

THE CHARACTERISTICS OF MUSLIM SOCIETY FROM THE POINT OF VIEW OF RELIGIOUS, MORAL AND BELIEF CHARACTERISTICS¹

AS CARACTERÍSTICAS DA SOCIEDADE MUÇULMANA DO PONTO DE VISTA DAS CARACTERÍSTICAS RELIGIOSAS, MORAIS E DE CRENÇA

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rigorosamente os princípios e ordens da sharia islâmica. A estrutura da sharia divina revelada por Alá ao seu Profeta Muhammad que a paz esteja com ele constrói uma comunidade islâmica integrada onde os valores de tolerância, respeito e honestidade poderiam prevalecer. Portanto, o principal objectivo do presente estudo é concentrar-se na forma como a aplicação dos princípios da sharia islâmica poderia melhorar a vida das pessoas e contribuiria largamente para a criação de uma utopia baseada na tolerância e em fortes laços sociais entre os muçulmanos. O presente estudo chegou a uma série de conclusões, a mais importante das quais é que a superioridade da comunidade muçulmana em relação a outras comunidades decorre da sua adesão e aplicação às ordens e princípios da sharia islâmica, do equilíbrio entre as ordens e princípios textuais da sharia islâmica e a sua aplicação à vida real transformam a comunidade muçulmana

Abstract: The present study aims to highlight the superiority of the Moslem community when it was highly complied with the principles and orders of the Islamic shariah. The structure of the divine shariah revealed by Allah to his Prophet Muhammad Peace be upon him builds an integrated Islamic community where values of tolerance, respect and honesty could prevail. Therefore, the major purpose of the current study is to focus on how the application of the principles of the Islamic sharia could improve peoples' lives and would contribute largely to creating utopia based on tolerance and strong social bonds among Muslims. The present study has reached a number of findings, the most important of which is that the superiority of the Muslim community to other communities stems from its adherence and application to the orders and principles of the Islamic sharia, the balance between the textual orders and principles of Islamic sharia and their application to real-life turns the Muslim community into a highly ethical community based on a sound value system and a high degree of morality. In addition, tolerance values in Islam do not mean to be linen with the application of the principles of the Islamic sharia.

Keywords: Muslim Society, Religious, Moral, Characteristics

Resumo: O presente estudo visa destacar a superioridade da comunidade muçulmana quando esta cumpriu

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numa comunidade altamente ética, baseada num sistema de valores sólido e num elevado grau de moralidade. Além disso, os valores de tolerância no Islão não significam estar de acordo com a aplicação dos princípios da sharia islâmica.

Palavras-chave: Sociedade Muçulmana, Religiosa, Moral, Características.

1. Introduction

God has created people into different nations and tribes as each tribe has its own distinct ethical features and code of conduct and value system. Religion plays an important role in shaping the ethics and the value system of the communities. That is to say, religion constitutes the main features of the civilization and culture of any community. Religion maintains the civilizations and the cultures of nations and protects them. Starting from the premise that Islam is the true religion of God, Islam elevates communities and improves their life and provides them a remarkable code of conduct and divine orders that protect society and maintain its internal and external peace and stability (Ismail, 2017).

The message of the Prophet Muhammad Peace Upon him has a great impact on the lives of the communities in the Arab peninsula as it contributed largely to changing their creed and behaviors. After the advent of Islam, people have left the worship of idols and started worshipping the almighty God which is invisible to them. In other words, the concept of belief has changed from believing in concrete and visible idols into invisible and abstract God, whose positive impact is that people has become less attached to material things and instead they become more attached to spirituality. Therefore, they grew spiritually as their belief in in the invisible God elevated their soul and sharpen their value system and improve their behaviors. Therefore, people have grown both mentally and materially in the sense that their belief in God not only expanded their cognitive and spiritual horizons but also control their material nature, the ending result of which is to make a psychologically balanced human being. This study is divided into introduction that includes the problem of the study, significance, and the reason for choosing the study, methodology and the limitations and four sections.

1.1. The Problem of the study

The moral superiority of the Muslim community is undeniable fact particularly when it follows the principles of the Islamic sharia. The conditions of the moral superiority are clearly stated in Qur'an and Sunnah, and this issue is not problematic at all. However, the problem rests

upon the different interpretations of the verses and sunnah tackling the issue of the moral superiority of the Muslim community. Therefore, the present study aims to examine the most important features of the superiority of the Muslim community.

