Suhaili Sarif \*\* Kamaruzaman Noordin \* Ahmad Sufian Che Abdullah\*\*

## Abstrak

Konflik merupakan suatu proses di mana dua atau lebih pihak berbeza dan bertembung dari segi kepentingan dan objektif peribadi. Konflik merupakan suatu yang tidak dapat dielakkan dalam sesebuah organisasi. Oleh yang demikian, Islam telah menggariskan beberapa kaedah bagaimana konflik dalam persekitaran organisasi dapat diselesaikan. Artikel ini cuba mengupas konsep konflik dalam organisasi dan bagaimana konflik yang berlaku dapat diselesaikan dengan cara yang baik berlandaskan Syariat Islam.

## Introduction

Conflict may occur anywhere when two or more people interact with each other. It can either energize an organization or generate war of words and actions. In an organization interface, conflict plays a prominent role to ensure the organization operates effectively and efficiently. Too few conflicts will cause employees in a comfort zone and hinder them from better performance. On the contrary, too many conflicts will weaken their bonds and unity. Organizational objectives can hardly be achieved without unity between the employees.

Lecturer, Department of Shariah and Management, Academy of Islamic Studies, University of Malaya.

<sup>\*\*</sup> Tutor, Department of Shariah and Management, Academy of Islamic Studies, University of Malaya.

Hence, conflicts should be wisely managed and managers should have a clear picture and guidelines of how to resolve the existing conflict. It is important because in most cases managers who face the problem have to act as a peacemaker or middleman to resolve the conflict particularly between employees under their supervision.

## **Conflict Defined**

The phenomenon of conflict has drawn much attention from social scientists. The relevant literatures are virtually endless and propose many different definitions. A few selected definitions of conflict by several authors are presented as follows:

- 1. Conflict refers to disagreement, opposition or struggle between two or more people or group. It results from their incompatible influence and often accompanies differences in power among parties.<sup>1</sup>
- 2. A process in which one party perceives that its interests are being opposed or negatively affected by another party.<sup>2</sup>
- 3. A process in which an effort is purposely made by A to offset the efforts of B by some form of blocking that will result in frustrating B in attaining his or her goals or furthering his or her interests.<sup>3</sup>
- 4. Any situation in which there are incompatible goals, cognitions, or emotions within or between individuals or groups and that leads to opposition or antagonistic interaction.<sup>4</sup>

In spite of divergent meanings the term has acquired, several common themes underlie most definitions. Conflict must be perceived by the parties to it. Whether conflict exists or not is a perception issue. If no one is aware of a conflict, it is generally agreed that no conflict exists.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Gordon Judith R. (1999), *Organizational Behavior: A Diagnostic Approach*, 6<sup>th</sup> edition, USA : Prentice Hall, p.272.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> McShane Steven L and Von Glinow Mary Ann (2000), Organizational Behavior, USA : Mc Graw Hill, p. 402

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> Robbins Stephen P. (1994), *Essentials of Organizational Behavior*, 4<sup>th</sup> edition, New Jersey: Prentice Hall, p.169

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> Hellriegel Don and Slocum John W. Jr, (1979), *Organizational Behavior*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition, USA: West Publishing Company, p 503

Additional commonalities among most conflict definitions are the concepts of opposition, scarcity and blockage and the assumption that there are two or more parties whose interests or goals appear to be incompatible. Resources such as money, prestige, power are not unlimited. Thus their scarcity encourages blocking behavior. When one party blocks the means to a goal of another, a conflict state exists. <sup>5</sup>

# **Perspectives on Organizational Conflict**

# The Traditional View<sup>6</sup>

The early approach to conflict assumed conflict was bad. Conflict was viewed negatively and it was used synonymously with terms like violence, destruction and irrationality in order to reinforce its negative connotation. Hence, conflict was to be avoided.

The traditional view was consistent with the attitudes that prevailed about group behavior in the 1930s and 1940s. From findings provided by studies like those done at Hawthorne, it was argued that conflict was dysfunctional outcome resulting from poor communication, a lack of openness and trust between people, and the failure of managers to be responsive to the needs and aspirations of their employees. Since all conflict is to be avoided, we need merely direct our attention to the causes of conflict and correct these malfunctioning in order to improve group and organizational performance.

