



The Concept of Human Rights in Islam

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ABSTRACT

Islam is a religion, which tends to develop a society of human beings in which they enjoy the reciprocal grounds of relationship among themselves. It forces its followers to execute the responsibilities they are responsible for, rather than challenging satisfaction of their rights from others. This is how a mutual relationship of discharging duties comes into existence. Responsibility of a person is the right of his other fellow beings. Every dimension of the Islamic concept of human rights forcefully allows the unconditional acceptance of dignity of the man, which is the fundamental right of each and every child of 'Adam'. The other most important aspect is the ground of the mutual relationships. Islam insists that each dimension of relationship among human beings must be based on fear of Allah, the Almighty. Hence everybody is strongly connected with each other through a connection that each knot of it has been knit with deep sense of realization that the individual has relations with his other companions either to please his Lord or leaves someone on the same fundamentals. So desiring the pleasure of Allah or having fear of His displeasure is the only criteria that has to be observed by every human being in order to establish his connections/relation with other fellow-beings. Personal desires and interests in this consideration are so mean that cause massive damage towards human dignity, which ends up into the deprivation of human beings from their inherent rights. This Islamic principle of specifying human rights is a fundamental cure of the social disease that child's petitions against their parents and parent's petition against their children. Now days everyone is left alone in this society.

KEY WORDS: Mutual rights, territorial supremacy, Human dignity, Brotherhood and Social Justice.

INTRODUCTION

Islam is guardian of dignity and respect for human beings. It has got the dynamic spirit to protect the mutual rights, honor and the promotion of permanent values in human society. The topic of Human Rights is one of the most important contents of modern time discussions which determine that where does a country or nation stands in the modern world. However Islam is the only civilization that embraces this concept from the day one that rises on horizon of the universe brightening with its shining and vibrant rays as it has been mentioned in the holy Quran: "And indeed we have honored the Children of Adam". [3]

There is another example from the early social life of the holy Prophet Hazrat Muhammad (PBUH) in the age of 20 years only, 20 years before his Prophethood, he participated in an 'oath ceremony' known as 'Half-ul-Fuzool' (This oath took place in the month of Z-ul-Qaadah (20 years before the Prophethood) soon after the battle of Fijar which took place in the month of Shaban. This oath is famous with this name because it was executed and administered due to the untiring efforts of the three persons whose names were commonly sharing the substance of 'FAZL', those were: Al-Fazl Bin Fuzalah, Al-Fazl Bin Widaah and Al-Fazl Bin Qudhaah For ref pl see Ibne Hisham, Abdul Malik, *As-Seerah An-Nabawiyyah*, Dar-ul-Kitab il Arabi, Beirut, Lebanon. 1429 HJri/2008. p: 90/1 and see Tabari, Ibne Jareer, Imam: *Tareekh-ul- Umam Wal-Mulook*, p:302/2 and Hasan Ibrahim Hasan: *Tareekh-ul-Islam*, p:205/1) in the history. This ceremony was held in the house of Abdullah Bin Judaa (son of the paternal uncle of Hazrat Ayesah (RA). He is famous in the history because of his generosity and hospitality. Pl. see Ibne Hisham, *As-Seerah An-Nabawiyyah*, p:91/1) and the aim o oath was to maintain peace, dignity and mutual respect among the fighting elements and forces of Arabs. This issue was so significant that the holy Prophet Hazrat Muhammad (PBUH) says:

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“I witnessed the oath in the house of Abdullah Bin Judaan. I would not be willing to withdraw from the honour of being one of the participants of the occasion even in lieu of the heavy compensations of a flock of red camels, and if someone appeals for assistance in the name of that oath even in Islamic era, I would extend my help to him.” (This was narrated by Ibne Is-haq on authority of Hazrat Talhah Bin Abdullah, Tabiee without mentioning the name of Sahabi. So this hadith is Mursal, not Marfoo.)

The delight of the holy Prophet Hazrat Muhammad (PBUH) in regard with the oath is quite understandable if the contents of the oath are comprehended which are:

“Witness to Allah! Together we all would rise and we would keep making efforts against the suppressor till he delivers the rights to the oppressed one. This oath would not cease to exist till oceans would continue wetting the oysters and the mountains of Makkah firmly keep kissing the heavens with their lofty tops and till our economy is based on social equality.”

