

# **The Holy Prophet Muhammad (SAW) as a Messenger of Peace in the World**

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The Holy Prophet Muhammad (SAW) was sent not only towards a specific nation or group of people but to the whole humanity of all the times. This is the uniqueness of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him) that he was not only a great person in his own time, but he is absolute for all times, for all people of any race, color, nationality or geographical location. He was an exemplar for the Arabs of seventh century and is also a role model for the humanity living now at the beginning of this 21st century as well as times to come. A non-Muslim western historian of nineteenth century John William Draper acknowledges the influence of the Holy Prophet (SAW) upon the entire human race in his book that:

“Four years after the death of Justinian, A.D. 569, was born at Mecca, in Arabia the man who, of all men exercised the greatest influence upon the human race....Mohammed.”<sup>1</sup>

He is an exceptional standard and ideal for the rich and poor, for young and old, for rulers and ruled, for the most intellectual as well as the most common people. A French writer Lamartine states about the standard of the Holy Prophet's life as follows:

“Philosopher, orator, apostle, legislator, warrior, conqueror of ideas, restorer of rational dogmas, of a cult without images; the founder of twenty terrestrial empires and of one spiritual empire, that is Muhammad. As regards all standards by which human greatness may be measured, we may well ask, is there any man greater than he?”<sup>2</sup>

Allah sent him as His Prophet for all humanity. He proclaimed a complete code for human life called “Islam” the verbatim meaning of which is peace and security. It indicates that the Holy Prophet (SAW) furnished topmost significance to the harmony, peace and smooth running of the society. As he was the Prophet for whole the humanity, his message of peace covers the entire human race in all the times.

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The period in which the Prophet of Islam was born was a period of war and fighting. Throughout the world sword was regarded as the sign of power. This saying was prevalent among the Arabs that the greatest check of war is war. It was an age of violence and battles. In those days people resorted to violence to achieve any goal, for they knew no other means. In such an ambiance the Holy Prophet (SAW) affirmed that the power of peace was far greater than the power of violence, humanity needs peace not violence, and peace can only be achieved by accepting Islam.

“أَسْلِمِ تَسْلِمًا”

“Accept Islam! You would become secured and peaceful.”<sup>3</sup>

In the conditions prevailing fifteen hundred years ago such observations appeared strange. It was so highly at odds with the times that only the person could utter such words whose mind has not been molded by his immediate circumstances, he is inspired by some higher source of knowledge. Both the initial as well as the later period of Islam testify completely to this inspired principle. Islam has its own aims and objects as well as a specific moral values system but Islam devotes absolute magnitude to the society without any bigotry of race, color or creed. There is harmony with peace and mutual security. All the human beings living in the Islamic society are behaved as the admirable populace having equal rights of protection of their lives and properties.

The Holy Prophet (SAW) is the pioneer of peace and security in this world. He came to bring safety and security in the world. The word ‘*Islam*’ means peace, and the word ‘*Iman*’ means safety and security. The Qur’an mentions that freedom from hunger and freedom from fear are two great blessings of Allah, which were bestowed upon the humanity through the Holy Prophet (SAW). Mankind has never known a religion that calls for peace like Islam. In this regard, it is sufficient to give as evidence that one of Almighty Allah’s names is “Peace” and the verbatim meaning of “Islam” is peace. He, the Almighty, wants by this to remind people that He, Most High, is the source of and caller for peace. Furthermore, the greeting exchanged among Muslims is “Peace, mercy and blessings of Allah be with you.” Likewise, Muslims finish their prayers turning their heads to the right and then to the left, saying each time, “Peace and mercy of Allah be upon you.” Moreover, if we review the verses of the Glorious Qur’an, we will find that many a time it speaks about and encourages people to bring about peace. Allah Almighty says:

وَاللَّهُ يَدْعُو إِلَى دَارِ السَّلَامِ وَيَهْدِي مَنْ يَشَاءُ إِلَى صِرَاطٍ مُسْتَقِيمٍ

