

CONCEPT OF PEACE IN ISLAM

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Abstract

The gist of the message of Islam is two things: (i) surrendering to the Divine Will which means giving due regard and reverence to the commandments of Allah i.e., acting upon them with utmost sincerity, and (ii) showing utmost compassion, love and affection towards Allah's creation. These two aspects can be summed up into one — LOVE — of God, for He is our Creator and of the creation, for all things belong to the same God. Hence, a Muslim is not a true believer unless he loves rest of the creation. This love is expressed when a Muslim meets others and greets them with peace (salam), wishing good to them all. This explains that peace can prevail when people love each other. It. This paper is an attempt the meaning and importance of peace in the primary sources of Islam.

Key Words - Islam, Peace, Love, Salām, Silm, Sakīnah, Ṣulh

INTRUCTION

Peace is essential to Islam. The gist of the message of Islam is two things. Two actions are very important in the worldview of Islam after pronouncing the belief in *Tawhīd*: surrendering to the Divine Will, which means giving due regard and reverence to the commandments of Allāh i.e., acting upon them with utmost sincerity, and behaving towards the creation with compassion, love and affection.

The above two aspects can be summed up into one — LOVE — of God, for He is our Creator and of the creation, for all things belong to the same God.

Islam is primarily a religion of peace and brotherhood. It teaches that whole creation is the family of Allah and therefore, the best in this family is one who loves other creatures the most. The sum and substance of all the teachings of Islam is two things: (i) surrendering to the Divine Will which means giving due regard and reverence to the commandments of Allah i.e., acting upon them with utmost sincerity, and (ii) showing utmost compassion, love and affection towards Allah's creation. These two aspects can be summed up into one — LOVE — of God, for He is our Creator and of the creation, for all things belong to the same God. Hence, a Muslim is not a true believer unless he loves rest of the creation. The feelings of love are expressed when a Muslim meets others and greets them with peace (*salām*), wishing good to them all. This explains that peace can prevail when people love each other. It is very unfortunate to see that the wishful campaign of misinterpreting and misrepresenting Islam in the world media to indoctrinate general public against Islam is disastrous not only for the image of a section of people in particular but for the whole humanity in general. The demonizing and maligning campaign against Islam has reached such proportions that what is said about the Muslims, their mindset, religion or culture cannot be said in mainstream discussion about even the most wretched barbarians. This trend is having very dangerous consequences. For a few decades the international scenario has undergone tremendous change. Especially, after 9/11 there has been an intense focus on the Muslims and Islam. The problems of misunderstanding, misinterpreting and misrepresenting the Muslims and their religion and culture confronting the Muslim community have attaining new dimensions in the age of social media. As Edward Said (*Covering Islam*, New York, 1997) puts it, there seems a strange revival of canonical thought, though previously discredited, the orientalist ideas about the Muslims which have attained

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NEED OF THE STUDY

It is very unfortunate to see that the wishful campaign of misinterpreting and misrepresenting Islam in the world media, to indoctrinate general public against Islam, is disastrous not only for the image of a section of people in particular, but for the whole humanity in general. The demonizing and maligning campaign against Islam has reached such proportions that what is said about the Muslims, their mindset, religion or culture cannot be said in mainstream discussion about even the most wretched barbarians. This trend is having very dangerous consequences.

For a few decades the international scenario has undergone tremendous change. Especially after 9/11 there has been an intense focus on the Muslims and Islam. The problems of misunderstanding, misinterpreting and misrepresenting the Muslims, and their religion and culture, have attained new dimensions in the age of social media. As Edward Said (Covering Islam, New York, 1997) puts it, there seems a strange revival of canonical thought, though previously discredited, the orientalist ideas about the Muslims which have attained a startling prominence at a time when radical or religious misrepresentations of every other culture group are no longer circulated with such impunity.

This study will explore the fundamental sources of Islam viz., the Qur'ān and the *Ḥadīth* to bring to fore that the teachings of peace are assuming core position in the Islamic worldview and there can be no true Muslim who does not uphold these teachings up to their utmost.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research methodology adopted in this paper is both descriptive and analytical. It is an attempt to describe what and how about the concept of peace in Islam. As most of the Qur'ānic injunctions are about war, this paper highlights that while war is exceptional, peace is essential to the worldview of Islam.

3.1 Peace—Definition and Meaning

The meaning of peace in Islam is expressed by the four Qur'ānic terms of *amn*, *silm*, *salām* and *sulh*. While the first three terms hold the same meaning of peace, the fourth refers to the means through which peace can be achieved.¹

3.1.1 Amn

It is defined as safety and security, absence of fear. From it is derived *amānah* which means trust and is opposite to *khiyānah* meaning betrayal; *āmin*: safe and secure, holy; *amīn*: trustworthy, honest; *amān*: amnesty; *ma'man*: place of peace, shelter. *amn 'amm*: means general security; *mu'amman* means insured; *ma'mūn* means safe; *ta'mīn al-maṣālih* means safeguarding of interests. *mu'taman* means trustworthy and reliable; *īmān* means

firm belief² and *Mu'min* means one who believes in Islam as the final revealed truth and thus becomes safe and secure from miseries of this world and the world hereafter.

This implies the meaning of *amn* to be absence of turmoil and terror wherein there is no security of life and property etc. A *mu'min* must always be *amīn* i.e; he must be not only harmless for others but also helpful to them.

