

IS ISLAM ANTISEMITIC?

Is it true that all Jews are cursed and we Muslims should not have friendship with them?

- Many misconceptions about this subject have come out of the lack of knowledge of Islam by others, and have to be cleared.
- The thought that Islam is antisemitic is not at all true. Islam is declared as a religion of peace and Justice. Any war or punishments in the Sharia Law are formulated by the Supreme Creator to maintain that peace. This is because the Quran is the latest Scripture sent by our Creator for the guidance of mankind, and HE HIMSELF has promised to preserve it from corruption, till the end of time.

(إِنَّا نَحْنُ نَزَّلْنَا الذِّكْرَ وَإِنَّا لَهُ لَحَافِظُونَ) — al-Quran,15: 9

- If all follow its guidance, there is no doubt that man can live in peace and security. ^{2: 38}
- When we ponder over the verses, nowhere in the Quran or Hadith (the way of our Prophet) does it say that we should not have friendship with Jews or, in that matter, with any other people who do not follow our religion. On the other hand, many of the verses in the Quran provide guidance for us to show love and respect towards others.
- Allah declares and “curses the one who is unkind to the orphan, who does not encourage the feeding of the poor, is heedless of what he says in his Prayer, and those who pray only to be seen (show off), while, when it comes to helping his neighbour, he turns away.” Sura Al-Maun 107
- Allah even declares: “... [Under certain conditions] lawful in marriage are chaste women from among the believers and chaste women from among those who were given the Scripture before you, when you have given them their due compensation, desiring chastity, not unlawful sexual intercourse or taking [secret] lovers.” - Surah Maidah, 5: 5

IF THEY WERE CURSED, WOULD SUCH MARRIAGES HAVE BEEN ALLOWED?

- The Quran explains to us that all the Prophets sent on earth brought the same message: “Worship NONE other than the Supreme Creator”: who Created the Universe and provides all comforts for mankind.
- And, HE declares that being kind and merciful to those fellow beings, whether human beings or animals, is the SECOND criterion that would bring man closer to their LORD, and grant them the greatest reward of Heaven, where there will be no rancour or evil.
- Thus, it is not enough if we have a Muslim name or even if we are saying our five times prayers.
- We will certainly be punished if we show hatred or cause harm to any other life, unjustly.

HE further helps us to differentiate between good deeds and evil.

For example, HE has forbidden dealing with Riba, committing Zina (illegal sex), causing corruption, cheating others in measure and weight, usurping others' property unjustly, etc.

This concept of Monotheism and its characteristics has been recorded by all other religions, and

the latest were the Jews and Christians, whose scriptures are still present among them.

- The problem lies in the fact that these Scriptures have been interpolated and changed according to the desires of those who presented them to the common people. - Surah Al-Baqarah, 2: 79

- Thus, some of the Jews became arrogant and considered themselves the chosen people who had the right to behave as they wished towards others. Their heart became hardened, and they did not feel mercy or pity towards their fellow beings. – 2: 74.

It is such Jews who defiantly caused corruption in the land, and looked down upon others, who were cursed by GOD (Allah in Arabic).

However, Allah declares that not all the people of the Scriptures were evil.

✓ “They are not [all] the same; among the People of the Scripture is a community standing [in obedience], reciting the verses of Allah during periods of the night and prostrating.” 3:113

- لَيْسُوا سَوَاءً ۗ مِنْ أَهْلِ الْكِتَابِ أُمَّةٌ قَائِمَةٌ يَتْلُونَ آيَاتِ اللَّهِ آنَاءَ اللَّيْلِ وَهُمْ يَسْجُدُونَ -

✓ “And among the People of the Scripture is he who, if you entrust him with a great amount [of wealth], he will return it to you. And among them is he who, if you entrust him with a [single] silver coin, he will not return it to you unless you are constantly standing over him [demanding it]. That is because they say, ‘There is no blame upon us concerning the unlearned [who are not Jews].’And they speak untruth about Allah while they know [it].” 3: 75

Hence, it is clear that it is those who have ignored the commands of Allah and who arrogantly disobeyed HIM who have been reprimanded and threatened with dire consequences. We can find this true when we ponder over the meaning of the words of the Quran. ¹

When we go through the life of our Prophet ﷺ we come to know how, in various circumstances, he and the later Caliphs stood for Justice, and judged the people according to their wrongdoing, no matter to what religion they belonged to.

1. A Jewish woman found joy in throwing garbage upon the Prophet while he passed by, and suddenly she stopped doing so. He enquired and, finding her ill, offered to help her.

2. In the case where a Muslim blamed a Jew for having stolen his armour, our dear prophet ﷺ, on finding the Jew innocent, ordered the Muslim to be punished and acquitted the Jew.

3. When Umar (ral) went on one of his rounds and found an old Jew begging in the streets, he immediately ordered his men to help him and provide for his food and shelter. He reprimanded his men for having left the Jew to beg.

¹ The Holy Quran, King Fadh publications, Tafseer No. 621

4. When the Prophet ﷺ travelled to Madinah and was made Head of the State, he made a treaty with the Jews based completely on fairness and equal opportunities. It is when they betrayed the trust and broke the treaty did Prophet ﷺ commanded them to leave the city.

5. The betrayal of these Jewish tribes reached such an extent that they had to be fought against; to retain the peace they had obtained in Medina, after having suffered the tortures of the Quraish in Mecca.

6. Here Allah orders the Muslims to fight against them till peace is restored. Yet, there were conditions laid by which the enemy should not be tortured, women and children should not be harmed, fruit trees should not be destroyed, etc. While this is the norm in any war, Islam strictly forbids such outlandish behaviour and orders Muslims to be kind to those who seek refuge and take them where they can hear what Islam truly is, and then take them to a place of safety.

Therefore, we should realise that not all Jews are cursed in the Quran.

We are not forbidden to befriend them, unless there is fear of their betrayal of our ranks during war.

I think that no country would leave unpunished anyone who betrays their country. ²

I hope the world will understand the Greatness of Islam.

Dr. THAHIRA IQBAL
DHMS/ BAIS/ MAIS (Alimah)