



## Promoting Interfaith Harmony: Examining Problems and Misunderstandings Between Muslims and Non-Muslims in India within the Framework of Maqāṣid Al-Qur'ān

Syed Alaudeen Seyed Ibrahim – Thameem Ushama

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#### ABSTRACT

In light of *Maqāṣid al-Qur'ān*, this essay considers solutions to the problems and misunderstandings between Indian Muslims and non-Muslims. It starts by addressing the instruction found in the Qur'ān regarding interactions between Muslims and non-Muslims, emphasising the necessity of tolerance, peaceful coexistence, and the ban on coercive conversion. Islām's idea of *da'wah* is examined, focusing on its peaceful nature and the significance of interreligious interactions and coexistence. The paper discusses the myth that *jihād* is a "holy war". It explains the verses of the Qur'ān that speak of murdering and battling non-Muslims, highlighting the Qur'ān's emphasis on peaceful coexistence and religious freedom. The importance of justice and fairness in dealing with opponents and nonbelievers is also explored. The study concludes with proposals and advice for fostering harmony between Indian Muslims and non-Muslims, including initiatives for conversation and communication, community-building activities, political leadership, and promoting acceptance and tolerance. The study emphasises the significance of comprehending and putting the Qur'ānic teachings into practise in order to promote mutual respect and peaceful coexistence among the various communities in India.

**Keywords:** *Maqāṣid al-Qur'ān, jihād, Coexistence, Religious Pluralism, Indian Muslims*

#### INTRODUCTION

India has diverse cultures and religions and a sizable Muslim population. However, problems and misunderstandings have hampered the coexistence of Indian Muslims and non-Muslims, creating social tensions and marginalisation. These issues have been made worse by the rise of religious extremism and the persistence of stereotypes. It is essential to investigate practical

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solutions that address these problems and advance interreligious understanding to develop a more inclusive and harmonious society.

This research article aims to provide recommendations for resolving the issues and misunderstandings that exist between Indian Muslims and non-Muslims within the framework of *Maqāṣid al-Qur'ān*, the objectives, and goals of Islāmīc law. The teachings of the Qur'ān and the principles derived from them offer a valuable foundation for fostering peaceful coexistence, promoting religious freedom, and ensuring justice for all individuals, regardless of their religious affiliation.

The Qur'ān, the central religious text of Islām, guides how Muslims should interact with people of other faiths. It emphasises the principles of pluralism, tolerance, and respect for human dignity. However, misinterpretations and misconceptions surrounding certain Qur'ānic verses have contributed to misunderstandings and divisions between Indian Muslims and non-Muslims. This article addresses these misconceptions and explores the essence of the Qur'ān's teachings related to interreligious relations.

The concept of *Maqāṣid al-Qur'ān*, which focuses on the higher objectives and purposes of Islāmīc law, provides a framework for understanding the broader goals of Islām. By examining the principles of *Maqāṣid al-Qur'ān*, we can derive recommendations that contribute to promoting interreligious harmony and resolving existing issues.

By examining the issues and misunderstandings between Indian Muslims and non-Muslims within the framework of *Maqāṣid al-Qur'ān*, this research article seeks to contribute to the academic discourse on interreligious harmony and provide practical recommendations for policymakers, religious leaders, and community stakeholders. Ultimately, it aims to pave the way for a more harmonious, inclusive, and tolerant society in India, where individuals of diverse religious backgrounds can coexist in peace and mutual respect.

### QUR'ĀNIC GUIDANCE ON MUSLIM AND NON-MUSLIM RELATIONSHIP

Islām in the Arabic language means peace and obedience in general, which comes from the origin of *silm*. It can be defined as getting real peace by succumbing to the Creator, Al-mighty Allāh or the condition of peace in obedience to Allāh. There are many references to the Qur'ān, and the narrations of the Prophet (p.b.u.h) reflect that this idea of peace is not only constrained to God but should be extended to other humans, animals, and other creatures. Moreover, this collective idea of peace in Islām was the fundamental objective of the teachings of all the prophets of Allāh all the time. Moreover, some divine and doctrinal terms of the Qur'ān resulted from the root word of *silm*. For example, *al-salām*, which means the peace or the origin of peace, is one of ninety-nine names of Allāh, *Dār al-Salām*, which means the dwell of peace, is named for the heaven, the angels who welcome a believer with *salām*, "May peace be on you" and the believers share this wonderful greeting within themselves, and this is practised by



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Muslims commonly all over the world.<sup>1</sup> Peaceful coexistence among human beings such as groups, associations, family and society is also a core element of the five essential objectives of *Maqāṣid al-sharī'ah*: protection of religion (*dīn*), life (*nafs*), family (*nasl*), intellect (*'aql*) and possessions (*māl*). It also embraces a good relationship with people in the same community and the followers of other beliefs and religions.

The Qur'ān explains that there is one God only, and He is the Lord of the universe in which Islām was built. Moreover, He is the originator of everything, including humanity. As He is the creator of humanity, He has the right to order them to obey and worship Him, and he has the right to challenge the so-called gods other than Him or to those who claim themselves as God to compete with Him. In addition, He is Omnipotent and never sees partiality among His creatures. All humans are the same in front of Him. He is the One who cares for and sustains the people even though they disobey, reject, and deny Him. Regardless of race, religion, and colour, he stretches his generosity, although those who confront Him and give him a chance repeatedly turn to Him back. This belief system points towards the fact that humans are not unequal in His sight, and everyone is responsible for his religious commitments, so nobody should be involved in defaming others' belief systems. He is the one who judges One's theology, whether they are right or wrong.

The primary teaching of all the prophets of Allāh was Islām, which means obedience to Allāh. The Qur'ān explains that believing in all the prophets is one of the foremost duties of a Muslim, and they should not discriminate against them. Allāh's prophets proclaimed their fraternity in believing Allāh and fastening the brotherhood in all people.

Allāh says,

... We make no distinction between one another of His messengers...<sup>2</sup>

Verily, We have sent the Revelation to you (O Muḥammad) as We sent the Revelation to Nūḥ...<sup>3</sup>

He (Allāh) has ordained for you of the same religion (Islāmic Monotheism) which He ordained for Nūḥ (Noah), and that which We have revealed to you (O Muḥammad p.b.u.h) and that which We ordained for Ibrahim (Abraham), Mūsā (Moses) and 'Īsā (Jesus) saying you should establish religion (i.e. to do what it

<sup>1</sup> Translation of the Meanings of the Noble Qur'ān in the English Language: Tr. By Muḥammad Taqī al-Dīn Al-Hilālī and Muḥammad Muḥsin Khān (K.S.A: King Fahd Complex for the printing of the Holy Qur'ān, 1998). Sūrat al-Ḥashr: 23, Sūrat al-An'ām: 127, Sūrat Yūnus: 10.

<sup>2</sup> Qur'ān, Sūrat al-Baqarah: 285.

<sup>3</sup> Qur'ān, Sūrat al-Nisā': 163.



