

Islam And Pluralism

Mr. Pahary S. M. Yasser (Islamic Studies)

Website: www.islamimanihsan.com

1. Non Muslim Under Shari'ah
2. Muslim Minorities Problems
3. Reactions
4. Facilities

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Cambridge Resources

www.whyislam.org/common-ground/rights-of-non-muslim-minorities/

<https://islamhouse.com/en/articles/428802/>

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Non-Muslims under Islamic History

During the Days of the Prophet

As far as the Jews are concerned

1. During the life of Prophet Muhammad, the Jews in Madina had a synagogue and an educational institute by the name of Bait-Al-Madras. He made sure it was preserved as well as all the Jews attending it were protected.
2. The Prophet of Islam made several treaties with the Jews. Following is an extract of a message that he wrote to form a treaty:

In the name of God, Most Gracious, Ever Merciful. This message is from Muhammad, Messenger of God. Verily, whoever follows us from the Jews shall have the help and the aid; and shall neither be victim of injustice, nor taken vengeance upon. The Jews of the children of Awf are safe with the Faithful. They have their religion and the Muslims theirs and themselves, except those who oppress or sin, they will forfeit themselves and their families. The Jews of Bani Al-Najjar, of Bani Al-Harith, of Bani Saaedah, of Bani Aws and of Bani Belanah are Jews like the others.



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Non-Muslims under Islamic History

During the Days of the Prophet

As far as the Christians are concerned

1. The Prophet honored the Christians of Najran from Yemen who visited him in his own mosque in Madina. The Christians prayed according to Christian fashion inside the mosque, and the Prophet and his followers prayed in Muslim tradition.
2. The Prophet respected the autonomy of the Christian churches. The nomination and the appointment of bishops and priests was left to the Christian community itself.
3. Prophet Muhammad promoted cooperation between Muslims and Christians in the political arena as well. The prophet selected a non-Muslims and delegated him as his ambassador to Negus, the king of Ethiopia. The name of that ambassador was 'Amr-ibn-Umaiyyah-ad-Damri.
4. During the days of the Prophet, there were two super powers, the Persians and the Romans. The Romans adopted Christianity while the Persians adopted atheist beliefs. Those two super powers were at war with each other. During that period, Muslims were a small minority in the Arabian Peninsula. They prayed to Almighty God that the Romans would win the war against the Atheistic forces. The feelings and the beliefs of the Muslims were based on the fact that the Romans were part of the People of the Book. (See Qur'an [30: 1-7](#))



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Non-Muslims under Islamic History

During the Days of the Prophet

As far as the Christians are concerned

The Prophet sent a message to the Monks of Saint Catherine in Mount Sinai. The English translation of that document is as follows:

This is a message written by Muhammad Ibn Abdullah, as a covenant to those who adopt Christianity, far and near, we are behind them. Verily, I defend them by myself, the servants, the helpers, and my followers, because Christians are citizens; and by Allah! I hold out against anything that displeases them. No compulsion is to be on them. Neither are their judges to be changed from their jobs, nor their monks from their monasteries. No one is to destroy a house of their religion, to damage it, or to carry anything from it to the Muslims' houses. Should anyone take any of these, he would spoil God's covenant and disobey His Prophet. Verily, they are my allies and have my secure charter against all that they hate one is to force them to travel or to oblige them to fight. The Muslims are to fight for them. If a female Christians is married to a Muslim, this is not to take place without her own wish. She is not to be prevented from going to her church to pray. Their churches are to be respected. They are neither to be prevented from repairing them nor the sacredness of their covenants. No one of the nation is to disobey this covenant till the Day of Judgement and the end of the world.



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Non-Muslims under Islamic History

During the Days of Umar

1. The Second Caliph (religious leader of Muslim people) 'Umar, asked his Governor in Syria to recruit a Greek person who could put the accounts of their revenues in order. He also appointed a Christian to head his Administration.
2. 'Umar respectfully declined to pray inside the church of Resurrection in Jerusalem, but he did pray outside. He was concerned that his followers would take it over from the Christians, if he prayed inside.
3. Muslims were given the key of the Church of Basilica in Jerusalem during the days of the Caliph 'Umar. The Muslims are still taking care of it today.
4. During the time of Caliph 'Umar certain Muslims had taken a piece of land belonging to a Jew. They constructed a mosque on it. 'Umar ordered the demolition of the mosque and the restoration of the land to the Jew.
5. When Jerusalem was submitted to Caliph 'Umar, an agreement was made between 'Umar-and the local Christians. The agreement goes as follows:

In the name of God, the Merciful, the Compassionate! This is the security which grants to the people of Elia. He grants to all, whether sick or sound, security for their lives, their possessions, their churches and their crosses, and for all that concerns their religion. Their churches shall not be changed into dwelling places, nor destroyed, neither shall they nor their appurtenances be in anyway diminished, nor the crosses of the inhabitants nor aught of their possessions, nor shall any constraints be put upon them in the matter of their faith, nor shall any one of them be harmed.



