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A FRAMEWORK FOR NONVIOLENCE AND PEACEBUILDING IN ISLAM

Mohammed Abu-Nimer[†]

INTRODUCTION

Today, there is little debate that a paradigm shift is occurring in the field of international conflict resolution; where experts laud the effectiveness of peaceful means ending disputes compared with the use of force or violence. This paradigm shift is reflected in the increasing number of peacebuilding academic and applied programs in Eastern Europe, Latin America, Africa, South and East Asia, and the Middle East, including conflict resolution workshops, projects for building civil societies, and nonviolent resistance mobilization.¹ In peacebuilding contexts, scholars and practitioners are seeking to integrate authentic, indigenous and local cultural methods of conflict analysis and intervention, which are replacing the generic conflict resolution applications developed by western practitioners in United States and Europe.²

In their efforts to disseminate peacebuilding approaches, practitioners have carried conflict resolution methods to Muslim communities.³ However, their progress has been hampered by a well-publicized Western assumption that Islamic religion and culture contradict the principles of peacebuilding, conflict resolution, nonviolence, and even democracy. Western media reports and policy documents often reflect these violent and aggressive images of Islam.⁴

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1. Ron Fisher, *Interactive Conflict Resolution* (N.Y.: Syracuse U. Press 1997).

2. See *Conflict Resolution: Cross-Cultural Perspectives* (Kevin Avruch, P. Black & Joe Scemicca eds., N.Y.: Greenwood Press 1991); John Paul Lederach, *Preparing for Peace: Conflict Transformation Across Cultures* (N.Y.: Syracuse U. Press 1995); Mohammed Abu-Nimer, *Conflict Resolution Training in the Middle East: Lessons to be Learned*, 3 Intl. Negot. 99 (1998) [hereinafter Abu-Nimer, *Conflict Resolution Training*]; Mohammed Abu-Nimer, *Conflict Resolution Approaches: Western and Middle Eastern Lessons and Possibilities*, 55 Am. J. Econ. & Sociology 35 (1996) [hereinafter Abu-Nimer, *Conflict Resolution Approaches*].

3. Training workshops in peacebuilding have been conducted in the Middle East, Philippines, and Indonesia by Search For Common Ground, Catholic Relief Services, Institute for Multi Track Diplomacy, and others.

4. Azizah al-Hibri highlights some of the negative depictions of Islam in American and

Academic literature on the subject is no less tinged with such stereotypes. For example, when one searches the Library of Congress subject catalogue for resources on *Islam and nonviolence*, fewer than five items appear on the screen. However, thousands of items are listed when *violence and Islam* are the search words.⁵

Scholarly interest in researching Islamic theories of peacebuilding also stems from the recent significant expansions in the study of religion and peace. Scholars and practitioners in peace studies and conflict resolution have begun exploring the role of religion in shaping the theory and practice of their field.⁶ This new wave of research aims to shift the focus away from religion as the cause of war and conflict to the ways in which religious values, beliefs, and rituals are a rich source for the study of conflict resolution, peace, and change. Muslim scholars and practitioners have joined the examination of the potential formulation and application of a systematic peacebuilding approach derived from their religious and cultural background.

This article is an attempt to contribute to a theory of nonviolence and peacebuilding principles and values from an Islamic perspective and within an Islamic context. The objective of this article is not to defend Islam or offer an apologetic justification for the past use of violence in the Islamic "world," but to actively promote peacebuilding and nonviolent strategies and values based on an indigenous Islamic religious context. The first part discusses some of the assumptions that must attend any research addressing Islamic conflict resolution, nonviolence, and peace. The second part reviews some of the research that has been done on Islam and nonviolence and peace. The third part focuses on the identification of Islamic values, stories and worldviews that support peacebuilding practices. It highlights the basic assumptions, principles, and values of nonviolent methods found in Islamic primary religious sources. The article concludes with a set of guiding principles that can function as a framework for the application of peacebuilding in the Islamic context; it also calls for further research to explore the reflection of these values in the daily lives of Muslims.

European historical writing in Azizah al-Hibri, *Islamic and American Constitutional Law: Borrowing Possibilities or a History of Borrowing?*, 1 U. Pa. J. Const. L. 491, 493-497 (1999).

5. See list of such studies, *infra*, n. 11.

6. See *Religion The Missing Dimension of Statecraft* (Douglas Johnston & Cynthia Sampson, eds., N.Y.: Oxford U. Press 1994); Abu-Nimer, *Conflict Resolution Approaches*, *supra* n. 2; Marc Gopin, *Religion, Violence and Conflict Resolution*, 22 Peace & Change 1 (1996).

APPROACHES TO THE STUDY ON ISLAM AND PEACEBUILDING

Before one describes the principles that underlie conflict resolution and nonviolent methods and determines their relationship to Islamic religion and tradition, it is imperative to establish fundamental distinctions and definitions which guide any discussion of nonviolence and peacebuilding in Islam.⁷ It is also important to describe the assumptions used by scholars and practitioners like myself who examine Islam and nonviolence that are necessary to contribute to a deeper understanding of the discussion and the objectives of the research.

First, the full potential of Islam to address social and political conflicts is yet to be fully realized. Both Islamic religion and tradition have a multitude of resources with which conflicts can be resolved peacefully and nonviolently. Islamic scripture and religious teachings are rich sources of values, beliefs, and strategies that promote the peaceful and nonviolent resolution of conflicts. Awareness of the Qur'an, the Prophetic tradition, and the early Islamic period is indispensable for understanding Islam, since these scriptures and traditions have continued to provide a paradigm for emulation by Muslims and Islamic movements in every age,⁸ and their influence can be traced in every philosophical, ideological, and scientific inquiry among Muslims. Moreover, the impact of the Islamic early period and the Qur'an is clearly discernable even in modern non-violent movements, such as Mahatma Gandhi's philosophy and methods of nonviolence, as McDonough and Satha-Anand show.⁹

Second, Islamic scholars and practitioners need to reconsider and constantly reevaluate our understanding and application of Islam in various historical periods when we consider nonviolence and peacebuilding. The process of deconstructing the meaning of historical realities is legitimate and necessary to the collective and individual

7. It should be noted that although the boundaries and distinctions between peace and conflict resolution fields are still being defined, nevertheless, in this study no distinction is made between them. Peacebuilding is used as an overarching term for nonviolent strategies and conflict resolution methods. They all share the assumption that to resolve a conflict, parties must be committed to nonviolent approaches and means. For further literature on such conflict resolution approach see John Burton, *Conflict Resolution and Prevention* (N.Y.: St. Martin's Press 1990); Louise Diamond & John McDonald, *Multi-Track Diplomacy: A System Guide and Analysis* (Grinnell: Iowa Peace Inst. 1991); Fisher, *supra* n. 1.

8. John Esposito, *The Islamic Threat* 25 (N.Y.: Oxford U. Press 1992).

9. Fasting is one of the main values and practices with which Gandhi associated Islam, particularly during his early imprisonment. See Shella McDonough, *Gandhi's Responses to Islam* 122 (New Delhi: D.K. Printworld 1994); Chaiwat Satha-Anand, *Core Values For Peacemaking in Islam: The Prophet's Practice as Paradigm*, in *Building Peace in the Middle East: Challenges for States and Civil Society* (Elise Boulding, ed., Boulder, Colo.: Lynne Rienner Publishers 1993) [hereinafter *Core Values for Peacemaking in Islam*].

survival of Muslim communities. Islam is subject to diverse interpretations and perspectives that may be legitimately pursued by sincere and knowledgeable Muslim scholars from different nations, cultures and schools.¹⁰ Therefore, knowledge and interpretations should not be treated as the property of small, privileged, and particular elites. Interpreting and viewing Islamic religion, tradition, and cultural patterns through nonviolence and peacebuilding lenses become important in accurately understanding and capturing the meaning of Islam.

Third, many Muslims themselves lack a comprehensive Islamic knowledge and hermeneutics relevant to nonviolent conflict transformation through its peaceful teachings. Most extant academic research and writing on Islam and conflict, not only by Orientalists, but even by Muslim scholars, is aimed at the study and interpretation of war, violence, power, political systems or legal arrangements. Approaching Islamic tradition and religion from these perspectives only perpetuates negative images and perceptions, particularly by Westerners.

Fourth, though a wide variety of Islamic religious teachings and practices address conflicts and peacebuilding, the validity of their application depends on the type of interaction involved in the conflict situation, including whether conflicts involve interpersonal, family, or community relations internal to the Islamic community or involve non-Muslims. However, Islam yields a set of peacebuilding values that, if consistently and systematically applied, can transcend and govern all types and levels of conflict, values such as justice (*adl*), beneficence (*ihsan*), and wisdom (*hikmah*) which constitute core principles in peacemaking strategies and framework.

Expanded awareness and use of these four assumptions in research and proposals on integrating Islam and peacebuilding can assist both Muslim and non-Muslim researchers in expanding their understanding of the relationship between the concepts and practices of nonviolence, peacebuilding, and Islamic culture, religion and tradition. Perhaps as importantly, such awareness can reduce the negative characterizations of Islamic society and religion in both popular and academic literature, particularly eradicating ill-founded generalizations about Islamic ways of thinking, believing, or living. Finally, utilization of these assumptions can provide researchers with a way to avoid oversimplified literal interpretations of Qur'anic verses and prophetic sayings that do

10. Many scholars have written on the legitimacy and importance of the different interpretations of Islamic texts. See Farid Esack, *On Being a Muslim: Finding a Religious Path in the World Today* (Oxford: Oneworld 1999); Azizah al-Hibri, *Islamic Constitutionalism and the Concept of Democracy*, 24 J. Intl. L. 1-27 (1992).

not follow the Islamic interpretive tradition of considering the historical context or social, political, and cultural forces that influence the lives of Muslims and non-Muslims as well.

CURRENT STUDIES OF PEACE AND NONVIOLENCE IN ISLAM

Currently published studies that focus on whether and how Islam as a religion supports principles and values of nonviolence, peace, and war can be divided into three main categories, each with its own research issues, perspectives, and interpretations of Islamic religion and tradition: (1) studies of war and *jihad*; (2) studies of war and peace; (3) studies of nonviolence and peacebuilding.

Studies of War and *Jihad*

Unfortunately, most modern studies of *Jihad* and war attempt to provide support for the hypothesis that Islamic religion and tradition lend themselves easily and in a unique way to the justification of war and violence as the primary means of settlement of conflicts. Some writers in this group have argued that Islam is a religion of "war," and that violence is an integral part of the Islamic religion and tradition; and conversely, all writers in this group consider "pacifism" or nonviolence foreign concepts to Islam.¹¹

In this group of studies, scholars have overemphasized, and some seem to have been "obsessed" with, the principle of *jihad* (self-exertion) in Islam. Violent *jihad* has been described as an ultimate method that Muslims employ to settle their internal and external differences. In this group of studies, scholars and policymakers view the behaviors and

11. Due to the scope and purpose of this article, the discussion of this category is brief. However, there have been several studies in English and many in Arabic that reviewed these studies and uncovered their cultural biases and limitations. For example, see Esposito, *supra* n. 8, at 26; John Esposito & John Voll, *Islam and Democracy* (N.Y.: Oxford U. Press 1996). A sample of the studies conducted from a war and *jihad* perspective includes Johannes Jansen, *The Neglected Duty: the Creed of Sadat's Assassins and Islamic Resurgence in Middle East* (N.Y.: Macmillan 1986); Giles Kepel, *The Revenge of God: The Resurgence of Islam, Christianity, and Judaism in the Modern World* (U. Park: Pa. St. U. Press 1994); Bruce Lawrence, *Defenders of God: The Fundamentalist Revolt Against the Modern Age* (N.Y.: Harper & Row 1986); Bernard Lewis, *Political Language of Islam* (Chicago: U. Chi. Press 1988); David Pryce-Jones, *At War With Modernity: Islam's Challenge to the West* (London: Alliance Pub. for the Inst. European Def. & Strategic Stud. 1992); Emmanuel Sivan, *Radical Islam: Medieval Theology and Modern Politics* (New Haven: Yale U. Press 1990); Michael Dunn, *Revivalist Islam and Democracy: Thinking About the Algerian Quandary*, 1 Middle E. Policy 16 (1992); Gudrun Krämer, *Islamist Notion of Democracy*, 23 Middle E. Rpt. 2 (1993); Martin Kramer, *Islam vs Democracy*, 95 Contemporary 2 (1993); *Islam and Liberal Democracy*, 271 A. Mthly. 89 (1993); Steven Emerson, *Islamic Fundamentalism's Terrible Threat to the West*, 27 San Diego Union-Trib. G3 (June 27, 1993); Daniel Pipes, *Fundamental Questions About Muslims*, 30 Wall St. J. A11 (Oct. 30, 1992).

expressions of Muslims solely through a “*jihad* lens,”¹² equating the rise of interest in Islamic religion with Islamic fundamentalism, the emergence of radical Islamic movements and the perception that Islam unequivocally legitimizes the use of force by government and religious movements as well.

Studies of War and Peace

By contrast to the “*jihad*-lens” group of studies, those studies in what may be called “war and peace” hypothesize that Islamic religion and tradition justify the use of violence and force only in certain limited and well-defined contexts. Scholars and writers in this group have focused on the conditions and circumstances in which Islam as a religion and tradition has allowed the use of force and violence to settle conflicts or as a way of dealing with others.¹³ In illustrating their perspectives, these scholars often rely on the following Qur’anic verses:¹⁴ “Permission to fight is granted to those upon whom war is made, because they are oppressed.” (22:39) “Fight in the way of God with those who fight with you, and do not exceed this limit.” (2:190) Thus, pacifism in its “Christian” sense cannot intersect with authentic Islamic teachings.

Scholars in the “war and peace group” put the highest emphasis on the struggle for justice and perceive the discussion of nonviolence as a means to an end and thus secondary in its importance in Islam. This approach as an alternative to nonviolence conceived as an end in itself is best described by Jaggi: “In one form or another, the principle of nonviolence has an important place in every religion. Some religions

12. Dan Quayle, Patrick Buchanan, Daniel Pipes, and others best represent such policy makers and politicians, who often have compared Islam with communism and Nazism. See Esposito, *supra* n. 8, at 168.

