

Religious moderation in the glorious era (reality of religious tolerance and protection during the Ottoman Empire)

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Abstract

This research aims to find out that during the reign of the Ottoman Empire there was inter-religious tolerance. There were even concrete contributions from Turkish Sultans respecting followers of other religions, providing protection for Christians and Jews who were hit by bloody conflicts. Several areas of the Turkish Sultanate allowed residents of different religious beliefs to live. Through the social structure that has been created by Muslim, Christian and Jewish citizens can live together in peace and tranquility. The research method is carried out by collecting information and data of various kinds of materials in the library such as reference books, results of similar previous research, articles, notes, and various journals related to the problem. The results are that the reality of religious tolerance and protection of non-Muslims during the Ottoman era was implemented well, especially since there was the al-Qanun law which generally regulated the legal system for its territory with an emphasis on the benefit of the ummah. There is also a Millet System that specifically regulates Muslims and non-Muslims living peacefully. The fact that the conquest of Constantinople did not destroy places of worship, nor did it force the conquered people to convert to Islam.

Keywords: Religious Tolerance, Protection of non-Muslims, Ottoman Empire

INTRODUCTION

Religion, as one of the pillars of human life, is often a source of inspiration, moral guidance and spiritual foundation. However, along with the times, various problems related to religion arise, which raises the need for a more moderate and inclusive approach (Widodo & Karnawati, 2019). One of the main problems that arise in the realm of religion is extremism and radicalization. Some groups or individuals interpret religious teachings in extreme ways, leading to acts of violence and intolerance. The level of intolerance and discrimination based on religion remains a serious problem in the country. For example, the mass fight between the “Front Pembela Islam” (FPI) and non-Muslim merchants who sell during the fasting month, the religious conflict between Islam and Christianity in Poso Aceh and Papua which until now has not been resolved, requires the presence of a re-discourse on Religious Moderation.

The Ottoman Empire was an Islamic kingdom with a large territory, and had a relatively longer period of rule compared to previous Islamic royal dynasties (Uliyah, 2021). His reign spanned approximately 7 centuries (1281 to 1924). During the reign of the Ottoman Turks, the Sultans not only seized Arab countries, but also the entire region between the Caucasus and the city of Vienna, even to the Balkans. Thus, Islamic centers grew in Trace, Macedonia, Thessaly, Bosnia, Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Albania and surrounding areas (Ali, 1996). Apart from expanding its wings of power to the West, the eastern region was also able to be controlled by the Ottoman Turks. Several regions, such as Persia and Iraq, which are Syiah, can be seized. Next were Sham and Egypt, so that in 1516 AD, the rapid expansion or territorial expansion carried out by the Ottoman Turks was able to penetrate important areas in mainland Europe, until the conquest of Constantinople (Esposito, 1976).

Even though it has a dominant military style, it is formed from the character of the Turkish nation itself which is tough, disciplined and obedient to regulations. This habit is a natural habit that they inherited from their ancestors in Central Asia. However, in terms of differences in beliefs, the Ottoman Turkish leaders did not act as blind fanatics towards the religions and theological organizations they believed in. Ottoman Turkish leaders did not impose Islamic beliefs on the inhabitants of conquered areas. There is no destruction of places of worship, there is no prohibition on worshiping even if you have different beliefs. It has been proven that during the sultanate of the Ottoman Turkish dynasty, many people of religions other than Islam found freedom to carry out religious activities that they believed in. There are also non-Muslim palace professionals. Peace is maintained in the holy cities of

Mecca, Medina and Palestine. Even Palestine at that time was a place that reflected true tolerance between Islam, Christians and Jews.

This research is a literature review which aims to portray religious moderation in the Islamic era of Ottoman Turkey. Where there were many role models in upholding religious tolerance at that time. So that these historical facts can be reconstructed in the country of Indonesia, which incidentally is rooted in ethnicity, ethnic culture and religion.

