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RESEARCH ARTICLE

TA AYUSH OR COEXISTENCE AS A LITERARY SOCIOLOGICAL THEORY

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Abstract

Ta'ayush or coexistence is recorded and commemorated in the main Islamic sources, i.e. the Qur'an and Hadith as the historical evidences and spiritual guidance for the Muslims related to inter-faith experiences of interaction, contestation and dialogue. The concept of ta'ayush discernible in the Islamic sources also attain the heed of Muslim scholars as the Muslim territories are expanded before the eyes of tolerant and resistant peoples. Generally, the concept is written and re-written continually in responding to the changing situations. In the modern time, the concept becomes the significant part of literary theorisation and exploration as can be related to the works of such earliest modern Muslim writer as Najib al-Kilani (1931-1995) depicting the Muslims' struggles and survival. To be more specific, ta'ayush as an Islamic literary sociological theory can be related to The Jade King (1988) as its author Huo Da is concerned with the idea of coexistence and socio-economic survival of the minority Muslim Chinese alongside majority peoples of other faiths and ethnicities. Therefore, this article is aimed at further discussing of ta'ayush as the literary theory, examining the main Islamic source and other Muslim scholarly works on ta'ayush on one hand, and Islamic literary theory-related works on the other as the references and the theoretical framework for this article. To conclude, ta'ayush as a Islamic literary sociological theory is important and relevant in appreciating Muslim literary works dealing with modern or contemporary Muslim issues where the Muslims are the minority.

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Introduction:-

Ta'ayush or coexistence is something clear stated and practically happened in the early history of the Muslims and specifically in the lives of Prophet Muhammad PBUH and the Companions. Simultaneously, the spirit of the term ta'ayush can be extracted from the general discussion in the main Islamic sources concerning the need of the attitude of mutual understanding and respect between the Muslims and the non-Muslims based on commonly-shared religious and social grounds. Later, the birth of the term in the first Muslim society turned into a serious matter of attention when the Muslim territory became wider and the term was widely practiced in multicultural societies where Muslims interact and coexist with different religious and cultural groups.

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What is more important to look at here is the conception of ta'ayush in terms of sociological literary theory besides the terminological aspect of the word. Before that, it should be mentioned here that the conception of ta'ayush can be traced back to the early Islamic formalization of the word ta'ayush upon the issuance of the Medina Charter (622 AD), which is one of the earliest manifestations of structured inter-religious coexistence in the Islamic governance. Under the leadership of the Prophet Muhammad PBUH, the charter established a pluralistic society in which Muslims, Jews, Christians and other communities lived together under a unified political framework. As Compier (2010) points out, this agreement allowed non-Muslim communities to retain their religious practices and manage their own internal affairs.

In the charter mentioned above is a clear stipulation by the Prophet Muhammad PBUH of the rights and obligations between communities, laying the foundation for the establishment of a multicultural society with peaceful coexistence. The charter states that the Jews of Banu Isra'il is considered as part of the general community allegiant the national leadership from the Muslim believers, and the allegiance allowed the Jews to practice their religion provided they did not encroach the practice of the religion of Islam, and provided they were allegiant to the State of Madinah especially in the cooperation of resisting foreign invasions (Article 25 & 27 of the Medina Charter). In other words, the Medina Charter was not only intended to resolve multicultural conflicts, but it is also meant to protect all citizens of Medina (Yildirim 2006). According to Ahmad (2014) the Charter was issued to govern a multicultural society, which gave citizens equal rights. He believes that the basic principles of the Charter can still be implemented in the context of modern multicultural minorities, and its value still has significance for modern and contemporary society. This is due to the fact that historical charter effectively reflects the Prophet's application of ta'ayush, and also shows that peaceful coexistence is the foundation of early Islamic rule.

As Islam spread beyond the Arabian Peninsula, for the Muslim scholars, the term ta'ayush turned into a bigger food of thought when it can be further explored and written in books; and for the Muslim leaders, the term became a political framework for governing multicultural regions such as al-Andalus where Christianity and Judaism under Muslim rule helped the region become the center of cultural and intellectual prosperity, especially in science, literature, and the arts. The prosperity was inseparable part from the tolerant system of ta'ayush as was suggested by Menocal (2009) who is of the opinion that cultural prosperity of al-Andalus was the fruit of a system of tolerance of Islam, which catered for common intellectual and cultural heritage that later played a big role in the European Renaissance. Likewise, Cohen (2021) did a comparison when he noted that the Jews did fare better under the Muslims compared to the time when the Jews was under the Christian rule. Despite jizya (head taxes) being imposed on them, they were granted a degree of autonomy that allowed to them practice their own religion. Therefore, the environment created through ta'ayush stands in a stark contrast to the later persecution and expulsion of the Muslims after the restoration of al-Andalus to the Christians.