The spirit of the oath was to warranty the assurance of provisions of the human rights even in the days when there were no rights mentioned for human beings. The holy Prophet Hazrat Muhammad (PBUH) picked up the forceful significance of the oath and appreciated it even when he was only 20 years old. His association with the oath result in his 23 years long Prophetic struggle that ultimately ended up in bringing about such a revolution that secured the human rights in true letters and spirits. [1]

Status of Human Being:

Before discussing the subject, it is necessary to know about the rank and prestige of the man that has been awarded him by Islam among other creatures. In Islam the idea of human rights is based on respect, dignity and equality that he has been appointed as the representative of Allah soon after the occurrence of his special creation as it has been mentioned in the holy Quran: “And (remember) when your Lord said to the angels: Verily, I am going to appoint a vicegerent on the earth.”

When Allah created Adam, the angels were asked to prostrate before him in order to establish his significant decorum as it is stated in the holy Quran: “And (remember) when We said to the angels: Prostrate yourselves before Adam.”

This first chapter of human existence has an evidence to establish the superiority and supremacy of Adam to all creatures in the universe. This has been mentioned in the holy Quran as per following: “And indeed we have honored the Children of Adam.” [3]

In this verse the fact has been revealed that Allah (SWT) has kindly blessed the children of Adam with fundamental nobility and dignity without referring them to mere external factor connected to the social or material stature. So every misconception of dignity based on wealth or family backgrounds has strictly been denied in Islam. Hence every child of Adam has been granted by a respectable place in society. So the verse has deductions that enable the mankind history to qualify the following major criteria based on social repartition in human life. [1]

No Aristocratic Approach allowed in Islam:

All human beings are from the same origin. The holy Quran states this theory on practical grounds as Allah addresses the mankind in the following vivacious verse: “O mankind! Be dutiful to your Lord, Who created you from a single person (Adam), and from him (Adam), He created his wife [Hawwa] (Eve).” [3]

No Room for Territorial Supremacy:

Similarly as previously mentioned, it is worthy to note that Islam does not permit anyone to block the way of provision of rights to all human beings on equal grounds. Every human being enjoy the rights of dignity and honor. The holy Quran says: “O mankind! We have created you from a male and female, and made you into nations and tribes, that you may know one another.” [3]

It is told in Holy Quran that all human beings are the children of Adam. So there is no difference among the basis of class, colour and any other aspect. As far as the differences based on family backgrounds and different parts of society are concerned, it is important only to know each other. This does not mean at all to cause differences among them. Similar and same spirit can be observed in the last address of the holy Prophet Hazrat Muhammad when he was addressing his noble and loyal companions. He said in a loud and clear voice, “O mankind! Behold! indeed your Lord is one and no doubt your father is one” (Ahmad Bin Hambal, Imam, Al-Musnad: Hadith No. 23536, p:411/5; Abu Nuaim, Hilyat-ul-Awliya,p:100/3; Munziree, At-Targheb Wat-Tarheeb,p:375/3; Al-Haithami, Majma-uz-Zawaid, p:346/6 and 266/8; Ibn-ul-Hajr Al-

Asqalani, Fath-ul-Bari, 527/6;Jalal-ud-Din As-Suyooti, Ad-Durr-ul-Manthoor Fit-Tafseeri Bil-Mathoor, p:98/6; Ash-Shaukani, Nail-ul-Awtar, p:164/5)

Belief in one and only one lord makes a strong relation between all human beings. And as being the child of Adam there is always a relation between them. The hadith reveals both spiritual and material aspects as the one Lord satisfies the belief system of the mankind and concept of one fatherhood makes them combined under one strong fiber of brotherhood. The holy Quran gives significance to this point and numerously addresses the all mankind. Sometimes with slogan of "O children of Adam!" and sometimes with the phrasing of "O mankind!" (Kareem, Dar-ul-Andlus Lit-Tabaah wan-Nashr wat-Tawzee, Beirut, Muhammad Fuad Abdul Baqi:Al-Mujam-ul-Mufahras Li Alfaz-il-Quran-il- Lebanon, p: 110-111 and 137 respectively)

