

## FUNDAMENTALS OF ISLAM AND PEACE IN THE CONTEXT OF HADITH

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### ***Abstract***

*This paper, constituting Part II of the inquiry into the fundamentals of Islam and peace, shifts the analytical lens from the Quranic text to the Sunnah - the recorded sayings, actions, and sanctions of the Prophet Muhammad (SAWA). Building upon the foundation established in Part I, which detailed the peace-oriented ethical framework of the Quran, this study examines how the Prophetic tradition (Hadith) operationalizes and reinforces these principles. Through a close reading of narrations from canonical sources such as Sahih al-Bukhari, the paper demonstrates that the Prophet's conduct exemplified peacemaking, tolerance, compassion for all humanity, and the strict rejection of harm and aggression. It analyses key historical episodes, such as the Treaty of Hudaibiya, as paradigmatic cases of prioritizing peace over political or military advantage. Furthermore, the paper addresses the critical question of violence by contextualizing the early Islamic military engagements (Ghazwat and Sariyah), arguing they were exclusively defensive or humanitarian in nature, not expeditions for forced conversion or territorial expansion. The study concludes that the contemporary association of Islam with violence stems from a profound misrepresentation and politicisation of both scripture and history. This misrepresentation is perpetuated by extremist factions who hijack religious narrative and by external discourses of Islamophobia, obscuring the authentic, peace-centric model established by the Prophet Muhammad (SAWA).*

### ***Introduction***

The preceding chapter, Part I: Fundamentals of Islam and Peace considering the Holy Quran, established the theological bedrock from which Islamic ethics springs. It elucidated how the Quranic revelation, through its foundational verses, institutes a comprehensive system predicated on peace (Salaam), justice ('Adl), the absolute prohibition of compulsion in religion (La Ikraha fid Deen), and the sanctity of human life. This textual analysis provided a necessary corrective to the reductive and politicised narratives that falsely equate Islam with inherent militancy.

However, the Islamic tradition is built upon a dyad of primary sources: the Quran as the divine word, and the Sunnah of the Prophet Muhammad (SAWA) as its living interpretation and application. As the Quran itself attests, the Prophet "does not

speak from his own desire. It is but a revelation revealed”<sup>1</sup>. Therefore, his every word and deed constitute an authoritative exegesis of the Quranic message. To understand Islam fully, one must examine not only the principles revealed in the Book but also their practical embodiment in the life of the one who received it.

This paper, serving as Part II of the inquiry, undertakes this essential task. It moves from the theoretical framework of the Quran to the practical paradigm of the Sunnah, exploring the vast corpus of Hadith literature to demonstrate how the Prophet (SAWA) translated the Quranic mandate for peace into a tangible social reality. The analysis will highlight narrations that enjoin peace-making, even through diplomatic compromise as evidenced in the Treaty of Hudaibiya<sup>2,3</sup>; advocate for universal compassion and kindness irrespective of faith<sup>4</sup>; and categorically forbid oppression, harm, and extremism in religious practice<sup>5</sup>.

A significant portion of this study is necessarily devoted to addressing the most persistent critique levied against Islam: its alleged sanctioning of offensive violence. This requires a meticulous, contextual examination of the military campaigns (Ghazwat) during the Prophet’s time. Contrary to the Islamophobic trope of “spreading faith by the sword,” this analysis, drawing on historical sources, will demonstrate that these engagements were sui generis responses to existential threats, persecution, betrayal of treaties, and the defence of the oppressed<sup>6</sup>. They were governed by strict ethical constraints and an overarching preference for peace, as the Hudaibiya treaty incontrovertibly proves.

Finally, this paper argues that the chasm between this Prophetic model of peace and the violence witnessed in the modern era - often perpetrated in Islam’s name - is not a theological contradiction but a historical and political rupture. The conclusion will posit that violence attributed to Islam is the product of a double distortion: the internal hijacking of religious discourse by political actors and extremist groups, and the external perpetuation of these distortions through

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<sup>1</sup> Holy Quran, Surah An-Najm, Verse No. 3, 4, 5

<sup>2</sup> Al Bukhari, Imam Abi Abdullah Muhammad ibn Ismail (194-256 A.H) , (810-870 A.D) , Translated by: Khan, Muhammad Muhsin (2013), *The Translation of the Meanings of Sahih Al Bukhari: Arabic-English*, 3rd Edition, Darussalam Publishers and Distributers, Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, Vol. 3, pg. 527-536, hadith No. 2731 & 2732

<sup>3</sup> Al Bukhari, Imam Abi Abdullah Muhammad ibn Ismail (194-256 A.H) , (810-870 A.D) , Translated by: Khan, Muhammad Muhsin (2013), *The Translation of the Meanings of Sahih Al Bukhari: Arabic-English*, 3rd Edition, Darussalam Publishers and Distributers, Riyadh, Saudi Arabia hadith No. 2698

<sup>4</sup> Al Bukhari, Imam Abi Abdullah Muhammad ibn Ismail (194-256 A.H) , (810-870 A.D) , Translated by: Khan, Muhammad Muhsin (2013), *The Translation of the Meanings of Sahih Al Bukhari: Arabic-English*, 3rd Edition, Darussalam Publishers and Distributers, Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, Vol. 1, Pg. 60

<sup>5</sup> Al Bukhari, Imam Abi Abdullah Muhammad ibn Ismail (194-256 A.H) , (810-870 A.D) , Translated by: Khan, Muhammad Muhsin (2013), *The Translation of the Meanings of Sahih Al Bukhari: Arabic-English*, 3rd Edition, Darussalam Publishers and Distributers, Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, Vol. 1, Pg. 59

<sup>6</sup> Ibn Sa’d, Muhammad (1985), *at-Tabaqatu’l-Kubra*, Beirut, Vol. II; Samhudi, Nuruddin Ali b. Ahmad, *Wafa Ul-Wafa*, Beirut, ed., I, pg. 281.

