Key Concepts in Interreligious Discourses

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The Concept of Peace in Judaism, Christianity and Islam

Edited by Georges Tamer

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Preface

The present volume in the book series "Key Concepts in Interreligious Discourses" (KCID) contains the results of a conference on the concept of peace in Judaism, Christianity and Islam held at the Friedrich-Alexander-University Erlangen-Nuremberg. The conference, which was organized by the Research Unit "Key Concepts in Interreligious Discourse" with the greatly appreciated support of the Evangelical Church in Germany (EKD), took place in Erlangen on December 14–15, 2017.

The Research Unit KCID offers an innovative approach for studying the development of the three interconnected religions: Judaism, Christianity and Islam. With this aim in mind, KCID analyzes the history of ideas in each of these three religions, always considering the tradition of interreligious exchange and appropriation of these very ideas. In doing so, KCID investigates the foundations of religious thought, thereby establishing an "archaeology of religious knowledge" in order to make manifest certain commonalities and differences between the three religions via dialogic study of their conceptual history. Thus, KCID intends to contribute to an intensive academic engagement with interreligious discourses in order to uncover mutually intelligible theoretical foundations and increase understanding between these different religious communities in the here and now. Moreover, KCID aims to highlight how each religion's self-understanding can contribute to mutual understanding and peace between the three religious communities in the world.

In order to explore key concepts in Judaism, Christianity and Islam, KCID organizes conferences individually dedicated to specific concepts. A renowned set of researchers from various disciplines explore these concepts from the viewpoints of each of the three religions. The results of each conference are published in a volume appearing in the abovementioned book series. Particularly salient selections from each volume are made available online in Arabic, English and German.

In this fashion, the Research Unit KCID fulfills its aspirations not only by reflecting on central religious ideas amongst a small group of academic specialists, but also by disseminating such ideas in a way that will appeal to the broader public. Academic research that puts itself at the service of society is vital in order to counteract powerful contemporary trends towards a form of segregation rooted in ignorance and to strengthen mutual respect and acceptance amongst religions. Such a result is guaranteed due to the methodology deployed by the research unit, namely the dialogic investigation of the history of concepts, as documented in the present volume on the concept of peace.

I wish to thank Dr. Albrecht Döhnert, Dr. Sophie Wagenhofer and their assistants at the publisher house De Gruyter for their competent caretaking of this

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volume and the entire book series. I would also like to thank Mr. Ezra Tzfadya for his assistance in preparing the volume.

Georges Tamer
Erlangen, May 2020

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Prologue

Since 2009, I have been engaged in a project based in Israel called Siach Shalom (Talking Peace).[1] Working on this project has meant embarking on a deep journey into the meaning of the powerful, complex and elusive concept of *shalom* in Jewish thought. Siach Shalom is essentially an effort to discover the secret of peace by turning the conversation about it into a practice which seeks to achieve it. My colleagues and I place the idea of seeking to discover the meaning of peace at the heart of the dialogue groups that we facilitate between religious and secular Israelis; Israelis and Palestinians. I have learned so much from this journey that I cannot dare to write about this topic without first acknowledging the debt that I owe to Siach Shalom and all of the participants in our dialogue groups. Most of all, I must mention my two partners in this work: Prof. Avinoam Rosenak[2] and Ms. Sharon Leshem Zinger,[3] from whom I have learned the most. Writing anything on this topic without accrediting them would be a scholarly crime. In mentioning them by name I hope to fulfill the Talmudic precept captured in the phrase, "Rabbi Elazar said that Rabbi Hanina said: Whoever reports a saying in the name of he who said it brings redemption to the world" (Babylonian Talmud Megillah 15a). If there is

1 Siach Shalom (Talking Peace) is a non-partisan civil society peace project that was co-founded by Prof. Avinoam Rosenak, Ms. Sharon Leshem-Zinger and Dr. Alick Isaacs in 2009. Siach Shalom operates under the aegis of Mishkenot Sha'ananim in Jerusalem. The problem our work aims to address is the mishandling of religion and the deep internal schisms this has created in both political processes and NGO interventions in the regional peace process. In this latter sense, Siach Shalom is also devoted to building cohesion and internal understanding inside Israeli society.

2 Avinoam Rosenak is a professor of Jewish thought and Jewish Education at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem.

3 Sharon Leshem-Zinger is one of Israel's leading group dynamic facilitators and psychodramatists who in addition to her work in Siach Shalom has taught at many places including Ben Gurion University and Sapir College (where she founded the Collot BaNegev group dynamic facilitation training program).

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anything in this paper that agrees with their teachings, I learned it from them. If any of it strays, the responsibility is mine.

1 Introduction – Two Meanings of Peace in Jewish Thought

Peace is not an undiscovered subject in modern Jewish scholarship. A great deal has been written about the Jewish ideal of peace and the different ways of attaining it.[4] It seems quite obvious that contemporary interest in this topic is at least in part due to the unfortunate fact that the Jewish State has been embroiled in conflict since the day of its inception. Having survived without a pronounced political identity for thousands of years and after returning to the stage of international politics, the Jewish collective has found the legitimacy and the security of its identity challenged militarily, politically and ethically by a chronic state of political conflict quite unlike anything that Jews have experienced in history. While many have been driven by this reality to look beyond the Jewish tradition, for example to the progressive values of the west, to find their answers; there is indeed a very significant effort to seek peace inside the teachings of Judaism and the number of initiatives, research projects, books and essays that this has yielded is indeed a blessing that has made much of the Torah's teaching about peace readily available to all who seek it.[5]

Given this, I think it is important in this paper to try to present something a little different. Rather than repeating what has already been written, I think it would be more valuable to investigate the religious history of the particular meaning of peace that in my view is most relevant to the contemporary Middle East but which is most overlooked in scholarship. This is a way of thinking

4 I would like to thank Rabbi Dr. Daniel Roth for his extensive work in this field and for the bibliographical material he has provided me with. See for example Gopin, Marc, *Between Eden and Armageddon*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000, 167–195; Kaminsky, Howard Gary, *Traditional Jewish Perspectives on Peace and Interpersonal Conflict Resolution*, New York: Teachers College Columbia University, 2005; Steinberg, Gerald M., "Jewish Sources on Conflict Management Realism and Human Nature," in: Michal Roness (ed.), *Conflict and Conflict Management in Jewish Sources*, 10–23, Ramat Gan: Bar Ilan University Program on Conflict Management and Negotiation, 2008; Roness, *Conflict and Conflict Management in Jewish Sources*, 140–141.

5 See Kaminsky ibid. for a detailed bibliography and summary of the field especially 30–34.

about peace that many associate with the most dissenting religious voices on the Jewish side of the conflict and as such it is often disregarded or even vehemently opposed. Since I don't want to address this topic in sociological or political terms and I certainly don't want to identify my position with that of any particular political group, I think it might be useful to begin by offering a philosophical distinction between two fundamentally different dimensions of peace in Jewish thought. These two are not the only meanings of the word *shalom*, but the use of a binary distinction here serves the purpose of clarity and gives me a point of entry into the analysis that follows.

The first dimension frames the meaning of peace quite conventionally in the religious values and practices that Jews turn to when they seek to resolve situations of conflict. There are indeed many examples in Jewish thought and in Jewish law of peacemaking practices that come to resolve arguments, disagreements and even violent conflicts that erupt between individuals,[6] families, communities, peoples – Jews and non-Jews. The Jewish tradition is very rich in legalism and the idea that a legal system or a judge can be an arbitrator in a situation of conflict is not foreign to the *halakha* (Jewish law) by any means. Similarly, throughout Jewish history we have examples of peacemakers and dispute resolvers who, emulating the great biblical example of Aaron the Priest, sought to resolve differences between conflicting parties without resorting to the judgment of the courts.[7] Bearing in mind some of the more recent terminology developed in the field of conflict resolution, it is possible to find traditional Jewish examples of resolving, managing and transforming conflict as well as practices that we might readily compare with alternative dispute resolution (ADR). This dimension of peace and the classical texts associated with it is the one that has attracted the bulk of scholarly attention in the field and it is not the one that I wish to address in any further detail in this paper.

In counter–distinction to the more conventional examples of peacemaking found in the Jewish tradition, the second dimension of peace refers specifically to the unique conditions that apply to the end of days and the messianic redemption. This peace is the ultimate world peace that the prophets spoke of and which is associated in the Bible with the ingathering of the exiles to the land of Israel, the return of the entire land to the Jewish people and the fulfillment of the biblical covenant. This form of peace, which I have previously

6 Kaminsky, ibid. Part IV, 190–218.

7 Roth, Daniel, *The Tradition of Aaron Pursuer of Peace between People as a Rabbinic Model of Reconciliation*, PhD diss., Ramat Gan: Bar Ilan University, 2012.

referred to elsewhere as both "Prophetic" and "Messianic" peace,[8] is often considered an obstacle to the resolution of conflict. The notion that something of messianic proportions is taking place in the 'here and now' can easily be used as a foil for resisting the more practical work of negotiation, compromise and agreement that Realpolitik demands. This observation is not without justification. However, since the notion of prophetic peace is the one most concerned with the conditions that many religious Jews in Israel understand as taking place in the world today – i.e. the return of Jewish exiles to the biblical land of Israel – I submit that clarifying the irenic potentiality of this concept is the more relevant and meaningful challenge to tackle at this time.

1.1 Prophetic Peace and the Ingathering of the Exiles

Prophetic peace in Jewish thought is a concept that is fundamentally connected to the fulfillment of the Jewish purpose in history. It is a form of peace that is grounded in a theological ideal that includes more than just the cessation of a particular military conflict. It is in fact the resolution of all internal and external conflict in the human soul, in intimate relations, in the family, the community, the Jewish people, international politics, nature and indeed between human beings and God. As it appears in the Bible, this kind of peace brings with it a total transformation of human consciousness and of the conditions of human personal, social and political life as we know them. This is the peace that the prophets speak of, that biblical teachings are geared towards and that the prayers that observant Jews recite every day yearn for. It is a meaning of peace that is more closely connected to the Hebrew word '*shalom*' (from the Hebrew root Shin, Lamed, Mem – meaning wholeness and completion) than the English word 'Peace' (from the Latin Pax – meaning pact or agreement).

The objection that holding out for completion runs the risk of obstructing more immediate and practical solutions to present-day problems is valid. The notion that the higher dream prevents people from taking certain steps towards lesser but more realistic achievable goals is one that needs to be taken very seriously. This is especially true if these steps can directly improve a pressing situation or alleviate human suffering. All the same, my suggestion is that widespread belief in prophetic peace is a concept that we cannot ignore. It is also a kind of peace that we can work with as we endeavor to create understanding between

8 Isaacs, Alick, *A Prophetic Peace. Judaism, Religion and Politics,* Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2011.

people and address the complex and painful conflict that has surrounded the State of Israel since its establishment in 1948. This is true both because the vision of prophetic peace is by far the most central principle of peace in Jewish thought and because the vision of prophetic fulfillment is a powerful force in contemporary Israeli religious Jewish identity. This is a vision that is built upon a great deal of ancient wisdom that has much to teach us today. This vision, therefore, is both authentic to the mainstream of classical Jewish thought and relevant to the contemporary situation.

For many "national religious" Jews living in Israel today, the conflict in the Middle East is not an isolated or detached modern experience. Rather, it can be seen as a crucial stage in the very long journey that the Jewish People has been on for thousands of years. This journey begins with the Jewish religious obligation to fulfill its collective covenantal purpose as outlined in the Torah.[9] That purpose is one given in covenant to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob; to the tribes of Israel and to the people who emerged from bondage in Egypt and who then stood together to receive it prophetically at Sinai. The purpose of this covenant is to be a holy people united in a holy land where they are to be a blessing, as God says to Abraham in Gen. 12, to all the families of the world. The covenant of Sinai insists that through living the life prescribed by the Torah, the Jewish people united in the land of Israel will disclose the unity of God to the world. Disclosing a consciousness of God's unity is likened in numerous Jewish sources to the shining of a light and it is perhaps most famous in the writings of Isaiah who spoke prophetically about the day when the Jewish people will become a light unto all the nations of the earth.[10] As many national religious Jews see it, the main story of our present period in history concerns the fulfillment of this covenant. After thousands of years of exile, the people are finally returning to the land and rebuilding it. But, their struggle to return and to re-form their collective identity is one that has been plagued by conflict and political opposition. For many, this opposition is a spiritual event which has deep meanings many of which are not known or understood, but which guide Israel toward the fulfillment of its prophetic purpose. These are meanings that need to be uncovered in order for the lessons of recent history to lead us in the direction of unity and peace. For them, this vision is very real and practical and its obstruction by conventional, political and diplomatic peacemaking practices is something that stirs up vehement spiritual, Halakhic and political opposition. Appreciating this

9 See Soloveitchik, Joseph Dov (1903–1993), *Kol Dodi Dofek* (*Fate and Destiny. From the Holocaust to the State of Israel*), New York: Ktav Publishing House, 2000, 42–44.
10 Isa. 49:6.

is crucial to understanding the widespread opposition of the religious communities in Israel to diplomatic peace efforts in the last 30 years.

If we put this idea in slightly different terms, we might say that for many religious Jews, it is no accident that the conflict in the Middle East seems to defy the capabilities of modern diplomacy. It is spiritually and religiously significant that the framework for peacemaking that modern politics provides is emerging as inadequate to the task of imagining a workable solution to this situation. And so, it seems valuable, and perhaps even essential, to try to think beyond the limits of secular politics and consider the possibility that the working definition of peace that conventional diplomatic practices of peacemaking are based upon is not appropriate to the task at hand. If the Jewish narrative of return to the land is indeed a step toward the fulfillment of the biblical covenant, then it seems reasonable to imagine that the failures of western diplomacy in the region are grounds enough to turn to the prophetic concept of peace and see what we can learn from it.

1.2 The Three Elements of Prophetic Peace

Having said a few words about the authenticity and relevance of our topic, in what follows I will try to explain the meaning of "Prophetic Peace" as my colleagues and I have come to understand it. Prophetic Peace is a complex idea, and I therefore want to present it systematically by dividing it up into three component parts. Though these three elements can often appear separately in Jewish texts, my claim is that they coincide significantly in the full concept of prophetic or messianic peace. Thus, I submit that a deeper understanding of each one and, most particularly, of the connections between them, is the key to unpacking the meaning of shalom in Jewish thought.

The three elements of prophetic peace are:

1. Anti-Politics
2. Unity of Opposites[11]
3. Knowledge of God

11 This concept has been developed most significantly in the research of Avinoam Rosenak who has dealt with its central role in the teachings of Rabbi Abraham Isaac Kook as well as in the extensive sources in Jewish thought upon which Rav Kook draws. See for example Rosenak, Avinoam. "Hidden Diaries and New Discoveries. The Life and Thought of Rabbi A.I. Kook," *Shofar. An Interdisciplinary Journal of Jewish Studies* 25:3 (2007), 111–47; *Prophetic Halakha. The Philosophy of Halakha in the Teaching of Rav Kook*, Jerusalem: The Magnes Press, 2007, 44–56 [Hebrew].

I will first introduce the concept of anti-politics giving illustrative examples of how it has appeared in biblical and rabbinic texts. I will then pick up the theme of the unity of opposites presenting examples of its biblical and rabbinic history. Next I will trace the connections between these and the knowledge of God showing how the combination between the three can offer us a definition of prophetic peace that we will be able to see in modern religious texts. Finally, I will offer some insights and suggestions, gleaned from the work of Siach Shalom, into ways we can think about the practical value of Prophetic Peace in the context of today's conflict in the Middle East.

2 Anti-Politics

'Anti-politics' is not strictly speaking a "Jewish" term but it is useful for our purposes because it characterizes several concepts that are central to the Jewish understanding of God and the collective. George Konrad used the phrase "anti-politics"[12] in a book of that name that some would argue helped bring down the Soviet regime in Central Europe. Konrad urged his readers to think of "anti-politics" as a realistic way of dealing with political oppression. His book *Anti-Politics* argued *for* standing down and *against* engaging in confrontation. Konrad proposed a notion of: "*de-statification*", which basically meant imagining a political system characterized by a reduction of power from above. Ultimately anti-political thought seeks to protect society from the volatile fusion of a grand idea with political power.

Though this was not Konrad's intention, his phrase is very useful for describing a profound element of the prophetic ideal in which the vision of peace is connected to a feature of Jewish religious thought that downplays the role of power in the life of the collective. In religious Jewish thought, the nation of Israel is not a political community of individuals held together by a common origin or government. Rather the Jewish collective is primarily understood as an expression or even as a creation of the uniting will of God, which brings the people together through their shared obligation to collectively live the life prescribed by the Torah. Rather than applying force or building a lowest common denominator around which groups can rally, the Torah is addressed to the ideal of a People who can only serve God together. In order to unite in this way the People must align their individual and collective will with his will as an act of free-choice. Thus the national community is a full expression of the freedom

12 Konrad, George, *Anti-Politics. An Essay*, trans. Richard E. Allen, New York: Quartet, 1984.

of each individual who finds his or her own unique place in the collective observance of the Torah by freely choosing it. This freedom depends on what the Torah refers to as "*hester panim*" i.e. the concealing of God's face.[13] This is the concept that makes space for people to choose rather than being too heavily imposed upon by the divine presence. Similarly, the Kabalistic tradition emphasized the notion that free-choice and even the basic independent existence of the world are only made possible by God's withdrawal or constriction of his light (i.e. of our awareness of him) in the world. Kabbalistic texts refer to this idea as *sod ha-tsimtsum* which literally means 'the secret of [God's] constriction'[14]. Both of these ideas, *hester panim* and *tsimtsum*, underline the principle that freedom or room for choice is made possible by – what is perhaps the ultimate anti-political act of – self-effacement and withdrawal from power. In the context of this withdrawal, the notion that divine sovereignty or *malkhut shamayim* and covenant or *brit* has an anti-political nature emerges into view.

From the prophetic perspective, peace has no obvious place inside the individualistic, power-laden and belligerent political process at all. The prophetic notion of peace is not about conventional political action. On the contrary, the biblical visions of peace seem to suggest that an ideal peace for Israel can never be the direct outcome of political action at all but must rather emanate from a "circumcision of the heart"[15]. This inner transformation (which is the cumulative outcome of all the free choices that observance of the Torah requires Jews to make every day) is described by the biblical prophets as something that happens when the Jewish people return from exile to collective life in the holy land.[16] The phrase "circumcision of the heart" is a metaphor for the removal of a hard covering that prevents the heart (meaning the inner consciousness) from recognizing God and his perpetual presence in (and as) creation. The removal of this covering demands a profound psychological shift in how human beings interact with one another, with the world and with God. In this context peace is achieved through a kind of anti-political politics in which power is replaced by listening; negotiation by spiritual engagement; interests-based agreements and alliances by genuine efforts to live together in a loving unity that mirrors or echoes the true depths of human consciousness in a place where it merges with a total awareness of God.

13 Deut. 31:17.

14 Tzimtzum is a term widely used in Lurianic Kabala. A useful explanation of the term in its various forms can be found in Kaplan, Aryeh, *Inner Space*, New York: Moznaim Publishing, 1990, especially 120–128.