13. A few of those works are: Akbar Ahmed, *Discovering Islam: Making Sense of Muslim History and Society* (London: Routledge & Keagan Paul 1988); Mahmoud Ayoub, Speech and Panel Discussion, *Nonviolence in Islam: A Dialogue Between Muslims* (Conf. on Nonviolence in Islam, sponsored by Nonviolence Intl. & Mohammed Said Farsi, Chair of Islamic Peace, Am. U., D.C., Feb. 14, 1997) (available at the Intl. Peace & Conflict Resolution Program Lib., Am. U., D.C.); Lardner Carmody & Tully Carmody, *Peace and Justice in the Scriptures of the World Religions: Reflections on Non-Christian Scriptures* (N.Y.: Paulist Press 1988); Sohail Hashmi, *Interpreting the Islamic Ethics of War and Peace*, in *The Ethics of War and Peace: Religious and Secular Perspectives* 146 (Terry Nardin ed., Princeton, N.J.: Princeton U. Press 1996); Fazlur Rahman, *The Islamic Concept of Justice*, in *Islamic Identity and the Struggle for Justice* (Nimat Barazangi, M. Raquibuz Zaman & Omar Afzal eds., Gainesville, Fla: U. Press of Fla. 1996); John Kelsay, *Islam and War: A Study in Comparative Ethics* (Westminster: John Knox Press 1993); Abdulaziz Sachedina, *Justification for Violence in Islam, in War and its Discontents: Pacifism and Quietism in the Abrahamic Traditions* (J. Patout Burns ed., D.C.: Geo. U. Press 1996).

14. For the translation of the Qur’an, the author relied on: Abdullah Yusuf Ali, *The Meaning of the Holy Qur’an* (Brentwood, Md.: Amana Corp. 1991), except in cases in which the quoted scholars have used other editions of the Qur’an.

limit its practice to human beings; others encompass the entire world of living beings. Some consider it the highest virtue, and others regard it as second only to social justice.”¹⁵

However, the relegation of nonviolence to a secondary place in the “war and peace” literature may stem from the intellectual base for these studies, and its limited definition of pacifism or non-violence. Many of these scholars aim to objectively present Islamic interpretations of war and peace, but they have all approached this topic from a framework of security, war, and strategic studies, or from a classic Islamic studies perspective instead of a grounding in peace and conflict resolution studies. Since these scholars’ analytical and disciplinary frameworks are outside of the peace and conflict resolution fields, they have often defined nonviolence and pacifism as a method or state of surrender to the enemy or the other party. They have concluded, based on this limited definition of nonviolence, that Islam cannot be described as a pacifist religion.

Both the writings of Hashimi and Sachedina capture well the argument of this group. Hashimi identifies several essential points from the Qur’an:¹⁶ that underlie Islamic discussions of the propriety of the use of peaceful and violent conflict resolution methods:

(1) The human person’s fundamental nature is one of moral innocence, that is freedom from sin;

(2) Human nature is characterized by the will to live on earth in a state of harmony and peace with other living things. (This is the ultimate import of the responsibility assigned by God to man, his viceregent on this planet. (Qur’an 2:30)) Peace (*salam*) is therefore not merely an absence of war; it is the elimination of the grounds for strife or conflict, and resulting waste and corruption (*fasad*) they create. Peace, not war or violence, is God’s true purpose of humanity;

(3) Given the human person’s capacity for wrongdoing, there will always be some who choose to violate nature and transgress against God’s commandments;

(4) Each prophet encounters opposition from those (always a majority) who will persist in their rebellion against God, and justify their actions through various self-delusions, through *kufṛ* (unbelief) and *zulm* (oppression);

(5) *Salam* (peace) is attainable only when human beings surrender to God’s will and live according to God’s laws; and

15. Peter O. Jaggi, *Religion, Practice and Science of Nonviolence* 25 (New Delhi: Musnshiran Manoharlal 1974).

16. Hashimi, *supra* n. 13, at 142. See Sachedina, *supra* n. 13.

(6) Because it is unlikely that individuals or societies will ever conform fully to the precepts of Islam, Muslims must always be prepared to fight to preserve the Islamic faith and Islamic principles. (8:60, 8:73)

These Islamic principles identified by Hashimi clearly provide a strong base for a solid peacebuilding and conflict resolution approach within Islam. According to these principles, human nature is to aspire to peace and not to war or violence. Humans seek harmony with nature and other living beings. In addition, humans can learn to be peaceful and change their wrongdoing since they are born innocent and not evil. The third and fourth assumptions illustrate an important principle of conflict transformation: conflict is a natural phenomenon and it will always be part of the human reality. Therefore, those who reject God and oppress others will constantly struggle with those who attained peace by surrendering to God's will. Being a good and faithful Muslim becomes the condition necessary to achieving internal and external peace and harmony.

The last principle, which requires Muslims to defend the Islamic faith, is mainly a call for action and resistance to *kufr* and oppression. Hashimi, like other researchers in his discipline of international relations, dwells on this point in particular to argue that Islam cannot be a pacifist religion, and that Islam justifies the acts of violence, war, and the use of force under certain conditions. He provides a well-developed set of conditions that should guide Muslims using violence. However, Hashimi's main argument is that although Islam allows the use of violence and force, it prohibits aggression; and its main objective is achieving peace through justice and the preservation of the faith and values. Like other scholars in this group, Hashimi assumes that defending Islam, and attaining justice and peace, does not take place via nonviolence; consequently, the use of limited or conditional force is a necessary step.

A similar analysis was provided by John Kelsay who examined the nature of peace according to classic Sunni perspectives. Kelsay notes four main basic features of peace:

- (1) a conception of human responsibility in which humans were endowed with knowledge that makes them responsible for their actions;
- (2) the possibility of human choice: humans select the way of heedlessness or ignorance (*jahiliyyah*) or the way of submission (*islam*);
- (3) the political result of these choices: the way of heedlessness and the way of submission as institutionalized in the existence of Islamic and non-Islamic political entities. The territory of Islam (*dar al-islam*)

and the territory of war (*dar al-harb*) are respectively viewed as such political institutes;

(4) a program of action in which *jihad* is a means to extend the boundaries of *dar al-islam* or the territory of Islam (*salam*).

Kelsay concludes by stating: "Sunni theorists understood force to be a possible and useful means of extending the territory of Islam and thus a tool in the quest for peace."¹⁷

In their attempt to explain the hypothesis that Islam is not a pacifist religion, and that war and force are permitted and justified in Islam, scholars in the war and peace group have had to address the conditions that permit the use of violence. Therefore, like scholars in the first category, they too have focused a great deal on the concept of *jihad* in Islam. Like Hashimi and others in this category, Kelsay spends the greater portion of his study investigating the application of *jihad* in *dar al-harb* (the territory of war) and attempting to support the existence and applicability of such rules of violent engagement.

These scholars have also had to investigate the question whether Islam is compatible with pacifism. While they are clear that war is permitted in the defense of the Muslim state and the self, they also agree that Islam prohibits wars of aggression, expansion or prestige. They suggest, however, that the possibility of unconditional pacifism is undermined in Islam by verses such as: "Fighting is prescribed for you, even though it be hateful to you; but it may well be that you hate something that is in fact good for you, and that you love a thing that is in fact bad for you: and God knows, whereas you do not." (2:216)

Hashimi concludes that: "The Islamic discourse on war and peace begins from the a priori assumption that some types of war are permissible—indeed required by God—and that all other forms of violence are, therefore, forbidden."¹⁸ The use of force, then, as far as the Qur'an is concerned, is defensive and limited to the violation of interpersonal human conduct. Sachedina also rejects the notion of pacifism in Islam:

Pacifism in the sense of rejecting all forms of violence and opposing all war and armed hostility before justice is established has no place in the Qur'anic doctrine of human faith or its inevitable projection into not only identifying with the cause of justice but working for it on earth.¹⁹

17. Kelsay, *supra* n. 13, at 35.

18. Hashimi, *supra* n. 13, at 151.

19. Sachedina, *supra* n. 13, at 147.

Saiyidain too supports this notion: "It cannot, therefore, be said that Islam does not envisage the possibility of the use of force at all, or does not sharply reprimand and stand up against those who go out of their way to deprive other people of the right to follow 'Truth' as they see it."²⁰ Thus according to this perspective, for a Muslim to be denied the right of worship is a valid reason and cause to apply force, because such a condition qualifies as a *kufir* (unbelief).

Thus, the "war and peace" group of scholars does not fundamentally associate Islam with violence, or expansion. On the contrary, these scholars suggest that non-aggression, pursuit of justice, and even peaceful and nonviolent means are natural and proper in the propagation of the Islamic faith. They find a warrant for peaceful means in the Qur'an and the Prophet's commitment to nonviolent resistance during his early years in Mecca. Even the Prophet's reluctant endorsement of limited warfare after his move to Medina has been taken to support the view that fighting is undesirable for Muslims, and that it is permissible only if there is no other effective way to resist aggression against the faith.²¹

Ayoub, Sachedina, and others, have proposed that Muslims practice "quietism" rather than pacifism, arguing that Islam views human existence as caught up in contradictions and conflicts between darkness and light, guided and misguided ways, justice and injustice, and that it is an ongoing moral struggle to achieve justice. Scholars in this category argue that Islam has always encouraged its followers to adopt the middle course, to follow the realistic path in solving day-to-day issues. Islam instructs them to keep in mind the spirit of equality, brotherhood, love, and purity of character. Thus, absolute nonviolence would not be a middle way, but limited force and struggle is permitted under certain conditions.

We ordained for the children of Israel that if anyone slew a person—unless it be for murder or for spreading mischief in the land—it would be as if he slew the whole people: and if anyone saved a life it would be as if he saved the life of the whole people.
(5:35)

20. Khwaja Gulam (K.G.) Saiyidain, *Islam: the Religion of Peace* 175 (2d ed., New Delhi: Har-Anand Pub. 1994). In support of this strong argument against pacifism, several verses in the Qur'an have been identified: "Nor slay such life as Allah has made sacred, except for just cause, nor commit fornication; and any that does this (not only) meets punishment, (but) the penalty on the Day of Judgment will be doubled to him." Qur'an 25:68-69. See also Qur'an 17:33, 6:151.

21. See e.g. Wahiduddin Khan, *Nonviolence and Islam*, in *Forum on Islam and Peace in the 21st Century* 5 (D.C.: Am. U. 1998).

Many scholars in the war and peace group can be criticized for discounting the second part of the verse that emphasizes the sacredness of life in Islam and instead using the entire verse to provide a proof for the inevitable need to use force. Unfortunately, analyses like theirs narrow the definition of nonviolence to passive pacifism and, as described by Sachedina, associate pacifism with a life of simplicity and poverty, one that prohibits bearing arms.²² Yet, such analysts never consider Gandhian nonviolence as a pacifist option even though it has produced a strong political and social impact on millions of people around the world and it can hardly be said that Ghandi's pacifism was a form of submission to the oppressor.

In short, "war and peace" scholarship that criticizes descriptions of Islam as a religion of peace that has nothing to do with war is ultimately misleading, detracting from the wisdom that might be gained if the conditions of war and use of violence are explored in Islam. Kelsay suggests, as others in this category do, that nonviolence ought to be evaluated in the overall Islamic goal of establishing a just social reality. Therefore the focus should not be on whether Islam provides support for nonviolence, but where, how, and when nonviolent strategies serve the goal of establishing and maintaining the just social reality which Muslims pursue. Framing the issue in this way excludes the possibility of moral and creedal pacifism or nonviolence, and assumes that the instrumental and pragmatic nonviolent approach is more appropriate in the Islamic context. However, several examples in Islamic history and tradition contradict the assumption that nonviolence cannot possibly be applied based on the moral foundation of a theory of peacebuilding in Islam; for example, the work of Ghaffar Khan and Sufi teachings are clear examples of creedal or morally absolute nonviolent approaches.²³

Studies of Peacebuilding and Nonviolence in Islam

Scholars and writers in "nonviolence" studies groups have acknowledged the existence and legitimacy of limited violence in Islamic scripture. Nevertheless they view and emphasize the great potential for nonviolence as a philosophy in Islam. They identify values and principles that make such a claim possible, such as: Islam's basic belief in the unity of humankind, the supreme love of the Creator, the obligation of mercy, and Muslims' duty of subjection of their passions and accountability for all actions. Scholars writing "nonviolence"

22. See Ayoub, *supra* n. 13; Sachedina, *supra* n. 13, at 74.

23. For full information on this case, see Eknath Easwaran, *A Man to Match His Mountains: Badshuh Khan Nonviolent Soldier of Islam* (Petaluma, Cal.: Nilgiri 1984).

studies work are guided/motivated by peace and nonviolent frameworks. Starting with the hypothesis "[t]here is no theological reason that an Islamic society could not take a lead in developing nonviolence today, and there is every reason that some of them should,"²⁴ they attempt to contextualize principles of peace and nonviolence in Islamic tradition and religion.²⁵ A few of these writers justify the use of restricted violence under certain strict conditions. However, without exception their overall perspective is based on the potential pacifist and nonviolent nature and characteristics of Islamic religion and tradition. For instance, Saiyidain argues: "There are circumstances in which Islam contemplates the possibility of war, for instance, to avert worse disasters like the denial of freedom to human conscience, but the essential thing in life is peace. It is toward the achievement of peace that all human efforts must be sincerely diverted."²⁶

Satha-Anand's pioneering list of eight theses of nonviolence which flow from Islamic teachings illustrates such a notion as well:

- (1) For Muslims the problem of violence is an integral part of the Islamic moral sphere;
- (2) Violence, if any, used by Muslims must be governed by rules prescribed in the Qur'an and *Hadith*;
- (3) If violence used cannot discriminate between combatants and noncombatants, then it is unacceptable to Islam;
- (4) Modern technologies of destruction render discrimination

24. Patout Burns, *War and its Discontents: Pacifism and Quietism in the Abrahamic Traditions* 165 (D.C.: Geo. U. Press 1996).

