

**HUMAN RIGHTS AND PEACEFUL COEXISTENCE: AN ISLAMIC PERSPECTIVE****Dr. Naseem Gul Dar\***

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**Abstract:** According to Islam, the fundamental unity of mankind was revealed at their creation. When Adam and Eve came into being, Allah (God) drew forth from their loins all the children of Adam, from the first human being to the last, and called for their testimony. The first covenant obligates people to know Allah (God), to know one another as one people, and to build the friendly relations essential for peaceful coexistence on earth. The Qur'an repeatedly emphasizes on the unity of mankind, i.e., they come from the same parents. There are, in fact many a commonality among different apparently divergent sections of mankind. Talking in specifically organic terms, every human being constitutes of the organic matter irrespective of his/her habitation. It is also a borne out fact that mankind has descended from the common parents. It is also a common observation that to changing phenomena of weather, climate and atmosphere, men, no matter where do they live, show almost common response and reaction. Interestingly enough, the collective conscience of man has always shown a common sensitivity to the different odds or evils that it faced at different stages of the development of human civilization. Man has never remained silent or passive before falsehood, injustice, oppression, persecution, etc. Even on the individual level he has never remained immune from or unaffected by the wrong deeds performed by him willy nilly. Thus, it seems that, like the 'physical behavior' of man which motivates him to guard himself against different forces of nature, mankind has a common 'moral behavior/basis/ground' according to which it responds the issues of human rights and peaceful coexistence. In this paper some key issues related with human rights and peaceful coexistence will be discussed in an Islamic perspective.

**Key Words:** Human Rights, Coexistence, Peace, Islam**Introduction**

Islam gives clear guide lines to value the rights of fellow human beings and all the religious communities. It rejects racism which is a hurdle to coexistence, it accepts diversity of faiths, it is for the fulfillment of peace, it respects freedom of mankind, and similarly respects the freedom of religious belief. Islam does not reject the existence of other religions rather recognize them and at the same time promotes harmony amongst the adherents of these varied religious traditions. This also sets and assigns the basic

role which the Muslims are expected to play among the mankind and for the mankind.

**Racism: A hurdle to Coexistence:** The Qur'an's assertion of one transcendent God, such a God, beyond gender, color, and personification, makes possible the establishment of a true, universal community among the people on earth. The Qur'an stresses on the concept of all people as children of Adam and Eve.<sup>1</sup> All people stand as equal with each other before Him. The very ideals of Islam based as they are on the worship of One God and on the injunction to humanity to seek unity based

on their common creation by that One God—these ideals move people away from the concept of a “chosen race” and of “gentile” and help them, see themselves as equally respected creations of Allah.<sup>ii</sup> One major hurdle in the way of peaceful co-existence is the false notion of racial superiority. It has already caused a great deal of bloodshed among different human races. Each tribe of the pre-Islamic Arabs claimed the greatest honor for itself on account of its pedigree.<sup>iii</sup> It is a matter of regret that even some religions that came before the prophethood of Muhammad (SAAS) aggravated the problem of disunity and inequality among mankind by laying down the principles of superiority solely on the basis of birth and religion.<sup>iv</sup> The Qur’an demolished the age-old structure of social superiority by asserting common origin of all human beings. It recognizes piety as the sole basis of nobility and superiority. Undoubtedly, this concept develops in man an optimistic attitude towards life by inspiring him to attain superiority through noble deeds. It has also made possible the realization of the universal brotherhood of nations.

Islam rejects racism and preaches alternative criteria for Allah’s people. It rejects the notion that Allah is biased or partial to a particular race or tribe, and that His Mercy is locked up to a certain group. With such profound statements in the Qur’an, Islam was able to wipe out age-old ethnocentric notions of superficial superiority and exclusive nobleness of mankind. Challenging the claims of the egocentric people who claimed that none shall enter paradise unless he belongs to their race and ethnicity, the Qur’an says: “...Say: “Produce your proof if ye are truthful.””<sup>v</sup> As to the true criteria for such a qualification, the Qur’an proclaims: “Nay,—whoever submits his whole self to Allah and is a doer of good,—he will get his reward with his Lord; on such shall be no fear, nor shall they grieve.”<sup>vi</sup> Islam discredits all kinds of chauvinism, be it racial or religious, because such chauvinism is based on nothing but selfish and idiosyncratic tendencies in the

