

Chapter Eight: Tolerance vs. Extremism

Propagating tolerance and fighting extremism are a major theme in the Egyptian school textbooks. Emphasis is placed on the promotion of Muslim-Christian relations inside Egypt and on fighting the phenomenon of extremism in religion. The textbooks highlight, in this context, the tolerant aspects of Islamic history and law as far as non-Muslims are concerned. However, unlike most of the state-issued books, those issued by the Al-Azhar Religious Institute include as well non-tolerant aspects of Islamic law.

Fostering Tolerance and Fighting Extremism Is an Educational Goal

This is a motif expressed in the books. Following are excerpts from the introductory parts of various books, especially those of religious education, as well as quotations from maxims appearing on the back cover of many books. Another source advocating this approach are the guiding notes at the beginning of various lessons. One source speaks of the need to use the media as a tool for attaining this goal.

The state has developed education and supplied the schools with modern educational means and methods. It has made the students aware of the problems of [their] environment and [of the need to] work for their solution, instilling the correct religious values [in their minds] – away from extremism and terrorism, so that everyone will live in peace and security...

Our Beautiful Language: Grammar and Grammatical Exercises, Grade 7, Part 2, (2002) p. 27

The essence of the focus in this curriculum is [on] helping the students to understand the Islamic perception of theology, the universe, man and life, a perception that will preserve their human distinctiveness and the distinctiveness of their society, and protect them from addiction, extremism, violence and from other types of deviance...

Creating a human being who rejects... fanaticism, extremism and everything that tears down the pillars of social structure...

Introduction, Islamic Religious Education, Grade 7, Part 1, (2002) pages not numbered

The essence of the focus in this curriculum is [on] helping the students to deepen their Islamic perception and their understanding of the matters of their religion, Islamic values and social systems, as well as emphasizing the belief in the divine mystery and the importance of jihad in God's cause. This perception is the one which will preserve their human distinctiveness and the

distinctiveness of their society and will protect them against slipping into harmful conduct such as extremism, violence, addiction, and other types of deviance.

Introduction, Islamic Religious Education, Grade 8, Part 2, (2002) pages not numbered

The book has focused on the principles that are needed by the students in their society, such as keeping away of violence...

Introduction, Islamic Religious Education, Grade 1, Part 1, (2002) page not numbered. This introduction is repeated in books of the same subject in later grades

It is hoped that this book will contribute to the realization of the following goals:

- ...
- Creating a human being who rejects... fanaticism and extremism.

Introduction, Islamic Religious Education, Grade 6, Part 1 (2002) pages not numbered

Thus, it is possible for the [present] book to contribute to the formation of the individual, and to build an aware and enlightened human being, who believes in his Lord, loves the Messenger and follows his example, [one who] is proud of the way of Islam, knows his duty in life, believing in the values of knowledge, justice and cooperation and rejecting reprehensible conduct, such as fanaticism and violence.

Introduction, Islamic Religious Education, Grade 8, Part 2 (2002) pages not numbered

The purpose [of this book] is to show Islam's tolerance, to raise the Muslims' prestige [in the eyes of non-Muslims], and to purify our society of all the faults and harmful effects that have been insinuated [into it] by some people who hide behind religion, while religion [itself] is free of them, and by some ignorant and stupid [people] who have harmed their religion as well as themselves. Because of their ignorance and stupidity, and as a result of their deeds and words, the Muslims appear [today in the world] in a false and untrue image. "They would extinguish the light of God with their mouths; but God seeks only to perfect His light, though the infidels abhor it."

Introduction, The Culture of Dialogue in Islam, Grade 11, (2002) p. 3

The Concept of Religion

Implied Issues

- Fighting extremism.

Islamic Religious Education, Grade 7, Part 1 (2002) p. 21

The Unit's Goals

After studying this unit the student should be able to:

- Work for the propagation of God's religion with wisdom and spiritual counsel.
- ...
- Reject violence...

What do we learn from this lesson?

- The manner of missionary work...

Implied Issues

- Tolerance and education for peace
- Fighting extremism and rejecting violence.

Islamic Religious Education, Grade 5, Part 1 (2002) p. 13

What do we learn in this lesson?

Implied Issues

- National unity and the cohesion of the two parts of the nation [i.e., Muslims and Copts].
- Fighting all types of extremism.
- Integration among the peoples of the world.

Islamic Religious Education, Grade 6, Part 2 (2002) p. 22

Violence and fanaticism are means of the ignorant.

Tolerance and mutual understanding are means of the learned.

Arabic Language: Read and Express, Grade 4, Part 1 (2002) back cover

Tolerance and mutual understanding are the foundation of civilized conduct.

Social Studies: My Homeland Egypt – Place and Time, Grade 6, Part 1, (2002) back cover

Problems and disputes are solved by mutual understanding and negotiation and not by fanaticism and violence.

Principles of Philosophy, Logic and Scientific Thinking, Grade 9 (2002) back cover

It is your right to express your view freely, but you should respect the views of others.

Arabic Language: Read and Express – Exercise and Activity Booklet, Grade 4, Part 1 (2002) back cover

One of the pillars of democracy is that you may express your opinion in complete freedom and also respect the freedom of others to express their own views.

Arabic Reading, Grade 9, (2002) back cover

Religion is faith, tolerance, cooperation and love.

Social Studies: My Governorate Is Part of Egypt, Grade 4, Part 2 (2002) back cover

Religion means [good] treatment [of others]. Treat [other] people [in the same manner] as you would like them to treat you.

Social Studies: My Homeland Egypt – Place and Time, Grade 6, Part 1 (2002) back cover

Also, no one denies the role of the other influencing factors such as... the media, with what they present. It is necessary to pay attention to what is presented to them [the youth] so that it pushes them towards progress and the rejection of violence, extremism, and fanaticism in all their shapes and forms.
Our Beautiful Language: Reading and Texts, Grade 7, Part 1, (2002) p. 19

The Importance of Freedom of Thought

This theme is directed against the phenomenon of extremist religious leaders outside the official religious establishment who exert influence over a large number of half-ignorant youths, bringing about the emergence of fanaticism and terrorism inside Egypt.

