PEACEFUL COEXISTENCE THROUGH THE CONCEPTS OF *BRAHMAVIHĀRĀS* OF BUDDHISM AND *MAQĀṢID AL-SHARĪʿA* OF ISLAM: A CONTENT ANALYSIS

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ABSTRACT

To understand every religion, it is vital to study the main sources, the specific religious scriptures of a particular religion. In order to draw a conclusion about the core message of religion, it is not scientific to observe only the practices of the adherents of a certain religion. Although Buddhism and Islam have been considered as religions of peace, the meeting of Buddhists and Muslims is most often imagined as one of violent confrontation in the modern world. There should be an understanding between Buddhism and Islam to ensure peaceful coexistence among the adherents. Based on the arguments,this study aims to analyze peaceful coexistence through two different concepts, Brahmavihārās from Buddhism and Maqāṣidh al-Sharīʿa from Islam. Primarily it seeks to analyze these two concepts within their respective religions for a better comparison. It uses a library-based qualitative method. For this purpose, the research adopts the content analysis method, which focuses on the materials from journals, books, written reports, and other materials. The study highlights that even though Buddhism and Islam have different doctrinal foundations, the basic teachings promote peaceful coexistence from different points of view. This research concludes that both religions share similar concepts of peaceful coexistence which denote and declare human dignity as a right that should be paid attention. Both religions prioritize love and justice as the main standard in discussing peaceful coexistence. Hopefully, this conceptual study will be able to show that these two ideas are very significant and valuable when dealing with religious conflicts, to make a better inter-religious understanding among Buddhists and Muslims and to succeed in a process of reconciliation and for peaceful coexistence among diverse religious people.

Keywords: *Buddhism, Islam, Peaceful Coexistence, Conceptual Ideas, Brahmavihārās, Maqāṣidh al-Sharīʿa*

INTRODUCTION

Across the world, Muslims and Buddhists have peacefully coexisted for a long time. But their interaction has been mainly political and economic instead of doctrinal. Even though the first contact between the Muslim and Buddhist civilizations took place from the areas where Buddhism had spread that came under the rule of the Arab Umayyad (661-684 AD) (Umayyad expansion) to the Central Asia region, three decades after the time of the Prophet Muhammad

(SW) (S. M. Yusuf 1955). The relationship between Muslims and Buddhism grew during the Abbasid period (775-809 AD), especially in an intellectual aspect (Ramli, Awang, and Ab Rahman 2018). Amid the 8th century CE, during the Abbasid period, the earliest meaningful interaction between Buddhist and Muslim scholars started. Caliph al-Mansur established a Bayt al-Hikmat (House of Knowledge) in Baghdad at that time for the study and translation of literature from Greek and Indian cultural works, particularly

on scientific topics. As part of this plan, his son, Caliph al-Mahdi, invited Buddhist monk scholars from the monasteries on the Indian subcontinent and Afghanistan to work at this Bayt al-Hikmat. He ordered them to help translate primarily medical and astronomical writings from Sanskrit into Arabic (Berzin 2010) and including the book entitled, the Book of the Buddha (Selim 2011). In contrast, during this period, there is no record of any Arabic works translated into Sanskrit. Although the monks at the Buddhist monastic universities at that time in present-day Afghanistan and the Indian subcontinent actively debated non-Buddhist Indian belief systems, yet there is no evidence that any such debates happened with Muslim intellectuals. No mention of Islamic beliefs appears in any of the Sanskrit Buddhist philosophical discourses, either then or afterwards (Berzin 2010).

It is believed that while both religions derived from different sources, the first to study Buddhism were Muslim scholars. Some Muslim scholars tend to show their huge interest in identifying similarities between the teachings of Buddha and Islam. Among the early Muslim scholars, Umar ibn al-Azraq al-Kirmāni who explained Buddhism to his Muslim audience during the Umayyah Period and the Umayyad Islamic scholar Wāsil ibn 'Aṭā' (700–748), the founder of the Mu'tazilah School, was well-acquainted with Buddhist thoughts, but how much knowledge he had of Buddhism, and how much influence he received from Buddhism, are difficult to confirm. Similarly, the great historian, al-Ṭabarī (838-923 AD) who used the term among them were "red-clad ones," namely Buddhist monks (Berzin 2010) and al-Biruni (973-1048 AD) who mentioned as Sāhib al-Hamra al-Shumania or red robe-wearers and al-Bud, the Shumanians for Buddhists (Sachau 1910: 158), al-Baladhuri (820-892 AD), Ibn al-Nadim (995 AD), al-Shahrastani's (1086-1153 AD) *Kitāb al-Milal wa an-Nihal* which is considered as the longest description of Buddhism in any Muslim source (Elverskog 2010). In the fourteenth century when the

Mongol ruler Ghazan Khan converted to Islam, he commissioned his minister Rashid al-Din al-Hamadhani (1247-1318 AD), (primarily he was a jew and reverted to Islam) to write a Universal History (*Jami al-Tawarikh*) which included a description of Buddhist beliefs written in cooperation with a Buddhist monk (Berzen 2010), have contributed to the study on Buddhism. Alexander Berzin (2010) further describes, although Muslim scholars of the past have shown repeated interest in gaining knowledge of Buddhism, while Buddhist scholars have shown comparatively less interest in learning about Islam, this situation is slowly changing at present. Therefore, in present Buddhist scholars like Snjezana Veljacic Akpınar and Alexander Berzin and Dalailama have been contributing on academic study or discussion on Islam and Buddhism. Similarly, even though an academic and comparative study on Islam and Buddhism have been surprisingly abandoning for a long time, yet contemporary few Muslim scholars such as Muhammad Hamidullah (1908-2002), Hamid Abdul Qadir (1957), Hamza Yusuf (1958), Shah Reza Kazemi (1960), Imtiyaz Yusuf have contributed to the academic and comparative study on Islam and Buddhism.

