

Peace Dimension in the Sirah of Prophet Muhammad (SAAS) With Special Reference to Battle of Badr

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Abstract: Sirah or the life of Prophet Muhammad (SAAS) is a subject of great importance for Muslim scholarship as well as for the common man. It is the main and the ultimate source of guidance for the Muslims. It stands as a bridge between ancient times and the modern age. The study of Sirah is not merely the study of life of a man but it is the study of mankind as a whole. Islam is the cradle of love and affection, peace and security. Its teachings are overwhelmed with humanity and welfare. Quran asserts repeatedly for the protection of human life and property, it commands: "...Do not mischief on the earth, after it has been set in order" (7:56). Protecting human life and property is obligated on every human being. This manifesto covers the establishment of world peace and invites to a balanced system. The practical lesson of this balanced system is found in the Sirah of the Prophet. The whole life of Prophet Muhammad (SAAS) starting from his birth till last day is an example of this manifestation. The purpose of sacred war in Islam is to establish peace. Though Islam acknowledges these realities, Islam Prohibits war, but allows only for the purposes if beneficial to humanity. This is absolutely clear because Islam follows the word fighting with the phrase "In the cause of Allah". Furthermore, during the course of combat a Muslim does not allowed to transgress, corrupt, destroy or steal; nor they allowed to kill women, children or elderly person; nor does he follow a deserter, kill an injured person or mutilate a dead person: neither does he mistreat a prisoner or a man of religion, nor intend to strike anyone on the face. The paper, in its context, examine and highlight the peace dimension in the battles of Prophet Muhammad (SAAS) and the main focus of this paper will be on the battle of Badr.

Key words: Prophet Muhammad • Sirah • Peace • War • Battle of Badr

INTRODUCTION

The seed of Islamic Empire was sown around 570 C.E when Muhammad (SAAS) was born in Makah. From the very youthful days of his life, Prophet Muhammad (SAAS) has great inclination towards peace. The Makkans called him *al-Sadiq* (the Truthful) and *al-Amin* (the Trustworthy). Prophet Muhammad (SAAS) started to preach his teachings of the unity of Allah in the city of Makah from the year 610 CE, for which he said he was called by a divine revelation received in the cave of *Hira*. This call was on one hand against a prevalent hereditary belief in idolatry and on other hand to accept it meant the acceptance of its teacher as the leader [1]. As this later Implies the transfer of Chieftainship to a junior family, not only other leading and materially more

influential families in the city but even the elder relatives of the Prophet himself of the family of Banu Hashim resented it vehemently when the senior family in the city took to active opposition the commonality were forced, as everywhere to do likewise even as a grass and husk in the face of a strong wind [2]. The Prophet (SAAS) had concentrated of his time, efforts and resources to the one object of furthering the reform movement yet in spite of the eight to ten years and during these years he called the pagans of Makah towards Allah, they first rejected him then resisted and later on inflicted brutal atrocities on him and on his followers. But he for the sake of peace avoided all sorts of confrontation in Makah the Muslims were asked to hold back their hands from their enemies. Allah says:

“Have you not turn your vision to those who were told to hold back their hands (from fight) but establish regular prayers and spend in regular charity.....” (Al-Quran, 4:77).

At last when all peaceful means failed, Allah’s messenger decided to leave Makah for a peaceful abode. Where he could safely establish the society on the fundamentals of Tawhid, thus for the establishment of peace and justice he avoided war and left even his native land. Medina at the time of Prophet Muhammad (SAAS) was a heterogeneous society inhabited by the Muslims (*muhajir* and *Ansar*), the Jews, the Christians and polytheists. The great task for Prophet Muhammad (SAAS) was how to unite all these diverse sections of society into a common system so that so that Medina could become a peaceful abode for all of them. The *Muhajirun* of Makah and *Ansar* of Medina were united through *Mawakhah*. To deal with other groups, the Prophet Muhammad (SAAS) adopted the realistic approach; accepted these people and gave their individual existence legal approval. He protected their interests and guaranteed them all facilities and rights on the basis of equality and justice [3]. Prophet Muhammad (SAAS) was a peace lover and wants to make Medina a peaceful state and he (SAAS) did not make any conspiracy against the maccan’s nor did he gather the people of Medina to launch an open war against them. He instead discouraged such intentions in these words. “*Medina expels out bad people as fire washes out rust from iron*” [4]. But the pagans did not remain silent. They wrote letters first to *Ansar* then to Prophet’s opponents an ultimatum demanding the surrender or at least the expulsion of Prophet Muhammad (SAAS) and his companions but evidently all such efforts proved in Vain [5]. As this has been mentioned above that Prophet Muhammad (SAAS) left Makah for the peace. But the Quraish’s of Makah did not remain silent and few battles have been fought between the Prophet and the Quraishes. Among them are Battles of *Badr*, *Uhad*, *Khandaq*, etc. and this paper is a humble attempt to highlight the peace dimension of battle of *Badr*.

