

The Holy Prophet (PBUH) is the prophet of peace and safety. Explain with arguments. (2018)

1-Introduction:

Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) stands as an unparalleled figure in the annals of history, not only for his spiritual and religious contributions but also for his profound role as a peacemaker. Throughout his life, he consistently embodied and promoted principles of peace, justice, and compassion, transforming a society marred by tribal conflicts and moral decay into one guided by unity and ethical values. From resolving local disputes in his early years to establishing the revolutionary Charter of Medina, Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) demonstrated a commitment of fostering harmony and coexistence among diverse communities. His strategic patience, diplomatic acumen, and unwavering dedication to peaceful resolutions remain a timeless blueprint for conflict resolution and social harmony, offering invaluable lessons for contemporary societies grappling with division and strife.

2- The Central Role of Peace in ... Islam: Prophets as Champions of Harmony

Peace holds a central and profound significance

in Islam, permeating its teachings and practices. The very word 'Islam' derives from the Arabic root 's-l-m', which means peace, and submission. This etymological foundation underscores the integral role of peace in the faith, as submission to the will of Allah is inherently linked to attaining inner and societal peace. The Quran explicitly advocates for peace, as seen in the verses like:

وان جنحوا للسلم فاجنح لها وتوكل على الله
"If the enemy is inclined towards peace, make peace with them. And put your trust in Allah."

(Al-Anfal 61)

Every prophet in Islam, from Adam to Muhammad (PBUH), was a proponent of peace, promoting messages of justice, mercy, and reconciliation. **Jesus** is described in the Quran as "a sign for humanity and a Mercy from Us" (Surah Maryam 21), exemplifying his role as a harbinger of peace. The Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), in particular, is often cited for his emphasis on peace, as reflected in his treaties and interactions with diverse communities.

Karen Armstrong has highlighted:

"Far from being the father of Jihad, Prophet Muhammad was a peacemaker, who risked his life and nearly lost

the loyalty of his closest companions because he was determined to effect a reconciliation with Mecca."

3. Prophet Muhammad (PBUH): A Symbol of Mercy and Peace.

The study of Sirah of the Prophet Muhammad proves that the personality of the Prophet is a source of Mercy and peace, not only for the Muslims, but for all the people of all the times, beyond the limitations of color, race, origin, territory, language and nations. The attitude of a person toward his enemy reflects feelings of his behavior. However, when we look at the prophet's attitude toward his enemies, we find it full of mercy, both at the collective and individual level.

History has neither witness nor will witness again another human figure, whose presence, thought, action can exert such a profound impact on the humanity as did the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH). Sir George Bernard Shaw said in 'The Genuine Islam'.

"I have studied him [Prophet Muhammad (PBUH)] - the wonderful man and in my opinion far from being an anti-Christ - he must be called the Saviour of Humanity. I believe that if a man like him were to assume the dictatorship of the modern

World, he would succeed in solving its problems in a way that would bring it the much needed peace and happiness.

4- Early Life: Fostering Harmony in Mecca

4.1 Hilful Fudhul

The 'Hilful Fudhul' or 'Pact of Virtue', was a significant event in Prophet's early life, showcasing his commitment to justice and peace. This was perhaps the first attempt of Muhammad to resolve the conflict by peaceful means.

Near Mecca there is a place known as Ukaz where an annual fair was held during the month of Dhul-Qadah when bloodshed and fighting were prohibited.

Once a war broke out between the tribes of Quraysh, Banu Kinanah and the Qais Aylan.

This bloody war continued for 10 years. Many precious lives were lost during the war; uncertainty and insecurity prevailed in society. These circumstances forced peace loving people to take some action. Therefore, a committee for peace called Hilful Fudhul was formed and an oath was taken among the conflicting tribes for peace. The prophet of Islam participated actively in this peace agreement. Muhammad always felt proud that he had been present at the house of Ibn Zadan at the time of this agreement.

No doubt this oath played a remarkable role in

maintaining peace and put a stop to bloody wars in the Arab World. Thus, one can say that through *Hilful Fudhul*, a third party alliance was established and acted as a mediator between the conflicting Arab tribes. About this pact the Messenger of Allah said:

"I witnessed a pact in the house of Abdullah Ibn Jud'an that I loved more than if I was to have a herd of red camels. If I were called to it in Islam, I would surely answer it."