25. See e.g. Eknath Easwaran, *supra*, n. 23; Ashgar Engineer, *Sources of Nonviolence in Islam*, in *Nonviolence: Contemporary Issues and Challenges* (M. Kumar ed., New Delhi: Gandhi Peace Found. 1994); Khalid Kishtainy, *Violent and Nonviolent Struggle in Arab History* in *Arab Nonviolent Political Struggle in the Middle East* 9-25 (R.E. Crow, P. Grant & Saad E. Ibrahim eds., Boulder, Colo.: Lynne Rienner Publishers 1990); *The Nonviolent Crescent: Eight Theses on Muslim Nonviolent Actions*, in *Islam and Nonviolence* 7-26 (Glenn Paige, Chaiwat Satha-Anand & Sarah Gilliat eds., Honolulu: Ctr. for Global Nonviolence Plan. Project, Matsunaga Inst. for Peace, U. of Haw. 1993); Mohammed Abu-Nimer, *Conflict Resolution in an Islamic Context*, 21 *Peace & Change* 22-40 (1996); Karim Crow, *Nurturing an Islamic Peace Discourse*, 17 *Am. J. of Islamic Soc. Sci.* 54-69 (2000); Abdul Aziz Said, *Cultural Context of Conflict Resolution: A Reference to An Arab-Islamic Perspective* (unpublished paper 1994) (available at Intl. Peace & Conflict Resolution Program (IPCR), Am. U., D.C.); Jawdat Said, *Peace—Or Nonviolence—in History and with the Prophets* (unpublished paper 1997) (from the forum on Islam and Peace in the 21st Cent., Am. U., D.C. 1997); Chaiwat Satha-Anand, *Muslim Communal Nonviolence Actions: Examples of Minorities—Coexistence in A Non Muslim Society* (unpublished paper) (presented at Islam & Cultural Diversity Conf., Am. U., D.C. 1998) [hereinafter *Muslim Communal Nonviolence Actions*]. See also Abdurahman Wahid, *Islam and Nonviolence: National Transformation*, in *Islam and Nonviolence* 53-59 (Glenn Paige, Chaiwat Satha-Anand & Sarah Gilliat eds., Honolulu: Ctr. for Global Nonviolence Planning Project, Matsunaga Inst. for Peace, U. of Haw. 1993); Wahiduddin, Khan, *supra* n. 21.

26. See Saiyidain, *supra* n. 20.

virtually impossible at present;

- (5) In the modern world, Muslims cannot use violence;
- (6) Islam teaches Muslims to fight for justice with the understanding that human lives, as all parts of God's creation, are purposeful and sacred;
- (7) In order to be true to Islam, Muslims must utilize nonviolent action as a new mode of struggle; and
- (8) Islam itself is fertile soil for nonviolence because of its potential for disobedience, strong discipline, sharing and social responsibility, perseverance and self-sacrifice, and the belief in the unity of the Muslim community and the oneness of humanity. Although in his second thesis, Satha-Anand allows the use of limited violence, nevertheless his fifth thesis clearly prevents the current use of violence.²⁷

As scholars and practitioners of peacebuilding in Islam explain the need for an Islamic nonviolent paradigm, they point to certain conditions:

(1) The historical period has changed and therefore, the use of violence as a means to resolve differences or to spread the faith is no longer religiously permissible. Whatever Muslims used to create, establish, or spread their faith fourteen hundred years ago is not valid for today's reality. Therefore, if Islamic culture and tradition would thrive and prosper again, both Muslim leaders and people have to adopt a nonviolent approach to address their differences and conduct their lives.

(2) The status of the Muslim community in a global system and in local communities has changed enormously, and it does not permit the use of violence. Many Muslim communities live as minorities in the world; their economic, social, and political status is different from six to seven centuries ago, when they were the majority or the dominant force in their regions and outside of them.

(3) Global economic and political systems that have been developing over the last century, prohibit the use of violence, particularly weapons of mass destruction, in settling conflicts.

(4) The new global reality, weaponry systems, and warfare leave neither Muslims nor Christians any choice but to abandon violence because the prescribed limits of violence cannot be assured.²⁸

27. Satha-Anand, *Core Values for Peacemaking in Islam*, *supra* n. 9.

28. Satha-Anand discusses the potential destruction which might result from nuclear warfare and concludes that such warfare is prohibited by Islamic teachings and principles. Satha-Anand, *Muslim Communal Nonviolence Actions*, *supra* n. 25, at 15). A similar conclusion was reached by K.G. Saiyidain as early as 1968 in a conference presentation on Islam and peace. He suggested that any type of total war cannot be carried out within the condition envisioned by Islam. See

(5) The use of violence as a means to address conflict was a minor element in the life of the Prophet and in Scripture, therefore, it should not occupy as much attention or importance today. The *Hadith* and Islamic tradition, and history and culture are all rich sources for examples of nonviolence and peacebuilding.

Scholars in the peacebuilding category attempt to reinterpret historical symbols, stories, and other events in Islamic tradition to change Muslims' approaches to life in general and to conflicts in particular. Searching for scriptural proofs that legitimize shunning violence in all its forms has been another primary focus of researchers in this category. These scholars emphasize Islamic sources that condemn violence and war in any context, particularly Qur'anic versus such as: "Whenever they kindle the fire of war, God extinguishes it. They strive to create disorder on earth and God loves not those who create disorder." (5:64) Tolerance and kindness toward all other people without exception are also emphasized: "God commands you to treat (everyone) justly, generously and with kindness." (16:90)

Supporters of the nonviolent Islam hypothesis often rely on the Meccan period of the Prophet's life (610-622 C.E.), when the Prophet showed no inclination toward the use of force in any form, even for self defense. He lived a life of nonviolent resistance, which was reflected in all his instructions and teaching during that period when Muslims were a minority. The Prophet's teachings were focused on values of patience and steadfastness in facing oppression.

Of the 23-year period of prophethood, the initial 13 years were spent by the Prophet in Mecca. The Prophet fully adopted the way of pacifism or nonviolence during this time. There were many such issues in Mecca at the time which could have been the subject of clash and confrontation. But, by avoiding all such issues, the Prophet of Islam strictly limited his sphere to peaceful propagation of the word of God.²⁹

Moreover, many *Hadiths* identified by peacebuilding writers and researchers illustrate the importance of peacebuilding and patience. Jawdat Said best summarizes several of these sayings in an attempt to prove the pacifist nature of Islam, particularly when the dispute involves two Muslims:

World Religion and World Peace (Jack Homer, ed., Boston: Beacon Press 1968). See the following sources located, *supra* n. 25: Easwaran; Engineer; Janner; Wahiduddin Khan; Paige; Jawdat Said; Satha-Anand; & Wahid.

29. Wahiduddin Khan, *supra* n. 21, at 5.

I don't see anyone in this world who clearly explained when it is incumbent upon a Muslim to behave like (Abel) the son of Adam! Nor does anyone teach the Muslims that the Messenger of God said to his companion Sa'd Ibn Abi Waqqas, '*kun ka-ibni Adam* (Be as the son of Adam)!' at the time when Muslims turn to fight one another. The Prophet(s) said to his companion Abu Dharr al Ghifari in a similar situation, when Abu Dharr asked him, 'But what if someone entered into my home (to kill me)?' The Prophet replied: 'If you fear to look upon the gleam of the sword raised to strike you, then cover your face with your robe. Thus will he bear the sin of killing you as well as his own sin.' And in the same situation, the Prophet(s) told his companion Abu Musa al-Asha'ri: 'Break your bows, sever your strings, beat stones on your swords (to break the blades); and when infringed upon by one of the perpetrators, be as the best of Adam's two sons.'³⁰

This lesson from the Qur'an supports a nonviolent response, even in a confrontational context. It is reflected in the story of Abel (*Habil*) and Cain (*Qabil*), personalities representing the two opposing ways of approaching life and conflict. Abel is representative of justice and righteousness, refusing to soil his hands with blood. Cain represents aggression and readiness to use violence or even kill on any pretext.

God accepts the sacrifice only of those who are righteous. If He has not accepted your sacrifice, how is it my fault? If you will lift your hand to slay me, I shall not lift mine to slay you. I am afraid of God's displeasure, who is the Creator of the worlds. (5:27-28)

Peacemaking and negotiation are recommended as the first strategy to resolve conflicts, as clearly expressed in the Qur'anic verse: "if they incline to peace, you should also incline to it, and trust in God." (8:39)

Even if justice rather than nonviolence and peace were the ultimate goal of Islamic religious teaching, pursuing peace through nonviolent strategies is a viable and effective method to achieving that justice, particularly when such methods are used to empower the victims of injustice. Kishtainy identifies several principles and techniques in Islam that support nonviolent resistance, such as tolerance, persuasion, arguing, suffering, patience, civil disobedience and withdrawal of cooperation, rejecting injustice, strikes, emigration, boycotting, diplomacy, publicity, propaganda, and special rituals (fasting, parallel lines of prayer, religious chanting).³¹ This approach rejects either unjust

30. Abu Dawud Sulayman ibn Ash'ath, *Sunan Abu-Dawud*, bk. 35, no. 4246, reviewed and verified by Muhammad 'Awamamah, *Kitab al-Sunan: Sunan Abu Dawud* (reprint, Jiddah: Dar al-Qiblah lil-Thaqafah al-Islamiyah 1998). Also cited by Jawdat Said, *supra* n. 25, at 13.

31. Kishtainy, *supra* n. 25.

solutions to problems or attempts to convince victims of oppression that they should endure an unjust reality; rather, it assumes that nonviolent methods, if applied correctly and systematically, will lead to justice.

Peacebuilding scholars argue that Muslims already possess the values and principles in both their religion and daily practice which are compatible with the adoption of nonviolent actions as tools to fight injustice. Anand-Satha suggests that the values that underlie the five pillars of Islam are also core values for Muslim nonviolence action, the duties:

- (1) to obey God and the Prophet only and disobey others if necessary;
- (2) to practice discipline through prayers;
- (3) to show solidarity and support for the poor through *zakah*, the tax to support the poor;
- (4) to practice self sacrifice, suffering and patience through fasting;
- (5) to embrace unity and brotherhood through pilgrimage.³²

In conclusion, the peacebuilding group of scholars would argue that active pacifism or nonviolence is not a strange concept but a core concept in Islamic Scripture and tradition. Islam as a religion and tradition has a set of values, beliefs, and strategies which facilitate nonviolence and peacebuilding. Those elements can be found in the Qur'an and the *Hadith*, as well as in cultural practices. The rest of this article will be devoted to framing a set of nonviolent and conflict resolution principles that exist in Islamic religion and exploring their correspondence with the theory and practice of nonviolence and peacebuilding.

ISLAMIC PEACEBUILDING PRINCIPLES AND VALUES

Many Muslim and non-Muslim scholars have identified values and principles in Islam such as unity, supreme love of the Creator, mercy, subjection to passion, accountability for all actions. These values are supported by innumerable verses in the Qur'an, commanding believers to be righteous and levelheaded in their dealings with their fellow beings. Forgiveness and mercy are recommended as virtues of the true faithful. Other Islamic values especially emphasized which relate directly to peacebuilding include *adl* (justice), *ihsan* (benevolence),

32. Satha-Anand, *Muslim Communal Nonviolence Actions*, *supra* n. 25, at 17.

rahmah (compassion)³³ and *hikmah* (wisdom). Islam emphasizes social justice, brotherhood, equality of mankind (including the abolishment of slavery, and racial and ethnic barriers), tolerance, submission to God, and the recognition of the rights of others. This section identifies and discusses a set of these values and principles supported by the Qur'an and *Hadith*. These values and principles constitute a peacebuilding framework which may guide scholars and practitioners who are interested in promoting such concepts in a Muslim community context. In many cases the principle's connection to peacebuilding is self evident, in others, the relationship is briefly clarified.

Pursuit of Justice

A main call of the Islamic religion is to establish a just social reality. Thus, the evaluation of any act or statement should be measured according to whether, how, and when it will accomplish the desired social reality. In Islam, acting for the cause of God is synonymous with pursuing justice. Islam calls for action to do justice whether one is strong or weak. The following Qur'anic verses are commonly identified by scholars as carrying a strong message concerning the social justice and responsibility reflected in Islam. They describe the Muslim's duty to work for justice and reject oppression and injustice on interpersonal and structural levels.

Allah commands justice, the doing of good, and liberality to kith and kin, and He forbids all shameful deeds, and injustice and rebellion. (16:90)

Allah does command you to render back your trusts to those to whom they are due; And when you judge between man and man, that you judge with justice. (4:58)

You who believe! Stand out firmly for justice, as witnesses to Allah, even as against yourselves, or your parents, or your kin, whether it be (against) rich or poor: for Allah can best protect both Follow not the lusts (of your hearts), lest you swerve, and if you distort (justice) or decline to do justice, verily Allah is well acquainted with all that you do. (4:135)

O you who believe, stand out firmly for God, as witnesses to justice and let not the enmity of others make you swerve from the

33. Several Qur'anic verses emphasize the value of compassion among people; see for example verse 90:17. Al-Tarmidhi stressed the same value: "He who does not show compassion to his fellow men is undeserving of God's compassion." Al-Bukhari Muhammad ibn Isama'il, *al-Adab al-Mufrad* bk. 34, ch. 53, 47-48 (Cairo: 1959).

path of justice. Be just: that is next to righteousness, and fear God. Indeed, God is well acquainted with all that you do. (5:9)

Continuously, the Qur'an reminds Muslims of the value of justice, thus it does not simply favor, but rather divinely orders the followers and believers to pursue justice.³⁴ Justice is an absolute and not a relative value, and it is the duty of the believer to seek justice and apply it. The early Caliphs were known for their strong pursuit of justice, particularly Umar Ibn al-Khattab who left a distinctive tradition in pursuing justice.

