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Principles and Bases of Peaceful Coexistence in Light of Quran

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Abstract

The contemporary world witnesses many accusations regarding the compatibility of Islam and peaceful coexistence. Many people base their arguments by relying on secondary sources or exceptional cases through history for this accusation. Media, especially Western one, highlights and dramatizes some negative behaviors of Muslim people even though they do not represent whole Islamic world and Islamic theology. This investigation addresses principles and bases of peaceful coexistence according to Quran. It highlights the Islamic viewpoint according to Quran. For this purpose, related verses are classified and indexed. The study suggests that Quran encourages Muslims for peaceful coexistence with non-Muslim people.

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Introduction

Human beings live collectively and form small and big communities. Contrary to the past, communities with different beliefs and religions interact more with each other through various political, social and economic relations. Such interactions should ideally lead to peaceful coexistence. It is manifestly clear that all divine religions and prophets promote monotheism and are harbingers of peace, security as well as friendly behavior towards the followers of other religions. Followers of different religions have gradually assumed various deviations with the passing of time and owing to separation from the guidance of divine prophets (Jafar, 1985). Principles and bases of peaceful coexistence are part of an important investigation topic nowadays. The right to peaceful coexistence has two aspects. From a general international law perspective it means friendly relationships among countries and nations based on recognition, equality of rights, non intervention and peaceful solutions to problems (Esfahani and Hosseini, 2017). From an unofficial international law standpoint it means recognizing the religious and ethnic minorities within country, respecting their rights, and freedom to perform religious rituals (Yilmaz, 2013: 160).

This study is intended to answer the following research question: What is Quran's stance regarding principles and bases of peaceful coexistence? Today, governments require security and peaceful coexistence and in contemporary international law, many different ways are sought to establish international peace and security. Although establishing international peace seems very challenging, any attempts made to achieve this objective deserve praise. Ultimately, people's relationships can be safe only when based on reasonable, rational and just principles.

In this study, the principles and bases of peaceful coexistence are investigated from the perspective of the Holy Quran with regards to genuine Islamic resources, and the originality of the right to peaceful coexistence from an Islamic perspective is proven. The comprehensive current research question is: What bases and principles does the Holy Quran suggest to Muslims to persuade them to live with followers of other schools who do not contribute their philosophy toward peace? This investigation deals with a new and modern approach to this topic, and to help Muslims in their interactions with other mankind.

Research Methodology

In this research, descriptive, analytical and library methodologies are implemented. Data has mainly been collected from relevant verses. After identifying and studying verses, these were

classified and indexed. Conclusions were then drawn by referring to different books and interpretations. Library resources in Arabic, Persian and other languages have been used for the current work. This research comprises three stages: 1. Collecting the requisite data 2. Analyzing the hypotheses 3. Writing up the work. The phrase “peaceful coexistence” is significant expression in international law and relations. There are only minor differences in the definition of this expression in various dictionaries. However, in practice, this expression has turned into a disguise behind which governments and authority figures look to get votes and political profits. Nonetheless, lexicographers and scholars in the field of international law imply that by taking advantage of this important international principle, countries with various religions and beliefs can live in peace, tranquility and cooperation and solve problems peacefully.

Analysis, Bases of Peaceful Coexistence

The most important bases of peaceful coexistence may be categorized as following:

1. Islamic Human Rights are Innate and Super-Faith

It is clear that the meaning of (recall to one common word), is recalling a desired coexistence based on this description: definite monotheism, not make anything his partner and not choose another as God. Obviously, if this common word was not sufficient for coexistence with natural and innate rights of all people of a divine book, the difference between the rules and regulations of those nations prevented a desired coexistence, then all people who have a divine book objected that only partnership about belief in definite monotheism and not make anything his partner and also not choose another as God, is not enough for coexistence with those rights; thus, Islam's Majesty, to which unity recall us?

The rule of "obligation":

الزموهم بما الزموا به انفسهم

Obligate anyone who is not from the same school of thought to do everything that he is obliged to them. The meaning of this rule is that Muslims must respect the rights and duties of non-Muslims, and observe this rule about them (Hakimi, 1999) unless a large deviation in these beliefs is observed such that they can no longer be recognized. Justice is a fundamental principle of Islamic human rights: in Islamic thought, “justice ”is the fastest basis of rights.

2. The Principle of Human Generosity

The divine religions, particularly Islam and the Muslims' divine book and doctrine of the Prophet provide the principle of human generosity. This phrase with its derivatives has been applied 47 times in the Quran. Lexically, it means material or moral dignity, and *karim* is a divine name meaning a merciful person who forgives the sins of his servants. Ragheb Esfahani (Mostafavi, 1991) wrote about *karam* and said that relative to people, *karam* means "good" habits and deeds which become apparent and are only applied to great virtues. Regarding all stated meanings, it can be understood that most philologists introduce *keramat* as meaning generosity, and in contrast to impudence and malice, its real meaning is magnanimity and generosity. Other meanings are evidenced by this real meaning as well.

