Islam: Peace and Conflict

Muslim attitude towards Peace

- The word "Islam" means peace or submission to God. Muslims believe obeying God's call and living by His moral values leads to a peaceful life. "**Oh you who believe! Enter into peace (Islam) wholeheartedly**" Surah 22:08
- Muslims should work for peace, even when they face criticism and hate from others "**Most Gracious are those who work on the earth in humility and when the ignorant address them, they say "Peace**" Surah 25:63
- The Qur'an described Islam as "**Dar as Salaam**" the house of peace
- Muslims greet each other by saying "**salaam alaykum**" "May peace be upon you"
- The Ummah (Muslim community) is very important – Muslims should try to live in peace with each other and support each other
- One of Allah's attributes is **As Salam** source of peace.
- Heaven is described as a place of peace "**For them will be a home of peace in the presence of the Lord**" Surah 6:127
- Peace means more than just absence of war, but also the absence of corruption, tyranny, oppression and injustice

The importance of Peace for Muslims

- Accepting Islam brings inner peace through submission to the will of Allah
- When Muslims have inner peace it encourages them to have peaceful relationships with others
- Peace should take a central role in a Muslims life. They should always look for an amicable solution, following Muhammad's example - Whenever Muhammad had a choice between two course of action, he always chose the non-confrontational one "**an amicable settlement is best**" Surah 4:128

Muslim attitude towards Peace making

- Muslims should end disagreements by making peace rather than by beginning further disputes "*"If two parties among the believers fall into a quarrel, make ye peace between them"* Surah 49:9
- "*But if the enemy inclines towards peace, do you also incline towards peace and trust in Allah*" Surah 22:39
- "*And the servants of the Most Merciful are those who walk upon the earth easily, and when the ignorant address them, they say 'peace' "*Surah 25:63
- Working for peace in the world is part of a Muslims duty as **khalifah** (stewards)
- Allah is called **Ar Rahim** (all merciful), solving conflicts peacefully reflects this
- Should work for peace in co-operative and peaceful ways

The importance of justice in peacemaking

- Allah is just "**Allah commands justice**" Surah 16:19. Muslims should ensure that everyone is treated with justice and fairness so that people can live together peacefully
- If the laws do not create a just society, people may begin a civil war, e,g, the Sunni Muslims in Syria began a civil war because they thought the legal system of the Asad regime was treating them unfairly

The importance of forgiveness and reconciliation in peacemaking

- God is compassionate and merciful to sinners, so Muslims should be merciful and forgiving to those who have offended them **"Ar Rahim"** the merciful is repeated many times during prayer, Muslims should follow his example to bring about peace
- How can Muslims ask Allah for mercy on the Day of Judgement if they have not been prepared to forgive? "*but if a person forgives and makes recompense his reward is due from Allah*" Surah 42:40
- There are many Hadith from Muhammad about forgiving people who have wronged you
- Muhammad himself forgave people and Muslims should follow the example of the prophet:
    - He forgave a neighbour who threw garbage at him every day
    - he forgave the people of Makkah when they attacked his ally during the Hiraj. They were worried they would be slaughtered in revenge. This has been described as one of the greatest examples of peacemaking
    - As leader of Medinah, Muhammad settled disputes between Muslims and Non-Muslims. He gave many verdicts in favour of non-Muslims. This gave him a reputation for being fair when trying to make peace.

