

Towards Establishing Global peace in the 21st Century, An Analysis of Holy Prophet's (PBUH) preaching and Practices

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ABSTRACT:

It is an established fact that the progress of any nation is not determined only by the material prosperity of its inhabitants rather one of the yardsticks, in this regard, is the lasting peace and tranquility, that its inhabitants enjoy. All the benefits of the material prosperity are marred by the absence of peace. One of the solid reasons to threaten the fabric of peace among societies and nations is the violation of civil human rights. When the individuals of a society feel threats to their rights, then anarchy comes into existence and destroys the very peaceful fabric of society. Factions of society become intolerant to one another. There starts a clash of cultures and ideologies. Different societies have been practicing various stoical philosophies to create peace among its individuals but in so far as, they have not been successful in spite of its tremendous enlightenment. The undertaken research is an attempt, in this regard, to highlight the multi dimensional preaching of the Holy Prophet (PBUH) in promoting peace among religions and societies. The undertaken study establishes that only the true adherence with the holy prophet's (PBUH) preaching of tolerance can promote the lasting peace among religions and cultures.

Keywords: material prosperity, intolerance, religions, Holy Prophet (PBUH).

Introduction:

It is a painful reality that our modern world is plagued by economic, political, social and cultural conflicts and the concept of peace seem to be deluding when we have a bird's eye view on the burning issues across the globe from Asia, Africa and to some extent even in Europe. There have been many peace treaties across the ages and across the nations, but the desired peace has been a nightmare. The reality is that mere signing peace documents cannot ensure peace. Neither the absence of armed conflicts can determine peace; rather it is a series of volunteer actions for a longer stretch of time that can restore peace among people. This dismal situation is very complex and many factors are interlinked resulting in the absence of peace for example, spread of diseases in the under-developed countries, global warming, climate change, declining economies, industrializations, and the never ending cycle of extreme poverty.

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METHODOLOGY

The undertaken study is basically the close text analysis of the secondary data that has been collected from books of history and other authentic evidences. The historical discourse has been analyzed in detail and the opinion has been formed without affecting the reality of the facts. There has been deliberate attempt to develop a consensus about the potential role of the Holy Prophet in restoring peace in various capacities, rather presenting his stance of peace with the tangible arguments that have force to be employed in the 21st century conflicts of the globe. All the dimensions of the Holy Prophet (PBUH) peace resolving strategies have not been discussed due to the limited capacity of the undertaken research. Only some of the leading incidents from the Holy Prophet's (PBUH) life have been given space that throw light on his methods and strategies of peace.

Conflict vs Peace

Conflict is usually taken as a negative activity but according to some political thinkers, it has great capacity to change and to create. Dudley Weeks (1992), world famous American facilitators in conflict studies, wrote on this new view,

“Indeed, conflict can serve as one of the engines of personal development and social evolution, generating opportunities to learn from and adapt to the diversities and differences that are natural and healthy characteristics of our society. Conflict can bring out into the open alternative ways of thinking and behaving. It can challenge us to manage our lives in ways that utilize our differences for mutual growth and benefit”¹.

But it is a very enlightened view of the conflict that is quite opposite to the grim reality. Conflicts, that are ideological in the beginning, can lead towards catastrophic consequences with the passage of time, if not handled tactfully with honest intentions. Conflicts arise due to difference of opinion, culture, economy, ritual, language, color, etc.

While on the other hand peace is altogether a positive phenomenon, though creative writers like Ruskin (1866)² claim that art flourishes only in war like nations, is only an exceptional opinion that can not be generalized by any moral and civic standard. The concept of peace can not be determined as a whole, rather it is a series of various values in which each part has a crucial role depending upon culture, nation, language, ritual, etc. The concept of peace may be best demonstrated by the following table:

Concept of Peace among different Cultures

Source: Ishida (1969)³, 135

	Will of God Justice	Prosperity	Order	Tranquility of Mind
Ancient Judaism	Shalom			
Greece		Eirene		
Rome			Pax	
China (Japan)			ho ho(heiwa)	p'ing/p'ing
India				Santi

The above table very explicitly demonstrates the dominating peace strategy of the great nations on the globe with a special emphasis on a basic value of the concept of peace in those times. For example, in the days of Judaism, “will of God” and “prosperity” were the leading strategies of peace. However, the element of “order” and “tranquility of mind” were not totally absent in building peace.

