

## EFFORTS OF MUSLIM THEOLOGIANs TO PROMOTE PEACE AND HARMONY AMONG THE MINORITIES IN PAKISTAN (A case study of the efforts of Maulana Mawdudi and Tahir-ul-Qadri)

**Dr. Muhammad Yasir**, Lecturer, Department of Humanities and Social Sciences Khwaja Fareed University of Engineering & Information Technology, R.Y.Khan.

**Dr. Umm-e-Laila**, Lecturer, Department of Islamic studies, The Govt. Sadiq College Women University, Bahawalpur.

**Majid Rashid**, Lecturer, Department of Humanities and Social Sciences Khwaja Fareed University of Engineering & Information Technology, R.Y.Khan.

### Abstract:

It is very rare in the contemporary political states of the world, where minorities enjoy all the human rights along with the political and religious liberty. Everywhere local interest is dominant. Ruling people have deprived the minorities of their human and social rights. The modern democracies have over favored the majorities while minorities are deprived of their basic human, social, political and religious liberties. There is no example in any country of the world where minorities are enjoying the status of first class citizenship. In a way or other they are deprived of their basic human rights some times by the coercive religious behavior of the majority and sometimes by the prejudiced dominant class.

In contrast the history of Islam has proved time and again that Islam is the only religion on face of the earth which offers all sorts of liberties and basic human rights to the minorities at different times and at different places.

Pakistan being an Islamic state provides the Minorities all the basic human rights along with the full liberty of expression and exercising their religious rituals culturally and linguistically too. All these liberties are ensured to them starting from objectives resolution till the finalization of the present constitution of Pakistan. All this had been made possible through the efforts of Muslim theologians and the founders of Pakistan. Amongst these theologians, Dr. Tahir ul Qadri (b 1951) and Mawlana Maududi (1979) occupy an outstanding position.

This paper mainly examines and highlights the efforts of Muslim Theologians and national leaders along the results manifested at the grass root level within the society of Pakistan.

**Keywords:** Minorities in Pakistan, Muslim Theologians, Dr. Tahir ul Qadri, Maulana Mawdudi, Rights of Minorities.

## **1. Introduction**

Minority and majority terms are not new in the history of mankind. From the very beginning of the social life of human beings minority and majority communities have been struggling for their social rights. Yet it has been time and again observed that majority dominates and violates the rules of minority rights. Therefore the minority rights have been limited to the terms of minority emancipation. Notably Islam has been the champion of minority rights. Due to its divine perspective of religion, Pakistan is the first subcontinent country to act upon strictly the rules of minority rights. Muhammad Ali Jinnah the founder of Pakistan and the pioneers of Pakistan movement ensured the minorities for their social, religious and ethnic emancipation. Moreover the religious leaders of Pakistan have laid out the theoretical and practical work on the concepts of minority rights. While the political key influential and the social leaders have practically advanced the practice of minority and majority relationship along with the respectful life of minorities. As Mawlana Maududi (1979) and Dr.Tahir ul Qadri (b1951) respectively organized and supervised mass communication to the grass level root of the Pakistani society, educated the very concepts of independent minorities as visualized and ensured by the basic rules of Islam.

Moreover it is a sociological fact that in an inter-religious and international competitive political atmosphere, religious and political propaganda gives a different picture of minority position in various countries and especially developing countries like Pakistan. While Pakistan is an exception to the religious prejudice, found in the south East Asian countries. It is very important to give the real picture of the religious, social and political situation in Pakistan regarding the rights of minority.

## **2. Islamic facilitations for minorities**

Islam has provided the minorities basic human rights which every member of Islamic state enjoys like security of life, security of asserts surety of self respect and the liberty of religion and rituals and the security of their religious worship places. It was made a social law of the first Islamic state Madinah. In addition they were exempted from military responsibilities against a nominal *Dhimmi* tax. Social equality is ensured to them in all walks of life. They were governed by their own religious laws and regulations.

