

TOLERANCE EDUCATION IN ISLAM

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Introduction

At the beginning of the twenty-first century the world is looking forward to ridding itself of the serious violence-related problems which constitute such a disaster to humankind that living in peace is almost an unrealizable dream of individuals, communities and states. In its report, the Carnegie Commission on Preventing Deadly Conflicts stated that more than 100 million people were killed in armed conflicts during the twentieth century, and over 170 million people were killed as a result of political violence.¹

To face this disturbing situation, researchers rallied to clamour for the necessity to work out possible solutions. In his book published in the year 2000, the French sociologist Alain Touraine raised the following question: "Can we live together?" He answered, "The solution lies in the peace culture."²

To counter violence and overcome social injustice, racial discrimination and ethnic grudges require, as Touraine has said, the acceptance of a peace culture. Given that education is the instrument and means of dissemination of culture, we can best achieve this peace culture through what is known as peace education. The peace aspired to is the absence of all forms of organized, direct or indirect violence.³ International efforts today, therefore, adopt the culture and education of peace as a means of dealing with violence and its causes. Peace culture means the culture acquired by people which directs them to embrace peaceful attitudes and behaviours towards others, be they individuals, states and environments.⁴

The importance of tolerance education has been emphasized by national and international organizations and institutions as well as by monotheist religions. Most significant of these religions is Islam, which God has made the final, universal message for all men in spite of their racial and cultural differences. Islam is a faith which is based on justice; it calls for tolerance and peace and rejects violence and aggression. Thus the widespread fear of Islam in the West as a religion that advocates violence and terrorism is baseless and unjustifiable. Hilali says in this respect, "I beseech Western highly cultured people to equitably study Islam and then they will find it a creed devoid of violence. Thus Islam was and still is a religion of tolerance."⁵

The Problem of the Study

The world is eager to know what Islam has to offer for tackling the problems which threaten security and peace, after the failure of centuries-old Western ideas to build up

tolerance and establish peace among people is noticed by the Western researchers themselves. According to Bradshaw and Wallace, the main reason for conflicts in the world today is “disparity”.⁶ Handa opines that both capitalism and communism are horrible social systems, which makes it possible to view globalization as a global system of war. Ali Mazru’i also holds the same view.⁷ Thus our world, which seeks to rid itself of conflict and violence, needs more than ever before to understand Islam’s view of tolerance education. This need has never been more important than it is today, due to the relation the Islamic world has with the West. Consequently it has been necessary to highlight the cognitive perspective which regulates and steers this relation in order to dispel the misgivings of the West and acquaint it with the reality of tolerance in Islam, as this reality may be known only to a minority of people. Hence the idea of this study, which led the researcher to deal with the attitude of Islam towards tolerance.

Aims of the Study

This study endeavours to achieve its main objective of underlining the real image of Islam and its emphasis on tolerance and tolerance education. In addition, it will also establish how Islam is different from man-made ideas and philosophies. The study attempts to answer the following questions:

1. What are the meanings, philosophy and importance of tolerance?
2. What is the concept of tolerance in Islam?
3. What is the nature of tolerance education in Islam?

The aim of the study is also to help educationalists, curricula planners and school-textbook authors to identify the numerous dimensions of tolerance in Islam. This study is also expected to lead to future researches in this field.

Assumptions

To deal with the problem, the study starts with the following assumptions:

1. The attitude of Islam towards tolerance is encapsulated in the principles of Islam and not in the behaviour of Muslims or a group of them. Therefore, this attitude should not be judged by the actions of Muslims who deviate from the correct understanding of Islam.
2. Tolerance in Islam does not reflect weakness but manifests strength. It is not a contravention of Islam’s universal principles or the elimination of the self and identity.
3. Islamic concepts of justice and human rights must take precedence over tolerance of the other in the event that the other has been unjust towards people, encroached on their religion, occupied their homeland or confiscated their rights.

General Concepts Related to Tolerance

Meaning of Tolerance

These two words used in English express basically the same idea: tolerance and toleration. The linguistic meaning of the word is derived from the Latin “tolerate”

which means “endure” or “put up with”.⁸

Nicholson thinks that toleration in its ordinary usage means the action of exercising forbearance (or one’s tendency to be forbearing). Therefore he sticks to the term toleration and does not use the term tolerance.⁹ According to *Oxford Word Power*, the word “tolerance” is the ability or willingness to accept a troublesome, undesirable or an agreed-with situation.¹⁰

It can be discerned from what has been said above that writers give several meanings to the word tolerance and differ about its use in expressing forbearance. This study is inclined to adopt the word “tolerance” because this word is more commonly used.

Nicholson offers another meaning of the word tolerance: that it is the virtue of one’s refraining from exercising one’s power to interfere with other peoples’ views and actions, given that these views and actions differ from what one believes and does, and what one thinks to be too important to morally agree with.¹¹

Popper gives an analysis of the concept of tolerance as offered by Voltaire, who expressed tolerance as the consequence that accompanies our human entity. All of us are the outcome of weakness. We are all fragile and errant. Let us, therefore, be tolerant of one another and mutually forbear the madness of one another. This is the first principle of the law of nature, the first principle of all human rights.¹² Popper derived three principles from this one which constitute the basis of what he called reciprocal tolerance: Firstly, I may be wrong and you may be right. Secondly, through our rational mutual understanding about things we may be able to correct some of our errors. Thirdly, if we rationally achieve mutual understanding, together we may draw nearer to reality.¹³

The declaration of principles issued by UNESCO defines tolerance as taking a positive stand which embodies an admission of the right of others to enjoy human rights and basic liberties.¹⁴

In Arabic, the linguistic origin of the word tolerance (*tasāmuḥ*) comes from the verb *samaḥa*. Arabic lexicons cite numerous meanings of the word *tasāmuḥ*, for example, *Lisān al-‘Arab* says: *tasāmuḥ* and *samāḥah* means liberality or generosity. We say *samaḥa* and *asmaḥa* to mean he gave generously. *Musāmaḥah* means lenience or forbearance; *tasāmaḥu* means to show forbearance; *samaḥa* and *tasāmaḥa* mean he did something in which he displayed leniency, *tasāmuḥ* is generosity; it is giving in a liberal way.¹⁵ In *Kashshāf Iṣṭilāḥāt al-Funūn* (Arts Terminologies), *samaḥah* means giving voluntarily out of magnanimity and *musāmaḥah* is refraining out of humility.¹⁶

By comparing these Arabic meanings of the word *tasāmuḥ* with the meanings of the word “tolerance” in English we find that they are somewhat different. Some Arab writers tried to coin definitions which include the modern meanings of the word *tasāmuḥ* such as the following: Overlooking other people’s faults (individuals as well as communities) and dealing positively with others in cases of disagreement, which constitutes a skill that is needed for human relations at individual and collective levels.¹⁷ It also means an individual’s willingness to respect other people’s beliefs, customs and feelings and to deal with them as humans, regardless of their colour, ethnic and denominational affiliations or their social backgrounds.¹⁸

In this study, tolerance means a positive attitude taken by the Muslim towards others with different religions and cultures. This positive attitude includes respecting their dignity and rights as human beings, showing kindness and compassion towards

his neighbours, enabling him to practise his creeds, respecting his opinion, acting justly towards him and using peaceful means to settle disagreements and conflicts with him.

