

FAITH AS A CATALYST FOR PEACE: THE ISLAMIC PERSPECTIVE ON CONFLICT RESOLUTION

¹QUDSIA FIRDOUS, ²MUHAMMAD ZAHID YASIN, ³DR. MAZHAR HUSSAIN, ⁴ABDUL GHAFFAR
SHAHANI, ⁵MUHAMMAD YOUSAF, ⁶EJAZ ASLAM

¹Ph.D. Scholar Comparative Religions IIU, Islamabad

²Ph.D. Scholar Islamic Studies Riphah International University Islamabad

³Assistant Professor, Islamic Studies, University of Narowal

⁴M.Phil. Scholar, Department of Islamic Studies, Ghazi University, Dera Ghazi Khan, Pakistan

⁵M.Phil. Scholar, Department of Islamic Studies, Ghazi University, Dera Ghazi Khan, Pakistan

⁶Assistant Professor, School of economics, Banking & Finance, Minhaj University Lahore, Pakistan

Abstract

Religion, culture, and heritage are major factors that contribute to the formation of identity. Religion, in particular, plays a crucial role in the causes, dynamics, and resolution of conflicts, making it a powerful tool for both generating and preventing conflicts. While some view religion as a source of conflict, it cannot be denied that religion can also play a significant role in conflict resolution and peace building. This paper delves into the multifaceted role of religion in society, which can act as both a source of conflict and violence, but also as a means for conflict resolution and peacebuilding. The interplay between religion and identity formation is explored in relation to its impact on conflict, including causes, dynamics, and potential resolutions. With a focus on the Islamic perspective, the paper outlines the guidelines and methodologies provided by religion to prevent conflicts and promote peace. Additionally, the role of religious leaders in facilitating peacebuilding efforts is examined. Ultimately, the paper underscores the need to recognize and harness the positive potential of religion in the pursuit of sustainable peace.

Key Words: Religion, Conflict, Peace building, Islam

INTRODUCTION:

Religion is a singular phenomenon within a society, playing a significant role in shaping an individual's outlook. It provides a sense of communal identity and aids in developing ethical behavior and attitudes. Additionally, it presents a complete way of life, encompassing spiritual, social, and political structures for its adherents. Religion also creates a powerful and central connection between motivational and directive forces that can influence a variety of individual and collective human actions. Conflict scholars have observed that social conflicts frequently arise and are resolved when individuals recognize that their identity and fundamental human needs, such as survival and security, are threatened or denied by another group. As a result, people may engage in defensive actions to protect their identity and basic needs. Religion has always been a significant factor in the dynamics of human societies, with its impact on shaping individuals' beliefs, values, and behaviors. It is an essential component of social identity, and its role in causing, developing, and preventing conflicts cannot be underestimated.

In many cases, conflicts and violence arise when people feel that their identity or basic needs are being threatened or denied. Religion, as a critical aspect of identity, can be a powerful motivator in these situations, as people may feel that their beliefs and way of life are under attack. For instance, religious conflicts throughout history, such as the Crusades, the Thirty Years' War, and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, demonstrate how religion can serve as a catalyst for violence. Moreover, religion can be considered a source of inspiration and guidance for individuals and communities, providing them with a moral framework for their actions. Religion can help individuals design and choose morally correct attitudes and behaviors and provide a complete lifestyle, encompassing spiritual, social, and political structures. It offers individuals a sense of communal identity and a powerful connection between motivational and directive forces that can influence individual and collective human actions. However, the link between religion and conflicts remains a controversial issue, as many argue that religion can also play a vital role in promoting peace and reconciliation. Many social



activists and peace builders are religiously motivated and have played a crucial role in addressing conflicts and clashes around the world.

Thus, religion's role in causing, developing, and preventing conflicts is a complex and multifaceted issue that requires careful consideration. It is essential to recognize the positive and negative aspects of religion's impact on human societies to ensure that it is utilized for promoting peace and understanding rather than causing conflict and division.