# Human Relation View

In contrast to the traditional view, the human relation view argued that conflict was a natural occurrence in all groups and organizations. Since conflict was inevitable, the human relations school advocates acceptance of conflict. They rationalized its existence and there are even times when conflict may benefit a group's performance. The human relations view dominated conflict theory from the late 1940s through the mid 1970s.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup> Jamilah Othman (1997), "Handling Conflict with Organizational Members. The Experience of Malaysian Malay Women Human Resource Managers in The Banking and Finance Industry, (PhD Thesis, University of Minnesota), pp.21-24

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup> Stephen P. Robbins (1994), *op.cit*, p.169

## The Interactionist View<sup>7</sup>

The latest view toward conflict is the interactionist perspective. While the human relations approach accepted conflict, the interactionist approach encourages conflict on the grounds that a harmonious, peaceful, tranquil and cooperative is likely to become static, apathetic and nonresponsive to needs for change and innovation. The major contribution of the interactionist approach, therefore, is encouraging group leaders to maintain an ongoing minimal level of conflict in order to keep the group alive, self critical and creative.

From these perspectives, it is obvious that organization's perception towards conflict differs as a matter of time. Nevertheless, one should realize that conflict has the potential to improve or reduce the performance of groups or organizations.

#### **The Conflict Process**

Conflict can be thought of as a process succeeding through four stages; potential opposition, cognition and personalization, behaviour and outcomes.<sup>8</sup>



#### **Figure 1 : The Conflict Process**

Source : Essentials of Organizational Behavior by Stephen P. Robbins (1994), by Prentice Hall

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>7</sup> David Buchanan and Andrej Huczynski (1997), Organizational Behavior, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition, Prentice Hall: United Kingdom, p 638

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>8</sup> Stephen P. Robbins (1994), *op.cit*, pp.171-177

The first stage in the conflict process is the presence of conditions that create opportunities for conflict to arise. These conditions, which also may be looked at as causes or sources of conflict, have been compressed into three general categories, which are communication, structure and personal variables.

The communicative source represents those opposing forces that arise from semantic difficulties, misunderstandings and "noise" in the communication channel. Specifically, evidence demonstrates that semantic difficulties arise as a result of differences in training, selective perception, and inadequate information about others. The potential for conflict increases when either too little or too much communication takes place. Further, the channel chosen for communicating can have an influence on stimulating opposition. The filtering process that occurs as information is passed between members and the divergence of communications from formal or previously established channels, offer potential opportunities for conflict to arise.

The term 'structure' in this perspective includes variables such as size; degree of routinization, specialization, and standardization in the task assigned to group members; heterogeneity of members; leadership style; reward systems; and the degree of dependence between groups. The larger the group and the more specialized its activities, the greater the possibility of conflict. There is also some suggestion that a close style of leadership, that is rigid and constant observation with restrictive control of the others' behaviors, increases conflict potential. Too much dependence on participation may also stimulate conflict because participation encourages the promotion of differences. Reward systems, too, are found to create conflict when one member's gain is at another's expense. Finally, if a group is dependent on another group or if interdependence allows one group to gain at another's expense, conflicting forces are stimulated.

The most important personal variables, which relate to the cause of conflict, are individual value systems and individual idiosyncrasies and differences. Certain personality types – for example individuals who are highly dictatorial, inflexible, and who demonstrate low esteem – lead to potential conflict. Different in value systems such as perception towards freedom, enjoyment, honesty, obedience and equality are also important sources for creating the potential for conflict.<sup>9</sup>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>9</sup> Neale, Margaret A. and Max H. Bazerman, "Negotiating Rationally : The Power and Impact of the Negotiator's Frame", *Academy of Management Executive* (August 1992), pp.42-51.

If the conditions mentioned in the first stage generate frustration, then the potential for disagreement becomes realized in the second stage. The antecedent conditions can lead to conflict only when one or more of the parties are affected by, and cognizant of, the conflict. However, just because a conflict is perceived it does not necessarily mean it is personalized. It is at the level where conflict is felt, when individuals become emotionally involved, that lead the parties experience anxiety, tension, frustration, or hostility.

The third stage instigates when a member engages in an action that frustrates the attainment of another's goals or prevents the furthering of the other's interest. This action must be intended or there must be a known effort to disturb another. Overt conflict covers a full range of behaviors, from subtle, indirect and highly control forms of interference to violent, direct, and uncontrolled struggle.