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exclusion and lack of respect for others. Islam also insists on the individual being honoured. Almighty Allah says: “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.”<sup>vii</sup> Almighty Allah has honoured the human beings by making them respectful and not lowly. They were preferred over all other creatures and were given a distinct position in this world. Allah (SWT) thus gave them faculties to be civilized, to acquire different kinds of knowledge and to achieve development. Allah (SWT) also made opportunities for them on earth and entrusted them with responsibilities that were beyond the capability of other creatures. Almighty Allah says: “We did indeed offer the Trust to the Heavens and the Earth and the Mountains; but they refused to undertake it, being afraid thereof: but man undertook it...”<sup>viii</sup> This honour was provided since birth, as Allah created man from earth and breathed into him of His spirit, then ordered the angels to prostrate to him in honour and respect. Almighty Allah says: Behold, thy Lord said to the angels: “I am about to create man from clay: when I have fashioned him and breathed into him of My spirit, fall ye down in prostration unto him.” So the angels prostrated themselves, all of them together.<sup>ix</sup> Then, soon after that Allah provided man with the knowledge to allow him to make his life and existence according to the way Allah willed them to be as the following verse of the Qur’an states: “And He taught Adam the names of all things...”<sup>x</sup> In spite of all this, man invented different notions on his own. In the field of religion too, he kept himself confined to the tradition which, he thought, was true. This gave rise to the diversity of religious traditions or simply faiths.

**Diversity of Faiths:** The phenomenon of religious diversity is one of the questions with which today’s religious thought is faced. The existence of communities in which people of different religious traditions live together and

the expansion of social relationships and communication at the threshold of the third millennium are among the reasons for paying attention to this vital issue.<sup>xi</sup> The Qur'an argues for Divine wisdom in human diversity of culture, language, and tribes. The purpose in this diversity is for men and women to cooperate in a life of righteousness and vie with one another in the performance of righteous deeds. Goodness must not be judged, therefore, by ethnic, racial or even religious identity <sup>xii</sup> ; because, according to the Qur'an: "...Verily the most honoured of you in the sight of Allah is (he who is) the most Righteous of you...."<sup>xiii</sup> Further, Islam is not a barrier for religious coexistence. Thus, the Qur'an states:

...To each among you have We prescribed a Law and an Open Way. If Allah had so willed He would have made you a single People, but (His Plan is) to test you in what He hath given you: so strive as in a race in all virtues. The goal of you all is to Allah; It is He that will show you the truth of the matters in which ye dispute.<sup>xiv</sup>

In other verse the Qur'an states: "If it had been thy Lord's Will, they would all have believed,—all who are on earth! Wilt thou then compel mankind, against their will, to believe!"<sup>xv</sup> An examination of the texts of these two verses makes it clear that diversity is the will of Allah. The text of the aforementioned verses also makes it clear that compulsion in the matters of faith is forbidden which is also corroborated by another verse of the Qur'an which states: "There is no compulsion in religion...."<sup>xvi</sup> A critical look of the texts of the verse 5:48 manifests that the purpose of these differences is to test, what we do with the revelations and how we behave with the precepts and teachings of Islam and who strive as in a race in good deeds. Diversity of religions, nations and peoples is a test and the teachings of Islam require that we manage the differences and live a peaceful harmonious life in this world. Thus the Qur'an states: "...And did not Allah check one set of people by means of another, the earth would indeed be full of

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mischief...."<sup>xvii</sup> In other verse the Qur'an states: "...Did not Allah check one set of people by means of another, there would surely have been pulled down monasteries, churches, synagogues, and masjid, in which the name of Allah is commemorated in abundant measure...."<sup>xviii</sup> The teaching of the aforementioned two verses is very significant in the present world context. The ever lasting teachings, the universal dimension of the message of Islam of these two verses are that if there are no differences between people, if power is concentrated in the hands of one group alone, be it one nation or one race the earth would be corrupt because human beings require others to control and limit their irresponsible impulse and behavior for expansion, supremacy and dominance. Verse 22:40 indicates that the scheme of Allah is to protect monasteries, churches, synagogues and masjid which establishes pluralistic religious nature of Islam.

One must not deduce from this discussion that according to Islam every religion is true, no, it is not like that. However, Islam never intends to disturb the required and essential harmony among people of diverse religious traditions. That is why it includes strong provisions for peace and harmony.