METHODS

This research method is library research as a study used to collect information and data with the help of various kinds of materials in the library such as documents, books, magazines, historical stories, etc. Meanwhile, Khatibah (2011) stated that library research is an activity carried out systematically to collect, process and conclude data using certain methods/techniques to find answers to problems faced through library research. Meanwhile, Danandjaja (2014) stated that library research is a systematic scientific method of bibliographic research, which includes collecting bibliographic materials related to research targets; collection techniques using library methods; and organizing and presenting data. So library research is a research activity carried out by collecting information and data with the help of various kinds of materials in the library such as reference books, results of previous similar research, articles, notes, and various journals related to the problem you want to solve. Activities are carried out systematically to collect, process and conclude data using certain methods/techniques to find answers to the problems faced (Sari & Asmendri, 2020).

The primary sources in this research are “Sejarah Pemikiran dan Peradaban Islam” by M. Abdul Karim, “*Tarik al islam as siyasi wa add dini wa as saqafi wa alijitima*”i, by Hasan Ibrahim Hasan, and “Dinamika Peradaban Islam perspektif historis” by Umar Faroq Tohir. Secondary sources in this research are books, articles, journals, newspapers and web publications that are relevant to the topic. The method used in this research uses the content analysis method. Rahardjo (2017) calls this method viewing data as symbolic symptoms.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The beginning of the Ottoman Empire

The founders of this kingdom were the Turks from the Oghuz tribe who inhabited the Mongol area and northern China. Over a period of approximately 3 centuries, they moved to

Turkistan then Persia and Iraq. They converted to Islam around the 9th or 10th century AD, when they settled in Central Asia. Under pressure from Mongol attacks in the 13th century AD, they fled to the west and sought a mountainous place among their brothers, the Seljuq Turks, in the highlands of Asia Minor (Hasan, 2013). Under the leadership of Ertugrul, they devoted himself to Sultan Alauddin II, the Seljuq sultan who at that time was fighting against the Byzantines. With their help, Sultan Alauddin II won victory. For his good services, Sultan Alauddin II awarded him a plot of land in Asia Minor which bordered Byzantium. Since then they have continued to develop their new territory and chose the city of Syukud as their capital (Syalabi, 1988).

Ertugrul died in 1289 AD. Leadership was continued by his son, Uthman. Uthman bin Ertugrul is considered the founder of the Ottoman empire. Furthermore, Uthman ruled between 1290-1326. Like his father, Uthman Ertugrul devoted himself to Sultan Alauddin II in the war against Byzantium until he was able to occupy several Byzantine territories. After enjoying victory over the Byzantines for a while, the invasion of the Mongol army devastated the Seljuq army and even Sultan Alauddin II was killed there. This defeat left the Seljuq sultanate in ruins. At that time, Uthman bin Ertugrul proclaimed the founding of an Islamic dynasty and announced himself as Padişyah Al-Utsman or Great King of the Uthman Family until his dynasty was called the Ottoman dynasty in 699 H (1300 AD). Subsequently, Uthman became the first ruler, often called Uthman I. Step by step, he could expand the territory of the kingdom. He attacked the Byzantine border area and conquered the city of Broessa in 1317 AD, then in 1326 AD it became the capital of the kingdom. Its territory includes Eastern Europe, Asia Minor, the Arab countries of West Asia and North Africa (Lapidus, 1999).

Al Qanun and Millet as regulators of religious life

The uniqueness of the Ottoman Empire system is its formation long tradition manifested in law (Qanun Nameh) which is usually associated with the name Sultan Sulaiman, in the Ottomans were known as Qanuni (law makers). This law regulates various things. Not only drafting it, Sultan Sulaiman also consistently and firmly implemented the law. Sultan Sulaiman implemented Islamic sharia in leading people spread across Europe, Persia, Africa and Central Asia. Freedom and tolerance in carrying out religious life were implemented during his reign. It is not surprising that during his reign Muslims and Christians were able to live safely and peacefully (Djahdan Human, 1989: 334). Hasan

Ibrahim Hasan says that: "Millet is derived from the Arabic word *millah*, which means a particular religious community. Millet was a system of protection for *dzimmi* (citizens of different religions) in the Ottoman era. Millet is also interpreted as meaning nation. In his book *Turkey a Modern History*, Erik J Zurcher mentions millet as a special designation for the *dzimmi* community. . Bernard Lewis in his book *The Emergence of Modern Turkey* writes that millet was a legal system of organisation to govern religious communities."

