An Islamic Cum Hindu Approach to Inter-Religious Dialogue

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ABSTRACT

This research looks at the notion of inter-religious conversation and how it relates to Islam and Hinduism. It works with the Qur'an and Sunnah on textual study and historical interpretation. The treatment of non-Muslims by early Muslim rulers, particularly the second caliph of Islam, "Umar," is examined in order to better understand the nature of interfaith discourse in Islam. There's overwhelming evidence that Islam and Hinduism play a distinctive role in the world. In encouraging interfaith discourse by ensuring justice, equal rights and religious freedom for people of all faiths, cultures, and civilizations. The study continues by emphasizing that Islam and Hinduism are complete religions that promote peaceful interreligious cooperation. It may be used as a model for resolving interfaith problems and fostering interfaith harmony and peaceful coexistence in the future.

Introduction

The discussion between followers of many religions is becoming increasingly common in today's world (Swidler, 2014a). People live in a world that is diverse in racial terms, religion, and culture (Wanietal, 2015). We come into contact with individuals of various religions on a routine basis in the shape of neighbors, students, acquaintances, and colleagues. As a result, the interfaith experience has become a part of our daily lives (Vineeth, 1994). Interreligious conversation is critical for religious groups to preserve a good relationship and peaceful coexistence. In the history of the world, there have been numerous tragic events (Eliuset al., 2019b). The 9/11 attacks, the Israel–Palestine conflict, Middle East conflict, Muslim–Buddhist conflicts in Thailand and Myanmar, and Hindu–Muslim clashes in India and Bangladesh are all real and current events that appear to be at odds with religious beliefs in general (Eliusetal.,2019b) (Hasan,2011). We know that every religion teaches universal love and preaches compassion for other people, but we see many heinous crimes committed in the name of religion, resulting in the deaths of many innocent people (Human Right Watch, 2016). It is past time to recognize the source of the problem and find a solution that brings people of various religious and cultural backgrounds together to make a meaningful contribution to humanity through interfaith dialogue. Inter-religious dialogue is a critical tool for reducing inter-religious tensions that exist around the world (Haque, 2010). Dialogue is not a new concept; it has existed since the dawn of time (Wanietal, 2015). Many

interfaith dialogue initiatives have been documented throughout history. Today's interfaith dialogue reflects the first Parliament of World Religions, which took place in Chicago in 1893 (Al-Masud & Elius, 2016). It is sometimes regarded as the beginning of the interfaith movement (Swamy, 2012). Many interfaith organisations, including the International Association for Religious Freedom (IARF,2017), the World Council of Churches (WCC,Forde,2013,p.5), the United Religions Initiative (URI,2017), the Interfaith Centre for Sustainable Development, and the King Abdullah bin Abdul Aziz International Centre for Inter religious and Inter cultural Dialogue (KAAICIID,2017), have worked on inter religious dialogue.

 Islam being a universal religion, it teaches love, tolerance, and compassion for all people (Waniet al., 2015). Since the time of Muhammad, the Prophet of Islam (Peace be upon him), Muslims have played a vital role in promoting interfaith harmony (Karim and Saile, 2009). Various examples of dialogue and interfaith relationships can be found in the Holy Qur'an (Al-Qur'an 49:13, 5:48, 16:125). The Prophets' dialogue with God, Angels' dialogue with God, Prophets' dialogue with their people, and even dialogue with the devil are all mentioned (Humaid, 2010, p.25). Even before achieving Prophet hood, the Prophet of Islam Muhammad (pbuh) was a true role model for positive engagement. The Prophet's positive involvement in resolving tribal disputes in Mecca 5 years before embarking on his Prophetic journey can be seen in the placement of the Blackstone (Hajaral-Aswad).As a result, he was known as al-Amin, "the trustworthy," and al-Sadiq, "the truthful" (Kurucan & Erol,2012,p.18).

Many examples of harmonious interfaith relationships can be found throughout Islamic history (Karim, 2009). Islamic Jerusalem under early Muslim rule is one such historic example (Nor, 2008). Another example of Islamic attitude toward non-Muslims is the 2007 Common Word initiative, which was signed by 138 renowned Muslim scholars ("A common word between us,"2009,pp.v–vii). Due to a lack of proper Islamic knowledge, Islam is currently misunderstood. To eliminate misunderstandings, research has already been done on this topic (Al-Masud & Elius, 2016; Baker, 2006; Hasan, 2011; Humaid, 2010; Karim and Saile 2009; Kamali, 2009; Wanietal, 2015). To rectify the ambiguity encompassing Islam's concept of interfaith dialogue, more research is needed. The goal of this research is to examine the concept of interfaith dialogue by an Islamic perspective. It will concentrate on the Qur'anic interpretation and prophetic practices towards other religions along with the historical relationship of early Muslim rulers especially "Hadrat Umar," the second caliph of Islam.