Allah says in the holy Qur'ān:

“Verily! Allah commands that you should render back the trusts to those to whom they are due; and that when you judge between men, you judge with justice.” (Al-Nisā'4:58)

It then means that *amānah* (trust) and *'adl* (justice) are interrelated with each other; when there is no *amānah*, there is no *'adl*.

Betrayal of the *amānah* amounts to the betrayal of Allah and His Messenger ﷺ

“O you who believe! Betray not Allah and His Messenger, nor betray knowingly your Amānah (things entrusted to you, and all the duties which Allah has ordained for you.”
(Al-Qur'ān, Al-Anfāl 8:27)

And it is narrated by Abū Hudhayfah that Allah's Messenger ﷺ said to us:

*“Certainly al-amānah (the trust or the moral responsibility or honesty and all the duties which Allah has ordained) descended from the heavens and settled in the roots of the hearts of men (faithful believers) and then the Qur'ān was revealed and the people read the Qur'ān (and learnt al-amānah from it) and also learnt it from the Sunnah [both the Qur'ān and As-Sunnah strengthened their (the faithful believers) amānah”*³

Thus *amn* is possible only when people are honest to both themselves and to others at the same time. That in turn is possible when they possess *īmān* and treat others according to the demands of *īmān* i.e; when they submit their will before the Supreme Will of Allah. This will pave way for the establishment of a just social order in society and thus an atmosphere of peace will prevail.

al-amn is a divine attribute. Allah being *al-Mu'min*, the Giver of security (Al-Qur'ān, Al-Hashr 59:23) does not like mischief (Al-Qur'ān, Al-Baqarah 2:205)

Amn thus, refers to a situation wherein everybody lives a peaceful life while having no fear of being attacked, robbed, exploited, persecuted, oppressed, victimized, discriminated against or subjected to any other kind of injustice. From here it follows that in a peaceful society every mischief monger is under a continuous fear of being arrested and punished accordingly.

It is, therefore, a condition of peace both mental and physical where there is no threat to the upholders of the message of peace and justice.

From the very beginning, Islam bore the stamp of peace and justice. Its utmost concern for peace can be gauged by considering the very words the holy Qur'ān uses to describe those things that seemingly would not warrant a mention of peace:

The first city of Islam is called the city of *amn*:

“And remember Abraham said: “My Lord, make this a City of Peace.” (Al-Qurān, Al-Baqarah 2:126)

Hence, whoever enters Makkah (the City of Islam) attains *amn*:

“And whoever enters it attains Peace.” (Al-Qurān, Āl-'Imrān 3:97)

Paradise, the place of Allah's blessings and bounties, is termed as the place of peace and security:

“Verily the Muttaqūn (the pious) will be in place of security (paradise).” (Al-Qur'ān, al-Dukhān 44:51)

Their Lord will welcome them with the words of peace and security. Says the Qur'ān thus:

“(It will be said to them): ‘Enter therein (Paradise) in peace and security’. (Al-Qurān, Al-Hijr 15:46)

Amn has so great an importance in the Islamic world view that those people who believe and work righteous deeds are promised to be granted power, their Religion (Islam) be established in the land and they are also promised that Allah will surely change their state of fear to that of security and peace:

“Allah has promised to those among you who believe and work righteous deeds, that He will, of surety, grant them to the land, inheritance (of Power), as He granted it to those before them: that He will establish in authority their religion—the one which He has chosen for them and that he will change (their state), after the fear in which they (lived) to one of security and peace.” (Al-Qur’ān, Al-Nūr 24:55)

And the hallmark of that state of peace and security will be that they will enjoy complete religious freedom and will worship Allah alone. The above quoted *āyāh* follows further:

“They will worship Me (alone) and not associate aught with Me.” (24:55)

3.1.2 Silm

Islam is an Arabic word. Its root is *slm*. Derivatives of this root word, *silm* and *salm*, have been used in the holy Qur’ān in the following way:

(Al-Qurān, Al-Baqarah 2:208)

It, therefore, follows that there is a direct relation between *Tawhīd* (Oneness of Allah) and peace.

Thus, in the *āyah* (24:55) the holy Qur’ān puts forth the factors on the basis of which peace and security can be established. These are: (i) faith and (ii) righteous deeds. And these again are the factors responsible for the perpetuation of peace: having faith and belief in Allah, obeying the true divine Religion on one hand and establishing harmonious relationship with His creation through righteous deeds on the other guarantees prevalence of peace in all spheres of human life. Not only this, but the true worship of Allah alone and good relationship with all His creation will surely lead man to eternal peace.⁴

“O you who believe! Enter perfectly in Islam (by obeying all the rules and regulations of the Islamic religion) and follow not the footsteps of Shaitan (Satan).” (2:208)

3.1.3 Salm

“And if they incline to peace, you also incline to it.” (8:61)

In (2:208) *silm* denotes complete surrender and submission to the rules and regulations of Islam while in (8:61) *salm* stands for peace. Literally, *silm* and *salm* (as derived from the same root) stand for two meanings: *ṣulh* (reconciliation) and Islam. In (2:208) *silm* means Islam.⁵ From the same root we get:

salima salāmatan: to be secure from both outer and inner miseries; *salima min ‘ayb*: to be holy; *salamahū musalamatan*: to reconcile; *aslama amrahū ilā Allah*: to leave one’s matters to Allah; to trust in Him; *aslama lahū*: to submit to somebody’s commandments; and *aslama*: to accept Islam as one’s religion⁶.