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orders you to do practically), and make no divisions in it (religion) (i.e. various sects in religion).<sup>4</sup>

The above Qur'ānic verses prove that no partiality should be adhered to among prophets, claiming that a particular prophet is superior to others, holding bigotry in the name of religion, and creating chaos among prophets' followers. In the meantime, Allāh the almighty made some prophets in leading positions than others.<sup>5</sup>

According to the Qur'ān, each human being should be respected because of being human regardless of belief, religion, or race. Many verses of the Qur'ān denote human values, and human creation is unique, priceless, and, best of all, a creature. For example, Allāh says, "*Verily, We created man in the best stature (mould).*"<sup>6</sup>

On top of that, Allāh ordered the honourable angels, Allāh 's holy troops, to bow down to Adam to honour him .

And (remember) when We said to the angels: "prostrate yourself before Ādam." And they prostrated except for *Iblīs* (Satan), he refused and was proud and was one of the disbelievers (disobedient to Allāh).<sup>7</sup>

The Qur'ān labels humans as caretakers and representatives (*Khalīfah*) of the Almighty.

Verily, I am going to place (mankind) generations after generations on earth.<sup>8</sup>

In this world, Allāh made everything for the benefit of humans. The following verse depicts it clearly,

See you not (O men) that Allāh has subjected for you whatsoever is in the heavens and whatsoever is in the earth, and has completed and perfected His Graces upon you...<sup>9</sup>

The Qur'ān not only honours humans but also esteems the value of human life. Sacrosanctity of human life is described in the Qur'ān,

And do not kill anyone whose killing Allāh has forbidden, except for a just cause.<sup>10</sup> And

We ordained for the Children of Israel that if anyone killed a person not in retaliation of murder, or (and) to spread mischief in the land – it would be as if

<sup>4</sup> Qur'ān, Sūrat al-Shūrā:13.

<sup>5</sup> Qur'ān, Sūrat al-Isrā':55, Sūrat al-Baqarah: 253, Sūrat al-Isrā' 21.

<sup>6</sup> Qur'ān, Sūrat al-Tīn: 4.

<sup>7</sup> Qur'ān, Sūrat al-Baqarah: 34.

<sup>8</sup> Qur'ān, Sūrat al-Baqarah: 30.

<sup>9</sup> Qur'ān, Sūrat Luqmān: 20.

<sup>10</sup> Qur'ān, Sūrat al-Isrā': 33.



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he killed all mankind, and if anyone saved a life, it would be as if he saved the life of all mankind.<sup>11</sup>

This verse exemplified the Revelation of Allāh regarding the value of human life to the people of previous prophets, too. Allāh elevates human dignity in another verse of the Qur'ān,

And Indeed, We have honored the Children of Ādam...<sup>12</sup>

The vital point to be noticed is that Allāh the almighty did not say that he had honoured a particular group of people in the human race who follow a particular religion. However, he honored the whole of humanity irrespective of religion, race, and color. At the same time, when a human rejects Allāh and His orders, He will bear the repercussions. However, it is in Allāh's hands whether he forgives him. It has nothing to do with the respect of humanity Allāh made for humans and their lives described in the Qur'ān. Humans have free will to do their matters as they wish, and each is accountable for his faith, belief, and choice of acts. When the acts of a man violate the rights of another human or humanity, like committing criminalities or acts of antagonism, according to the law of Allāh, all humanity is the same before Him. So, no one should be encouraged to humiliate or chastise others by religion or race. This concept helps to get through a blossomed peaceful and harmonious life with the followers of multiple religions and respecting humanity that is instructed in the Qur'ān.

### THE QUR'ĀN'S REFERENCE TO PLURALITY AND PEACEFUL COEXISTENCE IN A DIVERSE SOCIETY

The Qur'ān claims widespread justice among humanity. *'adl* refers to justice, fairness, equitability, equitableness, impartiality, and unbiasedness.<sup>13</sup> Being balanced is justice. It exists already in the universe and ecosystem as in divine and moral ethics. The holy book of Allāh gives a caution not to disrupt this balance. The Qur'ān says,

The sun and the moon run on their fixed courses (exactly) calculated with measured out stages for each (for reckoning). And the herbs (or stars) and the trees both prostrate themselves (to Allāh). And the heaven: He has raised it high, and He has set up the Balance. In order that you may not transgress (due) balance, and observe the weight with equity and do not make the balance deficient.<sup>14</sup>

According to primary Islāmic sources, this broad framework studies justice in human relationships. Justice is not something to be kept and followed in this life for worldly benefit, but it is a divine order of Allāh for a believing man. The core of the teaching of all the prophets

<sup>11</sup> Qur'ān, Sūrat al-Mā'idah. 32.

<sup>12</sup> Qur'ān, Sūrat al-Isrā': 70.

<sup>13</sup> Ruḥī Al-Ba'labakkī, in *Al-Mawrid: A Modern Arabic-English Dictionary* (Beyrūt: Dār il-'Ilm li al-Malāyīn, 1995), p 753.

<sup>14</sup> Qur'ān, Sūrat al-Raḥmān: 5-9.



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was justice. Everyone must maintain it apart from biases and favouritism, as it is a standard theory.

The Qur'ān says,

O you who believe! Stand out firmly Allāh, as just witnesses, and let not the enmity and hatred of others make you avoid justice. Be just; that is nearer to piety; and fear Allāh. Verily, Allāh is Well-Acquainted with what you do.<sup>15</sup>

The above Qur'ānic verse depicts that it is impossible to blossom long-lasting peace without laying justice because peace is a vital requirement. Moreover, the primary Islāmīc source, the Qur'ān, strongly rebuked someone involved in maltreatment or shows cruelty or abuses others in the name of belief.

One can understand from the Qur'ānic proclamation that it contains worldwide equality and brotherhood. Allāh says,

O mankind! We have created you from a male and a female and made you into nations and tribes that you may know one another. Verily, the most honourable of you with Allāh is that (believer) who has *al- Taqwā*.<sup>16</sup>

This verse is not confined to only Muslims and their believers. However, it starts by calling the whole of humanity as 'O mankind,' which includes all people who follow different religions and belief systems and who are living with a variety of cultures, races, and different levels of social standards and positions, etc.

Al-Mawdūdī says the term 'people' should be used instead of 'believers' to emphasise this importance. It serves as a reminder of their shared ancestry, which shows that they were created equally. The message that differentiation and distinction should only be based on virtues is conveyed in this way. It is stressed in Islām that piety should lead to more significant differentiation. As it states, "*Yes, we did create you from both male and female.*" It is intended to evoke the desire to acquire virtues and qualities that elevate some individuals over others in a dual analogy. The remark in His saying, "*Truly, We have created you from male and female,*" is used symbolically to convey the idea of equality in the essence of humankind. This is what the statement "*Indeed, the most noble of you in the sight of Allāh is the most righteous of you*" means. That sentence stems from the intended outcome of the analogy, which is "*In fact, We created you from male and female.*" It explains why it is distinguished [from the preceding statement].

