

Islam recognises that all the worlds great faiths share a common thread

It is defamatory to lie about the prophets, messengers and rishis whose teachings guide people to do good and prevent evil. It is defamatory to slander anyone and to some or most people it is blasphemy to malign their religion. The re-launch of the late Ahmed Deedat's lecture "from Hinduism to Islam" defames, disparages and mocks the beliefs of the followers of Hinduism. Even if Muslims did not share a common bond, which they do, no Muslim has the right to vilify and taunt.

The common bond relates to the Qur'anic reference to humanity being one, irrespective of beliefs, creed, gender, caste, language or social status (Qur'an, 2:213; 10:19). The obligation to respect the beliefs of others while inviting them to Islam is fundamental and referred to in the Qur'an, as for example, the right to freedom of belief and the freedom of choice of worship (Qur'an, 2:63; 6:56; 22:40); there being no compulsion in the way of life or religion one chooses (Qur'an, 2:256; 88:21-22); not to mock the belief or practices of others. "Unto every community has God appointed ways of worship which they ought to observe" (Qur'an, 5:48; 22:67).

Muslims are required to accept the Qur'an from God who is the only Creator. Hindus also believe in the one Creator, for instance, "God is pure and ever One" (Bhagavad Gita, 5:19); "Adoration unto you who is before me and behind me: adoration unto you on all sides, God of all. All powerful God of immeasurable might. You are the consummation of all: You are all" (Bhagavad Gita, 11:40). "He is one and one forever remains alone; believe it. There is no second in God" (Atharva, 13:5:20). "All these (creation) are but reflections of that One Undying Light. He fills all the quarters and all overhead and down below. He alone exists" (Mundak Upanishad, 2:10-11).

We often refer to the three faiths, Judaism, Christianity and Islam having a common ancestry, Abraham. He is the noble and virtuous father of multitude, greatly revered also by Hindus. In the Vedas, Mundak Upanishad and Gopath Brahmana we read about Brahamaji also known as *Pariapati* or the father of nations (Patriarch) who was married to Sarasvati and later to Parvati who bore him a child they named Atharva. Twelve years later Sarasvati gives birth to a son as well whom they called Angiras. Father and sons had revealed scriptures and the Qur'an refers to all three as "*rasool*", i.e. prophets who were also given divine scriptures. There are other similarities in all four Faiths like the honourable women's' personalities. Other stories also bear almost identical accounts such as the story of Prophet Noah who rescues his community and other life through the ark. Noah or Nuh is identical to the noble personality of Manu. The story of Manu is to be found in Matsya Purana, Bhagvat Purana and Agni Purana and is similar to the Biblical account. The Qur'an refers to the flood having affected Noah's community and not a world deluge. May God bless them and grant them peace!

Why then do we seek to divide ourselves when a common thread holds us together? Is it greed, arrogance, pride and material exploits that compel us to subjugate one another? One stands in awe of the great monuments and relics in Delhi, Agra and other parts of India. How were these magnificent buildings constructed by the great Moghals? Were

these not built on the sweat and blood of the people of Hindustan? What about the Hindu civilization and the many contributions to the then dark world? The DVD through its caricature of Hinduism therefore reduces one of the greatest civilizations to barrenness and its people as uncultured. God blessed other civilizations for His blessings is not reserved for or confined to anyone group. God is not sectionalist; He does not practice apartheid and cannot be monopolised. Every person is God's representative (Qur'an, 2:30); every person is a dignified being (Qur'an, 17:70) and each person is sacred and blessed (Qur'an, 5:32; 17:33).

The point is that God did not create one voice for humanity but many voices for one world community and through this diversity expects us to exercise our freedom responsibly to live in harmony and unity. "Make due allowance for human nature, and enjoin good action and leave all those who choose to be ignorant" (Qur'an 7:199). "O Lord of Peace, may there be peace in heaven and earth..." (Yajur 36:17).

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