

Bununla birlikte Goldziher din ile tedeyyünü birbirinden ayırmamakta, Yahudilik ve Hıristiyanlıkta'ta dini belirleme yetkisine sahip kılınan "din adamı" kavramını Müslüman âlimlere de yüklemektedir. Ayrıca o İslâmiyet'in oluşumunun Hz. Peygamber'in hayatından sonra da birkaç asır devam ettiğini ve bu süreçte kişilerin kendi görüşlerine uygun hadisler ürettiklerini düşünmektedir (bk. Tahsin Görgün, "Goldziher, Ignaz", *DiA*, XIV, 105-11). Böyle bir yargıyla İslâm düşünce tarihini okumaya girişen yazar, sahip olduğu bu tür düşüncelerden dolayı olsa gerek fıkıh âlimlerinin yaptıkları ictehad faaliyetlerini yanlış yorumlamaktadır.

Kitabın bütününde çeşitli yerlerde benzer bir bakış açısının ürünü şeklinde görülebilecek ifadelerle karşılaşmak mümkündür ki sanırım bu, temelde yazarın oryantalist bakış açısından kaynaklanmaktadır. Bu tür zaaflarına ve bazı bilgi yanlışlıklarına rağmen eser, aradan geçen uzun yıllara rağmen bugün dahi sahasında temel bir konumda bulunması sebebiyle özellikle Zâhirîlik üzerine çalışma yapacaklar için, verdiği çok yönlü bilgiler ve tartışmalar ile referans olma niteliğini korumaktadır.

Hülya Alper

### **Tolerance and Coercion in Islam: Interfaith Relations in the Muslim Tradition**

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The issue of tolerance in Islam, as well as the concept of the *dhimmi* in Islamic jurisprudence, has attracted the attention of many contemporary Jewish scholars. I dare say that as the minority problem is one that has perhaps seen the most flow of blood, especially in the Middle East, any attempt that can make a small contribution to the solution of this problem has to be welcomed. I consider this book to be a significant contribution to the problem of coexistence.

Islam came into being in an area populated not only by Christians and Jews, but also by Zoroastrians, Manichaeans and Hindus. While expanding geographically as a governing power from the Maghreb to India, Islam had to issue rulings for the adherents of these faiths. Considering the religious atmos-

phere of those times, compared to other great traditions, Islam was a “tolerant” religion. It was not political necessity or social conditions that led Islam to be tolerant to others. Rather, it was the religion of Islam itself and its rules and regulations that were ordained by the Prophet which occasioned tolerance towards the adherents of other traditions. This book is thus a detailed study of the issue of inter-religious relations in their historical context. Several matters have been taken into consideration, including the thorough investigation of the scope and content of the *dhimmi* category, as well as its application to the Ahl al-Kitab, namely the Jews and Christians, and the adherents of other faiths, such as Hindus and Zoroastrians.

In modern times, several Muslim intellectuals have tried to extrapolate many classical concepts in order to facilitate some frequently used approaches in inter-religious relations, such as inclusivism or pluralism. To perceive, for instance, the possibility of developing a modern concept of citizenship or pluralism based upon the concept of the *dhimmi*, one has to know the historical context and the scope of application of the very concept itself. Leading us to the roots of Muslim practices with regard to Jews and Christians, this book seems to make an important contribution to the modern discussion of the religious tolerance of Islam. It also opens up discussion about the possibility of interpreting these concepts in order to respond to the needs of modern times. The tolerant nature of Islam, as it appears in history, can provide a sound base for developing certain approaches which are relevant to the modern context of inter-religious relations.

The book deals with several significant issues. It pays considerable attention to the evolution of Islamic law and indicates the impact of the Jewish and Christian communities on this evolution. The issue of praying in the direction of Jerusalem and the so-called constitution of Madina are examined in the context of the Muslims’ relations with the Jews of Madina. Another issue taken into consideration is the theme of Islam’s claim of superiority over other religions and its impact on the application of the concept of *dhimmi*; that is, what kind of role the principle “Islam is exalted and nothing is exalted above it” played in determining the hierarchical status of religions, and how exactly did it affect Muslim behavior towards non-Muslims, in particular Jews and Christians? These issues were thoroughly examined in early *fiqh* literature.

Having read through these detailed investigations, we now come to the status of the *dhimmi* and whether or not they were treated equal before the law. Various answers are given to this question. Just a glance at the practice of *qisas* against the *dhimmis* suffices to help us understand this matter. For

instance, Abu Yusuf ordered *qisas* against a Muslim who killed a *dhimmi*. Although this issue differs from school to the school, as the author proclaims, the equality principle was implemented. The same applies to the issue of blood money (*diya*). Investigated also, in addition to the concept of the *dhimmi*, are the scopes and the applications of the concepts that define inter-religious relations in Islamic law such as *ahl al-ahd* and *ahl al-harb*, and the circumstances under which these statuses were given or taken back. The status of Zoroastrians and the Sabians are also dealt with.

Another important matter that is examined is that of religious freedom in the context of tolerance and coercion, whereby the praxis of the rule “there is no compulsion in religion” (Qur’an 2:256) in its historical circumstances is taken into close consideration. In order to determine the meaning of this verse, various *tafsir* books are examined, and the situation of the Jews of Madina in relation to this rule is also dealt with. The author also tries to answer this crucial question about whether the prohibition of religious coercion applies to all non-Muslims or only to some. We learn from this book that some scholars have claimed that this verse has been abrogated (*mansukh*). Nevertheless, as pointed out in the book, as far as the *dhimmis* (Jews, Christians and Zoroastrians) are concerned, it was concluded they would not be forced to embrace Islam if they agreed to pay *jizya* or *kharaj*. As stated in the book, despite the verse “there is no compulsion in religion,” some Muslim traditionalists and *fuqaha* hold that certain groups of people, such as apostates, women, children, prisoners of war, and *harbis* may be forcibly converted to Islam. Having examined the issue of religious freedom, the author moves on to the question of apostasy (*irtidat*). The circumstances under which the execution of an apostate would occur, the ruling with regard to female apostates and the *hadith* collections on this issue are surveyed.

