

PROMOTION OF PEACE IN LIGHT OF THE HOLY QURAN (SALABI' ASPECT)

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ABSTRACT

Peace is the key to activation of human potentials and socio-economic development of society. No man can live or flourish in terror. The same importance of peace makes it a motif of the Quranic teachings, which include orders and prohibitions. This article focuses on the later i.e. prohibitions. The holy Quran forbids doing anything which may lead to the breach of peace. Thus it exterminates the very root causes of disturbance and chaos. The need to obey these rules is increasing as much as the globe is shrinking and the people are coming closer.

Keywords: *Quran, Islam, Peace, Society*

INTRODUCTION

Peace is a main hub of development and prosperity of any society. It is a sort of bond which unifies all other factors of social well-being. Whether it is a progress of arts and sciences or socio-economic development, all can gain roots in a peaceful environment. A deteriorating law and order situation on the globe is the most serious concern of the future of humanity. That is why we find maintenance of peace as a recurrent motif of the declarations issued at the end of periodic summits of UN and all other international and regional organizations. It shows the importance of peace and at the same time the utmost desire of global community to solve the matter at the earliest and, thus, pave the way for a safer and better future.

Side by side with this monetary and physical well-being, the mental and intellectual progress i.e. human resource development is also possible only in peaceful and healthy environment. War-fare and terrorism give birth to fear and anxiety, which, on their part, block all human potentials to see the light of the day. The same significance of peace has made it as one of the major topics the holy Quran has guided the mankind. No system and no law can be more accurate and practicable than the one given by the Creator Himself. The holy Quran says; "Verily, this Quran guides to that which is most just and right" (Al Quran 17:9) The light the Quran illuminates and the righteousness the Quran unfolds guide the man to destination of success over here and in the world hereafter.

QURANIC CONCEPT OF PEACE

The Quran has mentioned the concept of peace in different perspectives. Some of them are as follows;

Haram' as a place of peace

The Quran has introduced 'Haram' (a sanctuary, an enclosure of the temple of Makkah) as a 'place of peace', because even in the dark ages of Arabia when there was fighting and bloodshed everywhere, the person who entered Haram was quite safe and calm. "Whosoever enters it, he attains security" (Al Quran 3:97) "And (Remember) when we made the house (the Kabah) a place of resort for mankind and a place of safety." (Al Quran 2:125). The holy Quran further says; Have We not established for them a secure sanctuary (Makkah), to which are brought fruits of all kinds, a provision from us (Al Quran 28:57). Before the emergence of Islam, there was no rule of law. No man was safe, neither his honor nor property. There prevailed a jungle law where only the fittest could survive. But even in this scenario, Almighty Allah had bestowed His special mercy on the inhabitants of Makkah by making them neighbours of the 'Haram' – the land of peace and tranquility. Have they not seen that we have made (Makkah) a secure sanctuary, while men are being snatched away all around them (Al Quran 29:67)

Appreciation of peace by the Prophets (AS)

The Quran appreciates peace and mentions it to be the prayer of the Prophets (AS).

When Prophet Ibrahim (AS) was building 'bait Allah' (the house of Allah) and praying for its habitation, at the same time he prayed for its peace and calmness. And (remember) when Ibrahim (Abraham) said, My Lord, make this city (Makkah) a place of security (Al Quran 2:126). Allah Almighty accepted the prayer and made the city of Makkah a place of peace, so much so that in the dark age of ignorance, the 'Haram' was considered so sacred that even the most blood thirsty could not dare to disturb its peace. Therefore, Almighty Allah has mentioned the peace of Makkah as His special favour for Qureshites. (He) Who has fed them against hunger, and has made them safe from fear (Al Quran 106:4)

Peace – a pre-requisite of Development

The holy Quran considers peace as a pre-requisite of development and prosperity. In Surah Al-Nahl, an example of a prosperous village has been mentioned in these words.

And Allah puts forward the example of a township that dwelt secure and well-content: its provision coming to it in abundance from every place (Al Quran 16:112). But, when the inhabitants of that village disobeyed Allah and turned thankless, agitation and chaos became their fate. Peace and prosperity vanished. Trade and commerce recessed. Drought, famine and terror prevailed. "But it denied the favours of Allah (with ungratefulness). So Allah made it taste extreme of hunger (famine) and fear, because of

that (evil, ie denying Prophet Muhammad(SAW) which they used to do” (Al Quran 16:112). Here, the Quran has elaborated the fact that no development can be imagined without peace.

