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Islamic Model of Peaceful Coexistence amongst Human Beings

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ARTICLE INFO		ABSTRACT
Article History: <i>Received: 06 February 2022</i> <i>Revised: 11 May 2022</i> <i>Accepted: 20 July 2022</i>		SUBJECT AND OBJECTIVES: One of the main contemporary issues worldwide is to achieve sustainable peace wherein people of different cultures are at peace with one another. In such a situation, it is expected that Islam, as the last and perfect divine religion, will provide solutions for various issues and problems that are in the way of human life, and this article was written with this purpose. METHOD AND FINDING: In this qualitative research, which is a type of exploratory study, the religion of Islam strives not only to correct the apparent behavior of human beings towards each other; but also looks at the problem at its core and provides a solution for them. In other words, the model lays the foundation for Islamic culture that manifests peaceful coexistence in human action and is in line with the ultimate human goal. The Islamic model of peaceful coexistence among human beings uses the traditional categorization of Islamic teachings of theology (worldview), jurisprudential (the dos and don'ts), and ethics (the paramount of human potentials), that these elements are interconnected. In such a way that the model firstly refines the self and then the society. CONCLUSION: The results show that the Islamic model has the ability to lay the foundations of peaceful coexistence among human beings.
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Introduction

The Islamic model of peace is made up of three levels of teachings, the theological or the worldview, the jurisprudential or the dos and don'ts, and the ethical or the paramount of human potentials. The model presented provides the basis of an Islamic culture where in which thought manifests consciously or unconsciously in human action and forms an integral part of the ultimate goal of a human being.

Accordingly, the model presented has three aspects to it:

1. Theological teachings that give vision to human beings and picturizes their ultimate goal.

2. Jurisprudential teachings have the egal authority and bound human beings with some obligations and prohibitions in order to achieve the intended goal.

3. Ethical teachings are those that are essential to uplift and reach the apex of human potential.

These cannot be achieved except under the umbrella of theology and jurisprudence. The model at a glance is reflected in the following figure:

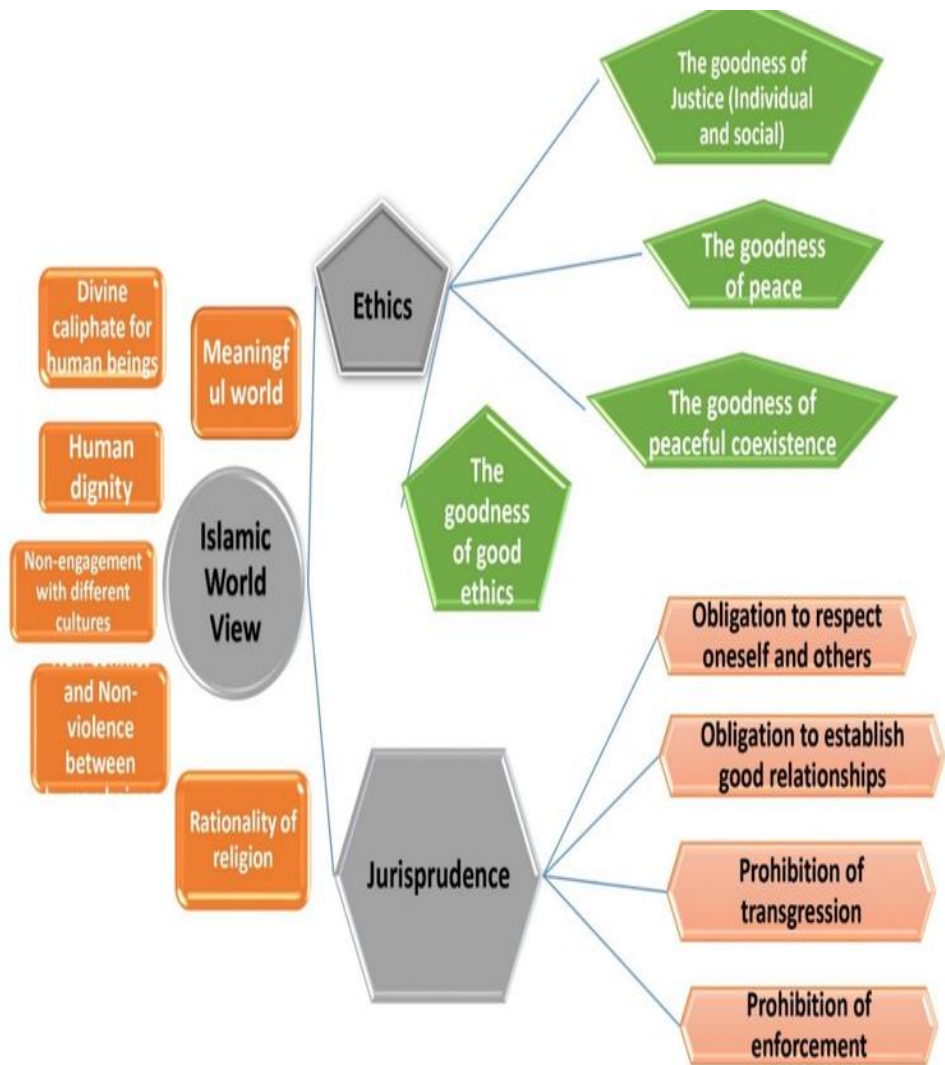


Figure 1: Islamic Model of Peaceful Coexistence in a Multicultural Society

Worldview Principles

Islamic disciplines are divided into three sections, theoretical, jurisprudential, and ethical. In this part, we will discuss the worldview elements which are in the peace model.

1. Divine Caliphate for Human Beings

The Holy Quran says:

- *“Certainly, we have honored the Children of Adam, and carried them over land and sea, and provided them with all the good things, and preferred them with a complete preference over many of those We have created”. (Quran, 17: 70)*

- *“When your Lord said to the angels, ‘Indeed I am going to set a viceroy on the earth,’ they said, ‘Will You set in it someone who will cause corruption in it and shed blood, while we celebrate Your praise and proclaim Your sanctity?’ He said, ‘Indeed I know what you do not know.’” (Quran, 3: 30)*

In Quranic terminology, human beings are the viceroys of God. The verses tell us why man has been sent to this world, what is the significance of his appointment as the vicegerent of Allah on this earth, what are the characteristics and special features of this viceregency. Unlike other Quranic stories,

this story has been mentioned only once.

