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# Intolerance, Its fatality and Remedial Measures in the Light of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH)'s Sīrah

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## ABSTRACT

Intolerance' is one of the major social evils which not only damages an individual's character but also shatters the whole society. It is the 'intolerance', if not dealt with at an early stage, consequently, results in sectarianism, extremism and, more fatally, in terrorism. Illiteracy, unawareness, poverty, grievances, injustice and various prejudices could be listed as some of the many causes igniting intolerance in the society. It may take various manifestations such as the religious, political and academic. The proposed paper aims to critically analyses the emergence of intolerance among the individuals as well as the society at large. It also highlights the causes that corrupt the tolerant behaviour and give rise to intolerance. Also, this paper outlines the types of intolerance and how they cause adverse impact on the individual and communal life. More importantly, the discourse in this paper examines and critically analyses the practical measures which Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) took to combat this evil in his time and how the Sīrah of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) can play a vital role, in the contemporary context, to eradicate the drastically increasing intolerance and impatience from the society. Finally, the paper concludes that the Sīrah of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) provides a comprehensive practical model to fight against the fatal social and spiritual disease of intolerance and if implemented with its true spirit, it can assure a peaceful, tolerant and coherent society.

**Key Words:** Tolerance, Intolerance, Impatience, Sīrah, Prophet, Society, Islam, Peace.

The 'Tolerance' is a personal trait which has been defined as 'the ability or willingness to tolerate the existence of opinions or behaviour that one dislikes or

disagrees with<sup>(1)</sup>. This attribute in one's behaviour and character ensure broad thinking, greater happiness and the acceptance of diverse opinions. While the 'Intolerance', being its opposite, would mean then 'the fact of refusing to accept ideas, beliefs or behaviour that are different from your own'<sup>(2)</sup>. It is a social and behavioural ailment which fatally effects the individuals and the society alike. An intolerant individual not only damages his own life but also put the peace of the whole society at risk. The tolerance, forbearance, integration and acceptability of diverse viewpoints are some of the fundamental prerequisites of a peaceful, moderate and coherent society.

'Intolerance' never emerges suddenly in an individual or a society. In fact, there are various stages which play a vital role for 'Intolerance' to exist as a physical reality. The very first stage in this regard is the 'Ignorance (*Jihalah*)'. It serves as a stepping stone for 'intolerance' to come in to being. The individuals who are ignorant of the true teaching of Islam and are unaware of the real spirit of Islam fall prey to the corrupted and distorted ideologies and as a result adopt un-Islamic and unrealistic behaviour and approach. That is why highlighting the importance and significance of knowledge and awareness, the Holy Qur'an states, 'Say: 'Can those who have knowledge and those who do not be alike?' So only wise do receive the admonition'<sup>(3)</sup>. This verse clearly underpins the difference between the approaches, behaviours and actions of those who bear knowledge and those who are ignorant.

The ignorance consequently results in 'narrow-mindedness' which is defined as '*lacking tolerance or not having the mental faculty to see beyond the superficial and recognize the underlying truth*'.<sup>(4)</sup> This lacking insight and inability to discover the concealed truths proves to be a barrier to an innovative thinking process and a rigid mind remains unable to appreciate and acknowledge the beauty of broad thinking and diverse ideas. Moreover,

A rigidly traditional individual's perceptivity, like that of a captive frog in a deep well, is able to function only within narrow parameters. He does not realize that there are boundless vistas of knowledge beyond the scope of the well, therefore, his mental and intellectual evolution remains stunted.

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(1) <https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/tolerance>, retrieved on 26/02/2019

(2) <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/intolerance>, retrieved on 26/02/2019

(3) Qur'an, 39: 9

(4) <https://www.ummah.com/forum/forum/family-lifestyle-community-culture/islamic-lifestyle-social-issues/21298-the-dangers-of-narrow-mindedness>, retrieved on 26/02/2019

He is unable to take advantage of the knowledge available beyond his limited horizon.<sup>(1)</sup>

An increased narrow-mindedness gives rise to 'Extremism and Radicalism' which is described as '*holding of extreme political or religious views*'.<sup>(2)</sup> This is to mean that an individual, group or organisation believes that only their opinion, ideology and strategies are right and legitimate undermining and illegitimizing all other contrary opinions, ideologies and strategies<sup>(3)</sup>. An extremist thinking is more dangerous than narrow-mindedness. In fact, it is an intellectual and ideological evil which springs out from narrow-mindedness.<sup>(4)</sup> It may adopt various manifestations such as the religious, political and economic etc.