Battle of Badr: Causes of the Battle: It seems that the Makkans took some economical steps against Medina, there is no doubt that Makkans economic pressure was effective since the control by the Makkans of the international commerce of that time is well known after long months of hesitation, the prophet finally decided to

take measures of defense a year or so after his arrival in medina he send a Muslim detachment the first to make it clear to the Quraish that their caravans also should not pass through the zone of Islamic influence and this means not only medina but also the territory of the tribes which had entered into an alliance with it. The initial efforts in this direction failed repeatedly at least seven times before the battle of *Badr*. But the eighth time prophet proceeded south towards Makah instead a north of medina, so that he could reach a safe place to intercept the enemy. *Badr* was selected for this purpose. But the Makkan caravan successfully withdrawal. But the Makkan army had already left on reception of abu Sufiyan message it was decided that army of Muslims should be exterminated once for all [6]. The Prophet was waiting for caravan but when he received the message that the Makkan army was coming in great number, he decided to oppose it; prophet firstly dominated the water supply so that enemy would be deprived [7]. The enemy had 950 men whole the Muslims numbered 313, in every way the enemies was superior and more powerful [8].

As battles generally began early in the morning, a site was selected by the Prophet for massing the Muslim army in such a way that if and when the enemy advanced for battle. The rising sun would not shine in the eyes of the Muslims [9]. The Prophet gave some important instructions to his men, who were the last batch on the surface of the earth who worshipped One God in the idolatrous and atheistic world of those days and as the Prophet himself put it in his prayer on that day. The practical instructions, given by the Prophet, said: “Do not move to break your lines but stay on; do not commence fighting until I order; do not waste your arrows while the enemy is still beyond reach, discharge your arrows only when the target is within reach: when the enemy approaches, begin to throw stones with your hands; on his nearer approach use lances and spears, till sword being drawn only finally for hand-to-hand fighting”. Every Muslim must have collected around him stones, the grenades of those days, in considerable number. That was practical only for the Muslims, who were staying on the defensive: the enemy, on the offensive, could not, even had they wished, have carried more than one or two stones each as they advanced from their base [10].

The famous dictum of the Prophet: “God has prescribed to behave well in every matter ; so, even when you kill, kill in a nice way”, has a moral and an aesthetic value of no mean order it was enjoined probably at this very occasion of *Badr* the first battle in which the Prophet

of Islam personally took part. Unnecessarily torturous ways of killing and the killing of women and children and those of the enemy personnel who do not actually fight, such as cooks, personal servants and the like; are expressively prohibited [11].

After getting instructions from Prophet Muhammad (SAAS) Muslims fought valiantly for the sake of noble cause and a small force defeated a large army. The casualties inflicted on the enemy were seventy and the large numbers were made prisoners of war. All the dead, both Muslims and Non-Muslims, were given burial. Mutilation or any other dishonor to the enemies dead bodies was strictly prohibited [12].

Prisoners of War: First time in the history of Islam, the question arose about the treatment to be meted out to prisoners of war. Companions of Prophet (SAAS) gave their own views, but prophet (SAAS) accepted the view the release of prisoners on payment of ransom. However, the Quranic verse had been revealed rebuking them for taking ransom from the captives rather than slaying them (8:68) [13]. The previous divine ordainment went as follows:

“... Therefore in the time for either generosity or ransom: until the war lays down its burdens...”
(Al-Quran, 47:04).

The ransom for the prisoners ranged from 1000 to 4000 dirhams in accordance with the captives financial situation, another form of ransom assumed as educational dimension, another clan of prisoners were released unransomed on ground of being hard up [14].

