
**THE
MORALITY
AND
GLOBAL
JUSTICE
READER**

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The Law of Peoples

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Abstract

When it comes to the moral justification of war, there is a remarkable overlapping consensus: a common justification of war that is shared by contemporary secular liberalism, Islamic Sharia, and Buddhist traditions. In this age of misunderstanding, it is important to appreciate the Islamic commitment to just war theory. It is equally important to appreciate the surprising realism and pragmatism of Buddhist just war theory, which is actually much closer to Barack Obama's Nobel Peace Prize address than it is to the idealized Gandhian pacifism attributed to the Dalai Lama. For both Muslims and Buddhists, aggressive war is always wrong, but defensive war is a necessary evil in a world of violent aggressors. This shared moral response to the inevitability of human conflict reveals the deeper commonality of our humanity.

Key Words

just war, jihad, passivism, Law of Peoples, right to war, Buddhist ethics, Islamic ethics

When it comes to the moral justification of war, there is a remarkable overlapping consensus: a common justification of war shared by contemporary Western (secular) liberalism, and Christian, Islamic, and Buddhist religious traditions. Given the striking and widely discussed differences between these worldviews, it is worth pausing and exploring this deep and fundamental convergence on the legitimate use of ultimate violence. Of course, there are obvious deep differences between liberals, Christians, Muslims, and Buddhists; still, the moral agreement beneath important differences is, I think, more important and provides a basis for

shared and fruitful connections in our evermore interconnected and interdependent world.

For the discussion here, I am assuming that liberal and Christian just war theory is reasonably familiar. We will, instead, focus on Islamic and Buddhist just war theory. In my experience, Islamic just war theory is not well known and most people seem to wrongly assume that the Buddhist tradition, with its deep commitment to Ahimsa and nonviolence, simply and categorically rejects the legitimacy of all war. In this age of misunderstanding, it is important to appreciate the Islamic commitment to just war theory. It is equally important to appreciate the surprising realism and pragmatism of Buddhist just war theory, which is actually much closer to classic Western just war theory, than it is to the idealized Gandhian pacifism attributed to the Dalai Lama. For both Islam and Buddhism, defensive war to protect one's community or nation is a necessary evil in a world of violent aggressors.

The Law of Peoples and the Right to War

The most influential proponent of contemporary Western liberalism is John Rawls, and his views on the "right to war" are found in *The Law of Peoples*. Rawls's view nicely captures contemporary Western just war theory and it thus provides our starting point for comparative reference. Rawls argues that "Liberal Democratic Peoples" should enter into a peaceful "Society of Peoples" that includes all states that respect basic human rights and limit the "right to war" to wars of self-defense—including the defense of one's allies and other peoples against aggression and gross violations of human rights (Rawls, 1999, 91). What Rawls calls "Decent Hierarchical Peoples," which are nondemocratic governments that nonetheless are committed to the good of all of the people and have a consultation system for responding to their people, are full and equal members of the Society of Peoples. "Benevolent Absolutisms" are more authoritarian non-democratic states that still accept the basic principles of nonaggression. Although these states lack a reasonable consultation system, they are concerned with the good of their people and they respect other fundamental human rights. These benevolent authoritarian states are not accorded the same level of respect by Rawls's Society of Liberal and Decent Peoples. But despite their violations of political and participatory rights, they are nonetheless peaceful and thus should be treated in kind. These states also have a right to be treated nonaggressively and thus also a right to war in self-defense (Rawls, 1999, 92). On the other hand, "Outlaw States" are defined, one, as states that engage in aggressive expansionist foreign policies and are thus a threat to all, and two, as states that violate the fundamental human rights of their people (Rawls, 1999, 64–65, 79–81).

Rawls argues that contemporary liberal democratic states reject the right to war "in the rational pursuit of a state's rational interests" as a sufficient justification for a declaration of war (Rawls, 1999, 90). The principle of nonaggression against other states is a moral constraint that states must honor in pursuing their national interests, and the violation of this principle is viewed as a violation of enforceable international law, as essentially a crime that warrants intervention and counteraggression in defense of the peaceful states and peoples. As Rawls emphasizes, however, "the aim of just war . . . is a just and lasting peace among peoples, especially with the people's present enemy" (Rawls, 1999, 94). Even during war, we must respect, insofar as is possible, the fundamental human rights of our enemy and fight the war always with an eye to the kind of peaceful relations that we seek in a Society of Peoples (1999, 96).¹

Is Rawls's account of a "realistic utopia," where most nation-states embrace a shared Law of Peoples and justification of war, realistic? Or, is this conception of just war distinctly Western in its orientation? In particular, is the above conception of just war also congenial to the world's approximately 1.3 billion Muslims and 400 million Buddhists?

Rawls endorses the thesis of Democratic Peace, which is the thesis that economically developed, constitutional democracies do not engage in war with each other. The idea here is that international commerce and democratic political institutions create both ideological and economic institutions that are more conducive to peace (Rawls, 1999, 47–51). In addition, nuclear weapons have radically changed the nature and calculus of war between the great powers. Randall Forsberg has argued that all these factors combine to make all-out war between the nuclear powers extremely unlikely. He explains:

Nuclear weapons have made all-out great-power war unthinkable; mechanized warfare and the extent and fragility of modern wealth have made non-nuclear war among richest countries more costly than profitable; and the spread of democratic values has made war increasingly unacceptable as a means to any ends except the narrow goal of defending against armed attacks by others. Combined, these factors have made a major conventional war anywhere in the world (except perhaps on the Korean peninsula) highly unlikely now and for years to come. [New Democracy Forum, 1997]²

Forsberg goes on to argue that we are thus faced with an unprecedented opportunity for a large-scale disarmament that would fundamentally change the world, and set the stage for a lasting age of world peace. The debate about the End of War was at its height before 9/11/01. The debate since the fall of New York's Twin Towers has shifted to the justification of preemptive war, and to

the divide between the West and the Rest, but especially Islam, in a Clash of Civilizations. In the wake of the Afghanistan and the Iraq War, the debate about the End of War may now seem myopic and naive. Actually, however, when it comes to justification of war, Western scholars, Muslim scholars, and even the Buddhist tradition agree that only defensive war is justified. Even if we do not see the end of all war in sight, the overlapping consensus on the illegitimacy of aggressive war to advance national interest is indeed moral progress and speaks to a deep moral consensus across otherwise diverse traditions.

Islamic Just War Theory

The First Pillar of Islam is the Declaration of Faith: "There is no God but Allah and Muhammad is his messenger." In this simple declaration one embraces monotheism, rejecting the once common polytheism of the Arab peninsula, and submits oneself, dedicating one's life, to the will of God as revealed in the Qur'an, and through the example provided by God's messenger, the prophet Muhammad. The first pillar of Islam is so simple in its form but its substance actually includes all of Islamic law and ethics, called *Sharia*.

