Comprehending Peace in Religious Propagation in Islam

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Abstract

The word 'Islam' manifests its meaning to the word peace which provides security and serenity to individuals and the community. The article focuses on this dimension of Islam and aims to present evidence from religious sources which assert that Islam is not a religion that supports terrorism but a religion which emphasizes peace and salvation. As a noun, the word 'Islam' is a system of beliefs revealed by Allah to Muhammad (pbuh). In retrospect, in its verb form Islam is derived from the infinitive of transitive four category verbs namely *if'al,* Islam is *"ef'ale-yüf'ilus"* infinitive form. The root of this word is also derived from the infinitive Arabic trilateral root of *silm* or *salamet* (peace and security). For this reason Islam is not only encyclopaedic definition referring to submitting or resigning oneself or one's person to God or the will of God, surrendering to the will of Allah (God), but also has the transitive meaning (ta'diyat), becoming (sayrurat), becoming of anything over an adjective and criterion (ta'ridh). Islam is not only the believer's submission to Allah, but it also has peace and safety that spreads right throughout to others. It is therefore, benefitting every individual as well as the society.

Keywords: Islam; Inner peace; Security; Serenity; Universal religion; Spiritual knowledge

Introduction

According to *Mustafa Sadıq Al-Rafi'*i the Arabic language, especially the Qur'anic words, has very rich meanings and derivations, as the words in their primary use are created by Allah. For this reason the word Islam, like these meanings, comes from its divine character (Al-Rāfi'ī, 1974). This is the ijaz of the Quran that has an inimitable level. It is a peculiar, integral aspect of the Arabic language, and has reached its utmost perfection in the Quran (Asad, 1980). As already stated the word of Islam is multi-dimensional, but this paper intends to focus on its changing in *sayrurat* meaning. It is the dimension which has both individual and social directions. Within this dimension to say *"aslama"* means *"sare zâ silmin* which is to find confidence and to reach safety (Al-Taftazani, 1356). From this etymology we understand that, to be Muslim is to find confidence and to reach safety and to find calmness. Therefore, Islam gives the soul confidence and security. For instance, Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) wrote a letter to Emperor Heraclius (Roman (Byzantine) from A.D. 610 to A.D. 641 which included the following crucial statement: *"Feinnî ad'uka bidi'ayati al-Islam. Aslim taslim / I invite you to be Muslim. Be Muslim find peace of mind"* (At-Tabari, 1987; Hamidullah, 1985; 1980).

As seen in this letter: *"Being a Muslim means finding peace of mind".* So it implies that if a man is a Muslim, he captures higher states of existence which give tranquillity, serenity and calmness. Being Muslim allows one to reach a new fulfilling world of the soul. As in religious terms it contains many symbols, the term *salam* conveys a lot of functional meanings from the angle of safety, security and salvation. Salam is evidence of being safe, secure and this greeting of salam like Islam comes from the same origin *(silm)* referring to as safety and security. In another example, the other form of this term (salam) is to be far from physical and spiritual disasters (Abul-Qasim and Al-Isfahani). Its complement and internal and spiritual dimensions, *iman* comes from e-m-n origin. *E-m-n* is the soul's confidence and disappearance

of fear (Al-Isfahani, 1991). For this reason *Muhammad Iqbal* says: *"Iman is not merely a passive belief in one or more propositions of a certain kind; it is a living assurance begotten of a rare experience."* (Iqbal, 1954).

Further, *Isutsu* emphasizes this meaning, namely the meaning of becoming (sayrurat) and in particular Islam is to have a new life: *"God Himself has chosen this as the name of the new Arabian religion. But it is also due to the fact that Islam, as an inner personal religious experience of each individual person means the occurrence of an important event that marks the initial point from which real obedience and humbleness begin. It marks a decisive turning point in the life of a man, a turning point the religious sense of which cuts his whole length of life into two halves (A, B) that will hence forward stand diametrically opposed to each other. Grammatically speaking, the verb aslama belongs to a particular group of verbs called inchoative'. In other words, instead of denoting permanent nature, it signifies something new that comes into being for the first time; it marks the beginning of a new situation, the birth of a new nature. Only in the participial form Muslim does it signify a more or less permanent attribute. But even then the implication is that it is an attribute which has ensued from the decisive step taken"* (Toshihiko, 1987).