**Peace:** Outcome of Islam is Peace, and is defined as submission to Allah, which means that peace cannot be obtained without total submission to the Lord of the universe. When Qur'an calls, "Enter Islam wholeheartedly"<sup>xix</sup>, it does not merely invite its adherents to follow the institutionalized system of Islam; it also signals to them that the real, comprehensive and long lasting peace can be achieved only through total acceptance of the System of Allah. Thus the Qur'an states that, "the System for you is the (system of) Peace"<sup>xx</sup>. And at another place the Qur'an states: "But Allah doth call to the Home of Peace...."<sup>xxi</sup> Further, at one more place Allah says:

...There hath come to you from Allah a (new) light and a perspicuous Book,—wherewith Allah guideth all who seek His good pleasure to ways of peace and safety, and leadeth them out of darkness, by His Will, unto the light,—guideth them to a Path that is Straight.<sup>xxii</sup>

Therefore, the final Guidance, the last Message, the Qur'an, is the message filled with peace and prosperity, a bounty of Allah for whole of His creation. But peace in this worldly life does not mean absence of differences it may mean so as for as the case of eternal life in Paradise is concerned. Peaceful living and peaceful coexistence are at the very center of what Islam enjoins on all Muslims. The Qur'an is very concerned with bringing an end to tribal, ethnic, and religious feuds and with promoting peaceful coexistence. So true is this that some Muslims believe the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights and the US Bill of Rights were influenced by the Qur'an.<sup>xxiii</sup> Otherwise, there were false notions of superiority and egotism on the basis of race, colour, tribe and ethnicity. Islam provided three basic elements— faith in one God (Allah), reform of self and reform of the society at large. Islam remained as a religious commitment, a socio-economic-political program, but above all a vehicle for the 'continuous reform' of the society. Almighty Allah says: "O ye who believe! Enter into Islam whole-heartedly; and follow not the footsteps of the Satan for he is to you an avowed enemy."<sup>xxiv</sup> It should be noted here that following the call to join peace by advising against following the steps of Satan means that the opposite of peace, i.e. war, is a suggestion of Satan. In order to show the importance of peace in Islam, it is sufficient to know that the term Islam itself is derived from it. It means: following God's commands and being faithful to worshipping and serving Him; this is referred to as peace. Suffice it also to know that as-Salam is one of the attributes of Allah. Hence, Almighty Allah says:

Allah is He, than Whom there is no other god;— the Sovereign, the Holy One, the Source of Peace (and Perfection), the Guardian of Faith, the Preserver of Safety, the Exalted in Might, the Irresistible, the justly Proud glory to Allah! (high is He) above the partners they attribute to Him.<sup>xxv</sup>

It is quite likely that the use of this name for Allah resides in the peaceful meaning that is being discussed. It also resides in the fact that Almighty Allah is free from imperfection and defect and of being affected by the adversities that affect others like annihilation. Almighty Allah also summons people to the abode of peace as in His saying: "But Allah doth call to the Home of Peace: He doth guide whom He pleaseth to a Way that is straight."<sup>xxvi</sup> The meaning is that of the abode of security, stability, and happiness. Some interpreters of the Qur'an explain the house of peace as paradise. One should also add that Muslims invoke peace at the conclusion of every prayer (Salah), and they exchange greetings with the same word. The prophet Muhammad's (SAAS) exalted saying states: "You will not enter paradise until you have faith, and you will not have faith until you love each other. Do you want me to point out to you something that will enable you love each other? Spread Salam (peace) amongst you."<sup>xxvii</sup> Peace, in the meaning given to it by the Islam, does not mean giving in or weakness, it means the securing of one's right. It also means the exchange of relations and services on the basis of equality and mutual respect and also on the basis of agreements which are binding to all parties.

So far as the study of Islam as a religion is concerned, it could be possible only through the texts of this religion. Although a Muslim is expected to be an expression of the Islamic teachings, but Islam could not be interpreted (misinterpreted) through the behavior of Muslims. It is so because in the prophet

Muhammad's (SAAS) time and in the first subsequent generation, most of the Muslim community lived according to the precepts of Islam. These are very comprehensive, covering every detail of life-religious observance, family, social, economical, political, cultural, and other aspects of daily life, as well as international, national and tribal relations. As centuries passed, bringing about the expansion of the Muslim communities and the tremendous growth of its resources, with various new nations joining the community and bringing with them their different backgrounds, heritages and philosophies, it was inevitable that some differences should develop between the Muslim's behavior and the teachings of Islam. There were individuals, subjects, rulers, and nations whole, though they bore Muslim names acted in ways utterly at odds with the Qur'anic precepts. Islam prohibits every kind of misbehavior, cheating, treachery, drinking intoxicants and gambling. Alas! How many Muslims nowadays live a life according to these rules? Although Truth could not be more than one, still Allah has willed that man should choose the right path on his own. For this purpose He bestowed freedom on mankind.

