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Exploring the Foundations of Peace: An Analytical Study of the Concept of Peace in Islam with Emphasis on the Qur'ān and the Sīrah of Prophet Muhammad (SAW)

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Abstract. Examining the Qur'ān and Prophet Muhammad's (SAW) Sīrah, this study explores the core of peace in Islam. It explains how Islamic teachings on peace are complex through a careful examination of important scriptures and historical settings. In Islam, peace extends beyond the mere absence of violence and includes justice, balance, and spiritual tranquility. The idea of peace is emphasized throughout the Qur'ān as a vital guide for people, societies, and countries to coexist together. The life of the Prophet Muhammad (SAW) is an example of compassion, tolerance, and moral behavior in a variety of settings, making it a beacon of peace. In order to promote and maintain peace, harmony, and brotherhood, the study will examine Islamic concepts in this respect. In order to

emphasize the importance of peace in Islam, it will analyze the main sources of Islamic knowledge, including the Qur'an, the Sunnah, and the Sīrah of the Prophet Muhammad (SAW).

Keywords: Qur'ān, Peace, Sīrah Nabwīyyah, Islam

INTRODUCTION

The pursuit of peace has been the main goal of humanity throughout recorded human history, both individually and collectively. Nonetheless, obstacles to peace have always presented a problem for human civilization. The unchecked advancement of technology and materialism in the modern world has put man at the center of unwarranted global competition, which has in turn fueled acts of terror, violence, natural disasters, hatred, hostility, individualism, and other factors that seriously impede the establishment of peace, brotherhood, and harmony. In such conditions, the existence of the human race on Earth is progressively in jeopardy as the planet slowly becomes a battlefield. In the meanwhile, religion has been a potent weapon in both terror and conflict. The primary and most authoritative source of instruction for humanity to preserve world peace and fraternity is the Sīrah of the Prophet Muhammad (SAW). The primary attribute of the Sīrah is the fight for peace. Throughout his whole life, Prophet Muhammad (SAW) worked to build peace, particularly during the first 23 years of his prophetic career.

Peace has been the core issue of mankind since antiquity; in reality, it is, perhaps, impossible to refer to any society, where peace has materialized in the absolute of the term. A look at different societies led the communities to the realization that human history was a history of confrontation, violence and wars. History is, indeed, little more than the register of the crimes, follies of mankind. It is a fact that conflicts and wars have prevailed between individuals, clans, tribes, states, empires and now nations throughout the world.[1]

Peace is a concept of societal friendship and harmony in the absence of hostility and violence. In a social sense, peace is commonly used to mean a lack of conflict and freedom from fear of violence between societies. Peace is most important in the contemporary world which is full of wars and attacks in the name of war against terror or some other operations. Every religion in the world is against the violence and it teaches peace and prosperity among individuals. Islam teaches us to maintain peace in the globe and it strongly condemns the violence because Islam itself means peace. 'Islam' literally means peace, therefore, it seems quite unnatural that a religion that names itself peace can teach or preach something that is violent or full of aggression. Islam says to its followers to maintain peace among the individuals and to be moderate in their behavior and adopt the qualities of kindness, love, and respect for others. Islam stands for the submission to Allah's will, it connotes submission, surrender and obedience. As a religion, Islam stands for complete submission and

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[1] Edward Gibbon, The History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire (London: Strahan and Cadell, 1776), 93

obedience to the will of Allah[2]. The eternal religion, reveled to Prophet Muḥammad (SAW) as the continuation in the series of Prophet's on the primordial nature upon which Allah created mankind.

Throughout the history world is full of conflicts and violence and it needs to establish peace in the globe. It is responsibility of religious persons and peace keeping organizations to solve the issue of peace. Throughout the history of human life on the earth, establishment of peace has been primary aspiration at individual as well as collective level. World is gradually turning into a battlefield due to the unrestrained technologies, endangering the survival of human race on the globe. Amid this circumstance, human beings globally need to put their individual as well as collective efforts for establishing peace and harmony, which is dire need of the time. The study should highlight the concept of peace in Qur'ān and Sunnah of Prophet Muḥammad (SAW).

