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Foreword

The interaction between Muslims and non-Muslims has been a matter of discussion amongst the Muslim scholars since the beginning of Islam. On the one hand, many Muslims have justified their interaction with non-Muslims based on some verses of the holy Quran and traditions. On the other hand, some Muslim groups not only did not consider the ethical treatment in their interactions with non-Muslims but also they have justified their harsh, offensive and non-ethical behaviour. In other words, many of the Muslim conflicts with non-Muslims stem from the problem of justifying the issue. Therefore, resolving the conflicts is one of the rationales for studying the problem. That is why this book, surveying the Quran and traditions, strives to analyze the various views of the commentators of the Islamic texts in this regard.

Another reason for the significance of studying this problem is its relation with the interfaith dialogues. If the necessity of ethical behavior in interaction with non-Muslims is proven in

the holy Quran and traditions it facilitates the interfaith dialogue. In fact, the dialogue will be based on the sacred sources, then, and develop in all over the Islamic communities. On the contrary, if it is not proven there will not be any commitment for Muslim communities to have the interfaith dialogue with people of other religions.

Therefore, in this book, the author studies, first, some technical words related to the problem in the Islamic texts including Kafir, the People of the Book, Mudarah and better argument. Then, concerning the interaction with non-Muslims, the Muslim scholars' views are categorized into two general views.

In the first view, which is prevailing amongst the Muslim scholars, there is no difference between Muslim and non-Muslim. I. e. as Muslims have to interact with other Muslims based on the Islamic teaching they ought to do with non-Muslims as well. There are many evidence in the Quran and hadiths for this view, which are presented in separate parts: social and ethical interactions, economical interactions and political interactions. Based on this view, all the Islamic teachings including ethical, economic etc. should be applied equally while interacting with Muslims or non-Muslims. The conduct of the prophet (SA) and the infallible Imams (AS) reinforce this view. The ethical, economic and political interaction of the prophet with Quraysh polytheists as well as the Jews and Christians are given as examples in this regard.

A separate chapter studies the other views regarding the problem. Some Muslims mix the views in this regard and some of them finds it a conditioned issue.

Then, the author presents the critiques about the problem and argues for the preferred view.

Analyzing the qital and jihad verses and justifying them. Beside the evidence for the first view is another aspect, which is discussed in this book. At last, several fixed and firm principles in Islam, which are the bases for the preferred view, are introduced. Some of these principles are principle of essential human honour, principle of coexistence, principle of free will in accepting any faith or religion, principle of fulfilling the contracts etc.

Publishing this book, the Research Institute of Urwatul Wuthqa is honoured to meet the international intellectuals' need on controversial Islamic issues as one of its missions. Accordingly, I would like, here, to thank the author, Mr Alizadeh Mohammadi and all the Institute's cooperative members who helped the work be published, particularly the editor, Mr Mohammad Reza Peysepar who served the text, the author and the readers for a better appreciation by producing a technical edition of the manuscript.

Preface

Religion is a fact that regards the common point of its followers. That is why religions always emphasize on the interfaith integrity. Emphasizing on the inter-religion integrity is equal to emphasizing on the differences between believers and non-believers. Therefore, religion emphasizes on interfaith integrity as much as it emphasizes on the differences existing between the followers and non-followers of the religion. It means that religion makes a strong border between its followers and others so that the interactions of the followers of a certain religion with those who are inside the religion are different from the interactions with those who are outside the religion. The case is the same with the religion of Islam. Muslims and non-Muslims are two important concepts that clarify the borders of interactions; Interactions in different realms: social, moral, political and financial. In other word, determining the borders of interactions by these two concepts, Muslims and non-Muslims, might mean that a certain action is an immoral action towards Muslims and

the same action is a moral action towards non-Muslims.

Islamic sources are full of moral, social, political and economic teachings and laws. These teachings give us a list of things that we should and should not do. For example, Allah (S.W.T) in the Holy Qur'ān prohibits us from backbiting: "do not spy nor let some of you backbite others"(49:12) and in another verse He command to speak kindly with others: "speak fair and kindly to the people." (2:83)

Interaction between Muslims and non-Muslims has a history as long as the history of Islam itself. Islamic scholars and jurists have discussed this issue from various aspects and sometimes their views are completely in conflict with each other. They give us several evidences from the Holy Qur'an and narrations for proving their views.

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