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Non-Muslims under Islamic History During the Umayyads and Abbasids

- Non-Muslims were holding the rank of Political, Ministers, Administrative positions and membership in Executive Councils. Non-Muslims were given judicial autonomy, not only for personal status, but for all affairs of their life: Civil, penal and others. During the Abbasid Caliphs, Christian Patriarchs and Jewish Hakhams (Rabbis) held highest positions in the Islamic state. They held the position of advisors in the cabinet of the Caliph himself.
- When the Muslim army reached the valley of the Jordan and Abu Ubaydah pitched his camp at Fihl, the Christian inhabitants of the country wrote to the Arabs, saying:

O Muslims, we prefer you to the Byzantine though they are of our faith, because you keep better faith with us and are more merciful to us and refrain from doing us injustice and your rule over us is better than theirs, for they have robbed us of our goods and our homes.



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Non-Muslims under Islamic History

During the Umayyads and Abbasids

- The people of Emessa closed the gates of their city against the army of Heraclius and told the Muslims that they preferred Muslim government and justice to the injustice and oppression of the Greeks.
- Mu'awiyah (661-680) employed Christians very heavily in his service, and the other members of the reigning house followed his example. Christians frequently held high posts at court.
- During the days of 'Umar Ibn 'Abd-al-'Aziz (an Umayyad Caliph) some Muslims took a church to enlarge the Grand Mosque of Damascus (Al-Masjid Al-Umawee). Caliph 'Umar Ibn 'Abd-al-Aziz ordered the demolition of that part of the mosque and to restore the church. However, the Christians opted for a monetary settlement.
- Non-Muslims were given the citizenship of the Muslim country in which they lived including the right to vote for the election of the Muslim state. However, they were exempted from being drafted in the Muslim army.
- During the days of Haroon Al-Rashid, Dr. Gabriel, the personal physician of the caliph Haroon al-Rashid, was a Nestorian Christian.



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Non-Muslims under Islamic History

Pact of Umar

- There are several different versions of the pact that differ both in their language and stipulations.^[17]
- The points:
- Prohibition against building new churches, places of worship, monasteries, monks or a new cell. (Hence it was also forbidden to build new synagogues. It is known that new synagogues were only built after the occupation of Islam, for example in Jerusalem and Ramle. A similar law, prohibiting the build of new synagogues, existed in the Byzantines, and was therefore not new for all Jews. It was new for the Christians.)
- Prohibition against rebuilding destroyed churches, by day or night, in their own neighbourhoods or those situated in the quarters of the Muslims.
- The worship places of non-Muslims must be lower in elevation than the lowest mosque in town.
- The houses of non-Muslims must not be taller in elevation than the houses of Muslims.
- Prohibition against hanging a cross on the Churches.



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Non-Muslims under Islamic History

Pact of Umar

- Muslims should be allowed to enter Churches (for shelter) in any time, both in day and night.
- Obliging the call of prayer by a bell or a kind of Gong (Nakos) to be low in volume.
- Prohibition of Christians and Jews against raising their voices at prayer times.
- Prohibition against teaching non-Muslim children the Qur'an.
- Christians were forbidden to show their religion in public, or to be seen with Christian books or symbols in public, on the roads or in the markets of the Muslims.
- Palm Sunday and Easter parades were banned.
- Funerals should be conducted quietly.
- Prohibition against burying non-Muslim dead near Muslims.
- Prohibition against raising a pig next to a Muslims neighbour.
- Christian were forbidden to sell Muslims alcoholic beverage.



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Non-Muslims under Islamic History

Pact of Umar

- Christians were forbidden to provide cover or shelter for spies.
- Prohibition against telling a lie about Muslims.
- Obligation to show deference toward Muslims. If a Muslim wishes to sit, non-Muslim should be rise from his seats and let the Muslim sit.
- Prohibition against preaching to Muslims in an attempt to convert them from Islam.
- Prohibition against preventing the conversion to Islam of someone who wants to convert.
- The appearance of the non-Muslims has to be different from those of the Muslims: Prohibition against wearing Qalansuwa (kind of dome that was used to wear by Bedouin), Bedouin turban ([Amamh](#)), Muslims shoes, and Sash to their waists. As to their heads, it was forbidden to comb the hair sidewise as the Muslim custom, and they were forced to cut the hair in the front of the head. Also non-Muslim shall not imitate the Arab-Muslim way of speech nor shall adopt the kunyas (Arabic byname, such as "abu Khattib").



