

Chapter Five: Peace

Tolerance

Tolerance is still stressed as an ideal and taught as such to Palestinian school students, especially from a Muslim point of view. But, as is the earlier textbooks, there is, in this context, no specific reference to Jews.

Islam has commanded [us] to practice justice, so that all people, including non-Muslims, will enjoy Islam's justice.

Islamic Education, Grade 5, Part 1 (2004) p. 84

Homework

I will write down a Qur'anic verse or a noble Prophetic Saying [*Hadith*] proving that it is obligatory to give charity to one's relatives, even if they are non-Muslims.

Islamic Education, Grade 10, Part 1 (2004) p. 16

Is the Muslim to be rewarded if he comforts a grieving non-Muslim?

Islamic Education, Grade 10, Part 1 (2004) p. 40

Morality in Islam is humane. It is based on respect for human dignity, regardless of color, nationality and religion... This humanism is manifested in the adherence to justice [even] in the case of opponents who turn against Islam and are hostile to it. It is not allowed to treat even these except on the basis of justice and fairness... The Prophet already warned against unjust treatment of non-Muslims, who live within the Muslim society, and [against] diminishing their rights. He said: "He who treats a person under a covenant [of protection] unjustly, or diminishes [his rights], or imposes on him more than he can bear, or takes from him anything against his wish, I shall be his opponent on the Day of Resurrection."

Homework: I will refer to history books and mention an event indicating the humane [attitude] of the Muslim in his dealings with others.

Homework: I will... write down a Prophetic Saying that proves the following:

The Muslim is obligated to act morally in his dealings with non-Muslims.

I will put a (V) sign next to the correct phrase and an (X) sign next to the incorrect phrase in the following [sentences]:

- [Part] of the Muslim's morality is offending the Protected People [*Ahl Al-Dhimmah*] and those ones who are under a covenant of protection.

Islamic Education, Grade 10, Part 1 (2004) pp. 81-82

We put before our colleagues the following educational issues so that they bear them in their mind when they interact and talk with the students throughout the lessons they teach them:

2. Developing the spirit of dialogue, partnership and mutual respect.
5. Keeping away from fanaticism, hatred and racism...

History of the Ancient Civilizations, Grade 5 (2004), Introduction, page not numbered

One of the scenes that indicate his [Caliph Umar bin al-Khattab's] justice is this episode with the Copt who had had a race with the son of Amr bin al-As, who was governor of Egypt, and won. The son of Amr bin al-As then hit him with a whip saying: "Take that from the son of the honored ones." The Copt came from Egypt to Medina and complained to Umar. Umar immediately wrote to Amr: "When my letter reaches you come [to me] and bring your son Muhammad with you." He said to the Copt: "Stay [here] until Amr and his son come"... After that Amr arrived... and Umar started looking around for his [Amr's] son and he was [standing] behind his father. Then he [Caliph Umar] said: "Where is the Egyptian?" He [the Copt] said: "Here I am!" [Umar] said: "The whip is in front of you. Hit the son of the honored ones with it!" He then hit him heavily while Umar kept saying: "Hit the son of the honored ones!" Then he [Umar] said: "Move it [the whip] over [and hit] Amr's balding head, because had it not for his governorship, he [his son] would not have hit you." [But] he [the Copt] said: "O Commander of the Faithful [i.e., Caliph], I have already exacted [my revenge] in full and have satisfied my thirst for revenge, as I have hit the one who hit me". He [Umar] said: "By God, if you had hit him [namely, Amr], we should not have separated you from him until you would have left off by yourself. O Amr, since when have you enslaved the people who were born to freedom by their mothers?"

Some of the examples of his [Umar's] justice are the following:

His justice towards the non-Muslims who were living in the Muslim state, one of his last directives before his death being: "I order you treat the Protected People [*Ahl al-Dhimmah*, i.e., non-Muslims] well for this was guaranteed them by your Prophet [Muhammad]."

