

THE CONCEPT OF PEACE IN THE BIBLE AND THE QUR'AN: A COMPARATIVE STUDY

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Abstract

This article examines the concept of peace from the perspective of the Bible and the Qur'an, in this respect, the researchers see some similarities and diversities instead of from Islamic or Christian traditions. Analytical study of the Bible and the Qur'an, especially from contemporary commentators, and comparative approaches are conducted as the methodology of the study in this article. The purpose of this article is to study whether the topic can be applied to build a harmonious life between Christian community and Muslim community or not, especially in the situation of conflict in both communities. Besides, the research is hoped to produce a fruitful discussion between Christian and Muslim scholars. As a result of this research, the researchers have discovered an important finding, namely, the concept of peace found both in the Bible and the Qur'an relates to some aspects of life such as to be good, righteous, and introspective.

Keywords: Peace; Qur'an; Bible; Muslim and Christian community.

Khulasah

Artikel ini mengkaji konsep keamanan dari perspektif Alkitab (Bible) dan al-Qur'an. Dalam hal ini, para penyelidik melihat beberapa persamaan dan kepelbagaian, bukannya dari tradisi Islam atau Kristian tetapi menerusi kedua Kitab Suci agama tersebut. Kajian analisa Alkitab dan al-Qur'an ini, terutama dari pengulas kontemporari dan aplikasi pendekatan perbandingan digunakan sebagai metodologi kajian dalam artikel ini. Tujuan artikel ini adalah untuk mengkaji sama ada konsep keamanan ini dapat diterapkan untuk membina kehidupan yang harmoni antara masyarakat Kristian dan Islam atau tidak, terutama dalam situasi konflik di kedua-dua komuniti tersebut. Selain itu, kajian ini seterusnya dapat menghasilkan perbincangan yang bermanfaat antara sarjana Kristian dan Muslim. Antara dapatan dari kajian ini ialah para penyelidik telah menemukan satu dapatan penting, iaitu, konsep keamanan yang terdapat dalam Alkitab dan al-Qur'an ini berkaitan dengan beberapa aspek kehidupan seperti menjadi baik, benar, dan introspektif.

Kata kunci: Keamanan; Al-Qur'an; Bible; masyarakat Islam dan Kristian.

Introduction

Living in peace is a situation that is longed for by every community in the world. Living in peace may mean to live in a situation without war, to be secure and prosperous, and or to love one another in a community. Moreover, living in peace, generally does not mean living in fear, insecurity or distrustfulness in the community. Unfortunately, there have been major changes in many religious communities, especially between Muslim and Christian communities and the importance of harmony within the two communities has begun to decrease. For example, the former Governor of Jakarta, Basuki 'Ahok' Tjahaya Purnama, was found guilty of blasphemy for

suggesting that some people had abused a Qur'anic verse.¹ Another example, Zakir Naik was considered to damage the harmony of religious communities in Malaysia and the academic field of comparative religion, when he criticized other religions in his preaching.²

Literature Review

Some scholars of Islamic studies such as Amithab Pal and Mohamed Atif Mogahed Mohamed explain about peace from the Islamic perspective in their books. Pal, in his book entitled *'Islam' Means Peace*,³ shows that Islam has no relation with violence. He presents Islam as a nonviolent religion, to counter the latest claims that Islam is linked to radicalism and extremism. Then, in the book entitled *Islam and Peace*,⁴ Mohamed Atif mentions that peace, which is relevant to Islam, is a term that talks about a state of security and harmony at the individual and community levels. Human behaviour will have a role in the application of peace in the life of individual and community.

Some Christian scholars also talk about peace from Christian perspectives. For example, Rick Love's article entitled *The Church as Reconciling Community*⁵ clarifies

¹ Callistasia Anggun Wijaya, "Ahok Guilty of Blasphemy, Sentenced to Two Years," The Jakarta Post, May 9, 2017, <https://www.thejakartapost.com/news/2017/05/09/ahok-guilty-of-blasphemy-sentenced-to-two-years.html>

² Mohd Tajuddin Mohd Rasdi, "Is Zakir Naik Engaging in Comparative Religion or Insulting Other Faiths?" Free Malaysia Today, July 26, 2018. <https://www.freemalaysiatoday.com/category/opinion/2018/07/26/is-zakir-naik-engaging-in-comparative-religion-or-insulting-other-faiths/>

³ Amitabh Pal, *'Islam' Means Peace: Understanding the Muslim Principles of Nonviolence Today* (Santa Barbara: Praeger, 2011).

⁴ Mohamed Atif Mogahed Mohamed, *Islam and Peace* (Riyadh: King Saud University, 2003).

⁵ Rick Love, "The Church as Reconciling Community," Paper presented at Seminar on Learning From, Learning With, and

that peace-making is not the same as peacekeeping, and that peace-making is not the same as peace-achieving. Instead, he equates peace with reconciliation because of the strong semantic overlap between the two terms, though there are some noteworthy differences between them.

Writing on peace from the Christian perspective is a book entitled *Warlike Christians in An Age of Violence*, written by Nick Megoran. The author realized that many centuries after Christ, the early church refused to punish violence. As a result, violence has spread throughout the world like a blazing fire. Then, by the co-optation of the Roman empire, the church declared that killing was blessed. Therefore, Megoran encourages Christian readers to be the true church of Jesus Christ, which rejecting war and being a biblical church that loves the enemy.

Besides Islamic and Christianity perspectives, another writing on peace is done by Johan Galtung, a Norwegian sociologist and peace activist. In his article entitled *Violence, Peace, and Peace Research*, Galtung focuses on the concept of peace as the absence of violence. He explains violence in two aspects, namely, personal and structural. In other words, he identifies violence from a sociological perspective. Besides, Galtung does not mention the religious aspect of peace, which could be important for some communities.

Likewise, many writings about peace either from Islamic or Christian perspective, or, from Islamic and Christian views as comparative study widely discuss peace as part of the issue of reconciliation, especially after the 9/11 incident, rather than discussing the prevention of conflict. On the other hand, in this article, the researchers investigate both aspects, reconciliation and prevention. Besides, the researchers make exegesis study to

understand the concept of peace, both from Biblical and Qur'anic perspectives. Thus, this article different from other articles that discuss the concept of peace.

The Bible says that peace comes from God, or, in other words, the source of peace is God, and that peace is given to those who follow His decrees and obey His commands carefully.⁶ In addition, a number of times in the Bible, Paul links the words, God or Lord, directly with the concept of peace through the phrase "God/Lord of peace."⁷ Furthermore, responding to what was written by Paul, Wayne Grudem, a Christian theologian, states that peace is an integral aspect of God's promise of redemption as mentioned in various passages of the Bible such as Psalms 29: 11; 85: 8 and Isaiah 9: 6-7.⁸

The word 'peace' in the Hebrew Bible comes from the Hebrew word, *shālôm*, which means completeness, soundness, safety, welfare, peace, health, prosperity, quiet, tranquillity, friendship with others, and friendship with God, especially in covenant relationship.⁹ Thus, the concept of peace in the Hebrew Bible includes not only the absence of conflict, but also many beneficial aspects of life.

In the New Testament, the Greek word *eirēnē* is used to explain peace. *Eirēnē* has a similar meaning with *shālôm* in the Hebrew Bible i.e. peace, welfare and health. In addition, *eirēnē* expresses an essential characteristic of the messianic kingdom.¹⁰

⁶ Leviticus 26:6.

