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RESOLVING CONFLICTING ISSUES IN A PLURALISTIC SOCIETY, TOLERANCE OR RESPECT

Abstract:

Multiracial society are often faced with issues of differences between races or nations that exist therein. Differences might happen in any issues such politic, economic, religion and so on. In certain cases, these differences may lead to clashes and complicated conflicts. Many are looking for the ways to reconcile the differences. The concept of 'tolerance' is one way to ease the problems of differences that arise, but there is a dispute about its suitability, and the concept of 'respect' is proposed as a more practical concept in solving problems between the races. There are discussion regarding the meaning of both words that turned to be a concept used in the context. This study aims to examine the meaning of each words literally, thus further examine the aspects of terminological meanings tolerance and respect in order to find the better concept which is more practical and comprehensive in addressing these issues. This paper uses the research method of semantic and content analysis to assess a more appropriate concept. The study found that the concept of tolerance is more comprehensive and practical as it includes the concept of respect. In short, the concept of tolerance cannot be practiced in the absence of the ideal of respect for different individuals and the issues raised.

Keywords:

Conflicting issues, pluralistic societies, tolerance, respect

1 INTRODUCTION

Tolerance is a concept in Islam which was introduced by the Prophet Muhammad about 1,400 years ago and has been practiced by Muslims to this day . In Islamic belief , conceptually and theoretically , the benefits and advantages of tolerance is accepted very well. In fact, practically the history of the life of Prophet Mohammed has confirmed that this concept leads to a harmonious life, especially when it involves different communities in terms of race, religion and culture. However , there are shortcomings in the practice of tolerance adopted by people from time to time which creates contentious issues among researchers mainly the Western researchers about the suitability of the concept and practice of tolerance in ensuring a harmonious living for multi-racial communities (Smith 1990; Schmidt 2002; Habermas 2004; Pasamonik 2004; Schirmer et.al 2012). Consequently, they introduced the concept of 'respect' which is stated as being more relevant today in resolving conflicting differences in society (Darwall 1977: 36-44; Van Quaquebeke et.al 2007:185-200; Oberdiek 2001:5; Schirmer et al. 2012:1-17).

The question that arises is to what extent that the views of the Western researchers are true. It will discuss whether the concept and practice of tolerance no longer appropriate today as disputed by them. This brief paper seeks to analyze the concept of tolerance and respect by using the method of semantic and content analysis research in order to find certainty of the extent of the truth of the matter being specified. The author examines the meaning of tolerance and respect for presenting the views and arguments, and to evaluate which one is a more relevant concept as a good approach in maintaining the well-being and sustainability of harmonious relations between different races.

2 PROBLEM STATEMENT

In the teachings of Islam and the expansion of Islam, the concept of tolerance has never been disputed as a method of guaranteeing the relationship between people from different religions, which thus maintaining communal harmony. It is evident through the history of life, particularly Muslim Prophet Muhammad's life (al-Muhdar 1990; Jum'ah Ali 2004; al-Husaini 2004; Zaquq 2004; Maccido 2004).

However, the passage of time and the changing of the times has made life and relationships between people to be more complicated. The emergence of the Western views of assessing the concept of tolerance has suggested that it is no longer appropriate to the current situation. This may stem from the historical experience of their social and political life which forms their understanding of the concept of tolerance in which tolerance failed to ensure harmonious relations in the different communities and religions. (Smith , 1990; Schmidt 2002 ; Habermas 2004; Pasamonik 2004; Schirmer et.al 2012) As an alternative, the concept of respect is highlighted as an important element in the construction and maintenance of harmonious relations in the community. (Darwall 1977: 36-44 ; Van Quaquebeke et.al 2007:185-200 ; Oberdiek 2001:5 ; Schirmer et al . 2012:1-17) . Based on the differences of opinion that exist, the question arises is that whether the true concept of tolerance is no longer relevant today whereas in Islam, the concept of tolerance is theoretically an ideal ?

3 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Based on the negative views of the concept of tolerance, this study seeks to find answers to the following questions:

1. What is the meaning of tolerance and respect?
2. How true is the state of tolerance is not relevant?
3. Between tolerance and respect, which is more suitable in the present dala maintain harmonious relations multiracial society?

