

Upon Common Values in Religions and Qur'anic Approach

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Abstract

In this paper, it will be shortly discussed the attitude of the Qur'an on the common values in its messages for "People of the book" and in the process of communicating with them and the role of this attitude in setting up proximity to interlocutor. Shared values play a significant role in establishing close ties and good relations with the people of various intellectual and religious backgrounds. It is the duty of each partner in dialog to put these values forward. This is exactly what the Qur'an does when addressing the people of the book. This approach provides a ground for a genuine dialog through which the Qur'anic truths can be told. This, in a sense, is an attempt to keep the dialog and therefore invitation going to convey the Qur'anic message. By following this strategy, the Qur'an aims to bring the people of the book to truth rather than to keep them away from it. This article attempts to analyze, from the point of view of religious education, the ways in which the Qur'an refers to the shared values in presenting its message to its addressee.

The history of mankind is full of wars and many of these wars are based on religious reasons. However, it is not possible to say that wars play a positive role in the spread of religions and development of societies. In fact, the spread of religions and the development of societies occur more in times of peace. Because individuals and communities become in a closed position against the propaganda and indoctrination, even if it contains the truth, in moments of fear and repression. Therefore, peace is a case in favor of religions too. This fact clearly demonstrates the need for the achievement and the protection of intercommunal peace. Such a peace is closely related to the view of religions toward each other because one of the main variables that determine behavior and attitudes of societies is religion.

Wars based on religious grounds are not caused by religion itself. Against another religion, the religion itself can not be represented in any discourse in this direction and also this does not suit to the nature and the purpose of religions. So what is the reason? Here, we want to address the view of the Qur'an about other religions, especially Abrahamic religions and the values of other religions, and their importance in terms of inter-communal peace.

The establishment of inter-communal and inter-religious dialogue and communication, and its continuity, depend on the viewpoint of religions and the attitude of its members toward each other and the tolerance they will show to each other.

All religions have set some promises for human beings and the promise of a happier life.

Religions are alternative systems and sets of principles that emerged as a result of dissatisfaction with the current situation and of humanity's moral and social crises. Therefore, religion sets ways of solutions to the problems and the principles that regulate behaviors. In this process, religions also consider human, psychological and pedagogical realities.

The existence of similar and common points among religions, and especially the Abrahamic religions, is natural and inevitable (cf. Küçük, 1998: 31 and Tümer–Küçük, 1993: 396) because the source of the Abrahamic religions are the same.

The shared values in the Qur'an

Holy Qur'an accepts that there are some common points between divine religions. This is expressed in some verses of Qur'an. Now, Let's look at some verses on the subject:

"O mankind! We created you from a single (pair) of a male and a female, and made you into nations and tribes, that ye may know each other (not that ye may despise each other). Verily the most honored of you in the sight of Allah is (he who is) the most righteous of you. And Allah has full knowledge and is well acquainted (with all things)". [Hujuraat:49/13]

And dispute ye not with the People of the Book, except in the best way, unless it be with those of them who do wrong: but say, "We believe in the revelation which has come down to us and in that which came down to you. Our God and your God is One; and it is to Him we submit (in Islam)." [Ānkabut:29/46]

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)." [Āli-Īmrān: 3/64]

"Of the People of the Book are a portion that stand (for the right): They rehearse the Signs of Allah all night long, and they prostrate themselves in adoration." "They believe in Allah and the Last Day; they enjoin what is right, and forbid what is wrong; and they hasten (in emulation) in (all) good works: They are in the ranks of the righteous." "Of the good that they do, nothing will be rejected of them; for Allah knoweth well those that do right." [Āl-i-Īmrān: 3/113-115] These verses indicate that there are those the owner of the sample behavior who may be taken as model in People of the Book. This approach has brought rapprochement and dialogue between religions to top, maybe even though one-sided (cf. Köylü, 2001:101-102).

Common points emphasized by the Qur'an can be divided into three parts:

First, the issues of belief and faith. In other words, values are believed. This can be divided into two: *First*; Belief in Allah. It indicates that all people believe and accept the same God and calls all people to believe in Allah (God), the One and Only (unique). *The second* is Belief in the Book. From time to time, The Qur'an refers to the previous divine books (as Holy Bible and the Torah).

Second, prophets and other historical individuals are beloved and accepted. There are some prophets, such as Abraham and Adam, that are loved by the members of all divine religions (Diraz, 1994: 240). There are also some of the same beloved historical prominent religious figures that are believed to have been brought by the Prophets. The Qur'an refers to previous generations of religion and their religious leaders.

Thirdly, traditional values and understandings.

The Qur'an essentially takes a negative attitude against the tradition and the traditional structure. Even in addition to being corrective, it is possible to describe Islam based on the Quran as an "innovation movement" and in this sense the a "revolutionist movement". The Qur'an puts forth the institution of Prophethood as an institution against tradition in 51 verses. And also it indicates that the tradition and the traditional understanding away from criticism is the main factor located on the basis of the "shirk" (running partner to Allah). Because there is a tendency in the structure and the creation of people to accept without thinking about what their fathers and forefathers did. For that reason, Shirk (running partner to Allah) is a religion of tradition and ancestry (Öztürk, 1995: 226).

However, the Qur'an does not completely reject tradition and the lines of the past. This negative attitude toward tradition is not a complete rejection of tradition, but an attitude against being blindly connected to traditional values. It selects positive lines of tradition and the aspects that meet the principles of its own and uses and considers it as an encouraging factor to unite at a common point.

When it is necessary, it has made positive references to some elements of tradition (cf. Baqarah, 2/170; ayrıca bkz. Máide, 5/104; Luqmân, 31/21; Şuarâ, 26/74-76).

For instance: “*And when it is said to them, “Follow what God has revealed,” they say, “We will follow what we found our ancestors following.” Even if their ancestors understood nothing, and were not guided?”* [Baqarah: 2/170]. According to this verse; "adherence to tradition" is not absolutely rejected, it is just attracted attention on their mistakes (just on the issues inherited might be wrong (not to think, to accept the traditional thinking as it is without criticism). And sometimes values or the lives of the ancestors can be the meeting point. Because human being can access to the truth and he can remain in the line as long as uses his mind. The verse of “*There is no god but He. He gives life and causes death—your Lord and Lord of your ancestors of old*” [Dukhân: 44/8] is expression of such a meeting and call for reconciliation.

As a result, the initiation and maintenance of human relations substantially depends on establishment and recognition (knowing) of the ground of these relations and is to be considered as factors that make up the ground during the relations. This point is more important in the activities such as religious education and training aims to influence people particularly.

Emphasis of the Qur’an on the common points can be considered as a conciliatory attitude of it to the interlocutors. Reconciliation and peace inter-civilizations depend on inter-faith reconciliation, inter-religious dialog and peace, because religion is usually a determining factor in the formation of inter-communal cultural differences and the borders.

Then, religious education programs and religious educators have important roles in ensuring peace and tolerance between the followers of different religions and contributing to universal peace. These roles are, in general, to take into consideration the values of different religions, to introduce them objectively and to be respectful to different faiths.

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