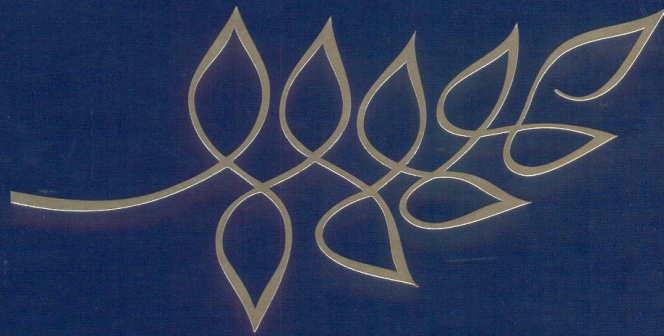


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Whereas the Sunnis grant the authority to call for the jihad to the Muslim ruler, pious or not, the Shiites reserve the authorization of the jihad to the infallible imam, or religious leader. For the majority of Shiites, the current imam is thought to be in a state of occultation, or concealment. Thus no one has the authority to call for offensive jihad. All Muslims agree that there is no need for a Muslim to be authorized to engage in defensive jihad, because self-defense and self-preservation fall within the most basic "laws of nature."

To reasonably answer the question of whether Islam is a religion of peace or a religion of war, or both, it is helpful to examine the Qur'anic verses 4:90 and 8:61. The former reads, in part, as follows: "...if they keep out of your way and do not fight you, and offer you peace, then God does not allow you any course [of action] against them." The latter verse goes further by clarifying the nature of the Islamic doctrine that makes binding an enemy's call for peace: "And if they incline toward peace, then you [too] incline toward it, and put your trust in God." Winning or losing, strong or weak, trustworthy or suspect, the other side's call for peace must be granted. This concept is even more clear in verse 4:94: "Do not say to someone who offers you peace, 'You are not a believer,' seeking the transitory wares of this world. Yet, with God are plentiful gains." Islam, the religion and the state, does not recoil from resorting to war, as a necessary path to peace.

[See also Ethics of War and Peace, *subentry on* Middle Ages; Islamic Ethics and Peace; Religion and Peace; and Religious Peace Doctrines, Comparative.]

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ISLAMIC ETHICS AND PEACE. Islam's ethical values are perhaps the least understood and the least acknowledged aspect of most discussions on the role of religious activism in the reformulation of the norms of peace. The understanding of the relationship between Islamic conventions and human emancipation and particularly its tradition of using peace as a unifying political force is often marred by the much disputed history of "empire building" in the medieval era, when territorial expansion was a recurring political dynamic. Thirty years after the death of Prophet Muhammad in 632 CE, or, from 661 onward, the caliphate assumed a somewhat monarchical character; over time its legal, religious, and moral legitimacy waxed and waned, its legitimacy sometimes relying on jurists' interpretations who under political expediency, sought to legitimize expansionist conquests in the name of Islam (Rosenthal 1958, Sachedina, 1996). Moreover, the expansion of the Islamic Empire left such a historical imprint that it was difficult to distinguish "Islam's legal position" on peace from "Muslim expansionist practices." Yet the sources of Islamic ethics and Islamic laws owe their legitimacy not to temporal history, but to their traditional legal base—the revealed message of the Qur'an and the hadith (known as the Traditions, these include the sayings and actions of the Prophet Muhammad). Although some of the injunctions in the aforementioned sources were also shaped by the necessity of time and events during the time in which they were revealed, the main values and laws regarding peace clearly depict a break from the set traditions of pre-Islamic practices regarding war and civilian immunity in times of conflict. Even in the later "wars for empire," these values of peace—although sidelined when it came to *jus ad bellum*—did influence the general amnesty provided to occupied, especially non-Muslim, populations. It is helpful to trace Islam's ethics on peace from its traditional base of legal and historical sources in order to understand contemporary debates related to this issue.

Emergence of Islam in Mecca

Many scholars consider the rise of Islam to be a phenomenon that corresponded with the urgent need for social

change and reform in Meccan society. Fifth- and sixth-century Mecca had slowly transformed from a traditional nomadic community to one with an influential capitalist class, largely as a result of its increased trading links with other empires. This profound economic change, however, did not come with a similar evolution of moral, social, and political ideas. In other words, the outdated pagan beliefs held by Meccans failed to provide the proper "social, moral, intellectual and religious readjustment" necessary to release the tensions that prevailed between "men's conscious attitudes and the economic basis of their life" (Watt 1952, 19). It is not surprising then, that the entire period of the Prophet Muhammad's stay in Mecca was marked by a nonviolent movement in which the preaching of Islam concentrated on the "transformation of ideas"—ideas related to the oneness of God, Muhammad's status as His Messenger, and the day of judgment, along with ideas related to the quality of the classes. As a result, the first people to accept the message were those who were already victims of the system, like orphans and slaves. The Prophet's Meccan history illustrates a rather "quietist" movement marked by secret preaching, insightful dialogues, and speeches to the tribes coming for pilgrimage.

