

An Analysis of Treaty of Hudaibiyah by Prophet Muhammad (Sallallahu Alayhi Wa Sallam): Its Benefits and Educational Implications to Conflict Resolution

Ishaq Abubakar Dauda, PhD

Corresponding author: ishaaq248@gmail.com

Department of Islamic Studies, Federal University of Education, Kontagora Niger State

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.16728283>

Abstract

In the world today, the problems and challenges to peace and unity are becoming increasingly more interdependent and interconnected. The sheer magnitude of these requires all human being to work together with mutual respect and understanding. Global efforts towards peace and reconciliation can only succeed with a collective approach built on trust, dialogue and collaboration. For that, there is a need to build a grand alliance for a culture of peace amongst all. Islam, as a practical religion of peace and conflict resolution presents a practical example in this regard. This article aims to explore the benefits and educational implications of Treaty of Hudaibiyah negotiated by Prophet Muhammad (Sallallahu Alayhi wa Sallam) with the Quraysh tribe. The treaty showcases the Prophet's (Sallallahu Alayhi wa Sallam) wisdom, patience, farsightedness, tactfulness, compromising, understanding, and consultative nature in conflict pledge, diplomacy, and strategic thinking. The work argues that the treaty provides precious lessons for Muslims and non-Muslims alike, contributing insights into effective conflict resolution and peaceful coexistence among different individuals, groups and communities in the world. Historical and analytical methods are engaged to achieve this objective. The study therefore recommends that a just socio-economic and political system is necessary to proffer lasting solution to conflict and violence in our society. The study concludes by revisiting the conduct of the Prophet (Sallallahu Alayhi wa Sallam) and his companions (RA) in the treaty, it gives the insight people and nations tend to overlook, to navigate in the challenges of today.

Keywords: Sulhu Hudaibiyah, Conflict Resolution, Educational Implications, Diplomacy

Introduction

In the world today, the problems and challenges to peace and unity are becoming increasingly more interdependent and interconnected. The sheer magnitude of these requires all human being to work together with mutual respect and understanding. Global efforts towards peace and reconciliation can only succeed with a collective approach built on trust, dialogue and collaboration. For that, there is a need to build a grand alliance for a culture of peace amongst all, particularly with the proactive involvement and participation of all the parties (Castro & Galace, 2019). No time is more appropriate than now to build a culture of peace and mutual understanding. No social responsibility is greater nor task heavier than that of securing peace on our planet on sustainable foundation.

Humankind needs to take lessons from its past in order to build a new and better tomorrow. One lesson learned is that, to prevent violence-ridden history repeating itself, the values of peace, non-violence, tolerance, mutual understanding, dialogue, conflict management and human rights will have to be inculcated in every member of a community or society. Islam, as a way of life and conflict resolution is relevant in this regard. To lend credence to this observation, Ramlan (2022) noted that, one way to learn and understand better the history of Islam is to re-read and relate historical events to daily lives by asking “how can we benefit from it?”

The Islamic texts and Muslim heritage approaches to conflict resolution are drawn on religious values that present a considerable wealth of responses based on positive solutions to the conflict, as the concept of social justice (*al-adl*) which is very central to the development of peace (Islam, 2024). One of such practical and remarkable events the world can learn from for resolving conflict is Sulhu-Hudaibiyah (The Treaty of Hudaibiyah. It was a pivotal treaty that took place between the Muslim community of Madinah led by Prophet Muhammad (*Sallallahu Alayhi wa Sallam*) and the Quraysh of Makkah in a place called Hudaibiyah. Yasir (2024) noted that, to be ice-cool in demeanour, to be fire-hot in determination, to be sponge-soft with issues at periphery, and to be steel-hard when it comes to principles is the art of diplomacy; and in the history of mankind the treaty of Hudaibiyah is one of the most perfect paradigm of this art. This work x-rayed the Treaty of Hudaibiyah and its educational implications to human kind in general and Muslim community in particular for resolving conflict in the present day society.

