

Guide to Conflict Resolutions: A Study of Prophetic Approach

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Article Info	Abstract
<p>Article History</p> <p>Received: November 25, 2021</p> <p>Accepted: June 26, 2022</p> <hr/> <p>Keywords : Sirah of Prophet Muhammad, Current World, Methods Of Disputes Resolutions, Guidance Of Sirah</p> <p>DOI: 10.5281/zenodo.6754768</p>	<p><i>Today the world is facing various kinds of disputes and conflicts. It has an extreme need to resolve these conflicts, in order to establish peace and harmony within the humanity. Different efforts are being made to achieve the goal of tranquility and synchronization in this regard. Sirah of Prophet Muhammad (Peace be upon him) is a valuable mean to contribute on the subject. This study provides a comprehensive look into Prophet Muhammad's conduct on disputes resolutions. It concludes that Prophet Muhammad had unique methods and techniques to resolve disputes and conflicts. It come to light the dynamics and potential of sirah to resolve the present day conflicts and clashes within Muslims and Muslim and none Muslim communities of the world.</i></p>

Introduction

Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) led an exemplary life in all respects. He is the most beautiful example of conduct (Quran, 33:21). We can acquire guidance by his life in all areas of our life cycle. He was an ideal arbitrator as well. He played an important role in resolving disputes among the different people, tribes and parties. In his youth, due to his noble character and beyond comparison honesty and truthfulness, people gave him the title of *al-Sadiq* (the truthful), *al-Ameen* (the trustworthy). People of Mecca appointed him their arbitrator for their disputes. In Medina, he was, in the very beginning conceded *Hakam* (Mediator) for resolution of the disputes among all the tribes and stake holders of Medina. The attempts taken by the prophet were so scientific that they can use as evidences of disputes resolution of all levels and all times. In other words we can find in the life and conduct of Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) a best way of resolving disputes and conflicts emerging in a society as well as in the whole of humanity.

2. Dynamics of Sirah with examples

Here, we will study some of the examples of disputes resolutions from the life and conduct of Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) and will try to explore their dynamics in the field of conflict and dispute resolution in the current age:

2.1 Hilf al-Fudul

Study of the Sirah of Prophet traces the first example of disputes resolution from his life as Hilf al-Fudul. It was a pact of Chivalry (Lings, 1983), and was consequence of 'Battle of Fijar', the Sacrilegious War (Harun, 2000). This war broke out when the Prophet was twenty years of age (Guillaume, 1998). It was so called because it fought in the sacred month. It was broken out in the fair of 'Ukaz' between the 'Quraish' and the 'Qais' tribe. This war prolonged its bloody feud by ten years, from 580 to 590 AD. This war busted the law and order situation of Arabia; society became unsecured; a number of lives were lost; cruelty, hijack, burglary etc. took the place of hospitality in entire region. In this situation some kind hearted people took initiative and formed 'Hilf al- Fudul', a committee for peace. This oath was taken amongst the renowned tribes of Mecca such as 'Banu Hashim', 'Banu Taym', 'Banu Asad', 'Banu Zuhra' and 'Banu Muttalib' (Husain, 1967). Together with the chief of Taym, Zubayr of Hashim was one of the founders of this order, and he brought with him his nephew Muhammad. This pact of Chivalry took place in the house of 'Abd Allah ibn jud'an. Having decided, after an earnest discussion, that it was imperative to found an order of chivalry for the furtherance of justice and the protection of the weak, they went in a body to the Ka'bah where they poured water over the Black Stone, letting it flow into a receptacle. Then each man drank of the thus hallowed water; and with their right hands raised above their heads they vowed that henceforth, at every act of oppression in Mecca, they would stand together as one man on the side of the oppressed against the oppressor until justice was done, whether the oppressed were a man of Quraysh or one who had come from abroad. (Lings, 1983)

Some historian claimed that the leadership was belonged to Muhammad (pbuh) in lieu of Zubair ibn Abd al-Muttalib as Muhammad Ali (1972) said, “the credit of taking the lead in the formation of this humanitarian organization was due to Muhammad and his family.”! However, this debate causes no decrease to the prophet’s contribution to peace any more. His eagerness to the oath was quite clear. Talha ibn Abdullah reported: The Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings be upon him, said:

