

RE-EXAMINING THE POSSIBILITY OF PEACEFUL CO-EXISTENCE OF MUSLIMS AND NON-MUSLIMS IN THE WEST BASED ON THE ABYSSINIAN MODEL

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Abstract

Prophet Abraham, Moses and other Prophets believed in migration like the Prophet (pbuh) did. The Prophet (pbuh) advised his companions to migrate and to live in a new country with peace and to respect the laws of the Land. His companions migrated to the Kingdom of Abyssinia and set an excellent example of living in harmony there. After the demise of the Prophet (pbuh) the companions of the Prophet (pbuh) travelled to and fro to different countries of the world to spread Islam and then many of them decided to settle there permanently. Their mausoleums are proofs of their permanent settlement in those countries. They lived peacefully and did not try to sow the seeds of revolt against the Government and hatred against the people of those countries. This paper will try to focus the reasons of excellent behavior by the Christian Abyssinians towards Muslims and by the Muslims towards Abyssinians. This paper will also try to find those factors which made Islamo-Christian coexistence possible in Abyssinia and of those factors can be recreated in the Western contemporary situation while remaining faithful to the sources of Islam and maintaining their Muslim identity.

Keywords: Re-Examining ; Possibility ; Peaceful ; Co-Existence ; Muslims ; Non-Muslims ; West Based ; Abyssinian Model

Introduction

The Companions left Arabia and spread to various countries far and beyond its borders. The majority of them breathed their last in various Asian and African countries, where their graves still exist (1). Bilal (ra) was born in Makkah and died in Syria.(2) Umm Haram bint Milhan (ra) with her husband, Ubadah ibn as-Samit Ansari (ra) visited several foreign countries. Her grave is in Cyprus, and is called the grave of the pious woman. (3) Khalid bin al-Walid (r.a) was born in Makkah but his grave and graves of his wife, son Abdul Rahman, Ayaz bin Ghanam (r.a), Ubaidullah bin Umar(r.a), Abu Darda (r.a) and Abu Zar Ghafari(r.a) are in Hims (Syria).(4) Abu Ayub Ansari's (ra) tomb is in Turkey. (5) Talha bin Ubaidullah's (r.a) resting place is in Basra.(6)

There is a point of view that Muslims should not live under non-Muslim rule and migrate to Muslim countries. According to Bernard Lewis, most *Ulama* have passed *fatwas* against Muslims living under non-Muslim rule. But scholars like Khalid Abou Al Fadl who studied and graduated from the Near East Studies Center at Princeton where Bernard Lewis taught for many years disagrees with him and says that *Ulama* have given complex rulings but with more opportunities for Muslims to settle in non-Muslim lands.(7)

Dr. Carroll, Associate Professor, in the Department of Religious Studies at Rice University U.S writes, "First we must ask questions of history. Have we as human beings ever lived together peacefully? Have people of very different faiths, for example, ever lived with each other for a sustained period of time without seeking to oppress or eradicate each other?... If we determine that sustained peaceful coexistence has been achieved in certain situation for example, under the Ottomans in the fifteenth century, or in thirteenth century Spain, we must further determine what factors allowed that coexistence to occur. What were the specific conditions-economic, political, social, cultural, etc, that made the coexistence possible?"(8) Karin De Villa, Spanish Professor at St. Mary's University, San Antonio writes, " The

intercultural and multicultural *convivencia* between Jews, Christians and Muslims in Al-Andalus was key to development of different sciences that later contributed to give birth to the Renaissance in Italy”(9)

Hijra or emigration

Raghib Asfahani writes that *Hijra* can be physical it means to adopt an attitude of, or to act with indifference or have no connection, no contact with people, places and values based on enmity, dislike, hatred, with Allah and the Prophet (pbuh).(4:34) “then leave them alone on bed”. It can be verbal, means to give up bad language or leave or dislike something due to its badness (evil/vice). The Prophet (pbuh) said, (*la taqoolo Hujra*) “Avoid indecent and lewd talk”. And it can be heart-felt, Allah (25:30) says, “And [on that Day] the Apostle will say: “O my Sustainer! Behold, [some of] my people have come to regard this Qur’an as something [that ought to be] discarded” The essence of meanings of *Hijra* is that of “leaving” or “forsaking” or “giving up”(10)

