

Tolerance and Harmony in Islam and its nurturing in students through Parent-teacher Collaboration

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ABSTRACT

Living together and accepting diversity is one of the challenges of 21st century when globalization has reduced distances and there is broad access to diverse human and physical resources. There is now greater responsibility on education institutions to address the issue of conflicts and violence and give priority to teaching skills of 'learning to live together'. A peaceful future depends on right type of education which aims to foster tolerance and harmony. This study presents how tolerance and harmony were emphasized and practiced in Islam to accept socio-cultural diversity and explains how educational institutions can nurture tolerance and harmony especially through parent-teacher collaborative meetings. The parent-teacher collaboration is regarded as a short meeting or a conference between parents and teachers of a specific student in order to discuss the student's progress at school and to find solutions to the academic and behavioral problems. The study is explanatory in nature and explains how parent teacher connection is effective in achieving harmony and tolerance among students. The related literature was reviewed extensively, and inferences were made. The existing literature showed that it is very crucial to understand human dimensions in different social and cultural contexts, and more crucial is to take initiatives for developing tolerance and harmony for a peaceful world. Islam gives special and sublime importance to a tolerant society. Our educational institutions may arrange fruitful parent-teacher meetings through which they can work together for peaceful future of their generations. It was concluded that regular parent teacher meeting is a three-way communication that helps the student in leading a successful life by becoming socially and morally responsible citizens of future.

Key Words: *Tolerance, harmony, diversity, parent-teacher meeting.*

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Introduction

Tolerance means the ability to tolerate pain or hardship or it can be said that it is the act of allowing something which can be different or unlike. Tolerance means the capacity to listen others' thoughts and allow others to talk. Taking into explanation the general significance of acceptance is the thing that meant here by tolerance. In view of the over-all meaning of tolerance is define underneath.

Oxford Dictionary defines it as:

1. "The ability or willingness to tolerate the existence of opinions or behavior that one dislikes or disagrees with."

"The capacity to endure continued subjection to something such as a drug or environmental conditions without adverse reaction."¹

According to Mariam Webster tolerance means:

*"It is the act of allowing something and capacity to endure pain, hardship, sympathy or indulgence for beliefs or practices differing from conflicting with one's own."*²

When we talk about tolerance in Islam or what Islam says of tolerance in sense of believes it means that it doesn't arise from apathetic towards religion as Islamic society based on tolerance, patience, dignity and harmony of all. Tolerance is a best way to solve problematic situations with bearing of opposing others' behavior and it makes a high provision of society to make peaceful environment.

It was the start of another era when the prophet Muhammad (SAW) was sent to this world. Profound fairness, human brotherhoods and combined with the teachings of the previous prophets. These valuable blessings were for all; to smell the scent of these blossoms. Because kindness, honesty, brotherhood and toleration are the essential necessities of all, Islam brought for all without discrimination.³

Let's take a moment to think about this description that the Prophet (saw) is a brighter Lamp, the flawless characterization of the attributes of Allah. By his example, the way he lived his life, that we gain vision of our lives. Prophet (saw) set many examples of tolerance and forgiveness. His whole life depends on tolerance and patience Muhammad (saw) was send to a very dark society. Starting his mission in the harshest situations of Arabia. The message of oneness of Allah which was brought by

1 Tolerance, 2020, Oxford living dictionaries, viewed 05 september,2020, from, <https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definitions/tolerance>

2 Tolerance,2020, Mariam Webster, viewed 05 septermber,2020, from <https://www.merriam->

[webster.com/dictionary/tolerance#:~:text=1%20%3A%20capacity%20to%20endure%20pain,act%20of%20allowing%20something%20%3A%20toleration](https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/tolerance#:~:text=1%20%3A%20capacity%20to%20endure%20pain,act%20of%20allowing%20something%20%3A%20toleration)

3 Allama syed suleman nadvi, kutab-e-madras, 2008, pp. 143, Idarah Islamiat, Lahore.

Muhammad (saw) though at the start, it was not welcomed. The people of Arabia opposed him, afflicted him at every step of his life. Prophet (saw) continue his journey and in the result of his patience people started converting to Islam. The main reason behind was its basic principles of Justice, tolerance and patience. And this was sheer form of ultimate equality¹.

