

Interfaith Dialogue Shariah Guidelines

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Prefatory Sermon

Dr. Abdullah Bin Arafah¹

الحمد لله رب العالمين والصلاة والسلام على مولانا رسول الله واله
وصحبه ومن والاه أمابعد!

Distinguished Gentlemen, Brothers & Sisters!

Before I begin the sermon permit me to extend heartiest greetings on behalf of the distinguished Dr. Abdul Aziz Othman Al Twajiri, Director General, ISESCO and his wishes towards the success of this seminar. He has also ordered me to convey the uttermost gratitude to Maulana Khalid Saifullah Rahmani, General Secretary, Islamic Fiqh Academy, India; other Academy dignitaries and Prof. Mohammad Noman Khan, Head, Dept. of Arabic, Delhi University for their contribution towards this seminar. He would also like me to offer sincere thanks to K. Rahman Khan, Union Minister for Minority affairs, Govt. of India for his presence on this occasion and also to all our esteemed guests in attendance.

Ladies and Gentlemen!

The topic of this seminar is extremely pertinent since the references for Islamic knowledge –of which the Quran and the Hadith are foremost –have assessed effective procedures and methodology regarding dialogue.

¹ ISESCO

ISESCO considers the issue of dialogue one of great import as it is an area of expertise for jurists concerned with pedagogical training, education and cultural contact. ISESCO's member nations have anointed it responsible for establishing clarity in the positions and perspectives of the various experts of the issue of dialogue. It has established itself as an authority among various national councils and has organized various seminars, conferences and symposiums. It has also released numerous valuable publications on the subject.

Among the notable documents produced by ISESCO is an analytical study on "Initiatives towards Interfaith Dialogue by The Custodian of The Two Holy Mosques". Even the Islamic Conference of Ministers of Public Culture held in Algeria (December 2011) agreed with and appraised this analytical tract. Soon ISESCO shall present a comparative strategy regarding this subject in the 8th Islamic Conference of Ministers of Public Culture which shall be held in Jeddah. This shall be on the occasion of the declaration of Medina as the seat of Islamic culture for the year 2013 A.D.

ISESCO is matching pace with international societies especially and has been fulfilling its capacity since the recognition of dialogue at the international level by the UN. It has been striving so that the Islamic voice regarding education, youth, trade and communications is heard by the UN. ISESCO also retains ambassadors and delegates of dialogue chosen from laureates of Islam and other foreign personages of eminence.

Esteemed Gentlemen!

ISESCO's way has been to employ its expertise towards progress in these areas and formulate future strategies based on the principles of Islam. It has published various books and tracts on

this subject. With concern to the individual and society and the development of the community its publications have been accorded great importance and validity. And it continues to strive on in the dissemination and fulfillment of its objectives.

Kindly allow me to now analyze the various issues regarding dialogues under the Shariah and idiomatic perspective. "الحوار" (discussion, conversation or dialogue) refers to the exchange of ideas between conversationalists regarding a certain topic and with a definitive purpose. An agreement of stance and perspective is not required for dialogue but an awareness of the perspectives held by all participants with an aim to create cohesiveness among them.

Language and conversation in dialogue have various dimensions based on three foundations:

The propagation of one's position and perspective while engaged in the act of dialogue. Another dimension is of inductive prowess where every participant presents various proofs and factuality's in order with his/her stance to make strengthen their argument. A further third element is the provocative which aims to spur the workers on. The modern science of linguistics holds great emphasis on using these three techniques. It has then divided the discourses into implication, meaning based on pronunciation and utterance (phonetics), or forms (morphology) or on the basis of adjunction (combination). Similarly they have been divided on the basis of the relationships between the meanings that emerge out of logical reasoning.

With regard to dialogue and discussion the word "حوار" which holds parlance, does not find mention in the Quran but instead when Allah says: "فقال لصاحب وهو يحاوره" (Al Kahf:24) in the form of a verb and has been listed in the glossary for "والله يسمع تحاوركما" (Al Mujadilah:1).

As far as the Hadith of the Prophet are concerned the word "حوار" does not appear in the glossary but its derivatives do. A Hadith attributed to Abdullah Bin Jarjees narrates:

"كان رسول الله يتعوذ من وعشاء السفر وكآبة المنقلب والخور بعد الكون، ودعوة المظلوم وسوء المنظر في الأهل ولمال"

(Sahih Muslim, Kitab Al Hajj, Hadith: 1343). About this Hadith, Timridhi has said:

"ويروى الخور بعد الكور أيضا" (Sunan Tirmidhi: 3439)

(Here الخور refers to a scarcity or paucity). Similarly the word "محاورة" appears in another Hadith and these are all synonyms for "حوار". Imam Bukhari attributes to Abu Al Darda:

"كانت بين أبي بكر وعمر محاورة، فأغضب أبو بكر عمر، فأنصرف عنه عمر مغضباً، فأتبعه أبو بكر يسأله أن يستغفر له"

(Sahih Bukhari: 4240)

Some other synonyms of "الحوار" exist as well: "الجدل" and its two variations, "جدل محمود" and "جدل مذموم". Similarly "المجادلة", "الدعوة", "المنافسة", "المناظرة", "المناقشة" إلى الله". The need for dialogue arises when there exist reagents. One such reagent is the existence of difference in opinion over subject matters. Education, establishing claim, determining meaning, proselytizing Islam, response to misconceptions held by unbelievers can also be causes for dialogue. As far as impedances to dialogue are concerned they are caused by a disregard or suspension of the etiquettes of debates and dialogues by the participants. A major fault is the use of slander and omission which sidelines the aim of cohesion and is an intimidatory technique. The Quran has used "مراء" for this nefarious act. And Allah says:

"يستعجل بها الذين لا يؤمنون بها والذين آمنوا مشفقون منها ويعلمون أنها الحق ألا إن بعيد" (Al Shuraa: 18) الذين يمارون في الساعة لفي ضلال بعيد"

One major fault is the holding one's opinions on a pedestal or being biased towards them which gives away the invalidity of the participant by showing that they are not interested in the emergence of clarity but on the insistence of their personal opinions. Another fault is of anger and rage which leads to slanderous and oft humiliating statements. One other fault is a lack of awareness of the basic etiquette of dialogue among the participants. This leads to unwarranted dialogues with the motives of all participants in a clash and no willingness to abide by the rules.

The Quran mentions various kinds of dialogues which we can list in the following order:

- Legal dialogues with a view towards the believers. An example is this Hadith from Abu Hurairah:
"سمعت رسول الله يقول: قال الله تعالى: قسمت الصلاة بيني وبين عبدي نصفين، ولعبدى ما سأل، فإذا قال العبد الحمد لله رب العالمين، قال الله تعالى: حمدني عبدي، وإذا قال: الرحمن الرحيم، قال الله تعالى: أتتني عليّ عبدي....."

(Sahih Muslim: 395)

- Oratorical dialogues, also geared towards the believers who are often addressed with "يا أيها الذين آمنوا". As well as being an adjective this is a great means of remembering that hardships shall be made easy and fondness for prayer shall also see increase.
- Similarly, admonitory dialogues like this ayah: "ألم يجدك يتيماً" (Al Dhuha). There exist causes for dialogues other than these just mentioned, such as cautionary, descriptive, such that demand attention over a portion of a story and other such important matters.

Dialogues warrant exceptions to some common courtesies. It is required that all parties present themselves with good accord so as to maximize returns from the effort. It is also in good stead that a priori to the dialogue every participant gives some thought to their intended benefit from the exercise. Similarly, make efforts to distance oneself from issues which can cause temptation and give rise to conflicts. All parties must also be familiar with the topic at hand as is the tradition in academic discussions where if one is a teacher and another a student, even then it is necessary for the student to know the topic of discussion and its purpose. Therefore, Allah has prohibited such people from getting into discussions and dialogues. He says:

"ها أنتم هؤلاء حاججتم فيما لكم به علم فلم تحاجون فيما ليس لكم به علم والله يعلم و
أنتم لا تعلمون" (Al Imran: 22)

Honesty is also among the listed etiquettes of dialogue since dishonesty injures the purpose of dialogue itself similarly patience during disagreements and impediments allows the other party to express themselves and clears the situation. On topics of discord patience and control over one's expression is also held in high regard. Another desirable trait is empathy with the opponent and fair play. "فيما رحمة من الله لنت لهم ولو كنت فظاً غليظ القلب لانفضوا من حولك" (Al Imran: 159). Similarly despite differences it is essential that respect, justice and cordiality are maintained.

Self control is also necessary to achieve solutions to common quandaries so that at least some common ground is reached. Discussions should also take off from common ground and differences be kept for later on. Points emerging during the dialogue should be addressed logically and with precision in providing proofs and justifications.

One's stand should be strategically explained and attention should be made to the riposte of the other. Cutting somebody down should be avoided and focus should remain on the person's argument not their associations or affiliations. Taking digs is also uncouth and one's style should avoid digressions and present the argument in a timely manner. Examples should be used in abundance to prove a point. The opponent's evidence should be trumped by stronger proofs and dialogues should be concluded with utmost respect and grace and the civility of the whole exercise should be emphasized upon.

Some etiquette is related to the post dialogue period. These include accepting one's mistakes, recognizing valid points and respecting differing opinions. Imam Abu Huzafa says: "Our stand is one perspective. According to our sensibility this is the best one. If somebody presents a stronger point in comparison to ours then that holds credence over us". Refrain from arrogance when trumped and avoid envy if taken down in a debate. Backbiting, spite and unnecessary skepticism should also be kept at bay in order to succeed at dialogues.

Now kindly permit me once again to express my gratitude to all of you on behalf of the Director General of ISESCO for taking the time and effort to grace us with your presence in this seminar. We hope that this seminar reaches fruition and is a success.

Allah's word is the true word and only He is the righteous guide

Keynote Address

Maulana Khalid Saifullah Rahmani²

الحمد لله رب العالمين والصلاة والسلام على سيد الأنبياء والمرسلين وعلى آله وصحبه
أجمعين، أما بعد!

Mr. President and esteemed Scholars!

Verily Allah has created human beings as a creature imparted with an extraordinary intelligence and understanding however, just as there is difference among human beings with respect to their features, color etc. there exists difference also in their nature, their thought processes and their behavior. Examples galore! Some prefer reds, some black. Somebody prefers one fruit and another other. Similarly difference of opinion also exists over not just the material but also symbolic. It is because of this multiplicity of possible behaviors and interpretations that so many religions exist today with each practitioner asserting complete faith in their stream's validity. Because of its divine origin the Quran is aware of this plurality. If Allah so desired he could've made it so that the entire world followed one religion but still allows the present situation since there is a higher motive behinds this condition. And he says:

ولو شاء ربك لامن من في الأرض كلهم جميعا (Yunus: 99)

ولو شاء ربك يجعل الناس أمة واحدة (Hud: 118, Anhal: 93)

ولو شاء الله لجمعهم على الهدى فلا تكونن من الجاهلين (Al Inam: 35)

²General Secretary Islamic Fiqh Academy, India

ولو شاء ربك ما فعلوه فذرهم وما يفترون (Al Inam: 112)

قل فله الحجة البالغة فلو شاء لهداكم أجمعين (Al Inam: 149)

Allah himself has not forced the righteous path upon men and has left the decision to abide or stray upon man's intellect and free will. So now the only means of guiding humanity to righteousness is through a change in perceptions and that can occur through dialogue and discussion. This has been referred to as the Call towards God and the righteous duel. It is also one of the non violent means of martyrdom.

Gentlemen, in this day and age dialogue is of prime import and it is essential that some facts regarding this be made apparent:

The purpose of dialogue:

One of the most pertinent questions is to realize as Muslims, our intention behind dialogues

- 1- The primary motive behind dialogue is to call towards Allah. This is why Muslims have been the righteous people as they call people towards betterment and restrain from wrongdoing.

"كنتم خير أمة أخرجت للناس تامرون بالمعروف وتتنهون عن المنكر (Al Imran: 110) وتؤمنون بالله ولو آمن أهل الكتاب لكان خيرا لهم"

The word "ناس" has been used in the Quran mostly for the nonbelievers.

The greatest kind of "معروف" is righteous faith.

The harshest "منكر" is rejection of faith and polytheism.

The motive of this verse is to encourage Muslims to proselytize and especially towards the People of the Books. The examples found in the form of various Messengers and even the Prophet

(P.B.U.H) talking to their communities have the call to faith as their driving motive.

- 2- The second objective of dialogue is to dispel the misconceptions of the other. Because how can faith enter as long as doubts, misconceptions and unanswered queries prick the heart and occupy it? A look at a lot of the conversations the Messengers had reveals that dispelling misconceptions was a large motive. They would be called illusionists, madmen. They would say that the book being shown was just nothing more but the "أساطير الأولين" or the 'legends of the ancients'. They would say that these are all old tales. The Messengers would respond courteously and in a positive manner with proofs towards their misconceptions.

The people of Mecca thought that Angels were Allah's daughters. The Quran denied it saying that how is it that those who detest the birth of daughters for themselves are out to prove Allah's daughters? The people of Mecca would ask that how is it possible for the dead to rise again once they have become dust. The Quran responded saying that if Allah can create you the first time over what difficulty is it that he can't enliven you again?

قل يحييها الذي أنشأها أول مرة وهو بكل خلق عليم (Yasin: 79)

The Jews would say that Ibrahim (A.S) was a Jew and the Christians claimed him for themselves. The Quran made it apparent that he was neither and ascribed to the Religion of Knowledge since the advent of both religions occurred multiple generations after him. The Christians claim that Isa (A.S) is Allah's son since he was born of Immaculate Conception which the Quran disproved with Adam's example who was born not just

without a father but a mother as well. By this logic even he should have divine parentage.

إن مثل عيسى عند الله كمثل آدم خلقه من تراب ثم قال له (Al Imran: 59)
كن فيكون

When some Christian scholars pointed out that the Quran mentions Haroon (R.A) as Mayam's (A.S) brother while instead he was a compatriot of Musa (R.A) from many generations prior, the Prophet (P.B.U.H) replied that the two Haroons were not one and the same but different personalities and that it was custom to name one's child after Prophets and Messengers.

Anyway, the dispelling of untruths is an important purpose of dialogue and it is an apt tool for this purpose.

- 3- Another aim of dialogue is the quelling embitterment and antagonism. The advantage of refined speech is that even if the opponent is not converted in full at least some differences are resolved. It is never an exercise in futility.
(Fusilat: 34) ولا تستوي الحسنة ولا السيئة ادفع بالتي هي أحسن فإذا الذي
بينك وبينه عداوة كأنه ولي حميم

This verse explains how on the one hand such invitations allow the other a chance of receiving guidance it also works on the other hand to eliminate or curb hostilities. When the companions migrated to Ethiopia on the Prophet's orders they found themselves in a dialogue with Najashi and his supporters. This eventually led to Najashi's accord with the Muslims, his tolerance and eventual acceptance of Islam itself.

When the Prophet (P.B.U.H) himself migrated to Medina he indulged in a dialogue with the Jews and other nonbelievers of the city which led to the signing of the Medina treaty and brought peace to the lives of Muslims. The Jews and other unbelievers

continued to plot against the Muslims even after that but at least they never openly confronted them. Similarly the Prophet adopted dialogues with other tribes of the Jews, the Levant, and elsewhere in Arabia which led to the peaceful spread of Islam's message.

Although many more basis for dialogue exist the above mentioned are those best achieved through it.

Dialogue and the Prophets:

Esteemed gentlemen! A cursory glance at the Quran as well as the Bible presents excellent examples of dialogue in the form of the incidents and addresses that the various Prophets go through. For instance, Prophet Noah (P.B.U.H) in chapter Hud (verses 45-40), Prophet Ibrahim (P.B.U.H) in the chapters Shura, An'am and Anbiya, Prophet Lut (P.B.U.H) in chapters Shura and Naml, Prophet Yusuf (P.B.U.H) in chapter Yusuf, Prophet Salih (P.B.U.H) in chapters A'raf, Hud and Naml, Prophet Hud (P.B.U.H) in chapters A'raf and Naml, Prophet Shoaib (P.B.U.H) in chapters Hud, A'raf and Shura, Prophet Musa (P.B.U.H) in the chapters A'raf, Shura and Taha, Prophet Sulaiman (P.B.U.H) in chapter Naml, Prophet Isa (P.B.U.H) in Aal Imram, and Prophet Muhammad's (P.B.U.H) conversations and addresses to his people in various chapters. An excellent example of the invitation is the one given by Prophet Muhammad (P.B.U.H) to the People of the Books (Aal Imran: 64-68).

The pious predecessors also maintained a tradition of dialogue with various religions during their own times and no doubt these yielded great results. These have been recorded in various books like when Imam Hanifa (R.A) entered a debate with an atheist over existence, when the Caliph Haroon debated with one of his Christian physicians or when the Caliph Mamoon organized a

debate between Kulthum Bin Umar Wathabi and Ibn Farawah the Christian.

Gentlemen, a great part of any debate is the manner in which the conversation is crafted.