In the last decades, Muslim-Buddhist clashes have been gaining global attention, referring to the events such as the destruction of the Nalanda monastery in the thirteenth century (Kumar 2011) and the destruction of the Bamiyan Buddha statues by the Afghan Taliban in 2001 (Elverskog 2010), the Buddhist government's suppression of Muslim minorities in South Thailand, violence against the Muslim Rohingya and the rise of the 969 movement in Myanmar (Kipgen 2014). The ethnic riots in Sri Lanka (Stewart 2014) have seriously harmed Muslim-Buddhist interrelationship. Even though these groups do not represent the entire Buddhist or Muslim community, it does give a bad perception of their respective religions. There were very strong historical engagements and understandings that played a vital role to ensure well respect between these two religions, as Johan Elverskog (2010)

stated 'Bamiyan Buddha statues survived thirteen hundred years under the Muslim rule.' So, it is noticed that there are numerous reasons behind these clashes which have geopolitical, social, and economic benefits as Fraser (2015) states "It's not the religion that creates terrorists, it's politics," under various profit motives, politics generate terrorism.

Undoubtedly, the Muslim-Buddhist clashesh are rooted in the spirit of extreme nationalism and racism. In addition, Gravers (2015) and Stewart (2014) suggest the motivation could be prejudgment against Muslims deemed capable of competing for religious, social, economic, national and government influence. Therefore, it is obvious, that because of social, political, and economic backgrounds, mutual understanding and relationship between Muslims and Buddhists could not be achieved to a satisfactory level. So, the studies which promote interreligious understanding between these two religions are essential. There are few academic initiatives has been taken for concerning the common ground between Islam and Buddhism to create a platform for inter-religious understanding among Buddhists and Muslims. However, the analyzing idea of peaceful coexistence through two different concepts from Islam and Buddhism has to be understood for promoteing good interreligious understanding.

The idea of peaceful coexistence is a topic to be regarded as a contemporary pluralist lifestyle and the most common and imperative subject in the sense of globalization. Although certain conduct and different theories are found in a territory, it is emphasized that peaceful coexistence is a very important topic to resolve ethnic and religious unrest hence it makes living together with the acceptance of differences. Though the concept of coexistence is viewed from various angles, fields, peaceful coexistence with the different principles like love and compassion, mercy and justice between the religions and races has gained huge attention, particularly in the process of conflict resolution among Buddhists and Muslims.

Therefore, this work has focused on the concept of *Brahmavihārās* (Four sublime attitudes) from Buddhist doctrine, and its explanations have been given relating to love and compassion to promote peaceful coexistence. While, the Islamic conceptual ideas of maintaining peaceful coexistence have been discussed from the perspective of the *Maqāṣid al-Sharīʿa* (higher objective of *Sharīʿa*) which contains mercy and justice. The paper argues that these concepts can serve as a worthy model of emulation by Muslims and Buddhists in their respective majority or mixed cultures. So, it can be observed that there are more important perspectives and appealing ways of Buddhist and Islamic conceptual ideas regarding peaceful coexistence. It also tries to find to make this study the starting point of a socio-religious understanding and interfaith discussion between Islam and Buddhism. The paper thus aims to contribute to reviving the Muslim-Buddhist dialogue in contemporary times to make good understanding. This study concludes that Islam and Buddhism have a similar scope for promoting humanity and ensuring peaceful coexistence which contains human wellbeing and justice.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Among the recent works, there are few Muslim studies about Buddhism, three of which are arguable, such as those by Imran Nasir Hosein, Abdullah Numsuk, and Harun Yahya (Hosein 2001; Numsuk 1999; Yahya 2005) .Yet, their objectives did not provide any significant common grounds to make better space for interreligious understanding and cooperation between these two religions, hence Harun Yahya tried to criticize Buddhism by using Islamic quotations. Similarly, the works do not contain any detailed explanation about conceptual ideas which promote peaceful coexistence between Buddhists and Muslims. In contrast, there are important two Buddhist-Muslim dialogue sessions that make good interreligious understanding among these two religions. Firstly, conducted by Dr. Daisaku Ikeda,

a Japanese Buddhist thinker and president of the SGI and Dr. Majid Tehranian, Iranian scholar and published in their book entitled Global Dialogue: An Islamic-Buddhist Dialogue (Ikeda and Tehranian 2003), which is a prime example of inter-religious dialogue. Secondly, the dialogue of Abdul Rahman Wahid or Gus Dur (1940–2009), eminent Islamic leader and first democratically elected president of the Republic of Indonesia with Daisaku Ikeda (Wahid and Ikelda 2015), which covers meetings between Buddhist and Islamic civilizations from the 7th century to the present, and their shared similarities. However, these dialogues only contain more general views or shared values of all religions, yet it does not focus on any specific conceptual ideas of these two religions. However, the works of Snjezana Veljacic Akpınar on Buddhist Meditations on Islamic Contemplative Paths: Less Traveled Roads and Abandoned Junctions, Alexander Berzin study on Buddhist-Muslim Doctrinal Relations and the work about Dialogue Between Islam and Buddhism through the Concepts of Ummatan Wasaṭan (The Middle Nation) and Majjhima-Patipada (The Middle Way) by Imtiyaz Yousuf (Akpinar 2015; Berzin n.d.; Imtiyaz Yusuf 2009) contain some conceptual ideas which promote good interreligious understanding between Buddhist and Muslims. Still, there are no any works published for promoting peaceful coexistence through the concepts of *Brahmavihārās* of Buddhism and *Maqāṣid al-Sharī'a* of Islam.

RESEARCH METHOD

This paper is within the field of religious thought history, which is primarily theoretical in nature and includes bibliographic and library analysis.It refers to the qualitative method.The structure of the study is descriptive, distinctive without critically comparing and analyzing the text deeply. The findings are compiled and organized according to Islam and Buddhism for the construction of love and compassion, mercy and justice which promote peaceful coexistence.