**Freedom of Mankind:** Islam teaches that human diversity is a sign of Allah's mercy and a portent for men of knowledge. Therefore in the Qur'an Almighty Allah states: "And among His Signs is the creation of the heavens and the earth, and the variations in your languages and your colours...." <sup>xxviii</sup> Thus, the Qur'an accepts the reality of difference and diversity within humanity. It gives the impression that diversity is part of the divine plan and recognizes the freedom of choice of mankind. Hence according to the Qur'an: "If thy Lord had so willed, He could have made mankind One People...." <sup>xxix</sup> Further more, the Qur'an recognizes the legitimate multiplicity of religious convictions and laws, as can be seen from this verse:

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...To each among you have We prescribed a Law and an Open Way. If Allah had so willed, He would have made you a single People, but (His Plan is) to test you in what He hath given you: so strive as in a race in all virtues. The goal of you all is to Allah; it is He that will show you the truth of the matters in which ye dispute. <sup>xxx</sup>

But those who are Muslims, believe in Oneness of Allah, are, therefore, told to proclaim:

Say ye: "We believe in Allah, and the revelation given to us, and to Abraham, Ishma'îl, Isaac, Jacob, and the Tribes, and that given to Moses and Jesus, and that given to (all) prophets from their Lord: we make no difference between one another of them: and we submit to Allah". <sup>xxxi</sup>

Indeed, the secret in allowing difference is that Islam advocates faith which should be based on observation, contemplation and then choice. At the same time Almighty Allah has given the opportunity to those who believe and who perform good deeds to reap requital and recompense, as opposed to those who neither believe nor perform good deeds and who should expect all the punishment that should ensue there from. It should be understood that when Islam allows freedom of faith, it also leaves the final word to difference about it to Almighty Allah who says: "...But Allah will judge between them in their quarrel on the Day of Judgement." <sup>xxxii</sup>

The notion of freedom of faith, in the view of Islam, starts out from the idea that religion is both faith and belief. Any personal and inner feeling has to be based on conviction, inclination and ease. This is because adopting Islam means that one has led and submitted himself to Almighty Allah. That it is established on the basis of freedom which Islam considers an important value, as it relates to the nature and innate instincts of man. Freedom is one of the basics of human rights and one of the most salient aspects of honoring Allah. We may even



say that the expression of honour, as already stated, is nobler than the expression of "human rights" which has become of current use lately. The term 'rights' connotes that there is taking and fighting, whereas honoring refers to the generous supply of wealth and favours. The freedom that Almighty Allah has bestowed upon man concerns his faith, work, lodging, correspondence, thinking and his expression, which form his personality and are the focus of his life, and which allow him to be productive. This is also the basis of the strong and united society where the sharpness of the struggle is subdued. The notion of struggle is used here in the sense of competition between opposing factions which try to eliminate and replace each other. This kind of fighting is a common human feature and law, which is almost general. The reason is that Islam has turned that into a competition which the Qur'an has insisted upon as in the following verse: "...And for this let those aspire, who have aspiration." xxxiii The Qur'an prohibits believers from using abusive language about other religions and faiths:

Reville not ye those whom they call upon besides Allah, lest they out of spite revile Allah in their ignorance. Thus have We made alluring to each People its own doings. In the end will they return to their Lord and He shall then tell them the truth of all that they did. xxxiv

In this verse the word 'Ummah' (religious community/ each People) and the word 'Zyanna' (beautiful and attractive/ alluring) are used together. It means that Allah made the religious injunctions (Shari'ah and Minhaj) of each community attractive and appealing to the followers of that community. Therefore, the Qur'an asks the believers respectfully to tolerate other Sharai' and Manahij and avoid any derogatory language against them. This type of command is used in many other places of the Qur'an to make sure not only that religious coexistence itself is respected but that the actions and beliefs of each religious community

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are protected. Hence the non-Muslim subjects under Muslim rule enjoyed such freedom that their educational institutions and their personal law courts were independent and free. xxxv Naturally, such a freedom could work only when there is enough choice for man to choose his faith. This brings to light the freedom of religious belief.

