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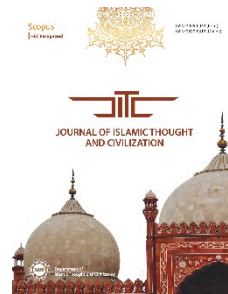
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# Islamic Paradigm of International Relations in Times of Peace and Conflict: A Conceptual Framework

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## Abstract

This study aims to demonstrate that Islam, as a religion, has an integrated paradigm to deal with international relations. The paradigm includes both peaceful and defensive frameworks applicable during times of peace and conflict, respectively. These two frameworks are based on several foundations and concepts that complement each other to establish the paradigm. The peaceful framework is based on three criteria, namely acquaintance, cooperation, and counseling. While, the defensive framework is based on the reprehension of warfare, the necessity of repelling, and the prioritization of benevolence. The current study seeks to elucidate each of these six concepts and their interconnectedness in shaping the Islamic paradigm of international relations. It relied on inductive and analytical methods to achieve these goals and concluded that Islam's approach to repelling aggression is primarily rooted in the disapproval of warfare, and that using force is considered a last resort when peace cannot be achieved through other means. Then, when the Muslims are dominant over their opponents, emphasis shifts towards benevolence and tolerance, over seeking justice or revenge.

**Keywords:** acquaintance, cooperation, conflict, international relations, Islamic paradigm, peace

## Introduction

The Islamic scriptures [the Qur'ān and the Hadīth] dealt with international issues in many texts, as did the rulings issued by early and contemporary Sharī'a jurists. The present study does not seek to review individual international issues and the approaches related to them, whether in the scriptures or in the jurisprudential heritage. Instead, it seeks to reconstruct the overall paradigm that stands behind these partial rulings, in a way that creates harmony and coherence between these rulings and the principles of Islam. It is crucial to show this holistic paradigm that governs all the partial provisions; it provides us with a methodological instrument to attribute the particles to their origins. If there is a text that bears several meanings, then it must be referred to the holistic paradigm to reach its sound understanding within this framework.

This paradigm is divided into two parts: a peaceful framework that Muslims must follow when peace is the case in international relations and a repelling framework that Muslims must follow when international actors deviate from the established rules of peace, leading to disruption of the international peaceful scene, with the goal to restore the scene to the original state of peace.

## 2. The Framework for Peace in International Relations

As mentioned above, the Framework for peaceful relations is based on three successive principles: acquaintance, cooperation, and counseling:

### 2.1. Acquaintance

In this world, there exists a remarkable diversity among humans, in their languages, cultures, customs, and ways of thinking. Every believer's logical question is: What is the secret behind this

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great cultural diversity among humans? Because Muslims believe that Allah is wise in His creation, and everything has a purpose, thus there must be a divine purpose behind this diversity. We do not need to strive to search for it, for the Qur'ān contains an explicit text that tells us about the purpose behind this human diversity, namely, the goal is acquaintance; that is, human groups of people need to get to know each other, "O Mankind, we created you from a single pair of a male and a female, and made you into nations and tribes so that you may get to know each other."<sup>1</sup> This verse contains a divine command urging people to know each other, as inferred from the lexical structure of the verse. Ibn 'Afiyah (1146-1088)<sup>2</sup> says: "It is possible the particle in the verse denotes obligation."

The verse mentions two social units: nations and tribes. Nations, in this context, refers to races, such as the Persians, Romans, Abyssinians, or Arabs. Tribes are subcategories of nations. Upon contemplation, it is evident that these two units are the source of forming cultural perceptions for humans. This indicates that the recommended acquaintance is acquaintance at the level of perceptions before on the level of personalities.

The purpose of getting to know each other as outlined in Qur'ān is the first pillar in the framework of peace in international relations within Islam. Allah wants the Muslim entity, with its different social units - nations and tribes - to get to know each other. Since we were asked to get to know each other, we have been created diverse and different in everything. It is the duty of a Muslim to embody this divine will in this life as a vicegerent on Earth. Muslims are encouraged to have an open mind to what other civilizations produce and to what their cultures practice while maintaining a balance with their own beliefs and values. "[Glad tidings are given to] those who listen to speech and follow the best of it."<sup>3</sup> Thus, Muslims are encouraged to listen and learn from others, incorporating beneficial knowledge into their own lives and communities. 'Abd Al-Karīm Al-Khaṭīb<sup>4</sup> says: "Just as the family does not isolate us from our community, nor does it separate us from our society, so our nation should not isolate us from other nations, and our society should not separate us from other societies."

The perspective of acquaintance that the Qur'ān urges us to achieve coincides with other Qur'ānic perspectives. For example, the Qur'ān asks its opponents to show what they have of knowledge, "Say, 'Do you have any knowledge, then bring it out to us.'"<sup>5</sup> In contrast, the nonbelievers' perspective, such as that of Quraysh, is that they refuse to listen and insist on what they inherited from their fathers, "Indeed, we found our fathers upon a religion, and we are, in their footsteps, following."<sup>6</sup>

This implies that the concept of acculturation, which emerged in 1880, is, in fact, an Islamic requirement as well as a civilized necessity. Acculturation, which means systematic interaction with other cultures<sup>7</sup> is a natural result of the directives for acquaintance. Since the divine demand for acquaintance cannot be fulfilled without systematic acculturation, and since "if a mandatory demand cannot be accomplished without another thing, this thing becomes mandatory itself,"<sup>8</sup> then, it is

<sup>1</sup>al-Ra'd 49:13.