15 Deut. 30:1–6.

16 Ibid.

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5 The Centrality of Prophetic Peace to the Jewish Understanding of Peace

When we consider the centrality of "anti-politics", "the unity of opposites" and the "knowledge of God" to Jewish thought it feels reasonable to suggest that peace is in fact far more than a key value in Judaism. It is in fact a central organizing principle in ways that this formulation brings to the fore. As we draw towards our conclusion, the point that I wish to make is perhaps an inversion of this i.e. that when we look at Jewish sources that talk explicitly about the concept or value of peace, a huge proportion of them are in fact recognizably referring to the concept of prophetic peace. In other words, the kind of peace that is central to Judaism's understanding of peace is prophetic rather than legal or political peace.

More specifically, a review of rabbinic sources dealing with peace underlines not only the importance of peace as a value but what might be seen as the rabbis attributing an overwhelmingly and seemingly hyperbolic centrality to peace in the rabbinic understanding of God, the Torah and the world. Here are just a few examples[82]:

> Should you say, "There is food and there is drink but without peace there is nothing!" It is therefore written "And I will put peace in the land" – this teaches us that peace is equivalent to everything. As it is written (Isa. 45:7) "I make light and create darkness, make peace and create everything – this teaches us that peace is equivalent to everything."[83]

Here the idea that everything is peace connects the very idea of peace with the foundational principles of Torah and creation. Similarly,

> See how great is the power of peace that the holy one blessed be He does not announce the redemption of Jerusalem except in peace as it says, Announce peace (Isa. 52). Alternatively Rabbi Levi said, "Peace is so precious that all the blessings close with peace. The reading of the Shema closes with peace, He who spreads a Succah prayer ends with peace, the priestly blessing closes with peace . . . .Rabbi Shimon Ben Chalafta said Peace is so precious that when the Holy One, blessed be He, asked to bless Israel there was no vessel he could find, which could hold this blessing other than peace. From where do we learn this? As it says, "God will give strength to his people; God will bless his people with peace.[84]

82 The following excerpts have been translated by me based on a variety of existing English editions.

83 Sifra Bechukotai 8.

84 Devarim Rabbah 5,16.

The hyperbolic tone is evident in this passage. Everything in Judaism from the prayers to the redemption of Jerusalem is described as culminating in peace. This text is only an excerpt from a much longer list that recounts the extreme worth of peace in many additional ways. In this context it is important to point out that the final statement is also a culmination in itself because it is quoted by the rabbis who chose the word *shalom* as the last word of the Talmud itself. One final example in this short but illustrative list establishes *shalom* as the foundation of the entire world,

> Avnimos the Guardian asked Rabban Gamliel, "What is the honor (foundation) of the world?" He answered, "Peace". He said to him, "Where is this learned from?" He answered, for it says: "he forms light and creates of darkness makes peace and creates everything. After God created peace he then returned to create everything else. As it says, "steer away from evil and do good seek peace . . ."[85]

Texts that we have not cited here in detail describe *shalom* as a name of God as the name of the Messiah as the name of the people of Israel; as the unity of life and death; as the defining characteristic of the righteous as the completion of the inner soul as the fabric that holds together marriage and the Jewish home, the fabric of the people of Israel and ultimately of the entire world.

Finally, as we draw closer to the implications of prophetic peace to the contemporary reality in the Middle East, it is important to point out how this dual centrality (of peace to Judaism and of prophetic peace to Jewish understandings of peace) is expressed in the writings of Rabbi Abraham Kook.

Notwithstanding his education in the great Lithuanian Talmudic academies,[86] Rabbi Kook's teachings are rooted in Kabbalistic doctrine. His thinking grows out of a concept of the world which contemplates an immanent divine presence in all areas of existence and infers from that universally applicable laws of conduct.[87] It follows, in his view, that the affinities and differences between Israel and the nations of the world are not merely a matter of consciousness and culture;[88] they are

85 Ps. 34.

86 Rabbi Naftali Zvi Yehudah Berlin (1816–1893; known by the acronym *Netziv*), the head of the Volozhin Yeshiva, was an important teacher of Rabbi Kook. See Rosenak, *Rabbi Kook*, 11–19 (Hebrew).

87 For discussion of this approach in contrast to normative sociological thinking, see Rosenak, Avinoam "*Halakhah*. Thought, and the Idea of Holiness in the Writings of Rabbi Haim David Halevi," in: Rachel Elior/Peter Schäfer (eds), *Creation and Re-Creation in Jewish Thought. Festschrift in Honor of Joseph Dan on the Occasion of his Seventieth Birthday*, 309–38, Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2005.

88 This is the approach found in normative sociological thought; Maimonides was its primary exponent in the Middle Ages.

substantive and ontological.[89] Existence, in all its contradictions, is suffused with the divine presence[90] and those contradictions do not disturb the all-encompassing divine logic.[91] The divine presence instills vitality in the range of spiritual movements and historical processes. This dialectical logic forms the structure for "the doctrine of the unity of opposites" at the center of Rabbi Kook's thinking,[92] a doctrine which as we have seen channels certain key biblical and rabbinic structures through the ideas of the Maharal[93] and through Kabbalistic and Ḥasidic literature overall.[94]

For Rabbi Kook, peace is part of an implicit vision that is less about politics than it is about the discovery of God's oneness in the world. By framing prophecies of peace in messianic time, the prophets leave Jewish history with the legacy of anticipating a future that seems almost impossible. Peace is a culmination of an impossible set of combinations that somehow join together in a unity of opposites that lies beyond human perception. In this perception, Rabbi Kook sees conflict (perhaps ironically) as the result of inadequate variety. Peace comes where human judgment is suspended, where variety is unlimited and no finite combination of subjective truths is allowed to stand for the whole truth. At the heart of the rabbinic project, peace is the product of a limitless process of questioning and classifying applied in a timeless commitment to the endless study and interpretation of every aspect of the law. Like the refraction of light into the colors of the rainbow (through which God expressed his covenant of peace with mankind after the flood), bringing the peace of mankind into the light of day requires the

89 See Tishby, Isaiah, *The Wisdom of the Zohar*, vol. 2, Jerusalem: Mosad Bialik, 1961, 3–93 (Hebrew); Rabbi Judah Halevi, *The Kuzari. An Argument for the Faith of Israel*, trans. Judah Halevi Hartwig Hirschfeld, New York: Schocken Books,1964; part I, sections 26–48, 95.

90 Rabbi Menachem Mendel of Chernobyl, *Me'or Einayim*, Jerusalem: Me'or Einayim Yeshivah, 1975, 13.

91 "The force of the contradiction is merely an illness that afflicts logic when limited by the special conditions of man's mind and attentiveness. As we assess the situation, we must sense the contradiction and use that sensation to arrive at a resolution. Above it, however, far above it, there is the supernal divine light, whose possibilities are unlimited and subject to no conditions whatever. It tolerates no impediment on account of the contradiction, and for it, there is no need to resolve it." Kook, Abraham, *Olat Re'ayah*, vol. 1, Jerusalem: Mosad HaRav Kook, 1989, 184.

92 See note On R. Kook's doctrine of the unity of opposites, see Rosenak, *Rabbi Kook*, 34–42; *Prophetic Halakhah*, 44–57.

93 Maharal, *Gevurot ha-shem*, 35; Neher, *The Teachings of Maharal*; Rosenak, "Unity of Opposites".

94 See for example, Kaufman, Tsippi, *Know Him in All Your Ways. The Concept of the Divine and Worship through Corporeality in Early Hasidism*, Ramat-Gan: Bar-Ilan University, 2009, 250–395 (Hebrew).

integration of all shades of opinion. Peace is the culmination of *all* options blended and it is thus an endless quest. An inadequate blend of color produces a murky quality of light, or, in Rabbi Kook's own words,

> Some err to think world peace will be built only through one color, one quality of opinions and characteristics. Therefore when they see that as scholars research the wisdom and knowledge of the Torah through their research different opinion and points of view flourish, they think that causes strife, the opposite of peace. This is really not the case. Real peace can come about only through the value of the flourishing of peace.[95]

This tireless and endless quest for the unity of an ultimately impossible infinite variety of legal options is an echo of the following passage from the *Zohar*,

> Conflict is a distancing of peace, and whoever is in conflict about peace is in disagreement with His holy name, because His holy name is called 'Peace' . . . . Come and behold: the world does not exist except through peace. When the Holy One, blessed be He, created the world, it could not endure until He came and made peace dwell upon them. What is it? It is the Sabbath, which is the peace of the upper and the lower grades. And then the world endured. Therefore, whoever creates dissension about peace will be lost from the world. Rabbi Yosi says that it is written "great peace have they who love your Torah" (Pss. 119,165). The Torah is peace, as it is written "and all her paths are peace" (Prov. 3:17). And Korach came to blemish that peace above . . ." (Zohar, Numbers 16)[96]

The *Zohar* here is distinguishing between a debate conducted for the sake of heaven and one that is not. The former is a debate – or even a conflict – that is motivated (perhaps paradoxically) by the desire for cosmological peace. The notion that peace is the opposite of conflict, though simple, is counter-intuitive to the political worldview in which peace is the by-product of converging interests and agreements. In the political sense peace is what remains to be built when conflict is removed. In the *Zohar's* formulation, peace is a theological term. It is the active antidote to conflict. The conditions required for achieving this kind of peace are in many ways quite the opposite of those needed for political agreements. While conflict resolution requires a compromise – the relinquishing of certain demands in the quest for a common ground or shared system of law – peace is the culmination of infinite differences that must be generated and developed, as it were, from below. Peace must therefore transcend the limits of tolerance and pluralism. It cannot be reached without

95 Kook, Rabbi Abraham I., "Olat ha-Rayah," in Sagi, *The Open Canon*, 119–122.

96 "Now Korach," in *The Zohar*, vol. 18, the first unabridged English translation with commentary, ed. and compiled by Rabbi Michael Berg, New York: The Kabbalah Center International Inc., 2003, 225–26.

reclaiming what is ugly, unpleasant and counter-intuitive.[97] It demands the sacrifice of ethics and a radical openness to the impossibility of prophetic surprise. It is the quest that motivates endless generations of study, tireless dedication to minute details, limitless explication, deliberation and dissent – all of which proliferate and ferment, filling pages and pages of rabbinic texts compiled over thousands of years and still expanding in our time.

6 Conclusion – The Irenic Irony

I hope it is pertinent and appropriate to follow through on what I said in the introduction to this paper about the potential value of exploring the practical implications of prophetic peace in the context of today's Middle East. I will confine my concluding remarks specifically to the implications that my thesis has for Jewish religious involvement in the peace effort.

It is, I think, important to call attention to what I am calling here the "irenic irony". Beyond being a nice play on words, the irenic irony is a reference to the obvious gap between the centrality and importance of peace in all of the monotheistic religious traditions and the overt participation of religion and religious people in activities that generate and perpetuate conflict. Anyone who asks the crucial question of why the Oslo peace negotiations failed must at least include in

97 It is relevant to mention here the halakhic category of "Avera Lishma": The Talmud suggests in a number of places (e.g. Nazir 23a–b and Brachot 61a) that certain transgressions are necessary for preserving the law. These are categorized as transgressions that are performed in "its name" – in the name of God or in the name of the law. The examples discussed in the Talmud include sexual intercourse between King Ahasuerus and Queen Esther and also the incestuous rape of Lot by his daughters. In both cases, the law is not so much the issue as survival. The Talmudic discussion (Nazir 23b) reaches the somewhat conservative conclusion that such transgressions are accepted in the hope that they will lead to more pious behavior. However, later rabbinic texts toy with the idea that certain transgressions are of spiritual and religious importance in their own right since religious expressions sometimes require transcending the legal boundaries of the Halakha. See for example the stories of the three confessors in the twelfth century text *Sefer Ḥasidim*. In these stories, confessors come to a wise man to describe sins that they have performed, claiming that they only transgressed in order to bring themselves close to temptation so as ultimately to overcome it and repent. But, in order to get there, they needed first to sin. See Ben Samuel, Judah, *Sefer Hasidim*, ed. Jehuda Wistinetzki, Frankfurt/Main: M'kize Nirdamim, 1924, sections 52–53 (Hebrew). Though the confessors are censured for their conduct in this story, later Ḥasidic writers, such as Rabbi Tsadok Hakohen of Lublin, maintain paradoxically that the annulment of the Torah is also its foundation since God's will is served when the law is transgressed in His name.

his or her answer a reference to the fact that both the Israeli and Palestinian leadership faced fierce internal opposition from religious actors. Broadly speaking, beyond political debate and protest this religious opposition has basically been held responsible for fueling settlement activity on the Israeli side and terrorism on the side of the Palestinians. These are perhaps not the only reasons that Oslo failed and they are perhaps not motivated solely by religion, but there can be no doubt of their importance and of the central role that religion played in both.

What I am referring to as the irenic irony here though, runs deeper than the gap between what religion believes and the way religious people act. It also refers to the consistent failure of secular and religious liberals to impress upon those who they see as religious radicals the importance of peace and peaceful behavior as their own tradition demands it. How many times have we heard that "this and that" person's idea of Judaism, Islam or Christianity is not the truth about what that religion *really* teaches?!

Looking at this question solely from the Jewish side of the conflict, it seems quite clear that the failure of liberals and moderates to make an irenic impression on those who's Judaism they criticize can be attributed to a different gap. The irenic irony is perhaps not about the gap between peaceful teaching and peaceful acting so much as it is about the gap between political and prophetic peace. The idea that we began with – i.e. that there is plenty of material in the Jewish tradition that can be called upon to find support for the western secular modes of diplomacy and conflict resolution – has blinded our attention to the fact that the idea of prophetic peace is far more central to both Jewish understandings of peace and of Judaism itself. This is particularly the case in the present historical context; which many religious Jews and almost all national religious Jews identify as a time in which biblical prophecy is gradually and painfully being fulfilled.

In such a time it seems urgent to find ways of seeking peace that align themselves with the principle of prophetic peace or at least make equal space for it in the processes that must inevitably include those whose vision of peace subscribes to it. In a nutshell, this is one of the crucial elements of Siach Shalom (Talking Peace)'s vision.

While academic footnotes have perhaps sufficed to illustrate how Avinoam Rosenak's penetrating insights into the Jewish tradition – and especially into the teachings of Rabbi Kook – have shaped my presentation of prophetic peace, now is the time to speak about the seminal contribution of Sharon Leshem Zinger to the thesis of this paper.[98] She is without doubt a thinker and a true

98 I want to mention here that I await her forthcoming book whose proposed title is *The Well of Peace – A Dynamic Model for Siach Shalom Talking Peace*.

scholar of Jewish texts but a greater accolade is due to her on account of her ability to uncover how the mechanisms of Jewish thought can give us insight not only into the psyche and the soul but into the complex matrices of interactions that take place between people in both political and social environments. If there is such a thing as a Jewish theory of group dynamics designed to foster the experience of prophetic peace, Leshem Zinger is its author. It is perhaps not customary to accredit in an academic paper lessons that have been learned in an environment of practice, but not to do so in this case would comprise a scholarly crime. The idea that prophetic peace is a workable mode of living together is one that she puts into practice in the group dynamic encounters that we facilitate together. These are built upon the construction of an anti-political environment – a circle of people sitting together as it were around a well – in which starkly opposing points of view can be shared from a place of depth that, when experienced, feels like a spiritual revelation somewhat akin to the knowledge of God. For those whose political outlook is secular the welcoming depths of the interaction are deeply meaningful. But, uniquely in the landscape of the Middle East, these encounters invite the most passionately religious people to feel that their voice is a voice of peace that must be heard.

Given the historical stalemate that peace negotiations have been in for so long, it might perhaps be the time to imagine an anti-political prophetic peace process that is radically inclusive of religious and secular voices in Israeli society today and which might well need to be the face of peace processes in the future.

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Volker Stümke

The Concept of Peace in Christianity

Peace – who among us does not desire to live without war and struggles, without need and fear? Considering peace in this comprehensive way, most would admit that we are not living in peaceful times. Furthermore, these desires were described in the negative ("without") – how to name the opposite, the affirmative features of peace, is indeed debated. As in most religions the Christian faith has developed an understanding of peace. For Christians this is grounded in the Bible as Holy Scripture and can be extended through history of the Church, and is now facing today's challenges. One of the basic assertions concerning peace is found in the Hebrew Bible:

> I will hear what God the LORD will speak: for he will speak peace to his people, and to his saints: but let them not turn again to folly. Surely his salvation is near them that fear him; that glory may dwell in our land. Mercy and truth are met together; righteousness and peace have kissed each other. Truth shall spring out of the earth; and righteousness shall look down from heaven. Yes, the LORD shall give that which is good; and our land shall yield her increase. Righteousness shall go before him; and shall set us in the way of his steps.
>
> (Ps. 85:8–13)[1]

Accordingly, in Christian understanding, peace, the righteousness of the people and justice in the land must be inseparably connected. Peace is not only a personal experience, but a political and social achievement as well. To unfold the Christian understanding of peace, this chapter is divided in three sections, each containing four subsections. The sections follow the historical development starting [1.] with the Bible, then [2.] going through some main insights in Church history, and ending [3.] with the current tasks. The four subsections address the different aspects of peace; namely: the political, the social, the personal, and the religious.

1 Biblical References Regarding Peace

For Christians, the Hebrew Bible (also called the Old Testament) and the New Testament together form the Holy Scriptures. This collection of writings came into being in a process that took about eight hundred years, so there are a lot of

1 The quotations from the Bible follow The American King James Version.

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descriptions of peace and there is a development of insights concerning living together without war, violence, need, and fear. Firstly, peace is interpreted in a positive and in a negative way; so the prevalent distinction between positive and negative peace in the political sciences is also found in the Bible.[2] Peace (שלום / shalom) is described in the Hebrew Bible negatively as the absence of war, and positively as living together as God's chosen people contently and safely, protected against defamation and false accusations (Ps. 4).[3] Perhaps God's salvation experienced on earth is the best paraphrase for peace. The New Testament mostly adopted this understanding of peace (*εἰρήνη* / eirene). Peace is as well negatively understood as the absence of war, and positively unfolded as the reconciled relationship between God and humans through Jesus Christ and out of this as the virtue of brotherly love and humility.[4]

Secondly, the Biblical authors compare these desired conditions with their experience in the real world. In the real world this positive peace is not naturally granted. Instead, the Biblical scriptures stress the fact that violence has been ruling this world from the beginning, when Cain slew his brother Abel (Gen. 4). As people often harm each other, even negative peace is rarely found.[5]

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2 Cf. for the following Otto, Eckhart, *Krieg und Frieden in der Hebräischen Bibel und im Alten Orient. Aspekte für eine Friedensordnung in der Moderne*, Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1999; Krochmalnik, Daniel, "Krieg und Frieden in der hebräischen Bibel und rabbinischen Traditionen," in: Ines-Jacqueline Werkner/Klaus Ebeling (eds), *Handbuch Friedensethik*, 191–202, Wiesbaden: Springer, 2017; Schnocks, Johannes, *Das Alte Testament und die Gewalt. Studien zu göttlicher und menschlicher Gewalt in alttestamentlichen Texten und ihren Rezeptionen*, Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlagsgesellschaft, 2014; Schwienhorst-Schönberger, Ludger, "Recht und Gewalt im Alten Testament," in: Nadja Rossmanith et al. (eds), *Sprachen heiliger Schriften und ihre Auslegung*, 7–33, Institut für Religion und Frieden (Ethica Themen), Wien: BMLVS Heeresdruckerei, 2015.

