# 10232 - Ruling on the call for closeness and reconciliation between religions

## the question

Here in America we are trying as best we can to call people to Allaah according to the way of the Pious Predecessors (al-salaf al-saalih). Recently there has emerged a very serious matter, which is the spread of committees to bring together the three heavenly religions – Islam, Christianity and Judaism – whereby each group sends a representative to try to bridge the gaps between these three religions and bring them closer together. They meet in churches and synagogues, and even pray together, as happened following the massacre in al-Khaleel ("Hebron") in Palestine. These meetings are attended by a not insignificant number of followers from these three religions.
Our question is: the Muslims are represented by scholars – or by people who are counted as being scholars – and there has arisen among us an argument as to the ruling on attending meetings such as these, where Muslim scholars shake hands with and embrace priests and monks. There is no opportunity for da'wah in these meetings; they are held in the name of bringing these three religion closer together. Is it permissible for a Muslim who believes in Allaah and the Last Day to attend such meetings, to enter churches and synagogues and to greet and embrace a priest or monk? For your information, this phenomenon has spread across America, and we hope that you can send us the solution, because we have agreed to accept your ruling between us to suppress this fitnah that exists at the national level. Wa'l-salaamu 'alaykum wa rahmat-Allaahi wa barakaatuhu.

## Detailed answer

Praise be to Allah.

After studying the matter, the Committee for Issuing Fatwas responds as follows:

Firstly:

The basic principles of faith with which Allaah revealed His Books – the Tawraat (Torah), Injeel (Gospel) and Qur'aan – to His Messengers, and to which His Messengers – peace be upon them – Ibraaheem, Moosa, 'Eesaa and other Prophets and Messengers – called mankind, are all the same. The earlier Messengers foretold the coming of those yet to come, and the later Messengers confirmed what their forbears had said, supporting them and pointing out their importance. The details of their laws differed according to the circumstances, times and interests of the people, by the wisdom and justice of Allaah and as a mercy and a favour from Him. Allaah says (interpretation of the meaning):

"The Messenger (Muhammad) believes in what has been sent down to him from his Lord, and (so do) the believers. Each one believes in Allaah, His Angels, His Books, and His Messengers. (They say,) 'We make no distinction between one another of His Messengers' — and they say, 'We hear, and we obey. (We seek) Your forgiveness, our Lord, and to You is the return (of all).'" [al-Baqarah 2:285]

"And those who believe in Allaah and His Messengers and make no distinction between any of them (Messengers), We shall give them their rewards; and Allaah is Ever Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful" [al-Nisa' 4:152]

"And (remember) when Allaah took the Covenant of the Prophets, saying: 'Take whatever I gave you from the Book and Hikmah (understanding of the Laws of Allaah), and afterwards there will come to you a Messenger (Muhammad ) confirming what is with you; you must, then, believe in him and help him.' Allaah said: 'Do you agree (to it) and will you take up My Covenant (which I conclude with you)?' They said: 'We agree.' He said: 'Then bear witness; and I am with you among the witnesses (for this).'

Then whoever turns away after this, they are the Faasiqoon (rebellious: those who turn away from Allaah's obedience).

Do they seek other than the religion of Allaah (the true Islamic Monotheism worshipping none but Allaah Alone), while to Him submitted all creatures in the heavens and the earth, willingly or

unwillingly. And to Him shall they all be returned.

Say (O Muhammad ): ‘We believe in Allaah and in what has been sent down to us, and what was sent down to Ibraaheem (Abraham), Ismaa‘eel (Ishmael), Ishaaq (Isaac), Ya’qoob (Jacob) and Al-Asbaat [the offspring of the twelve sons of Ya’qoob (Jacob)] and what was given to Moosa (Moses), ‘Eesaa (Jesus) and the Prophets from their Lord. We make no distinction between one another among them and to Him (Allaah) we have submitted (in Islam).’

And whoever seeks a religion other than Islam, it will never be accepted of him, and in the Hereafter he will be one of the losers”

[Aal- ‘Imraan 3:81-85]

After mentioning the call of His close friend (khaleel) Ibraaheem, and the Messengers who were with him, Allaah says (interpretation of the meaning):

“They are those whom We gave the Book, Al-Hukm (understanding of the religious laws), and Prophethood. But if these disbelieve therein (the Book, Al-Hukm and Prophethood), then, indeed We have entrusted it to a people (such as the Companions of Prophet Muhammad ) who are not disbelievers therein.

They are those whom Allaah had guided. So follow their guidance. Say: ‘No reward I ask of you for this (the Qur’aan). It is only a reminder for the ‘aalameen (mankind and jinn).’”

