

Perceptions of Coexistence in Arabic Prose : Special Reference to the Holy Prophet's Agreement of Hdaybiyyah

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Abstract:

Prose is an inevitable part of literature. It stands apart from the poetic literature. Arabic prose literature consists of several parts. After the emergence of Islam, when the revelations from Allah (Wahi) began to reveal upon the Prophet (PBUH), Arabic prose literature began to move towards another level. Especially Al-Qur'an and the Hadeeths of the Prophet (PBUH) have occupied a unique place in Arabic literature. This study takes issue with criticizing the propaganda that primary sources of Islam instil terrorism and extremism. But, the study affirms that it contains the qualities of coexistence and peace. This study tries to introduce the agreement of 'Hdaybiyyah' as an important document in Arabic prose, to disclose the contribution of Arabic literature in building perceptions of coexistence via a comprehensive approach. The methodology adopted is qualitative method. The primary and secondary data were collected through sources and related books, and scholarly works and data were analyzed. This study has concluded that the agreement of Hdaybiyyah represented an important event in history, consisting of many provisions related to war, peace, governing, agreements and treaties. The Messenger (PBUH), with his wisdom and skill, insisted on building peace and achieving coexistence. This study highlights this agreement as an important model and a wonderful example in the process of peace-keeping, mutual understanding and coexistence.

Key Words: Perception, Coexistence, Arabic Prose, Hdaybiyyah, Peace-keeping.

Introduction

Islam was the last religion to be given to this world. This religion is based on Islamic principles; It has become a guide for all human beings born until the Day of Judgment. This religion is a beautiful religion that teaches peace, coexistence, and harmony. All guidelines beautifully clarify the path to human success. Finally, as a revealed religion, its teachings should be able to guide the entire human beings. Islam has both the Qur'an and the Sunnah as sources. No one who has read and pondered over them can deny that these two contain guidance for the whole human community. In this way, the Islamic religion contains all kinds of teachings for the success of a person and a society. The best results can be achieved if these are practised in normal life.

In this context, building peace, coexistence, tolerance, understanding, and trust between the religions, are intensely predictable in the whole world. So, the kinds of Arabic prose literature play a great role in achieving this goal. Coexistence is accepting the opinion and behaviour of the other based on the principle of difference, respecting the freedom of the other, his ways of thinking and behaviour, and his political and religious opinions, and accepting the cultural uniqueness of different nations and peoples to establish a coexistence based on mutual respect. Thus, it contradicts the concept of oppression and violence. One of the most important foundations of coexistence in Islam is the unity of the heavenly religions in their origins. These are formulated by the Revelation (الوحي).

Islam has two main sources that came through the Revelation; the Holy Quran and the Sunnah of the Messenger. These sources are going under Arabic classical prose. Sunnah of the Messenger refers to the methods followed by the Prophet (PBUH) while implementing the teachings of Al-Qur'an and guiding people towards its higher goals. The agreements done by the Holy Prophet (PBUH) with non-Muslim communities in his era are considered vital political strategies for building coexistence in the Arabian Peninsula. Throughout these agreements, he established the foundations of the best-organized state, and the government that the Messenger established to administer this state, was appropriate for his era and adequate to the needs of the society that he ruled.

This study focuses on exploring Perceptions of Coexistence in the Holy Prophet's Agreement of Hudaibiyyah. It implies that the document will provide information and insights into how the Agreement of Hudaibiyyah played a role in coexistence and harmony, in the historical and social significance. This title indicates that the work aims to concern a lesser-known aspect of Arabic prose by emphasizing the contributions of the Holy Prophet's Sunnah.

Statement of the Problem

When Islam and its sources are criticized as the inciters of terrorism, the concepts of coexistence and social harmony are embodied in prose texts in Arabic literature, especially in agreements with the Prophet. Such critiques occur mostly in non-Arabic and non-Islamic atmospheres. At the same time, exploring these perceptions in the academic corner wasn't sufficiently happened. However, the Sunnah of the Holy Prophet has various perceptions of peace and coexistence. Especially his agreements like Hdaybiyyah, etc. These perceptions were expressed in Arabic literature during that historical period and were influenced by cultural and social events. The agreement of Hdaybiyyah is an important historical event in the history of Islam. This is considered a historical model that could help to lay the understanding and harmony among the people in the Islamic era. It was the political move of the Prophet that witnessed the contribution of Islam to peace. In this context, it is believable that this paper fulfils that academic need with potential sight and opens the gates to researchers.