3 **Ps. 4**: "Hear me when I call, O God of my righteousness: you have enlarged me when I was in distress; have mercy on me, and hear my prayer. O you sons of men, how long will you turn my glory into shame? How long will you love vanity, and seek after leasing? [. . .] But know that the LORD has set apart him that is godly for himself: the LORD will hear when I call to him. Stand in awe, and sin not: commune with your own heart on your bed, and be still. [. . .] Offer the sacrifices of righteousness, and put your trust in the LORD. There be many that say: Who will show us any good? LORD, lift you up the light of your countenance on us. You have put gladness in my heart, more than in the time that their corn and their wine increased. I will both lay me down in peace, and sleep: for you, LORD, only make me dwell in safety."

4 Cf. Forderer, Tanja, "Frieden in den neutestamentlichen Schriften," in: Elisabeth Gräb-Schmidt/Julian Zeyher-Quattlender (eds), *Friedensethik und Theologie. Systematische Erschließung eines Fachgebiets aus der Perspektive von Philosophie und christlicher Theologie*, 117–36, Baden-Baden: Nomos, 2018.

5 Cf. Die deutschen Bischöfe, *Gerechter Friede*, Bonn: Sekretariat der Deutschen Bischofskonferenz, 2000, first chapter; Baumann, Gerlinde, "Gewalt in biblischen Texten.

Israel experienced many wars during its history. In the year 587 BC, the capital Jerusalem, the temple, and the entire state of Israel were destroyed, and the people were sent into the Babylonian exile. Thus the desire for peace and the experience of violence contradict each other. Nevertheless, there is a vivid hope in the Scriptures not only for negative, but also for positive peace. This positive peace is characterized by just conditions for everyone and not only by the absence of war and violence. Living together in peace indicates that neither poverty nor exploitation nor breaching of contracts will occur (Isa. 11:3–5), but that there will be harmony among peoples and that they will live in accordance with nature (Isa. 11:6–9). The Lord of justice will eliminate the wrongdoers, so that tranquillity and security will reign (Isa. 32:15–18).[6] And God will overcome poverty and need (Ps. 9:16–18).[7]

Thirdly, the main point in awaiting this desired peace is its dependence on God. As mankind is weak and sinful, we are not able to put these paradisiac conditions into execution. It is the Lord who will bring peace. From the initial fratricide, God has helped humans in limiting violence. He marked Cain allowing no one to kill him (Gen. 4:15); by this God prevents a cycle of violence. Later, God chose Abraham and then Moses as his partners, making a covenant with them representing his chosen people. The rules in this covenant were also limiting the use of force. For example, the prescription "an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth" (Exod. 21:23–25) hinders an exaggeration of violence in prosecution by stressing the proportionality of harmful answers. These limitations helped establishing and keeping the negative peace, although they cannot bring positive peace – this will be achieved by God's Messiah, a chosen messenger of God that will fulfill the promise of living together contently and safely:

> And there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots: And the spirit of the LORD shall rest on him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the

Hintergründe, Differenzierungen, hermeneutische Überlegungen," in: Severin J. Lederhilger (ed.), *Gewalt im Namen Gottes. Die Verantwortung der Religionen für Krieg und Frieden*, 83–95, Frankfurt/Main: Peter Lang, 2015.

6 Isa. 32:15–18: "Until the spirit be poured on us from on high, and the wilderness be a fruitful field, and the fruitful field be counted for a forest. Then judgment shall dwell in the wilderness, and righteousness remain in the fruitful field. And the work of righteousness shall be peace; and the effect of righteousness quietness and assurance for ever. And my people shall dwell in a peaceable habitation, and in sure dwellings, and in quiet resting places."

7 Ps. 9:16–18: "The LORD is known by the judgment which he executes: the wicked is snared in the work of his own hands. [. . .] The wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the nations that forget God. For the needy shall not always be forgotten: the expectation of the poor shall not perish for ever."

> LORD; and shall make him of quick understanding in the fear of the LORD: and he shall not judge after the sight of his eyes, neither reprove after the hearing of his ears: But with righteousness shall he judge the poor, and reprove with equity for the meek of the earth: and he shall smite the earth: with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips shall he slay the wicked. And righteousness shall be the girdle of his loins, and faithfulness the girdle of his reins. The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf and the young lion and the fatted calf together; and a little child shall lead them. And the cow and the bear shall feed; their young ones shall lie down together: and the lion shall eat straw like the ox. And the sucking child shall play on the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put his hand on the cockatrice' den. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain: for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the LORD, as the waters cover the sea. (Isa. 11:1–9)

This profound peace is a vivid hope for Christians (and for Jews as well) and it will not be realized by humans but by God via his Messiah. He, the Prince of Peace, will not only bring violence to an end (negative peace) but will furthermore create this ideal world in God's authority (Isa. 9:1–5).[8] Thus, positive peace is a hope for the future. God will certainly intervene and will reward the faithful (Deut. 12:1–12).[9]

8 Isa. 9:1–5: "Nevertheless the dimness shall not be such as was in her vexation, when at the first he lightly afflicted the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, and afterward did more grievously afflict her by the way of the sea, beyond Jordan, in Galilee of the nations. The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light: they that dwell in the land of the shadow of death, on them has the light shined. You have multiplied the nation, and not increased the joy: they joy before you according to the joy in harvest, and as men rejoice when they divide the spoil. For you have broken the yoke of his burden, and the staff of his shoulder, the rod of his oppressor, as in the day of Midian. For every battle of the warrior is with confused noise, and garments rolled in blood; but this shall be with burning and fuel of fire."

9 Deut. 12:1–12: And at that time shall Michael stand up, the great prince which stands for the children of your people: and there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time: and at that time your people shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the book. And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt. And they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever. But you, O Daniel, shut up the words, and seal the book, even to the time of the end: many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased. Then I Daniel looked, and, behold, there stood other two, the one on this side of the bank of the river, and the other on that side of the bank of the river. And one said to the man clothed in linen, which was on the waters of the river: How long shall it be to the end of these wonders? And I heard the man clothed in linen, which was on the waters of the river, when he held up his right hand and his left hand to heaven, and swore by him that lives for ever that it shall be for a time, times, and an half; and when he shall have accomplished to scatter the power of the holy people, all these things shall be finished. And I heard, but I understood not:

Then God's enemies will be gone completely and swords will be hammered to ploughshares (Mic. 4:1–4).[10]

According to Col. 1:15–20[11] and Luke 4:16–21,[12] Christians actually believe that Jesus is this Messiah ("Christ" is the Greek translation of the Hebrew term "Messiah"), whereas Jews do not agree, and therefore still wait for the arrival of the redeemer. At this juncture, the main difference between the Jewish and the Christian understanding of peace arises. As Christians are convinced that Jesus is the Christ, they also claim that the negative and the promised positive peace are already accessible here on earth. To emphasize this, Christians refer mainly to the

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then said I, O my Lord, what shall be the end of these things? And he said, Go your way, Daniel: for the words are closed up and sealed till the time of the end. Many shall be purified, and made white, and tried; but the wicked shall do wickedly: and none of the wicked shall understand; but the wise shall understand. And from the time that the daily sacrifice shall be taken away, and the abomination that makes desolate set up, there shall be a thousand two hundred and ninety days. Blessed is he that waits, and comes to the thousand three hundred and five and thirty days.

10 Mic. 4:1–4: But in the last days it shall come to pass, that the mountain of the house of the LORD shall be established in the top of the mountains, and it shall be exalted above the hills; and people shall flow to it. And many nations shall come, and say, Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, and to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for the law shall go forth of Zion, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem. And he shall judge among many people, and rebuke strong nations afar off; and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks: nation shall not lift up a sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more. But they shall sit every man under his vine and under his fig tree; and none shall make them afraid: for the mouth of the LORD of hosts has spoken it.

11 Col. 1:15–20: [Christ,] "Who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature: For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him: And he is before all things, and by him all things consist. And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence. For it pleased the Father that in him should all fullness dwell; And, having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things to himself; by him, I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven."

12 Luke 4:16–21: "And he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up: and, as his custom was, he went into the synagogue on the sabbath day, and stood up for to read. And there was delivered to him the book of the prophet Esaias. And when he had opened the book, he found the place where it was written, the Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he has sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord. And he closed the book, and he gave it again to the minister, and sat down. And the eyes of all them that were in the synagogue were fastened on him. And he began to say to them, This day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears."

religious, the personal and the social perspective, whereas Jews stress the fact that in the political perspective peace has not yet arrived on earth. This implies that the Messiah did not yet appear. I will now focus on the Christian interpretation.

1.1 From the Religious Perspective

In his letter to the Romans, apostle Paul outlines the salvation Jesus brought to humans in reference to the peace that is established through Jesus as the Christ:

> Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ: By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God. And not only so, but we glory in tribulations also: knowing that tribulation works patience; and patience, experience; and experience, hope: And hope makes not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given to us.
> (Rom. 5:1–5)

According to Paul, peace with God is the main aim that Jesus has achieved. In Jesus Christ God overcomes violence with love and reconciliation. Whilst violence can merely be limited by other violence, and even this only as long as it is used proportionally, God's love is able to bring violence to an end and to establish the positive peace. Since this love is stronger than the sin of humans, love can drain the sources of violence. According to most of the authors of the New Testament, including Paul, sin as a broken relationship of all humans to God, and indeed causes evil deeds such as violence (Rom. 3:11–18).[13] Furthermore, they are convinced that humans are too weak to overcome these sins by themselves; God himself has rendered redemption through Jesus Christ instead (Rom. 3:23–24). The itinerant preacher Jesus from Nazareth has preached God to be a merciful father, willing to forgive all sins (Luke 15:11–24). Thus, only repentance and faith are needed to be redeemed. After being condemned and crucified as a criminal by the political and religious leaders, Jesus was resurrected by God. Ipso facto it was evident for the believers that those leaders were wrong, whereas Jesus was in the right and had proclaimed God as he really is (Acts 2:23f). This implies

13 **Rom. 3:11–18**: "There is none that understands, there is none that seeks after God. They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that does good, no, not one. Their throat is an open sepulchre; with their tongues they have used deceit; the poison of asps is under their lips: Whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness: Their feet are swift to shed blood: Destruction and misery are in their ways: And the way of peace have they not known: There is no fear of God before their eyes."

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> Recompense to no man evil for evil. Provide things honest in the sight of all men. If it be possible, as much as lies in you, live peaceably with all men. Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place to wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, said the Lord. (Rom. 12:17–19)

Christians should behave as humans and not as if they were God. To accept God being God and oneself being human implies an undisturbed relationship between God and man, in which both have their own profile and none is overruled by the other. This attitude is accompanied by a self-relativization of Christian faith that has two facets. Firstly, God is the judge, neither the Christians nor the Church are. Final judgements are therefore not due to either of them. They shall proclaim the gospel including its warnings of false deities, but they must not make final decisions nor condemn humans because of their religion. Secondly, God is the merciful father who forgives sins. So Christians are depending on the grace of God as well, since they are also sinners. This insight rejects religious hubris and evokes humility instead.

Thus, the freedom of religion as a human right can be supported by Christians not only because they benefit from it (as a religion), but furthermore because all humans are created by God and depend on his grace. The Last Judgement will verify or falsify the Christian faith as well as all other religious beliefs. God will judge all humans and thereby reveal the right and wrong religions. This eschatological caveat does not revoke the truth-claims of Christian creeds, yet it insists to differ between a religious assertion and a human believer. Passing eternal judgement on humans is solely up to God; to accept, to criticize, or to oppose religious assertions falls into the responsibility of Churches and is limited to nonviolent means (*sine vi humana, sed verbo*). Finally, all of these measures promote peace, because they involve religions into the public discourses and prevent by this that a religion absolutizes her own insights.

3 Current Tasks Regarding Peace

For Christian faith peace with God as a consequence of our justification is the foundation for peace on earth. This peace with God was realized by Jesus the Christ, in whom God reconciled the world with himself, not imputing their trespasses to them (2Cor. 5:19). From now on, God and Christians will cooperate to realize peace on earth. This earthly peace is two-fold; negative peace denotes the absence of war and violence, positive peace comprises justice and righteousness among the people. In order to support the process of peace, Christian faith accepts the state's monopoly of the legitimate use of force and does not

allow the religions to acquire this position. Likewise, the Christian tradition limits this use of force, for example with the just war theory. Furthermore, the Church is called to promote this peace process by proselytizing through peaceful means and engaging in society diaconally. Finally, all must accept freedom of religion as a human right.

It is not sufficient, however, solely to declare human rights; they must also be instilled and guaranteed. Since human rights belong to the *temporalia*, the secular government became more and more important as the authority to enforce these rights. During the religious wars in Europe in the 16th and 17thcenturies, the state became the principal guarantor for negative peace. Especially Thomas Hobbes (1588–1679) put all his hope in the absolute ruler as a mortal God (Leviathan). This ruler shall not only have the monopoly on the use of force, he shall furthermore also decide about the religious membership of his state and its citizens, because only this plenitude of power can, following Hobbes, prevent a "*bellum omnia contra omnes*" (a civil war all against all).[90] In order to limit or, if possible, to avoid religious wars, Hobbes strengthened the secular government and rejected religion. Other political philosophers followed him and declared that the *temporalia* should be treated as if there were no God ("*etsi Deus non daretur*"),[91] instead referring to the rights and the laws of the state. Many Christians, therefore, emigrated from Europe to America, because their religious freedom was not guaranteed by the state's laws.

Thus, the rule of law was a central means to achieve negative peace on earth, and it was bound to the state and his monopoly on the use of force. With this modification the cogency of the just war theory was affected, because it was now the state deciding whether to wage a war or not. The states developed into national states and their sovereignty was neither limited by nor bound to the Church or the religion. Each national state as a sovereign entity then has the right to conduct warfare. The strong points of this development were the containment of religious violence and the guarantee of the rule of law. The weak point was the absolute sovereignty of the national state that was neither bound to international institutions (as it will become in the 20th century through the United Nations) nor restricted by responsibility to the citizens (as it will become in the 21th century: the Responsibility to Protect). In summary, the state's sovereignty

90 Cf. Schotte, Dietrich, *Die Entmachtung Gottes durch den Leviathan. Thomas Hobbes über Religion*, Stuttgart: frommann-holzboog, 2013; Münkler, Herfried, *Thomas Hobbes. Eine Einführung*, Frankfurt/Main: Campus, 2014.

91 CF. Grotius, Hugo, *De Jure Belli ac Pacis. Libri tres* (1625), ed. By Walter Schätzel, Tübingen: Mohr-Siebeck, 1950, 33; Luther, Martin, *Der 127. Psalm ausgelegt an die Christen zu Riga von 1524* (= WA 15, 373, 3).

ensures the rule of law and fosters negative peace, but it is also dangerous because of the plenitude of power.

Accordingly, peace on earth is still long in coming. Although Steven Pinker has suggested that violence was steadily declining during human history,[92] it does not feel as if we are living in peaceful times. The Second World War and the constant threat of atomic warfare especially challenge Christian peace-ethics: Are atomic weapons, including the ability to destroy the entire planet, still to be categorized as a "sword," and by this justified as just military means? Is the policy of deterrence aiming at negative peace? How should the so called new wars, mostly civil-wars, riots, and acts of terrorism be classified? Neither Christians nor the Churches are able to answer these questions extensively by themselves. Albeit, they should provide a framework or suggestions, based on peace with God and oriented towards contemporary challenges. Consequently, this chapter will deal with proposals of the Christian faith concerning peace on earth in the 21th century.

3.1 From the Political Perspective

"War is contrary to the will of God"[93]– with this ethical imperative the World Council of Churches (WCC) in 1948 phrased an insight that the Peace Churches had already expressed, and that had become evident facing the world wars and their atrocities. Meanwhile, both of the major Churches in Germany followed this concept and have performed a paradigm shift, replacing the traditional term "just war" by the concept of "just peace."[94] The Catholic German Bishops Conference as well as the Protestant Council of EKD have recently each published

92 Cf. Pinker, Steven, *The Better Angels of Our Nature. Why Violence Has Declined*, New York: The Viking Press, 2011.

93 Cf. World Council of Churches, *Just Peace Companion*, 2nd edition 2012, 15; in German: Bericht der Vierten Sektion der Gründungs-Vollversammlung des Ökumenischen Rates der Kirchen in Amsterdam 1948; in: Kirche und Frieden. EKD Texte 3, Hannover (Kirchenkanzlei der EKD) 1982 155–162, 156: „Kriege sollen nach Gottes Willen nicht sein". Cf. Garstecki, Joachim, "Ist noch drin, was draufsteht? Ökumenische Friedensethik und kirchliche Friedensarbeit im Spannungsfeld zwischen ziviler Konfliktbearbeitung, militärischem Interventionismus und öffentlicher Kriegsgewöhnung. Eine Problemanzeige," in: Friedemann Stengel/ Jörg Ulrich (eds), *Kirche und Krieg. Ambivalenzen in der Theologie*, 213–231, Leipzig: EVA, 2015.

94 Cf. Werkner, Ines-Jacqueline, *Gerechter Friede. Das fortwährende Dilemma militärischer Gewalt*, Bielefeld: transcript, 2018.

a memorandum with "just peace" in the title.[95] This current conception of just peace lies in the line of sight of the assertion from 1948.[96] In further publications, the WCC has unfolded this assertion and has also taken up the term "just peace."[97] The notion of just peace rejects the traditional nexus in Christianity between war and justice as is found in the just war theory. Conflicts and quarrels are from biblical viewpoint indeed a fact that can be described and should be evaluated ethically afterwards. Thus, not the conflicts but the means to solve them should be moral and can be criticized from an ethical point of view as well. However, this applies to conflicts, and not to wars, following the WCC. War is not an occasionally arising incident like any other conflict that can be evaluated ethically as just or unjust. Correspondingly, war is not merely the continuation of policy by other means.[98] War rather indicates a failure of politics, as the main assignment of politics is to take responsibility for peace, justice, order, and law.

Whereas the just war tradition accepted war as a political means and limited it with ethical criteria, the just peace conception repudiates the idea that war can be a legitimate act.[99] Only peace can be referred to as just, never war. At best, a war might be the lesser evil and therefore risked – but it is still an evil. At first this could sound like a mere controversy on words. Yet there is an underlying shift of paradigm: Political considerations shall be designed to start not from war but from peace. To achieve peace means to prepare peace – and

95 Cf. Die deutschen Bischöfe, *Gerechter Friede, Bonn 2000; Aus Gottes Frieden leben – für gerechten Frieden sorgen. Eine Denkschrift des Rates der Evangelischen Kirche in Deutschland* (EKD), Gütersloh: Gütersloher Verlagshaus, 2007.

96 For the Catholic peace-ethics the papal encyclical "pacem in terries," published in 1963 during Vaticanum II was a milestone; cf. Justenhoven, Heinz-Gerhard/O'Conell, Mary Ellen (eds), *Peace Through Law. Reflections on Pacem in Terris from Philosophy, Law, Theology, and Political Science*, Baden-Baden: Nomos, 2016. For the Protestant traditions Dietrich Bonhoeffer was quite influential; cf. von Lüpke, Johannes, "Frieden im Kampf um Gerechtigkeit und Wahrheit. Dietrich Bonhoeffers Friedensethik," in: Volker Stümke/ Matthias Gillner (eds), *Friedensethik im 20. Jahrhundert*, 13–28, Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 2011.

97 Cf. World Council of Churches, *Just Peace Companion*, 2nd edition 2012. Cf. Raiser, Konrad, "Eine Ethik rechtserhaltender Gewalt im ökumenischen Diskurs. Zwischen gerechtem Krieg und Pazifismus," in: Ines-Jacqueline Werkner/ Torsten Meireis (eds), *Rechtserhaltende Gewalt – eine ethische Verortung. Fragen zur Gewalt Band 2*, 95–115, Wiesbaden: Springer, 2018.

