

Principle of Responsibility in the Medina Charter to Build Cooperative Relations of the Cross-Cultural Community

Prinsip Tanggungjawab dalam Piagam Madinah Membina Hubungan Kerjasama Masyarakat Silang Budaya

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ABSTRACT

The Medina Charter is the world's first written constitution enacted by the Prophet Muhammad PBUH to manage the cross-cultural society in Yathrib (after the migration, Yathrib changed its name to Medina al-Munawwarah). The Yathrib community comprises of various ethnicities, languages, religions, and tribes. Before the arrival of Islam, Yathrib had no organised political system and people lived in factions and sects. Its people were constantly in conflict due to high levels of ethnocentrism, fight instigations and quarrels of merely small matters. Thus, the Prophet PBUH drafted the Medina Charter to build cooperative relations within the cross-cultural society. This article aims to identify the principles of responsibility in the Constitution of Medina and analyse the principles of responsibility in building cooperative relationships of cross-cultural communities in Medina. Qualitative methods i.e., in-depth interviews and (systematic) literature review or library research were used for this study. In analysing the data, content analysis method was employed. The results found that this Charter has laid down the principle of responsibility to be followed by every individual for the common good and has succeeded in uniting and fostering cooperative relations within the cross-cultural community of Medina.

Keywords: Principles of Responsibility; Medina Charter; Cooperation Relations; Cross-Cultural Society

ABSTRAK

Piagam Madinah merupakan perlembagaan bertulis pertama dunia yang digubal oleh Nabi Muhammad SAW untuk mengurus masyarakat silang budaya di Yathrib (selepas peristiwa hijrah Yathrib ditukar nama kepada Madinah al Munawwarah). Masyarakat Yathrib terdiri daripada pelbagai etnik, bahasa, agama dan suku puak. Sebelum kedatangan Islam, Yathrib tidak mempunyai sistem politik yang teratur dan masyarakatnya hidup secara berpuak-puak serta terpisah. Masyarakatnya sering berkonflik kerana masyarakatnya mempunyai semangat etnosentrisme yang tinggi sehingga sanggup bersengketa dan berperang walaupun melibatkan perkara kecil. Maka, Baginda SAW telah mengubal Piagam Madinah bagi membina hubungan kerjasama dalam masyarakat silang budaya. Justeru, artikel ini bertujuan mengenal pasti prinsip tanggungjawab dalam Perlembagaan Madinah dan menganalisis prinsip tanggungjawab dalam membina hubungan kerjasama masyarakat silang budaya di Madinah. Artikel ini menggunakan kaedah kualitatif iaitu temu bual mendalam dan kajian kepustakaan. Manakala, kaedah analisis kandungan digunakan untuk menganalisis data yang

diperoleh. Hasil dapatan mendapati piagam ini telah meletakkan prinsip tanggungjawab untuk dilakukan oleh setiap individu demi kepentingan bersama. Hal ini telah berjaya menyatu padu dan membina hubungan kerjasama dalam masyarakat silang budaya di Madinah.

Kata kunci: Prinsip Tanggungjawab; Piagam Madinah; Hubungan Kerjasama; Masyarakat Silang Budaya

INTRODUCTION

The principle of responsibility is an important principle in human life. Therefore, this principle has been widely discussed. According to S. Abul A'la Maududi (1995), human beings are given the responsibility to prosper the Earth. Therefore, Allah recognizes human beings as caliphs to do good deeds and stay away from evil as well as form human beings who are obedient to Allah—(Hamka 2006; Khairul Azmi Mohamad & Nooraini 2009). Every action taken by human beings will be held accountable in the hereafter (Abdullah Ahmad Qodiry Al-Ahdal 2003). According to O. P. Simorangkir (1987), responsibility means taking good care of everything around and being willing to do anything. Responsibility must be exercised towards oneself, society, religion and country. Thus, Islam places the responsibility on Muslims to implement Islamic law, especially justice for the well-being and harmony of all human beings (Wan Z. Kamaruddin Wan Ali & Ahmad Zuhdi n.d.).

In the history of Islam, for example, Prophet PBUH set the best example in carrying out his responsibilities as a neighbour and leader by visiting the sick Jews and Christians and giving gifts to them (Mohammad Nidzam Abdul Kadir 2009). Similarly, Khalid al-Walid, the Commander of the Islamic War, also visited non-Muslims while in Iraq (Yusuf al-Qaradhawi 1989). This shows that Islam does not look at religious and ethnic differences in carrying out responsibilities related to welfare and humanity. This was also once done by Sufyan bin Umaiyah who lent 200 shields to Prophet PBUH in one war.

