

The Concept of Pluralism in the Light of Āthār-e-Sahābah (R.A)

Moazzam Ali* Aziza Madnia Saeedi† Imran Ali‡

p- ISSN: 2521-2982

e- ISSN: 2707-4587

p- ISSN: 2521-2982

Headings

- Introduction
- Pluralism and Ḥaḍrat Umar Fārūq (R.A)
- Non-Muslim Thinkers and Venerable Companions
- Conclusion

Abstract *Pluralism allows the other people to live and practice their beliefs, religions in a same society. This paper explains the behavior of venerable companions of Holy Prophet (PBUH) regarding others who have religion other than Islam. Companions of the Holy Prophet (PBUH) always treated the followers of the other religions with affection, kindness and compassion. The conduct of Venerable Companions will remain as a guiding star for the human beings.*

Key Words: Pluralism, Venerable Companions, Religions, Kindness

Introduction

History witnesses that there is no comparison or example to generosity found in any other religion other than Islām. The Prophet (PBUH) was an embodiment of blessing and kindness, from the very first day of preaching to the end he dealt with tolerance till the end. He was not only a forgiving person but also gives favors to them. Either they are libertines of Tā'if or someone else, if they are enemies or conspiring group anyone who came for sorry, will never be rejected rather blessed. After the Prophet (PBUH), His Venerable Companions used to make the same practices and provided other religions whole freedom and their religious rights.

Here is so many examples of pluralism by the Venerable Companions:

In Ghazwah-e-Badar, Muslims caught many war prisoners and they were distributed among the Venerable Companions because resources were not good to take care of them. Venerable Companions were asked to take care of the prisoners. Those Venerable Companions didn't care of their own hunger but they fed and took care at their level best. The brother of Muṣ'ab Bin 'Umayr describes after becoming Muslim:

"Once Abū 'Azīz Bin 'Umar came as a non-Muslim prisoner, brother of Muṣ'ab Bin 'Umayr, he told about Anṣār that they used to feed him with his best and provides him bread but he eats himself with

*Lecturer, Department of Islamic Studies, Government Degree College of Special Education Bahawalpur, Punjab, Pakistan. Email: moazzamali51@yahoo.com

†Assistant Professor, Department of Islamic Studies, Government Degree College of Special Education Bahawalpur, Punjab, Pakistan.

‡Visiting Lecturer, Department of Islamic Studies, Government Degree College of Special Education Bahawalpur, Punjab, Pakistan.

dates (due to the lack of breads). Many of the times I feel ashamed and tried to return but they never accepted and used to return me.”

Except Islām there is not such any example in any religion where the conqueror remains hungry, examples of hospitality should never be found for guests, the examples made by Anṣār in Islām, a person who came for killing but entertained as a guest. There is not such a nation or peoples.

Ḥaḍrat Abū Bakr Ṣiddīq (R.A) and Pluralism

At the time of Prophethood, the followers of many religions were got sheltered in Islāmic state and through proper deeds they were provided with complete rights. Abū Bakr Ṣiddīq (R.A) not only provided them with complete rights rather attested with his seal and initial. In his period, the countries which were conquered by him the non-Muslim found the same rights as the Muslims. One can see the importance of respect and taking care of the belongings of non-Muslims that in Islāmic society in every deed they are mentioned. And particularly Christians and Jews highlighted in their processions of festivals. There were no instructions for them complete freedom. For example when Khālīd bin Walīd (R.A) made a pact on order of Abū Bakr Ṣiddīq (R.A), it is particularly mentioned:

“The monasteries and churches of Ehl-e-A‘ānāt should not be destroyed and except the timing of Muslims prayers, they can play their bugles any time. They will also not be stopped while moving with Cross on their festivals.”

Ḥaḍrat Abū Bakr Ṣiddīq (R.A) was so caring about the worshipping places of non-Muslims. When he sent army towards Syria, including categorized instructions it is said:

“Monks and Friars should not be disturbed and the worshipping place also not be destroyed.”

