

## ***A comparative Study of Religious Pluralism and Diversity in the Perspectives of Semitic Religions***

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### ***Abstract:***

*The current study mainly focuses on the concept of religious pluralism and diversity in the perspectives of Semitic religions. It proceeds with the enriched evaluation of the concept of the religious pluralism and diversity. Religious pluralism has become the prevailing factors in the contemporary society and almost every region around the globe is dominated by religious, social, cultural and civilizational diversity. The perspective of religious pluralism in the light of two of the Abrahamic religions i.e. Judaism and Christianity is discussed briefly. Moreover, the study will describe the teachings of Islam on the concept of religious pluralism. It will analyze the theological and religious basis of the relationship of Islam with Christianity and Judaism. It also includes the opinions of the scholars about the idea of religious diversity. The current study also brings into the agenda of the status of Dhimmis in the Islamic state and clarifies some of the misconceptions regarding the position of non-Muslims in Islamic State. This article discusses the freedom of religion as well. The last part of the paper concludes the study with some of the findings.*

***Keywords:*** Religious Pluralism, Diversity, Plural Society, Interfaith, Civilization, Society, Culture, Islam, Judaism, Christianity.

### **I- Introduction**

The religious pluralism and diversity is rampant and it is evident all over the globe in the contemporary society.<sup>1</sup>This is the only reason that

the majority of the scholars deliberately say that the religious pluralism has become a fact of the contemporary world.<sup>2</sup> ‘Oxford Advance Learning Dictionary’ has simply defined the word ‘Pluralism’ into “the existence of different groups of people in one society”.<sup>3</sup> The current study will comparatively evaluate the teachings of the semitic religions over the concept of religious pluralism while focusing on how Islam showed great tolerance towards other religions. Judaism and Christianity are Abrahamic religions and both of the religions share some commonalities with Islam.<sup>4</sup> ‘Christianity leads in terms of number of followers which exceeds over two billion all over the globe. The second largest number of followers pertains to religion of Islam containing 1.8 billion Muslims. While the ‘Virtual Jewish library’ gives its statistics that the Jewish-born people are less than the other two Abrahamic religions and they are about 14 million on this planet’.<sup>5</sup>

Islam, having affirmed that the true religion, showed religious pluralism and taught its followers to treat the followers of other religions with good will, harmony and tolerance.<sup>6</sup> Islamic state was founded after the migration to Madina, wherein the Jews were given full religious freedom. They also enjoyed social justice and equality living in Islamic state. ‘The prophet pbuh endeavored his best to preserve human dignity and he created a state that was made up of diverse communities and faiths. Thus, the Prophet of Islam pbuh has successfully maintained the sense of harmony among the followers of different faiths and religions. Islam has applied the spirit of religious pluralism through its teachings and these are still valid in the contemporary era’.<sup>7</sup>

“Islam is distinguished with recognizing the fact that whole human race, regardless of their religion and culture, are the creatures of Allah at the first place. Islam is one of the Abrahamic religions which

consider the whole of the humanity equal in the eyes of Allah”<sup>8</sup>. The whole humankind shares single parents. At the same time, Islam has the quality to recognize religious, intellectual, linguistic diversity and the message of Islam is universal which focuses on the guidance of the people and makes them aware of the good and evil”<sup>9</sup>.

## II- Literature Review

The literature review reveals that several studies have been conducted on the topic of religious pluralism and diversity. The reason behind this rampant literature is that the comparative study of religion has drawn the attention of the contemporary scholars to conduct their critical studies on religious pluralism. This research belongs to different religious academic record about pluralistic society with Muslim society and I think many people in the world are writing about religious pluralism. Meanwhile the lack of authentic research demands a special focus on this topic to fulfill the public necessity because Islamic perspective and its features are clear and many writers are neglecting these facts regarding religious pluralism and diversity. Some books and research papers are discussing general issues, following books are related to my topic but still there is a need to conduct a comparative study among the semitic religions over the concept of diversity.