Concerning the source of this article, both primary and secondary sources in English, Arabic, Sinhala, Pali, and Tamil languages have been consulted.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Definition of Peaceful Coexistence

The idea of peaceful coexistence was developed by the Soviet Union and China during the Cold War as a tool for communist states to live in harmony with capitalist states and, in the case of China, with regional forces. It was in sharp contrast to theories of mutual aggressive violence that the two governments were not able to live peacefully. Nevertheless, it was applied differently by the Soviet Union and the People's Republic of China, and debates over differing interpretations of peaceful coexistence contributed to one aspect of the Sino-Soviet split in the 1950s and 1960s.[1] The countries, Russia and the US are specified as mighty of this terminology. The term coexistence was used to quench the economic and political conflicts among the countries. It was considered as a structure of work together while understanding the dissimilarities. But nowadays it is considered that there is much difference in usage of this term when comparing with its history. Even though the term coexistence has got a political background historically, in the present situation it is generally used to maintain racial and religious harmony among diverse people.

The word coexistence is defined by philologists in various aspects. Among the definitions, it is mentioned that "Coexistence is a state in which two or more groups live together respecting their differences and resolving their conflicts in a nonviolent manner" (Weiner 1998). Also, It is "to exist together at the same time or in the same place and also to live in peace with others despite differences, especially as a

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[1] "Peaceful Coexistence," *Encyclopedia.com*, Retrieved February 22, 2021 (https://www.encyclopedia.com/social-sciences/applied-and-social-sciences-magazines/peaceful-coexistence).

matter of policy."[2] Similarly, coexistence refers to "to live together at the same time and in the same place and to exist in mutual tolerance."[3] Meanwhile the word Peaceful coexistence means "competition without war, or policy of peace between nations of widely differing political systems and ideologies, especially between Communist and non-Communist nations"[4] and the first known use of peaceful coexistence in 1857.[5] Peaceful coexistence also refers to (A policy of) mutual toleration between states, groups, etc., having different beliefs, ideologies, or outlooks.[6] Thus, from these clarifications and definitions, the concept of peaceful coexistence can be summarized as follows in numerous ways.

- To live together (in time or place) and to live in mutual tolerance.

- To learn to recognize and live with difference.

- To have a relationship between persons or groups in which none of the parties is trying to destroy the other.

- To interact with a commitment to tolerance, mutual respect, and the agreement to settle conflicts without recourse to violence.

Considering the above clarifications, peaceful coexistence between religions is both a personal and social requirement. It is believed that a study on peaceful coexistence from a religious perspective is seen as an important theme for it could serve as a mechanism for enhancing cross-cultural religious communication. Similarly, discoveries and insights emerging from the comparative study of religions on themes like peaceful coexistence could be essential to resolve contemporary human challenges particularly ethnic and racial conflicts among Muslims and Buddhists. Isolation is not conducive to growth and advancement to counter nonviolent. The relevance of research in the field of peaceful coexistence between Islamic and Buddhist scriptures was highlighted in this context. Nonetheless, the study only focuses on love and compassion from *Brahmavihārās* of Buddhism and mercy and justice from *Maqāṣid al-Sharīʿa* of Islam which promotes peaceful coexistence.

The Necessity of Peaceful Coexistence

Discussions about the controversies and violence between different religious and non-religious groups around the world have something in common in the modern era. According to the Encyclopedia of Wars, out of all 1,763 known or recorded historical conflicts, 123, or 6.98%, had religion as their primary cause (Phillips and Charles 2004: 1484–85) and The Great Big Book of Horrific Things provides religion as the source of 11 of the world's 100 deadliest massacres (White 2011: 544). Similarly, religious intolerance has risen over the past decade, and its tensions have been taking places between different groups in many parts of the world. Specifically, there are enormous conflicts between Buddhist and Muslim adherents which have been reported in some of the south and southeast Asian regions. The destruction of the Nalanda monastery and the Bamiyan Buddha statues and Buddhist government's suppression of Muslim minorities in South Thailand and violence against the Muslim Rohingya and the rise of the 969 movement in Myanmar and the ethnic riots in Sri Lanka are rooted in various backgrounds, but the events have seriously harmed Muslim-Buddhist understanding. Although this group does not have any religious motivations or backgrounds, it does give a negative image for their respective religions. Like all religions, the core message of

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[2]Coexistence. (n.d.), Merriam Webster Dictionary. Retrieved October 11, 2020, from https://www.merriamwebster.com/dictionary/coexistence

[3]Coexistence. In the Cambridge dictionary, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 1996) / Coexistence. In the Oxford dictionary, (Oxford: Oxford University Press 1992)

[4]Peaceful coexistence. (n.d.). In Dictionary.com Retrieved October 11, 2020, from https://www.dictionary.com/browse/peaceful-coexistence

[5]Peaceful Coexistence. (n.d.). In Merriam Webster Dictionary.com Retrieved October 11, 2020, from https://www.merriamwebster.com/dictionary/peaceful coexistence

[6]Peaceful Coexistence: Definition of Peaceful Coexistence by Oxford Dictionary on Lexico.com also meaning of Peaceful Coexistence. (n.d.). Retrieved October 11, 2020, from https://www.lexico.com/en/definition/peaceful_coexistence

Islam and Buddhism is rooted with peace and nonviolence and human wellbeing. Therefore, Muslim-Buddhist clashes are gaining global attention concerning on the past and present incidents in the places where they live as equal citizens. Even though there were very strong historical engagements that played a vital role to ensure well understanding between these two religions, yet the meeting of Buddhism and Islam is most often imagined as one of violent confrontations in the modern world. It is believed that there is an urgent need for interreligious understanding to make a huge impact on reducing the conflicts among the adherents. For that reason, religious adherent should know the religious core message from its main sources. It is somewhat necessary to ensure good interreligious understanding between Muslims and Buddhists to safeguard peace and harmony. Besides, it is important to bring front the religious concepts like *Brahmavihārās* of Buddhism and *Maqāṣid al-Sharīʿa* of Islam from religious traditions.