⁷ See, Romans 15: 33; 16: 20; Philippians 4: 9; 1 Thessalonians 5: 23.

⁸ Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1994), 203.

⁹ Francis Brown, *The Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew and English Lexicon* (Peabody: Hendrickson Publishers, 1996), 1022-1023.

¹⁰ William F. Arrndt & F. Wilbur Gingrich, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Literature*, (Chicago & London: University of Chicago Press, 1979), 227.

The concept of *salām* in the Qur'an does not just include the meaning of the absence of conflict or war; the concept has a broader meaning that covers many aspects of life. The concept of *salām* contains Islamic values that develop a sense of responsibility, i.e., responsibility towards God and also towards oneself and towards others, by living with them in peace.¹¹

Hence, the Bible, which contains the Hebrew Bible and the New Testament, has a similar concept of peace with the Qur'an. *Shālôm* and *eirēnē* cover many aspects of life which urge people to live in peace.

The Biblical Understanding on Peace

The concept of peace in the Bible is one of its important teachings. This can be seen by the fact that in the Bible, the term peace is used more than 340 times.¹² Basically, the original Bible is written in two languages, Hebrew and Greek, but there is a small portion in Aramaic. Hence, the concept of peace needs to be understood from three different languages, Hebrew, Aramaic and Greek.

The Hebrew Bible is not only the Scriptures of the Jewish people, but it is also an important part of what the Christian community calls the Old Testament. In the discussion on peace from the Hebrew Bible's perspective, the researchers explain, as closely as possible, the meaning of peace from the Jewish perspective, but acknowledge that a larger percent of the interpretation of the term, peace, in the Hebrew Bible comes from a Christian Biblical perspective. This is due to the fact that this research analyses the concept of peace in comparative study for Christian and Muslim communities.

¹¹ Pal, 'Islam' Means Peace, 19.

¹² Colin Brown ed., *The New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology* 3 (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Corporation, 1976), 777 and 780.

Shālôm in the Hebrew Bible

Peace in the Hebrew Bible comes from the Hebrew word שָׁלוֹם (*shālôm*) and Aramaic word שְׁלָמָא (*sh^elam*). The Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew and English Lexicon (BDB) describes *shālôm* in its various expressions by the following six definitions: completeness in number; safety, soundness in body; welfare, health, prosperity; peace, quiet, tranquillity, contentment; peace, friendship in human relations and peace with God; and peace from war.¹³ Additionally, BDB defines *sh^elam* as meaning complete, finished, and render in full.¹⁴

The Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament explains that *shālôm*, which occurs more than 250 times in the Hebrew Bible, does not mean merely the absence of war, but also denotes completeness, wholeness, peace, fulfilment, and implicitly the idea of unimpaired relationships with others and fulfilment in one's undertakings.¹⁵ Thus, in the Hebrew Bible, *shālôm* and *sh^elam* are not used merely to represent the antithesis of war, but also to express situations that lead people to live in peace with each other. Of note, this peace is enabled by the presence of God.

In the Hebrew Bible, which is divided into three divisions, Torah (the Pentateuch), *Nevi'im* (Prophets), and *Ketuvim* (Writings), the term *shālôm* is utilized in a variety of expressions in every division. However, the researchers examine the term in the Hebrew Bible in general, regardless the division.

In contrast, the term *sh^elam*, only occurs in one section of the Hebrew Bible, namely the *Ketuvim*. The researchers show where it shares the same meaning as

¹³ Brown, *The Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew and English Lexicon*, 1022-1023.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 1115-1116.

¹⁵ R. Laird Harris ed., *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament 2* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1980), 2401.

shālôm and where it conveys the differing meaning of complete or finished.

Although the term *shālôm* is used as a customary greeting by Jewish people nowadays, its usage is more varied in the Hebrew Bible. It depicts the early history, theology and principles of the Jewish people, and its relation to contemporary problems.¹⁶ *Shālôm* is used to show good health or well-being,¹⁷ as stated in Genesis 29:6. Adam Clarke, a Bible commentator, adds that in this respect, this term also refers to prosperity, especially in Genesis 37: 14.¹⁸

The term, *shālôm*, is also used to depict living in peace with neighbours. This is mentioned in Genesis 26 when Abimelech and his adviser and commander of his forces came to Isaac and shared their anxiety regarding Isaac's success. At the end of the story, they made an agreement and left Isaac (PBUH) in peace.¹⁹ The story of Joseph (PBUH) portrays *shālôm* as a peaceful mind and security of mind.²⁰ David Leiter, an Old Testament scholar, claims that the steward was moving Joseph's brothers from a state of anxiety into a non-anxious presence.²¹

John Gill, a Bible commentator, explains that *shālôm* portrays safety and the security of salvation. In Genesis 15:15, God is promising Abraham (PBUH), that upon his

¹⁶ Antony Adolf, *Peace: A World History* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2009), 83.

¹⁷ Encyclopedia Judaica, "Peace."

¹⁸ Adam Clarke, *The Holy Bible: Commentary and Critical Notes* (New York: B. Waugh and T. Mason, 1835), 212.

¹⁹ David A. Leiter, *Neglected Voices: Peace in the Old Testament* (Scottsdale: Herald Press, 2007), 23.

²⁰ John Calvin, *John Calvin's Commentaries*, "Christian Classic Ethereal Library," accessed on 5th of May 2015, http://www.ccel.org/study/Genesis_43

²¹ Leiter, *Neglected Voices*, 24.

death, he will enter into eternal peace.²² This use of *shālôm* in this passage demonstrates how there can be peace in the relationship between humans and God.²³ Another use of *shālôm* is to demonstrate friendship as mentioned in Joshua 9: 15 when Joshua made a treaty of peace with the Gibeonites.²⁴

Commonly, the term *shālôm* is interpreted as the antithesis of war,²⁵ as shown in Deuteronomy 20:10 and Micah 3:5. Another expression of *shālôm*, which this time paints a picture of a complete loyalty, is found in Malachi 2:6. In addition to its eight above-mentioned uses, the term *shālôm* is closely linked to the manifest presence of God, as seen in the priestly blessing that summarises all blessings given by God to the Israelites, as stated in Numbers 6: 24-26.²⁶

The book of Zechariah illustrates the next two different ways the term, *shālôm*, is used in the Hebrew Bible. The first is in the context of harmonious understanding, as illustrated in Zechariah 6:13²⁷ The second use, mentioned in Zechariah 8:16, shows how *shālôm* is a result of perfect justice.²⁸ Different expression of *shālôm* is found in Isaiah 9: 6, which uses the term as an adjective. The meaning of *shālôm* in this instance

²² John Gill, "John Gill's Exposition of the Bible," Bible Study Tools, accessed on 5th of May 2015, <http://www.biblestudytools.com/commentaries/gills-exposition-of-the-bible/genesis-15-15.html>.

²³ Harris, *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament* 2, 931.

²⁴ Berlin and Brettler, *The Jewish Study Bible: Tanakh Translation*, 479.

²⁵ Sailhamer, *The Pentateuch as Narrative*, 458.