In religious affairs, the minority rights are based upon the Qur'anic principal of *no-compulsion* or *coercion* as mentioned in the verse:

لَا إِكْرَاهَ فِي الدِّينِ<sup>1</sup>

Similarly at another place the Qur'an has advised

لَكُمْ دِينُكُمْ وَلِيَ دِينِ<sup>2</sup>

Which means that your beliefs are for yourself and my beliefs are for myself.

The status and importance of the rights of minorities can be judged by this statement of the Holy Prophet ﷺ:

أَلَا مَنْ ظَلَمَ مُعَاهِدًا، أَوْ انْتَقَصَهُ، أَوْ كَلَّفَهُ فَوْقَ طَاقَتِهِ، أَوْ أَخَذَ مِنْهُ شَيْئًا بِغَيْرِ طِيبِ نَفْسٍ، فَأَنَا

حَاجِبُهُ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ<sup>3</sup>

“Beware! Who so ever maltreated the protected person (minority) or usurped the right of such person or troubled him more than his capacity or obtained something without his consent, I would fight for his right against that Muslim on the day of Resurrection.”

It is not just a warning but a law which was practically enforced in the time of Holy prophet ﷺ and even now this is part of the Muslim law presently in every Muslim state. The Noble Prophet ﷺ used to host the non-Muslim delegations Himself; the delegate from Ethiopia was taken as personal guests of the Holy prophet ﷺ. To further the same Islamic ethics, the Beloved Prophet ﷺ used to present high respect to the delegates who were allies of His companions. The Prophet ﷺ stated:

إِنَّهُمْ كَانُوا لِأَصْحَابِي مُكْرِمِينَ، فَإِنِّي أَحِبُّ أَنْ أَكْفِيَهُمْ<sup>4</sup>

“Because these people enjoy a distinguish status and relation with our people therefore I have liked to deal respectfully with them and host them especially.”

The very statement of the Holy Prophet ﷺ is actually the explanation of the nature of relationship with the people of other religions.

Similarly, Abu Sufiyan (653 AD) who was at that time the enemy of Islam, even then at the time of Conquest of Mecca the Holy Prophet ﷺ declared that

“Whosoever entered the house of Abu Sufiyan, has actually achieved the peace.”<sup>5</sup>

Islamic state provides and protects the equal rights to the minorities. For that matter the parity of state law for the Muslim and non-Muslim is affirmed by the following exemplary tradition:

Once a Muslim murdered a non-Muslim, the Holy Prophet ﷺ awarded death penalty to that Muslim as a Qisas and declared

أَنَا أَحَقُّ مَنْ أَوْفَى بِدِمَّتِهِ<sup>6</sup>

I have the prime responsibility of ensuring and protecting the right of non-Muslims.

The Muslim society ensures the provision and liberty of enjoying the basic human rights which may be concluded in the civil and criminal laws enforced in the Muslim states. The Muslim state offers the liberty of religion to the majority and minority equally. It gives the liberty of expression and equal compensation in the legal and social forms. Muslim state is responsible to provide private and individual liberty, the rights of family protection along with the social and economic protection. It also ensures the right of earning livelihood freely and enjoying the collective assistance and social security. Islamic state is bound to act upon the social contract with the minorities wherein they are exempted from the military services. Another aspect of respecting the treaties with non-Muslims and other nations is that Islam provides a wide range of the rights of war prisoners. The holy Prophet ﷺ has emphasized highly on the humanly treatment of prisoners of wars which can be seen in the example of the prisoners of the battle of Badr.

