

Introduction

The Peacemaking and Conflict Resolution Field and Islam

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What places do nonviolence and peacebuilding have in Islam? What are the challenges to mitigating violence in Muslim communities? What do Muslim religious and community leaders need in order to reform the current debate on the uses of violence and non-violence? This book is the result of an international conference of Muslim scholars and practitioners who came together to address these questions, discussing contemporary Islam, its relation to violence and peacemaking, and the possibilities for reframing and reinterpreting methodologically the problems of violence and peacemaking in Muslim communities.

The subject of peacemaking and conflict resolution in Muslim communities is especially timely. There are two active wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, while radical Islamist groups threaten the stability of Pakistan, Egypt, Lebanon, and other states. The futility of counteracting extremism with military force is contributing to radicalization in Muslim communities; in the past ten years, the narrative of extremism has not diminished, but is flourishing among the disillusioned youth and middle class.¹ Given these challenges and others, it is vitally important to examine contemporary principles, methods, and approaches of peacemaking and conflict resolution by leading Muslim intellectuals and practitioners in the Islamic world.

More specifically, the conference explored historical examples of addressing conflict in Islam and the ways that the community of legal scholars (*ulama*) existed as an institution and asserted its political and religious authority. Muslim juridical debates among legal scholars on the subjects of war, rebellion, and resistance must be interpreted as legalistic responses

to their particular social, political, and cultural contexts.² The arguments of the *ulama*, who developed just war theories and peacemaking engagements, must be read as commentaries on the law, not a vision for an ideal social order. Even if the *ulama* was itself influenced by the cultural, political, and social order of its time, it worked within a legal paradigm relatively unswayed by the desires of political elites and did not interfere with the law to favor its interests.

Moving beyond juridical interpretations of just war theory, the conference examined the possibilities for nonviolent interventions, peacemaking, the implementation of human rights, the reinterpretation of texts, peace education instruction, and employing successful mediation skills in an Islamic context. Several challenges arise in assessing the field of Islamic peacemaking. First, the overemphasis—by both the *ulama* and Western scholars—on the juridical and scriptural components of Islamic peacemaking practices has limited the conversation to particular legal and theological finer points. While useful to a certain degree, a legal and theological framework limits the scope of peacemaking efforts and is entirely disconnected from the field of conflict resolution. Second, scholars and practitioners need to be more self-critical of normative polemics within Islam and more deliberate with particular concepts of legal, social, political, and religious reform. Third, the agenda to correct and counteract Islamic exclusivism and radicalism has to be a serious and thoughtful endeavor, cognizant of the day-to-day cultural, social, political, and economic realities of Muslim societies.

The essays in this book capture the diversity of interpretations, concepts, and challenging situations within the field of Islamic peacemaking. The authors—both Muslim scholars and peacebuilding practitioners—offer critical perspectives that are needed to understand what works, what opportunities exist, and what areas are fertile for effective peacebuilding efforts. The essays also comment on how to engage constructively with Muslim leaders. None of the authors advocates searching for the reformers or moderate Muslim networks to counteract radicalism, or attempting to establish liberal democracies to contain, restrict, and deflate Islamists. Instead, these essays reflect the marvelous amount of scholarship and fieldwork in the discipline of peacemaking as it exists within the tradition of Islam. Historically, according to jurists, Islamic law seeks to preserve and protect life, religion, property, lineage, and intellect. These essays appreciate these values as they try to help peacemaking efforts create stable, functioning societies.³

Criticism of Religion

At the start of the twenty-first century, religion is associated by some with intolerance, violence, and breeding radicalism; it is regarded in some quar-

ters as the cause for extremism and human rights violations. None of the world's religions is impervious to fomenting conflict, but Islam has often been singled out as particularly and intrinsically violent. Critics associate it with extreme intolerance and claim that it breeds radicalism. It is easy to see where the criticisms come from: With the combination of late twentieth-century fundamentalist movements, Islamist politics, al-Qaeda radicalism, Iran's theocracy, and attacks by Islamist groups against civilians across the world, it is impossible to discuss contemporary Islam without referring to the subject of violence. In 2006, Pope Benedict XVI's comments on Islam at the University of Regensburg referred to Islam as anti-rational and quoted a fourteenth-century Byzantine emperor, Manuel II Paleologus, who made derogatory references to the Prophet Muhammad and to Muslims.⁴