Objectives

The objectives of this study are formulated as follows:

- To introduce the Agreement of Hdaybiyyah as an important document in Arabic prose.
- To disclose the contribution of Arabic literature in building perceptions of coexistence.
- To find out the perceptions of coexistence in the Agreement of Hdaybiyyah to promote coexistence via a comprehensive approach.

Methodology

The nature of this research requires the researcher to use descriptive and analytical methods to complete this study and to reach the required results. To meet the objectives of the study, primary and secondary data were used. Generally, the research is done under a qualitative and quantitative approach.

Results and Discussion

1. Introduction of Arabic Prose

Prose literature is a natural style of communication that uses grammatical structure. The prose is the opposite of poetry, which uses a rhythmic structure that does not impersonate ordinary speech. However, there is a type of poetry called "prose poetry" that uses elements of prose while adding poetic techniques such as heightened emotional content, high frequency of

metaphors, and juxtaposition of contrasting images. Most forms of writing and speaking include prose, including short stories, novels, journalism, academic writing, and regular conversations. In language, prose is defined as publishing or disclosing something, or sending speech in such a way that it is not subject to meter or rhyme.

Gangni Chen (2019) states that "Prose is one of the literary genres and it has undergone a long history from its coming into being to its present development. As a literary genre, its development is inseparable from that of a novel. It can be said that the novel originates from prose. For a long time, the study of prose has been overlooked even the definition of it lacks the precision and to some degree is very vague." (Chen, 2019)

Shawqi Daif (1960) introduces prose, "Prose is speech that is not organized into meters and rhymes, and it is of two types: The first type, is the ordinary prose that is said in the language of communication, and this type has no literary value except for what is sometimes found in it, such as proverbs and sayings. As for the second type, it is the prose in which its authors rise to the level of prose. A language that contains art, skill, and eloquence, and this genre is what critics in different languages are concerned with researching, studying, and explaining the events and phases it went through, and the qualities and characteristics that distinguish it from each phase. It branches into two large tables, namely rhetoric and artistic writing - and some researchers call it prose. Artistic, which includes written stories as well as inked literary letters, may be expanded to include stylized historical writing." (Shawqi, 1960)

"The Arabs' literature has been divided following the period of various literary productions that they have made in different periods. Literature is termed As *Adab* in Arabic. Its original meaning was the feast maker or the feast or the moral goodness. It acquired the meaning of education whether it was secular or religious in the Umawid period. From the Abbasid period, it got the specific narrow meaning of the literary products or the literature as a whole. (As a part of Arabic literature) the forms of prose included al-Waṣāyā (Admonitions) which were short epithetic sayings that have didactic values meant to teach morals and norms of the Arab, al-Amthāl (Proverbs) short pithy sayings meant to teach morals, al-Qiṣaṣ (Short Stories) brief narratives, al-Khiṭābah (Oration) powerful speeches delivered to create an immediate impact on the audience, ar-Rasāil (Epistles) which addressed the individuals and groups of people, ar-Riwāyah (Novel) long narrative and al-Masraḥiyyah (Drama)." (Jabir, 2019)

The Arabic prose has several stages of development. Dr. Jabir highlights that "the genres of prose literature at its early period were orations, epistles, documentation of the treaties and

the monumental works of the sciences and branches of knowledge. The forms of prose were extended in the Umawid and Abbasid periods into stories and novels." (Jabir, 2019)

Arabic Prose has a long-term history. It flourished beyond the poetry. "Arabic poetry's dominance declined after the 13th century, with the rise of Arabic prose between 750 and 1500. In the early Islamic period, poetry and oral narratives coexisted with the Quran. Before 750, there was limited prose literature, mostly related to government matters. Some works by figures like Abd al-Hamid ibn Yahya and Ibn al-Muqaffa' appeared, the latter known for translating "Kalilah wa-Dimnah," a fable from Sanskrit. The establishment of paper mills in Turkestan and Iraq after 750 boosted prose writing. Later Arabic prose was influenced by Islam, given the predominantly Muslim reading public. Consequently, most literature from 750 to 1500 had religious themes. Early long prose works included Quran commentaries by Muqatil ibn Sulayman al-Balkhi and the biography of Prophet Muhammad by Muhammad ibn Ishaq. Quran commentaries, Muslim law treatises like al-Muwatta' by Malik ibn Anas, and hadith collections evolved into significant genres. These early works marked advanced stages in their respective traditions. Ibn al-Nadim's al-Fihrist catalogued countless early Arabic works, many of which are lost today." (Encyclopedia, 2013)

