

Survey of Islamic International Relations in Prophetic Tradition

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Islam as a universal religion has a special approach for establishment of international relations. Different dimensions of this approach can be found in the accounts of the Prophet's (s) interactions with other nations. Theoretical foundations of Islamic international relations, inspired by Qur'anic principles, have consolidated the mechanism of these relations in practice. Meantime, a survey of Islamic international relations in the context of prophetic tradition can provide a paradigm for the contemporary Islamic community. The present research has employed an analytical-descriptive method to explore the vision of the holy prophet of Islam for Islamic international relations. The paper further highlights the guidelines the Prophet (s) applied to actualize the fundamental ideals of Islam. Recent studies indicate that the Prophet (s) respected the principles governing the international relations, considering the precepts to be requisite to build up a world in which all nations would live peacefully with mutual understanding and active cooperation. As such, he made special efforts so that Islamic international relations would come to fruition and acquire a position of prime importance. This paper aims at explicating the international activities of Prophet Muhammad (s), a topic that has rarely been studied in the history of international relations.

Keywords: Holy Prophet (s), prophetic conduct, international relations, religions, Islam

1. Islamic International Relations from Qur'anic Perspective

The Holy Qur'an has constituted international relations not on geographical but on ideological foundations. Islam, as a universal and all-encompassing religion, is not restricted to a single tribe, clan, race, region, country, or continent. This grand religion has been sent by God for guidance, prosperity, and salvation of mankind (Khalilian 1368 Sh, 157).

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Qur'anic teachings reinforce the idea that monotheistic religions have emanated from a single source and evolved in the course of human life. Primitive man did not have the intellectual capacity to assimilate religion in full. Therefore, Revealed Religion came to be presented to man in pieces. All religions before Islam were sent only to one nation and were incomplete. Islam, as the last link of the chain of religions, was sent down to man by God to complete the previous revelations. Qur'an confirms the sayings of the earlier prophets; the essential ingredients of Islamic monotheism, prophethood, and eschatology are shared by all monotheistic religions. The prophet of Islam (s) acknowledged what had been revealed in other heavenly Scriptures (Shelbi, 1989, 3:116):

And when there cometh unto them a messenger from Allah, confirming that which they possess. (Q 2:101)

He hath ordained for you that religion which He commended unto Noah, and that which We inspire in thee (Muhammad), and that which We commended unto Abraham and Moses and Jesus. (Q 42:13)

Say: O People of the Scripture. Come to an agreement between us and you: that we shall worship none but Allah, and that we shall ascribe no partners unto Him, and that none of us shall take others for lords beside Allah. (Q 3:64)

From the Islamic perspective, peaceful coexistence of the followers of different religions is cherished. This perspective is not based on pragmatism; rather, the mere establishment of peaceful relations is encouraged, because it is primarily compatible with human nature. Man is a social being and naturally tends to live in company with other fellow human beings. Islam is also a religion ingrained in man's primordial nature, which responds to man's natural needs, permitting relation with other nations from any race or creed (Amid Zanjani 1373 Sh, 2:140).

Secondly, peaceful interactions between human beings facilitate their growth, elevation, and mutual understanding, which eventually leads to acknowledging a single source of belief systems and inclination towards the truth. As a well-founded Islamic text, the Qur'an has invited mankind to unity, which cannot be effected without relation and association with the adherents of other religions: "Call unto the way of thy Lord with wisdom and fair exhortation, and reason with them in the better way" (Q 16:125). Therefore, general invitation to Islam and presentation of Qur'anic verities call for developing rigorous relations with various races, groups, and nations at international scale. Accordingly, Qur'an subscribes to the establishment of relations with different nations:

“Say: O People of the Scripture. Come to an agreement between us and you: that we shall worship none but Allah, and that we shall ascribe no partners unto Him, and that none of us shall take others for lords beside Allah” (Q 3:64).