Strictness in religion contradicts the spirit of Islam.

Islamic Education, Grade 10, (2002) p. 55

This divine road, which you should follow, does not put by its rules [any] restrictions on the freedom of thought. On the contrary, you have the right to think about any of the matters of life with no restriction, because you are fully responsible before God for what you choose for yourself, either good or bad... As for those who suspend their own thinking and follow others in their error with no awareness or [independent] thought, they have been already warned in the Holy Qur'an of their punishment, and it has been made clear to them that those who have deceived and misled them will lag behind them on the Day of Resurrection.

Islamic Religious Education, Grade 6, Part 1, (2002) p. 33

Exercises

2. What do you think of those who follow others without thinking?

4. What will you say to those who forbid what God has permitted?

Islamic Religious Education, Grade 6, Part 1 (2002) p. 34

The importance of the science of logic is... that it is the science which... brings the one who studies it out of a state of “rejecting the other” to a state of “accepting the other”, and out of a state of dialogue and argument with spears and arrows to a state of dialogue with ideas and logical arguments, realizing that a human being is a human being by virtue of [his] brain and not [by virtue of his] sword, and that the truth is bigger than can be understood by one brain [only].

Principles of Philosophy, Logic and Scientific Thinking, Grade 9, (2002) pp. 55-56

Rejection of Violence

Violence begets only violence. Therefore God ordered His Messenger to forgive and be patient.

Islamic Religious Education, Grade 5, Part 1, (2002) p. 14

What will happen if:

- Violence spreads among the people.
- The people are not patient with one another.

Write an essay to your school paper about gentleness and violence and [about] the impact of each on society.

Islamic Religious Education, Grade 5, Part 1, (2002) p. 15

Rejection of Religious Fanaticism

[All] talk in religious matters specifically, and in other matters in general, should be based on correct knowledge, sound understanding and on wide and conscious study of the fundamentals of religion, as well as its [various] branches, meanings, goals and rules...

Difference of opinion in matters that accept individual judgment is not blameworthy as long as it aims at reaching truth and that which causes the realization of [the] useful interests of individuals and groups...

Islamic Education, Grade 9, (2002) p. 66

They [the Christian Arab emigrants from Syria to the Americas in the nineteenth century] found a great difference between the religious fanaticism of the Arab east in general, and in Lebanon in particular, and the freedom of religion in the New World. This tolerant and broad outlook to religion entered the hearts of many of them and influenced the poets of the

Diaspora... They sang in praise of this religious tolerance. Mahbub al-Shartuni says:

“Any people in which fanaticism spreads becomes despicable...”

And he says in another poem:

“They said: Do you love the Arabs [i.e., the Muslims]? I said: I love them

It is decreed by neighborliness and affinity

They said: They have treated you niggardly. I answered them:

[They are] my family and they are generous, even if they treat me niggardly

They said: [and what about] religion? I said: a generation is vanishing

And with it vanishes hatred and feud”

Modern Arabic Literature, Grade 11 (2002) p. 103

Fanaticism and Extremism

Fanaticism means strong inclination towards one idea or one opinion and rejection of all other ideas and opinions. Extremism is the opposite of middle course. One of the Arab poets described that and said:

“We are people with no middle among us

For us [only] to be first before others, or the grave”

He would be satisfied with nothing but to be first, or the grave, and he does not see [any color] except black and white. The gravest forms of fanaticism or extremism are the religious fanaticism or extremism, for it spreads fear, worry and panic among the one people and between various peoples.

Fanaticism and extremism are opposed to the heavenly [monotheistic] religions, which have filled the world with peace, tranquility and justice.

They [i.e., the monotheistic religions] were based on tolerance and the acceptance of others – whatever their religion, race and color may be – for everyone belongs to God and returns to God, and all the people belong to one origin and one root.

Principles of Philosophy, Logic and Scientific Thinking, Grade 9, (2002) pp. 51-52

The following passage, though it does not say so specifically, seems to be directed against the extremist religious groups inside Egypt.

The destructive movements, whatever their type and color may be, aim at attacking the youth, which is the nation’s hope and future... It may not have escaped the attention of any fair person that those deviant movements make their utmost efforts to strike the nation and stop [its] awakening. Faithful efforts are needed vis-à-vis the deviant and misleading groups to uncover and expose them in front of the youth so that they will beware their schemes and protect themselves against their tricks.

Language Exercises, Grade 9, (2002) p. 134

Other Expressions of Tolerance in the Egyptian Textbooks

Social justice is guaranteed to all. There is no discrimination on the grounds of religion, or gender, or color.

Islamic Religious Education, Grade 8, Part 1, (2002) p. 49

Every state respects the political borders of its neighbors.

Social Studies: My Governorate Is Part of Egypt, Grade 4, Part 1, (2002) p. 14

The enemy has become a friend.

Language exercise, Arabic Language: Read and Discuss, Grade 5, Part 1, (2002) p. 43

Why do we consider sport to be the only island of peace in the world?

[Answer:]

Because sport brings together a number of states that exceeds that of the member states in the UN, away from all political, racial or religious disputes. Youth from all countries are gathered in order to compete and win without fanaticism or anger. They compete in order to win, and there is no difference between a black man and a white man, nor between a Muslim, a Christian, or a Jew.

Our Beautiful Language: Reading and Texts – Exercise and Activity Booklet, Grade 7, Part 1, (2002) pp. 22, 17 - answers side, respectively

Promoting Understanding and Co-Existence between Muslims and Copts

An effort is made to present the Copts and their religion as an integral part of Egypt and to encourage friendly co-existence and good neighborly relations with them.

Adel is a beloved student who loves his friends and cooperates with them in cleaning their neighborhood. They celebrate together the holidays and [other] festivals of [both] Muslims and Christians.