By and large, peace has been as the main strategy of the civilized societies across the ages. But it is a pity that instead of explicit efforts by the peace makers, there has not been a lasting peace on earth except the occasional ages when peace reigned supreme. According to Davenport⁴ (1869) one of those golden times of social and political piece was the era of the Holy Prophet (PBUH) (571-632) that signaled the affective use of the strategies of peace on various levels). In the subsequent paragraphs, a systematic attempt has made to critically analyze those strategies of peace by the Holy Prophet (PBUH) for the benefit of the whole humanity to come.

Prophet’s Strategies of Peace, An Analysis

Absence of peace has many dimensions and it changes faces with the changing societies, traditions, rituals and cultures. On the basis of these variations, peace disappears among societies, nations, etc. There has been a long tradition of peace through the ages. Sometimes peace is derived with the help of sword as with the case of Egyptians and Greeks. Sometimes, it is achieved by providing limited autonomy to the stakeholders as with the case of Romans who set the seeds of civil democracy.

Similarly, there is a golden tradition of Holy Prophet (PBUH), who by his speeches and actions reached the culmination point of peace. He like other leaders of the humanity, faced many issues on the personal, national and international level that could have threatened peace but he led his followers to the enduring peace, resolving all types of conflicts with his speeches and actions, from which is based all the golden principles of peace of Islam. His

handling of peace matters were so systematic and organized that it can be taken as a model for all times of conflicts resolution even after the laps of 1400 hundreds.

The Holy Prophet's Peace Strategy and the Reconstruction of Kabah

Firstly, the first ever effective attempt by the Holy Prophet (pbuh) to restore peace is described by historians is called "Hilful Fudul" the alliance of Fudul⁵. It was a unanimous oath by all the leading Quraish to establish peace in Mecca. According to Khan⁶(1983) this peace agreement was the result of "Battle of Fijar" that lasted for ten years from 580 to 590 between the revengeful temper of Arab tribes, namely, the Quraish and the Qais tribes. But after this alliance and peace agreement, there emerged a wave of détente among the Arab tribes. Kabah was re-built with mutual consent and agreement. But, just after the construction work was ended, another dispute erupted to place the sacred Black Stone in its actual place. Each tribe head wanted to own this honor. A bloody battle was supposed to unleash, if the Holy Prophet (PBUH) had not appeared on the scene. The process of placing the Black Stone in Kabah was suspended for a few days. After serious discussions, it was suggested by Abu Umayyah ibn Mugirah that let the first person to pass the gate of al-Suffah should settle the issue. All the tribe heads agreed to the proposal. The first person who entered the gates of Al-Suffah was Muhammad. All the tribe's heads accepted him as their arbitrator. Considering the intensity of the situation, he took a robe and placed the Black Stone in the middle of the garment. He then suggested the elders of the tribes to hold the different corners of the robe and carry the stone to the it's place. Reaching the appointed place, the Holy Prophet (PBUH) placed the Holy Stone himself. All the elders of the tribes were appeased and the task of construction was completed with peace and satisfaction.