The slogan "live and allow others to live"[7] is very famous in the modern world, and it is considered that this freedom is indeed embedded in human nature. Generally, from a religious point of view, it can be observed that the essence of almost all religious values are made up as "Do good, and leave Bad." In Buddhism it is mentioned in Dhammapada: The Buddha was once asked to put the whole of his teaching into a few words and he replied that "To avoid all evil, to cultivate good, and to cleanse one's mind" — this is the teaching of the Buddhas. (Dhammapada: 183). In Islam, Al-Qurān clarifies that "Those who follow the messenger, the Prophet who can neither read nor write, whom they will find described in the Torah and the Gospel (which are) with them. He will enjoin on them that which is right and forbid them that which is wrong. He will make lawful for them all good things and prohibit for them only the foul; and he will relieve them of their burden and the fetters that they used to wear. Then those

who believe in him, and honor him, and help him, and follow the light which is sent down with him: they are the successful" (al-Qur'ān 7: 157). Most religions generally share the teaching attributes of aspects against violence and extremism. Buddhism says that the "Hatred is, indeed, never appeased by hatred in this world. It is appeased only by loving-kindness This is an ancient law" (Dhammapada: 05). It is clarified in al-Qurān, Allah (God) says that "We created not the heavens, the earth, and all between them, but for just ends. And the Hour (day of judgment) is surely coming (when this will be manifest). So overlook (any human faults) with gracious forgiveness (al-Qur'ān 15: 85). Thus, when studying the sacred text of Buddhist and Islamic religions, one can find many conceptual ideas that motivate peaceful coexistence among diverse people.

Peaceful Coexistence and the Concept of *Brahmavihārās* of Buddhism

Buddhism is the world's fourth-largest religion with over 520 million followers, or over 7% of the global population, known as Buddhist.[8] Buddhism, religion, and philosophy developed from the teachings of the Buddha (Sanskrit: "Awakened One"), a teacher who lived in northern India between the mid-6th and mid-4th centuries BCE (Before the Common Era).[9]

According to Mahinda Palihawadana (2006: 67), in ancient India, at a moment of political, social, and spiritual tension, the Buddha appeared. The canonical texts of Theravada bear witness to the existence of wars between kings and Republican states. The scripture also reveals that the Buddha is concerned with the social conflicts of the many conflicting religious and philosophical schools of the time, induced by violence, poverty, and constant conflicts and confrontations.

Buddhism is known as "the Religion of Peace" because Buddhist teachings focus on self-

[7]Live and Let Live, *Marriam Webster Dictionary* (n.d.), Retrieved November 09, 2020, from https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/live and let live

[8]"Buddhists". Global Religious Landscape. Pew Research Center. Retrieved 13 March 2015.

[9]Buddhism. *Britannica.com*, Retrieved November 09, 2020, from https://www.britannica.com/topic/Buddhism

awareness to maintain bodily, verbal and inner peace (Tanabe 2016). It is noticed during the study of its fundamentals and core philosophies, Buddhism contains various beautiful conceptual ideas that motivate peaceful coexistence and religious harmony. Buddhism explains peace and harmony at the highest level and encourages equality and justice, love and compassion among all human beings including yourself, parents, friends, monks, the old, animals, and even with enemies. Therefore, in that terms, Buddhist guidance to show equal respect to all the living beings in the world contains significant features. According to Buddhist philosophy, peace, and justice is not fragmentary and sectional, but complete and universal and not only between man and man, Buddha and Buddha, is their justice, but also between man and Buddha, man and animals; all of them are equal with each other. Therefore, it is believed that the teachings of Buddha guide clearly to live together with peace and harmony without any discrimination among peoples.

The main Buddhist Sutras[10] are specified in the normative teachings of Gautama Buddha, and there are some conceptual ideas were formed from Buddhist Sutras, promote peace and harmony, and love and mercy. It is mentioned that there are four conceptual ideas of love that make it 'true' love and these concepts must combine to make love, true and long-lasting. They are not mystical or even spiritual concepts; they are merely acting and values that must be retained by the person to make love powerful. These four conceptual elements of love are easy to grasp, but they make a relationship much more worthy and healthy (Francesca 2017). According to Nyanaponika (1999), these conceptual ideas have been taught by the Buddha and that called *Brahmavihārās* (sublime attitudes, lit. "abodes of Brahma") or a series of four Buddhist virtues and the meditation practices which are mentioned in

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[10]In Buddhism, sutras, also known as suttas, are canonical scriptures, many of which are regarded as records of the oral teachings of Gautama Buddha.

Digha Nikaya-13 of Pali Tri Pitaka. Indeed, it is believed that these four sublime states of mind bring peace of mind which promotes peaceful coexistence among diverse people.

Brahmavihārās - Four Sublime Attitudes:

1. Loving-kindness(Pāli:*mettā*,Sanskrit:*maitrī*)

   Bhikku Bodhi (2005: 90) says that the *mettā* gives the meaning of benevolence and this is not only the desire to make someone happy but the ability to do so. The word *mettā*, Sanskrit: *maitrī* is most often translated into loving-kindness (Harvey 2012: 154) or mercy. Someone may have every intention to love, but the way that someone love may make them unhappy, so it is accepted to consider true expectation by behaving positively. Dhammapada explains that "Overcome the angry one by not getting angry; overcome the wicked by goodness; overcome the stingy by generosity, and the liar by speaking the truth" (Dhammapada: 223). According to Nyanaponika (1999: 16) love, which by the Enlightened one was named "the liberation of the heart", "the most sublime beauty": this is the highest love. And he explains the highest manifestation of love; to show to the world the path leading to the end of suffering, the path pointed out, trodden, and realized to perfection by Him, the Exalted One, the Buddha. However, Buddharakkhita (1995) says that the *mettā* makes one a pure font of well-being and care for others. Just as a mother gives her own life to protect her child, so *mettā* only gives and never desires anything in coming back and immensely patient attitude of a mother who forbears all difficulties for the sake of her kid and ever defends it despite its misbehavior. Therefore, *mettā* is an attitude of a friend who wants to give one the best to further one's well-being (Buddharakkhita 1995), which encourages peaceful coexistence.

2. Compassion (Pāli and Sanskrit: *karuṇā*) results from *mettā*, it is identifying the suffering of others as one's own.

