Contextualizing Divine Qur'an and Islamic Concepts of International Relations

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Abstract

International Affairs are being practiced since 1920 pragmatically after World War-I and many states have been established mostly with a lesser tolerance towards minorities. However; the first state which had granted equal rights to all its nationals following Islam, Jewism and Paganism was formed by the Holy Prophet Muhammad (Peace Be upon Him) in 622 AD at Medina. Establishment of such state not only brought peace and development within but also successfully established diplomatic relations with other states. Interstate and intrastate relations were galvanized on the foundations of treaties leading to universal brotherhood and leadership and the most prudent and pragmatic treaty which was principally based on facets like equality, justice, peace and tolerance was 'Charter of Medina'. Adoptions of Qur'anic injections by the state of Medina not only led to establishment of a strong state but also caused the expansion to West Asia and Europe till Northern France. However as the Muslims started breaking the treaties during Battle of Torus they started losing the battles and territories. Much against the Islamic concepts Islam is being projected as an intolerant religion leading to terrorism due disunity among the Muslims and hypocratic attitude of the Muslim Political leadership.

Key Words

Holy Qur'an, Peace, Foreign Relations, Treaties, Tolerance and State

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Research Question

Since the regrettably incident of September, 11 2001; Islam is being branded as a religion that propagates terrorism and the Muslim countries are being projected to have very little tolerance towards Non-Muslim countries and societies. Hence effort has been made through present research to find out the true and Qur'anic concepts to deal with diplomacy and international affairs more pragmatically.

Research Objective

The objective is to put across Qur'anic concept of international relations to highlight the true perspective of Islam and the Muslims about peace and tolerance.

Research Methodology

Considering availability of primary sources and wider scope of the research qualitative research methodology has been adopted.

Introduction

In current global perspective Islam as religion and the Muslims as its followers are being highlighted as extremist and radical who are intolerant and war mongers. However the truth is that peace loving Muslims are being exploited and this exploitation is mainly due to increasing disunity among the Muslims and possession of hydrocarbon reserves which are source of attraction for global strategies. Most of the Muslims political leaders have lost the sight and forgot the value of true path due to their lust of power and ravenousness. This self-centered attitude has led to failure to adopt the rules and guide lines which were followed by no less than Holy Prophet Hazrat Muhammad (PBUH) and his true followers. Spirit of Islam as indicated by its name includes equality, peace, justice and brother hood has been distorted. Regrettably these qualities are weakening within the Muslims and due to this they are becoming weaker with every passing moment despite ever increasing numbers as compared to other religions. Unfortunately; notwithstanding the fact that the Muslims are mainly fighting with each other, yet they are being branded as threat to international peace and as 'axis of evil'. It is

vital to evaluate that Islam teaches universal peace and tranquility and lays emphasis to have friendly relations with other states, groups and individuals.

Till the time Muslims kept following the injections of Holy Qur'an they remained successful. However, due to disunity the Muslims lost battle of Tours in 1247 AD in Norther France (Italian Library, 2013) and Muslims started losing the already conquered territories.

Qur'anic Concept of Peace and International Affairs

Peace as highlighted in Holy Qur'an is one of the most vital demand of Islam on moral, religious and legal standings. Qur'an declares "God is the source of peace and bestower of security" (Holy Quran, chapter 59, verse 23). Such injections entail compliance by all Muslims to work for obtaining and preserving peace and security. The Holy Qur'an strictly forbids performing any activity against peace and security. Holy Qur'an declares "and create, and not disorder in the earth after it has been set in order" (Holy Quran, chapter 7, verse 56), (Holy Quran, chapter 11, verse 86) and (Holy Quran, chapter 29, verse 37). Islam being supporter of peace incorporates foreign relations for which Islamic states are required to have welcoming relations with every nation and best strategy is to maintain friendly relations in order to avoid fighting and wars. Holy Qur'an pronounces "fight in the way of Allah against those who fight against you, but begin not hostilities" (Holy Quran, chapter 2, and verse 190). Holy Prophet Hazrat Muhammad (PBUH) raised the sword only once he was attacked and cheated by Non-believers. Holy Quran further says "Sanction is given unto those who fight because they have been oppressed; and Allah is undeniably able to grant them victory" (Holy Quran, chapter 22, verse 39). Islam defines International Affairs in subsequent three dimensions:

- Dealings with Non-Muslim Allied countries
- Dealings with Non-Muslim Non-Allied countries
- Dealings with Muslim countries