Allamah Tabatabai using his unique methodology of interpretation mentions the following with regards to the selection of human beings as God's vicegerent and the objection of the angels and says:

When the angels heard the announcement that God was going to create a vicegerent in the world, they arrived at the conclusion that this creation would be the one that would create mischief in the world due to its earthly nature. A vicegerent appointed in the earth would certainly be created from material components. Therefore, he would necessarily be bestowed with two basic traits of

desire and anger. These two traits along with the limited resources on the earth would place this vicegerent in constant unceasing struggle and constant confrontation.

Keeping this in view, the angels at once understood that what Allah intended to create was not only an individual but a species. The members of which would have to live together, cooperating with one another, establish a society and a social order. And with a venture like this, they were bound to cause mischief and to shed blood.

On the other hand, however, they knew that viceregency or setting one thing in place of another was unthinkable unless the

vicegerent were a true copy of his predecessor in all the characteristics, traits, and intrinsic abilities.

God with all the divine and uncomprehendable attributes was creating a specie that would be a replica of Himself; of course in its restricted human dimension, the dilemma was, how can God, the sublime, the perfect make someone who would be earthly, deficient, and lowly represent the majesty and splendor of Allah in the earth? Can a lowly creature of the earth be a mirror of divine beauty and sublimity?

For the reply, Allah used a sentence, *“Surely I know what you do not know”*, and thereafter He introduced

an act, *“And He taught Adam the names, all of them”*.

The context shows that:

The vicegerent was to get the viceregency of Allah; he was not to become a successor of any earthly creature that had preceded him. If Allah had wanted the man to take the place of that previous creature, the reply, *“And He taught Adam the names, all of them”*, would be quite irrelevant. Assuming that man was given viceregency of Allah, this prestige would not be restricted to the person of Adam only, his descendants too would be vicegerents of Allah in the earth. Adam was taught the names.

In other words, this knowledge was ingrained in

human being in such a manner that, since that first day, it has been constantly bearing newer, fresher, and better fruits. Therefore, this assumption is correct that the whole of mankind is a vicegerent of Allah is evident by the following verses:

- *“And remember (O people of ‘Ād!) when He made you successors of Nūh’s people...” (Quran, 7: 69)*
- *“Then We made you successors in the land after them...” (Quran, 10: 14)*
- *“And He makes you successors in the earth”. (Quran, 27: 62)*

The word translated here as “successor” is the same that has been translated as “vicegerent” in the verse under discussion.

Allah did not say that the vicegerent-designate would not cause mischief and bloodshed; nor did He reject the plea of the angels that they celebrated His praise and extolled His glory. By this silence, He confirmed that the angels were right on both counts. But then He made manifest one thing which the angels were not aware of. He showed them that there was a matter which they could not shoulder the responsibility of, while this proposed vicegerent could do so. Man was entrusted with a divine secret which the angels, in their nature, were unable to know or understand and that divine gift would more than compensate the ensuing mischief and bloodshed.

Allah told them, first, that surely, He knew what they did not know. It does not refer to Adam's knowledge of those names. The angels were unaware of even the existence of these “names”; it was not that they knew about the names but were not sure whether Adam knew them or not. Had the angels been doubtful only about Adam's knowledge of the names, it would have been enough to tell Adam to inform the angels of the names in order that they would have known that Adam knew. Instead, Allah first asked them to tell Him “the names of those”.

The angels had claimed the viceregency of Allah for themselves, and had hinted that Adam was not fit for

it; but the essential qualification for the viceregency was the knowledge of the names; therefore, Allah asked both candidates about the names; the angels did not know them, and Adam knew; it proved that he had the qualification while they lacked it. The question (about this knowledge) addressed to the angels ends with the clause, “*if you are right*”; it means that they had claimed a position, essential qualification of which was this knowledge. (*Tabatabai, 1996: Vol. 1: 193-199*)

The analysis of the above section shows that Human beings are made up of body and soul, which Both the dimensions have their own requirements for

their survival. The body requires food to eat, a place to live, fellow human beings, etc. for its survival whereas intellect, appetite, and anger are the primary traits of the soul essentially required for its prolongment. Since the bodily requirements are due to the material nature of human beings they are called material requirements and since the latter is related to the soul they are known as spiritual. The material aspect is common between mankind and the animal world. The two states of the soul i.e. appetite and anger are also common between the human and the animal world.

What distinguishes the two creations of God is the intellectual attribute in human

beings and it is for this reason that human beings have honored and granted superiority over other creations.

The animal world which lacks human intellect acts in line with its natural tendencies of satiating its material requirement with the help of the soul that motivates it in fulfilling it. The other creation of God known as angels are pure intellect and lack the deficiencies brought about by the nature of materiality. Therefore, when the angels were notified about the creation of human beings which had material tendencies, they at once asked God that how can a being that has a tendency towards destruction be a representative of God?

The reason one says that materiality in its essences has a tendency towards destruction is that when the soul chooses one of the two extremes it goes out of the equilibrium and causes destruction.

For example, if anger and appetite are left unchecked, they lead to irreparable destruction. Therefore, unless there is a balance between the two powers materiality would bring nothing but destruction. This is precisely the argument raised by the angels as well to which God replied, "*I know what you do not know*". Meaning there is a source in this caliph that would prevent him from going towards the extremes. That source is known as intellect,

the distinguishing faculty between the human and the animal worlds.

Therefore, if mankind uses its intellect to control the material instincts and create a level of equilibrium between them, then he can rise above the angels who lack these material tendencies likewise if human beings use the intellect to go to the extremes to satisfy their material desires then such people are worse than animals, who lack the faculty of intellect.

This can also be found in the traditions of the infallible, for example, the following tradition from Abdullah bin Sanan who asked Imam Sadiq whether angels were superior or the children of Adam. Imam quoted the

Commander of the Faithful,
Ali in response:

*“God placed intellect in the angels without lust, He placed lust in animals without intellect and in human beings, He placed intellect along with lust. Hence, if human intellect takes over his lust, he will be superior to angels and if his lust takes over his intellect, he will be lower and meaner than animals”.
(Hurr Amili, 1994, Vol. 15: 209)*

In other words, amongst the three creations of angels, animals, and human beings, the first two are bound with their innate nature whereas human beings have the free will to either follow the carnal desires

and descend from the level of being called human beings or follow the commands of God and ascend to the heights higher than that of the angels.