98 Cf. von Clausewitz, Carl, *Vom Kriege* [1832], Neuausgabe, München: Ullstein, 32002, Erstes Buch, 1. Kapitel, Abschnitt 24, 44: „Krieg ist die bloße Fortsetzung der Politik mit anderen Mitteln".

99 Cf. Haspel, Michael, "Die „Theorie des gerechten Friedens" als normative Theorie internationaler Beziehungen? Möglichkeiten und Grenzen," in: Jean-Daniel Strub/Stefan Grotefeld (eds), *Der gerechte Friede zwischen Pazifismus und gerechtem Krieg. Paradigmen der Friedensethik im Diskurs*, 209–225, Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 2007.

not war: *si vis pacem, para pacem* – and not, as the old saying goes: *para bellum* (prepare the war).[100] In this context of "*para pacem*" (prepare peace), the international law, just policing, good governance, and international networking become very important. Hence, just peace corresponds to legal pacifism. Both refer the prohibition of force according to Art. 2 Par. 3f of the United Nation Charter:[101] conflicts and disputes ought to be solved with peaceful means; an international legal framework is a very important means.

Para pacem – this imperative already implies the two main insights from the just peace paradigm: Firstly peace is a process of preparing peace and rejecting violence; it is neither a constant factor nor an unchangeable ideal. Secondly this peace process is complex and therefore depends on networking (in politics: comprehensive approach). This multifacetedness can be illustrated with the aims that the WCC has stated in 2012:

- for peace in the community – so that all may live free from fear (Mic. 4:4),
- for peace with the earth – so that life is sustained,
- for peace in the marketplace – so that all may live with dignity,
- for peace among the people – so that human life is protected.[102]

These aims are linked to a peace-process in two perspectives. On the one hand the concept itself is evolving; analyzing "*para pacem*" implies discovering connections and achievements that can hamper or foster peace. Violence and force have likewise many facets that are partially interconnected; thus, new challenges can be detected. On the other hand these aims are signposts that will lead a certain way to promote peace. Yet, since people as well as communities live and change, these aims will never be realized in full. Thus, promoting, preserving, and renewing peace is a perpetual endeavor.[103]

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100 Cf. Senghaas, Dieter, "Frieden als Zivilisierungsprojekt," 14. An earlier form of this concise formulation can be found in the 19th century liberalism: „si vis pacem, para libertatem et iustitiam" – cf. Czempiel, Ernst-Otto, *Friedensstrategien. Eine systematische Darstellung außenpolitischer Theorien von Machiavelli bis Madariaga*, Opladen: Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften, ^{2}1998, 165f.

101 Cf. UNC (1945) art. 2 par. 3f: "All Members shall settle their international disputes by peaceful means in such a manner that international peace and security, and justice, are not endangered. All Members shall refrain in their international relations from the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any state, or in any other manner inconsistent with the Purposes of the United Nations."

102 Cf. World Council of Churches, *Just Peace Companion*, 2nd edition 2012, 9–13.

103 Cf. *Aus Gottes Frieden,* 2007, 11. – In the following passages I will outline the main insights from the current church papers dealing with just peace. As there are many consonances I will not refer to certain papers nor quote them directly.

The peace process is therefore connected with the conflict process. In both cases one can differ between prevention, intervention, and post-conflict peace building. Prevention does not imply prohibiting conflicts; quite the opposite, they can be helpful for individuals and for society to define their way of life or to set their priorities for themselves. Conflict should be prevented from turning violent. Education for peace, just conditions in society, equivalent opportunities in the market, and healthy environment will help reaching this goal. The Churches currently stress prevention as most important and they list many measures to foster prevention of conflict such as supporting the rule of law. A constitutional state with the separation of powers might be the best protection against new wars, especially in failing states. Yet the implications for the international system are debated:[104] When peace can be supported through law, do we need a world-state to establish and foster this law, although it might become tyrannical? Or is it better to merely install an international court, although it will be basically powerless, since the national states will not accept to be overruled by an alien organization? In any case, international organizations should be strengthened and human rights must be accepted worldwide. From the military perspective, the delivery of arms must be controlled, disarmament (not only of nuclear weapons) must make progress, and the privatization of violence must be stopped.

Before we turn to the issue of intervention into a violent conflict, some post-conflict remedies must be discussed. Since the rule of law is one of the most important aims, the stability of the state must be promoted to build up peace. At the same time, atrocities and injustice must be dredged up, and this is a painful and stressful process, because there are two aims that are both important but cannot be reached together. On the one hand, people want to know the truth, for example they want to know who violated the rights of their relatives. On the other hand, they want justice and atonement. Thus, the perpetrators are afraid to reveal the truth because of the legal consequences. Accordingly, the jurisdiction decrees that no one can be forced to incriminate oneself. A truth commission and the possibility of forgiveness should therefore be combined.[105] And it should be placed in the local governments so that victims and perpetrators can narrate their experiences and together find a solution to reconciliation. However, this procedure must be limited; otherwise the state's monopoly on legislation and jurisdiction will be weakened.

104 Cf. Justenhoven/O'Conell, *Peace Through Law*, 2016.

105 Cf. Gobodo-Madikizela, Pumla, *A Human Being Died That Night. A South African Woman Confronts the Legacy of Apartheid*, London: Granta Books, 2006.

The most defying point in the conflict process is reached when conflicts turn violent. In this case the peace process shall concentrate on protection and mediation. Whereas Churches and faith-based actors have been especially helpful in mediating (see below in the following subsection), politics is mainly responsible for the protection of the people. More precisely, two aspects are debated in the current Church papers. On the one hand the concept of "responsibility to protect" (R2P), developed by an international commission sponsored by the Canadian Government (ICISS) in 2001, caused a shift in international law: Not the interests of the (national) state, but the concerns of the people are crucial for the legacy of the government.[106] The government must protect its people. "Each individual State has the responsibility to protect its populations from genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity."[107] If it cannot or will not fulfill this duty, the international community may intervene with civil and military means up to a humanitarian intervention as the last resort (ultima ratio). This political commitment picks up the vote of the Church to protect the vulnerable, especially women and children, albeit with the possibility to use military means and thereby stuck in the cycle of violence.[108] Therefore, Christians are split in their attitude towards R2P.

On the other hand, the debates carry on between the two major peace traditions relating to the use of military force – as can be seen in the reactions to R2P. With the concept of just peace, the two major Churches in Germany have taken up the insights from the Peace Churches that war cannot be a just means. The Churches, following Jesus Christ, are bound to peace and shall therefore foster civil activities. However, in an armed conflict the vulnerable must be protected, if necessary with police and military means. At this point, the queries start with two questions: Is the state justified in using armed force? And are Christians allowed to support the state, for example as soldiers? These topics are still highly controversial among Christians and in the Churches.[109] The concept of just peace in the major Churches results in a legal pacifism, which implies that the use of force cannot be ruled out in any case, but must be restricted rigorously; whereas

106 Cf. Evans, Gareth, *The Responsibility to Protect. Ending Mass Atrocity Crimes Once and for All*, Washington: Brookings Institution Press, 2009; Verlage, Christopher, *Responsibility to Protect. Ein neuer Ansatz im Völkerrecht zur Verhinderung von Völkermord, Kriegsverbrechen und Verbrechen gegen die Menschlichkeit*, Tübingen: Mohr-Siebeck, 2009.

107 Cf. The United Nations General Assembly, *World Summit Outcome Document* 2005, 138.

108 Cf. Busche, Hubertus/Schubbe, Daniel (eds), *Die Humanitäre Intervention in der ethischen Beurteilung*, Tübingen: Mohr-Siebeck, 2013.

109 Cf. Enns, Fernando/Weiße, Wolfram (eds), *Gewaltfreiheit und Gewalt in den Religionen. Politische und theologische Herausforderungen*, Münster: Waxmann, 2016.

the Peace Churches cling to an absolute pacifism including the possibility for Christians to suffer as Jesus did. In order to settle this quarrel, the Churches stress again the processual character of peace, implying that they are all on their way to peace, but starting from different points and taking varying routes.

With this reference to the process of peace, the divergences can be explained and tolerated whereas the commonalities are stressed. For example, in 2007 the EKD has modified its position regarding nuclear weapons.[110] Having experienced the atrocities of the atom bombs in the Second World War (Hiroshima, Nagasaki), the Protestant Churches have since condemned the use of nuclear weapons. However, in the "Heidelberger Thesen" (1959), the tolerance of ownership of these weapons, including the threat to use them (deterrence) was accepted as a Christian behavior at that instant ("noch").[111] Nearly fifty years later (2007), the EKD stated that threatening with nuclear weapons can no longer be seen as a means of legitimate self-defense. This enlarged commonality with the Peace Churches created albeit another controversy: How should the government deal with those nuclear weapons that are already there? Is a nuclear disarmament required, certainly step by step, or must they be kept to hinder a new rat-race to earn these weapons, since the knowledge to build such bombs can never be extinguished?

This example illustrates the strong points of speaking of a peace-process: it allows modifications and facilitates tolerance. Nevertheless, there is also a weak point: A process may have different starting points, but it has one end. From this point of view, the different positions can be measured and compared. Such a ranking is dangerous though, because it upgrades the one and downgrades the other. In order to avoid this danger the second insight from "*para pacem*," the complexity, should be spelled out as a practice in discourse.

110 Cf. Stümke, Volker, "Der Streit um die Atombewaffnung im deutschen Protestantismus," in: Volker Stümke/Matthias Gillner (eds), *Friedensethik im 20. Jahrhundert*, 49–69, Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 2011; Möller, Ulrich, *Im Prozeß des Bekennens. Brennpunkte der kirchlichen Atomwaffendiskussion im deutschen Protestantismus 195–1962*, Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlagsgesellschaft, 1999.

111 Schockenhoff, Eberhard, *Kein Ende der Gewalt? Friedensethik für eine globalisierte Welt*, Freiburg/Breisgau: Herder, 2018, 379f explains that and how this „noch" modified it's meaning. In the 1950th three interpretations were at hand; firstly a factual reading (as a political compromise), secondly a psychological reading (as a personal acceptance of fear) and thirdly a temporal reading (as a time limit). Forty years later, this temporal meaning dominated and demanded the politics to start with disarmament talks.

3.2 From the Social Perspective

What should be done? The list of necessary or at least useful measures to achieve and preserve peace is long. In the state, a good government is needed, whereas corruption and nepotism are dangerous. The rule of law must be established and furthermore the laws should be just. In the market allocation should be performed in a fair way so that no one will have to starve. Children should be educated and should go to school. Man and woman must be treated equally. People must have the ability to participate in the political decision-making process and their human rights must be accepted and protected. Furthermore, they must be enabled and have the chance to lead a good and self-determined life. The environment must not be overcharged so that future generations can also live peacefully and without fear or need on this earth.

The main problems of this list are at hand. For a start, it is very abstract and does not entail concrete steps. Yet it is the process of developing concrete steps, and not the principles, where controversies begin. Furthermore, not all aims can be pursued at the same time with the same emphasis. Thus the problem of how to rank these aims arises. Finally, some of these aims do not suit each other well. Nevertheless, the aims themselves sound convincing. Consequently, the implementation process is decisive. The Churches could declare these aims in a know-it-all manner, by this mixing up their regiment in *spiritualia* and its duties with God and forgetting about the self-relativization they should have learned (as explained in the preceding section). Besides, it is of course not a peaceful behavior to act as guardian for the fellow citizens.

The better decision for the Churches would be to practice discourse. No less a figure than Pope Benedict XVI has advised the Church to engage in discourse, mainly with philosophy.[112] A critical dialogue of the Christian faith with philosophy is supportive for both sides.[113] On the one hand, the philosophy may learn that metaphysics is still a topic area for reason when it is confronted with Christians who can explain what and why they believe. On the other hand, Christians and the Churches may become more wary of turning

112 Vgl. Benedikt XVI., "Glaube, Vernunft und Universität. Erinnerungen und Reflexionen," in: Christoph Dohmen (ed.), *Die „Regensburger Vorlesung" Papst Benedikts XVI. im Dialog der Wissenschaften*, Regensburg: 15–26, Pustet, 2007, and id., "Ansprache seiner Heiligkeit Papst Benedikt XVI. im Deutschen Bundestag," in: Georg Essen (ed.), *Verfassung ohne Grund? Die Rede des Papstes im Bundestag*, 17–26, Freiburg/Breisgau: Herder, 2012.

113 Ratzinger, Joseph, "Was die Welt zusammenhält. Vorpolitische moralische Grundlagen eines freiheitlichen Staates," in: Jürgen Habermas/Joseph Ratzinger (eds), *Dialektik der Säkularisierung. Über Vernunft und Religion*, 39–60, Freiburg/Breisgau: Herder, 2005.

into fundamentalists. Fundamentalists tend to lock themselves into their belief-system and regard all others as outsiders and enemies. Yet challenged through the critical questions of philosophy, they cannot hide in their pious shells but must justify themselves and their confessions – or modify them when the philosophical annotations are compelling. This papal approach to connect faith and reason promotes the social engagement of the Churches to achieve and preserve peace as well. Instead of "knowing it all" from a pretended transcendent point of view, Churches can connect with other social institutions. And this connection is not a silent coexistence, but cooperation founded on discourse.

In supporting the peace process the Churches have a particular task not above, but beside the other contributors: According to Jesus Christ, the Church itself shall be a sign of peace and reconciliation or, as the German Bishops more precisely and provocative stated: a sacrament of peace.[114] The Churches shall point with their existence beyond themselves to the reconciliation with and through God. In their preaching and in the liturgy, in their own repentance and in the willingness to forgive, in their engagement for the poor and needy (as advocates for justice) and in political counselling, and last, but not least in their own dependence on God's forgiveness, the Churches proclaim and express peace with God becoming reality on earth. For this reason, the Churches must not use violent means themselves. Hence, Christians shall engage in social ministry for the good of humanity: By doing so they begin to implement the required justice in society; for example, they commit themselves globally to fair trade and locally to emergency relief. Whilst Christians and Churches shall take further steps towards peace, neither may undertake God's task: salvation. Christians and Churches are thereby protected against the risks to overburden their options for action, and from self-deification. This protective limitation will increase their placidity and their peace-ability, because it refers them to their place and tasks.

3.3 From the Personal Perspective

Not only the Churches, but also the Christians are called to support the peace process. A brief look to the role of faith-based actors in armed conflict shall illustrate this specific challenge. The political scientist Markus A. Weingardt, mostly engaged in peace and conflict studies, has examined how religions, and especially their followers (he speaks of faith-based actors), have been catalysts to

114 Cf. Die deutschen Bischöfe, *Gerechter Friede*, Bonn, 2000, 89.

the peace-progress in various conflicts worldwide.[115] According to Weingardt, these local actors are very successful for three reasons: Firstly, they are emotionally involved in the conflict, since they love the country and its people. Secondly, they are trustworthy, because their aim to achieve peace is not tarnished by their own economic or political interests; it is rather based on their faith and concentrated on ending the conflict. Thirdly, they are thought to be capable of achieving peace, since they do not belong to one of the parties of the dispute. Altogether, the faith-based actors have a credit of trust. This applies to Christians and Church representatives as well. They must use this credit by engaging in the peace-process.

Furthermore, peace education is an important means, and education is primarily located within the family. The WCC publication from 2012 defines education as "a profoundly spiritual formation of character that happens over a long period of time." This is, according to the WCC, a "holistic process of character formation," and the "everyday life practise" that shall be influenced "from the very beginning" – by parents, Christian teachers as well as the Churches. "That involves introspection of all members of the Church, into how their choices, their actions and their lifestyles do or do not make them servants of peace."[116] Nevertheless, this goes too far. Christian educators tend to completely engulf the child and thereby damage the freedom of religion. Furthermore, this holistic approach tries to do the work of the Holy Spirit. Peace education is indeed important and should be practized not only in word but also in deed and cogent behavior. Yet it must know its own limitations, otherwise peace education would spread itself too thin and would tend to a self-deification.

3.4 From the Religious Perspective

Christianity as a religion can foster peace but it can also become evil and support religious wars. Charles Kimball listed five features that indicate "when

115 Cf. Weingardt, Markus, *Religion Macht Frieden. Das Friedenspotential von Religionen in politischen Gewaltkonflikten*, Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 2007; id., *Was Frieden schafft. Religiöse Friedensarbeit. Akteure, Beispiele, Methoden*, Gütersloh: Gütersloher Verlagshaus, 2014.
116 World Council of Churches, *Just Peace Companion*, 2nd edition 2012, 113–115.

religion becomes evil."[117] Though Kimball has scrutinized the three monotheistic religions, I will concentrate now on Christianity:

1. The first danger of religion is its aspiration to claim absolute truth, since this aspiration may easily lead to intolerance, and intolerance becomes dangerous when not only arguments and truth-claiming statements are attacked, but humans are affected as well. Letting this argument play out, to be intolerant against the content of an argument is not half as dangerous as the intolerance against humans. Christian faith guard against this danger and should be clear in its mind time and time again, that God is the judge and that God will vouch for the eternal truth. Christians proclaim the Triune God, but he alone can and will prove that he is Father, Son and Holy Spirit.
2. The second danger lies in faith itself. Faith bound to God excessively can lead to blind obedience. Such Christians isolate themselves and condemn others, first inside the group, then expand to others in other constellations. To prevent this danger, debates with other religions, with philosophy, humanities, and sciences are vital for Christianity.
3. Kimball calls the third danger the "establishing of the ideal time." Those who are convinced that the end is near will not deal with the secular world and its daily challenges. In this case, Luther's legitimization of the secular government and his call for Christians to support the state's work with their professions can help to cool down religiously overheated minds.
4. The fourth danger is the hubris of the Church and the faith. He or she who is determined to have the right and last word wants to dominate others and is not willing to look for balance and compromise. Hopefully, such a Christian will remember that he or she is not God, but a sinner depending on God's forgiveness just like any other.
5. Finally, the fifth danger in Kimball's list is the identification of religion and nation. One who adores the government and its politicians and who swears absolute loyalty to the temporal rulers is as dangerous as those who want to build a religious state where everyone has to obey the religious leader. Both should consider that, according to Luther, God has ordained two regiments.

Christianity must be aware that biblical and religious sources, and furthermore even the confessions and convictions of the Christian faith, carry peaceful messages, but also some precarious contents that are open to violence. The Christian

117 Cf. Kimball, Charles, *When Religion Becomes Evil*, New York, Harper, 2002; id., *When Religion becomes lethal The Explosive Mix of Politics and Religion in Judaism, Christianity, and Islam*, San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2011.

faith is not simply exploited by bellicose politicians or war-lords, it has perilous resources.[118] There are two ways to handle this danger. On the one hand, one can limit the political influence of religion.[119] For Christianity, this implies accepting the self-relativizations (the Church is neither God's proxy nor the temporal regiment) and the duties (to proclaim the gospel with words and without violence). On the other hand, one can start a relecture of the precarious texts and analyze the perilous interpretations.[120] By this one can come into dialogue with radical, (i.e. fundamentalist) Christians, because both parties refer to the same sources.

