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RESEARCH ARTICLE

CONCEPT OF PEACE IN ISLAM

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ABSTRACT

The basic question is: peace for what? Or what is the criterion of peace? Pacifists generally maintain that peace must include social justice, universal and lasting peace can be established only if it is based upon social justice. This concept of peace has won general acceptance among scholars. The question arises as to how peace in this sense has never been established throughout human history, that is, peace with social justice. History itself provides empirical proof of the fact that this definition of peace is not in accordance with the law of nature. And it is a fact that, in this world, one cannot achieve anything without adhering to natural laws. The reason behind this failure to establish peace is that almost all the scholars have bracketed peace along with certain irrelevant factors. Their concept of real peace is one in which there is no injustice, no violation of human rights, no inequality and no violence of any kind. Let us take the analogy of the soil giving us the foodstuffs without which we cannot continue to exist. According to the law of nature, we have first to acquire fertile land and then prepare it for the cultivation of crops. The same is true of peace. Peace is like social soil, by cultivating which we can receive the fruits of social justice. Just as it is not possible to derive food directly from the soil, similarly we cannot derive social justice directly from peace. According to the law of nature, peace can be attained only on a unilateral basis, and not on a bilateral basis. This means that first of all we have to abandon all kinds of confrontational methods such as political activism, protest-based activism and human rights activism. This kind of unilateralism will establish normalcy, normalcy will then lead to peace and peace will open the door to all kinds of opportunities. Then, wise planning we can achieve all those goods that we want in terms of social justice and human rights.

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INTRODUCTION

What is Islam?

Every religion has a set of terminology which is necessary to understand in order to have a proper appreciation of that particular religion. The religion of Islam too has its set of terminology. I would like here to present in brief certain basic terms.

- (a) **Islam Iman (Faith):** The meaning of Iman is to have faith in something. That is, to accept Islam with conviction. This faith is a discovery of God. Beyond that discovery there is no discovery.
- (b) **Islam (Surrender to God):** Islam means peace as the root word of Islam is Silm which means peace. In Islam peace is the greatest good.
- (c) **Dhikr (Remembrance):** Dhikr means to remember God, the designer and creator of the Universe; who will reward as well as punish for our good and bad deeds. This remembrance is known as dhikr.

- (d) **Salat (Prayer):** Salat means prayer. It is the most important part of Islamic worship. It is obligatory for a Muslim to offer prayer five times a day.
- (e) **Sawm (Fasting):** The meaning of Sawm is abstinence. Sawm is a form of worship which has to be observed annually, in the month of Ramadan. The outward form of Sawm is abstinence from eating and drinking from dawn till sunset. The inner state of Sawm is renunciation of all things that God has forbidden.
- (f) **Zakat:** Zakat means purity. This means that a man purifies his earnings by giving away one part of them in path of God. In this way zakat awakens the sense in man not to consider his earnings as his own possession, but a gift of God.
- (g) **Hajj (Pilgrimage):** Hajj means pilgrimage. That is, visiting sacred places in Hijaz in the month of ZulHijja in order to perform the annual worship required of a believer once in a lifetime. It is through Hajj that interaction takes place between Muslims on an international level. Hajj is a symbol of Islamic unity. It is also through Hajj that Muslims from all over the globe are reminded of Abraham's sacrifice. Pilgrims also witness the historical places associated with the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH).

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- (h) Dawah (Invocation):** Dawah means to call or invite. A Muslim who has received the message of God must do his utmost to communicate this message to other human beings. This dawah work in its nature is a Prophetic task.
- (i) Jihad (Peaceful Ideological Struggle):** The meaning of Jihad is to strive or struggle in a peaceful way. This Jihad involves struggling with one's own self. Struggling to communicate the word of God to others is also Jihad. Similarly when any power commits aggression against Islam, that is religious persecution and extreme cruelty or brutality; then at that movement, rising in defence against that power too is Jihad. But on one condition that a state should defend that aggressive power, not any group or organizations of Muslims of that state¹.
- (j) SABR:** Sabr means patience, for example, restraining oneself from any adverse reaction when faced with an unpleasant situation. On all such occasions, one must be able to offer a positive response instead, of a negative one.