The final stage in the conflict process is the consequences or outcomes of the interaction between the overt conflict behavior and conflict-handling behaviours. The outcomes may be functional or dysfunctional. On the one hand, conflict is functional or constructive when it improves the quality of decisions, encourages interest and curiosity among group members, stimulates creativity and innovation, provides the medium through which problems can be aired and tensions released, and fosters an environment of self-evaluation and change. Several findings suggest that conflict in the group might be an indication of strength rather than of weakness.<sup>10</sup>

On the other hand, conflict may be dysfunctional or destructive when it reduces group effectiveness. Among the more undesirable consequences are a retarding of communication, reductions in group cohesiveness, and subordination of group goals to the primacy of infighting among members. At the extreme, conflict can bring group functioning to a halt and potentially threaten the group's survival.<sup>11</sup>

The demarcation between functional and dysfunctional is neither clear nor precise. No one level of conflict can be adopted as acceptable or unacceptable under all conditions. The type and level of conflict that creates healthy and positive

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>10</sup> J. Hall and M.S. Williams, "A Comparison of Decision-Making Performance in Established and Ad-Hoc Group", *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* (February 1966), p.217

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>11</sup> Richard L. Hoffman, "Homogeneity of Member Personality and Its Effect on Group Problem Solving", *Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology* (January 1959), pp.27-32

involvement in one group may, in other group or in the same group in another time be highly dysfunctional. <sup>12</sup>

# **Managing Conflict: An Islamic Perspective**

As mentioned earlier, conflict has a significant role in organization. Conflict that consistently recurring-especially caused by misunderstanding between members-will reduce the organizational performance. However, the conflict remains necessary to keep the organization alive and functions effectively. The organization that has too few conflicts may have members that are too complacent. Moderate conflicts need to be actively generated to stimulate changes and effectiveness.<sup>13</sup>

Islam recognizes conflict and disagreement as a natural phenomenon in organization. History has shown that conflicts and differences in opinion, approaches and actions are unavoidable.

Allah says:

"And if your lord had so willed, He could surely have mankind one ummah nation or community (following one religion only i.e Islam). But they will not cease to disagree. Except him on whom your lord has bestowed His mercy (the follower of truth-Islamic Monotheism) and for that did He create them."

[Hūd (11): 118-119]

These verses proved that Allah intentionally create differences among mankind so that they may think and solve problem in a creative way. However, it does not mean that human can behave according to their own accord as Islam provides guidelines and rules to its followers.

In the early Muslim history, several disagreements between companions arose but were resolved later. Those disagreements are:

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>12</sup> Iqbal Unus (Dr.), "Conflict Management : The SALAM Model", <u>http://ww.islamist.org/</u> <u>index.php?file=./services/resources/book\_excerpts/index.html&file2=conflunus</u>,14 September 2004

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>13</sup> David Buchanan and Andrej Huczynski (1997), op.cit, p. 653

# 1. Distribution of land after the conquest of Iraq<sup>14</sup>

After Muslim armies successfully conquered Iraq, the responsibility to decide should and how to divide the conquered land fell on the khalifah 'Umar al-Khaṭṭāb. Different opinions were raised on the issue and Muslims were in conflict with one another. For instance, the army commanders and senior companions like 'Abd al-Rahman ibn 'Awf thought that the land should be divided and distributed.

'Uthmān, 'Alī and 'Umar (RA) thought that the land should not be distributed but left with the original cultivators. A general assembly was called. It included all Muhājirin, and five representatives each from Aws and Khazraj tribes. The general assembly discussed the matter for several days. The crisis became prolonged and complicated. 'Umar (RA) one day referred to the Quranic verse that concluded with the words "...those who come after them." The assembly was convinced when 'Umar (RA) said: "How, then, can I distribute it amongst you and leave those who come afterwards without any share?" Thus, the conflict was resolved by resorting to an acceptable authority.

# 2. Succession of khilafah following the death of 'Uthman RA.<sup>15</sup>

'Uthmān (RA)'s assassination caused major division among Muslim. One group demanded that the new Khalifah, 'Alī ibn Ṭālib (RA) to punish the assassins and those who favored the conciliatory approach of the Khalifah. Mu'āwiyah (RA) refused to accept the leadership of 'Alī (RA).

'Alī (RA) sent a letter to Mu'āwiyah (RA) asking him to submit to his leadership. Mu'āwiyah chose to deny the order. The Khalifah sent an army to subdue him. The two armies faced each other for three months while concerned people on both side continued to attempt for a settlement. A truce lasted for an additional month before it broke out into war. There was much bloodshed, but none can claim victory. The two leaders continued to exhort their followers against the other.

