

Islamic Perspective of Peace and Its Necessity in the Contemporary Era

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ABSTRACT

Islam is a Religion of peace and Moderation and it condemns extremism and violence. Peace carries a central position in the Islamic traditions. The main focus of Islam is to establish a blissful society where all can get prosperous life. Islam has been revealed to remove cruelty aggression and atrocities from the social system of the world. Today, the humanity is suffering troubles, hardships and anxiety. In this situation the teaching of Islam can create peace and love. This paper will focus on the importance of peace in the light of the Islamic commandments and will bring out the benefits of the implementation peace in the contemporary era.

Keyword: Peace, Mankind, Tolerance, Humbleness, Honour

1. Introduction:

Meaning of Peace

Islam is an Arabic word, which means peace¹, harmony, contentment, tranquility, and as well as reconciliation and prosperity.² The fact of peace is that man should be satisfied with his religion, life, honor, wealth, property, and respect for everything, and man should not be in any danger about them. One, who performs all the instructions of Islam theoretically and practically, is known as a Muslim. The name of Islam is worldwide in meaning. Islam is not a name of a clan or an individual, such as Christianity is named after the clan of Christ; Judaism is also named after the Judah, like same Buddhism after Buddha.

Problem Statement

Peace is the name of smooth life without any violent differences. But unfortunately, terrorism and violence is spreading gradually in the whole

world. People are facing psychological problems. So it is important to explore the contemporary issues that are disturbing the practice of peace. This study will also highlight the implementation of the Process of Peace.

Research Questions

1. What is the importance peace in society?
2. What is peace in the light of Holy Quran and Hadith?
3. What are the contemporary issues that are disturbing the practice of peace?
4. How does the benefit of the implementation of the Process of Peace can be attained?

Objectives

1. To explore the reasons behind the lack of the peace in the society.
2. To identify the core issues which are barricading the establishment of peace.
3. To find out the benefits of the implementation of peace.

Literature Review

Peace is very indispensable in any nation. Every religion of the world is talking about peace. People are writing down about the real concept of peace. The religion of Islam is a biggest example of peace. Quranic commandments and the statements of the Holy PBUH are telling us about the importance and objective of peace. Different article have been written on this topic.

1. Difficulties & Challenges Facing Islam In Establishing Peace On Arabian Lands, And The Holy Prophet's (ﷺ) Strategy by Dr. Naseem Akhtar.
2. Religious Authority and Its Role in Peacemaking: An Appraisal in Perspective of National Narrative for Peace by Amir Hayat
3. The Role of Peace in Stability of The Society an Analysis in Islamic Perspective by Dr Farhat Aziz
4. Social Peace and Reform, The Foremost Contemporary Need (In Perspective of Practical Role Of 1st Century Hijri Muslim Women) by Dr Hafiz Nasir Ali
5. Patterns of Peaceful Cooperation in Medieval Muslim Medina and Its Relevance to The Present by Farooq Hassan

But in above mentioned articles, dimensions are different. In my I shell concentrate on general meaning of peace, its importance issues and benefits of peace.

Methodology

This research is descriptive and analytical in nature. Data has been collected from primary and secondary sources.

Importance of Peace

Peace is important to the survival of mankind that it has now literally become a matter of life and death for humanity. Peace means life. Its absence means death or violence. Peace as a positive concept that comprises harmony, tranquility, integrity, contentment, equilibrium, repose, and moderation. Absence of peace will bring violence, disputes, disorder, and conflicts among the people. Currently in Iraq, Syria, Afghanistan, Palestine, Nigeria, Pakistan, Iran, Kashmir etc. thousands of Muslim youth have made their terrorist or militant organizations. All these terrorist organizations are misinterpreting the meaning of Islam. Islamic concept of peace includes love, kindness, generosity, wisdom, knowledge, service, social empowerment, universality and dignity, the sacredness of human life, equality, individual responsibility, accountability, patience, collaboration and solidarity.

Qur'an and Ahadith on Peace

It is Islam which laid the foundation of universal brotherhood and condemned all sorts of discrimination based on caste, creed, colour, riches and possession. There are many verses in the Holy Quran and Ahadith that promote peace. A few of them are quoted below: Allah says in the Holy Quran:

﴿يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ إِنَّا خَلَقْنَاكُمْ مِنْ ذَكَرٍ وَأُنْثَىٰ وَجَعَلْنَاكُمْ شُعُوبًا وَقَبَائِلَ لِتَعَارَفُوا إِنَّ أَكْرَمَكُمْ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ أَتْقَاكُمْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَلِيمٌ خَبِيرٌ﴾³

“O mankind! We created you from a single (pair) of a male and female and made you into nations and tribes, that ye may know each other (Not that ye may despise each other). Verily the most honoured of you in the sight of God is (he who) is the most righteous of you and God has full knowledge and is well acquainted (with all things).