Millet, which comes from Arabic, says *millah*, which means a particular religious community. Millet as a system of protection against *dhimmi* (people of different religions) in the Ottoman era. Millet is also interpreted as meaning nation. In his book *Turkey a Modern History*, Erik J Zurcher mentions *millet* as a special name for the *dzimmi* community. Bernard Lewis in his book *The Emergence of Modern Turkey* wrote that millet was a legal organizational system for governing religious communities. This system was used by the Ottomans to regulate religious communities under their control, such as Greek Christians, Armenian Christians and Jews. Not only does it refer to religious communities, millet is also used as a term for ethnic groups (Republika, 2022). Abdul aziz says that: "The millet system in the Muslim world provided the pre-modern paradigm of a religiously pluralistic society by granting each religious community an official status and a substantial measure of self-government (Sachedina, 2001)."

Furthermore, this millet system refers to the royal practice of dividing people based on recognized communities between the 15th and early 20th centuries. By the early 19th century, a millet system based on this practice had become the backbone of the legal and societal organization of the Ottoman Empire. In essence, under Ottoman auspices, citizens were categorized into religious communities (Sahin, 2012). According to Imber, during Ottoman rule, the kingdom's population was very diverse in terms of religion, language and social structure. As the ruler (Sultan) came to power, Islam became the dominant religion, but the Greek and Armenian Orthodox churches remained important to the sultanate's political structure and served large Christian populations in many areas that outnumbered Muslims. Apart from Christians, there were also Jews in the Ottoman region. After they were expelled from Spain in 1492, Thessaloniki became the place with the largest Jewish population in the world at that time. There are also other religious groups such as the Maronites and Druze from Lebanon (Imber, 2002).

Based on the model of non-Muslim relations developed during the 7th and 8th centuries, Sharia classifies humans into three categories, namely Muslims, people of the Bible (people who also receive the revelation of the holy book, such as Christians and Jews) and unbelievers. The basic scheme states that only Muslims have the right to become full members of the political community, while the Ahl al-Kitab as non-full members cannot still be changed or modified according to the view of sharia. Next, infidels have absolutely no qualifications to obtain such legal recognition or protection, unless they are guaranteed temporary (safe) protection for practical reasons such as in the context of commerce and diplomacy (an-Na'im, 2007).

Conquest of Constantinople and Religious Freedom

Looking at its history, Islam has a long tradition of managing relations with non-Muslims. There are no traditions and persecution of infidels in Islam, as found in the concept of "heretics" in medieval Europe. Islam does call non-Muslims "infidels", but that is in no way a permit, let alone an order to execute infidels because of religious differences. The Koran emphasizes: "There is no compulsion to convert to religion." (al-Baqarah: 256). Karen Armstrong notes: "There was no tradition of religious persecution in the Islamic empire". There is no tradition of religious persecution in the Islamic world (Armstrong, 1991).

The brilliant fact about the conquest of Constantinople in 1453 AD by Muhammad al-Fatih is that after the city was conquered, it was not burnt to the ground and destroyed but instead the city was designed to be more beautiful and majestic. This is different from Hulagu Khan's conquest of the city of Baghdad, which also burned down the civilization in it. Muhammad al-Fatih's efforts to change the name of Constantinople to Istanbul and make it the throne of Islam. As the capital of the kingdom, various development efforts continue to be carried out. Muhammad al-Fatih mobilized the residents of his conquered countries to carry out business in the capital Constantinople. So this city became a trade center across the continents of Asia and Europe. St. Mary's Church Sophia was converted into a mosque with the name Aya Sofia as a symbol of the victory of Muslims in the city of Constantinople. This mosque's architecture was changed according to Islamic architecture. Apart from that, it was beautified and decorated in such a way that it became the most beautiful mosque in the world (Thohir, 2013).