**Freedom of Religious Belief:** The freedom of religious belief is claimed to have been preached in Islam. The Qur'an prohibits forced religious conversion and any hindrance to religious freedom. Hence, the Qur'an states: "There is no compulsion in religion: Truth stands out clear from Error: whoever rejects Tagut xxxvi and believes in Allah hath grasped the most trustworthy hand-hold, that never breaks. And Allah heareth and knoweth all things." xxxvii Advising Muhammad (SAAS), who was very concerned that the Makkans accept Islam, Allah (SWT) tells him: "If it had been Allah's Will, they would not have taken false gods: but We made thee not one to watch over their doings, nor art thou set over them to dispose of their affairs." xxxviii The Qur'an, upholding religious freedom as a way of Almighty Allah that must be respected, says: "If it had been thy Lord's Will, they would all have believed,—all who are on earth! Wilt thou then compel mankind, against their will, to believe!" xxxix Allah's Plan is to use the human will to co-operate in understanding Him and His relations to us. This is the answer to an objector who might say: "If He is All-powerful, why does sin or evil exist in the world? Can He not destroy it?" He can, but His Plan is different, and in any case it is not for a prophet to force any one to accept the truths which he is inspired to preach and proclaim. It is to this extent that the Qur'an views the religions other than Islam.

**The Qur'anic view of Other Religions:** The Qur'an not only declares that each and every people have been provided with the Divine guidance but also insists on this essential

message being one and the same in all cases, and makes no difference between the various prophets who bore it. But one must remember the general foundation, according to Islam, is that the religion of all messengers is the same, but their legislations vary. All are inspired by Almighty Allah. One of the basics of faith in Islam is to believe that all creeds and religions are one and the same in terms of monotheism, prophethood, resurrection, and comprehensive belief in Allah, His angels, His books, His messengers, the Day of Judgement and fate whether good or bad. However, Islam recognizes the other religions only to the extent that whether they confirm the basic truth brought by the prophets (AS) which was lastly brought by Muhammad (SAAS).

**Islam's recognition of Other Religions:** Before Islam, world religions were at war with each other. Jews and Christians rejected each other violently. Their mutual persecution is documented in many books of Judeo-Christian history. Islam's unique contribution to human civilization is its recognition of the presence of other religions and its acceptance of the need to live in peace with those religions. Isma'il R. al-Faruqi, confirming this fact, says,

The respect with which Islam regards Judaism and Christianity, their founders and scriptures, is not a courtesy, but an acknowledgement of religious truth. Islam sees them in the world not as "other views" which it has to tolerate, but as standing de jure, as truly revealed religions from God. Moreover their legitimate status is neither socio-political, not cultural, nor civilizational, but religious.<sup>x1</sup>

The Qur'anic view of the Ahl al-Kitab should be understood accordingly.

#### **The Qur'anic Concept of Ahl al-Kitab:**

This concept reveals and encourages the further development of special and intimate relations among Muslims, Jews, and Christians. The

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Qur'an uses the word 'Ahl al-Kitab' (people of the Book) specifically of Jews and Christians. But the objective is to remind not only Jews and Christians but Muslims too that their religious heritage is shared and that their religious roots are similar. The Qur'an addresses prophet Muhammad (SAAS):

Say: "O People of the Book! come to common terms as between us and you: That we worship none but Allah; that we associate no partners with Him; that we erect not, from among ourselves, lords and patrons other than Allah." If then they turn back, say ye: "Bear witness that we (at least) are Muslims (bowing to Allah's Will)."<sup>xii</sup>

The shared heritage here is the concept of One Transcendent Allah and the obligation to obey certain rules in following Him. When Isma'il R. al-Faruqi was asked this question whether Jews and Christians should be called 'infidels' in Islam, he explained that the term 'infidel' is applied to a person who does not recognize Allah at all. It should not, he said, be applied to the adherent of another religion who believes in Allah.<sup>xiii</sup> Al-Faruqi further said that no Jews and Christians may be called 'infidel' a priori. However, if he or she denies Allah or Allah's unity and His transcendence, he/she may be called so.<sup>xliii</sup> However, the Ahl al-Kitab are not the only religious groups that live on earth. There are other groups as well for whom clear guide lines were provided by prophet Muhammad (SAAS) that has come down to us.

