
The Holy Prophet's (PBUH) Practical Steps For peace

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ABSTRACT

Islam is the religion of peace. Peace cannot exist without toleration, patience and goodwill. The gist of Islam's message is two things; firstly giving due regard and reverence to Allah's commandments and secondly being affectionate and compassionate towards Allah's creation. Peace exists when there is compassion in people's hearts for each other. We, Muslims are very lucky because we are the followers of Islam and our leader is; "The Prophet of Mercy (PBUH)" who not only taught us the commandments of Almighty Allah but also guided us about affection towards Allah's creation. He (PBUH) always practically taught us to live in peace and to love peace also. The present article focuses on the practical examples from the life of the Holy Prophet (PBUH) which will help us to show us the right path; to live our lives according to Allah's will and Allah's Prophet's (PBUH) will. The article consists of two sub-chapters. In the first sub- chapter, examples from the life of the Holy Prophet (PBUH) will be presented while the second sub- chapter will highlight the events from the Holy Prophet's (PBUH) time period in Madinah. These two sub- chapters will be followed by conclusion and bibliography.

Key Words: Practical Steps, Peace, Commandments, Affection, Toleration.

The Holy Prophet's (PBUH) Practical Steps For peace

The Holy Prophet (PBUH) had great inclination towards peace from the very youthful days of his life. He was known as Al-Sadiq (the truthful) and Al-Amin (the trustworthy) among the people of Makkah. Long back when after the death of Qusay bin Kalab, there took place serious tussle between Bani Abd Manaf and Bani Abd ul Dar on the issue of the guardianship of Kabah and other affairs related to it. Amidst the atmosphere of war, talks of compromise began to be made and ultimately the possible bloody clash was averted and compromise was done. Later on, when Islam came, the Holy Prophet (PBUH) talked about this in the following words:

“Islam strictly keeps standing all the peace agreements made during the days of ignorance.”¹

1- Events from the life of the Holy Prophet (PBUH) in Makkah

(i) Hilf ul Fuzul

Before Islam there was no order in Arabia. The weak people were under tyranny. The looting of caravans was a common practice and life had turned into hell. This situation compelled some of the chiefs of Makkah to assemble at the house of “Abdullah bin Jadaan” for an agreement of peace and justice under the following two main conditions:

1-We must stand with oppressed and help him either he is a Makkan or an outsider.

2-We must stand against the oppressor whosoever he may be, unless and until he gives the oppressed his due.

The Holy Prophet (PBUH) used to say about this agreement in the following words:

“I was present at the house of Abdullah bin Jadaan at the time of the agreement. If I am given a lot of red camels against this I will not accept and if (now) during the days of Islam anybody calls me on the basis of this agreement I will gladly accept (and come for his help).”²

(ii) The Issue of Al Hajr ul Aswad (The Black Stone)

When the Holy Kabah got damaged due to heavy rainfall and flood, the Quraish and other tribes of Makkah decided to rebuild it. When they reached the height where Al Hajr ul Aswad was to be installed, they started disputing to install it. The issue became so dangerous that swords were drawn and people took oath to shed blood for gaining the opportunity to install the Stone. On the fifth day Abu Umayyah bin Mughirah, the eldest among the Quraish, suggested that the first man who came the next morning would be accepted as judge. The next morning it was none but the Holy Prophet (PBUH) who had reached on the spot first of all. He spread a sheet of cloth, put the stone on it and asked a chief of each and every tribe

to take hold of the cloth to carry the Stone to its fixed place. He then took the stone himself and installed it. In this way a great war was averted by the Mercy for the whole mankind. Later the Holy Prophet (PBUH) expressed his wish to rebuild Kabah but he gave up his intention in order not to give people chance to grow misunderstandings in their minds that would in turn disturb their peaceful atmosphere.³

(iii) Persecution & its outcomes

When Allah's Messenger (PBUH) called the Pagans of Makkah towards Oneness of Allah, they first rejected, then resisted and later on inflicted brutal atrocities on him and his followers. But he, for the sake of peace, avoided all sorts of confrontation and retaliations. The Muslims were asked to hold back their hands from their enemies. It is mentioned in the Holy Quran in the following words:

"أَلَمْ تَرَ إِلَى الَّذِينَ قِيلَ لَهُمْ كُفُّوا أَيْدِيَكُمْ وَأَقِيمُوا الصَّلَاةَ وَآتُوا الزَّكَاةَ"⁴

"Have you not seen those who were told to restrain from fighting, establish prayer and pay Zakat"⁵

When the tyranny of the Pagans of Makkah reached its heights, the Holy Prophet (PBUH) still did not think of any retaliation but ordered his companions to migrate to Abyssinia. This was the first migration which took place on Rajab, 5th Nabawi.⁶ The inhuman treatment by the Pagans of Makkah continued and the second time avoidance of confrontation took place when the Holy Prophet (PBUH) asked one more group of the companions to migrate to Abyssinia. The Islamic principles and practice of peace were beautifully brought to light by Jafar bin Abi Talib(R.A) in the court of Negus in the following words:

"O king! We were an ignorant nation worshipping the idols, eating dead meat, doing bad deeds, breaking kinship, ill-treating our neighbors and the strong among us was suppressing and oppressing the weak such was our condition. Amidst this Allah sent His compassionate Rasul(PBUH) to us. He is one among us whose noble ancestry, truthful and trustworthy nature and modesty we all know very well. He invited us towards Oneness of Allah and to worship Him alone and giving up idol worship. He told us to tell truth, pay the trust, respect the kinship, love the neighbor and forbade us from doing unlawful acts, shedding of blood, telling lie, eating up orphan's property and launching false charge against chaste women. He also enjoined us to offer prayer and pay Zakah"⁷

His just nature was so known to everyone that even his dread enemies could not deny it although, out of their jealousy and strong feelings of hatred, they would often make it a point of joking. Although idol worship was strongly condemned right from the very beginning, the Muslims were

never allowed to lose patience and launch any attack, secret or open, on Kabah to throw out the hundreds of idols the polytheists had placed inside it.

(iv) Pledges of Aqabah

A short time before Hijrah took place; two deputations from Madinah came to Allah's Messenger (PBUH), one after the other. Both of them pledged Him, their word to obey his teaching. These are called as the first Bayah (pledge) of Aqabah (of twelve men) and the second Bayah (pledge) of Aqabah (amounting to seventy-three people). The teachings of peace of the first Bayah were: "We will not appoint anything as partner to Allah; we will not steal, neither will we commit adultery or kill our children; we will abstain from calumny and slander; we will not disobey you (Allah's Messenger PBUH) in anything that is right."⁸

(v) Migration to Madinah

At last when all peaceful means failed, Allah's Messenger decided to leave Makkah for a peaceful abode where he could safely establish the society on the fundamental of Oneness of Allah. Thus for the establishment of true peace and justice, he avoided war and confrontation and left even his native land. He was therefore, consoled by this: if they don't except, Allah's land is vast, and you can fulfill your mission anywhere else:

" يَا عِبَادِيَ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا إِنَّ أَرْضِيَّ وَاسِعَةً فَإِيَّايَ فَاعْبُدُونِ"⁹

"O my servants who have believed! Surely My earth is spacious (to migrate if needed), therefore worship Me and Me alone."¹⁰

On reaching Madinah he did not make any conspiracy against the Makkans nor did he gather the people of Madinah to launch an open war against them. He instead discouraged such intentions in these words:

"Madinah expels out bad people as fire washes out rust from iron."¹¹

The migration marks the start of an era that put, for the first time in human history, before the world the practical shape of real peace and true justice because, in the words of Karen Armstrong:

"It was at this point that Muhammad(PBUH) was able to implement the Quranic ideal fully and that Islam became a factor in history".¹²

2- Events from the life of the Holy Prophet (PBUH) in Madinah

(i)-Construction of Masjids

When the Holy Prophet (PBUH) migrated from Makkah to Madinah, the first action which he took ; was construction of masjid. He, alongwith his companions constructed first of all; Masjid e Quba; the first masjid of Islam and when he reached Madinah, Masjid e Nabwi was constructed. The main aim of the masjid was Tawhid (Oneness of Allah) as it is described in the Holy Quran in the following words:

"وَأَنَّ الْمَسَاجِدَ لِلَّهِ فَلَا تَدْعُوا مَعَ اللَّهِ أَحَدًا"¹³

“Mosques are built for Allah’s worship; therefore, invoke not anyone along with Allah.”¹⁴

