

Peace, the essential message of Islam

• *Professor Dr. Jehanzeb Khalil*

•• *Saima Perveen*

Abstract:

This research has been conducted with purpose to erase misunderstanding of Westerner about Islam. Islam originates from the word "Salam" which means peace, submission and tolerance. Islam has never preached for intolerance, hatred and violence. It has despised violence and bloodshed and having no place for extremism. Islam is a religion of moderation rather than extremism. The Holy Quran enshrines benign treatment and attitude even towards non-believers, who are residing in Muslim state and to guarantee them all their basic rights of life and property. It negates hatred and fundamentalism and stands for universality. There arises question that how this situation has been muddled and the real soul of Islam is distorted? How incendiary norms have been infested in federally administered tribal areas of Pakistan? There is a need for implementation of anti-terror laws and to condemn terrorism in all its manifestations.

Introduction:

Islam is a religion of peace and does not favor terrorism in any form or manifestation. Muslim world is at its critical juncture and suffering is from violence and aggression. Muslims have been victims of terrorism. This situation has been exploited and manipulated by anti-Islamic elements for their own sake. They have applied blame game towards Islam. They are trying to accuse Muslim and Islam for rendering their notion of clash of civilization. This is indeed unfortunate and tragic. So far these accusations reflect sheer ignorance of Islamic teachings. Also, it is tantamount to the refutation of Islamic tenets. Islam, on the other hand, is the pioneer champion of humanism and benevolence.

To contemplate about what is terrorism then basically terrorism is to cause tension and anxiety in people. It is hijacking, indiscriminate firing on civilian,

• *Dean of Arts., Abdul Wali Khan University, Mardan,*

•• *Lecturer at Department of Political Science, AWKUM, Mardan,*

and detonating rail system. It is to create disturbance and chaos and to neglect social norms. It is calculated use of unlawful violence or threat of unlawful violence to inculcate fear, intended to coerce or to intimidate government or societies in the pursuit of goals that are religious, ideological and political.

Throughout history terrorism has been practiced in one or other form. In Greek historian Xenophanes wrote of psychological warfare against enemy population. Roman emperors such as Tiberius and Caligula (14-41 AD) used banishment, expropriation of property and execution as mean to discourage opposition of their rule. The Spanish Inquisition (Catholic Tribunal) used arbitrary arrest, tortures and execution to discourage opposition to their rule and to punish what it viewed on religious heresy. The use of terror was openly advocated by Robespierre as a mean to encourage revolutionary spirit during the French Revolution. The period of his political dominance was called "Reign of terror". After American civil war, defiant southerner had formed a terrorist organization called Ku Klux Klan to intimidate black supporter of Reconstruction. In later half of 19th century terrorism was prevalent in shape of assassination of persons who were in position of power. In that period kings, Prime Ministers Presidents and governmental officials were assassinated by anarchists. In Twentieth century nuclear technology come to forefront and dictator of that time as Stalin, Hitler was main actors behind terrorist activities. In twenty first century colonial conflicts, confiscation of properties and clash of civilizations become hallmark.

The causes of terrorism have been different and have resulted from violation of human rights, porous borders, and government's stubborn attitude, vicious circle of poverty, unemployment and ignorance. A terrorist is one who terrorizes people, confiscate their property and hinder their freedom.

Peace is the soul and spirit of Islam and there is emphasis in the Holy Quran to adopt peace. Following are main provisions in this regard;

Quran Ayah of peace:

Peace is one of most important attribute of Allah. Allah, the Almighty, states in the Glorious Quran, , which reads as follows:

هُوَ اللَّهُ الَّذِي لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ الْمَلِكُ الْقُدُّوسُ السَّلَامُ الْمُؤْمِنُ الْمُهَيَّمِنُ الْعَزِيزُ الْجَبَّارُ
الْمُتَكَبِّرُ سُبْحَانَ اللَّهِ عَمَّا يُشْرِكُونَ

*“Allah is He, than Whom there is no other god; the Sovereign, the Holy One, the Source of Peace (and Perfection), the Guardian of Faith, the Preserver of Safety, the Exalted in Might, the Irresistible, the Supreme: Glory to Allah!(High is He) above the partners they attribute to Him”.*¹

Allah has guaranteed security of life to every creature, no matter whether Muslim or non-Muslim.

