

Islam and Nonviolence

ISLAM AND NONVIOLENCE

Edited by

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Center for Global Nonviolence
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To All Nonviolent Seekers of Truth

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PREFACE

The Center for Global Nonviolence Planning Project is pleased to present this report of an international exploratory seminar on Islam and nonviolence held in Bali, Indonesia, during February 14-19, 1986. The origins of the seminar are explained in the Introduction by Chaiwat Satha-Anand (Qader Muheideen).

We are grateful to the United Nations University, and especially to the then Vice-Rector Kinhide Mushakoji and senior programme officer Dr. Janusz Golebiowski, of its Regional and Global Studies Division, and to the cosponsor, Indonesia's Nahdatul Ulama, led by Abdurrahman Wahid, for making the seminar possible. The cooperation of the Government of the Republic of Indonesia, exemplified by the presence of its Minister of Religious Affairs, H. E. Mr. Munawir Sjadzali, who opened the seminar and wished it success, is gratefully acknowledged.

The inspired hospitality extended to participants by Mrs. Gedong Bagoes Oka and members of her globally respected Ashram Canti Dasa [Servants of Peace Ashram], which welcomes seekers after nonviolence of all faiths and callings, continues to uplift us as it does all who have been blessed by it. So does the warm welcome extended by the people of the East Bali Muslim village of Budakeling to our seminar members who visited their village and mosque for Friday prayers.

We thank the Amana Corporation, Brentwood, Maryland, for permission to reprint Commentary 1, 2, 3, and 4 on Surah 2:138 from *The Meaning of the Holy Qur'an*, by A. Yusuf 'Ali (1991, p. 71); and Lynne Rienner Publishers, Inc., Boulder & London, for permission to reprint "The Nonviolent Crescent" by Chaiwat Satha-Anand (Qader Muheideen) from *Arab Nonviolent Political Struggle in the Middle East* edited by Ralph E. Crow, Philip Grant, and Saad E. Ibrahim (1990). This essay was originally prepared for the Bali seminar.

Preface

Quotations from the Holy Qur'an in the present volume are from *The Meaning of the Holy Qur'an*, by 'Abdullah Yusuf 'Ali, New Edition with Revised Translation and Commentary, prepared under the supervision of the then president of the International Institute of Islamic Thought, the late Isma'il Raji al Faruqi (Brentwood, MD: Amana Corporation, 1991

We have tried to regularize English transliteration of the principal Islamic and Arabic terms used in the volume. To assist readers unfamiliar with them we have appended a Glossary that also includes some alternative spellings.

The generous advice and assistance of George Simson and the publications committee and Stanley Schab, editor, of the Spark M. Matsunaga Institute for Peace, is gratefully acknowledged.

We hope that this book will encourage further exploration of nonviolence in Islam as a contributor to the spirit, science, and skills that are needed for nonviolent global transformation.

The Editors
Honolulu, Bangkok, and Boulder
August 1993

Introduction

**Chaiwat Satha-Anand
(Qader Muheideen)**

INTRODUCTION

A seminar on Islam and Nonviolence, to many, sounds unimaginable in a world where the term “Islam” has ceased to be a simple description. Instead, it means a lot of “unpleasant” things to some non-Muslims. Edward Said, a Columbia University professor, writes, “For the right, Islam represents barbarism; for the left, medieval theocracy; for the center, a kind of distasteful exoticism. In all camps, however, there is agreement that even though little enough is known about the Islamic world there is not much to be approved of there.”¹ Needless to say, concerning the issues of violence and nonviolence, Islam is normally perceived as heavily oriented towards the former.

But Glenn D. Paige, professor emeritus of political science at the University of Hawai‘i thinks differently. This American professor is not a Muslim. People around him sense that he has a strong inclination towards Buddhism and Jainism. His most significant bond with them is, perhaps, the precept that instructs human beings to abstain from taking the lives of other living things. He exemplifies this very principle because he is an extremely rare political scientist. He is seeking to be a nonviolent (or to be more precise—a nonkilling) political scientist; since 1980 he has taught a course in Hawai‘i on “Nonviolent Political Alternatives.” Professor Paige was the temporary convenor of the United Nations University exploratory seminar on “Islam and Nonviolence” held in Bali in February 1986.

The idea of this seminar grew out of a special relationship between us. We met in 1978 in Hawai‘i, where I was a Ph.D. student in political science. It all began when I registered for

Professor Paige's course on "Nonviolent Political Alternatives." As a member of the Muslim minority community in Thailand, I had left my home country one year after a bloody episode in its political history had taken place at Thammasat University, and I had come in search of political alternatives to violence. This American professor was ready. Together we strolled along the relatively virgin academic path of nonviolence. In the professor, I found academic training in nonviolence. In me, the professor found a case of Muslim receptivity to nonviolence that radically altered his former perception of Islam. Subsequently the professor met another nonviolent Muslim political scientist, Syed Sikander Mehdi, a University of Karachi professor. Paige met Mehdi at an international course on "Nonviolence: Meanings, Forms and Uses," organized by Theodore L. Herman, then director of Peace Studies at Colgate University, held at the Inter-University Centre of Post-graduate Studies, Dubrovnik, Yugoslavia during June 26–July 6, 1983.

Meeting these two Muslim political scientists who took nonviolence seriously led Paige to dream of a seminar, a meeting place, a forum where those keenly interested in developing Islamic contributions to peaceful global transformation could meet, exchange ideas, and try to identify feasible future projects of common interest.

Paige then put his dream into writing and sent a proposal to the United Nations University in Tokyo for consideration. It was approved on December 6, 1984. First, it was scheduled to be held in Sabah, Malaysia, in May 1985. But the seminar had to be cancelled because of a change of the Sabah Government in April 1985. Then it was rescheduled for December 1985 in Bali, Indonesia, only to be postponed again until early 1986, at the Indonesian Government's request, so that the Minister of Religious Affairs officially could open it.

Paige's dream was finally realized when the seminar was held successfully at Ashram Canti Dasa, Bali, Indonesia during February 14–19, 1986. Among eighteen participants from India, Jordan (an American), Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Malaysia, Thailand, Indonesia, Egypt, and the United States, there were fourteen Muslims—ten men and four women. It must be pointed out that Mrs. Gedong Bagoes Oka, the famous Gandhian of Bali and head of the Bali

Canti Dasa Ashram, provided all the participants with rare motherly care that was unforgettable.

THE EXPLORATION

The papers presented in this volume cover a wide range of issues. Nevertheless these varied issues can be grouped into three categories—theoretical, theological, and instrumental. My paper, “The Nonviolent Crescent,” is basically theoretical. It tries to argue for the Muslim’s sacred obligation to fight for justice in the modern world through nonviolent means.

Three papers take primarily a theological approach to their subject: the first by an Indian historian, Razi Ahmad’s “Islam, Nonviolence, and Global Transformation”; the second by an Indonesian political leader and writer, Abdurrahman Wahid’s “Islam, Nonviolence, and National Transformation”; and the third by a rural development activist from Bangladesh, Mamoon al-Rasheed’s “Islam, Nonviolence, and Rural Transformation.” Addressing issues of social transformation at the global, national, and local levels, these authors attempt to show how Islam is indispensable for human change. They argue that such transformations need to be carried out nonviolently and that there are ample Islamic injunctions which sanction peaceful change. One author, however, cautions that nonviolence will only be realized in the contemporary world when equality becomes a reality. Since Islam highly values equality, it can contribute to a nonviolent world. In addition, Islam deals with the roots of violence by fighting injustice and seeking to educate the human mind for nonviolence.

A paper by the Malaysian physicist Khalijah Mohd. Salleh on “Islam, Nonviolence, and Women” provides fresh insight. She points out that for Muslim women to work effectively for nonviolence, Islamic knowledge is badly needed. She concludes, “It should be noted, however, that her contributions can become meaningful and effective provided opportunities are given her to engage in society.”

A paper by Mazzahim Mohideen, then deputy director of Sri Lanka’s Marga Institute, on “Islam, Nonviolence, and Interfaith Relations” looks at the relationship between Islam and other global

religions. It seeks to discern commonalities of perception, teaching, and practice that can serve to promote ongoing dialogue “for the promotion of interfaith harmony, human development, and global peace and order.” Emphasizing the primacy of human beings in the physical universe, he claims that this assertion is shared by people of all persuasions.

Collectively these papers bring into focus a number of issues. First, for Muslims, Islam is definitely a repertoire of solutions for social ills that is still waiting to be fully realized. Second, even among Muslims, there is still a severe lack of comprehensive Islamic knowledge. Therefore, the search for more Islamic knowledge assumes paramount importance. Third, Muslims must try to project an image of Islam that is genuine and closer to the Muslims’ own understanding of it, rather than passively accepting the image portrayed by popular writers whose knowledge of Islam and Muslims leaves much to be desired.² The message of Islam revealed in Surah (chapter) 5, Ayat (verse) 32 of the Holy Qur’an needs to be widely shared. The Almighty says:

And if any one saved a life,
It would be as if he saved
The life of the whole people.

It should also be noted that amidst the brotherly and sisterly atmosphere, debates, sometimes heated, did take place. These debates signified the seriousness which the participants in this exploratory seminar accorded to the discussion.

OF DISCREPANCIES AND SOLACE

The seminar, like so many others, was attended by participants with basic differences. True, many of us were Muslims, as are all the authors of the papers included here. But each of us came from a distinctive social background, class, and culture. One difference observed was between those from countries in which Muslims were a majority and those in which they were not. Even the books read by the participants differed. As a result, perceptions of an issue were at times dissimilar. Moreover the very terms used

Introduction

in formal presentations and informal communications differed. For example, it was pointed out that the terms “violence” and “nonviolence” are not Qur’anic terms. Therefore it was suggested that “coercion” might be preferable. However, there are at least two problems with this. First, if a term is non-Qur’anic, can it not be discussed? “Nuclear weapons” is certainly not a Qur’anic term. But is it not part of present reality and deserving of serious discussion by Muslims? Second, judging from a sociological standpoint coercion and violence are different concepts. Coercion, in fact, can be both violent and nonviolent.

The discussion revealed lack of knowledge about both Islam and nonviolence. For example, most participants were not familiar with the literature on nonviolence, such as Gene Sharp’s extremely important book *The Politics of Nonviolent Action*.³ Consequently they failed to see that nonviolent action is a form of fighting for justice. Like many people throughout the world, quite a few thought that nonviolence is equivalent to submission or passivity. Also, when some participants quoted a Hadith (a saying attributed by tradition to the Prophet Muhammad), others might question its authenticity. This raised the concern that the seminar needed expert classical Islamic scholars, and surely this is appropriate for further inquiry into specific issues. But what was needed at the outset, it was suggested, was not petrified textual exegesis. Instead, as ordinary Muslims, it was inspirations from the Words of God and the Traditions of the Prophet that should be embraced.

Despite our shortcomings, the exploratory seminar on Islam and Nonviolence accomplished at least three things. First, it indicated to the world that Islam indeed can offer a peaceful solution to social ills. Second, it provided an opportunity for a broad spectrum of Muslim social activists, scholars, and concerned non-Muslims to join together in a penetrating exploration of nonviolent alternatives to global violence in the present era. Third, it helped to construct a human bond that otherwise would be nonexistent. This human bond was, and is, supported by strong religious conviction. For Muslims, Islam provides a comfortable basis for discussion of issues related to general human and social problems. Differences which arose in the seminar, though significant, were primarily

hermeneutical. As such, a commonality was already there and any conflicts which arose were truly instructive and healthy.

What is more important, perhaps, was a non-Muslim's unusual remark at the end of the seminar. Professor Paige told the participants that never before had he experienced so strongly the spirit of God among mortals. This seminar was just a beginning. A lot more work needs to be done, including research, study, and further seminars. But the faith is there, the beginning made, and the supportive human relationships established.

NOTES

1. Edward Said, *Covering Islam* (New York: Pantheon, 1981), p. xv.
2. For example, V. S. Naipaul, *Among the Believers* (New York: Vintage, 1981).
3. Gene Sharp, *The Politics of Nonviolent Action* (Boston: Porter Sargent, 1973).

The Nonviolent Crescent: Eight Theses on Muslim Nonviolent Actions

**Chaiwat Satha-Anand
(Qader Muheideen)**

From 1982 to 1984, Muslims from two villages in Ta Chana district, Surat Thani, in southern Thailand had been killing one another in vengeance; seven people had died. Then on January 7, 1985, which happened to be a Maulid day (to celebrate Prophet Muhammad's birthday), all parties came together and settled the bloody feud. Haji Fan, the father of the latest victim, stood up with the Holy Qur'an above his head and vowed to end the killings. With tears in his eyes and for the sake of peace in both communities, he publicly forgave the murderer who had assassinated his son. Once again, stories and sayings of the Prophet had been used to induce concerned parties to resolve violent conflict peacefully.¹

Examples such as this abound in Islam. Their existence opens up possibilities of confidently discussing the notion of nonviolence in Islam. They promise an exciting adventure into the unusual process of exploring the relationship between Islam and nonviolence.

This chapter is an attempt to suggest that Islam already possesses the whole catalogue of qualities necessary for the conduct of successful nonviolent actions. An incident that occurred in Pattani, southern Thailand, in 1975 is used as an illustration. Finally, several theses are suggested as guidelines for both the theory and practice of Islam and the different varieties of nonviolence, including nonviolent struggle.

JIHAD

A discussion of Islamic action against injustice is necessarily an examination of one of the most controversial concepts in Islam—*jihad*. Generally translated as “holy war,” the term *jihad* connotes to non-Muslims desperate acts of irrational and fanatical people who want to impose their worldview on others. But this imposition is virtually untenable because the Qur’an says “Let there be no compulsion in religion.” In fact, it can be argued that the great Arab conquests were essentially political and ideological. The Muslims were willing to tolerate pluralistic societies, which allowed the tensions of older tyrannies to be relaxed. Islam simply offered many peoples of the seventh and eighth centuries a freer, more secure and peaceful life than they had experienced in the past.² Sometimes the conversion process took place in exchange for a Muslim divine’s bureaucratic, religious, and educational services. Historically, especially in Southeast Asia, Islam seemed to stress continuity rather than conflict with previous cultures.³

What then is the meaning of *jihad*? Some Muslims considered *jihad* to be the sixth pillar of Islam.⁴ Among the Muslim legal school, the *Khawarij* (seceders) used *jihad* to impose their opinion on the rest of the Muslim community in the name of transcendent and extreme idealism. They insisted that because the Prophet spent most of his life in war, the faithful should follow his example—that the Islamic state should be organized for war, and heretics forcibly converted or put to the sword.⁵ But for Muslims, whose criteria for conduct are the Qur’an and the Hadith (traditions of the Prophet), historical examples pale in the face of the Qur’anic verses.

Fight in the cause of Allah
Those who fight you,
But do not transgress limits;
For Allah loveth not transgressors. (2:190)

According to this verse, aggression is prohibited in Islam, and the fighting that is permitted has its limits. The admonition of other relevant verses provides clarification:

The Nonviolent Crescent

And fight them on
Until there is no more
Tumult or oppression,
And there prevail
Justice and faith in Allah. (2:193)

Altogether and everywhere. (8:39)

One of the reasons for fighting oppression is

For tumult and oppression
Are worse than slaughter. (2:191)

In this sense, fighting in the cause of God in Islam is basically synonymous with fighting for justice. The Qur'an has a precise injunction to substantiate this point:

And why should ye not
Fight in the cause of Allah
And of those who, being weak
Are ill-treated (and oppressed)?
Men, women and children,
Whose cry is "Our Lord!
Rescue us from this town,
Whose people are oppressors;
And raise for us from Thee
One who will protect;
And raise for us from Thee
One who will help!" (4:75)

There is no need to probe deeper into the exegesis of these verses. For the purpose of this analysis, it can be concluded that *jihad* means to stand up to oppression, despotism, and injustice (whenever it is committed) and on behalf of the oppressed (whoever they may be). In its most general meaning, *jihad* is an effort, a striving for justice and truth that need not be violent. According to 'Abd-af-Radhiq's reading of the Qur'an, God has instructed the Muslims to propagate their religion only through peaceful persuasion and preaching.⁶

Classical Muslim scholars have placed *jihad* in three categories. Ibn Taymiya, for example, argues that *jihad* is achieved sometimes by the heart, sometimes by the tongue, and sometimes by the hand. *Jihad* of the heart, against one's own weaknesses and inner evil, is often described as the "greater *jihad*," while the "lesser *jihad*" is fought against external enemies. Ibn Taymiya also suggests two cardinal rules for *jihad* by the tongue and by the hand: understanding and patience.⁷

Jihad can be differentiated according to the direction (inner and outer) and method (violent and nonviolent). The inner *jihad* in the narrowest sense is fought within the individual. In a broader sense, the outer *jihad* may be seen as a struggle to eliminate evil within the *ummah* (community). On an even broader reading, *jihad* can be thought of as a struggle within that portion of humanity that accepts some form of spiritual guidance in order to purify itself.⁸ In short, *jihad* is the command of Allah Almighty and the traditions of Prophet Muhammad that demand a perpetual self-reexamination in terms of one's potential to fight tyranny and oppression—a continual reassessment of the means for achieving peace and inculcating moral responsibility.⁹

The point, however, is not to dwell on the conventional wisdom of separating the concept of *jihad* into wars and self-purification. What is most important for contemporary Muslims is that *jihad* categorically places the notion of war and violence in the moral realm. The purpose of *jihad*, ultimately, is to put an end to "structural violence."¹⁰ But the means used are not independent of moral scrutiny. On the basis of the Qur'an and the Sunnah, rules have been enunciated to forbid Muslims to kill noncombatants. One of the Hadiths reports these instructions by the Prophet: "Go in God's name, trusting in God, and adhering to the religion of God's messenger. Do not kill a decrepit old man, or a young infant, or a woman; do not be dishonest about booty, but collect your spoils, do right and act well, for God loves those who do well."¹¹ Not only are the lives of the noncombatants deemed sacred, but the Qur'an requires that even a tree must be spared:

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Whether ye cut down (O ye Muslims!)
The tender palm-tree
Or ye left them standing
On their roots, it was
By leave of God, and
In order that He might
Cover with shame
The rebellious transgressors. (59:5)

The placing of *jihad* within the Islamic ethical sphere also means that wanton destruction of an enemy's crops or property is strictly forbidden. This principle was clearly stated in a speech the first Caliph, Abu Bakr, made when he sent 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, nor 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.¹²

Transgressors of these principles were rebuked. At one time during the conquest, the authorities apprehended a girl who had been publicly singing satirical poems about Caliph Abu Bakr and amputated her hand. When Abu Bakr heard this news, he was shocked and wrote a letter to the *muhajir* who had punished the girl.

I have learnt that you laid hands on a woman who had hurled abuses on me, and therefore, had her hand amputated. God has not sought vengeance even in the case of polytheism, which is a great crime. He has not permitted mutilation even with regard to manifest infidelity. Try to be considerate and sympathetic in your attitude toward others in the future. Never mutilate, because it is a grave offence. God purified Islam and the Muslims from rashness and excessive wrath. You are well aware of the fact that those enemies fell into the hands of the Messenger of Allah (may peace

be upon him) who had been recklessly abusing him; who had turned him out of his home; and who fought against him, but he never permitted their mutilation.¹³

From the verses of the Qur'an and these examples from one of the Prophet's companions, it can be concluded that the lesser *jihad*—the use of physical violence against others—has certain limits. These moral injunctions are possible because Muslims have to practice greater *jihad*—the process of struggle against worldly passion in oneself. The perpetual inner and greater *jihad* will guide the conduct of lesser *jihad* in both its objectives and its conduct. This requirement in Islamic teaching raises the question of whether a lesser *jihad* can ever be practiced in an age of mass warfare and nuclear weapons.

It is interesting to note that the first symposium in the Islamic world on the nuclear arms race (organized in Karachi, Pakistan, by the World Muslim Congress in cooperation with the University of Karachi in March 1984) was held with the theme "The Nuclear Arms Race and Nuclear Disarmament: The Muslim Perspective." Inamullah Khan, secretary-general of the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC) said:

Since 1976, it [the OIC] has addressed itself regularly every year to a consideration of the twin issues of the strengthening of the security of non-nuclear weapon states against the threat or use of nuclear weapons, and of the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones . . . an enunciation of the principles that nuclear disarmament must be universal and non-discriminatory for it to have any sense.¹⁴

Echoing the same idea, a retired Pakistani general candidly pointed out the frightening capacity of nuclear overkill: "What is worse, there are no signs of reduction in the stockpiles. Instead there is an unbridled race for qualitative and quantitative superiority and more sophisticated weapons are being added to the nuclear arsenal every year."¹⁵ He then suggested that Muslims must make their full contribution to the international efforts for general and complete nuclear disarmament. Nuclear-free zones should be

established in the Middle East, South Asia, Africa, and other parts of the world, with the ultimate aim being to rid the entire globe of nuclear weapons. States possessing nuclear weapons should extend unconditional and legally binding assurances to refrain from using or threatening to use such weapons against states without nuclear arms. Instead peaceful nuclear technology must be shared among the people of the world. Finally, the Muslims should strengthen themselves through political unity, economic development, and acquisition of necessary technologies, including know-how in the nuclear field.

The argument against nuclear wars and nuclear weapons is fundamental to the question of Islam and violence in the nuclear age. Inamullah Khan argues that although Islam permits fighting, it insists that the use of force be minimal. Furthermore, the Muslim conduct of war must be as humane as possible. A Muslim soldier does not fight for self-glory or plunder, and he is ordered not to kill indiscriminately. Given this mandate, Islam prohibits nuclear weapons because they are weapons of mass destruction and can in no way distinguish between combatants and noncombatants nor between military targets and fields and factories.¹⁶

It is important to note that this argument is incomplete. Inamullah Khan twice pointed out that “Nuclear weapons are not weapons of war. They are instruments of mass extermination.” But the analysis that Muslims are not permitted to use these weapons because they do not conform to the Islamic conduct of violence overlooks an important fact: Nuclear weapons are not the only kind of weapons that cannot distinguish between combatants and noncombatants or between military targets and farmers’ villages. Khan’s omission of this point arises out of an incomplete consideration of the nature of modern warfare.

War casualties have dramatically increased in the twentieth century, which has been characterized as “the century of total war.”¹⁷ In its first fifty years over one hundred million people, military and civilian, were killed, and World War II claimed almost thirty-five million civilian lives.¹⁸ This astonishing rate of civilian casualties is basically a result of new technologies such as aerial bombardment, submarine warfare, and chemical/biological warfare.¹⁹ It can thus be said that throughout modern history,

especially since the onset of the industrial revolution, technology has had profound implications for the capacity to wage war.²⁰

The issue has become more complicated with the proliferation of terrorism. Over the decades, the tendency has been to choose methods that minimize the terrorists' risks. As a result, the targets increasingly have become defenseless victims who have little value as symbols or who are not responsible for the conditions the terrorists say they want to alter.²¹ This analysis holds that the critical variables for understanding terrorism are not related to technology but rather to the purpose and organization of particular groups and the vulnerabilities of particular societies to them. Nevertheless it is possible to argue that the societies' vulnerabilities more or less depend on the level of destruction of the technology used in terror.

If the effect of terror becomes the prime focus of analysis, then the extent of damage done to human life by modern and sophisticated weapons must be taken into account. In this sense, technology assumes paramount significance.

Michael Walzer points out that one of the hardest questions in the theory of war (or violence in the modern age) is how those victims of war who can be attacked and killed are to be distinguished from those who cannot. The moral quality of war lies, among other things, in the tendency to set certain classes of people outside the permissible range of warfare, so that killing any of their members is not a legitimate act of war but a crime.²² Perhaps one of the best sets of guidelines for judgment in the conduct of violence includes two major principles: proportionality and discrimination. The principle of proportionality centers on the means of violence. It implies that battlefield use of particularly inhumane weapons should be restricted. The principle of discrimination centers on the objects of violence. It suggests that the belligerents should discriminate between combatants and noncombatants and that noncombatants should be protected.²³

The question is how noncombatants can be protected when the level of violence used is so overpowering that it destroys the possibility of discriminating between combatants and noncombatants. Moreover some users of violence do not intend to discriminate but instead want the terrorization per se to attract attention from the world media so that their causes can be furthered.

As a result it is virtually impossible for the innocents to remain safe in an age when the sophistication of modern technology of destruction is coupled with the growing disregard of human life.

Islam does not tolerate such indiscriminate methods. Nor does it allow God's creation—human lives, trees, animals, the environment—to be destroyed. For example, the use of napalm is unacceptable, as are explosions in department stores, hijacking and killing hostages on any means of transportation, and bombing civilian targets. The modern world has made primitive weapons obsolete, but the encompassing moral sphere of Islam also renders modern weapons morally illegitimate. Does this conflict mean that oppressed Muslims should submit and ignore the command of God to fight? Is there any alternative for Muslims in the contemporary world? Before these questions can be discussed, Islamic ideas and teachings conducive to the absence of violence should first be appreciated.

ISLAM AND THE PROMOTION OF LIFE

In the Beginning, Allah Almighty said:

Behold the Lord said to the angels
"I will create a vicegerent on earth." (2:30)

God created people to be the vicegerents on earth and instilled His spirit in every man, woman, and child.

When I have fashioned him
(In due proportion) and breathed
Into him of My spirit,
Fall ye down in obeisance
Unto him. (15:29)

This verse suggests the sacredness of human life because the spirit of the Creator resides within the otherwise empty body. In this sense, also, humankind is one.

Mankind was one single nation,

Chaiwat Satha-Anand

And Allah sent Messengers
With glad tidings and Warnings. (2:213)

The unity of humankind is asserted repeatedly in the Qur'an.

Mankind was but one nation,
But differed (later). Had it not
Been for a Word
That went forth before
From thy Lord, their differences
Would have been settled
Between them. (10:19)

Once these verses are appreciated, then it is possible to understand the meaning of a verse such as this:

And if anyone saved a life,
It would be as if he saved
The life of the whole people. (5:32)

Human life is thus sacred. Humankind is one single family, and every human life has a value equivalent to the sum total of all human lives.

Murder is considered one of the four major sins in Islam.²⁴ Yet there is a paradox: If Islam values the sanctity of life, how can Muslims fight "tumult and oppression" to the end? Unless Muslims forsake the methods of violence, they cannot follow the seemingly contradictory injunctions. It is evident that fighting against injustice cannot be avoided. But the use of violence in such fighting can be eschewed. Alternatives to violence must be adopted if the sanctity of life is to be preserved. Because nonviolent alternatives do exist,²⁵ an argument can be made that for Muslims to be true to their faith, they have no alternative but to utilize nonviolent action in the contemporary world. The question then is whether Islam embodies conditions conducive to the use of effective nonviolent actions.