The Islamic Approach to Inter-religious Dialogue:

The world is a fascinating place. According to Islam, this diversity can only be created by Allah (God) for the greater benefit of humanity. "If God willed, He would make you one community," the Qur'an says (Al-Qur'an 5: 48). "If God willed, all human beings would believe," says another verse. So, O Prophet, will you force them to believe?" (Al-Qur'an, Surah 10: 99) These Qur'anic verses indicate that diversity is God's plan, and Muslims must accept that some individuals or groups will not follow their religion. They'll have to learn to live with their differences in love, cooperation, and mutual understanding (Kurucan & Erol, 2012, p. 37). Islam promotes peace and harmony, as evidenced by Muslims' greeting, as salamu 'alaykum (peace be upon you) (Tirmidhi, 1998, p. 349). (Al-Qur'an 21:107) The Prophet of Islam is known as rahmatan lil-'alamin (mercy for the entire world). In Islam, God is also known as rabbil 'alamin (the world's cherisher) (Al-Qur'an 1: 1). All revelations are considered legitimate by Muslim scholars (Haq, 2014).

There had never been a single system for all of humanity, according to Islamic teachings. God sent

a Prophet to each community, and each community received a different Prophet. God revealed His Message to all peoples and made no distinction between Prophets (Al-Qur'an 22: 67; 2: 285). A fundamental belief in Islam is to believe in all of the Prophets (Al-Qur'an 4: 136; 4: 164). Disbelievers in God and His Prophets, as well as those who discriminate between God's Prophets, deserve a humiliating punishment, according to Islam (Al-Qur'an 4: 150–151). Islam sees itself as an extension of all previously revealed religions. Prophet Noah, for example, was referred to as the submitter (Muslim) (Al-Qur'an 10: 72). Ibrahim (Abraham) was a prophet. In the Qur'an; he is referred to as a Muslim (Al-Qur'an 3: 67). As a result, Islam recognized all previous Prophets as Islamic Prophets. The term "Islam" mentioned in the Quran, according to Cole (2019), is a derived form of Aramaic mashl mnt, which was translated to Greek as paradosis (Tradition), and Greek usage had a direct influence on Arabic. As a result, Islam in the Quran refers to the prophetic tradition of monotheism, which encompasses all monotheistic religions.

Christians and Jews are referred to as the people of the Revealed Book with special reverence. Through his son Isma'il, the Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) came from the same lineage as Ibrahim's (Abraham's) descendant (Nor et al., 2018). Islam's inclusiveness is demonstrated by its acceptance of other people's faiths, rights, and dignity. As long as they do not contradict the Qur'anic teachings, Islam includes some laws from previous scriptures, as well as some pre-Islamic customs and local traditions (Baker, 2006).

The Divine guidance was put into practise by the Prophet of Islam. He went to the sick, to see if they were believers, nonbelievers, or polytheists, for instance (Tirmidhi, 1975, p. 328). He had empathy for people of different faiths. In Madinah, he never forced non-Muslims to follow Islamic laws (Al-Masud & Elius, 2016). "Once a group of Jewish scholars came to the Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) and declared that one of them committed adultery and they wanted him to judge," says Ab Hurairah, a companion of the Holy Prophet (pbuh). The Prophet then made a decision based on Jewish scripture" (Al-Tabari, 2000, p. 303). In Madinah, the Prophet's rule is a living example of solidarity, peace, and interfaith harmony (Kurucan & Erol, 2012, p. 74). The Prophet's companions comprehended his ideals as well. Non-Muslims were treated with justice and kindness in many Islamic societies, according to history (Kurucan & Erol, 2012, p. 85).

Abu-Munshar (2007) mentions the argument of El-Awaisi that Islamic teachings are not in favor of eliminating preaching of other faiths (p. 43). Islam is in favor of counterbalance (tadafu') as a mean for creating a harmonious environment instead of confrontation. It also promotes provision of protection to the holy places of Islam and other religions. This is mentioned in the Qur'an: "And if God did not counterbalance (daf'u) the deeds of some people by others, monasteries, churches, and mosques where the name of God is remembered abundantly, would have been demolished" (Al-Qur'an 22: 40).

