

Co-existence in a Multi-Faith Society

Date: 20/05/24

Q, Comment on the teachings of Islam regarding co-existence in a multi-faith society.

1, Introduction:

Nations across the globe, with increasing innovations such as the internet, social media, and artificial intelligence have become closer than ever. While globalisation has a plethora of benefits for human beings, it has at the same time resulted in increasing tensions amongst different nations as well as faiths/religions. In light of this, it has become imperative for individuals to learn to live respectfully and peacefully in a multi-faith society. The perfect guidelines - as for everything else - are laid down by the Din of Allah (SWT), Islam, which strives to maintain peace, unity, stability, and equality in society. This is rightfully captured by Uthman Sulaiman, who asserts:

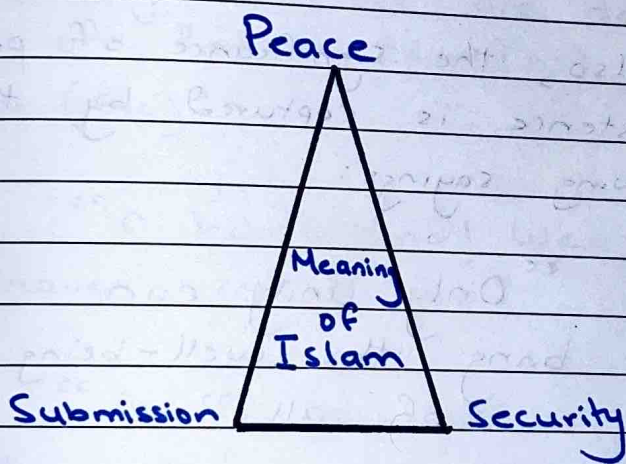
“Islam came to unite people and not to divide them.”

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(Uthman Sulaiman, An Islamic Perspective on Peaceful Coexistence, 2023)

2) The Importance of Peaceful Coexistence in a Multi-Faith Society:

The significance of peaceful coexistence in a multi-faith society is subtly captured by the very meaning of the term 'Islam.'



(This suggests that maintaining peace in society is one of the core principles of Islam. Moreover, Allah (SWT) states in the Noble Quran:

“Truly Allah loves those who fight in His Cause in battle array, as if they were a solid cemented structure.”

(Al-Quran, 61:4)

The above verse clearly highlights the importance of peaceful coexistence, i.e., one must adhere by the principles of unity and solidarity when navigating through challenges in life. More importantly, it also infers that the pleasure of Allah Almighty can only ever be attained via unity.

Also, the significance of peaceful coexistence is captured by the following sayings:

“Only unity can bring the well-being of all.”

(Robert Muller)

“You may call for peace as loudly as you wish, but where there is no brotherhood there can in the end be no peace.”

(Max Lerner)

33) What Are the Teachings of Islam Regarding Coexistence in a Multi-Faith Society?

34) All human beings are descendants of Prophet Adam (AS):

The starting point ^{under} Islam in uniting mankind and ensuring coexistence in a multi-faith society is the fact that human beings, albeit ^{having} ~~having~~ different races, ethnicities, genders, etc are descendants of Prophet Adam (AS) and Hawa (Eve):

“O humankind! We have created you

“All of you are the children of Adam and Adam was created from dust...”

(Sahih Muslim)

This, therefore, means that individuals should work collectively to attain al-Falah (Success in this world and the Hereafter) instead of quarrelling with one another.

3b, There is no compulsion in religion under Islam:

It is enshrined in the Holy Quran that there is no compulsion in Islam:

“لَا إِكْرَاهَ فِي الدِّينِ”

“Let there be no compulsion in religion”

(Al-Quran, 2: 256)

This makes it plain that Muslims are prohibited to force people of other faiths to accept Islam. The perfect example of this is the Conquest of Makkah, whereby the beloved Prophet (PBUH) declared the house of his worst foe, Abu Sufyan, as a place of sanctuary, notwithstanding whether one accepted Islam or not.

3c, Islam teaches Muslims to respect other religions:

Islam teaches Muslims to respect other religions, especially Christianity and Judaism as

both of them in their true form are the religions of Allah (swt). Al-Farugi, moreover, argued that because the founders of these religions ~~were~~ are prophets of Allah, their revelations that were delivered to them form an integral part of Islam. Respect for other religions is also reflected by the impeccable character of the Prophet (PBUH), who not only invited a Christian delegation from Najran to live in the Prophet (PBUH's) mosque, but also permitted them to perform their religious practices inside the mosque.

3d) The Din of Allah (swt) does not permit violence:

The Glorious Quran unequivocally abhors ~~7. fasad~~ (violence) in society, and provides that:

“وَاللَّهُ لَا يُحِبُّ الْمُفْسِدِينَ”

“Allah does not love those who do mischief.”

(Al-Quran, 5:64)

This again shows that a Muslim must strive to maintain unity and never engage in violence.

3c) Islam teaches Muslims to be humble and respectful:

As Islam does not permit violence, Muslims are required to be humble and respectful ~~to~~ ^{with} everyone without any discrimination:

“The Muslim is the one from whose tongue and hand the people are safe, and the believer is the one from whom the people's lives and wealth are safe.”

(Prophet Muhammad PBUH)

Thus, Muslims are expected to be kind and respectful ^{to} everyone, including non-Muslims.

3f) Muslims are taught to be just and fair:

The Noble Quran teaches

Muslims to be fair and just in all spheres of life. The following verses of the Glorious Quran thus provides:

“O ye who believe! stand out firmly for Allah, as witnesses to fair dealing, and let not the hatred of others to you make you swerve to wrong and depart from justice. Be just: that is next to piety: and fear Allah. For Allah is well-acquainted with all that ye do.”

(Al-Quran, 5: 8)

The above-mentioned verse highlights the following principles:

- i) Muslims must respect everyone
- ii) Muslims must deliver fair and impartial justice
- iii) Muslims must acknowledge the diversity of religions
- iv) Muslims must be tolerant of the beliefs of others
- v) Muslims must not discriminate against anyone.

As Islam instills these essential values in Muslims, Muslim countries have today become the epitomes of justice and hospitality, always providing for the needy, the orphan, and the captive without any discrimination:

"We are only feeding you for God's sake. We want no reward from you nor any thanks."

(Al-Quran, 76: 8-9)

4) Conclusion:

As technology continues to bring human beings from across the globe closer and closer, the importance of peaceful co-existence in a multi-faith society continues to grow. Human beings, as Islam advocates, must learn to respect each other's religions, beliefs, ideologies, and so on without discrimination and bias. Instead, they must strive to promote equality, unity, and justice in society to attain the bounty of Allah Almighty. The Holy Quran unambiguously asserts that a

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Society will only ever be successful and free from chaos and anarchy if it is united. This was perhaps rightly captured by William ~~st~~ Shakespeare who stated that:

"We come into the world like brother and brother, and now let's go hand in hand, not one before another."

(William Shakespeare)