[al-An’aam 6:89-90]

“Verily, among mankind who have the best claim to Ibraaheem (Abraham) are those who followed him, and this Prophet (Muhammad) and those who have believed (Muslims). And Allaah is the Walee (Protector and Helper) of the believers

[Aal ‘Imraan 3:68]

“Then, We have sent the Revelation to you (O Muhammad saying): “Follow the religion of Ibraaheem (Abraham) Haneef (Islamic Monotheism — to worship none but Allaah) and he was not

of the Mushrikoon (polytheists, idolaters, disbelievers).

[al-Nahl 16:123]

“And (remember) when ‘Eesaa (Jesus), son of Maryam (Mary), said: ‘O Children of Israel! I am the Messenger of Allaah unto you, confirming the Tawraat [(Torah) which came] before me, and giving glad tidings of a Messenger to come after me, whose name shall be Ahmad’”

[al-Saff 61:6]

“And We have sent down to you (O Muhammad) the Book (this Qur’aan) in truth, confirming the Scripture that came before it and Mohaymin (trustworthy in highness and a witness) over it (old Scriptures). So judge among them by what Allaah has revealed, and follow not their vain desires, diverging away from the truth that has come to you. To each among you, We have prescribed a law and a clear way”

[al-Maa’idah 5:48]

It was reported that the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said:

“I am the closest of mankind to ‘Eesaa ibn Maryam in this world and in the Hereafter. The Prophets are like brothers (from one father), their mothers are different but their religion is one.” (Narrated by al-Bukhaari).

Secondly:

The Jews and Christians deliberately distorted the meanings, and replaced words with others which were not said to them. In this way they changed the basic principles of their religion and altered the laws of their Lord. For example, the Jews said “‘Uzair (Ezra) is the son of Allaah” [al-tawbah 9:30 – interpretation of the meaning]; they claimed that Allaah got tired after creating the heavens and the earth and everything between them in six days, so He rested on the Sabbath day; they claimed that they crucified ‘Eesaa (peace be upon him) and killed him; they tricked their way into allowing fishing on the Sabbath, which Allaah had forbidden for them; they abolished the

punishment for zinaa; they said “Allaah’s Hand is tied up (i.e. He does not give and spend of His Bounty)” [al-Maa’idah 5:64 – interpretation of the meaning]; and other ways in which they altered and distorted their religion in theory and in practice, even though they knew what they were doing, following their own desires. The Christians claimed that the Messiah ‘Eesaa (peace be upon him) was the son of God, or even that he was a god alongside Allaah; they confirmed the Jews’ claim to have crucified ‘Eesaa (peace be upon him) and killed him. Both groups claimed to be the sons of God and beloved by Him; they disbelieved in Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) and in the message he brought, and they hated him out of jealousy. But Allaah had taken a pledge from them that they would believe in him and support him. And there are other scandalous contradictions on the part of both groups. Allaah has told us about many of their lies and fabrications, and how they have distorted the doctrines and laws which Allaah had revealed to them. Allaah exposed them and refuted them in His Book. Allaah says (interpretation of the meaning):

“Then woe to those who write the Book with their own hands and then say, ‘This is from Allaah,’ to purchase with it a little price! Woe to them for what their hands have written and woe to them for that they earn thereby.

And they (Jews) say, ‘The Fire (i.e. Hell-fire on the Day of Resurrection) shall not touch us but for a few numbered days.’ Say (O Muhammad  to them): ‘Have you taken a covenant from Allaah, so that Allaah will not break His Covenant? Or is it that you say of Allaah what you know not?’” [al-Baqarah 2:79-80]

“And they say, ‘None shall enter Paradise unless he be a Jew or a Christian.’ These are their own desires. Say (O Muhammad ), ‘Produce your proof if you are truthful.’ [al-Baqarah 2:111]

“And they say, “Be Jews or Christians, then you will be guided.” Say (to them O Muhammad ), “Nay, (we follow) only the religion of Ibraaheem (Abraham), Haneef [Islamic Monotheism, i.e. to worship none but Allaah (Alone)], and he was not of Al-Mushrikoon (those who worshipped others along with Allaah).”

