The Religious Institution's Role in Spreading the Tolerance Culture

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Abstract

The development and complexity of life and the specialization in human knowledge have created the urgent need for a religious institution. Therefore, the presence of a central religious institution in a homogeneous society gives it an incomparable power of influence on the one hand, and gives society the ability to bind its members to religious teachings, which increases steadily as the interaction between the institution and the rest of institutions increases. On the other hand, the social structure, the awareness of those in charge of managing the religious institution, and their comprehension of the reality of the message of Islam and the reality of the influence of social change must play a role in the religiosity of individuals and their goals and their awareness of what society expects from the religious institution of effective positions influencing social life, especially in the face of major deviations and changes in the social, cultural, economic, and political life Otherwise, the religious institution will turn into an institution with an existence that is isolated from the affairs of society and state, which makes it a symbolic institution that grants the instrument of forgiveness to the one who is able to pay its price, as indicated by Muhammad Baqir Al-Sadr.

Cases of social and political performance of this institution were represented by a set of limited demands that do not touch and do not address the essence of the problems of the social system in the state. Rather, they are demands that implicitly recognize the dominance of the dictatorial state and seek mercy from it in accomplishing some works such as exempting individuals from military service. Government officials' visits to clerics only Reflect the religiosity of the citizen as a result of being affected by this trend, a large segment of society members lived under the control of the state, subject to its policies away from the orientations of the religious institution.

The need for the religious institution to intervene to bring about reforms or social change has become an urgent need, especially with regard to fanaticism and the rejection of the other and the absence of a culture of tolerance as social problems that have political, economic, educational, family, and religious implications. The presence of these problems creates chaos, instability, and societal disintegration.

No one can disagree that the religious institution is one of the main institutions responsible for developing and shaping the religious awareness of individuals in rural and urban areas. This was confirmed by those with a functional viewpoint when they looked at religion as embodying the spirit of the group and reflecting the collective existence of groups and individuals. Drukaim emphasized that religion is a source of social solidarity, which

expresses the identity of the individual in society that strengthens the social norms that govern society and achieve stability and cohesion. This is due to the fact that religion, from Durkheim's perspective, is a unified system of beliefs and practices related to the sacred world, and the one responsible for inculcating these beliefs and teachings is the religious institution, which is concerned with the formation of common feelings, security, and common social solidarity.

The researcher reached a number of recommendations, including issuing religious fatwas with explicit texts that emphasize the rejection of racism and sectarianism and urging the development of a culture of tolerance because it is one of the priorities of the religious institution, as well as expanding the scope of religious awareness-raising operations on social issues to determine the position of the religious institution and not to leave it to political and media trade that harnesses it Politicians to serve their own interests, as well as asking the legislative, judicial, and governmental authorities to activate the executive powers of the laws against those who contribute to incitement to sectarianism and the rejection of the other. The researcher also recommends paying attention to the educational aspect by establishing a culture of tolerance in the educational curricula so that it is transmitted from one generation to another.

Keywords: Institution, religion, culture, tolerance.

Introduction

Evidence indicate that the religious institution in the Iraqi society has a cultural and social power that influences the attitudes of individuals. This influence is not the result of the moment. The Iraqi social history is harnessed with evidence indicating it. The religious authority had such an effective role in social and political issues in addition to its role in legal guidance.

The social appearance of religion is embodied in the form of various institutions, multiple and various roles, goals, and functions. In other words, the social existence of religion is in the form of an institution. A religious institution is an official organization with a continuous and permanent character, such as the Ministry of Endowments, mosques, or other places of worship. The primary goal that these institutions seek is to spread Religious culture, the development of religious awareness, and the strengthening of solidarity and cooperation among members of society. It has a more spiritual than a material dimension.

The religious institution is also concerned with the dissemination of religious cultures and the development of religious awareness. It is also one of the means leading to social solidarity, the development of society and its development and assistance in stability through controlling and regulating the behaviour of its members. It is also a centre for the practice of religious rituals, prayer, and recitation. It can be said that no matter how different these institutions are, their goals and functions vary, they are all found to serve mankind.

The religious institution has many means that help it exercise its social roles, through which it can influence society directly, as well as through which it can develop and spread social cultures such as the culture of tolerance, which is one of the most important cultures that the Iraqi society needs. Tolerance has an important religious position in the Glorious Quran

and the Prophetic Sunnah. That is obvious in the activities of the religious institution, such as mosques, religious schools, legal fatwas, and Friday sermons.

1. Institution

The Oxford Dictionary defines the institution as every large organization that helps people with their special needs (The Oxford, 2011).