As for interfaith marriages, the author frankly appreciates Islam’s lenient attitude. As indicated in the book, Islam is substantially different from Judaism and Christianity on the matter of interfaith marriages; the religious laws of the latter two traditions have a negative attitude towards religiously mixed marriages. During the discussion, various issues are taken into consideration. Is it possible, for instance, for a *dhimmi* to marry a Muslim woman? Would such a marriage be valid? Some schools of jurisprudence prescribe a severe punishment for a *dhimmi* who weds a Muslim woman. Again, Islamic traditions preclude any possibility of a marital relationship between a Muslim woman and non-Muslim man. Islamic law, in general, endorses the annulment of a marriage between two unbelievers in which the wife embraces Islam and the

husband refuses to follow suit. Precedents of interfaith marriages are set by the Companions of the Prophet; Uthman ibn Affan and Talha ibn Ubayd-Allah married Christian women, while Hudhayfa ibn al-Yaman married a Jewess. The book gives quite useful details on the issue of interfaith marriage. It is to be noted that such marriages are not endorsed by every jurisprudential school. For instance, Malik ibn Anas did not approve these kinds of marriages, while Ahmad b. Hanbal, though admitting their permissibility, expressed his disapproval. As for the case of Zoroastrian women, although they are considered *dhimmi*, they are not classified as People of the Book. Consequently, Muslim men may not marry Zoroastrian women. This book has successfully introduced a detailed discussion on various issues with regard to the adherents of other faiths; but it is the governing idea of the book upon which we cannot agree.

Many Christian and Jewish orientalis use every opportunity to express the idea that is implicit in their minds - that Islam stemmed entirely from Christian and Jewish origins. Conducive to such a purpose, Friedmann underlines some practices taken from the Jewish tradition. The fact is that Islam did not hesitate to accept traditionally Jewish practices, such as the fasting during the month of Muharram. Yet it is subtle dishonesty to question the originality of Islam by relying simply on these kinds of individual practices. Those who believe that Islam simply came into being through Prophet Muhammad's amalgamation of Christianity and Judaism must frankly pose themselves this question: If this was the case, or if creating a religion like Islam is after all within the boundaries of human capacity, why, after Islam, has there not appeared a religion that is greater and more influential than Islam for over one thousand four-hundred and thirty years? This question still awaits an answer.

There is another issue. Although the author accepts Islam's egalitarian approach towards the prophets and values it as more considerate than both Judaism and Christianity, he eventually states that 'the egalitarian approach in prophetology was, however, not destined to last...Islamic tradition soon began to assert that Muhammad was the best of creation and consequently worthier than any other prophet' (p. 196). I think the author simply misunderstands the Islamic doctrine of prophethood. Prophets constitute a special genus among people. In their prophethood, in their belonging to this exceptional class, Muslims cannot differentiate among them. A Muslim cannot declare that Moses was a prophet whereas Jesus was not, like the Jews. But, the prophets of course differ, owing to their messages and the revolution their prophethood carried out in history. In this sense, a Muslim believes that Mu-

hammad is superior to other prophets, just as the Jewish tradition understands Joshua is not equal to Moses.

One of the basic arguments underlying this book is that the social context in general and the Muslim community in particular have determined the nature as well as the content of the attitudes of Islam towards other adherents of religions. Such an approach again stems from the denial of the divine roots of Islam. If the approach to other prophets was determined by the Muslim community, as indicated in the book, it is more likely that due to their new religious identity Muslims would have been more willing to deny all other prophets except Prophet Muhammad, which would have had consequences regarding the perception of the *dhimmi* concept. No religion other than Islam accepts the religious identities of others. No religion other than Islam tolerates the existence of other religions under its dominion. One only needs to recall the fate of the Jews and Muslims in Spain under Christian rule and cast a sight upon Muslims living in Gaza under Israeli dominion. Had there not been a prophetic injunction with regard to Jews and Christians, or if Islamic rules had been determined by its community or a historical process, one would not have found any Christians or Jews in the lands under Muslim rule.

In short, the basic attitudes toward Jews and Christians and the rules and regulations with regard to *dhimmis* have been divinely ordained and the historical process did not play a decisive role in the nature of these rules. Without a doubt, these rules have been applied and shaped by the Muslim community through the historical process. The milieu of the times, to be sure, has played a decisive role in shaping Muslim attitudes toward *ahl al-dhimmah*. In order to determine Islam's religious value in this field, one only need compare Islam with Judaism and Christianity and the Muslim community with Jews and Christians. In that respect, as endorsed by the author, Islam exceeds both Judaism and Christianity. The significant undertaking on our part this century is the need to seek a new approach to the adherents of other faiths. Muslims cannot confine themselves either to the historical unfolding of these rules or to the historical applications of them. The Quran and the Sunnah have given us the sacred principles and the history of the Islamic tradition has given us the applications of these principles. The task awaiting Muslims today is to aptly develop these lenient rules for modern circumstances from within the same sacred principles, observing their applications as implemented throughout history.

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