In Christianity, it also touches on the responsibility of caring for and loving other individuals as oneself as recorded in the Old Testament chapter Leviticus (19:18):

“Thou shalt not avenge, nor bear any grudge against the children of thy people, but thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself: I am the Lord”.

According to Huntington (1999), religion is the foundation of civilization and can lead to conflict. This is different from the view of Islam which views religion can bring a relationship of cooperation, justice, tolerance, responsibility, love and unity

of mankind (Mustafa Daud 1991; Abdull Rahman Mahmood, Kamaruddin Salleh, Ahmad Sunawari Long & Faudzinain Badaruddin 2009). Sahibi Naim (1983) argues that religious man will know the purpose of life and organise all aspects of life of his followers. Religion also serves as a tool of evaluation or social control. Meanwhile, Siti Fatimah Abdul Rahman (1993) also thinks that religion or belief system can strengthen and defend the spirit of a nation in achieving national aspirations.

Islam recognizes the diversity of human beings in line with the words of Allah in chapter *al-Hujurat* verse 13 which explains the creation of human beings who are made into nations and tribes so that human beings know each other (Hairol Anuar Mak Din et al., 2020). Nevertheless, the process of development and modernization faced by society has influenced the importance of human bonds (Burgess 1978; Moore, 1963). Human relationships are increasingly marginalised and even individualistic and materialistic attitudes are held in part of society today (Nur Asia 2008; Moha Asri Abdullah 2010). This requires a solution to avoid division in society (Yildirim n.d.).

Ibn Khaldun (1993) argues that division occurs due to human nature that does not understand the nature of human life that needs each other. Islamic history, for example, proves that a religion is capable of resolving fights and wars. This coincides with the nature of religion which aims to realise brotherhood, respect, love, justice and so on. Therefore, the Islamic government became a harmonious, peaceful and respected country a while ago (Zaleha Embong, Nik Yusri Musa & Nazri Muslim 2018).

Therefore, the Prophet PBUH was sent as a guide and example to mankind. In Medina, Prophet PBUH has successfully managed a plural society through the Medina Charter which was drafted based on the guidance of the Qur'an (Embong et al. 2021). Abubakar Aceh (1970) and Mat Saad Abdul Rahman (1995) believes that a pluralistic society at that time of the Prophet PBUH is the best example. The good service given by the Islamic government to the non-Muslim community led many people to embrace Islam. The success of the Prophet PBUH in building an Islamic state is based on the factors of *ta'awun* practice (Munir Muhammad Al-Ghadban 2003; Aunur Rafiq 2009). The importance of the

practice of *ta'awun* as stated by Yusuf Qardhawi (1997) that *ta'awun* (helping each other), *tanaashur* (supporting each other) and *taraahum* (loving) are fundamental in Islamic brotherhood. This practice can create a relationship of cooperation and unity in society (Ahmad Munawar Ismail & Abdul Muhaimin Mahmood 2022).

Muṣṭafa Daud (1991) also discusses the importance of a responsible attitude among neighbours. An individual is responsible for building friendships and helping neighbours. According to Muamar (2007), the relationship between neighbours can form a relationship of cooperation and unity in society. This is in line with the study of Nur Jasmine Lau Leby (2008) which shows that good neighbourhood relations and interactions allow community members to live a harmonious and peaceful life.

In addition, a discussion regarding the importance of the principle of responsibility in a country had been conducted by S. Abul A'la Maududi (1986) and Che Bakar Che Mat et al. (2007). According to S. Abul A'la Maududi (1986), the government's responsibility to the people is an important matter that needs to be given priority. The power of the government is the trust of Allah and must be handed over to the people in a fair manner. Che Bakar Che Mat et al. (2007) detailed the government's responsibility to the people and the people's responsibility to the country. Yusuf al-Qaradhawi (1989) also conducted research on the responsibilities of *ahl al-Dhimmah* (non-Muslim communities) in Islamic countries. The responsibility outlined is the payment of *jizyah* which is the annual tax obligatory on non-Muslim individuals paid to the Islamic state at a certain time when the obligatory conditions are perfect and there is no reason to abolish it (Yusuf al-Qaradhawi 1989: 29). In addition, *kharaj* is a tax imposed on non-Muslim individuals on the proceeds of economic activities undertaken (Yusuf al-Qaradhawi (1989: 29) and business tax. In addition, it is subject to Islamic laws in the area of *muamalat* and respect for religious ceremonies. as well as maintaining the feelings of the Muslim community.