لَقَدْ شَهِدْتُ فِي دَارِ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ بْنِ جُدْعَانَ حَلْفًا مَا أَحْبَبْتُ أَنْ لِي بِهِ حُمْرَ النَّعَمِ وَلَوْ أَدْعَىٰ بِهِ فِي الْإِسْلَامِ لَأَجَبْتُ

Certainly, I had witnessed a pact of justice in the house of Abdullah ibn Jud’an that was more beloved to me than a herd of red camels. If I were called to it now in the time of Islam, I would respond. (Sunan al-Kubra, 12114)

This oath played an important role to set up peace in Arabia and history remarks that there were no more wars or iniquities took place for many years after its formation (Sarwar, 1961).

This example of a pact of Chivalry was a unique one to establish peace. To guard citizens from the brutality of unjust war as well as to minimize the conflicts between the two hostile groups. By this vow prophet (pbuh), being free from the war, created a third party alliance and worked as an arbitrator between the two intimidating oppositions. Here, he used the experienced method of unity of cognizant people on the issue of humanity. As a result, with their reasonable and sensible suggestion and action, Arabia got back its peaceful society after a long time. By this example number of disputes of the current world can be settled.

2.2 Placing the black stone

Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) was about the age of 35, ‘*Kabah*’ was devastated due to a violent flood. Besides this, an incident of robbery of the treasures of ‘*Kabah*’ also happened for the lack of its security system, as it had no ceiling and its walls were just above the height of a man (Lings, 1983). So ‘*Quraish*’ along with the other clans of Mecca decided to rebuild ‘*Kabah*’ and the construction works were divided equally among the clans. The tribes of Quraysh gathered stones for the building, each tribe collecting them and building by itself until the building was finished up to the black stone, where controversy arose, each tribe wanting to lift it to its place, until they went their several ways, formed alliances, and got ready for battle. ‘*Banu Abdud Dar*’ brought a bowl full of blood; then they and the Banu. ‘*Adiy ibn. Ka’b ibn. Lu’ayy*’ pledged themselves unto death and thrust their hands into the blood. For this reason they were called the blood-lickers. Such was the state of affairs for four or five nights, and then Quraysh gathered in the mosque and took counsel and were equally divided on the question. A traditionist alleged that Abu Umayya Ibn. al-Mughira Ibn. ‘*Abdullah Ibb. ‘Umar Ibn. Makhzum*’ who was at that time the oldest man of Quraysh, urged them to make the first man to enter the gate of the mosque umpire in the matter in dispute. They did so and the first to come in was the apostle of God. When they saw him they said, ‘This is the trustworthy one. We are satisfied. This is Muhammad.’ When he came to them and they informed him of the matter he said, ‘Give me a cloak.’, and when it was brought to him he took the black stone and put it inside it and said that each tribe should take hold of an end of the cloak and they should lift it together. They did this so that when they got it into position he placed it with his own hand, and then building went on above it. ((Guillaume, 1998)

Prophet (pbuh) played the role of a mediator and settled a bloodshed dispute in this event. This practice of mediation was one of the primordial evidences of the history in resolving conflicts. Here, two aspects should be studied properly. Firstly, the selection process of the conciliator was unscientific and evidently not supported by the procedure of modern age. But, at that time, ignorance and superstition were so prevailing upon the Arabs that without depending on fortune they remained no way to get the solution. Besides, their culture and custom also supported them to do the same. However, the second one, possibly the more significant matter of this event, was the decision of the arbitrator. As the judge Muhammad (pbuh) could pronounce any judgment. He might give his decision in favour of his own tribe, ‘*Quraish*’. In that case, there might be the chance of a violent battle among the clans. But, in the way that he judged, was the best decision in this disputable matter. He definitely resolved a ferocious communal conflict by his selfless verdict. He used the technique of sharing the common interest among the rival parties, which should be practiced in the decision of communal conflicts of the present.