Furthermore, facing these possible perils, all religions should be interested in initiating a world-wide cooperation concerning peace ethic. Especially, in our times of pluralism and globalization, such attempts of understanding among the religions have become urgent. Hence, Hans Küng started the "Projekt Weltethos" in 1990 with three premises:

- No peace among the nations is possible without peace among the religions.
- No peace among the religions is possible without dialogue between the religions.
- No dialogue between the religions is possible without basic research in one's own religion.[121]

In 1993, a Parliament of the World's Religions signed a declaration based on the Golden Rule: "What you wish done to yourself, do to others" (Matt. 7:12).[122] Thus, the religions have found moral values and principles that all can share, although the derivation and the concrete wording might differ. As a result, these shared moral insights are open for divergent reasonings. This interreligious dialogue can foster understanding, tolerance and acceptance between the religions. Its focus is acquiring peace on earth through ethics and puts the definition of God and the associated truth-claims in the rear. The eschatological caveat that God will be the judge and will bring eternal peace is therefore

118 Cf. Assmann, Jan, *Totale Religion. Ursprünge und Formen puritanischer Verschärfung*, Wien: Picus, 2016.

119 Cf. Svensson, Isak, *Ending Holy Wars. Religion and Conflict Resolution in Civil Wars*, Queensland: University of Queensland Press, 2012.

120 Cf. Kippenberg, Hans G., *Gewalt als Gottesdienst. Religionskriege im Zeitalter der Globalisierung*, München: C.H. Beck, 2008.

121 Cf. Küng, Hans, *Projekt Weltethos*, München: Piper, 1990; id., *Handbuch Weltethos. Eine Vision und ihre Umsetzung*, München: Piper, 2012; Frühbauer, Johannes F., "Das Projekt Weltethos," in: Ines-Jacqueline Werkner/Klaus Ebeling (eds), *Handbuch Friedensethik*, 915–924, Wiesbaden: Springer, 2017.

122 Matt. 7:12: "Therefore all things whatever you would that men should do to you, do you even so to them."

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Asma Afsaruddin

The Concept of Peace in Islam

Regardless of predominant discourses in the Western public sphere about Islam and Muslims today, it must be emphasized in this chapter that the concept of peace is a central one in Islamic thought. The Arabic word *salām* is most frequently used to connote "peace"; it shares its etymology with the name for the religion – "Islam" – itself. *As-salām* is one of the ninety-nine names for God (*Allāh*) in Islam invoked by pious Muslims everywhere; this further underscores the importance of the concept of peace in Islamic religious thought and praxis. It is also well-known that Muslims traditionally greet one another by saying "Peace be on you" (*As-sal ām ʿalaykum*) to which the response is "And peace be on you" (*Wa-ʿalaykum as-sal ām*). With regard to the general establishment of peace as a socio-organizational principle, the prevalent attitude among Muslims is that the revealed laws of God, properly interpreted and implemented, will inevitably lead to the ultimate desideratum: a just and peaceful social order.

While peace, peaceableness, and peacemaking are central concepts within Islam, the religion in its fundamental orientation cannot be described as a pacifist. Pacifism in its absolute sense is generally understood to mean an unconditional eschewal of violence under any and every circumstance.[1] In general, the Islamic moral landscape has not been receptive to the idea of pursuing non-violence as an ideological end in itself, severed from the requirement of fulfilling the conditions of social and political justice. Non-violence, after all, can be (and has been) forcibly imposed by the strong on the weak to the detriment of the latter's rights and dignity. Thus pacifism, when defined as non-violence under all circumstances and the unconditional rejection of war, even in the face of violent aggression, would be regarded in specific situations as facilitating injustice and contributing to social instability – and, therefore, morally and ethically unacceptable.

The neologism "pacificism," on the other hand, more closely encapsulates traditional Islamic attitudes towards peacemaking. Pacificism refers to a preference for peaceful conditions over war, but accepts that armed combat for defensive purposes may on occasion be necessary to advance the cause of peace.[2]

1 Jenny Teichman, *The Philosophy of War and Peace*, Exeter, UK: Imprint Academic, 2006, 171.
2 For the distinction between "pacifism" and "pacificism," see Martin Ceadel, *Pacifism in Britain 1914–1945. The Defining of a Faith*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1980, chap. 1; see also idem, *Thinking about Peace and War*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987, 101ff.

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Conditional pacifism may be another way of referring to this position. In contrast, absolute pacifism harbors the possibility of acquiescing in injustice and evil, a moral infraction that is indefensible within the Islamic ethos. The Islamic principle of *ḥisba* (enjoining good and forbidding evil) instructs that refusal to resist wrong, even if only verbally, is a grave abdication of individual and collective moral responsibility. Peace does not devolve on its own; the establishment of a non-violent social and world order requires conscious effort and constant vigilance, in addition to peaceful intent. Paradoxically, the maintenance of peace requires that those who would seek to subvert it must be resisted through a variety of peaceful means at first and ultimately through principled violence when peaceful means are exhausted. The Qurʾān uses the term *jihād* to connote this constant human struggle to promote what is essentially right and good and prevent what is evil and wrong in all aspects of life.

Discussions of peace and violence in the Islamic milieu must therefore start with a focus on the term *jihād* with its multiple, contested meanings in the various sources of Islamic thought and praxis. As always, our discussion must begin with the Qurʾān, the central revealed scripture in Islam which lays the foundation for all moral, ethical, and legal thinking in the Islamic milieu.

1 Jihād in the Qurʾān

Jihād in the Qurʾān is a broad, multivalent term and its basic signification is "struggle," "striving," "exertion." The lexeme *jihād* is frequently conjoined to the phrase "*fī sabīl Allāh*" (lit. "in the path of God") in extra-Qurʾānic literature. The full locution in Arabic, *al-jihād fī sabīl Allāh*, consequently means "struggling/striving for the sake of God." This translation points to the polysemy of the term *jihād* and its potentially different connotations in different contexts, for human striving "in the path of/for the sake of God" can be accomplished in multiple ways. A different Qurʾānic term *qitāl* specifically refers to "fighting" or "armed combat" and is a component of *jihād* in specific situations. *Ḥarb* is the Arabic word for war in general. The Qurʾān employs this last term four times: to refer to illegitimate wars fought by those who wish to spread corruption on earth (5:64); to the thick of battle between believers and non-believers (8:57; 47:4); and, in one instance, to the possibility of war waged by God and his prophet against those who would continue to practice usury (2:279).[3] This term

3 These are the only instances when the specific word *ḥarb* is employed in the Qurʾān.

is never used with the phrase "in the path of God" and has no bearing on the concept of *jihād*.

According to the Qurʾānic world-view, human beings should be constantly engaged in the basic moral endeavor of enjoining what is right and forbidding what is wrong (Qurʾān 3:104, 110, 114; 7:157; 9:71, 112, etc.). The "struggle" implicit in the application of this precept is *jihād*, properly and plainly speaking, and the endeavor is both individual and collective. The means for carrying out this struggle vary according to circumstances, and the Qurʾān often refers to those who "strive with their wealth and their selves" (*jāhadū bi-amwālihim wa-anfusihim*; for e.g., Qurʾān 8:72).

We now proceed to a discussion of the various meanings of *jihād* as they occur in the Qurʾān. Although not intended as an exhaustive discussion, our survey below brings to the fore the different inflections of *jihād* against the backdrop of some of the key events in the life of the Prophet Muhammad (d. 11/632).

1.1 The Meccan Period (610 CE–1/622)

According to Islamic sources, the Prophet Muhammad began to receive revelations roughly around 610 CE. This constitutes the beginning of the Meccan phase of Muhammad's prophetic career which lasted until the famous *hijra* or emigration to Medina in 622 CE, which corresponds to the first year of the Islamic calendar. During the Meccan period, the Muslims were not given divine permission to physically retaliate against the pagan Meccans who persecuted them for their profession of monotheism and instituted several harsh measures against them – including an economic boycott, forced starvation, and physical torture. Verses revealed in this period counsel the Muslims to steadfastly endure the hostility of the Meccans while continuing to practice and propagate their religion. Although the Qurʾān recognizes the right to self-defense for those who are wronged, it maintains in this early period that to bear patiently the wrong-doing of others and to forgive those who cause them harm is the superior course of action in resisting evil. A cluster of verses (42:40–43) reveal this highly significant, non-militant dimension of struggling against wrong-doing (and, therefore, of *jihād*) in this early phase of Muhammad's prophetic career. These verses state:

> The requital of evil is an evil similar to it: hence, whoever pardons and makes peace, his reward rests with God – for indeed, He does not love evil-doers. Yet surely, as for those who defend themselves after having been wronged – no blame whatever attaches to them: blame attaches but to those who oppress people and behave outrageously on

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1.2 Jihād as Justified Fighting in the Qurʾān

To continue our delineation of the semantic topography of *jihād* in the Qurʾān, we must now turn our attention to the combative component (*qitāl*) nestled within this umbrella term. The question we must ask is when, where, why, and how does *qitāl* become a required component of striving in the path of God, according to the Qurʾān? To answer this question, we have to focus on the Medinan phase of the Prophet Muhammad's career and take a close look at select critical verses which deal with the necessity of fighting under certain conditions as a moral duty imposed upon believers.

1.2.1 Jihād in the Medinan period

During the ten years of the Meccan period and the first two years of the Medinan period (622–624 CE) – for a total of roughly twelve years – Muslims were not allowed to physically retaliate against their pagan Meccan persecutors. But shortly after the emigration to Medina, a specific Qurʾānic verse (22:39–40) that permitted fighting for the first time was revealed. The verse states:

> Permission [to fight] is given to those against whom fighting has been initiated, and indeed, God has the power to help them: those who have been driven from their homes against all right for no other reason than their saying, "Our Provider is God!" For, if God had not enabled people to defend themselves against one another, monasteries, churches, synagogues, and mosques – in all of which God's name is abundantly glorified – would surely have been destroyed.

In the Meccan period as we recall, Qurʾān 42:40–43 (mentioned above) allowed self-defense but not through violent means; the reasons for undertaking this kind of non-violent self-defense are the wrongful conduct of the enemy and their oppressive and immoral behavior on earth. In Qurʾān 22:39–40, two more reasons are given: the initiation of fighting by the enemy and wrongful expulsion of people from their homes for no other reason than their affirmation of belief in one God. Furthermore, the Qurʾān asserts, if people were not allowed to defend themselves against aggressive wrong-doers, all the houses of worship – it is noteworthy that Jewish and Christian places of worship are included alongside Muslim ones – would be destroyed and thus the word of God extinguished. It is reasonable to infer from this verse that Muslims may resort to defensive combat even on behalf of non-Muslim believers who are the object of the hostility of non-believers. These are the just causes for which Muslims may go to war against an intractable enemy, like the pagan Meccans, against whom all peaceful means of resistance were deployed and exhausted during the

preceding non-violent twelve years period before divine permission was finally granted to fight in self-defense.

Another verse (Qurʾān 2:217) states:

> They ask you concerning fighting in the prohibited months.[25] Answer them: "To fight therein is a serious offence. But to restrain [people] from following the cause of God, to deny God, to violate the sanctity of the sacred mosque, and to expel its people from its environs is with God a greater wrong than fighting in the forbidden month. [For] disorder and oppression are worse than killing.

In this verse, the Qurʾān acknowledges the enormity of fighting during the prohibited months but at the same time stresses the higher moral imperative of maintaining order and resisting wrong-doing. Therefore, when both just cause and righteous intention exist, war in self-defense against an intractable enemy may become obligatory.

The Qurʾān further states that it is the duty of Muslims to defend those who are oppressed and who call out to them for help (4:75), except against a people with whom the Muslims have concluded a treaty (8:72). The Qurʾān also counsels (5:8), "Let not rancor towards others cause you to incline to wrong and depart from justice. Be just; that is closer to piety." This verse therefore warns against succumbing to unprincipled and vengeful desire to punish and inflict disproportionate damage.

The principle of proportionality is in fact emphasized in Qurʾān 2:194 where it is explicitly stated: "Whoever attacks you attack him to the extent of his attack. Fear God and know that God is with the God-fearing." Aṭ-Ṭabarī helpfully points to a range of interpretive opinions among the exegetes. According to Ibn ʿAbbās, this verse was revealed in Mecca when the Muslims were few in number and too weak to subdue the polytheists, who would revile and physically hurt them. Thus, God allowed the Muslims to retaliate to the extent to which they were hurt or to be patient or to forgive, the latter being the ideal response, according to Ibn ʿAbbās. When the Prophet emigrated to Medina, and God increased him in strength, and rescued Muslims from their victimhood and gave them control of their own affairs, he commanded them not to attack one another like the people of the pre-Islamic period.[26]

But others maintained, continues aṭ-Ṭabarī, that the verse was Medinan and allowed believers to fight those among the polytheists who fought them.

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25 These were four specific months deemed sacred in the pre-Islamic period during which fighting was prohibited. These months are: Shawwāl, Dhū ʾl-Qaʿda, Dhū ʾl-Ḥijja, and Muḥarram.

26 Aṭ-Ṭabarī, *Jāmiʿ*, 2:205.

Those who subscribed to this interpretation included Mujāhid b. Jabr with which interpretation aṭ-Ṭabarī agrees, since the verses preceding Qurʾān 2:194 have to do with fighting the unbelievers, which was allowed only after the *hijra*. The remainder of the verse is also Medinan since fighting was not permitted in the Meccan period. The meaning of "Those who attack you retaliate against them to the extent to which they attack you," may be compared to "Fight in the path of God those who fight you." The resulting meaning is that "whoever attacks you in the Kaʿba and fights you, attack and fight him to the extent of his act of aggression," according to the law of *talionis* (*qiṣāṣ*). Others have maintained that the meaning of this verse is, "Whoever aggresses against you – that is, whoever is hostile towards you and inflicts a wrong – you may attack him – that is inflict harm on him to the same extent – in exact retribution (*qiṣāṣ*) for what he did to you, without transgressing the limits (*lā ẓulman*)."[27] The verse concludes, aṭ-Ṭabarī continues, with an assurance to the believers that those who adhere to these limits are the pious ones and God is with the pious who revere him, carry out the religious obligations, and avoid what is forbidden.[28]

1.2.2 Initiation of Hostilities

The Qurʾān also has specific injunctions with regard to initiation of hostilities. Qurʾān 2:190 which reads, "Fight in the cause of God those who fight you, but do not commit aggression, for God loves not aggressors," forbids Muslims from commencing hostilities. Fighting must be in response to a prior act of aggression by the enemy.

Qurʾān 2:190 is one of the most significant verses concerning the combative *jihād* in the Medinan period. Early exegetes, such as Mujāhid and as-Suddī (d. 128/745), unequivocally subscribed to the view that the verse explicitly forbids Muslims from ever initiating aggression against anyone, including obvious wrongdoers/oppressors (*az-ẓālimīn*), in any place, sacred or profane. Thus Mujāhid comments that according to this verse, one should not fight until the other side commences fighting.[29] According to Muqātil, this verse is specifically a denunciation of the Meccans who had commenced hostilities at al-Hudaybiyya (6/628), leading to a repeal of the prohibition imposed upon Muslims against fighting near

27 Ibid., 2:205–06.
28 Ibid., 2:206.
29 Mujāhid, *Tafsīr*, 23.

1.2.3 Qurʾān 9:12–13 and 2:216

Qurʾān 9:12–13 is another important cluster of verses providing a list of reasons that make physical retaliation permissible against an enemy. These verses state:

> If they break their pacts (*aymānahum*) after having concluded them and revile your religion, then fight the leaders of unbelief. Will you not fight a people (*qawman*) who violated their oaths and had intended to expel the Messenger and commenced [hostilities] against you the first time?

There is a general unanimity among the exegetes that these verses underscore the prior aggression of the pagan Meccans against the Muslims which necessitated fighting against them. The early exegetes Mujāhid, Muqātil and the Ibāḍī exegete of the late third/ninth century Ibn Muḥakkam (d. 290/903) understand these verses as allowing Muslims to fight those polytheists who had violated their pacts (*aymānahum*) with them, had denigrated Islam, and initiated hostilities against them.[32] Muqātil specifically remarks that Qurʾān 9:12 refers to the Meccan polytheists who violated their agreement with the Prophet to desist from fighting from two years. Instead of observing the truce, they secretly armed the clan of Kināna and goaded the latter to attack the clan of Khuzāʿa, who had made peace with Muhammad. As a result, "the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, deemed it licit to fight them" (*fa-staḥalla an-nabī ṣallā allāhu ʿalayhi wa-sallam qitālahum*). The next verse refers to the same incident concerning Kināna and Khuzāʿa, he continues, and denounces the Quraysh for descending on *Dār an-nadwa*,[33] conspiring to either kill the Prophet, shackle him, or expel him. The Quraysh commenced hostilities when they marched to Badr to fight the Muslims.[34]

In his commentary on Qurʾān 9:12, aṭ-Ṭabarī says that it is a critique of those among the Quraysh who violated the terms of their pact with Muhammad that they would not fight the Muslims nor provide aid to their enemies; additionally, these Qurayshīs had defamed Islam. The leaders of the unbelievers thus had to be fought against so as to cause them to desist from providing aid to the enemies of Muslims and from reviling Islam. Aṭ-Ṭabarī notes that most exegetes agree with this interpretation, although they differ on the precise

32 Ibid. 58–59.

33 *Dār al-nadwa*, referred to a kind of town hall in Mecca to the north of the Kaʿba where the Quraysh used to meet to deliberate upon important communal matters and hold certain public events; see the ar. "Dār al-nadwa" in the *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, second edition, ed. Peri Bearman et al., published online 2012.

34 Muqātil, *Tafsīr*, 2:159–60.

identification of the leaders of the unbelievers.[35] The next verse adds to the polytheists' list of misdeeds their expulsion of the Prophet and their commencement of hostilities during the battle of Badr. Others, like Mujāhid, say it is because they began to fight the clan of Khuzāʿa who were the allies of Muhammad. The verse concludes, comments aṭ-Ṭabarī, by warning that Muslims should fear God more than they do the polytheists.[36]

In the late sixth/twelfth century, ar-Rāzī notably emphasizes that the verb *badaʾūkum* in Qurʾān 9:13 draws attention to the fact that the aggressor is unequivocally the greater offender (*tanbīhan ʿalā anna l-bādiʾ aẓlam*).[37] Along with Qurʾān 2:190, Qurʾān 9:13 is understood generally to offer the most explicit iteration of this scriptural condition – "that they had initiated aggression against you" (*wa-hum badaʾūkum awwala marratin*) – for resorting to armed combat.

Those who would prefer to infer an unending divine command to fight non-Muslims qua non-Muslims look elsewhere in the Qurʾān. One of their favorite verses is Qurʾān 2:216 which states "Fighting has been prescribed for you even though you find it displeasing. Perhaps you dislike something in which there is good for you and perhaps you find pleasing that which causes you harm. But God knows and you do not."

A diachronic survey of the exegeses of Qurʾān 2:216 however unearths an early critical position on fighting that became nearly completely forgotten or ignored in the later period. The verse which describes fighting as a prescribed duty (*kutiba ʿalaykum al-qitāl*) instigated a discussion among exegetes as to who exactly was being addressed in the pronominal suffix – *kum*. Aṭ-Ṭabarī provides valuable documentation that early Medinan authorities like Ibn Jurayj and ʿAṭāʾ b. Abī Rabāḥ believed that only the Muslims during the time of Muhammad are the referent in this verse. Ar-Rāzī adds to this list the name of another Medinan scholar ʿAbd Allāh b. ʿUmar who had similarly maintained that the duty of fighting was imposed on the Companions alone. Contrasted to these Medinan scholars is the early Syrian authority Makḥūl who is said to have sworn at the Kaʿba that fighting (he uses the word *ghazw*, no doubt to set up a contrast to defensive fighting) was obligatory. His student, the well-known Syrian jurist al-Awzāʿī (d. 15/774), was more equivocal – and pragmatic – in his views, as reported by aṭ-Ṭabarī. In the fifth/eleventh century, al-Wāḥidī is on record as endorsing the early position that fighting as a religiously prescribed duty applied only to the Companions, citing ʿAṭāʾ b. Abī Rabāḥ as his authority.

