

## Islam: A Religion of Global Peace

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### **Abstract**

*Islam is a religion derived from the Arabic word “Salam”, means “peace”. Here, it means peace with Allah as the sole creator of all humans, animals, plants, angels, jinn etc. It also means total submission to the will and command of Allah. As a religion of global peace, Islam has bequeathed to humanity a civilization that has presented itself as the greatest heritage that bestowed to humanity enlightenment, knowledge and prosperity, thereby redeeming mankind from the misery and. Even, when Islam was conquered and dominated by foreign powers, its influence has remained unlike other civilizations remained. It resisted eliminations or even complete burial in the sounds of time. This, was made possible because of the great importance attached to knowledge and the pursuance of it by Islam as can be seen from the Qur’an, the Hadith and books of scholars of Islam. This closely links to the great qualities of peace making exhibited by the prophet of Islam Muhammad (SAW), the role model per excellence the world had ever produced. The Qur’an and Hadith are so fundamental on peace and peacemaking. Both the Qur’an and Hadith have turned the ignorant and ruthless society into a beacon of peace with scandalous characters turned into righteous servants of the Almighty, Who lived with love and fear of Allah, and His glory with him deeply set in their refined hearts. Thus, Islam as religion of global peace has a lot to offer on the problems of insecurity in Africa. The paper intends to show the position of peace in Islam as a solution to the problem of insecurity particularly in Africa.*

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## **Introduction**

Islam is a religion derived from the Arabic word “Salam” which means among other things, peace, purity, submission and obedience. In the religious sense of the word, Islam means submission to the will of God and obedience to His laws. The connection between the original and the religious meanings of the word is strong and obvious. Only through submission to the will of God and obedience to the laws can one achieve true peace and enjoy lasting purity” (Abdallati, 2007). It is by obeying the laws of Allah the creator that true peace will be achieved. In the Glorious Qur’an, Allah says”: But if they inclined to peace, you also incline to it, and put your trust in Allah, verily He is the All-Hearer, the All-Knower” (Q 8:61). By the above verse, the prophet peace be upon Him was encouraged to establish peace with all peace lovers.

The prophet also motivated his followers to put trust in Allah, the most merciful and beneficent. Allah promised protection to the prophet and all peace lovers. He has assured the prophet and Muslim His full protection and help against any peace breaker whether as an individual or community however powerful he or they may be. To appreciate how Islam approaches the question of peace, one has only to consider a few elementary facts about Islam. Peace and Islam are derived from the same root and may be consider synonymous. One of God’s names is peace. The concluding words of the daily prayers of every Muslim are words of peace. The greeting of the Muslims when they return to God is peace. The daily salutations among the Muslims are expressions of peace. The adjective Muslim means in a sense peaceful. Heaven in Islam is the abode of peace. These facts made Islam a religion of global peace (Abdallati, 2007).

## **Why do We Need Peace?**

Peace is needed because all positive activities can only take place in an atmosphere of peace, it is only in the peaceful atmosphere that normal relationship between people are established. Peace enable love and friendship to exist so also, constructive and creative activities could flourish in a peaceful atmosphere, peace lead to the development of academic and intellectual advancement in technology, science, economy, politics and even in religion

## **The Light of Islam under Prophet Muhammad (SAW)**

Islam under Prophet Muhammad peace and blessings of Allah be upon him marked a turning point to barbaric history of the world and the Arabs in particular. The period, prior to emergence of prophet was characterized as the darkest age of human history; it was time of ignorance and anarchy because of lack of guidance in the religious, social, political and economic order. The period was the darkest age in human history. It is full of insecurity, the political, social and cultural life developed by the peoples of the ancient world was shattered by the Barbarians. The social and religious order organized by Judaism, Christianity and Zonastrianism had disintegrated. The people had forgotten the ideal of religion. Morality had fallen at low ebb. Corruption, intolerance, persecution and wrangling of creeds and sects prevailed everywhere never in the history of the world, say Ameer Ali in Rahim, was the need so great, the time so ripe for the appearance of a deliverer (peace maker) (Rahim, 2001). This was prophet Muhammad, the chief architect of world peace, great peace maker and peace motivator. His coming brought a better religious and social order and universal message of peace, order and

brotherhood to the world. Historical evidences attested the fact that prophet Muhammad's (PBUH) his birth circumstances, youth-hood and adulthood came with the miraculous events full with peace event. From his youth to adulthood, he was a noble person, trustful and trustworthy, humble and honest with honorable character of peace loving. Peace and blessings of Allah be upon the prophet, who reached the pinnacle expelled darkness by virtue of his beauty, excellence and worthwhile s character. The prophet of mercy, Muhamamd (SAW) was the last, the seal and the leader of prophets and messengers" (Al-Qadiriyyah, 2009).

