

Islamic Peace Centered Theology

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Abstract

Although has been so far portrayed as religion of violence, the very essence of Islam is peace. The use of violence in such concepts of jihād (waging holy war) and shahīd (martyr) is actually only allowed in the last resort. Besides, it does not belong to the main precepts of Islam as presented in the arkān al-īmān (the pillars of belief) and the arkān al-islām (the pillars of obligations). This paper argues that peace constitutes the essential part of Islamic theology and that the mission of every human being in Islamic teaching is to be God's vicegerent on the earth. This mission for a true believer may not be achieved unless he or she works with others in building peace, not by force. Violence can only be used to protect the freedom of as many as members of the community to live peacefully.

Keywords: Struggling for peace, Essence of Islam, Vicegerent of God, Mission of the chosen people.

اللَّهُمَّ أَنْتَ السَّلَامُ، وَمِنْكَ السَّلَامُ، وَإِلَيْكَ يَعُودُ السَّلَامُ، فَحَيِّنَا رَبَّنَا بِالسَّلَامِ، وَأَدْخِلْنَا
الْجَنَّةَ دَارَ السَّلَامِ، تَبَارَكْتَ رَبَّنَا يَا ذَا الْجَلَالِ وَالْإِكْرَامِ.

God, you are the peace; it is only from you that the peace comes and to you it goes back. Therefore, let us live, our God, with peace; put us into Paradise, the abode of peace. May your blessing grow, God, the owner of greatness and compliment.

A. Introduction

There are many Muslims who pray regularly with the above prayer after doing their five-time-a-day obliged prayers, but the

problem of peace is always there with him. Then we may raise at least two questions: First, are they aware of the meaning of the prayer when they recite the formulae, since most of them do not understand Arabic? Second, do they choose the meaning of peace for the word السلام (*al-salām*), seeing that this word has the meaning of both peace and safe?

Nevertheless, I begin my paper with the prayer for I have two things in mind: (1) Islam is potential to be brought to supporting the struggle for peace, and (2) that to do so Muslims should change some of their understanding of the sacred texts of which they have so far a fixed understanding. An example of such fixed understanding is that Islam suggests the use of violence and teaches its adherents to take uncivil attitudes towards people of other faith and is anti pluralism. Such understandings have been formed in the course history in which Muslims struggled with life problems and exigencies with the Qur'an functioning as reference from time to time.

It is common to portray Islam as a religion demanding its adherence to use violence more than to build peace. The notion of *jihād* or waging war against others considered disbelievers is there in most books representing Islamic teaching. The use of violence can be found here and there practiced by Muslims even in their domestic affairs. The reality of anti-peace is such that anyone to gave another side—that of peaceful theology of Islam—risks being accused of bad Muslim by his co-religionists. I quote below an observation of a writer on such a bad situation:

Now, obviously, there are Muslims who do not consider acts of terrorism or violence, or the supremacist attempts to impose Islamic law over non-Muslims, part of their Islamic piety. And certainly I applaud them and wish there were more of them insofar as they're sincere. They are, however, universally worldwide on the defensive today. They are represented as the bad Muslims by their fellow Muslims who are pointing to the texts of the Qur'an and the teachings of Muhammad. And so the Muslims who we could look to with hopes of reform, the Muslims who we would look to in hopes of their being our allies, they are the ones who are considered to be the bad Muslims generally in the Islamic community. Now it must also be further stated, unfortunately, that there is no theological system in Islam, there is no sect, there is no group within Islam that has formulated a comeback, a

construction of Islamic theology based on the Qur'an that makes a case to reject violence and supremacism and the subjugation of unbelievers. It doesn't exist. There are many individuals who are working against it, but there is no group that we can point to and say "Ah, they're the ones we need to work with!" In other words, they have not formulated any kind of convincing comeback. The texts are not on their side.

