

Peace and Conflict Resolution in Islam: A Perspective Building

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Abstract

The critics of Islam have hypothesized that several teachings of Islam jeopardize the modern nation-state and its law and order. Islam is perceived as a part of the problem rather than a solution. Islam, however, has a rich inheritance of addressing conflicts in the world. The Islamic texts and Muslim heritage approaches to conflict resolution draw on religious values and present a considerable wealth of responses based on positive solutions to the conflict. The terms/concepts like social justice al-adl to the terms like sulh, translated as settlement and mūsālāha translated as reconciliation, wasta (patronage-mediation), tāhkīm (arbitration), and importantly salam a peace greeting among Muslims form the conceptual framework of the conflict resolution and peacebuilding in Islam. The specific term for non-violence in the Arabic language is not known, however the alternate vocabulary which stresses non-vehemence and peace is al-unf (no force), sabr (patience), akhlāq (virtuous character), etc. Since the conflict begins within a person, one strives to resolve that conflict through aql (intellect) to fight al-hawa (passions and desire) to overcome jahl (ignorance) with ikhlas (purity) then ihsan (beneficence) or putting the good and beautiful into practice is exercised and above all fighting for social justice jihad. This paper is an effort to build the theoretical aspect of Islam and conflict resolution. A descriptive research design has been employed for the present study. The data was collected through primary and secondary sources of information, and the method of data collection adopted was content analysis.

Keywords: *Islam, peace, conflict resolution, theory building*

INTRODUCTION

Peace and Conflict Studies

The subject of 'Peace and Conflict Studies' advanced in the nuclear and cold war era. The subject has grown exponentially since its birth in the mid-20th century. The pioneers of peace studies, peace education, and peace research go back to ancient times. But the systematic practice of peace and conflict education began in the early 20th century, partly in reaction to World War I and took off after World War II. The origins of the subject date back to the ethical and religious debates on peace and war in the greatest traditions and cultures of the world. However, the scientific approaches to investigating war and peace emerged soon after World War I. It continues to be vibrant and alive today (David 2003: 55).

The term peace can have several meanings but here we are focused on the "absence of war" and the idea of justice (Galtung 1996:198). In Islamic tradition, peace is an aspiration for the pursuit of justice and happiness. Conflict, on the other hand, is the confrontation and clash of interests, which may result in violence and war or what we may call direct violence. The idea of conflict can generate harmful practices in a society. The meaning of the term war is confusion, and the modern English noun 'war' means a ruinous condition, and 'conflict' means discord and no accord (Webster 1993). We have also in our mind the idea of structural violence and cultural violence that needs resolution through the modals of peace and conflict developed since last two decades. However, in this paper we focus on religious conflicts which are studied in cultural conflicts and that have sometimes resulted in direct violence.

Religious conflict, in the subject of international relations, falls in the category of cultural conflicts and the "clash of civilizations". The cultures have always differed, and civilizations have clashed, on and off, since pre-modern times. In 1993, the American political scientist Samuel. P. Huntington wrote an article titled "the clash of civilizations". According to the editor, this article was the most debatable article after the "policy of containment" by George F Kennan

in the Foreign Affairs magazine. Huntington's thesis regarding the rise, clash, and fall of civilizations is worth considering because it was the theory of the beginning of the involvement of religion and culture in international politics. Huntington argued that the world will see the division in the name of civilizations, irrespective of ideologies, which was the trend up to the cold war. And the most important divisions, conflicts and wars will be witnessed among the cultures with *fault lines*, and between the people who differ in religion and other cultural elements. For example, his famous arguments in the book are: "Islam has bloody borders", "Muslims have problems living with their neighbors", and "Islam and Christianity have been others other". Huntington made the world anxious regarding Islamic Civilization with his thesis; however, many academicians rebutted it (Huntington 1997: 30-90). Huntington focused more on the "other" in the "clash of civilizations theory". Islam was seen as an enemy of the 'other'. And such an idea of the 'other' prospered when 9/11 took place. The suspicion regarding Islam reached to heights even after the Madrid 2004 and London 2005, wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, the continual increase in suicide attacks within the Muslim world and towards others has made Islam synonymous with terrorism. However, these concerns are age-old anxieties that lie within a multiplicity of times, and spaces, on the western pages of manuscripts, paintings, in the government diaries and documents, in dramas, poetry and fiction, and on the screens of movie theatres. Within the civilizational development of west, we find a Muslim monster and hatred for Islam (Arjana 2015: 19). This bad representation of the west was dealt with by many scholars through interfaith dialogue, inter-religious dialogue, dialogue among civilizations, etc. The practitioners of both these academic camps present arguments and build theories. Islam and conflict resolution theory building does not perceive peace as a negative peace 'absence of war' but peace is defined as positive peace in which there is presence of justice. Building peace and promoting a culture of dialogue is a necessity among the fellow human beings without which mankind cannot live with liberty, justice, solidarity, equality, and

tolerance (UHCHR 2003). This work will study the theory building of peace and conflict resolution from an Islamic perspective.