According to Roziyah Sidik (2004) and Muhammad Yasin Mazhar Siddiqui (1993), the government's role is to clearly explain the responsibilities of each citizen. This is as implemented by the Prophet PBUH by explaining the responsibilities of the people through the Clauses contained in the Charter of Medina. According to Ahmad Ibrahim and Dzafar El-Qasimy

(1985) and Abdul Monir Yaacob (1996), Clauses 3 to 12 are the provisions of rights and responsibilities that must be implemented by the Muslim community. Meanwhile, Roziyah Sidik (2004) and Ibrahim Che 'Noh (2001) argue that Clauses 24, 37 and 38 describe the responsibilities that must be borne by the Jewish tribe. The responsibility that needs to be accepted is to finance the cost of the war, donate property and weapons and work with the Muslim community in defending Medina. This is as being portrayed by Sufyan bin Umayyah who lent 200 shields to the Prophet PBUH in one battle.

Therefore, these Clauses are important for the life of society to create unity and create a community that lives side by side in harmony (Muhammad Abd. Rauf 1991; Muamar 2007). As a result, Medina became a symbol of Islamic strength and the main bastion of Islamic defence in the face of the threat of the four great powers related to Rome, Persia, the Arab tribes in the Arabian Peninsula and the infidel Quraysh of Mecca (Embong et al. 2021 & Muṣṭafa Ramadhan 1991).

It is clear that the principle of work plays an important role and must be accepted by every individual, society, government, organisation and country to create peace and harmony. The principle of responsibility can create relationships and mutual assistance in a plural society hence socio-political stability in a country (Embong et al. 2021).

METHODOLOGY

The data collection method in this study uses the qualitative method of in-depth interviews with two Islamic historical scholars about Mahmood Zuhdi Ab. Majid, Zulkifli Mohamad Al-Bakri and an ethnic relations scholar on Shamsul Amri Baharuddin. Interviews were conducted to gain an overview of the Medina Charter and cross-cultural relations in Medina. The library method was used for journal articles, theses, books, proceedings, newspapers and the like. Medina Charter search data is a source of relevant scientific sources. Content analysis method is used to analyse the data obtained.

This study focuses on the principles practiced by the Prophet PBUH in the Medina Charter. This principle has done good relations of the cross-cultural community in Medina and it becomes a country that is respected and feared by the enemy.

ESTABLISHMENT OF THE MEDINA CHARTER

The Medina Charter was written entirely by two Muslim writers namely Ibn Ishaq (Died 151H) and Ibn Hisham (Died 213H) (Izzuddin 2008: 110). This charter is the first written constitution in the world drafted by the Prophet PBUH as a guide to the cross-cultural society in Medina (Watt 1956; Muhammed Hamidullah 1968; Zainal Abidin Ahmad 1973; Afzalur Rahman 1992; Roziyah Sidek 2004; Ahmad Ibrahim & Dzafar El-Qasimy 1985). According to Watt (1956), Peters (1994) and Ahmad Khairuddin (2007). The Medina Charter is an authentic document and has content appropriate to the sociological and historical conditions of the time. Guillame (2004) named the Medina Charter as a Friendly Agreement in his book entitled *The Life of Muhammad*. According to Guillame (2004), this charter emphasizes the coexistence between the Muhajireen and the Ansar as well as the Jews. These groups respect each other's religion, protect property rights and have the same duty in defending Medina. Ibn Ishaq is of the view that (quoted from Peters 1994: 198):

“And the Apostle of God wrote document between the Migrants and the Helpers and in it he made a peace (*wada'a*) with the Jews and the pact (*'ahada*) with them and he confirmed them according to their religion/law (*'ala dinihim*) and properties and laid down obligations due to them and imposed obligations upon them”.

It is clear that the purpose of the Medina Charter was enacted so that the community could take responsibility, organise relationships and solve problems among the cross-cultural community in Medina. In the original text of the Medina Charter, there is no division of Clauses. The division 47 the Clause was placed by A. J. Wensinck in his study entitled *Mohammed en de Joden te Madina* in 1928 A.D. written to obtain the title of Doctor of Philosophy in Semitic Literature (Watt 1956; Izzuddin 2008: 111). However, Muhammed Hamidullah (1968) argues that the Medina Charter has 52 Clauses, the first part contains 25 Clauses and the second part contains 27 Clauses. Historians generally note that this constitution was written in the first year of the Hijra (Ahmad Ibrahim & Dzafar El-Qasimy 1985). Whereas, Muhammed Hamidullah (1968) has given the possibility that the first part was made in the first year of the Hijra then the second part was added in the second year of the Hijra after the battle of *Badr*.