The Holy Quran says:

*“They have hearts with which they do not understand, they have eyes with which they do not see, they have ears with which they do not hear. They are like cattle; indeed, they are more astray. It is they who are heedless”.
(Quran, 7: 179)*

Since, human beings are the representatives of God and therefore they ought to be a manifestation of God, albeit in their own capabilities. The teachings of Islam, including the cultural aspect,

should be such that promotes Godliness in the society. It is impossible that the teachings of Islam are empty of culture. The reason for this is that culture is the common element in a society that leads society towards a single goal. If the teachings of Islam are void of culture then there would be a vacuum between the intellectual, ethical, and practical teachings of Islam and therefore, its adherents would never reach the lofty goal suggested by Islam.

Similarly, as human beings are a combination of two dimensions, the material and the spiritual, the proposed culture should be such to include both. If there are any restrictions in any of

the material or spiritual traits, it should be in line with the ultimate goal.

2. The Principle of a Meaningful World

In the Holy Quran mentions:

“Indeed, in the creation of the heavens and the earth and the alternation of the day and night there are signs for people of reason who Who remember Allah while standing or sitting or [lying] on their sides and give thought to the creation of the heavens and the earth, [saying], Our Lord, You did not create this aimlessly; exalted are You [above such a thing]; then protect us from the punishment of the Fire”. (Quran, 3: 190-191)

The Quran makes it distinctly clear that it is an error to think that the world is created in vain and human beings have been created simply by chance or without a sounding purpose. The next question that comes to mind is if the world is not created in vain then what is the purpose of creation.

The Holy Quran mentions three types of goals for human beings. They are:

- To test human beings
 - To worship God
 - To attract His mercy.
- (Mesbah Yazdi, 2022)

The above-mentioned goals are not parallel to each other rather each one is a prerequisite to the other; Meaning, in order to attract God's mercy, one needs to

reach the level of worship. Similarly, in order to reach the level of worship, one needs to successfully pass the divine tests and trials. Human beings need to choose the path of worship in times of test in order to attract divine mercy. To further explain the three goals mentioned in the Quran consider the following verses:

- *"It is He who created the heavens and the earth in six days- and His Throne was [then] upon the waters- that He may test you [to see] which of you is best in conduct. Yet if you say, You will indeed be raised up after death, the faithless will surely say, 'This is nothing but plain magic'. (Quran, 11: 7)*

- *"It is He who has made you successors on the earth, and raised some of you in rank above others so that He may test you in respect to what He has given you. Indeed, your Lord is swift in retribution, and indeed, He is all-forgiving, all-merciful". (Quran, 6: 165)*

- *"We created man from a mixed sperm to try him, so We have made him hearing, seeing. We have shown him the way: Either grateful or ungrateful". (Quran, 18: 7)*

- *"Do the people suppose that they will be let off because they say, 'We have faith,' and they will not be tested? Certainly We tested those who were before them. So Allah shall*

surely ascertain those who are truthful, and He shall surely ascertain the liars". (Quran, 29: 2-3)

- *"He, who created death and life that He may test you [to see] which of you is best in conduct. And He is the All-mighty, the All-forgiving". (Quran, 67: 2)*

It is clear from the above verses that one of the purposes of creation is to test human beings. Success and failure in these tests depend on our determination to act according to God's commandments in all situations.

We have two kinds of tests; one is personal tests, meaning our personal obligations in relation to ourselves and God (although its effect might not be

limited to being personal) like praying, fasting, etc., while the other is the social test; meaning our social obligations towards our neighbors, society, community and the humanity on a whole. The verb presented by Islam for acting in accordance to the divine will in these tests, personal as well as social, is called worship, which is another purpose of creation as mentioned in some verses of the Quran. For example:

- *"I did not create the jinn and the humans except that they may worship Me". (Quran, 51: 56)*

- *"Did I not exhort you, O children of Adam, saying, Do not worship Satan. He is indeed your*

manifest enemy. Worship Me. That is a straight path?" (Quran, 36: 60-61)

As mentioned, acting in line with the commandments of Allah is known as worship whether the act is a personal act or a social act.

In the later section, we will introduce the social aspects of Islam which form the Islamic culture and how Islam suggests its adherents to live in multi-cultural society. The need to mention the purpose of human creation is to illustrate that worship encompasses all social encounters as well. For example, if a Muslim acting according to the standards of Islam, greets someone in a nice way, helps his fellow human being, stands against

oppression etc., all of these acts will be considered as worship and through these acts, the person will be able to achieve the ultimate goal of creation i.e. attracting divine mercy.

There are verses in the Quran that point towards an even higher goal for creation and that is to attract divine mercy:

*“Had your Lord wished, He would have made mankind one community; but they continue to differ, except those on whom your Lord has mercy- and that is why He created them- and the word of your Lord has been fulfilled: I will surely fill hell with jinn and humans, all together”.
(Quran, 11: 118-119)*

Writing about the above verse, Allamah Misbah says:

According with this verse one may conclude that the ultimate purpose of creation is to receive divine mercy. Therefore, the eventual goal is to attain divine mercy and the punishment mentioned is a necessary requirement of it. This is because, attaining divine mercy necessitates human free will and human free will necessitates that there are at least two options for people, one that leads to mercy and the other naturally would be the one leading towards divine punishment. (Mesbah Yazdi, 2022)

It is therefore upon human beings to choose that which would lead to divine mercy which in other words is known as worship and refrain from that which would cause divine punishments alternately known as sin.

The whole world has been created for us so that we can attain these goals:

*“He has disposed for you[r benefit] whatever is in the heavens and whatever is on the earth; all is from Him. There are indeed signs in that for a people who reflect”.
(Quran, 45: 13)*

One important thing to take note of here in light of our discussion is that none of the verses talk about believers or non-believers,

rather the verses are general and include all human beings. Therefore, all human beings are created for the above-mentioned purposes and all of them enjoy the bounties favored by God. This is an important key, that human beings regardless of their religion, race, language, or any other differentiating factors are created by default to enjoy His blessings and thereby attract even more.