See also Ibnu’l-Athir, Abu’l-Hasan Ali b. Muhammad (1965), *al-Kamil fi’t-Tarikh*, Beirut, Vol. II, pg. 113&116; Bukhari, Manaqib, 251, Maghazi, 2.



of Allah.”<sup>14</sup> And the Ordinance of Allah is nothing but the message of peace for humanity. And for advancing this message of peace, Prophet (SAWA) proposed the Hudaibiya Treaty to defuse the environment of war established by pagans of Banu Quraish. There were three conditions of the treaty: 1) The Prophet (SAWA) would be bound to return to Banu Quraish any person from them coming towards Muslims, even those embracing Islam. 2) Banu Quraish would not be bound to return any of the Muslims going to them and 3) The Prophet (SAWA) and His companions would visit Makkah the following year and would stay there for three days while keeping “their weapons in cases”.<sup>15</sup> This treaty was signed at a time when the morale of the Muslims was very high because of their success in defending themselves against Banu Quraish in the wars waged by them<sup>16</sup> while the Banu Quraish were angry and shattered by their consecutive defeats. Holy Prophet (SAWA) was in a position to put His favourable conditions in the Treaty. But for the sake of Peace and to avoid war, He did whatever was requested by the enemy.<sup>17</sup> He even removed ‘Allah’s messenger,’ the title of His name, from the agreement at the demand of the pagans, and succeeded in making peace with them. Although some of the Companions were not in favour of this treaty and expressed their strong disagreement, Allah’s Apostle (SAWA) wanted peace and not war.<sup>18</sup> All the Muslims are commanded strictly to avoid harming others. According to a hadith, “A Muslim is the one who avoids harming Muslims with his tongue and hands.”<sup>19</sup> This statement makes it very clear that the way Al Qaeda, ISIS and Taliban extremists are terrorising humankind, irrespective of their religion, is against the above-cited hadith, thus against Islam. Once a man asked the Prophet (SAWA), “Whose Islam is good” or “What (sort of) deeds in (or what qualities of) Islam are good?” The Prophet replied, “To feed (others), and to greet those whom you know and those whom you do not know.”<sup>20</sup> This hadith encourage us to help needy people without any discrimination, while fanatic fundamentalists have been criticising Abdul Sattar Edhi for his aid for

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<sup>14</sup> Al Bukhari, Imam Abi Abdullah Muhammad ibn Ismail (194-256 A.H) , (810-870 A.D) , Translated by: Khan, Muhammad Muhsin (2013), *The Translation of the Meanings of Sahih Al Bukhari: Arabic-English*, 3rd Edition, Darussalam Publishers and Distributers, Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, Vol. 3, pg. 527-536, hadith No. 2731 & 2732

<sup>15</sup> Al Bukhari, Imam Abi Abdullah Muhammad ibn Ismail (194-256 A.H) , (810-870 A.D) , Translated by: Khan, Muhammad Muhsin (2013), *The Translation of the Meanings of Sahih Al Bukhari: Arabic-English*, 3rd Edition, Darussalam Publishers and Distributers, Riyadh, Saudi Arabia hadith No. 2698

<sup>16</sup> See Armstrong, Karen (10 Sep 1993), *Muhammad: A Biography of the Prophet*, 1st Paperback edition, Harper Collins Publishes Inc., New York, pg. 164-210

<sup>17</sup> Armstrong, Karen (10 Sep 1993), *Muhammad: A Biography of the Prophet*, 1st Paperback edition, Harper Collins Publishes Inc., New York, pg. 211-250

<sup>18</sup> Armstrong, Karen (10 Sep 1993), *Muhammad: A Biography of the Prophet*, Harper Collins Publishes Inc., New York, pg. 221-222

<sup>19</sup> Al Bukhari, Imam Abi Abdullah Muhammad ibn Ismail (194-256 A.H) , (810-870 A.D) , Translated by: Khan, Muhammad Muhsin (2013), *The Translation of the Meanings of Sahih Al Bukhari: Arabic-English*, 3rd Edition, Darussalam Publishers and Distributers, Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, Vol. 1, Pg. 59

<sup>20</sup> Al Bukhari, Imam Abi Abdullah Muhammad ibn Ismail (194-256 A.H) , (810-870 A.D) , Translated by: Khan, Muhammad Muhsin (2013), *The Translation of the Meanings of Sahih Al Bukhari: Arabic-English*, 3rd Edition, Darussalam Publishers and Distributers, Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, Vol. 1, Pg. 60

humanity following the true Islamic school of thought with the fundamental idea that one need not know another's religion or caste or creed while helping. One of the four signs of a hypocrite is "Whenever he fights, he behaves in a very imprudent, evil and insulting manner."<sup>21</sup> And this hadith may be viewed in light of radicalised fundamentalists' intolerant and brutal behaviour towards other human beings on social media or live conversations and hate speeches, all of which are against Prophet (SAWA)'s guidance. "Abusing a Muslim is Fusuq (an evil doing) and killing him is Kufr (disbelief)."<sup>22</sup>

