The Role of ISLAM
In Establishing
PEACE in the Contemporary World

A Research Proposal
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THE ROLE OF ISLAM IN ESTABLISHING PEACE IN THE CONTEMPORARY WORLD

1. INTRODUCTION

Peace is considered the greatest good in the world today and is the greatest need of the contemporary world. First used in the 12th century, the Webster's dictionary defines peace as, "a state of tranquility or quiet; freedom from civil disturbance; a state of security or order within a community provided for by law or custom; specifically, absence or cessation of war; a state of reconciliation after strife or enmity; etc."[1]

The origin of the word peace comes from English *pees*. The term *pax* (akin to Latin *pacisci* to agree) is the Latin feminine noun from which the English word "peace" is derived. The word has varied meanings the reaching of agreement between two parties; respect for others; quality of life; peaceful time; civil safety and security; etc.[2]

Peace has been the need of the hour since the dawn of human history and has been the target of man[3]. While man has considered peace as his goal since times immemorial, but there has never even been a consensus on the definition of peace, much less a formula to achieve it. It is a reality that peace has not been achieved, never has man even come close to it. There has always been war at one or another of places in the world. Ivan Block gives the dismal reality:

> 'An analysis of the history of mankind shows that from the year 1496 BC to the year 1861 of our era, that is, in a cycle of 3357 years, there ere but 227 years of peace and 3130 years of war: in other words, thirteen years of war for every year of peace. Considered thus, the history of the lives of people presents a picture of uninterrupted struggle. War, it would appear, is a normal attribute of hum life.[4]

But man, by his very nature, yearns for peace. Why this contradiction? Will it ever be possible to obtain world peace? What is man's role in establishing peace? What is the formula to achieve peace? Can we find any guidelines to achieve peace? Can religion give any guidelines to achieve peace? Can a religion like Islam play a role in establishing peace?

With the aim of finding answers to such questions, the present research aims to trace the ideologies associated with peace. Keeping this in mind, some have defined peace as merely be 'the absence of war,[5] others consider it an 'ideal'[6] defining it as 'the removal of all internal and external violent conflict'. Still others consider it the result of certain conditions[7] such as stability, justice, human rights, equality, freedom, happiness among and within all individuals, peoples and nations of the world, etc.

Having traced the various ideologies of peace the research aims to analyze these ideologies to see if any one or group of them can serve as a model to achieve peace in the contemporary world.

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[1] *The New International Webster's Comprehensive Dictionary of the English Language* (Deluxe Encyclopedic Edition), Trident Press International, Naples, 2001, p.927.
[2] Yount, Nigelle (Editor), *The Oxford International Encyclopedia of Peace*, Volume 3, Page 350.
[3] Adolf, Anthony: *Peace: A World History*, Polity Press, page 1
[4] ibid
[5] Arthur & Lila Wienberg, *Instead of Violence*, Grossman Publishers, New York, 1963, Page 292.
[6] ibid
[7] ibid

2. IDEOLOGIES ASSOCIATED WITH PEACE

The term "peace" has innumerable connotations. The oldest understanding of peace is that synonymous to equilibrium and stability. John Galtung considers peace to go in three directions, the "absence of organized collective violence"; the ideal of the sum total of "all good" values in the world community of nations; and peace associated with the fulfillment of certain conditions.[8] The research will endeavour to understand each of these and other connotations of peace.

2.1. Peace Synonymous to Equilibrium and Stability: The first is the original idea of peace as a synonym to stability or equilibrium that has been followed since antiquity. It also covers the "law and order" concept or the idea of a predictable social order even if this order is brought about by means of force and the threat of force. This is can be exemplified to the periods of stability in international affairs in history, from *Pax Romanica, Pax Islamica*, *Pax Britannica* and *Pax Americana*.

2.2. Absence of Violence: Other scholars hold the idea of peace as the absence of organized collective violence or 'the absence of war'. In the words of Haroon Riaz, a freelance journalist of Rawalpindi, Pakistan:

'What is Peace, but the Absence of Violence. Just like Death is the Absence of Life.'

This is referred to absence of violence and war between major human groups; racial and ethnic classes as well as nations. Others, however, consider this a limited definition of peace.