3. The Principle of the Rationality of Religion

The primary resource of Islam includes, Quran, the Ahadith, and rationality. It is a divine gift used not only to understand and comprehend but to deduct religious rulings as well as consent to something that might not be exclusively

mentioned in the Quran and Ahadith.

The Quran extols the wise, the thoughtful, and those who ponder over their affairs: (*Ref: Quran, 8: 29*)

“It is only people of understanding who heed”.
(*Quran, 13:19*)

The Holy Quran condemns those who refuse to use this precious gift, it says:

- *“They will say: If only we had really listened and used our reason (minds), we would not have been companions of the Blaze”.* (*Quran, 67:10*)
- *“There are those people who are blind to the truth because they refuse to see it despite the fact that they have normal eyesight, and refuse to hear despite the fact*

they have normal hearing: They have hearts wherewith they understand not, they have eyes wherewith they see not, and they have ears wherewith they hear not (the truth). They are like cattle, nay even more astray; those! They are the heedless ones”.
(*Quran, 7: 179*)

- *“The blind and the seeing are not the same. Nor are those who believe and do right, the same as evildoers”.*
(*Quran, 40: 58*)

Therefore, even if there were no prophets sent, God would still have an argument in the form of rationality. Imam Kadhimi says:

God has two arguments, the apparent and the hidden. The apparent

argument is the prophet and the Imam whereas the hidden argument is the intellect. (Kulayni, 1987)

Accordingly, if one comes across a hadith that goes against the sound intellect or interprets a verse out of context or against the other verses of the Quran, such narrations would not be considered valid, and such an interpretation would be considered incorrect.

The sage, Nasir al-Din Tusi in his book “Tajrid al-I’tiqad” says:

If the means of proving good and evil were restricted to that means provided by religious rulings alone, the good and evil of acts would, in a general manner, cease to have any meaning,

since they could be proved neither by intellect nor by religious means. This is because the religious rulings on what is good or evil are in accordance with the principles of good and evil; and these principles in turn are discernible by the intellect. If the intellect were intrinsically incapable of this discernment, then the principles of good and evil become meaningless, being unprovable either by the intellect or religion: an act commanded by God would then be ‘good’ not because it is an expression of the universal principle of goodness; but only because it has been commanded

by God. (Ref: *Sobhani Tabrizi, 2012*)

4. The Principle of non-Conflict and Violence amongst Human Beings

I would quote the famous scholar George Bernard who insists that:

If a man like Muhammad was to assume the dictatorship of the modern world, he would succeed in solving the problems that would bring it the much-needed peace and happiness. (Shaw, 1936)

He must be called the savior of humanity. The great historian, Lamartine argues that with regard to all standards by which human greatness may be measured, we may well ask, is there any man greater than him? (*Lamartine, 1854, Vol. 2:*

276-277) For he justifiably, does lead the list of the world's most influential persons. (*Hart, 1978*)

Therefore, God glorifies him saying:

"And we have sent you not but as a mercy for all that exists". (Quran, 21: 107)

This refers to Muslims, non-Muslims, animals, plants, etc. In other words, everything existent is encompassed by the Prophets mercy. Each and every aspect of the Holy Prophets life demonstrates perfection and is invaluable for those who seek a model of guidance. That is why he was a prophet and is considered the best of creation. He always desired peace with the Christians, Jews, and idolaters, and only unsheathed his sword

when he was forced to do so in order to defend Islam, peace, justice, and also to repel injustice and aggression. The Prophet was born to establish peace and unity in the world; Therefore, without a doubt the extinction of race awareness between Muslims is one of the most outstanding accomplishments of Islam.

The Quran stressed the steadiness of the religious experience of humankind and taught us that God sent Messengers to every people on the face of the earth. The Quran instructs Muslims to argue other faiths with respect and friendly attitude:

“Do not argue with the Peoples of the Scriptures except in the kindest manner unless it is such

of them as are set on evil doing- and say: We believe in that which has been bestowed upon us, as well as that which was bestowed upon you; for our God and you’re God is one and the same, and unto Him that we surrender ourselves”. (Quran, 29: 46)

Undeniably, the religion of God presented the compassionate ethos which was the trademark of the more advanced religion: brotherhood and social justice were its crucial virtues. The Jews and the Muslims lived side by side in peace in Madinah. The Prophet allowed them to exercise their religion freely. He made peace between the polytheist tribes of Aws and Khazraj.

In addition to this, he cautioned his followers that if anyone killed or abused a non-Muslim in the slightest of ways, he would not even be able to smell the fragrance of Paradise and that the Prophet himself, on Judgement Day would speak in the defense of the non-Muslim.

5. The Principle of Human Dignity and Respect for Human Beings Without Considering Other Features

One of the most influential principles prescribed by Islam to attain peace is to adhere to human dignity. Islam aims to ascertain, uplift, and sustain the honor and dignity of humans. In the Islamic view, man is considered as God's vicegerent on the Earth.

Every component of the world has been created for the purpose of accommodating and facilitating the fulfillment of man's noble mission of viceregency.

God explicitly mentions that the creation of a human being itself without taking into consideration its caste and creed is an honorable one and something which is honored by God should not, therefore, be dishonored by humans:

- *“We have indeed created man in the best of molds”.*

(Quran, 95: 4)

- *“We honored the progeny of Adam, provided them with transport on land and sea, gave them for sustenance things good and pure, and conferred on them special favors*

above a great part of our creation". (Quran, 17: 70)

It is in this sense that Islam teaches respect for the human body. Not only for the living human body but also for the dead, as exemplified by the prophet who stood up in veneration for the passing by of a funeral of a Jew, at a time when Jews were waging war against him and tried to assassinate him and then poison him but failed. One of his companions exclaimed it was only the funeral of a Jew. The Prophet retorted: is it not a human being?" *(Bukhari, 1997)*

The unity of human beings is established in many verses of the Quran and the traditions of the Prophet. The value of a

human being depends on his good deeds, and not on his wealth or position:

"Oh mankind, we created you from a single (pair) of a male and female, and made you into nations and tribes that you may know each other. Verily the most honored of you in the sight of Allah (God) is he who is the most righteous of you". (Quran, 49: 13)

Based on this, if one intends to study of the creation of the universe and mankind and also the status of human beings with God, one ought to invoke the notion of love in Islam. God is love and has created the world out of love. Faith starts with love, an overpowering love for certain

truths. It is required to flourish by the nourishment of this love to the extent that one's love for God fills all of one's heart and directs all aspects of one's life.

