

An Everlasting Peace Treaty

(Verse 9)

وَإِنْ طَائِفَتَانِ مِنَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ اقْتَتَلُوا فَأَصْلِحُوا بَيْنَهُمَا فَإِنْ بَغَت إِحْدَاهُمَا عَلَى الْأُخْرَى فَقَاتِلُوا الَّتِي تَبْغِي حَتَّى تَفِيءَ إِلَى أَمْرِ اللَّهِ فَإِنْ فَانَتْ فَأَصْلِحُوا بَيْنَهُمَا بِالْعَدْلِ وَأَقْسِطُوا إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُحِبُّ الْمُقْسِطِينَ

“And if two factions from amongst the believers begin fighting against one another, then restore peace between them both. However, if one party revolts against the other party, then fight the revolting party until they submit to the command of Allah. When they do so, then restore the peace that was between them with justice and act with equality (between the parties involved). Surely Allah loves those people who act with equality.”

Peace and harmony, whose basis is founded upon justice and fairness is one of the benefits of the teachings of the moral ethics and is also one of the rulings (that must be enacted) in an Islamic society. However true peace is one in which the interests of the opposing parties who are belligerent towards one another is brought forth in the correct manner.

It is peace and harmony which is upheld by people of true faith and who possess cognizance of Allah (Glorified and Exalted is He) and if one of the two sides who are within the sphere of justice and fairness were to step out and go beyond the boundaries, then with whatever force and power is available, they would be stopped. The forces would be mustered up to fight against the aggressive party so that they return back to the path of truth.

In order to make such a peace agreement permanent and stable, Islam has laid down certain conditions:

1. Any sort of peace treaty or agreement to refrain from aggression and hostility must be based upon justice and fair dealings and if one party is more powerful than the other side, then they must not use their power to impose their wishes and desires on the party who is weaker.

It has been said in the past that, “True peace between a powerful (nation) and a weaker one can never

be conceivable” and this is definitely the truth and thus, the Qur’an has told us that:

فَأَصْلِحُوا بَيْنَهُمَا بِالْعَدْلِ وَأَقْسِطُوا

“...then restore the peace that was between them with justice and act with equality (between the parties involved).”

2. Those who possess true faith and genuinely recognize Allah (Glorified and Exalted is He) and who do not stand to profit from the disagreement must be the ones who oversee the peace treaty.

3. Anytime one of the two parties thinks about expansion (of their area or land) and try to take steps that go against the peace treaty, then those who are the arbitrators and the neutral party involved must inform the aggressive party about the outcomes or effects of them starting a war. This must be done so that the person who wishes to oppress others and go against the laws of Islam would know that there is no room in an Islamic society for such people and these two fundamental conditions are found in the Qur’an in the following verse:

فَإِنْ بَغَتْ إِحْدَهُمَا عَلَى الْأُخْرَى فَقَاتِلُوا الَّتِي تَبْغِي

“However, if one party revolts against the other party, then fight the revolting party until they submit...”

4. Fighting against the oppressing party must not take on the form of revenge or retribution. Rather, any form of opposition to the oppressor must be due to the fact that he has gone against the laws of Allah (Glorified and Exalted is He), and one must try to remove the thoughts from his head in which he feels that he is able to violate and encroach upon the rights of the believers, and this can be deduced from the section of this verse that states:

حَتَّى تَفِيءَ إِلَى أَمْرِ اللَّهِ...

“...until they submit to the command of Allah.”

Thus, opposition to oppression must continue until the oppressor returns back to the path of justice and fairness – which in essence are the commandments of Allah (Glorified and Exalted is He) – as have been mentioned in this verse.

5. At the end of this verse, we have been reminded of an important point which is that those people who

have true faith must constantly strive to make sure peace is attained and any wars that take place must not make them hopeless or discouraged of trying to attain peace. This must be realized and carried out even to the point that after the oppressors have subjugated a group of people, we must still keep our spirits high and try to formalize a new peace treaty that is based upon justice, just as it has been mentioned in the verse:

...فَإِنْ قَامَتْ فَأَصْلِحُوا بَيْنَهُمَا بِالْعَدْلِ وَأَقْسِطُوا

“When they do so, then restore the peace that was between them (the parties involved) with justice and equality)...”