A deep and thoughtful study of Qur'an and Sunnah explores that 'moderation' is an in-built character of Islam which is predominantly manifested in all teachings and practices of Islam. Therefore, by default, extremism has no place in Islam and the individual and groups bearing any extreme views, ideologies or actions neither represent nor the Muslim community. Almighty Allah has introduced Muslims, in the Qur'an, as a moderate and balanced community, as is highlighted in the following verse,

An in the same way, (O Muslims) We made you the best Ummah (Community – fair to all with a tolerant, moderate and balanced outlook) so that you may bear witness to the people...<sup>(5)</sup>

Also in one of his Hadith, the Messenger of Islam (PBUH) is reported to have said, '*Do not stress yourself, otherwise, this stress would be imposed upon you ...*'<sup>(6)</sup>

It is evident from the above Quranic verse and prophetic statement that Muslim Ummah is supposed to be a moderate, balanced and tolerant community having no traces of intolerance and extremism in their intellect, behaviour and character.

The ultimate outcome of extremist thinking is 'Intolerance' which undermines broad thinking and acceptability of diverse ideas and varying approaches. In recent times it has emerged as a heinous social evil that has not only affected the individuals and their thoughts and actions but has also shattered the Muslim societies round the globe. It is, in fact, a cancer which is damaging and ruining moral and behavioural structure of all segments of the society. It is the intolerance due to which people are confined to their

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(1) Ibid

(2) [https://www.google.com/search?q=extremism&rlz=1C1CHBD\\_en-GBGB825GB825&ogq=extremism&aqs=chrome..69i57j0l5.2942j0j8&sourceid=chrome&ie=UTF-8](https://www.google.com/search?q=extremism&rlz=1C1CHBD_en-GBGB825GB825&ogq=extremism&aqs=chrome..69i57j0l5.2942j0j8&sourceid=chrome&ie=UTF-8), retrieved on 26/02/2019

(3) Shams, 2006:15

(4) Qadri, 2017: 25

(5) Qur'an, 2: 143

(6) Shams, 2006: 20

own rigid and narrow thinking and refuse to acknowledge and accept the views, beliefs and actions that are contrary to their own.

The continued and uninterrupted intolerance breeds ‘Terrorism’. It may adopt two manifestations; intellectual or academic terrorism and armed terrorism. At an early stage, through intellectual terrorism, sectarianism, extremism, hatred and ‘*Takfiry*’<sup>(1)</sup> ideologies are promoted and promulgated. It is the intellectual terrorism which, in fact, paves the path for the armed terrorism by serving as the breeding place for it.

The U.S. Code of Federal Regulations defines ‘terrorism’ as the following

The unlawful use of force and violence against persons or property to intimidate or coerce a government, the civilian population, or any segment thereof, in furtherance of political or social objectives (28 C.F.R.)<sup>(2)</sup>

Since 9/11, the extremism and terrorism have wrongly and unfairly been bracketed with Islam and Muslims. Therefore, Esposito states in this regard,

From the Iranian revolution to the 9/11 and 7/7 attacks, and continued acts of global terrorism by militants in the name of Islam, questions have raised, and charges made regarding the relationship of Islam to religious extremism, violence, suicide bombing and terrorism.<sup>(3)</sup>

From the day one, Pakistan has played a vital and significant role in the war against terror due to which Pakistan and its people have regularly been the target of extremism and terrorism. Over 70,000 Pakistanis have lost their lives in this war against terror, but despite all that, Pakistan is still considered to be a breeding place for extremism and terrorism which is truly the negation of Pakistan’s sacrifices and sufferings.<sup>(4)</sup>

## Fatality of Intolerance

Intolerance and fanaticism is predominantly prevailing in all segments of the Pakistani society; from laymen to politicians, and from academia to religious authorities and can equally be observed in domestic setup, public places, media houses and the

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(1) Takfiriyyat – Casting opponents and those with contrary views out of Islam declaring them ‘disbelievers’.