The Masjid was built on the basis of taqwa (piety) and its aim was not to spread mischief. The command for justice and worshipping Allah in the mosque was given simultaneously:

"قُلْ أَمَرَ رَبِّي بِالْقِسْطِ وَأَقِيمُوا وُجُوهَكُمْ عِنْدَ كُلِّ مَسْجِدٍ وَادْعُوهُ مُخْلِصِينَ لَهُ الدِّينَ"¹⁵

“O Muhammad, say to them: My Rabb has commanded justice and that you set your faces in the right direction at the time of every prayer and call Him with true devotion”¹⁶

The masjid is the place wherein the Muslims learn how to live disciplined life. It also gives them peace of mind and heart when they remember their Lord and offer prayer:

"الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَتَطْمَئِنُّ قُلُوبُهُمْ بِذِكْرِ اللَّهِ أَلَا بِذِكْرِ اللَّهِ تَطْمَئِنُّ الْقُلُوبُ"¹⁷

“Such are the ones who have believed and whose hearts find satisfaction in the remembrance of Allah. Beware! It is the remembrance of Allah which provides tranquility to the hearts.”¹⁸

Thus at the very beginning; the Message of Islam in Madinah was of peace and calmness. The peaceful nature of the masjid and those who pray in it can be imagined by the fact that it is not allowed to talk about worldly affairs in it. Even loud talking is prohibited in the masjid be it even the very remembrance of Allah, when it disturbs any worshipper in Salah.¹⁹

(ii)-Brotherhood between Immigrants and Helpers

First of all, after the construction of Masjid al-Nabawi, the Holy Prophet (PBUH) established brotherhood between the Mahajirun of Makkah and the Ansars of Madinah. The basis of it, according to Ibn Qayyam was that both the groups would share with each other’s joy and sorrow.²⁰ The fact is that this brotherhood was not hollow with any reality on the face of earth but the Holy Prophet (PBUH) gave it a practicable shape by connecting its reality with blood and property, it involved hearts rather than tongues. The holy Quran testifies this reality in these words:

"إِنَّ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَهَاجَرُوا وَجَاهَدُوا بِأَمْوَالِهِمْ وَأَنْفُسِهِمْ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ وَالَّذِينَ آوَوْا وَنَصَرُوا أُولَئِكَ

بَعْضُهُمْ أَوْلِيَاءُ بَعْضٍ ۚ وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَلَمْ يُهَاجِرُوا مَا لَكُمْ مِنْ وَلَايَتِهِمْ مِنْ شَيْءٍ حَتَّى يُهَاجِرُوا"²¹

“Those who believed migrated and made Jihad with their wealth and their persons in the cause of Allah; as well as those who gave them asylum and help, are indeed the protecting friends of one another. As to those who believed but did not emigrate, you are under no obligation to protect them until they emigrate”²²

Its purpose according to Muhammad Ghazzali, was to dilute prejudice and bias of Jahiliyyah(ignorance and to undo all considerations of race, color etc so that the criterion of highness or lowness would be nothing but taqwa(pietty).²³

(iii)-Treaty of Madinah

In Madinah the Holy Prophet (PBUH) had to deal with three types of people: Companions (Immigrants and helpers), Mushrikeen and Jews. For the establishment of the peaceful and just order, Allah's Messenger (PBUH) undertook the great task of uniting all of them in a common bond. An agreement was made between the Muhajrun, the Ansars and the Jews. This is called Mithaq ul Madinah(Treaty of Madinah). The main clauses of the treaty for peace were as:

- (i) The righteous believers shall rise against one who transgresses or commits injustice or sin or spreads mischief among the believers; all of them shall join hands against such person be the son of anyone of them.
- (ii) And no believer shall kill another believer for a non-believer nor shall he help him against a believer.
- (iii) And whoever from among the Jews obeys (our principles of peace and justice) shall be given help and treated with equity. Neither shall injustice be done against such people nor shall anyone be helped against them.
- (iv) And whoever wages war against the holders of this document then they (the Jews and the Muslims) shall help each other. They shall go for mutual welfare and consultation and shall fulfill their promises and keep their words and shall do no wrong.
- (v) And if there arose any new dispute or quarrel between the upholders of this document leading thereby to dispute between them, then they shall submit it before Allah and His Messenger(PBUH).And Allah likes that this document be followed with obedience and care.
- (vi) And if anyone attacks (Madinah) they (the Muslims and the Jews) shall help each other.
- (vii) And if anyone invites them towards making reconciliation or peace and towards taking part in the process of reconciliation, they shall accept and take part. Similarly when they invite anyone towards reconciliation, they shall accept it (themselves first) and its acceptance shall be obligatory on the Muslims also except when someone fights against Islam.