LITERATURE REVIEW

All the religions as such have concerns regarding their involvement in the conflict and most importantly the two works by Mark Juergensmeyer (Mark 2000: 200) *Terror in the Mind of God* and *Religious Nationalism Confronts Secular Nationalism* in which he set forth the potential of major world religions in the recent terrorist activities. The first time after Huntington, he has predicted the threat of religion in international politics. The 1970's saw the growing trend of fundamentalism among the religions have been observed, and the scholars like R Scott Appleby and his *Fundamentalism* project with Marten. E Marty and Atalia Omer have come up with the results of growing religious fundamentalism as a threat to national and global security. Islamic Fundamentalism is also one of the threats mentioned in the project *Fundamentalism Observed* (Martin, Appleby 1996: 60-120). The involvement of religion as an element of resolving conflict got developed in the academia over the last three decades by the scholars like Desmond Tutu who used the technique of reconciliation and forgiveness in his work *The Book of Forgiving: The Fourfold Path for Healing Ourselves and Our World*, Marc Gopin's *Holy War, Holy Peace: How Religion Can Bring Peace to the Middle East*, Jonathan Douglas (Gopin 1997; 1-31) and others constructed theories of analyzing and solving the conflict on religious lines. Interfaith dialogue and the involvement of several religious preachers around the globe which led to the establishment of dialogue institutes among various religions, made the case for religion strong in solving the conflicts. The peaceful interpretations of the religious texts were seen in reaction to the attack on religion. Many scholars like Wahiduddin Khan, an Indian scholar wrote several works in which he defends the case for Islam as a religion of peace (Khan 1999: 9-100). Karen Arm Strong in her recent work *Fields of blood* made the case for religion

stronger in which she historically provided evidence for the reason of conflict as political and economic, and less religious (Wani 2015: 337). The works like *Crescent and Dove* by Qamar al Huda in 2010 provide insightful interpretations of Islamic texts in the domain of peacebuilding in the contemporary Muslim World (Huda 2011:10-200). Abu Nimer's works like *Nonviolence and Peacebuilding in Islamic Context: Bridging Ideals and Reality* in 2003; *Peacebuilding By, Between and Beyond Muslims and Evangelical Christians* in 2009, and other works have added in the field of the study.

Genesis of conflict in Islam

Historically, Muslims have conflicted with the “Other” since the 8th century AD. The Arabs were in Spain for 700 years and Sicily for 500 years. Then there were about two hundred years of so-called crusades. Some centuries later Ottomans threatened to overrun Europe, making their way to Vienna. The colonial movements of the west in Muslim lands and the Muslim reaction to getting political independence from France, Russia, Britain, Holland, etc also created the conflict between the Muslims and “Others”. The decline of the Mughals and Ottomans led to political consequences which never ended. The reformation moments which began soon after the decline of the Mughals and the Ottoman Empire gave rise to new currents in Islamic thought. Various scholars presented a range of interpretations to the texts of Islam, influenced by the socio-political conditions of their times, which led to the emphasis on the transformation of religious consciousness and self-awareness among Muslims. The likes of Syed Qutūb in Egypt and Maulana Maudūdī in India provided an interventionist interpretation of Islam which latter on developed Islam as a religion that must be involved in the world affairs-politically, socially, and economically (Milton-Edwards 2005:137).

The colonialism left the world shapeless due to the “arbitrary borders, economic, ethnic and religious aberrations left on the territories carved out by the

colonial powers” (Johns-Lahoud 2005: 11). The zones of Muslim culture with which European powers had been engaged were the Ottomans (1281-1923 AD), Safavids (1501-1772 AD) in Iran, Mughals (1526-1857 AD) in the Indian sub-continent and Southeast Asia. Relation with the Ottomans was negatively determined because major parts of Europe and other places were dominated by them. This excerpt from the book *Islam in World Politics* verbatim says:

The severity of British rulers against the mutineers in 1857 in Indian Mutiny resulted in many Muslims leaders leaving the sub-continent for the Holy land and other regions of Middle East. It set divisive forces at work among the Hindu and Muslim communities of the region, and marked the beginning of long history of religious and political movements which in 1947 led to the partition, the creation of nation states in India and Pakistan, and eruption of the festering sore of Kashmir as a focus for Hindu-Islamic hostility.... The carving out the states like, Iraq, Jordon, Syria, Lebanon and Palestine during the First World War were geographically determined by the interests of European powers, thus setting the scene for a number of the geo-political problems of the contemporary Muslims world (Milton-Edwards 2005:139).

The most important historical event that is responsible for the paradigm shift in the Muslim world is the question of Palestine. It was the British mandate which opened the door for the Balfour declaration of 1917 which envisaged a national home for Jews in Palestine. The exodus of Palestinians from their homeland, many of whom continue to be refugees, hastened the conflict within the Muslim world.

