Peace/war ethics and different normative fields in the Islamic knowledge tradition: a methodological introduction

Dr. des. Heydar Shadi

Research fellow, research project: *Islamic peace ethics*

Sankt Georgen Graduate School of Philosophy and Theology, Frankfurt, Germany

heydarshadi@gmail.com

Abstract

There is an intensive ongoing debate among western scholars on Islam about the relationship between Islam and peace/war. While some argue that Islam is, like its literary meaning, a religion of peace, some other maintain that Islam, similar to or more than other religions, fosters violence and war. Apart from any position regarding this debate, this paper deals with a methodological question and discusses the question 'what do we mean by "Islam" and "ethics" when we talk about "Islamic peace ethics"?'.

Most of the secondary literature on Islamic peace/war ethics focus almost exclusively on *fiqh* tradition. The author maintains that for an adequate Islamic peace ethics we should first clarify the normative disciplines and sources in the Islamic knowledge tradition. For this purpose the paper will study the normative fields and resources in the Islamic tradition that have dealt or can deal with the normative aspects of peace/war. The paper will introduce the following normative fields and then examine briefly how and in which extend these disciplines have discussed peace/war question.

- *Akhlaq-e falsafi, hikmat-e 'amali* (philosophical ethics, practical philosophy)
- *Fiqh*/*Sharia* (law, jurisprudence)
- *Akhlaq-e 'erfani* (sufi/mystical ethics)
- *Adab* (social moralities/etiquette) and *nasihat al-muluk* (political advices*/*mirrors of princes) literature.
- *Akhlaq-e naqli* (scriptural-traditional ethics, based on Koran and Hadith)
- *Akhlaq-e kalami* (theological-dogmatic ethics)

Keywords: Islamic peace and war ethics, methodology, knowledge culture, normative fields.