Pluralism and Ḥaḍrat Umar Fārūq (R.A)

Same in the period of ‘Umar Fārūq (R.A) in pact with Ehl-e-Elīyā, there are clear instructions to take care of Christians’ identity (the cross).

In fact at that time, there was a complete freedom for Christians as well as other religion followers. They had complete freedom to follow their religious practices and full care of their religious feelings. Another incident of 2nd caliph ‘Umar bin Khaṭṭāb (R.A) is found in the books of history:

“An old man of Rome entered into the city who desired to sale out his horse. At custom post of custom inspector asked him to sell his horse before entering the post, so he could not pay the custom charges. That Christian demanded twenty thousand but inspector offered him eighteen thousand rupees. The Christian refused and after paying the custom duty entered into the city. By chance the horse was not sold out, when he went to exit the custom inspector again demanded the duty. In place of paying off the duty the Christian went straight to 2nd Caliph. The Caliph was in mosque so this Christian didn’t enter into the mosque. He received a word as a message “Kafīeta” at the time he didn’t know the meaning of that word. He turned disappointed and went back to the post but when he reached at the post he came to know that the caliph had sent the decision that should not take anything from this Christian. Such a quick response is matchless.

The examples of care for humanity and tolerance in the time of peace were extra ordinary. Same in war situations at the time of overcoming and dealings with war prisoners, behavior of Venerable Companions was matchless.

Many deeds and pacts were formed at the time of ‘Umar Fārūq (R.A) because in his period, the area of Islāmic state was quite vast. In these pacts they were dealt with kindness and took special care of their rights. For example in history the pact with Ādherb-ī jān is described in the following words:

“In this region every kind of land plains or hilly area, valleys or the honors of Fountains the things will remain with the same possessors. Their life and belongings, religion or conditions remain secured except the payment as a tax with their own free will. The tax would not be implemented on kids, ladies and aged peoples.”

Allah Almighty has not deprived any one to follow the book of success for eternal success and has equally given the chance to everyone to grasp the success by following the book. Anyone who wants to get benefited should follow the guideline of the Prophet Muḥammad (PBUH) and if someone doesn't follow there is no oppression for him. In other words all the human beings (followers of all the religions) have not only complete religious freedom rather they are free to follow their own religions. This is the school of thought that 2nd caliph 'Umar Fārūq (R.A) used to offer his slave Assaq to embrace Islām (he was Christian) but he refused. He (R.A) used to say that is open choice there is no repression in Islām. And before some days of his martyrdom, Ḥaḍrat 'Umar got him free and said to him, go away about your will.

In Islām after preaching and elaborating the message of the religion, there is no forcing to embrace. This is the Islāmic well-wishing that they launch their optimizing programmed but could not force or intrude and the whole history approves it.

In Qādsiyah, an Iranian after getting arrested became Muslim. When uprightness, compassion and Faithfulness he spoke improvisational that till Muslims have these attributes they will not be defeated. Now I have no interest with Irānians.

Non-Muslims used to embrace Islām by getting impressed the nations. European propaganda that Islām was established on the strength of sword looks meaningless after reading these incidents.

When the Venerable Companions got incumbency and powers of military, politics and they established huge governments in east and West. Even at that they affectionate tolerance and the examples of leaving & overlooking and religious expansions set by Muslims are matchless such an example doesn't find in the times of Jews and Christians. In fact the history is full with horror and terror made by other religions. Venerable Companions conquered many regions but never forced those to embrace Islām rather gave them freedom to follow their own religion. Islām spread richly in Egypt and Africa. In the period of Ḥaḍrat 'Umar (R.A):

“When 'Amr Bin Al- 'Lḥī (R.A) took the people from the different villages and after enslaving, sold them into Arab, they were scattered into Arab. Then Ḥaḍrat 'Umar (R.A) called them back from every area of the country either they adopted Islām or not and sent them back to Egypt. He (R.A) write: it depend on them whether they accept Islām or not.”

The given incidents have proved that over the span of the history the Venerable Companions having victories and military dominates never forced any dominoes or nations to embrace Islām rather gave them complete freedom to embrace any religion. Its story witnesses that many dominoes didn't leave their religion them full protection and homage to worshipping places. They got equal rights like Muslims and European think tank confessed the tolerance and justice:

“Arabs behaved same with the people of Andalusia as they did with Syria and Egypt. Their possessions, their churches and their laws were given to them and gave them right to get justice from their own nation followers.”