It was during these neo-colonial settings that the definition of war in Muslim world undertook a different standpoint. The restructuring of war law among the Muslims was shaped and many Muslims went for the jihad against the colonial oppression of the west. This is when some Muslims scholars made jihad as *fard al-‘ayn* (an individual’s religious duty). Talal Assad asserts:

....jihad has less to do with the transhistorical worldview rather than it has much to do with the political-theological vocabulary in which jurist’s men of

learning and modernist's reformers debated and polemicized in response to the varying circumstances (Assad 2007:12).

West started building a narrative against Muslims. The discourse of *jihad* was represented in western literature as synonymous with terrorism. Western academia created ruckus with the terms like terrorism and fundamentalism, even though former term had an origin interrelated to the French revolution and the later in Christianity. Western academia built a narrative in which Muslims and Islam were alleged to conflict and war. In this category, scholars argued that Islam is a religion of 'war' and that conflict is inevitable and part of Islamic teachings, and that *jihad* was used as a violent tool by Muslims to resolve conflicts, which in turn means that Islam had no potential/principle for peacemaking and conflict resolution other than *jihad*.

Against this backdrop, practitioners of the peace and dialogue became apprehensive of the circumstances and, therefore, initiated a process of dialogue. The theory of 'clash of civilizations' was responded with the theory of 'dialogue among civilizations' (Khatami 2000). In addition to dialogue theory, the theology of peace, epistemology of dialogue and peacebuilding got developed theoretically and politically. The theoretical precepts/principles rejected this claim of violence against Islam and substantiated Islam as a major contributor to the teachings of non-violence and peace building.

The Theoretical Perspective of Peace, Non-violence and Conflict Resolution in Islam

Developing a culture of positive peace

Islam has a very rich inheritance of addressing the conflicts in the world, but it is alleged as a part of the problem not unlikely. The Islamic texts and Muslim heritage approaches to conflict resolution are drawn on religious values that present a considerable wealth of responses based on positive solutions to the conflict, as the concept of social justice *al-adl* which is very central to the development of peace. The conflict in a society often begins with inequality, lack

of proper distribution of resources, an unjust socio-political system which results in complaints, rebellion and hence conflict. Therefore, a just socio-economic and political system is necessary to end the conflict. Justice is possible if the people in power resolve to search for truth by making the judiciary independent and powerful, and by creating equal opportunities to obtain goals (Gopin 1997:1-31).

The Non-violent approach is arduous when *al-adl* justice is denied. In the case of Malcolm X and Fidel Castro, the approach towards peace building and conflict resolution is justice reliant. Malcolm X says ‘there is nothing in our book, the Quran that teaches us to suffer peacefully’ (Malcolm, Alex 2013: 402-415). This certainly has a socio-political context in America where white supremacy ruled the roost. Our religion teaches us to be intelligent, peaceful, obey the law, and respect for others. If someone lays a hand on you send him to the cemetery’ (Malcolm, Alex 2013: 402-415). Malcolm X was not an advocate of violence, but he believed that a peaceful struggle would not end the racism and segregation (Nugroho & Aryani 2021: 120-133). This denial of justice from the leadership, and discrimination of man based on caste, creed, color, or religion has challenged the peace process in the world. It disallows the fundamentals rights, like the ‘right to equality’ which entangled people to do ambitious and aggressive things that result in violence. This determination of people to act violently is a state’s liability to stop acting discriminative and discontinue performing as an obstacle to the peacemaking and conflict resolutions. The idea of sovereignty to control people and curb the freedom of expression is a major *raison d’être* of violence in our times. The scheme to stifle voices, choke criticism, and deny right to the speech has over the years justified militant models of conflict, violent revolutions and rebellions like the revolution of Fidel Castro. The lack of justice opens the doors of potential violence (Ulafor 2020: 54-61). Remember, this is permissible only if when the effective way to resist aggression is not available.

The terms like *sūlh*, reconciliation, or peacemaking predate Islam when Arabs used to settle the tribal feuds. *Sūlh* as a technique was used by Prophet

Muhammad in treaties like the treaty of Hudaibiya. It reflects the sense of resolution and conflict management. In the Muslim history and the development of Muslim political thought, we see *sūlh* frequently used to end wars through the payment of tribute. *Dar as-Sūlh* is the domain added by the Muslim scholars other than *Dar al-Harb* and *Dar al-Islam* in which Muslims have concluded peace treaties with non-Muslims. The Quran encourages human beings to use *sūlh* to reconcile disputes. The end of a dispute through reconciliation is ordained between the two parties, like “*make peace between them with justice, and be fair: For God loves those who are fair and Just*” (Al Quran Nisa: 128). Prophet preferred reconciliation over adjudication. Umar ibn al-Khattab who was reported to have directed in his letters to his representatives in the different parts of the Muslim Empire: ‘*And strive for conciliation so long as the rendering of judgment does not become evident to you*’ (Al-Ramahi 2008:12). The Quran says ‘*If two parties among the Believers fall into a quarrel, make ye peace between them...*’ (Al-Nisa:128).

The use of *istislah* is another method applied by jurists to find the solutions to the problems which are not found in Quran and Hadīth. The *mūslāha* translated as reconciliation, to look for something positive or to avoid what is harmful (Abu Nimer 2010: 73-92). We can use the *istislah* to solve merging challenges and according to Imam Malik to ‘seek good’ is one of the fundamentals of Shariah (Imam and Alkali 2021).