Such a peace treaty and agreement that is founded on the above mentioned conditions is a true peace agreement that Islam has laid down and enjoined upon the belligerent parties at war.

If the above mentioned conditions were to be carried out, then in addition to being able to safeguard the interests of both parties, we would also be able to cover the entire world with the clothing of a peaceful life – which is the greatest wish and longing for the people of the entire world. This is the peace that Islam has proposed and the conditions that it has given to attain and maintain such a state.

Let us take a look at the peace treaties that both the major and minor nations of the world have signed and ratified in the past – which of these agreements are truly just? Is a peace treaty that is drawn up between two aggressive parties ever equitable, or is it ever imaginable that peace between a powerful and a weak nation is attainable?

Are the councils that oversee the peace treaties impartial or are they completely free of any benefit or profit in their arbitration, problem solving and settling of a dispute and enmity? Are the aggressive parties made known of the peace treaties, agreements and settlements (that are imposed upon them) by the major powers of the world before they sign and enact them?

The political commentators of the world are all in agreement and have stated that, “Establishing peace in any part of the world will never be accepted except with complete agreement of the world powers and the dominating super powers of the world. Even the establishment of peace in the Middle East will only become possible when two camps – from both the East and the West – are in agreement of such a peace.”

Therefore, such an imposed peace which is far from being achieved will never yield positive results and an everlasting and perpetual peace will in no way be realized or established.

Struggling for Peace

Peace is one of the goals and ethical values of the religion of Islam and is one of the most important obligatory acts of the religion (for the believers) which must be enacted with the conditions mentioned above. It does not make any difference if the peace agreement which is trying to be reached is between two Muslims, two groups of people or two major nations. In any event, it is incumbent on every Muslim that in the minimum, he must strive and struggle to make sure peace is established.

In the war of Hudaibiah, the Messenger of Islam (blessings of Allah be upon him and his progeny) displayed an amazing self-sacrifice in establishing peace between the Muslims and the Polytheists. He was willing to order some of his companions to return back to Makkah [to live amongst the Polytheists just as they (the people of Makkah) had wished] just to make sure the peace treaty could be ratified. (We have gone into detail on this issue in our book, Furugh Abadiyyat).[1](#)

Elaborating on the importance of peace and friendship between two opposing parties, Amir al-Mu'minin `Ali ibn Abi Talib (peace be upon him), has said the following:

وَصَلِّحْ ذَاتَ بَيْنِكُمْ فَإِنِّي سَمِعْتُ جَدَّكُمْ يَقُولُ: صَلِّحْ ذَاتَ الْبَيْنِ أَفْضَلُ مِنْ عَامَّةِ الصَّلَاةِ وَالصِّيَامِ

"I advise you (my two sons – al-Hasan and al-Husain) to establish and foster peace amongst two opposing parties, since surely I have heard your grandfather (the Messenger of Allah, blessings of Allah be upon him and his progeny) say, 'Establishing peace between two opposing parties is better than praying and fasting for the entire year.'"[2](#)

The commandment of establishing peace is so important in the view of Islam that the person who is trying to make peace (between two parties) is permitted to use any logical means at his disposal and he is even permitted to lie to the opposing parties to bring about this peace![3](#)

Standing up to an Oppressor

Without doubt, standing up to an oppressor is one of the sacred primary teachings of Islam. Principally, a majority of the Heavenly Prophets came from families who lived under the oppression and domination of tyrants.

In addition, there are very few Surah's of the Qur'an in which the names and punishments of the tyrants is not mentioned (either directly or indirectly) and even in the verse under discussion, the Islamic society has been commanded to fight against tyrants and oppressors until they return back to the straight path and open the doors to the commandments of Allah (Glorified and Exalted is He). It is said in this verse:

فَقَاتِلُوا الَّذِينَ تَبْغِي حَتَّى تَفِيءَ إِلَى أَمْرِ اللَّهِ...

