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Religion's Contributions to A Peaceful World

by

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Abstract

This thesis examines the Thoughts of Buber, Augustine, and Ibn Khaldun on resolving interreligious tensions. It demonstrates their common ground in articulating morality as the basis for peace. This morality comes out of love of God, requires respect for all human beings, and has the potential to motivate humans to act cooperatively and justly from a place other than that dominated by unjust, greed, and violence. This present study of their works indicates that such a morality, one that reflects love between people as strong as the love between a human and God as developed and articulated in these theological writings, is a precondition for communication in social and political systems. These thinkers therefore posit morality based on others’ humanity as a departure point for successful dialogue and just law for humans around the world.

To the memory of Dr. Ibrahim Abu-Rabi’

To whom I owe much of the motivation for my graduate work

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**Chapter One**

**Introduction: Historical Background for Interfaith Dialogue, its Original Meaning and the Way it is Applied**

The world today is experiencing a great tension between Abrahamic religious groups. Religious scholars long ago worked to find a way to enable people to communicate together in order to solve their problems in a peaceful way, rather than responding to violence with more violence. A negative and violent attitude only brings chaos to the world and elevates tensions. Dialogue provides an opportunity for Abrahamic believers to meet and seek peaceful resolution, as indicated by the dialogue meetings that have taken place through time and around the world. Dialogue invites people to a way of communication that can change their exclusive approach toward others to a more inclusive way in order to gain mutual understanding and help them remove prejudgment and prejudiced images of the other. This attitude can enhance human relations through love of the other and respect for the other’s dignity and unique point of view. Dialogue in this thesis is concentrated on religion for two reasons: first, much violence today is perpetrated in the name of religion and second, religious thought has struggled for centuries with moral principles regarding the way humans should communicate with each other.

Right after a prime example of violence, World War II, the Roman Catholic Church suggested dialogue as a means to approach people from other faiths in order to gain mutual understanding and bring peaceful resolution to tensions.[[1]](#footnote-1) Formulated as *Nostra Aetate*, “The Declaration on the Relations of the Church to non-Christian Religions,” was promulgated by Pope Paul VI on October 28, 1965. Point 5 in the Declaration articulates a moral stance: “We cannot truly call on God, the Father of all, if we refuse to treat in a brotherly way any man, created as he is in the image of God. Man's relation to God the Father and his relation to men his brothers are so linked together that Scripture says: "He who does not love does not know God" (1 John 4:8).”

The document focuses on the social responsibility of the Church.[[2]](#footnote-2) It points out that as do Roman Catholics, so too do non-Christian religions struggle with “the unsolved riddles of the human condition”[[3]](#footnote-3) and seek ways to enlighten the lives of men and women.[[4]](#footnote-4) This attitude appreciates the spiritual and moral truths of any non-Christians. The Roman Catholic Church holds Abrahamic believers in especially high regard because they have common beliefs and practices; they all submit to one God as Abraham did, they pray and pay alms and fast the same as Christians do (Kimball 73-82). From this sense of commonality the first three missionary Vatican dialogue conferences were formed in the twentieth century. Eastern and Western Christians came together to improve their relations with people from other faiths. The dialogues assisted participants to reach mutual interreligious understanding (Kimball 51).

The dialogue meetings also contributed to a rise of academic studies, particularly comparative studies of religion in Western universities. This trend increased over time, leading Westerners to a new way of viewing human religiosity (Kimball 49). For example, The Holy Cross Greek Orthodox School of Theology in Brookline, Massachusetts initiated in 1985 academic dialogue between Christianity and Islam. Further meetings have taken place in Istanbul, Athens, and Amman, showing that peaceful coexistence and justice can rise through mutual understanding and dialogue (Papademetriou 207). This phenomenon is still common today, but religious academic scholars need to find ways to extend its benefits.

The special thing about the work of Pope John Paul II was his humanitarian goal of making dialogue the focus of advancing and liberating humans (Kimball 102). This Pope highly valued “the dialogue of religious experience.” The Vatican has had significant international practice at dialogue, and their goal and practice of dialogue has motivated people around the world to communicate on multiple levels (Kimball 102). This is especially clear from the way Pope John Paul II and Pope Benedict XVI have interpreted dialogue as not only communication on a personal level but also on an international level where humans meet to seek for peace between them and to enjoy their relation with God in prayer meetings. In 1986 and 2002 Pope John Paul II invited one hundred and eight religious leaders from around the world to Assisi for his first world peace prayer meetings (Kimball 42). The prayer meeting is understood by Pope Benedict XVI to not only unite people with God, but to unite those who pray together as well; the idea is that prayer will naturally lead to dialogue and more openness toward others (Hedges 204).

*Explanation of the term “Interfaith Dialogue”*

Dialogue is defined according to Point 5 in the Vatican Declaration as a way to love one’s neighbors like God loves us; it is a moral encounter to others. Dialogue at any level, whether personal or in larger communities, is a means to gaining mutual understanding as a basis for cooperative relationships between people as a means of achieving peaceful resolution when conflicts arise (Kimball 111). Dialogue is a useful tool in this kind of meeting, but until now its benefit was limited to participants in the meeting.

*Actualization of Interfaith Dialogue*

Ataullah Siddiqui initially argued that dialogue cannot succeed when one party is host and the others are invited guests. He gave the example of post-colonial people when they were invited to Christians’ meetings for dialogue; it was hard for them to collaborate with their hosts, because they had been hurt by them before (94). They felt inferior to the other participants and reluctant to continue the dialogue; however, the Vatican approach changed the participants’ attitude to a more positive one. People who joined the meeting were treated as equal partners in the dialogue and helped them participate more effectively (Siddiqui 94). The meetings were effective when people were treated as equals in the Vatican meetings as Siddiqui explained; a sense of moral equality and the belief in shared humanity are ways in which dialogue can be effective. As a result, the Vatican has stimulated dialogue meetings around the world.

*Recent international interfaith dialogue*

Dialogue can facilitate peaceful resolution of sociopolitical tensions. It addresses people’s political and social problems and helps them to come out of misery caused by inequalities in the world. A moral requirement that all Abrahamic believers and humans in general to a large extent have in common, is that of humanitarian justice and the necessity of sharing the world with others in a peaceful way. For example, Saudi Arabia after 9/11 initiated an interfaith dialogue conference between Muslims and other faiths. This dialogue has taken a more serious turn since King Abdullah of Saudi Arabia discussed it for the first time on the national and international levels at the Mecca and Madrid conferences in 2008. These conferences and many others that came after have been significant steps toward a peaceful resolution of sociopolitical tension and helping people to communicate with other believers with a sense of equality.

King Abdullah of Saudi Arabia considered the idea of interfaith dialogue during his meeting with Pope Benedict XVI in the Vatican in 2007 (*Initiative* 6). He said in this meeting: “. . . I pray to God to ensure that we come to a word that is just between us and that we pray to him to save humanity” (qtd. in *Initiative* 6). In his keynote speech at Mecca’s conference in 2008 he focused on the need for human unity. Moreover, at the World Conference in Madrid he and King Juan Carlos I hosted an interfaith dialogue meeting, which focused on unity in humanity and commonality in morality (*Initiative* 6). King Abdullah stated in this meeting that: “Man could be the cause of destruction . . . He is also capable of turning it into an oasis of peace and tranquility in which adherents of religions, creeds and philosophies could co-exist, and in which people can cooperate in a peaceful manner, and address problems in dialogue rather than violence” (qtd. in *Initiative* 6).

The more serious step that followed was a meeting of the world leaders in the UN General Assembly, a session that emphasised the importance of interfaith dialogue (*Initiative* 7). King Abdullah announced in this meeting that: “Human beings were created as equals and partners on this planet; either they live together in peace and harmony, or they will inevitably be consumed with misunderstanding, malice and hatred” (qtd. in *Initiative* 7). He also said: “We state with a unified voice that religions through which Almighty God sought to bring happiness to mankind should not be turned into instruments to cause misery” (Abdullah bin Abdulaziz, 42). Thereafter, King Abdullah signed “a memorandum of understanding with UNESCO to set up an international program for promoting a culture of dialogue and peace” (Abdullah bin Abdulaziz 48). These meetings focused on what unites religious believers: the “profound faith in God and adherence to the universal values enshrined in all faiths, which call for compassion, mercy, peace, honesty and coexistence” (Abdullah bin Abdulaziz 48).

In 2010 King Abdullah of Saudi Arabia established an international interfaith dialogue center in Vienna to help achieve the goal of peace (Abdullah bin Abdulaziz 49). His actions have aided Muslims in understanding the benefits of interfaith dialogue in times as tense as the ones we are experiencing today. Other religious groups are also seeking dialogue as a way to overcome interfaith tensions. This is important because of the way religion has been compromised and the way its good has been forgotten during different acts of violence and conflict.

*Moving forward*

The world is still filled with wars between, and within the same, faiths resulting in chaos. Individual and institutional efforts have tried to do everything possible to unite people despite their diversity for the cause of the betterment of society, because unity was originally mandated by the Abrahamic religious scripts. When people are not united across faiths, they are not fulfilling what their faiths require of them. The meetings did not make people completely come out of misery, but allowed them to gain a mutual understanding.

 As the Rabbi Burton L. Visotzky noted in his article “A Rabbi, The Jewish Theological Seminary, and Jewish Muslim Engagement: A Field Report,” ongoing commitment permits interfaith people to move beyond what he characterizes as “first date” to a moral careful relation that still needs to find a constructive solution for “the hard issues of religious and political differences.” According to Visotzky “This requires a commitment to long-term confidence-building and mutual respect.” He recognized that the “Saudi shift is a significant change in world-view, on par with the Catholic Church’s adoption of ‘Nostra Aetate’ during Vatican Two” (Visotzky 33). He also mentioned that JTS, The Jewish Theological Seminary that was established in 1886 has a vision of Judaism that is ambitious toward world where Jews can coexist with others peacefully "Vision". This vision is based in Jewish scripts and they are working to apply it in their societies "Vision". Their vision as posted on their website states: “We know that we can meet the unprecedented demands of the present moment with innovation born of tradition” "Vision". They have engaged in dialogue in a local level between synagogue and Mosque, which led to a fruitful relation between the Jew-Muslim communities. Overall, Visotzky believed that “. . . inter-religious dialogue . . . [is] for the betterment of all humanity, inshaAllah” (Visotzky 34).

*Selection of representative theologians*

This thesis will explore the work of Buber, Ibn Khaldun and Augustine in regards to their thought on reducing interreligious tensions. This thesis includes one theologian from each of the Abrahamic religions, which is important in discussing the potential contributions of the Abrahamic religions to peaceful resolution of interfaith tensions. Judaism, Islam, and Christianity respectively are introduced in this thesis through the work of Martin Buber from the nineteen and twentieth centuries, Ibn Khaldun from the fourteenth and fifteen centuries and Augustine from the fourth and fifth centuries. The history of these Abrahamic thinkers provides a useful perspective on the importance of morality for peaceful communication in order to help organise human life and ensure human happiness.

As a result of the examination of works by these three theologians, the concept of moral human relation across religions will be discussed.

*The structure of the thesis*

The following chapter, Chapter Two, introduces communication as the gateway to resolving interfaith tensions. Communication involves meeting each other, seeking to understand each party’s position on a situation, and trying to find common ground for the establishment of peace through the process of dialogue. This methodology chapter reviews contemporary communication thinkers Robert Craig, Jürgen Habermas, and Martin Buber. The goal of this review is to find a metalanguage that indicates basic manners for interfaith dialogue.

The three subsequent chapters expand upon the methodological chapter with expositions of the works of Buber, Ibn Khaldun and Augustine. Buber, Ibn Khaldun, and Augustine present potential structures for peaceful communities. They are each valuable to this study because they present their religious moral beliefs which are, it will be argued, necessary for an effective dialogue. In addition, their perspectives continue to influence the theologies of the Abrahamic communities even today.

Chapter Three, the first of these expository chapters, provides an analytical view of Buber’s political experience and dialogue theory as a framework for understanding Augustine's and Ibn Khaldun's ideas. Communication theory is critical to Buber’s perspective for peace. Buber’s contemporary political and social experience of tension between the Abrahamic groups makes his theory quite significant because it is relatively close to today’s interfaith situation. The first part of Chapter Three outlines the chronological development of Buber’s intellectual that led him to construct his I-Thou dialogue theory. Buber’s I-Thou concept acknowledges the necessity of communication as a religious responsibility and as a way to communicate with God. Therefore, according to Buber, dialogue communication has to be based on morality as informed by religion to be fruitful. Truthfulness and openness are important moral values as a components for I-Thou dialogue. The participants in I-Thou dialogue communication should treat each other as they wish to be treated. This idea came to Buber through his religious understanding of morality of loving oneself as he loves his neighbour. The I-Thou relationship manifest human equality has informed not only Judaic tradition but also the Abrahamic traditions as well.

The organization of these expository chapters proceeds from the most recent thinker, Buber, to the earliest one, Augustine. This serves to illustrate a fundamental commonality of perspectives on peace between the Abrahamic faiths that has not changed over time. From the fifth century, during the catastrophe in the city of Rome in 410 when tensions between Christians and pagans were aroused, through to the great sociopolitical upheavals of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, religions continue to recommend peaceful communication as the basis of a common humanity and morality that all humans share.

Chapters Four and Five elaborate the theories of Ibn Khaldun and Augustine with respect to reducing interreligious tensions. Like Buber, Ibn Khaldun and Augustine saw morality as a key factor for dialogue and a peaceful society. Ibn Khaldun is a Muslim historian who studied the reason for the rise and fall of Islamic dynasties. He found the reason for divisions in the *ummah* arising from the lack of group feeling of moral and religious solidarity. As a means to develop a more workable society, Ibn Khaldun studied human nature and social organization. He emphasised the importance of communal unity and solidarity. This solidarity comes through moral communication and values that the society cherishes. He refers to moral solidarity as the reason for the rise and fall of any social organisation. Morality to him is informed by the Arab tribal culture that was completed by Islamic religious moral values. Therefore, moral solidarity evolved and became religious moral one. In Ibn Khaldun’s perspective the perfect morality is the religious spiritual one that nourishes humans conscious souls, making communication useful and community structure strong.

Ibn Khaldun articulates religious moral solidarity as the way societies develop social morality and continue to be strong. Communication therefore to him is based on morality that unites the community and brings justice through the moral character of its leader whose job is to keep people away from aggressive behaviours. The more moral the leader is the more influential he can be; therefore, moral communication is the way to spread peace. Ibn Khaldun is important to the study of interfaith dialogue communication because he explains how society is constructed and how morality and spirituality are the basis of human communication success. The chapter about Ibn Khaldun will first introduce his theory of human nature and social organization, and then give examples from Islamic history to show how moral solidarity is an important factor in societal communication and constructions.