*Religious Pluralism Framing Religious Diversity in the Contemporary World* is one of the books which starts by first detailing general issues related to religious pluralism. It makes the case for keeping the empirical, the normative, the regulatory and the interactive dimensions of religious pluralism analytically distinct while recognizing that, in practice, they often overlap. It also underlines the importance of seeking connections between religious pluralism and other pluralisms. Next, the book explores how religious diversity can operate to contribute to legal

pluralism and examines the different types of church-state relations: eradication, monopoly, oligopoly and pluralism”.<sup>10</sup>

“*Religion in Prison: Equal Rites in a Multi-Faith Society*, by James Beckford focuses on religion in prisons in England and Wales (the prison systems and ecclesiastical situation in Scotland and Northern Ireland being different) along with some comparative study of the position in the USA. Their search that informs the book was conducted by means of a combination of review of official documents relating to religion in prison and of relevant background literature; questionnaires distributed to the chaplaincies of the 130 prisons in England and Wales and qualitative interviews and on-site observation in a sample of these institutions”.<sup>11</sup> The *Gospel in a Pluralist Society Paperback* was published by Leslie Newbigin in October 30, 1989. It addressed the relation of gospel to a pluralistic society and that was the message of Christianity regarding religious pluralism and diversity. *Common Ground: Islam, Christianity, and Religious Pluralism* was written by Paul Heck, in which he undertook the study of religious pluralism as a theological and social reality.

### **III- The Judaism and the Pluralistic Society**

Judaism is one the Ilhamic and Abrahamic religions which believes in Oneness of God. Jews are the scattered people who are settled in different countries of the world.<sup>12</sup> Jewish beliefs are based on the unity of the Lord Almighty and the superiority of the Israelites.<sup>13</sup> The most important religious book of Judaism is the Torah.<sup>14</sup> The customs and traditions of Judaism are based on the social and religious laws of Judaism. This is the set of laws known as Halakha which not only provides the guidance on religious matters but also gives the instructions on the matters of daily life.

This portion of the study covers the major teachings of Judaism regarding religious diversity and how it treats with other religions. In this part of the paper the Jewish classical traditions regarding religious pluralism is explained. The Jewish literature theoretically explains the Rabbanic attitude towards other religious groups. This study discusses three main characteristics that shed light on the religious diversity. These three characteristics are enlisted as following: the internal structure of Judaism which shows that Judaism is limited to one nation, the tradition of intellectual pluralism which is mainly found in the Halakic community and the tradition's treatment of tolerance.

The whole humanity is divided in several ethnicities where each group has its own laws and language. However, the Jewish Biblical literature divides the humanity in two basic categories i.e. Israel and the other nations of the world. According to the Jewish treaties the covenant plays a pivotal role which declares Torah as the law of the Israelities and it says that the only Jews are the people who are bound by its instructions. Thus they claim to have a divine plan, according to which the monotheist nature of tradition of Judaism is contrasted to the people who worship idols and commit *shirk*. Moreover, the Talmudic literature clearly permits discriminatory treatment of non-Jews. The rabbinic tradition also develops two legal strategies and considers all others except Jews as idolaters, and makes it clear that the religious and moral corruption of other groups is intolerable'.<sup>15</sup>

In this regards *darkhei shalom* is important to understand according to which the Jews are entitled to stay away from the Idolaters and they have to maintain the social peace. However, the rabbanic literature emphasized on extending social solidarity with the pagans who live in neighborhood. Thus it can be said that the concept of *darkhei*

*shalom* is the basis for tolerance on one hand and it emphasizes on the legitimization of moral relativism on the other hand. In traditional perspective, Jews believe that they are the chosen people and they hold a covenant with Allah. They believe in the Torah which contains the teachings for the people of Jews. According to Talmudic literature Christianity is a form of idolatry. Modern Orthodox rabbis engage in interfaith religious dialogue, while most Orthodox rabbis do not. Many have some other views like Rabbi Eliezer Berkovits writes that "Judaism is Judaism because it rejects Christianity, and Christianity is Christianity because it rejects Judaism".

Emet Ve Emunah is one of the famous scholars who summarizes the statement of principles of conservative Judaism. This official statement holds that: "No relationship can be nurtured between Jews and Muslims unless it acknowledges explicitly and seeks to combat the terrible social and political effects of Muslim hostility".