2.3 Resolving the dispute of Aws and Khazraj

‘*Aws*’ and ‘*Khazraj*’ were two famous clans of Medina. They were hostile and used to fight against each other. Constant bitterness convinced the sensible persons of both the tribes that they needed an overall chief who would unite them as Qusayy had integrated Quraysh, and that there was no other way out of their problem. (Lings, 1983) In this regard Abdullah ibn Ubay, a leading persona of ‘*Khazraj*’, was proposed as the king of Medina, but without any undisputed decision, this proposal was postponed and they were looking for another better character that was not belonged to any of the two opponent clans. Meanwhile, prophet (pbuh), with the permission of Allah, decided to take the invitation of Medinites to go to Medina for better future. The citizen of Medina warmly welcomed him and almost all of the pagans of both ‘*al-Aws*’ and ‘*al-Khazraj*’ accepted Islam impulsively. Muhammad (pbuh) united them with the brotherhood of Islam and the existing hostility vanished away.

The conflict between ‘*Aws*’ and ‘*Khazraj*’ was a communal clash. It was based on the honour and supremacy of their own clan, not on a common interest to attain. Everyone claimed their superiority over others and did not

hesitate to harm others in favour of his own tribes. In such case, prophet (pbuh) practiced a general role of dispute resolution. He mediated between them not by the clannish customs, but by common concern that was Islam. He federalized their thoughts from their own clan to the teachings of Islam. He gave the analogous honour and treatment to the rival parties and made them understand the importance of Islam in here and hereafter. Moreover, he launched the concept of Islamic brotherhood so that they began to think every Muslim as their brother irrespective of the color, caste and tribes. This extraordinary policy also played a vital role to dissolve their opposition. So, it may be asserted that in the role of a moderator Muhammad (pbuh) certainly was a successful leader.

2.4 Disputes resolutions through Charter of Medina

Charter of Medina is an ideal example of the life of Prophet Muhammad (pbuh), for resolution of disputes. In Medina Jews were a considerable power. They were subdivided into three clans, Banu Qainuqa, Banu Quraiza, Banu Nadir. Other inhabitants of Medina, Aus and Khazraj were always at war with each other. Of the two chief clans of the Jews, Banu Quraiza were the allies of Aus and Banu Nadir joined the Khazraj. Now it so happened that the major portion of the Aus and Khazraj embraced Islam. So the Holy prophet concluded a pact between Jews and Muslims. He made them agree on the terms that Muslims and Jews should live as a nation, each party should keep its own faith without any interference from the other, Medina should be considered as sacred by both, all bloodshed being prohibited therein, on the occasion of war with a third party, each should come to the help of the other, the prophet should be the final court of appeal of dispute. (Ali, 1972)

This was a combined process to resolve and to prevent the impending conflicts. As Jews were a mentionable figure at Medina and were very much capable to create home hazard, they must have had to be well treated. But receiving all the power of authority, prophet (pbuh) not only treated them well but also gave them the equal rights and status. Because he knew that inequity creates disputes, and hence he was not ready to give any chance of it under his leadership in Medina. This diplomatic forethought indirectly constrained the Jews to obey his role. On the other hand, by the formulation of the agreement, he litigated the matter under the supreme court of justice. As both of the parties were equal before law no one had the right to break the law and order of Medina state.