NONVIOLENT ACTION AS AN

ISLAMIC MODE OF STRUGGLE

What is needed to practice nonviolent action? Gandhi answers:

Belief in non-violence is based on the assumption that human nature in its essence is one and therefore unfailingly responds to the advances of love. . . . The non-violent technique does not depend for its success on the goodwill of the dictators, for a non-violent resister depends on the unfailing assistance of God which sustains him throughout difficulties which could otherwise be considered insurmountable.²⁶

In another place, he writes:

Truth and non-violence are not possible without a living belief in God, meaning a self-existent, all-knowing, living force which inheres in every other force known to the world and which depends on none, and which will live when all other forces may conceivably perish or cease to act.²⁷

A Muslim following Gandhi's teaching would not feel estranged. In fact, it may be possible to trace the Islamic influence on Gandhi concerning the omnipotent and incomparable God. Faith in the supreme Allah already exists in the hearts of every true Muslim.

If Gandhian nonviolence is not sufficient, a modern theory of power may suffice. Gene Sharp writes:

Political power disintegrates when the people withdraw their obedience and support. Yet, the ruler's military equipment may remain intact, his soldiers uninjured, the exiles unscathed, the factories and transport systems in full operational capacity, and the government buildings undamaged. But everything is changed. The human assistance which created and supported the regime's political power has been withdrawn. Therefore, its power has disintegrated.²⁸

For Muslims, this so-called modern theory of power simply embodies the basic Islamic principle that a person should submit

only to the Will of God. As a result, a Muslim is not bound to obey anyone whose power has been used unjustly. The Qur'an gives the following warning:

When (at length) the order
For fighting was issued to them,
Behold a section of them
Feared men as—
Or even more than—
They should have feared Allah. (4:77)

Yet there is assurance as well:

Behold! verily on the friends
Of God there is no fear,
Nor shall they grieve. (10:62)

Complete submission to the Will of Allah means that if Muslims are oppressed and too weak to fight back, they nevertheless must refuse to obey an unjust ruler. They do have a means to refuse—they can leave. And leave they must, because the command of God on this issue is quite clear.

When angels take
The souls of those
Who die in sin
Against their souls,
They say: "In what (plight)
Were ye?" They reply:
"Weak and oppressed
Were we in the earth."
They say: "Was not
The earth of Allah
Spacious enough for you
To move yourselves away
(From evil)?" (4:97)

Whether Muslims are weak or strong, they must do something, and it is this tendency toward action that enables them to

engage easily in nonviolent struggle. As a technique, nonviolent action is not passive: "It is *not* inaction. It is *action* that is nonviolent."²⁹ Hence, by definition, nonviolent action cannot occur except by the replacement of passivity and submissiveness with activity, challenge, and struggle.

NONVIOLENT ACTION IN PATTANI, 1975

The proximity between Islam and nonviolence can be illustrated with a case study. On November 29, 1975, five adult Malay Muslims and a thirteen-year-old boy traveling in Narathiwat, southern Thailand, were stopped and put into a dump truck by a group of people dressed in dark green suits. When the truck reached the Kor Tor bridge separating Narathiwat from Pattani, the six civilians were stabbed in the back, their skulls crushed, and their bodies thrown into the river. Fortunately, the boy survived, and the massacre was brought to public attention by a group of Muslim activists who began a protest.³⁰

The people started their peaceful demonstration on December 12, 1975, in the compound of the central government house in Pattani, then formed the Civil Rights Protection Center to keep the protest going. On behalf of the Muslims, the center issued four demands to the government: the arrest of the criminals by rule of law, compensation for the victims' families, withdrawal of government troops within seven days, and a meeting by December 16 between Prime Minister M. R. Kukrit Pramoj and the people. The government did not seem to take these demands seriously, but the Muslims persevered.

On December 13, 1975, University students from institutions in the south came to join the protest. The military and the police surrounded the city of Pattani. During a panel discussion that evening, a bomb exploded among the people. One of the coordinators of the protest rushed to the microphone shouting "Do not flee!" He was fatally shot on the stage. The police came and put an end to the protest. There were twelve deaths and more than thirty people injured, seven of whom were women and children.

This incident caused the people grave concern and sadness. On the same day, around fifty thousand gathered again at the central mosque in Pattani, patiently braving the torrential rain. In retaliation, schools in Pattani and Narathiwat were burned, and the people accused the soldiers of committing arson. One more officer of the Civil Rights Center was stabbed to death. The government did not yield—but neither did the people. On December 21, Muslims from Bangkok rallied at their central mosque to pray for those killed. On the following day, nine educational institutions joined the protest by suspending classes.

The government responded by saying that the protest was but a minor incident involving only a few hundred people, a claim that prompted a huge demonstration on December 28. The mass of people formed themselves into a parade more than three kilometers long, marching in orderly fashion with Thai flags and portraits of the Thai king and queen leading their procession. Even a heavy rain could not weaken their will as they walked toward the Toh Ayah graveyard. The organizers pointed out that this demonstration was an attempt to fight for justice, display the people's strength, and demonstrate that the protest was not the "minor" incident the government claimed it to be. The protesters prayed for the souls of the deceased and then dispersed at 6:00 p.m.

On January 2, 1976, Thai Muslim government officials from the five southern provinces met to consider how to encourage the prime minister to come to Pattani. They announced January 4 they would strike on the following day if their demands were not met. On January 10 their representatives met with the prime minister, who promised to go to Pattani. The protest ended after forty-five days with, among other things, the removal of Pattani's governor and his replacement by a Muslim.³¹

There seem to be five conditions that enabled the Muslim protesters to stage a sustained nonviolent protest in Pattani. First, they possessed the will to disobey, without which no nonviolent action can be realized. The Muslims are willing to disobey because for them God alone is supreme. This total submission to Allah in turn means a rejection of any other form of absolute authority, including the state's.

Second, the Pattani Muslims were courageous despite severe repression by the state apparatus. Because they submitted to Allah alone, they did not have to fear any mortal. Muslims believe as a precept of *iman* (faith) that all the good and bad incidents in their lives are bestowed upon them by God. As a result, resignation while working for a just cause, without fear of punishment, becomes possible. In the final analysis, they believe God will take care of them.

Third, Muslim discipline enabled the gathering, the protest march, and even the threat to resign en masse to be carried out efficiently. All of the activities were well orchestrated. The quality of discipline bears little relationship to the leadership of the group because it takes time to cultivate such a collective trait. Muslims, however, are already disciplined in their everyday life; that they pray five times a day contributes to this quality.

Fourth, the concept of *ummah* (community) is very strong among Muslims, who find this unity of brotherhood expressed in the Qur'an:

And hold fast
All together, by the Rope
Which God (stretches out
For you) and be not divided
Among yourselves. (3:103)

Fifth, the feeling among the Pattani Muslims was anything but passive. Islam repeatedly encourages action, and although *jihad* can be performed by the heart, the tongue, or the hand, the important requirement is that it be performed in one way or another. It is also important to note that two out of three ways of performing *jihad* are action-oriented. Action, therefore, is of paramount importance for Muslims, just as it is at the core of the modern theory of nonviolence.

These five characteristics of the Muslims evident in the Pattani case can be termed the "Five Pillars of Muslim Nonviolent Action." Interestingly they correspond well with the sacred Five Pillars of Islam: *shahadat* (a vow that proclaims there is no god but God and Muhammad is His messenger); *salat* (prayers at specific times five times a day from sunrise to sunset, each preceded by

proper ablution); *zakah* (compulsory religious tax that every Muslim has to pay); *sawn* (fasting in the month of Ramadan every year by abstaining from food and drink from sunrise to sunset while purifying both the tongue and the heart in the process); and *hajj* (pilgrimage to the holy city of Mecca at least once in a lifetime if one can afford it).

Each of these five pillars produces a special quality for those who continually practice them. The *shahadat* vow by a Muslim is an act asserting that the person will not allow other things to supersede the Will of God. This obedience to God entails the possibility of disobedience to any power that contradicts God's command. The *salat*, at a lower level of understanding, is an exercise in disciplinary action. When offered in a congregation, which is usually encouraged, it becomes an assertion of equality because the poor can stand shoulder to shoulder with the rich in such a prayer. The *zakah* reminds Muslims of their obligation to society at large because the tax sensitizes them to the problems of others and induces them to do something about it. The *sawn*, both a lesson of self-sacrifice and empathy, enables Muslims to develop patience, the quality that Abdul Ghaffar Khan, the leader of the nonviolent struggle by the Pathans against the British, regards as crucial for nonviolence in Islam.³² Finally, the *hajj* is a reaffirmation of brotherhood and the belief that all Muslims form one nation, regardless of race, color, nationality, or class. It is a return to the beginning, an immersion in the eternal source of life that has guided their ancestors for millennia.

In other words, a practicing Muslim should possess the potential for disobedience, discipline, social concern and action, patience and willingness to suffer for a cause, and the idea of unity—all of which are crucial for successful nonviolent action.³³ It remains to be seen how Muslim intellectuals will attempt to tap the fertile resources of nonviolent thought within their own tradition and resolve the paradox of living as a true Muslim in the contemporary world.

CONCLUSION

This chapter has attempted to address Muslims and others interested in the relationship of Islam to the modern world. The points of reference made here are primarily sources most Muslims accept—the Qur'an and the Hadith. It is indeed essential that Islam is looked at from a fresh angle. Because the conventional worldview accepts violence as normal, a nonviolent Muslim must part with this paradigm. To have a paradigm shift, the fundamental acceptance of violence must be seriously questioned.

The eight theses on Muslim nonviolent action that follow are suggested as a challenge for Muslims and others who seek to reaffirm the original vision of Islam so that the true meaning of peace—the absence of both structural as well as personal violence—can be obtained:

1. For Islam, 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 in Islam.
4. Modern technology of destruction renders discrimination 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 purposive and sacred.
7. In order to be true to Islam, Muslims must utilize nonviolent action as a new mode of struggle.
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 mankind.

That such theses of Muslim nonviolent action are essential to peace in this world and the true meaning of Islam is evident from the Qur'an:

Peace!—a Word
(of salutation) from the Lord
Most Merciful! 36:58)

NOTES

AUTHOR'S NOTE: A slightly modified version of "The Nonviolent Crescent" was translated into Arabic as "La 'unf fee al-Islam" (Islam and Nonviolence) and published in *Al-Muqawama Al Hadanieh Fi Al-Nidal Al-Siyyas* [Civilian Resistance in Political Struggle], ed. Saad Eddin Ibrahim (Amman, Jordan: Arab Thought Forum, 1988). It was also translated in its entirety into Indonesian (*Bahasa Indonesia*) as "Bulan Sabit Tanpa Kekerasan: Delapan Tesis Tindak Kekerasan Dalam Islam," and published in *Menggapai Dunia Damai*, ed. Mochtar Lubis (Jakarta, Indonesia: Yayasan Obor Indonesia, 1988).

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13. Ibid.
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17. See Raymond Aron, *The Century of Total War* (Boston: Beacon, 1955).
18. Francis Beer, *Peace Against War* (San Francisco: W.W. Freeman, 1981), pp. 35-37.
19. Andrew Wilson, *The Disarmer’s Handbook* (New York: Penguin, 1983), p. 19.
20. Steven E. Miller, “Technology and War,” *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists* (December, 1985): 46-48.
21. David Rapoport, “Fear and Trembling: Terrorism in Three Political Traditions,” *American Political Science Review* 78, no. 3 (September 1984): 658-677.
22. Michael Walzer, *Just and Unjust War* (New York: Basic Books, 1977), pp. 41-42. Medieval writers distinguish *jus ad bellum* (justice of war) from *jus in bello* (justice in war). “*Jus ad bellum* requires us to make judgments about aggression and self-defence while *jus in bello* primarily concerns the observance or violation of the customary and positive rules of engagement.” Walzer, p. 21.
23. Beer, *Peace Against War*, pp. 91-92; Wilson, *The Disarmer’s Handbook*, pp. 289-290.
24. Robson, *Mishkat al Masabih*, p. 16.
25. Gene Sharp, *The Politics of Nonviolent Action* (Boston: Porter Sargent, 1973).
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27. Ibid., p. 112.
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29. Ibid., pp. 64-65.

30. Chaiwat Satha-Anand, *Islam and Violence: A Case Study of Violent Events in the Four Southern Provinces of Thailand 1976-1981* (Tampa, Florida: University of South Florida Monograph on Religions and Public Policy, 1987).

31. *Thai Rath* (Thai daily paper), December 13, 1975-January 26, 1976.

32. Eknath Easwaran, *A Man to Match His Mountains: Badshah Khan, Nonviolent Soldier of Islam* (Petaluma, CA: Nilgiri Press, 1985), p. 117.

33. Sharp, *The Politics of Nonviolent Action*, Parts 1 and 2.

Islam, Nonviolence, and Global Transformation

Razi Ahmad

Behold, thy Lord said to the Angels: "I will create a viceregent on earth." They said: "Wilt Thou place therein one who will make mischief therein and shed blood?— Whilst we do celebrate thy praises And glorify Thy holy (name)?" He said: "I know what ye know not." (2:30)

Since the dawn of human civilization step by step "man" has been forging ahead towards the goal of perfection. Living in the state of nature, he fought ceaseless wars and the fittest survived. But this situation did not last long and man had to find ways and means for coexistence. Had there been no such understanding, human civilization would not have reached the present stage. What was that force that compelled man to move from an isolated existence to life in families, clans, groups, and nations? Undoubtedly it was the law of love that prompted a life based on cooperation. With the passage of time man not only organized groups, but the institutions developed gradually passed from the stage of violence and war to that of cooperation and nonviolence.

It has been aptly observed that:

humanity to tame the individual and make him social and civilized employed a two-fold method. It first informed and reformed his mind and then created external circumstances, checks and hindrances, that made unsocial conduct difficult and painful. On the one hand there was a psychological and an ideological approach, on the other hand an institutional and external approach.¹

By this process man's mind and will were gradually "converted by the teaching, preachings and examples of the great ones, the

reformers and prophets.” The inner and the outer processes developed simultaneously. In the long run this helped the kings and lawgivers to institutionalize the outcome. Whenever there was lack of coherence or support, the process experienced a severe backlash and was temporarily interrupted. Ideological and institutional interdependence constituted an important element in the process of human thinking. We cannot imagine an ideology taking root without an institution, nor can we envision an institution flourishing without an ideology. Man learned this in the process of his evolution. The validity of this theory became apparent in recent years, as the world witnessed the failure of the League of Nations, an institution ahead of its ideology.²

The tragic collapse of the League of Nations and the present tendency on the part of some powerful countries to bypass and ignore the resolutions of the UN make it clear that despite its marvellous achievements in the fields of knowledge, science, and technology—“humanity has not yet recognized the propriety, justice and efficacy or even the need of truth and nonviolence in group relations.” Narrow nationalism makes nations distrust one another. The race for nuclear armaments apart from conventional arsenals has reached a new height with the piling up of nuclear warheads capable of annihilating human civilization in a matter of hours.

It was Gandhi who, for the first time in recent years, experimented with nonviolence on a broad scale in solving sociopolitical issues. His experiments in South Africa and later on in India roused a hope for a better future among the downtrodden, exploited, and suppressed, as well as in those wanting to serve society. Inspired by the emancipation of India largely through nonviolent means they all looked forward to the emancipation of all of humanity through similar means. A brief assessment of the Gandhian concept of nonviolence seems pertinent. And since the concept is based on a synthesis of religion and politics, it may be worthwhile to first have an idea of the concept of nonviolence as envisaged by some religious traditions.

NONVIOLENCE IN VARIOUS RELIGIOUS TRADITIONS

Thanks to recent scientific developments the world has shrunk to such an extent that the echo of an incident in one part of the world vibrates in other parts with equal intensity. But at the same time increasing contact between and dependence upon different peoples and cultures has ironically widened the gap between the haves and have-nots and has opened up innumerable avenues of friction and distrust. Since time immemorial prophets and saints have tried to teach the lessons of peace and coexistence, but human history has no want of incidents when human hypocrisy has touched low levels. Religion means consciousness, righteousness, and piety. Spiritual and metaphysical doctrines prompt men to be closer to each other. Religions envisage a quest for the meaning of life, truth, and ultimate end. But with the passage of time religion has lost its dynamism and has tended to become a set of rituals and dogmas. Though these various drawbacks and weaknesses have crept in, the vital role of religion in nourishing the development of human civilization cannot be denied. In this long process the instinct of nonviolence has played a significant role. In one form or another, the principle of nonviolence has an important place in every religion. Some religions 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.³

Hinduism

Quoting T. W. Rhys Davids, O. P. Jaggi says that in Hindu literature the word *ahimsa* is found first in the Chandogya Upanishad.⁴ *Ahimsa* is an important element in other Upanishads as well, along with such qualities as restraint, truthfulness, non-stealing, celibacy, compassion, rectitude, forbearance, temperance in food, and cleanliness. During the Upanishadic period animal sacrifices to the gods were not prohibited; sacrifices were considered a duty towards the gods and were not taken as *himsa*. In the Mahabharata *ahimsa* gains prominence. But if a choice is to be made between *ahimsa* and duty, the latter is to be given priority. The Bhagavad Gita is more categorical about duty coming first, *ahimsa* second. The Laws of Manu adds that the *himsa* prescribed

in the Vedas should be construed to mean *ahimsa*, because moral duties arise from the Vedas.⁵ Thus from its beginnings, in Indian philosophy *ahimsa* is considered an important aspect of human behavior.

Jainism

Vardhaman Mahavir, the twenty-fourth Tirthankara in the line of the great Jain teachers, went much further than the established Hindu conception of *ahimsa* and preached strict observance of nonviolence towards all living creatures. For the attainment of nirvana of the soul, observance of nonviolence was considered to be the “highest ideal” of life.⁶ Therefore, the Jain approach to nonviolence is very broad, covering both physical and metaphysical aspects. The ethical principles of Jainism are also based on nonviolence. A believer in Jainism has to observe the following six rules (*anuvrata*):

1. I will not kill innocent moving animals voluntarily.
2. I will not commit suicide.
3. I will not commit abortion.
4. I will neither join any organization or party whose aim is violence and destruction; nor will I participate in such activities.
5. I will not consider any individual an untouchable.
6. I will not behave cruelly towards anyone.⁷

Buddhism

In one of its aspects, Buddhism was a revolt against the intolerant social order that had been allowed to grow up under the priestly class of Brahmins. In the name of religion many distortions had developed which violated the spirit of the scriptures. Buddha, himself a crown prince, realized the agony of the masses. In reaching self-realization he came to understand that ignorance was the root of all suffering. When the flame of desire and lust is extinguished the state of nirvana is reached.⁸

Buddha started preaching his revolutionary ideas and within a short period there was an atmosphere ready to welcome the gospel of truth. It was the first time in Indian history for someone to

challenge the long established supremacy of the priesthood. The seeker's salvation no longer rested within the framework formulated by the privileged class. Now, right speech, right action, right means of livelihood, right exertion, right mindedness, right meditation, right thinking, and right point of view became the foundation of nirvana. This fundamental change in socioreligious approach had a far-reaching effect and the downtrodden welcomed the new religion with open hearts. When Buddhism became a state religion it also gained support from influential quarters. But with the passage of time Buddhism lost its luster and revolutionary character in the land of its birth.

Judaism

The Jews attach more importance to social justice than to nonviolence per se. Their credo is "evil for evil, good for good." According to the Old Testament,

Who sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed . . . He that smiteth a man, so that he die, shall be surely put to death. . . . And if any mischief follows, then thou shalt give life for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot, burning for burning, wound for wound, stripe for stripe.⁹

Christianity

Christ said:

Ye have heard that it was said, "an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth," but I say unto you, resist not him that is evil but whosoever smiteth thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also. And if any man would go to law with thee, and take away thy coat, let him have thy cloak also (Matt. 5:39-40).¹⁰

This approach is a departure from the teachings of Judaism. For Jesus Christ, God is a Loving Father. Christ, according to whatever little is known about him, stood for justice, love, nonviolence, and compassion. Christ rebelled against the prevalent faith, which had become very complicated and ritualistic. This attitude was not tolerated by the priests and he was tortured and finally crucified.

Jesus emphasized love of God and love of fellow human beings. His love has no limits and the poor and downtrodden have his special consideration. “Love thy neighbor” has a broad meaning. Jesus said,

Love your enemies, . . . pray for your persecutors, so that you may show yourself true sons of your Father in Heaven, for He makes His Sun rise on bad and good alike, and makes the rain fall on both upright and wrong doers, For if you love only those who love you, what is there remarkable in that? (Matt. 5:44–46)¹¹

The Sermon on the Mount contains the most fundamental teachings of Jesus. These teachings have inspired thousands of people. Friedrich Heer, in his monumental work *Great Documents of the World*, notes: “Jesus is no political revolutionary, no founder of a Church and no anarchist, though as the Sermon shows he does abolish all orders, powers, and rights that men have invented themselves and that bar the gate to the ‘Kingdom of God’.”¹²

In A.D. 313 Constantine, the emperor of Rome, embraced Christianity and declared it a legal religion. Before that, Christians had not been allowed openly to observe their religious rites. They had been tortured and persecuted. But with the conversion of the emperor, the course changed. Christians were not only granted full religious liberty but all avenues were opened for the propagation of Christianity. Within a short period the number of followers increased tremendously. But with the influx of men and women with worldly passions, there also developed a large degree of corruption and misinterpretation. The Cross, a symbol of love and compassion, now became an emblem of imperial authority and the Roman Army. These developments changed the basic conception of “love” and “nonviolence.” Church leaders started to give new meanings to the basic principles and a compromising attitude developed. A theory of “just war” was worked out. When the Roman Pope claimed his temporal power, a further drastic change occurred. He now became the de facto head of the State as well as the Church. He was now more interested in power than in the teachings of Jesus Christ. The principles of love, compassion, and resist-not-evil were neglected and by stages rejected. Religious people who disagreed with the Pope were harassed. The story of

the crusades is a story of the negation of the principles for which Christianity stood. But with the dawn of the Renaissance and Reformation, the introduction of the reforms initiated by Martin Luther, and the advent of the Industrial Revolution, a new chapter opened. The history of groups like the Mennonites and the Quakers in the years that followed is the story of the reshaping of Christian thought, along with a revival of interest in nonviolence and peace.

The Nonviolence of Gandhi

Gandhi is considered to be the twentieth century prophet of nonviolence; as a matter of fact nonviolence and Gandhi have become synonyms today. Gandhi was a religious man and took keen interest in the teachings of different religions. During his student days in India and England he was deeply influenced by friends adhering to different religions. Under these various influences he developed a new conception of religion based on tolerance and human fellowship. He considered man holistically and never divided human life and behavior into compartments. People of various faiths were one before him. Therefore, in his teaching we find the spirit of integration.

Committed to religion, Gandhi tried to mold his life and program in the true spirit of religion. In other words, we can say that the spiritual aspect of religion remained his guide. He saw more similarities between religions than differences. For the first time in recent human history we find in him a public figure who proclaimed *sarva dharma sambhava*—equal regard towards all religions. He says, “religions are different roads converging on the same point. What does it matter that we take different roads, so long as we reach the same goal? In reality, there are as many religions as there are individuals.”¹³ He explained his conception of religion in the following way: “By religion, I do not mean formal religion, or customary religion, but that religion which underlies all religions, which brings us face to face with our maker.”¹⁴ The deep impact of religion inspired him to search for truth. And in this process of searching for truth he discovered nonviolence. He says, “To me Truth is God and there is no way to find Truth except the way of nonviolence.”¹⁵ Nonviolence is refraining from killing anyone out

of anger or selfish motives or from causing pain to others. Only with complete selflessness can one aspire to achieve such a goal.

Gandhi's search for truth and his commitment to nonviolence reaches a new height when he says:

To see the universal and all-pervading spirit of Truth face to face one must be able to love the meanest of creation as oneself. And a man who aspires after that cannot afford to keep out of any field of life. That is why my devotion to truth has drawn me into the field of politics.¹⁶

From his South African days until his last days we find this same spirit guiding him. When the cherished goal of the independence of India was in sight his principles were tested and he had to pass through the fiery ordeal of Muslim-Hindu hatred, this perhaps being the most troubled phase of his life. However, his faith in nonviolence remained undiminished.

Hundreds of books have been written by both Indian and foreign writers on the Gandhian technique. He himself wrote hundreds of pages elaborating his ideals. It is not possible to review them here. I merely want to show that with Gandhi the concept of nonviolence reaches a stage where it takes a scientific shape in the arena of group relationships. Throughout his life Gandhi experimented with truth and nonviolence and made it the basis of his technique of struggle for leading India to independence. In recent years the American civil rights crusader, Martin Luther King, Jr., adopted this technique quite successfully. In view of these examples, there should not remain any doubt about the validity of the technique of nonviolent struggle.

The world has experienced enough of the destruction of wars and violent struggle. The unimaginable loss caused during the First and Second World Wars is still haunting our minds. Once again the future of human civilization is at stake—this time owing to the piling up of nuclear warheads by the great powers suspicious of each other. In Gandhi's own words:

If the mad race for armaments continues, it is bound to result in a slaughter such as has never occurred in history. If there is a victory left, the very victory will be a living death for the nation that emerges victorious. There is no escape from the impending

doom save through a bold and unconditional acceptance of the nonviolent method with all its glorious implications.¹⁷

ISLAM

“This day have I
Perfected your religion
For you, completed
My favour upon you
And have chosen for you
Islam as your religion” (5:4).

This last revelation to the Holy Prophet clearly indicates that Islam was not a completely new way. There had been religions before the advent of Islam, but with the passage of time they had lost their luster and were no longer sure guides for humanity. Circumstances gave birth to this new religion of peace; conditions prevailing in Arabia were pathetic. Internecine feuds and jealousies among the tribes, continuation of war from generation to generation, and innumerable vices culminating in the burial of living female babies, had made the social structure unbearable. In the neighborhood of Arabia the intolerance of the Roman Church had made the situation gloomy. In Persia, Mesopotamia, Syria, Palestine, and Egypt, people were confused by the conflict of Magian mysticism, Jewish conservatism, and Christian intolerance. Religion had become a bundle of rituals, hypocritical ceremonies, and dogmas. When, in spite of grave opposition and persecution, Islam was able to establish itself in Arabia, a new situation developed all around. M. N. Roy writes:

The strident cry of the new religion that there is but one God, softened by great tolerance, subject to this fundamental creed, was enthusiastically hailed by the distressed multitudes searching for the secure anchor of a simple faith in a stormy sea of social disintegration, intellectual bankruptcy and spiritual chaos.¹⁸

With the rise of Islam, the foundation was laid for a unique social order. It allowed freedom of conscience to all who embraced it or who placed themselves under its protection. In a very short period Islam became a shield against all types of persecution.