Further Describes

“In the times of Arab Government churches were built in abundance, this is the proof of argument that how much they valued others religions.”

Even in Islāmic states, Venerable Companions used to give respect and security to the false gods (idols). When 'Amr Bin Al- 'Lḥī (R.A) was governor of Egypt, a Muslim soldier broke a non-Muslim's idols

eye. Non-Muslim person filed the case. The case was presented front of the governor. He (R.A) gave the decision to break the eye of the person who broke the eye of Qibtī's idol. At this decision of 'Amar bin Al-^ل that Qibtī was stunned because he could expect a decision like this at any cost. Muslim soldier requested Qibtī that what should he get in breaking his eye. It's better to have penalty, after a very long conversation he accepted the penalty and soldier's eye was survived.

An Englishman describes about the time when they conquered Jerusalem the pact which they made:

"The non-Muslim public of Jerusalem is guaranteed by conquer that their lives and possessions, families and worshipping places, holy cross and their every belonging are secured. There will be no interference in their lands and religions. Neither their ecclesiasts will be destroyed nor any kind of harm."

Same at the conquest of Bayt al-Muqaddas, the pact was written between Ḥaḍrat 'Umar Fārūq (R.A) and them, in that pact the protection of creed and their slogans are mentioned:

"The safety has been provided to their life & belongings, their churches and holy crosses their churches will not be the habitation of Muslims and not to be destroyed, neither their properties nor the buildings will be destroyed."

Muslims always considered their religious duty to respect the religious emotions of non-Muslims and safety of their worshipping places in Islāmic state. In Islāmic state, the tambour workers not only used to get the safety of their religious rights but received every kind of services and other favors. Even in the value of capitation, they received tangible relaxations. Already there was no capitation on children, ladies and aged peoples. Not only these people were exempted from capitation but also if there is any needy. They apologized without paying anything.

Amīr al-Mo'minīn 'Umar Fārūq (R.A) on the visit of Syria see that few peoples were standing in sunshine and on their heads olive oil was being poured. At asking, he comes to know that they are the people who didn't pay capitation-tax. He (R.A) said: What excuse these people are presenting. Have they nothing? "Don't put such burden on them that they couldn't endure, I have heard from Prophet Muḥammad (PBUH) that don't torment any human being. Anyone who torments a person, at the Day of Judgment Allah Almighty would do the same with doers.

Ḥaḍrat 'Umar Fārūq (R.A) was so careful about the rights of non-Muslims that at the time of his death, even he was badly injured and unable to breath properly, even at that time he be qusted:

"I request to the coming caliph on the behalf of Rasūl Allah (PBUH) that take care of the rights of non-Muslims. Even if there is war in their favor they will be favored. They shouldn't be burdened more than their tolerance."

Pluralism in the Period of Ḥaḍrat 'Uthmān (R.A) and Ḥaḍrat 'Alī (R.A)

Ḥaḍrat 'Uthmān (R.A) and Ḥaḍrat 'Alī (R.A) both, acted upon the line of action of their mentor caliph Ḥaḍrat 'Umar Fārūq (R.A). The Kindness and generosity of Ḥaḍrat 'Uthmān (R.A) is popular throughout the world. He was kind and generous to all without the discrimination of religion. He (R.A) not only followed the directions of the previous caliphs rather made the people of his time to follow the guidelines. He advised his governors to condescension for the followers of other religions. Ṭabar^ل has described about Ḥaḍrat 'Uthmān's tolerance and cane of the subject after caliph ship he described:

"Allah Almighty has given the order to the rules that they should guard the subject, not only become the receivers of tax."

He (R.A) used to keep very tolerating behavior with non-Muslim subject. This is the reason that non-Muslims never did revolt in wars.

This is the righteous behavior of Ḥaḍrat 'Uthmān (R.A) and previous caliphs that remained loyal. They neither launched any revolt against Ḥaḍrat 'Uthmān (R.A) nor participated in any revolt.