Many critics vociferously promote reforming Islamic thought, arguing for the urgent need to bring political, social, economic, and perhaps cultural reformation to the Arab-Muslim Middle East. Such reforms include reinterpreting religious doctrines more liberally by minimizing the importance or value of conservative, orthodox, and traditional positions. Other impulsive reforms include changing religious education, altering political systems, lessening the influence of religious law, and diluting social and cultural practices that appear to be obstacles to progress. Some policymakers advocate American idealism—the values of freedom, justice, equality, democracy, and prosperity—as an alternative system of ideas for Muslim societies. The underlying assumption is that Muslims live in a stagnant, irrational, and premodern tradition that has failed to respond to the challenges of modernity; essential values, such as progress, science, reason, freedom, and equality, have not yet set in. However, even a cursory glance at Islamic history reveals cultural and intellectual diversity; scientific and mathematical discoveries in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries; social and religious revivalist movements in the seventeenth century; nineteenth-century modernist reformation movements; pioneering work on religion, culture, and rationalism; and a massive amount of literature in twentieth-century Islamic thought on colonialism, political activism, peacemaking, governance, human rights, and democracy.⁵ Islam as a civilization and faith tradition has been anything but stagnant and intellectually dormant, and, as with other civilizations, there are both intolerant and tolerant voices.

Along with ideas of reforming, reinventing, and transforming Islamic societies, unfortunately, there is much confusion about the role of religion in conflict and how conflicts are mistakenly framed in religious terms. The history of at least the past three millennia includes powerful examples of millions of people dying for the cause of someone's version of the divine, even as each of the world's religions strictly prohibits killing. The challenge

is to not conflate historical events with current conflicts, or apply theological interpretations to situations that have nothing to do with religion or religious communities. On the one hand, there must be a serious debate about the political aspirations of religious groups. On the other hand, there needs to be an awareness of the many religious actors who have no particular political aspirations, yet are acutely sincere about peacebuilding, conflict prevention, and conflict resolution. In these debates, we must be honest about our level of knowledge of various religious histories and traditions. It is important to check, if not suspend, the biases we hold toward any faith-based communities and their activities, whether they be fundamentalist religious actors involved in peacemaking or progressive religious leaders involved in promoting human rights.

The world's religious traditions offer a great deal of insight into promoting peace and resolving conflicts. Religious peacemaking—commonly referred to as faith-based peacemaking—is rooted in the traditions of many faiths to affirm justice, love, reconciliation, and peaceful relations. The spiritual convictions of these religious communities inspire many of their members to work for social justice generally and involve them directly in conflict prevention, mediation, and conflict transformation work. Religious leaders and religious organizations involved in peacemaking are operating from their respective faith traditions to support personal, communal, and relational transformations.⁶ Religious peacemaking involves forgiveness, recognition of pain, counseling, rehabilitation, recovery from trauma, public confessions, joint prayers, using narratives to create empathy, advocacy programs for victims, forums to explain misunderstandings, addressing the distorted image of the other in the faith tradition, and using the arts to express mutual respect. The bonds formed in interfaith peacemaking activities reveal an amazing level of openness to dialogue, allowing participants greater freedom to reconstruct broken relationships and damaged communities, reconcile conflicting parties, negotiate peace agreements, and create a common vision for peace.