- 1- One the essentials here have been described as "قول حسن" in the Quran. It is mentioned that: (Al Baqarah: 83) "وقولوا للناس حسنا"

When Allah sent the Prophets Haroon and Musa to extend an invitation to the Pharaoh he advised them:

"فقولا له قولا لينا لعله يتذكر أو يخشى" (Taha: 44)

While describing the framework of the invitations Allah said:

"ادع إلي سبيل ربك بالحكمة والموعظة الحسنة وجادلهم بالتي هي أحسن" (Al Nahl: 125)

The scholar Ibn Taimiyyah makes a point that instead of a good spar the initiation is towards: "مجادلة بالتي هي أحسن":

"ولم يقبل بالحسنة كما قال في الموعظة، لأن (Radd Aly Al Muntaqin: 468) الجدل فيه مدافعة ومغاضبة، فيحتاج أن يكون بالتي هي أحسن، حتى يصلح ما فيه من الممانعة والمدافعة"

On another occasion it was specifically said that one's conversation with the People of The books should be on the righteous method:

"ولا تجادلوا أهل الكتاب إلا بالتي هي أحسن إلا الذين ظلموا منهم" (Al Ankabut: 46)

Gentility should be expressed not just in diction but also in speech. A harsh voice should not be used:

"لا يحب الله الجهر بالسوء من القول إلا من ظلم" (Al Nisa: 48)

2- The second characteristic is that one should behave with the debater in a positive manner even according to daily standards and the Prophet (P.B.U.H) is an excellent example. This is why the Prophets would address the non believing Opponents as "يا قومي", which connotes acceptance and love. When the Prophet (P.B.U.H) wrote letters to foreign rulers and dignitaries even then there was full leeway to exalt their positions. When Abu Jahl was sent an invitation to Islam he was addressed in the letter as "أبو الحكم" which was the highest compliment to his decorum and stature. On Uday Bin Hatim's arrival he was taken to the treasury and seated with reverence. When a letter was sent to Heraclius he was addressed as "عظيم الروم".

3- One important aspect is to treat the fellow debater justly and not be stingy in appreciating them. Allah has endowed every entity with some positives and acknowledging them lowers embitterment and might facilitate their conceding. The Quran makes clear:

"ولا يجرمنكم شنآن قوم على ألا تعدلوا اعدلوا هو أقرب للتقوي"
(Al Mairah: 8)

We see in the Quran that even though the ills of the unbelievers are pointed out if any individual or group had any redeeming attributes they were mentioned in an appreciatory manner. For example:

"ومن أهل الكتاب من إن تأمنه بقنطار يؤده إليك ومنهم من إن تأمنه بدينار لا يؤده إليك إلا ما دمت عليه قائما ذلك بأنهم قالوا ليس علينا في الأميين سبيل ويقولون على الله الكذب وهم يعلمون"
(Aal Imran: 75)

4- Another important characteristic in a debate is tolerance. In a debate often things are said which are against one's

temperament or one's standing or may apparently hurt one's dignity. But the debater should not let this affect him and must turn the other cheek gracefully. The Quran insists this numerously and Allah says:

"خذ العفو وأمر بالعرف وأعرض عن الجاهلین" (Al A'raf: 199)

On another occasion:

"ولا تستوي الحسنة ولا السيئة ادفع بالتي هي أحسن فإذا الذي بينك وبينه عداوة كأنه ولي حميم، وما يلقاها إلا الذين صبروا وما يلقاها إلا ذو حظ عظيم"

Excellent examples of tolerance and cordiality exist between the Prophets and their peoples. The Quran mentions these in detail.

- 5- It is important that the addressor beware of the addressee's language. The Prophets also spoke to their anointed people in their own language:

وما أرسلنا من رسول إلا بلسان قومه (Ibrahim: 4)

Ibn Tayyimah writes in this regard:

"وأما مخاطبة أهل الاصطلاح باصطلاحهم ولغتهم فليس بمكروه إذا احتيج إلي ذلك وكانت المعاني صحيحة كمخاطبة العجم من الروم والفرس والترک بلغتهم وعرفهم، فإن هذا جائز حسن للحاجة وإنما كرهه الأئمة إذا لم يحتاجوا إليه"

(Dar Taarud Al AqlWaNaql 42/1)

Preferred themes of debate:

One important question is about the topics of debate. The Quran enlightens us on this by saying that foremost those topics should be picked for discussion which both parties agree upon:

"قل يا أهل الكتاب تعالوا إلى كلمة سواء بيننا وبينكم ألا نعبد إلا الله (Aal Imran: 64) ولا نشرك به شيئاً ولا يتخذ بعضنا بعضاً أرباباً من دون الله فإن تولوا فقولوا اشهدوا بأنا مسلمون"

"كلمه سواء", which all Prophets have called towards is essentially the call of one faith, prophecy and the eventuality of doomsday. The revealed texts especially endorse this hence it makes for ease in endorsement to place this commonality at the fore of the discussion and Islam places emphasis on this for its invitations. However, it maintains that there has always been one religion as Allah himself has said:

"شرع لكم من الدين ما وصى به نوحا والذي أوحينا إليك وما وصينا به إبراهيم وموسى وعيسى أن أقيموا الدين ولا تتفرقوا فيه"

And that this is the one true accepted religion, has also been made clear:

"ومن يتبع غير الإسلام دينا فلن يقبل منه وهو في الآخرة من الخاسرين"

He does not condone the essential monism of religions as claimed by some that there are multiple paths to one destination. There is only one path and one destination; by Allah's affirmation and through servitude to him.

Final Word:

Although the importance of debate and dialogue span all across their need is pertinent in the Indian context. This is because of two major reasons. First, India is unique in its multicultural nature. There can hardly be a religion without adherents in this land and this has been the scenario since days of yore. This is the land that gave rise to Buddhism, Vedic religions, Jainism and Sikhism. Islam itself reached here in its nascence and soon spread all over. Similarly, Christians, Jews and Zoroastrians are also found here in large numbers. Debate and dialogue in this space will only promote a sense of understanding and facilitate cordiality and peaceful existence.

Second, this is the world's largest democracy with freedom of religion enshrined for all. The democratic environment here is stable and deep rooted. Case in point, the President of this country is a Hindu, the Vice-President is Muslim, the Prime Minister is a Sikh, the Speaker is a Dalit woman and the leader of the ruling coalition is a Christian. There is a prevalent atmosphere which is conducive to debate and dialogue here which will assist not only in dispelling misunderstandings but also prove beneficial towards the proselytism of Islam.

It is in this milieu that the Islamic Fiqh Academy, India has invited scholars and teachers of religious and modern domains and decided to host this workshop titled "Shariah and Methodology for Interfaith Dialogue" so that this conducive environment can be used to present to the people of this land religious dialogue and through it champion the intellectual brilliance and supremacy of Islam.

I pray that this seminar finds success and proves to be an aid in the proselytism of Islam.

وبالله التوفيق وهو المستعان

Propositions

Shariah Fundamentals for Interfaith Dialogue

Under the sponsorship of the Islamic Fiqh Academy, India and the assistance of ISESCO and the Department of Arabic, Delhi University, a seminar titled “Shariah Fundamentals for Interfaith Dialogue” was conducted between 10th-12th Jumada Al-Thani (22nd-24th Apr. 2013 A.D) at the Delhi University.

Of the 40+ papers received during the event, there were a few issues unanimously agreed upon. Here is an account of those:

- 1- It is essential that interfaith dialogues be held with the experts of various faiths residing in India.
- 2- Promotion and maintenance of interfaith dialogues between Muslim scholars and their contemporaries among the various creeds, sects and beliefs that inhabit India.
- 3- Efforts should be concentrated on promoting the shared values between the various Indian systems exploration towards further common ground.
- 4- Utmost respect towards the various religions, their personages, establishments, texts and artifacts should be called for.
- 5- Protection of and safeguard of all activity geared towards maintaining Human Rights as they are the basis for freedom of expression, religion and also protect individual rights and property.
- 6- Harmony and empathy among all groups of people be promoted as well as attention towards justice, equality and rights for all.

- 7- The cultivation of a hospitable environment prior to any engagement in dialogue and leeway for the social, temperamental and temporal preferences for participants.

The following recommendations by the participants of the seminar were also approved:

- 1- The promotion and safety of human brotherhood on various levels demands the guarantee of justice, safety and fairness and is paramount. With this great task ahead it is required that adherents of various faiths be engaged in dialogue so as to foster in an environment of empathy, understanding and peace.
- 2- This seminar requests ISESCO to look into the possibility of a seminar addressing “India and the Journey to Hajj”.
- 3- This seminar appeals that ISESCO assist in cataloguing the enormous number of Arabic manuscripts present in various libraries across the country.
- 4- The seminar requests that ISESCO facilitate the translation of Arabic texts on Islamic architecture, Indian culture and Islamic civilization into English and the translations of those texts which document the impact of Islam on the Indian milieu into Arabic.
- 5- The creation of literature that documents interfaith discourse between Muslims and followers of other faiths and also the efforts of eminent personages in this regard along with introductions to the various religions.
- 6- Establishment of avenues to train and nurture individuals with expertise in dialogue who shall possess in depth knowledge of the intricacies of various religions.
- 7- The organization of interdisciplinary events involving the Islamic Fiqh Academy, India and various other Muslim scholars and seminaries to further study interfaith dialogue.

8- Emphasis on India's membership to various offices of the Organization of Islamic Conferences and representation for Indian Muslims at Islamic cultural and governing bodies.

Minutes of the seminar

Shariah Fundamentals for Interfaith Dialogue

Under the aegis of the Islamic Fiqh Academy and the co-operation of the Department of Arabic, Delhi University and ISESCO a three day seminar from the 22nd -24th April 2013 was successfully held at the Delhi University.

The initial gathering saw more than 300 individuals from various universities, religious organizations, government bodies and a large number of teachers, scholars and members of the intelligentsia.

In his opening remark Dr. Abdullah Bin Arafah clearly elaborated upon the motives, need for and present scenario of interfaith dialogue. He also spoke of ISESCO's efforts to this end on the international level and its appointment as a representative of this cause. After this Maulana Ateeq Ahmad Bastavi, Secretary, Scientific affairs, Islamic Fiqh Academy presented an introduction of the topic. Following this, the Algerian ambassador spoke appraisingly about the Islamic Fiqh Academy's efforts and accomplishments in various fields of knowledge. The Moroccan ambassador graced the occasion with his presence as well and of particular note was the presence of K Rahman Khan, Union Minister, and Minority Affairs.

Dr. Zafar ul Islam Khan then presented his analysis of the various papers tabled in this seminar and expressed his congratulations to the academy.

The initial session was chaired by Dr. Wali Akhtar Nadvi, Professor, Dept. of Arabic, Delhi University and Prof. Noman Khan, Head of the Department welcomed the gathering.

Opening Session

Monday, 22nd April, Time: 11 a.m - 2p.m
Conference hall, Dept. of Botany, Gate no.4, Delhi University

Recitation from the Quran: Qari Abdul Basit

- Chief Guest: K. Rahman Khan (Union Minister, Minority Affairs)
- Presidency: Dr. Zafar ul Islam Khan (Member trustee, IUMS)
- Opening lecture: Dr. Adbullah Bin Arafah
(Dir. Public Culture, ISESCO)
- Welcome address: Prof. Mohd. Noman Khan (Head, Dept. of Arabic, D.U)
- Introduction to the topic: Maulana Ateeq Ahmad Bastavi (Darul Uloom Nadwatul Ulama, Lucknow)
- Notable guests: Sheikh Mohd. Hasan Shareef (Algerian Ambassador)
Sheikh Mohd. Sidi (Charge d' Affaires, Morocco)
Sheikh Mohd. Bin Abdul Aziz Madani (Cultural Attache, KSA)
- Speeches: Prof. Mohsin Usmani Nadvi (Ex Head, Dept. of Arabic, EFLU)
Prof. Shafeeq Ahmad Khan (Ex Head, Dept of Arabic, Jamia Millia Islamia)
Maulana Shauqat Hussain Qasmi (Darul Uloom, Deoband)
- Vote of thanks: Ml. Obaidullah Asadi (Secretary, Seminar Academy)

Moderator: Dr. Wali Akhtar Nadvi (Asst. Prof. Arabic, D.U)

The keynote address by Khalid Saifullah Rahmani, General Secretary, Islamic Fiqh Academy was then presented which proved insightful and educative of many levels. After this Dr. Abdullah bin Arafah the ISESCO representative presented his speech.

On the 23rd of April the first session of the program presided by Prof. Abdul Majeed took place and Prof. Abdul Maaz moderated it. Papers were presented by Professors and research scholars presented 10 papers in all of which 9 were in Arabic and one on English. 150 members of the audience from various religious and academic institutions attended this session. Dr. Arafah reinstated the need for efforts in this area through his speech in this session. The program ran according to this schedule:

First session

Topic: Dialogue in the Light of Shariah and Hadith

Time: 9:30 A.M – 11:30 A.M, Tuesday

Presidency: Prof. Abdul Majeed (Former Head, Dept. of Arabic, Osmania University, Hyderabad)

Moderator: Prof. Abdul Maaz (Head, Dept. of Arabic Maulana Abul Kalam Azad National Urdu University)

Papers:

- 1- A Miracle of Quranic Dialogue (Prof. Abdul Maaz)
- 2- Principles of Dialogue with Various Religions in light of the Quran and Sunnah (Prof. Mohd. Hussain Khan Nadvi)
- 3- The Logic Behind Dialogue in Light of The Quran (Maulana Jawed Ahmed Nadvi)
- 4- A Quranic Example of Interfaith Dialogue (English) (Dr. Abdullah Fahad Falahi)
- 5- Islam's Stand on Non-Muslims: Quranic and Sunnah Perspective (Prof. Mohd. Nauman Khan)
- 6- The Revealed Faiths and Their Followers: Quranic Stand (Dr. Mohd. Akram Falahi)
- 7- Etiquette of Dialogue in Light of Quran and Sunnah (Dr. Naeem Ahsan Ashri)
- 8- Interfaith Dialogue in Light of The Quran (Maulana Qamarud Din Qasmi)
- 9- The Concept of Dialogue in The Quran (Maulana Ajmal Qasmi)
- 10- Dialogue in light of The Hadith (Maulana Mohd. Azam Qasmi)

Second Session

Topic: Basis for Dialogue in Shariah

Time: 12:00 P.M – 2:00 P.M

Presidency: Prof. Mustafa Shareef (Former Head, Dept. of Arabic, Osmania University)

Moderator: Maulana Mohd. Azam Nadvi (Al Mahad Al Islami, Hyderabad)

Papers:

- 1- Shariah Guidelines for Interfaith Harmony (Dr. Mohd. Shahjahan Nadvi)
- 2- Dialogue: With Regard to Peaceful Coexistence (Dr. Mohd. Ayyub Nadvi)
- 3- Shariah Principles for Interfaith Harmony (Prof. Mustafa Shareef)
- 4- Dialogue With The Sikhs (Prof. Shafeeq Ahmad Khan Nadvi)
- 5- Shariah Basis for Mutual Agreement (Dr. Shams ud Din Nadvi)
- 6- Dialogue: A Jurisprudential Perspective (Maulana Mohd. Azam Nadvi)
- 7- Dialogue: A Discussion on Principles (Maulana Mohd. Imtiaz Alam Qasmi)
- 8- Principles of Dialogue With Co-citizens (Maulana Anees ur Rahman)
- 9- The Revealed Faiths in Quranic and Sunnah View (Muneerul Islam)
- 10- Interfaith Dialogue in Light of Quran and Sunnah (Wazah Muhammad)

Third Session

Topic: The Possibilities and Impact of Dialogue

Time: 3:00P.M – 5:00P.M

Presidency: Prof. Mohd. Hasan Khan Nadvi
(Former Head, Dept of Arabic, Barkatullah Uni.)