35 For a discussion of the various possibilities, see aṭ-Ṭābarī, *Jāmiʿ*, 6:329.

36 Ibid., 6:331.

37 Ibid., 5:535.

It is clear, therefore, on the basis of this substantial documentation that this position was hardly a minority and negligible one in Islamic history. As late as the fifth/eleventh century, our sources indicate that this remained a credible and dominant view subscribed to by influential scholars and that there was considerable resistance on the part of some scholars to the attempts of other scholars to aggrandize the status of fighting as a religious duty incumbent on *all* believers for all time.[38]

There is a clear regional breakdown by the time of the Successors in the Umayyad period – our survey indicates that Ḥijāzī scholars, prominently among them ʿAṭāʾ b. Abī Rabāḥ, tended to understand Qurʾān 2:216 as mandating fighting only for the Companions during the time of Muḥammad while Syrian and, one assumes, generally pro-Umayyad jurists, like Makḥūl, subscribed to the view that the verse contained a general commandment for all eligible Muslims to fight. This latter position is articulated most explicitly by ar-Rāzī in the early sixth/twelfth century when he asserts that "in spite of what ʿAṭāʾ said," the verse in its use of *ʿalaykum* is to be understood as imposing the duty of fighting on both those who were present at the time of its revelation and those who will come later. Given his defensive tone, ar-Rāzī is fully aware that he is going against the prevailing exegetical near-consensus of his time that, according to this verse, fighting as an individual religious obligation had lapsed after the time of the Prophet. But clearly the legal sensibilities of his time and the historical exigencies during the Seljuq period plagued by vulnerability to external enemies must have prompted ar-Rāzī to adopt this line of reasoning. Al-Qurṭubī in the last quarter of the seventh/thirteenth century hews to very similar views; in his case, his concern to establish fighting as an individual duty on the basis of this verse is prompted by the precarious situation in which Muslims in al-Andalus find themselves in the face of the Reconquista. It should be noted in this context that other early authorities like Ibn ʿAṭiyya and Sufyān ath-Thawrī cited by our exegetes construed the military *jihād* in general as a voluntary (*taṭawwuʿ*) and collective act.[39]

1.2.4 Qurʾān 9:5 and Qurʾān 9:29

Roughly by the century with the maturation of the legal schools (*madhāhib*), we start to detect a strong exegetical tendency to infer a general mandate from

38 See a discussion of these various views in Afsaruddin, *Striving in the Path of God*, 65–71.
39 Ibid.

the Qurʾān to fight offensive or expansionist wars. Two Medinan verses are often cited by many jurists as setting up a religious obligation to fight non-Muslims until they convert to Islam or at least capitulate to Muslim rule. The first is Qurʾān 9:5 which states: "When the sacred months have lapsed, then slay the polytheists (*al-mushrikīn*) wherever you may encounter them. Seize them and encircle them and lie in wait for them. But if they repent and perform the prayer and give the *zakāt*, then let them go on their way, for God is forgiving and merciful." The second is Qurʾān 9:29, which states: "Fight those who do not believe in God nor in the Last Day and do not forbid what God and his messenger have forbidden and do not follow the religion of truth from among those who were given the Book until they proffer the *jizya* with [their] hands in humility."

A survey of exegetical works reveals that until the Seljuq period, the first verse Qurʾān 9:5 was not the subject of much attention among Qurʾān commentators. Early exegetes understood the *mushrikīn* mentioned in this verse to refer specifically to those polytheists with whom the first generation of Muslims did not have pacts and therefore historically circumscribed in its application. Thus, Muqātil understands the *mushrikīn* mentioned in the verse as a reference to those polytheists during the time of Muhammad with whom there was no pact (*ʿahd*) and who represented a hostile faction against whom the Muslims could legitimately fight.[40]

Aṭ-Ṭabarī also understands the verse to command the slaying of hostile polytheists specifically during the time of Muhammad.[41] After aṭ-Ṭabarī it is noteworthy that al-Wāḥidī and az-Zamakhsharī both pay scant attention to Qurʾān 9:5, since the verse was unambiguously understood by them to refer to the treatment of the polytheists during Muhammadʾs time and thus to have no further applicability in their own time and place.[42]

It is extremely significant that no exegete in our survey refers specifically to Qurʾān 9:5 as the *āyat as-sayf* ("verse of the sword") before the late eighth/fourteenth century. We first encounter this designation in our survey in the commentary of the well-known exegete Ibn Kathīr (d. 774/1373) from the Mamluk era.[43] Ibn Kathīr's characterization of this verse indicates to us that by the Mamluk period when Islamic realms were under continuous assault by the Crusaders and the Mongols, many scholars felt impelled to derive a general expansive mandate from Qurʾān 9:5 and other such historically circumscribed

40 Muqātil, *Tafsīr*, 2:157.

41 Ibid.

42 See this discussion in Afsaruddin, *Striving in the Path of God*, 72–73.

43 Ibn Kathīr, *Tafsīr al-Qurʾān al-ʿaẓīm*, Beirut: Dār al-Jil, 1990, 2:322.

Qurʾānic verses to fight and punish all those who posed a threat to the well-being of Muslims.

Another verse Qurʾān 9:29 has been understood by a number of scholars to mandate endless warfare against the People of the Book unless they convert to Islam and that it too, like Qurʾān 9:5, abrogates other conciliatory verses in the Qurʾān. A diachronic survey of the exegeses of this verse reveals the following: Qurʾān 9:29 was understood by the early exegete Mujāhid b. Jabr as a specific reference to the battle of Tabūk,[44] thereby implying that the scriptuaries referenced in this verse are specifically hostile factions from among them, like the Byzantine Christians.[45] However, later exegetes understand this verse as referring broadly to Jews and Christians who are required to humbly pay the *jizya* as a marker of their inferior legal status vis-à-vis Muslims. Aṭ-Ṭabarī also acknowledges that the historical context for the revelation of this verse was war with Byzantium, and soon thereafter Muhammad undertook the campaign of Tabūk, as maintained by Mujāhid and others.[46]

Ar-Rāzī in the late sixth/twelfth century helpfully preserves a spectrum of opinions among Muslims scholars on how to interpret key locutions in the verse which indicate divine dissatisfaction with certain contingents from among the People of the Book. By his time, most exegetes read this verse as containing a blanket condemnation of Jews and Christians because they do not believe as Muslims do. Ar-Rāzī however documents the important views of an early Kufan exegete Abū Rawq (ʿAṭiyya b. al-Ḥārith al-Hamadānī al-Kūfī, d. 140/757) who stated that this verse chides Jews and Christians for not heeding the prescriptions contained in the Torah and the Gospel respectively. Abū Rawqʾs views are more credibly in line with several Qurʾānic verses (Qurʾān 5:44–47; 5:66) which call upon Jews and Christians to follow the Torah and the Gospel respectively, and other verses which refer to different revealed laws and ways of life existing concurrently with Islam without having been abrogated (for example, Qurʾān 5:48), and which affirm that previous revelations are confirmed, rather than superseded, by the Qurʾān (for example, 2:89,101; 5:48; 10:37). No doubt over time as Muslims became majorities outside of the Arabian peninsula and began to develop a growing sense of communal solidarity vis-à-vis non-Muslims, often against the backdrop of continuing skirmishes with the Byzantine Christians

44 Mujāhid, *Tafsīr*, 99.

45 This verse refers specifically to the Byzantines who are said to have amassed their forces on the Syrian border in preparation for an attack on Muslims in the year 630. Arabic sources refer to the event as the Battle of Tabūk, although no battle was eventually fought since the Byzantine forces failed to materialize.

46 Aṭ-Ṭabarī's, *Jāmiʿ*, 6:349.

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this verse. Thus, Mujāhid says that the statement "Were you to spend all that is on earth you would not be able to reconcile their hearts," means that when two Muslims meet and shake hands, their sins are forgiven. A variant exegesis attributed to Mujāhid offers further clarification of this somewhat elliptical comment. According to this variant, a man named ʿAbda b. Abī Lubāba related that he met Mujāhid and the latter took his hand in his own and said, "If you should see two individuals who harbor love for God and one of them takes the hand of the other and smiles at him, their sins drop off them just as the leaves drop from the tree." ʿAbda told Mujāhid, "But indeed that is easy." Mujāhid remarked, "Do not say that, for indeed God has stated, 'Were you to spend all that is on earth you would not be able to reconcile their hearts.'"[116]

The two reports taken together convey Mujāhid's conviction that sincere faith in God results in genuine bonds of friendship and good will among believers, expressed outwardly in gestures of friendship towards one another, such as by shaking hands and exchanging smiles. But simply going through such motions does not automatically create a sense of bonhomie, unless they are firmly embedded in faith and love for God – this latter being a much harder task, as pointed out by Mujāhid – and can only be effected by God himself. Once firmly implanted in one's heart, love for God translates into love for one's fellow beings.

9 The Modern Period

In the modern period, Muslim scholars have often pushed back against the frequently negative depictions of Islam and its supposed proclivity for violence by many Western missionaries and Orientalist scholars, particularly during the period of European colonization of a broad swath of the Muslim world during the late eighteenth, nineteenth and the early part of the twentieth centuries. Below we focus on one such prominent scholar.

9.1 Muḥammad ʿAbduh

The nineteenth century Muslim reformist and scholar Muḥammad ʿAbduh (d. 1905) who lived during the period of British colonization of his native

116 Ibid., 6:280–81.

Egypt, often criticized Orientalist characterizations of *jihād* as a relentless militant activity. ʿAbduh was also critical of a number of medieval Muslim exegetes who invoked the concept of abrogation (*naskh*) to articulate a conception of the military *jihād* as offensive warfare that could be waged against non-Muslims. Thus, ʿAbduh rejects the interpretation that the so-called "sword verse" (Qurʾān 9:5) had abrogated the more numerous verses in the Qurʾān which call for forgiveness and peaceful relations with non-Muslims. Citing the views of as-Suyūṭī (d. 911/1505), ʿAbduh argues that in the specific historical situation with which the verse is concerned – with its internal reference to the passage of the four sacred months and to the pagan Meccans – other verses in the Qurʾān advocating forgiveness and non-violence were not abrogated but rather in [temporary] abeyance or suspension (*laysa naskhan bal huwa min qism al-munsaʾ*). *Naskh* implies the abrogation of a command, which is not the case here. Rather the command contained in Qurʾān 9:5 was in response to a specific situation at a specific time in order to achieve a specific objective and has no effect on the injunction contained in, for example, Qurʾān 2:109, which states, "Pardon and forgive until God brings about His command," which is in regard to a different set of circumstances and objectives.[117]

ʿAbduh is critical of those who would see the injunction contained in Qurʾān 9:5 with its clear reference to Arab polytheists applicable in any way to non-Arab polytheists or to the People of the Book. The latter are referred to very differently in the Qurʾān, as in Qurʾān 5:82,[118] and in *ḥadīth*s, such as the one which counsels leaving the Ethiopians (as well as Turks) alone as long as they leave the Muslims alone. He bemoans the fact that if jurists had not read these verses and *ḥadīth*s "from behind the veil of their juridical schools" then they would not have so egregiously missed the fundamental point made throughout the Qurʾān and in sound *ḥadīth*s that "the security to be obtained through fighting the Arab polytheists according to these verses is contingent upon their initiating attacks against Muslims and violating their treaties . . . "[119] ʿAbduh goes on to point out that the very next verse Qurʾān 9:6 offers protection and safe conduct to those among the polytheists who wish to listen to the Qurʾān.[120] The implication is clear – polytheists and non-Muslims in general who do not wish

117 Muḥammad ʿAbduh and Rashīd Riḍā, *Tafsīr al-manār*, Cairo: Maṭbaʿat al-manār, 1931, 10: 161–62.

118 This verse states, "You will find the closest in affection to those who believe are those who say we are Christians."

119 Riḍā, *Tafsīr al-manār*, 10:162–63.

120 Ibid., 10:171–75.

Muslims harm and display no aggression towards them are to be left alone and allowed to continue in their ways of life.

ʿAbduh identifies three different types of *jihād*: 1) struggle against the external enemy (*mujāhadat al-ʿaduw aẓ-ẓāhir*); 2) struggle against the devil (*mujāhadat ash-shayṭān*); and 3) struggle against the soul (*mujāhadat an-nafs*). All three types are included in the following Qurʾānic injunctions: "Strive in regard to God as is His due" (Qurʾān 22:78); "Strive with your wealth and selves in the path of God" (Qurʾān 9:41); and "Those who believed, emigrated, and strove with their wealth and their selves in the path of God" (Qurʾān 9:72). Two *ḥadīth*s furthermore attest to the manner of carrying out *jihād* by the hand and the tongue: one in which Muhammad says, "Struggle against your passions (*ahwāʾakum*) as you struggle against your enemies;" and the other in which he says, "Strive against the unbelievers with your hands and your tongues." The latter *ḥadīth*, continues ʿAbduh, stresses the primacy of *jihād* of the tongue – that is, of attesting to the truth by means of amassing evidence and compelling arguments.[121]

The above proof-texts and others beside them belie the arguments made by Orientalist scholars and those who follow them that *jihād* is reducible to fighting against non-Muslims in order to forcibly effect their conversion. ʿAbduh points to Qurʾān 2:256 ("There is no compulsion in religion") and other verses which allow fighting only against those who initiate fighting and which command Muslims to incline to peace when the adversary inclines to peace as proof-texts – all of them establish the falsity of imputing such a reductive meaning to *jihād*.[122] Wars fought for material gain and for the shedding of blood, as was common among ancient kings, or for revenge and out of religious animus, as in the case of the Crusades, or for the purpose of confiscating the possessions of the weak and demeaning human beings, as evident in the European colonial wars of his time, are all forbidden by Islamic law, he says.[123]

With regard to Qurʾān 3:103, ʿAbduh, like a number of his pre-modern predecessors, understands the verse to be a reference to the reconciliation of the Aws and Khazraj tribes of Medina after their submission to God, putting an end to their bitter past of chronic hostility. He further understands this verse to

121 Ibid., 10:279.

122 Many of these points are also made strenuously by other modern Muslim scholars, such as Abū Zahra, *al-ʿAlāqāt ad-dawliyya fī l-islām*, Cairo: Maṭbaʿat al-azhar, 1964, 47:52; Subhi Mahmassani, "The Principles of International Law in the Light of Islamic Doctrine," *Recueil des Cours* 117 (1966): 249–79; Wahba az-Zuḥaylī, *Āthār al-ḥarb fī l-fiqh al-islāmī: dirāsa muqārana*, Damascus: Dār al-fikr, 1982, 503, and others.

123 ʿAbduh and Riḍā, *Tafsīr al-manār*, 10:280.

contain a strong denunciation of the tribalism of the pre-Islamic period, termed in Arabic *al-ʿaṣabiyya*. He marshals as proof-text the *ḥadīth* in which the Prophet declares, "One who invokes tribalism is not one of us." ʿAbduh sees this pre-Islamic tribalism resurgent in the nationalisms of his own time which create dangerous divisions among people. ʿAbduh asserts that the true advancement of a nation lies in uniting all its citizens through their devotion to God, which ensures the well-being and welfare of all people, regardless of their religion or ethnicity.[124] It is through "holding fast to God's rope" that one may successfully resist divisiveness and sectarianism which leads to the shedding of blood, as happened in the pre-Islamic past, and thereby achieve genuine reconciliation among people.

With regard to Qurʾān 8:63, ʿAbduh understands this verse to apply primarily to the Meccan Muslims, who became brothers of the Medinan Muslims in faith, despite differences in social status and worldly rank. He underscores this dramatic transformation in the following way: "As for the Muhājirūn, reconciliation (*taʾlīf*) occurred among their rich and the poor, their masters and their clients, their nobility and their common people, in spite of the arrogance of the Jāhiliyya that had previously existed among them."[125] It was this concord among them that allowed them to endure the enmity of their fellow tribesmen and relatives for the sake of God. None of this could have been achieved by means of all the wealth and enticements of the world.

ʿAbduh then goes on to point to the centrality of love in human relationships, which has been, he says, asserted by wise people through the ages. These sages agree that "Love is the greatest of all bonds among humans and the most potent inducement to happiness is human social life and its refinement."[126] They further concur that in the absence of love, nothing else can take its place in repelling evil, while the proper functioning of society is contingent on the dispensation of justice. While love has been considered to be instinctual and not a matter of choice and justice regarded as an act of deliberation, Islam made love a virtue and adherence to justice an obligatory duty. Justice in particular was the due of all who reside in the Islamic state, with no distinction to be made between the Muslim and non-Muslim, pious and impious, rich and poor, etc.[127]

In this important exegesis, ʿAbduh goes further than his pre-modern predecessors and extends the concept of reconciliation based on love and justice to

124 Ibid., 4:21.
125 Ibid., 10:70–71.
126 Ibid., 10:71.
127 Ibid.

all human beings, regardless of their religious affiliation (or lack thereof). He argues that out of love for the Creator and adherence to justice the individual and the state must treat everyone even-handedly.

9.2 *Jihād* as Peaceful Activism

There are several contemporary scholars who have focused in their written works on the peaceful activism they understand to be the predominant meaning of *jihād*. A number of such scholars and thinkers typically emphasize the virtue of patient forbearance as the most important aspect of *jihād*, and therefore of non-violent resistance to wrong-doing. This modern emphasis on non-violent public activism as the best manifestation of *jihād* has been espoused by a number of well-known and less well-known figures. One of the more prominent names from the twentieth century is that of the Pashtun leader Syed ʿAbd al-Ghaffār Khān (d. 1988). He organized a peaceful resistance movement called the Khudai Khidmatgars ("the Servants of God") against the British colonizers of India, arguing that Muslims should adopt non-violence against oppression on the basis of their own scriptural directives and historical praxis of the early Muslims which emphasized patience (*ṣabr*).[128] For a closer study of this "school" of non-violence based on published materials, I am presenting the thinking of Jawdat Saʿīd and Wahiduddin Khan, who are among the best-known contemporary writers on this topic. Some of the key points of their arguments in favor of non-violence are discussed below.