The fifth chapter focuses on Augustine, the Christian theologian from the fifth century. He too experienced religious political social tension between Christians and also between Christians and Pagans under the Roman Empire. His political contribution therefore is very valuable because he lived in a diverse community and he sought a way for peace communication that he called earthly peace. His understanding of peaceful human relations is informed by the love of God and the love of neighbours as a way to imitate Christ and live peaceful life.

Augustine’s understanding of communication is based on the love of God, hence on religious morality. The City of God, Jerusalem, is a vision of a peaceful community where all worshippers live together. It is not clear if he meant living together literally or metaphorically; that is, whether literally or metaphorically people need to communicate together and cooperate through their shared moral values. Realizing human shared moral values is one step towards positive dialogue that can lead to peaceful relation. Therefore, the ideas that Augustine develops in *The City of God* is important for this study because it provides an ideal vision of peaceful community based on moral humanitarian communication.

The final chapter reviews and summarizes the analytical review of the works of the three theologians, demonstrating that Abrahamic thinkers have relevance for peace in the contemporary world. Buber, Ibn Khaldun and Augustine saw peace and happiness emerging through morality. Interhuman moral dialogue thus becomes a theme for bringing people together to open their hearts and minds to each other.

Buber, Ibn Khaldun and Augustine have each proposed peaceful resolutions to bridge the gap between religious groups. Examination of their works indicates that their similarities are more profound than their differences and that they all approach peace in much the same way. Although they lived in different time periods and had different historical and religious backgrounds, they all viewed social and political stability as achievable through a shared religious morality that could be communicated through interfaith dialogue. In spite of the fact that the three thinkers embraced different Abrahamic religions, they all agreed on the goodness of humankind, each believing that good people exist not only within the limits of their own religious circle or geographical region, but they also exist anywhere and throughout history.

The three Abrahamic thinkers Buber, Ibn Khaldun, and Augustine will be examined for their contribution to peace communication across religious barriers today, because they are representative of their religious view and very influential in their tradition. Therefore, their theories might provide a model for contemporary communication between religious groups and may highlight the common perspective in peace communication in the Abrahamic religions. Each thinker will be discussed in order to analyse and to indicate the strengths and weaknesses of their peace communication views; this will indicate their common metalanguage that appears to be the foundation for the peace communication for today. It may be possible then to develop interfaith relations today based on this perspective of the theory of the former Abrahamic thinkers.

Buber, Ibn Khaldun and Augustine all valued morality as it is informed by their respective faiths. Each believed that social stability occurs when combined with religious or moral systems. They held that all religions have some kind of moral base and, for them, morality is the main factor in political stability and social peace and harmony. Augustine and Ibn Khaldun were in agreement with Buber on what comprises moral values, and all three seem to have accepted the universality of religion’s moral humanitarian message. This thesis thus contributes to understanding the potential of religion offers towards reducing conflict.

**Chapter Two**

**Methodology: Religion and Communication Theories**

Communication theory as a field of study holds great potential as a useful tool in understanding and facilitating interreligious dialogue. This chapter will therefor explore the work of Robert T. Craig, Jürgen Habermas, and Martin Buber.

*Robert T. Craig*

Robert T. Craig is a contemporary American scholar whose concern has been to apply communication theory to religion. He identifies seven perspectives within the field of communication studies: rhetorical, [semiotic](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Semiotic), [phenomenological](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Phenomenology_%28philosophy%29), [cybernetic](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cybernetics), [sociopsychological](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Social_psychology_%28sociology%29), sociocultural, and [critical](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Critical_theory). Each perspective emphasizes a different aspect of communication and focuses on particular ways humans interact together. Craig proposes a metalanguage of “dialogical and dialectical coherence” as a means of understanding the similarities and differences between the different theoretical approaches within the field of communication studies. Craig states that he would like to “reconstruct communication theory as theoretical metadiscourse engaged in dialogue with practical discourse in everyday life”(120).

 The common focus in all these theories is the fact that they have respect and care for humanity. Universal humanity can lead to universal dialogue and function as pragmatic settings. In other words, facts and truth whether they are constructed or genuine could be the common ground to all dialogue. Therefore, dialogue could be effective if it is based on communality, while in reality it is mostly based on pragmatic world view.

For example the “Rhetorical” theory, as Craig presents it, requires societies to be collective. In this perspective, deliberation and judgment in society is based on the power of words. Therefore, people can be manipulated by a persuasive speech, which makes them blindly adopt the speaker’s opinion even Though the speaker might have a hidden agenda or the intention of a selfish political and/or social gain (Craig 122-133). This kind of practice is immoral as it is counter to the goal of true communication, using language to control people’s reaction to reality or even see reality in the way the speaker wants them to see it. The practice of this theory is very often used today by some religious speakers to maintain their power among their adherents while discriminating against other religious faith communities. Religious speech and interfaith dialogue should emphasize the power of unity, and not a uniformity that disregards diversity as Rhetorical theory implies.

Semiotic theory on the other hand is an intersubjective way of communication that presumes mediation by signs based on prerequisite knowledge of a common language. Commonality is somewhat problematic because it assumes that the word that is spoken has the same meaning across the world and different cultures; thus, there is a great chance of miscommunication (Craig 134-137). It should be noted here that common language is seldom universal because the diversity and complexity of the meanings mitigate against a blanket concept of shared meaning. This perspective explicitly affirms that one language has only one meaning, yet that cannot be legitimate because the diversity of our world results in different interpretations around the meaning of most words. This theory effectively segregates the world into two class systems each based on precise knowledge of the language, the word will be interpreted differently by the elite and the ordinary people. This sense of inequality of understanding challenges the very meaning of human communality. In the interfaith context the sense of superiority and exclusivity has the same negative effect on communication. For example, salvation is a religious term that is understood differently in one Abrahamic faith than the other; as a result one group will reject the others’ notion of salvation and consider the others belief as the embodiment of falsehood, which eventually will result in tension, discrimination, and divisions within and between religious groups.

Craig recommended that interfaith people to employ a “Phenomenological” perspective because it enables participants to understand themselves and “others.” The phenomenological perspective enjoins participants to treat each other with respect for their shared humanity as a means and to overcome their differences by seeking a common ground. This theory basically treats facts as “objective” while values are “subjective.” Dialogue is genuinely supportive and open between participants. People engaged in this type of communication enjoy each other’s companionship without mediation.

Similarly, “Sociocultural” theory operates as symbolic processes that produce and reproduce cultural patterns. Its emphasis on collective responsibility requires the participants to value tolerance and mutual understanding (Craig 144-146). It allows participants to come to agreement and reach out to others’ opinions, allowing them all to treat one another with respect and dignity. Accordingly, the participants will realize that they are partners in this world and that they share the same basic human rights.

In regards to human rights, Craig glosses the “Critical” theory that is mostly associated with the hegemonic Marxist ideology. This perspective found instability and oppression in what is traditionally inherited. It allows critical reflections that emphasize freedom and equality (Craig 147-150). Craig’s theoretical idea of dialogical and dialectical coherence across these seven perspectives in the field of communication studies has some potential as an interfaith dialogue structure, but it does not really provide solid ground for specific interfaith dialogue, especially in attempting to resolve some of the Abrahamic tensions today. For example, the phenomenological theory that Craig recommends for interfaith communication was examined to see if it could fit within his unified definition of communication. It was found that he did not really address the specificity of the interfaith situation. It will need further articulation in order to make it a valid option for contemporary discussion.

*Jürgen Habermas*

Jürgen Habermas’ communication theory has been somewhat influenced by Marx’s notion of tradition as an irrational force. Habermas values critical reflection and aims to “free social action” from the irrational “false consciousness” that is caused by the unconscious self. He uses rationalism as a strategic act to evaluate the validity of his claims and finds truth through cognitive objectified reality, rightness and sincerity within communicative interpersonal relations (Grant 55-56). Through these elements he established the ground for dialectic dialogue, which is based explicitly on consciousness and does not find its truth from uttered tradition or the cultural unconscious ideology.

Habermas’ theory of communication seeks to understand the relationship between communication activities and their effect in human societies. It elaborates a sociopolitical dimension of communication through analyzing multi-disciplinary perspectives. He argues that dialogue is a way to come to a mutual understanding between diverse meanings. Therefore, he seems to consider dialogue between participants as a way they could share their perspectives without recognizing their own traditional viewpoint as the only truth.

Habermas did not analyze the processes of critical theory; rather, he examined dialogue and determined whether social action is a communicative and strategic activity or whether it is part of human nature. He proposed three main elements affecting communication: 1) situation; 2) one’s self that is oriented through “prejudices”; and 3) consciousness. These three elements react in communication activity in different ways to fulfill, reject, or even transform the concepts that were introduced to peoples’ consciousness. Thus, the concept could be relevant to conscience in a way that people chose to “fulfill” the communication, adopting a concept or taking some part of the concept where it had some particle meaning of truth to them. In the second instance people could “reject” it, should the concept be related to past historical experience which had been negative. Or in the third case the communication could transform people. Therefore, in dialogue people should free themselves from any prejudice understanding of a situation to be able to come to mutual universal understanding, and analyse the other’s opinion to determine its truth. For Habermas communicative action thus has a rational basis, because people’s conscious is sharing a definition about a situation with the other participants’ consciousness, which helps developing both consciousnesses (*Communicative Action* 64-86).

Habermas seems to draw upon hermeneutical interpretation as a device in order to understand new concepts around reality. Hermeneutical interpretation is a key factor that participants use to allow themselves to be open to their partners in dialogue. However, none of the partners can claim to have the ultimate truth. The participants accordingly are enjoying sincerity of meanings that allow them to crossover their differences and build bridges to acknowledge and reach out to each other. That will result in transformation in understanding in the way the diversity of the interlocutors is interpreted. Interfaith dialogue therefore, should not be understood as a discourse of submission or random chatter. Rather, it requires meeting the challenge of finding a valid mechanism to interpret the other in more rational sense, without allowing prejudice to blind consciousness from the basic meaning of humanity and common Abrahamic beliefs (Euben 345- 350).

Habermas reflects on the theory of language as a tool for dialogue, finding that its nature can be quite manipulative. Verbal debate certainly has a prominent place in his model of human action, and oral contexts of communication have been relatively little studied. However, the distinctions in language between oral and literacy meanings are the reason for this dilemma. Nevertheless, Habermas suggested: “a single grammar of language is a domination of social power that serves all social interactions” (Euben 348). He does not consider dialogue endangering objectivity as such; truth is a matter of one-to-one correspondence to facts that are hermeneutically explained. Objectivity helps to reconstruct meanings through an explanation from the interpreter as well as to facilitate the understanding of the participants. Habermas here is recommending that people should go beyond their shared individual understandings to be able to articulate a wide variety of aspects without changing their identity.

The hermeneutical way of interpretation was clearly suggested in Habermas’ peace speech. He did not like the idea of jumping to conclusions around the incident of 9/11. His political point of view was that people cannot accuse all Muslims as responsible of that terror. He exhorted people to hear Muslim voices about that incident and to try to interpret them more carefully. In that sense, Habermas seems to believe in the effect of power in communications, whether the power is cultural, economic, or political. Inequalities of power are mostly the reason behind any act of revolution or terror. Humans unfortunately are not equally treated, and those powers are not fairly distributed among people, which will often result the impossibility of effective dialogue communication. Elites are presenting class segregation, which influences a moral and ethical understanding of justice and equality. Even the meaning of truth itself nowadays is humanly constituted. People tend to create it rather than discover it through their dialogue (Habermas, *Dialectic* 43). The reconstructions of ideas around truth are derived by material gains in order to win a particular project or interest. Society in that sense can be seen through economic, cultural, and religious powers that mostly lack morality and equality.

Habermas declares that human identity is shaped by sociopolitical relations with others. Although his work began from a Marxist background, he challenged Marx's hegemonic theory. He argues that the liberation comes through free moral communication between people through deliberative discourse. People should treat others as equal intellectual human beings. The philosophical definition of reasoning is untenable because rational theory could not be universal (Habermas, *Communicative Action* 140), it should be pragmatically based on social science. This suggests that any universalist claims can only be validated by encountering it with the theological or historical assumptions of specific society.

Communication transmits and renews cultural knowledge which will harmonize action towards social integration and solidarity. Habermas seems to believe communicative practice is the process that people go through to form their identities as communication causes consciousness to evolve. For Habermas, communication is a means to achieve, sustain and review consciousness through having been said Habermas gives the impression that he shifts his emphasis more to collective rationality than to the individual.

Habermas wrote in his book *An Awareness of What is Missing*: “Humans are capable of reaching an agreement through a hermeneutical procedure based on the common use of reason; there is an interrelation between faith and reason in the religious modes of argumentation" (43-44). He pointed out the fact that there is a moral potential that resides in religion in its formal ethical belief of modesty and generosity. Religion can explain ethical reasoning to maintain moral and cultural society. The most important factor that can guarantee the success of interfaith dialogue therefore, can be characterized by the point that the participants have to take each other seriously. People can provide sincere explanations without prejudging each other in order to establish effective dialogue. Others will then take the dialogue seriously in a “correspondingly intelligent form” (Habermas *Naturalism* 49).

 The central characteristic of interfaith dialogue is God and the injunction that humans to reach out for each other in order to maintain human freedom. Habermas supports that by saying: “The worship of one God liberates human beings from all possible ideals and earthy powers” (*Awareness* 61- 63). This quote views religion as a motive for interfaith dialogue. Habermas viewed religious belief as an unconscious reaction to communication activity; however, it seems that Habermas does not deny religious power and authority as a moral and ethical ground for rational reasoning and communal relations. Nevertheless, with his stand on religion as irrational, his theory will not be quite relevant to interfaith people. Religious people will not see his theory addressing their concerns as they wish it would be addressed because they view their religion to be rational and having the capacity to solve social and political problems. In addition, Habermas developed phenomenological theory in more psychological and philosophical complexity that does not closely relate to the interfaith relation but more to socio-political problems, which is not the focus of this thesis.

*Martin Buber*

As a Jewish philosopher of the twentieth century, Buber experienced sociopolitical tensions between interfaith groups which resonate with today’s interfaith tensions. His communication theory originated from his religious and sociopolitical experience of this tension. Dialogue for Buber is a way to solve problems and bring interfaith peace. He divided the human dialogical relationship into two realms: God-human and human-human. He presented human-huamn dialogue as a way to communicate with God. He distinguished the human-to-human relationship in two categories: I-it and I-Thou. The I-Thou dialogue relation is genuine theological aspect of human interactions where God is part of the dialogue. Buber’s concept of I-Thou dialogue is similar to Craig’s articulation of phenomenological theory, but it is more developed in Buber’s work (Craig 138-140). Buber’s I-Thou dialogue theory is thus an appropriate theory to be the framework of this thesis and it will be explained thoroughly in the next chapter in order to lay the ground for peace communication and harmony between Abrahamic religious groups.