"Religion is very easy and whoever overburdens himself in his religion will not be able to continue in that way. So you should not be extremists, but try to be near to perfection and receive the good tidings that you will be rewarded..."<sup>23</sup> This hadith is to convey the message that Islam does not like people to suppress while, contrary to this hadith, twenty-first century fundamentalism, with its radicalism and extremism, is making religion difficult. "Make things easy for the people, and do not make things difficult for them and give them glad tidings and do not repel them."<sup>24</sup> Another hadith reinforces the same message of performance within the bounds of self-capacity, "Do (good) deeds which are within your capacity (without being overtaxed) as Allah does not get tired (of giving rewards) but (surely) you will get tired and Ad-Din (good, righteous deed act of worship) loved most by Allah is that which is done regularly."<sup>25</sup>

Another hadith says, "None of you will have faith till he likes for his (Muslim) brother what he likes for himself."<sup>26</sup> It means to be selfless and treat others as one wants to be treated. Noticeably, this hadith does not include only Muslims, instead, it covers all people; brothers to each other in human relations. The word 'Muslim' is added by the writer of Sahih Bukhari in bracket that indicates this word is not present there in the original hadith. This fact verifies my stance regarding this hadith, that it talks about all people irrespective of religion, caste, colour or creed.

A Muslim and a Jew quarrelled. The Muslim said, "By Him Who gave

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<sup>21</sup> Al Bukhari, Imam Abi Abdullah Muhammad ibn Ismail(194-256 A.H) , (810-870 A.D) , Translated by: Khan, Muhammad Muhsin (2013), *The Translation of the Meanings of Sahih Al Bukhari: Arabic-English*, 3rd Edition, Darussalam Publishers and Distributers, Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, Vol. 1, Pg. 72, hadith No.34, repeated in vol. 3, pg 369

<sup>22</sup> Al Bukhari, Imam Abi Abdullah Muhammad ibn Ismail(194-256 A.H) , (810-870 A.D) , Translated by: Khan, Muhammad Muhsin (2013), *The Translation of the Meanings of Sahih Al Bukhari: Arabic-English*, 3rd Edition, Darussalam Publishers and Distributers, Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, Vol. 1, Pg. 80, hadith No. 48

<sup>23</sup> Al Bukhari, Imam Abi Abdullah Muhammad ibn Ismail(194-256 A.H) , (810-870 A.D) , Translated by: Khan, Muhammad Muhsin (2013), *The Translation of the Meanings of Sahih Al Bukhari: Arabic-English*, 3rd Edition, Darussalam Publishers and Distributers, Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, Vol. 1, Pg. 74, hadith No. 39

<sup>24</sup> Al Bukhari, Imam Abi Abdullah Muhammad ibn Ismail(194-256 A.H) , (810-870 A.D) , Translated by: Khan, Muhammad Muhsin (2013), *The Translation of the Meanings of Sahih Al Bukhari: Arabic-English*, 3rd Edition, Darussalam Publishers and Distributers, Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, Vol. 1, Pg. 97, hadith No. 69

<sup>25</sup> Al Bukhari, Imam Abi Abdullah Muhammad ibn Ismail(194-256 A.H) , (810-870 A.D) , Translated by: Khan, Muhammad Muhsin (2013), *The Translation of the Meanings of Sahih Al Bukhari: Arabic-English*, 3rd Edition, Darussalam Publishers and Distributers, Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, Vol. 1, Pg. 76, hadithNo. 43

<sup>26</sup> Al Bukhari, Imam Abi Abdullah Muhammad ibn Ismail(194-256 A.H) , (810-870 A.D) , Translated by: Khan, Muhammad Muhsin (2013), *The Translation of the Meanings of Sahih Al Bukhari: Arabic-English*, 3rd Edition, Darussalam Publishers and Distributers, Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, Vol. 1, Pg. 60-61

Muhammad superiority over all the people!" The Jew said, "By Him Who gave Musa [Moses] superiority over all the people!" At that the Muslim raised his hand and slapped the Jew on the face. The Jew went to the Prophet and informed him of what had happened between him and the Muslim. The Prophet (SAWA) called the Muslim and asked him about it. The Muslim informed him of the event. The Prophet told him, "Do not give me superiority over Musa, for on the Day of Resurrection all the people will fall unconscious and I will be one of them, but I will be the first to regain consciousness, and will see Musa standing and holding the side of the Throne (of Allah). I will not know whether (Musa) has also fallen unconscious and got up before me, or Allah has exempted him from that stroke."<sup>27</sup>

One of the seven commands to be a better human is "to help the oppressed"<sup>28</sup> On another occasion, Allah's Apostle said, "Help your brother, whether he is an oppressor or he is an oppressed one. People asked, "O Allah's Messenger! It is all right to help him if he is oppressed, but how should we help him if he is an oppressor?" The Prophet said, "By preventing him from oppressing others."<sup>29</sup> The Prophet warned people, "Be afraid, from the curse of the oppressed as there is no screen between his invocation and Allah."<sup>30</sup> Because "Az-Zulm (oppression) will be a darkness on the Day of Resurrection."<sup>31</sup> It was even encouraged to be kind to animals, too. The people asked, "O Allah's Messenger! Is there a reward for us in serving the animals?" He replied: "Yes, there is a reward for serving any animate (living being)."<sup>32</sup>

