SPEAKING PEACE AND TOLERANCE

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ABSTRACT*: When we talk about peace and stability, Islam comes into mind. Islam is what defined the true meaning of peace to mankind. Hence, the world and universe could benefit from the infinite compassion and mercy of Allah. Islam teaches and advises every Muslim to treat everyone, either Muslim or non-Muslim with gratitude and justice, to help and protect the innocent and the needy. To stop evil and all evil shaped in the form of chaos, unrest, instability, fear and terror which destroys the concept of all peace and tranquility. If we look at the orders of Allah and the Seerah of Nabi (SAW), we learn that they order their followers to restrain from evil, oppression, war, killing and blood shed, because all of this is forbidden in Islam. Who so ever does not follow this order has been declared as the followers and the workers of Satan.*
KEYWORDS: *Peace, tolerance, Islamic society, Islam promotes peace and tolerance.*

Introduction:

Islam has given all the Muslims the order of creating an environment of freedom and discipline where ever they go and whoever they come across in their dealings. That is why Islam teaches equality amongst all sorts of people, no matter which religion, language or cultural group they belong to. Islam taught us how to live with peace and tranquility, and above all it teaches everyone the most important lesson of all, which is tolerance for each other.

In the society which adapts, implements and follows the teachings of Nabi(SAW), the followers of any church, synagogue, temple or any place of worship can safely practice. These followers may practice any religion free from any resistance, hindrance or difficulty. There will be no lack of peace or terrorism.

Islam made it loud and clear 1400 years ago that Islam is a religion of tranquility, nonviolence and peace. It teaches us to treat mankind with mercy, sympathy and justice.

As Allah says: *"Surely Allah enjoins the doing of justice and the doing of good (to others) and the giving to the kindred, and He forbids indecency and evil and rebellion; He admonishes you that you may be mindful.* [1]

All religions preach love, mercy and peace and are completely against terrorism. Intolerance, extremism and racism that happen every day in the name of religion are due to the misconception and lack of understanding about religion. Due to this misunderstanding of the true religion they end up doing more evil than good. Thus it is necessary that when one wants to make an honest opinion about a certain religion, he must not use such examples. To understand any religion, the best method is to study the origin of the religious theology.

The origin of Islamic theology is the Quran and the life i.e. Seerah of Nabi (SAW). The foundation of these theories of all the Holy Books, are based on morality, love,

mercy, humility, sacrifice, tolerance, peace and tranquility. Thus, when a Muslim spends his life in the light of these views he becomes soft hearted, caring, humble, honorable, just and trustworthy. He becomes a person who spreads love, respect, friendship, happiness and joy amongst all those that surround him.

Similarly, all those Christians and Jews who truly follow the Holy Bible and Torah will have the same experience and feelings. The Magnificent Quran is such a divine book that was revealed to guide mankind towards The path favored by Allah (Sirat ul Musthaqeem). In this divine scripting Allah has ordered mankind, to adapt the best of all character (Ikhlaq e Husna) i.e. this character includes the attributes of love, mercy, tolerance and sympathy.

The word "Islam" is used for peace [2]. and tranquility. Islam came to teach mankind about the infinite mercy of Allah, which He wants to shower upon this earth. Allah calls all mankind towards Islamic morality, through which the whole world may receive the mercy, sympathy, compassion, peace and tranquility of Islam. This is only possible if one follows his life according to the teachings of the Quran.

The Quran has made it compulsory for every man to treat another human, with the same compassion equality and justice, whether he is Muslim or a non-Muslim. It also teaches to help and protect the needy and handicapped, and to stop evil from spreading. These evils include all types of unrest, chaos, terrorism and intolerance which lead to the destruction of the security of all peace, comfort and ease in one's life. *"Allah does not love mischief making"*[3]

To kill an innocent human being for no reason is a great evil and a corrupt act. Allah has repeated this in the Quran just as it was ordered in the Torah and Bible before it.

As Allah says: *For this reason, did We prescribe to the children of Israel that whoever slays a soul, unless it be for manslaughter or for mischief in the land, it is as though he slew all men; and whoever saves one life, it is as though he saved all humanity; and certainly Our apostles came to them with clear arguments, but even after that many of them certainly act extravagantly in the land.* [4]

From this we are clearly informed that murdering and bloodshed is a grave and major sin. Whoever disobeys this order and spreads chaos and corruption on this earth,

Allah says about them in the Quran; *"The way (to blame) is only against those who oppress men and revolt in the earth unjustly; these shall have a painful punishment."*[5] *In another verse Allah condemns chaos and corruption .*[6]

"And those who break the covenant of Allah after its confirmation and cut asunder that which Allah has ordered to be joined and make mischief in the land as for those upon them shall be curse and they shall have the evil (issue) of the abode".[7]