Craig, Habermas and Buber are three important communication thinkers who contributed to peace communication. They presented foundational theories to promote dialogue as a bridge-builder to overcome human differences. This chapter examined the foundations of dialogue as conceived by Craig, Habermas and Buber as a method to reconcile today’s problems. Buber’s theory was found to be the most applicable one in the context of the Abrahamic traditions for the fact that it arises out of the Judaic belief systems which makes it capable of providing a theory that is specifically constructed within Abrahamic religious tensions and sociopolitical situations. At the same time, it is necessary to look for the basic foundations within the other Abrahamic thinkers to determine whether there is sufficient agreement between them and Buber’s theory to assist in promoting peace communications.

**Chapter Three**

**Martin Buber and I-Thou Dialogue**

One of the foremost thinkers of religion and peace communications in the last century was Martin Buber. Buber demonstrates a sophisticated view of the phenomenological approach to communications discussed by Craig and to which Habermas contributed. Buber, a Jewish philosopher of the twentieth century, paid special attention to religious dialogue. His conceptualization of a community of communication influenced many people to actualize the relationship between themselves and the world and the most significant contribution of Buber is that his theory was implemented in his community.

Buber demonstrates the value of communication throughout his work, focusing mostly on the value of dialogue for its ability to increase human mutual understanding and acceptance of others. Much of his theory developed out of, and in response to, his personal experiences. His cultural situation, his religious concerns, his education, and his sociopolitical direction all helped shape his understanding of dialogue and communication theory.

Buber’s dialogue theory differentiates two types of relationship: I-It and I-Thou. These relationships are indicative of differing communication patterns. I-it is the common way that people communicate to get what they desire; it is associated in Buber’s view with selfishness because it is a communication with the goal to serve oneself but not the whole community. I-Thou, on the other hand, comes through moral relation that is genuine and spiritual, addressing the ‘Thou’ that is associated with God’s moral commandments in all the Abrahamic religions.

 I-Thou dialogue is an ethical form of human interaction because it originated from the love of God and neighbours. This chapter will feature the two kinds of dialogue and explore how dialogue may be used to resolve sociopolitical problems. In other words, this chapter asks the question: Can Buber’s philosophy of dialogue participates in resolving social and political problems between religious communities? In order to find out, the educational and sociopolitical experiences that helped crystallize and develop Buber’s theory of dialogue will be outlined. This will be followed by an analysis of the strengths and challenges of the theory in terms of its applicability for addressing the sociopolitical problems of our time.

*Buber’s Educational Development*

Buber was born in Vienna in 1878. As a child he attended a Jewish school. He later went on to a secular academic school and university in Germany. This educational transformation from a religious to a non-religious educational environment allowed Buber to view the world in a broader way through meeting and interacting with people from diverse intellectual backgrounds and spiritual schools of thought. Buber then began to think deeply about the relationship of humans with God and with others.

This curiosity from young age was more firmly shaped through Buber’s higher education. The environments of Vienna, Leipzig, Berlin, and Zurich enhanced his ability to explore the nature of humans and their relation to God from a philosophical standpoint. He studied Kant, Nietzsche, and other philosophers who enriched his knowledge and opened the door for Buber’s own philosophical work. Due to his ongoing interest in the human relation to God and the unity of men, Buber devoted his first philosophical work to “the unity of man with His creator and with all His creation” (Simon 44).

In addition, Buber’s doctoral dissertation work was in German mysticism, which introduced him to a new way of reading other faiths and understanding the Bible. He translated some of its verses in a new way because of his extensive knowledge of Hebrew. He later announced his feelings of brotherhood towards Jesus as opposed to dividing people (Simon 47). His belief in a link between Christianity and Judaism comprised the first step in Buber’s theory of interfaith dialogue and relations with others.

*Buber’s Spiritual Journey*

Buber’s philosophical understanding of religion and politics turned to the spiritual teaching of Jewish Hasidism. He wanted to devote his life to spiritual pursuits as a means of defining community relations. This deeper spiritual journey was the second step towards Buber’s theory as it allowed him to find his spiritual self and thereby discern what really mattered to him in terms of hopes and goals. Hasidism became the foundational ground of Buber’s dialogue theory, and it inspired him in his writing from 1905-1907 which led up to his seminal work *I and Thou*in 1922 (*Between Man and Man* 215).

During Buber’s years at the university he read a pamphlet written by Theodor Herzl, the Zionist thinker, whose message offered hope for Buber and all Jews that they would have the chance to be united in a land of their own as a Jewish nation. Buber attended Herzl’s talk at the First Zionist Congress meeting in 1897 and was at first excited to see Jewish people from all over the world. Jews been separated from each other for so long, yet had always shared the same prayers and desire to recreate their lost nation. But this moment of hope and joy turned out to be a disappointment to Buber when it changed from the spiritual I-Thou dialogue meeting to the I-it form of dialogue. This happened when one group of Zionists suggested using the political power of I-it dialogue to fulfil the Jewish dream. Buber felt discouraged because he believed it was better for them to become spiritually prepared for their promised land through the I-Thou relationship (Simon 51).

 In Buber’s view Jews should be at least as concerned about their spiritual I-Thou development as they are concerned about I-it relation to the land; indeed, Buber saw spiritual I-Thou development as the key factor in bringing Jews together physically (Simon 51-52). Buber recognized I-Thou dialogue language in religion, while politics mostly uses I-it dialogue or monologue language. Religion is concerned with a broad “messianic goal” that benefits all, while politics is concerned with indifferent means to short-term ends (Kohanski 91). In Buber’s perspective, political I-it dialogue communication is an evil means because it is a persuasive instrument that focuses on using others to fulfil temporal needs and material goals in any way possible. Buber gave up on Zionism at 26 years old because in his view it was becoming more political and less spiritual, which was not what he had pictured when he first was encouraged to join (Simon 55).

Buber felt the first priority for a society is to focus on its relation with God and other humans. In his view political power hinders that kind of loving spiritual relationship while religion provides what is essential to an individual’s genuine relation to God and to fellow humans. It is understandable that Buber’s experience in his childhood in Germany encouraged him at first to have hope of unity forthcoming through Zionism, but his philosophical work and deep understanding of spiritual unity of the human world and its relation to God drove him away from the I-it attitude of politics. He turned to Hasidism’s humanist approach, which influenced his philosophical development for the rest of his life. Dialogue to Buber seems to be a way to acknowledge faith differences and focus on the commonality between the religions, which will allow the dialogue participants to bridge the gap between them and gain a mutual understanding.

Through dialogue people will feel responsible for others, because they are communicating in a direct way with individuals and groups in the spirit of eternal heavenly life and continuous changing truth. It is a community that is not built from economics and history but rather from deep spiritual works of communication. Buber’s idea of community “demands [. . .] that men live their lives with [. . .] genuineness and integrity” in order to establish a peaceful, universal community. This happens when “the will of man [. . .] becomes one with the will of God” (Friedman 47). Buber thinks evil and violence can be redeemed through strengthening the force of good through a genuine relationship and true community communication established through the human relationship between God and fellowman (Friedman 282). As a result, when humans begin to dialogue in an I-Thou manner, the tension and violence that has been done through the course of time will begin to disappear.

*Buber’s Sociopolitical Experience*

Buber lived during a tense time between interfaith groups and his communication theory has a practical component which makes it more than just a theoretical proposal. He practiced his dialogue theory within his religious community and used it to reach out to other faith groups. His peaceful communication with diverse individuals in the community during a time of intense political difficulty was not accepted by political figures. Buber’s sociopolitical experience indicates that the use of his philosophy of dialogue has limits in the political arena. It appears that the capacity of humans to communicate for a peaceful solution in the context of the political situation in Europe in 1914 was limited to non-existent. Buber felt that the European sense of superiority was causing the impasse. Later, at the beginning of the war, he saw how Hitler as a soldier started to spread the notion of I-it uniformity through his small troops. A sense of nationalism started to grow stronger in people’s minds from that moment and gradually overcame a sense of European unity that accepted diversity (Simon 81). As a result, I-Thou interfaith and other frank dialogue was made impossible, and nationality and religion began to determine people’s identity and loyalties (Simon 82).

However, this sociopolitical complexity did not diminish Buber’s concern with spirituality; instead, Buber argued for a spiritual communication unity that did not exclude or harm others. Buber held the general principle of unity in high regard because he felt that “one alone can do nothing.” He rejected individualism, the position which was common in Europe after the French Revolution, as unable to bring communal communication unity to Europe (Simon 95). Nevertheless, Buber stated that communication in a community must have a genuine spirit of dialogue and mutually respectful relations between humans. He criticized certain forms of communal communication unity such as collectivism; he only upheld collectivism in its sense of humans coming together under the divine unity of God and others (Simon 136).

 Buber’s collective community view of communication is different than totalitarianism. His critique of totality is that it binds individuals in its dialogue in a way that makes them lose their sense of human responsibility, and that leads to a weak community. Without responsible care between humans, collective I-Thou dialogue cannot take place. In order to achieve the greatest form of unity, people must enter into genuine I-Thou dialogue and work together sincerely for the best interest of all humans. For this reason Buber supposed that cooperation, or working together with a sense of individual responsibility before the community, is more desirable than simple totality or a collective form of communication and coexistence (Simon 169).

Nationalism and the social order were not the only things responsible for the sociopolitical disorder, but they are two reasons for the World War I era. The economic industrial growth also provoked political competition between countries, which enhanced an antagonistic sense of nationalism as each country tried to outstrip the other in terms of colonial land seizure and wealth. Colonial powers competed with each other while their subjects suffered from unjust wealth distribution, with funds spent only to enhance military strength and extend the political power to seize more lands (Simon 77). The people in the countries of the colonizers and of the colonized suffered the hardship of high taxes while living in slums; thus these unsatisfied people protested to try to redirect the wealth to be spent on social reforms.

Small, peaceful movements took place across the world around this time, such as Gandhi’s passive fighting efforts that objected to unjust wealth distribution and advocated for the equality of civil rights and grass roots resistance to the British colonial power. These social nonviolence efforts were rooted in love and respect for human rights and dignity (Simon 79). Buber appreciated Ghandi’s love and truth movement because he considered social justice a common interest that can bring people together and the revolution of preserving good human values as a way to communicate for human unity (Simon 77-79). Buber however, took a somewhat position than Gandhi, seeing himself as a realist thinker rather than as an idealist. Buber believed that there are certain situations where violence is an appropriate response in order for humans to defend themselves (Simon 158). Buber felt that revolution through the I-it way of toleration is not perfect; but, it could be perfect when humans enthusiastically support their fellow men out of love and care to each other. Then it is “perfectedness” revolution (*Between Man* 17-18). Buber supports his view by saying: “In the midst of all hazards of the history of the nations there is a fact of facts which endures uninjured human brotherliness” (qtd. in Simon 124).

Buber understood love based on the religious teachings of the Hebrew Bible and on the I-Thou relation, explaining the teaching of ‘love others as you love your own self’ in this way: “In reality one does not love oneself, but should rather learn to love oneself through the love of your neighbours to whom, then I should show love as I wish it shown to me” (qtd. in Simon 119). In his view, it is great when humans open their hearts and minds to each other while at the same time ensuring that the voice of self is not completely lost (Simon 134). This philosophical idea that spirit has an intrinsic power that enhances faithful courage and faithful love between humans is one of the most important elements of Buber’s I-Thou dialogue theory (Simon 136). In Buber’s view, the spiritual bonds between humans are stronger than any socioeconomic political I-it bonds.

Buber’s philosophical critique of nationalism and his admiration of ideas of unity, truth, and love inspired his speech at the Twelfth Zionist Congress meeting in 1921, where he encouraged understanding between Jews and Arabs. He was concerned about the influence of nationalism on the relationship between Jews and Arabs, declaring that “power hysteria is evil” and warning the Jews against supremacy over their neighbours (qtd. in Simon 95). The communal aspect of Buber's dialogue theory was coming together and was presented in his book, *I and Thou*, which was published in 1922 before Hitler’s rule of Germany and the Second World War. In this book Buber implies that the reality of life of communication involves meaningful partnership between humans in dialogue, as will be explained in the last section of this chapter.

*I and Thou* was very influential; however, it could not stop the Second World War from happening. In Germany during the 1930s depression was increasing due to economic deficit. The Nazis blamed Jews and communists for their economic situation. Politics and economy are two factors that have divided the world in this time of history. In reality, Hitler took advantage of the unstable world economic situation and led Germany in his campaign against Jews, communists, and other groups. During that period Buber gave a speech to Christians in Stuttgart in which he said:

It behooves both of us to show respect for the true faith of the other. This is not what is called ‘tolerance;’ our task is not to tolerate each other’s waywardness but to acknowledge the real relationship in which both stand to the truth. Whenever we both, Christian and Jew, care more for God Himself than for their images of God, we are united in the feeling that our Father’s house is differently constructed than our human models take it to be. (qtd. in Simon 129)

After this strong speech people were inspired, but two years later the influence of the Nazis made them turn a blind eye to the real danger of Hitler’s view and people began to accept it. In 1934 Hitler gained full power over Germany and for twelve years or more oppression overtook freedom and justice there and in all the lands that were under Hitler’s rule or were influenced by his hateful campaign (Simon 130). Buber lived in Germany under Hitler’s power for five years, but he managed during those years to spread wisdom and comforting knowledge through speeches that he gave across Germany. These intellectual and spiritual speeches and organization made people view Buber as “the one who is fighting the evil Nazism with patriarchal dignity” (Simon 131). Buber believed that true spirit is above any political parties. For all those who exercise greed for power and I-it dialogue relation, God is watching over them and “God carries on a dialogue with those who suffer under this abusive power” (Simon 131).

In his speeches Buber communicated narratives from the Old Testament in which God granted a better life to people suffering from injustice. Abraham’s wife Hagar is one such example. This kind of talk and communication brought spiritual comfort and happiness to his fellow Jews. In his speeches Buber identified two kinds of prejudices: the first is when an individual locks himself out of the world. This prevents him from seeing anything beyond himself and renders him to the I-it manner of communication. The second kind of prejudice when a person respects and speaks about the views he faithfully holds without being arrogant or radical. This kind of communication usually strengthens the person and allows him to open his mind to the world and dialogue with others in an I-Thou manner (Simon 133). The Nazis were infected with the first kind of prejudice because they mistrusted each other, which allowed prejudice and mistrust to spread throughout nations. This attitude consequently limited Nazis communication to the I-it form because they only cared about themselves. This prejudicial attitude also brought division. Buber warned people about prejudicial behaviours because they contradicted the meaning of I-Thou dialogue, peaceful living, and unity.

