



Islam: A Submission to none but Allah OR

Islam: Finding peace through Submission to none but Allah

Muslims are accused of being terrorists. Islam is accused of being predominantly violent, even spread by the sword. In such times it would be understandable that some Muslims would try to defend Islam by emphasising the oft-overlooked, peaceful side of the Deen.

However, unduly exaggerating any aspect of the Islamic way of life distorts the true picture. It can be dangerous, for it can play right into the hands of those who wish to harm Islam and Muslims by promoting certain aspects of Islam and censoring others. Many of those who accuse Islam know full well that their words are little more than a shallow attempt to divert attention from true debate about the merits of the Islamic way of life. Moreover, their policy is aimed at putting pressure on Muslims to leave the pure Islamic way of thinking. They wish, instead, that Muslims become preoccupied with cost-benefit analyses before undertaking any action, instead of looking to what Allah is most pleased with. By adopting a distorted Islam, we could be undermining the foundations of what it means to be a Muslim.

It is not uncommon to hear the phrase 'Islam means peace'. It is said that Islam and *salaam* (Arabic for peace) have the same root, so therefore peace is the core of Islam. The inference is that *Islam IS peace*, meaning that wherever peace is found, then this is Islam. Islam can then become any form of peace - even by surrendering to or remaining silent about oppressive murderers; accepting a peace process with the Jewish entity (even though it is forbidden in the *shari'ah*); or indeed appeasing every occupation of Muslim lands. In this representation of Islam, the *shari'ah* ceases to be the measure to judge actions by, replaced by whatever is judged at any particular time as most peaceful.

Linguistically this is a mistake. Islamically it is a catastrophe. It may be true that both words share the letters S L M, however, there are many words sharing the same three root letters. Only *silm*, *salm* and *salaam* are mentioned in Arabic dictionaries as having peace (*Did al-harb*) among their meanings. Even *salm* and *salaam* both have the meaning surrender as well. More importantly though, when understanding any word in the Qur'an or *Sunnah* it is necessary for it to keep the meaning as used by the Arabs at the time of revelation, unless there is text to give it a more specific meaning. For instance, *Salah* in the language of the Arabs means to supplicate (*du'aah*), yet Islamic texts gave it a specific meaning of the act of prayer performed five times a day by Muslims. No Muslim would argue that merely making *du'aah* five times per day fulfilled the second pillar of Islam.

In his *tafsir* of, ﴿بَلَىٰ مَنْ أَسْلَمَ وَجْهَهُ لِلَّهِ وَهُوَ مُحْسِنٌ فَلَهُ أَجْرُهُ عِنْدَ رَبِّهِ وَلَا خَوْفٌ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا هُمْ يَحْزَنُونَ﴾, **“No, whosoever surrenders himself to God, while doing good, he will have his reward with his Lord. There will be no fear over them, nor will they grieve”** [Qur'an 2:112] Tabari mentions “He means with ‘*islam al-wajh* (*islam* of the face): to make oneself low, and submissiveness to His order. The origin of ‘*al-islam*’ is: surrendering (*istislaam*), because it is from ‘I surrendered to his order’ meaning submitting to his order. The Muslim is only called a *muslim* with the submission of his body to the obedience of his Lord.” فإنه يعني بـ "إسلام الوجه": التذلل لطاعته والإذعان لأمره. وأصل "الإسلام": الاستسلام، لأنه "من استسلمت لأمره"، وهو الخضوع لأمره. وإنما سمي "المسلم" مسلماً بخضوع جوارحه لطاعة ربه.

Qamus al-Muhit defines *al-islam* as “obedience, concession and surrender” الطاعة والانقياد والتسليم

Qurtabi says in his *tafseer* “*al-islam* in the language of the Arabs: surrendering, obedience and submitting” والاسلام في كلام العرب: الخضوع والانقياد للمستسلم.

So, the word Islam has submission at the heart of its linguistic meaning, and has been given a specific Islamic meaning of surrendering, obedience and submitting to Allah without resistance.

In fact, this is the very heart of what it means to be a Muslim. Submitting one's very desires to Allah is the highest form of worship. Submission is what Allah (swt) asks of us and is the naturally sensible thing to do. Every thing in existence is submitting to Allah against its will as all submit to the laws of the universe set by Allah. Humans have free will to choose what actions to perform. By submitting our actions to a system of rules (the *shari'ah*) designed by their Creator is certainly sensible. By willingly submitting our will to the Will of Allah, such that we do not even desire for that which would displease Allah (swt), is an even purer worship to Him.

