THE CONCEPT OF PEACE IN THE QUR'ĀN

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ABSTRACT

On the subject of peace in the Qur'ān, the non-Muslim world needs to understand that peace in Islām does not mean the absence of war, but the absence of oppression, corruption, injustice and tyranny. The Qur'ān seeks to promote excellent moral values. Peace is one of those values. In fact the word "Islām" itself is derived from the root *silm*, which is the root letter for peace. Allah (SWT) ordered the early Muslims to seek peace at a time when peace lovers were few and far between. It is therefore, fair to note that military Jihad is to ensure peace. This is the state of things in Islām and those are the provisions made by Islām for international peace in war-free periods. To ensure that mankind lives in amity, it has laid down the principle of tolerance, patience, and forgiveness which should pave the way for a peace move during the period of hostility or war. Islām teaches peace-building values and harmony among humanity. In his bloodless conquest of Makkah, he forgave his archenemies. This paper analyses the concept of peace in the Qur'ān, the definition of peace in the Qur'ān and the establishment of a lasting peace on earth. It concludes with a conclusion and a list of references.

Key words: Qur'an, peace, non-Muslims, Jihad.

INTRODUCTION

Before the birth of Islām, *al-Jazeera al-'Arabiyyah* (the Arabian Peninsula) was known as a hostile region where tribal warfare was widely spread. There were hatred, aggressions, and hostilities among different warring Arab tribes, which regularly broke out into fighting; every now and then, there was much bloodshed. Things had reached a point that the entire Arabian peninsula seemed to be on the verge of destroying itself, until Islām came and it was due to the blessings of Islām alone that saved those tribes and brought their never-ending hostilities to an end. Islām came to destroy the tribalism culture in the Arabian peninsula, and spread justice and equality among the tribes. Warring tribes became brothers and Islām united all people under the banner of Islām (Farj, 1960). The Qur'ān encourages Muslims that once the aggression and enmity comes to an end, Muslims must stop fighting and they should respond immediately and positively to the first signs of peace offered by the enemy. Today, global peace is at risk as we witness evil carnages happening on a daily basis. Such violence would be a terrifying prospect if it is not brought to an end. As the very word of Islām means peace, it is no doubt that the religion of Islām which brought peace to the war-torn world 1400 years ago is still much needed today to end the vicious cycle of warfare that is happening today in our world.

Definition of Peace in Islām

It is always useful, let alone necessary, in dealing with any specific subject for researchers to define the terms they use first and foremost. In this connection, we are dealing with the Islāmic definition of peace (*salam* or *silm*). According to Sayid Quṭb (1977), it has a wider and deeper significance than that currently adopted by world statesmen. Peace must imply freedom, justice and security for all people. *Salām,* peace, is from the same root as Islām, the religion of unity and harmony (Yūsuf 'Ali, 1989). In his commentary, Yūsuf 'Ali, (1989) also states that *salām*, translated into "peace", has a much wider signification. It includes: (a) a permanent sense of security, which is unknown in this life; (b) soundness, freedom from defects or perfection, as in the word *salīm;* (c) preservation, salvation or deliverance, as in the word *sallama*; (d) salutation accorded to those around us; (e) resignation, in the sense that we are satisfied and not discontented; and (f) freedom from any jarring element. All these shades of meaning are implied in the word 'Islām'.

According to ('Abdul Ḥamīd, 1993), the word *Islām* itself implies different shades of meaning. It is often translated as "peace" which signifies a sense of security and permanence, soundness, freedom from defects, perfection,

preservation, salvation, deliverance, salutation, and accord with others, resignation in the sense that we are satisfied and not discontented. It is for this reason, among others, that Islām is in continuous pursuit of peace in the ordinary sense as well as in the different shades of its meaning. Peace in all its signification becomes the real goal of the religion of Islām, indeed of every religion. Mischief in whatever form is strongly condemned so that peace is the desired state of affairs to be established. Similarly, (Al-Braik, 1986) states that one should bear in mind that this notion of peace is directly connected with the Islāmic cooperative spirit and its monotheistic doctrine. The Islāmic philosophy towards peace is a philosophy of peace and security, all of which is culminated in the Qur'ān and the *Sunnah*.

