

## **A Critical Analysis of Social Relations, Religious Tolerance and Freedom in Abbasid Era (750-1258)**

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### ***Abstract***

*One of the most important aspects of the Human Rights issue is the respect and tolerance which society must show towards the religions of other people; this, of course, includes the issue of freedom of religion. Tolerance means "to bear." As a concept, it refers to respect, acceptance and appreciation of the rich diversity of cultures, forms of expression and ways of being human. In Arabic, it is called tasamuh. Words like hilm (forbearance) or 'afw (forgiveness) or saf-h (overlooking) also convey the meaning of tolerance. In Persian and Urdu, we use the word rawadari which is derived from rawadari meaning acceptable or bearable and dashtan meaning "to hold". Thus it means to hold something acceptable or bearable. In this article, I would like to discuss very briefly about the Islamic point of view and the Muslim rulers especially of Abbasid caliphs on the tolerance.*

**Keywords:** Tolerance, Abbasid Era, Islamic History

Islam doesn't acknowledge the discrimination of language and region; black and white, small and big and ruler and ruled, all are equal according to this faith. The Muslims maintain informal relations with the followers of other faiths not only in streets and markets, but also in mosques and palaces, A black negro slave, Hazrat Bilal (RZA), had the distinction of being *Muazzan* (caller) of prayers and a very esteemed companion of the Holy Prophet (PBUH). Contrary to this, in the non-Muslim societies no black Christian could claim equality with a white Christian. According to Islam all human beings are equal and every Muslim state is responsible for the protection of the rights of its citizens without any discrimination of creed and nationalism.

Syed Ameer Ali describes the state of societies before the advent of Islam:

*"Whether eastern or western societies, the condition of common man was so much deteriorated and miserable that it could not be described in words. They possessed no rights of ownership or property nor political privileges as they were either slaves of the affluent or powerful or of the class possessing the religious sanctity. There was no approved law for rich and poor, stronger and weak and of elite and destitute."*<sup>1</sup>

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In the ancient Persia the life of common man had been made despondent. Peer Karam Shah describes:

*"The infrastructure of ancient Iranian society had been established on two pillars; one was the superiority of genealogy and the second was prosperity. There were boundaries between the noble or ruling class and the common man. There was discrimination between their things, in attire and carriage, their houses, orchards, women and servants."*<sup>2</sup>

This biased treatment was against those people who were their fellow faithful, while their dealing with the followers of other faiths were very much oppressed and savage. In Rome which used to consider itself as very much civilized, the treatment with non-Christians would be very harsh.

Syed Ameer Ali mentions as follows:

*"The non-Christians, Jews, Heretics or Pagans enjoyed under Christians a fitful experience. It was a matter of chance that whether they would be massacred or reduced to slavery. Rights they had none, enough if they were suffered to exist. If a Christian contracted an illicit union with a non-Christian, a lawful union was out of question, he would be burnt to death. The Jews might not eat or drink or sit at the same table with the Christians, nor dress like them. Their children liable to be torn from their arms, their goods plundered at the will of a baron or bishop or a frenzied populace."*<sup>3</sup>

The misery of the mankind continued until the moment, when The Holy Prophet (PBUH) declared the practical equality of human beings and broke the chain of privileged and poor. Right from Hazrat Adam (PBUH) to Allah's Last Apostle, Hazrat Muhammad (PBUH), all Prophets brought the same message of Allah Almighty about the equality of mankind.

An Islamic state divides its population in such a way that which part obeys the principles of Islam, on which the foundations of the state have been laid and the other part which comprises of the non-believers. Those who obey the Islamic principles are called Muslims and the rest of the disbelievers are known as Non-Muslims. The Islamic state clearly explains to the non-Muslims that the rights it can confer on them and vice versa. It also keeps its doors open that if they like the Islamic principles then they can join the ruling faithfuls by embracing Islam. The Islamic state is also bound to accord all the rights of Zimmis, non-Muslims which have been determined by the Shariah.<sup>4</sup>

Karen Armstrong mentions with reference to sense of hospitality of the Muslims:

*"The Muslims have always been aware of the fact that their holy scripture the Holy Quran has conferred a mission upon them for establishing a society on the basis of mutual respect with justice and morality in which all persons may be treated with reverence."*<sup>5</sup>

Syed Ameer Ali states:

*“The pearl of Islamic philosophy lies in its manifesto of rights, which was conferred by the Holy Prophet (PBUH) after his arrival in Medina with the title of Charter of Medina and this factor can also be observed in the messages despatched to the Christians of Najran and its surroundings at a time when Islam had taken over the total control of Arabian peninsula. The latter document has always remained as a guideline to the Muslim rulers about the treatment with the non Muslim population and if any ruler has deviated from this practice then the factor of this act was due to his personal character. If we draw our attention from this political necessity which has always presented itself in the attire of religion then no religion other than Islam deals with the followers of other religions in a pleasant way.”<sup>6</sup>*

### **Collection of Taxes in Modest Quantity:**

The Islamic state levies Zakat on Muslims for their property and wealth. While it collects Jizyah and Khiraj from the non Muslims and due to these two factors they are declared Zimmis and are accorded the citizen rights, which are specified for the Muslims.

Al- Mavardi states that:

*“Jizyah is the name of a fixed quantity which was collected from the Zimmis and would discontinue after they would embrace Islam. The difference between Khiraj and Jizyah was that the Khiraj used to be taken on the ownership of land and it would make no difference even after converting to Islam, while Jizyah was the tax of soul and would be exempted with the embracing of Islam and secondly that the basis of Jizyah is established on the Quranic principles while the foundation of khraj lies on Ijtihad.”<sup>7</sup>*

Arnold mentions:

*“There are abundant evidences to show that the Christians in the early days of Muhammeden conquests had little to complain of in the way of religious disabilities. It is true that adherence to their ancient faith rendered them obnoxious to the paymaent of Jizyah , a word which originally denoted tribute of any kind paid by the non-Muslim subjects of the Arab empire , but comes later on to be used for the capitulation of tax as the fiscal system of the new rulers became fixed. But this jizyah was too moderate to constitute a burden.”<sup>8</sup>*

There was surely the benefit of wealth in embracing Islam but if any Christian abandoned his faith just to save himself from Jizyah , then he will have no ultimate gain on the Day of Judgement.