Thirdly, the Qur’anic verses and the tradition of the Prophet (s) and Islamic leaders clearly indicate the legitimacy of international relations in the eye of prophet (s). Obviously, this state of affairs persists as long as the other side does not show hostility to Muslims: “Allah forbiddeth you not those who warred not against you on account of religion and drove you not out from your homes, that ye should show them kindness and deal justly with them” (Q 60:8). Therefore, the Islamic government and Muslims are obligated to deal reverently with the non-Muslims who are not hostile to Muslims and to observe their rights. As such, the Holy Qur’an has worked out ways for establishing Islamic international relations. The keynotes of the techniques are touched upon as follows:

A) Attention to Common Principles

Adhering to Islam and hereby achieving eternal salvation does not hinder building up relationship with adherents of other religions. Obviously, association with every one of the religions has special laws, the details of which have been cited in Islamic jurisprudence sources. However, a standard pattern of behavior that is considered normal in social relations lies on understanding and conciliation. It is more than clear that religious, language, and cultural commonalities along with joint national, economic, and other goals and interests play a prominent role in fructifying the aforementioned principle. Fortunately, mutual understanding revolves on pivots that are predominantly present in Islam and that are highly appreciated by Islamic leaders.

The Holy Qur’an invites the People of the Scriptures to take the idea of monotheism, shared by all Abrahamite religions, seriously and not to neglect this main axis that can unify religions:

Say: O People of the Scripture. Come to an agreement between us and you: that we shall worship none but Allah, and that we shall ascribe no partners unto Him, and that none of us shall take others for lords beside Allah. And if they turn away, then say: Bear witness that we are they who have surrendered (unto Him). (Q 3:64)

This verse indicates two points: one is that belief in the Oneness of God is adhered to by major religions of Islam, Christianity, and

Judaism; the other is that the monotheism cherished by the People of the Scriptures has grown more distant from the pure monotheism preached by Abraham. To purify their religions, believers are required to follow the Qur'anic concept of monotheism that is the genuine Islam. However, if adherents of other religions refuse to accept this invitation, the Holy Qur'an does not prescribe Muslims to engage in conflict with them but to merely declare their firm adherence to Islamic monotheism, saying, "Bear witness that we are they who have surrendered (unto Him)" (Q 3:64).

The glorious Qur'an orders its followers to choose no approach but "incisive method of debate" and "peaceful dialog" with the adherents of other religions: "And argue not with the People of the Scripture unless it be in (a way) that is better, save with such of them as do wrong; and say: We believe in that which hath been revealed unto us and revealed unto you; our God and your God is One, and unto Him we surrender" (Q 29:46). Islamic laws have always been rational and in conformity with peace. As such, Islam does not authorize its followers to insult or abuse even the idol-worshippers who carried out the most superstitious practices (including worshipping idols, infanticide, etc.), because this act will give rise to their prejudice and lead them to unknowingly use foul language against God: "Revile not those unto whom they pray beside Allah lest they wrongfully revile Allah through ignorance (Q 2:108). In fact, all nations and religions command the highest esteem in the sight of God. Also, in Imam 'Alī's (a) emphatic order to Mālik al-Ashtar (who was one of his most intimate commanders), Islamic government is obligated to treat the people with kindness and mercy—be they Muslims or non-Muslims, religious or irreligious—never dealing with them as do wolfish rulers who think of nothing but amassing wealth: "Do not show behavior towards people as if you are a voracious and ravenous beast and as if your success lies in devouring them"(Nahj al-balāghah, Letter 53).

B) Preservation of Human Dignity

Belief in the principle of the equality of human beings in their creation strengthens the conviction of the inherent dignity of mankind. The acceptance of human dignity in the context of religious and cultural faith facilitates communication. Islam holds that human dignity, honor, and freedom capture significant attention and develop the main lines of these notions with profundity and reverence. One of the most important anthropological underpinnings of moral values is the appreciation of the existential standing of mankind. Another point inferred from the holy verse that reads, "Say: O People of the Scripture. Come to an agreement between us and you: that we shall

worship none but Allah” (Q 3:64) is that only in a monotheistic society is the slavery and servitude of man to man unacceptable. Also, the Holy Qur’an states that the entire members of human beings are to be venerated: “And verily, We held children of Adam in honor and mounted them on vehicles and feed them on clean things, giving them superiority to many of Our creatures” (Q 17:70). Undoubtedly, such an attitude will prodigiously contribute to the construction of a framework for building international security.