Establishing a Lasting Peace on Earth

Ahmad (1982) has mentioned that the central focus of Islām is to call all humankind to worship their Lord and Creator and not to associate anything with Him. Islām also urges people to submit to His Will. With reference to the establishment of a lasting peace on earth, one of the ideal ways is first of all, a true Islāmic society to be found on earth. This would act as an ideal example, calling community of nations towards Islām.

As a result, the boundaries of Islāmic society and Islāmic state would keep on expanding until the entire humanity would come within the fold of the love, benevolence and mercy of its Creator. ; It is an undeniable fact that modern science and technology has brought about fantastic changes in our contemporary life. Our globe has shrunk tremendously; we can travel from one corner of the earth to another in a matter of hours. The world has been reduced to a village, various countries being like localities of a single town.

However, this elimination of distance is entirely a physical and outer phenomenon. Mentally and psychologically, the various nations of the world are still far apart from each other. Even though at the political level men aspire to develop a universal brotherhood and a single world-state, in reality they cannot find a basis or value through which to overcome the barriers of color, creed, and race.; The desire for world peace and cordial relations among the nations of the world had led to the formation of "the League of Nations" in the early part of the last century.

However, it failed miserably and ceased to exist after a few years because of the utterly selfish and inhuman attitude of some of the member countries. The yearning for peace and amicability in international relations persisted and it again resulted in the formation of a world body known as the "United Nations." It is an open secret, however, that it too has failed to achieve its purpose. Most resolutions passed by the UN are not implemented in clear

defiance of its charter. Even though it has prestigious paraphernalia of offices and divisions, its efficacy as a custodian of peace has never been up to the mark.; Ahmad (1982) also says that if we look at the matter from the right perspective, we realize that only Islām can meet the challenge of the time.

The failure of peace-making world bodies like the UN lies in the fact that these cannot possibly offer a ground for treating various national and ethnic groups as equal partners in the community of nations. Islām, on the other hand, gives us two such fundamental concepts which alone can bind the human race in one single totality. It tells us that all human beings living on the surface of this earth come from one primordial pair — Adam and Eve — and as such they are like members of one family.

Again, the Creator of all is Allah (SWT) (swt) and as such, they are all equal in His eyes. White people have no superiority over colored nations, nor have Western nations any ground to boast against Eastern ones. Islām totally negates all baseless values and attitudes which treat some people as inferior to others in any respect whatsoever.; The upshot of this discussion is that the truth which is essential for the happiness and peace (of both individual as well as societies at the widest level) is all there and complete in the Qur'ān and the Sunnah (the tradition and practice of the Prophet (saw). Whoever amongst Muslims studies the Qur'ān and the life of Prophet of Islām (saw) in earnest must face the question, "Are Muslims ready to follow the heights that Allah (SWT) (swt) shows them and be a witness to this unto the world?"; The need of the hour is to explain and spread the teachings and wisdom of the Qur'ān, first among the Muslims themselves and then among the entire humankind. This can be achieved only through sincere and tireless efforts of those young men who decide to dedicate their lives to the learning and teaching of the Book of Allah (SWT) (swt) (Ahmad, 1982).

Peace is linked to justice. Injustice is the main and primary cause of war. Justice requires even relations between two equal partners, while injustice produces uneven relation between two unequal partners. The 'invisible wars' such as poverty, misery, famine, epidemics, discrimination, racism, apartheid, and oppression are all behind the destruction of peace as much as the 'visible wars' such as aggression and invasion. As far as the invisible wars continue, not only at the material level such as the misdistribution and unequal development, but also on the moral one namely the relation between the center and the periphery violence, then wars will continue. (Ḥanafi, 2000).