4.2 Erection of Hajar-al-Aswad: Resolving the Black Stone dispute

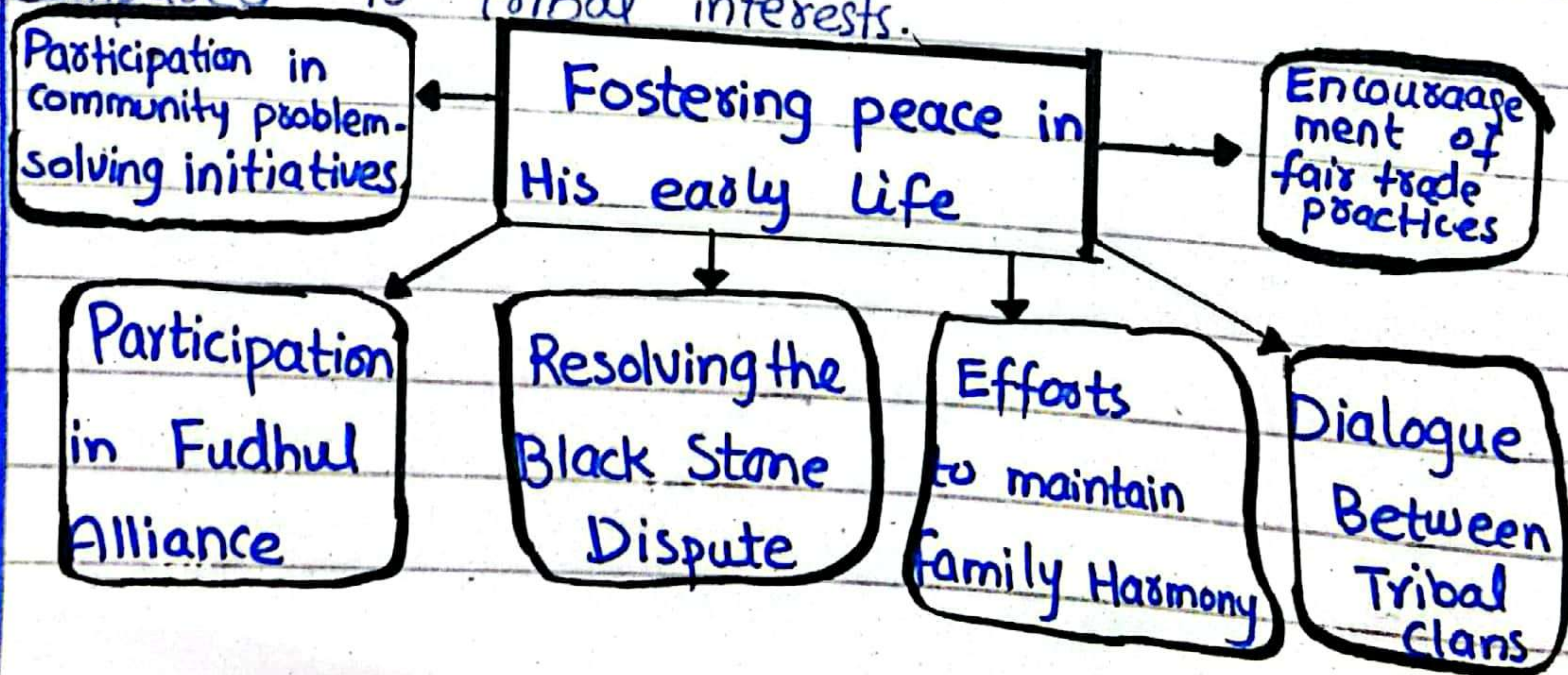
Prophet Muhammad's early life is replete with instances that highlight his innate ability to foster harmony and resolve conflicts. Another notable example of resolving the conflict is his intervention in the Black Stone Dispute. The incident occurred when the tribes were constructing the Kaaba, and a disagreement arose regarding who should have the honor of placing the sacred Black Stone in its position. The dispute threatened to erupt into a significant conflict among the tribes. Demonstrating his wisdom and commitment to peace, Muhammad (PBUH), who was respected for his integrity and fairness even before his prophethood, proposed a

solution that satisfied all parties. He suggested placing the Black Stone on a cloak, with representative from each tribe holding the edges, and then he himself placed the stone in its designated spot. This early demonstration of conflict resolution aligns with Islamic principles emphasizing justice and peace. The Quran though revealed later, echoes this ethos in verses like:

“Indeed, we sent our Messengers with clear proofs, and revealed with them the Scripture and the Balance (justice) that the people may maintain in justice.”

(Quran 57:25)

This incident is a good example of good arbitration of Muhammad (PBUH) showing how he saved the Anathagonistic Arabs from a violent clash. In this way, he solved the problem rationally and considered common interest of peace for all Arabs as compared to tribal interests.