   Karuṇā, is often translated as compassion

(Harvey 2012: 326) and considered as the second *Brahmavihāra* in Buddhism. Compassion is what occurs when someone with goodwill experiences suffering, as Ajahn Thanissaro highlights in his essay "Head & Heart Together: Taking Wisdom to the *Brahmavihāras"* (Domyo 2018). According to the Buddhist explanations, it can simplify that this is the ability to ease the pain of others, as well as the desire to other's well-being. This is also based on understanding, but the understanding of the suffering of love. Only when someone truly understands others' suffering will be able to help in easing their burdens. It can be said that, to develop this conceptual idea: Communication with loved people and knowing what troubles them and getting if there is anything that can do that will help instantly (Francesca 2017). Through this communication will ensure understanding and bring the desire to help others for strengthening the relationship to maintain peaceful coexistence among people. Domyo (2018) emphasizes compassion or *Karuṇā* is what arises when someone with goodwill witnesses suffering. Therefore, the attainment of *karuṇā* is inevitable to ensure a peaceful mind which urges peaceful coexistence.

3. Sympathetic joy (*Pāli* and Sanskrit: *muditā*)

The *muditā* is often translated as sympathetic joy (Domyo 2018) or empathetic joy (Harvey 2012). It is explained that not only to compassion with others but also to joy with other beings is essential. There is no proper English word typically, enough for this quality to rejoice because of someone's fortune. However, it can be easily understood through the opposite words: jealousy, envy. Therefore, this concept is highly significant, and it makes better engagement and good understanding to ensure healthy relationships between people for peaceful coexistence. Nyanaponika (1999) explains the more sublime and noble the joy of others is, the more justified will be our own sympathetic joy hence cause for our joy with others is their noble life securing their happiness here and in lives hereafter. In the deeper layers of their minds,

people harbor a definite aversion to dwelling on the happiness of others. Conze (1973) highlights that the "envy and jealousy are strong, deep-seated, though rarely admitted, counterforces. All the time we jealously compare our lot with that of others and grudge them the good fortune which eludes us..." So, jealousy makes people stress and destroy peaceful mind. Therefore, Nyanaponika (1999) concluded that sympathetic joy is strength and gives strength: this is the highest joy.

4. Equanimity (Pāli: *upekkhā*, Sanskrit: *upekṣā*): is even-mindedness and serenity

The final element is *Upekkhā*, meaning freedom or equanimity (Harvey 2012: 326). According to Peter Harvey (2012: 154), equanimity is even-mindedness and serenity, treating everyone impartially. Equanimity is a perfect, unshakable balance of mind, having a non-reactive mind, rooted in insight and looking at the world around us, and looking into our own heart, we see clearly how difficult it is to attain and maintain the balance of mind. If the mind is balanced the relationship between people flourishes instantly and when the mind is balanced, both people within them should have freedom, and feel free within the association which can enrich the peaceful coexistence. The opposite of *Upekkhā* is distress, particularly when we encounter suffering (Domyo 2018). So, there

Figure 1

Four Sublime State of Buddhism (*Brahmavihārās)*
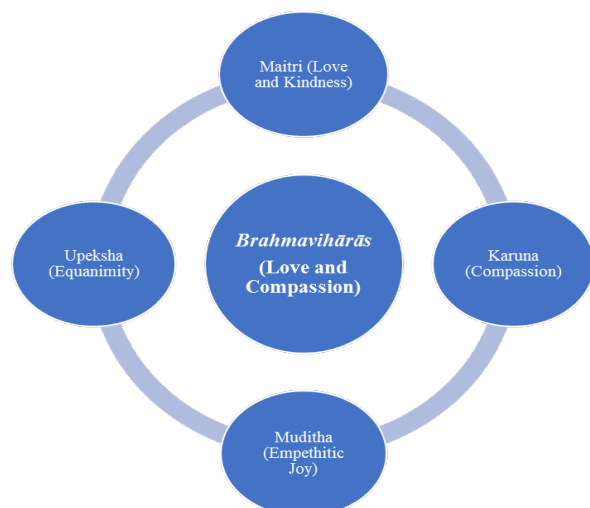
should also be freedom within the relationship between diverse people if one can cultivate this element, being able to feel comfortable in sharing ideas and thoughts without fear of judgment to ensure peace and harmony.

It is known that working with these four conceptual ideas (*Brahmavihārās*) to ensure love and compassion will bring peaceful coexistence among people. Therefore, these elements have a more considerable practical way to make a better relationship between diverse religious adherents.

Discrimination occurs when a person is treated less favorably than another person in a similar situation and this treatment cannot be objectively and reasonably justified. Buddhist sources completely deny human differences and inequalities based on birth and wealth or any other reason. It is mentioned that the Buddha's stand against human discrimination. For instance, Brahmins were given great status in ancient India, so people wanted to be born or become and live as Brahmins, but according to Buddhism, no one is a Brahmin by birth or generation. Not by matted hair, nor by family, nor by birth does one become a Brahmin. But in whom there exist both truth and righteousness, pure is he, a Brahmin is he. Lord Buddha says "I do not call him a Brahmin merely because he is born of a Brahmin womb or sprung from a Brahmin mother. Being with impediments, he should address others as "sir." But he who is free from impediments, free from clinging--him I call a Brahmin. (Dhammapada: 393, 396). This conceptual idea gives a clear picture of human equality and love which ensures peaceful coexistence.

Briefly, through the conceptual ideas of *Brahmavihārās* (Four sublime attitudes), can grasp that human being must live with right mindfulness which reduces violence and extremism and promote peaceful coexistence, peacefully with other people, other living organisms, and with his self-own. According to Buddhism (Agrawal Jyotsna & Sahota Poonam 2020) to counter these *Brahmavihārās*

meditation may be applied, which contains the development of feelings of friendliness (Maitri), joy and goodwill (Mudita), compassion (Karuna) and acceptance and equanimity (Upeksha). These specific meditations and interventions have been found to result in multi-faceted improvements for reducing anxiety, depression, psychological distress, envy that cause violence and an increase in interpersonal harmony and well-being which encourage peaceful coexistence among diverse people. So, Buddhist conceptual ideas on peaceful coexistence have more significant insights and attractive forms which cover love and compassion.

