Peace, its dimensions and relation with some Islamic notions: An overview DOI: 10.5281/zenodo.10477186

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Abstract

Peace remains imperative for human beings and their prosperity and development at large. That's why Islam is a great supporter of peace and it wants to wipe out all the factors and reasons that cause danger to peace. Most importantly, The word Islam means peace and security as well. A great number of Quranic verses and Hadiths mention the importance, establishment and precepts of peace. As wars and conflicts are the killer of peace. So, Islam gives clear and expressive teachings for eliminations of them and promotes international and global peace view for the safety, sanctity, protection and security of the world as a whole. I want to give brief overview of peace in light of Islamic view and outlook.

Keywords: peace, prosperity, Islam, Quran, Hadith, outlook, international

Introduction

The term 'Islam' itself has its root to the verb 'salima' and the noun 'salam' which means salvation and peace.¹Etymologically, the word of Islam means the salvation, peace, and submission. In Arabic, the word Islam itself is directly rooted and linked to the verb salima and masadar or noun derived from the verb as-salaamu meaning "to be safe" or "salvation". The noun as-silmu has the same meaning as as-sulhu and its meaning is 'peace' as well; as it can be observed in the phrase أنا سلم لمن سالمني وحرب "I make peace to those who do the same, and fight against those who fight me").

The term as-silmu and Islam has the same root, it is also analogous to as-sulhu which means peace, and al-ishlah means conciliation, peacemaking, making a change and reformation etc.². The word as-sulhu is originally derived from the one-level verb salhu which is opposite of destruction, which then becomes the second verb, saalaha which means antonym of enmity.³ The term as-sulhu is also depicted in the words Darus-Sulh, that shows a country that does not come into Darul-Islam but opted to make peace with it.Maulana Wahiduddin sad:

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Some scholars define peace as the absence of war. This definition is, from the dictionary or literal point of view, correct. Whenever there is no war or violence between individuals or groups, a state of peace begins to prevail on its own.

The word al-amnu means serenity and peace, while al-amaan also has other meanings, i.e. covenant; protection, and guarantees.⁴ It also can be understood as the security from the violence. ⁵These words also have their roots to the word al-iman or belief.⁶ peace is not a only state of passivity. On the flip side, it is being fully active against the threat of evil, destruction, and disorder that may stem from within or from without.⁷ As Collingwood points out, peace is a 'dynamic thing⁸ and requires consciousness and vigilance, a constant state of awareness.

The word ועושעון has the meaning of

(الْإِسْلَام) إِظْهَار الخضوع وَالْقَبُول لما أَتَى بِهِ مُحَمَّد صلى الله عَلَيْهِ وَسلم وَالدّين الَّذِي جَاءَ بِهِ مُحَمَّد صلى الله عَلَيْهِ وَسلم-9

or submission and full acceptance of religion conveyed by Muhammad.

Types and scope of peace

Peace in Islam can be both positive and negative peace. Therefore, positive peace is substantial in Islam. According to Galtung, positive peace may be shown by cooperation, equality, peaceful culture, and dialogue. While the negative peace may be described as the absence of violence or the condition when the conflict parties signs short term peace agreement, abstain from violence. ¹⁰

Negative peace is needed to prevent violence among parties, disputes, or further violence and international conflict. Positive peace or substantive peace gives a broader perspective to address the causes of a conflict.¹¹

The term positive peace is related to human values and its application as a peace customs in life. As we know that Allah is Ar-Rahman or The Most Beneficent and the Al-Raheem or The Most Merciful. So human beings being His creations certainly can not be remained aloof from those two characters. As it is mentioned in the Qur'an

Indeed, those who have believed and done righteous deeds - the Most Merciful will appoint for them affection".

Perhaps Allah will put, between you and those to whom you have been enemies among them, affection. And Allah is competent, and Allah is Forgiving and Merciful.

Importance of peace

The term "Alsilmi" is also mentioned in the Qur'an, as Allah has commanded the believers,

"O ye who believe, enter too Islam completely, and do not follow the paths of Satan".

