

WORLD DIFFERENT FAITHS WITH REFERENCE TO ISLAMIC VIEW OF PEACEFUL CO-EXISTENCE

Ghulam Nabi

Assistant Professor
Department of Islamic Studies , IUST, Awantipora, J&K

In the world of humanity the degrees of progress and decline are infinite _ progress begins with the cultivation of sweetness and cordiality in our manners. To sweeten daily human intercourse is a normal need. This intercourse begins with a greeting (Salaam). Further we give kindness and courtesy without asking, and return it if possible in even better terms than we received, or at least in equally courteous terms.

“When a (courteous) greeting is offered you, Meet it with a greeting still more courteous, or (at least) of equal courtesy, Allah takes careful account of all things”

A very high standard is set for the maintenance of good relations for instance a standard set for the charity is one of the good example:

“Kind words and covering of faults are better than charity followed by injury...”

With regard to destruction and evil, the evil commanding soul may create infinite crimes but concerning good and creativity, its power is extremely low and partial- This evil commanding soul will be transformed into a good soul provided he repents and believe and work righteous deeds.

“Unless he repents, believes and work righteous deeds, for Allah will change the evil of such persons into good, and Allah is oft-forgiving, Most Merciful ”

Allah’s Mercy transforms the repentant’s nature from evil to good .The good soul when walk on earth walk in humility.

“And the slaves of Most Beneficent (Allah) are those who walk on the earth in humility and sedateness and when the foolish address them (with bad words) they reply back with mild words of gentleness”.

With regard to Servitude of man author of Risal Nur, Said Nursi writes “O man, if you are the slave of Him alone, you will earn a place superior to all creatures. But if you hold back from this Servitude to Him, you will become an abased slave to impotent creatures. If you rely on your ego and own power and abandoning reliance on Allah and supplication ,deviate into pride and boasting, then you will fall lower than an ant or bee in regard to goodness and creation, and become weaker than a spider or a fly. You will become heavier than a mountain in regard to evil and destruction, and more harmful than a pestilence.”

Islam is a composition of unique and unparallel ideas, values, thoughts, guidelines and laws which Prophet Muhammad (SAW) expressed or applied during his life. It stands for “a commitment to surrender one’s will to the will of Allah” and thus to be at peace with the Creator and with all that has been created by Him.”⁷ It is based on the recognition of oneness of the Creator and of our submission to His will. It may also be defined as that religion which stands for complete faith in the teachings of Prophet (SAW) and steadfast obedience to his way of life. It provides a comprehensive set of legal laws regarding all facets of human existence, the implementation of these laws brought unheralded tranquility and justice in the society. It will definitely bring peace which indicates tranquility, mental calm, reconciliation, amity, accord, concord, friendliness, harmony on the one hand and, absence of or cessation of

war, state of reconciliation after strife and enmity, freedom from mental agitation or anxiety, freedom from civil disorder on the other.

This concept of peace is based on the concepts of morality, love, compassion, humility, sacrifice, tolerance. A man who lives by these precepts in its true sense will be most polite, careful of thought, modest, just and trustworthy. He will spread love, respect, harmony and peace.

The life of Prophet (SAW) is an illustrious model for whole mankind. His life in Makkah was full of examples, where he suffered without a protest. He was subjected to many hardships and personal injuries. His reactions to these were nothing but peace, to live together, to coexist honorably with each other. We have hundreds of examples of torture to Muslims at Makkah but even then they never put themselves to violence, which Islam has condemned on all fronts. The Treaty of Hudabiya and the conquest of Makkah are unique examples in History.

Islam also lays down the methodology of preaching. The Quran declares:

“Invite (mankind, O Muhammad (SAW) to the way of your Lord (i.e. Islam) with wisdom (i.e. with the divine inspiration and the Quran) and fair preaching, and argue with them in a way that is better....and clearly advocates that there is no compulsion in religion.