Again, *Aslama imra’un ilā Allah* means to resign one’s self to the Will of Allah, to submit⁷.

Thus when one submits and surrenders his will before the Will of Allah, and follows all the rules and regulations of Islam he attains peace of body and mind, reconciliation, concord, safety, security and becomes well without any blemish⁸. To elaborate, Allah, the Creator, has created the universe on the pattern of justice and is always maintaining His creation in Justice⁹. He has ordained for the whole universe the law of submission (the law of nature) which all the objects of this universe, the sun, the moon, the planets, the oceans, the trees and all things have to follow willingly or unwillingly: and this law of nature which is governing all phenomena of the universe has been termed “*Islam*”. See how the word *Aslama* has been used at one place in the holy Qur’ān:

“Do they seek other than the religion of Allah (the true Islamic Monotheism-worshipping none but Allah Alone), while to Him submitted all creatures in the heavens and the earth, willingly or unwillingly. And to Him shall they all be returned.” (Al-Qur’ān, Āl-‘Imrān 3:83)

Submission of the whole universe to Allah’s Will has also been described as:

“To Him belongs every being that is in the heavens and on earth: all are devoutly obedient to Him.” (Al-Qur’ān, Al-Rūm 30:26)

Ibādah (Allah's worship) also means complete submission to Allah:

"There is none in the heavens and the earth but comes unto the Most Gracious (Allah) as a slave. Verily He knows each one of them, and has counted them a full coming. And everyone of them will come to Him alone on the Day of Resurrection (without any helper, or protector or defender)." (Maryam 19:93-95)

Whatever exists in the universe bows before Allah and rests with peace:

"The sun and the moon run on their fixed courses (exactly) calculated with measured out stages for each (for reckoning). And the herbs (or stars) and the trees both prostrate themselves (to Allah)." (Al-Qur'ān, Al-Rahmān 55:5-6)

The sun brings peace to life in the world through its submission to Allah's commandments: According to a hadith the sun (every evening) prostrates before the *'arsh* (the divine Throne) and seeks permission for the next day. A day will come when it will be asked to return back where it had come from (i.e., the last day when this world will come to its end and the sun will never rise again)¹⁰.

Thus, from above it follows that all things in the heavens and on the earth but "all nature in Creation not only obeys Allah but devoutly obeys Him i.e., glories in its privilege of service and obedience."¹¹

Hence through submission and by surrendering to Allah's command (Law of nature) the universe is at peace with itself (having no flaw in it) (Al-Qur'ān, Al-Mulk 67:3) and with its Creator at the same time.

Man, being the Supreme Creation of Allah follows the same natural law in his involuntary capacity. But in his voluntary capacity he has been given divine commandment to follow and surrender his will before it. Unlike the rest of the creation, (except the jin who are also accountable before Allah) man has been given free will. It is up to him to either surrender this free will before the Will of Allah or transgress:

"We showed him the Way: whether he be grateful or ungrateful." (Al-Qur'ān, Al-Dahr 76:3)

Man has been shown the way by means of revelation, the holy Qur'ān. If he accepts this guidance, he too, like the rest of the creation in the universe, will attain peace. In other words, by accepting Islam man will attain inner peace and at the same time will go at peace with his Creator and with the whole creation including his society. Islam is essentially in the nature in which Allah has made mankind.

"So set you (O Muhammad) your face towards the religion (of pure Islamic Monotheism) Hanīf (worship non but Allah Alone). Allah's Fitrah (i.e., Allah's Islamic Monotheism) with which He has created mankind. No change let there be in khalq-Allāh (i.e., the religion of Allah—Islamic Monotheism): that is the straight religion, but most of men know not."¹² (Al-Qur'ān, Al-Rūm 30:30)

It is also in a *hadith*, narrated by Abū Hurayrah that Allah's Messenger :días

"Every child is born on Al-Fitrah [true faith of Islamic Monotheism (i.e. to worship none but Allah Alone)], but his parents convert him to Judaism or Christianity or Magianism, as an animal gives birth to a perfect baby animal. Do you find it mutilated?"¹³

Thus, according to this *hadīth* every new born child comes in this world free and with peace; his body and bone submits to his Creator. Then after attaining maturity, he generally does not try to know his Creator but blindly accepts what his parents and his atmosphere tells him. Had he been given opportunity to come across the Guidance of his Creator (the holy Qur'ān) he would have surely succeeded in recognizing his true Lord—Allah.

Hence submitting to the Will of Allah is in accordance with man's own inborn nature. Then if he submits and accepts Islam consciously, which his own body and the whole creation have accepted (involuntarily), he will attain mental peace and will go on the Path of Peace not violating the scheme of things in the universe. Thus, the three dimensional harmonious and peaceful relationship between God, man and universe will be established.

3.1.4 Salām

Salām is one of the *al-asmā' al-ḥusnā'* (divine Names) which means 'source of peace'. Allah being Himself the Source of Peace guides His bondsmen to the ways of peace and safety:

"O Allah You are Peace and from You we get Peace."¹⁴

“Wherewith Allah guideth all who seek His good pleasure to ways of peace and safety.”

