

## FOSTERING HARMONIOUS SOCIETAL CONSTRUCTS THROUGH ISLAMIC PRINCIPLES

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**ABSTRACT:** *The paper underscores the profound impact of Islamic principles in promoting understanding, unity, and peaceful coexistence within societal constructs. Drawing from various facets of Islamic teachings deeply rooted in the Qur'an and the Prophet's guidance, the study advocates for compassion, justice, and inclusivity in societal construction. The convergence of these principles serves as a beacon for fostering coexistence and justice, offering pathways to construct harmonious societies. Following an extensive exploration of inter-group relations in the region, the study proposes a set of recommendations to address challenges and cultivate lasting harmony. These recommendations encompass initiatives such as education and awareness programs to bridge gaps, community-based conflict resolution mechanisms, advocacy for inclusive governance, support for interfaith dialogue and collaboration, civic engagement and empowerment, enhanced security measures, collaboration with NGOs and international bodies, media sensitization campaigns, incorporation of Islamic perspectives into education and outreach, and continual research for adaptive strategies and effectiveness monitoring. The implementation of these recommendations is envisioned to create an environment conducive to peaceful coexistence, understanding, and shared prosperity within Nigeria, particularly Taraba State.*

**Keywords:** *Islamic Teachings, Society, Inter-Group Relations, Peaceful Co-Existence*

### A. Introduction

In the exploration of fostering harmonious societal constructs through Islamic principles, Iwendi defines inter-group relations as the interactions among individuals from different



groups and the collective behavior of groups at both intra and inter-organizational levels.<sup>1</sup> This dynamic involves the existence of mutually exclusive groups engaged in continuous interaction. Typically, these exclusive groups exhibit a 'we' attitude towards members of their own group while adopting a 'they' attitude towards members of the out-group. In support of this, Iwendi references Sherif, who posits that any interaction between individuals of one group and another, in terms of their group identification, constitutes inter-group behavior.<sup>2</sup> Sherif further elaborates that such behavior pertains to the relations between two or more groups and their respective members.<sup>3</sup>

Expanding on this concept, Figueiredo et al, argue that inter-group relations focus on various societal groups, encompassing racial or ethnic groups, national groups, religious groups, work groups, and artificial groups.<sup>4</sup> This perspective delves into the interactions among people belonging to different groups, whether in-groups or outgroups, emphasizing their perceptions, thoughts, and actions towards one another. These insights form a crucial part of the analytical framework for inter-group relations.

This synthesis offers a concise and clear overview of the conceptual framework related to inter-group relations. It effectively amalgamates the definitions and perspectives of scholars such as Iwendi, Sherif, and Figueiredo, underscoring the importance of comprehending interactions among individuals from diverse societal groups.

Islamic concept of peaceful coexistence and religious harmony is the view that human beings are united under Almighty Allah which commands Muslims to build bridges of understanding and cooperation with fellow human beings in order to create an environment of social order.<sup>5</sup> Peaceful coexistence requires that people abstain from abusing and denigrating those who do not share their beliefs. Deriding and mocking others can engender violence and hatred. Therefore, the Qur'an urges respect for the beliefs of others. The Qur'an states:

Had Allah willed, they would not have taken others besides Him in worship. and we have not made You a watcher over them nor are You set over them to dispose of their affairs. And insult not those whom they (disbelievers) Worship besides Allah, lest they insult Allah

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<sup>1</sup>O. F. Iwendi, "Inter-group Relations in Nigeria: The Dynamics and Complexities", *International Journal of Development and Management Review (INJODEMAR)* Vol. 11, 2016, <http://www.oxforddictionaries.com>, retrieved on 19<sup>th</sup> November, 2023

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>3</sup> M. Sherif, *Intergroup Relations and Leadership*, New York, Willey, 1962.

<sup>4</sup> A. Figueiredo, J. P. Valentim, and B. Doosje, "Theories on Intergroup Relations and Emotions: A Theoretical Overview", *Psychologica* Vol. 57, No. 2, 2014, DOI: [http://dx.doi.org/10.14195/1647-8606\\_57-2\\_1](http://dx.doi.org/10.14195/1647-8606_57-2_1).

<sup>5</sup> M. A.M. Mihlar, M.R. Abd Rahman, M.K. Mahyuddin, A.N. Mokhtar, & Y. Ahmad, "Religious Harmony and Peaceful Co-Existence: A Quranic Perspective", *Al-Abqari Journal of Islamic Social Sciences and Humanities, USIM*, 2(2), 2016.

wrongfully without knowledge. Thus we have made fair-seeming to each people its own doings; Then to their Lord is their return and He shall then inform them of All that they used to do.<sup>6</sup>

The commentary encapsulates the essence of inter-group relations, highlighting the significance of group identification and its profound impact on individual attitudes and behaviours. This, in turn, lays the groundwork for an in-depth exploration of the literature on Islamic alternatives to inter-group relations and peace, aligning with the study's focus on Nigeria, specifically the Northern Senatorial Zone of Taraba State.

## **B. Methodology**

This research relies on a diverse range of primary and secondary data sources. While primary data collection methods like interviews or surveys are not used, the study predominantly focuses on secondary data sourced from printed materials. These materials include books, articles, theses, dissertations, and newspapers.

Printed sources act as crucial repositories of knowledge, offering varied perspectives, scholarly insights, and historical context pertinent to the research. Books often provide comprehensive analyses, while articles offer more specific insights. Theses and dissertations present detailed research conducted by experts in the field, offering thorough investigations and findings. Newspapers offer snapshots of current or historical perspectives, capturing societal events and opinions relevant to the research topic.

By extensively utilizing a range of printed materials as secondary data sources, the research aims to establish a comprehensive understanding of the subject matter. This approach contributes to a robust analysis and interpretation of the study's findings, enhancing the depth and breadth of the research outcomes.

## **C. Literature Review**

In examining the article "Fostering Harmonious Societal Constructs Through Islamic Principles," various scholars and theoretical frameworks shed light on inter-group relations, particularly within the Northern Senatorial Zone of Taraba State, Nigeria.

Human beings, as social beings, fulfill their fundamental needs through group affiliations.<sup>7</sup> Figueiredo et al. encapsulate Sherif's Realistic Group Conflict Theory, indicating

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<sup>6</sup> Qur'an, Surah Al-An'am 6:107-108.

<sup>7</sup> Baumeister, R. F., & Leary, M. R. (1995). The need to belong: Desire for interpersonal attachments as a fundamental human motivation. *Psychological Bulletin*, 117, 497-529. doi:10.1037/0033-2909.117.3.497

that groups with mutually exclusive goals may foster cooperation, while competition for identical goals can lead to conflict. Additionally, they highlight that conflicts arise when groups cannot fulfill their goals harmoniously.<sup>8</sup>

Moreover, the Social Identity Theory emphasizes that an individual's self-concept aligns with their group identity, which can hinder competency.<sup>9</sup> To foster harmonious relationships, eliminating divisive identifications that create 'us versus them' mentalities is essential.

Several studies provide insights relevant to the study's focus. Ngbea and Achunike underscore Nigeria's religious and tribal diversity, aligning with the current research's interest in ethno-religious affiliations.<sup>10</sup> Wakili in his report on religious pluralism and conflicts within the zone,<sup>11</sup> Sulaiman and Wakili's analysis of religious and ethnic conflicts in Nigeria, and Suberu's exploration of ethnic tensions and governance challenges contribute valuable insights into the complexities of inter-group relations.<sup>12</sup>

Additionally, studies like that of Bello on Islamic influence in Taraba State,<sup>13</sup> Abubakar's investigations on ethno-religious crises,<sup>14</sup> and Suleimuri's work on colonial policies' impact in the Muri Emirate enrich the understanding of the region's historical, religious, and ethnic dynamics.<sup>15</sup>

Theoretical works by Hamman on the Middle Benue Region's history, Fremantle's document on Muri Province,<sup>16</sup> and Kirk-Greene's historical account of Adamawa Province provide crucial insights into the historical context of the study area.<sup>17</sup>

Furthermore, empirical studies such as Nsemba and Johnson's analysis of ethnic and citizenship crises,<sup>18</sup> the Book of Elijah's investigation into colonial factors in inter-group

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<sup>8</sup> A. Figueiredo, J. P. Valentim, and B. Doosje, "Theories on Intergroup Relations and Emotions: A Theoretical Overview", *Psychologica* Vol. 57, No. 2, 2014, DOI: [http://dx.doi.org/10.14195/1647-8606\\_57\\_-2\\_1](http://dx.doi.org/10.14195/1647-8606_57_-2_1).

