

Manifesting Victory and War and Peace In Islam

(Lessons from the opening verses of Holy Quran)

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In the Name of Allah The Beneficent, The Merciful

Introduction:

This booklet includes practical lessons from some opening verses of chapter 48 of the Holy Quran. These are manipulated and presented in an ugly way to the world. Islam is not about bloodshed nor is it about massacre of women's' rights; it is about brotherhood and it is about setting a certain norm in the society where the people can share and practice this glorious religion in a friendly and favorable environment. In this short booklet you will find a clear concept of war and peace in Islam and a clear picture of victory in Islam and how this good religion propagates its message.

Explanation of the opening verses of Chapter Fatah

48

Surely We have granted you an open victory,(1) so that Allah may forgive you of your previous and subsequent faults, accomplish His bounty upon you, and may guide you to a straight path,(2) and so that Allah may support you with a mighty support.(3)

Literal meaning: In Arabic the literal meaning of Fatah is “to open something”. An Arabic dictionary “Moajim Maqayees Allugha” describes: “the word fatah is opposite of locking”. For example when we say “open the door” its opposite is “ to lock the door”. Another dictionary “Mofradaat” of a scholar Raghīb al Ispḥānī, also gives the same meaning that is of a close object. Sometimes it applies for the opening of visible things and when it comes to knowledge Fatah means problem solving. A similar word of it is miftah which is used for “keys”. Another one is Muftooh, which refers to a conquered area. It means that it is open and not banned for any movement.

Commentary

Chapter fatah, the 48th chapter of the Holy Quran is Madani. As you know that there are two types of chapters (Suras) in the Holy Quran:

- 1- The chapters that were revealed before the migration of the Holy prophet SAWW to the city of Medina. These are called “Mecci Suras”.
- 2- Those that were revealed after the migration, are called Medani Suras.

Chapter Fatah which has 29 verses was revealed when the Holy Prophet SAWW after signing the Peace Pact with his enemies at Hodaibiyah (a place at the outskirts of Mecca on its way to Jeddah), was on His way back to Medina. After fighting bitter wars with the people of Mecca in 6 Hijra, he saw in a dream that He is visiting the House of Allah, performing Umra in His House in Mecca, along with a group of His companions and they have no fear of their enemies in their heart. The Holy prophet (PBUH) declared that besides all His enmity with the infidels of Mecca he is going to perform Umra and the Muslims should accompany him. He invited people from the neighboring villages to join Him for the pilgrimage. Many village Bedouins refused to join Him, claiming that Mohammed and His companions wanted to get them into an armed clash with the people of Mecca who were superior to them in terms of weapons and power. They believed that Muslims would not come back alive. Hence the Holy Prophet (PBUH) was able to bring with Himself, only a group of 14,00 people. They all were dressed as pilgrims and had nothing with themselves except a sword and sacrifices. When the people of Mecca received news about the Prophet’s journey they pledged to debar the Holy Prophet (PBUH) from entering into Mecca and declared war against Him. When the Holy Prophet (PBUH) was informed that the enemy troops are awaiting Him on His way to Mecca he searched for another way and finally stationed His people at Hodaibiyah, now known as Shumaisiyy, with the determination that he will enter the House of Allah without shedding a single drop of blood. The Holy prophet (PBUH) involved them in negotiations and finally made a peace pact to shun the war for ten years. When he was on His way back home, He was reminded of a great victory, Fatah al-Mobin in the form of revelations. Now the point of discussion is the meaning of the word Fatah al-Mobeen” which is being highlighted in this chapter, and its literal meaning is to manifest victory, which refers to the conquest of Mecca that happened in 8 Hijra, or it refers to the peace treaty of Hodaibiyah in 6 Hijra.

Hence, you will notice two different statements:

Conquest of Mecca

Peace treaty of Hodaibiyah

Allamah Tabatabai, a prominent commentator, writes in his famous commentary, “Al-Mizan” that all the events that have been highlighted in this chapter are somehow related to the peace treaty of Hodabia. For example:

- 1- We see blocking the entry to Mecca by the people of Mecca.
- 2- Refusal of the people of the suburbs of Medina from going along with the Prophet Mohammed PBUH for performing umra in 6,Hijra.