Moderator: Dr. Abdul Majid Qazi Nadvi
(Lecturer, Arabic, Jamia Millia Islamia)

Papers:

- 1- Dialogue About Common Issues (Maulana Zia ud Din Qasmi Nadvi)
- 2- Interfaith Dialogue: Correct and Incorrect Methods (Prof. Abdul Majeed)
- 3- Interfaith Dialogue With Emphasis on Strength and Evidences (Dr. Abdul Majid Qazi)
- 4- Contemporary Manners and Conditions for Interfaith Dialogue (Dr. Abdul Quddus Nadvi)
- 5- Shariah Conditions on Dialogue (Maulana Adbul Basit Nadvi)
- 6- Interfaith Dialogue: Types and Purposes (Maulana Mohd. Sajid Qasmi)
- 7- Interfaith Dialogue (Mufti Abdullah Qasmi)
- 8- The role of Dialogue in Peaceful Coexistence (Sheikh Adbul Islam Hamud)
- 9- Reflections From The Shariah on Interfaith Dialogue (Maulana Mohammad ullah Qasmi)
- 10- Shariah Conditions on Dialogue (Sheikh Abdul Ghani Al Nahari)
- 11- Methods of Dialogue (Urdu) (Zafar Darik Qasmi)

Fourth Session

Topic: Dialogue with Indian Religions

Time: 9:30A.M – 12:00 P.M, Wednesday

Presidency: Prof. Mohsin Usmani Nadvi
(Former Head, Dept. of Arabic, EFLU)

Moderator: Maulana Abdullah Basit Nadvi
(AlMahad Al Aali LitTadreeb Fil QadhaWalIfta, Patna)

Papers:

- 1- The Need for Dialogue to Resolve Islamic Issues in India
(Prof. Mohsin Usmani)
- 2- Islam And The Vedanta: A Comparison (Prof. Shafi Sheikh)
- 3- Relationship Between Interfaith Dialogue and Peaceful Coexistence (Prof. Shahjahan Kashmiri)
- 4- Interfaith Dialogue for Peaceful Coexistence (Dr. Naseem Akhtar Nadvi)
- 5- Methods of Interfaith Dialogue with Indian Religions
(Mufti Mohammed Ashraf Farooqi)
- 6- Islam and India (English) (Prof. Adbul Khaliq)
- 7- Shariah Principles and Conditions for Dialogue (Dr. Mujeeb Akhtar Nadvi)
- 8- Principles and Conditions for Dialogue in Quranic Light
(Dr. Ghitreef Shahbaz Nadvi)
- 9- Interfaith Dialogue and Contemporary Reflections
(Maulana Aftab Alam Nadvi)
- 10- The Need and Ways of Dialogue With Indian Religions
(Urdu) (MaulanaWaris Mazhari)

- 11-The Principles and Conditions for interfaith dialogue between Indian Religions (Urdu) (Dr. Shakeel Ahmad Habibi)
- 12-Quranic Methodology for Dialogue (Dr. Abdul Karim Qasmi)
- 13-Shariah Principle of Dialogue (Maulana Zafeerud Din Qasmi)
- 14-Unity Among Theologians (Maulana Maqsood Ahmad Furqani)
- 15- Contemporary Interfaith Dialogue: Etiquette and Principles (Maulana Abdul Khaliq Kamil Nadvi)

**Dialogue between Various Religions
Shariah Principles and Guidelines**

Shariah Principles for Interfaith Dialogue

Dr. Shahjahan Nadvi³

By ordaining compassion and honor with the non-Muslims the Quran has solved a major social dilemma. It has also made clear that society should be based on justice and equality. The Prophet (P.B.U.H) mentions: “O’ ye who profess faith in Allah, uphold truth and remain steadfast upon justice and let not enmity towards any people restrain your justice. This is closer to piety and fear Allah for he knows all your deeds. (Maida: 8)

Similarly it has outlined the manner of dialogue so that society can be civilized and peaceful, thus eliminating animosity, injustice and strife. Every citizen can thus attain a peaceful existence in the folds of society.

Islam dislikes reclusiveness

Islam’s multitude and universality is proof of this and it addresses every aspect of human life which is why it expresses dislike of reclusiveness and social detachment. Neither does it condone unfamiliarity and animosity. It has always encouraged ethics cordiality and has always restrained form acts which may harm relations between human beings. It has often sanctioned acts as well. Case being, its approval of marriage with People of the Books but ban on marriage with unbelievers. It did so because faith and honor cannot be assumed to exist forever and since marriage is not a temporary agreement. Therefore, for a successful family life marriage with unbelievers was banned and the short

³Professor, Jamia Islamia, Shantapuram, Kerela

life of marriages has been proven over time. However, other relations with them have not been forbidden and have been sanctioned by the Shariah and there are certain fundamentals regarding this which must be observed:

Solidarity:

Islam has revealed to us that all humanity despite its divisions into tribes and clans had a single progenitor and an Original father. This division has been done to make them assistant and helpful to each other and not to embitter one another.

Islam is a universal religion:

Islam is a global religion meant not for a particular area or people but for all humanity. Allah says: "Say forth: Verily! I am Allah's messenger for all humanity, he who controls the land and the skies. He has no equal and he alone controls life and death. Hold faith in Him and His messenger who also believes in Him and his Word so that you may receive guidance" (A'raf: 158)

Freedom of faith:

The concept of freedom of faith has been championed by Islam through the ages. It has dealt with other people through compassion and was actually brought about to bring an end to such violence and pillaging. This is why it allowed everybody freedom of religion and severely condemned violence in the name of Islam.

Jihad was actually prescribed so that man can go about life without having to worry about religious obstacles. Allah says: "والفتنة أشد من القتل" (And sedition is worse than murder)

Contact for peaceful coexistence:

Despite differences Islam advises a path of compassion and dialogue for the sake of peace which is why it holds peace above war and prescribes it only in a deadlock. Allah says: "And if they seek peace you should turn to it too. Verily Allah is the all seeing all knowing" (Anfal: 61). On the occasion of Hudaibiyah when the Quraish raised the issue of a treaty The Prophet acceded despite that the conditions presented were not just and fair.

According to Islam such acts can only strengthen peace and bring safety because the responsibility of proselytism is also upon Muslims. Allah says: "You are an excellent people since you call to the good and restrain from the bad and you hold creed in Allah" (Aal Imram: 110). Since we have to extend the invitation to Islam to every inhabitant on Earth, maintaining cordial relations will only assist in proselytizing. And this shall happen when Muslims display convincing and appealing character that brings about a change of heart. Sarkhashi (R.A) says in this regard: "If Muslims enter a conflict with a people to whom invitation has not yet been extended then they have no right to fight them as long as it has not been extended since Allah has said: (Israa: 15) *وما كنا معذبين حتى* "وما كنا معذبين حتى" (And we don't send terror upon them until a Prophet has been sent). The prophet also said to his commanders that offer them an invitation first and if they refuse then enter into battle with Allah's help (Muslim, Hadith: 1731). The infidels believe that the Muslims wage war only to kill and make captives but if they knew that the purpose was to safeguard religion they would desist at the beginning itself, therefore it is essential that they be called cordially towards Islam (Sharh Al Seer Al Kabir 75-76/1)

All creation is Allah's family:

Islam's purpose is the creation of a society based on brotherhood and respect for humanity which is why it has called all creation Allah's family. The Prophet says: "All creation is Allah's family and among them he prefers those who treat others with goodwill" (Baihaqi: 7048). Every person on this earth irrespective of affiliations deserves to be treated with respect and goodwill. This is why spending in the needs of others had been equated with spending in the sake of Allah. He says: (O' Prophet) Guidance can only be accorded to people from us and it is not your duty. And what you spend of your own money is for your benefit and what you spend is for Allah's favor and you shall receive your expense's worth and no harm shall come to you" (Baqrah: 272), Ibn Kathir says in praise of this verse: "The Prophet (P.B.U.H) would advise to donate to Muslims earlier, then after the revelation of this verse he extended donations to other faiths a well" (Tafsir Ibn Kathir 704/1). On this basis Imam Azam said: "It is permissible to give all alms except Zakat to non-Muslims"(Marghinani, Hidayah 111/1). Islam has not just made cordiality a means of maintaining human relations but also a means of piety as seen in the Hadiths above. Many more verses stand as examples which forbid looting and pillage and other means of violence. Instead they appeal to all Muslims that they treat every individual as their brethren and show respect.

Religious dialogue:

Islam places special emphasis on dialogue as a means of broadcasting and proselytism. Over the ages dialogue has been used by various faiths to strengthen relationships. However benefit from dialogue can only be achieved when racial or linguistic superiority is kept aside and intellectual motives are placed at the fore. This does not mean that dialogue involves conceding to

polytheism or distancing from Islamic perspectives, causes and icons.

Scope of compassion:

The scope of understanding extends to all affairs concerned with human welfare. It promotes the exchange of information, maximizing mutual benefit the promotion of values and awareness against waywardness and moral decay.

Principles of compassion:

- The thought of supremacy and encroachment of rights should be dispelled.
- Interference in others' affairs should not cause harm.
- The motive should not be to absorb the others' possessions. Blasphemy, sin, falsity should not arise.

Advice:

- Assist in agreed upon issues.
 - Aim to strive towards the betterment of humanity ad its causes.
 - Keep biases aside and recognize the positives in differ cultures.
 - Retrain from violation of rights and instead safeguard them.
-

Shariah Principles for Interfaith Dialogue

Maulana Shaukat Hussain Qasmi Bastwi⁴

By the term dialogue we refer here to the exchange of ideas between the opinions makers of various faiths and to introduce them to the various positive aspects of Islam that emphasize peace and accord.

An important point to keep in mind is the Catholic conspiracy of present day interfaith dialogue. When the Christians saw the immense spread of Islam to the West and America and how it was embraced by multitudes, they enacted a policy of their own to engage in dialogue with the aim of discrediting Islam's popularity. They started preaching that all religions are one and share values. Their propaganda also credited the rise of Islam to the sword, it suppresses the woman and that its leadership and mores are not in sync with the modern age.

In any case, we must engage in dialogue and use it as a means of inviting people towards Allah's path.

Subjects of dialogue:

- 1- Respect for humanity.
- 2- Respect for all religions, places of worship and practices.
- 3- Protecting human rights.
- 4- Protecting minority rights.
- 5- Uplifting the downtrodden and victimized.
- 6- Providing education for all sections of society.

⁴Darul Uloom Deoband, Saharanpur, U.P

Dialogue and Its Basis in the Shariah

Dr. Muhammad Mustafa Shareef⁵

Bringing adherents of various faiths closer and dispelling their misconceptions and doubts is a major requirement of the present age, more so in India where people of various religions and convictions reside together.

Universal brotherhood:

Theologians and experts in religious history are well aware of Islam's primacy in recognizing the importance of clan and family relations. It was the one to call all humanity one family by saying:

"يا أيها الناس اتقوا ربكم الذي خلقكم من نفس واحدة وخلق منها زوجها (Al Nisa: 1) وبث منهما رجالاً كثيراً ونساءً واتقوا الله الذي تسائلون به والأرحام، إن الله كان عليماً رقيباً"

(O' people! Fear your Lord who created you from one life and from that singular soul he created its pair, from which men and women were spread and fear the Lord upon whose name you call out. Verily Allah has oversight on all of you).

Every human being on this earth is entitled to dignity and honor by God.

"ولد كرمنا بني ادم وحملنهم في البر والبحر ورزقنهم من الطيبات وفضلنهم على كثير ممن خلقنا تفضيلاً"

⁵Former Prof. Usmania University, Hyderabad

(And we created Adam's children and honored them with land and seas and provided them with bounteous objects and favor above other creations) (Bani Israel: 7).

Cordiality with non-Muslims:

Islam accords freedom of religion to all and no person shall be tormented on the basis of their religious preference.

The life of the Prophet (P.B.U.H) is example of this as when he took Medina no Jewish tribe was harmed and they were entitled to complete freedom.

The protection of non-Muslims:

Another of Islam's hallmarks has been that it has upheld not just religions but also the personal integrity of people over the ages and has employed discretion in inviting them towards Islam.

"ولاتجادلوا أهل الكتاب إلا بالتي هي أحسن"

The Shariah Status of Dialogue

Maulana Abdul Basit Nadvi⁶

Islam is a universal religion devoid of allegiance to any community, tribe or region. Its message is for all humanity. Its prophet is a prophet to all mankind and Muhammad (P.B.U.H) laid emphasis on this while sending out his invitation to Islam. He invited individuals and also nations at large. The alleys of Mecca, the markets of Okaz and Majnah, the valleys of Taif are all witnesses to his efforts towards invitation. And after him Allah bestowed his People with the privilege of engaging in dialogue towards invitation. This has resulted in the introduction of countless to the wonders of Islam and the use of dialogue to spread evermore the light of Islam is a cause close to every Muslim.

Important aspects of Dialogue:

That we whole heartedly believe in the truth of Islam and its veracity.

"إن الدين عند الله الإسلام" (Aal Imran: 19)

(Verily the religion close to Allah is Islam)

"ومن يبتغ غير الإسلام ديناً فلن يقبل منه وهو في الآخرة من الخاسرين" (Aal Imran: 85)

(And if ye seek another religion to Islam, it shall not be accepted and such a person shall be among the doomed in the Hereafter)

⁶ Principal, Al Mahad Al Aali Lit Tadreeb Fil Qadha Wal Ifta, Patna

So that we follow Islam in every aspect of our lives and that our beliefs are uniform so as to avoid external influence and dilution of our tasks.

During the course of dialogue we must stand firm and patient in the face of struggles and obstacles. (Aal Imran: 200) "يا أيها الذين آمنوا اصبروا وصابروا واابطوا واتقوا الله لعلكم تفلحون"

(O ye who believe! Be patient and endure, stay firm and fearful of Allah, ye shall prosper). Patience makes hardship endurable and the charms of the material should not hold us from our goals.

The sight of humanity straying from righteousness should evoke an emotional response within us that calls towards affirmative action for its betterment. And we should strive towards all attempts in this regard. The Prophet of Allah would be so afflicted and concerned for his People that Allah himself spoke to him against it:

(Al Kahf: 6) "فلعلك باخ نفسك على آثارهم إن لم يؤمنوا بهذا الحديث أسفا"

(You would most certainly give your own life to make them believe in the word of the Quran).

Gentility and politeness must be upheld at all times just as how Allah told Haroon (A.S) and Musa (A.S) to present themselves with the utmost grace even when they appeared before the most tyrannical of rulers: (Taha: 44) "فقلوا له لا لنا لعله يتذكى أو يخشى"

(And speak softly to him, perhaps he may accept guidance or become fearful)

And the Prophet says: "Allah is gentle and he prefers gentleness and bestows it, and he dislikes harshness and does not bestow it or anything else other than gentleness" (Muslim).

While in dialogue one must be composed and sincere, the manner of speech should be uplifting and the opponent should not be able to infuriate you. We shouldn't mock anybody, nor should the faults of others be raked against them as part of dialogue.

Our approach should appreciate the intellectual capacity of the addressees so that they can comprehend and fully understand our arguments. The Prophet said that he was ordered by Allah to frame his sermons according to the mental capacity of the audience.

When it comes to dialogue it is essential that one is familiar with the intricacies of the subject before engaging with an opponent so as to properly dispel their doubts and misconceptions. For this we need to develop people well versed with a variety of topics.

The need of the hour:

The gravest and most pertinent need of the day is the broadcast of the Islamic message. Maulana Ali Miyan Nadwi speaks of this very issue when he says: "The greatest service to the Islamic people at present can be uniformity in the ways of Islam's truth and subscription to it. This is a time when the need is of the untiring efforts and attempts from dedicated individuals to reinvigorate a torpid Islam and ensure an illuminated future for the entire world since the world's future is linked to this people and the future of this people is linked to the truth of Islam. If this truth departs from the hearts of Muslims then who will invite the world towards it and who will reinvigorate Islam? The prophet Isa told his disciples that they were akin to salt in food in that if the salinity of salt was to vanish then what else on earth could bring the saline taste to food" (Aly Al Islam Min Jadid: 106)

Sayyid Qutb Shaheed (R.A) writes: "Islam's is the only society where people exalt Allah's supremacy and feel pride not in

subservience to man but to the Divine. Islam is the only thing that accords man much needed freedom in the truest sense and bestows upon him accolades and rewards as he is entitled by Allah. It allows him to boldly proclaim priority over the angels and entitlement over the earth.

Etiquette of Dialogue: In Light of the Quran and Shariah

Dr. Naeem Al Hasan Asri⁷

Islam places an emphasis on dialogue from the very beginning unlike any other religion on earth. Islam has always preferred dialogue and discourse as means of dispelling confusion and misunderstanding, it has also championed these for the resolution of day-to-day conflicts and it has also praised politeness and initiative in these matters, saying:

"وإذا حييتم بتحية فحيوا بأحسن منها أو ردوها إن الله كان على كل شئ حسيباً"
(Al Nisa: 86)

(And if you are greeted, respond alike or better for Allah shall verily hold account)

Aims and purposes:

- 1- To explain the importance of dialogue in light of the Quran and Shariah.
- 2- Invitation to the religion.
- 3- Solidarity among Muslims.
- 4- Dispelling internal differences.
- 5- Strengthening religious truth and quashing doubt.

Methods of dialogue:

The Quran advises various methods and manners according to the nature of the time and the addressee:

1- Straightforward invitations:

⁷Professor, Department of Arabic, Delhi University, Delhi

"قل يا أهل الكتب تعالوا إلى كلمة سواء بيننا وبينكم" (Aal Imran: 64)
(And say to the People of the Books: "Come towards that which is common amongst us").

2- Suggestive manner:

"يا بني إسرائيل اذكروا نعمتي التي أنعمت عليكم وأوفو بعهدي أوف بعهدكم وإياي فارهبون"

(O! Children of Israel, remember my blessing to you and fulfil all promises and I shall fulfil my promise to you and fear none other) (Al Baqarah: 40)

3- Persuasive manner:

"ولو أن أهل الكتب امنوا واتقوا لكفرنا عنهم سيئاتهم ولأدخلنهم جنت النعيم"

(If the People of the Books were to accept faith we would forgive their misdeeds and enter them into the gardens of pleasure).