Islam never seek to fight peaceful idolaters, in fact, it sought to fight the idols of greed, desire. Its interest is to establish a society based on unity and equality of all human beings.¹⁰ In the interest of unity and harmony, Peace, Social Justice Almighty Allah has allowed Muslims to fight with those who spread corruption mischief and ruin the basic fabric of society.¹¹

“Permission to fight is given to those (i.e. believers against disbelievers), who are fighting them, (and) because they (believers) have been wronged ...”

Said Nursi explains it as , lesser evil is acceptable for a greater good..... if a Jihad is abandoned due to those lesser evils (material and physical harms),the greater evil will come after the greater good has gone and that is absolute wrong

The Muslim is allowed to fight against oppression, tyranny, injustice, mischief, corruption as the following Quranic verse clearly states:

“And what is wrong with you that you fight not in the cause of Allah, and for those weak, ill-treated and oppressed among men, women and children, whose cry is: “ Our Lord: Rescue from this town whose people are oppressors; and raise for us from you one who will protect, and raise for us from you one who will help.”

War is absolutely evil, laying hands on a weapon is evil, picking up a sword is evil, but if it is removal for the evil (Corruption, Oppression, Mischief) then war is not only justified but necessary. The Quran declares:

“Those who have been expelled from their homes unjustly only because they said: “Our Lord is Allah”- for had it not been that Allah checks one set of people by means of another, monasteries, churches, synagogues, and mosques, wherein the name of Allah is mentioned much would surely have been pulled down...”

Thus the existence of armed forces, the duty of which is to prevent aggression, is an absolute necessity. The existence of an army for defense is essential to check aggression against itself. Here the Quran says:

“ And make ready against them all you can of power, including steeds of war(tanks, planes, missiles, artillery etc) to threaten the enemy of Allah and your enemy ... ”

Islam came to reform society and to form a nation (*Ummah*) and a government. It came to reform the whole world. It cannot be without the law of war, as some religions believe that they have no law for war. Islam is a religion that covers all human activities; it has laws which govern society. In fact the religion that has no laws of war allows all kinds of wars and aggression because it has no definite war structure. Islam calls for peace but it also advocates war to establish peace. Suppose if one group wills to coexist honorably with other and the opposing side is not ready to coexist and being oppressive and intends to trample upon human dignity and honor then what should be done? Should the first group, who wants to remain in harmony and peace surrender and welcome misery and accept dishonor. The answer is no.

War for the sake of aggression against other people - who have no intentions against the aggressor- for the sake of subjecting them or grabbing their property, is highly condemnable but the war in reply to aggression, for the sake of peace and social justice is highly commendable. Islam allows only this type of war- for the maintenance of peace and social equilibrium. This is the concept of Jihad in Islam.

The Seerah of the Prophet Starting from the Hira where Prophet (SAW) received the wahy, and the whole Makkah phase the Muslims were tortured, persecuted and forced to leave their homes. The Prophet (SAW) migrated to Madinah, where he developed a socio-political structure of Islam. The Makkans intensely hostile to the Prophet's following marched towards Madina with an army of thousand. Prophet (SAW) and the Muslims defended their state, and they fought with the Makkans.

The best example of peace in Islam can be seen from the Treaty of Hudabiyah. The clauses of the said Treaty go as follows:

- 1) The Muslims shall return this time and come back next year but they shall not stay in Makkah for more than three days.
- 2) They shall not come armed but can bring with them swords only sheathed in scabbards these shall be kept in bags.
- 3) War activities shall be suspended for 10 years, during which both parties will live in full security and neither will raise sword against the other.
- 4) Whosoever wishes to join Muhammad (SAW) or enter into Treaty with him, should have the liberty to do so; and likewise whosoever wishes to join Quraish, or enter into Treaty with them, should do so.
- 5) If anyone from Quraish goes over to Muhammad (SAW) without his guardian's permission, meaning a fugitive, he should be sent back to the Quraish; but any of the Muhammad (SAW) followers return to the Quraish he shall not be sent back.

Hudabiyah Truce marked a new phase in the process of Islamic action and life of the Muslims. Six years had passed since the Prophet (SAW) and his Companions were forced to migrate. Now they wished to perform the pilgrimage and the Makkans posted themselves at every point of access to the city, to ensure that Muslims could not enter. The Muslims were justified to fight. But the Prophet (SAW) maintained the peace and returned back, without performing pilgrimage, along with all the 1400 Companions. The Quran says:

“ And He it is Who has withheld their hands from you and your hands from them in the midst of Makkah, after He had made you victors over them...”