2.5 Pact of Hudaibiyya

In 6 after Hijrah, Prophet dreamed that with his head shaved he entered the Ka'bah, and its key was in his hand. The next day he told his Companions of this and invited them to perform the Lesser Pilgrimage with him, whereupon they hastily set about making preparations so that they could leave as soon as possible. Between them they purchased seventy camels to be sacrificed in the sacred precinct. Their meat would then be distributed among the poor of Mecca. Each man took with him a sword, and what might be needed for hunting, but before they set off 'Umar and Sa'd ibn 'Ubadah suggested that they should go fully armed. Quraysh, they said, might well take the opportunity of attacking them, despite the sacred month. But the Prophet refused, saying: "I will not carry arms; I have come forth for no end other than to make the Pilgrimage." When the pilgrims reached 'Usfan, the scout who had been sent on ahead rejoined them with the news that Quraysh had sent Khalid with a troop of two hundred horse to bar their approach. So the Prophet asked for a guide who could take them on by another way, and a man of Aslam led them a little towards the coast and then by a devious and difficult path until they reached the pass which leads down to Hudaibiyyah, an open tract of land below Mecca at the edge of the sacred territory. Their detour had kept them well out of sight of Khalid, but at one point, when it was too late for him to take up another position, they raised so much dust that he realised what had happened, and galloped back to Mecca with his troop to warn Quraysh of their approach. Seeing the situation Quraysh sent Budayl ibn Warqa' and others respectively to look into the matter. From the Muslims prophet (pbuh) sent his son-in-law, 'Uthman to Quraysh for negotiation. But when the rumour of Uthman's murder reached to Muslims, they vowed under a tree to take vengeance. Being fretful in this terrible situation, Quraysh sent Suhayl to conclude a treaty. When they had finally reached an agreement the Prophet told 'Ali to write down the terms, beginning with the revealed words of consecration *بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ*, "in the Name of God, the Good, the Merciful", but Suhayl objected. "As to Rahman," he said, "I know not what he is. But write *بِسْمِ اللَّهِ*, In Thy Name, O God, as thou wert wont to write." Some of the Companions cried out "By God, we will write naught but *بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ*," but the Prophet ignored them and said "*بِسْمِ اللَّهِ*," and he went on dictating: "These are the terms of the truce between Muhammad the Messenger of God and Suhayl the son of 'Amr"; but again Suhayl protested. "If we knew thee to be the Messenger of God," he said, "we would not have barred thee from the House, neither would we have fought thee; but write Muhammad the son of 'Abd Allah." 'Ali had already written "the Messenger of God," and the Prophet told him to strike out those words, but he said he could not. So the Prophet told him to point with his finger to the words in question, and he himself struck them out. Then he told him to write in their place "the son of 'Abd Allah," which he did. The document continued: "They have agreed to lay down the burden of war for ten years, in which times men shall be safe and not lay violent hands the one upon the other; on condition that whoso come to Muhammad of Quraysh without the leave of his guardian, Muhammad shall return him to them; but whoso come to Quraysh of those who are with Muhammad, they shall not be returned. There shall be no dodge and no deceit. And whoso wishes to enter into the bond and pact of Muhammad may do

so; and whoso wishes to enter the bond and pact of Quraysh may do so. Khuza'ah leaped to their feet and said: "We are one with Muhammad in his bond and his pact." Whereupon the men of Bakr said: "We are one with Quraysh in their bond and their pact." And this agreement was subsequently ratified by the chiefs of both tribes. The treaty ended with the words: "Thou, Muhammad, shalt depart from us this present year, and shalt not enter Mecca when we are present in despite of us. But in the year that is to come, we shall go out from Mecca and you shall enter it with thy companions, staying therein for three days, bearing no arms save the arms of the traveler, with swords in sheaths." (Lings, 1983)