Allah, the Almighty, states in the Glorious Quran, which reads as follows:

يَا أَهْلَ الْكِتَابِ قَدْ جَاءَكُمْ رَسُولُنَا يُبَيِّنُ لَكُمْ كَثِيرًا مِمَّا كُنْتُمْ تُخْفُونَ مِنَ
الْكِتَابِ وَيَعْفُو عَنْ كَثِيرٍ قَدْ جَاءَكُمْ مِنَ اللَّهِ نُورٌ وَكِتَابٌ مُبِينٌ - يَهْدِي بِهِ اللَّهُ
مَنِ اتَّبَعَ رِضْوَانَهُ سُبُلَ السَّلَامِ وَيُخْرِجُهُم مِّنَ الظُّلُمَاتِ إِلَى النُّورِ بِإِذْنِهِ وَيَهْدِيهِمْ
إِلَى صِرَاطٍ مُسْتَقِيمٍ

"O People of the Book! There hath come to you Our Messenger, revealing to you much that ye used to hide in the Book, and passing over much (that is now unnecessary): There hath come to you from Allah a (new) light and perspicuous Book. Wherewith Allah guideth all who seek His good pleasure to ways of peace and safety, and leadeth them out of darkness, by His Will, unto the light, guideth them to a Path that is straight".²

Ahadith about peace:

(i). *"You would not enter Janna, Paradise until you acquire [full] faith. You would not acquire [full] faith until you love one another. Should not I guide you to an action, which if you maintain you would love one another? [Then] spread Salaam, the greeting of "peace" [as much as you could] amongst you [in the community]"³*

(ii). *"Offer food generously to others, initiate the greeting of 'peace' [in the community], to those whom you know and also to those whom you know not"⁴*

There exist affectionate treatment and to have cordial terms with non-believers too.

Muslim has been clearly defined by following Hadith:

"A Muslim is the person from whom other Muslims feel secured against [attacks] of his tongue and hands. An immigrant, [on the other hand] is a person who [fully] forsakes what Allah, the Almighty, has declared as banned [and unlawful to practice]"⁵

Another Hadith defines a true believer as following:

"A Believer is a person who, people feel [fully] peace from him"⁶

At the time the Quran was revealed (7th century A.D.), there was no United Nations or Amnesty International to keep the peace or expose injustice. Inter-tribal violence and vengeance was commonplace. As a matter of survival, one must have been willing to defend against aggression from all sides. Nevertheless, the Quran repeatedly urges forgiveness and restraint, and warns believers not to "transgress" or become "oppressors."

"Fight in the Way of Allah against those who fight you, but do not go beyond the limits. Allah does not love those who go beyond the limits."⁷

The Quran further directs:

"But if they cease, Allah is Ever-Forgiving, Most Merciful".⁸

Islam condemns suicide and terrorism:

Islam sternly abhors suicide and terrorism. But as for what some people do regarding activities of suicide, tying explosives to them and then approaching non-Muslims and detonating them amongst them, then this is a case of suicide and Allah's refuge is sought. So whoever commits suicide then he will be considered eternally to Hell-Fire, remaining there forever, as occurs in the hadith of the Prophet, (sal-Allaahu `alayhe wa sallam):

*“And whoever kills himself with an iron weapon, then the iron weapon will remain in his hand, and he will continuously stab himself in his belly with it in the Fire of Hell eternally, forever and ever”.*⁹

If a person commit suicide with hope of becoming martyr then it is his misconception because in Islam it is sternly forbidden to take any innocent life. In case of suicide blast within seconds many lives become victim of callous act of militants. Many sons, fathers and brothers who would be only source of family earning loses their lives. Their bodies disfigured to the extent that they become unidentifiable in such suicide blasts. The Quran adds:

وَمَنْ يَقْتُلْ مُؤْمِنًا مُتَعَمِّدًا فِجْرًاؤُهُ جَهَنَّمَ خَالِدًا فِيهَا وَغَضِبَ اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَلَعَنَهُ
وَأَعَدَّ لَهُ عَذَابًا عَظِيمًا

“And whoever kills a believer intentionally, his recompense is Hell to abide therein, and the Wrath and the Curse of Allah are upon him, and a great punishment is prepared for him”.¹⁰

Often a person being despised and find only solvation in blowing himself and to take revenge from fellow beings as well. He becomes impatient and goes towards disastrous pathway rather than to be contented and afterwards be rewarded by Allah Almighty.