Philosophy of Tolerance

This philosophy implies that the object of tolerance is man; for every human being is the object of the tolerance of other human beings. This, according to Popper's analysis, indicates that tolerance is a reciprocal behaviour which cannot be realized without participation from both sides. In essence, tolerance is a moral virtue; it acknowledges the right of others to be different whilst at the same time one is not obliged to subscribe to those different beliefs.

Tolerance differs from indifference, which is a negative attitude towards a certain behaviour. On the other hand, tolerance is the antithesis of fanaticism and the hatred and violence it generates towards the other.¹⁹ Tolerance is a sublime human value which can be acquired through education. It is confirmed by monotheistic religions and proclaimed by contemporary ideas. It is also an important constituent element of peace culture and a basic introduction to peace education.

Importance of Tolerance

Tolerance is extremely important for both the individual and society. Tolerance is a moral response to all sorts of fanaticism; it makes it possible to refine the latter and stop it from reaching the state of violence. It also empowers people to search for truth by holding dialogue with each other and allows for the exchange of views on controversial issues. In addition, tolerance is the cornerstone of coexistence in a society which has numerous religious, cultural and ethnic groups. It is also a basic need for the establishment of peace. As UNESCO Director General F. Mayor said, tolerance is a *sine qua non* for peace among individuals as it is among peoples. It is the spice required for every peace culture.²⁰ Absence of tolerance from the life of society leads to the rise of serious problems, because its absence means the spread of fanaticism and violence and the predominance of taboo, whether at intellectual, political, social, or cultural levels.²¹

Development of the Concept of Tolerance

In the historical course taken by tolerance, it has witnessed numerous changes in its meaning, starting from its birth in its original homeland in Europe until it has acquired its present state. I'rāb surveys what *Lalande French Dictionary* says about the rise and evolution of the word tolerance.²² This dictionary discusses how the term was born in the 16th century during the Catholic-Protestant wars and conflicts in Europe and how they reciprocally ended up with Catholic tolerance towards Protestants. With the end of the 18th and the beginning of the 19th century, the concept of tolerance was no longer confined to religious aspects but became associated with the freedom of thought and belief in general, as a result of the various circumstances which accompanied the modern European Renaissance.

Since the beginning of the twentieth century tolerance has assumed an obvious international dimension; even more so since the announcement of the International Declaration of Human Rights in the year 1948 which stressed the principle of tolerance.

After the collapse of the Soviet Union, there emerged extremist ethnic trends and rightist movements in Europe and various other parts of the world that rejected the values of tolerance and instead worked to create hostility towards the other.

These developments led the international community to revive the issue of tolerance and establish a new perception which forges an irrevocable relation between human rights and peace. During the last decade of the 20th century, the concept of tolerance witnessed a remarkable development, and on December 20, 1993, the United Nations General Assembly decided to proclaim 1995 as an International Year for Tolerance and UNESCO declared December 16 every year as a Tolerance Day.²³ This new concept has become embodied in many international documents related to human rights.²⁴

Thus, through the above survey of the rise of tolerance it is clear that tolerance, according to ‘Umar, passed from the stage of leniency towards the other, to the stage of recognition of rights and then to the stage of respecting these rights.²⁵

This means that the modern concept of tolerance, in addition to its original philosophical, religious and moral charge, is in the process of acquiring a legal charge. Meanwhile, the need of societies for such a legal meaning seems to be more and more emphasized vis a vis the remarkable growth every now and then of the phenomenon of fanaticism, and the factors of poverty, ignorance, stagnation and injustice.²⁶

The Concept of Tolerance in Islam

To answer the second question of this study, which is “What is the concept of tolerance in Islam?”, the researcher has closely investigated Qur’ānic verses and prophetic ḥadīths related to tolerance, and has also made use of educational literature written on this topic. To avoid repetition, the researcher has restricted himself to dealing with the main principles which define the concept of tolerance in Islam and has reinforced them with some practical examples.

Principles of Tolerance in Islam

The Qur’ān and sunnah are the two fundamental sources of Islam which is the true and tolerant faith and the creed of Prophet Ibrahim (Abraham) (p.b.u.h.) of which God says in the Qur’ān: “Say: Verily my Lord has guided me to a Way that is straight, —a religion of right,—the Path (trod) by Abraham, the true in faith” (Qur’ān 6: 161). Prophet Muhammad (p.b.u.h.) says, “The religion most beloved by God is the true and tolerant one”.²⁷ But while the word *tasāmuḥ* (tolerance) does not occur in the Holy Qur’ān, the word *iḥsān* (kindness), together with its derivatives, has occurred 37 times in 23 *sūras*, all of which call for tolerance.²⁸ God says in this context, “And remember when We took a Covenant from the Children of Israel (to this effect): worship none but God; treat with kindness your parents and kindred, and orphans and those in need; speak fairly to the people” (Qur’ān 2:83). While God reminds the Children of Israel of their aversion to what He commanded them to do although He had taken their covenant to observe it, He also commands them and all His servants, as mentioned in the aforesaid Qur’ānic verse, to carry out His right to be worshipped alone and without partners, and commanded them to respect the rights of people by treating them kindly and speaking to them fairly. The most deserving people in this respect are parents, kindred, orphans and those in need. In his interpretation of the

meaning of “speak fairly to people”, al-Hasan al-Basri says, “Fair speech is to enjoin good and forbid evil, to be forbearing and to pardon offending people and to speak to them with kindness as God said. This is a character which God is pleased with. It is appropriate that God commands His servants to speak fairly after He has ordered them to treat people kindly. Thereby He combines good deeds with good words.”²⁹

Thus beneficent deeds and kind speech, with their numerous meanings, have constituted the subject matter of kindness as an exalted standard of character and a grand value which comprises other values derived from the principles of Islam. Muslims are legally bound to be tolerant to others, including non-Muslims. The other dimensions of tolerance in Islam together with patterns of their practical application throughout the course taken by Islamic life are discussed below.

Dimensions of Tolerance in Islam

1. Pluralism in Creation

One of the basic beliefs in Islam is the multiplicity of creation. Al-Qardawi says, “Islam has built its concept on two basic facts: the oneness of the Creator and the multiplicity of creatures.”³⁰ Humans are numerous and diverse in their ethnic origins, languages, colours and religions whether these religions are sent down from God or made by men. God says in this context, “And among His Signs is the creation of the heavens and the earth, and the variations in your languages and your colours: verily in that are Signs for those who know” (Qur’ān 30:22).

The purpose of multiplicity in creation is to make people know one another, as God has stated in the Holy Qur’ān when He says, “O mankind! We created you from a single (pair) of a male and a female, and made you into nations and tribes, that you may know each other” (Qur’ān 49:13). Mutual acquaintance of people is not possible without recognition, acceptance and mutual understanding of one another.

Islam has clearly declared God’s divinity and lordship of all the worlds. Its followers are required to believe in all the heavenly scriptures and all the prophets who came before Prophet Muhammad (p.b.u.h.). Islam alone confirmed the unity of religion and commanded people not to make divisions in it: “The same religion has He established for you as that which He enjoined on Nūḥ, that which we have sent by inspiration to you—and that which We enjoined on Ibrāhīm, Mūsā and ‘Īsā: Namely, that you should remain steadfast in Religion and make no divisions therein” (Qur’ān 42:13). Thus the unity of religion has made all the prophets the sons of one father and preachers of one religion. Diversity within the one religion can be found in the many different laws.