This verse leads Muslims to the peace and invites to do good deeds and all types of virtues. Both the Al-Qur'an and Sunnah have encouraged the people especially muslims towards the attitude of peace.Al-Qur'an advises Muslims to have good behavior and attitude toward adherents of other faiths¹⁵, to settle disputes,¹⁶ to know each other,¹⁷ and to cooperate in goodness, not enmity. The concept of peace in Islam may get less coverage in Islamic political literature, but it has actually gotten very much spotlight, even written in depth in the books of human social ethics of life. Islamic history is filled with numerous precepts and examples that has explained the peace-loving nature of Islam in an elaborate way.

As the prayer of Prophet Ibrahim in the Qur'an "And remember when the Prophet Ibrahim Prayed

وَإِذْ قَالَ اِبْرَاهِيْمُ رَبِّ اجْعَلُ هٰذَا بَلَدًا أَمِنًا وَّارْزُقْ اَهْلَه مِنَ الثَّمَرَاتِ مَنْ أَمَنَ مِنْهُمْ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْأَخِرِ-18 "My Lord, make this a secure city and provide its people with fruits - whoever of them believes in Allah and the Last Day.",

Then in other verse,

My Lord, make this city (Makkah) secure and keep me and my sons away from worshipping idols.

Relation of peace with Islam and Fitra(Nature)

Holy Prophet (BPUH) has described Islam as the Religion of "Nature". His (BPUH) following hadith has explained it sufficiently:

A human being is born neutral (with clean slate of his mind) without having any inclination to one religion or the other.

Here again the word "nature" is mentioned with its meaning "Al-Fitra" and the Prophet (SWS) said that nature is Islam. Islam is proponent to invite Non-Muslims to discuss the problems faced by world for the sake of global peace. We can achieve true global peace through dialogue and discussion only and can end all kinds of religious and social hatred and differences.

The perfection of creation means that Allah has directed man to a righteous nature. As the words of Surah Ar-Rum Allah says

Then face your face with the righteousness of Allah (Allah), (on) the nature of Allah Who created man according to the fitrah. No change in the nature of Allah.

Hence, peace and nature are concmmitant. Holding firmly to fitra is indispensable for ensuring peace in the world

Islamic moral values and peace

Morality (akhlaq) of Islam should be followed and practise by each and every person so that the real peace may develop and evolve. According to Abu Zahra, 22 there are

ten principles of mu'amalah or relationship among people, such as respect for mans' dignity²³; unity²⁴; cooperation in good deeds or humanity²⁵, tolerance²⁶, freedom (to decide fate and religion)²⁷; justice²⁸; equality in human relationships²⁹; integrity³⁰; and compassion.³¹ These principles are not just principles that bring individuals closer to each other or cause intergroup relationships, but form the principles of the state as well, since the state is a political entity that it is encouraged in Islam peace may be brought about through conciliation and peace-making efforts and conflicts may be resolved among individuals or groups Islam stresses the significance of making and creating peace among people. Hence the virtue of peace-making or al-ishlah has been figured in many verses of the Qur'an and hadith.

In an-Nisa' Allah says,

لَّا خَيْرَ فِي كَثِيرٍ مِّن نَّجْوَلْهُمْ إِلَّا مَنْ أَمَرَ بِصَدَقَةٍ أَوْ مَعْرُوفٍ أَوْ إِصْلَحٍ بَيْنَ ٱلنَّاسِ : وَمَن يَفْعَلْ ذَٰلِكَ ٱبْتِغَآ ءَ مَرْضَاتِ ٱللَّهِ فَسَوْفَ نُوْتِيهِ أَجْرًا عَظِيمًا ـ ³²

No good is there in much of their private conversation, except for those who enjoin charity or that which is right or conciliation between people. And whoever does that seeking means to the approval of Allah - then We are going to give him a great reward. Then in Surat al-Anfal, Say,

يَسْلُونَكَ عَنِ ٱلْأَنْفَالِ ِفُلِ ٱلْأَنْفَالُ لِلَّهِ وَٱلرَّسُولِ فَٱتَّقُواْ ٱللَّهَ وَأَصْلِحُواْ ذَاتَ بَيْنِكُمْ وَأَطِيعُواْ ٱللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُۥ إِن كُنتُم مُؤْمنينَ -33

The (decision concerning) bounties is for Allah and the Messenger." So fear Allah and amend that which is between you and obey Allah and His Messenger, if you should be believers.

