

INTER-FAITH DIALOGUE AND PROPHET MUHAMMAD (SAW)'S LETTERS

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Prophet Muhammad (SAW) led his life in various aspects, every aspect gives eternal light to mankind in every walk of life. This is why his prophet-hood is universal.

Today inter-faith dialogue is very essential with rest of the civilizations and religions. Islam also invites rest of the religions to sit on one table on the basis of common points. Prophet (SAW) wrote to heads of the states after Hudaibia Truce. These letters are safe in the books of Seerah of the Prophet (SAW) and history. The letters have different shapes to study the most important is that, he invited the then international powers towards Islam. Apparently the addressed ones are merely two big powers of the world but having mixture of many civilizations. What kind of address was opted by the Prophet (SAW), What were the common aspects of these letters? What was the mode of conveying his invitation, most important is this, what was the response of these letters. There are three main things to be noted at: sympathetic behaviour, enemy like views, neutral response. Now a days studying these letters are very need of the day in the light of inter-civilization dialogue and the practical approach towards the Seerah of Holy Prophet (SAW). We see different kinds of ideas and theories. The same way of address as was opted by Holy Prophet (SAW) in this dialogue.

According to some of the intellectuals, the term Inter-faith dialogue has been imported from the west and was manipulated by the Orientalists for their own interests. They desire to impose their ideas by this methodology towards the Muslims. Orientalists have no equal based discussion or eradicating misunderstanding between the Muslims and non-Muslims rather adding more doubts. So muslims should not involve themselves in this intrigue. The targets set by the west have always been more than one. Islam has always been the well-wisher of all the religions of the word.

Qur'an by the common things invite normally to all the world particularly the book-keepers, and this invitation or being close to them is basically the inter-religion dialogue, it can extend

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From all the discussion, it is proved that Allah saved Muslim Ummah from this apostasy because the seerah of their prophet (P.B.U.H) is safe in their possession. This fact has been admitted by western scholars. Their names along with their confessions have been provided within the contents of this book. It has also been mentioned that with such matchless conscious and careful effort Muslims have preserved even every minor incident of their prophet's life. On contrary to this any book of Hinduism, Judaism, Zoroasterianism Buddhism, and Christianity is helpless to give us complete and authentic idea of the life of their religious leaders. The books of these religious have undergone distortions as we have proved from inner and outer arguments.

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presumed and beyond reality that their scholars prefer or give more importance to their constructed monuments instead of their religious texts. Their books were written after 600 years of Lalit Daster Budh.

The age of Zoroaster is reckoned 200 to 350 B.C. Avesta was his religious book. Its language was Zand (Old persian) But, Alexander the Great conquered Persia in 331 B.C. and he put a large section of Avesta into fire. So nothing can be said with certainty regarding the language of this religion, its religious literature, and the dates of compilation. There are found separate books for most of the sects.

Taurah is the book of Jews. It was written 500 years after the death of Moses. This book was also put into fire many times by the enemies of Jews. It was written again on the basis of memorized knowledge after hundreds of years. There was made no research about the certificate, content and the characters of the narrators.

According to Michael Hart Despite the fame of Moses, the creditable information about his life is missing. (40)

Christians have deep love for Jesus Christ but the life history; sayings of Christ are found in unauthentic and discreditable manner. According to researchers the details of even 50 days of his 33 years life span is not known.

According to Dr. Michael Hart the original information about Jesus Christ's life is uncertain. So, even Christianity is void of the authentic and creditable record of the sayings and happenings of Jesus Christ's life. In world religions there seems no such arrangement and standard for the narration of tradition and knowledge which the Muslim Ummah did to preserve the Ahadith, Sunnah and the Seerah of their Prophet (P.B.U.H). This very thing is certified even by the non-muslims.(41)

The decisive saying of Dr. Hameed Ullah is "The books similar to Holy Quran are also found in other nations for example, Jews have Taurah but I found no book similar to Seerah in other nations." (42)