Sharia is usually translated "Islamic law" but the concept of law here is that of the moral law in the broadest possible sense. Sharia means both "law" and "the path." Similarly, the word for Islamic jurisprudence, *Fiqh*, means both "jurisprudence" and "insight." The Sharia path is a guide for one's entire life, it involves insight into the will of God for man, and it is thus much more than law in the civil and political sense of the term. Sharia is, in fact, more specific about family law (which governs marriage, divorce, and inheritance) than it is about criminal and civil law in more general terms.³

Sharia is based on four sources:

1. *The Qur'an*—the prophetic recitation from Allah to Muhammad
2. *The Sunna and Hadith*—stories of the life and sayings of Muhammad
3. *The Consensus of Scholars*—especially the classical commentaries on the meaning of the Qur'an & Hadith
4. *Analogical Reasoning*—from previous settled cases, interpretation, and analysis

The first and primary source of Sharia is, of course, *the Qur'an*. Since it is the directly revealed will of God, it is the primary source and trumps absolutely all other sources. Sharia, the true and straight path, simply cannot contradict the Qur'an. The Qur'an, however, is primarily focused on the articulation of the unity and majesty of God, the lessons we should have learned from the earlier

prophets from Adam to Jesus, and the conflict with polytheism and idolatry. Although there are some specific guidelines in the Qur'an, especially about family law and (importantly for our purposes) just warfare, specific moral guidance, in concrete and ever new situations, can only be inferred from its broad and poetic language and its few context-specific rules.

The second source of Sharia, the *Hadith*, thus takes on extra importance. Because Muhammad was chosen by God as the messenger, he was especially favored by God, and his life thus provides a model for us to emulate. Muhammad's sayings, actions, and character thus provide a model to follow whenever the Qur'an is silent on an issue. Unlike the Qur'an, however, the accuracy and authenticity of Hadith are often sources of controversy. In early scholarship, much emphasis was placed on establishing chains of oral and eventually written transmission of the words and deeds of Muhammad. Over time, after over one hundred years of oral transmission, and after the companions of Muhammad had all long since died, the collections of Hadith took on clearer shape and authority. There are, nonetheless, distinct and equally authoritative collections of Hadith, and of course small details of stories, or of wording, can have significant impact on an overall interpretation and the crucial generalization to new situations and cases. Even when we have clear agreement on the prophet's words or actions, as we shall see below, the actual implications for us can remain unclear or controversial. As a canon of interpretation, however, the Qur'an trumps the Hadith, and the Qur'an clearly emphasizes the righteousness, mercy, equity, and justice of God. It thus follows that we should always interpret the Hadith so that it elucidates the Qur'an, and thus also so that the conclusions seem reasonable and just.

The next source of Sharia is the *consensus (Ijma)* of religious scholars that formed slowly through the shared effort of interpreting the Qur'an and Hadith. In practice, this scholarly consensus takes form, first, in the early written commentaries on the Qur'an and Hadith, and later it comes to include the four major Sunni "schools" of thought (or alternatively the Shia traditions) and other influential interpreters of the Qur'an and Hadith. (The four Sunni schools and the foundational Shia-Sunni split are not our focus here.)

Ijtihad refers to the act of novel interpretation by an individual of the Qur'an and Hadith. In the beginning, after the death of Muhammad, there was much room for independent and novel interpretation. Over time, however, a strong consensus formed on many matters of interpretation, and the consensus of the community of scholars itself takes on independent authority as a third source of Sharia. The unstated assumption of Qur'anic interpretation is that, with the help of the Qur'an and of the Prophets, the Will of God as it applies to our lives is knowable by man. Thus, if over time, after much shared reflection, scholarship, and discussion, a consensus has formed, other things equal, we have reason to

trust the accumulated wisdom of the scholarly community. As a result, as consensus forms and is accepted by the Muslim community, "the gates of *Ijtihad* [novel interpretation] close," and the authority of tradition comes to trump any new interpretation. Notice that the third source of Sharia is itself based on consensus and not the Qur'an itself. It is a consensus that established consensus settles an issue and excludes new and perhaps progressive reinterpretation. As such, this is a deeply conservative principle of interpretation. This is not to deny that there is indirect support for the authority of consensus in the Qur'an and Hadith, but the support is itself based on inference and analogy, the fourth source of Sharia. Nothing in the Quran or Hadith suggests that insight and interpretation is reserved for the generations long past and closed to the wisdom of the present and living. The closing of the gates of *Ijtihad* was itself ordained by the scholars closing the gates, and it is sustained by current scholars affirming the established consensus of the past. It is thus a thoroughly conservative interpretative principle.

With each new situation, new knowledge, and new technology, we get novel problems and questions. Since the Qur'an and Hadith provide some clear cases of required actions, permissible conduct, and prohibition, we can use these examples as a basis for analogies to guide us in thinking about new situations. In addition, the consensus that has formed over time on a wide variety of moral questions provides additional settled cases that provide additional analogical insights for new and unsettled moral questions. The fourth source of Sharia is this type of *analogical reasoning* from clear cases to new cases—also called casuistry.

For example, the Qur'an states that man should not use fire as a punishment, for it is the punishment of God, and this has been interpreted by many to exclude the firing of cities in times of war. On this basis, many argue that the use of nuclear weapons is analogous to burning cities in that the bombs essentially incinerate cities, and that the use of nuclear weapons is thus also forbidden. The Qur'an, however, also says that one should arm and prepare oneself for war so as to deter aggressors. Additionally, the Qur'an states that one need not continue to restrain oneself, from otherwise forbidden means of waging war, when the enemy has not shown similar restraint. On the basis of these three different passages, many Islamic scholars conclude that the first use of nuclear weapons is forbidden, but nuclear deterrence and nuclear retaliation (in response to another's first use of nuclear weapons) in principle may be permissible.

An opinion on a moral question like the permissibility of using nuclear weapons, or other matters of theology, is called a *fatwa*. A fatwa is simply an opinion on a particular issue or question that is based on the four Sharia sources. Any Muslim who has seriously studied the Sharia may issue a fatwa, but the weight, the significance, and the influence of a particular fatwa will depend both on the quality of the reasoning, and also on the reputation and authority of the person

issuing it. On new issues, there are likely, at least initially, to be competing opinions based on different sources, on different interpretations of the significance of Qur'anic passages and Hadith, or on the approaches of different traditions of interpretation. Over time, if a consensus develops as to the best opinion, then this becomes part of the Sharia itself—and a source of future analogies. In other instances, the Sharia sources may equally justify distinct and competing opinions and thus there may be a plurality of shared but distinct opinions on an issue.

When distinct subsets of the larger Islamic community come to distinct opinions on an issue, each of these opinions is entitled to respect, and thus the consensus is that the matter is underdetermined and thus each of the opinions is equally valid. Individual Muslims can then follow the opinion they believe to be most compelling. In short, the Sharia relies heavily on already established consensus on many issues, but there is also a range of acceptable positions officially represented in the distinct schools and traditions of interpretation.