<sup>9</sup> O. F. Iwendi, "Inter-group Relations in Nigeria: The Dynamics and Complexities", Op. Cit.

<sup>10</sup> G.T. Ngbea and H.C. Achunike, "Religion: Past and Present in Nigeria", *International Journal of Sciences, Basic and Applied Research*, Vol. 17, No. 2, 2014, pp. 156-174.

<sup>11</sup> H. Wakili, *Religious Pluralism and Conflict in North Western Nigeria, 1970-2000*. Research Report No 2. Centre for Research and Documentation (CRD), Kano, 2009.

<sup>12</sup> R. T. Suberu, *Ethnic Minority Conflicts and Governance in Nigeria*, Spectrum Books Limited, Ibadan, 2003.

<sup>13</sup> A. Bello, (2014). "Muslims and *Da'wah* in Taraba State: Prospects and Challenges", Usman Danfodiyo University, Sokoto, (M.A. Islamic Studies).

<sup>14</sup> M. Abubakar, "Ethno-Religious Crises in Taraba State: Causes, Effects and Solutions from Islamic Perspective", Bayero University, Kano, M.A. Islamic Studies, 2017.

<sup>15</sup> H. M. Suleimuri, "Impact of British Colonial Agricultural Policies on Muri Emirate, 1903-1960", Al Neelain University, Khartoum, Sudan, (PhD. History), 2018.

<sup>16</sup> M. Hamman, *The Middle Benue Region and the Sokoto Jihad 1812-1869; The Impact of the Establishment of the Emirate*, Arewa House, Kaduna, Ahmadu Bello University, 2007.

<sup>17</sup> J.M. Fremantle, *Gazetteer of Muri Province (Up to December, 1919)*, London, Frank Cass and Company Limited, 1972.

<sup>18</sup> A. H. M. Kirk-Greene, *Adamawa, Past and Present an Historical Approach to the Development of a Northern Cameroons Province*, Dawsons of Pall Mall, London, International African Institute, 1969.

rivalry,<sup>19</sup> and Ali's examination of religious pluralism from the Medina Charter offer diverse perspectives essential for comprehending the region's dynamics.<sup>20</sup>

In sum, these studies collectively enrich the understanding of the historical, administrative, ethnic, and religious dimensions within Nigeria, laying a robust foundation for the exploration of Islamic alternatives to inter-group relations and peace-building efforts.

## **D. Results And Discussion**

### **Islamic Perspective on Inter-Group Relations and Harmonious Coexistence for Peace**

Islam posits that the interconnection of the universe originates from a singular Divine Will, emphasizing the intricate interdependence among humanity. Individuals, likened to constituent atoms within this cosmic framework, are fundamentally reliant on one another. Central to Islamic doctrine is the unity of humanity, seeking to amalgamate its varied elements. This tenet, prominently featured in the Qur'an and the teachings of the Prophet, prioritizes fundamental values such as religious freedom, interfaith concordance, equitable treatment of non-Muslims, conflict resolution mechanisms, and collaborative endeavors. This paper aims to comprehensively explore these Islamic doctrines through a meticulous analysis of Qur'anic verses and an in-depth examination of the Prophet's initiatives aimed at fostering unity amid the diversity prevalent in society.<sup>21</sup>

Within Islam, ethnic, linguistic, national, and tribal affiliations are acknowledged as aspects of personal identity but are not considered grounds for differentiation or privilege. The Islamic concept of a shared human origin establishes a fundamental equality that transcends racial or linguistic differences (Q.4.1). This Qur'anic passage emphasizes the shared lineage of humanity, instilling corresponding responsibilities within the broader human family.

The Qur'an acknowledges the diverse array of languages and colors as indicative of divine wisdom (Q.30:22), portraying pluralism as an intrinsic facet of human existence within the framework of Islamic teachings. Consequently, contesting pluralism would run counter to the divine intent (11:18).

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<sup>19</sup> L. E. Nsemba, and A. Johnson, "Ethnicity and Citizenship Crisis in Nigeria: Interrogating Inter-Ethnic Relations in Sardauna Local Government Area, Taraba State", *African Journal of Political Science and International Relations*, Vol. 6(3), 2012.

<sup>20</sup> M. Ali, "Religious Pluralism and Peace: Lessons from the Medina Charter", Nanyang Technological University, Singapore, 2016, [www.rsis.edu.sg](http://www.rsis.edu.sg), retrieved on 5/10/2022

<sup>21</sup> S.M.Y. Gilani, & T. Islam, "Conceptual Basics for Unity in Multi-Ethnic Diversity: The Qur'anic and Prophetic Paradigm", *International Journal on Qur'anic Research*, Vol. (2), No. 2, 2012.

Illustrative of the Prophet Muhammad's teachings on social conduct within a multicultural society, the Medina Charter stands as a testament to nurturing ethnic, cultural, and religious pluralism.<sup>22</sup> Islamic principles underscore absolute parity among individuals, irrespective of color, race, or nationality, placing a premium on conscientiousness and moral integrity over superficial differences.<sup>23</sup>

Freedom of religion, as elucidated in Qur'anic verses and the teachings of the Prophet, encompasses both external and internal freedoms. It grants individuals the autonomy to embrace or reject a religion and the liberty to adhere to religious teachings without disparaging other beliefs. Islam champions religious freedom within a pluralistic society, valuing individuals' rights to their spiritual experiences.<sup>24</sup>

Respect for religious sentiments holds paramount importance in Islam. The Qur'an emphasizes refraining from disparaging remarks about others' beliefs or revered figures from different faiths, advocating for discussions on religious matters to be conducted with respect and courtesy.<sup>25</sup>

Sumbulah elucidates that the Qur'an guarantees religious freedom as one of eight fundamental rights, celebrating and acknowledging diversity. The Qur'an highlights diversity as a valued aspect of human societies, evident in various religious attitudes across different periods.<sup>26</sup>

This synthesized overview encapsulates Islamic principles promoting unity, equality, and respect for diversity. It underscores how Islam advocates harmonious coexistence among diverse groups, emphasizing the significance of mutual respect and comprehension in a pluralistic society.

### **The Medina Constitution: Establishing Peaceful Coexistence among Diverse Cultural and Religious Groups.**

Throughout history, establishing a harmonious and diverse society has remained a paramount concern for humanity. In modern socio-political contexts, this issue has gained

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<sup>22</sup> T. Wildan, "Principles of the Teaching of Nation and State Life in the Constitution of Medina", *Ibda': Jurnal Kajian Islam dan Budaya* Vol, 21, No. 1, 2023, 17–36 DOI: 10.24090/ibda.v21i1.6747

<sup>23</sup> S.A.A. Mawdudi, Human Rights in Islam, *Al-Tawhid Islamic Journal* [4], Vol-4, No. 3, 1407. [8], Al-Islam.org, retrieved on 16<sup>th</sup> November, 2023.

<sup>24</sup> U. Sumbulah, "Freedom of Religion in Qur'anic Perspectives: The Inclusive Interpretations of Contemporary Muslim Scholars", *Advances in Social Science, Education and Humanities Research (ASSEHR)*, Vol. 137 International Conference on Qur'an and Hadith Studies (ICQHS), 2017.

<sup>25</sup> S.A.A. Mawdudi, *Human Rights in Islam*, Op. Cit.

<sup>26</sup> U. Sumbulah, "Freedom of Religion in Qur'anic Perspectives: The Inclusive Interpretations of Contemporary Muslim Scholars", Op. Cit.

significant traction. Scholars from various religions and communities recognize that humanity's material and intellectual progress hinges upon peaceful and diverse coexistence. Prophets, leaders, and experts across different eras have endeavored to foster such harmony in societies. Notably, the Prophet Muhammad (SAW) stands out for his compelling efforts. His pursuit wasn't just a dynamic struggle for peace but a divine exemplar that swiftly influenced human history. The historical fact remains that until the Day of Judgment, the Prophet Muhammad (SAW) remains a messenger of peace and mercy for the welfare of all humanity, transcending sects, faiths, and cults.<sup>27</sup>

As portrayed in the Qur'an, the Prophet Muhammad (SAW) was sent as a mercy for all creatures (Al-Qur'an, 21:107), emphasizing his role as a harbinger of compassion and goodwill to humanity at large.