Ḥaḍrat 'Alī (R.A) also followed the same practices of Ḥaḍrat 'Uthmān (R.A) and maintained the traditions with non-Muslims. Though at the time of Ḥaḍrat 'Alī (R.A) there were many issues and wars at the same time but the rights of ehl-e-dhimah were never compromised. During the ominous time of Ḥaḍrat 'Alī (R.A), the tolerance was fully kept in consideration and never intensified the non-Muslim subject. He (R.A) used to Ceriman:

“The people whom; we have taken the responsibility of their lives, belongings, respect and regard. Their blood is our blood and the value of their blood is equal to the blood of ours.”

His (R.A) state of tolerance was that:

“He took care of the economy of non-Muslim subject, once non-Muslim's canal of irrigation was filed then he (R.A) wrote to the oppressor. Non-Muslims have described about the canal of irrigation in your jurisdiction which is filled with soil means buried with soil. This is the security of Muslims well-to-do to take care and try to restore.”

Once a group of Khawrij got momentum and endangered the existence of Islāmic state. On the power of sword ready to wild work then he (R.A) gave the message to them which was duly offered with freedom of religion and to stop the riot, said as:

“Wherever you want to live, it is a deal between us that you will not adopt blood-shedding and robbery, avoid tyranny and if you commuted anyone of them then I'll announce an open war against you, 'Abd Allah bin Shaddād said: By God, they were not murdered till the time they did robberies and illegal murders.”

The period of Khulafā' al-Rāshidīn is a daylight example of pluralism, for peace lovers and society with tolerance, where every man of the society spent free life of complete economic, political and religious freedom. The Venerable Companions were the followers of this thought which gave the slogan of freedom. Love to humanity and human being got freedom from the slavery of human being. This all struggle of Venerable Companions was not for the sake of power and authority rather just for Allah's blessings and grace. Venerable Companions themselves were the embodiment of God's fear. They were so much careful that rights of human being will be highly noticed by Allah Almighty. Temporary benefits were sacrificed for collective benefits.

In fact, Venerable Companions believed in general social characterization. They keep on importance of respect regard and importance of humanity. A human being, as a Muslim, as a social person and citizen, as a ruler, as a commander, as a soldier, as a judge, as a merchant or as a scholar, the Venerable Companions laid the foundation of life on two rules. First means worshipping of God and human friendship, but the identity of God worshipping laid on human friendship. Though human friendship and best morals wherever they went, they were warranty welcomed by oppressed people and accepted their thought and program. Accompanied them, the history is full with such examples that non-Muslims embraced Islām on the basis of righteous and fair behavior and human friendship. Venerable Companions were the symbol of tolerance and pluralism.

Non-Muslim Thinkers and Venerable Companions

The line of action, followed by Venerable Companions and Muslim rulers was as righteous and justice that non-Muslim thinkers were accepted the matchless tolerance of Muslims. Brown Laurance E. comments about the open heartedness of Muslims that:

“This is decided that 'Arabs who blessed with power and government by God. You know God lives with us but they never attacked on our religion rather always have given the regard. They paid homage to our priests and saints of God and they equally pay respect to the churches and monasteries.”

Only religious freedom doesn't fulfill the regard of any non-Muslim. Even their worshipping places, religious rights, religious personalities and religious book are fully scoured. In Islām Jihād and Killing is also

secured and their safety and freedom is also conditional. In fact, the importance has also been described. Allah says:

"الَّذِينَ أُخْرِجُوا مِنْ دِيَارِهِمْ بِغَيْرِ حَقٍّ إِلَّا أَنْ يَقُولُوا رَبُّنَا اللَّهُ وَلَوْلَا دَفْعُ اللَّهِ النَّاسَ بَعْضَهُمْ بِبَعْضٍ لَفُتِنَتِ صَوَامِعُ وَبِيَعٌ وَصَلَوَاتٌ وَمَسَاجِدٌ يُذَكَّرُ فِيهَا اسْمُ اللَّهِ كَثِيرًا
وَلَيُنْصُرَنَّ اللَّهُ مَنْ يَنْصُرُهُ إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَقَوِيٌّ عَزِيزٌ"

"[They are] those who have been evicted from their homes without right-only because they say, "Our Lord is Allah." And were it not that Allah checks the people, some by means of others, there would have been demolished monasteries, churches, synagogues, and mosques in which the name of Allah is much mentioned. And Allah will surely support those who support Him. Indeed, Allah is Powerful and Exalted in Might."

