Conclusion

Islamic Nonviolence as Ethic and Orientation

We began this analysis of pacifism and nonviolence in contemporary Islam with a challenge both to its earlier dismissal by Orientalist scholarship and to its more recent promotion by interested political powers. As a tendency, it is neither negligible nor simply summarised in the bromide that 'Islam is a Religion of Peace'. Rather, one discovers a rich range of pasts, presents, and potentials too variegated to be painted in one broad brushstroke. Some of its hues in fact clash starkly with one another. Through historical explorations of past proponents of Islamic nonviolence, and during conversations with their now-living successors, we have time and again identified contrast and divergence as well as confluence and continuity. Recognising this polyphony is vital. But it is not sufficient. Having delved into the particular, we may now permit ourselves to raise our sights again to the general. This book contends that, for all their difference and distinctiveness, its subjects do indeed demonstrate important shared approaches to ethical evaluation and moral improvement. These, furthermore, mark them out as characteristically Islamic. They demonstrate both continuity with their wider religious culture and meaningful differences from secular and non-Islamic conceptions of nonviolence. Yet before making this positive case we must first be conscious of the hazards in attending past efforts at classification – the better to avoid them ourselves.

THE INADEQUACY OF PHILOLOGICAL TAXONOMIES

One initially attractive approach to the taxonomising of Islamic approaches to pacifism and nonviolence is broadly lexical: a focus on the words our subjects and informants use. At its widest, it has become a rhetorical commonplace to assert that 'Islam' and 'Peace' are synonymous by virtue of being formed from the same triliteral root [*jadhr*] – the morphemic building blocks of the Semitic languages. It has even arisen, albeit in passing, during the course of the interviews which inform this book [see Chapter 7]. This same argument has met with criticism and dismissal in some scholarly literature [e.g. Idris, 2019: 318] and not without reason. This approach is unconvincing even in narrowly lexicographical terms given that root letters are sometimes shared by semantically unrelated Arabic terms. In wider terms, moreover, the fact that an etymological connection exists between two words does not require us to connect them in their meaning and usage. An English speaker who describes a tenebrous scene as 'sinister' cannot fairly be accused of having thereby rehearsed an old slur against the left-handed – though 'left' may indeed be that term's Latin origin.

A more sensitive and more promising variant on the lexical approach identifies 'key terms' which might be understood to stand for particular moral virtues. We have in the course of this work encountered innumerable references to redolently Quranic concepts such as *raḥmah* [mercy] and *ṣabr* [patient forbearance and perseverance], to *khidmah* [service], and to *taqwah* [God-consciousness]. We have seen, too, a constellation of translations of pacifism and nonviolence: from *lā-ʿunf* to *silmiyyah* to *ʿadam-e tashaddud* to *lā-ikrāhiyyah* to the 'system of Abel' and the 'path of Adam's son'. We might therefore be tempted to identify such language as delineating the contours of Islamic nonviolence. This is indeed a very widely taken tack in earlier writing on Islamic nonviolence – examples of which are too numerous to invidiously highlight here. It is not without its usefulness. Yet one is faced with the gulf between moral language on the one hand and its understanding and application on the other. It is a divide which some philosophers have argued has rarely been wider than at present [e.g. MacIntyre, 2004]. That a given person speaks of 'mercy' does not mean that others will necessarily see them as merciful – still less that they ought to do so. Moral language does not exist in a vacuum but instead gains meaning from the lived contexts within which it arises. These interpretive contexts naturally give their own inflection to what might otherwise appear to be a single and invariant concept – sometimes to dramatically different effects.

Nowhere is this polysemy more often obvious than where morality converges with politics. One would be hard-pressed to diagnose the divisive politics of democratic states in terms of which party espouses 'truth', 'justice', or 'liberty' and which does not. The crux of political contestation is precisely that contending movements understand such terms and their implications so very differently. This quandary is an unavoidable one when thinking about nonviolence and pacifism, as these intrinsically make political demands. They are expressly concerned with distinguishing which sorts of acts are permissible and which are forbidden. Notwithstanding their wider material and ideological contexts, the mere use of such terms tells us little of their specific meaning; the great rhetorical power of words usch as *raḥmah*, *khidmah*, *taqwah*, and *ṣabr* is precisely that they are familiar to all Muslims (Arabic speaking or not) and are thus embedded in the widest possible range of contexts (nonviolent or otherwise). Indeed, in one of our case studies [Chapter 4] the word most closely associated with nonviolence is in fact *tawḥīd* or monotheism itself – arguably the most foundational theological touchstone not only of Islam but of the entire Abrahamic tradition. It is precisely this encompassing universality which makes such terms so poorly amenable to analysis in isolation from their embodiment by living persons. Their very ubiquity makes concern for context more rather than less important.

Some earlier writing has attempted to provide deeper context for the conceptual fundaments of Islamic nonviolence through recourse to Muslim pacifists' appeal to scripture. Where Quranic language is being used, that is, it is not unreasonable to ask which part of the Quran is being quoted (and, perhaps, which is not) – and concomitantly which experiences of the early Muslims are being taken as models. The structure of that scripture and the manner of its revelation does indeed furnish us with another tentative model for the analysis of Islamic nonviolence. While shorter than some religious scripture (and about a tenth the length of the Christian Bible), the Quran is a complex and poetic text which by its own account contains both decisive directions and elusive allegories [*muḥkamāt wa mutashābihāt*; Quran 3:7]. It condemns anthropomorphism while also describing God as seated upon a throne and possessing a 'face' and 'hand'; by turns it both urges and denies the freedom of human agency [e.g. Quran 9:105; Quran 8:17]. In the language of Islamic hermeneutics one therefore usually speaks not of 'literal' [*ḥarfī*] readings but of epistemologically probabilistic [*muḥtamal*] 'evident' [*ẓāhirī*] ones [cf. however Gleave, 2013]. What

was or was not evident to the first recipients of the Quranic revelation was in no small part related to their own place in history and experience of the world.