The Ethics of Violence in Islam

In discussing the ethics of violence, one begins with the question of who can be attacked during war and how one distinguishes victims from combatants.⁷ Such discussions have been documented in Islamic juridical discourses beginning in the ninth century, but in the past forty-five years alone, the field of Islamic peacemaking has produced a variety of theories, practices, and methodologies to use within Muslim and non-Muslim communities. At the time of Majid Khadduri's *War and Peace in the Law*

of *Islam* (1955), scholars were obsessed with the ethics of war and the ways that Muslim legal scholars argued for and sanctioned violence. The literature then was dominated by historical juridical interpretations of war, engagement, disengagement, peaceful relations, and the rules associated with warfare. Since that time, however, the field has expanded tremendously to include scholars from conflict resolution, history, politics, sociology, anthropology, theology, and law, as well as practitioners implementing peacebuilding concepts. The broadening of the field has led to a great deal of work reframing Islamic beliefs to assert that it contains within it a long-standing tradition of peacemaking.

Glenn D. Paige, Chaiwat Satha-Anand, and Sara Gilliatt's edited book *Islam and Nonviolence* (1993) consists of six essays exploring the nonviolent dimensions of Islamic tradition and ways in which Islamic nonviolence can socially, politically, and globally transform the world to be more peaceful. Ralph Salmi, Cesar Adib Majul, and George K. Tanham's *Islam and Conflict Resolution: Theories and Practices* (1998) frames Islam against Western societies, reiterating the familiar analysis of fundamentalist movements as a threat to Islamic principles of peacemaking and civilization. Abdul Aziz Said, Nathan Funk, and Ayse Kadayifci's edited book *Peace and Conflict Resolution in Islam: Precept and Practice* (2001) analyzes several important aspects of conflict resolution, ethics, history, and politics in the Islamic tradition, highlighting Sufism as a key area containing paradigms of peacemaking. Abdul Karim Bangura's *Islamic Peace Paradigms* (2005) identifies key themes, such as dialogue, love, law, and nonviolence, to demonstrate essential modalities in promoting peace in Islamic cultures. And Mohammed Abu-Nimer's *Nonviolence and Peace Building in Islam: Theory and Practice* (2003) is a magnificent example of a Muslim scholar defining the Islamic peacemaking field within the conflict-resolution discipline. Abu-Nimer demonstrates that the fundamental principles of Islam support peacebuilding and nonviolence, and that these basic assumptions, values, and beliefs are derived from text, scripture, historical narratives, culture, and daily human experiences. He convincingly uses case studies to demonstrate how traditional dispute resolution methods in Arab-Muslim communities reveal the daily application of nonviolence and peacebuilding techniques.⁸

As the field of peacebuilding within the Islamic tradition continues to broaden, it is important to affirm unambiguously that killing any innocent being is not acceptable or legitimate. Chaiwat Satha-Anand, an important scholar and practitioner of nonviolent Islamic peacebuilding, asserts that violence is completely unacceptable in Islam and that Muslims must use nonviolent action to fight for justice and reconciliation.⁹ He states that

“Islam itself is fertile soil for nonviolence because of its potential for disobedience, strong discipline, sharing and social responsibility, perseverance, and self-sacrifice, and the belief in the unity of the Muslim community and the oneness of mankind.”¹⁰ Satha-Anand disputes status-quo perspectives on Islamic just war theories, particularly the use of defensive violence, by once again reviving the nonviolent aspects of the Islamic tradition. He challenges scholars and practitioners to be critical of historical positions justifying violence and to apply an alternative framework of thinking. Policymakers, conflict resolution experts, and scholars must take seriously the work of Satha-Anand, as well as that of Said Nursi, Sakina Yakoobi, Abdul Ghaffar Khan, Shaykh ‘Ali Goma‘a, Hakim Mohammed Said, Dr. Seyyed Hossein Nasr, Nicolish Majid, Kabir Helminski, Din Syamsuddin, Ghazi bin Muhammad, Dr. Abdal Hakim Murad Winter, Mohammad Hashim Kamali, Shaykh Mustafa Ceric, Shaykh Al-Habib Ali al-Jifri, Yousef Sanei, and many others. In addition, even if their voices are rarely heard because they are drowned out by radical rhetoric and authoritarian systems that crush dissent, everyday Muslim leaders committed to promoting tolerance and diversity are involved in peacebuilding activities across the world.