The issue of unity amid ethnic diversity in the initial Islamic state has been a contentious topic, particularly in western academia. There's a common misconception that the early Islamic state exhibited intolerance toward other races and ethnicities, especially Jews and Christians, employing despotic and coercive measures. However, the Islamic state was inherently non-nationalistic, racial, or ethnic. It incorporated non-Muslims, adhering to principles of unity and coexistence. The first Islamic state in Medina revealed the Islamic concept of multi-ethnic unity within a multicultural society. It stressed principles such as freedom of religion, inter-religious symbiosis, religious tolerance, and equal treatment for non-Muslims, fostering mutual understanding and cooperation.<sup>28</sup>

The Constitution of Medina serves as historical evidence, showcasing how a diverse community in Medina evolved into a unified entity. It marked a significant shift in Medina's societal fabric, encompassing multiple tribes, including the Khazraj, Aus, and Jewish communities. The Prophet Muhammad's migration to Medina signaled the genesis of a state life that embraced various communities, emphasizing the importance of mutual obligations and responsibilities outlined in the Constitution of Medina.<sup>29</sup>

The Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W) demonstrated a conciliatory approach toward the Jewish community in Medina. His interactions aimed at fostering friendship, cooperation, and

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<sup>27</sup> R. A. Saeed et al, "Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) Practices to Establish a Pluralistic Society: Study of Madīnah Charter in Contemporary Global Context". *Cultural and Religious Studies*, September 2018, Vol. 6, No. 9, 2018, 548-560, doi: 10.17265/2328-2177/2018.09.004.

<sup>28</sup> S.M.Y. Gilani, & T. Islam, "Conceptual Basics for Unity in Multi-Ethnic Diversity: The Qur'anic and Prophetic Paradigm", Op. Cit.

<sup>29</sup> T. Wildan, "Principles of the Teaching of Nation and State Life in the Constitution of Medina", Op. Cit.

understanding. He engaged with Jewish leaders, extending kindness and respect, even participating in their practices, symbolizing mutual respect and coexistence.<sup>30</sup>

Practically, the Prophet Muhammad (SAW) played a pivotal role in establishing a peaceful and diverse society, signing the Methaq-e-Madinah agreement. This charter set forth principles for peaceful coexistence, religious freedom, and human rights, serving as a historical model for harmonious living among diverse groups.<sup>31</sup>

The Charter of Madīnah exemplifies Islam's stance on peace, diversity, and prosperity, extending protections and rights to non-Muslim minorities within a Muslim-majority society. The Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W) displayed immense respect for followers of other faiths, ensuring their rights were safeguarded. He accommodated Christians in his mosque and provided space for visiting tribes, advocating for religious autonomy and socio-cultural freedom.<sup>32</sup>

The Constitution of Medina establishes foundational principles for governance within the embryonic Islamic state, emphasizing unity among the Muslim citizenry and stipulating the Prophet Muhammad's role in resolving disputes.<sup>33</sup>

This historical account underscores Islam's profound impact in promoting peaceful coexistence, diversity, and mutual respect, setting precedents for inclusive societies and governance structures.

### **Exemplifying Islamic Conflict Resolution: The Treaty of Hdaybiyah and Makkah Conquest Fostering Peaceful Coexistence**

The Treaty of Hdaybiyah serves as an illustration of Islamic conflict resolution tactics. Despite the Quraysh's attempts to hinder Islam's progress, the Muslim community continued to thrive. Prophet Muhammad led believers unarmed towards Makkah for pilgrimage but faced opposition, camping at Hdaybiyah where a miraculous spring emerged amid water scarcity. Despite repeated peace efforts, the Quraysh remained unresponsive until 'Uthman Ibn Affan's involvement sparked concerns for his safety, resulting in an allegiance pact. Ultimately, a treaty was signed, granting a decade-long truce, allowing peaceful pilgrimage the following year, and

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<sup>30</sup> Gilani, & T. Islam, "Conceptual Basics for Unity in Multi-Ethnic Diversity: The Qur'anic and Prophetic Paradigm", Op. Cit.

<sup>31</sup> R. A. Saeed et al, "Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) Practices to Establish a Pluralistic Society: Study of Madīnah Charter in Contemporary Global Context", Op. Cit.

<sup>32</sup> Gilani, & T. Islam, "Conceptual Basics for Unity in Multi-Ethnic Diversity: The Qur'anic and Prophetic Paradigm", Op. Cit.

<sup>33</sup> P. S. Smith, "Of War and Peace: The Hudaibiya Model of Islamic Diplomacy", Florida Journal of Islamic Law, Volume 18/Issue 1, 2006.



permitting conversions between Makkans and Muslims. Despite some discontent, this agreement bolstered Muslim respect and strength. The subsequent revelation of the 'Victory' chapter of the Qur'an attracted more individuals, including former adversaries, into the Muslim community. A year later, a peaceful 'Umra solidified the significance of the Treaty of Hdaybiyah.<sup>34</sup>

Practically, the Qur'an explicitly supports peace efforts. Verses 8:60-61 emphasize defensive preparation while encouraging a willingness to lean towards peace if adversaries reciprocate.

During the sixth year after Hijrah, Muslims, attired as pilgrims in white, embarked on the Umrah pilgrimage to Makkah. However, the Quraysh's refusal to permit their entry led to the Prophet's establishment of a truce at al-Hdaybiyah, about 7 miles from Makkah. Despite favoring the Quraysh, this event marked another triumph for Islam's pursuit of peace (Emara, 1432-2011).

The Treaty of Hdaybiyah signaled a decade-long peace agreement between Makkah's Quraysh and Medina's Islamic State, promoting peace and mutual respect among aligned tribal factions. However, a breach occurred when a Makkahn tribe attacked another, endangering the treaty and resulting in casualties. Despite initial reluctance from Quraysh leaders, Prophet Muhammad pledged support to the victimized tribe. Subsequently, he amassed a considerable force and advanced towards Makkah, employing strategic measures to awe the Quraysh. Abu Sufyan, representing Makkah, initially hesitated but eventually sought forgiveness and embraced Islam upon meeting the Prophet. Declarations of amnesty were made for those in Abu Sufyan's household and those who remained peaceful or disarmed. Abu Sufyan returned to Makkah, conveying the Prophet's proposal of peace and protection. Despite some initial resistance, the majority accepted this message, leading to a peaceful resolution and acknowledgment of the terms presented by Prophet Muhammad.<sup>35</sup>

Wan Chik et al, highlight the Treaty of Hdaybiyah as a crucial event demonstrating Prophet Muhammad's endeavors towards peaceful coexistence. Preceding this treaty was the Bay'ah Ridwan, a pledge made by the Prophet and his companions under a tree in Hdaybiyah,

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<sup>34</sup> L. Azzam, & A. Couverneur, *The Life of the Prophet Muhammad (Peace and blessings of Allah be upon him)*. Al Rashid Mosque, (nd). <https://alrashidmosque.ca>, retrieved on 19<sup>th</sup> November, 2023

<sup>35</sup> K. Sultana, and R. Ahmad, "Conquest of Makkah: A Case Study of Kindness and Forgiveness", *Journal of Historical Studies Vol. VIII. No. 1 (Jan-Jun)*, 2022.

stemming from a misunderstanding about Uthman bin Affan's safety.<sup>36</sup> This pledge was commended in the Qur'an, indicating divine approval. The treaty, negotiated with Suhayl bin 'Amru representing the Quraysh, outlined specific terms:

1. Muslims were barred from entering Makkah in that year but allowed entry the following year for three days, carrying sheathed weapons without disturbance.
2. A ten-year truce was established.
3. Individuals were free to align with either side, with their chosen tribe aligning them with that respective party. Conflict with a tribe would equate to conflict with the aligned party.
4. If a Quraysh member sought refuge with the Muslims without family permission, they would be returned, and vice versa.