4 DEFINITION OF TOLERANCE

Discussion about the word tolerance in language is just simply recording whatever that is defined in the dictionaries. According to the Oxford Dictionary, the word 'tolerance' is derived from Latin words 'tolerare, tolerantia' which means 'action in response to difficulties' or 'ability to withstand adversity'. Tolerance also means a desire to tolerate different opinions and behaviors that are not well-liked. It is interpreted as allowing the existence of acts and practices which are not agreed by someone with no interference or violation. (<http://oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/tolerance?q=tolerance>).

Tolerance refers to the attitude of being patient and enduring the presence or existence of something that one does not like or does not accept. (Ghazali Basri 1998:298) This attitude allows freedom of expression and living together in harmony with those who do not see eye to eye in matters of religion, race, and custom titles (Kamen 1967; Galeotti 2001; Pasamonik 2004; Stetson & Conti 2005) but there are also other definitions that characterizes that tolerance is not just an attitude or trait, but it involves a careful decision in refraining from doing acts contrary to or not agreed to by a person despite the individual's authority to act. (Horton 1998)

In order to understand the usage of the word in Malay, reference should be made to Malay dictionaries. The word 'toleransi' that is used in Malay language is a borrowed word from the English words 'tolerance' or 'toleration'. *Kamus Pelajar* (Students Dictionary) second edition defines 'toleransi' as an attitude of being patient and compromise. Furthermore, *Kamus Dewan* (Hall's Dictionary) defines tolerance as the willingness to accept and respect other people's opinions that are different from one's own stance or belief. It reflects a positive attitude with an open mind to accept the differences in behavior. In this case, it involves attitudes or mental attribute which gives freedom of opinion, belief, etc. to other persons or practices that allow freedom especially in religion. The most significant element of this definition is that there is a difference of opinion or whether the act requires the attitude to accept and forgive the differences.

In Arabic, the word tolerance is translated as *tasamuh*. Apart from *tasamuh*, the word *ikhtimal* is also used to describe the meaning of tolerance. These words are very large sense and understanding of the concept of tolerance. *Tasamuh* stands for respect and tolerance. *Ikhtimal* simply defined as an attitude and let the indulgence. (Umar 1979) It means compromise and an open mind in accepting the reality of ethnic diversity, culture and religion as *sunnatullah*, what has been decreed by Allah (Muhammad Zaidi et al., 2006).

However the word tolerance does not reflect the true meaning of the word *tasamuh* because in the context of the construction of Arabic words, the word *tasamuh* is built on a foundation the word *tafa'ul*, which refers to the act of involving two parties that work together and with each other. Therefore, *tasamuh* means mutual tolerance and mutual acceptance of differences in our environment. By accepting differences as part of what has been decreed by Allah will help individuals to respect and have an open mind in accepting the fact that people have different sets of faith, belief and thought, which might also still be on the contrary to the faith and belief that is of another person. Tolerance in the context of the English language involves only one party who compromises, and typically is the weak one and do not have the power to speak, disagree or oppose the legislation that has been set. As a result, the negative aspects are seen in the word tolerance because a party that compromises has to force aside their own beliefs and views. While the word *tasamuh* gives a notion of building a good relationship between the two parties because both parties mutually give and take to create a positive atmosphere in practicing *tasamuh* (Jaffary & Kamaruddin 2003).

In order to understand the meaning of tolerance, it also depends on the aspect of terminology because the understanding of the word tolerance varies according to the specific context which is also influenced by the social and political life. Basically the two terms that are being used are: first, 'tolerance' and second, 'toleration'. Both are derived from the word 'tolerate' which means to survive, allowing either view, the acts and practices without any interference or infringement of rights and also allow different religious views without discrimination (UNESCO 1995). There was a view expressed that the two terms have different terms of use. 'Tolerance' is adopted in aspects of personal behavior while toleration refers to the aspect of tolerance that occurs in the legislation or in the political and social principles. (King 1976; Lukes 1997 Oberdiek, 2001). The second does not differentiate between the two terms of the word. (Heyd 1996; Gray, 2003). In the context of the Malay language, the word tolerance is used generally to refer to personal behavior and the application of the law.