An Overview of Sulhu- Hudaibiyah (Treaty of Hudaibiyah)

The Treaty of Hudaibiyah was a peace pact signed in the sixth year of Hijri (March, 628 CE/6AH) between the Prophet Muhammad (*Sallallahu Alayhi wa Sallam*), representing the state of Medina, and the Quraysh tribe of Mecca. It was a pivotal treaty that took place in a place called Hudaibiyah. Hudaibiyah is located approximately 24 kilometers from the Grand Mosque (*Masjid al-Haram*) on the old Jeddah road in Saudi Arabia.

After leaving Makkah, Prophet Muhammad (*Sallallahu Alayhi wa Sallam*) saw a dream that he performed Tawaf around the Holy Kaaba in Mecca. The next day, Prophet Muhammad (*Sallallahu Alayhi wa Sallam*) called his companions and narrated the dream. The companions suggested the Messenger (*Sallallahu Alayhi wa Sallam*) of Allah to go for Umrah, so a caravan of 1,400 pilgrims and 70 sacrificial camels walked towards Mecca (Afzal, Naz, Abu-Bakar, Ilyas, Bukhari, & Shaheen, 2024). The companions felt special as they initially thought this was the prophesied return to their homeland (Makkah), where they were previously prosecuted for being Muslims and were then chased out by the Quraysh of Makkah. They travelled without arms in hopes Quraysh people would see their peaceful intentions to perform pilgrimage and allow them into the city as per customs (Ayoub, 2021).

On hearing about the congregation, the leaders of Quraysh got alarmed, and even though they had no right to cease the unarmed Muslims, the Quraysh people stopped the Muslims from entering Makkah. In fact, the Quraysh were so frightened that they sent an army of 200 fighters under the leadership of Khalid bin Walid to prevent the Muslim caravan from stepping into the city. Seeing this, the Messenger (*Sallallahu Alayhi wa Sallam*) of Allah changed his route and settled in a lesser-known place on the western edge of the Haram territory named "Hudaibiyah" (Islamic Landmarks, 2024). Prophet Muhammad (*Sallallahu Alayhi wa Sallam*) then sent Uthman bin Affaq (RA) to tell the Quraysh that their purpose of the visit was to perform Umrah and not to fight. However, the Quraysh kept him, and a rumor was spread stating that the Quraysh had killed Uthman bin Affaq (RA). On hearing this, Prophet Muhammad (*Sallallahu Alayhi wa Sallam*) gathered the Muslims and asked them to prepare for war. When the Makkans got to know that tribes were aligning with Prophet Muhammad (*Sallallahu Alayhi wa Sallam*) and they were ready to fight, they quickly released Uthman bin Affaq (RA) and sent Suhail bin Amr Al-Thaqafi as a representative to negotiate the terms of the peace treaty.

After long and peaceful discussions, the parties decided to resolve the matter through diplomacy and the points of the Treaty Hudaibiyah were drawn in March 628.

The Treaty of Hudaibiyah was a contract of peace signed between the Muslims of Madinah and Quraysh of Mecca under the famous acacia tree called Bay'ur-Ridwan. Most of the conditions of the Treaty of Hudaibiyah favored the pagan people of Quraysh. Muslims were heartbroken knowing they had to return to Madinah and return the next year to perform Umrah. When he finished signing the treaty, the Prophet (*Sallallahu Alayhi wa Sallam*) asked the Sahabah to slaughter their sacrifice and shave their heads. This was the ritual signifying the completion of their Umrah. No one moved. He repeated his request three times, but most of the Muslims didn't obey. The Prophet (*Sallallahu Alayhi wa Sallam*) entered the tent of his wife *Ummu Salmah* and narrated the scenario to her. She asked: "Oh Prophet of Allah! Do you want them to listen to you?" "Yes" he replied. "Then, go out and don't speak to any one until you slaughter and get shaved yourself". He got out and did exactly that. When people witnessed him doing so they got up and slaughtered their animals got their hair shaved. Khidri (2005)