The connection of peace building with justice is thus never far from the surface in Islam. Peace is the product of order and justice. One must strive for peace with justice. This is the obligation of the believer as well as the ruler. More than that, it is a natural obligation of all humanity:

God does command you to render back your trust to those to whom they are due. And when you judge between people, that you judge with justice. Indeed, how excellent is the teaching that He gives you. For verily God hears and sees all things.' (4:58) 'God loves those who are just.' (60:8)

Islamic scripture also sends a consistent message that Muslims must resist and correct conditions of injustice which can be corrected, both through activism and third party intervention, and through divine intervention. Justice and peace are interconnected and interdependent. The notion that peace cannot be achieved without justice is echoed by many peacebuilding researchers and activists.³⁵ In addition, the Qur'an and the Prophet have called Muslims to mobilize and stand fast against injustice, even if the injustice is generated by a Muslim:

O you who believe! Stand out firmly for justice, as witness to Allah, even as against yourselves, or your parents, or kin, and whether it be (against) rich or poor: For Allah can best protect both. Follow not the lusts (of your hearts), lest you swerve, and if you distort (justice) or decline to do justice, verily Allah is well acquainted with all that you do. (4:135)³⁶

Islam distinguishes between *adl* (justice) and *qist* (equity, fair play).³⁷ While there are many teachings in the Qur'an about social and

34. See particularly verses 5:8, 57:25, 16:90, 4:58 & 42:15.

35. See John Lederach, *Peace Building in Divided Societies* (N.Y.: Syracuse U. Press 1997); Heidi Burgess & Guy Burgess, *Justice Without Violence: A Theoretical Framework*, in *Justice Without Violence* (Paul Wehr, Heidi Burgess, & Guy Burgess eds., Boulder, Colo.: Lynne Rienner Publishers 1994).

36. See other verses 5:9, 57:25 & 7:29.

37. Verse 3:18 in the Qur'an states: "There is no god but He: That is the witness of Allah, His angels, and those endued with knowledge, standing firm on justice (*Qist*). There is no god but He

economic justice, scholars agree that several Islamic institutes and values are central to ensure such justice. Promoting economic justice in Islam is an important principle applied through a number of channels, such as those Islamic institutes and values identified by Raquibuz Zaman:

(1) *Zakah*, one of the five pillars of Islam, requires Muslims who have the basic necessities and comforts of life to pay a share of their wealth in order to purify their wealth on behalf of the poor. *Zakah* should be exclusively used to support the poor and needy. The administrators of *zakah* are those whose hearts have been reconciled to Islam. It is used for the ransoming of slaves, in the cause of God, and for the wayfarer;

(2) The giving of voluntary charity (*sadaqah*) is a responsibility beyond the obligatory payment of *zakah*. God urges all people to give generously in charity from whatever wealth He bestowed on them;

(3) Contributing to the *waqf*, an institution which handles the assistance to the poor is another form of voluntary charity. Individuals may leave part of their wealth for *waqf*; and the resources of *waqf* are used to benefit the poor and needy among Muslims);

(4) Other occasions to give to the poor are *Id al-adha* (the feast of immolation), the sacrifice of animal and *kaffarah* (expiation and atonement). Muslims distribute food and give money to the poor during the feast;

(5) Muslims also do justice through *Wasiyah* (will), which permits Muslims to leave a third of the property passing through their will to charity. Contribution to charitable foundations and organizations is an important way to promote social and economic justice;

(6) *Irth* (Islamic law of inheritance) promotes economic justice and equality by distributing an estate among all members of family.

Other Islamic laws and cultural practices similarly encourage mutual support and cooperation to ensure economic justice. They

the exalted in power, the Wise." Relying on this verse and others (55:9, 60:8), Mahmoud Ayoub, *supra* n. 13, at 43, emphasizes *Qist* is social justice in its broadest sense—first in our relationship to God and second in our relationship to society. We have to treat each other with *qist*. Justice also has a legal meaning when we refer to just laws. Similarly relying on verse 2:143: "Thus have We made of you an Ummah justly balanced, that ye might be witnesses over the nations, and the Messenger a witness over yourself;" Ayoub describes *wasat* as being the characteristics of fairness in Islam.

The prophetic tradition supports such notion of moderation and fairness: "You should act in moderation." Sahih al-Bukhari, vol. 7, bk. 70, no. 577; vol. 8, bk. 76, no. 470. (Except where it is indicated otherwise, all Sahih al-Bukhari *Hadiths* in this article are based on the translation of Muhammad Muhsin Khan, *The Translation of the Meaning of Sahih al-Bukhari: Arabic-English* (Ankara: Hilal Yayinlari 1972)). These were verified with the Arabic edition of *Sahih Al-Bukhari*, vol. 1-8 (Bayrut: Dar al-Kutub al-'Ilmiya 1992).

include:

(1) *Diyah* (blood money), which obligates the family of the criminal offender to pay money to the victim's family;

(2) *Musharakah* (the law of sharing), which obligates Muslims to share their harvest of crops with those who cannot afford to buy them. Similarly, inheritors should remember the needy when they divide their inheritance; (4:80) and

(3) *Diyafah* (the law of hospitality) based on the prophetic tradition, which holds that there is a social obligation to treat the guest graciously:

He who believes in God and the last day must honor his guest for one day and one night as well as granting him hospitality for three days. More than this minimum is considered *sadaqah*. A guest, then, should not stay longer in order that he might embarrass his host.³⁸

While some of these methods are more central to Islam and more known than others, all are specific Islamic methods to promote economic justice and the equitable distribution of resources. They illustrate the strong Islamic emphasis on both distributive and procedural aspects of justice. The Qur'an supports these notions when it describes the Muslim community as a just one. (3:110)

The concern for justice as prescribed by Islamic principles and teachings is compatible with approaches of nonviolence that mobilize communities to resist injustice in society. Contrary to the popular misperception among opponents of nonviolent conflict resolution, the nonviolent approach does not mean submission or passivity to aggression and injustice. Nonviolence and conflict transformation change the structural violence that exists in the conflict situation. The primary end of nonviolent engagement is to abolish the structural violence on both micro and macro levels. Such changes are necessary to establish a just society.³⁹

38. Sahih al-Bukhari, vol. 8, bk. 73, no. 156. Several of those values and institutions were cited by Raquibuz Zaman in *Economic Justice in Islam, Ideals and Reality: The Cases of Malaysia, Pakistan, and Saudi Arabia*, in *Islamic Identity and the Struggle for Justice* (Nimat Barazangi, M. Raquibuz Zaman & Omar Afzal, eds., Gainesville, Fla: U. Press of Fla. 1996). Raquibuz Zaman based his examples on Yusuf al-Qaradawi, *Economic Security in Islam* (Muhammed Iqbal Siddiqi trans., Lahore: Kazi Publication 1981).

39. In peace studies there is an emphasis on all aspects of justice (distributive, procedural, as well as, restorative components). Johan Galtung, *Peace, Violence, and Peace Research*, 6 J. Peace Research 67-191 (1969).

Social Empowerment through Doing Good (*Khayr* and *Ihsan*):

Social empowerment of the oppressed through the two critical Islamic values of *ihsan* (beneficence) and *khayr* (doing good) is important to accomplish justice as well. As a religion, Islam spread in large measure because of its foundations of helping and empowering the weak and the disempowered, and it continues to be characterized as a religion of dynamism and activism. Struggling against oppression (*zulm*), assisting the poor, and pursuing equality among all humans are core religious values emphasized throughout the Qur'an and *Hadith*. Islam demands that one should do good (*ihsan*) not only to one's parents and relations but also to the orphans, the needy, the helpless and the neighbor whether he/she is related to oneself in any way or not at all.⁴⁰ The emphasis in Islam is on doing good (*khayr*), not on power and force (*quwwah*). Good deeds are associated with *al-sirat al-mustaqim* (straight path) and with all the virtue of the Prophet.

And there may spring from you a nation who invites to goodness and enjoins right conduct and forbids indecency. Such are they who are successful. (3:104)

Those who believe (in the Prophet of Islam) and those who are Jews and Christians and the Sabians (that is who belong to a religious group) who believe in God and the Last Day of Judgment) and whose deeds are good, shall have their reward with their Lord. On them there shall be no fear nor shall they grieve. (2:62)

Khayr (doing good) in Islam is among the many teachings, rules, and institutes that insure social justice (distributive, administrative, or restorative) and empowerment. Acts of social and economic justice are so important in Islam that they are even equated with worshiping God.⁴¹ The value of *zakah* (almsgiving) and *sadaqah* (voluntary charity) relate to individual and collective responsibility. These obligatory and voluntary duties are intended for the poor, stipulating fixed shares of inheritance for women, children, and a host of regulations regarding the just treatment of debtors, widows, the orphans (90:13-16) and slaves. (24:33)⁴² *Zakah* and *sadaqah* are central virtues for doing good in life and helping others particularly needy people. *Zakah*, one of the five main pillars of Islam, is aimed at insuring distributive social justice and

40. See Qur'an 17:26.

41. See *id.* 2:110 in which regular charity is emphasized like regular prayer; also verse 2:3 describes believers as those who keep regular prayer and spend out in charity.

42. *Zakah* is also encouraged and described in detail with its rewards in Qur'an 2:262-272.

empowerment of the weak. Charity is a good deed which every Muslim has to carry out within his/her limits. The Prophet said: "There is a *sadaqah* to be given for every joint of the human body; and for every day on which the sun rises there is a reward of *sadaqah* for the one who establishes justice among people."⁴³ Charity is prescribed in at least 25 Qur'anic verses. All encourage Muslims to take more responsibility for the social injustice systems that exist in their communities.

It is not righteousness that you turn your faces towards east or west; but it is righteousness to believe in Allah and the last day, and the book, and the messengers; to spend your substance, out of love for him, for your kin, for orphans, for the needy, for the warfarer, for those who ask, for the ransom of slaves; to be steadfast in prayer, and practice charity, to fulfil the contract that you have made, and to be firm and patient in pain (or suffering) and adversity. (2:177)

People are responsible for and have obligations toward those who are underprivileged in their community. Islam repeatedly stresses such principles. "Did He not find you an orphan and provide for you shelter (and care). And He found you wandering and gave you guidance and He found you in need and made you independent (in the financial sense)." (93:7-9)

The Prophet's compassion as reflected in his treatment of the underprivileged who suffered personal misfortune or from social and economic injustices was not the result of the Qur'anic teaching only, but was born from his own experience as well. The expectation that the Muslim should do the good is not only on behalf of people that the Muslim knows, but, as the Prophet said: "I and the person who looks after an orphan and provides for him, will be in paradise like this, putting his index and middle fingers together."⁴⁴ The Qur'an supports the responsibility for such compassion: "Therefore treat not the orphan with harshness, nor repulse the petitioner (unheard)." (93:9-10) Thus, the Muslim ought to give charity and provide assistance to those who are poor and in need of help. Caring and helping those underprivileged constitute a central mechanism for social empowerment and for maintaining a sense of community. For example, the abolition of slavery was a clear result of the ethical standpoints and principles which guided Muslims in addressing issues of oppression, poverty, and human suffering.

43. Sahih al-Bukhari, vol. 3, bk. 49, no. 870.

44. *Id.*, vol. 7 bk. 63.

On the interpersonal level, preserving good relationships with others is an expectation that a Muslim must fulfill. "No Muslim can become a *mu'min* (genuine believer) unless he seeks for all others (not only Muslims) what he seeks for himself and he makes friends with them for God's sake."⁴⁵ "God commands you to treat (everyone) justly, generously and with kindness." (16:90) "Be good and kind to others even as God is to you." (28:77)

Doing good extends beyond the interpersonal to a group or community level. A nation cannot survive, according to Islam, without making fair and adequate arrangements for the sustenance and welfare of all the poor, underprivileged and destitute members of the community. The ultimate goal Islam points toward is a world in which suffering and poverty can be eliminated. In addition to individual *zakah* or charity, the state is obligated to provide for its poor through *zakah* and *bayt-al-mal* (public treasury). *Zakah* was even recognized, with offering prayer, as a minimal condition to recognizing a community as a community of true Muslims.⁴⁶ Thus economic justice is a major component of Qur'anic teachings, which describe in detail the proper distribution of wealth.

In short, for a Muslim, justice and doing good are expected to be achieved and pursued in all interactions with other Muslims and non-Muslims. Both the Prophet and the Qur'an praised these as central virtues. Justice, along with those values and principles that insure it, can be utilized in collective movements and mobilization for solidarity and sympathy among Muslims both on national and local levels. These values also directly relate generally to social and economic development and to peacebuilding in particular because they are focused on social empowerment and their orientation is people-centered. The processes and outcome of nonviolent conflict resolution are supposed to empower the parties involved in the conflict, by providing equal access to decision-making and by giving the parties ownership of the conflict. Therefore, many mediators emphasize the need for equal access among the parties around the negotiation table since these nonviolent strategies are designed to empower, mobilize, and engage people in the process of resolving their conflicts.

Universality and Human Dignity

Islam sends a firm and clear message through the Qur'an and

45. See al-Tirmidhi, bk. 39, ch. 19, & bk. 45, ch. 98 (cited in Saiyidain, *supra* n. 20).

46. See Qur'an 2:162, 2:177 & 5:55.

Hadith of the universality of the human person. Universal humanity is a central value in Islam conveyed through Muslims' beliefs in the equality of origins, and their calls for equal rights, treatment, and solidarity among all people. The human is an integral part of an ocean of creation, and is the most dignified and exalted of all creatures. The human has the potential to learn and know, the ability to decide which actions to take, and to bear the consequences of his/her actions. The human is God's viceregent on earth. The Qur'an states: "when your Lord said to the angels verily I am going to appoint a viceregent on earth." (2:30)

Thus, the protection of human life and respect for human dignity are sacred in Islam. The honor that God bestowed on humans is also stressed. "We have honoured the sons of Adam; provided them with transport on land and sea; given them for sustenance things good and pure; and conferred on them special favors, above a great part of Our creation." (17:70) Thus, the work, worship, and life of a person should be aimed at preserving, protecting, and achieving human pride and dignity as main principles and values in Islam. Islamic scholars have cited several Qur'anic verses to establish the importance of human dignity and pride:

We have indeed created man in the best of moulds. (95:4)

It is We who created you and gave you shape; then We bade the angels bow down to Adam, and they bowed down; not so *Iblis*; he refused to be of those who bow down. (7:11)

Behold, thy Lord said to the angels: 'I will create a viceregent on earth.' They said: 'will You place therein one who will make mischief therein and shed blood? While we do celebrate Your praises and glorify Your holy (name)?' He said: 'I know what you know not.' (2:30)

It is considered a good deed to intervene or act to protect the basic dignity and pride of the person, because the creation of the human by God makes him/her a creature who deserves respect and protection.