At youthful age, he was a beacon of peace, because of his humbleness, generosity and accessibility, sincerity and faithfulness to all categories of people; male and female, young and old, rich and poor, leaders and masses. As a contributor to peace making at his young age, the prophet was a member in the part of chivalry (Hilf-Al-Judood) and had participated in the sacrilegious war (Hurb-Al-Fujjaar) all with intention of contributing to peace and peace living". When the prophet (PBUH) turned fifteen, a sacrilegious war broke out between the two tribes of Kinananah and Qiyas Aylaan. It was so called because, the two tribe fought in the sacred truth. At the beginning of the war, Qays had the upper hand, but by midday Kinananah were victorious" (Ed-Din, 2000). It was mentioned that the prophet (PBUH) took part in that war with intention of bringing peace among the tribes and not for tribal sake and the Arabs were known then. The condition of the Arab has been termed as *Ayyam al-Arab*. It is a record of blood feud, raids and irregular warfare among the Arabin tribes. Banu Bakr and Banu Taqhlil tribes fought for forty years on a small matter, the beating of a she camel. The Quraish and Hawazin fough the battle of Harb al-Fizr for many years. The Aws and Khezraj tribes of Madinah carried on warfare for some generations. There was also an enmity and rivalry between the northern Arabs and the southern Arabs (Rahim, 2001).

The prophet (PUBH) was a member in the pact called Hif Al-Judool which aims at protecting the defenseless and ensures safety of strangers in Makkah. The pact first originated because a stranger from Yemen sold goods in Makkah to an influential member of a powerful local clan who subsequently refused to pay the money nor returned the goods, where upon the aggrieved seller stood up in the vicinity of the Kaabah and implored people to come to his rescue, being a stranger in the city. Several members of Quraish's aristocracy rallied to assist him and ensured the return of his goods. They later met in the Kaabah, where they pledged henceforth to combat oppressive acts and uphold justice, Muhammad then was only twenty five (25) years old, and was present at the gathering, and he was so impressed with the merits of the pledge to the extent that when he commenced his mission, he legalized it in Islam. As years went by, even after his mission had become a success, the prophet continue to expressed both his high regards for the pact and his willingness to abide by it's provisions (Ed-Din, 2000). These evidence has testified to us that Muhammad (Islam) was an agent of global peace.

### **Qur'anic Guidance on Peace Task**

The prophet has been commended in many verses of the glorious Qur'an to establish peace. "Invite (all) to the way of thy lord with wisdom and preaching and argue with them in ways that are best and most gracious. For thy knoweth best, who have strayed from His path, and receive guidance" (Qur'an; 16:125). This verse has guided the prophet and Muslims on the best way to call for peace and dialogue in the most standard manner of approach. The messenger of

Allah stands as an example to all. Muslims derived inspiration or indeed a fundamental principle of peace building from the Qur'an. In the history of Islam peace is as old as the beginning of the religion itself. It has even driven, its name, from peace (Slm), (Abdullati, 2007). It's aim is to have peace with creator Allah and with everyone it's values and principles of peace building.