#### **IV- Christianity and the Christian community**

Christianity is the largest world religion which stemmed from the practical life and the teachings of Jesus Christ in the 1<sup>st</sup> century AD. The number of believers is estimated to be exceeding two billion around the globe. This religion is divided in certain sects including the 'Roman Catholic Church, Eastern Orthodox churches, and Protestant churches'. One of the oldest branches is the Oriental Orthodox churches which had been out of contact with Western Christianity and Eastern Orthodoxy from the middle of the 5th century until the late 20th century because of a dispute over Christology (the doctrine of Jesus Christ's nature and significance).

Christianity has influenced our society at large, and as we think for almost two thousand years, it has also been influenced by the society, law,

culture and religion etc. Christianity is a Semitic religion and they believe in trinity. It is claimed that it has about two billion followers worldwide. There are several denominations in Christianity, of which the two major denominations are Catholic and Protestant. Christians in a pluralistic society where there is no doubt about their beliefs or practices but probably have a strong bias against it. Some of the Christian scholars have argued that religious bigotry is a false or self-contradictory concept based on biblical reasons.

Globalization has a great effect on the shaping of the world in the system of politics, society and religion. Today the world is moving towards the global community and they are intending to live in mutual respect and peace. The values of justice, peace are still at stake. There are many religions on the globe and every religion has its own teachings and traditions. Christianity has its own message of love but unfortunately the history of Christianity is replete with persecutions and crusades.

The worldwide religious circumstance is likewise in transition. In certain pieces of the Western world, the institutional expressions of Christianity are in decay. New types of religious responsibility arise as individuals progressively separate individual confidence from institutional having a place. The quest for authentic spirituality with regards to a mainstream lifestyle presents new difficulties to the places of worship. Further, people groups of different conventions, similar to Hindus, Muslims, Buddhists, Sikhs, and so on, who have progressively moved into these regions, as minorities, regularly experience the should be in exchange with the lion's share local area. This moves Christians to have the option to express their confidence in manners that are significant both to them and their neighbors; discourse surmises both confidence responsibility and the ability to verbalize it in word and deed'.

Simultaneously, Christianity, particularly in its outreaching and Pentecostal appearances, is filling quickly in certain areas of the world. In a portion of different districts, Christianity is going through revolutionary changes as Christians grasp new and lively types of chapel life and go into new associations with native societies. While Christianity seems, by all accounts, to be on the decrease in certain pieces of the world, it has become a unique power in others.

These progressions expect us to be more mindful than before to our relationship with other strict networks. They challenge us to recognize "others" in their disparities, to invite outsiders regardless of whether their "abnormality" in some cases compromises us, and to look for compromise even with the individuals who have announced themselves our adversaries. At the end of the day, we are being tested to build up an otherworldly atmosphere and a philosophical methodology that adds to innovative and positive connections among the strict customs of the world.

A few Christians have contended that religious pluralism is an invalid or self-conflicting idea. Maximal types of religious pluralism guarantee that all religions are similarly obvious, or that one religion can be valid for a few and another for other people. The two biggest Christian branches, the Catholic Church and the Orthodox Church, both case to be the "one genuine church" and that "outside the genuine Church there is no salvation"; Protestantism nonetheless, which has various sections, has no predictable teaching in such manner, and has a wide range of positions with respect to religious pluralism.

Some different Protestants hold that solitary devotees who have faith in certain essential precepts know the genuine pathway to salvation. The center of this teaching is that Jesus Christ was an ideal man, is the Son of God and that he kicked the bucket and rose again for the bad behavior



of the individuals who will acknowledge the endowment of salvation. They keep on having faith in "one" church, an "imperceptible church" which includes various sorts of Christians in various groups and divisions, putting stock in specific issues they consider essential, while separated on an assortment of principles they consider non-central.