In Islam, within every person there is sacredness; that person is protected and sacrosanct until the person violates this sanctity. The person removes with his/her own hands such blanket protection by committing a crime thus removing part of his/her immunity. With this dignity, Islam protects its enemies, as well as its children and elders. This dignity, which God blessed humanity with, is the base for all human relationships.⁴⁷

47. Sheik Muhammed Abdallah Draz, *Observations in Islam* 164 (n.d.), cited by Fahmi Howeid, *Al-Islam wa al-Dimuqratiyyah*, in *Islam and Democracy* 27 (Cairo: Al Ahram Pub. &

Thus, in addressing conflicts through Islamic values, promoting and preserving the dignity of the parties involved becomes an important motivation in resolving the conflict. In fact, protecting and insuring the dignity of underprivileged groups in society is the core value that underlies many of the peacebuilding and nonviolent strategies.

Equality

Islamic teachings go beyond intervention to reach a settlement in a specific dispute; they aspire to achieve the value of one human family. The value of equality among all members of the community is prevalent in the Islamic tradition and values. It is promoted and acknowledged as a basic value because of the oneness and common human origin of all people:

O mankind! We created you from a single (pair), a male and female, and made you into nations and tribes, that you may know each other (not that you may despise each other). Verily the most honoured of you in the sight of Allah is the most righteous of you. And Allah has full knowledge and is well acquainted (with all things). (49:13)

In Islam, there is no privilege granted based on race, ethnicity or tribal association. The only two criteria to be deployed in recognizing good Muslims are their faith and good deeds. There is no difference whatsoever between people except in their devotion to Allah, since He is the common creator of all humans. A well known *Hadith* confirms this principle of equality: "All people are equal, as equal as the teeth of a comb. There is no claim of merit of an Arab over a Persian (non-Arab), or of a white over a black person, or of a male over female. Only God-Fearing people merit a preference with God."⁴⁸ Ibn Taymiyah (a well-known Muslim scholar 1263-1328) argued in these terms: "The desire to be above other people is injustice because all people are of the same species. A man's desire to put himself higher and reduce the others is unjust."⁴⁹ Islam underscores that all people are the children of Adam and Eve, and such sayings are often cited by traditional mediators and arbitrators as a recommendation or a call for brotherhood and harmony.

Translation Ctr. 1993).

48. Muhammad Ali, *A Manual of Hadith* (Lahore: Ahmadiyya Anjuman 1941).

49. Al-Sharif al-Radi, *Nahj al-Balagha* vol. 1, 77 (Beirut: Mu'assasat al-A'lami lil-Matbu'at 1978) (reviewed and classified by Muhammad Baqir al-Mahmudi); Kishtainy, *supra* n. 25, at 12.

Sacredness of Human Life

Peacebuilding approaches assume that human life is valuable and must be saved and protected, and that resources should be utilized to preserve life and prevent violence. A central teaching of Islam is that there is a purpose and meaning in the creation of the universe, including humans: "Not for (idle) sport did We create the heavens and the earth and all that is between!" (21:16, see also 44:38) The Qur'an clearly suggests the sacredness of human life, "And if any one saved a life, It would be as if he saved the life of the whole people." (5:32) "And do not take a life which Allah has forbidden save in the course of justice. This he enjoins on you so that you may understand." (17:33) Islam respects the unique meaning of each person's life: it is an integral part of the great cosmic purpose. Consequently, what each person does matters profoundly.

Thus, destruction and waste of resources that serve human life are prohibited. Even when Muslims in the early period launched an armed conflict, their rulers instructed them to avoid destruction and restrict their wars. According to a well known speech made by the first *khalifah* Abu Bakr, when he dispatched his army on an expedition to the Syrian borders:

Stop, O people, that I may give you ten rules for your guidance in the battlefield. Do not commit treachery or deviate from the right path. You must not mutilate dead bodies. Neither kill a child, nor a woman or an aged man. Bring no harm to the trees, nor burn them with fire, especially those which are fruitful. Slay not any of the enemy's flock, save for your food. You are likely to pass by people who have devoted their lives to monastic services, leave them alone.⁵⁰

In a similar context, Imam Ali, reacting to his followers' pressure to go to war, was forced to utter the following words to convey the importance of the values of saving lives, as well as patience and the duty to avoid violence:

If I order you to march on them on warm days, you say 'This is the fire of summer. Give us time until the heat is over.' If I ask you to march on them in winter, you say 'This is the bite of the frost. Give us time until the cold is over.' All this and you flee from the heat and the cold, but, by God, you are more in flight from the

50. Sahih Muslim, vol. 3, bk. 19, no. 4456. This also appears in Al-Tabari (Mohammad b. Jarir), *Kitab al-Umam wa-al-Muluk*, vol. III, 226-227 (Cairo: Dar-al-Ma'arif 1969). See Satha-Anand, *Muslim Communal Nonviolence Actions*, *supra* n. 25, at 11.

sword.⁵¹

In short, peacebuilding initiatives in Islam ought to preserve and improve the conditions for protecting human rights and dignity, and promote equality among all people. Accomplishing those objectives through intervention is encouraged regardless of race, ethnicity, or religious affiliation of the people.

A Quest for Peace

Peace in Islam is a state of physical, mental, spiritual and social harmony. Living at peace with God through submission, and living at peace with fellow beings by avoiding mischief on earth, is real Islam. Islam is a religion that preaches and obligates its believers to seek peace in all life's domains. The ultimate purpose of one's existence is to live in a peaceful as well as a just social reality. While, as will be described,

[t]here are circumstances in which Islam contemplates the possibility of war, for instance, to avert worse disasters like the denial of freedom to human conscience . . . the essential thing in life is peace. It is towards the achievement of peace that all human efforts must be sincerely diverted.⁵²

Peace is viewed as an outcome and goal of life to be achieved only after the full submission to the will of God. Thus, peace has an internal, personal as well as social applications, and God is the source and sustainer of such peace. Accordingly, the best way to insure peace is by total submission to God's will and to Islam.⁵³ Shunning violence and aggression in all its forms has been another primary focus of Islamic values and tradition. Many Qur'anic verses stress this principle, among them: "Whenever they kindle the fire of war, God extinguishes it. They strive to create disorder on earth and God loves not those who create disorder." (5:64) Tolerance, kindness to other people, and dealing with all people in such a manner with no exception is also emphasized in these verses: "God commands you to treat (everyone) justly, generously and with kindness."; (16:90) "Repel evil (not with evil) with that which is best: We are well-acquainted with the things they say." (23:96) Thus when evil is done to you it is better not to reply with evil, "but to do what best repels the evil. Two evils do not make a good."⁵⁴

51. Al-Sharif al-Radi, *supra* n. 49, at 77, cited by Kishtainy, *supra* n. 25, at 12.

52. Saiyidain, *supra* n. 20, at 164.

53. The principle of total submission to God's will is central to Islam; thus, peace, as well as justice, cannot be fully accomplished without this principle. See Kelsay, Hashimi, & Sachedina, *supra* n. 13.

54. Abdullah Yusuf Ali, commentary notes, *supra* n. 14, at 895.

The Prophet's tradition also supports the shunning of violence and calls for restraint. Such teaching is clear in the *Hadith*: "The Jews came to the Prophet and said, 'Death overtake you!' Aishah said, 'And you, may Allah curse you and may Allah's wrath descend on you'. He (the Prophet) said: 'Gently, O Aishah! Be courteous, and keep yourself away from roughness.'⁵⁵ Forgiveness and amnesty are also recommended and viewed as the best reaction to anger and conflict.⁵⁶ Even in situations or relationships of conflict and fighting, Islam calls on its followers to prefer peace over war or violent confrontation. This notion is best reflected in the well known verse: "But if the enemy inclines towards peace, do you (also) incline towards peace, and trust in Allah: for He is the one that hears and knows (all things). (8:61) Nor can goodness and evil be equal. Repel with what is better: then will he between whom and you was hatred become as it were your friend and intimate!" (41:34)

The quest for peace is also clear in the Prophet's tradition and life. The use of violence as a mean to address conflict was rare in the Prophet's life and in the Qur'an. During the Meccan period of the Prophet's life (610-622 C.E.), he showed no inclination toward the use of force in any form, even for self defense. He emphasized nonviolent resistance in all his instructions and teaching during that period in which Muslims were a minority. The Prophet's teachings were focused on the value of patience and steadfastness in facing the oppression. For 13 years, the Prophet fully adopted nonviolent methods, relying on his spiritual preaching in dealing with aggression and confrontation. This period of the Prophet's life has been cited as a source of nonviolent inspiration and teachings of peaceful preaching. During this time, though he was tortured, accused of blasphemy, and humiliated, and his family and supporters were ostracized, he did not curse his enemies or encourage violence. On the contrary, his teachings were centered around prayer and hope for enlightenment and peace. Ibn Umar relates that someone asked the Prophet, "Who is the best Muslim?" He replied, "That one whose hand and tongue leave other Muslims in peace."⁵⁷

55. *A Manual of Hadith* 386 (Muhammad Ali trans., Lahore: Ahmadiyya anjuman ishaat-I-Islam 1944).

56. In support of such interpretation see Qur'an 41:34, 7:56, 7:199, 28:54 in which Muslims are expected to exercise self-restraint, and control their anger and reaction to evil doing.

57. *Sahih al-Bukhari*, vol. 1, bk. 2, no. 10; the complete saying is translated by Mohammad Muhsin Khan, *supra* n. 37, as: The Prophet said: "A Muslim is the one who avoids harming Muslims with his tongue and hands. And a *Muhajir* (emigrant) is the one who gives up (abandons) all what Allah has forbidden."

In Islam, the quest for peace extends to both interpersonal and community cases of quarrel or disagreement. Muslims should not use violence to settle their differences, but rely on arbitration or other forms of intervention. The Qur'an explains, "[y]ou should always refer it (disputes) to God and to His Prophet." "And obey Allah and His Messenger; And fall into no disputes, lest you lose heart And your power depart; and be patient and persevering: for Allah is with those who patiently persevere." (8:46)

Peace in Islam is reflected in the meaning of the word itself in Arabic. The word Islam means the "making of peace;" thus, the idea of "peace" is the dominant one in Islam. A Muslim, according to the Qur'an, is a person who has made peace with God and others. Peace with God implies complete submission to His will, which is the source of all purity and goodness, and peace with others implies the doing of good to fellow humans: "Nay, whoever submits himself entirely to God, and is the doer of good to others, he has his reward from His Lord" (2:112) The centrality of "peace" is reflected in the daily greetings of Muslims of each others "*al-salam alaykum*" "peace be upon you." The Qur'an states: "And the servants of Allah most gracious are those who walk the earth in humility and when others address them, they say peace!" (25:63) "And their greeting therein shall be, Peace." (10:10) "Peace" is also a reward which the believers will enjoy in paradise: "They shall hear therein no vain or sinful talk, but only the saying, Peace, Peace." (56:25-26) Peace is the ideal that Muslims strive to achieve and they are constantly reminded of this value through the names of God such as "Abode of peace." (10:25)

Islamic principles and values of peace cannot be fully explained without addressing the value of *jihad*.⁵⁸ Scholars agree that there are conditions which permit the use of force, and there have been massive amounts of debates and research by Muslims and non-Muslims to provide interpretations of the context and meaning of *jihad*. Many of these studies concluded that *jihad* does not mean the constant use of the sword to resolve problems with non-Muslim enemy, or among Muslims. In addition to the Qur'anic verses which indicate the possibility of peaceful and nonviolence *jihad*, different sects in Islam have emphasized the principle that there are several levels of *jihad* and that the self-*jihad* is the most difficult to achieve.⁵⁹

58. See review of studies in text accompanying *supra* nn. 11-12.

59. There are Muslim groups which emphasize the spiritual rather than the physical *jihad* (such as Sufism & Ahmadiyyah). The Sufi teaching explains that "The warrior (*mujahid*) is one who battles with his own self (*nafs*) and is thus on the path of God." Others suggested that

Peacemaking

Open communication and face-to-face confrontation of conflicts are more productive than avoidance of problems or the use of violence to resolve them. Communication and confrontation reduce the cost of an ongoing conflict, and address all the grievances of the parties. The role of the third party, as an integral part of peacebuilding intervention, is mainly to facilitate communication, reduce tension, and assist in rebuilding relationships. Such interaction is described as functional and necessary to engage the parties in a true peacebuilding process. Islam encourages such process through an active intervention, particularly among Muslims themselves.

If two parties among the believer fall into a quarrel, make you peace between them. But, if one of them transgresses beyond bounds against the other, then fight against the one that transgresses until it complies with the command of Allah. But, when it so complies, then make peace between them with justice and be fair. For, God loves those who are fair. The believers are but a single brotherhood; so make peace between your brothers and fear Allah that you may receive mercy. (49:9-10)

Though these verses have been used by scholars who justify the use of violence in Islam, and to disqualify the pacifist hypotheses, nevertheless they clearly support the concept of mediation and the third party intervention to resolve disputes using fairness and justice as the primary values of intervention. In addition, they reflect a core Islamic value of shunning away aggression. Muslims should not be involved in aggression at all. "And let not the hatred of some people in shutting you out of the sacred mosque lead you to transgression (and hostility on your part). Help one another in righteousness and piety. But help you not one another in sin and rancor." (5:2) Lack of tolerance and hatred should not lead an individual to become the "aggressor" or hostile to the other disputant, even if they shut him out of the house of God, which is an act of exclusion and violence. Rather, Muslims must settle their conflicts peacefully based on both the Qur'an and the Prophet's tradition, as shown in the verses, "[t]he believers are but a single brotherhood: so make peace and reconciliation between your two (contending) brothers" (49:10) and "[s]hould they (two) reconcile with each other and a reconciliation is best." (4:128) Also there is a clear call in the Qur'an for peacemaking and reconciliation in verse

da'wah (calling to spread Islam through preaching and persuasion) is the major form of *jihad* for a Muslim. See Javad Nurbakhsh, *Tradition of the Prophet: Ahadith* vol. 2, 76 (N.Y.: Khaniqahi-Nimatullahi Publications 1983).

