

RELIGION AND PEACE: ANALYZING ISLAMIC APPROACH TO CONFLICT
RESOLUTION

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Abstract

Religion has historically been crucial in influencing peacebuilding initiatives and conflict resolution methodologies. This paper examines the Islamic methodology for dispute resolution, highlighting its tenets of justice, reconciliation, and compassion. The research elucidates essential processes for dispute resolution, including mediation (sulh), arbitration (tahkim), and forgiveness (afw), based on Islamic teachings from the Qur'an, Hadith, and classical jurisprudence. The study contends that Islamic teachings advocate for a comprehensive approach to peace, reconciling individual rights with social cohesion. This study enhances the comprehension of religion's role in promoting sustainable peace through the examination of theoretical frameworks and practical implementations.

Keywords: *Islam, Peace, Violence, Conflict*

INTRODUCTION

Enlightenment led to the separation of Church and State, making religion a personal matter of each individual citizen. Since religion is connected with conservatism and violence, several secular nations have outlawed any form of religious expression in public spaces. However, religion has continued to play an important role in influencing the political, social, and economic views of people worldwide. It has been the source of both individual and social morality and provides the cultural norms and values that continue to define the identities of people and communities. As a result, it is challenging to overlook religion in certain important areas of human existence. Religion, according to Said and Funk, "cannot be excluded from dealing with some profound human qualities, such as liberty and inevitability, peace and security, right versus wrong, and holy versus profane." Funk and Said (2002), pp. 37–38

Religious institutions have emerged as an alternate means of countering violence in recent conflicts around the world where secular authorities have failed to curb it. Religion fosters a variety of human attributes that are critical to rapprochements and the establishment of social fairness in order to maintain peace. In addition to being crucial for conflict resolution, a religiously based approach to peacebuilding is also necessary for development, as Appleby noted, "Each of the players in this drama of convergence contains multitudes. "Religion," "development," "and "peacebuilding" are contested terms that admit of multiple meanings Peacebuilding and development are decades rather than centuries old, but religion, adaptive to its late modern globalizing environment, is no less fluid in meaning and expression. (Appleby, 2015: 183-184).

Many researchers have viewed religion as a cause of conflict and bloodshed, yet many people continue to believe in it because they consider religious norms and values as a source of harmony and peace. Major scholarly discourse has primarily linked Islam to violence and conflict in relation to its role in resolving conflicts and promoting peace. In order to shed light on Islamic social capital as a tool for resolving disputes and promoting peace, this study attempts to analyze Islam's stance on peace and conflict by placing Islamic writings in their proper perspective.

Idea of Conflict Resolution and Peace building in Islam

Conflict has long been a part of human reality and is thought to be a natural phenomenon. It is important to first understand the roots of conflict. According to Bisno the five main origins of conflict are cultural, ideological, structural, biosocial, and personal and interactional. (Bisno,1988: 27–30) Conflict has been multifaceted, overlapping, and intricate. The underlying causes and dynamics of conflict are explained by a number of theories.

A fundamental component of the Islamic worldview is peace, and the vast majority of Muslims worldwide consider Islam to be the religion of peace. The social coherence, harmony, social justice, and peace that are essential for resolving conflicts are guaranteed by Islamic beliefs and standards. In Arabic, "salam" denotes peace, as opposed to "harb," which means battle. Even the term "al-Islam" emphasizes the fact that the true goal of religion is to protect the safety and well-being of the average person. The word "Islam" is one of Allah's adjectives for peace and one of the most exquisite terms for the ultimate source of peace. (Quran 59: 23–24).

Islamic religious standards and ideals, such as justice (adl), beneficence (ihsan), and wisdom (hikmah), are non-violent and helpful in resolving conflicts and promoting peace. According to these Islamic precepts, people are fundamentally more interested in peace and stability than in conflict and bloodshed. In addition to having the ability to learn how to be peaceful and correct their mistakes since they are born as innocent beings rather than evil ones, humans are often inclined to maintain harmony and balance with nature and other living things. In the field of peacebuilding and conflict resolution, these Islamic principles and values can help bring about harmony, balance, and peace both inside and outside.