Arabic Language: Read and Learn, Grade 2, Part 1, (2002) p. 35

... The religious holidays such as the Muslim New Year, the Prophet's Birthday, Id al-Fitr, Id al-Adh'ha [both being Muslim holidays] and Christmas.

Social Studies: My Governorate Is Part of Egypt, Grade 4, Part 2 (2002) p. 23

Write a telegram of two lines to a Christian friend in which you greet him on the occasion of Christmas.

Social Studies: My Governorate Is Part of Egypt, Grade 4, Part 2, (2002) p. 24

Draw a picture showing the displays of celebration of a holiday by Muslims or Christians, which you will hang in the school exhibition.

Social Studies: My Governorate Is Part of Egypt, Grade 4, Part 2 (2002) p. 28

... When I went out of our apartment I saw smoke in the apartment of our neighbor Girgis.²⁶ The teacher: And what did you do? Mahran: I hurried to our apartment and informed my father."

Arabic Language: Read and Learn, Grade 2, Part 1 (2002) p. 40

I am Egypt, the land of love and peace, the land of security and safety, the land of mosques and churches.

Arabic Language: Read and Learn, Grade 2, Part 2, (2002) p. 13

We pray to God that He continue [to grant] that grace over Egypt, increase her resources and guard her for her sons, [both] Muslims and Christians, in security and peace.

Arabic Language: Read and Discuss, Grade 5, Part 1, (2002) p. 11

The old man said: "Good life is [found] in cooperation and unity among all the people of the country, Muslims and Christians."

Arabic Language: Read and Learn, Grade 2, Part 2, (2002) p. 34

Love and mutual caring should prevail between us, as members of one family, and in our relations with our relatives, neighbors and friends, [both] Muslims and Christians.

Arabic Language: Read and Discuss, Grade 5, Part 2 (2002) p. 59

Islam's General Tolerance towards Non-Muslims

The educational effort to change the attitude of the Muslim majority toward the Coptic minority for the better relies to a great extent on religion. Islam's tolerant position towards non-Muslims is emphasized, as can be seen in the following examples.

²⁶ Jirjis [Girgis in Egyptian colloquial dialect - = George] is a Christian name. Thus, this text carries a message of good neighborly relations with Christians.

The Muslim wishes good to all people.

Islamic Religious Education, Grade 1, Part 2, (2002) p. 14

Tolerance makes for all social intercourse being conducted in a relaxed and peaceful manner, without discrimination between Muslim and non-Muslim. Every person has the right to conduct his business and perform his religion's practice, for Islam is bent on having the people of the homeland behave toward one another like members of the same family. The principle of national fraternity is one of the most important principles established by Islam... Mercy, not aggression or provocation, is the foundation of the relationship between human beings in the eyes of Islam. Islam is the religion of tolerance, tranquility and moderation...

Islamic Religious Education, Grade 6, Part 1, (2002) p. 32

Exercises

- What are the examples of Islam's tolerance towards non-Muslims?
- Choose [from the following options] what you think is right and explain the reason [for your choice]:
 - If you see a person assaulting a place of worship of non-Muslims, you will -
(Join him – Prevent him from doing so – Leave him alone).

Islamic Religious Education, Grade 6, Part 1 (2002) p. 34

The law of Islam regards all people as brothers in humanity. They [have descended] from one father and one mother, and God created them in this life so that they could get to know each other and cooperate in [matters of] kindness and piety and not in [matters of] sin and aggression.

...The law of Islam orders its followers to cooperate in [matters of] kindness and piety among themselves, and between themselves and others – the followers of other religions, as long as they [i.e., the non-Muslims] do not harm us and do not act unjustly towards us, the Muslims.

...The law of Islam has recognized the rights of the individual and his human dignity, and forbids any infringement of his honor or of his right to property or life – whether he is Muslim or non-Muslim, as long as this individual does not commit any punishable or accountable act.

Facilitated [Islamic] Jurisprudence, Grade 8, (2000) pp. 261-262
[Azharite book]

Justice in Islam is absolute... All members of the society enjoy it without distinction of origin, gender, property, power, color, or religion itself. Islam's justice encompasses the Muslim and the non-Muslim.

Islamic Religious Education, Grade 8, Part 1 (2002) p. 31

Islam also establishes equality in this right [civil freedom] between Muslims and non-Muslims. They have the [same] civil rights Muslims have, and the [same] duties, except in matters related to their religion where their beliefs are respected.

Islamic Religious Education, Grade 8, Part 1 (2002) p. 38

The teacher finished his talk and started discussing with his students the meaning of keeping an agreement, which is one of the good characteristics a Muslim should adopt in his dealings with all people – Muslims and non-Muslims.

Islamic Religious Education, Grade 4, Part 2, (2002) p. 12

Put a V sign next to the conduct you like and an X sign next to the conduct you do not like, correcting it:

...

One who keeps [one's] agreement with Muslims but violates it with non-Muslims.

Write a speech that you will read on the school radio about “treating people nicely,” [both] Muslims and non-Muslims.

Islamic Religious Education, Grade 4, Part 2, (2002) p. 14

Why do racial struggles occur in some countries, but do not occur in the Muslim countries?

Islamic Religious Education, Grade 8, Part 1 (2002) p. 35

Islam's Historical Tolerance towards Non-Muslims

This is also a major theme in the educational effort that aims at increasing tolerance towards the Coptic minority in Egypt, although indirectly (See direct references to this issue in Chapter Four: The Copts.)

The Treaty of Medina [between Muhammad and the Jews]

Implied Issues:

- Tolerance and education for peace.
- Cohesion between the two elements of the [Egyptian] homeland [i.e., Muslims and Copts].

...With that treaty the first homeland emerged whose sons lived on [the principle of] freedom of worship.