Then:

Now, mainstream Islamic theologians and the preponderance of Islamic theological tradition teaches that if there is a disagreement between two passages in the Qur'an, then one of the chief ways to see which one takes precedence in our own day is, which one came later chronologically in Muhammad's career. Unfortunately for us, the violence comes later, and thus is considered under the principles of *al-nasikhwal-mansukh* (or abrogation) to cancel out the peaceful passages. Or the peaceful passages only apply when Muslims are a small group, as the Meccan Muslims were in the first stage of Muhammad's career. So in other words, when they're a small group, when they're powerless, then they teach tolerance and nonviolence. But later, gaining in power and numbers, the other parts begin to kick in, and the violence and the supremacism apply.¹

Meanwhile, the Qur'an, like other scriptures, contains passages that have more than one meaning and the Muslims who read it also have differences by which they may understand it differently. Therefore, a long-standing understanding should not be taken as the sole true understanding. Any understanding is always one of many possible understandings and its endurance does not mean the right to close the use of one or more of others. The problem then is that many Muslims believe that the teaching of Islam that they get from their teachers is the only teaching of Islam and is sacral without any possibility of being questioned or revised. The only thing left for Muslims now is to observe is as religious obligation.

The long history of using violence in the practice of Islam has made it strange for some people to think about the essential Islamic teaching of love, humbleness and preference of forgiving to

¹ Robert Spencer, *Not Peace but a Sword: The Great Chasm Between Christianity and Islam* (San Diego: Catholic Answers Press), 2013. The quoted passages are from the epilogue of the book, "Is the Only Good Muslim a Bad Muslim? The Kreeft/Spencer Debate". Italic mine.

retaliation. Likewise, the fact that many Muslims find themselves in a miserable condition leads them to see the only solving more in using the language of violence than in that of tenderness and the ability to control themselves. The problem is, then, how to open the possibility of revising some of teachings that Muslims feel do not fit modern exigencies, without the risk of losing their essence.

However, before going more into the discussion of this problem, a word should be given to the term of theology. This very term sometimes misleads Muslims to the notion of *'ilm al-kalām*, *'ilm al-tawḥīd* or *'ilm usūl al-dīn*, a branch of Islamic science dealing with principles of Islamic faith. Its subject matter consists of the Pillars of Faith,² while its approach is scholastic. This notion of theology in Islam differs somehow from its meaning in Christian and the West tradition of human formulation of what is believed as God's guidance or revelation. This formulation comprises all aspects of religion that in Islam is divided into *'ilm al-kalām* (discussion of belief) or *'aqīda* (principles of belief), *fiqh* (laws, rules), *akhlāq* (ethics) and *taṣawwuf* (mysticism). The term theology is used in this paper as sensible formulation or understanding of what is believed as God's guidance. It will not comprise all aspects of Islam, but only its basic teaching of the mission of human being in this life as understood by the writer.

B. Islam: Going into Peace?

The Arabic word *islām* of which the religion that Muhammad founded gets its name, comes from the root of SLM pertaining to submission and peace.³ However, the use of this word and the verb stemming from it (*aslama*, *yuslimu*) as well the actor (*muslim*, *muslimūn*) does not give the meaning of going into peace, but of submission. We find the use of *al-silm* (which may pertain to peace making) once, but only with the meaning of observing religious

² Namely the Six Pillars of Faith consisting of: (1) belief in Allah, (2) belief in His angels, (3) belief in His Books, (4) belief in His Messengers, (5) belief in the Hereafter, and (6) belief His Decree and Decision (the predestination).

³ The word *al-islām* is used in many passages in the Qur'an: sura 3/Āl 'Imrān: 19 and 85, 5/al-Mā'ida: 3, 9/al-Tauba: 74, 39/al-Zumar: 22, 49/al-Ḥujurāt: 17 and 61/al-Ṣaff: 7 giving the meaning of obedience and submission, as is clear from the context.

obligation. Therefore, Muslim exegetes give the meaning of submission as well to this word. To change it to the meaning of peace—like what is done by many supporters of peaceful movement—will break the context of the verse wherein this word is found.⁴

The word *al-salm* is used many times in the Qur'an, meaning reconciliation of conflicting sides, as in the verse that reads:

وَإِنْ جَنَحُوا لِلسَّلْمِ فَاجْنَحْ لَهَا وَتَوَكَّلْ عَلَى اللَّهِ إِنَّهُ هُوَ السَّمِيعُ الْعَلِيمُ. (الأنفال: 61)