The Quran Says: “Whosoever kills a person (unjustly), except as a punishment for murder or (as a prescribed punishment for spreading) disorder in the land, it is as if he killed all of humanity.”⁴

On another occasion He states: “And when it is said to them, ‘Do not spread corruption in the land’, they say, ‘We are only reformers!’ Truly, it is they who spread corruption but they perceive it not.”⁵

When they hear ill speech, they turn away from it and say: For us are our deeds, and for you are your deeds. Peace be upon you; we seek not the way of ignorance.”⁶

Peace is possible only through Islam. Islamic teachings are the guarantor of peace and purity in both life and death of a Muslim. It is stated in Surah An-Nahl: “Whoever does righteousness, whether male or female, while he is a believer - We will surely cause him to live a good life, and We will surely give them their reward [in the Hereafter] according to the best of what they used to do”.⁷

Islam is a religion of peace; therefore, it does not have any door for hate, oppression, and cruelty. It teaches about peace, harmony, brotherhood, equality, justice, and love.

Now let's turn to the Sunnah of Holy Prophet of Islam (ﷺ): The Messenger of Allah (SWT) conveys the message of honesty, piety, peace, mercy, integrity, and love. The charter of the Medina is the best example of peace. Hazrat Muhammad (ﷺ) made this agreement with the Jews to restore peace.⁸ During the conquest of Makkah, Hazrat Muhammad (ﷺ) had given protection to all in the shade of peace without the difference of caste, color, and creed.⁹ He forgave them all. There is no greater example of peace in human history than this charter of Madinah.¹⁰ “Abu Hurayrah (RA) articulated that, the Messenger of Allah (SWT) said, “The Muslim is he from whose tongue and hand all people remain safe”.¹¹

The Holy Prophet said that “A Muslim is one who reconciles with his tongue”.¹²

The Holy Prophet (ﷺ) further stated, “None of you should point a weapon at his brother, for he does not know, for perhaps the devil may draw it out while it is in hand, resulting in his fall into a pit of Hell”.¹³

Islam considers everyone's life sacred, whether Muslim or non-Muslim. At another place, the messenger of Allah (SWT) stated,

"مَنْ قَتَلَ نَفْسًا مُعَاهِدًا لَمْ يَرِحْ رَائِحَةَ الْجَنَّةِ، وَإِنَّ رِيحَهَا يُوجَدُ مِنْ مَسِيرَةِ أَرْبَعِينَ عَامًا".

"Whoever killed a Mu'ahid (a person who is granted the pledge of protection by the Muslims) shall not smell the fragrance of Paradise though its fragrance can be smelt at a distance of forty years (of traveling).¹⁴

Throughout the Islamic history, Islam illustrates the life of the Holy Prophet (ﷺ) as the greatest examples of kindness for humanity. When the Holy Prophet (ﷺ) went to Taif to preach the message of Islam. Then the people of Taif threw stones upon the Holy Prophet (ﷺ). At that time, I looked up and saw Gabriel in it. He called me saying, 'Allah has heard your people's saying to you, and what they have replied back to you, Allah has sent the Angel of the Mountains to you so that you may order him to do whatever you wish to these people.' The Angel of the Mountains called and greeted me, and then said, "O Muhammad! Order what you wish. If you like, I will let Al-Akh-Shabain (i.e. two mountains) fall on them." The Prophet (ﷺ)

said, "No but I hope that Allah will let them beget children who will worship Allah Alone, and will worship None besides Him".¹⁵

After the prophethood, the Holy Prophet (ﷺ) spent thirteen years at Makkah and ten years at Madina. Instead of facing hardships, the Prophet (ﷺ) always advised His followers to be compassionate and humble with others.

Contemporary Issues that are Disturbing the Practice of Peace:

If we talk about the existing status of the society, we can see immoral activities i.e., (hate, oppression, theft, killing, injustice, and inequality). This is very alarming situation. Following are the elements which damage the process of peace building.

1. Sectarianism: One of the main causes of disturbance among Muslim community is Sectarianism. It means body or group of people subscribing to views that are divergent from other people of the same religion. Allah (SWT) in the Holy Quran warns the believers to “not be of those who associate others with Allah [Or] of those who have divided their religion and become sects, every faction rejoicing in what it has”.¹⁶

2. Educational Disparity: Educational institutes can play a vital role in creating awareness among individuals. But unfortunately, Institutions are not taking as many steps as they can to introduce concept of peace in their curricula.