Overall, the word ta'ayush is not merely an Islamic message that is restricted to practical purposes of Muslim coexistence in multicultural environment, but it is also part of the vast knowledge of Islam to be well understood and passed from one knowledgeable man to another. It is clear that ta'ayush is understood beyond terminology in a remote approach to the message and knowledge of Islam. Most importantly the word has significant values of social peace, harmony and stability.

Ta'ayush in the Main Islamic Sources:-

Looking at the Qur'an and Hadith, there are general messages of instructions, commands or prohibitions in the Qur'an and Hadith that emphasise harmonious relation among mankind. The emphasis of the harmonious relation is articulated or clear-cut as it can be practically translated into the Medina Charter by Prophet Muhammad PBUH in the early days of Medina. Historically, it is acknowledged by Muslim scholars such as Yildirim (2006) that the Medina Charter is the first written constitution of Islam, enshrining the rights and underlining obligations of its citizens, maintaining social stability in Medina and its surrounding Muslim territories. This historical development briefly indicates general understanding of the people of Madinah about the basic idea of taayush or coexistence, and deep understanding of the term by the Muslim scholars. Moreover, the historical development of Madinah was characterized by the observation and guidance as can be proven with the Prophet's intense and inclusive farewell speech covering many aspects of the Muslim interests. According to Abu Nadella, the Messenger of Allah PBUH said a few days after the Hajj: O people, your Lord is one, and your father Adam is also one. The Arabs gain no preferential treatment over foreigners, foreigners gain no preferential treatment over the Arabs, whites gain no preferential treatment over blacks, and blacks gain no preferential treatment over whites, unless justice. Did I not convey the message? They said: The Messenger of Allah has conveyed the message (Musnad Ahmad 2025, no.

23489). This indicates that the Madinah Charter became the reference for social consideration and justice, and it became the foundation for the coexistence of multicultural regions later.

In this context, the main Islamic sources (al-Qur'an and Hadith) and the historical background (the Madinah society) offer a solid ground for further discussion of the conception of ta'ayush. It should be noted that the Qur'an and Hadith that were compiled by the Companions close to the Prophet Muhammad PBUH are the well-preserved and well-understood Islamic sources respectively. Also, the historical background of Madinah became the main focus for the development of Muslim intellectualism of the later period, meaning all the tapestry of individual and social activities in one respect, and cultural and ethnical activities was strenuously observed and passed down from one generation. Generally speaking, the concept of ta'ayush can be extracted from the main sources of Islam and the history of the early Muslims. The concept is comprehended by the Companions and subsequent Islamic scholars. Diving deeper into the Qur'an and Hadith, the concept of ta'ayush is perfected with other messages of instructions commands or prohibitions related to the solution of social problems such crimes, sins and injustices contained in the same Islamic sources. Also, the concept of ta'ayush is rounded up with the mentioning in the Qur'an (al-Hujurat 49: 13) that the most best or honoured humankind is the most pious, pointing to the unbiased standard of the best mankind underlined in Islam. Importantly, the standard of the Qur'an on the best humankind is the exclusion of ethnicity and skin that are seen as biased, thus the conception of ta'ayush discussed in the context of the Islamic religious sources is something serious and justifiable.

Besides, the concept of ta'ayush is religious, not a normal social practice, therefore the Islamic concept still relevant to further be reviewed in the present context as can be seen in the views of Afra and Abdullah (2023) asserting that ta'ayush is the basis for building a peaceful society within the framework of religious harmony. In this regard, the Islamic concept of taayush is self-sufficient, it does need the suffocation of other religious activities to create religious uniformity or standardization in order to prove the relevancy of the Islamic sources. This is clear when it is mentioned the Qur'an (al-Baqarah 2: 256) that there is no compulsion in embracing Islam. Thus, the existence of different races and religions in one territory either Muslim or non-Muslim dominated is a matter of the management of religious spaces for various religious adherents identified in the law of the territory. At the same time, there is common social space that can be shared by all religious groups or communities, and that space is devoted for the common interest related to the nation building. The discussion above shows that the main Islamic sources and the early historical Muslims cater for a solid foundation for in understanding the concept of ta'ayush and its implications. This is proven as the messages of the Qur'an and Hadith regarding taayush are not just legal or religious stipulation but they are something applicable or can be translated to real practice. In other words, the messages are not just philosophical or theoretical, they are presented with clear guidelines supported with examples and wisdoms shown in the Qur'an and Hadith and in the lives of Prophet Muhammad PBUH and his Companions.