4- Reparative method:

"ولو أنهم أقاموا التوراة والإنجيل وما أنزل إليهم من ربهم لأكلوا من فوقهم ومن تحت أرجلهم منهم أمة مقتصدة وكثير منهم ساء ما يعملون"

(And if they had stayed true to the Torah and the Bible and other books sent to them they would have reaped from above and beyond. There is a strain among them that is true to the texts but the majority is of ill character).

5- Regulative manner:

"يا أهل الكتب لم تكفرون بآيت الله وأنتم تشهدون يا أهل الكتب (Aal Imran) لم تلبسون الحق بالباطل وتكتمون الحق وأنتم تعلمون"

(O! People of the Books, why do you blaspheme against Allah's verse despite being one with it. O! People of the Books why do you relate truth with untruth and conceal despite knowing?).

Opportunities for dialogue:

Allah's messenger entered into dialogue on various occasions:

- 1- Attendance in the gatherings of the Others.
- 2- Invitations to Islam.
- 3- Correspondence with leaders of state.
- 4- While receiving delegates.
- 5- While reciting the Quran.
- 6- Discussions with scholars,

The ethics of dialogue under the Quran and Shariah:

The Quran urges towards an ethics of dialogue so that a motivated dialogue can occur and the call to Islam successfully placed. These include dedication, sincerity, justice, modesty, optimism, patience and tolerance, integrity and trustworthiness, sufficient redress of the addressee, perseverance, humanity and regard for truth, admitting faults and creating an atmosphere conducive to dialogue.

A soft manner of speech and addressing is also helpful in a successful dialogue therefore harshness should be strictly avoided in favor of a charming approach. Ibn Kathir writes in junction to a verse, “If an opportunity for debate arises, a positive and appealing manner should be employed”.

Shariah Guidelines to Reconciliation in Religion

Dr. Shamsuddin Nadvi⁸

Freedom of religion and discourse has been awarded an unprecedented space in Islam. This specialty of Islam is why today people of all religions are able to coexist in harmony and practice their various faiths without interference. On the other hand Islam invites all humanity to ponder over issues relating to the creation of the universe and appreciates the endeavors of men who devote themselves to the issues of creation.

"والذين إذا ذكروا بآيات ربهم لم يخروا عليها صماً وعمياناً"

(And when the Lord's verses are read they then they fall into pretense of being deaf and blind).

Principles of reconciliation:

- 1- Dialogue should take off from common ground. For instance, while engaging People of the Book, dialogue should begin from the oneness of God and then progress towards dispelling blasphemy and misconceptions, eventually imploring priests and rabbis to embrace righteousness.
- 2- Present logical and thought out proofs like those found in the Quran which have left the wisest of men dumbstruck and have no superior even today. For instance Allah says to the unbelievers

⁸Bhopal

"خلق السموات بغير عمد ترونها وألقى في الأرض (Luqman: 10-11) رواسي أن تميد بكم وبث فيها من كل دابة، وأنزلنا من السماء ماء فأنبثنا فيها من كل زوج كريم، هذا خلق الله فاروني ماذا خلق الذين من دونه، بل الظلمون في ضلل مبين"

(Allah made the heavens rest on invisible pillars and planted the ground firm with mountains lest you be swayed away and he has populated them with all kinds of animals. And then He sent down water from which sprang vegetation. These are all Allah's creations; name what these others you hold to Him have created. These people are certainly misguided in their ways).

Allah asks the unbelievers that they pray to stones and animals, yet have these ever created anything, or sprouted a single grain from the soil? What is wrong with your minds that you do not turn to Allah Almighty? He is the one who has created the universe and controls all functioning. He is the one worthy of all worship.

The Quranic Principles of Debate

Maulana Mohd. Nematullah Idris Nadvi⁹

It has been Allah's custom to create individuals with unique, varying degrees of intelligence. These he kept in mind while revealing the Quran and the intended addressees of its verses. Another of its specialties is the presence of proofs that satisfy all mental capacities, leaving no doubt. Much unlike the philosophers whose discourse is only accessible to a few.

Another stylistic device employed by the Quran has been the appeal to both mind and emotion unlike the work of theologians whose appeal is only to the mind. However, the interpretation of the words, their meaning and the rhythm of the Quran can pose a challenge. I shall elucidate various styles with instances:

1- Segmented approach:

While addressing the proofs presented by the unbelievers the Quran has taken up this approach of addressing each segment of the evidence with a trump and mentions that none of them were worthy of being considered. Thus by reduction their proofs were disproved. Allah says:

"ثمانية أزواج من الضأن اثنتين ومن المعز اثنتين قل ء الذكـرين حرم أم الأنثيين أما اشتملت عليه أرحام الأنثيين نبؤوني بعلم إن كنتم صدقـين، ومن الإبل اثنتين ومن البقر اثنتين قل ء الذكـرين حرم أم الانثيين أما اشتملت عليه أرحام الانثيين، أم كنتم شهداء إذ وصكم الله بهذا، فمن أظلم ممن افترى على الله كذباً ليضل الناس بغير علم، ان الله لا يهدي القوم الظالمين"

⁹Based in Dubai, U.A.E

(And created 8 pairs of livestock, meaning two kinds (male and female) among sheep and ram, two among goats. And say to them, has any of these males been forbidden to you, or the females or the kid they carry in them? Show a single proof to the contrary if you are true!

And two kinds among camels and cows. And has he forbidden any of these males to you or the females, or the kid they carry? Were you present when he ordained these prohibitions and proclaimed them? Verily, who can be more oppressive than he who puts illegal restraints and Allah shall keep such people from heaven in the Hereafter).

Suyuti (R.A) elaborates here that the unbelievers often put arbitrary restriction on animals or on just the females. Here Allah took on a segmented approach and implored them to cite their cause for prohibition. And then he cites himself that the cause relates to either the female or the foal or one among the mothers. Of if there is no cause then it is just devotional and divinely ordained. The Prophet (P.B.U.H) forbids this. According to their first view all animals, their second all female animals and according to their third view both genders are prohibited. However since a divine proclamation exists prohibiting this the Prophet considers these proofs as perdition and ignorant.

2- Reasoning through Quranic incidents:

Incidents are often paid great attention to and since the intent of the Quran is to provide counsel and guidance it has employed incidents to convey its teachings and proofs which can be used to strike against idolatry.

The subject of these incidents is usually a prophet who has grown up chaste among his people, has faced many obstacles and is considered pure and upstanding. So when such a prophet presents evidence it becomes doubly strong by virtue of its inherent truth and the purity and chastity of its presenter.

Similarly, the Quran adopts a mode of query at times but its purpose is to expound. For instance when Allah says:
"أو ليس الذي خلق السموات والأرض بقادر على أن يخلق (Yasin: 81)
مثلهم بلى وهو الخلاق العليم"

Elsewhere, he proves the required and refutes its contradictory since there exists no need for its presence. The Divine proclaims:

"ولو كان فيهما آلهة إلا الله لفسدنا فسبحان الله رب العرش (Anbiya: 22)
عما يصفون"

In some cases it highlighted the faults of the unbelievers or engaged them in a manner that by first agreeing to their preliminary points created such a counter argument that disposed them of their objective. For instance:

"وقالوا إن أنتم إلا بشر مثلنا تريدون أن تصدونا عما (Ibrahim: 10-11)
كان يعبد أبائنا فأتونا بسلطان مبين، قالت لهم رسلهم إن نحن إلا بشر مثلكم
ولكن الله يمن على من يشاء من عباده"

It has also outright refuted some proofs on ground that they are willfully created, as in accepting orders in line with self-interest and refuting those in non-compliance. Allah says: (Al Baqarah: 85) "أفتؤمنون ببعض الكتاب وتكفرون ببعض"

(Do you proclaim faith upon some sections of the Book and not upon others?)

Final word:

On the one hand while the Quran has Allah's authority as keeper of ordinance and guidance, on the other it is a book of right and wrong meant for the instruction of the ignorant. It has been used by various messengers and it has also incorporated their instances with the purpose of inviting towards Allah.

For those engaged it is pertinent that they employ to maximum gain the ethics and codes created by those involved in debate and discourse. Arguments from the Quran should be presented keeping in mind the sagacity of the opponent and are readily comprehensible and relevant.

Shariah Regulations for Dialogue with Non-Muslims

Maulana Zafeeruddin Qasmi¹⁰

Definition:

The lexical meaning of dialogue: To converse with someone.

The term "جدال" while originally referred to an altercation, over time its use became synonymous with debate and eventually with dialogue. Allah says:

"قد سمع الله قول التي تجادلك في زوجها وتشتكي إلى الله والله يسمع تحاوركما إن الله سميع بصير"

(Verily Allah heard the pleas of the woman who was complaining against her husband to you and in in front of Allah. He hears all and sees all).

Idiomatically the two words are regarded as synonyms.

Prescriptions for dialogue:

The Quran not only prescribes dialogue but has also recorded the efforts of various messengers. For instance the dialogues between Musa (A.S) and the Pharaoh, Ibrahim (A.S) and his father and also the conversation between Nu (A.S) and his people.

"قالوا يا نوح قد جادلتنا فأكثرت جدالنا فأتنا بما تعدنا إن كنت من الصادقين"

¹⁰Department of Arabic, Delhi University, Delhi

(They said: O Noah! You debated well with us, now if only you could show that which you threaten us with to prove your honesty).

The importance and purpose of dialogue in Islam:

It is a means of promulgation for Islam. In Islamic nation with significant Christian populations it reinforces the importance of Muslims. In non-Muslim countries it is a means of achieving and safeguarding Muslim personal law. It leads to a peaceful existence and allows for the light of Islamic knowledge to spread wide.

Aim of dialogue:

The purpose of dialogue is the alleviation of doubts and misconceptions and is a means to truth. It helps in achieving solutions to problems which are acceptable to all and also enlightens us with different perspectives. Most importantly it leads to positive outcomes.

Types of dialogue:

- 1- For the purpose of inviting towards Islam and dispelling misconceptions.
- 2- For the achievement of peace.

The Shariah decrees only these two forms of dialogue. First to invite them to Islam, then to invite them towards a peaceful coexistence and if these fail then displacement via segregation and neglect. Another type of dialogue while present is not allowed under the Shariah which proclaims unity of religion and is against Islamic objectives. This includes fondness with unbelievers, the attachment to them and considering jihad revoked.

Dialogue and loyalty:

"ولاء" refers to loyalty, allegiance or affection towards somebody (Lisan Al Arab 406/15) A proclamation of fondness to a friend would constitute "ولاء". It is of two types:

1- To love Allah and his Messenger

This is necessary for all Muslims since Allah ordains:

"إنما وليكم الله ورسوله والذين آمنوا الذين يقيمون الصلوة ويؤتون الزكاة وهم راكعون"

(Your friend is Allah himself, and his Prophet and his followers who pray, give charity and supplicate).

2- To love non-Muslims, Allah disallows it

Therefore affection towards believers and not forming emotional attachments with non-Muslims is an Islamic principle prescribed over all Muslims and is also a test of their faith. Breaking this is a matter of infidelity to Islam.

"ومن يتولهم منكم فإنه منهم"

(And those among you who befriends them is certainly one of them) (Mairah: 51).

Some so-called scholars of Islam whose motive is the dilution of its teaching have made this notion popular that the issue of association with non-Muslims and affection towards Muslims is a minor one. Thus we should also extend a welcome arm towards them and form relationships with them. They cite (Baqarah: 213) as their proof.

Therefore, for the sake of bringing about universal brotherhood we should befriend all people and these people went so far as to deny the utility and need of dialogue itself. Islam is a religion of moderation and has allowed interaction with non-Muslims but not to the extent of forming emotional attachments. Allah ordains:

"لا ينهاكم الله عن الذين لم يقاتلوكم في الدين ولم يخرجوكم من دياركم أن تبروهم وتقسطوا إليهم إن الله يحب المقسطين"

(Those who did not fight with you over religion, Allah allows you to interact with them and behave with them in a fair and modest way. Allah appreciates justice) (Al Mumtahina: 8)

Dialogue and unity of religions:

There is no space for the unity of religion in dialogue because it is in contradiction to the Islamic standpoint. It is the handiwork of the West and the Baha'is that they have made allowed this blasphemous thought to prevail. In 1987 Roger Garaudy, a French thinker organized an Abrahamic conference in Cordoba stating that although he had accepted Islam he was still a Christian and called himself a Muslim, a Christian, a Jew and Hindu simultaneously (Dawat Al Taqreeb 935-37).

The principles of this invitation:

Considering all religions equal, considering the different prayers of other religions valid, participation in the religious activities of other faiths and conveying congratulations on religious occasions, diluting truth and falsity, blasphemy and noncompliance to the principle of allegiance towards Muslims and sidelining of non-Muslims.

Shariah principles of dialogue:

- 1- To not recognize false faiths under any circumstance
- 2- To hold steadfast upon Islamic teachings and values
- 3- To refrain from participation in any gathering based on unity of religion
- 4- To not stray from Islam's virtues
- 5- Never deviate from any Islamic principle in lieu of a peaceful life
- 6- To not concede upon any Shariah matters where there is no scope of interpretation

Dialogue between Various Religions
Introduction

Religious Dialogue and Islam

Dr. Rasheed Kahus.¹¹

Islam's efforts towards interfaith dialogue are not recent. It emphasized the need for doing so 1400 years ago itself. Allah said this to Muhammad (P.B.U.H) in this regard:

"قل يا أهل الكتاب تعالوا إلى كلمة سواء بيننا وبينكم ألا نعبد إلا (Aal Imran: 64) الله ولا نشرك به شيئا ولا يتخذ بعضنا بعضا أربابا من دون الله فإن تولوا فقولوا اشهدوا بأنا مسلمون"

(And say to them, O People of the Books come towards the common among us. Worship only Allah and associate other to him and take no other Gods. And if they refuse, say to them that we are subjects of the Lord).

When the delegation from Najran arrived, the Prophet (P.B.U.H) simply engaged in an intellectual exchange with them and even allowed access to the Masjid Al Nabawi. About the Hilful Fuzul the Prophet (P.B.U.H) maintained till the end that he would gladly accept participation to such a gathering.

Just as how Islam calls for universal brotherhood it also been advocating interfaith dialogue at this juncture I would like to elaborate the means of dialogue not among various faiths but among various sects since the religion is the same but the jurisprudence and cultures differ.

The Islamic way of dialogue between cultures:

The West has also attempted to bring humanity closer through various attempts and means. The cry of the 'clash of civilizations'

¹¹Morocco

rings even today. The West was so enamored by this concept of Samuel Huntington's that it critically examined every culture but to no avail. Sectarianism and division grew rife and the West is again seeing its plans fail and scampering for alternatives. Actually, it is ignoring Islam's call to dialogue also because Islam has been the only force to transcend spatial and cultural differences and has managed to draw people closer, had them benefit from their common good and has achieved peace and brotherhood.

Dialogue between cultures:

Wisdom, exhortation and decorum are key principles of dialogue. Allah mentions:

"أدع إلى سبيل ربك بالحكمة والموعظة الحسنة وجادلهم بالتي هي أحسن إن ربك هو أعلم بمن ضل عن سبيله وهو أعلم بالمهتدين" (Nahl: 125)

(Invite people to your Lord with wisdom and politeness. Your Lord recognizes those who have strayed from the path and those who are guided).

These rules are for all purposes sound and their employ can result in significant advantage to the purposes of dialogue. Furthermore, it was learned that dialogue is not reserved for People of the Books but for all people astray from the righteous. It must be noted that the aim of these dialogues is not the altogether conversion of faiths or the wiping out of discord. Instead it is to better utilize commonalities for benefit and understand differences. The glorious days of Islam's yore are testament to the fact that it never coerced or forced anybody into conversion. Even today the practices and structures of non-Muslims are maintained peacefully in Muslim nations all over. Islam generously conceded the beauty of all religions and utilized their experiences to acquire

knowledge and arts which were then used by the European to leap great strides today.

The scholar Yusuf Al Qardhawi writes: “Muslims are firm believers of the benefits of interfaith dialogue. The Quran is filled with narrations of conversations between messengers and their people. Even the conversations between Allah and Satan find mention. We are not supporters of the Western concept of clash of civilizations and expect that it shall embrace our efforts through dialogue with open arms and shall demonstrate humanity, brotherhood and empathy instead of pride and vanity.(Al Hwar Bayn Al Islam)

Inter cultural dialogue:

Because people have interpreted clashes as discomfiture in the case of minor issues they stand in agreement with the Western point of view. Allah responds to this:

"ولو لا دفع الله الناس بعضهم لبعض لفسدت الأرض ولكن الله ذو فضل على العالمين" (Baqarah: 251)

(And if Allah had not excluded some people from the others there would be great discord on the Earth. And he is most generous upon this Earth).

While the intention of this verse is the survival of the fittest, it is not to imply that that which results in the public good should be made abundant and the alternative exterminated.

Cultural exchange of the positive:

One section of people have adopted the “interests of civilizations” covering human moral values that shall result in a society that can affect change in all cultures since this change is not the responsibility of one and everybody must work towards it.