Scorn of Turmoil and agitation.

The holy Quran has scorned turmoil and breach of peace in different ways and styles.

- It says that disturbance and agitation are worse than assassination. “And persecution is worse than slaughter. The same Surah again says; “For persecution is worse than killing” (Al Quran 2:217). Though the murder of a single man is tantamount to the murder of humanity in the light of Quran, but the disturbance of peace and chaotic situation is a greater crime than a murder as its repercussions are highly fatal and dreadful.
- The Quran dislikes chaos and turbulence saying it to be a routine of hypocrites. They used to create misunderstandings among the Muslims, instigate quarrels and disturb peace of society. Whenever they were warned against their mischief and provoking activities, they replied quite complacently that they were infact, standard-bearers of peace. The Quran says; “And when it is said to them: ‘Make not mischief on the earth’, they say: ‘We are only peace-makers’. Verily, they are the ones who make mischief, but they perceive not” (Al Quran 2:11,12).

Disturbance of peace is, in itself, a hateful act whether it is in a family, in a village, in a country or in the world. But provoking a peaceful community and instigating quarrels among them is the most heinous crime. The above mentioned Ayah (verse) indicates that if any person or group or even literature disturbs the peace of the people living with brotherhood and fraternity, it will be an act of hypocrisy. Such a wrong-doer will be a hypocrite in the light of the Quran and will face the worst end in the world hereafter.

“Verily, the hypocrites will be in the lowest depth (grade) of the Fire” (Al Quran 4:145) (Akhtar M& Hafiz, 2001).

Intrigues and conspiracies are easy tools in the hands of cowardly people, who can, thus, achieve their objectives in the garb of friends and well wishers. The Quran describes such wickedness in these words. “And of mankind there is he whose speech may please you (O Muhammad SAW) in this worldly life and he calls Allah to witness as to that which is in his heart, yet he is the most quarrelsome of the opponents. And when he turns away (from you (O Muhammad SAW), his effort in the land is to make mischief therein and to destroy the crops and the cattle, and Allah likes not mischief” (Al Quran 2:204,205)

These hypocritical activities are also mentioned in Surah al-Taubah.

“Had they marched out with you, they would have added to you nothing except disorder, and they would have hurried about in your midst (spreading corruption) and sowing sedition among you – and there are some among you who would have listened to them. And Allah is the All-knower of wrong-doers. Verily, they had plotted sedition before, and had upset matters for you, until the truth (victory) came and Decree of Allah (His religion Islam) became manifest though they hated it” (Al Quran 9:47, 48).

- The holy Quran condemns those who breach the peace as being extremely hated by Almighty Allah: 1. “And Allah likes not mischief” (Al Quran 2:205). 2. “Verily, Allah loves not corrupters” (Al Quran 28:77). Brutality and crossing of extremes in any matter lead to the violation of law. The Quran has, therefore, plugged this loophole. “And transgress not the limits, truly, Allah likes not the transgressors,” (Al Quran 2:190). Allah better knows those who disturb peace in the guise of reformation. “And Allah Knows him who means mischief from him who means good” (Al Quran 2:220)
- Another Quranic style of condemnation of mischief mongers is that it has categorically declared that the success on the doomsday is only for those who do not hanker after spreading turmoil and unrest in the land. “That home of the Hereafter (i.e. Paradise), We shall assign to those who rebel not against the truth with pride and oppression in the land nor do mischief by committing crimes. And the good end is for the pious” (Al Quran 28:83). The Quran says:- “And seek not corruption in the earth” (Al Quran 28:77)
- Hatred against turbulence is one of the do’s (orders) of all Prophets (AS) which shows that it was not tolerated in any span of human history. The Prophet Saleh (AS) says, advising his nation Thamud: “And obey not the command of the prodigal, who spread corruption in the earth and reform not”. (Al Quran 29:151,152). The Prophet Sho’aib (A.S), known as Khatib-al-Ambiya (Orator of the Prophets) for his mastery in eloquence and rhetoric, advises his nation in these words: “And do not do mischief on the earth after it has been set in order that will be better for you, if you are believers”. (Al Quran 7:85)
- The Quran orders to give severe punishments to those who breach the peace. “The recompense of those who wage a war against Allah and His Messenger and do mischief in the land is only that they shall be killed or crucified or their hands and their feet be cut off from opposite sides, or be exiled from the land. That is their disgrace in this world, and a great torment is theirs in the hereafter”. (Al Quran 5:33). Pir Muhammad Karam Shah says in the interpretation of this ayah. “Almighty Allah and his Holy Prophet (SAW) have ordered to maintain peace, make the roads safe and root out mischief and turmoil from every nook and corner of Islamic state. To violate this order and cause disturbance is like perfidy

and rebellion against Allah and his Prophet (SAW). Therefore if someone kills any person whether Muslim or Dhimmi (a non-muslim living peacefully in Islamic state), the Quran calls it to be a war against Allah and His Prophet (SAW). (Karam Shah, 1995)

