

The Nonviolent Crescent: Eight Theses on Muslim Nonviolent Actions

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From 1982 to 1984, Muslims from two villages in Ta Chana district, Surat Thani, in southern Thailand had been killing one another in vengeance; seven people had died. Then on January 7, 1985, which happened to be a Maulid day (to celebrate Prophet Muhammad's birthday), all parties came together and settled the bloody feud. Haji Fan, the father of the latest victim, stood up with the Holy Qur'an above his head and vowed to end the killings. With tears in his eyes and for the sake of peace in both communities, he publicly forgave the murderer who had assassinated his son. Once again, stories and sayings of the Prophet had been used to induce concerned parties to resolve violent conflict peacefully.¹

Examples such as this abound in Islam. Their existence opens up possibilities of confidently discussing the notion of nonviolence in Islam. They promise an exciting adventure into the unusual process of exploring the relationship between Islam and nonviolence.

This chapter is an attempt to suggest that Islam already possesses the whole catalogue of qualities necessary for the conduct of successful nonviolent actions. An incident that occurred in Pattani, southern Thailand, in 1975 is used as an illustration. Finally, several theses are suggested as guidelines for both the theory and practice of Islam and the different varieties of nonviolence, including nonviolent struggle.

JIHAD

A discussion of Islamic action against injustice is necessarily an examination of one of the most controversial concepts in Islam—*jihad*. Generally translated as “holy war,” the term *jihad* connotes to non-Muslims desperate acts of irrational and fanatical people who want to impose their worldview on others. But this imposition is virtually untenable because the Qur’an says “Let there be no compulsion in religion.” In fact, it can be argued that the great Arab conquests were essentially political and ideological. The Muslims were willing to tolerate pluralistic societies, which allowed the tensions of older tyrannies to be relaxed. Islam simply offered many peoples of the seventh and eighth centuries a freer, more secure and peaceful life than they had experienced in the past.² Sometimes the conversion process took place in exchange for a Muslim divine’s bureaucratic, religious, and educational services. Historically, especially in Southeast Asia, Islam seemed to stress continuity rather than conflict with previous cultures.³

What then is the meaning of *jihad*? Some Muslims considered *jihad* to be the sixth pillar of Islam.⁴ Among the Muslim legal school, the *Khawarij* (seceders) used *jihad* to impose their opinion on the rest of the Muslim community in the name of transcendent and extreme idealism. They insisted that because the Prophet spent most of his life in war, the faithful should follow his example—that the Islamic state should be organized for war, and heretics forcibly converted or put to the sword.⁵ But for Muslims, whose criteria for conduct are the Qur’an and the Hadith (traditions of the Prophet), historical examples pale in the face of the Qur’anic verses.

Fight in the cause of Allah
Those who fight you,
But do not transgress limits;
For Allah loveth not transgressors. (2:190)

According to this verse, aggression is prohibited in Islam, and the fighting that is permitted has its limits. The admonition of other relevant verses provides clarification:

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And fight them on
Until there is no more
Tumult or oppression,
And there prevail
Justice and faith in Allah. (2:193)

Altogether and everywhere. (8:39)

One of the reasons for fighting oppression is

For tumult and oppression
Are worse than slaughter. (2:191)

In this sense, fighting in the cause of God in Islam is basically synonymous with fighting for justice. The Qur'an has a precise injunction to substantiate this point:

And why should ye not
Fight in the cause of Allah
And of those who, being weak
Are ill-treated (and oppressed)?
Men, women and children,
Whose cry is "Our Lord!
Rescue us from this town,
Whose people are oppressors;
And raise for us from Thee
One who will protect;
And raise for us from Thee
One who will help!" (4:75)

There is no need to probe deeper into the exegesis of these verses. For the purpose of this analysis, it can be concluded that *jihad* means to stand up to oppression, despotism, and injustice (whenever it is committed) and on behalf of the oppressed (whoever they may be). In its most general meaning, *jihad* is an effort, a striving for justice and truth that need not be violent. According to 'Abd-af-Radhiq's reading of the Qur'an, God has instructed the Muslims to propagate their religion only through peaceful persuasion and preaching.⁶

