



PEACEFUL
COEXISTENCE
IN ISLAM



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PREFACE

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

الحمد لله رب العالمين، والصلاة والسلام
على سيدنا محمد وعلى آله وصحبه أجمعين

The struggle to be a good human being and a good Muslim is the essence of Islam. This aspect has been misunderstood by many people, both Muslims and Non-Muslims alike. People misrepresent and claim that Jihad is a holy war against non-Muslims. This is not correct understanding. In Islamic literature, the word holy (Muqaddas) has never been applied for war (Harb) because Islam is the religion of peace and security among all people of the world.

We have explained the issue of peaceful coexistence in Islam in the light of Quran and Ahadith. This book is an important read for everyone in the world.

CORRECT UNDERSTANDING

There are two types of struggle in Islam, the foremost of the two is the struggle against the wrongful inclinations of the human self. Once this is achieved, a Muslim is required to spread peace in human society by working for justice and honorable living for all people of the world. Both these aspects together are known as fighting in the way of Allah (رَّ وَجَلَّ عَ) or Jihad.

Allah (رَّ وَجَلَّ عَ) is our creator. He wants us to live in peace on planet Earth. He does not want humans to live like animals. Our creator wants us to live like humans who care for each other and care for their environment. He wants us to be grateful for the bounties He has provided us for our living. This is the way of Allah (رَّ وَجَلَّ عَ) and this has been the teachings of all the prophets of Islam.

What is Iman?

Iman is to believe in Allah (رَّ وَجَلَّ عَ) and all his prophets and to walk on the path shown by Him. Since Prophet Mohammad (صلى الله عليه و آله وسلم) is the seal of Prophet-hood, believing in him as the last prophet of Allah (رَّ وَجَلَّ عَ) is essential. Once you believe in Allah (رَّ وَجَلَّ عَ) and His Apostle (صلى الله عليه و آله وسلم), you believe in the teachings contained in Quran and Sunnah and you are walking on His path.

The salvation of people in Hereafter depends upon Sahih Iman. Anyone having Sahih Iman in his heart equal to the weight of a mustard seed, he/she will not remain in Hell. He will be taken out of Hell on Prophet's (صلى الله عليه و آله وسلم) mediation.

It is in Quran - وَنَضَعُ الْمَوَازِينَ الْقِسْطَ لِيَوْمِ الْقِيَامَةِ فَلَا تُظْلَمُ نَفْسٌ شَيْئًا وَإِنْ كَانَ مِثْقَالَ حَبَّةٍ مِنْ خَرْدَلٍ أَتَيْنَا بِهَا [And We place the scales of justice for the Day of Resurrection, so no one will be treated unjustly at all. And if there is (Iman equal to) the weight of a mustard seed, We will bring it forth.] (Al-Anbiya - 47)

It is in Hadith - It is narrated on the authority of Abdullah bin Mas'ud (رضي الله عنه) that the Apostle of Allah (صلى الله عليه و آله وسلم) said, 'no one shall enter the Fire (of Hell) who has in his heart the weight of a mustard seed of Iman. (Bukhari, Muslim and others).

What is the meaning of 'Iman' equal to the weight of mustard seed'? This is explained in the following Ahadith.

It is in Hadith - Apostle of Allah (صلى الله عليه و آله وسلم) said, (i) He who among you sees something abominable should modify it with the help of his hand; (ii) and if he has not strength enough to do it, then he should do it with his

tongue, (iii) and if he has not strength enough to do it, (even) then he should (abhor it) from his heart, and that is the least of Iman. **(Muslim Book 1, Hadith # 84)**

It is in Hadith - It is narrated on the authority 'Abdullah bin Mas'ud (رضى الله تعالى عنه) that the Apostle of Allah (صلى الله عليه و آله وسلم) observed : Never a Prophet had been sent before me by Allah towards his nation who had not among his people (his) disciples and companions who followed his ways and obeyed his command. Then there came after them their successors who said whatever they did not practice and practiced whatever they were not commanded to do. He who strove against them with his hand was a believer. He who strove against them with his tongue was a believer, and he who strove against them with his heart was a believer and beyond that there is no faith even to the extent of a mustard seed. **(Muslim Book 1, # 86)**

The moment a person submits to Allah (رَّ وَجَلَّ عَ), it is obligatory on him to contribute to the establishment of peace on Planet Earth by supporting the poor for his/her survival. If he is weak, cannot support them openly, he should stay away from supporting their oppression. This is known as Iman equal to the weight of mustard seed.