In the early 21st century, the world is grappling with the specter of religious extremism and violence, which has led many to believe that religion is at the core of much of the strife around the globe. The Abrahamic faiths, Christianity, Judaism, and Islam, in particular, have been at odds with one another, leading to a sense of tension and hostility that seems to define much of our modern world.

However, it is important to recognize that all three of these religions contain strong teachings and orders for peacemaking as well. In fact, religious leaders and institutions have played significant roles in past cases of mediation and peacemaking. It is therefore essential to understand that religion, despite its potential for conflict and violence, can also be a force for good in the world.

Throughout human history, religion has been both a major contributor to war, bloodshed, hatred, and intolerance, and a source of laws and ideas that have provided civilizations with a cultural commitment to critical peace-related values. In many cases, religion has been the impetus for social change and has served as a catalyst for movements dedicated to promoting peace and justice. Religion can be a powerful force for peace building when it is harnessed in constructive and positive ways. In this context, it is important to acknowledge the role that religious institutions and leaders can play in fostering peace and promoting understanding between different faith communities. By providing a shared sense of values and promoting a commitment to the common good, religion can serve as a bridge between different groups and contribute to the building of a more just and peaceful world. Therefore, while it is true that religion has often been a source of conflict and violence, it is important to recognize that it can also be a force for peace and social change. By analyzing both the positive and negative characteristics of religion in detail, we can gain a better understanding of its potential as a nexus of conflicts and peace building, and work towards harnessing its potential for the greater good.

RELIGION AND CONFLICTS REASONS AND TYPES:

Religions typically have a set of doctrines or articles of faith that followers must accept without question. However, this can lead to inflexibility and bias towards other beliefs. Additionally, adherents may find it difficult to compromise on matters that are considered divine orders. Furthermore, a significant portion of religious texts, scriptures, and dogma are ambiguous and subject to interpretation, leading to disagreements over which interpretation is correct. Since there is no authority to arbitrate such disputes, the most popular interpretation often prevails. Consequently, followers are often motivated to take action based on their interpretation of religious teachings. While the majority of followers usually hold moderate views, fundamentalists are often driven to fulfill their interpretation of God's will. Throughout human history, religion has been closely linked to violence and conflict. This can be seen in various religious texts, such as the Old Testament of the Bible, which recounts the violent deeds of various figures including Moses, Joshua, David, Gideon, Deborah, and Barak. Some have pointed out that these violent acts were seen as necessary for the judgment of the wicked and the purification of society. In the case of the Old Testament, the Canaanites were seen as sinful and decadent, and their destruction was considered necessary for the greater good of Israel. Furthermore, the people of Israel were warned that they too would face a similar fate if they strayed from the righteous path. Similarly, in Islam, the concept of jihad or holy war is often associated with violence and conflict. However, it is important to note that the Quran also emphasizes the importance of peace and justice, and the verses regarding jihad are often interpreted in the context of self-defense and the defense of the oppressed. Nonetheless, the interpretation of such verses and the use of violence in the name of religion has led to many conflicts throughout history. Despite these violent aspects of religion, it is important to recognize that many religious teachings also emphasize peace, compassion, and social harmony. For example, the concept



of ahimsa or non-violence is a central tenet of Hinduism, Buddhism, and Jainism. In Christianity, the teachings of Jesus Christ emphasize forgiveness, love, and turning the other cheek. In Islam, the importance of peace and compassion is emphasized in the concept of salaam, which means peace and is often used as a greeting. Overall, the relationship between religion and violence is complex and multifaceted. While religion has been used to justify violence and conflict, it has also been a source of peace and compassion for many people throughout history. It is important to critically examine religious teachings and interpretations in order to promote peace and understanding among different religious groups.