Islamic Religious Education, Grade 3, Part 2, (2002) pp. 21-22

His [Muhammad's] treaty with the Christians of Najran [in Yemen] is one of the most wonderful examples of good treatment of the Protected People [Ahl al-Dhimmah – Jews and Christians in Islamic law]. He ordered not to touch their churches and places of worship and to leave them free to practice their rites. The Orthodox Caliphs [the first four caliphs after Muhammad] after him followed his example by treating the Protected People with kindness and affection. . . One of the best descriptions of this spirit is the treaty of [Caliph] Umar Bin al-Khattab with the people of Jerusalem, in which it was said that “he has given them protection for their lives, property, churches and crosses, that their churches shall not be taken for dwelling, neither be destroyed nor impaired, as well as their confines, crosses and any [other] property of theirs. They shall not be forced to change their religion and no one of them shall be hurt²⁷.” This treaty became an example for all the treaties that were concluded with the Christians of Syria and others.

Reading, Grade 11 (2002) p. 9

The Conditions of the Protected People [Ahl al-Dhimmah] in Muslim Society

In spite of the clear tolerant legal position of Islam toward the Protected People, the conditions of the Protected People in Muslim society were not the same throughout the long Islamic period and in the various Muslim lands. Those conditions were sometimes influenced by external events that befell the Muslim society at the hands of the Byzantines and the Crusaders. Because of that, there were some cases of strictness by some of the Muslim rulers for short periods. Some limitations were also imposed on the Protected People because of the spirit of religious fanaticism that was prevalent in the world of the Middle Ages, both in the Muslim and Frankish countries. [But] these exceptions and limitations were abolished and equality spread, as happened in the days of [Caliphs] Al-Rashid, Al-Mutawakkil, and the Fatimid [Caliph] Al-Hakim bi-Amrillah.²⁸ Churches and Jewish synagogues continued to be built ceaselessly in the countries of the Muslim world, in spite of what was stipulated in the treaties [concluded] with them, by which the Protected People were not allowed to build new churches and synagogues in Islam, but only to keep what was actually existent [at the time of the Muslim conquest].

The Muslims also allowed the Protected People to publicly perform their religious rites in their cities. Bells rang, horns were blown and religious processions with crosses and braziers took place with no objection . . .

²⁷ It is interesting that the following sentence in the treaty is not quoted – “No Jew shall dwell in Iliya [Jerusalem] with them”.

²⁸ Contrary to what is stated in this text, the Abbasid caliph Al-Mutawakkil and the Fatimid caliph Al-Hakim bi-Amrillah were known for the harsh measures they enacted against the Protected People, though the latter later changed his attitude towards them for the better.

The Protected People specialized in some occupations in Muslim society. Their dignitaries worked as merchants, money changers, bankers, and clerks in government offices. Their middle class [people] worked as farmers and in the textile industry, in tanning and dyeing. Their poor worked in cleaning the markets and streets and as shoemakers and blacksmiths.

History for Public High School, Grade 11, (2002) p. 28

Many Christians and Jews worked in [the field of] medicine under the shadow of the Muslim state. The Christian physicians of the east excelled... Alongside the Christian and Sabi'an²⁹ physicians, a large number of Muslim physicians became famous and were not less prominent or less skilled than the non-Muslim physicians... as well as Maimonides the Jew...

History for Public High School, Grade 11, (2002) p. 54

The Protected People [Ahl al-Dhimmah], namely, Christians and Jews, were practicing medicine and commerce and were money changers.

Social Studies: Geography of the Arab Homeland and Milestones of Islamic History, Grade 7, Part 2 (2001) p. 53

Christians and Jews lived under the protection of Muslim society. They enjoyed under Islam religious freedom, participated in commercial and industry business and in the state's administrative affairs, and had their share in the fields of science, medicine and art.

Social Studies: Geography of the Arab Homeland and Milestones of Islamic History, Grade 7, Part 2 (2001) p. 37

Put a V sign or an X sign next each of the following phrases:

- D. The Christians and the Jews in the Muslim society suffered from oppression

[Answer:]

- D. (X)

Social Studies: Geography of the Arab Homeland and Milestones of Islamic History – Exercise and Activity Booklet, Grade 7, Part 2 (2001) pp. 29, 21 – answers side, respectively

"Copts, Muslims, as well as Jews, lived in complete harmony and trust.

Social Studies: Geography of the Arab Homeland and Milestones of Islamic History, Grade 7, Part 2 (2001) p. 50

The Fatimid [caliphs] treated the Protected People [Ahl al-Dhimmah], namely, Christians and Jews, affectionately and protectively. Some of them

²⁹ Sabi'ans – members of a small gnostic sect in Iraq (identified with present-day Mandaites) who were treated as Ahl al-Dhimmah

were given the position of vizier.

Social Studies: Geography of the Arab Homeland and Milestones of Islamic History, Grade 7, Part 2 (2001) p. 60

Add to your information

When [the Mamluk sultan] Baybars captured the castle of Kerak that is located on one of the hills near the city of Homs in Syria, he did not destroy the church in that castle. It remained as it used to be till this day. He built a mosque next to it... thus honoring the Christian place of worship.

Social Studies: Geography of the Arab Homeland and Milestones of Islamic History, Grade 7, Part 2 (2001) p. 75

Islamic Law and the “Protected People”

The above-mentioned educational effort that aims at the promotion of tolerance and neighborly relations between Muslims and Copts in Egypt finds its expression as well in Islamic law lessons of the state schools, and also, to a certain degree, in Azharite religious schools. But the latter also do teach less tolerant approaches.

A. Definitions

The Protected People [Ahl al-Dhimmah] in Islam

“Dhimmah” linguistically is pact, protection and pledge. The “Dhimmah People” is a term used for the People of the Book [Ahl al-Kitab] who inhabited the countries of Islam. They were thus named because they agreed to pay the jizyah [poll tax paid by non-Muslims] to the Muslim state, which secured their lives, honor, property and community, and thus [they] became a trust under the Muslims’ protection.

The People of the Book are the followers of the holy books, that is, Jews and Christians. They were joined by the Zoroastrians in the reign of [Caliph] Umar Bin al-Khattab [634-44 CE], by the Berbers in the reign of [Caliph] Uthman Bin Affan [644-56 CE], and by the Sabi’ah³⁰ – in the reign of [Caliph] A-Ma’mun [813-33 CE]. The name “Protected People” was generally used in the Muslim state to denote the non-Muslims, especially Jews and Christians who lived under the patronage of the Muslim state and in the shadow of its protection.