Nonviolence in the Islamic Tradition

According to Sunni and Shiite *ulama*, basic Islamic peacemaking teachings are meant to help individuals in a society maintain healthy relationships, both with each other and with the divine. When conflicts erupt and destroy human relationships, restoring them is essential if justice is to be served. This process involves politicians, clergy, scholars, and intellectuals, who supersede those who do not have the power to institute justice. The consultation process among the authorities allows for dialogue, debate, and an exchange of views on a variety of subjects, but it is especially critical for authoritative bodies to ensure that they understand the opinions of others. Theologians, jurists, philosophers, and other scholars historically have promoted Islamic teachings of ethics to prevent, mediate, and resolve conflicts; ultimately, any level of disharmony is understood as disrupting peace. Historically, theologians stress the need for personal transformation and striving toward elevating spiritual awareness through fasting, prayer, charity, meditation, rituals, Qur’anic recitation, service, love of others, adoption of orphans, and displaying compassion and forgiveness to oneself and to others who have done harm.¹¹ The traditional theological thought is that once the heart and mind are gradually transformed toward peace—moving away from greed, egocentric desires, suffering, materialism, and harming others—humans then can act peacefully in the world.

The inner life thus is connected to the outer dimensions of peacemaking, at the personal, social, national, and global levels. Islamic peacemaking is founded on several principles of nonviolence and peacebuilding, including the pursuit of justice and equality; the universality and dignity of humanity; the sacredness of human life; reason, knowledge, and understanding; forgiveness; proper deeds and actions; collaborative actions and solidarity; inclusivity; and tolerance. Qur'anic verses, hadith injunctions, and narratives of the companions of the Prophet accentuate the proper ethical treatment of the elderly, orphans, prisoners, mentally challenged, neighbors, strangers, enemies, members of different religious traditions and tribes, and animals.¹² These and other principles of nonviolence and peacebuilding are integral to the faith tradition of Muslims and are crucial to Muslim peacebuilding initiatives developed by important figures such as Abdul Ghaffar Khan, Chaiwat Satha-Anand, Hakim Mohammed Said, and Jawdat Sa'id.

Part of what makes Islamic peacebuilding efforts unique are the processes by which their principles are applied. For example, Islamic efforts to create peace use a religious judge (*qadi*) to rely upon established guidelines in Islamic law (*shari'ah*). The process of mediation, arbitration, and reconciliation (*sulh*) consists of the conflicting parties agreeing on a process of resolving a dispute with a third-party mediator, who will ensure that all parties are satisfied by the outcomes. In presenting evidence of the dispute (*bayyinah*), parties use witnesses and material evidence to argue their respective positions in the case. Other customary practices of dispute resolution (*'urf*) also include the use of third-party members to reconcile a dispute (*mukhtar*). Using an intermediary to represent the party (*wasta*) has been a traditional practice to intervene in a conflict; the representative works toward a specific period of mediation (*hudna*), or truce. Conflicting parties find representatives, not necessarily lawyers, who can best present their positions as clearly as possible. The representatives then find a trusted third-party mediator who is committed to resolving the particular conflict and can guarantee that the parties receive a fair settlement. A settlement may include an agreed-upon sum of money to the victim for compensation of losses (*atwah*), which is usually tied to a public offering of forgiveness. Compensation (*ta'awruza*) is not only measured in financial terms, however; it also involves a service to the family or community and specific gestures of grief relief. For instance, *ta'lif al-qulub*, or offering peace to the heart, is a legally recognized practice of reconciliation, by which the offender periodically visits the victim's family to demonstrate remorse. These different processes allow space for conflicting parties to have their interests represented and seek the proper restoration of peace or harmony in their community.