It is mentioned by Agrawal Jyotsna and Sahota Poonam that in conflict situations how these sublime states practically will be applied: hence it generally includes contemplation and reflection on the conditions that are unfavorable and those that are favorable for the four *Brahmavihārās*. Further, there is an effort to develop specific feeling, and then extend it from a small group (or a single person) to larger groups and finally to the entire world. For example, for the development of loving-kindness, one may start with generating the feeling of loving-kindness for oneself, then towards someone for whom it is typically easy, then towards someone neutral, then towards someone who is challenging and eventually towards everyone (Agrawal Jyotsna & Sahota Poonam 2020). For Buddhists, it is indispensable to consider applying these *Brahmavihārās* of Buddhism when conflicts and clashes occurred with other communities to calm down unnecessary feelings and angry to ensure peaceful coexistence.

Peaceful Coexistence and the Concept of *Maqāṣid al-Sharīʻa* in Islam:

Islam is the second-largest religion in the world with 1.8 billion followers, or 24.1 percent of the world's population. Islam teaches that God is one, merciful, all-powerful,[11] and has guided humanity through prophets (messenger

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[11]Campo, Juan Eduardo, "Allah" Encyclopedia of Islam, (Infobase Publishing 2009) p. 34.

of God) with revealed scriptures.[12] The primary scriptures of Islam are the Qur'ān, believed to be the verbatim word of God, as well as the teachings of Prophet Muhammad.

The very word Islam etymologically refers to peace and submission. The word Islam derives from the Arabic root *Salām*, or *Silm*, which means peace and obedience to God's will.[13] Each Muslim is ordered to greet other Muslims with the words *"Assalam-o-Alaikum"* which means peace be upon you. God refers to Himself al-*Salām* or "Peace" in several verses of the Noble Qur'ān. The spirit of peace and harmony is embedded in every principle and norm of Islam. In its true sense, every instruction of Islam aims to secure peace and create harmony in every sphere of life and society. Noteworthily, the conceptual idea of *Maqāṣid al-Sharī'a* in Islam, formulated as a discipline by early and modern-day Islamic scholars and validated from the verses of the Noble Qur'ān and Prophet Sayings (SAW), promotes and encompasses elements or principles for peaceful coexistence among diverse groups of people.

Maqāṣid al-Sharī'a in Islam - Higher Objectives of Islamic *Sharī'a*

Exploring the goals and higher objectives of Islamic *Sharī'a* which is described as *Maqāṣid*, during early periods and in contemporary Muslim scholars emphasized that Islamic *Sharī'ah* focuses especially on humanity, humanitarianism and human well-being (Auda 2011). Traditionally five major *Maqāṣid* (higher objective of *Sharī'a*) have been identified as those which Islamic societies, and Islamic law, in particular, aim to preserve. For example, five such goals, namely the preservation of life, faith, reason, progeny, and property, have been defined by Al Ghazali (1997) and the modern and contemporary scholars have broadened the scope of the five traditional *Maqāṣid*. For instance,

in his theory of *Maqāṣid* Muhammad Rashid Rida (d. 1935) included reform and women's rights. Muhammad Al Ghazali (d. 1996) added justice and freedom to the pre-modern five *Maqāṣid* and Yusuf al-Qaradawi (1926), improved human dignity and rights in his theory of *Maqāṣid* and Ibn Ashhur, included values such as equality, liberty and orderliness, among others, as part of universal values in *Maqāṣid* (Duderija 2016). However, it is important to note that most of the scholars' attempts have defined *Maqāṣid* clearly and explicitly that would apply to the relationship between Muslims and non-Muslims or between human relationships beyond those inherited from the classical Islamic legal tradition. Since justice and human dignity are often reflected in *Maqāṣid* (Friedmann 2003), the higher objective of Islamic *Sharī'a* clearly emphasizes the conceptual idea of human wellbeing and the peaceful harmonious life not only for Muslims but also for all human beings without any discrimination. The following diagram describes the higher objectives of *Sharī'a* which aim for human wellbeing through the five protections.

Figure 2

Five Major *Maqāṣid Sharī'a* diagram

Although the notion of *Maqāṣid* contains more significant elements and varies explanations yet the concept of peaceful coexistence can be summarized from all five primary *Maqāṣids* within

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[12] Peters, F. E, "Allāh." In the Oxford Encyclopedia of the Islamic World, (Oxford: Oxford University Press 2009)

[13] Esposito, John L, "Islam." In the Oxford Encyclopedia of the Islamic World, (Oxford: Oxford University Press 2009)

Peaceful Coexistence Through the Concepts of *Brahmavihārās* of Buddhism and
Maqāṣid Al-Sharī'a of Islam: A Content Analysis
Mohamed Ashath

the two icons which are Mercy to Humankind and Establishing Justice as Sheikh Muhammad Abu Zahra elaborated that *Sharī'ah* was a "mercy to humanity" with three major goals: "nurturing the righteous individual", "establishing justice", and "realization of benefits" (Abu Zahra 1990). From the explanations of Abu Zahara and Hasim Kamali concept of *Maqāṣid* al-*Sharī'a* (and even five primary protection) primarily concerns on *Rahma* (compassion) and *Adl* (Justice) (Abu Zahra 1990; Hashim Kamali 1999) which promote peaceful coexistence. Therefore, it is conforemed all five primary *Maqāṣids* contain mercy to mankind and justice. So, even though the concept of *Maqāṣid* is very vast and contains more different elements and features but it can be briefed and described as Mercy to Humankind and Justice to all. These are two ultimate achievements of *Sharī'a* and which strengthen from various Qur'ānic verses (See the verses 18: 58, 5: 147, 10: 109, 05: 08). So, these two icons can be easily interpreted by relating peaceful coexistence and harmonious life in a pluralistic society. Therefore, the basic conceptual idea of the *Maqāṣid* encourages human wellbeing, peace and living together which contains mercy and justice with all.

