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Religious tolerance and harmony was rendered a dynamic dimension considered modern to the day. In pronouncing his vow to provide protection to non-Muslims in a Muslim society, the Prophet said:"Whoever kills a person who has a truce with the Muslims will never smell the fragrance of Paradise." (Saheeh Muslim)

The Prophet strictly warned against any maltreatment of people of other faiths. He said:"Beware! Whoever is cruel and hard on a non-Muslim minority, or curtails their rights, or burdens them with more than they can bear, or takes anything from them against their free will; I (Prophet Muhammad) will complain against the person on the Day of Judgment." (Abu Dawud)

Now the torch-bearers of anarchism let loose before, during and mostly after the elections to the 10th Parliament will say 'we have not killed any non-Muslim, we have not burdened them with what they cannot bear, we have merely burnt their houses and driven them away from their homesteads, hu-ha-ha-ha...' Let them be pricked by their conscience if they have any.

One of the finest examples of religious tolerance and indeed fraternity can be seen in a letter that Prophet Mohammad wrote to his emissary who met with the religious leaders of Saint Catherine in Mount Sinai; they had sought the protection of the Muslims, and he guaranteed them freedom of worship and movement, freedom to appoint their own judges and to own and maintain their property, exemption from military service, and the right to protection in war. The Prophet wrote:

"This is a message from Muhammad ibn Abdullah, as a covenant to those who adopt Christianity, near and far, we are with them. Verily I, the servants, the helpers, and my followers defend them, because Christians are my citizens; and by God! I hold out against anything that displeases them. No compulsion is to be on them. Neither are their judges to be removed from their jobs nor their monks from their monasteries. No one is to destroy a house of their religion, to damage it, or to carry anything from it to the Muslims' houses. Should anyone take any of these, he would spoil God's covenant and disobey His Prophet. Verily, they are my allies and have my secure charter against all that they hate. No one is to force them to travel or to oblige them to fight. The Muslims are to fight for them. If a female Christian is married to a Muslim, it is not to take place without her approval. She is not to be prevented from visiting her church to pray. Their churches are declared to be protected. They are neither to be prevented from repairing them nor the sacredness of their covenants. No one of the nation (Muslims) is to disobey the covenant till the Last Day (end of the world)."

'On another occasion, the Prophet received a delegation of sixty Christians from the region of Najran, then a part of Yemen, at his mosque. When the time for their prayer came, they faced the direction of east and prayed. The Prophet ordered that they be left in their state and not harmed.' (Source: M Abdulsalam in <islamreligion.com>, 2006)

Unfortunately for our nation, to those people who have taken the law and religion into their own hands time and again, let them be reminded by a verse in the Quran: "Fight in the way of God against those who fight against you, but begin not hostilities. Lo! God loveth not aggressors."(2:190) ■