Many Muslims support campaigns and organisations that work for peace in the world

Islamic Relief	• Raises awareness of the challenges faced by children who live in conflict zones • Supports refugees from conflict with medical care and food.	Salaam Peace	Community engagement programmer in London to change the perception of Islam bringing people from diverse backgrounds together through sport, homework clubs, mentoring schemes and community activities

Attitudes to Conflict

Causes of Conflict

Cause	Examples
Politics: • lack of unity in the government • one group believes that they should hold power over another • one group want independence (nationalism)	• Rohinga Muslims, Burma • Ethnic Cleansing – • Tutsi Genocide Rwanda 1994 • Sebian Bosnian conlict 1992
Resources: • need for natural resources or greed • Economic problems	• Gulf Wars – West wanted access to oil reserves • Dhafur – access to water • Zimbabwe – ecomonic crisis led to mass migration of refugees to South Africa looking for food and work
History:. • events in the past might not be forgotten • Conflicts caused by artificial borders created as a result of colonialism e.g. Sudan and Kenya)	• Northern Ireland • current civil war in South Sudan
Religion: • Belief that one religion is correct or another religion is false • Diversity within a religion	• Kashmiri Muslims want to be part of Pakistan not India • Syria – government Shi'a, rebel are Sunni • CAR – Chrisitian V Muslim

Problems caused by war
Casualties
- WW2 60 million people killed
- UN report Jan 2016 nearly 19,000 civilians killed in Iraq between Jan 14 and Oct 15 and 36,245 injured
- Syria since 2011181,00 soldiers, 70,00 civilians and 12,000 children died

Displacement
- WW2 Nazis deported 7-9 million
- Iraq – 3.2 million internally displaced
- Syria – 3 million refugees fled to Turkey alone

Expense
- War costs money – weapons, military personal
- Disrupts economy
- Cost of hosting refugees – healthcare, housing etc

Problems caused by conflict within society:
- It has a negative effect on community relations with groups not willing to integrate, which can lead to groups feeling isolated and left out and causes unnecessary divides
- It can lead to disunity and distrust between groups from different backgrounds, especially where there has been discrimination
- If there is little agreement or compromise it is difficult to get people to talk together or live in peace without conflicts arising
- It can lead to poor treatment, discrimination and violence, which then leads to more conflict

Attitudes to Conflict (cont)

Muslim response to conflict

If a war is just then a Muslim must fight as the Qur'an teaches that you should fight back if attacked and Muhammad fought in wars of self-defence *"**Fight in the cause of Allah those who fight you, but   do not transgress limits; for Allah loves not transgressors*"* Surah 2:190

When Makkah, violated the terms of the peace by attacking one of Mohammed's allies he raised an army and fought against them

Muslims should not be the first to attack
Any conflict in which they could be classed as the aggressor could not be fought by a faithful Muslim. So Muslims could NOT be involved in a conflict which :-

- Takes resources from someone else
- Forces another country or people to become Muslim
- Changes the political leadership or ideology of another country
- Changes the culture of a country

Greater Jihad is more important than lesser jihad **"*The strongest among you is not the one who can defeat another in fighting, but the one who can control his anger*"**

Humanist response to conflict
- Humanists seek to lead good lives without harming others as they believe human life is special and should be protected
  - Humanists have the view that all humans should live together in harmony
- It is important to use reason and experience when making decisions and would work to find peaceful solutions that reduce conflict and its causes
- Most Humanists believe that religion is at the root of many conflicts
  - Belief that one religion is correct or another religion is false : **Central African Republic** Christian V Muslim
  - Diversity within a religion: **Syria** – government Shi'a, rebel are Sunni
  So, a good way to end wars would be to get rid of religion.
- Humanists believe in making the **United Nations** stronger so it:
  - can end wars with a peacekeeping force
  - make the world a fairer place so that wars do not begin
- Many Humanists are Pacifists and so would not fight in wars

Situation Ethics
- Many Muslims and Humanists apply Situation Ethics to issues of conflict. They will look at the causes and effects of a conflict and make a decision based on what will produce the most loving outcome:
  - If a country has been invaded and its people are being ethnically cleansed, they may decide the best solution is to fight against the invaders
  - If the war will end in using nuclear weapons which would destroy most of the world, they would decide not to fight

Pacifism

Muslim attitude towards Pacifism and Passive Resistance

The Qur'an encourages Muslims to "***struggle in the way of Islam***" , so there is no idea of pacifism or turning the other cheek in Islam. But there is a tradition of **passive resistance** based on story of Moses and Aaron, where they refuse to fight the Israelites who rebelled against God (Surah 5:28)