Finally, it was agreed that the appointment of the Khalifah is to be decided by two referees, Abū Mūsā from 'Alī (RA)'s side and 'Amr ibn al-'Aş from the other side. After six months of meeting and discussion, the referees agreed that both

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>14</sup> Yūsuf al-Qarādawi (2000), al-Siyāsah al-Syar 'iyyah, Beirut : Resalah Publisher, p.214

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>15</sup> Ţāhā Jābir Fayyad al-Alwani (1987), Adāb al-Ikhtilāf fi al-Islām, Herdon : al-Ma'had al-'Ālami li al-Fikr al-Islāmi, p.56

contenders should be deposed and then people will be allowed to choose whomever they wish to elect as Khalifah. After Abū Mūsā announced the withdrawal of the 'Alī and Mu'āwiyah, 'Amr announced that he accepts 'Alī's withdrawal but confirms Mu'āwiyah's claim to the Khilafah. The schism widened further.

With no solution in sight, a group of Muslims decided that the struggle would end only with the assassination of 'Ali (RA), Mu'āwiyah (RA) and 'Amr (RA). They succeeded only in killing 'Ali (RA), enabling Mu'āwiyah to become the undisputed ruler. From a shortsighted point of view, the conflict was resolved by resorting to brute force. From a long-term perspective, the apparent resolution eventually led to a profound schism in the Muslim ummah.

## The Concept of Syūrā, Ta'āwun and Nasihah

The concept of *syūrā*, *ta'āwun* and *nasīhah* are so prominent in Islamic management and administration. These concepts has been wide and deeply appreciated and implemented since the prophet lifetime in managing conflict and making the best decision.

 $Sy\bar{u}r\bar{a}$  is basically a decision making process - consultative decision-making - that is considered either obligatory or desirable by Islamic scholars. Those scholars who choose to emphasize the Quranic verse: "..and consult them in the affairs" [Āli `Imrān (3):159] consider  $sy\bar{u}r\bar{a}$  as obligatory, but those scholars who emphasize the verse wherein "... and who (conduct) their affairs by mutual consultation..." [al-Syūrā(42):38] are praised, consider  $sy\bar{u}r\bar{a}$  as desirable.<sup>16</sup> It is clear that  $sy\bar{u}r\bar{a}$  is not merely restricted to consultations or *mushāwarah*, in the form of a process or a method of how management is conducted; but it also constitutes a praiseworthy characteristic of a believer, who absorbed by such an attribute will be able to achieve completeness of believe.<sup>17</sup>

Within the context of avoiding conflict, one must stress the pro-active nature of  $sy\bar{u}r\bar{a}$ , the idea that one has to invite and seek  $sy\bar{u}r\bar{a}$ , not simply engage in it because

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>16</sup> M. A. Muqtedar Khan (Dr.), Shura and Democracy, <u>http://www.ijtihad.org/shura.htm</u>, 17 November 2004

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>17</sup> Mohd. Affandi Hassan (1992), *The Tawhidic Approach in Management and Public Administration*, Kuala Lumpur : National Institute of Public Administration Malaysia (INTAN), pp.60-63

it is forced by circumstances. If one consults others in a pro-active way, seeking  $sy\bar{u}r\bar{a}$  before crisis emerges, different views are brought into focus well before positions harden. Those consulted parties are likely to be supportive and ready to accommodate the issue even if things do not follow their way entirely.

*Nasihah* on the other hand, is an Arabic word that is usually translated to mean "sincerity" or "sincere advice", but actually embodies every type of virtue. The Prophet (saw) has equated the entire religion to giving *naṣiḥah* This concept can be traced back to famous hadith of the Prophet saw :

"The religion is nasihah." The people asked, "To whom?" The Prophet (saw) replied, "To Allah and to His Book and to His Messenger and to the leaders of the Muslims and the common folk." [Collected by Bukhari and Muslim]<sup>18</sup>

From the hadith, it is understood that the Prophet extended the principle of *nasihah* to every one from the top to the bottom, from the leaders to the common folks.

*Nasihah* in the context of avoiding conflict should also be pro-active in nature. It requires an active monitoring of actions and prompt evaluative response to them. Like consultation, giving and receiving advice is also a prophetic tradition. When parties involved in a conflict resort to sincere advice as a normal mode of interpersonal and inter-group behaviour, the potential of conflict is minimized. The parties involved are able to correct one another's views and action before they become a source of conflict.