Prophet Muhammad (p.b.u.h.) emphasized this fact by saying: “I am the closest of people to ‘Īsā (Jesus) the son of Mariam (Mary) in this world and the hereafter. Prophets are brethren for certain reasons. Their mothers are different and their religion is one and the same.”³¹ The Qur’ān, in turn, emphasized that there is no distinction between one prophet and another as God says, “We make no distinction (they say) between one and another of His apostles” (Qur’ān 2:285).

In addition, Islam did not confine this tolerance to the followers of monotheistic religions, but extended it to include believers in man-made religions too. It left them free to adopt their creeds and treats them on an equal footing with the People of the Book. In this regard al-Baladhuri says, “The Prince of the Faithful

‘Umar ibn al-Khattab presented their case to the *Shūrā* (Consultative) Council and said to its members: I do not know what to do with the Majūs (Zoroastrians). Whereupon Abu al-Rahman ibn Awf said, “I do testify that Prophet Muhammad (p.b.u.h.) said: Treat them as you treat the People of the Book.”³² So it can be safely said that man-made religions received the same treatment as monotheistic religions. Then came the Muslim religious scholars who followed this prophetic sunnah and the way of the rightly-guided Caliphs and said, “These religions had their own scriptures but they lost them.”³³

An example of the practical applications of the concept of multiplicity was Prophet Muhammad’s permission given to the early Muslims to emigrate to Abyssinia, in recognition of the other who differed in religion, as a step taken to establish the first relationship with them. The Prophet (p.b.u.h.) said, “In Abyssinia there is a king who never allows injustice to be done to anybody. So, go to his country until God provides you with relief and an outlet.”³⁴ When the Muslims were brought before the Negus (the title of the Abyssinian sovereign) and when Ja‘far ibn Abi Talib made the first comprehensive informational address of Islam, the Negus asked him about what the Holy Qur’ān says regarding Mariam the daughter of ‘Imrān and her son ‘Īsā (Jesus) (p.b.u.h.). After the Negus listened to the verses recited from *Sūrat Mariam* of the Qur’ān his eyes became wet with tears and his heart was filled with submissiveness and he said that both what he listened to and what Jesus Christ brought along with him came from the same source. Then he said, “You, and the person from whom you came, are welcome. I bear witness that he is God’s Apostle, and that he is the man of whose coming Jesus gave the glad tidings. Were it not for my state preoccupations, I would go to him to kiss his feet. Stay in my territory for as long as you wish.”³⁵ In acknowledgement of the Negus’s gallant stand, Prophet Muhammad (p.b.u.h.), upon hearing of his death in the year 9 after Hijrah (A.H.), gathered his *Ṣaḥābah* (Companions) and said to them, “One of your brethren in Abyssinia died there.” The Prophet then took them to the desert, lined them up in rows for prayer and performed the funeral service in absentia for the Negus.³⁶ After the Prophet’s migration (Hijrah) and arrival to al-Madinah he laid down the first constitution for the Muslim state. This document was called *al-Ṣaḥīfah* (document) which provided for religious and cultural pluralism for the citizens of this state. Ibn Ishaq said, “Prophet Muhammad (p.b.u.h.) prescribed a document between al-*Muhājirūn* (Emigrants) and al-*Anṣār* (Supporters) in which he made peace and pledge with the Jews and allowed them to retain their religion and property and stipulated rights and duties for them. This document provided that Jews have their own religion and Muslims have theirs too.”³⁷

2. No Compulsion in Religion

The religious plurality recognised by Islam requires giving the non-Muslim the freedom to adopt the religion and belief he wishes. God says in this respect, “Say: The Truth is from your Lord. Let him who will believe, and let him who will, reject it.” (Qur’ān 18:29).

The difference of people in religion is a result of God’s will and discretion, although He could have made mankind one people. This is clear from the Qur’ānic verse, “If the Lord had so willed, He could have made mankind one People: but they will not cease to dispute” (11:118). Islam does not allow compulsion in religion, since

religion is based on conviction and free choice and not on coercion and compulsion. God says in this context, "Let there be no compulsion in religion: Truth stands out clear from Error" (Qur'ān 2:256). He also says, "Will you then compel mankind, against their will, to believe!" (Qur'ān 10:99).

Such religious tolerance brought by Islam has made bringing people to account for their paganism and error a prerogative not of Muslims but of God on the Day of Judgment. In this respect God says addressing His Apostle (p.b.u.h.), "You are not one to manage (men's) affairs. But if any turn away and reject God, God will punish him with mighty Punishment. For to Us will be their Return; then it will be for Us to call them to account" (Qur'ān 88:22-26).

Suffice it to say that, in recognition of Islam's tolerance, historical sources have never stated that any person who espoused a monotheistic or a pagan religion in Muslim lands was forced to adopt Islam. In fact, the presence of the other as represented by the coexistence of Jews and Christians with Muslims is a great manifestation of this sublime stand taken by Islam which has accommodated and lived with the other, even if the latter was an atheist.

A practical example of the principle of no compulsion in religion is what ibn Abbas narrated: an Anṣārī Muslim of Banī Sālim ibn 'Awf, called al-Husayni had two Christian sons. He said to Prophet Muhammad (p.b.u.h.): "Shall I force them to adopt Islam, for they insist on adhering to Christianity?" Whereupon the Qur'ān came down with the answer which was pronounced by the Prophet: "Let there be no compulsion in religion."³⁸ Another example is what was narrated by ibn al-Qayyim who said that after the conquest of Khaybar, the Prophet found copies of the Torah which he ordered to be returned to the Jews because he felt that the Jews have the right to teach their religion to their children in compliance with God's saying: "Let there be no compulsion in religion: Truth stands out clear from error."³⁹

Last but not least, is what was written in 'Umar ibn al-Khattab's *Uḥdah* or Covenant which he handed over to the envoys of Sophronius, the Patriarch of Jerusalem after the conquest of the city. For, according to al-Tabari, he pledged them security for their lives, property, churches and crosses which were not to be touched or demolished, and none of the Christians should be molested. What is historically recorded, to 'Umar ibn al-Khattab's credit, is that when the time came for the afternoon ritual prayer (*Ṣalāt al-ʿAṣr*) when he was in the church of the Holy Sepulchre, he left the church without performing the prayer, lest Muslims should convert it into a mosque after his death. He also wrote to the Muslims a letter requesting them not to collectively pray on the stair on which he had prayed except only one by one without proclaiming the *adhān* (call for prayer).⁴⁰

3. Dialogue for Mutual Understanding

Dialogue (Ar. *ḥiwār*) is derived from *ḥawara* which means 'retorted'. *Muḥāwarah* (dialogue) is giving answers; *taḥāwur* means mutual responses. Thus *ḥiwār* (dialogue) is mutual response and conversation with the other. According to these meanings, *ḥiwār* or dialogue is a communication process between two or more sides. When dialogue evolves from its simple form, it becomes a process aimed at the exchange of knowledge and information to arrive at joint facts.

Dialogue acquires its considerable importance from the fact that man does not realize his human self or produce knowledge without creatively interacting with

others. Adherence to creative and continuous dialogue between various parties would gradually reduce disagreement. By means of dialogue, the mind develops and grows stronger due to the exposure to diversity of thought and variation of methodology. Islam has always been keen on stressing the importance of dialogue. It has fixed rules for dialogue to ensure its success. Perhaps the most significant rule when conducting dialogue with the other is mutual respect and recognition. In this way, dialogue can be seen as the best solution to problems, as it aims to search for the truth and concentrates on specific issues.