Al-Mawdūdī makes some insightful observations about this verse in his reading of the *Tafhīm al-Qur'ān*. He discusses the notion that global disruption results from human prejudices and divisions. Factors such as accidental birth, family, tribe, ethnicity, region, country, colour,

<sup>15</sup> Qur'ān, Sūrat al-Mā'idah: 8.

<sup>16</sup> Qur'ān, Sūrat al-Ḥujurāt: 13.



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or language are frequently the basis for these divisions. Discrimination has historically resulted in several injustices, including the idea that one group is superior to another. Along with these examples of injustice and horror, he also draws attention to the abuse of indigenous communities, bigotry against people of colour in America and Africa, and the devastation caused by nationalism during conflicts.

He focuses on three essential facts:

- One man and one woman are the progenitors of all humans.
- Although linguistic, cultural, and geographic distinctions are inevitable, they should not be used as an excuse for injustice or superiority.
- Born or background is not a legitimate basis for superiority; only moral perfection is.

According to him, rather than catalysing injustice and animosity among people, differences among them should be used to foster collaboration and recognition.<sup>17</sup>

According to Sayyid Quṭb, this phrase means people all, with their diverse racial and ethnic backgrounds, communities, and tribes, are descended from a single source. Therefore, avoid splitting up or having conflicts with one another to avoid wasting their energy. The One who made people all from a male and a female is calling out to them, humankind, to tell them of the reason they are to become nations and tribes. It is not like they incite animosity and strife. Instead, it is to get to know one another and have a harmonious coexistence. Language, race, temperament, etiquette, talents, and abilities are not the causes of conflict and strife. They promote cooperation, which enables all requirements and tasks to be satisfied. God sees no significance in race, language, birthplace, or colour. The statement "*The noble of you in the sight of God is the one who is most genuinely God-fearing*" is the only standard used to evaluate people.<sup>18</sup>

The Qur'ān expects humanity to live as created and made by the creator in a diverse social setup without enmity and discrimination. They were made into different clans and groups with different qualities, yet they were the same family with the same parents. It is natural to live in diversity, but there must be unity in diversity. The unity should be like a human body in which the organs are different in size and features. However, they still help a man be healthy, and humanity is like a beautiful garden with many kinds of plants and different flowers. When we see a garden with different types of beautiful plants, it looks lovely. Likewise, the peaceful coexistence among diverse human societies is very beautiful. Thus, the Qur'ān encourages possible coexistence, stating the origin of the human race and the real scenario of universal brotherhood in human life.

<sup>17</sup> Abū al-A'īn Mawdūdī, *The Meaning of the Qur'ān*. Ed. By A.A.Kamal. M.A (Lahore: Islamic Publications Limited, n.d) Vol: 49, p 99.

<sup>18</sup> Sayyid Quṭb, *Fī Zilāl al-Qur'ān* (Cairo: Dār al-Shurūq, n.d.), Vol. 49, p. 97.



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Humanity should accept diversity first. Living plural in a society seems new, but such an idea has been introduced previously. The Qur'ān relates very clearly to humanity that he would have done so if he wanted to make all humans a particular sect.

To each among you, We have prescribed a law and a clear way. If Allāh had willed, He would have made you one nation, but that (He) may test you in what He has given you; so, compete in good deeds...<sup>19</sup>

The verse "*To each among you*" is explained by Muḥammed Asad as follows:

In order to emphasise the diversity among human societies, this statement alludes to the various groups that comprise mankind. *Shir'ah* or *Shari'ah*: This phrase, "the way to a watering place," designates a legal framework necessary for a community's social and spiritual well-being. When referring to Islām, it frequently means the set of moral precepts and regulations that Muslims live by.

*Minhāj*, in its abstract form, expresses "an open road" as a way of life or a course of action. It covers a broader range of behaviours and lifestyle choices people and groups make. *Dīn*: Compared to *shir'ah* and *minhāj*, this phrase is more inclusive. It includes the canonical laws of religion and the essential spiritual principles that all of God's apostles have taught throughout history. It comprises the eternal spiritual precepts upon which different religions base their doctrines.

While the Qur'ān frequently mentions "unity in diversity," he focuses on this theme. This means that although prophets may suggest different laws (*shir'ah*) and lifestyles (*minhāj*) based on cultural and historical situations, fundamental spiritual truths (*dīn*) are constant throughout revelations. As the culmination of Revelation, he claims, the Qur'ān gives the ultimate and ideal route to spiritual fulfilment and is the pinnacle of Revelation. It is considered the culmination of all previous revelations. It also states that the Prophet Muḥammad is the final Prophet, known as the "seal of all prophets". The fact that the message of the Qur'ān is unique does not exclude followers of other faiths from receiving God's grace. The Qur'ān recognises the possibility of obtaining God's favour and the absence of fear or sorrow for individuals of other faiths who believe in a single God, the Day of Judgment, and conduct virtuous lives. "*But (He indeed) to test you in what He has given you.*"<sup>20</sup>

Al-Mawdūdī answers why, despite teaching the same lifestyle and offering mutual assistance, different prophets and texts differ in the specifics of their religious regulations. He summarised the main ideas: He clarified that different religious rules have distinct details, but that does not mean their roots or beginnings differ. Instead, they are all derived from Allāh, who established laws suited to various societies and eras.

<sup>19</sup> Qur'ān, Sūrat al-Mā'idah: 48.

<sup>20</sup> *The Message of the Qur'ān*, Tr. By Muḥammed Asad, (England: The Book Foundation, 2003) p 178.





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Although there are valid causes for variation, Allāh could have given humanity a universal law. Testing people's compliance with what Allāh has given them is one of the reasons. The truth will be acknowledged and accepted by those who comprehend the essence of the divine path and are not biased, even if it necessitates enacting new laws. Some people may reject fresh direction because they misinterpret the path's genuine spirit and become inflexible due to their embellishments.

All these rules aim to do is to encourage moral behaviour. Regardless of how different the laws may seem, people should still aim to be the best at virtues. Those who comprehend this goal should strive toward virtue by abiding by the rules and laws of heaven. He understands that arguments and conflicts cannot be used to overcome prejudices and obstinate views. Instead, these distinctions will be evaluated by Allāh in the last judgment. People will be able to comprehend the reality they have lived with throughout their lives at that point when the truth or falsity concealed in their arguments is exposed.

Sayyid Quṭb emphasises that the commandments of Allāh are too precious to be given up for any imagined temporary advantages, mainly since God is aware that these advantages will not come to pass. He says that Allāh purposefully made individuals with various tendencies, vulnerabilities, and outlooks on life. In Allāh's plan, this diversity fulfils a definite function. He has given everyone direction and inspired them to compete with each other in doing good actions. People are rewarded by Allāh when they return, according to the decisions and deeds they have committed throughout their lives.<sup>21</sup>

Similarly, the Qur'ān also explains that if Allāh wanted to make all human believers believe Him only, He would have done so.