2. Importance of Arabic Prose in Literature

Prose language is characterized by accuracy, clarity, and focus on details, and expresses ideas and meanings more realistically and clearly than poetry. Literary prose allows the writer to give his characters and events the freedom to speak and express their thoughts in a detailed way, rich in details and images. Prose is the basic idea behind novels and stories, and is also used in other creative works such as essays and diaries. Thanks to the use of literary prose, the writer can reach the reader more believably and convincingly, making the reading experience more exciting and impactful.

In this view, Arabic prose is one pioneer field of world literature. Basma A. S. Dajani (2019) reveals in her study entitled "The Function Of Arabic Literature In Arabic Language Teaching" that, "Literature is the mirror of society. Thus, the three main branches of literature which are prose, poetry and drama often represent the intellectual and cultural trends of society. Between language and literature, there is a timeless relationship. Language is the other side of the thinking process, communicating, building relationships, buying, selling, education and entertainment. All these features and situations can be easily depicted in literary works." (Dajani, 2019) This shows the relationship between society and literature and also endorses its importance in social relations.

3. Agreement of Hudaibiyyah

3.1 Introduction:

The Agreement of Hudaibiyyah was an important event that happened during the era of the Holy Prophet (PBUH). It was a vital agreement between the Prophet, representing the people of Medina, and Quraish representing the people of Makkah. It was in January 628.

3.2 Background:

It was about the sixth year of Hijri. (Mubarakpuri, 1995). A few months before this, the battle of Khandaq had ended. At the time of the treaty, all the people living in the Arabic peninsula were divided into two main groups, Muslims and non-Muslims. There were Muslims in Medina and non-Muslims in Makkah. Animosity and differences were inherent between the two groups. At the same time, the people of Makkah, who were intent on crushing Islam from the beginning, could not bear the fact that the Muslims were gaining strength in Madinah and established a republic of their own. With this aim, they also started wars with Muslims.

For this, the battles of Badr, Uhud, and Ahzab which they undertook had caused them great defeat and losses. They also lost their self-confidence. As a result, they gathered all their strength and carried out the battle of Ahzab. However, they failed miserably. This made the invasion of the Muslims in Madinah impossible, forcing the city of Makkah to adopt a peaceful course. On the other hand, the city of Madinah excited and happy by the successive victories was driven to the feeling of liberating Makkah and Kafa. Not only this, the city of Madinah had also achieved a state of excellence in defence. They were also making attempts to enter Makkah. In this background, the Agreement of Hudaibiyyah took place.

3.3 The clauses of the agreement

The famous researcher Saifur Rahman al-Mubarakpuri (1995) explains the causes that led the Quraish to undergo this agreement as follows, "When Quraish saw the firm determination of the Muslims to shed the last drop of blood for the defence of their Faith, they came to their senses and realized that Muhammad's followers could not be cowed down by these tactics. After some further interchange of messages, they agreed to conclude a treaty of reconciliation and peace with the Muslims." Thus, he brings the clauses of the agreement as follows:

1. *The Muslims shall return this time and come back next year, but they shall not stay in Makkah for more than three days.*

2. *They shall not come back armed but can bring with them swords only sheathed in scabbards and these shall be kept in bags.*
3. *War activities shall be suspended for ten years, during which both parties will live in full security and neither will raise the sword against the other.*
4. *If anyone from Quraish goes over to Muhammad [pbuh] without his guardian's permission, he should be sent back to Quraish, but should any of Muhammad's followers return to Quraish, he shall not be sent back.*
5. *Whosoever wishes to join Muhammad (PBUH), or enter into a treaty with him, should have the liberty to do so; and likewise, whosoever wishes to join Quraish, or enter into a treaty with them, should be allowed to do so. (Mubarakpuri, 1995)*

4. Perceptions of Coexistence in the Agreement

The law of Islam has brought fairness and justice in the issue of peace and war, unifying the two matters, with the best legislation and the most honorable statement. It has made peace the basis of treatment between Muslims and others and made war a repel of aggression and the preservation of religions, bodies, lineages, and wealth. Almighty Allah made peace the basis of the relationship between Muslims and others and forbade Muslims from warring against others unless they committed aggression, so He established a key role in dealing with others.

