

Holy Prophet (PBUH) as a Peacemaker

Introduction

Holy prophet ^(PBUH) was the greatest patron of peace. He always gave preference to diplomatic way out over engaging in the conflicts. Prophet (PBUH) wanted peace to prevail and as a leader of Muslim ummah he preached the very same attribute of making peace. Holy Prophet (PBUH) was so strongly against the idea meaningless instinct driven violence that he codified laws which protected not only the one who was not a party in the conflict, but also the combatants involved. According to Montgomery Wall out of all the fight that were fought by, led or had holy Prophet (PBUH) involved ensued 1058 casualties of the enemy despite 100 of conflicts. Holy Prophet's personality was so kind, honest and truthful that even non believers of Makkah used to call him Al-Sadiq and

Al-Ameen. It shows that even those who did not follow his faith very able to trust his sincerity which is a key attribute for peacemaking. As Thomas Carlyl expresses it:

"If ever any man was sincere, it was he."

Islam and its Prophet on War and Peace

Throughout the history of Islam, Muslims have avoided starting a conflict and have only taken when it got to be a necessity. Despite producing great thinkers like Sophocles, Aristotle, Plato and so on Greek civilisation (one that is admired and celebrated in the west) waged wars for the worldly, materialist and personal interests of their leaders. Islam abhors distortion of peace and order as Prophet (PBUH) has said "Peace is Islam" and "Indeed, God is peace".

These words of the prophet as coded in Sahih bukhari elucidates how Islam is centered around the idea of propagating peace and that was the very cause of prophet's endeavours, to convey the message of peace in a manner that replicates the peace. In Quran it has been expressed:

"Reconciliation is the best" (4:128)

Peacemaking of Prophet in Makkah

It is a misconception that Islam has reached all this success and spread on relying upon its military might, however this is a crooked understanding of Islamic history which people like Gibben and Carlyl, who have studied Prophet's (PBUH) life meticulously, have realised that indeed he was the best of the peacemakers who has suffered countless mishaps and all the

mistreatment at the hands of Quraysh who made it very difficult for the Prophet (PBUH) to continue to spread the message of God with ease and peace. They made Prophet (PBUH) and his companions struggle for bread trying their best to enrage him to declare war but Prophet (PBUH) endured those hardships in an exemplary manner. He used to always advise against the conflict even after Muslims had grown to a number which would allow them to give a massive blow to the opposition; Prophet (PBUH) believed that the right time is yet to come as he was not in favour of a haste war which could cost loss of human life.

(a) Hilf al Fuzul:

Even before attaining prophethood our holy Prophet (PBUH) had made peacemaking efforts like that of Hilf al Fuzul. When a merchant came to Makkah

to sell his goods; he was swindled and was not paid which served as the backdrop of this peacekeeping pact.

(b) Adjustment of Black Stone:

Black Stone is of immense value and Muslims all over the world have great regard for its religious importance, hence on one occasion when the Black Stone fell on the ground due to heavy flooding; everybody wanted to have the honour of adjusting it to the right place. This could have invited chaos and mass eruption which was averted by an advice given by the Prophet (PBUH) to make them all agree that whoever comes first to the Kaaba on the next day would have that honour.

(c) Shi'b abi Talib:

It is a narrow valley where prophet at that time resided and was on the task of spreading holy message.

The boycott of Shi'b abi Talib lasted from 7th year of prophethood till the 10th. For 3 years it was barred to engage with Muslims on the grounds of trade as well as social intermingling. Despite such harsh treatment Prophet (PBUH) did not resort to conflict as that was not the message of Islam to simply lay hands to bypass challenges.

(d) Visit to Ta'if:

In the 10th year of prophethood holy Prophet (PBUH) visited Ta'if to share his knowledge of righteous deed. People of Ta'if not only rejected his message but also stoned prophet and made him bleed. Upon being offered by the angels to get people of Ta'if crushed he rejected the offer hoping that Islam will reach them.