Allah (swt) asks us to ponder ﴿أَفَحُكْمَ الْجَاهِلِيَّةِ يَبْتَغُونَ وَمَنْ أَحْسَنُ مِنَ اللَّهِ حُكْمًا لِقَوْمٍ يُوقِنُونَ﴾ “Do they then seek the judgement of Ignorance? And who is better in judgement than Allah for a people who have firm faith?” [Qur’an 5:50]

He (swt) informs us that the path to betterment is willingly submitting ourselves to His system, by referring all matters back to what His Messenger, Muhammad (saw), brought. ﴿فَلَا وَرَبِّكَ﴾ “But no, by your Lord, they will not have faith, until they make you (Muhammad) judge in all disputes between them, and find in themselves no resistance against your decisions, and accept with full submission.” [Qur’an 4:65]

The submitting Muslim is grateful to his Lord for all His favours. He is ever thankful that Allah has given clear guidance and the *shari’ah* as a way to Him. He turns in repentance to His Lord for past ingratitude and wants only to submit to whatever pleases Allah most.

The submitting Muslim, faced with any problem, asks ‘what solution would please my Lord?’ He searches the Islamic texts for a text or an indication whether Allah (swt) is pleased or displeased with a certain course of action. He then submits fully to that rule, adopting it as the *hukm shari’i* (Islamic rule) for him. Were he unable to derive the rule from the text, as most many Muslims today are, then he asks those who are able.

If the submitting Muslim heard that his adopted Islamic rule was disliked by other people, he does not go back to the text to find a more pleasing rule. That would not be submitting to Allah, but to peer-pressure or public opinion. Ultimately both would entail following his or their desires.

Allah (swt) says ﴿وَأَنْ أَحْكُمَ بَيْنَهُمْ بِمَا أَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ وَلَا تَتَّبِعْ أَهْوَاءَهُمْ وَاحْذَرْهُمْ أَنْ يَفْتِنُوكَ عَنْ بَعْضِ مَا أَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ إِلَيْكَ﴾ “And so judge between them by what Allah has revealed and do not follow their desires, but beware of them lest they turn you away from even some of what was revealed to you” [Qur’an 5:49]

The submitting Muslim is not like the lawyer, who looks at what technical point of law or precedent he can use to serve his purpose. It is the truth of the matter that counts. The submitting Muslim does not search the historical jurists’ opinions looking for a ruling that suits his own agenda, adopting any *shaadh* (obscure) opinion. Allah (swt) has warned against this grave error many times. The submitting Muslim has *taqwa* (fear and consciousness of Allah) to help him decide what ruling to adopt. His only concern is what is most pleasing to Allah. Without this, he has only legal wranglings which miss the very point of Islam: submission.

Allah (swt) says ﴿وَمَنْ يَبْتَغِ غَيْرَ الْإِسْلَامِ دِينًا فَلَنْ يُقْبَلَ مِنْهُ وَهُوَ فِي الْآخِرَةِ مِنَ الْخَاسِرِينَ﴾ “Whoever accepts other than Submission as his religion, it will not be accepted from him, and in the Hereafter, he will be with the losers.” [Qur’an 3:85]

Peace has its place in Islam. It is what we wish for each other in the next life, as we pray to Allah in our standard greeting ‘As-Salaamu alaikum’. It is a rule of foreign policy after treaties have been concluded. It is the natural consequence of implementing the Islamic *shariah* in the Islamic state, as it is the basic way of dealing between the citizens of society, Muslim or not. It is the settled state of the heart and mind of the believing submitting Muslim. Other beliefs may give temporary or partial peace of mind, but only Islam gives permanent inner peace, as only Islam is built upon the mind and agrees with human nature.

In the end, despite whichever label people wish to place on Islam, Islam has submission to Allah’s *Deen* at its heart.

﴿أَلَمْ تَرَ إِلَى الَّذِينَ يَزْعُمُونَ أَنَّهُمْ آمَنُوا بِمَا أَنْزَلَ إِلَيْكَ وَمَا أَنْزَلَ مِنْ قَبْلِكَ يُرِيدُونَ أَنْ يَتَحَاكَمُوا إِلَى الطَّاغُوتِ وَقَدْ أُمِرُوا أَنْ يَكْفُرُوا بِهِ وَيُرِيدُ الشَّيْطَانُ أَنْ يُضِلَّهُمْ ضَلَالًا بَعِيدًا﴾

“Have you seen those who claim to believe in what has been sent down to you, and what was sent down before you? They wish to go to the *taghut* for judgement, while they have been ordered to reject it. *Shaytaan* wishes to lead the far astray.”

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