...And had your Lord willed, those on earth would have believed – all of them together...<sup>22</sup>

It shows that the compulsion to follow a particular religion opposes the system of Allāh in which humans have the freedom to choose their beliefs. If Allāh wanted to make the whole of humanity His followers, there would not be any single man who rejects Him on this earth. Nevertheless, humans were free to select their belief system or reject it. Allāh postponed the judgment until the day of resurrection whether the man would get a reward from Him for his faith or punishment for his rejection. Anyhow, the verdict is with Allāh. This concept makes explicit that the Qur'ān strongly disagree with being pejorative and aggressive with the followers of other religions and encourages them to agree with how they are.

In contrast, they are only accountable to Allāh for their choice of belief—approving the multiple religions. People do not imply approving the final truth and the God of other religions, introducing one's religious views to others, or thoughtfully calling others to their religion.

<sup>21</sup> Sayyid Quṭb, *Tafsīr fī Zilāl al-Qur'ān*, Vol. 5, p 110

<sup>22</sup> Qur'ān, Sūrat Yūnus: 99.



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However, the correct meaning of plurality is to live with different kinds of people with different religious identities, values, and beliefs as one society with peace and harmony.

### THE CONCEPT OF DA'WAH IN ISLĀM AND ITS PROHIBITION OF FORCED CONVERSIONS

According to the Qur'ān, forcing others to believe is prohibited. Introducing and inviting to one's religion is not considered as forcing. The Qur'ān recommends inviting people towards Islām as it is obligatory for all Muslims to call upon excellently and witness the whole of humanity to inculcate the actual message. The manner of *Da'wah* is taught in the Qur'ān. The *Da'wah* should be done intelligently and politely.

The book of Allāh says,

Invite (mankind, O Muḥammad p.b.u.h) to the Way of your Lord (i.e. Islām) with wisdom (i.e. with the Divine Revelation and the Qur'ān) and fair preaching and argue with them in a way that is better. Truly, your Lord knows best who has gone astray from His Path, and He is the Best Aware of those who are guided.<sup>23</sup>

This emphasis on kindness and tact—and, thus, on using reason alone in religious dialogues with adherents of other creeds—perfectly aligns with the fundamental, categorical mandate, according to Muḥammed Asad. Moreover, numerous passages declare that there is no compulsion recognised in Islām.<sup>24</sup>

Al-Mawdūdī emphasises the significance of using discretion and intelligence to spread Islām. This aligns with the Qur'ān's mandate to properly communicate while considering the audience's intelligence, capacity, and circumstances. It embodies the Qur'ān's overarching purpose of conveying the message in a pertinent and significant way to the audience.

Al-Mawdūdī emphasises the idea of "excellent admonition," which entails addressing the audience's sentiments and emotions and providing logical reasoning. This is in line with the goal of the Qur'ān, which is to win people over with their hearts and minds. It emphasises how important it is to denounce abuses and persuade people of the disgusting nature of such actions and their detrimental effects.

Al-Mawdūdī stresses the significance of genuinely caring for the recipients' well-being. This is in line with the Qur'ān's teachings, which invite people to righteousness and point them

<sup>23</sup> Qur'ān, Sūrat al-Naḥl: 125.

<sup>24</sup> *The Message of the Qur'ān*, Tr. by Muḥammed Asad, p 463.



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in the direction of their own best interests. It emphasises that the admonisher should sincerely care about the audience's well-being and reform.

Al-Mawdūdī emphasises the significance of spreading Islām through the finest available means of communication. This entails acting with compassion and conviction, exhibiting moral integrity, and staying out of debates, polemics, and arguments. This is in line with the goal of the Qur'ān, which is to lead people to God's path via knowledge and inspiring discourses (Qur'ān 16:125). It places more emphasis on using persuasive and well-reasoned arguments than on using combative or polarising strategies.<sup>25</sup>

According to Quṭb's perspective, it is crucial for advocates to explicitly state that their job is to encourage people to walk the road that God has laid forth. This emphasises that the advocate's fundamental responsibility is to faithfully deliver the divine message, which aligns with the Qur'ānic aim of encouraging humanity to monotheism and good life. He underlines that the advocate should fulfil their obligation to their Lord without looking for favours or personal recognition. This is in line with the objective of the Qur'ān, which is to call individuals to worship God alone, without assistance or ulterior intentions.

Quṭb emphasises the value of discernment in advocating. Advocates must be aware of the audience's status and circumstances, adjust their message appropriately, and refrain from making things seem complicated or onerous. This aligns with the Qur'ān's goal of providing advice and effective communication while considering the audience's level of intelligence and preparedness.

He emphasises the value of gentle exhortation that speaks to hearts and aims to elicit positive emotions and actions. Advocates should avoid pointless criticism or chastisement and persuade others to heed God's instructions. This aligns with the Qur'ān's teaching that beautiful and wise preaching should win people over to the Almighty.

Quṭb highlights the significance of polite debate. Advocates should work to find the truth compassionately instead of attacking opponents personally or dehumanising them. This is in line with the goal of the Qur'ān, which is to call people to righteousness without hurting or offending them.

He emphasises the importance of upholding other people's dignity when debating. It should be evident to supporters that their goal is to find the truth, not to win disputes or brag. This aligns with the Qur'ān's teaching on maintaining respect and human dignity in relationships.<sup>26</sup>

The Qur'ān says:

<sup>25</sup> Abū al-A'īn Mawdūdī, *The Meaning of the Qur'ān*, Vol. 16, p 579-580.

<sup>26</sup> Sayyid Quṭb, *Tafsīr fī Zilāl al-Qur'ān*, Vol. 16, p 89-91.



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There is no compulsion in religion.<sup>27</sup>

Asad thoroughly explains the meaning of the term "*dīn*" in the Qur'ān. He emphasises that "*dīn*" refers to religion in its most comprehensive meaning, including doctrinal content, practical ramifications, and one's attitude towards their object of worship. It also incorporates the contents of and adherence to a morally binding law. Asad guarantees that readers comprehend the term's breadth and depth in the Qur'ān by doing this.

Asad highlights the Qur'ān's ban on coercion (*ikrāh*) in matters of faith or religion in his interpretation of this verse. He emphasises that all Islāmic jurists agree that forcing someone to convert to Islām is wrong in every situation and that trying to convert a nonbeliever is a severe transgression. This interpretation is consistent with the goal of the Qur'ān, which is to protect religious freedom and oppose coercion.

Asad's interpretation refutes the myth that Islām favours "conversion or the sword." He clarifies that Islām encourages a free and willing adoption of the faith rather than forced conversion by highlighting the prohibition of coercion and the significance of authentic faith. This explanation aims to dispel misconceptions and highlight the real significance of the Qur'ānic message.