Goldzeiher state:

*“Now instead of Jizyah the convert had to pay the legal alms, Zakat, annually levied on most kind of movable and immovable property.”<sup>9</sup>*

The conditions of Jizyah which were fixed by various conquerers could not remain uniform. Dr. Arnold mentions:

*“The rates of Jizyah levied by the early conquerors were not uniform and the great Muslims doctors, Imam Abu Hanifa and Imam Malik are not in agreement on some of the less important details.”<sup>10</sup>*

The Jizyah was not collected from a weaker and neither from those who used to remain busy in their religious affairs. It was only incumbent on wise, adult and free men. It was also not collected from women and children.

Imam Abu Yousuf mentions in his book *“Kitab-ul-Khiraj”*:

*“Jizya is incumbent on all the men with the exclusion of women and children at the rate of 48 dirhams on well to do people, at the rate of 24 dirhams on the middle class and at the rate of one dirham on the poor cultivators who worked with their own hands. This was charged from them every year. If they brought any goods with them like cattle and other material etc., the same will be accepted from them, it would be taken from according to the price.”<sup>11</sup>*

The Muslim rulers would deal with the Zimmis with equity, justice and nice treatment while collecting Jizya. It was the practice of Islam that no Zimmi should be beaten while collecting the Jizya nor they should be asked to stand in the sultry sunshine or any other physical torture. In the event of violation the official could be detained in the imprisonment.

Al Mavardi in his composition *“Ahkam-ul-Sultaniya”* mentions:

*“Imam Abu Yousuf wrote a letter to Caliph Haroonur Rashid to pay acclamation to the Zimmis, while collecting the Jizya and it was the common practice of the son of the paternal uncle of the Holy Prophet (PBUH). Be aware of their needs and never let anyone commit extortion or inflict excessiveness to them. Nothing from their property apart from Jizya should be taken. You might not have been unaware of the last words of the Holy Prophet Hazrat Muhammad (PBUH), Hazrat Abu Bakr Siddiq (RZA) and Hazrat Umar Farooq (RZA) that always accomplished welfare, praise and never gave them any trouble.”<sup>12</sup>*

Rashid Ahmed Nadvi states:

*“The major source of generating revenue of the Abbasid state was Jizya. During Abbasid rule the majority of the population had embraced Islam. Even then it was a large source of revenue. The people of far flung areas had not embrace Islam yet and Jizya was imposed on them. Furthermore, in Baghdad and other big cities, there was a great number of the Jews and Armies residing over there. In Iraq Christians of a tribe, Banu Taghlab were also existing in adequate number.”<sup>13</sup>*

### **Exemption from Military Service:**

As the Islamic state is an ideological state and only those can protect these state who acknowledge these concepts with their hearts. If the non-Muslims would do that their status would be like hired soldiers. Hence, they were told share the expenses spent on the protection of the frontiers of the state and pass their lives with comfort and peace. Hence Jizya is not just a sign of obedience but also the charges of the national security.

Dr. Arnold states:

*“The tax was not imposed on the Christians as some would have considered it as a penalty for their refusal to accept the Muslim faith, but was paid by them in common with the other Zimmis or non-Muslim subjects of the state whose religion precluded them from seeing them by the army of the Muslims.”<sup>14</sup>*

Artin also endorsed this that payment of Jizya meant exemption from military service.

*“It released them from the compulsory military service that was incumbent on their Muslim fellow subjects.”<sup>15</sup>*

About exemption from military service Karen Armstrong mentions. She says.

*“The system was that the Jews, Christians and other religious groups were allowed to follow their faith, but they will have to acknowledge that Islam is the religion of the state and is superior to all in the country. The people called as Zimmis or the under protection of the Muslim state would pay tax in lieu of these services, which was a routine of that period. The Zimmis were not allowed to arm themselves and they had also to follow other laws. The scholars had indicated that the laws were not insulting and no restriction was applied in the enforcement of these laws.”<sup>16</sup>*

The Jizya was received from the non-Muslims in lieu of the military services provided to them.<sup>17</sup> But this fact is also not without interest that if any non-Muslim joined the Islamic army, then he would be exempted from paying Jizya. Because he would guard the frontiers of the state along with the Muslims.<sup>18</sup> These were the excellent precedences which were unparalleled that the non-Muslims would live peacefully in their homes and keep themselves active in their daily business, while in the wake of the foreign invasions the Muslims would solely defend the country.

Sometimes the Abbasid Caliphates would display extraordinary lenience and if any non-Muslim would desire to join army on his willingness, then the military services were rendered from him.

Qazi Athar Mubarakpuri mentions:

*“During the reign of Abbasi Caliph Haroon-ur-Rashid, Fazal bin Yahya rendered marvellous feats in Khorasan in 178 A.H. He constructed taverns, masjids and fought a Jihad (holy war) in Mawra-un-Nehr. He sent 20,000 soldiers to Baghdad which was known as “Kariminia”. This army included Zimmi and the tales of bravery of Hindu soldiers were very much popular all around. On this occasion Marwan bin Abu Hafsa composed a Qaseeda (tribute), with the following verses: Translation: “Fazal bin Yahya is like a fire which does not extinguish during the battle, while many other flames turned off. He distributes the plundered wealth like a liberal person and when the Indian sword is drawn it does not recede.”<sup>19</sup>*

### **Protection of Soul and Property:**

Abbasids also protected the soul and property of the non-Muslims, as has been ordained by Islam to them.

Syed Ameer Ali mentions the quotation of Hazrat Ali (RZA):

*“The blood of the Zimmis is like the blood of Muslims.”*<sup>20</sup>

Syed Abul A’ala Maudoodi also mentioned the quotation of Hazrat Ali (RZA) in his book:

“They accepted the responsibilities of Zimmis for this reason so that their property should become as ours and their blood may also become like our blood.”<sup>21</sup>

Rashid Ahmed Nadvi writes:

“Hence the Fuqahah have drawn Jizya so that if a Muslim murders a Zimmi deliberately then he will have to pay the *Diat* (the penalty for murder), which becomes mandatory for the Muslim who has committed the sin.”<sup>22</sup>

Syed Ameer Ali further mentions:

“In the non-Muslim societies the general public could not transfer the land and property of wealthy persons. While the wealthy people would snatch the land and property of the general public. Even after paying a heavy tax they could not achieve any thing through inheritance. They had to grind the grain or if he had to bake the bread then they had to give the share to their master or feudal lord under these circumstances. They could not even harvest their crops unless they didn’t give tenth share to the Church, twentieth to the emperor and his courtiers. They could not even leave their house without the permission of their masters.”<sup>23</sup>

However, the Abbasids displayed their open mindedness acquired the properties of the non-Muslims according to their necessity, by properly paying the prices. The zimmis possessed the right of dealing with their property and sell it or transfer the same to their children.