The Qur'anic explanation of inter-religious dialogue:

According to the Qur'an, all human beings, regardless of religious or cultural affiliation, are descended from Adam and Hawwa (Eve) (Al-Qur'an 4: 1). The idea of unity is expressed here in a broad sense by reminding man of humanity's beginnings. According to Kamali (2009), regardless of linguistic or racial identity, the unity of mankind's origin is the foundation of their equality in Islam. The Prophet (pbuh) said in a well-known tradition of his farewell address, "People, please! You were both created by the same God and are descendants of the same father. As a result, Arabs are not superior to non-Arabs, nor are whites superior to blacks, nor are blacks superior to whites, except in terms of righteousness."(Albani, 1996, page 449).

As a result, no one has the right to claim superiority over others. Everyone should converse to each other with mutual understanding rather than suspicion or hatred, and create a harmonious environment (Yitik, 2004).

To achieve interreligious harmony, Islam maintains cooperative attitudes toward people of other religions. While Muslims are referred to as ummatan wasathan (middle or moderate community) (Al-Qur'an 2: 143), Jews and Christians who follow their scriptures' laws are referred to as ummatan muqtashidah (moderate or balanced community) (Al-Qur'an 5: 66). These two Qur'anic verses suggest a universal principle of common moral and ethical conducts that will aid in the development of peaceful interfaith relations (Afsaruddin, 2009). According to the Qur'an, "Say to the people of the Scripture, "O people of the Scripture!" Come to an understanding between us and you that we will worship none other than Allah, that we will have no partners with Him, and that none of us will have any other lords than Allah "... 3: 64 (Al-Qur'an).

The Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W) dealings with the people of other religions:

Numerous examples of dialogue and conversation between Muslims and non-Muslims can be found in Muhammad's (pbuh) life (Haq, 2014). The Prophet (pbuh) spent his entire life in conversation with believers, nonbelievers, atheists, and idolaters. For Muslims, his life is a true example of dialogue (Kurucan & Erol, 2012, p. 70). "All creatures of God are members of the family of God," the Prophet of Islam is said to have said, in accordance with the verses of the Qur'an. "He is the best loved of God who loves best His creatures" (Elius et al., 2019a). All people were loved equally by the Prophet. He avoided cursing even his enemies and instead sought God's mercy for them. When the Prophet went to preach in Ta'if,All people were loved equally by the Prophet. He avoided cursing even his enemies and instead sought God's mercy for them. People persecuted the Prophet when he went to Ta'if to preach Islam because he was preaching a new religion to them. Despite the fact that the persecution went beyond his tolerance, he never wished for their death and instead prayed to God for their forgiveness (Galush, 2003, p. 500). The Prophet of Islam led by example in terms of compassion, generosity, and living a good life. "He who believes in Allah and the hereafter must not be the cause of suffering for his neighbour," according to Abu Hurairah (Al-Bukhari in Mawsu'ah al-Hadith al-Sharif al-Kutub al-Sittah, 2008, p. 6018).There are many other traditions that protect neighbours' rights and dignity, regardless of their religious affiliation. For example, according to Al-Bukhari in Mawsu'ah al-Hadith al-Sharif al-Kutub al-Sittah, 2008, p. 6016, "He will not be a true believer, the Prophet repeated three times, from whose hand his neighbour is not safe."

Muslim Rulers Treatment of the People of other Religions:

There are many records that non-Muslims were well received with their cultural and religious identities and provided a secured life in many lands under the rule of the four rightly guided caliphs, the Umayyads, Abbasids, Seljuks, and Ottomans (Kurucan & Erol, 2012, p. 85). Abu Yusuf narrates that during the period of Caliph Abu Bakar, "Umar," "Uthman," and "Ali," there were many agreements between Muslims and non-Muslims which none of them were violated by any of the Caliphs. Their churches, temples, and synagogues were protected, and they practiced their religions freely (Yaqub, n.d., p. 160).When Abu "Ubaydah ibn al-Jarah" was governor of Damascus during the reign of "Umar," the second caliph, Jews, Christians, and Muslims agreed that "their churches and synagogues would not be changed." No one will disparage the other and fight amongst themselves. There will be no harm done to one another. Violations of the agreement will be treated as criminal offences" (Hamidullah, 1987, p. 428).