<sup>2</sup>'Abd Al-Ḥaqq ibn Ghālib Ibn 'Afiyah, *Al-Muḥarrir Al-Wajīz [The Short Investigation]* (Beirut: Dār Al-Kutub Al-'Ilmiyah, 2001), 6/153.

<sup>3</sup>al-Zumar 39:18.

<sup>4</sup>'Abd Al-Karīm Al-Khaṭīb, *Al-Tafsīr Al-Qur'ānī lil-Qur'ān* (Cairo: Dār Al-Fikr, 1970), 453.

<sup>5</sup>al-An'am 6:148.

<sup>6</sup>al-Zukhruf 43:23.

<sup>7</sup>Donnie Cush, *Mafhūm Al-Thaqāfah fī Al-'Ulūm Al-Ijtīmā'iyah [The Concept of Culture in Social Sciences]*, Trans. Qāsim Al-Miqdād (Damascus: Ittīhād Al-Kitāb Al-'Arab, 2002), 64.

<sup>8</sup>Muḥammad ibn Al-Ḥusayn Abū Ya'lá, *Al-'Uddah fī Uṣūl Al-Fiḥ [The Equipment in Islamic Jurisprudence]* (Riyad: Al-Imam University Press, 1990), 2/419.

mandatory for a Muslim to open channels of acquaintance and increase their paths as much as possible. Research centers are thus a mandatory demand as they would seek the best products of other cultures and utilize them in their social context. Likewise, mutual study tours between different cultures are necessary, and every means that achieves the purpose of acquaintance is also mandatory. No matter how advanced a society is, it progresses according to what is available to it. When it begins to learn about other cultures, it will notice the aspects of excellence in those cultures and import them, and will mark the advantages it has, so it adheres to them. A society that follows the developments of other societies undoubtedly becomes more distinguished.

For this reason, Allah ordered us to get acquainted, and for this reason, He made us different. Without this difference, humanity would not have progressed. All the radical changes that affected societies and led to their revival are, in fact, the result of acquainting with the other. Ralph Linton (1893-1953) says: "The relative speed in the growth of human culture as a whole is attributed to the ability of all societies to borrow elements from other cultures and incorporate them into their own. There is probably no existing culture that owes more than 10% of all its elements to inventions made by members of its own society."<sup>9</sup>

This is actually quite true; as the scientific revolution in physical sciences in the Muslim world was the result of the close contact of the Greek heritage. The applied sciences did not emerge in the Islamic world except after the translation movement, which began during the reign of Khālīd bin Yazīd (668-704) and flourished during the reign of Al-Ma'mūn (786-833). On the other hand, European societies did not turn from the state of darkness for a thousand years except after the Islamic heritage was moved to it after the fall of Andalusia in the fifteenth century. Before that, these societies were not naught in value. But because they were acquainted with a more progressive heritage, they were inspired to follow and reproduce in their own context in an even better way than that followed by Muslims when they introduced the Greek heritage. An example is the city of Gondishapur developed and flourished after the arrival of the Nestorians, demonstrating the transformative power of cultural exchange.

Today, in the Islamic world, we cannot deny that there has been a great revolution in Islamic studies in terms of curricula and topics. Contact with contemporary Western civilization has led Islamic studies to approach social issues in economics, politics, international relations, sociology, psychology, and education and made them develop research methods in the Islamic methodology. All this happened because of the contact with the "other," which is in this case, the Western civilization. Donnie Cush<sup>10</sup> stated that, "there are no pure cultures versus mixed cultures; they are all mixed cultures to varying degrees."

Therefore, it is the diversity of human beings and their differences that make them complement each other, and this is the guarantee of the continued progress of humanity. As explained by the English philosopher John Stuart Mill (1806-1873),<sup>11</sup> whenever a society collapses into backwardness, another society emerges that leads the renaissance. Tocqueville was right when he said: "Emotions and thoughts cannot be renewed, nor can the heart grow, and the human soul elevate except through the mutual influence of human beings with each other."<sup>12</sup>

<sup>9</sup>Nadīm Al-Bīṭār, *Hudūd Al-huwīyah Al-Qawnīyah: Naqd 'ām [The Limits of National Identity]* (Beirut: Bīsān lil-Nashr wa-Al-Tawzī', 2002), 215.

<sup>10</sup>Cush, *Mafhūm Al-Thaqāfah fī Al-'Ulūm Al-Ijtīmā'īyah*, 77.

<sup>11</sup>John Stuart Mill, *Principles of Political Liberalism*, Trans. Imām 'Abd Al-Fattāh (Cairo: Maktabat Madbūlī, 1996), 199.

<sup>12</sup>Catherine Zuckert, "The Role of Religion in Preserving American Liberty — Tocqueville's Analysis 150 Years Later," *Tocqueville's Defense of Human Liberty: Current Essays*, edited by Peter Augustine Lawler, Joseph Alulis, (New York: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1993). 595.

So, the Islamic community is legally obligated to get to know other cultures and critically evaluate their merits and drawbacks. It must harness the advantages of other cultures to enhance its own prosperity while learning from their shortcomings to avoid similar pitfalls. Thus, the value of acquaintance is a guarantee for the continued progress of human societies.