Classical Muslim scholars have placed *jihad* in three categories. Ibn Taymiya, for example, argues that *jihad* is achieved sometimes by the heart, sometimes by the tongue, and sometimes by the hand. *Jihad* of the heart, against one's own weaknesses and inner evil, is often described as the "greater *jihad*," while the "lesser *jihad*" is fought against external enemies. Ibn Taymiya also suggests two cardinal rules for *jihad* by the tongue and by the hand: understanding and patience.⁷

Jihad can be differentiated according to the direction (inner and outer) and method (violent and nonviolent). The inner *jihad* in the narrowest sense is fought within the individual. In a broader sense, the outer *jihad* may be seen as a struggle to eliminate evil within the *ummah* (community). On an even broader reading, *jihad* can be thought of as a struggle within that portion of humanity that accepts some form of spiritual guidance in order to purify itself.⁸ In short, *jihad* is the command of Allah Almighty and the traditions of Prophet Muhammad that demand a perpetual self-reexamination in terms of one's potential to fight tyranny and oppression—a continual reassessment of the means for achieving peace and inculcating moral responsibility.⁹

The point, however, is not to dwell on the conventional wisdom of separating the concept of *jihad* into wars and self-purification. What is most important for contemporary Muslims is that *jihad* categorically places the notion of war and violence in the moral realm. The purpose of *jihad*, ultimately, is to put an end to "structural violence."¹⁰ But the means used are not independent of moral scrutiny. On the basis of the Qur'an and the Sunnah, rules have been enunciated to forbid Muslims to kill noncombatants. One of the Hadiths reports these instructions by the Prophet: "Go in God's name, trusting in God, and adhering to the religion of God's messenger. Do not kill a decrepit old man, or a young infant, or a woman; do not be dishonest about booty, but collect your spoils, do right and act well, for God loves those who do well."¹¹ Not only are the lives of the noncombatants deemed sacred, but the Qur'an requires that even a tree must be spared:

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Whether ye cut down (O ye Muslims!)
The tender palm-tree
Or ye left them standing
On their roots, it was
By leave of God, and
In order that He might
Cover with shame
The rebellious transgressors. (59:5)

The placing of *jihad* within the Islamic ethical sphere also means that wanton destruction of an enemy's crops or property is strictly forbidden. This principle was clearly stated in a speech the first Caliph, Abu Bakr, made when he sent his army on an expedition to the Syrian borders:

Stop, O people, that I may give you ten rules for your guidance in the battlefield. Do not commit treachery or deviate from the right path. You must not mutilate dead bodies. Neither kill a child, nor a woman, nor an aged man. Bring no harm to the trees, nor burn them with fire, especially those which are fruitful. Slay not any of the enemy's flock, save for your food. You are likely to pass by people who have devoted their lives to monastic services, leave them alone.¹²

Transgressors of these principles were rebuked. At one time during the conquest, the authorities apprehended a girl who had been publicly singing satirical poems about Caliph Abu Bakr and amputated her hand. When Abu Bakr heard this news, he was shocked and wrote a letter to the *muhajir* who had punished the girl.

I have learnt that you laid hands on a woman who had hurled abuses on me, and therefore, had her hand amputated. God has not sought vengeance even in the case of polytheism, which is a great crime. He has not permitted mutilation even with regard to manifest infidelity. Try to be considerate and sympathetic in your attitude toward others in the future. Never mutilate, because it is a grave offence. God purified Islam and the Muslims from rashness and excessive wrath. You are well aware of the fact that those enemies fell into the hands of the Messenger of Allah (may peace

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be upon him) who had been recklessly abusing him; who had turned him out of his home; and who fought against him, but he never permitted their mutilation.¹³

From the verses of the Qur'an and these examples from one of the Prophet's companions, it can be concluded that the lesser *jihad*—the use of physical violence against others—has certain limits. These moral injunctions are possible because Muslims have to practice greater *jihad*—the process of struggle against worldly passion in oneself. The perpetual inner and greater *jihad* will guide the conduct of lesser *jihad* in both its objectives and its conduct. This requirement in Islamic teaching raises the question of whether a lesser *jihad* can ever be practiced in an age of mass warfare and nuclear weapons.