In the covenant that Umar wrote for the inhabitants of Jerusalem at the time of its conquest, it is declared: "In the name of God the merciful the compassionate. This is the assurance of protection given by God's servant, Umar, Commander of the Faithful, to the people of Iliya [Aelia Capitolina – Jerusalem]. He has given them protection for their lives and property, for their churches and crosses, their sick and healthy and the rest of their nation. Their churches shall not be taken for dwellings, nor be destroyed, nor anything be taken from them, or their confines, nor their cross, nor anything from their property. They shall not be forced to convert and no one among

them shall be harmed. No Jew shall dwell in Iliya with them³⁴.” By that Umar has become an example of the Muslim ruler who rules with justice, establishes truth and preserves the rights of all members of the subject [population].

Islamic Education, Grade 10, Part 2 (2004) p. 66

Respecting the Rights of the Minorities in the Muslim State

[Caliph] Umar's policy with regard to his subjects is a clear example that Islam is bent upon guaranteeing the rights of the members of the subject [population] and enabling them to lead honorable lives no matter what their religion is. When Umar [once] saw an old Jew begging from the people because of his poverty and need he said to him: “We have not been fair to you. We took from you the poll tax [*jizyah*]³⁵ while you were young and then we neglected you when you became old.” And he ordered to give him and his likes a pension from the Muslims' treasury.

Islamic Education, Grade 10, Part 2 (2004) pp. 67-68

The obligation of the Muslim state towards the need of the poor is not restricted to the Muslims but rather encompasses the non-Muslim Protected People [*Ahl al-Dhimmah*], who live in Muslim society. Therefore [Caliph] Umar bin al-Khattab gave pensions from the treasury to the poor among the Protected People, which would satisfy their needs.

Islamic Education, Grade 10, Part 2 (2004) p. 100

Assessment

8. I will put a V sign next to the correct phrase and an X sign next to the incorrect phrase in

the following [sentences]:

A. The alleviation of poverty in Islam does not include the Protected People [*Ahl al-Dhimmah*].

Islamic Education, Grade 10, Part 2 (2004) p. 101

[Caliph] Ali bin abi Taleb... Commander of the Faithful, lost a coat of mail and found it in the possession of a Jew in Medina. But the Jew claimed that the coat of mail was his. They went to Judge Shuraykh to give a verdict. The judge asked Imam Ali to bring two witnesses who would testify that the coat of mail was his. His servant Qunbur came forward, as well as his [Ali's] son Al-Hasan. They both testified that the coat of mail was his.

³⁴ It is unfortunate that the example of tolerance provided to the pupil is discriminatory rather than the application of a universal principle. It reflects an arrangement made between Muslims and Christians more than tolerance as such. The presence of Jews in the Holy City was offensive to the Christians and Umar respected this, while not showing any tolerance to the yearnings of the Jews to dwell in the city.

³⁵ Paid by non-Muslims.

Judge Shuraykh said to Imam Ali: “As regards the testimony of your servant I accept it. As regards your son’s testimony we do not accept it.” And he said to the Jew: “Take the coat of mail.” When the Jew saw the Muslims’ justice he converted to Islam and admitted that the coat of mail was Ali’s and returned it to him. But Ali gave it to him because of his conversion and gave him more presents besides that.

Islamic Education, Grade 5, Part 2 (2004) p. 46

I will explain the scene that indicates the justice in the story of Ali bin abi Taleb and the Jew.

Islamic Education, Grade 5, Part 2 (2004) p. 50

A Muslim does not deceive any human being, whether he is his coreligionist or not.

Reading and Texts, Grade 10, Part 2 (2004) p. 6

Illustrations of [Muslim] Religious Tolerance

When the Messenger emigrated to Medina, where a great number of Jews were living, one of the first things he did in affairs of state was concluding a treaty between them and himself, whereby their faith was respected and the state was obliged to protect them from harm. They [on their part] should unite with the Muslims against anyone harming Medina. Thus the Messenger applied the principles of religious tolerance at the very beginning of Muslim civilization.