- The covenants Almighty Allah had taken from Bani Israil (children of Israel) included one that they would not shed blood. “And (remember) when We took your covenant (saying): Shed not the blood of your (people), nor turn out your own people from their dwellings. Then, (this) you ratified and (to this) you bear witness” (Al Quran 2:84).

Condemnation of cruelty and terrorism

The Holy Quran want to shape a society founded on justice and rule of law, where no one dares to oppress others or snatch their rights on the basis of his power, wealth or status. If any individual, group or even government comes to violence and tyranny, it is duty of every Muslim to raise his voice against it. The Quran orders to expose the tyrants and condemns cruelty in different ways.

- The Quran describes oppression as the main cause of destruction of nations in the past. “And that it is He (Allah) Who destroyed the former ‘Ad (tribe), and Thamud (tribe) : He spared none of them. And the people of Nuh (Noah) aforetime. Verily, they were more unjust and more rebellious” (Al Quran 53:50-52). And Allah says: “The way (of blame) is only against those who oppress men and rebel in the earth without justification; for such there will be a painful torment”. (Al Quran 42:42) And Allah does not like those who tyrannize the people. “He likes not the oppressors”. (Al Quran 42:40)
- The Quran predicts the worst end for the cruel. “And those who did wrong, if they had all that is in earth and therewith as much again, they verily, would offer it to ransom themselves therewith on the Day of Resurrection from the evil torment; and there will become apparent to them from Allah what they had not been reckoning”. (Al Quran 39:47)

The Quran mentions wrong-doing as the main cause of destruction of the people of ancient days. How many a town (community) given to wrong-doing, have we destroyed, and raised up after them another people (Al Quran 21:11). The Quran again says; “And how many a town (population) have we destroyed, which was thankless for its means of livelihood! And those are their dwellings, which have not been inhabited after them except a little. And verily! We have been the inheritors” (Al Quran 28:58, 59). The nations which were powerful at home and had even subjugated and suppressed the neighboring areas, the Quran tells the story of their ruins in these words. “And how many

a generation we have destroyed before them who were stronger in power than they. And (when our torment, came), they ran for a refuge in the land! Could they find any place of refuge? Verily, therein is indeed a reminder for him who has a heart or gives ear while he is heedful” (Al Quran 50:36, 37).

- Almighty Allah sent his Prophets (AS) in order to set up a system of justice based on a rule of law so that evil and unrest could be controlled and the land be made liveable for mankind. Shah Wali Ullah (R.A) writes: “One major objective of the arrival of the Holy Prophet (SAW) was to bring to an end the two tyrannous rules of the day (Persia and Byzantine) and the others like them. Economic in equilibrium reached its hights those days and a limited affluent class had started suppressing the people on the basis of their wealth. In so doing, they forgot Allah (and felt no scruples). The people, under the burden of heavy taxes, were forced to lead the lives of oxen and donkeys”. (Shah Waliullah, ND)
- The holy war (Jihad) in Islam is not meant for itself, rather it aims at curbing caruelty and barbarism. “Permission to fight (against disbelievers) is given to those (believers) who are fought against because they have been wronged; and surely Allah is able to give them (believers) victory” (Al Quran 22:39). In Islam, the real focus is combating violence and oppression, whether it is achieved by fighting or by truce. If fighting could aggravate the situation, then it would be stopped. Reconciliation will be preferred though apparently it is at the weakest conditions. (Ubaidullah, 2009)

Not to sever the bond of kinship

Blood relation is a good bond to keep people live together. Cutting off this relation means that a man does not execute the rights of his parents, brothers, sisters and other relatives and denies to behave with them affectionately. During the days of ignorance, the people were badly involved in dishonouring blood relations, apart from many other menaces which would breach the peace. Therefore, the Quran concentrated on this aspect as well.