“And Allah invites to the abode of peace and guides whom He pleases into the right path.”<sup>4</sup>

He, Most High, also says about His righteous servants as follows:

لَهُمْ دَارُ السَّلَامِ عِنْدَ رَبِّهِمْ وَهُوَ وَيْلُهُمْ بِمَا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ

“For them is the abode of peace with their Lord.”<sup>5</sup>

He, the Almighty, also informs us in the Qur'an that the greeting of the believers in the Hereafter is “peace,” as mentioned in the following verse:

تَحِيَّتُهُمْ يَوْمَ يَلْقَوْنَهُ سَلَامٌ وَأَعَدَّ لَهُمْ أَجْرًا كَرِيمًا

“Their salutation on the day when they shall meet Him will be 'Peace.’”<sup>6</sup>

The angels will also salute the believers in Paradise with “peace” as the Qur'an says:

وَالْمَلَائِكَةُ يَدْخُلُونَ عَلَيْهِمْ مِنْ كُلِّ بَابٍ . سَلَامٌ عَلَيْكُمْ بِمَا صَبَرْتُمْ فَنِعْمَ عُقْبَى الدَّارِ

“The angels enter unto them from every gate (saying), Peace be unto you because ye persevered. Ah, passing sweet will be the sequel of the (Heavenly) Home.”<sup>7</sup>

The Prophet (Peace and blessings be upon him) was reported to have said:

خير الناس من ينفع الناس

“The best among people is he who benefits them the most.”<sup>8</sup>

He (peace and blessings be upon him) was also reported to have said:

“A (true) Muslim is the one who avoids harming Muslims with his tongue and hands, and a (true) believer is the one on whose part Muslims fear no aggression.”<sup>9</sup>

Based on the above, it becomes clear that the distinction of the Holy Prophet (SAW) is to come with the religion of peace and safety, and there is no

room in Islam for violence or aggression. The Holy Prophet (SAW) is introduced in the Qur'an in these words:

“We have not sent you forth but as a mercy to mankind”<sup>10</sup>

This shows that his distinctive quality was that he was a blessing personified in word and deed. The Holy Prophet held a high moral character, so that even if badly treated by others, he went on returning well for evil. People harmed him, yet he would pray for them. He would remain patient in the face of oppression and, regardless of the provocation; he would refrain from becoming incensed. In setting this paradigm, his aim was to mold souls that were God-oriented, that found Allah so great that everything else faded into insignificance. He wanted everyone to have such boundless peace of mind that nothing could disturb him. Such balanced individuals would never then become prey to worldliness. Totally free from negative reaction, they would then be able to turn everything in this world, whether material or spiritual, into food for more profound thought, rather than into pretexts for rash and vengeful action. He told the people that every religion has some special characteristic, that of Islam being modesty. In the absence of such a virtue, no community can have lasting peace. His life's experience ranged from penury to prosperity, from defeat to success, yet whatever the degree of well-being or hardship; he steadfastly trod the path of moderation. At all times and right till the end, he remained a patient and grateful servant of the Almighty, bringing his message of peace and tolerance to mankind.

His mission was to bring peace to the world. One of the ways in which he strove towards this end was to attempt to convince people that all men and women, albeit inhabiting very different regions of the world, and different from one another in color, culture and language, et cetera, were in fact blood brothers and sisters. His message was crucial, for a proper relationship of love and respect can be established only if that is how human beings regard one another. To inculcate such feelings, the Prophet would preach to his followers, "You are all Adam's offspring and Adam was made of clay." And in his prayers to his Creator, he said, "O Lord, all Your servants are brothers."

He struggled to bring people abreast of the reality that all men and women, although inhabiting different regions of the world, and seemingly different from one another as regards their color, language, dress, culture, etc., were each other's blood brothers. Hence a proper relationship will be established between all human beings only if they regard one another as sisters and brothers. Only then will proper feelings of love and respect prevail throughout the world.