The Holy Prophet (PBUH), by means of his practical wisdom, resolved that serious conflict and restored peace. If this incident is analyzed critically, it can be very explicitly concluded that that the criterion for the selection of the Holy Prophet (PBUH) as a judge of that particular incident does not meet the modern standards. Neither, the procedure of the selection of judge was scientific nor compatible with the practices of the modern world. Secondly, as Prophet Muhammad belonged to the tribe of Quraish, he might have decided the case in favour of his own tribe, as all the tribal heads were unanimously bound to abide by the decision of the holy Prophet (PBUH). But, the Holy Prophet (PBUH), approached the matter selflessly. That is the reason that that the conflict was settled peacefully. Similarly, if the so called leaders of the world : meaning to say, UNO, American Governments, European Union, etc. selflessly intend to

solve issues of the world,, no wonder that the critical issues of the world may be solved. For example, it is the ill intentions of the international governments that conflicts in Middle East, Asia and Africa have not been solved yet. The international Governments have their hidden interests under these conflicts. They intentionally prolong these conflicts for their own evil interest. So, it is the need of the hour that Holy Prophet's (PBUH) model should be followed in solving the conflicting issues of the modern world.

The Holy Prophet's Peace Strategy with Aws and Khazraj

Secondly, before the Holy Prophet (PBUH) moved to Medina, there was no single power there. Every tribe had its own ideology and power. According to Rizvi⁷ (2006), they were often at daggers drawn with each other. The most serious conflict existed between Aws and Khazraj. They fought many battles and the bloodiest battle was the last before the migration of the Holy Prophet (PBUH) to Medina. Though afterwards, they mutually decided Abdullah ibn Ubay as their head, but the bad blood still persisted among them. They were thinking of another personality who did not belong to them either. Consequently, they started eying the Holy Prophet (PBUH). Consequently, many people started meeting him on the occasion of pilgrimage at Mecca in successive years and even embraced Islam. They assured him to defend if he migrated to them and took two pledges known as "The Pledges of Al-Aqaba". Consequently, the Holy Prophet (PBUH) migrated to them on Monday 27 September, A.D. 622⁸. The warlike tribes of Medina welcomed him and embraced Islam spontaneously. They shaped into one society under the flag of Islam.

The Holy Prophet's (PBUH) stance in the matter of Aws and Khazraj can be analysed critically. He ended their enmity not by applying their cultural norms and tribal traditions; rather he brought them under one flag with all embracing ideology of Islam. He created theological harmony between them. He inspired in them the golden principle of Islamic brotherhood that does not care for colour, language, race, ethnicity, geography, etc. Considering this point in perspective, the burning issues of the globe can be solved if the golden lesson of Islamic brotherhood, propagated by the Holy Prophet (PBUH), is effectively practiced. If the difference between East and west, between English speaking and non-English speaking humanity, between the blacks and whites, etc. is finished permanently.

The Holy Prophet's Peace Strategy with Banu Qainka, Banu Nadir, and Banu Quraizah

Thirdly, after migrating to Medina with his companions, the conditions were not altogether easy for this newly built locality of Muslims. Apparently, inter-

ior and exterior threats were there. However, the exterior threats were more serious. As, few Jews tribes were residing in the vicinity of Medina, they could be a great threat for the safety of Medina and the Muslims. Among these tribes were “Banu Qainka, Banu Nadir, and Banu Quraizah”. Though some of the Jew tribes were allies with the Aws and Khazraj, yet, there was a need to bring them under some control for the safety of Medina. In this regard, the Holy Prophet tried to develop a consensus rather to make an alliance between Medina and the neighboring Jew tribes.

Consequently, a sort of Union came into existence between the neighboring tribes and Medina on the principles of mutual co-operation and reciprocal defense. This peace treaty is considered as one of the landmarks in the history of peace efforts with the slogan “Live and let other Live”

If this charter of Medina is carefully analyzed, it becomes crystal clear that the Holy prophet (PBUH) restored peace with the slogan of equality that even inspired the revolution centuries after in France in 1789. The charter was significant in the sense that it assured equal rights to Jews and Muslims in the new fabric of the government. Jews were given equal social, political, economic, and civil rights along with the Muslims. The charter resulted in the unity and centralization of the Medina. It also proved the Holy Prophet’s vision of peace that was not religiously orthodox and was not discriminately biased. Now, if the super powers of the modern world executes such peace agreements in which there should be equal religious rights to the all the states, then, it can be hoped that the world will not be divided into poles and groups, threatening each other. As, it has been a reality that certain religions are attached with terrorism following an international political Agenda. It is a fact that one of the reasons to endanger peace is when states fear about the jeopardy of their theological rights. So, the Holy Prophet’s (PBUH) ideal of peace across the religions is a landmark and can be used in restoring effective peace in the 21st century.