In 1938 during Hitler’s Nazi rule in Germany, Buber went with his family on a vacation to Switzerland. While he was away, Hitler continued his conquests in Germany and work and life became harder for the Jewish people there. Buber’s friends recommended to him not to come back to Germany, and because his daughter was in Jerusalem, Buber moved there with the rest of his family. It was very hard for Buber to be forced to leave Germany after all those years. His time from that point on felt as if he was in exile because he was away from Europe, the place that he knew, loved, and had lived all his life. Buber believed that there was a way to resolve interfaith tension in Germany, and in Israel, commenting that “where there is faith and love, a solution may be found even to what appears to be tragic contradiction” (Glatzer and Mendes-Flohr Letter523, 482). Buber relinquished his own direct involvement in political resolution and became, instead, content with “personal speeches” and I-Thou dialogue that allowed him to practice spiritual communication and present his version of peace resolution. Buber’s most important participation in politics was through his personal dialogue communications. He said “there can only be peace in genuine cooperation” (qtd. in Simon 159).

Soon after that the Cold War began Buber became very troubled by it. He viewed the world as if it were divided into two aggressive camps, each considering itself to be the holder of truth and the other the embodiment of falsehood. Anyone who wanted to be moderate by not taking sides with one of the two groups was accused of being the enemy (Simon 161). Buber urged a return to genuine dialogue between nations and people to resolve the situation, claiming that: “People must engage in talk with one another through their truly human men if the great peace is to appear and the devastated life of the earth renew itself” (qtd. in Simon 166).

Buber noted that a religious-like morality could be achieved in a dialogue communication, but it would not be ideal and utopian (Simon 173). In Buber’s view religion has an advantage over ethics. He posited this on the grounds that religion has a deep and long-standing tradition of thought that demands responsibility from self toward others, rather than a kind of way of being in the world that is primarily oriented towards political gains. Religious morality is the force that unites people as equal worshipers of God and encourages them to communicate in a peaceful way. Buber felt this kind of communication with his small group of Hasidic followers; with them, he was free to love his fellow men as if all were equally related to him (*Between Man and Man* 224).

*The Dialogue Theory*

With the brief review of Buber’s intellectual and spiritual life complete, this section is devoted to analysing Buber’s theory of dialogue which was originally influenced by the Hasidic spiritual teachings he encountered in his life. In his theory of dialogue he divides human relations into two realms, one with God and one with man. He then distinguishes the men-to-men relation into two categories: I-it and I-Thou.

The incorporation of the word ‘Thou’ with ‘I’ represents a spiritual dialogue because ‘Thou’ is a term seen commonly in the monotheistic religions; it is also commonly seen in medieval English. For example, when God speaks to his worshipers he calls them ‘Thou,’ this is because of the translation from either Greek or Hebrew. The use of ‘Thou’ is not in the sense of imposing order so to speak, but it also has more fatherly tone. According to Buber, through I-Thou dialogue people learn as much about themselves as they learn about the other. Naming this type of dialogue “genuine dialogue,” he claims that the I-Thou relation is the way in which one can see God in everything, including in the other. In genuine dialogue the two accept each other partners by confirming each other’s humanity. Dialogue partners must speak their minds “without shifting grounds” because the purpose of this genuine dialogue is to convey the truth in order to “fulfill ever anew unity of the two” (Agassi 86). Buber claims that people cannot be prepared for this type of dialogue, it just happens. Whenever it occurs they can only open themselves to interact with it; they cannot control it.

Although humans cannot control it, Buber explains that I-Thou communication occurs more often in one-on-one conversation, based on the openness and faithfulness between one and the other it is a healing process. The two people in a conversation should remain open to each other's points of view but must also share their own points of view, not relegate them simply because they are having a conversation with someone who does not share those beliefs. Faithfulness, as in not shifting grounds to please the partner is an important factor in genuine dialogue. Dialogue partners must convey the truth that they hold and invite the other to understand their complete point view. According to Buber, these components can lead to fruitful I-Thou dialogue. The more humans get together in dialogue the more likely they will experience an I-Thou dialogue relation. For example, Streiker indicates that Buber never accepted Christianity as if he converted to it, but he was always ready to listen to and share dialogue with Christians (16). In regards to genuine understanding between Christians and Jews, Buber says, “Judaism and Christianity stand together in the mastery of God [. . .] Only on this basis can there be genuine understanding between” them (Glatzer and Mendes-Flohr Letter 580, 540). This openness and truthfulness will enable people to experience the unity of the I-Thou dialogical relation because “The primary word of [I-‘Thou’] can only be spoken with a whole being” (Buber qtd. in Simon 101). It automatically opens one up to receiving/accepting the whole being of the other body and soul. The I-Thou relationship is a direct, mutual, and personal relation (Simon 102). However, a friendly conversation is not enough to be called I-Thou. In I-Thou dialogue the people in the conversation are wholly together in spirit. Sometimes such dialogue does not require speaking. Silence, in the right spirit, may provide I-Thou dialogue even if the two are total strangers to each other: a “brief glance might reveal mutuality” (qtd. in Simon 103). The ‘Thou’ in that sense cannot necessarily be found by seeking it; rather, it comes through grace, genuine encounter, and observation (Glatzer and Mendes-Flohr Letter 562, 525).

The I-it relation is dominant in human relations and can include any type of communication and relation because it does not speak with the whole human being of body and soul. The I-it relation is objective and impersonal and tends to be self-centered without regarding others as equal to themselves. Buber’s view of the ‘it’ of I-it is that “without it man cannot live. But he who lives with it alone is not a man” (qtd. in Simon 105). This relation of I-it accrues through the ways in which people experience their personal material world. The more humans focus on objects, the more they see others around them as objects that they only communicate with if they know that they will benefit something. On the other hand, Buber's hermeneutical interpretation of the I-Thou relation regards both participants as subjects. I-Thou dialogue is thus a practice which values ethical matters such as hospitality and respect, creating a comfortable and safe environment. The most successful communication exhibits a high degree of respect and humanitarian quality that comes from grace, as I-Thou dialogue does. Because of its humanitarian quality, dialogue is an essential foundation for human communities.

Some may argue that the aim of sharing different ideas is to potentially change a participant’s point of view. But in such a scenario, the resulting communication would not comprise genuine dialogue or an I-Thou perspective. Buber’s theory moves more toward harmony than discord, because, he says: “A social structure may be directed by either of the primary relationships. But only when I-Thou guides these structures are they spiritually alive” (Streiker 11). In contrast, the I-it relation is a self-centered, one-way relation, “subject to object” (Streiker 4). For example, I-it benefits its participants by sharing experiences and achieving specific goals, but there is no more room in this relation for I-Thou dialogue in the sense of communal spiritual unity and harmony. Science is not able to evaluate this human experience, since it essentially involves "utilization and control" (Streiker 5). Streiker interprets Buber’s meaning of the I-it relation not as a predominantly evil relation, but rather in the sense that I-Thou enriches relations in a way that I-it cannot. The I-it relation is essentially objectifying, ignoring the real existence and humanity of the other person, as opposed to I-Thou, which looks at the other as the equal of ‘I.’

 I-it is a person’s relationship to any ‘thing,’ whether a partner in marriage, a family member, or a friend. These relationships can be more meaningful if they are imbued with the sacred spiritual meanings of I-Thou. This idea might be difficult to understand from a materialistic perspective, but may be easier to comprehend when thought of as deeply rooted in the moral duty often encouraged by religion, such as duty to parents, spouse, or neighbours. Buber elaborates upon the ways in which religion has a moral and ethical reasoning that motivates adherents to live a meaningful life with a relation to God through relations with their fellow men, by living God’s commandments and fulfilling the religious goal of communicating peacefully with other religious worshippers. Oriented this way human relationships become more meaningful and hold high moral and spiritual value that strengthens their relation to their surroundings. It shifts the focus from the subject to object dynamic of I-it to the more respectful subject to subject relationship of I-Thou.

Once his theory of dialogue had been established, Buber moved on to another essential aspect of human life: community. He was interested in community as a concept. His work was appealing to this broad range of religious and ethnic communities as it combined spiritual language with rational language that could be applied to any human situation and presented a philosophical solution rooted in peace and harmony. Buber calls any social organization, despite its diversity, a “reference to men's [universal] communal or social situation” (Streiker 10). Expanding the principle of I-Thou dialogue into a universal context, one can see the universal pragmatic community as a combination of diverse smaller communities around the world that relate to each other on the basis of humanity and moral codes. Admittedly, all humans may not be able to agree on shared concepts of humanity and moral codes. Still, there is a possibility that humans can exercise their communication activity in order to develop common ground for a shared moral belief that enables them to extend their hands to reach out to others while also maintaining their unique identities. Buber’s dialogue theory can bridge gaps between people based on enhancing their understanding of each other in order to build community.

 Dialogue is a critical intersubjective activity with a transcendent meaning of community where one can release the self to become self and other (Agassi 10). Dialogue in the form of I-Thou is a speech that leads to valid conscious understanding that allows the members of a community to treat each other as partners and see each other in the same way that they see themselves, not as an opponent or even an object as in I-it manner (Agassi 102). The humanitarian aspect of interaction is common among people who have not become alienated from their human substance. Buber is not being utopian by recommending humanitarian I-Thou community relations, he only hopes that human dialogue will bring them mutual and understanding peace through grace. Buber saw dialogue is most fruitful when it is initially derived from truthfulness and sincerity; dialogue with these two elements will almost certainly reach other people’s hearts. The aim of dialogue is to change peoples’ hearts before their minds through the realization of shared humanity in a shared community.

*Buber’s Contribution to Peace Communication Theory*

Political and material life has changed the spiritual relationships of humans. Economic, cultural, religious, and political powers have negatively influenced habits of socialization. According to Buber however, humans can communicate for the good of themselves and their communities. If people start believing again in the possibility that they can reach a communal mutual understanding based on a collective rational mindset of shared humanity through I-Thou dialogue, this will allow them to share their individual points of view. People will then be able to sense their responsibility to others and move toward a more peaceful world. All people deserve to be treated with respect and dignity, and that can be done through thinking of their world in a pragmatic universal sense. Buber, in his theory and everyday life, reached out to people from different faiths, making his theory very successful and practical and perhaps even applicable to today’s problems. His dialogue encourages peaceful cooperation that allows humans to enjoy and benefit from their diversity and their life together.

The most beneficial point that can be taken from Buber’s life and theory is that people should treat each other with respect and dignity because of the shared divine spirit that exists equally in all. If all Abrahamic believers communicate through their common shared values, they will find peace together. These groups need to share mutual understanding through I-Thou dialogue. In the I-Thou relation, there is no room for violence, only a place for love for the same God and for benefiting each other to create a strong physical and spiritual community. If people consider themselves religious it is their religious duty to bring peace. If people consider themselves human, it is their humanitarian duty to rise against violence. It is human to desire freedom and peace, and through dialogue this desire may be shared as can work toward a peaceful world.

It is also important to note the limitation of Buber’s theory of I-Thou dialogue relation. It does not have specific process to ensure its efficacy in the sociopolitical domain. As Buber said, people cannot prepare for I-Thou dialogue, they can only be able to receive it when it comes through divine grace. Buber’s I-Thou dialogue relation is thus perhaps more mystical than practical, which limits its ability to be pragmatically implemented in its fullest sense. However, what can be taken from Buber’s communication theory is the importance of respecting human dignity and peaceful resolution, which can come through moral acceptance for the other and treating the other as one wishes to be treated. Through these humanitarian moral concepts interfaith dialogue can precede.

**Chapter Four**

**Ibn Khaldun and Social Group Feeling**

Ibn Khaldun is an Islamic historian who focused his study on the relationship between religion, society and politics to ensure the establishment of a strong community. He contributes to shaping peace communications as a leader in understanding the human need to communicate in order to build society, satisfy needs, and avoid conflicts. His sociopolitical findings indicate that strength of social organization is through morality, which Ibn Khaldun refers to in his work as moral group feeling or solidarity. Ibn Khaldun understood solidarity as the human group feeling that arises from moral communication with others. This notion brings to view the common value of morality in communication across the three Abrahamic religions. Ibn Khaldun analysed the political tension within Islamic dynasties that stemmed from immoral activities. He proposed moral solidarity as the most significant element for sociopolitical communication.

Ibn Khaldun was the first Muslim to be considered a universal historian. His book, *Muqaddimah*, provides a political and social analysis of Islamic and Berber history (Rabi 2, 47). In his work Ibn Khaldun utilizes a combination of scripture, narrative, and history. Ibn Khaldun’s presentation of history places particular emphasis on history not only as the study of material institutions or facts, but as a study of human communication, social activities, and what the human mind has “believed, thought and felt in the different ages of the life of the human race” (Bourke 14-15). A unique aspect in Ibn Khaldun’s historical work is its analysis of historical facts around communication and the way in which he combines them with his discoveries of how dynasties and civilization originated. For example, he examines Arab history and analyzes the essential characteristics of human social communication and organization in nomad and in civilized society. He then discusses these elements in regards to their effects on sociopolitical peace in these communities.

Ibn Khaldun developed his theory based on the historical data from the Muslim community that existed during the Prophet’s time up to his own time in the fourteenth century. However, he did not view all historical narratives as holding truth because some of them were written with “prejudice and partisanship [which] obscure the critical faculty and preclude critical investigation. The result is that falsehoods are accepted and transmitted” to the following generation. This sort of communication led to divisions and hate between different religious, tribal and socio-political groups (Ibn Khaldun 35). Ibn Khaldun believed that God created humans as thinking beings, which makes them better and stronger than all other beings. Humans are intellectually capable of communicating in a better way than other beings through their critical analysis. Humans are able to control the evil inside them that urges them to be immoral. Their communication with others can be moral if they interpret reality with a responsible attitude towards others. Humans are free to make their communication choice, whether to be immoral and follow their evil instincts, or to be righteous by following their moral soul.

In addition, humans, according to Ibn Khaldun, naturally have the need for a restrictive influence and strong authority to protect them from each other and to help them to communicate together peacefully. Humans moral souls ensure their survival from unjust aggressive behaviors towards others and enable the members of the community to communicate together in order to acquire civilization. Humans naturally have the disposition to cooperate, which permits them to communicate together peacefully and settle with others in any sort of social organization. These social findings about the human ability to communicate and live together peacefully are great contributions from Ibn Khaldun for the study of peacemaking and sociopolitical stability. Peaceful dialogue relation then, according to Ibn Khaldun, can draw interfaith people to come together through morality.

Ibn Khaldun begins *Muqaddimah* by narrating Arab history, stating that Arab tribes chose some cities around the Fertile Crescent as dwelling places “for the comfort of companionship and satisfaction of their needs,” as well as to be able to protect themselves in a community surrounded by walls (Ibn Khaldun 42). In order for Arab tribes to ensure their social stability they attempted to secure their freedom through their moral communication relation with others. Shared moral ground in Arab tribal values enhanced moral group feeling and justice, resulting in a sense of peaceful unity based on equality between the members.