However, the Messenger (*Sallallahu Alayhi wa Sallam*) of Allah was a pioneer, and so he knew that it was a great triumph in the history of Islam and would result in increasing not only the number of Muslims in the Arabian Peninsula but also Muslims would have full liberty to preach Islam. On returning from *Hudaibiya*, the beloved Prophet Muhammad (*Sallallahu Alayhi wa Sallam*) received a revelation from Allah, stating that the Almighty had placed a seal of honour on the treaty and named it "*Fatahul-Mubeen*," which meant manifest victory. In the verse, Allah also rewarded His blessings and pleasure to all the companions who had taken the oath of allegiance under an acacia tree called *Bay'ur-Ridwan*. Allah termed His protection upon Prophet Muhammad (*Sallallahu Alayhi wa Sallam*) and the Muslims. Regarding this, Allah says in the Glorious Qur'an:

إِنَّا فَتَحْنَا لَكَ فَتْحًا مُّبِينًا

Indeed, we have granted you a clear triumph O Prophet
(Qur'an 48:01)

The Surah was revealed after the Treaty of Hudaibiyah. The treaty was significant in stopping the long struggles of Muslims to visit the Holy Land and city of Makkah. In 630, right after two years of signing the treaty, the polytheists of Mecca violated one of the most important terms of the treaty – abandoning the war. Regarding this, Ayoub (2021) observed that this happened that Banu Khuza's

tribe, who was an ally of the Muslims, and Banu Bakr, who was with the Quraish people, clashed in a fight. However, during a battle between the tribes, the Quraysh secretly took part in the ongoing war and killed some men of Banu Khuza. In this way, a vital clause of the treaty was breached. Realizing their mistake, the Quraysh, under the leadership of Abu Sufyan, went to apologize to Prophet Muhammad (*Sallallahu Alayhi wa Sallam*), but they were not pardoned by him.

Conditions of the Treaty of Hudaibiyah' (*Sulhul Hudaibiyah*)

The Treaty of Hudaibiyah was materialized between the messengers of Quraysh and Prophet Muhammad (*Sallallahu Alayhi wa Sallam*), with four terms of conditions as enumerated thus:

- 1 Muslims will return to Madinah without visiting the Ka'bah that year. Instead, following year, they will be allowed entry and a peaceful stay in Makkah for a period of three days and they are to come unarmed. They may bring with them sheathed sacrificial knives instead.
- 2 It was decided to hold a ceasefire between the parties for a period of 10 years. During this time, people were supposed to live in safety and harmony.
- 3 It was decided that the agreement between any tribe and the Prophet (*Sallallahu Alayhi wa Sallam*) was not prohibited. Similarly, anyone who wanted to join the Quraysh people and sign an accord with them could not be stopped.
- 4 If anyone from Makkah converts to Islam and goes over to Madinah to join the Prophet (*Sallallahu Alayhi wa Sallam*) and his companions without his guardian's permission, he should be repatriated. However, should any of the Muslims from Madinah decide to return to Makkah and convert to polytheism then he may do so without repatriation.

Significance of the Treaty of Hudaibiyah to Development of Islam

The significance of the Treaty in the history of Islam cannot be denied. Even if some points of the treaty were not favouring Muslims at that time, overall, the agreement was a good thing for the followers of Prophet Muhammad (*Sallallahu Alayhi wa Sallam*). It is so because the treaty benefited the Muslims in several ways which include.