Besides the terms *wasta* (patronage-mediation) are used for alternate dispute resolution. A verse from the Quran which substantiates the mediation as:

If you anticipate a split between them, appoint a mediator from his family and another from hers. If they desire reconciliation, Allah will restore harmony between them. Surely Allah is All-Knowing, All-Aware (Al-Nisa: 35)

The term *tāhkim* (arbitration) which means the involvement of another person is also used as a method of alternate dispute resolution along with *sulh*.

The evidence of appointing a judge *hakkam* arbitrator is found in the holy Quran as:

But no, by your Lord, they will not [truly] believe until they make you, [O Muhammad], judge (*yuhakkimuka*) concerning that over which they dispute among themselves and then find within themselves no discomfort from what you have judged and submit in [full, willing] submission.” (Al-Nisa: 65)

One of the examples of arbitration in Islamic history is the one between Hadhrat Ali and Hadhrat Muawiyah that during the battle of Siffin in which they settled their war/conflict through arbitration by appointing another person on their behalf. However, the result of arbitration didn't yield the desired result of settlement but arbitration as a technique was intended to end the war (Saidilyos 2020: 47).

The need for arbitration rather than punishment is healthy for a community that lives together rather than the one which focuses on individualism, like western society (Desmund Tutu 2011:68). Promoting reconciliation between two strange communities is an arduous task but preparing the stage for the peace process amid war is a categorical imperative. In the case of Rohingya Muslims and Buddhists of Rakhine many opportunities have been created to promote peace and Burmese people are now yearning for a peaceful life (Weber, et al. 2017: 55-82). One of the challenges in such conflicts is the arbitration/reconciliation between fringe groups/armed groups and the state. Instead of further mushrooming the conflict, the parties involved should be arbitrated. In Kashmir the unwillingness of the state of India and Pakistan to go for talks and use these methods to end the war is found less after the rise of BJP in India (Josef 1953:498). The greatest challenge to any peace technique arises from these conflict zones, where the old cliché “everything is fair in love and war” is believed by conflating parties. It is also knotty and perplexing to find the guilty party because of the justifications, arguments and rationale parties have. In such situations Martin Luther King method is a useful one. King Jr. in his acceptance speech for the Nobel peace prize said:

“First, non-violence was not for cowards... it took great courage to place oneself unarmed and defenseless in front of a gang of white racists or heavily armed police officer... second, non-violent was not used to humiliate or defeat opponents, it is for friendship and converting the opponents... thirdly, non-violence should be used to fight the evil and not the person caught in these evil forces. Fourthly, non-violence was beneficial because it avoided the physical harm that violence inflicted on the body and finally that non-violence remedy tilt that forces of the universe toward justice. Based on these, the non-violent activities will be equipped with knowledge to withstand pains and sufferings without retaliating.... (John 2020: 54)

The essential and old technique used by humankind for resolution of conflicts is arbitration as a solution. This technique can also be used to settle any form of conflict, whether it is economic, political, legal disputes, country, kin, tribe, disputes, and others. In Islam, the techniques are moral to settle the disputes, we rarely find any specific term for non-violence in the Arabic language; however, we find the alternate vocabulary of techniques which stress on non-vehemence and peace, like *al-unf* (no force), *sabr* (patience), and *akhlāq* (virtuous character) etc. (Gopin 2001: 18). Since the conflict begins within a person, one strives to resolve that conflict through *aql* (intellect) to fight *al-hawa* (passions and desire) to overcome *jahl* (ignorance) as: *And the servants of the Most merciful are those who walk upon the earth with humility, and when ignorant address them (harshly), they respond with peace* (Al-Furqan: 63).

And when ‘within’ conflict is eradicated with *ikhlas* (purity) then *ihsan* (beneficence) or putting the good and beautiful into practice is exercised and above all fighting for social justice *al-adl* (Douglas 2001: 56). Moreover, when there is a disagreement between two parties, the Arabic term is *al-ikhtilāf*, the intractable observance of one’s idea and opinion with no respect for eclecticism and then enforcing this opinion on others are the ingredients of *al-jidal* (dispute or dialectics) and when a dispute becomes severe and the disputants only concern is to dominate the opponent without any concern for truth, the situation is named as *al-shiqaq* (dissension) (Nimer 2006).