In a hadith, Messenger of Allah (s) said,

ألا أخبركم بأفضل من درجة الصيام والصلاة والصدقة ؟ قالوا : بلى ، قال : إصلاح ذات البين ، وفساد ذات البين الحالقة ـ34

May I tell you something better than fasting, prayer and alms?" The Companion replied, "Yes." He said, "Reconcile the relationship (two warring people), because the destruction of the relationship is the cutter.

The hadith shows that peacemaking and keeping not only counts as a virtue, it also reduce unnecessary hostility and damage. In order to ensure the absence of violence, Islam also promotes security.

State's security gets essential to maintain the survival of human life.

Security is also directly linked to trustworthy issues, or beliefs. As the non-traditional security concept also states 'freedom from fear' as one of the security indicators. Al-Qur'an contains wisdom and lessons for people who use their reason.³⁵ Da'wah through peaceful means remains a central point of a number of Qur'anic verses which tell the stories of the many previous prophets. The Qur'an has narrated of how the earlier prophets succeeded in establishing relationships with those who rejected their preaching. Still in Al-Qur'an, people of 'Ad are mentioned as 'brothers' of the Prophet Hud, even though they refused to accept Islam.³⁶ The Qur'an has also

mentioned Thamud who rejected the Prophet Salih, and the people of Noah as 'brothers'. Allah also commanded Moses to deliver da'wah to Pharaoh with 'qaulan layyinan' or a gentle word. There are also many examples in sunnah and sirah about how Prophet Mohammed has developed good relationships with people; ethics towards parents, children, neighbors, women, and other believer, ethics in assembling, speaking and giving opinions, and other ethics that encourage Muslims to remain virtuous and true toward others. It is also important to understand and prevent the potential conflict, Latent conflict often emerges within society with various racial groups and ethnicities. So, even before the conflict eruption, Mohammed has reconciled between two muslim groups Muhajirin and Ansar so that love, compassion and altruism have taken root among them. The story of Medina Charter between Hazrat Muhammad (PBUH) and Jews, as well as the truce with the Quraysh tribe in the Hudaibiyah Treaty displays the importance of making peace for co-existence and building good relationships. The story of Medina Charter between the Hudaibiyah Treaty displays the importance of making peace for co-existence and building good relationships.

Belief in Hereafter and peace

As Islam reveals the human nature to do good and evil. However, it does not mean that evil deeds are permissible in Islam; including violence, crime, and hostility. As it is mentioned in the verse as well,

it is indeed a lucky man who purifies the soul, and indeed he fails who corrupts it.

Qatadah said, this verse explains that fortunate is one who purifies himself from a disgraceful attitude as well as disdainful and hateful things; is considered obedient to Allah, as its narrators are Mujahid, Ikrimah, and Said bin Jubair. ⁴⁰ The remarkable and conspicous difference between Islam and other paradigms is the concept of hereafter and after life, and the concept of reward and sin or reckoning. In Islam, all human deeds will be accounted for in the hereafter. As Allah says in the Quran Surah az-Zalzalah;

Whoever does good deeds of zarrah, he will see the reward, and whoever does the evil weighing of zarrah, will surely get his reward.

Belief in hereafter serves as catalyst and inspires human being of being peaceful and righteous and results in promoting goodness and preventing evil that is key to success in hereafter.