The definition of cultures:

A distinction between religious practices and religions is a divine act and so is their coexistence. Allah says:

"يأيتها الناس إنا خلقناكم من ذكر وأنثى وجعلناكم شعوبا وقبائل لتعارفوا إن أكرمكم عند الله أتقاكم إن الله عليم خبير"

(O people, Allah created you from one man and woman and then split you into races and people so that you may distinguish between yourselves. Certainly the closest to him among you is the one who fears him most. And he is aware and sees all).

Contact between different cultures is itself the base of human relations. This leads to understanding on a personal level as well as allows for the dispelling of misunderstandings.

In comparison to other interpretations the word "تعارف" has a wider scope and even cultures derive the authority to mingle from the same Allah who created and allowed contact between races.

Therefore, the principles outlined in the Quran are meant to facilitate mutual benefit, understanding, develop contact and a sense of brotherhood among various groups. As far as the invitation of the West is concerned, it is a culture concerned with progress, progress and superior to other cultures. Muslims should therefore align with the material culture of the West and treat its concerns as their own.

Muslims and Non-Muslims in Quranic and Shariah Light

Prof. Mohd. Noman Khan¹²

Allah sent Islam as the final religion for the prosperity and guidance of humanity and as a means of riddance against the various deviant practices and divisions created by the other religions based on monotheism. Islam has always been clear about its stand on the truth in other revealed faiths and their modern distortions. It has engaged with them in an excellent manner.

Islam and combat:

Islam is partisan to peace and only under intolerable circumstances allows for taking up arms. Jihad itself began only for the protection of religion, territorial sovereignty, dignity and property. Islam has even outlined the conditions precursory to it:

- 1- A war of religions
- 2- Combat should be only with those who are at war with Muslims
- 3- No excesses should be meted out

Allah ordains: (Al Baqarah: 19) *وقاتلوا في سبيل الله الذين يقاتلونكم ولاتعتدوا إن الله لا يحب المعتدين*" It is made clear to Muslims that combat is lawful with those who are at war with Muslims, cause harm to them and their honor. It is also made clear that they must be fought keeping in mind the principles of justice and these boundaries of justice should not be transgressed to exact revenge. Allah says:

¹²Head, Dept. of Arabic, Delhi University, Delhi

"فمن اعتدى عليكم فاعتدوا عليه بمثل ما اعتدى عليكم واتقوا (Al Baqarah: 194)
الله واعلموا أن الله مع المتقين"

Islamic teachings on fair combat:

Islam does not allow for the suspension of justice and virtue even in combat. The Prophet forbids treachery, mutilation and the killing of children and women. Abu Dawood narrates that, War, but do not betray or indulge in treachery, do not mutilate and do not kill a child. Another narration forbids the killing of priests and seminarians and also prohibits the burning of fields and plantation.

The Prophet's treatment of prisoners of war:

According to Islamic history the first battle fought was that of Badar where a large number of prisoners were taken. The Prophet distributed them among his companions and ordered they be treated in the best manner possible. The companions treated their upkeep above their own and even that of their kin. When it came to deciding their fate some suggested killing them while others suggested releasing them upon ransom, an idea agreeable to the Prophet as well. This despite it being clear knowledge that these people were enemies of Islam and out to cause harm at every instance.

Islam's tolerance of others:

By releasing those who were enemies of Islam, it was made clear that Islam advises justice and honor towards all. As long as non-Muslims are present their safety and that of their property is the responsibility of the ruler. The world is testament to the exemplary treatment accorded to non-Muslims by Muslim rulers, to which there is no equal to this day. For example, Once when A Jew garnered a complaint against Ali (R.A) to the Caliph Umar (R.A),

the Caliph called out, O Abu Hasan, please take a seat next to your complainant” to which Ali sat down by the Jew with some discomfort. Upon decreeing judgment Umar asked Ali if he was uncomfortable with the judgment, to this Ali replied that he was discomfited by the fact that the Caliph addressed him by his surname, which is a mark of respect and he did not want the Jew to feel as if justice had left the Muslims.

Requirements for Interfaith Dialogue and Peaceful Coexistence

Dr. Shaad Hussain Kashmiri¹³

The history of dialogue in Kashmir:

In the 8th century A.H when Syed Ali Hamdani visited Kashmir, he had an elaborate, detailed discussion with a renowned saint lasting many hours upon which the saint accepted the truth of Islam. This practice of dialogues spread wide into the province in a peaceful manner. Till 1989 A.D the Hindu—Muslim unity of the region was noteworthy and many Hindu brethren produced great works in Urdu and Persian. Three years ago on a friend of mine on an invitational mission said to a Hindu girl, “You are my sister. It is circumstance that we have been separated”. This had such an effect on her that she started crying and took a copy of the Quran. Recently we heard a lot of Non-Muslim tourists that they thought Kashmiris were terrorists but they are gentle people instead. On reason for this prevalent myth is the media which has always taken a biased stand towards Muslims incriminating them in the world’s eyes. Therefore if we seek a change in perspective the Muslims shall have to engage with the world and indulge in an exchange of ideas. And it is under Allah’s might to better our relations: (Mumtahinah: 7) "عيسى الله أن يجعل بينكم وبين الذين عاديتهم منهم مودة، والله قدير، والله غفور رحيم"

(And hope that Allah resolves contention between you and those who are against you. And Allah is affectionate, forgiving and merciful).

¹³Professor, Dept. of Arabic, Kashmir University, Jammu & Kashmir

Threats to dialogue:

Ever since the conditions of the Muslims deteriorated there and the oppression of others caused loss of life and property they became very wary of outsiders and started hating them. So much so that such dialogues were viewed as a Western plot on their faiths. Prof. Ibrahim even said that, "Interfaith dialogue is a systematic ploy whose threats are apparent. Participation in these amounts to injustice upon the Islamic community".

The Jewish perspective on this is that the Muslims who have been driven away by violence and oppression be drawn closer in order to realize their dream of supremacy over the East.

Even if we take these threats to be true we mustn't forget that Islam is the vanguard of humanity and respect and it has made every human responsible for justice and fairness. Allah says:

"لاينهمك الله عن الذين لم يقاتلوكم في الدين ولم يخرجوكم من دياركم أن تبروهم وتقسطوا إليهم، إن الله يحب المقسطين"

(Mumtahinah: 8)

And at another instance:

"لا تستوي الحسنة ولا السيئة، ادفع بالتي هي أحسن فإذا الذي بينك وبينه عداوة كأنه ولي حميم"

It must be noted that these same threats apply upon the unbelievers as well. Some believe it is possible their perspectives might affect ours. However, the majority has a positive outlook and sees openings in non-Muslim nations emerging. In one debate the following was heard: "Islam has emerged victorious. That which we had been denying for centuries and since the 16th century Europe has been claiming that there is no space for logic in faith".

Nevertheless, the benefits of dialogue are apparent. Prof. Abdul Hadi also sheds light saying, “From the Islamic point, dialogue is a necessary human need since man is not solitary in Islam and does not live outside society and is therefore not separated from the acts and effects of others”.

Interfaith Dialogue under Present Situations

Maulana Aftab Alam Nadvi¹⁴

Western society is one that is highly intelligent, meticulous in its plan of actions and an efficient employer of rallying tactics. Dialogue is also one link to this chain of weakening the Muslims and a means of revenge for the Israelis. The present call to dialogue extended by the West is in fact a call to Catholicism. About its motives Dr. Abdul Rahim Al Salmi says, “The present call to dialogue was not extended by Muslims and neither were it outlined motives and objectives. It was an act of the West which leaves participants wondering what the true motives are. Invitation, argument, dominance or coexistence, comprehension and unity of religions. Whatever they are, the Muslims are at a loss because under the guise of dialogue such articles and papers are being published which promote the concept of civilizations at clash and are highlighting especially the conflict between the Islamic and the Western world. Dr. Ahmad Azmi, an Islamic thinker says, “The true objective of this effort seems to be an emotional and ideological preparation of the Western world for war under the cloak of organizing these gatherings for human cultural progress while it works towards disseminating a multi-cultural ideology. By taking up this stance the West makes clear that it does not want Islam participant in the upliftment and effort to solve humanity’s crises. It assumes that the future belongs to it and that its ideas shall achieve success in the times to come. It hopes its governance by democracy will prevail and has taken Islam as its biggest enemy. The former President of America says,

¹⁴Director, Jamia Umm Al Muslimeen Umm

“Islam is our true enemy because it always calls for adoption of Islamic culture and law and proclaims comprehensive authority over religion and the world”.

It has been observed earlier as well that the West is an expert user of slogans and terminology. For example, Equality among man and woman, women’s rights, freedom of opinion, human rights, New World Order and dialogue. All these terms sound nice and appealing as if their purpose is human upliftment but the West wants its own benefit and the propagation of its own ideology. This is why some scholars are not fans of this initiative and view it with suspicion. Its motive is Western supremacy and annihilation of all challengers. The modern call to dialogue is itself an obstacle to the invitation to the righteous religion and since Allah has entrusted us with the correct way of going about dialogue we must take it upon ourselves.

Participate wholeheartedly in the spreading of Islam and for the time being ignore dialogue since it stands against the Prophet and Shariah’s outlined pattern. Dr. Ahmad Azmi opines that such dialogue should take place between religions as would between truth and untruth. We do not support the present or any effort that does not distinguish between the two and equates belief and unbelief.

Dialogue: A Quranic Miracle

Dr. Abdul Maaz¹⁵

The Quran is not just a miracle in terms of its prosody, semantics and scansion but also in its ways of revelation and describing the fates of Peoples past. Its miraculous nature is displayed in its explanations of facts and supporting arguments. Therefore only those references should be used in articles which are firm, researched and recognized.

A lot of incidents have been transcribed in the Quran, for instance the incident of the two orchard owners which elucidates a lot of ethics and principles of dialogue like the call to obedience towards Allah, to accept him as the true Lord and encourage safeguarding against blasphemy.

The Quran recognizes dialogue as a great means of invitation and encourages Muslims to be well versed with its ethics and to engage in it at every opportunity. That there is no compulsion in religion is also a teaching of Islam, and no person can force another over wanting to establish an air of peace of cordiality.

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¹⁵Prof, Arabic, Maulana Azad National University, Hyderabad

Dialogue According to the Islamic Perspective

Maulana Mohd. Sajid Qasmi¹⁶

The term 'interfaith dialogue' covers a whole plethora of dialogues, enlisting all of whom is not feasible, hence I shall suffice with the following:

1- Dialogue aimed towards invitation:

There are four steps to invitation:

- a- Invitation
- b- Discussion: this refers to providing proofs against upheld misconceptions and the emergence of truth.
- c- Cursing: The opponent continues to argue and neglect the truth despite its proofs. Then the debaters should call their family and pray to Allah to smite the person.
- d- Disassociation: If despite apparent proofs a person continues to deny then declare disassociation from him.

2- Dialogue for peaceful coexistence:

The West has created this type for its own purposes. The true motives should be the establishment of cordial relations between various cultures and countries, promoting trade an economy and fostering peaceful conditions.

However, the West uses this to fulfil its own economic and political aims. It has imposed certain rules to this end:

- a- Prohibition of death upon apostasy in Islam.
- b- Freedom of religion to Non-Muslim factions in Islamic countries.

¹⁶Prof. Darul Uloom, Deoband, Saharanpur, U.P

- c- Distance form religious extremism and terrorism. Also non-interference in the religious matters of others.

According to the western definition he purpose is to eradicate differences and bring people closer which requires the abrogation of various Shariah rulings and is thus prohibited.

3- Dialogue towards religious proximity:

Its basic and distinctive guidelines are:

- a- Considering all faiths correct
- b- Stand united against atheism
- c- Stand firm against pornography and sexual indecency
- d- Respect for the religious beliefs and faiths of others
- e- To not participate in dialogue with the aim of proselytism

Since this manner is against that of the Prophet and other messengers there is no doubt in its invalidity. The Prophet (P.B.U.H) and the messengers all invited towards the one true faith and away from blasphemy. The matter of faith cannot be negotiated upon and here both unbelievers and Muslims are seen as equals.

Conclusion: The prevalent concept of interfaith dialogue stands against Islam since it requires the abrogation of many of Islam's teachings. Thus the need is to first recognize the Islamic manner and motives of dialogue which hold the betterment of the world within them.

Interfaith Dialogue for Peaceful Coexistence

Dr. Naseem Akhtar Nadvi¹⁷

In a country like India where a large number of religions exist with their distinct characteristics and where misinformation is being spread about Muslims and Islam, innocent Muslims youth are picked up on terror charges and sent to trial, where miscreants are out creating discord against Islam and where efforts to create an environment of peace have fallen flat, the urgency for dialogue is apparent for the unmasking of conspiracies against Islam, the resolution of misunderstandings and devotion of effort instead towards the progress of the country.

Challenges to peaceful coexistence:

The global media for the most part and its Indian counterpart have created a stigma of fear and terror when it comes to Muslims. After the fall of the Soviet Union, Islam is now viewed as the biggest obstacle to capitalist ideology and thus an enemy to the world.

The first light upon these vicious schemes was shed by Edward Said in his book 'Covering Islam' which addressed many such misconceptions and misrepresentations of Islam and Muslims.

Tolerance:

Religious tolerance is crucial to the achievement of a peaceful atmosphere. Islam in particular is distinguished in these efforts even among western thinkers who consider Islam more attuned

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towards Science and a proponent of self-control, justice and tolerance.

Relations with non-Muslims:

Islam grants permission for all relations that work towards the betterment of humanity and bring peace and cordiality. As far as war is concerned, even its purpose is not violence but instead the stamping out of evils so that religious freedom can be practiced.

Relations with pagan parents:

Even with pagan parents one's treatment should be of utmost respect. Allah says:

"ووصينا الإنسانمعروفة"

Jalaluddin Umri writes that in Hanafi thought, the maintenance of pagan parents is also the responsibility of the children and this is substantiated by "معروفا" in the above verse. Similarly even if a neighbor is a non-Muslim Islam advises the utmost cordiality. The Prophet said, "Those who believe in Allah and the Day of Judgment should not cause discomfort to their neighbors".

The scholar Rasheed Raza Misri said that the Caliph Umar considered the ambit of this quote to include both Muslims and Non-Muslims. And his understanding is good enough for the rest of us. Misri then goes on to formally sets the rights of a neighbor like being treated well, to give gifts, to invite him to feasts and occasionally visit the neighbor.

Social relations:

Islam has always maintained that all men and women are created equal, that none shall be treated preferentially over others and everybody shall be treated on the equally on the basis of humanity.

Therefore the establishment of trade and social relation with all is beneficial to this effort. In contrast, the Hindu social structure is based on racial distinctions and is divided into four categories. The historian D. Jha writes that the Hindu Golden Age was actually one of oppression and violence, especially against the backward *Shudra* class.

Here this question arises that has Islam maintained distinction by decreeing unbelievers impure?

It should be understood that in every country there are certain areas restricted to one and not to another but this does not denote humiliation or scorn but the maintenance of peace in the country. As far as the prohibition of unbelievers into the protected Haram, the reason is just the maintenance of religious purity and safety against the impurity of idolatry so that all present can achieve religious tranquil.

Rights of the non-Muslims:

Their protection:

All scholars agree on this that the protection and safety of non-Muslims is important and any harm to them is a major sin. The Prophet says “Any person who murders a non-Muslim, Allah shall ban Heaven for him”.

The status of Jizya:

The subject of Jizya (tribute) has always raised various concerns. However, what the non-Muslims don't realize is that with the ever expansion of the Muslim empire, the protection of the non-Muslims, inviting them towards Islam, safeguarding their freedom of religion and their exemption from military service became hardships upon the rulers. It was for the continued functioning of

the state and the maintenance of their status that some tribute was asked of them.

Conclusion:

Islam has always called for the respectful treatment of others and has always called for the highest regard for all and equal treatment irrespective of racial distinctions. It urges to keep the call towards the one true God above all other aims.

The Role of Dialogue in Creating Human Accord

Maulana Zia ud Din Qasmi Nadvi¹⁸

This is the age of an investigative and scientific temper. All around us there is an abundance of inventions and revelations. There is a weapons race on which is threatening peace all over. On the other hand globalization is challenging the cultural and religious identities of people. In this day and age there is a pressing need for a plan of action based on respect for humanity, human values and safeguard of peace. This is why dialogue has achieved a stature not accorded to it ever before, because of the realization that peace can only be realized through efforts on this front. As far as Islam is concerned, its treatment of others has been exemplary.

The prescription of treaties came about to maintain peace like in the instance of the Prophet's migration to Medina, when for the first time in human history a charter citing the rights of the Ansar, the Christians, the Jews and other unbelievers was created. Similarly, after the conquest of the Levant when the Caliph Umar ibn Al Khattab (R.A) came to sign the documents of victory he did not pray in the Church and when asked replied that he didn't do so to avoid it being taken as a precedent for its conversion into a mosque. These were the teachings of Islam that brought people en masse into its folds. Through dialogue we can share this image of Islam with the world. It allows us to truthfully represent Islam and how it calls for respect towards man, striving towards peace, seeking knowledge and accords freedom of religion to all.