Ibn Khaldun points out that human social organization determine that “Man is ‘political’ by nature” (Ibn Khaldun 45). For Ibn Khaldun this means that humans are social animals who cannot live without social communication and organization. According to Ibn Khaldun humans have the need to live in social groups and communicate morally in order to fulfill their basic needs and live in peace. They need to cooperate with others to satisfy their basic needs as well as defend themselves and their resources from any aggressive assault (Ibn Khaldun 45). Aggressiveness as Ibn Khaldun views it is naturally existent in all living beings to defend themselves from dangerous situations; therefore, God gives humans the ability to use their minds to communicate and choose how to respond to aggressive situations. Humans are rational beings so they should use their minds and moral souls to analyze a hazardous situation before taking action. It is therefore “absolutely necessary for man to have the cooperation of [and to communicate with] his fellow men” (Ibn Khaldun 46), because when mutual communication exists, humans can have food and security, and thereby survive and live in a peaceful community.

*Leadership in Human Social Organization*

Ibn Khaldun agrees with the idea that the mission of all humans is to spread peace through communication. In this sense, social organization is presumed to be a means for peace, security and satisfaction of all human spiritual, intellectual, and physical needs. As mentioned earlier, people need a restrictive influence on them to prevent them from becoming violent and unfair towards each other (Ibn Khaldun 47). Therefore, there should be a person who is able to direct and protect them from attacking each other. This person should have a character of high morality, or “royal authority” as Ibn Khaldun calls it, which typically exists as a natural characteristic and gives the person the capacity to communicate and administer their community to gain peaceful coexistence (Ibn Khaldun 47).

The person who has the necessary moral character to administer and communicate is called the mediator or leader of the social organization in Ibn Khaldun’s view. His job is to protect people’s rights and make sure no one exploits others. It is not enough for this leader to be powerful; he should enhance a communal group feeling in the society through communication, which will make people sense his royal authority and appreciate his leadership. Royal authority also requires superior morality. Each leader should exhibit morality by treating his people with respect. Immorality in communication, represented by subjugating people and hoarding resources for the leader’s own use, will negatively affect the group feeling and strength of a community. A dominating, prejudiced authority that does not respect its citizens is doomed to fail, especially in nomad tribes, whose people do not like someone controlling their freedom. Moral character is therefore necessary for communication as it does reflect in the social group feeling of unifying solidarity, which is compulsory for successful social organization (Ibn Khaldun 107-108).

 Some religious philosophers, as presented by Ibn Khaldun, anticipate that the political leader with the capacity to create a united social organization will be a prophet, because in that sense God is communicating with people. According to Ibn Khaldun, God is the perfect moral entity. God knows what will restrain people and satisfy all their needs. However, Ibn Khaldun’s doe not see the leadership is limited to prophethood, he acknowledges that there have been periods in history where there were no prophets, but people were still successfully led morally and communicated peacefully. The influence of the mediator to him is different than that of a religious prophet, with the revelations of the law of ordinances revealed to him by the prophet in communication with God. Both leaders, the mediator and the prophet, should communicate with people through morality in order to do their job and take care of others. Prophets influence human life by nourishing their souls with spirituality and morality, while mediators administer people’s material life in order to prevent them from becoming violent. This administration can only be successful through morality. Mediators, or political leaders, existed long before and after the coming of the prophets in history, and if prophets were the core of the stability of all social organizations, civilization would never have continued to exist and communicate (Ibn Khaldun 47).

 Ibn Khaldun views successful leadership communication in any human social organization to be moral and/or spiritual. The spiritual form of communication is Prophethood, which he views as being offered by God only at certain times according to His grace and wisdom way of communication with all His worshippers. Ibn Khaldun believes that God has chosen certain individuals at certain times in history and honoured each one of them by communicating sometimes directly with him in order to make him a prophet. This prophet is thus a direct link of communication between God and His servants (Ibn Khaldun 48). Ibn Khaldun views the purpose of the prophet as providing spiritual nourishment and morality to human souls in order to enable them to reflect upon themselves and their surroundings, and to increase positive communication and a critical view of the world. The teachings of the prophets reflect God’s communication of light and wisdom, which eventually makes people communicate better morally and spiritually and encourages them to strive together for peace and unity.

When people communicate with God by reflecting God’s light in their souls, it will moves their intellect to find ways to be more moral and peaceful in their communication with others (Ibn Khaldun 77-78). Social organization in that context enables people to communicate, because communication can be stronger if it comes from the spiritual feeling from people’s souls. The intention to reflect God’s light can make people more committed to their moral values and create a sense of togetherness. Ibn Khaldun considers Prophet Muhammad to be the spiritual moral example of leadership communication, and the Righteous Muslim leaders after him. Through moral religious communication these leaders were able to fulfill the needs of each individual as well as the community as a whole, which influenced people’s souls and made them loyal and united in their community.

Ibn Khaldun explains how the people during the Prophet Muhammad’s time experienced a sense of security because the Prophet’s religious moral communication touched their souls and influenced them from within. Prophet Muhammad, as all the other Abrahamic prophets in Ibn Khaldun’s view, were chosen by God to deliver His message of mercy to all humankind. Prophets were never immoral in their communication with people, they never demanded that people give them a title of president or king, and they never wanted people to privilege them. Religious communication is rooted in true morals and faith and people followed prophets who were famous for their moral character. This inspired them to practice their own good moral communication and they subsequently lived together peacefully (Ibn Khaldun 96).

Religious morality complemented the Arab tribes’ high standard of moral culture communication, which made them acquire religious solidarity and concentrate all their strength in order to make truth prevail. They became fully united and gave authority to the religious moral authority, whether to the prophet himself or to the religious moral leaders after him, because of the leader’s moral character and way of communication. The Arab tribes accepted religious truth and moral guidance because it touched their free souls, which were open due to their free life in deserts. The nomad Arab souls were never distorted by slave-like obedience to empires or kings, which may impress humiliation and weakness upon the souls of their subjects. The nomad tribes appreciated their freedom and dignity more than living a life full of humiliations. These tribes liked to be led kindly and not be antagonized by someone trying to dominate them (Ibn Khaldun 118-20). Ibn Khaldun therefore believed that religious communication strengthened the Arab tribes’ moral souls. He relates strong social ties to the ability of religious spiritual communication to move people’s souls and unite them under prophethood, noting that prophets never forced communities to adopt a religious stance as is usually the case in other immoral communication in the form of political tyrants.

Ibn Khaldun gives other examples of Arab Islamic dynasties to illustrate how religious communication transforms human nature. He declares that Islamic moral ordinances are cemented for the good of civilization. Righteous Caliphates took over leadership after the death of the Prophet and followed the religious moral communication forms by displaying merciful moral character. Ibn Khaldun recognizes that God put both good and evil in human nature, but argues that evil is closer to humans when they fail to use religious moral communication to improve their souls, and it is the evil qualities of humans that make them aggressive and unjust in their communications (105). Ibn Khaldun believes that immoral communication makes peaceful resolution impossible between people. On the other hand, Ibn Khaldun says that religious moral communication can guide the souls by the connection and love of God to not commit evil work and violence.

*Solidarity and Group Feelings*

Ibn Khaldun explains that the greedy concern to maintain a life of luxury can change the communication relation between the members of a community from good to evil. Because the goal of communication will prioritize self-interests rather than the welfare for the whole community, this could lead to unjust communication based on inequality and power differences which will weaken the solidarity the group feeling of the community. This happens especially when the leader communicates with people in an immoral subservient form and uses group loyalty to serve the various material luxury interests of the ruling class instead of the community social welfare (Ibn Khaldun 115). This has happened, as narrated by Ibn Khaldun, when Arab leaders of some Islamic dynasties neglected their religious morality and forgot the important characteristics of leadership. Their authority no longer had the capacity to lead the community and thus the community lacked the spiritual group moral feeling that once was the grounding for unity.

Ibn Khaldun gives the example of some dynasties when the people and their leaders forgot their religious morality and no longer had connection to each other. Then they had no reason to follow the leaders, who cared less about unity through religion and more about immoral communication to further the leaders own luxury and gains (Ibn Khaldun 121-22). As Ibn Khaldun states, “Only by God’s help in establishing his religion do individual desires come together in agreement to press their claims, and hearts become united” (Ibn Khaldun 125). The secret is that when hearts are turned to the truth and reject the luxuries of the material world, people become one and the envy and jealousy that accompany material concerns disappear and mutual communication and support flourish (Ibn Khaldun 126).

Besides moral group feeling and solidarity, the success of dynasties and communities depend also on the number of supporters (Ibn Khaldun 130). Ibn Khaldun came up with this idea through his observation of the rise and fall of Arab Muslim dynasties. During the rise of the dynasties a huge number of supporters guaranteed their stability. The dynasty begins decline when there was less support for it. Ibn Khaldun argues that people will revolt against their leaders if their leaders fail to carry on the religious moral communication, or impose unjust evil practices on them. Under such circumstances religious and moral people will either leave the dynasty or will call for change and the prohibition of evil practices. In the evolution of such a situation some people will use their ability to communicate to deliver eloquent speeches to draw masses to them and gain mass support. Ibn Khaldun said “if someone merely pretends to (achieve religious reforms) in order to gain (political) leadership, he deserves to be hampered by obstacles and to fall victim to perdition” (Ibn Khaldun 127). This means that these immoral leaders who use communication to win the heart of the masses by claiming religious reforms will eventually lose their followers. This is because the followers want experience a genuine group feeling. A real religious moral reformer will be supported by people. They will sense the honesty of the reformer and then support him for his moral character and genuine communication. Genuine communication comes through religious spiritual and moral group feeling, which unite the community and enhance its ability to establish peaceful cooperative relationships between its members.

Ibn Khaldun’s political theory describes luxury greedy goals as the result of the transformation in human social environment from nomad to civilization, noting its effect on human behaviors and habits. Ibn Khaldun identifies the effect in the case of Arabs and Berbers transitioning from their nomadic life to a more sophisticated civilized life. He lays the groundwork of his theory by discussing the life of tribal peoples and their great respect for royal authority and group feeling. In the midst of the hardships of life in the middle of deserts, this was the means for the survival of Arabs’ tribes. People had to stay loyal to their group feeling and communicate with each other in order to satisfy their human needs. Even when those tribes moved to the cities and enjoyed the relaxed luxuries of sedentary life, they continued to communicate and embrace their solidarity to find their way in the civilized and complex life of the city. However, group feeling took different forms and gradually changed throughout Islamic history.

When tribes first converted to Islam, they modified their group feeling to serve the religious cause, because religious laws moved them from inside. Through Ibn Khaldun’s analysis of the history of Islamic political powers, he captures the transformation of group feeling from its purely religious moral cause in the first Muslim community, which was made up of these different tribes during the Prophet’s first community in Medina. More tribes supported the Prophet at the end of his life and the Islamic dynasties during the Caliphate’s time through religious group feeling. The number of supporters is an important element that brought success and stability to the Islamic dynasty; however, the gradual change of the group feeling from religious and moral to a focus on tribal lineage led to immorality in the later years of dynasties. This lack of morality and spirituality brought failure and division throughout the Islamic dynasties.

*The Four Generations Theory*

Ibn Khaldun’s interpretation of the reason for this change is based on his four generations theory, which proposes that the life of a dynasty does not extend more than 100-120 years. The first generation chooses its leader based on the ideal characteristics of a leader. The first leader therefore deserves to have royal authority because he possesses the moral character, perhaps religious, to administer and unite the community under a mutual group feeling. In the second generation, the leader inherits the royal authority because he is a member of the first leader’s family, and the attitude of the leader and people becomes more focused on luxuries. They are too lazy to strive to retain their previous glory of group unity because they have become less spiritual or moral and do not know what it takes to become united, although they live under the illusion that they have what it takes to be a strong nation again (Ibn Khaldun 137).

The third generation grows even further apart from religion or morality. Their sense of unity is lost because their group feeling has long since disappeared. At this point, people are led by force and made subservient to their leader, even more than in the second phase. The leaders in the second and third phase take royal authority for granted without knowing the required morality and religion for the leadership position, so they fail to lead, and people become divided under their rule. The fourth generation will have a destroyed sense of prestige for moral or spiritual communal group feeling (Ibn Khaldun 138). By that time people will naturally start again to establish a new social organization that they hope to be better than the previous rulers of the declined dynasty. This search for a new dynasty might result in group bias or fragmentation, which is evident in the Islamic history of dynasties whether based on kin, religious group, or strong political power.

 It is important then to take into account Ibn Khaldun’s description of the four generation lifespan of a dynasty. He remarks that after the Prophet’s first generation in the form of the small Muslim community in Medina followed by the Righteous Caliphates, the Arab tribes were attracted to an easy life and pursued tranquility, but those things were still not more important to them than the religion that brought them together. The moment they forgot their religion during the second generation, some went back to the desert while the rest remained in the city, divided and fighting for political power (Rabi 48). Ibn Khaldun’s idea of religion uniting nations leans towards communication and spiritual reform as the way to achieve sociopolitical harmony and unity through the bond of religious moral group feeling.

*The Kinds of Solidarity*

Ibn Khaldun’s reading of Islamic theology and history is that group feelings can be either good and justifiable or bad and unjustifiable. He says that solidarity is good if “it is expressed in support of legitimate worldly or religious reason” (Rabi 68). In this way Ibn Khaldun hints towards another type of solidarity that is negative and views it through the Prophet’s request to people to avoid bad and immoral solidarity. The Prophet wanted people to be united through spiritual moral group feeling or solidarity, but reject the tribal linage division that prevent cooperation and provoke violence and divide the community into groups against each other more than uniting them together (Rabi 68).

Throughout history, the division on the name of tribal solidarity existed within Islamic society because it favored superior tribal or sect development over the success of the whole Muslim community. According to Ibn Khaldun, there are different types of solidarity, one of which is moral solidarity that had a religious force and brought peace and wealth to Muslim dynasties, because they treated their neighbors with respect and shared their resources not only among the Muslims but with all who inhabited the Islamic dynasty. The second and immoral solidarity is tribal division for political gains that does not have equal moral standards as the religious solidarity. Ibn Khaldun relates it to the second generation of the Arab Muslim dynasties that concentrated wealth among the ruling family and their alliances. The political solidarity here lacked equality between all the members of the community. After people chose their first leader based on his moral religious character, leadership became inherited through the initial leader’s branch of relatives (Ibn Khaldun 101). Therefore, justice and morality were not necessarily common in the rest of the density rule. The leaders who inherited their authorities as if it was their right, they were not the right people for the leading position and responsibility.

Lastly, Ibn Khaldun describes how solidarity existed in the form of Islamic kingship, noting that it became more of a secular rule which lost some of its religious moral values. This is an example of his four generation theory of the gradual change of solidarity from moral to immoral, which is the reason for the decline of Islamic dynasties of the Arab tribes (Rabi 9). The gradual change in religious influence was due to the fact that Muslims as well as other religious groups do not always follow their religious law precisely. Humans are frequently challenged between moral and immoral communications. According to Ibn Khaldun, people will not have group feelings unless they experience moral communications (Rabi 9). The reason Ibn Khaldun appreciates religious and moral solidarity is because group feeling is a means for peaceful communication. Moral communication has strong ability to unite people, and the strength of this tie will determine the possibility of peace in the community.

