Concepts of Peace and Peacemaking in Islam
Key virtues

Peace
Compassion
Mercy
Forgiveness
Forbearance
Patience
Clemency
Generosity
Justice
Equality
Peace

‘Peace is a Word Spoken by a Merciful God!’ (Quran 36:58)

• Islamic peacemaking is a teaching and tradition that has the potential to transcend divisions.

58. (It will be said to them): Salâm (peace be on you) — a Word from the Lord (Allâh), Most Merciful.

Quran 36:58
Islamic Peacebuilding

‘It may be that God will grant love [and friendship] between you and those whom ye [now] hold as enemies. For God is Oft-Forgiving, Most-Merciful’ (Quran 60:7).

• From a religious or spiritual perspective peacebuilding makes explicit the connection between ‘inner’ and ‘outer’ peace

7. Perhaps Allâh will make friendship between you and those whom you hold as enemies. And Allâh has power (over all things), and Allâh is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful.

Quran 60:7
Peace

**Negative peace** refers to the absence of violence but can include latent conflicts.

**Positive peace** is the restoration of relationships, establishment of justice, and the creation of just social systems that serve the needs of the whole population.

**Peace** is the framework within which conflicts unfold non-violently and creatively into positive change.

Diversity and Unity

‘O humankind! Be careful of your duty to your Lord Who created you from a single soul and from it created its mate and from them twain hath spread abroad a multitude of men and women.’ (Quran 4:1)
Diversity and co-existence

‘O mankind! We created you from a single [pair] of a male and female, and made you into nations and tribes, that you may come to know one another. Verily the most honoured among you in the sight of God is the most righteous of you. (49:13).

‘And had your Lord so willed, He could have surely made all human beings into one single community: but (He willed it otherwise, and so) they continue to hold divergent views’ (11:118).

118. And if your Lord had so willed, He could surely have made mankind one Ummah [nation or community (following one religion i.e. Islâm)], but they will not cease to disagree.

(Quran 11:118)
Tolerance and co-existence

256. There is no compulsion in religion. Verily, the Right Path has become distinct from the wrong path. Whoever disbelieves in Tāghūt and believes in Allāh, then he has grasped the most trustworthy handhold that will never break. And Allāh is All-Hearer, All-Knower.

(Quran 2:256)

2. “I worship not that which you worship,
3. “Nor will you worship that which I worship.
4. “And I shall not worship that which you are worshipping.
5. “Nor will you worship that which I worship.
6. “To you be your religion, and to me my religion

(Quran 109:1)
Sacredness of life and Non-violence

29. O you who believe! Eat not up your property among yourselves unjustly except it be a trade amongst you, by mutual consent. And do not kill yourselves (nor kill one another). Surely, Allâh is Most Merciful to you.}

(Quran 4:29)

32. Because of that 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 he killed all mankind, and if anyone saved a life, it would be as if he saved the life of all mankind. And indeed, there came to them Our Messengers with clear proofs, evidences, and signs, even then after that many of them continued to exceed the limits (e.g. by doing oppression unjustly and exceeding beyond the limits set by Allâh by committing the major sins) in the land!

(Quran 5:32)
Forgiveness and reconciliation

40. The recompense for an evil is an evil like thereof; but whoever forgives and makes reconciliation, his reward is with Allâh. Verily, He likes not the Zâlimûn

(Quran 42:40)

96. Repel evil with that which is better. We are Best-Acquainted with the things they utter.

(Quran 23:96)

‘...repel evil (not with evil) but with something that is better (ahsan) - that is, with forgiveness and amnesty.’ (Quran 23:96)
Reconciliation – key concepts

Sulh

Peace, defined in opposition to conflict or war. Establishment of peace (a situation of non-conflict) between groups, an agreement or truce or settlement between groups to halt and prevent further conflict or violence. Establishing communal unity and peace, often through a visible public action negotiated by mediators working with both groups.

Musalaha

Reconciliation between groups

Islah, al-Islah

Usually means ‘reform’, improve, but also used for the process of reconciliation
Reconciliation

• The concept has religious roots
• Is often not just *an* important issue, but *the most* critical one in any protracted conflict
• At the most basic level, reconciliation is all about individuals. It cannot be forced on people. They have to decide on their own whether to [forgive](#) and reconcile with their one-time adversaries.
Reconciliation

Stages in reconciliation process

• Truth (coming to acknowledge there is some merit to the other side's interpretation of events),
• Justice (gaining redress as a means of putting the past to rest),
• Mercy regard (forgiveness on the part of victims), and
• Security (expectations of peaceful coexistence)
Islam and Reconciliation

• Reconciliation is not just a physical process, but involves personal healing and, ultimately, forgiveness.

• ‘The recompense of an injury is an injury the like thereof; but whoever forgives and thereby brings about a re-establishment of harmony, his reward is with God; and God loves not the wrongdoers.’ (Quran 42:40)
Mediation, reconciliation and arbitration

• Differences from ‘western’ understandings
• Consultation, reconciliation, arbitration, settlement
• Justice (qist, ‘adl)
• Person / interest / position distinctions in ‘western’ mediation approaches
• But a number of useful approaches that can be used in certain settings
Ahmad ibn Hanbal, Hadith no. 1851

‘Truly, the religion is ease. Anyone who tries to outdo the religion in strictness, it will overcome him. So remain steadfast and be moderate, and seek help with journeys of the morning and evening and a part of the night.’

Bukhari, Mishkat al-Masabih (Book of Prayer) no. 12

Balance and moderation against extremism

1851. It was narrated that Ibn ‘Abbas said: The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said to me on the morning of Muzdalifah: “Pick up (pebbles) for me.” I picked up for him small pebbles (the size of broad beans). When I put them in his hand, he said: “Yes, like these. And beware of going to extremes in religious matters, for those who came before you were destroyed because of going to extremes in religious matters.”

Comments: [Its isnad is saheeh]
Other conceptual points

Individual **choice** – there is always a choice and always a choice to do good, and treat others with justice, generosity and kindness.

Individual **responsibility** – towards God, oneself and towards living in peace and harmony with others

Sacredness of life

Very strong aversion to disorder, discord and chaos

Patience and perseverance

Hospitality and the treatment of a stranger

Historical events that are based on negotiating treaties, truces and peace
Thank you!