

Does Islam Have a “Golden Rule”?

It is not unusual to hear the claim that the “Golden Rule” lies at the heart of every religion. Here is the teaching from Jesus that is the basis for that “Rule”:

So whatever you wish that men would do to you, do so to them; for this is the law and the prophets.

Matthew 7:12

So according to the “Golden Rule,” we are to treat all others as we would wish to be treated.

However, when it comes to the treatment of others, Islam makes a stark distinction between Muslims (believers) and non-Muslims (disbelievers). Here is some of what Allah says in the Koran about how to treat disbelievers:

Chapter 4, Verse 101

...verily, the disbelievers are ever to you open enemies.

Chapter 9, Verse 73

O Prophet (Muhammad)! Strive hard against the disbelievers and the hypocrites, and be harsh against them, their abode is Hell, - and worst indeed is that destination.

Chapter 9, Verse 123

O you who believe! Fight those of the disbelievers who are close to you, and let them find harshness in you...

Chapter 48, Verse 29

Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah. And those who are with him are severe against disbelievers, and merciful among themselves...

Chapter 66, Verse 9

O Prophet (Muhammad)! Strive hard against the disbelievers and the hypocrites, and be severe against them; their abode will be Hell...

In contrast, here is some of what Allah said about how Muslims were to treat other Muslims:

Chapter 4, Verse 92

It is not for a believer to kill a believer except (that it be) by mistake...

Chapter 49, Verse 10

The believers are nothing else than brothers. So make reconciliation between your brothers...

We can see that Allah distinguishes between Muslims and non-Muslims, and he commands Muslims to treat non-Muslims differently from how they are to treat their fellow Muslims.

The Koran states that Muhammad spoke for Allah (4:80) and it commands Muslims to obey Muhammad (59:7). The Koran also states that Muhammad is the perfect Muslim (33:21).

Muhammad said that Islam required this:

Narrated Anas: The Prophet said, “None of you will have faith till he likes for his (Muslim) brother what he likes for himself.”

Sahih Al-Bukhari, No. 13

Muhammad said that Muslims were not to harm each other:

Abu Huraira reported that Allah’s Messenger (may peace be upon him) had said...A Muslim is the brother of a Muslim. He neither oppresses him nor humiliates him nor looks down upon him...All things of a Muslim are inviolable for his brother in faith; his blood, his wealth and his honour.

Sahih Muslim, No. 2564

On the other hand, Muhammad said there would be no penalty for a Muslim who murdered a non-Muslim:

It was narrated from ‘Amr bin Shu’aib, from his father, from his grandfather that the Messenger of Allah said: “A Muslim should not be killed in retaliation for the murder of a disbeliever.”

Sunan Ibn Majah, No. 2659

Muslims were even supposed to dress differently from non-Muslims:

'Abdullah b. 'Amr b. Al- 'As reported: Allah's Messenger (may peace be upon him) saw me wearing two clothes dyed in saffron, whereupon he said: These are the clothes (usually worn by) the non-believers, so do not wear them.

Sahih Muslim, No. 2077

And Muhammad said that a Jew or a Christian is worth only half of a Muslim:

It was narrated from 'Amr bin Shu'aib, from his father, from his grandfather, that the Messenger of Allah ruled that the blood money for the People of the Book is half of that of the blood money for the Muslims, and they are the Jews and Christians.

Sunan Ibn Majah, No. 2644

Muhammad said this about greeting Jews and Christians:

Abu Huraira reported that Allah's Messenger (may peace be upon him) had said: Do not greet the Jews and the Christians before they greet you and when you meet any one of them on the roads force him to go to the narrowest part of it.

Sahih Muslim, No. 2167

Muhammad even said that Jews and Christians would take the place of Muslims in Hell:

Abu Burda reported on the authority of his father that Allah's Apostle (may peace

be upon him) said: No Muslim would die but Allah would admit instead of him a Jew or a Christian in Hell-Fire.

Sahih Muslim, No. 2767R1

How were Muslims to treat Jews? Muhammad said the rocks would call out for Muslims to kill Jews:

Narrated Abu Hurairah: Allah's Messenger said, "The Hour will not be established until you fight against the Jews, and the stone behind which a Jew will be hiding will say, 'O Muslim! There is a Jew hiding behind me, so kill him.'"

Sahih Al-Bukhari, No. 2926

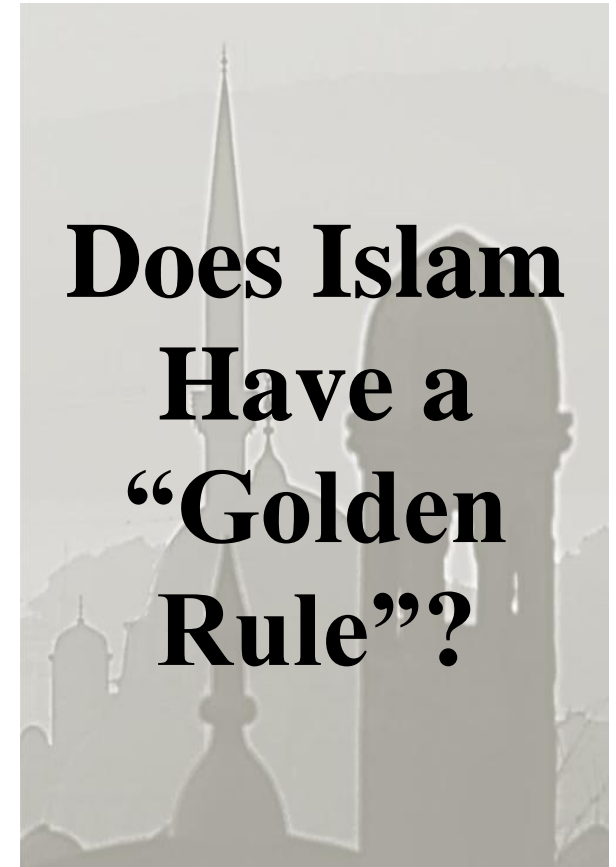
And on this deathbed, Muhammad said:

It has been narrated by 'Umar b. Al-Khattab that he heard the Messenger of Allah (may peace be upon him) saying: I will expel the Jews and Christians from the Arabian Peninsula and will not leave any but Muslims.

Sahih Muslim, 1767

Jesus taught that we should do unto others as we would have them do unto us. As we can see, however, Islamic Doctrine makes a clear distinction between how Muslims are to treat their fellow Muslims and how they are to treat non-Muslims.

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Part of a series on Islam

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