The treatment of Christians in Islamic Jerusalem by " Hadhrat Umar" is an example of non-Muslims being granted religious freedom. "Umar" ensured their safety and security, as well as the safety and security of their possessions, places of worship, and religious symbols, and did not impose taxes that were beyond their means (Abu-Munshar, 2007, pp. 91–92). The assurance given to those living in Aelia (Islamic Jerusalem) by "Umar" is a historic example of non-Muslim tolerance. According to El-Wakil (2016), the recent study has proven the authenticity of "Umar's" covenants with the Christians of Jerusalem and Mesopotamia, as well as Ali's covenant with the Armenian Christians,Regardless of religious or cultural affiliation, "Umar" was always strict on justice. When the son of Egypt's governor, "Amr ibn al-As," hit a Coptic Christian, claiming he was the son of a nobleman, it was reported to "Umar," who resurrected "Amr ibn al-As" and his son from Egypt and ordered the Coptic man to hit Muhammad, the son of "Amr ibn al-As," in retaliation (Abu-Munshar, 2007, p. 79). As a result, "Umar's" rule was a watershed moment in terms of peace, security, and justice. One day, "Umar" happened to pass by an elderly "dhimmi" who was begging from door to door. When we collected jizyah from him, "Umar" told him that we couldn't allow him to beg in his old age.We couldn't allow you to beg in your old age when we collected jizyah from you in your youth, "Umar" told him. Then he ordered that he be given a pension from the state treasury, which he made available to all dhimmis in need (Al-Jawziyyah, 1997, p. 144). Similarly, "Umar" was walking through Damascus' streets when he came across a group of Christians who were suffering from leprosy. When "Umar" saw this, he ordered a donation from the treasury to be given to them. He also directed that they be fed on a daily basis (Al-Baladhuri, 1987, p. 177). This is a symbol of Muslims' concern for all humanity, regardless of their religious beliefs.

In 1187 CE, "Salah al-Din" followed in the footsteps of "Umar" when he conquered Islamic Jerusalem after 88 years of Crusader rule. After three days of closure, he ordered the churches to reopen and granted them freedom of worship (Abu-Munshar, 2007, p. 156). He made Islamic Jerusalem a safe haven for all Christians, allowing them to carry out their religious rituals. While expanding the Damascus mosque, "Walid ibn Abd al-Malik," the "Umayyad" caliph, demolished a Christian church close by.The Christians complained about the incident after "Umar ibn Abd al-Aziz" became caliph. Despite the protests of the local Muslims, "Umar ibn Abd al-Aziz" demolished the mosque's extension (Kurucan & Erol, 2012, p. 89). Thus, the treatment of Muslim rulers reveals that they upheld Islamic teachings of religious freedom and interfaith harmony throughout their reign. In most cases, if a ruler broke interreligious harmony during his reign, the next ruler restored it.

The Perspective of Hinduism to Inter-religious Dialogue:

In Hinduism, dialogue has always been important. Many of the Upanishads (religious texts) are written in the form of a dialogue, in which different points of view on philosophy are discussed. Many Hindu saints were known for their debates and dialogue, and as a result, they frequently changed their minds. Adi Shankara begins the Manisha Panchakam by asking an outcast to move aside, but eventually comes to the conclusion that when one knows God, caste is irrelevant, and that the outcast is Shiva himself. Satsang (literally, "true company") is a respectful exchange of ideas among devotees, as well as reflection and meditation. Many Hindu lineages are enthusiastic about this. Nowadays, this can happen in closed internet forums, private social networking groups and other places. This is seen as valuable as long as it aids learning and spirituality and does not lead to discord.

Hinduism has always had a vibrant tradition of dialogue, which has always extended to other dharmic religions. This is unsurprising, given how blurry the line between Hindu and non-Hindu traditions is. Sikhs are not Hindus, according to some, because they reject the Vedas, have their own saints, and do not worship murtis (devotional images). Many sects that are widely considered to be non-orthodox branches of Hinduism, such as Veera Saiva and Arya Samaj, are in the same boat. Hindus and followers of other dharmic religions often have close ties, and Hindus and Buddhists often share temples and festivals (such as the Bagh Bhairav Temple in Kirtipur). Sikhs frequently attend festivals at my local Mandir, and Hindus frequently attend festivals at the local Gurdwara. We can see the interaction between dharmic religions throughout history. Advaita Vedanta, a Hindu school, and Buddhism had a strong influence on each other, and Jainism helped to emphasise Hinduism's vegetarian tradition.