The Love for God can rise only through the reduction of our selfishness. Only after ridding ourselves of selfishness will we be able to achieve the ultimate goal of creation. Therefore, we see that the Holy Prophet who was the most in love with God was sent as a prophet of mercy, a manifestation of divine love. He used to say the famous tradition which says:

"People are all God's family, so the dearest people to Him are those who benefit his family the most". (Kulayni, 1987)

According to the hadith similar to what is mentioned in the new testament, on the day of Judgement God will ask some people why they did not visit him when he was sick, why they did not feed him whilst he was hungry and why they did not give him water although he was thirsty. Those people will ask: how could these have happened, while you are the Lord of the entire universe? Then God will reply:

So and so was sick and you did not visit him, so and so was hungry and you did not feed him and so and so was thirsty and you did not give water to him, did not you know that if you did so you

would find me with him?
(Heydarpoor, 2002)

6. The Principle of Engagement with Different Cultures

As mentioned, Islam is a religion of rationality therefore, if we come across a culture or a custom that doesn't harm the interests of humanity and doesn't go against the fundamentals of Islam and nor is it mentioned in the verses of the Quran and the narrations, then adhering to it or ignoring it would be free choice. It doesn't enforce its opinion upon others and has left humanity free to choose. In the following, two examples of the verses of the Holy Quran are mentioned:

- *"We showed him the Way: whether he be grateful or ungrateful (rests on his will). (Quran, 76: 3)*

- *There is no compulsion in adhering to the Islamic faith". (Quran, 2: 256)*

Therefore, Islam wants people to hear, ponder and then follow the best way. It wants its followers to have an insight of what they follow and to choose goodness over evil:

"Those who eschew Evil, and fall not into its worship, and turn to Allah (in repentance), for them is Good News. So announce the Good News to My Servants, Who hear advice and follow the best thereof. Such are those whom Allah guideth and such are

men of understanding”.
(Quran, 39: 17-18)

The Grand Mufti of Egypt Ali Gomaa says:

I am personally fully convinced that the only ground for capital punishment for the apostate is only when apostasy is coupled with some other serious crimes such as high treason or murder.

He argued that his reasoning was based firmly on three key verses from the Quran which he reminded his audience said first, “*Unto you your religion, and unto me my religion*”; second, “*Whosoever will let him believe, and whosoever will let him disbelieve*”; and, most famously as I have

already mentioned above, “*There is no compulsion in religion*”. (Ref: *Banglawala, 2009*)

Jurisprudential Principles

After knowing the theological foundations of the Islamic model, one needs to in line with the peace model analyze the practical elements. Islamic disciplines are divided into three sections, theoretical, jurisprudential, and ethical. In this part, we will discuss the jurisprudential elements which are in line with the theoretical elements of the peace model.

1. Obligation to Respect Oneself and Others

To respect oneself means to honor and value ourselves and the people around us with that which is suitable and considered self-respect.

It is to be in line with the instance so respect in accordance with the customs of nations and their different cultures and social norms. However, to honor ourselves or others it is primarily important to know and realize our worth.

We cannot respect ourselves or others if we are ignorant about the worth of our existence as a being. One cannot expect honor and respect from a person who doesn't honor, respect, and value own self. We don't need to possess any outstanding or unique-distinguishing capabilities. Nor is it necessary to have external material achievements and possessions. The fact that we are created as a vicegerent and possess the capacity to be

the caliph and representative of God is enough to dignify the whole of humanity. To understand and cherish being the masterpiece of God. It is only after the creations of human beings that God acknowledged Himself saying:

"Then We created the drop of fluid as a clinging mass. Then We created the clinging mass as a fleshy tissue. Then We created the fleshy tissue as bones. Then We clothed the bones with flesh. Then We produced him as [yet] another creature. So blessed is Allah, the best of creators".
(Quran, 23: 14)

We are human beings and we have the supreme divine grace, that is, the power of discernment, choice,

will, and authority. Having all these blessings entails responsibilities. The best way we can honor ourselves is by giving the various elements of our body their correct due.

The fourth Imam, Imam Zain al-Abidin has a famous book called “The Treatise of Rights” wherein he mentions the rights of our body parts as well as the society in which we live. Some of the ways in which we can honor ourselves and the others are as follows:

- Accepting Ourselves and the people as they are.

Of course, this doesn't mean that we should strive to achieve higher ranks in material as well as spiritual. What is meant here is to be grateful for the capabilities

given to us by God and not to envy the ability, potentials, possessions, etc. of others.

- Having valuable goals in life. One who respects his-self would never believe that life was bestowed in vanity.
- Having a nice and smiling appearance.
- Taking care of physical as well as mental health.
- Having values in life.
- Having self-esteem.
- Respecting others.
- The perfect example of self-respect is to avoid sins. If we sin, we are creating barriers to reaching perfection.

There are many other things for which one can refer to the book, “The Treatise of Rights”.

Mohammad Adel Ziaei, a director of the Shafi'i jurisprudence group at the University of Tehran, says:

The most important issue in the discussion of literature is the need to refer to the behavior of Salaf Saleh (the righteous predecessors) and how they interacted with each other. We can consider their style to be a role model for us. Certainly, their method will help us to address the etiquette of disputes more appropriately. If we look at the golden generation that was present at the beginning of Islam, we see that despite their differences, they ultimately did things with mutual respect.

He continued that the basic principle in respecting others is to pay attention to humanity. Imam Malik says: All human beings make mistakes and also speak the right words.

In other words, their words are sometimes accepted and sometimes they are rejected; Then, referring to the shrine of the Prophet, he said: Except for this grave.

Therefore, if we accept the possibility of error as a fundamental principle, we will also accept the possibility that both we and our fellow human beings may make mistakes. If we do not accept this basis, we cannot claim the etiquette of dispute, and if a person is an absolutist, he cannot implement the etiquette of dispute.