Peace would reign if each depository, recipient or beneficiary returns his deposit to its owner. No peace is possible as long as the depository is withholding the deposit from its legal owner and acquires it for himself. No

peace is possible without permanent justice. That is why military occupation, foreign settlements in occupied territories, reservations, deportations and all forms of injustices regarding the relation between people and lands will continue to be the major cause of war. The state of peace is an ideal state while a state of belligerency is a real one. Islām would vouch for the ideal state against the real one, since the ideal through human action is the only potential real, and since the actual real, as an expression of passions, is volatile.

This is expressed by a parable of two belligerent partners and two equal one. In the first case, belligerency is a result of inequality. In the second case, equality brings peace. Therefore, inequality between any two partners becomes a cause of war, while equality brings peace. Whoever greets, salute, offers peace, cannot be discredited or disbelieved. He has to be taken on his words and be offered peace in return. Peace is reciprocal between two partners. If one offers peace, the other accepts it in good faith. A greeting of peace does not generate hostility or anxiety (Ḥanafi, 2000).

Applied to international relations, peace is reciprocated by peace. If a nation manifests a desire for peace, the other nation reciprocates by peace. An offer of peace can never be rejected. If a nation offers guarantees of peace to another nation, the state of belligerency then ends. War has no justification any more. Allah (SWT) says in the Qur'ān, "*If they withdraw from you but fight you not, and (instead) send you (guarantees of) peace, then Allah (SWT) hath opened no way for you (to war against them).* (al-Nisā: 90).

The highest guarantee of peace is to diffuse the causes of war: occupied land returned, injustice lifted, and discrimination abolished. However, if a nation transgresses against another nation and does not offer any guarantee of peace, its aggression is naturally encountered by self-defense – peace for peace, war for war. (Ḥanafi, 2000).

> "*If they withdraw not from you nor give you (guarantees) of peace besides restraining their hands, seize them and slay them wherever ye get them; in their case we have provided you with a clear argument against them.*" (al-Nisā: 91).

As opposed to the two classes of deserters to whom clemency may be shown, there is another class which is treacherous and dangerous and cannot be left alone. They try to win your confidence, and are all the time in the confidence of the enemy. Every time they get a chance, they succumb to the temptation of double-dealing. The best way of dealing with them is to treat them as open enemies. Keep them not in your midst. If they give you guarantees of peace and do not actually fight against you, well and good. If not, they are deserters actively fighting in the ranks of

the enemy. They have openly given you proof, and you can fairly seize and slay them in war as deserters and enemies (Yūsuf 'Ali, 1989).

Examples of absence of guarantees include occupied territories not returned, invasion not ended, oppression not banned, injustices not lifted, or discrimination not eliminated.

Peace cannot be implemented by war; otherwise it will be a contradiction in terms. Ends do not justify means. Peace between nations can be implemented only through peaceful means. Nations 'unbound' such as big powers are the major causes of limited or generalized wars. Nations 'bound' by a universal code of ethics can generate peace.

The big powers as unbound nations are serf-nations, subject to their desires and greediness, while the 'bound' nations, abiding by the universal code of ethics, are free-nations (Ḥanafi, 2000). The constitution of the world is, according to Islām, founded on the principle of justice. The laws of war and peace also take notice of this very same concept of justice. Islām, unlike idealistic metaphysicians or certain modes of religious beliefs that regard evil as unreal, treats evil on its own plane as something real which has to be fought and vanquished. ('Ali Anwer, 1987).

With regard to those who threaten global peace, 'Ali Anwer, (1987) has mentioned that the Holy Qur'ān has drawn a picture of the real trouble-makers: the portrait of the psyche of the pretenders is as valid today as it was more than 1400 years ago when it was drawn up:

"When it is said to them: 'make not mischief on the earth,' they say: why, we only want to make peace! Of a surety, they are the ones who make mischief, but they realize (it) not." (al-Baqarah: 11-12).