#### **V- Islam and religious pluralism**

Under the Prophet's initiative, Muslims' mentality to others was portrayed all in all by shared generosity, kinship, and a solid inclination for compromise, peace, harmony and friendship. When the Prophet (peace be on him) set up himself in Madinah, opportunity to rehearse one's own confidence, quest for social equity, balance, fraternity and the safeguarding of human pride had become paradigmatic. Historically, it has made ready keeping up equilibrium and concordance among the adherents of various faiths. Islam grasps religious pluralism based on its lessons. These lessons have successfully been substantial previously and will stay legitimate for the coming ages.

The study of world religions clearly exhibits that Islam teaches interfaith harmony and it also respects diversity and pluralism. It has been the tradition of Islam to criticize the discrepancy in the teachings of other religions but never rejected them as false. Islam never had the policy of coercion to convert the followers of other religions to Islam. Rather Islam is distinguished to provide the freedom of conscience for both the interreligious and intra-religious.

The guidelines and teachings that Islam has given to the formation of an ideal society will apply to all people of the society, whether Muslim or infidel. In a society inhabited by the people of different religions, the Qur'an has provided clear directions and rules regarding the reciprocity in the relationship with its people. The bases which Islam provided for the

relationship are following: good behavior, sympathy, collaboration, mutual benevolence.

The investigation of the lessons of Islam unmistakably delineate that the center message of all prophets had been to call the individuals to the Oneness of God in the light of Divine direction given by the prophets. In this importance all the prophets had been submitters to Allah and Islam isn't just the religion lectured by Muhammad (peace be on him) yet in addition the religion of the multitude of genuine Prophets of God, for example, Noah, Abraham, Jacob, Joseph, Moses, and Jesus and their devotees. The Qur'an gives proof that Judaism and Christianity represent authentic religious conventions uncovered by God before the inconsistency in the lessons made by its supporters. Presumably, it condemns a few Jewish and Christian conventions however, it additionally affirms the message of God that is contained in their Scriptures. Despite the fact that, now and again, God's uncovered direction was adjusted by point by point lawful decrees, for example, types of love, dietary laws. Notwithstanding, the basics of genuine religion have consistently continued as before. It is for the most part perceived in Islamic tradition.

The Prophet Muhammad pbuh was distinguished to have a different religious experience, however, the other prophets also received authentic revelation from Allah and that is the only reason for which it has been prohibited to create difference among the prophets. Islam considers religious pluralism and that is the only reason that it did not compel the people to enter into the fold of Islam. The use of sword of power is justified with the protection of the religion. Islam mentions other places of worship including churches and synagogues and that is obvious regarding the religious diversity in Islam. Prophet Moses and Jesus are the prominent figures in the line of Prophet-hood and both of them were given

the revealed knowledge. However the followers altered the teachings. Even the Prophet pbuh was instructed to follow the teachings of his predecessors in the prophetic office. The text of the previous revealed books was interpolated by the followers. Islam equally honored the whole of mankind responsible to acknowledge the divine message and worship only One God and always abide by His rules.

‘The theory of Tahrif is explicit for the discrepancy which is evident in the content of previous two major semitic religions. Quran states about the previous scriptures in the following words: “To Thee we sent the Scripture in truth, confirming the Scripture that came before it, and guarding it In safety: so judge between them by what Allah hath revealed, and follow not their vain desires, diverging from the truth that hath come to thee. To each among you have We prescribed a law and an open way. If Allah had so willed, He would have made you a single people, but (his plan is) to test you in what He hath given you: so strive As In a race in all virtues. The goal of you all is to Allah. It is He that will Show you the truth of the matters in which ye dispute.”<sup>16</sup> The above mentioned verse appears to be mentioning the revealed books of Moses, Jesus and the last Prophet pbuh. The scholars have explained that the Shariah was different for these three religions. The reason is that Allah was well aware of the needs of each community.

Because of the discrepancy in the previous texts, Islam abrogated many laws of previous revelations and made Islam and the prophet-hood of Muhammad the final for the whole humanity. Now till *Qiyamat* Islam entails immunity from abrogation. Therefore, those laws of previous *shariah* are acceptable which are confirmed by Quran and Sunnah. The above conversation exhibits Muslims' affirmation of Christianity and Judaism as evident in their starting points. Notwithstanding the vagueness

of relations among Islam and other strict conventions in issues of law, Islamic custom doesn't forestall Muslims to have great relations with the supporters of different religions. The beginning of the Prophet's life in Madinah show that he was keen on amicable and tranquil relations with the devotees of the other strict conventions also. He likewise endeavored to actuate individuals from all religions to take an interest in the Muslim Hajj, yet just Muslims partook in the Hajj celebration and all others wouldn't partake.