Almighty Allah says in Qur'an:

“O mankind! Be careful of your duty to your Lord Who created you from a single soul and from it created its mate and from them twain hath spread abroad a multitude of men and women.”<sup>11</sup>

Allah Almighty also says:

“O mankind! Lo! We have created you male and female, and have made you nations and tribes that ye may know one another. Lo! The noblest of you, in the sight of Allah, is the best in conduct. Lo! Allah is Knower, Aware.”<sup>12</sup>

According to a Hadith (sayings of the Prophet), the Prophet once said:

“A true believer is one with whom others feel secure. One who returns love for hatred.” The Prophet made it clear that one who would only return love for love was on a lower ethical plane. We should never think it is only if people treat us well, that we should treat them well. We should rather be accustomed to being good to those who are not good to us and to not wronging those who harm us.

During the life of the Holy Prophet (SAW) Quraysh, who enjoyed the leadership of Arabia, turned so hostile to him that they went to the extent of waging war against him. Throughout the first thirteen years of his Mission, Prophet Muhammad preached in Makkah, but it was in the face of bitter opposition from the Makkans. In the early Makkan period when the antagonists far exceeded the Prophet's companions in number, it often happened that when the Prophet would stand to pray, his detractors would come near him and whistle and clap in order to disturb him, but the Prophet did not even once show his anger at such acts. He always opted for the policy of tolerance and avoidance of confrontation. Once he was so badly stoned by his enemies that the blood began to spurt from all over his body. This happened when he went to Ta'if. When he attempted to call them to Islam, instead of listening to his words of wisdom, they set the street imps upon him, who kept chasing him till nightfall. Even at that point, when he was utterly exhausted and bleeding from head to foot, all he said was: “O my Lord, guide my people along the true path as they are ignorant of the truth.”

According to a tradition recorded in 'Sahih Muslim,' when his opponents greatly increased their persecution, his Companions asked him to curse them. At this the Prophet replied, "I have not been sent to lay a curse upon men but to be a blessing to them." His opponents continued to treat him and his Companions with injustice and cruelty, but he always prayed for them.

When it happened to impossible for him to stay at Mecca as the opposition became very strong, the Prophet left Mecca for Medina. But his antagonists did not leave him in peace. They began to attack Medina. In this way a state of war prevailed between the Muslims and non-Muslims. Since the Prophet avoided war at all costs, he strove to bring about a peace agreement between him and the Makkans. According to the books of seerah, the Quraysh wanted to embroil him in minor or major wars for more than eighty times. But the Prophet did his best to avert war through peaceful policy.

The war of Trench, which is also called Ahzab, was the extreme of the animosity of Quraysh, when they gathered their whole allied groups with them to eliminate the Muslims and their small state of Madina. Situation was so horrible and dangerous for Muslims because the Jews also announced openly that no pact of alliance existed any longer with Muhammad (SAW). The Holy Prophet (SAW) was briefed on this situation, and the Muslims understood their critical position with the horrible danger implied therein. Their back was vulnerable to the attacks of Banu Quraiza, and a huge army with no way to connive at in front, while their women and children unprotected standing in between. The Qur'an describes the gravity of the situation as follows:

“And when the eyes grew wild and the hearts reached to the throats, and you were harbouring doubts about Allâh. There, the believers were tried and shaken with a mighty shaking.”<sup>13</sup>

It was a decisive war in the early history of Islam which proved the invaders to be the worst enemies of peace and hence, it was established that they must be crushed or dominated to maintain and guarantee the peace of the society. Consequently, The Holy Prophet (SAW) had to change his strategy and thus he declared:

“Now we will take the initiative in war and will not wait for the land of Islam to be invaded, we will move forward to the invaders.”<sup>14</sup>

The Holy Prophet (SAW) declared his peace policy which endeavors to crush all the hands or factors that could cause the intrusion of society's peace.