After undergoing several changes, the Medina Charter, which was completed in the first and second year of the Hijra, contains 47 Clauses and is divided into two parts. The first part contains Clauses 1 to 23 dealing with the relations of the Muhajireen and the Ansar which were completed before the outbreak of the Battle of *Badr*. Meanwhile, Clauses 24 to 47 relate to the rights and obligations of the Jews completed after the Battle of *Badr* (Mat Saad Abd. Rahman 1995: 38; Zulkifli Hussin 2003). The Medina Charter is the Prophet's strategy to restructure the political and social system in Medina. This is because Medina needs an orderly administrative system to manage the cross-cultural society and strengthen its strength to face various threats.

The Medina Charter includes issues such as the rights and obligations of the government and the people it governs, legislation, justice, defence arrangements, the position of head of state, service to non-Muslims, social security and understanding of the ummah (Ahmad Ibrahim & Dzafar El-Qasimy 1985). According to Che Bakar Che Mat et al. (2007: 27), there are nine main points in the Medina Charter, namely the formation of the ummah, human rights, religious associations, associations of all citizens, minorities, the duty of citizens, protecting the country, national leadership and guaranteeing peace. In this charter, Prophet PBUH laid down the principle of responsibility to manage a cross-cultural society. This shows the seriousness of the Prophet PBUH to create harmony under Islamic rule.

DISCUSSION

Islam places the responsibility on all Muslims to implement Islamic law, especially justice for the welfare of all human beings (Siti Aisyah Samudin 2021; Wan Z. Kamaruddin Wan Ali & Ahmad Zuhdi 2013). Therefore, the principle of responsibility is very important for the development of individuals, communities and countries (Zaleha Embong, Nik Yusri Musa and Nazri Muslim 2018). Therefore, Prophet PBUH set the responsibility for every member of the community of Medina (Roziyah Sidik 2004). This was done to ensure that the cross-cultural community could work together in maintaining the security of Medina as the opinion of Mahmood Zuhdi Ab. Majid that:

“Prophet PBUH did not underestimate the differences and racial diversity. The Prophet PBUH set the responsibility to the entire community of Medina so that they can work together to maintain the peace of Medina”.

Therefore, cross-cultural societies have roles and responsibilities that need to be implemented. According to Zulkifli Mohamad Al-Bakri, the Medina Charter explains in detail the responsibilities of the people of Medina. For example, the Muhajireen from the Quraish have the original right to pay each other and accept ransom payment fairly. This is as stated in Clause 3, namely:

“The Muhajireen of Quraish are based on their old beliefs. They bear to pay and receive ransom payment (*diat*) from each other in which they redeem anyone who is captured in a benevolent and just manner among the believers”.

The tribes of Medina such as Bani Auf, Bani al-Harith, Bani Sa'idah, Bani Jusyam, Bani al-Najjar, Bani 'Amru bin' Auf, Bani al-Nabiet and Bani Aus also have the same responsibility which is to bear each other pay and accept ransom payment in a good and fair manner. The responsibility of this tribe as stated in Clauses 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10 and 11. Meanwhile, in Clause 12 it explains the responsibility of fellow Muslims to help each other contributed to pay the ransom payment fairly. Clause 12 states that:

“That the believers should not allow any problems among themselves but must be equally responsible to contribute charitable to pay the ransom payment fairly”.

In addition, Muslims and non-Muslims are responsible for defending Medina and financing the country as stated in Clauses 24, 37 and 38. The responsibilities are to finance the cost of war, donate property and weapons and cooperate with the Muslim community in defending Medina (Ibrahim Che' Noh 2001; Roziah Sidik 2004; Abdul Monir Yaacob 1986). The clauses are as follows:

Article 24:

“That the Jews should also spend with the Believers as long as they are at war”.

Article 37:

“That the Jews should fund the state and that they should help each other against anyone who fights the people who are members of this charter. And let them advise each other, do good to sinful deeds”.

Article 38:

“That the Jews should bear the cost along with the believers as long as they are in a state of war”.