Concept of Ummat e Wasat and Peace

Islam is a religion that declares Muslims as wasata, as it has been mentioned in the Qur'an, that the character of Muslims is ummatan wasatan. 42 wasata is a stand-alone and middle position, neither side nor both. wasata attitude does not show 'ghuluw' or exaggeration. 43 A man who is wasata will be able to understand reality, priority, nature or sunnatullah, and comprehend religious texts comprehensively. 44 Islam stresses that human being are equal socially and legally and they also have the potential to do good and bad. The word of God in sura as-shams goes;

وَنَفْسٍ وَمَا سَوَّنهَا ٧ فَأَلْهَمَهَا فُجُورَهَا وَتَقْوَنهَا -45

And by the soul (nafs) and the perfection of His creation, He inspired the soul what is wrong and what is right for it.

Qutab believed that the concept of Ummah in Islam results from the point directly that God regards all humans as one solid and concrete Ummah.⁴⁶ This connection comes from the essence of human life that's linked to the nature of creation, and these solidify the concept of peace in Islam. Therefore, the concept of peace is the main principle and war is out of ordinary situation, which only takes place temporarily when the unity of Ummah is risked. ⁴⁷

God then led man to the way of good and evil. Both the options are available and good one must be selected.

Conflict, War, Peace and Islam

Islam wants to dismantle network responsible for damaging peace by creating violence and conflct that ensue war. As Maulana Wahiduddin Khan wrote in his book:

It is no exaggeration to say that Islam and violence are contradictory to each other. The concept of Islamic violence is so obviously unfounded that prima facie it stands rejected. The fact that violence is not sustainable in the present world is enough to support the belief that violence as a principle is quite alien to the scheme of things in Islam. Islam claims to be an eternal religion, and an eternal religion cannot have a principle in its scheme which is not sustainable in successive periods of human history. Any attempt to bracket violence with Islam amounts to casting doubt upon the very eternity of the Islamic religion. 48

The Qur'an has narrated the first conflict which was accompanied by use of violence that occurred in human history. That story is related to the sons of Adam, when Qabil and Abel were differed and started fighting for a potential spouse. As it is hinted in Surah al-Maidah, "his lust encourages the killing of his brother, so he kills him, and he is among the losers". ⁴⁹

As for as conflict is concerned, it is also mentioned in the Qur'an in a number of terms and levels, ranging from enmity⁵⁰, disputes⁵¹, disagreements⁵², and wars.⁵³

Before advent of Islam, a large number of the inhabitants of the Arab Peninsula maltreated to each other. They would start fighting on very minor issues and this practice remained in vogue for a long time. This reality has been portrayed in the holy Quran:

وَاعْتَصِمُوْا بِحَبْلِ اللّهِ جَمِيْعًا وَلَا تَفَرَّقُوا ا وَاذْكُرُوا نِعْمَتَ اللّهِ عَلَيْكُمْ اِذْ كُنْتُمْ اَعْدَاَءً فَالّفَ بَيْنَ قُلُوبِكُمْ فَاَصْبَحْتُمُ اللّهِ عَلَيْكُمْ اِذْ كُنْتُمْ اَعْدَاَءً فَالّفَ بَيْنَ قُلُوبِكُمْ فَاَصْبَحْتُمُ مِنْهَا ۚ كَذٰلِكَ يُبَيِّنُ اللّهُ لَكُمْ اٰيَاتِه لَعَلَّكُمْ تَهْتَدُوْنَ ـ 54

And hold fast, all together, by the rope which Allah (stretches out for you), and be not divided among yourselves; and remember with gratitude Allah's favor on you; for

not divided among yourselves; and remember with gratitude Allah's favor on you; for you were enemies and He joined your hearts in love, so that by His Grace, you became brothers; and you were on the brink of the pit of Fire, and He saved you from it. Thus Allah makes His Signs clear to you: That you may be guided.

Different battles like the battle of "Fujjar" were fought among different Arab tribes for years.