(Al-Qur’ān, Al-Mā’idah 5:16)

The Muslims are directed to greet each other with *salām* whenever they meet each other:

“Ali narrates that Allah’s Messenger said: There are six duties a Muslim has to perform towards another Muslim: (one of them is) when he meets him he should greet him with salām (peace be on you)”

The Muslims are directed when they intend to enter houses other than their own to seek permission and convey to them the message of peace:

“O you who believe! Enter not houses other than your own, until you have asked permission and greeted those in them.” (Al-Qur’ān, Al-Nūr 24:27)

And again, when they enter the houses of their close relations, they are commanded to say *salām* to one another:

“But when you enter the houses, greet one another with a greeting from Allah” (i.e., say *السلام عليكم* — peace be on you), blessed and good.” (Al-Nūr 24:61)

The paradise being *dār al-salām* (al-An‘ām 6:27) (abode of peace), the righteous dwelling therein will greet one another with *salām*—peace:

“And salām (peace, safety) will be their greetings therein” (Al-Qur’ān, Yūnus 10:10)

They will have nothing therein but *salām*:

“No Laghw (dirty, false, evil vain talk) will they hear therein, nor any sinful speech (like backbiting). But only the saying of: salām! salām! (greetings with peace).” (Al-Qur’ān, Al-waqi‘ah 56:25-26)

The Messenger of Allah has said that the people of the paradise will nether have neither difference nor enmity (hatred) amongst themselves; their hearts will be as if one heart, and they will be glorifying Allah in the morning and in the afternoon.¹⁵

This hadith implies that people living at peace have no mutual enmity and hatred as if they have one heart.

Such people, when angels of death approach them, are given glad tidings through the word *salām*:

“Those whose lives the angels take in a state of purity, saying (to them), ‘Peace be on you; enter ye the Garden, because of (the good) which ye did (in the world).’” (Al-Qur’ān, Al-Nahl 16:32)

And when they will arrive the Garden of Paradise, its keepers will salute them in by using the same word *salām*:

“And those who eschewed disobeying their Lord shall be driven in companies to Paradise so that when they arrive there its gates will have already been thrown open and its keepers shall say to them: “Peace be upon you; you have done well. So, enter. Herein you shall abide.” (Al-Qur’ān, Al-Zumar 39:73)

Peace is the result of patience and patience is one of the distinguishing qualities of righteous Muslims. Thus when, after death, they enter the Paradise, their patience will pay to them and in return they will get *salām* from the angels that will enter their gardens from every gate:

“And angels shall enter unto them from every gate (with the salutation) “Peace unto you for that ye preserved in patience.” (Al-Qur’ān, Al-Ra’d 13:23-24)

The men on the Heights¹⁶ will call them and will salute them with *salām*:

“They will call out to the companions of the Garden, “Peace be upon you”.” (Al-Qur’ān, Al-A’rāf 7:46)

The true Muslims are humble and peaceful and when they happen to meet those foolish people who merely dispute, they, in order to avoid wrangling, and also for the sake of peace, say to them *salām*:

“And the (faithful) slaves of the Most Gracious (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.”¹⁷ (Al-Qur’ān, Al-Furqān 25:63)

A true Muslim is one from who’s hand other Muslims (in particular and all the beings in general) are safe and secure.¹⁸ Islam does not waste even least chance to avoid confrontation. Even in the battle field if an enemy

offers *salām* to the Muslims thereby expressing himself to have embraced Islam, the Muslim are in no way allowed to fight him suspecting his acceptance of faith and for the sake of worldly gains. The holy Qur'ān says:

“O you who believe! When you go (to fight) in the Cause of Allah, verify (the truth), and say not to anyone who greets you (by embracing Islam), ‘You are not a believer’; seeking the perishable goods of the worldly life. There are much more profits and booties with Allah.”

(Al-Qur'ān, Al-Nisā' 4:94)

The Muslims are directed to be ever ready to fight the enemies of truth (who don't want peace to be established on earth for their own selfish interests). But even in the midst of the fight, they must be equally ready for peace if the enemy from the other side shows least inclination towards peace. Allah says:

“But if the enemy incline towards peace, do thou (also) incline towards peace; and trust in Allah: for He is the One that heareth and knoweth (all things).”

(Al-Qur'ān, Al-An'ām 8:61)

But while showing interest for peace, the enemy may actually intend to deceive the Muslims. Even in that case the Muslims are advised to trust in Allah and work forward for the sake of peace in spite of taking risk for it:

“And if they intend to deceive you, then verily, Allah is All-Sufficient for you. He it is who has supported you with His Help and with the believers.”

(Al-Qur'ān, Al-Anfāl 8:62)

But if the Muslims stand against the evil to root it out and have authority to do so, they should not lose heart fearing the enemy and should not cry for peace. They should instead remain firm:

“So be not weak and ask not for peace (from the enemies of Islam) while you are having the upper hand.”