Prophets making of alliances/friends

Alliances in modern International Relations regulate the conflict and promote relationship. Prophet Muhammad ﷺ was able to maintain the alliances with both Muslims and Non-Muslims and we have a wealth of principles on the foundation of which the Prophet made alliances. To understand the conflict resolution and peace agreements in the modern sense, the parties who conflict with each other must have some agreement. Prophet Muhammad ﷺ conflicted with the Quraish and the level of conflict had turned into a war because there were causalities on both sides. There was no possible way of agreement between the two parties because the Quraish were not only reluctant in accepting the new message of the Prophet and wanted to assassinate Prophet. The strategy that Prophet applied here was *hijrah* (migration) to save his life to minimize the damage and war. This was at a time when Muslims and Quraish were not in any formal understanding, the time when no document was signed. It was a time of chaos, persecution, and torture for Muslims (Hisham 2013: 39). At the international stage Prophet Muhammad ﷺ applied certain strategies and relations which were of historical importance. Some of the examples taken from *sirah* literature show that Prophet Muhammad ﷺ left Mecca, the birthplace of Prophet, and went to Medina but in between the persecution that he endured from Quraish; prophet developed one of the most important strategies of international relations called alliances. An alliance in international relations is a formal agreement between two parties, states, or countries for the mutual support in case of war. In Artha-sastra, Kutaliya has said that in pursuing alliances countries should seek support and assistance from different states against the threat of neighbors. Prophet Muhammad ﷺ was successful in creating an alliance with Medinites at Aqaba, popularly known as the “pledge of Aqaba” 622 AD. The pledge is of historical significance because of the Muslim dialogue between two strange communities in which the Prophetic wisdom was witnessed unparalleled. He created brotherhood (*ukhwa*); trust (*iman*) and security (*al-aman*) in the thrice held dialogue with the people of Aus

and Khazraj on the plains of Aqaba. The people of Aus and Khazraj knew that going for the pledge with the prophet will turn their relations hostile with the Jews of Medina and for that Prophet made a “promise”, which is found in almost every *sirah* work: “Your blood is my blood; you belong to me and I to you. I will wage war against those who make war upon you and have peace with those that keep peace with you” (Nomani 1987:159). Truth (*haq*), trust (*iman*) and security (*al-aman*) played a significant role in making alliances and resolution of conflicts.

This was a turning point and the beginning of a new dawn in the life of Muslims and Islam. Ibn Hisham states, after the continuous failure in Mecca Prophet, was looking for alliances to go abroad and obtain protection and defense when needed (Hamidullah 2007: 115). And for that Prophet was successful in building an alliance with the people of Medina. In Medina, we find two tribes -- Aus and Khazraj-- who were rival clans and were in conflict with each other. Khazraj clan had an alliance with the Jews and to end the disequilibrium of forces, Aus had to seek an alliance with the Quraish of Mecca. Prophet Muhammad ﷺ made an excellent use of the chasm between Aus and Khazraj.

When Prophet and his companions reached Medina Prophet had to replicate this method of forming alliances over and over again. We find a Jeudo-Muslim alliance in which it was strictly forbidden for Jews to provide any help to the Quraish of Mecca or their allies. Apart from depriving the Meccans of the help of Jews of Medina, clause 43 of the constitution of Medina aimed at forming a Jeudo-Muslim alliance. In this way any treaty of peace with the invader needed a common decision (Ahmad 2015: 151).

In Medina, we notice that new emigrant colonies were attracted. The “policy of emigration” for making more strong alliances worked wonderfully for Prophet. As the hatred of Meccans increased for Prophet, He was more intelligently creating new friends and minimizing enemies. We see that in Medina for strengthening the international relations and alliances, Prophet organized Muslims and non-Muslims in a city-state, for the common defense. Even we find

in the *sirah* literature of Muhammd Hamidullah that the Prophet opened gates for non-Medinite Muslims. The population of the state was strategically increased (Hamidullah 1941: 29).

Prophet also established military alliances with the tribes around Medina, with Juhainah in the north, Damarah, Ghiffar and Mudlij in the south to minimize the damage to his community (Hamidullah 2007: 51). Prophet entered the Mecca in 630 AD, Malik ibn Awf al-Ansari gathered the clan of Hawazin to fight the Prophet. When Prophet heard about the news, he borrowed weapons from Safwan ibn Umayyah, a Meccan idolater. The interesting part of the event is that eighty idolaters, including Safwan, fought on the side in this battle. This means that Prophet had no hesitation about accepting non-Muslims as allies (Dawoody 2009: 54).

Negotiations (Tafaadh)

Negotiation in conflict resolution is a dialogue between different parties intended to reach to a beneficial outcome aimed at resolving points of differences. It is a powerful method for resolving conflict and requires skill and experience. Zartman defines negotiation as “a process of combining conflicting positions into a common position under a decision, rule of unanimity, a phenomenon in which the outcome is determined by the process”. Negotiation techniques can resolve immediate conflict. In 1964 American policy analyst Fred Charles Ikle wrote an influential book titled *How Negotiations Negotiate*, in which he focused on how a nation can prevail over the other side and concluded that a good negotiator must above all, “maintain the will to win”. However, such negotiation does not resolve the conflicts but if negotiations must resolve the conflicts, a different perspective is needed, primarily the one which sees negotiation as a part of resolving the differences which for that matter should aim at win-win solutions in which all sides are better off than they were before (Barash 2014: 282). Negotiation is a diplomatic activity and it takes place in return for the exchange of information

and understanding. The basic techniques are encouragement, compromise, and bargaining.