The meaning of a text is in part dependent on the circumstances in which it arises. This fact was recognised by Muslims for many centuries before the more thoroughgoing historicising turn in scriptural hermeneutics led by nineteenth-century thinkers such as Friedrich Schleiermacher [d. 1834] or Ernest Renan [d. 1892]. It is attested at least as early as al-Wāḥidī of Nishapur [d. 1076], who tried to systematise connections between the historical events during which scripture was revealed and its subsequent interpretation. The primary goal of such efforts is exegetical rather than historiographical: its purpose is to divine the most likely purpose of a given revelation by reference to the temporal moment in which it was delivered to humanity. The Quran itself was after all received chapter by chapter over the course of some two decades and not in the order in which one encounters them in a written Quran [*muṣḥaf*]. During that lengthy period, the status and experiences of the Prophet and his community would vary dramatically, and with them the immediate effects of divine revelation. It is for this reason that reflecting on those various circumstances would remain a salient concern in the centuries-old *asbāb al-nuzūl* [occasions of revelation] literature developed by the likes of al-Wāḥidī and al-Suyūṭī [d. 1505].

While such temporal moments may be quite specific, moreover, they also give rise to wider distinctions among occasions of revelation. The broadest and 'most significant' [Ernst, 2011: 3] such division, and that most directly relevant to our present concerns with nonviolence, is that between 'Meccan' and 'Medinan' verses. Distinguishing between revelations received in the earlier and the later phases of the Prophet's career was likewise a preoccupation of early Orientalist scholarship since Gustav Weil [d. 1889] and Theodor Nöldeke [d. 1930]. The basic distinction between these is not an obscure one; the historical line dividing one from the other is the *year zero* beginning of the Islamic [*hijrī*] calendar. That historical moment marks a dramatic shift in the fortunes of the early Muslim community. In Mecca, the Prophet and his Companions were an oppressed minority of monotheists amid a polytheistic majority. Thereafter in Medina they were the ascendant religio-political authority over both their new home and the wider Arabian Peninsula. The circumstances in which Islam was practised, that is, were markedly different before and after the *hijrah* migration. The nature of divine guidance received by the believers during these periods concomitantly addresses

the exigencies of those circumstances, the latter engaging more extensively with matters of administration and affairs of state:

> The Meccan and Medinan suras show quite different qualities. The short and rhythmically powerful Meccan suras sustained the worship services of a small community of believers under pressure from a hostile pagan establishment. In contrast, the lengthy and prosaic Medinan suras debated scriptural and legal issues with Jews and Christians, at a time when Muhammad's followers were striving to survive as a community during a difficult struggle with opposing military forces and political treachery. [Ernst, 2011: 3]

Both defenders of the essentially peaceable character of Islam and some of the faith's most ardent critics have in recent decades looked to this Meccan–Medinan divide among Quranic verses to ground their cases. This is perhaps most salient in the Sudanese socialist Maḥmoud Moḥammad Ṭaha's [d. 1985] *Second Message of Islam* [1987] and the Somali-born activist Ayan Hirsi Ali's polemic against the 'Medina Muslims' she regards as lamentably comprising the majority of believers. Both see the Meccan period as nonviolent and the Medinan as violent, while their disagreement lies in which period they see as the most definitive of Islam writ large. Following such thinking, one might quite naturally incline to the expectation that proponents of Islamic nonviolence embrace the Meccan example and reject the Medinan. Yet in the course of our present study we have failed to identify any exclusive concentration on Meccan verses, let alone a repudiation of Medinan ones. On the contrary, we have seen crucial events of the Medinan period explicitly appealed to as the *locus classicus* of Islamic nonviolence. One need only consider the centrality of the *ṣulḥ of ḥudaybiyyah* (six years after the Prophet's *hijrah* to Medina) in Wahiduddin Khan's thought [Chapter 5], or the fact that both Jawdat Said and Ali Shariati locate the scriptural epitome of nonviolence in a *Medinan* chapter of the Quran [Chapters 4 and 6].

Indeed, those last two thinkers further illustrate the limitations of narrowly scriptural or philological approaches to classifying varieties of Islamic nonviolence. In terms of their lexical choices and of the Quranic verses each selects to ground their nonviolence in scripture, the Iranian Ali Shariati and Syrian Jawdat Said might appear to be closer to one another than any two others whom we have examined. Both construct their religious rhetoric on the foundation of the account of Cain and Abel in *sūrat al-mā'idah*. Indeed, not just in the same Medinan chapter but the self-same verses of that chapter (cf. Bacha Khan, whose most common recourse to this chapter is through its verses on the virtue of forgiveness [see Chapter 2]). Both regard Abel [*hābīl*], who refused to fight his

fratricidal brother out of fear of God, as the paragon of Islamic nonviolence. Both gloss the contrast between Cain and Abel in moral and psychological terms of selfishness and selflessness, of egotism and god-consciousness. Yet the content and consequences of their philosophies remain very different in spite of this. Said's peaceful 'Path of Adam's Son' comprises a kind of civic liberalism: his concerns are with open critical discourse and democratic legitimacy, with a believing citizen's duties and moral obligation. Shariati's itinerary, on the other hand, culminates in a revolutionary call for martyrdom-seeking: 'Die, so that others may live!' Said encourages the practitioner of nonviolence to remain true to their own search for truth, and observe an ethic of non-compulsion [*lāikrāhah*] towards others. By contrast, Shariati's vision of the nonviolent martyr is one whose individuality is sublimated into the expression and embodiment of a high transhistorical ideal. Said elevates the rational, the deliberative, and the discursive. Shariati's idea is almost mystical in its goal of ego-transcending escape from a fallen world dominated by the tyrannical 'System of Cain'. The fact that both men invoke the same symbolic repertoire is not insignificant. But looking only to the signs and scriptures through which they communicate obscures as much as it reveals.

ISLAMIC NONVIOLENCE AS PEACE HISTORY?

If proper contextualisation is to take place, then we are obliged to look farther afield than the (sacred) language which Muslim advocates for nonviolence employ. Yet here too a note of caution must be sounded. An exaggerated focus on historical context runs the risk of historicism; of reducing our human subjects to empty receptacles for impersonal influences outside of their awareness or control. It also tempts one to a dangerous form of ethnic or cultural essentialism: the search for an easily identifiable population who can be singled out as embodying some normative vision of Islam. These pitfalls have, after all, been enthusiastically plumbed in recent years. Both Muslims and non-Muslims have thereby contributed to the invidious 'Good Muslim/Bad Muslim' discourse famously critiqued by Mahmood Mamdani [2004]. In the wake of the horrendous 11 September attacks on the United States' World Trade Centre, for instance, an advisor to the White House of President George W. Bush published a book purporting to distinguish the dangerous faith of violent Islamists from its titular *Other Islam* [Schwartz, 2008]. The latter, one learns in the course of the text, comprises a comparatively small number of adherents of certain Sufi orders, and especially to Balkan Bektashism.