When explaining the meaning of mischief in these verses, Ibn Kathir (2000) has mentioned that 'they' are refers to the hypocrites. As for "*make not mischief on the earth*", that is disbelief and act of disobedience. Abū Ja'far said that Ar-Rābi' bin Anas said that Abū Al-'Āliyah said that Allah (SWT)'s statement, "*When it is said to them: 'make not mischief on the earth",* means do not commit acts of disobedience on earth. Their mischief is disobeying Allah (SWT), because whoever disobeys Allah (SWT) or His commands, he has committed mischief on earth. Peace on both earth and in the heavens is ensured and earned through obedience to Allah (SWT).

In explaining the types of mischief that the hypocrites commit and quoting Ibn Jarīr, Ibn Kathir mentions that the hypocrites commit

mischief on earth by disobeying their Lord and continuing in prohibited acts. They also abandon what Allah (SWT) has made obligatory and doubt His religion even though He does not accept a deed from anyone except with faith in His religion and certainty of its truth. The hypocrites also lie to the believers by saying contrary to the doubt and hesitation their hearts habour. They give as much aid as they can to Allah (SWT)'s loyal friends and support those who deny Allah (SWT), His Books and His Messengers. This is how the hypocrites commit mischief on earth, while thinking that they are doing righteous work on earth.   The statement by Ibn Jarir is true; taking the disbelievers as friends is one of the categories of mischief on the earth. (Ibn Kathir, 2000)

When the Quran says*, "Of a surety, they are the ones who make mischief, but they realize (it) not."* (al-Baqarah: 12), it means that the hypocrites' behaviour and their claim that it is for peace, is itself mischief although in their ignorance, they do not see it to be so. (Ibn Kathir, 2000)

As Yūsuf 'Ali (1989) says, much mischief is caused (sometimes unwittingly) by people who think that they have a mission of peace, when they have not even a true perception of right and wrong. By their blind arrogance, they repress the good and encourage the evil. International relations in Islām are based on the concept of a lasting and universal peace. The understanding of the conception of fraternity, equality, justice and peace is fundamental to understanding the norms of law among nations in Islāmic traditions.

Today, global peace is at risk as we witness evil carnages happening on a daily basis, mostly on Muslims. Such violence would be a terrifying prospect if it is not brought to an end. As the very word of Islām means peace, it is no doubt that the religion of Islām which brought peace to the war-torn world 1400 years ago, is also much needed today to end the vicious cycle of warfare that is happening in our world.

At present, Muslims are more than one fifth of the world population, and Islām is the world's fastest-growing religion. We know that according to Qur'ānic teachings, Islām does not impose itself by sword and Muslims are not addicted to war, therefore, Islām's contribution to global peace today is timely and much relevant as all other systems have failed to bring peace to the world.

Peace and the Qur'ān

The Qur'ān has explicitly stated that faith in Allah (SWT), who has created this world to good purpose, and ensuring justice and freedom, equally and with accountability are all inevitable preconditions for one's attainment of peace. The Qur'ān states, *"It is those who believe and*

confuse not their beliefs with wrong – that are (truly) in security, for they are on (right) guidance." (al-An'ām: 82). As long as Allah (SWT) is the embodiment of peace within Islāmic traditions and a Muslim is in pursuit of realizing the noble goal of peace, one is actually trying to spiritually apply one of Allah (SWT)'s attributes to one's daily chores and activities. This is fundamentally the core of Muslim thinking insofar as the concept of peace in Islām is concerned.

The Qur'ān encourages peace and rejoices it in this life and in the hereafter as the following verse explains (Al-Braik, 1986):

"There hath come to you from Allah (SWT) a (new) light and a perspicuous Book. Wherewith Allah (SWT) guideth all who seek His good pleasure to ways of peace and safety, and leadeth them out of darkness, by His Will, unto the light – guideth them to a path that is straight." (al-Mā'idah: 15 – 16).