Finally, we have to point out a fundamental idea, which is that acquaintance, even if it is required, it will not be fruitful unless we get to know each other based on a clear identification of our own civilizational identity. If we get acquainted with other nations while we are ignorant of our own civilizational identity, we will not achieve acquaintance. Rather we will have a civilizational dependence as is the case today. We have become familiar with Western knowledge not to compare it with our perceptions, but to adopt and reuse directly in our context without even thinking systematically about the value of this knowledge. Al-Jābrī (1935-2010)<sup>13</sup> was quite right when he said: "Without an identity that is powerful with its components, openness to other cultures - especially the dominant ones - leads to becoming a prey to alienation and penetration."

Achieving this civilizational identity that is powerful with its components, there is no fear of fusion in the other. This coincides with the statement by Talal Asad (1932-)<sup>14</sup> when he says: "The idea that cultural borrowing must end with complete submission and a loss of originality is an illusion."

## 2.2. Cooperation

After acquainting and knowing each other's merits and demerits, the Qur'ān tells us about another value that complements the value of acquaintance, which is the value of cooperation "And cooperate in righteousness and piety, but do not cooperate in sin and aggression."<sup>15</sup> Note that the context of this verse does not relate to an internal matter in the Muslim community. Rather, it talks about how Muslims deal with others, and the verse commands them to cooperate in righteousness and piety. This means cooperating in everything that is good, and the most important type of this goodness is piety, which is the fulfillment of rights and duties towards Allah and towards His servants.

It is also possible to derive the obligation to cooperate with others from several Qur'ānic principles. Allah told us that the purpose of sending messengers is for people to establish justice, and this is something that can only be achieved by extending bridges with others in this world to cooperate in establishing justice. Likewise, Allah commands believers to enjoin good and forbid evil, then this requires to see what others have. If what they have is evil, it should be rejected, and if it is good, it should be embraced. In fact, there are several proofs for the obligation to cooperate, either explicitly or implicitly. The idea of cooperation is undoubtedly fundamental, and it is also recognized by mental necessity.

Just as acquaintance is crucial, cooperation is also a necessary principle to complete the benefit of acquaintance, as there is no point in people getting to know each other and then not cooperating on what they have agreed upon regarding commonalities. If two countries, for example, achieved acquaintance in the educational field and studied the advantages and disadvantages of each, it is necessary now for them to cooperate to transfer the advantages of each to the other, and so on in all areas of life.

<sup>13</sup>Muḥammad 'Ābid Al-Jābrī, *Mashrū' Al-Nahḍah Al-'Arabī [The Project of Arab Renaissance]* (Beirut: Markaz, 2016), 173.

<sup>14</sup>Talal Asad, *Genealogies of Religion: Discipline and Reasons of Power in Christianity and Islam* (London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1993), 12-13.

<sup>15</sup>al-Mā'idah 5:2.

Unless there is cooperation between human societies, the benefits of acquaintance remain one-sided and incomplete. The true value of cooperation obligates partners to make the benefit mutual and shared. In addition, there is no value in cooperation without acquaintance, as the cooperation of Muslims with other countries and civilizations must be based on a clear conceptual ground, that Muslims know thoroughly what others have so that they can choose what they cooperate on and what they avoid.

### 2.3. Counseling

If acquaintance takes place and cooperation results thereof, then the process does not stop at this point. There is another notion Shari'a draws our insights to, and that is the idea of mutual counseling. Counseling can be defined as urging people to each other to carry on with some tasks. This is what can be derived from the Qur'an: "Similarly, there came not to those before them any messenger except that they said, "A magician or a madman. Is this the legacy they have transmitted, one to another?"<sup>16</sup> This means: Did each generation advise the next to accuse all the apostles of being magicians or madmen?

The idea of mutual counseling is a very important one, both in promoting goodness and deterring evil. As goodness is magnified by mutual encouragement, while evil is exacerbated by the same. Hence, Qur'an is keen that the believer be characterized by mutual counseling for goodness "then that he become of those who believe and counsel each other to be steadfast, and counsel each other to be merciful."<sup>17</sup> Al-Baghawī (1044-1122)<sup>18</sup> says: "And they advised each other to be patient, in accordance with the obligations and commands of Allah, and they advised each other to be kind, with the mercy of people."

In Surat Al-Asr Allah mentioned that loss will befall all of humanity, except for those who possess the following characteristics: "Except for those who believe and do righteous deeds and advise each other to truth and to patience."<sup>19</sup> This underscores the importance of mutual counseling in sustaining goodness. Because mutual counseling is the value that guarantees the "sustainability" in doing good, acquaintance helps identify the right path, cooperation facilitates the implementation of goodness, and mutual counseling ensures the continuity of virtuous deeds. Each of the three principles serve a purpose and a goal, collectively contributing to a positive societal landscape in various domains, including politics.

If cooperation is achieved among human societies in general, what is expected after that is for the partners to cooperate and counsel to continue this cooperation. Cooperation may start and then collapse at the first turn of disagreement or for any other reason. Thus, it is important that there be counseling among nations to overcome all obstacles that hinder cooperation whenever they arise.

The notion of counseling is, therefore, a crucial one, because it is the value that guarantees continuity of goodness. The challenge with doing good is not its initiation but its sustainability. Today, countries may sign thousands of agreements with other countries, but these agreements hardly find any activation on the ground. If the goal is to make goodness a sustainable human trait, we cannot rely solely on "acquaintance" that will make us aware of aspects of goodness, or on "cooperation" which facilitates its implementation. Rather, we must prioritize "counseling" to sustain goodness in our lives. The sustainability of goodness entails embedding it as a cultural trait in societies. This is what Allah wants to be embodied in the human realm in the state of peace, i.e., if

<sup>16</sup>al-Dhāriyāt 51: 52-53.