An additional, secondary but still fundamental Sharia moral principle is the *principle of necessity*, which states "necessity makes permissible the prohibited." The Qur'an states, "God desires your well-being not your discomfort" (Q 2:185). In circumstances where there are serious consequences to life, health, or well-being, particular prohibitions that would block life-saving action or cause serious harm do not apply. Of course, applying the principle of necessity requires judgment and is context and situation specific. One must consider the significance and point of the prohibition as opposed to the beneficial consequences of an infringement, and decide if the prohibition is waived in that particular context. This principle inevitably plays a significant role in matters of life and death, and it is thus a central principle of Islamic practical ethics.

With this simple sketch of Islamic Sharia in hand, we can turn to the doctrine of jihad and the Islamic conception of a just war.

Jihad is sometimes called the sixth pillar of Islam, and radical "jihadists" are too often the face of Islam in the West. Although jihad is a duty, it simply is not a license to kill innocents and nonbelievers, as jihadist radicals and terrorists claim. First, "jihad" basically means struggle, and it signifies struggle in the name of Islam. There are two forms of jihad. The *Greater Jihad* is the internal struggle to follow the Sharia and to have true faith in God. The *Lesser Jihad* is the defense of the Islamic Community, which does include spreading and extending the call of Islam. Obviously, the Greater Jihad is not a source of controversy; it is the Lesser Jihad that is associated with jihadist terrorists supposedly acting in the name of Islam.

The question before us is thus over the nature of the Lesser Jihad, and this question is essentially the question of the nature of just war theory in Islam.⁴ First and most importantly, *the Lesser Jihad is nothing more than defensive war; it is not*

supposed to be a war of conversion or a general state of war against unbelievers. This is a point of controversy, however, and the more radical jihadists tend to divide the world into the World of Islam, the World of War, and the World of Truce. On this radical interpretation of jihad, believers are in a perpetual state of war with the unbelievers, and fighting unbelief itself can be a just cause for war.

The broad consensus of Islamic scholars, however, clearly and unequivocally rejects this understanding of jihad as contrary to the fundamental principles of the Qur'an. First, the Qur'an explicitly states, "There shall be no compulsion in Religion" (Q 2:256). This principle is expanded and further specified in the verse of the Qur'an entitled "The Unbelievers" that states: Say: "Unbelievers, I do not worship what you worship, nor do you worship what I worship. I shall never worship what you worship, nor will you ever worship what I worship. You have your own religion and I have mine." [Q 109]

Two other important verses state, "God said 'Leave to Me those that deny this revelation'" (Q 68:44); and "Forgive them and bear with them until God makes known His will" (Q 2:109).

In all of these verses, the Qur'an expresses a "live and let live" approach to other religious beliefs. This attitude also had real political significance and was institutionalized throughout Islamic history. The first historical example occurred during Muhammad's life when he did not seek vengeance after the fall of Mecca in 630 CE (on those who had persecuted him, driven him out of Mecca and to Medina, and then attacked the new Muslim community in Medina). Additionally, in 1187 CE, when the crusaders' earlier bloody conquest of Jerusalem gave way and the city fell to Saladin, he followed Muhammad's example by taking no significant retaliation on the non-Muslim peoples of the city, and instituted a system of religious freedom. More recently, under the Ottoman Empire, the Islamic rulers instituted the "Millet" legal system that recognized three distinct systems of laws and courts for Muslims, Jews, and Christians. The Millet legal system clearly follows the Qur'an on "The Unbelievers," which states, "you have your own religion and I have mine" (Q 109). Religious tolerance, at least for Jews and Christians (People of the Book), is deeply rooted in the Qur'an, Hadith, and the traditions and history of Islam.

(As a point of clarification, because of the traditional doctrine of apostasy, according to many jurists, the doctrine of religious freedom does not extend to Muslims in that they cannot abandon Islam. Indeed, on some interpretations of Sharia, the punishment for apostasy is death. According to this tradition, for example a Muslim converting to Christianity is subject to the death penalty, and this clearly is not religious freedom. Religious toleration, so understood, provides external protections to minority non-Muslim religious communities but it also

permits severe internal restrictions within religious communities.⁵ The doctrine of apostasy is indeed a part of the Sharia tradition, but like the prohibition on images of Muhammad (which is not found in the Qur'an or Hadith and is instead a cultural tradition), or the subordination of women in Islam, it is not clear that it has a sound Sharia basis. The radical doctrine of apostasy is founded on (controversial) Hadith, but contradicts the explicit Qur'anic injunction that "there shall be no compulsion in religion" (Q 2:256). Recall that the Qur'an takes priority over the Hadith, and so the doctrine of apostasy is subject to criticism from Islamic progressives. Apostasy, however, is not the topic in question here.)

Given the Islamic emphasis on religious tolerance, what then accounts for the beliefs of radical jihadists? First, as a historical and sociological matter, the legacy of the Crusaders and the religious war by Christendom on Islam has a lingering impact in Islamic attitudes toward the West. Second, the Qur'an includes significant praise for war and for defending Islam by violent military means. The Qur'anic accounts of the original battles between Muhammad and the Meccans provide a rich source for the glorification of war and martyrdom for Muslims. Third, after the death of Muhammad, we have the violent battles for control of the young Muslim community and the fratricidal Sunni-Shi'a split that has lasted to the present day. Fourth, the early history of Islam is a glorious expansion which included both peaceful and militarist means. Eventually, the Islamic Empire falls to the Mongols, but Islam rises again to glory in the Ottoman Empire. Islam is a religion of peace and toleration, but its rich cultural history includes enough violent lore and legend to inspire jihadists to emulate a sometimes violent past and to strive to bring back the lost Islamic Empire.

Leaving these broad socio-historical generalities behind, let us look more directly at the Qur'an itself. Jihadists maintain that they are simply following the Qur'an, which is the clear word and will of God. Why would they claim this? The most important verse supporting the jihadists is the famous *verse of the sword*:

And when the forbidden months are passed, slay the unbelievers wherever you find them. [Q 9:5]

And we also have these two inflammatory verses:

Slay [the unbelievers] wherever you find them. Drive them out of the places they drove you. Idolatry is more grievous than bloodshed. [Q 2:191]

Fight against them until idolatry is no more and God's religion reigns supreme. But if they desist, fight none except the evil doers. [Q 2:193]

There is much in these simple verses to incite jihadists. On the other hand, the last verse does restrict war to those who do not "desist" and in this respect

suggests a more defensive stance. Similarly, the following verse makes clear that one should not "slay" those who are seeking peace:

If they withdraw from you and fight you not, and instead give you assurances of peace, then God has opened no way for you against them. [Q 4:90]

More explicitly, the following verses do not glorify war at all:

War is proscribed of you, though it be hateful to you. [Q 2:216]

Fight in God's cause against those who wage war against you, but do not transgress [attack them first], for God loves not transgressors [aggressors]. [Q 2:190]

