



## Core Curriculum

### 5 The Qur'an and Hadith

#### 5.1 **Islam and Other Religions**

##### INTRODUCTION

Bismillāhir Rahmānir Rahīm, As-salāmu ‘Alaykum wa rahmatullāhi wa barakātuh. Peace be upon you brothers and sisters.

Welcome back to our channel! Up until this point we’ve spoken a lot about Islam. We’ve covered quite a number of topics, from Islamic beliefs to Islamic practices. We’ve talked about law and we’ve also talked about spirituality.

One thing we haven’t talked about is Islam’s relationship with other religions. What does Islam say about other religions? What does it say about people of other faiths? How does Islam treat people of other religions?

These questions are really important given that not everyone in the world is Muslim. For those of us who are living here in the West, this question is even more urgent for the majority of people that most of us tend to deal with, whether it is at work or school, are non-Muslim. For those of us who are converts to Islam where most of our families are non-Muslim, these questions are even more pertinent.

In this lesson, we will overview some of the basic elements of Islam concerning its views and treatment of people of other faiths.

##### BODY OF TEXT

The Prophet Muhammad (s) once said:

“Beware! Whoever is cruel and hard to protected non-Muslims, or curtails their rights, or burdens them with more than they can bear, or takes anything from them against their free will; I (Prophet Muhammad) will complain against the person on the Day of Judgment.”

He also said:

“Whoever kills a person who has a made peace with the Muslims will never smell the fragrance of Paradise.”

The Qur’an makes a distinction between two groups, the People of the Book (Ahl al-Kitāb) and polytheists and idol worshipers (mushrikīn). The mushrikīn are those who believe in, and worship gods other than Allah. The Ahl al-Kitāb refers to Jews, Christians and Sabians which are all, or for the most part, Abrahamic religions.

This means that the religions of the Ahl al-Kitab can trace themselves back to the universal monotheistic message of the Prophet Abraham (as). There are a few fundamental differences between these two groups and how Islam views them.

In terms of the mushrikīn, Islam believes that such beliefs are deviant and contradict the truth and reality. In fact, Islam goes as far as believing that worshiping idols is in essence a Satanic activity. As such, there is no truth behind idol worship but it is instead a deviation of God’s plan for humanity.

The Ahl al-Kitāb, or People of the Book, trace their origins traced back to a divinely revealed religion and a divinely inspired Prophet. Islam, for example, believes in Moses and Jesus (peace be upon them both), their teachings as well as the Divine Books that were given to them by God.

One cannot be a Muslim without belief in the divine nature of these religions. For this reason, Islam will allow Muslims to marry non-Muslims

under specific conditions and contexts whereas under no circumstances does Islam allow Muslims to marry idols worshipers.

Even though Islam may believe that other religions are false, or have been distorted from their original true message, it in no way wishes to disrespect or insult them. The Qur'an for example states the following:

And do not insult those they invoke other than Allah, lest they insult Allah in enmity without knowledge. Thus We have made pleasing to every community their deeds. Then to their Lord is their return, and He will inform them about what they used to do. (Chapter 6, verse 108 of the Holy Qur'an)

The Qur'an is stating a simple rule. If you want others to respect you and your religion, you need to be kind enough to show them the same amount of respect. Disrespecting others is just a recipe for mutual fighting between human beings which the Qur'an wants to avoid completely. But there is another problem as well.

Some people think that respecting another person or system of belief means that one needs to accept it. This is absolutely incorrect. The Qur'an is very clear throughout its pages on the incorrectness of religions other than Islam. Respect in the Qur'anic view, however, means that one's discussion or relating to others should not result in insults or mockery no matter how incorrect the religion may be. One must always uphold the highest of manners and be polite and respectful.

This is an important point to consider for those who interact with non-Muslims regularly whether they are co-workers, classmates or family. Taking a condescending tone and putting someone down is a recipe for making them hate Islam. The above verse is implying just that. If you want to bring someone of another religion to come into the light of Islam, you need to be respectful and uphold the best moral character or risk alienating them from Islam forever by having them insult Islam. The Prophet (s) brought people into Islam mainly due to his impeccable respect and manners:

So by mercy from Allah, [O Muhammad], you were gentle with them. And if you had been rude [in speech] and harsh in heart, they would have disbanded from about you. So pardon them and ask forgiveness for them and consult them in the matter. And when you have decided, then rely upon Allah. Indeed, Allah loves those who rely [upon Him]. (Chapter 3, verse 159 of the Holy Qur'an)

The Qur'an is thus teaching us that the essence of Islam's relation to other religions, and by extension, what it expects from Muslims and how they relate to non-Muslims, is that of gentleness, kindness and compassion. It is not taking away their rights, patronizing them or treating them like second class citizens. If a Muslim happens to mistreat a non-Muslim for no other reason than the person's religion, then he or she will be at fault according to Islam and answerable to God on the Day of Judgment.

Until Next Time, Thank you for watching. As-salāmu 'Alaykum wa rahmatullāhi wa barakātuh