By the same stroke, ever greater swathes of the tradition are (often explicitly) condemned as inherently closed-minded, hostile, and warlike [e.g. Schwartz, 2008: 137–138].

Sufism more broadly was likewise identified by researchers at the Rand Corporation as constituting a variety of Islam which was at once particularly peaceful and 'natural allies of the West' [Rabasa et al., 2007: 73]; as inherently 'moderate' rather than 'radical', in the language of the foreign policy establishment. This move was made in spite of the fact that Sufis were often made famous for their martial prowess in state-formation and armed resistance to Western imperialism: from Algeria's ʿAbd al-Qādir al-Jazā'irī to Shamyl of the Caucasus [see Woerner-Powell, 2017]. Yet even notwithstanding such historical elisions, the findings of the present volume suggest neither that Islamic nonviolence is a Sufi preserve, nor indeed that its proponents are necessarily 'moderates' in the sense of welcoming the hegemony of the United States. Indeed, several chapters have been devoted to Muslim pacifists who are openly hostile to Sufism or to American influence, regarding them respectively as agents of irrational cultural decadence and imperialist 'westoxification' [*gharbzadegī*; see Chapters 4 and 6]. Others, in stark contradistinction, are not only influenced by Sufism [Chapters 2 and 5] but founding leaders of expansive Sufi communities [Chapters 1 and 3]. Likewise, some of those discussed here proudly regard America as their home [Chapters 3 and 7] – as do several million of their co-religionists today. Even among those who do not, one also finds staunch critics of Occidentalism and anti-Western prejudice [Chapter 5].

Neither sectarian identity, nor the experience of colonialism, nor broad ideological alignment, nor location in the Global North or Global South suffices to identify the cradle of Islamic nonviolence. In the course of this work we have encountered Sunnis and Shias; professors and illiterates; products of traditional Islamic learning and of secular education. These have evinced tendencies ranging from socialism to conservatism [Chapters 4 and 5]; from the modernist to the anti-modernist [Chapters 3 and 5]; from the democratic to the theocratic [Chapters 1 and 6]; and from quietist to revolutionary [Chapters 4, 5, 6, and 7]. While almost invariably dissident to the status quo, they have responded as often to perceived injustices within their communities as to those imposed by foreign powers. Ethnic and geographic location is concomitantly not a helpful guide. While there are evidently substantive traditions of Islamic nonviolence in West Africa, for instance, one would not thereby be

justified in concluding either that West African Islam is invariably nonviolent or that Islamic pacifism is essentially West African. Neither view can be sustained. Like Erica Chenoweth et al.'s [2011] quantitative research, our qualitative inquiry has identified nonviolent thought and action on the part of Muslims living in all corners of the globe. Yet it is not universally accepted anywhere. Neither we nor our subjects encounter Islamic nonviolence as a simple and unquestioned default position. While there do in all likelihood exist Muslims who instinctively observe nonviolent ethics without reflecting or discursively elaborating upon them, in every case we have examined such ethics are being adopted in the conscious knowledge that other principled positions are both possible and widely held.

One might furthermore be unjustified in classifying Islamic pacifism and nonviolence as an exclusively modern variety of Islamic reformism. It is true that this study's focus has been on figures living in the past century, many of whom make arguments which speak directly to contemporary events, culture, and technology. Yet it is not necessarily the case either that these modern features are their most essential, nor that the appeals to pre-modern heritage which all of them make are ahistorical or counterfeit. A comparative discussion of nonviolence in pre-modern Islam is the subject of another study than the present, of course. Nonetheless, significant continuities with classical ethical argumentation are indeed to be recognised. Suffice it to observe both that we have not only seen projects of revitalising a faith allegedly led astray by past clerical orthodoxy (the aim of so-called modernist and Salafist reformists alike) but also a great deal of concern for the continuity of tradition. For every iconoclastic and anticlerical Shariati we have encountered a theologically conservative Amadou Bamba – or indeed a Bacha Khan whose political and pedagogical project simply did not obviously include any systematic reappraisal of conventional theology at all. The temptation to explain Islamic nonviolence by classing it as a subspecies of one of the broad generic categories familiar to the beginning student of Islamic studies is one which the findings of this study encourage one to resist.

The fact that Islamic nonviolence is not obviously endemic to one group, school, period, or locality only underlines the fact that as a phenomenon it is underdetermined by such causal factors; these alone cannot explain it. On the contrary, its resistance to being reduced to some more fundamental explanatory force constitutes compelling evidence that it deserves consideration on its own terms – as current scholars continue

to urge [e.g. Cole, 2022]. The kind of contextualisation which is needed in order to map each individual path taken by Islamic nonviolence must therefore begin by being precisely that: individual. One must remain sensitive to the worlds of thought and of culture, of politics and of history, in which each of our subjects lives, while also recognising their unique perspectives on them. The former do not explain – nor explain away – the latter. But they do unavoidably inflect them. They help us to understand how, where, and why a given argument is made or action is taken. As has been observed by a prominent philosopher of epistemic justice when writing on the task before those who seek to understand thought traditions which differ from one's own,

> the idea here is not that philosophies are reducible to their context, and dismissable on those grounds, but that without understanding philosophical systems and trends in their context we cannot hope to adequately interpret or assess them. [Alcoff, 2017: 403]

This individual, cultural and historical, approach is one which both informs and justifies the structure of studies such as the present which begin with case-by-case encounters. Yet it does not end there, and we have not restricted ourselves from making comparative observations – just as this quotation refers to one's understanding not only of individual people or ideas but also 'philosophical systems and trends'. While the differences between varieties of pacifism and nonviolence embodied by the subjects of this book may be striking, these need not render them incommensurable. They do not exist in separate and hermetically sealed realities of their own. On the contrary: while the historical pacifists of earlier chapters relatively rarely reference one another, those interviewed today have shown themselves significantly more likely to do so. We can ourselves draw also comparisons – both between Muslim cases for nonviolence and between such discussions and their parallel conversations in the secular field of moral philosophy.