Despite the treaty's partiality, it granted specific rights such as performing Hajj and ensuring security. Despite the imbalanced terms, the Prophet's actions underscored reconciliation over strife, outlining vital treaty principles:

1. Emphasizing reconciliation above violence or warfare.
2. Rejecting one-sided or biased agreements.

The Treaty of Hudaibiyah epitomized Prophet Muhammad's dedication to peaceful resolutions, establishing a precedence for prioritizing harmony in international relations over conflict.

Subsequent events following the treaty marked a turning point in relations between Muslims and the Quraysh of Makkah. Despite the Muslims' commitment to peace and spreading Islamic teachings, the Quraysh persisted in their customary ways. The treaty's nullification stemmed from the Quraysh's error in attacking the Khuza'ah seeking refuge. In response, the Prophet pledged support to the oppressed Khuza'ah. Although Abu Sufyan sought reconciliation upon realizing the mistake, key figures in Madinah rejected it. Preparing for an inevitable confrontation, the Prophet planned a surprise attack on Makkah, urging significant mobilization. However, an unforeseen betrayal occurred when a former ally informed the Quraysh of the impending assault (Fatturohman, 2014).

Fatturohman elaborates that Ali, alongside companions, intercepted the letter. The sender, Na'tib, admitted his motive and concern for his family's safety amid the impending conflict due to a lack of protection. Despite Na'tib's mistake, the Prophet comprehended the human vulnerability underlying his actions. As the Prophet advanced towards Makkah, notable

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<sup>36</sup> W. M. Y. Wan Chik et al, "A Comparative Analysis of Bay'ah during the Time of the Prophet S.A.W", *International Journal of Academic Research in Business and Social Sciences*, Vol. 7, No. 8, 2017. <http://dx.doi.org/10.6007/IJARBS/v7-i8/3233>, retrieved on 15<sup>th</sup> November, 2023.

figures like Abu Sufyan and Abbas sought shelter and acceptance. Acknowledging his prior animosity, Abu Sufyan sought forgiveness and embraced Islam. Approaching Makkah with a substantial army, the Muslim forces camped near the city, concealing their presence. Witnessing the vast camp, Abu Sufyan recognized it as a sign of Prophet-hood, while Abbas assured him of the city's safety under the Prophet's assurance.

The conquest of Makkah unfolded with minimal opposition, as many surrendered or sought refuge. The Prophet peacefully entered the city, marking a significant shift in power dynamics and the eventual expansion of Islam.

### **The Farewell Pilgrimage Sermon's Role in Universal Human Rights for Peaceful Coexistence**

The final phase of Prophet Muhammad's (S.A.W) life, symbolized by the Farewell Pilgrimage, holds significant importance in understanding the Islamic perspective on essential human rights. This historic event, considered the last major hajj gathering for the Prophet, provided the backdrop for his Farewell Message, delivered during the hajj akbar (major hajj) coinciding with Jum'ah (Friday) prayer. The Farewell Message, often referred to as the Farewell Sermon, addressed key aspects of Islam and highlighted the challenges facing the *Ummah*. Contrary to popular belief, the text of the sermon is composite rather than a single narrative, prompting the term 'Farewell Message' for a more accurate description.<sup>37</sup>

Farooq underscores the historic and symbolic significance of the Farewell Sermon, considering it as the Prophet's last such address. The sermon aimed to universalize human rights, transcending time and place limitations, a departure from traditional Arab customs. The Prophet's emphasis on these principles, conveyed during the sacred time and place of hajj, added weight to his injunctions, serving both as a religious leader and a statesman.

This universalist orientation of the Farewell Sermon finds contemporary relevance, as Muslims have repurposed it in support of the 1948 United Nations Declaration of Universal Human Rights. Farooq suggests viewing the sermon as an earlier attempt at a human rights declaration, serving as a justification to enhance human rights compliance by Muslim societies and states. The Prophet's contribution to the development of human rights is evident in how he laid the foundations for the idea of universal human rights, challenging the prevailing tribalism of the time.<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>37</sup> M. O. Farooq, "The Farewell Sermon of Prophet Muhammad: An Analytical Review", *Islam and Civilisational Renewal*, Vol. 9, No.3, 2019. <https://papers.ssrn.com>, retrieved on 15<sup>th</sup> November, 2023.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid.

The Islamic perspective on fundamental human rights, as outlined in the Farewell Sermon, emphasizes their divine origin and the responsibility of safeguarding them. This view aligns with the principles enshrined in the Medina Charter, covering aspects such as religion, life, intellect, lineage, and property.<sup>39</sup> Rooted in the Qur'an, Islamic human rights advocate for the sanctity of life, freedom, education, self-respect, and ownership, reflecting the principles of brotherhood, freedom, and equality. These rights are in line with the objectives of Islamic law, focusing on the preservation of life, intellect, religion, lineage, and property.<sup>40</sup>

Islam's universality extends beyond national boundaries, aiming to establish justice and elevate moral values. The foundation of this framework lies in God and justice, guiding both domestic and international Islamic relations. Ethical principles underscore unity, equality, dignity, non-discrimination, non-violent intervention, rejection of domination, commitment to treaties, and peaceful coexistence.<sup>41</sup>

Quoting verses from the Qur'an, Islam emphasizes the sanctity of life, the unity of humanity, and the absence of coercion in matters of faith. The Farewell Sermon encapsulates the essence of Islam, highlighting the sanctity of life and property, women's rights, the importance of the Qur'an and Sunnah, and the unity of the Muslim *Ummah*. The Prophet explicitly rejected racial or ethnic superiority, laying the foundation for equality among all individuals:

That is why we decreed for the children of Israel that whoever kills a soul, without (its being guilty of) manslaughter or corruption on the earth, is as though he had killed all mankind, and whoever saves a life is as though he had saved all mankind.<sup>42</sup>

O Mankind! Indeed, we created you from a male and a female, and made you nations and tribes that you may identify with one another. Indeed, the noblest of you in the sight of Allah is the most God wary. Indeed, Allah is all-knowing, all aware.<sup>43</sup>

And had your Lord wished, all those who are on earth would have believed. Would you then force people until they become faithful?.<sup>44</sup>

Do not kill a soul which Allah has made sacred except through the due process of law....<sup>45</sup>

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<sup>39</sup> S. Lasmi, Z. Wei, S. Xu, Human Rights in Islamic Perspective. *Journal Emerging Technologies in Education*, 1(2), 2023, 75–83. <https://doi.org/10.55849/jjen.v1i2.278>, retrieved on 11<sup>th</sup> November, 2023.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid.

<sup>41</sup> S. M. Taheri, and M. R. Dodhiya, “The Ethical Views of Islam in International Relations”, *Kom*, vol. VII (3), 2018, 53–68. doi: 10.5937/kom1803053M, Retrieved on 15<sup>th</sup> November, 2023.

<sup>42</sup> Qur'an 5:32

<sup>43</sup> Qur'an 49:13.

<sup>44</sup> Qur'an 10:99.

<sup>45</sup> Qur'an 6:151.

The Farewell Sermon, as a road-map for humankind, emphasizes the Prophet's role as a founder of human rights, promoting the right to life, equality, justice, property, and the rights of women. Islam's balanced view of secular and religious aspects through worship fosters peaceful coexistence. The study acknowledges the Prophet's effective use of available media and rhetorical eloquence in disseminating the sermon's teachings, contributing to its lasting impact.<sup>46</sup>

The Farewell Sermon represents a pivotal moment in the Islamic perspective on essential human rights, transcending time and place limitations. Its universalist orientation aligns with contemporary notions of human rights, and its principles continue to guide Muslims in promoting justice, equality, and peaceful coexistence on a global scale. The Farewell Pilgrimage Sermon holds immense significance in advocating a universal vision of human rights for peaceful coexistence. This pivotal sermon, delivered by Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W) during the final pilgrimage, transcends time and place limitations, emphasizing the inviolability of human rights. Its relevance lies in laying the groundwork for a just society, fostering peace, and advocating equality among diverse communities, making it a guiding beacon for promoting harmony and coexistence based on universal human rights.