The 1919 Covenant of the League of Nations came forth with the idea of political settlements in international relations; the rationale of Article 1 of the United Nations is the settlement of disputes by peaceful means. The article also reads respect for the obligations of the treaties and not to resort to the war. In Islam, we find the most palpable negotiation technique compromise which was made functional by the Prophet of Islam in the treaty of Hudaibiya to reach an agreement concerning the demands of both Muslims and Quraish. The Quraish of Makah intended to fight and Khalid bin Walid, who later became one of the generals of Islam, rallied all the tribes in Makah to fight pilgrims from Medina. The Prophet came to know about the intention of Makans and he immediately sends a word that 'He had come for the pilgrimage not for the war'. They declined the message of Prophet until 'Urwa, an age-old Quraysh leader, whose message was indented to bring peace, intervened and came to negotiate with the Prophet. However, Prophet never meant war at this point of time and the discussion with Urwa remained inconclusive, therefore, Prophet sent an emissary to Quraish, but they killed the camel on which he traveled with the message. Prophet persisted in the message of peace and negotiations which were still in the process even after Quraish categorically busted the faith. Prophet sent another envoy and this time his very close associate Uthman bin Affan finally after a maximum effort, Quraish came to resume the negotiation and a settlement arrived which was reduced to writing. The draft, treaty offered several obstacles and the prophet exhibited consummate patience in this delicate situation (Iqbal 1998:50).

In the draft signed, Prophet and Muslims had to compromise to a large extent and even Prophet had to omit the phrase "Apostle of Allah" from the draft, the compromise for which his companions disagreed, but Prophet negotiated it skillfully to avoid the war. Sometimes the negotiators' art may, therefore, include recourse to equivocal language for future developments. Nobel-Prize winning

Canadian diplomat Lester Pearson noted that he has not sometimes used language “not so much to record agreement as to conceal and disagreement” that it was desired to be so, and it was hoped to disappear in time (Barash 2014:285). We do find huge compromise a sort of ‘Carthaginian peace’ established between Allies and central powers in World War 1 in treaty of Versailles. Versailles was unsuccessful until Dawes plan successfully resolved the issues related to World War I. But In Hudaybiya we see the prophet as an ambassador, using a compromising language for drafting a future hope in which he as a negotiator (*al-mufaodh*) appeared with a clear vision and firm grasp on what modern day diplomats and negotiators try to achieve.

Prophets’ transformation of relations into brotherhood and fraternity

Scott Appleby, who has done extensive research on religion and politics, says that a new form of conflict transformation religious peacebuilding is taking place all over the world inside the communities shaped by violence. It is so because religion develops certain concepts which have the major potential to solve conflicts around the globe. In this manner, the focus on good relationships has been a priority in providing conflict resolution. John Paul Lederach says:

In my estimation, the starting point for understanding and supporting reconciliation process is a reorientation toward the centrality of relationships. It is in the ebb and flow, the quality of interdependence of relationships that we find the birthplace and home of reconciliation. This is quite different than a focus on issues, the shaping of substantive agreements, or cognitive and rational analytic-based approaches to conflict resolution. In these latter approaches attention is placed on the external, often symptomatic expressions of how the relationship is negotiated. But they often remain just that, external and symptomatic. To enter reconciliation process is to enter the domain of the internal world, the inner understandings, fears and hopes, perceptions and interpretations of the relationship itself (Lederach 2002: 200).

During the time of Prophet Muhammad ﷺ we find how Prophet transformed the conflict within the society by applying the techniques of brotherhood and fraternity. The term *ukhwa*, the alternate meaning of which is fraternity and brotherhood has been one of the ways and methods mentioned in the texts of Islam and exercised by the Muslims to reach the ideal of *insaf* or justice.

The Qur'an brings into focus this fact of common parentage and hence brotherhood in its following verses:

O mankind! Be careful of your duty to your Lord Who created you from a single soul and from it created its mate and from them twain hath spread abroad a multitude of men and women...”(Quran 4:1)

And He it is Who hath produced you from a single being, and (hath given you) a habitation and a repository... (Quran 6:98)

Since human beings belong to the same human stock and have common ancestry, all of them are like brothers and sisters. As children of the same parents, they are equal having equal rights and duties to each other. Thus, Islam promotes universal brotherhood and fraternity not only among the individual human beings but also among peoples and nations. Hence the fundamental principle of the foreign policy of the Islamic state is to promote brotherhood and fraternity among the nations of the world.

The Prophets' covenant with Medinians and Jews resulted in the first, ever signed, treaty of Islam. This treaty has mentioned word oneness and equality plentiful times for those who live out different faiths other than Islam. The Muslims have their faith, Jews have theirs. The freedom of religion comes clean, and the Jews of Banu Auf are attested as one community with Muslims. Soon after the finishing point of the treaty, Prophet addressed with the universal language of equality and declared “Your flesh is our flesh, and your blood is our blood”. This message is very basic to the conflict resolution in Islam in which all the religions can live together for a political cause leading towards *justice* with a broad spectrum of equality (Helmick and Peterson 2002: 195).