“While we have no contemporary records of Moses or Confucius or Buddha, while we know some fragments of Christ's life, but nothing of the thirty years which prepared the way for the culminating three, the story of Muhammad is extremely clear. Here, instead of shadow and the mysterious, we have history. We know as much of Muhammad as we do of men who lived much closer to our epoch. His external record, his youth, his relatives, his habits are neither legendary nor hear-say His internal record, after his mission had been proclaimed is no hazy tradition of some obscure or perplexed preacher”(38)

R. Bosworth Smith writes:

"We know as about Muhammad as we know about Milton and Luther. We know about the whole life of Muhammad. His early record, his youth, his habits, relations and his first revelation. When he had been proclaimed we have a contemporaneous look absolutely unique in its origion, on the authenticity of which no one has ever been able to cast a serious doubt."(39)

CONCLUSION

In Human history, Muslims are the first and the last Ummah which has compiled such an authentic, related and researched record of the incidents, sayings and actions of their Holy Prophet (P.B.U.H) that is free of exaggeration and is based on facts. Seerah books have complete harmony of wisdom and copying. The intellect, character and fame of Seerah writers are analysed on highest standards and this thing is matchless in the religions of the world. Hinduism is the oldest religion of the world, but it has no definite beliefs. Neither it has one specific person as its founder, nor a definite religious book.

Nehru regards the religious books of Hindus such as Ramayana and Muhabharata a mixture of facts and fictions.

The religious record of Hindus of earlier times was not so much but later it got added and changed in every era.

The period of Buddhism is told 560 B.C. It is written in the same encyclopedia that the religious books of Buddhism are such

A regular arrangement of copying of knowledge

It has also been a basic feature (quality) of Muslims regarding seerah writing that they started writing the sayings and routines of the Holy Prophet (P.B.U.H) during his life time. Because the very first command of Holy Quran suggests a clear concepts of copying of knowledge. Following are some famous written books during the life of Holy Prophet (P.B.U.H)

(i) Saheefa-e-Sadqa from Abdullah bin Umroo bin Al-As (65A.H)

It is available in Musnad Ahmed Bin Hanbal today.

(ii) Saheefa-e-Ans b. Maalik (92 A.H)

His disciple Saeed b. Hilal says

فأخرج اليها مجال عنده فقال: همد سمعتها من النبي ﷺ فكاتبها وعبر عنها

"Hazrat Ans used to open his diary for us and said that he heard this knowledge from Holy Prophet (P.B.U.H), he wrote in his presence and presented it in his presence."(36)

(iii) Saheefa-e-Abdullah b. Abbas.

He was a very learned and intelligent companion of the Holy Prophet (P.B.U.H). He died in 68 A.H. He was 14 years old at the time of death of Holy Prophet (P.B.U.H)

(iv) Saheefa-e-Ayesha:

"Hazrat Ayesha passed 7 years and 5 months with Holy Prophet. She died in 58 A.H. after 48 years of Holy Prophet (P.B.U.H). According to khateeb Baghdadi she used to take dictation from his nephew Urwah bin Zubair regarding the sayings and incidents of Holy Prophet (P.B.U.H)"(37)

There are hundreds of books about Seerah and History that were compiled during the life time of Holy Prophet (P.B.U.H). So, the mentioned features of seerah writing with such continuity do not exist in any of the nations but Muslims.

While comparing the Holy Seerah of Muhammad (P.B.U.H) with the biography of other founders of religions. R.V.C. Bodley writes:

الاسناد سلاح المؤمن اذ لم يكن معه سلاح فباتى شئى يقتل ٥

"Al Asnad (Certificate) (knowledge of tradition principle) is the weapon of a believer. How will he fight if he is without weapon."(32)

In the principle of knowledge there is an internal criticism on details and incidents. Muslims maintained a high standard of knowledge along with the research of tradition.

Prof. Philip K. Hitti writes "This form of history composition is unique in the case of the Arabs, and meets the most essential requirements of the modern historiography, namely, "Back to the source" and trace the line of Authorities."(33)

The principle of knowledge has been summarised by **Ibn-e-Jozi** in the following words.

كل حديث رايته يخالف العقول او يناقض الامور فاعلم انه مروج ٥

"That every tradition which is against reason or against basic principles is a fabricated one."(34)

Arrangement of authentic and contiguous traditions.