Protection of Foreigners on Pilgrimage to Jerusalem

In 1533 AD, Sultan Sulaiman announced his willingness to accept France's peace offer. However, peace was only implemented in 1535 and decided in Baghdad. This peace, which is considered a concession agreement, concerns the military and economic fields. Based on this agreement, France was given the right to carry out shipping trade in Ottoman territories by paying 5 percent of the tax. The important points of treaty are: Full freedom of loading and unloading and shipping for both armed and unarmed naval vessels. The right of sale and exchange of goods in all parts of the Ottoman Empire for all the subjects of the Kingdom of France. Payment of customs and other taxes to the Ottoman Empire only once a year. The taxes paid by the French to the Ottoman Empire were the same as those paid by the Turks. Having the right of consulate representation, with diplomatic protection for him, his relatives, and those who work with him. It was the authority of the French consul to conduct inquiries in social and criminal matters where the perpetrators were French subjects, and he was authorized to judge. The consul also has the right to request the assistance of local authorities to execute the laws laid down. In a dispute in which one of the parties is an Ottoman Turk, the French subject is not indicted or convicted except in the presence of a French interpreter. Statements made by French nationals in matters of concern.

In addition, the treaty also stated that competition in France was to be settled according to the laws of their own Country and they were allowed to carry out their religious rites. Apart from that, they were also given the right to protect the Christian religion in Jerusalem (Ali & Nor, 2018). The treaty also allowed all Christians in the Ottoman empire to receive French protection. So with this agreement further increased cooperation between Ottoman Türkiye and France (Ratnasari, 2013).

The advance of the Ottoman Turks in the 15th century resembled the early expansion of Islam eight centuries earlier. The group of scribes regained tolerance. Within months of the fall of Constantinople, a treaty was concluded between the Sultan and Patriarch Gennadios. Ottoman power would protect the construction of the Greek church, even against their fellow Christian enemies such as the Serbian Orthodox Church. The capital city of Constantinople contained Greek churches and people spread their faith peacefully. As Fletcher writes, throughout most of the Ottoman rule, until the beginning of the 20th century, the

population of Constantinople (Istanbul) was divided into 60 percent Muslims and 40 percent Christians and Jews. The capital city of Constantinople was never an Islamic city demographically in the sense of, for example, Baghdad (Fletcher, 2009).

On religious issues, members of the dhimmi community must dress differently, pay jizya; and live in segregated environments, especially in cities. However, in practice, these rules are not strictly implemented. Many Christians and Jews occupy high positions and quite sensitive positions, such as ambassadors and governors, are exempt from the jizya obligation, and wear certain clothes. Formally, Christian and Jewish communities must comply with several other symbolic restrictions, for example prohibitions on publicly holding religious rituals and building houses in Muslim areas. This restriction was carried out to indicate the low status of the dzimmah community and members. However, some of the administrative regulations imposed by the Ottoman empire, such as the relocation of several Christian and Jewish communities from several provinces to Istanbul, and restrictions on their residence in certain areas, were more motivated by the country's economic interests due to certain social conditions. Forced relocation was imposed as an individual and communal punishment (an-Na'im, 2007).

Shelter for non-Muslims After The Collapse of Andalusia

When Granada fell into the hands of Christians in 1492 AD, initiated by King Ferdinand and Queen Isabel, the peaceful life of coexistence between religious communities suddenly turned into an intolerant and hateful relationship. This is very contrary to the life of the Andalusian people during the Islamic caliphate. The condition of Muslims and Jews was killed and expelled in a barbaric manner from Andalusia. Next they were only given 3 choices, convert to Christianity, be expelled from Andalusia, or if they didn't choose both they would be killed. In 1502 Ferdinand and Isabella's edict declared that Islam did not apply in Spain and its practice was a crime (Al-Faruqi & Al-Faruqi, 2003).