Ta'ayush in the Contemporary Muslim Writings:-

It is important to note here that ta'ayush to be elaborated in the writings of the Muslim scholars is based on the premise built on the essence of the Qur'an and Hadith, the historical background of the Revelation and the commentaries of both main Islamic sources. Despite comparative long gap between the first revelation of the Qur'an and Hadith till the time of the commentaries on one hand, and the emergence of the writings later Muslim scholars on the other, the gap does mean the separation of the latter from the premise attributed to the former. This is proven when the subsequent development of Islamic intellectualism does not point to the abandonment of or contradiction to the Islamic premise. Conversely, subsequent Muslim intellectualism is generally considered as the continuance of the Islamic tradition especially when the Muslim intellectualism withstands the influences of Greek philosophy and Western modernism as can be seen in the consistency of the original Islamic messages and premise in the writings of renowned Muslim scholars or writers such as the first Muslim sociologist Ibn Khaldun (1332-1406) of the al-Andalus Muslim period and the first Muslim literary critic and writer Najib al-Kilani (1931-1995) from Egypt of the modern period.

As of Ibn Khaldun (1332-1406), his masterpiece Muqaddimah (Rosenthal 2015) is based on the Muslim-Christian cultural context of al-Andalus during the Muslim reign, and especially based on the survival of Muslims under the Christian rule before the complete Christian restoration of al-Andalus and expulsion or Christian conversion of all the Muslims. Thus, the background context of Ibn Khaldun's Muqaddimah is the dominance of the Christian presence compared to the diminishing Muslim land of the vast territory of al-Andalus inherited from the previously Muslim ancestors. Therefore, the attention of the author is the sociology, namely the history of the Muslims especially those in Iberia the finally remained piece of al-Andalus. Besides discussing the Muslim history, his work

covers many Muslim civilizational achievements explaining his concern in defending their cultural identity and the religion of Islam. Generally, the conception of ta'ayush that can be extracted from the writing of Ibn Khaldun is the religious consciousness and knowledge of the Muslims as the cultural reference in the new social context after the mass exodus or expulsion of the Muslims from al-Andalus. In the context of this article, the conception from the writing coincides with the emphasis here when presently the Muslims in non-Muslim countries are not politically dominant but practically they can observe their religious duties. This is because the writing of Ibn Khaldun contain useful reflections on how the Muslims should live in the shadow of the political diminishment as can be ascribed to the loss of al-Andalus from the Muslim control and the adaptation of the Muslims in the new living environment.

Similarly, Najib al-Kilani (1931-1995) throughout his copious literary works is considered as one of the most critical scholars and writers in the 20th century. His novels reflect the Muslim plights and struggles throughout the world from Indonesia, 'Adhra' Jakarta (1969) besides copious novels and short stories concerning the Arab-Muslims. His attention is the concern over the diminishing Muslim political power globally. However, the main themes of national peace and social harmony that can be drawn from his writings can be related to the discussion the concept of ta'ayush. This is because the themes concerning the essence of the sociological interpretation of the past Muslim experience of ta'ayush or coexistence as was portrayed in the novels and short stories of al-Kilani (1969; 2012) is based on social justice and equality, not terrorism that can undermine the national interest. Thus, the novels Muslims intellectuals generally of the essence underlying the conception of ta'ayush.

The conception of ta'ayush is not restricted to the philosophical aspect, it can be seen as a theoretical matter when there are contemporary Muslim writers in the West and the East interested in the welfare of the Muslims living in a non-Muslim dominated political environment but having some space of social participation. One such Muslim writer is Huo Da, who in *The Jade King* (1988) dealt with the relationship between Muslim minorities and mainstream groups, and dealt with the cultural conflict between Muslims and non-Muslims. Generally, the author reflects on the phenomenon and manifestation of the social solitude of contemporary elder Chinese Muslim communities compared to young Muslim Chinese willing to participate in national economic and education building. While the elder generation is portrayed in the novel showing their adherence to their own religious beliefs and shunning contemporary cultural integration, the young Muslims through the character Han Xinyue highlights Huo Da's expectations and ideals for cultural integration. This is because the woman character is described as representing the vision of the younger generation, not only retaining her Muslim identity, but also actively participating in crossing the boundaries between culture and religion and integrating with mainstream culture. Thus, the novel demonstrates the application of the sociological concept of ta'ayush in the contemporary society where the Muslims are the minority but they are allowed to enjoy a peaceful coexistence with mainstream culture and simultaneously maintaining their own Islamic identity.