The Qur'an moved further to demonstrate the concern of Islam on peace and it says “: O people of the book. Come to common terms as between us and you...If then they turn back, stay ye: Bear witness that we, (at least) are Muslims bowing to Allah's will” (Qur'an, 3:64). Here Allah encourages the prophet to invite followers of other religions to Islam-peace dialogue. The above verse can even seen from the practical demonstration of the verses quoted above. Peace is a central and fundamental theme in the Qur'an. Throughout the Qur'an peace could be said to be one of those themes that occupy the centrality and fundamentality. It has been mentioned so often in various verses e.g (Qur'an 8:61, 10:25, 24:61, 26:63, 59:23 etc). According to Qur'anic scientist and exegetists, constant mentioning of a thing is a indication of it's importance. But what is most important in this regard is the fact that the word-peace has been found to share some element of synonymy with the message of the Qur'an that is Islam. The two words (peace and Islam were derived from the same root), Islam as a religion is the name given to the message brought by the Qur'an. It is the only acceptable religion to Allah” (Shehu, 1996). Numerous verses in the Qur'an speaks about peace such as: Allah is He, whom there is no other being worthy of worship beside Him: The sovereign, the Holy one; the source of Peace (and perfection) (Qur'an, 59:23).

Allah has also told us in the Qur'an that the name of the final abode of those who submit to the will of Allah and obey His laws is abode of peace: and that their situation when they come to inter it and when they are inside it is peace. In the first case the Qur'an says: But Allah doth call to the Home of Peace; He doth guide whom He pleaseth to a way that is straight (Qur'an, 10:25).

In the second and third case respectively Allah said in the Qur'an:

*And those who feared their lord will be led to the garden in group: until behold they arrive there. It's gates will be open. And it's keepers will say: Peace be upon you! Well have ye done! Enter ye Here, to dwell therein (Qur'an 10: 9 – 10).*

Another things which conveys to us the significance attached to peace in the Qur'an or rather in Islam is that, the Qur'an enjoined that believers (Muslims) to salute themselves with the word “peace” and that when they come to seek permission with the word “peace” in the former case, Allah says in Suratul-An'am.

When those come to thee who believe in our signs say; “Peace be on you”.

*In the latter case, Allah says in Suratul-Nur “But if ye enter, Salute each other (with peace) a greeting of blessing and purity as from Allah.....(Qur'an, 24:61).*

Finally, one other things which signified that peace is a central and fundamental theme in the Qur'an is that, the Qur'an has described men of God (i.e righteous and pious men) as men of

peace or peace seekers and makers, this is made in several verse for example Allah says:

*And the servant of (Allah) most gracious are those who walk on the earth in humility, and when the ignorant address them they says, "peace" (Qur'an, 26:63).*

In another verse Allah said;

*And when (the believers) hear vain talk, they turn away there from and say: to us our deeds, and to yours; peace be to you: we seek not the ignorance (Qur'an, 28:56).*

The foregoing has been an – Exposition of the position of peace in the Qur'an, one will have no doubt the Qur'an is definitely concerned, after considering all these verse and the specific meaning and context in which "Salam" (peace) has been used with peace to the whole universe and beyond. Sheikh Yusuf Ali in Shehu (1996) has explained the shade of meanings conveyed by the word "peace" as it appears in the various verse. All these meaning have defect significance and bearing to global and transcendental peace. In his commentary of verses 62 of Suratul Maryam (i.e Surah, 19), which reads "They will not bear any vain discourse, but only salutation of peace "Yusuf also indicated that note 2.512, p. 869, that:

Salam, translate "peace" has a much wide significance which include:

1. A sense of security and permanence, which is unknown in this life.
2. Soundness, freedom from defects, perfection as in the word Salam;
3. Preservation, salvation, deliverance as in the word Salam.
4. Salutation, accord with those around us;
5. Resignation, in the sense that we are satisfied and not discontented; besides
6. The ordinary meaning of peace, i.e freedom from any jarring element.

All those shades are implied in the word-Islam. He has made alsmot similar comment and conclusion. He made such comment, after presenting albeit briefly the dimension and situation in which "peace" is involve in Islam as ordained by the Qur'an. His commentary and conclusion establish is more clear term the assertion that the Qur'anic approach to peace is the reliable dependable and sublime approach which can ensure and guarantee peace to the world he said;

This is how fundamental and dominant the theme of peace is in Islam the individual who approaches God through Islam cannot fail to be at peace with God with himself, and with his follow men. Taking all these values together, putting man in his proper place in the cosmos, and viewing life in the Islamic perspective, men of good faith and principle cannot fail to make our world a better world, to regain human dignity to achieve equality, to enjoy universal brotherhood and to build a lasting peace as against insecurity that cause the death of many people.