This notion and noble cause has been established by Islam as an institution called '*Jihad*' i.e. to struggle with all its power against all kinds of invaders and is a tool to maintain and guarantee the peace and security of the society. Any scuffle or violence that distresses serenity and peace of the society has no permissibility or pertinence within Islam. Islam respects the inviolability of the human soul, yet it does not tolerate humiliation and acquiescence to aggression. Nevertheless, it permits fighting against enemies of Islam as a means of self-protection and resisting occupation and belligerence.

Inviolability of every individual of the society is highly admired by Islam. Any kind of humiliation, aggression or oppression is not allowed at any cost. Upheaval, turmoil, tumult or any kind of disruption in the society is unbearable in eyes of Islam. If the society is running smoothly with peace and security, any aggression or use of force, individually or collectively, is strictly prohibited. But if any factor, internal or external, initiates any kind of commotion or disturbance in the society, it must be opposed with force. '*Jihad*' is to struggle peacefully through out the life for propagation of Islam and its peak and climax '*Qital*' is just to oppose or combat the peace disturbing factors of the society. If there is no negative force or factor initiating the tumult in the society, there will be no movement or initiative of '*Qital*'. The institution of '*Jihad*' is strictly established as a tool to preserve and ensure the peace and security of the society. Islam recognizes it as a lawful and justified course only for self-defense, resistance of aggression, and freeing people from occupiers and tyrant authorities. Peace keeping struggle and efforts would be better understood, when the Quranic concept of permissibility of '*Qital*' will be kept in mind.

There are three major bases for which Islam agrees to fight and the institution of '*Jihad*,' reaching its zenith '*Qital*,' comes into force and starts functioning. First of all, Islam gives permission of fighting to its followers when they are put into suppression and maltreated or victimized. Hence, the Qur'an says:

أُذِنَ لِلَّذِينَ يُقَاتِلُونَ بِأَنَّهُمْ ظَلِمُوا وَإِنَّ اللَّهَ عَلَىٰ نَصْرِهِمْ لَقَدِيرٌ

“Sanction is given unto those who fight because they have been wronged; and Allah is indeed able to give them victory.”<sup>15</sup>

Secondly, the permission of '*Jihad*' or fighting is given for self-defense in the case of any kind of invasion. This principle of war in Islam is expressed in Quran as under:



وَقَاتِلُوا فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ الَّذِينَ يَقاتِلُونَكُمْ وَلَا تَعْتَدُوا إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يُحِبُّ الْمُعْتَدِينَ

“Fight in the way of Allah against those who fight against you, but begin not hostilities.”<sup>16</sup>

Thirdly, Islam also dictates that fighting is legislated as a means for defending the rights of the oppressed, as the Qur'an says:

وَمَا لَكُمْ لَا تقاتِلُونَ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ وَالْمُسْتَضْعَفِينَ مِنَ الرِّجَالِ وَالنِّسَاءِ وَالْوِلْدَانِ الَّذِينَ يَقُولُونَ رَبَّنَا أَخْرِجْنَا مِنْ هَذِهِ الْقَرْيَةِ الظَّالِمِ أَهْلُهَا وَاجْعَل لَنَا مِنْ لَدُنْكَ وَرِيًّا وَاجْعَل لَنَا مِنْ لَدُنْكَ نَصِيرًا

“And why should ye not fight in the cause of Allah and of those who, being weak, are ill treated (and oppressed)? Whose cry is: Our Lord! Rescue us from this town whose people are oppressors; and raise for us from thee one who will protect; and raise for us from thee one who will help. Those who believe fight in the cause of Allah, and those who reject Faith fight in the cause of evil: So, fight ye against the friends of Satan: feeble indeed is the cunning of Satan.”<sup>17</sup>