4:114: "In most of their secret talks, save (in) him who orders charity or kindness, or conciliation between mankind and he who do this seeking the good pleasure of Allah, we shall give him great reward."

Peacemaking and reconciliation of differences and conflict are preferred and highlighted by the Prophet's tradition. He instructed his followers: "He who makes peace between the people is not a liar."⁶⁰ The Prophet's intervention in resolving the problem of the Black Stone in Mecca is based on a well-known *Hadith*—as a classic example of peacebuilding.⁶¹ It illustrates the creativity of a peaceful problem-solving approach conducted by a third party intervenor (in this case, the Prophet himself). Mecca clans had a dispute over the *Ka'ba's* building and the lifting of the Black Stone to its higher location. The clans asked for the Prophet's advice and intervention, due to his reputation as a trustworthy and faithful person. The Prophet proposed a simple yet creative method to resolve the dispute. He placed the stone on a cloak and asked each clan to hold one side of the cloak and jointly lift the stone to the required height, then he placed the Black Stone in its new location.⁶² The resolution of this problem implies the denunciation of violence and competition, and appreciates values of joint problem solving, and creativity. In fact, there are many accounts of interventions by the Prophet in which he utilized such skills and principles in settling disputes.

In short, based on Islamic values, aggression and violent confrontation, bigotry, and exclusion are less effective than peacebuilding and nonviolent methods in resolving problems. Methods of peacemaking and the pursuit of justice rather than violence can be employed to resolve differences. Such values correspond to those identified by practitioners and scholars in conflict resolution and peace studies as a fundamental strategy which should guide conflict resolvers

60. Sahih al-Bukhari, vol. 3, bk. 49, no. 857. Translation is based on Muhammad Muhsin Khan, *supra* n. 37.

61. 'Abd al-Malik Ibn Hisham, *al-Sirah al Nabawiyah* 192 (Bayrut: Dar al-Fikr lil-Tiba'ah wa-al-Nashr wa-al-Tawzi 1992).

62. Arbitration in Islam was also explored by other researchers, such as Khadduri in Majid Khadduri, *War and Peace in the Law of Islam* (London: Oxford U. Press 1955). He identified several occasions in which the Prophet acted as arbitrator and mediator before and after prophethood. For example, in the incident of the Aws and Khazraj tribes of Medina, the Prophet acted as mediator according to the Arab tradition and ended their enmity; in arbitration between the Prophet and Banu Qurayza, (a Jewish tribe) both agreed to submit their dispute to a person chosen by them. Khadduri concludes that the third party intervention was an acceptable option to end fighting. The third party is binding if their relatives are not affected by their decision. He also adds the arbitration case between Ali and Mu'awiya, which was initiated to end the civil war. For full details of these events in the life of the Prophet see Ibn Hisham, *supra* n. 61, at 288.

in the field of conflict resolution, too.⁶³

Forgiveness

In Islam, as in many religions, it is a higher virtue to forgive than to maintain hatred. Justice ought to be pursued and evil should be fought. Nevertheless, forgiveness remains a higher virtue (42:40 and 24:43). Forgiveness is the way people (Muslim and non-Muslim) ought to deal with each other, "Keep to forgiveness (O Muhammad) and enjoin kindness, and turn away from the ignorant." (7:199) and Muslims are instructed to "[r]epel evil (not with evil) but with something that is better (*ahsan*)—that is, with forgiveness and amnesty." (23:96) In fact, believers are urged to forgive even when they are angry. (42:37)

The Prophet himself, when he entered Mecca with his Muslim followers set an example of a great forgiving attitude towards Meccans who fought him by declaring it as a sanctuary.⁶⁴ The Prophet always prayed when he was persecuted during the Mecca period, saying: "Forgive them Lord, for they know not what they do."⁶⁵

Being merciful is another quality or behavior expected from a Muslim. "God has mercy upon those who are merciful to others."⁶⁶ Mercy is an important step in the process of forgiveness and reconciliation. The value of forgiveness and its relationship to mercy is similarly supported by a story about some of the Prophet's followers who asked him to invoke the wrath of God upon the Meccans because of their persecution of Muslims. His reply was: "I have not been sent to curse anyone but to be a source of *rahmah* (compassion and mercy) to all."⁶⁷

Forgiveness and reconciliation are central values and practices in Western peacebuilding and conflict resolution approaches too. Theories and practices of conflict transformation and resolution have focused on reconciliation as the most desired outcome of a conflict resolution

63. James Laue & Gerald Cormick, *The Ethics of Intervention in Community Disputes*, in *Ethics of Social Intervention* (Gordon Bermant, Herbert Kelman & Donald Warwick eds., N.Y.: Halsted Press 1978); Burgess & Burgess, *supra* n. 35.

64. Sahih al-Bukhari, vol. 5, bk. 59, no. 603. Another saying that supports such forgiving attitude when the Prophet entered Mecca is: "There is no censure from me today on you (for what has happened is done with), may God, who is the greatest amongst forgivers, forgive you." Muhammad Ibn Sa'd, *al-Tabaqat al-Kubra* vol. 2, 142 (Beirut: 1957).

65. Muhammad Ibn Is'haq, *Kitab al-Siyar wa-al-Maghazi* 184 (Dar al-Fikr 1978). Translation is based on Muhammad Ibn Ishak, *Life of Mohammed* (Alfred Guillaume trans., Lahore: Oxford U. Press 1955) (a translation of *Is'haq's Sirat rasul Allah*, with an Introduction).

66. Sahih al-Bukhari, vol. 4, 175; vol. 9, 141. Javad Nurbakhsh, *supra* n. 59, at 81.

67. *Id.*

process.⁶⁸

Deeds, Actions, and Individual Responsibility and Choice

Islam puts emphasis on doing and deeds; the real test of a Muslim's faith is in action. Lip service is not enough. As for those who have faith and have done good deeds, God will take them for his friends. "On those who believe and work deeds of righteousness, will (Allah) Most Gracious bestow love." (19:96) "If you do good, it will be for your own self; if you do evil, against yourselves you did it." (17:7) An individual is responsible for his/her deeds; no one else can guide him or bear the responsibility of someone else's actions:

Whosoever brings a good deed will receive tenfold the like thereof, while whosoever brings an ill deed will be awarded but the like thereof; and they will not be wronged. (6:160)

It is not that We wronged them but they wronged themselves. (11:101)

Whoever acts righteously, man or women, and has the faith, verily We will give such a person a good life and give his reward in the hereafter also, according to the best of their actions. (16:97)

According to Islam a person has three major types of responsibilities according to which he/she will be judged by God:

- (1) responsibility towards Allah to be fulfilled through the performance of religious duties faithfully;
- (2) responsibility to oneself by living in harmony with oneself;
- (3) responsibility to live in harmony and peace with other fellow humans.

Deeds are central in measuring the person's obligation in meeting these responsibilities.

Similarly, the emphasis on "actions and doing" is central in peacebuilding, particularly when parties attempt to go beyond the dialogue and exchange of opinions. Believing in the importance of behavioral changes and implementation of values through specific actions is a central factor that promotes peacebuilding and change. Moving the other by persuasion and allowing him the free will to make a choice are two important principles in Islam. Both indicate that individuals carry the responsibility of their own actions. Even the Prophet himself was not responsible for the decisions of others: "But if

68. In fact, since 1990, an important development in the field of peace and conflict resolution has been the emerging focus on the role of forgiveness and healing in the process of reconciliation in the post war phase.

they turn away, Say: 'Allah suffices me: there is no god but He: in Him is my trust—He the Lord of the Throne (of Glory) Supreme!'" (9:129) The Prophet emphasized that if others do not accept your message, it is their choice, therefore, the person is only responsible for his/her actions.⁶⁹ Allah is the sole arbitrator who judges the choices of the people:

Now then, for that (reason), call (them to the faith) and stand steadfast as you are commanded, nor follow you their vain desires; but say: 'I believe in the Book which Allah has sent down; and I am commanded to judge justly between (us and) you. Allah is our Lord and your Lord; For us (is the responsibility for) our deeds, and for you for your deeds. There is no contention between us and you'⁷⁰ (42:15)

The sense of individual choice and call for involvement extends to the political governing system in which the ruler expects his followers to take full responsibility and stop injustice if it is committed. Abu Bakr told the people: "I am no better than you. I am just like any one of you. If you see that I am pursuing a proper course, then follow me; and if you see me err, then set me straight."⁷¹ Thus, the emphasis on persuasion is a strong indicator that humans are in charge of their own fate, and should personally reason about the effects of their own individual actions. Persuasion is a main strategy in the Qur'an, as reflected in the great number of verses that present the arguments of those who opposed the Prophet, and the systematic negation of these arguments through proof and evidence in the Qur'an.

Naqvi establishes the importance of "free will" and choice in Islam by deducing this value from its basic axioms. He states: "In the Islamic ethical scheme, man is the cynosure of God's creation."⁷² He is God's

69. See other verses emphasizing the same principle of individual choice and responsibility: Qur'an 5:8, 9:6, 16:125 & 42:48.

70. Individual responsibility, choice, and God's arbitration on the Judgement Day are also reflected in the verses in Qur'an 18:29, 109:6, 88:21, 88:22 & 34:28.

71. Al-Tirmidhi, *supra* n. 33, cited by Muhammad Ali, *supra* n. 55, at 384.

72. The ethical axioms in Islam are:

(1) Unity (*tawhid*);

(2) Equilibrium in regards to justice and doing good (*al-adl wa-al-ihsan*) refers to the desirability of an equitable distribution of income and wealth, the need for helping the poor and the needy, the necessity for making adjustment in the entire spectrum of consumption, production and distribution relations, and others. All these instructions are aimed to prevent or correct the *zulm*;

(3) Free Will (*ikhtiyar*), a person is capable of choosing the right if he/she follows the correct path of God. But humans are also capable of making the wrong choice. Humans are free to make the choice, but their freedom is not absolute;

(4) Responsibility (*fard*), the responsibility toward oneself, God, and others. By doing good things and observing faith, humans can insure their correct path. The person is an integral part of

viceregent on earth: 'He it is Who has placed you as viceregent of the earth'" (6:165) Hence, the purpose of human life is to realize one's status as a 'free' agent, invested with Free Will and able to make choices between good and evil, right and wrong. By virtue of their freedom, humans can either realize their destiny of being God's viceregent on earth or deny themselves this exalted station by making the wrong choice. In other words, humans will be held accountable for the choices they make in their individual capacity.

Involvement and actions in community life are favored channels for meaningful deeds by Muslims, because deeds and individual responsibility are so central in Islam. Therefore, Muslims are encouraged to improve their communal life, support each other, abolish poverty, and help the needy. Such goals can be attained only through actions and deeds, important criteria which God and the Prophet instructed the followers to adopt. They are essential and central to the judgment of Muslims. Thus, peacebuilding in Islam must be based on such principles of individual responsibility and orientation to act upon his/her choices in supporting the development of their community.

Patience (*Sabr*)

Muslims are encouraged to be patient and to wait on their judgment of others, whether they are Muslims or non-Muslims. *Sabr* (patience) is a virtue of the believer who can endure enormous difficulties and still maintain his strong belief in God. In Arabic, the word *sabr* implies a multiplicity of meanings which cannot be translated into one English word, including,

- (1) patience in the sense of being thorough, not hasty;
- (2) patient perseverance, constancy, steadfastness, firmness, of purpose;
- (3) systematic as opposed to spasmodic, or chance action;
- (4) a cheerful attitude of resignation and understanding in sorrow, defeat, or suffering, as opposed to murmuring or rebellion, but saved from mere passivity or listlessness, by the element of constancy or steadfastness.⁷³

a society, which he/she ought to treat well, doing good. The person will not be responsible for what others have done, will not be questioned about the deeds of others.

Based on Syed Nawab Haider Naqvi, *Islam, Economics and Society* 25 (N.Y.: Kegan Paul Intl. 1994).