(2) [https://www.google.com/search?q=what+is+terrorism&rlz=1C1CHBD\\_en-GBGB825GB825&oq=what+is+terrorism&aqs=chrome..69i57l2j69i59j69i60j69i59j69i60.4735j0j8&sourceid=chrome&ie=UTF-8](https://www.google.com/search?q=what+is+terrorism&rlz=1C1CHBD_en-GBGB825GB825&oq=what+is+terrorism&aqs=chrome..69i57l2j69i59j69i60j69i59j69i60.4735j0j8&sourceid=chrome&ie=UTF-8), retrieved on 26/02/2019

(3) Esposito, 2010: xxiii in the Forward of the Fatwa on Terrorism and Suicide Bombings by Dr Muhammad Tahir Al-Qadri

(4) Hasan, 2017: 27

parliament, both on individual and communal levels. Due to an increased intolerant behaviour, use of inappropriate and offensive language about one another has become a norm. No one seems to accept, acknowledge and honour the views and beliefs of other fellow members of the society.

Undoubtedly, the religious intolerance has gone an extra mile to that extent that the adherents of various schools of thought; both the leaders and the followers, due to their prejudiced narrow thinking, have turned so intolerant that they are never acceptive of mutual differences and are unable to acknowledge the beauty of the unity in diversity. They not only argue and fight with each other but also issue Fatwas against one another and keep casting each other out of Islam. It is the aggravated religious intolerance as a result to which '*Takfiriyyat*' has emerged in the Muslim societies in the form of an evil ideology which is costing many lives in and outside Pakistan.

One of the several practical manifestations of intolerance and fanaticism is that the leaders and the followers of one sect are hesitant to enter in the Masjid belonging to the other sect, or to pray behind the Imam of the other sect. Moreover, they do not allow their followers to go in the Madaris and educational institutions of the other sect for education. Intra faith marriages are also disliked and discouraged.

This disintegration among the various Muslim sects keeps them apart from each other resulting in the isolation and disunity among them which further results in hatred and unacceptability for one another. The continued disunity, hatred and academic and theological difference sometimes ignited to such heinous level that they cause terrorism and bloodshed against one another.

Pakistan and its people are facing fatal terrorism since the last three decades which has taken thousands of innocent lives and destroyed infrastructure and resources costing billions of dollars. No doubt, there have been various external factors of all this hell, but at the same time, the religious intolerance has also played a significant role to bring this destruction and disparity to the country and the nation.

To bring the peace and prosperity back to the country and to ensure harmony and peaceful coexistence among all segments of the society, it is inevitable to eliminate and uproot all forms of intolerance and extremism from the country. To combat intolerance, extremism and terrorism, the whole society needs to be based on peace, mercy, loyalty, tolerance and moderation.<sup>(1)</sup> As it is evident from the Islamic fundamental teachings, intolerance and extremism have no room in Islam. As a perfect code of life, Islam promotes the tolerance, moderation, positive and productive inter and intra faith dialogue and peaceful coexistence as its salient features which could be rectified by the several Qur'anic verses, Prophetic Ahādīth and numerous examples from the practical life (Sīrah) of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH). Hence, one of the Quranic verses reads in this regard,

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(1) Ibid: 26

لكم دينكم ولي دين

*(So) you have your dīn (religion), and I have my Dīn (Religion).<sup>(1)</sup>*

It is very much clear from this verse that Islam does not only acknowledge and appreciate the existence of the diverse and conflicting beliefs but also accepts them as a practical reality in an Islamic society. Another verse states in this regard,

Say: ‘O People of the Book, come to that matter which is common between us and you (namely that): we shall worship none other than Allah, and we shall not associate any partner with Him. Nor shall anyone of us take one another as Lords apart from Allah.

This verse is a fundamental evidence for the permissibility of inter faith dialogue based on commonalities and mutual interests. And that is what Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) practically materialised when a delegation of Christians arrived in Madinah from Najran.<sup>(2)</sup> Therefore, establishing a positive dialogue with other faith communities for better understanding and mutual beneficence is not only the Quranic injunction but also a Sunnah of the Prophet (PBUH).

It is also to be noted, in the light of this verse, if the dialogue among other faiths and religions and has been encouraged, how important and essential it would be to have an increased and continued productive intra faith dialogue among all Muslim schools of thought and denominations for the enhanced mutual understanding and bringing them closer to one another. Only through the dialogue, the mutual misconceptions and misunderstanding can be removed and unity among all denominations can be ensured for the greater benefit of the society.