The Prophet (*saw*) explained what would happen if they altered, distorted, changed and lied about Allah (SWT). He also ignored much of what they changed, since it would not bring about any benefit if it was explained. *Subul al-Salām* in the verse above means ways of safety and righteousness (Ibn Kathir, 2000).

The Qur'ān further adds: *"But those who believe and work righteousness will be admitted to gardens beneath which rivers flow – to dwell therein for aye with the leave of their Lord, their greetings therein will be "Peace!"* (Ibrāhim: 23).

Thus, the call for authentic peace in Islāmic doctrine, as we have already shown, is deeply rooted in the knowledge of Allah (SWT)'s way, by abiding by His commands and by abstaining from evil deeds. And, hence, Islām requires that in order to have durable peace anywhere, certain conditions must be met (Al-Braik, 1986).

This includes the peace between the individual and his Creator, between the individual and his conscience, and between him and his community. Peace can be established in the interrelationship of groups, in the relation between individuals and their governments, and finally between one state and another. In order to achieve this end, Islām extends from the peace of conscience, to peace in the house, then to peace in society and ends in world peace (Sayid Quṭb, 1977)**.**

Islām is fundamentally a religion of peace; actually, the word "Islām" in and of itself connotes and is synonymous with peace. The Qur'ān states, *"O ye who believe! Enter into Islam wholeheartedly; and follow not the footsteps of the evil one; for he is to you an avowed enemy."* (al-Baqarah: 208). With this religion, the Muslims have not found a better name than *Muslimūn* (the peaceful believers). The Prophet (*saw*) had defined a Muslim as "one from whose hands, tongue and limbs everyone is safe." Another translation defines a Muslim "as one from whose hands and

tongue his fellows apprehend no harm."(Ibn Ḥajr al-'Asqalānī, 2004)**.** When the Qur'ān was revealed, it concluded *Sūra of al-Qadr* (Night of Power or Honour) with peace (Al-Braik, 1986).

The Qur'ān says, *"Peace!... This until the rise of morn."* (al-Qadr: 5). This verse tells us about the angels giving the greetings of peace during the night of Al-Qadr to the people in the mosques until the coming of *fajr* (dawn). Qatadah and Ibn Zayd both said concerning Allah (SWT)'s statement, "*Peace!... This until the rise of morn."* This means, all of it is good and there is no evil in it until the coming of *fajr* (dawn) (Ibn Kathir, 2000).

Yūsuf 'Ali (1989) says that when the night of spiritual darkness is dissipated by the glory of Allah (SWT), a wonderful peace and a sense of security arise in the soul. This lasts until this life closes, and the glorious day of the new spiritual world dawns, when everything will be on a different plane, and the chequered nights and days of this world will be even less than a dream.

It is also worth noting here that the greeting between Muslims and the angels to believers in general is peace: 'peace unto you, 'as stated the Qur'ān,

> *"Peace unto you for that ye persevered in patience! Now how excellent is the final Home."* (al-Ra'd: 24).

The angels will enter from every direction congratulating them for entering paradise. The angels will welcome them with the Islāmic greeting and commend them for earning Allah (SWT)'s closeness and rewards as well as being admitted into the dwelling of peace, neighbours to the honourable Messengers, Prophets and truthful believers. The Qur'ān also adds,

> *"Their salutation on the Day they meet Him will be 'peace': and He has prepared for them a generous reward."* (al-Ahzāb: 44).

The apparent meaning – and Allah (SWT) knows best – is that their greeting, from Allah (SWT) (*swt*) on the day that they meet Him, will be *salām*, i.e. He will greet them with *salÉm*. Qatādah claimed that the meaning was that they would greet one another with *salām* on the day when they meet Allah (SWT) (*swt*) in the hearafter. Furthermore, Allah (SWT) has prepared for His good followers a great reward,

> *"For them will be a Home of Peace in the presence of their Lord: He will be their Friends, because they practised (righteousness)".* (al-An'ām: 127).