Hence, no major religion has been exempted from complicity in violent conflict. Charles Selengut describes the expression

"Religion and violence" as "jarring", attesting that "religion is thought to be opposed to violence and a force for peace and reconciliation. He acknowledges, however, that "the history and scriptures of the world's religions tell stories of violence and war even as they speak of peace and love".¹

Hector Avalos² argues that,

"Because religions claim divine favor for themselves, over and against other groups, this sense of righteousness leads to violence because conflicting claims to superiority, based on unverifiable appeals to God, cannot be adjudicated objectively."³

Similarly, many religions emphasize the importance of spreading their message and converting others to their faith, which can lead to conflict and controversy. This process of evangelism can involve calling upon devotees to spread the word of God and expand the number of followers. However, in some cases, this push for religious expansion has been used as a means of asserting dominance and control over subject peoples, as was the case with European colonization and the forced conversion of indigenous populations. This can create feelings of inferiority and resentment among those who are targeted for conversion, leading to clashes and violence. In addition, religion can often be a hidden source of conflict, with tensions simmering below the surface until a triggering event causes them to rise to the forefront. These underlying tensions can stem from a range of ideological movements, such as freedom, nationalism, socialism, totalitarianism, and communism, all of which have been used to motivate martyrdom and justify the taking of millions of lives. While religion may not always be the direct cause of conflict, it can be a powerful motivating force that fuels violence and unrest in times of crisis.

Religious conflicts or violence can also arise from the failure to adhere to religious teachings or selective application of them. Religion demands its followers to practice its guidelines, and when believers disregard these teachings, conflicts may arise. For instance, the concept of capital punishment in Islam is often a source of religious violence, as well as the punishment for committing adultery. Misunderstandings and misinterpretations of religious teachings can also contribute to conflicts. Religious clergy in all religions have the authority to interpret divine orders according to the circumstances, but this can lead to social and religious distress if their interpretations are not accurate. The lack of accurate knowledge of religion is another significant cause of religious conflicts, as individuals may not understand the true teachings and instead act on misinformed beliefs. Sometimes, dominant social or political groups impose their preferences or biases on the masses using religion as a tool. For instance, the rise of Islamism in Turkey and Egypt, Hindu nationalism or Hindutva in India, and Zionism in Israel can all be considered examples of religio-political movements. These groups often use religion to promote their political agenda and to mobilize support from the

¹Selengut, Charles (2008-04-28). *Sacred fury: understanding religious violence*.

²**Hector Avalos** (born October 8, 1958) is a professor of Religious Studies at Iowa State University and the author of several books about religion.

³ Avalos, Hector (2005). *Fighting Words: The Origins of Religious Violence*. Amherst, New York: Prometheus Books.



masses. In such cases, religious symbols and rhetoric are used to create a sense of religious identity and to legitimize political power. However, this can also lead to conflicts with other religious groups or with those who oppose their political views, leading to religious violence and turmoil. The imposition of a particular religious' ideology by a dominant group can also create tensions and conflicts within the society, as those who do not share the dominant view may feel marginalized or discriminated against.

The political interpretation of religion can often lead to a controversial understanding of it. Politicians and the ruling class often twist religious teachings to serve their own interests. They may selectively interpret religious doctrines to advance their agenda, which can result in a distorted and narrow view of the religion. The use of religion and religious leaders/scholars for achieving specific political goals is unfortunately common. This manipulation of religion can create further divisions and conflicts within societies.

Similarly, the role of international media in the relationship between religion, conflict, and peace has also been controversial. Media outlets such as CNN, BBC, and Al Jazeera have been accused of perpetuating a conflictual view of religion in their coverage of conflicts. This often involves highlighting the religious identities of conflicting parties and framing conflicts as religiously motivated, even when there may be other factors at play. Such coverage can have a significant impact on public opinion and can further perpetuate the idea that religion is inherently conflictual. However, it is important to note that media outlets also have the power to shape narratives around religion and conflict in a more nuanced and peaceful manner. By highlighting instances of interfaith cooperation and promoting dialogue and understanding, media can play a positive role in promoting peace and understanding between different religious groups.⁴

The attitude of exclusivity is a significant cause of religious intolerance. Many religions claim that they alone are the true religion and possess the only true knowledge of God. This can lead to the belief that followers of other religions are in error and are worshipping a false god, which can lead to intolerance and conflict. The idea of linking religion with nationalism can also contribute to religious conflicts. This happens when a nation's identity is deeply intertwined with a particular religion, and followers of other religions are viewed as a threat to the nation's identity. This can lead to discrimination, exclusion, and even violence towards minority religious groups.