### **Remedial Measures in the Light of Prophet (PBUH)’s Sīrah**

As has already been highlighted in the previous discourse, Islam has always denounced, discouraged and condemned intolerance, extremism and every form of terrorism. Islam, by default, is a moderate Dīn which promotes tolerance, forbearance and coexistence through its beliefs, teachings and practices. Also the Prophet of Islam (PBUH) has manifested the same throughout his practical life. His whole life was a true and perfect embodiment of peace, mercy, patience, tolerance and forbearance. This aspect of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH)’s behaviour and character has been described in the following Qur’anic verse,

وَمَا أَرْسَلْنَاكَ إِلَّا رَحْمَةً لِّلْعَالَمِينَ

<sup>(1)</sup> Quran, 109: 6

<sup>(2)</sup> Al-Baghwi, 2004, Vol.1: 241

*And, (O Esteemed Messenger!) We have not sent you but as a mercy  
for all the worlds.<sup>(1)</sup>*

فِيمَا رَحْمَةً مِّنَ اللَّهِ لَئِن لَّمْ يَكُنِ اللَّهُ لِرِجْسِ هَذِهِ الْأُمَّةِ قَدِيرًا لَّفَسَدُوا لَوْلَا رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ عَلَيْهِمْ لَخَطَفَتْهُم مِّنْ حَوْلِكَ

*(O My Esteemed Beloved!) What a mercy of Allah that you are  
lenient with them! Had you been stern and hard-hearted, people  
would have deserted, scattering away from around you...<sup>(2)</sup>*

Through these verses the mercifulness, kindness and excellent moral values have been reflected as the natural and ingrained attributes of Prophet (PBUH)'s behaviour and character. This merciful and kind treatment of Prophet (PBUH) was not only confined to his companions and followers but was also extended to even his worse enemies. Numerous examples can be traced from his life which indicate that he always treated his opponents and enemies with respect and kindness, and it goes to that extent that he never took revenge from those persecuted and tortured him throughout his life.

Prophet Muhammad (PBUH)'s character, behaviour, words of wisdom and the course of action provide an effective and comprehensive framework to overcome intolerance and combat extremism and terrorism from the society. In the light of Prophet's Sirah, the following steps and practical measures could be adopted in this regard:

## 1. Education and Awareness

It has already been elaborated that 'ignorance' is the stepping stone towards the journey to extremism and intolerance. This is the first tool due to which innocent people fall prey to the extremist ideology. Therefore, the role of education and awareness about the right and wrong cannot be undermined in this regard. The significance of knowledge and education can be comprehended by the fact that the very first revelation sent down to Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) was about education which read,

اقْرَأْ بِاسْمِ رَبِّكَ الَّذِي خَلَقَ . خَلَقَ الْإِنْسَانَ مِنْ عَلَقٍ . اقْرَأْ وَرَبُّكَ الْأَكْرَمُ . الَّذِي عَلَّمَ بِالْقَلَمِ . عَلَّمَ  
الْإِنْسَانَ مَا لَمْ يَعْلَمْ

(1) Quran, 21: 107

(2) Qur'an, 3: 159

*(O Beloved!) Read (commencing) with the Name of Allah, Who has created (everything). He created man from a hanging mass (clinging) like a leech (to the mother's womb). Read, and your Lord is Most Generous, Who (besides that) taught man (all that) which he did not know. Or Who imparted to (the most eminent of) mankind (the chosen Prophet Muhammad [blessings and peace be upon him] without using any pen) the whole knowledge that he was not aware of before.<sup>(1)</sup>*

Also there are numerous Prophetic Ahādīh through which the importance of education has been highlighted; hence, Mu'awiyah (RA) has reported the Prophet (PBUH) to have said,

If Allah intends someone well, He grants him insight in the religion. I am the only distributor, while the Bestower is Allah.<sup>(2)</sup>

According to Ibn Abbas (RA), Allah's Messenger (PBUH) said, A jurist (Faqih) is more difficult for Satan than a thousand worshippers.<sup>(3)</sup>

Above described Qur'anic and Prophetic statements undeniably determine the inevitability and beneficence of education and how hard it is to deviate a learned and well-informed individual from the right path.