“...then fight the revolting party until they submit to the command of Allah.”

In another place in the Qur’an, we are cautioned that no Muslim is permitted to take an oppressor as a protector; it has been mentioned:

وَلَا تَرْكَنُوا إِلَى الَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا فَتَمَسَّكُمُ النَّارُ

“And do not incline towards those people who are oppressive and do wrong or the fire will seize you.”⁵¹

The noble leader of the Shi`a world, Amir al-Mu`minin `Ali ibn Abi Talib (peace be upon him) has said, “Many times the Prophet of Islam (blessings of Allah be upon him and his progeny) said:

لَنْ تُقَدَّسَ أُمَّةٌ لَا يُؤَخَذُ لِلضَّعِيفِ فِيهَا حَقُّهُ مِنَ الْقَوِيِّ غَيْرَ مُتَتَّعِعٍ

“That nation or government in which the rights of the oppressed and destitute people are not guarded and where the mighty and powerful people are not forced to accede to these rights will never see happiness and salvation.”⁴

After being deprived of the right to lead the community for twenty-five years, Amir al-Mu`minin `Ali ibn Abi Talib (peace be upon him) explained the reason why he accepted the leadership (Khilafah), at that time:

أَمَّا وَالَّذِي فَلَقَ الْحَبَّةَ وَبَرَأَ النَّسَمَةَ لَوْ لَا حُضُورُ الْحَاضِرِ وَقِيَامُ الْحُجَّةِ بِوُجُودِ النَّاصِرِ وَمَا أَخَذَ اللَّهُ عَلَى الْعُلَمَاءِ أَنْ لَا يُقَارُوا عَلَى كِطَّةِ ظَالِمٍ وَلَا سَعْبِ مَظْلُومٍ لِأَلْقَيْتُ حَبْلَهَا عَلَى غَارِبِهَا وَ لَسَقَيْتُ آخِرَهَا بِكَأْسِ أَوْلِئِهَا

“Behold, I swear by Him who split the grain (to grow) and created living beings that had it not been for the people coming to me and had the supporters not exhausted the argument and if there had not been the pledge of Allah with the scholars that they should not acquiesce in the gluttony of the oppressor and the hunger of the oppressed, I would have cast the rope (of Khilafah) on its own shoulders and would have given the last one the same treatment as to the first one.”⁵

Through his clear speech and the unmistakable events of Islamic history and keeping in mind that those who held the flag of the religion in every time were always the oppressed individuals of society and the powers who worked against the Prophets were the ones who made up the exploitation powers (of their time), is it correct what the materialists claim the following about religion that: “Religion instructs its followers to observe patience and tolerance in the face of oppression from the exploiters and that one

should consider their oppression as being a part of undisputable fate and destiny that has protected the interests of the exploiters.”

“The pressures and forces exacted by the leaders in relation to their subjects and the extortion and encroachment on the rights of the Feudalists and the Aristocrats in relation to the oppressed and downtrodden people – even though it lead to violent uprisings – however, by drawing upon the parallels that these uprisings and ineffectiveness had, lead to consolation in the minds of those who were deprived amongst the society and thus it was slowly thought that religion had a stupefying effect on the soul of a person.”

The person who has even the least amount of knowledge in relation to the plan that religion has brought forth, would know that all of the incorrect observations (mentioned in the above mentioned quotes) were designed to confuse the people who do not know the truth and realities about religion.

The issue of observing patience is a belief that even the materialists of our time possess. It is indeed one of the upright principles of the ethical teachings which all nations and all people – including the materialists – have true faith in. Without this main ethical trait, there is not a single person who possesses aims and goals (for himself) that would ever be able to reach his objectives (without this trait).