There is also support from the Qur'an opposing the use of violence, "***if anyone kills a person – unless in retribution for murder or spreading corruption in the land – it is as if he kills mankind***" Surah 5:31

As long as the government is just and allows Muslims to practice their religion freely, it should be obeyed.. However, if certain human rights such as freedom to worship are taken away, or Muslims are forced to act against their beliefs, then passive resistance is allowed. This is because obedience to Allah and the prophet come first, "***It is obligatory for one to listen to and obey (the ruler's orders) unless these orders involve disobedience (to Allah); […] if an act of disobedience (to Allah) is imposed, he should not listen to or obey it***." (Hadith – Sahih Al-Burkhari).

If displeased with something in society Muslims should choose to protest peacefully by marching, signing petitions, writing letters to politicians to bring about change.

The **Ahmadiyya Muslim Community** founded in 1889 organise rallies and non-violent protests to highlight issues, one of their slogans is "***love for all hatred for none***" showing how "jihad" is misunderstood by non-Muslims as well as Muslims

The **Arab Spring** protests in 2011 against the lack of democracy were based on pacifism and passive resistance e.g, the demonstrations in Tahir Square, Cairo which led to the overthrow of President Mubarak in Egypt. Although both sides did use violence, in the main they succeeded in overthrowing the president by passive resistance. Some involved were nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize.

Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan (1890-1988), friend of Gandhi, campaigned non-violently against British rule and also wanted a united independent India rather than Pakistan and Bangladesh being separate states.

Muhammad Ali refused to fight in the Vietnam War

Humanism and Pacifism

Most Humanists are Pacifists. Pacifist ideas developed amongst Atheist Philosophers, who argued against war as it is a waste of human resources as human life is all the more valuable if you do not believe in an afterlife e.g. Rousseau, Bentham

Many Humanists were conscientious objectors during the two World Wars and after WW2 help set up the United Nations and after the development of Nuclear Weapons formed groups like CND (Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament)

Those Humanists who are not pacifists would think very carefully before supporting a war, because of the loss of life involved and the destruction it causes.

Humanists think wars fought over religion are ridiculous and they criticise the part that organised religions occasionally play in encouraging and supporting wars

Just War Theory

The Just War theory was developed by St Thomas Aquinas (1225-74) but ideas about what constitutes a just war were also developed in Hinduism, Islam, Judaism and Buddhism long before.

Today it is generally agreed that a war is just if:
- **Just Cause**: The reasons for fighting should be to uphold justice (e.g., self defence)
- **Comparative justice**: Those affected by injustices should expect a better future following the war.
- **Legitimate authority**: Only a recognised leader or head of state can sanction a war.
- **Right intention**: The motive to fight should be to re-establish peace and restore human rights.
- **Probability of success**: There should be a strong likelihood that the war will be won.
- **Last resort**: War should only take place if all efforts for peace have been tried and have failed.
- **Proportionality**: The amount of force used in war should be in proportion to the problem.

Muslims and Just War

The concept of Just war is subjective and individual Muslims will interpret it differently according to their own view of the situation, this can make the theory difficult to apply in practice

Lesser Jihad - This relates to Just War as it is a set of rules that must be met in order for a war to be considered justified. However, this is emphasised differently by Sunni and Shi'a Muslims.
- Sunnis don't give it any official status, although it is seen as a central idea
- Shi'as see Jihad as one of the 10 Obligatory Acts

There are strict rules in Islam as to whether a war is just "***Fight in the cause of Allah those who fight you but do not transgress limits***" Surah 2:190

After Muhammad won a war against Makkah no house was robbed, no man or woman was insulted. The Prophet forgave the population of Mecca. Only four criminals were punished.