(Al-Qur'ān, Muḥammah 47:35)

The message of Islam is the message of *Salām*. *Laylah al-Qadr* (the Night of Power or Honour) in which the first revelation came to Allah's Messenger, Muhammad ﷺ while he was in Hirā' cave¹⁹ is declared to be full of Peace and Security. The angels come down therein with the message of *salām*:

“Therein came down the angels and the Spirit (Gabriel) by Allah's permission, on enemy errand: Peace! ... This until the rise of Morn.” (Al-Qur'ān, Al-Qadr 97:4-5)

For every human being who accepts Allah's Message (Islam), the reward will be *Salām*:

“And Peace to all who follow guidance.” (Al-Qur'ān, Tāhā 20:47)

All Messengers have been given respect by Allah by conferring on them *Salām*:

“And peace be on the Messenger.” (37:181)²⁰

Mentioning the Messengers like Nūh (Noah), Ibrāhīm (Abraham), Musā (Moses), Harūn (Aaron) and Ilyāsīn (Elias) in the holy Qur'ān, Allah offers *Salām* to all of them individually²¹.

Īsā (Jesus) is honored through the same word *Salām*:

“So peace on him the day he was born, the day that he dies, and the day that he will be raised up to life (again)” (Al-Qur'ān, Maryam 19:15)

He glorifies himself by saying *salām* on himself:

“So peace is on me the day I was born, the day that I die, and the day that I shall be raised up to life (again).” (19:33)

When the Muslims mention any Prophet of Allah, they say: *Peace be on him*.

In the *ṣalāh* (prayer) the high esteem and veneration paid to Allah's Messenger in *tashahhud* (testimony of faith) and blessings for the worshipper himself and for the righteous slaves of Allah are expressed by using the word *salām*:

“May Allah's Peace, Mercy and Blessings be on thee O Prophet. And may peace be on us and the righteous servants of Allah.”

To complete the *ṣalāh* the *muṣallī* (the worshipper) completes it with *salām* (*taslīm*) i.e; he turns his face to the right and then to the left saying *assalāmu 'alaykum wa rahmatullāh* (peace and mercy of Allah be on you). Thus, from the above discussion, “*salām*,” translated “peace” has a much wide signification. It includes (1) a sense of security and permanence, which is known in this life; (2) soundness, freedom from defects, perfection as in the word *salām*; (3) preservation, salvation, deliverance, as in the word *sallama*; (4) salvation, accord with those

around us; (5) resignation, in the sense that we are satisfied and not discontented; besides (6) the ordinary meaning of peace, i.e; freedom from any jarring element. All these shades of meaning are implied in the word *Islam*”²²

Keeping in view the above discussion and the various interpretations of *salām* and *silm*, the meaning of peace in terms of *salām* and *silm* comes out to be mercy, blessing, mutual love, unity, respect, non-violence, absence of war, acknowledgement, mental and physical well-being and tranquility, justice and above all a state (physical as well as spiritual) in which one lives while enjoying Allah’s pleasures by following His commandments enshrined in the teachings of the Way of Peace—*al-Islam*. It follows, therefore, that mere calmness, absence of violence, mutual consensus and love without belief in Allah—the True Lord of the mankind, and actions according to His Will is not peace in the real sense of the word.

Since *Islam* stands for peace and peace-keeping is its basic purpose, *salām* and *silm*, therefore, signify the Islamic mission of peace for the sake of which Islam provides guidance from the individual level to the international level, encompassing all the other aspects of familial and societal life of man.

Sulh

But if conflict takes place, peace-making becomes the foremost duty of the Islamic people. This aspect of the mission of peace is covered by the endeavours of *ṣulh*. Thus *salām* (peace-keeping) and *ṣulh* (peace-making) are two aspects of the same process. *Ṣulh* means *amn*, *salām* and reconciliation.²³ Its root is *ṣlh*. In order to get clear understanding of this term, let us define its derivatives:

Ṣallaha wa aṣlaha: to reform, to repair; *aṣlaha*: to reconcile; *ṣālaha muṣālahatan*: to make peace (its opposite is *khāsama* which means to quarrel); *ṣulh ta’āqudiyy*: agreemental peace; *muṣlih*: reformer *ṣālih*: pious, fit, suitable, beneficial, healthy; *al-tasāluh ma’a al-’aduw*: to meet with the enemy (to reconcile with him).²⁴

Ṣulh also means end of war²⁵ and it is particularly used in the sense to end hatred between people.²⁶ Importance of *ṣulh* in Islam has been exhaustively described in the holy Qur’ān and the hadith: Allah says:

“(You should not make Allah’s Name an excuse against) making peace among mankind.” (2:224)

“So make peace and reconciliation between your two (contending) brothers.” (49:10)

The following *āyah* throws more light on the concept of *ṣulh*:

“If a wife fears cruelty or desertion on her husband’s part, there is no blame on them if they arrange an amicable settlement between themselves; and such settlement is best; even though men’s souls are swayed by greed. But if ye do good and practice self-restraint, Allah is well acquainted with all that ye do.” (4:128)

Two important things have been mentioned here: (1) reconciliation (*ṣulh*) is always best (*wa al-ṣulh khayr*)²⁷ (2) to reach an amicable solution by good actions (which may keep the atmosphere of mutual understanding and hope alive) and self-restraint (which may not allow unhealthy situation prevail or extend further) are among best ways. In the following Qur’ānic *āyah*, the concept of *ṣulh* is related with justice:

“Ye are never able to do justice between wives even if it is your ardent desire: But turn not away (from the woman) altogether, so as to leave her (as it were) hanging (in the air). If ye come to a friendly understanding, and practice self-restraint, Allah is Oft-forgiving, Most Merciful.”(4:129)

Two things can be the principle causes of division between man and his wife, money and “the other man or woman”. The problem of money has been dealt with in (4:128) by the guidance that even though man is swayed by greed, he/she should practice self-restraint to reach an amicable settlement. Another problem of “the other man or woman” is being dealt with here in (4:129) that man cannot do justice with more than one wife. Since justice demands that instead of leaving his woman as if she were hanging, he should practice self-restraint so that he may reach reconciliation with her.²⁸ In this way this Qur’ānic *āyah* guides man and woman as to how to establish peace at family level.