"I hope, from their offspring will be people who worship Allah alone." (Sahih Bukhari)

Peacemaking Efforts in Madinah

When Prophet (PBUH) first arrived in Madinah, it was an unstable region with different tribes each at conflict of the interest with the other one. The tribes of Aus and Khazraj had had escalation however there was an embedded tension. Other tribe that potential of erupting conflict was Jewish tribe who were under the clientage of Madinite Arabs, but were quickly regaining strength. Despite a challenging milieu Prophet (PBUH) secured peace in the region and succeeded in formation of a state.

(a) Unification of Aus and Khazraj:

With efforts of Prophet (PBUH) two of the warring tribes were united into Ansaar and to strengthen amicable environment he established brotherly relations between Ansaar and Muhajireen ensuring a peaceful communion.

(b) Charter of Madinah:

Charter of Madinah is remarkable peacemaking feat that courted jews and ensured that everybody would be treated on the grounds of equality, freedom and guaranteed central peace.

(c) Treaty of Hudaibiyyah.

Treaty of Hudaibiyyah was objectively not an easy decision for any leader except the one true embodiment of peace that is Prophet (PBUH) who ceded to diplomatically difficult conditions as to maintain peace, prevent conflict and enabled Muslims to visit Makkah the next year and allowed Quraish to trade in Muslim regions.

(d) Conquest of Makkah:

Without an iota of doubt Prophet (PBUH), had he wanted to, could have used this occasion to make infidels

repay for all the sufferings that they threw upon Muslims, however Prophet (PBUH) being the voice of peace, tolerance and equality claimed that everybody will be safe and treated equally. He did not agree to superiority of an Arab over a Non Arab or white over black and vice versa. He offered freedom to the people and said "اذهبوا انتم الطلقاء"
"You can go, you are free"

(e) Diplomatic Efforts and Wafud delegations:

Prophet (PBUH) used to write letters with his stamp to invite kings and rulers to Islam. After conquest of Makkah he received many delegates to whom he would negotiate and influence.

(f) Hajatul Widda:

Holy Prophet after performing his first and last Hajj delivered a sermon

that marked the beginning of a new era. Prophet in his last sermon wanted to instill peace and love in the hearts of people:

"Behold, all the practices of paganism and ignorance are under my feet. The blood revenge of the days of ignorance are remitted."

Regulation of War to Promote Peace

Islam discourages killing. Muslims fight for right and not for display of might. To ensure a systematic turnaround that confirms to peace Islam has a framework of adherence to engage in a war.

(a) Rules for Non Combatants:

Prophet has strictly prohibited to kill anyone not involved in the conflict

"Do not kill any old person, any woman or any child."

"Do not kill monks in monasteries."

(b) Rules for combatants:

Even for those who are fighting a Muslim has to adhere to the specific rules that prevent killing of the wounded, stealing from the enemy territory, torturing with fire, and mutilating dead bodies. In the battle of Ahzab a warrior of the enemy of Islam fell in trenches and died upon being offered money in exchange of the return of the corpse prophet (PBUH) said:

"I do not sell dead bodies, you can take corpse of your comrade."

(c) Safeguarding peacetreaties:

Prophet (PBUH) was the man of his words and

valued diplomatic commitments. He would never conduct a breach of faith which is why he said they he would not be able to help Jandal, who was the son of emissary of non believers who dealt with Muslims, as the condition of treaty had been settled and agreed upon.

(d) Declared response over instigation:

Prophet (PBUH) has advised this to all Muslims:

"If you fear treachery on the part of people, throw back to them on the terms of equality. Indeed Allah despises treacherous."

He makes it clear to only attack on equal terms in self defence but never instigates undeclared aggression.

Conclusion

Prophet is indeed the voice of peace, a light that shines over the entirety and inspires peace and kindness. He has lived a life that is an exemplary way of living and forging a society inclusively, peace, diplomacy, non aggression and putting best efforts to instill humanity and safeguarding human life.