73. Based on Abdullah Yusuf Ali interpretations of *sabr* in the Qur'an, *supra* n. 14, at 28.

As the Prophet said,

Nay, seek (Allah's) help with patience and perseverance and prayer: it is indeed hard, except to those who bring a lowly spirit. (2:45)

You who believe! Seek help with patient perseverance and prayer: for Allah is with those who patiently persevere. (2:153) . . . but if you persevere patiently, and guard against evil, then that will be a determining factor in all affairs. (3:186) O you who believe! Persevere in patience and constancy; vie in such perseverance; strengthen each other; and fear Allah; that you may prosper. (3:200)

At least fifteen additional Qur'anic verses encourage Muslims to be patient and persevere in their daily lives and in their pursuit of a just life.⁷⁴ The way in which Muslims should live out the virtue of patience is described as follows: "Therefore do you hold patience—a patience of beautiful (contentment)." (70:5) This deep commitment to God is the source of patience that empowers people in crisis or when they are persecuted. It is the belief that their cause will be victorious. Patience, according to Islam, can be a source of solidarity among people who resist their persecution with patience: "O you who believe! Persevere in patience and constancy; vie in such perseverance; strengthen each other; and fear Allah; that you may prosper." (3:200)

Patience is also associated with making a personal and individual sacrifice. "O you who believe! Seek help and prayer: for Allah is with those who patiently persevere." (2:153) "Be sure we shall test you with something of fear and hunger, some loss in goods or lives or the fruits (of your toil), but give glad tidings to those who patiently persevere." (2:155) "Patience and perseverance" as interpreted by Yusuf Ali is not mere passivity. It is active striving in the way of truth, which is the way of Allah. Thus, oppression and persecution can be resisted and faced with praying and active patience. Patience and restrain are better than revenge. The Prophet said that: "power resides not in being able to strike another, but in being able to keep the self under control when anger arises."⁷⁵ Even when arguing or engaging in a conflict, the Prophet said:

Whoever has (these) four qualities is a hypocrite, and whoever has any one of them has one quality of hypocrisy until he gives it up. These are: whenever he talks, he tells a lie; whenever he makes

74. Some of those verses are 10:109, 11:115, 16:126-127, 20:130-132, 40:55, 40:77, 46:35, 50:39, 70:5 & 73:10-11.

75. Sahih al-Bukhari, vol. 8, bk. 73, no. 135.

promise, he breaks it; whenever he makes a covenant, he proves treacherous, and whenever he quarrels, he behave impudently in an evil-insulting manner.⁷⁶

And if you catch them out, catch them out no worse than they catch you out: but if you show patience, that is indeed the best (course) for those who are patient. And do you be patient, for your patience is but from Allah; nor grieve over them: and distress not yourself because of their plots. For Allah is with those who restrain themselves. And those who do good. (16:126-128)

In commenting on these verses, Yusuf Ali says:

The context of this passage refers to controversies and discussions, but the words are wide enough to cover all human struggles, disputes, and fights. In strictest equity you are not entitled to give a worse blow than is given to you. But those who have reached a higher spiritual standard do not even do that Lest you should think that such patience only gives an advantage to the adversary, you are told that the contrary is the case: the advantage with the patient, self possessed, those who do not lose their temper or forget their own principles of conduct.⁷⁷

This is a strong command that instructs Muslims on how to use patience and self-restraint in reacting to conflicts, a type of patience that will give them the advantage. *Sabr* is an important quality of the believers—as agents of change—in Islam, the same characteristic required for peacebuilders and for those who engage in nonviolent resistance campaigns. This type of patience is very appropriate to peacebuilding, since an intervener in such a context would need a great deal of patience to carry out initiatives for peace and development in the community, and the receiver's patience is also required for a peaceful coexistence in conflict areas.

Ummah, Collaborative Actions, and Solidarity

Peacebuilding approaches assume that collaborative and joint efforts to resolve a problem are more productive than competitive efforts by individuals only. The principle of one *Ummah* or community, and collaborative efforts based on that principle, are often utilized to motivate disputants to reach an agreement, achieve unity, gain strength, and be empowered by working together. *Ummah* also embraces the idea of reducing cost and damage that might incurred by individuals if they

76. *Id.*, vol 3, bk. 43, no. 18.

77. Abdullah Yusuf Ali, *supra* n. 14, at 670.

stand alone in a conflict. It is used to mobilize unity and support against the outside enemy, and to motivate people to avoid political and social split or rivalries (*fitnah*). As a collaborative approach to life's challenges, *Ummah* assists in social and political mobilization, and can be employed for collective actions in a social or economic development or peacebuilding context.

In Islam the base for solidarity is wider than the Muslim community alone. God has created all humans equal, and they have a common origin. Therefore, they should assist one another and not neglect each others' needs.

O people, fear your Lord who has created you from a single soul and created from it its pair and spread from this too many men and women Fear Allah, in whose name you plead with one another, and honour the mothers who bore you. Allah is ever watching over you. (4:1)

Solidarity among Muslims is a central value too, reflected in the well-known traditional saying:

'Help your brother, whether he is an oppressor or he is an oppressed one.' People asked: 'O Allah's Apostle! It is all right to help him if he is oppressed, but how should we help him if he is an oppressor?' The prophet said: 'By preventing him from oppressing others.'⁷⁸

The Prophet also declared that: "None among you has faith until you desire for your fellow Muslims what he/she desires for him/herself."⁷⁹ This is a clear message to avoid the use of violence and prevent aggression by Muslims against other Muslims and non-Muslims. Solidarity in this context is different from tribal solidarity (*assabiyyah*—assisting members of the same tribe/clan/family against outsiders, regardless of the conditions).⁸⁰ Thus, nonviolent strategies in Islam are most effective if they are based on collective approaches and political and social solidarity.

The concept of *ummah* has functioned as a base for collective action since the Prophet's time. During the early period of Islam, in Mecca, the Prophet utilized the values of collaboration and collectivism to mobilize his followers and to respond nonviolently to accusations and to the force of those who did not follow his prophecy.

78. Sahih al-Bukhari, vol. 3, bk. 43, no. 623.

79. *Id.*, vol. 1, bk. 2, no. 12.

80. Islam attempted to abolish such value of tribal solidarity; however it remains a strong norm among many Arab and non-Arab Muslims.

Contrary to the notion that the sense of *ummah* has vanished due to the different political regimes in Muslim world, and that it existed only when Muslims were all under the same political authority, Esack Farid argues "The notion of *ummah* has not only survived but continues to give Muslims a deep sense of belonging." As suggested previously, the *ummah* has even expanded to include non-Muslims, for all those who believe in God are members of this community, too. Farid stresses that "[t]he universal community under God has always been a significant element in Muslim discourse against tribalism and racism."⁸¹ Other scholars note that the "People of the Book," as recipients of the divine revelation, were recognized as part of the *ummah*, based on the Qur'anic verse: "[A]nd surely this, your community (*ummah*), is a single community." (23:52) The charter of Medina—the first constitution created by the Prophet—is another proof of such an inclusive and religiously diverse community.⁸²

The Prophet reminded his followers on many occasions on the importance of unity and solidarity between the believers and non-Muslims. He instructed Muslims to avoid causes of dissension and to support each other, comparing their relationship to the organs of the body that communicate pain if one part is ill, or to a building which is strengthened by the strength of its various parts. "A believer to another believer is like a building whose different parts enforce each other. The Prophet then clasped his hands with fingers interlaced (while saying that)."⁸³

Islam has been considered a religion of structural transformation and change, particularly in its impact on pre-Islamic civilizations. In this context, the principle of *ummah*, in both its specific and general meanings, has emerged in Muslim history as a powerful mechanism for social and political transformation.⁸⁴

81. Farid Esack, *Liberation and Pluralism: An Islamic Perspective of Interreligious Solidarity Against Oppression* (Oxford: Oneworld Publications 1997). In *Liberation and Pluralism*, Farid Esack has completed a pioneer study on the Islamic theology of liberation based on the experience of Muslims in South Africa in fighting against Apartheid. Esack describes an astonishing account of the utilization of Islamic beliefs and values in mobilizing Muslims to resist and fight the South African system, particularly by building community coalitions with non-Muslims. Such experience affirms the great potential to construct coalitions across religious boundaries and identities in resisting war, violence, and injustice.

82. Akbar Ahmed, *supra* n. 13, also supports this notion of the *ummah* being diverse religious and individual community, particularly in the Medinan period in which the Qur'an mentions it 47 times, and only nine times in Meccan period. See Farid Esack, *Religion and Cultural Diversity: For What and With Whom?* (presented at the Islam & Cultural Diversity Conf., Am. U., D.C. 1998).

83. Sahih al-Bukhari, vol. 3, bk. 43, no. 626.

84. See Wahid, *supra* n. 25.

Peacebuilding initiatives can preserve a community's structure and identity by careful planning, implementation, and follow up. The inclusion of Muslim-defined communal solidarity in these phases can contribute to the success of peacebuilding initiatives and serve as an effective forum for social mobilization. Nonviolence and peacebuilding are based on similar collective and collaborative approaches that aim to respond to the needs and interests of the parties, and to create future bonds, relationships, and agreements between disputing parties. Collective approaches utilized by the victims of injustice or the less powerful party to exert influence and power over the other side can create a change in the behavior of the other side, as demonstrated by leaders of nonviolent movements on both political and social levels. *Ummah* offers a powerful mobilizing frame for various Muslim communities to pursue justice, realize their power base, and assert themselves nonviolently to systematically resist structurally unjust arrangements.

Inclusivity and Participatory Processes

Participatory forums and inclusive procedures are more productive and effective than authoritarian, hierarchal, and exclusionary decision-making approaches. Peacebuilding strategies are based on either assisting parties in joint interest-based negotiation or bringing a third party in to facilitate such a process.

Similarly, the Qur'an's main premise is that the idea of inclusiveness is superior to exclusiveness, that justice must replace injustice. These principles are best reflected in the Muslim tradition of mutual consultation (*shura*) in the governing process. The meaning of *shura* is the solidarity in society based on the principle of free consultation and genuine dialogue, reflecting equality in thinking and expression of opinion.⁸⁵ Through public and private consultation, the governor (the leader) should seek active advice and input from his followers prior to making a decision. "Those who harken to their Lord, and establish regular prayer; who (conduct) their affairs by mutual consultation; who spend what We bestow on them for sustenance." (42:38) Whether the ruler must consult is not a matter subject to

85. Tawfiq al-Shawi, *Fiqh al-shura wa-al-istisharah* (the Jurisprudence of Consultation and Shura) 293 (al-Mansurah: Dar al-Wafa' 1992), cited in Howeidy, *supra* n. 47, at 117. Azizah al-Hibri establishes the principle for Islamic governing systems—the will of the people shall be the basis of the authority of the government. She identifies the *bay'ah*: "the act of accepting and declaring allegiance to a potential ruler." This process of contracting with the people is recognized as a participatory and democratic principle in Islam. Azizah al-Hibri, *Islamic Constitutionalism and the Concept of Democracy*, 24 J. Intl. L. 1, 12 (1992).

differing interpretation in Islam due to the imperative form in which the *shura* was communicated to the Prophet.⁸⁶

The central role that *shura* plays in Islamic governance systems has been widely discussed by Islamic scholars, particularly those who support the notion that democracy is not necessarily contradictory to Islam. Despite scholarly debates on when and who can be consulted in important community decisions, the fact remains that consultation and input in decision making is expected from the whole *ummah*, the general community and its leaders through a process of *shura*. Thus, *shura* was a hallmark of early Islamic governance.

For Islamic scholars who have emphasized its central role, *shura* is not merely a consultation by the rulers and their advisers only, but it is an inclusive process. *Shura* involves all matters concerning the *ummah*, not simply those which they might be likely to have expertise. The people of the *shura* represent all the segments of the society, differing from the people of *ijtihad* who are the Islamic *fuqaha*' (pl. of *faqih*) or experts of jurisprudence. The Prophet encouraged Muslims to consult with each other and with experts. He repeatedly consulted with other Muslims and followed their advice even when he disagreed with the person.⁸⁷

Scholars have identified major principles which support the democratic and inclusive procedures in Islam. Some of these principles are:

- (1) Governance is for the *ummah*: its approval is a *sine qua non* for the continuation of the rulers. Thus the legitimacy for governance is based on the *Ummah*'s satisfaction and approval rather than on the *khalifah*'s:⁸⁸ "The Prophet said that if all Muslims agreed on a matter, then it cannot be wrong."⁸⁹
- (2) The community is obligated to pursuing religion, building a good life, and looking after public interests; these are not the

86. There are other verses in the Qur'an that support this notion, for example see verse 13:159. Also Abu Bakr established an early example for other Muslim leaders by deriving his governing legitimacy from the people: "I have been given authority over you, but I am not the best of you. If I do well help me, and if I do ill, then put me right." Muhammad Salim 'Awwa, *On the Political System of Islamic State* 115 (Indianapolis, Ind.: Am. Trust Publications 1980), cited in al-Hibri, *supra* n. 85, at 21, 24.

87. The Battle of Uhud is a good example of such consultation, in which the Prophet, contrary to what he thought, agreed to meet with Quraysh's army outside of Medina. See Abd al-Malik Ibn Hisham, *Al-Sirah Al-Nabawiyah* 192-193 (9th Cent. repr., M. Sirjani ed., Cairo: al-Maktabah al-Tawfiqiyah 1978), cited in al-Hibri, *supra* n. 85, at 20.

88. Muhammed Musa, *Nizam al-Hukum fi al-Islam*. (Governing System in Islam) (Cairo: 1967). Some of the verses in the Qur'an in this matter are 88:21 & 88:22.

89. Muhammad ibn Yazid ibn Majah, *Sunan* vol. 2, bk. 3950, at 1303 (Beirut: Dar al-Kutub al-Ilmiyah n.d.), cited in al-Hibri, *supra* n. 4, at 506.

responsibility of the rulers only. In addition to the Qur'anic verses supporting this principle, almsgiving (*zakah*) is the best evidence for the mutual responsibility of the people in supporting each other. Helping others and sharing part of their wealth become a right and duty of Muslims towards each other.⁹⁰

(3) Freedom is a right for all. Freedom is the other side of monotheism. By acknowledging his loyalty to God alone, a person is free from all others.⁹¹ Individual freedom of decision is expected and favored by the Prophet who says "Do not be a conformist, who says I am with the people, if they do good I do good, and if they do harm, I do harm."⁹² If freedom of expression of all people is not guaranteed then *shura* is not practiced.

(4) All people are equal in their origin. They are all humans and from one father. They were all created from the same soul.⁹³

(5) The other—the different one—has legitimacy, which provides him with the right to protection by virtue of his being human. For example, the Prophet stood to respect a funeral and when he was told that it was a Jewish funeral, he wondered aloud: "Is not that a soul!"⁹⁴

(6) Oppression is prohibited and opposing it is a duty. *Zulm* (unjust treatment) is one of the most prohibited acts because it defies Islam's chief message of justice.⁹⁵

(7) The law of *shura* is above all. Islamic law is to be followed by both the rulers and the people. Such a principle has the potential to protect the people from governments and technocrats who might manipulate and change the rules to serve their interests.