It is interesting to note that the first symposium in the Islamic world on the nuclear arms race (organized in Karachi, Pakistan, by the World Muslim Congress in cooperation with the University of Karachi in March 1984) was held with the theme "The Nuclear Arms Race and Nuclear Disarmament: The Muslim Perspective." Inamullah Khan, secretary-general of the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC) said:

Since 1976, it [the OIC] has addressed itself regularly every year to a consideration of the twin issues of the strengthening of the security of non-nuclear weapon states against the threat or use of nuclear weapons, and of the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones . . . an enunciation of the principles that nuclear disarmament must be universal and non-discriminatory for it to have any sense.¹⁴

Echoing the same idea, a retired Pakistani general candidly pointed out the frightening capacity of nuclear overkill: "What is worse, there are no signs of reduction in the stockpiles. Instead there is an unbridled race for qualitative and quantitative superiority and more sophisticated weapons are being added to the nuclear arsenal every year."¹⁵ He then suggested that Muslims must make their full contribution to the international efforts for general and complete nuclear disarmament. Nuclear-free zones should be

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established in the Middle East, South Asia, Africa, and other parts of the world, with the ultimate aim being to rid the entire globe of nuclear weapons. States possessing nuclear weapons should extend unconditional and legally binding assurances to refrain from using or threatening to use such weapons against states without nuclear arms. Instead peaceful nuclear technology must be shared among the people of the world. Finally, the Muslims should strengthen themselves through political unity, economic development, and acquisition of necessary technologies, including know-how in the nuclear field.

The argument against nuclear wars and nuclear weapons is fundamental to the question of Islam and violence in the nuclear age. Inamullah Khan argues that although Islam permits fighting, it insists that the use of force be minimal. Furthermore, the Muslim conduct of war must be as humane as possible. A Muslim soldier does not fight for self-glory or plunder, and he is ordered not to kill indiscriminately. Given this mandate, Islam prohibits nuclear weapons because they are weapons of mass destruction and can in no way distinguish between combatants and noncombatants nor between military targets and fields and factories.¹⁶

It is important to note that this argument is incomplete. Inamullah Khan twice pointed out that “Nuclear weapons are not weapons of war. They are instruments of mass extermination.” But the analysis that Muslims are not permitted to use these weapons because they do not conform to the Islamic conduct of violence overlooks an important fact: Nuclear weapons are not the only kind of weapons that cannot distinguish between combatants and noncombatants or between military targets and farmers’ villages. Khan’s omission of this point arises out of an incomplete consideration of the nature of modern warfare.

War casualties have dramatically increased in the twentieth century, which has been characterized as “the century of total war.”¹⁷ In its first fifty years over one hundred million people, military and civilian, were killed, and World War II claimed almost thirty-five million civilian lives.¹⁸ This astonishing rate of civilian casualties is basically a result of new technologies such as aerial bombardment, submarine warfare, and chemical/biological warfare.¹⁹ It can thus be said that throughout modern history,

especially since the onset of the industrial revolution, technology has had profound implications for the capacity to wage war.²⁰

The issue has become more complicated with the proliferation of terrorism. Over the decades, the tendency has been to choose methods that minimize the terrorists' risks. As a result, the targets increasingly have become defenseless victims who have little value as symbols or who are not responsible for the conditions the terrorists say they want to alter.²¹ This analysis holds that the critical variables for understanding terrorism are not related to technology but rather to the purpose and organization of particular groups and the vulnerabilities of particular societies to them. Nevertheless it is possible to argue that the societies' vulnerabilities more or less depend on the level of destruction of the technology used in terror.

