

PROPHET MUHAMMAD

(خاتم النبيين ﷺ)

& Religious Pluralism

(A Cross-Cultural Perspective)



DR. JAMIL AKHTAR

PROPHET MUHAMMAD (ﷺ)
&
Religious Pluralism
(A Cross-Cultural Perspective)

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Jamil Akhtar
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DEDICATION

*To my unwavering pillars of support and
endless wellsprings of love – Mom and Dad.
Their guidance and encouragement have shaped
every page of my journey, and
this book stands as a tribute to the roots
they planted in my heart.
May they live long (Aameen)*

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Transliteration Table¹

TRANSLITERATION TABLE

| | | | | | | | | | |
|---|----|---|----|---|----|----|----|---|----------|
| ا | a | آ | d | غ | gh | بھ | bh | Long Vowels | |
| ب | b | ذ | dh | ف | f | پھ | ph | ا | ā |
| پ | P | ر | r | ق | q | تھ | th | آ | ā |
| ت | t | ژ | r | ک | k | ٹھ | th | ی | ī |
| ٹ | t | ز | z | گ | g | جھ | jh | و | ū |
| ث | th | ژ | z | ل | l | چھ | ch | و | (Urdu) o |
| ج | j | س | s | م | m | دھ | dh | ے | (Urdu) ē |
| چ | ch | ش | sh | ن | n | ڈھ | dh | Short Vowels | |
| ح | h | ص | s | و | w | رھ | rh | ا | a |
| خ | kh | ط | t | ہ | h | کھ | kh | ی | i |
| د | d | ظ | z | ی | y | گھ | gh | و | u |
| <p>ی (e), when it appears at the middle or end of a word, is transliterated as elevated comma (') followed by the letter representing the vowel it carries. However, when ِ appears at the beginning of a word it will be represented only by the letter representing the vowel it carries.</p> <p>ع is transliterated as elevated inverted comma (').</p> <p>ض as an Arabic letter is transliterated as (d), and as a Persian/Turkish/Urdu letter as (z).</p> <p>و as an Arabic letter is transliterated as (w), and as a Persian/Turkish/Urdu letter is transliterated as (v).</p> <p>اُ is transliterated as (ah) in pause form and as (at) in construct form.</p> <p>Article ا is transliterated as (al-) whether followed by a moon or a sun letter, however, in construct form it will be transliterated as (l).</p> <p>و as a Persian/Urdu conjunction is transliterated as (-o) whereas as an Arabic conjunction و is transliterated as (wa).</p> <p>Short vowel (َ) in Persian/Urdu possessive or adjectival form is transliterated as (-i).</p> | | | | | | | | <p>Diphthongs</p> <p>و ا (Arabic) aw (Persian/Urdu) au (Turkish) ev</p> <p>ی ا (Arabic) ay (Persian/Urdu) ai (Turkish) ey</p> <p>Doubled</p> <p>و ا (Arabic) uww (Persian) uvv (Urdu) uvv</p> <p>و ا (Arabic) iyy</p> | |

¹ This table is taken from IRI, IIUI website, and it is followed while transliterating the relevant words in this book.

Preface

In the ever-evolving tapestry of human history, Prophet Muḥammad (ﷺ) has done something as a guiding force in shaping religious interfaces and transforming determined cultures' ethos. The book at hand, "Prophet Muḥammad (ﷺ) and Religious Pluralism (A Cross-Cultural Perspective)," ventures on an elaborate investigation of the Prophet's encounters with Christians and Jews, unfolding the intricate dimensions of his relationships to understand something about religious pluralism along with instructive angles that apply to current struggles. It is my pleasure to welcome the readers as we navigate through the historical landscape of Prophet Muḥammad (ﷺ)'s life. As a scholar who is deeply involved in analyzing interfaith relations, the aim has been to elucidate the Prophet Muḥammad (ﷺ)'s more complex interactions with Christians and Jews. The introduction sets out a personal view of why this exploration is historically important and pertinent to our current global context.

The introductory chapter provides a brief background of Prophet Muḥammad (ﷺ)'s life to establish the broader historical context. This book purposefully makes the broader context, highlighting the importance of studying the Prophet's relationship with different religious communities. Embarking on this scholarly voyage, it becomes apparent that the subtleties of interfaith politics in Prophet Muḥammad (ﷺ)'s time are central to our globally connected world.

The second chapter presents how the Prophet interacted with Jewish communities during both Mecca and Madīnah times. The Constitution of Madīnah formation is considered a demonstration that the Prophet was dedicated to peaceful co-existence. The expulsion of Jewish tribes from Madīnah as an act to achieve peace is investigated, and the Treaty of Hūdaybiyyah illustrated how diplomatic attempts to achieve harmony were carried out. The chapter also points out that Prophet Muḥammad (ﷺ) was engaging with Jewish scholars and how Jews converted to Islām.

Following this, the third chapter reveals the relations of Prophet Muḥammad (ﷺ) with Christians from his early age to diplomatic relationships with Christian communities. The Constitution of Madīnah is considered a landmark document that sheds light on the Prophet's vision for a pluralistic society where people can live and cooperate peacefully. This chapter continues to delve into Prophet Muḥammad (ﷺ)'s meetings with Christian delegations and the narratives of people who decided to follow Islām highlighting inclusivity in his message. In the fourth chapter, the author draws timeless lessons from the Prophet's life. It discusses his principles applied in addressing modern issues and challenges; it promotes communication between people of different cultures to achieve mutual understanding. The historical instances of religious pluralism during Islāmic rule in Andalusian Spain and the Ottoman Empire are analyzed, and examples from contemporary cases within modern Islāmic states are discussed. This

chapter also encourages opening up on religious plurality and fosters an inclusive atmosphere.

The fifth chapter tackles obstacles and misconceptions regarding Prophet Muḥammad (ﷺ) and religious pluralism. It demolishes widely held myths, such as charges of enforced conversions and misunderstandings in the past. It deals with modern issues, in which it critically discusses Islāmophobia and its repercussions on interfaith connections providing ways to encourage understanding and tolerance. Globalization, interconnectedness, and the rise of extremism have cornered religious pluralism today; thus an overall outlook into the issues associated with it is sounded out in terms of challenges. The sixth chapter examines how the teachings of the Prophet Muḥammad (ﷺ) are contemporary in promoting religious harmony. It explores the role of academics and religious leaders in advancing pluralism, highlighting joint efforts to promote understanding and campaigns to combat extremism and advance tolerance. These initiatives' effects on world peace and co-existence are carefully considered.

Through the pages of this book, readers are invited to travel back in time and follow the Prophet Muḥammad (ﷺ) as he makes his way through the difficult terrain of religious pluralism. The stories throughout these chapters aim to reveal the wisdom in the Prophet's interactions and provide insightful guidance for promoting harmony in the modern world. It will set the stage for an interesting and illuminating investigation of the Prophet Muḥammad

(ﷺ)'s legacy and its lasting influence on navigating diversity in various historical periods and geographical spaces. In short, this research book aims to contribute to the current discussion on religious pluralism by providing a thorough analysis of Prophet Muḥammad (ﷺ)'s interactions with Jews and Christians. It aims to identify timeless lessons, tackle current issues, and show the way toward a world that is more tolerant and understanding by using a cross-cultural lens.

Dr. Jamil

07-January-2024