In Asad's interpretation, the moral and ethical aspects of the Qur'ānic message are constantly emphasised. He emphasises the significance of comprehending and abiding by a morally obligatory law. He stresses rejecting coercion that contradicts Islām's moral and ethical precepts.<sup>28</sup>

In interpreting this passage, Abū al-A'lā al-Mawdūdī highlights the meaning of *dīn* and its consequences. He claims that the term *dīn* refers to the complete way of life based on the belief in Allāh, as stated in *Āyat al-Kursī*, as well as the religion itself. This expanded interpretation of *dīn* encompasses theological and Islāmic moral, ethical, and practical tenets.

The basic idea that no one can be forced to adopt or adhere to the Islāmic belief and way of life is emphasised by Al-Mawdūdī's reading of the Qur'ān. He underlines that one's free will and conviction are the only sources of true belief and commitment to the Islāmic way of life. It is not negotiable or forceful.

Al-Mawdūdī answers the goal of the Qur'ān, which is to defend the principle of freedom of belief and reject religious compulsion, by emphasising this issue. According to his perspective, Islām promotes a faith and way of life that are accepted voluntarily rather than through coercion, and it supports a sincere and voluntary acceptance of its teachings and ideals.<sup>29</sup>

<sup>27</sup> Qur'ān, Sūrat al-Baqarah: 256.

<sup>28</sup> *The Message of the Qur'ān*, Tr. By Muḥammed Asad, p 70.

<sup>29</sup> Abū al-A'lā Mawdūdī, *The Meaning of the Qur'ān*, Vol. 2 p186.



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Sayyid Quṭb uses his interpretation of this verse in *Fī Zilāl al- Qur'ān* to illustrate the idea of *Maqāṣid al- Qur'ān*, or the purposes or aims of the Qur'ān.

He highlights the tenet of the Qur'ān that one's religious beliefs are a matter of conviction and cannot be compelled to follow. He emphasises that faith should originate from an individual's free will and comprehension of the message, in line with the Qur'ān's goal of preserving religious liberty and distancing itself from coercion.

He emphasises how Islām considers all aspects of the human condition, including the mind, common sense, emotions, inner nature, and consciousness. This aligns with the Qur'ān's goal of conveying a complete message touching every aspect of human existence.

Quṭb compares the historical imposition of Christianity with the manner taken by Islām. He highlights that rather than relying on physical miracles or forceful methods, the message of Islām is based on facts, argument, explanation, and persuasion. This emphasises the Qur'ān's goal of using reasoned and convincing means to spread the word.

He examines the idea found in verse 2:256 of the Qur'ān, which states, "There shall be no compulsion in religion." The correct path is now distinguished from the wrong One." This idea reflects the Qur'ān's respect for human free will, cognition, and emotion and the freedom people have to select their views. It also fits in with the larger objective of freedom of belief and human emancipation.

Quṭb compares Islām's position on religious freedom and the authoritarian, oppressive ideologies and governments of the 20th century, which deprived people of their ability to select their beliefs and live by them. He highlights that the ability to hold any belief is a fundamental human right that characterises who we are as people.

Quṭb highlights how the Qur'ān reinforces the idea that accepting God as absolute and sovereign is the proper course to pursue while rejecting Him is the wrong One. This aligns with the Qur'ān's teaching that people should be guided towards faith in God, serenity, confidence, loftier ideals, and moral principles.

Quṭb discusses the seeming inconsistency between the idea of *jihād* and the religious precept of non-coercion. According to Quṭb, the goal of Islām's *jihād* advocacy is not to convert others to the faith but rather to defend it and guarantee the security and liberty of its adherents. This interpretation is consistent with the goal of the Qur'ān, which is to protect the faith and its adherents.

In placing *jihād* in its historical and modern context, Quṭb highlights its significance in protecting religious freedom and guaranteeing the right to practise and spread one's beliefs freely. He contends that the establishment of an equitable and tolerant society that upholds religious freedom requires *jihād* in order to overthrow despotic governments that persecute religious adherents. This reading is consistent with the goal of the Qur'ān, which is to preserve justice and protect the right to free speech and religion.



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According to Quṭb, *Jihād* aims to construct a just social order that respects individual freedom regardless of religious creed, not to impose Islāmic ideas. In Islāmic society, he highlights the value of individual freedom and dignity. This reading is consistent with the goal of the Qur'ān, which is to create a morally and just societal structure.

According to Quṭb, power is necessary for the Islāmic order to continue existing, defend its adherents, and survive. He contends that *jihād* is a safeguard against outside dangers and a way of sustaining and advancing Muslim society. This reading is consistent with the goal of the Qur'ān, which is to protect the faith and its adherents.

Sayyid Quṭb also highlights the importance of Muslims having a self-assured and patriotic vision of Islām, considering the ideas of "no compulsion in religion" and the need to be ready for self-defence and defend the faith when needed. He exhorts Muslims to trust the history and teachings of Islām. This assurance is consistent with the Qur'ān's goal of encouraging faith and conviction in Islām's veracity. Believers are exhorted to embrace their beliefs proudly and firmly.

He emphasises how crucial it is for Muslims to be ready to defend their faith if it is in danger. This aligns with the Qur'ān's goal to preserve and propagate the faith. In the face of assault, the Qur'ān recognises the necessity of self-defence.

According to Quṭb, the true enemies of humanity are those who stand in the way of Islām's advancement and the propagation of its teachings. This is consistent with the goal of the Qur'ān, which is to defend justice and fight oppression. It suggests that Muslims ought to fight to uphold their religious freedom and against attempts to discredit their faith.

Quṭb serves as a reminder to Christians of their duty to cherish and distribute the gifts and direction they have received from God. This is in line with the goal of the Qur'ān, which is to uphold justice and goodness in society. Muslims have to spread the word of Islām to others.<sup>30</sup>

It is crucial to note that the free will to reject the invitation is up to the invitee. The Qur'ān did not say any penalty for the rejection of the *Da'wah*. It is between them and their God when they persist in rejecting their God.

But if they turn away (O Muḥammad p.b.u.h from the Islāmic Monotheism which you have brought to them). We have not sent you (O Muḥammad p.b.u.h) as a *Hafīz* (watcher, protector) over them (i.e. to take care of their deeds and to recompense them). Your duty is to convey (the message).<sup>31</sup>

<sup>30</sup> Sayyid Quṭb, *Tafsīr fī Zilāl al-Qur'ān*, Vol. 2, p 353.

<sup>31</sup> Qur'ān, Sūrat al-Shūrā: 48.



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Al-Mawdūdī says that you (Muḥammad p.b.u.h) have not been made responsible and must bring them to the right path anyhow, nor will you be held accountable for why these people did not come to the right path.

Al-Mawdūdī's view is consistent in clarifying the Qur'ān's message. He underlines that the Prophet Muḥammad's (p.b.u.h) job is to deliver the word accurately and truthfully; he is not responsible for ensuring everyone understands it. This clarity ensures that people understand the message and make their choices freely.

Al-Mawdūdī's interpretation upholds the goal of the Qur'ān, which is to defend human free will. He emphasises that while the Prophet is responsible for spreading the word, he cannot coerce or force anyone to believe. This honours the person's right to decide whether or not to accept the message.