Peace and Violence

Peace has always been, in every age a human need. However, in modern times, peace has become so important to the survival of mankind that it has now literally become a matter of life and death for humanity. Peace means life: its absence means death or violence. In the use of violence, man simply follows his basic instincts, while to promote peace, man has to give himself a complete moral overhaul. Only after such a conversion is the individual able to play the role of a peace-loving person. The need is to convert violence into peace, for only after this conversion is he able to play the role of a peaceful person. So for this process a comprehensive ideology of peace is necessary. In Islam war and violence has no place. Hundreds and thousands of youths, have taken up arms due to their emotions but not because of Islam. Currently in Iraq, Syria, Afghanistan, Palestine, Nigeria, Pakistan, Iran, Kashmir etc. thousands of Muslim youth have made their terrorist or militant organizations like Alqaidah, ISIS, Taliban, Boko Haram, Lashkar-e-Toiba, Jaish-e-Muhammad, Hizbul Mujahideen etc. All these terrorist organizations are doing wrong under false justification. They are misinterpreting Islam. They are doing wrong in the name of Jihad. Jihad is not a war. Jihad is not any negative term. But Jihad means peaceful ideological struggle as discussed earlier. All this Muslim terrorism has nothing to do with Islam. Islam and Muslims are two different things. Don't see Islam on the basis of Muslims but see Muslims on the basis of Islam. Peace has been defined by the scholars as the absence of war. Technically, this definition is right. When there is no armed conflict in a society, a state of peace will automatically establish itself. Peace is the result of planned action, while violence is purely an aggressive response to any kind of provocation. The peace loving person first thinks and then acts. The violent person first acts and then thinks. The peace loving person stands for truth, while the violent person stands for falsehood. In peace, construction is all while in violence destruction is all. A peace loving person lives with love in his heart for others, while a violent person lives with hatred for others. A peace loving person ignores problems and avails opportunities, while a violent person leaves all the

opportunities and remains locked in a futile struggle with problems².

The Treaty of Hudaibiya

The treaty of Hudaibiya is an important event in the early history of Islam. When this treaty was signed, a Quranic verse was revealed to Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) which called this treaty 'clear victory' (48:1). There were number of polytheists in Arabia whom Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) was calling to oneness of God (tawhid). At that time they did not like Prophet's mission. They opposed him, so much so that they unleashed war against him. This climate of war prevailed for many years. Because of this it was not possible to carry on in a balanced manner, the work of dawah, or inviting people to God's path, and other constructive activities. In order to end this unfavorable environment, the Prophet began to negotiate with his opponents at a place called Hudaibiya. His opponents kept insisting on very severe conditions. After two weeks of talks, the Prophet unilaterally accepted their conditions and entered into a peace treaty with them. In this way, he put an end to the existing state of war and established peace with his opponents. As a result of this treaty, the followers of Islam gained the opportunity of engaging in dawah and other constructive work. And so, because of this, within just two years, Islam became so firmly established that very soon, without shedding blood, it became dominant all across Arabia. In the present age of science and technology. All these Muslims who are engaged in war and violence throughout the globe, should through their guns and bombs into the river and should unilaterally join the hands with United Nations Organization (UNO) as the majority of nations who have signed on the charter of UNO are Muslim nations. So when these Muslim Youth will accept all the conditions of UNO, then it will be possible for them to get the victory like that of the Hudaibiya. So if these Muslim youth will engage themselves in dawah work and some other constructive work, this will lead to the revival of the treaty of Hudaibiya³.

Proselytism

When an individual belonging to one religious group joins another religious group after converting to that religion, in religious terminology, is called proselytism. Maulana Wahiduddin Khan, a renowned Islamic scholar of India says in his book "Conversion: An Intellectual Transformation", that this definition is a limited concept of conversion, which needs to be viewed in a more scientific light. "Conversion in Islamic thought is not synonymous with proselytism in the formal sense. It is an event, which takes place in a person's life as a result of intellectual revolution or spiritual transformation. It is not simply leaving one religious tradition for another. The Islamic ideal of conversion is for the individual to discover the truth after an exhaustive search for it and then by his own choice, abandon one religion for another". He further says, "Conversion does not mean just saying some formal words, changing one's name and leaving one cultural group to join another. It entails not just an outward change of religion, but a profound alteration of the mindset after passing through many stages of soul-searching and self-analysis. Conversion, in essence is the emergence of a new individual--- one of the most significant events of human history, for it is only with the

¹Maulana Wahiduddin Khan, "Islam and Peace"
Dr. Javed Ahmad Ghamidi, "Mizan", Al-Mawrid, Lahore Pakistan.

²Maulana Wahiduddin Khan, "Ideology of Peace".

³Maulana Wahiduddin Khan, "Ideology of Peace".

proliferation of such spiritually reformed personalities that any given society will attain true moral uplift, and reach the highest levels of achievement. Conversion in reality, is an event resulting from a sense of discovery. After making a discovery one does not remain as before. One becomes a new man". So when we read this, that conversion is an intellectual transformation, it means that a converted person gets ready to relinquish all the activities of before converting. A converted person wants to marry a Muslim if he or she converts to Islam. He/She becomes ready to bear all the tortures or pressures from their families, society or sometimes ex-religious groups. He/She becomes an intellectually developed person and he manages his emotions and gets merged into the Islam with full conviction.

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