(i) Fighting against our own evil inclinations

It is in Quran - [And those who strive hard in Our (cause), We will most certainly guide them in Our ways; and Allah is indeed with the people of Ihsan.] **(Al-Ankaboot - 69)**.

It is in Hadith - The Prophet (صلى الله عليه و آله وسلم) said, ‘the fighter in Allah's (رَّ وَجَلَّ عَ) path is the one who strives against his Nafs in obedience to Allah. **(Tirmidhi # 1671, Ahmad # 1234)**

(ii) Fighting against the oppression in human society

It is in Quran - أَدْنِ لِلَّذِينَ يُفَاتَلُونَ بِأَنَّهُمْ ظَلِمُوا وَإِنَّ اللَّهَ عَلَىٰ نَصْرِهِمْ لَقَدِيرٌ الَّذِينَ أُخْرِجُوا مِنْ دِيَارِهِمْ بِغَيْرِ حَقٍّ إِلَّا أَنْ يَقُولُوا رَبُّنَا اللَّهُ وَلَوْلَا دَفْعُ اللَّهِ النَّاسَ بَعْضَهُمْ بِبَعْضٍ لَفُتِنَتِ السَّمَوَاتُ وَالْأَرْضُ وَمَنْ فِيهِنَّ وَإِن لَّا إِذْنُ مِنْ رَبِّكَ لَفُتِنَتِ السَّمَوَاتُ وَالْأَرْضُ وَمَنْ فِيهِنَّ وَإِن لَّا إِذْنُ مِنْ رَبِّكَ لَفُتِنَتِ السَّمَوَاتُ وَالْأَرْضُ وَمَنْ فِيهِنَّ وَإِن لَّا إِذْنُ مِنْ رَبِّكَ لَفُتِنَتِ السَّمَوَاتُ وَالْأَرْضُ وَمَنْ فِيهِنَّ [Permission to fight is hereby given to those who are attacked because they have been oppressed – Allah indeed has power to grant them victory – those who have been unjustly driven from their homes, only because they said, ‘Our Lord is Allah’ **(Al-Hajj - 39-40)**

Some people take, out of context meaning of some Quranic verses to claim that Jihad means to fight non-believers en masse. This is a wrong understanding.

It is in Quran - وَقَاتِلُوا فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ الَّذِينَ يُقَاتِلُونَكُمْ وَلَا تَعْتَدُوا إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يُحِبُّ الْمُعْتَدِينَ [Fight in Allah's cause against those who fight with you, but do not overstep the limits. Allah does not love those who overstep the limits.] (**Al-Baqara - 190**)

Three things have been addressed in the above verse; (i) fighting in Allah's (رُّ وَجَلَّ عَ) cause, (ii) fighting only with those who fight against you, and (iii) not to overstep the limits in fighting.

(i) Fighting in Allah's (رُّ وَجَلَّ عَ) cause

Allah (رُّ وَجَلَّ عَ) is the creator of all human beings. It is not that He is the creator of only Muslims. He loves all His servants. What He does not like is someone who does not try to understand Allah's (رُّ وَجَلَّ عَ) signs in the Cosmos, denies His merciful bounties, stages a rebellion, and creates oppression and tyranny on other human beings.

Human history is a witnessed how tyrant rulers have resorted to oppression, killing and tribulations in the world. This is the reason, Allah (رُّ وَجَلَّ عَ) sent Prophets in every nation to rid people off their ignorance, provide them justice and free them from the clutches of tyrant rulers / tribal heads.

The prophets fought back with these tyrants to provide justice to the people and re-establish order and peace.