Islamic conceptions of peace, as they are portrayed in the Qur'an and the Sīrah of the Prophet Muhammad (SAW), place a strong emphasis on virtues like justice, forgiveness, compassion, and forbearance[3]. Verses from the Qur'an offer counsel on societal stability and human oneness, making it a foundational source for comprehending peace. The significance of the Qur'anic fundamental signs is further emphasized, guaranteeing the accurate understanding of divine intention and meaning. By examining historical cases, it is clear that Muslims have implemented these fundamental principles of peace in their dealings with Muslim and non-Muslim societies, demonstrating how Islamic teachings are really put into practice.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION
The Qur'anic Interpretation of Peace

Peace is encouraged by the Qur'an, which is the primary and final source of Islam. The genuine meaning of phrases like *"Slm," "Salam," "Aman,"* and *"Sulh"* is urged and instilled in man in several verses of the Qur'an. Islam derives its name from the Arabic word *"slm,"* which means "making peace," "living in a mutually peaceful environment," "finding peace," "reaching salvation and well-being" or "being far from danger," "achieving goodness, comfort, and favor," "avoiding troubles and disasters," "submitting oneself and obeying," "respecting," and "being far from wrong." For its adherents as well as every other person on the planet, Islam is a religion that promotes and demands peace. In Islam, the right to life is a basic right. Allah forbade the taking of a human being's life without cause. On this issue Allah mentions in Qur'ān:

> *"On that account: We ordained for the Children of Israel that if any one slew a person--unless it be for murder or for spreading mischief in the land--it would be as if he slew the whole people: And if any one saved a life, it would be as if he saved the life of the whole people. Then although there*

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[2] S.A.A. Maududi, Towards Understanding Islam trans. Khuram Murad (Delhi: Markazi Maktaba Islami Publishers, 2011), 19.

[3] Dr. Naveed Altaf Khan, et.al," Qurʾānic Foundation of the Seerah of "Mercy for the Worlds (PBUH): An Explanatory Study" *The Islamic Culture* , Vol. 47 No. 2 (2022)

came to them Our Apostles with Clear Signs, yet, even after that, many of them continued to commit excesses in the land"[4]

We concluded from the aforementioned verse that nobody has the authority to kill someone for no cause at all and that protecting life is extremely essential to Islam. Every human has a duty to defend it. We should uphold international peace and harmony if we defend these kinds of rights. Respecting human life and resisting acts that violate the peace are crucial for mankind. This manifesto calls for a balanced system and addresses the building of global peace. According to what Allah states in the Qur'ān, humans are given a high position in the hierarchy of all the creatures that are known to exist.

"We have honored the sons of Adam..."[5]

A person, who possesses the ability to reason, as well as spiritual and action-oriented desires, is deemed worthy of this esteemed position. Given their inherent capacity for thought and will, humans are therefore asked to submit to Allah's will and to keep His commands. The greatest protection for world peace and concord is submission to Allah's will and observance of his beneficent law.[6]

There are several verses in the Qur'ān where the spirit of peace is expressed, either directly or indirectly. The Qur'ān's very first verse states: *"In the name of Allah, the Most Merciful, the most Compassionate"*. The Qur'ān has 114 repetitions of this verse, which amply demonstrates that both the Islamic God and the book of Islam are the books of kindness. Islamic God is the Allah of compassion and mercy. There is a verse of Qur'ān which says:

"But Allah doth call to the Home of Peace: He doth guide whom He pleaseth to a way that is straight."[7]

The aforementioned verse informed us that peace is the ultimate purpose of Islam, which is why all of its teachings are focused on achieving this result. Upon doing a thorough analysis of the Qur'ān, we shall come across several verses that address the things and happenings in the cosmos, portraying it as a paradigm of harmony and tranquility. Astronomical bodies are scattered across space, and they are all in motion, perfectly following their orbits. After highlighting this phenomenon, the Qur'ān instructed us to adhere to it in order to preserve global peace and harmony; this entails staying inside one's own circle and refraining from breaking it. Qur'ān says:

"Do they seek for other than the Religion of Allah?-while all creatures in the heavens and on earth have, willing or unwilling, bowed to His Will [Accepted Islam], and to Him shall they all be brought back."[8]

Maintaining peace under all circumstances is the foremost duty of a sincere Muslim, along with upholding justice and morality. The foundation for the construction of

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[4] Al-Qur'ān, 5:32

[5] Al-Qur'ān, 17:70

[6] Patchrathanyarasm salamat, "Qur'ānic Concept of Peace and Harmony." Manusya: Journal Of Humanities, special issue no.16(2008), 7

[7] Al-Qur'ān, 10:25

[8] Al-Qur'ān, 3:83

justice and righteousness must be a real believer. Because Allah states in the Qur'ān that doing justice is the most essential thing for a Muslim,

> *"O ye who believe! Stand out firmly for justice, as witnesses to Allah, even as against yourselves, or your parents, or your kin, and whether it be [against] rich or poor: for Allah can best protect both. Follow not the lusts [of your hearts], lest ye swerve, and if ye distort [justice] or decline to do justice, verily Allah is well-acquainted with all that ye do."*[9]

Since good things can only be attained in a climate of peace, it is evident from the Qur'ān verse that peace, peaceful coexistence, and tolerance are the call bonum of Islam. Allah declares in the Holy Qur'ān:

> *"And the servants of [Allah] Most Gracious are those who walk on the earth in humility, and when the ignorant address them, they say, "Peace!"*[10]