C) Recognition of Other Religions

Man’s nature does not accept heartfelt beliefs by force. Islamic jurists maintain that the faith of one who has embraced Islam by coercion is deficient and untenable (Rashid Rida 1360 Sh, 11:395). In fact, the Holy Qur’an never gives instructions against human nature: “There is no compulsion in religion. The right direction is henceforth distinct from error. And he who rejecteth false deities and believeth in Allah hath grasped a firm hand hold which will never break” (Q 2:256); “And if thy Lord willed, all who are in the earth would have believed together. Wouldst thou (Muhammad) compel men until they are believers?” (Q 10:99). The prophet of Islam (s) has been assigned only to communicate the divinely message to mankind. However, he carries no responsibility for people to have faith in Islam: “Had Allah willed, they had not been idolatrous. We have not set thee as a keeper over them, nor art thou responsible for them” (Q 6:107). Obviously, the verses state that Islam has recognized the religions held by adherents of other religions and has not permitted Muslims to impose their beliefs on others. Islam has rather called on its followers to leave non-Muslims free in their religious beliefs and live with them in peace. The tenets of Islam are not to be imposed on the adherents of other religions. The right way is to present them in dialogs and support them by reasoning, and thus convince the minds and hearts of the audience.

D) Negation of Racism

Many of the verses of the Holy Qur’an are addressed to the entire mankind. The following are some examples:

O Children of Adam! We have revealed unto you raiment to conceal your shame, and splendid vesture, but the raiment of restraint from evil, that is best. This is of the revelations of Allah that they may remember. O Children of Adam! Let not Satan seduce you as he caused your (first) parents to go forth from the Garden and tore off from them their robe (of innocence) that be might manifest their shame to them. Lo! he seeth you, he and his tribe, from whence ye see him not. Lo! We have made the devils protecting friends for those who believe not. (Q 7:26, 27)

O Children of Adam! If messengers of your own come unto you who narrate unto you My revelations, then whosoever refraineth from evil and amendeth there shall no fear come upon them neither shall they grieve. (Q 7:35)

And when We shook the Mount above them as it were a covering, and they supposed that it was going to fall upon them (and We said): Hold fast that which We have given you, and remember that which is therein, that ye may ward off (evil). (Q 7:171)

Verily We have honoured the children of Adam. We carry them on the land and the sea, and have made provision of good things for them, and have preferred them above many of those whom We created with a marked preferment. (Q 17:70)

O man! What hath made thee careless concerning thy Lord, the Bountiful. (Q 82:6)

Thou, verily, O man, art working toward thy Lord a work which thou wilt meet (in His presence). (Q 84:6)

These perceptions indicate that from the Islamic perspective, humanity has a common significance among the residents of the earth. People in different regions have no inherent differences with one another. Despite the fact that mankind throughout the course of history has differed in terms of language, color, and race, Islam holds that all are children of one father and one mother (Adam and Eve), and these differences do not affect their humanness. (Abushabane 1998, 542-3). The Holy Qur'an regards the differences between languages and colors as divine signs and as means for people to recognize one another: "And of His signs is the creation of the heavens and the earth, and the difference of your languages and colours. Lo! herein indeed are portents for men of knowledge" (Q 30:22). The Holy Book has denounced any form of racist thoughts: "O mankind! Lo! We have created you male and female, and have made `you nations and tribes that ye may know one another. Lo! the noblest of you, in the sight of Allah, is the best in conduct" (Q 49:13). Therefore, peaceful co-existence and cordial relationship with foreigners are the principles that underlie Islamic international relations. Islam is a religion ingrained in man's primordial nature and never counters natural and human inclinations; it promotes the perspective that one can efficiently engage in dialog and debate with one's ideological opponents in a calm and cordial climate.

Many-Faceted Cooperation for Development of Society

One of the dimensions of international relations is cooperation and participation in different political, economic, social, and cultural

activities/operations. The Holy Qur'an has called Muslims' attention to cooperation in good deeds but not in "sin and belligerence":

O ye who believe! Profane not Allah's monuments nor the Sacred Month nor the offerings nor the garlands, nor those repairing to the Sacred House, seeking the grace and pleasure of Allah. But when ye have left the sacred territory, then go hunting (if ye will). And let not your hatred of a folk who (once) stopped your going to the Inviolable Place of Worship seduce you to transgress; but help ye one another unto righteousness and pious duty. Help not one another unto sin and transgression, but keep your duty to Allah." (Q 5:2)

One of the most important instances of cooperation that forms part of the basic structure of international relations is the permission given by the Holy Qur'an to its followers regarding marriage with women of the People of the Scriptures and partaking of their food:

This day are (all) good things made lawful for you. The food of those who have received the Scripture is lawful for you, and your food is lawful for them. And so are the virtuous women of the believers and the virtuous women of those who received the Scripture before you (lawful for you) when ye give them their marriage portions and live with them in honour, not in fornication, nor taking them as secret concubines. Whoso denieth the faith, his work is vain and he will be among the losers in the Hereafter. (Q 5:5)

Since Q 5 is the last chapter of the Holy Qur'an revealed to the Prophet (s), the laws it contains are not abrogated. If in conflict with other verses, the ordinances of this chapter are to be regarded as the revokers of other injunctions (Tabatabaei 1372 Sh, 2:204). Also, after a lengthy debate regarding the permissibility of marrying the People of the Book, the author of *Jawāhir al-kalām* (a major source of Islamic jurisprudence) draws this conclusion: "Thanks to God, from now on, there is no longer any problem in the marriage of Muslims with the People of the Book" (Najafi 1981, 30:31-9).

The Prophet (s) bore in mind the guidelines of the Holy Qur'an in establishing relations with other nations and thus caused the message of Islam to reach the people of the world.

2. Theoretical Foundations of Islamic International Relations in Prophetic Tradition

A) Principle of Invitation and Jihad

Invitation occupies a considerable standing in Islamic literature and has a lot of influence in Islam's foreign relations. Religious materials verify that Muslims have no right to fight the pagans prior to inviting

them to monotheism and prophethood. Muslim jurists have also accepted this notion as an inalienable axiom in Islamic jurisprudence (Ṭūsī 1417 AH, 5:265, 520; Ibn Idrīs al-Ḥillī 1410 AH, 2:12). The Holy Qur'an has numerous verses regarding invitation, regarding it as the major duty of the holy prophet of Islam (s): "O Prophet! Lo! We have sent thee as a witness and a bringer of good tidings and a warner. And as a summoner unto Allah by His permission, and as a lamp that giveth light" (Q 33:45-6). The prophet of Islam (s) accorded such significance to the principle of invitation that in the wars he was the one to initiate the invitation and would invite even those whom he had already invited to Islam (Sajjadi, 1385 Sh, 15:173). The letters sent to the leaders of states by the Prophet (s) also reveal the significance of invitation in foreign relations in his viewpoint.

One of the stages of invitation is jihad. Obviously, jihad without invitation is forbidden (Ṭūsī 1417 AH, 5:265, 520). Therefore, jihad in Islam is not a goal in itself but a means for invitation. The philosophy of in Islam is to establish the sovereignty of valuable divine and human principles and elimination of tyranny against the oppressed people:

How should ye not fight for the cause of Allah and of the feeble among men and of the women and the children who are crying: Our Lord! Bring us forth from out this town of which the people are oppressors! Oh, give us from Thy presence some protecting friend! Oh, give us from Thy presence some defender!" (Q 4:75)

War has been authorized for preventing corruption on the earth and for encountering what impedes human perfection and happiness:

Bethink thee of the leaders of the Children of Israel after Moses, how they said unto a Prophet whom they had: Set up for us a King and we will fight in Allah's way. He said: Would ye then refrain from fighting if fighting were prescribed for you? They said: Why should we not fight in Allah's way when we have been driven from our dwellings with our children? Yet, when fighting was prescribed for them, they turned away, all save a few of them. Allah is Aware of evil doers." (Q 2:246)

To put it differently, the sacred laws of Islam stipulate that war is only waged in a state of emergency and as a last resort (Musawi 1384 Sh, 92). Therefore, the main purpose behind the mission of the prophet of Islam (s) is invitation to God, monotheism, and delivering the message of God to the people of the world. This invitation is the peaceful jihad, which works together with the other type of jihad that involves the use of force.