In addition to *shura*, *ijma'* (consensus building) is an important mechanism of Islamic decision-making because, with *shura*, it supports collaborative and consensus building processes rather than authoritative, competitive, or confrontational procedures for dealing with differences. These principles in Islamic tradition and religion practiced by the

90. Al-Ghazali, *Ihya' Ulum al-Din* (Revival of Religious Studies) vol. 2, 306 (Leon Zolondek, trans., Leiden: E.J. Brill 1963), cited in Howeidy, *supra* n. 47, at 106.

91. Freedom and choice are supported in the Qur'an through 2:256, 18:29, 17:107 & 10:99. Cited in Howeidy, *supra* n. 47, at 107.

92. Muhammad Salim Awwa, *Fi al-Nizam al-Siyasi li-l-Dawlah al-Islamiyyah* (The Political System of the Islamic State) 215 (Cairo: al-Maktab al-Masri al-Hadith 1983), cited in Howeidy, *supra* n. 47, at 108.

93. See discussion of the principle of equality in Islam in text accompanying notes 48-49, *supra*.

94. Sahih al-Bukhari, vol. 2, bk. 23, no. 399. In addition, the Qur'an stresses the legitimacy of differences in various verses such as 49:13, 30:22, 11:118 & 11:119.

95. See verses 46:12, 42:42 & 4:148.

Prophet mandate involvement and responsibility among people to resist *zulm*, rather than passivity or acceptance of oppression.⁹⁶ Moreover, regardless of the level or nature of the conflict (community/interpersonal, or political/social), consensus and inclusivity frameworks are simply more effective than authoritative decisionmaking and coercion in resolving conflicts or implementing projects. They can achieve sustainable agreement (particularly on community and public policy levels) in many areas of conflict.

Pluralism and Diversity

Pluralism and diversity are core values in Islamic tradition and religion. The Qur'an recognizes diversity and tolerance of differences based on gender (49:13; 53:45); skin color, language (30:22); beliefs and ranks. (64:2; 6:165) Harmony between the different social grouping and communities is praised, and competition and control of any person by another is condemned.⁹⁷ The Qur'an asserts that differences are inherent in human life. Thus, ethnic, tribal, and national differences have no real bearing on closeness to God. Rather, as suggested in discussing *ummah*, only their degree of faith is the solemn criterion by which those groups will be judged.

Differences among people, inevitable in humanity, are a basic assumption in Islam. "If your Lord had so willed, He could have made mankind one people: But they will not cease to dispute." (11:118) These differences are integrally related to the free will that God has bestowed on humanity, for people should be expected to be diverse not only in nationality and affiliation, but also in the expression of their faith and the path that they choose to follow. (10:99) Such a principle of free will and the individual's responsibility for all his/her actions is reflected in the Qur'an: "If Allah so willed, He could make you all one people: but He leaves straying whom He pleases, and He guides whom He pleases: but you shall certainly be called to account for all your actions." (16:93)

Tolerance of the "others," particularly non-Muslim people of the Book), is repeatedly accepted and emphasized in Islam. The equality of the followers of different religions is reiterated in both the Qur'an and *Hadith* many times. Muslims are asked to remember that there is no difference in the treatment of people of different religions except in their faith and deeds: (3:113-114), (2:62) and (5:69). The Qur'an calls on

96. Howeidy, *supra* n. 47, at 112.

97. There are many Qur'anic verses that support this notion of appreciation of differences. See 2:213, 10:19, 7:38, 13:30, 16:63, 29:18, 35:42, 41:42 & 64:18.

Muslims to abandon fighting and coexist peacefully with other religions, reaffirming the validity of the other religions and requiring its followers to respect their scriptures. In fact, the expansion of Islam through *da'wa* in Asia and Africa or the Pacific region has taken place mainly among non-Muslims. Under such circumstances Islam could not have survived or prospered without having been strongly pluralistic and accepting of diversity.⁹⁸ The Qur'an reflects this celebration of diversity of people and belief:

Say: 'O People of the Book! Come to common terms as between us and you: That we worship none but Allah; That we associate no partners with Him; That we erect not, from among ourselves, lords and patrons other than Allah.' If they turn their back, say you: 'Bear witness that we (at least) are Muslims (bowing to Allah's Will).' (3:64)

Say, 'O People of the Book, you have no ground to stand upon unless you stand fast by the Torah and the Gospel and all that has been revealed to you from your Lord Those who believe (in the Qur'an), those who follow the Jewish scriptures and the Sabians and the Christians—any people who believe in God, the Day of Judgment and do good deeds, on them shall be no fear nor shall they grieve.' (5:71-72)

Among Muslims themselves, pluralism historically existed in the early Muslim community. There was no single Islamic law or constitution, nor standardization of the Islamic law. For example, the Sunni tradition produced four legitimate schools of thoughts, not limited to legal traditions. In fact, the development of Qur'anic interpretation legitimizes the validity of differences (*ikhtilaf*): several interpretations of the Qur'an coexisted in the same period and space. On the other hand, Islam is least tolerant of nonbelievers or infidels. Throughout the history those who were cast as *kafirun* (*pl. of kafir*—unbeliever) were persecuted and punished by rulers and other followers.⁹⁹

The Medinah charter, which was contracted between the Prophet and the various tribes, is an example of the high level of tolerance and respect of diversity assumed by Islam. Under the charter, all Muslims and Jewish tribes (apparently, no Christians were involved) are considered one community, but each tribe retains its identity, customs, and internal relations. The charter was supplemented by a set of rules derived from the Qur'an and *sunnah* to protect the rights of each group.

98. Farid Esack, *Religion and Cultural Diversity: For What and With Whom?* (Islam & Cultural Diversity Conf., Am. U., D.C. 1998).

99. *Id.*

The freedom of religion, and the right not to be guilty because of the deed of an ally, were among the protected rights.¹⁰⁰

Proceeding from this recognition of diversity, seven main principles or *usul* can be derived from the Qur'an supporting coexistence and tolerance:¹⁰¹

(1) Human dignity deserves absolute protection regardless of the person's religion, ethnicity, and intellectual opinion orientation.

(17:70) This dignity is a form of individual protection given by God;

(2) All humans are related and from the same origin; (4:1; 6:98; 5:32)

(3) Differences among people are designated by God and are part of His creation and rules (*sunnan*), thus differences in ethnicity, race, culture, etc., are a natural part of life. (30:22; 10:99; 11:118, 199) God had the power to create us all the same, but He did not; (11:118)

(4) Islam acknowledges other religions and asserts their unity of origin; (42:13; 2:136)

Because differences are a given in Islam, there is no justification for violating people's rights to existence and movement due to their different religious affiliation; (42:15)

(5) Muslims have the freedom of choice and decision after the calling or the message has been delivered; (2:256; 18:29; 17:107; 109:4-6)

(6) God is the only judge of people's actions. People are responsible for their decisions and deeds when they face judgement. The Prophet only carried the message, only God is responsible for the judgement; (42:48; 16:124; 31:23; 88:25, 26)

(7) Muslims should observe good deeds, justice, and equity in dealing with all human beings. (5:9; 4:135; 60:8)

The principles (explain why) [sic] Islam was not consumed by other cultures and did not reject them either; instead Islam created a new civilization, multicultural and pluralist in practice. Although Asian, African, or European Muslims have widely different cultural practices, nevertheless, as Muslims, they are expected to tolerate each other's cultural differences and those of non-Muslims in their communities.

100. Ibn Hisham, *supra* n. 63, at 501-504.

101. Howeidy, *supra* n. 47, at 202.

Unfortunately, the social and political movements that attempt to mobilize the masses to pursue political control have been engaged in redefining multicultural and pluralist Islam as a more "centralist and narrow" view of the world.¹⁰² Muslim scholars are still reacting to proposals attempting to re-define Islam in relationship to the principles of diversity and tolerance of difference. For example, Farid Esack expresses some skepticism about the consequences of the embrace of all diversity to the Muslim community. He cautions against an automatic acceptance of all differences for two reasons. First, he points out the theological challenge of determining how Islam can set the limits on diversity and find an orderly path toward either affirmation or change of traditional practices, such as women leading Friday prayers. Second, he cautions that Western values and cultures underlie pluralism, which may unwittingly serve as an extension of hegemonic interests over the so-called underdeveloped world. Farid Esack proposes that diversity be understood in Islamic not as the mere willingness to let every idea and practice exist, but as aimed towards specific Islamic objectives, such as freeing humankind from injustice and servitude to others, so that we may be free to worship God."¹⁰³ In peacebuilding, diversity and tolerance of differences are core principles of practice. In their efforts, peacebuilders hope to bring people to the realization that they are different, and that such differences should not constitute a basis for discrimination or bias. Moreover, it is harmful and unjust to deprive people of their rights because of their national, racial, religious, or other affiliation. These values have been made integral parts of Islam since its inception. In short, for Muslims diversity and tolerance of difference are God's wish, because if God had wished He could have created all humans alike. Instead he created a pluralist world with different humans.

CONCLUSION

This article has only begun to describe the principles and assumptions which characterize conflict resolution and nonviolent beliefs and practices in Islam. As illustrated, all values are strongly supported by Islamic text and tradition (Qur'an and *Hadith*). The set of values and principles identified in this research constitutes a framework for Islamic peacebuilding that confirms Satha-Anand's eighth thesis which reveals the connectedness between nonviolence and peacemaking

102. Wadad Kadi, Address, *Reflections on Islamic Perspectives on Cultural Diversity* (Cultural Diversity & Islam Conf., Ctr. for Global Peace, Am. U., D.C. 1998).

103. Esack, *supra* n. 98, at 15.

and Islam: "Islam itself is fertile soil for nonviolence because of its potential for disobedience, strong discipline, sharing and social responsibility, perseverance and self-sacrifice, and the belief in the unity of the Muslim community and the oneness of mankind."¹⁰⁴

The adoption of this framework can have significant implications on various aspects of internal and external intervention programs and forces in any Muslim community. If it is applied in a community context, this framework can promote objectives such as:

- (a) an increase of solidarity among members of the community;
- (b) bridging the gap of social and economic injustice;
- (c) relieving the suffering of people and sparing human lives;
- (d) empowering people through participation and inclusivity;
- (e) promoting equality among all members of the community; and
- (f) encouraging the values of diversity and tolerance.

On an applied peacebuilding level, Islam as a religion is conducive to nonviolence and peacebuilding methods through its various rituals and traditions. For instance, the weekly Friday prayer is a natural place for gathering which has been utilized by many political leaders and movements. In the last decade, scholars such as Satha-Anand, Johansen, and Crow, et. al., and others have begun examining Islamic traditions and religion to identify other rituals and practices that can be effective in applying nonviolent action strategies.¹⁰⁵ For example, the obligation of fasting is an excellent training for hunger strikes. Second, the ritualistic prayers and the formation of the worshipers into parallel lines; and practice of speaking and moving in strict uniformity prepare people for engagement in disciplined actions. Third, religious chanting can be a main channel for peaceful marches, meetings, principle.¹⁰⁶ All these are excellent preparation techniques for the discipline needed for nonviolent demonstrations, sit-ins, and assemblies. The utilization of nonviolence and peacebuilding strategies based on an Islamic framework is appropriate for both conflicts that involve only Muslims and those that involve non-Muslims too.

In both conflict resolution and development work, proven strategies to bring change to the life of disadvantaged communities

104. Satha-Anand, *Muslim Community Nonviolence Actions*, *supra* n. 25.

105. See *Id.* n. 25, at 7-12, for discussion of three case studies in which Muslim communities in South East Asia have used the religious practices of fasting and praying as nonviolent resistance methods.

106. *Id.*; Abu-Nimer, *supra* n. 25.

always depend on the use of local and indigenous traditions and experience. Intense involvement of the community in the processes of change and resolution of its problems (organizing, applying, and evaluating) tends to increase the impact of the intervention. Muslim communities are not an exception to such a rule. Utilizing Islamic values and principles suggested in this framework will increase the possibility for peaceful change and development in such communities.

On a policy making level, the incorporation of such values into decision-making and orientation of leaders as well as followers to these values can bring new momentum to any community. As social change agents in the various Muslim communities attempt to mobilize their people to engage in social and political movements, they often neglect the importance and power of such religious and cultural values in appealing to their masses. The values in this framework can constitute a way of communication for change among Muslims.

In the area of economic and social development initiatives, particularly those carried out by outside agencies and organizations, the use of these values and norms in their local projects can contribute to the success and sustainability of these initiatives. When such programs are developed based on these values, the outcome and the process has to empower the local communities and members who were involved. For example, when a World Bank microeconomics project in Cairo incorporates the values in this peacebuilding framework within the design and implementation phases, the outcome of such a project was necessarily different from a project that was based on criteria derived from American or western values and approaches.

At present these are religious ideals. The present reality of the Muslim communities is far from achieving or applying such ideals on a massive political or social scale. In fact, many of today's Muslims seem not to follow these values and principles in their daily lives. Nevertheless, these ideals continue to exist and are transmitted to new generations through cultural, religious beliefs and practices, and other forms of socialization. In fact, much of the frustration among many Muslims expresses itself in the failure of Islamic leaders and communities apply these values and principles.

The discussion in this article reflects a major gap between the Islamic basis for a peacebuilding approach to life in general and the interpretation of Islam as a war-like religion. This gap cries for the need for a more solid "community of interpreters" to study Islam and peacebuilding, interpreters who will attempt to contextualize Islamic religious and traditional values within peacebuilding and nonviolent

frameworks, rather than in war and conflict frameworks. This effort to reconstruct legitimate social, religious, and political nonviolent alternatives to resolve internal and external conflicts in Muslim societies is most needed to promote socio-economic development on all levels.

Finally, by identifying the principles and values of peacebuilding in an Islamic context, the question of their existence in Islamic tradition and religion becomes irrelevant. Thus, future research and studies can focus on the next step: examining the application of such principles in day-to-day contexts, and identifying the obstacles that prevent their application. Another area of future research is to document successful day-to-day initiatives of peacebuilding and conflict resolution conducted in Muslim communities. By examining such case studies scholars and practitioners can promote the conditions for effective peaceful intervention to resolve political, social, and other types of conflicts which are tearing apart many Muslim communities.