# ISLAM'S ROLE IN TRANSFORMING INDIVIDUALS TOWARDS THE CULTURE OF PEACE

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*Peace is the greatest need of man as it is a pre-requisite for human progress. Unfortunately it has not become a reality in spite of numerous efforts throughout history. The present study, while striving to find Islam's role in establishing peace in the contemporary world, has found that if achieving peace is the target, ideologically the way to go is with a peaceful, non-violent approach by abjuring violence in any form and by avoiding any kind of coercion; while methodologically the aim is to train individuals to transform themselves from the culture of violence to the culture of peace. The Islamic view is that such a transformation can only take place in society if self-motivated individuals transform themselves by adhering to unilateral good behaviour. Thus, at an individual level, they learn the art of situation management by responding positively to negative situations and, at the social level, they, knowing their limits, keep their actions within the peaceful sphere while carrying on all their activities.*

Peace is of paramount importance in the world today. Considered the greatest good or *summum bonum*, peace has been a necessity for man since the dawn of human history and a fundamental pre-requisite for ensuring human progress, as it is only in an atmosphere of peace that all positive activities can be accomplished. Unfortunately peace is also the one thing that man has not been able to achieve in spite of numerous efforts to achieve it in history. While peace efforts gained momentum in the 19th century when organization for peace was initiated, peace did not become a reality. The 20th century witnessed pacifism, the *making of* peace (*pace* and *facere*), become an independent discipline and the formation of a supra-regulatory body, the United Nations that aimed 'to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war, … to practice tolerance and live together in peace with one another as good neighbors, and to unite our strength to maintain international peace and security.' Peace, however, continued to remain a distant dream. The present study strives to understand the definition of peace and the way forward to 'establish peace in the contemporary world.'

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The Oxford International Encyclopedia of Peace defines peace as reaching of agreements between two parties; respect for others; quality of life; civil safety and security.[1] *Ideologically* peace-makers have strived to achieve peace through the absence of war,[1] 'stability in the region' as in Pax Romana[2] and 'not merely the absence of war but the presence of conditions such as justice, of law, of order – in short, of government' as quoted by Albert Einstein (1879-1955).[3] According to Johan Galtung (b. 1930), the principal founder of the discipline of peace and conflict studies, peacemaking goes in three directions, the 'absence of organized collective violence'[1] 'the ideal of the sum total of "all good" values in the world community of nations'[2] and 'peace associated with the fulfillment of certain conditions.'[3]

In terms of the *methodology* to achieve peace, *Five Paradigms of Peace* have gained popularity and are taught in the master's course of International Peace and Conflict Resolution at the International Service, American University, Washington DC. They are coercive power,[1] world order,[2] conflict resolution,[3] nonviolence (civil disobedience)[4] and transformation.[5] Studying the Islamic point of view, the research has found that if achieving peace is the aim, ideologically the way to go is through a pragmatic peaceful, non-violent approach, not the ideal; abjuring violence in any form and by avoiding any form of coercion of others. As regards the *methodologies* the study has found that the transformation paradigm ensures results by transforming individuals from the culture of violence to the culture of peace. The term 'culture of peace' was introduced in UNESCO'S Manifesto 2000 for Culture of Peace and Non-Violence:

> "The year 2000 must be a new beginning, an opportunity to transform – all together – the culture of war and violence into a culture of peace."[2]

The United Nations partners with many contemporary peace organizations in efforts towards transforming the culture of violence to the culture of peace. Fr. Jun Mercado, Director of the Institute for Autonomy and Governance, has this to say about the 'culture of peace,' ""Peace-building is a vast project...linked to: (1) building a 'new paradigm' or politics of living together; (2) a wholesale reconstruction or development of areas affected by conflict; (3) a new

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[1] Young, Nigelle (Editor), *The Oxford International Encyclopedia of Peace*, Volume 3, p. 350.
[2] UNESCO's *Manifesto 2000 for Culture of Peace and Non-Violence*, Internet, http://www3.unesco.org/manifesto2000/uk/uk_manifeste.htm, [accessed March 6, 2013].

understanding of "security" and safety; and (4) a new culture—a culture of peace.[3] I have termed such a transformation, 'a transformation towards the culture of peace' which refers to helping individuals imbibe positive values, principles and ethics based on positive, peaceful behaviour.