### **Peace in the Hadith (The Sunnah of the Prophet)**

The prophet (PBUH) himself has encourage the Muslims to spread widely the salutation of peace. He said "Shall I not teach you something which if you do, you would enhance mutual love in your midst? He said spread the salutation of peace amongst you (Bukhari and Muslim). In another related hadith, prophet Muhammad (PBUH) has also taught us to terminate our

prayers with the word “peace be unto you“ And he taught us the exaggerates of salutation with peace be upon you” as is enjoined in many several places in the Qur’an. Writing on the traditions of the prophet (PBUH); Bukhari and Muslim said; “The greatest ever compiler of the traditions of the messenger of Allah began his important chapter for dialogue or what he calls peacemaking (Al-Sahl, Vol. 3, No. 531 – 546) with the following important sayings of Allah (Awf), there is no good in most of their secret talks save him who extorts to a deed of charity or kindness or reconciliation between humankind. To him who does this seeking the good pleasure of Allah; we shall soon give reward of the highest value (Qur’an, 4: 114).

To create a peace atmosphere between Muslims and non-Muslims living in an Islamic state, the prophet Muhammad requested in many of his Hadith to have made a very encouraging statements to the disbelievers”. Ibn Masood and Ali in Ahmad said; the prophet (PBUH) said “I shall claim on behalf of the disbelievers on the Day of Judgment on behalf a disbeliever who was harmed or whose due right was diminished or if more than bearable pressure was exerted on him or if something was taken from him without his consent. All this was said and done practically by the prophet in order to create peaceful, sincere, honest, fair, logical and honorable relationship among people. And following these model-ways will help us to live in peace and be free from insecurity. Following the guidance of Qur’an and exemplary life character displayed by the prophet peace and blessings of Allah (PBUH) the society will remain harmonious and in peace atmosphere.

### **Worthwhile Disposition for Sustenance of Peace in any Society**

Having seen that peace is central and fundamental in the teachings of both the Qur’an and Hadith, it is important to note that Islam has made some elements as worthwhile disposition for sustenance of peace to be established in our society. A summary of these worthwhile virtuous will be made below as follows. Avoid rumor mongering, liars ridicule, slander, deformation of character, boasting, cheating, backbiting, cancelling of faults, double agents, jealousy, hatred and hostility. The Islamic regulation for maintaining peace requires the avoidance of all these bad behaviours. It encourages true worship of Allah, our creator alone not associating him with other deity, to respect and kind to parents. The lord hath decreed that ye worship, none but Him and that ye be kind to your parents.....(Q 17: 23 – 39). This is done by showing humility and mercy to them as they have shown to us when we were in the childhood. Rendering kindness and due right to others particularly those in wants and the ways farer, speak to people with kind words and in polite manner. As reported by Bukhari, the prophet said “Whoever believes in Allah and the last day should either speak good or keep silent. Islam enjoy the Muslims to imbibe the practice of doing justice and fairness, honest work, respect for elders, teachers and authorities, telling the truth and keeping promises, gratitude, patience and endurance, tolerance and generosity, forgiveness and reconciliation, modesty in action, punctuality and promptness. This is the best way of having peace in society. This is because, it is reported that one of major causes or civil wars in Africa is vein or hate speech as (NTI/NOA, 2019).

In contributing to bringing peace and fight against insecurity, we should assist in reconciliation among disagreeing parties, the prophet (PBUH) said “Allah always is in the aid of His servant so long as servant is in the aid of his brother (Bukhari). We should assist in building the peace and unity among the people. Qur’an and Sunnah of the prophet encourage the doing

good virtuous. “The good deed and the evil deed are not alike. Repel the evil with one is better than lo! The person who was your enemy may become like a close friend” (Q 41:34). This means that whenever we know that we are at fault we should quickly repent and seek for forgiveness from those we offended whether they are our parents, friends or even strangers. If someone shows repentance and ask for our forgiveness we should forgive, we should not continue refusing to speak to him. The prophet is reported to have said “It is not allowable for man to keep apart from his brother more than three days. The one turning away and other one turning away when they met, the better of the two is the one who is the first to give a greeting” (Bukhari and Muslim, reported).