It's no surprise that Hindus are frequently at the forefront of inter-religious dialogue and events, given their long history of cooperation and respect between dharmic religions. The Hindu preacher Morari Bapu organised the 2009 "World Religions Dialogue and Symphony," and Hindus are well represented at many local, national, and international events. Swami Vivekananda's speech at the World Congress of Religions in 1893 is widely regarded as one of the most powerful pro-interfaith speeches ever given. Many Hindus, on the other hand, are hesitant to engage in dialogue with non-dharmic religions. One reason for this is that Hindus who attend these events are frequently perceived as representing Hinduism as a whole by others. Many non-Hindus are unaware of the vast diversity within Hinduism. Speaking for Hinduism is like speaking for all Abrahamic religions: Catholics, Protestants, Jehovah's Witnesses, Mormons, Unitarians, Shia Islam, Suni Islam, Ahmadiyya, Bahai, Mandeans, Druze, and all sects of Judaism. Consider how many of the other attendees were led to believe that Branch Davidian and Anton LaVey's Church of Satan were mainstream elements of your religion.

This is the dilemma that a Hindu faces at an interfaith gathering. When someone claims to speak for Hinduism, other Hindus are quick to point out that they are not speaking for all Hindus. The "Declaration of the Second Hindu-Jewish Leadership Summit" is an example of this. This state, among other things, that Hindus have worshipped one Supreme Being in both its formless and manifest aspects for millennia. When a Hindu prays to a particular manifestation, he or she is referring to only one Supreme Being. This isn't to say that Hindus revere 'gods' and 'idols.'Without going into detail about Hindu theology, most Hindus believe that some images of God are aspects of the one creator God (Ishvara), while others are illustrious beings (Devas) who are as distinct and unique as you or I. Different schools have different ideas about how distinct you, I, and the Devas are, ranging from completely distinct at one extreme to any separation from God being merely a mirage at the other. I believe it is reasonable to conclude that Swami Dayananda Saraswati's interpretation of Hinduism here goes too far in implying that the statement encompasses all Hindu beliefs. This has been expressed by some Hindus in very strong terms. Sandhya Jain wrote: This is outrageous. A Hindu guru who upholds the legitimacy for Hindus of the literature of another religion, and tries to make Hindu Dharma pass standards set by that intolerant sect, is betraying the Devas, the Dharma, the bhaktas, the Desh – nothing more need be said in this matter. In one stroke, he has also legitimised the missionary and jihadi hatred of and assault upon Hindu dharma in Hindu bhumi.

Conclusion:

According to the conclusions, having multiple religions is not unusual. For the sake of God's

satisfaction, Muslims must maintain unity despite differences and accept differences with sincerity, love, and cooperation. Islam, as a universal religion, values interfaith dialogue (Haq, 2014). The Qur'anic approach and the Prophet's dealings, as well as the treatment of non-Muslims by early Muslim rulers, particularly "Umar," demonstrate that people of other religions have been treated equally as human beings. In Islam, dialogue between Muslims and non-Muslims is highly valued. In Spite of the differences between Islam and other religions, Islam has adapted well to a society with many different religions and cultures. When the Christians of Najran came to the Prophet for a theological discussion about the nature of Christ, for example, they did not agree on doctrinal issues but did agree on a peace treaty (Kamali, 2009).. As a result, in an interreligious dialogue program, it is not necessary to discuss theological issues of various religions. It is only necessary to accept and respect differences in order to preserve God's system and to follow the ideals of the Prophet (pbuh), as well as to engage positively with one another in order to promote peace, harmony, and coexistence (Kamali, 2009).Islamic teachings do not encourage Muslims to harm people of other faiths; rather, they encourage Muslims to assist, secure, and provide them with their due rights and dignity (Kurucan & Erol, 2012, p. 43). During times of peace and through peaceful means, more people accepted Islam (M. H. Hasan, 2009).

The treaty of "Hudaybiyyah" is regarded as a watershed moment in Islam's interreligious dialogue, as it allowed Muslims and non-Muslims to interact and discuss issues. Non-Muslims were granted many rights by Muslim rulers, particularly the four righteous caliphs, including the protection of their churches, temples, and synagogues (Yaqub, n.d.). The treatment of non-Muslims by "Umar" is a historical example of tolerance, respect, and interreligious harmony. When dealing with non-Muslims, "Umar" followed Islamic principles. His advice to people of other faiths was always based on justice and fairness (Abu-Munshar, 2007, p. 117).Many Muslims and non-Muslims misunderstand the concept of jihad in Islam. The "Dhimmi" system has evolved over time, based on economic, political, and social considerations, since the time of the Prophet Muhammad (phub). There are few examples of interruption in Islamic history, so it's not fair to say that Islam is a sword religion or that it spread through violence based on them (Kurucan & Erol, 2012, p. 85). In short, by properly applying Islamic teachings on interreligious dialogues, any violence, mistrust, and conflicts among faith groups could be eliminated.

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