2.3. Ideal Peace Inclusive of All Good: The third concept of peace, which is less clearly defined, refers to the *ideal* of 'all good' things in the world. This particularly refers to justice, human rights, freedom, happiness among and within all nations and/or people and cooperation and integration between human groups, with less emphasis on the absence of violence.[9]

2.4. Peace based on Certain Conditions

Another form of peace is one based on certain conditions set for peace.[10] Individuals, groups, communities and nations place certain conditions for peace such as justice, human rights, equality, freedom of action, pluralism and dynamism, presence of cooperation, freedom from fear, freedom from want, economic growth and development, absence of exploitation, etc.

Any target needs an ideology or concept to yield positive results, including peace. *The present research aims trace different ideologies of peace and analyze if any of them or groups of them can result in peace.*

[8] Galtung, Johan: Theories of Peace-A Synthetic Approach of Peace, International Peace Research Institute, Oslo, 1967, p.17.
[9] ibid, p. 15.
[10] ibid, p. 14.

3. THE NEED FOR THE STUDY

The modern man considers peace to be summum bonum. Mankind yearns for inner peace, of normalcy in society and harmonious relations with others (societies, cultures, nations, groups, etc.). In spite of innumerable efforts as outlined in the previous pages of this chapter throughout history to achieve peace, peace is still a distant dream. *Why has Peace Not Ensued?* While all agree that the achievement of peace is the ultimate goal, while striving for peace in the modern world, challenges to peace are seen at the following levels:

3.1. Deterrents to Peace at the Secular Level: At the secular level, besides the internal problems in societies and nations, the biggest deterrent to peace is the development of a nuclear arsenal by the developed and now developing countries. The development of the nuclear bomb in the Second World War, though giving victory to the Allies, spelt disaster for the world at large. This is because, with it came the race for the proliferation of nuclear arms in the modern world. Although disarmament is the buzz-word today, and many of the countries are using their nuclear power for peaceful means such as energy, but the cloud of doom reigns high above us and the quest for peace is still a distant dream.

3.2. Deterrents of Peace at the Religious Level: At the religious level, the major deterrent to the achievement of peace in the modern world is that of the concept of 'just war' and the ideology of violence being perpetrated under the concept of al-islam dinun was dawlatun` (tr., Islam is a religion and a state).

3.3. Lack of Consensus on the Definition of Peace: Although many advocates and organizations of peace have arisen in the last few decades, there is not even a consensus on the definition of peace among them. Even the Oxford International Encyclopedia of Peace gives such as diverse definition for the word peace as: 'the absence of war or hostility'; 'the occurrence in society of harmony or normalcy'; 'inner tranquility within a person'…", etc.

3.4. Lack of Success of the Peaceful Method: Although many advocates and movements for peace have arisen in the modern world such as Mahatma Gandhi's Non-Violence Movement, Nelson Mandela movement against Apartheid, Martin Luther King Junior's Movement for the rights of the Negroes, Maulana Maududi's and Syed Qutb's movements for Islamic Revival, many Anti-Nuclear Movements, etc; but they have at the most been able to achieve partial success.

These issues present a major challenge to the attainment of world peace both at the secular and religious level. There is still a need to undertake a study that will arrive at a definition of peace, a methodology whereby peace can be achieved in the world.

4. THE STUDY

To overcome the above-mentioned deterrents to peace the present research will endeavour:

4.1. To Find Out Guiding Principles for Peace: Throughout history both secular fields and religion have played a guiding role to individual, communities and nations. In the 21st century we have to see if religion as well as secular sources can give any guiding principles in achieving world peace. We have to see if religion and secular sources can be used as an instrument of obtaining peace. We have to question if secular sources, religion and/or spirituality play a pacifist role in the 21st century.

The study will attempt to look at secular sources and the original sources of Islam to see if they provide any guidance on the principles of peace.

4.2. To Clearly Define Peace: The next step is to arrive at a clear definition to the word "peace". For this the study will question whether peace means merely the absence of war in other words, if a country is not involved in a war, do the people of that country live in a green peace or is it more than that?

The study will attempt to look at secular sources and the original sources of Islam to see if they can help in giving a clear definition of peace.

4.3. To Find a Practical Ideology of Peace: Man can properly fulfill any given mission only when he is ideologically convinced of its validity. Ideology provides man with the necessary warranties; otherwise he fails to act with the necessary energy and enthusiasm so vital to the success of any struggle. In similar vein, courage is the greatest energizer in the journey of life. A courageous man can climb to the top of a mountain, whereas a man devoid of courage cannot even proceed along level pathways. But what is man's source of courage? It is ideology which provides man with the courage to tread the path of peace.

The study will next attempt to find an ideology on the basis of which peace can be achieved.