¹⁸Teacher, Madarsa Saiyidina Umar Farooq Saifullah Ganj, Sultanpur, U.P

Through dialogue we can dispel the misconceptions that surround Islam like how it only values the blood of Muslims, when in fact it calls for the protection of non-Muslims and the Prophet says that if anybody keeps from the right of the non-Muslim, or is overbearing or takes from them without permission then he shall stand on their behalf against the person on the Day of Judgment.

Aims and objectives of dialogue:

The safeguard of human capacity, preservation of peace, establishment of justice and equality, eradication of temptation and vice and the prevalence of reconciliation and peace and religious freedom.

Quran and Dialogue

Dr. Ghitreef Shahbaz Nadvi¹⁹

The Quran not just extolls the benefits of dialogue at various occasions but also discusses its principles, basis and methodology in great detail. The word which "حوار" whose meaning include dialogue appears only thrice in the Quran but various synonyms for the same have also been used.

Dr. Awad says that while the word "حوار" appears just thrice in the Quran, a synonym "جدال" with roughly the same meaning appears 29 times and the number of related citations numbers in excess of 500. (Al Hwar Asloob Hayat/65).

Methodology:

An exchange in a manner which is ingenious, uses sound wisdom and humility, point and counterpoint. These principles can bring a dialogue to success and their exemption can cause undesired results. Another point to be kept in mind is that the discussion should begin from common ground which the Quran refers to as "كلمه سواء".

"قل يا أهل الكتاب تعالوا إلى كلمة سواء بيننا وبينكم إلا نعبد إلا (AalImram: 649) الله ولا نشرك به شيئاً ولا يتخذ بعضنا بعضاً أرباباً من دون الله فإن تولوا فقولوا اشهدوا بأنا مسلمون"

(Say to them: Come towards that which is common among us: that we do not worship any other apart from Allah and do not hold

¹⁹New Age Islam, New Delhi

others to him or hold other Gods. And if they turn away then tell them that verily you are the ones obedient to Allah)

Dialogue is an especially important tool for all Muslims and all people in general. Dr. Al Majeed Omrani writes: The verse (Anbiya: 107) "وما أرسلناك إلا رحمة للعالمين" (And O! Prophet, we sent thee as mercy over the entire world) presents a concept on one nationhood. The verse (Al Inam: 135) "وأن هذا صراطي مستقيماً فاتبعوه" (Verily, my way is the right way, so preach no other way other than mine since it takes you away from Allah's. He emphasizes this so that you can protect yourselves) also makes clear that Muslims should raise awareness and promote adoption of the Quranic ways just as they should encourage the call to Islam's universalism (Mustaqbil Al Hazarat Bayn Al Saraa' p.20).

The foundations of dialogue in Quranic light:

As far as the question of the basis for dialogue presented in the Quran is concerned the Islamic thinker Dr. Abdul Hameed Ahmad Abu Sulaiman presents an excellent case in his book "الأنا والآخر في الروية القرآنية الكونية". The summary is as follows:

"Islam is the only religion to declare that all humans are one and from the same parents despite divisions of religion, faith and nationality. Therefore cordial relations should be maintained with all since they are all relations of each other.

"يا أيها الناس اتقوا ربكم الذي خلقكم من نفس واحدة وخلق منها زوجها وبث منهما رجالاً كثيراً ونساءً، واتقوا الله الذي تسائلون به والأرحام إن الله كان عليكم رقيباً"

(O! People, fear your lord who created you from one being and then created its pair and made men and women flourish. And fear only him, for whom you question each other, and do not estrange yourselves. Verily, Allah keeps his sights on you). Relations

cannot be broken or mistreated on the basis of difference in nationality or religion.

"لا ينهاكم الله عن الذين لم يقاتلوكم في الدين ولم يخرجوكم من دياركم أن تبروهم وتقسطوا إليهم إن الله يحب المقسطين"

(Allah prohibits those people from you who did not engage in war over religion or pillaged your homes. Treat them with justice for Allah appreciates those who uphold justice) (Mumtahinah: 8)"

Every being on this earth is entitled to a just life and cannot be mistreated on any occasion.

"يا أيها الذين آمنوا كونوا قوامين لله شهداء بالقسط ولا يجرمنكم شنآن (8) (Maidah: 8) قوم على ألا تعدلوا اعدلوا هو أقرب للتقوى واتقوا الله إن الله خبير بما تعملون"

(O! ye who profess faith, remain steadfast for Allah and profess the truth. Let not anything keep you from being just, always be just since it is a sign of strong belief and fear Allah. Verily, he is aware of your actions) (الأنا والآخر فى الرؤية القرآنية الكونية مطبوعه دار (الإسلام قاهره

For the success of dialogue the participants shouldn't put their personal issues upfront. Instead like the messengers they should convey sincerity, truth and empathy. They have no personal motive nor do they wish to achieve personal gains.

The aims and objectives of dialogue:

- 1- Invitation towards Allah
- 2- Proper representation of Islam and Muslims
- 3- Resolution of issues and contentions
- 4- Benefit from the other's knowledge

Final words:

Dialogue has achieved a status unlike ever before in today's time. It is essential to the resolution of conflicts and to effectively face the challenges before humankind. Everywhere it is being praised and being organized in large numbers so that peace can be achieved and life made appreciable for all. As Muslims it is important that we make people aware of the Islamic methodology, aim and objective of dialogue as well.

Jurisprudential Dialogue in Quranic Light

Maulana Syed Jawed Ahmed Nadvi²⁰

Allah divided humanity into various tribes and communities so that they could recognize each other and work together towards progress and protect human concerns. Not so that they make factions between themselves and quarrel. The Quran has always maintained that people should not linger over personal vendettas and should promote moral commonalities in order to achieve greatest common good. Allah says:

“And it should happens so, that you enact excesses in vengeance upon those people who happened to restrict you from the Haram complex and indulge in violence. Refrain and restrain each other, and fear Allah for He metes out strict punishment” (Maidah: 2).

And He says at Mumtahinah: 8, that, “Allah has certainly not stopped you from engaging in a just way with those who did not fight with you over religion or threw you out of your homes. He is appreciative of those who are just”.

The teachings of justice and equality that are taught by the Quran are unparalleled in other religions and it has greatly emphasized the means of writing and exchange of ideas to promote these values and has considered and interfaith exchange productive. For the past couple of decades even western scholars and thinkers have been promoting and organizing interfaith dialogues globally but their methods have not been very effective since they are not Islamic. The Islamic manner is to begin from common ground

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which the Quran calls the common word so that later on agreements can be produced.

In reality the western efforts in this cause do not seem concerned with human betterment at all. Instead its primary motive is personal benefit since it is always out to malign Islam at every possible platform. It has called Islam unworthy of practice or called for changes to its jurisprudence. At other times it has considered Islamic culture in conflict with the West and when it was seen that Islam was drawing a large number of followers all over the world it decided to engage in dialogue and seminars. The German thinker Herbert Buser writes in the fifth edition of his book "أسس الحوار فى القرآن الكريم: دراسة فى علاقة الاسلام باليهودية والمسيحية":

"Ever since the Muslims have focused their efforts on the duty of invitation the Christians have developed the practice of writing papers" (p.196).

Thus the Western efforts towards dialogue are aimed at self-interest, which is why whenever any gathering is organized Western thinkers put up some sort of condition that promotes globalization. Dr. Hasan Azizi writes in the "كلية الشريعة" published from the University of Karaouine, Fez: "for some time now, terms such as "Inter-cultural dialogue", "Gathering of cultural representatives" and "Bringing cultures closer" have been very popular, when in reality they are all results of Western perspectives which have been opposing Eastern and especially Islamic cultures. This is why the West itself decides the purpose and objectives of dialogues. (Majallah Al Rabtah, Mecca, no.555, 1434 A.H).

However instead of boycotting these gatherings we must use them to our benefit as was shown to us by the Prophet (P.B.U.H) at the

time of the Treaty of Hudaibiyah when he signed the accord despite apparently oppressive conditions put in by the infidels of Mecca. He addressed the protest of his companions by saying that, “I swear upon the entity that controls all nature and my life that I shall sign every accord that elevates in their eyes, the dignity of things close to Allah”.

And he emerged the victor in reality because this accord allowed Muslims access to people whom they could not reach before and allowed them to showcase Islamic values and character. Within two years of the treaty such large volumes of people has come into Islam as never before in its history. That dialogue can bring about a change of perspective says enough for its advocacy. Even though we might feel that the situation is stacked against us we must preserve onwards to break the walls of difference between religions so that peaceful coexistence can be achieved and conditions of peace and tranquility prevail worldwide.

Interfaith Dialogue: A Jurisprudential Perspective

Maulana Mohd. Azam Nadvi²¹

The meaning of interfaith dialogue:

The exchange of ideas between representatives of various religions is called interfaith dialogue. It is of five types:

- 1- Dialogue for peaceful coexistence
- 2- Dialogue geared towards invitation to Islam
- 3- Dialogue towards religious understanding
- 4- Dialogue towards unity of religions
- 5- Dialogue for monotheism

Shariah ordinance for interfaith dialogue:

Depending on the basis and aim the Shariah guidelines for dialogue also vary. If it is to be considered analogous to debate then it is prescribed compulsory on various occasions.

The dispelling of various allegations leveled upon Islam and the affirmation of its truth and proximity with Allah.

Debate with People of the Books is obligatory when: there is the possibility of somebody accepting Islam and only one scholar is capable of debate; the ruler has ordained some knowledgeable person with the responsibility of debate.

On certain conditions it is obligatory but not over all: when a large number of capable people are present. In such a case even one person's engaging in debate will relieve the others of the

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responsibility. If none engages, all of them will be committing sin (Zad Al M'ad 639/4).

It is also recommended on certain occasions:

- 1- Affirmation of truth through argument
- 2- Debate on an occasion when there is a possibility of a non-Muslim accepting Islam

Occasions for prohibition of debate:

When the purpose is the concealment of truth or the dissemination of falsity, an attempt to overpower Muslims, to brag about one's capacity or if worldly gains or popular fame is at stake.

Dialogue towards peaceful coexistence:

The Quran uses words like great favor or installment to describe this act. Islam welcomes efforts towards the achievement of tranquility in life and extends its wholehearted support and encouragement to such efforts.

Such interpretations are not in conflict with Shariah texts prohibiting attachments with non-Muslims since the purpose of Islam is the provision of equal rights to all which is why it stresses justice in one's treatment of others and advocates sagacity in calling towards Islam.

Shariah basis for the above category:

Because dialogue is not concerned with religion or attachment towards non-Muslims in this case and instead relates to issues concerning worldly existence and problems arising therein, the Shariah has allowed for it and considers it a part of the larger call towards Islam. Yusuf Qardhawi writes while talking of such dialogues: "The eradication of hate and rivalry that have

developed through the crusades and then the imperial periods and its replacement with love, empathy and brotherhood is the purpose of such dialogues” (Awlooyat Al Hurmat Al Islamiya Fi Al Rahlat Al Mufadat p.176).

Dialogue for inviting towards Islam:

In Islamic understanding this involves bringing the true image of Islam to non-Muslims, introducing them to its merits and wonders, make them aware of blasphemy and idolatry and bring them closer to Islam through reasoning and delicate wisdom which proves the falsity of other religions. This kind of dialogue is mentioned profusely, Allah says:

"قل يا أهل الكتاب تعالوا إلى كلمة سواء بيننا وبينكم أن لا نعبد إلا (Aal Imram: 64) الله ولا نشرك به شيئا ولا يتخذ بعضنا بعضا أربابا من دون الله فإن تولوا فقولوا اشهدوا بأنا مسلمون"

(And say to them: O! People of the Book come towards that which is common among us, that we worship none but Allah and hold note partisan to Him and none among us may decree another God except Him. And if they turn away them declare that they are witnesses to your affirmation).

This is why when the Prophet sent a delegation to Heraclius, his motive was not religious comprehension but instead an invitation towards Allah.

The theme of invitational dialogues:

- a- Call towards one Allah
- b- Invitation towards belief in Prophethood
- c- Inviting other faiths to leave excesses and that they refrain from unfounded beliefs about Allah and especially about levying allegations on Isa and Mariyam.

d- Call towards faith in the Quran

These aims have always been considered in the Islamic perspective. As far as the Western thinkers are concerned, their motives are:

- 1- Proselytizing Christianity
- 2- Creating doubts about Islam and its Messenger
- 3- Proving its own religion as the truth
- 4- To interpret "كلمه سواء" as 'good deeds'

Dialogue towards religious understanding:

Since this type of dialogue is incongruous with the methods of Islam and the Prophet, the Shariah has not allowed it.

This is because it is based in forming attachments towards non-Muslims and adopting their ways. Also, shrugging off certain Shariah rulings, considering jihad repealed and Muslims and non-Muslims as equal.

Dialogue towards unity of religions:

This means considering all religions correct and all practices valid. In a way that the routes are different but the destination is the same (Dawat Al Tashweeb Bayn Al Adyan 339/1).

The biggest advocate of this idea is Roger Garaudy who believes that all revealed religions have one creator hence their books should be compiled into one and places of worship should have churches and mosques side by side to promote participation and facilitate pilgrimages.

Shariah Ruling:

The Prophet of Allah is the Prophet of all humanity and his teachings are meant for every single person, the Shariah has

decreed this form of dialogue prohibited since it constrains his universality and his ambit. The community agrees upon this (Fatawi Al Lajantah Al Daimtah Fi Wahdat Al Adyan 1942).

Dialogue towards monotheism:

To assimilate the various aspects of the various religions and transmute them into a new religion in such a fashion that the followers of the original religions leave them for this newfangled religion. The difference between this and the unity of religions is that here the traits of all religions are assimilated while in the latter all forms of religious beliefs are considered correct and just different paths to the same destination.

Shariah Ruling:

This thought is in complete discord with Islamic Oneness and Prophethood. There is not even a doubt about its illegality and if any Muslim proclaims such a belief then they are excluded from Islam.

Guidance:

- 1- For a Muslim, dialogue is a means of fulfilling an immense responsibility such as calling to Islam and proselytism.
- 2- Since it brings opportunities for contact with others, dialogue is a great means of dispelling misconceptions and doubts about Muslims and Islam in the minds of non-Muslims.
- 3- Securing peace and safety, especially in a Muslim minority country is not a problem jurisprudentially when religion and faith are secured.
- 4- Dialogues organized for the promotion of morally sound people should be branded under exchange of ideas instead of interfaith dialogue.

5- Spending time in dialogues geared towards unity of religion is not correct jurisprudentially even though they may be guised under peaceful coexistence or understanding religions.

People of the Books and Exchange of Ideas in Quranic Light

Mufti Ashraf Abbas Qasmi²²

The Quran mentions four kinds of lost communities: the idolaters, hypocrites, the Jews and Christians and offshoots of these have been spoken of with various proofs and evidences. Shah Sahib writes that "The Quran talks of four lost groups and has addressed them variously depending on the circumstances. Firstly, it reasons against the indecency of their irregular beliefs and practices and secondly, it refutes with proofs, their misconceptions and misguidance's" (Al Fawz Al Kabir/19).

The hypocrites are in fact idolaters. They accepted Islam on the face of it but in their hearts their motives are pagan. That is to cause maximum damage to Islam and Muslims. The pagans did not have any revealed scriptures to follow, instead they had traditions of yore which they followed as a religion. Their claim of being followers in the way of Ibrahim was refuted by:

"إن إبراهيم كان أمة قانتا لله حنيفاً وما كان من المشركين شاكراً لأنعمه اجتنابه
وهده إلى صراط مستقيم"

(Without doubt Ibrahim was a person, and a follower of Allah and certainly not among the idolaters. He was thankful for Allah's mercies. Allah chose him and guided him towards the exalted path).

Therefore The Quran only acknowledged Judaism and Christianity as revealed faiths.

²²Teacher, Darul Uloom, Deoband, U.P

There is only one divine faith:

It is prevalent among us that there are three divine faiths: Islam, Christianity and Judaism. However we did not endeavor to find out what exactly is a divine religion. There are three requisites of revealed faiths: Doctrine, ethics and Shariah. The doctrine and ethics of all revealed faiths are uniform, only the Shariah is framed according to the times and the people. All prophets have been revealed the same religion. Allah says:

"شرع لكم من الدين ما وصى به نوحا والذي أوحينا إليكم وما وصينا به إبراهيم وموسى وعيسى أن أقيموا الدين ولا تتفرقوا فيه كبر على المشركين ما تدعوهم إليه الله يجتبي إليه من يشاء ويهدي إليه من ينيب"

(He has ordained for you the same religion he ordained for Noah, and has now been revealed to you, and was revealed to Ibrahim and Musa and Isa. Maintain that religion and do not splinter upon it).

This is why there was a difference between Imam Sahib and the others. Dr. Wahba Zuhaili writes: "In fact there was no difference at all. It became apparent because of his lack of understanding of doctrine and religion. He gave this opinion *fatwa* because he was an idol worshiper, and worshiper of the stars. And he who believed that he had faith in a revealed scripture approved it) (Al Fiqh Al Islami Wadaltah/162).

Why does the Quran only mention People of the Books specifically?