Finally, the concept of *ta* ' $\bar{a}wun$ , literally means cooperation should be practiced in order to avoid conflict. The Quran advises Muslims to cooperate with one another towards goodness and piety but not in indulging into sin and transgression. This attitude of practicing *ta* ' $\bar{a}wun$  in a discreet way forces one to become firm with what is goodness and piety and what is sin and transgression. And this coming to grips with issues in a pro-active way leads to reduced incidence of conflict that could be dysfunctional.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>18</sup> Ahmad ibn 'Ali Ibn Hajr al-'Asqālāni (1997), Fath al-Bāri Fi Sharh Şahih al-Bukhāri, Kitāb al-Īmān, Beirut : Dār al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyyah, p.182

## The Process of Resolving Conflict

As a religion that encourages love and brotherhood, Islam is very concerned about the way to resolve conflict. The focus is not only in solving the problem but also the consequences after an agreement is met. The later aspect is important because most of the time, despite the problem is successfully resolve, the relation between two conflicting parties is no longer as close as before.

To deal with such circumstances, Islam suppresses its follower to avoid and resolve any conflict before the crisis deepens. In addition, every Muslim has to practice the concept of  $sy\bar{u}r\bar{a}$ ,  $t'\bar{a}wun$  and  $nas\bar{i}hah$  in their daily life as mentioned before.

Based on the basic guidelines, conflict management can be handled through the following process:

## 1. Stating the conflicting view

The nature or content of the conflict must be thoroughly stated. This will establish what is at stake and how quickly conflict needs to be resolved based on its seriousness. However, some conflict may be resolved just by stating the parameters of conflict clearly, because one party or the other may find that it can live with the situation without trying to change it.

As far as the step is concerned, it is in line with the Quranic advice to prevent mankind from acting on what they do not know:

"And pursue not that of which you have no knowledge; for every act of hearing or of seeing of (feeling in) the heart will be inquired into (on the Day of Reckoning)"

[al- Isrā' (17): 36]

#### In the other versus Allah says

"But they have no knowledge, therein, they follow nothing but conjecture; and conjecture avails nothing against the truth" [al-Najm (53):22]

# 2. Agreeing that a conflict exist

At this stage, the conflicting parties must focus on the issue and detach it from personalities. One way to do this is, when possible, let each side to state the other side's position as fairly as it can.

# 3. Learning the difference

The next step in managing conflict is listening and learning the existing differences. Most of the time the conflicting parties listen with no intention to learn but to respond when their turn comes. At this stage the spirit of  $sy\bar{u}r\bar{a}$  and  $nas\bar{i}hah$  must be firmly appreciated. The parties involved should move to a higher level by consulting one another on how to deal with the problem between them. Through this exercise, they direct their mutual resources of creativity, experience and wisdom to attack the problem, not one another.

# 4. Solving existed conflict

A number of approaches that are widely carried out are as follows :

# 4.1 Conflict resolution approaches <sup>19</sup>

Kenneth Thomas (1975) has introduced conflict resolution approaches which are based on two dimensions:

- 1. How assertive or unassertive each party is in pursuing its own concerns.
- 2. How cooperative or uncooperative each is in satisfying the concerns of the other.

The five approaches to conflict resolutions introduced are:

- 1. competition (assertive and uncooperative)
- 2. collaboration (assertive and cooperative)
- 3. avoidance (unassertive and uncooperative)
- 4. accommodation (unassertive and cooperative)
- 5. compromise (mid range on both dimension)

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>19</sup> David Buchanan and Andrej Huczynski (1997), op.cit, p.654

Approach	Objective	Your posture	Supporting rationale	Likely outcome
1 Competition	Get your way	'I know what's right. Don't question my judgement or authority'	It is better to risk causing a few hard feelings than to abandon the issue.	You feel vindicated but other party feels defeated and possibly humiliated.
2 Avoiding	Avoid having to deal with conflict	'I'm neutral on that issue. Let me think about it. That's someone else's problem.'	Disagreement are inherently bad because they create tension.	Interpersonal problems don't get resolved, causing long-term frustration manifested in a variety of ways.
3 Compromising	Reach an agreement quickly	'Let's search for a solution we can both live with so we can get on with our work.'	Prolonged conflicts distract people from their work and cause bitter feelings.	Participants go for the expedient rather than effective solutions.
4 Accommodating	Don't upset the other person	'How can I help you feel good about this? My position isn't important that it is worth risking bad feelings between us.'	Maintaining harmonious relationships should be our top priority.	The other person is likely to take advantage.
5 Collaborating	Solve the problem together	'This is my position, what is yours? I'm committed to finding the best possible solution. What the facts suggest?'	Each position is important though not necessarily equally valid. Emphasis should be placed on the quality of the outcome and the fairness of the decision-making process.	The problem is most likely to be resolved. Also both parties are committed to the solution and satisfied that they have been treated fairly.