Civil society and peace in Islam

The notions of civil society and peace are closely related in Islam and are based on the principles of compassion, justice, and cooperation. Islamic teachings place a strong emphasis on the value of a peaceful society in which institutions and individuals cooperate to protect justice and thwart oppression. Islam's civil society is founded on ideas like: Shura (Consultation): The Quran promotes group decision-making (42:38). Every individual must participate in a just society. It is the duty of society to uphold morality and avert injustice, according to Amr bil Ma'ruf wa Nahi anil Munkar (Enjoining good and prohibiting evil) (Quran 3:104). Social Justice Islam places a strong emphasis on social justice, helping those in need (Zakat), and making sure no one is left behind (Quran 2:177). Charity & Volunteerism: The foundation of a strong civil society is the provision of financial (Sadaqah) and charitable assistance to others.

Modern Muslim communities can benefit from the social capital of the Islamic cultural and civilizational tradition in order to establish social fairness, recognize religious plurality, and achieve peace and stability. Islam's social capital includes certain principles that its adherents are expected to uphold in both their public and private lives, including selflessness, kindness, compassion, tolerance, and equity. Islamic ethos and norms, in addition to these ideals, support and encourage the concepts of justice, equality, human rights, democracy, and pluralism—all of which are vital components of any civil society.

Tawhid (Unity of God)

Tawhid is the core idea of monotheism in Islam, denoting the oneness and absolute unity of Allah. It is the primary belief that differentiates Islam from other faiths and is the foundation of Islamic theology. Tawhid is emphasized throughout the Qur'an and is the first section of the Shahada (the Islamic profession of faith): "La ilaha illa Allah" (There is no god save

Allah). Islamic scholars have classed Tawhid into three primary categories: 1. Tawhid al-Rububiyah (Oneness of Lordship) conviction that Allah alone is the universe's Creator, Sustainer, and Controller. 2. Individuality of Worship, or Tawhid al-Uluhiyyah Worship is owed to Allah alone, not to idols, partners, or middlemen. Only He must be the object of devotional acts, prayer, fasting, and sacrifice. 3. Oneness of Names and Attributes, or Tawhid al-Asma wa'l-Sifat Allah's names and qualities are distinct, flawless, and incomparable to anything else. No one possesses His divine attributes, such as omnipotence and omniscience.

It is believed that Islam cannot be fully practiced without Tawhid. The worst sin in Islam is associating partners with Allah (shirk), but belief in Tawhid leads to paradise. It molds a Muslim's life, guaranteeing the separation from false beliefs and sole dependence on Allah. The basis for a life of faith, honesty, and devotion is laid by tawhid, which also defines a Muslim's relationship with Allah.

Additionally, Tawhid teaches that all beings are one and calls on Muslims to recognize that all of creation is interconnected with God's other creations, particularly all human individuals and communities. Believing in God gives people a sense of freedom from other people, which restores their basic liberty; humans are not slaves to other people. The Islamic concept of monotheism is largely about having a true and positive sense of freedom.

Individual and Social Morality

Islam offers a thorough ethical framework that takes into account morality's communal and individual facets. Its teachings, which are mostly based on the Qur'an and the Sunnah (the customs of Prophet Muhammad), place a strong emphasis on the close relationship between individual behavior and group duty.

Islam has a comprehensive stance on morals. It encourages people to cultivate a social environment based on empathy, justice, and shared responsibility while also pushing them to build a solid ethical basis via spiritual development and self-discipline. This dual focus guarantees that moral behavior permeates all facets of social life and is not limited to individual piety. Islamic ethics are based on the idea that all people are answerable to God. Because of this accountability, Muslims are encouraged to cultivate an internal moral compass that is marked by personal intentions, or niyyah, are just as important as deeds. In order to strive for sincerity in both prayer and daily life, Muslims are urged to purify their hearts and motivations. Honesty, humility, patience, and compassion are essential qualities. Both religious activities and daily encounters foster the idea of akhlaq, or moral character. Routines like as the five daily prayers, the Ramadan fast, and the reading of the Qur'an are not just acts of devotion but also disciplines that promote self-control and mindfulness.