Imparting Peace from Spiritual Knowledge

Since Islam imparts the soul with a very good spiritual condition, its rituals have an immense effect. Since the biggest dhikr is prayer (salat), the prayer transmits man's soul from his body to a spiritual realm. Due to this peculiarity of the prayer Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) was saying to Bilal in the time of azan *"(O Bilal) stand up make us quiet by azan"* (Abu-Dawud, 1992; İbn Hanbal, 1992). Muhammed Iqbal says that the timing of the daily prayer restores self-possession to the ego by bringing it into closer touch with the ultimate source of life and freedom (Iqbal, 1954). In this dimension of prayer that provides calmness, the *tasbihat*

starts by saying the first rosary after prayer *"Allahümma ante salamu ve minkessalam / My Allah you are the provider of soundness and calmness, the soundness and calmness is from you"*. Essentially this *tasbihat* is a transmission to the name of Allah *"as-Salam / who gives soundness, calmness"* which is in the verse of al-Hashr, 59/23. (Al-Zamakhshari, 1987; Fakhr al-Din; al-Ālūsī, 1987). This dimension has a close relationship with the social dimension, too, because if the individuals of an association are restless, then the social structure of this association will be in crisis and chaos. Naturally, the basic elements of the social tranquillity and serenity, calmness structure are in the individuals, so if they are restless this will directly affect the association.

As for the base of social association, being Muslim, entering to the safety which implies *silm* (peace), is namely being in social reconciliation. When *Muhammad Hamdi Yazır* explains the expression of Islam, he describes Islam as *"a mutual entering into safety"* (Yazır, 1979). Nevertheless Islamic expression is a template relating to *if'al vazin* (measure) and this *bab* (category) of transmitting peace to others does not imply partnership and surrender. It is understood that *Muhammad Hamdi Yazır* considers that the meaning of expression requires a second party to be in receipt of the peace in order to move from a purely individual state to a societal state. From this it is implied meaning of both partnership and surrender. The best example of this dimensional meaning can be found in the following saying of the Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) (Bukhârî, 1992; Muslim, 1992; Abu Dawud, 1992; Tirmidhi, 1992; Al-Dârimi, 1992; İbn Hanbal, 1992): "Whose Islam is the best? i.e. (Who is a very good Muslim)? He replied: *"Al Muslimu men salima al-Muslimune min lisanihi ve yadihi / The Muslim is one from whom one has no need to fear neither the hand nor the tongue.* A man asked the Prophet (pbuh) *"What sort of deeds or (what qualities) of Islam are good?"*. The Prophet (pbuh) replied: *"Tut'imu't-teame ve takrau's-salame alâ men arafte we man lem*

ta'rif" / To feed (the poor) and greet those whom you know and those whom you do not know" (Bukhârî, 1992; Muslim, 1992; Abu Dawud, 1992; ibn Hanbal, 1992) . With such reminder which the Prophet emphasized that the best of the Muslims are those who reinforce the social peace and harmony as a prerequisite of Islam. All of this proves that true Muslim is an integrative constructive element of society. In this context it is said in the Qur'an that: *"O you who have believed, enter into silm (peace) completely..."* (Al-Quran 2:208)

In this verse from the Quran it is understood that the religion of Islam aims to finally bring universal peace to humanity; all mankind united in it. A community in which everybody respects the rights of others, each one likes the other as a brother. As Muslims play an important role in this universal peace and it is stipulated that the believers must strive for global reconciliation, hence it is well noted that the expression *"silm"* in the verse is understood that Islam means reconciliation (Al-Qurtubi, 1988; Al-Baydawî, 1991).

Goodness for Oneself and for Others

From this beginning, the naming of the term Islam is indeed due to its content which refers to the sense of surrender. According to Fakhr al-Din Al-Razi *silm* is generally used for reconciliation and discontinuing warfare. Using it for this meaning means that in reconciliation each of the two sides submits to the other. In that case it is more exact to understand that this Qur'anic expression implies both Islam and reconciliation together. Namely, this common, global *silm* can only be achieved with Islam. In the same way Muhammad Hamdi Yazır understands the verse in this way and says that it is implied from the verse that Allah wants all believers to enter a common, global reconciliation with Islamic as the religion. This verse partly wishes to express that believers will establish such a perfect social setup, such as the perfect reconciliation and peaceful vicinity by submitting to Allah's prescriptions and

nothing results from insurrection, separation, aggression to Allah's right and his servants right among all. Hence, every individual exists in reconciliation and peace. Everyone should be busy with their task in security and love, and in an entire serenity one wins his world and the other future life. Thwart disturbances and defeatisms that vitiate this has the Hadith for the Muslim to be reminded of (Yazır, 1979): *"Al Muslimu men salima al-Muslimune min lisanihi ve yadihi / the Muslim is one from whom one has no need to fear neither the hand nor the tongue"* (Bukhâri, 1992; Muslim, 1992; Abu Dawud, 1992; Tirmidhi, 1992; Al-Dârimi; 1992; Ibn Hanbal; 1992).