If the effect of terror becomes the prime focus of analysis, then the extent of damage done to human life by modern and sophisticated weapons must be taken into account. In this sense, technology assumes paramount significance.

Michael Walzer points out that one of the hardest questions in the theory of war (or violence in the modern age) is how those victims of war who can be attacked and killed are to be distinguished from those who cannot. The moral quality of war lies, among other things, in the tendency to set certain classes of people outside the permissible range of warfare, so that killing any of their members is not a legitimate act of war but a crime.²² Perhaps one of the best sets of guidelines for judgment in the conduct of violence includes two major principles: proportionality and discrimination. The principle of proportionality centers on the means of violence. It implies that battlefield use of particularly inhumane weapons should be restricted. The principle of discrimination centers on the objects of violence. It suggests that the belligerents should discriminate between combatants and noncombatants and that noncombatants should be protected.²³

The question is how noncombatants can be protected when the level of violence used is so overpowering that it destroys the possibility of discriminating between combatants and noncombatants. Moreover some users of violence do not intend to discriminate but instead want the terrorization per se to attract attention from the world media so that their causes can be furthered.

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As a result it is virtually impossible for the innocents to remain safe in an age when the sophistication of modern technology of destruction is coupled with the growing disregard of human life.

Islam does not tolerate such indiscriminate methods. Nor does it allow God's creation—human lives, trees, animals, the environment—to be destroyed. For example, the use of napalm is unacceptable, as are explosions in department stores, hijacking and killing hostages on any means of transportation, and bombing civilian targets. The modern world has made primitive weapons obsolete, but the encompassing moral sphere of Islam also renders modern weapons morally illegitimate. Does this conflict mean that oppressed Muslims should submit and ignore the command of God to fight? Is there any alternative for Muslims in the contemporary world? Before these questions can be discussed, Islamic ideas and teachings conducive to the absence of violence should first be appreciated.

ISLAM AND THE PROMOTION OF LIFE

In the Beginning, Allah Almighty said:

Behold the Lord said to the angels
"I will create a vicegerent on earth." (2:30)

God created people to be the vicegerents on earth and instilled His spirit in every man, woman, and child.

When I have fashioned him
(In due proportion) and breathed
Into him of My spirit,
Fall ye down in obeisance
Unto him. (15:29)

This verse suggests the sacredness of human life because the spirit of the Creator resides within the otherwise empty body. In this sense, also, humankind is one.

Mankind was one single nation,

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And Allah sent Messengers
With glad tidings and Warnings. (2:213)

The unity of humankind is asserted repeatedly in the Qur'an.

Mankind was but one nation,
But differed (later). Had it not
Been for a Word
That went forth before
From thy Lord, their differences
Would have been settled
Between them. (10:19)

Once these verses are appreciated, then it is possible to understand the meaning of a verse such as this:

And if anyone saved a life,
It would be as if he saved
The life of the whole people. (5:32)

Human life is thus sacred. Humankind is one single family, and every human life has a value equivalent to the sum total of all human lives.

Murder is considered one of the four major sins in Islam.²⁴ Yet there is a paradox: If Islam values the sanctity of life, how can Muslims fight "tumult and oppression" to the end? Unless Muslims forsake the methods of violence, they cannot follow the seemingly contradictory injunctions. It is evident that fighting against injustice cannot be avoided. But the use of violence in such fighting can be eschewed. Alternatives to violence must be adopted if the sanctity of life is to be preserved. Because nonviolent alternatives do exist,²⁵ an argument can be made that for Muslims to be true to their faith, they have no alternative but to utilize nonviolent action in the contemporary world. The question then is whether Islam embodies conditions conducive to the use of effective nonviolent actions.