Nonviolence in Islam

At the age of forty, in about 611 A.D., Prophet Muhammad declared his prophethood in Mecca and preached his gospel of one God, thus discarding 360 gods and goddesses housed in the holy shrine of Ka'bah. Although he was respected by the Meccans for his compassion, honesty, purity of character, gentleness, and truthfulness, and was respectfully called Amin (Trustworthy), his preaching of the new faith in "One God" infuriated nearly the entire city. The dominant groups in Mecca charged Prophet Muhammad with blasphemy and let loose ceaseless torture on him and his supporters. He went to Ta'if to preach his ideas. There, too, he was tortured and humiliated. He and his family were ostracized. Throughout this period he neither cursed anyone nor said ill words about anyone. On the contrary, he prayed for their enlightenment and peace. The period of persecution continued for twelve years. Then a plan to murder him was hatched and finally he was compelled to migrate to Medina. This migration helped not only in the speedy spread of Islam but also changed the course of human history. Within a few years Islam became an established force. The signing of the Treaty of Hudaibiyah in 628 A.D., after the fall of Mecca to the forces led by the Prophet, can be cited as the best example of his love. At that time the marching army of God could easily have compelled the demoralized Meccans to accept whatever terms he wanted. But the Prophet agreed to the terms suggested by the Meccans. Within two years the Meccans violated the truce and the Prophet was compelled to march and finally Mecca was conquered. Stanley Lane-Poole writes:

The day of Mohammad's greatest triumph over his enemies was also the day of grandest victory over himself. He freely forgave Quaraysh all the years of sorrow and cruel scorn with which they had afflicted him and gave an amnesty to the whole population of Mecca. Four criminals whom justice condemned made up Mohammad's proscription list, when as a conqueror he entered the city of his bitterest enemies. The army followed his example, and entered quietly and peaceably; no house was robbed, no woman insulted.¹⁹

The history of Islam is only fourteen hundred years old and it could be said to be the latest in the series of great world religions. Nobody can deny its contribution to world civilization except those with prejudiced eyes. Arnold Toynbee has rightly observed that, “the prevalent depreciation of Islam in the West is a relic of anti-Islamic Christian prejudice.”²⁰ There is no need to describe the achievements of the Muslims, as every detail of their rise and fall is available. Their mark on world history by way of their contribution to human civilization is a recorded fact. As H. A. L. Fisher notes:

From one end of Europe to the other, Christian states found themselves confronted with the challenge of a new oriental civilization founded on a new oriental faith.²¹

This unprecedented success of Islam was “due to revolutionary significance and its ability to lead the masses out of the hopeless situation created by the decay of the antique civilizations not only of Greece and Rome but of Persia and China and of India.”²² Within a short span of time the disunited Arabs were united under one banner. They demolished the edifices of Caesars and Kaisers and out of that ruin they accumulated treasures of knowledge and preserved and multiplied them for the benefit of future generations. The military victories of the Muslims were a prelude to a more magnificent and lasting performance in the social and cultural fields. Political unity provided opportunities for economic prosperity which in the long run resulted in cultural and spiritual progress. A new social order, based on new ideas, was inaugurated. M. N. Roy writes:

The rich spiritual legacy of the glorious civilization of ancient Greece was almost buried under the dreary ruins of the Roman Empire, and lost in the darkness of Christian superstition. The grand mission of rescuing the invaluable patrimony which eventually enabled the peoples of Europe to emerge from the depressing gloom of the holy middle ages and build the marvellous monument of modern civilization, belong to the Saracen arms, and to the sociopolitical structure erected on the basis of Islamic monotheism. The sword of Islam, wielded ostensibly in the service of God, actually contributed to the victory of a new intellectual life which eventually dug the grave of all religions and faiths.²³

We have seen in brief the concept of nonviolence as envisaged by some traditions. It has also been observed that some traditions went to an extreme length and to some extent bypassed the practical aspects of human aspirations and limitations. On the other hand, Islam has adopted a realistic attitude and expects its adherents to adopt a middle course in solving day-to-day issues, keeping in mind the spirit of equality, brotherhood, love, and purity of character. No one is allowed to kill anybody except under certain specified conditions. The Holy Qur'an says:

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)

But, at the same time, Islam gives full consideration to human weakness. While love is the ideal, a common man cannot love his enemy. Unless a man reaches a spiritual height he is bound to react and “good for good” and “bad for bad” is all that will satisfy him.

When Islam began its expansion the marching army was welcome as deliverers of the oppressed peoples wherever it went. The revolutionary teachings of Islam had totally changed the attitude of those in the army. On account of their ways they got full support from the masses. When the first Caliph Abu Bakr dispatched the Islamic army to Syria the following discipline was to be strictly enforced:

Do not commit treachery or deviate from the right path. You must not mutilate dead bodies. Neither kill a child, nor a woman, nor 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.²⁴

The injunctions were strictly carried out and the marching army was taken by the vanquished as their liberators.

The word Islam is derived from Arabic *salama* which means to be tranquil, at rest, to have done one's duty, be faithful, and at perfect peace. The noun derived from it means peace, greeting, safety, and salvation. According to Justice Amir 'Ali the word does not imply, as is commonly supposed, absolute submission to God's Will, but rather it denotes striving after righteousness.²⁵ After a thorough study of the basic tenets of Islam one concludes that it is based on a belief in the unity, power, mercy and supreme love of the Creator; charity and unity of all people; subjugation of passion; and accountability for all actions on the day of judgment. The individual is the nucleus of the social order. Islam emphasizes the holistic development of the individual as a basis for a healthy society. There are innumerable verses in the Qur'an which command believers to be righteous and above passion in their dealings with their fellow beings. Love, kindness, affection, forgiveness, and mercy are recommended for the true faithful. The Holy Book says:

O mankind! We created
You from a single (pair)
Of a male and a female,
And made you into
Nations and tribes, that
Ye may know each other
(Not that ye may despise
Each other). Verily
The most honored of you
In the sight of Allah
Is (he who is) the most
Righteous of you.
And Allah has full knowledge
And is well acquainted
With all things). (49:13)

And hold fast
All together, by the Rope
Which Allah (stretches out)
For you, and be not divided
Among yourselves;

Razi Ahmad

And remember with gratitude
Allah's favour on you;
For ye were enemies
And He joined your hearts
In love, so that by His Grace,
Ye became brethren. (3:103)

Kind words
And covering of faults
Are better than charity
Followed by injury. (2:263)

The Qur'an has elaborately and repeatedly emphasized freedom of conscience. Faith and conviction are matters of conscience and no compulsion is allowed in this regard. We find several verses in the Qur'an clarifying this point. For example:

Let there be no compulsion
In religion. Truth stands out
Clear from Error. (2:256)

It should now be clear in our minds, as I said at the outset, that it is natural that Islam, the latest in the series of world religions, should guide people faced with the enormous problems of the contemporary world. From the beginning the Prophet Muhammad exhibited maximum tolerance, fellow-feeling and brotherhood, peace towards all, compassion and love, righteousness and freedom of conscience, courtesy towards all; and duty towards parents, kith, and kin, and especially towards the downtrodden and exploited. Therefore God said of him

We sent thee not, but
As a mercy for all creatures. (21:107)

GLOBAL TRANSFORMATION

From the date of the signing of the Magna Carta in 1215 to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1948, or even simply from the French Revolution to the Russian Revolution, remarkable changes have occurred in ways of thinking and working. But at the same time the nineteenth century wars and the two great world wars

fought within the first half of the present century tell a different tale. And now human civilization has reached a point where there are only two apparent alternatives left—survival of civilization and total annihilation.

The record of human life and civilization is one of dynamism. There are always new ideas, new problems, and new approaches. Fresh philosophical concepts continue to arise. The first half of the twentieth century witnessed an unprecedented intellectual, scientific, and technological upsurge which laid the foundation of a new era. It also appeared that a new dimension had been added to human perception. As a result all human values, including moral and spiritual ones, have been put on trial. Where we stand today there is no incentive to goodness at all. And when there is no place for “values” there is no chance for civilization in the true sense of the term.

The danger of the annihilation of human civilization and the erosion of ethical values have compelled the leaders of the world to think seriously about the future of humanity. Even Dwight D. Eisenhower, former U.S. President, expressed such concerns:

[ON LIBERTY]: In the Council of Government we must guard against the acquisition of undue influence, whether sought or unsought, by the military-industrial complex. The potential for the disastrous rise of misplaced power exists and will persist. We must never let the weight of this combination endanger our liberties or democratic processes. We should take nothing for granted.

[ON EQUALITY]: Every gun that is made, every warship launched, every rocket fired signifies, in the final sense, a theft from those who hunger and are not fed, those who are cold and are not clothed. This world in arms is not spending money alone. It is spending the sweat of its laborers, the genius of its scientists, the hopes of its children. This is not a way of life at all in any true sense. Under the cloud of threatening war, it is humanity hanging from a cross of iron.

[ON FRATERNITY]: Indeed, I think that people want peace so much that one of these days governments had better get out of their way and let them have it.²⁶

Another American President, John F. Kennedy, in a broadcast on October 22, 1962, said, "We will not prematurely or unnecessarily risk the costs of worldwide nuclear war in which even the fruits of victory would be ashes in our mouth." Confirming that fear on December 16, 1962, Marshall Timoshenko, a Soviet military commander, said, "today war can erupt just by mistake. A nuclear war would kill eight hundred million people." Why this apprehension? Because the colonialism of yesterday has taken a new shape. Spheres of influence, protectionism, and block psychology are playing important roles and represent a craze for domination and exploitation. Here Islam undoubtedly comes to our rescue, provided it is practiced intelligently.

Islam is a simple religion. It expects its adherents to strictly observe the basic tenets: profession of faith, prayer, fasting during the month of Ramadan, *zakah* (alms), and *hajj* (pilgrimage, for those who can afford it). In addition to these obligations a Muslim is required to fight in the cause of God. This obligation, known as *jihad*, is often misinterpreted. The Holy Qur'an says:

Fight in the cause of Allah
Those who fight you,
But do not transgress limits;
For Allah loveth not transgressors. (2:190)

And slay them
Wherever ye catch them
And turn them out
From where they have
Turned you out;
For tumult and oppression
Are worse than slaughter. (2:191)

And fight them on
Until there is no more
Tumult or oppression,
And there prevails
Justice and faith in Allah;
But if they cease,
Let there be no hostility
Except to those
Who practice oppression. (2:193)

Islam is a monotheistic religion based on universalism. "Islam," says H. A. R. Gibb, "never identified itself with Arabs, although at times Arabs had identified themselves with it. . . . Islam set the terms of a new experiment in pure monotheism, unsupported by any of the symbolism or other forms of appeal to the emotions of the common man, which had remained embedded in the earlier monotheistic religions."²⁷

The simplicity of Islamic principles made a Muslim willing to surrender to the command of the Almighty. There is no mediator in between. In his farewell speech before his death the Prophet clearly said that after him, the Holy Qur'an, his own life, and—at stages of confusion—conscience should be the guides for Muslims. All barriers such as clan, color, and nationality were abolished and Muslims of the world were knit into one thread of brotherhood.

During Islam's formative stage religious speculation or mysticism had little scope, though its elements were present in the Qur'an. The Prophet gave priority to the performance of one's duties. But gradually it emerged, especially through Imam Ghazali in the East and Ibn-Tufail in the West, both of whom helped to make this system of intuitive knowledge acceptable to the world. Ameer Ali comments that the holy men and women who flourished in the first and second centuries after the Prophet were more Quietists than Sufis. In the third century when Junaid flourished, Sufism had become a recognized Islamic philosophy.²⁸ When Islam reached India and became part and parcel of the Indian way, the then prevalent Indian mysticism also influenced it. During the entire Muslim period, with a few exceptions, Muslim rulers adopted a middle way and Sufis played an important role in bringing the Hindus and Muslims closer to each other. In due course this process gave birth to a composite culture which had a distinctive peculiarity. In other parts of the world as well Sufism played an important role, especially in softening the attitude developed under the influence of orthodoxy.

At the time of the birth of Islam, the social, political, and legal conditions in Arabia were anarchic. Therefore, after establishing a firm footing, steps were taken toward a sound legal structure which ensured the weak not only protection but also a share in the benefits created by the new order. H. A. R. Gibb says that law in the eyes of

the Muslim scholars was not merely an intellectual study. It was the practical aspect of the religious and social doctrine preached by Muhammad.²⁹ After establishing a legal structure, Muslims gave attention to theology. With the establishment of an empire, the Arabs came into contact with several races and religions which made it necessary for them to formulate the theological structure based on *tahwid*. With the passage of time the simple, rigid, monotheist religion of Islam “broadened into a complex of legal schools and theological sects, superimposed on a medley of congregations with their own rituals and an extraordinary diversity of religious ideas and practices.”³⁰

It is a historical fact that the downfall of Baghdad in 1258 prepared the ground for the advent of the Renaissance in Europe. By the time Europe started to gain from the far-reaching effects of the industrial revolution, the Muslim world had started to decay in spirit. Still it maintained its political supremacy. Before the First World War the Ottoman Empire was the biggest empire on earth. After the First World War a wave of narrow-minded nationalism swept over the Middle East and the Ottoman Empire became fragmented. The victorious powers tried to benefit from the situation, acquiring numerous protectorates. But the nationalistic trend did not allow the imperialist forces to further exploit the area, for a wave of revival soon began, in order to face the challenges from within and the dangers from without. Mohammad Iqbal has reproduced a translation of a Turkish verse of the poet Ziya which says, “In order to create a really effective political unity in Islam, all Muslim countries must first become independent, and then in their totality, they should range themselves under one caliph.”³¹ Commenting on it Iqbal writes,

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It seems to me that God is slowly bringing home to us the truth that Islam is neither Nationalism nor Imperialism but a League of Nations which recognises artificial boundaries and racial distinction for facility of reference only, and not for restricting the “social horizon” of its members.³²

The European economic and expansionist pressure created a chain reaction throughout the Muslim world. The movements of Abdul Wahab of Najd, Ahmed al-Tijani of North West Africa, Ahmad Ibn Idris of Morocco, Mohd. Ibn Ali al-Sunusi of Algeria, Mohd Othaman al-Amir Ghani of East Africa, Mahdi Mohammad of Sudan, Jamaluddin Afghani, Mohd. Abduh, Shaikh Rashid Rida of Egypt, Shah Waliullah, Syed Ahmad Barelvi, and Sir Syed Ahmad Khan of India, among others, were the exponents of the new Muslim renaissance.

The fourteen hundred year Muslim history is pregnant with the story of the rise and fall of various liberal and orthodox theological movements, caliphs, ruling dynasties, autocrats, and dictators. Islam gave to the world a simple code capable of great development in accordance with the progress of material civilization. Its conception of the state is simple and based on flexible tenets. It has complete appreciation for human rights and duties. There is no high rate of taxation. All men are treated as equal in the eyes of the law and the principles of self-government are emphasized. By making law supreme Islam made the executive authority answerable to the law—a law based upon religious sanction and moral obligations. William Urquhart comments:

The excellence and effectiveness of these principles (each capable of immortalising its founder) gave value to the rest, and all combined endowed the system which they formed with a force and energy exceeding those of any other political system. Within the lifetime of a man, though in the hands of a population wild, ignorant, and insignificant, it spread over a greater extent than the domains of Rome while it retained its primitive character, it was irresistible.³³

The twenty-first century is knocking at our doors. Good and bad experiences of the present century will soon be rolled into the pages of history. And human achievements up to the end of the twentieth century will certainly provide incentives to march forward

into the future. At the same time the sad experiences should serve as eye openers to the long-suffering world community. The United Nations Charter declares:

WE THE PEOPLES OF THE UNITED NATIONS DETERMINED to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war, which twice in our lifetime has brought untold sorrow to mankind, and to reaffirm faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person, in the equal rights of men and women and of nations large and small, and to establish conditions under which justice and obligations arising from treaties and other sources of international law can be maintained, and to promote social progress and better standards of life in larger freedom, AND FOR THESE ENDS to practice tolerance and live together in peace with one another as good neighbours, and to unite our strength to maintain international peace and security, and to ensure, by the acceptance of principles and the institutions of methods, that armed force shall not be used, save in the common interest, and to employ international machinery for the promotion of the economic and social advancement of all peoples, HAVE RESOLVED TO COMBINE OUR EFFORTS TO ACCOMPLISH THESE AIMS.

Can the world community claim that the spirit of the United Nations is being honored? The situation as of 1986 is gloomy. The world is divided into two sharp blocs. A third group of non-aligned states is also trying to get recognition, though many of the non-aligned countries support one or other bloc. The developing world is faced with internal challenges and external pressures. Most of the countries do not have a people's or a representative government. Hardly any country has cordial relations with its neighbours.

The Muslim world is passing through a very peculiar period. Pakistan does not enjoy good relations with Afghanistan. Iran and Iraq have been at war for six years and lakhs of people have been made cannon fodder. Egypt does not have good relations with Libya. Libya is drowned in controversy with Morocco. There are about fifty Muslim countries inhabited by more than six hundred million people. Most of them are developing ones. The faces of the entire Middle East, Indonesia, and some countries of Africa have been changed by petro-dollars. However, these countries stand

nowhere in the present world of superior innovations in the fields of science and technology.

It should be borne in mind that we have been discussing Islam and its teachings in the global context without judging the acts of particular Muslim states or rulers. A Muslim might have been a ruler or a founder of an empire, but he might not have been a true one according to the standard fixed by Islam. We have found many scholars committing the serious mistake of taking an act of a Muslim ruler to be an act prescribed by Islam. This has created much confusion in regard to the evaluation of the contribution of Islam to human civilization.

If we look into the pages of history we find that violence committed by nations on a large scale, apart from individual acts, has been due to personal rivalry, desire for territorial gains, competition for hegemony over weaker people, both individuals and nations, economic gains, racial or national friction, the possession of huge wealth and power, decline of spiritual power, apathy toward ethical values, and so forth. In the past the sphere of war was limited, but with the industrial revolution came the demand for markets which gave birth to colonialism. And with the expansion of colonialism the evils of war also expanded. A. R. Azzam rightly says,

The evil of colonialism will continue to prevail until people discover by trial and sacrifice a solution equally acceptable to the strong and the weak. . . . The sacrifice of colonialism is necessary for the salvation of present day civilization.³⁴

I need not describe the effects of colonialism here as history is full of the evils of its by-products—expansionism, exploitation, treachery, deception, and torture. Islam does not permit such injustices. The renowned Egyptian scholar Anwar al-Jundi has discussed these issues and has drawn attention to the following essential principles of Islam:

1. It is Islam which freed human reason and soul from the polytheism and worship dedicated to someone other than God; it freed thought, will and action; it refused to elevate sentimentalists and rationalists and established that the most salient concept was that existing between belief and action, the word and behavior.

2. Islam recognized man's inclination and sentiments, everything that is instructive and natural in him.

3. Muslims are not submissive. Islam believes in nature's submission not in its challenge; it believes in the meeting of the generations not in the clash between them.

4. Islam does not approve of the theory of changing morals according to differences in situation and time.

5. For Islam, man is not completely bad, he is not burdened with original sin; the sin is not rooted in his being. Islam teaches that man is both good and bad and it is his faith in God which diverts him from the evil; man is enslaved neither by his hereditary characteristics nor by his environment.

6. Islam refuses to break the unity of thought in face of economy and politics, society and religion; it reinforces the maintenance of all the elements in a single orientation which is based upon the unity of the human soul.

7. The spirit of Islam and its method, which unite morals and the law (*shari'a*) under a monotheistic belief, do not oppose the march of civilization, but on the contrary, vigorously drive this march onwards towards higher goal.

8. Islam has established a complete system covering the general lines to be followed by man in his behavior towards himself and his community.

9. It supports the community and individualism, links spiritualism and materialism and wholly integrates the human soul and reason. It calls upon Muslims for movement, for transformation of their means and lifestyle, and for welcome for any innovation fitting in with the framework of their values and principles.

10. Islamic principles possess sufficient flexibility and comprehensibility to suit them to any human society and to offer for its problems the truest solutions within the framework of belief in God, excellent morals, effective individual responsibility and faith in resurrection and future reward.

11. Islam was the origin of the appeal for the liberation from all tyrannical oppression; for the study of the universe; for the search of proofs; for the refusal to imitate falsity; and for the

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separation from ancestral beliefs when these are not founded on the explicit truth accepted by the heart.

12. Islam has the capacity to coexist with different civilizations and cultures. The characteristic of Islam is that it unites, liberates and controls, individualism and collectivism, science and religion, nationalism and effectivity, the spirit and matter, revelation and reason, this life and the hereafter, the world of mystery and the perceptible world, stability and evolution, the past and the present, conservation and regeneration, Islam and humanity.³⁵

Step by step human civilization has reached its present condition. Outer space is now within the reach of human beings. But it is also clear that in spite of such achievements man has not yet reached a stage of “man” as envisaged by the great prophets, saints, and thinkers. We are faced with several complicated problems, and among them the question of the world’s existence is the most vital. The situation demands the highest priority. Glenn D. Paige has suggested five tasks for a nonviolent global transformation:

1. Removal of the threat to human survival posed by nuclear weapons, biochemical weapons, and other weapons of mass destruction.

2. Removal of the threat to economic survival posed by violent maintenance of structures of material deprivation and by diversion of life-sustaining resources for life-taking purposes.

3. Removal of threats to freedom and diversity of cultural expression that are posed by psycho-physical terror, torture, and killing.

4. Removal of threats to the viability of the biosphere that result from direct violence and from related economic and industrial despoilment.

5. Removal of lethal divisiveness among various segments of humanity that prevents constructive cooperation in solving global problems.³⁶

All religions, including Islam, have been striving for peace. From time to time man has also proclaimed his resolve to live in

peace and harmony—for example in the Covenant of the League of Nations, the Charter of the United Nations, and in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. However, the requisite will to implement this resolve has been lacking. Time and again this has put man on trial. Simply put, if humanity is to survive it must adopt a nonviolent method for solving its problems, whether the difficulties are between individuals, between communities, or between nations. Islam can play a vital role in solving human problems and in developing alternatives for peaceful global transformation.

Islam does not rule out violence in certain situations. This violence, however, is defensive in character. For the rest, Islam emphasizes social justice, brotherhood, and the equality of humankind. The virtues of forgiveness and mercy, tolerance, submission to God, recognition of the rights of others, and right means are emphasized again and again both in the Holy Book and in the sayings of the Prophet. Furthermore the Prophet demolished all national and racial barriers. Islam aims at a peaceful and just social order. If there were aberrations in history they were a violation of the essential spirit of Islam.

The world is thirsting for peace and longing for a new just economic and social order. The basic teachings of Islam strengthen the forces of peace and of a just social order.

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8. *Ibid.*, p. 15.
9. *Ibid.*, p. 32, with reference to Gen. 4 and Exod. 21.
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35. Mohammad Arkoun, "The Islamic Consciousness: A Cultural Profile," *Cultures IV*, No. 1 (1977) *Perenniality of Values*, UNESCO, 1977, pp. 70–75.

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Islam, Nonviolence, and National Transformation

Abdurrahman Wahid

THE CONCEPT OF UMMAH

A historical approach to the relationship of Islam and nonviolence in the light of national transformation necessitates the “proper” understanding of the social form used for that purpose by Muslims throughout their history. Without defining conclusively what is meant by “national transformation,” it can be said here that the main social form used to effect changes by Muslims is the concept of *ummah*, the Muslim community per se. Over the course of several centuries, this concept has developed into different social institutions, such as the “caliphate” [*khalifah*] and the “sultanate,” and has even emerged as the ideal “Islamic society” consistently formulated by modern Muslim thinkers from Al-Afghani to Sayyid Qutb and Al-Maududi.

But history shows that the concept of *ummah* has at times been quite specific, while at others it has remained more general. In the early stages of the Islamic community’s life it connoted a relatively small community of believers adhering completely to Islamic teachings as formulated by the Prophet. Following soon after these early stages its meaning developed into that of a world community, an *oikoumene* of nations with a rich legacy reaching back to various previous civilizations. This concept of *ummah* was, and still is, how historians conceive of “imamate” [*imamah*] or “caliphate.” This consciousness of being part of a large, universal Islamic community was the supporting elan of this concept.

Later, during colonial rule, the term *ummah* denoted a much narrower meaning: that of being part of a racial unit, ethnic group, or cultural entity, and was used in such phrases as the *ummah* of Arabs [*‘ummah ‘arabiyyah*], as witnessed by the emergence of

kampung Arab (Arab towns) in many Southeast Asian cities. After independence, the meaning of *ummah* became limited once again. It denoted membership in formal Islamic movements, as in the term widely used here, *Ummat Islam Indonesia*.

Currently these various connotations are used in an overlapping way, resulting in many misunderstandings among fellow Muslims. In this chapter *ummah* is used in a geographical sense to connote the concept of the twentieth century “nation-state.” Since the object of this discussion is not the meaning of the word *ummah* itself, but rather how it transforms nations, its use in the “nation-state” sense is seen as appropriate here.

NATIONAL TRANSFORMATION

National transformation, or “national development,” is currently a great challenge to “nation-states” in Muslim countries. These countries face seemingly intractable problems in containing massive expressions of communalism and maintaining national integration gained after long and bitter struggles and severe hardships. Difficulties also abound in establishing the rule of law, in building economic frameworks for equitable distribution of wealth, and in cementing social cohesion. Government response to these difficulties varies from place to place, but mainly takes the form of technocratic sociopolitical engineering, consolidation of the prevalent national ideology, and, in many cases, outright political suppression. There are a whole range of political devices used to prop up those responses, from limited restriction of individual and group political rights to blatant authoritarianism. The end result is a want of full freedom of expression for individuals. Thus the governments decide basic issues concerning the welfare of each respective country without sufficient consultation with the people. Social control becomes more and more difficult to exercise, and in the long run corrective measures are less and less possible to enact by the nation as a whole. Justice becomes more difficult to observe, and opportunities for violent acts by the rulers are more readily available.

PROBLEMS OF APPROACH, IDENTITY, AND CONTINUITY

In light of situations in which “nation-states” fail to curb their use of violence but rather make their own use of force easier, Islamic movements face immense obstacles, which can be characterized as the problems of approach, identity, and continuity.

The Problem of Approach

In struggling for social justice, equal treatment before the law, and freedom of expression, these movements must choose between a radical or gradual approach.

The Problem of Identity

They are also faced with the difficult choice between a pluralistic identity (such as “Indonesian Muslim nationalist” or “Arab Muslim socialist”) and a purely Islamic identity. Pluralistic identities risk making so many accommodations to other elements that in the end the unique Islamic aspect is lost and the identity even becomes non-Islamic. On the other hand, the monolithic tendency to reassert Islamic values only alienates these movements from the broader networks of citizens’ national coalitions. Isolated from those coalitions, Islamic movements will be seen as sectarian groups and will eventually develop their own sense of exclusion, which will result in factual sectarianism, if not outright separatism. The challenge at this time is to find an identity that will both develop a sense of belonging to Islam while also retaining a sense of belonging to a larger and wider network of groups motivated by world ideologies, other faiths, and global concerns.

