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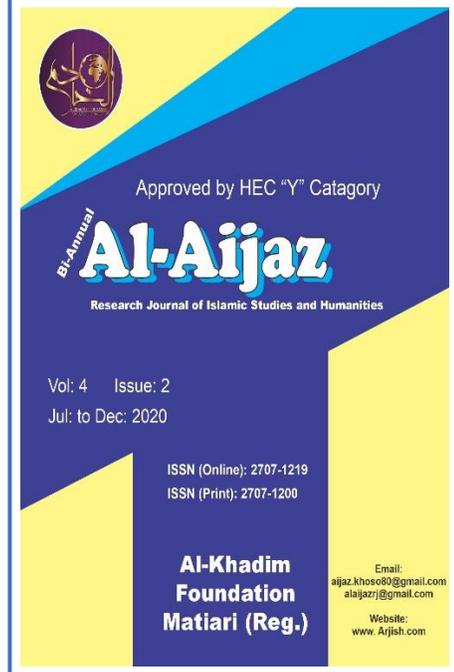
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TOPIC:

Prevailing Situation of Tolerance in Contemporary Society
(From Islamic Perspective)

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Prevailing Situation of Tolerance in Contemporary Society (From Islamic Perspective)

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Abstract

Islam is a religion of peace and harmony. It wants a peaceful society where everyone could spend his life with peace. Patience has been given great importance in Islam. The meaning of patience is to control oneself in times of pleasure, sorrow, trouble, and distress and avoiding actions that are against the teachings of Islam. A group of different people, where people are connected with each other for the basic needs of life is called society. Islamic society is one that is free from all unethical things and where everyone can freely spend his life according to Islamic teachings. But the situation of contemporary society is entirely different, each one is in trouble and is facing intolerance. This situation is creating an unbalance environment in society such as; extremism, aggression, anger, and lawlessness, etc. In reality, with the passage of time the situation of society is moving towards ruin, here is a need to produce the teachings of Islam in society. As well as, the right and wrong concept would be cleared in the mind of people and they would follow the teachings of Islam to make their lives easy and peaceful. This research can be valuable in its specific field because the prevailing situation of tolerance in contemporary society is discussed from the Islamic perspective.

Keywords: Contemporary society, Prevailing situation, Tolerance, Endurance, Human beings, Islamic teachings,

1. Introduction

Patience and forbearance have been given great importance in Islam. The importance of patience can be gauged from the fact that patience is mentioned in more than ninety places in the Qur'an. There are countless examples of patience and forbearance in the life of the Prophet (PBUH). Patience is one of the requirements of love and in terms of tact, it is tantamount to snatching the enemy's weapon. Because violence can be answered with more violence than that. But there can be no answer to non-violence. In response to language extension can be done. But silence cannot be answered. Patience and endurance is such a precious blessing that not only saves us from endless problems but also helps us to live a good and happy life. But unfortunately, we have given up the use of patience in our lives, so on the one hand, we have suffered a lot of problems, difficulties and worries and on the other hand we have diseases like frustration, depression or tension. There is a deep connection between patience and this cosmic system. There is a mixture of patience in every action of the universe. For example, the moon and stars travel in their own orbits and change night into day and day converts at night. The little plant does not fully change in form of tree, it grows slowly in day and night. On a tree first comes the flowers and then the

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fruits. This cosmic connection teaches us to make a connection in life by incorporating it into our lives. The means of success in any society are lots. But given the present times and circumstances, what is most needed is "patience", which literally means to stop, to endure, to be steadfast or The importance of patience can be gauged from this. Allah Says "And seek help through patience and prayer, and indeed, it is difficult except for the humbly submissive [to Allah]".¹ Undoubtedly, patience and prayer are two great weapons for every human. Through prayer, a believer's relationship with Allah (SWT) is established. From which he gets the support and help of Allah (SWT). Patience brings the maturity of character and perseverance in humans. It has been commanded to make patience and prayer, one's motto in times of trouble and distress. Regarding the help of human beings in difficult situations through patience and prayer, the Holy Qur'an says in another place: "O you who believe, seek help through patience and prayer. Indeed, Allah is with the patient".² If we deep look at the contemporary arena then many facts come before us regarding the intolerance situation in society, everyone is facing many problems such as; killing, violence, robbery, kidnaping, the fire of revenge, gang rape, the beating of a wife, acid throwing cases, etc. These all are causes of intolerance. The reality is that we are going to downfall with the passage of time. Here is a dire need to follow the teachings of Islam. The aim of this research was to explain the prevailing situation of tolerance in contemporary society with statistical and Islamic analysis. If we succeed in it, then it can be better the environment of society.