²⁶ Brown, *The New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology* 3, 777.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 1256.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 1258.

describes a peaceful prince whose administration will restore and perpetuate David's throne.²⁹

Another example of *shālôm* is found in Isaiah 54:1-17 where it is recorded that God will not remove his promise of peace with the Israelites, and also reassures Israel that the generations to come after Isaiah would experience great peace. This indicates that *shālôm* can be used to demonstrate man's peace with God.³⁰ Interestingly, in Job 25:2, it is stated that the one who has the initiative to make peace is God³¹ and in Job 22:21, the word *shālôm* is related to the phrase "submit to God" that can produce prosperity.

Isaiah 9:6 is an interesting verse that the researchers want to highlight because of how *shālôm* relates not to a single word, but rather to a title that contains the word. In this verse, Christians attribute the epithet "Prince of Peace" to a very important figure of Israel community, namely, the Messiah.³² Furthermore, the following verse says that the child will reign on David's throne and that his peace will have no end. This verse has been generally accepted as a messianic prophecy,³³ which means that the

²⁹ Albert Barnes, "Albert Barnes' Notes on the Whole Bible," StudyLight.org, accessed on 24th of May 2015, <http://www.studylight.org/commentaries/bnb/view.cgi?bk=22&ch=9>

³⁰ David A. Leiter, *Neglected Voices*, 24.

³¹ Barnes, "Albert Barnes' Notes on the Whole Bible."

³² Isaiah 9:6-7, "For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and peace there will be no end. He will reign on David's throne and over his kingdom, establishing and upholding it with justice and righteousness from that time on and forever. The zeal of the LORD Almighty will accomplish this." (New International Version)

³³ Adela Yarbro Collins and John J. Collins, *King and Messiah as Son of God: Divine, Human, and Angelic Messianic Figures in Biblical and Related Literature* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2008), 36. In Targum Jonathan the term

child is the promised one of God, who is the so-called son of God mentioned in 2 Samuel 7,³⁴ specifically verses 13-14.³⁵ This passage is provocative because it raises several issues such as whether the child is divine or merely human, and, whether the child who is born is a present, a future, or an eschatological figure.³⁶

The researchers acknowledge that the Aramaic term for peace, *sh^llam*, is used only in the Ketuvim. In the book of Daniel, it is used twice, once by King Nebuchadnezzar and once by King Darius as a greeting, similar to that of the instances when *shālôm* is used in other sections of the Hebrew Bible as a greeting of peace. Matching the BDB Hebrew and English Lexicon's meaning of complete/finished, *sh^llam* is also used one time in Daniel 5:26, to explain the end of the reign of King Belshazzar. In the book of Ezra 5:16, the term is also used three times, two times as greeting and one time it is utilised to explain how the temple of God had been under construction but was not yet finished.

The Understanding of Eirēnē in the New Testament

Peace in the New Testament is derived from a Greek verb εἰρηνεύω (*eirēneúō*), which means to reconcile, live in

Messiah is explicitly stated in the text. See Joseph A. Fitzmeyer, *The One Who Is to Come* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2007), 165.

³⁴ Even though in the early tradition of the Jewish Bible considered the book of Samuel as a single book, this section of the research uses *The Jewish Study Bible: Tanakh Translation* that divides the book into 2 parts, 1 and 2 Samuel.

³⁵ 2 Samuel 7:13-14, "He is the one who will build a house for my Name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever. I will be his father, and he will be my son. When he goes wrong, I will punish him with the rod of men, with floggings inflicted by men." (New International Version).

³⁶ Mark J. Boda, "Figuring the Future: the Prophets and Messiah", in *The Messiah in the Old and New Testaments*, ed. Stanley E. Poter (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2007), 37.

peace, be at peace outwardly and inwardly, and keep the peace.³⁷ As a noun, this term comes from εἰρήνη (*eirēnē*), which denotes peace, peace and order, and corresponds to the Hebrew *shālôm*, which means welfare and health. In addition, *eirēnē* is used as an essential characteristic of the messianic kingdom.³⁸

Furthermore, in Greek constructs, *eirēnē* is primarily utilized to explain a state, not a relationship or attitude. A positive expression of *eirēnē* could refer to a peaceful state, whereas a negative one could refer to the absence of hostility.³⁹ In addition, this term is used to convey a number of different expressions such as greetings, the feeling of rest, reconciliation with God, peace with one another, peace of soul and an eschatological salvation.⁴⁰ Brown says that in profane Greek *eirēnē* denotes the antithesis of war or the condition resulting from a cessation of war. Peace is the state of law and order which gives rise to the blessings of prosperity.⁴¹

In the synoptic Gospels, the term *eirēnē* occurs 19 times, 4 times in Matthew, once in Mark and 14 times in Luke. In Matthew 10:11-13 and its parallel in Luke 10:5-7, the term is used to refer to greeting, but it implies the expression of happiness as mentioned by Albert Barnes, a biblical commentator.⁴²

³⁷ Arndt and Gingrich, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, 227.

³⁸ *Ibid.*

³⁹ Gerhard Kittel and Gerhard Friedrich ed. *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, translated and abridged in one volume from German by Geoffrey W. Bromiley (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1985), 184.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 186-187.

⁴¹ Colin Brown ed., *The New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology* 2, 776.

⁴² Albert Barnes, *Barnes New Testament Note* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1949), 172.

An interesting passage about peace (*eirēnē*) can be found in Mark 5:34. Following the healing of the woman who had been subject to bleeding for twelve years. Jesus (PBUH) said to her using the phrase which usually be spoken by a priest after a cleansing ceremony in which appropriate offerings and sacrifices would be offered.⁴³ His statement therefore raises a query; was Jesus (PBUH) declaring himself a priest? In fact, the author of the book of Hebrews claims that Jesus (PBUH) is a priest in the order of Melchizedek, not according to the order of Aaron's (PBUH) priesthood.⁴⁴ Furthermore, if Jesus (PBUH) was making such a claim, he was implicitly announcing his messiahship, since the office of priest is one of three offices, prophet, priest and king, held by messiah.⁴⁵ Thus, he demonstrates himself to be God's agent who mediates the peace of God to those who are troubled.⁴⁶

The Gospel of Luke in chapter 2:8-14 tells about an angel who appeared to some shepherds to announce the coming of the Messiah. Barnes says that this passage is the fulfilment of Isaiah 9:6 that mention the prince of peace who is coming to reconcile the world to God. Moreover, the prince of peace (the Messiah) will make peace between humankind and God because humankind is at enmity with itself and also at war against God.⁴⁷ Thus, the term *eirēnē* in Luke 2:14 is used to depict reconciliation between humans and between God and humans.

⁴³ Ronald J. Kernaghan, *Mark* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2007), 111.

⁴⁴ Hebrews 7: 11-28.

⁴⁵ Exodus 29: 21; Leviticus 8: 30.

⁴⁶ T.D. Alexander and Brian S. Rosner ed., *New Dictionary of Biblical Theology* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2000), 683.

⁴⁷ Barnes, *Barnes New Testament Note*, 704.

Another picture of *eirēnē* in the New Testament is illustrated in Romans 2: 9-10. This passage is a condition of perfect well-being created by God as a blessing for everyone who does good.⁴⁸ Interestingly, this passage puts peace, glory and honour in contrast to the trouble and distress that will be given to every human being who does evil. The researchers think that peace in this respect is not only a blessing as claimed by Moo, but also a reward, because of the contrast that is presented.

Reconciliation with God is another depiction of *eirēnē* given in the epistle to the Romans.⁴⁹ This peace is a result of justification by faith as stated in Romans 5:1. Moreover, as an outcome of reconciliation with God, peace occurs among brethren in the kingdom of God, as seen in Romans 14:17-18.⁵⁰ Thus, in the epistle to the Romans Paul not only explains about peace or reconciliation with God, but he also mentions about peace among those who have peace with God.