Prophet Muhammad's (SAW) Sīrah: Peace building Initiatives

Both Muslim academics and the general public place a high value on sirah, or the life of the Prophet Muhammad (SAW). It serves as a link between the medieval era and the present day and is the primary and most authoritative source of instruction for humans. Islam is the birthplace of affection, peace, and safety. Its lessons are overwhelmingly humanitarian and welfare-focused. The primary feature of the Sirah that distinguishes it is its battle for peace. The Prophet (SAW) dedicated his entire life, particularly the twenty-three years of his prophetic period, to establishing peace. He (SAW) not only offered principles for peace but also implemented practical measures to make the principles a reality. The way the Prophet (SAW) resolved the conflict over the location of the Black Stone *(Hijra Aswad)* during his pre-prophetic life is a powerful illustration of how to settle disagreements amicably. The Treaty of *Hudaibiyyah* is another outstanding example, throughout human history, of giving up everything in order to achieve peace. Some significant events that took place during the life of the Prophet (SAW) helped to spread the message of peace throughout the world include Hilful-Fuzul, which occurred during the Prophet's pre-prophetic period, and Mithaq-i-Madina, which occurred after the hijra when the Prophet (SAW) arrived in Makkah to perform the Hajj but was stopped by the Quraish. Under all circumstances, the Prophet Muhammad (SAW) constantly aspires to keep peace. His attempt was to take advantage of any chance to keep the peace. Despite the situation being against him and his people, he made the decision to sign the peace pact. Since, as he once stated, violence is never preferable to peace. The primary goal of the Prophetic mission was to bring people closer to Islam by teaching them the lessons of the Qur'an. To promote peace and harmony to all of humanity, we should be aware of the numerous Hadith that the Prophet (SAW) left us and adhere to in order to propagate peace and emphasize the value of peace in Islam. The Prophet (SAW) states in a hadith:

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[9] Al-Qur'ān, 4:135
[10] Al-Qur'ān, 25:63

> "A true Muslim is one from whose tongue and hands bear no violence and a perfect Muijahid is he who has given up those vices which are prohibited"[11]

Another hadith narrated by Abu Musa once companion submitted to the Prophet (SAW) saying:

> "O! Prophet (SAW) which Islam is superior? The Prophet (SAW) replied: of the person from whose tongue and hand suffer no violence."[12] Likewise Prophet Muḥammad (SAW) says, "He, who makes peace between people by inventing good information or saying good things, is not a liar"[13]

Another ḥadith form Riyadh-us-Saliheen where Prophet Muḥammad (SAW) said:

> "It is better for a leader to make a mistake in forgiving than to make a mistake in punishing"[14]

Another ḥadith from Sahih al Bukhari where Prophet Muḥammad (SAW) said: "Allah will not be merciful to those who are not merciful to people"[15]

Prophet Muhammad (SAW) had a number of incidents throughout his life where he attempted to uphold peace. Prior to prophet hood, there was an occasion known as the *Ḥilf al-Fudūl* "pact of the Virtuous," which was a 590 A.D. agreement made by the Meccan people during the Age of Ignorance, in which they vowed "to support and defend the rights of oppressed people in the area."[16] Another significant event in human history that preserved peace was the installation of Ḥajaru al-Aswad in his rightful seat in 605 A.D. A fierce dispute erupted between the tribe's chiefs about who should have placed the stone first; they were willing to fight until only one of them remained standing. In the end, Prophet Muhammad (SAW) resolved the matter so simply that everyone took part in the stone-laying ceremony. As a result of this decision, the Prophet (SAW) stopped an impending conflict[17]. Another event that occurred during the prophetic period was the signing of the Treaty of Hudaybiyyah (*Ṣalaḥ al-Ḥudaybiyyah*) in 628 A.D., which brought peace to the region and reduced tension between the Muslims and Quraish polytheists for 10 years. Bringing peace and harmony to the area and facilitating a peaceful Hajj are the primary goals of this pact[18]. The conquest of Mecca (Fatḥ-i-Makkah) in 630 A.D. is another event that is noteworthy for preserving unity. This refers to the Islamic conquest of Makkah under the leadership of the Prophet (SAW) that took place without any violence or consequences. At that point, the Prophet (SAW) had all of his opponents brought before him; nevertheless, he pardoned them all and remarked,

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[11] Bukhar, Imam, Tajred-i-Bukhari, Lahore N.D, p.16

[12] Imam Tirmidhi, Al-Tirmidhi, Hadith 1011

[13] Khan, Muhammad Muhsin, Sahih al-Bukhari, Dar-us-Salam, Vol.9:473

[14] Imam An-Nawawi, Riyadh-us-Saliheen, Dar-us-Salam, Vol.1:633.