<sup>17</sup>al-Balad 90:17.

<sup>18</sup>Al-Ḥusayn ibn Mas'ūd Al-Baghawī, *Tafsīr Al-Baghawī* (Riyad: Dār Ṭaybah lil-Nashr wa-Al-Tawzī', 1996), 8/433.

<sup>19</sup>Al-Asr 103: 03.

the international scene is devoid of justifications for conflict/warfare, which we will be discussed when exploring the other side of the Islamic paradigm in international relations, which is the warfare framework.

In Islam, the peaceful framework of international relations starts with the notion of acquaintance. It encourages countries and peoples to familiarize themselves with one another and not isolate themselves because human progress is dependent on acculturation and learning about the experiences of others. However, Islam does not stop at mere acquaintance, but it seeks to embody this acquaintance in cooperation based on principles and common interests among nations and then urges counseling to sustain this cooperation and ensure its continuity and stability.



Figure 1

### 3. The Islamic Framework of International Relations in Case of Conflict

The Islamic framework of international relations in times of peace has been elucidated above, it is imperative to address how Islam responds when the international landscape becomes fraught with conflict. For this, there is another Islamic framework to address this transformation, which is the defensive model. This model relies on three fundamental principles that form the philosophical framework of the fighting legislation in Islam, as these legislations would not be truly understood except in the light of these three pillars:

#### 3.1. Reprehension of Warfare

Reviewing the texts of Sharī'a and the biography of the Prophet Muhammad, reveals that the reprehension of war is one of the most prominent features that characterize the logic of Islamic legislation. This is also consistent with the nature of the divine creation of man, as Allah did not create man with claws or fangs; instead, humans are meant to resolve their problems with reason, unlike beasts, that Allah created without reason. Therefore, whoever recognizes force as a substitute for reason in resolving human disputes, is, in fact, dealing with life through the logic of beasts, and thus abandoning his humanity.

Starting with the goal of human diversity, which is acquaintance as stated in the Qur'ān. Is it possible for Allah to make acquaintance a goal for the diversity of human socialization and then make fighting the preferred mechanism? Whoever marks acquaintance as a higher goal for human diversity will undoubtedly regard fighting with reprehension as it is the opposite of the goal He wants. Wars result in fighting, destruction of societies, and rooting hatred between the victorious and the defeated. What acquaintance is expected to arise from such relation?

Moving on to the vocabulary used in the scriptures, it's widely acknowledged that naming has a deep psychological effect. It is not hidden from the reciters of the Qur'ānic text that the Qur'ān attaches great importance to vocabulary. Upon examining the contexts of fighting in the Qur'ān, it is evident that the Qur'ān never used the word "*fath*" [victorious opening] in any incident where fighting took place. Muslims fought dozens of battles and expeditions, yet the Qur'ān did not describe any of them as a *fath*. The description of *fath* was limited to political incidents in which no fighting took place, such as the *fath* of Mecca and the Treaty of Hudaibiyah. The latter was clearly described as *fath* [Indeed, We have given you, [O Muhammad], a clear conquest].<sup>20</sup> The companion Al-Barā' said: "You count the true victory (*fath*) the conquest of Mecca, and it was truly a victory, but we -the

<sup>20</sup>Fath 48:01

companions- count the victory (*fath*) the pledge of *Riḍwān* on the day of Al-Ḥudaybiyyah.<sup>21</sup> In addition, the entry of Muslims to Mecca was described as victory (*fath*) {When Allah's victory and *fath* come...}. It is well known that neither in Ḥudaybiyah nor in the conquest of Mecca there was a fight, yet we find the Qur'ān glorifying the importance of what happened and calling it these words that have great connotations.

So, the Qur'ān did not use the word "*fath*" (victory) for any military solution, but reserves it for victories that occurred by peaceful means or to indicate victory in general, as Allah said: "Those who wait [and watch] you. Then if you gain a victory from Allah, they say, "Were we not with you?" But if the disbelievers have a success, they say [to them], "Did we not gain the advantage over you, but we protected you from the believers?." <sup>22</sup> This verse does not refer to military victory specifically, but rather to the idea of victory in general. This is similar to the verse: "But perhaps Allah will bring conquest or a decision from Him,"<sup>23</sup> although some commentators -for example Al-Suddī (-745)- have argued that what is meant by the conquest here is the conquest of Mecca, and this confirms that military treatments were not the preferred option according to the logic of Islam.

Moving from the denotations of vocabulary to the preferred option in the Islamic perspective, it becomes evident that peace is the favored choice. Reviewing the texts of Sharī'a shows that whenever there are two options: peace and war, the Qur'ān chooses peace. Refer, for example, to Al-'Anfāl, which was revealed after the Battle of Badr. Allah mentioned in it that if there is an enemy whose betrayal we fear, then we must prepare for them the strength to terrorize them, so that they do not invade us. However, if they choose to have peace, it is mandatory on Muslims to accept peace. "And if they incline to peace, then incline to it [also] and rely upon Allah. Indeed, it is He who is the Hearing, the Knowing."<sup>24</sup> Here Islam chooses peace even after Muslims possess sufficient power to intimidate and deter the opponent.