The Messenger had neighbors from among the People of the Book [*Ahl al-Kitab* – Christians and Jews] and he treated them with righteousness, giving them presents and receiving presents from them. When a delegation of the Christians of Ethiopia arrived, God’s Messenger lodged them in the mosque and himself tended to their hospitality and service...

Once a delegation from Najran [Christians from Yemen] came to him and he lodged them in the mosque and allowed them to pray there. They prayed on one side thereof and God’s Messenger and the Muslims prayed on another side. When they wanted to dispute with the Messenger in defense of their religion, he listened to them and argued with them. All that [was done] gently, politely and tolerantly.

The Messenger received a present from the [Christian] ruler of Egypt and [also] received from him a maid whom he sent him. God’s Messenger married her and she bore him Ibrahim who lived only a few months. Among his directives to the Muslims [are the following]: “Treat the Copts well because they are your relatives”.

The course of the noble Messenger's religious tolerance, which was characterized by a highly humane attitude, was followed by his successors after his death. Thus we find [Caliph] Umar bin al-Khattab, on his entry into Jerusalem, and the time for the afternoon prayer came while he was in the great Jerusalem church [i.e., the Holy Sepulcher], refused to pray in it, so that the Muslims after him would not take it as a pretext for making it a mosque... A Christian woman from Egypt complained to him that [the Muslim governor] Amr bin al-As had included her house within the mosque, in spite of her objections... Although [such an action] is permitted by our present-day laws ...Umar did not like it and ordered Amr to demolish the newly built part of the mosque and give the Christian woman her house back in its former condition!

This is the tolerant spirit that prevailed in the society guided by our civilization's principles. We witness forms of religious tolerance, the equivalent of which is not to be found in history nor indeed in the modern era!

One of the manifestations of the religious tolerance was that mosques and churches were [built] next to each other under the inspiration of our eternal civilization. The clerics in the churches were given complete control over their parish in all religious and church affairs and the state did not interfere in them...

It is deplorable that this religious tolerance, which has no equivalent in history, led to the exploitation of foreign privileges by Westerners at the end of the last century [that is, the nineteenth century] and the beginning of the present century [20th] with the aim of eliminating the phenomena of national sovereignty in the country.

Reading and Texts, Grade 10, Part 2 (2004) pp. 9-10



I will consider the following and answer: What do we call the person who conducts the wedding contract [procedures]³⁶?

National Education, Grade 5 (2004) p. 3

A Christian Education textbook takes the issue of tolerance further and seems to imply tolerance towards Israelis as well.

...Our love for others means:

- Our love for [any] human being regardless of his identity, or his color, or his race.
- Our love for those who oppress us and commit aggression against us, because God loves them as well.

Christian Education, Grade 5 (2004) p. 54

There are texts that emphasize Islam's insistence on being tolerant to non-combatants in war.

Islam has forbidden the killing of women and children in war.

Islamic Education, Grade 10, Part 1 (2004) p. 52

[Caliph] Abu Bakr gave orders to Usamah's army saying: "...Do not kill a child, or an old man, or a woman. Do not cut a date palm, nor burn it. Do not

³⁶ The pictures appear in a lesson within a larger unit called "the Palestinian Family" (p. 2)

cut down a tree bearing fruit. Do not slaughter a sheep, or a cow, or a camel, except for eating. You will meet people who have dedicated themselves [to God] in the hermitage. Leave them alone with that to which they have dedicated themselves.”

Islamic Education, Grade 10, Part 1 (2004) p. 62

Peace with Israel

The issue of peace with Israel is not mentioned in this latest issue of textbooks. The Oslo Accord is mentioned as part of the Palestinian struggle between the two Intifadhas and as an event that facilitated the establishment of the Palestinian Authority. Peace is not mentioned in this context and peace with Israel is not mentioned at all.