The Essays in This Book

This book complements previous work in many ways. First, it incorporates history, theology, politics, economics, education, theory, and practice to examine the creative work that many scholars and practitioners in the field of Islamic peacemaking have done. Second, the essays combine the intellectual heritage of Islam with the practical challenges of peacemaking, conflict resolution, mediation, and reconciliation in Muslim communities. The authors—experts in their respective fields, with intricate knowledge of concepts of justice, reconciliation, dialogue, ethics, peacemaking, and conflict resolution in Islam—agree that religious peacemaking generally, and Islamic peacemaking specifically, are effective mechanisms to build peaceful communities that can foster values of coexistence, tolerance, and pluralism. They assume that Islamic peacemakers are genuinely interested in cultivating a culture of peace at all levels of society, though they are not so naïve as to think that religious leaders cannot be corrupt or do not generate obstacles to peacebuilding. Finally, though this book does not cover strategies to counter radicalism, there is strong agreement among the authors that developing civil society, cultivating an ethos of pluralism, broadening political and economic systems, tapping into religious leaders for peacebuilding activities, encouraging critical thinking skills in educational institutions, and investing in human capital are the strongest steps toward counteracting extremism.

The book is divided into two parts. Part I covers concepts of peace, Islamic conflict resolution, and peacebuilding. Part II covers peace education, nonviolent action, human rights, and peacemaking training. Part I begins with Ibrahim Kalin's excellent survey of concepts of peacebuilding in the philosophical and theological traditions of Islam. Kalin outlines the important philosophical and political debates within Islam regarding violence, nonviolence, evil, good, sin, war, peace, the status of minorities, and divergent views on establishing peace. He demonstrates how the multiple views of minorities and the legal status of Jews, Christians, Hindus, and other religious communities allowed them to make important contributions to the larger Muslim civilization. In assessing the evolution of Islamic thought regarding peace, Kalin strongly emphasizes how intellectual and cultural pluralism contributed to a profound respect and reverence for non-Muslims, creating space and time for mutual coexistence.

Asma Afsaruddin meticulously examines the early semantic use of *jihad* and its connection to political, military, and elitist perspectives. She demonstrates how, in the evolutionary growth of the expansionary dynastic state, the first generation of Muslims in the seventh-century Umayyad period ultimately used the term *jihad* to defend their dynasty's expansionary

policies. Afsaruddin's essay reveals the tensions among theologians, philosophers, and military and dynastic leaders who exploited the use of *jihad* to mean martyrdom, struggling in the path of the divine, armed combat, and holy war. The necessary legal and ethical articulation of war and peace meant conflicting interpretations of key Qur'anic verses and their original intent. For military leaders and Umayyad political leaders, *jihad* was appropriated as propaganda for armed combat and the belief that *jihad* essentially meant fighting others rather than struggling with oneself. This blatant misrepresentation of the Qur'anic term had no scriptural basis, and in turn, the process of transforming the meaning of *jihad* divorced it from mainstream interpretations of the Prophet's Mecca and Medina period, ultimately causing serious tensions among scholars and believers.

Waleed El-Ansary's essay on understanding and applying accurate use of Qur'anic language as a way to counter radical self-identity highlights the importance of language in peacebuilding in Muslim communities. El-Ansary demonstrates that al-Qaeda's use of the word for participants in *jihad*—*mujahidun*—is based on their self-identification as righteous freedom fighters who are struggling against injustice. Referring to them as such thus legitimates their cause and reinforces their legitimate self-understanding. Seeking to counteract this abuse of language and Islamic theology, prominent Muslim scholars have preferred a new word for al-Qaeda that does not reinforce Osama bin Laden's self-definition as a religious hero and defender of the faith. Shaykh 'Ali Goma'a, the grand mufti of Egypt, argues that the appropriate term is *irjaf*, which has no link to Islamic theology and connotes scaremongering by bringing frightening commotion to society. This is not an issue of semantic usage; rather, this internal debate by high-ranking religious leaders shows that there is an ongoing effort to recapture religious and theological terms to delegitimize al-Qaeda's movement and simultaneously ensure that Qur'anic terms are not disparagingly abused for violent causes.