Comprehensively speaking, all the rights above mentioned are manifested in the practical life of Holy Prophet ﷺ and His treaties with the non-Muslims and especially with the Christians and

Jews. Responding the emphasis of Holy Prophet ﷺ on the rights of minorities, the Caliphs and the rulers of Banu Umayyad and Abbasids tried to fulfill such responsibility of respecting the said rights. For example the treaty of people of ‘Aanaat’ reached upon in the time of Hazrat Abu Bakr رضي الله عنه reveals that

1. Their religious shrines and temples would not be perished.
2. They can blow their Naqos any time except the five time calls of Muslim prayers.
3. They can publically hoist their cross on their yearly rituals of Easter etc.<sup>7</sup>

This is the reason that the minorities were pleased and felt secured under the Islamic governments. There are various manifestations in a number of Muslim rules and moreover they have been confessed by the members of relative minorities some of them are related here under: Bernard Lewis (Born in 1916)<sup>8</sup> cites a fifteenth-century Jew writing to Jews in Europe and urging them to migrate to Turkey:

Is it not better for you to live under Muslims than Christians? Here every man may dwell at peace under his own vine and fig tree. Here you are allowed to wear the most precious clothe your children in red or blue- without exposing them to the insult of being beaten black and blue’. Jews in Germany are ‘pursued even unto death’ Jewish reports on Turkish behavior and Turkish attitudes are almost uniformly favorable’.<sup>9</sup>

Another famous orientalist Montgomery Watt (2006)<sup>10</sup> has accepted that

The Christians were probably better off as Dhimmi under Muslim Arab-rulers than they had been under the Byzantine Greek.<sup>11</sup>

Islam has not only provided the provisions of Basic human rights but also has implemented it practically, as we have mentioned it above. Moreover the Non Muslim writers and thinkers have praised this aspect of Islamic rules at different occasions and different places.

### **3. Pakistani State law for the protection of Minorities and Muslim theologian’s efforts**

Historically speaking most of the Muslim theologians have in numerous contributions for promoting the inter-religious harmony and ensuring the security of minority rights. They have

rightly highlighted the real Islamic response for the rights of minorities and promoting the inter-religious harmony in Pakistan. A majority of the theologians of Pakistan namely Mawlana Mawdudi (1979), Justice Peer Karam Shah Al-Azhari (1998), Dr. Tahir ul Qadri (Born in 1951), Shah Ahmad Noorani (2003), Mawlana Ghulam Ghous Hazarvi (1981) and Mawlana Kosar Niyazi (1994) have been working hard in this context during all the time of Pakistani movement and afterwards till the finalization of the constitution of 1973. Along with the Muslim theologians non-Muslim personalities like Justice Alvin Robert Cornelius (1991)<sup>12</sup> and Justice Rana Bhagwandas (2015)<sup>13</sup> have been practically contributing to the inter-religious intercourse social assimilation and ideological progress in the field of humanitarianism. It has been a collective effort of all the Pakistanis to make the constitution of Pakistan a real reflection of Mesaaq-e-Madinah in order to give justice both to the majority and minority. Accordingly the concept of Pakistan taking shape of the constitutional regulations ensures the human liberty, freedom of expression and free religious practice as Quaid-e-Azam(1948) said during his address to Pakistan's Constituent Assembly on August 11, 1947.

Hindus would cease to be Hindus and Muslims would cease to be Muslims not in the religious sense because that is the personal faith of each individual, but in political sense as citizen of state... you are free to go to your mosque or to any place of worship in this state of Pakistan. You may belong to any religion or caste or creed... that has nothing to do with the business of the state.<sup>14</sup>

Resultantly the Objectives Resolution, March 1949, passed by Pakistan's Constitution Assembly which was collective efforts of Muslim and non-Muslim theologians recognized the rights of Minorities which says:

All persons are equal before the law and are entitled without any discrimination to the equal protection of the law. In this respect, the law shall prohibit any discrimination and guarantee to all persons equal and effective protection against discrimination on any ground such a race, color, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status.



In those states in which ethnic, religious or linguistic minorities exist, persons belonging to such minorities shall not be denied the right, in community with the other members of their group, to enjoy their own culture, to profess and practice their own religion, or to use their own language.<sup>15</sup>

Concisely speaking the process of development of inter-religious harmony and the utmost guarantee of the rights of minorities evolved from 1949 that is regulation of objectives, and was completed in the final shape of the constitution of 1973.