The institution in the French language is an apparatus, or a form of social organization, that often possesses a legal or semi-legal capacity and performs a social function in addition to its continuing capacity regardless of the will of its members (Thebian, 1990).

On the other hand, Max Veber looks at the institution on the basis of the idea of interdependence, as it gives the individual the opportunity to possess internal laws or regulations that can be applied with relative success within a limited work area on those who practice them in a way that can be determined through certain criteria (Haramiya, 2005).

2. Religion

In the Arabic language, religion means recompense in proportion to the figurative act (Al-Zubaidi, 2001). Religion is also a set of worship and beliefs practiced by individuals after the mind is convinced of it, the heart believes in it, the conscience is reassured, and it guides to the truth in beliefs and to goodness in behaviour and dealings.

Religion is an intellectual revolution that leads man to perfection and advancement in all important areas that are closely related to human life (Al-Subhani, 2013).

Religion is a system of general facts, which lead to a change in morals and behaviour, if taken seriously, and if the believer lives it with deep and inspired emotional conviction.

3. Culture

The word culture means education and knowledge (Al-Jawahiri, 2005). Taylor defines culture as that total complex that includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, custom, and other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society (Abboud, 2001). It is also defined as a set of intellectual, spiritual, creative, literary, and artistic formations and the prevailing ideologies that constitute an innovative reality that is specific to certain people and a certain era (Thebian, 1990). The anthropologist (Malinovsky) defines it as a social inheritance that includes inherited material elements, commodities, technical processes, ideas, individual habits, and values (Abdulkhaliq, 2016).

4. Tolerance

Tolerance is a word that is derived from forgiveness, that is, generosity. To be tolerant means to be lenient and to be generous (Ibn Mandhour, 2009).

Tolerance is also defined as the willingness to accept groups or ideas that one opposes and to acknowledge to them and their owners their right to practice all their political and civil rights (Muhammad, 2007).

Tolerance also means taking a positive attitude in which the right of others to enjoy universally recognized human rights and fundamental freedom is recognized. For this reason, the UNESCO declaration emphasized avoiding any ambiguity that tolerance should not be invoked to justify violating the basic values of human rights (Shaaban, 2011). It is also defined

as endurance with suffering in order to coexist with something that does not really agree with an immoral issue just because of the desire for forgiveness (Al-Hassan, 2001).

Tolerance is a cultural, intellectual, and ideological system, which has its mechanism of action, its method of influence, its method of thinking, and its way of working. It is not possible for the values of tolerance to prevail unless all its premises are completed, that is, it is based on a series of intellectual and cultural processes to which the individual and society are subject in order to work correctly and effectively (Al-Gharbawi, 2008). It is also defined as the right of the other to differ and coexist, without estrangement, clash, or enmity. Tolerance does not mean giving up beliefs or intellectual convictions or compromising around them. Rather, it means coexistence with the other, and dealing with him/her with humanity, justice, and fairness regardless of the correctness and wrongness of his/her ideas (Yousuf, 2018).

First: Problem Statement

The Iraqi reality reveals prominent changes at the level of social construction, especially the negative ones, which generated discord, exclusion, rivalry, intolerance, rejection of the other, and the non-acceptance of the difference in thought and opinion. The researcher focused on the concept of tolerance because it is a positive value and the aim of it is to tame the soul to respect and accept pluralism, participation, and recognition of the other, which constitutes the cognitive framework of the religious system to which the prophets refer and teachings from heaven were sent down in this regard. Everyone demands the dissemination of the spirit of love, tolerance, and acceptance of the other, but the pace of intolerance and violence continues to increase in most aspects of social life. On the other hand, there is a large number of writings and statements issued by all institutions Including the religious institution, calling for tolerance, but some of those who belong to that institution are working to spread the culture of revenge and sectarianism, rejecting the other, and not accepting the other through the pulpits on religious and other occasions. Therefore, the present study attempts to answer a set of questions posed by the researcher as follows:

1. What are the most important factors affecting the attitude of the religious institution towards the culture of tolerance?

2. Can the intervention of the religious institution be more effective in spreading the culture of tolerance?

3. What are the limits of the social responsibility of the religious authority in the Iraqi society from the point of view of individuals?

4. What is the extent of the spread of the culture of tolerance in the Iraqi society?

Second: Significance of the Study

The present study is significant as it tackles an important topic, which is the culture of tolerance, as is one of the most important topics in the contemporary world because it represents the basic principles upon which civil social life is based within the framework of a society that is characterized by social and cultural pluralism and filled with political, intellectual, and religious conflicts on the other hand. Tolerance is an important and necessary requirement to bring about economic and social development, progress, and advancement in societies. Religion is what links members of society with one another in an organizational structure that helps to strengthen social ties and relations among individuals and groups. This role is evident through its representatives in social life (the religious institution) by its means. Represented by councils, schools, mosques and religious fatwas that encourage and constantly remind the

development and dissemination of a culture of tolerance among individuals and the strengthening of ties and relations.