Hassan Ibrahim Hassan mentions:

“In the reign of Motassim the Turkish influence and rule had extended enormously. As Motassim had relied on them extra ordinarily and had appointed them on high ranks, and due to this reason the Turks gave torture to the people of Baghdad. Motassim also began to consider about shifting his capital to some other place and in this regard his mind for changing to the site where he had constructed his palace. This place was located at a distance of three days travelling from Baghdad in the east of Dajla and in the north of Baghdad its distance was about seven miles.”<sup>24</sup>

Hassan bin Ibrahim further mentions that Moatssim gave 5000 dinars to his minister Ahmed bin Khalid and sent him to Samra in 219 A.H. Ahmed bin Khalid purchased a Christ Church and the orchard adjacent to the church in 5000 dinars. Furthermore he also purchased the other lands and houses in the vicinity and informed Moatassim about this buy and sale.<sup>25</sup>

During the period of decline when the Abbasid Caliphate was contracting in Africa, Egypt, *Persia, Khorasan, Mavar-ul-Nehar, Yemen* and many other countries got out of their rule, their revenue also decreased and in order to meet this deficiency

they introduced many “*Zaraib*”. *Zariba-tul-Aras* was one of these as is mentioned by Rashid Ahmed Nadvi:

“*Zariba-tul-Aras* was introduced in the rule of Caliph Motammid. In his rule the property or wealth left in big quantity after death by those members of public without inheritors would be deposited in his treasury by Caliph Motammid himself. Moatammid also consulted the Fuqahah in this regard during his rule that whether the Shariah allowed this act or not. Qazi Abu Yousuf declared it as against Shariah. and wrote that the Holy Prophet (PBUH) had explained that no Muslim could be the inheritor of the property of Infidel and vice versa. Two different faiths could not be the inheritors of one another. Hence, on this basis the state could not become the inheritor of the property of Zimmis, while it can be the inheritor of the property of Muslims. Most probably Motammid issued the notification of the abolishing of *Zariba-tul-Aras* and he also disbanded the department and distributed the amount among *Zavil Arham*.”<sup>26</sup>

In the Abbasid rule the public would also protect the property of the non-Muslims. If any such incident would happen then the public would stage protest. Maulana Manazir Ahsan Gillanji in his book mentions the statement of Buzurg bin Sheharyar that one Jew Ishaq used to act as a broker on the seaport of Oman. By chance he had a brawl with another Jew and then he fled to India. When he reached India, he had only two thousands gold coins. He stayed away from Oman for almost thirty years and returned to Oman in 300 A.H., with great pomp and show. He now possessed his own ship and reached the seaport of Oman on a ship loaded with trade luggage. It was the period of Caliph Muqtadir and Ahmed Hilal was his **commissioner** in Oman. It has been mentioned that the Jew merchant sold a huge quantity of one lakh *Misqal* (equal to one tola approx.) of *Mushk* (musk) to Ahmed bin Hilal and also sold various items of one thousand or more than one thousand Rupees value to others. The fame of his wealth also gradually reached Baghdad and people netted a web of conspiracies against him and convinced the Caliph to review his goods. The messenger of Muqtadir reached Oman and delivered the letter of Muqtadir Billah to Ahmed bin Hilal for sending that Jew merchant to the royal court. But the public staged a strong protest on this action. Maulana Manazir Ahsan Gillani further quotes his statement:

“The shops were closed and appeals were sent to the Caliph, duly signed by outsiders and particularly the natives of Oman, in which it was mentioned that if the Jew merchant was forcibly taken to Baghdad then the traffic of ships on the seaport of Oman would be stopped absolutely. The merchants would flee and the people would disseminate this information that no one should come to the coast of Iraq as there would be no guarantee for the protection of the property and wealth of the owner.”<sup>28</sup>

### **Justice and Equity:**

The equity and justice has been a great quality of the followers of Islam and other nations of the world are far behind in the matter of equity and justice. The Abbasid caliphs would not discriminate between weak and strong, rich and poor

and infidel or Muslim while dispensing justice. This was the reason that the non-Muslim public would accept the decision of the state without any hesitation. The Caliph used to warn the Ministers and Knights to keep the justice always in consideration and never to carry out any extortion or oppression on any one. Qazi Athar Mubarakpuri mentions that once the army of Ruler of Sindh *Uyinia bin MusaTameemi* staged a rebellion against him, then Caliph Mansoor wrote to him:

“If you had done the justice then they would never have staged disturbance and if you had kept your promise then they would not have excited the plundering.”<sup>29</sup> Abbasid rulers had maintained the supremacy of justice and equity in their empire and there was no discrimination in this factor. The Qazis (judges) would give verdict fearlessly, even if the rival would have been the Caliph. A similar verdict was given by Abu Yusuf against Haroon-ur-Rashid, however, in the course of the proceeding he committed a mistake, which Abu Yusuf condemned throughout his life.

Muaffaq ibne Ahmed Al-Makki (died 168 A.H.) mentions that an old man of Iraq filed a claim against Caliph Haroon-ur-Rashid that he has snatched the orchard owned by him. Incidentally, the case was presented on the day, when Caliph Haroon-ur-Rashid was himself deciding the cases. Qazi Abu Yusuf was presenting the statements of the rivals and their claims to Haroon-ur-Rashid. When the turn of this case arrived, he presented Qazi presented the case to the Caliph and said that the blame on him was that he had grabbed the orchard of one old man. The plaintiff was present in the court and if desired he could be presented in audience. The old man came and Qazi Abu Yusuf asked him that what was his claim? He replied that the Caliph has illegally snatched his orchard and he demanded equity. Qazi then asked that at the moment the orchard was in whose possession? He replied that in the personal possession and supervision of the Caliph. Then Abu Yusuf addressed Haroon-ur-Rashid and said that what was his point of view regarding this claim. Haroon replied that there was no such orchard in his possession which might have been the old man's property. Qazi asked the plaintiff after listening to the arguments of the rivals. The petitioner was asked that whether he had any proof to support his claim. He replied in assertive and asked to swear upon God. Caliph Haroon-ur-Rashid took the oath and said that this orchard was given to him by his father Caliph Mehdi and I was its owner. When the old man heard it and he got furious and left the court murmuring that as someone drinks *Sattoo* (milled wheat) easily, in the same way that person has taken the oath.<sup>30</sup> Imam Zahbi has mentioned that the plaintiff was a Christian.