Al-Mawdūdī recognises that the decisions taken by humans will not hold the Prophet Muḥammad (p.b.u.h) responsible. This is consistent with the accountability goal of the Qur'ān, which holds each person accountable for their deeds and convictions.

The interpretation of Al-Mawdūdī upholds the concept of non-coercion in matters of faith found in the Qur'ān. The Prophet's job is to convey the word and give people the freedom to choose, not to convert them to Islām by force.<sup>32</sup>

### INTERFAITH RELATIONS AND COEXISTENCE IN ISLĀM

The Islāmic stand about the relationship of Muslims with non-Muslims is based on harmony, coexistence, and justice. The Qur'ān stated that Muslims should have a good relationship with innocent non-Muslims.

Allāh does not forbid you to deal justly and kindly with those who fought not against you on account of religion nor drove you out of your homes. Verily, Allāh loves those who deal with equity.<sup>33</sup>

This holy verse emphasises a Muslim's responsibility to be kind to others who live with him, regardless of religion. Allāh used the word *Qisṭ*, which means justice, and *Birr*, which means kind. The same word, *Birr*, and its roots are used in the Qur'ān and ḥadīth in the sense of doing good to parents, *Birr al vālidayn*. The meaning of the word *Birr* is beyond kindness. It includes kindness and respect in the relationship between parents and their children. So, Islām advises Muslims to have such a relationship with non-Muslims. The other word used by Allāh in this verse is *Qisṭ*, which is translated as justice. The word *'adl* is also used in Arabic for justice. However, some scholars say the *Qisṭ* has a deeper meaning than *'adl*. *'Adl* means giving others rights without a decrease or increase. However, the *Qisṭ* means giving their rights

<sup>32</sup> Abū al-A'īā Mawdūdī, *The Meaning of the Qur'ān*, Vol. 42 p545.

<sup>33</sup> Qur'ān, Sūrat al-Mumtaḥinah: 8.



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and being justice more than their limit. Ibn al- 'Arabī denotes that being kind to non-Muslims with Justice (*Qisṭ*) is not only being justice, but it is beyond that to the extent that you should offer them even some of your wealth to uphold a good bond with them. Al-Qurṭubī mentions the statement of Ibn al-'Arabī in his *Tafsīr* that the *Qisṭ* here denotes not 'Adl because 'Adl is obligatory on someone who fights against Muslims and someone who does not fight.<sup>34</sup>

Concerning relationships with non-Muslims in particular, Sayyid Quṭb offers insights into how this verse applies the *Maqāṣid al- Qur'ān*, or the higher goals and purposes of the Qur'ān. Quṭb continues by pointing out that this verse authorises Muslims to keep cordial ties with non-Muslims who did not wage war against them or expel them from their homes because of their religion. The verse essentially permits cordial relations with non-Muslims who do not directly threaten Muslims.

However, he stresses that the Qur'ān categorically forbids Muslims from developing relations with anyone who actively opposed them, drove them from their land, or assisted in driving them out. Those who were personally involved in acts of aggression against Muslims are subject to this prohibition.

According to Quṭb, the idea expressed in this passage is consistent with Islām's more extensive perspective on the universe and human life. It embodies the fundamental principles of Islāmic international law, which views peace as the presumptive state in interpersonal relationships. Unless aggression, treason, the restriction of religious freedom, or any other type of injustice is perpetrated, Islām upholds peace.

He emphasises that religious differences are the primary source of hostility between Muslims and non-Muslims. Islām insists on the right to practise freely and spread one's religion without interference. Muslims are obligated to protect this freedom from being repressed by force.

According to Quṭb, this directive supports the idea that Muslims are united by their shared religious beliefs. It denotes the significance of faith as the fundamental source of Muslims' identity and motivation. His view is consistent with the surah's subject, which emphasises the importance of religion in Muslims' lives and deeds. The surah exhorts Muslims to live harmoniously with those who accept their religion.

Sayyid Quṭb's interpretation of this verse from the Qur'ān emphasises the importance of faith as a unifying concept for Muslims and the Qur'ān's universal values of justice and fairness. It allows for equitable and peaceful dealings with non-Muslims who do not directly threaten. Additionally, it emphasises the prohibition against developing friendships with individuals who actively support hostilities. This instruction is consistent with Islām's larger goals of upholding justice and defending religious freedom.<sup>35</sup>

<sup>34</sup> Shams al-Dīn Al-Qurṭubī, *Al-Jāmi' li Aḥkām al-Qur'ān*, ed. by Hishām Samīr al-Bukhārī, vol. 18:59.

<sup>35</sup> Sayyid Quṭb, *Tafsīr fī Zilāl al-Qur'ān*, Vol. 60, p 468-470.





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Al-Mawdūdī provides a reply in response to the query of whether Muslims ought to mistreat all unbelievers, whether they are hostile or not. According to al-Mawdūdī, "justice" has a particular meaning in this context. He contends that "justice" in this setting entails a division between two types of nonbelievers: hostile and non-hostile. He contends that treating these two categories of nonbelievers equally would not be just.

According to Al-Mawdūdī, it is acceptable for Muslims to have a strict attitude towards non-Muslims who aggressively persecute them, coerce them into renouncing their faith, drive them from their homes, and pursue them even after they have been expelled. In other words, people who actively participate in attacks against Muslims should face serious consequences.

Al-Mawdūdī, on the other hand, emphasises the need to treat those nonbelievers well who were not complicit in the violence and persecution of Muslims. He says that Muslims should uphold the obligations owed to these non-hostile nonbelievers as a result of their familial and other connections. He promotes fairness and kindness in this regard.

In this context, Al-Mawdūdī's interpretation and application of *Maqāṣid al-Qur'ān* centre on the concepts of justice, fairness, and differentiation based on people's deeds and behaviours. It exemplifies the Qur'ān's goal of fostering justice and fairness in interpersonal relationships.

The interpretation of Al-Mawdūdī emphasises the value of preserving kinship and blood ties with non-hostile nonbelievers. Muslims can uphold the idea of preserving familial ties even with individuals who do not share their faith by treating them with kindness.

Al-Mawdūdī's view strongly emphasises striking a balance between kindness and justice. Non-aggressive disbelievers should be handled relatively and compassionately, but hostile disbelievers may be punished harshly due to their acts against Muslims.<sup>36</sup>

Ibn 'Āshūr places a strong emphasis on the virtues of fairness, compassion, and equity while dealing with non-Muslims, especially those who have not waged war on Muslims because of their faith or driven them from their homes. He explains many facets of how Muslims should approach non-Muslims as well as the circumstances in which they should be fair and kind to them.

He begins by describing the idea of *isti'nāf*, which refers to distinguishing between non-Muslims who are enemies of Islām and those who are not, in order to explain this verse. He quotes chapters from the Qur'ān that stress the importance of not siding with God's enemies, and he notes that Allāh made an exception for those non-Muslims who did not show animosity towards Muslims. These non-Muslims were strongly opposed to Islām, and they practised a faith that was utterly at odds with Islām.