History for Public High School, Grade 11, (2002) p. 28

³⁰ Sabi’ah – a small gnostic sect in Iraq (identified with present-day Mandaites).

B. General outlook

The following article is an example of a tolerant approach on the part of the official religious establishment, written by Sheikh Dr. Muhammad Sayyid Tantawi, head of the Al-Azhar religious institute in Egypt and the leading religious authority in Sunni Islam. The book itself was issued by the Ministry of Education, not by Al-Azhar.

The Treatment of Non-Muslims by Muslims

...Did the Islamic law differentiate in its procedures between the Muslims and their non-Muslim compatriots – no matter how small their number– in terms of rights and duties and in terms of human dignity and social justice? I can say, based on my understanding of the law of Islam, that it made all equal regarding rights and duties, human dignity and social justice, the protection of life, honor and property of all against any aggression, and the establishment of relations between them [all] on the basis of tolerance, show of love and respect for one another and the exchange of useful services...

One of the proofs of this is that it [i.e., the Islamic law] ordered the Muslims to base their relations with non-Muslims on kindness and fairness, so long as they [i.e., the non-Muslims] did not harm them. Listen to His words: “God does not forbid you to be kind and equitable to those who have neither made war on your religion nor driven you from your homes. God loves the equitable. But he forbids you to make friends with those who have fought against you on account of your religion and driven you from your homes or abetted others to drive you out. Those that make friends with them are wrongdoers.” (Al-Mumtahanah, 8-9)

That is, God does not forbid you, O Muslims, to befriend and have relations with others who differ from you in faith and religion, so long as those who differ from you in religion do not harm you. Rather, you should base your relations with them on justice and kindness because God loves the just ones in their words, deeds and judgments.

But God forbids you to be kind and have relations with those who showed hostility to you, or those who helped [others] to do so. Anyone amongst you – O Muslims – who cooperates with anyone who has harmed and fought against the religion of Islam, will be one of the wrongdoers who deserve severe punishment...

This is a general rule regarding the treatment of all non-Muslims. As regards non-Muslims who are People of the Book – Jews and Christians – there is an addition to this general rule [namely] that the law of Islam has forbidden [Muslims] to argue with them, except in a friendly manner, so that the good relations between us and them will continue. God said: “Be courteous when you argue with the People of the Book, except with those among them who

do evil. Say: We believe in that which has been revealed to us and was revealed to you. Our God and your God is one. To Him we submit". (Al-Ankabut, 46)

The law of Islam was not content with that, but it permitted [Muslims] to dine with the People of the Book, to eat of what they slaughter, and to marry their women – but not pagan women...

The Prophet's Sayings set forth in detail what was stated in general terms by the Holy Qur'an and ordered [Muslims] to treat the People of the Book respectfully... [Some] of these Prophetic Sayings [Ahadith] are: "Whoever harms a Protected Person [Dhimmi] shall have me as his opponent... on the Day of Resurrection", and his saying in another Hadith: "Whoever harms a Protected Person harms me, and whoever harms me harms God."

If the Muslims and non-Muslims live in the same state, have the same citizenship, share the same homeland, live under the same sky, are supported by the same land and joined by the same interests – as is the case with us in Egypt, I say, if the situation has become like this – the non-Muslims, no matter how small their number, have the same rights and duties the Muslims. At the same time, each have their own faith, which they have chosen for themselves and their own religion which they have been content with, for faiths and religions are not subject to enforcement and compulsion...

As long as the non-Muslim respects the Muslim's faith and does not harm it, and as long as he respects the right of citizenship in a state of which the official religion is Islam, the law of Islam obliges its followers to show mutual respect and forbids them to harm others' faiths...

This would have been a long article if we had wanted to adduce numerous [pieces of] evidence [to the effect] that the law of Islam does not distinguish between people, whether Muslims or non-Muslims, regarding rights and duties and [regarding] the execution of justice...

Suffice it to mention a story referred to by the Holy Qur'an in nine verses of Surat al-Nisa' (105-113) which summarize the events of that story [as follows]: An apparent Muslim, by the name of Tu'mah Bin Ubayriq, stole a coat of mail from one of his neighbors, named Qutadah Bin Nu'man, and then hid it with a Jewish man named Zayd Bin al-Samin. When the coat of mail was seized in the custody the Jew he said that Tu'mah Bin Ubayriq was the one who left it with him. But Tu'mah denied that and alleged that the Jew had been the thief. Tu'mah's relatives came to defend [him] by lying... God rebuked Tu'mah Bin Ubayriq's relatives, who had defended him by lying and gave a false testimony... Thus we see these noble verses [of the Qur'an] guide the people toward the truth, which does not bend according to affection

or tribal solidarity... even if the unjust person is an apparent Muslim, and is treated as such, and the just person is a non-Muslim...

The primary rule in the treatment of non-Muslims – no matter how small their number is – who live with their Muslim brethren in one state, all holding the same citizenship and under the protection of the same flag, ... is that they have the same rights and duties the Muslims have. The law of Islam protects everyone's honor, property and dignity... At the same time every person has his own faith that he has chosen for himself and his own religion that he has been content with. Those who have sound faith and sound minds – especially those who have the same citizenship – do not fight one another, neither envy one another, nor be insolent to one another, nor treat one another unjustly. They rather cooperate with one another in matters of kindness and piety, not in matters of sin and aggression.

The Culture of Dialogue in Islam, Grade 11, (2002) pp. 48-53. The story about Tu'mah Bin Ubayriq and the Jew appears as well in **Studies in Theology: Tradition and Morals, Grade 11 (2001) pp. 176-77**

C. Social relations

Two contradictory approaches are easily noticeable. The state-sponsored textbooks are mostly positive in their approach toward non-Muslims, while a markedly negative approach is presented mostly by Azharite books.