3. The Principle of Justice

Justice is one principle emphasized in the Quran and is considered a belief principle. This belief influences all Muslims and Islamic societies, and when applied, it can lead Muslims toward correct work management and raising the flag of justice not only in Islamic countries but also throughout the world. The magnitude of this subject is to such extent that nothing can prevent it; friendships and hostility, relationship and kinship or affinity and separation cannot influence it, and every deviation from it shows obedience of concupiscence (Tabatabaee, 1986). Quran verses clearly forbid doing injustice to enemies, whether personal or religious. With this in mind, we cannot be unjust to dualists or religious minorities. The scope of justice extends to where the rights of religious minorities are included (Esfahani and Hosseini, 2017).

4. The Principle of the Heart's Affection

One way to invite infidels to Islam is financial encouragements. Therefore, it is supposed that their hearts would incline towards Islam (Quran, 60: 9):

إِنَّمَا الصَّدَقَاتُ لِلْفُقَرَاءِ وَالْمَسْكِينِ وَالْعَامِلِينَ عَلَيْهَا وَالْمُؤَلَّفَةِ قُلُوبُهُمْ وَفِي الرِّقَابِ وَالْغَارِمِينَ وَفِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ وَابْنِ السَّبِيلِ فَرِيضَةً
مِّنَ اللَّهِ وَاللَّهُ عَلِيمٌ حَكِيمٌ

Charity is only allotted to empty-handed, helpless persons, its incumbents and those who are appeased, as well as to slaves, debtors and confused persons. This verse indicates instances where alms are applicable, because hypocrites have found fault with the prophet regarding the form of charity division and asked him: "Why do not you give it to us?" This verse answers that charity has certain application instances, which are precepts from God that are legitimated based on science and wisdom, and they are not changeable. Since the purpose instances are God's precepts, they cannot be changed. Therefore, alms should be offered to

infidels whose hearts lean toward Islam (Mottahari, 1988). The object of giving alms to this group is that they are attracted to Islam by financial encouragement and gradually appeal to Islam; if they will not become Muslim, then rather help Muslims fight other groups of infidels (Moghaddas, 1999). In addition to infidels, Shiite jurists consider Muslims who do not have such a strong belief as this group.

5. The Principle of Denying Compulsion to Accept Religion

One principle about rules on coexisting with non-Muslims is that of prohibition from resorting to force. This principle is recognized from many verses (Quran):

لَا إِكْرَاهَ فِي الدِّينِ قَدْ تَبَيَّنَ الرُّشْدُ

There is no force in religion and good ways are detectable from by-ways. The word means: to force someone to do something they do not like. According to scientists and commentators, this verse denies the compulsion about religion the descending status of this verse is confirmed this understanding. The sentence is either declarative –it refers to creation and says there is no force in religion and faith, or an originative sentence- that says not to force anyone to accept religion and faith (Tabarsi, 1958); in this case, denial is based on the creation fact that there is no force about religion and faith.

Belief in the unity of religions (Esfahani and Hosseini, 2017), baseless religious prejudices and doctrine tolerance while living in the fundamental principles of Islam and the Prophet's Household despite keeping loyal to the right truth and enforcing the extrinsic rules, like all true mystics considers love as the driver of all the particles of the universe, which in case of not existing, the existence would lack meaning and conception. He views global love superior to and more pervasive than all rituals and religions and all existence under its control, thus in his mind, compared with love, wisdom, reasoning and law are taken as secondary and inferior phenomena and assumes that: wisdom adds temptation and obsessions and engages an imperfect human being in materialistic affairs, while love frees him from temptation.

6. The Principle of Benefaction

Principle regarding relations with other humans, especially non-Muslims, is the principle of benefaction that many verses refer to. This word stems from benefit which is the opposite of harm. With respect to external and spiritual matters, speech, heartfelt qualities and practice, benefit is used as the opposite of harm and benefaction means doing good and doing work in the best manner (Moghaddas, 1999). Some consider it to mean doing better for others. In

verses of the Quran, in easy times and hard, repression of anger, forgiveness and respect for parents, etc., signify benefaction. Thus, benefaction indicates answering a good deed with a better deed and a bad deed with a less bad deed. A question arises on this issue: what is the extent of this principle and does it include all non-Muslims or is only restricted to non-Muslims who are at peace with Muslims? Several verses consider God as one who has universal mercy and one of God's attributes is beneficent; God sent the prophet as mercy for all people and ordered him to do good in the same way that God did well to him. On the other hand, some verses absolutely emphasize observing relation bonds with kinsmen too.