1.2. The Significance of the Study

The significance of the present study can be attributed to the following reasons:

The study is closely related to the reality of the Muslim community which is expected to be moderate and charitable.

The positive impact of addressing the good qualities of the Muslim community on the public and private life.

1.3. The objective of the study

1-reflecting on the importance of the strong religious connections among the members of the Muslim community

2-highlighting the practical balance of the community

3-Highlighting the value of tolerance as one of the features of the Muslim community.

4-highlighting the qualities of cooperation and brotherhood among the members of the Muslim communities.

2. Methodology

The present study uses the exploratory methodology that depends on collecting, classifying and analyzing data, and then clarifying the connections and the relationships among the main issues tackled by the study.

The limitations of the study

The present study is limited to examine some features of the Muslim community that includes only four major characteristics, as there are so many characteristics and features of the Muslims community which have not been discussed in the current study

The definitions and the terminology of the study.

Linguistically, according to Lisan Al-Arab dictionary, merit (miza) is derived from the verb “maza”, which means to be distinguished and it also has other different meanings like,

separation, isolation, transmission and distinction (Ibn Mazur, 2000, p.256). However, according to the dictionary of the Modern Standard Arabic, its meaning in Modern Standard Arabic is “excellence, being helpful” (Omar, 2008, p.650). Therefore, the lexical item “miza” in Modern standard Arabic dictionary refers to an aspect of excellence and superiority that marks a difference.

The definitions of community

In Arabic language, according to Language Criterion. the lexical item “mugtma” is derived from “gama,” which means “to collect things together” or to add one thing to another” (Ibn Faris, 1979, p.36). Therefore, the Arabic lexical item, mugtama refers to community, a group of people share a common interest, who are restricted by customs, habits, traditions and laws. Therefore, if its members are Muslims, then the community can be called an Islamic community (Taher, p.14. 2000).

3. Results and Discussion

3.1. The Advantage of Muslim’s community common belief

Before the advent of Islam, the inhabitants of the Arab peninsula lead a nomadic life style, notorious for its tribalism, and urgent economic interest that cause brutal fights and lack of stability. Therefore, people feel insecure. When Prophet Muhammad Peace Be Upon him had received his divine message and people started embracing Islam, the pre-Islamic habits had come to an end. People had no longer been controlled by tribal habits; however, they become in compliance with the principles of Islamic shariah in all aspects of their lives including their financial, economic, and social relations, which represents a crystal-clear evidence that the message of the Prophet Muhammad is the best method for organizing and reforming communities. Faith is the common ground that bonds people together and makes them live in harmony. Almighty God said: “But if they intend to deceive you - then sufficient for you is Allah. It is He who supported you with His help and with the believers” (Al-anfal, 62-63). The bonds of kinship, tripe, and nation came after the faith bond, and these bonds are controlled and organized by the Islamic shariah. The generation of the Prophet’s companion were highly committed to the principles of Islam. In Badr Battle, the prophet’s companion Mus’ab ibn Umair said to the captivator of his brother, “never be kind to him” ; his mother is a rich woman, so she might pay a lot to set him free.” Abuaziz said to him, O brother, this is your recommendation to me” Mus’ab answered him, you are not my brother, he is my real brother.” (Ibn Hisham, 1955,

p. 250). In the same vein, Omar ibn Alkhatib favors his affiliation to Islam over tribal filiations when he advised the Prophet Muhammad to kill the captives” (Sahih Albukhary, 2002, p.1825).

In this way, the Prophet Muhammad Peace be upon him has laid the foundations of the Muslim’s community in connection with Islamic faith and principles. He warned Muslims against thinking about the bad things they used to practice before embracing Islam. Say, [O Muhammad], "If your fathers, your sons, your brothers, your wives, your relatives, wealth which you have obtained, commerce wherein you fear decline, and dwellings with which you are pleased are more beloved to you than Allah and His Messenger and jihad in His cause, then wait until Allah executes His command. And Allah does not guide the defiantly disobedient people (Al-tawba, 24).