Another portrayal of peace in the New Testament can be seen in the epistle to the Hebrews, especially chapter 13:20, where the term is combined with the word God as one phrase, namely God of peace. This term is used as part of the closing of this letter to explain the wholeness of blessing.⁵¹ This also indicates that God is the source of peace, who gives happiness, a peaceful mind, health and prosperity, and even has initiative to reconcile humans with Himself, so that human beings have the hope of heaven.⁵² In the epistle of James, a different nuance of *eirēnē* is seen in the way the term and its derivation -

⁴⁸ Douglas J. Moo, *The Epistle to the Romans* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 1996), 139.

⁴⁹ Barnes, *Barnes New Testament Note*, 2106.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 2354.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 165.

⁵² Barnes, *Barnes New Testament Note*, 4448.

peaceful or peaceable, relates to wisdom and righteousness, as mentioned in James 3:17-18.

It seems that the verse in James brings readers to understand that heavenly wisdom should be understood in the context of moral virtues and practical goodness.⁵³ After stating that wisdom is pure, which means free from profanity,⁵⁴ the verse, explains that heavenly wisdom is peace-loving,⁵⁵ taken from the word εἰρηνικός (*eirēnikos*), which means peaceable or peaceful, in the sense of being irreconcilable with the feeling of jealousy.⁵⁶ Thus, James shows the full circle of wisdom or righteousness; that the wisdom which comes from above (heaven), shown by the peacemakers through their good deeds in a peaceful manner and then is reaped by the peacemakers as a reward.

The Concept of Peace in the Qur'an

If there is a word that should always go together hand in hand with Islam, the word is peace. In Arabic, peace and Islam come from the same root, *s-l-m*. Seyyed Hossein Nasr, an Iranian Muslim scholar, says that peace is a result of a Muslim who surrenders himself to the Divine Will.⁵⁷ In other words, Muslims who want to have peace in their life must submit their life to God. However, gaining peace is not an easy process. A Muslim must learn deeply how to apprehend it.

Reading and learning the Qur'an, as a book in which God's message to humanity is written, are important disciplines for Muslims for them to understand and have peace. Without the Qur'an, a Muslim will neither

⁵³ Sophie Laws, *A Commentary on the Epistle of James* (London: Adam & Charles Black, 1980), 163.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵⁵ The NIV translation translates this word as peace-loving.

⁵⁶ Sophie Laws, *A Commentary on the Epistle of James*, 163.

⁵⁷ Seyyed Hossein Nasr, *Ideals and Realities of Islam* (Chicago: ABC International, 2000), 14.

understand, nor have peace, for the Qur'an is the main guidance that teaches so much about it. Learning from the life of Muhammad (PBUH), the prophet of Islam is another important facet to studying peace. The life of the Prophet from his childhood until his death reflects a peaceful life, albeit interspersed by some conflicts with those who did not agree with his teachings and understandings on God.

In this section, the researchers discuss Qur'anic understanding on peace and examine various issues such as Arabic terms and other implications related to the teaching of peace, which the researchers consider as both relevant and important. In examining Arabic terms related to the teaching of peace, the researchers discuss two trilateral, namely *s-l-m* (س ل م) and *ṣ-l-ḥ* (ص ل ح) by reason that both are the root words of peace. It is from these primary roots that the teaching of peace is developed.

In the Qur'an, the term peace is reflected from two words *s-l-m* (س ل م) and *ṣ-l-ḥ* (ص ل ح). The trilateral *s-l-m* (س ل م) occurs 140 times in 16 derived forms in the Qur'an; meanwhile the trilateral *ṣ-l-ḥ* (ص ل ح) occurs 180 times in 8 derived forms.⁵⁸ Furthermore, the trilateral *s-l-m* (س ل م) is translated as: submit, greeting or saluting, free, to pay, peace, save, safely, secure, sound, stairway, and ladder,⁵⁹ while *ṣ-l-ḥ* (ص ل ح) is translated as: righteous, reconciliation, make peace, reform, improve, good, cure, corrected, set it right, set it in order, proper, repair, virtuous, honest and amend.⁶⁰

Of the 140 occurrences of *s-l-m* in the Qur'an, there are three forms that frequently emerge. Specifically the

⁵⁸ Quran Dictionary, viewed on 17th of July 2014, <http://corpus.quran.com/qurandictionary.jsp?q=slm>

⁵⁹ Edward William Lane, *An Arabic-English Lexicon* (Beirut: Librairie Du Liban, 1968), 1412-1417.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 1714.

noun form **سَلَامٌ** (*salām*), which is translated as peace, appears 42 times; the verb form **أَسْلَمَ** (*aslama*), which is interpreted as submit, appears 22 times; and the active participle **مُسْلِمٌ** (*Muslim*), which is translated as submissive, Muslims, submit, submission, surrender, and those who submit, appears 39 times. Other forms of *s-l-m* such as *sil'm*, *salm*, *sullam*, *salīm*, etc. occur less than 5 times each in the Qur'an.⁶¹ Furthermore, the three forms that most frequently appear, *salām*, *aslama* and *muslim*, all reflect a connection between humans,⁶² as well as a connection between humans and God.⁶³ Interestingly, one of applications of peace is a characteristic or a name of God.⁶⁴

The term *salām* is used in the Qur'an to convey a number of expressions. Firstly, *salām* is used as greeting between humans, especially among Muslims, and from an angel to humankind as well.⁶⁵ Secondly, *salām* is applied as a prayer or hope.⁶⁶ Thirdly, *salām* is utilized as a sign of peace with God, which is begun with repentance.⁶⁷ Fourthly, *salām* is a reward that is provided by God for those who have faith and seek the way of God.⁶⁸ Fifthly, *salām* is salvation from God to those who have been chosen by God.⁶⁹ Sixthly, *salām* is blessing that is given by God to His messengers.⁷⁰

⁶¹ Quran Dictionary, viewed on 17th of July 2014, <http://corpus.quran.com/qurandictionary.jsp?q=slm>

⁶² See Qur'an 4: 94; 5: 16; 27: 31.

⁶³ See Qur'an 6: 127; 13: 24; 2: 136.

⁶⁴ See Qur'an 59: 23.

⁶⁵ See Qur'an 11: 69; 14: 23; 15: 52; 25: 63.

⁶⁶ See Qur'an 6: 54; 10:10; 19:15; 19: 33.

⁶⁷ See Qur'an 6: 54.

⁶⁸ See Qur'an 6: 127; 10: 25; 13: 24.

⁶⁹ See Qur'an 21: 69; 50: 34.

⁷⁰ See Qur'an 37: 79; 37: 109; 37: 120; 37: 120.

The Qur'an also expresses the term *aslama* in multiple ways. Firstly, it is used as a command that is given by God to His people who obey His will.⁷¹ Secondly, *aslama* is a reward that will be given to those who surrender their lives to God.⁷² Thirdly, *aslama* is the best way to perform religious life and to follow God, but it should come from a sincere heart and it is not for boasting.⁷³ Fourthly, *aslama* is a blessing or favour given to humankind by God, in order that humankind might submit to Him.⁷⁴

Furthermore, the Qur'an uses the term Muslim/s as a noun, proper noun and adjective. Almost all of the verses explain Muslim/s as someone or those who surrender to God, except in 27:31 and 38, the story about submission of Sheba to Solomon.