From a psychological aspect, tolerance is individual ownership in assessing people, events, phenomena or behavior contrary to justice. The main feature of tolerance is its ability to examine and reflect on the positive and negative aspects simultaneously. As a result, the decision not to show any bias element (Turebayeva et al . 2013). As a matter of fact, a story about tolerance focused on the story of the struggle of society against injustice, oppression and intolerance against religion and adherents of different religious views. it begins with a religious war between Christians and Jews. Jews are regarded as enemies of Jesus Christ as he was planning the crucifixion. The error was borne by all the descendants of the Jews and has resulted in the spirit of hatred and hostility being prolonged among Christians. (Mendus, 1989: 6)

Scenarios like these are prevalent among Protestants and Catholics. Religious conflict that occurred has created a profound impact on the understanding of the concept of tolerance. Various efforts were made to ease tensions, such as guarantees of religious freedom which only makes religion a private affair, as well as agreement that has been made to ensure that the interests of all parties are met. When there are those who disagree with an issue or matter, the parties were required to find a solution for the purpose of compromise. In these circumstances, tolerance occurs and based on the history of tolerant means authorization in law. (Mendus 1989:6; Van Quaquebeke et.al 2007:185-200).

Consequently, the understanding of the meaning of the concept of tolerance is dependent on the practice of tolerance itself which is influenced by the social environment, religion, and politics of a community. Based on the historical background of the case in Europe shaping perceptions of assessing tolerance as a society that does not fit in solving a difference in society.

5 DEFINITION OF RESPECT

The effect of the meaning and practice of tolerance was rated as being failed to harmonize the differences that exist in a multiracial society. Therefore, the concept of respect was introduced. The concept of respect is highlighted by some researchers (Darwall 1977: 36-44; Van Quaquebeke et.al 2007:185-200; Oberdiek 2001:5 ; Schirmer et al . 2012:1-17) to replace the concept of tolerance as arguably more appropriate in dealing with differences existing in the society. Respect means feelings with due regards for the feelings, wishes, or rights of others' .

In Malay, the word 'hormat' is borrowed from Arabis word. As stated in the *Kamus Dewan* it means showing a high opinion of the person by providing the most decent service toward the person. It also means that the act is an indication of a sense of service or tribute towards someone. (<http://prpm.dbp.gov.my/Search.aspx?k=hormat>). Respect can also be translated into an attitude of cooperation, regardless of race, religion, wealth, and rank. For example, the leaders respect the rights of those who are led.

In Malay terms, the word '*hormat*' is used to show the meaning of respect. Respect or honor is a word that is used to convey the message that is more suitable for multi-cultural nature of the policy. In the context of Malaysian culture which is composed of many nations, respect includes speech and deed. Among other features that reflect an attitude of respect is to give hospitality, courtesy, appreciation, opinions and abilities of others. In the event of a discrepancy between both opinions, religion or culture, respect motivates us not to belittle or ridicule the difference (Schirmer et al. 2012: 1-17).

Respect also means to entertain or receive one as a free individual, with needs and interests that should be taken seriously and not to lower it (Schirmer et al. 2012: 1-17). Attitudes like this can further enhance the relations between the individual which may further integrates the society. According to Jones (2002: 348-349), respect is the ability to speak without being regarded as derogatory or being laughed at, or have the space to express a contrary opinion. The key element is the opportunity to speak and be heard as well as the experience, ideas and views taken seriously and appreciated.

In such cases, respect is the most fundamental thing in a person's social relationships. It did not occur spontaneously but it requires mutual appreciation that is achieved. It is not limited to the right to speak but other rights such as the right to choose a religion, and the right to practice the religion without any prejudice. Respect is the acceptance of what is in a person even if we do not understand. Through acceptance, it provides the assurance of autonomy rights and dignity of the individual, and thus strengthens its own autonomy (Sennet 2004).

While in Arabic, the word used to express respect and caring is *ihthiram*. Munjid Dictionary defines *Ihtiram* as honor guard and honor them generally means honor and glory. But these two words only one party and did not include the meaning of 'mutual'.