The Problem of Continuity

Should these Islamic movements formulate their own “alternative development strategy” by pursuing low-key bottom-to-top participative strategies, or should they proclaim Islam as a definite alternative social plan to replace existing development plans? It is not easy to choose between the piecemeal and gradual process, on the one hand, and the more radical and holistic strategy on the other.

TWO ASPECTS OF NATIONAL TRANSFORMATION

National transformation involves two aspects. First, there must be a change toward more distinct divisions of labor between different sectors of society. Such a change in social structures involves a fundamental change in the institutional relationship between the state and the individual citizen. Second, a change is needed in the social relationships among different strata of the society. These changes may be peaceful transformations or violent upheavals. Almost all Islamic movements are very concerned with this aspect and are willing to use whatever means are necessary to achieve such a change. This willingness to use violence will by necessity involve violence in their efforts. One act of violence begets further counterviolence and soon an uncontrollable escalation of violence ensues.

To avoid the possibility of such an escalation, with its never-ending specter of a war of annihilation, Islamic movements should dedicate themselves to nonviolence as a way to achieve their objectives. But how can these movements develop this attitude in the face of so much violence in their respective countries? They must begin by reconsidering how social change occurs—a process which is largely misunderstood by the rulers and the ruled alike. Often social institutions are pulled into diametrically opposed positions creating highly explosive polarizations.

The following two frameworks are offered in hopes of alleviating the aforementioned confrontational situations. Perhaps they can serve as a first step toward nonviolence.

(1) In countries where a formal Islamic state is difficult if not impossible to establish, Islam should play the role of the guarantor of human dignity through action programs to ensure the physical safety of individual citizens, their right to protect their family and descendants, the safety of their property, and fairness in their profession. The implementation of these guarantees could promote the spiritual and material well-being of the society. People's direct participation in the endeavor could be encouraged through the application of Islamic teachings as the social ethics of their respective nations. To pursue that objective, promotion of a bottom-to-top development strategy is necessary, including the

establishment of free associations to improve socioeconomic living standards as well as to foster sociopolitical rights of the disadvantaged sectors of the society, and to encourage mutual respect in interfaith relations. This framework has the decisive advantage of being capable of achieving its objectives within the current “nation-state” forms.

(2) The pursuance of national transformation should be put in a “national coalition” context with nonreligiously motivated groups, such as legal aid institutions, environmental groups, and associations to transfer appropriate technology to rural areas. This approach necessitates an inclusive attitude from the Islamic movements, stressing similarities rather than emphasizing differences in dealing with organizations motivated by faiths other than Islam. This is what constitutes the pluralistic sociocultural approach to democratization within the context of what Catholic theologians term a “human development” strategy.

Islam, Nonviolence, and Social Transformation

Mamoon-al-Rasheed

In times such as ours when conflict is the order of the day and the potential of technology offers more to fear than to hope for, social and political theory faces its gravest challenge. Theoretical political systems have grown increasingly suspect and intellectual formulations tend less to challenge than to repel. But there is a rapidly developing demand hitherto neglected by social and political theory. This demand is not for theoretical systems which point to an end structure which eliminates conflict, but rather for nonviolent ways of conducting conflict when it arises. Such a demand must be met by a theory of process and means rather than by a theory centered on an end or a particular goal. Basic to such a theory is a philosophy of action. Joan V. Bondurant¹

In this chapter I try to formulate an approach to social and political action guided by the tenets of Islam. I have not presumed to write on Islam. Nor have I written strictly on Islamic political philosophy. I have tried to abstract from Islam in discussing contemporary problems—an approach inadequately explored thus far by political theorists. This is not to claim that what I present here is Islam's philosophy of action. I hope my formulation is suggestive rather than definitive. Here I intend to envision a society that draws on the nonviolent principles inherent in Islamic teachings. Nonviolent protests and actions can be temporary and sporadic events. In contrast to this is a nonviolent worldview which is infused into the lifeblood of society. The latter is my focus. Such an ideology calls for a radical transformation of existing socioeconomic structures. Nonviolence should thrive as the form of collective behavior of the members of society. Nonviolence should be integrated into the

social system itself so that it becomes the behavioral pattern of the members of society.

CAUSES OF VIOLENCE

In the modern world the causes of violence are complex and run the gamut of ideological, economic, religious, racial and strategic issues. But what actually lies beneath the sociology of violence? What facet of the human constitution impels people to resort to violence when certain circumstances converge? The simple answer is that the basis of all violence is fundamentally a sense of separateness—separateness between individuals, sects, communities, and nations. The very simplicity of this answer belies the depth and pervasiveness with which separateness has found root in the human psyche. Today it even seems natural for individuals to think of themselves as lonely and separate from every other individual. The culmination of this phase of human development is given expression in the philosophy of existentialism, which views existence as always particular and individual. Of course separatism means not only the glorification of the individual but also that of the separate unit, section, culture, and nation. The individual now identifies with a larger unit, such as nation, sect, or race, but it is still identification with a part rather than a whole. The ability of the individual to identify with the larger unit has been an important step in human development, but still there is the conditioning influence of separatism. This has led to the expression of entrenched nationalism, sectarianism, and racism.

Materialism and Selfishness

Like separatism, violence has a deep root in materialism and selfishness. Like the selfish man whose desire and greed control his behavior, similarly nations covet territory, spheres of influence, and resources. Nations of great wealth live side by side with nations that can barely feed their people. Scarce resources are consumed by the wealthy at a gluttonous rate, with a resultant strain on the world economic structure. The wealthy live in comfort and convenience, while in many parts of the world people live on the streets without

even the basic needs of food and shelter—unwanted, uncared for, and without hope. In such an unbalanced environment nonviolence can never become a reality.

The link between poverty, deprivation, and violence has been firmly established. Unjust disparities exist not only between nations but also within nations and among individuals. This deformed relationship leads to a violent social order.

If the world were a global village of one hundred people, six of them would be Americans. These six would have over a third of the village's income, and the other ninety-four would subsist on the other two thirds. How would the wealthy six live 'in peace' with their neighbors? Surely they would be driven to arm themselves against the other ninety-four—perhaps even to spend, as Americans do, about twice as much per person on military defence as the total income of two-thirds of the villagers.²

To discuss nonviolence in Islam with no mention of justice is like staging Hamlet without the Prince of Denmark. Injustice is the spawning ground of violence. And injustice stems from economic disparities and social inequities. Once injustice is eliminated through social transformation, especially in the rural areas, there will be no occasion for violence. There will be no injustice to prompt violence.

Militarization

Another frequent cause of violence is the militarization of a country. In developing countries backed by predatory powers, the military holds a puissant position, often relying on repression to guarantee control. In the ultimate mockery of defence, a military wedded to political control turns inward to terrorize the people it is intended to protect. Militarization is a process "whereby military values, ideology and patterns of behavior achieve a dominating influence on political, social, economic, educational and external affairs of the state."³ During times of crisis the military establishments assume the role of messiah. The former imperial masters often help them seize this role. The military rule usually depends economically and technologically on its foreign tutelary, and its main task is to repress the local population. Militarization also

moves resources from the poor to the rich countries. Third World peasants subsidize both their own repressors and the major arms dealers, who share a common interest in and responsibility for the repression.

Violence is also transferred in the form of defence training from the superpowers to the Third World. "Training" the armed forces of the developing countries involves much more than technical assistance. The training of officers of these countries increases abruptly just before or immediately after a military coup. There is a very important correlation between per capita defence training and the frequent coups and attempted coups against civilian governments.⁴ Furthermore assistance to the military while a civilian government is in office destabilizes the latter. The giving of military aid to a military government tends to make it more stable. With the rise of neomilitary elitism, military assistance thus helps to undermine the civil population and increases violence.

A close corollary to militarism is counterinsurgency. It acts as a vicious prelude to the universalization of violence in the guise of intelligence service. It not only terrorizes a society but also lets loose an international banditry. This system has engulfed the world with a state of cold violence. Only a spark is needed to make it ignite.

Cultural Terrorism

Another phenomenon brooding in many Third World countries, especially in many poor Muslim countries, is Western value-laden cultural terrorism in the name of development and volunteerism. These racketeers supply the social and cultural legitimation needed for the state violence of militarism. Cultural terrorism thrives best in countries where militarization is already thriving. It disintegrates and dismembers the prevailing sociocultural system, precisely the Islamic value system. In Muslim societies and among Muslim youths, these voluntary organizations backed by the Church and supported by their governments are indulging in secularizing societies in the name of development. These Church-backed volunteers are embarked on a process of de-Islamization in the name of welfare, peace, and human rights. They play a knavish dual role. One, they work among the educated but

unemployed, the half-educated, or young drop-outs. These youth are well paid in comparison to their employed friends, are injected with secular ideology, and are made to believe their own religion is backward. This process gradually replaces their own culture and lifestyle with that of the West. Two, they create dissension amongst the minority community by taking advantage of the worthlessness and suppressive nature of the governments and they accuse the dominant religion of all injustice.

Technology

Technology presents another disturbing phenomenon; it disrupts the whole rural ecology and directly breeds violence. It has damaged the system of redistribution. The imposition of technology, in conjunction with the types of development aid which have been injected into developing societies, increases the disparities between the rich and the poor. This has encouraged the export of cash crops to earn foreign exchange and has led to the subjugation of the rural labour force to the needs of agribusiness.

The culture that we have been forced to inherit today, the one within which political and social forces emerge and act, is a violent culture. Violence is always present in one way or another—not necessarily in the form of overt direct violence (war); but always in the shape of a *world of violence* (structural and cultural), in the form of the military, paramilitary, police, defence preparation and expenditure, constitutional obligations, diplomacy; and so on. Put briefly it has become a basic aspect of everyone's life. Violence is always potentially and often actually present. The world of states, as well as the entire world of politics and diplomacy, is based on violence—cultural and structural, with a high potential for direct violence. Violence is a reality which guides supreme decisions effecting the fate of nations and of humanity itself, and it has maintained this dominant and legitimated position even to the present.

THE TRADITION OF NONVIOLENCE

A study of the tradition of nonviolence shows three main streams in its development: religious, metaphysical, and ethical. To the religious stream belongs the nonviolence of the Hindu, Christian, and Muslim scriptures as well as that of Gandhi. To the metaphysical stream belongs the nonviolence of Jainism. And to the ethical stream belongs the nonviolence of individual thinkers like Henry David Thoreau and John Ruskin.

Gandhi's Nonviolence

The Gandhian concept of nonviolence implies a system of values and meaning with a commitment to a creed. Gandhi emphasized that Satyagraha was a creed as well as a technique of action intended to replace methods of violence. His doctrine of nonviolence was an adaptation of Tolstoy's and Thoreau's ideas, which had been inspired by Christianity. Gandhi accentuated the nonviolent aspects of the Hindu religion in presenting his Satyagraha to the Indian people. This was due to his genius rather than to explicit roots of nonviolence in Hinduism. Gandhi himself confirmed that nonviolence has no importance in Hinduism, even though it conforms with it. He wrote, "The finest hymn composed by Tulsidas in praise of Rama gives the first place to his ability to strike down the enemy. . . . The code of Manu prescribes no such renunciation that you impute to the race. Buddhism conceived as a doctrine of universal forbearance signally failed. . . . Shankaracharya did not hesitate to use unspeakable cruelty in banishing Buddhism out of India."⁵ Gandhi only "adopted symbols but had no Hindu ideals worth the name."⁶ Despite all this Gandhi tried to show that nonviolence was in conformity with Hinduism, while also not being Hindu-bound. However, despite his ingenuity, not many of the political followers of Gandhi in the Indian National Movement accepted nonviolence as a creed.

Very late in his life Gandhi realized the widening gulf between him and the men around him, "the men he had developed as the leaders of the Congress Party."⁷ It cost the Congress to keep Gandhi in an apparent show of poverty,⁸ and as a result after his

death none of his close disciples were able to renew his program in its entirety.

The Christian Perspective

The Christian perspective on the role of the Church has also failed to deal with the problem of violence. It promoted the Crusades, which led to massacres in the name of God and Truth. Next it blessed violent colonial expansionism with the justification of an evangelical spiritual mission. Finally during the two world wars, it lacked the courage and method to stop such a human catastrophe or to encourage people power to rise against brutal force. Instead it blessed the soldiers on both fronts, every morning, barely hours before they started killing each other. Christian soldiers today are "heir to a Christianity that had for seventeen hundred years engaged in revenge, murder, torture, the pursuit of power and prerogative violence."⁹

The impact of nonviolence is failing because of the failures of the prophets of nonviolence to answer the criticisms of the secularists and researchers of scientific truth, who label the religious foundation of nonviolence a set of prejudices or unverifiable hypotheses. Conflicts cannot be eliminated either from international society or from human nature. Violence, like conflict, is also a phenomenon of apparent reproach but with an inherent utility. It is universally recognized today that power is inherent in almost all social and political relationships and that its control is the basic problem in political theory and in political reality. A theory of nonviolence, therefore, has to accommodate violence to the extent to which its control can be brought about by an ideal pursuit of violence itself.

ISLAM AND NONVIOLENCE

It is in this context that Islam claims special relevance. I hope to elucidate five connections between Islam and nonviolence. First, nonviolence in Islam is grounded in the society at the grass-roots level through each individual. It is integrated into the personal activities of individuals and into the collective behavior of an

Islamic society. Second, the Islamic concept of peace as the basis of nonviolence can provide a link in bringing all people together in the service of human development and peace. Not only will the Islamic influence give renewed meaning to nonviolence, but it can also facilitate a process of international integration which involves us all, directly or indirectly. Third, the Islamization of nonviolence can be acceptable to non-Muslims because it is relevant and effective in the context of the most dire need of all humankind today, human survival. Fourth, Islamized nonviolence based upon the recognition of this dire need would not include even a limited form of war. The Islamic practice of nonviolence will provide a criterion for redefining not only various theories of war but also the very nature or relationship between war and peace, violence and nonviolence. Fifth, an Islamic concept of nonviolence will set to rest the philosophies which overemphasize individual salvation to the neglect of the society. The question of survival is so important to the individual that each of us has to take it very seriously in the context of the wider question of the survival of the human race. The threat of nuclear war has made it imperative for everybody to view their survival as linked to the survival of humankind.

The twenty-first century is going to be an Islamic century, not in the sense of Muslim domination, but in the sense of Islamic *influence*, direct or indirect, upon the destiny of the world. Not only does Islam present a far stronger comradeship between people of different nationalities than the pale agnostic humanism of modern civilization, but it also presents an economic and social program that has no parallel in the capitalist or socialist systems. Furthermore Islam is a tested ideology in regard to its potential foundational role in nonviolent overcoming of unjust rule or law, aggression, deprivation or servitude.

Three Examples

Nonviolent Revolution in Iran. It is this nonviolent spirit of Islam that effected the most spectacular nonviolent revolution in Iran, which took all by surprise. A whole people was able to fight for many months against a dictatorship which had under its command the most sophisticated arms and a most ferocious machine, Savak. Western perception has still not absorbed this

event. It is a striking demonstration of how people with religious zeal achieved liberation from all the bi- and tri-polarities sanctified by Yalta.

Egypt. Barely 150 years ago no more than forty members of Egypt's National Society, under the leadership of Sayyed Jamal ad-Din Afghani, through a mere month of diligent practice of only seventeen of Islam's most basic social codes,¹⁰ almost brought about a nonviolent revolution in Egypt. A month's effort of the Society frightened Lord Cromer, the English economic adviser, who saw a drastic reduction in English influence and English trade falling by thirty-five percent. He sent a horrified cable to London: "I hereby notify the British Authorities of the danger posed by the National Society. If it continues its activities for one more year . . . not only will the trade and policy of England in Asia and Africa be completely destroyed, but also there is a fear that the influence of Europe will be gravely endangered throughout the world." The head of the Bank of England in Egypt wrote a letter to a London businessman saying: "It is one of the wonders of life that today the police of Europe in Egypt (and tomorrow the whole world) will be trampled upon by the activity of just forty Muslims, whose only weapon is their religion and the implementation of its principles."¹¹ The British Prime Minister William Gladstone, in a violent rage in the House of Commons, lifted the Qur'an above his head, tearing it to pieces, vowing to rip the Book out of the hearts of the Muslims in order to save the Empire.

India. A third experience with Islamic nonviolence comes from the Indian subcontinent. The Pathans of the Frontier province of Pakistan have long been reputed as masters in the arts and sciences of violence. The development among the Pathans of a movement committed to the use of nonviolence as the means for promoting social and political objectives demonstrates the potential appeal of the Islamic technique. In 1929 Ghaffar Khan, a Pathan of great physical and moral stature, organized the "Khudai Khidmatgar" to effect political, social, and economic reforms based on Islam.¹² "Its adoption of nonviolence was more thorough than that of the Indian National Congress in as much as the Khudai Khidmatgar [KK] pledged themselves to nonviolence not only as a policy, but as a creed, as a way of life."¹³ The ideal of the KK was

to become true Servants of Allah, to serve Allah, and to realize the Pleasure of Allah through serving humanity.¹⁴ The KK was able to carry out a nonviolent program to the extent of establishing a parallel government for a short period in Peshawar. When Gandhi first visited the Frontier in 1938 he was amazed to see an organization already tried in the techniques of nonviolence. No less spectacular was the nonviolent movement for the “impossible dream” of Pakistan by the Muslims of the Indian subcontinent, who refused to crucify themselves “on a cross of Hindu nationalism.”

Injustice in the Muslim World

Either by chance or by choice, Islam is a religion of the Third World. Today Islam is the religion of individuals who have been expropriated from their homes or whose habitats have vanished from under their feet through the jugglery of diplomacy or foxy maneuvering of nationalism. Hardly a two-year period has passed in the last 150 years without some Muslim land in either Asia or Africa being taken by the West, or without Muslims fighting against the encroachment of Western nations. A Muslim trying to snatch out a slice of justice from the national and international jungles is branded, in the most modern rhetoric, a terrorist, fundamentalist, revivalist, or some other pejorative term. Violence used by the arrogant powers, the “cowboy actions” of the vulturine nations against the seekers of justice, have no nomenclature in Western rhetoric.

Thus Islam is the religion of those militants against whom severe wrongs have been committed and who in turn are committed to truth and justice. Islam today is the slogan of those who desire freedom and justice but are denied it, and an institution for those who struggle against local brute force and against all forms of international aggrandizement.

Above and beyond foreseeable changes that might take place in the West and the East, especially in the Muslim countries and societies, it is impossible to speculate regarding the progress and functioning of nonviolence without there being an adequate solution and settlement to the dilemmas already created by Western ways for Muslims. It is difficult to forget easily and quickly the consequences of the suffering that has been inflicted on Muslims in

recent years and the injustice and violence on account of which they continue to bleed.

Gandhi's concept of nonviolence can be described literally as holding fast to truth. Satyagraha can be translated as Truth-Force. Gandhi never claimed to know the truth in any absolute sense. He said, "I am but a seeker after Truth. I claim to have found the way to it. . . . But admit that I have not yet found it."¹⁵

In Islam Truth refers to the *Hidayat* [guidance] revealed by Allah. It is a comprehensive term indicating that true, correct, and complete *Hidayat* is contained only in this Truth. It is the most important term in the Qur'an. Over two hundred mentions bring out its different shades of meaning, relating it to Absolute Truth, the Divine Being, and man and human society. In the Islamic view Truth cannot be realized completely individually—it can be realized fully only in a social system and through a living community.¹⁶ Muslims are reminded that they have to accept the responsibility of creating a just, virtuous, and godly society. Therefore individual attainment of faith and piety is not sufficient. Each individual must also contribute to the social good, because humans can live rightly and happily only in a society and it is through living well in a society that the Way of Allah can be justified.

Power

Nonviolence is closely linked with the evolution of power forms. Violence occurs because the power to generate violence exists. Nonviolence can only be achieved when and if humankind succeeds in creating a nonviolent power form to prevent all individuals and states from generating violence, or through a power diffusion whereby each and every individual shares power.

Nonviolence is the basic tenet of political and economic decentralization. Gandhi believed that exploitation becomes a reality when power is concentrated in a single hand or in a single body like the state. He said, "The state represents violence in a concentrated and organized form."¹⁷ Therefore he advocated diffusion of power in hopes of avoiding violence. He viewed the "increase in the power of the state with the greatest fear, because while apparently doing good by minimizing exploitation, it does the

greatest harm to mankind destroying individuality, which lies at the root of all progress.”¹⁸ Destruction or denial of individuality is tantamount to exploitation, which leads to violence. Therefore to ensure nonviolence, human welfare, peace, and security a society should strive for a maximum flowering of human personality and the decentralization of social, economic, civic, and political power. The theory behind the modern state does not accommodate such qualities.

Human Society as a Whole

Interstate and intrastate violence are the visible symptoms of a deeper malady. There is essentially a failure in the system to develop in people the sense of duty they owe to one another. All the civic attainments, all the political rights, all the efforts of neohumanism, and all the freedom enunciated by modern political theories have failed to reveal to citizens the interests of human society as a whole. Nor can these clearly reveal to the people of one nation how inseparable its own national interest is from those of human society as a whole. We cannot begin to realize our full potential until we have achieved a community which knows no limit but that of human society and renders all obedience to a Law common to all. It is with this in mind that Islam “does not aim to create a state but to create a society.”¹⁹ A Muslim has no country except that part of the earth where *shari‘a* is operative. He has no nationality except his *iman*, which makes him a member of the *ummah*.

This interdependence of all individuals in a society is brought out by Allah’s description of the violence that led to the killing of one son of Adam by the other.

On that account: 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,

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It would be as if he saved
The life of the whole people.
Then although there came
To them Our Messengers
With Clear Signs, yet,
Even after that, many
Of them continued to commit
Excesses in the land. (5:32)

Elsewhere Allah says:

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 Judgement will be doubled
To him. (25:68–69)

Nor take life—which Allah
Has made sacred—except
For just cause. And if
Anyone is slain wrongfully,
We have given his heir
Authority (to demand Qisas
Or to forgive): but let him
Not exceed bounds in the matter
Of taking life; for he
Is helped (by the Law). (17:33)

Take not life, which Allah
Hath made sacred, except
By way of justice and law (6:151).

VIOLENCE

The social turbulence and violence of Arabia during the time of the Prophet is well known. The social situations in the neighboring enlightened nations then were no better. Great philosophers and social scientists of Rome and Greece not only supported violence but gave it legitimacy. Greeks legalized the killing of wives by their husbands. In India until recent times

widows were burnt alive in the funeral pyre of their husbands. Certain caste Hindus had no right to live—shedding of their blood was legal for Brahmins.

In our recent memory the violence committed on Hiroshima and Nagasaki created a hell so horrifying as to be beyond that which any religion has conceived. The dead were even deprived of their final sacred resting places. In Vietnam violence not only killed the living but also violated them and their ancestors by bombing temples, pagodas, churches, and sacred places where the dead lay—all in the name of the defence of Christian Civilization.²⁰ On tiny Cambodia Americans dropped bombs comparable in tonnage to all those employed in Europe during World War II.

Islam's Response To Violence

When such are the scenarios of violence, Islam's Message is: "Slay not such life as Allah has made sacred, except for just cause." One should give serious thought to the fact that Allah did not say simply, "Slay not such life as Allah has made sacred," but added: "except for just cause." Similarly it was not said, "Anyone slaying a person would be as if he slew the whole people," but rather the following exception is added, "unless it be for murder or for spreading mischief in the land."

Human nature does not naturally succumb to mere injunctions and refrain from forbidden actions. Strict laws are necessary to guide and keep human nature in order and under control. Prescription of punishment is essential if dictates are transgressed and laws are violated. Therefore, it is not enough to say, "Slay not such life as Allah has made sacred," or

Do no mischief on the earth
After it hath been set in order. (6:56)

Severe sanctions are needed to keep individuals and groups from failing to follow the dictates or from indulging in violence.

Islam allows a person leeway as long as one does not cross certain limits. A person is allowed to live and has a right to life as long as he does not indulge in any kind of violence. But if he exceeds that limit and causes chaos and oppression in the society or

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becomes a threat to the lives of his fellow beings, then he loses the right to live. In such cases appropriate punishments provide security and freedom for others. According to the Qur'an,

Tumult and oppression are worse than slaughter. (2:191)

In Islam, therefore, a criminal is dealt a punishment equally severe to the crime committed.

The law of equality
Is prescribed to you
In cases of murder:
The free for the free,
The slave for the slave,
The woman for the woman.
But if any remission
Is made by the brother
Of the slain, then grant
Any reasonable demand,
And compensate him
With handsome gratitude.
This is a concession
And a Mercy
From your Lord.
After this whoever
Exceeds the limits
Shall be in grave penalty. (2:178)

Here, the *Qisas* comes into operation.²¹

War is sometimes a necessity. Gandhi said that if people “are to preach the mission of peace, they must first prove their ability in war.” This he felt to be a “terrible discovery,” yet he held that “a nation that is unfit to fight cannot from experience prove the virtue of not fighting.”²²

Allah did not proscribe against armed conflict in self-defence or against others who cause tyranny. Permission to resort to violence is given, therefore, to those who have been wronged.

To Those against whom
War is made, permission
Is given (to fight), because
They are wronged. (22:39).

The wronged people are defined as

Those who have
Been expelled from their homes
In defiance of right
(For no cause) except
That they say, "Our Lord
Is Allah." (22:40)

People who can resort to violence are further defined as

Those who,
If We establish them
In the land, establish
Regular prayer and give
Regular charity, enjoin
The right and forbid wrong. (22:41)

These people, however, do not fight for themselves, nor for territory, resources, or privilege. They fight for Right and for Allah. This permission for retaliation comes as Grace from Allah to those who are *mustadafa'yyun* [oppressed] and to those whom Allah wants to be the inheritors of power, as an example to those who defy the Authority and Sovereignty of Allah.²³

And We wished to be
Gracious to those who were
Being depressed in the land,
To make them leaders (in faith)
And make them heirs. (28:5)

Allah has promised, to those
Among you who believe
And work righteous deeds, that He
Will, of a surety, grant them
In the land, inheritance
(Of power). (24:55)

My servants,
The righteous, shall inherit
The earth. (21:105).

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These tenets of Islam show that those who are authorized to take recourse to violence are persons committed to a life strictly defined by Allah.

Let those fight
In the cause of Allah
Who sell the life of this world
For the Hereafter. (4:74)

Allah holds Muslims responsible for humanity.²⁴ This responsibility is not merely to convey the Message to humanity, but also to take positive measures to ameliorate the lot of the oppressed, even to the extent of waging wars for their sake.