TRANSFORMING INDIVIDUALS TOWARDS THE "CULTURE OF PEACE"

The transformation paradigm considers peace as a profoundly internal process and, as such, focuses on the individual, the building block of society, as the target of change. If making peace a reality in daily life is the aim, the focus should be on transforming individuals towards the culture of peace using education, cultural change, and spirituality.[4] UNESCO conforms to this approach in its *Manifesto of Peace*:

> "Change begins with individuals who work to make their dreams come true. We begin by believing that a Culture of Violence can change to a Culture of Peace."[5]

The individual approach, the essence of the transformation paradigm, is echoed in the motto of *The Institute for Individual and World Peace*, "making the world a place of peace, one person at a time."[6] Dr. Israr Ahmad (1932-2010), an Islamic theologian and *mufassir* of the Quran, in his book, *The Quran and World Peace* has explained that as individuals are the building blocks of society, once they change, society will change.[7] Maulana Wahiduddin Khan (b. 1925) refers to such a transformation as, "an intellectual revolution in individuals to reveal their true, positive personalities to they become peaceful members of society.'[8] The transformation process, thus, begins with the transformation of individuals. Once individuals, the building blocks of society, are transformed on positive lines, society will be transformed on positive lines.

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[3] "Redrawing Our Paradigms for Peace, Democracy, and Development", February 9, 2012, http://www.boholchronicle.net/20120219-part-6-redrawing-our-paradigms-for-peace-democracy-and-development.html, [accessed March 14, 2013].

[4] Funk, Nathan, C.: *Peace Paradigms: Five Approaches to Peace* in Peace In Gandhi Marg, October-December, 2002, Vol. 24, p. 3.

[5] UNESCO, *Manifesto of the Culture for Peace*, Internet: http://www.peace.ca/unesco.htm, [accessed March 6, 2013].

[6] Institute of Individual and World Peace, http://www.iiwp.org/index.html, [accessed January 3, 2013].

[7] Ahmad, Israr (author); Ahmad, Absar (trans.): *The Quran and World Peace*, Markazi Anjuman Khuddam-ul-Qur'an Lahore, Lahore, 2002, p. 1.

[8] "Maulana Wahiduddin Khan," http://www.cpsglobal.org/mwk, [accessed March 14, 2013].

The Dalai Lama supports this approach when he says that while compassion is the pillar of world peace ... it is the responsibility of one to shape oneself towards peace.[9] The target of the transformation is, therefore, the individual. When an individual changes on positive, peaceful lines, he becomes an instrument of broader changes, which results in peace in society.[10]

CHANGING MINDS TOWARDS POSITIVITY

An important question to ask is how can we change individuals towards the culture of peace? We find an answer to this in UNESCOs Preamble in these words:

> *"Since wars begin in the minds of men, it is in the minds of men that the defenses of peace must be constructed."*[11]

While UNESCO made this observation in the 20th century, the Prophet of Islam, Muhammad bin Abdullah (570-632) gave this formula to the world in the 7th century in these words:

> "As regards the reformation of human beings, there is only one really important thing and that is, the reformation of the mind. Change people's minds and their whole life will be changed.[12]

In this tradition the change of the mind and thinking of an individual is the centre, or *markaz* of transformation. According to this view the mind is the most important instrument for changing individuals from the culture of violence to the culture of peace. The transformation paradigm, thus, focuses on the inner transformation of the individual at the level of the mind.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES FOR TRANSFORMATION

Education for peace has evolved as a major method to transform individuals from the culture of violence to the culture of peace. Some of these values are forgiveness, sharing, well-wishing, mutual respect, patience and tolerance. Historically moral instruction and value education,