NO Superiority according to Color or Beauty:"

Similarly every child of Adam is created beautiful and have equal standing among all mankind so no one can claim that he/she is more beautiful or higher in standard as compare to others. It is clearly mentioned in the holy Quran:

"Verily we created the man in the best stature (mould)" [3]

The holy Prophet said: "Behold! No Arab is superior to any non-Arab, and no non-Arab is superior to any Arab, neither the red is superior to the black nor black has any superiority to any red, but due to only piety" (*Ahmad Bin Hambal, ibid*)

The holy Quran says: "And for all, there will be degrees according to that which they did, that He (Allah) may recompense them in full for their deeds. And they will not be wronged." [3]

In Islam one and same standard is mentioned for both Men and Women and both have equal rights and no one is superior from other, there is a verse of the holy Quran: "For men there is a reward for what they have earned, and (likewise) for women there is a reward for what they have earned." [3]

All human beings are equal and only difference in their standings is due to the inherent power of their moral deeds. These deeds are their assets and they will be rewarded or punished on the basis of their deeds. This message can easily be learned from above mentioned verses.

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Employment of all Universal Resources:

Above all, Allah (SWT) verifies the fact in His Holy Book repeatedly that all Human beings have equal rights of all the universal resources. Every body has the equal right to reach and consume the universal resources. Allah has made every thing available, submissive and dutiful to all mankind without any discrimination in them. The only thing which is left upon man is to seek for the opportunities to make things in his favour. Let us read the holy Quran in this regard": "He it is who created for you all that is on the earth."

There is another verse about it: "See you not (O man!) that Allah has subjected for you whatsoever is in the heavens and whatsoever is in the earth." [3]

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One Origin:

The points mentioned above allows every Human being to enjoy their rights and available sources without any discrimination. Human rights are essentially general or universal in character- equally possessed by all human beings everywhere. They extend to every person on Earth without discriminations irrelevant to merit. [8]. In Islam all discriminatory possible sources which promote status oriented differences in human society, mere gender based discrimination, or the religious differences or differences generated on the basis of colour and language were strictly banned and strictly prohibited. [2] Now onwards no one can deprive anyone from his or her rights anyway whosoever he or she is, whether rich or poor, male or female, black or white or belongs any part of world. The message was loud and clear that "All human beings are children of Adam and Adam was made from clay" (Ibne Abi Hatim Ar-Razi, As-Siqat, p:55/2; Ibne Katheer, Ima-dud-Din, Al-Bidayah wan-Nihayah, p:301/4). This prohibited all self drawn outlines by the human mind to create the society as his wish and will. According to Islamic concept every person is born free and no one can make him slave. Even the Prophet was not granted to claim his mastership over the others. [5] The holy Quran says: It is not possible for any human being to whom Allah has given the Book and Al-Hukm (Al-Quran, Aale-Imran, 3:79) (the knowledge and understanding of the laws of religion) and Prophethood to say to the people: "Be my worshippers rather than Allah's." On the other hand (he would say): "Be 'Rabbaniyyeen'." ('Rabbaniyyeen' is plural of 'Rabbani.' This is an attributed noun towards 'Rab'. It means those who belong to Allah) "When you made the people slaves,

whereas their mothers had conceived them free.” (Ibne Katheer, Imam, Albidayah Wan-Nihayah,p:3,4/5; Ibn-ul- Jauzi, Seerah of Umar, p:29; Further see: Muhammad Husain Haikal, Al-Farooq Umar, p:2. 1998)

The prophet hood is aimed to support the noble cause of human liberty, and one the Prophet is deputed to his Ummah to liberate them from the grasps of slavery by playing his significant and vigorous role as the commissioned one by Allah. The holy Quran says: “He releases them from their heavy burdens and from the fetters (bindings) that were upon them.” [3]

Islamic concept of human rights forth come before the reader in the following bullets:

-Dignity of mankind

The theory of human rights in fact depends to be recognized on terms of inborn respect to the mankind. No idea of human rights could be implemented practically without determining the honour of human in common scale. ‘Piety’ is the only benefit for any individual to enjoy supremacy to his or her fellow beings. The holy Quran does not validate any condition for liking anyone other than piety. It is expressed in the holy Quran: “Verily, the most honorable of you with Allah is that who is the most pious amongst you.”