Relations with Non-Muslim Allied Countries

Affairs among the countries are founded on the treaties which have been concluded among them. Such relations will continue to develop and progress till the times the countries continue to abide by the treaties. Holy Qur'an is very firm and just once it is about observance of treaties even at any cost. Holy Qur'an teaches that it is the obligation of a Muslim state to help the Muslims living in a Non-Muslim country once they call for help but this leverage is not valid for the Muslims who are living in the country with which the called upon Muslim country has concluded the treaty. Holy Qur'an explains "when Muslims ask for help from you in the matter of religion, then it is compelling on you to help them except against a country with which you have concluded a treaty" (Holy Quran, chapter 8, verse 72). As per Islamic concept importance for any treaty does not end here rather Islam further defines about the rights of 'Blood Money'. Qur'an further declares "and if a resident of Muslim country murders a someone with whom you are in treaty then the Blood Money will be paid to the heirs of the killed person by the murder" (Holy Quran, chapter 4, verse 92). God has made it certain on the Muslims to abide by the treaties at any cost. It is further professed by Islam that no treaties should be kept as secret. The first point about open covenants among the fourteen points presented by U.S President Woodrow Wilson in 1918 after the victory of Central Powers in World War-I testifies the validity of the facet which was highlighted 1400 years ago (Encyclopedia Britannica).*"Open covenants of peace, openly arrived at, after which there shall be no private international understandings of any kind but diplomacy shall proceed always frankly and in the public view"*

Treaties should be based on universal brother hood and common interests instead of personal interests of political leaders however unfortunately opposite to it is being done by majority of Muslim political leadership.

Dealings with Non-Muslim Non-Allied Countries

Islam lays emphasis on peace and harmony even with Non-Muslim countries with which a Muslim country is not in any agreement; for peace, welfare, justice and brotherhood. Islam teaches about the

necessity for the universal peace, however on the bases of equality, long lasting peace. Qur'an grants more value to peace, however, if war is imposed then it professes to fight till the conditions are restored. Holy Qur'an says "Help each other on the path of righteousness and piety and help not any one unto sin and transgression" (Holy Quran, chapter 5, verse 2). In order to act against any violence it explains "If any one attacks you; attack him in the manner as you were attacked" (Holy Quran, chapter 2, verse 199). Islam is even sympathetic to the people of Non-Allied; Non- Muslim countries. If a person from a Non-Muslim country with which a Muslim country have no treaty enters the Non-Allied Muslim country then protection of that Non-Muslim becomes the responsibility of that Muslim country in which the Non-Muslim has entered. The protection is ensured from even the richest and strongest of the Muslims. If the Non-Muslim settler does not follow the laws and fails to leave the country after prescribed period then he is supposed to be dealt in accordance with laws pertaining to the Muslim country in which he is residing as that Muslim country is responsible for its own security. Islam has left no doubt and has defined all aspects of international relations and professes respect for all countries. Islam professes to have friendly relation with other countries through treaties.

Relations with the Muslim Countries

As per Qur'anic injections all Muslims are brothers due to religious ties and not on the bases of territorial limits and has eliminated any kind of distinction with reference to creed, colour or nationality and has united the Muslims as one ummah (nation). Rights of all Muslims are sacred and are to be ensured by the authorities. Holy Qur'an says "Hold fast the guidance of together and do not separate" (Holy Quran, chapter 3, verse 103). Regrettably the Muslims as an Ummah in general and political leaders in particular have forgotten the lessons hence are facing lot of difficulties for being divided. It is vital to have unison among the Muslims not only as a religious point of view but also for numerous factors like defence, social development, education and economic securities. It is the obligation of every Muslim state to sustain friendly relations with all other Muslim states. In case of any dispute between two Muslim countries, all other Muslim countries must do their best for its

resolution through dialogue, arbitration or use of force against the belligerent till the time antagonist is forced to obey. Such acts by Muslim countries will not only create harmony among all the Muslims countries but also within their ally's hence enhancing peaceful environments for complete human race which can prove to be an ultimate end state for prudent International Relations. Regrettably nowadays the Muslim are not only fighting with each other but are also inviting; or helping Non-Muslims to fight against Muslim states; examples of Iran-Iraq war, tension between Iran and Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Kuwait-Iraq war, Arab-Israel war and recent support by Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to United State of America against Syria and Yemen are points in case. These facts are causing disorder in International Arena.

Charter of Medina

This masterpiece treaty was concluded between three arch religions rivals Muslims, Pagans and Jews residing in the Arab land. This unique treaty despite involving three arch religions rivals proved its prudence and helped Holy Prophet Hazrat Muhammad (PBUH) to not only to form a Muslim State but also to strengthen it. The fairness and equality were the hall marks of the treaty (Ramli, 2012). The treaty was so fair that it announced; that even the adversaries of the Jews who are friendly to the Muslims will not be supported against Jews as the Muslims are in covenant with Jews. Treaty not only harmonized various religions but also strengthened the newly formed state of Medina and the Muslims. Treaty ensured friendly ties among various parties and neighbouring states and tribes thus developing International Relations. Medina was considered as a capital by all parties and universal leadership of Holy Prophet Hazrat Muhammad (PBUH) was acknowledged and recognised even by the arch religious rivals.