In the all three cases mentioned above, the intrusion and invasion is made to the harmony and peace of the society by not the followers of Islam but by the invader or intruder who initiates the turmoil in the society. Therefore, the institution of ‘Jihad’ has to come into force to safeguard and secure the peace of the society. It does not mean that once ‘Jihad’ started contours any aim to cause massacre of the enemy and to further contribute to the turbulence in the society, and could not be stopped without approaching this very aim. On the contrary, Islam always aims to stop the war initiated by the upheaval factors, if the peace of the society is maintained that is the Islam’s topmost priority. Islam dictates that Muslims are to make peace with their enemy too, if the latter has stopped its aggression and accepted peace that is based on justice and giving back rights to the oppressed. Allah Almighty, thus, says:

وَإِنْ جَنَحُوا لِلسَّلَامِ فَاجْنَحْ لَهَا وَتَوَكَّلْ عَلَى اللَّهِ إِنَّهُ هُوَ السَّمِيعُ الْعَلِيمُ

“And if they incline to peace, incline thou also to it, and trust in Allah. Lo! He is the Hearer, the Knower.”<sup>18</sup>

There are many other commandments from the Qur'an and Sunnah that indicate the Holy Prophet’s policy of peace, kindness, and brotherhood in humanity.



A key factor and necessary step towards maintaining peace and security in the world is to apply justice in all the fields of life. Islam gives special attention to this important principle. The Qur'an and Sunnah are abundant with provisions commanding Muslims to apply justice towards friends and enemies alike. Allah says:

إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَأْمُرُكُمْ أَنْ تُؤَدُّوا الْأَمَانَاتِ إِلَىٰ أَهْلِهَا وَإِذَا حَكَمْتُمْ بَيْنَ النَّاسِ أَنْ تَحْكُمُوا بِالْعَدْلِ

“Allah doth command you to render back your Trusts to those to whom they are due; And when ye judge between man and man, that ye judge with justice.”<sup>19</sup>

He also says:

وَإِذَا قُلْتُمْ فَاعْدِلُوا وَلَوْ كَانَ ذَا قُرْبَىٰ

“Whenever ye speak, speak justly, even if a relative is concerned.”<sup>20</sup>

Further, the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) reports that Allah Almighty said:

“O my servants! I have forbidden injustice for Myself and forbade it also for you. So avoid being unjust to one another”<sup>21</sup>

Every kind of injustice, individually or collectively, is prohibited and forbidden in Islam, as it is antagonistic to the peace and security of the society. Therefore, it is explicit in the entire life of the Holy Prophet (SAW) that his justice and equality were second to none in the human history. Main mission of all the Prophets of Allah was to establish justice among the mankind. Muslims are urged in the Qur'an to live with justice with each other as well as with non-Muslims to carry on this prophetic mission in the world. In many places in the Qur'an Allah reminded the Believers and urged them to uphold justice for all people and under all circumstances. Allah says:

“O ye who believe! Stand out firmly for justice, as witnesses to Allah, even as against yourselves, or your parents, or your kin, and whether it be (against) rich or poor: for Allah can best protect both. Follow not the lusts (of your hearts), lest ye swerve, and if ye distort (justice) or decline to do justice, verily Allah is well-acquainted with all that ye do.”<sup>22</sup>

Justice is described in the Qur'an with two important words: *Al-`Adl* and *Al-Qist*. *Al-Adl* means "equity, balance." It means doing things in a proportionate manner, avoiding extremes. *Al-Qist* means "share, portion, measure, allotment, amount." It means that every one and every thing has a due. One who gives every one and everything its due is "*Muqsit*" and the one who takes away others dues is called "*Qasit*". Allah says:

وَأَقْسُوا إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُحِبُّ الْمُقْسِطِينَ

"be fair: for Allah loves those who are fair (and just)."<sup>23</sup>

During the Holy Prophet's period of rule over the Muslims, his just and tolerant attitude towards those of other religions, languages, races, and tribes, and his way of not discriminating between rich and poor, but treating everybody equally, he is a great example to all of mankind. A number of incidents testify to the Prophet's justice. He lived in a place where people of different religions, languages, races, and tribes all coexisted. It was very difficult for those societies to live together in peace and security and check those who sought to spread dissension. One group could become aggressive towards and even attack another over the slightest word or action. Yet, the justice of the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) was a source of peace and security for those other communities, just as much as it was for Muslims. During the time of the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him), Christians, Jews, and pagans were all treated equally.