However, taking revenge is allowed in Islam, not only for oneself but also on behalf of the oppressed ones. "The recompense for an evil is an evil like thereof, but whoever forgives and makes reconciliation, his reward is with Allah; verily, He likes not the Zalimün (oppressors). And indeed whosoever takes revenge after he has suffered wrong, for such there is no way (of blame) against them. The way (of blame) is only against those who oppress men and wrongly rebel in the earth without

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<sup>27</sup> Al Bukhari, Imam Abi Abdullah Muhammad ibn Ismail(194-256 A.H) , (810-870 A.D) , Translated by: Khan, Muhammad Muhsin (2013), *The Translation of the Meanings of Sahih Al Bukhari: Arabic-English*, 3rd Edition, Darussalam Publishers and Distributers, Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, Vol. 3, pg. 341-342, hadith No. 2411

<sup>28</sup> Al Bukhari, Imam Abi Abdullah Muhammad ibn Ismail(194-256 A.H) , (810-870 A.D) , Translated by: Khan, Muhammad Muhsin (2013), *The Translation of the Meanings of Sahih Al Bukhari: Arabic-English*, 3rd Edition, Darussalam Publishers and Distributers, Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, Vol. 3, pg. 362, hadith No. 2445

<sup>29</sup> Al Bukhari, Imam Abi Abdullah Muhammad ibn Ismail(194-256 A.H) , (810-870 A.D) , Translated by: Khan, Muhammad Muhsin (2013), *The Translation of the Meanings of Sahih Al Bukhari: Arabic-English*, 3rd Edition, Darussalam Publishers and Distributers, Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, Vol. 3, pg. 362, hadith No. 2444

<sup>30</sup> Al Bukhari, Imam Abi Abdullah Muhammad ibn Ismail(194-256 A.H) , (810-870 A.D) , Translated by: Khan, Muhammad Muhsin (2013), *The Translation of the Meanings of Sahih Al Bukhari: Arabic-English*, 3rd Edition, Darussalam Publishers and Distributers, Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, Vol. 3, pg. 364, hadith No. 2448

<sup>31</sup> Al Bukhari, Imam Abi Abdullah Muhammad ibn Ismail(194-256 A.H) , (810-870 A.D) , Translated by: Khan, Muhammad Muhsin (2013), *The Translation of the Meanings of Sahih Al Bukhari: Arabic-English*, 3rd Edition, Darussalam Publishers and Distributers, Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, Vol. 3, pg. 364, hadith No. 2447

<sup>32</sup> Al Bukhari, Imam Abi Abdullah Muhammad ibn Ismail(194-256 A.H) , (810-870 A.D) , Translated by: Khan, Muhammad Muhsin (2013), *The Translation of the Meanings of Sahih Al Bukhari: Arabic-English*, 3rd Edition, Darussalam Publishers and Distributers, Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, Vol. 3, pg. 373, hadith No. 2466

justification; for such there will be a painful torment. And verily, whosoever shows patience and forgives, that would truly be from the things recommended by Allah. And whomsoever Allah sends astray, for him there is no *Wali* (protector, helper, guardian) after Him. And you will see the *Zalimun* (oppressors) what they behold the torment. They will say: Is there any way of return (to the world)."<sup>33</sup>

### **Does Islam Preach Violence?**

Contrary to the above-mentioned evidence that provides excellent support to Islam as a religion of peace, there are people who accuse Islam of being a religion of violence by quoting selected verses from the Holy Quran and sayings of Holy Prophet Muhammad (PBUH). So, it is very important to have a deeper look into the contextual and comparative study of this concept. All of the religions - particularly, the religions of the Book - also have verses which seem to support violence, however, only in the context of eliminating oppression and for saving humanity. Perhaps that's part of the 'test' during the Last Days – measuring, by our actions, which verses of Holy Quran or Bible, or whatever, we chose to focus on. The laws of the previous scriptures that applied to earlier generations are repeated and emphasised for the Muslims in the Quran. Muslims are commanded to follow such laws. For example, all religious texts, including the Holy Quran, contain passages, seemingly contradictory because of the various interpretations and perceptions, with justifications for divine violence in certain contexts. The best way to understand Islam is through a holistic study of the Holy Quran with a focus on its fundamentals and not contradictions. The comprehension of the concept of divine violence - and how it functions - is very important. Walter Benjamin in his essay, *Critique of Violence*, rightly says, "Divine Violence, which is the sign and seal but never the means of sacred dispatch, may be called "sovereign" violence."<sup>34</sup> However, sometimes, people distort principles preserving violence, claiming the exercise of divine violence because the meaning of "the legitimate and illegitimate violence"<sup>35</sup> is not obvious. However, the answer to "the question 'May I Kill?'" meets its irreducible answer in the commandment 'Thou shalt not kill'<sup>36</sup>.<sup>37</sup> as God is preventing the killing;

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<sup>33</sup> Holy Quran, Surah Ash-Shuraa, Verse No. 40-44

<sup>34</sup> Benjamin, Walter edited by Marcus Bullock & Michael W Jennings (1996), *Walter Benjamin Selected Writings Volume 1 1913-1926: Critique of Violence (1921)*, pg. 252, The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts, London, England

<sup>35</sup> Benjamin, Walter edited by Marcus Bullock & Michael W Jennings (1996), *Walter Benjamin Selected Writings Volume 1 1913-1926: Critique of Violence (1921)*, pg. 238, The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts, London, England