Ta'ayush as Islamic Literary Sociological Theory:-

The discussions above of ta'ayush in the main Islamic sources, and contemporary Muslim scholars and writers can be related Islamic literary sociological literary theory proposed in this article. This is due to the fact that the main Islamic sources and the contemporary Muslim writings cover many respects that can be related to the understanding of the concept. Basically, the concept is not only in essence written the Qur'an and Hadith, but it is also constantly echoed in modern Islamic literary works. Thus, the main Islamic sources and the contemporary Muslim views allude to the definition of multiculturalism which is the main trait of the concept of Islamic sociological ta'ayush. Therefore, the discussion of the theory here revolves around three main ideas, of literary philosophy and theoretical.

As of the literary philosophy, the term ta'ayush can be related to the sociological interpretation behind the general commands and prohibitions of the Qur'an and Hadith with regards to the Muslims as a collective society working together towards religious and non-religious accomplishments. This is the Muslims are bound together with the ties of aqidah (faith), shariah (law, system and so on) and akhlak (morality) that require the Muslims to go the straight path to achieve common interest besides individual needs. Outside the Muslim community circle, the Muslims are commanded to treat mankind regardless of religion and cultural backgrounds respectfully. Thus, there is social system related to the Muslim community as well as social system to the non-Muslim communities, however the existence of the dual systems in the Muslim State does not mean dualism in terms of social justice generally, conversely it means the difference of the religions adhered to. The absence of social injustice is seen historically in the running of the Muslim State when zakah that is related to the Muslim economy development is imposed on the Muslims whereas jizyah (tax) related to non-Muslim individual interest in the Muslim State is imposed on the non-

Muslims. At the same time, zakah is comparatively higher to jizyah and the Muslim authority has the upper hand to exploit the allegiance of the non-Muslims in the Muslim State.

Theoretically, there was such a past renowned Muslim scholar as Ibn Khaldun who had been through the multiculturalist of al-Andalus where he built his writing career and where there were a larger number of the Christians compared to the Muslims who however have the political upper hand. What is so special about Ibn Khaldun that he was suggested by Enan (1997) and recognized generally by later Muslim and non-Muslim scholars as the Muslim sociologist is the re-exploration of the history of the Muslims the different way compared to previous Muslim historians. In this regard, the Muslim sociologist closely looked into the vast territories of the Muslim World objectively focusing on distinct characteristics of one region of the Muslim territories before moving to another, thus ignoring the stereotypical historical periodization based on the transition of one caliphate to another. Besides, he was more focused on exploring and comparing the characteristics of individual nations such as the Arabs and the Berbers, therefore he was closer to sociologist than to historian. In the context of this study, the work Muqaddimah of Ibn Khaldun represents a sociological multicultural study, and specifically in relation to the al-Andalus society his work can be related to the question of ta'ayush or coexistence of the Muslims in a multicultural society.

After Ibn Khaldun era and the era of the imperialism of the Muslim World, the Muslims in some parts of the world became minorities despite their big numbers as the political power moved to the non-Muslims. Thus, the question of the survival of the Muslims increasingly became the hot topic of discussion among Muslim scholars through historical and literary perspectives. Present days, the question of the Muslim survival turns into the question of ta'ayush or coexistence in the non-Muslim majorities because the trend of present Muslim scholars is inclined to the discussion of Islam as a harmonious religion allowing the social space for cultural interaction and economic development. Basically, the transition of discussion from the Muslim survival to the Muslim coexistence does not deny the essence of the Muslim survival as the religion of Islam is founded on peace and harmony. The discussion of the Muslim coexistence is not only of the Muslim scholarly thought, it is also translated to fictions, i.e. novels and short stories. This can be seen in The Jade King written by Huo Da who highlights the problem of the disintegration of Muslim elder generation from the bigger China Chinese society. In short, the Islamic conception of ta'ayush can be extracted from the main Islamic sources and can be found of the elaboration of the conception in later Muslim works throughout generations. Theoretically, the concept of ta'ayush is practiced by Muslim writers referring to the Muslim minorities, and the concept is the continuance to the Muslim sociology as can be related to Muqaddimah written by Ibn Khaldun.

