

## Peace and Security (part 3 of 3): God Consciousness

**Description:** The role of the belief in God and being constantly conscious of Him in bringing about peace and security in society.

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In reality, though, laws alone cannot bring about peace and security. This leads to another very important factor that sets Islam apart from all human attempts at peace and security. The first and most important factor that contributes to security has to do not with laws but with what is in the hearts of the people. The ultimate goal of Islamic law is to establish, strengthen and support the faith in individuals and in the community as a whole. As discussed above, this faith brings peace into the heart, which immediately curtails violent feelings towards others. Furthermore, part of this faith is the implanting of *taqwa* (God-consciousness) into the hearts of the individuals. As noted above, this faith and *taqwa* brings him peace but it also restrains his actions. He must behave only within a set of general principles and one of the goals of those principles is the establishment of peace and security. If he is disgruntled, for example, he understands that he does not have the right to go to his workplace and start shooting at everyone in sight, as has happened on more than one occasion in the United States in recent years. So there are limits to his behavior that ensure security and peace.

There is actually a very important point that underlines the person's entire outlook on life which again results in security and peace. This faith and *taqwa* provides a purpose to one's life and an understanding of being a noble creator with a goal in life. This life is not meaningless. It is not the result of some random combining of matter. Similarly, humans are not simply descendant from other animals. This understanding in itself has a profound effect on the individuals' actions. This author has had personal experience working in prisons in the United States. Upon asking numerous inmates why they committed their crimes, the response was invariably, "Why not?" The only question to them was whether they could get away with an act and not get caught. There was no question of any responsibility towards a Creator or any sense of purpose in this life. Indeed, one cannot argue much against their way of thinking if one is foolish enough to believe that this existence is purposeless and by mere chance.

Not only, though, is there a restraint on one's actions via faith and *taqwa* but there is developed a corresponding desire to do what is good. On this point, one can take the famous example of the prohibition of alcohol in the United States enacted in 1919. This law was passed as a result of widespread drunkenness as well as increases in crime and violence. Even though people could see the wisdom of the law and believed in the law—and that is why the law was actually passed—many of them did not have anything in their hearts that would lead them to obey the law. When there is belief in God's laws and *taqwa*, the situation is very different. There develops a hatred in the heart for the act that

is banned. The believer recognizes that the act in itself is evil and, even worse, it is displeasing to his Lord. Thus, the believer restrains himself to the best of his ability from such illegal acts. And, since the enactment of God's laws results in security, this end result is met.

What further contributes to the implementation of God's laws that ensure security is that stress that Islam puts on the spirit of community. In recent years in the United States, as a reaction to the lack of peace and security, many communities developed what is known as "neighborhood watches." This is where the neighbors look after one another and keep an eye on things. The goal is not simply to spot breaches of peace and security but to make the people realize that they are part of a community and that they should be concerned with what is happening to the others in their neighborhood. Of course, what they develop cannot compare to the kind of community spirit and brotherhood that is developed within Islam. The reality is that some people are weak and they can be easily swayed by desires or by other evil people. They need people that they can lean on to keep them on the Straight Path and help them overcome their weaknesses. Thus, the spirit of brotherhood in Islam is permeated by the obligation to look after one another, encourage one another to do good and prevent one another from doing evil. Thus, God says:

**"The believers, men and women, are *aulyaa* (helpers, supporters, friends, protectors) of one another, they enjoining what is good and eradicate what is evil..." (Quran 9:71)**

The Prophet, may the mercy and blessings of God be upon him, said:

"The believer with respect to another believer is like a building, one portion strengthening the other."[\[1\]](#)

This relationship between the individual members of society, like the spirit behind the Neighborhood Watch programs, further brings about peace and security for the individuals of society.

Islam takes care of both this life and the Hereafter. In fact, it ties the two together. One can argue that it is only through this intimate relationship that true peace and security are going to be achieved. Guidance must come from God—and can only come from God—to know what are the beliefs, laws and steps that will provide peace and security. Via Islam, the individual can find internal peace. That can allow him to be at peace with others. At the same time, he has the steps and laws he needs to ensure peace and security for the society at large.

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Endnotes:

[\[1\]](#) *Saheeh Al-Bukhari and Saheeh Muslim.*

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