Akin to the principle of brotherhood lies the principle of equality as the fact of common parentage of all the human beings leads to establish that human beings are not only brothers of each other but also are equal. The Prophet of Islam, in his famous address delivered before a large gathering on the occasion of his farewell pilgrimage, had declared that all human beings are sons of Adam and Adam was created out of clay. No white has precedence over a black or an Arab over a non-Arab. All are equal and in the sight of Allah, only he who is best who is most excellent in conduct (Al-Bukhari, Hadith 1623, 1626, 6361).

The maintenance of brotherhood and fraternity solved generously the interpersonal conflicts within Medina and the Muslim community. The resounding tradition of the Prophet on the brotherhood that “None of you truly believes until he loves for his brother what he loves for himself” and the practice of such wise quips created a strong bond between *Ansar* and *Muhajir* and the brotherhood between the two communities is a record event of conflict resolution in Islam for Muslim. The meaning is not restricted here to Muslims but to humanity as well and the Prophetic tradition goes “Love for the people what you love for yourself, and you will be a believer”. Such events fashioned an unbound spell of mutual understanding which eventually resulted in sacrificing the most desirable things *Ansar* or *Muhajir* ever desired for. The magic of the teachings of brotherhood and fraternity yielded not only the results for the development of a substantial culture and civilization but immediately resolved the conflicts which were to no avail before the coming of the Prophet. Besides that, the emphasis was put on the centrality of relationships in which respect, honor, and regard for family and neighborhood were seen juristically as basic ideals for being a Muslim, the underpinnings on which the Islamic culture flourished. One of the traditions of the prophet vibrates with the message of being good with neighbors as “he who is not amongst us who is not good with his neighbor” (Afzal: 285).

Principles of forgiveness and pardoning (Afu and Musamaha)

One of the elements of resolving the conflicts in Islam is “forgiveness”. One of the attributes of Allah mentioned in the Quran is *Al-Gaffur* which in English means the one who has the potential to forgive or ‘forgiver’, and the verb used for the term is *ghafara* which means ‘to forgive’. Allah is oft-forgiving, often mentioned in the Quran and the traditions of Prophet replicate this element numerous times (Al Quran 53:32, 4:17, 4:153, 4:76). Divine forgiveness is yet contingent on human repentance *taubah*. In Islam, there lies hermeneutical tension (Gopin 2001:18) in the texts when we find both retribution and forgiveness. Islamic conflict resolution model, however, stresses more on terms like forgiveness to solve conflicts. It is a fact that terms like retribution and *jihad* are violent in nature but as discussed earlier the use of them is restricted to failure of non-violent techniques, like arbitration, treaties and negotiations. Besides, the possibility of violent texts, Islamic peacebuilding measures seek out the possibilities of conflict resolution through the Islamic texts after critical evaluation. The peace practitioners prefer non-violence over violence and forgiveness over retribution. One of the qualities of Prophet Muhammad ﷺ was ‘forgiveness’, he would never revenge on personal welfare. There is a clearly eloquent first choice in Islam for non-violence over violence and for forgiveness (*afu*) over retribution. The Quran aims to regulate the vengeance element within human beings and forgiveness is repeatedly accentuated in the matters of requiting crime (Al Quran 4:149).

Hazrat Aisha (R.A) asked Prophet Muhammad ﷺ: "O Messenger of Allah! If I realize Lailat-ul-Qadr (Night of Decree), what should I supplicate in it?" He replied, "You should supplicate: 'O Allah, You are the Forgiver, You love forgiveness, so forgive me' (Tirmidhi 9: 1195).

There are traditions and historical events which can act as seminal guidelines for the Muslim development of the subject “Islam and conflict transformation” with special reference to forgiveness. In the “conquest of Mecca”, for example,

the Prophet had a dominating position politically and yet demonstrated peaceful action when he stated that *there is no reproach today upon you, May Allah forgive you, go your way, for you are free*. Islamic tradition repeats this concept of forgiveness, and we find the textual verbatim of this Prophet's forgiveness replicated in Quran through Prophet Yusuf to his brothers:

Yusuf's brothers said to him, "By Allah! Indeed, has Allah preferred thee above us, and we certainly have been guilty of sin!"

He said: "This day let no reproach be (cast) on you: Allah will forgive you, and He is the Most Merciful of those who show mercy!" (Yusuf:91-92).

The Quran intends to standardize the humdrum, retributive responses of people to conflict and violence. Forgiveness is consistently held out as the preferred option for humanity in matters of requiting clear injustice or crime. *"The recompense of an injury is an injury the like thereof; but whoever forgives and thereby brings about a reestablishment of harmony, his reward is with God; and God loves not the wrongdoers"* (Al-Quran 42:40) These were the teachings upon which Prophet built his relations with the members of other religions and Meccans during the times of strife. We also see this modal applied by Nelson Mandela who after coming to power could have taken the revenge of white supremacist elements, but he forgave everyone --white or black--, and put off the scourge of racism to rest. In Mandela we find a great deal of reconciliation through forgiveness.

