

Moral Diplomacy: The Concept of Islamic Diplomacy and Diplomatic Practice in Early Age

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Abstract

Objective The study aimed to present the Concept of Diplomacy and Diplomatic Practice in the Early Islamic age with two objectives 1) How the Islamic state manage policy on diplomacy affairs and makes co-existence with another creed? 2) What is the international policy of Madinah and what are the major characteristics of The Holy Prophet (PBUH) as an international policy maker?

Methodology This study applies a qualitative research method. The research methodology uses a documentary research method with an analytical description to collect data from three major sources (Primary, Secondary, and Tertiary) with relevant literature and books.

Research findings The Result found that in the Early Ages Islamic State of Medina adopted the concept of Moral Diplomacy as a major policy for international relations affairs focused on preaching Islam without any interests. The Holy Prophet (PBUH) shows his great characteristics in this field by using a number of diplomatic tools for interacting with foreigners. These models from the Holy Prophet (PBUH) were later developed by prominent Muslim jurists as a branch of science known as Ilm-Siyar (Islamic International Relations) relates to interactions between Muslims and non-Muslims in the States.

Application The Concept of Moral Diplomacy presented by the Holy Prophet (PBUH) consists of 5 major characteristics 1. Gentleness in Human Relation 2. Loyalty 3. Patience 4. Modesty 5. Loyalty shows a great model for later Muslim diplomats to promote good relations with non-Muslim

communities. These characteristics present positive views of Islam as be optimistic idea in order to respond to Islamophobia spread by Westerners in recent times.

Keywords: Moral Diplomacy, Islamic Diplomacy, Ilm Siyar

Introduction

Prior to the coming of Islam, the socio-political setting of the Arab community was still in uncivilized and ignorant conditions. The concept of Tribalism spreading in the Arabian Peninsula led people to rely on their own tribe first. The relations between Arab tribes were sometimes conducted in a negative way leading to the emergence of various conflicts and hence many enmities and wars taking place between the tribes for a long period of time, such as the Fijar Wars. The leaders had a responsibility to protect their communities from the destruction which might be caused by their opponents. The weaker tribes might seek protection from the stronger and greater tribes. Some historians opined that the socio-political settings of the Arabs in the uncivilized and ignorant period were in unsafety conditions and moral turmoil.

After the early spread of Islam in the Arabian Peninsula, the Islamic teaching aimed to uproot the uncivilized and ignorant culture of the Jahiliyyah lifestyles. The Holy Prophet (PBUH) attempted to reconstruct the Arab civilization by offering Islam as their new way of life. He showed his great moral and ethical manners in the process of carrying out his diplomatic mission for reforming the uncivilized and ignorant culture and establishing the peaceful coexistence and sustainable moral life to all tribes in desertic Arabia.

With the rise of Islam, we may see the Establishment of principles that were proved revolutionary for diplomacy and international relations on the idea of a universal state based on human

equality. The distinctions of race color, and language are totally abolished. The Holy Quran has mentioned

“Lo! Those who believe (in that which is revealed unto thee, Muhammad), and those who are Jews, and Christians, and Sabaeans - whoever believeth in Allah and the Last Day and doeth right - surely their reward is with their Lord, and there shall no fear come upon them neither shall they grieve”

(Surah al-Baqarah: 62)

The Conquest of Makkah in 630 A.D. was a turning point for the Holy Prophet (PBUH) on his mission. Islam spread rapidly throughout the Arabian Peninsula within a decade of the great potential of the Holy Prophet (PBUH) along with his companions. In a later year 631 A.D. known in Islamic history as “The Year of Deputation”. Madinah as the sovereign state initiated to sending of several diplomats’ corps to several tribes and kingdoms for the sake of preaching work resulted to a mass of tribes converting to Islam. The Holy Quran proved this fact in the following verses

“When Allah's help comes and victory is attained. And (O Prophet,) you see that the people are entering into Allah's Religion in crowds”

(Surah al-Nasr: 1-2)

(al-Maududi, 2013: 604) described in this verse that the words “in crowds” means that when the time for the people to Islam one’s

and two's come to an end. Many tribes in Arabia have free will to select their creed without any pressure. In 631 A.D. known as The Year of Deputations. Many deputations from every part of Arabia coming before the Holy Prophet (PBUH) started enter into Islam whole tribe until before the death of The Holy Prophet in 10 A.H. The whole of Arabia became Muslim, and not a single polytheist remained anywhere in the country.

Behind the scenes, this achievement was not derived from the sharpness of a sword or spear, but in fact, the Arabs accepted Islam mostly from the great morals and manners of the Holy Prophet (PBUH) which they encountered.

In the Early Islamic period. Madinah conducted diplomatic practices and international relations policy similarly to the concept of "Moral Diplomacy" in the Modern age. The Holy Prophet (PBUH) has shown his characteristics as a good diplomat and negotiator. The concept of diplomatic practices by the Holy Prophet succeeded in the mission resulted with a mass of Arab tribes have conversions to Islam.