Part of the usefulness of such intercultural conversation is justified by the comparative sophistication of reflections on nonviolence by moral philosophers. These have spent decades in the collaborative labour of analysing and assessing the warrants, inferences, and consequences of countless possible arguments for and against a widening gamut of 'violence'. While some of these scholars are avowed pacifists, moreover, their methods and the epistemic environment in which they operate are dedicated not to dogmatic assertion but to open critical evaluation. The result has been less an accumulation of arguments for and against some

unproblematically known quantity called 'violence' than a proliferation of reflections on the forms which the rejection of violence may take. Violence may be understood as organised, as spontaneous, or as habitual. It may be enacted by groups, by individuals, and by institutions. Violence may be cultural and epistemic as well as physical. Richard Henry Pratt's infamous call to 'kill the Indian and save the man' would remain redolent of its ethnocidal intent even if Native American children were not being physically beaten in its exercise. Rather than being a simple matter of the immediate and intentional infliction of physical damage, violence takes as many forms as the destruction and displacement it generates. It is for this reason that the historical explorations and the interviews which comprise this book have been at pains to differentiate each subject's own understanding of what human harms exist and how they can be avoided. We have not presented violence and nonviolence as a simple binary, nor indeed contented ourselves with the only slightly more nuanced distinction between absolute and contingent ethical commitments. Instead, we have identified Muslim elaborations of nonviolence which grapple with questions not only of killing but of living and dying; of authenticity and of identity; of gender and of race; of economics and of the environment; of spirituality and of the believer's relationship with the divine absolute. In each case we have identified not only positive features but also noted apparent gaps and elisions. The fact that different paths exist is the very thing which facilitates their contrast and comparison.

Awareness of the contested complexity of '(non)violence' need not entail that all perspectives on it are equally justified. Still less, however, does it compel us to police an ever-narrowing range of pacifisms which pass ever more stringent tests of purity. The Reverend Doctor Martin Luther King, Jr's alleged marital infidelities would surely have hurt his family deeply, and could therefore be regarded as acts of emotional violence. But they do not discredit his commitment to political nonviolence. The fact that Mohandas Gandhi entertained some racist and sexist ideas – and thereby participated in forms of structural violence – does not oblige us to disqualify him from being a 'real pacifist'. Likewise, the fact that Gandhi's critique of caste oppression did not go so far as that of B. R. Ambedkar does not render him an elitist or a reactionary defender of injustice. Rather, approaching his as a variety of nonviolence which tolerates some forms and degrees of structural violence offers both a more flexible framework for analysis and a more lifelike image of the living person behind it. The same is true, *mutatis mutandis*, for everyone else we have described in this text.

ISLAMIC NONVIOLENCE, SECULAR THEORY, AND THE ROLE OF *NIYYAH*

In spite of this plurality of perspectives, general themes do emerge. Not least is a shared concern with the moral reform of the individual and their community, expressed in distinctly theocentric terms. Commonalities are not limited to a shared recourse to scriptural Quran and *ḥadīth*, nor to concern for their protagonists such as Abel and Muhammad, Bilāl bin Rabāḥ and Abū Dharr al-Ghifārī. Other common themes encompass the very concerns raised in the previous section: the various ways in which violence may be recognised and described. Muslim thinkers and activists clearly share the desire to identify and counteract not only the intentional killing of human beings but also the whole gamut of other avoidable disruptions problematised in the secular literature. While no individual figure encountered over the course of this survey takes a clear and uncompromising position with respect to every imaginable dimension of violence, neither is it the case that any of these is nowhere to be found. While pacifism and nonviolence take many forms, in other words, one struggles to find any such variety which is not also advocated by a Muslim on the basis of their own understanding of Islam. Not only is the popular view that Islam precludes an ethic of nonviolence empirically false in its general sense, but even the more restricted assertion that Islam necessarily precludes *some forms of nonviolence* is not obviously supported by the evidence. The fact that broadly deontological cases and appeals to virtue ethics are *more often* to be found than (say) consequentialist or utilitarian argumentation does not negate this fact. It is not least the many overlaps between Islamic and secular reflections on nonviolence which make the analytical tools of moral philosophy so pertinent to a systematic understanding of Islamic nonviolence – for all that we also argue that this role is limited in important respects.

The first such limitation is a broad one. The conversation between the work of Muslims, that of scholars of Islam, and that of secular moral philosophers cannot be one-directional. None of these groups is in a position unilaterally to enlighten or compel the others. We have not, for instance, argued that the gaps and shortfalls in scholarly and popular understanding of nonviolence in Islam are simply to be remedied by more thorough application of secular models – helpful though these may be. Neither, however, is it the case that professional philosophers' past lack of interest in debates among Muslims is entirely explainable either by anti-Muslim bias or by entrenched Eurocentrism in university departments of

philosophy which Muslims or Islamicists might easily cure. Of course, a growing number of philosophers now argue that these do play some role, and that addressing them is imperative not only for the redressing of historic wrongs but furthermore for a properly contextualised understanding of the Western canon itself. 'Eurocentric philosophy doesn't even manage to be Eurocentric! It fails to cover its own supposed cultural domain [which includes Jewish and Muslim Europeans] ... only once philosophy diversifies will we be able to call it what it really is' [Adamson, 2016: 45; cf. Garfield and Van Norden, 2016]. The *status quo* alternative, meanwhile, has been argued to present

> an epistemology of ignorance born of imperial and colonial projects of plunder that legitimates a lack of investigation and study beyond one's own domain. Hence Eurocentrism has no need to apologize, much less correct itself. On the contrary, Eurocentrism has a need not to know, a motivation not to learn, in the service of its material and discursive conquests. [Alcoff, 2017: 402]

The dialogue between secular moral philosophy and the Muslim manifestations of pacifism and nonviolence is further complicated by the existence of some deep differences between their prevailing forms, which may preclude the simple translation of one repertoire into the other. One finds among the discussions of pacifism and nonviolence in Islam throughout this study shared factors which present substantive alternatives to the methods predominating in the philosophical academy. Most salient among these is a direct challenge to the notion of nonviolence defined by a 'harmony of means and ends' which has become a commonplace of the secular literature since the seminal work of Johan Galtung [1976]. Time and again throughout the preceding chapters, we have encountered Muslim advocates of nonviolence instead argue for a wider and more demanding *harmony of means, ends, and intentional dispositions*. Not only does peace require peaceful means, that is, but it also calls for peaceful agents to enact them. Nonviolence therefore not only entails a process of personal moral improvement but also demands it. The intention [*niyyah*] which one might regard as preceding an action is in all of these cases understood as an essential and inseparable component of the act itself. This is arguably both the most consistent thread throughout the foregoing cases and the most conspicuously Islamic element in its approach to ethical reasoning.