<sup>36</sup> Bible, 20: 13, 6th out of 10 commandments of God

<sup>37</sup> Benjamin, Walter edited by Marcus Bullock & Michael W Jennings (1996), *Walter Benjamin Selected Writings Volume 1 1913-1926: Critique of Violence (1921)*, pg. 250, The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts, London, England

the “predatory violence”<sup>38</sup> advocating peace through inspirational awareness utilizing “[t]he educative power”<sup>39</sup>

Islam condemns the killing or even the persecution of people merely because they embrace a different religion. The Quran mandates absolute freedom of religion in society. It does not allow Muslims to fight except in self-defence and to enforce peace. It does not allow restrictions on those who disagree on religions matters. It urges the Muslims to treat such people kindly and equitably.

However, there are passages, as we discussed earlier, which allow violence in certain contexts and are misused by the political game changers, whether fundamentalists or neoliberals. For example, Allah commands in Surah Al Anfal, “*Wa qatiluhum hatta la takoona fitnatun ...*, (And fight them until there is no *fitnah*)”<sup>40</sup>. Here, ‘them’ and ‘*fitnah*’ are appropriated most often according to one’s targeted requirement. ‘Them’ is usually interpreted to refer to disbelievers who cause *fitnah*, ignoring the fact that the *fitnah* could be caused by some believers of Islam, too. The most important examples of *fitnah* deployed by some so-called believers (I prefer to call them so-called believers because the true believers always try to avoid *fitnah* by following holistic commands of the Quran) are the Battles of *Jamal* (Camel) (36AH / 656 AD), *Siffin* (37AH / 657AD), and *Karbala* (61AH / 680AD). So fighting is recommended against the ones who cause *fitnah* who could be either Muslims or non-Muslims. Secondly, the word *fitnah* is also translated as ‘disbeliever’ by some islamophobes to validate their point that Islam commands one to kill all disbelievers and by some fanatics to justify their terrorism as an Islamic command. *Fitnah* means a situation of chaos, instability, uncertainty, disorder, riots, terror; in short, absence of peace and stability is called *fitnah*. Now the context for this particular command by Allah is expressed in earlier verses in the same chapter which highlight the reason, “*Wa iz yamkuroo bika alladheena kafaru le yusbitooka au yaqtulooka au yakhrujooka*, (And [remember, O Muhammad], when those who disbelieved plotted against you to restrain you or kill you or evict you [from Makkah].)”<sup>41</sup> Then “*Wa hum yasuddoona anil Masjid Al Haram*, (And they obstruct [people] from al-Masjid al Haram)”<sup>42</sup>; Masjid al Haram refers to the place of worship. In response to these offensive actions, Prophet (SAWA) was commanded to fight with them. In the same chapter, verses 33 and 38 explain precisely to cease fighting and forgive in case they stop oppression and hostility. “*Wa maa kan Allahu Muazzibahum wa hum yastaghfiroon*, (Allah would not punish them while they seek forgiveness).”<sup>43</sup> And if

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<sup>38</sup> Benjamin, Walter edited by Marcus Bullock & Michael W Jennings (1996), *Walter Benjamin Selected Writings Volume 1 1913-1926: Critique of Violence (1921)*, pg. 240, The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts, London, England

<sup>39</sup> Benjamin, Walter edited by Marcus Bullock & Michael W Jennings (1996), *Walter Benjamin Selected Writings Volume 1 1913-1926: Critique of Violence (1921)*, pg. 250, The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts, London, England

<sup>40</sup> Holy Quran, Surah Al-Anfal, Verse No. 39

<sup>41</sup> Holy Quran, Surah Al-Anfal, Verse No. 30

<sup>42</sup> Holy Quran, Surah Al-Anfal, Verse No. 34

<sup>43</sup> Holy Quran, Surah Al-Anfal, Verse No. 33

they cease hostility, what has previously occurred will be forgiven to them.<sup>44</sup> There are a number of other examples like this which are exploited by extremists to radicalise fundamentalists or to polarise supremacist islamophobe neoliberals with one common interest, to hold power by gaining the support of manpower.

Since some terrorist groups have used the name of Islam to promote their political power-seeking agendas, this gave many non-Muslims an opportunity to label the Muslims as terrorists, sometimes deliberately, and sometimes it's because people don't, as a rule, think very critically – they are formatted in this way or that, as a function of what they see on the news, what they hear in the community, promoted as common sense. And they make no effort to see the more realistic, holistic picture. And of course, islamophobia, as I have said earlier, serves the interests of a certain political class, ignoring the fact that there are many terrorists who happen to be non-Muslims. This does not make these principles evil but rather brings to light the evil nature of the criminals, whether Muslim or not.

Terrorism is an act of violence committed by people belonging to all religions. Terrorists, who are born Muslims by chance, raise their religious beliefs to claim legitimacy for the violence and terrorism that they commit on thousands of men, women, and children in attempts to achieve special interests, whether political, social or religious. Those who do not comprehend Islam and those who have an interest in distorting the truth about Islam have been trying to make terrorism synonymous to Islam. A mistaken notion has been common in the western media. Several groups have used terrorism to implement their own agenda, issues or beliefs. None of them represents a true religion. Novjot Singh Sidhu, a famous Indian cricketer, Member of Parliament, social worker and a humanitarian, says: "*dehshat gardi ka koi mulk nahi hota. Shiddat pasandon ka koi mazhab nahi hota, na hé koi zaat hoti hey*"<sup>45</sup> Translation: Terrorism does not have any country. Extremists have neither religion, nor caste." Attacks on civilians around the world by such groups cannot be justified by any religion. It is strongly condemned in all religions, including Islam, as clarified by the word of God in the Quran, and the New Testament of the Bible, for example.