4.4. To Find a Practical Methodology for Achieving Peace: There are essentially two types of methods to the attainment of any goal, especially for the achievement of peace: the *unilateral approach* whereby a individuals, communities or nations undertake a program within its sphere of influence and entirely at its own discretion, and a *bilateral approach* (even called the *multilateral approach*) where this is done in tacit or open understanding with other individuals, communities or nations.

The study will try to arrive at a method from the above or any other found during the course of the research to achieve peace.

If the study is able to achieve the above, it will endeavour to test the definition, guiding principles, ideology and methodology through qualitative methods.

5. THE HYPOTHESIS OF THE STUDY

Scholars have confirmed that the Prophet of Islam was a pacifist and not only followed pacifist principles himself, but also gave an ideology of peace to the world in how he negotiated the Hudaibiya Treaty in 627 AD. This research will endeavour to find if these principles can serve as guidelines for individuals in general and groups, nations in particular to find peace.

As Islam claims to be an eternal religion; it has to offer solutions to problems of all ages in the world. In the contemporary world, *peace* is considered summum bonum. For Islam to live up to its claim of being an eternal religion, it should be able to provide an ideology of peace to the world.

Taking from both the above the present study is putting forward the following hypothesis:

> *"Islam gives an ideology of peace which can serve as a model to achieve peace in the contemporary world."*

The Importance of the Model in Islam

The Quran says: "*You have indeed in the Prophet of God a good example for those of you who look to God and the Last Day, and remember God always.*" - Quran 33:21

A Tradition states that the Prophet observed, "*My generation is the best one, then the second generation and then the third generation.*"- Sahih Muslim, 8/550

Based on the above, the Quran and Sunnah, the early period of Islam serves as the model. Taking guidance from the above, the present research will endeavour to find the model for peace in Islam based in its primary and secondary sources: Quran (Arabic text, Translations and Tafsirs), Sunnah (Sihah Sitta, Musnad Ahmad), Seerah, the example of the early period of Islam, etc. The study will further try to see how this can be relevant in the modern world.

6. TITLE OF THE STUDY

The proposed dissertation aims to undertake an objective study of this subject. The title of the study is:

> *"The Role of Islam in Establishing Peace in the Contemporary World"*.

7. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The following are the primary objectives of the study:

- To take a birds-eye view of pacifists trends in religious and secular history.

- To study the broad trends or concepts used by various peace activists and pacifists to achieve peace.

- To study the broad methodologies used by various peace activists and pacifists to achieve peace.

- To define peace.

- To define and explain the methodologies for achieving peace.

- To strive to understand why peace has not been achieved in spite of tremendous efforts.

- To arrive at the Islamic pacifist model based on the original sources of Islam, Seerah of the Prophet of Islam and the early period of Islam.

- To see if this Islamic pacifist model can provide an ideology and methodology to achieve peace in the contemporary world.

- To arrive at "*Theoretical Model: Role of Islam in Establishing Peace in the Contemporary World,* based on historical and qualitative analysis.

- To verify these findings through structured and unstructured interviews with some contemporary Islamic scholars to arrive at conclusions and offer recommendations on how the concept of peace in Islam can be relevant in the modern world.

- To test the interim and conclusive results of the findings through qualitative methods for effectiveness.

- To spread these findings through the Islam and Peace project.

8. TENTATIVE CHAPTERIZATION

The work will comprise the following tentative chapters:

1. **Introduction**

    1.1 Background

    1.2 War and Its Views

    1.3 Principles Governing Conduct In War Times

    14. After Modern Warfare, Peace The Only Option

    1.5 Peace, Pacifism in Historical Perspective

    1.6 A Study of the Present Ideologies for Achieving Peace

2. **Scholarship on Peace**

    2.1 Pacifist Trends in History

    2.2 Defining Peace

    2.3 Methodologies of Achieving Peace

    2.4 Why Is Peace a Distant Dream?

3. **The Islamic Pacifist Model**

4. **Role of Islam in Achieving Peace in the Contemporary World**

5. **Conclusions and Recommendations**

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Glossary

9. METHODOLOGY

In the proposed work historical and qualitative research methodology will be employed.