3-Pledge of Ridwan, an oath declared by the companions of the Prophet Mohammed PBUH under an acacia tree.

Allama Tabataba'i's explanation seems reliable and the other view is not reliable as not a single verse of this chapter refers to the conquest of Mecca; nor does any verse hint about an event that will take two years in future.

Before going into the details I would like to give you the list of Scholars and narrators that support the idea that the true victory in Islam is the peace treaty of Hudaibiyah.

- 1- Aloosi Baghdadi in Rooh al- maani
- 2- Jarir Tabari Tafsir-e- Tabari
- 3- Hafiz Ibn-e-Kasir Tafsir Ibn-e-Kasir
- 4- Allamah Baghawi Tafsir Ibn-e- Baghawi
- 5- Allamah Al-Shaukani Fatah Al-Qadeer
- 6- Thaalibi maliki jawahir Al-Hisaan
- 7- AlaUddin Al-Baghdadi Tafsir Al-Khazin
- 8- Abu Ishaq Thalabi Al-Kashf Wal bayan
- 9- Hashim Bahrani Al-Borhan Fi Tafsir Al-Quran
- 10- Allamah Qortobi Al Jamay Lay tafsir Al-Quran
- 11- Abu zaid maliki Tafsir Saalibi
- 12- Ali ibn-e-Ibrahim Tafsir Al-Qommi
- 13- Shiekh Al-Haweezi Tafsir noor Al- thaqalain
- 14- Allamah Naqi naqvi Fasl Al-Khitab
- 15- Allama Nasir makarim Tafsir-e- namoona
- 16- Allamah TabaTabai Al-Mizan
- 17- Mufti shafi Maarif Al-Quran

Narrations:

1- Anas Bin Maalik, a companion of the Holy Prophet SAWW was quoted as saying that Fatah Al-Mobin is Hodaibiyah. (Sahih Al- Bokhari, Kitab Al-tafsir)

2- Again Anas Bin Maalik in more detail narrates: that when we returned back home from Hodaibiyah, in a state of shock and grief as our sacrifices were not allowed to be brought to the House of Allah, at that moment the very first verse of this chapter was revealed on the Holy prophet (PBUH) and he was informed that he had been gifted a manifest victory by Allah. That was why the holy prophet SAWW remarked: “A verse had been revealed which is most beloved for me than the whole world.” (Sahih Al-bokhari hadith No;4834)

3- Jabir’s Narration:

Another famous companion of the Holy prophet (PBUH) Jabir Ansari, was quoted as saying that we never regarded victory except on the day of Hodaibiyah. (Tafsir Al-tabari Vol.3 ,Pg.93).

4- Dhahak, a famous commentator states that the first verse... means we have given you the victory without war and definitely there is a victory in peace. (Thalabi, Tafsir Kashf wal bayan , Beirut: Vol.9, Pg.42)

5- Omar’s Objection:

Authentic sources show that Omar bin Al-khattab, a companion of the Holy Prophet (PBUH), was quite upset at the peace treaty and its terms. He exclaimed in extreme grief and indignation: “ O messenger of Allah! Are you not the true Prophet of God?

He replied: Why not?

Then Omar asked:

“Are we on the right path and they on the wrong one?”

He replied: “yes”.

Omar asked: Is it not a fact that our martyrs are in paradise and their slain ones are in hell?”

The Holy Prophet (PBUH) replied: Why not?

Omar then said: Why should we submit to this humiliation and return without observing Umrah or Allah decides the matter through war?

Prophet Mohammed (PBUH) replied: I am the servant of Allah and his Messenger. I can never violate His command. He will never destroy me. He is my helper.

Omar posed more questions to the Prophet (PBUH): Did you not promise that we would visit Allah’s house and perform “tawaf?”