Here we have an explicit statement limiting war to defensive war, and this fits the more general prohibition on killing in the Qur'an:

Do not slay the soul sanctified by God, except for just cause. [Q 6:151, 25:67]

It also fits the doctrine of religious freedom that we discussed above:

There shall be no compulsion in religion. [Q 2:256]

Lastly, in the Qur'an, we have the doctrine of giving quarter (*aman*) to enemy troops, which is sanctuary and safe passage:

If an idolater seeks asylum with you give him protection so that he may hear the Word of God (the call of Islam), and then convey him to safety. For the idolaters are ignorant men. [Q 9:6]

This is simply in contradiction to the idea that Islam directs the slaying of nonbelievers. It also does not cohere with the Qur'anic principle that treaties must be honored even with idolaters:

Repose no trust in idolaters, save those with whom you have made treaties. . . . So long as they keep faith with you keep faith with them. God loves the righteous. [Q 9:7]

On the basis of all of these passages, and other Hadith, the consensus of scholars insists that just war is strictly limited to defensive wars and humanitarian wars in defense of the rights of Muslims when they are oppressed by others.

So what are we to make of the "verse of the sword" telling us "and when the forbidden months are passed, slay the unbelievers wherever you find them" (Q 9:5)? Is

not the context actually quite clear? The verse is clearly about not fighting during the "forbidden months" and waiting until they are passed to return to the fight. There is no directive here that licenses the indiscriminate killing of unbelievers, and the many verses we have reviewed above demonstrate that such a reading contradicts a consistent theme of defenses and limited war that flows throughout the Qur'an and Hadith. The Islamic "right to war" is a right against aggressors and in defense of the innocent.

Because war is limited to aggressors, to those who are attacking or threatening the community, it is also limited to combatants. The targeting of innocent non-combatants is clearly prohibited and thus Muslims also recognize and endorse the principle of discrimination of combatants and innocents, and prohibits the intentional targeting of innocents. (Of course, this is a difficult distinction that is easier made in theory than in practice.) Islamic scholars also insist on the principle of efficacy (that the means used must be likely to achieve the end) and the principle of proportionality (the harm of war must be outweighed by the good end to be achieved). In addition, a violent war, a jihad, must be declared by a legitimate political authority representing the Muslim community. The Lesser Jihad is not an individual mission like the Greater Jihad, which is focused on inner faith and cultivating virtue. For all of these reasons, jihad does not justify indiscriminate terrorism aimed at innocent noncombatants.

We thus have a near perfect convergence between Islamic consensus on just war theory and the Western consensus. Of course, just as there are those who defend a militant expansionist conception of Islam and stand ready for war against all nonbelievers, so too in the West we find some who advocate war as a means to spread democracy, and indeed even those who still support war as a legitimate means to advance national patriotic interests. As a historical matter, Islam has also been spread by the sword and Christianity has had its crusades, inquisitions, and religious wars. This is not in question. But what is clear is that there is no "clash of civilizations" on the right to war and its clear limits.

Buddhist Ethics and Just War

At the core of Buddhist ethics are its dual commitments to a fundamental precept of nonviolence and to cultivating the virtue of unbounded compassion for all living creatures. In exploring the Buddhist conception of war and violence, we first need to appreciate some core doctrines of Buddhist metaphysics and philosophy of mind. The first is the *Doctrine of Inter-Dependent Origination* (also called Co-dependent Arising), which asserts that all of existence is essentially interrelated, interdependent, and interconnected. The second is the *Doctrine of No-Self*, which applies interdependent origination to the self, and thus concludes that there is no essential enduring self. These two doctrines are the core of Buddhist philosophy:

"One who sees interdependent origination sees the Dharma, and one who sees the Dharma sees the Buddha" (Strong, 2008, 109). Although the causal integration and slow transformation of the elements that make up the self create the illusion of an enduring self, the individual self is simply a momentary configuration of discrete, although causally codependent, changing elements. The self is essentially interrelated, interconnected, and interdependent on the rest of existence. There is no unitary permanent self.

In a later philosophical development, Nagarjuna (the most important Buddhist philosopher—other than the Buddha—probably from the second century CE) further develops this idea. He emphasizes that the elements (that seem to constitute the self and other things) are also mere impermanence, in the sense that they, too, lack any inherent reality. At the most basic level, there is nothing solid or substantial that makes up everything else. In this sense, the essence of everything is really empty. But this is not to deny that things exist; it is to point out the nature of their existence. This is the famous *Doctrine of Emptiness*. A simple way of thinking of this idea is that all existence is fundamentally *relational*. In understanding this concept, it helps to start with a simple obvious example. The concept of a mother presupposes the concept of a child. It also suggests a particular social relationship between the child and the mother, other than female, that is distinct from a father. In these ways the concept of mother can only be understood in its relation to other concepts. It has no meaning or referent independent from these relations—and it is thus relational. According to the doctrine of emptiness, this kind of relational dependence is true of everything. In addition, things do not have real essences that persist through time and change. There are no basic essential elements that undergo change but are themselves unchanging. Reality is just a dynamic of interrelated forces and *processes*. In more philosophical terminology, this view is a form of thoroughgoing *anti-essentialism*. Again, it helps to look at a more obvious example. What is a chair? Chairs can have four legs, three legs, or be one piece. They can be made of wood or metal or plastic. Is a barstool a chair? Is an ottoman a chair, if it is used for a chair? There seems to be no core, essential, unchanging attribute of all chairs; except perhaps that chairs are for people to sit on, but that is relational. In addition, can a chair be a piece of art that is not intended for sitting? The chair as art may still be a chair because of its relation with useful chairs. The case of mothers and chairs are easy cases. The more radical claim of emptiness is that this type of relational anti-essentialism is true of all reality without exception.

The philosophical doctrine of emptiness is complex and fascinating. It is interesting, for example, to explore the connections between the doctrine of emptiness and contemporary physics. In addition, some contemporary theories of mind and sense perception also reject the idea of a unitary mind and self. We will

not here explore these connections. It is enough to note that in addition to philosophical arguments, the doctrine of No-Self is compatible with a naturalistic scientific worldview. We will focus on the implications of interdependent origination for Buddhist ethics and here it is the doctrine of no-self that is crucial.

A central thesis of Buddhist ethics is that the self is simply a particular contingent configuration of impermanent attributes and a dynamic of psychic energy. The self is constituted by physical form, sense perception, emotions and feelings, cognition, consciousness, and the forces of karmic causality that cause rebirth itself. It is the relation of these changing elements that constitutes what we call the self, and nothing more.⁶

A deep recognition of the interdependent origination (and codependent arising) of all things, and the doctrine of no-self, are at the core of the Buddhist justification for boundless compassion for all sentient life. The egocentricity that characterizes so much of human behavior is based on the illusion of the self and its alleged independence and distinctness. When these delusions are removed, the path to inner transformation is opened.