Hijra also denotes to give up forever as Qur’an says (46:19) “ Now begone from me for good” (74:5) “And all defilement shun!” and Qur’an stresses (73:10) “and avoid them with a comely avoidance” it shows that all forms of *Hijra* should be in the best possible manners. It generally means to migrate from *Dar al Kufr* (Abod of Kufr) to *Dar al Islam* (Abod of Islam) such as from Makkah to Madinah in 622 A.D. but it also means to give up sins and disobedience of Allah. (11) The Prophet (pbuh) said, “A *Mohajir* (immigrant) is one who gives up everything Allah has forbidden”. (12) The Prophet (pbuh) said, “A *mohajir* is a person who forsakes (gives up) his sins and mistakes”(13)

There is another form of *Hijra*, during the 2nd migration to Abyssinia Usman (ra) and his wife Ruqayya (ra) expressed sadness that the Prophet (pbuh) was not with them. When the Prophet (pbuh) heard this, he replied “(don’t be sad) both your migration are towards Allah and towards me” (14) while the prophet (pbuh) was in Makkah and they migrating to Abyssinia which was not *Dar al Islam* (Abode of Islam)

Hijra can be conscious and unconscious such as Abu Musa al Ashari (r.a) narrates about his migration with fifty Muslims, he said, “We were in Yemen and were informed that Prophet (pbuh) had migrated to Madin. We set out for Madina by boat. But because Sea storm our boat diverted to the coast of Abyssinia. We met Ja’far (ra) and lived in Abyssinia for many years, after the conquest of fortresses of Khabar we returned to Madina with Ja’far (ra), when the Prophet (pbuh) saw us he said, “O people who have come by boat you will be rewarded for two migrations.” (15).

EARLY MODELS OF MUSLIM MINORITIES

Three models of Muslim minorities are found in the early period of Islam.

1. The Makkah Model (610 A.D – 622 A.D)
2. The Kingdom of Abyssinian (modern Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia) Model (615 A.D 632 A.D)
3. The Madinah Model, many years after Hijrat to Madinah (622 A.D) Muslims remained in minority. The majority comprised of Jews and people of other faiths.

THE MAKKAH MODEL

Muslims were made victims of physical and moral abuse and mocked at and insulted by the rich and influential non-Muslim masters on false accusations. Muslims were punished by hunger, thirst, imprisonment and tortured, many of them were martyred. The Prophet (pbuh) during this period was not so badly treated as he (pbuh) was under his paternal uncle, Abu Talib’s protection and the support of the Banu Hashim tribe. Bilal (ra), (d.644 A.D), the son of an Abyssinian slave called *Rabah*, the first *muezzin* of Islam, his owner was Ummayah Bin

Khalaf, a bitter enemy of Islam. Bilal was made to lie under the burning sun with a huge rock on his chest. Bilal's only escape from this punishment was to declare that he was no longer a Muslim, which Bilal did not do. With excruciating pain, Bilal would say Ahad! Ahad! (One! One!). Bilal's (ra) neck was tied with a rope and he was dragged by children in the streets of Makkah.

MIGRATION FROM MAKKAH TO THE KINGDOM OF ABYSSINIA IN 615 A.D.

Some reasons for migration to Abyssinia were, the non-Muslims' increased intensity of abuse and torture on the Muslims and the Muslims wanted to save their lives. If the Muslims did not migrate tensions would increase between the Muslims and non-Muslims resulting in conflicts. The Quraysh were getting scared of the growing number of Muslims because the strength of the Quraysh would become less. If the Muslims had not migrated Islam which had just been born could have never taken root so soon.

Why was Abyssinia chosen for migration of Muslims? The Prophet (pbuh) felt that the Negus (Najassi, Asmaha bin al-Hibr) the King of Abyssinia (though a Christian) was a lover of justice. Therefore, he would allow the Muslims to live in peace as long as they wanted. Yemen was another option but it was under the ruler ship of Khusrow Parviz, the King of Iran, who had bad feelings for the Prophet (pbuh). Syria was not close to Makkah. Yemen and Syria had close business ties with the Quraysh. If the Muslims had migrated to Syria or Yemen, the chance of the Muslim minorities being expelled by the two countries was greatly possible.