Allah says: *"Allah does not forbid you from dealing kindly and fairly with those who have neither fought nor driven you out of your homes. Surely Allah loves those who are fair. Allah only forbids you from befriending those who have fought you for your faith, driven you out of your homes, or supported 'others' in doing so. And whoever takes them as friends, then it is they who are the true wrongdoers."* (Al-Mumtahanah: 8-9)

The Prophet (PBUH) spent more than half the time of his prophethood not fighting people, but rather being patient when they harmed them. When the Companions complained about their weakness, lack of resourcefulness, and disdain for people, and they asked the Messenger for permission to fight the unbelievers, he refused, saying: "I was not ordered to fight." It is also not proven that the Prophet started a war with the polytheists suddenly. Rather, the Prophet established the first civil constitution in the history of mankind, which is called Watheekathul Madeenah (The Medina Document).

The Prophet (PBUH) also made peace agreements with some people to strengthen his government. Among them, the Agreement of Hudaibiyyah with the Quraish was the most important. The diplomacy of the Prophet (PBUH) was revealed in it. He has shown that it is

stronger to seek reconciliation through agreement and treaty than to conquer territory through war.

This agreement had very important lessons in exploring perceptions of coexistence and peace. "The Treaty not only occupies a crucial place in the history of Islam but also in the present times, it holds a significant value. The treaty offers several vital lessons to Muslims on patience and gentleness. Following are the lessons one can learn from it:

1. **Patience can resolve every problem:** It is a difficult virtue to attain, but it has the power to resolve every issue. Although at the start, the conditions of the Treaty did not favour Muslims, because Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) showed patience, peace was ensured.
2. **Raising your sword is not always the answer:** Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) had the support of so many brave Muslim brothers. Still, instead of raising his sword despite the challenges, he chose to settle things through peaceful talks. Thus, the Treaty of Hudaibiyah points out that walking on the path of peace is vital.
3. **Muslims should honour agreements:** From the treaty that was made in January 628, Muslims should learn the value of commitments. Because the Quraish people did not follow the agreement and violated a vital clause, the Prophet invaded and defeated them by the grace of Allah.

The Treaty of Hudaibiyah aided in maintaining peace between the states of Makkah and Madinah. It ensured Muslims a chance to go on a peaceful pilgrimage to the holy Kaaba and allowed the formation of allies. For the true followers of Islam, it noted down and offered vital lessons on peace, patience, and victory." (Zamzam, 2023)

The Agreement of Hudaibiyah offers valuable lessons on maintaining composure during times of crisis, respecting and fulfilling obligations, and prioritizing peaceful solutions over violence. Despite initial obstacles, the Prophet Muhammad's patience, rational thinking, and determination resulted in a favourable outcome for Muslims. Upholding promises is crucial, as Quresh's lack of commitment led to consequences and eventual victory for the Prophet Muhammad. In Al-Hadibiyah, a peaceful solution was chosen over violence, highlighting the importance of prioritizing peace and non-violent conflict resolution, regardless of one's strength or courage. Taken together, these lessons demonstrate the value of calmness, patience, and rational decision-making in achieving successful outcomes, both in personal and broader contexts. This significant perceptions of coexistence and peace has been pointed out by Islamic Landmarks as stated as follows:

1. *Remaining calm amid a crisis can be challenging, but the qualities of patience and rational thinking grant the ability to resolve issues, ensuring that the results favour individuals in such situations. For instance, despite the initial appearance that the terms and conditions of the Agreement of Hudaibiyyah were unfavourable to the Muslims, it was through Prophet Muhammad's (PBUH) display of peace, patience, and determination that the treaty ultimately shifted in their favour, subsequently securing peace in the years to follow.*
2. *Another vital lesson derived from this agreement involves the significance of honouring and valuing commitments. Regardless of circumstances, one should ensure the fulfilment of promises. Due to the Quraish people's failure to adhere to the agreement and their participation in the battle, Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) chose to dissolve the treaty, leading an army to Makkah and securing victory against the Quraish with the assistance of Allah.*
3. *Upon Prophet Muhammad's (PBUH) arrival with the 1400 Muslim caravan at Hudaibiyah, the alternative of resorting to violence against the brutal Quraish presented itself. Nevertheless, the Messenger (PBUH) of Allah made a different choice. Despite the numerous challenges, Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) maintained composure and opted for a peaceful resolution. The lessons drawn from the Agreement of Hudaibiyah emphasize that irrespective of one's bravery and strength, prioritizing the path of peace over violence is imperative.*

This attitude of the Prophet towards peace and co-existence gave Islam and Muslims massive success over time. Al-Mubarakpuri (1976) points out that, "A series of events confirmed the profound wisdom and splendid results of the peace treaty which Allâh called "a manifest victory". How could it be otherwise when Quraish had recognized the legitimate Muslims' existence on the scene of political life in Arabia and began to deal with the believers on equal terms? Quraish in the light of the articles of the treaty, had indirectly relinquished its claim to religious leadership, admitted that they were no longer interested in people other than Quraish, and washed their hands of any sort of intervention in the religious future of the Arabian Peninsula. The Muslims did not have in mind to seize people's property or kill them through bloody wars, nor did they ever think of pursuing any coercive approaches in their endeavours to propagate Islam, on the contrary, their sole target was to provide an atmosphere of freedom as regards ideology or religion: "Then whosoever wills, let him believe, and whosoever wills, let him disbelieve." [Al-Qur'an 18:29] The Muslims, on the other hand, had the opportunity to spread Islam over areas not then explored. When there was an armistice, war was abolished, and men met and consulted together, none talked about Islam intelligently

without entering it; within the two years following the conclusion of the treaty double as many entered Islam as ever before.” (Al-Mubarakpuri, 1976)

The Prophet took advantage of the opportunity of this peace agreement which lasted for two years before the Quraish broke it in the year 8 AH, to call the people and expand the spread of Islam. The official messages that the Prophet Muhammad sent to the kings and the leaders of nations and peoples, tribes, and groups in his time, are a prominent page from the pages of the Prophet’s biography and Islamic history because those messages reveal an aspect of the practical, tangible application of the universality of the Islamic call. This was a huge global peace-building process.

With this approach, Islam came to Southern Asian countries like Sri Lanka. "During the time of the Prophet (PBUH), the call of Islam was extended to many countries of the world. The letters written by the Prophet (peace be upon him) to the rulers of Rome and Persia are proof of this. Some historians have suggested that letters were sent to the lower countries in the same way. In this way, Dr. Hameedullah mentions in his book Foreign Relations of the Prophet Muhamad that Sir Thomas Arnold mentions in the first edition of his book The Preaching of Islam that Wahab Ibn Abihabsa (RA) took the letter of the Prophet (PBUH) to China in the year 628 and he gave the letter of the Prophet to the King of Ceylon in which the king was invited to Islam, so he allowed him to teach the religion and built a mosque and gave freedom to those who wanted to accept the religion. He preached to the Arabs who were already here and later to others and converted some to his religion and he went to Arabia in the tenth of Hijri - 632 AD." (NIE, 2018)

Conclusion

The agreement of Hudaibiyah represented an important event in the lives of Muslims, and a prominent turning point in their preaching and on the way to defending themselves. This peace treaty - and the events that surrounded it - included many provisions related to war in a Muslim government and the agreements and treaties that Muslims could conclude with non-Muslims if the interest was achieved, and it gave them lessons in the arts of negotiation. Among the terms of this reconciliation were matters that some Muslims considered unacceptable concessions, but the Messenger (PBUM), with his wisdom and skill, saw in them an interest, honour, and victory for Muslims, and he insisted on building peace and achieving coexistence. This study highlights the most important benefits, and lessons learned from this reconciliation so that it will be an important model for Muslims in the field of coexistence and for countries

and governments a wonderful example in the process of peace and understanding. It also focuses on the events of the Hodaybiyyah Peace Treaty. And the circumstances that preceded it; the approach followed by the Prophet (PUBH) in this reconciliation, and the benefits, and lessons learned from it, which Muslims need in every time and place.

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