Mercy to Human; A Man should be Dignified:

Maqāṣid Sharī'a of Islam explains that the man should be dignified without any differences hence among the various creations of God, the highest position is given to the human being. The ever first principle of *Maqāṣid Sharī'a,* protection of human life or dignity and other principles clearly state that there are no any other creations given priority than human beings and human beings should be dignified. It is mentioned in the Noble Qur'ān, Allah says "And surely We have honored the children of Adam" (al-Qur'ān 17: 70). This verse describes that the entire human society has the highest level of dignity whether Muslim or Non-Muslim so, the man should be highly esteemed and dignified. So, there should not be any discrimination based on creed, clan,

race, language, culture or any other grounds. Allah says in Noble Qur'ān "Whosoever killed a person...... it shall be as if he had killed all mankind" (al-Qur'ān 05: 32), and this clearly defines that a proper value must be appropriately given to humans whether it is a Muslim or a non-Muslim. The notion of the *Sharī'a* from these Qur'ān verses is to abolish all kinds of discrimination and protect all aspects of human life, social behavior and promotes coexistence among diverse social groups.

Establishing Justice; Injustice must be Eradicated, and Justice must be Upheld:

Establishing justice is one of the core goals of *Sharī'a* and it is described in Al-Qur'ān, Allah mentions "O you who believe! Be upright for Allah, bearers of witness with justice, and let not hatred of a people incite you not to act equitably; act equitably, that is nearer to piety, and be careful of (your duty to) Allah; surely Allah is Aware of what you do" (al-Qur'ān 05: 08). All five goals of *Sharī'a*, namely the preservation of human dignity, faith, reason, progeny, and property, have been defined by Al Ghazali (1997) based on justice.

The Justice itself is a manifestation of God's mercy as well as an objective of the *Sharī'a* in its own right (Hashim Kamali 1999). So, the *Maqāṣid Sharī'a* and the Quranic verses like above-mentioned clearly describe that humans should practice justice in every activity of society with everyone without any discrimination. Today, injustice is the main threat to maintain peaceful coexistence. The real coexistence and peaceful life cannot be expected in a society occupied with injustice and extremism. Briefly, the concept of *Maqāṣid* al-*Sharī'a* is maintaining peaceful coexistence in a higher level with promoting justice.

Having said that, Muslims should consider practically applying the core idea of *Maqāṣid* al-*Sharī'a* to reduce any conflicts with other communities. For example, in a practical level,

when any clashes and conflicts have occurred, Muslims should realize the main theme of *Maqāṣid* al-*Sharīʿa*, which concerns the protection of human dignity, ensuring justice and human wellbeing without any discrimination towards human beings, be they Muslims or non-Muslims. Muslims cannot be involved in any kind of harming or killing innocents or living beings hence the protection of life and ensuring justice are important elements of the *Maqāṣid* al-*Sharīʿa* in Islam. Likewise, other *Maqāṣid* al-*Sharīʿa* ensure the peaceful coexistence among diverse people. Consequently, Muslims should obey to *Sharīʿa* and behave according to the *Maqāṣid* al-*Sharīʿa* in Islam.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The term "Brahma" in "*Brahmavihārās*" refers to a divine being in the Buddhist cosmology (a god, if you will, but not in the omnipotent, monotheistic sense), and "vihara" means a dwelling place or abode (Domyo 2018) hence Peter Harvey (2012: 154) described *Brahmavihārās* of Buddhism as divine abiding. Among the prescribed meditations in Buddhism, this *Brahmavihārās* meant to regulate one's attitude to other people, and focus on the development of love, compassion and impartiality (Conze 1973: 80) which promote peaceful coexistence among diverse people. Although, the concept of *Brahmavihārās* are a pre-Buddhist concept, and scriptures acknowledge that this idea does not originate within the Buddhist tradition, yet the Buddhist tradition gave its own explanation (Harvey 2001: 247). In the early Buddhist dialogues and also later works like *Visuddhimagga* these sublime attitudes are discussed as the objects of meditation (Gokhale n.d.). According to Aronson (1980: 71), Gotama Buddha taught these meditations in the broader framework of the quest for liberation from mental defilement and rebirth, so he clearly contrasts the mere practice of the sublime attitudes with his teaching of the

eightfold path liberation. Similarly, the *Diga Nikaya* of Buddhism emphasizes the Buddha to be calling the *Brahmavihārās* as "that practice", and he then contrasts it with "my practice" as follows (Aronson 1980: 71). Therefore, it is believed this concept not specifically Buddhistic, occurs also in the Yoga Sutras of Patanjali and may have been borrowed from other Indian Religious systems (Conze 1973: 80).

The Inter-Relations of these four sublime states are clearly discussed by Nyanaponika (1999: 24–29) which can be interpreted, how *Brahmavihārās* promote love and compassion to ensure peaceful coexistence through meditation. It is known that Buddhism is considered to be a practical religion of peace and nonviolence. These *Brahmavihārās* are ingredients of Right Mindfulness, tend to promote universal wellbeing (Rakesh, n.d.). Therefore, according to Buddhism, that through the concept of *Brahmavihārās* (Four sublime attitudes), can grasp that human being must live with the right mindfulness which reduces violence and extremism and promote love and compassion to ensure peaceful coexistence, peacefully with other people, other living organisms, and even with his self-own. For that self-love or inner peace is very important when ensuring peaceful coexistence. So, there are more important perspectives and appealing ways of Buddhist *Brahmavihārās* philosophical ideas regarding peaceful coexistence.

Similarly, the Islamic conceptual idea of maintaining peaceful coexistence has been discussed with the higher objective (*Maqāṣid*) of *Sharīʿa* which contain mercy and justice in general. Although, the concept of *Maqāṣid* al-*Sharīʿa* is very vast and deep with different range of explanations, yet the Islamic scholars have classified the entire range of *Maqāṣid* into three categories in descending order of importance, beginning with the essential or *daruriyyāt*, followed by the complementary benefits, or *hājiyyāt*, and then the embellishments or *tahsiniyyāt* (Hashim Kamali 1999). The essential (*daruriyyāt*) interests are counted at five, namely faith, life, lineage, intellect and property

(Auda 2008). Jasser Auda further explains that the *Maqāṣid* al-*Sharīʿa* are also the group of divine intents and moral concepts upon which the Islamic law is based, such as, justice, human dignity, free will, magnanimity, facilitation, and social cooperation. However, from the explanations of Abu Zahara and Hasim Kamali, it can be easily understood the primary concerns of *Maqāṣid* al-*Sharīʿa* is *Rahma* (compassion) and *Adl* (Justice) (Abu Zahra 1990; Hashim Kamali 1999) which promote peaceful coexistence.