Muslims made a complete arrangement of authentic and contiguous traditions concerned with the seerah of our Holy Prophet (P.B.U.H)

Dr. Hameed Ullah says about this important research standard.

"The quality that is found among the Muslims is practically absent among other nations, namely, the reference should not be incomplete. So, in the books of Ahadith wherever there is a hadith of even one line or half a line, It follows a long list of names of persons narrating that hadith. e.g. From __ bin __. Bukhari, has narrated Ahadith which reach our Holy Prophet (P.B.U.H) through three companions, three narrators. At most there are found 9 narrators in some of the Ahadith. It means that in the period of 3 centuries there had arrived 9 generations of narrators."(35)

On the grounds of these clear commands of the Holy Quran and Hadith, the Muslims maintained a high status of research and scrutiny as well as tradition narrating with knowledge instead of tradition narrating without knowledge.

Censure of mixing right (truth) and wrong (Untrue)

It is also a feature of the Muslims in seerah writing that they have discriminated between the basic and the derived or affiliated material, so that traditions may not become a collection (mixture) of true and false, and right and wrong. This principle has been described in the Holy Quran in the following words in Ch.2 verse. (42)

وَلَا تَلْبِسُوا الْحَقَّ بِالْبَاطِلِ وَكَتُمُوا الْحَقَّ وَأَنْتُمْ تَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٤٢﴾

"And mix not truth with falsehood, nor conceal the truth while you know."(30)

The Holy Prophet (P.B.U.H) has said a very severe threat regarding the copying of false and below standard tradition. The Prophet (P.B.U.H) said:

مَنْ كَذَبَ عَلَيَّ مُتَعَمِّدًا فَلْيَتْرِكْ مَقْعَدَهُ مِنَ النَّارِ ۖ

"The one, who attributed a false talk knowingly, he must seek his residence (destination) in Hell."(31)

So, Muslims regarded the most dignified and golden principle of research and knowledge in seerah writing. They also kept seerah texts free of the mixture of right (truth) and wrong (untrue).

A High Standard of Principle of Knowledge and Tradition.

Muslim seerah writers maintained a high standard of knowledge and tradition. In the principle of tradition a complete process of research is made about the persons narrating the incidents of seerah that whether they are muslims, sensible, adult, just and perfectly disciplined or not.

It is also checked that they are free of paganism, insanity, sinfulness, impiety and oblivion.

Imam Sufyan Sauri Says:

very difficult to do so in these days because the whole collection of their religious literature consists of superstitions and imaginations. The original material has vanished to a great extent. The historical background of these books, original language, the author's life history, the details and particulars of their compilation as well as content, nothing is definite and certain rather it is presumed and estimated. Even none of the followers of these religions can claim that the books and the sayings attributed to these leaders are exactly reported from them.

A peculiar aspect of seerah writing

Seerah (biography) writers have comprehensively discussed each and every aspect of the life of Holy Prophet (P.B.U.H). So, they made the peculiarity aspect conspicuous in seerah writing. The life of Holy Prophet (P.B.U.H) before Annunciation, the life and message after Annunciation, the life and message before Hijrah, the life and message after Hijrah, the nature and virtues of Holy Prophet (P.B.U.H), sayings and commands, qualities and excellences, the account of his social, economical, political, religious and military dealings, all are given with such detail, research, order and literary elegance that the real features and concepts of his holy life come to the scene. Such sort of examples of seerah writing in other religions are missing.

Censure (Condemnation) of Tradition without Knowledge:

In the Holy Quran and Hadith there is censure of tradition narrating without knowledge.

Allah says in Ch 17 verse 36

وَلَا تَقْفُ مَا لَيْسَ لَكَ بِهِ عِلْمٌ

"And follow not that of which you have no knowledge."(27)

Another saying comes in Ch 53 verse 28.

وَإِنَّ الظَّنَّ لَا يُغْنِي مِنَ الْحَقِّ شَيْئًا

"And verily, guess is no substitute for the truth."(28)

It is the saying of the Holy Prophet (P.B.U.H)

إياكم والظن فان الظن الكذب الحديث

"Avoid superstition and conjecture, for it is fabricated and untrue."(29)