-Equality of all Human Beings

The understandable result for the inborn dignity of entire mankind is social equality. Only piety and hard work are point of Superiority preference. The holy Quran has this good news for the humanity: “And for all, there will be degrees according to that which they did.” [3]

-Liberty and freedom

All idols are broke by Islam and liberated the mankind from cruelty of all types of exploitations as one of the most important and major role of the Prophet hood was decided by Allah: “He releases them from their heavy burdens and from the fetters (bindings) that were upon them.”

This resulted in the complete liberty of the mankind from the bloody rule of all other forces than the real force and that is the real Lord: Allah.” All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. They are endowed with reason and conscience and should act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood”. Islam has seconded this notion as it called for such right and legislated it for over 1000 centuries ago. It also made a strategic provision for minimizing the number of slaves in the earth [9]. The following Qur’anic verses is worth of consideration. Almighty Allah says: “And those who pronounce thihar from their wives and then [wish to] go back on what they said – then [there must be] the freeing of a slave before they touch one another. That is what you are admonished thereby; and Allah is Acquainted with what you do”. [58:3], [10]. Islamic concept of Human Rights is compatible with western concept provided, Sharia (God made Laws) is properly interpreted in a best way. It was argued that the proper interpretation of Sharia can legitimize the abolition of Polygamy. It was further stated that if the latter is properly applied. It can prevail absolute equality between Human Beings. [11]

Brotherhood

Islam not only promotes brotherhood through its innovative and progressive program, but Islam calls upon the humanity to believe in one Lord and to believe that they are all children of one father(Adam). That belief gather them even though they are at long distances based on geographical units. This pearls all mankind into one thread. This is how under the shade of holy Quran a nation with brilliant identity mark of brotherhood comes into being. The holy Quran says: “The believers are nothing else than brothers.” [3]

This verse ties the people wonderfully with each other through the bond that deny all kinds of differences. This powerful force of Islamic belief has been reflected in the following hadith of the Prophet (PBUH):”

“Verily the believer is like a strong building that its some part strengthens its other part.” (Bukhari, As-Saheeh, hadith No. 467, p: 182/1; Muslim Bin Al-Hajjaj Al-Qusheri, As-Saheeh, hadith No. 2585, p: 1999/4; Muhammad Bin Esa At-Tirmizee, As-Sunan, hadith No.1928, p: 325/4; Abdur Rahman An-Nisai, As-Sunan, hadith No. 2560, p: 79/5)

It is enlightened in this hadith that each and every unit of building gives strength to the other units by joining themselves strongly, concept of brotherhood emerges under the umbrella of Islamic belief that deny every possible inequality which has even the least potential to harm the structure of this brotherhood. [6]

-Justice

Injustice is the threat due to which equal rights are not given to all. Let’s see how Islam deals with this important social aspect. Islam urges to go to any level for usefully executing the provision of Islamic system of Social Justice. This courage can be observed when a lady named ‘Fatimah’ from a highly regarded family was caught suspected. Charge was proved and the Prophet (PBUH) was approached by people requesting not to cut her hand. The Prophet (PBUH) got angry and uttered sentence that set an in discriminatory pattern

of the society. He said: "And by God! If Fatimah daughter of Muhammad (PBUH) had committed the theft, I would have cut her hand also." (Bukhari, *As-Saheeh*, hadith No. 3288, p: 1882/3; Muslim *As-Saheeh*, hadith No. 1688, p: 1315/3; At-Tirmizee, *As-Sunan*, hadith No.1430, p: 37/4)

Why should not have happened this all episode in this fashion when the smooth foundation was previously laid down by the holy Quran itself. It draws our attention: "Say (O Muhammad! (PBUH): "My Lord has commanded justice."

"And give full measure and full weight with justice."