- It must be fought for a just cause
  - Islam is being attacked "***And why should you not fight in the cause of God***" Surah 4:75
  - people are suffering an injustice ".. ***and those who, being weak and ill-treated***" Surah 4:7
  - in self-defence not in attack "***To those against who war is made, permission is given to fight because they are wronged***" Surah 22:39
- It must a last resort
- It must be authorised by a Muslim authority – a religious not a political leader
- It has the support of the Muslim community and not just declared by one individual
- It doesn't aim to win new land or power
- It is not done to convert others to Islam
  - Innocent civilians (especially the old, the young and women) must not be attacked "***Do not kill any child, any woman, or any elderly or sick person***" Hadith

- It will not harm trees, crops and animals "***do not spoil the cultivated fields and gardens***" Hadith

- It must be ended as soon as the enemy lays down their arms "*But if the enemy inclines towards peace, do you also incline towards peace*" Surah 8:61

Just War Theory (cont)

If a war fulfils these conditions, then a Muslim MUST fight in it because:
- The Qur'an says that Muslims must fight if they are attacked and the Qur'an is the Word of God
- Muhammad fought in wars and Muslims should follow his example
- There are many Hadith that say Muslims should fight in Just Wars

The Qur'an says that anyone who fights in a Just War will go straight to heaven "*to him who fights in the cause of Allah – whether he is slain or gets victory – soon shall We give him a reward of great value*" Surah 4:74

Humanist attitude towards Just War
Some Humanists accept the Just War theory as it is based on reason and moral values.

Other Humanists believe that it is impossible to have a just war. They believe human life is special and even though they do not believe human life came from God they would not support the destruction of it. They believe non-violent means should be used before war is consider and do not support war as it threatens humans life.

Situation Ethic and Just War
The nature of modern warfare means there are difficulties working out whether a war is just – modern weapons make it almost impossible to avoid killing civilians. Therefore many people, including Muslims use something like Situation Ethics to determine whether not fighting a war would be more unjust than fighting it. If:
- The cause of the war is just
- Attempts to solve the conflict peacefully have been tried
- There is a chance of success
- The military try to avoid civilian casualties as much as possible
  They would consider a modern war to be just

Is Just War even possible?
- Some people argue that there are contradictions within Islam – Islam promotes peace and peacemaking yet it has criteria for fighting in a war
  - In response, some Muslims say that as there is a set of conditions which must be met this is possible
  - lesser jihad is justified if it is to guarantee freedom of faith.

- Just war is NEVER possible since:
  - many conditions for lesser jihad were given in the past and they are outdated. We now have international laws and organisations such as the UN.
  - it is too challenging to meet the criteria set – you can become involved in conflict without threatening human life or damaging the environment
  - Modern weaponry can't be used in a way that would satisfy the criteria -Weapons of Mass Destruction cause widespread devastation
  - Violence only leads to more violence, Islam is a religion of peace and only non-violent methods can achieve peace

Holy War

Harb al-Maqadis is a "Holy War" or a war that is fought because of religious differences. It must fulfil criteria of **Lesser Jihad**. Muhammad and his followers were involved in a number of Holy Wars, including the **Battle of Badr**, the **Battle of Uhud** and the **Conquest of Makkah**

Holy War is only justifiable to defend Islam. In order for it to be a Holy War, Muslims may fight to:
- Protect the freedom of Muslims to practise their faith (if a country is preventing a Muslim from following their faith or forcing them to practise a different faith) '***Fight them until there is no more persecution, and worship is devoted to God***.' (Surah 2)
- Strengthen Islam (if Islam is being threatened)
- Protect Muslims against an attack – if Muslims are being persecuted or in danger of being attacked
- It must be authorised by a religious leader
- It must promise a spiritual reward for those who fight in the war