6 THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN TOLERANCE AND RESPECT

Based on the definitions mentioned above, there are two important elements that contribute to the process of tolerance in general, including religious tolerance of difference and conflict. Differences that occur may be a result from the diversity that exists in a society both in terms of ideology, religion, culture and practices. However, the difference without the occurrence of the argument does not require the occurrence of tolerance. Antitheses occur either in terms of beliefs, attitudes and practices which are not liked or after specified then it is not acceptable to the parties involved. Apart from these two elements, there are other features that set by Western theorists are i. The opposite of that is important, ii. The tolerance has the power to act , iii. Regardless of his power, he does not make such action, and iv. Action tolerance is a necessity in order to avoid the occurrence of more severe (P.Nicholson 1985 : 160-161 ; Horton 1996; 28-43 ; Cohen 2004: 68-95).

When there is a different situation that leads to the conflict in matters of disagreement, this situation needs people to have a flexible attitude, accepting and can withstand the differences that exist. However, this leads to an understanding of the meaning and the negative evaluation where the word tolerance is an attitude of protest against things that do not like where this is not reflected in the attitude of protest into action and he had to and pretend to receive the item (Fitzgerald, 2000; Carey 2000: 45; Oberdiek 2001: 38). The reality shows that by having tolerance, one cannot accept and appreciate the opposite matters that exist in our environment. The implication is that the view of tolerance can only be accepted as the minimum level of social interaction is not sufficient in establishing harmonious relations between members of different religious communities and cultural or racial bias problem (Pasamonik 2004; Scanlon 2006; Byram 2009; Schirmer et al 2012).

There is a difference between tolerance and respect which leads to semantic differences and the impact of social interaction. Being tolerant means to endure something or things that are not agreed upon or ignore forced. The situation is the difference between tolerance and other concepts which involve the presence of tolerance and the existence of different individuals or dissent (Van Quaquebeke et.al 2007:185-200). One is aware of his perception of other individuals with conflicting views and practices it employs. However, there is still a gap between this individual because the individual is considered to be the outsider or not being accepted part of the community or his group. Impact, impression or perception of the individuals outside of it as strangers still exists. However, Western researchers will assess tolerance as a basic condition to the existence of a peaceful situation in the life of a plural society (Pasamonik 2004; Scanlon 2006; Byram 2009; Schirmer et al 2012).

Compared with tolerance, respect has a more positive element where someone is not just tolerated but consider the difference as a positive value. The right way is before accepting the difference as a positive value, it requires a close contact with individuals who have a point of view, a different culture or religion or to understand the differences that occur. (Byram, 2009)

The concept of honor comprises of two categories of respect, that are: recognition respect and appraisal respect. Recognition respect refers to recognition, acknowledgement, actions and

attitudes that ought to be given as certain features for any matter. It involves determination and facts. This includes the law, a person's mood, social institutions, its position and role (Darwall 1977: 36-49; Van Quaquebeke et.al 2007:185-200). The appraisal respect refers to the attitude of respect shown to one or the characteristics of a good or outstanding person who deserves respect and it is based on an individual assessment. For example, one person is seen and assessed as having high integrity. Thus we demonstrate attitudes and behaviors that reflect our particular praise and appreciation for the integrity. The object of the category of the individual and respect is admirable traits (Darwall 1977: 36-49).

There are also researchers who classify respect as 'respect as esteem' or 'respect as consideration' (Kant 1964; Rawl 1971; Sennet 2003; Butler & Drake, 2007). The difference between them is the acquisition of respect either naturally or through effort. When respect is obtained from the public through the efforts that is carried out like to work hard for a living, responsible and helpful so it is respect es esteem (Rawl 1971; Sennet, 2003), while respectfully owned by nature as human beings is respect as consideration. It is the natural qualification of a man named human or community members regardless of any differences. Everyone has the right to be treated politely and with courtesy (Sennett, 2003; Hill 2004).

As a result, the concept of respect results in an individual who appreciates the views expressed, religion or culture that is contrary to those held by him. This award motivates him to listen and accept it with an open mind without belittling or insulting the difference.