And why should ye not
Fight in the cause of Allah
And of those, who, being weak,
Are ill-treated (and oppressed)?—
Men, women, and children,
Whose cry is: “Our Lord!
Rescue us from this town,
Whose people are oppressors;
And raise for us from Thee
One who will protect;
And raise for us from Thee
One who will help!” (4:75)

Allah not only commands Muslims to be concerned and active for the rest of humanity, but also urges them to seek cooperation from others for the progressive goals of Islam.

And let not the hatred
Of some people
In (once) shutting you out
Of the Sacred Mosque
Lead you to transgression
(And hostility on your part).
Help ye one another
In righteousness and piety,
But help ye not one another
In sin and rancour. (5:3)

Allah asks Muslims, within the framework of Islam to admit any merit or virtue in any hostile individual or group.

The Qur'an stresses that force must be used only as a last resort against oppressors of basic human rights. These basic rights are defined as freedom of belief, freedom of expression, freedom of life, and freedom of survival. According to the Qur'an the use of force is legitimate only when dialogue and reason have failed, and cannot be an essential principle or an inevitable necessity, as presented in revolutionary ideologies. When animal instincts and limitations prevail over the human intellect, then the use of force becomes an undesirable necessity for the well-being of humankind as a whole. It is conditional and requires Divine permission, since it is exceptional. If this permission were not given, sacred places would be dishonored, the enmity of nations would never end, and the earth would be a place full of mischief mongers.

To those against whom
War is made, permission
Is given (to fight) because
They are wronged;—and verily,
Allah is Most Powerful
For their aid;—
(They are) those who have
Been expelled from their homes
In defiance of right,—
(For no cause) except
That they say, "Our Lord
Is Allah." Did not Allah
Check one set of people
By means of another,
There would surely have been
Pulled down monasteries, churches,
Synagogues, and mosques, in which
The name of Allah is commemorated
In abundant measure. Allah will
Certainly aid those who
Aid His (cause). (22:39–40)

Every time
They kindle fire of war,
Allah doth extinguish it,
But they (ever) strive
To do mischief on earth.

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And Allah loveth not
Those who do mischief. (5:67)

It bears repeating that this Divine permission is only given in cases where human rights are violated (including the right to observe one's faith) or in cases where the people's security is threatened. This concession is never to be taken advantage of in order to preach the Faith. Men and women are to be called to the Faith by wisdom and counsel.

Invite (all) to the Way
Of thy Lord with wisdom
And beautiful preaching;
And argue with them
In ways that are best and most gracious. (16:125)

Coercion of any nature, such as allurements, whether it be through charity or material benefits, is not to be applied.

Let there be no compulsion in religion:
Truth stands out clear from Error. (2:256)

One is to argue with reverence and grace. If people are not convinced, then they are to be left alone.

O ye who believe!
Guard your own souls:
If ye follow (right) guidance,
No hurt can come to you
From those who stray.
The goal of you all
Is to Allah: it is He
That will show
The truth of all
That ye do. (5:105)

Let not those grieve thee
Who rush headlong
Into unbelief:
Not the least harm
Will they do to Allah. (3:176)

RURAL TRANSFORMATION AND AN ISLAMIC SOCIETY

It is only now that a real awakening to the relevance of the Islamic Message to both our social and individual problems is beginning to take place. If modern civilization had really fulfilled the dreams of its protagonists, if social justice and economic emancipation through various “isms” had not turned out to be a mirage, if better and improved technology were still seen as the panacea for all our problems, if modern medicine could really have taken care of all our diseases, if modern science had continued to inspire undiluted awe, if modern psychology had continued to offer hope for a better world, if the dangers present in ecological imbalance had not become so obvious, if economics had not failed so miserably to contain or even explain inflation and, most important, if the extinction of the human race through a nuclear catastrophe had not become such a distinct possibility—then perhaps interest in Islam would never have been revived. When the injustices and threats facing us seem to demand desperate measures, Islam’s Message is as urgent and essential as ever.

Rural transformation in Islam is the full manifestation of the Will of Allah and the realization of His Pleasure. Furthermore no transformation in a Muslim society, be it in rural or urban areas, can be explained simply by means of categories such as class, class-consciousness, class-struggle, or economics. “Islam does not confine itself merely to purifying the spiritual and moral life of man in the limited sense of the word. Its domain extends to the entire gamut of life.”²⁵

When the Prophet arrived at Medina there was no legitimately constituted social authority. He set up an authority, with due sanction from the various constituents of the Medinese population. He drew up a written constitution, federal in nature, and with multiple clauses to accommodate various groups and their interests. The document was the “political genius of its author, it was in reality a revolution.” The center of power shifted from the tribe to the community,” which “included Jews and pagans as well as Moslems.”²⁶ The Islamic society of Medina was almost a system of

confederated local government in which non-Muslims controlled and directed external and security affairs.

An Islamic society by nature assimilates all indigenous elements within its religious and social framework. Local elements that do not conflict with the values and ideals of Islam are made part of the total process of Islamization, giving a new direction, shape, and character to the society. Conflicting elements in a society remain a source of violence and can never bring peace. Therefore, Islam rejects those which conflict with its values.

Principles of Transformation

Transformation in Islam is basically Islamization—a process of integrating Islam’s fundamental values into the life of society. “Islam is a system for practical human life in all its aspects. This is a system that entails the ideological ideal—the convincing concept which expounds the nature of the universe and determines the position of man in this universe as well as his ultimate objectives herein.”²⁷ Islam is a complete code of life and the success of an Islamic society here and Hereafter lies in the total compliance with the entire scheme of life envisioned by the *shari‘a*.

Tawhid, ummah, al-‘adl, and ihsan are central concepts in Islam when considering the dynamic role they can play in transforming rural society and liberating humankind. These principles bring out the significance and the practical daily meaning of the Pleasure of Allah. The Pleasure of Allah calls for both a change of hearts and a change of societal structures. A change of heart without a concomitant change in structures would leave present oppression unchanged. A change of structures without a change of heart would lead to new oppression since the liberated oppressed, still driven by selfishness and greed, would become oppressors in their turn. Only the two together can bring a situation where people live together in fellowship and freedom. It is to such a society of free people living in a nonexploitive society that Islam summons us and to which it leads by its own inherent dynamism of *iman*. It is neither a blueprint nor a vision but a Divine reality that initiates the values of the New Order—*tawhid, ummah, al-‘adl, and ihsan*. Muslims are committed to the never-ending task of

providing the social structures within which these values can be realized and safeguarded.

In Islam *tawhid* is central to any kind of transformation. It is an absolute principle of spiritual truth. It gives shape to social life in all its manifestations and impacts everyday life. It links the metaphysical and the spiritual to the various aspects of a person's daily life—work, production, trade, consumption, distribution, entrepreneurship, family relations, social behavior, as well as societal institutions, the law, and the arts—all of which make Islamic society a living whole. *Tawhid* is the core concept from which all aspects of rural social transformation are to be derived. It is the integrating factor of all life.

The concept of *ummah* is next in importance when considering Islamic transformation. It is an integral part of the concept of *tawhid*. Through this concept of community Islam aims at establishing a social order wherein individuals are united by a bond of fraternity. Individuals living in an Islamic society are like members of one single family created by Allah from one couple.

O mankind! We created
You from a single (pair)
Of a male and female,
And made you into
Nations and tribes, that
Ye may know each other
(Not that ye may despise
Each other). Verily
The most honoured of you
In the sight of Allah
Is (he who is) the most
Righteous of you. (49:13)

Ummah is not parochial but universal. It engenders an egalitarian and cooperative environment.

Closely linked to *ummah* and inseparable from it is *al-'adl*, which denotes a balance of forces at the fundamental level. It puts all aspects of life in proper perspective and balance. It is fundamental to the Islamic concept of socioeconomic justice. Social justice must characterize people's social behavior, which in turn influences economic behavior. *Iman* that has elements of injustice

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is unacceptable to Allah.²⁸ *Al-'adl* directs man to the *sirat-al-Mustaqim*,²⁹ and helps individuals to avoid all extremes.

Ihsan is another factor which is important for all socio-economic relations in Islam. It refers to the cordiality in social relations born of an individual's willingness to forgive and forget, to sacrifice for others what is one's due, to prefer others' interest over one's own, and to be generous.

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)

Ihsan should guide the myriad social ties of an individual. It is especially important in grass-roots relationships and between family members.

And that ye be kind
To parents. Whether one
Or both of them attain
Old age in thy life,
Say not to them a word
Of contempt, nor repel them,
But address them
In terms of honour. (17:23)

We have enjoined on man
(To be good) to his parents:
In travail upon travail
Did his mother bear him,
And in years twain
Was his weaning: (hear
The Command), "Show gratitude
To Me and to thy parents." (31:14)

The spirit of nonviolence is seen to stem from the family. The Prophet says, "Best among you is one who is best for his family." And Allah commands, "Accept my instructions to deal with women generously."

Mamoon-al-Rasheed

And, (reverence) the wombs
That bore you: for Allah
Ever watches over you. (4:1)

Ye are forbidden to inherit
Women against their will.
Nor should ye treat them
With harshness. (4:19).

From the wider perspective of social relationships in general, Islam enjoins its followers to be kind to others. The Prophet said, “Be kind to those on earth, the One Who is in Heaven will be kind to you.” In the Qur’an there are numerous verses that have prescribed the quantum of retribution that an individual may demand from others who have done an injustice.

The recompense for an injury
Is an injury equal thereto
(In degree): but if a person
Forgives and makes reconciliation,
His reward is due from Allah: for (Allah)
Loveth not those who do wrong. (42:40).

Though one is permitted an equal retribution, Allah loves those who are generous.

Who restrain anger,
And pardon (all) men:—
For Allah loves those
Who do good. (30:134).

But if ye show patience,
That is indeed the best (course). (16:126).

For Allah is with those
Who restrain themselves. (16:128).

Ihsan enables a society to vibrate with love and affection, fraternity, and friendship.

Allah describes a true believer as one who establishes Islam on earth, one who creates a peaceful world of plenty for all. When we conceive of a society in Islam we think of its three primary interdependent components: the Family, the *Masjid*, and the

Neighborhood. To work towards social awareness, transformation, and Islamic nonviolence we must recognize, strengthen, and develop these basic social units.

Submission to Allah

To understand an Islamic society one needs to ask, “Who is a Muslim?” A Muslim is one who sets his face “firmly and truly, towards Allah,” believes only in Allah, and His Apostle and strives with all his or her effort for the Cause of Allah.

For me, I have set
My face, firmly and truly,
Towards Him Who created
The heavens and the earth,
And never shall I give
Partners to Allah. (6:79).

Only those are Believers
Who have believed in Allah
And His Messenger, and have
Never since doubted, but
Have striven with their
Belongings and their persons
In the Cause of Allah:
Such are the sincere ones. (49:15).

It is this Submission which is Islam, the realization of *Iman* in practical life. Those who of their own free will accept Allah as their Sovereign, surrender to His Will, and undertake to realize His Commands, are called Muslims.³⁰ Interestingly this realization came to Gandhi as a “whisper,” of which he made mention on March 22 and again on July 30, 1946: “The still small voice within me whispers: Remember the teaching of first verse of *Ishopanishad* and surrender all you have to Me.”³¹ All those who surrender their whole selves to the Will of Allah are welded into a society. Such a society stems from the voluntary solidarity of its members and is not a preconstituted pact imposed at birth. This type of society is always formed through a bottom-up process. Islamic society is the “result of a deliberate choice and striving; it is the outcome of a contract between human beings as individuals and their Creator.”³²

This is the marked conceptual difference between the formation of an Islamic society and a modern society.

Leadership in an Islamic Society

The leader of such an Islamic society must fulfill the following requirements: the leader (1) must be trustworthy, (2) must have thorough and perfect knowledge of *shari'a*, (3) should have a sound ability to render justice, and (4) has to be a person of *taqwa*.

Allah doth command you
To render back your Trusts
To those to whom they are due;
And when ye judge
Between man and man,
That ye judge with justice. (4:58)

The sole objective of such a society is to establish *salat*, *zakah*, and virtue.

(They are) those who,
If We establish them
In the land, establish
Regular prayer and give
Regular charity, enjoin
The right and forbid wrong. (22:41)

O ye who believe!
Obey Allah, and obey the Messenger,
And those charged
With authority among you. (4:59)

This Islamic society functions by mutual consultations of the *mutaqi* and *'alim*.³³

Each Islamic society is an independent and self-contained unit under the aegis of the *ummat al-Islam*, receiving its guidance and direction from the *khalifat ul-Muslimin*. These small social units are essential to the development of behavior and character; achievement of collective *falah*; spiritual attainment; and the civic, economic, and religious dimensions of the welfare, security, and justice of the Islamic society. These qualities can begin within the

smaller units and then spread to the *ummat-al-Islam* and then to humanity at large.

Through the concept of *ummah*, Islam visualizes a stateless society. A nation-state, irrespective of the particular type, is an instrument of coercion which undermines the freedom of individuals. The Islamic stateless society, however, is not akin to the Marxist vision of a stateless society. Through a process of *tazkiyah* [character building] and *tarbiyah* [education], Islamic society emerges from a comprehensive transformation of the social, civic, and economic aspects as well as the spiritual and moral development of its individual members.

The Individual in Islamic Transformation

The pivotal element in Islamic rural transformation is the individual, who is seen as the basic component of society. The development and welfare of each individual is the primary goal of Islam. In the context of modern society the individual is not an entirely free agent capable of defining his or her existence. Rather it is the modern society, through its various institutions, which defines the role and existence of the individual.

Life in an Islamic society is a collective made up of individuals; each individual is responsible for his words and actions. An individual's social posture is a product of his understanding of history and society and the use he chooses to make of this knowledge. Social position or material status do not determine one's self-perception or one's position in society.

O mankind! do your duty
To your Lord, and fear
(The coming of) a Day
When no father can avail
Aught for his son, nor
A son avail aught
For his father.
Verily, the promise of Allah
Is true: let not then
This present life deceive you,
Nor let the Chief Deceiver
Deceive you about Allah. (31:33)

In an Islamic society individuals belong on an equal footing. In Islam, equality is a more dominant concept than freedom. The modern conception of freedom is franchise, whereas in Islam it is an invitation to Obey, to Submit. The individual is endowed with intelligence by Allah, and is called upon to do good, to form part of society, and to obey authority. But in so doing the individual is to act by free decision in accordance with perception. “By the Soul and the proportion and order given to it; and its enlightenment as to its wrong and its right;—truly he succeeds that purifies it.” If he disobeys, the fault is his own, for he is free to select good or evil.

We showed him the Way:
Whether he be grateful
Or ungrateful (rests on his will). (76:3)

Thus in Islam individuals, inspired by *tazkiyah* and fortified by *tarbiyah*, become the prime instruments in the transformation of a contemporary society into a society of Islamic order. Islamic society once established should not be passive in the face of human exploitation, tyranny, or injustice. Citizens are expected to help the oppressed and the persecuted of their neighborhood or society. Islam exhorts individual believers continuously to strive to establish Allah’s Will on earth. All individuals of the society are obliged to struggle against every obstacle to this goal, whether individually or collectively. This ceaseless effort is the *jihad*.

Jihad

Jihad represents an effort to strive seriously and ceaselessly to fulfill the Will of Allah in human life. In the context of transformation of contemporary society *jihad* has four probable functions. They are: (1) the development of Islamic principles within the self to subdue the *nafs al-ammarah* [carnal desires] and to realize the Will of Allah, (2) the eradication of evil and the establishment of Right, (3) the extension of the word of Allah to all corners of the world, and (4) the development, through a spirit of total sacrifice, of security against injustice and aggression. It should be stressed that *jihad* is not synonymous with war. While war does have a place within the total spectrum of *jihad*, one must first try all peaceful avenues to change. The Prophet stressed the need for

organization and authority and the Qur'an unequivocally condemns disorder and anarchy. *Jihad* protects the former and stands guard against the latter.

The Will of Allah

Since the Islamic way of life is oriented around the goal of realizing Allah's Will in the world, society must be organized and governed in accordance with the tenets of Islam. An Islamic society is a political unit, a firmly united dynamic body. This unity at the societal level is crucial for it is in the society where the spiritual and the temporal merge. Allah, the authority at the center, unifies this total vision of an Islamic society. In light of these considerations, we see that Islam not only has religious dimensions but also social and political dimensions. An Islamic society can be described as "theocratic" — as a Divine democratic society.³⁴

Tolerance

In an Islamic society tolerance is the rule, and it should always be shown to non-Muslims. This is a fundamental principle of Islam laid down in the Qur'an. A non-Muslim member of an Islamic society enjoys all the benefits, rights, and privileges of Muslims. Such a person is absolutely free in the internal matters of religion, rites and rituals, personal law, and behavior and is protected and defended in the performance of their law. But in the external affairs of the society, such as the general rules for conducting social affairs, external relations, and protection of the society from internal disorder and external threats, he or she is to come to the active help of the Muslims as long as it does not threaten personal law. Or the non-Muslim can remain passive and neutral by paying the cost for such actions. Security of life, property, and freedom of conscience are guaranteed to non-Muslims, who are known as *dhimmi*. The Prophet protected them and proclaimed: "I shall myself be the complainant against him greater than he can bear or deprive him of anything that belongs to him." So concerned was the Prophet about the non-Muslims that a few moments before he breathed his last he was reported to have said: "Any Muslim who kills a *dhimmi* has

not the slightest chance of catching even the faintest smell of Heaven. Protect them; they are my *Dhimmi*.”

Tawhid, The Sovereignty of Allah, and His Khalifah

In Islam, an individual and a society are radically transformed to strive in the cause of Allah, to develop a soil-soul relationship to realize the Pleasure of Allah, and to help relocate the sovereignty and power as per *Kalima*: “La Ilaha Illallahu Muhammadur Rasulallah” [There is no god but God and Muhammad is His Messenger]. This is *tawhid*. It is not just a group of words; it has three distinct features as well as a Message. The three features are (1) *La Ilaha*, no gods: a rebellion against all existing order and superstitions that have bonded people to the orders and beliefs created by human beings; (2) *Illallah*, but Allah, submission to only One, a surrender to the *only* Authority; and (3) the only method of achieving these two objectives is by following the Messenger. The Message is the equality of human beings.

Tawhid is a challenge to local, national, and international authority trying to usurp the greatest attribute of Allah, which is Sovereignty. In Islam all attributes of Sovereignty of any conceivable nature reside in Allah alone, and no one else can share them to the slightest degree.

To Allah doth belong the dominion
Of the heavens and the earth,
And all that is therein,
And it is He who hath power
Over all things. (5:123)³⁵

It is Allah who creates and governs, firmly holds the Authority, and regulates and governs everything.

Your Guardian-Lord
Is Allah, who created
The heavens and the earth
In six Days, then He established Himself
On the Throne (of authority). (7:54)

Allah made men His *Khalifah* on earth and placed them with (delegated) authority so that men would establish the *Din* of Allah.

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Allah has promised, to those
Among you who believe
And work righteous deeds, that He
Will, of a surety grant them
In the land, inheritance
(Of power), as he granted it
To those before them; that
He will establish in authority
Their religion—the one
Which He has chosen for them. (24:55)

Allah placed some above others to test their ability and judgment in the execution of their role as *Khalifah*.

It is He Who hath made
You (His) agents, inheritors
Of the earth: He hath raised
You in ranks, some above
Others: that He may try you
In the gifts He hath given you. (6:165)

Tawhid operates only through a society's affirmation of its commitment to the Way of Allah and for the establishment of the *Din* of Allah. When in operation *tawhid* endows a society with a unity of purpose, function, destiny, and identity. It preconditions the transfer of economic, social, civic, and political power to the oppressed and the establishment of *al-'adl* [justice].

Islamic transformation must demonstrate that the struggle for human dignity and social justice is based upon the acknowledgement of the Omnipotence and the Sovereignty of Allah. The success for such transformation demands a general disbanding of the "privilegentia" which presides over power structures.

In order to realize nonviolence, the crucial issue today is not the fair and balanced distribution of income and opportunity but rather of *power* and *responsibility*. The transformation process therefore should seek to rearrange privileges and power of the dominant class and transfer power to the poor. Religious, social, economic, civic, and political leadership should not be distributed among members, but should be delegated to a Rural Peoples Institute for the benefit and privilege of all in the society, and it

should have Divine sanction. The prime objective of transformation of a society in Islam is the relocation of power through perpetuating the process of *al-'adl* and *establishing the Sovereignty of Allah*.

The oppressed grow and develop when they are confronted by difficulties. This growth happens on account of their lack of possibilities, their continued efforts to free themselves from chains of oppression, their patience and perseverance, their trust in Allah, their lack of reliance upon material dependencies, and their spiritual competence. Because they resist torture they reach out towards liberation movements and achieve important victories. These people have received special attention from Allah. They have been referred to in the Qur'an and in the Sunnah with profound affection and respect. The promise of their role as leaders and as heirs of the earth have been revealed.

And We wished to be
Gracious to those who were
Being depressed on the land,
To make them leaders (in faith)
And make them heirs,
To establish a firm place
For them in the land. (28:5-6)

These are the people who “ask help from Allah and are patient,” “guard themselves against wrong and evil,” and become powerful with the help of Allah.³⁶

Tawhid transforms an individual's entire ego into a dynamic force to restructure one's sense of justice and sense of performance as a social being. Reflecting on the spirit of *tawhid*, Malcolm X commented that if white Americans could accept *tawhid*, then perhaps they too could demonstrate in reality the Oneness of Man and cease to measure and hinder and harm others in terms of their “differences” in color.³⁷

The Islamic concept of nonviolence and rural transformation in this sense is human liberation. Transformation for nonviolence and liberation are political actions. Islam is supremely a political religion. The term “Islam” itself is a political term. It implies a unity of the ethical and the temporal which is beyond the concept of a secular notion of politics. Islam is political action. The *taghut* is in possession of political power, economic monopoly, social

authority, and civic advantage. He does not favor transfer of power to the oppressed. On the other hand, the oppressed need to have power to operationalize and consolidate their *imam*. It is thus impossible to analyze social transformation of the rural areas towards nonviolence and liberation without analyzing the problem of *power*. Practicing Islam is a process of waking up. Islam increases awareness of one's own existence and environment. It is the direct awareness of the significance of one's actions—of what one is doing. Islam gives insight that allows one to gravitate towards the best people and it is the constant reminder of one's real place in this universe, so that one does not become too self-indulgent.

Khalifah, Trusteeship, and Islamic Economics

In Islam the power to rule society is delegated to the whole community: it is not the privilege of any one person or group of persons. All believers living in such a society are repositories of the *khalifah*. The *khalifah* bestowed by Allah on Muslims is the popular vicegerency and “not a limited one.” Every believer is a *khalifah* of Allah in his own individual capacity. The Prophet said, “Everyone of you is a ruler and everyone is answerable for his subjects.”³⁸ In an Islamic society, no one is inferior to another.

Tawhid is a very radical concept which strikes directly at those who make humanity subservient, whether in religious attire as priests; in political vesture as kings, revolutionary leaders, and ruling juntas; in the economic garniture as bankers and monopolists; in the social trim as missionaries, philanthropists and voluntary workers; or in academic costume as intellectuals and scholars. Human authority should be accepted only as an instrument for collective work, social programs, and civic discipline—not as vehicles for power, authority, or superiority. Superiority in Islam rests solely on one's *taqwa*. “The Holy Qur'an allows privileges only for justice and piety. A pious has privileges; a person with a good spirit has privileges. These privileges, however, do not relate to material things, to property. Such privileges must be done away with. All people are equal, they are all given equal rights.”³⁹

The spirit of *tawhid* presupposes that individuals have no natural rights over their material possessions.

Allah hath purchased of the Believers
Their persons and their goods;
For theirs (in return)
Is the Garden (of Paradise):
They fight in His Cause,
And slay and are slain. (9:111)

Let not those
Who covetously withhold
Of the gifts which Allah
Hath given them of His Grace
Think that it is good for them:
. . . soon shall the things
Which they covetously withheld
Be tied to their necks
Like a twisted collar,
On the day of Judgment. (3:180)

Man exercises his social and occupational authority according to *khalifah* theory.

Behold, thy Lord said to the angels:
"I will create a vicegerent on earth." (2:30)

Under this theory man is charged with responsibility for faithfully sustaining himself and other creatures of the earth. Man accepted this responsibility as an *amanah* [trust] from Allah.

We did indeed offer
The Trust to the Heavens
And the Earth
And the Mountains;
But they refused
To undertake it,
Being afraid thereof:
But man undertook it. (33:72)

By accepting this *amanah* man has been assigned to the most distinguished position of the office of *khalifah*. The faithful execution of the responsibilities of a trustee and the role of a vicegerent is the true *ibadah* in Islam. The *khalifah* is bestowed on

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the entire society through the performance of every individual. They “enjoin what is just and forbid what is evil” and are protectors of one another, irrespective of gender.⁴⁰ Humans are but a trustee of Allah on this earth in society, and not absolute owners. If one does not perform one’s duties voluntarily then pressure should be created to bring one’s behavior in line with Islamic society’s collective behavior. Allah makes people inheritors of power and property so that He may try them.

It may be that your Lord
Will destroy your enemy
And make you inheritors
In the earth; that so
He may try you
By your deeds. (7:129)

Even family and children are but a trial for their perfection.

And know ye
That your possessions
And your progeny
Are but a trial;
And that it is Allah
With Whom lies
Your highest reward. (8:28)

It is our actions in relation to the execution of our duties as *khalifah* and trustee, that Allah is going to judge and so He warns us not to betray the Trust.

It is your actions that Allah
And His Messenger will observe. (9:94)

O ye that believe!
Betray not the trust
Of Allah and the Messenger,
Nor misappropriate knowingly
Things entrusted to you. (8:27)

The concepts of *khalifah* and *amanah* are natural corollaries to Allah’s sovereignty over material wealth. The use of power or of wealth to satisfy an individual’s ego is a direct revolt against Allah. All wealth belongs to the society and is intended for the support of

the members of the society. A particular individual is only a trustee of the property.⁴¹ In an Islamic society the owners of wealth and those who control the means of production should manage and exercise their economic power, possessions, and resources as trustees of the society and not as absolute owners or controllers.

The concepts of man's role as *khalifah* and as trustee removes the wide disparity between the rich and the poor. The theme of *amanah* rests on the belief that capitalists and landlords should transfer the accumulated wealth into a trust for the common use of the society. In such an Islamic society food, clothing, provisions for pure drinking water, shelter, security, peace, and sufficiency are the most inalienable features of a good life.

There is therein (enough provision)
For thee not to go hungry
Nor to go naked,
Nor to suffer from thirst,
Nor from the sun's heat. (20:118–119)

Allah made the Ka'bah,
The Sacred House;
An asylum of security for men. (5:97).