*(Ref: The Scientific Meeting
“Politeness Conditions of
Differences in Education and
Research”, 2021)*

2. Obligation to Establish Good Relationships

Most of the religions regard to worship, sacred rituals, and sacrifices as symbols of the religiosity, piety, and spirituality of a person. Those who abandon their worldly obligations and leave cities and towns for forests and caves to “meditate” are often called “holy persons”. Whereas the one who involves himself in farming, trading, and establishing and maintaining good relationships are considered as normal worldly people. Islam however, changed this understanding through the concept of Ibadat or devotions

and worships, as well as through its teachings on the economy, social and political affairs as well as international relations.

One important ayah in the Holy Quran refers to this integrated approach in the context of social responsibilities of human beings:

It is not righteousness that ye turn your faces towards East or West; but it is righteousness to believe in Allah and the Last Day, and the Angels, and the Book and the Messengers; to spend of your substance, out of love for Him, for your kin, for orphans, for the needy, for the wayfarer, for those who ask, and for the ransom of slaves; to be steadfast in prayer,

and practice regular charity, to fulfill the contracts which we have made, and to be firm and patient, in pain (or suffering) and adversity, and throughout all periods of panic. Such are the people of truth, God-fearing. (Quran, 2: 177)

In this relatively long ayah, the Quran refers to social obligations that are more important than simply facing towards the East or the West to make five times daily prayer. Without downgrading the importance of prayers, the Quran integrates the meaning and purpose of prayer with socially uplifting policies and concern for the welfare of the community. While talking about the articles of

faith, the Quran reminds a believer that the declaration of faith in Allah, His Book, and the Last Day is not sufficient unless a conscious effort is also made to care for relatives, orphans, the needy, and travelers as well as to ensure the welfare of those who ask for help. Similarly, it highlights the need to use assets for the liberation of people who have been denied freedom and liberty in their own homeland or abroad.

When an institute calls for the use of material and human resources to liberate people from political oppression, this political activity is normally considered a worldly act. Nevertheless, the remarkable approach of the Quran is to place its emphasis on the

liberation of the oppressed and meeting the needs of economically less-developed people as part of devotion, worship, and faith. The value of social welfare is compared and contrasted with the value of devotion and worship of Allah, the Lord of Universe.

The Quran emphasizes establishing good relations as a basic value. This concern of the Quran for human issues makes it general, relevant, and applicable in all circumstances. It also induces a Muslim to relate his piety with social realities. It gives a new meaning to piety and virtue as social values. These values encourage a person to share the blessings and bounties of Allah with others as a matter of obligation. It is

also considered a condition to achieve the ultimate goal of life.

Consequently, piety not only encompasses the love of Allah; but also the love of fellow human beings who should be treated as part of an extended human family. While the ayah begins with a reference to spending substantially for one's kin, it immediately refers to orphans, the needy, travelers, and others who may fall in the category of "strangers". This looks more complete when one adds the narration of the Holy Prophet:

"Religion is not only what one formally or ritualistically practices but how one deals with others".
(Ref: Bassiouni, 2012)

3. Prohibition of Transgression

Man is a social being and lives in groups with his fellow human beings. The survival and continuity of social life depend on the existence of a strong bond between members of society through love, understanding, and mutual respect.

Hence, in one's social life, one is bound to abide by what one expects people to do and to treat people as one expects to be treated. Therefore, if he likes truth and righteousness, loyalty and adherence to the covenant, his life, property, reputation, honor, etc., he himself ought to be bound by these virtues; Likewise, if he hates stinginess, resentment, and jealousy of others towards himself and

expects goodness and kindness from people, he should himself possess these attributes or should be striving to achieve them. If he doesn't like people to violate and transgress his rights, he should follow the suit.

The Holy Quran condemns those who neglect their social responsibilities while expecting others to fulfill them. It considers this kind of hypocrisy to be a sign of irrationality. It says:

"Will you bid others to piety and forget yourselves, while you recite the Book? Do you not exercise your reason?" (Quran, 2: 44)

Imam Sadiq while describing the rights of other members of the society says:

“The minimum right they have upon you is that you love what you love for yourself and do not like what you do not like for yourself”. (Majlisi, 1983)

Our intellect, the third source for deriving religious rulings considers transgression evil, and therefore, depending upon the level of transgression every society has certain laws. Since transgression is evil and all that is evil is prohibited in Islam one can conclude that transgression in all its forms is prohibited in Islam.

Allamah Tabatabai while interpreting the verse “O you who believe! Do not enter houses other than your own houses until you have asked permission (tasta’nisu, from istinas)

and saluted their inmates; this is better for you, that you may be mindful”, (Quran, 24: 27) says the following:

Having ‘uns’ with or toward something means having a peaceful relationship and affinity with it. Istinas [in the form istif ‘al] means “seeking” or “asking for” such a condition and relationship. It is done practically by mentioning God’s name or doing tanahnun (coughing, clearing the throat, hemming, making a sound like “hem” or “ahem”) in order to make the host realize one’s presence and willingness to enter the house. It is a way of informing the owner to

prepare for the entrant's presence because he might be in a condition that he does not want others to see him or find him in that state.

Therefore, the wisdom behind this law is to cover the private affairs of the people and respect the honor of the believers. When one asks permission and informs the owner before entering a house, and then salutes the owner after-wards, he is helping the owner to cover his private affairs and is assuring the owner about himself [that he has no ill will and is not intending any harm]. Persistence with this good custom leads to the strengthening of a

general sense of brotherhood, friendship, and mutual support to reveal the fair and conceal the foul. This is referred to by saying: "This is better for you, that you may be mindful". (Quran, 24: 27)

It means: May it be that by consistent practice of this custom you would be mindful of what you should observe and revive in terms of the brotherhood and bond of the hearts, for that is where all social happiness lies. (Tabatabai, 1996)

4. Prohibition of Enforcement

This principle in line with the divine gift of free will entails that people are free to choose whatever they

like as long as it does not interfere in the general betterment of society. Meaning, in our interactions, Islam does not instruct us to force our beliefs or practices upon others. So, inviting people towards good and forbidding them from evil is one of the primary obligations upon Muslims but to enforce their belief and practice is forbidden.

On the other hand, if a person commits such a sin and the other person carries out an action out of enforcement, the act will not be accepted in Islam as it was not done with free will.