Unfortunately, the religious seminaries of Pakistan, irrespective of their juristic denomination, are playing a vital role in the promotion of religious intolerance in the society on both individual and communal levels. Hence, Qadri argues in this regard,

In seminaries, along with the religious education, the tendency of violence based on religious beliefs is not less than tragedy. Contrary to other form of violence, it has various aspects, dimensions and motivations. Experts believe that the sectarian violence is the worst form of violence based on religion.<sup>(4)</sup>

He further argues,

It is to be noted that although these seminaries are not completely isolated from the mainstream educational system of Pakistan, but the thought and ideology and the world view taught in the seminaries of one sect are more often completely contrary to the others. Moreover, the medium and mode of coaching in these institutions is such that the academic interpretations

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<sup>(1)</sup> Qur'an, 96: 1-5

<sup>(2)</sup> Al-Qadri, 2012, Vol. II: 84

<sup>(3)</sup> Ibid: 86

<sup>(4)</sup> Hassan, 2017: 47



and explanations by one sect are never acceptable for the other. This behaviour has triggered the sectarianism to a greater level.<sup>(1)</sup>

Therefore, to combat intolerance and counter extremism, a comprehensive and all-inclusive syllabus heavily based on peace, love, tolerance, forbearance, moderation and harmonious coexistence needs to be introduced and implemented in all seminaries and educational institutions of all sects and denominations. Moreover, the literature inciting intolerance and mutual hatred must be abended and also the religious leaders and scholars who advocate hatred and intolerance causing the peace of the society at risk must be dealt with an iron hand. It is the fundamental duty of the governments to take necessary practical measures in this regard.

## 2. Promoting Tolerance and Forbearance

To eradicate the prevalence of intolerance from the society, it is incumbent upon everyone to promote forbearance and tolerance at all levels. The Sirah of the Prophet (PBUH) is the best role model for us in this regard. Even during the worst of the circumstances, he (PBUH) always observed a higher level of tolerance. The extent of his tolerance and forbearance can be realised from the following example.

Pir Muhammad Karam Shah Al-Azhar has reported from Subul ul Huda that at the battle of Badr when Prophet Muhammad (PBUH)'s face was severely injured and also his teeth broke, the companions felt so aggrieved and upset that they requested the Prophet (PBUH) to curse the enemies. The Prophet replied in response to their request saying, '*O my companions! I have not been sent to accurse rather God has sent me as an embodiment of Rehmat and preacher of the truth.*'<sup>(2)</sup> Then the Prophet (PBUH) held his hand up and prayed, 'Oh God! do give guidance to my nation; they are oppressive to me for they do not recognise me, had they recognised me they would not have done so.'<sup>(3)</sup> Also he states that Bukhari and Muslim have reported from Jabir that,

To this event I am the eye and the ear witness; the Prophet was at Ja'ranah, he was distributing silver placed in sheet of Bilal, a man said, 'Oh Prophet of God! Do the justice in distribution.' The Prophet replied to him, 'or may you destroy, if I do not do the justice then who will do it. If I do not do justice, I may be a loose'.<sup>(4)</sup>

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(1) Ibid: 34

(2) Al-Sahy, 1927, Vol. IV: 38

(3) Al-Azhari, 2011, Vol. V: 163

(4) Ibid from Subul ul Huda, Vol. IV: 38

Hazrat Umar hearing this conversation sought the permission of Prophet to kill the man for his rudeness but the Prophet said he sought refuge of God from killing him for the people would say he started to kill his companions.

These examples reflect Prophet (PBUH)'s excellent tolerant behaviour as he never adversely reacted to the extremely rude and aggressive treatment by his enemies, rather he remained calm and observed forbearance. We, the followers of Prophet Muhammad must learn a lesson from these examples and try our best to imitate this in our behaviour and character.

### 3. Acknowledgement of Diversity

Adopting a rigid and stereotype thinking, confining to one's own narrow-minded approach and refusing to accept and acknowledge the opposite and contrary views, in all religious, social and political perspectives, are also some of the factors which are igniting the intolerance in the society. These elements serve a barrier or an obstacle in the process of appreciating or accepting the views or beliefs which are conflicting to one's own. This rigid and non-accommodative behaviour, when aggravated, results in division, disunity and sectarianism. Prophet (PBUH) has condemned this approach and always encouraged the acceptance of diversity and peaceful coexistence.