A city enjoying security
And quiet, abundantly supplied
With sustenance from every place. (16:112)⁴²

In Islam one is to share one's wealth with those who are of limited means and share in the works that benefit the society as a whole. Surplus wealth should go for the collective *falah* of the society. The orders in the Qur'an in this regard are categorical and unqualified. It upholds the rights of the needy and destitute through the wealth of the rich.

And in their wealth
And possession (was remembered)
The right of the (needy),
Him who asked, and him
Who (for some reason) was
Prevented (from asking). (51:19)

And those in whose wealth
Is a recognised right

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For the (needy) who asks
And him who is prevented
(For some reason from asking). (70:24-25)

Muslim, Abu Dawud, and Ahmad quoting Abi-Said al-Khudri states: “The Prophet said: ‘Whoever has a surplus of animals for riding should give it to a person who has nothing, and whoever has a surplus of food should give it to a person who has no food.’” He further adds, “The Prophet named so many kinds of property or belongings until we thought that no one of us has the right to keep a surplus.” A society based on such voluntary sacrifice for human welfare and advancement is an Islamic society.

Islam does not recognize a consumption-oriented affluent society. It advocates a low-cost economy and a middle class living for all. It seeks constant human elevation, freedom, and the avoidance of the dehumanization associated with competitive commercialization and heavy industrialization. Today even sociologists agree that technology’s prevalence does violence to the dignity of the laborer as a human personality—it is a direct threat to the *imam*.

Human exploitation of natural wealth subordinates the Will of Allah. It is obligatory on Muslims to harness the resources of nature to serve the cause of justice, to promote righteousness, and to eliminate evil. However, Allah’s resources must not be allowed to become instruments of exploitation by individuals or groups of individuals. Wealth is desired to ease poverty, hardship, and dependability—not for ease, comfort, and affluence. Islam condemns indulgence in luxurious living and the desire to show-off.⁴³ It opposes the conspicuous consumption of the leisure class.⁴⁴ As a lesson the Qur’an relates the story of Qarun, his lust for wealth, and his subsequent fall.

So he went forth among
His people in the (pride
Of his worldly) glitter.
Said those whose aim is
The Life of this World:
“Oh! that we had the like
Of what Qarun has got!
For he is truly a lord
Of mighty good fortune!” (28:79)

Wealth in Islam is desired to improve morality, to perfect the *ibadah*, and to develop the quality of a person. Wealth is not desired for the maximization of standards of living. Wealth is for collective purposes and not for individual utility. It is for social development and not for individual consumption and pleasure. In the eyes of the Prophet wealth was of no greater significance than the foam of the sea. According to Bukhari, a collector of Hadith, very often he would cry out from the depth of his heart, “O God! Bestow upon the descendants of Muhammad only as much provision as may be necessary to sustain life.” The Prophet also said to his wealthy companion Usman ibn Affan: “The son of Adam has no right (for the things of the world) except a home sufficient to live in according to need, clothes sufficient to cover his body, and utensils for food and water.”⁴⁵

While insisting upon a powerful built-in mechanism for income redistribution, Islam is even more powerful on account of its alignment with the Pleasure of Allah. In an Islamically transformed society there would be two classes of people: workers and entrepreneurs. Land ownership is subjected to the interest of the society. Land is the free gift of Allah, given for use, and not for ownership. Shah Waliullah held that the use of land should be regulated by the society in its general interest while exploitation by idle landlords should be outlawed. No one, Shah Waliullah held, has the right to consider himself the master either of land or of fellow men.⁴⁶ Islam “regards the cultivator as the owner of the land.”⁴⁷ Landlords have no right to claim a natural power invested by Allah as a factor of production.⁴⁸

A Muslim’s belief in Allah entails an automatic duty for justice. Income distribution induced through voluntary giving along

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with the compulsory resource transfer affected through *zakah*, *kharaj*, *'ushr*, and *sadaqat ul-fitr* are not only economic necessities but also means of spiritual attainment and mutual cooperation.

Of their goods take alms,
That so thou mightest
Purify and sanctify them,
And pray on their behalf,
Verily thy prayers are a source
Of security for them. (9:103)

Wealth is not to be circulated amongst only a few.

What Allah has bestowed
On His Messenger (and taken
Away) from the people
Of the townships—
Belongs to Allah,—

To His Messenger
And to kindred and orphans,
The needy and the wayfarer;
In order that it may not
(Merely) make a circuit
Between the wealthy among you. (59:7)

In an Islamic society each individual's happiness should have equal value.

And spend of your substance
In the cause of Allah,
And make not your own hands
Contribute to (your) destruction. (2:195)

Allah loveth not
The arrogant, the vain glorious,
(Nor) those who are niggardly,
Or enjoin niggardliness on others,
Or hide the bounties
Which Allah hath bestowed
On them. (4:36–37)

It is essentially a society with equal income distribution.

Mamoon-al-Rasheed

Those who are deceived by the luxury and life of this world are rejectors of the Faith.

It was the life of this world
That deceived them. So
Against themselves will they
Bear witness that they
Rejected Faith. (6:130)

Piling up wealth which is not for use or service to those who need it has been condemned in the strongest terms by Allah.

Who pileth up wealth
And layeth it by,
Thinking that his wealth
Would make him last forever!
By no means! He will
Be sure to be thrown into
That which Breaks to Pieces. (104:2-4)

Spending one's honestly earned wealth is obligatory.

O ye who believe!
Spend out of (the bounties)
We have provided for you
Before the Day comes
When no bargaining
(Will avail), nor friendship
Nor intercession.
Those who reject Faith—they
Are the wrong doers. (2:254)

One is asked to spend what is beyond one's need.

They ask thee how much
They are to spend;
Say: "What is beyond
Your needs." (2:219)

Tawhid and *al-'adl* together make up the Islamic system, which at one and the same time unifies as well as balances. They are the ultimate aims of one's self-realization that can only grow in an atmosphere of jihad. Such an atmosphere will prevail only in a

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society where an equal share is given “even unto the last.” The principle of *sharing* is described as:

One should spend all that he earns on his lawful and reasonable needs, and if any surplus accrues, hand it over to others so that they may satisfy their needs. Islam regards this equality as one of the highest standards of morality and has put it forward as an ideal with such force that a society influenced by *Hidayah* will always respect those who earn and spend, much more than those who keep their wealth hoarded and who go on investing surplus income in earning more.⁴⁹

It is the *salat* and *zakah*, or pray and pay synthesis, which keeps the efforts to transform a society alive and perennial. Inwardly one must develop by *salat* and *dhikr*; outwardly one must function in the social arena of action. Thus people can move from deep inner contemplation to vital and purposeful social activity in any sphere. *Salat* indicates the personal project whereas *zakah* and *sadaqah* indicate the social project. One is not complete without the other. If they are divided the result is either a superficial “Western radicalism” or a “socialist automatism” stressing action and service at the expense of awe and vision, or a pietism, relating spirituality to the private sector.

Social justice is the key to an Islamic social system.

My Lord hath commanded
Justice; and that ye set
Your whole selves (to Him)
At every time and place
Of prayer. (7:29)

It must be tempered with compassion to avoid unnecessary social hardship. Each individual is entitled to justice from the society. Social justice, or *al-'adl*, requires the poor to be moved up and the rich to be moved down the scale of the social hierarchy. It is with this view that the great Khalifah Umar, seeing the gap between the rich and the poor widening, said: “Had I done first what I did later, I would have taken away the wealth from the rich and distributed it among the poor.”⁵⁰ To solve or alleviate within a reasonable time the basic problems of poverty, deprivation, and inequity, it is necessary that the better off members of a society have their existing

standard of living lowered, kept static over time, or kept from growing as fast as it would otherwise grow, until a favorable balance is reached.

CONCLUSION

The main strategy of transformation in Islam lies in raising a band of people. In the words of the Qur'an:

Let there arise out of you
A band of people
Inviting to all that is good,
Enjoining what is right,
And forbidding what is wrong:
They are the ones to attain felicity. (3:104)

Under the shade of this spirit A'ishah said:

We have come into the field for the sake of the God, which Allah Almighty and His Messenger, peace and blessings of Allah be on him, has commanded every one, young and old, man and woman to do. We have come to command the people to do good and to protect the good, and to safeguard people from evil and remove evil from the world.⁵¹

When people are ready, transformation will take place in the rural societies through a mass-based reconstruction movement which will develop small "Islamic social laboratories,"⁵² units of peoples' power, will, and work in which the people will run their own affairs according to the tenets of Islam. Thousands and millions of such Islamic laboratories centering on *masjids* [mosques] will emerge, restructuring the established order. Next these decentralized but highly ideologically motivated, cohesive units will form a pattern of the ultimate *ummat al-Islam*; a nonviolent world community, based on the *din* of Allah.

Salat or prayer in Islam is an institution for social action. The most cohesive prayer occurs on Fridays, when the whole society assembles. The *masjid*, therefore, is essential. The rhythm of Islamic practices is essential for group dwelling. A *masjid* with its arrangements for ablution, five daily prayers at the call of the

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muezzin, and the fast of Ramadan with its nocturnal activities, encompass communal rather than isolated activities.

Social living is indispensable to the dignity of life which Islam demands. Women must observe the injunctions of Islam, all children must be educated, all orphans must be taken care of, all widows must enjoy their social and economic rights, all disabled must be looked after, and all elders must be respected. All these requirements are difficult to reconcile in an isolated existence. Living together in a cohesive society is a pillar of the faith and a framework within which to live the good life in Islam.

Power is an essential force of life, always in operation, vibrant, and dynamic. When Muslims agree on Islamic ideas and want the power to propagate their *iman*, they organize a *masjid*, not in the physical sense, but in the moral and spiritual sense. When people agree on certain political ideas and want the power to put them into practice, they organize a political party. For Muslims, Islam is the political party. Power and organization are one and the same. Similarly *masjid and Islam are one and the same*. The *masjid* is the nucleus of power of an Islamic society.

Transformation of Muslim societies in rural or urban areas involves a rediscovery of social welfare, civic function, and the mobilizing capacity of a *masjid* for any nonviolent action. A *masjid* brings men and women together, establishes the spirit of cooperation, creates dynamic social solidarity, furthers mutual understanding, generates the spirit of consultation, helps keep the society informed, and keeps the society dynamic.

The *masjid* is a place for the quest of peace, both spiritual and physical. These aspects originate from the individual's affirmation of Allah's sovereignty with the concept of *tawhid*, and in the recognition and invocation of Allah's Will. *Jumu'ah*, a coming together, already represents the "actualization of peace" A Muslim oriented towards a *masjid* and *jumu'ah* is in fact under obligation within his or her Qur'anic commitment to invite others to participate in the nonviolent struggle for justice, peace, and security.

The essential Islamic elements on which the concept of rural transformation for a nonviolent world is based are: the exclusive and absolute Sovereignty of Allah; the *shari'a*, being the paramount as well as the sole source of policy; the dignity and equality of man and woman; the authority being in the nature of a

trustee of Allah; and *mutaqi* being at the helm of authority, exercising their power as *khalifah* of Allah on the basis of consultation. The transformed society of Islam will be a society of absolute justice, freedom and rights, peace and security, and sufficiency and work. It will aim at the ultimate unity of the *ummah* and of humanity at large.

Islam is a message for all and for all seasons. Against this background I have tried to sketch with a broad and rugged brush Islam's approach to rural transformation, which I believe, if translated into action, both in letter and spirit, will clarify for all well-meaning persons the meaning of fundamentalism and militancy in the awakening of Islam and will assist exploration of whether Islam is relevant for ushering in a nonviolent world.

NOTES

1. Joan V. Bondurant, *Conquest of Violence: The Gandhian Philosophy of Conflict* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1969), p. xiii.
2. Simple Living Collective of the American Friends Service Committee, *Taking Charge, Achieving Personal and Political Change Through Simple Living* (New York: Bantam, 1977), front cover.
3. World Council of Churches, Report of the Consultation on Militarism, November 1977, p. 3.
4. Edward Thomas Rowe, "Aid and Coups d'Etat," *International Studies Quarterly* (University of British Columbia) 18, no. 2 (June 1974): 238-255.
5. Mahadev H. Desai, Tr. by Hemantkuma G. Mikanth, *Day-to-Day With Gandhi* (Varanasi: Sarva Seva Sangh Prakashan, 1968).
6. M. M. Sankhdhar, "The Relevance of Gandhism: A Point of View," *Gandhi Marg* 27 (June 1981): 152-153.
7. Larry Collins and Dominique Lapierre, *Freedom at Midnight* (New Delhi: Vikas, 1976), p. 99.
8. *Ibid.*, p. 98.
9. "A-Bomb Chaplain: I Was Told It Was Necessary," *Sojourner* (August 1980).

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10. "Where does the Power of Islam Lie," *Imam* (London), Jamadee al-Thani/Rajab, AH1405 (March 1985): 39-41. The 17-Point Program of Action of the National Society of Egypt included the following:

1. Each day, every member of the Society must read at least one hizb (1/16) of the Sublime Qur'an, with due care and reflection.
2. Compulsory prayers are to be said in congregation.
3. Do not abandon the principles to "enjoin good and to forbid evil."
4. Call non-Muslims to Islam.
5. Debate with Christian missionaries in the best possible manner.
6. Have kindness and give charity to the needy and deprived.
7. Carry out any legitimate request, and help those in need of assistance without their asking.
8. Respect family ties and promote bonds of affection with your close relatives.
9. Visit the sick.
10. If a Muslim is missed at a gathering, inquire after his well-being and the reason for his absence, so that he can be helped in the event of difficulties.
11. Call on those who have returned from a journey.
12. Pay compulsory dues to the deserving needy.
13. Do not refrain from guiding and helping those who are not familiar with the injunctions and rites of their religion, which ensures man's felicity.
14. Avoid contemptible qualities, particularly conceit, arrogance, selfishness and greed for power and position.
15. Overlook the petty faults and errors of Muslim brothers.
16. Do not be bad-tempered, irritable, or discourteous.
17. Refrain from saying or doing anything which has no material spiritual benefit for yourself or other Muslims.

Each member of the Society carried a small notebook and made note of every time he acted on one of the seventeen articles, to be recorded in the register-book of the Society. Since the implementation of some of these points required financing, those forty people decided from the outset to sell any luxuries they had and to live with only the basic necessities of life.

11. *Ibid.*, pp. 40-41.

12. The Khudai Khidmatgar Pledge, which every member had to sign, read thus:

1. I put forth my pledge in honesty and truthfulness to become a true Khudai Khidmatgar.
2. I will sacrifice my wealth, life, and comfort for the liberty of my nation and people.
3. I will never be a party to factions, hatred, or jealousies with my people, and will side with the oppressed against the oppressor.
4. I will not become a member of any other rival organization, nor will I stand in any army.
5. I will faithfully obey all legitimate orders of all my officers all the time.
6. I will live in accordance with the principles of nonviolence.
7. I will serve all God's creatures alike; and my object shall be the attainment of the freedom of my country and my religion.
8. I will always see to it that I do what is right and good.
9. I will never desire any reward whatever for my service.
10. All my effort shall be to please God, and not for any show and gain.

13. Pyarelal, *A Pilgrimage of Peace: Gandhi and Frontier Gandhi Among N.W.F. Pathans* (Ahmedabad: Navajivan, 1950), p. 134.

14. *Ibid.*, p. 118

15. Gandhi, *Young India* 17 (November 1921).

16. By (the Token of)
Time (through the Ages),
Verily Man
Is in loss,
Except such as have Faith
And do righteous deeds,
And (join together)
In the mutual teaching
Of Truth, and of
Patience and Constancy. (103:1-3)

17. Gandhi, *Modern Review* (October 1935): 143.

18. *Ibid.*, p. 144.

19. Qamar-ud-Din Khan, *Al-Mawardi's Theory of State* (Lahore: Islamic Book Foundation, 1983), p. 4.

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20. Shingo Shibata, "Religion and Nuclear Extermination," *The Churchman* (August-September, 1979).

21. In order to clarify this important concept we reprint here the following commentary from *The Meaning of the Holy Qur'an*, translated and with commentary by A. Yusuf 'Ali (Brentwood, MD: Amana, 1991), p. 71 (reprinted with the permission of the publisher).

1. Note first that this verse (2:178) makes it clear that Islam has mitigated the horrors of pre-Islamic customs of retaliation. In order to meet the strict claims of justice, equality is prescribed, with a strong recommendation for mercy and forgiveness. Therefore, to translate *Qisas* as retaliation is, I think, incorrect. The Latin legal term *Lex Talionis* may come near to it, but even that is modified here. In any case it is best to avoid technical terms for things that are very distinct. In English *retaliation* has a wider meaning equivalent almost to returning evil for evil, and would more aptly apply to the blood feuds of the days of ignorance. Islam says:

If you *must* take a life for a life, at least there should be some measure of equality in it; the killing of the slave of a tribe should not involve a blood feud where many free men would be killed; but the law of mercy, when it can be obtained by consent, with reasonable compensation, would be better.

Our law of equality takes account of three equations in civil society; free for free, slave for slave, and woman for woman. Among free men or women, all are equal. Also you cannot claim that because a wealthy, high born, or influential man is killed, his life is equal to two or three lives among the poor or the lowly. Nor in case of murder, can you go into the value or abilities of a slave. A woman is mentioned separately because her position as a mother or an economic worker is different. She does not form a third class, but a division in the other two classes. One life having been lost, do not waste many lives in retaliation; at most let the law take one life under strictly prescribed conditions, and shut the door to private vengeance or tribal retaliation. But if the aggrieved party consents (and this condition of consent is laid down to prevent worse evils), forgiveness and brotherly love is better, and the door of mercy is kept open. In Western law, no felony can be compounded.

2. The jurists have carefully laid down that the law of *Qisas* refers to murder only. *Qisas* is not applicable to

manslaughter, which is due to a mistake or an accident. In that case there would be no capital punishment.

3. The term “brother” is perfectly general. All men are brothers in Islam. In this and in all questions of inheritance, females have similar rights to males, and therefore the masculine gender refers to both sexes. We consider the rights of the heirs in the light of the larger brotherhood. In 2:178–179 we have the rights of the heirs to life (as it were), while 2:180–182 proceed to the heirs to property.

4. The demand should be such as can be met by the party concerned, that is, within his means and reasonable according to justice and good conscience. For example, a demand could not be made affecting the honor of a woman or man. The whole penalty can be remitted if the aggrieved party agrees out of brotherly love. In meeting that demand the culprit or his friends should be equally generous and recognize the good will of the other side. There should be no subterfuges, no bribes, no unseemly byplay: otherwise the whole intention of mercy and peace is lost.

22. Mahadev H. Desai, *Day-to-Day With Gandhi*, p. 166.

23. To establish a firm place
For them in the land,
And show Pharaoh, Haman,
And their hosts, at their hands,
The very things against which
They were taking precautions. (28:6)

24. Ye are the best
Of Peoples, evolved
For mankind,
Enjoining what is right,
Forbidding what is wrong,
And believing in Allah. (3:110)

25. Syed Abul Maududi, *Islamic Way of Life* (Beirut: The Holy Koran Publishing House, 1977), p. 1.

26. R. A. Nicholson, *A Literary History of the Arabs* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1969), p. 173.

27. Sayed Qutb, *Islam: The Religion of the Future* (Beirut: The Holy Koran Publishing House, 1978), p. 5.

28. It is those who believe
And confuse not their beliefs
With wrong—that are
(Truly) in security, for they

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- Are on (right) guidance. (6:82)
29. Show us the straight way. (1:6)
30. Maududi, *Islamic Way of Life*, pp. 16–17.
31. D. G. Tendulkar, *Mahatma* Vol. 7, Rev. Ed. (New Delhi: Publication Division, Government of India, 1962), pp. 83, 280, 409.
32. Maududi, *Islamic Way of Life*, p. 17.
33. And consult them
In affairs (of moment).
Then when thou hast
Taken a decision,
Put thy trust in Allah.
For Allah loves those
Who put their trust (in Him). (3:159)
34. Syed Abul Maududi, *Islamic Law and Constitution*, trans. and ed. Khurshid Ahmed (Lahore: Islamic Publications, 1983), pp. 139–40.
35. Also refer to 2:107, 3:189, 5:43, 7:128, 7:111, 7:128, 20:6, 21:89, 23:88, 24:42, 25:2, 36:83, 62:5, 59:23, and many other similar verses.
36. 24:55.
37. Charis Waddy, *The Muslim Mind* (London and New York: Longman, 1983), pp. 109–110.
38. Maududi, *Islamic Law and Constitution*, p. 149.
39. Selected Messages and Speeches of Imam Khomeini, Tehran, 1980, pp. 2–9.
40. The Believers, men
And women, are protectors,
One of another: they enjoin
What is just, and forbid
What is evil: they observe
Regular prayers, practice
Regular charity, and obey
Allah and His Messenger. (9:71)
41. A. Yusuf ‘Ali, *The Holy Qur’an: New Edition with Revised Translation and Commentary* (Brentwood, MD: Amamna, 1983), p. 179, footnote 511. Also see 4:5.
42. See also 5:100, 10:25, and 24:55.
43. Sayyid Manzoor Ahsan Gilani, *Islami Ma’ashiyat* (Hyderabad, India: Idara Isha‘at-e-Urdu, 1947), pp. 138–140.
44. Sayed Qutb, *Social Justice in Islam* (New York: American Council of Learned Societies, 1970).
45. Kaukab Siddiqui, *Islam and Revolution* (American Society for Religion and Education, 1981), p. 75.

46. Edward Mortimer, *Faith and Power* (New York: Random House, 1982).
47. I. H. Quraishi, "Land Tenure in Islam," *International Islamic Colloquium Papers* (Punjab: University Press, 1960), pp. 149-150.
48. Abdul Hamid Ahmad Abu-Sulayman, "The Theory of the Economics of Islam," *Contemporary Aspect of Economic Thinking in Islam* (American Trust Publications, 1978).
49. Syed Abul Maududi, *The Economic Problem of Man and Its Islamic Solution* (Lahore: Islamic Publications, 1975), p. 34.
50. Taha Hussain, *Al-Fitnah al-Kubrad*, Vol. I, Urdu trans. by Abdul Hamid Nomani (Bombay: Ajmal Press), p. 21. Also referred to in Al-Muhallah, Abu Ubayd, *Kitab al-Amwal* (Cairo, 1958).
51. Kaukab Siddiqui, *Islam and Revolution*, p. 110.
52. A term very gratefully borrowed from Dr. M. A. Mannan, Islamic Development Bank, Jeddah.

Islam, Nonviolence, and Women

Khalijah Mohd. Salleh

The word “nonviolence” appears foreign when I think of Islam. It is the term *salam* or peace that I often associate with it. However, the lack of the use of the term “nonviolence” can be seen as partially reflecting the current state of affairs in several countries throughout the world. Violence is common and the situation is worsening. There is no need to produce statistics here because it is happening right in front of our eyes. For those who are worried about the chaotic and destructive consequences that violence brings, it is fitting to talk about “nonviolence.”

Violence is said to take place when an individual acts in an outrageous manner and applies unlawful and injurious physical force either to himself, to others, or to the surroundings. An act of violence is consequential. It is a manifestation of a troubled, tumultuous spirit and heart. The disturbance in the spirit and heart is so strong that it offsets the sanity of the mind. Under such influences the individual is strongly influenced by his *nafs* (carnal desires) and he focuses his thought just on himself. He does not care about others, about their safety or welfare. Justice to him then is simply getting whatever he desires, even if it means chaos or destruction to either property or life. To be thoughtful, considerate, and patient are remote behaviors for him at that time. Any social, moral and religious values that he upholds when he is stable no longer count. Thus a person exhibiting violence is one who has lost control and is unable to balance an otherwise sound mind, desires, and feelings for others. It is his inability to manage the pressures within him that makes him explode and harm those around him.

A person may feel justified committing violence. However, due to the annihilating consequences of violence, Islam strongly objects to it. It is mentioned in the Qur‘an:

But let there be amongst you
Traffic and trade
By mutual good will:
Nor kill (or destroy)
Yourselves: for verily
Allah hath been to you most merciful!
If any do that
In rancor and injustice—
Soon shall We cast them
Into the Fire: and easy
It is easy for Allah. (4:29-30)

ISLAM AND NONVIOLENCE

Individual or societal nonviolence is dependent upon the individual's or society's ability to live in harmony with their surroundings. Such individuals do not feel threatened. They are confident; hence they feel secure, calm, and sound.

Man* is able to achieve such a state. Islam provides him with the formula that he needs. Individuals do not have to spend time making experiments or observations in order to arrive at the empirical laws of human behavior. Such man-made empirical laws would not be universal and complete; hence there would be doubt about their validity and application. This is so because man the observer cannot divorce himself from the human system that he studies. His presence affects the system and therefore alters the state of the system. Thus the exactness of his observations and the resulting conclusions would be at variance with the actual state exhibited before the study is made. The limits of man-made laws are clearly evident in the breakdown of the Communist based social systems in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe.

* In this chapter the term man and the use of masculine pronouns, unless specifically stated otherwise, refer to both men and women.

The laws for human life laid down in Islam are believed by Muslims to be revealed by Allah, the Creator of all that exists. Thus these laws come from outside the human system.. Through them man knows his origin, his makeup, his shortcomings, and

weaknesses. He knows his potentials and his destiny. Through the Qur'an and Sunnah he learns a great deal about himself, his needs, and the principles of living. He therefore learns how to lead his life in the most pleasant, efficient, and effective manner.

Life on this earth has definite goals and man is required to work towards them. Thus with the guidance that has been given, man can get started early in his mission without having to discover by experimentation what the goals are. How can one ascertain that he receives guidance? Actually it is the person who asks the question who finally has to make the choice to believe or not. An element of faith is a prerequisite, which can be strengthened through further thinking and reflection upon all kinds of personal, social, and physical phenomena.

From the definition of violence and the standards set by Islam, immediately it can be said that violence is sinful and forbidden. It is possible for a Muslim to restrain acts of violence if his behavior follows the principles of Islam. In this chapter I shall touch on three practical principles of restraint: the principle of submission to one and only one supreme being, the principle of causality, and the principle of resurrection and judgment.

THE PRINCIPLE OF SUBMISSION

By the very definition of Islam, which is complete submission to Allah, a Muslim is expected to believe in the oneness of the Creator, Allah, and to obey all His commands with respect to God, to himself, to society, and to the environment. A Muslim is advised to remember Allah all the time. It is the very act of remembering Allah that will guide him to what is good and deter him from what is bad.

There are various ways of remembering Allah through *salat* (prayers), *zikr*, good deeds, and the exercise of righteousness. The main mode of remembering Allah, however, is through the daily *salat*, to be performed five times a day at certain prescribed times and in a specific manner. For one who understands the meanings of the prayers, each act of praying helps him continuously to check himself and to remind himself of his duties and responsibilities. Not only does he remind himself that his prayers, services, life, and

death are for Allah alone, but he also seeks Allah's guidance to the straight and blessed path. Such a Muslim is convinced that by remembering and obeying Allah, he will be saved from committing grievous sins. Also he will free himself from fear and worry.