3. Misconstruction of the Western Community: Today, western community high-lights only violent events and ignore all those initiatives which are taking place for creating peace and harmony in the society. All this creates a negative impact of Islam in the minds of people.

4. Terrorism: Terrorism is another main hurdle in the path of peace. After 9/11 there is a great misconception in the minds of people regarding Islam. Generally, people are thinking that Muslims are spreading violence in the world.

5. Weak Role of the UN and Security Council: The role of United Nations cannot be denied in peace creating process. The Security Council has primary responsibility, under the United Nations Charter, for the maintenance of international peace and security.¹⁷ UN is playing as much as positive role in the development of peace. But, there is still much room for improvement as unrest and violence prevails in almost every part of the world.

6. Distortion of Historical Facts: A group of people intentionally present Islamic History in mutilated form. They rely on very weak narrations and thus cause to create misunderstanding about the teachings of Islam which cause irritation and unrest in the world.

7. Lack of Understanding of Religious Dogmas: One of the biggest reasons of not following the process of peace among people is to turn away from. Generally, kids are not getting any proper guidance of religious obligation at their homes.

8. Ignorance of Religious Teachers: Another important reason, our some of the Ulma in spite of their great knowledge of Islam most of the times moved common average Muslims away from Islam just because of their ignorance regarding many important day to day issues.

9. Government Responsibilities: It is the responsibility of the government to provide Islamic atmosphere in the country. They have to take proper measure to ensure that Islam is in the society. Any such thing which is against our Islamic teachings should be dealt properly.

10. Non-practicing Muslims: There are a lot of non-practicing Muslims in the world. They do create a bad impression of Islam and Muslims. There are who don't follow Islam in his/her life and are just the Muslim because they were born into a Muslim family. This type of person will be called as Moderate Muslim and people now a days feel proud to be called as Moderate Muslims.

11. Intolerance: In our society there is no tolerance at all. We don't even like to hear anything which is against our own ideas. Having a difference of opinion is not a bad thing. In fact, it is a good thing. In this way, the people get more chances of learning new things. The main problem is the lack of self-control over things against our own ideas. We have also witnessed people of authority who lose their control over certain things. Lack of tolerance puts away people from us. When we have difference of opinion at that time, we have to listen to others regarding what they believe. If we get the answers then we should answer that logically and politely instead of showing aggression.

12. Internal and External Fights: People have created their own desires in Islam. One sect blames the others of inventing new things in Islam. Everyone thinks of themselves as the true Muslim on the right path and calls fellow Muslim as Kafir. We should have to just follow Quran and the teachings of our beloved Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ). Allah knows best who is on the right path.

Benefits of the Implementation of the Process of Peace

1. Sacredness of Human life: The Holy Quran reveals that: "On that account we ordained for the children of Israel that if any one slew a person unless it be for avenging a murder or for spreading mischief in the land it would be as if he slew the whole people and if any one saved a life it would be as if he saved the life of the whole people."¹⁸

The Holy Prophet (PBUH) in his last sermon delivered at the eve of Hajj said: “I apprise you that your lives, your property and your honour are similarly as sacred to one another as this sacred day of this sacred month in this sacred town, soon you will be meeting your Lord and He will ask you about your actions.”¹⁹

2. Security of Property: The Holy Quran reveals: “O ye who believe! Eat not up your property among yourselves in vanities: but let there be amongst you traffic and trade by mutual good will.”²⁰

3. To abstain from Adultery: Adultery is one of the illegitimate ways of fulfilling sensual desire. Almighty Allah reveals: “Nor come nigh to adultery for it is a shameful (deed) and an evil, opening the road (to other evil).”²¹

4. To abstain Falsehood: Islam also ordains its believers to abstain from speaking lie, and to practice truthfulness in life. The Holy Quran reveals: “O ye who believe! Fear God and be with those who are true (in word and deed).”²²

5. To avoid from drugs: Islam being the religion of peace also commands its believer to abstain from all kinds of impermissible/ unlawful/ illegitimate. The Holy Quran reveals: “O ye who believe, intoxicants, and gambling (Dedication to) stones and (divination by) arrows are an abomination of Satan’s handiwork. Eschew such (abomination) that ye may proper. Satan’s plan is (but) to excite enmity and hatred between you with intoxicants and gambling, and hinder you from the remembrance of God, and from prayer will you not then abstain.”²³