This is the impression of Islām that never harmed any temple of non-Muslims in Islāmic state. The will which is given by the first caliph to the commander of Islām, Usāmah bin Zayd it was written clearly... You will come across such people who are fixed into temples, don't make any harm to them or their doing.

If any harm reached to the worshipping places of any religion then the Muslims prevention it as the grand mosque Banū-Umayyah was built, it was considered the wonders of this world. There was a church adjacent to the mosque. Caliph 'Abd al-Malik offered a large amount to merge the church into the mosque but Christians refused. Later on caliph's son Walīd bin 'Abd al-Malik also tried but they didn't agree. Walīd threaten them that if they are not agreed than any other way will be adopted. In these situations, Christians started propaganda against him. So he demolished that church and extended the mosque on that place. Later on 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz tried to demolish that area of the church but Muslims felt the anarchy, fight and disorder but he didn't agree at any cost. Finally he sent a delegation of Muslims to the Christians. After reconciliation they wrote the agreement, then 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz accepted happily and passed on decision. It is said that Muslims returned all the disputed churches and paid off the price of that place.

A same incident occurred in the time of Banū 'Abbās that was also resolved immediately. E. Brown wrote that:

"In the time of caliph Hۛۛ dۛۛ, in Egypt the Mariyam church was partially damaged. The governor of Egypt Musa asked the solution from the Islāmic scholars. Layth bin Sa'd the head scholar passed the Fatwā that the church should be rebuilt and all the expenses should be borne by the government."

A Christian poet presented these qualities of Islām in appreciation that: only Muslims are a nation in this universe where every religion gets complete freedom.

This is the reason that Muslims provided the complete safety and security to the churches and never gave any harm. It's proved with the statement of General Geof III (General of Christian Army) describes Muslims line of action in a letter to president Bishop Rifard Shir in these words:

"(whatever you did with them) they (Muslims even that) don't launch any war against Christian religion rather they are kind with our religion. They regard our Christians and Chrismis; they also provide funds to our churches."

This rich behavior of Muslims was also appreciated by famous Western thinker Gastal Libon in these words:

"The rich behavior and tolerance of Muḥammad (PBUH) with Jews and Christians was matchless and there is no comparison with the representatives of Judaism. And after the Prophet (PBUH), the caliphs also did the same practice and followed his footsteps."

Although, the orientates and European historians never left any chance to oppose Islām but the history of Muslims tolerance is as rich that despite all they could not refuse to accept. They accepted the rich behavior of Islām.

Conclusion

The righteous character of Venerable Companions is as unique that there is no other religion or any other followers, where we can find so clear and best characters. So it is a need to accept the fact and study the righteous and tolerating biography of venerable companions. Through considering the biography of Venerable Companions as a guiding star to remove the intolerance and class structure and in those teachings a human friendship and righteous society should be established which should be based on love, peace and delight. Venerable Companions dealt with tolerance through their unique dealings transactions, and social relationship with non-Muslims. They possessed with finest ethics, they gave respect to the religious emotions and feelings. The respect for worshipping places of non-Muslims kept in consideration every time. In collective issues when they appeared as leaders, commanders or governors they followed according to the Islāmic education and kept the spirit of religious tolerance alive. In every condition, they took care of the rights of non-Muslims their lives, self-respect, belongings and safety of their worshipping places. Due to such dealings history witnesses that because of fair dealings of Venerable Companions a lot of non-Muslims embraced Islām. They welcomed Islāmic armies in their countries where their own religion was a symbol of cruelty.