It was on this occasion that the Muslims took the pledge called Bait-i Ridhwan, to fight for their faith, but the Prophet (SAW) made an end of the state of warfare between the Muslims and the idolaters. He expressed his willingness to agree to any terms the Makkans may impose¹⁹ thus a constructive action implied by the Prophet (SAW) marked a new phase of progress and prosperity in the history of mankind

Another great example is the conquest of Makkah when Prophet (SAW) proclaimed general amnesty to the people of Makkah.

Hadith recorded by Bukhari, narrated on the authority of Anas bin Malik, “Help your brother whether he is an aggressor or victim of aggression.”

The Prophet (SAW) was asked: “How can we help the aggressor?” He (The Prophet (SAW) said: “Keep him away from aggression”

The best man is he who does the greatest good to humanity. Muslim is one from whose hands, tongue and limbs everyone is safe. Goeth, the great German Philosopher-Poet, reading the Quran, exclaimed:

“If this is Islam, then every thinking man among us is in fact, a Muslim.”

The righteousness of Muslim is well defined in Islam:

“It is not Al- Birr (piety, righteousness..)that you turn your faces towards east and (or) west (in prayers); but Al-Birr is (the quality of) the one who believes in Allah, the Last Day, The Angels, The Book, The Prophets and gives wealth in spite of love for it, to the kinsfolk, to the orphans, and to the poor who beg, and to the wayfarer, and to those who ask, and to set slaves free, and offer the prayers perfectly(Iqamat as Salat)and gives the Zakat and who fulfill their covenant when they make it and who are patient in extreme poverty and ailment (disease) and at the time of fighting (during the battles) such are the people of truth and they are Al-Muttaqun (Pious).

Islam lays great emphasis on the concepts of sincerity and brotherhood. Both the Quran and Hadith which contains commandments of Islam is not addressed to one single nation but to all nations belonging to all ages and, therefore, the message it embodies is universal. The Quranic verse no. 13 of *Surah al-Hujrat* clearly states that different nations and tribes were made in order to know each other. Similarly the message delivered by the Prophet (SAW) in his last Pilgrimage “Your blood, your Honor, your property is as sacred as this day, this month and this city”

The structure of social life in Islam is very lofty, sound and comprehensive. Among the substantial elements of this structure are sincere love for one's fellow human beings, mercy for young and respect for the elders, comfort and consolation for the distressed, visiting the sick, relieving the grieved, social solidarity, respect for the rights of other people to life, property and honor. All this we can see from the Prophetic statements and practices of the Companions of the Prophet (SAW). So hence all this is from Islam and Islam thus means that religion which calls for peace of mind, soul, social solidarity and above all the obedience or submission to the will of Allah.

The Quranic verses generally interpreted as an evidence of religious pluralism from chapter Ma'idah and Ankbut states as:

To thee We sent the Scripture in truth confirming the scripture that came before it and guarding it in safety; so judge between them by what God hath revealed and follow not their vain desires diverging from the truth that hath come to thee. To each among you have We prescribed a Law and an Open Way. If God had so willed He would have made you a single people but (His plan is) to test you in what He hath given you: so strive as in a race in all virtues. The goal of you all is to God; it is He that will show you the truth of the matters in which ye dispute And in Chapter Ankbut

And dispute ye not With the People of the Book, Except with means better (Than mere disputation), unless It be with those of them Who inflict wrong (and injury) : But say, “ We believe In the Revelation which has Come down to us and in that Which came down to you ; Our God and your God Is one ; and it is to Him We bow (in Islam).”

Islam never seek to fight with other faiths rather it promotes co-existence on certain common grounds to live in peace but if any group wants to indulge in wrongful ways then Islam promotes Jihad to establish peace. Peace is the central theme of Islam. Prophet has warned a person who wants to destroy harmony. Many sayings of Prophet testify the cause.