The Holy Qur'ān calls Jews and Christians for dialogue through meeting on common terms. Thus God addressed Prophet Muhammad (p.b.u.h.) by saying, "Say: O People of the Book! Come to common terms as between us and you: that we worship none but God; that we associate no partners with Him; that we erect not, from among ourselves, lords and patrons other than God. If then they turn back, say: Bear witness that we (at least) are Muslims" (Qur'ān 3:64). If the followers of the other party refuse to listen and turn back from what they were invited to, that does not mean one can be hostile towards them. Rather, one should argue with them in a decent manner that is within the limits of decorum. God says in this connection, "And dispute you not with the People of the Book, except with means better (than mere disputation)" (Qur'ān 29:46). Obscenity with those who differ in opinion is not permissible, nor is it allowed to abuse their creeds, even if they are atheists. God says, "Revile not ye those whom they call upon besides God, lest they out of spite revile God in their ignorance" (Qur'ān 6:108). By this means the Qur'ān authenticates dialogue between people, and so it is the first religion to call for interfaith dialogue in an attempt to reach an understanding about controversial matters.

A practical example of dialogue as a principle of tolerance is when the Ṣaḥābī (Prophet's Companion) Hatib ibn Abi Balta'ah handed al-Muqawqis, the head of the Copts, Prophet Muhammad's (p.b.u.h.) letter in the year 7 A.H. Hatib said to him: "Our invitation to you to believe in the Qur'ān is like your invitation to the People of the Torah (Old Testament) to believe in the Gospel (New Testament), and every Prophet who lives among a people, these people shall be his community and they must obey him. You are one of those who are contemporaries of this Prophet. We do not forbid you from adoption of Christ's faith, but we request you to follow it. Whereupon al-Muqawqis said, "We shall look into what you say." After a lengthy argument with his patriarchs and high-ranking officials of his government, al-Muqawqis said, "I have pondered over the issue of this Prophet and found that he does not enjoin any loathsome thing nor forbid any desirable thing. He is not a straying magician, nor a lying priest. In fact, I have found with him the sign of prophethood and apostleship."⁴¹

4. Respect for Human Dignity and Rights

Islam has emphasized the principle of respect for human dignity and rights prior to its appearance in the International Declaration of Human Rights. Islam has bestowed an honour on man which is not enjoyed by any other creature. God says in this regard, "We have honoured the sons of Adam; provided them with transport on land and sea; given them for sustenance things good and pure; and conferred on them special favours above a great part of Our creation" (Qur'ān 17:70).

Requirements of honouring man include respecting and safeguarding his rights, which Islamic Sharī'ah is keen on. Islamic Sharī'ah has kept these rights safe by making

encroachment on them a crime and prescribing a definitive legal unquestionable penalty.⁴² Non-Muslims do not differ from Muslims as regards human dignity and respect for rights; the Islamic state constitution as illustrated in the *Ṣaḥīfah* (constitutional document) has guaranteed all non-Muslims civil rights. According to this constitution all the People of the Book and the Majūs (Zoroastrians) attached to them who were subjects or citizens of the Muslim state enjoyed all the rights and were required to perform all the duties of citizenship. This was unprecedented within the non-Muslim framework over fourteen centuries ago. Tolerance towards the people of the Book extended to include social coexistence with Muslims except for those who fought Muslims and expelled them from their homes. God says in this context, “God forbids you not with regard to those who fight you not for (your) Faith nor drive you out of your homes, from dealing kindly and justly with them: For God loves those who are just” (Qur’ān 60:8). According to al-Zawawi, the aspects of Muslim tolerance towards the other are good companionship, gentle treatment, respect for others, kindness, compassion and beneficence, all of which are required in daily life.⁴³

The People of the Book did not live in ghettos or isolated places; nor were they viewed as second-rate citizens. This means that Muslim life did not know the concept of minority, but instead knew the concept of nation (*ummah*) with all its constituent elements. In fact, the social care given by the Islamic state in the cases of poverty, disability or old age, covered the People of the Book exactly as it covered Muslims. The Muslims welcomed non-Muslims such as Jews, Christians, Majūs and Sabians, and enabled the talented individuals of these sects to occupy the highest state positions starting from clerical work and ending with ministerial portfolios. Moreover, members of creeds other than Islam were allowed to move freely in the economic and financial fields.⁴⁴

Practical examples of this tolerance include the provisions of the *Ṣaḥīfah* with regard to the rights and duties of the Jews: “All the Jews who are our allies shall enjoy support and equality without being wronged or allied against.”⁴⁵

Ibn Ishaq writes: “Muhammad ibn Ja‘far ibn al-Zubayr told me that when the delegation of Najran Christians came to Prophet Muhammad in al-Madinah and entered his mosque while he was performing the ‘Aṣr (afternoon) prayer, the time of their prayer also came. They performed it in the mosque of the Prophet (p.b.u.h.) and he allowed them to do that and they turned their faces towards the east when they ritually prayed.”⁴⁶

The peace with which Prophet Muhammad concluded the Najran delegation provided for the rights of Christians which were approved by Islam as follows: “To Najran and its environs, the people of its creed and to all those who espouse Christianity, in the east and west of the land, near and far, speakers of eloquent Arabic and other tongues, shall be granted God’s covenant of protection and Prophet Muhammad’s pledge of custody for their property, lives, religious confessions, be they absent or present. This also covers their community, places of worship and all their possessions be they small or large.”⁴⁷ Islam, however, did not demand anything from its non-Muslim citizens in return for all this generosity in rights, except only one duty: absolute loyalty to the state, the homeland and the *ummah* (nation or community).

Islam did not degrade the dignity of non-Muslims when it levied the Jizyah (poll tax) on them, for it also imposed Zakāt al-Fiṭr (Ramaḍān obligatory donation) or the head-tax on Muslims. Islam prescribed the Jizyah after the Tabuk military

expedition where God says in this regard, “Fight those who believe not in God nor the Last Day, nor hold forbidden that which has been forbidden by God and His Apostle, nor acknowledge the Religion of Truth (even if they are) of the People of the Book, until they pay the *Jizyah* with willing submission, and feel themselves subdued” (Qur’ān 9:29). The tolerance of Islam is exhibited by its stance on *Jizyah*, not as a motive or a target of war, but an outcome of it. In this connection, ibn al-Qayyim refuses to interpret the Arabic word *ṣaghar* as violence, servility or humiliation. He says: “All this lacks evidence and it is not the purport of the [above] Qur’ānic verse, nor has it been narrated that the Prophet (p.b.u.h.) or the *Ṣaḥābah* (his companions) had done that.” What is correct is that the meaning of the word *ṣaghar* which occurs in the Qur’ānic verse implies that the *dhimmīs* (free non-Muslims living in a Muslim country) abide by the religious rules, and pay *Jizyah*.⁴⁸ Only financially capable people are obligated to pay it; it is not required from a member of the People of the Book if he dies or becomes needy. So we find that Caliph ‘Umar ibn al-Khattab did justice to the other when he passed by an aged Jew who was begging. ‘Umar said to him, “We did not treat you justly. We levied *Jizyah* on you during your earlier manhood and neglected you in your old age.” And ‘Umar ordered that adequate pension be paid to him from the Public Treasury.⁴⁹