Muaffaq ibne Ahmed Al-Makki further mentions that the face of the Caliph had sparkled with abger by listening to such comments from a common man. Yahya Barmaki in a bid to cheer up the Caliph Haroon and asked Qazi Abu Yusuf that the equity and justice of this case is unprecedented. Imam Abu Yusuf replied that there was no escape than dispensing justice. Imam Abu Yusuf had not spared anything in providing the justice, but even up till the last moment he regretted his blemish and would feel mental torture and tension about that fault and would also fear that how he would reply on query of Allah in this regard. The people asked him that in which



matter he has shown slackness? He would have not gone beyond that he forced the Caliph of the greatest empire on the earth, to take oath in front of an ordinary farmer. Then he asked the people that they had not apprehended the thought which has given him tension. Then he in an upset way that my pain and burning was due to the fact that I could not ask Haroon to get off the chair and stand there where his rival was standing in the capacity of a party or accord permission to bring a chair for the plaintiff also.<sup>32</sup>

In the entire period of Abbasid Caliphs there was not a single moment when the knights and the administrators of the caliphate would have been involved in unfair oppression, extortion and injustice with the public. The measures which were taken for the reformation of the rebels were called "*Tadeeb*" and this action was necessary for the revival of the peace and tranquility and equity and justice.

### **Opportunities of Education for every one:**

Contrary to other societies the Abbasids opened the doors of education for all. Every citizen was allowed to seek and adopt educational sector according to his mental level

Syed Ameer Ali mentions:

"In the history of every big nation, a glorious period has passed compulsarily. In the history of Athens that era was the age of Pericles and similarly in Roman history it was the period of Augustus.. There was also an illustrious period of Islam which can be called as in a just manner and this era was extended from the ascending to the throne of Caliph Mansoor up to the death of Caliph Motazid Billah. The second era of magnificence of this glorious chapter was the period except a brief era of Mutwakkil. This period left the previous one well behind in splendour and brilliance and that was the period of first six Abbasid caliphs and especially of Mamun-ur-Rashid. The Caliphs of Baghdad like their counterparts of the Caliphs of Cordova (Spain) gave consideration to the welfare of non-Muslims to the extent that they established a special department for the security and the protection of the rights of the Zimmis. The head of this department was called as *Katib-ul-Jahza* in Baghdad and *Katib-ul-Zamam* in Spain."<sup>36</sup>

This is a fact that the rulers would like to get the buildings of their own choice constructed and demolished the previous ones. Bannu Ummiya and Banu Abbas adopted this line of action in their respective reigns. They would also take into consideration the temperament of the subjugated nations while constructing new buildings. They would also get the services of the artisans of subject nations in constructing new buildings.

Dr. Gustaoli Bahn in his book "*Tamaddun-e-Arab*" mentions:

"Anyhow this fact is ensured that the buildings constructed in the initial period of Islam were not built by the Arabs. For instance, the changes they brought in churches and temples to convert these into masajids and constructed the buildings with the old material. Actually they were the builders of those structures belonged to the subjugated territories. Hence the artisans from whom the job was accomplished

in Syria were mostly Iranians or Asians. Their relation with the Arabs were like a new Ameer (wealthy person) who spends his wealth in constructing new structures and in this regard the constructor might be anyone but the reflection of the personal ideas of its owner. It was also mandatory for these Iranian and Asian artisans to keep the choice of the owner into consideration and this was the reason that after short period the Arabs produced such excellence, that in their buildings and other structures a prominent difference could be sensed. It is possible that due to the difference of the country the arrangement of decoration and floral designs might be Iranian, Asian or Hindi but the overall shape and the proportion of various parts was as a whole Arabian.”<sup>37</sup>

The Abbasid also paid full attention to public welfare and the non-Muslims would also get benefit from this facility.

Syed Ameer Ali mentions:

“Abbasi rulers established taverns for the caravans and built canals and ponds of water from Baghdad to Makkah-tul-Mukarrama and planted trees on both sides of the roads. They also built rest houses for travellers of every community and road between Makkah-tul-Mukarrama and Medinah-tul-Munawwara and also set up the check post on the postage of camels and horses for the facilitation of the travelling between Hijaz and Yemen. They appointed postmen to take post to the post offices of other cities. In the capital they set up a central office where the antique documents of the state were preserved. They arranged the police all over their dominion. They also developed a Shirkat-e-Tajjar for the solution of mutual disputes and eradicate the cheating among businessmen. Forms for stipulated period were demanded from the provincial governors for the welfare of the public.”<sup>38</sup>

### **Participation in Festivities:**

Since the times of the Sassanid dynasty a number of festivities were celebrated in Iran, e.g., Nauroze, Meher Jan and Ram and special congregations were organized by the Abbasid caliphs on these occasions. The Abbasid caliphs would participate themselves in these festivities.