The Holy Prophet’s Peace Strategy and Shi`b Abu Talib

Fourthly, When the Holy Prophet (PBUH) announced his prophet hood and started to preach Islam openly, the majority of Meccan stood against him as they did not believe in monotheism. It was also against their long standings beliefs. So, they not only opposed him but also started creating hurdles in his way of preaching. They started calling him magician in order to dissuade people from him. They also offered the holy prophet (PBUH) with lavish offers to abstain his idea of monotheism. But the Holy Prophet remained steadfast. Rather, the acceptance of Islam of Umer and Hamza. Consequently, they hit

another plan to boycott the Holy Prophet (PBUH) and his tribesmen. Actually, they feared to lose their political and theological control in the territory. It was a complete social, economic boycott. There was a strict compliance of the boycott and the Holy prophet (PBUH) and his tribes' people were in extreme pitiable condition. After three years, with the efforts of Hisham and Hakim and some other nobility of Mecca appeared on the scene and tried to diffuse the situation. Finally, the conflict was resolved without disturbing peace at large.

Apparently, the boycott incident was not a direct confrontation but it could result in a bloody battle if the Holy Prophet (PBUH) had not behaved with exemplary tolerance and forbearance that were the preaching of Islam. Davison⁹ (1963) asserts that it was the Holy Prophet's (PBUH) patience that a bloody civil war was avoided and motivated the nobility of Mecca to intervene. Rather, the Holy Prophet (PBUH) brought under his spell of kindness not only the people of Mecca but also the whole of Arabia within a span of few years. Following the Yard stick of the Holy Prophet's (PBUH) tolerance and patience, the current burning issues of 21st century can also be solved. The starts of the world wars were just due to not handling the situation with patience and tolerance that cost millions of lives. Similarly, if the countries increase their level of trust with their neighbours, and display spirit of tolerance and patience, many wars can be avoided and the world can be changed in to a peaceful place for the coming generations of human beings.

Conclusion

To err is human. This ingredient of human nature has been playing its destructive role since the days of Adam when his two sons quarreled and one was killed by the other. This pitiable characteristic has been present in human nature through the ages in various dimensions with different capacities. It has cost many human lives. But it is a painful reality that the humanity is in ever increasing danger of war in the 21st century that it was never before in the entire history of humanity. The advent of nuclear weapons has further worsened the situation. All the political and moral philosophies of the western world have failed in ensuring peace on the globe. There is a dire need of a strong political and religious philosophy that can ensure lasting peace for the ailing human beings. In these pury times, only the theological message of the Holy Prophet (PBUH) that has stood against the tests of all times, can solve the critical issues of the suffering humanity. It is only by following the golden principles of patience, tolerance, firm faith, equal rights, patronizing, etc. that can promise a peaceful world. Undoubtedly, it would be heaven upon earth, if there is a durable peace and love among the human beings.

Note: The undertaken research is far from being thorough and comprehensive. All the dimensions of the Holy Prophet's (pbuh) peace strategies could not be explored due to the constraint of a research paper. But it can be taken as a point of departures. Further researches in this regard may be undertaken to further enhance the scope and utility of the topic. As it is the need of the hour to resolve the conflicts of the ailing humanity with the help of a sound political and moral philosophy that was presented by the Holy Prophet (PBUH) fourteen hundred s years ago.

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