Islam recognized the people of other religions and considered them the members of Islamic state and took care of the rights and welfare of the non-Muslims living in Islamic state. Islamic law has very clear teachings about the principles which ensure the protection of life and property and freedom of religion for those non-Muslims who live in Islamic state. The following portion clearly mentions those verses of the holy Quran which directly or indirectly address the issue of religious diversity and pluralism.

### **The references of the verses of the Holy Qur'an about Pluralistic Society**

Regarding the creation of the human being Quran has clearly stated that Allah Almighty created all human beings from dust:

"يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ إِنَّ كُنْتُمْ فِي رَيْبٍ مِّنَ الْبَعْثِ فَإِنَّا خَلَقْنَاكُمْ مِنْ تُرَابٍ"

“O people! If you are in doubt about being raised up (after death) then (contemplate your creation and evolution)”. “We initiated your creation (i.e. chemical genesis) from (the extract of) clay” “All the human beings have been given souls and have been honored with wisdom and good qualities. All have been given instructions to contribute in the construction of the society throughout the globe. All human beings are descendants of one parent”. The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said:

”والناس بنو آدم وخلق الله آدم من تراب“<sup>17</sup>

'All people are descendants of Adam and Adam was created by Almighty Allah. All human beings are alike to each other in physical, rational and emotional attributes, and all are alike in real emotions and passions; all are equal in attributes. In the above verses, the common qualities make the Muslim closer to others. According to the psychologist, the more the two human beings have the common qualities, the closer they will be to harmony. That Muslims accept others as human beings; because they are humanity co-brothers'.

In this Qur'an, Allah Almighty made Hud (as) a brother of the people of Aad;

"وَأَلَىٰ عَادٍ أَخَاهُمْ هُودًا قَالَ يَا قَوْمِ اعْبُدُوا اللَّهَ مَا لَكُم مِّنْ إِلَٰهٍ غَيْرُهُ أَفَلَا تَتَّقُونَ" 18

“And to (the people of) ‘Ad We (sent) their (kinship) brother Hud. He said: ‘O my people, always worship Allah; you have no other God except He. Will you not become Godfearing?’”.

Similarly, many prophets were called brothers of their nations.

### **Islam and religious and intellectual differences and their causes:**

People of different religions and ideas live in this world; it is under the wisdom and wisdom of Allah Almighty;

"وَمِنْ آيَاتِهِ خَلْقَ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَاخْتِلَافِ أَلْسِنَتِكُمْ وَالْوَالِدَاتِ إِذَا رَضِيَ لَكُمْ مِنْهُنَّ لِحْيَتِهِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لآيَاتٍ لِّلْعَالَمِينَ" 19

“And of His Signs (too) are the creation of the heavens and the earth and (also) the diversity of your tongues and colors. Verily in that are Signs for the men of knowledge (and research).”

And Allah said in another verse:

"وَلَوْ شَاءَ اللَّهُ لَجَعَلَكُمْ أُمَّةً وَاحِدَةً وَلَكِنْ يُضِلُّ مَنْ يَشَاءُ وَيَهْدِي مَنْ يَشَاءُ وَلَسَأَلَنَّ عَمَّا كُنتُمْ تَعْمَلُونَ" 20

“And had Allah so willed He would have made (all) of you one Umma (Community) but He holds strayed whom He wills and leads to

guidance whom He wills. And you will surely be asked about the deeds you used to do”.

And in another verse, He said:

"إِلَّا جَعَلْنَا مِنْكُمْ شِرْعَةً وَمِنْهَاجًا وَلَوْ شَاءَ اللَّهُ لَجَعَلَكُمْ أُمَّةً وَاحِدَةً وَلَكِنْ لِنَبْلُوَكُمْ فِي مَا آتَاكُمْ فَاسْتَبِقُوا  
الْخَيْرَاتِ" 21.