**Religions other than Ahl al-Kitab:** The use of the term 'Ahl al-Kitab' or 'People of the Book' and 'Book People' by Islam to refer to non-Muslims who live with Muslims in the same society proves that Muslims recognize the Books and the Messengers upon whom they were revealed. There are some called 'the people of protection' or 'protégés' (ahl al-dhimma or dhimmis), i.e. the people of the covenant, peace and security. This is a name that has a wider

meaning than the People of the Books, because it includes the religions of the Books as well as other religions and which were known and recognized, as the Magians, Samaritans and Sabians. Ibn Qudāma mentions that: "Al-Nakha'i, al-Sha'bi and ashāb al-ra'y say: "His (i.e. the Zoroastrian's) blood-money is like the blood-money of a Muslim, because he is a free and inviolable human being, akin to a Muslim".<sup>xliv</sup> According to Muhammad Legenhausen:

...We cannot definitively rule that the followers of religions other than Judaism, Christianity and Islam are not "People of the Book", because it is impossible to determine that the original teachings contained in these religions were not brought by a prophet of Allah. The divergence between the content of their scriptures and teachings from those of Islam do not prove that the original teachings were not in essence the same. For although the scriptures and teachings of Christianity are inconsistent with those of Islam, this is explained by the erosion (tahrif) of the original teachings, and there is no reason why a similar strategy could not be used to explain the possibility that non-Abrahamic religions might be divinely revealed religions.<sup>xlv</sup>

We may discuss and try to find out whether or not religions which were prevalent during the time of Muhammad (SAAS) are having revealed scriptures or messages and whether or not they were actually descended from any prophet but at the same time we must remember that the religions or faiths or ideologies which came after the prophethood of Muhammad (SAAS) have no basis according to Islam and therefore, have no scope for discussion on their legitimacy. Moreover, whatever the religion or faith whether Christianity, Judaism, Buddhism, Hinduism, Jainism or anything else they are now not to be followed, according to Islam. Because by the coming of final messenger and final guide that is the Qur'an all the previous messages or guidance's are now abrogated. Hence only the

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final messenger and the message which he came with are to be followed, according to Islam.

This non-Ahl al-Kitab group also includes the Indian religious communities who profess multiple religious traditions with a profound similarity.

**Indian Religions:** There is no doubt that Allah (SWT) sent prophets (AS) to people of India. But there is no mention of any Indian prophet or scripture in Qur'an. There are some books, written by Muslims who tell that Adam (AS) was sent down in India and lived herein, and from here his offspring spread throughout the world. Therefore human beings are called Adami (attributing to Adam).<sup>xlvi</sup> There are many Muslim scholars according to whom Hindu deities like Ram Chandra and Krishna should be taken with respect and they should not be blasphemed because they might had been prophets or righteous persons. Ibn Hazm<sup>xlvii</sup> considers the Brahmans as deists and regards the religious traditions of India and the Far East in general as a corrupted form of the religion of Sabaeans.<sup>xlviii</sup> Some Sufis have speculated that the sacred texts of Hinduism were based on divinely revealed scripture, and yet others have advanced the hypothesis that the Buddha was the prophet Dhu al-Kifl.<sup>xlix</sup> There are the religions like Buddhism and Jainism in India and their founders are considered to be Sidhartha Goutama or Gautama Buddha and Maha Vira, they too must not be defamed because may be they were prophets of Allah or some pious persons and if not still it will create an atmosphere where every one will abuse the respectful personalities of other faiths which is prohibited for Muslims as per the clear guidelines of the Qur'an are concerned. But, in the sight of Muslims, as for as Sikhism, Bahaism and Qadiyanism etc. are concerned, their founders surely were not prophets or righteous persons. Because, according to them (Muslims), prophet Muhammad (SAAS) is the



last prophet and messenger of Allah. Nevertheless, adherents of all these faiths or religions need not be expelled from the platform of peaceful coexistence rather they too are

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included in it and tried to be understood and at the same time they are to be made understand what Islam is.

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xlviiIbn Hazm was a Muslim scholar and writer of eleventh century.

xlviiiSee Abu Muhammad 'Ali ibn Ahmad ibn Sa'id ibn Hazm, *Kitab al-Fasl fi al-Milal wa al-Ahwa' wa al-Nihal*, Cairo: al-Matba'ah al-Adabiyah, 1317-1321 A.H. / 1899-1903, pt.1, pp. 34-48, 69-78, 113-116.

xlixSee Nasr, Seyyed Hossein, "Islam and the Encounter of Religions" in *Sufi Essays*, 2nd ed., Albany: State University of New York Press, 1991, pp. 123-151.