<sup>36</sup> Abū al-A'ālā Mawdūdī, *The Meaning of the Qur'ān*, Vol. 60, p 468.



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This verse (from *Sūrah al-Mumtaḥnah*) emphasises the value of fairness and kindness when dealing with non-Muslims, according to Ibn 'Āshūr. Muslims are urged to treat non-Muslims who are not actively hostile towards Islām or Muslims with kindness and fairness. Then, he talks about a specific instance involving a lady named Qutaylah who travelled to Madīnah to see her daughter during a time of peace between the Prophet of Allāh and the Quraysh. In response to Asmā' binti Abī Bakr's inquiry on whether or not she should keep in touch with her mother, the Prophet urged Asmā' to do so. Abū Bakr was the companion of the Prophet. He goes on to discuss the meanings of the words *Birr* (kindness) and *qist* (justice) and how Muslims are supposed to interact with non-Muslims in a way that is fair and compassionate. It emphasises how much Allāh adores righteous people. He ends by saying that this passage permits treating persons of the covenant (non-Muslims who live under Muslim rule) well and even showing gratitude for their possessions.<sup>37</sup>

### CLARIFYING MISCONCEPTIONS ON QUR'ĀNIC VERSES ABOUT FIGHTING NON-MUSLIMS

There are misunderstandings about some verses of the holy Qur'ān among people, whether Muslims or non-Muslims. To clarify and understand the objectives of those verses, one should study the backgrounds in which context it was revealed and to whom it has been revealed. For example, some verses from the Qur'ān induce Muslims to fight and kill non-Muslims, "*Kill the Mushrikūn (polytheists) wherever you find them...*"<sup>38</sup>

The context and circumstances in which the phrase "*kill the polytheists wherever you find them*" was revealed are reflected in Sayyid Quṭb's interpretation of the verse. He offers a thorough exegesis of the passage, taking into account both the historical context and the Qur'ān's overarching purpose. According to Sayyid Quṭb, this passage denotes the beginning of an all-out war against the idolaters who have long tormented and fought the Muslims. After a time of grace, during which fighting was not permitted unless necessary for self-defence, the verse was revealed. According to Sayyid Quṭb, these four months allowed the idolaters to repent of their behaviour and perhaps even convert to Islām. It was not a retaliation drive; it was a warning. He says the idolaters would be spared if they repented, accepted Islām, prayed consistently, and gave alms. They had the opportunity to adopt Islām because this was a sincere promise of peace. Sayyid Quṭb highlights the humanitarian side of Islām by asserting that individual idolaters seeking shelter were to be given protection even during a state of war. This deed served as an illustration of the mercy and wisdom of Islām. He emphasises that even in times of turmoil, Islām's ultimate objective was to lead people in the right direction. In order to give adversaries a chance to learn about Islām, protection was given to those seeking sanctuary.

<sup>37</sup> Muḥammad Ṭāhir Ibn 'Āshūr, *Al-Tahrīr wa al-Tanwīr*, (Tūnus: Al-Dār al-Tūnusiyyah, 1984) Vol. 28, p 151-153.

<sup>38</sup> Qur'ān, Sūrat al-Taubah: 5.



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Sayyid Quṭb dispels the myth that the purpose of *jihād* in Islām was to convert people against their will. He contends that guidance and self-defence rather than compulsion were the fundamental goals of *jihād*. In Sayyid Quṭb's perspective, emphasis is placed on Islām's commitment to justice and compassion during conflict. He highlights Islām's larger message, which aims to defend the values of justice and self-defence, lead humanity, and protect those seeking sanctuary.<sup>39</sup>

O you who believe (in Allāh's Oneness and in His messenger Muḥammad p.b.u.h)! Verily, the *Mushrikūn* (polytheists, pagans, idolaters, disbelievers in the Oneness of Allāh, and in the Message of Muḥammad p.b.u.h) are *Najasun* (impure). So let them not come near *al-Masjid al-Haram* (at Makkah) after this year; and if you fear poverty, Allāh will enrich you if He wills, out of His Bounty. Surely, Allāh is All-Knowing, All-Wise.<sup>40</sup>

The word *najas* is used in this verse to characterise the polytheists' spiritual condition, suggesting that they are morally or spiritually unclean because of their affiliation with polytheism or disbelief. This phrase, which has a spiritual rather than a physical connotation, is used only once in the Qur'ān. Muḥammed Asad's explanation strongly emphasises the term's spiritual connotation. It is consistent with the bedouin definition of the term *najas*, which is used to designate someone immoral or unfaithful.

The verse refers to the *Ka'bah* in Makkah as the "Inviolable House of Worship" (*al-Masjid al-Ḥarām*). The warning is addressed towards polytheists, warning them not to enter Makkah's sacred area after the given year, signifying that they are spiritually dirty and should not enter this most sacred of places.

This rule was implemented to eradicate any traces of ignorance and *shirk*. Since the disbelievers were forbidden from entering the *Al Masjid-Al Ḥarām*'s holy premises, they were also restricted from performing the *Ḥajj* and visiting the shrine. They are unclean not just because of their physical appearance but also their beliefs, morals, actions, and ignorance. Because of this, they are not allowed to get inside the holy place's consecrated grounds. Varying people have had varying interpretations of this rule. According to Imām Abū Ḥanīfah, it merely forbids them from doing the *Ḥajj* and *'Umrah* and from engaging in ignorance-promoting rituals within the holy premises. However, Imām Al-Shāfi'ī believes that they have been barred from entering the *al Masjid-al Ḥarām* for any reason at all. They are not only not permitted to enter *al-Masjid al- Ḥarām* but any mosque, according to Imām Malik. The Prophet (p.b.u.h) allowed disbelievers to enter the Prophet's mosque in Madīnah; hence, the last opinion is incorrect.<sup>41</sup>

<sup>39</sup> Sayyid Quṭb, *Tafsīr fī Zilāl al-Qur'ān*, Vol. 9, p 55,56.

<sup>40</sup> Qur'ān, Sūrat al-Tawbah: 28.

<sup>41</sup> Abū al-A'la Mawdūdī, *The Meaning of the Qur'ān*, Vol. 9, p186-187.



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Sayyid Quṭb's interpretation of this verse highlights the idolaters' fundamental impurity by emphasising their abstract impurity. They may not be physically unclean, but the text emphasises their spiritual uncleanness and exhorts believers to seek purification when dealing with them. The stringent rule that forbids idolaters from being present in the *Ḥaram* area indicates the significance of cleanliness linked with this revered location. Idol worshippers are considered impure; hence, they are told to stay away from the Sacred Mosque since it is a source of purity.

In order to ensure the welfare of the Makkān populace, Quṭb understands the probable economic costs of prohibiting idolaters from participating in trade and pilgrimage. However, he adds that if believers put their faith first, they need not worry about their livelihood because God wants their hearts to be devoted to their faith. They will prosper from God's bounty, and He governs everything with insight and discernment.

