

Prophetic Correspondence and Diplomacy with the Kingdom of Abyssinia:

A Model for Muslim Minorities in the Contemporary World

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ABSTRACT

This MPhil thesis examines the prophetic correspondence and diplomatic engagement of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) with the Kingdom of Abyssinia (Habasha) and explores its relevance as a normative model for Muslim minorities in the contemporary world. In the formative period of Islam, Abyssinia emerged as a unique political and religious space where early Muslims experienced protection, justice, and religious freedom under a non-Muslim ruler. By analyzing this historical interaction, the study situates prophetic diplomacy within the broader framework of Islamic political thought, international relations, and minority jurisprudence. The central research question of this thesis asks: how did the Prophet Muhammad's diplomatic approach toward the Kingdom of Abyssinia shape principles of coexistence, justice, and political engagement, and in what ways can these principles be applied to the lived realities of Muslim minorities today? The study employs a qualitative and analytical methodology grounded in classical Islamic sources, *Sīrah* works alongside contemporary scholarship on Islamic diplomacy, minority and interfaith relations. Textual analysis is used to examine prophetic letters, the event of the migration to Abyssinia, and the discourse of Ja'far ibn Abī Ṭālib at the court of the Negus. These primary sources are critically assessed in light of modern socio-political contexts to identify enduring diplomatic and ethical principles. The significance of this research lies in its contribution to academic discourse on prophetic diplomacy and Islamic models of minority engagement. It offers an interdisciplinary perspective that bridges Islamic studies, history, and international relations, while providing a theoretically grounded framework for understanding Muslim minority conduct in pluralistic societies. By highlighting justice, moral integrity, respect for law, and constructive engagement as key prophetic principles, this thesis adds to contemporary debates on peaceful coexistence and the role of religion in global diplomacy.

Keywords: Abyssinia (Habasha), Islamic diplomacy, minority fiqh, and interfaith relations.