This perspective is one which expresses itself even in the neologisms which our subjects have developed to express 'nonviolence' in their own languages. Whereas 'pacifism' and 'nonviolence' in English (like their

more literal calques *silmiyyah* and *lā-ʿunf* in Arabic) foreground methods and outcomes, more indigenous alternatives such as Bacha Khan's *ʿadam-e tashaddud* and Jawdat Said's *lā-ikrāhiyyah* refer explicitly to psycho-spiritual states. The frequency with which Muslim advocates of nonviolence such as those surveyed here use the Quranic term for 'struggle' [*jihād*] to describe their efforts should likewise not be dismissed as an attempt to launder a concept which has come for many to signify fanatical violence. Rather, it too betokens the degree to which these Muslim nonviolentists regard autocritique and the struggle to reform oneself [*jihād al-nafs*] as a core component of nonviolent ethics. This interpretation is encouraged by the enormous popularity among our subjects of the expression *al-jihād al-akbar* or *jihād-e akbar* ['the greater or greatest struggle'] to describe such efforts. While the (perhaps apocryphal) Prophetic *ḥadīth* from which it is drawn has historically been especially popular among Sufis (and concomitantly questioned by their critics, notably Ibn Taymiyyah [d.1328]) to describe their own spiritual disciples, moreover, in the present context we have repeatedly seen it embraced also by Muslims with little patience for mysticism. What these Sufis and non-Sufis share is precisely the conviction that reform of the self is not separable from commitment to a broader social ethic. This too is a logical consequence of the conflation of actor and action which we have seen our historical examples and interviewees consistently assume and invoke.

The fact that the inclusion of the actor and their intent within the moral status of the act is not limited to Sufis with a special interest in 'internal' spiritual development but is likewise propounded by their critics underscores its significance as a common feature of Islamic nonviolence as we have encountered it. We have seen our interview participants relate this principle directly to one of the most famous of Prophetic aphorisms [*innamā al-aʿmālu bil-niyyāti*; *ḥadīth al-niyyah*; *Ṣaḥīḥ Bukhārī* no. 1], and thus to the mainsprings of Islamic scriptural tradition [see e.g. al-Suyūṭī, 1986: 43; de Francesco, 2013; Mian, 2022; compare also Qur'ān 5:33] and the basic maxims [*qawā'id*] of Islamic jurisprudence [viz. *al-umūru bi-maqāṣidihā*]. To this one might add that in devotional terms 'making *niyyah*' (whether vocally or otherwise) is universally understood in Islam as an ineliminable element of pious action and obligatory to ritual prayer. If the heart is not first actively oriented towards God, that is, the devotion is incomplete and invalid [*bāṭil*] – irrespective of its otherwise impeccable performance. It has even been classically argued (for instance in al-Suyūṭī's *kitāb al-ashbāh wa'l-naẓā'ir*) that it is intention [*niyyah*] which provides 'the commutative standard involved in the

correlation of acts with their posthumous treatments' [Vasalou, 2008: 226] – joining pious acts in this life to reward in the next. Embodied in both elevated and prosaic activities by Muslims the world over many times each day, this attitude to moral action is characteristically Islamic. It is salutary to note that an approach to the ethical evaluation of moral acts which includes the disposition of the agent is a widely attested one throughout pre-modern Islamic thought. It is so widespread, in fact, as to be found even in the very traditions of violent *jihād* against which so many of those discussed here rebel. In the course of his discussion of the seminal theorist of armed *jihād* ʿAbd Allāh ibn al-Mubārak [d. 797], for instance, Thomas Sizgorich observes:

> In the two works for which he is best known, his *Kitāb al-jihād* and *Kitāb al-zuhd*, Ibn al-Mubārak set forth a doctrine of [armed] *jihād* which insisted that it was the *ascetic piety of the individual warrior* alone which made war against the infidel holy in the eyes of God . . . The renunciation of worldly concerns, which manifests itself as *purity of intention*, is a recurrent theme in each work. [Sizgorich, 2009: 166, 180, emphasis added]

While maintaining a connection with classical Islamic tradition, the adoption of a *niyyah*-conscious ethics in the field of nonviolence complicates familiar dichotomies between absolute and contingent commitments to nonviolence as they are usually understood in the secular literature. An absolute commitment on the Galtungian model – one which must always be undertaken irrespective of other conditions – might for instance on this basis be regarded as anything but absolute if its motives are not properly aligned. Peace by peaceful means may not be seen as peaceful if its intentions are not as they should be. The expansion of the Galtungian binary of means and ends to a ternary concert of means, ends, and intentional dispositions may therefore strike one as more rigid and demanding than prevalent secular models. It adds yet another demanding criterion to the desiderata of nonviolence. And yet we have repeatedly encountered Muslim approaches to nonviolence which are considerably more flexible and ambivalent than this might lead one to expect [notably in Chapters 1 and 7]. This apparent contradiction is not so much a mystery as the predictable result of a mismatch between two quite different sets of expectations.

Over the past century, the preference in academic philosophy (particularly in the Anglo-Saxon world) has often been for precise norms, explicit propositional logic, and an atomism which separates the relations between facts or entities from their natures in and of themselves. (One might also draw parallels with the axiomatic distinction between group

and individual in liberal political theory; with the abstraction of civil law from its more narrative antecedents; with the commodity fetishism of consumer capitalism which isolates artefacts from their history of production; or with the psychology of the 'buffered self' identified by Charles Taylor [2007] as characteristic of secular modernity.) The same preference expresses itself in relation to the modern depersonalisation of moral evaluation, with Alasdair MacIntyre observing that:

> At the very beginning of modern moral philosophy [since Immanuel Kant and Thomas Reid] ... the moral agent as traditionally understood almost, if not quite, disappeared from view. The moral agent's character, the structure of his desires and dispositions, became at best a peripheral rather than a central topic for moral philosophy, thus losing the place assigned to it by the vast majority of moral philosophers from Plato to Hume ... That such choice has to be without psychological or indeed any causal antecedents explains why the philosophy of mind becomes largely irrelevant to the purposes of the moral philosopher ... It is a conception of morality which can acknowledge no good reason for obedience to the precepts of duty which is external to those precepts themselves. [MacIntyre, 1982: 295–296, 307]

From such a perspective, one is repeatedly struck throughout the present study by apparent inconsistencies and contradictions, where our subjects expect different degrees of nonviolence of different people at different times – in apparent defiance of the universal norm which should govern them all. Both in the course of our historical investigations and in our discussions with Muslim nonviolentists, we have frequently identified our subjects' efforts to make room for the permissibility to others of actions from which they themselves assiduously abstain. It may be tempting to regard this as evidence of incoherence at best and hypocrisy at worst. On the basis of the foregoing discussion, however, another – more charitable and more productive – analysis is possible.