Research

The research aimed to study the Concept of Diplomacy and Diplomatic Practice in the Early Islam Age dealing with two major objectives. 1) How the Islamic state manage policy on diplomacy affairs and makes co-existence with another creed? 2) What is the International policy of Madinah and what are the major characteristics of The Holy Prophet (PBUH) as an international policy maker ?

Methodology

This study applies a qualitative research method. The research methodology uses a documentary research method with an analytical description to collect data from three major sources with relevant literature books and electronic sources. The study tries to present that any diplomacy efficiently applied has to adopt these characteristics and tools as a part.

Research Findings

After the Study of Diplomacy and Diplomatic Practices in the Early Islamic Age. The Author may be summarized by the following

Moral Diplomacy

The Concept of Diplomacy in The Early Islamic Age mentioned by Professor Afzal Iqbal in his book “Diplomacy in Islam” as Moral Diplomacy consists of five major characteristics presented by the Holy prophets (PBUH) and his companions. The discussions may be following (Iqbal, 1988)

Moral Diplomacy is a system supported by countries whose beliefs are analogous to those of a nation with similar values and beliefs. A major idea behind this diplomacy was to force or promote own values to other countries. (Cassese, 1995)

The international policy of Madinah during the rule of the Holy Prophet (PBUH) was to promote Islamic teaching and ethical values to other countries they accepted or not if they accepted Islam would be a part of the Islamic state and develop together but if The country refused

to accepted Islam so they must be paid for taxes (Jizya) or fought with Islamic State. This kind of diplomacy in the early Islamic age was similar to the Moral diplomacy promoted by U.S. President Woodrow Wilson in the early 20th Century in order to promote democratic ideas to all countries with the result of economic support to those who accept and sanction to country that refuses democracy. (Ambrosius, 2002)

The Concept of Moral Diplomacy presented by the Holy Prophet (PBUH) in the Early Islamic Age derived from his great values of ethical and moral characteristics based on the teaching of the Holy Quran and Sunnah which can be divided into five major characteristics as follows.

1. Gentleness in Human Relations

The Islamic Teaching encouraged propagators (Da'i) to have gentleness (non-Obligatory) in their mission. The Non-Believers have the freedom to join Islam as they wish, they can study the teachings of Islam before acceptance. The Holy Quran has mentioned

*“Let there be no compulsion in religion, for
the truth stands out clearly from falsehood.
So, whoever renounces false gods and
believes in Allah has certainly grasped the
firmest, unfailing hand-hold. And Allah is All-
Hearing, All-Knowing.”*

(Surah Al-Baqarah Chapter 256)

The Holy Prophet (PBUH) has kind interactions with people. He never be angered or chafed to his guest, while he speaks tried to avoid

all vain discourse, he invites and argues in ways most gracious, his words are gentle, his manner is grateful, he is unfailing in courtesy and he says what is best, unlike the conventional diplomat who seeks for their interests.

In the year of delegation in 631 A.D. Many deputations visited Madinah. The Holy Prophet received his guests with a smile and salutation of peace, when he dealt with people using simple language, spoke clearly and slowly, never raised his voice to a high pitch, and always advised his companions to remain quiet if they didn't have a good thing to say.

By this feature, the gentleness of the Holy Prophet (PBUH) was a part of the great ethical value that led him to earn a title by the Almighty Allah (SWT) as “Rahmat-ul-lill-A’lameen” (The Mercy for all creatures) (Iqbal, 1988 pp:115-24)

2. Trustworthy

Trustworthiness was a salient feature of the Holy Prophet (PBUH) his name “Al-Ameen” may be prove by this fact. The Holy Quran has mentioned:

“Fulfil the Covenant of Allah when ye have entered into it, and break not your oaths after ye have confirmed them; indeed, ye have made Allah your surety; for Allah knoweth all that ye do.”

(Surah Al-Nahl Chapter 91)

The aforementioned described Muslims as being prohibited from lies, fraud, and every trick in dealings and negotiation activities. The believers must be judgmental and trustful (Amanah) even if it will be led disastrously.

In the events of Hudaibiyyah. The Holy Prophet (PBUH) showed his great potential in trustful even though Muslims were disadvantageous to The Makkans in this treaty but they never broke the promise still the Quraysh broke the treaty in later time.

In the Modern age, Modern diplomacy encourages to show his false propagation and tricks for the sake of national interest as the main factor. Many diplomats used his discourse as the art of negotiation ignored from truthful even friends or foes. This characteristic was transformed into his companions. We may see that at that time many non-Muslims converted to Islam because they believed in the word of Muslims. (Iqbal, 1988: 125-37)

3. Patience

Patience is a part of the moral diplomacy introduced by The Holy Prophet (PBUH). It's also a part of faith (al-Iman) according to al-Hadith. The good diplomat must be patient and continue with singleness in his mission, waiting for a proper time is a characteristic of diplomacy the Holy Prophet (PBUH) has shown us a high quality of patience in his 23 years on missions. He never loses his hope and faith in The Almighty Allah (SWT) while difficult. He prayed to Him while suffering from harsh abuse from Quraysh and never fought with them, seeking help from Him to protect Muslims from disaster, he ordered his

companions to the patient for a cause and in last the Almighty Allah (SWT) revealed the permission on fighting (Jihad) to response on the enemy. (Iqbal, 1988: 146-49)