Allah (SWT) describes paradise as 'the abode of peace' because its residents are safe due to their access to the straight path, which conforms to the way of the Prophets. As their way was not wicked, they earned the abode of peace which is free from all wickedness. (Ibn Kathir, 2000).

With regard to the "Home of Peace" Yusuf 'Ali (1989) notes that in contrast with the ephemeral and uncertain pleasures of this material life, there is a higher life to which Allah (SWT) is always calling. It is called the Home of Peace. For there is no fear, nor disappointment, nor sorrow there. Those who will be chosen have sought not material advantages but the good pleasure of Allah (SWT).

Ibn Kathir (2000) States that while forgiveness becomes part of the character of the devout believers, the Qur'ān says,*"But turn away from them, and say 'Peace!' But soon shall they know!"* (al-Zukhruf: 89). 'Turn away from them' means turning away from the idolator and say salam (peace) means do not respond to them in the same evil manner in which they address you but try to soften their hearts and forgive them in word and deed.

When Allah (SWT) says: "*But soon shall they know!"* This is a warning from Allah (SWT) (*swt*) for them. His punishment which cannot be warded off strikes them and Islām spread throughout the east and west.

"And the servant of Allah (SWT), Most Gracious are those who walk on the earth in humility, and when the ignorant address them, they say: 'Peace!' (al-FurqÉn: 63).

This verse tells us the attributes of the servants of the Most Gracious. If the ignorant people insult them with bad words, they do not respond in kind, but they forgive and overlook, and say nothing but good words. This is what the Messenger of Allah (SWT) (*saw*) did: the more ignorant the people, the more patient he would be. (Ibn Kathir, 2000)

In his commentary, Yusuf 'Ali (1989) explains ignorance in a spiritual sense and address in the aggressive sense. The peoples humility is shown in two ways: (1) To those in real search of knowledge, they give such knowledge as they have and as the recipients can assimilate; (2) To those who merely dispute, they do not speak harshly, but say 'peace!', as much as to say, 'May it be well with you, may you repent and be better'; or 'May Allah (SWT) give me peace from such wrangling'; or 'peace and good-bye: let me leave you!

The idea of war in Islām is accepted as an inevitable social phenomenon. (Shalaby**,**1997). However, it must also be noted that in Islāmic legal theory, the ultimate objective of Islām is not war, but the establishment of peace and justice. The real aim of the Qur'ān

concerning war or fighting is to enjoin positive peace and goodwill, not only towards Muslims, but also towards all people and nations (Kolyu,2003).

At this point, Boisard (1988) has mentioned that Islām stands to defend not only the Muslims, but also persecuted Jews and Christians. This kind of armed intervention characteristically corresponds to what 19th century European international law meant by "humanitarian intervention." This is a literal case of the assertion of basic human rights: security, guarantee of man's person and property and respect for freedom of thought. Islām's military power was the background and guarantee of this assertion.

We have seen that Islām is a religion deeply interested in and devoted to peace.

Saiyidain (1976) has mentioned that the etymological root of the word "Islām" is *silm*, which means peace. The normal greeting of a Muslim to everyone is *Assalamu Alaikum* (peace be upon you). In the Qur'ān as well as the traditions of the Prophet (*saw*) there are numerous references to peace.

It becomes necessary, therefore, to examine the attitude of Islām to the issues of war and peace, which are, far and away the most crucial issues of the age. All that religion has taught, all that mankind has achieved in its painful and exacting journey through time, all that science and culture have given to man, the very structure of human civilization hangs over an abyss of disaster, because total annihilation by war may well be around the corner.

The basis of enduring peace in the world can only be individuals and communities who believe in justice and compassion, in the brotherhood of man and in the interdependence of human welfare all over the globe. The Qur'ān lays down clearly that faith in Allah (SWT), who has created this world to good purpose and justice in all personal as well as social and national relations are inevitable conditions for peace (Saiyidain, 1976): *"It is those who believe and confuse not their beliefs with wrong – that are (truly) in security, for they are on (right) guidance."* (al-An'ām: 82).