There are several reasons for this:

- 1- They are among the invited even if their method of invitation is completely unacceptable because the Prophet (P.B.U.H) was sent as a prophet to the entire world.

History stands witness that no other Prophet ever claimed to bring a message for the entire world and one that will stand till the end of times. Therefore the invitations of other religions are incongruous with the teachings of the prophets.

- 2- At the time of the Quran's revelation people recited the Torah and the Bible and agreed upon one Shariah. Among them were a large number of scholars and the call from the Prophet does not sit well with the idolaters. Allah gives guidance to whomever He wants and whoever seeks it. Therefore Islam is the true divine religion and its followers Muslims.

Meaning of People of the Book:

The Jews have always claimed that they follow the revealed Torah and the Talmud therefore only they are People of the Book. According to them Christians are not People of the Book. The Quran recognizes both as People of the Book since the Jews and Christians are followers of Musa and Isa respectively.

Are the Sabeans People of the Book?

Due to a lack of concrete knowledge about the Sabean doctrine and ethics the scholars have not been able to definite rule in their case. The scholar Aloosi writes that some believe they are present and follow some messengers, like Yahya and follow the Zaboor, pray to the angels and towards the Ka'ba but there is no consensus over their marital and sacrificial practices (Ruh Al Maani/ 391).

Their belief was that only they are the true observers of the messengers' teachings.

The Quran's way of addressing People of the Book:

Belief in divine oneness which is fundamental to the revealed religions has been disfigured by the People of the Books. The Jews claimed that Prophet Uzair was the son of God and the Christians started following the Trinity and still boasted of being faithful. The Quran says in this regard:

"قل هو الله أحد الله الصمد، لم يلد ولم يولد ولم يكن له كفوا أحد"

(Say: that Allah is One, He is independent, He begat not, nor was he begotten and he is peerless).

And it invited towards the true Oneness:

"قل يا أهل الكتاب تعالوا إلى كلمة سواء بيننا وبينكم أن لا نعبد إلا (Aal Imran: 64) الله ولا نشرك به شيئا ولا يتخذ بعضنا بعضا أربانا من دون الله فإن تولوا فقولوا اشهدوا بأنا مسلمون"

(And say to them, O People of the Books come towards the common among us. Worship only Allah and associate other to him and take no other Gods. And if they refuse, say to them that we are subjects of the Lord).

And it elaborates that the causes for their degeneration are their own social and moral ills and by treating them they can again achieve victories and success. "وإن عدتم عدنا"

The mischief's of the Jews are documented in history. Their troubling of prophets, murdering, lynching and spilling of the blood of prophets has been a hallmark. The Quran outlines this so:

"وضربت عليهم الذلة والمسكنة وباءوا بغضب من الله ذلك بأنهم كانوا يكفرون بآيات الله ويقتلون النبيين بغير الحق، ذلك بما عصوا وكانوا يعتدون"

(And they were subjected to humiliation and destitution, and they returned with Allah's wrath. This happened because the people

refuted Allah's verses and murdered Prophets or because they were disobedient and committed excesses).

The Quran's praise of the People of the Book:

One of the Quran's marvels is that despite the hostility of the People of the Books, it has praised their commendable individuals:

"ليسوا سواء من أهل الكتاب أمة قائمة يتلون آيات الله آناء الليل وهم يسجدون، يؤمنون بالله واليوم الآخر ويأمرون بالمعروف وينهون عن المنكر ويسارعون في الخيرات، وأولئك من الصالحين"

(Not all among them are equal. A group among them worships Allah at night and recites His verses and supplicates. They believe in Allah and the Day of Judgment. They enjoin good and forbid evil, they endeavor towards good and they are among the righteous) (Aal Imran: 113-114).

And these people were counted among those whom Allah blessed with special knowledge:

"إن الذين أوتوا العلم من قبله إذا يتلى عليهم يخرون للأذقان سجدا"

(Without doubt, those upon whom knowledge was bestowed, when they recite they prostrate and pull their faces downwards).

And it was made clear that even though the Christians have some love for the Muslims the Jews only harbor hatred:

"لتجدن أشد الناس عداوة للذين آمنوا اليهود والذين أشركوا" (Maidah: 82)

(Certainly you shall find the Jews harboring great enmity for the Believers).

And history stands witness to the enmity Jews have shown towards Muslims and their efforts towards the same.

Two special orders for the People of the Books:

The Quran mentions two special orders regarding the People of the Books. The first of these is regarding slaughter where on the one hand it says:

"ولا تأكلوا مما لم يذكر اسم الله عليه وإنه لفسق" (Inaam: 121)

(And do not eat over which Allah's name has not been recited for doing so is disobedience).

On the other hand it creates an exception for People of the Books:

"وطعام الذين أوتوا الكتاب حل لكم وطعامكم حل لهم" (Maidah: 5)

(And the food of the People of the Book is permitted to you and yours to them).

The second ruling is with regard to marriage where marriage with idolaters is forbidden but permitted with people of the Books:

"والمحصنات من الذين أوتوا الكتاب من قبلكم" (Maidah: 5)

(And chaste women from those among you who were granted Scriptures)

Contemporary People of the Books:

It is clear as day that contemporary People of the Books are not equivalent to their Quranic counterparts in the least. They have left their knowledge base in the influence of communism and atheism. Mufti Shafi writes: "firstly, a lot of people who check Judaism or Christianity against their names in the registers today actually consider it a curse. They do not believe in the Torah or the Bible or Musa or Isa. In practice they are irreligious and only Jews or Christians culturally" (Maarif Al Quran 64/3).

Maulana Khalid Saifullah Rehmani writes: “Those people who deny God, His prophets, revelation and the angels are atheists even if they hold Jewish or Christian names. They are not People of the Books” (Kitab Al Fatwa 354/4).

On the question of the admissibility of a 1400 year old permissibility for marriage and slaughter, the majority is in validation. This is because the state of divergence is not new and was found even at the time of the Quran’s revelation. Moreover, even today adherent Jews and Christians can be found. Dr. Wahba Zuhaili writes: “According to me the majority opines in the affirmative since sufficient proofs are present regarding marriage with People of the Books”.

Dialogue with People of the Books:

The Quran mentions three principles of dialogue with People of the Books:

- 1- The Quran uses excellent words with regard to the People of the Books, therefore while engaging with them words that are polite, comforting and cordial should be used because severity creates distance and embitters the heart.
"وجادلهم بالتى هى أحسن" (Ankabut: 64)
(And argue with them in the best of ways)
- 2- The Quran mentions as a principle of debate, starting in a respectful manner to enable the dissipation of difference later of. It is called the ‘common word’.
- 3- It is also important to maintain Islam’s superiority so that in order to appease any unislamic misgiving is not agreed to.

Dialogue in Light of the Prophet's Sunnah

Maulana Mohd. Azam Qasmi²³

Scope:

Dr. Abdul Rahim Samaeel Al Sama'i distinguished two kinds of dialogue:

1- Dialogue regarding religious issues:

This is what is called mutual negotiation or exchange of ideas. Here topics apart from religion, matters of faith and doctrine are discussed.

2- Religious dialogue:

Here religious matters are discussed. Faith, life after death and other matters of faith are included here.

Generally debaters are not able to maintain this distinction and because of this dialogues do not result in significant results.

Opportunities for interfaith dialogue:

The Prophet (P.B.U.H) engaged in dialogue at various junctures. These are a guidance and beneficiary to us.

- 1- Gathering representatives of various religions at one place
- 2- Going to their homes and talking to them
- 3- Extending calls to Islam during Jihad
- 4- Sending people to invite them to Islam

Similarly the Prophet adopted various manners keeping in mind the temperament of the addressee:

²³ Teacher, Al Ma'had Al Islami, Hyderabad

- 1- Warning
- 2- Encouragement
- 3- Gradually calling towards Belief and etiquette
- 4- Publically inviting towards Oneness
- 5- Enumerating similarities to logically state and assuage
- 6- Expounding upon commandments and prohibitions

Proposals:

- 1- The development of debaters who are aware of the intricacies of dialogue and can employ proofs and arguments of substance.
- 2- Collation of old and new dialogues and setting their rules etiquette.
- 3- Creating awareness about these intricacies among students at seminaries and holding mock debates among their teachers.

Interfaith Dialogue

Shariah Principles and Methodology

Sheikh Abdul Ghabi Al Nahari²⁴

There can be no Shariah ruling upon dialogues as long as their intent and benefits are not defined. As far as Islam is concerned the purpose of dialogue is most definitely not the adoption or acceptance of any religious beliefs or practices apart from those of Islam or even considering them an option. Its purpose is not just the refutation of falsity and the affirmation of truth but also the eradication of misgivings and doubts and the widening the reach of Islam's light.

Regulations:

Intentions of dialogue:

- a- Dialogue for peaceful coexistence
- b- To spread Islamic teachings and values

The Christian intellectual Daniel Armbruster is a proponent of this objective and promotes it among his community so that Muslims can be drawn away from their religion and into Western and Christian practices.

Muslims should refrain from such dialogues and beware of those dialogues that promote false religions. These should be boycotted by all. This does not mean that Muslims do not participate in thought for the world, instead they are only concerned with actual progress.

Even the Quran speaks of withstanding from participation in sin and aggression. Also, by promoting false religions

²⁴Jamia Islamia, Shantapuram, Kerala

even non-Muslims are held bereft of Islam's graces.(Al Tanzeer Abdul Rahman Al Saleh p 22-26).

c- Dialogue and unity of religions:

The creation of a new religion and its proselytism is certainly not the purpose of dialogue as the Buddhists, Jews and Christians keep trying to do. We know that there is no religion apart from Islam which holds any credence in Allah's eyes and is the only true religion.

The basics of Islam and the Shariah should under no circumstances be compromised against or neglected in any manner.

The intellectual method of dialogue:

One's argument should be backed by proofs and witnesses and they should be in congruence with the claims. For instance, the Pharaoh alleged that Musa was a madman and a magician. These are contrary since a magician is a highly intelligent person and a madman is feeble.

The evidence should not be made the claim because in such an instance it is unfit as evidence. Therefore language and phrasing should be changed a little.

Pay attention to the thought and ideas being aired since the purpose of dialogue itself is the employ of thought and ideology to maximum benefit.

There should be effort towards eliminating ideological difference. The ideological compatibility of the opponent should not be an issue in dialogue. Neither should any person's opinion be held against them in our treatment of said person (Madarij Al Salikeen, Ibn Al Qayim Al Jawziyyah, Research: Mohd. Hamid Al Fiqi, Dar Al Kitab Al Arabi, Beirut, second reprint, 1393 A.H/1973 A.D

545/3). Do not be quick in judging as it shows pride, arrogance and feebleness. The attempt should be to calmly convince others and not an adamant insistence upon one's claims.

It is also important the debaters fulfill their duties with trust. For ex. thoroughly verify and probe into attributions. Always cite references when quoting from a source. Also, one should take care to not be boastful of one's knowledge.

Revealed Faiths and the Quran

Dr. Mohd. Akram²⁵

Islam is not the name of just one particular religion. It refers to all teachings given by the messengers. It is a global and universal religion and its Prophet is a universal prophet and its book the Quran is a book for all mankind's benefit and instruction. It contains instant solutions to all problems and is the means of betterment for humanity.

Regarding the People of the Books the Quran made clear at the time of its revelation that they are not concerned with the teachings of the messengers sent to them. They are concerned with a fabricated religion and worship their wills. The Quran labeled them as criminals and sinners guilty of committing sins that put humanity to shame:

- 1- Causing hindrance in Allah's path.
- 2- Taking from another's wealth illegally.
- 3- Feigning ignorance about Allah's book.
- 4- Hiding the truth and obfuscating it with falsity.
- 5- Distorting revealed Scriptures.
- 6- Attributing their own words to Allah.
- 7- Polytheism.
- 8- Defaming Allah.
- 9- Killing the messengers.

Despite these vice of the Jews and Christians the Quran advises putting aside enmity and adopting cordiality with them, using positive word while referring to them like "يا بني اسرائيل" and "يا بني"

²⁵Professor, Dept. of Arabic, Delhi University, Delhi

"اسرائيل". Even though it is the Quran that points out that the Jews and the Christians branded Uzair and Isa respectively as Allah's son, it never uses the term 'polytheists' with reference to them (Yahoodiyat Wa Nasraniyat, Maududi, p. 527).

It also describes how some individuals among these are stronger and more distinguished in terms of their doctrine and deeds. And how Christians feel closer to Muslims than do Jews. The Quran invites the People of the Book at various junctures and in various manners.

- a- Upfront invitation towards faith.
- b- Invitation towards the common word.
- c- Invitation to correctly follow the Torah and Bible and recognize the Quran.

"ولو أنهم أقاموا التوراة والإنجيل وما أنزل إليهم (Al Maidah: 67-68) من ربهم لأكلوا من فوقهم ومن تحت أرجلهم منهم أمة مقتصدة وكثير منهم ساءها يعملون يا أيها الرسول بلغ ما أنزل إليك من ربك وإن لم تفعل فما بلغت رسالته والله يعصمك من الناس إن الله لا يهدي القوم الكافرين"

(If these people had followed the Bible and the Torah which were sent down to them they would have reaped from above and beyond. There is one segment among them that is still faithful, most however are very bad.

O Prophet, go forth and deliver the message of Allah to them, and if you do not do so you will not have delivered this message to a single soul. And Allah shall protect you and He does not send guidance to the undeserving).

However, the Quran also advises to keep in mind certain things when inviting the People of the Book:

- a- Putting aside enmity and being just.
- b- Debating in a civilized manner.
- c- Publically express faith in all prophets and Islam.

Dialogue in Light of the Quran

Dr. Ajmal Qasmi²⁶

Ordinarily, interfaith dialogue has two purposes: 1) Invitation towards Allah. 2) Creating accord among followers of different religions. For over half a century various religions have been facing challenges in this regard like the clash of civilizations, warring and scientific discoveries which why making the world a peaceful place, protecting against differences, civil wars and destruction is a pressing concern.

Some Islamic principles:

Equality:

All members participating in the dialogue should be treated equally and should be given equal opportunities. Allah says: (Saba: 24) "وإنا أو إياكم لعلى هدى أو فى ضلال مبين"

Allah has not spoken of bringing to light the deficiencies of any individual but rather commenting on the nature of all.

Acknowledging truth:

The purpose of dialogue should be the acknowledgement and surfacing of truth. Allah says:

"قل فأتوا بكتاب من عند الله هو أهدى منهما أتبعه إن كنتم صادقين" (Qasas: 49)

The purpose here is to overwhelm the opponent.

²⁶Department of Arabic, Jawaharlal Nehru University, Delhi

In situations of disagreement:

There will occur some instances when it will be impossible to create a consensus. On such occasions it is best that all parties continue to address the issues in their respective manners.

"وإن كذبوك فقل لي عملي ولكم عملكم تعملون" (Yunus: 41)

Proper meaning of 'views':

If there occurs a need for the expression of personal views then a manner of utmost trustworthiness should be employed and if it comes to refutation then logic should be used as mentioned variously by the Quran. Allah says: (Al Jasiya: 24) "قالوا ما هي" and added a disclaimer in: (Al Jasiya: 24) "ومالهم بذلك من علم إن هم إلا يظنون"

**Dialogue among Various Religions &
Faiths: Need and Methodology**

The Needs of Indian Muslims and the Importance of Dialogue

Prof. Mohsin Usmani Nadvi²⁷

In the present day, interfaith dialogue holds a key position in the brainstorming for solutions, striving towards peaceful coexistence and the collation of multiple viewpoints on one platform. Its importance is seen in this verse: "قل يا أهل الكتاب تعالوا إلى كلمة سواء بيننا وبينكم". Since the Jews and Christians do not follow the Prophet (P.B.U.H) but are still part of the divine religions, Allah has ordained an exchange of ideas with them. Islam has never taken up a manner which maligns its image. Justice and equality, peace, solidarity and cooperation have always been close to the Islamic rulers. They never treated others with a sense of injustice or bias. Especially in India where Islamic rulers reigned for 800 years justice and when it came to the rule of others their treatment of Muslims was the opposite. They presented such obstacles to the Muslims that they could not progress in any field.

The issues of Indian Muslims:

One main issue is of invitation because in the present scenario it is not possible to invite like our predecessors did and brought large numbers into the fold of Islam. Ever since the emergence of political differences, the partition and various sectarian and religious riots the mindset of our Hindu brethren has turned antagonistic towards invitation. Similarly. Our Hindu brothers residing in Muslim nation were also not convinced properly about Islam so as to relent in their negative perceptions. As a result

²⁷ Former Head, Dept. of Arabic, EFLU, Hyderabad

proselytism almost ground to a halt. It is on today, but at a grinding pace.

Another issue is that of Muslim personal law. The government knows that one reason that Muslims are able to live with their Islamic identities intact is Muslim personal law. This is why at various occasions there are attempts by either the judiciary to enact changes to it or the progressive Muslims are roused to demand them. Some biased individuals also demand a uniform personal code upon the Muslims. The constitution of India however does not allow any interference in personal law.

