

Strategic Religious Tolerance

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The purpose of this document is to model the strategy of religious tolerance found in the Quran (Koran). When Mohammed was in Mecca, he needed religious tolerance to get people to submit to his god. For the same purpose, when he took over the city of Medina he used force.

Muhammad in Mecca

My first experience with the Quranic Islamic attitude of religious tolerance was in the early 1970's as a Navigator in the Air Force. The United States was training Saudi Arabian and Iranian air crews, and since I have always been interested in understanding or strategy I noticed the extreme difference between the two peoples. Of course Saudi's were Arabian and Iranians were Persian, but both were Moslem. My Iranian roommate was a very strict Shiite Muslim, and the Saudi's who lived in our complex were Sunni Muslim, also very strict to the Arabic Quran. Because at that time I had heard of the strict rules they had to live by in Saudi Arabia, the Saudi's liberal attitude towards alcohol and sex caught my attention (We saw the same tolerant attitude with the 911 hijackers going to strip clubs the night before their mission). It was at that time that I learned of the strategic religious tolerance a Muslim has in a country that is not ruled by Muslim law. The Saudi's example is Mohammed in Mecca.

Muhammad in Medina

I wondered why my Iranian roommate was so strict. Christmas came. He and I were the only two students left on the base. I had just arrived to Columbus, MS from Bonners Ferry, ID, and just arriving from Tehran I believe he was the first Iranian on base. He could speak English, but for some reason he totally rejected western ways and wanted nothing to do with me. At that time Iran was not under Muslim law which happened nine years later in their revolution. A week before the US Hostage Crisis during the Iranian Revolution, I saw his intolerant attitude while riding in a blue US Air Force bus through the streets of Tehran. The Iranian example is Mohammed in Medina.

Quranic Strategic Tolerance

With help from Christians (like [Nezir Hyseni](#)) I found both religious tolerance and intolerance strategies in the Quran. In the earlier Mecca period, Muhammad taught that he was to "call to the way of your Lord with wisdom and goodly exhortation, and have disputations with them in the best manner" (Sura 16:125). In Mecca he was outside of his law on a mission. But, in Medina he was within the borders of his very political religion. When Muhammad went to Medina "it was...time for a different watchword: '...kill the idolaters whenever and wherever you find them; take them prisoner, lay siege to them, and wait for them in every ambush' (Sura 9:5); 'fight the way of God'(Sura 2:244)."

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Summary: Strategic Religious Tolerance

The purpose of this document has been to model the strategy of religious tolerance found in the Quran (Koran). For the same purpose: to get people to submit to his god, it is right there with religious intolerance. When Mohammed was in Mecca, to get people to submit he needed religious tolerance. For that same purpose, when he took over the city of Medina he used force. When he was in a town that believed in many gods or idols, he used strategic tolerance. But, when he was under his law or bringing a city under that law, his strategy was intolerance. For the same purpose, all Quranic Muslims in the United States are using either Strategic Tolerance like those Saudis I knew or Strategic Intolerance like my fellow Iranian.