

Qno: Discuss religious tolerance in the context of post-prophetic Muslim history.

① Introduction

Prophet (PBUH) established the first constitution of Medina, laying the foundation of a multi-religious community

(Ummah). All citizens regardless of their faith, such as Jews, Muslims,

and other non-Arab minority groups were granted equal rights and ^{religious} freedom.

The delegation of Najran in 630 CE where Christians were allowed to pray in Muslim

Mosques displayed prophetic commitment to religious diversity. However, later Rashidun

caliphs and successor caliphates (Umayyads, Abbasids) attempted to honor the prophetic

legacy of religious tolerance and clemency.

However, today's Muslim societies are falling

short of such principles of coexistence and

respect for religious diversity.

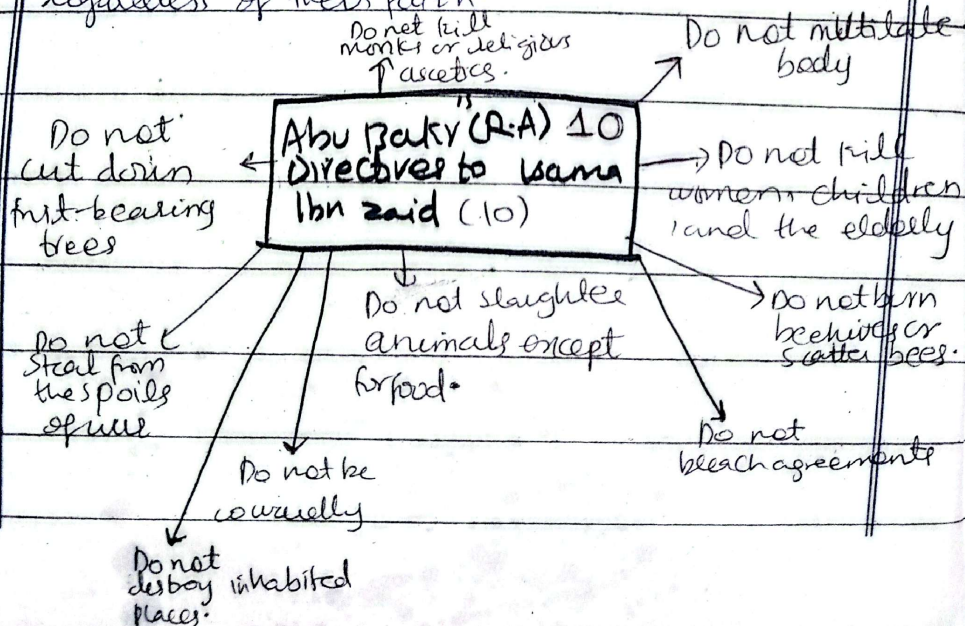
② Post-Prophetic Muslim History

(a) Incidents of Religious Tolerance

(1) In Rashidun Caliphate

① Hazrat Abu Bakr's (R.A)

Caliph Abu Bakr (R.A) as the first caliph after the Prophet Muhammad (P.B.U.H) emphasized religious tolerance and democracy in the early Islamic state. He protected non-Muslims by forbidding harm to monks, places of worship, or non-combatants. He issued these explicit directives to Umar Ibn al-Khattab (R.A) during a military campaign. He also honored the Pact of Hudaybiyah, a pact among Meccan tribes to assist the oppressed regardless of their faith.



② Hazrat Umar (R.A)

(1) The Treaty of Jerusalem

When Jerusalem was conquered, Caliph Umar personally visited the city. He (R.A) was offered to pray in the Church of Holy Sepulchre. However, he declined to ensure future generations do not convert church into a mosque. He preserved the Christian character of the church, exemplifying respect for religious diversity.

(2) The Pact of Umar (R.A)

Hazrat Umar (R.A) outlined the ~~pact~~ rights and responsibilities of non-Muslims under Muslim rule. He guaranteed freedom to dhimmis in return of jizya tax (protection tax). Non-Muslims were allowed to practise their faith freely. They could govern themselves according to their own religious laws.

(3) Stipends from Dait-ul-Mal to Non-Muslims

Caliph Umar (R.A) institutionalized Zakat

to ensure the protection of Muslims and non-Muslims alike. He was committed to the welfare of disabled non-Muslims, providing them stipends from the State Treasury (Bait-ul-Mal). He even exempted them from paying jizya tax. He (R.A) even gave the Zawalman as Ahl al-Dhimma (protected people)

② Usman Bin Affan

(1) Exempted from Jizya for the elderly and Disable

Caliph (Usman) (R.A) continued with the practice of Hazrat Umar (R.A) by levy jizya tax on only able-bodied, financially capable non-Muslim men. While women, children, the elderly, the sick, and the poor were generally exempted.