Respect, modesty, love peace, faith, sincerity, trustworthiness, humility and confirmation of information or news before spreading it to public are among the important ethical values or practice enjoyed to us; it is part of discipline to confirm the truth or, false of an information least one falls into shame and regret, confirmation of news from evil doer, help safeguarding the personality of person. Any action undertaken without certainty of information is condemned because it could lead to repentance (NCE/DLS, 2007).

Islam prohibits rancor, backbiting, suspicion, spying, theft and gambling false, accusation, adultery and fornication and ridiculing of people despite the social differences existing in any community. “Allah sees His servants as equal. Materials or racial discrimination is not an index for judging or assigning honor in the sight of Allah. Thus, it is immoral for any behavior man or woman to cheat his or her believing brother or sister. It is quite possible that the person taunted could be better in the sight of Allah, than the person who ridiculed. “.....the noblest of you in the sight Allah is He who fears Allah most and Allah has full knowledge and is well acquainted with all things (Q 7:13). Allah does not consider your physical appearance but piety to stop or avoid rumor mongering slander and deformation of character.

Basically, the Qur’an and Sunnah of the prophet encourage believers to have a sense of equality among human or races. Therefore, it is normally wrong for any being to feel himself or herself superior racially or materially. Virtually, we all have the same two eyes to hear, one month to eat and drink, two legs to move, walk, stand and sit and we also go to toilet, the same after we eat and drink and wash out private parts in the same manner by ourselves whether one is the president of his country or the lowest common man in his own contrary. So superiority and honor is nothing but the fear of Allah (SWA) and this is the ethical teaching of Islam.

We can see the loftiness of soundness and campiness instruction of sincere love for one’s fellow human being, mercy for the young, respect for the elders, comfort and consolation for distressed, visiting the reviving and grieved, genuine feelings of brotherhood and social solidarity, respect for the rights of other people to life, property, and honor, mutual responsibility between the individual and society, tranquility, peace, harmony and happiness among all human being. Besides the unity of humanity in origin and ultimate goal, and beside this mutual responsibility and concern, the social life of Islam for ensuring peace and tranquility is characterized by cooperation in goodness and piety. It is marked with full recognition of the individual and his sacred right to life, property and honor. It is also marked with an effective role played by the individual in the domain of social morals and ethics. In an Islamic society, the individual cannot be indifferent. He is enjoined to play an active part in the establishment of

sound social morals by way of inviting to the good and combating the evil in any form with all lawful means at his disposal. In so doing, not only does he shun evil and do well but also helps others to do the same. The individual who feels indifferent to his society are a selfish sinner; and his faith are undernourished” (Abdalati, 2007). All the qualities which Islam consider as novel will as well not bring peace but also avoiding insecurity and fear among people.

## **Conclusion**

From the foregoing, discussion it is evidently clear that Islam, the religion of peace which derived its name from a word *Salam* which means peace contributed greatly to avoidance of insecurity and establishes peace. That in the Qur’an and hadith peace is central and fundamental to peace making. In Islam no one can pleasure of God except through peace with his lord, with himself and with his fellow men. “This is how fundamental and dominant the theme of peace in Islam. The individual who approaches God through Islam cannot fail to be at peace with God, with himself and with his fellow (Abdalati, 2007).

Taking all these values together, to make our world a better place for living, to regain human dignity and progress, to achieve unity and equality among all races of the world, to enjoy universal brotherhood and to build a lasting peace, we must be at peace with our creator first and then follow the guidance of Qur’an and Hadith on peace and try leaving all immoral behaviours such as rumor mongering, rancor, cheating, liars, dishonesty, fighting, backbiting, corruption, devouring and imbibe the practice of kindness, simplicity, sympathy, sincerity, generosity, faithfulness, love and harmony and peaceful coexistence. That is why it is one of the aims and objectives and Hajj which is a strong pillar of Islam is the establishment of peace globally. To support this assertion, Abdallati said “it is the largest annual convention of faith where Muslims meet to know one another, study their common affairs and promote their general welfare”. It is also the greatest regular conference of peace, known in the history of mankind. In the cause of Hajj, peace is dominant theme, peace with God and one’s soul, peace with one another and with animals, peace with birds and even with insects. To disturb the peace of anyone or any creature in any shape or form is strictly prohibited in order not cause insecurity. With these, we will surely have the solution to problems of insecurity in Africa and the world.

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