The Holy Qur'an contends that Muslims should engage in jihad against aggressors and enemies:

Fight in the way of Allah against those who fight against you, but begin not hostilities. Lo! Allah loveth not, aggressors. And slay them wherever ye find them, and drive them out of the places whence they drove you out, for persecution is worse than slaughter. And fight not with them at the Inviolable Place of Worship until they first attack you there, but if they attack you (there) then slay them. Such is the reward of disbelievers. But if they desist, then lo! Allah is Forgiving, Merciful. And fight them until persecution is no more, and religion is for Allah. But if they desist, then let there be no hostility except against wrongdoers. The forbidden month for the forbidden month, and forbidden things in retaliation. And one who attacketh you, attack him like manner as he attacked you. Observe your duty to Allah, and know that Allah is with those who ward off (evil). (Q 2:190-4)

B) Principle of Rejection of Domination of Pagans over Muslims

One of the principles constituting the foundation of the foreign relations of the prophet of Islam (s), manifested by him in his words and deeds, was the principle of rejecting the hegemony of pagans over Muslims and upholding Muslim dignity. This principle has been derived from the following Qur'anic verse:

Those who wait upon occasion in regard to you and, if a victory cometh unto you from Allah, say: Are we not with you? And if the disbelievers meet with a success say: Had we not the mastery of you, and did we not protect you from the believers? Allah will judge between you at the Day of Resurrection, and Allah will not give the disbelievers any way (of success) against the believers" (Q 4:141).

“*Sabīl*” here signifies law (Bojnordi n.d., 1:187). The rejection of the domination of pagans over Muslims implies that God has left no way for pagans to subdue or overpower Muslims. Basically, the rejection of the dominance of pagans over Muslims is expressive of positive and negative aspects; the negative aspect denotes the rejection of the hegemony of foreigners over political and social destiny of Muslims; the positive aspect represents the religious duty of Islamic *ummah* in safeguarding their political independence (Sajjadi 1385 Sh, 176). The prophet of Islam (s) paid serious attention to this important and fundamental principle in his international relations; he would never accept the dominance of non-Muslims over Muslims in any way.

Principle of Peace and Peaceful Co-Existence

Some Western orientalist uphold that Islamic foreign relations lays stress on war and that peace occupies a secondary and exceptional

status (Sajjadi 1385 Sh, 171). However, from the Islamic viewpoint, peace and peaceful co-existence is the main goal and end of social development. In fact, the most important goal of sending prophets is promoting social justice. Peace and peaceful co-existence are prerequisites of social justice.

The Holy Qur'an has called the believers to peace and tranquility in scores of verses and warned them against hostility and revenge: "O ye who believe! Come, all of you, into submission (unto Him); and follow not the footsteps of the devil. Lo! he is an open enemy for you" (Q 2:208). The tradition of the prophet (s) also stresses peace and peaceful co-existence. To encourage his opponents to join negotiations, the Prophet (s) never neglected the details of the terms of agreements (Amid Zanjani, 1367 AH, 274). If a war broke out, the Prophet (s) pursued the policy of seeking peace. The most glaring evidence is the Hūdaybiyyah Peace Accord. In chapter *Anfal*, God states, "And if they incline to peace, incline thou also to it, and trust in Allah. Lo! He is the Hearer, the Knower. And if they would deceive thee, then lo! Allah is sufficient for thee. He it is Who supporteth thee with His help and with the believers" (Q 8:61-2). Peaceful approaches are therefore the most important means in Islamic law for settlement of differences in internal and international affairs.

C) Principle of Honoring Treaties

Another principle appreciated by the Prophet (s) in his international relations of Islam is respecting pacts and contracts. There are many verses in the glorious Qur'an regarding this principle. A number of the verses describe those who break the pacts as the worst creatures on the earth. The verses 55 and 56 of chapter *Anfal* are two instances: "Lo! the worst of beasts in Allah's sight are the ungrateful who will not believe; Those of them with whom thou madest a treaty, and, then at every opportunity they break their treaty, and they keep not duty (to Allah)" (Q 8:55-6). Therefore, when a contract is signed, it must not be broken under any conditions. For this reason, the agreements between Muslims and non-Muslims are binding (Sajjadi, 1385 Sh, 178). The prophet of Islam (s) emphasized on this principle and enjoined his followers to respect their pacts and agreements (Mousawi 1384 Sh, 66). Practical tradition of prophet (s) clearly reflects this principle.