In such a case it is extremely important that Muslim leaders engage with representatives of the Government in an ideological exchange to ensure that Muslims can habit this country with no fears of encroachment upon their identity, their culture and practices and can live with their and knowledge safeguarded.

Another sphere is of education. In schools and colleges the curriculum is such that it encourages tremors in the belief of Divine. Furthermore, there is no mention in many subjects of the contribution of Muslims or also the role of Muslim leaders in the freedom struggle. There were laws that stated that Madrasas should be closed due to a lack of basic facilities which prompted a dialogue between govt. representatives and members of the Muslim personal law board for the govt. to finally declare no interference in matters of the Madrasas. However contemporary Madrasas still loom under threat of being outlawed at any given day.

Another issue concerns Urdu, the language of Indian Muslims and it is not just Muslim authors and poets who have excelled in it but even Hindus delved into its depths. And since its script is similar to Arabic it lends itself to the learning of the Quran and a large

Islamic knowledge base is in Urdu. However, ever since Pakistan declared Urdu its national language a lot of Hindu brothers started detesting it. They declared Hindi as the official language and nowadays the local language has replaced Urdu in a lot of districts. There has been some contemplation over the status of Urdu between Muslim leaders and the govt. which has provided some relief to Urdu but the need for more persists.

A major concern in India are communal riots, among which Gujarat is particularly tragic. Countless innocent lives were lost, made homeless. At the same time, branding innocent Muslim youth as terrorists is prevalent, newspapers and journals print false information against them and they are portrayed as terrorist masterminds.

One issue is the lack of opportunities towards Muslims so that they may improve their own and their society's conditions. This is because the governmental departments are under the control of individuals who oppose this. They are maltreated in the workplace which is why the Muslims are even backward among the backward classes. This is despite the constitutional guarantee of equal opportunities.

These are the issues challenging Muslim lifestyles and identity in this country. Their solution lies solely in dialogue, hence our leaders should take up this initiative because the government also comprises of people who empathize with Muslims and treat them justly and not solely of antagonists of Islam.

The Need for Dialogue with Indian Religions and its Methodology

Dr. Waris Mazhari²⁸

Introduction:

Dialogue with the Indian religions has always been more pertinent as compared to other religions because with the People of the Books our basis in religion has been clearly defined whereas the nature of intent with non-scriptural religions is different.

The initial contact of Islam with India was based on peace and commerce but after the advent of Islamic rule the two parties became adversaries and competitors, resulting in a stressful relationship.

After the end of this rule the common efforts against imperialism brought the two factions closer and their success created closeness. However the tragedy of India's partition played a significant role in promoting segregation. The changes in global affairs that the new century brought about also adversely affected the Muslim-non-Muslim relationship and strengthened the anti-Muslim factions.

The purpose of dialogue and its Shariah Basis:

An important basis for dialogue is the Islamic concept of humanity. It is based in: 1) Integration, 2) Dignity and 3) Equality.

The Quran emphasizes the fact that all humanity is one. We are all children of the same singular father and mother and every human

²⁸Maulana Azad National Urdu University, Hyderabad

being has the right to respect, justice and equality. Religious differences can not excuse any sort of injustice.

Another Shariah basis of dialogue among the Muslims is the duty of proselytism, which requires that by all means necessary the message of Islam is spread far and wide. In the present scenario this duty entwines with the act of invitation. Another basis is effort towards elimination of hatred and distance towards Muslims in the eyes of other religions.

Basic obstacles:

There are many obstacles to dialogue with the religions of India. The greatest is that both factions feel that there are significant cultural and religious differences and their concepts about life and the universe are contradictory to each other. However, it is to be noted that all Hindus are not idol worshipers, not is it a basis of their religion just as Muslims do not consider a component of faith. In reality a large chunk of both factions views the other as sub-human when in reality such behavior is more of a practical reality than religious. The Hindu mindset has been more affected by the Partition and Islamic rule whereas the Muslims cover under the aftereffects of multiple riots, the Babri Masjid demolition and the Gujarat tragedy. As a response to Hindu nationalist movements Muslim youths were attracted towards extremism and the Internal Security reports during the BJP rule raised suspicion over Madrasas which jolted the Muslim scholars severely.

Some among the Muslims and Hindus feel that there is no purpose to dialogue and some say that dialogue with extremist organizations is futile and negotiations with them are akin to bowing before them. However, the need for dialogue with extremists is greater than with peace loving individuals.

Features of dialogue:

In the quest for the correct methodology towards dialogue with Indian religions it is essential that issues that can draw them to a common platform be sought out and commonalities be sought so that distances can be reduced. According to the Quran (Inaam: 107), these differences are a result of dispositions, which discord rather than accord (Maidah: 107). therefore the natural reaction is to not eliminate them but to acquiesce them. The Quran says that “In Allah wanted He would have created all as one people but they are inherently different” (Nahl: 93). Humans are a collectivist organism which is why there exists no community which does not believe in participation.

Dispelling misconceptions:

Dispelling misconceptions is not just a purpose of dialogue but also its result. Misconceptions should themselves be debated and discussed. Some scholars believe that there is a need to discuss Hinduism itself since it should rudimentary signs of Oneness, Prophecy and the Day of Judgment. Mirza Mazhar Jan-e-Janan considered Hindus believers of the Oneness who have been led astray by delusion. Al Beruni believed that idol worship was a practice of the masses and not the elite and Shah Abdul Aziz (R.A) said that Ram and Krishna must have been saints hence they should be referred to with deprecatory titles. This is a point to consider because if the Quran (Fatir: 24) says that every community was sent messengers then this one would also not have been left bereft.

Another point of consideration is that if the Hindus are idolaters then are they so in the same sense as the Arabs of yore? Apparently it is not so since scholars themselves have differentiated among the idol worshipers of Arabia and other idol

worshippers and the order for Jihad was not the same for the two as well. Many of our scholars hastily apply verses pertaining to the Arabs to the Hindus of India.

The need for serious literature:

The cause for misconception is rooted in ignorance. Hence, it is necessary that literature which addresses these misconceptions about Islam and Muslim culture be developed so that such misconceptions can be done away with and compassion and proximity towards Muslims can be promoted.

Expansion of scope for partnership:

Along with literature it is necessary that avenues for partnership be developed. Ghettoization and leaving mixed societies is especially detrimental to the Muslims of India. There is a need to jurisprudentially address community visits and participation in their events, giving condolences and gifts. On the point of imitating them also, extremes are observed. Ibn Taimiyyah who is known among the scholars of yore for holding the strictest opinions in this regard had clearly said in reference to the cultural subjugation of Muslims and the disparity among Muslim and non-Muslim nations that in outwardly means and ways (الهدى الظاهر), participation is advisable according to religion and in certain cases necessary.

In conclusion, dialogue with Indian religions is a need of the hour. Indian Muslims should make efforts towards this. In my opinion the religious seminaries of India can play an important role in this because of their credibility and grassroots access. Doing so will maintain reliability in the public eye as well as allow for extensive benefits from them.

Dialogue with the Sikhs In Light of the Shariah

Dr. Shafiq Ahmad Khan Nadvi²⁹

The Sikh religion originated in India in the 16th century. Its founder is Guru Nanak. It includes teachings from various religions, especially Islam. The term Sikh is a Punjabi word which means a follower of the Guru who strives towards his way and believes in one God and his ten exalted Gurus.

Its first leader, Guru Nanak b.1469 A.D- d. 1539 A.D was especially influenced by Sheikh Fariduddin Ganj Shakar and he included couplets from Jaan-e-Janan in his book the Guru Granth. For a while he was employed under Nawab Daulat Ali Khan after which he retreated into spiritual knowledge seeking and declared that God had ordained him the Guru of all people. After this he travelled across India and went as far as Iraq and Hejaz. After returning he devoted himself to formulating his religion.

During Guru Nanak's lifetime, Sikhism was a religious reform movement centered around Divine Oneness, repentance, belief in God, angels, Prophets, Scriptures and the Day of Judgment. Moreover there was also encouragement towards prayer, Fasting, Hajj and Zakat and abstaining from evil and sin. Guru Nanak believed that the Quran was true, a valuable book of much resource and must be respected (Janamsakhi, Bhai Bala p.221)

And it is also said that those who recite the first Kalima shall be protected by the Prophet's (P.B.U.H) intercession on the Day of Judgment. (ibid: 153).

²⁹Former Head, Dept. of Arabic, Jamia Millia Islamia, Delhi

The archaeologist Dr. Tara Chand in his book 'Influence of Islam on Indian Culture' writes that Guru Nanak held Muhammad as his ideal which is why his teachings have the Prophet's imprint (p. 169).

Guru Nanak begins his book the Mool Mantra in the following manner:

There is One God, All present, The Universal Truth, Everlasting, Beyond Fear, Beyond Hatred, Beyond Birth, Beyond Death, Peerless and Everlasting.

For a while the Sikh followed Guru Nanak's teachings but when the final Guru, Guru Govind arrived he made the teachings of Sikhism very strict:

- 1- Not cutting body hair from birth to death.
- 2- Always carry a comb.
- 3- Always wear a bangle (*kada*) in the hand
- 4- Always carry a dagger.
- 5- Wear a loose undergarment (*kacchera*) and refrain from tobacco, meat and wear a turban.

However there exists even today a segment of Sikhs who follow the faith of Reincarnation. And prays daily, recites the holy books and sets away 10% of its earnings towards charity.

Methodology of Dialogue in India

Mufti Mohd. Arshad Farooqui³⁰

India is a country where Hindus, Muslims, Christians, Sikhs, Buddhists and Jews all reside and in every part of the country. It is therefore the imperative that peace and order be a primary concern in this country.

The history of dialogue in India:

An overview of Indian history makes it clear the Islamic scholars have always strived greatly to promote Islam in the country and have constantly participated in dialogue. With the capture of Sindh, Muhammad Bin Qasim initiated the process of educating about Islam and very soon countless people came into the fold of Islam.

Dialogue with Christians:

Prior to engaging with the Christians it is necessary that knowledge of the Torah and the Bible be sought. In this regard it is essential that Islamic seminaries also incorporate teaching of Hebrew into their curriculum and include the study of the Torah and the Bible under a separate department.

Dialogue with Hindus:

The Hindus are an ignorant people bereft of logic and reason. They have made polytheism their hallmark and have Gods beyond number. They consider the Vedas their religious texts.

³⁰Teacher, Jamiatul Islam Anwar, Deoband, U.P

Methodology:

When engaging the Hindus one's manner should always be accommodating and they should be made aware of Allah's mercies and punishments, the obscenity of polytheism and idolatry and they should be invited to consider the creation of life and especially humans by Allah. The verses of the Quran should be recited to them.

Duties of the speaker:

The speaker should keep in mind to begin with universal truths and Islamic facts regarding lies, bribery, interest, adultery, gambling, intoxication and other evils so that a righteous society can be strived towards and an example for the world is set.

The Need for Dialogue in Contemporary Times

Dr. Abdullah Quddus Bin Mohd Kalimuddin³¹

Terms and conditions:

To a certain extent the need for dialogue is more pertinent today since it is an age of investigation and science. The invention of satellites and the internet has brought people closer and created a global village. In such a case, there is a need for the followers of different religions to coexist and live peacefully. This objective can be achieved to a great extent via dialogue since it fosters understanding and respect for humanity.

Etiquettes of dialogue:

1) Sincerity and verity:

The objective should always be the appeasement of Divine will and not popular appeal or boasting of one's knowledge.

2) Refrain from biases:

There should not be bias towards a person or perspective because it hinders from seeing one's mistakes and withhold from seeing the opponent's perspective clearly.

3) Compassion and respect for opinions:

Islam also teaches us to treat people in consideration of their stations. For instance, if the addressee is elderly or concerned with politics one must use an appropriate form of address, listen to them attentively, one shouldn't disregard or be callous to them and exercise refrain any displays of superiority.

³¹Assistant Prof. Maulana Azad National Urdu University, Hyderabad

4) Polite conversation:

While engaging in dialogue a polite means of conversation and should be employed as it is also charitable.

5) Adequate explanations:

Proofs and evidences of value should be provided cordially and one's perspective and views should be expressed in a manner that does justice to them.

6) Dignity and calmness:

During debates one must hold composure and be dignified throughout. Even on occasion of being cursed one must maintain composure and remain calm.

7) Freedom of opinion:

Every individual should be given the freedom to express their opinions and should not feel any restraint upon them.

Conditions:

- 1- Self-esteem
- 2- Listening
- 3- Perseverance
- 4- Beginning from common ground
- 5- Discuss issues of pertinence
- 6- Sense of pride

—

Dialogue with Indian Religions in Light of the Shariah

Dr. Shakeel Ahmad Habibi³²

In order to deal with the feeling of shock that American political scientist Samuel P. Huntington's idea of the 'Clash of Civilizations' left in the air, The former Iranian President Mohammad Khatami organized various dialogues. The UN also organized an international 'Inter-Cultural Conference' to no significant result. Around September 2006, Pope Benedict passed a remark while talking of a Crusader that "Islam is a religion of vagrancy" brought these efforts to a halt. Then in 2008 at the occasion of the Mecca Conference the Saudi sovereign, King Abdullah raised the issue of interfaith dialogue, after which an 'Interfaith Dialogue Conference' was organized in Madrid the result of which was the declaration of 2010 as the International Year for the Rapprochement of Cultures. This journey of a quarter of a century shows that dialogue still awaits its objective.

The basic aim of this dialogue is that to and fro contact is maintained between cultured and the Islamic Shariah has been promoting this since day one. There are two perspectives regarding dialogue in this world. One is that which views dialogue detrimental to one's personal motives, like the Christians who try to mould this into a monologue where the second participant is left to quietly listen.

There are some gentlemen who prefer that their opinions are accepted as the whole truth without any opposition. Some other gentlemen prefer to seek out common ritual like the leaders of

³²Jamia Millia Islamia, New Delhi

Quraish while they forget that the purpose of dialogue is to seek truth and through it peaceful coexistence. Any conference towards dialogue organized nowadays can be grouped under two heads:

Agreement upon principles:

The agreement that Muhammad (P.B.U.H) entered with the Quraish of Mecca was always based on principles. In contrast, every principle today is weighed according to its benefits. In a way even the constitution of India is a great system for Indian Muslims but it's the adult suffrage and its own infrequency is a cause for its detriment insofar as the order and law in the entire country is undermined. The disorder that strikes the country today is not far from chaos. Anyway, the situation demands an agreement upon principles.

The Prophet said: "No doubt all humans are brothers" (Abu Dawood).

One of the main purposes here is establishing a standard of integrity and piety

"وتعاونوا على البر والتقوى ولا تعاونوا على الإثم والعدوان واتقوا (Maidah: 25)
الله إن الله شديد العقاب"

(And cooperate in deeds which are of virtue and righteous and do not contribute to deeds that are sinful, and fear Allah for his punishments are severe).

It is important also to define the limits of cooperation and non-cooperation. In leading the Shariah has left much scope. Its conditions and specificities are:

a- International communications:

One reason for communications between nations is to eliminate unfamiliarity and foster cooperation. Islam

recommends this by starting with the *Salam*, a prayer for the safety and prosperity of non-Muslims can also be made. Gifts can be exchanged. During the course of communications it is also necessary to assert that Islam does not endorse force in matters of religion. Similarly the folly of chasing wealth and creating social hierarchies can also be explicated.

b- Justice and equality:

Insistence on justice and equality is also essential to foster comprehension of cultures. Building on this respect for humankind can be made common and thus a curb be enacted on terror and barbarism.

c- Rights versus issues:

At the moment Islam's status is that of a stranger. The issue of communal riots faces the country. Therefore, raising cries for minority rights will only serve to portray Muslims as self-concerned and pestering. Instead it would be better to raise concern for human rights.

Certifying truth:

More importantly, the Muslim people, despite their culture and traditions are a proselytizing people insofar as that this is the purpose of every action and dialogue itself. Addressing other groups keeping this in mind and thus devising a strategy will prove beneficial and effective.

a- Yearning truth:

b- For those who seek truth the Quran has one verse

"تعالوا! إلى كلمة سواء بيننا وبينكم"

We hope that the examples of the Prophet and the companions, and other stories in the Quran will prove an eye-opener for this group of people.

c- Dilly-dalliers:

Those people who still express doubts and concerns over accepting the Truth can be reasoned with using their own scriptures and even by means of refutation. For instance asking them: (Aal Imran: 70) "يا أهل الكتاب لم تكفرون بآيات الله وأنتم تشهدون"

(O People of the Book, why do you refute Allah's verses when you are in observance yourselves).

And they can be implored towards the Quran:

(And I was ordered to remain steadfast and to recite the Quran to them) (Naml: 91, 92).

d- Deniers and obstinate people:

Some people will remain stubborn and rebellious. These should not be treated like for like because the Quran teaches us: "O Prophet, remain patient over the things these people say" (Taha: 13).

"And O Prophet, be patient about the things they say and praise your Lord and recite his name at dawn and before dusk".

Our task does not end at disassociating from them. Instead, we should pray to Allah that he makes the hearts of those deniers and stubborn people receptive to the Truth.