*When they (your enemies) tend to resolution, tend to it and lean on God the Hearer and the Knower. Sura 8/al-Anfāl: 6.*⁵

Another word derived from the same root is *al-salām* that means the utterance of peace and then becomes the essence of Islamic greeting, *al-salām 'alaikum* (may peace be upon you). An example of the Qur'anic use of it is:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا إِذَا ضَرَبْتُمْ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ فَتَبَيَّنُوا وَلَا تَقُولُوا لِمَنْ أَلْقَى إِلَيْكُمُ السَّلَامَ لَسْتَ مُؤْمِنًا تَبْتَغُونَ عَرَضَ الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا فَعِنْدَ اللَّهِ مَغَانِمٌ كَثِيرَةٌ كَذَلِكَ كُنْتُمْ مِنْ قَبْلُ فَمَنَّ اللَّهُ عَلَيْكُمْ فَتَبَيَّنُوا إِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ خَبِيرًا. (النساء: 94)

*O you who believe! when you go abroad in the cause of Allah, investigate carefully, and say not to anyone who offers you a salutation: "You are not a believer!" coveting the perishable goods of this life. With Allah are profits and spoils abundant. Even thus were you yourselves before, till Allah conferred on you His favors. Therefore, carefully investigate. For Allah is well aware of all that you do. 4/al-Nisā': 94*⁶

This reminder concerns the utterance of peace that was uttered by a group of people to a unit of Muslim troop considering the first as enemies. This troop thought that the utterance of peace was only a lie camouflaging their real attitude and therefore did not stop fighting

⁴ Namely, sura 2/al-Baqara: 208. Cf. the exegesis of Ibn Kathīr and al-Qurṭubī, for example, that have the inclination to take the meaning of Islam (observing Islamic duties) for the word *al-silm*.

⁵ Cf. Surat 4/al-Nisā': 90-91, 16/al-Naḥl: 28 and 87, and 47/Muḥammad: 35.

⁶ Cf. 5/al-Mā'ida: 16, 6/al-An'ām: 127, 10/Yūnus: 25, 19/Maryam: 33 and 20/Ṭāhā: 47.

them. The Qur'an condemned the attitude of this troop as wrong. It is of Islamic teaching spirit that one has to prefer peace to fighting.

In the Qur'an, God is called *al-Salām* as well, which may give the meaning of the Peace or the Source of Peace.⁷ This word is actually problematic since it may give the meaning of safety, too, by which one may commit violence to anyone whom he/she considers as enemy, while worshiping God the Savior.

The Qur'an uses also the word *ṣulḥ* by the meaning of resettlement, reconciliation of members of a family or a community after being in conflict. Take for example the verse that reads:

وَإِنْ امْرَأَةٌ خَافَتْ مِنْ بَعْلِهَا نُشُوزًا أَوْ إِعْرَاضًا فَلَا جُنَاحَ عَلَيْهِمَا أَنْ يُصْلِحَا بَيْنَهُمَا صُلْحًا وَالصُّلْحُ خَيْرٌ وَأُحْضِرَتِ الْأَنْفُسُ الشُّحَّ وَإِنْ تُحْسِنُوا وَتَتَّقُوا فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ خَبِيرًا. (النساء: 128)

*If a wife fears cruelty or desertion on her husband's part, there is no blame on them if they arrange an amicable settlement between themselves; and such settlement is best; even though men's souls are swayed by greed. However, if you do good things and practice self-restraint, Allah is well-acquainted with all that you do. Sura 4/al-Nisā': 128.*⁸

Thus, the very word *al-islām* may give the meaning of going into peace or peacefulness, but the Qur'an uses it in the meaning of submission to God. This does not mean at all that this primary source of Islam pays no attention to peace-making and peaceful inter-human relationship. It uses other terms, i.e. *al-salm*, *al-salām* and *al-ṣulḥ*, to promote peace and peaceful relations. To be a Muslim is to surrender one's self to God who wants human beings to live in peaceful surrounding.