In virtue of the Prophet's vision, the Companions had been certain of the success of their expedition; and when they heard the terms of the treaty and realised that having reached the very edge of the sacred precinct they must now return home with nothing accomplished, it was almost more than they could endure. But worse was to come: as they sat there in sullen and explosive silence, the clank of chains was heard and a youth staggered into the camp with his feet in fetters. It was Abu Jandal, one of the younger sons of Suhayl. His father had imprisoned him on account of his Islam, fearing that he would escape to Medina. His elder brother 'Abd Allah was among the pilgrims and was about to welcome him when Suhayl caught hold of the chain that was round his prisoner's neck and struck him violently in the face. Then he turned to the Prophet and said: "Our agreement was concluded before this man came to thee." "That is true," said the Prophet. "Return him then unto us," said Suhayl. "O Muslims," shouted Abu Jandal at the top of his voice, "am I to be returned unto the idolaters, for them to persecute me on account of my religion?" The Prophet took Suhayl aside and asked him as a favour to let his son go free, but Suhayl implacably refused. Be patient, Abu Jandal," said the Prophet. "God will surely give thee and those with thee relief and a way out. At this point 'Umar could no longer contain himself. Rising to his feet, he went to the Prophet and said "Are you not God's Prophet?" and he answered "Yea." "Are we not in the right and our enemies in the wrong?" he said, and again the Prophet assented. "Then why yield we in such lowly wise against the honour of our religion?" said 'Umar, whereupon the Prophet replied: "I am God's Messenger and I will not disobey Him. He will give me the victory." "But did you not tell us," persisted 'Umar, "that we should go to the House and make our rounds about it?" "Even so," said the Prophet, "but did I tell thee we should go to it this year?" 'Umar conceded that he had not. "Verily you shall go to the House," said the Prophet, "and shall make thy rounds about it." But 'Umar was still seething with indignation, and went to Abu Bakr to work off his feelings still further. He put to him exactly the same questions he had put to the Prophet; but though Abu Bakr had not heard the answers, he gave him the same answer to each question in almost exactly the same words; and at the end he added: "So cleave to his stirrup, for by God he is right." (Lings, 1983) Apparently, this accord seemed as an offensive one for the Muslims as most of its clauses go against the Muslim's concerns. As it mentioned, Companions of the Prophet also contradicted, but Muhammad (pbuh) was firm to take the opportunity of peace at any charge. He welcomed the dishonorable accord and proved his mastermind in resolving disputes. In fact, the treaty of '*al-Hudaibiyah*' was an apparent victory for the Muslims. (Quran, 48:01). History has confirmed that this pact was the product of profound political wisdom. (Haykal, 1976) After that, Muslims got the opportunity to correspond with the other clans and to show their divine character and as a result a large number of people accepted Islam; Muhammad (pbuh) got the extent to spread the notion of Islam in international ground and to give a proof for his magnitude of all time. Quraysh also approved the political state of Medina and Islam as an equal power to them. The most notable article of the treaty was the peace pact for ten years between the two parties resolving all types of conflicts. By this concord the rivalry between the Meccans and Medinites came to an end. This truce was possibly the greatest example of the sincerity and eagerness of prophet (pbuh) towards peace and conflict resolution. In this event we see more than one technique to resolve the forthcoming dispute:

Firstly, prophet (pbuh) performed the policy of avoidance to stay away from the warfare with the advanced army of Quraysh. Secondly, prophet (pbuh) showed an immense tolerance to regulate the truce, as he kept patience over the cruelty of Meccans that they did with his messengers. Even, during the time of making treaty, Abu Jandal, a new Muslim, escaped from the custody of Meccan and begged shelter to the prophet (pbuh), he did not allow him to give shelter according to the condition of the agreement. His companions argued that at that very time the treaty was not written, so they were not bound to hand him over to Meccan. But, with the selfish approach of Suhayl, prophet (pbuh) made the decision in favour of Quraysh (Haykal, 1976). Finally, the method of negotiation was performed truly in the agreement. In the negotiation process prophet (pbuh) took all the proposals of Quraysh without any question just for resolving conflict. Prophet (pbuh) for the peace and conflict resolution purpose, even accepted demand of removing the words of Rahman , Bismillah and Muhamma al-Rasul Allah from the document of the treaty.

3. Methodology

This study is mostly based on English translations of the original Arabic sources of the Sirah of the prophet, like Ibn Ishaq, Ibn Hisham. Account of history and Sirah, touched briefly for the purpose, is critically evaluated without altering the actuality. It provides the readers dynamics of sirah of Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) for disputes and conflict resolutions of the different groups and nations worldwide.

4. Conclusion and Recommendation

This study provides a comprehensive look into Prophet Muhammad's conduct on disputes resolutions. It concludes that Prophet Muhammad had unique methods and techniques to resolve disputes and conflicts. People of Mecca appointed him their arbitrator for their disputes. In Medina, he was, in the very beginning conceded *Hakam* (Mediator) for resolution of the disputes among all the tribes and stake holders of Medina. Pact of Hudaibiyah is an incomparable example of his love for peace and vision of disputes resolutions. The attempts taken by the prophet for conflict resolutions were so scientific that they can use as evidences of disputes resolution of all levels and all times. So within the different efforts being made to achieve the goal of tranquility in the present day world, Sirah of Prophet Muhammad (Peace be upon him) is the best way of resolving disputes and conflicts emerging in a society as well as in the whole of humanity.

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