The other term of peace used in the Qur'an is *ṣ -l- ḥ* (ص ل ح). Muhammad Asad translates some terms that have root *ṣ -l- ḥ* (ص ل ح) that is *tuṣlīḥū* as "promotion of peace" in 2:224,⁷⁵ *yuslīḥā* as "to set things peacefully" in 4:128,⁷⁶ *ṣulḥān* as "peace", also in 4:128,⁷⁷ *'aṣlaḥa* as "makes peace" in 42:40,⁷⁸ and *'aṣlīḥū* as well as "makes peace" in 49:9 and 10.⁷⁹

Furthermore, Asad uses "promotion of peace" in 2:224 to refer to an oath relating to divorce which is uttered by a husband to his wife.⁸⁰ Asad writes "makes

⁷¹ See Qur'an 2: 131; 6: 14; 6: 71.

⁷² See Qur'an 2: 112

⁷³ See Qur'an 4: 125; 31: 22; 72: 14; 49: 17.

⁷⁴ See Qur'an 16: 81; 22:34.

⁷⁵ Muhammad Asad, *The Message of the Qur'an* (Gibraltar: Dar al-Andalus, 1980), 49.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 129.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 746.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 793.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 49.

peace" in 42:40 to point out to a struggle against tyranny that has tendency to use a similar tyrannical attitude towards the previous oppressors.⁸¹ In addition, he interprets "makes peace" in 49:9 and 10 in the context of fighting between two groups of believers involving any forms of discord or contention, either verbal or action; they have to make peace for they are brethren.⁸²

Another translation of the Qur'an, interpreted by Muhammad Yusuf Ali, translates some words that are taken from the root *ṣ -l- ḥ* (ص ل ح) i.e. *muṣliḥūna* as "want to make peace" in 2:11,⁸³ *'aṣlaḥa* as "makes peace" in 2:182,⁸⁴ *tuṣliḥū* as "making peace" in 2:224,⁸⁵ *'aṣliḥū* as "make peace" in 49:9 and 10.⁸⁶ Moreover, Yusuf Ali translates *muṣliḥūna* as "we want to make peace" in 2:11 in context of people who did some mischief, sometimes unwillingly, but they claim that they have a mission of peace, whereas, in fact, they have no such intention, and even do not have a true perception of right and wrong.⁸⁷

In addition, Yusuf Ali interprets *aṣlaḥa* as "makes peace" in 2:182 referring to the situation of a testator who feels that he cannot do justice to one who will inherit his inheritance,⁸⁸ and "making peace" in 2:224 in the background of a warning for not making an oath in the name of God as an excuse for not doing good or making peace, especially when a husband will divorce his wife.⁸⁹ Meanwhile, in 49:9 and 10, Ali uses make peace for

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 746.

⁸² *Ibid.*, 793.

⁸³ Abdullah Yusuf Ali, *The Holy Qur'an: Text, Translation & Commentary* 1 (Lahore: SH. Muahammad Ashraf, 1938), 19.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 71.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 88.

⁸⁶ Abdullah Yusuf Ali, *The Holy Qur'an: Text, Translation & Commentary* 2, 1405.

⁸⁷ Abdullah Yusuf Ali, *The Holy Qur'an* 1, 19.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, 71.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 89.

aṣliḥū, in context that there is a quarrel between two parties of believers that should be reconciled by the collective community of Islam.⁹⁰

Thus, both Muhammad Asad and Yusuf Ali translate trilateral *ṣ-l-ḥ* (ص ل ح) and its variants to mean peace as expressions referring to solving problems if there is a conflict between two or more parties, but not as prevention of a conflict or for maintaining peace.

A Selection of Qur'anic Texts on Peace

This section mentions some of the passages of the Qur'an that relate to the teaching of peace based on trilateral *s-l-m* (س ل م) and *ṣ-l-ḥ* (ص ل ح). In order to discuss these passages, the researchers refer to various commentaries of the passages, especially commentaries by Indonesian interpreters. In fact, the researchers come from Nusantara Archipelago.

The first passage is al-An'ām (6):54.⁹¹ It appears that the term peace in this verse relates to the mercy of God who invites people who did evil in ignorance to repent. An Indonesian Muslim scholar, Abdul Malik Karim Amrullah (1908-1981 CE) who is known as Hamka, says that all humans have committed sin and sin inhibits someone to express his or her faith. But those who have courage to express their faith are welcomed by God with a peace that is able to eliminate doubts caused by the lack of faith. Besides, God obliges Himself to give mercy to those who have faith.⁹²

⁹⁰ Abdullah Yusuf Ali, *The Holy Qur'an* 2, 1405.

⁹¹ "When those come to thee who believe in Our signs, Say: "Peace be on you: Your Lord hath inscribed for Himself (the rule of) mercy: verily, if any of you did evil in ignorance, and thereafter repented, and amend (his conduct), lo! He is Oft-forgiving, Most Merciful." (Yusuf Ali's translation).

⁹² Abdul Malik Karim Amrullah, *Tafsir al-Azhar Juz VII* (Jakarta: Pustaka Panjimas, 2007), 302-303.

Hamka's statement about expressing faith is not so clear. It raises the issue, of whether the meaning of the term is, "to repent" or merely make a "verbal confession". If the meaning of expressing faith is to admit all the sins and repent, the researchers agree with this explanation because this verse is in accord with the Qur'an, *al-Imrān* (3): 89, "Except for those who repent after that and correct themselves. For indeed, Allah is Forgiving and Merciful."

A clearer statement that leads people to pursue peace with God comes from Quraish Shihab (1944-), another Indonesian Muslim scholar. Shihab says that this is good news given by God to those who repent and regret their evil deeds. This is a mercy from God Himself because God has great grace and He is all-merciful. Besides, the word peace in this verse can be understood as revelation or prayer that the people who repent will be blessed with peace and kept away from unhappy conclusions.⁹³ It seems that Shihab explains that peace with God should begin with repentance and the repentance appears as an invitation from God also.

Considering the two commentaries above, the researchers opine that the term peace in this context has two meanings. The first is a sign of peace with God, which is started with repentance. The second is prayer, which when coupled with a heart of repentance will be blessed by God.

The second passage is taken from *al-Furqān* (25):63, "And the servants of (Allah) Most Gracious are those who walk on the earth in humility, and when the ignorant address them, they say, 'Peace!'"⁹⁴ The context of this verse talks about the difference between people who do not believe in the revelation of God and people who believe and become the servants of God. This passage

⁹³ M. Quraish Shihab, *Tafsir Al-Misbah* 4 (Jakarta: Lentera Hati, 2002), 118-119.

⁹⁴ Yusuf Ali translation.

highlights the good attitude of the servants of God who say "peace" when they met the ignorant.

Hamka concludes that the meaning of peace in this sentence is greeting, not to respectful or highly knowledgeable people, but to foolish people who are narrow minded. The servants of God greeted them with peace because the servants of God are polite, gentle, and humble people. Even though the narrow-minded people accosted them with bad words, they replied towards the ignorant with good words, not with anger.⁹⁵ The researchers think that Hamka explains that peace in this verse is one of characters of the slaves of God who reciprocate bad words with good words, namely with a greeting of peace.