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[9] Dalia Lama: *The Human Approach to Peace,* Internet, http://www.dalailama.com/messages/world-peace/a-human-approach-to-peace, [accessed March 6, 2013].
[10] Funk, Nathan, C.: *Peace Paradigms: Five Approaches to Peace*, *op. cit.*, p. 3.
[11] *UNESCO Constitution,* Internet, http://portal.unesco.org/en/ev.php-URL_ID=15244&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201.html, [accessed January 3, 2013].
[12] Hadith, Sahih Al-Bukhari, No: 50

grounded in religious education were the precursors to education for peace.[13] In time as the word 'peace' came to be used as an 'umbrella term'[14] to collectively refer to all the positive values,[15] peace became the central theme in positive ethics education. As a result values and ethics such as non-violence, tolerance, patience, non-confrontation, controlling anger and good conduct, principles and attitudes became the building blocks of the culture of peace and the basis to impart education for peace in individuals.[16] There was, thus, a shift in focus from moral values education to education for peace in transforming individuals from the culture of violence to the culture of peace.[17]

Religion provides man the ethics and values for such a transformation as, at its core, religion believes in and instills values and ethics in its adherents. All religions teach the importance of peace. One of the earliest Buddhist verse collection practiced in everyday life lays emphasis on non-enmity and empathizes on peace:

> "Hatred is never appeased by hatred.
>
> Hatred is only appeased by Love (or, non-enmity).
>
> This is an eternal law." -- Pali Dhammapada, Verse five of the text (of 423 verses)

It is said that Prophet Isa gave tremendous importance to peace and tolerance. The following words that have been attributed to him in the New Testament of the Bible are witness to this:

> Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the sons of God. (Matthew 5: 9)
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> For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. (Romans 8:6)

Besides making individuals understand the importance of peace, religion also provides the guiding principles to achieve a transformation from the culture of violence to the culture of peace.

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[13] Position Paper, National Focus Group on "Education for Peace", National Council of Educational Research and Training, September 2006, p. 7.

[14] Johan Galtung: *Theories of Peace – A Synthetic Approach to Peace Thinking*, International Peace Research Institute, Oslo, 1967, p. 6.

[15] *Learning the Ways to Peace: A Teachers' Guide to Peace Education*, May 26, 2012, p. 1, http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0012/001252/125228eo.pdf, retrieved December 13, 2012.

[16] A. S. Balasooriya: *Learning Ways to Peace: A Teacher's Guide to Peace Education,* UNESCO, New Delhi, 2001, p. 9.

[17] Position Paper, National Focus Group on "Education for Peace", *op. cit.*, p. 13.

Islam is a religion of peace. One of the attributes of God described in the Quran is 'As Salaam' (meaning peace and security) that means that God Almighty Himself is an embodiment of peace. According to the traditions of the Prophet Muhammad (570-632) given in Al-Bukhari, 'Peace is Islam' and 'God is Peace'. The method given in Islam to achieve peace is given in the following verse of the Quran in these words, "Reconciliation is the best option." (4:128) According to this verse when differences arise in social life, Islam teaches one to follow the principles of peace, tolerance and adjustment, i.e., the conciliatory course rather than a confrontational one. The study has found that the original sources of Islam, Quran (word of God) and Hadith (sayings and actions of the Prophet Muhammad), provide the ethics and values from which principles can be derived for disciplined living. And when individuals are trained based on these principles they will be able to transform themselves towards the culture of peace. Some of these ethics and values and the principles derived from them that can help individuals to transform themselves on positive lines towards the culture of peace are given below.

The Ideology of Non-Violence

At the ideological level, the greatest principle for peaceful living found in Islam is non-violence. In the words of M K Gandhi (1869-1948), "If we want to reap the harvest of dialogical coexistence in the future, we will have to sow seeds of non-violence." The principle of non-violent activism is, thus, one of the most important principles to follow if one wants to transform oneself towards the culture of peace. Emphasizing on the principle of non-violence the Prophet of Islam has observed:

> "God grants to non-violence what he does not grant to violence."[18]

These words tell us about a law of nature. A violent reaction may satisfy one's emotions, but it cannot be good for any constructive goal. Such a goal requires sustainable effort, which is possible only through non-violent activism. Another law of nature is that non-violence is result-oriented, while violence is destruction-oriented. If individuals confine their activities to the field

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[18] Hadith, Sahih Muslim, No: 4697

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of gentleness and non-violence, his work will yield positive results; whereas when one opts for the way of violence and intolerance, he regresses instead of advancing.