- 1 **Recognition of Islam:** The treaty marked the recognition of Islam by the Quraysh, who initially denied the Islamic state and Muslims. It can be noted that, after coming to Madinah the Prophet

(*Sallallahu Alayhi wa Sallam*) established an Islamic State, and all the citizen of Medinah (Aws and Khazraj) were under his administrative strategy (the agreement of Medinah) (Al-Mamuni, 2019). But this treaty led to formal recognition of the existence of an Islamic state for the first time

- 2 Recognition of Prophet Muhammad (*Sallallahu Alayhi wa Sallam*):** Before the treaty, the status of the Prophet (*Sallallahu Alayhi wa Sallam*) in the eyes of the Arabs was only that of a group of exiles against the Quraysh and the tribes, and they considered him to be outside the community (Afzal et al; 2024). Owing to the agreement, the hostile Quraysh tribe recognized Prophet Muhammad (*Sallallahu Alayhi wa Sallam*) as the leader of the state of Madinah.
- 3 Opportunity to Spread Islam in Arabian Peninsula:** The 10-year peace agreement gave the Muslims a chance to preach Islam and deal with the enemies on the other side of the Arabian Peninsula, which led to fast spreading of Islam in the world.
- 4 Development of Socio-Economic Conditions of Muslim Ummah:** Al-Mamuni (2019) observed that succeeding the treaty, the Muslims were given a golden opportunity to develop their socio-economic condition. Since they had a chance to spread their business among all the tribes and states fearlessly which made them able to solve their internal problems and make weakness up after all. And it is verily another important task for developing international relations.
- 5 Freedom to make Alliances with other Tribes:** The treaty opened the door for the Arab tribes to make alliance agreements with whichever of the two political powers they wanted to gave the Messenger of Allah the opportunity to implement his policy of not allowing the opposing forces to unite in the first degree and then uniting the separate political units in the second degree.
- 6** It created a rift between the Mekkans and the Jewish allies of the Medinah state, the Quraysh. Now it was certain that in the event of an advance towards the Jews, the Quraysh would neither be able to help them nor would they pose a threat to the capital city of Medinah. That is why, after the Treaty of al- Hudaibiyah was satisfied by the south, the Prophet (*Sallallahu Alayhi wa Sallam*) easily subdued all the opposing powers of northern Arabia and central Arabia.
- 7 Religious Position of Muslim:** The religious position of the Muslims was started to be developed after this treaty rapidly. As they had no intimidation from their enemies, they could pay their complete attention to spreading Islam, for which a large number of people accumulated beneath the shade of Islam within two years only. Since followers of Islam and the polytheists were no longer

in an ongoing struggle, some people started seeing the religion in a new light and became its followers.

Educational Implications of the Treaty of Hudaibiyah (*Sulhu Hudaibiyah*)

The educational implications of the Treaty of *Hudaibiyah* in the history of Islam cannot be overemphasized. The Treaty not only occupies a crucial place in the history of Islam, but also has a lot of educational implications to the present day conflict management or resolutions:

- 1 Patience is a key factor in conflict resolution:** Patience is a difficult virtue to attain, but it has the power to resolve every issue. Although at the start, the conditions of the Treaty did not favour Muslims, but because Prophet Muhammad (*Sallallahu Alayhi wa Sallam*) showed patience, peace was ensured in the years after to come. In conflict situation, patience and thinking straight give person the power to resolve critical issues, and ensuring that the results are in one's favour.
- 2 Honouring agreement is sacrosanct:** From the treaty that was made, the Muslims should learn the value of commitments. Because the Quraysh people did not follow the agreement and violated a vital clause, the Prophet (*Sallallahu Alayhi wa Sallam*) invaded and defeated them by the grace of Allah. This implies that regardless of what happens, it is very important to always keep to the terms of agreement and the parties involved should make sure to keep to their words. It goes a long way in resolving conflict.
- 3 Not every conflict can be resolved through Military force:** The treaty demonstrated that raising sword or arm is not always the answer to contending issues or conflicts. Prophet Muhammad (*Sallallahu Alayhi wa Sallam*) had the support of so many brave Muslim brethren. Still, instead of raising his sword despite the challenges, he chose to settle things through peaceful talks. Thus, the Treaty of Hudaibiyah points out that walking on the path of peace is vital. The points of the treaty teach that no matter how brave and strong you are, you must prioritize the path of peace rather than opting for violence.
- 4 Peace is preferred over war:** It was believed that the Muslims in Madinah had a military advantage against the Quraysh in Makkah because of the great losses they suffered from. However, Prophet Muhammad (*Sallallahu Alayhi wa Sallam*) taught his companions that when there are options for peace, one should choose peace over war and conflict. The Prophet (*Sallallahu Alayhi wa Sallam*)