Can Islam guide Muslims to the means of deterrence that prevent war if it prefers the option of war? Whoever prefers the option of war, will not slacken from it, especially with the availability of its indications "fearing treachery from a people."<sup>25</sup> In fact, those who prefer war don't even need indications to start it. But the Qur'ān is opposite to this, as it directs us to deterrence which only those who want peace can resort to. That is why Allah has commanded us to incline to peace in the event that the peaceful intentions of the other party become clear to us "and if they incline to peace, then incline to it."<sup>26</sup>

Likewise, in Al-Tawbah - which was one of the last revelations - Allah commanded the Muslims that if they made a covenant with a people, then they must abide by their covenant as long as the others are committed "So if they are upright to you, then act upright to them."<sup>27</sup> The Qur'ān linked the uprightness of Muslims to the uprightness of the other side. Could fighting be preferable to Allah while He demands righteousness of us as long as others are upright? Whoever prefers the option of fighting does not stop except due to inability, but with the ability to choose peace, this is evidence of the deep unwillingness to fight in the first place. Therefore, if the option of fighting was desirable from the Islamic perspective, Allah would command the Muslims to fulfill their covenant exclusively

<sup>21</sup>Muḥammad ibn Ismā'īl Al-Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ Al-Bukhārī* (Damascus: Dār Ibn Kathīr, 1993), 7/144; Abū Al-Ḥusayn Muslim ibn Al-Ḥajjāj Muslim, *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim* (Cairo: Sharikat Maktabat wa-Maṭba'at Muṣṭafā Al-Bābī Al-Ḥalabī, 1954), 4/3919.

<sup>22</sup>al-Nisā' 4:141.

<sup>23</sup>al-Mā'idah 5:52.

<sup>24</sup>al-Anfāl 8:61.

<sup>25</sup>al-Anfāl 8:58.

<sup>26</sup>al-Anfāl 8:61.

<sup>27</sup>al-Tawbah 9:7.



when they were weak. Rather, He made their commitment to it conditional on the commitment of the other party.

Another example is in *Al-Mumtahinah*, in which Allah says: "It may be that Allah will grant friendship between you and those whom ye (now) hold as enemies."<sup>28</sup> Allah arouses in the believers the wish to turn their relationship with the polytheists of Quraish from a struggle to one of affection and friendship, so how can He be anxious for conflict after that?

So, whenever the Qur'ān finds an opportunity to remove the choice of war, it inclines to it, as the previous texts and others have proven, such as the verses: "Therefore if they withdraw from you but fight you not, and (instead) send you (Guarantees of) peace, then Allah Hath opened no way for you (to war against them)"<sup>29</sup> and, "Fight them until there is no [more] fitnah and [until] worship is [acknowledged to be] for Allah. But if they cease, then there is to be no aggression except against the oppressors."<sup>30</sup> Had Islam tended to prefer wars in general, it would not have occupied itself and Muslims with the enormous restrictions that it imposed in the case of wars. We can mark some restrictions before the war act, such as "If you are afraid of the treachery of some of your allies, you may disregard your treaty with them,"<sup>31</sup> restrictions during the war, such as "O ye who believe! When ye go abroad in the cause of Allah, investigate carefully,"<sup>32</sup> and restrictions after the war is over, such as the guidance regarding the captives: "And they give food in spite of love for it to the needy, the orphan, and the captive."<sup>33</sup> It is clear that a religion that makes fighting a preferred end and end would not seek to charge its followers with such restrictions, which are real burdens in wartime.

Then let's move from the realm of theory to the realm of practice. Can anyone claim that the Prophet Muhammad chose war when he could have chosen peace? Whenever the Prophet Muhammad was given the choice between war and peace, he would always choose peace. In the conquest of Mecca, for example, the balance of power was undoubtedly in favor of Muslims. Since the Treaty of Ḥudaybiyah, Muslims have constituted the strongest entity in the Hijaz, yet they did not use these forces for brutality and bloodshed. When the Prophet arrived in Mecca, Quraysh refrained from handing over Mecca, but the Prophet did not initiate a fight. Rather, he reached a peaceful solution in which Muslims entered Mecca, then even when the Prophet took control of Mecca and all its leaders submitted to him, he did not kill anyone, but said to them: "Go, you are the set-free." Likewise, in the Treaty of Ḥudaybiyyah, the Muslims had sufficient strength to defeat the polytheists of Quraish, yet the Prophet Muhammad inclined towards peace despite the unfair provisions contained in the Treaty of Ḥudaybiyah. In addition, whenever someone sought refuge with the Prophet Muhammad, he wouldn't refuse that. For example, when 'Umm Hānī' (571-661) came to him and asked him to accept the refuge of two men from Banī Makhzūm, he fulfilled her request, and said "We have given protection and security to those to whom you have given that."<sup>34</sup>

This happened in the conquest of Mecca. Another example is 'Umair bin Wahb (-641) who came to secure Safwān bin 'Umayyah (-661), and the Messenger Muhammad said to him: "He is secured."<sup>35</sup> 'Umm Ḥakīm bint Al-Hārith bin Hishām gave protection to 'Ikrimah bin 'Abī Jahl (598-

<sup>28</sup>al-An'ām 6:7.

<sup>29</sup>al-Nisā' 4:9.

<sup>30</sup>al-Baqarah 2:193.

<sup>31</sup>al-Anfāl 8:58.

<sup>32</sup>al-Nisā' 4:94.

<sup>33</sup>al-Insān 76:8.