When comparing these two concepts, peaceful coexistence has been explained through *Brahmavihārās* of Buddhism which contains love and compassion in general, while *Maqāṣid* al-*Sharīʿa* from Islam that primarily concerns on mercy and justice. However, both traditions hold that perceptions and actions of individuals through ethical behavior and moral codes are the main and most important steps towards ensuring peaceful coexistence. In Buddhism, this transformation is achieved through the realization of Buddhahood, while Muslims seek the same goals via the realization of the knowledge of Allah or Creator. Similarly, the ultimate goal of Buddhist teaching is attaining *Nirvana* or *Nibbana*; It refers to the extinction of desire, hatred, and ignorance and, ultimately, of suffering and rebirth. Literally, it means "blowing out" or "becoming extinguished," as when a flame is blown out or a fire burns out (S. Lopez 2014), and escaping from this life while in Islam obtaining *Jannah* (paradise). It views that paradise as a pleasure garden in which the blessed experience the greatest sensual and spiritual happiness and getting better life hereafter. It is mentioned in Noble Quran; "Allah has promised to Believers, men and women, gardens under which rivers flow, to dwell therein, and beautiful mansions in gardens of everlasting bliss. But the greatest bliss is the good pleasure of Allah: that is the supreme felicity" (al-Qurʾān 9: 72). And so, the realization of peaceful coexistence through the concepts of *Brahmavihārās* of Buddhism and *Maqāṣid al-Sharīʿa* of Islam and its implication in social life bring Buddhists to attain *Nirvana* while *Jannah*

for Muslims in the life hereafter.

It must be noted that, although these two religions were erected over different, even opposite, doctrinal foundations, and are far apart in terms of time, space, and religious contexts, without having had direct traceable historical connections between them, both adopt remarkably similar strategies and conceptual ideas to ensure peaceful coexistence. Both manuscripts and religious terms are also vastly different in their writing style and use of language. However, it can be noticed, that Islam and Buddhism have a similar scope for promoting humanity and ensuring peaceful coexistence which contains love and compassion, mercy and justice to safeguard human wellbeing and prosperous life. Therefore, hopefully, this study will be able to show that these teachings and practices are very significant and valuable when dealing with contemporary conflict and unrest, especially between Buddhists and Muslims.

It is suggested that peaceful coexistence can ensure in the places where Muslims and Buddhists live as equal citizens when these two communities can think together on the concepts like *Brahmavihārās* and *Maqāṣid* al-*Sharīʿa* within their religious border. There is no place for conflicts and clashes when Buddhist should concern with the *Brahmavihārās* meditation while Muslim with *Maqāṣid al-Sharīʿa*.

Basically, Buddhists should think about this Brahmavihārās meditation and its core achievements and objectives, which cover the improvement of feelings of friendliness (Maitri), joy and goodwill (Mudita), compassion (Karuna) and acceptance and equanimity (Upeksha). While Muslims should consider realizing and applying the core idea of *Maqāṣid al-Sharīʿa* to reduce any conflicts with other communities. For example, in the real world, when any clashes and conflicts have occurred between Muslims and Buddhists, Buddhists will handle and control all the feelings from the background of *Brahmavihārās* meditation that concerns love and compassion while Muslims from the idea of

Maqāṣid al-Sharī'a that concerns the protection of human dignity and ensuring justice for human wellbeing without any discriminations between the diverse community. As a result, it is claimed that Buddhists who practice and protect *Brahmavihārās* cannot be involved in any kind of harming and killing even disturbing others hence love is the main idea of *Brahmavihārās*. In the same way, Muslims cannot be involved in any kind of destroying or murdering innocents or living beings hence the protection of life is one of the *Maqāṣid al-Sharī'a* in Islam.

Furthermore, for Buddhists, *Brahmavihārās* will apply thought meditation or realization. By doing so, there is an attempt to build certain feeling, and toexpand it from a small unit to larger units and finally to the entire globe. For Muslims *Maqāṣid al-Sharī'a* in Islam can be produce through the realization of the following Islam hence if someone fails to follow, they will not be considered as practical or real Muslim.

CONCLUSION

The contemporary world order has generated an urgent need for frequent interactions between people of different civilizations, cultures, and religions which may promote understanding and constructive relationships. Undeniably, according to this textual study with the content analysis, the teachings of Islam and Buddhism with their shared ethical and spiritual values can contribute to peaceful coexistence and reconciliation among the people of different faiths and beliefs. This study is an attempt to provide conceptual ideas on peaceful coexistence that encourage human wellbeing and understanding among people or particularly among Muslims and Buddhists. With the textual evidence, it is affirmed that to attain peaceful coexistence among Buddhists and Muslims, it requires them to comprehend and be aware of these conceptual ideas in the global complex context. Through exploration and interreligious understanding, peaceful coexistence can be achieved. Mutual understanding must be developed through identifying concepts that contain common ground

before any fruitful dialogue between religions can take place. Otherwise, we may end up talking on the wrong basis, which will not produce any beneficial results.

In conclusion, the conceptual ideas on peaceful coexistence that have been formulated by Islam and Buddhism are embedded for building harmony among religious adherents. Whenever peaceful coexistence has existed, it has been based on unity despite differences rather than on unity with differences. It is not based on agreeing to agree, but on agreeing to disagree. It can be summarized that both religious concepts, *Brahmavihārās* of Buddhism and *Maqāṣid al-Sharī'a* of Islam contain and encourage to maintain peaceful coexistence and harmonious life in a pluralistic society. Both religions share a similar scope for peaceful coexistence and declare humanity, love and justice as a right to be granted to everyone. They prioritize social interest based on human values as the mainframe of reference when discussing the concept of peaceful coexistence.

To sum up, the content analysis on these two concepts provides a wider room for a comprehensive and universal view on religious concepts rather than mere scriptural-religious interpretations. This discussion allows religious scholars from diverse religious traditions to acknowledge and embrace their doctrinal and theological differences. Simultaneously, they can encourage an intellectual and scientific inter-religious dialog to build a more productive and unbiased conversation now, next, and beyond.

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