

**TALKING PAPER
ON
ISLAM'S GOLDEN THREADS OF PEACE AND RESTRAINT**

- President Jimmy Carter drew from the best religious traditions of Anwar Sadat and Menachem Begin to reach a peace accord, demonstrating the relevance of religion between communities.
- Islamic theological threads of peace include...
 - Islam means “ peace;” to submit to the will of God and to live in peace with all God’s creation.
 - As-Sallaam (“The Peace”) is one of the 99 names for Allah. Constant remembrance of Allah helps Muslims remain calm. Before starting any activity, they begin by saying, “In the name of Allah, the Merciful, the Compassionate.”
 - All are brothers and sisters because Allah created us from one father and one mother (Adam and Eve).
 - The Qur’an suggests that variety in humankind is one of the riches of God’s world.
 - Domination of one group over another is unacceptable (i.e., Pharaoh and his treatment of the people of Israel).
 - Judaism, Christianity and Islam share an Abraham tradition. All three religious groups are called “people of the book.”
 - There is “no compulsion” to convert others according to the Qur’an. Choosing a faith is a matter of free will. Respect and accommodation of other faiths was exemplified when Muslims ruled Spain.
 - Muslims believe that a prophet has been raised in every age and nation. God appointed 124,000 prophets before Muhammad. Due to this high number of prophets, none can claim that they are unaware of God’s commandments to humanity on the Day of Judgment.
 - The Prophet Muhammad preached with reason and kindness. He said, “To love each other you must spread (establish) peace.” A parable illustrates the Prophet Muhammad’s merciful will. Once the prophet sent a deputy to the pagans, but the deputy was killed. When Muhammad marshaled his troops, he advised them, “Don’t treat people like the pagans treat us; don’t kill the warriors.” He demonstrated jihad (striving) during his 13-year stay in Mecca by adhering steadfastly to the faith in spite of terrible persecution - doing all in his power morally and spiritually to reform those around him.
 - The Qur’an condemns those who disturb the peace; “Do not promote disorder on the earth after peace is established” (Surah 7:56-57). “Do not go about committing inequity and causing disorder on earth” (Surah 5:64).
 - Violence, suicide missions and terrorism are considered anti-Islamic acts. A person committed to his religion has values and would not commit such crimes.

- Peace at all times should be uppermost in the mind of a Muslim. The greeting “as-salamu ‘alaikum” means “peace be with you.” The response “wa ‘alaikum salam” means “peace be also with you.”
- Fasting should reduce anger and is intended to sharpen the awareness of the needy. Almsgiving recognizes that people cannot have peace when they are hungry. They must be fed, taken care of financially and health-wise, and have a safe place to sleep. Muslims respect the recipients of charity as equals.
- Peacemakers can build on an Islamic peace treaty tradition; a long history of texts on diplomacy concerning co-existence between nations (i.e., Muslims were reconciled to the Jews when Muhammad made a peace treaty).
- Historically, holy war has never been a “knee jerk reaction.” Muslims did not begin calling the response to the First Crusade a holy war until 22 years into the conflict, when they fully realized what they were facing.
- Forums such as the Multi-Faith Forum through the Islamic Center of Long Island and the Council on American Islamic Relations in New York promote interfaith dialogue.
- Islam calls for restraint during times of war. Extremists depart from the Islamic traditions such as...
 - Only a prophet called to preach in a stateless milieu has to assume a role of political leadership (aka., this mantle fell on Moses and Muhammad). The main mission is religious. The political role results from unjust and sinful social conditions.
 - Focus is on the greater jihad of one’s soul.
 - Military jihad is regulated by the following rules:
 - Fight only for self-defense, but do not exaggerate (Qur’an 2:190). A “just cause” may include the imperative to extend territory.
 - The head of an Islamic state, not an individual, must initiate a declaration of Muslim intentions.
 - Must be waged by a regular Muslim army; not individuals.
 - Discriminate between guilty and innocent. Avoid harm to women, children, old men and to the environment (the same list as in just war).
 - When the former enemy is ready to stop hostilities and look for opportunities for peace, Muslims must stop fighting and look for peaceful solutions (Qur’an 8:60-61).
 - Monasteries, churches, synagogues and mosques are protected.
 - No molestation and no pillaging.
 - He who fights for heroism or worldly fame gains no merit and is doomed to eternal perdition.
- Moderates make up the majority of Muslims. They had been a “silent majority” up until September 11th. Their voice needs to be heard and acknowledged today.