- (viii) And this document shall support no Oppressor or wrong doer. And whoever goes out for war (against the enemies) and whoever sits (in home and does not take part in war) both shall enjoy peace and security except those who commit injustice or crime.
- (ix) And Allah and His Messenger Muhammad (PBUH) are on the side of that person who fulfills his promise and obeys Allah and does not harm anybody.

This is the first written constitution of the world.²⁴ Treaty of Madinah built the society of Madinah on the strong foundations of brotherhood and it put an end to all discriminations of caste, color, ethnicity, tribal prejudice. The Muslims and the non-Muslims were considered as the citizens of the same state and both the groups were demanded to abide by their own norms and in case they had any dispute, they had to necessarily submit before, Allah's Messenger (PBUH). War and peace were considered indivisible i.e.; if there was war, it was for all and if there was peace, it was for all. The Muslims and the Jews as the citizens of the same state were demanded to live on the principles of mutual love and respect, peace and security, sincerity and reconciliation.

Briefly, this constitution made Madinah a well established state wherein peace dwelt and justice ruled.²⁵ It was the first great commonwealth which not only repeated and re-asserted the message of real peace and true justice, but also succeeded in illustrating it by actual practice.²⁶

(iv) Treaty of Hudaibiyah

The treaty of Hudaibiyah was a 'No War Pact' between the people of Makkah and Allah's Messenger (PBUH) which took place in 6 A.H. when 1400 Muslims, all wearing Ihram, intended to perform 'Umrah' which means that they were not in intention of war or any other disputed activity as Allah says in the Holy Quran:

" وَمَا تَفْعَلُوا مِنْ خَيْرٍ يَعْلَمُهُ اللَّهُ وَتَزَوَّدُوا فَإِنَّ خَيْرَ الزَّادِ التَّقْوَىٰ " ²⁷

"Whatever good you do, Allah knows it. Take necessary provisions with you for the journey and piety are the best provision of all."²⁸

Only sacrificial animals were with them and they were without any war weapons.²⁹

The Quraish came to know about this caravan. They sent Khalid bin Walid with 200 horse riders to stop the Muslims. Khalid's army stationed at a place named Kura Al Ghamim. When Allah's Messenger (PBUH) knew this, he changed his way and chose a somewhat difficult one to avoid the bloody fight. Then the Quraish sent a deputation headed by Budayl bin Warqa. He said to Allah's Messenger (PBUH) that the Quraish had decided

to fight and stop him at any cost. Allah's Messenger (PBUH) replied him that he did not intend to fight them. Then Hazrat Usman(R.A) was sent to Makkah to clarify the views of Muslims and a rumor spread out that he was martyred. The Holy Prophet (PBUH) took oath from the Muslims to take revenge of the Hazrat Usman(R.A) blood. When the Quraish came to know about Muslims' intention, they sent their deputation for bilateral talks.

Finally the document of the peace treaty was written down. It was decided that there would be no war for the next ten years. The Holy Prophet(PBUH) along with his companions will go back to Madinah without performing Umrah and they will come next year to perform Umrah and will stay in Makkah only for three days armless. Also, the tribes of Arab will have option to join any group; either Muslims of Madinah or Pagans of Makkah according to their own desire. Anybody from among the Muslims or the pagans who goes to Madinah shall be sent back but if any Muslim (from Madina) goes to Makkah he shall not be sent back. On these conditions, the treaty was signed between the Holy Prophet (PBUH) and the pagans of Makkah. Although, most of its conditions were against the Muslims' interest, but the Holy Prophet (PBUH) accepted it just for peace and tranquility.