The essential core of morality for Mahayana Buddhism is *Compassion* toward all living creatures and *Equanimity* of mind that is reflected in all of one's actions, reactions, and perceptions. Wisdom and compassion are the Buddha-essence. The development of wisdom and compassion is the essence of the Path and the Middle Way, but meditation is still the means by which we develop ever greater wisdom and compassion. The ultimate goal of Buddhism is release from suffering. We all want to be happy and avoid suffering. The insight of the Mahayana tradition is that the key to happiness is developing both insight and boundless compassion. In particular, there are two insights that are essential to happiness (Dalai Lama, 1999, Chap. 6–8).

The first is that cognition, emotion, and will are all interconnected. Here we see the practical implications of the Doctrine of Inter-Dependent Origination. First, we have the dependence of emotions on cognition. The emotion of fear usually has a clear cognitive content which includes the belief that something is dangerous or harmful. To take a simple example, fear of flying in an airplane includes beliefs about airplanes, flying, and danger. Fear of flying also involves the will in that it often includes a sense of diminished autonomy and vulnerability (which is also cognitive). Some emotions may be more instinctual but most human emotions are laced with cognition. Without the underlying beliefs, it would not be the same emotion. Cognition also involves the will and emotion. If we do not take an interest in the objects of thought, we simply cannot concentrate and take in the information. Indeed, the more engaged and interesting something is, the more we can concentrate, and the more we learn and remember. Emotions essentially include cognition and cognition presupposes effective engagement. It

follows that one can change one's emotions, passions, and desires by changing one's beliefs and conception of reality. This is how insight transforms character.

Second, emotion affects cognition in another important way. If we are angry or upset about something, we cannot concentrate and think clearly. Indeed, even one's capacity for perception is diminished by powerful emotions. The Dalai Lama calls the emotions that disrupt our mind in this way the "afflictive emotions." Emotions like anger, hatred, greed, and lust generate powerful desires and unsettle our minds. Indeed, they distort our judgment, undermine our will, and ruin our sleep. Furthermore, when we act on these desires, their satisfaction does not leave us satisfied at all. A person who is emotional in this way is never at peace. If one does not act on afflictive desires, the passions do not just go away; they remain and corrode from within. If, instead, the person acts on the desire and expresses hatred, for example, there is the momentary release of aggression but the person is no better off. In addition, by expressing anger, one has probably hardened an enemy who may then retaliate in turn. On the other hand, the person without anger does not suffer from its loss and is thus only a gainer.

Buddhist insight meditation aimed at anger would first help one internalize a deep awareness of the self-destructive nature of anger. It would also focus on the source of the anger and reveal its causes, its thorough interdependence, and ultimately its emptiness. Anger has a cognitive component, and is thus focused on an object, but the object has no real essence—and is itself caused by and dependent on a complex web of connections. As our idea of the essence of the object of anger dissolves, so too does the anger—because the anger was based on a distorted conception of its object. In this way, insight into interdependent origination transforms the cognition itself, and reveals that anger and hatred, and all afflictive emotions, are based on delusion and confusion.

It is not surprising that the satisfaction of these desires founded on delusion leads only to more misery and suffering—both for oneself and for others. But insight must get *into* the anger itself; the mere knowledge that anger is afflictive and self-destructive does not extinguish anger. Similarly, if I simply give someone the facts of airline safety, that does not eliminate all the fear of flying. The orientation must be shifted both cognitively and emotionally, and this is a matter of fundamentally transforming the way one thinks and feels. The moral rules (or precepts) are a first step, but without insight and understanding, rules and restraint alone leave desires to still fester within. It is thus necessary to also reflect on the causes and nature of anger and on the real nature of the object of one's animosity. It is only through greater understanding, and long practice, that established habits of thought and actions can be altered and reoriented. Buddhist insight meditation thus has a mission that was lacking in the earlier yogic practices. Indeed, insight meditation (and mindfulness of interdependent origina-

tion) is also a way of life, in that one can adopt a meditative stance almost anywhere and anytime.

War is often rooted in destructive desires for territory and power and resources. It is also caused by conflicts of interests that generate anger and hatred manifest in the dehumanization of one's enemy. But whether the conflict is interpersonal or international, it is always self-destructive and self-defeating. Violent conflicts also tear the wider fabric of relationships, harming friends and family in their wake. Wars harm combatants and noncombatants alike; the virtuous are always killed too, along with one's supposed enemies. Buddhism emphasizes the self-perpetuating and self-defeating nature of violence; aggression is rooted in afflictive emotions and delusion. Violence simply is not a path to inner peace and happiness.

For the major traditions of Buddhism, this is the core of the justification for nonviolence and universal compassion. It is noteworthy, however, that the doctrine of no-self and emptiness also inspired the Samurai ideal of Bushido. The Bushi warriors embraced the Zen ideal of "no-mind" which included clearing one's mind of distractions and responding purely and spontaneously. As Harvey explains, "The idea that life and death are empty, essenceless phenomena also helped develop a lack of hesitation, and a lack of fear of death, in battle. . . . There is only evil in killing if the person killed is not recognized as empty and dream-like" (Harvey, 2000, 266–267). If one kills without the afflictive emotions of anger or hatred, and with full awareness of the truth of emptiness, one's mind is pure and remains at peace. In this example, we see the interesting interplay between cultural conditions and Buddhist metaphysics and metaethics. Across cultures, the contours of Buddhist ethics has been influenced both by its theology and by the particular contextual circumstances. Like all else, the Buddhist ethic of war and peace seems to be subject to the principle of interdependent origination.

Tibetan Buddhism, History, and Just War

Although the commitment to passivism in Buddhism is well known, it is important to see that, in an important sense, passivism is perhaps a means and not an end in itself. We have seen that afflictive emotions like anger and hatred, although aimed at others, are self-destructive and typically misguided as well. In this sense, acting on these emotions is a mistake. Because violence is almost always rooted in afflictive emotions and delusions, it is almost always a mistake. Nonetheless, it is not the case that Buddhists reject all uses of physical coercion.

Buddhist countries have, and in earlier times even monasteries had, police and armies. Buddhist mythology includes the Four Heavenly Kings, who guard the four corners of the world, and protect the Buddha's followers from evil and also

preserve the teachings of Buddhism (the Dharma). Similarly, Buddhist rulers also used their armies to protect their country and the Dharma (Kopel, 2007). We will discuss the classical Buddhist king Asoka below, but first we will briefly look at the history of a more familiar contemporary sect of Buddhism: the Tibetan Gelugpa sect led by the Dalai Lama. Even Tibetan Buddhism, which is now famous for its commitment to nonviolence, owes its original prominence to an alliance with the Mongol warlords—Genghis, Kublai, and Altan Khan.⁷ Mongol armies favored and protected the particular Buddhist sectarian tradition that was ruled by the Dalai Lama, and this military support elevated the Dalai Lama to the dominant political position in Tibet; the Dalai Lama rode to power on the shoulders of Mongol warriors. Indeed, the relationship was so close that the grandson of Altan Khan was His Holiness the Fourth Dalai Lama. Indeed, even the title “Dalai Lama” was itself bestowed by the Mongol leader Altan Khan in 1578 on the Third Dalai Lama (and applied posthumously to his two earlier incarnations). *Dalai* means “ocean” in Mongolian and signified the Ocean of Wisdom manifest by the Dalai Lama. (This early relationship also spread Buddhism into Mongolia, and this is why Mongolian Buddhism is a branch of Tibetan Buddhism.)