According to the saying of Muhammad (saw):

" يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ، أَلَا إِنَّ رَبَّكُمْ وَاحِدٌ، وَإِنَّ أَبَاءَكُمْ وَاحِدٌ، أَلَا لَا فَضْلَ لِعَرَبِيٍّ عَلَى عَجَمِيٍّ، وَلَا لِعَجَمِيٍّ عَلَى عَرَبِيٍّ، وَلَا أَحْمَرَ عَلَى أَسْوَدَ، وَلَا أَسْوَدَ عَلَى أَحْمَرَ، إِلَّا بِالتَّقْوَى "

*"O People! Indeed your Lord is same; you are all the offspring of the same father (Adam); neither an Arab has any priority over a non-Arab, nor a non-Arab is superior to an Arab; Being white or black in skin earns you no privilege; in the eyes of your Lord the best among you is the one who fears Him most."*²

The example of tolerance and justice is Islam instructs us that one's friendship should not obstruct one from administering equity in support of himself, or one's hostility should not make you pass decision against him.³

To benefit the essential necessities of tolerance, kindness, justice and brotherhood Islam, doesn't appeal its subjects to be Muslims in compulsion. That's why Allah make Prophet (Saw) is a mercy for all creation. In Quran Allah says:

﴿وَمَا أَرْسَلْنَاكَ إِلَّا رَحْمَةً لِّلْعَالَمِينَ﴾

*"We have not sent you, [O Muhammad], except as a mercy to the worlds."*⁴

To show such lessons, Muhammad (saw) was kind and humble to all. He (saw) accepted the invitations of meal that was given by the non-Muslims. Hazrat Anas (RA) says,

*"A Jew once invited the Holy Prophet for a meal which the Prophet accepted."*¹

1 Shadi Nafisi, Tolerance in Islam, 2018, vole, 74, issue, 10, pp. 4, HTS technologies studies, University of Tehran, Iran.

2 Abu Abdullah Ahmad bin Muhammad bin Hambal, Musnad Ahmad bin Hambal, 1993, chap.5, Hadith no.411, 23489, Darul Haya Al-turath Al Arabi, Beirut, Lebanon

3 Aziz Ur-Rehman saifee, the teaching of Holy Prophet to promote peace and tolerance in an Islamic culture, 2012, vol.31, issue.1, pp.38, Euro journal publications.

4 Al Quran, 21:107

Islam is the religion of tolerance and simplicity; it gives a plenteous space for opportunity of freedom of thoughts and doesn't stifle individuals. After that it is absolutely on them to accept or to reject the invitation of righteousness. However, we as a Muslims are not permitted to impose our thoughts on others. As Allah the Almighty says in Holy Quran:

﴿لِكُلِّ أُمَّةٍ جَعَلْنَا مَنْسَكًا هُمْ نَاسِكُوهُ فَلَا يُنَازِعُونَكَ فِي الْأَمْرِ وَاذْعُ إِلَى رَبِّكَ إِنَّكَ لَعَلَىٰ هُدًى مُّسْتَقِيمٍ (٦٧) وَإِنْ جَادَلُوكَ فَقُلِ اللَّهُ أَعْلَمُ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ (٦٨) اللَّهُ يَحْكُمُ بَيْنَكُمْ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ فِيمَا كُنْتُمْ فِيهِ تَخْتَلِفُونَ (٦٩)﴾

“For every religion we have appointed rites which they perform. So, [O Muhammad], let the disbelievers not contend with you over the matter but invite them to your Lord. Indeed, you are upon straight guidance. And if they dispute with you, then say, Allah is most knowing of what you do. Allah will judge between you on the Day of Resurrection concerning that over which you used to differ.”²

We can get various experiences of tolerance from the life of our Holy Prophet Mohammad (P.B.U.H). His whole personality and way of life proves best examples of harmony and tolerance ever practiced.