The Methodology of Non-Confrontation, Non-Interference and Avoidance

Methodologically the most important principle to follow is that of non-confrontation. Giving this principle with relation to the movement of planets, the Quran states:

"Each floats in [its own] orbit." 36: 40

This verse gives a principle of non-confrontation. Just as in the natural world all planets, stars and other astronomical bodies move in their own separate orbits without confronting with other bodies; man should also continue to strive towards his own goals without confronting with others either at a physical level by actually interfering and fighting with others or at a psychological level by provoking the ego of others. The principle of non-confrontation can also be extended to the principle of non-interference,[1] that is not interfering with others and the principle of avoidance[2] that is avoiding the confrontational path.

Values for Transformation

If an individual wants to transform himself/herself from the culture of violence to the culture of peace he/she should follow the above ideology and methodology. And the values and ethics that are needed to tread this path can be found in various sources of Islam, some of which are outlined below.

1. The Value of Patience

Patience is an important pre-requisite if one wants to transform oneself from the culture of violence towards the culture of peace. This is because it repeatedly happens that in social life one experiences bitterness on account of others, thus provocative situations are bound to occur in society. On such occasions, if one reacts negatively, the matter will escalate to the point of a head-on collision. On the other hand if one is able to remain patient one is able to avoid any form of confrontation and keep one's actions in the peaceful sphere. This is what is called patience. Islam repeatedly enjoins people to tread the path of patience, *sabr*. The Qur'an says for patience:

"Surely the patient will be paid their wages in full without measure." (39: 10)

"The patient man is the helper of God." (61:14)

Why does Islam lay so much on the value of patience? The reason for this is that patience is the key factor in maintaining the desired system of God, a peaceful society. This is why so much reward is promised by God for those who are patient, stating, "Patience is for Me." (16:127/74:7) What is the wisdom behind laying so much emphasis on patience or *sabr*? When an individual adopts the path of patience, he is following the path of nature which results in a peaceful society; but when he adopts the path of impatience, he deviates from the path of nature which results in of all sorts of evils in society. That is why Islam lays such importance to patience, calling it a ladder to all kinds of progress.

2. The Value of Forgiveness

Forgiveness is another very important principle to consider when transformation towards peace is the aim. A few traditions of the Prophet of Islam explain this.

"One who does not forgive the faults of others will not have His sins be forgiven by God."[19]

"Show kindness, and kindness shall be shown to you; forgive, and you shall be forgiven."[20]

"One who does not forgive the faults of others will not have His sins forgiven by God."[21]

According to Islam forgiveness is vital for the transformation process to begin, as without forgiving others one continues to ponder over their negative actions and wastes one's time. It is only when one is able to forgive others that one is able go beyond the issue and commence other positive activities that will help him transform himself on positive lines and then one will be able to continue one's journey of life uninterrupted.

These are simply a few of the guiding principles given in Islam's original sources through which individuals can transform themselves towards the culture of peace.

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[19] Hadith, Al-Adabul-Mufrad, No: 137
[20] Hadith, Musnad Ahmad, No: 6541
[21] Hadith, Al-Adabul-Mufrad, No: 137

Transformation and Tazkia-e-Nafs

Transformation towards the culture of peace can be referred to as *tazkia-e-nafs* or purification of the self in Islamic terms. In the Quran *tazkia* is given as one of the four responsibilities for which Almighty God sent prophets. (2:129) Islam not only gives *tazkia* as a method of transformation but gives a positive motivation for those who are able to purify themselves, as mentioned in the Quran:

> "Gardens of eternity, through which rivers flow - that is the recompense for those who purify themselves." (20:76)

According to the above verse, Paradise (Al-Janna), the ideal abode of the hereafter, is for one who purifies his soul in this present world and reaches the world hereafter with a purified personality. If eternal paradise is the reward for purification (or transformation) this will be a positive motivation for individuals to transform themselves towards the culture of peace. Islam, therefore, not only gives ethics and values in its original source but these can be used to extract universal principles of life which can be used by individuals to transform themselves from the culture of violence to the culture of peace. Further Islam gives a positive motivation for such a transformation that is, *Al-jannah* or paradise.