7 SIMILARITIES BETWEEN TOLERANCE AND RESPECT

Although there is a difference between tolerance and respect, but there exists an undeniable existence of overlapping of some aspects of the meanings. The matters being referred to here is that in the sense of tolerance, there is an element of respect.

At the first place, both tolerance and respect require knowledge. The absence of knowledge regards the action of intolerance and disrespect. Tolerance is not an attitude or an act of indifference or do not care about the differences that occur even in accepting something without having the knowledge. All behaviors are defined by the items rather than being tolerance and is agreed by most Western researchers. (Carey 1999; Cohen 2004; Pasamonik 2004; Scanlon 2006; Byram 2009; Byrne 2011; Schirmer et al 2012) Similarly, the word *tasamuh* as described requires the cooperation of the two parties to compromise and accept differences. By accepting or tolerating an action without having knowledge is not what is considered to be tolerant but it is more of indifference to those differences. Thus, tolerance is fundamental to knowledge about different things or the opposite.

Ignorance and knowledge about a religion created three categories of tolerance: bare toleration, full toleration and mere toleration (Oberdiek 2001: 28-33). Bare toleration is the tolerance that occurs without any feeling of respect as an individual. The person who has this tolerance is not interested in those who differ from him but he even hopes that they come out of the tolerant group. Mere toleration or tolerance of mediocrity tolerance was based on the recognition of the

existence of differences however do not tolerate interested parties to find a path towards a life more compatible and in harmony with the opposite party to it. The person practising this tolerance is not inclined towards choosing a lifestyle that reflects their recognition of the differences that exist. Full toleration or full tolerance is tolerance established by the appreciation of difference where the tolerance is set to see the differences and pleased to welcome the fact that the other party has its own way of life . Although the dispute is not fully supported, the parties are willing to tolerate and support the development of social structures and institutions of the opposite party. (Oberdiek 2001: 28-33 ; Byrne 2011:287-309) .

Full toleration is compatible with a view that sees tolerance based on mutual respect as an autonomous individual. A person who was behaving in this comprehensive tolerance encourages the differences that exist because it can expand the integrity of an individual as having autonomy. Proliferation of different views and ways of life actually has its own value and make room for the discussion and debate about what is good and true. Although this individual practice full tolerance but he did not ignore or set aside of his own but he's open to the possibility of a review of the holdings. (Byrne 2011:287-309)

What is clear in the above description is that the concept of tolerance encompasses an element of appreciation for the differences and conflicts, and the concept also includes a part of the meaning of the concept of respect. Attitudes and appreciative actions stem from an effort to understand the meaning of the difference. Next, Forst (2003) classifies four concepts that are within tolerance of the concept of consent or permission, the concept of co-existence (co-existence), the concept of respect and esteem concept. In the concept of respect, tolerance involves the mutual recognition of the moral equality of political checkers where all the same accept each other without giving priority to only one side. (Forst 2002)

In short, respect is part of the concept of tolerance and without respect, tolerance will not happen. Deep sense of tolerance embodies the concept of respect. Tolerance in a multiracial society should be practiced with mutual respect for either individual or views, religion and culture.

8 CONCLUSION

As a result of the presentation of the meaning of tolerance and respect, it is clearly found that both languages have a different meaning in the context and the practical meaning of the term as the overlap occurs between the two. Elements of value or appreciation for the differences occur either in thought, culture and religion.

The concept of tolerance is a general concept that encompasses attitudes and actions involving the two parties to understand each other and accept differences without opposite reaction. The concept of respect is more dedicated to the appreciation shown through words or acts as a proof and a sign of our acceptance of differences.

In conclusion, the concept of tolerance remains appropriate as the method to solve problems of differences that arise in a multiracial society. The debate brought by Western researchers cannot be a ground for their understanding of the concept of tolerance which is influenced by the history and environment. In fact the concept of tolerance is relevant to the choice of the more specific concept of whether the concept of consent, respect or esteem depends on the situation. Yet, all

three of these are found in the concept of tolerance. What is more important is the goal to be achieved by this concept that is to solve the problem of difference and preserve communal harmony.

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