The peace agreement of Hudaibiyyah can be cited as one of its significant examples. At that occasion when the terms and conditions of the peace agreement were to be documented, Prophet (PBUH) asked Ali (RA) to begin the document by writing, 'بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ (In the name of Allah, the Most Beneficent, Ever Merciful).' Suhayl, the Makkan representative, objected saying, 'I don not know this, instead, write, 'بِاسْمِكَ اللَّهُمَّ (With the name of Allah)'. So, the Prophet (PBUH), on his objection, instructed Ali (RA) to begin with 'اللَّهُمَّ بِاسْمِكَ', which he obeyed. Then afterwards, the Prophet (PBUH) dictated, 'that is what had been agreed between Muhammad, the Messenger of Allah, and Suhayl bin 'Amr.' Suhayl again objected by saying, 'If I had testified you as the Messenger of Allah, I would not have fought against you, therefore, instead write your name and your father's name.' Hence, Prophet (PBUH) instructed (Ali) to write, 'That was what had been agreed between Muhammad bin Abdullah and Suhayl bin 'Amr...' <sup>(1)</sup> This clearly reflects how acceptive Prophet (PBUH) was for the opposite and contrary views. He not only accepted Suhayl bin 'Amr's objection but also acknowledged it by making amendments in the document.

Therefore, for the enhanced peace and integration, rigidity and narrow-mindedness need to be diluted down and the acceptance of the diverse views, beliefs and discourses should be promoted from top to bottom level. The religious leadership must take a lead in this regard by compromising on secondary and minor issues and focussing on the primary and fundamental beliefs and principles of Islam.

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(1) Inb Hisham, 2009: 687

## Mercy and Kindness

Mercy and kindness are more effective tools to tackle and die down anger, hatred, prejudice and intolerance. Expressing the sentiments of mercy and treating those with opposite and contrary views or beliefs with kindness removes any barriers bringing them closer and creates room for better understanding and peaceful coexistence.

Rudeness, rigidity and hard heartedness, on the other hand, result in the mutual communication gap and give rise to misunderstandings about each other, hatred and enmity. The aggravation of which, consequently, may be reflected sometimes in the form of extremism and terrorism against one another.

That is why, the teachings of Islam are predominantly based on mercy and kindness. The Messenger of Islam was a perfect and comprehensive embodiment of peace, kindness and mercy. This attribute of Prophet (PBUH) has been outline in a crystal-clear manner in the following Qur'anic verse which reads,

وَمَا أَرْسَلْنَاكَ إِلَّا رَحْمَةً لِّلْعَالَمِينَ

*And, (O Esteemed Messenger,) We have not sent you but as a mercy  
for all the worlds.<sup>(1)</sup>*

One of the many practical manifestations of the eternal merciful character of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) was on the day of the conquest of Makkah. Hence, Dr Al-Qadri argues in this regard,

Consider for a moment the time of the conquest of Makkah when the Prophet (PBUH) entered the Sacred City as a conqueror with an army of 10, 000 men. The Makkans surrendered willingly and there was no bloodshed. However had the Prophet intended he could have sought revenge for the sufferings he had endured at their hands. He and the early Muslims not only suffered persecution and humiliation, but several attempts were made to assassinate him. It was in such dire circumstances that the Prophet (PBUH) had been forced to leave his beloved city. Upon entering Makkah, one Ansarite commander Sa'd b. 'Ubada (RA) declared passionately: 'Today is the day of war.' The Prophet (PBUH) expressed displeasure at this statement, took the flag from him and handed it over to his son and said to Abu Sufyan:

"اليوم يوم الرحمة"

*(Today is the day of mercy).<sup>(1)</sup>*

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<sup>(1)</sup> Quran, 21: 107

Then the Holy Prophet (PBUH) asked his enemies: ‘What kind of behaviour do you expect from me today?’ They replied: ‘We expect the same behaviour as the one Prophet Yousuf (PBUH) extended to his brothers.’ The Holy Prophet (PBUH) said what Prophet Yousuf (PBUH) had announced:

*اذهبوا فانتم الطلقاء*

*Go, for you are free (of blame and punishment).<sup>(2)</sup>*

This is one of the many examples illustrating magnanimity of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH).<sup>(3)</sup>