### **Table 1 : Conflict Resolution Approaches**

**Source** : *Developing Management Skills*, second edition by David A. Whetton and Kim S. Cameron (1991) by Harper Collins Publishers Inc.

# 4.2 Providing an expert opinion<sup>20</sup>

On many occasions, the individuals or group involved in the conflict do not have enough knowledge to judge with authority which view is right. In such situation, it is best to bring an outside expert that will be able to make correct judgment on the issue. The expert should be able to win the trust of the conflicting parties and should posses

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>20</sup> Naceur Jabnoun (1994), Islam And Management, Kuala Lumpur : Institut Kajian Dasar, p. 171

the necessary professional credibility. He or she shall make a professional judgment and shall be able to convince both parties. Convincing both parties about the expert's judgment is instrumental in the settlement of the conflict.

## 4.3 Negotiation<sup>21</sup>

Negotiation is a process of bargaining between the conflicting parties. The negotiation is very effective when there is a tendency for reconciliation or agreement. It is not effective when the settlement requires judging in favor of one side. Allah said regarding marriage conflicts:

"If ye fear a breach between them twain, Appoint two arbiters, one from his family and the other from hers; if they wish for reconciliation, Allah will cause their reconciliation: For Allah hath full knowledge, and is acquainted with all things. "

[al-Nisā' (4):35]

The negotiators can view negotiation as win-lose situation or win-win situation, depending on the nature of the conflict. The win-win situation appears to be unrealistic. However, there is usually an innovative potential solution that offers joint benefit to both parties. These solutions are termed as integrative agreements.

#### 4.4 Arbitration<sup>22</sup>

As the degree of communication between conflicting groups decreases, the need for arbitration becomes urgent. Delays in arbitration can worsen the conflict. The arbitration can take various forms. It can be handled by an accepted neutral person or committee, or an official authority. In all cases, the arbitrators have to show knowledge of the issue, understanding of the overall interest of the organization, and especially impartiality and justice. Allah said:

" Allah doth command you to render back your trusts to those to whome they are due; and when ye judge between people, that ye

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>21</sup> *ibid*, pp 171-172

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>22</sup> *ibid*, p.172

judge with justice: verily how excellent is the teaching which He giveth you! For Allah is He who heareth and seeth all things" [al-Nisā' (4): 58]

Arbitration should involve conflict smoothing by emphasizing the common interests and de-emphasizing their differences. Allah has ordained Muslims to reconcile the differences between one another, emphasizing the bonds of brotherhood that exist among them. Furthermore, because ego and grudge, usually accompany conflicts, Allah has coupled reconciliation with belief and awareness of Allah.

The use of authoritative command can be very efficient in arbitration. However, if it is not coupled with justice and a clear explanation of the reasons behind the authoritative decision, it will only work in the short run. Authoritative command is needed when conflicts persist and start hurting the organization, or when one party is determined to be right while the other is at fault. In fact, if one party has transgressed upon another, Muslims are ordained to firmly stop this transgression. Once this aggression is stopped, Muslims need to reconciliate the two parties. Allah said:

" but if one transgresses beyond bonds against the other then fight ye aginst the one that transgresses until it complies with the command of Allah, and if complies, then make peace between them with justice, and be fair fo Allah loves those who are fair"

[al-Hujurāt (49): 9]

## Conclusion

Conflicts are very common in organization. It is due to the differences in objective, views, interests and so on. The conflicts could occur between two or more competing parties from single or different departments. Conflict could be functional or dysfunctional. Functional conflict is necessary to an organization to keep it alive and functions effectively. On the other hand, too many conflicts could damage the stability of an organization. The fact that an organization can benefit from the functional conflict after it is settled demonstrates that the effect of a conflict depends primarily on the way it is managed. In case a conflict is not well managed, it becomes automatically a dysfunctional one that hinders the operations of an organization.

5

Islam has shown several concepts regarding how conflict should be managed. The concepts of *syūrā*, *ta'āwun* and *naṣīḥah* should be implemented to avoid and resolve conflict. Using the concept of *syūrā* and *naṣīḥah* as underlying concepts, there are several approaches to manage the existed conflict. Such approaches among others are conflict resolution approaches, negotiation, expert opinion and so forth. By implementing such approaches we hope that every conflict can be successfully resolved without damaging the stability of the organization.