E.F Peters writes while analyzing as to why the Prophet (pbuh) advised to his followers for migration to Kingdom of Abyssinia across the Red Sea, "The choice is interesting. Christian Abyssinia had long had commercial relations with Mecca, and Muhammad must surely have thought that his Muslims would receive a sympathetic hearing there, as apparently they did. Many stayed on in Africa but others rejoined Muhammad after he had resettled in Medina." (16).

Members of the 1st and 2nd migrations to Abyssinia

The Muslim group consisted of 15 people (11 men and 4 women) from different families who reached the *Shuaiba* the Sea port and booked a ferry for half a Dinar and set out for Abyssinia under the leadership of Usman (r.a) (17) and arrived at *Musawwa* (Ariteria sea port which was part of Abyssinia) and went to *Uksum* (old capital of Abyssinia). After a short period of time Ja'far-Abu- Talib (r.a), the elder brother of Ali (ra), the only member of the Banu Hashim tribe and other Muslims reached Abyssinia. Now the Muslim group had 82 men excluding women and children. (18). In the 1st migration there were 4 women while in the 2nd migration there were 18 women, out of whom 11 were from tribes of Quraish.(19) some people also took their families with them. They spent three months peacefully and contentedly, one day they heard that the Quraysh had embraced Islam, the Muslims felt home-sick and returned to Makkah. But those were just rumours. Infact, the conditions of the Muslims had worsened, so, they decided to go back to Abyssinia.

THE ABYSSINIAN MODEL

The migration to Abyssinia was purely on religious grounds but religious problems were not created there. Today Muslim migration to the West, has been on mostly volunteer and material grounds, therefore the creation of religious problems is hard to understand and explain. There are similarities between the Muslims who migrated to Abyssinia and the Muslims of today who have migrated to the West. The Abyssinian model can be adopted for learning lesson and improvement in Islamo-Christian relationship.

Advice to Ja'afar (RA) before his departure by Holy Prophet (pbuh)

The Prophet (pbuh) counseled the Muslims and said: "*Migrate to Ethiopia and live there till Allah relieves the hardship you face here as that is the land of justice and truth. There is a king who loves justice; no one is treated unjustly by him.*"(20)

Before decision to send the Muslim to Abyssinia, Place and audience analysis were two important things for existence and survival of immigrants. The Prophet (PBUH) was greatly convinced about his choice of place and personality and greatly sure that the Muslims would be well-received and be given a patient hearing and protection.

Highlights of the letter:

1. Phrase “Land of truth” is a great example of acceptance of other peoples and faiths. This kind of respect for people of other faiths shows that the Prophet’s (PBUH) spiritual progress had elevated his mental level to its highest and he (PBUH) was a man of sublime character.
2. Certification of truthfulness for the non- Arab, Christian ruler, whose language, religion, and culture were different from the Prophet’s.
3. Lesson to the entire Muslim community to appreciate truth and justice, everywhere by everyone.
4. The praise of King in such a way shows unbiased and unprejudiced attitude towards people of other faiths.
5. The praise of King in the following words in note –worthy “who loves justice; no one is treated unjustly by him” was done when he had not accepted Islam.
6. Abyssinia was not *Darul Islam* (Abode of Islam) *but* the Prophet (PBUH) advised the Muslims to migrate towards Abyssinia and Muslims lived there peacefully.

THE PROPHET’S LETTER TO THE KING AND RECEPTION OF THE MUSLIMS

The text (21) of the letter to the King of Abyssinia is based on:

1. The Oneness of Allah and the Prophethood (PBUH).
2. The true status of Jesus and Virgin Mary.
3. The invitation and advice for peace.