Some terrorist groups which massacre innocent people consider themselves as martyrs. Those who kill innocent people in the name of their religion or in the name of God and who consider themselves as martyrs should think twice. Their act is strongly condemned by God in the verses of the Quran. These people are disobeying God's commandments and the truth as revealed in the Quran. Instead they blindly follow the views of their corrupt leaders and self-serving scholars. The Quran is very clear on this issue; the believers must defend themselves but never aggress. It is true that Islam advocates the use of strength to secure peace, but never to aggress unless in self defence. God of the Muslims is the same as the God of the Jews and the Christians and all the other religions. God does not permit any group to kill innocent people belonging to any religion. The blame lies with the terrorists and not the religion they claim to follow. Not everyone who calls himself a Muslim is a genuine Muslim, as much as not everyone who thinks of himself as a Jew or a Christian is one. Islam should not be confused with what the so-called Muslims have done. Actually, by the definitions of the Quran, they are not Muslims in

<sup>44</sup> Holy Quran, Surah Al-Anfal, Verse No. 38

<sup>45</sup> Sidhu, Novjot Singh (16 Feb 2019), *Pulwama Hamla: 'Dehshat Gardi ka Koi MulK Nahi Hota'*, [BBC Urdu](#)

the true sense of the term. We should not let our emotions overcome logic and understanding.

Islam stands for peace, harmony and understanding. It does not preach hatred or condone acts of violence. Unfortunately the message of Islam has been distorted by the enemies of Islam, both from within and without.

### **The Causes of Sariyah / Ghazwat / Wars in Islam:**

It is argued that the Holy Prophet (SAWA) fought many wars which are called *Ghazwat* and the sole purpose of these wars was to enforce Islam and expand its influence, according to some anti-Islamic ideologies which have bred Islamophobia. For that reason, Islam is alleged to be spread through the sword or *Jihad bil Saif*. So it may be enlightening to analyse the causes of *Ghazwat* and *Sariyahs* carried out during the first 10 years (622 to 632 AD) after *Hijrah* (migration) from Makkah to Madina, in Benjamin's theoretical perspective regarding divine violence. Banu Quraish of Makkah were hostile to the Prophet (SAWA) from the very beginning because of His preachings regarding Islam, which was against their belief of polytheism, so they wanted to kill Him (SAWA). The Prophet (SAWA), along with His companions, migrated to Madina to escape their savagery. But Banu Quraish started preparations of war to fight against Muslims and Islam. Meanwhile, they started attacking the Muslims' trade caravans. So defensive action was needed to demonstrate the strength of Muslims to ensure their protection and avoid further attacks. The battle of Badr was fought for the purpose of preventing the Quraish's preparations for war.<sup>46</sup> The sariyyas of Saif al-Bahr and Rabigh, along with Abwa, Buwat, Hamraul Asad and small Badr were carried out to ensure the security of the weaker against the brutal dominance of the powerful all around the region. That was also to determine that the Muslims of the region were strong enough to protect themselves as well as the weaker ones who cannot defend themselves against oppression; the small tribes residing in the vicinity of Madina. The Battles of Badr, Uhud and Khandaq are the greatest defensive battles in terms of legitimacy and strategy that aimed to defend against aggression. Since permission is given by the Quran for battling in self defence,<sup>47</sup> with an emphasis that battles can only be fought based on legitimate reasons: in self defence, to help oppressed communities, against violation of peace treaties, to take revenge, to avoid enemies' preparations, to establish peace, to abandon terrorism and coercion.<sup>48</sup> As we have said, no war is permitted in Islam for spreading Islam because there is 'no compulsion in religion'. In the same manner, it is forbidden to fight for expanding the boundaries of Islamic States.

Some of the Sariyas took place when the Prophet (PBUH) sent patrol teams and spies in order to collect information regarding preparations for battle by enemies

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<sup>46</sup> Ibn Sa'd, Muhammad (1985), *at-Tabaqatu'l-Kubra*, Beirut, Vol. II; Samhudi, Nuruddin Ali b. Ahmad, *Wafa Ul-Wafa*, Beirut, ed., I, pg. 281.

See also Ibnu'l-Athir, Abu'l-Hasan Ali b. Muhammad (1965), *al-Kamil fi't-Tarikh*, Beirut, Vol. II, pg. 113&116; Bukhari, Manaqib, 251, Maghazi, 2.

<sup>47</sup> Holy Quran, Surah Al-Hajj, Verse No. 38; Surah Al-Baqarah, Verse No. 190; Surah Ash-Shura, Verse No.41.

<sup>48</sup> Holy Quran, Surah Al-Baqarah, Verse No. 194

who could launch instant attacks. Those patrol teams, while on their mission to gather information, were involved in incidental combat. And then backup troops were sent to assure the security of patrolling teams. Examples are the Sariyahs of Nahla, the first Dhul Qassa, Wadil Qura, the second Jinab, Hunayn, Abdullah ibn Rawaha, and Khaybar.