### **Embracing Islamic Ethical Values for Harmonious Coexistence**

Islamic ethical principles define value as the embodiment of 'good character,' shaped by the teachings of the Qur'an, Prophet Muhammad's Sunnah, and the precedents established by Islamic jurists. This provides a comprehensive framework for living, governing various aspects of modern life, including individual conduct, family, societal, political, economic, and judicial domains. The Qur'an encompasses multiple terms that delineate ethical concepts such as *khayr*, *maslahat*, *birr*, *qist*, *'adl*, *haqq*, *ma'ruf*, *nahi munkar*, and *Taqwa*, advocating not just doing good but also prohibiting evil actions. Ethics, fundamentally essential for purposeful living, offer the means to guide intentional actions, preventing randomness and promoting rational goal-setting within society. In a social environment lacking ethical guidelines, specific outcomes become elusive due to the absence of established methods for choosing objectives among unlimited possibilities. Even within standard ethical frameworks, individuals might face hindrances in pursuing personal goals. Rational ethical standards allow for the organized prioritization of goals, enhancing the capacity to succeed in endeavors. Morality and integrity,

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<sup>46</sup> M. A. Khan et al, "Analyzing The Farewell Sermon of the Prophet Muhammad (pbuh): A Critical Perspective", *International Journal of Linguistics Studies (IJLS)*, 2021. [www.al-kindipublisher.com/index.php/ijls](http://www.al-kindipublisher.com/index.php/ijls), retrieved on 15<sup>th</sup> November, 2023.

vital traits showcasing a nation's integrity, extend beyond law enforcement careers, underlining the significance of integrity in behavior. Recognizing the dignity and necessity of moral reasoning inspires individuals to uphold moral conduct, contributing to the construction of a fair society based on uniform principles. Beyond societal benefits, leading a morally upright life aids in securing meaningful employment, fostering business success, and reducing communal and personal anxiety.<sup>47</sup>

Ethics, rather than being purely philosophical, concern the enhancement of daily living. Living ethically enriches one's life and that of others, emphasizing the importance of instilling ethical practices from a young age to navigate complex moral dilemmas successfully. Islamic ethics underscore the cultivation of virtue, recognizing the importance of exercising moral behavior in shaping a virtuous character. The analogy of physical fitness illustrates the necessity of developing essential virtues, such as perseverance

According to Taheri and Dodhiya, Islam aspires to establish a global moral community beyond national governments, seeking to realize human and moral values within a political framework based on transnational justice. In this moral-political community, Islam aims to provide security and prosperity to all humankind, with Allah and justice serving as pivotal elements in international Islamic relations. The core of thought in Islamic systems, both domestically and internationally, revolves around Allah, and adherence to divine laws is crucial. Islam, viewed as a comprehensive, eternal religion, transcends specific races or groups and operates universally, irrespective of race, nationality, language, culture, or beliefs.<sup>48</sup> The ethical principles guiding international relations in Islam are rooted in divine commandments, emphasizing principles such as harmony, reconciliation, and unity among humans. Despite differences in race, language, religion, and customs, the fundamental unity of human societies lies in their monotheistic nature. The Islamic theory of international relations seeks the liberation of nations from injustices and inequalities within a self-determined international order. It particularly opposes ethnic and racial discrimination, emphasizing the respect for humanity irrespective of race and ethnicity. The Glorious Qur'an condemns racist thoughts, emphasizing the common origin of all human beings and urging unity and awareness of Allah's knowledge.

O Mankind! Indeed, we created you from a male and a female, and made you nations and tribes that you may identify with one another.

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<sup>47</sup> M. Ebrahim, and K. Yusoff, "Islamic Identity, Ethical Principles and Human Values", *European Journal of Multidisciplinary Studies*, Vol. 6, No. 1, 2017. <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/320568572>, retrieved on 13rd December, 2023.

<sup>48</sup> S. M. Taheri, and M. R. Dodhiya, "The Ethical Views of Islam in International Relations", Op. Cit, 28-42.

Indeed, the noblest of you in the sight of Allah is the most God-wary among you. Indeed, Allah is all-knowing, all-aware.<sup>49</sup>

The ethical principles delineated in the Qur'an are deeply centered on the divine. A Muslim is expected to embody qualities such as love, kindness, cooperation, grace, generosity, compassion, honesty, helpfulness, and sympathy for the sake of Allah and His creations, particularly humanity. Their conduct should be guided by love for Allah or governed by fear of Allah. Their ultimate judgment, whether rewarded with heavenly bliss or condemned to hellfire on Judgment Day, hinges on their submission or disobedience to Allah's Will. The Qur'an underscores the respect and honor of humanity. Allah's relationship with humanity is profoundly intimate, having created mankind from a single essence. All of humanity is akin to a single family, stemming from Adam and Eve. In essence, humans hold the highest status among all creation, having been fashioned in the most exquisite form by Allah. Infused with the divine spirit, the paramount goal for humans is the progressive attainment of divine attributes and inherent values. Allah encompasses and treasures humanity, being infinitely closer to humans than their jugular vein. Almighty Allah values and acknowledges service to humanity as the utmost form of service. It is desired that to draw closer to Allah, one should love and serve fellow human beings.<sup>50</sup>

Here are some ethical principles outlined in the Qur'an:

1. Worship only Allah: Your Lord has ordained that you worship none but Him.<sup>51</sup>
2. Show kindness, humility, and respect to parents: Be dutiful to your parents, especially when they reach old age. Do not express any disrespect to them, but speak to them with kindness and honor.<sup>52</sup>
3. Practice moderation in expenditure: Do not spend extravagantly or be miserly in your expenses. Profligacy is akin to the behavior of devils.<sup>53</sup>
4. Refrain from mercy killings due to fear of poverty: Do not kill your children fearing poverty, as God provides for them and for you. Killing them is a grave sin.<sup>54</sup>
5. Avoid adultery: Stay away from unlawful sexual relations, as it is a grave sin and an evil path.<sup>55</sup>

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<sup>49</sup> Qur'an 49: 13.

<sup>50</sup> L. H. S. Kazmi, "Islam and Contemporary Ethical Challenges", *Archive of SID Sophia Perennis*, Number 1, Winter 2, 2010. [www.SID.ir](http://www.SID.ir), retrieved on 13rd December, 2023.

<sup>51</sup> Qur'an 17:23

<sup>52</sup> Qur'an 4:36

<sup>53</sup> 17:26-27

<sup>54</sup> Qur'an 17:31

<sup>55</sup> Qur'an 17:32

6. Do not unjustly take a life: Do not take a life that Allah has forbidden except for a just cause.<sup>56</sup>
7. Care for orphaned children: Do not encroach upon the property of orphans unless it is to improve it until they reach maturity.<sup>57</sup>
8. Keep promises: Fulfill all agreements and covenants, as they will be questioned.<sup>58</sup>
9. Be fair and honest in dealings: Give full measure and weight in fairness using an accurate scale, as it is beneficial and better in the long run.<sup>59</sup>
10. Avoid arrogance: Do not walk the earth with pride and conceit, as you cannot penetrate the earth nor reach the stature of mountains.<sup>60</sup>
11. Fear Allah and speak the truth: Believers are encouraged to maintain their duty to Allah, fear Him, and always speak the truth.<sup>61</sup>
12. Abstain from intoxicants and gambling: Believers are advised to avoid alcoholic drinks, gambling, and other activities related to seeking luck, as they are deemed disgraceful products of Satan's handiwork. Avoiding these leads to success.<sup>62</sup>

The ethical principles outlined in the Qur'an form the foundational framework for an Islamic alternative to peaceful coexistence. By embracing these principles, individuals and societies can foster harmony, justice, and mutual respect. These principles not only guide personal conduct but also advocate for compassion, fairness, and responsibility toward others regardless of differences. They serve as a pathway toward building a world where diverse communities coexist in tranquility, guided by shared values of integrity, compassion, and mutual understanding.

