

Islamic Terms Of Peace

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Basic Identification

- WHO (author): The Muslim diplomats or generals who had fought to take over Murcia in 713 might have written it as it represents the peace agreement between the two groups that wrote The Treaty. However, Olivia Remie Constable translated it from Arabic to English.
- WHO (audience): The population of Murcia, Theodemir and his people, and the Muslims. As the Muslims had taken over Murcia, everyone was required to know the conditions of living with Muslims in Murcia. The present-day audience can be anyone who is interested in studying Islamic history. It can also be important for the people studying peace treaties in the Muslim world or in history. It can be used to educate Muslims about their history, as most of them believe Islam was spread without violence.
- WHEN: It was written in 713 after taking over Murcia.
- WHERE: The Treaty was written in Murcia between Abd Al-Aziz and Teodemir, Tudmir, who was the ruler of Murcia. It is located in the current Spain so I come from Spain.
- What type of document?

It is a treaty between Muslim ruler Abd Al-Aziz and Theodemir Tudmir, the ruler of Murcia. Abd Al Aziz and Muslim diplomats wrote the document to inform the people and ruler of Murcia about their rights and limits under Muslim rule.

• Outside Information: What was happening in that time and place?

In 713 and preceding years, the Muslims were conquering other areas and expanding their faith. They were taxing the non-believers and converting those who were willing. The Muslims used to send the unaccepting and hostile non-Muslims from their homes to be settled in other parts of the region. The Muslims used to sign peace treaties to live with the non-Muslims who accepted their conditions and obeyed their laws. Moreover, they were required to pay a certain amount of tax to live on the lands. The Muslims fought wars to control more lands in the Arab world and North Africa. Hence, the time was famous for the Muslim conquest and expansion of Islam using force. It was the time of Muslim dominance and wars in the Arab region and Non-Arab regions.

Content

- What is the document about? (main points)

The document is a Muslim-Christian Treaty that took place between Tudmir and Abd Al Aziz. It is a peace treaty that Muslims had with the Christians. The Muslims conditionally safeguarded the religious and social freedom of the Christians and, in return, demanded that the Christians not collude with the enemies to plot against Muslims. It represents the attempts of Muslims to live in harmony with Christians. It is about the peacebuilding strategies of Muslims with other communities in 713.

The document explains the peace treaty that ensured the protection of Tudmir as it stated that the Muslims “will not harass him nor remove him from power.” Moreover, they promised, “his followers will not be killed or taken as prisoners.” It also ensured their religious freedom as it explained that “their churches will not be burned” as long as Tudmir “remain sincere and fulfil the conditions.” The treaty clearly states that Christians will be free to live their lives as long as they accept and obey the rules and conditions set by the Islamic rulers. (Qur’an 17:1, Abdel Haleem trans., 2004) The non-Muslims’ safety and security depended on the mercy of the Muslim ruler. The conditions put forth for the Tudmir was that they “will not shelter fugitives, nor the enemies.” The Muslims wanted full compliance with the rules of not “concealing the news of the enemies.” The non-Muslim population of Murcia was required to pay “one dinar, four measures of each crop and liquids, wheat, barley, fruit juice, vinegar, honey, and olive oils.” The document is about the conditions under which non-Muslims were allowed under the Muslim rules in history.

The document highlights the essential components of Muslim peace treaties with their colonies, and it does appear exploitative and unfair to the people who lived in those places their whole lives. The invasion and conditions for living together were better than in the later colonies because the invasions gave some agency to the people of the conquered region. However, in some ways, it resembles colonialism, converting people to Islam, forcing people to choose from limited options and to gain monetary benefits, and exploiting them. Regardless, it represents the military expeditions of Muslims.

- What’s the document not about?

The document is not about the war, the discussions for peace, or anything similar. It simply states that the treaty where the Muslims demanded certain actions from the Christians in exchange for protection and Taxes. It is not about the violent fighting and the taking over the lands of non-Muslims. It is not about what happened afterwards or before the treaty. It is not about the current Muslim

conditions, nor does it hint. It is not about the reactions of the non-Muslims or Muslims living in the area. It is not to show the differences and injustices that Muslims perpetrated on the non-Muslim population after conquering their land. It does not represent the sentiments of non-Muslims. It is not a critique nor an assessment of Muslim endeavours. It simply shows the Muslim endeavours and their commitment to settle conditionally with the non-Muslims. It is a peace treaty that the winner imposes on the defeated.

- Where does the author get his/her information?

It comes from Medieval Iberia. (Brown, 2009) It was originally in Arabic, but the Olivia Remie Constable translated it into English. The author gets it from Constable's translation.

- How does the author come across?

The author seems to be explaining things and contrasting the Latin Chronicles and claiming that the document implies "that the Muslim conquest of the Iberian Peninsula has been gradual and piecemeal endeavours." Moreover, the author suggests that the Muslims used "two different processes" to control the people in the region while conquering. The document also suggests, "Some cities appear to capitulate quickly in the face of military force", but others resisted the force, fighting back against the Muslim military. However, in other areas, the conquest was initiated through diplomatic means. Although in the beginning, the author seems to have a biased outlook on the endeavours of Muslims, it changes after a few lines towards objectivity. Additionally, the tone of the treatise seems to be commanding and shows the Muslim power sending threats to be coerced unless they "remain sincere and fulfil the conditions" and demand compliance with the treaty.

Connection

- Why was this document written?

The document was written to ensure agreement between the Muslims and Christians after conquering Murcia. It was written to lay down the principles of living together in the same society.

- What are the author's biases?

The author tries to emphasize that Muslims were not as violent as they are presented in the Latin Chronicles. The author emphasizes the peacebuilding and tolerance aspects of the treaty.

- What can we learn from this source about the society it comes from?

Society was violent, and fighting war was a norm. It was normal to use the children and women and burn sacred places to hurt the man, as the treaty banned such things, implying that they were common in society.

- How believable is this source? Why?

It is an ancient and rare document, but with the currently available information, it is difficult to say whether it is credible or not. However, the author and others have accepted it as a credible and important document from history, and it appears credible. Although it is difficult to test the credibility of the document, it cannot be discarded as the translators and other people consider it important and historic. Hence, its credibility comes from the translator and the author, who treated it as a genuine document without criticizing its credibility.

References

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Brown, J. A. C. (2009). Hadith: Muhammad's legacy in the medieval and modern world. Oneworld.
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