The breach of treaties constitutes a crime in international relations. So some of the Ghazwat and Sariyahs were to encounter the tribes who breached the treaties by helping enemies and providing them with secret information. It was also to prevent enemies from getting support in the surrounding territories that could be harmful for the State of Madina. Similarly, if the states do not react by taking precautionary measures after receiving the news of the enemy's attack plan, it would mean to further expose oneself against enemy attack. The military expeditions of Tabuk, Taif, Khaybar and the Ghazwa of Fadak, and the large number of Ghazwat and Sariyahs were carried out as a result of receiving information of pending attacks. Declaration of war by the enemy is one of the reasons which justifies fighting according to the Prophet (SAWA) and to answer the declaration of war is regarded as self defense.<sup>49</sup> There were some battles which were fought against the robbers and plunderers who looted the trade convoys or plundered herds from the shepherds. The defence of property and life in the event of raids and plunder is also considered self-protection.

Some of the wars were fought in order to end the pressure regarding freedom of religion applied by the tribes and states that oppressed and tortured Muslims or other minorities. If communities which are oppressed in terms of practising their religious rituals and worship and which are being deprived of their fundamental rights - freedom of belief and worshipping - and their places of worship are being demolished<sup>50</sup>, then Muslims are held responsible to make an effort to end this oppression through permitted fighting, and then to establish peace as soon as the oppressor retreats from oppressive actions by signing peace treaties.<sup>51</sup> "And why should ye not fight in the cause of Allah and of those who, being weak, are ill-treated (and oppressed)?— men, women, and children, whose cry is: "Our Lord! rescue us from this town, whose people are oppressors; and raise for us from Thee one who will protect; and raise for us from Thee one who will help!"<sup>52</sup> The Sariyah of Bi'r al-Mauna and the Ghazwa of Dumatul-Jandal were the military interventions that the Prophet (SAWA) carried out in order to help the Muslims who were victims of oppression.

The Prophet (SAWA) sometimes sent delegates to some tribes and states when he was asked and he sometimes sent delegates with the intention of conveying the message of Islam without being asked. Some of these delegates whose aim was nothing but to convey the message of Islam were ambushed and

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<sup>49</sup> For detailed information on Ghazwat and Sariyahs, see Nargül, Veysel, Kur'an

<sup>50</sup> Holy Quran, Surah al-Hajj, Verse No. 40

<sup>51</sup> Holy Quran, Surah al-Hajj, Verse No. 39

<sup>52</sup> Holy Quran, Surah al-Nisa, Verse. 75

betrayed; they were martyred.<sup>53</sup> The delegates had to defend themselves when they were attacked. In other words, wars were fought not because the addressees did not accept Islam but because they attacked Muslims. Therefore, the Prophet (SAWA) fought in order to eliminate the barriers that prevented *tabligh*, not to make people accept Islam by force. Thus there were some wars which were carried out to punish those who mistreated and killed the diplomats and envoys, since it is the state's duty to take care of its citizens.

### Wars and Political Perspective

The analysis of the causes of Ghazwat and Sariyahs indicate that no war was fought for spreading Islam or expanding the boundaries of the Islamic state of Madina under the Prophet (SAWA)'s command, as is misrepresented by some atheists, neoliberals and extremist fundamentalists; misrepresentation for the sake of political interests. Thus the wars fought by Muslim rulers with the purpose of expanding geographical boundaries, contrary to the Ghazwat and Sariyahs, cannot be categorised as wars of Islam. Those wars were in line with pure political purposes, to expand the geographic area of rule and power, and had nothing to do with Islam. The only resemblance is the religion of the rulers and the majority of their soldiers was Muslim. These rulers had been assassinating their own brothers, sons, cousins, friends in order to remain in power, eliminating any opposition or family rivalry that could cause the rule to change hands. The wars fought by Mughal, Turkish and Ottoman emperors are some of the many vital examples of such political games of thrones. An eminent Indian poet, Dr Rahat Indori, rightly expressed this idea of politics distorting peace by exploiting the name of Islam, presenting humanity as a secondary concept, in favour of political power,

*"Milana chaha hey insaan ko jab bhe insaan say  
Tou saaray kaam syasat bigaar detii hey"*<sup>54</sup>

My translation: 'Whenever the effort is made to unite people, politics intervenes to escalate the differences, thus divisions.' This is the same politics that escalates tensions on the borders that helps in diverting the attention of the people in order to win elections. The 2019 elections in India, for example, were won by the Bharti Janta Party (BJP) that was in government and was very unpopular because of its full fledged support to the radical notion of Hindutva and failed economic policies. To divert people's attention from its poor performance and to regain the lost popularity, it played the card of Pak-India traditional rivalry by escalating the tension on the Line of Control (LOC) between Pakistan and India, just one month before elections. A so-called airstrike with no damage to Pakistan benefitted the Modi government, defining him as a 'strong,' 'virile' leader, and he easily won reelection. Indori addressed this situation in his verses as,

*Sarhadon pr boht tanao hey kya?  
Kuch Pata tou karo, chunao hey kya?*

<sup>53</sup> Nargül, Veysel (2003), *What are the purposes of wars that Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) fought?*, Published online at the site of [Questions on Islam](#)

<sup>54</sup> Indori, Dr Rahat (2012), *Rahat Indori - Hamari Association Mushaira - Dubai 2012*, Next TV, via Youtube.com <https://youtu.be/eUWepBwa26k>

*Khauf bikhra hey donon samton main  
Teesri samt ka dabao hey kya<sup>55</sup>*

My Translation:

Oh, there is tension on border?