2. Analysis of the Problem

In this research work some points are discussed deeply as; meanings of tolerance, the meaning of society, Islamic society, Tolerance, and Islamic Teachings, and the Prevailing Situation of Tolerance in Contemporary Arena. This research work may be useful and beneficial for readers and researchers.

2.1. Meanings of Tolerance

Patience means controlling oneself in times of happiness, trouble, sorrow, and distress, etc., and avoiding actions that are against the *Shari'ah*. In other words, the meaning of patience is "to work with courage and don't panic", "to work with patience", "to be patient".³ The meaning of patience in the term *Shari'ah* is that the desires of the soul should not be allowed to prevail over the intellect and the limits of *Shari'ah* should not be exceeded. The requirements of determination and maturity of determination are called patience. Patience is a great and virtuous deed. Human beings have been told that "O you who have believed, persevere and endure and remain stationed and fear Allah that you may be successful".⁴ If we look at this Arabic word in terms of its usage in the Quran and Arabic literature, its basic meaning is 'stop'. Then the word's meanings were expanded and came to be used in the sense of steadfastness and perseverance. Now it is mostly used in the same sense. This steadfastness is on its "position". This "position" can be a battlefield and as well as high qualities of morals. That is, if a person persists in his good "position" in every situation, then it is patience. Patience does not include the concept of persevering in the wrong things. Therefore, the word patience is always used in a positive sense. However, in its real or literal meaning (stop), it is also used in the negative aspect. The importance, greatness, and benefits of patience and the benefits of this world and the hereafter can be gauged from the

fact that Allah Almighty has commanded us in the Holy Qur'an many times and in different situations of our lives to be patient. "Those will be given their reward twice for what they patiently endured and [because] they avert evil through good, and from what We have provided them they spend".⁵

2.2. Meaning of Society

Society a group of individuals whose basic needs in life are interconnected. Which is defined by the society that it does not necessarily to belong to the same nation or religion. When referring to the history of a particular nation or religion, its name is usually added to a society such as Eastern society, Western society, or Islamic society. The Qur'anic concept of a society of brotherhood and well-being, a common basic necessity of life in Islam, is a concept against which all lexical definitions of society lose their luster. It is explaining before human beings that "Say, "O My servants who have believed, fear your Lord. For those who do good in this world is good, and the earth of Allah is spacious. Indeed, the patience will be given their reward without account".⁶ This Qur'anic concept paves the way for a society where, according to the basic concept of society, all people have access to basic necessities of life and peace of mind. And no human society can be called a good society unless every one of its members is considered an equal human being, and even the weak have the same human rights as the powerful have, even if this weakness is natural or financial or any other type.⁷

2.3. Islamic Society

The basic virtue of Islamic society is a society free from *shirk*. The Qur'an forms a society in which those who live grieve and sympathize with one another, who respect one another. That is why "unjust killing" is called oppression in the Qur'an. According to the Qur'an and hadiths, murder is punishable in only five cases.

1. When he has unjustly killed someone.
2. Religion is the enemy of truth' Obstacles to religion and does not refrain from enmity.
3. Someone has committed mischief and unrest within the borders of the Islamic Empire.
4. To commit adultery despite being married.
5. Be an apostate.