According to Islamic teachings, for individuals who have been able to transform their personalities on positive lines, based on the universal principles mentioned in the Quran and Hadith, God has prepared the eternal positive, peaceful world of paradise. It is for such people that our most compassionate Lord will say:

> 'O soul at peace, return to your Lord, well-pleased and well-pleasing. Join My servants. Enter My Paradise.' (89: 27-29)

Ibn al-Abbas, referring to the above verse, says that God will say this to a tranquil and believing soul, a soul that is at complete rest, inviting him to enter His eternal Paradise.[22]

According to Islamic teachings it is such a transformed soul, referred to as *an-nafsun-mutmainna* in the Quran, who will be able to make this world a peaceful world and with God's

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[22] Farid, Ahmad (compiled from the works of Ibn Rajab al-Hanbali, Ibn al-Qayyim al-Jawziyya and Abu Hamid al-Ghazzali), *The Purificatin of the Soul,* Al-Firdous Ltd., London, 1991, p. 38.

grace inhabit the eternal home of peace in the next eternal world. Positivity is, therefore, the central theme if the purification or the positive personality development of individuals and in social affairs if peace, the pre-requisite for all any worthy goals, is the aim. This is because positivity at an individual level results in spiritual individuals and when such spiritual individuals are formed in a society, at a collective level it results in peace. Peace can, therefore, only be brought in society if individuals are able to transform themselves on positive lines through positive thinking and action. This is the essence of transforming individuals from the culture of violence to the culture of peace.

Education for Peace and Individual Transformation

In his book, Professor Felipe McGregor one of the architects of the culture of peace program links culture of peace to education for peace.[23] Education for peace is an important aspect of the transformation from the culture of violence to the culture of peace, the guideline for an individual being:

> 'If you want peace, be peace. Be an instrument of peace.'[24]

As such an important aspect of transformation towards the culture of peace is to make informal motivational education accessible to as many people in society as possible. Peace education can be described as the process of training individuals to 'acquire the values, the knowledge and develop the attitudes, skills, and behaviors to live in harmony with oneself and with others.'[25] When planning such a peace education exercise we have to ask ourselves certain questions: If we want to change society on peaceful lines, where do we begin? How can we train people in the culture of peace? The study has found certain basic formulae to be used if transforming individuals towards the culture of peace is the aim. Some of these are outlined below.

1. Educating the Individual

We know that the traditional model of value education has not received much success. But when we tried to find out why, an important fact came to light. The reason for the failure was

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[23] MacGregor, Felipe: *Culture of Peace*, Peru, 1986.
[24] Funk, Nathan, C.: *Peace Paradigms: Five Approaches to Peace* in Peace, *op. cit.*, p. 3.
[25] Peace Education, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Peace_education, [accessed July 28, 2012].

that these value education modules placed greater emphasis on the content of values rather than on the one who practices these values – the *individual*. Thus, the *target of education for peace* is the *individual* and its *objective* is to make individuals *understand the culture of peace* using education and spirituality.[26] This realization gave us the objectives for result-oriented education for peace with the focus on the individual to *one*, make him/her understand the importance of peace and positive values[27] and *two*, motivate him/her to actually imbibe these values and apply them in their daily life. The long-term proactive strategy for education for peace is to nurture peace-loving individuals who choose to act non-violently[28] to transform themselves towards the culture of peace using values and principles of life derived from them.

## 2. Addressing the Minds

The study found that one reason why ethical development was often not successful was that it was being done in the language of do's and don'ts, and as prescriptions these do not address the individual mind. As a result the person is not able to understand the relevance of the values and is not motivated to apply their principles in daily life. If we want individuals to imbibe the culture of peace and change on positive lines we have to explain the ethics and corresponding principles in a language that *addresses their minds*. Thus the focus of education for peace is the training of the individual at the level of the mind where the change must begin.[29] Explaining this *The Hague Appeal* suggests that education for peace should 'transform people's mindsets.'[30]

## 3. Moral Choices in Individual Hands

Jerome D. Frank (1909-2005), a professor of psychiatry at John Hopkins University School of Medicine explains, giving the example of Dr. Scott, a psychologist, says that man's mind can be trained.[31] Danilo Dolci (1924-1997), an Italian reformer has also laid emphasis on education or training to improve humanity, which he says is something that cannot be achieved by merely

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[26] Funk, Nathan, C.: *Peace Paradigms: Five Approaches to Peace* in Peace, *op. cit.*, p. 3.