With an unrestrained use of Mongol military might, the great Fifth Dalai Lama consolidated near total political control and religious dominance of Greater Tibet. Geoff Childs explains, “Even the Fifth Dalai Lama, considered to be an incarnation of the compassionate and fully awakened being Chenrezik, espoused the use of force to protect his political interests. When confronted with a rebellion in 1660, the Fifth Dalai Lama issued the following instructions to his Mongol allies on how to dispose of the Tibetan insurgents:

[Of those in] the band of enemies who have despoiled the duties entrusted to them:

Make the male lines like trees that have had their roots cut;
 Make the female lines like brooks that have dried up in winter;
 Make the children and grandchildren like eggs smashed against rocks;
 Make the servants and followers like heaps of grass consumed by fire;
 Make their dominion like a lamp whose oil has been exhausted;
 In short, annihilate any traces of them, even their names.”⁸

More recently, the Thirteenth Dalai Lama, Thupten Gyatso (1876–1933), the year before he died, anticipated the looming confrontation with China and wrote, “[We] should make every effort to safeguard ourselves against this impending disaster. Use peaceful means where they are appropriate; but where they are not appropriate, do not hesitate to resort to more forceful means.”⁹ The current Fourteenth Dalai Lama fled Tibet *after* military resistance failed. The Ti-

betan army resisted the Chinese invasion but was soundly defeated and disbanded and sent home by the Chinese. The current Fourteenth Dalai Lama now emphasizes the futility of violent resistance and argues that nonviolence is the best means to achieve Tibetan cultural and political autonomy. In his 1962 autobiography, however, he praised the “courage and determination” of the Tibetan soldiers that defended him, and wrote, “I could not in honesty advise them to avoid violence. In order to fight they had sacrificed their homes and all of the comforts and benefits of a peaceful life. Now they could see no alternative but to go on fighting, and I had none to offer” (cited in Sperling, 2001, 325).

It is disappointing to discover that the supposed Shangri-La of Tibetan Buddhism was actually founded and sustained by military might. The romantic image of a historically peaceful Tibet, sustained by compassion and nonviolence, is a Western idealized projection. Some might even suggest that the conversion to non-violent pacifism by the Dalai Lama in exile, and the Tibetan Diaspora, involves a complex interplay of a core Buddhist ideal and international political dynamics.

In short, Buddhist rulers have not been pacifist. Like all other states, they have used force and violence for self-defense or national defense. Nonetheless, Buddhist doctrine and teaching have emphasized that the use of force and violence is usually counterproductive, and it thus should always be the means of truly last resort. It seems that the current Buddhist stance of antiwar passivism is actually pragmatic, and not absolutist. Indeed, we will next see that all Buddhist precepts are best understood as “skilful means,” and as such, they work in an indirect and pragmatic fashion to help direct one onto the path to wisdom and virtue.¹⁰

The Doctrine of Skilful Means

A primary text of East Asian Buddhism is the *Lotus Sutra* (Watson, 2002), and the core doctrine of the *Lotus Sutra* is the Doctrine of Skilful Means—also translated as “Expedient Means” (Pye, 2003). “The Parable of the Burning House” perhaps best captures this core doctrine of the *Lotus Sutra*. The immediate point of the parable is to explain the many sects and distinct doctrines of Buddhism, and the evolution and development of Buddhism:

A rich man with a large house is faced with a serious problem when his house is being engulfed by fire as his children are playing happily inside, and ignoring his warning to escape from the burning house. As a skilful (or expedient) means, the rich man tells his children that there is a cart outside the house waiting for them, and in particular he tells each child that there is the type of cart outside that each child most desires—a goat-cart or deer-cart or ox-cart. In joyous anticipation each child runs out of the burning house to seize the particular desired cart. Once

outside the burning house, there are no carts. The rich man responds to his disappointed children, however, by providing each of his children the same fabulous ox-cart, which is actually the best of all the carts, and transcends the original more limited desires of each of his children. [Watson, 2002, 34–39]

This parable was used to explain the many distinct and often incompatible Buddhist doctrines, practices, and sects that flowed into China from India. The parable tells us that the Buddha has provided different sects and doctrines to different people, but each with the goal of helping people escape the burning house, which is the treadmill of afflictive desires and delusion that lead to suffering. Once out of the fire, the more advanced doctrines and True Path, the real Vehicle of Enlightenment, can be revealed—which includes the doctrine of skilful means itself. This suggests also that the rules, precepts, and rituals of Buddhism are themselves skilful means to achieve ever greater insight and compassion, which will lead to inner peace and happiness.

The doctrine of skilful means clearly applies to many of the ethical precepts of Buddhism. For example, many of the over two hundred moral precepts for Buddhist monks serve the end of developing inner discipline and restraint, which are prerequisites to virtue, rather than being an end in themselves (Keown, 2000). The basic ethical precepts, like prohibitions on harming and lying, are also expedient means and secondary rules that help keep one on the right path, but which are not actually absolute rules. Indeed, the parable of the burning house already shows that justified deception is not a prohibited lie. The father misleads his children justifiably for their own good as the Buddha misleads his early followers to get them on the right path.

Similarly, here is an interesting example of compassionate killing from the Buddhist canon that reflects the defeasible nature of all moral rules.

One night deities inform a Bodhisattva sea captain that one of his passengers is a robber intent on killing 500 merchants and stealing their goods. He realizes the robber will suffer many ages in hell for his deed, and that his only option is to kill the robber and take the bad karma on to himself. Accordingly “with great compassion and skilful means” he kills the robber. But by willingly accepting the karmic punishment, the bad karma is cancelled. [Harvey, 2000, 135–136]

There are several things to notice about this example of compassionate killing. First, killing is usually harming and rooted in aggression. In contrast, compassionate killing is rooted in boundless compassion both for the potential victims and for the potential victimizers. In principle, it seems that compassion can even justify preemptive violence. Second, however, the sea captain is a Bodhisattva and has fore-

knowledge provided by deities. Although compassion can justify killing, only enlightened beings can have the virtue and wisdom to infringe such basic norms as the prohibition on killing. Third, as a corollary, it follows that the ethical precepts are rules for the unenlightened. The moral seems to be that the less enlightened should stick to simple moral rules, but the more enlightened the being, the more judgment and compassion should guide one’s actions in confronting difficult moral decisions. The right act will sometimes involve infringing rules for the greater good of all.