Shihab deems that the meaning of peace in this passage is salvation or being protected from all disgrace. Furthermore, Shihab says that salvation is the border between peace and separation, and between grace and punishment. So, the term peace in this verse can be interpreted as the absence of good relationship between the servants of God and the ignorant, but it does not mean there is enmity between both parties. Shihab believes that the term ignorant in this sentence is not unknowledgeable people, but unfair people who do iniquity caused by either appetite or narrow mindedness. In addition, this term is also used for those who ignore divine teachings.⁹⁶

The researchers opine that both interpretations can be accepted in the sense that servants of God must not have too close a relationship with the ignorant; they can rightly secede from the ignorant. However, the separation does not give a license for bad words; rather it should be supported by good words, namely a salute of peace. Besides, the researchers think that having a sense of peace

⁹⁵ Abdul Malik Karim Amrullah, *Tafsir al-Azhar juz XIX*, 44.

⁹⁶ M. Quraish Shihab, *Tafsir al-Misbah* 9, 529.

with others should be one of the characteristics of the servant of God.

The third verse that the researchers choose to discuss is stated in Qur'an, al-Nisā' (4):125. The context of this text is about believers who do good, who will enter heavenly gardens. But who are the believers? The believers are those who submit their life to God, and submission is the right way that should be chosen by the believers. The verse says that there is no better person except one who surrenders to God.

Shihab says that if someone claims that he is a Muslim (one who submits himself to God), but he does not do good deeds, his claim to be Muslim has no strong foundation; a person like him does not have pride as a Muslim because he does not do what a Muslim must do, which proves his confession by doing good deeds. Besides, there is no one is called better in religion except he who follows the way of Ibrahim (PBUH), who fully submits himself to God. So, the one who will be rewarded by God, who is called better in religion is the one who fully submits himself to God and proves his submission by doing good deeds, introspecting himself, feeling the presence of God, and following the straight path of Ibrahim (PBUH).⁹⁷

The researchers think that Shihab sees *aslama* as wholehearted submission to God. This submission is not only through a confession that someone is Muslim, but it is proved by good deeds and awareness that God is always present in his life, just as Ibrahim (PBUH) proved himself as Muslim, whose face was always directed to God. The researchers opine that submission to God and the concept of peace cannot be separated. Echoing Hossein Nasr's opinion, the researchers would say that submission to God is one of the means to attain peace.

⁹⁷ M. Quraish Shihab, *Tafsir al-Misbah* 2, 598.

The fourth passage deals with the other trilateral, *ṣ-l-h* (ص ل ح). The verse is taken from al-Baqarah (2):182. The context of this scope, starting from verse 180, is about the requirement of a person who approaches death and leaves wealth to make a bequest for his parents and relatives as an obligation for the godly. Verse 181 states that whoever changes the bequest is guilty. Then, verse 182 says that if there is a concern that the testator does not make the bequest correctly, and there is someone who tries to correct and reconcile it, the one who reconciles it is not guilty. However, the paragraph is not clear concerning who are being reconciled and why they need to be reconciled.

In his commentary, Shibab emphasizes the reason why there should be peace, and he sees whether an alteration of the will is allowable or not. He opines, if the testator is suspected to have made a mistake or to have been unfair in determining his testament, and subsequently there is someone who advises him to change the will, the alteration can be tolerated and the one who gives the advice is not guilty. It is also permitted if the recipient of the testament revises it, if the will is not in accord with religious teachings.⁹⁸

Abū Ja‘far Muḥammad ibn Jarīr al-Ṭabarī (839-923CE), an early Muslim scholar, sees this passage from the perspective of who are the peace makers and who are people being reconciled. He says that whoever is worried that the testator will make a mistake or sin, which means the testator is deviating his will from the truth, either intentionally or unintentionally, for example the testator bequeaths his wealth to his parents or relatives who have no right to get the bequest more than the portion prescribed by religious law.

⁹⁸ M. Quraish Shihab, *Tafsir al-Misbah* 1, 374.

So, people who attend the meeting of the provision of the will may recommend the testator to make a correct testament and explain what is right according to God's sight and they are not guilty in recommending this to the testator. In other words, the people make peace between the testator and the recipients of the will; this is considered as reconciliation from God's perspective.⁹⁹

The researchers think that people who recognise a conflict or see a situation that can lead to a conflict, are justified and even encouraged to make peace between two persons or parties who are in conflict. The reconciliation is expected to prevent a greater conflict and seek the grace of God. Although, the context of al-Baqarah (2):182 talks about a will of someone who is approaching his death, the researchers assume that the process of the reconciliation can be applied in other contexts such as war, family conflict, disagreement in society and so on. An interesting thing relating to the agreement, in the context of this verse, is the testament - that if an agreement is possibly disadvantageous to one party, it may be altered and the alteration is tolerated, especially if the agreement is not in accord with religious law, as mentioned by Shihab.

The fifth passage for discussion is found in al-Hujurat (49):10. This verse also relates to the trilateral *ṣ-l-h* (ص ل ح) and this is a continuation of the previous paragraph that talks about appealing to believers to make peace between two factions of believers who are fighting, and that the reconciliation must be done fairly. The researchers are interested to examine this passage because it deals with conflict between two groups of believers who must be reconciled by fellow believers in an effort to maintain peace among Muslims. Besides, the term make

⁹⁹ Abū Ja'far Muḥammad ibn Jarīr al-Ṭabarī, *Jāmi' al-Bayān 'an Ta'wīl Āyī al-Qur'ān* 3, translated from Arabic by Ahsan Aksan (Jakarta: Pustaka Azzam: 2007), 69.

peace in this passage is related to brotherhood and mercy from God.

Shihab comments about this verse by saying that a conflict should be ended by reconciliation because in all conscience, believers who have steady faith and are united by faith are like siblings, even though they are not ancestral brothers. Therefore, the fellow believers, who are not involved in the conflict, are under obligation to make peace and fear God in order that they will not be stricken by misadventure, either caused by the conflict or caused by anything else. The duty of reconciliation should be carried out after the conflict to re-establish the harmonious and fraternal relations among the believers.¹⁰⁰

Al-Ṭabarī says that the meaning of peace-making between two brothers is to encourage two members of faith who are fighting to return to the law of God and His messenger. Besides, the believers must fear God and implement all obligations He gave to Muslims to reconcile the fighting brothers fairly and leave immorality so that God will give grace and forgive the mistake committed in the past. Indeed, God will bless and forgive if the believers obey and honour His command and fear Him.¹⁰¹

The researchers opine that reconciliation is a very important aspect in creating peace. Reconciliation is needed because there is the possibility that people who are involved in a conflict have bitterness or feelings of resentment towards their former opponents that can lead to a disharmonious relationship after the conflict. This disharmonious relationship does not only occur with the former opponents but also with God. There is possibility that people, who are in conflict, blame God for the situation they are facing. Blaming God is a state that requires repentance from the people, and mercy and forgiveness from God. Thus, reconciliation is expected to

¹⁰⁰ M. Quraish Shihab, *Tafsir Al-Misbah* 13, 247 and 249.

¹⁰¹ Al-Ṭabarī, *Jāmi' al-Bayān* 23, 738-739.

lead people in conflict into a better relationship so that God will give His mercy to them.

The last verse that the researchers analyse is al-Shūrā (42):40. The context of this verse is about the exhortation of God to humankind to exercise their option to either choose a good life or a bad life. For example, when someone is persecuted by someone else, the persecuted one can take revenge, but if he forgives and makes peace with the one who persecutes him, God will give him reward because God does not like people who do evil.