The Social Value of Ta'ayush:-

Ta'ayush, as part of the literary theory of Islamic society, embodies the value of coexistence between Muslims and non-Muslims, promotes social development and promotes mutual respect and harmony among ethnic diversity. In historical cases such as the Charter of Medina, the Prophet put different ethnic, religious and cultural groups within a social framework and made them live in harmony. The theory was followed in al-Andalus and other multicultural societies. Therefore, it can be seen that ta'ayush is not only limited to religious principles, but also symbolizes governance strategies. However, in the context of non-Muslim society in contemporary society, ta'ayush still has guiding significance for the development of Muslim minority groups.

Based on the Qur'an's definition of the existence of multiculturalism as a result of Allah's great creation and not the work of mankind, it is stated in the Qur'an that Allah would have made you into one nation if he had willed it, but He divided you into nations in order to test whether you could keep the teachings and procedures He gave you, so be ye good (5: 48). So the value of coexistence is accepting our differences and doing good. In other words, the phenomenon of multiculturalism is not the source of conflict, but rather the interaction of common differences. Ta'ayush, which has its roots in the Qur'an and the Hadith, transcends religion and uses equal dialogue and mutual respect to transform potential conflicts into new opportunities for development. The relevance of ta'ayush is particularly important for ethnic minorities facing the challenges of cultural invasion and marginalization in today's multicultural era.

Looking back on history, the feasibility of ta'ayush was effective in creating social harmony, and the concept of coexistence in Medina under the leadership of the Prophet Muhammad PBUH symbolized the common value between Muslims and non-Muslims, that is, uniting groups of different nationalities, religions into a social system while contributing to the common community. Highlighting that Islam's inclusiveness also sets a precedent for governing multicultural societies. In the later period of Muslim rule in al-Andalus, the ta'ayush concept was

extended, and humanity once again witnessed the remarkable achievements of the cooperation of Muslims, Christians and Jews in the economic, philosophical and artistic fields of the same region. From these perspectives, ta'ayush's value can transform cultural differences into a vehicle for human prosperity. Addressing challenges in multi-cultural societies by promoting dialogue and respect.

As far as literature is concerned, ta'ayush theory has become one of the ways of communication between contemporary literature and society. Although there are some fictional narrative techniques in the techniques, some abstract expressions often make the narration more vivid. In contemporary literature, writers use the interaction of diverse cultures between communities to reveal the appearance of society, inject emotion into ta'ayush as a social literature theory, arouse emotional resonance, and attract readers to think about the self-redemption of nations in a multicultural society. In the above article, we mentioned that the concept of ta'ayush, embodied in the literary works of the writers Najib al-Kilani and Huo Da, has given consideration to the harmonious coexistence of different nationalities. In the contemporary literary work *The Jade King*, communication barriers are often formed between Muslims and non-Muslims due to religious beliefs and cultural differences. Older generations of Muslims hold traditional, conservative views that marginalize their descendants in a multicultural context. Huo Da embodies the ideal of cultural integration in the characters of her novels. In this regard, the ideas of Huo Da run through the central ideas of ta'ayush, in which the author seeks to strike a balance between ethnic integration and faith, in which Muslims interact positively with mainstream society while keeping their faith intact. In this mode, ta'ayush acts as a bridge between the ethnic group and modern society.

In short, the values of ta'ayush are fully embodied between Muslims and non-Muslims, both in the political management of history and in the reflection of later Muslim writers on society through modern literature, with the aim of working together to maintain social justice and promote the common development of peoples. Their efforts promote mutual understanding among multicultural communities and call for mutual cooperation and trust. For the society, ta'ayush's existence enables the public to spontaneously form stronger social cohesion in the face of challenges, which is a more effective way for cross-cultural cooperation.

Conclusion:-

The discussions above point to the fact that ta'ayush is something serious in Islam that draws the attention of the Muslim scholars and writers. It can be concluded that ta'ayush is not just the field of the experiment of the Muslim thought in social space but it is the essence of the religion of Islam that emphasises peace and harmony among peoples of various ethnicity and nation, and among members of one particular society. *The Jade King* authored by Huo Da is one of the best examples that extend the question of ta'ayush from the main Islamic sources and the discussions of Muslim historians. Theoretically, the Islamic conception of ta'ayush touch on both private Islamic space when concerning Islamic religiosity and shared social space when taking account of social responsibility and national interest.

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