The emigrants were well received in Abyssinia, and were allowed complete freedom of worship. While reporting about the life of Muslims in Abyssinia, Umm Salmah, (ra) narrates, “When we reached Abyssinia, the King gave us shelter; we were given complete freedom to practice Islam in a peaceful environment. There was no one who tortured us by words (or in any way), when the Quraysh heard about our safe and peaceful conditions in Abyssinia. They called their influential people for plotting against us.” (22)

Efforts of the Quraysh to send the Muslim Emigrants Back to Makkah

The leaders of Quraysh, however, were none the less determined that they should not be left in peace, to establish there, beyond their control, a dangerous community which might be increased tenfold if other converts joined them. So they speedily thought out a plan, and made ready a quantity of presents of a kind that the Abyssinians were known to value most. Leatherwork they prized above all, so a large number of fine skins were collected, enough to make a rich bribe for every one of the Negus’s generals. There were also rich gifts for the Negus himself.(23) and Arabian horse of very fine breed and expensive silk gown too. (24)

The distortion of the Image of Islam by the Quraish delegation

The Quraysh had tried to bribe the king with expensive presents. Amr ibn al-As, of the clan of Sahn and Ammar bin Waleed, two best diplomats and representatives of Quraysh, approached the generals separately with precious gifts and said:

“Some foolish young men and women of our people have taken refuge in this kingdom. They have left their own religion, not for yours, but for one they have invented, one that is unknown to us and to yourselves. The nobles of their people have sent us to your king on their

account, that he may send them home. So when we speak to him about them, counsel him to deliver them into our hands and have no words with them; for their people see best how it is with them.” (25)

The text based on:

1. The Quraysh tried to convince the King of Abyssinia that the Muslims were criminals and as fugitives have run from the law of their country.
2. The Quraysh also tried to poison the minds of the Abyssinia ministers with gifts and convinced them that the Muslims are against the religion of their ancestors and taking advantage of the freedom in Abyssinia.
3. The King wanted a complete investigation in this regard.
4. The Muslims were brought to the court of Negus and Jafar Ibn Ali Talib (ra) was made the leader and representative of the Muslims.
5. Jafar (ra) told the King about the inhuman, ignorant and barbaric conditions in which they were living and the suffering the people were going through.

Effective presentation of Islam in the palace of the king of Abyssinia

Ja'far (ra) introduced Islam and the text (26) of address in the palace of king of Abyssinia states:

1. The Oneness of Allah and Prophethood (PBUH).
2. True status of Jesus (PBUH) and Virgin Mary.
3. The worst evil customs of the Arab society before Islam.
4. Keen interest in positive changes in the society by eliminating evils and inculcating morals and social upliftment as preached by the prophet of Islam.
5. Effective communication and presentation of Islam which removed the misperceptions and changed the whole scenario.
6. Defensive role of Islam instead of condemnation of the Quraysh.
7. The nobility of the Prophet (pbuh) and the greatness of his message. Which would bring peace, justice and happiness to society.
8. Recitation of some verses from Chapter Maryam, where the King found a lot of common points between the Qur'an and the Bible and was convinced of the authenticity of Islam.
9. The King's judgment in favour of the Muslims and order that are free to live in his Kingdom as long as they wished.

Response of Negus

After hearing the comments of Ja'far (ra) Negus said, “I welcome you and I also welcome the noble messenger who has sent you here.... You can live in my Kingdom wherever you wish” (27)

FACTORS WHICH MADE ISLAMO-CHRISTIAN COEXISTENCE POSSIBLE IN ABYSSINIA

Islamic text and tradition encourages peaceful coexistence in a non-Islamic State. The companions of the prophet (pbuh) in spite of belonging to a totally different environment, laws and customs of Makkah migrated to Abyssinia and adjusted very well in the environment of Kingdom of Abyssinia. The Muslims respected and abided the systems and laws of Abyssinia.