### **Islamic Leadership: Mediation and Peace-building in Religious-Ethnic Diversity**

Islamic leadership stands as a pivotal force in resolving conflicts among different groups and nurturing peace by aligning with the guiding principles found in the Qur'an and Sunnah. The primary duty of Islamic leaders is to enforce the laws of Allah, viewing leadership as a sacred responsibility meant to steer humanity towards everlasting improvement. This role is characterized by a deep spiritual essence, as demonstrated by the practices of leaders,

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<sup>56</sup> Qur'an 17:33

<sup>57</sup> Qur'an 17:34

<sup>58</sup> Qur'an 17:34

<sup>59</sup> Qur'an 17:35

<sup>60</sup> Qur'an 17:37; Qur'an 31:18

<sup>61</sup> Qur'an 33:70

<sup>62</sup> Qur'an 5:90



underscoring the indispensable need for leadership that's rooted in spirituality or divine guidance to effectively steer organizations.<sup>63</sup>

The Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W) serves as an exemplary, showcasing how to harmonize diverse communities and instill a sense of unity termed as *Ummah*. His equitable decisions, particularly those enshrined in treaties that safeguarded minority rights, serve as a testament to a leadership approach that fosters coexistence. This model of leadership contributed to a well-rounded progress under Islamic governance, addressing the spiritual and material needs of diverse religious groups within the Islamic State of Madinah.<sup>64</sup>

Distinct from Western paradigms, Islamic leadership, as derived from the Qur'an and Sunnah, views leadership as a trust bestowed upon leaders for the greater good of their followers and mankind. The Qur'anic verse "Be pious scholars of the Lord" (Q.3:79) emphasizes the essence of leadership grounded in mutual agreement, steering away from coercion unless in conflict with revealed knowledge sources. Islamic leadership is construed as a service to humanity, compelling leaders to pursue the happiness and well-being of individuals and societies, encouraging followers to strive for defined objectives.<sup>65</sup>

The ethical expectations of Muslim leaders extend to their subordinates, shaping their conduct based on Islamic principles. The Qur'an emphasizes the potency of leaders' examples over their authority, urging them to be exemplary in both speech and actions (Surah Al-Imran, 3:51). Notably, Muslim leaders exhibit empathy, comprehending their followers' sentiments and supporting their personal growth. This approach cultivates an environment conducive to personal and professional development within the organizational realm.<sup>66</sup>

Islamic leadership principles aren't confined to theory but extend into organizational practices, demanding leaders to uphold values like security, openness, efficiency, and fair justice. Nonetheless, observations point to reduced interaction between leaders and employees, resulting in performance issues. Addressing these challenges necessitates swift intervention by hospital management to appraise and resolve conflicts to avert further deterioration.<sup>67</sup>

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<sup>63</sup> H. Salamun, and A. Ab Rahman, "Leadership Values and Understandings from an Islamic Perspective" in *Leadership in a Changing World - A Multidimensional Perspective*, Web of Science, IntechOpen, n.d. <http://dx.doi.org/10.5772/intechopen.101989>, retrieved on 23<sup>rd</sup> November, 2023.

<sup>64</sup> Ibid.

<sup>65</sup> M. Sammari, 'Islamic Leadership and Management: A perfect model for today's CEOs', Department of Executive Leadership Program, Business School, Faculty of Business & Media, Selinus University, Doctor of Business Administration in Executive Leadership, 2023.

<sup>66</sup> H. Salamun, and A. Ab Rahman, "Leadership Values and Understandings from an Islamic Perspective" in *Leadership in a Changing World - A Multidimensional Perspective*, Op. Cit.

<sup>67</sup> R. F. Amelia, R. Febriani, and C. Sa'diyah, "The Effect of Islamic Leadership on Employee Performance Mediated by Job Satisfaction", *Jurnal Manajemen Bisnis dan Kewirausahaan, Jamanika*, Vol. 2 No. 4, 2022. DOI: 10.22219/jamanika.v2i04.23805,

Pious leadership, deeply entrenched in Islamic principles, steers and oversees transformations to achieve contextual objectives. Central to this leadership is the notion of empowerment, enabling followers to harness their capabilities effectively. Pious leaders promote adherence to Islamic practices, even amidst adversity, emphasizing love and kinship to foster a sense of belonging and responsibility among followers. This commitment fosters a culture of mutual support and concern for others' needs, contributing to the realization of social justice within the organizational framework.<sup>68</sup>

The implementation of Islamic leadership principles, as evidenced by the Prophet Muhammad's teachings and the practices of Rabbani leaders, holds immense potential in fostering peaceful coexistence among diverse ethno-religious groups in pluralistic societies. By exemplifying fair and just leadership, upholding minority rights through treaties, and embracing diversity within the Islamic State of Madinah, these principles offer a blueprint for harmonious living.

The emphasis on empathy, mutual agreement, and the pursuit of shared objectives encapsulates Islamic leadership's core, transcending individual interests and promoting a collective sense of responsibility. Encouraging open dialogue, understanding, and respect for varying beliefs and cultures, this leadership model fosters an environment where different groups feel valued and heard.

By promoting values of love, brotherhood, and a commitment to social justice, Islamic leadership nurtures a culture of mutual assistance and support. This nurturing environment creates a sense of belonging among diverse groups, fostering an inclusive society where individuals feel accepted and respected, regardless of their backgrounds.

Ultimately, the application of Islamic leadership principles can pave the way for peaceful coexistence among ethno-religious groups in pluralistic societies by promoting understanding, empathy, and collaboration, laying the foundation for a cohesive and harmonious community.

### **Islamic Philanthropy and Community Building**

The term "philanthropy" originates from the Greek words *phileo* and *anthropos*, meaning love and humankind, respectively. Philanthropy in Islam is characterized by acts of charity driven by love for humanity and the public good. Islamic philanthropy encompasses two distinct classifications: traditional philanthropy, emphasizing direct social services to address

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<sup>68</sup> H. Salamun, and A. Ab Rahman, "Leadership Values and Understandings from an Islamic Perspective" in *Leadership in a Changing World - A Multidimensional Perspective*, Op. Cit.

immediate needs, and social justice philanthropy, focusing on eradicating social injustice as the root cause of poverty and inequity.<sup>69</sup>

In Islam, social justice and economic growth are interconnected, with the religion advocating for a strong and sustainable economy rooted in principles of social justice. Islam emphasizes the duty of the affluent to spend their wealth for the collective well-being of society, promoting cooperation, sharing, and distributive justice. The Qur'an emphasizes that wealth should not circulate only among the rich, aiming to nullify human-produced inequalities in resource distribution.<sup>70</sup>

Islam establishes financial institutions like *baitulmal*, *ushur*, *sadaqah*, and *zakah* to ensure wealth circulation across all social strata, irrespective of caste, color, or religious affiliation. Reviving the institutionalization of *zakat* becomes imperative in contemporary Muslim societies to foster social justice, economic growth, and poverty alleviation.<sup>71</sup>

Fuadi notes the dichotomy between social justice and traditional philanthropy, framing it as an "advocacy versus services" discourse. Social justice philanthropy aims to effect policy changes on political issues, emphasizing long-term goals and empowering recipients to become independent.<sup>72</sup> In contrast, traditional philanthropy provides immediate services, often creating dependency. Islam's key underpinnings aim to minimize inequalities to promote a culture of "social cohesion" and "creative cooperation." Islamic philanthropy advocates for justice, growth, and sustainable development, emphasizing the importance of human life. The paper underscores the relevance of social justice philanthropy in Indonesia, citing the Qur'anic verses that encourage initiatives in the society's interest.<sup>73</sup>

The role of *Waqf* is a distinct socioeconomic tool in Islam, reflecting ethical and moral values. *Waqf* institutions play a crucial role in addressing infrastructure deficits, promoting social and economic development, and fostering a cooperative civil society. Rano argues for the reestablishment of *Waqf* institutions to combat socioeconomic challenges within the Muslim *Ummah*.<sup>74</sup>

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<sup>69</sup> A. Fuadi, "Towards the Discourse of Islamic Philanthropy for Social Justice in Indonesia", *Jurnal Ilmu-Ilmu Keislaman*, Vol. 8 No. 2, 2012. DOI 10.18196/AIJIS.2012. 0008. 92-102.

<sup>70</sup> M. Muslehuddin, *Economics and Islam*. Markazi Muktaba Publishers, New Dehli, 2009.

<sup>71</sup> Malik, B. A. (2016). "Philanthropy in Practice: Role of Zakat in the Realization of Justice and Economic Growth", *International Journal of Zakat* 1(1),

<sup>72</sup> A. Fuadi, (2012). "Towards the Discourse of Islamic Philanthropy for Social Justice in Indonesia", *Op. Cit.*

<sup>73</sup> B. A. Malik, "Philanthropy in Practice: Role of Zakat in the Realization of Justice and Economic Growth", *Op. Cit.*

<sup>74</sup> A. S. U. Rano, "A Treatise on Socio-Economic Roles of Waqf", *Munich Personal RePEc Archive, MPRA Paper No. 91413*, 2018. <https://mpra.ub.uni-muenchen.de/91413/>, retrieved on 23<sup>rd</sup> November, 2023.