5. The Meccan Period: Preservance in the Face of Persecution

During the Meccan period, Prophet Muhammad exemplified remarkable preservance and peaceful resistance in the face of relentless persecution by the Quraysh. Despite the severe hostility and brutality he and his followers endured, the prophet consistently adopted a non-violent approach. This period is characterized by his steadfast patience and unwavering commitment to spreading the message of Islam through peaceful means. The Quran advises adherents to respond to evil with good:

وَالسَّيِّئَةُ إِذْ فَعَّ بِالتِّي هِيَ أَحْسَنُ فَإِذَا الَّذِي بَيْنَكَ وَ
بَيْنَهُ عَدَاوَةٌ كَأَنَّهُ وَلِيٌّ حَمِيمٌ

"Respond to evil with what is best, then the one you are in feud with will be like a close friend."

(Quran 41:34)

The Prophet (PBUH) embodied this principle, choosing to endure insults, physical harm, and social ostracization without retaliation.

The Quraysh imposed social and economic Boycott on the Prophet's clan, isolating them in a narrow valley. This boycott led to severe hardship, with limited access to food and essential supplies, causing immense suffering among the Muslims, including the Prophet.

Notably, the Hadith literature also records numerous instances of his peaceful responses to aggression.

For example, when asked by his companions to invoke God's curse on the Quraysh, he replied:

|| "I have not been sent as an invoker of curses, but as a mercy."
(Sahih Muslim)

6- The Hijra: A Strategic move for peace and Community Building

The Hijra, or migration to Medina, marked a pivotal and strategic move by Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) to establish a new, harmonious community grounded in peace and justice. Faced with increasing hostility and life-threatening persecution from the Quraysh in Mecca, the Prophet (PBUH) sought a safe haven where the nascent Muslim community could flourish. Upon arrival, the Prophet (PBUH) immediately set to work on uniting the diverse groups in Medina, including the Ansar (the native Medinan tribes) and the Muhajirun (the Meccan migrants). The Prophet instituted the practice of Prophethood (Muakhat), pairing each Meccan migrant with a Medinan host, fostering strong personal and economic bonds between them. This strategic move not only secured the survival and growth of the Muslim community but also laid the foundation for an exemplary society based on principles

of justice, equality, and mutual respect. As the Prophet (PBUH) said:

"The believers, in their mutual kindness, compassion, and sympathy, are just like one body."

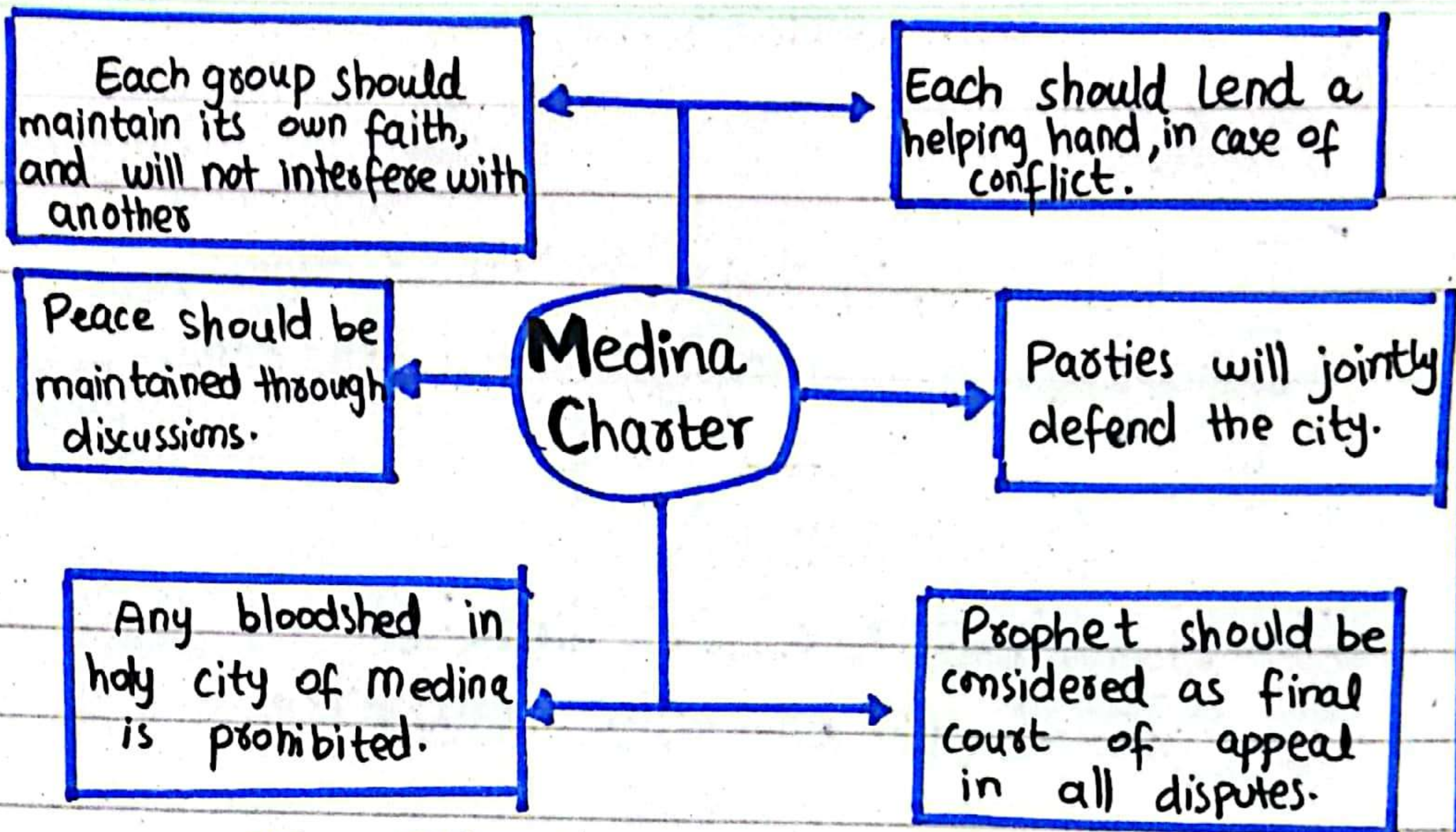
(Sahih Bukhari)