In another verse Allah condemns: "And do not make mischief in the earth after its reformation, and call on Him fearing and hoping; surely the mercy of Allah is night to those who do good (to others)"[8]

In today's day and age tragic cases of terrorism, mass murder, bloodshed and ethnic cleansing are taking place all over the world. Innocent human beings are being slaughtered in cold blood. These counties are drowning in the blood of innocent

people killed by fellow humans, whose hearts are full of hatred for each other based on false, manmade and artificial grounds and reasons

These acts of terrorism are surfacing under false pretenses and motives in different places of the world, where the cultural and traditional history don't show any evidence of favoring terrorism. Hence, it is crystal clear and proven that the root cause is due to the ignorance of religion. As religion brings characteristics and attributes in mankind like, morality, love, respect, honor and tolerance

When mankind loses a firm grasp on religion he loses the qualities and virtues like God fearing and God consciousness and the concept of Judgment day. They forget that they will be tried in the court of Allah for all their corruption and evil doings. They lose the concepts and belief in mercy, compassion, morality and god consciousness.

Those who perform such acts in the name of religion, in reality are very corrupt and disturbed people. As in the Quran, Allah has described those people who swore to assassinate the Holy Prophet (SAW).

As Allah says; *"And there were in the city nine persons who made mischief in the land and did not act aright"*

"They said; swear to each other by Allah that we will certainly make a sudden attack on him and his family at night, then we will say to his heir; We did not witness the destruction of his family, and we are most surely truthful'

"And they planned a plan, and we panned our plan while they perceived not. [9]

From this historical event it is clearly proven that even though these people expose themselves as religious followers, it definitely does not mean that whatever they are doing is allowed by the religion. Instead, on the contrary this is against the will of Allah and the moral values and the teachings of Islam.

Therefore, it is impossible for any human to be a God fearing person who is well aware of the true essence of religion and at the same time be one who creates and helps in the spreading of chaos, corruption, torture and oppression.

As Allah says: *"And when he turns back he runs along in the land that he may cause mischief in it and destroy the tillage and the stock, and Allah does not love mischief making" "And when it is said to him, '' Fear Allah", he is tempted by arrogance to (commit) sin; therefore, hell is sufficient for him, and certainly it is an evil resting place. Baqarah.*[10]

Such people don't care about these tragedies unless they are personally affected by them. This shows that we have lost the true essence of the teachings of religion, like selflessness, brotherhood, honesty and the urge to help one another. In order to get rid of all the chaos and unrest in this world, the very first thing that should be done is that we must get rid of non- religious beliefs by educating people through open forms about these false beliefs which have been wrongly innovated and entered into the lives of mankind in the name of religion.

The most important lesson which must be taught is creating God Consciousness and the awareness of a Supreme Power.

Islam has clarified such key principles in peace keeping that even today if we follow these principles the world would become the pinnacle of peace. For example, Islam has gotten rid of injustice in society. When injustice becomes rampant in a society, then it loses existence of tolerance, compassion and forgiveness. This is why every religion orders mankind to live with fairness and justice. It is further advised that we should not divide amongst each other into casts and groups, to protect one another's rights, to condemn torture and oppression, to raise our voice against and condemn the oppressor and help and protect the oppressed and needy, Before giving the verdict about any conflict, we must listen to both sides, put honesty above all races, regardless that we have sympathy and compassion in our hearts, We must make sure that our judgment not be clouded or effected by or emotions. A person who has a firm grasp on justice will always keep his emotions in check and never be biased by his personal beliefs while coming to a decision.

He should try to be firm with both parties and always take the side of those who are right. He should never leave the path of the truth and honesty. He should care more for the gain and benefit of others and not his own, even if he has to sacrifice his own personal gain or benefit. Then only can we produce a society full of peace and calm, which is exactly what Islam wants.

As Allah says: *"If you judge between them with equity; surely Allah loves those who judge equitably"*[11] *"O you who believe: be maintainers of justice, bearers of witness of Allah's sake, though it may be against your own selves or (your) parents or near relatives; If he be rich or poor, Allah is nearer to them both in compassion; therefore, do not follow (your) low desires, lest you deviate: and if you swerve or turn aside, then surely Allah is aware of what you do."*[12] *"O you who believe! Be upright for Allah, bearers of witness with justice, and let not hatred of a people incite you not to act equitable: act equitably, that is nearer to piety, and be careful of (your duty to) Allah; surely Allah is Aware of what you do"*[13]

The world that we live in consists of different societies, where there are different religions and beliefs, like Christians, Jews, Muslims, Buddhists, Hindus, Monotheists, and Atheists. Hence the followers of these different religions should try to be more tolerant to those who don't share the same beliefs as they do. If anyone opposes their beliefs then they should try to forgive them and try to be just, fair and flexible in their dealings. In any given society, if people are forced to follow the beliefs of a certain religion, it is completely wrong and is against all Semitic religions. This will become like a poison for the establishment of peace and tranquility in the society.