The Lord... does not forbid the Muslims to be kind, generous and just toward non-Muslims, as long as they live in peace with the Muslims and have good relations [with them]. The noble Messenger urged [the Muslims] to be tolerant and made the Muslims love that [trait] by practice... He said: “[Anyone] who deals unjustly with a person under a treaty [i.e., non-Muslims who are protected by a treaty], or gives him less than what he deserves, or burdens him with more than what he can bear, or takes from him something against his will, I shall accuse him on the Day of Resurrection.”

Islamic Notions in Environmental and Demographic Education, Grade 8, (2002) p. 84

God has said: “Do not argue with the People of the Book, except in a friendly manner”.

Islamic Notions in Environmental and Demographic Education, Grade 8 (2002) p. 86

It is apparent that the good deed of greeting [a person] is [reserved] for a Muslim [only]. As regards the infidel, one should not greet him. But we answer his greeting in order to reassure him, make his heart as one with [ours], and make him acquainted with Islam's tolerance and its keeping peace with those who keep peace with it.

Selected Texts from the Prophetic Tradition [Sunnah], Grade 7, (2000) p. 9 (Azharite)

It is disliked [by God] to greet the Protected People [Ahl al-Dhimmah] because that means extolling them, which is disliked. If Muslims and infidels are gathered together he [i.e., the Muslim who approaches them] will greet them intending the Muslims [only]. If he says: “Peace upon those who follow [God's] guidance” – it is permissible. There is no objection to returning the Protected People’s greeting, because refraining from doing so would hurt them... and that is disliked [by God]... And he [i.e., the Muslim] should not say more than “and upon you”...

Selections for the Explanation of [the Book of] "Selection", Grade 9, (2002) pp. 287- 88 (Azharite)

If a Muslim says to a Protected Person [Dhimmi]: “May God prolong your life”, meaning that... he [eventually] will become a Muslim, or pay the poll tax [as a Dhimmi] – then, it is permissible because it is a good wish for Islam. If not – it is not permissible.

Selections for the Explanation of [the Book of] "Selection", Grade 9 (2002) p. 288 [Azharite]

No one of the Protected People [Ahl al-Dhimmah] should be allowed to imitate the Muslims in his clothing and [way of] riding, nor in his appearance... [This is] because [a Muslim] should respect a [fellow] Muslim, befriend him, greet him first, and make room for him on the road and while being seated, and the infidel should be treated in the opposite manner. The Prophet said: “Do not greet them first and drive them into the narrowest roads.” So, if they do not distinguish themselves from the Muslims... we are likely to respect an infidel, befriend him, and greet him first believing that he is a Muslim, and that is not permissible.

Their women should be distinguishable from the Muslim women as they walk on the road as well as in public baths. They should carry around their neck an iron circle and their cover should be different than that of Muslim women. There should be on their houses signs that would distinguish them from the Muslims’ houses, so that a beggar would not stop at them and pray for them [when given a charity]. In short, they should be distinguished in a way that would signify their humiliation and subjection.

Selections for the Explanation of [the Book of] "Selection", Grade 11, (2002) pp. 358-59 (Azharite)

[The Prophet] orders [us] to support the oppressed whether he is a Muslim or a Protected Person [Dhimmi].

Selected Texts from the Prophetic Tradition [Sunnah], Grade 7, (2000) p. 50 (Azharite)

The one who oppresses a Protected Person [Dhimmi] – I shall be his opponent on the Day of Resurrection.

Prophetic Saying [Hadith], Booklet of Arabic Script, Grade 6, (2002) p. 19

Anyone who kills a [non-Muslim] person protected under a treaty shall not smell the scent of Paradise.

Selected Prophetic Sayings [Ahadith], Grade 10, (2002) p. 86 (Azharite)

Visiting the sick... whether he be a Muslim or a Protected Person [Dhimmi], a relative of the visitor, or a neighbor, or someone else – is a good deed that has a reward. ...And supporting the oppressed, whether a Muslim or a Protected Person [Dhimmi].

Selected Prophetic Sayings [Ahadith]..., Grade 10 (2002) pp. 41-42 [Azharite]

There is no objection to visiting them [when they are sick], following the example of God's Messenger and because it means behaving kindly to them, which we have not been forbidden to do.

Selections for the Explanation of [the Book of] "Selection", Grade 9, (2002) p. 288 (Azharite)

Taking care of a non-Muslim relative – Islam has permitted [one] to take care of him and give him alms, because of the kinship that binds the [Muslim] man to him.

Islamic Education, Grade 9, (2002) p. 41

If an infidel relative of a Muslim dies, he should wash him as if he washes a filthy cloth, wrap him up in a cloth and throw him in a pit, because he is ordered [by Islam] to take care of him and not to leave him as food for predatory animals. He should not pray over him because that is [considered] asking for God's mercy for him, and he [i.e., the infidel dead] is not entitled to that. If he so wills, he may hand him over to the followers of his [non-Muslim] religion so that they shall do with him what they do with their own dead.

Selections for the Explanation of [the Book of] "Selection", Grade 9, (2002) p. 148 (Azharite)

D. Conversion to Islam

Here again one can find the aforementioned two contradictory approaches. On the one hand, a strong emphasis on Islam's rejection of forced conversion, and on the other hand, passages that state the opposite. In this case, the contradiction exists within the Azharite books, while the state books side with the tolerant approach.

“I have been ordered to fight the people”... that is, the People of the Book, and some say, the polytheists... “until they testify that there is no god except God and that Muhammad is God's messenger, and [until they] perform the [ritual] prayer and give the Zakat [religious tax]...”

Selected Prophetic Sayings [Ahadith], Grade 11, (2002) pp. 16-17 (Azharite)

The law of Islam does not compel anyone to embrace Islam, because there is no coercion in [matters of] belief. Compelling [one] to embrace Islam or another religion does not produce sincere believers but rather deceptive hypocrites.

Facilitated [Islamic] Jurisprudence, Grade 8, (2000) p. 261 (Azharite)

Islam stipulates that it is not permitted to force a human being to abandon his religion and adopt Islam.