⁷ Cf. 59/al-Hashr: 23. Jacques Berque in his *Le Coran; essai de traduction*, renders this name with *le Dispensateur de salut* (the Dispenser of safety); Régis Blachère, *Le Coran; traduction nouvelle*, gives *le Pacificateur* (the Pacificator), arguing that the meaning of *le Salut* (the Salvation) was not known at the time of Muhammad and that the meaning *le Salulaire* (the Savior) dated from later exegetes; while M. M. Pickthall, *The Meaning of the Glorious Qur'an*, translates it with Peace.

⁸ Cf. Suras 2/al-Baqara: 160, 3/Al 'Imrān: 89, 4/al-Nisā': 146, 8/al-Anfāl: 1, 16/al-Nahl: 119, 24/al-Nūr: 5, and 49/al-Ḥujurat: 9 and 10.

C. The Essence of Islam

The essence of the Prophet Muhammad's call, as can be found in the earlier revealed verses of the-Qur'an is to follow God's way in contrast to the way of Satan. The God's way manifest conspicuously in the ability to overcome passion stimuli that appear in the form of selfishness, arrogance, stinginess, show-off etc. and to orient them to valuable deeds. To release human being from the shackle of earthly life—i.e. a life steered by carnal desires—and from selfishness is among the primary goal of Islamic call.⁹ Therefore, a win or success in life is often mentioned in the Qur'an as for those who manage to control themselves from the temptation of desires. It states, for example, that those who are released from their stinginess are the winners¹⁰ and that to forgive is better than to retaliate.¹¹

It is true that this scripture mentions many times the belief in Allah and the Hereafter as basis for successful life. Nevertheless, the belief must be realized in the form of self-control and concern to the well being of others that in many places of the Qur'an are called good deeds and virtues (*al-ṣāliḥāt*). The most conspicuous appearance of one's faith is that in the relationship with others he or she does not do any harm to them.¹² The observance of religious rituals will have no meaning or even is considered a blasphemy if it is not accompanied with concern and giving help to the needy. Islam gives strong emphasis to the sensitivity to the possible existence of people who are treated unfairly. When sending one of his companions to Yemen, the Prophet Muhammad commanded the envoy to be aware of the prayer of anyone who was treated wrongly since there is no barrier between it and God at all, meaning that God will always hear the prayer.¹³

Imām al-Bukhārī reported a saying of the Prophet Muḥammad pbuh. as follows:

⁹ Cf. sura 7/al-A'rāf: 175-176.

¹⁰ Cf. sura 59/al-Ḥaṣhr: 9 and 64/al-Taghābun: 16.

¹¹ Cf. sura 43/Shūrā: 40.

¹² The Prophet Muhammad said, "Never goes into Paradise anyone whose neighbor is not safe from his disturbance," in his saying narrated by Muslim and Ahmad.

¹³ A Prophet Muhammad Tradition narrated by al-Bukhārī, Muslim and al-Turmudhī.

انصُرْ أَخَاكَ ظَالِمًا أَوْ مَظْلُومًا. قَالُوا: يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ، هَذَا نُنصِرُهُ مَظْلُومًا. فَكَيْفَ نُنصِرُهُ ظَالِمًا؟ قَالَ: تَأْخُذُ فَوْقَ يَدَيْهِ. رواه البخاري

The Prophet once said, “Help your brother when either treating or being treated wrongly.” The Companions then asked, “We understand why we should help him when being treated wrongly, but how should we help him when treating wrongly?” He responded, “Hold his hand.”

It is stated in many passages of the Qur’an that God does not like wrongdoers and never show them the right way.¹⁴ It is clear from such a statement that Islam suggests its adherents to support justice and to avoid wrongdoing in inter-human relations. Since injustice is a primary cause for the absence of peace, to erase it is a very decisive step in the long struggle for peace.