[15] Muhammad Muhsin Khan, Sahih al-Bukhari, Dar-us-Salam Vol.9:473

[16] Ibn Hisham, al-Sira al Nabawiyyah, vol.1, p.141-142

[17] Ali Zainal P Malawani, Islamic History-Prophet Muḥammad, retrieved from https:/www.academia.edu/42867277/Islamic_History_Prophet_Muḥammad, p.21

[18] Ibid, p.45

"Go, you are free."[19]

Interfaith Dialogue and Peaceful Coexistence

Building a harmonious society requires peaceful cohabitation and interfaith communication. Interfaith dialogue fosters empathy, understanding, and trust by enabling people of different religions to have candid discussions about their practices, values, and beliefs. In order to foster inclusive environments where people of all faiths feel empowered and welcomed religious groups must actively participate and collaborate with one another. But obstacles like racial tensions, cultural prejudices, and historical conflicts can impede development. Individuals and groups may overcome these challenges and work toward a more compassionate and inclusive society by fostering humility, empathy, and openness. These ideas provide a method to achieve lasting peace, societal cohesiveness, and reconciliation.

Promoting peaceful coexistence between many religious communities is greatly aided by interfaith conversation[20]. By encouraging tolerance, harmony, and collaboration, it acts as a strategy to lessen conflicts between different religions. As universal principles that promote love, compassion, tolerance, and forgiveness, a number of academics highlight the importance of interfaith conversation in fostering cross-cultural understanding. Creating local forums for discussion is crucial for fostering meaningful contacts amongst common people and promoting suživot, or meaningful cohabitation. The key to fostering unity and averting confrontations in multireligious societies is to embrace moderation and brotherhood via discourse, whether it takes place in person or virtually. Encouraging peaceful coexistence and resolving interfaith issues in today's varied society are mostly achieved via interfaith discussion, which is governed by the ideals of justice, equality, and respect for all religions.

Through a variety of strategies, different religions may increase understanding between people. One strategy is to expose people to a variety of viewpoints through educational activities[21]. Furthermore, encouraging tolerance amongst Muslims, Christians, and non-religious people can help ease religious tensions[22]. While it's important to address the issue of disinformation and deceit, information interchange made possible by modern technology may also be extremely important in fostering mutual understanding[23]. Moreover, it is stressed that fostering understanding

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[19] Maulana Wahiduddin Khan, Islam and Peace, Goodword Books India, 2015, p.71

[20] Aadil Hussain Wagay, "Interfaith Dialogue: A Qur'anic Cum Prophetic Perspective", *South Asian Research Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences,* Vol. 4, Issue: 6 (2022) see also *"Fethullah Gülen: Interfaith Dialogue as a Way to the Global Peace"*

[21] Alexander Knysh, et.al, *"When Two Worldviews Meet: Promoting mutual Understanding between Secular and Religious Students of Islamic studies in Russia and the United States"* retrieved from https://typeset.io/papers/when-two-worldviews-meet-promoting-mutual-understanding-2ylmoyre8h

[22] Steffen Moritz, et.al, *"Fostering Mutual Understanding Among Muslims and Non-Muslims Through Counter-stereotypical Information: An Educational versus Met-cognitive Approach"* retrieved from https://typeset.io/papers/fostering-mutual-understanding-among-muslims-and-non-muslims-5f2huek7we

[23] Ikbal Maulana, *"Mutual Understanding in the Age of Vulnerable Truth"* retrieved from https://typeset.io/papers/mutual-understanding-in-the-age-of-vulnerable-truth-lfulvxcrzo

amongst individuals of various religions requires conversation, which is seen as a crucial first step in averting conflicts on a local, national, and worldwide scale. All things considered, encouraging understanding between people of various religions necessitates a blend of educational initiatives, interfaith tolerance, information sharing, and candid conversation.

CONCLUSION

Peace is the most important aspect of every religion. Many Qur'anic verses also emphasize peace and justice in dealing with people of other religions. It also urges to cooperate and maintain harmonious relationships with one's neighbor irrespective of religion, culture and ideology. The Prophetic traditions also inspire Muslims to deal fairly and generously with non-Muslims including Jews, Christians, atheists and polytheists. The Prophet (SAW) is a true example in engaging and maintaining peace and harmony with people of different religions. He made many accords with non-Muslims granting security of their life, property and religion and none of them was broken by him. He never harmed or abused non-Muslims, and strictly warned Muslims to refrain from any kind of harm to them. He advised Muslims to treat neighbors as their heirs. Accordingly, the Qur'anic teachings and Prophetic traditions could be a model for promoting peace and harmony. However, this will not work if Islam continues to be misunderstood. If the Qur'anic teachings and the Prophetic approach are understood and implemented correctly, religious conflicts, hatred, enmity and mistrust will be minimized and interreligious harmony and peaceful co-existence will be established.

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