*The Shifting point in Solidarity in Islamic history*

The Umayyad Caliphate provides an example of what happens when religious solidarity is replaced with political solidarity. When the Umayyad Caliphate mixed their religious solidarity with kingship, it gradually became a political and unjust form of solidarity. The kingship replaced the Caliphate, and for this reason Ibn Khaldun views kingship as a secular system. The decline of Arab Muslim power started with the first Muslim *Fitna* (civil war). This event marked the beginning of the second generation. The *Fitna* led to changes in the kind of group feeling that was used by the ruling system. The leader Muawiya of Umayyad used religious group feeling to reach out to Muslim people’s hearts and unite them under his rule and the rule of Umayyad family. He became Caliph following his involvement in the civil war. He won the hearts of Arab tribes through bravery and group feeling. However, Muslim loyalty to the dynasty was shifted to some extent form religious per say, to mixed feelings of religious, morality and tribalism relations and loyalties. This later weakened unity because the equality and justice for all that once was the key to the dynasty’s strength was lacking. Ibn Khaldun attributes this to kingship system that lacked equality for all its people (Rabi 69).

As a result of weak unity Muslims were divided into groups based on family-oriented kingship. Each group claimed it was formed through religious solidarity. However, that was not the case as it brought fragmentation instead of unity in the larger community (Rabi 16-17). Muslim leaders became more political than spiritual, and the political solidarity shifted itself to a new military force to protect the heredity the kingship and maintain its strength (Rabi 163). Political luxury and power, as well as heredity, made Muslims lose their group feeling. Ibn Khaldun argues that this is ultimately the reason that brought the Islamic dynasties to their end (Rabi 166).

Based on Ibn Khaldun’s *Muqaddimah*, it is clear that he believes spiritual and moral ties underpin a feeling of solidarity that is stronger than family or blood relations (Rabi 50). Spirituality and morality play an important role in unifying people. They are more significant than tribal solidarity alone because they eliminate enmities. According to Ibn Khaldun, religion gives people common insight and purpose for their mutual affairs. His rationale behind this belief is the powerful potential of human unification for God’s sake and their ability to control their evil desires. However, there is a slide from spiritual solidarity into a focus on political goals which brought division and weakness to group feeling, just as happened in the Arab dynasties. In other words, immoral solidarity shifts human communication from spiritual goals and a selfless attitude towards others to a more materialistic and self-centered form of communication. Immoral solidarity is based on the self-centered attitude that changed the system of Islamic dynasties. This resulted in the decline of communal and unifying group feeling within the Muslim community (Rabi 57).

Unifying group feeling to Ibn Khaldun is not the sense which creates a superior attitude between people that makes them politically aggressive and divides them on the basis of attempted uniformity. Ibn Khaldun defines the unifying group feeling of solidarity as rooted in the good part of humans. He makes moral values the ultimate goal of political and social unity and the solution for tensions. Ibn Khaldun says that the social organizations before the prophethood were moral, enjoying peaceful relationships and unity. In this sense Ibn Khaldun seems to acknowledge good morality for communication whether religious or non-religious, as long it brings kindness and justice between the people of the community and does not oppress anyone (Ibn Khaldun 95). A tyrant leader will leave behind him broken souls and destroyed personalities. A tyrant obliges people to adapt to humiliation and a slavery status that does not allow the motivation to be morally right or to seek a sense of togetherness with others. People who are oppressed in this way will be greedy and pursue only pleasures for themselves. Oppression awakens the evil that lies within humans and paves the way for immoral solidarity.

The Arab tribal social organizations were strong in their social ties and unified by the compassion of morality and blood relations. Family ties are honored in Arab tribal culture, and this compassion arises in the form of group feeling or solidarity that leads to a strong family or group moral unity (Ibn Khaldun 98). This feeling can even extend to other people outside the social group or state community for spiritual or other reasons, and can become more important than blood ties alone (Ibn Khaldun 104). Group feeling is initiated by superiority of the dynasty or social community, which reflects love and respect for the moral character of its leader. The leader has to be the bravest and strongest among his community and have a royal authority that makes his orders readily obeyed and followed by the group. Ibn Khaldun further argues that humility and respect for people’s feelings are the characteristics that make a leader most loved and obeyed, not the ability to subjugate his people (Ibn Khaldun 106). Other good qualities of leadership Ibn Khaldun suggests are: generous, forgiving of error, tolerant toward the weak, hospitable toward guests, supportive of dependents, the indigent, and people in adverse circumstances, faithful to fulfilling all his obligations, committed to the preservation of honour, humble towards all, attentive to the complaints of supplicants, able to lead everyone to the appropriate way of life, and wary of fraud, cunning, deceit, the shirking of obligations, and other evil things that would work to divide people who were previously unified (Ibn Khaldun 112). A person with these qualities is the appropriate person to be a leader as they have the capacity to create strong solidarity within the community.

Ibn Khaldun adds that some tribes tended to join dynasties not for the love of morality or respect for blood relations, but because they were primarily attracted to prosperity and wanted to lead an easy life. They lived where resources were provided to them, and whether they were provided to them with respect or humility, they had no problem living in the shadow of the ruling dynasty and adopting a position of subjugation. This occasionally resulted in group feeling growing weak because people were more concerned with prosperity and no longer cared about the respect or morality of the group feeling. Ibn Khaldun therefore views this kind of relation as based on interest in material luxury, which prioritizes material gains over moral social solidarity. Concern for luxury to Ibn Khaldun is the reason for the decline of social group solidarity because luxury makes people care mostly for themselves and reduces the unity of group solidarity. In this context the group feeling that once united the social group and formed the dynasty is no longer able to protect the dynasty’s stability (Ibn Khaldun 109). Without group feeling in a dynasty, everyone chases after luxury for his own self-satisfaction. Equality disappears and people start attacking each other in order to gain power and survive. Ibn Khaldun refers to this as the “evil animal:” People allow the evil inside them to control their feelings and actions (Ibn Khaldun 123). Once a social organization loses its group feeling, people will not be able to unite because the royal authority will not be effective in preventing the people in the community from committing evil works.

Ibn Khaldun suggests emphasizing good qualities in a community rather than bad ones, because the evil power inside humans is only a small part of human nature; the biggest part is inclined toward good qualities. Ibn Khaldun states that royal and political authorities are those who are inclined to the good human part and not the evil part. The good qualities in humans, such as cooperation, are appropriate to royal authority (Ibn Khaldun 111). Ibn Khaldun’s work argues that the goal of social solidarity is group power to achieve a better life. Social solidarity was necessary for the nomads who were struggling in conditions of hardship and it is still important for any social organization seeking stability (Rabi 52). Ibn Khaldun saw nomads as close to nature and more spiritual because they had free choice and soul, in contrast to the luxurious life of civilization that opened the door for the aggressive behaviors that spoiled people’s good nature and hard work (Rabi 56). The transition from nomadic life to civilized life limited solidarity to a political arena driven by the monarchal system, and the tribal system evolved into a kingship system (Rabi 53).

According to Ibn Khaldun, kingship is a secular political system based on heredity. This does not mean a disregard for people’s drive to be united as a family. Ibn Khaldun accepts tribal political solidarity as long as it does not divide the community. In other words, he accepts tribal solidarity when it is moral, but when the moral condition is not fulfilled then political solidarity alone cannot save dynasties from failure. Solidarity or group feeling based on the desire for unity is crucial to political strength, though not in the sense of racism. The aspiration for leadership leads to unity, but racism or discrimination should not become its driving force. Solidarity should not be translated into racism. Racism is evil and can turn people against each other (Rabi 59-60).

Ibn Khaldun describes three phases in the decline of solidarity: the first phase is dynamism and militancy, or an expansion of the superiority of tribal solidarity. The second phase occurs when political leaders start to monopolize the benefits of political power and the most powerful leader becomes monarch and develops a character of selfishness (kingship political solidarity). Finally, the third phase is the decline of solidarity which ultimately makes the monarch incapable of practicing his political influence, and he becomes a burden to the state (Rabi 64). Ibn Khaldun thus describes the destruction of solidarity as occurring through the monarch’s monopoly on power and misuse of luxury (Rabi 66). Kingship is based on political solidarity focused around the ruling family and can become more important to people than any moral values; people tend to ignore good morals in favor of family loyalties (Rabi 49). In order to avoid such consequences and to maintain political development and stability, kings and state leaders should have a fundamental moral standard, realize the limits of their power, and have mutual understanding with their people (Rabi 158).

*Conclusion*

Although Buber and Ibn Khaldun lived in different times and had different religious backgrounds, they both suggested that religion has been a source of morality and unity throughout history. They noticed that people were attracted to materialistic and political gains and that consequently they lacked unity, morality, and spirituality, which explain why history is full of tension and wars, motivated and incited by human political desire. Ibn Khaldun’s work emphasizes the influence of spiritual moral group feeling as a basis for peaceful community. His sociopolitical findings and readings of history from an early point are valuable for the study of society and politics today.

In his book *The Political Theory of Ibn Khaldun* Muhammad Rabi states that Ibn Khaldun has been nominated by scholars as the father of modern political science (2). Ibn Khaldun was a critical historian who narrated events and analyzed their causes. His work demonstrates his concern with how changing conditions affect human affairs and a commitment to finding an explanatory framework that explains origins and causes of events. In that sense, Ibn Khaldun’s historical method is rooted in philosophy similar to that of Buber and of Augustine, as will be discussed below. Ibn Khaldun’s work shares a perspective with Buber and Augustine in that he views human history as a mix between good and evil, with evil holding falsehood. Ibn Khaldun declares that it takes critical insight to find truth. Critical insight is the way to make good use of historical facts (Ibn Khaldun 5-9). Acknowledging the commonality between Ibn Khaldun’s political theories and Buber’s dialogue theory is one step to opening the door to interfaith dialogue and to sociopolitical peace and harmony.

Ibn Khaldun’s work conveys a of set guidelines focusing on aspects of the human ability to coexist by means of moral souls and rational minds, together with just influence, such as in the form of state law. Understanding the human nature of others allows people to find solutions for their political and social conflicts. This is because humans are political beings and, through communication, they can be cooperative in creating laws that support community, rather than using law as an instrument of oppression and control. Thus learning about human nature and habits opens the way to know how to cooperate, to live in peaceful harmony, and to build civilization. Both Buber and Ibn Khaldun articulate the political and religious value of morality and unity. They emphasize the importance of moral value for their respective religions as well as for political stability in general. They both respect the value of human dignity and equality, and appreciate the good in all people. They understand the human moral capacity to unite people and thereby strengthen communities.

Ibn Khaldun’s focused on exploring reasons for the tensions and instabilities within the Islamic dynasties. He noted Arab tribal group tension and the wide range of ethnic and religious diversity in the community of the Islamic dynasty. Ibn Khaldun mentions that people were treated equally and their freedom was guaranteed. Yet his work offers insight into the importance of communication across any society today and the value of morality as a precondition to peace communications. A limitation of Ibn Khaldun’s theory lays in his focus on Arab tribal tensions which affected the majority of society. Thus he did not relate his theory to minorities, as did Buber and Augustine. Ibn Khaldun did not focus on tensions between faiths under the Islamic dynasties up to and including the fourteenth century as diverse peoples lived and had lived peacefully in different places and different eras under Islamic rule. The context was different for Augustine in the forth century and Buber in the twentieth. Ibn Khaldun four generation theory might be argued as not applicable in todays world as there is dynasties lasted less or more than 100 years. Overall, his point was to outline the fact that human are naturally challenged between good and evil, peace and violence actions that should be tacking to consideration in order to solve conflict from its root cause and come to a cooperative mutual communication.

**Chapter Five**

**Augustine and the City of God**

Augustine’s contribution to peace communication arises from his biblical understanding of the notion of the City of God. Augustine’s development of the idea of the City of God is one of the foremost theories of religion. It provides an early vision of peaceful community. Augustine elaborates a moral religious value of community that can be viewed today as an important element for communication. The concepts of humanity and shared world highlighted in Habermas’ phenomenological approach to communication were introduced centuries ago in a religious context through Augustine’s view of a shared world and humanity that brought together all good people in a metaphorical City of God.

Augustine is an influential Christian thinker who articulated his peace theory during an epoch of sociopolitical tension. He was born pagan in November 354, but later in his life converted to Christianity and became the Bishop of Hippo. This transition between religions influenced Augustine to have a somewhat broad view of religion. He lived in Africa under Roman rule where he communicated with diverse people across cultures and religions. As a result of his experience of diversity, Augustine cherished the goodness in all humans and recognized the ability of good people to live together peacefully through their moral values. He learned about the 410 CE attack on the city of Rome from the Christian Marcellinus. In a letter to Augustine, Marcellinus described the Goth’s horrific assault on the city and the charges that the Roman pagans imposed on the Roman Christians, blaming them for the loss of the city (Bourke, Forward, 8). At the time of the attack Rome’s ideology was dominated by multiple deities and pagan cults; thus, Roman society was divided between pagans and Christians, and the tension between them was elevated during and after the Gothic invasion (Bourke, Forward, 8).

This Gothic invasion in 410 inspired Augustine to write his political peaceful communication theory in a series of books with the title *City of God*. In this text he addresses the Marcellinus letter, arguing that the prior greatness of Rome was not due to its domination by the pagan republic. He supports his argument by stating that, hypothetically, if pagan deities were responsible for giving greatness to the Romans they would have saved the pagans and granted them victory against their enemies. Clearly that did not happen, because pagans rule ended in 476 CE.

In Augustine’s view, the greatness of the community is based on the good will of its people. Rome could be even better if it was based on justice as a moral and cognitive value through the love of a single God rather than on multiple pagan deities and selfish material values. Augustine explained his vision of peace based on the biblical understanding of the City of God which is antithetical to the evil city focused on material wealth. The City of God is based on the love of God and religious morality, which can be articulated as a way to communicate peace across religious diverse communities.

*The meaning of the City of God*

The vision of peace, or the City of God, is Jerusalem as Augustine metaphorically stated (Bourke, *Essential Augustine* 205). Although Augustine’s text does not provide much detail regarding how a metaphorical city of God could be pursued on Earth, it does provide valuable insight into how to communicate and live on earth peacefully. Augustine’s City of God, as presented in this chapter, outlines a political and social theory that offers examples of how to gain earthly peace communication today on national and international levels (Bourke, Foreword, 10). Religious morality according to Augustine is the code for peacemaking. This chapter will examine Augustine’s work to determine what is useful for a peace communication theory today.