THE PRINCIPLE OF CAUSALITY

There is no action without a reaction and there is always a cause for every action. Without this principle it is impossible to determine the relationship between two events and hence to anticipate to what results an action can lead. For example, one can be loved, respected, and well treated by others if he himself gives love, shows respect, and treats others well. It is because of this principle that a Muslim has to develop a good pleasant character and personality, with a high standard of moral values. Such qualities are not simply attained. They are acquired either through parental guidance or religious education, which can be either formal or informal, as will be elaborated upon later.

When a Muslim understands the principle of causality he will be motivated to try his best to do anything that brings good to himself and his surroundings. This is not just for the reward that goodness will bring to him but to gain the Pleasure of Allah. The Qur'an states that this is the best of all rewards that any believer and God-fearing person can attain. Thus a conscientious, righteous Muslim will automatically be prevented from doing wrongful and sinful actions, especially those that are as destructive and annihilating as violent acts.

THE PRINCIPLE OF RESURRECTION AND JUDGMENT

The principle that there is going to be resurrection and judgment is yet another internal guide for a Muslim. This principle informs the Muslim that life on this earth is temporary (**56:60-61**), and that there will be another life after this one. That life is eternal and of a different dimension (**23:15-16**). The character of that life will depend on what a person does in this world. This belief has a profound influence upon the manner in which a Muslim conducts

his affairs. Those with power, wealth, and fame will not be oppressive and unjust opportunists or exploiters. They will be true in their words and deeds. Those who are weak and poor will not act barbarically and violently just to get a handful of rice and water. Without this principle a man feels free to do just as he likes. He will not care for the consequences of his acts. This principle is necessary if man is expected to be responsible and cautious. There need not be pressure nor threats of punishment by the laws of the state.

The inner motivation to act responsibly and sensibly comes about because man is concerned about the decision regarding his destiny to be made on judgment day. At that time he will be questioned about how he has utilized his time, energy, and wealth during his life on earth. Thus his desire to have the balance in his favour makes him constantly check his activities so that they conform to the standards already set by Islam.

Such an argument makes sense. It gives meaning to one's life and existence on this earth. The consequences of living up to such teachings are as promised in the Qur'an and Hadith: peace without fear and worry. Observation of the practices of philosophies other than Islam show that material success and achievements can be great, but they cause people to live in corruption, misery, and at war with one another. They lead the human race to disaster. However, if a man knows that he will be accountable for any act, be it as small as an atom, he will be careful about what he does.

THE MUSLIMAT, HER ROLE AND CONTRIBUTION

A *muslimat* contributes towards the promotion of nonviolence through her positions as individual, wife, mother, and member of society.

Woman as Individual

As an individual a woman learns that the creation of sex is not purely for sexual purposes. Sex draws men and women together for more than just the fulfillment of physical and carnal desires. It is for companionship and procreation. As such, sexual relations must be treated with reverence and are to be performed only by married couples. On reflection, is it not because of society's failure to observe this principle that the current global problem of AIDS is something to be expected? Further it has been statistically shown that a majority of those who suffered from AIDS had been rather free with their sex life. Hence it is necessary for a man or a woman to guard themselves against possible acts and circumstances that arouse their sexual desires when in the company of others than their spouses.

In Islam a woman is advised to cover all but her face and hands when in public. Her beauty and ornaments are meant only for her husband and for members of her immediate family (24:31). She should lower her gaze and guard her modesty when walking in public (24:31). She should avoid being alone, especially at lonely spots. The purpose of these prescriptions for women is to avoid acts and circumstances that are conducive to unlawful sexual assaults, which bring about undesirable consequences. Through them the woman's safety is ensured.

In Islam the way a woman should dress and the way she should appear in public are not just for the purpose of creating an identity of her own. It is for her own modesty, safety, and protection. One can hardly deny that finally it is one's safety that matters most, compared to the attention and admiration that a woman can get by her display of beauty and alluring manners. It also helps a man not to be a victim of his own weaknesses. It can be said that Islamic teaching guides a woman to take preventive measures against sexual attack, thus safeguarding her life, purity, and modesty.

Woman as Wife

A *muslimat* learns from the Qur'an (30:21) that man and woman as husband and wife are meant to be helpmates to one

another, and that they can find tranquility in each other. It is actually Allah who instills in the heart of man the feeling of love and mercy. This therefore gives us cause to come together. It is obvious that some of our needs cannot be fulfilled by ourselves alone, but through our mates. The importance of fulfilling each other's needs is indirectly expressed through a hadith: when a man calls upon his wife to fulfill the sexual urge and she declines and for this reason the husband remains angry with her all night, the angels send curses upon the wife until dawn. At first glance this hadith seems to portray the wife as completely subservient to the husband's sexual impulse. However, an in-depth knowledge and understanding of the Qur'an shows that both men and women have needs and the responsibility of fulfilling each other's needs when the occasion arises. Further bear in mind that men were more often outside their homes. Hence they were the ones who frequently came into contact with the Prophet. Thus it appears that it would always be the men's problems that He would address. To overcome misunderstandings, the interpretations of Qur'anic teachings cannot be made in isolation from the sociocultural milieu of the Arabic society at the time they were being revealed.

The immediate reaction to this hadith by a simple-minded person is that one would not want to be cursed, but on reflection there is wisdom behind the hadith. As we have seen, both men and women have needs and weaknesses. Unfulfilled needs affect a person's mood and if they become too much to bear they may trigger subsequent acts of aggression and violence. The hadith, coupled with some understanding of man's psychological makeup, thus help both men and women to appreciate each other's needs and thereby allow both to play their roles dutifully. This way the spirit and the heart will not be troubled and both the husband and wife can be tranquil. Such mutual support prevents those who want to live in piety from being emotionally and psychologically disturbed. It also prevents men and women from engaging in extramarital relations, which would only create emotional and psychological problems within themselves and others as well.

Woman as Mother

Let us now discuss the promotion of nonviolence through a woman's role as a mother. Basically it is the role of both mother and father to mould a child's character. This can be concluded from the hadith that a child is born pure. It is the parents who turn him into a Jew, Christian, or a Muslim.

A disturbed, insecure child of bad character is so because of an unhappy childhood. Such a child is often not well attended by his parents during his early days. The child has been deprived of love, care, and the necessary stimulation for healthy growth and development, either mentally, physically, or spiritually. Such children will not grow up to have a pleasant personality. What were acts for the sake of drawing attention will in later life become part of the child's character. For example, a child demanding his parent's attention will throw fits, start screaming and shouting, and even throw and break things. When such behavior remains unchecked and uncorrected, the child will ultimately grow up to be a temperamental, incorrigible, and unmanageable individual. It will not be too surprising later to learn about his involvement with drugs, crime, and violence.

Islam has definite principles on how to raise children. These principles do not change with time. One principle is that at the time of ejaculation both husband and wife should pray for a good offspring. In effect, this is praying for the best possible combination of qualities for the offspring. Then during the pregnancy, the woman has been advised to exercise good behavior and to be calm and serene. To achieve that teachers advise us to recite certain surah of the Qur'an such as "Maryam" (19), because such chapters describe the good qualities exhibited by various prophets. The mother then prays for the well-being of the foetus. All these point to the influence the mother has on the physical, emotional, psychological, and spiritual aspects of the foetus.

Once the child is born, breast feeding is encouraged. It is indicated in the Qur'an that a Muslim mother should spend two years breast feeding her child. It is not just the mother's milk that is important for the baby, but also the contact and interaction between the mother and child during breast-feeding. The warmth and closeness that the mother gives during this period provides

emotional nourishment to the child. A child that is loved and well taken care of will grow up to love and care for others.

Once a strong maternal bond is established it would be hard for a mother to be unconcerned for the child. In fact she tends to be protective of her child. It should therefore be reasonable to expect that such a mother would not have a strong inclination to abuse and ill-treat her child. The child may be naughty when he is bigger. Then the mother needs to discipline him. She will cane him if necessary, but not to the extent of hurting the child. Ill-treating children is forbidden, but reasonable punishment for the purpose of education is not. With parents who are aware of such principles, a child is likely to be safe.

Islam insists on the development of a good and fine character. That is a lifelong process, but a good foundation for such growth and development is essential. It is for this reason that a child has to be trained from early childhood to exhibit good character. The parents are duty bound to be good models for the children. Since it is natural for mothers to play a more dominant role in the development of the child's character, a Muslim mother has to give priority to child care and upbringing. A mother who understands her role well and can actually perceive the great importance that she has in her child's life will struggle to meet the needs of her child. She renders her service by giving her time, energy, and feelings.

One of the primary conditions for proper upbringing is the household atmosphere. It must be Islamic. This allows the inculcation of Islamic values to begin early. To start with, the mother can insist that the family observe daily prayers regularly and that the children develop good personal habits and good relationships with other members of the family. The mother together with the father can exercise control over the kinds of influences to which the children are exposed.

This is not to say that caring for and bringing up children is an easy task. It is not. It requires time, energy and thought. The only way to go about this is to somehow win the children's respect and allegiance. This can be achieved while also maintaining strictness if the children know that they can trust their parents' words and deeds, and that they will benefit mentally, physically, and spiritually if they obey their parents.

Parents who replace good spiritual values with material ones, thinking that there is no place for the spirit in human life, are just paving the way for an unhappy life in old age for both themselves and their children. There is a hadith which states that parents will spend their old age in tears if they do not train their children to be good Muslims. There have been examples of how miserable the lives of aged parents turn out to be when their children just ignore them once they are old and feeble and can no longer be of much help to the children. However, if the child turns out to be a good Muslim adult, then he will not give such treatment to his parents, since the Qur'an has reminded him not to say a word of contempt to parents nor to rebel against them (17:23, 24). Next to God and the Prophet, man is to respect and obey his parents, except when their words or deeds are contradictory to Islam (29:8; 31:14). Knowing this, parents will be motivated to carry out their tasks and responsibilities in a sure manner, feeling confident that things will turn out right.

The basis for child development in Islam is not material. The child needs not only nourishment for the body but also for the intellect as well as for the spirit. The child as a whole does not remain oblivious to what is happening around him. His growth and development respond to the kind of care, attention, and education that he receives. Early experiences provide the foundation for every aspect of growth and development that takes place in his later years. These statements are supported by studies of child development. It is very important for society to emphasize proper care for pregnant mothers and children, and the quality of family life. Society must make sure that parents are well aware of their tasks and responsibilities in nurturing individuals to become worthy members of the community. It is meaningless to say that what happens at home is a private matter and should not be infringed upon. Whatever happens in the home and to the individual must be of concern to society. If a unit of society, the individual, is weak and not well, how can the society be expected to be strong and healthy? After all, the well-being of any given structure or system depends very much on the well-being of the components that make it up and the bonds between them. The structure or system is sturdy only if the components are strong and well bonded. It will just collapse if

the components are fragile and weakly bonded. It is for just this reason that in Islam marriage and family institutions are not personal and private. They cannot be left to the whim and fancy of the couples concerned, but must be established according to laws laid down by Allah.

Woman as Member of Society

Given the right education, training, and suitable working conditions, a woman can contribute to her society. In relation to the promotion of nonviolence there are several areas of human endeavor in which women can engage. These are areas that have direct bearing on matters related to the state of human beings, their growth, and development, including education, social work, and health. Those who are qualified can become professionals, researchers, or policy makers.

Professionals would include educators or teachers at all levels of human learning—early childhood, preschool, school, university, and adult. Professionals do not function just as transmitters of knowledge and culture, but actually complement the role of parents as moulders of personality. Once children grow up and interact more with others, their personality and character development are influenced by their environment—the sociocultural values that are upheld by the society, and in Islamic society an individual is expected to complement individual activities and practices with service to others.

Nothing contributes more towards improving a person's well-being than such an education. Unfortunately the kind of education and training that professionals usually get these days does not include matters pertaining to human relations and interactions. Training concentrates on the technical skills needed to qualify them to become professionals. They are not trained to become humane professionals. Such an orientation makes such persons oblivious to the human factors that influence the success of their undertakings. For them it is dollars and cents that matter, rather than human welfare. The consequences of this kind of management approach may be insignificant if the workers are "dumb." However, most workers today have some basic education and know their rights. They are able to evaluate whether or not they are justly treated. If

their rights are respected then they will support their organizations. Otherwise they will be disenchanted and resentful. Ignoring this human problem may aggravate the relationships between employers and workers and between the state and the people. Workers in the end may resort to harsh methods to solve their problems.

Professionals who are trained to be more humane will never overlook the human and social factors that effect job performance. Women can contribute to this by becoming capable educators, teacher trainees, health personnel, or even social workers.

Research is another area that some women can enter. This would basically consist of research on human welfare as a whole. It could be about the nature, growth, development, and well-being of man. Other areas include education and health. Being more sensitive to women's feelings and needs, women can make productive and creative research contributions towards understanding those needs and problems.

Finally some women should contribute towards policy making. Men cannot be sensitive to everything. Their nature and perceptions make them more sensitive to certain aspects of life, but they do not always take a special interest in the well-being of women, children, and family life. By their very nature they cannot understand matters peculiar to women. So whatever is missed by men has to be included by women. It is therefore necessary to have women within the policy making group. Otherwise policies will be sex-biased and often to the disadvantage of women. No doubt the Qur'an has provided all the basic principles of living. But the ways men and women interpret them, react to them, and apply them differ depending on how much they are affected by these principles. There are a lot of things in law—especially on questions of marriage, divorce, and alimony—that would seem more fair to women had women been given a chance to express their opinions and feelings. It would therefore be more gentlemanly for men to recognize and accept their limitations in understanding the whole spectrum of human issues and problems and thereby allow women to participate in matters that affect them.

CONCLUSION

The success of a *muslimat* in performing her role as a contributor towards nonviolence depends on several factors. Apart from talent, ability, and education she is affected by several other factors: the types of activities that she is engaged in and her socioeconomic status.

Her activities will affect the way she distributes her time and manages her daily affairs. These affect her own self, her career, her family, and society. If she is ambitious but unable to manage her affairs effectively or without the right support, then her health—mental, physical or emotional—will be affected. This in turn will affect her performance of her tasks and responsibilities. Often enough men like to attribute a woman's inefficiency and shortcomings to the fact that she is a woman. This is not fair. Given fair and proper working conditions, anyone—man or woman—can do his or her job perfectly well.

Socioeconomic position also influences her level of performance. If she is of higher socioeconomic status, then it would be easy for her to obtain needed support. For example, she can get domestic helpers that relieve her of mundane household chores. Thus she can spend more time with her children and husband, attending to their emotional and spiritual needs. A woman's life also will be more bearable if employers understand and appreciate the different types of tasks and responsibilities that she has to carry out. As it is, most employers tend to brush aside family affairs and problems, indicating that these have to be tackled by the employee herself. Such an attitude reflects the lack of concern of employers for family life and the overall well-being of their workers.

However, despite all these factors, it will be the character and personality of the woman, her knowledge, and experience that finally determine whether or not she can make worthy contributions to a nonviolent society. The level of her knowledge and experience will definitely influence her confidence and approach towards tackling the problems that she faces.

In the final analysis how much and how well a woman can contribute towards nonviolence in her capacity as person, wife, mother, or member of society depends on who she is, her education and training, available facilities, and the conditions to which she is

subjected. Knowledge of Islam provides her with the necessary information. The practice of Islamic teachings will influence her concern towards the issues and problems at hand, subsequently motivating her to want to make contributions. It should be noted, however, that her contributions can become meaningfully effective and productive only if opportunities are given to her. There are increasing numbers of better educated and qualified women capable of filling management and policy-making positions. Room must be made to allow these women to move up, so that any policy or program the government or an organization would like to carry out will always consider the women's viewpoint. If it can be said that by nature men are more aggressive while women are more gentle, then maybe the way we manage our society will be less violent and the environment less destructive if there are also women sitting in the responsible committees.

Islam, Nonviolence, and Interfaith Relations

M. Mazzahim Mohideen

This chapter will attempt to discern commonalities of perceptions, teaching, and practice as a basis for ongoing dialogue for the promotion of interfaith harmony, human development, and global peace and order. In so doing I will endeavor to distinguish what is distinctly Islamic from what Islam shares with other faiths.

To facilitate discussion, I will consider other faiths in two categories: those that are theistic in belief, and those that are not. Islam shares with the theistic religions a common belief in the origin and purpose of life and in the nature and destiny of the human species. These then are the bases of interfaith relations insofar as the theistic religions are concerned. On the other hand, Buddhism and other nontheistic or agnostic religions have a different understanding of the universe, of the human person, of other forms of life, of birth, death, and after-life, of existence in other spheres or life cycles, and of the whole cosmos itself. Concepts such as creation or eternal human destiny are alien to such religions. However, there is a shared acceptance among all believers, whether theistic or non-theistic, agnostic or atheist, that the human being has innate dignity and value and is worthy of respect.

There is also implicit acknowledgement among all religions of the value of the universe, especially of Planet Earth and the physical environment in which the human species lives and has its being. There is an emerging consciousness of the importance of the environment for the sustenance of human life itself. Thus there is a perception of order, balance, and equilibrium between the human species and the physical environment in which humans have developed. The human person occupies the place of primacy in the physical environment. Based on that primacy all religions

acknowledge a hierarchical order of being and values. Thus the primacy of the human being in the physical universe and the different perceptions and beliefs of his role and relationships provide the starting point of my discussion of Islam and interfaith relations.

HUMAN PERSON, UNITY, AND DIGNITY

The prevailing concepts of human unity and the fundamental equality of all persons are supported by various ideological, scientific, and religious interpretations of reality and of the human species. We in Islam believe that God, the One, has created all human beings. By direct intervention in His own process of creation God brought into being the human species, the original man and woman. God also intervenes in every human creation by infusing a soul into each being. This is the basis of the Qur'anic principle of the unity of humankind. All differences of ethnicity, race, sex, caste, or status are of secondary importance, if any. What is fundamental is that all human beings are created by God and are therefore God's creatures—equal in nature and with equal rights as persons. The differences we observe today are due to many factors, and should not be seen as a permanent impediment to the reconciliation and unity of the human race. It is a function of religion to promote the process of human reconciliation or peace and to foster unity among peoples everywhere.

Not only does Islam believe in the Divine origin of human creation, but also that each human person has a divinely oriented purpose or destiny. All beings are enjoined to strive towards perfection so that they may tend towards union with the All-Perfect One, who is God. Islamic doctrine, therefore, places great emphasis on the righteousness of the soul, and thereby reminds us of the transcendental nature and purpose of human existence. Our earthly existence does not circumscribe the life of the human person. There is an existence beyond our mortal life on earth, an existence which knows no pain, no sorrow, and no death. It is endless existence with the author of life who is the source of all joy, the Perfect One. Our human striving is basically to achieve that end, to return to the source of life, of joy, and of goodness.

But Islam, while sharing with the theistic religions this eschatological vision of life, also affirms with them that earthly existence is a means by which to achieve our common human destiny. The universe, too, is a part of God's creation, and is not to be despised. The striving towards perfection has to be achieved in and through this earthly existence, which has value in itself. Islam teaches that the human being can become divine and that each individual can and should participate in the process of achieving such perfection. Therefore, each individual is of value not only intrinsically but also in relation to his potential and purpose in this world.

Service to humanity is an important aspect of Islamic teaching, which enjoins its adherents to strive to promote the spirit of human fraternity. The Qur'an stresses not only the spirit of self-sacrifice but also exhorts its followers to shun selfishness.

But give them preferences
Over themselves, even though
Poverty was their (own lot).
And those saved from
The covetousness of their own
Souls—they are the ones
That achieve prosperity. (59:9)

The Holy Prophet has said, "You cannot be a true Muslim until you wish for others what you wish for yourself." Another saying is, "The best among men is one who does good to the people." He also said: "Be kind to all living beings, so that God may be kind to you" (all quoted from the hadith collected by Bukhari). *D'awa* in Islam means to practice one's faith, serving as an example to others and uniting Islam.

The Holy Prophet urged us to consider ourselves as humans first. We share a common humanity, which is the basis of our unity. It is *taqwa*—God consciousness—which alone constitutes the basis of one's superiority over the other. *Taqwa* includes solicitude and goodwill towards others.

O Mankind! Revere
Your Guardian Lord
Who created you
From a single Person,

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Created, of like nature,
His mate, and from them twain
Scattered (like seeds)
Countless men and women (4:1)

The most honored of you
In the sight of Allah
Is (he who is) the most
Righteous of you. (49:13)

PROPHETS IN HISTORY

The Holy Prophet taught us that all religions in their pristine essence are one, emanating as all of them did from the self-same Divine source. It is an Islamic belief that different prophets were sent at different times to meet the needs of the various times. The basic message of Islam is peace and submission to the Will of God. The Holy Qur'an says

There is no compulsion in religion. (2: 256)

It also says

Your religion for you, and mine for me. (109:6)

Interpreted in the modern context this informs Muslims that despite our differences on religion, we must understand one another and live in peace and unity. Belief in the Books of God that were revealed before Islam and in the prophets before the Holy Prophet is an article of faith in Islam. The permitting of others to practice their own faith was the principle on which the Holy Prophet preached the Islamic faith. The Holy Prophet of Islam provided the Christians of his time with a Charter to practice their own faith. Islam exhorts Jews, Christians, and others to act according to their creeds.

Muslims are enjoined to believe in all the prophets, irrespective of whether they were named in the Holy Qur'an. Verses 4:164 and 40:78 mention the fact that there were other prophets before Muhammad whose names were not mentioned to him. The Qur'an requires belief in the truth and righteousness of all the prophets and in the revelations vouchsafed to them by God. The

Torah and Injil (Bible) are repeatedly mentioned. There is no compulsion in religion:

Truth stands out Clear from Error. (2:256)

This is the policy of Islam towards other religions. Beliefs revealed in the scriptures to the prophets before Prophet Muhammad are enjoined on Muslims. Twenty-five prophets are named in the Qur'an and references are made to as many as 124,000 unnamed prophets. At the advent of Islam, those who were not adherents of the Islamic faith were referred to as the People of the Book and were admitted and accepted as part of Muslim societies. It was in this context that Muslims, although enjoined to carry the message of Islam to non-Muslims, were warned that there is no compulsion in religion.

FREEDOM OF RELIGIOUS BELIEF

In Islam there is no question of one religion versus another. The Holy Prophet Muhammad preached the oneness of God, and in so doing sought to eradicate potential causes of conflict, such as differing perceptions of religion. In Islamic terminology irreligion is referred to as *kufir*. A *kafir* is not a non-Muslim, but one who does not believe in any religion.

Peace at all times should be uppermost in the mind of a Muslim. The Islamic greeting, *assalamu 'alaikum*, means "peace be with you." The response *wa 'alaikum salam* means "peace be also with you." The message of Islam is one of love, goodwill, understanding of others, truth, justice to all, kindness to all creatures created by God, and charity, which are the core values of all religions. Muslims believe that the fountainhead of all religions is the one and universal God. The only additional claim that Muslims make is that with the Holy Prophet Muhammad the message of God came in an expanded and complete form, covering all aspects of life, and that he was the seal of prophethood.

By peace we do not mean just the absence of conflict or tension. Peace has both a personal or internal dimension as well as a social one. An individual is called upon to be at peace with

himself, his desires, his aspirations, and his conscience. He is also called upon to be at peace with those around him, beginning with the members of his own family, his neighborhood, his social community, and his country. God is the source and sustainer of peace—internal as well as social.

There is a misconception that because Islam is a religion based on Divine Revelation provided by a single holy book, it can neither tolerate nor cooperate with the followers of other religions, such as Hinduism, Buddhism, or Christianity. *This is very far from the truth.* As we have seen, the Qur'an confirms the revelation given to earlier prophets.

Those who believe (in the Qur'an)
Those who follow the Jewish (scriptures)
And the Sabians and the Christians—
Any who believe in Allah
And the Last Day,
And work righteousness—
On them shall be no fear,
Nor shall they grieve. (5:69)

The Qur'an accepts the virgin birth of Christ and speaks of Jesus as God's word

which He cast upon Mary, and a spirit from Him. (3:45)

In 1889 Amir 'Ali wrote that there is no difference between Christianity and Islam except for the conception of the sonship of Jesus. The Charter of Religious Freedom preached by Prophet Muhammad gives Christendom on behalf of the world, of Islam, for all times to come "till the end of the world," the freedom and preservation of Christianity. There is nothing strange in this, for after all God sent the Holy Prophet as

a mercy unto all creatures. (21:107)

Muslims draw inspiration from two main sources. One is the Qur'an and the other is the Sunna, or Way of the Prophet, which includes reports of his day-to-day behavior and actions and his tacit approval of things said and done in His presence "The acceptance and understanding of the Prophet's legacy is essential in Islam,

because first its acceptance is enjoined by God in the Qur'an, and second, it supplements and explains the Qur'anic message."

The Qur'an comprises the dogma, a body of narrative, and moral and juridical injunctions. Central to the dogma is the belief that there is no god but God and that Muhammad is His Apostle and the last of the Prophets. Belief in angels, the Day of Judgment, Paradise and Hell, and in the righteous being rewarded and the wicked being punished is complementary to faith in the One God.

COMMONALITIES WITH OTHER RELIGIONS

The word "Islam" is derived from a root word which means "peace." It literally means "absolute submission to God's will," but it does not imply any idea of totalism. Next to Christianity it is the religion with the second largest number of adherents in the world. It is not a religion formulated by the Prophet Muhammad, but is a summation of all previous religious norms decreed by God through His revelation to all Prophets, including Moses and Jesus Christ. The Christian God and Allah are the same supreme God. The Muslims prefer to use the word "Allah" since the Arabic language is revered by all Muslims, as it was the language in which the Qur'an was revealed.

If you ask a Muslim when Islam began, he would give an unexpected answer. It is as old as time, as old as God's creation, as old as Adam and Abraham and Moses, he would say. Was not Abraham himself a Muslim and his son Ishmael the father of the Arab race? Every person is born a Muslim. This is part of Muslim belief. But if we are to seek what is distinctive in the Islamic religion then we must look first and last to the person, character, and career of the Holy Prophet Muhammad.

The Qur'an does not speak of other great world religions such as Hinduism and Buddhism, but it explains the existence of other religions when it states: "And if the Lord willed, all who are in the earth would have believed together." The Qur'an also states:

If God had so willed
He would have made you
A single People, but (His)
(Plan is) to test you in what

He hath given you: so strive
As in a race in all virtues. (5.48)

God has revealed Himself “at sundry times and in diverse places.” There are several instances in the Qur’an which refer to the mystery of God’s purpose in creating different peoples and nations while always insisting on their unity. According to the Hadith, when the Prophet stood up for a funeral, one of his companions remarked, “It is a funeral of a Jew.” The Prophet replied, “Is it not a soul?” He said, “if you behold a funeral, then stand.” It is known that the first Muezzin who gave the call for congregational prayers was Bilal, an emancipated Negro slave.