The majority population of people is based on the followers of different religions. In life many hardships either political, economic, or social difficulties or injustices are unmasked due to religious intolerance.

There are without any doubt many other reasons for the hardship and injustice of society like the cast and creed systems, economic injustice, grouping, and sectarianism on the grounds of color, creed, language and prejudice towards each other. This is why we need equality in both economics and culture. However, all the

other evils and hardships that are present in life overall are due to the result of intolerance. If we put a stop to this intolerance, then as a result we can end many flaws and discrepancies in our society. Instead of veering towards intolerance and violent behavior due to religious prejudice, if we just increase our tolerance towards the followers of different religions and allow them to freely practice and participate in their religious customs and rituals, then we can very easily change our hostile environment into one of peace and tranquility. Along with this, Islam gives us the teachings of forgiveness and compassion, patience and tolerance, time and time again in order to keep a peaceful society.

As Allah says; *"Take to forgiveness and enjoin good and turn aside from the ignorant"[14]*

Islam has ordered its followers, to create an environment of freedom and tolerance wherever they go. Due to this reason, Muslims have been able to teach the followers of different religions, languages and traditions to live peacefully together.

Religious tolerance is the only path which can decrease religious differences and can contain them within their limits. By increasing mutual friendship and love, we can only bring to life a wonderful environment of culture and traditions. This exact path of religious tolerance if followed can free our society from all the torment, oppression, killing, bloodshed and destruction.

Those societies that hold high moral values will have mosques, churches, and synagogues that are safe form any violence and destruction, where the followers can practice freely. The reality is that true intolerance can only bring peace and tranquility under the condition that is completely genuine.

To bring peace to the society it is necessary to adapt and make certain attributes a mandatory part of life, then all the obstacles that our society faces in reforming peace and advancing towards the most peaceful and civilized society becomes easier.

Patience and Compassion:

By patience and forgiveness for each other the brotherhood attained by the result of this will lead to peace, development and happiness. Political activities are correct and fruitful. The nation's economics are used for national interests. The public and national leadership goes in the hands of non-prejudiced parties. With these changes both the rich and poor form a trustworthy relationship: their peaceful environment is formed.

Decreasing Violence and Increasing Mutual help:

Tolerance for each other in society increases by decreasing violent behavior, and by increasing mutual help and relationships; this increases peace on a bigger and broader scale which leads to the improvement in cultural relations.

Settling differences through open dialogue:

Nowadays minor differences lead to very complicated conflicts, when all this can be avoided by mere conversation and communication. Therefore, in order for us to make this possible, we must permanently try to settle even the most extreme differences by dialogue. To settle religious differences, we must make religious tolerance our permanent principal. If we constantly adapt religious tolerance as one of our key principles of life, then our personal lives

and the lives of those around us will be free of any tensions and we will be able to comfortably live our lives together.

Promoting a happy environment:

Without tolerance it is impossible to promote a happy environment. In reality the positivity brought by the combining of various national traditions come together and help in promoting a happy environment.

Humanitarianism: Humanitarian work, good will and promoting such efforts are one of the main factors which will lead to a peaceful environment. In order for this to materialize, it is necessary to have unity amongst each other. Because through this we can build a peaceful environment, where there will be no favoring or monopoly, and every person gets his individual chance to develop, grow and advance in life successfully. In this era the call of the day is that we arrange our lives so that we may adapt a promoting and developing system. We need to give a new life to this chaotic system. We need to get rid of hunger, poverty, disease, ignorance, inferiority complexes, and oppression. Replace them with peace and tranquility, economic stability and development in science and technology.

In order to gain all this, we must have an unemotional, positive and realistic attitude, so we can raise the level of human potential to such high standards, that humanity is given its due respect.

Robert Mugabe says: We should respect all human life no matter what color or race they belong to. There is nothing more important than sanctity of life and human life itself. We should make an effort to build a free society. Where people of different points of views, whether they belong to a certain color, belief or cultural have the right to take part in all economic or political activities.

A person's cultural, scientific and technological development, the societies, social development and the establishment of world peace can only be made possible if mankind performs all his affairs and dealings with honesty and hard work. Along with this it is necessary that the leadership be in strong hands of leaders who can play vital roles in the leadership of the people. It should be made clear that it is mankind's purpose of existence to get rid of the problems and obstacles in life like poverty, ignorance, disease, oppression and injustice. Then it is to improve the economy, development of political awareness, character building, spiritual refinement, fulfilling the rights of others, and the overall correction of society.