Allah Almighty revealed to the Holy Prophet (SAW) the kind of justice and conciliation he needed to adopt towards those of other religions:

"So call and go straight as you have been ordered to. Do not follow their whims and desires but say, "I believe in a Book sent down by Allah and I am ordered to be just between you. Allah is our Lord and your Lord. We have our actions and you have your actions. There is no debate between us and you. Allah will gather us all together. He is our final destination."<sup>24</sup>

This noble attitude of the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him), being in total harmony with the morality of the Qur'an, should be taken as an example of how members of different religions today should be treated.

There cannot be any peace without justice and there cannot be any justice without reforming our thinking, our behavior and our policies. It is strange that there is so much talk today about seeking safety and security, but

very little about how to bring justice to those who are suffering under deep oppression and occupation. The world cannot be safe unless it becomes more just and fair world. Islam emphasizes the establishment of equality and justice, both of these values cannot be established without some degree of tolerance. Islam recognized from the very beginning the principle of freedom of belief or freedom of religion. It said very clearly that it is not allowed to have any coercion in the matters of faith and belief. The Qur'an says:

لَا إِكْرَاهَ فِي الدِّينِ

“There is no compulsion in religion.”<sup>25</sup>

If in the matters of religion, coercion is not permissible, then by implication one can say that in other matters of cultures and other worldly practices it is also not acceptable. In *surat* Ash-Shura Allah says to the Prophet (Peace and blessings be upon him):

فَإِنْ أَعْرَضُوا فَمَا أَرْسَلْنَاكَ عَلَيْهِمْ حَفِيظًا إِنَّ عَلَيْكَ إِلَّا الْبَلَاغُ

“If then they turn away, We have not sent you as a guard over them. Your duty is but to convey (the Message)”<sup>26</sup>

In another place Allah says:

ادْعُ إِلَى سَبِيلِ رَبِّكَ بِالْحُكْمِ وَالْمَوْعِظَةِ الْحَسَنَةِ وَجَادِلْهُمْ بِالَّتِي هِيَ أَحْسَنُ إِنَّ رَبَّكَ هُوَ أَعْلَمُ بِمَنْ ضَلَّ عَنْ سَبِيلِهِ وَهُوَ أَعْلَمُ بِالْمُهْتَدِينَ

“Invite (all) to the Way of your Lord with wisdom and beautiful preaching; and argue with them in ways that are best and most gracious. Your Lord knows best, who have strayed from His Path, and who receive guidance.”<sup>27</sup>

Further, Allah says to the Believers:

وَأَطِيعُوا اللَّهَ وَأَطِيعُوا الرَّسُولَ وَاحْذَرُوا فَإِنْ تَوَلَّيْتُمْ فَأَعْلَمُوا أَنَّمَا عَلَى رَسُولِنَا الْبَلَاغُ الْمُبِينُ

“Obey Allah, and obey the Messenger, and beware (of evil): if you do turn back, know then that it is Our Messenger's duty to proclaim (the Message) in the clearest manner.”<sup>28</sup>

One can also cite Allah's words:

“Say: ‘Obey Allah, and obey the Messenger: but if you turn away, he is only responsible for the duty placed on him and you for that placed on you. If you obey him, you shall be on right guidance. The Messenger’s duty is only to preach the clear (Message).”<sup>29</sup>

All these references give note that the Holy Prophet (SAW) did not coerce people with threat or fighting force to accept Islam. However, he did present the message to them in the most cogent and clear way, invited them to the truth and did his best in presenting and conveying the message of Allah Almighty to humanity, but it is up to people to accept or not to accept. Only they were punished who had become oppressors and enemies of peace of the society and committed aggression against the righteous and stopped others to come to the way of Allah. There were many in the society who denied Allah, but the Holy Prophet (SAW) did not punish or combat every one. But they were the Quraysh and the Jews of Arab who crossed all the limits in creating the tumult and turmoil in the society. As a result, the Holy Prophet declared an offensive policy to get them crushed or conquered. Even after observing that offensive and crushing policy, he remained seeking a chance of any peace treaty according to the peace strategy of Islam as mentioned by the Qur’an:

وَإِنْ جَنَحُوا لِلسَّلْمِ فَاجْنَحْ لَهَا وَتَوَكَّلْ عَلَى اللَّهِ إِنَّهُ هُوَ السَّمِيعُ الْعَلِيمُ

“And if they incline to peace, incline thou also to it, and trust in Allah. Lo! He is the Hearer, the Knower.”<sup>30</sup>

The peace treaty of al-Hudaybiyyah is a clear example of this, when the Holy Prophet (SAW) agreed to every demand his antagonists made on the sole assurance that peace would subsequently prevail. After great efforts on his part, the non-Muslims agreed to the finalizing of a Ten-year peace treaty, which was drafted and signed at the al-Hudaybiyyah.

While the al-Hudaybiyyah treaty was being drafted, the Meccans indulged in a number of extremely provocative acts. For instance, the agreement mentioned the Prophet’s name as ‘Muhammad the Messenger of Allah’. They insisted that the phrase ‘the messenger of Allah’ should be taken out, and be replaced simply by ‘Muhammad, son of Abdullah’. The Prophet accepted their unreasonable condition and deleted the appellation with his own hands. Similarly, they made the condition that if they could lay their hands on any Muslim they would make him a hostage, but if the Muslims succeeded in detaining any non-Muslim, they would have to set him free. The Prophet even conceded on this position. For the restoration of peace in the region, the Prophet accepted a number of such unjustifiable clauses, which the enemy

added. In this way he set the example of peace and tolerance being linked with one another.

Prophet Muhammad (Peace and blessings be upon him) undertook a number of armed campaigns to remove treacherous people from power and their lodgings. He had entered into pacts with several Jewish tribes, however, some of them proved they treacherous. Prophet Muhammad (Peace and blessings be upon him) launched armed campaigns against these tribes, defeated and exiled them from Medina and its surroundings.<sup>31</sup>

During twenty-three years' period of Prophetic life, the Holy Prophet (SAW), in extremely unavoidable situation, had to encounter his antagonists in more than eighty small or major war attempts. Total casualties consisted of about one thousand from both sides. To win over such an aggressive and belligerent people with so little bloodshed had been possible only because the Prophet always used to make the most of the power of peace. Arabia had been conquered during the life of the Prophet itself. This revolution brought about by the Prophet of Islam was indeed a bloodless revolution. And this bloodless revolution became possible only by the power of peace. In the later centuries of Islam, too, this peace formula was followed. That is why Islam achieved great successes through the power of peace. The Prophet of Islam had held that the power of peace was far greater than the power of violence. The Prophet and his followers put this into practice successfully on many occasions. This line of thought continued to influence later generations.

In the later stage of the Prophet Muhammad's (Peace and blessings be upon him) life, the tribe of Banu Khuza'ah became his ally. They were living near Makkah that was under the rule of the pagan Quraysh, Prophet Muhammad's (Peace and blessings be upon him) own tribe. The tribe of Banu Bakr, an ally of Quraysh, with the help of some elements of Quraysh, attacked Banu Khuza'ah invoked the treaty and demanded Prophet Muhammad (Peace and blessings be upon him) to come to their help and punish Quraysh. The Prophet Muhammad (Peace and blessings be upon him) organized a campaign against Quraysh of Makkah, which resulted in the conquest of Makkah that occurred without any battle.<sup>32</sup> Allah orders the Muslims in the Qur'an: "If you fear treachery from any group, throw back (their treaty) to them, (so as to be) on equal terms. Lo! Allah loves not the treacherous."<sup>33</sup>