Another attitude which Islam shares with other religions is respect for life in its various forms. The Qur’an and the Hadith are explicit in respect for all forms of life. The Qur’an says “and there is not an animal on earth nor flying creature upon wings but is a people like unto yourselves. We have neglected nothing in the book of decrees. Then unto their Lord they will be fathered.” It also says: “Every creature knoweth its prayer and its praise; and God knoweth when they do.” This includes even the sun and the moon and the stars.

A failure to understand the basic principles of Islam would be a failure to appreciate its true spirit. The French proverb “to understand is to forgive” is never truer than in matters concerning religion. Prophet Muhammad Himself never claimed that Islam was a new religion. According to Qur’anic theory Islam has existed since the beginning of the earth and will exist until the Day of Resurrection. From time to time this religion is corrupted. When people have forgotten the principles of the true faith, God in His infinite mercy sends to them a Reformer, a *Rasul* or Messenger, in order that he may point the way and warn the people. Such were Abraham, Ishmael, Moses, and Jesus, the son of Mary. So also was the Prophet Muhammad, the son of Abdullah, who claimed that he was merely a man like others, liable to err in human affairs, but divinely guided and inspired in matters of religion.

The principle of brotherhood, which Islam has made real, is one of its greatest glories. All religions have taught brotherhood in various ways, but no religion in history can claim to have made brotherhood as real and natural in everyday life. At this point one is

reminded of the wars amongst Muslim nations in the world today, which challenge the edifice on which Islam stands. As with other religions, so with Islam: what matters is what we do, not what we profess to be. In his last sermon the Prophet told his people that excellence consisted only in deed. Pride of color or race was condemned. The Arab is not superior to the non-Arab. We are all sons of Adam, and Adam was made of clay. Verily all Muslims are brothers. He said, "If a deformed Abyssinian slave holds authority over you and leads you according to the Book of God, hear him and obey him." Nowhere has the true spirit of Islam been so tersely summarized as in this last speech of the last Prophet of Islam.

THE SOCIAL DIMENSION OF ISLAM

Islam is not a religion for a recluse. It is social in dimension. Its adherents live in society and are required to live peacefully among others. A Muslim must live a full life. We must be in the world, but not of it. In other words, our values should not be worldly, material, or ephemeral. A Muslim must have a transcendental vision of the world and of human existence. However, this does not mean that the earthly condition of human existence is irrelevant. On the contrary, Muslims are obliged to seek to build and develop the social community and social environment, not to ignore it. Social conditions influence individuals, their thinking, and acting. Subhuman conditions and inhuman relationships distort the concept of human dignity and the fundamental equality of all people. We must, therefore, seek to improve and develop the social conditions of human existence.

Islam disavows coercion, constraint, or imposition. The right way has indeed become distinct from error (2:256). According to its own claim Islam is a *din-al-fitrah*, or religio-naturalis. By that understanding religion is but part and parcel of human nature, inborn and needing only to be awakened. Thus we in Islam are encouraged to work for an interreligious brotherhood of the followers of all faiths. However, Islam rejects both irreligion and polytheism. The Holy Prophet was against the ideology of "believing in nothing and daring everything," which he considered dangerous. A Muslim is enjoined to foster the factors that make for

unity rather than seek to identify differences. Islam does not attempt to make religion a bone of contention, nor does it seek to build fences of religious exclusivity. Rather it seeks to build bridges of understanding.

Islam is also a religion of hope. The Holy Qur'an says: "Don't be despondent and don't despair of the mercy and blessings of God whose mercy is all pervading." Allah is the source of a Muslim's hope, for Allah is Infinite Being and Infinite Power. It is the certainty of a Divine Providence that sustains all humanity and is the basis of our hope. In communicating with the Divine, human beings are reminded of their humanity, their common condition of frailty, of mutual need, and of dependence on one another. We realize how dependent we are and that in unity and solidarity lies our strength.

In Islam the channels of communion are called *ibadat*. These are prayer, fasting, tax for the poor, charity in thought, and belief in the One, Unique, and Universal God of all. *Ibadat* is to be practiced without distinction or discrimination, for self-elevation or perfection through spiritual, physical, moral, and material practice.

The Qur'an also refers to *muamalat*, which means one's dealings with human society. Much emphasis is given to this aspect and it is said that God will not forgive a defaulter unless the person or the persons whom he had wronged forgave him. Obligations to one's neighbor are matters of paramount importance. The Holy Qur'an is explicit in stating that one who is dearest to his fellow men is dearest to God. It is an Article of Faith in Islam that we are answerable to God for our deeds—good or bad. Islam enjoins one to regard social welfare as important as one's own welfare.

Islam has also sought to assimilate other counsel, without compromising its principles, its basic concepts, and its Articles of Faith. However, this does not mean it is syncretic. It has not diluted its beliefs, but is open to the values of other religions and other societies, provided they are not contrary to its own values. This absence of rigidity enables Muslim society to maintain an equilibrium between the essential requirements of Islam and those of modern complex societies.

UNIVERSALITY OF ISLAM

As we have seen, Islam is a religion which enhances the insights and values that have been preached by all the prophets inspired by God, some explicitly and others implicitly, in different ages and different countries.

Say ye: "We believe
In Allah, and the revelation
Given to us, and to Abraham,
Isma'il, Isaac, Jacob,
And the tribes, and that given
To Moses and Jesus, and that given
To (all) Prophets from their Lord:
We make no difference
Between one and another of them. (2:136)

Before the revelation of the Holy Qur'an some nations and people claimed Divine origin for their beliefs but denied such origin to the creeds of other nations or people. This could be interpreted to mean that God did not provide His guidance to other people and nations. The concept of a "chosen people" and its exclusiveness has caused dissension and discord among God's creatures. Islam does not subscribe to this concept, for it teaches that God has not made any invidious distinction between different peoples. The Qur'an commences with the words of glorification and thanksgiving to God, the Creator and Provider of the whole Universe. The words used here are so general that they include all the different peoples in different ages and different parts of the world. This verse clearly indicates that the Qur'an does not accept the belief in a special covenant of God with a particular people to the exclusion of all others. Perhaps the concept of a chosen people and of a special revelation is open to a different interpretation, other than to suggest exclusivity or privilege. In all humility one should strive to understand the concept as perceived in the Jewish and Christian traditions before pronouncing judgment on it.

Be that as it may, the Qur'anic verse teaches a Muslim to believe that not only does the Creator and Provider of the whole Universe give the means of physical growth equally to all on earth, but also He provides them with the means of spiritual development. This noble teaching assures all people of the certainty of God's sustenance and providence. All people comprise a fraternity of

dependent beings, under the universal fatherhood of God, destroying that narrowness of mind which separates brother from brother.

There is another dimension of interfaith relations which deserves close examination. God as the Creator is also the Lord of history. He was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be. He revealed Himself in all ages to different peoples in diverse ways. He was the unknown God of the animist—the personification of power as symbolized in the elements. He was a personal God whose assistance had to be invoked, his intercession begged, who had to be propitiated, worshipped, adored, and glorified. He has been perceived in a multitude of ways by millions of people. And God chose to guide people in every age through prophets, sages, and teachers. In some cases the Divine as the source of inspiration was explicit, while at others it remained implicit. But the teachings of the various preachers of religions were not preserved in their original purity. The passage of time and the lack of efficient means of preserving such teachings led to human interpolations and incorrect interpretations. The very language in which the teachings were proclaimed was liable to constant change, and so they became open to different interpretations. Later generations found it difficult to know the original message and meaning. As time went on, new situations arose in human affairs, calling for a new order of things.

Each age and emerging circumstances produced prophets who sought to lead their society authentically. Prophecy is more than social criticism. Underlying a Prophet's critique is a world vision that is basically moral. The Qur'an says:

To every people (was sent) a Messenger. (10:47)

And there never was
A people without a warner
Having lived among them. (35:24)

The Qur'an repeatedly teaches that in every age a prophet has been raised in every nation. This great truth was revealed to an unlearned Arab who did not even know what nations existed and what scriptures they possessed. Such a teaching is the basis for the universality of the Divine message to all mankind. Humanity will

always be under the deepest obligation to the Holy Prophet of Islam for enunciating this principle.

FUNDAMENTALISM

We move now from the sphere of Islamic teaching and belief to that of practice. An aspect of religious practice that has led to some discord is what has come to be called “Islamic fundamentalism.” Among Muslims one does not speak of Orthodox Islam, Modern Islam, or Fundamental Islam. The term “fundamentalism” is mistakenly applied to Islam by non-Muslims in general, and in the modern world it bears a political connotation as well. One is made to believe that “fundamental Islam” does not permit interfaith relations and tries to insulate itself from other religions. The perception of “Islamic fundamentalism” is held by persons with a background one might term “secular Christianity.” This in no way implies any lack of respect for Christianity. All it means is that some Christians seek to emphasize the secular or horizontal dimension of Christianity, namely, that while religion can admit no dichotomy between the sacred and the secular, it must incarnate itself in the secular world. In other words, religion is not otherworldly. The kingdom of God begins on earth. This view of Christianity is different from the fundamentalist position that the scriptures must be understood literally, that the vertical dimension of Christianity is more important, and that the world is fraught with evil and therefore one has to guard against its dangers. It is a narrow, restrictive understanding of Christianity which would seek to protect its members within the confines of a ghetto. In this way religion is regarded as a private matter.

The Qur’an makes it clear that religion cannot confine itself to one segment of human life, nor can it choose to abstain from exercising any decisive influence over everyday life. Religion is not a private matter for each individual. The moral dimension of human activity—be it political, social, or economic—is the concern of religion. Moral issues affect the relations not only between individuals but also among groups, communities, and nations. It must be emphasized that Islam is a total and integral code and way

of life and is concerned with every aspect of human well-being, whether religious, economic, social, or political.

On the other hand, “fundamentalism” has also been understood to mean a restrictive interpretation of scripture and teaching and a preoccupation with the preceptual aspect of religion, ignoring the moral dimension of human activity unless there is explicit applicable reference in scripture to the ethics of the situation. The fundamentalist’s understanding of religion is different from the creative response of religion to specific situations and human predicaments. Fundamentalism lays store by the letter of the law or precept, ignoring its spirit.

There is still another understanding of the expression “fundamentalism,” which represents both an individual and collective effort of believers to look afresh at the teachings of the Qur’an in order to ensure that its pristine character is preserved. At this point one must condemn the actions of certain Muslim political leaders who have taken advantage of and abused their positions and employed certain strategies to achieve their own political ends by misquoting the Qur’an or the sayings of the Holy Prophet. They have contributed to turmoil in the world. Islam has always had an integral set of values, completely self-sufficient, with only one standard of truth, commanding the believer to live an integral and authentic life, accepting nothing but what is harmonious and directly relevant to the way of life indicated in the Qur’an. It is a perception of life in its totality.

History can recall the efforts of Lenin when he coined the term “Islamic socialism” to capture the imagination of the peoples of the nine Muslim provinces of Russia and bring those people under the influence of his own ideology. To Russians then Islamic fundamentalism may have a different dimension. Islam stresses that moral and spiritual development must accompany advancement in science, industry, economy and other beneficial aspects of life. Islam seeks to promote psychological and spiritual unity in which men and women are all brothers and sisters of one large family, irrespective of differences of language, place of origin, ethnicity, or race. The social system in Islam depends for its protection and progress on the individual himself, on personal discipline and adherence to individual conscience rather than on coercion or direction by any external power. For a Muslim this system is

basically sacred and belongs to the Supreme Authority—God—to whom man submits in love, obedience, and loyalty.

A believer's first duty is spiritual. He must recognize that material power and gain may be a means to his advancement, but in any case he must accord primacy to the spiritual. Islam flourished among societies and nations with diverse cultures and histories during the past fourteen centuries and continues to grow and influence humankind in the civilized world. Modernization or development is not perceived as antithetical to Islam, provided its values are not at variance with the teachings of the Holy Qur'an. Islam is open and receptive to all that is good and conducive to the progress of man in all aspects of life, respects the values of all religions, and is opposed only to the irreligious.

JIHAD

Another aspect of Islamic thought that is misunderstood by non-Muslims is *jihad*. Many think that *jihad* means only a religious war waged in the path of God, according to rules and instructions laid down in the *shari'a*. This is very far from the truth. Rather whatever endeavor is made at any particular time for the preaching and propagation of Islam and the moral and spiritual correction and guidance of humankind is the *jihad* of that age. It is well known that the Holy Prophet remained in Mecca for about thirteen years after the mantle of apostleship had fallen upon him. During this period the *jihad* of the Holy Prophet and his companions consisted of adhering steadfastly to the faith, in spite of the terrible persecution meted to them by their enemies, and in doing all that lay in their power to spread the Divine Message of Islam and to morally and spiritually reform those who lived around them.

The word *jihad* is derived from *jahadun*, meaning exertion or striving. Technically it means exerting one's power in repelling the enemy to the extent of one's ability, whether by word or by deed. It also means a war undertaken for a just cause and for the defence of Islam. The Holy Qur'an uses the word in various ways:

And those who strive
In Our (Cause)—We will
Certainly guide them

In Our Paths,
For verily Allah
Is with those
Who do right. (29:69)

And if any strive (with might
And main), they do so
For their own souls. (29:6)

And strive in His cause
As ye ought to strive
(With sincerity and under discipline). (22:78)

Although *jihad* clearly has many different uses, some European writers have twisted it, limiting it to cases of holy war.

The Object of *Jihad*

To those against whom
War is made, permission
Is given (to fight), because
They are wronged—and verily,
Allah is most powerful
For their aid—
(They are) those who have
Been expelled from their homes
In defiance of right—
(For no cause) except
That they say, “Our Lord
Is Allah.” Did not Allah
Check one set of people
By means of another
There would surely have been
Pulled down monasteries, churches,
Synagogues, and mosques, in which
The name of Allah is commemorated
In abundant measure. Allah will
Certainly aid those who
Aid His cause. (22:39–40)

The object of *jihad* is self-defence, which is also a natural law with all animals; the object is not propagation of the faith. The Holy Qur’an strictly prohibited conversion by force, saying

There is no compulsion in religion. (2:256).

Jihad is Holy war in the sense that had there been no war, then no religious liberty, no justice, and no house of God, irrespective of caste and creed, would have been saved. This magnanimous pronouncement of the object of war in protecting the holy places of all faiths is nowhere found in the world except in Islam. For absence of good motive in war, the world is now in utter chaos, and imperialistic and bureaucratic tendencies have cropped up to an amazing extent. All the wars undertaken by the Prophet and his companions were of the specified type. In another verse the Qur'an discusses the object of war in unmistakable terms:

Fight in the cause of Allah
Those who fight you
But do not transgress limits. (2:190)

This verse also warns Muslims not to be excessive in killing, avoiding the killing of women, children, and the old. In the midst of an actual fight the Holy Prophet prayed in the field of Badr: "O Allah! I beseech Thee to fulfill Thy covenant and Thy promise. O Allah! If Thou wilt, Thou will be worshipped no more."

Against Whom to Fight?

The fight must be against aggressors who create disturbance in the world and destroy the houses of God of all faiths. However, Islam prohibits fighting with those who do not take an aggressive part or who are under any treaty with Muslims on payment of a *jizya* tax, which is a token of submission to Muslim rule. The Qur'an recites:

(But the treaties are) not dissolved
With those Pagans with whom
Ye have entered into alliance
And who have not subsequently
Foiled you in aught,
Nor sided anyone against you.
So fulfil your engagements
With them to the end
Of their term: For Allah
Loveth the righteous. (9:4)

If one amongst the Pagans,
Asks thee for asylum,
Grant it to him,
So that he may hear the Word
Of Allah; and then escort him
To where he can be secure,
That is because they are
Men without knowledge. (9:6)

Allah forbids you not,
With regard to those who
Fight you not for (your) Faith
Nor drive you out
Of your homes
From dealing kindly and justly
With them: For Allah loveth
Those who are just. (60:8)

Merits of *Jihad*

In the eyes of Islam *jihad* is one of the chief meritorious acts. It is the best source of earning merit, but as mentioned it should be undertaken with the intention of self-defence. If it does not have that motive, then it is devoid of all merit. According to the Hadith, “He who fights for chivalry, heroism, fame of worldly gain acquires no merit and the aggressor is doomed to eternal perdition. . . . *Jihad* is the best action of a Muslim. . . . A great reward has been promised for supplying even arms and ammunition to the warriors.”

There are innumerable traditions relating to the merits of *jihad*. The Hadith include such sayings as: “Merit acquired in *jihad* is no less than what is earned in praying and fasting. . . . Fire will not touch a foot which trod the path of Allah. . . . All the sins of a martyr will be forgiven except debt. . . . The doors of paradise are under the shade of swords. . . . Paradise is guaranteed for martyrs. . . . A coin spent in the way of Allah brings innumerable blessings.”

For these rewards, the Holy Prophet wished that he should die several times in holy war and be brought back to life several times for holy war.

Spiritual *Jihad*

“The greatest *Jihad*,” says the Holy Prophet, “is the fight against one’s own evil passions,” because the enemies of the soul are working secretly to undermine the more vital qualities of man. The great tussle which ensues in the mind between good and the evil forces is called the greatest fight. There are two propensities in a man—bestly and angelic. Man is an animal, and like other animals has the propensities of an animal. He also has a soul, from Allah, and therefore he also has propensities for good deeds. At the age of discretion, one tries to prevail over the other. The struggle of the soul to gain the upper hand over the animal nature is called the greatest fight or *jihad*.

To devote oneself to the noble task of guiding and educating the ignorant and to spend time and money, sacrificing comfort, is *jihad* in the *divine estimation*. In the present time this animates the tasks before every religious person.

Islam does not divide its followers into two distinct categories of clergy and laity. Therefore, in the absence of a clerical order, it imposes on every Muslim the obligation to understand the message and practice the teaching of Islam as best one can, and to convey by precept and example to all those groping in the dark the message of Islam—the message of light, which is the message of divine guidance, love, and mercy. A Muslim’s love for good and truth imposes upon him the duty to cultivate love for His creation. A Muslim’s expression of love for truth does not involve being only truthful to oneself, to do that which is right and to shun that which is evil in respect to oneself, but also to disseminate the message of Truth, to enjoin the right and forbid the wrong, as taught by the Holy Qur’an.

A Muslim’s interpretation of *jihad* begins as a soul-searching exercise. It involves ridding oneself of *nafs ‘ammara* [animal instincts], developing *nafs lawwana* [the sixth sense—tranquility] and human nature, and seeking to know oneself—*mutma‘inna* [understand yourself and achieve *insan kamil*—the spiritual plane]. One knows then that to God all human life is precious and God is not for the chosen few. God is the Lord of the World.

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. (5:32)

The Holy Prophet of Islam said, “Mankind is the family of God. The dearest among men with God is one who is good to his family.” He also said, “The whole earth is made a Mosque for me and the pure. . . . Be kind to all living beings so that God may be kind to you. God is never kind to a person who is not kind to the people.”

The Prophet also said that “a Muslim who lives in the midst of society and bears with patience the afflictions that come to him, is better than the one who shuns society and cannot bear any wrong done to him.”

Three things are enjoined upon the faithful:

- (a) To help others, even when one is economically hard-pressed;
- (b) To pray ardently for the peace of all mankind; and
- (c) To administer justice to oneself and treat all justly.

A Hadith confirms that on one occasion the Holy Prophet offered a mosque to Christian priests to offer up their prayers.

ISLAMIC JURISPRUDENCE

Two further matters of Islamic jurisprudence that we need to understand are the morality of violence as a form of punishment and the concept of a just war.

The history of Islamic law can be divided into four distinct periods. The first period began with the *hijrah* of the Holy Prophet to Medina and ended with his demise. The second period commenced with the date of his death and the foundation of different schools of jurisprudence. It covers the period of the companions of the Prophet and their successors who compiled, interpreted and extended the law through collective deliberation. The third period refers to the successful study of law and religion

during which time the four schools of Sunni were established. Since then there has been no further independent approach and evaluation of the law. Jurists have simply worked within the limits of the four schools, developing the work of their founders. This fourth period may be regarded as not yet having come to an end. The laws attempt to preserve the sanctity and dignity of human life and its concern for justice.

According to Islamic jurisprudence rights are of two kinds. First, are the rights of God (society) and second are the rights of people as individuals. Punishment is divided into two classes—*hadd* and *ta'zir*. In *hadd* the measure has been specifically apportioned. In the case of *ta'zir*, the court has the discretion to measure and form which punishment is to be imposed. *Hadd* is most difficult to impose and its instances are very few, according to recorded history.

Law is prescribed for the protection of society. The social legislation of Islam aims at a state of affairs in which every man, woman, and child has enough to eat and wear, an adequate home, equal opportunities and facilities for education and medical care. Comprehensive social security schemes have been handed down in many Qur'anic verses and have been simplified by the Holy Prophet and the Caliphs. It is against this background that punishment is meted out. *Hadd* is a form of deterrent punishment that is meant to be imposed only when man behaves like an animal.

In regard to just war, I would refer to *Al-Hadith*, Vol. II, by Al-Haj Maulana Fazhul Karim.

Islam preaches the brotherhood of man. The Muslim brotherhood is a community within the wider brotherhood of those who subscribe to the belief in the existence of the One God and the accountability of man on the Last Day. This brotherhood does not countenance either a superior or an inferior caste, nor does it believe in a fatalistic approach. Each man will reap what he has sown. Man must work out his own salvation. He cannot hope for anything for which he has not striven.

GLOSSARY

'alim: man of knowledge, both ethical and scientific.

al-'adl: justice, impartiality, honesty, equitableness.

amanah, amana: trust.

assalamu 'alaikum: Peace be with you, a Muslim's greeting.

d'awa: to practice one's faith, serving as an example to others.

dhimmi: non-Muslim, who should be trusted and protected (this word is misused as hostages).

dhikr: remembrance of Allah during work, rest, or sleep; repetition of God's name.

din: faith, rule, law, Laws of Allah; the essence of the Prophet's message, the spiritual truth common to all religions and addressed to all humankind.

falah: to act, a proper act; a comprehensive concept of social welfare, which includes economic, social, material, and educational needs.

hadd: fixed penalty for acts forbidden in the Qur'an, limits laid down by God.

hadith: Tradition, records of actions and sayings of the Prophet.

hajj: pilgrimage to the holy city of Mecca at least once in one's lifetime if one can afford it (one of the Five Pillars of Islam).

hidayah, hidayat: guidance; a comprehensive code of life encompassing all aspects.

Glossary

hijrah, hijra: Muhammad's migration from Mecca to Medina.

'ibadah, 'ibadat: piety, ordinances of divine worship, channels of communion: prayer, fasting, poor tax, charity in thought and belief in one, unique, and universal God of all.

ihsan: performance of good deeds, generosity. It also means worshipping Allah as if you are seeing Him or as if He is seeing you.

'imamat, imama: world community.

'iman: faith, affirmation of faith in Allah, in His angels, in His books, in His apostles, in the day of judgment, and in the divine decree to good and evil.

Injil: The Bible.

Al-Insan Al-Kamil: complete person, perfect person.

jama'at, jama'a: community, gathering, party, communal assembly.

jihad: literally means "striving." It denotes any form of activity, either personal or community-wide, by Muslims in an attempt to strive for the cause of Allah. There is "greater" or inner jihad and "lesser" or outer jihad.

jumu'ah: Friday, the Day of Assembly; also the title of Surah 62.

ka'bah, ka'ba: House of God

kafir, kafir, kufr, kwfr: one who does not have a religion, those who do not recognize or acknowledge God.

kalima: the spoken word, the realized Word of God

khalifah, khalifa: vicegerent, representative directly accountable to the master.

Glossary

kharaj: tax on non-Muslims in lieu of *zakat* and *ushr*, and for security.

khawarij: seceders.

khilafa, khilafah, khilafat: political institution of which the khalifa is the head.

Khudai Khidmatgar: servants of Khuda/Allah; nonviolent Pathan soldiers of Badshah Khan (Abdul Ghaffar Khan) in India's Northwest Frontier Province.

masjid: mosque, literally a place where a Muslim touches his forehead while prostrating.

muamalat: one's dealings with human society.

muezzin: the person who calls the hour of prayers.

mullah: a Muslim in a quasiclerical class trained in traditional law and doctrine.

mustadafa'yyun: the oppressed, depressed, or exploited.

mutaqi: man of *taqwa*, piety, integrity, or strength.

mutma'inna: confident.

nafs-al-'ammarah (or *amara*): carnal desires, the carnal self.

qisas: law of equality and mercy.

Ramadan: the ninth month of the lunar calendar, which is the month of fasting for Muslims (one of the Five Pillars of Islam).

rasul: prophet, messenger.

sadaqa, sadaqah: to do a good deed, give alms, charity.

Glossary

sadaqat ul-fitr: compulsory charity given on the occasion of 'Id, the last day of the month of fasting, Ramadan.

salah, salat: prayers at specific times five times a day from sunrise to sunset, each preceded by proper ablution (one of the Five Pillars of Islam).

salam, salamat: noun from the verb *salima* "to be well, uninjured," used in the meaning of "peace, health, salutations, greeting."

sawn: fasting in the month of Ramadan every year by abstaining from food and drink from sunrise to sunset while purifying both the tongue and the heart in the process (one of the Five Pillars of Islam).

shahada, shahadat: a vow that proclaims there is no God but God and Muhammad is his Messenger (one of the Five Pillars of Islam).

shari'a, sh'ariat, shariah, shar'iya: the canon law of Islam (literally, the way to a watering place).

sirat-al-Mustaqim: the true path, the path chosen by God.

sunnah, sunna: the deeds, utterances, and unspoken approval of the Prophet.

taghut: arrogant one.

tarbiyah: a sister concept of *tazkiyah*, education and training.

taqwa: God consciousness, piety, fear of Allah, righteousness, good conduct; restraining or guarding one's tongue, hand, and heart from evil.

tawhid: unity of Allah.

ta'zir: discretionary punishment for lesser offenses.

Glossary

tazkiyah: character building; lifelong transformation of human personality in which all aspects of life play a part. *Tazkiyah* does not limit itself to the conscious learning process: it is rather the task of giving form to the act of righteous living itself. In every moment of life one should remember one's position in front of Allah and thereby convert facts into values, processes into purposes, actions into goals, and plans into realization. *Tazkiyah* is purification of the soul to such an extent that it controls and guides the *nafs-al-'ammarah*.

ummah, umma: a faith community whose identity is Islam and not color, race, language, common history, geography, or any other quality; its main constituents are faith and creed.

'ushr: agricultural dues/tax.

zakah, zakat: compulsory religious tax that every Muslim has to pay (one of the Five Pillars of Islam).

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