Say (O Muslims): “We believe in Allaah and that which has been sent down to us and that which has been sent down to Ibraaheem (Abraham), Ismaa’eel (Ishmael), Ishaaq (Isaac), Ya’qoob (Jacob), and to Al-Asbaat [the offspring of the twelve sons of Ya’qoob (Jacob)], and that which has been given to Moosa (Moses) and ‘Eesaa (Jesus), and that which has beengiven to the Prophets from their Lord. We make no distinction between any of them, and to Him we have submitted (in Islam).” [al-Baqarah 2:135-136]

“And verily, among them is a party who distort the Book with their tongues (as they read), so that you may think it is from the Book, but it is not from the Book, and they say: ‘This is from Allaah,’ but it is not from Allaah; and they speak a lie against Allaah while they know it

[Aal ‘Imraan 3:78]

“Because of their breaking the covenant, and of their rejecting the Ayaat (proofs, evidences, verses, lessons, signs, revelations, etc.) of Allaah, and of their killing the Prophets unjustly, and of their saying: ‘Our hearts are wrapped (with coverings, i.e. we do not understand what the Messengers say)’ — nay, Allaah has set a seal upon their hearts because of their disbelief, so they believe not but a little.

And because of their (Jews) disbelief and uttering against Maryam (Mary) a grave false charge (that she has committed illegal sexual intercourse);

And because of their saying (in boast), ‘We killed Messiah ‘Eesaa (Jesus), son of Maryam (Mary), the Messenger of Allaah,’ — but they killed him not, nor crucified him, but it appeared so to them the resemblance of ‘Eesaa (Jesus) was put over another man (and they killed that man)], and those who differ therein are full of doubts. They have no (certain) knowledge, they follow nothing but conjecture. For surely; they killed him not [i.e. ‘Eesaa (Jesus), son of Maryam (Mary)]:

But Allaah raised him [‘Eesaa (Jesus)] up (with his body and soul) unto Himself (and he is in the heavens). And Allaah is Ever All-Powerful,All-Wise.”

[al-Nisaa’ 4:155-158]

“And (both) the Jews and the Christians say: ‘We are the children of Allaah and His loved ones.’ Say: ‘Why then does He punish you for your sins?’ Nay, you are but human beings of those He has created…”

[al-Maa’idah 5:18]

“And the Jews say: ‘Uzair (Ezra) is the son of Allaah, and the Christians say: Messiah is the son of Allaah. That is their saying with their mouths, resembling the saying of those who disbelieved aforetime. Allaah’s Curse be on them, how they are deluded away from the truth!

They (Jews and Christians) took their rabbis and their monks to be their lords besides Allaah (by obeying them in things which they made lawful or unlawful according to their own desires without being ordered by Allaah), and (they also took as their Lord) Messiah, son of Maryam (Mary), while they (Jews and Christians) were commanded [in the Tawraat (Torah) and the Injeel (Gospel)] to worship none but One Ilâh (God — Allaah) Laa ilaaha illa Huwa (none has the right to be worshipped but He). Praise and glory be to Him (far above is He) from having the partners they associate (with Him).”

[al-Tawbah 9:30-31]

“Many of the people of the Scripture (Jews and Christians) wish that if they could turn you away as disbelievers after you have believed, out of envy from their ownselves, even after the truth (that Muhammad  is Allaah’s Messenger) has become manifest unto them”

[al-Baqarah 2:109]

-- and there are other outrageous statements and shameless fabrications which never cease to amaze and astound. We have mentioned some examples of what they do as a basis for the following response.

Thirdly:

On the basis of the above, it is clear that the basic foundation of the laws and religions that Allaah

has prescribed for His slaves is one and there is no need to bring them close to one another. It is obvious that the Jews and Christians have distorted and twisted that which was revealed to them from their Lord, to the point that their religions have become falsehood, kufr and misguidance. Because of that Allaah sent Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) to them and to other nations in general, to make clear what truth they were hiding and to make known what they were concealing, and to correct the beliefs and laws that they had corrupted, and to guide them and others to the straight path. Allaah says (interpretation of the meaning):

“O people of the Scripture (Jews and Christians)! Now has come to you Our Messenger (Muhammad ) explaining to you much of that which you used to hide from the Scripture and pass over (i.e. leaving out without explaining) much. Indeed, there has come to you from Allaah a light (Prophet Muhammad ) and a plain Book (this Qur’aan).

Wherewith Allaah guides all those who seek His Good Pleasure to ways of peace, and He brings them out of darkness by His Will unto light and guides them to the Straight Way (Islamic Monotheism).”

[al-Maa’idah 5:15-16]

“O people of the Scripture (Jews and Christians)! Now has come to you Our Messenger (Muhammad ) making (things) clear unto you, after a break in (the series of) Messengers, lest you say: ‘There came unto us no bringer of glad tidings and no warner.’ But now has come unto you a bringer of glad tidings and a warner. And Allaah is Able to do all things.”