The constitution of 1973 is the unanimous agreement on the citizen equality before the state laws and national consensus on the assurance of religious and social liberty for the minorities and the socio economic parity thereof. Articles 4, 9, 14, 15, 16 and 25 of the Constitution of Pakistan guarantee conferment of equal rights to all citizens on the basis of equality. State of Pakistan practically ensures the implementation of the said rules in the spirit of the article 36 of the constitution which says:

The state shall safeguard the legitimate rights and interests of minorities, including their due representation in the Federal and Provincial services.<sup>16</sup>

The above mentioned story of the development and evolution of the laws protecting minorities comprehensively reflects the efforts of the theologians with the cooperation of political and national leaders including the founder of Pakistan.

#### **4. Maulana Mawdudi and Dr. Tahir ul Qadri's efforts for Minorities**

In the perspective of Pakistani society the work and efforts of Mawlana Mawdudi and Dr. Tahir ul Qadri is outstanding. Because both have performed not only as religious leaders but also as social reformers. They have a long history of their efforts and their commitment to the cause of humanity including the rights of minorities and the enforcement of practical, legal and moral justice. It should also be mentioned here that Mawlana Mawdudi was also the head of a political party along with his religious and social prominence. Similarly Dr. Tahir ul Qadri is a legal expert along with the religious leader and the head of a political party. Therefore, their efforts are multilateral and long lasting. The former leaders have a major following throughout the country because they are committed to the highest limit of practical performance and their literary work

(written and spoken material) is liked and followed by the majority of the population. Therefore it is the previous most effective cause of the inter-religious harmony and the cultural assimilation of different classes, sects and religions. The promotion of social peace and legal justice is stimulated by their practical examples.

**A.** Maulana Mawdudi was the pioneer of social and religious reforms to liberalize the minorities and suggested to ensure the enforcement of the regulations regarding the security and liberty of the Minorities. He gave a detailed account of the Islamic sources ensuring the parity between the majority and minority rights. He has highlighted the rights of the minorities in his numerous books. He has founded a party known as *Jamat-e-Islami*. The said organization is still operative in Pakistan and championing the cause of minorities along with the Islamic society through its minority wing which is working till 80s. The minorities are represented in the minority wing of the party by active members of various religious communities by the “Agreeing members” of the relative religions. It is a phenomenal development in the history of *Jamat-e-Islami* that they have recently invited the members of Hindu, Christian and Sikh communities into their annual congregation at Minar e Pakistan Lahore and allocated a separate enclosure for them. Moreover they were allowed to display their own [religious] literature at the ijtema.

Other partners, co-contributors and parallel contributors to the promotion of rights of minorities include Ataullah Shah Bukhari(1961), Maulana Ahmad Saeed Kazmi(1986), Shah Ahmad Noorani(2003), Mawlana Mufti Mahmood(1980), in a way or other have promoted inter – religious harmony and had tried successfully to guarantee the civil and human rights constitutionally to the minorities. For that matter, the said guarantees and assurances were represented in the constitution of 1962 and later on in the constitution of 1973.

**B.** The next and the most important contributor to the inter-religious relations is *Dr.Tahir ul Qadri*. In the field of promoting the rights of minorities in Pakistan and the harmonization of inter-religious relations, the status of Dr. Tahir ul Qadri is outstanding. He is considered to be an only leader of the common people of Pakistan; who promotes his philosophy of peace and inter-religious harmony by representing Pakistan in every international religious and social conference. He tours almost the country of Europe, Canada, America, Middle-East and South-East Asia. He is establishing and maintaining an inter-religious harmonial network throughout



the above mentioned countries. He is well known to be liberal enough to invite Christian and other minorities to his Minhaj ul Qur'an gatherings and allows them to worship freely according to their own religious beliefs in the Mosque of Minhaj ul Qur'an.