Islam likewise emphasizes the importance of reciprocal rights and responsibilities in a just society. The lessons promote the following actions that advance welfare, justice, and social cohesion. The concept of the ummah (community) emphasizes the value of oneness. Activities such as sadaqah (voluntary charity) and zakat (obligatory charity) are useful ways to help the underprivileged and lessen societal injustices. The values of fairness in commerce, equal treatment under the law, and the defense of everyone's rights, regardless of status, serve as the foundation for social interactions. Islam places a high value on upholding positive relationships with family, neighbors, and society at large. Kindness toward others and proper etiquette (adab) are emphasized numerous times in the Quran and Hadith. Collective Well-Being: Islamic social morality goes beyond individual deeds and focuses on creating a community where people look out for one another. It also makes sure that institutions and societal structures uphold moral values like openness, responsibility, and compassion.

From Islamic perspective, individual morality is as important as the social morality, there is required to purify the individual's moral character first, that would enable them to discharge their collective responsibility, as prophet said "noblest is one who is the best in conduct", in respect of individual morality, Islam has been more focused on the values of selflessness, kindness, humility, caring and sharing with others such as destitute, orphan and needy. Kindness and respect towards parents and neighbors are an integral part of Islamic injunctions, every Muslim is committed for righteous work and peace; and all these values are presented as man's gratitude to God that reflect in both Quran and Prophet's teachings.

Fear of God (Taqwa)

In Islam, the term "taqwa" describes a strong sense of devotion, God-consciousness, and fear of upsetting Allah. Its meaning encompasses more than simply dread; it also involves love, devotion, and a constant awareness of Allah in all facets of life. It is frequently translated as "God-consciousness" or "piety." Originating from the Arabic root (wa-qā), the word Taqwa means "to shield" or "to protect." It represents defending oneself from sin and Allah's wrath by following His instructions. Taqwa is mentioned repeatedly in the Quran as a crucial attribute of believers. Allah declares: "Indeed, the most noble of you in the sight of Allah is the most righteous (atqākum)." (Quran 49:13)

Mercy, Compassion and Tolerance in Islam

The Quran and the teachings of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) consistently underscore the core Islamic principles of mercy, compassion, and tolerance. Personal behavior, societal connections, and even encounters with people of different religions are guided by these concepts. Allah's titles, Ar-Rahman (The Most Merciful) and Ar-Raheem (The Most Compassionate), demonstrate His mercy. The opening line of the Quran reads, "In the name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful." (Quran 1:1) Another description of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) was that he was a

"Mercy to the worlds": Islam promotes mercy in all facets of life, including treating family members and animals with compassion.

In Islam, being kind involves acting altruistically. The Holy Quran states: "Indeed, Allah commands justice, doing good (Ihsan), and generosity to relatives..." (Quran 16:90) "Allah loves that when one of you does something, he does it with excellence (Ihsan)," stated the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH). (Muslim) Helping the underprivileged, being kind to strangers, and acting justly in all interactions are all examples of "And We have not sent you, [O Muhammad], except as a mercy to the worlds." (Quran 21:107)

Islam encourages peaceful cohabitation and religious tolerance. "There is no compulsion in religion..." the Quran declares. (Quran 2:256) The Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) exemplified tolerance by living in harmony with non-Muslims, respecting agreements, and making sure their rights were upheld. The Quran counsel's kindness and patience even in the face of hostility: "Repel [evil] with what is better, and your enemy will become like a close friend." (Quran 41:34) Islamic principles of mercy, compassion, and tolerance promote harmony and peace. Islam believes that putting these characteristics into practice helps build a society that is compassionate and just while also drawing one closer to Allah.