Sabr patience and Ihsan perfect goodness as values of peace and non-violence

The Quranic method of conflict resolution invokes *sabr* patience. We find in the text an unvarying plea for endurance. The men of *sabr* attain salvation along with the righteous truthful, and men of good deeds *al khayr*. Those who fail to attain *sabr* are in complete loss as:

By the passage of time! Surely humanity is in grave loss, except those who have faith, do good deeds, and urge each other to truth, and urge each other to perseverance (Al-Quran 103).

Patience is a skill because enduring pain, suffering and challenges make our characters strong. Patience grants paradise. It yields immense results in conflict and war. Prophet Muhammad was patient towards his enemies in Mecca; he didn't retaliate, and neither was reactionary. He was patient. It does not mean that he was passive; it means introspecting more than others, searching for future possibilities and not giving up easily. Patience is related with time. People usually do not have time to negotiate, to talk and to think. Giving yourself some time in the middle of a conflict means you are aiming for peace. Patience here also means that we are not driven by emotion and ego but working dispassionately to resolve a problem. For a best leader to deliver patience is a key skill. In Islam patience forms one of the important ethical and moral codes along with bravery, honesty and forgiveness.

Ihsan means “beautification”, ‘excellence’, and ‘perfect goodness’ is both an outer and inner aspect of Shariah. *Ihsan* in Islamic tradition is an achievement a believer attains when he reaches to a stage of great accountability, wherein according to a tradition of Prophet Muhammad a believer worships God as if he sees Him, even if he cannot see Him, he is still in a stage of belief wherein he has a conviction that God sees him (Bukhari Vol 1 Book 2: 48). This station of a believer is a high accountability disposition. The values that will cascade from this believer will highly be effective in marinating peace and stability in society. He will be patient, accountable, truthful, forgiving, and disciplined and just, a great treasure for peace and conflict resolutions.

CONCLUSION

The subject “Islam and conflict resolution” has a huge gamut in our times. There are reasons for its being a subject of importance; one is Islam and Muslims are held responsible for terrorism and violence in the world, second the tradition

of Islam has the luxury of possessing potential precepts to resolve the conflicts. Scholars like Abu-Nimer, Amjad Muhammad Salem, Qamar Ul Huda, G.E. Irani, S.H. Nasr, N.C. Funk, Marc Gopin and others have contributed very well in the academic circles for the development of this subject. The subject needs more academic exercise and men power with academic vigor to extract positive and Universalist aspect of religions. In order to do that, we need to respond the other academic camp, which has been focusing on the negative and particular aspects of religion, the camp which has theorized the clash theory of religion.

The wealth of peaceful teachings in the Quran and Traditions of the Prophet need further exploration. The discovery of such precepts should herby be taught in schools and colleges. The important aspect of Prophetic personality is the implementation part. Prophet Muhammad successfully made the apropos terms operational at state level, in the state of medina. We can begin by applying these teachings in the school and college curriculum/syllabi in various add-on courses. These precepts need to be taught as a part of the syllabi in the subject of peace and conflict resolution.

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Notes

1. Fault lines according to the Huntington are those lines, which are shared by people of different religions. Like India and Pakistan share a fault line and the people who share the fault line are in war with each other.
2. Samuel. P. Huntington, *The Clash of Civilizations' and the Remaking of the World Order*, New York; Touch Stone, 1997. This theory has been rebutted by the academicians like Edward said in "Clash of Ignorance", Jonathan Fox, Faud Ajami, Muhammad Khatami in "Dialogue among Civilizations", Stephen Walt, Benazir Bhutto and others. Besides that numerous works have been

written on the subject by Scholars like, Fawaz Gerges “The future of Islam; Peaceful coexistence or clash of civilizations”.

3. The justifications of defensive war during the circumstances imposed by exploitative and oppressive forces found in Quran and agreed by most of the Muslim Scholars, e.g., Wahidudin Khan, Nonviolence and Islam, in Forum on Islam and Peace in the 21st Century 5 (D.C.: Am. U. 1998).
4. For detailed account of arbitration as a technique of resolving conflicts please see khakimov, saidilyos (2020) "arbitration (*tahkim*) and reconciliation (*sulh*) in islam as alternative dispute resolution mechanisms," *the light of islam*: vol. 2020 : iss. 4 , article 4. available at: <https://uzjournals.edu.uz/ijau/vol2020/iss4/4>
5. Sirah literature which is written on the life of Prophet Muhammad describes the kinds of torture/ persecution to which the *al-mustad'afin* (oppressed, socially weak Muslims) were subjected. Like Bilal, a slave was severely tortured by his master to abandon the new religion. See, Nadiyah Husni Saqr, *Falssafa al-Harb fi al Islam*, Supreme Council of Islamic Affairs, Cairo, 1990.
6. The treaty of versailles was signed on 28th of June 1919 which ended the state of war between Germany and Allied powers. Prominent economicist Jhon Keynes declared the treaty too harsh and compromising for Germany.
7. The plan provided for an end to the Franco-Belgian occupation of the Ruhr, and a staggered payment plan for Germany's payment of war reparations. Because the Plan resolved a serious international crisis, Dawes shared the Nobel Peace Prize in 1925 for his work.

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