1. Muslims when treated badly or with cruelty did not resort to violent ways. On the other hand, they tried to be unprejudiced with the situation in Abyssinia by not taking

- sides with any party. They did not interfere with the problems or situations in Abyssinia.
2. They cooperated with the Kingdom in lawful, legal and just matters.
 3. They accepted the Kingdom as legal and lawful. They respected the laws of the land.
 4. They did not receive any messages from the Prophet (pbuh) to overthrow the kingdom of Abyssinia and try to take it over so that the Islamic Shar'iah (laws) could be promulgated and implemented there.
 5. They were not incited by the Prophet (pbuh) to bring about an armed Islamic revolution in the Kingdom
 6. Muslims had to keep their faith intact and be on more friendly terms with "people of the book" rather than with people who worshipped idols and gods.
 7. Muslims who had migrated to Abyssinia, after living there for seven years did not want to go to Madinah. The Prophet (pbuh) never forced any of them to come and settle in Madinah.
 8. The Muslims of Madinah and Abyssinia were always on good terms with each other to the extent that the Prophet (pbuh) told the Muslims, "Until the Abyssinians attack you, do not attack them" (28). He (pbuh) also said, "As long as they do not bother you and let you live in peace, you too should not bother them also to live in peace" (29)
 9. The polytheists of Makkah racially and genealogically belonged to the family or race of the Prophet (pbuh) but he (pbuh) preferred the Christians of Abyssinia to them.
 10. Muslims who lived in Abyssinia established good relationships between Madinah and Abyssinia due to their excellent character and behavior.

Continuation of ties between the Prophet (pbuh) and the Negus after Hijra:

In 628 A.D, after 13 years when Jaf'ar (r.a) returned to Madinah, Najashi sent his son, Irha bin Ashama bin al-Hibr, with a group of sixty Abyssinians to pay homage to the Prophet (pbuh) Najashi also sent a letter with them in which was written

"O Prophet (pbuh) I testify that you are the true Prophet of Allah, and you are being a Prophet is endorsed in all (the previous sacred) scriptures. I have accepted Islam on your hands and the hands of your Uncle's son, Jafar (ra). I am now an obedient slave of Allah. I am sending my son, Irha, to pay respects to you. If you so command me, I will myself come to pay homage to you. Assalamu Alakka ya Rasoo Allah"(30)

This group of Arha and the sixty Abyssinians were on one ship while Jaf'ar (ra) along with some others were on another ship. The ship of Najashi's son sank in the middle of the Ocean Irha was drowned to death. Jaf'ar (ra) along with seventy men wearing woolen clothes safely came to Madinah and offered their respects to the Prophet (pbuh). Sixty two of them were Abyssinians and eight Syrians. Maqatil and Kalbi reported they were forty, out of whom 32 were Abyssinians and 8 were Syrians. Ata said they were 80, out of whom, 40 were (Najrani) Yemenis, who belonged to the tribe Banu Harith, 32 were Abyssinians and 8 were Syrians and Romans. The Prophet (pbuh) recited Surah Yaseen to them. On hearing the recitation, they started crying and all of them embraced Islam. They also that this scripture is similar to the scripture revealed to Jesus Christ.(31)

Imam Tabari (389-923 CE/225-310 AD) writes that Saeed bin Jubair (ra) narrates that, "Najashi sent a delegation to the Prophet (pbuh), he recited verses of the Qur'an to them and they (the members of the delegation) embraced Islam. On that occasion Allah revealed the verse (5:82) for them. This converted to Islam delegation went back to Negus and informed him about the meeting with the Prophet (pbuh) and his recitation of the Qur'an. On hearing

this Najashi also embraced Islam and remained a Muslim till his death. When Najashi died the Prophet (pbuh) told the Muslims that “one of your brothers is dead”, so, let’s offer the funeral prayers for him. The Prophet (pbuh) led the funeral prayer of Najashi in absence in Madina while his dead body was in Abyssinia” (32)

CAN THE CONDITIONS BE RECREATED TODAY, THE PRESENT TIME, ALTHOUGH TAKEN FROM THE PAST

Can the conditions that made peaceful coexistence possible elsewhere and in a different era be transported or recreated to the present time, in the current situation of conflict and violence. A Muslims who live in a non-Muslim country and environment or any person who is there with visa or immigration is known “*Mustamin*” in Islamic terminology. If that person thinks he is living in *Daar ul Harb* (house of war) it is his dire misunderstanding. Next year after the Hudaibiyah peace treaty the Prophet (pbuh) circumambulated and worshiped in the Kabah with his companions; the power was in the hands of non-Muslims. He (pbuh) returned with companions to Madinah in peace without any hostilities. The person is duty bound to observe the rules of the land and respect the prevailing system. Visa or immigration is a contract between the emigrant and the country which issues him visa or allows him migration. The only place where they cannot obey the laws of the new country is if they are compelled to say or act against the tenets of Islam such as prostrating to an idol etc. since the Prophet (pbh) said, “Under no circumstances can the will of Allah be disobeyed for the pleasure of any person. (33) Muslims living in non-Muslim countries are following the life-style and behavior of Muslim minorities in Abyssinia:

1. Respecting and abiding by the laws of the host country
2. Fighting from the side of the host country if the need arises for their support.
3. Not wanting to overthrow the Govt. and establish Islamic *Shari’ah* in its place.
4. Being on friendly terms with the people of the book.
5. Sharing their knowledge and expertise in all the fields of science and education leading to economic and social success of the migrant country.
6. Acting as missionaries and persuading people to accept Islam from a pedestal of honour and convincing them about the truth of Islam with their words and actions.
7. Learning the effective art of communication (including internet-based) to convince non-Muslims about the truth of Islam by their actions and deeds.
8. Having complete knowledge about Islam and the Prophet of Islam like Jaf’ar (ra)
9. Knowing the religion and culture of the host country
10. Not attacking the place they have sought refuge it but rationally analyze the negative situations they have come from and the reasons for doing so.
11. Inviting non-Muslims to Islam from the pedestal of honour.
12. Striving to improve the oppressive conditions of their societies and also trying to eliminate oppression from the world.

MUSLIM MINORITIES IN EUROPE –PRESENT AND PAST

There are an estimated 10-15 million Muslims with a lot of ethnic diversity (Turks, Algerians, Moroccans and Pakistani) living in Europe. A small number of Muslims are converts of indigenous European origin. The biggest Muslim minorities live in France, Germany and Great Britain. Tariq Ramadan, a Muslim European (Swiss) thinker, the maternal grandson of Hassan al-Banna, the Brotherhood founder, points out that there are at least five fundamental freedoms (or rights) generally available to Muslims in Europe, right to

observe most of the major practices, right to knowledge, right to found organization, right to form representative bodies and right to appeal to the law. (34)

There have been Muslim minorities in history such as Muslims in Sicily remained under Christian rulers by fatwa of Sheikh Al Mazari (d.1141) in the twelfth century; Muslim minorities have also lived in Spain; Austria and Russia from the 15th to 19th centuries. (35)

Except for Spain where Muslims have lived for more than 800 years. Muslims in other parts of Europe migrated there after the Second World War, Four generations of Muslims have lived in Europe but Muslims now are trying to make their presence felt more than ever and Europeans are finding this hard to accept, as the Europeans are carrying Montgomery Watt identifies four negative features of the of Islam from the medieval times. (36) Europe and America are the homes of the Muslims who live there . This requires *Ijtihad* from Muslim Scholars to arrive at a new *Fiqh* to deal with contemporary challenges of living in the West as a minority, but remaining faithful to the sources of Islam”(37).

In Great Britain, the Runnymede Trust supported the publication of a report on Islamophobia in 1997. The report described the prejudice and discrimination faced by Muslims in everyday life due to an attitude of narrow-mindedness.(38)

There are negative images about Europeans in the minds of Muslims too. The Muslims feel that European Societies are less moral and less religious. Muslims want to protect themselves and their children from the “liberal morality”(39) of Europe, and the preservation of family life and values. They want to be given time to pray at work and be allowed to attend the Juma congregational prayers. They want halal foods to be available and the right for women to observe hijab, so, there are barriers of mistrust between the two communities. Hatred and violence towards each other has increased after 9/11 and Muslims are being challenged to address the sources of the religious extremism.

MUSLIM MINORITIES IN AMERICA-PRESENT AND PAST

There are four to six million Muslims in the United States. Islam ranks as the third largest religion after Christianity and Judaism from the time of Columbus; Spanish Muslims have lived in Spanish and Portuguese settlements in America. One – fifth of African slaves brought to America between the 16th and 19th centuries were Muslims. There was a significant increase in Muslim immigrants to America after the 2nd World War.