There are set conditions taken from the Qur'an which should be met for Muslims to fight in a holy war "***Fight in the cause of Allah those who fight you but do not transgress limits***" Surah 2:190:
- It must be fought to bring about the end goal of good
- It must be a last resort
- Innocent people should not be targeted or killed "***Do not kill any child, any woman, or any elderly or sick person***" Hadith
- Enemies should still be treated with justice
- Wounded enemy soldiers should be cared for in the same way as one's own soldiers
- War should stop as soon as the enemy asks for peace "***But if the enemy inclines towards peace, do you also incline towards peace***" Surah 8:61**
- Property should not be targeted "***Do not destroy the villages and towns***" Hadith
- Chemical or biological warfare is forbidden

If a Holy War fulfils these conditions then a Muslim MUST fight in it

**There are different interpretations of this verse
- Most Muslims believe that wars were to ensure peace between Muslims and non-believers.
- However others have interpreted this verse as granting permissions to wage holy wars to spread Islam and convert others…

Humanist attitude to Holy War
The concept of Holy War is indefensible. Religion is misguided – there is no God and so the truth about life is to be found in reason and science. To fight a war based on religious ideas and in response to a religious leader is ridiculous.

Weapons of Mass Destruction

Nuclear Weapons
Nuclear weapons were first developed during WW2. In August 1945 America dropped an atomic bomb in Hiroshima, Japan killing 84,000 people. Three days later they dropped another atomic bomb on Nagasaki, killing 40,000 people, and the Japanese surrended bringing an end to WW2.

Since then, nuclear weapons continue to be developed. The hydrogen bomb is 1000 times more powerful that the atomic bombs dropped on Japan, the neutron bomb can kill or disable people while leaving buildings intact. These bombs can be delivered from land sites or submarines rather than dropped from aircraft. Intercontinental ballistic missiles have a range of up to 10,000km

Chemical Weapons
Any toxic chemical that can cause death, injury or sensory irritation is considered to be a chemical weapon. They affect the skin, eyes, lungs, blood, nerves or other organs.
The most dangerous are nerve agents e.g. sarin; blood agents e.g., hydrogen cyanide; blister agents e.g. mustard gas. All of these are liquid but become gases when released

Biological Weapons
These include bacteria, viruses and fungi when used as a weapon of war. These can be targeted against one individual, a group or people or an entire population. One example is the bacteria which causes anthrax – if the anthrax spores are breathed, this can lead to toxic shock or death

Benefits of WMD	Problems of WMD
• Because nuclear weapons have the potential to destroy the earth,, this prevents one country attacking another with them as they could be destroyed as well (**mutually assured destruction – MAD**) • Biological and chemical weapons don't destroy buildings, roads etc and so they are an efficient way of destroying an enemy whilst leaving the infrastructure intact. Those using the weapons can be protected from their effects by using gas masks, protective clothing etc	• They deliberately target innocent civilians (specifically excluded from the effects of war by Just War theories and Holy War • Nuclear weapons are so powerful they threaten world extinction • Chemical and biological weapons are difficult to deliver effectively and the effects can only be guessed at. These weapons could be uncontrollable once released, nothing could stop them from spreading from outside the original target area

Muslim attitudes to WMD

The use of WMD is unjustifiable due to the extensive damage they can cause, which would always have the potential to be greater than anticipates. Using WMD would break several of the Just War criteria including Innocent people should not be targeted or killed "***Do not kill any child, any woman, or any elderly or sick person***" Hadith

Pakistan is the only Muslim country that has nuclear weapons, which it developed as it feared India would attack if it couldn't defend itself but it has never tried to justify having them using Islamic teachings

The Spiritual leader of Iran, Ayatollah Khamenei has said "***The Islamic Republic of Iran would never resort to the use of weapons of mass destruction***"

Humanist attitudes towards WMD
No Humanist would support the use of WMD given the extensive damage they can cause. Humanists believe human life is special and should not be destroyed, even though they don't believe that life was given by God– "***we should be against the possession of weapons which provide the potential for the murder of millions, if not billions of people, and the destruction of the one planet we're able to call home***" Paul Simms, British Humanist 2014

Though some would say it is acceptable to have them as a deterrent as other countries have them, to prevent being attacked. They accept the concept of **MAD** has kept the peace.