... Though Islam makes men custodians of their wives... a Muslim husband who is married to a woman of the People of the Book [Christians and Jews mainly] is not permitted to force her to adopt Islam or to prevent her from performing her worship and the rites of her religion. The Prophet confirmed, after having immigrated to Medina, that the Jews there may keep their religion. The [Prophet's] companions followed him in this praiseworthy norm and left to the people of the lands conquered by them the choice of keeping their religion or embracing Islam.

Islamic Religious Education, Grade 8, Part 1, (2002) pp. 36-37

Islam extended human rights and respect for other religions, as a noble [Qur'anic] verse has stated: “There shall be no compulsion in religion”. People are not coerced into embracing Islam but rather left free with what they have chosen for themselves. By that, Islam gives the most wonderful example of religious tolerance. God has said [in the Qur'an]: “Had your Lord pleased, all the people of the earth would have believed in Him, one and all. Would you then force people to have faith?” (Yunis 99) It is true that the Messenger was forced to draw [his] sword, but [that was] for defending God's religion, and not for aggression. God has said: “Fight for the sake of God those that fight against you, but do not attack them first. God does not love aggressors”.

Reading, Grade 11 (2002) pp. 8-9

"It has been proven by history and reality that the Muslims have never resorted to compelling anyone to embrace Islam. What they did is that whenever they conquered a country they offered Islam to its people. If they embraced it out of conviction [The rest of the sentence is unclear, probably a typographical error]. And if they refused and [preferred to] remain with their religion and faith, they were left alone and were treated justly as stipulated by the law of Islam.

... Those who do not follow our religion, but live with us, and we live with them in the same homeland, joined together by common interests, supported by the same land and enjoying the same citizenship – the famous juristic rule that says “they have the same rights and the same duties like us” applies to both them and us.

Islamic history has not mentioned [a case in which] one of the Muslims – whether a ruler or one of the ruled– [ever] forced a follower of another religion to embrace Islam...³¹

It becomes absolutely clear to us from all this, that the law of Islam invalidates and nullifies every statement, or deed, or belief that comes by way of compulsion or coercion... because that contradicts its principles and fundamentals that are based upon reflection, contemplation, conviction and choice. God will guide whomever He wishes to the right path.

Studies in Theology: Spiritual Matters, Grade 9 (2002) pp. 49-51 [Azharite]

If a Protected Person [Dhimmi] is forced to convert to Islam, his conversion is valid. If a Harbi [non-Muslim alien] is fought against and converts to Islam – it is valid... If the [same] Dhimmi returns [to his former religion], he is not killed [like an ordinary apostate], but imprisoned until he converts to Islam [again], because there is doubt regarding his belief [when he was forced to convert]. There is a possibility that it [i.e., his forced conversion] was sincere, so he is to be killed as an apostate. It is [also] possible that he did not believe [in Islam while having been forced to convert] and then he [should] be a Dhimmi and shall not be killed...

Selections for the Explanation of [the Book of] "Selection", Grade 10, (2002) p. 168 (Azharite)

If a Protected Person [Dhimmi] is forced to embrace Islam and converts, his conversion is valid. If he returns [to his former religion], he is not to be killed but should be imprisoned until he returns to Islam.

Selections for the Explanation of [the Book of] "Selection", Grade 11 (2002) p. 373 [Azharite]

The following excerpt deals with the opposite case – conversion from Islam.

³¹ There were cases of forced conversion of non-Muslims in Islamic history but they were very few. Examples: The mass conversion of the Jews in Morocco under the Almohads in the 12th century and in the Iranian city of Mash'had in the 19th century. In both cases the forced converts were later permitted to return to Judaism.

A female apostate is not to be killed [unlike the case of a male apostate]. She should be imprisoned and beaten every day until she becomes a Muslim [again]. It means that Islam should be offered to her and if she refuses it, she should be flogged. Then Islam should be offered to her [again] and if she refuses it, she should be imprisoned. And there is a version according to which she should be taken out every day and beaten as we have described, because it is not permissible to kill her. She has committed a gruesome crime that has no fixed punishment [hadd] for it, so she is punished by a non-fixed punishment [ta'zir], that is – beating and imprisonment...

An [apostate] slave woman should be imprisoned. If her master needs her service, she should be brought to him and he should be ordered to force her to return to Islam. The judge should send to her every day someone who would flog her into Islam. Thus, the two advantages [i.e., her daily service to her master and her eventual return to Islam] would be achieved together."

Selections for the Explanation of [the Book of] "Selection", Grade 11 (2002) pp. 371-372 [Azharite]

E. Poll Tax

In discussing the poll tax imposed on non-Muslims, the state book tries to present it in a positive light, while the Azharite book treats the issue from the traditional juristic point of view.

The jizyah [poll tax] in Islam is an amount [of money] paid by the Protected People [Ahl al-Dhimmah] in return for the protection provided to them by the Muslim state, or in return for not having embraced Islam and for being allowed to remain within their [own] community and not having been forced to leave it. It parallels the zakat [religious tax], which is imposed on the Muslims. Thus, the two parties, the Muslims and the Protected People, become equal in their payment to the state for the services, protection and security it provides them with.

The jizyah becomes null and void regarding those who convert to Islam, unlike the kharaj [Land Tax]. The jizyah was imposed on males, not upon females, and only on those who were able to pay it. Children were exempted from paying it, as well as old men, invalids, blind people and monks.

History for Public High School, Grade 11, (2002) pp. 21-22

The jizyah [poll tax paid by non-Muslims] should be exacted in a humiliating manner. The one who takes [it] should be seated while the Protected Person [Dhimmi] stands before him. He [the tax collector] should seize him by the collar, jolt him and say to him: "Give the jizyah, o enemy of God!"

Selections for the Explanation of [the Book of] "Selection", Grade 11, (2002) p. 357 (Azharite)

F. Religious restrictions on non-Muslims

This issue is discussed exclusively in an Azharite book.