Dr. Hassan Ibrahim Hassan mentions:

“Nauroze was an ancient festival of the Iranians, which was celebrated on the very first day of the new year. This used to be the first day of the year and it used to fall in the winter season at a time when the Sun would enter the house of the Zodiac sign Pisces. The Sultans of Khwarasam had promoted a new custom of getting the summer uniform of the military attired by the soldiers and would participate in the Nauroze festivities. In the period of Nauroze the Iranians would exchange gifts and among these the sugar and the clothings were also included for attire. The emperors of Sasanid dynasty of Iran had given great significance to Nauroze and would celebrate it with pomp and show. They would organize special Darbars (royal courts) during five days of Nauroze, on the first day they would give rewards to the public, on the second day they would honour the elevated persons, who used to be the land lords of that time. On the third day, they would welcome the great warriors and Zoroastrians; while on the fourth day they would welcome and gave

warm reception to their family members, close relatives and exclusive persons and on the fifth day they would spend the day with their families and children, maids and slaves. On the sixth day they would exempt themselves from official duties and specify the whole day for themselves and would receive gifts.official duties and specify the whole day for themselves and would receive gifts<sup>9</sup>

Dr. Hassan Ibrahim Hassan further mentions:

“The Abbasid Caliphs possessed great affiliation with the Iranians and as a display of diversity they would organise the festivities of Nauroze with enthusiasm and fervor. In the same way they would also observed the Festival of Meher Jan at the end of the year with the same pomp and show. Meher Jan is also called Roz-e-Mehe, which meant “ the soul of love” Iranians considered this day as their biggest Eid The Iranians also believed that Meher Jan was the logic of the end of this world, while Nauroze was the symbol, of the beginning of the universe. This statement would not be out of place that Meher Jan co-incided with the beginning of winter season and the Iranians would send gifts to one another similar to Nauroze and sugar would also be included in these presents. The Iranian emperors would adorn their warriors with the robe of warriors. It was a routine of the Iranian emperors that they would organize Darbars (royal courts) on the occasion of both Nauroze and Meher Jan. The fifth day of Meher Jan would be considered very lucky and sacred for the Iranians. They would call it as Ram Roz and Meher Jan was considered as great. On this day Faridoon had conquered Zahak and Iranians had celebrated Eid-e-Meher Jan on that occasion. This day would fall on 16<sup>th</sup> of Meher Jan while the Eid-e-Ram would be celebrated on 21<sup>st</sup> of this month. Zoroaster had ordered to pay equal respect to Meher Jan and Nauroze and Eid should be celebrated on both the days. After that famous warrior Mazban Shapoor had declared the days falling between 16<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> as Eid days. Later on, the Salateen of Persia declared all the thirty days of the month as Eid for different classes of the society.<sup>40</sup>

Abbasid caliphs organized their government machinery on the pattern of the Iranians. Even in their life they had adopted all the life style of the Iranians. These were also precedence of the cordial relations of the Muslims with non-Muslims.

Islam imparts education to constitute such a society in which equal and unanimous rights to all human beings. It also determine a legislation for the Muslims in promoting the inspire cordial relations not only for their fellow faithfuls but also with the faithfuls of other religions, so that the non-Muslims might be tempted towards Islam. The Holy Prophet (PBUH) presented Islam as a religion with equal laws for Muslims and the mankind. After the period of Holy Prophet (PBUH) the sacred Caliphs also set precedences of kind treatment with the non-Muslims by applying the holy Sunnah. This practice was also maintained by the succeeding rulers.

### **Division of World Nations:**

The Holy Prophet (PBUH) has divided the world into four parts regarding the legal status and have determined separate rights for every part. These are being applied for the last fourteen centuries. This division is as follows:

1. Those who believe in the Holy Quran and other divine scriptures. Every one among them are one another's brother and is associated in every noble and evil deed.
2. The followers of scriptures whose names have been mentioned in the Holy Quran, or suffice to say they might be followers of any scripture mentioned in the Holy Quran, can reside in the limits of Islamic state by paying the tax of their protection. Their worshipping places and the religious monuments can also be saved. The Muslims can marry their women and can eat the meat of the animal slaughtered by them. The Muslims can also eat their lawful food and can also offer them their lawful food.
3. Similar to the followers of the holy scriptures i.e. they don't have belief in the Holy Quran, New Testament, Old Testamen and Bible, but claim to be the possessors of some holy scriptures, e.g., Sabai who claim to have a divine scriptures and simultaneously worship Sun, fire and other manifestations of the nature. After the conquest of Sindh and Turkistan the Islamic scholars also included the Hindus and Buddhists through such assumptions. The Muslims neither marry their women nor can eat their slaughtered animals. In addition to these two things the Holy Prophet (PBUH) has conferred the rights of the faithfuls of other scriptures. In the Islamic state after paying Jaziya they become authorized to avail all rights. The protection of their soul and property, honour and worshipping places is the duty of the Islamic state.
4. The infidels and non-believers who have neither any divine scripture nor they are affiliated with any divine religion.<sup>41</sup>

#### **Condition of the People Associated with other Religions:**

Before the advent of Islam, there were two major powers of the world, Roman empire and Iran. The religious and setarian discrimination in these countries had reached such a point that the human beings had become severe enemy of each other's blood.

Pir Karam Shah Al Azhari mentions:

“When Byzantine emperors embraced Christianity, then their sympathies of the Christians living in Iran inclined naturally towards them. Due to this reason the Iranian empires put the blame on Christians that they have been damaging their sacred religious teachings and they teach the people to become the slaves of one God and must not worship sun and fire. They insult the servants of the emperor and taught them the magic. The first royal decree issued for the Christians was that they would pay double tax than other public, so that the expenses of war, in which they didn't take part, could be met with. They ordered one Bishop Marshimoon to collect the amount of the tax from them. He did foolishness and refused to obey the order. There were two genuine reasons for that firstly they were very poor and could not pay such a heavy tax and second was that it was not the duty of the Bishop to collect the tax. He was arrested along with his companions. On a Good Friday in 339 A.D., Marshimoon and five other Bishops and one hundred priests were given to death sentence and hanged at the place of Sosa.”<sup>42</sup>

In Rome every Christian was the enemy of other and the dectarianism was at its peak, as followers of one church would commit extortion and oppression on the followers of other church.

Syed Ameer Ali mentions:

“About the middle of the 6<sup>th</sup> century the drooping fortunes of the Monophsites revived the guidance of one of their leaders, Jacob, Bishop of Edessa. Under him and his successor they acquired overwhelming predominance in the eastern empire, and by their unrelenting persecution of the Nestorians and their bitter quarrels with the orthodox or the Chalcedonians, plunged the Christian Church into internecine warfare and bloodshed.”<sup>43</sup>

The Jews and the followers of the other religions also became the victim of the oppression of priests and the rulers. In India the inhumane oppression was committed to the people of low caste and those associated with other religions. Even today the people of low caste are called “Dallat” in some regions of India and a four walled voundary is constructed around their localities, so that the othter people could not dare to mix up with them. This was the fact that when the Muslim conquerers reached those territories , they were warmly received by the locals.