[al-Maa’idah 5:19]

But they resisted the truth and turned away from it in sin, enmity and jealousy, after the truth had become clear to them. Allaah says (interpretation of the meaning):

“Many of the people of the Scripture (Jews and Christians) wish that if they could turn you away as disbelievers after you have believed, out of envy from their ownselves, even after the truth (that Muhammad is Allaah’s Messenger) has become manifest unto them”

[al-Baqarah 2:109]

“And when there came to them (the Jews), a Book (this Qur’aan) from Allaah confirming what is with them [the Tawraat (Torah) and the Injeel (Gospel)], although aforetime they had invoked Allaah (for coming of Muhammad ) in order to gain victory over those who disbelieved, then when there came to them that which they had recognized, they disbelieved in it. So let the Curse of Allaah be on the disbelievers.”

[al-Baqarah 2:89]

“And when there came to them a Messenger from Allaah (i.e. Muhammad) confirming what was with them, a party of those who were given the Scripture threw away the Book of Allaah behind their backs as if they did not know!

[al-Baqarah 2:101]

“Those who disbelieve from among the people of the Scripture (Jews and Christians) and Al-Mushrikoon, were not going to leave (their disbelief) until there came to them clear evidence.

A Messenger (Muhammad ) from Allaah, reciting (the Qur’aan) purified pages [purified from Al-Baatil (falsehood)].”

[al-Bayyinah 98:1-2]

How can any rational person who knows about their persistence in falsehood and their continuing to knowingly follow misguidance out of jealousy and their pursuit of their own desires, hope for a closer relationship between them and the truly believing Muslims? Allaah says (interpretation of the meaning):

“Do you (faithful believers) covet that they will believe in your religion inspite of the fact that a party of them (Jewish rabbis) used to hear the Word of Allaah [the Tawraat (Torah)], then they used to change it knowingly after they understood it?

[al-Baqarah 2:75]

“Verily, We have sent you (O Muhammad ) with the truth (Islam), a bringer of glad tidings (for those who believe in what you brought, that they will enter Paradise) and a warner (for those who disbelieve in what you brought, that they will enter the Hell-fire).And you will not be asked about the dwellers of the blazing Fire.

Never will the Jews nor the Christians be pleased with you (O Muhammad) till you follow their religion. Say: ‘Verily, the Guidance of Allaah (i.e. Islamic Monotheism) that is the (only) Guidance. And if you (O Muhammad) were to follow their (Jews and Christians) desires after what you have received of Knowledge (i.e. the Qur’aan), then you would have against Allaah neither any Walee (protector or guardian) nor any helper.”

[al-Baqarah 2:119-120]

“How shall Allaah guide a people who disbelieved after their Belief and after they bore witness that the Messenger (Muhammad ) is true and after clear proofs had come unto them? And Allaah guides not the people who are Zaalimoon (polytheists and wrongdoers).”

[Aal ‘Imraan 3:86]

Even though they may not be worse in kufr and enmity towards Allaah than their fellow mushrikeen, they are still like them. Allaah says (interpretation of the meaning):

“So (O Muhammad ) obey you not the deniers [(of Islamic Monotheism __ those who belie the Verses of Allaah), the Oneness of Allaah, and the Messengership of Muhammad ].

They wish that you should compromise (in religion out of courtesy) with them, so they (too) would compromise with you

[al-Qalam 68:8-9]

“Say (O Muhammad to these Mushrikoon and Kaafiroon): ‘O Al-Kaafiroon (disbelievers in Allaah, in His Oneness, in His Angels, in His Books, in His Messengers, in the Day of Resurrection, and in Al-Qadar)!

I worship not that which you worship,

Nor will you worship that which I worship.

And I shall not worship that which you are worshipping.

Nor will you worship that which I worship.

To you be your religion, and to me my religion (Islamic Monotheism).’”

[al-Kaafiroon 109:1-6]

The person who thinks of bringing Islam, Judaism and Christianity together, or bringing them closer to one another, is like one who strives to bring together the opposites of truth and falsehood, kufr (disbelief) and eemaan (faith). There is nothing like this except what the poet described:

“O you who want Thurayyah (Pleiades) to marry Suhayl (Canopus) [names of stars and constellations], for Allaah’s sake, how could they meet?

She appears in the north (lit. the direction of Syria) when she rises, and Suhayl when he rises appears in the south (lit. the direction of Yemen)!”