Dr. Tahir ul Qadri has started practically the promotion of rights of minorities by establishing the organization Muslim Christian Dialogue Forum (MCDF) in 1981 in Pakistan. In the name of the said organization regular meetings and events started to be held. In this context an important event took place and resultantly the Christian community was invited to worship in mosque of Minhaj ul Qur'an so that mutual harmony and Muslim-Christian dialogue may be promoted. And simultaneously every year joint celebrations of Christmas are co-celebrated at Lahore. During the decade of 80s the progress of mutual understanding and the promotion of interreligious cohesion have been advanced. Various countries started holding inter religious conferences and therein the rights of minorities got promotion through the lectures and discussions in such conferences. In the same decade Dr.Tahirul Qadri addressed various conferences in the countries South Africa, Europe and Canada. In the next decade the same system of conferences may important advancement in the countries Turkey, Norway, and Denmark. Similarly, the system did spread in the countries United Kingdom, USA, Canada and Australia and finally in 2010 many countries entered the system and completed the series. In this context MQI has organized a conference *The Peace for Humanity* in 2011 in UK in which 11000 people participated. It consisted of various religious scholars belonging to Hinduism, Christianity, Judaism, Buddhism and Sikhism.

Dr Tahir ul Qadri founded a political party in Pakistan Known as The Pakistan Awami Tehreek (PAT). He announced the establishment of PAT on 25 May 1989 in a public meeting at Mochi Gate, Lahore. PAT and Tehrik-e-Nifas-e-Fiqh-e-Jafria (a Shia political group) now known as Tehrik-e-Jafaria signed a 'Communique of Unity' to promote social and religious harmony. Pakistan Awami Tehreek (PAT) is the only political party, which has moved a petition in the Lahore High Court against the Punjab Government's Local Government Ordinance 2015 with a view to getting the constitutional right of direct vote for the non-Muslims.

Besides the practical work, Dr Tahir ul Qadri has a major contribution in promoting peace & harmony through his literary work (written and spoken material) which is liked and followed by

the majority of the population. He has written various books on the topics pertaining to the rights and role of minorities in Islamic society and especially the Pakistani society. These books are the latest work on the minority rights by any theologians of Islam *Human Rights in Islam and Islam on the Rights of Non-Muslims*. Moreover MQI founder Dr. Tahir ul Qadri has delivered in numerous lectures at in numerous places in the world on the said topics and has thus tried his level best to promote the inter-religious harmony and the recognition of the rights of minorities. This shows that the said leader and his co-partners in Minhaj ul Qur'an organization give utmost importance to the rights of minorities. In his special message on the National Day of Minorities celebrated on August 11, 2015, Dr Tahir ul Qadri has said that:

Non-Muslims are part of our national fabric. They have equal rights, adding that establishment of a prosperous and peace-loving society is impossible without their contributions and role.

He said that the Pakistan Awami Tehreek (PAT) considers the non-Muslims as equal citizens of the country in the light of the teachings of the Holy Quran and Sunna, the Constitution of Pakistan and the Quaid-e-Azam's speech of August 11, 1947 and holds their services and contributions during the freedom struggle and in development of the country in the highest esteem. He said that the PAT has always adopted a clear and manifest stance on the excesses committed against the minorities devoid of any ambiguity and sided with them during these times.

He said that we would not rest till we get justice and rights for the minorities in the light of the Quaid-e-Azam's vision and the spirit of the Constitution. He said that we would get those lands and properties vacated which have illegally been occupied. He said that the PAT is of the considered opinion that without active role and contributions of the non-Muslims, Pakistan cannot be made to join the ranks of the developed and prosperous countries.<sup>17</sup>

Dr. Tahir ul Qadri along with other reformers are co-Celebrating the rituals of religious minorities through the good offices of the workers and leaders of Minhaj ul Qur'an. The efforts

of both the leaders (Mawlana Mawdudi and Dr Tahir ul Qadri) are very popular amongst the masses. Their efforts have transform into social movements which are positively evolving and making progress at the grass root level. It is very evident that minorities of Pakistan are receptive in this context and reciprocally the members of the minority classes are cooperating with the said leaders and thus are achieving the highest possible level of religious and socio economic prosperity. Finally speaking both the above mentioned leaders has left unforgettable marks in the field of inter-religious harmony and humanly possible social justice.