Religion can be a powerful tool in promoting world peace as it provides ethical guidelines and principles that aim to reduce and eliminate negative emotions and thoughts such as greed, hatred, and delusion. The teachings of religious leaders and educators often emphasize the importance of cultivating inner peace and harmony within oneself, which can ultimately lead to a more peaceful and tolerant society. By recognizing and addressing the root causes of violence, individuals can work towards a more peaceful and harmonious world, free from the devastating effects of global conflict. UNESCO's constitution highlights the importance of constructing defenses of peace in the minds of individuals, as wars stem from the human mind. Therefore, to achieve inner peace, one must cultivate the qualities of peace within oneself. This means letting go of selfish desires for material possessions, overcoming racial prejudices, and relinquishing the desire for power. Merely accumulating wealth and material goods cannot bring about lasting peace and happiness. True and lasting peace can only be achieved by disarming the mind of all "poisonous" defilements, such as greed, hatred, jealousy, and egotism. In this way, mental disarmament can pave the way towards genuine and enduring peace. Religion serves as a source of motivation and guidance for individuals, equipping them with essential tools to reduce their greed through acts of generosity, conquer hate and animosity with love and kindness, and dispel ignorance by cultivating wisdom and insight to perceive the true nature of beings and the world around us. However, the potential negative impacts of religion arise when it is misinterpreted and misused.

Every significant religion across the world has, at some point, affirmed the importance of peace through their leaders and intellectuals, whether in traditional texts or contemporary reformulations. This is because religion is a potent element of cultural norms and values, and it deals with the most

⁴Reychler, Luc (1997) *Religion and Conflict*. The International Journal of Peace Studies, Vol. 2 No. 1.

fundamental existential matters of human life, including freedom and determinism, fear and faith, security and insecurity, right and wrong, and sacred and profane. Thus, religion is intricately involved in individual and social concepts of peace.⁵

Types of religious conflicts:

Religious conflicts can take many forms, depending on the nature of the religious beliefs and practices involved, as well as the social, political, and economic contexts in which they occur.

Some examples of religious conflicts include:

- **Doctrinal conflicts:** These involve disagreements over theological interpretations of religious texts or doctrines, such as the nature of God, the afterlife, or the meaning of salvation. Doctrinal conflicts can lead to schisms, sectarianism, and even religious extremism or terrorism.
- **Cultural conflicts:** These involve clashes between different religious and cultural traditions, such as customs, rituals, languages, or dress codes. Cultural conflicts can lead to discrimination, prejudice, and intolerance towards minority groups, as well as cultural hegemony or ethnocentrism by dominant groups.
- **Political conflicts:** These involve the use of religion to legitimize or challenge political power, authority, or governance, such as the role of religion in lawmaking, policymaking, or diplomacy. Political conflicts can lead to state-sponsored or state-repressed religious persecution, as well as religious nationalism or separatism.
- **Economic conflicts:** These involve the distribution or access to economic resources, such as land, water, or natural resources, based on religious affiliations or beliefs. Economic conflicts can lead to religious-based discrimination, exploitation, or marginalization, as well as religious-based resistance or rebellion.

Factors that fuel religious conflicts:

While religious conflicts can have various causes and triggers, some common factors that fuel their escalation or perpetuation include:

- **Identity politics:** Religion can become a source of identity that defines group boundaries and fosters in-group loyalty, solidarity, and pride. However, this can also lead to out-group hostility, animosity, and violence, especially when religion is politicized or weaponized to gain power, resources, or recognition.
- **Lack of dialogue and understanding:** Religious conflicts can also result from the lack of mutual communication, empathy, and respect between different religious groups. When people rely on stereotypes, myths, or prejudices to define the "other," they may perceive religious differences as threats to their own beliefs or values, and hence react with fear, anger, or aggression.
- **Historical grievances and traumas:** Religious conflicts can also stem from unresolved historical injustices or traumas, such as colonization, slavery, genocide, or war, that have affected religious groups differently. These traumas can fuel intergenerational resentment, bitterness, and revenge, and make reconciliation or forgiveness difficult.