D. Mission of the Chosen People

In the teaching of the Qur’an, human being is God’s vicegerent given the trust of choosing and deciding whatever way of life he/she wants to follow. This trust or God’s confidence—or *amānah*¹⁵—to give the freedom of act to human being is actually very risky since the entailing power of it may be use either for goodness or badness. By this trust and power human being may become anti God, destroy the environment, do injustice etc. It was this possibility of making bad deeds—worded with making destruction and shedding blood—that the angels foresaw when they asked why God was willing to make a vicegerent on earth, i.e. Adam. God then said that there was something in His knowledge that the angels did not know.¹⁶ This thing must be a great one the value of which weighs down the possibility of making destruction. Can it then not be deduced that God wants human being to prevent destruction and bloodshed as the main end of its creation with the capacity of choosing what is good from the possibility of doing the contrary? The angels—in the Qur’anic narration of the story of Fall—did not realize that capacity

¹⁴ Cf. sura 3/Al ‘Imrān: 57, 87 and 140, 5/al-Mā’ida: 51 etc.

¹⁵ Sura 33/al-Aḥzāb: 72.

¹⁶ Cf. the Qur’anic story of Fall in which is narrated the conversation of God and the angels in sura 2/al-Baqara: 30-39.

since they knew only obedience in those who were created obedient and disobedience in those who were created disobedient. The real mission of human being in the teaching of the Qur'an is to choose to live the life in which morality overcomes carnal desires and emotion.¹⁷

This scripture states as well that human being is only created to do 'ibāda to no other than God. Many Muslims, however, understand this statement as an order to do the religious rituals, God worship in its narrow sense. 'Abada-ya'budu-'ibāda in Arabic pertains to worship and to serve and therefore that understanding is not without good basis at all. However, to give such great weight to God worship while neglecting the other function of serving God does not fit the spirit of this religion that emphasizes moral responsibility.¹⁸ In many verses of the Qur'an God worship is contrasted to human worship. To refuse human worship—and paying homage only to God instead—means refusing human exploitation by human being and, in the contrary, putting forward dignity and responsibility. By worshiping God only—in the broader sense of the word, i.e. living on His way—, human being becomes a free nature, but its freedom is not without limit since there is God in front of Whom he or she has to account for whatever he or she does.

Then, regarding their position in the society, Muslims are obliged to be witness of justice, even on him/herself, the parents and the relatives as is stated in the following verse:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا كُونُوا قَوَّامِينَ بِالْقِسْطِ شُهَدَاءَ لِلَّهِ وَلَوْ عَلَىٰ أَنفُسِكُمْ أَوِ الْوَالِدِينَ
وَالْأَقْرَبِينَ إِنْ يَكُنْ غَنِيًّا أَوْ فَقِيرًا فَاللَّهُ أَوْلَىٰ بِهِمَا فَلَا تَتَّبِعُوا الْهَوَىٰ أَنْ تَعْدِلُوا وَإِنْ
تَلَّوْا أَوْ تُعْرَضُوا فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ خَبِيرًا. من سورة 4\النساء: 135.

O you who believe! stand out firmly for justice, as witnesses to Allah, even as against yourselves, or your parents, or your kin, and whether it be (against) rich or poor: for Allah can best protect both. Follow not the lusts (of your hearts), lest ye swerve, and if you distort (justice) or

¹⁷ Cf. sura 7/al-A'rāf: 175-176.

¹⁸ Cf. sura 107/al-Mā'un that rebukes those who do not give help to the needy while observing rituals as blasphemous.

decline to do justice, verily Allah is well acquainted with all that you do. Sura 4/al-Nisā': 135.

This collective duty of being witness for justice is given in relation of the position of Muslims as chosen people as is stated in another verse saying:

وَكَذَلِكَ جَعَلْنَاكُمْ أُمَّةً وَسَطًا لِتَكُونُوا شُهَدَاءَ عَلَى النَّاسِ وَيَكُونَ الرَّسُولُ عَلَيْكُمْ شَهِيدًا... الآية. من سورة 2/البقرة: 143.

Thus have We made of you the chosen people (or justly balanced people), that you might be witnesses over the nations, and the Messenger a witness over yourselves;... Surat 2/al-Baqarah: 143.