3. Islamic International Relations in Practical Tradition of Prophet (s)

The prophet of Islam (s) constituted the international relations of the Islamic community with other nations on theoretical grounds, which

will be dealt with in the following pages, in order to translate the fundamental ideals of Islam into reality. Scores of efficient guidelines were applied to bring success to Islamic political relations with other nations (Qavam n.d., 207). The most important of these methods are as follows:

A) Negotiation with Ambassadors and Envoys

Negotiating with, and trying to persuade, the opposite side is counted as one of the most common tools of communication in international relations. It is cost-effective and peaceful in nature; it also has a long-standing history in settlement of disputes and containment of tribal and national wars (Sajjad 1380 Sh, 175). This approach underpinned the basis for international relations of the Prophet (s). To this end, the prophet of God (s) dispatched envoys to non-Islamic countries and bound them to prefer negotiation to violent methods (Sajjadi 1379 Sh, 99). Subsequent to the conquest of Mecca, the noble prophet of Islam (s) found the opportunity to conduct negotiation with ambassadors of tribes and countries more actively.

B) Dispatch of Preacher and Communication of the Message of Islam

In the sphere of international relations of the Prophet (s), activities are not restricted to negotiation. However, efforts were always made to influence the conducts of the opposite side through propagation and cultural activities and to form favorable characteristics in them. For this reason, one of the instruments of international relations employed by the prophet of God (s) was dispatching preachers and transmitting messages to the chiefs of tribes and leaders of countries. These propagations found expression in the following forms:

- Direct contact with individuals, heads of states and delegations visiting Mecca on the occasion of Hajj rituals.
- Migration of Muslims to Abyssinia (Ethiopia) in two occasions with the incentive of propagation.
- Dispatching distinguished Muslim personalities to other countries.
- Dispatching delegations for propagation, like those sent to Yemen, Najd and Rajīʿ (Sajjadi 1379, 101).

The Prophet (s) conveyed messages and forwarded letters to the chiefs of tribes and leaders of other states besides sending preachers. The letters partially invited to the belief shared by all Revealed Scriptures; that is, “monotheism” (Ibn Hishām 1361 Sh, 4:254; Ahmadi Mianji 1419 AH, 315-508). Some of the scholars have estimated the letters to number over 300 (Ibn Kathīr 1408 AH, 4:306).

C) Fulfilling Pacts and Contracts

The prophet (s) did not negate the nationality of peoples and their internal independence. Despite the universal nature of Islam, the entity of tribes, nations, and other religions whether in the domain of Islamic government or outside of its domain remained well-guarded. One of the evidences of this treatment is the various pacts signed by the prophet of Islam (s) with different nations. In all these cases, as long as non-Muslims remained loyal to the terms of the agreement, the Islamic government did not break the peace pacts so that peaceful co-existence would remain in force (Amid Zanjani 1367 Sh, 3:505). The most glaring evidence of these pacts is the Ḥudaybiyyah Peace Treaty (Ahmadi Mianji 1419 AH, 1:261-3). These pacts were concluded in view of the needs of time in special situation and conditions between Muslims and Quraysh (Modarresi 1375 Sh, 46). In accordance with the pact, the two sides would cease war against each other for a period of 10 years so that public security and peace would be established in the Arabian Peninsula. Also, the ‘Aqaba Pact and Medina Constitution were among the international treaties signed between the prophet of God (s) and the Christians of Najran (Shahidi n.d., 49-54).

D) Creating Unity and Friendship among People

One of the effective techniques in the implementation of international policies is the use of economic and financial means. In his international relations to foster friendship and unity among people, the prophet of Islam (s) used such means.

Cultivation of friendship and unity among people is clearly called for by the Holy Qur’an and stands for allocation of portions of the spoils of war and financial profits of the Islamic government to incline the hearts of pagans to truth. The Holy Qur’an states, “The alms are only for the poor and the needy, and those who collect them, and those whose hearts are to be reconciled, and to free the captives and the debtors, and for the cause of Allah, and (for) the wayfarers; a duty imposed by Allah. Allah is knower, Wise” (Q 9:60). As the verse indicates, distribution of alms is restricted to the mentioned eight categories (Sajjari 1380 Sh, 179). An example of spending the spoils of war to cultivate friendship and unity among people by the prophet of Islam (s) is the battle of Ṭā’if when the nobles and chiefs of the city who had recently converted to Islam or the polytheists who had helped the Prophet (s), so he gave them greater share of the war spoils than others so as to cultivate friendship with them and with their tribes (Ibn Hishām 1361 Sh, 2:314). In response to the objections of his companions, the Prophet (s) said, “Did you feel offended in your heart for a petty worldly property by means of which I wanted to soften

their hearts and make them enamored so that they might embrace Islam?" (Mousawi 1384 Sh, 119).