He replied: yes indeed, I did promise but I did not promise that it will happen this year. For sure we will visit the house and perform tawaf.

Omar kept quiet but his grief and doubts were never erased. He went to Abu bakr and repeated the same questions to him as he posed to the Holy Prophet (PBUH). He was also reported to have said: I never gave way to any doubt since I embraced Islam, but on this occasion I could not avoid it. (From Sahih Bukhari and Maarif al- Quran of Mufti Shafi)

6- Zohri’s narration:

Zohri, a clergy in Umayyad dynasty, used to say that there is no victory in the history of Islam bigger than the peace pact of Hodaibiyah. The broken

relationship with Infidels of Mecca restarted and they were getting closer to Muslims; and within the period of three years a large number of them embraced Islam.

Shobi, another scholar and narrator, held the same view. He would believe that even the victory of Muslims in the battle of Khyber and the Oath delivered by the companions of the Holy Prophet (PBUH) were due to the results of the peace pact of Hodaibiyah.

War and peace in Islam

With the help of all these revelations of chapter 48 of the Holy Book and the authentic interpretations you can easily draw the result that the real victory in Islam and the Holy Quran is Peace and not War. Many battles were fought and won by Muslims but none of them were given the name of victory. Only the battle of Khyber was considered to be near victory in which only 93 Jews were killed. So there was no way to divert this divine message and to say that the term Fatah al-Mobin, open victory, encourages battles with the Jews of Khyber that happened just one month after the peace pact of Hodaibiyah; or it refers to the conquest of Mecca that happened in 8 Hijra, after two years for there is nothing to support these assumptions.

You can also draw this result that the real Islam never allowed its followers to defeat their enemies with might and power, nor does it give them the authority to capture their land and make them slaves. Islam was spread with high spirituality in its message, reality and attraction in its teachings. If, in Islamic rule an infidel gave the testimony in the oneness of God and the Prophethood of Prophet Mohammed (SAWW) during the war, his life would be safe. It did not mean compulsion but it was a subsequent way to save his life as he was compelled to die as a prisoner of war.

Omar was not ready to accept these realities. He raised very strong objections against the peace pact of Hodaibiyah, showed his suspicion and doubts about the Holy Prophet (SAWW) and his promises and termed the peace Pact of Hodaibiyah as a defeat. Thus, you can easily understand the nature of advances the Muslims made during his caliphate as his views about humiliation and defeat were infact a shining victory in the eyes of Allah and His Prophet (PBUH). This bright victory was spreading its message like the sun beneath the mountains of Hodaibiyah and its rays were spreading peace from the Arabian Peninsula to the whole world, forever.

This message of peace should never contradict with Jihad. The reason was that unlike Christianity Islam gave the people the right to defend themselves. You can not wage a war against anyone irrespective of his religion but you can defend yourself against his invasion. The Holy Book will guide us to the right path: "And fight in the way of Allah with those who fight you and do not exceed as Allah does not like those who used to exceed." (2: 190)

A commonly accepted rule among the followers of progeny of the Holy Prophet (SAWW) was that it is not just to initiate war against the enemy in the absence of the Holy Prophet (SAWW) or infallible Imam.

In the light of this concept we would say that if someone exceeds the limits and starts violating it or he punishes innocent people, civilians, children and women then he would be guilty in accordance with the Holy Book. So where you like would to place suicide attacks in Islam in which innocent people fall target? How could you justify hijacking children and women and slaughtering humans by Taliban like a herd of cattle? Forcing the people to have beard and the women to stay in their houses and lashing them on mere suspicion might be the Islam of Sufi Mohammed or American sponsored Islam but not the real Islam. Islam of the Prophet Mohammed

(PBUH) raised his voice for the education of man and woman, while the Islam of Sufi Mohammed would never allow women to acquire knowledge.