Mohammed Abu-Nimer reflects on the principles of Islamic models of conflict resolution and peacemaking and the challenges they pose to Western approaches to conflict resolution. Arguing that there are traditional cultural, religious, and indigenous approaches to resolving conflict, Abu-Nimer identifies the key principles that local leaders follow. At the same time, he shows that there are serious obstacles in Islamic peacemaking, affecting economic, social, and political development; the formation of effective intervention strategies; and the insurance that conflict reduction is sustained. Abu-Nimer's extensive fieldwork experience and straightforward assessment of problems in peacemaking reveal the gaps that exist between theory and practice, which require further investigation.

Part II begins with Zeki Saritoprak's biographical evaluation of Said Nursi, a prominent Turkish practitioner of nonviolence almost unknown in the West. Saritoprak's essay illuminates how the life of Said Nursi is a model of nonviolence for Turkish Muslims. Said Nursi's experience of the last years of the Ottoman Empire, his service in World War I, and the establishment of Turkey all contributed to his deep commitment to nonviolence. Mohandas Gandhi and Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., are used frequently as textbook cases to study nonviolent social movements; Saritoprak's essay demonstrates how a similarly remarkable man could inspire thousands of Turkish citizens to accept nonviolence as a code for life. As the field of Islamic peacemaking lacks documentation and analysis of Muslim leaders who persistently advocated a nonviolent response to conflict, this essay raises our awareness of one such monumental figure and his immense contributions.

Waleed El-Ansary's second essay explores the issue of violence by religious actors through the prism of human development and security and the prevalent problem of economic stagnation in Muslim societies, arguing that the complex economic matrix in which religious actors operate is an important part of the problem of religious violence. He suggests that strategies to reduce violence must address economic development as well.

Reza Eslami-Somea's essay discusses current intellectual thought and trends in reform in Muslim societies, exploring how Muslim reformers have historically relied upon *shari'ah* principles for resolving societal questions of modernity. He affirms that reformers have overemphasized the role of *shari'ah* as the primary source in resolving problems such as those of gender inequality, human rights, and democracy. According to him, reformers in Muslim societies have failed to meet the challenges of modernity due to their inability to operate outside of *shari'ah* and recognize a system of universal principles of human rights and freedom. The essay contextualizes the tension between modern secular reform efforts and religious approaches to reform, indicating that real peacemaking efforts cannot take place if they are limited to one particular worldview.

Asna Husin relates the efforts of a Muslim non-governmental organization (NGO) to reform education in Aceh, an extremely poor province and conflict zone in Indonesia. In addition to difficulties in funding and retaining staff, as well as political and social chaos, the Muslim NGO also faced martial law, an ongoing military operation, and the horrendous aftermath of the 2004 tsunami. Nevertheless, the NGO persevered to complete a two-volume Islamic peacemaking textbook written by the Ulama Council of Aceh and conduct workshops to train religious schoolteachers in peacemaking. The essay both documents the harsh realities of peacemak-

ing activities and offers lessons for understanding how NGOs can overcome enormous obstacles to operate and execute an Islamic peacemaking program.

Ayse Kadayifci-Orellana and Meena Sharify-Funk discuss Muslim women as agents of change, documenting a rich tradition of women contributing to the field of Islamic peacemaking. The essay explores how major Muslim women figures, often neglected in history and modern efforts in peacemaking, have been influential in conflict prevention and resolution. The literature in the field seriously lacks an analysis of women's contributions and approaches to conflict resolution, as well as the various practical tools Muslim women have used in peacebuilding. Kadayifci-Orellana and Sharify-Funk examine women NGOs in Afghanistan, Kenya, and Thailand that creatively identified space and opportunities to counteract extremism, mitigate electoral violence, support health services, promote human rights, coordinate youth activities, and conduct peacebuilding training in their respective communities. The essay is a reminder of how often the larger field of conflict resolution, and especially the field of Islamic peacemaking, does not acknowledge the work of women.