E) Securing the Release of Captives and Slaves by Paying Ransom

Among the meritorious deeds encouraged by the Islamic international law is the abolition of slavery, a principle that has been only recently embedded in the constitutions of the majority of countries. The laws pertaining to the release of slaves, as well as other laws presented by Islam, had been already enshrined in a number of heavenly religions prior to Islam. However, the privilege of the law in Islam was that it obstructed all roads encouraging slavery and disseminated the culture of equality of all human beings. In accomplishing this, Islam employed the best and most successful methods. One of the other privileges of Islam compared to other religions lies in the former's philosophical insight into slavery presented in a special plan that culminated in full release of slaves in natural form (Office for Cooperation of Islamic Seminaries and Universities 1368 Sh, 141). Also, one of the instruments contrived by Islam in international relations is the release of slaves in exchange for ransom. *Fakk raqaba* or liberation of slaves and prisoners by paying ransom is one of the instruments Islam has selected in international relations. Literally speaking, *fakk* means releasing and detaching two things and *raqaba* (pl. *riqāb*) means slaves. *Itq* is interchangeable with the term *fakk* as it indicates separating the slave from the owner (Qorashi, 1364 Sh, 5:199). With the start of jihad against oppressors and pagan regimes, the logical program of Islamic liberation of slaves was launched. The message of Islam and Islamic army to the slaves living under the domination of oppressive pagan governments was that slaves would be released as soon as they embraced Islam and disobeyed their owners. This is only one ring of the set of chains charting out the idea of the freedom of slaves in Islam. However, for ever more precise understanding of the program of the release of slaves in Islam, one had better read Q 90, a chapter that was revealed in Mecca prior to the migration of the Prophet (s) and his companions to Medina, when the devoted followers of the Prophet (s) were fewer than the fingers of one hand. This chapter of the Holy Qur'an in those conditions can be maintained as declaration of a program, and as the stance of Islam and its noble prophet (s), on slavery, orphans, and indigent people. In this Qur'anic chapter, God primarily speaks of the city of Mecca and its importance and swears by it, mentions birth and reproduction, alludes to guidance and deviation of man and his God-given physical resources, and speaks of man as a creature born and begotten of pain. Finally, the chapter speaks of the difficult task of faring the "uphill road" and mentions releasing slaves and feeding orphans and

destitutes as instances of this task. According to the chapter, those who fulfill this task will be included among the believers (Qorshi 1364 Sh, 5:199).

Conclusion

Qur'anic teachings postulate that Islamic international relations are conducted in full cooperation with the growing power of Islam and in line with development of societies. Muslims have been urged to recognize other religions and involve in interaction with them. To accomplish this end, Muslims have been advised to keep aloof from any form of racism, hold commonalities with other religions in highest esteem, and observe human dignity. The tradition of the prophet of Islam (s) features his respect for this attitude. By considering Qur'anic tenets, the Prophet (s) fashioned international relations on the following tenets: invitation and *jihād*, rejection of the domination of pagans over Muslims, peace and peaceful co-existence, honouring the pledges of treaties, establishing international relations of the Islamic society with other nations through negotiations with their ambassadors and envoys, dispatch of preachers and transmission of messages, fulfilling pacts, cultivation of the spirit of unity and friendship among people, and release of slaves, and so forth. The tradition of the Prophet (s) was accordingly emulated by Muslims for building up relations with other nations. In later times, the special intellectual, cultural, and political circumstances of the world awakened the conscience of the peoples of the world, their truth-seeking sentiments and drift towards Islam began more vigorously than the former times. It is therefore relevant for Muslims to get ready to establish wide-ranging relationship with other religions with the aim of publicizing the sheer truth for truth-seekers. If Muslims uphold their values and traditions in dealing with other nations and refuse to exercise hegemony over others and also avoid giving in to oppression and simply promulgate their genuine thought and present the message of their religion efficiently, they can put into action the tradition of prophet (s). Therefore, Muslims can establish relations with other nations and transact with them in their Islamic international relations by upholding their Islamic beliefs and culture and by seeking inspiration from prophetic theoretical and practical tenets and tradition.

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