9.2.1 Jawdat Saʿīd

Jawdat Saʿīd (b. 1931) is a well-known Syrian writer and thinker known for his pacifist views, derived from his reading of the Qurʾān, particularly of the story of Adam's two sons, as elaborated below. He obtained a degree in Arabic language from al-Azhar University and eventually settled in Bir Ajam in the Golan Heights, where he lives in the ancestral family house until today. In the English

128 For a detailed study of Abdul Ghaffar Khan's movement, see Robert C. Johansen, "Radical Islam and Nonviolence. A Case Study of Religious Empowerment and Constraint among Pashtuns," *Journal of Peace Research* 34 (1997): 53–71. For a monograph-length study, see Eknath Easwaran, *A Man to Match His Mountains. Badshah Khan Nonviolent Soldier of Islam*, Petaluma, CA: Nilgiri Press, 1984.

translation of his work titled *Non-Violence: The Basis of Settling Disputes in Islam*,[129] Saʿīd grounds his non-violent understanding of *jihād*, glossed as the struggle to resist wrong-doing, in his reading of the Qurʾānic verses (5:27–31) which give an account of the violent altercation between Adam's two sons. These verses state:

> And recite to them the story of Adam's two sons, in truth, when they both offered a sacrifice [to God], and it was accepted from one of them but was not accepted from the other. Said [the latter], 'I will surely kill you. Said [the former], 'Indeed, God only accepts from those who are righteous [who fear Him]. If you should raise your hand against me to kill me – I shall not raise my hand against you to kill you. Indeed, I fear God, Lord of the worlds. Indeed, I want you to obtain [thereby] my sin and your sin, so you will be among the companions of the Fire. And that is the recompense of wrongdoers.' And his soul permitted him to murder his brother, so he killed him and became among the losers. Then God sent a crow searching [i.e., scratching] in the ground to show him how to hide the private parts of his brother's body. He said, 'O woe to me! Have I failed to be like this crow and hide the private parts of my brother's body?' And he became of the regretful.[130]

Among the relevant ethical and moral imperatives that Saʿīd derives from these verses are a) that a Muslim should not call for murder, assassination, and/or any provocative acts that may lead to the commission of such crimes; b) that a Muslim should not present his opinion to others by force or yield to others out of fear of any such force; and c) that a Muslim in his/her pursuit to spread the word of God "must not diverge from the true path which was set forth by the prophets from beginning to end."[131] The third inference indicates Saʿīd's understanding of *jihād* as an essentially non-violent enterprise undertaken by Muslims for the purpose of bearing witness to the truth and justice of their faith and to propagate it – in other words – to carry out *daʿwā*, which he defines as "an act of calling . . . to Islam."[132]

Muslims, continues Saʿīd, are primarily entrusted with speaking "the words of truth under any condition."[133] In this context, he refers to the *ḥadīth* in which Muhammad affirms that the best *jihād* is speaking a word of truth to a tyrannical ruler. Our author further suggests that while being a witness to truth in this manner, a Muslim may not resort to violence, even apparently in

129 Translated by Munther A. Absī and H. Hilwānī, Damascus: Dār al-fikr, 2002 from the original Arabic.

130 Translation in Saʿīd, *Non-Violence*, 27.

131 Ibid., 35.

132 Ibid., 34.

133 Ibid., 37.

self-defense. He refers to the *ḥadīth* in which Saʿd b. Abī Waqqās asked the Prophet what he should do if someone were to come into his house and "stretches his hand to kill me?" The answer was, "Be like Adam's [first] son;" and then Muhammad recited Qurʾān 5:27–31.[134]

But what about the combative *jihād* which the Qurʾān clearly permits under certain conditions? Saʿīd does not deny that these verses exist but states that their commands are not applicable in the absence of a properly formed Islamic community, which is currently the situation in which Muslims live. A properly formed Islamic community is one in which truth and justice reign, inhabited by Muslims "who call for the construction of the Islamic society, its reformation or protecting it against the elements of corruption." They are furthermore those

"who have enough courage to declare their creed and everything they believe in, and who are openly denouncing what they believe to be wrong in a clear way (thus reaching (sic) the distinct propagation of Islam. . . . They are the kind of people who, for their cause, persevere patiently with the oppression of others when they are subjected to torture and persecution."[135]

Such patient, non-violent activism in the face of oppression and injustice and in the absence of the properly constituted Islamic community is the only form of *jihād* that can be carried out by Muslims today, asserts Saʿīd. Such non-violent activism is in emulation of all the prophets mentioned in the Qurʾān who patiently endured the harm visited upon them by their own people on account of their preaching the truth. One of the examples our author highlights is that of Moses arguing calmly and peacefully before the Pharaoh in defense of the truth that he had been called to preach. In contrast, the Pharaoh resorted to aggression, as tyrannical rulers are apt to do, in order to protect their political dominion.[136] Believers should not resort to violent overthrow of despotic governments, counsels Saʿīd – for then they would be following in the footsteps of the Pharaoh by adopting violent methods. Like Moses and all the other prophets, they should attempt instead to bring about a peaceful resolution of conflict through the clear and fearless proclamation of the truth.[137]

It should be noted that Saʿīd does not state that fighting is always categorically prohibited; he recognizes *jihād* "as an ongoing process on condition that a Muslim must know exactly when to resort to armed struggle."[138] "Executing

134 Ibid., 28–29.
135 Ibid., 78.
136 Ibid., 40–57.
137 Ibid., 37–40.
138 Ibid., 39.

laws," he says, "and carrying out Jihād must only be done by individuals who are qualified for such an important task."[139] The improper and excessive recourse to the combative *jihād* and cynical manipulation of it by unscrupulous people have "caused more harm to Muslims than any other malpractice."[140] Muslims are primarily charged today with preaching the message of God and reforming humans, which can never be accomplished by force as stated in the verse "Let there be no compulsion in religion" (Qurʾān 2:256).[141] Saʿīd calls those who advocate unconditional violence in the name of Islam "preachers of terrorism" whose vicious ideology "must be quelled with any possible means."[142] Evil cannot be erased by violence, however; evil can only be eradicated by the establishment of justice, and justice is served by the best form of *jihād* – the proclamation of truth.[143] Saʿīd stresses that such truth should be presented on the basis of reason and should conform to Qurʾānic evidential standards, as stated in Qurʾān 2:111, "Say, 'Produce your proof, if you should be truthful.'"[144] The Qurʾānic exhortation to acquire knowledge through reflection and travel ("Travel through the land and observe how He began creation;" Qurʾān 29:20) requires fundamental cognitive and spiritual changes among Muslims today, which are the prelude to broader social transformations (cf. Qurʾān 8:53).[145] When humans are able to comprehend God's signs more fully, then they will begin to apprehend the root causes of their behavioral problems and proceed to solve them. "At that point the society will recover from all the causes which make people turn against each other, the same as those who recover from diseases befalling their bodies."[146] Violence is a disease which afflicts us all and threatens to engulf us unless a comprehensive revolution changes human attitudes, "especially since we are still bound within the phase of the belief in the accusations which the Angels launched against Adam, as being a creature who promotes destruction and corruption."[147] This is the message and mission that Saʿīd wishes to convey to the youth in particular so that they may be able to bring about these necessary peaceful transformations.

139 Ibid., 122.
140 Ibid., 40.
141 Ibid., 62.
142 Ibid., 74.
143 Ibid., 77–79.
144 Ibid., 111.
145 Ibid., 114.
146 Ibid., 124.
147 Ibid., 124–25.

9.2.2 Wahiduddin Khan

Wahiduddin Khan, born in 1925, is a contemporary Indian scholar of Islam who is the president of the Islamic Centre in New Delhi, India. For fifteen years he was a member of the Jamaʾat-i Islami founded by Mawdudi in 1941 but broke with the latter because of fundamental disagreements concerning the relation between Islam and politics. Khan emphasized, unlike Mawdudi, that *tawḥid* and peaceful submission to God was at the heart of all things Islamic and not political and economic reform.[148]

In his book *The True Jihād: The Concept of Peace, Tolerance and Non-Violence*[149] written in the aftermath of September 11, Khan stresses that the main purpose of Islam was the peaceful propagation of the faith (*daʿwā*) and that political and social reform were at best secondary concerns which would inevitably result from the spiritual reformation of Muslims. He begins this short treatise by pointing to Qurʾān 22:78 which exhorts the believer to "strive for the cause of Allah as it behooves you to strive for it." *Jihād* derived from the Arabic root *j-h-d* points to this earnest struggle for the sake of God, a term which eventually came to be applied to the early battles in Islam as well, since they were part of this overall struggle. Strictly speaking, the term for fighting is *qitāl*, and not *jihād* per se. On the basis of the *Musnad* of Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal, he identifies the *mujāhid* as "one who struggles with himself for the sake of God;" as "one who exerts himself for the cause of God;" and as "one who struggles with his self in submission to the will of God." *Jihād* is therefore essentially a peaceful struggle against one's ego and against wrong-doing in general.[150]

Khan proceeds to establish the peaceful essence of *jihād* by invoking the following proof-texts. He refers to Qurʾān 25:52 ("Do not yield to the unbelievers, but fight them strenuously with it [the Qurʾān]"), which establishes that *jihād* is essentially a peaceful, non-violent struggle to establish the truth since "no military activity is referred to in this verse." A *ḥadīth* narrated by ʿĀʾisha, recorded by al-Bukhārī, quotes the Prophet as expressing a preference for the easier of any two options. Since war is a hardship, this *ḥadīth* encodes the superiority of the peaceful struggle for truth. The Prophet's biography reveals that he never initiated hostilities and that he went to great lengths to avoid it. Examples from his life which support this interpretation are as

148 Cf. the article by Irfan A. Omar, "Islam and the Other. The Ideal Vision of Mawlana Wahiduddin Khan" *Journal of Ecumenical Studies* 36 (1999): 423–39.

149 Published by Goodword Books, New Delhi, 2002.

150 Khan, *True Jihad*, 13–16.

follows: 1) In the Meccan period, Muhammad was primarily concerned with challenging polytheism through peaceful, verbal means; 2) Even when during the thirteen year Meccan period the Quraysh became his arch-enemy and prominent members of the tribe conspired to kill him, he avoided any physical confrontation and resorted instead to migration to Medina at the end; 3) the battle of the Trench is a stellar example of avoiding unnecessary violence; as is 4) the Treaty of al-Hudaybiyya which the Prophet signed with the pagan Meccans in order to avoid the shedding of blood; and 5) the peaceful conquest of Mecca at a time when the Muslims were militarily strong testify to the preference for non-violent methods over violent ones to promote truth and justice. These examples provide testimony, states Khan, that "the position of peace in Islam is sacrosanct, while war in Islam is allowed only in exceptional cases when it cannot be avoided."[151]

Muslim advocacy of the principle of non-violence today recognizes "that the commands of the shariah change according to altered situations."[152] In the premodern period, war was a way of life; now we are able to imagine and implement peaceful strategies for conflict resolution. Khan scoffs at "the *jihād* movements" of the contemporary period for their glorification of violence; in these changed circumstances, "launching out on a violent course of action is not only unnecessary, but also un-Islamic."[153] A movement, he says derisively, cannot be deemed a *jihād* "just because its leaders describe it as such."[154] A properly constituted *jihād* must fulfill the essential conditions decreed by Islamic law. The combative *jihād* which is essentially *qitāl* (glossed as "armed struggle") is an activity relating wholly to the state and cannot be placed in the same category as acts of worship, such as prayer and fasting. There is no room, he emphasizes, for non-state warfare, for war, and it must be defensive war, may be declared only by the ruling government. Non-combatants may not be targeted. On this basis, Khan sternly condemns the perpetrators of the September 11 attacks. He also proscribes the carrying out of suicide bombings which he declares to be a complete departure from Islamic norms and religiously-sanctioned practices.[155] Khan comments, "According to Islam we can become martyrs, but we cannot court a martyr's death deliberately."[156]

151 Ibid., 16–23.
152 Ibid., 25.
153 Ibid., 26.
154 Ibid., 27.
155 Ibid., 23–38.
156 Ibid., 39.

The Qurʾān makes a fundamental difference between "the enemy" and "the aggressor," continues Khan. Believers have not been granted the right to wage unprovoked wars against their enemies; the Qurʾān actually commands them to wage peace against them instead. How? Qurʾān 41:33–34 instructs them: "And good and evil deeds are not alike. Repel evil with good. And he who is your enemy will become your dearest friend."[157] Khan discerns in these verses a clear Qurʾānic mandate for "turning one's enemy into a friend through peaceful means, instead of declaring him an enemy and then waging war against him." Muslims may resort to fighting only if the enemy attacks them first and only when all efforts at reconciliation and peaceful resolution of the conflict have failed. Muslims are clearly forbidden to initiate wars except in response to a prior act of violent aggression, as in Qurʾān 22:38 ("Permission to take up arms is hereby given to those who are attacked because they have been wronged") and in Qurʾān 9:13 ("They were the first to attack you").[158]

Commands to fight in the Qurʾān are to be understood as "specific to certain circumstances" and "were not meant to be valid for all time to come."[159] Islam is fundamentally a religion which teaches non-violence, he asserts. The Qurʾān states that God does not love *fasād*, which Khan glosses as "violence." Qurʾān 2:205 clearly indicates, he comments, that "*fasād* is that action which results in disruption of the social system, causing huge losses in terms of lives and property." God loves non-violence; and He promises in Qurʾān 16:5 that "Those who seek to please God will be guided by him to 'the paths of peace.'" As a consequence of this high valorization of non-violence, the Qurʾān eulogizes patience (*ṣabr*) as a human virtue, promising reward for it that is beyond measure (Qurʾān 39:10). *Ṣabr* is the equivalent of non-violence as understood in the modern period. The absolute higher valuation of non-violence over violence is indicated in a *ḥadīth* in which the Prophet remarks, "God grants to *rifq* (gentleness) what he does not grant to *ʿunf* (violence)."[160]

Non-violent activism is particularly relevant for Muslims in the contemporary period and is the most important aspect of *jihād* for them today, affirms Khan. Peaceful interactions between Muslims and non-Muslims will allow for serious dialogue to emerge between them and expose Muslims to the kind of intellectual stimulation they are badly in need of "if they are to tread the path

157 Ibid., 39–40.

158 Ibid.

159 Ibid., 44–45.

160 Ibid., 46–48. For the importance of *ṣabr* as a basic principle of non-violence and peacebuilding, see also Mohammed Abu-Nimer, *Nonviolence and Peace Building in Islam. Theory and Practice*, Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2003, 71–73.

of progress."[161] Adopting the path of non-violence, continues our author, will be tantamount to "reviving the sunnah of Hudaybiyya;" an event the Qurʾān (48:26) had referred to as "a clear victory."[162] Ideally, peace should be accompanied by justice. But so strong is the imperative towards non-violence in Islam, asserts Khan, that one may settle for peace first even if it falls short of justice, as was exemplified by the Prophet's agreement to the terms of al-Hudaybiyya, which were unfavorable towards Muslims. This acceptance of a lopsided peace treaty did however lead to the establishment of justice and made unnecessary the waging of war to attain it. He reminds that "God calls to the Abode of Peace" (Qurʾān 10:25) and there is no other way to realize God's will.[163]

10 Conclusion

Our exploration of the historical trajectory of *jihād* in the context of war and peacemaking leads us to the following conclusions. First, this study documents the multiple and contested meanings of *jihād* that are prevalent in different genres of sources consulted here – Qurʾān, *ḥadīth*, legal and ethical/edifying literature – and challenges a monolithic, reductive understanding of the term. Second, it establishes the defensive and limited nature of legitimate war in the Qurʾān as stressed particularly by exegetes, ethicists, and moral theologians. In the Qurʾān, peace is the default situation; war can be waged only as a last resort when other peaceful means of resolving conflict have been exhausted and Muslims have been attacked by the enemy. *Jihād* in the Qurʾān is therefore most categorically not holy war, as it is often (mis)translated into English (and its equivalent in other Western languages). Holy war is aggressive war waged in the name of God to effect the forcible conversion of non-believers and is often a "total, no-holds barred war" intended to annihilate the enemy.[164] Both of these objectives are doctrinally unacceptable in

161 Khan, *True Jihad*, 94.

162 Ibid., 95.

163 Ibid., 105–108.

164 Roland Bainton's definition of holy war in the context of the Crusades is generally accepted; he described the Crusades as "a holy war fought under the auspices of the church or some inspired religious leader, not on behalf of justice conceived in terms of life and property, but on behalf of an ideal, the Christian faith"; see his *Christian Attitudes toward War and Peace*, Nashville, Tenn.: Abingdon, 1986, 14.

Islam. Third, it contextualizes the legal positions that legitimized offensive military activity as contingent responses to specific political circumstances, which cannot be deemed to be normatively binding for Muslims for all times and for all places. This is a position that emerges very clearly in the writings of modern Muslim theologians like Muḥammad ʿAbduh and others.

The Qurʾān also strongly advocates for peaceful interpersonal and intercommunal relationships among Muslims and between Muslims and non-Muslims, especially the adherents of the two other monotheistic faith communities. The verses discussed above concerning this aspect of peacemaking (Qurʾān 3:103; 8:63) and their exegeses by some of the most prominent Muslim commentators through time have much to tell us today about faith-based resolution of conflictual situations and harmonious coexistence with others. These verses locate both love and animosity within the human heart; which of the two gets the upper hand within it is contingent upon certain choices of the individual. The individual, on the one hand, may choose to believe in and submit to God, thereby cleansing his or her heart of resistance to God's will and allowing one's heart to be flooded with love for God and, consequently, for God's creation. On the other hand, one can reject faith in God and harden one's heart against other human beings and thus allow oneself to be swept away by worldly needs and the desire for dominance. The two diametrically opposed states are exemplified by the Medinan tribes of Aws and Khazraj, who were intractable enemies before the advent of Islam. But, once faith entered their hearts through their submission to God, it was God, as the exegetes remind us, who transformed their inward state from one of animosity to comradely love and peaceful reconciliation.

More recently, several influential Muslim thinkers have resuscitated the concept of *ṣabr* as the most important element of *jihād* that can be deployed as a guiding principle for promoting non-violence and peacemaking in the modern world. This development constitutes a robust recognition of the centrality of this concept in the lexicon of contemporary Islam – both from an ethical and praxis-based perspective. Through a close reading of scripture and the historical contextualization of later literary productions which chart the storied history of *jihād*, we can assert that fundamental Islamic perspectives on peace and war have much to contribute to contemporary global discussions concerning violence and conflict resolution. Peacemaking within Islam is scripturally mandated and woven into the religion's very foundation – this is a message that is timely and urgent in the divisive times that we live in.

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Epilogue

Introduction

Through our inquiries into the concept of peace in the context of Judaism, Christianity and Islam we have attempted, at first, to strip the concept of its political and military dimensions and concentrate on those aspects dealing with the relationship between God and man. This is, in our view, the locus from which the duty and the will to engage in political peacebuilding emerge. It allows us to find appropriate theological resources from within the three faiths, which make it possible to develop a society in which everyone can live in peace and freedom, especially those whose sense of agency in the public sphere is religiously motivated. How does each one of these religions conceptualize peace? At which conceptual intersections do they meet? Which distinctive elements make their concepts of peace different from each other?

1 The Concept of Peace in Judaism

In Judaism, it is most appropriate to call the genuinely religious dimension of peace "messianic peace." The Hebrew word *shalom* defines a certain "fulfillment"; such a messianic peace is regarded as resolving all earthly conflicts. It also depicts the resolution of all conflicts between man and God.