Islam is religion of moderation and Allah states in Holy Quran as follows;

وَكَذَلِكَ جَعَلْنَاكُمْ أُمَّةً وَسَطًا لِتَكُونُوا شُهَدَاءَ عَلَى النَّاسِ

*“We made you to be a community of the middle way, so that (with the example of your lives) you might bear witness to the truth before all mankind.”*¹¹

Duties of mankind has been illustrated as;

وَلْتَكُنْ مِنْكُمْ أُمَّةٌ يَدْعُونَ إِلَى الْخَيْرِ وَيَأْمُرُونَ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَيَنْهَوْنَ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ

*“Let there arise From among you a band of people who invite to righteousness, and enjoin good and forbid evil.”*¹²

Benevolence and gentle treatment towards whole humanity is the basic teaching of Islam and Prophet (P.B.U.H) had established practical model of this attitude won over the hearts of non-Muslims by benign his treatment.

Pakistan is a hostage of terrorism and extremism and its FATA belt is strewn with militants. These non-state actors are basically the remnants of Afghanistan war when it was invaded by the Soviet Union. During Soviet

invasion Pakistan had taken that insurgency quite normal which could not be followed by fall out for Pakistan. After Soviet exit from Afghanistan, the US had abandoned Pakistan in the midstream, no post war cautionary measures, pacification and adjustment facilities were provided to the hardened fighters so that they might be accustomed to the society.¹³ The end of Afghan Jihad was start of Pakistani extremism. The first phase of extremism started with Indian conspiracy in the shape of various bomb blasts in different areas of Pakistan. There were two important reasons behind, as India was to revenge Pakistan for its supporting Kashmiri insurgents in Indian held Kashmir, secondly, Pakistan backing of Sikh's Khalistan movement of East Punjab in India. Pakistan had alleged India for these blasts.¹⁴ Second phase was started in late 1980s with collusion of three extremist organizations namely, Sipah e Sahaba Pakistan (SSP), Sipah e Muhammad Pakistan (SMP), Lashkar e Jhangvi. These organizations had ruthlessly killed so many professionals, civil servants, clerics and carried their callous ventures until severely punished by Government as result of which some these extremists moved to FATA. Meanwhile, ethnic strife was alarming in Karachi, where Mahajar Qaumi Movement (MQM) was troubling other factions in Sindh. As a last resort Operation 'clean up' was launched in Benazir era to curb these uprising.¹⁵ Third phase was started in 2001, where Afghan Taliban infiltrated to Pakistan tribal area and gradually this area was turned to Al-Qaeda and Taliban's hub.

Pakistan is accused for the presence of Al-Qaeda and Afghan Taliban who attacked coalition forces in Afghanistan. Al-Qaeda was originally the organization with norm and tradition of Arab countries especially Saudi Arabia and Egypt. Now Al-Qaeda has its cell in approximately forty countries. As far as Al-Qaeda is concerned then is clear that it became an organization against US forces occupation of different Muslim territories and it had fought against Soviet invasion in Afghanistan. In the garb of terrorism it wants to get rid of foreign occupation and to work for renaissance of the real soul of Islam. For them 9/11 was turning point to military and political joint venture for realisation of this goal and to prepare world as field for Jihad.¹⁶

Al-Qaeda was arch rival of the US with no resentment against Pakistan, but when Pakistan launched military operation in FATA as per Musharraf's order, since Al-Qaeda has been turned against military dictator without any grudges for the state.¹⁷ The motive behind Al-Qaeda arrival to FATA was to flourish its agenda of Jihad and to give tough time to the US, and for the same another frontline organization was needed in order to escape from Pakistan state and army focus. This space was filled by Tehrik e Taliban Pakistan which remained active in Swat, FATA and so many other parts of Pakistan.¹⁸

Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan known as the Pakistani Taliban, is an umbrella organization of various Islamist militant groups based in the north western Federally Administered Tribal Areas along the Afghan border in Pakistan. Most, but not all, Pakistani Taliban groups coalesce under the TTP. In December 2007 about 13 groups united under the leadership of Baitullah Mehsud to form the Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan. The Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan's

stated objectives are resistance against the Pakistani state, enforcement of their interpretation of sharia and a plan to unite against NATO-led forces in Afghanistan and for this purpose TTP has launched a series of suicide attacks.¹⁹ TTP is validating their ruthless attacks inside Pakistan in retaliation of US engagement in Afghanistan and due to Pakistan key role in combating terrorism.²⁰ Militants or Taliban have firm belief in Muslim Theologian Ibn Tamiyyah doctrine, to launch offense against Non-Muslim and who do not concede to Islamic fundamental mode of interpretation.²¹ There existed Takfir ideology, which deem non-believers as Kafir. Ayman Al-Zawahiri of Al-Qaeda is with the same Takfir doctrine.²² To sum up, the justification of aggression in the garb of Islam is contrary to the spirit of Islam. The two concepts 'fitnah' (sedition) and 'fasad' (corruption) are acrimonious political crimes perpetrated against Islamic political community (the Ummah). To label a Muslim as non-Muslim is the taking of Allah's judgement in own hand which is committing of 'shirk' or most probably 'kufr'.²³ Al-Qaeda and Tehrik Taliban Pakistan (TTP) are interconnected and according to Aamir Rana an expert on terrorism, terrorist commander Ilyas Kashmiri, leader of HUJI is new commander of Al-Qaeda Pakistani wing.²⁴

In order to ponder over the root causes of terrorism there have been different views. Those people, who have been berefted of socio-economic provisions, unable to keep body and soul together, illiterate having no judgement of right and wrong and to cap it all living in areas where exists no state writ are flourishing grounds to instill extremism and terrorism in minds. According to Ayesha Siddiqi the basic reasons behind militancy can be poverty as South Punjab and Upper Sindh are areas which are deprived of socio-economic provisions. There is lower Human Development indices of World Bank and Asian Development Bank. Lower education is also main cause.²⁵ There are Madrassas where minds of youth are groomed for militancy and terrorism.²⁶

There are three types of forces among Taliban as, various category is good Taliban, who are friendly and are aboded in North Waziristan Swat and the rest of Pakistan as TTP, LeT, JuD, JeM. They are longing for establishing political order conceived by them and deemed Mullah Omar as their leader. They get inspirations from him but operate on their own lines. Both Pakistan and Afghanistan Taliban are concerned about their respective states and are supporting each other.²⁷

There is contrast in the activities of Al-Qaeda, the TTP, and Afghan Taliban. Albeit they have common enemy as West especially the US to fight against her, but Al-Qaeda is fighting against the US and her coalition allies, Afghan Taliban are fighting against foreign forces who have invaded Afghanistan since 9/11 and TTP is active against Pakistani state and against security personnel.²⁸ Mehmood Shah, a former security official in Pakistan's tribal areas, said "there is no doubt that a link between the Haqqani network and the Pakistani Taliban exists" The insurgency and consequently military operation in FATA had been stretched to the US intervention in Afghanistan. The Al-Qaeda and its associates infiltration to Pakistan was triggered by the US military