initiated the treaty himself after being approached by a mediator, despite there was an option to retaliate against the Quraysh with force for obstructing the peaceful delegation from performing the Umrah. Instead, Prophet Muhammad (*Sallallahu Alayhi wa Sallam*) offered a truce with the Quraysh in Makkah. This tactical decision taught us that the default relationship among nations and its community is peace. That is the basis of all relationships is peace.

- 5 Importance of National Building:** Even though both parties mutually agreed on the terms, the treaty is undeniably in favour of the Quraysh. Nonetheless, the Prophet (*Sallallahu Alayhi wa Sallam*) saw something that his companions failed to see from the treaty, an opportunity to strengthen community and nation-building initiatives in Madinah. In order for Madinah to flourish, securing the peace at its border is indeed a strategic decision taken by the Prophet Muhammad (*Sallallahu Alayhi wa Sallam*). The Prophet's acceptance and agreement of the terms despite its imbalances were meant to secure peace and not be involved in perpetual conflict and warfare. Ramlan (2022) noted that from the content of the treaty, there are three things that the Prophet (*Sallallahu Alayhi wa Sallam*) could benefit Madinah and ultimately, Islam in terms of community building, freedom of religion was observed, which was not accepted in Makkah; and opportunity to forge a multilateral relationship with other tribes or communities.
- 6 Farsightedness in Goal Achievement:** There is no doubt the fact that wisdom grants immense farsightedness, discernment and good judgment to whoever possesses it. Prophet Muhammad displayed these traits at Al-Hudaibiyah when he showed tact, forbearance and restraint with the Quraysh and their apparently prejudiced and unjust demands. The Prophet's goal was to spread the message of Islam far and wide. His vision was to see Islam growing, spreading and gaining momentum not just within, but beyond Arabian boundaries. In order to accomplish his long-term vision, he was wise enough to let the Quraysh assume that they won.
- 7 Tactful Negotiation with Acrimonious Enemies:** Prophet Muhammad (*Sallallahu Alayhi wa Sallam*) displayed exemplary patience when negotiating the peace treaty at Al-Hudaibiyah with the Quraysh delegates who came to talk to him. For example, when the rather impudent `Urwa ibn Mas`ud, the main leader of the Quraysh, was talking to him, he became disrespectful towards the Prophet, and tried to pull at his beard. The Prophet did not retaliate. The Prophet (*Sallallahu Alayhi wa Sallam*) had the bigger picture in mind – that of the welfare and success of Islam – which is why

he displayed forbearance, and overlooked all personal attacks the Quraysh made against him. He wanted to facilitate a truce, and culminate a treaty that would allow Muslims to regain entry into the central, sacred city of Makkah, thus enabling Islam to spread and grow according to his mission.

8 Compromising on Trivialities and Crushing Ego: When the treaty of Al-Hudaibiyah was being drawn up, the Prophet instructed Ali ibn Abi Talib to write his name down in it as “Muhammad the Messenger of Allah”, to which the Quraysh objected, giving the reason that they did not believe that he was God’s messenger, so how could they sign a treaty that said he was so? They insisted that his name instead be penned down as “Muhammad ibn Abdullah”. Prophet Muhammad (*Sallallahu Alayhi wa Sallam*) readily agreed to this request, despite it being an open rejection of his status as Allah’s Prophet. There are few men who can allow their ego to be crushed in such a manner, and their personal honour to be undermined, all for the sake of the preservation or propagation of Islam.