To maintain a balance in the social system, it is necessary to make laws that will end the harassment and no one will dare to abuse anyone. If the oppressors are spared, their morale will increase and there will be a cycle of killings, looting, unrest, and riots. No one's life or property will be safe. Islam attaches great importance to justice and human equality. The lives and property of all human beings are respected. No human being is inferior to another in terms of race, family, or religion. Free slaves, men, and women, the rich and the poor, the young and the old, the poor, and the king, all have equal rights as human beings in Islamic society. Whoever commits a crime, he will be punished if the oppressed person voluntarily forgives the oppressor, then the oppressor will be freed without charge from the punishment. Islamic law requires that "revenge for evil is the same as evil." Hadrat Abu Huraira (RA) narrated that at occasion the Holy Prophet (PBUH) said;

ما يزال البلاء بالمؤمن والمؤمنة في نفسه وولده وماله حتى يلقي الله تعالى وما عليه خطيئة

"The believing man and the believing woman are afflicted with the calamities of life,

property and children. Even when he/she appears before Allah, there will be no sin in his book of deeds.”⁸ Islamic society is a peaceful society, in which there is no room for superstitions such as lying, betrayal, injustice, theft, robbery, murder and looting, deception, loss of rights. The Prophet (PBUH) said: “Whoever protects his tongue, Allah Almighty will cover her faults.”⁹ Another place it is stated that

الشكر نصف الإيمان، والصبر نصف الإيمان، واليقين الإيمان كله

"Patience is half faith, and gratitude is half faith and certainty is perfect faith."¹⁰

Blasphemy of one Muslim, calling by a bad title promotes hatred and enmity. "A Muslim is the one from whose tongue and hand the other Muslim is safe."¹¹ Islam is the religion of peace and equality therefore it reforms a society that is free from all evils and such a society can be the guarantor of peace and tranquility in the world.

2.4. Tolerance and Islamic Teachings

There are many incidents in life in which a person becomes overwhelmed with emotions and he takes the wrong decision. He immediately wants to take revenge and wants to show such his superiority and power the front of his enemy. It may bring peace of mind and heart and also get rid of various dangers. But Islam does not allow any decision based on emotions. Every human being has to face two kinds of situations in life, sometimes happiness, sorrow, relief, laughter, sighs, sobs, comfort, anxiety, and pleasures of health. As well as similarly the sighs and groans of illness, the abundance of sustenance, the scarcity, the mourning, and condolences on death, this is called life. Both sides of this picture are part of the nature of worldly life. A life is a full of joys and pleasures very attractive and good for a person. A person thinks that all this is the fruit of his efforts and hard work. He does not think that all this is the grace of Allah Almighty of the universe. When misfortunes and calamities come with time, he becomes frightened and he cries out and forgets his Allah Almighty in shouting and groaning. Whereas believers have patience in times of suffering and hardship. They surrender themselves to Allah Almighty, trust Him, and seek help from Him. They are pleased with Him and do not complain to Him. A believer adopts in all circumstances a course of life that is under the faith and the commandments of Allah Almighty. He adopts a positive attitude, i.e. patience, and gratitude. He also works patiently in times of suffering and pain. Even, he becomes thankful to Allah Almighty in happiness and sorrow. He pays the words of thanks with his tongue, realizing the greatness of Allah Almighty in his heart and the commandments of Allah Almighty through his deeds. A person should show patience in all kinds of situations and seek help from Allah Almighty and be sure that no one else can solve these problems except Him. Therefore, he should not show impatience in any aspect of life. For those who have patience, Allah Almighty gave them a great reward in this world and hereafter. Therefore, one should never be nervous or frustrated by hardships. In the troubles, the Allah Almighty had even put His most beloved prophets. Just as Hazrat Ibrahim (as) was thrown into the fire, Ismael (as) was put to the test by asking for his life, Hazrat Ayub (as) showed great patience and perseverance and Allah Almighty bestowed the title of *Naam-ul-Abd*. The whole of the Holy Prophet (PBUH) is full of trials. He was born as an orphan. He did not have any support besides Allah Almighty. He faced the opposition of hypocrites and Maccans consecutively after the proclamation of Prophet hood, but the temperament of the Holy Prophet (PBUH) did not change. He continued his holy mission, for which Allah Almighty choose him. The Holy Quran says that