[27] UNESCO Asia Pacific Regional Bureau of Education, *op. cit.*, p. 37.

[28] Position Paper, National Focus Group on "Education for Peace", National Council of Educational Research and Training, September 2006, p. 7.

[29] Funk, Nathan, C.: *Peace Paradigms: Five Approaches to Peace* in Peace, *op. cit.*, p. 3.

[30] *Peace Education: A Transformative Response to Major Societal Challenges*, www.scribd.com/doc/39053320/Peace-Education-2, [accessed July 31, 2012, p. 2].

[31] Arthur and Lila Weinber: *Instead of Violence – Writings by the great advocates of peace and non-violence through history*, Grossman Publishers, New York, 1963, p. 78.

making speeches but by working towards.[32] From the Islamic perspective the aim of education for peace, therefore, is to train individuals in a manner that they understand that although they are completely free to make their moral choices, to ensure peace in society and to allow themselves to avail of the existing opportunities; they have to limit their freedom so that it does not interfere with the freedom of others. In this world each and every one of us is free to do as we like. No one can take this away from us. Thus, the formula of social ethics entails:

'you are free, but your freedom ends where another's nose begins.'[33]

This is an important aspect of social living  which is given in the following verse of the Quran:

'This is the truth from your Lord. Let him who will, believe in it, and him who will deny it.' – Quran: 18:29

According to this verse God Almighty has given each and every man and woman freedom to do as he and she likes. From this we can understand that God has sent man to this world for the purpose of testing him and, accordingly, granted him complete freedom. God will not take back this freedom in this world, but will hold man to account for his thoughts and deeds (of this world) on the Day of Resurrection in the next world by either rewarding him with eternal Paradise or punishing him. In such a situation what is expected from an individual? This is given in the following tradition of the Prophet of Islam in these words:

'A believer is one who likes for others what he likes for himself.'[34]

This is a very concise guiding principle of social ethics, the *principle of reciprocity*. Everyone knows what attitude he wants or does not want from others. If members of society want positive speech and behaviour from others, they too have to speak and behave positively with them. If they do not want others to stand in their way, they have to likewise ensure that they do not stand in the way of others. If they want others to give them space to avail of the existing opportunities, they have to also give space to others. Once realization dawns on individuals that the choice is theirs, but it is in their own interest to make the right choice, they are able to,

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[32] Ibid, p. 24.
[33] CPS International, http://cpsglobal.org/content/forbidden-tree, [accessed July 31, 2012].
[34] Hadith, Sahih Al-Bukhari, No: 13

keeping the broader implications in terms of personal and social values; make the right moral choice,[35] with the aim of receiving the same from others. This is a very important aspect to keep in mind when education for peace is the goal.

## 3. Duty-Conscious vs. Rights-Conscious Ethics

A question that is often asked if peace in society is the aim is whether the focus of the transformation is on rights-consciousness or duty-consciousness? Ensuring human rights are definitely an essential part of social life, but can merely making demands assure human rights for all? This is the subject of a discipline called *deontology*. Derived from the Greek word *deon*, meaning duty, deontological ethics are described as morality of an action based on 'duty' or 'obligation'. The ethics of the most famous deontological ethicist, Immanuel Kant (1724-1804), can be summarized as 'do only the action that you would wish to see made a universal rule to govern the lives of everyone around you all the time.'[36]

An important principle to prepare such a duty-conscious society is of keeping the onus of duty on oneself, rather than on others as mentioned in this tradition of the Prophet of Islam:

> Ámmar, one of the Companions of the Prophet of Islam said that whoever has these three attitudes can be said to have *Iman* (Faith): spending money in a tight-fisted condition hoping that God will give in return; dealing with people justly without getting them to move to court; and making efforts to keep the world peaceful.[37] (Kanzul Úmmal: 1/289/1399)