When both the parties were about to sign the document, Abu Jandal(R.A) a Muslim whom the Makkans had put behind the bars for his accepting Islam came there. He had fled out of the jail. When he reached before the Holy Prophet (PBUH) and the Muslims, the document of reconciliation had just been signed. His condition was very much miserable. Suhail(head of pagans delegation) rejected the Holy Prophet's(PBUH) request to leave Abu Jandal(PBUH) and dragged him to Makkah. The companions became furious but since the Holy Prophet (PBUH) was committed to make Sulh(reconciliation), he returned Abu Jandal and told him to have patience and consoled him by saying that Allah would open way for him.³⁰

(v) The Holy Prophet's (PBUH) letters convey peace

After the treaty of Hudaibiyah, Allah's Messenger (PBUH) sent letters to various tribal heads, provincial officials and neighboring kings. Through these letters the Holy Prophet (PBUH) intended to invite important people to Islam. One important thing commonly found in almost all letters is the sentence: "اسلم تسلم" (accept Islam, you will attain peace)³¹. This shows his serious attitude towards peace and its implementation which makes him a unique leader of the history who will ever be remembered due to his peace loving nature.

(vi) No war treaty with Christians

The Holy Prophet (PBUH) fought no war with the Christians.³² He, instead, entered into treaty with several Christian tribes, promising them

his protection and guaranteeing them the free exercise of their religion and to their clergy undisturbed enjoyment of their old rights and authority.³³

In the year of Deputations, came a Christian delegation from Najran. They were very much impressed by the Holy Prophet (Pbuh) but their ingrained habits and customs prevented them from accepting Islam, They argued with Him and he proposed a Mubahah, i.e., a solemn meeting, in which both sides should summon not only their men, but their women and children, earnestly pray to Allah, and invoke the curse of Allah on those who should lie. The Christians declined and instead submitted that they wanted to return to their own place, live on their own religion leaving Him on his own religion. They also requested him to appoint a person who would judge between them in their property matters. He dismissed them in spirit of tolerance with a promise of protection from the Sate in return for tribute.³⁴ Not only this; He allowed them to offer prayer in Masjid e Nabawi according to their own religious teaching before talking to them.³⁵

The charter Allah's Messenger (PBUH) granted to the Christians of St. Catherine monastery in 6 A.H. is, "one of the noblest monuments of enlightened tolerance that the history of the world can produce."³⁶ The charter enjoined on all the Muslims that they should protect the Christians, defend their churches, the residences of their priests and guard them from all injuries. They were not to be unfairly taxed; no bishop was to be driven out of his bishopric; no Christian was to be forced to reject his religion; no monk was to be expelled from his monastery; no pilgrim was to be detained from his pilgrimage, Nor were the Christian churches to be pulled down for the sake of building mosques or houses for the Muslims.

(vii)-Conquest of Makkah

The Holy Prophet (PBUH), was no doubt, prophet of mercy. He showed his mercy at the time of conquest of Makkah. He forgave even those who were his bitter enemies, who tortured him and his companions when they were in Makkah during early days of Islam. He could take revenge from them but he forgave them, which resulted in the rapid increase of the religion of Islam and a lot of pagans accepted Islam just because of the loving nature of the Holy Prophet (PBUH) and also because of the steps taken by him for peace and tranquility. No doubt, he proved at that time that Islam is the religion of peace, mercy, love and tranquility.

Conclusion

Islam literally means "peace". Its fundamental purpose is to create an atmosphere of peace based upon submission and surrender to the Supreme Will of the Creator and the love of His creation. Through "submission" the believer gets inner peace, and becomes peaceful for others, thereby helping in creating a peaceful society. The Messenger of Islam, Muhammad

(PBUH), is introduced to mankind, as the propagator of the Message of peace and justice. It was due to such Just and merciful nature and character of the “Prophet of Rahmah”(PBUH) that he succeeded in establishing the greatest ever commonwealth where the ruler and the ruled were judged by the same law. Dawah was the mission of Allah’s Rasul (PBUH) for which he had been sent. With this he brought about the greatest ever revolution in the world and established a world order of peace and justice, of piety and virtue. The Islamic state established at Madinah, was conceived to be the world state entrusted with the task of establishing world peace and maintaining universal order. The practical steps taken by the Holy Prophet (PBUH) are role model for not only Muslims but also for the whole mankind to walk on the footsteps of the Prophet of Mercy (PBUH) as we find no other way or option to follow anyone else other than the Holy Prophet (PBUH). May Allah help us to follow the footsteps of the Holy Prophet (PBUH) and spread peace. Ameen.

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