<sup>34</sup>Abū Bakr ibn Abī Shaybah, *Muṣannaḡ Ibn Abī Shaybah* (Riyadh: Dār Kunūz Ishbīliyah, 2015), 18/449.

<sup>35</sup>'Abd Al-Malik Ibn Hishām, *Sīrat Ibn Hishām* (Egypt: Sharikat Maktabat wa-Maṭba'at Muṣṭafā Al-Bābī Al-Ḥalabī, 1375AH), 2/417.

636), and the Messenger agreed to that.<sup>36</sup> All of the above proves that the option of peace is the preferred option in the perspective of Islam, and that the option of fighting is not the option required to fulfill rights except when other means are not possible. Otherwise, fighting would be the norm in human relations.

### 3.2. Necessity of Repelling [Tadāfu’]

It was mentioned in the previous section that fighting is disliked in Islam. Had Islam stopped at this point, it would have stopped at the same point as did Christianity, for Christianity robs man of the right to fight back,<sup>37</sup> as stated in Christ saying: [You have heard that it was said: An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth. As for me, I say to you, do not resist those who offend you. He who slaps you on your right cheek, turn to him the other.]<sup>38</sup>

Islam, on the other hand, has the distinction of being a realistic, rather an idealistic, religion. If it legislates what ought to be, it does not forget what is actually taking place in reality. Hence, Islam's reprehension of fighting was not reflected negatively on the activism of Muslims in the public sphere. Rather Islam obliged Muslims to be part of an equation that the Qur’ān called the "*tadāfu*’" equation.

The idea of repelling, as dealt with by the Qur’ān, lies in the fact that man often tends to expand the circle of his interests, even if it comes at the expense and robbery of the rights of others. The Qur’ānic vision sees that the solution to repel and eliminate this transgression lies in facing brute force with just force after exhausting peaceful means in confronting it. This view is consistent with the linguistic definition of *tadāfu*,’ as Ibn Manẓūr (1232-1311)<sup>39</sup> says: “*tadāfu*’ means removal by force”. This is the only way to stop a person’s transgression over his fellow human beings. Had man been left with absolute power without any resistance, he would definitely transgress.

Hence, Allah tells that the *Sunnah* of repelling is a social necessity for the stability of human society, through which the desires of aggression are curbed with back aggression. Everyone who is transgressed against has the right to repel and fight back. If he doesn’t, then he is a sinner according to Shari’a; because his silence about this injustice and transgression contributes to expanding the scope of the tyranny of the transgressor, and leads to its extension to include new areas that rob a person from the freedom to choose his religion. That’s why Allah warned in his book that leaving the transgressors would not lead to tolerance and prosperity, but would lead to the elimination of people’s religious freedoms. "And had Allah not repelled the people by one another, the earth would have been corrupted,"<sup>40</sup> and "For had it not been for Allah's repelling some men by means of others, cloisters and churches and oratories, and mosques, wherein the name of Allah is oft mentioned, would assuredly have been pulled down. Verily Allah surely supports those who support Him. Lo! Allah is Strong, Almighty."<sup>41</sup> This verse clearly shows that were it not for the people’s resistance to the aggressors and the oppressors, this would have led to the demise of religions, and that is why Allah

<sup>36</sup>Ibid., Vol. 2, 417.

<sup>37</sup>Judaism contrasts with Christianity. If Christianity demands social inactivity, Judaism provokes activism in the individual in his society. The Torah says: “Do not remain silent about making justice to the poor in their claim” Exodus (23/6). Also: “Do not be unjust in judgment, do not go along with the poor, and do not favor the noble, but judge all with justice” Leviticus 19/15. These texts are political as they impose on Jews to be actively participating in sustaining justice in society. In this respect, Judaism intersects with Islam in the idea of activism. Islam is alien in this.

<sup>38</sup>*Gospel of Matthew* 10:38.

<sup>39</sup>Muḥammad ibn Mukarram Ibn Manẓūr, *Lisān Al-‘Arab* (Beirut: Dār Ṣādir, 1994), 8/87.

<sup>40</sup>al-Baqarah 2:251.

<sup>41</sup>al-Ḥajj 22:40.

legislated fighting for people to ward off these transgressions away from themselves, including what the verse mentioned, i.e., expelling people from their homes unjustly.

Likewise, Allah says: "And those who disbelieve are allies of one another. If you do not do it, there will be persecution on earth and corruption."<sup>42</sup> This verse expresses the idea of repelling as well, as it commands Muslims to support one another to deter the disbelievers just as the disbelievers support each other. Ibn Jarīr Al-Ṭabarī (839-923)<sup>43</sup> says, "Unless they do what they were order to, the end is that there will be persecution on earth and great corruption. This happens if they leave '*tadāfu*' against the transgressors".

In fact, '*tadāfu*' is the explanatory concept of all force legislation in Islam, whether it is in international relations or even in internal affairs such as penalties. The purpose behind all these legislations is to deter the oppressors and transgressors so that their injustice and transgression are not magnified. In order to understand all the Islamic legislation related to the use of force, one must seek to understand it through the gateway to the concept of '*tadāfu*', as it is the explanatory guide to it.

This is what Abū Ḥāmid Al-Ghazālī (1058-1111)<sup>44</sup> realized, as he mentioned that when Islam orders a Muslim to fight to protect his money or honor, even though they are lesser than the value of the soul, the purpose of that is not only to recover the money. Rather the purpose is to ward off and repel sins".