#### **Permission of Disputation in Royal Courts:**

Abbasid Caliphs had accorded permission of expression to the followers of every religion and they never committed oppression to anyone in this regard. In their reign the open disputation among followers of every religion would be held frequently and every group was also allowed to prove his faith right.

Prof, Hatti writes:

“According to the practice of Nustorians , the speech delivered by Timothy in 781 A.D., in support of Christianity in front of Caliph Mehdi was still preserved in the form of a chronicle.”<sup>44</sup>

Prof. Hatti further mentions:

“Similarly a famous magazine of Al Kundi is preserved in which the qualities of Islam and Christianity have been compared and it has been detailed that this was a narration of a disputation, which was staged in front of Caliph Mamoon in 817 A.D.”<sup>45</sup>

The Abbasid caliphs and knights were very much advanced in tolerance and good nature. In their reign all religions and beliefs were free to preach and propagate their faith. The capital Baghdad was a religious and ideological wrestling arena, in which not only the wrestlers of various sects of Islam would grapple with each other, but the combatants of other religions would also enter the arena with full coaching. Even , the sessions of their disputation would be held in the royal courts and the proof of the same can be taken through some incidents.”<sup>46</sup>

Some Hindu Rajas requested to Caliph Haroon-ur-Rashid to send some scholars to their country, who could introduce Islam to them and then discussed with their pandits in front of them.

Syed Suleman Nadvi states:

“When the pandit started the sensible objections, then the Muslim scholar began to quote Ahadees-e- Nabawi (PBUH) in reply. Pandit said that these were only useful to those who are the followers of your religion . Even the pandit asked a question that your God has power over every thing then (God forbid) whether He has the power to create a character like Him? That innocent scholar said that it was not his job to reply such queries. This was the job of the scholars of the Holy Quran. Raja returned that scholar informed Caliph Haroon-ur-Rashid that earlier he had learnt from his elders and now he believed after watching with his own eyes that there was no solid logic to prove the righteousness of your religion. Caliph summoned the scholars of the Holy Quran and presented this issue to them and a child of minor class rose in his place and asked Ameer-ul- Momineen that this objection was absurd, because Allah has not been created nor he has been given birth to any one and if He creates someone like Him, then the created one will not be like him and by all means He will be his creation and moreover the existence of another personality like God is His contempt and God will never like to have His disgrace and on this issue He has no power. The raising of this question is just like that God can be . God can die, God can eat and drink water and it is apparent that God can't do any such act, because these are against the majesty and magnificence of God. This reply was liked by everyone and Caliph Haroon-ur-Rashid desired to send this child to compete with the pandit but the veterans requested him that after all he was a child. Hence instead he sent a famous orator to India. But that orator was poisoned to death during the journey by that pandit.”<sup>47</sup>

Similarly outside Baghdad the followers of other religions would organize disputations with Muslims. Abul- Hassan (d.957 A.D.) said that when he came to Khambiyat, then the ruler of this town was a Hindu trader and was a Brahman and was a subordinate of the Raja Wilibh Rai of Mahanagar. He was very fond of disputations and with the Muslims or followers of other religions who had been strangers to his city, he would arrange disputations and discussions.<sup>48</sup> Among the Abbasid Caliphs, Mamoon can be singled out as the one ruler who was very much of disputations.

Maulana Shibli Naumani mentions:

“Although the functions of Mamoon would not be held without the mention of knowledge, yet the *Seh Shambay* (Tuesday) was fixed for disputations. The scholars and experts of various arts of every faith and nation would attend the court. The formal court would already be arranged and all the persons would sit there informally. The court servants would ask every body to be seated informally and they could even put off their socks. Then the sheet of meal would be decorated with the varieties of food and drinks. After taking the meals and applying perfumes, they would attend the *Manazra* (disputation) in *Darul Manazara* and would along side Mamoon in his proximity. The disputation would start and Mamoon would become a party. But the expression would be so much free that the speaker would not feel the presence of the Caliph. This gathering would continue up to the noon. After the Sun's decline the meal would be served and the people would also leave after taking

meals. In these disputations sometimes the participants used to cross the limits. However, Mamoon would tolerate all the proceedings with patience and soberness.”<sup>49</sup>

A follower of Sanvi religion also held a disputation with Mamoon.

Maulana Shibli Naumani further states:

“One day a very fine and interesting discussion was held with a follower of Sanvi religion. Mamoon asked him that whether the man could be shamed of his wrong doing? Sanvi replied that why not? Mamoon again asked a question that was it good or bad deed to be ashamed of a sin? Sanvi replied in yes. Mamoon again asked him that the person who was ashamed had committed the sin or someone else? Sanvi replied that by the same person. Mamoon then asked that it was the same person who committed sin and also was rewarded. The Sanvi got confused and said that no, he would say that the one who was ashamed didn’t commit the sin. Then Mamoon asked that whether he was ashamed on his sin or someone else’s? Sanvi at last became speechless.”<sup>50</sup>

The disputation with the false claimant of prophethood also used to be held in the court.

Shibli Naumani mentions an incident in this regard:

“One day a person entered the court who had made the claim of prophethood. As usual many palmists and astrologers and scholars attended the disputation, but no was aware of the situation and his claim of prophethood. Mamoon asked the astrologists to make his astromonical table that whetherb this person was right or wrong. All went in the compound to see the horoscope and the situation was that Sun and Moon were in a particle; Venus, Saturn were in Swcorpio and were watching Scorpio. On this horoscope everyone said that the claimant might have been right. But Yahya bin Mansoor differed with them and said the Jupitar was in Haboot and it is in a house with which it has no matching. This fact got the claim of that person wasted. When both the parties made their presumptions, Mamoon asked them that whether they knew that what claim has been made by him. He was a claimant of prophethood. The courties and the audiences demanded some miracle from him. He presented a ring that whoever would wear this except him would start laughing till the moment it was not put off. But he said that if he wore it nothing would happen. Similarly he showed a pen and only he could write with it and no one else could write even the pen would not move in his hand. Both the claims were found correct. Mamoon at once realized that it was some rare knowledge miracle and if he avoided the claim of prophethood then he was a very useful person. Mmoon apprehended that he was an expert of mathematics and astronomy. The magic of grains was his invention which was present in every house of Baghdad.”<sup>51</sup>

Phillip Hatti has also gave the witness of such religious discussions.