Parent-Teacher Meeting

Parent teacher connection is an important factor in order to achieve major targets of an effective education i.e. Tolerance and harmony. In common, the parents do not try to develop an interaction with the teachers. Parent-teacher connection has been defined as:

“The function of a good parent-teacher relationship is much more than just a vehicle for status reports from teacher to parents on a child’s performance or behavior. It is really a partnership providing two-way information flow from the teacher to the parents about the child’s classroom achievements and persona and from the parent to the teacher about the complementary elements in the home environment”. It also provides mechanism for teachers in order to invite as well as support parents’ active participation in the education of their children in their home environment. And it can provide linkage between the classroom learning activities and the at-home learning activities(1).

1 Hafiz Ibn e Kaseer, Tafseer al Quran al Azeem, 1405 A.H, volume 2, page 34, Darul Haya Al-turath Al-Arabi, Beirut, Lebanon.

2 Al Quran, 22:67-69

This is a meeting between a parent and a teacher to talk about the student's learning and his/her progress. This may be regarded as parent-teacher interview, parent-teacher conference and even the learning conference.

Many schools organize parent-teacher connection/meeting early in the year and then after that the school report is sent home.

Schools might offer a set time, may invite to arrange a time, and schools are asking parents to book time that suits them using an online "parent-teacher interview website". Some schools may hold meetings before or may be after the school, others run them in evenings. More than a person can go to attend the meeting – parents are welcomed to take other members of the family. These meetings are useful and positive where as well as hearing from child's teacher, parents can ask questions as well as share your thoughts so that parents and teachers can become partners in the child's education.

Good two-way communication

Good two-way communication between parent and teachers is essential for students' success. The more teachers and parents share relevant information with each other regarding the student, the better prepared will be both in order to help student achieve academically.

Two-way communication includes:

1. Conferences
2. School community councils

3. Weekly/monthly folders of student work, sent home for parental review and comment

4. Phone calls
5. E-mails
6. School website

Communication strategies

The formation of effective school-home communication is growing more complex as society has changed. It is necessary that a number of strategies, adapted to needs and demands of particular families and their schedules, be unified into a general plan. Some of the strategies to consider include:

1. Newsletters
2. Yearly open houses
3. Home visits (where and when applicable)
4. Annual calendars
5. Inserts/publishing in local newspapers

6. Annual grandparents' day
7. Board of Education spokesperson
8. Homework hot lines
9. Yearly field days
10. Notices and handouts in local markets
11. Workshops
12. Face to face interaction
13. Invitations on particular days
14. Communications focused on fathers and mothers

There was a survey conducted based on the data taken from total of 640 teachers. That survey revealed that the teachers have the knowledge regarding the significance and ways in order to develop connections with the parents of the students. The teachers use several ways but usually face certain problems to develop an effective relation with the parents due to the pitiable skills as well as non-cooperative approach of the parents. It is suggested the change in contents and the training patterns of teacher-education courses. This is also highlighting the need of appropriate planning and application in explaining roles of teachers as well as the school management in attaining proficiency to develop interaction with parents⁽¹⁾. Another study sought to identify major factors that teachers and parents described as impacting on their connection. The major findings exposed that nature of parent-teacher connections was either collaborative or non-collaborative. Several activities reinforced practices. Positive or less than the satisfactory outcomes were afforded to students. It was found that parents and teachers had common preferences on what practices made their interactions collaborative. The study recommended professional learning opportunities for the teachers⁽²⁾.

Developing tolerance and harmony among students through Parent-Teacher Connection

Parent-teacher connections help to create harmony among:

1. Teacher and child
2. Parent and child
3. Parent and teacher

Open communication may play a vital role in forming these partnerships. Parents feel invited and comfortable in order to approach teacher with questions, concerns and suggestions. The connection provides formal opportunities to go over the student's progress and hear parent's feedback; this communication, also, allows both to work together for the benefit of the child.

Parental involvement

While interacting with teachers on regular basis, self-confidence and self-respect increase which in return is closely related to the parental involvement in the academic matters allowing children to get motivated to perform their best at school.

Establish good relationship

1. Parents will be able to establish good relationship with their children.
2. Parents will spend quality time with their children.
3. Parents will listen to them carefully and will also respond with understanding.⁽¹⁾

Role of parents in ensuring harmony and success

“Do parents know how and what they can do to ensure their children's success? Do they understand how the school and home can work in harmony for the good of both?”⁽²⁾

It is possible that majority of parents are doing their best they can, but they do not know answers to these questions. They are willing to help their children in achieving success but also, they do not know how to do that. There are ten characteristics that can provide blueprint to parents in order to be more effective in ensuring their children's success.