NONVIOLENT ACTION AS AN

ISLAMIC MODE OF STRUGGLE

What is needed to practice nonviolent action? Gandhi answers:

Belief in non-violence is based on the assumption that human nature in its essence is one and therefore unfailingly responds to the advances of love. . . . The non-violent technique does not depend for its success on the goodwill of the dictators, for a non-violent resister depends on the unfailing assistance of God which sustains him throughout difficulties which could otherwise be considered insurmountable.²⁶

In another place, he writes:

Truth and non-violence are not possible without a living belief in God, meaning a self-existent, all-knowing, living force which inheres in every other force known to the world and which depends on none, and which will live when all other forces may conceivably perish or cease to act.²⁷

A Muslim following Gandhi's teaching would not feel estranged. In fact, it may be possible to trace the Islamic influence on Gandhi concerning the omnipotent and incomparable God. Faith in the supreme Allah already exists in the hearts of every true Muslim.

If Gandhian nonviolence is not sufficient, a modern theory of power may suffice. Gene Sharp writes:

Political power disintegrates when the people withdraw their obedience and support. Yet, the ruler's military equipment may remain intact, his soldiers uninjured, the exiles unscathed, the factories and transport systems in full operational capacity, and the government buildings undamaged. But everything is changed. The human assistance which created and supported the regime's political power has been withdrawn. Therefore, its power has disintegrated.²⁸

For Muslims, this so-called modern theory of power simply embodies the basic Islamic principle that a person should submit

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only to the Will of God. As a result, a Muslim is not bound to obey anyone whose power has been used unjustly. The Qur'an gives the following warning:

When (at length) the order
For fighting was issued to them,
Behold a section of them
Feared men as—
Or even more than—
They should have feared Allah. (4:77)

Yet there is assurance as well:

Behold! verily on the friends
Of God there is no fear,
Nor shall they grieve. (10:62)

Complete submission to the Will of Allah means that if Muslims are oppressed and too weak to fight back, they nevertheless must refuse to obey an unjust ruler. They do have a means to refuse—they can leave. And leave they must, because the command of God on this issue is quite clear.

When angels take
The souls of those
Who die in sin
Against their souls,
They say: "In what (plight)
Were ye?" They reply:
"Weak and oppressed
Were we in the earth."
They say: "Was not
The earth of Allah
Spacious enough for you
To move yourselves away
(From evil)?" (4:97)

Whether Muslims are weak or strong, they must do something, and it is this tendency toward action that enables them to

engage easily in nonviolent struggle. As a technique, nonviolent action is not passive: “It is *not* inaction. It is *action* that is nonviolent.”²⁹ Hence, by definition, nonviolent action cannot occur except by the replacement of passivity and submissiveness with activity, challenge, and struggle.

NONVIOLENT ACTION IN PATTANI, 1975

The proximity between Islam and nonviolence can be illustrated with a case study. On November 29, 1975, five adult Malay Muslims and a thirteen-year-old boy traveling in Narathiwat, southern Thailand, were stopped and put into a dump truck by a group of people dressed in dark green suits. When the truck reached the Kor Tor bridge separating Narathiwat from Pattani, the six civilians were stabbed in the back, their skulls crushed, and their bodies thrown into the river. Fortunately, the boy survived, and the massacre was brought to public attention by a group of Muslim activists who began a protest.³⁰

The people started their peaceful demonstration on December 12, 1975, in the compound of the central government house in Pattani, then formed the Civil Rights Protection Center to keep the protest going. On behalf of the Muslims, the center issued four demands to the government: the arrest of the criminals by rule of law, compensation for the victims’ families, withdrawal of government troops within seven days, and a meeting by December 16 between Prime Minister M. R. Kukrit Pramoj and the people. The government did not seem to take these demands seriously, but the Muslims persevered.

On December 13, 1975, University students from institutions in the south came to join the protest. The military and the police surrounded the city of Pattani. During a panel discussion that evening, a bomb exploded among the people. One of the coordinators of the protest rushed to the microphone shouting “Do not flee!” He was fatally shot on the stage. The police came and put an end to the protest. There were twelve deaths and more than thirty people injured, seven of whom were women and children.