When seen in the light of Islamic philosophical traditions of ethical evaluation which centre the individual and their motivations [*niyyah*], apparent conflicts between advocacy for ostensibly different degrees of nonviolence are more readily reconciled. We have seen these range from apologies for the Prophet's warfare, to qualified acceptance of defensive force, to a continuum of stances on structural violence and environmental harms. In each instance, the actor's starting point is as relevant as the goal of their journey, and thus their ethical status is defined less by success or failure in reaching a goal than in terms of their intentional movement towards the recognised goal. One is asked to consider less an isolated choice in the present concerning possible futures than an

ongoing process running from past to present to future. The key cognitive metaphor here is less one of *scalar coordinates* on a Cartesian plane of normative possibilities (where some are violent and others nonviolent) than one of *vectors*: the direction of travel becomes one's key moral concern. Indeed, at the risk of replicating the sort of philological genetic fallacy critiqued at the opening of this chapter, one might point out that the Quranic term for intention [*niyyah*] has also historically meant 'to be bound for another land' [Ibn al-Manẓūr, 1984: 348], while the verse most often recited to verbalise the *niyyah* to pray [Quran 6:79, emphasis added] begins: 'Indeed, I have turned my face *toward* He who created the heavens and the earth, inclining *toward* truth'. The goal of one's travel is by definition other than the place in which one begins, while that starting point constrains which routes are available so as to reach one's destination. The operative question before the Muslim nonviolent ethicist may not therefore be 'which action satisfies the established abstract criteria for nonviolence?' Rather, they will ask: 'which of the alternatives open to a specific person – as delimited by their knowledge, ability, circumstances, and degree of spiritual advancement toward God – will occasion the least harm?' Whereas secular varieties of contingent pacifism often consider either material questions of practicality or philosophical conflicts with other confounding moral issues, the preoccupation with moral development among Muslim thinkers surveyed here necessarily also includes the spiritual state, development, and inclination of the actor as a fundamental concern.

This shift in orientation in turn transforms the project of advocacy for nonviolence from one of *governance* into one of *pedagogy*. By virtue of its internal and autonomous character, that is, intentional *niyyah* may be encouraged but cannot be compelled. While actions may be commanded, character must instead be formed through its own growth. As such, we have seen our subjects pursue varieties of an 'educative method' [Khan, 2004: 100] 'which triumphs over a person's conscience rather than over their body' [Said 2009b]. It is no coincidence that almost all of the activists surveyed here regard themselves in the first instance as educators. Rather than identifying and enforcing a set of fixed principles, their approaches seek to meet their audience where they are and then to shepherd them in the direction of more peaceful possibilities. Peace on this view may only be achieved through becoming a more peaceful person, and in turn by helping others to do the same. This typically *pedagogical orientation* in Islamic nonviolence does not necessarily place it in opposition to legal and juridical discourses, it should also be said.

Each can and does overlap, as illustrated in the earlier discussion. Indeed, we have already seen one of our interview participants [Chapter 7] explicitly invoke a classical jurisprudential maxim in order to make this very point, while we ourselves have argued elsewhere that what Aristotle calls *phronesis* or contextual practical wisdom is a salient element of Islamic law as it is actually practised [Woerner-Powell and Edmondson, 2019; see also Agrama, 2010]. On the contrary, the ease with which a nonviolent pedagogy coexists with such practices both underlines its culturally Islamic character and plays an important role in the final theme to which we would like to draw attention.

COMMUNITY AND COMMUNION AS NONVIOLENT PRAXIS

The overwhelming majority of those proponents of Islamic nonviolence whom we have surveyed place an evident premium on the avoidance of symbolic and discursive breaks with the wider Muslim population. Such efforts at maintaining a sense of unity with Muslims whose beliefs and ways of life differ profoundly from their own may indeed be one reason why some have found this strand of the Islamic tradition so difficult to recognise: it does not always advertise its difference. It is nonetheless a feature upon which other writers on Islamic pacifism have remarked, and in so doing distinguished it from many secular pacifisms:

> [P]acifist clerics [in West Africa] are not separatists, in contrast with the Western tradition of pacifism. They do not reject the *ummah*, the constituted faith community of Sunni Islam. Social pluralism mitigated the tendency toward political and communal separatism, and the absence of centralised government power removed political coercion in conversion and religious affiliation. [Sanneh, 2016: 11]

The separatism of 'the Western tradition of pacifism' which Lamin Sanneh highlights is not only the physical isolationism of communes and intentional communities. It also manifests itself in less ostentatious forms. The distinction he draws may even be detectible in the different manners in which the (Muslim) primary and (academically secular) secondary sources which inform this study reason and argue. The work of the professional ethicist or moral philosopher tends as much to the disputatious as that of most academics. Many scholars win their reputations through critique and refutation. Analysing and deconstructing existing theories is moreover a major methodological concern of the secular academy, be it in the humanities or the natural sciences. Indeed, at least since Karl Popper [1935], practices of falsification have with good reason

been widely seen as one classical demarcation criterion between science and pseudo-science. Yet in the cases of Islamic nonviolence we have encountered throughout this research one is often struck by the relative absence of critical confrontations. Though some – most notably Amadou Bamba, Ali Shariati, and Jawdat Said [see Chapters 1, 4, and 6 and Appendix] – do offer swinging commentaries on their Muslim clerical establishments, the tendency has most often been to avoid condemning understandings of Islam which diverge from their own. Nowhere was this more obvious than during our interviews, where great pains were taken to avoid such ruptures.