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Non-Muslims under Islamic History

Pact of Umar

- Obligation to identify non-Muslims as such by clipping the heads' forelocks and by always dressing in the same manner, wherever they go, with binding the zunnar (a kind of belt) around the waists. Christians to wear blue belts or turbans, Jews to wear yellow belts or turbans, Zoroastrians to wear black belts or turbans, and Samaritans to wear red belts or turbans.
- Prohibition against riding animals in the Muslim custom, and prohibition against riding with a saddle.
- Prohibition against adopting a Muslim title of honour.
- Prohibition against engraving Arabic inscriptions on signet seals.
- Prohibition against any possession of weapons.
- Non-Muslims must host a Muslim passerby for at least 3 days and feed him.
- Non-Muslims prohibited from buying a Muslim prisoner.
- Prohibition against taking slaves who have been allotted to Muslims.
- Prohibition against non-Muslims to lead, govern or employ Muslims.
- If a non-Muslim beats a Muslim, his Dhimmi protection is removed.
- In return, the ruler would provide security for the Christian believers who follow the rules of the pact.



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Non-Muslims under Islamic History

Rights of Dhimmi

- Minorities enjoyed exemption from military service, freedom of religion, freedom to practice their religious duties, and the right to renovate, although not to erect, new houses of worship. In return, a **poll tax (*jizya*)** was levied.
- They were prohibited from criticizing the Qur'an, expressing disrespect to the Prophet or to Islam, conducting missionary activity, or having sexual relations with or marrying Muslim women. They were not allowed to make their crosses, wine, and pork conspicuous, or to conduct their funerals in public. Riding horses was prohibited, as was erecting houses taller than those of the Muslims. ***Dhimmi*s** were required to wear clothes that made them recognizable and were barred from holding certain public positions.



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Non-Muslims under Islamic History

Jizya

- Among non-Muslim subjects, only the able, the young, the healthy, and working male adults were required to pay **jizya**.
- Non-Muslim women, children, the aged, the sick, the unemployed poor, the disabled, and clergy were not required to pay **jizya**.
- **The Hanafis** divided non-Muslims into three categories and required them to pay different amounts: a rich **dhimmi** was required to pay 48 dirham per year, a middle-class **dhimmi** was required to pay 24 dirham per year, while a low-income **dhimmi** was required to pay only 12 dirhams per year. It was possible to pay the tax in monthly installments.



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Muslims Minorities

Difficulties

1. difficult to find time to offer prayers
2. strong hold of unislamic cultural and life style
3. blame of being terrorists
4. dangers of such outspokenness of Scholars
5. psychological oppressions
6. freedom of intermingling of sexes
7. Alcohol, drugs and haram food / activity
8. Terrorists groups emerged



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Muslims Minorities

How to React

- adequate attention to studying and understanding the problem
- (5: 8) ‘Believers, stand out firmly for God, as witnesses to fair dealing, and let not the hatred of others toward you make you swerve to wrong and depart from justice. Be just: that is next to piety: and fear God. For God is well-acquainted with all that you do’. – *Justice and patience*
- (5: 2) “...let not the hatred of some people in (once) shutting you out of the Sacred Mosque lead you to transgression (and hostility on your part). Help you one another in righteousness and piety, but help you not one another in sin and rancour: fear God, for God is strict in punishment.” – *violence and vengeance*



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Muslims Minorities

How to React

- (25:63) 'The Servants of the Lord of Mercy are those who walk humbly on Earth, and who, when the foolish address them, reply 'Peace'" - *ignoring the words of ignorant people*
- (6: 108) 'Do not revile those they call on beside God, so they, in their hostility, revile God, without knowledge'. - *call to respect the sanctity of faith symbols*
- Do not disagree - *Unite*



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Muslims Minorities

Facilities

- Modernisation of Madrasa – India
- Muslim **integration** as well as **preservation** of the countries' cultures - Denmark
- **relationship between mosques and states – UK**
- **financial** or other support for religious education and institutions
- faith schools and segregated education to provide support for Islamic education – Mauritius
- Rights and subsidies to both Imaams as wages and mosques to buy any kind of transport - Mauritius



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