

# Peace, Tolerance, Mutual Co-Existence and Conflict Management in the Light of Islamic Education



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**Peace, Tolerance, Mutual  
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## Introduction

Young generation of today is the future of the nations and visionary nations are required to wisely invest in its youth to secure better futures. In the developed world youth have a lot of opportunities available like better education, health, skill development and positive entertainment. Unfortunately in Pakistan instead of providing a productive atmospheres most of the youth particularly those living in poverty and remote areas are being negatively utilized. This situation become worsens when we look at the remote areas of North West Frontier Province and the Tribal areas. The religious groups, political parties and extremists have also negatively exploited the youth of these areas. The long Afghan war and later on the unrest in the tribal and adjacent areas have further contributed into a violent culture and intolerant societies. Keeping in view this situation, Sustainable Peace and Development Organization (SPADO) established an initiative called “Youth for Peace” which is striving for a non-violent and peaceful world through the active and practical participation of youth. One of the priority areas, which SPADO has identified regarding its youth activities is educating youth on tolerance, peace, non-violence and mutual-co-existence. There is not even a single institution available in Pakistan, which can teach peace and non-violence to the Pakistani youth. The longer term goal of the program is to establish a **Peace Resource Center** where youth and other segments of the society will learn the true philosophy of peace and non-violence in the context of humanity and Islamic Teachings.

This peace manual is a step forward towards our goal of peace and harmony in the region and we look forward to your support, feedback and suggestions.

## Module One: Understanding Peace

The Arabic term "Islam" itself (إسلام) is usually translated as "submission"; submission of desires to the will of God. It comes from the term *Slama*, which means "to surrender" or "resign oneself". In this module a resource person/religious scholar will educate the participant regarding peace and will be addressing all these areas in detail. Furthermore some basic knowledge will be given in the notes as reference material.

- Defining peace:
- Importance of peace in Islam:
- Explanation of violence in Islam:
- Questions/Answers/Suggestions

**Notes:** As in other Abrahamic religions, **peace** is a basic concept in **Islamic thought**<sup>1</sup>. Islam is a religion of peace. "A Muslim is the one who surrenders to the will of Allah and is an establisher of peace (while Islam means establishment of peace, Muslim means one who establishes peace through his actions and conduct)", (L. Groff, 2002). The meaning of Islam is peace, but unfortunately some extremist Muslims are involved in terrorists activities. These people are not only damaging the image of Islam but also responsible for creating an unhealthy environment around the world for all human beings. The Holy Quran speaks about the basic dignity of all human beings. Holy Prophet Muhammad has repeatedly said, "Mankind are the dependents, or family of God, and the most beloved of them to God are those who are the most excellent to His dependents." "Not one of you believes until he loves for his brother what he loves for himself." Great Muslim scholars of prophetic traditions such as Ibn

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<sup>1</sup> [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Peace\\_In\\_Islamic\\_Thought#cite\\_note-0](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Peace_In_Islamic_Thought#cite_note-0)

Hajar al-Asqalani and Sharafuddin al Nawawi have said that the words 'his brother' mean any person irrespective of faith.<sup>2</sup>

Islamic education is misinterpreted for the vested interests by different extremist leaders. Islam and even Holy Quran are giving a clear guideline to avoid such actions. "Did we keep you away from the guidance when it was revealed to you? (Indeed not) you yourselves were the criminals. 'Those who were proud say unto those who were despised: Did we drive you away from the guidance after it had come unto you? Nay, but ye were guilty."<sup>3</sup>

The Prophet, (peace and blessings be upon him), spoke about the equality of all human beings, regardless of their race, color, language or ethnic background. Islamic law (Shari'ah) recognizes the rights of all people to life, property, family, honor and conscience. Extreme ideologies, suicides terrorism, human rights violations and other pervasive phenomenon are tearing Muslim social family fabric apart. Peace is not only the problem of Pakistan; it is now a global challenge, which can't be gained by wars and violent means rather by effective non-violence means.

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<sup>2</sup> [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Peace\\_In\\_Islamic\\_Thought#cite\\_note-0](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Peace_In_Islamic_Thought#cite_note-0)

<sup>3</sup> Al-Quran, Sura, Saba, Verse, 32



## Module Two: Understanding Tolerance

Hazrat Ali (R) said; “The most powerful person is that who can control his/her anger”. Islam educates its follower regarding tolerance and displaying a tolerant behavior with others. In this module a moderator will be discussing the ideology and importance of Tolerance, as well as the effects of intolerant behavior. To enhance understanding of participant some basic information is given in notes of the reference material.