The historically-known stand of Prophet Muhammad and Muslims in general has proved the effectiveness of social coexistence with non-Muslims. Ibn al-Qayyim cites a practical example of this when he writes that that Prophet Muhammad (p.b.u.h.) attended their banquets, visited their sick people, participated in their funerals, visited them to offer condolences or congratulations and conducted business deals with them. Muslims followed his praiseworthy examples.⁵⁰ In litigation, the Prophet dealt with non-Muslims according to their own rulings. Al-Bukhari narrated on the authority of Abdullah ibn Dinar on the authority of ibn ‘Umar that an adultery case in which a Jew and a Jewess were involved was brought before the Prophet in al-Madinah to pass the legal punishment (*ḥadd*) on them. He asked for the Torah and ordered them to be stoned to death according to its rulings.⁵¹ This event symbolized the broad horizon of this religion and the freedom granted towards non-Muslims.⁵²

The Prophet married from people from other religions. He married a Jewess called Safiyyah, the daughter of Huyayy ibn Akhtab who was the chief of Bani al-Nadir tribe after her people were defeated in Khaybar. He cast his gown on her and placed her under his protection. He also married Mary, an Egyptian Coptic Christian woman. She was the most beautiful female in the palace of al-Muqawqis, the head of the Copts, who sent her as a present to the Prophet and she gave birth to Muhammad’s son Ibrahim who died before he became about two years old. Three years after his death, Prophet Muhammad himself died leaving Mary without any consolation except that she was a mother of one of Prophet Muhammad’s offspring. But she was comforted also by the Prophet’s commandment to the Muslims which was: “Take good care of the Copts for you owe them a covenant and blood kinship.”⁵³

5. Justice is Right and Fanaticism is Deviation

The word justice (*‘adl*) occurs about 26 times in the Qur’ān. It means equity and soundness of judgement.⁵⁴ Justice is a basic rule in Islam which God has openly enjoined together with other qualities such as beneficence. He says in this respect, “God commands justice, the doing of good, and liberality to kith and kin, and He

forbids all shameful deeds and injustice and rebellion: He instructs you that you may receive admonition” (16:90). Islam did not restrict justice to Muslims but made it include even the differing other, even if he were an enemy, because establishment of justice among people is a trust and it is the nearest action to the realization of piety. God says, “God doth command you to render back your trust to those to whom they are due; and when you judge between man and man, that you judge with justice” (Qur’ān 4:58).

God also commands His Apostle Muhammad (p.b.u.h.) to do justice, “... and say: I believe in the Book which God has sent down; and I am commanded to judge justly between you. God is our Lord and your Lord. For us (is the responsibility for) our deeds, and for you for your deeds. There is no contention between us and you. God will bring us together, and to Him is (our) final good” (Qur’ān 42:15). Justice is the basis of equality between people, making them all equal before law, regardless of their differences in any respect. The Arabic word *musāwāh* (equality) is derived from the root *sawā* which occurs, together with its derivatives in the Qur’ān about fifty times. Its meanings include straightforwardness and justice.⁵⁵ Due to its keenness on the establishment of justice and equality in human life, Islam has emphasized the following:

1. Respecting the humanity of man, whoever he may be. Thereby Islam has been a global religion.
2. Fighting all the incorrect ideas, beliefs and behaviours which lead to discrimination such as the allegation that God is the Lord of one people to the exclusion of others, and of one nation excluding other nations; or the claim that divine honour is monopolized by one particular people, the followers of one particular religion or a single civilization.

Islam also refuses to allow those with certain qualities or those of a certain race to claim nearness to God. It has made the doors of worship and obedience open to all without exception and has made piety, beneficence and righteousness the criteria of probity in this world and the hereafter. God says, “Verily the most honoured of you in the sight of God is (he who is) the most righteous of you” (Qur’ān 49:13).

Islam fights fanaticism of all forms and regards it to be a digression from what is right. For fanaticism is the refusal to accept what is right in the presence of evidence as a result of bias towards a certain side.⁵⁶ To adopt of what is wrong by following one’s own desires even if one knows for certain that it wrong is a blameworthy thing against which God has warned. He says in this context, “Were you to follow their desires after the knowledge which has reached you, then you would find neither Protector nor Helper against God” (Qur’ān 2:120).

From its very first day Islam banned tribal fanaticism and labelled it as one of the leftovers of the *Jāhiliyyah* or pre-Islamic period of ignorance. Prophet Muhammad (p.b.u.h.) said, “Leave it, for it is wicked.” He also said, “He is not one of us who beats face, tears open garments and advocates or invokes the call of *Jāhiliyyah*.”⁵⁷ In Islam, no race, colour, influence or religion has priority over others. This is what Prophet Muhammad meant when he said, “I am the foremost of (Muslim) Arabs just as Suhayb is the foremost of (Muslim) Romans, Salman is the foremost of (Muslim) Persians and Bilal is the foremost of (Muslim) Abyssinians.”⁵⁸ These earliest Muslims of their respective peoples, associated with Prophet Muhammad, represented mankind, irrespective of their races and colours. Thus we

might consider Islam to be ahead of the United Nations Organization and its subsidiary agencies like UNESCO in resisting fanaticism and racial discrimination, through the establishment of justice and equality among all people.

An example of the application of justice when dealing with the other is the Qur'ān's defense of a Jew who was accused of stealing a coat of mail. Before the Jew was convicted, Qur'ānic verses were sent down to acquit him and to prevent the Prophet from being an advocate to those who betray their trust and to seek God's forgiveness. God says on this occasion, "We have sent down to you the Book in truth, that you might judge between men, as guided by God: so be not used as an advocate by those who betray their trust. But seek the forgiveness of God, for God is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful" (Qur'ān 4:105-106).⁵⁹ There are many instances in Islam where Muslims and the People of the Book are treated equally. Examples are: equality in penalties, blood money, guarantee and castigation punishments; the equality in deprivation of inheritance between Muslims and the People of the Book: Muslims do not inherit from their relatives who belong to the People of the Book and vice versa. Islam permitted its adherents to eat the food of the People of the Book and their slaughtered animals, provided that these animals are essentially and legally permissible for being eaten by the Muslims. It also allowed Muslim men to marry women who belong to the People of the Book. God says, "The food of the People of the Book is lawful unto you and yours is lawful unto them. (Lawful unto you in marriage) are (not only) chaste women who are believers, but chaste women among the People of the Book, revealed before your time" (Qur'ān 5:6).⁶⁰

6. *Peace Is the Basis of Relations*

The word *salm* or *salām* (peace) is linguistically derived from the root "salima" which, together with its derivatives, occurs 78 times in the Qur'ān. In Arabic the word *silm* or *salm* means salvation, security, conciliation, pacification, chastity, safeguarding against disagreement, safety and peace.⁶¹ The word *salām* means surrender, obedience, submission, conciliation and abandonment of war and discord, peace and shelter.⁶² From these meanings it seems that the words *silm* and *salām* are synonymous.

Peace (*salām*) is defined as a term used in international relations to refer to the absence of hostilities. It may also be used to mean harmony, cooperation and balance in social relations, whether inside various organizations or in social groups.⁶³ In this regard Prophet Muhammad (p.b.u.h.) said, "*Salām* is one of the names of Almighty God which has been placed in the earth, so circulate peace amongst yourselves."⁶⁴ The circulation of peace means spreading security, tranquility and safety among people whether in their individual or international relations.

Islam in its nature and all implications is the keenest religion on the establishment of security and peace in the world. No one challenges this fact except those who are ignorant of Islam's rule, resentful of its system or not convinced by evidence and proofs. The name of Islam itself is derived from the root of term *salām*. The word "Muslim" is derived from *silm*. A true Muslim is one who keeps people safe from his deeds and words. God says, "... it is the cult of your father Ibrahim (Abraham). It is He (God) who named you Muslims, both before and in this (Revelation); that the Apostle may be a witness for you and you be witnesses for Mankind" (Qur'ān 22:78).