The Palestinian people embarked on its first *Intifadhah* in 1987. After the signing of the Oslo Accord in 1993 the Palestinian National Authority was established, in 1994, in parts of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. Then, in 2000, the Palestinian people embarked upon its second *Intifadhah* (the Al-Aqsa *Intifadhah*).

National Education, Grade 5 (2004) p. 31

The victorious conclusion to the conflict is portrayed in the following story rather than the possibility of peace.

The Race between the Eagles and the Vultures

“The Race between the Eagles³⁷ and the Vultures” is based on an idea. It is a symbolic story... aimed at deepening the national consciousness...

[Excerpts]:

...The eagles came back from their daily journey of bringing food and found out that the vultures had already occupied their nests and driven their youngsters away from them. The eagles asked for an explanation and the leader of the vultures told them that they had decided to settle in these mountains and asked the eagles to look for another place for themselves.

The eagles’ leader said: “Is this our reward for having given you the opportunity to rest and have something to eat before you continue on your journey?”

The vultures’ leader turned his beak towards the sky and said: “Why should we go? You go, and, whenever you come here, we will show you our hospitality.”

³⁷ It should be noted that the eagle is the emblem of the Palestinian Authority, which, incidentally, appears in every textbook, and the symbolism of the story is immediately clear to the student.

A sparkle of astonishment filled the eyes of the eagles' leader and he said: "But this is our homeland!"...

...One wise eagle realized that a disaster would befall the eagles if the two parties met in battle. The wise [eagle] looked beyond the vultures and saw the... crows and other immigrating birds and did not find any of the [local] mountain population. If fighting took place the immigrating birds would support the vultures and the eagles would fight alone. The wise eagle said: "Instead of fighting each other... I suggest that the vultures appoint five strong vultures and the eagles will appoint five strong eagles and those chosen will have a race. Victory will give the winning team and its kin the right to reside in this place."

...The vultures discussed [the matter] and agreed... The eagles gathered to consult about the matter and one of them criticized the wise eagle saying: "This is our land from time immemorial, why, then, should we make our staying here subject to the result of a race we might lose?"

...The two teams gathered and the wise eagle said: "Every team will fly from the highest peak in the mountains to the valley below and come back here carrying prey. The team that brings bigger prey and arrives sooner will be the winner. Then we will repeat the [race] and the one who wins both races will have the right of residence [here]."

...The vultures soon came back carrying large animals... and a while later the eagles came back carrying small animals... The wise eagle was astonished to see the team losing and said: "...I want to hear from the team the reason for not winning." The leader of the eagles' team said: "Honestly, we felt awe as we found ourselves suddenly in a race with the vultures, who are, as you know, famous for being [good] hunters." ...The wise eagle said: "The vultures' reputation overwhelmed you and you forgot your real capabilities..." The leader of the eagles said: "How could you forget that this is our air and you have flown here a lot and know the air currents between the mountains that help [you] flying? ...Go on, O eagles, these are your nests. Defend them!"

The wise eagle signaled and the two teams flew off. Soon the eagles returned carrying large prey... The vultures followed them carrying small prey... The wise eagle said: "You won once and we won once. Let us race for the third time and the one who wins will win the contest."

...The eagles flew through an air pass between the mountains they knew well. While the vultures were circling in the air to explore the valley underneath, and the prey there, the eagles already fell on their prey and returned with it... The vultures stood with the [other] immigrant birds prepared [for battle], because they were not content with the result of the

contest. Then the leader of the eagles laughed mockingly and said to the leader of the vultures: “Before you do something irresponsible look around carefully”. The leader of the vultures looked around... All the eagles [of the surrounding areas] had arrived because they felt the danger when they saw the birds racing in the sky... The leader of the vultures realized that if a battle broke out the eagles would win it. He bowed his head and signaled to the vultures and to the other [immigrant] birds to go...

Reading and texts, Grade 10, Part 2 (2004) pp. 32-36