Third: Objectives of the Study

1. Understanding the meaning of tolerance, its dimensions, and effects.
2. Determining the reasons for the interest in spreading the culture of tolerance.
3. Identifying the aspects of the religious institution's role in spreading the culture of tolerance.
4. Reaching conclusions, recommendations, and suggestions that help in spreading the culture of tolerance in the Iraqi society.

Fourth: Tolerance in the monotheistic religions

1. Tolerance in Judaism

Judaism is one of the monotheistic religions that was revealed to the Prophet Moses (peace be upon him) in Egypt during the existence of the Children of Israel or the Hebrews. It is one of the oldest religions and is currently known as the Abrahamic religions. Its holy book is the Torah that was revealed to Moses, which Christianity also adopts, considering it the Old Testament, which was completed by the New Testament. Judaism is based on two sources, the Torah or the so-called Old Testament to distinguish it from the New Testament the Bible. The Old Testament is sacred to both Jews and Christians. Commentaries on the Torah were drawn up by Jewish scholars and rabbinic rabbis after Christ, so they built on them traditions and etiquette that over time became a subject of sanctification for the whole of the Torah, knowing that there was no mention of the Talmud, neither in the Gospels, nor in the dialogue between Christians and Jewish sects, nor in the Glorious Quran nor the prophetic hadiths (Sousa, 1981).

Moreover, the Jewish religion and its holy book (the Torah), has been rewritten several times and in one of these times it was completely lost, as there are factors behind rewriting the Torah, including giving some new laws and rituals of sanctity and respect (Sabri, 2011).

2. Tolerance in Christianity

Christianity is a monotheistic heavenly religion revealed to the Prophet Jesus, son of Mary, peace be upon them. It is the Christian religion. A call came to the Children of Israel, not to invalidate the religion of Moses, but rather to complement it. Christians do not reject the old book of the Torah, but rather sanctify it, as well as what was revealed to them in their book, the New Testament called the Bible. Christianity is a monotheistic movement embraced by people of different classes, workers, the poor, and employees, united by one spirit, whose goal is the pursuit of a virtuous life all for the worship of the Lord, contact with Christ, and the service of others (Shehata, 1984).

The Christian religion urges love and peace and calls for tolerance. It is often attributed to the Christian faith according to the evangelical texts, which was narrated by the apostles that one of the Christian teachings is to remain silent about injustice and not respond to it. It also calls for brotherhood and forgiveness. In the various evangelical texts, there are evidence confirming these principles according to the discourse of forgiveness and love, which directly lead to approving behaviours that renounce violence and call for the establishment of peace and tranquillity among humans, whether Christians or others. It was mentioned in the Gospel of Matthew; "If your brother sins against you, go and reprimand him between you and him privately" (Matthew's Gospel, p. 23). Christianity in its teachings and the sayings of Christ (peace be upon him) and those who came after him from his disciples emphasize the principle of a culture of tolerance and rejection of violence. This is confirmed by the words of Jesus

(peace be upon him) (Blessed are the merciful, blessed are the righteous of heart, blessed are the peacemakers) (Riyadh, 2000).

3. Tolerance in the Islamic Religion

Islam is one of the most important monotheistic religions that is not concerned with matters of worship, spirituality, and ideal and moral values only, but is concerned with material, mundane, scientific, and realistic matters that the pure religion recommends (Baghdadi, 2001).

In Islam, the concept of tolerance is that every member of the nation has the right to believe what he/she truly sees, and to have the freedom to perform the rituals of his/her religion as he/she is pleased. Islam looked at religions with a view of tolerance and called Jews and Christians as the People of the Book. This is a divine directive that the language of communication with the People of the Book should be soft and tolerant (Al-Ghamdi, 2013).

The Islamic religion calls for coexistence and rapprochement and urges its followers to tolerance and erasing intolerance and extremism with others. It is known that Muslims practiced tolerance with non-Muslims, a unique tolerance that there is no counterpart in history (Al-Nadawi, 2016).

Fifth: The religious institution's role in spreading the tolerance culture

The religious institution has many means that help it practice its social roles, through which it can influence society directly, as well as through which it is possible to develop and spread social cultures such as the culture of tolerance, which is one of the most important cultures that the Iraqi society needs. Tolerance has an important religious position in the Glorious Quran and Sunnah, which is evident in aspects, such as mosques, religious schools, legal fatwas, and Friday sermons.