The first thirteen years of the Prophet Muhammad's teachings of Islam are particularly relevant for their instructions on peace. During this period, the focus of the message of Islam was entirely on encouraging personal piety, fostering a state of inner peace, and developing self-discipline—essentially teaching the new Muslims how to behave peacefully. These teachings are meant to inform every aspect of Muslim life—first not only between the individual and God but also between husbands and wives, business partners, and friends, and so forth. It was only after these ethical and moral values were firmly established that the migration to Medina took place, the Islamic state was established, and the formal laws of Islam (both personal regulations and public or state laws) were pronounced and put into practice.

Ethics of Peace and the Covenant of Medina

Muhammad's migration from Mecca to Medina resembles the migration of Moses from Egypt to Sinai. Both migrations were undertaken to escape persecution from the prevalent order of their societies. Muhammad's migration came as a result of the treaty of Aqaba signed with the two rival tribes of Aws and Khazraj who converted to Islam and pledged him support. This was a pragmatic yet nonviolent move, since Mecca offered a

bleak future to the Prophet; individualism was a strong force there, largely the result of an increasingly mercantile environment. In contrast, the agrarian society of Medina was less homogenous, less individualistic, and more ready for a shift from its traditional social norms. For the feuding tribes of Aws and Khazraj, a prophet whose authority rested not on blood, but on religion instilled the hope of a unifying force for integrating the social and political order of Medina. When Muhammad arrived in Medina it was inhabited by Arab and Jewish tribes who lived in an uneasy relationship with one another. The Jews in particular looked upon the arrival of Muhammad with disfavor and resentment, and questioned his authority, which was based on his success at winning converts in Medina and the support that was pledged to him from other tribes. The Prophet aimed to reconcile all the groups as citizens of a unified state. In 623 CE he presented a "covenant of Medina" and succeeded in having it signed by both the Muslims and the Jews. The covenant contains forty-seven articles, the five most relevant and important ones are the following:

1. They (Jews and Muslims) are a single community (*ummah*) distinct from other people.
2. The Jews of Bani Awf are a community (*ummah*) along with believers. To the Jews their religion (*din*) and to the Muslims their religion. (This applies) both to their clients and to themselves, with the exception of anyone who has done wrong or acted treacherously; he brings evil only on himself and on his household.
3. Between them (that is, to one another) there is help (*nasr*) against whoever wars against the people of this document. Between them is sincere friendship and honorable dealing, no treachery. A man is not guilty of treachery through the act of his confederate. There is help for (or, help is to be given to) the person wronged.
4. The valley of Yathrib is sacred for the people of this document.
5. Whenever among the people of this document there occurs an incident (disturbance) or quarrel from which disaster for it (the people) is to be feared, it is to be referred to God and to Muhammad, the Messenger of God (God bless and preserve him). God is the most scrupulous and truest (fulfiller) of what is in the document.

It is notable that in this covenant, which outlines clearly the principles of religious pluralism, both Muslims and

Jews are granted common citizenship, the essence of which lay in their loyalty to the state of Medina. The Jews were regarded as part of one *ummah* who were to cooperate in the protection of Medina side by side with the Muslims. Because of this, certain scholars have regarded Medina to be the first state in Arabia with a clear social contract that extends to people of both faiths and a unified authority. Significantly, it is only after the establishment of the state that one finds the first Qur'anic consent for war and the various laws related to war, peace, and the formulation of treaties in Islam.

Treaties with Christians

The Christian community of Najran was an important center of Christianity in southern Arabia. When Muhammad rose with the call to Islam, particularly after the consolidation of Medina, the Christian clergy from Najran visited him (around 630 CE) for an interfaith dialogue. They were impressed by his simplicity, and the respect he extended to them by allowing them to worship in the mosque. They were unwilling to leave their faith (having been invited to enter into Islam) and their meeting was concluded by an agreement dictated by the Prophet that carried the following text:

Najran and their followers are entitled to the protection of Allah and to the security of Muhammad the Prophet, the messenger of Allah, which security shall involve their persons, religion, lands and possessions including those of them who are absent as well as those who are present, their camels, messengers, and images [*amthila*, a reference to their crosses and icons]. The state they previously hold shall not be changed, nor shall any of their religious services or images be changed. No attempt shall be made to turn a bishop, a monk from his office as a monk, or the sexton of a church from his office. (Dakake 2005, 17)