“And those who break the covenant of Allah after its ratification, and sever that which Allah has commanded to be joined and work mischief in the land, on them is the curse and for them is the unhappy home” (Al Quran 13:25). Again, the Quran says: “And fear Allah through whom you demand (your mutual rights) and (do not cut the relations of) the wombs (kinship). Surely Allah is ever an All-Watcher over you”. (Al Quran 4:1)

The Quran says in surah Al-Nur. “And let not those among you who are blessed with graces and wealth swear not to give (any sort of help) to their kinsmen and the poor and those who left their homes for Allah’s cause. Let them pardon and forgive. Do you not love that Allah should forgive you? And Allah is oft-forgiving, most merciful” (Al Quran

24:22). “Would you then, if you were given the authority, do mischief in the land and sever your ties of kinship” (Al Quran 47:22,23). On the basis of this ayah, Hazrat Umar (R.A) forbade the sale of Umm-e-Walad (a female slave who becomes the mother of the child of her master). Imam Hakim Neshapuri narrates from Hazrat Buraidah (R.A) that one day he was sitting with Hazrat Umar (R.A) that a noise rose from the vicinity. On asking, it was told that a female slave was being sold and her daughter was crying. Hazrat Umar (R.A) instantly called Ansar (Medinite Companions of the Holy Prophet SAW) and Muhajirin (Companions migrated from Makkah) and asked whether there is any capacity of breaking off blood relation in Islam. All replied in negative. Then, he continued, as to why a daughter was being separated from her mother.

Could there be any cutting off relation above it? Then he recited the above mentioned Ayah of the Holy Quran. The people asked him to take any action in this concern which he deemed wise. Hazrat Umar (R.A) circulated an order in the Islamic state that no female slave would be sold if she had produced child from her master, as it is like breaking off relation and so forbidden (Hakim, 1422 AH). The sayings of the Holy Prophet (S.A.W), in this concern, are so clean that they need no explanation. Hazrat Aisha (R.A) narrates that the Prophet (SAW) said: “The womb (blood relation) is hanging with Arsh (The Empyrean where the throne of Allah rests) and saying: May Allah connect a person who connects me and cut him into pieces if he cuts me”. (Muslim, 2006). Hazrat Jubair bin Mutim (R.A) narrates that the Holy Prophet (S.A.W) said: ‘The person who cuts off blood relation will not enter into paradise’ (Bukhari, 1982). Segregation of blood relation could lead society to disturbance, therefore, Islam has closed this door and ordered to give all relatives their due rights and thus, keep them united and satisfied.

End of Prejudices

Prejudices on the basis of race, colour, language etc. can undermine the edifice of peace and tranquility. The people living together and closer split apart and become thirsty for the blood of each other. All the binding factors fall prey to some single bias. The Quran has broken all the idols of hate, prejudice and pride and maintained only good character as the basis of nobleness. “O mankind! We have created you from a male and a female, and made you into nations and tribes, that you may know one another. Verily, the most honourable of you with Allah is best in conduct. Verily, Allah is All-Knowing, All-Aware” (Al Quran 49:13). Syed Abul Ala Maududi writes: “This Ayah addresses the whole mankind and reforms a great deception i.e. prejudices of race, colour, language, homeland (geographic boundaries) and nationality which has, since the time immemorial, disturbed the peace of the globe. Man has always drew circles around himself and

counted the people getting born within his circles to be his friends and declared those living outside as his enemies” (Maudodi, 1980).

A person, who is noble due to his piety, will be free from pride and vanity. He will be a standard-bearer of peace and a good incarnate for his society. On the contrary, a proud man will be full of hatred and enmity and will disseminate the same in his surroundings. The Holy Prophet (SAW) has condemned prejudices on different occasions. During his address on the conquest of Makkah, he said: “All praise be to Allah who has removed flaw of ignorance and vanity from you. Men are of two types. One is a pious man who is noble in the eyes of Allah and the other is a wicked who is mean and abject. All the people are progeny of Hazrat Adam (A.S) and Allah has created Adam from clay” (Baihaqi, 1401 AH).

In his last sermon on the eve of ‘Hajjat Al-Wada’ (The last pilgrimage), the Prophet (SAW) said, “O people! Lo your Lord is One, no Arab is superior to a non-Arab and no non-Arab is superior to an Arab. No black is better than a red and no red is better than a black. Then only criterion for superiority and honour is piety” (Ahmad Bin Hambal, 1938). Another tradition says, “Verily, Allah does not look at your appearances and your wealth, rather he looks at your hearts and your acts” (Muslim, 2006). In the light of these teachings, if the Muslims abolish all discriminations, a true global brotherhood can become a reality. This will be free from all sorts of favouritism, inequity and bias. There will be mutual love, peace and prosperity all around.

