

Abstract:

The Banu Arfida Phenomenon: Prophet Muhammad's (SAW) Vision for Cultural Harmony in Seerah and its Implications for South African Muslims.

as one of the turning events in the Prophet Muhammad's (PBUH) life, reflecting his approach to intercultural living. It recounts an episode in which an Abyssinian company conducted a private performance in the newly established Islamic state of Medina during the Prophet's (PBUH) lifetime, emphasising the Prophet's (PBUH) joyful greeting and his observation that Islam was "vast".

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This paper addresses the problem of "the Banu Arfida phenomenon" The study explores the conflict between universal religious commandments and various artistic exuberance, making the event a model of cultural integration. This historical example provides a framework for fostering mutual tolerance, coexistence, and respect among distinct Muslim cultural groups in a contemporary multicultural society.

Furthermore, this article examines how this historical precedent applies to modern South African Muslim society. Given South Africa's rich multicultural fabric and diverse Muslim community, which includes indigenous African converts, descendants of Malay, Indonesian, and Indian heritage, as well as recent immigrants, the Banu Arfida phenomenon in Prophet Mohammed's (SAW) Seerah provides a compelling blueprint. It argues for an internal acceptance of this varied identity, emphasising cohabitation over assimilation and fostering the authentic expression of various cultural traditions within Islamic practice. This prophetic model offers a timeless framework for nurturing inclusivity, establishing mutual respect, and bridging understanding between the varied South African Muslim community and the rest of society.