Islam encourages its followers to act with insight and has condemned blind following. This takes on more importance if the

society is multicultural wherein people of different backgrounds, religions, and customs live side by side.

If we look into the history of the advent of Islam, the Holy Prophet didn't enforce Islam upon the people, rather he explained to them and those who were able to understand the message of the prophet and Islam turned towards Islam and those who did not want to follow the message of Islam turned away from it.

Ayatullah Makarem Shirazi, while providing an exegesis for the chapter of "Kafirun" mentions that, this chapter was revealed when the polytheists insisted the Holy Prophet to worship their idols for a year and they

would in turn worship Allah for the other year. The prophet rejected their request, so they said, if you only seek the blessings of our Gods then we would accept your God as well. The Holy Prophet waited for the revelation, (*Makarem Shirazi, 1995, Vol. 27*) which said:

*“In the name of Allah,
Most Gracious, Most
Merciful.*

Say: O unbelievers!

*I do not serve that which
you serve,*

*Nor do you serve Him
Whom I serve:*

*Nor am I going to serve
that which you serve,*

*Nor are you going to
serve Him Whom I serve:*

*You shall have your
religion and I shall have*

*my religion”. (*Quran, 109: 1-6*)*

The verses above clearly indicate that Islam does not accept the language of force. It doesn't legitimize accepting force nor does it approve its adherents to resort to force. This is instrumental in a multicultural society that people have the freedom to do and choose whatever they want. Of Course, like in any society, there are red lines that all citizens need to abide by but people on a social level are forbidden to use the language of force even though they might be witnessed to things they wouldn't approve of.

Ethical Principles

After mentioning the theoretical arguments and the jurisprudential maxims regarding Islam's model of peace, we will now mention the ethical statements of Islam for a peaceful multicultural society.

1. The Goodness of Justice

In Islam, rights are respected and justice, which is to protect the rights of individuals, is considered a value. There are two types of Justices emphasized in Islam, individual and social. If one is not just in his personal affairs, he won't be able to do justice in social affairs either. Opposite to the concept of justice is oppression. Oppression literally means cruelty, persecution, and

diminishing one's rights. As much as justice is valuable and virtuous, oppression is considered immoral, inhuman, and vice.

- **Individual Justice**

Individual justice belongs to the individual themselves on a personal basis. Its field of exercise is within the bounds of human existence. Individual justice means that a person is able to strike a balance and establish moderation within himself. It is related to human morality and actions. It is a never-ending struggle to find the correct equilibrium between the three powers of anger, desire, and intellect.

Individual justice is so important that Imam Khamenei says:

In every human being, his personal and individual justice is instrumental in achieving social and collective justice. A person who is drenched in his carnal desires cannot claim to administer justice in society. (Imam Khamenei, 2021)

Although the provision of general and inclusive justice depends on the existence of infrastructures, including appropriate and deterrent laws, it does not necessitate that the existence of these infrastructures would lead to the establishment of justice. The main element that guarantees justice is a god-fearing human being who has reached the level of equilibrium within himself. Therefore, there is a consensus

amongst Islamic scholars that individual justice is a necessary prerequisite for the establishment of social justice, and this is the reason why much stress has been laid by Islam for its adherents to adhere to justice and to beware of extravagance.

According to this, Righteousness cannot be achieved unless thru the attainment of justice. A righteous person is someone who is familiar with all the dimensions, components, and indicators of justice and observes all of them in his actions, speech, and behavior. He knows his rights as well as the rights of those in his society and while striving to secure his own rights is

careful to avoid violation of the rights of others.

- **Social Justice**

In the realm of social life, the goal of prophethood is to establish justice:

“We sent Our messengers with clear signs, the Scripture and the Balance so that people could uphold justice”. (Quran, 57: 25)

According to Imam Khamenei, the lexical meaning of “justice” is moderation while technically it implies giving everything its due, with any extravagance. Nowadays, justice is the same as social justice. it is in the environment of justice and social justice that human beings can grow, reach

higher human levels, and achieve perfection. Thus, the goal of the prophets in the realm of social life is a prelude to the attainment of the same goal that exists in the realm of the individual life i.e. inner transformation, modification, and becoming a true human being. (*Imam Khamenei, 2021*)

Islam promotes social justice with two great principles:

- Comprehensive and balanced unity
- General development and solidarity between individuals and communities

In the view of Islam, God has commanded the establishment of comprehensive justice and calls upon its adherents to rise in order to fulfill this obligation. The principle of social justice is

a comprehensive justice that encompasses all aspects of social, family, cultural, political, and economic life. It is necessary to establish justice in the individual as well as the social spheres of human life for humanity to progress and achieve a blissful life for all human beings. God calls upon people to be just:

“And if you judge, judge between them with equity; surely Allah loves those who judge equitably”. (Quran, 5: 42)

Consequently, this divine love is those who rise up for Him desire to establish justice.

2. The Goodness of Peace

The primary principle in Islam is peace; Islam emphasizes

peace in communication with all humanity, Muslim and non-Muslim alike, and It encourages its adherents to avoid war and violence, and it places limits on the use of force. Although, the Quran acknowledges the right of retribution but states:

“Those who forgive the injury and make reconciliation will be rewarded by God”. (Quran, 42: 40)

In the following, will list a few principles of peace found in the Quran:

The primary principle to achieve peace is to acknowledge difference and give the other a chance to choose whatever he wishes. The Quran acknowledges this fact and doesn't impose its

ideology or commandments upon others:

“Let there be no compulsion in religion: Truth stands out clear from error: whoever rejects evil and believes in Allah has grasped the most trustworthy handhold that never breaks. And God hears and knows all things”. (Quran, 2: 256)

It explicitly mentions and rejects the enforcement of force in belief and practice:

“The truth is from your Lord, so whoever wills- let him believe, and whoever wills- let him disbelieve”. (Quran, 18: 29)

Likewise, it prescribes the same ideology for the others in the society as well:

“For you is your religion, and for me is my religion”. (Quran, 109: 6)

These passages advocate peace in the society and denounce violence under the banner of Islam. It implies that religious faith is a voluntary matter and that individuals must choose freely and consciously and not compulsively. The message of such verses of the Quran is to respect dissenting beliefs and to recognize the freedom of others. This principle can in many cases prevent cultural violence and contribute to the realization of the culture of peace.