Jihad legally and judicially is based on the Quran's injunctions. Simply it means individual efforts to promote and advance faith and belief in God, strengthen and spread belief in God, and exaltation of the word of God ⁵⁵after implementing the social and economic justice fully. ⁵⁶Therefore, according to Islamic theology:

War by itself is not the ultimate aim, but an instrument to provide and keep peace.⁵⁷ The clear and lucid evidence of Islamic peaceful behavior is that in Prophet Mohammad's 80 battles in a 10-year period in Madina the number of human dead from both sides (Muslim and polytheists) did not exceed 1400.

Qutab also believed that Islam can bring more perfect and multilateral justice than any other justice system, cult or social school.⁵⁸

Qutab maintained that the war in Islam is legitimate and permissible only if it is meant to promote the word of God and follow God's path. The meaning of "the word God" that is interpreted as "God's will" is clear and obvious for mankind, is compatible with unwavering and unchangeable tradition of creation and mankind. ⁵⁹ One indication of reality of "the word of God" or "God's will" is that Islam of this common good is meant for all, and it removes anything between people and common good which may be intervening and interfering. Hence, by referring to the 39th Quranic verse of Anfal:

وَقَٰتِلُوهُمْ حَتَّىٰ لَا تَكُونَ فِتْنَةٌ وَيَكُونَ ٱلدِّينُ كُلُّهُ لِلَّهِ ۚ فَإِنِ ٱنتَهَوْاْ فَإِنَّ ٱللَّهَ بِمَا يَعْمَلُونَ بَصِيرٌ -60

Fight them until there is no fitnah and worship is for Allah

Qutab maintained: «If someone intends to prevent people from the benefits of Public Good and does this by use of force, such a person is enemy of God and aggressor to "the word of God" and "God's will". We must get rid of him through peaceful methods then "the word of God" fulfills again. Therefore, we do not say that we can force them to accept Islam and follow Islam's rules. We must give them freedom of thought and extensive information that will lead them to God's path and prosperity». ⁶¹

Qutab (ibidem.) believes that war in Islam must result in disposal of intrigue, dispensing justice all over the world and bring real justice, including social, legislative and international justice in all human sections and societies. Therefore, if someone wants to oppress and tyranize others and lead them astray from right path and path of justice, even if he is Muslim, others are allowed to fight against him until he returns to "the word of God" or "God's will". Afterward, those who go against religion, return to God's path. In his opinion, ubiquitous justice and preventing injustice is a close and right concept to the word of God that must be always above all doubts and ensure it at all cost. The 9th verse of Hujarat says:

وَإِنْ طَآئِفَتَانِ مِنَ الْمُؤْمِنِيْنَ اقْتَتَلُواْ فَاصْلِحُواْ بَيْنَهُمَا فَإِنْ بَغَتْ إحْدَاهُمَا عَلَى الْأَخْرى فَقَاتِلُوا الَّتِيْ تَبْغِيْ

حَتَّى تَفِيٓءَ إِلَّى اَمْرِ اللَّهِ ۚ فَإِنْ فَآءَتْ فَاصْلِحُوا بَيْنَهُمَا بِالْعَدْلِ وَاَقْسِطُوا ﴿ اللَّهَ يُحِبُّ الْمُقْسِطِيْنَ - 62

If two factions among the believers should fight, then make settlement between the two. But if one of them oppresses the other, then fight against the one that oppresses until it returns to the ordinance of Allah. And if it returns, then make settlement between them in justice and act justly. Indeed, Allah loves those who act justly.

In addition, the 190th verse of Bagara

وَقَاتِلُوْا فِي سَبِيْلِ اللَّهِ الَّذِيْنَ يُقَاتِلُوْنَكُمْ وَلَا تَعْتَدُوْا ۚ إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يُحِبُّ الْمُعْتَدِيْنَ -63

Fight in the way of Allah those who fight you but do not transgress. Indeed. Allah does not like transgressors.