Religion as a tool of peace: An Islamic Perspective

This paper initially discusses the broad connection between religion, conflict, and peace, but then narrows its focus to the Islamic perspective on religion and peace building. In the aftermath of the September 11, 2001 attacks, there has been a significant amount of research conducted on Islam and its supposed association with violence and radicalism. However, this focus on the relationship between Islam and violence has neglected the potential for religion, specifically Islam, to promote peace building efforts. While religion can be a source of conflict, it can also serve as a means to foster understanding, reconciliation, and peace.

The topic of the relationship between religion and peace is highly debated among scholars. Some, like Scott Appleby, argue that although violence is not necessarily inherent in religion, it still has the

⁵ Abdul Aziz Said and Nathan C. Funk, "The Role of Faith in Cross-Cultural Conflict Resolution" (presented at the European Parliament for the European Centre for Common Ground, September 2001), 1.



potential for violence due to the ambiguous nature of many sacred texts, which can be interpreted in ways that legitimize violence. However, the pursuit of peace and justice is a central concern and shared goal among most religions worldwide. It is important to distinguish between the teachings of a religion and the actions of its followers, as well as to recognize that religious interpretations can promote both violence and peace.

The term "Islam" literally means "submission" or "surrender" and refers to the act of submitting oneself to the will of God. In Islamic tradition, this submission is seen as a path to attaining inner peace and tranquility. As it is stated in the Qur'an: "But your God is One God: submit then your wills to Him (in Islam): and give thou the good news to those who humble themselves. To those whose hearts, when Allah is mentioned, are filled with fear, who show patient perseverance over their afflictions, keep up regular prayer, and spend (in charity) out of what We (Allah) have bestowed upon them" (22:34-35).⁶

As a religion, Islam has the potential to inspire and empower individuals to engage in peaceful actions as part of its broader definition of "jihad," which encompasses the constant struggle for righteousness and virtue in all aspects of life. This concept of jihad emphasizes the importance of personal transformation and spiritual development, and it encourages Muslims to engage in acts of compassion, mercy, and justice in their communities and beyond. By embracing the principles of Islam and striving to fulfill their religious obligations, Muslims can work towards creating a more peaceful and just world.

Islam promotes moral-ethical and spiritual attitudes that encourage peaceful actions. These attitudes include courage, discipline, and unity of purpose, all of which are essential to the success of nonviolent actions.⁷ "Some scholars Chaiwat Satha-Anand is among the scholars who have interpreted the five pillars of Islam in terms of nonviolence. The first pillar, the Witness to God (Shahada), is an implied expression of noncompliance to any power that contradicts the teaching of Islam and the rules of Islamic Law. This creates room for civil disobedience, which can be used as a nonviolent means of resistance against oppressive regimes or unjust policies. The second pillar, Prayers (Salat), and the fifth pillar, Pilgrimage (Hajj), are performed in congregations. They are a portrait of equality among human beings, regardless of their social or economic status. Moreover, they create a mental image of people gathering in the same place, which facilitates the mobilization of their collective power. This is crucial for nonviolent action, as it allows for a larger and more diverse group of people to come together for a common cause. Given that the performance of these rituals is seen as a form of jihad to Allah, they imply discipline and commitment. This discipline and commitment can also be applied to nonviolent action, as it requires a similar level of dedication and persistence."⁸

Hijrah, the act of migration or withdrawal, can also be seen as an application of nonviolence within Islam. It refers to the Prophet Muhammad's migration from Mecca to Medina in 622 CE, which marked the beginning of the Islamic calendar. The concept of Hijrah emphasizes the importance of physical and spiritual movement towards a more just and peaceful society. In the context of nonviolence, Hijrah can be understood as a nonviolent means of resisting oppression and injustice. By leaving a place where there is conflict or oppression, Muslims can preserve their dignity and rights without resorting to violence. In this sense, Hijrah is not only a physical migration but also a moral and ethical act of resistance against violence and oppression. Moreover, the idea of Hijrah also includes the notion of seeking refuge or asylum in a place that provides safety and security. This concept is particularly relevant today, as many people around the world are forced to flee their homes due to conflict, persecution, or other forms of violence. The Islamic tradition of Hijrah provides a framework for understanding the importance of offering sanctuary and protection to those in need, regardless of their religion or background. Overall, the concept of Hijrah demonstrates how Islam can be used as a means of promoting nonviolence and social justice. By emphasizing the importance of migration,