This incident caused the people grave concern and sadness. On the same day, around fifty thousand gathered again at the central mosque in Pattani, patiently braving the torrential rain. In retaliation, schools in Pattani and Narathiwat were burned, and the people accused the soldiers of committing arson. One more officer of the Civil Rights Center was stabbed to death. The government did not yield—but neither did the people. On December 21, Muslims from Bangkok rallied at their central mosque to pray for those killed. On the following day, nine educational institutions joined the protest by suspending classes.

The government responded by saying that the protest was but a minor incident involving only a few hundred people, a claim that prompted a huge demonstration on December 28. The mass of people formed themselves into a parade more than three kilometers long, marching in orderly fashion with Thai flags and portraits of the Thai king and queen leading their procession. Even a heavy rain could not weaken their will as they walked toward the Toh Ayah graveyard. The organizers pointed out that this demonstration was an attempt to fight for justice, display the people's strength, and demonstrate that the protest was not the "minor" incident the government claimed it to be. The protesters prayed for the souls of the deceased and then dispersed at 6:00 p.m.

On January 2, 1976, Thai Muslim government officials from the five southern provinces met to consider how to encourage the prime minister to come to Pattani. They announced January 4 they would strike on the following day if their demands were not met. On January 10 their representatives met with the prime minister, who promised to go to Pattani. The protest ended after forty-five days with, among other things, the removal of Pattani's governor and his replacement by a Muslim.³¹

There seem to be five conditions that enabled the Muslim protesters to stage a sustained nonviolent protest in Pattani. First, they possessed the will to disobey, without which no nonviolent action can be realized. The Muslims are willing to disobey because for them God alone is supreme. This total submission to Allah in turn means a rejection of any other form of absolute authority, including the state's.

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Second, the Pattani Muslims were courageous despite severe repression by the state apparatus. Because they submitted to Allah alone, they did not have to fear any mortal. Muslims believe as a precept of *iman* (faith) that all the good and bad incidents in their lives are bestowed upon them by God. As a result, resignation while working for a just cause, without fear of punishment, becomes possible. In the final analysis, they believe God will take care of them.

Third, Muslim discipline enabled the gathering, the protest march, and even the threat to resign en masse to be carried out efficiently. All of the activities were well orchestrated. The quality of discipline bears little relationship to the leadership of the group because it takes time to cultivate such a collective trait. Muslims, however, are already disciplined in their everyday life; that they pray five times a day contributes to this quality.

Fourth, the concept of *ummah* (community) is very strong among Muslims, who find this unity of brotherhood expressed in the Qur'an:

And hold fast
All together, by the Rope
Which God (stretches out
For you) and be not divided
Among yourselves. (3:103)

Fifth, the feeling among the Pattani Muslims was anything but passive. Islam repeatedly encourages action, and although *jihad* can be performed by the heart, the tongue, or the hand, the important requirement is that it be performed in one way or another. It is also important to note that two out of three ways of performing *jihad* are action-oriented. Action, therefore, is of paramount importance for Muslims, just as it is at the core of the modern theory of nonviolence.

These five characteristics of the Muslims evident in the Pattani case can be termed the "Five Pillars of Muslim Nonviolent Action." Interestingly they correspond well with the sacred Five Pillars of Islam: *shahadat* (a vow that proclaims there is no god but God and Muhammad is His messenger); *salat* (prayers at specific times five times a day from sunrise to sunset, each preceded by

proper ablution); *zakah* (compulsory religious tax that every Muslim has to pay); *sawn* (fasting in the month of Ramadan every year by abstaining from food and drink from sunrise to sunset while purifying both the tongue and the heart in the process); and *hajj* (pilgrimage to the holy city of Mecca at least once in a lifetime if one can afford it).