Islam has imposed peace as a practice and regarded it as one of its basics. Islam dictates self-habitation to peace through *ihrām* (ritual consecration of the pilgrims going to Makkah), for once the Muslim starts *ihrām*, he is banned, amongst other things, from cutting down plants, killing animals, shooting game and hurting anyone by hand or by mouth, even if the targeted person were his father's murderer and he met him face to face. God says in this context, "Let there be no obscenity, nor wickedness, nor wrangling in the Ḥajj" (Qur'ān 2:197). Thus, through this *ihrām* he becomes peace for himself and for others, be they humans, animals or plants.

This shows that Islam is extremely careful to disseminate peace and security: peace is therefore an Islamic aim. Accordingly, Islam emphatically states that peace is the basic element of external or international relations between Muslims and others, while war is an exception or a contingent emergency. This is the viewpoint of many Muslim jurists.

In the same context Prophet Muhammad (p.b.u.h.) says, "Don't wish to meet with the enemy, ask God for safety, but if you encounter the enemy hold on fast."⁶⁵ So fighting in Islam is a necessity, but it is the last choice which Islam offers. This judgment is taken from Prophet Muhammad's injunctions to the commanders of the Muslim army where he says, "If you meet with your polytheist enemies invite them to three choices and accept any one they offer you and refrain from fighting them. Then call them for adoption of Islam. If they favourably respond, accept that and avoid fighting them. If they refuse, ask them to pay *Jizyah* (poll tax). In case they agree, accept that, and fight them not. But if they reject, seek God's help and fight them."⁶⁶

What should be stressed here is that the motive for fighting the enemies is not their atheism and contravention to Islam with regard to faith, but is to act in self-defence in order to protect Muslim life, sanctities and territories. Thus fighting in Islam is not an end per se but a contingency restricted by legal justifications. The most significant aims include warding off aggression and the removal of injustice towards Muslims. In this context, the following Qur'ānic verse was sent down to allow fighting: "To those against whom war is made, permission is given (to fight) because they are wronged; and verily, God is Most Powerful for their aid" (Qur'ān 22:39). As regards self-defence and defence of one's kinsfolk, property, religion and homeland which is the mainstay of the establishment of religion, God says, "Fight in the cause of God those who fight you, but do not transgress limits; for God loves not transgressors" (Qur'ān 2:190). The same applies to securing the protection of the freedom of religion and creed for the believers whom others try to make abandon their religion. God says in this regard, "And fight them on until there is no more tumult and oppression, and there prevail justice and faith in God; but if they cease, let there be no hostility except to those who practise oppression" (Qur'ān 2:193).

But Islam forbids war for other than these humanitarian and reformatory purposes and does not allow war for the purposes of material or utilitarian gain under any circumstances. Islam is careful to ensure that the road to peace with the other remains open if the other asks for it and if the other is content to be subject to the conditions prescribed for peace by Islam. God says, "Against them make ready your strength to the utmost of your power, including steeds of war, to strike terror into (the hearts of) the enemies of God and your enemies, and others besides, whom you may not know, but whom God does know. Whatever you shall spend in the cause of God, shall be repaid unto you, and you shall not be treated unjustly. But if the enemy

inclines towards peace, do you (also) incline towards peace and trust in God for He is the One that hears and knows (all things)” (8:60-61). This became an Islamic approach to be followed until the Day of Judgement. This ruling has been confirmed with what Almighty God says, “If they withdraw from you, but fight you not and (instead) send you (guarantees of) peace, then God has opened no way for you (to war against them)” (Qur’ān 4:90).

Islam has also laid down other unprecedented and unemulated principles for peace and war. It has called for the observance of commitments, covenants and conditions and commands for refraining from betrayal and treachery. God says, “Fulfil the covenant of God when you have entered into it” (Qur’ān 16:91). Abu Dawud authentically narrated on the authority of Safwan ibn Salim on the authority of many sons of the Ṣaḥābah on the authority of their fathers, that Prophet Muhammad (p.b.u.h.) said: “Anyone who wronged a person who entered into a covenant with Muslims, detracted this covenantor’s right, overburdened him with or robbed him of anything, shall have me as a disputant against him on the Day of Judgement.”⁶⁷ Islam ordered compassion in war and due observance of its humanitarian rules and ethics. Islam has absolutely prohibited injustice to the other, whoever he may be, because the outcome of injustices are disastrous in this world and the hereafter. God says, “But God never wishes injustice to His servants” (Qur’ān 40:31).

The Prophet (p.b.u.h.) said, “Injustice shall be heaps of darkness on the Day of Judgement.”⁶⁸ Islam has also forbidden unwarranted killing, terrorizing or threatening the human soul. God says, “If anyone slew a person—unless it be for murder or for spreading mischief in the land—it would be as if he slew the whole mankind; and if anyone saved a life, it would be as if he saved the life of the whole mankind” (Qur’ān 5:35).

In this context, Islam regards nuclear weapons of all forms and their monopolization by a minority to be a threat to human peace and security because of the formidable destructive power of these weapons. Islam has laid down an integrated framework for the ethical rules of war. Suleiman ibn Buraydah narrated on the authority of his father that when the Prophet appointed somebody as a commander of an army or a company of fighters he enjoined him in particular to fear God and to be kind to the Muslims under his command. The Prophet used to say on similar occasions, “Start your campaign in the name and cause of God. Fight those who rejected God. Fight without being false to your trust or treacherous. Don’t mutilate victims or kill infants.”⁶⁹ This injunction was a slogan of caliphs and provincial governors, who reiterated it to the military commanders when they sent them to war. Caliph Abu Bakr commanded Yazid ibn Abu Sufian (year 18 A.H., 629 C.E.) when he bade him farewell as the commander of an army going to Syria, as follows: “You will find people who claim that they consecrated themselves exclusively to God. Leave them to act according to this claim. I shall give you ten commandments: “Don’t kill a woman, a child or an aging person. Don’t hew down a fruit tree, or destroy a flourishing place. Don’t kill a sheep or a camel except for food purposes. Don’t burn down or flood palm trees, betray your trust or be cowardly.”⁷⁰

In the light of the above principles and their applications, tolerance is a broad concept and a great value which directs the Muslim’s attitude towards the various aspects of an ideal Islamic way of life. Some of these aspects include: acceptance of the other and recognition of his religious and cultural pluralism, enabling the other

to establish his belief and respecting his places of worship, respecting the other's opinion besides observance of the rules of dialogue with him, showing regard for the other's dignity, safeguarding his rights, forging good relations, being kind, compassionate and beneficent towards him and providing him with the opportunity to participate in the development of Islamic life with all its economic and intellectual activities. The Muslim is also enjoined to behave justly towards the other to treat him as an equal in the eyes of the law when the law so commands and to adopt a peaceful way of settling disputes with him.

Nature of Tolerance Education in Islam

Islam is a divine system which has its own comprehensive concept of the universe, man and life. It aims to achieve development and progress in this world, and also invites man to prepare for the hereafter. Islam hopes to achieve its aims through education, which has been associated with Islam since the first day of its *da'wah* (preaching). The Holy Prophet was educated by God himself in the matters of Islam in order to carry out the mission. In turn, Prophet Muhammad educated the *Ṣaḥābah* (companions), who in turn educated the *Tābi'īn* (Successors) both inside and outside the Arabian Peninsula later on.