"Indeed, We have sent Our Messengers with clear proofs, and revealed with them the Scripture and the Balance (justice) that mankind may keep up justice."

"O you who believe! Stand out firmly for justice, as witnesses to Allah; even though it be against yourselves, or your parents, or your kin, be he rich or poor, Allah is a Better Protector to both (than you)."

"O you who believe! Stand out firmly for Allah as just witness, and let not the enmity and hatred of others make you avoid justice. Be just: that is nearer to piety; and fear Allah." [3]

Freedom of Religion

In spite of the fact that Islam exactly believes that there is only one Lord of all mankind and no one can be worshiped inspite him and the Prohet Hazrat Muhammad(PBUH) is his last messenger , but it does not allow its followers to force other non-muslims to convert themselves into Islam. This statement of Quran portraits to a crystal clear posture about the subject. The holy Quran says: "There is no compulsion in religion." [3]

Unique System of Social Justice:

By Keeping in view the broad social justice system as provided by the holy Quran and Sunnah of the holy Prophet, everyone can easily understand that this is only Islam that stops all kind of inequalities and hurdles in the way of providing justice. This is made sure to provide rights to all mankind in spite of the fact that someone has got anger against anyone, or the decision is affecting someone's own interests. It means that provision of justice to the mankind is actually to protect Allah's respect and His rights. [4] This idea of connecting human rights with the rights of Allah Almighty and His pride is a single feature of Islamic practical norms that makes every follower of Islam so answerable and aware to avoid the breaching of the Islamic characteristics and discipline. The holy Quran further puts highlights to provide this topic with His following divine orders: "Verily, Allah commands that you render back the trusts to those whom they are." It is further described in the holy Quran: "Verily, Allah commands justice the doing of good." [3]

The divine injunction to watch justice in due way of providing the rights to the people who deserves, it is further followed by another divine result of doing good (Ihsan) is clear in its meanings. If justice is missing in description of services, this clearly means lack of rights of the people. Justice (Adl) is core of description of services and providing rights. But Ihsan is spirit of justice (Adl). Adl is mere provisioning of faithful rights to whom they belong, but doing well in this perspective means to do something more encouraging and positive and to sacrifice one's own rights for other fellows. [2] This aims to escape the society from any promising venture of self-centered approach and to do such practices that each and every human being must preemptively commence ejection of obligations on his part to pay the rights of others even by sacrificing his own rights."

Conclusion:

One can easily find out and conclude that the society based on justice (Adl), doing good (Ihsan) and mutual grounds of ejection of obligations and description of services always enjoys a life full of peace without having any fear about clash of interests. All human beings live under the dynamic shield of and no one can harm and broke this rope that its one side is strongly held by believers and the other end is held with Allah. Likewise the Islamic concept of human rights is literally based on eternity and holiness. Because this does not stand on any human legislation, but this is certified, approved and further provisioned by the Almighty Allah, the Sustainer and the Cherisher of all the worlds. No law of any land or governmental or legal forum neither can undo it nor is allowed to legislate alongside its spirit. The wide range of this inclusive concept of human rights in Islam has been come to life under the forceful and great spirit of the last address of the Holy Prophet where he acknowledged these rights unable to be ceased until someone is demonstrated guilty for dishonoring the same. In article 63 of Medina agreement, it was stated that: "And this is a full guarantee from Allah and Muhammad (PBUH) the messenger of Allah, for provisioning of all rights to those who stand loyal and firm to the piety and good deeds." This promise and guarantee of life

and respect and provisioning of all human rights is supreme one point and that if someone is not faithful to the Islamic state and the system being operated beneath its dynamic divine supervision. This theory of being faithful to the Islamic state can easily be derived from the above stated text because it not only Muhammad (PBUH) alone in person is mentioned in the clause to provide warrantee of all rights with Allah, but it is Muhammad as the 'Messenger of Allah' stands with this guarantee. Hence it is proved that the way Islam stands for providing rights to all human beings on equal basis and giving no superiority to anyone as compare to other under the light of divine guidance of Almighty Allah, and no method can be compared with it as there being a strong chance of the attachment of human sentiments to protect their own benefits or at least favoritism."

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