Each of these five pillars produces a special quality for those who continually practice them. The *shahadat* vow by a Muslim is an act asserting that the person will not allow other things to supersede the Will of God. This obedience to God entails the possibility of disobedience to any power that contradicts God's command. The *salat*, at a lower level of understanding, is an exercise in disciplinary action. When offered in a congregation, which is usually encouraged, it becomes an assertion of equality because the poor can stand shoulder to shoulder with the rich in such a prayer. The *zakah* reminds Muslims of their obligation to society at large because the tax sensitizes them to the problems of others and induces them to do something about it. The *sawn*, both a lesson of self-sacrifice and empathy, enables Muslims to develop patience, the quality that Abdul Ghaffar Khan, the leader of the nonviolent struggle by the Pathans against the British, regards as crucial for nonviolence in Islam.³² Finally, the *hajj* is a reaffirmation of brotherhood and the belief that all Muslims form one nation, regardless of race, color, nationality, or class. It is a return to the beginning, an immersion in the eternal source of life that has guided their ancestors for millennia.

In other words, a practicing Muslim should possess the potential for disobedience, discipline, social concern and action, patience and willingness to suffer for a cause, and the idea of unity—all of which are crucial for successful nonviolent action.³³ It remains to be seen how Muslim intellectuals will attempt to tap the fertile resources of nonviolent thought within their own tradition and resolve the paradox of living as a true Muslim in the contemporary world.

CONCLUSION

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This chapter has attempted to address Muslims and others interested in the relationship of Islam to the modern world. The points of reference made here are primarily sources most Muslims accept—the Qur'an and the Hadith. It is indeed essential that Islam is looked at from a fresh angle. Because the conventional worldview accepts violence as normal, a nonviolent Muslim must part with this paradigm. To have a paradigm shift, the fundamental acceptance of violence must be seriously questioned.

The eight theses on Muslim nonviolent action that follow are suggested as a challenge for Muslims and others who seek to reaffirm the original vision of Islam so that the true meaning of peace—the absence of both structural as well as personal violence—can be obtained:

1. For Islam, the problem of violence is an integral part of the Islamic moral sphere.
2. Violence, if any, used by Muslims must be governed by rules prescribed in the Qur'an and Hadith.
3. If violence used cannot discriminate between combatants and noncombatants, then it is unacceptable in Islam.
4. Modern technology of destruction renders discrimination virtually impossible at present.
5. In the modern world, Muslims cannot use violence.
6. Islam teaches Muslims to fight for justice with the understanding that human lives—as all parts of God's creation—are purposive and sacred.
7. In order to be true to Islam, Muslims must utilize nonviolent action as a new mode of struggle.
8. Islam itself is fertile soil for nonviolence because of its potential for disobedience, strong discipline, sharing and social responsibility, perseverance and self-sacrifice, and the belief in the unity of the Muslim community and the oneness of mankind.

That such theses of Muslim nonviolent action are essential to peace in this world and the true meaning of Islam is evident from the Qur'an:

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Peace!—a Word
(of salutation) from the Lord
Most Merciful! 36:58)

NOTES

AUTHOR'S NOTE: A slightly modified version of "The Nonviolent Crescent" was translated into Arabic as "La 'unf fee al-Islam" (Islam and Nonviolence) and published in *Al-Muqawama Al Hadanieh Fi Al-Nidal Al-Siyyas* [Civilian Resistance in Political Struggle], ed. Saad Eddin Ibrahim (Amman, Jordan: Arab Thought Forum, 1988). It was also translated in its entirety into Indonesian (*Bahasa Indonesia*) as "Bulan Sabit Tanpa Kekerasan: Delapan Tesis Tindak Kekerasan Dalam Islam," and published in *Menggapai Dunia Damai*, ed. Mochtar Lubis (Jakarta, Indonesia: Yayasan Obor Indonesia, 1988).

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24. Robson, *Mishkat al Masabih*, p. 16.
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