Hamka explains this verse and says that a weak person in human terms, is considered as a strong person in the sight of God because God gives him strength, which He takes from the strong; conversely, a strong person in human terms is seen as a weak person in God's sight because God takes his strength and gives it to help the weak. But, if a believer wants to have a perfect and pure faith, it is better for him to forgive someone who persecutes him. Furthermore, Hamka says that this verse essentially says that if the persecuted one is forgiving and seeks a peaceful resolution, this comes from the strength of his soul, not from his weakness.¹⁰²

Shihab has a different opinion of this verse. He says, this verse explains that the one who will gain eternal joy is he who is persecuted, and he defends himself with his own strength so that the persecution does not continue and the persecutor will be deterred. Retaliating towards the persecutor's crime in the same manner is like repeating the crime. However, this is not an easy situation to implement. If the persecuted person forgives, not claiming his rights, there is no retaliation, so then he rebuilds a harmonious relationship with the persecutor, and even rewards the evil with kindness. Thus, he will be rewarded by God.¹⁰³

¹⁰² Abdul Malik Karim Amrullah, *Tafsir al-Azhar juz XXV-XXVI*, 38.

¹⁰³ M. Quraish Shihab, *Tafsir Al-Misbah* 12, 513.

The researchers opine that forgiveness is a better way to respond to persecution, even though the persecuted person is able to take revenge. As mentioned by Hamka in his commentary on al-An'ām 54, all humans have committed sin; perhaps the persecuted one has unwittingly persecuted others, so a wicked deed can be done by anyone. Therefore, forgiving others is greater than vengeance and tolerating wickedness is reasonable thinking.

Various Issues Related to the Trilateral *s-l-m* (س ل م) and *ṣ-l-h* (ص ل ه) on the Teaching of Peace

The teaching of peace in the Qur'an, based on the trilateral roots, *s-l-m* (س ل م) and *ṣ-l-h* (ص ل ه) is also seen in the interrelated issues of submission to God, forgiveness, love and others. In this section, the researchers discuss eight interrelated issues that link, either directly or indirectly, to the teaching of peace. The researchers expect that this will provide a framework for peace building for those who are interested in becoming peacemakers according to the Islamic perspective.

The first issue that the researchers discuss is submission to God. According to the discussion above, submission to God is the state of peace where someone realizes that God is always with him and this understanding motivates him to do good deeds according to God's law, as can be seen in the Qur'an surah al-Nisā' verse 125. The one who has this understanding is called a Muslim, one who has a relationship with God which is based on faith. On one hand, submission to God is one of the means to attain peace; on the other hand, demonstrating peace is a reflection that one has faith in God. Mohamed Atif, an Egyptian scholar, says that harmony and consistency in heart, mind, word and deed, as aspect of faith, represent the Islamic ideal model of

peace.¹⁰⁴ So, peace and submission to God are like two sides of a coin that cannot be separated from one another.

The second issue for discussion is reconciliation (*iṣlāh*). Conflict¹⁰⁵ stemming from contradiction opinions is an unavoidable part of human life,¹⁰⁶ and needs a solution. It should be resolved; otherwise the conflict will deplete one's energy, physically and spiritually. An unresolved conflict can damage one's mind and intellect that can also cause bodily weakness.¹⁰⁷ The researchers believe that reconciliation is one of the solutions to re-establish friendship and harmonious relationships between two or more parties involved in a conflict.¹⁰⁸

The third issue that the researchers observe is repentance, as mentioned above in al-An'am (6):54. The word repentance in Arabic comes from the trilateral root, *t-w-b* (ت و ب) which means a man returns to God from his sin, and it signifies he desists from his sin.¹⁰⁹ This term is an important term in the Qur'an, so much so that God even revealed one chapter about it, called al-Tawbah. As seen in its definition and occurrence in the Qur'an, repentance is an interaction only between human beings and God, it does not occur between human beings.

¹⁰⁴ Mohamed, *Islam and Peace*, 34.

¹⁰⁵ Conflict is defined as a confrontation between one or more parties aspiring towards incompatible or competitive means or ends. See, Christopher Miller, *A Glossary of Terms and Concepts in Peace and Conflict Studies* (San Jose: University for Peace, 2005), 22.

¹⁰⁶ Johan Galtung, *Transcend and Transform: An Introduction to Conflict Work* (London: Pluto Press, 2004), 1-2.

¹⁰⁷ Niruben Amin ed., *Avoid Clashes* (Gujarat: Ajit Patel Mahavideh Foundation, 2006), 15.

¹⁰⁸ Yaacov Bar Siman Tov, "Dialectics between Stable Peace and Reconciliation" in *From Conflict Resolution to Reconciliation*, ed. Yaacov Bar Siman Tov (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004), 72.

¹⁰⁹ Edward William Lane, *An Arabic-English Lexicon*, 321

Effectively, repentance restores peace between human beings and God.

The fourth interrelated point is forgiveness, which is derived from the Arabic root '-f-w (ع ف و) as asserted above in al-Shūrā (42):40. If there is man who has power to take revenge but he does not use the power to do that, conversely, he forgives the one who wrongs him, he shows that he is a worshiper of God. This shows that this man is learning from God, as one of the characteristics and names of Him is the Forgiver. There is no reason for Muslims not to apply forgiveness and thereby bring peace. Abu Nimer, a peace practitioner and professor, says, "Forgiveness is the way people (Muslim and non-Muslim) ought to deal with each other."¹¹⁰

In the Qur'an, the term forgiveness is also taken from Arabic root word *gh-f-r* (غ ف ر). This term occurs 234 times in the Qur'an, in nine derived forms, which usually translated as to forgive, forgiving, forgiver, and forgiveness.¹¹¹ Most of these appearances can be classified into two categories, namely to the character of God as forgiver and exhortation for human beings to forgive, either to be a righteous person or to get reward from God.¹¹²

The fifth interrelated aspect is the practice of greeting someone, by wishing peace upon them, as seen in al-Furqān (25):63 above. Greetings, which are an expression

¹¹⁰ Mohammed Abu-Nimer, "Framework for Nonviolence and Peacebuilding in Islam," in *Contemporary Islam: Dinamic, not Static*, ed. Abdul Aziz Said, Mohamed Abu-Nimer and Meena Sharify-Funk (New York: Routledge, 2006), 153.

¹¹¹ Quran Dictionary, viewed on 13th of June 2018, <http://corpus.quran.com/qurandictionary.jsp?q=gfr>

¹¹² Russel Powel, "Forgiveness in Islamic Ethics and Jurisprudence", *Barkeley Journal of Middle Eastern & Islamic Law* 4(1) (2011), 19.

of friendship and one of the human universals,¹¹³ should be performed by anyone who wants to interact with others. It is most unusual, especially for a first meeting, to begin an interaction with someone by asking the name, occupation or address of the interlocutor, without using a greeting. Likewise, for people who already know each other, a greeting is usually used as the beginning of communication when they meet up.