There are circumstances in which Islām contemplates the possibility of war – for instance, to avert worse disasters like the denial of freedom to human conscience, however, the essential thing in life is peace. It is towards the achievement of peace that all human effort must be sincerely diverted. Even in the course of war, if the enemy shows the slightest inclination towards peace, Muslims must respond to it

positively and take the risks of peace, which are worth more than those of war. Even if they fear that the other party may play them false, they must explore every possibility of securing peace (Saiyidain, 1976):

"But if the enemy inclines towards peace, do thou (also) incline towards peace, and trust in Allah (SWT); for He is the One that heareth and knoweth." (al-Anfāl: 61).

In his commentary on the above verse, al-Qurṭubi (2002) says that Muslims must always be ready for peace as long as it benefits the Muslim community. This is in line with the Prophet's practice as he had had several peace treaties with the enemy of Islām such as *al-Ḥudaybiya* and the *Khaybar* Pact.

Although the verb form is that of a command, the Prophet (*saw*) and those after him had a choice. If they thought making peace would have suited them, they would. Further, the words "if they incline to peace" suggest that it was the enemies who showed readiness to work out a peace formula and not the Muslims. It was not the Muslims who offered the proposal since that would be construed as weakness on their part. (Zaheer, 1996).

If a community suffers voluntary exile on account of persecution and oppression, and some of its weaker brethren stay behind, holding fast to faith but not prepared for the higher sacrifice, the exiles still have a duty to help their weaker brethren in matters of religion. The exiles, being at open war against the state which oppressed them, would be free to fight against such state. But if the weaker brethren are in a state in mutual alliance with the community, the community cannot in honour interfere with that state, whether it is Muslim or not. Presumably, the alliance implies that the grievances of the weaker brethren will be redressed by the state itself. But it is not honourable to embarrass our own ally (Yusuf 'Ali, 1989)

It would thus never be right for Muslims to break a treaty unilaterally. It is only when their enemies break their contract and try to evict them from their home and take the initiative in fighting, that they are permitted to fight, unafraid of the large numbers annoyed against them. It is stated again and again that a *Mu'min* should be afraid of no one, of nothing except Allah (SWT), when such a situation arises. (Saiyidain, 1976).

Thus, if the transgressors wage a war, the Muslims are only permitted to fight against them in self-defence because they are subjected to tyranny or being pushed out of their homes for affirming that they worship Allah (SWT). Such violation of human rights has to be resisted. If people do not stand up for truth or for their just rights, tyranny and injustice are not defied (Saiyidain, 1976).

Such defensive wars should never be waged for any personal advantage but to make the aggressors give up their aggression and breach of contracts.

"But if they violate their oaths after their covenant, and attack your faith, fight ye the chiefs of unfaith, for their oaths are nothing to them, that thus they may be restrained." (al-Tawbah: 12).

In the above verse, Allah (SWT) says, if the idolators with whom you conducted peace treaties for an appointed term break their oaths, treaties or convenants and attack your religion by cursing the Messenger (*saw*) or attacking the religion of Islām by way of criticism and disapproval, they are to be fought. This is why Allah (SWT) says afterwards,

"*Fight ye the chiefs of unfaith, for their oaths are nothing to them, that thus they may be restrained*".

So that they may refrain from the disbelief, rebellion and the transgression they indulge in. Qatadah and others said that the leaders of disbelief were Abu Jahl, 'Utbah and Shaybah, Umayyah bin Khalaf.

Al-Ā'mash narrated from Zayd bin Wahb from Ḥudhayfah, "The people of this verse were never fought again." A similar statement was reported by 'Ali bin Abī Ṭālib. However, this verse is general, even though the specific reason behind revealing it was the idolators of Quraysh. So this verse generally applies to them and others as well (Ibn Kathir, 2000).