The resulting position is strikingly similar to recent consequentialist moral theories. For example, R. M. Hare argues that archangels, with perfect knowledge and perfect character, could follow direct consequentialist principles, but that simpler folks like us humans, “proles,” need moral rules so as to generally do what’s best (Hare, 1981). More precisely, we find ourselves, to varying degrees, in different contexts, and during different times of life, between the extremes of simple-minded proles and perfect archangels. So, too, for different people and contexts, moral rules can be more complex and refined; and indeed in some cases of moral dilemmas, we should directly do what seems to be best overall. Peter Railton has also defended a compelling “sophisticated consequentialist” moral theory that incorporates the virtues of character into a broader indirect consequentialist ethical system (Railton, 1984). Similarly, Robert Adams has developed a character-based moral theory, which he calls motive utilitarianism (Adams, 1976).

Asoka and the Ideal Buddhist King

In our personal lives, it is clear that we should strive to control and eliminate the psychological poison, the afflictive emotions, of anger and hatred. Insofar as is possible, of course, we should avoid harming others. However, I can use force to defend myself or others, for example, blocking a blow or restraining an attacker. Self-defense and defending others from aggression need not involve intentional harm to others. Of course, there are hard cases where I can save myself or an innocent only by harming or killing the attacker. When asked about his views on defensive actions, it is reported that the Dalai Lama responded: “If someone has a gun and is trying to kill you . . . it would be reasonable to shoot back with your own gun. Not at the head, where a fatal wound might result, but at some other body part, such as a leg” (Bernton, 2001). The guiding principle is to do as little harm as possible and to strive to maintain equanimity and compassion.¹¹

When it comes to the justification of war, however, the question is directed to the rulers of nations, not individual citizens. Faced with invading armies or other aggressors, are rulers supposed to disband their armies and surrender their countries? Obama recently faced this question as he had to account for sending troops into battle as he accepted the Nobel Peace Prize.

He answered:

As someone who stands here as a direct consequence of Dr. King's life work, I am living testimony to the moral force of nonviolence. I know there's nothing weak—nothing passive—nothing naive—in the creed and lives of Gandhi and King. But as a head of state sworn to protect and defend my nation, I cannot be guided by their examples alone. I face the world as it is, and cannot stand idle in the face of threats to the American people. . . . So part of our challenge is reconciling these two seemingly irreconcilable truths—that war is sometimes necessary, and war, at some level, is an expression of human folly. . . . The nonviolence practiced by men like Gandhi and King may not have been practical or possible in every circumstance, but the love that they preached—their fundamental faith in human progress—that must always be the North Star that guides us on our journey. For if we lose that faith—if we dismiss it as silly or naive; if we divorce it from the decisions that we make on issues of war and peace—then we lose what's best about humanity. We lose our sense of possibility. We lose our moral compass. [Obama, 2009]

It will surely be surprising to many that Obama's position harmonizes perfectly with the classical Buddhist model of the ideal ruler. (Of course, whether any particular deployment of troops is a necessary defensive action is another question.) The model Buddhist ruler is the King Asoka and his conception of just war also involves a conception of diplomacy first but defensive war when necessary to protect the community from aggressors (Strong, 1994 and 2008).

Asoka ruled the northern territories of contemporary India about one hundred years after the Buddha, 304–230 BCE. As Buddhist legend has it, Asoka converts to Buddhist after a bloody but triumphant conquest over Kalinga (modern Orissa). As a Buddhist ruler, he adopts vegetarianism, digs wells, provides medical care for humans and animals, promotes religious toleration, and in general supports public welfare. Most importantly, for our purposes, King Asoka rejects war as a means of expansion and tool of national interests and devotes his rule to spreading the teaching of the Buddha, the Dharma, and supporting the community of monks, the Sangha. Asoka writes on one of his stone pillars,

Now [Asoka] Beloved-of-the-Gods thinks that even those who do wrong should be forgiven where forgiveness is possible. Even the forest people, who live in Beloved-of-the-Gods' domain, are entreated and reasoned with to act properly. They are told that despite his remorse [at the slaughter of innocents in his past] Beloved-of-the-Gods has the power to punish them if necessary, so that they should be ashamed of their wrong and not be killed. Truly, Beloved-of-the-Gods desires non-injury, restraint and impartiality to all beings, even where wrong has been done. Now it is

conquest by Dharma that Beloved-of-the-Gods considers to be the best conquest. . . . This conquest has been won everywhere, and it gives great joy—the joy which only conquest by Dharma can give. [Asoka, *Fourteen Rock Edicts*, No. 13]

In other edicts, Asoka assures people on his borders that they need not fear conquest—that he only wishes to spread the Dharma (but he also insists on mutual respect between religions).

Asoka, the model Buddhist ruler, has a powerful army, and police force, but he strives to be merciful and compassionate with criminals and with other peoples within or beyond his borders. The goal is to teach and encourage virtue and wisdom, but nonetheless, aggressors, whether internal or external, cannot be passively tolerated; criminals will be punished and invaders will be repelled. It is clear that Asoka does not disband his army; he remains the dominant superpower in his region. In short, these are the political lessons we can draw from the idealized rule of Asoka: trust the people and treat them with compassion, support the Sangha, which is the community of monks that preserve and teach the Dharma, defend the innocent against all transgressors (but never with hatred or malice), and recognize and acknowledge the harm to the victims of aggression but also forgive the transgressors.

In short, we have here the familiar just war theory with which we began—with the additional Buddhist emphasis on truth and reconciliation.¹²

The Buddha as Peace-Keeper

Before we conclude this discussion of Buddhism and war, we should consider the story of the Rohini River water dispute between the Sakyas and the Koliyas.¹³ The dispute is a classic dispute between two tribes sharing a river during a draught. The short version is the two sides are on the battlefield, ready to fight, when the Buddha arrives as peace-keeper. The Buddha first blocks out the sun setting darkness over the battlefield, and then reveals himself floating above them in the air, shooting six-colored rays of light out from his hair. Needless to say, the two sides are taken aback by this supernatural display and ceasefire is achieved. In the interest of lasting peace, the Lord Buddha reasons with the tribes on the harms and futility of war and also the benefits of peaceful cooperation. The Buddha knows, however, that these reasons will not lead to a lasting peace, and so he convinces the two tribes to turn over the youth that make up their armies to the Buddhist Sangha. In this way the armies are no longer available and the youth of the tribes are brought together in cooperation and Karmic transformation. Yet even this will not do! The young novice monks miss their wives and want to return to their villages, so the Buddha takes them away to the heights of the Himalayas to

distract them from their passion and longing for the loving embrace and comfort of home. All attachment, even attachment to home, to country, and to one's people, leads to inevitable conflict as distinct peoples claim land, rivers, or other resources. There is surely a lesson here that could be applied to the conflict over Tibet but I will leave that aside.