The Qur'ān aims to lead Muslims toward complete devotion to Allāh and the holy religion. The backdrop of this *sūrah* comes after Makkah was conquered. Quṭb highlights the need for education in the Muslim community in order to advance their faith while also pointing out weaknesses within it. He also emphasises the critical distinction between the *jāhiliyyah* approach, which results in human enslavement, and the approach of Islām centred on serving Allāh alone. In order to appreciate the genuine importance of Islāmic laws and regulations governing interactions with other societies, it is essential to comprehend these disparities.<sup>42</sup>

In this verse, the word *mushrikūn* specifies the idol worshipers. The Qur'ān names the Jews and Christians *ahl al-kitāb*, which means the people of scripture. One can understand the differentiation from the verse,

Those who disbelieve from among the people of the Scripture (Jews and Christians) and *Al-Mushrikūn* (the polytheists) were not going to leave (their disbelief) until until there came to them clear evidence.<sup>43</sup>

The so-called verses claimed against non-Muslims are sometimes misunderstood and misrepresented by some people without looking at the actual historical context and the previous and later verses that speak about this same matter in other places of the Qur'ān. Such verses talk about only the tyrannies and the subjugations and the cruelties of the idolaters against Muslims in the lifetime of the Prophet (p.b.u.h). Some Jews and Christians also had hostility toward Muslims. However, mostly the idolaters of Makkah tortured and killed the Muslims, and some captured their wealth and properties unjustly. They were chased after only because they were Muslims and obeyed Allāh's messenger. There are many examples available. The Makkans killed Ammār's family: his mother, Sumayyah, and his father, Yāsir.

<sup>42</sup> Sayyid Quṭb, *Tafsīr fī Zilāl al-Qur'ān*, Vol. 9, p 77,78.

<sup>43</sup> Qur'ān, Sūrat al- Bayyinah: 1.



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Moreover, many were killed; apart from them were many *huffāz* who kept Allāh's Qur'ān in their hearts. All of them were troubled by them only because they accepted the Oneness of Allāh and addressed Islām to the people of their surroundings. On top of that, those cruel idolaters even killed the messengers of the Prophet (p.b.u.h), who were sent to the leaders to convey the message of the Prophet (p.b.u.h). It is considered a great crime in our era to kill the ambassador of any country, which will cause war later. The *Mushrikūn* did not leave by that. They sent requesting letters to the governors and leaders to kill the Prophet (p.b.u.h). They betrayed, cheated, and broke promises and truces like the treaty in *ḥudaybiyyah*. So, their problem is not based on religion or race but on their oppression and criminality. However, what the Qur'ān expects to be with non-Muslims is to live peacefully and with peaceful coexistence filled with justice, mutual and brotherly understanding, and respectful manner apart from the religion or race. We can see this unique objective in the Qur'ān itself.

The Qur'ān, in case orders to kill all the non-Muslims wherever found, then the people with different religions would live peacefully in the countries where many Muslims live or in the countries where Islām rule is being executed. However, they have lived peacefully until now since Islām came to the world. When Islām spread worldwide, many countries came under Islām rule; if the Qur'ān's objective was to eradicate the non-Muslims, almost no non-Muslims could survive in the Muslim lands. Some Muslims may not be good enough to pressure some people from non-Muslims, but it might happen because of misunderstanding or unawareness of the objective of the Qur'ān. The Qur'ān places first preference everyone not to compel or pressure anyone for the sake of religion.

### SUGGESTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PROMOTING HARMONY

The difficulties that Indian Muslims have had as a result of the actions of Hindu militant groups have had a substantial and wide-ranging influence on the Muslim population in India. Muslims now live in a hostile and fearful environment as a result of the violence and prejudice that these groups continue to practice. As a result, their standard of living has fallen, they are now more impoverished, and they have less access to jobs and educational possibilities. The cycle of violence and discrimination has only been furthered by the lack of justice and accountability for these crimes, further marginalising the Muslim community.

The Indian government must adopt a firm position against Hindu extremist groups and make them responsible for their deeds in order to address these issues. This can be accomplished by tightening the enforcement of laws and regulations intended to stop violence and discrimination and by stepping up efforts to address the underlying causes of these problems through community participation and educational initiatives.

It is also crucial for non-Muslim communities in India to take the initiative to cooperate and establish bridges of understanding with their Muslim neighbours. This can include campaigns to inform the public about the varied experiences and viewpoints of the Muslim



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community, as well as programmes to foster trust and respect between people through similar interests and volunteer work.

The *Maqāṣid al-Qur'ān*, also known as the Qur'ānic goals, offers a framework for advancing social justice, compassion, and understanding. Within this framework, the following actions can be taken into consideration in order to resolve the problems and misperceptions that exist between Indian Muslims and non-Muslims:

**Education and Awareness:** The Qur'ān's promotion of knowledge and awareness is one of its primary goals. This can be accomplished by implementing educational programmes presenting factual information and increasing awareness of both populations.

In order to decrease misunderstandings and advance tolerance and understanding between Muslim and non-Muslim populations, discourse and communication are encouraged.

**Community Building:** Supporting activities that foster a feeling of shared identity and community, such as sports, cultural events, and volunteer work, can aid in removing social and cultural barriers.

**Political Leadership:** Political leaders are essential in fostering racial harmony and resolving racial conflicts. They can endeavour to advance laws that advance justice and equality for all, irrespective of religion.

In order to encourage coexistence and close the gap, it is essential to emphasise the principles that both communities share, such as justice, compassion, and respect for human dignity.

**Encourage Tolerance and Acceptance:** The Qur'ān strongly emphasises these qualities, and encouraging them can ease tensions between various populations.

### **CONCLUSION**

The *Maqāṣid al-Qur'ān* framework has been used to thoroughly examine the problems and difficulties in resolving disputes and erasing misunderstandings between Muslims and non-Muslims. This article has demonstrated that the *Maqāṣid al-Qur'ān* offers an invaluable framework for fostering understanding and harmony across various religious communities by examining different religious communities' difficulties and potential solutions to these difficulties. This article has illustrated the possibilities for religious tolerance and understanding as well as the role that Muslims can play in this process by drawing on the teachings of the Qur'ān and the *Maqāṣid al-Qur'ān*. The study added to a more significant discussion on the value of religious tolerance and understanding and offered workable strategies for resolving issues that different religious communities encounter. Ultimately, this study emphasises the importance of ongoing involvement and communication across various religious communities in fostering understanding and creating a more peaceful world.



## Promoting Interfaith Harmony: Examining Problems and Misunderstandings Between Muslims and Non-Muslims in India within the Framework of Maqāṣid Al-Qur'ān

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Encouraging tolerance between Muslims and non-Muslims in India necessitates a holistic strategy that includes initiatives to inform and increase awareness, promote communication and dialogue, foster community development, and support laws that advance equality and justice. We can contribute to creating a society that is more harmonious and peaceful by cooperating within the confines of the *Maqāṣid al-Qur'ān*.

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