“We have designed for each one of you a discrete law and an all-embracing way of life. Had Allah so willed, He would have made you all one Ummat (Community) agreeing to the same law). But He wants to test you in these (separately given sets of Commandments) which He has given you (suited your respective life situations). So, make haste in doing pious works. The aforementioned verses clearly show that the wisdom of Allah demands this religious diversity trial of servants. The verses and traditions of this article teach Muslims to live in peace and harmony with those of other faiths”.

### **Respect for Human Rights and Protection of Religion in Islam:**

Islam, as a human being, is respected by man irrespective of his religion and belief. Allah says (interpretation of the meaning):

وَلَقَدْ كَرَّمْنَا بَنِي آدَمَ 22

“And We have indeed honored the children of Adam”.

There is no compulsion in the matter of religion; Banned and mutilated), prevented from harassing and intimidating, respecting its honor, rights, property. All human beings are equal; however, they are distinguished on the basis of "action righteous". Allah says (interpretation of the meaning):

"يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ إِنَّا خَلَقْنَاكُمْ مِنْ ذَكَرٍ وَأُنْثَىٰ وَجَعَلْنَاكُمْ شُعُوبًا وَقَبَائِلَ لِتَعَارَفُوا إِنَّ أَكْرَمَكُمْ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ أَتْقَاكُمْ  
إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَلِيمٌ خَبِيرٌ" 23.

“O people! We created you from a male and a female, and (divided) you into (large) peoples and tribes, so that you might recognize

one another. Surely the most honourable among you in the sight of Allah is he who fears Allah most. Certainly Allah is All-Knowing, All-Aware”.

‘In Islam, the respect of a human being is that he commands the respect of the dead. It is reported from Hazrat Abdullah ibn Abbas that Ibn al-Husayn was the son-in-law of Ansari, who emigrated to Christianity before emigrating. Then they returned to Medina, so they insisted on their conversion to Islam, they both refused to convert to Islam. They brought the matter to the Messenger of Allah so that he could force them to convert to Islam. Their father said, 'O Messenger of Allah! Will my liver go to hell before my eyes?’ So Allah revealed this verse’.

### **Relationships with parents and relatives:**

Parents and relatives are the closest relations of human being in a society. The Qur'an advises them to be kind and it did not discriminate based on the difference of religion. Even a person entered into the fold of Islam and his parents are still deprived of this blessing of Islam, this newly converted Muslim is clearly instructed to be respectful to his parents and treat them kindly though they are still infidel. But if the parents force him to come back to infidelity, then the Quran gives instructions very clearly:

"وَإِنْ جَاهِدَكَ عَلَىٰ أَنْ تُشْرِكَ بِي مَا لَيْسَ لَكَ بِهِ عِلْمٌ فَلَا تُطِعْهُمَا وَصَاحِبُهُمَا فِي الدُّنْيَا مَعْرُوفًا"<sup>24</sup>

“And if both of them struggle with you to make you associate with Me as partner something whose (reality) you simply do not know, then do not obey them. And cooperate with them in worldly affairs in a decent manner”.

‘The Qur'an emphasizes that whether we are relatives or those of other faiths, their rights should be paid and their information should not be neglected. How sensitive the Qur'an is in this case can be assessed with one example. Islamic Shariah stipulates a Muslim to be entitled to inherit a

person's rights. No unbeliever can inherit a Muslim. But that does not mean that it cannot be financed by any other means.

The Qur'an allows non-Muslim relatives to share some of their wealth through will or gift gifts in Surah Ahzab verse 6'.

### **Happy relations with neighbors:**

The next closest human being to a relative is with his neighbors. The teaching of the Qur'an is that Muslims become good neighbors. It did not cause any harm to its neighbors, it helped them in their misery and had a happy relationship with them.

### **Financial assistance to the poor:**

In society some people are poor, needy, and helpless. It is the duty of the wealthy people to inform them, help them in time and support them. The Qur'an does not discriminate between Muslim and non-Muslim in this matter. He also commands non-Muslims to agree. Not only this, he also says that it should be expended on non-Muslims only for the good of Allah, they should not be expected to benefit from any worldly benefit and they were not tempted to embrace Islam through wealth.