Concomitantly, we have seen several past and present thinkers adopt forms of nonviolence which they evidently regard as morally preferable but which they at the same time consciously refrain from demanding of others. They have often advanced moral arguments for nonviolence which, to quote Rabia Harris [see Chapter 7], are 'legitimate but not obligatory'. A certain kind of Kantian may recoil at the notion of a moral virtue which engenders no automatic obligation. Yet the concept is an extremely familiar one in Islamic legal ethics, corresponding directly to the category of *mustaḥabb* ['beloved'] among the five fundamental rulings [*al-aḥkām al-khamsah*] falling between required and forbidden. This encompasses actions which do bring divine reward but are freely chosen rather than obliged. One might also observe that there exists a long tradition of quoting a *ḥadīth qudsī* [*ḥadīth 38* of al-Nawawī's *40 Ḥadīth*, drawn from Bukhārī's canonical collection] to the effect that the believer's path to God's love is paved precisely by such 'supererogatory' acts [*nawāfil*; sing. *nāfil*]. Muslim advocates for nonviolence have often shown themselves to be particularly concerned with this liminal moral category: neither merely permissible [*mubāḥ*], nor necessarily mandatory [*wājib*], but something which moves between the one and the other through the ethics of supererogation.

The question of violence towards non-human animals is particularly instructive in this respect. Some third of those discussed in this text observed vegetarian diets, a proportion which is far higher than that of any general population outside of India (of which only one of our subjects was in any event a citizen). We have furthermore seen some of them advance the views both that the unnecessary killing of animals is harmful and even that the consumption of animal meat spiritually inclines one towards anger and violence. In the case of the Senegalese Amadou Bamba, indeed, we have identified reports that he abstained so completely from violence towards animals that he would not harm even dangerous pests

such as scorpions. One might be tempted to conclude from this that there exists a close relationship between vegetarianism and nonviolence in contemporary Islam. Yet the reality is far more ambivalent, and only one of our subjects [Chapter 3] seems to have made any effort to enjoin others to observe such a diet. On the contrary, vegetarianism has more often appeared in the form of supererogatory devotion on the one hand or heavily couched as a personal choice on the other.

The question of violence towards the non-human world is particularly salient precisely because it is so habitually accepted. While only a minority of human beings may argue systematically for pacifism, in practice most will never kill another human being – either in or out of wartime [see e.g. Pew, 2019]. The 'warist' [Cady, 1989] philosophy is therefore one which is more often paid lip-service than acted out. Voluntary meat-eating, by contrast, is practised on a regular basis by the overwhelming majority of the global population – including by many who nonetheless harbour moral scruples about it. Never before in history has animal meat, now intensively farmed and heavily subsidised, been so readily and inexpensively accessible. 'A chicken in every pot' may eloquently have expressed vaulting ambitions to prosperity in seventeenth-century France or 1920s America. Yet it may puzzle the readers of today, for whom chicken is eminently abundant. It is furthermore the case that animal slaughter is repeatedly described in both the Quran and the *ḥadīth* literature: the holy book of Islam describes animal sacrifice while the Prophet Muḥammad, the Islamic noble paradigm [*uswahtun ḥasanah*; Quran 33:21], was not a vegetarian. Meanwhile, the increasing number of Muslims living as religious minorities, and the tensions they experience as such, further highlights differences between Muslim and non-Muslim foodways as markers of group identity. Such differences are especially appealing to those who feel themselves marginalised or under threat – as many minority Muslims understandably do. Vegetarian dishes offer little opportunity to distinguish Islamically *ḥalāl* [permissible] food and its consumers from non-Muslim groups precisely because they are so universally inoffensive. There in fact exist many reasons why meat-eating Muslims today might find nonviolence towards animals unappealing. Indeed, in her Muslim feminist critique of contemporary discourses surrounding meat-eating informed by the seminal work of Carol Adams [2015] on the intertwining of patriarchy and the subordination of animals, Kecia Ali has noted that,

> [d]espite some advocacy of reduced meat consumption, Muslims infrequently discuss – and even less frequently, advocate – vegetarianism. The default Muslim stance toward vegetarianism, particularly if it is justified by animal

welfare concerns, remains confusion, hostility, or outright rejection. Although, as Richard Foltz observes, 'there exists no unified Islamic or Muslim view of nonhuman animals' [2006: 149], it is still the case that 'preoccupation with the rights of nonhuman animals' – and vegetarianism more particularly – 'remains firmly outside the mainstream in Muslim societies around the world today' [2006: 155, 156]. The same is true in Muslim minority communities in the West. [Ali, 2015: 273]

Ali's study also presents countervailing currents, however – and in doing so it highlights a productive parallel to our earlier discussion of the ethical function of intention [*niyyah*] in Islamic nonviolence. Ali notes that the Indo-British Sunni Muslim advocate for Islamic vegetarianism Basheer Ahmad Masri [d. 1992] argues in his *Animal Welfare in Islam* not that Islam forbids the eating of animals but that it contains the 'motivation' to end such practices. Indeed, Masri goes so far as to deploy this putative fact as part of an interreligious polemic. In his view, this *niyyah*-conscious *ethics of orientation* and *willed motion towards a good* is both more flexible and less demanding than what he sees as the more rigidly legalistic approaches of both other religious and secular vegetarianisms [Ali, 2015: 279]. Irrespective of whether one accepts either Masri's premise or his conclusion, the fact remains that the form of argumentation he adopts substantially reproduces that of the pacifists discussed here. It equivocates between the assertions that a moral value is essential to Islam and that Muslims are not automatically obliged to observe it.

The community-maintaining utility of the argument from intentional orientation [*niyyah*] to both Muslim pacifists and vegetarians alike is considerable. It avoids direct conflict with those large populations who maintain the licit nature of violence against humans or animals, while also obviating the need to engage in a demanding and divisive effort of scriptural abrogation [*naskh*]. None of those whom we have discussed denied that the Prophet ever fought or killed human beings, nor that he slaughtered animals for food, nor even that God might have permitted such acts to others. Instead, and notwithstanding the conflicting forms and degrees of violence which they recognised or rejected, each made the case that God did not permit it *of them* as seekers of His love and favour. The centring of personal moral and spiritual improvement in lieu of the abstracted act or final outcome 'in and of itself' permits precisely this ostensibly contradictory stance. The choices one makes are conditioned by one's place on a path towards God rather than by some imperiously universal and categorical maxim. This form of

argument thereby also serves a rhetorical and pedagogical purpose in resisting the impulse to denounce and to alienate those whom it seeks to convince. These same features might nonetheless be regarded as obfuscating rather than diplomatic: at best pusillanimous or at worst opportunistic.