6. Righteousness and Piety: Having fear of Allah can escape man from all kind of evils. Allah Almighty says: “Indeed, the most honourable among you in the sight of God is the most pious.”²⁴

7. Equality and Fraternity: Islam holds a unique concept of brother hood and equality: “O you mankind! We have created you from a male and a female.”²⁵

8. Justice and Favour: Islam commands its followers to do justice and favour to the people. The Holy Quran says: “Verily, God commands (you) to do justice and favour.”²⁶

9. Moderation: Allah Almighty likes those who are moderate in their dealings: “Verily, Allah Almighty is not pleased with the extravagant.”²⁷

10. Generosity: Islam inspires its followers to be generous and kind to others and says: “And spend in the way of Allah and put not yourselves into destruction by your own hands”.²⁸

11. Humbleness: Islam emphasizes on the value of humility and humbleness, as it is said: “And the servants of (Allah) Most Gracious are

those who walk on the earth gently, and when the ignorant address them, they say, "Peace""²⁹

12. Patience and Forbearance. In the Holy Quran attributes of true believers are mentioned like: "And they steadfastly persevere in the face of persecution, hardship, and war"³⁰

13. Sacrifice and Selflessness: Allah Almighty says: "and entertain no desire in their hearts for things given to the (latter), but give them preference over themselves, even though poverty was their (own lot)"³¹

14. Tolerance and Forgiveness: Attributes of true believers as mentioned as: "Who spend [in the cause of Allah] during ease and hardship and who restrain anger and who pardon the people - and Allah loves the doers of good"³²

15. Mercy and God-Fear. Allah Almighty says about our beloved Prophet (PBUH): "And We have not sent you, [O Muhammad], except as a mercy to the worlds"³³

16. Promise Keeping: Allah Almighty says: "You shall not touch the orphans' money except for their own good, until they reach maturity. You shall fulfil your covenants, for a covenant is a great responsibility."³⁴

17. Modesty: It is an important value of Islamic ethics. Prophet S.A.W said: "Indeed, Modesty is a branch of Faith."³⁵

18. Safeguarding the Tongue and Private Parts: It is obviously an important value of Islamic system which is evident from the following Hadith:

"مَنْ يَضْمَنُ لِي مَا بَيْنَ لَحْيَيْهِ وَمَا بَيْنَ رِجْلَيْهِ أَضْمَنَ لَهُ الْجَنَّةَ."³⁶

"Whoever can guarantee (the chastity of) what is between his two Jaw-bones and what is between his two legs (i.e. his tongue and his private parts), I guarantee paradise for him"³⁷

19. Mutual Co-operation: Islam teaches its followers to co-operate with each other and to become beneficial for all the Muslim Ummah. "Co-operate with each other in matters of righteousness and piety"³⁸

20. Respect and Honour for Others: Islam ensures the respect and honour for others as is commanded in the following Quranic verse: "O you who have believed, let not a people ridicule [another] people; perhaps they may be better than them; nor let women ridicule [other] women; perhaps they may be better than them. And do not insult one another and do not call each other by [offensive] nicknames. Wretched is the name of disobedience after [one's] faith. And whoever does not repent - then it is those who are the wrongdoers."³⁹

21. Freedom of Religion: Islam teaches its followers to tolerate and accept the viewpoints of others. "There shall be no compulsion in religion"⁴⁰

22. Sincerity in Faith: Followers are directed to be sincere and true to their Sustainer and Lord: “He is the Living one; there is no one to be worshipped except He. You shall worship Him alone, devoting your religion absolutely to Him alone”.⁴¹

Conclusion

Islam is fundamentally a religion of prosperity and peace. Islam places a higher value on people than any other aspect of society or its tenets. The Quranic⁴², Therefore We ordained for the Children of Israel that he who slays a soul unless it be (in punishment) for murder or for spreading mischief on earth shall be as if he had slain all mankind; and he who saves a life shall be as if he had given life to all mankind.) makes this importance clear. The purpose of God's prophets and messengers down through the ages has been to remind people of their inherent capacity for friendship and love. Islam holds that to surrender to God, to worship Him as the Creator and the Master, and to acknowledge the inherent goodness in all people is to live a good life.

The religion of Islam shines on the horizons of the Arab by the Holy prophet (PBUH) and gradually enlightened the whole world. Islam is a universal religion and the aim of Islam is to fight against injustice and any kind of violence. The individual who will recognize his true nature on which every person is created will be able to live together in society with peace and affection to each other.

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