This treaty reflects two important Qur'anic injunctions, one that relates to the concept that "there is no compulsion in religion" (2:256) and the other that states:

God does not forbid you respecting those who have not made war against you on account of (your) religion, and have not driven you forth from your homes, that you show them kindness and deal with them justly. (60:8)

Similarly, the Prophet concluded a treaty with the monks of Saint Catherine's monastery in Mount Sinai guaranteeing them safety of their place of worship, and clearly reflecting the Qur'anic injunction to protect all holy places:

And had there not been God's repelling some people by others, certainly there would have been pulled down cloisters and churches and synagogues and mosques in which God's name is much remembered. (22:40)

The Treaty of Hudaibiyya

In 628 CE Muhammad and his followers came to Mecca to offer pilgrimage, but were forced to turn back when the Quraysh would not allow them inside the city peacefully. The Prophet negotiated a peace treaty with the Quraysh who promised entry for pilgrimage the following year. The terms of the treaty were largely one-sided and unfavorable, particularly the clause that stipulated that if Muslims left the Quraysh and reached Medina, they would be returned, but Muslims who fled from Medina would not be returned. The Prophet agreed to it, much to the dismay of his companions. However, the treaty brought within it a "peace offensive" that offered additional time for the consolidation, conversion, and alliance of the various tribes of Arabia. The treaty lasted for only two years. Then the Quraysh, aided by one of its allies, attacked the Banu Bakr, an ally of Medina. This meant the immediate termination of the treaty and as a result, the Prophet, with an army of 10,000, set out for Mecca; its leaders had no choice but to surrender without combat.

Amnesty to Enemies

When the Prophet entered Mecca he offered general amnesty to anyone who took refuge inside the sacred precinct of the Ka'aba, or in the house of Abu Sufyan, and anyone who shut the door of his house or appeared unarmed. When the Prophet reached the sacred precinct, he asked the Quraysh about the kind of treatment they expected from him, they replied: "You are the noble son of a noble father." Upon hearing this, all were forgiven and given immunity. However historical sources reveal that eleven men and six women did not come under this immunity and were put to death on charges of the persecution carried out against the early Muslims of Mecca.

Later Treaties

After the death of the Prophet Muhammad a series of expeditions were carried out (633–646 CE) against the two major empires of the Near East, the Byzantine Empire and the Persian Empire, and into Egypt. It is debatable as to what extent, some, if not all of the wars, were engaged out of necessity, for they reveal clear

expansionist tendencies. However, the treaties signed with the occupied populations of those areas reveal a certain resemblance to the ones signed in the times of the Prophet. In particular, they continue the tradition of giving immunity to the local population regardless of their faith. When Syria was conquered by the Muslim commander, Abu Ubaydah b. Jarrah, he signed a treaty with the Christians of Aleppo ensuring them safety "for their lives, their possessions, city wall, churches, homes, and the fort." Similar treaties were signed at Antioch, Ma'arrat Masrin, and on the Egyptian front by Amr bin al-'As. In the case of occupation, the non-Muslim communities were required to pay a security tax (*jizya*) to the state after which they were exempted from military service and were protected by the Muslim army. Muslims of these areas were similarly taxed through the payment of *zakat*, or a charity tax. The historian al-Tabari records the following in the Covenant of 'Umar, a document apparently addressed to the people living in Jerusalem in the year 636 CE:

This is the assurance of safety (*aman*) which the servant of God 'Umar, the Commander of the Faithful has granted to the people of Jerusalem. He has given them an assurance of safety for themselves, for their property, their churches, their crosses, the sick and the healthy of the city, and for all the rituals that belong to their religion. Their churches will not be inhabited [by Muslims] and will not be destroyed. Neither they, nor the land on which they stand, nor their crosses, nor their property will be damaged. They will not be forcibly converted ... the people of Jerusalem must pay the poll tax like the people of other cities and they must expel the Byzantines and the robbers. (Dakake 2005, 18)

It is generally recognized that in the backdrop of the persecution by the Orthodox Church against other sects, the Muslims, who only imposed a mild tax in exchange for safety, were generally welcomed as liberators, not conquerors. Those who were exempted from the *jizya* included the needy, blind, elderly, monks, and people who served places of worship, women and children.