This idea clearly explains to us the equation of '*tadāfu*,' for Allah wants clearly to prevent injustice among people. Perhaps the effect of injustice is small in itself but leaving this injustice to pass without resistance will lead to an increase of injustice in society. If a person commits injustice without resistance, he would not stop due to the gains he achieves from injustice. Therefore, Islam wants to resolve the matter of oppression radically, and this explains to us why Islam allows the matter to reach the level of fighting for seemingly minor issue. No matter how much the robbed money is, it is considered in a lesser status compared to the value of protecting the soul of the human being, yet Islam commands Muslims to defend their money even if it costs them their souls, not in order to preserve the money itself, but to prevent the very idea of injustice from expanding.

This is also the rationale behind the Sharī'a penalties (*ḥudūd*), as they are not abolished even if the oppressors are forgiven, as the right of Allah remains. If a thief steals, he must be punished even if the owner of the property pardons him, because the purpose of the punishment is not only to sympathize with the victim, but to deter injustice from its origin. Therefore, the Ḥanafī jurist Al-Zayla'ī (-1360)<sup>45</sup> says: "The purpose of establishing the *ḥudūd* as a right of Allah is to free the world from corruption and to exhort people from committing its cause in the future." Because this is the purpose of the *ḥudūd*, they "are not abolished by the forgiveness of the servants."<sup>46</sup>

Revising the concept of '*tadāfu*' in the Qur'ān, it is evident that it was mentioned in two contexts, both of which were preceded by attacks that Islam chose to deter by force:

<sup>42</sup>al-Anfāl 8:73.

<sup>43</sup>Muḥammad ibn Jarīr Al-Ṭabarī, *Tafsīr Al-Ṭabarī* (Makkah Al-Mukarramah: Dār Al-Tarbiyah wa-Al-Turāth), 14/87.

<sup>44</sup>Abū Ḥāmid Al-Ghazālī, *Iḥyā' 'ulūm Al-Dīn [Revival of the Religious Sciences]* (Beirut: Dār Al-Ma'rifah), 2/324.

<sup>45</sup>Uthmān ibn 'Alī Al-Zayla'ī, *Tabyīn Al-Haqā'iq [Clarification of the Truths]* (Cairo: Būlāq, 1895), 3/207.

<sup>46</sup>Ibid., 3/171.

1. In Al-Baqarah<sup>47</sup>: "And when they went forth to [face] Goliath and his soldiers, they said, "Our Lord, pour upon us patience and plant firmly our feet and give us victory over the disbelieving people. So, they defeated them by permission of Allah, and David killed Goliath, and Allah gave him the kingship and prophethood and taught him from that which He willed. And if it were not for Allah checking [some] people by means of others, the earth would have been corrupted, but Allah is full of bounty to the worlds".
2. Allah tells us in these verses the story of a battle that took place between the prophet Dāwūd (David) and Goliath who was an unjust aggressor, and reminds us that the Prophet David defeated Goliath, but this victory was not the result of luck or wishes, but rather the result of working according to the defense (*tadāfu* ' ) equation that was embodied in this battle in which David confronted Goliath and his soldiers.
3. In Al-Hajj,<sup>48</sup> "Permission [to fight] has been given to those who are being fought, because they were wronged. And indeed, Allah is competent to give them victory. [They are] those who have been evicted from their homes without right - only because they say, "Our Lord is Allah." And were it not that Allah checks the people, some by means of others, there would have been demolished monasteries, churches, synagogues, and mosques in which the name of Allah is much mentioned. And Allah will surely support those who support Him. Indeed, Allah is Powerful and Exalted in Might. [And they are] those who, if We give them authority in the land, establish prayer and give *zakāh* and enjoin what is right and forbid what is wrong. And to Allah belongs the outcome of [all] matters."

In this verse, defense (*tadāfu* ' ) is also mentioned after the attacks against the oppressed believers "as that they were wronged", and it is mentioned that the fighting was only legitimate so that the oppressed would repeal the wrongdoers and stop them. Were it not for this defense (*tadāfu* ' ), "there would have been demolished monasteries, churches, synagogues, and mosques."

So, whenever the concept of *tadafu* ' is mentioned in the Qur'ān, it refers to a necessary treatment that is necessitated by the attacks of the other parties. This means that the goal of Islam behind the legislation of fighting is to ward off injustice itself. The idea of temptation and corruption is manifested in its clearest form, as Islam legislates fighting to preserve money. So, how can the fight not be prescribed to preserve the freedom of man in his religion, which is much greater? Therefore, the Qur'ān mentioned that fighting is a really big matter, but depriving people of their freedoms and forcing them to change their religion is more heinous and sinful than fighting itself "Tumult and oppression are worse than slaughter."<sup>49</sup>

### 3.3 Priority of al-Ihsān (Benevolence)

As previously explained, Islam does not see fighting as a desirable or preferable mechanism, but rather as a reprehensive and a forced choice. However, Islam's reprehension of fighting does not mean that it requires Muslims to stand still in the face of the aggression of others. Rather they must enact the "repelling" equation that seeks to commit the lesser evil in order to ward off the greater evil. So, what happens after defending and repelling? If we suppose that the Muslims won after entering into the repelling equation and the fighting it entails, then what is the rule that governs their behavior after victory? Do others become lawless prey for Muslims?

Here emerges another distinction of Islam, which is that it does not manage the scene of victory with revenge and vengeance, not even with equal justice, but rather with the rationale of benevolence. The best proof of this is the attitude towards the captives, for Allah says: "And they give food in spite

<sup>47</sup>Al-Baqarah 2:250-251.