Islam put great stress on the importance of justice. Some verses of the Quran used the term "Ullov", that means that cruelty and injustice must be restricted and controlled as a human instinct. In the Quranic terminology this word used except the words like rebellion and mutiny, being introduced as an anti-order reality and disorder. The Quran mentions the stories of Belqeis and Pharaoh, warns them about "Ullov", which may cause sedition, rebellion and disturbance of public security, even strictly asks Muslims to prevent "Ullov" and corruption on the Earth

تِلْكَ ٱلدَّارُ ٱلْأَخِرَةُ نَجْعَلُهَا لِلَّذِينَ لَا يُرِيدُونَ عُلُوًّا فِي ٱلْأَرْضِ وَلَا فَسَادًا ۚ وَٱلْعَٰقِبَةُ لِلْمُتَّقِينَ ـ

That 'eternal' Home in the Hereafter We reserve 'only' for those who seek neither tyranny nor corruption on the earth. The ultimate outcome belongs 'only' to the righteous. Qutab opined that if verse 60 of Anfal encourages believers to

وَأَعِدُواْ لَهُم مَّا آسْتَطَعْتُم مِّن قُوَّةٍ وَمِن رَبَاطِ آلْخَيْلِ تُرْهِبُونَ بِهِ - عَدُوَّ آللَّهِ وَعَدُوَّكُمْ وَءَاخَرِينَ مِن دُونِهِمْ لَا تَعْلَمُونَهُمُ آللَّهُ يَعْلَمُهُمْ ء وَمَا تُنفِقُواْ مِن شَّيْءٍ فِي سَبِيلِ آللَّهِ يُوفَّ إِلَيْكُمْ وَأَنتُمْ لَا تُظْلَمُونَ -67

Make ready for an encounter against them all the forces and well-readied horses you can muster that you may overawe the enemies of Allah and your own enemies and others besides them of whom you are unaware but of whom Allah is aware.

Or even the verse 35th of Mohammad gives warning to believers that

فَلَا تَهنُواْ وَتَدْعُواْ إِلَى ٱلسَّلْمِ وَأَنتُمُ ٱلْأَعْلَوْنَ وَٱللَّهُ مَعَكُمْ وَلَن يَتِّرَكُمْ أَعْمَلُكُمْ ـ68

Do not weaken and call for peace while you are superior; and Allah is with you and will never deprive you of your deeds.

Here Allah almighty emboldens and encourages Muslims to be steadfast and consistent as any laxity and carelessness will lead to dominance of adversaries. As a result of their subjugation, peace and security will be endangered.

Islam is a great advocate of peace. It focused on peace as a whole and covered all kind of peace and asked its adherent to make sure its existence.

World history is replenished with conflicts, wars and battles that showed the non-existence of peace. It is a tragedy of the world that the powerful attacked and assaulted the powerless and they were subjected to tyranny, oppressions and cruelty and myriad of people had been killed in the wars. It is very unfortunate and sorrowful that no one learnt the lesson from history.

In modern world, despite rapid and swift progress in every walk of life, knowledge, sophistication and International Institutions, situation is no different and remains grim and volatile .That's why, different parts of the world are in the grip of violence, unrest, wars and tyranny and has been devoid of peace since ages. World is in dire need of peace and restoration of human rights

Islam not only stresses upon inner peace but also home, societal and world peace in this regard.

Conclusion

Islam is a religion of peace and gives great significance to it. Message of peace takes the center stage in Quran and the same case is in Hadith, Sira and other Islamic sources. Islam itself means peace and security. Quran made mention of Prophet Ibrahim praying to God for peace more than once. Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) remained great advocate and exponent of peace through His life and signed treaties with other opponents for the sake of peace. Two types of peace cover all its aspects and elaborate its limits and differences. It has direct relation with fitra and ethics. Both of them give rise to peace. Even human birth is with fitra. They are essential to both human and society. Quran uses term Umat wahad and umat wasat. Both the terms lead to peace as they encourage to create unity and forbid dispute. Belief in Hereafter corrects human beings and makes them pious, righteous and peace loving. Peace remains elusive in the world and peace making is coveted greatly as always. Muslim scholars put great stress on peace and put forward her views for the acquisition of global peace. Conflict, war, battles, sedition, mutiny and unrest must prevent so that dream of peace may come true.

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