Relation between *ṣulh* and *’adl* (justice) is more clearly described in the following Qur’ānic *āyah* :

“And if two parties or groups among the believers fall to fighting, then make peace between them both. But if one of them outrages against the other, then fight you (all) against the one that which outrages till it compels with

*the Command of Allah. Then if it complies, then make reconciliation between them justly, and be equitable. Verily Allah loves those who are the equitable.” (49:9)*²⁹

Since peace is better than fighting, the Muslims are always expected to act justly and strive for peace-making. They are ever commanded to fight the party which acts unjustly, for the sake of peace and justice.³⁰ But if people reconcile their matters on the basis of injustice, this reconciliation is condemnable before Allah.

It is repeated by Ā'ishah that Allah's Messenger ﷺ said:

*“Whoever innovates (a deviational thing) in this religion of our (i.e; Islam) which is not from it (i.e; which does not come within the essence of Islam) then that (innovation) is rejected.”*³¹

It is also narrated by 'Umar b. 'Awf al-Muzanī that Rasūlullāh ﷺ said:

*“Sulh between the Muslims is lawful only when it does not amount to make a lawful thing unlawful or vice versa.”*³²

Bukhārī narrates that Allah's Messenger ﷺ said: Hasan b. 'Alī saying, 'This son of mine is Sayyid (i.e. a noble) and may Allah make peace between two big groups of Muslims through him.³³

This prophecy came true when Al-Hasan bin 'Alī made peace between the people of Irāq and Syria.

This *hadīth* shows the Messenger's ﷺ great enthusiasm for peace. Calling Al-Hasan bin 'Alī *Sayyid* (leader) and relating this with his peace making capabilities highlights the importance and value of *ṣulh* in the life of a Muslim.

Whispering and secret talking is generally discouraged in Islam. But if it is for the sake of reconciliation among mankind it is commendable. The holy Qur'ān testifies:

“There is no good in most of their secret talks save (in) him who orders Sadaqah (charity in Allah's Cause), or Ma'rūf (Islamic Monotheism and all the good and righteous deeds which Allah has ordained), or conciliation between mankind; and he who does this, seeking the good Pleasure of Allah, We shall give him a great reward.” (4:114)

It is narrated by Umm Kulthūm bint 'Uqbah b. Abū Mu'īt that Allah's Messenger ﷺ said:

*“He who makes peace between the people by inventing good information or saying good things, is not a liar.”*³⁴

It is unlawful for the Muslims to make their oaths an excuse for not making peace. And at all times they are directed to break their oaths and do the right thing.

“And make not Allah's (Name) an excuse in your oaths against your doing good and acting piously, and making peace among mankind.” (2:224)

Ibn Kathīr has quoted a number of *ahādīth* which say that if a Muslim has taken oath not to do a good deed or make-peace among people, he must break his oath when he comes across any chance to do a good act.³⁵

The opposite of *ṣulh* is *fasād* (mischief) which is highly condemned by the holy Qur'ān in the following *āyah* wherein both the words have been used with opposite meanings:

“And follow not the command of Al-Musrifūn (i.e. their chiefs: leaders who were polytheists, criminals and sinners), “who make mischief in the land, and reform not.” (26:151,52)

(Al-Qur'ān, Al-Baqarah 2:11-12)

“And when it is said to them: ‘Make not mischief on the earth,’ they say: ‘We are only peace-makers.’ Verily! They are the ones who make mischief, but they perceive not.” (2:11,12)

Ibn Abbās says that the hypocrites used to say that they were making peace between the Muslims and the People of the Book while in reality it was not so.³⁶

They were actually depressing the good and encouraging the evil. But since their blind arrogance would not allow them to see things in their right perspective, they would think that they had a mission of peace.

When Prophet Ṣālih propagated Allah's Message among his people (*Thamūd*), they rejected him. There were some mischief mongers who plotted to kill him. The holy Qur'ān says about them:

“And there were in the city nine men (from the sons of their chiefs), who made mischief in the land, and would not reform.” (24:48)

Allah has provided man every means of sustenance. It demands that he should be grateful to Him, should live a peaceful life and should not make mischief:

“Eat and drink of that which Allah has provided and do not act corruptly, making mischief on the earth.” (2:60)

Killing of innocent people is highly condemnable. Taking life of one innocent being is as if whole mankind has been killed. But one who kills others loses his own security; everybody has a right to live but not for making mischief on the earth. Allah says:

“.....if anyone killed a person not in retaliation or murder, or (and) to spread mischief in the land—it would be as if he killed all mankind.” (5:32)