attack on 'Tora Bora' by taking it as safe haven for the former. This attack was carried out at the time when the US was not sure about Al-Qaeda's presence, resultantly, there are divergent comments even among the US defense officials, as CENTCOM commander General Tommy Frank commented, "We don't know to this day whether Mr Bin Laden was at Tora Bora in 2001." Therefore he never favored and deployed more troops there and adopted 'light footprint' doctrine.²⁹ Kerry contradicted Frank statement and emphasized that due to no more troops and to rely on Afghan forces has caused Osama to flee away from Tora Bora.³⁰ Al-Qaeda was divided into two groups, as one infiltrated into Pakistan's tribal areas Parachinar, harboured by tribes men of Ghilzai for which they were facilitated with satisfactory money and weapons.³¹ This operation was conducted at critical area on Paki-Afghan border and Pakistan was kept in oblivion about it. Later on, when the militants spread to far flung tribal areas of Pakistan, only then Pakistan was assigned the task to trace them out. Consequently, Pakistan military was deployed to Miranshah and Wana with Frontier Constabulary and after an arduous search approximately 250 Al-Qaeda/ Taliban infiltrators were captured from Tirah valley.³²

This leads to consistent military deployment in tribal areas in order to curb militancy in FATA as in 2005 nearly 80,000 Pakistani troops were in Waziristan. Local residents of FATA sided with these militants by deeming military presence as an infringement on their sovereignty. The other reason of their favor can be the aggression of militants, who cannot bear the resistance from these tribes. They have their own norms and traditions without any other consideration. Gradually, not only wazirs and mehsud but foreign non-state actors as Uzbek and Chechen had joined this rampage against the state of Pakistan and military with all possible aerial power which have turned it a war. Militancy get infested to all the seven agencies of FATA under myriad militant groups and strengthened the roots.

TTP is paid sumptuously for its service and in return has been enabled to maintain militia with this money. It is like a mercenary force and has provided base to Al-Qaeda.³³ Afghan Taliban have linkages with their counterparts in North and South Waziristan and they have been infested into Punjab, Baluchistan and Sindh which have deteriorated Pakistan security. Tehrik Taliban Pakistan (TTP) under Hakimullah Mehsud and some other similar groups have links with Al-Qaeda who had not deterred even from assaulting on Pakistan Military Headquarter (GHQ) and intelligence organization, the Directorate for Inter Service Intelligence (ISI) they have sanctuaries in FATA.³⁴ Pakistani military has launched various operations against these militants. There were terror activities in Swat whereby at last resort operation rah-e-haq was carried. The Swat operation was successful and stretched to the Lower Dir, Malakand, Buner to eradicate the militant's safe havens. For Army there were challenges, as they have to restore government's writ, to carry out rehabilitation of Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) and to enlist former soldiers in the police and have 25,000 police in the area.³⁵ North Waziristan has been deemed safe haven of foreign militants as Uzbeks and Arabs linked to Al-Qaeda's by the US. Haqqani

network is nightmarish for the US which has put the US on tenterhooks. Albeit Haqqani network founder Jalaluddin Haqqani and his son Sirajuddin Haqqani presence in Waziristan has been uncertain but the US is claiming so. The US has been in covert operations in the shape of drone strikes in Waziristan since 2004 which have caused death of civilians besides high profile militants. As regard the Taliban groups in North Waziristan, Pakistani Taliban groups led by Hafiz Gul Bahadur and Maulvi Nazir Ahmed are active members. Various peace agreements have been conducted with Bahadur, Nazir and other groups in the agency in 2006 and 2007. These agreements have remained unproductive and just provided space to the militants to operate against the coalition forces in Afghanistan. The Bahadur led group not only continuously launched attacks against NATO and ISAF in Afghanistan but have broken peace deal, in spite Pakistan military still abstained from launching operation against militants in North Waziristan while keeping some grounds in consideration.³⁶

Recently another military operation 'Zarb-e-Azab' has been launched in north Waziristan whereby proper strategy has been operated against militant. Resultantly militants have perpetrated callously as for instance, the most heinous is ruthless attack on Army Public school Peshawar where innocent children have been killed in an inhuman way. It is matter of utter dismay and instigate question that is Islam allow killing of even a single person? What are the real factors in background? Supposedly the coming time will grapple to cut the Gordian knot but one thing is certain that Islam is religion of peace and moderation and there is no any place for terrorism.

Recommendation:

Terrorism is sword of Damocles which has been hanging over whole humanity. It has perturbed the world. Following steps must be adopted to tackle this issue.