Islam and Rules of War

Where it is professed by the westerns powers that everything is fair in love and war and that has been observed happening during the world wars and at many others occasions; however Islam being contrary to it even set rules for war (Aboul-Enein **&** Sherifa, 2004). Firstly, one must avoid war and try to maintain friendly relations. Secondly, Islam teaches

hence lay bar to fight unless being attacked upon. Thirdly, Islam even sets mandate or the limit or extension of the war; it allows only to fight till conditions are put right and do not extend the war for mere occupation. Fourthly, Islam stops to harm enemy who begs for mercy in the name God or proclaims that he has embraced Islam as a religion even to save his life. Lastly, no Muslim is allowed to take a personal revenge by killing someone even during the war. After defeating the Pagans of Makah in 630 AD (Italian Library, 2013) Holy Prophet Hazrat Muhammad (PBUH) conquered the city and proclaimed that the residents must be dealt with compassion and gave a few exemplary and relationship developing commandments. Holy Prophet Hazrat Muhammad (PBUH) not only excused Abbu Sufyan but also granted refuge to anyone who enters his house, hence indicating the respect for even a defeated enemy. This action not only enriched the Islam in the Arab Peninsula but also stretched it further to Middle East, Africa and Europe. Holy Prophet Hazrat Muhammad (PBUH) also proclaimed that no animal should be harmed, no tree or its branch to be cut and no corps to be destroyed (Youseef & Zuhur, 2004). The Holy Qur'an while addressing The Holy Prophet says "It does not suit a prophet that he should have prisoners until he involves in proper combat in the country. If you take prisoners, except in proper combat you will be considered as longing for the favours in this world, while God desires for you the Life after death. God is mighty and wise" (Holy Quran, chapter 8, verse 67). During his last address Holy Prophet Hazrat Muhammad (PBUH) said "Oh Muslims, those who have prisoners of war in possession, I advise you to feed and clothe them in the way you do it for yourself. Giving them pain will not be tolerated".

Diplomacy and Holy Qur'an

Islam seeks for utmost collaboration, cooperation through brotherhood. An Islamic state must extends its support to a country or a set of countries that are determined for global peace, health and benevolence and are fighting against evil. Apart from fighting, Qur'an also prohibits providing any assistance to an aggressor that tries to disrupt the peace or attempts to infringe the human rights. The Holy Qur'an declares "assist each other for the right path and pious duty and

do not support each other for sin and transgression and keep your duty to God as he is tough in punishment" (Qur'an: Chapter 5, Verse 2).

Islam professes respect, indiscrimination and liberty as the foundations of diplomacy. God has conferred respect for whole human race regardless of creed, nationality and caste. Freedom is considered as a bravura benevolence and slavery as a major misery. Islam lays special emphasis on the security of the diplomats and the foreigners visiting the country. Protection of all envoys in a Muslim country is the obligation of country being visited or where an envoy is living. Violence against any Muslim envoy will be declared as an act of war. If an envoy is found involved in unwanted activities in a Muslim country; its will be returned to its country of origin if such a treaty exists between both countries. If there is no treaty then in that case the unwanted envoy will be dealt as per the laws of the land where it has committed the crime. Injections to treat a prisoner of war with respect and to make an agreement with him to a teach Muslim child as a condition to set him free indicates many noteworthy factors; firstly the significance or respect of education, respect provided to a prisoner of war for being an educated person and lastly making an agreement with him to educate. The prisoners of war who were set free in fact inadvertently played a role of Muslim envoys that facilitated in spreading of Islam as a religion.

During his last address Holy Prophet Hazrat Muhammad (PBUH) said "Oh Muslims, those who have prisoners of war in possession, I advise you to feed and clothe them in the way you do it for yourself. Giving them pain will not be tolerated". It proved to be the one of the most excellent instances on the account of human rights and diplomacy apart from indicating a kind and a considerate behaviour towards the most subjugated.

Contextualizing the Concept of Jihad in Islam

Islamic Concept of Jihad has been and is being projected wrongly particularly among the western societies; hence it will be imperative to understand the true spirit of Jihad for better understanding about Islam and the Muslims for friendly relations with other religions and countries. Jihad means 'to put oneself on righteous path'. Jihad has been granted an

important status as it demands complete refinement of a person, involving moral, physical and spiritual facets and such kind of Jihad is called as Jihad-e-Akbar; Greater Jihad (Saleem, 2002).