The mosque has a prominent and important role that it can play in all areas of life, especially at the present time as a result of the difficult and dangerous political and social conditions that our society is going through, such as sectarian tension, displacement, killing, and the absence of a culture of tolerance and acceptance of the other. Therefore, mosque can have an effective role in making behavioural and intellectual changes. This can lead to the achievement of society's solidarity, compatibility, cohesion, and integration among all its components and social spectrums in order to reduce the state of political and social tension among members of society. This comes through the role imams and preachers play in the process of religious and social awareness, which leads to a decrease in the level of tension and conflict and the development of a culture of tolerance in the Iraqi society through guidance and awareness (Muhammad, 2013).

The roles of preachers in mosques are very dangerous. They either send messages that aim to spread intimacy and love, or messages of violence, hatred, and rejection of the other. Some Friday sermons had a great influence in disseminating national directives that contributed to extinguishing the fire of sedition and promoting peaceful coexistence and solidarity and not adopting accusations and incitement because they cause sectarian animosity, which is not expected from a preacher or a religious scholar (Idan, 2018).

Religious Authorities in Najaf played a pivotal role in the events after the fall of the regime in 2003 by issuing many statements and fatwas in which they identified several political, social, and other positions, as well as Friday sermons, which are an important source for identifying their orientations on many issues of societal importance. The religious authority in Najaf sees the necessity of establishing a civil state that respects all religions and sects, which

is clear through the fatwas that refer to this trend. It believes that the civil state model is the closest form to the nature of the Iraqi society, and it must be within the constitutional framework that does not conflict with the laws of the Islamic religion (Mansour, 2021).

After the fall of the Iraqi regime in 2003, the collapse of all institutions, and chaos spread in various aspects of the country. In order to ensure public property and not to abuse it, it is also forbidden to use stolen devices from government departments (Al-Khaffaf, 2013).

The Authority also has several positions that urged calming the security situation in Iraq and avoiding discrimination and rivalries between all parties. That is a clear position towards the differences that occurred recently between the political parties in Iraq represented by the so-called (coordinating framework) and the Sadrist bloc, which generated a kind of chaos, division, and threat, so the Authority called on the parties to practice restraint and to stay away from hatred, conflict, and division for the sake of a united and strong Iraq.

Sixth: Results and Recommendations

Each scientific research has specific results, which are the outcome of the effort made by the researcher. The researcher that tries to contribute to solving the problem of the subject of his/her research must put some recommendations for the competent authorities, provided that these authorities take into account as much as possible the adoption of these recommendations.

1. The results

1. The religious institution in the Iraqi society plays a large and influential role in the lives of individuals. The concept of tolerance has always been associated with religion. Therefore, the religious institution has sought, through its various channels, to work on spreading this culture among the components of the one society, whether religious, sectarian, ethnic and national levels, considering it a necessary and urgent need because of the great diversity among the components of the Iraqi people.

2. Religious institutions, through their media platforms, whether official or unofficial, called for a distance from hatred to spread a culture of tolerance and peace among the various social components. Their focus was on religious tolerance, which represents a door to all other types of tolerance, to accept the other regardless of his/her religion and sect. It contributes to opening a lot of tolerance among the members of society. These calls were not limited to tolerance among the people of the same religion, but went beyond to include calls for tolerance and dialogue among different religions.

3. One of the most important results that can result from spreading the culture of tolerance, which assumes that this culture is an urgent and necessary need is the development of the spirit of citizenship and democracy among individuals. Citizenship is a set of rights and duties between the citizen and the state. The commitment of individuals to their duties is matched by the state's commitment to the rights of its citizens.

4. The knowledge production of the religious institution, whether at the level of religious seminaries, mosques, or pulpits, contributed greatly to the rejection of religious, racial, and sectarian fanaticism. This role was greatly manifested after the sectarian war that swept the country through the supremacy of calls for the unification of the Islamic ranks and the transcendence of narrow sectarian differences.

2. Recommendations

1. Spreading the culture of tolerance widely through religious councils adopted by religious institutions

2. Accountability of those who fail to spread the culture of tolerance among the clergy because some of them started to stir up strife for personal gain.

3. Staying away from issues that incite strife and sectarianism among the people.

4. Using the public pressure card on the religious establishment in dealing with issues of political chaos that made political stability unattainable.

5. Issuing badges or identification identities for the preachers who belong to the religious institution officially to limit the large number of clerics whose exaggerated number has become suspicious.

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