



THE CONCEPT OF TOLERANCE IN ISLĀM AND ITS IMPORTANCE

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Abstract

This article explores the concept of religious tolerance in Islām and its importance in today's society. It highlights historical examples of interfaith harmony in Uzbekistan and includes references from the Holy Qur'ān and Ḥadīths of Prophet Muḥammad (peace be upon him) that emphasize the need for kindness and fairness toward followers of other religions. The paper also discusses the legal framework of Uzbekistan, which guarantees freedom of belief and promotes interfaith cooperation. It underscores the significance of tolerance in fostering social stability, national unity, and peace.

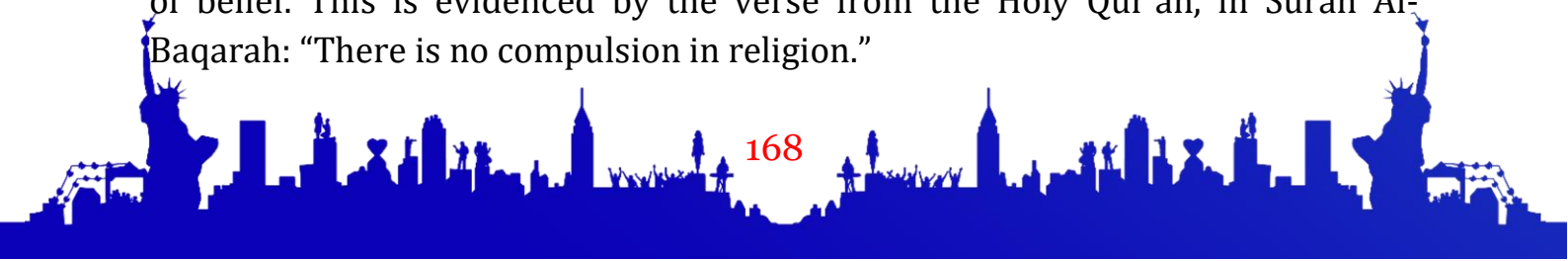
Keywords:

Islām, tolerance, religious freedom, Uzbekistan, Qur'ān, Ḥadīth, interfaith harmony, belief, legislation, morality

Historically, the territory of Uzbekistan has been a model of religious tolerance for the world. Scholars such as Burhān al-Dīn Marghīnānī, 'Abū al-Layth Samarqandī, and 'Alā' al-Dīn al-Kāsānī—who came from our homeland—paid special attention to the issue of being tolerant toward followers of other religions in their writings. For a Muslim to live a prosperous life, it is necessary not only for oneself but also for friends and those around to have strong faith, sound knowledge, and a tolerant attitude.

Today, Uzbekistan is home to representatives of nearly 130 nationalities and followers of various religions who live in peace and harmony. Special attention is being given in our country to strengthening and developing the principles of religious tolerance, which serve as a foundation for goodness and peaceful coexistence. Indeed, people of different faiths living side by side in mutual cooperation and unity under one homeland and great ideals is a clear reflection of religious tolerance.

Tolerance in Islām was manifested from the very beginning of the religion. Among the world religions, Islām is the only one that explicitly declared freedom of belief. This is evidenced by the verse from the Holy Qur'ān, in Surah Al-Baqarah: "There is no compulsion in religion."





In fact, our Constitution also guarantees that no one can be forced into any religion and that every person's rights and freedoms are protected. It states: "Freedom of conscience is guaranteed for everyone. Every individual has the right to believe in any religion or not to believe in any religion. The imposition of religious views by force is not allowed." It is fair to say that the principle of religious tolerance is reflected throughout the articles of our Constitution. The rights, freedoms, and responsibilities of every citizen living in Uzbekistan are clearly defined and protected within the framework of law.

Religious tolerance means peaceful coexistence of people with different beliefs, despite their theological differences. Everyone is free to practice their religion, while recognizing that others have the same right. Accepting others' excuses with tolerance, and easing their burden while shouldering hardship yourself, is one of the core teachings of our sacred religion.

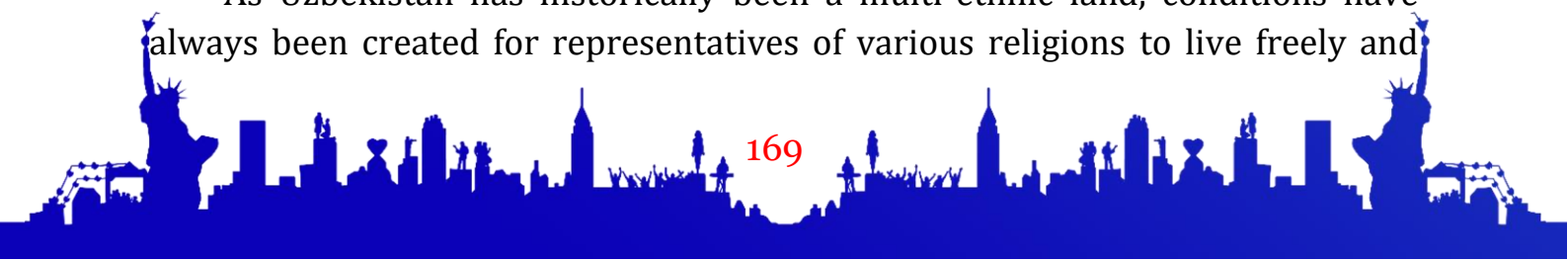
Religious tolerance is also emphasized in the Law of the Republic of Uzbekistan "On Approving the Concept of Ensuring Freedom of Conscience and State Policy in the Religious Sphere," adopted on February 25, 2025. In particular, Article 3, Clause 2 of this law states: "Religious beliefs and religious tolerance, as well as the true humanistic essence of religions, are among the moral and ethical foundations of society. They serve to unite and consolidate the people of Uzbekistan and strengthen mutual respect and compassion within families as a source of ancient values."

From the earliest days of Islām, there was no pressure against former religions, nor was there fanaticism against various sects and ideologies. This clearly demonstrates the tolerant nature of our religion. The ultimate goal of all this is to ensure peace and tranquility among all peoples and nations.

The Qur'ān confirms that Muslims are not prohibited from treating non-Muslims with kindness and justice. Surah Al-Mumtahanah, verse 8, states: *"Allah does not forbid you from being kind and just toward those who did not fight you because of religion and did not expel you from your homes."*

The Prophet Muḥammad (peace be upon him) was a true example not only for the Muslim community but for all humanity. Despite having opportunities for revenge, he forgave those who wronged and oppressed him. In one ḥadīth, he instructed Muslims to treat even non-Muslim neighbors with kindness. He said: *"Whoever harms a non-Muslim under protection (dhimmi), I will be his adversary on the Day of Judgment."* (Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal, Musnad)

As Uzbekistan has historically been a multi-ethnic land, conditions have always been created for representatives of various religions to live freely and





securely here. Alongside other institutions, religious communities are becoming increasingly active in the development of society, contributing to the revival of our people's spirituality and identity, and most importantly, to the strength and permanence of our independence.

To ensure the continuation of this positive process, it is essential to maintain friendly relations with people of different religions and nationalities and to adhere to the laws adopted in this direction

References:

1. On Approving the Concept of Ensuring Freedom of Conscience and State Policy in the Religious Sphere.
2. Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal. Musnad. – V:21. – Beirut: Muassasa ar-Risala , 1998. – 512 p