The success of these improvements is only possible if the social structure is based on strong leadership at every level of the system, which will make a serious effort in answering all the questions of the public.

The current societies of today's world are structured in the whirlpool of ignorance, greed, superiority, and the oppression of the people. Thus a realistic attitude can only help get humanity out of such volatile situations. When we talk about the development and betterment of humanity, then we must first and foremost keep in mind the true meaning, importance and purpose of human life.

Then we should correct our point of view about the world that we live in. We have to study world history and decide our role in the society in light of our capacity to think and make decisions. We must adapt this mode of life for the sake of the improvement of the standards of economic, cultural, and political performance, and along with this work on unity and world peace.

Allah is the God and creator of all humanity. He is not only the God for a specific group of people or a certain part of the world. To love God practically means to love humanity i.e. to help each other. This perspective is the key aspect in bringing a change in humanity and the society. This is a new frame of mind about life. This new and better frame of mind brings a better lifestyle. Such a mindset brings a better and deeper understanding about life and also improves our united purpose in life. If we truly love Allah, then each and every one of us will love each other because we are all Allah's creations. Every human has a direct connection with Allah. Allah is real, he is alive, He is near and he guides people and blesses those who ask him for help.

The Quran, Torah and the Bible all three Holy Books describe the oneness of God. In Monotheism everyone agrees on the belief in the oneness of God and they also preach the guidance towards a similar path of life. The foundation of the teachings of all three books is that all humanity are the followers of one same belief and reality.

Therefore, Dennis Wrigley writes in his book "One Lord One People, The story of the Maranatha Community"

"Faith is a gift from God, organized religion is manmade. As we gather together to examine our faith we are repeatedly drawn to the realization that our loyalty must always be to God and to nothing less.

Faith takes us beyond reason into the very mystery of God himself and his plans for us. It involves us in the risk of following him no matter where he may lead. Faith, in human terms, is unpredictable and challenging. Before God it is an acknowledgement that he is our Father and that he knows what he is about, even though his plan may be temporarily hidden from our understanding". [15]

We can only bring the belief in Allah into our lives by realizing the need to unite with the hungry, thirsty, demoralized and oppressed, and we have empathy for them, their emotions and their physical needs. When we have attained the simplicity of love and have developed a true relationship and justice becomes our motto, as justice is the fundamental building block on which human relationship and social development are based on. This can neither be replaced with chaos, destruction or war.

As Dennis Wrigley says: *"The magnitude of destructive forces at work in the world today is enormous. The multi-billion Mafia organization operates on a global scale corrupting, degrading and killing. The sister drug trade is now an international business in destruction. Pornography has mushroomed into a multi mullion business. Secret societies such as the triads in Hong Kong and elsewhere undermine society and wreck human relationships. The occult of Haiti and many other lands brings fear and degradation. Crime is growing on an international scale and serious assaults on children and the elderly have now reached monumental proportions. Added to this the world powers continue to spend huge sums on arms when millions go short of the basic necessities of life".*

(One Lord, One People) page number 78. Marshall Morgan and Scott Publications, Basingstoke's, Hants, RG23 7 LP, UK

Our Holy Prophet Nabi (SAW)'s life is an example for us. Our Holy Prophet Nabi (SAW) signed a treaty with the Christians of Najran, which leads the torch for tolerance. The more we focus on the conditions of the treaty, the easier it becomes for us to adapt the path of tolerance, which can be applied to attain complete world peace. The conditions of the treaty were as follows:

1. The protection of all churches, chapels, monasteries, guest houses, whether they are in the mountains or in open fields in dark caves or inside the city, in a valley or in the desert, they are under my responsibility.
2. The protection of the beliefs, rituals, culture and religion of the other party and the groups involved are my responsibility.
3. The priests, monks and travelers will not be terminated from their respective duties.
4. I will not interfere in these houses of worship
5. Nor will I convert them into Mosques
6. Nor will I use the guest houses or Inns.
7. I will not force a Christian to become Muslim.
8. In the court of law and social affairs they will have equal rights.
9. If there is a Christian woman in a Muslims house, she has the right to perform and practice her religious customs, she can ask her scholars about any religious issue whenever she wants, whoever condemns his Christian wife from her religious customs is a defaulter of the treaty from Allah and His Messenger, thus is worthy of Allah's wrath and punishment.
10. If they want to repair or renovate their churches or monasteries or historic buildings and need financial help or moral support from the Muslims, then the Muslims will willfully oblige.[17]

The last Sermon is based upon similar principles, which makes this statement crystal clear that Our Holy Prophet Nabi (SAW) valued peace and tranquility, as Nabi (SAW) personally made endless efforts for the solidarity of Peace and Tranquility.

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(7) Al –Quran- Ar-Raad (13:25)
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