- Islamic Ideology of Tolerance
- Importance of Tolerance in Islam
- Intolerance and its effects
- Questions/Answers/Suggestions

**Notes:** And let not hatred of people incite you to act inequitably. ‘O ye who believe! Be steadfast witnesses for Allah in equity, and let not hatred of any people seduce you that ye deal not justly. Deal justly, that is nearer to your duty. Observe your duty to Allah. Lo! Allah is informed of what ye do’. ‘And let not the hatred of a people – because they hindered you from the sacred mosque – incites you to exceed the limits’.<sup>4</sup>

Islam has given guidance to its follower how to invite someone towards Islamic education, all to the way of your Lord with wisdom and beautiful preaching; and argue with them in ways that are best and most gracious Your Lord knows best, who have strayed from His Path, and who receive guidance.

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<sup>4</sup> Al-Quran, Sura, Al- Maeda, Verse, 2

Call unto the way of the Lord with wisdom and fair exhortation, and reason with them in the better way. Lo! thy Lord is Best Aware of him who strayeth from His way, and He is best aware of those who go aright'.<sup>5</sup>

**2.192.** Then if they desist, know well that God is Ever-Forgiving, Most Compassionate.

**Discussion points/Assignments:**

- **Participants to share their personal experiences of intolerance and its impacts**
- **All participants to collect media reports on incidents related to intolerance**

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<sup>5</sup> Al-Quran, Sura, An-Nahl, Verse, 125

## Module Three: Mutual Co-Existence

To educate youth that Islam not only favor but promote the concept of living with differences. By this way we can realize the importance of Islamic Teachings on mutual co-existence. A religious leader will talk about the concept of Islam on mutual co-existence in the light of Islamic Teachings. The following topics will be emphasized upon. For further understanding some reference material is given in notes.

- Islamic Concept of Mutual Co-Existence
- Importance of pluralism in Islam
- Role of peaceful co-existence on communities and development

**Notes:** Learning how to live together with “other” and “the others” and understanding of other are a very important component of inter-faith education. When we look at Islam we can find plenty of evidence that recognize and support inter-faith and cultural dialogues and pluralism. However, interpretation of religious texts and implementation may be different in terms of a given time and place. Because we are children of our age and every human being is under the influence of his or her own living environment and societies. This is probably valid for every religious understanding and interpretation. Let us provide a verse from the Qur’an which recognizes pluralism and diversity and condemns discrimination and prejudices based on tribalism and racism.

“O mankind! We created you from a single (pair) of male and female and made you into nations and tribes that ye may know each other (*ta’aruf*) (not that ye may despise each other). Verily the most honoured of you in the sight

of Allah is (he who is) the most righteous of you. And Allah has full knowledge and is well acquainted (with all things)".<sup>6</sup>

In this Qur'anic verse *ta'aruf*...means to know/recognize/understand each other. This encourages a partnership role between different people in knowing each other and sharing the knowledge and recognition of each other, and this, in a sense, leads to a culture of a pluralism and tolerance in societies.

Generally speaking, majority of Muslim scholars of Qur'anic exegesis reach the conclusion that diversity between different people can only prove the richness of God's creation. Some Islamic scholars, add that the differences between the human beings, in fact, provide good ways for the people for the competing one with another in promoting good and proving solidarity among themselves.

We can understand that the concept of *taaruf* (knowing each other) requires condemnation of all prejudices and discrimination based on tribalism or racism since the main point is the equality in creation and pluralism in human society.

In the Holy Qur'an, God Most High enjoins Muslims to issue the following call to both Christians and (*People of the Scripture*): O People of the Scripture! Come to a common word between us and you: that we shall worship none but God, and that we shall ascribe no partner unto Him, and that none of us shall take others for lords beside God. And if they turn away, then say: Bear witness that we are they who have surrendered (unto Him).<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Al-Quran, Sura, Al-Hujurat, Verse 13

<sup>7</sup> Al-Quran, Sura, Aal 'Imran Verse, 64

As in the last address the Holy Prophet said:

O people, verily you're Lord and sustainer is One and your ancestor is one. All of you descend from Adam and Adam was made from earth. There is no superiority for an Arab over non-Arab nor for a non-Arab over an Arab; neither for a white man over a black man nor a black man over a white man except the superiority gained through Allah consciousness of Allah.<sup>8</sup>

O' people! Verily your blood, your property and your honor are sacred and inviolable until you appear before your Lord, as the sacred inviolability of this day of yours, this month of yours and this very town (of yours). Verily you will soon meet your Lord and you will be held answerable for your actions.<sup>9</sup>

So let our differences not cause hatred and strife between us. Let us vie with each other only in righteousness and good works. Let us respect each other, be fair, just and kind to another and live with sincerity, peace, harmony and mutual goodwill.