End of Sectarianism

The power, dignity and awe which Allah almighty has bestowed on unity and mutual love, might be canceled from the Muslims due to their simplicity and silliness, but it is not at all hidden from the enemies. Therefore, they have always tried their best to divide the Muslim Ummah and inflame their differences. History provides an ample proof that whenever the enemy succeeded in damaging Muslim unity, it was only by creating gulf among them. It is an open secret that Muslim Umma has lost its unity and undergone disintegration and division on every front whether political or intellectual. It has separated into countless sects and quarters. Every sect claims to be right-ful and presents its brand of Islam as the original one. Moreover, the be all and end all of every group is to speak and publish literature on controversial topics and even resort to terrorise the adversaries. It is because each group has its vested interests. The Quran describes that the religious differences of the people of scriptures (Jews and Christians) were mainly due to their lust for worldly gains. The Quran says in Surah al-A’raf’.

“And recite (O Muhammad SAW) to them the story of him to whom We gave Our revelations, but he threw them away, so Satan followed him up, and he became of those who went astray. And had We willed, We would surely have elevated him therewith, but he clung to the earth and followed his own vain desire. So his parable is the parable of a dog: if you drive him away, he lolls his tongue out, or if you leave him alone, he (still) lolls his tongue out” (Al Quran 8:175,176). The Quran says in Surah al-Taubah: “O you who believe! Verily, there are many of the (Jewish) rabbis and the (Christian) monks who devour the wealth of mankind in falsehood, and hinder (them) from the way of Allah. And those who hoard up gold and silver and spend them not in the way of Allah, announce unto them a painful torment” (Al Quran 9:34). Giving examples of the people of scriptures and their mutual differences, the holy Quran has repeatedly stressed on not to fall into sectarian disputes and controversies like them.

The Quran says: “and be not as those who divided and differed among themselves after the clear proofs had come to them. It is they for whom there is an awful torment” (Al Quran 3:105). The Quran says that the Prophet (SAW) has nothing to do with those who cause to split the Muslims and divide them into factions. “Verily, those who divide their religion and break up into sects, you (O Muhammad) have no concern in them in the least. Their affair is only with Allah, Who then will tell them what they used to do” (Al Quran 6:159). The Quran again says: “And we have not sent down the Book (The Quran) to you (O Muhammad SAW), except that you may explain clearly unto them those things in which they differ” (Al Quran 16:64). The only way to settle all differences of the Muslim and bring them to unity and mutual harmony is to return to Allah’s Book – (The Quran) No doubt, it was their indifference to this Book which shattered their unity. No other bond can bring them together in the current state of affairs. Therefore, the Quran categorically states: And hold fast, all of you together, to the rope of Allah (ie this Quran) and be not divided among yourselves (Al Quran 3:103).

To control one’s anger

Sometimes, things happen before man, which are against his temperament. So, he instantly gets enraged and reacts violently. The Quran orders to maintain peace of mind in such situations. Describing the characteristics of the believers, the Quran says: “(Those) who repress anger” (Al Quran 3:134). Instant and violent reaction only results in repentance. So the wiser thing is to control oneself in anger and never react in haste. There are many traditions which narrate as how to control anger and they describe the virtues of mildness and good temper. Abdullah (RA) narrates that the holy Prophet (SAW) asked his companions (RA) “Which is the Meaning of being a wrestler (a strong and powerful man) in your eyes? They replied ‘The Wrestler is the one who throw down

his competitors (and could not be defeated)'. The Prophet (SAW) said, 'No, but (the more powerful is that) one who controls himself in the state of anger'. (Muslim, 2006) Abu Hurairah (RA) narrates that the holy Prophet (SAW) said, 'the person who controls his anger, though he could react, Almighty Allah will fill him with peace and belief' (Tabri, 1409 AH). In another tradition, narrated by Abu Hurairah (RA), the Prophet (SAW) said, "The powerful is not that who prostrate others, but the one who controls himself in anger" (Bukhari, 1982).

CONCLUSION

The above study shows that the holy Quran has plugged all the holes which could have disturbed the peace of humanity. These are not all the Quranic injunctions on the topic. Rather, we have quoted only some of them over here. We can say that the Quran does not allow his believers to do anything which may hurt others and force them to take law into their own hands. It is the duty of each and every citizen to obey law and never succumb to any action which may instigate others to violate law or tread on a violent path. Adherence to the Book of Allah is the only guarantee of lasting peace on the globe.

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