Hmm, if election is in order?

Petrified is either side!

Certain is Third's disorder!

Here, Indori pointed out the intervention of a third power in escalating the wars between the two rivals. And the third power is supposed to be superior to the others, able to escalate or de-escalate the controversies, thus called a superpower of the World. And the superpowers can easily forge the facts. A religion can be declared the religion of terrorism, and this misrepresentation of Islam has stuck, through Jihad Narratives encouraged by the superpower of the contemporary world, to incite combatants against Russia in Afghanistan. The superpowers can easily persuade other states to sponsor their political agendas. And Saudi Arabia served the intentions of the aforementioned superpower by becoming its agent while establishing Al Qaeda, Taliban and the centres of radicalisation in the form of Madrassahs in Pakistan, all with a misrepresented concept of Jihad that will be discussed in detail later in the next chapter titled *Construction of Religious Misrepresentation and Coercion in History of Islam* under the heading 'Decolonised Representation of Jihad Narrative'. The superpowers can make almost any state their friend for their self-serving political purposes, and then after achieving their goals can apply sanctions on the same states, alleging support for terrorism. And US-Pak relations over the past forty years is a good example of this relationship in which the regime of a dictator, Zia ul Haqq, an agent of this superpower, manufactured terrorists and terrorism shaded in Jihad and Mujahideen during the 1980's while democratic governments faced sanctions later for the same Jihad and Mujahidin, labelling them as terrorists and terrorism. This will be discussed in detail later in the thesis. And now the same US-built Jihad Narrative is being termed as terrorism for which Islam and the whole Muslim community is being blamed. Not only the same US-trained Al Qaeda and Taliban, but Mujahideen and Jihadi groups are being termed as terrorists, all of whom are, not surprisingly, Muslims. Indori expressed this forgery and politically exploited notion of 'Islamic Terrorism and Muslim Terrorists' in a *Mushaira* held in Lakhnau, India saying: how can terrorism be related to Islam that itself means peace? He drew attention to the consequences if these misrepresentations turn into truth. He points out through his poetry:

*"Maseeha dard kay hamdard ho jaien tou kya ho ga?*

*Ravadaari k jazbay Sard ho jaien tou kya ho ga?*

*Jo yeh laakhon karoron panch waqton kay namazi hein*

*Agar such mooch main dehshat gard ho jaien tou kya ho ga?<sup>56</sup>*

My Translation:

What would happen if saviors turn sympathetic to cruelty?

<sup>55</sup> Indori, Dr Rahat (2012), *Rahat Indori - Hamari Association Mushaira - Dubai 2012*, Next TV, via Youtube.com <https://youtu.be/eUWepBwa26k>

<sup>56</sup> Indori, Dr Rahat (2015), Video Titles: *Latest Mushaira - Rahat Indori*, Bismillah Channel, Copyright Master Cassettes, Lucknow, India, [youtube.com](https://www.youtube.com)

If harmonious morality turns into frozen, cold senselessness?

If these millions of Muslim worshippers who offer prayers five times a day, regularly, become terrorists, in reality?

If Islam preaches violence, terror and intolerance, then why are most Muslims peaceful people? In this regard, it is important to note again that the problem is not with theology but bad people who, through their erroneous interpretations, misconceptions and misrepresentations, often intentionally and often with a political goal, start practicing extremist violence and in addition, start preaching it in the same way as well.

### **Conclusion**

In this regard, it is important to note again that the problem is not the fundamental principles of Islam or any other religion, but political exploitation. The narrations from Quran and hadith cited and referenced above are a few examples from many more, left for the reader to explore. So, we may conclude that Islam - according to the above-mentioned fundamentals of Islam - just like other religions, is a religion of peace that promotes the welfare of humanity, founded on compassion for humanity, based on love for all without any discrimination of caste, colour or creed. Holy Quran is a Book in which 113 chapters out of 114 begin with the introduction of the God of Islam as God of Mercy and Compassion. Islam does not have any god of war or hate or injustice. However, Islam is not a pacifist religion. It allows military action in certain contexts, contrary to the politically motivated extremist interpretations that allow them to use these quotations out of context for self-serving purposes to validate their terrorism. Islam is also a victim of the same types of accusations of terrorism as Christianity is for the Crusades, the Spanish Inquisitions, Anti-Jewish pogroms, European colonialism in Asia and Africa, the Lords Resistance Army in Uganda and many other acts of violence during the twenty-first century. As a matter of fact, the allegations against Islam, like any other religion, are based on misrepresentations.<sup>57</sup> Thus for the sake of exploring misrepresentations and the roots of coercion and extremism, fieldwork was conducted in Iraq, Iran and Pakistan to analyse how these fanatic fundamentalists succeed in finding support to achieve their political goals. So, the next chapter, in continuation of this chapter, will highlight the religious misrepresentations according to the results of the fieldwork data.

**Note: The research was conducted during doctoral studies at La Rochelle Université, France (2016-2019)**

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<sup>57</sup> Hasan, Mehdi (3 July 2013), *Mehdi Hasan | Islam Is A Peaceful Religion | Oxford Union*, Published by [OxfordUnion](https://www.oxfordunion.org.uk/) TV Channel on youtube.com