1. Feeling of control over their lives.
2. Frequent communication to children.
3. Family dream of success.
4. Hard work, the key.
5. An active lifestyle.
6. Twenty-five to thirty-five home centered learning hours in a week.
7. Parent and teacher both are viewed as a mutual support system as well as the problem-solving units.
8. Clearly understood school rules that are constantly enforced.
9. Frequent contact with teachers.
10. Emphasizing spiritual growth.⁽¹⁾

Social Construction

Social construction means making the child an “ideal child” for the society. It is not possible in all ways, but it is an attempt to at least help him/her in achieving the status. Both parent and teacher focus on the social skills because these skills are carried on through the life of the child⁽²⁾.

Sense of security

One of the most observed benefits is that the child feels that his/her teacher or parent is working together and supporting in order to give him the best in life. This is the best feeling ever for a human on this earth. Similarly, when both work together, they can set clear and concise expectations from the child and the child would know those expectations and would be able to fulfill them too. Parents and teachers can also set boundaries for the child that are well articulated and defined. By doing this, they would be able to form a collaborative team in order to predict problems and their solutions easily and with proper definitions. So, we cannot underestimate the power of parent teacher regular connection.

Miscellaneous benefits

1. Increased motivation
2. Fewer/less suspensions
3. Improved and positive attitude
4. Decreased use of drugs
5. Higher rating
6. Improved morale
7. Increased support
8. Mental relaxation
9. Increased cooperation ⁽¹⁾.

Development of tolerance and Harmony

The best way of teaching tolerance is social surroundings that is inspiring and model for teacher as an agent for describing through Islamic teachings. Social surroundings mean a combination of family, school, and community. These three which work together to create a tolerant environment for students to learn, reproduce and training tolerance. Teachers as agents make sure that students have contact of these three environments. The term tolerance means in Islam that tolerating and accepting differing qualities as a truth of life. This concept is explained in Quran in this way:

“O mankind, indeed, we have created you from male and female and made you peoples and tribes that you may know one another. Indeed, the most noble of you in the sight of Allah is the most righteous of you. Indeed, Allah is Knowing and Acquainted.”¹

In this ayah Allah the Almighty says that he created different nations, tribes and sexes just to know each other. He also reminded us that the only thing which made us noble is piety and all other things are just for identity. So, tolerant education in term of Islamic Religious education is a procedure

1 Al-Quran 49:13

of knowledge and diversity in all parts of mortality to mutual understanding and living in it in harmony.

Tolerance involves acceptance of the things one distresses with, not hold with of or hates. Tolerance can be understood as ‘a virtue’ because it relates to acceptance of the differences between others and ourselves. Rather than fight of disagreement it teaches us the way of creating peaceful environment. It is also the prophetic way. Prophet (S.A.W) not only perform this but like the behavior of tolerance many ways and rewards of tolerance like:

“Abu Huraira reported that a person said: Allah's Messenger, I have relatives with whom I try, to have close relationship, but they sever (this relation). I treat them well, but they treat me ill. I am sweet to them, but they are harsh towards me. Upon this he (the Holy Prophet) said: If it is so as you say, then you in fact throw hot ashes (upon their faces) and there would always remain with you on behalf of Allah (an Angel to support you) who would keep you dominant over them so long as you adhere to this (path of righteousness).”¹

As well as Prophet (S.A.W) dislikes the behavior of intolerance. In one of his narration Prophet (S.A.W) says:

“Abu Ayyub Ansiri reported Allah's Messenger (may peace be upon him) as saying: It is not permissible for a Muslim to have estranged relations with his brother beyond three nights,

the one turning one way and the other turning the other way when they meet ; the better of the two is one who is the first to give a greeting.”²

The way of teaching and learning tolerance is explained that human beings are created for learning as we were born in a state of innocence. Then we start learning through the verity of knowledge which is necessary for life. For this reason, Allah says:

*“It is He Who brought you forth from the wombs of
Your mothers when ye knew nothing; and He gave you
Hearing and sight and intelligence and affections: that ye
May give thanks to Allah”³*

In short tolerance is an attitude which we learn rightly through Islamic education. As attitude the best way to teach tolerance is role modeling of teachers, repetition, and familiarization and firming up.