In the Hadith, the hand represents bodily action and the tongue represents spiritual action. Therefore, Muslims by body and soul provide security and safety in the society. The word Islam contains the meaning *silm* and *salamet,* which shows Islam's function in security and safety in individual and social direction. It has been understood that those believing in Islam aim at creating oneself whose soul and society are at peace and Islam's perfect heart is the heart of man. Of course with the Islamic creed, belief in the Oneness of God leads to the unity and brotherhood of mankind; this destroys all of the barriers that are among humans. For example *tawhid* means to see God as one. The individuals of the society unite in the One (Allah) and this delivers unification of souls. In this context, one of the great functions of Islam is to constitute a powerful conscience and soul that accepts the society as a family of the individuals. This conscience and soul have led them into great devotion and heroism. However, this phenomenon had only been seen in the period of Muhammad, Abu Bakr, Umar and Uthman's and partly Ali's period is completely outside this process due to inner warfare and disturbances. Islam brings into being this conscience and soul by faith and worship. Islam aims at bringing the community within the context of a unified community (*wahdat* community). According to common understanding if you want to understand an

achievement well you must go through the process in which such achievements are gained. Therefore, to get the best understanding of Islam's contribution to peace one must go to the time of Muhammad (pbuh).

In Eastern cultures, in simultaneous historical time of the Western society, enmities continue across generations. At the time of Muhammad (pbuh) there were two tribes: Aws and Khazraj. The enmity of the Aws and Khazraj was inherent through generations as confirmed by Jung's common collective unconscious theory. This enmity brought about a phenomenon that has been incorporated into the chromosomes of the two tribal communities. This collective unconsciousness was operating in a small way and, consequently, there was much bloodshed. In addition, the tribe's pride and the culture of ignorance (Jahiliyah) were igniting it. In spite of this, Islam made them brothers to each other. This was an amazing revolution. The power of Islam to proliferate peace, at the time of Muhammad (pbuh) manifests itself in the following verse and shows how it has the ability to unify enemies and allow them to live in peace: *"And brought together their hearts. If you had spent all that is in the earth, you could not have brought their hearts together; but Allah brought them together. Indeed, He is Exalted in Might and Wisdom"* [Al- Quran 10:63]. *Therefore* the Islamic faith caused a big revolution in their souls, softened their hearts and united them. This verse mentioned above explains the eternal enmity that had been between Aws and Khazraj was stopped by Islam, and the mercy wrought by Islam that was intensified in the community.

From the deliberation above, it is pertinent to highlight again that the word Islam is derived from *silm* and *salamet* that propagation of peace is established in its meaning, hence the religion of Islam means living in peace. For this reason Islam would not permit terrorism. It is therefore a common reference when certain community learned of the wars waged in Islamic history, attempted to equate Islam with violence and terrorism (Khadduri, 1955; Lewis, 1974; Ülken, 1954). Looking at the life of Muhammad (pbuh) it will be evident that the Prophet waged wars for defensive purposes and unavoidable reasons. The following verse substantiates this claim that Islam is a religion of peace and salvation: *"Because of that, We decreed upon the Children of Israel* (for their book being the first divine book) (İbn Al-Arabi and Baydawi, 1988) *that whoever kills a soul unless for a soul or for corruption [done] in the land-it is as if he had slain mankind entirely. And whoever saves one-it is as if he had saved mankind entirely…"* (Al-Quran 6:32).

Conclusion

Islamic scholars bring this interpretation to this verse: The right of life is fixed for all spirits. Killing one of the spirits is an aggression to the life right that everyone has in common. Killing a person unjustly is a crime against humanity. This emphasizes the sanctity of human life. It is essential for preservation of human life that everyone should regard the life of others as sacred and help to protect it. The one who takes the life of another without right, does not commit injustice to that one alone, but also proves that he has no feeling for the sanctity of human life and mercy for others. Hence, he is most surely the enemy of the whole human race, for if every individual suffered from the same kind of hard-heartedness, the whole human race would come to an end. Taking a life affects all of humanity; whereas, saving one man's life is like saving all of humanity. Based on an etymological analysis, Islamic scholars show us that Islam is a religion of peace that gives inner peace and security to man and society and never orders people to be killed. On the contrary, it hallows human life and considers it as an incontestable right. The religion of Islam aims to finally bring universal peace to humanity. This situation reveals that people who claim that Islam orders to kill have misunderstood the Qur'an and have had non-Muslim aims.

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