### **Respect:**

For a prosperous society, it is necessary to treat all the people of the society well, treat them with dignity and address them in a good manner. Even in this case, the Qur'an has not distinguished between Muslim and non-Muslim. Allah says (interpretation of the meaning):

"وَ إِذَا حُيِّئْتُمْ بِحَيْثَةٍ فَحَيُّوا بِأَحْسَنَ مِنْهَا أَوْ رُدُّوهَا".<sup>25</sup>

“And when you are honored with (a word of) greeting, then (in reply) greet with a better (salutation) or (at least) reciprocate (in the same words)”.



Hazrat Ibn Abbas said on one occasion: "Answer the greeting, whether the salutatory is a Jew or a Christian or a Magician." He then recited the same verse. The hadeeth also shows that non-Muslims can be greeted, their greetings can be answered, and they can be reconciled. Apart from Muslims, there were Jews and polytheists. When you arrived, you greeted. The companions also used to salute anyone they met, and leave any distinction in this matter. He urged others to do the same'.<sup>26</sup>

### **Matters:**

People in society need each other's help, support and support step by step and have to deal with different issues. Otherwise, it would be difficult for them to make a living. In a society where believers belong to different religions, they can work and interact with each other. The basic teaching of the Qur'an in this regard is:

"يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا أَوْفُوا بِالْعُقُودِ".<sup>27</sup>

O Believers! Fulfil (your) promises.

(the famous polytheist) in Mecca.<sup>28</sup>

Al-Nawawi writes in a Hadith:

"All Muslims agree that matters can be dealt with by the responsible and the unbeliever, unless there is anything forbidden in them."<sup>29</sup>

### **Tolerance:**

Tolerance is the main factor in pluralism. That is, accepting the freedom of those who disagree with it as they believe in their faith and religion, they can adopt whatever belief and religion they want.

### **Respect for the Qur'an and other dignitaries of other religions:**

The Qur'an conveys dialogue with the religions. He wants the truth to be clarified and the false to be denied, and the falsehoods that the followers of other religions have incorporated in their religious teachings

to be sorted out, but he insists that the seriousness of the discussion and debate. Be careful and polite and not take offense at their religious sentiments.

### 'Friendship' to non-Muslims in a post-apartheid society:

The objection to the Qur'an is that it forbade Muslims from having 'friendly relations' with those of other faiths and called them 'enemies'. Obviously, feelings of envy and hatred towards the enemy erupt. They are not treated in any way, but rather are harmed. The argument is presented as follows:

"يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَا تَتَّخِذُوا الْكٰفِرِينَ أَوْلِيَاءَ مِنْ دُونِ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ"<sup>30</sup>

O Believers! Make not friends with disbelievers instead of believers.

Such verses need to be considered in their correct context. Believers are advised not to make the unbelievers 'first'. For a person with any of the above mentioned characteristics, both the words 'Wali' and 'Maula' are used. In such verses, the word "saints" has come to mean very close. Allama Zamakhashri says:

"لا تَتَّخِذُوا أَوْلِيَاءَ تَتَّخِذُونَهُمْ وَتَتَّخِذُونَهُمْ وَتَوَاصَلُونَهُمْ وَتَعَاشَرُونَهُمْ مَعَاشِرَةَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ"<sup>31</sup>

Allah says, "Do not make the unbelievers saints", it means that it is not your case to help them, to seek help from them, to have brotherly and sincere and loving relationships with them and with them. Be united as believers are.

It is also important to keep in mind the circumstances in which Muslims were forbidden to be closely associated with 'infidels'. Muslims were going through tough times. The war against them was waged by their enemies and they were forced to overthrow them. The attitude of the Jews and the Gentiles was also based on open hostility. They were supporting

the disbelievers against the Muslims. A third group was hypocrites. These were the people who apparently embraced Islam and had added themselves to the Muslims, but in reality they were associated with the disbelievers. If the Muslims had any success, they would snake on their breasts and cheer them on if there was any harm to them. All these people were united on the hostility of Islam and Muslims. In such cases, it was extremely dangerous for Muslims to have a close relationship with their enemies. This thing was harmful both religiously and politically. That is why the Qur'an urged Muslims not to belong to the 'province', explaining about each separate group.