⁶ English interpretations of the ayahs of the Qur'an are by Abdullah Yusuf Ali

⁷ Karim D. Crow, "Islamic Peaceful Action (al-Jihad al-Silmi): Nonviolent Approach to Justice and Peace in Islamic Societies," *Capitol Journal on Culture and Society* 12, no. 1 (2001-2002): 149-150.

⁸ <http://www.religionconflictpeace.org/54>



Muslims are encouraged to seek out peaceful and just societies, and to resist violence and oppression through nonviolent means.

As stated in Quran:

“When angels take the souls of those who die in sin against their souls, they say: “In what (plight) were ye?” They reply: “Weak and oppressed were we in the earth.” They say: “Was not the earth of Allah spacious enough for you to move yourselves away (From evil)?” Such men will find their abode in Hell, What an evil refuge! he who forsakes his home in the cause of Allah, finds in the earth many a refuge, wide and spacious”. (4:97; 100)

This Quranic verse emphasizes the importance of Hijrah or migration as a means to escape oppression and injustice. It suggests that if someone is living in a place where they are weak and oppressed, they should consider migrating to a place where they can live freely and without fear. The verse implies that the earth of Allah is spacious enough to provide refuge to those who are seeking it. It is also noteworthy that the verse mentions that forsaking one's home in the cause of Allah can lead to finding many refuges on earth. This suggests that the act of migration can be seen as a way of fulfilling one's duty towards Allah, and can be considered as a nonviolent means of resistance against oppression and injustice.

Religious leaders can play a critical role in promoting peace and resolving conflicts by using their moral and spiritual authority to influence the behavior and attitudes of their followers. They can use their platform to promote messages of peace, compassion, and understanding, and encourage their followers to adopt nonviolent means of conflict resolution. Furthermore, religious leaders can help to mitigate conflicts by acting as mediators or facilitators in negotiations between conflicting parties. They can bring diverse groups together and provide a safe space for dialogue, creating an opportunity for constructive engagement and understanding. In many cases, religious leaders may be more trusted by their followers than secular leaders or institutions, which can make their interventions more effective. However, religious leaders can also contribute to conflicts and violence if they use their authority to promote extremist or exclusionary ideologies. This highlights the importance of promoting religious leaders who hold moderate and inclusive views, and ensuring that they have the support and resources necessary to promote peace and nonviolence within their communities.⁹ Religious leaders hold the potential to act as promoters of peace and nonviolence. They can serve as moral authorities and facilitators, fostering unity and harmony amongst individuals belonging to different communities and faiths. Religious leaders can utilize their religious influence to prevent extremist ideologies and promote peaceful messages, encouraging forgiveness, tolerance, and acceptance. Moreover, religious leaders can contribute to conflict prevention and resolution by promoting dialogue, reconciliation, and social service. By addressing the underlying causes of violence, such as poverty, injustice, and inequality, religious leaders can advocate for policies that prioritize peace, justice, and human rights. In summary, religious leaders possess the ability to play a significant role in promoting peace and nonviolence, but it is essential for them to exercise their influence and platform with responsibility and effectiveness.

Religious leaders typically possess a significant amount of moral authority, and as such, their public disagreement with conflict leaders or their ideologies can greatly undermine the credibility and legitimacy of the cause. Furthermore, religious leaders can leverage their influence to rally their followers and facilitate initiatives aimed at curbing violence and advancing peace.