Yet the argument from intentional orientation [*niyyah*] might instead be understood as embodying another form of nonviolent praxis. This is one which regards the social and psychological harm of dividing someone from the community to which they belong as itself a harmful act of dislocation. While neither exclusively Islamic nor abstractly religious, this concern is very conspicuously both. Part of the social function and cultural fecundity of religious traditions lies in the fact that they provide shared symbolic resources through which people not only find common cause and agreement but also retain a sense of community when such agreement is lacking. This is certainly true of long-established, decentralised, heterogeneous, and proselytising world religions such as Islam. Their success depends not only upon creating a sense of communion but upon defending it; 'ye should remain steadfast in religion, and make no divisions therein' [Quran 42:13]. Both the valorisation of solidarity and a strong taboo on anathematisation and excommunication [*takfīr*] are widely evidenced in mainstream Islamic tradition on levels ranging from the ritual to the legal to the scriptural. Islamic practice encourages community cohesion in many quotidian ways – from the canonical alms tax [*zakāh*], to charitable giving [*ṣadaqah*], to visiting the sick, to the fact that Friday *Jumuʿah* prayer calls not only for rituals of recognition of other congregants but for a minimum number of participants. False accusations of disbelief, the wilful breaking of community, are meanwhile ruled strictly forbidden [*ḥarām*] by the vast preponderance of jurists. Indeed, Prophetic *ḥadīth* threatens to rebound any such imputations back upon the would-be excommunicator themselves [*Ṣaḥīḥ Bukhārī* no. 6045]. Even Ibn Taymiyyah [d. 1328], the medieval Muslim scholar most often associated in modern writing with the religious justification of violent extremism, 'maintained in general that *takfir* among Muslims was a deplorable practice … except in reference to the Mongols for whom he had conceived a deep personal animus' [Afsaruddin, 2008: 195]. In the Introduction we drew attention to the conventions of mutual recognition among rival schools of Islamic thought manifested in events such as the anti-sectarian Amman Message of 2004 which explicitly condemn excommunication.

Conversely, both the term 'excommunicator' [*takfīrī*] and the name given to the historical group most associated with that practice [*al-khawārij*; 'those

who leave or go out from the group'] remain common terms of abuse in Muslim vocabularies. They are most often applied to violent extremist groups such as al-Qaeda or Islamic State. Indeed, one of our subjects explicitly uses this language to condemn schism: *al-khurūj* [the verbal noun of which *khawārij* is the broken plural active participle; Said, 1993a: 233–235; Chapter 6]. Just as separatism is stigmatised in Islam at large, it is assiduously avoided by our subjects. The marked preference for moral arguments which promote nonviolence while stopping short of condemning less peaceable co-religionists thus reflects both a long-standing tradition of Islamic ethical reasoning, a traditional stigmatisation of separatism, and the strategic exigencies of a minority positionality. Our subjects attempt to balance a committed nonviolence with a reluctance to isolate themselves from fellow Muslims who have not yet been convinced of its wisdom. This in turn betokens an inclusively communitarian dimension of nonviolence which comparatively individualist secular pacifisms by their nature neglect. In case after case which we have encountered, solidarity and communion with wider society is assumed to constitute an element of what Galtung calls 'positive peace', the diminution of which is therefore inherently destructive. In short, proponents of Islamic nonviolence through their practice recognise alienation, estrangement, and anomie as modalities of violence. These remain insidious ills which secular societies often struggle to combat.

The distinctiveness of Islamic nonviolence is worthy of recognition whether or not one finds it attractive or persuasive. Our highlighting of these and other matters is not, however, intended to serve as warrants for their inclusion in wider philosophical debates on violence and nonviolence. Not only is that case made elsewhere in the philosophical literature, but the expectation that it is necessary has itself been subject to serious critique. Such philosophical gate-keeping has in recent years been attacked as unjust, contradictory, and ethnocentric:

> Non-western philosophies have to merit inclusion by presenting distinct lines of argumentation one cannot find in the Western canon, yet they must also pass a test of intelligibility, not being so distinct that they are beyond comprehension. These ... remain forms of Eurocentrism by assuming the non-negotiable legitimacy of a Western measuring stick, holding Western judgments, sensibilities, assumptions, norms, and conventions in place as the gatekeepers for philosophical inclusion. [Alcoff, 2017: 397]

Our concern has likewise not been to extoll the merits of Islamic nonviolence, either to Muslims or to non-Muslims. Rather, the task at hand has more narrowly confined itself to describing, analysing, and comparing many of the most salient forms it has most recently taken. The ethical

and theological attractiveness of any or all of these will in the final analysis be determined by the reader. Nevertheless, it is only as a result of such a comparative process that 'Muslim pacifists and exponents of nonviolent civil resistance … [may be problematised] as a distinct phenomenon' [Cole, 2022: 387].

Through all of the foregoing, we have neither argued that nonviolence is inherent to Islam nor presumed to adjudicate on what form it should or should not take. The widespread belief that historical Islam does not comprise ethics of pacifism and nonviolence is nonetheless conclusively falsified. It is an empirical fact that it does. Those forms of nonviolence are numerous, and in important respects both converge and diverge. They both clash and harmonise with one another and with more secular philosophies. Our call has been to engage in sensitive and systematic scrutiny of such variegated forms while also recognising their wider family resemblances. This is not a task to be undertaken by the invidious generalit:y 'Is Islam a Religion of Peace?' Though our attempt at providing a more nuanced exploration is necessarily not all-encompassing, it is our hope that it opens new avenues and offers sufficient resources to explore them. It remains clear that much scholarly work remains to be done on the part of both Islamicists and moral philosophers so as to map regions of Islamic thought which have too often been left uncharted.

Though this study does not encourage the view that Islam is by necessity opposed to nonviolence, to those who persist in it we offer a final reflection. The more intrinsically wedded to violence one maintains the Islamic faith to be, the more profoundly the continued existence of endogenous nonviolent currents within it implies their perennial quality. If one regards peace as growing not out of the faith but in spite of it, that is, then it must be a hardy herb indeed to flourish in such arid soil. Rather than an aberrant denial of some inherently conflictual 'state of nature', nonviolence might therefore instead be seen as representing an entirely organic expression of the human psyche: universal in its origins if not in its appeal.

To Muslim devotees of nonviolence, finally, this book hopes to offer an opportunity which more hagiographical or polemical accounts do not. Through critical studies such as this, believers may learn both from the successes and from the failures of others. In so doing, they might perhaps deepen their insight – both into one another and into their own understanding. This is a process already well underway. But its onward path can be trodden by the believers alone.

Modo liceat vivere est spes; *innā allāha maʿ al-ṣābirīna*.