1 Imam Abdul Hussain Msulim Ibn-Al-Haja, Sahih Muslim, Dar us salam, Karachi, 2009, vol, 2, book no, 32 H:no, 6204

2 Ibid, H:no, 6210

3 Al-Quran 16:78

Developing tolerance among students through Parent-teacher connection

Tolerance is one of the best practices that help people to live together in harmony and stability.

Teaching tolerance, peace, human rights, dignity, respect, cooperation, understanding, appreciation and human values have been one of the main educational and teaching activities of many educational systems⁽²⁾.

It is suggested to have that kind of parent-teacher connection in which all of the three should have a discussion. Conversations are relevant when supported by certain evidences, including facts that may support big ideas. Welcome the student so that he/she can say in order to support or contradict points. At the end, student may feel like he/she reaches right conclusion on his/her own and everyone will feel valued for his/her contributions.

Rejecting intolerant behavior

No matter how benevolent, the end rarely justifies the means. It is suggested to both parent and teacher that to push back on intolerance. It is noticed that little intolerances may grow into big ones. Don't do that. Stop it before the action becomes a habit.

Passive Listening

It involves a very high level of attentiveness and concentration. Through passive listening, parent and teacher can help in developing tolerance in their child. They may use the following methods:

1. Invitation to talk

It means "How can I help you?" This question can be asked to the child so that he/she may feel openness and develops courage in talking and sharing.

2. Neutral feedback

"Go on", "Right", "Huh"

This looks like that the child is being listened carefully as feedback is the best way to give attention.

3. Avoiding communication blocks

It is recommended not to criticize all the time. Let him/her talk with flaws (if any).

4. Give him/her hundred percent attention at least for half an

hour. The child will in return tolerate when the other person speaks.

5. It is important to stop self-listening
It means do not get into other person's thoughts.
6. Ask open questions with encouragement.
Try not to hide anything but keep a check on the language, words and the tone with which something is said to the child.
7. Use of attentive silence in order to encourage child to open up
Sometimes, being quite when someone is speaking is the best therapy to avoid aggression and promote tolerance. When this activity is being practiced in young age, the child grows up with positivity as how to listen to someone when he/she gets angry or is frustrated. Silence is the best key to a moral and emotional support. Attentive Silence is defined as an attitude or state of mind which requires self-discipline and patience. It is actually a conscious decision in order to be silent when the other person is telling something, listen, as well as to hear what the next person is saying. It demonstrates thoughtfulness as well as consideration, both, at the same time in order to allowing one to uncover his/her real message of what he/she is speaking. It is a beautiful method of communicating with grace and sympathy, making the other person feel that he/she is being heard and understood at the same time ⁽¹⁾.

Emotional support

At the early age, child is emotionally weak and can experience anger and lack of tolerance. The misunderstanding of any worse situation or circumstance may cause trouble for the child. The early encounters with pain can be healed with emotional support by the parent and the teacher. Unwell children can be unaware of the fact and can get stressed on small things. The parent teacher relationship can also cater this problem by understanding the emotional misbalance of the child. This is the time to increase the ability of the child to help him/her in emotional situations so that he/she can tolerate the emotional difficulty within himself/herself.

To cater this problem, both should get the opportunity to talk to the child in a peaceful environment with positivity. Both should be prepared for the inevitable discussion about the matter ⁽¹⁾.

Conclusion

The discussion concludes that parent teacher regular interaction is helpful in achieving harmony and tolerance among students. The communication between teacher and parent may help keep each other informed regarding the key information about the child. The student's teacher will get benefited from knowing his/her physical or psychological needs, his/her interests and talents which he/she may want to highlight, as well as school-related programs in which he/she is participating. The student may become more open about his/her problems. The student may

become more focused, well-behaved, communicative, confident, patient that will lead him/her to a successful afterwards. Teachers and parents go hand in hand for all-round development of student. In return, students become socially and morally responsible citizens of future.