7. The Principle of the Best Way of Invitation and Publicity

و من أحسن قولاً ممن دعا إلى الله و عمل صالحاً و قال إني من المسلمين

“And who is better in speech than one who invites to Allah and does righteousness and says, ‘indeed, I am of the Muslims’” (Quran, 41: 33). The verse of this surah mentions dualists' speech who said that: "do not listen to this Quran". This verse was sent for disapproval of their speech and with a nugatory question, this verse says that: no one is more eloquent than who calls people towards God. The word of this verse is generic and it includes all inviters towards God.

This verse mentions three features for eloquent persons:

1- Invitation to God's obedience. 2- Good deed 3- Verbal admission of resignation to the will of God. This verse indicates that if the inviter towards God, invites people with good deed and with resignation to the will of God, his publicity will be the best publicity. Because when people see that the inviter himself acts his speech, they sure that he is honest and has a healthy belief and intention; because good deed shows the healthy belief of his actor (Tabarsi, 1958).

God does not force people to religion, and on the other hand, he says that fight with infidels, so that there is not any revolt there and all of the religion is entitled to God. There is no force higher than infidels are free between acceptance of Islam and death, and there is no other way.

First, according to scientists of Quranic sciences, there should be a real contradiction between the abrogating and abrogated verse but there is no relation between this verse and jihad verses, because this verse refers to brightness of religion and truth. But Islam orders to killing that its criterion is not force and cruel, and it does not want to spread Islam by force, rather its criterion is defending of monotheism and truth. After spreading of monotheism, though the religion of people is not Islam, it does not force them to acceptance of Islam. The legitimacy of contract of is confirmed this understanding.

Second, if the verse of sword abrogates this verse, at first it should abrogate the reason of denying force in acceptance of religion, and unless this reason is not abrogated, this precept cannot be abrogated, because continuity of precept is dependent on continuity of its reason, whereas the reason of the precept, i.e. clearness right way from false way, cannot be abrogated. And the verse of killing does not influence on appearance and non-appearance of religion legitimacy to abrogate the precept that is reason of this appearance.

Third, this verse refers to invitation and it is one of the principles of invitation and says that: do not force anyone to accept of religion. If the verses of jihad abrogate this verse so they should abrogate all verses of publicity, whereas no one claims such that.

Forth, war is not restricted to the war for imposition of belief, so this verse is not its contradictory. Killing of people deserving to be fought can be fulfilled for different goals, for example: for defending of life and property, obviation of injustice, saving of poor people and for removal of obstacles in religion publicity; these instances are not related to imposition of belief.

Fifth, all of dualisms or infidelities are not kind of sedition, so the object of killing the infidels in this verse is not obviation of infidelity and obligatory acceptance of religion, rather the meaning of sedition is sedition in religion and making difficulty about Islam. Ghotbeddin Ravandi explains that: obviation of sedition refers to esteem and power of Islam and contempt of infidelity.

Quranic, historical and traditional evidences show that they tried to mislead Muslims and forced them to acceptance of dualism and idolatry, thus God ordered to fight with them so that the pressure and torture for changing belief is completely obviated, and every one can worship God freely.

Sixth, the verses of killing can abrogate the verses of reluctance, when the absolute reason of killing is infidelity, and we will prove that the absolute reason for killing infidels is not infidelity (Khoei, 1981). The following verse clearly refers to non-forcing of religion:

ولو شاء ربك لأمن من فى الارض كلهم جمعياً أفانت تكره الناس حتى يكونوا مؤمنين

“If God wanted, absolutely anything that exists on earth, all of them believe in God, so do you force people to follow?” (Quran, 10: 99). This verse means that: though union of humans is based on monotheism and God's will and desire, God's will does not want to force people to acceptance of truth religion, rather God with sending prophets and with frightening and promising them, asks people to choose belief, not infidelity; because acceptance of

monotheism religion by force is contradictory with duty and deservingness of reward (Tabarsi, 1958).

Findings

The first principle regarding infidels is inviting them to monotheism and Islam by peaceful means. Even if they do not accept invitation of Islam, still there is no coercion. Allowing fighting and war with non-Muslims is not related to invitation to Islam but for other compulsory reasons such as protecting human life, religious freedom, and etc. Islam utilizes many ways to succeed this invitation in peaceful ways. Financial encouragement is one of them. The Quran has suggested general rules of coexistence with all groups of non militant infidels and these rules consist of all close behaviors of Muslims with non-Muslims, either personal, familiar or social behaviors and moral, economic, cultural, judicial and legal and political relations.

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