Qur'anic Laws of War and Peace

This historical evidence facilitates our understanding of the basic premises of the Qur'anic laws of war and peace. The permission to fight was given only after a state was established, and then in self-defense: "Permission (to fight) is given to those upon whom war is made, because they are oppressed, and most surely God is well able to assist them" (22:39). Simultaneously, clear laws were

revealed regarding the conduct required by Muslims in warfare: "And fight in the way of God with those who fight with you, and do not exceed the limits" (2:190). Those limits covered immunity for (a) women, children, the elderly, and sick; (b) all those who were either unable or unwilling to fight (i.e., people who were unarmed or remained neutral); and specified that (c) during a combat mission it was forbidden to loot or rob a traveler and to create any obstruction for passersby; (d) looting and plundering of the civilian population, when the Muslim army marched into enemy territory, was prohibited, as was the destruction of their crops or trees; and (e) the prisoners of war would be given immunity and were often freed on ransom, or if they were not affluent enough, would be released without any charge. In any case, the prisoners were to be treated well and fed properly; and finally, (f) it was forbidden to mutilate the dead bodies of the enemy or to kill the enemy by setting them ablaze. Lastly, retaliation in self-defense is justifiable, but once the enemy wishes to end hostilities and make peace, combat is necessarily to be halted and peace treaties signed: "And if they incline to peace, then incline to it" (8:61). Moreover, in the instructions regarding transgression of limits, the Qur'an makes it even clearer: "Do not make mischief in the land after its reform; this is better for you if you are believers" (7:85). One of the most important injunctions is related to the respect for oaths or covenants. The Qur'anic verse clearly enjoins: "And fulfill the covenant of God when you have made a covenant, and do not break the oaths after making them fast" (16:91). This refers specifically to the treaties made with opposing groups, since their violation could cause an outbreak of hostilities between them and other Muslims: "So as long as they are true to you, be true to them; surely God loves those who are careful (of their duty)" (9:7). Muslims are also forbidden from aiding or giving refuge to other Muslims against those with whom they have signed a treaty:

As to those who believed but came not into exile, you owe no duty of protection to them until they come into exile; but if they seek your aid in religion, it is your duty to help them, *except against a people with whom you have a treaty of mutual alliance. And (remember) God sees all that you do.* (8:72)

Scholars have interpreted this verse in the context of the current war on terror, as a prohibition against aiding militants attacking Western countries in the name of jihad, since states, by virtue of their *de jure* recognition of international law, agree not to engage in acts of

violence against one another. In a similar vein, the rule regarding covenants strictly compels Muslims living in non-Muslim states not to engage in violent activities against their resident state, since under the laws of citizenship they pledge loyalty to them and are party to the social contract offered by them.

The Contemporary Debate

The debate that continues today between traditional scholars who look to Islamic legal sources, and the militants is a question of the legitimacy of the latter's arguments. The scholar's condemnation of militants asserts that their stance is at variance with the traditional principles of war and peace given by Islam. They claim that militants who cite core Islamic slogans have not understood the true meaning and principles of peace (at an individual or state level) and the limitations of war. Moreover, they assert that jihad, by law, is a state instrument and not an individual responsibility. Perhaps the most compelling challenge put forward by the militants is the question of the indifference of Muslim (and non-Muslim) states to the critical issues of the Muslim world, and their failure to provide justice, which is a necessary corollary of peace.

A related debate has been ongoing since the earliest Islamic state was established, namely, are there circumstances in which the overthrow of an unjust ruler is justified? The majority of orthodox Muslims hold that order must be maintained; rulers can be changed by consensus or by peaceful methods. The position of traditional scholars is based on primary texts that state that the sin of spreading "mischief" or chaos, which is likely to ensue in the absence of a ruler or during a period of upheaval, is *not* preferable to an unpopular leader.

These are central questions that point to some of the dilemmas involved in responding to the militants and ending their estrangement with Islam's legal and historical ethics of peace.

[See also Ethics of War and Peace, *subentry* on Middle Ages; Human Rights, *subentry* on Political Concept; Islam; Just War, Theory; Nonviolent Action, *subentry* on Nonviolent Action as Active Resistance; Religion and Peace; Religious Peace Doctrines, Comparative; State Formation and War; and Treaties.]

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ISOLATIONISM VERSUS INTERVENTIONISM IN THE UNITED STATES.

Isolationism and interventionism are concepts that are closely associated with policy debates about national security. Regardless of whose security or the exact circumstances confronting a state, champions of these policy positions share some common beliefs. Isolationists are likely to reject the use of force in the absence of a truly existential threat to a nation or state. Rather, war and threats of violence are seen as likely to exacerbate, not quell, crises or ongoing conflicts. They believe that political, economic, or social meddling in civil disturbances or international conflicts is counterproductive because it is unlikely that outsiders can devise effective solutions to complex disputes. Many isolationists also question the moral basis for passing judgments on the affairs of others and foisting one's preferences on foreign governments. Most tend to hold respect for national sovereignty in higher