According to Roziah Sidik (2004), members of the community are responsible to participate in reconciliation as stated in Clause 45 (b) and 46. Clause 45 (b) states that:

“Each party is obliged to take part in a reconciliation.”

Meanwhile, Clause 46 states that:

“That the Aus Jews themselves as well as those associated with them shall bear the same obligations as any other party to this charter for the sole good (of the reconciliation) of the members of this charter. They should do good by not committing sin because whoever does something then he bears it himself. Allah bears witness to the truth of the contents of this charter and approves it”.

“The state of Medina was founded on the basis of cooperation between the races. Prophet PBUH did not underestimate any race at that time, all were included in the Medina Charter”.

In addition, this principle also plays a role in creating an attitude of mutual help and cooperation. This is as stated in Clauses 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11 and 12. These Clauses mention one by one the tribes of Medina to explain the responsibilities of fellow Muslims. This situation allows the Muslim community to help each other and work together to make charitable contributions to pay the ransom payment fairly (Siti Aisyah Samudin 2021). Clause 45 (b) clarifies the responsibility of the entire community of Madinah to participate in the peace process. According to Mahmood Zuhdi Ab. Majid that:

“The Medina Charter succeeded in uniting the plural society and they worked together to achieve peace in Medina”.

In addition, this principle also plays a role in strengthening neighbourhood relations and strengthening consensus in the community. Neighbours also have the right to be respected as Zulkifli Mohamad Al-Bakri views that:

“The right of a neighbour in Islam is a right to be respected”.

This shows that neighbours have rights that need to be emphasized. Thus, society is responsible to help, protect and cannot harm its neighbours (S. Khuda Bukhsh 2017; Mahmood Zuhdi Abdul Majid 2010; Mohammad Nidzam Abdul Kadir 2009). This is proven in the words of the Prophet PBUH, from Abi Syuraih r.a. in Sahih Al-Bukhari, no. 1702 which means:

“The Prophet PBUH said: “By Allah he does not believe! By Allah he is not a believer! By Allah, he is not a believer!” People ask: “Who is that person, O Messenger of Allah?” Prophet PBUH replied: “People whose crimes never give a sense of security to their neighbours”.

In addition, this principle also plays a role in uniting the plural society when the granting of rights is done fairly and the guarantee of religious freedom. Muslims and non-Muslims respect each other’s religious beliefs. Therefore, the Prophet PBUH did not take action against the people who rejected the call of Islam but respected their decision (Roziyah Sidik 2004). According to Ramli Awang (2003), Islam succeeds in uniting a plural society due to the implementation of the concept of tauhid (oneness of Allah) which does not discriminate between human beings. As a result, cross-cultural communities feel secure under Islamic rule. This is in line with the views of Mahmood Zuhdi Ab. Majid that:

“The practice of tolerance has united the plural society because the non-Muslim community is guaranteed freedom of religion”.

This was also agreed by Shamsul Amri Baharuddin who stated that:

“The Medina Charter is a constitution that emphasizes the relationship between the plural society. This is the reason why the people of Medina live in safety and peace”.

In addition, this principle successfully regulates community relations when each tribe is mentioned one by one in recognition of their rights as co-citizens of the Muslim community (Ali Khan 2006). According to Afzal Iqbal (2000), Maher Abu-Munshar (2007) and Abd al-Fattah El-Uwasi (2007), the success of Islam in Medina is due to the stability of relations between the plural society. This element of love has brought about a major change in the relationship of the cross-cultural community in Medina. For example, the argument between the Aus and Khazraj tribes was united by a bond of love (Afzal Iqbal 2000). As a result, tribes and tribal systems were eliminated and replaced with closer kinship ties (Shaikh Sofiy al-Rahman al-Mubarakfuri 2011). Meanwhile, non-Muslims were also given protection and prohibited from committing cruelty to them (Denny 1977). This is because safety was guaranteed for them by Prophet PBUH as long as they could respect the Medina Charter (Mat Saad Abd. Rahman 1995; Roziyah Sidik 2004).

CONCLUSION

Based on the discussion section, the principle of responsibility is an important basis in the Medina Charter. This principle has been applied in the Medina Charter to educate the people of Medina with a responsible attitude towards religion, family, community and country. This has caused the people of Medina to maintain the rights that have been entrusted to the common good. These clauses show the principle of responsibility practiced by Prophet PBUH to successfully manage the cross-cultural society and build cooperative relations until Medina became a strong and respected country.

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AUTHORS’ CONTRIBUTIONS

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