Furthermore, if the path chosen by God is clear and univocal. He invites people to peace and regards war

and violence as the evil way: (Ref: *Quran, 2: 208*)

*“Allah invites to the Home of Peace, and guides whomever He wills to a straight path”.
(Quran, 10: 25)*

Moreover, it suggests making peace with the enemies as well:

*“But if they incline towards peace, then incline towards it, and put your trust in Allah. He is the Hearer, the Knower”.
(Quran, 8: 61)*

It calls upon its followers to remember the greater reward with God and the pardon and excuse the wrong-does

“The retribution of a bad action is one equivalent to it. However, whoever

*pardons and makes reconciliation, his reward lies with Allah. He does not love the unjust”.
(Quran, 42: 40)*

3. The Goodness of Peaceful Coexistence

The teachings of Islam are based upon peaceful coexistence and call upon people to live based upon the principle of peace and justice. Therefore, it can be said that peace in Islam is an eternal constitution. Even the nature of war in Islam is a defensive one, not an offensive one because the principle of Islam is peace and coexistence, not conflict, violence, and war. War in Islam is a secondary principle, not a primary one.

The Quran justifies wars for self-defense in order to protect oneself or to protect Islamic communities against internal or external hostility. It permits physical jihad to defend itself from the wars waged against those who “violate their oaths” by breaking a treaty. Even in self-defense has been strictly limited and has its own conditions.

The instances mentioned for jihad are normally interpreted out of context for political gains. The conditions of aggression, violation of a treaty, or self-defense are considered as every person’s right and by no means considered to be violence.

The Islamic teachings invite people to peaceful

coexistence based upon justice and consider this existence vital for the progress of humanity. Peaceful coexistence is therefore an immortal and primary law and God doesn’t love the transgressors:

“Lo! Allah loveth not aggressors”. (Quran, 2: 190)

It calls upon its adherents to adhere to humanitarian principles and values. After the conquest of Mecca, the Prophet of Islam said:

“Instead of revenge and bloodshed today is a day of mercy”. (Ref: Yazdani, 2020)

Therefore, the distinction between aggression and defense must be distinguished; Aggression is unlawful but

defense is permissible and at times obligatory. The Quran forbids Muslims from humiliating those who are against their ideology and calls upon its followers to respect them even though it is false:

*“Do not insult those they call upon besides Allah, lest they insult Allah out of hostility and ignorance. We made attractive to every community their deeds. Then to their Lord is their return, and He will inform them of what they used to do”.
(Quran, 6: 108)*

4. The Goodness of Good Ethics

Islam gives very much emphasis on the importance of ethics and its significance for the development of

individuals as well as society. A good society is composed of good people. There are many Quranic verses and hadiths which indicate the importance of ethics. The Holy Quran mentions:

*“Let there arise out a group of people inviting to all that is good enjoining what is right and forbidding what is wrong. They are the ones who attained success”.
(Quran, 5: 44)*

The two important points can be highlighted from the above verse; the first is calling others to all that is good, and the second is enjoining what is right and forbidding what is wrong. Good implies the whole Islamic value system, its beliefs,

ideas, ethical principles, and all aspects of life. It can be inferred from the above verse that successful Muslims are those who firstly strive to be good and secondly, they do not limit the goodness to themselves rather they strive to make society better as well.

The manifestation of the level of humanity in human beings can be seen through their ethics. The higher the person is the better are his ethics. The best of people are those that possess the best of ethics. The Holy Prophet says:

“Nothing is heavier on the scale than having a good character”. (*Kulayni, 1987*)

Ethics are the basic pillar for a healthy and firm

society. A society devoid of ethical values would always be having problems. Therefore, all scholars and philosophers agree on the importance of ethics consider ethics as the foundation of every society. The first step in establishing a peaceful human society is to advocate refined morality. It is an absolute necessity to ensure the happiness and goodness of life.

Humanity needs ethics to monitor its relationship with God, with family, with other fellow human beings in society, as well as the other creatures of the universe. But before all this, the first and foremost need to have a righteous approach within their innermost self. To have such a

relationship the teachings of Islam in terms have been divided into theoretical ethics and practical ethics. The theoretical part deals with the part of the necessity of acquiring ethics and its effects on his world as well as the hereafter, while the practical part mentions the types and ways to achieve the virtues while also providing solutions to eliminate the vices.

The Holy Quran suggests adhering to the moral of the Holy Prophet, who according to the witnesses of history never did injustice to anyone while possessing the best of morals not only with the adherents of Islam but also to the adherents of other religions.

Imam Ali narrates that once the Prophet told the very rich Jew whom he had owed a few dinars that he had nothing to pay him back at that time. The Jew decided not to leave the Prophet before he would pay him. The Prophet, therefore, sat with him. In the same place, he offered the Dhuhr, Asr, Maghrib, Eshaa, and Fajr prayers. As he noticed that his companions were threatening that Jew, the Prophet looked at them and said:

“What are you doing? Allah has not sent me to wrong any person, including the followers of other religions”.

Conclusion

The peace model proposed by Islam strives not only to correct the apparent behavior of human beings towards each other, rather, it looks at the problem at its core and provides a solution for them. It starts by preaching the theological basis before making jurisprudential obligations and then making way for ethical commandments. On the theoretical front, it proposes laws that manifest the status of human beings as a whole without them being divided based upon religion and sect.

Islam considers human beings as dignified creatures that have the capability to become divine caliphs. Having such a lofty status involves having greater

responsibility as well. It also suggests that the world around us has a purpose and the more we strive to achieve them the higher will our station and rewards be in the hereafter. It separates humanity from other creations due to the presence of rationality within them and then considers it to be a scale upon which people will be judged.

To make people aware of their obligations, Islam then proposes jurisprudential laws. These laws ensure that no right is being usurped and that everyone enjoys a status depending upon their position in society. Justice is the pinnacle of Islamic teachings in all realms. For people to reach higher levels

of personal and social levels, it proposes ethical commandments so that people. These commandments bring peace to the person as well as the society. It ensures better and pleasing settlements for various differences and arguments. It encourages peaceful co-existence, sacrificing for the better good, the forgoing of ego and other vices.

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