It will be seen from this that the taking of prisoners was allowed only as long as war condition prevailed and even when the prisoners are taken they cannot be kept so permanently, but must be set free either as a favor or at the utmost by taking ransom. This was not just rhetoric but the Prophet Muhammad (SAAS) carried this injunction into practice in his life. He carried this injunction throughout his whole life not only in the battle of Badr, or battles fought with Quraish. But the same injunction was carried in the battle of Hunan were six thousand prisoners of Hawzin tribe were taken and they were all set free simply as an act of favor [15]. During the battle of Muraisi hundred families of bani Mustaliq were taken as prisoners of war, all being set at liberty without ransom being paid [16]. Same injunction was carried against the Romans in the battle of Tabuk and against Jews in the battle of Khyber.

According to the verse coated above, when war ceased and peace was established, all war prisoners are to be set free. It is also recorded that a prisoner of war testifies that he was kept in a family whose people gave him bread, while they themselves had to live on dates [17].

Therefore prisoners of war were not only set free but, as long as they were kept prisoners, they were kept honorary.

Islamic Guidelines on War: Quranic and Prophetic rules of war permits defensive fighting against active combatant while forbidding harm to anyone or anything else, human, animals and property. According to Muhammad’s rules of war, no justification exist for either side to attack civilian’s property or anyone who is not an active combatant. This comprehensive understanding of world issues applies on the concept of war in Islam which is governed with restricted rules that makes it one of the noblest forms of war fares and was legislated for defending human rights, preventing injustice and oppression and preserve human rights. The reasons behind which Muslims resort to war are pertinent to preserving human rights and dignity. The meaning was clearly emphasized directly in Quran when Allah described the type of war that he approved of by attaching the attribute (*Fi Sabil Allah*) which means for the sake of Allah. It means that going into the war is not performed out of personal interests or private gains but rather are conducted for human value and general interest. As Allah says: *“Fight in the cause of Allah those who fight you, but do not transgress limits; for Allah love not transgressors.”* (Al-Quran, 2; 190); *“And fight them on until there is no more tumult or oppression and there prevails justice and faith in Allah; but if they cease, let there be no hostility except those who practice oppression”* (Al-Quran, 2:193).

Thus, the commandment to fight is defensive and that fighting protects Temples, Churches, Synagogues and Mosques which is to say universal religious freedom. Also Prophet’s approach towards war was defensive as he (SAAS) advices his followers in these words, *“Fight in the name of Allah and in the way of Allah. Fight against those who disbelieve in Allah. Make a holy war, do not embezzle the spoils; do not break your pledge; and do not mutilate the dead bodies; do not kill the children. When you meet your enemies who are polytheists, invite them to three courses of action. If they respond any of these, you also accept it and with-hold yourself from doing them any harm. If they refuse then, seek Allah’s help and fight them.....”* [18].

Also the Companion and the first caliph of Islam Abu Bakr said people regarding the rules of war “O People! I change you with the ten rules learn them well for your guidance in the battle fields! Do not commit treachery or deviate from right path. You must not mutilate dead bodies, neither kill a child, nor a woman nor an aged man, bring no harm to the trees, nor burn them with fire, especially those which are faithful say not any of the enemy’s flock, save for your food. You are likely to pass by people, who had devoted their lives to monastic services, leave them alone” [19].

Therefore the Prophet’s directions to his soldiers also show that the war he engaged in were not due to any desire to enforce religion. If the wars of Islam had been undertaken with the object of forcing Islam upon people or for violent purpose, then why should women, children and old men have been exempted it would rather have been easier to win them over by holding the sword over their heads because women, children and old men naturally do not resist. From the above discussion it is clear that the propose of war in Islam is to establish peace as Allah says in Quran, “*And had not Allah checked one set of people by means of another, the earth would indeed be full of mischief: but Allah is full of bounty to all the world*” (Al-Quran, 2: 251).

CONCLUSION

Islam calls to peace and considers peace to be normal and war to be astonishing and exceptional emergency entered into it only out of desperation and as a last resort. Islam being the religion of peace throws an ample light on war also, but in times of need. It is pertinent to mention here that Islamic civilization witnessed several battles especially during the lifetime of Prophet but the war was initiated by their enemies first. After the migration of Prophet to Medina, the Makkans were bitter enemies. They always were in search of an opportunity to weaken the Prophetic city-state of Medina however Prophet had made special arrangements for the security of both religion and the inhabitants of Medianan state. With the result several battles took place during his lifetime but the approach from the Muslim side was quite defensive. During these battles the loss was quite less in comparison with the modern world wars. Peace treaties were initiated with the enemies before the war situations so that the human lives may be saved from destruction, but the inception from the opposite side compelled the Muslims to take arms and fought with the enemies.

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