Similarly one can never justify invading other countries based on the mere suspicion that some terrorists might take shelter there. One has no right to station ones' forces in other countries for the safety of ones' people at the cost of billions of other lives. If you are keen to establish law and order then find only the guilty one, put aside your fighting, forgive and forget; as did the Holy Prophet (PBUH). In the light of this preaching how would you justify an operation in which millions of people were forced to leave their houses and pass their lives in the camps as refugees while the real culprits are never executed nor arrested? The Holy Prophet (PBUH) and Muslims were forced to leave their homes, their lives were in danger and their belongings were taken by the infidels of Mecca but the Holy Prophet SAWW instead of taking revenge kept his people and his rival busy in negotiations which was finalized in the form of a peace pact in Hodaibiyah. So we should do the same, if we want to follow His way, the only way that is leading towards peace. If you can not achieve your goal by war then you can achieve it by peace.

A look on the Vocabulary of Fatah in the Holy Quran:

Terminologies and vocabularies of the Holy Quran should be analyzed carefully and deeply. It is the case of the word Fatah, which has been repeated sometimes in the Holy Quran. The Holy prophet (PBUH) signed a peace pact in 6,Hijra, Performed Umraratul-Qadha in 7,Hijra and conquered Mecca in 8, Hijra. The opening verses of chapter 48 were revealed in 6, Hijra when our Prophet was on His way back to Medina in which he was informed that he had been given a bright victory in the past, then it could never refer to the conquest of Mecca, an event that took two years. Hence we should have a look over the verses and the events that were pointing:

Fatah Al-Mobin (1:48) refers to peace in 6, Hijra.

Fatah Al-Qareeb (18: 48) refers to the victory of Khyber.

Fatah wal Nasr (1: 110) refers to the Yemenies who were the last ones to embrace Islam in 10, Hijra.

Sultan-e-Naseer (superiority and authority) (82: 17) refers to the conquest of Mecca in 8, Hijra.

Analysis of the latter verses of Chapter 48

These verses explain the effects and results of the peace pact of Hodaibiyah and Allah states that He won a manifesting victory for His prophet Mohammed PBUH in the form of peace for the following four reasons:

- 1- He wanted to forgive all His prophet's sins.
- 2- He wanted to increase His bounties upon His prophet.
- 3- He wanted to guide His Prophet PBUH to the right path.
- 4- He wanted to provide help and assistance to His prophet.

If you will read these verses you will ask that what is the relationship between peace and sins of the Holy Prophet (PBUH)? How will you dare to say that the sins of the Holy Prophet were forgiven when he made peace with the infidels? You must be aware that all the Prophets were Sinless and obviously so was our Prophet, who was the last and the best of them, with the seal of the Prophets. Now the question that arises is why was Allah saying that He would forgive all of His Prophets' sins after the peace of Hodaibiyah?

Learned Scholars seem quite worried when answering these questions. One commentator said that this verse resembled another one in which the Holy prophet PBUH was commanded By God to ask forgiveness from him and his followers. Another one Tabari, was of the view that this was a command just like the commands of describing Glory to Allah SWT. Qortobi, a famous commentator admitted that there were many differences regarding these verses. Mujahid, another commentator said the preceding sins mentioned in the verse, referred to the sins of the Holy Prophet PBUH before Prophethood. Wahidi, another scholar said it denoted small sins. Atta khorasani said that the previous sins referred to the sins of Adam and the following sins referred to the sins of followers. Another assumption was, that the previous sins were the sins of the battle of Badr, which was fought in the second year after the migration of the Holy prophet PBUH to the city

of Medina; while the rest of the sins were the sins of the Battle of Honain, which was fought after the conquest of Mecca in 8, Hijra, two years after the peace of Hodaibiyah. (See Qortobi and Thalabi)

In my opinion, all these explanations are irrelevant, as you can easily prove, in the light of Quran and Sunna, that your Holy Prophet PBUH was sinless. And if you accepted any of the above given explanations then how can you prove the relationship between the sins that were forgiven and the peace of Hodaibiyah?

And if you say that the sins, referred in the verse, were the sins of the Holy prophet PBUH before Prophethood then it would never be true as the Holy prophet PBUH was always the man of character, even before His prophecy. The people would regard him a true and faithful person. And even the people of that time always found honesty and truth in Him.