About 2/3rds Muslims in America today are immigrants or descendents of immigrants. Islam is now viewed as a foreign religion (violent and militant) and a threat to the West especially after the Iranian Revolution, hijacking in Lebanon, the Gulf and Pakistan, suicide bombing in Pakistan, Iraq and Afghanistan and attacks against Americans in Somalia, Saudi Arabia, New York and Washington. Like Muslims in Europe, Muslims in America have also been challenged to define their roles in America with issues of assimilation, integration, multi-culturalism, inter-marriage, gender-relations, worship and education. Many have problems using the English language and still others have the nostalgia for their native or original cultures.

Esposito writes “In recent years a major issue for Muslims has been the Americanization of the Muslim experience”(40) In the past, Imams were brought to America from foreign countries. Now more and more Muslims realize the need for native Imams who can understand the problems faced by the Muslims in daily life and answer their questions related to Islam. (41)Muslims have also made efforts to participate in Inter-faith work with Jews and Christians.

RECOMMENDATIONS

There are many valuable and practical recommendations given by the scholars for consideration such as Wahiduddin writes that extremist Muslims represented Islam in such a way that it clashed with the French system and culture. This resulted in many unnecessary

bans and obstacles to Muslims way of life by the French government (42) Jocelyne Cesari writes, "What is needed therefore is multidimensional dialogue in order for Muslims to understand Europe and for Europe to understand Muslims. To go beyond the discourse of tolerance and approach respect and to go beyond mere co-existence and think about pro-existence".(43) According to some estimates, considering the high birth rates among the Muslim population and low birth rates among the indigenous populations, Muslims will outnumber non-Muslims by 2050. Esposito writes, "Obviously co-existence of Muslims and non-Muslims is here to stay" (44). Some more recommendations are:

1. Muslims should make a careful study of the surroundings; some methods of adjusting to realities must be sought opportunities must be availed by rising to proper political awareness.
2. Muslims have to make their presence felt in a positive way in the political environment of the country. They can improve relations of the West with the Muslim countries of the world. Muslims must present a positive picture of themselves to the West which will help them be regarded as national and political assets and try to end hostilities with the West.
3. Muslims should develop proper religious leadership which can handle situations in the country and build a better image of Muslims everywhere by all means.
4. Muslims can also endeavour and take part in the development of society by building educational institutions, libraries, guidance centers etc. for both Muslims and non-Muslims. If they want to take part in political fields, it should be done in a peaceful manner.
5. Muslims must avoid emotional rhetoric and try to be rational and non-emotional in their life style including interpretation of Islam.
6. Muslims should not react to the discriminations against them and ignore their antagonism and combativeness. Islam is an entirely tolerant religion.(45) Tolerance is the only basis for peace. In a society where tolerance is absent, peace will also be absent.
7. The representatives of Muslims and non-Muslims should hold discussions with open hearts.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

The companions of the Prophet (pbuh) travelled to various countries, settled there permanently, learned the language of the country, and adopted the cultures which were not contradictory to Islamic teachings, married, had children and died there. Their migrations were on purely religious grounds but religious problems were not created by them. Migration of early Muslims to the Kingdom of Abyssinia was not towards Abode of Islam but was towards a country where the ruler and people were the follower of Christianity. Muslims and Christians lived together peacefully in the Kingdom of Abyssinia. Muslims respected and abided the laws of the host country. They did not adopt double standers over there and did not hide their Muslim identity. Muslims did not set up any secret cell for agitation or revolt. Muslims have lived in Europe and America for centuries and majority of emigrants have accepted Europe and America as their homes and adjusted to the situations there and have history of love-hate relationship. The Abyssinian model proves that excellence and nobility were factors that gave the Muslims protections in the Kingdom. People of other faiths cannot

see faith of a Muslim in the heart but nobility in behavior and character can bring about a positive change in the perception about Muslim communities in the West. Muslims are *dais* (preachers) and other nations are *mad'u* (to whom you invite), *Dais* are well-wishers of *madu*. *Dawah* is wholly an experience of love and tolerance. Whatever Muslims gained in Abyssinia was through *Dawah* with sublime character, any future gains in the West will be likewise through it if true Islamic requisites are kept in mind. Peaceful co-existence is the core value of Islamic Shar'iah and the only way of existence on this planet.

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