*Morality between Love and Justice*

Plato and Aristotle, who are Augustine’s interlocutors in the *City of God*, suggest that the only way to harmony is through both justice and love as equal elements within society. Morality in Augustine’s sense however, is different than the political-philosophical theory of Plato’s and Aristotle’s works. Augustine places greater importance on love than on justice for societal communication. This is because justice in its general understanding is not enough. Justice can only provide a satisfactory basis for society if it is produced through faith or love, rather than being limited to a principle of civil relations. According to Augustine, justice should be rooted in human feelings, in order to communicate more effectively (Meynell and Parel 72). Augustine’s argument in response to the ideal human relationships proposed in Plato’s *Republic* is the fact that true justice to Augustine can only occur through the more important element of love because it encourages people to communicate sincerely.

This is where Augustine’s theological side comes in, because love to Augustine is God (Meynell and Parel 76). Communication through justice would not be enough if it was only a relation between humans without the light of faith. Augustine’s view of true justice shaped by love shows how divine wisdom implies individual moral and intellectual activity, and one can achieve true justice as a result of effective communication when people have their love in this order: Love of God, love of self, and love of others through God (Meynell and Parel 76). In this he means that love should be lit by faith so that it can constitute true justice to all humans through communication. Love between humans could not then be separated from the love of God. Augustine views the only way to true love is through human love of God. Love of God, in his opinion, improves human relations and communication with other humans and things around them.

Therefore, true justice as the main component for interfaith communication as Augustine describes it, can happen when the human soul follows God’s divine and loving rules. If humans have good will inside them they will not wish evil toward anyone. Humans will “do injury to no one. This will happen only if he gives to each his due” (qtd. in King 23). Augustine’s perspective of genuine virtue hint towards a successful way of human relation through divine light enhances peaceful dialogue. Perfect goodness to Augustine is true happiness, and it is possible only in the consistent contemplation of God. Worldly moral values cannot reach the highest moral form of divine good. Augustine comments that men are humans who have something divine present in them, posited by some Christian traditions. Humans ultimately love each other for the sake of God in order to enjoy communication with God and to gain peace, as indicated when Augustine says:

Just as you ought to take joy in yourself, not focusing on self but on Him who made you, so also is it in regard to the person that you love as you do yourself. Thus they may take joy both in ourselves and in our brethren, in relation to the Lord. (qtd. in Bourke, Forward, 98)

Therefore, love is the core of the metaphorical City of God and it is what constitutes communication on the basis of true justice and peaceful earthly life.

There is a minimal amount of justice that can appear in human relation, which Augustine acknowledges as coming from moral civil authorities, called positive political justice. Political positive justice tries as much as possible not to break any principles of justice in order to have successful community, but it seems to fail in Augustine’s sense to be equal to the religious divine true justice relation. This is because the civil political authority usually comprises the ‘Earthly City’ which tends to command more than to tack care of its people, often in the name of religion as was the case in Rome, in order to treat the people as subjects. Augustine observes in *the City of God* that humans can be a “perverse imitation of God,” inflated with pride and seeking to control people through unjust relationships (157). When there is no love for God in the soul of a person, there is no true justice in their human relation. Therefore, Augustine did not consider political justice as equal to religious true justice relation. Augustine in *the City of God* viewed religious justice as able to make a person just in his body and soul as well as just to others, which means, by Augustine’s account, that “that ancient creation [Rome] was never a republic, because in it true justice was never practiced” (75). Augustine considered Rome’s temporary glory as deriving from the desire to dominate fellow men in the name of liberty, but this glory gradually became an imperial republic of wars and conquests due to its immoral relation between people.

The picture that Augustine presents is closely related to imperial colonial powers. Augustine’s discussion of the similarity between Alexander’s conquest and pirate robbery clarifies the meaning of selfish political material power and gains that oppresses people and steals their right to freedom and dignity (Meynell and Parel 74). This oppressive political authority pretends to liberate its citizens by “persuaded the people, in the name of religion, to receive as true those things which they themselves knew to be false; in this way, as it were binding them up more firmly in civil society, so that they might in like manner possess them as subjects” (Augustine qtd. in Meynell and Parel 73). The love of God in Augustine’s perspective will encourage humans to be truly just in their relation with others.

*Religious Moral Communication: Peace and Universal Unity*

Augustine’s concept of morality is informed by Christian theology (Bourke, *Essential Augustine* 149). He takes a position that God’s commandments are not an end in themselves but that they are a path of wisdom. God needs nothing from humans. He commanded humans to do what is good for themselves (Bourke, *Joy* 87-91). For example, God commanded humans to love each other and “do no evil.” Augustine translated this as “harm no one, kill no person, do not steal, do not commit adultery, engage in no fraud, speak no false testimony” (Augustine qtd. in Bourke, *Joy* 104). In this sense Augustine reinforces the Ten Commandments as an ideal account of human ethical behaviour that can lead to positive communication.

 Augustine concludes his analytical findings by saying that all humans seek happiness because they are afraid to become unhappy (Bourke, *Essential Augustine* 151). There is no evil person by nature, only humans who do evil works. According to Augustine, humans should not hate others who commit evil works but instead should hate the evil works that have been done. Subsequently, if a person committed one of the prohibited acts of the Ten Commandments, the act should be hated but the person is still loved and should be given the opportunity to repent (Bourke, *Essential Augustine* 159). For example, people seek wealth because they want to be financially secured in order not to live in misery. This is rationally understandable, but in order to do that they might sometimes engage in unethical behaviours that harm others, such as theft. Theft is an unethical behaviour that represents people’s greedy blindness towards others. A similar act occurs when people take more than their actual need.

Augustine’s philosophical explanation of such negative behaviour is explained through his understanding of wealth or material gains as inferior goals of the human soul. The more humans seek such gains the more miserable they will be. In Augustine’s view people become wicked because they desire happiness in immoral way and it this immorality which makes them unhappy. This happens today when people within a community disregard the equal right of the other on the land and their respected humanity. Augustine views God’s authority as the perfection of happiness and as a superior entity to the human soul. In his view if humans want happiness they should seek God to make them better and moral in their souls and with others. In this way Augustine’s proposal for peace is a way to seek other for the love-like to God.

If humans accept the biblical account of souls as being created in God’s image, then according to Augustine humans will seek God to help them know themselves better. People’s love of God will lead them to love themselves and their neighbors, which is an important commandment that contributes to the issue of interfaith communication today. If people love their neighbors who love God, on behalf of his wife, children, household, and all within humans within reach, then all eventually love each other for God’s sake. This is a commandment that was first mentioned in the Old Testament and all the other Abrahamic faiths. Augustine views peace on earth as coming to fruition through moral communities that express love of oneself and one’s neighbour through God as the way one would like to be loved by others. If people start treating others as they wish to be treated, then peace and joy can thrive amongst humans. If humans look at other humans in the world as their neighbours, as suggested by the metaphorical City of God, then people will be able to live together and achieve a better life on earth. Morality as it is informed by Augustine’s religious belief is a universal notion of loving God, self, and neighbour. These can be the basic notions informing of interfaith dialogue today.

Peaceful unity of all humans is an important aspect of Augustine’s City of God which enhances sociopolitical community, because this type of love is informed by religious morality. Augustine declares that humans are able to unite together through their acceptance of the same supernatural truth and also in the love of the same supernatural good (Gilson 13). Augustine’s work is an insightful argument for peace. He defines peace as “the perfectly ordered and harmonious communion of those who find their joy in God and in one another in God” (qtd. in Bourke 10).

Augustine believes that the way to peace and happiness for humans is through sharing their ethics and spiritual goods. In addition, humans need to cooperate together to satisfy their material needs by taking only a little and letting others take some too (Bigongiari 347-349). This view of human realtion highlights the value of sharing the world with others in positive form of justice. When people do that, they will be at peace with all humans and will harm no one. Furthermore, people will not focus on the love of power or authority but on a sense of duty and responsibility to others because they share the world with them. By loving God and caring for neighbors, people will humble themselves to their fellowmen through love and mercy (Bourke, *Essential Augustine* 161).The moral love-like relation with other can contribute to peace dialogue relation today.

Augustine further describes his vision of peace in the unity of mankind, proposing that people should treat each other equally because of their universal shared humanity. His explanation of shared human history is religious in that it derives from biblical revelation and the narrative about Adam that explains the fact that all humans are derived from him (Gilson 30). Spiritual narratives are used by Augustine in order to support his ideal vision of peaceful living. Augustine uses scriptures about Adam to illustrate God’s desire for humans to be bound together in harmony and peace by the ties of their common origins (Bourke, *Essential Augustine* 200).

Augustine as a theologian of history understood from religious narratives and biblical accounts that humans seek unity in their common humanity and relation to Adam, yet he doesn’t recommend a Christian basis for this unity and peace in the world. He doesn’t even discuss an ideal universal as exclusively Christian; however, some people view his vision in such a way (Gilson 32). Augustine’s work sheds light on the concept of common human unity and religious morality that can gather all mankind in a peaceful relation. The City of God might not exist physically in this life, yet it has metaphorical meaning that can inspire all humans to put an end to selfishness and aggressive behaviour. It is clear from the concept of the City of God that all humans can share the world and live together through peaceful realtion.

*The Grounding of Augustine’s Theory in Religious Value: The Kind of Love Determines the Kind of Communication*

The concept of the City of God is meant to enhance human relations and set an example for peaceful unity and communication between humans today with disregard to race or religion. Augustine’s writing mentions that people are primarily divided according to their love for God or love for the world (Gilson 25). He declared that people of good will are not necessarily Christians, but are diverse people from different times and parts of the world that share a love of the same God or of good. The distinguishing factor is that the City of God is based on good whether it is religion or morality. Augustine does not view it as a political organization with goals of power, but as a community built on peaceful love relationships arising from the inner character of religion or morality of the community members. Despite the great variation between people in different nations around the world, Augustine confirms that there are only two kinds of human societies or “cities” according to his interpretation of the scriptures.

Whenever humans reach what they truly love and wish for, whether heavenly moral conscience or earthly material power, they feel inner peace for what they found. The holy love focuses on common social welfare for the sake of heavenly society, which brings peace to the individual as well as to the community. While selfish material love seeks control of social affairs and does not consider human welfare as much, it brings satisfaction to the individual but does not reflect peace into the community. The society that loves God will enjoy a peaceful life together. This is because their citizens seek inner peace through their spirituality and desire for their neighbors what they desire for themselves as the commandments ask them to do. This can be possible outside of religion so long as a true love for one’s neighbour is sought. Augustine said the community that shares love and justice is a City of God (Bourke, *Essential Augustine* 201).

Augustine thus viewed the reason for pagan Rome’s decline as due to its concentration on earthly, material gains as opposed to heavenly or spiritual gains. These two kinds of gains are explained thoroughly in City of God. The 410 incident was the key event that led Augustine to write on the notion of the City of God, basing it on the biblical account of the two types of imaginary cities as described above, one more godly and one more devilish, so to speak. His idea was that the opposing heavenly and earthly goals influenced the kind of city that humans established. That is to say, concern and love for selfish material achievements will create the metaphorical City of the Devil, while concern and love for heavenly goals will create the metaphorical City of God. Significantly, however, the City of God is not necessarily filled merely with good men, and the good men of the City of God are not exclusively Christian (Gilson 13). Augustine acknowledges this in his writing, explaining that there are some bad Christians and there were also good men who existed before Christ, yet all belonged to God’s city so long as they were concerned with moral spiritual goals.

Hypothetically, the way Augustine presents the members of the two theoretical cities are everywhere on earth, intermingling throughout history and the course of time it is still not clear if he means literally or metaphorically. Augustine argues that humans naturally have the urge to come closer to God, but they are constantly being challenged to choose between earthly and heavenly goals and values. This is the human struggle on earth (Bourke, Forward, 9). All humans desire peace and happiness, according to Augustine, and those two ends can be pursued through either heavenly means or earthly means.

Augustine observes that earthly selfishness typically involves conflict between people’s interests, and the strong person usually overcomes the weak one (Paolucci xii). This is evident in today’s reality in which powerful people manipulate the weak through their eloquent speeches, as Craig also describes in his outline of rhetorical communication theory. This selfish attitude is characteristic of the metaphorical City of Devil but not of the City of God. Augustine argues that the love of God produces a peaceful, moral city, while the love of earthly power drives humans to become aggressive and to pursue happiness through means that lead to unhappiness, which ultimately leaves them with an unsatisfied self and soul. Whether Augustine meant this literally or metaphorically, it is important to note that in both ways he saw that people who do good works can be united. Thus positive communication today can enhance goodness not by specific religion or world view but through a moral, good, humanitarian character.

*The biblical terms Jerusalem and Babylon*

In biblical terms Jerusalem is the metaphorical City of God and Babylon is the City of the Devil. Babylon is understood as “confusion,” and Jerusalem is understood as a “vision of peace and hope for liberty” (Bourke, *Essential Augustine* 205). Peace is, as Augustine presents it, combined with love. The earthly city which is formed by the love of self even to the contempt of God is Babylon, where “the prince and the nation [. . .] are ruled by the love of ruling” (Bourke, *Essential Augustine* 202). The heavenly city, which is established by the love of God, can only happen in Jerusalem, where “the prince and the subjects serve one another in love” (Bourke, *Essential Augustine* 202).

According to the Augustinian development of the term Babylon, people who do not live by faith today will eventually seek happiness in an earthly or material way of communication. This is a form of obedience to the satisfaction of their needs, it is not freedom. Babylon fails because of its selfish character that only cares for one’s own gains but not for one's group or community as a whole. On the other hand, Augustine views Jerusalem as the land where one lives by faith and works toward peace by sharing the earth’s material goods, living with others in harmony (Bourke, *Essential Augustine* 203). In biblical terms, Jerusalem is the bringer of earthly peace through a perfectly harmonious relation with God and with one another in God. In that city heavenly peace can be possessed by faith and peace on Earth (Bourke, *Essential Augustine* 204). In both cities no matter how different and diverse they are the inhabitants tend to hope to gain earthly peace and they desire to maintain a common agreement among humans. The City of God is meant to be for God’s worshippers as scattered across the world. “God's worshippers” could refer to anyone who worships God and who is morally good (Bourke, Foreword 10).

Augustine asked his fellow Christians not to concern themselves with politics (Bourke, *Essential Augustine* 216). The simplest understanding of Augustine’s peace work as articulated in his *City of God* would not countenance violence or unjust behaviour because it deals with compromising human lives and integrity, contradicting universality and equality in goodness. Followers of all Abrahamic faiths have long believed in communication as a means to gain justice. Tension and war as well as peace and coexistence are a common reality between faith groups, especially in the last decades. Competition and a superior attitude between religious groups who believe that their group is better than the others is a central reason for tension between followers of Abrahamic religions. Communication can bring peace to interfaith groups if each group treats the other as an equal partner, rather than viewing one’s own group as the “chosen people” and therefore others are inferior. Before God all humans are one. It is therefore important for people to recognize today that Augustine did not wish his peace vision to be exclusive to Christians or to any other religious group. Augustine seems to have envisioned City of God as the land that brings all God’s worshippers together as equal partners on the land. He emphasizes the importance of people caring about each other and not being selfish in their relationships.