Islamic education combines belief and work and emphasizes their concomitance to each other. Islamic education makes man the pivot of all its activities; it is concerned with cultivating all dimensions of man's personality and regulating all his relations in accordance with Islam's principles and values so that he may be beneficial for his religion, his own self, his nation and humanity at large. Islamic education pays due attention to inculcating values from childhood. The purpose of Islamic education is to direct the learner's thought and correct his behaviour in accordance with Islamic principles.⁷¹

Tolerance education aims to provide the individual with knowledge, values, attitudes and skills which are needed to accept others. It aims to inculcate in pupils an awareness of religious and cultural diversity and encourages them to respect other people's views and to show kindness and compassion towards them, thus enabling them to establish their faiths. Tolerance education also exists to teach pupils how to adopt peaceful means to resolve conflicts with others in accordance with the principles and rules of Islam.

So values in Islam are numerous. They are Islamic concepts which express behavioural stands practised by the Muslim during his life in all his relations. Tolerance is one of the Islamic values which Islamic education incorporates. Hence the relation between tolerance education and Islamic education is one of a part to the whole. Tolerance education as defined above in this study is based on two main sources: the Holy Qur'ān and the Prophet's *sunnah*. Thereby it has a divine end and means, distinguishing it from others. The real educator of this education is God, the Creator and Maker of *fiṭrah* (natural disposition) and Giver of talents. It is He who enacted norms for the growth of *fiṭrah* and prescribed rules for its perfection, righteousness and happiness in this world and the hereafter.

The starting points of tolerance education in Islam are the principles on which tolerance is founded. The Qur'ān and *sunnah* have drawn an integrated framework for tolerance education in terms of aims, content and means. The Qur'ānic verses encourage man to uphold the values by following its rulings. God says, "Wherewith

God guides all who seek His good pleasure to ways of peace and safety, and leads them out of darkness, by His Will, unto the light—guides them unto a Path that is straight” (Qur’ān 5:18).

Tolerance education is gradually imparted according to Islamic values. This is one of characteristics of Islamic education which reflects the distinctive quality of Islam: when educating people it does so by bringing in new rules gradually. The first thing started by Islam was the formation of ‘*aqīdah*’ (faith) and the upbringing of man according to it, before holding man legally responsible for detailed legal rulings about *ḥalāl* (permissible) and *ḥarām* (forbidden). For educational aims, the Qur’ān was not sent down all at once but over twenty-three years, either as an answer to a question or as an explanation of an event or as general guidance. Concerning the secret of this Qur’ānic approach ‘Ā’ishah said, “The first portion to be sent down of the Qur’ān was a *sūrah* (chapter) with the details of a subject matter where Heaven and Hell were mentioned and once people tended towards Islam, what is permissible (*ḥalāl*) and what is prohibited (*ḥarām*) were revealed. But if banning alcohol had been sent down first, people would have said, ‘We will never abandon alcohol’, and had adultery been banned first, people would have said, ‘We will never leave adultery.’”⁷²

It was in the light of this educational wisdom that Prophet Muhammad (p.b.u.h.) educated a matchless generation of great men who became, with their mutual compassion, tolerance, adherence to the rulings of Islam, devoted to worship for God’s own sake.

Like other fields of Islamic education, tolerance education makes Prophet Muhammad (p.b.u.h.) an ideal example for Muslims in all his morals and in all his actions. He is the paragon whom God has chosen for educating mankind where He says, “You have indeed in the Apostle of God a beautiful pattern (of conduct) for anyone whose hope is in God and the Final Day and who engages much in the praise of God” (Qur’ān 33:21). Thanks to their constant company with him, the *Ṣaḥābah* (Companions) learned from Muhammad (p.b.u.h.) the rulings of Islam and acquired his values of kindness, beneficence, compassion, forgiving, overlooking and tolerance even towards bitterest enemies. When he faced stubborn atheists, polytheists, hypocrites and ignorant people, God commanded him to be patient and tolerant towards them and to ask God’s compassion and forgiveness for them. God says, “It is part of the mercy of God that you deal gently with them. Were you severe or harsh-hearted, they would have broken away from you: so pass over (their faults) and ask for God’s forgiveness for them and consult them in affairs (of moment) (Qur’ān 3:159). He also says, “But forgive them and overlook (their misdeeds): for God loves those who are kind” (Qur’ān 5:13).

These Qur’ānic verses and others and the holy ḥadīths (sayings of the Prophet) which explain and clarify them indicate that tolerance education is conducted within an integrated framework of knowledge, skills, different types of work and behaviour, values and attitudes. It appears, through scrutinizing the attitude of Islam towards tolerance, that the call of the Qur’ān and *sunnah* to show tolerance came within their texts that deal with judgments about various questions and issues. Tolerance education in Islam aims to incorporate numerous Islamic topics, such as, Qur’ān, ḥadīth, ‘*aqīdah*’ (faith), *sīrah* (the Prophet’s biography), *fiqh* (jurisprudence) and Islamic culture. In other words, it comes through embedding the values of tolerance in the contents of Islamic education indirectly. In the light of the above survey we can

examine the general features of the nature of tolerance education in Islam as follows:

1. Tolerance education is one of the aspects of Islamic education where the individual learns and is encouraged to acquire the value of toleration.
2. Tolerance education has six main Islamic principles which comprise pluralism, avoidance of compulsion in religion, dialogue for understanding, respect of man's dignity and rights, that justice is right and fanaticism is deviation therefrom.
3. The main sources of tolerance education are Qur'ānic verses and Prophet Muhammad's ḥadīths, which came to teach, guide and educate people in the values and morals of Islam.
4. Tolerance education takes time and effort to change patterns of thinking and behaviour. It requires first of all enhancement and consolidation of the '*aqīdah*' (belief) to create responses based on this and related rules of religion.
5. Following the manner in which tolerance values are approached in the Qur'ān and ḥadīth texts, the values of tolerance can be indirectly introduced into the school curricula and textbooks by embedding them in the school subjects.
6. The activities of tolerance education aim to enable the individual to acquire knowledge, values, attitudes and skills related to his attitude towards the other.

Strategies of Tolerance Education

By going back to the attitude of Islam towards tolerance and the principles on which it is based, we can enumerate several introductory steps to educating a Muslim on how to exercise tolerance in his various relations: his relation with God, with his own self, with the other, within the local, Muslim and international community, all of which are integrally related. Following are some of the most important of these steps and strategies:

- (a) Stressing the fact that the Muslim's belief in God requires him to recognize other monotheistic religions, their prophets and the scriptures sent down to them. A Muslim's belief in God and declaration of His unity in His names and attributes requires the Muslim believer to know these names and attributes, to act according to them and to assimilate them, which provides a basis for being tolerant to the other. These values constitute compassion, peace, forgiveness, wisdom, justice, gentleness, forbearance, generosity, hospitality, right, pardon, and pity.⁷³
- (b) Strengthening the Muslim's relation with God and his fear of Him through religious observances which develop the Muslim's religious deterrent and fear of God. For prayer is a deterrent against what is vile and reprehensible, be it deeds or words. Fasting is a type of self-discipline and a behaviour that refrains one from discord, a sort of sympathization with the deprived other, and a training of one's patience and endurance. *Zakāt* is interdependence, mutual cooperation and purification of oneself from selfishness. Pilgrimage is a devotional journey which embodies the spirit of equality, training in peace through the ritual of *ihrām*, and refraining from doing harm to the other without obscenity and viciousness.
- (c) Building confidence in the Muslim's self by highlighting the honours bestowed on him by God; he is endowed with reason and will and the task of carrying the responsibility of vicegerancy and he may, through his worship of

God, be raised to the rank of angels. This status invests him with responsibility towards the other and makes him look with honour and respect toward this other, for he is his brother because both are descendents of Adam.