Moreover, the religion of the Jews and Christians has been abrogated by Allaah when He sent the Messenger Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) and Allaah obliged all the people of the  earth, Jews Christians and others, to follow him. Allaah says (interpretation of the meaning):

“Those who follow the Messenger, the Prophet who can neither read nor write (i.e. Muhammad) whom they find written with them in the Tauraat (Torah) and the Injeel (Gospel) — he commands them for Al-Ma‘roof (i.e. Islamic Monotheism and all that Islam has ordained); and forbids them from Al-Munkar (i.e. disbelief, polytheism of all kinds, and all that Islam has forbidden); he allows them as lawful At-Tayyibaat (i.e. all good and lawful as regards things, deeds, beliefs, persons and foods), andprohibits them as unlawful Al-Khabaa’ith (i.e. all evil and unlawful as regards things, deeds, beliefs, persons and foods), he releases them from their heavy burdens (of Allaah’s

Covenant with the children of Israel), and from the fetters (bindings) that were upon them. So those who believe in him (Muhammad ), honour him, help him, and follow the light (the Qur'aan) which has been sent down with him, it is they who will be successful.

Say (O Muhammad): "O mankind! Verily, I am sent to you all as the Messenger of Allaah — to Whom belongs the dominion of the heavens and the earth. Laa ilaaha illa Huwa (none has the right to be worshipped but He). It is He Who gives life and causes death. So believe in Allaah and His Messenger (Muhammad ), the Prophet who can neither read nor write (i.e. Muhammad ), who believes in Allaah and His Words [(this Qur'aan), the Tauraat (Torah) and the Injeel (Gospel) and also Allaah's Word: "Be!" — and he was, i.e. 'Eesaa (Jesus) son of Maryam (Mary)], and follow him so that you may be guided."

[al-A'raaf 7:157-158]

If they persist in following their religion, which has been abrogated, then they are adhering to falsehood, not to true religion. So it is not permissible for the Muslims to get close to them, because by getting close to them they are approving of their falsehood on the one hand, and misleading the ignorant, on the other. What Muslims should do is expose their falsehood just as Allaah has exposed them in the Qur'aan. And Allaah knows best.

Fourthly:

Someone might say: can there not be a truce among them, or a peace treaty, so as to avoid bloodshed and the tragedies of war, and so that people may go about their business and earn a living, and that the world may be developed so that the call to truth and guidance may be given to all people, and so that justice may be established among all people? If someone were to say this, it is fair enough, and any efforts to achieve this would be valuable, for it is a noble aim, because it is possible and it would have a great impact on people. But this applies only when it is not possible to enforce the jizyah system, because Allaah says in Soorat al-Tawbah (interpretation of the meaning):

"Fight against those who (1) believe not in Allaah, (2) nor in the Last Day, (3) nor forbid that which

has been forbidden by Allaah and His Messenger (Muhammad), (4) and those who acknowledge not the religion of truth (i.e. Islam) among the people of the Scripture (Jews and Christians), until they pay the Jizyah with willing submission, and feel themselves subdued”

[al-Tawbah 9:29]

At the same time, we must also make sure that we are striving to support the truth. This should not be an attempt on the part of the Muslims to appease the mushrikeen or to give up any of the rulings of Allaah, or anything that would entail their compromising their own dignity. The Muslims must retain their pride and their adherence to the Book of their Lord and the Sunnah of their Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him); they must continue to hate their enemies of Allaah and not befriend them, following the guidance of the Qur’aan and of the Messenger (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him). Allaah says (interpretation of the meaning):

“But if they incline to peace, you also incline to it, and (put your) trust in Allaah. Verily, He is the All-Hearer, the All-Knower” [al-Anfaal 8:61]

“So do not become weak (against your enemy), nor be sad, and you will be superior (in victory) if you are indeed (true) believers.

[Aal ‘Imraan 3:139]

“So be not weak and ask not for peace (from the enemies of Islam) while you are having the upper hand. Allaah is with you, and He will never decrease the reward of your good deeds’

[Muhammad 47:35]

Our Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) explained that by his actions, and achieved it in his dealings with Quraysh in the year of (the treaty of) al-Hudaybiyah, with the Jews in Madeenah before al-Khandaq and in the campaign of Khaybar, and with the Christians in the campaign of Tabook. Hence it had the great effect of bringing peace and security for everyone. Truth prevailed, he gained power in the land, people entered the religion of Allaah in crowds, and everyone was able to strive for his worldly and spiritual interests. This was a time of prosperity

and power, when Islam and peace spread. History and real life provide stronger evidence and a more eloquent testimony to that effect, for those who are open-minded and objective, and who are free from tribalistic and argumentative thought. In that there is a reminder for the one who has a heart or gives ear while he is heedful (cf. Qaaf 50:37). And Allaah is the Guide to the Straight Path; He is Sufficient for us and He is the Best disposer of affairs.