This is so because the meaning of patience (*sabr*) is not that one gives in to the oppression of a tyrant. In no culture or in any of the books of ethical traits has patience been explained in this way. Rather, the meaning of patience (*sabr*) means to be firm on the path to reach one’s goals and to have endurance in the face of tribulations. Thus, there is not a single nation that has reached to any point without showing endurance and firmness (on the path towards their goal).⁶

Therefore, the true meaning of patience is opposite to that which the materialists imagine it to be as it truly means to be firm and resolved against the opposing enemies and opposition to the incorrect wishes and desires of the soul or the unpleasant events that happen in one’s life. Such an ethical principle is one which will destroy subjugation, demolish the empires of the oppressors and one which will bring about success and victory in the various stages of one’s personal life.

The aversion that Islam shows to oppression and tyranny is to such an extreme, that even the person who is pleased with an oppressor living is counted as being amongst those who commit oppression:

قَالَ الْإِمَامُ جَعْفَرُ بْنُ مُحَمَّدٍ الصَّادِقُ (عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ): أَلْعَامِلُ بِالظُّلْمِ وَالْمُعِينُ لَهُ وَالرَّاضِي بِهِ شُرَكَاءُ

Imam Ja`far ibn Muhammad as-Sadiq (peace be upon him) said: “*The person who oppresses (another person) and the one who helps him and the one who is pleased with him (oppressing someone else) are all equal to one another.*”⁷

Safwan ibn Mahran, was one of the close friends and companions of Imam Musa ibn Ja`far al-Kadhim

(peace be upon him) who owned many camels. One day the Imam (peace be upon him) reproached him by saying that, “All of your deeds are good except one of them and that is that you rent out your camels to Harun al-Rashid, the Oppressor.”

The companion said to the Imam, “I swear by Allah! I never rent him my camels for vain or prohibited acts. Rather, at the time of the Hajj, I give him my camels so that he is able to visit the House of Allah. I do not even go with him on this journey; rather, I send those who work with me to accompany him.”

The Imam replied, “When you give Harun the camels, do you request him to pay you in full before he takes them or does he give you an amount and then the rest is paid to you (when he returns)?”

Safwan replied, “He pays me an amount before he goes and then the rest when he returns from his trip.”

The Imam then asked Safwan, “Do you wish that Harun returns back from his trip alive so that he can pay you back the rest of the money that he owes you?”

The companion replied, “Yes.”

The Imam (peace be upon him) then said, “Whoever is happy or wishes that an oppressor is given a long life is considered as an oppressor himself and his eventual outcome will be the hell-fire.”⁸

Yes! That what the materialists say about religion has been extracted from Christianity and is close to the teachings of the Christian Church since in their opinion, one of the teachings of the Messiah (‘Isa ibn Mariam, peace be upon them both) is that if a person hits you on one side of your face, then give him the other side too, as it is stated: “But I tell you, Do not resist an evil person. If someone strikes you on the right cheek, turn to him also the other.”⁹

^{1.} Volume 2, Page 580–603 (Third Printing); this can also be read in the English translation of the mentioned book entitled, The Message, published by Islamic Seminary Publications of Karachi, Pakistan, reprinted by Ansariyan Publications (Refer to Page 518 – 539).

^{2.} Nahjul Balagha, Volume 3, Page 85 (Advice from Amir al-Mu’minin ‘Ali ibn Abi Talib, peace be upon him, to his children.)

^{3.} al-Makasib al-Muharramah, Discussion on the Prohibition of Lying.

^{4.} Nahjul Balagha, Volume 3, Page 113 (Letter that was written to Malik al-Ashtar).

^{5.} Ibid., Volume 1, Speech 3.

^{6.} We have explained the true meaning of sabr or patience as explained in the Qur’an under the commentary of verse 11 of Surah Luqman (31) where it is stated:

وَاصْبِرْ عَلَىٰ مَا أَصَابَكَ

“So then bear with patience that which we have tested you with.”

^{7.} Wasail al-Shi’a, Volume 12, Page 128.

^{8.} Ibid., Volume 12, Page 132.

^{9.} New Testament, St. Matthew, Chapter Five, Verse 39 (as found on bible.gospelcom.net).

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