By the year 413 pagans in the city of Rome were overwhelmed by the assault and blamed the destruction of their city on the Christians, cursing the Christian God with more bitterness than usual. Because of this conflict, Augustine concentrated his work from that point on against the pagans’ blasphemy and error (Gilson 20). He turned his discourse from a universal religious perspective to a more narrow focus that excluded the pagans. Through his predestination ideology he began to claim that pagans did not have God’s grace because they desired power, wealth, and pleasure, and he stated that they were the ones who called for a so-called Devil state with only earthly goals. The pagan Roman city lacked unity and equality between their citizens because they do not have love of God in their souls. Augustine’s important discussions of unity, peace and equality throughout his work may be useful today in terms of changing the unjust political communication and seek moral dialogue to minimize tension between religious groups.

Augustine associated immorality closely with the pagan political order. He had higher expectations for religious moral ability to create peaceful communities due to the love of God. For that reason, Augustine declared Christians should show mercy to others in order to have God’s mercy. Thus, even when Augustine became particularly spiteful toward the pagans for their earthly system and injustice toward Christians, he did not encourage Christians to violate pagans or seek a Christian holy state in Rome. In his interpretation of Christ’s act of sacrificing his life on the cross, Augustine warned his fellow Christians not to limit the Christian community to the city of Rome or to any religious or worldly values, because such goals he viewed as more earthly than heavenly.

*Augustine’s Contribution to Communication Theory*

Augustine ultimately suggests that Christians should try to cooperate with others and not get involved in political greed. Christians should endeavour to help others overcome violence and treat humans with respect for their diversity in laws, manners, and institutions in order to secure peace on earth (Paolucci xix). Seeking to communicate with other humans will help Christians fulfil their mission to create the peace vision expressed in the metaphorical City of God. Augustine introduced the idea of universal religion and saw the good in all believers, even the ones who did not follow the way of Christ. This indicates that Augustine was not an exclusivist, but an inclusivist for most of his life. He did become very explicit in excluding pagans, but it is important for scholars today to recognize that the exclusivist position was not Augustine’s most prominent position it was rather a response to the pagan’s error.

In most of his work Augustine puts peace and love as priorities over violence and hate. He celebrates tolerance and equality between mankind, which is needed today in order to resolve the current interfaith tensions. Many of these ideas Augustine expresses through his theory of earthly versus heavenly goals and, as mentioned, he directs his fellow Christians not to preoccupy themselves with earthly political gains since this kind of gain tends to cause violence between groups and divorce people from morality.

Augustine provides a general orientation that can be interpreted as a way for interfaith people to communicate today. However, he did not state clearly how interfaith people can communicate; he only said moral relationships in the form justice arise from love of God. He did not set out a clear structure for interfaith dialogue. His reaction to the pagan error towards Christians did not resolve the tension between them. Augustine had responded to their blame with blame. According to his own theory, morality and avoiding reacting to immoral political claims is the recommended management of the situation because it is the imitation of Jesus. Jesus sacrifices himself to avoid political immoral blames. The theory set guidelines for peaceful moral communication through the love of God and others, but it does not identify specific structures with which to approach this sort of communication. Augustine’s theory indicates the reason for the lack of peace throughout the world is the lack of morality and articulates a way to gain peace. The theory has an idealistic vision and does not show clear examples of peace communication.

**Chapter Six**

**Analysis and Conclusion: Final Remarks on Dialogue and Peaceful**

**Cooperation in Buber, Ibn Khaldun, and Augustine**

This thesis sought to explore ways interfaith tension has been addressed with a view to establishing and maintaining a peaceful society. In order to solve any problem, people need first to find the reason behind it and then try to solve the problem at its root. Reasons must be given for the favored response by contrasting it with other seemingly less effective approaches. Buber, Ibn Khaldun, and Augustine all suggested that human relation, as informed by Abrahamic religion, such as in the form of I-Thou dialogue, can bring earthly peace and human unity. This is because I-Thou dialogue rises from spirituality and morality. They each appreciate human morality if it is able to bring peace, which makes their theories relevant to the academic study of religion and sociopolitical readings of today’s world.

Phenomenological communication theory in Craig’s overview and Habermas’s work reflects differing phenomenological positions. Craig understood the phenomenological theory of communication as “the experience of dialogue with others” (138). Craig’s study is concerned with articulating different communication theories and the way in which various scholars understand them. Craig did not mention Buber’s I-Thou dialogue theory as being a form of phenomenological theory. However, for this thesis Buber’s I-Thou dialogue theory was found to be more applicable than Craig’s due to the religious and sociopolitical details that provide the scaffolding on which it is built. Craig did provide a partial theoretical assessment of the study of phenomenological communication theory, but he did not apply it to specific situations of sociopolitical interfaith tension as did Buber.

Craig viewed dialogue as a means of satisfying the human need for “companionship, friendship and love” (Craig 136). Craig’s rationale of this need for communication reflects Ibn Khaldun’s clarification of the human need for communication. However, Ibn Khaldun is more appropriate for this thesis because he viewed the theoretical phenomenological concept through historical examples of communication and how they were applied within the faith community.

Habermas’s phenomenological theory focuses on consciousness and the world as an object, which led him to use the term “lifeworld” whenever he spoke about this phenomenological concept. Habermas’s understanding of lifeworld is that all humans belong to the world because they are living in it. The perception of the world arises from consciousness; therefore, the world is a place that humans share and inhabit together. The world belongs to all humans so they can fulfill their commitment to humanity. In this sense Habermas’s perspective is close to Augustine’s view of the world as a shared place for all humans. Augustine’s theory adds a more religious explanation, which makes it more relevant to this thesis proposing solutions to interfaith tensions, because it validates the concept of phenomenological theory in a Christian context of a metaophorical City of God.

Habermas’ theoretical development of the meaning of the phenomenon of communication is complicated and has a variety of psychological and philosophical elements that do not necessarily address interfaith relationships as intended in this thesis.

Buber, Ibn Khaldun, and Augustine have contributed elements that enhance our understanding of religious phenomena, such as the genuine love felt in relations with God felt by worshippers through their own experiences. These theologians specifically focused on religious moral components that have important impact on dialogue across different traditions as a means of gaining mutual understanding between religious groups. This focus makes their theory relevant to the questions asked in this thesis. Buber, Ibn Khaldun, and Augustine all mentioned a common requirement for interfaith dialogue as informed by their respective faiths and sociopolitical contexts: Love of the other as God so too loves.

The prerequisite for interfaith dialogue as the Abrahamic thinkers illustrate is a moral attitude that respects human dignity. Buber, Ibn Khaldun, and Augustine contributed to peaceful interfaith relation through their discussions of a moral, humanitarian way of communication. For this thesis, Buber’s communication theory provided the theoretical model for interfaith dialogue through his I-it and I-Thou models. He suggested the I-Thou relationship as a more adequate way to achieve sincere interfaith dialogue. It is important now to view the strengths and weaknesses of each thinker’s view in order to elucidate the possibility that these thinkers could help shape today’s interfaith dialogue to resolve tensions between religious groups.

Three elements that were commonly identified by the thinkers from each of the Abrahamic faiths as important for dialogue and communication include: Spirituality, morality, and humanity. Buber described these elements as fundamental to interfaith dialogue. He felt that without them dialogue would not be fruitful or have an impact on the community that would lead to peace. In Buber’s view, dialogue that resolves interfaith tension can only be achieved through the I-Thou relationship because this model is compatible with spirituality, morality, and humanity. Morality is also fundamental, in Ibn Khaldun’s view, to the communal social structure and the way a community gains its group feeling and solidarity. Ibn Khaldun viewed morality as a fundamental characteristic of human communication and dialogue that can help to build a peace community. Augustine’s work agrees with Buber’s I-Thou notion as he too views peace as originating from a love of God that reflects moral values in human relations.

The most important aspect of morality is its respect for human dignity and equality. Buber, Ibn Khaldun, and Augustine all supported their view of human equality with religious narratives indicating that humans originated from a single father (Adam), arguing that therefore all are related to each other through this lineage. Therefore, as a family humans should treat each other as equal partners who share this world together without any sense of superiority. Superiority and prejudice are viewed by the three Abrahamic scholars as a key reason for interfaith tension. These feelings create a situation in which each group believes that it is the only one loved, chosen, and favoured by God. Buber, Ibn Khaldun, and Augustine consider the notion of human equality as an important factor that needs to be acknowledged in any communication relation and social structure in order to move towards less tension and more peace. It is very important for interfaith dialogue partners to acknowledge their human equality, because human equality is mandated by the Abrahamic faith that they claim to accept.

Seeking spiritual communication with God is the foundation of Buber’s I-Thou dialogue relation. He proposed I-Thou dialogue as a means for humans to actualize a dialogic relationship with God through other humans. This perspective has a mystic character that Augustine viewed as the love and light of God as coming through human communication. Augustine viewed the love of God as the way for peaceful living, positing that if a human loves God he will harm no one. Ibn Khaldun also found a correlation between the love of God and peaceful living; however, he was less mystical in his understanding of it than was Augustine. Ibn Khaldun considered the love of God is one way that human seek to fulfil their spiritual need through solidarity and group feeling in a spiritual religious community. Buber and Augustine both referred to human unity as a brotherhood relation. A brotherhood relation can help nourish the moral souls of humans and draw them together.

*Strengths of this Dialogue Communication Concept*

The shared theological metalanguage of Buber, Ibn Khaldun, and Augustine in regards to communication in lived historical situations reveals similarities in Abrahamic moral, humanitarian, and spiritual notions of communication as a departure point for peaceful dialogue.

An interesting observation coming out of this study is that there is no major difference in the ways these three thinkers view morality, humanity, and spirituality. The religious concepts of morality, humanity, and spirituality common to these thinkers can also benefit other dialogues as well because these elements resonate more broadly in human consciousness. These concepts are not limited to the religious sphere, yet they are most fully developed there.

Another notable factor in the work of Buber, Ibn Khaldun, and Augustine is that they all involved God in human relationships in one way or another, whether seeking him through dialogical relationships, through His love, or obeying His law. God was important to each theorist, and they all sought peaceful relations with others to please God and worship Him through their moral behaviours. The three thinkers insisted on respecting the humanity of others on the grounds that humans are created in God’s image and/or because they believed God commanded them to respect it. Recognizing shared humanity is a fundamental part of both spirituality and morality. Morality is the common element that these Abrahamic thinkers insisted upon because of its importance for peaceful communication and community unity. This examination of the works of Buber, Ibn Khaldun, and Augustine thus indicates that there is an inaccurate association between religion and immoral activities.

*The Weakness of this Dialogue Concept*

There are nuances in the meaning of morality for each of these thinkers. Buber viewed morality as informed by the Jewish commandment of the love of God and love of neighbours. Although this is exactly what Augustine indicated in his theory, Buber applied it as a commandment while Augustine viewed it as a recommended moral means of expressing Christian appreciation to God for sacrificing His son for their sins. Ibn Khaldun viewed morality as being informed by Islamic law and conveyed by the moral character of the Prophet. Therefore, a sense of guilt and love motivates Christians to be moral while a sense of obeying God’s commandments motivates Jews and Muslims to be moral.

For Buber, Ibn Khaldun, and Augustine the meaning of morality is informed by their Abrahamic religious beliefs, which set parameters on the theoretical meaning of morality. Each considers non-religious morality as unequal to religious morality Nevertheless, they all agree that any form of morality is necessary for dialogue communication and that it is the way to resolve human tensions and as a result gain peace.

*How this Analysis Can Help Interfaith Dialogue Today*

Through its study of the work of Buber, Ibn Khaldun, and Augustine, this thesis contributes a theoretical concept of ways to narrow the gap between interfaith groups. The approach of these religious thinkers is legitimate for interfaith communication as it is grounded in their respective faiths. This theological perspective is more likely to be trusted by religious people who seek interfaith dialogue than is the thought of modern secular thinkers. When billions of worshippers globally understand that their own religion exhorts them to be peaceful and moral and to dialogue with others, interfaith dialogue is then viewed by huge numbers of people as a legitimate way to resolve tensions with followers of other faiths.

This notion of morality, of respect for all humans, as a reason and basis for dialogue contributes to understanding in faith communities that dialogue is a legitimate means for resolving political and social tensions. Some dialogue however, such as the I-it relation which Buber described as operating via selfishness, inequality and a prejudice toward others which excludes a sense of equality and togetherness between people, simply elevates tensions.

The moral humanitarian basis for dialogue emphasizes people’s responsibility to other humans. God wants people to experience relationship with Him through their peaceful and loving relations with others. The communication theories that are provided in this thesis outline elements of successful interfaith dialogue which can provide a foundation for further discussion with a view to designing a structure for interfaith dialogue.

Interfaith dialogue will be most fruitful if it focuses on moral humanitarian need. This focus will result in positive returns and the development of peaceful cooperation across religious communities and across the world. It is hoped that this moral humanitarian interfaith dialogue will result in a unity that offers the possibility for justice in which all humans are treated equally. As Buber says of the I-Thou relation. It is recognition of the divine that exists within humans that increases their sense of equality and sense of togetherness. Humans need dialogue that is initiated through morality and grace to unite them as equal partners with equal rights, with the capacity to resolve their humanitarian issues through moral and non-violent means.

Dialogue will not be fruitful if its discussion of theological differences has an overt or covert sociopolitical motive to subjugate or convert other nations. Dialogue must be genuine, with no selfish interests or political motivation. People need a moral social resolution that arises from responsible human conscience. This is needed in order to bridge the gap that is caused by superiority, discrimination, and fighting for political and theological perspectives. A focus on what people have in common, which is their human dignity, has the capacity to gradually remove unjust powers and action through the light of this morality. The religious and theoretical perspectives of Buber, Augustine, and Ibn Khaldun articulate such morality as an effective basis for dialogue. Dialogue offers the dialectic possibility of awakening human morality by helping people to understand each other better, and therefore, and encourage them to treat each other equally. This in turn can lead to mutual acceptance, sincere communication, and peaceful human cooperation.

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1. “The Church, therefore, exhorts her sons, that *through dialogue and collaboration* with the followers of other religions, carried out with prudence and love and in witness to the Christian faith and life, they recognize, preserve and promote the good things, spiritual and moral, as well as the socio-cultural values found among these men” (*Nostra Aetate*, point 2, italics mine). [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. “In her task of promoting unity and love among men, indeed among nations, she considers above all in this declaration what men have in common and what draws them to fellowship” (*Nostra Aetate*, point 1). [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. *Nostra Aetate*, point 1. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. “[. . .] other religions found everywhere try to counter the restlessness of the human heart, each in its own manner, by proposing "ways," comprising teachings, rules of life, and sacred rites” (*Nostra Aetate*, point 2). [↑](#footnote-ref-4)