One can identify three fundamental elements of messianic or prophetic peace in Judaism, which can be described most aptly in terms of "anti-politics," the "unity of opposites" and the "knowledge of God." The first element refers to an attitude in which the current means of political peacebuilding like negotiating, building alliances and strategical employment of power are replaced in their entirety by a more spiritual set of normative commitments emerging from a fundamental human awareness of God. What may seem, from a secular point of view, to be a fanciful idea has its roots in the prophets of the Hebrew Bible. They do not, in any sense, represent what one expects from a leader. They stammer and stutter while needing God's support in order to proclaim the message they are obliged to bear. They have no actual power. The same goes for the rabbis, whose interpretation of God's word in the scripture is regarded as equal to, or even surmounting prophecy. In addition, some central stories in the Hebrew Bible can be read as parables of "power" reflecting anti-political attitudes. Abraham

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raises his offspring in the desert, as a shepherd, far away from the bustling cities. The efforts of the people of Babel to build their tower can be interpreted as an act of self-protection as well as an attempt to shape a human society that seals them off from the presence of God. The collapse of this enterprise demonstrates the sovereignty of God, which frustrates every plan built on mere human planning. "Anti-politics" does not constitute quietism, but rather a reminder of God's omnipotence along with an urgent appeal to internalize prophetic exhortations and turn back to God. The theological precedent for this idea lies in the concept of God's self-concealment through which he creates a sphere of freedom for his human creation. The most famous expression of this thought is found in Isaak Luria's concept of *tsimtsum*, or God's constriction, where God himself, originally filling the whole of reality, constricts himself in order to enable his creation to be free. Likewise, self-limitation is fundamental for the idea of anti-politics as it paves the way to a messianic era of peace capable of surmounting any current political action. It reflects a return to the paradisiacal state – an everlasting Sabbath.

This messianic era is characterized by the fulfillment of "the unity of opposites." The unity of everything which is divided and seems to be irreconcilable represents the reality of God himself along with his ultimate unity and oneness. Thus, this ideal state transcends time and secular reality. The creation returns to an everlasting Sabbath, where creation and creator, good and evil, and all presently incommensurable opposites are unified. In addition, the contradictions inherent in many Jewish laws and teachings will dissolve and form one great, peaceful vision. This indicates that ostensible theological contradictions in the present time point to a deeper unity which is still hidden to us and which will be revealed at a certain moment in the future.

Third, the "knowledge of God" is essential for understanding the concept of prophetic peace. It combines the two other elements – "anti-politics" and the "unity of the opposites" – towards a holistic vision of God's wholeness. *Knowing* here means submerging into God, becoming aware of everything that exists. This reflects a biblical conception of knowledge understood in terms of wholeness. The unity of all people, i.e. peace, is founded on the idea of the biblical covenant. Isaiah's vision of a child ruling once hostile opponents depicts a concept of a peace which reaches beyond the well-balanced and negotiated state of affairs apparent in the current world where wise or not-so-wise leaders shape the destiny of peoples.

Judaism, as such, is oriented towards *shalom*, this constituting the last word of the Talmud. *Shalom* is indeed a name of God, and peace represents the constant struggle for uniting that which had formerly been separated. This leads to a vision capable of enabling this abstract concept of prophetic peace to become a

guidepost for the resolution of current disputes. This point is especially salient, as it cannot be denied that religions play a crucial role in framing most of the ongoing conflicts currently raging in the world. Prophetic peace should therefore be viewed in terms of a "workable mode of living together." If circumstances allow for the fundamental principles of anti-politics to emerge, defined in terms of the eventual unity of contradictory points of view, participants in a conflict can possess a mutual knowledge of God. This would bring together all religious and secular voices in a vision of unity.

2 The Concept of Peace in Christianity

The Holy Scriptures – the so-called Old and New Testaments – conceive of the concept of peace both in a negative sense in terms of the absence of war as well as in the positive sense of the experience of God's salvation (of the chosen people in the Old Testament) and reconciliation (through Jesus Christ in the New Testament) on earth. However, in this world, both aspects of peace rarely coexist and are never in a perfected state. Therefore, a human longing for peace always persists. Indeed, the Bible clearly states that both forms of peace depend on God. God's commandments serve to limit violence and his covenant with his chosen people is the fundament upon which it is possible to establish a safe and just society. The promise of positive peace on earth will be fulfilled through the coming of God's chosen messenger, the Messiah. Christians believe that Jesus of Nazareth is this Messiah who is therefore attributed with the title "Christ," which is the Greek translation of the word "Messiah."

After the brutal crucifixion and death of Jesus, it was, first of all, St. Paul who elaborated the assumption that the main aim of God's messenger, who was acclaimed by his followers the Son of God, was to overcome violence with love and reconciliation i.e. to bring to earth the peace of God. The resurrection of Christ demonstrates for believers that God can overcome death and transform injustice and brutality into glory. Thus, sin is understood in the New Testament essentially as a broken relationship between human beings and God, a state which is the origin of all evil deeds such as violence. However, since Jesus preaches that God is merciful and will forgive those who repent, it becomes possible for everyone to heal that relationship and overcome sin. This enables not only a new peaceful relation between God and mankind, but also a new state of peace between human beings. All religious controversies should come to an end and positive peace should flourish in Christian communities because they are united in Christ. Nevertheless, the hope that all quarrels will cease in Christian communities has

not yet been fulfilled and so it becomes obvious that peace does not constitute a no-brainer, but rather must be understood as an ultimate but attainable goal arrived at through divine salvation.

The peacebuilding activities of Christians are not limited to their own congregations. For brotherly love, exemplified in Christ, should ideally spread into their social environment. Engagement on behalf of social welfare should become a special feature of Christian identity. Righteousness is a concept connecting redemption by God, the benevolent behavior towards one's neighbor and the task of establishing a just order.

The latter dimension touches particularly on the question of the relationship between spiritual and political power. Should Christians aspire to temporal power in order to create a peaceful society and potentially use violence in the attempt to achieve this goal? The New Testament demonstrates that Jesus always refused to take up weapons and did not even allow his disciples to do so. The peace of God is a spiritual peace which cannot be enforced by mundane power. Nevertheless, throughout history, Christians have had to wrestle with the question of how to deal with political power. Three fundamental conceptions can be differentiated in this context:

1) The conception of coexistence, according to which the mingling of mundane and spiritual affairs is strictly prohibited,
2) the apocalyptic conception of a contradiction between God and those secular forces deemed collectively as evil forces to be destroyed on Doomsday and
3) the conception of cooperation with the government. Such a government should be considered as installed by God himself, as long as it does not contradict God's will.

These conceptions have been often modified throughout the course of Church history and were challenged by historical events such as the rise of Christianity's political power with the Emperor Constantine or the Sack of Rome by the Visigoths in 410. This latter event prompted the Church Father St. Augustine to develop his influential distinction between God's kingdom as the City of God and the mundane kingdom as the City of Man. Since the City of God is considered to be otherworldly, eternal peace will therefore be realized only in heaven and not on earth. For Augustine, the City of God coexists in our times with the mundane City of Man. Augustine's aim was not to suggest that mundane power should not be utilized in order to support religious institutions, namely the Church, but to make clear that even a disastrous military defeat cannot disturb God's kingdom. Luther transformed this teaching from a relationship of coexistence to a relationship of cooperation between the two kingdoms.

The idea that mundane government has the duty to preserve peace – not eternal peace, but negative earthly peace – via political and even military means as an important condition to exercise religious duties and to preach the Gospel was in general highly accepted in the Christian tradition. However, in order to accept military interventions, it was necessary for certain rules and standards to be fulfilled. Therefore, debating the conditions for "just war" has constituted a prominent discussion in Christianity. Such a discussion is still going on among Christian theologians, especially while facing new forms of war like drone warfare.

After World War II, a shift from "just war theory" to the concept of "just peace" has taken place in Christian Churches all over the world. Crucial for this paradigm shift was a rejection of the link between war and justice, which has undergirded the tradition of "just war theory" a long time. War and violence can never be called just following this new paradigm. Furthermore, peace would need to be understood in terms of a general task, and not a mission solely concerned with armed conflicts. Peace should be conceived as peace within communities and marketplaces involving God's human creation. But even with this change of perspective, it remains a challenging task for Christians and the different churches to position themselves in regards to questions of humanitarian intervention and the duty to protect the suffering and the innocent, be it peacefully or by force.

From a religious perspective, humility and self-limitation are crucial to avoid growing intolerance and the proclamation of absolute und exclusive truth. These traits are essential for countering apocalyptic movements, theocracy and nationalism. Christians should be aware of religion's potential to create hatred as well as to produce peace. Peace will not be established among peoples and religions if there is no true dialogue between them along with a strong willingness to display humility and mutual acceptance. This demands a true interest in the other. It fundamentally calls for the exploration of one's own tradition as a basis for understanding and as a fundament for promoting peace. Thereby, the Churches themselves must become signs of peace while engaging in social ministry. With the proper display of humility, self-limitation and meekness, they may increase their credibility, particularly in times of crisis.

3 The Concept of Peace in Islam

Although peace/*salām* is very central in Islam and even one of the 99 names of God, Islamic thought has never been receptive to the idea of pacifism defined as the rejection of all forms of violence, especially as it concerns military intervention.

The impetus behind this phenomenon is not that Islam in any way constitutes a religion that promotes violence and aggressive behavior, but rather because it was confronted in a very early stage of its history with military realities. In addition, the possibility of passively acquiescing to injustice and violence contradicts the principle of *ḥisba* ("enjoining good and forbidding evil") according to which it is an individual and a collective moral responsibility to engage actively and steadfastly in the struggle against evil with the intention to achieve peace. This struggle is famously known as *jihād* which is often combined with the phrase "in the path of God" (*fī sabīl Allāh*). The Qurʾān understands the term as an individual or collective struggle to be achieved not only by military means. However, the meaning of the term has significantly changed throughout the centuries. Although the Muslims in the Meccan period were persecuted by the pagan Meccans, they did not make use of the right of self-defense. Accordingly, the Qurʾānic emphasis here rests upon an ethos of patiently bearing wrongdoings and injury. A prominent although presumably later verse in this regard is 3:200 which not only commands Muslims to "be patient and forbearing," but even to "vie in forbearance" while also imploring them to "be firm." But even when it came to fighting, the overall rules and principles of proportionality had to be respected. Qurʾānic ethics prohibited the commencing of hostilities and allowed for fighting mainly based on defensive purposes. The hermeneutical tool employed to nullify these Qurʾānic commands was that of abrogation (*naskh*) – a mechanism that has been debated in the field of Qurʾānic exegesis up to this day. However, it cannot be ignored that there exists a polyvalence of the term *jihād* within the Qurʾān itself. This has spawned a large variety of interpretations. The Abbasid period saw a form of secularization in the articulation of *jihād,* which had the effect of allowing expansionist wars. This tendency ultimately undermined the rich early discussions on *jihād* and divided the world into *dār al-islam* (House of Islam) and *dār al-ḥarb* (House of War) for the first time. The caliphs had to uphold a kind of "cold war," a state of permanent military awareness. Here it is worthy to mention that the concept of *dar al-ḥarb* finds no basis within the Qurʾān. It was not only the Hanafite school of law which denied the possibility of waging a just war against unbelievers. But rather the border situation with the Byzantine empire forged the concept of *jihād* into a kind of *realpolitik*.

While this type of interpretation in regards to warfare may have been prevalent, there have always been some exegetes like aṭ-Ṭabarī, for instance, who have focused on the aspect of patience as it relates to the concept of *jihād*, thereby building upon an idea prominently featured in the Qurʾān. To strive in the way of God, in this case, relates to a certain steadfastness in fulfilling religious obligations, while consistently fighting against evil desires and inclinations. Patience and forbearance constitute the necessary personal characteristics

for not relenting in this struggle. For aṭ-Ṭabarī, this aspect in the concept of *jihād* – which he calls the "greater *jihād*" – is superior to the militant aspects of *jihād* – the "lesser *jihād*."

Additionally, the *ḥadīth* literature stresses the dimension of "patience" in the concept of *jihād*. It promotes its own genre of interpretation (*faḍāʾil aṣ-ṣabr*) which accentuates patience as a highly estimated virtue. To be patient is considered here in terms of a competition of the pious, which will in turn be rewarded by God.

Yet it would be misleading to treat the concept of peace in Islam as merely proceeding from the term "peace" and conceived as the opposite of war. The notion of peace, or in Arabic "*as-salām*" (along with its derivatives), is used in the Qurʾān to signify the relationship between the faithful and God. It represents the ultimate spiritual aim of human life and leads towards eternal peace as a paradisiacal state of being. Indeed, it begins in the here and now. There are several verses in the Qurʾān, along with passages in the *ḥadīth* literature, in which the faithful are asked to bring together multiple hearts, thereby practicing reconciliation. Reconciliation here represents the gateway to paradise. To establish peace, enemies have to be transformed into allies by the means of forgiveness, clemency and forbearance. Unity and brotherhood are central for the Muslim community, both in the here and now as well as in the hereafter.

Modern Muslim thinkers like Muḥammad ʿAbduh name this peaceful and patient attitude "love" (*al-ḥubb*) and extend the concept of reconciliation based on justice and love in order to include all human beings. He also stresses the peaceful meaning of *jihād* and refuses to reduce the concept of *jihād* to the commandment to fight against non-Muslims. ʿAbduh emphasizes the centrality of the peaceful aspects of Islam as opposed to its negative image propagated by many Orientalists and Western missionaries.

Several Muslim thinkers follow ʿAbduh's non-violent depiction of Islam and theologically undergird the idea of *jihād* with the notion of peaceful activism, using it in some cases as a means to push back against colonialist oppression. The contemporary Indian scholar Wahiduddin Khan refers to the portrayal of prophet Muḥammad, which is delivered in Islamic tradition and reveals in many aspects that the prophet always sought to find non-violent ways to solve conflicts or to reduce violent means in military conflicts to a lower limit in order to establish peace. For Khan, it is clear that "the position of peace in Islam is sacrosanct." Peaceful interactions between Muslims and non-Muslims are for him, last but not least, the basis of serious dialogue between them. This constitutes a form of intellectual stimulation which Muslims – and one should add: not only Muslims – are badly in need of "if they are to tread the path of progress."

4 Commonalities and Differences

The concept of peace can be deployed at least in three different modalities:

1) As the opposite of war in the sense of an armed conflict or a tense situation of mutual suspicion and aggression between states or rival groups. In this sense, peace can be defined as a relationship between states or groups, which excludes hostility and violence, enabling them to live in freedom from fear of violent conflicts.
2) In a more ethical sense, peace can be understood as a virtue defined in terms of an inner state of serenity and calmness. Or to put it the other way around: peace, in the sense of a peaceful state of mind, is characterized by the absence of inner struggles and false desires, thereby enabling an individual to have an autonomous life and behave in a deliberate and virtuous way.
3) Peace can also designate a kind of a utopic, everlasting state of affairs in which both aspects coincide and create a stable equilibrium all over the world – and/or in the afterworld. It is characterized by the absence of actual inner and outer conflicts and even by the absence of any threat of potential conflicts.

All three meanings are present in the Sacred Scriptures of Judaism, Christianity and Islam and in their theological traditions. However, these different meanings are emphasized in various fashions dependent on religious trends and changing political and social circumstances. In the face of current violent conflicts between groups that justify violence with religious reasons, the role of peacemaking – in the sense of promoting "peace" in the political meaning – dominates in debates about religion and peace. Thus, the prevailing question is: Which impact may religions have on their adherents so that they can live together without hostility and violent conflict? To refer to individual virtues or ideal states of everlasting harmony would obviously fall short of the mark if the aim is to give fruitful answers to the question of how to solve religiously motivated conflicts.

When we consider the use of the word "peace" and its equivalents in Hebrew, Greek and Arabic in the Sacred Scriptures, it becomes obvious that in a religious context the second and third meanings of peace should prevail. Alick Isaak has noted that not only in Judaism, but also in Christianity and Islam, peace constitutes both a "key value" and a "central organizing principle." It represents, in fact, the ultimate aim of human existence and behavior. Yet first of all, the concept of peace in Judaism, Christianity and Islam must designate the relation between human beings and God.

Regarding the first field of semantic meaning associated with peace (as articulated above), a crucial question, in past and present, is related to Christian communities equipped with political power, while the struggle for peace has been understood there as either a political enterprise or a spiritual challenge. We can find a huge number of answers to this dilemma ranging from pacifism and quietism to the advocating of military interventions. Here we can observe a parallel situation to the understanding of *jihād* or the "striving in the path of God" in Islam. However, while Christianity presents a sharp distinction between the realm of mundane power and the realm of spiritual power based on the New Testament, the term *jihād* in the Qurʾān is characterized by a high degree of polyvalence. Consequently, interpretations of this notion have varied across the ages, from spiritual conceptualizations that have understood *jihād* as a steadfast and patient inner struggle to overcome evil inclinations to those which promote a practical, more militaristic duty. Although the Qurʾān and the Bible do not explicitly advocate waging "holy wars," one can find this idea in both traditions in connection with expansionary and missionary contexts. Yet all three traditions contain deliberations regarding the extent to which military means can be seen as adequate, i.e. the so called "just war theories."[1]

A central corrective against violent tendencies within the three faiths is the fact that all of them attribute God with peaceful qualities and intentions. God is indeed characterized as merciful, with numerous passages in the Sacred Scriptures of Judaism, Christianity and Islam explaining that God loves and rewards those who show forbearance to wrongdoers. God is characterized as the (only) source of inner peace, with all three traditions developing practices and theories regarding the way how to reach this inner form of spiritual peace. Furthermore, in all three traditions peace depends on God. All human efforts to establish peace on earth are in vain if they are not established on the foundation of faith in God.

But these exhortations should not be understood as appeals to quietism. In all three traditions, it is clearly stated that earthly peace becomes a reality only through the struggle for peace and the avoidance of violence by man. Biblical texts as well as the Qurʾān not only revere the commandment to treat thy brother with love and mercy, but also implore mercy towards oppressors and enemies. Here the concept of peace is closely related to the idea of justice and the equality of men. Peace can only flourish in a just society whereby everyone treats his or her neighbor in the manner that they wish themselves to be treated. In opposition to secular formulations of this maxim such as Immanuel

1 See volume 18, „The Concept of Just War in Judaism, Christianity and Islam" of the present book series (forthcoming).

Kant's categorical imperative, peacebuilding constitutes, according to all three religions (and particularly Islam), not merely altruistic forms of behavior. The award for the attainment of peace can be obtained in the afterlife. Judaism also advances the notion that the realization of peace on earth will accelerate the coming of the messianic age. In Christianity, peace does not constitute an end in itself, but is rather the result of redemption obtained through the incarnation and the death of Jesus Christ. Therefore, the concept of peace in all three religions points ultimately to the afterlife, where the ideal of peace will be fulfilled.

For Jews, Christians and Muslims, the age of eternal peace will begin with the coming of the Messiah / Christ and conclude with the last judgement as the fulfillment of ultimate justice. A special feature of Christian faith lies in the idea that the Messiah has already come in the person of Jesus Christ. With his incarnation, the power to establish peace has arrived into the world. The sending of the Messiah was an expression of God's love to human beings, which was then perfected through his ultimately redemptive death on the cross and subsequent resurrection. Therefore, in Christian thought, a kind of simultaneity exists between earthly attempts to build peace and a sphere of eternal peace in the process of actualization achieved through coming of Christ. However, although the coming of Jesus Christ can be understood as the dawn of an era of eternal peace, the lack of peace in the sense of the absence of hostility and violence remains a common experience for Christians from the very beginnings of Christianity up till now. After his resurrection, Christ returned to his disciples saying, "peace be with you" in order to take away the fear, sorrow and despair that have overwhelmed the faithful after the arrest and death of their "Lord." This salutation not only granted comfort and hope, but it also formed the basis upon which they were able to follow Jesus in his mission to bring the peace of God to humanity.

Facing recent and present social conflicts, abhorrent cruelty and destructive wars in several parts of the world, reconciliation has become a central motif in the process of peacebuilding. Jews, Christians and Muslims should increasingly strive to establish themselves as pivotal actors in this process whenever and wherever it is needed. Peacebuilding, however, can only be a pursued through patient dialogue.

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