The 14th century Sufi, Abd al-Karim al-Jili stated that all principal religions actually worship Allah in their own way:

1. The Infidels; they disbelieve in a lord, because they worship the essence of God which reflects there is no lord over Him.
2. The Physicists; worshipping the Nature which are actually attributes of God.
3. The Philosophers; worshipping the Stars, which represents further names of God.
4. The Majians worship God in the names of Unity in which all names and attributes past just as fire destroys and transmutes them in their nature.
5. The Materialists; denying a Creator and instead believe in the eternity of Time
6. The Jews, Christians and the Muslims also Worship in their own ways to the same God
7. The others also follow in one way or other same course

Some characteristics among religions stand common because of common needs. These characteristics may be shared with other faiths, but taken together they make religion distinct. Following are some common traits

Belief in Supernatural Beings. ...

Sacred vs Profane Objects, Places, Times. ...

Moral Code With Supernatural Origins. ...

Characteristically Religious Feelings. ...

Prayer and Other Forms of Communication.

Human values of social and ethical norms common to all cultures and societies as well as religions represent a melding of social progress, justice and spiritual growth. The timeless values are: a deep caring for all life, a responsible attitude toward the planet, nonviolence, compassion and love, friendliness and compassion, generosity and sharing, integrity, honesty and sincerity, moderation in one's activity, service, commitment and responsibility, peace, contentment, enthusiasm ,Much of the misery that has come into the world in the name of religion can be avoided by introducing these shared values.

REFERENCES

1. Taqiuddin Hilali and Mohammad Mohsin khan write about how the Salam (greeting) began. They narrated a Hadith from Bukhari on the authority of Abu Huraira, "The Prophet (SAW) said, "Allah created Adam in His image, 60 cubits in height. When He created him, He said (to him), "Go and greet that group of angles sitting there, and listen what they will say in reply to you, for that will be your greeting and the greetings of your off springs." Adam (went and) said, " As-Salamu Alaikum, they replied As Salamu Alaikum Wa Rahmatullah..."(The Noble Quran, Madina, Maktaba Dar al- Quran, pp. 142-43)
2. 4:86
3. 2: 263
4. 25:70
5. 25: 63
6. Badiuzzamaan Said Nursi, The Words , p.329
7. Mawdudi, Sayyid Abul A'la, "Towards Understanding Islam", Delhi, Maktaba Islami, 2004, pp. 10-11.
8. 16:125
9. 2:256
10. If Allah did not prevent mankind, some with others, the earth would be full of corruption. 2:251
11. Ibid
12. 22:39
13. Badiuzzamaan Said Nursi, Letters, "12th letter",p.59
14. 4:75
15. 22:40
16. 8:60
17. Safiur Rahman, "Ar- Raheeq al Makhtum, Madina, Daras Salm, P. 403.
18. 48:24
19. Abdullah Yusuf Ali while commenting on the verse no. 24 of Surah al- Fatah writes, "Little incidents had taken place that might have plunged the Quraish and the Muslims from Medina to fight. On the one hand Quraish were determined to keep out the Muslims, which had no right to do, and on the other hand the Muslims, though unarmed, had sworn to stand together, and if they had counterattacked they could have forced their entrance to the Kaba, the Centre of Makka. But Allah restrained both sides from anything that would have violated the peace..." (The Holy Quran, King Fahd Complex, Medina, P. 1582.)
20. Bukhari, "Kitab al- Mazalim"
21. Ibid
22. Singh,N.K."Islam: A Religion of Peace, Delhi, Global vision publishing House, 2002, p. 52.

23. 2:177

24. Saifur Rahman. op.cit. P. 545

25. 5:48

26. 29:46

27. Abdul Karim al-Jili, a 14th-century Sufi mystic, developed a profound understanding of religious pluralism through a cosmological understanding, particularly his theory of the "Perfect Human" (al-Insan al-Kamil). He builds the ideas from his influential predecessor Ibn Arabi. Al-Jili argued that religious diversity is not an accident but a direct reflection of God's will and attributes. He believed that all religions, in their own way, are seeking and revering God, who, in turn, wishes to be revered through these diverse expressions