After the collapse of the glory of Islam in Andalusia at that time, there was no longer a tradition of tolerance, harmonious life between religious communities changed to the point of persecution of Muslims and Jews by the church inquisition in Spain. After the fall of Islamic rule in Spain, some of the expelled Jews were accommodated and protected in Ottoman territory. For example, in Jerusalem, during the reign of Sultan Sulaiman the Magnificent (Suleiman the Magnificent 1520-1566), Jews lived side by side with Muslims. A number of Jewish refugees from Europe were amazed at the freedom that Jews enjoyed in the region (Armstrong, 1991). Because the Ottoman Turks were not religious fanatics, the territories in Ottoman Turkey became a place of refuge for Jews from attacks by Christian

kingdoms in Spain and Portugal in the 16th century (Thohir, 2013). The Ottoman Empire's protection of the Jews was also very good. When Jews became targets of hatred and oppression in Christian Europe, Muslim areas became a safe haven for Jews. Even though it provides an inaccurate picture of the development of Islam, the Encyclopedia Judaica still admits that Muslim attitudes towards Jews were much more tolerant than Christian attitudes. Since Islam spread by force of arms rather than by spiritual propaganda, it didn't generally aspire, at least initially, to conquer souls. Therefore, it displayed greater tolerance than Christianity (Husaini, 2004).

This fact is proof that Islamic teachings and traditions are filled with various notes about tolerance between humans. The height of Islamic civilization once brought blessings to the whole world, including Western society, prompting the Irish historian, Tim Wallace-Murphy, to write a book entitled "What Islam Did For Us: Understanding Islam's Contribution to Western Civilization" (London: Watkins Publishing, 2006). In the midst of incessant attacks on Islam through various media in the West, this fact provides a very beautiful picture of Islamic history. In fact, he did not hesitate to invite the West to admit the magnitude of their debt to Islam. At that time, the life situations of the Islamic world and the Western world were very contrasting, he said that "*Life for the majority of people in mainland Christian Europe was short, brutal and barbaric when compared with the sophisticated, learned and tolerant regime in Islamic Spain*". The values and concept of *tasamuh* or tolerance in Islam come from the Qur'an and al Hadith. Islam teaches us to believe that all the Messengers were sent by Allah to bring messages to their people, since before the Prophet Muhammad SAW revealed them. The rule of tolerance in Islam comes from the Qur'anic verse *laa ikraaha fi al-diin* which means there is no coercion in religion, but does not deny the element of Islamic preaching which is inviting, not coercive.

Based on these rules, non-Muslims from the *dhimmi* infidel group (who are among the Muslims) must be protected and guaranteed security and must not be forced to convert to Islam because they pay *jizyah*. In terms of worship, the form of tolerance in Islam is manifested by the existence of conveniences in carrying out worship for people who have limitations, such as replacing ablution with *tayamum* if you don't get water, praying sitting if you are sick and unable to stand, replacing fasting with other things. days if you are unable to work due to illness or travel (Arifin, 2016).

Respect and Protect Different Religious Celebrations

People who converted to Christianity were only burdened with protection costs (jizyah) which were relatively cheap compared to the time of Byzantine rule. All residents have the freedom to practice religion according to their respective beliefs. Christians and Jews were given the freedom to worship fairly, exceeding the concessions granted by Byzantium. On Christian holidays, the Ottoman Turkish leader sympathized by sending Janissary troops to guard the church (Saefudin, 2013). Inter-religious meetings in the Ottoman Empire began when this kingdom was first formed. When the Ottoman empire was centered in Edirne or Adrianople in the early 14th century, the Jewish community had been there for a long time. When the Ottomans entered Bursa in 1324, they found the Jewish community also settled. The Jews welcomed Ottoman as a savior. Sultan Usman gave them permission to build The Etz ha-Hayyim (Tree of Life) Synagogue which was still preserved until the mid-20th century. Other Jewish communities from Europe including Karaites immigrated to Edirne. Likewise, Jews who were expelled from Hungary, France and Sicily fled to Ottoman territories (Zohar, 2005).