1. Westerner misconception about Islam must be erased on priority basis and Muslim must practice according to real spirit of Islam.
2. Extremism, intolerance and violence are norms of irreligious and immoral acts therefore there must be no value for these on part of Muslims.
3. Anti-terror laws must be implemented in real sense. All terror activities are to be punished with due process of law.
4. Civil military cooperation must be enhanced in regard of tackling terrorism and consensus oriented approach be adopted in making policies and before taking any decision so that no security threats get emerged from authoritarianism of either civil or military sphere.
5. 3D policy that is Dialogue, Development and at last resort Deterrence be adopted. Truce with Taliban has been contracted in recent past which mostly aborted but anyhow Taliban must be compelled to table talks.
6. Political polarization must be put down and all factions have to discourage militancy in each and every form and manner.

7. Afghanistan stability is indispensable for peaceful Pakistan and our war on terror has been consequences of infiltration across Durand line so all foreign elements must be eliminated from FATA.
8. Sectarianism and fundamentalism must be eradicated.
9. Good governance and the writ of state is indispensable for settlement of militancy in FATA. Like the British model the writ of state should be strengthened despite the ongoing insurgencies because it is the best way possible to counter terrorism.
10. To evolve structure according to local people value system, because abrupt turn of situation cannot end in positive goals.

Conclusion:

Islam is religion of peace and prosperity. Its teachings of safety and love are universal. There is no room of violence and aggression in Islam. The prevalent misunderstanding about Islam should be overpowered. The state should implement writ of the state in tribal areas and incendiary norms should be curbed. Moreover the policies of the state should be for general welfare so that grievances against state might not result in rampage.

End Notes and References:

- ¹ Quran, 59:23
- ² Quran, 5:15-16
- ³ Sahih Muslim, Kitab ul Iman, Hadith No.84
- ⁴ Sahih Al-Bukhari, Kitab ul Iman, Hadith No. 28
- ⁵ Sahih Al-Bukhari, Kitab ul Iman, Hadith No. 10
- ⁶ Sunan Ibn e Maja, Kitab ul Fitan, Hadith No. 3959
- ⁷ Quran, 02:190
- ⁸ Quran, 02:192
- ⁹ Sahih Al-Bukhari, Hadith No. 5360
- ¹⁰ Quran, 04:93
- ¹¹ Quran, 02:143
- ¹² Quran, 03:104
- ¹³ N Ilahi. Pakistan's Security Quagmire: Security Strategy and the Future of the Islamic Nuclear Nation. Continuum, International Publishing. P.140.
- ¹⁴ Ibid. p. 142.
- ¹⁵ The Pakistan Development Review (Winter 1996), p. 628.
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- ¹⁷ Opcit. Security Quagmire. p. 153.
- ¹⁸ Ibid.
- ¹⁹ C. Christine Fair and Seth G. Jones. Pakistan's War Within Survival Vol. 51, No. 6. December 2009, January 2010. pp. 161-188.
- ²⁰ Opcit. JI Afghanistan End game.
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- ²² Yahya Mujahid and Syed Saleem Shehzad. Discussion with Ayesha Siddiqa, Islamabad, October 10, 2010.

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- ²³ Abbottabad Commission Report. P. 325.
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- ³⁰ Kerry. Tora Bora Revisited. pp.2-3. Michael Hirsh, Exclusive: CIA Commander: US Let Bin Laden Slip Away; MSNBC Newsweek. 15 August, 2005.
- ³¹ Opcit. Yunas. The Pakistan-US Conundrum. p. 38.
- ³² CENTCOM. [http:// www.informationclearinghouse.info /pakistan- unscentcom. htm](http://www.informationclearinghouse.info/pakistan-unscentcom.htm), 2002.
- ³³ Ahmad Rashid, Interview by Farah Zia and Ather Naqvi, “We Have Not Taken North Waziristan Seriously”, Special Report The News (TNS).
- ³⁴ Opcit. Ayesha. Pakistan Counterinsurgency. p. 150.
- ³⁵ Police Return to Former Taliban Haven, BBC November 15, 2009
- ³⁶ Mushtaq Yusufzai and Malik Mumtaz Khan. NWA Militants Scrap Peace Deal, The News, 30 June, 2009.