And some of the acts of mischief making, described in the *ḥadīth*, that do not allow peace to sustain but disturb it at all levels, are described in this *ḥadīth*:

Narrated Anas b. Malik that Rasūlullāh ﷺ said:

“The biggest of al-kaba’ir (the great sins) are: (1) to join others as partners in worship with Allah³⁷ (2) to murder a human being, (3) to be undutiful to one’s parents³⁸ (4) and to make a false statement”, or said, “to give a false witness.”³⁹

Sakīnah

It is another word used in the holy Qur’ān in the meaning of peace and tranquility:

“And their Prophet (Samuel) said to them: Verily! The sign of His kingdom is that there shall come to you At-Tabūt (a wooden box), wherein is Sakīnah (peace and reassurance) from your Lord.” (2:248)

In the *ḥadīth* also *sakīnah* means peace:

It is narrated by Al-Barā’: *“A man was reciting sūrah al-Kahf and his horse was tied with two ropes besides him. A cloud came down and spread over that man and it kept on coming closer and closer to him till his horse started jumping (as if afraid of something). When it was morning, the man came to the Prophet and told him of that experience. The Prophet said, “That was al-sakīnah (tranquility or peace and reassurance along with angels), which descended because of (the recitation of) the Qur’ān.”⁴⁰*

“He is Who sent As-Sakīnah (calmness and tranquility) into the hearts of the believers, that they may grow more in Faith along with their (present) Faith.” (48:4)

“Indeed, Allah was pleased with the believers when they gave the Bai’ah (pledge) to you (O Muhammad) under the tree: He knew what was in their hearts, and He sent down As-Sakīnah (calmness and tranquility) upon them, and He rewarded them with a near victory.” (48:18)

In the above mentioned Qur’ānic *Ayāt* and the *ḥadīth* the meaning of *sakīnah* is reassurance, calmness, peace, tranquility, absence of fear; all these blessings are achieved through a faithful relationship with Allah by striving for His Cause—*al-Islam*. Similarly, in (48:26), (9:26,40) *sakīnah* contains the meanings of tranquility, assurance, absence of fear etc. All these shades of meanings are contained in the concept of peace.

Conclusion

Islam is the religion of peace. Peace in Islam is guaranteed due to the values of toleration, patience and good will and love which are the sole and spirit of the teachings of Islam. When Islam calls for complete surrender and submission to the Supreme Will of Allah, the Creator of man and the universe, it envisages that the whole creation must be loved and shown compassion as the family of Allāh.

Hence the gist of the teachings of Islam is two things: i. paying due regard and reverence to the commandments of Allah and practicing the commandments of Islam with utmost sincerity Showing utmost compassion, love and affection towards Allah’s creation. The Holy Qur’an says: The above two aspects can be summed up into one—love—of God, for He is our Creator and Sustainer and of creation, for all things belong to Him.¹ That is why a Muslim is not considered to be a perfect believer unless he loves other human beings. This love is expressed when a Muslim meets others and greets them with peace (*salam*), wishing good to them all. This explains that peace can prevail when people love each other. This in turn will end every kind of injustice and will play vital role in establishing a social order based upon peace and justice. Peace is not mere absence of violence and existence of calmness. But it exists when everybody in society gets his due and his grievances are redressed without any delay. In the same manner justice cannot be established until the atmosphere is conducive, calm and serene. Hence the

administration of justice has always been a religious obligation in Islam which consists of the application of the principle of Shari‘ah in the name of Allah.

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¹ Abu Sufyān Islāhī, *Tasawwuri Aman*: A comparative study, Delhi, Qur‘ān wa Sunnat Academy, 2002, P.147 and 151.

² Wahīd al-Zamān Kīrānwī, *Al-Qāmūs al-Jadīd*, Deoband, Maktabah Muhammadiyah, 1992, P.30-33.

³ *Sahīh al-Bukhārī*, Tr. by Taqī al-Dīn al-Hilālī and Muhsin Khān, Delhi, Kitāb Bhavan, 1984, Vol.9. H. No.381.

⁴ See also discussion under *silm* below.

⁵ Mufti Muhammad Shafī, *Ma‘ārif al-Qur‘ān*, Delhi, Rabbani Book Depot, 1991, vol.I, P.443.

⁶ Kīrānwī, op. cit., P.429.

⁷ William Thomas Wortabet, *Wortabet’s Dictionary*, Beirut, 1997, P.379. See also S. A. A. Mawdūdī, *Towards Understanding Islam*, Delhi, Markazi Maktabah Islami (MMI), 1994, P.17.

⁸ Wortabet, loc. cit. where the meaning of Islām is given as peace of body and mind, reconciliation, concord, well without blemish, safe, secure.

⁹ (Al-Qur‘ān, Āl-‘Imrān 3:18). See also *Ma‘ārif al-Qur‘ān*, vol. 2, P.34.

¹⁰ Narrated by Bukhari and Muslim in *Tafsir Ibn Kathir* (Urdu), Delhi, I‘tiqād Pub. House, n.d., vol. 3, Part. 17, P. 50. Narrated by Abū Dhar: It goes till it prostrates itself underneath the Throne, and takes the permission to rise again, and it is permitted and then (a time will come when) it will be about to prostrate itself but its prostration will not be accepted and it will ask permission to go on its course, but it will not be permitted, but it will be ordered to return whence it has come and so it will rise in the west. The Tr. of the meanings of Bukhari chap. How the sun and the moon move in a circle. (Ar-Eng) V.4, Tr. Dr. M. Muhsin Khan, Islamic University, Madina Munawwarah, Kitab Bhavan, New Del. 1984, P. 283.