“So be patient, [O Muhammad], as were those of determination among the messengers and do not be impatient for them. It will be - on the Day they see that which they are promised - as though they had not remained [in the world] except an hour of a day. [This is] notification. And will [any] be destroyed except the defiantly disobedient people?”.¹² At an occasion, Hazrat Muhammad (PBUH) said that “He said, “I will not be a grateful servant of Allah”.¹³ It is instructed to human beings that “And verily, whoever is patient and forgives, then verily, this is one of the most courageous deeds”.¹⁴ Allah Almighty will give innumerable rewards to those who are patient in comparison to other good deeds. Hazrat Ayesha (RA) said that “the Holy Prophet (PBUH) engaged almost the entire night in the worship of Allah Almighty. The blessed feet of the Prophet (PBUH) would swell due to the frequent stay. She said that she asked from the Messenger of Allaah (PBUH)! You are the beloved and chosen servant of Allah Almighty, then why do you work so hard? Hazrat Muhammad (PBUH) said: “I will not be a grateful servant of Allah Almighty”.¹⁵ All the above mentioned explanation describe that we should follow the Islamic teachings. As well as, we should give preference to tolerance in every aspect of life then peace and pleasure would be possible in society.

2.5. Prevailing Situation of Tolerance in Contemporary Arena

The formation of a peaceful society consists of many units. The survival and prosperity of the society is possible only by the co-ordination and organization of these units- The first condition of which is unity and for this, it is necessary to tolerate each other's view. It is endurance that makes a civilized person and develops the ability to be advanced in all aspects of life. This present day, the tradition of tolerance in our society is beginning to die down and this is where the series of riots begin. The outburst of these riots is producing unrest situation which is the main reason to rise the frustration in society. There are two main reasons for the deterioration of society, including the lack of unity among nations and the lack of tolerance, which are major obstacles to the development of society. Unfortunately, intolerance is on the rise in the world and especially the situation of our country Pakistan is more disturbing than the rest of the world. Every human being today is in the grip of a tangled state of endurance, and as a result, no one is willing to listen to one another. Even when talking on any subject, every human being is bent on proving his ideology correct. If someone's words are offensive or against someone's mood. So, people get into a fight, and if the same situation happens between the parties in a house, even those living under one roof do not dare to tolerate each other. They keep the differences among themselves for many days.¹⁶

This intolerance has led us to the point that today everyone else seems ignorant. Today every human being consider that he has a lot of knowledge than other. He gives his arguments in an attempt to prove the other person wrong. This is the first step to create unpleasant environment in society. The same situation produce intolerance, lawlessness, trouble, depression and unhappy condition in society. This unbalance environment give way to grow the robbery, kidnapping, violence, and killing, etc. in society. Moreover, the values like tolerance and gentleness are disappearing and have been replaced by anger, intolerance, haste, and extremism. Now, these things are hurting hearts and that is why we are seeing a strong reaction in society. There was a time when each issue was discussed among people and the parties listened to each other and then one of them was accepted to bring improvement in society. But today the situation has changed. With the passage of

time, materialism has increased and people have forgotten that values like moderation, tolerance, and justice not only strengthen a society but also bring individuals closer together.¹⁷ In contemporary society, we are far away from each other, the main reason is the intolerance. When a society has to lack superior qualities, atrocities like extremism, aggression, anger, intolerance, and lawlessness arise and destroy the peace and tranquility of the society. This custom is increasing continuously in society that everyone gives answer to the stone with brick.¹⁸ This is the biggest reason that the whole of society is restless today. The teachings of tolerance are an enlightening chapter of Islam. In Islam, the special importance of treating humanity, serving human beings and working for their betterment has been stated.

3. Conclusion

Islam is a religion of peace and harmony. It does not like intolerance. In Islam patience has a significance role, if we have a look at history of Islam many examples come before us such as the life of Holy Prophet (PBUH) shows that his entire life is an example of tolerance. Similarly, the lives of companions of Hadrat Muhammad (PBUH) are a symbol of tolerance. This is a fact that if the tolerance is eliminated from our lives, then human being will come in the list of animals. It is tolerance which gives high rank a human being and without it a human will be considered like cattle. Because intolerance produce many unethical values in society such as, robbery, kidnapping, killing, lawlessness, troubles, and many other unbalance conditions. Today our society is suffering from such issues. Here is a dire need to follow the teachings of Islam. If we will spend our lives according to the teachings of Islam, then we can succeed in world and hereafter.

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