- (d) Cognitive elevation of the Muslim by freeing him from ignorance and providing him with information which is based on an Islamic concept that defines his attitude towards the other and acquaints him with rights that must be respected because ignorance of the other makes the Muslim more inclined to be intolerant with him. An uninformed person cannot possibly be tolerant since intolerance finds its roots in ignorance and in fear of the unknown, whether this unknown is another person, culture or religion.
- (e) Stressing to the Muslim that his tolerance is not only information or knowledge of the other and his rights, but that it also requires practical application. God says in this respect, “O you who believe! Why say you that which you do not? Grievously odious is it in the sight of God that you say which you do not” (Qur’ān 61:2-3).
- (f) Encouraging the Muslim to force himself to accept the other and modify the stereotyped image formed about this other and to behave with him according to the principles prescribed by Islam. In this respect the start is made from what God says, “Verily never will God change the condition of a people until they change it themselves (with their own souls)” (13:11), and He also says, “Truly he succeeds that purifies it (the soul)” (Qur’ān 91:9).
- (g) Praising the sound heart which is free from fanaticism and malice and which harbours no grudge against the other simply because he is of a different religion, colour or race. This tolerant attitude would create a frame of mind that is eager to know the meanings of Islam, ready to adopt good manners, and saturated with mutual compassion and tolerance; to cultivate such an attitude is a demand of God and a preaching of the prophets. God says, speaking through Ibrahim (Abraham), “And let me not be in disgrace on the Day when we will be raised up—the Day whereon neither wealth nor sons will avail, but only he (will prosper) that comes to God with a sound and a clear heart” (Qur’ān 26:87-89). The good outcome of a sound heart is equanimity, tranquility and the feeling of safety and security.
- (h) Calling Muslims to abide by the principle of *Shūrā* (consultation) in their lives, on the basis that *Shūrā* is founded on the respectful exchange of opinions. *Shūrā* provides an opportunity to practise intellectual dialogue with the other in an endeavour to arrive at the best decisions and settle differences with him through the adoption of sound argument and proof and without suppressing him. It is not surprising, therefore, that the order of God comes to His Prophet (p.b.u.h.) to consult people: “So pass over (their faults) and ask for (God’s) forgiveness for them, and consult them in affairs (of moment)” (Qur’ān 3:159).
- (i) Inculcating the value of tolerance into the Muslim child. This can be achieved by encouraging the child to follow both the parents and the elder members of the family. The roles played by these members help to establish relations based on mutual love and tolerance, and thus the child learns to respect the other and deal with him kindly. Therefore, Prophet Muhammad (p.b.u.h.) emphasized that “The best gift a parent can give to his son is good manners.”⁷⁴ God commanded parents to protect their children from evil and heinous acts:

“O you who believe! Save yourselves and your families from a fire whose fuel is men and stones” (Qur’ān 66:6). Because of the importance of the family in building up tolerance, educationists emphatically state that it could be impossible to compensate for the educational defects which are caused by the family at a later stage when the child goes to school.⁷⁵

- (j) Acquainting the Muslim with models of the way of life followed by our venerated forefathers, including leaders, scholars and jurists, who were tolerant in their behaviour towards the other. Another commendable thing is to underline the role of one’s friends and companions in the acquisition of manners based on tolerance because peers and comrades often influence behaviour towards the other. God says in this regard, “The Day that the wrong-doer will bite at his hands, he will say: Would that I had taken a (straight) path with the Apostle! Ah! Woe is me! Would that I had never taken such a one for a friend! He did lead me astray from the message (of God) after it had come to me! Ah! The evil one is but a traitor to man!” (Qur’ān 25:27-29).
- (k) Encouraging Muslims to join the wider community and perform the duties of citizenship that requires the acceptance of and coexistence with the other, avoidance of being unjust to him, abstention from encroachment on his rights and shunning detachedness from him. This consolidates the spirit of collective work which leads to a happy life within society. Prophet Muhammad (p.b.u.h.) said in this connection, “A Muslim who mixes with other people and shows forbearance to the harm they do him is better than a Muslim who does not actively mix with people and does not show forbearance when he is wronged by them.”⁷⁶
- (l) Utilizing all means to teach and spread the values of tolerance even at the time of war, thereby acting in accordance with the ethics of war and *Jihād* (holy war) as prescribed by Islam for dealing with the other. Compassion, mercy, forgiveness and gracious pardon are all conducive to changing souls. This approach reflects the dictum of the *Ṣaḥābī* ‘Amr ibn al-‘As (may God be pleased with him) when he conquered Egypt. He said, “We are not carrying out a raid but our mission is to change the souls of people.”⁷⁷
- (m) Making the Muslim perceive that Islamic *da‘wah* (preaching) to the other is a global one. This means that Muslims should guide the other by preaching to him and persuading him by means of argument.
- (n) Spreading the principles and values of Islamic culture, which calls for tolerance, moderation and cooperation and resists all forms of fanaticism, extremism and other deviations from the straight path. In this respect many contemporary sociologists, such as Robert Merton, are of the opinion that numerous forms of deviation such as we witness today in our contemporary societies are not merely caused by individuals as such but are the outcome of the prevalent culture.⁷⁸
- (o) Acquainting the Muslim with the fact that tolerance and repudiation of violence are among the fundamental and basic constituent elements which make Islamic education an international one that is capable of saving people from the plights of wars and destructive conflicts. These constituent elements include: the unity of mankind, equality among men, respect of human rights, freedom of belief, democracy or *Shūrā*, observance of the rights of minorities, peaceful coexistence, tolerance and the rejection of violence.⁷⁹ Inculcating

these values is particularly important in this century when conflict and violence is growing more severe owing to the disputes about the interests of great powers and their expansionist policies.

It can be seen from what has been said above that the paths leading to tolerance education and its strategies are numerous and diverse.

Summary

This study has investigated the Islamic texts in the Qur'ān and ḥadīth (Prophet Muhammad's sayings) related to the subject and made use of the education literature about the same. It has highlighted the perspective of Islam on tolerance and on educating man in accordance with this. The following are the most significant conclusions of this research:

- (a) The concept of tolerance (*tasāmuḥ*) in English differs in connotation from its concept in Arabic because of the difference between the cultural origins of the two languages; for this reason the Arab writers try to work out definitions of tolerance which implicitly include the modern meanings of the word.
- (b) Tolerance differs from other concepts such as leniency and forbearance. It is the opposite of fanaticism.
- (c) Tolerance is extremely important, for it is briefly the moral response to fanaticism with all its forms. It is a sine qua non for peace among individuals and peoples and its absence means the spread of the policy of taboo or incrimination in all aspects of life.
- (d) The principles of tolerance towards the other which Islam declared and applied in life are unprecedented. They are not based on man-made ideas and philosophies, but on divine principles. To adhere to these principles is regarded as adhering to legal judgements prescribed in Islam.
- (e) The lack of tolerance which disturbs the world today can be seen in the unjust fight for grabbing lands with natural resources, and injustices perpetrated against defenceless people.

It is recommended that further research should be done to refute the falsehood and accusations raised by some people as regards the concept of tolerance in Islam.

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