It was the climax of Prophet (PBUH)’s mercifulness and kindness that he pardoned, at the time when he could take fullest revenge, those who had remained his worse enemies who continuously persecuted and tortured him for years. And in this way, he brought them closer and turned his foes to closest friends and followers. Therefore, Dr Al-Qadri further argues,

Through such gracious conduct the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) single-handedly united Arabia and left behind for his followers a legacy of love, compassion and tolerance.<sup>(4)</sup>

## **Tackling Unemployment and Poverty**

Unemployment and poverty are also among the major reasons that cause distress and disparity and let people, especially the young generation, to fall prey to extremism, intolerance and consequently they are pruned to terrorism. Due to the increasing social, political and economic grievances, the young and immature youth become aggressive and intolerant and to satisfy their irritative reactive instinct and to take revenge of their sufferings sometimes take the law in to their own hands and carryout terroristic activities.

Like many countries, poverty and unemployment are of the main issues of Pakistan. Hundreds of thousands of Pakistani still do not have access to education, and those are educated facing unemployment. Hasan argues that of those 45, 000 university graduates who graduated in 2013, 16,000 are still unemployed.<sup>(5)</sup> this high level of unemployment causes psychological and emotional stress and intolerance in the society.

(1) Al-‘Asqalani, 1379AH, Vol. 8: 8-9

(2) Ibid: 18-19

(3) Al-Qadri, 2015: 33-34

(4) Ibid

(5) Hassan, 2017: 32

No doubt, at occasions, external factors also play an important role in this regard as well. Some times external forces and agencies exploit their grievances for their own vested interests, and they fund them to conduct such heinous activities.

Therefore, necessary practical measures are required to be taken to tackle unemployment and poverty. That was Prophet Muhammad (PBUH)'s comprehension of such issues that just after his migration from Makkah to Madinah and having established there the Islamic Welfare State of Madinah, the very first step which he took was to address the unemployment and the economic issue of the community. He successfully handled these issues by introducing a unique idea of establishing the *Mawākhāt* (brotherhood) among the Muhajirūn (emigrants) and the Ansār (Helpers – residents of Madinah). The details of which can be in numerous books of Ahadith and Prophetic autobiographies. Hence Ibn Hisham reports that Ibn Ishaq said,

آخي رسول الله صلي الله عليه و آله وسلم بين اصحابه من المهاجرين والانصار

*And the Messenger of Allah (PBUH) established Mawākhāt among his companions from the Muhajirūn and the Ansār.<sup>(1)</sup>*

The establishment of *Mawākhāt* played a significant and vital role to address the financial and economic crises of emigrants who sacrificed their homeland, wealth and property to support the cause of Islam. They left everything behind and migrated empty handed to Madinah.

## Conclusion

The discourse in this paper has been dedicated to examines 'Intolerance' as a social and behavioural ailment which primarily is an individual's dilemma but gradually the whole society becomes its victim. It has also explored that intolerance does not emerge incidentally, instead there are many stages, such as the ignorance, narrow-mindedness and extremism through which it adopts its final shape and prevails in the society along with its several practical manifestations which grievously effect all segments of the society, the worse form of which ultimately results in terrorism.

Further, it outlines the fatal impacts which intolerance, impatience and extremism cast on individuals and the society. These impacts may include the widely used offensive and immoral language, aggressive behaviour and the prevalence of the *Takfiri* ideology demonising and declaring the opponents as the disbelievers.

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(1) Ibn Hisham, 2009: 355, Ibn Kathir, 2011: 227

Moreover, this paper presents a practical framework, in the light of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH)'s Sirah, to successfully overcome intolerance and combating terrorism. It highlights that by educating the masses and creating awareness about the peaceful and peace-loving spirit and introducing the moderate face of Islam, intolerant behaviour of the individuals and the society can considerably be mended.

Continuously promoting tolerance and forbearance, signifying the necessity and beneficence of diversity, advocating the acknowledgement and acceptance of opposite views and beliefs and creating an environment of mercy and kindness can also play a vital role in producing a tolerant and moderate society.

Additionally, by taking effective practical measures to end the circle of poverty and bringing the unemployment level down to its lowest can also address some of the social, political and economic grievances ensuring relative enhanced tolerant society.

Finally, the paper concludes that the Sirah of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) is an excellent role model for the Muslims and non-Muslims alike, and if adopted with its true word and spirit, can present the practical solutionس to many social, psychological, political, economic, ethical and spiritual issues of humanity.

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