Justice in Islam

Justice (Adl) is the primary concept for resolving conflicts and establishing peace; concurrently, it is an integral component of Islamic ethics. The Holy Quran instructs Muslims to uphold this ideal throughout their lives. This concept primarily affects the private and individual facets of human nature, while its principal focus is social life. Whenever individuals engage in any form of relationship, the issue of fairness unavoidably arises. The Quran repeatedly emphasizes this concept, appearing as a cohesive theme throughout its chapters and verses, as well as in the traditions of the Prophet (PBUH).

The concept of justice in Quran has universal appeal, its principles are valid for entire humanity, regardless of their affiliation with any religion as Quran says: "O you who believe! Stand out firmly for justice, as witnesses to God, even as against yourselves, or your parents, or your kin, and whether it be against rich or poor" (Quran, 4:135). It is the responsibility of ordinary Muslims to ensure justice and resist tyranny, whether it exists at interpersonal or structural levels. There are a lot of Quranic verses that support this view, as Allah says in holy Quran: Allah commands justice, the doing of good, and liberality to kith and kin, and He forbids all shameful deeds, and injustice and rebellion: He instructs you, that ye may receive admonition" (Quran, 16:90). In following verses, Quran asked its believers to be firm in the path of justice whatever the circumstance is, as Quran says: "Ye who believe! Stand out firmly for justice, as witness to Allah, even as against yourselves, or your parents, or your kin, and whether it be (against) rich or poor: for Allah can best protect both. Follow not the lusts (of your hearts), lest ye swerve, and if ye distort (justice) or decline to do justice, verily Allah is well-acquainted with all that ye do" (Quran, 4:135).

In the following verses, Quran integrated justice with piety, first condition to get piety is to be just because Allah doesn't like unjust, as Quran says "O ye who believe! Stand out firmly for Allah, as witnesses to fair dealing, and let not the hatred of others to you make you swerve to wrong and depart from justice. Be just: that is next to Piety: and fear Allah. For Allah is well-acquainted with all that ye do" (Quran, 5:8).

From Islamic perspective justice is an absolute value, not a relative one, Muslims must stand for justice and pursue it, even with their enemies, as Quran reflects: "Serve Allah, and join not any partners with Him; And do good----to parents, kinsfolk, orphans, those in need, neighbors who are near, neighbors who are strangers, the companion by your side, the wayfarer (ye meet), and what your right hands possess: for Allah loveth not the arrogant, the vainglorious" (4:36). Piety is very significant in Quranic scheme of thought, it reflects humble obedience and fear of God; honesty in dealings with others; ensuring justice and avoiding all wrongdoings, and protecting chastity.

The Islamic tradition supports resistance if there is injustice either by activism or third-party intervention, In Islam, peace-building and justice both are interconnected and interdependence, both are cannot be separated from each other. Without order and justice peace cannot be imagined, actually peace is the outcome of order and justice, to establish peace and resolve the conflict, it is important to ensure justice.

Pluralism in Islam

Pluralism is not in opposition to Islamic principles and values. The first prophet of Islam permitted Jews and other people to coexist with Muslims when he founded the city-state of Madinah. In addition to granting people their fundamental rights, the prophet permitted them to live in accordance with their religious convictions, openly express and defend them, converse with Muslims, and even critique Islam.

Non-Muslims have been given unique privileges throughout the history of Islam to conduct their social, familial, and private lives in accordance with their religious convictions. In order to protect their culture and faith, they were also granted special authorization to operate their educational institutions. Regarding interactions across communities, Sunna is adamant about preserving amicable ties with non-Muslims.

Conclusion

Conflict resolution is the process undertaken to terminate disputes. This paper examines the Islamic approach to conflict resolution, whereby the author elucidates non-violent Islamic measures that can effectively address various types of conflict. The Qur'an consistently admonishes individuals against engaging in recklessness, arrogance, egotism, and pride,

which are significant sources of conflict, and advocates for reconciliation (Sulh), mediation (Wasatah), and arbitration (tahkim) as means to resolve disputes. In the Islamic worldview, peace is intrinsically linked to justice, as injustice engenders conflict, malevolence, and societal disorder; without peace and justice, human development is unattainable. The Islamic conception of justice compels Muslims to desire for others what they desire for themselves and to treat others as they wish to be treated.

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