Peace and Security (part 2 of 3): Society

Description: How Islam creates a sense of peace with in society, and the role of laws in maintaining security.
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His freedom of internal agitation should definitely, therefore, affect how he interacts with those around him. This starts with those closest to him in his family and extends to his neighbors and others in the community, eventually extending to all of humankind as a whole. Thus, Islam establishes an entire social structure in which people interact with others, based on relationships, rights and obligations, in ways that bring about a peaceful coexistence. Children recognize the rights of their parents upon them while parents recognize their roles towards their children. Husbands and wives come together not as competitors but as partners cooperating to produce a home filled with peace and love. Indeed, God points to this relationship that He has created as a great sign:

"And among His Signs is this, that He created for you wives from among yourselves, that you may find repose in them, and He has put between you affection and mercy. Verily, in that are indeed signs for a people who reflect." (Quran 30:21)

Thus, God has laid down stringent laws that protect the sanctity of the home, such as the laws concerning adultery, fornication and slander. The reason is that the home is truly the foundation for the society as a whole. If there is no peace in the home, one can hardly expect that people will exit their home in a troubled state and be peaceful, fulfilling members of society.

Since the guidance of Islam covers not only what is traditionally known as "law" but also ethical behavior and conduct, Islam provides detailed guidance for the manner in which members of a society should interact with one another. There is a great emphasis on mutual respect, with each member of society realizing that he is part of a larger unity entailing rights and obligations. This mutual feeling produces a society that is filled with peace, wherein each individual looks after the welfare and needs of the other members of society.

Thus, when Islam is enacted, the individual finds peace all around him, from within himself and throughout the entire society. In fact, even world peace can only truly come about when there is justice. In recent years, more and more people have realized this fact and emphasize, "There is No Peace Without Justice." (Justice is often a slogan used when going to war but it is usually not more than that, a slogan.) But there can be no true justice or peace until people raise themselves above national or ethnic economic or political interests. There can be no true justice or peace as long as people still believe that they can go to war against others simply for their own economic interests, such as,

for example, in order to exploit the natural resources that are on somebody else's land. True justice can only occur when people dedicate themselves to God, applying His guidance while removing their egos and desires from their decisions.

In the Hereafter, of course, it will only be through believing in God and following His guidance that one will achieve eternal peace. Again, God makes it very clear that this is what He is actually calling the humans to:

> **"God calls to the home of peace (Paradise) and guides whom He wills to a Straight Path." (Quran 10:25)**

Before leaving this question of peace, there is a very important question but maybe its complete discussion is beyond the scope of this article: Can someone have true internal peace when the life he is living in this life does not give him any clue to how he will fare in the Hereafter, or if there is a complete disconnect between the two or if there even seems to be some contradiction between the two. For example, capitalism, socialism and democracy all promise to provide something in this world yet, in reality, they can provide nothing to the individual with respect to the Hereafter. Hence, they leave a void in the individual's life that will prevent him from ever finding true peace. The result is that the individual may try to dichotomize his life: being secular with respect to this world while having some form of spiritual belief concerning the Hereafter. But how can he even know if his secular pursuits are compatible with what his spiritual teachings are telling him will happen in the Hereafter. Does he have to make himself schizophrenic? Even worse, what if the spiritual teachings he believes actually point to the fact that his worldly life is wrong, such as when his spiritual teachings tell him that the flesh and this world are evil and so forth. How can individuals of this nature ever find true peace in themselves?

How Islam Brings About Security

Security can be considered a corollary to the issue of peace. The factors that bring about peace contribute to the establishment of security.

However, probably the first thing that comes to people's mind when they think of security has to do with laws. Laws are definitely important for security as they lay down the parameters of acceptable behavior. In fact, Islam is a religion that not only provides general principles for life but also provides detailed laws. These laws further bring about peace and security. Peace and security will undoubtedly be the goal of any society. However, God is the only one who has the knowledge of this creation to be able to determine laws that can bring about peace and security. As for humans, they are always guessing. One can point to the example of the death penalty (capital punishment). The death penalty is arguably one of the greatest deterrents for major crimes. However, the European Union has completely banned it. In the United States, the masses keep swaying back and forth, never quite sure as to whether it is a good thing or not. In reality, they will never be able to be certain. This is because they will never be able to put humans in a laboratory experiment and determine whether the death penalty is more positive than negative. Hence, they will always be guessing. Even the European Union that is completely against it is actually completely against it based on nothing but conjecture.

On the other hand, one of the main goals of Islamic law is the preservation and continuance of life. As part of that goal, the law of retribution and the death penalty are part of Islamic law. These laws are not meant simply for the sake of punishment. Such laws are actually meant to protect life, as God says:

> **"And there is (a saving of) life for you in the Law of Equality in punishment, O men of understanding, that you may become the pious" (Quran 2:179)**

This statement is coming from the only one who could possibly make such a statement and who alone knows the reality. Thus, by turning away from God's guidance, humans will always be groping and it does not, therefore, seem likely that they will ever be able to advise a complete social system on their own that could truly produce peace and security. Thus, Islam, the religion of the Creator, is the only way of life that can ensure security.

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