Some people wrongly claim that Islam's early wars were fought to spread Islam in the world. They forget the fact that 'belief' is related to heart and in no way, it can be achieved by sword. Allah (رُّ وَجَلَّ عَ) wants faith to emanate from the heart, not through fear or compulsion. He wants to enlighten people's minds and hearts about Himself and His creation in this Cosmos, rather than their bowed head in fear.

It is in Quran - لَا إِكْرَاهَ فِي الدِّينِ ۚ قَدْ تَبَيَّنَ الرُّشْدُ مِنَ الْغَيِّ ۚ فَمَنْ يَكْفُرْ بِالطَّاغُوتِ وَيُؤْمِن بِاللَّهِ فَقَدِ اسْتَمْسَكَ بِالْعُرْوَةِ الْوُثْقَىٰ لَا انفصَامَ لَهَا وَاللَّهُ سَمِيعٌ عَلِيمٌ [There is no compulsion in religion; undoubtedly the right path has become distinct from the wrong; He who turns away from the forces of evil and believes in Allah has grasped a very firm handhold; it will never loosen; and Allah is All Hearing, All Knowing.] (**Al-Baqara - 256**)

We are required to invite people to Sahih Iman through reason and, more importantly, by being an example of what is good and upright. Only then would people accept Iman wholeheartedly and apply its teachings willingly. He who forces religion upon others, oppresses people into it, is not acting on the commandments of Allah (رُّ وَجَلَّ عَ) and His Apostle (صلى الله عليه و آله وسلم).

In the first 13 years from the declaration of Prophet-hood, there was no commandment to fight with the oppressors. Even when a small community of Muslims was established in Madina, Muslims did not fight with the Pagans. The war was imposed on them by pagans, and Muslims fought the first defensive war of Islam in Badar, Madina, in which Allah (رُّ وَجَلَّ عَ) provided victory to Muslims.

When Makka was taken over by Muslims, no one was forced to accept Islam. The entire population embraced Islam looking at the generosity of Prophet Mohammad (صلى الله عليه و آله وسلم) towards them although they had tortured him and his followers for 13 long years.

In subsequent battles, wherever Muslims won, the local populations were not forced to accept Islam. They could profess their religion. As a matter of fact, protection was given to them from their enemies.

Muslims are required to pay Zakat whereas non-Muslims are free from this obligation. In its place, a tax called Jizya was taken from non-Muslims to meet the expenses of providing them protection and a peaceful living in the country. Some people talk a lot about Jizya and portray this requirement in a bad light. They forget the fact that Muslims pay Zakat and non-Muslims pay Jizya. So where is the disparity? If the Government does not take taxes, how will it function?

(ii) Fighting only with those who fight against you

History of early Islam is witnessing that Muslims did not fight with anyone who wanted to live in peace with them. They took up arms only against those tyrants who were existential threat to Muslims and those who were the sworn enemies. Thus, the wars were essentially defensive in nature and the aim was to establish order and peaceful living in the world. If Muslims had done what Christians/Jews/Salafis have done in Spain, Bosnia, Palestine, Arabian Peninsula (Saudi Arabia) and other places, entire continents of Asia, Africa and half of Europe would have 100% Muslim population today.

(iii) Not to overstep the limits in fighting

The basic principle, stipulated in Quran, about fighting in a war is that other communities should be treated as your own. Fighting is justified for legitimate self-defense, to aid other Muslims or to help populations suffering under the oppression of tyrant rulers. Once the war is won and tyrants are subdued, it was commanded to treat them well, ignoring the harm they had done earlier.

It is in Quran - وَلَا تُطِيعِ الْكَافِرِينَ وَالْمُنَافِقِينَ وَدَعْ أَذَاهُمْ وَتَوَكَّلْ عَلَى اللَّهِ وَكَفَى بِاللَّهِ وَكِيلًا [Do not give in to the disbelievers and the hypocrites. Ignore the harm they cause you and put your trust in Allah. Allah suffices as a Guardian.] (Al-Ahzaab - 48)

Prophet Mohammad (صلى الله عليه و آله وسلم) used to give guidelines to army entrusted to fight in a conflict. Based on these instructions, Hadhrat Abu Bakr (رضي الله تعالى عنه) is reported to have given the following guideline to the Army.