The events of Hudaibiyyah in Islamic history shows the importance of patience for a cause with the optimized vision of the Holy Prophet as a diplomat. In the text of Hudaibiyyah Muslim army get a huge loss in the treaty. They set for Makkah for a long distance with full hope to visit the House of Allah and homelands but they have to return to Madinah without entering Makkah. The Holy Prophet accepted this agreement with full patience and in last the fruitful appeared to them by the conquest of Makkah in a later year without any bloodshed. (Smith, 2006)

The Almighty Allah (SWT) encouraged Muslims to be patient. The Holy Quran has mentioned:

“Therefore, (O Prophet), have patience. Surely
Allah’s promise is true. Let those who lack certainty
not cause you to be unsteady.”

(Surah Al-Rum Chapter 60)

4. Modesty

The Concept of Modesty is totally against modern diplomacy because the recent government has to decorate their views with luxury to show their power and strength in socio-economic conditions against friends or foes. In contrast, Islam encouraged modesty to all followers even the Holy Prophet (PBUH) as state ruler. The Islamic State in the Early Age lived with modest life and wasn’t concerned with property or

money so we may see in many events and hadith that the Holy Companions weren't interested in receiving money but for the sake of religion, all vanity of color, wealth, race and numbers were collapsed by Islam.

The Holy Prophet (PBUH) was a great model of modesty, he was born as an orphan and lost his mother as a child. He grew up under the caretaker of his grandfather and then uncle. When he got married to Khadijah (R.A.) the wealthiest lady of Makkah, he still lived with modesty in a small house. Later in Madinah, he built some small rooms near The Prophetic Mosque, not in a palace. The house is made from mud thatched with date palm leaves. If a guest stands up, they can touch the ceiling with his hand. In Madinah, he created equality in society which excluded all privileges. The only privilege lay in service and sacrifice. (Iqbal, 1988:149-55)

The Reign of Hazrat Umar ibn Al-Khattab (R.A.) also shows in his modest life. The Islamic State has extended its territories into Central Asia and Africa. Many disputants visited Madinah and hoped to see the great ruler who was able to conquer one-third of the globe. When they reached Madinah, the great ruler lived a simple life, slept under the tree without any guard, and wore clothes with stitches without a crown and staff. The Holy Prophet (PBUH) along with his Companions lived without concern for wealth, or honor but sought reward and complacency (Ridaa) from The Almighty Allah (SWT) alone. (Al-Mawardi, 2006-1427)

5. Loyalty

Loyalty is an attitude of steadfast and consistent devotion to duty, In Communist and Totalitarian countries, loyalty is considered as

blind faith in infallibility. Islam teaches followers to respect and bold down to their Creators. (Iqbal, 1988) The Holy Quran has mentioned:

“Say: ‘Surely my Prayer, all my acts of worship, and my living and my dying are for Allah alone, the Lord of the whole universe, He has no associate. Thus, have I been bidden, and I am the foremost of those who submit themselves (to Allah).”

(Surah Al-an’am Chapter 60)

The aforementioned is the concept of Moral Diplomacy in the Early Islamic age which can develop the Islamic state as the superpower of the world at the time. By this factor, Muslims became formidable and received respect from other countries. Therefore, the Muslim diplomat in various countries may be studying and adopting this concept for diplomacy affairs to make characteristics as Muslims because the Holy Quran has proof has shown us that this concept and great ethical values able to uplift socio-political conditions in Muslim countries to be power in the global forum.

Conclusion and Recommendation

In the present time, the influence of Western ideas spread in every aspect of life including the international relations perspective. Western international relations mostly relied on national interests before positive relations among humanity. Therefore, human beings ignore ethical principles and focus on their interests. For the aforementioned reasons, humans must adopt Islam in their routine because its principles

are full of great moral and ethical values to uplift the human mind as a virtuous person.

In conclusion, this research paper shows the relevance between Islam and diplomacy that may be useful for readers and researchers, especially for Muslim diplomats who seeking salient features of Islam in diplomacy. The methodology shows us how the Holy Prophet (PBUH) and his companions managed international relations with other states hidden with tricks for interactions with other religious communities. After the establishment of Madinah, the State was surrounded by Christian, Jewish, and Polytheist societies. But within a decade Madinah was able to make these societies accept Islam without any force or threats they surrendered to Islam to the great Moral and Ethical values of Muslims.

The Concept of Moral diplomacy presented in this paper shows a great model for Muslim diplomats or leaders who wish to deal good relations with non-Muslim communities. These five characteristics may show positive views of Islam to non-Muslims leading them to be optimistic. Therefore, these concepts must be studied in related departments and organizations to present Islam in positive ways and build sustainable relations between Muslims and Non-Muslim in society.

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