It is clear from this detail that only non-Muslims are forbidden to have such a close relationship which will expose the political and military secrets of the Islamic State and increase the problems of Muslims and this prohibition is only with those who are with the Muslims. Be at war or be supportive of their enemies.

## **VI- Conclusion**

The current study infers that religious pluralism is adequate in Islam and it permits the presence of various religious groups on the planet. Islam regards variety of religions as a characteristic marvel in the chronicled advancement of religions. Islam affirms that the genuine supporters of the right lessons will get salvation. In managing pluralism in the Islamic tradition it must be perceived that the disclosure of the most youthful of the Abrahamic faiths really discovered articulation in a pluralistic universe of religions. Islam acknowledged and assessed other pre-Islamic religious customs basically but never dismissed them as bogus. Indeed, its otherworldly space was shared by other monotheistic religions. Acknowledgment of pluralistic reactions to divine guidance and

the opportunity of human heart to arrange one's own profound space are found in Islamic custom.

Moreover, Islam negates the idea of coercion in order to coerce the people convert in Islam. In this way Islam respects the religious freedom for the people and it provides them liberty in their faith. Islam is the advocator of interfaith harmony and reconciliation. Islam does not de-link itself from the series of the previous prophets and their teachings. Only those teachings are criticized which have been altered by the people after their prophets. Islam does not negate those teachings which are approved by the main sources of Islam including the Quran and the Sunnah. Even it is legitimate to have friendly relationship and sign the peace treaties with the followers of other religions. This is evident from those agreements which the Prophet of Islam signed with the Jews and Christians in order to demonstrate friendly peaceful relationship.

The Qur'an gives proof that Judaism and Christianity represent authentic religious conventions uncovered by God before making *Tehreef (alteration)*. Presumably, it condemns several Jewish and Christian tenets however it likewise affirms the message of God that is contained in their Scriptures. Although, every once in a while, God's uncovered direction was changed by definite legitimate discernments for example types of love, dietary laws. Nonetheless, the basics of genuine religion have consistently continued as before. It is for the most part perceived in Islamic Tradition that while Din or the basics of religions continued as before, the Shari'ah or religious remedies of the individuals were adjusted. Islam likewise thinks about religious plurality as an associative of God's bestowal of choice and decision on people. God might have constrained all individuals to follow reality, however didn't do as such.

If God in His infinite wisdom did not compel people to embrace the truth, it is very difficult to argue that it might be permissible for human beings to do so. In fact the Qur'an explicitly declares that there is no compulsion in

religion. The mention of churches and synagogues along with mosques is perhaps significant for analyzing the Islamic view regarding religious diversity. Similarly, the Qur'an provides numerous references to the concept of universal truth and states repeatedly that all nations have been blessed with divine guidance.

It is well known that the Prophets Moses and Jesus figure prominently in the Islamic tradition, which maintains that they were Prophets of God favored with divine revelation, quite a few of whereas the prophets were entrusted with transmitting a revealed book of Allah to their people. The Islamic tradition accepts that the Tawrah and the Injil were revealed books which the followers of the former Prophets were required to live by.

Islamic state is distinctive in protecting the rights of the non-Muslims. This is the reason that the Dhimmis who reside in Islamic state enjoy equal rights as those of the other citizens. This is evident that Islamic state allows religious pluralism and given an opportunity to the followers of other religions to exist in Islamic state. On the same rule the Dhimmis are also not to be forced to convert to Islam. Hanafis, Shafis and Qudama said that the validity of the forced conversion is based on the volunteered conversion of Dhimmis later.

Religious pluralism is also dominant in the world because in the contemporary world aloofness has become impractical. This is the part of our religious traditions to engage in interfaith dialogues and talks in order to provide people the opportunity to observe the teachings of Islam closely'. This is the necessity of the time to wake up and provide the followers of other faiths the opportunity of dialogue. Looking for common ontological grounds will help us understand each other.

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