Some people might use utilitarian principles to justify the possession of nuclear weapons, as if you possess theme, this means following **MAD**, you won't be attacked and so won't have to suffer the horrendous consequences of war, therefore it brings about the greatest happiness for the greatest number of people as everyone is happier living at peace than through war.

Issues surrounding Conflict

New technology means that wars can be fought on much larger scale, causing much more destruction, particularly to civilians and can be controlled remotely e.g. drones sent to drop bombs

Terrorism

Terrorism condemned by UN "***Criminal acts intended to provoke a state of terror are iin any circumstances unjustifiable, whatever the considerations"***

Since **9/11** (suicide attacks of 11th September 2001 in New York, Washington) the threat of terrorism was taken to new levels, including attacks on London on 7th July 2005 (**7/7**), Paris on 13 November 2015 and Ariane Grande concert in Manchester 2nd May 2017.

Not all terrorist attacks are committed by Muslims, Las Vegas shooting 1st October 2017 and the shooting of Jo Cox MP 16 June 2016

Muslims views on violence

Muslims believe in a civilised society and people should not use violence except under legal authority because:
- Using violence without just cause is sinful
- Any Muslim who is violent to a fellow Muslim is acting against the **Ummah**
- It is the duty of Muslims as **vicegenerents** to protect the weak and innocent not attack them
- In his final sermon Muhammad said "***every Muslim is a brother to every Muslim***" – no one should be violent to their brother

Muslim views on terrorism

Teachings on Just War make to hard to justify terrorism. Muslim scholars like Hamza Yusuf have made the following points:
- Terrorism attacks innocent civilians which is forbidden by Muhammad "***Do not kill women or children or non-combatants and do not kill old or religious people***"
- Suicide is **haram**, so a suicide bomber is going against Islam by killing himself as well as bringing harm to innocent people
- During the **Crusades**, Muslims did not allow the killing of civilians
- Murder is **haram** and killing civilians is seen as murder
- Muhammad said that there are people who kill in the name of Islam, who will go to hell because "***they weren't fighting truly for the sake of God***"

The vast majority of Muslims are against terrorism and work to prevent it happening.
The Muslim Council of Britain:
- Has paid for adverts to condemn terror attacks
- works closely with the police to develop counter-terrorism policies
- puts on events to educate the public about Islam

Humanist views on terrorism
- It is fundamentally wrong for civilians to be directly targeted by violence to achieve political, social or religious ends
- The "end can never justify the means", no matter how good the goal of terrorist might be, terrorising a civilian population is always wrong

Types of Exam Questions

	Mark	Skills	Requirements	Example Question
A	3	AO1 – knowledge	**3X one** sentence answers	Outline **three** Muslim beliefs about conflict
B	4	AO1 – knowledge	**2 reasons** Development of each reason (could be a quote or example) **(PE)** Reason and development <u>MUST</u> link	Explain **two** features of Just War theory for Muslims
C	5	AO1 & 2 – knowledge and application	**2 PEEL** paragraphs in depth Evidence from Wisdom/Source of Authority Give examples.	Explain **two reasons** why peace is important in Islam In your answer you must refer to a source of moral wisdom and authority.
D	12	AO2 – application	**3 PEEL** paragraphs, explaining different views on this statement **Para 1:** Religious point of view **Para 2:** Religious <u>OR</u> humanist/atheist **Para 3:** Conclusion (which argument do you think is the most convincing **and** least convincing) –"I think…" - Quotes and examples needed.	"Religious people should be pacifists". Evaluate this statement considering arguments for and against. In your response you should: - refer to **religious teaching**, - refer to **non-religious** points of view /refer to **different** religious points of view/ **relevant** ethical arguments - reach a justified conclusion.