References

- Ibn-e-Hishshūm, Abū Muḥammad ‘Abd al-Malik Bin Hishsh m. (1936). Al-Sīrah al-Nabawiyah. Egypt: Maḥab al-Bī al-ḥalī. (2) 394
- Abū Yūsuf, Ya‘qūb Bin Ibrāhīm. (1979). Kitāb al-Khirāj. Al-Qahirah: Maḥab al-Salfiyyah wa Maktabataha. 146
- Ibn al-Jawzī, ‘Abd al-Raḥmān bin ‘Alī. (1412 A.H/1992 A.D). Al-Muntaḥim fī Tārīkh al-Umam wa al-Malūk, Bayrūt: Dār al-Kutub al-‘Ilmiyah. (4) 116
- Al-Ṭabarī, Muḥammad Bin Jarīr. (2007). Tārīkh al-Ṭabarī (Tārīkh al-Umam wa al-Malūk). Damascus: Dār Ibn-e-Kathīr. (3) 403-404
- Muḥammad Miyan, Syed. (1999). Ṣahābah Kirām kī ‘Ehd-e-Zarrīn. Lāhore: Maktabah Meḥmūdīyah. 288
- Al-Ṭabarī, Tārīkh-e-Ṭabarī. (3) 539
- Ibn-e-Sa’d, Abū ‘Abd Allah. Muḥammad Bin Sa’d. (1997). Al-Tabqāt al-Kubrā. Bayrūt: Dār-e-ḥadīth. (6) 158
- Nadavī, ‘Abd al-Salām. (1950). Uswah Ṣahābah. India: Ma‘ārif Aḥmad Ghaḥīh. (1) 146
- Ibid. 146
- Muḥammad Miyan, Syed, Ṣahābah Kirām kī ‘Ehd-e-Zarrīn. 288
- Ibid
- Manṣūr Pūrī, Qāḍī Sulaymān. (nd). Raḥmat al-‘Ālamīn. Lāhore: Shaykh Ghulām ‘Alī & Sons. (3) 12
- Brown, Laurenc E. (1933). The Eclipses of Christianity in Asia. UK: Cambridge University Press. 39
- Modūdī, Abū al-Ā‘īn, Syed. (1996). Al-Jihād Fi al-Islām. Lāhore: Idārah Tarjumān al-Qur’ān. 297
- Abū Yūsuf, Kitāb al-Khirāj. 259
- Ibid
- Al-Ṭabarī, Tārīkh-e-Ṭabarī. (3) 615
- Muḥammad Ḥamīd Allah, Dr. (2005). Khuṭbāt-e-Bahāwalpūr. Islām Ābād: Idārah Tehqīqāt-e-Islāmī. 372
- Abū Yūsuf, Kitāb al-Khirāj. 82
- Al-Ya‘qūbī, Aḥmad bin Ya‘qūb. (nd). Tārīkh al-Ya‘qūbī. Bayrūt: Dār Ahya al-Turāth al-‘Arabī. 203
- Shakānī, Muḥammad Bin ‘Alī. (1413 AH/1993AD). Nayl al-Auṭār. Miṣr: Dār al-ḥadīth. (7) 196
- Brown, Laurenc E. The Eclipses of Christianity in Asia. 37
- Al-Qur’ān (22) 40
- Ibn al-Athār, Abu al-ḥasan ‘Alī Bin Abī al-Karam. (1417 AH/1997AD). Al-Kāmil fī Tārīkh al-ḥadīth. Bayrūt: Dār al-Kitāb al-‘Arabī. (2) 196
- Al-Baladhūrī, Abī al-‘Abbās, Aḥmad Bin Yahyā Bin Jābir, Imām. (1988). Fatūḥ al-Buldān. Dār wa Maktabah al-Hilāl. 127
- Bāghpatī, Matīn Tārīq, Islām Aur Rawādārī. 74
- Ibid. 81
- Thomas, W. Arnold, Sir. (1896). Invitation To Islām. London: Archibald Constable & Co. 102
- Gostaaf Lobon. (2013). Ḥadīrah al-‘Arab (Translated By: ‘Adil Ḥahīr). Egypt: Hindāwī Al-Qāhīrah. 128