The verse threatened those who embraced Islam and resided in Mecca and refused to immigrate to Madinah because they like to stay close to their family members, and business as they said if we immigrate, we will lose our money and our business and our homes will be ruined.”(Albaghawi, 1997, p.25).The loyalty of Muslims to each other. he believers, men and women, are Auliya' (helpers, supporters, friends, protectors) of one another, they enjoin (on the people) Al-Ma'ruf (i.e. Islamic Monotheism and all that Islam orders one to do), and forbid (people) from Al-Munkar (i.e. polytheism and disbelief of all kinds, and all that Islam has forbidden); they perform As-Salat (Iqamat-as-Salat) and give the Zakat, and obey Allah and His Messenger. Allah will have His Mercy on them. Surely Allah is All-Mighty, All-Wise(Al-tawba, 71). In this context, loyalty is defined as muslims are obliged to support each other when it comes to religious affairs. (Al-tabri, 2001, p.600).

Religious renunciation from all other believes and their people, as belief in God and atheism cannot be gathered in the same heart as one of them must drive the other outside. Therefore, God has order his people not to be friendly with the infidels. (O Muhammad SAW) will not find any people who believe in Allah and the Last Day, making friendship with those who oppose Allah and His Messenger (Muhammad SAW), even though they were their fathers, or their sons, or their brothers, or their kindred (people). For such He has written Faith in their hearts, and strengthened them with Ruh (proofs, light and true guidance) from Himself. And We will admit them to Gardens (Paradise) under which rivers flow, to dwell therein (forever). Allah is pleased with them, and they with Him. They are the Party of Allah. Verily, it is the Party of Allah that will be the successful (Al-mugdala, 22).

3.2. The Practical Balance of the Muslim Community

In Arabic language, balance refers to justice and straightforwardness and it is also used to measure things and identify their value. In this way, the balance of the Muslim community refers to the prevalence of justice and values of right and sincerity among the members of the community. But seek, with that (wealth) which Allah has bestowed on you, the home of the Hereafter, and forget not your portion of legal enjoyment in this world, and do good as Allah has been good to you, and seek not mischief in the land. Verily, Allah likes not the Mufsidun (those who commit great crimes and sins, oppressors, tyrants, mischief-makers, corrupts)(Al-Qasas, 77). Although this verse exposes the situation of Karun, it addresses generally all rich people who do not spend their money for God sake or in charitable works, as there should be a balance in spending money between worldly life and afterlife.(Ibn Attyia, 2005, p.222).

The general context of the verse is to teach us how to achieve balance in all issues of our life. The afterlife is mentioned first because it remains forever and it is the final destination of man, and the reasonable situation is that man does his best for enriching his afterlife. However, the worldly life is not permanent; therefore, one should spend lesser on it. The balance in the Muslim's community reflects itself in many verses in Quran. And those, who, when they spend, are neither extravagant nor niggardly, but hold a medium (way) between those (extremes). (Al-furqan, 67). The verse states that true believers neither spend extravagantly in disobeying God nor niggard and prevent God's right. (Altabri, 497). Therefore, the companions of the prophet spend lots of money as charity and alms. For example, Abu-baker donates all his money and Omar bin Al-khatab donates the half of his money and Othman prepares the army during the hard time and at the same time, they did not spend any money in useless things.

They did not spend any money in things and stuff prohibited by God, as they take initiatives to make charity and good things and stay away from doing bad things. The companions of the prophet have achieved a fully balanced system of life:

- In worship: they make all obligatory prayers and are keen on performing optional prayers and they do not exhaust themselves and endure what they cannot .
- In social relationships: they respect the rights of others as much as possible, which is crystal clear in the saying of Salman Alfaris to Abu Al-darda: “ Yourself has its right, and your God has his own right, and your family has its own right, so you have to give everyone his right.”(Alturmazi, 1996, p.187)

In Muslim community, there is also a kind of balance between the strong and weak people, as it may not have been possible for the strong to oppress the weak because of its strength nor leave the weak as prey to him due to his weakness. Abu-baker Said : The weak among you is a strong until I bring him his right and strong among is weak until I take from him the right of the weak.(Ibn Hisham, 1990, p.424).

3.3. Brotherhood and Positive Cooperation among the members of the Muslim Community.

The idea of Brotherhood in the Muslim community is derived from the following Quranic verse: The believers are nothing else than brothers (in Islamic religion). So make reconciliation between your brothers, and fear Allah, that you may receive mercy (Al-Ḥujurāt, 10). Brotherhood denotes biological brother and connotes friendship, love, respect, having something in common. In this verse, brotherhood is that of religion as believers love one another. An-Nu‘mān ibn Bashīr (may Allah be pleased with him) reported that the Prophet (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) said: "The believers, in their mutual love, compassion, and sympathy are like a single body; if one of its organs suffers, the whole body will respond to it with sleeplessness and fever. (Muslim, 2006, p. 1999). The idea of response refers to love and mercy and sympathy among the community of believers. (Al-manway, 1971, p.514).