Ali Al-Batari’s book on religious discussion *Kitab-ud-Deen wal-Dula* which is the commentary of religion of Islam, a Non-governmental compilation in defense and was written with the help of the Khalifa himself in the court of Mutowakal.

It is a strong and Moderate /balance writing. In this book, there is no religious bias and discrimination; there are several references from the Bible.

These references seem to be from or primitive Arabic translations of Old Testament. According to same narrations earlier in the era of Haroon a person Ahmad Bin Abdullah Bin Salam had translated the Old Testament into Arabic language. There are also some evidents that in the later part of the seventh's century, some parts of old testament were converted into Arabic language from or Greek language. (52)

### **The Style of Preaching of Islamic:**

Muslims have participated whole heartedly in preaching Islam in every age. It has been started by the Holy Prophet (PBHU) himself. He stressed at the importance of regional as well as international preaching. For this reason, he wrote letters to the rulers of the states. The complete detail of these letters have been described by Dr. Hameed Ullah in his own book.

Sahaba Karam has considered the preaching as a religious obligation. (53) Banu Abbas has also participated in this sacred work and keep such a decent manner that there could not be any example like that.

In the reign of Mamun, has been found, was written to a Christian by Mamun's relative Abdullah Hashmi who invited him to embrace Islam.

Once Khalifa (54) Mamun-ul-Rasheed has delivered an address. He turned the people of the court's attention towards him and mentioned scornfully to those people who embraced Islam for worldly profit and selfishness. And their example was set by those hypocrites who planned to kill the Holy Prophet (PBHU) while apparently they were the friends of the Prophet of Allah. But as the Holy Prophet did goodness in return of badness. Khalifa also has intended to behave politely & patiently with these people. As long as Allah Almighty had been just to them.

Such a complaint from Khalifa was really valuable because it proves that what was the situation toward newly-Muslim and the struggle was to make them embraced Islam sincerely and unselfishness.

When it was proved that they had become Muslims because of worldly desire, they had been rebuked harshly. (55)

The answer of the mentioned letter had been written by Abdul Masiah. Shibli Naumani says a person cannot estimate until, he can see himself. He wrote such words for the Holy Prophet (PBHU) Holy Quran and Sahaba Karam's heart's thimble to hear these words. This letter is in the form of a digest. Shibli says that he has seen this letter himself. He says: I assure the audiences that with the reading of every word, my heart trembled with fear when the letter was presented before Mamun, he could say only after reading the letter: -

The religion which is for the world is Zoroastrianism and the religion which is just for the life hereafter is Christianity, but the religion which is beneficial for both hereafter and world is Islam. For the arguments Shibli Further says (56).

Mamun himself was busy in the preaching of Islam. He invited the people of far off areas of like Mawara-ul-Nahar and Farghana to embrace Islam. But he never forced people to embrace Islam unfairly by using his grandeur Yazdan Bakht, the leader of



Firqa Manwlyah came to Baghdad, he disputed / argumentated with the Muslim scholars in which he was stand still. Mamun tried to make Yazdan embrace Islam but he refused saying:

“O, Ameer-ul-Momineen, your advice has been accepted and your talk has been listened but you are not one of those who force people to leave their religion.”

Khalifa Mamun, instead of getting anger at his dejection, sent his army for the security of Yazdan Bakht, so that the ruler could be saved by the malicious persons in the subject (57).

In the first half of the 9th century, many people from the Nestorian Church had embraced Islam. And there is not a single evident which proves any severity. Ecclesiastical historians mentioned some kind of change but they never mentioned any force or compulsion. It proves that Non-Muslims embraced Islam according to their will.

Dr. Arnold narrates: (58)

“In fact, it would have been an interesting thing, if we had found a writing, in which they wrote the details of their lives, written by themselves, and we had known how Islam flourished in the nature of these people.”

Dr. Hasan Ibrahim Hasan Writes:

“Religious sects had different position with each other in this regard that they could not accept each other's religion. For example no Christian could accept Judaism and no Jew could accept Christianity. Transferring or changing of religion was limited only to embrace Islam. No other religion could be accepted besides this. (59)”

### **Non-Muslims, Places of Worship:**

Abbasides guarded even Non-Muslim's places of Worship. In their reign, places of worship of Christians, Jews, Gaubres and Hindes were spread all over the country not in hundreds but thousands in numbers.

But no historical evidence is such as could prove that the Muslims had harm anyone. (60)

Christians had the permission to build new church and monasteries. Many events had been narrated by Muslims, in which new church had been built. In the reign of Khalifa Abdul-al-Malik a new church was built in the city of Alrihah and two churches were built in the city Alfistat of Egypt. (61)

Dr. Arnold Narrates: (62)

He further says:-

In the reign of Khalifa Mehdi (775-785), a church, for Christian prisoners, was built in the city of Baghdad. These prisoners were in imprisonment when the Muslims were fighting against the Christian of the Roman empire. (63)

In the golden age of Haroon-ur-Rasheed many churches were built in the country. (64) (65)

Instead of this religious freedom some Orientalists attacked the Muslim sovereign in such a way which harmed Islam. Mr. Yamir is among those people who are famous for these false blames.

Shibli Says:-

“When the world of God had been in the hand of Muslim successors, it was Khulfay-Rashdeen, who were acknowledged the real gwcle of the Muslims in every age, signed a sure guide pact of security of those people who spent millions in the building of churches.

Isn't Umar Bin Abdul Aziz, who sent orders to the administrator of Damascus to break the extra part of the Masjid which was the land of the church and was broken by Waleen, and gave permission to the Christians to build their own church, consider Umar II? Aren't in the reign of Abbasids hundreds, thousands grand churches were built? If Orientalists have any doubt, they should read the conditions of Deer-Alrome, Deer Ashmooli Deer Alsaalib, Deer warsha, Deer Washmalish, Deer Samaloo, Deer Azri, Deer Alraiza, Deer Alzrqabiya, (66)

Church bells were rung in the churches all the day. Some churches were fixed for special festivals where there was a grand gathering on fixed days and religious customs were performed with zeal & zest.