7- The Charter of Medina: A Model for peaceful Coexistence

As the Prophet (PBUH) established the Muslim community in Medina, he faced the challenge of uniting a diverse population comprising Muslim migrants, Native Medinan tribes, Jews, and other groups. The Charter of Medina, also known as the constitution of Medina, was crafted to address this challenge by delineating the rights and responsibilities of all inhabitants, regardless of their religious or tribal affiliations. This comprehensive social contract emphasized justice, mutual defence, and collective responsibility, ensuring that all parties could live in harmony and security. The Quran reflects this ethos of unity and justice:

إيها الناس إنا خلقناكم من ذكر و أنثى و
جعلناكم شعوبا و قبائل لتعارفوا

"O humanity! Indeed, we created you from a male and a female, and made you into peoples and tribes so that you may get to know one another."



7. The Treaty of Huddabiyyah: Negotiating Peace with Quraysh

After six years of migration, the prophet of Islam decided to visit Mecca with 1400 of his followers to perform Umra. He took animals for sacrifice and ordered each person to have only one sword for self-defense. When the news of his departure reached Meccans, they became furious, and decided to stop Muslims from entering Mecca. They prepared an expedition and headed towards the route of Medina. When Prophet Muhammad was informed about the violent reaction of Meccan Muslims, he changed the route in order to avoid clash. Muhammad (PBUH) sent Usman Ibn Affan to negotiate with idolaters. When it was rumoured that Usman was murdered. After this incident, the Quraysh expected unpleasant consequences and sent a delegation under the leadership of Suhail Ibn Amr, which resulted in the signing of agreement.

between the Muslims and Meccans.

The Prophet's decision to enter into ten-year truce, even at the expense of certain immediate gains, highlighted his profound understanding of long-term benefits of peace over continued hostility. This diplomatic move allowed for an unprecedented period of interaction and dialogue between Muslims and Non-Muslims paving the way for peaceful spread of Islam. **Zuhri** explains clearly why the Hudabiyah peace was a conquest:

“There could be no greater conquest than this in Islam. Previously people (pagans and believers) would fight when they came face to face. When peace was signed, war was left aside and people were sure of each other. When they met face to face, they talked and debated.”

8. Other Exemplary acts of Peacemaking

Example	Description
Defensive Nature of Gazawat	Gazawat were aimed at protecting the nascent Muslim community from aggression and ensuring peace.
Principles of Warfare	Strict rules of engagements, prohibiting harm to women, children, and elderly ensure ethical conduct.
Conquest of Mecca	Despite years of persecution by the Quraysh, Prophet entered Makkah without bloodshed.
Amnesty to People of Mecca	“Go, you are free.” A general amnesty to all inhabitants.

9. Conclusion: Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) vision of a peaceful World

Prophet Muhammad's role as a peacemaker is exemplified through his diplomatic strategies, ethical warfare, and acts of forgiveness, such as Treaty of Hudaibiyyah, and the Conquest of Mecca. His emphasis on mercy, justice, and reconciliation not only secured peace during his lifetime but also laid the foundation for enduring principles of harmony and coexistence.

The continuing relevance of his message of peace resonates in today's world, offering timeless guidance for resolving conflicts and fostering mutual respect among diverse communities.