The sixth issue that implicitly deals with peace is tolerance. Tolerance is a condition where someone exercises a willingness to accept feelings, habits, beliefs that are different from his or her own.¹¹⁴ Although the word, 'tolerance' is not used explicitly in the Qur'an, it does not mean that the Qur'an does not talk about the subject of tolerance. The Qur'an implicitly discusses the understanding of tolerance using different terms or phrases such as "no compulsion,"¹¹⁵ "do not insult,"¹¹⁶ and "to you be your way, and to me mine."¹¹⁷

Furthermore, tolerance was a very influential facet in the propagation of Islam because through it, Islam was accepted broadly from the time of the Prophet (PBUH) until now.¹¹⁸ In addition, Maulana Wahiduddin Khan says, "What is the price of tolerance? It is simply tolerance. We live in a world of differences, and these differences cannot be eliminated. Therefore, we have only two options before us: adopting the policy of tolerance or that of

¹¹³ Torbjörn Lundmark, *Tales of Hi and Bye: Greeting and Parting Rituals Around the World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 1.

¹¹⁴ See, Merriam-Webster Dictionary, "Tolerance," accessed 10th of April, 2015, <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/tolerance>

¹¹⁵ The Qur'an (2):256 in Yusuf Ali translation.

¹¹⁶ The Qur'an (6):108 in Shahih International translation.

¹¹⁷ The Qur'an (109):6 in Yusuf Ali translation.

¹¹⁸ Towqueer Alam Falahi, *The Qur'ānic Concept of War and Peace* (New Delhi: Kanishka Publishers, 2004).

intolerance. While the latter leads to violence, the former ensures peace."¹¹⁹

The seventh topic that interrelates with the concept of peace, is love. The Qur'an does not record peace and love together in one passage, but this does not mean that they do not have any relation to each other. Prince Ghazi bin Muhammad bin Talal, an interfaith activist, says "Peace is a stage of love, and human love for God requires peace."¹²⁰

One can see love in three aspects namely God's love toward human beings, human beings' love toward God, and love between human beings. God's love toward human beings and vice versa is the foundation for human beings to be forgiven and to build a relationship of peace with God. That is the way to love and to be loved by God, as mentioned in the Qur'an (3):31. One of the ninety-nine names of God is *al-Wadūd*, which means the Lover and Beloved. This name does not merely indicate the essence of God, but rather the name that has a relationship with human beings.¹²¹

The eighth or last related point is nonviolence. The picture of Islam as a violent religion came to the fore after the terrorist attacks on 9/11, when the twin towers of the World Trade Center in New York and the Pentagon in Washington D.C. were hit by airplanes that had been hijacked by terrorists who claimed to be Muslims. Since then, condemnation of Islam as a violent religion has continued via various negative propaganda campaigns conducted by many parties, especially in the West.¹²² This

¹¹⁹ Maulana Wahiduddin Khan, *The True Jihad: The Concept of Peace, Tolerance and Non-Violence in Islam* (New Delhi: Goodwords Book, 2002), 102.

¹²⁰ H.R.H. Prince Ghazi bin Muhammad bin Talal, *Love in the Holy Qur'an* (Chicago: Kazi Publication Inc., 2010), 246.

¹²¹ Oliver Leaman ed., *The Qur'an: An Encyclopedia* (New York: Routledge, 2006), 40.

¹²² Amitabh Pal, "Islam" Means Peace, 1.

has been further supported by many research projects concerning the Islamic teaching of peace and how it relates Islam with violence rather than nonviolence.

Unfortunately, this research was not only conducted by orientalist, but also carried out by Muslim scholars. Abu Nimer says, "Many Muslims themselves lack comprehensive Islamic knowledge and hermeneutics relevant to nonviolent conflict transformation through its peaceful teachings."¹²³

The discussion of the nonviolence aspect in Islamic peace building is not an easy topic; in fact, the Qur'an mentions or allows Muslims to fight, which means there is space to use violence in solving a conflict. However, resolving a conflict by using a nonviolence approach is not an impossible matter. The researchers think that nonviolence can be used as an important vehicle in Islamic peace building, which can show the peaceful face of Islam. Various phrases and verses in the Qur'an such as, "God does not love transgressors", "God loves those who do good", "Every time they kindle the fire of war, God extinguish it" (5:64), and "God commands justice, the doing of good...and He forbids all shameful deeds, and injustice and rebellion" (16:90) show that God encourages His people to promote nonviolence in Qur'anic peace building.

Similarities and Diversities

The concept of peace in the Bible and the Qur'an is used to explain some expressions such as greetings, antithesis of war, reward from God and so on. The researchers are interested to highlight some issues related to the concept of peace, both in the Bible and the Qur'an. Firstly, the source of peace. Both the Bible and, implicitly the Qur'an, say that peace comes from God, or in other words, God is

¹²³ Mohammed Abu-Nimer, "Framework for Nonviolence and Peacebuilding in Islam", 133.

the source of peace. It begs a question, why God sent His peace to human beings? Does it mean that human beings do not have peace so God must bring down the peace from heaven?

The Bible does not say that human being has no peace so that God must send His peace to him or her, rather, the peace is sent by God so human being will have a victorious life, as mentioned in Leviticus 26:6, and God equips human being with everything good for doing His will, as mentioned in Hebrew 13:12. Likewise, the Qur'an teaches that *salām* is a states of peace where someone realizes that God is always with him and this understanding motivates him to do good deeds according to God's law, as implied in al-Nisā' verse 125.

So, the first similarity of the concept of peace in the Bible and the Qur'an is that the source of peace, which is from God, and the purpose that God sends His peace, is that people who have peace will understand that they have to do good deeds according to God's law and will, so they will have a better life in the world and the hereafter. The diversity of the concept is that the Bible talks explicitly about the source of peace and the purpose of God sends the peace, while the Qur'an mentions about them implicitly.

Secondly, how to respond to the peace of God? Amongst Muslims responding to peace as greeting is a must and is not a difficult matter. The difficult part for Muslims is when they are in the state of conflict, either between Muslims or between Muslims and people from other religious community, and even in a deeper stage, which is being in conflict with God. The researchers believe that the best way to respond to the peace of God is to accept it wholeheartedly. By taking the peace sincerely, one will understand that conflict is a part of life that cannot be avoided, and it has to be resolved. Besides, one will realize that God knows the condition of human

beings, so He revealed some verses in the Qur'an about forgiveness, love, tolerance, and so on. And, in the state of conflict between humans with God, He sent down some verses about repentance.

Similarly, the Bible encourages those who believe in it to open their heart to the word of God and take the peace of God, so God will grant the victorious life. The victorious life in this respect is not only defeating the enemy but also a fruitful life, as stated in Leviticus 26: 6, which are mentioned above. Interestingly, one of interrelated aspects of peace, namely love, is one of the most important teachings that Jesus (PBUH) commanded to his followers, as written in Mark 12: 29. Further, the Bible also mentions that the initiative to build peace came from God, both peace between humans and peace between God and humans.

It seems that the Bible and the Qur'an have the same view in terms of how people who believe in either the Bible or the Qur'an, or perhaps both of them, to respond the peace which is taught in them. Both Scriptures encourage people to believe that God is the initiator of peace and those who accept peace from God will have a good life, in the world and in the hereafter.

Conclusion

The concepts of peace in the Bible and the Qur'an have some similarities, especially when they are seen from the perspective of the sources they came from, how to respond and how to apply in daily life. Therefore, the concepts can be used as sources of solving religious conflicts, especially between Muslim and Christian communities. Certainly, one who is interested to be a peace maker in the area of religious conflict should observe the cultural and religious background of people who are in disharmony, so that he or she will understand the root of the conflict and is able to solve the problem.

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