<sup>48</sup>Al-Hajj 22:39-41.

<sup>49</sup>al-Baqarah 2:217.

of love for it to the needy, the orphan, and the captive."<sup>50</sup> This verse states an acknowledgment and praise of the Islamic approach to dealing with the captives, telling us that one of the characteristics of the believers is that they feed the captive food in spite of their need and love for it. Nevertheless, a Muslim is required to practice altruism and be benevolent to the captive. Al-Zamakhsharī (1075-1143)<sup>51</sup> says: "The pronominal reference in the verse refers to the desire and need for food."

In this case, the concept of right (Huq) is not the name of the game since the right is for a person to take his share of his food. Rather, the concept here is beyond what is right or just to what is better than it, which is benevolence (*al-Ihsān*) and (*al-Īthār*). This verse reinforces the rationale of benevolence and altruism of the Muslim in his dealings with the captives as a captive is paired with the orphan and the needy, making them in one status. This is what makes the captive entailed to the common characteristic of the orphan and the needy, which is that they are the subject of mercy, kindness, and altruism, and that is because they all share the state of weakness and humiliation.

This Qur'ānic legislation is also embodied in the *Sunnah* of the Prophet Muhammad when he said: "Release the sufferer – that is, the captive, feed the hungry, and visit the sick."<sup>52</sup>

Therefore, Islam does not require the Muslims to stand on the shore of justice only, but also demands to advance to the depth of benevolence, for it is fair to punish those who erred in against you, but it is goodness to forgive and pardon him "And if you punish [an enemy, O believers], punish with an equivalent of that with which you were harmed. But if you are patient - it is better for those who are patient."<sup>53</sup> We note that the Qur'ān mentions patience here in the case of punishment, but it did not mention that in the case of repelling the transgression. "So whoever has assaulted you, then assault him in the same way that he has assaulted you."<sup>54</sup> When punishing, he reminded them of patience and forgiveness; because the punishment is related to revenge, that is, after the end of the harm and the beginning of being able to punish the opponents.

The rationale of benevolence is a universal logic in human relations; as it is embodied in all areas of life, and this is what we find in the Qur'ān: "Repel, by [means of] what is best, [their] evil. We are most knowing of what they describe,"<sup>55</sup> and "And not equal are the good deed and the bad. Repel [evil] by that [deed] which is better; and thereupon the one whom between you and him is enmity [will become] as though he was a devoted friend."<sup>56</sup> These verses tell us how Islam presents the rationale of benevolence over the rationale of justice as an exemplary way to maintain social coherence, as benevolence is a general and collective behavior.

#### 4. Conclusion

In conclusion, this research emphasizes several key findings: Sharī'a obligates Muslim societies to engage with and understand other cultures by recognizing their merits and demerits. Utilizing the benefits from other cultures while learning from their shortcomings is crucial for societal progress. Thus, the value of 'acquaintance' becomes a guarantee for the continuous progress of human societies.

- Muslim cooperation with other countries and civilizations must be based on a clear conceptual foundation. Muslims have mature knowledge of what others have so that they can choose well

<sup>50</sup>al-Insān 76:8.

<sup>51</sup>Abū al-Qāsim Al-Zamakhsharī, *Al-Kashshāf 'an Haqā'iq Ghawāmiq Al-Tanzīl [The Explorer of Mystery of the Holy Quran]* (Beirut: Dār al-Kitāb al-'Arabī, 1987), 4/668.

<sup>52</sup>Al-Bukharī, *Ṣaḥīḥ Al-Bukhārī*, 4/1109.

<sup>53</sup>al-Naḥl 16:126.

<sup>54</sup>al-Baqarah 2:194.

<sup>55</sup>al-Mu'minūn 23:96.

<sup>56</sup>Fuṣṣilat 41:34.

what they collaborate on and what they avoid, then recommend this cooperation to ensure its continuity and stability.

- The peaceful model of international relations in Islam begins with the idea of acquaintance. It desires that nations and peoples get to know each other and not isolate one another, as human progress is contingent upon understanding and learning from each other's experiences. Additionally, Islam does not suffice with achieving mere acquaintance but seeks to embody this acquaintance in cooperation on shared principles and interests between peoples.
- Islam is distinguished by being a realistic religion, not an ideal one, although it legislates what should be, it does not forget what currently exists. Hence, Islam's aversion to warfare has not negatively impacted the effectiveness of Muslims in the public domain. On the contrary, it obliged them to enter into an equation called the '*tadāfu*' equation, a concept addressed by the Qur'ān. The idea behind '*tadāfu*,' as the Qur'ān discusses it, lies in the fact that humans often tend to expand the scope of their interests, even if it comes at the expense of the rights of others, seizing and usurping them. The Qur'ānic perspective sees that the solution to preventing and eliminating such encroachments lies in responding to oppressive force with brute force after exhausting peaceful means in confronting it. This is the only way to halt human transgression against his fellow human. If absolute power is left unchecked without resistance, it will inevitably lead to transgression.
- Islam prioritizes benevolence over justice, encouraging forgiveness and generosity even in situations of victory. It promotes kindness and mercy towards others, even those who may have wronged.

### Conflict of Interest

The authors of the manuscript have no financial or non-financial conflict of interest in the subject matter or materials discussed in this manuscript.

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The data associated with this study will be provided by the corresponding author upon request.

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