Imam Ali has stated in one of his sermons in Nahj al-Balagha:

Allah made an arrangement when he (Prophet Mohammed PBUH) was about two years old that one angel of great value and position was with him all the time and he would teach Him all the manners and take him on the way of virtues and pure deeds. (Nahj-al-Balagha, Sermon No: 190, Qasea)

Hence, it was proved that the Prophet Mohammed did not commit any mistake and was never seen corrupt in anyway, even before he was officially announced as a Prophet at the age of forty.

Sheikh Toosi, a prominent Shia scholar, was aware of this problem that all of the prophets were sinless and he could solve it by saying that the sins were of the Prophet's followers. So, this problem would be solved, however, another one that how can you relate the issue of forgiveness to the peace pact, remains unsolved. However, Allamah Tabatabai, gave a good explanation in this regard. He first admitted that the word ZANB in these verses often referred to sin but sometimes it might be used for something, which does have good results. Giving the example of Moses he said that the murder He committed by mistake in Egypt was not a sin but the word ZANB has been used for it.

Allama Tabatabai is true. If a single murder could be a sin in the eyes of the people of Egypt at the time of Moses then the continuation of war and unrest in Arabian land was naturally a bigger sin! Undoubtedly, the infidels of Mecca started this unrest but Muslims were held responsible for it. After the peace pact of Hodaibiyah in 6, Hijra, the after effects of all the previous wars were washed away and it was proved that the Muslims were not violent rather they were more peaceful. And this was the real meaning of the forgiveness of the prophet's previous stands about continuation of war and jihad. Now the world would respect him more would love him and his religion more, and would see him as a messenger of peace and not as a commander of war. Hence the reconciliation of Hodaibiyah created such a peaceful and favorable condition that Our Holy prophet PBUH sent his message to four big powers of that time, inviting them towards Islam. This was the right path because as a messenger His first and foremost duty was to deliver the message and not to win a war in the battlefield. It was also evident from the coming verse No: 8, Indeed we have sent you as a witness and as a bearer of good news and as a Warner. (8:48).

Indeed, He was sent as a messenger and not as a commander of war. This was the second prime result of the peace pact of Hodaibiyah. The delegations from all over the world started coming and within two years whole of the Arab world embraced Islam and a day came when Allah SWT announced:

Today! I have perfected your religion for you, and I have completed my bounties upon you, and I have approved Islam as your religion. (3:5)

This was the great day of Ghadir when the Holy Prophet PBUH announced Imam Ali A.S. as His next leader to lead the Ummah after Him. And if there was no peace then this day would never come.

We could further summarize the results of the peace pact of Hodaibiyah as:

1- If the war would have been continued then the principles of Morality would not have been completed and so is true for Islam and the right path would have been blurred by the smoke and fire of war. The real mission of a messenger was to deliver the message and to communicate what Allah SWT has sent Him down for. God did not send Mohammed PBUH to conquer the cities, to capture the property and land of people and to make them slaves but to free them from the bondage and to fill their hearts with the light of faith. This goal could never have achieved with war not even with jihad, but it was possible only with peace. Basically delivery and acceptance of the message of God was possible only in favorable conditions of peace.

2- Although Allah helped Muslims in some of their battles with infidels but the guarantee that He would help them more in the future was when they would make peace. But if they did not submit to peace and even exceeded the defined limits in defensive jihad and were aggressive to innocents, he would never help them.

3- The Holy prophet PBUH did not shed a single drop of blood in the conquest of Mecca when He brought forward a massive army of 10,000 and took the hold of Mecca in His hand in 8, Hijra and made free all of His enemies. It showed His struggle for peace and that there is no concept of revenge in Islam.

The Muslims at the time of the Holy prophet PBUH might have learnt lessons from the peace of Hodaibiyah and submitted to peace, but is the turn of the Muslims of 21st century to submit to peace and learn lessons from the above defined verses of the 48th chapter of the Holy Quran.