No new church, hermitage or synagogue shall be built in the lands of Islam... [But] if an old one collapses, they may rebuild it... They are forbidden [to build new places of worship] in the cities. As for the villages... they are not forbidden to do that, and they may sell wine and pork. That is, in the villages where the majority [of the population] is Protected [Dhimmah]. In Muslim villages, it is not permissible. As for the land of the Arabs [the Arabian Peninsula], they are forbidden to do that in both cities and villages.

Selections for the Explanation of [the Book of] "Selection", Grade 11, (2002) p. 359 (Azharite)

If they have a holiday, they should not take out their crosses [in a procession], but [rather] perform [the ceremonies] in their churches. They should not take it [the cross] out of the churches to parade it in town, because it is [considered] a sin. [Also,] showing it [in public] means honoring unbelief.

Selections for the Explanation of [the Book of] "Selection", Grade 11, (2002) p. 360 (Azharite)

G. Non-Muslims and mosques

The same Azharite book presents two different approaches on two related issues.

There is no objection to a Protected Person [Dhimmi] entering the Holy Mosque [in Mecca] or any other mosque. It has been reported that he [the Prophet] made the delegation of Thaqif [the tribe of the city of Ta'if] stay as guests in the mosque [of Mecca] while they were [still] infidels.

Selections for the Explanation of [the Book of] "Selection", Grade 9 (2002) p. 289 [Azharite]

If a Protected Person [Dhimmi] informs him [i.e., a Muslim] that the water [for ablution before the Muslim's prayer] is impure, he shall not accept what he [the Dhimmi] says, because it is apparently a lie aimed at harming the Muslim, because of the religious animosity.

Selections for the Explanation of [the Book of] "Selection", Grade 9 (2002) p. 284 [Azharite]

H. Non-Muslims and alms donated by Muslims

It [i.e., the zakat religious tax paid by the Muslims] shall not be spent on a Protected Person [Dhimmi]... [But] other alms, such as vowing gifts, expiatory gifts and the alms of Id al-Fitr [Muslim holiday at the end of

Ramadan] may be paid to him. Abu Yusuf [a Muslim jurist of the Middle Ages] said: "It is not permissible – like the Zakat money"...

None of [all] this should be paid to a Harbi [a non-Muslim coming from a non-Muslim country]... It is also not permissible to make any payment from the Ushr [Islamic religious tax] to a Dhimmi.

Selections for the Explanation of [the Book of] "Selection", Grade 9 (2002) p. 182 [Azharite]

The Prophet said: 'Give the alms of Id al-Fitr [Muslim holiday] to any freeman or slave, Jewish or Christian'.

Selections for the Explanation of [the Book of] "Selection", Grade 9 (2002) p. 186 [Azharite]

God does not forbid you to be kind and equitable to those who have not made war on your religion, that is, God does not forbid you to give charity to infidels who have not made war against your religion, namely, women and the weak ones among them...

Selected Prophetic Sayings [Ahadith], Grade 11, (2002) p. 74 (Azharite)

I. Economic matters

On this subject even the strictest Azharite book is fairly lenient.

The Protected People [Ahl al-Dhimmah] are like Muslims in commercial transactions and it is permissible for them to sell wine and pork [which Muslims are forbidden to do].

Selections for the Explanation of [the Book of] "Selection", Grade 10, (2002) p. 12 (Azharite)

"Spoils" is a term for any property that is taken from the infidels by force and as a result of a victory. What is taken from them as a present, or theft, or embezzlement, or as a gift is not spoils, [but] belongs personally to the one who has taken it.

Selections for the Explanation of [the Book of] "Selection", Grade 11, (2002) p. 341 (Azharite)

Anyone who cultivates wasteland with the permission of the authorities becomes the owner of that [land], whether he is a Muslim or a Protected Person [Dhimmi]. The Muslim and the Dhimmi are equal [in this case] because cultivation gives rise to ownership.

Selections for the Explanation of [the Book of] "Selection", Grade 10 (2002) p. 382 [Azharite]

J. Legal matters

The following are rules of the Hanafi juristic school, discussed in one Azharite book.

The testimony of the Protected People [Ahl al-Dhimmah] against each other is accepted... Their testimony against a Muslim is not accepted... It is not prohibited to accept their testimony [in general] because they keep away from what is forbidden by their religion, and lying is forbidden in all religions...

Selections for the Explanation of [the Book of] "Selection", Grade 10, (2002) p. 232 (Azharite)

If a freeman and a slave, or a Muslim and a Protected Person [Dhimmi] each claim kinship [to a foundling], the freeman has a greater entitlement than the slave and the Muslim a greater entitlement than the Dhimmi, because it is to the greater advantage for him [i.e., for the foundling]... unless he has been found in a synagogue or a church or a village of theirs, when he is to be [regarded as] a Dhimmi, because apparently Muslim children are not to be found in places of the Protected People and vice versa... If a Muslim finds him and a Christian claims that he is his son, then he is his son, but [also] a Muslim... If [in such a case] he [the foundling] carries something Christian such as the cross or the zunnar [the Christian girdle], then he is a Christian.

Selections for the Explanation of [the Book of] "Selection", Grade 10 (2002) pp. 324-325

A Muslim [is to be killed] for [having killed] a Protected Person [Dhimmi], because of their equality in everlasting protection and because non-punishment would make them [i.e., Dhimmis] reluctant to accept the protection pact, which may cause an obvious damage...

Selections for the Explanation of [the Book of] "Selection", Grade 10, (2002) p. 414 (Azharite)

[Corporal] punishment is inflicted [in cases of dispute] between a Muslim and a Protected Person [Dhimmi], because they are equal in [the amount of] blood money.

Selections for the Explanation of [the Book of] "Selection", Grade 10, (2002) p. 419 (Azharite)

The blood money for a woman is half that [of a man]... and the blood money for a Muslim and a Protected Person [Dhimmi] is the same.

Selections for the Explanation of [the Book of] "Selection", Grade 10, (2002) p. 428 (Azharite)