#### **Assignments:**

- **Participants to share their own experiences while living peacefully with other faith's believers.**

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<sup>8</sup> Qadri, Tahir Ul, Human Rights in Islam, Minhaj Publication Lahore, Pakistan

<sup>9</sup> <http://www.alhafeez.org/lastsermon.htm>

## Module Four: Conflict Management

This module is designed to educate youth with the basic knowledge of understanding conflicts, as well as to realize them how to prevent conflicts and build peace in the light of Islamic education. A moderator will discuss all phases of conflict management in detail, then a religious scholar will be giving Islamic knowledge of conflict management in the light of Islamic education. Some reference material is given in notes.

- Understanding Conflict
- Phases of Conflict Management
  - a) Conflict Prevention
  - b) Peacemaking
  - c) Peacekeeping
  - d) Peace building
  - e) State building
- Islam and Conflict Management

**Notes:** Islam teaches us in every moment of life, to resolve and manage our conflicts through dialogues peacefully. We have to address all these issues to resolve our conflicts.

And if they incline to peace, incline thou also to it, and trust in Allah. Lo! He, is the Hearer, the Knower. And if they would deceive thee, then lo! Allah is Sufficient for thee. He it is Who supporteth thee with His help and with the

believers, And (as for the believers) hath attuned their hearts. If thou hadst spent all that is in the earth thou couldst not have attuned their hearts, but Allah hath attuned them. Lo! He is Mighty, Wise.<sup>10</sup>

And let not your hatred of a folk who (once) stopped your going to the inviolable place of worship seduce you to transgress; but help ye one another unto righteousness and pious duty. Help not one another unto sin and transgression, but keep your duty to Allah. Lo! Allah is severe in punishment. **(Al-Maeda 5:2)**

**Ali Ibn Abi Talib**, the fourth Caliph after the Prophet, has an incisive definition of justice. He considers justice to be *the placement of everything in their proper order*. The issue of proportionality and relativeness is thus an indispensable part of justice.<sup>11</sup>

**Peace based on justice**, therefore, would mean *a balanced, fair and tranquil state of affairs*, where all concerned would enjoy their due rights and protection.

Prophet Muhammad (SAW) is reported to have said once:

*"Mankind are the family of God, and the most beloved of them to God are those who are the most excellent to His family." "Not one of you believes until he loves for his brother what he loves for himself."*<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> Al-Quran, Sura, Al-Anfal 8:61,62,63

<sup>11</sup> Motahhari, Morteza, Adl e Elahi [Divine Justice], Tehran: Sadra Publications, 1982, pp. 59-67s

<sup>12</sup> [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Peace\\_In\\_Islamic\\_Thought#cite\\_note-0](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Peace_In_Islamic_Thought#cite_note-0)

## **Module Five: Group Discussion/Presentations**

The last session of the training workshop is devoted to group discussion and presentations. The objective of the session is to provide an opportunity to the youth to discuss and present their knowledge gained during the training workshop and at the same time express the views and recommendations of their groups

- **Groups Formation**

**The participants will be divided into groups where they will be provided with the following topic to discuss and present**

- a) Peace**
- b) Tolerance**
- c) Mutual co-existence**
- d) Conflict Management**

- **Presentations by group leaders**

**The group will choose their group leader where he/she will present the group work in the form of a presentation through flipcharts**

- **Questions/Answers/Comments**

**Each group leader and the group will answer the questions of other groups/participants whereas the participants will also share their comments on the presentations**



- **Conclusion**

The resource person, religious scholar and team leader will conclude the workshop by summarizing the two days proceedings of the workshop. The youth will be encouraged to act as mentors for their fellows

- **Peace Prayer**

**A peace prayer will be conducted by the religious scholar where all the participants of the workshop will pray for peace and harmony around the world**

- **Certificates Distribution**

**The guest of honor will distribute the certificates among the participants**



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