9 Always make a wide Consultation in Conflict Situation: Ramlan (2022) noted that, the Prophet (*Sallallahu Alayhi wa Sallam*) has shown several enduring leadership qualities despite being put in a difficult situation and made consultation with his wife *Ummu Salamah*. This point’s on the virtue of consultation, and that it is permissible to consult a virtuous wife. A wise leader consults his wife in matters regarding the successful “human resource management” of his subordinates or followers, especially if she is virtuous, knowledgeable and wise herself. Any Muslim man who finds himself in a leadership position should, therefore, never consider it beneath his dignity or a blow to his ego, to go to his wife and ask her what he should do if he faces a dilemma and cannot figure out what to do. If the divinely-guided Prophet can consult his wife about how to inspire more than a thousand men to obey him, Muslim men nowadays should also follow his example, and not undermine consulting their wives, even in matters related to corporate governance or the management of their company’s employees. Another point to note is that the Prophet even took along a wife on the arduous journey from Madinah to Makkah! This indicates how a man should try to keep his wife in his company as much as he can, even during strenuous travels undertaken to perform pilgrimage in the state of ihram

Conclusion

Islam has a very rich heritage in addressing the conflicts in the world, but it is alleged as a part of the problem not unlikely. The Islamic texts and Muslim heritage approaches to conflict resolution are drawn on religious values that present a considerable wealth of responses based on positive solutions to the conflict, as the concept of social justice (*al-adl*) which is very central to the development of peace. Conflict in a society often begins with inequality, lack of proper distribution of resources, an unjust socio-political system which results in complaints, rebellion and hence conflict. Therefore, a just socio-economic and political system is necessary to proffer lasting solution to conflict and violence in our society. Justice is possible if the people in power resolve to search for truth by making the judiciary independent and powerful, and by creating equal opportunities to obtain goals. It laid the foundation for the conquest of Makkah and taught Muslim generations a life-long lesson on solving conflicts with peace, patience, harmony, and gentleness. It is important that we continue to reflect on Prophetic history in dealing with today's crisis. By revisiting the conduct of the Prophet and his companions, it gives us the insight we tend to overlook, to navigate in the challenges of today.

References

- Afzal, M; Naz, H; Abu-Bakar, M; Ilyas, U; Bukhari, H; & Shaheen, N. (2024). The political impacts of the treaty of Al-Hudaybiya. *Migration Letters*, 21 (10), 696-706 Retrieved from www.migrationletters.com.
- Al-Mamuni, A. (2019). The role of the treaty of Hudaibiah in international relations. *Malaysian Journal for Islamic Studies*, 3 (2), 133 - 141
- Ayoub, O (2021). The treaty of Hudaibiyah: Key points, significance and lessons. Retrieved from <https://zamzam.com/blog/treaty-of-hudaibiya/>.
- Castro, L. N; & Galace, J. N. (2019). *Peace Education: A pathway to a culture of peace*. Philippines: Center for Peace Education, Miriam College Quezon City.
- Islam, N. U. (2024). Peace and conflict resolution in islam: A perspective building. *Indonesian Journal of Interdisciplinary Islamic Studies (IJIIS)*, 6 (2); 127 -154. DOI: 10.20885/ijiis.vol6.iss2.art2
- Islamic Landmarks (2024). Treaty of Hudaybiyyah: History, lessons, key events and importance. Retrieved from <https://www.islamiclandmarks.com/makkah-other/treaty-of-hudaybiyyah>
- Khidri, M.S. (2005). *Nurul Yaqeen fi Seeratul Sayeedul Mursaleen*, Bairut Labenun Darul fikri,.

Ramlan, A. R. (2022). 4 things to know about the story of Hudaibiyah. Retrieved from <https://muslim.sg/articles/4-things-to-know-about-the-story-of-hudaibiyah>

Yasir, K. (2024). Political foresight of the Prophet: A textual analysis of treaty of Hudaibiyah. Retrieved from <https://www.academia.edu/20267103/Hudaibiya-Treaty-Textual-Analysis>