To know the meaning of being witness of Muslims with regard to other people as is stated in this verse, we should compare it to the function of the Prophet Muhammad whose mission is to become witness with regard to his followers. He did not watch only what they did, but guided them, protected them, oriented them to the best way and do whatever good for their life. He wanted the best for them and was very much concerned of their suffering.¹⁹ Therefore, any Muslim should want the best for others, show the best orientation of life that may bring happiness to his/her fellow human beings; remind them when they make bad deeds and support them when they do the good ones. He/she should be active in knowing what is happening in the community where he/she lives and take needed action for the best of the community. Since any human being—however strong his/her faith is—can never be immune to fault, a Muslim should take the humbleness to receive other's reminder from wherever it may come.

The obligation to be witness for all people cannot be done unless one has good relationship with them. The word that was translated in the last verse with "chosen" is *wasath* that means literally "in the middle." The best position for you to have good relationship with people is when you are in the middle of them and the witnessing can be done the best if there is peace between you and them.

¹⁹ Cf. for example, sura 9/al-Tauba: 128.

E. War as Expression of Faith

Can war be an expression of faith? When the Qur'an obliges fighting, it states that it is not something that the believers like. Nevertheless, it is obliged to do fighting for there is something nobler than forgiving and forbearance.²⁰ Muslims do not like fighting and Islam does not suggest them to fight in a normal situation. It is only allowed to fight when there is no other way to defend life from the aggression of others. Fighting is only the last resort when talk, negotiation and other options to make peace fail and the threat of death is there. In such a situation, fighting is not only suggested but also obliged. To let the self in danger is wrong in the spirit of Qur'anic teaching, as is alluded by the following verse:

وَمَا لَكُمْ لَا تُقَاتِلُونَ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ وَالْمُسْتَضْعَفِينَ مِنَ الرِّجَالِ وَالنِّسَاءِ وَالْوِلْدَانِ
الَّذِينَ يَقُولُونَ رَبَّنَا أَخْرِجْنَا مِنْ هَذِهِ الْقَرْيَةِ الظَّالِمِ أَهْلُهَا وَاجْعَل لَنَا مِنْ لَدُنْكَ وَلِيًّا
وَاجْعَل لَنَا مِنْ لَدُنْكَ نَصِيرًا. (4/النساء: 75)

And why should you 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!." Sura 4/al-Nisā': 75.

In a normal situation where there are options to make the life better and no threat of life, to forgive is far better than to retaliate. It is not blamable in the teaching of the Qur'an to return bad action of others with the same bad action, but not to exceed. However, it suggests to make peace and to forgive the wrongdoer. This suggestion does not mean that Muslims should leave anyone to do wrongdoing, but that the target of reaction towards bad deed is the deed itself and not the doer. We must forgive the doer but have to stop the bad deed.

When the prophet Muhammad was forced to choose between two options of fighting and making peace treaty at the event of

²⁰ Cf. 2/al-Baqara: 216.

Hudaibiah,²¹ he chose the latter although his companions urged him not to take the treaty that they thought would give more benefit to the enemy. The spirit of this decision of the Prophet is that peace is always greater than any other material benefit.

In a word, fighting in Islam is never an order that has to be carried on every time, but it is more like an emergency exit that can be used with tight rules and at the last resort. In a normal situation, where there exist other options, it is prohibited at all.

F. How Peace Should be Built

Faith in the concept of the Qur'an has to be realized in the form of care to other human being, as is clear in its reprimand to anyone who does not give help to needy people. Such a human being is called *belier* of religion, although he or she may observe ritual obligations, and what he or she deserves is only misery and hell.²² To be able to do social obligations like giving help to the needy we need peaceful situation. The *da'wa* (call to the way of God), as an important means for Muslims to do their mission of witnessing the justice in inter human relationship, can only be carried on when there is peace. War and insecurity that usually it entails will only block ears and hearts from hearing.

We cannot deny the fact that peace cannot be maintained forever. Sometimes we have to struggle hard for peace and we know that to establish peace we need partners and supporters as much as possible. The peace that we need and are longing for is impossible at times there are people who do not want it. The problem is, then, what and how to do with that kind of people, especially when they are aggressive to us?