Religious scholars need to revive and disseminate some fundamental but neglected teachings of Islam, which emphasize the importance of eradicating violence and conflicts. One such teaching is the need to honor and respect all humans, regardless of their religion, race, or skin color. This principle is enshrined in the Quran, where Allah SWT states, “We have honored the sons of Adam, provided them with transportation on land and sea, given them pure sustenance, and favored them over many of our creations.” (17: 70)

⁹<http://www.collinsdictionary.com/dictionary/english/religious-leader>



In reference to this discussion, a scholar of Islam wrote, “Islam does not believe in false distinction of race, color or territories, it always keeps the door open for them to embrace Islamic principles of life and become equal participants in all matters.”¹⁰

- The affirmation of religious differences among humans occurred based on the will of Allah. This has been described by Allah in the Qur’an which means;
“If thy Lord had so willed, He could have made mankind one people; but they will not cease to dispute”.(11:118)
- The Prophet’s and preacher’s responsibility is to remind people, not forcing them to admit and believe in God, neither to question the disbeliefs of the unbelievers. This has been stated by Allah in the Qur’an:
“Therefore do thou give admonition, for thou art one to admonish. Thou art not one to manage (men’s) affairs”. (88:21-22)
- Islamic claims that the Muslim community should be “just” even to non-Muslims. Allah has stressed this principle as follows:
“O ye who believe! Stand out firmly for God, as witnesses to fair dealing, and let not the hatred of others to you make you swerve to wrong and depart from justice. Be just: that is next to piety: and fear God, for God is well-acquainted with all that ye do”. Sūrah al-Māidah (5:8)

Muslim religious leader should also stress that Islam encourages its followers to engage in dialogues with non-Muslims. As Allah said in Sūrah Al-Nahl (16): 125,

“Invite (all) to the Way of thy Lord with wisdom and beautiful preaching; and argue [dialogue] with them in ways that are best and most gracious; for thy Lord knoweth best, who have strayed from His Path, and who receive guidance”.

- Acknowledging religious pluralism and honoring differences of opinion as communal among human differing in background, culture, religion, race and ethnicity, as mentioned by the Qur’an (49:13)
- “Religious leader particularly the Muslim, should avoid three harmful behavior warned by the Qur’an (as well as by religious teachings and common human ethics) in an effort to strengthen Islamic teachings among Muslims, which is:

(a) Extremism: being too extreme in translating and implementing regulation or decision,

(b) Chauvinism (ta’asub): accepting only own thought or view from particular group as the best, while others must be refuted or side-lined,

(c) Fanaticism: reacting blindly in following or implementing particular action, stand or own approach without considering other judgment”¹¹.

CONCLUSION:

The discussion centered on the role of religion in conflict and peacebuilding. It was noted that religion is often a core source of identity and, as such, can play a vital role in promoting peace and justice beyond ethnic differences. However, religion is not usually the only or even primary cause of conflict. Unfortunately, the positive role of religion as a force in peacemaking is often ignored. Religious teachings can provide justifications for extreme action or peace, which is important to remember when in a conflict-zone with any or no religious implication.

Religious affiliation and conviction often motivates religious communities to promote particular peace-related government policies. These communities also directly oppose dominance and endorse peace and reconciliation. Sometimes, wrong understandings of religion may cause radicalism, but usually, religious affiliations motivate towards peace. To acquire complete and wide knowledge and understanding of Religion is a dire need today.

¹⁰Al-Maududi(1977),*The Islamic Law and Constitution*, Lohore: Islamic Publication.

¹¹www.ijern.com/journal/June-2014/07.pdf



The role of religious leaders in perpetrating and preventing conflicts should be acknowledged. In a conflict, religious leaders may employ religious authorities or religious language to mobilize followers and widen their base of support. Religious leaders engaged in peacebuilding can draw on a common worldview, theological language, and shared values by adherents to gain support for peace. Religious leaders and institutions can intercede in conflict situations, serve as a communication link between opposing sides, and provide training in peacemaking methodologies.

Interfaith dialogues are another form of religious peacemaking. Rather than seeking to resolve a particular conflict, it aims to resolve interfaith tensions that may cause future conflict or derive from previous conflict. Some basic and forgotten teachings of religion in order to peacebuilding should revive and focused by Religious leaders. It is important for believers to try to move beyond the narrow understanding of their religion, towards a wider one, where the whole universe becomes the center of attention, and to go beyond the mere performance of rituals of the faith to live by its ethics and spirit.

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