### **Conclusion**

Minorities have all the basic human rights in Islamic society or Muslim states, which every other member of the state or individual is entitled to. Because Pakistan came into being in the name of Islam, therefore it ensures the implementation of Islamic rules regarding the rights of minorities constitutionally. The theologians and founders of Pakistan have strived for the sure enforcement of the minority rights successfully. The very efforts of the religious and political leaders resulted in the form of minorities well being and the happy social life, as a part of the faith of all the citizens. Moreover these conditions are flourishing day by day to the full satisfaction of minorities. The best manifestation of the fruitful utilization of such social opportunities is the ideally successfully life of Justice A.R.Cornelius (1991) and X Chief justice Rana Bhagwandas (2015). Both of them belong to the minority classes; that is Christian and Hindu respectively and both of them reached the highest status of their concerned institution and became the top key influential of the judiciary of Pakistan. Furtherly speaking, all the minorities have their reserve seats in the political institution and they have the right to be represented in the religious, economic and social forums. Wherein they enjoy their reserve quota according to their ratio of population. It is hereby humbly submitted that Pakistan is overdoing the favors for the minorities because various organizations have worked for the betterment of minorities nationally and internationally. As we have declared in the previous Para's that various theologians and social workers have organized and established various organizations in order to ensure and smooth running of the minority functions of life. Which manifest the happy pitch of life of minorities in Pakistan.



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<sup>1</sup> Al-Baqarah, 2:256.

<sup>2</sup> Al-Kafiroon, 6:109.

<sup>3</sup> Abu Dawud Sulayman ibn al-Ash'ath al-Sijistani, Al-Sunan (Bairoot: Al-Maktabah al Asariya), 170/3, Hadith No: 3052.

<sup>4</sup> Ahmad Bin Al Husain Al-Baihqi, Shoab al Emaan (Riyadh: Maktabah tul Rushd), 381/11, Hadith No: 8704.

<sup>5</sup> Muhammad bin Omar Al Waqdi, Al-Maghazi, Research: Marsden Jonas (Bairoot: Dar al Aalmi, Third Edition 1409/1989), 818/2.

- <sup>6</sup> Ahmad Bin Al Hussain Al-Baihqi, Al-Sunan al Kubra, (Bairoot, Dar ul Kutab al Ilmiya, 2003), 56/8, Hadith No: 15919.
- <sup>7</sup> Dr. Muhammad Hameed Ullah, Al-Wasa'iq-Al-Siasiya, 323, Waseeqa No: 98.
- <sup>8</sup> Bernard Lewis was a British American historian specializing in oriental studies. He was also known as a public intellectual and political commentator.
- <sup>9</sup> Bernard Lewis, the Jews of Islam (London, Routledge and Kegan Paul), 135-36.
- <sup>10</sup> William Montgomery Watt was a Scottish historian, Orientalist, Anglican priest, and academic. From 1964 to 1979, he was Professor of Arabic and Islamic studies at the University of Edinburgh
- <sup>11</sup> Montgomery Watt, Islamic political thought (Edinburg, Scotland: University press, Chicago, Aldine, 1968), 151.
- <sup>12</sup> Chief Justice Alvin "Bobby" Robert Cornelius, HPk, was a Pakistani jurist, legal philosopher and judge, serving as the 4th Chief Justice of Pakistan from 1960 until 1968. In addition, he briefly served as Law Minister in the cabinet of Yahya Khan.
- <sup>13</sup> Rana Bhagwandas, was a senior judge and former acting chief justice of the Supreme Court of Pakistan. He enjoyed extremely high reputation as a judge.
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- <sup>15</sup> The constituent Assembly of Pakistan debates, vol 5 1949.
- <sup>16</sup> Karamat Hussain Niyazi: the Secretary of National Assembly of Pakistan, The constitution of the Islamic republic of Pakistan (Islamabad, fifth Edition, 20<sup>th</sup> April, 2010), 18.
- <sup>17</sup> <https://www.minhaj.org/english/tid/33951/Non-Muslim-minorities-part-of-national-fabric-integral-to-development-Dr-Tahir-ul-Qadri.html>.

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