The concluding sections of the paper highlight the role of *zakat* as a religiously motivated economic instrument, differentiating between "charity for the sake of duty" and "charity for the sake of charity." *Zakat* is recognized for its potential to influence economic activity, address social inequalities, and provide social security entitlements in line with modern public finance principles.<sup>75</sup>

The Islamic principles of philanthropy, social justice, and economic instruments play pivotal roles in fostering inter-group relations and peaceful coexistence. The intricate balance between traditional philanthropy and social justice philanthropy reflects Islam's emphasis on immediate assistance and long-term empowerment. Islam's stance on wealth distribution, through *zakat* and other financial institutions, underscores the importance of addressing social inequalities and ensuring the well-being of all strata of society. The revival of these institutions in contemporary times is crucial for achieving social justice, economic growth, and poverty alleviation within Muslim communities.

Moreover, the roles of *Waqf* institutions stand out as ethical and moral pillars that facilitate socioeconomic development, infrastructure provision, and the nurturing of cooperative civil societies. Ultimately, *zakat* emerges not just as a charitable act but as a duty, a means to foster economic activity, mitigate social inequalities, and provide for social security entitlements, aligning with modern principles of public finance. By upholding these principles and reinstating these institutions, the Muslim *Ummah* can pave the way for a more equitable, just, and prosperous society, fostering inter-group harmony and peaceful coexistence in line with Islamic teachings.

### **Promoting Interfaith Dialogue and Collaboration**

Interfaith dialogue emerges as a pivotal strategy to alleviate global inter-religious tensions. Paradoxically, religious affiliations often become a catalyst for heinous acts, despite the universal emphasis on love and compassion within every faith. This situation underscores the urgent need for comprehensive research to dispel misconceptions surrounding Islam and articulate its stance on inter-religious dialogue. This article aims to explore the Qur'an and the Prophet (peace be upon him) lifestyle to elucidate Islam's perspective on interfaith dialogue, highlighting potential pitfalls to navigate during such exchanges. Employing a qualitative

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<sup>75</sup> B. A. Malik, "Philanthropy in Practice: Role of Zakat in the Realization of Justice and Economic Growth", Op. Cit.

approach through contextual analysis and historical interpretation of the Qur'an and *Sunnah*, this research underscores the significance of Islamic knowledge in addressing ambiguity.<sup>76</sup>

Islamic belief acknowledges diversity as a Divine design, asserting that differences among people will persist until the Day of Resurrection. The Qur'an explicates the purpose and wisdom behind these differences, emphasizing that diversity serves as a test, purifying good from evil and distinguishing truth from falsehood:

Allah could surely have made mankind one *Ummah* [nation or community (following one religion i.e. Islam)] but they will not cease to disagree.<sup>77</sup>

The Qur'an presents a model of tolerance by recognizing all prophets of Judaism and Christianity as legitimate messengers of Allah.

Al-Bishr explicates that diversity is Allah's will and serves as a test for humanity to live in peace and harmony despite differences.<sup>78</sup> The Qur'an teaches:

Reville not ye those whom they call upon besides God lest they out of spite revile God in their ignorance.<sup>79</sup>

And say, 'The truth is from your Lord, so whoever wills - let him believe; and whoever wills - let him disbelieve.'<sup>80</sup>

Islam's aspiration for a peaceful world extends beyond its own followers, aiming to create a harmonious environment for people of all faiths and cultures.<sup>81</sup>

Al-Turki advocates for dialogue as a means to foster coexistence marked by mutual respect. The Islamic World's call to dialogue reflects a sincere desire to mitigate crises, emphasizing positive cooperation and understanding among diverse cultures.<sup>82</sup> The International Conference for Dialogue, convened in Makkah, stands as a testament to Islam's commitment to resolving global disputes through dialogue.

The Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques, in his remarks, emphasizes the Islamic world's historical and civilizational qualifications to play a key role in global dialogue. He positions

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<sup>76</sup> A. H. Wagay, "Interfaith Dialogue: A Qur'anic Cum Prophetic Perspective", *South Asian Research Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences*, Vol.4, Issue-6, 2022. 10.36346/sarjhss.2022.v04i06.003,

<sup>77</sup> Qur'an 11:118.

<sup>78</sup> M. Al-Bishr, "Prelude" in *Interfaith Dialogue Cross-Cultural Views*, Ghainaa Publications in cooperation with Muslim World League (MWL), 2010. [www.ghainaa.net](http://www.ghainaa.net), retrieved on 23<sup>rd</sup> November, 2023.

<sup>79</sup> Qur'an 6:108.

<sup>80</sup> Qur'an 18:29.

<sup>81</sup> A. H. Wagay, "Interfaith Dialogue: A Qur'anic Cum Prophetic Perspective", Op. Cit.

<sup>82</sup> A. A. M. Al-Turki, "Dialogue Between Followers of Religions From Makkah to New York", in *Interfaith Dialogue Cross-Cultural Views*, Ghainaa Publications In cooperation with Muslim World League (MWL), 2010. [www.ghainaa.net](http://www.ghainaa.net), retrieved on 23<sup>rd</sup> November, 2023.

dialogue as a tool to exemplify Islam's principles of tolerance, justice, and coexistence for the betterment of humanity.<sup>83</sup> The Qur'anic injunction:

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: for thy Lord knoweth best, who have strayed from His Path, and who receive guidance.<sup>84</sup>

Humaid highlights the importance of dialogue on both individual and collective levels, citing examples from the Qur'an that demonstrate various types of dialogues, including those with angels, prophets, and even the Devil. Dialogue is portrayed as a means of correction, rectifying mistakes, and arriving at the desired truth through competent individuals of learning and experience.<sup>85</sup>

Islam, as a universal religion, advocates for interfaith dialogue and fosters an environment of equality and mutual understanding. While acknowledging differences, Islam promotes peaceful coexistence and encourages dialogue as an effective tool to communicate its message to diverse faiths. It is imperative that qualified Muslim scholars take the lead in interfaith conversations, ensuring the preservation of Islamic principles and dispelling misconceptions.<sup>86</sup>

Interfaith dialogue, conducted within the framework of Islamic *Sharī'ah*, holds the potential to eliminate violence, mistrust, and conflicts among diverse faith groups. Muslims are urged not to ignore this imperative challenge but to actively engage in dialogue to convey the true spirit of Islam to the world.

### **Legal Frameworks and Islamic Law**

The legal landscape within Islamic jurisprudence, known as *shari'ah*, exhibits internal diversity, evident in the multitude of *fiqh* schools and *madhhabs*. Notably, leading *fiqh* schools recognize the entitlement of non-Muslim minorities to uphold their customary and personal laws on various aspects such as matrimony, ownership, worship, religious occasions, and life events. Furthermore, non-Muslims are granted the autonomy to adhere to their traditions related to dress, food, and beverages, even if these practices contradict Islamic teachings. In cases where a Muslim destroys non-Muslim possessions like liquor and pork, compensation is

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<sup>83</sup> Ibid.

<sup>84</sup> Qur'an 16:125.

<sup>85</sup> S. A. Humaid, "The Islamic View of Dialogue with the Other" in *Islam and Dialogue with the Other*, Ghainaa Publications in cooperation with Muslim World League (MWL), 2010. [www.ghainaa.net](http://www.ghainaa.net), retrieved on 23<sup>rd</sup> November, 2023.