“How the Sun and the Moon move in a circle”, P. 283.

¹¹ A.Y. Ali, *English Translation of the Meanings of the Holy Qur‘ān*. Madinah Munawwarah, 1413H., Ex. n., 3532.

¹² This interpretation is given by Hilālī and Khān, op.cit., P. 544 quoting *Tafsir Tabarī*.

¹³ *Bukhari*, H. 467 cited in Hilālī & Khān, op. cit., Ex. n. (V. 10:19).

¹⁴ Mawlānā M. Idrīs, *Hisn Hasīn*, Delhi, Murid Book Depo, n.d., P. 143, see also (Al-Qur‘ān, Al-Hashr 59:23).

¹⁵ See *Bukhari*, Vol.4, Hadith no. 468, in Hilālī and Khān, op. cit., P. 539.

¹⁶ *Ashāb al-A‘rāf* (the men on the Heights) have been described variously. Some say that they are angels, some say the great prophets possessing exalted spiritual dignity who, from their High exalted stations, will welcome the righteous with a salutation of peace. Others say that they are such souls as are not decidedly on the side of merit or decidedly on the side of sin, but evenly balance on a partition between heaven and hell. See Abdullah Yūsuf ‘Alī, *English Translation of the meanings and commentary of the Holy Qur‘ān*, Madīnah, The Presidency of Islamic Research, IFTA, Call and Evidance, 1413 H., Ex. n. 1025.

¹⁷ The word *Salām* has been translated here as ‘mild words of gentleness’ which always have high power to shut the doors of clash and violence. See Tr. Hilālī and Khān.

¹⁸ *Taysīr al-Bukhārī*, op. cit., Vol. 1, chap. *Al-Muslim man salima al-Muslimūna min yadihī wa lisānih*.

¹⁹ Which night was it in which the first revelation came to the Prophet? For a detailed discussion see Mawlānā Safī al Rahmān Mubrakpūrī, *Al-Rahīq al-Makhtūm*, Aligarh, *Al-Majlis al-‘Ilmī*, 1988, P. 103.

²⁰ See also (Al-Naml 27:59).

²¹ See (Al-Sāffāt 37:79, 109, 120, 130).

²² A. Y. ‘Alī, op. cit., Ex. n. 2512.

²³ *Al-Qāmūs*, op. cit., word *Sulh*, P. 516.

²⁴ *Ibid*, P.515-16.

²⁵ Ibrahim Madkūr, *Al-M‘jam al-wasīt*, Deoband, Maktabah Husayniyyah, 1960, word *Sulh*.

²⁶ Rāghib Isfāhani, *Al-Mufradāt fi Gharīb al Qur‘ān*. word *Sulh*.

²⁷ Mufti Muhammad Shafī, *Ma‘ārif al Qur‘ān*, Delhi, Rabbānī Book Depo, 1991, Vol. II, P. 564, where he says that this Qur‘anic teaching is general including all the fields of human life. It is also in hadīth that *Sulh* between the Muslims is always lawful except when they intend to make lawful things unlawful or vice versa (it is narrated by Al-Hākīm from Kāthīr b. Abdullah. See Mufti Shafī, op. cit., P. 564 where he quotes it from *Tafsīr Mazharī*).

²⁸ See Abdullah Yūsuf ‘Alī, op. cit., Ex. no 639 and 39.

²⁹ More discussion on this will be found below under ‘Justice’ in the present work.

³⁰ One of the grounds on which ‘Jihād’ in Islām gets legitimized is to crush all obstacles in the way to peace and justice. Thus, Islām wages war for the sake of peace and justice. A detailed discussion will be found below under ‘Jihād’.

³¹ This hadīth has been written by Imām Bukhārī in the Book of *Sulh* under the chapter (i.e., *Sulh* on injustice is rejectionable).

³² See *Tirmidhī* and *Mishkāh* in chap. *al-Ifās* cited in Ab. Gaffār Hasan Rahmānī, *Intikhābi Hadīth*, Delhi, MMI, 1993, P 276.

³³ Bukhārī, *kitab al-Sulh*, chap. (The saying of the Prophet to Al-Hasan b. ‘Alī

³⁴ *Bukhārī*, *kitāb al-Sulh*.

³⁵ See *Ibid*, Vol. 1, part 2, P.91-93.

³⁶ *Ibid*, Vol. 1, part 1, P. 66.

³⁷ Submitting to false deities is against the Islamic *Tawhīd* and when one does not submit to Allah alone he ceases to live with peace and disturbs peace at all levels.

³⁸ Parents lose peace of mind when their children become ungrateful and undutiful to them. Their children, in turn, go astray. This disturbs peace at both family level and societal level.

³⁹ *Taysir al-Bukhārī*, op. cit., Hadīth No. 10 see Hilālī and Muhsin, op.cit., P. 148.

³⁹ *Bukhari*, Vol. 6. No. 531, P. 429 باب فضل الكهف

⁴⁰ *Bukhārī*, vol. 6. H. No. 531, P. 429.