With reference to this verse, it is widely reported that the allusion is to the Quraysh tribes that had entered into a no-war treaty with the Prophet (*saw*) but soon crossed swords with Banu Khuzā'ah, one of the Prophet's ally, committing aggression in support of Banū Bakr, their ally.

In fact, it is said that the war was the result of a quarrel that started between two individuals. One of them, belonging to Banū Bakr, sang a panegyric against the Prophet (*saw*). Another, a Khuzā'i told him, "If you repeat it before me, I will break your jaw." The man repeated it and soon his jaw was broken. Their quarrel led to a battle and ultimately, when the Khuzā'ah complained to the Prophet (*saw*), it led to the subjugation of the Quraysh and the fall of Makkah. (Al-Qurṭubī, 2002).

As soon as conditions become favourable for peace, war should never be continued, for war is at best an unpleasant aberration, the normal course of life is peace (Saiyidain, 1976).

But while Islām preaches peace and insists on the due fulfillment of obligations towards friends and foes alike, it recognizes realistically that there are situations when war may become inevitable. In dealing with such situations, it lays down meticulously the laws, conditions and

limitations under which recourse to war are permitted (Kolyu,2003).

Allah (SWT) says in the Qur'ān, "*Fight in the cause of Allah (SWT) those who fight you, but do not transgress limits; for Allah (SWT) loveth not transgressors.*" (al-Baqarah: 190).

Reviewing the early Muslim era and reflecting on the experience of the early Muslim generations, one can clearly see that peace was and is still the original position of Muslims, and that war was either a punitive measure to annihilate tyranny and oppression, or a defensive measure to stop aggression. From the very beginning, the Prophet (*saw*) was instructed to use a friendly approach to call people to Islām, *"Invite (all) to the way of thy Lord with wisdom and beautiful preaching; and argue with them **in the ways** that are best and most gracious. For thy Lord knoweth best, who have strayed from His path, and who receive guidance."* (al-Naḥl: 125)

The textual "*aḥsan*" can be rendered both as 'best' as well as 'better' (Zaheer, 1996). What is the implication of the word "**in the way**" in the above verse?

Al-Zamakhsharī (1997) answers that it is the manner of 'calling' in which the well-meaning attitude and sincerity of the caller is plainly manifested.

In al-Mawdudi's words (1993), this instruction is very important for those who are engaged in the propagation of Islām. They should always keep in view two things 'wisdom' and 'excellent admonition'. 'Wisdom' implies that one should use discretion in the work of propagation and should not do this blindly like foolish people. Wisdom demands that one should keep in view the intelligence, capability and circumstances of the addressees and convey the Message in accordance with the requirements of the occasion. Moreover, one should refrain from applying one and the same method to each and every person or group but should first diagnose the real disease of the addressee and then cure it by appealing to his head and heart.

Conclusion

This articles was conceived as an attempt to analyse the concept of peace in the Qur'ān. In this context, it is fair to underscore that wars and killings are neither the primary focus of Islām, nor its functional goals. Rather, peace constitutes a norm in Islām. When we refer to the Qur'ān, we find that the concept of peace is discussed in a complete and comprehensive way.

The quest for peace and justice is perhaps a core issue and a major shared aspiration in most of the world's religions. However, a more realistic analysis will show that even for secularist thinkers peace has been a major concern, though their basic assumptions and the motivating force behind it may be totally different.

In Islām, the basic relationship between individuals, societies, countries and generally among the human being is that of peace and not war. In a very strict circumstances, war necessary becomes inevitable and necessary mostly in self-defense. Islām teaches humanity that Allah (SWT) created human race in different colours, languages, cultures, to show the beauty of Allah's creation, to worship Him alone without any association, and to respect, interact, related and live together peacefully.

Allah (SWT) says in the Qur'ān, *"O mankind! We created you from a single (pair) of a male and a 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 Allah (SWT) is (he who is) the most righteous of you and Allah (SWT) has full knowledge and is well acquainted (with all things)."* (al-hujurāt:13).

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