There is much more to explore in this story, but what I find most striking is the clear recognition of the difficulty of avoiding tribal or factional conflict in the normal course of life. A lasting peace requires removing all of the young men, so there are no potential warriors, and completely removing them from home, love, and family. A clear message of this story is that even the Buddha cannot prevent war and maintain a lasting peace until we have all achieved enlightenment and extinguished the passions, the afflictive emotions, the greed and delusions that are the wellspring of conflict. If the Buddha cannot prevent war without conscripting all of the youth into monastic seclusion, what is a mere earthly leader to do?

For those who must rule humankind as it is (caught up in the conflicts of life, faced with so much anger, hatred, and mutual righteous recriminations, indeed faced with those set on harming, dominating, and killing others), the model offered by Rawls and Obama, Muhammad and Asoka, is indeed the most realistic utopia that one can hope for.¹⁴

Final Reflections

We have focused on the overlapping consensus on just war theory, but before we conclude, it is important to note that the comprehensive doctrines, the overall worldviews, of Buddhism and Islam also make a difference.

First, the distinct social-political roles of the Buddha and Mohammad make a difference. The prophet Muhammad was also the political and military leader of a people. The fledgling Muslim community was driven out of Mecca and to Medina. Muhammad was both the prophet and the political leader of Medina, and he had to defend his community in military battles with Mecca. Muhammad was triumphant in battle, conquered Mecca, but he was also merciful in peace. As a result, the Qur'an and Hadith include frank discussions of the reality of war, and the Sharia includes a detailed conception of just war. The Buddha, on the other hand, was a prince who abandoned political and social power to lead, instead, a monastic community. Despite the agreement on just war theory, as founders, the Buddha and Muhammad offer very different idealized images. Contrast the two questions: "What would Muhammad do?" and "What would the Buddha do?" The Buddha is not a political leader; indeed, in Buddhism, we must turn instead to the temporal leader of a nation, King Asoka, for an ideal of political rule. In addition, Muhammad emphasized his human, nondivine, nontranscendent nature, and in

this respect, he is more like Asoka than the Buddha. If we ask, "What would Asoka do?" the answer is probably the same as the answer to the question, "What would Muhammad do?" Similarly, the Buddhist ideal of monastic withdrawal from the complexity and web of social life is not found at the core of Islam. Islam is primarily a religion of daily life. The Buddha, as leader of a monastic community, and the monastic code, does not offer much guidance for the daily life of lay Buddhists. Muhammad's followers are imbedded in families; they are fathers and sons, mothers and daughters, husbands and wives, workers and soldiers. In addition to a detailed just war theory, Islamic Sharia also presents a guide for day-to-day domestic life, marriage, romantic love, and family. These are not the core issues of monastic life. Unlike the Buddhist monastic path, the straight path of Sharia is a path for all people.

Second, Buddhism emphasizes the futility of war in a way that is not found in Islam. For Buddhists, war is sometimes justified in theory but rarely, if ever, in practice. Recall that war is always self-destructive, even when it is necessary. In contrast, for Islam war is a necessary evil that is hateful, but engaging in a just war is not sinful or wrong. Just warriors go to paradise and are favored and beloved by Allah for their commitment and sacrifice. For Buddhists, violence clouds the waters of one's mind and also sets back one's Karma.¹⁵ With wisdom and skilful means, the harm caused may be neutralized by the good done, but it is still always unwholesome to harm a living creature, however necessary and justified. War is always a result of human folly and self-destructive attachment, even when it is necessary, and in this sense it is not part of some larger plan. I think that this difference does make a real difference in one's attitude to war, even a just and necessary war.

Third and last, the focus on nonviolence and passivism in much contemporary Buddhism is not at all foreign to Islam. Indeed, the Sufi tradition of Islam focuses on love and compassion as the purest manifestation of the divine and also focuses on transcendence and union no less than does Buddhism. In this respect, the Sufi poet and mystic Mevlana Rumi is as much of a contemporary inspiration as is the Dalai Lama. The appeal of pure boundless compassion is as universal as is the distaste for war.

Notes

1. For a clear discussion of current debates on the justification of humanitarian war, preemptive war, preventive war, and justification of the Iraq war, see O'Driscoll (2008).
2. For an extensive discussion of the contemporary reality of war and its impact, see Forsberg, et al. (1997).
3. For a comprehensive account of Islamic Sharia, and the different schools of interpretation, see Cook (2000).

4. For an excellent discussion of jihad and war, see Hashimi (2003). I am indebted throughout my discussion to Hashimi's account. On the Greater and Lesser Jihad, see Ruthven (1997).

5. See Will Kymlicka (2002), Chapter 8, "Multiculturalism," for the distinction between internal restrictions and external protections. Kymlicka also provides a clear account of the difference between a doctrine of religious toleration, like the Ottoman Millet system, and between different religious groups and freedom of conscience, which also embraces internal dissent. Any religious tradition with a conception of heresy and apostasy does accept freedom of conscience, but even the orthodox can tolerate other belief systems. Internal dissent is a challenge to the internal consensus and religious authority, and it is often treated harshly (even when freedom of *other* religions is accepted).

6. On the doctrine of no-self, see Collins (1982). In Western philosophy, these issues are explored in Hume (1896) and Parfit (1989).

7. For the history of Tibet and the Dalai Lama's rise to power, see Goldstein (1999).

8. Geoff Childs, *Tibetan Diary* (2004, 143). The quotation and translation from the Fifth Dalai Lama's letter is from Elliot Sperling (2001, 318). See Sperling for further discussion of the idealization of Tibetan Buddhism.

9. Kopel (2007) citing Smith (1997).

10. This interpretation of Buddhist ethics, and the discussion of skilful means below, are developed more fully in Cummiskey (2010).

11. On Buddhist political theory, see Harris (1994); Nandasena Ratnapala (1997); and K. N. Jayatilleke.

12. Buddhist just war theory is also focused on alternative means of conflict resolution. For a comprehensive discussion, see Harvey (2000), Chapter 6, "War and Peace."

13. The discussion that follows is based on Strong (2009). For original sources see Bollee (1970).

14. Some might argue that, in contrast to the Buddhist ideal of boundless compassion, Islam is clearly more easily distorted into an ideology that supports war and the cold-blooded killing reflected in the martyrdom of Muslim suicide bombers. In response, we should recognize the equally "cold-blooded" mindset manifest in the Buddhist Samurai ideal of Bushido, which is clearly founded on the Buddhist doctrine of emptiness and the inescapability and insignificance of death. For a brief discussion, see Harvey (2000, 264–270). In Islamic Jihadist and Buddhist Samurai warriors, we see not the essence of either view but instead the ideological malleability of all comprehensive worldviews.

15. It is noteworthy that even here we find exceptions to the rule. As Harvey (2000) explains, in Japan during the Ashikaga rule (1336–1573), "the Jodo-shin school became fortified temples, with its armed followers, both priests and laity, acting to de-

fend its single minded 'true faith' in the saving power of the Amida Buddha. They could be fanatical in battle believing that they would be reborn in Amida's Pure Land if they were killed" (266).

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