Addressing the Army under the command of Usama bin Zaid (رضي الله تعالى عنه) who were entrusted to fight in Syria in 632 AD, Abu Bakr (رضي الله تعالى عنه) said as follows:

"O people! I charge you the rules for your guidance. Listen carefully and remember them.

(i) You shall not engage in treachery; you shall not act unfaithfully; you shall not engage in deception; you shall not indulge in mutilation; you shall kill neither a young child nor an old man nor a woman; you shall not cut palm trees or burn them, you shall not cut down (any) fruit-bearing tree; you shall not slaughter a sheep or a cow or a camel except for food.

(ii) You may pass by people who may have devoted their lives to monastic services, leave them alone.

(iii) Some people may bring you vessels containing variety of food. If you eat anything from (those dishes), mention the name of Allah (رُؤًى وَجَلَّ عَ) over them.

(iv) Go ahead in the name of Allah's (رُؤًى وَجَلَّ عَ)." "

Reference - Tabari, Volume 9, Pages 163-164)

The above principles were honored during the Crusades by Sultan Saladin and al-Kamil. After al-Kamil defeated the Franks during 5th crusade (1217-1221), their commander **Oliverus Scholasticus** praised the Islamic laws of war. Commenting on how al-Kamil supplied the defeated Frankish army with food, he is reported to have said as follows:

"Who could doubt that such goodness, friendship and charity come from God? Men whose parents, sons and daughters, brothers and sisters, had died in agony at our hands, whose lands we took, whom we drove naked from their homes, revived us with their own food when we were dying of hunger and showered us with kindness even when we were in their power."

BLOODSHED WAS NON-EXISTENT DURING EARLY WARS OF MUSLIMS

In a matter of a decade, by 10 AH (632 AD), practically the whole of Arabia had adopted Islam as their religion. If one were to meditate over the statistics, he will realize that for such magnitude of acceptance of a religion and Muslim rule, the use of arms and bloodshed was practically nonexistent.

The Prophet (صلى الله عليه و آله وسلم) fought defensive wars only on his arrival in Madina. The conquests of the decade (622-632 AD) extended over 3 million square kilometers, i.e., some 900 kilometers daily for ten years at an average. During these wars' enemy casualties were very less. Muslim losses were even lesser. Two to three hundred people martyred on the battlefield, a thing uncommon and unknown in the history of mankind.

When Prophet Mohammad (صلى الله عليه و آله وسلم) migrated to Madina in 622 AD, he was acknowledge as the Prophet of Allah (صلى الله عليه و آله وسلم) by a handful of people from among the people of Madina and Makka together. But by 632 AD the Prophet (صلى الله عليه و آله وسلم) left a Muslim empire over most of Arabian Peninsula with over one million Muslims inhabitants.

PROPHET MOHAMMAD (صلى الله عليه و آله) (وسلم) IN THE EYES OF NON-MUSLIMS

A book was published in New York in 1978 providing ranking of 100 most influential person in the history of mankind. Prophet Mohammad (صلى الله عليه و آله وسلم) was regarded as top ranking for his contribution to human society. This [book](#) is available on Amazon.

Gandhiji wrote in 'Young India (periodical), 1928, Volume X, as follows:

QUOTE - I wanted to know the best of the life of one who holds an undisputed sway over the hearts of millions of mankind... I became more than ever convinced that **it was not the sword that won a place for Islam** in those days in the scheme of life. It was the rigid simplicity, the utter self-effacement of the Prophet (صلى الله عليه و آله وسلم) the scrupulous regard for pledges, his intense devotion to his friends and followers, his intrepidity, his fearlessness and his absolute trust in God. **UNQUOTE**

Gandhiji and his followers stood in front of bullets many a times and gave their lives. Gandhiji's nonviolence was defensive in nature. And what was his defense? His defense was Indian masses. He gathered masses in front of the tyrant army to scare them away. And he succeeded in his mission after a long struggle. He taught bravery, he did not teach cowardice and surrender to tyrant rulers.