<sup>86</sup> A. H. Wagay, "Interfaith Dialogue: A Qur'anic Cum Prophetic Perspective", *South Asian Research Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences*, Vol. 4, Issue-6, 2022. 10.36346/sarjhs. 2022.v04i06.003,

obligatory, irrespective of their value under Islamic law. Non-Muslims also enjoy freedom in lifestyle, education, economics, trade, artistic expression, media, and communication. However, in public law domains like constitutional law, criminal law, security and justice, taxation, and certain property matters, uniform laws are generally applied to all citizens, limiting the scope of legal pluralism.<sup>87</sup>

*Siyāsah* authorizes lawful governments to implement administrative rules, policies, and legislation promoting justice and good governance. These measures may deviate from established *fiqh* rules or address areas where *sharī'ah* is silent, as long as they align with the higher goals of Islam. In times of crisis, the state may adopt policies that diverge from normal rules but are justified by necessity (*darūrah*). This underscores that law alone may not always suffice to secure public interest; political, economic, customary, and exceptional conditions also influence governance. Throughout history, Muslim governments have employed *siyāsah* to introduce administrative and policy measures alongside substantive *sharī'ah*, acknowledging a degree of legal pluralism.<sup>88</sup>

The Right to Justice is a fundamental right in Islam, emphasized in the Qur'anic verses that prohibit aggression and promote fair treatment, extending even to enemies:

Do not let your hatred of a people incite you to aggression.<sup>89</sup>

And do not let ill-will towards any folk incite you so that you swerve from dealing justly. Be just; that is nearest to heedfulness.<sup>90</sup>

You who believe stand steadfast before God as witness for (truth and) fair play.<sup>91</sup>

We have not sent you but as a Mercy to the worlds.<sup>92</sup>

These verses reflect the universal principle of justice and the ethical conduct required of Muslims towards all humanity, not limited to a specific community or belief system.

The teachings of Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W) prioritize justice, freedom, and equality, defining the rights and obligations of individuals and groups. The Madinah Charter, a historical document, exemplifies the commitment to justice, equality, and freedom of religion, even for non-Muslims.<sup>93</sup>

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<sup>87</sup> M. H. Kamali, "Al-Maqasid Al-Shari'ah the Objectives of Islamic Law", International Islamic University Malaysia, n.d.

<sup>88</sup> Ibid.

<sup>89</sup> Qur'an 5:2.

<sup>90</sup> Qur'an 5:8.

<sup>91</sup> Qur'an 4:135.

<sup>92</sup> Qur'an 21:107.

<sup>93</sup> Gilani, & Islam, "Conceptual Basics for Unity in Multi-Ethnic Diversity: The Qur'anic and Prophetic Paradigm", Op. Cit.

The charter outlines the status of Jews in an Islamic state, guaranteeing their protection and equal treatment. Even Jews who did not join Muslims in defending Madinah were considered residents of the state with the right to be defended. The document reflects equal rights for Jews, Muslims, and polytheists, fostering a sense of citizenship and social, religious, and political liberty.<sup>94</sup> The Objectives of Islamic Law highlight the importance of benefiting individuals and communities, with the overarching objective of *Rahmah* (Mercy or Compassion) and *Maslahah* (Benefit). The Shari'ah aims to promote cooperation, support within families and society, and the improvement of human life conditions.<sup>95</sup>

Justice, viewed as a manifestation of Allah's Mercy, is a principal objective of the Shari'ah. 'Adl, meaning to place things in their right and proper place, is a fundamental objective of the Shari'ah, seeking equilibrium between rights and obligations to eliminate excesses and disparities in all spheres of life.<sup>96</sup> The Qur'an emphasizes the role of Messengers and the revelation of the Book and the Balance to establish justice among mankind:

We sent Our Messengers and revealed through them the Book and the Balance so that Justice may be established amongst mankind.<sup>97</sup>

Islam upholds the sanctity of human life, prohibiting the killing of an individual, which is likened to killing all of humanity: "Whoever kills a soul unless for a soul or for corruption [done] in the land – it is as if he had slain mankind entirely. And whoever saves one – it is as if he had saved mankind entirely" (Q.5:32, Surah Maidah).

The religion emphasizes respect and sanctity for all individuals, regardless of factors like color, religion, race, or caste. The Qur'an underscores the gravity of taking a life and encourages saving lives, emphasizing the equality and dignity of all human beings (Akhter & Abdul Qadoos, 2017; Qur'an 5:32).

Islamic law, as manifested through the shari'ah, intricately weaves a tapestry of justice, pluralism, and universal principles that transcend boundaries. The Qur'anic verses cited underscore the overarching call for fairness, compassion, and equity in dealings with all humanity, irrespective of faith or background. Islam champions justice as a cornerstone, establishing a framework where legal pluralism coexists with a fundamental pursuit of balance and fairness. The historical precedents, like the Madinah Charter, exemplify the commitment to upholding the rights and freedoms of diverse communities within an Islamic state. These

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<sup>94</sup> R. A. Saeed et al, "Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) Practices to Establish a Pluralistic Society: Study of Madīnah Charter in Contemporary Global Context", Op. Cit.

<sup>95</sup> M. H. Kamali, "Al-Maqasid Al-Shari'ah the Objectives of Islamic Law", Op. Cit.

<sup>96</sup> Ibid.

<sup>97</sup> Qur'an 57:25.



principles illuminate the path towards a society founded on justice, equality, and respect for the sanctity of every human life, echoing the timeless relevance of Islamic teachings in today's world.

### **E. Conclusion**

Islamic principles emerge as a comprehensive framework promoting understanding, unity, and peaceful coexistence. Through exploring various facets of Islamic teachings—emphasizing core values, conflict resolution strategies, ethical values, philanthropy, interfaith dialogue, leadership models, and legal frameworks of Islam advocates compassion, justice, and understanding for building inclusive societies.

In essence, these Islamic principles, deeply rooted in the Qur'an and the Prophet's guidance, illuminate pathways to construct harmonious societal structures. Their convergence signifies Islam's profound influence in fostering coexistence and justice within societies, offering a beacon for a more inclusive and harmonious world.

### **F. Recommendations**

Based on the comprehensive research conducted on inter-group relations and peaceful coexistence in Taraba State's Northern Senatorial Zone, several recommendations emerge to address the identified challenges and promote lasting harmony:

#### **1. Education and Awareness Programs:**

- a. Implement education and awareness initiatives to address the lack of awareness and education identified as underlying causes of conflicts.
- b. Design programs that promote tolerance, cultural understanding, and appreciation for diversity within schools and communities.

#### **2. Community-Based Conflict Resolution Mechanisms:**

- a. Strengthen and support community-based conflict resolution mechanisms, involving traditional leaders and local institutions in mediating disputes.
- b. Encourage dialogue platforms that bring together representatives from different ethnic and religious groups to discuss common concerns and find mutually beneficial solutions.

#### **3. Government Policies and Inclusive Governance:**

- a. Advocate for inclusive government policies that address issues of ethnic and religious disparities.
- b. Ensure equitable resource allocation, job opportunities, and infrastructure development to prevent the emergence of conflicts driven by denied economic opportunities.

#### **4. Interfaith Dialogue and Collaboration:**

- a. Promote and support interfaith dialogue initiatives to foster mutual understanding and cooperation among religious communities.
- b. Encourage religious leaders to actively engage in initiatives that emphasize common values, tolerance, and peaceful coexistence.

#### **5. Civic Engagement and Empowerment:**

- a. Empower local communities through civic engagement programs that encourage active participation in decision-making processes.

- b. Support initiatives that promote economic empowerment, especially for marginalized groups, to reduce feelings of resentment and inequality.

#### **6. Security and Law Enforcement:**

- a. Strengthen security measures to ensure the safety of all citizens, regardless of their ethnic or religious background.
- b. Enhance the capacity of law enforcement agencies to prevent and respond to ethno-religious conflicts promptly and effectively.

#### **7. Collaboration with NGOs and International Bodies:**

- a. Collaborate with non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and international bodies to implement conflict resolution initiatives and humanitarian aid programs.
- b. Leverage external support to enhance capacity-building programs and promote peace-building efforts in the region.

#### **8. Media Sensitization:**

- a. Conduct media sensitization campaigns to promote responsible reporting and reduce the dissemination of divisive information that could contribute to conflicts.
- b. Encourage media outlets to play a constructive role in fostering understanding and unity among diverse communities.

#### **9. Incorporate Islamic Perspectives:**

- a. Integrate Islamic perspectives on inter-group relations and peace-building into educational curricula and community outreach programs.
- b. Encourage religious leaders to emphasize Islamic principles that promote compassion, justice, and understanding in their teachings.

#### **10. Long-Term Research and Monitoring:**

- a. Support ongoing research initiatives that monitor the effectiveness of implemented recommendations over the long term.
- b. Continuously assess the evolving dynamics of inter-group relations and conflicts, adapting strategies as needed.

By implementing these recommendations, stakeholders can contribute to creating an environment conducive to peaceful coexistence, understanding, and shared prosperity within the Northern Senatorial Zone of Taraba State.

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