First, we need to establish a living together that may protect the humanity and ourselves. Solidarity, care and concern to others who want peace—things that do not exist in the theological awareness of many believers—has to be developed and built strong. Then, we need to build justice in inter human relationship and

²¹ Cf., for example, W. Montgomery Watt, *Muhammad: Prophet and Statesman* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, reprint edition, 1969), 182-188.

²² Cf. sura 107/al-Mā'ūn: 1-7.

treatment and to bridge a dialogue with those who do not seem to want peace. It is not impossible that they do actually mean peace by doing what appears to be anti peace. In addition, readiness to share with others should be shown in religious attitude. Truth claim will never help reducing conflict and it is only by appreciating the truth that others may have that we can call them to sit on the table of dialogue.

From the very beginning, the Islamic call rebukes the accumulation of wealth for self-interest and reminds that the capability of releasing one's self from the tie of stinginess is a requisite for success in the life of a believer.²³ Most of the orders to do good deeds and to avoid bad ones do not require the being Muslim of anyone who may be object of those deeds. Giving help to the needy is suggested by Islam without any order to know if the needy is Muslim or not. Likewise, it is obliged to avoid injustice and wrongdoing, no matter if the object of the act is an infidel, let alone if a believer. It is here that we may understand the saying of the Prophet Muhammad that he was only sent as mercy to all humankind.²⁴

When it is not enough for talk, call and reminder to stop aggression, what should be done? Here we need state as the only authority to use power for the benefit of all citizens. The state, the rules of which are made by the agreement of all citizens, should become their representative to protect the public sphere where everyone may live as citizen with dignity, without any feeling of threat. Religion may participate in the process of making any decision and monitoring state's work, but not to take any action in the name anything in the public sphere in which only state has the authority for the purpose of protecting any citizen.

It is true that it is not easy for anyone taught so far by religious authorities that there is no concept of separation between religious and worldly spheres in Islamic teaching (*al-Islām dīn wa daulah*). Nevertheless, it should be remembered that the delegation of ruling authority to state does not mean transgression of Islamic concept of

²³ Cf. sura 59/al-Ḥashr: 7 and 9, 64/al-Taghābun: 16 and 104/al-Humaza: 1-4.

²⁴ Cf. sura 21/al-Anbiyā': 1.

the unity in Islamic life at all. The concept has been so far understood from the side of Islam as the religion of the winners to whom belong all authorities, included the authority to rule. There, Islam is the only rule and Muslims are the only rulers, making non-Muslim citizens protected people (*ahl al-dhimma*) with no right to rule or to lead. In the present situation where Islam is no longer the sole source of authority and the state is established to protect all the citizens of different faiths the concept of unity has to be changed, not in the essence but in the form of application.

G. Conclusion

To conclude I say once again that to establish peace we need self-confidence and readiness to share with others. Sometimes, when you feel insecure about your safety you may not believe that others will do no harm to you. The feeling of being threatened may make you misunderstand however gesture others may launch and translate it with threat or even offence. Theology, as a human understanding of God's message, is very much influenced by psychological condition of the theologian and/or those he or she represents. Therefore, we have to do our best together to have people of religion gain their confidence and feeling of secure if we really want peace to be the center of theology.

In a world where people of different faiths and cultures live together the readiness to share the space is only natural. The awareness of public sphere in which all may work and express the feeling or belief they have peacefully should be developed. In order that every individual and every group have enough room, each has to respect other's right to have the same. This means that each must make a limit to his/her own freedom and need. The failure to do this will cause collision and conflict and theology may be used to fuel war.

Theology may support either peace or war and therefore there should be wisdom in choosing options of understanding available for the theologians in order to get the most appropriate to the dignified life for all members of the community. It is sure that peace is closer to that kind of life than enmity and violence. To be successful in

promoting peace, we will have to promote justice be it in the distribution of wealth or in the chance to develop individual's potentialities and to express one's belief etc. Without justice and fair treatment in the relations between human beings, the temptation of using violence is always there and those who feel of being treated unfairly or marginalized in decision making process may take it using theology their basis for doing so.

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