This tradition emphasizes on the importance of keeping the responsibility of maintaining peace in society and justice on oneself. This can also be termed as the principle of maintaining ethics on unilateral terms, not on bilateral terms. This is mentioned in the Quran in these words:

> "Repel evil with good. And you will find that one who was your enemy will become your dearest friend." (23: 96)

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[35] National Curriculum Framework 2005, National Council of Educational Research and Training, New Delhi, 2005, p. 62.
[36] Immanuel Kant, http://trivialcontemplations.wordpress.com/2011/01/13/ethics-why-deontology-teleology-and-existentialism-are-illogical-apart-from-god/, [accessed July 28, 2012].
[37] Al-Bukhari: 1/14/28

This verse of the Quran not only gives the principle of maintaining unilateral good behaviour but also presents the method for it: *firstly*, not considering anyone as one's enemy; and *secondly*, in case one finds negative behaviour on the part of the other, to not return enmity for enmity, rather treat the other well. The result of such unilateral, good behaviour will be that your enemy will become your dearest friend.

According to the principle of unilateral, duty-conscious ethics one has to give a positive response in return for the negative actions of others. This means that one must unilaterally be a well-wisher and lover of all mankind, even if the other acts as one's enemy. Such unilateral ethics give an individual a high moral target to live up to: of becoming a good human being, who is a principled person, who lives a life of the highest moral character.

Preparing such duty-conscious individuals is the aim of the education for peace program that targets the transformation of individual towards the culture of peace. It is only when such individuals are formed can society that society develops on positive lines. This is because individuals who are conscious of their own rights will always make demands upon others; whereas duty-conscious individuals will realize that their self-development lies in fulfilling their own duties. The formula of a rights-conscious person is thus, 'others must do it;' while that of a duty-conscious person is, 'I will do it'. Rights-based ethics, founded on the 'we-they' concept, focus upon what has to come from others, whereas duty-based ethics, founded on the 'we-we' concept, start with the self. A rights-based society will lead to social anarchy, whereas a duty-based society will lead to harmony, solidarity, peace and compassion.

TRANSFORMATION BEGINS WITH ONESELF

We have waited too long for others to change society, when the truth is: *If we want to transform society we have to begin with ourselves*. Thus, we, the building blocks of society, have to start the transformation process in ourselves. At an *individual level* we have to learn the art of situation management. We can do this by responding positively to negative situations. In this way we will be able to stop the vicious cycle of violence from continuing. At the *social level* we need to know our limits and realize that we have to remain in the peaceful sphere for our actions to deliver positive results. The way to go is, thus, through the peaceful, non-violent

approach, by abjuring violence in any form and by avoiding any kind of coercion. How can we do this? Social evils do not erupt all of a sudden; they germinate and grow over a period of time, sometimes assuming monstrous proportions. Thus, one practical way to begin the process of humanizing society is to begin the transformation in oneself.

IN CONCLUSION

Transformation towards the culture of peace makes the individual, the building block of society, the target of change. The emphasis is on helping individuals to understand the importance of all positive values that are collectively represented in the term 'peace' and motivate and help them to transform themselves the culture of peace using guiding principles from religious and secular sources. According to Islam such a transformation, a profoundly internal exercise, is achieved by addressing the individual at the level of the mind to live a principled life by imbibing values and ethics such as the importance of positive thinking and living (*tazkia* as mentioned in the Quran), learning the art of conversion and the importance of values such as tolerance, patience, forgiveness. Such a training, referred to as 'education for peace', lays emphasis on a duty-conscious or 'we-we' ethics as opposed to rights-based or 'we-they' ones. The aim of such an exercise is two-fold: *firstly*, it ensures that individuals develop their personalities on positive lines and learn to manage situations and *secondly*, it ensures that their relations with others in society are developed on positive lines. If individuals are able to transform themselves towards the culture of peace they not only become contributing members of society and responsible citizens, but are also able to continue their journey of life uninterrupted. They are able to convert their potential into actual and rise to heights in this world as well as the hereafter.

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