1. Study of the Literature and Interview Transcripts:

- *Concept of Peace in the Modern World:* The study will endeavour to find the concept of peace in the modern world through the writings (articles and books) of and on advocates and movements of peace (King, Martin Luther: **Strength to Love,** Augsburg Fortress Publishers, 1986, Gandhi, K. Mohandas: **The Essential Gandhi: An Anthology of His Writings on His Life, Work, and Ideas,** *edited by Louis Fischer, with a Preface by Eknath Easwaran); E*ncyclopedias of peace (Young, J., Nigel (ed.): *The Oxford International Encyclopedia of Peace*, Oxford University Press, USA, 2010; Pauling, Linus (ed.): *World Encyclopedia of Peace*, Paragon Press, USA, 1986; etc.); etc. The study will further collect data based on interviews with contemporary experts of the issue and transcribe them.

- *Methodology of Peace in the Modern World:* To arrive at an understanding of what peace means in the modern world and analyze if it can be achieved therein, the study will look at literature (articles and books) such as: Boulding, Elise: *Cultures of Peace: The Hidden Side of History*, Syracuse University Press, 2000; Fahey, Joseph J.: *A Peace Reader: Essential Readings on War, Justice, Non-Violence and World Order*, Paulist Press, 1992; Holloway, John, Pluto: *Change the World Without Taking Power: The Meaning of Revolution Today*, Press, 2002; Easwaran, Eknath: *Gandhi, the Man: The Story of His Transformation*, Nilgiri Press, 1997; Zinn, Howard: *The Power of Nonviolence: Writings by Advocates of Peace*, Beacon Press, 2002; Jr., Collopy, Michael: **Architects of Peace,** *Clayborne Carson, ed.,* King, Luther, Martin: **The Autobiography of Martin Luther, Mandela, Nelson: *Long Walk to Freedom: The Autobiography of Nelson Mandela***; Gandhi, K. Mohandas: **The Essential Gandhi: An Anthology of His Writings on His Life, Work, and Ideas;** Lama, Dalai: *The Dalai Lama's Book of Wisdom,* Hunt, Scott: *The Future of Peace*, etc. The study will further collect data based on interviews with contemporary experts of the issue and transcribe them.

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- ***Concept of Peace in the Muslim World and Its Methodology:*** The study will further endeavour to find the reasons for the lack of peace in the Muslim world through the writings (articles and books) of John L Esposito (*Voices of Resurgent in Islam* published by Oxford University Press, New York); Muhammad Asad (*The Principles of State and Government in Islam* published by University of California Press); Mazharuddin Siddiqui (*Modern Reformist Thought in the Muslim World* published from Islamabad, Pakistan); William Montgomery Watt (*Islamic Political Thought* published by The New Edinburgh Islamic Surveys); Maulana Abul A'la Maududi (*Towards Understanding the Quran*: English Translation of Quran Tafsir, *Tafhim al-Quran, Jihad in Islam, West Versus Islam*, *The Political Thought in Islam*, etc.); Syed Qutb (Quran Tafsir: In the shade of the Quran, Milestones, Social Justice in Islam, etc.); and Maulana Wahiduddin Khan (*Tazkirul Quran, Islam and Peace, Ideology of Peace, The True Jihad, The Prophet of Peace: The Teachings of the Prophet Muhammad*, etc.). The study will further cite the opinions of older theologians, jurists as well as modern and contemporary scholars on the issue. *The study will further collect data based on interviews with contemporary experts of the issue and transcribe them.*

- ***Concept of Peace in Islam and Its Methodology:*** To understand the concept of peace in Islam we will look at the primary sources, Arabic text of the Quran, Sunnah (Sihah Sitta, etc.) as well as the secondary sources such as the translations of the Quran and their traditional and modern exegesis (*Tafsir Ibn Kathir*, etc.); (*Sirat Ibn Kathir*; and *Biography of Muhammad*, by Ibn Ishaq, translated by Ibn Hisham, etc.) and the example of the Sahaba (*Hayat as-Sahabah*, etc.) and other literature giving the early period of Islam.

2. Theoretical Framework and Its Verification through Interviews: Data from these sources will be analyzed to arrive at: *Theoretical Framework: Role of Islam in Establishing Peace in the Contemporary World.* This will be verified through both structured and unstructured interviews with contemporary Islamic scholars. *Based on these interviews the findings will be verified and Conclusions and Recommendations given on Role of Islam in Establishing Peace in the Contemporary World.*

The interim and final findings of the research will be published and disseminated through interactions with scholars, www.islamandpeace.org, leaflets, booklets, thesis and mp3s.

7. TENTATIVE BIBLIOGRAPHY

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Signature of the Supervisor   Signature of the Candidate

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