(2) Equal Blood Money for Non-Muslims

Under Usman's (R.A) rule, the blood money (diya) for a non-Muslim citizen was the same as that of a free Muslim. He

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demonstrated impartial justice. Thus, Caliph Usman (R.A) showed his utmost commitment to the Quranic and prophetic principle of equal dignity of all creation regardless of their faith.

"Let there be no compulsion in religion" — Surah Al-Baqarah.

(3) Usman's (L.A) Governor in Egypt and His Fair Treatment of Coptic Christians

The Coptic community in Egypt during the Caliph Usman's (R.A) period showed a policy of religious tolerance under Islamic rule. His governor in Egypt, Abdullah Ibn Saad ensured inclusive administration by ensuring the rights of non-Muslims as non-negotiable.

(4) Caliph Ali Ibn Abi Talib

(i) Protection of Non-Muslim Communities in Kufa and Basra

Hazrat Ali (a.s) ensured equitable

governance in newly conquered areas like Kufa and Basra. Non-Muslims were allowed to retain their own religious courts for personal law issues.

"The ruler is a shepherd and will be asked about the flock" — Hadith.

(2) Hazrat Ali and the Christian Man

Hazrat Ali (RA) saw his armor was being sold by a Christian man. He brought the matter before a court. Due to lack of witnesses, Hazrat Ali lost the case. The Christian, deeply moved by Hazrat Ali's (RA) moral leadership, accepted Islam.

"A person is either your brother

in faith or your equal in

humanity" — Imam Ali (a.s)

(2) Umayyad caliphate

(1) Sarjun ibn Mansur (Christian) as Head of Fiscal Administration in Syria

Sarjun ibn Mansur, a Melkite Christian, served as head of fiscal administration in Syria under Muawiyah and Yazid I. He also appointed other Christians to key roles as tax collectors in Rome. He integrated non-Muslims in his administration to end discrimination of all kinds against them.

"A synagogue, or a church or temple of fire worship... not to be destroyed". - Caliph Umar II

(2) Withdrawal of Mosque Expansion Plan

Muawiyah initially proposed annexing the cathedral of Saint John in Damascus into the Grand Mosque. When Christians objected to it, he (RA) withdrew the plan, showing respect for non-Muslim sacred spaces.

(3) Abu Ubaydah ibn al-Jawah Returned Jizya Tax to Syrians

The Muslims had conquered parts of Syria and were collecting jizya tax from non-Muslim communities. However, when Byzantines were planning a counterattack, he ^{re}turned all the jizya saying he was unable to protect them from Byzantine attacks.

Abbasid Caliphate

(1) House of Wisdom in Baghdad

A rare example of religious inclusivity was the House of Wisdom in Baghdad. It was an academic hub where Muslims, Christians, Jewish and Zoroastrians collaborated and translated Greek, Persian, and Indian knowledge.

(2) Christian Physicians at the Caliph's Court

Under Caliph Harun al-Rashid, Jafar ibn

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Bukhtishu, a Christian, earned his trust. The well-being of all Muslims depended on him. Thus, it demonstrates the commitment to religious diversity of the Muslim leaders.

(3) Protection of Zoroastrian Faith Sites

Caliph in the Abbasid Caliph protected Zoroastrian fire temple from destruction and allowed for its restoration. They treated Zoroastrians as Dhimmi (protected people). Thus, their right to practise their faith was protected by the Muslim state. In return, jizya was imposed on them, particularly the ones who are able-bodied men).

Under Gun-Powder Empires

House of Wisdom under Naimur Rasheed

Bait ul Hikmah was the Grand Library of Baghdad. It was a

multi-faith intellectual hub where scholars of diverse faiths (Muslims, Jews, Christians & Zoroastrians) collaborated to translate Greek, Persian and Indian works into Arabic.

Millet System under Ottoman Empire

To manage a religiously pluralistic society, the Ottomans developed 'Millet System' (meaning nation). Each millet was led by its own religious head and they acted as both spiritual and civil authorities for their communities. The Ottoman Empire delegated local governance to manage religious diversity.

Critical Analysis

There is a growing wave of religious intolerance in today's Muslim nations. Persecution of minority-faith groups has ^{become} a widespread phenomenon.

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The misuse of Blasphemy law is also on the rise, manifested in signing of 70-year old Sri Lankan man. These Islamic laws are used by powerful quarters for settling personal scores. The prophetic ideals and Quranic principles on religious tolerance have been flouted by the Muslim communities time and again. Forced conversions of minors, particularly girls or women of marriageable age, are a stain on religious tolerance.

Conclusion

Thus, it could be concluded in the end that the most of the Muslim rule around the world has been tolerant and inclusive of diverse faiths. From the Prophetic era and Rashidun Caliphate to disparate empires and dynasties under Muslim rule, non-Muslims as Jews, Christians and Zoroastrians

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were protected as dhimmis (protected people) by the Muslim rulers.

The Convencia in Spain, Al-Azhar University in Cairo, and the House of Wisdom in Syria were all manifestations of religious plurality under Muslim leaders.