When there was conflict between Catholics and Protestants in Europe, many of them fled to ask Caliph Sulaiman for political asylum. They were given the freedom to choose their religion and were given a place in Ottoman Türkiye. Lord Cerssay stated that in an era where injustice and despotism were known for Roman Catholics and Protestants, Sultan Sulaiman was the most fair to his people even though some were not Muslim. After the end of Solomon's caliphate, the Ottoman Empire experienced decline (Karim, 2011).

Helping Irish Christians During the Famine

The Ottoman Turkish leader, Sultan Abdul Majid 1 (1823 - 1861) became a helper for the Irish people who were affected by hunger and cold (1845 - 1852). Sources from Wikipedia write that at least one million Irish citizens died of starvation, while during the period of disaster (the great famine) two million Irish citizens exodused abroad, becoming the largest displacement in history. Currently, there are 50 million Irish refugees who have become United States citizens.

So based on this incident, the Ottoman Sultan, Caliph Abdul Majid I, stated his intention to send 10,000 pounds sterling to help the Irish people. But strangely, the Queen of England, Victoria intervened and requested that the Ottoman Caliph only send £1,000. The

Reason is because he himself only sent £2,000, which cannot be equated to IDR 37.8 million at the current rupiah exchange rate. So the Caliph only sent £1,000 as requested by the Queen of England, the ruler of Ireland at that time. But Caliph Abdul Majid I's sense of humanity continued to disturb his heart. Finally, the Caliph secretly sent five Ottoman ships, which were packed with food (Istanbultarihi, N.d). Although the British fleet tried to blockade the Ottoman ships. But with the struggle, food and aid also arrived at Drogheda Harbor and was left there by the Ottoman sailors. The ten thousand pounds promised by Caliph Abdul Majid I to Ireland would be worth around 800,000 pounds or around 1.7 million US dollars (Rp. 26.35 billion at an exchange rate of 15,500). It was later discovered that at the same time the economy of the Turkish Caliphate was not completely 'healthy' (www.inilah.com).

The Drogheda Harbor area is a silent witness to the generosity of Sultan Abdul Majid I and a silent witness to the resilience of the Ottoman sailors who dared to break through the blockade of the British fleet so that humanitarian aid reached the Irish Christians. This place is a testament to the humanity and generosity of the Ottoman Sultan and is still remembered by local residents, even 173 years later. This memorial and information about the unforgettable assistance of the Ottoman Empire is immortalized in a museum in Dublin, with a plaque on the wall of Drogheda's central building. This plaque was unveiled in 1995 by Mayor Alderman Godfrey and the then Turkish Ambassador to Ireland, Taner Baytok. The contents of the plaque read, "The Great Irish Famine of 1847-In remembrance and recognition of the generosity of the People of Turkey towards the People of Ireland" (SuaraIslam.id).

CONCLUSION

The history of religious moderation in the Ottoman era provides inspiration and relevant views on actual issues related to religious moderation. The Ottomans, as a vast Islamic empire, succeeded in creating a model of moderation that involved religious plurality and cultural diversity. Through this historical reflection, we can explore useful insights for responding to current issues of religious moderation. First: Recognition of Diversity: The Ottomans were known for their policy of tolerance towards various religious groups. The Ottoman government recognized diversity and granted rights to non-Muslim communities. Through this view, its can evaluate how recognition of diversity can be implemented in current

Religious moderation policies. Second: Education and Interfaith Dialogue: During the Ottoman period, there was a spirit of inclusive education, with Ottoman leaders supporting interfaith learning and dialogue. Recommendations for current issues of moderation could include increased investment in inclusive religious education, which promotes better understanding between religious communities. Third: Protection of Human Rights: The Ottomans practiced a system that involved protecting human rights, including the rights of religious minorities. The recommendation based on this is to strengthen the protection of human rights and religious freedom in the context of current religious moderation policies. Fourt: Collaborative Approach with Religious Leaders: When the Ottomans reached the peak of their glory, the government worked together with religious leaders to create social harmony. Modern recommendations could include a collaborative approach involving religious leaders in formulating moderation policies, so that these policies reflect religious values and justice.

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