Although there are strong ties of brotherhood among believers, the dispute and conflict may arise. Therefore, brotherhood can help solve this problem as rational and wise people can sort out these conflicts and reconcile the disputed parties. “Make peace between your brethren”(Alhugrat, 10). The sharia texts have include many evidences of the positive cooperation among Muslims:

1-Muslim should assist his Muslim brother during hard times, calamities and help him get rid of his trouble and problems.

2-Muslim should support his Muslim brother and protect him from enemies.

3-Muslim should conceal the wrong deeds done by his Muslim brother unless the sinner declares his sins publically and does not follow the advice of his Muslim brother in order to warn people against him (Ismail, 1998, p.49).

4-The prohibition of despising any Muslim, as Muslim may not despise his Muslim's brother.

5-The prohibition of envy among Muslims, which is the desire of losing one's own bliss. (Ibn Al-mulqan, 2012, p. 401)

6-The Prohibition of deception and cheating people.7-The prohibition of hatred, jealousy and envy, which requires to avoid the causes of hatred as the only acceptable hatred is that one which is for God sake. All of these prohibitions are mentioned in the Prophet's hadith: "On the authority of Abu Hurayrah (may Allah be pleased with him) who said:The Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said, "Do not envy one another, and do not inflate prices for one another, and do not hate one another, and do not turn away from one another, and do not undercut one another in trade, but [rather] be slaves of Allah and brothers [amongst yourselves]. A Muslim is the brother of a Muslim: he does not oppress him, nor does he fail him, nor does he lie to him, nor does he hold him in contempt. Taqwa (piety) is right here [and he pointed to his chest three times]. It is evil enough for a man to hold his brother Muslim in contempt. The whole of a Muslim is inviolable for another Muslim: his blood, his property, and his honour." (Muslim, 1986).

The prevalence of Tolerance in the Muslim Community.

Tolerance refers to flexibility, agreement, generosity, and hospitality (Ibn Faris, 1979, p.99).Muslim community is known for its tolerance because Muslim believes in the religion of tolerance. The Prophet said, I was sent by a tolerant religion (Ibn Hanbil, 2001, p. 349).

Tolerance and flexibility are the main goals of Islamic faith as tolerant hearts are neither rough nor oppressive. (Ibn Ashur, 1984, p.462). Islam was founded on flexibility and moderate tolerance, as Muslims are committed to making what they can do. Tolerance is also restricted by the religious text and it does not violate the fundamentals of Islam and its principles. The following are examples of tolerance in Islam:

1-The prophet used the generalization when reforming or correcting the mistakes and errors of people without mentioning their names, which is evident in his saying: "What is the matter with people who lift their gaze to the sky when praying?" And he spoke sternly concerning that until he said: "They must stop that or they will certainly lose their eyesight."(Al-bukhary, p. 150)

2-The tolerance of the Prophet in treating his companions is highlighted by Othman bin Afan, when saying " We were companions of the prophet during travel and at home and he always visited sick people, followed funerals, conquer with us, and console us.(Ahmad, 531).

3-The Prophet exempted poor Christians people from paying jizya and instead it should be paid by the Muslim treasury , which was done by Omar bin Al-khatab as shown in the letter sent by Omar ibn Abdulaziz to his some of his governors, asking them "Look at the Christians who grew old, became physically weak, and unable to work and gain money, and then exempt

them from paying tributes and take this money from Muslim treasury. (Ibn Zangyiah, 1986, p.61).

4. Conclusion

The most important findings achieved by the study are as follows:

1-Every community has its remarkable features that distinguish it from other societies and the Muslim community is known for its application to the divine orders of God.

2-Community must have a system and there must be connections and ties between his members.

3-Religious commitment is the most important quality that distinguishes the Muslim community from other communities.

4-The practical balance cannot be realized unless it follows the principles of the Islamic sharia, which elevates the community and turns it into civilized and high-quality performance one.

5-Brotherhood in God is the best way to make people closer to each other and it also strengthen the ties among the members of the community.

6-The value of tolerance is a clear mark of the moderation of the Muslim community and the validity of Islam for all times and spaces.

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