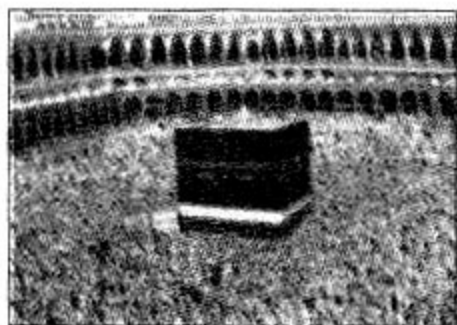


Formula of co-existence

By Maulana Wahiduddin Khan



Multi-religious society is a universal phenomenon, most societies being multi-religious in composition. A question commonly asked is: how to live in a society where believers of different religions are living side by side? Al Quran was revealed in the first quarter of the 7th century. Some of its parts were revealed in Mecca and some in Medina. Both cities were inhabited by people of different religions, namely, Jews, Christians and Muslims. In this situation the Quran offered a very simple formula: *"For you your religion, for me mine."* (109:6)

This Quranic formula was based on a natural principle of co-existence or mutual respect. It can be expressed thus: Follow one and respect all. No religious activity can be carried out without peace.

This formula, giving room to all the religions in any society, ensures peace.

In the early history of Islam, there is a relevant story in the life of the Prophet of Islam that aptly illustrates this principle.

The Prophet of Islam migrated from Mecca to Medina in 622 AD at which time there were some Jewish tribes living in Medina.

One day it happened that the Prophet of Islam, seated at that time, saw a funeral procession passing through a street in Medina. On seeing the funeral, he stood up out of respect. One of his companions said, "O Prophet, that was the funeral of a Jew, not a Muslim."

The Prophet replied: "Was he not a human being?"

This means that the Prophet discovered a commonality between himself and a Jew, because both were men and created by God. This was enough to provide a basis upon which both could co-exist.

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