Indeed, it is difficult to mobilize people to fight when they see no invaders in their territory; however, those who are charged with responsibility see dangers ahead of time and must provide leadership. The Messenger of Allah, Muhammad (Peace and blessings be upon him), had the responsibility to protect his people and the religion he established in Arabia. Whenever he

received intelligence reports about enemies gathering near his borders he carried out preemptive strikes, broke their power and dispersed them.<sup>34</sup>

Allah ordered Muslims in the Qur'an:

“Fighting is prescribed upon you, and you dislike it. But it may happen that you dislike a thing that is good for you, and it may happen that you love a thing that is bad for you. And Allah knows and you know not.”<sup>35</sup>

Allah declares in the Qur'an:

“They ask you (Muhammad) concerning fighting in the Sacred Month. Say, Fighting therein is a grave (offense) but graver is it in the sight of Allah to prevent access to the path of Allah, to deny Him, to prevent access to the Sacred Mosque, and drive out its inhabitants. Persecution is worse than killing. Nor will they cease fighting you until they turn you back from your faith, if they can...”<sup>36</sup>

Allah also says:

“And those who, when an oppressive wrong is inflicted on them, (are not cowed but) fight back.”<sup>37</sup>

To gain this freedom, Prophet Muhammad (Peace and blessings be upon him) said:

“strive (jahidu) against the disbelievers with your hands and tongues.”<sup>38</sup>

The life of the Prophet Muhammad (Peace and blessings be upon him) was full of striving to gain the freedom to inform and convey the message of Islam. During his stay in Makkah he used non-violent methods and after the establishment of his government in Madinah, by the permission of Allah, he used armed struggle against his enemies whenever he found it inevitable. Allah admonishes Muslims in the Qur'an:

“And why should you not fight in the cause of Allah and of those who, being weak, are ill-treated (and oppressed)? Men, women, and children, whose cry is: ‘Our Lord! Rescue us from this town, whose people are oppressors; and raise for us from You, one who will protect; and raise for us from You, one who will help.’”<sup>39</sup>

The mission of the Prophet Muhammad (Peace and blessings be upon him) was to free people from tyranny and exploitation by oppressive systems. Once free, individuals in the society were then free to chose Islam or not. Prophet Muhammad's (Peace and blessings be upon him) successors continued in his footsteps and went to help oppressed people. Islam rightly recognizes the rights of all the humanity and supports the co-existence of world religions. A Christian missionary, T. W. Arnold, writes about the peaceful policy of Islam

about the co-existence of the religions and shows a glimpse of history as follows:

“.....of any organized attempt to force the acceptance of Islam on the non-Muslim population, or of any systematic persecution intended to stamp out the Christian religion, we hear nothing. Had the caliphs chosen to adopt either course of action, they might have swept away Christianity as easily as Ferdinand and Isabella drove Islam out of Spain, or Louis XIV made Protestantism penal in France, or the Jews were kept out of England for 350 years. The Eastern Churches in Asia were entirely cut off from communion with the rest of Christendom throughout which no one would have been found to lift a finger on their behalf, as heretical communions. So that, the very survival of these churches to the present day, is a strong proof of the generally tolerant attitude of Mohammedan governments towards them.”<sup>40</sup>

In conclusion, Islam is entirely a religion of peace that guarantees the peace and security of the society. War strategy of the Holy Prophet (SAW) is nothing but striving in the way of Allah with arms against all internal or external factors which could cause the rumpus of the peace, harmony, serenity, tranquility, and security of the society. Jihad in Islam does not include striving for individual or national power, dominance, glory, wealth, prestige or pride. It is just a struggle for the betterment of the humanity and a tool to safeguard the peace and security of the society against the all kinds of insidious factors or forces causing tumult and turmoil in the society. The entire life-struggle of the Holy Prophet (SAW) gives the message to all human beings that we should live in this world (the global village) with peace and justice and try our best to fight against, if there is any factor or force creating injustice and fracas in our world.