Contextualizing Islam and Terrorism

In order to understand the Islamic views about terrorism it will be vital to first coin a definition of terrorism. It is pertinent to think that why a standard definition has not been coined for terrorism at United Nation level? It is vital to analysis that is terrorism is a menace or is a tool to implement the foreign policy or combination of both? However a million dollars question is that who is to decide; will it be sufferers (mostly the Muslims) or the international policy makers. It is interesting to note that terrorism which is being highlighted and projected as a major world issue particularly since September 11, 2001 is still vague and undefined and even has been recognised at United Nation level (Item 6 of Human Rights, 2013). All states have coined various definitions as per their political objectives. Absence of any standardised definition has made it challenging to formulate common and simple laws to deal with this menace. Presently terrorism is being defined as "act of violence" to "reaction against unjust and exploitation". It will be pragmatic to evaluate terrorism at United Nation level to resolve it by discussing the causes through case histories. It is surprising that mainly the sufferers of terrorism are being made responsible for it. In case of Indo-Pacific region the just resolution of Kashmir Problem in accordance with 72 years old United Nation Resolution will eliminate the chances of terrorism (Matinuddin, 2003). Human past is full of incidents where thousands of people have died in wars to achieve the national interests as envisaged necessary by a few policy makers (mainly Non-Muslims); who even being responsible for killing of millions are not considered as terrorists. However on the contrary, if a Muslim takes any action, even against the exploitation being suffered, is very conveniently declared as a terrorist. This contradiction is one of the basic reasons due to which world has failed to control terrorism. Mainly the terrorism is branded to the Muslims however world is observing that Afghanistan is even being used as combat zone among the Non-Muslim countries (Nixon, 1992). Afghani struggle against the aggressors to get rid of belligerents is

surprising. It is due to above mentioned reasons that strategy to fight and root out terrorism has even failed the global powers to achieve their hegemonic designs and to finish the terrorism. Holy Qur'an declares "God enjoin justice and kindness" (Qur'an: Chapter 16, Verse 90). Holy Qur'an stresses upon justice "O ye who believe! Be ye staunch in justice, witness for God, even though it be against yourselves or your parents or your kindred, whether a rich or a poor man, for God is nearer to both" (Qur'an: Chapter 4, Verse 135). Spirit of International Affairs is peace that is founded on the bases of fairness and impartiality, hence it is evident that Islam does not profess terrorism hence must not be labelled as cause of terrorism.

Concepts of Islamic Monetary Structure and its Impact on International Affairs

History has seen communism failing and witnessing capitalism diminishing because both are based on extreme. Communism influenced even the elementary rights which ultimately led to viciousness and revolution against it and eventually to its fiasco (Lorimer, 1997). Capitalism has demonstrated to be another extreme as it allowed earning, investment and business with very little governmental control. As both systems have failed so it will be prudent to understand and implement the Islamic system of economy which has its foundations in balance, justice and convenience. At first place Islam professes to assist the needy by just paying 2.5 per cent (Zakah) of annual saving to only those who can afford it and are in possession of saving equivalent to value of 90 grams of gold or 624 grams of silver. To one side it helps needy and on the other side ensures social justice and keeps the money in circulation. Islam allows limited loans and that too for dire needs and not for business; which is to avoid exploitation and to promote justice and makes government responsible for basic provisions. Apart from discouraging the loans, it strongly forbids to get any interest on loan (usury). Islam permits government to mainly collect 'Usher' (10 per cent of the individuals earning as tax) with a few minor collections like 'Jazya' and fund raising during war etc. True adoption of Islamic monetary structure even only by the Muslims will not only strengthen their economies but will also have encouraging impact on other countries

which ultimately will enhance bilateral, multilateral and International Relations.

Conclusion

Peace rests on the base of Islam as Islam means peace. Islam signifies value of peace for social and economic development. Qur'an says "God is the source of peace and bestowal of security" (Chapter number 59, Verse number 23). The Holy Qur'an teaches about the principles of brotherhood, peace and humanity. To seek knowledge is the central piece of Islam and this was the first message that was conveyed to Holy Prophet Hazarat Muhammad (PBUH) by the God Almighty. The All these values mentioned above are foundations of International Relations. Islam wants peace, hence encourages establishing friendly relations among individuals and among states. However due to global politics and disunity among the Muslims it is being projected as a faith of intolerance. International relations can be improved by adopting the foundations of peace, unison, impartiality and fairness. This will allow putting across the true perspective about Islamic concept of international relations and tolerance in front of the world for more pragmatic peace and prudent international relations.

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