Hasan Ibrahim Hasan writes for Deer-Baghdadi: -

This church was built at the bank of the canal Dajjaj Many gardens were annexed with the church, in which there were many trees. In the east of Baghdad there was Deev-e-Rome (which is mentioned before) one of its bishop gave a counseling to Mansoor, that he should have build his capital / Metropolitan near this Church. (67)

Dr. Arnold narrates: -

“With the establishment of Islamic state, instead there would be any harm to the progress of Christian church. With the help of the history of the Nostorian church, it is known that when they were among the subject of Muslim rulers, the love and festivity for the religious life has suddenly been created among them. In the reign of Abbasid Khalifa, they got such security in their places and country that they started missionary work out of the country with zeal and zest, they sent their missionary to china and India. (68)

Prof. Philip.K.Hitti writes in his book “History of the Arab”, Deer-Al-Rome was considered the metropolitan of Nostorians and around if in Baghdad, there was a Colony of Christians which was called Daar-al-Rome. The sub-ordinates of Batriegue was established as seven Matranies in the country i.e Basra, Mosal and Naseeben. And under each, two or three Asqafs were appointed. (69)

Hitti Further says that rulers appointed new Batriegue and he was crowned a turban by Khalifa himself. And he was the head of all the Christian in the state. In 912, Batriegue of Jacobs tried to transfer his metro Politian to Antakia but Nostovians or Jasleeq made his mission fail with the help of the Khalifa.

The blame on the Jacobs was that they were the supporters of Bazantanian. However one monastery of Jacobs was in Baghdad and one centre had become near the capital in Takviat. It is said that the number of the monasteries of Christians, which were in the eastern part of Baghdad excluded the western part, were more than half a dozen. (70)

It is really strange that in the reign of Khalafa, Christianity seems to be so lively and religion that it has been sending its following to the far off areas of India

and China for preaching. According to the statement of Alfahrist Ibn-e-Nadeem had a meeting and a talk with that Christian preacher, who came from China, in the Christian's Colony of Baghdad.

This interesting dialogue is copied thoroughly in the mentioned book. (71)

Prof. Philip Hitti Writes:

In this age, there was a famous inscriptions containing the name and work of 67 Nestorian preacher in the city of Sianfu (China). And the church of India and Christian Batrieque of Tamus Wali was entered in the reign of Baghdad. These events are the prove that Christian church of eastern Syria had a religious preaching festivity in the reign of Muslims. Mangol and manchor, admitted as a Rustum-ul-Khatt, was the essence Ghauri which is derived from the alphabet of Nestorians.

### **The Places of Worship of Jews & Christians:**

Jews and Guebres were less in quantity than Christians and were leading their lives under the Muslim reign. Most of the people were related to agriculture specially Jews were attached to the trade of gold and silver. They also had civilian rights in Abbasid reign. They were in the good books of Abbasi Khalifa. Khalifa had no fear against them. They set a colony specially in Baghdad and lived in complete harmony.

A.J. Arberry narrates: (74)

Prof. Philip Hitti narrates, in 1169 Tadeela Kabun Yameen had come to Baghdad, he saw ten Jewish religious schools and twenty three hermitages there. The biggest of all the heronitayes was a grand one, which was decorated with gold and silver. (75)

The Co-operation of Muslims with Jews is an understood thing, because before Muslim reign Christian had made their lives hard. They lived mixing with the people and other people of the society copied their style of living Arberry writes (76)

### **Gaubre and other People of Tvinity:**

There is a mentioning of Gaubre in Surah Hajj. (77) Gaubre was also among infidels. They were at their religion with a complete freedom. Government never forced them for anything. Muslim rulers guarded their lives, wealth and honour.

Philip Hitti writes after the success of Iran, Zoroastrian which was its previous religion, was not abolished. Its fire places were established not only in Iran but also in Iraq and India. Parsies are the representators of Zoroastrian in India. Their forefathers in 8th century had migrated there. But there are a lot of Zoroastrian who embraced Islam. The first one among them was Ibn-e-Muqaffa. (78)

### **The Freedom of Sabians:**

The actual Sabian of Arab writers were from the Firqa Mandiyya which was semi Jewish and semi Christians. They called themselves as Nasura Oyha Yahya. Nasura means a follower. That is why the people of modern Era, has been considering them the Christians of Yuhna Wali the people of Mandiya Firqa performed the custom of Istabagh after birth, before marriage and even at many

events. They resided around the declivity of Babul. And historically the actual country of Istabaghi cast was Palestine. Their language is Mandeek, a branch of Arami. The style of writing of this language resembles with Nabti and Tadmiri writings SABI has been mentioned three times in the Holy Quran. So these Sabies of Babul were among the infidels. (80) Hitti narrates that the adjoining areas of the Swampy area of Northern Iraq has been enumerated in it. The adjoining area of Basra is Always muddy. Five thousand people of this sect are still alive. It is necessary for them to reside near the flowing river. To dive into the flowing water is a religious obligation and a quality of their religion. (81)

The beliefs and religious acts of these Sabians of Babul have no Connection with that of Hiran, were actually star-Worshipper, who in the reign of Muslims started to call them Sabi. So that they could get the benefits which was mentioned in Quran while behanvy nicely with Sabies. This name had been attached to them from that age. And this strange religion was flourished near the centre of Khilafat-e-Baghdad. Some people from this sect had become famous due to their great intellectual capability and services of knowledge. Their familiarity also made the Muslims the security guard of this religious sect.

De. Leci. Oleri Writer: -

Sabit Bin Qura (D 901) had always been proud to be his religion. Sabit says that his forefathers kept on their religion with the help of God with this support they spoke daringly. That is why, our beloved city did not interfere in the Christian sovereignty. We are the heirs of this city and its claim is that it was unbelievers who irrigated this land first and worked for the crops. They built harbours and discovered the science. (82)

### **Conclusion:**

Inshort it can be concluded with the above mentioned historic references that Islamic history is full of such kind of behaviours and tremendous relationships of the rulers with minoritories and non-muslims as we observed in the light of evidences of abbasian\*s era. Now –a-days, the present circumstances are demanding highly that the present rulers also should act-upon such a way to bring harmony, peace and prosperity in the society.

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