Qamar-ul Huda analyzes the established methodological thinking and approaches in the Islamic peacemaking literature to illustrate how scholars have developed the field based on their particular disciplines. This analysis demonstrates the weaknesses and strengths of methodologies in Islamic peacemaking; however, Huda advocates the desperate need to develop practical skills and knowledge for religious leaders to operate in the larger field of peacebuilding. After examining numerous problems of Western peacebuilding workshops for Muslim religious leaders, he suggests how organizations and peace trainers can help religious leaders to be more receptive, more responsive, and ultimately transformed. Offering analysis based on fieldwork experience, Huda suggests seven critical areas for skills transmission workshops for religious leaders, including organizational management skills, mediation and negotiation skills, project planning and execution, strategic planning for intervention and conflict transformation, and the finer art of engaging religious leaders in peacebuilding.

Contemporary Efforts at Islamic Peacemaking

Real initiatives in Islamic peacebuilding are occurring in all Muslim communities, every day and throughout the world, from Muslim minorities in the West to majority Muslim societies in Africa, the Middle East, and South and Southeast Asia. These peacebuilding activities include high-ranking scholars, such as muftis and grand ayatollahs; regional and

local-level politicians; and imams, teachers, *qadis*, lawyers, activists, religious educators, artists, musicians, and others in civil society. In December 2005, the Mecca Al-Mukarramah Declaration amassed all heads of state from the Organization of Islamic Conference (OIC) to affirm “that terrorism in all its forms and manifestations is a global phenomenon that is not confined to any particular religion, race, colour, or country, and that can in no way be justified or rationalized . . . we are also called upon to redouble and orchestrate international efforts to combat terrorism.”¹³ The conference also stated that “the Islamic civilization is an integral part of human civilization, based on the ideals of dialogue, moderation, justice, righteousness, and tolerance as noble human values that counteract bigotry, isolationism, tyranny, and exclusivism.”¹⁴

Another example is the Second International Conference of the Assembly for Moderate Islamic Thought and Culture, sponsored by the Royal Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan in 2006. It issued a twenty-five point plan to support moderates in reforming and reviving all aspects of Islamic heritage, values, and ethical values in the global Muslim community. The assembly called for an international moderate assembly to generate a moderate movement and to coordinate activities with “all institutions and Islamic agencies, which adhere to the moderation programme.”¹⁵ Point thirteen of the plan unequivocally endorsed “affirming a committee on dialogue with leading Western thinkers and politicians.”¹⁶

Equally important is the Muslims of Europe Conference, held in Istanbul in 2006, that addressed the issues of Muslim minorities in Europe, the rise of Islamophobia, racism, and the need to fight terrorism collectively and promote diversity and inclusivity. The twelve-point document it fostered, known as The Topkapi Declaration, reasserted its support of the European Council for Fatwa and Research to further work on engagement with society and positive integration. The fifth point of the declaration stated, “As full and dynamic citizens aware of their rights as well as their responsibilities, European Muslims have the right to criticize, dissent, and protest, as do all European citizens. This right is in accordance with the democratic processes of Europe and in accordance with their faith. Islam calls upon all Muslims to promote the common good and welfare of society as a whole and prevent what is wrong.”¹⁷

Since 2002 the annual Doha Debates in Qatar have attracted over five hundred leading scholars, practitioners, activists, politicians, lawyers, media specialists, economists, and other professionals to a widely publicized discussion of issues such as terrorism, war, refugees, trade, education, conflict prevention, discrimination, labor rights, interfaith dialogue, and other peacemaking subjects. In November 2006, the Fiqh Council of North

America, the highest-ranking Islamic organization in the United States, issued the Thanksgiving Fatwa of Peace to demonstrate their unyielding commitment to the United States. Among the fatwa's major points were that all acts of terrorism are forbidden in Islam, it is forbidden for a Muslim to cooperate or associate with any individual or group that is involved in any act of terrorism or violence, and it is a civic and religious duty to cooperate with law enforcement authorities to protect the lives of all civilians.¹⁸ The pronouncements of this and other high-profile organizations and conferences have their analogue in the work of many Muslim NGOs and nonprofit organizations working at peacebuilding with little recognition. These include the Wajir Peace and Development Committee in Kenya,¹⁹ the Inter-Faith Mediation Centre in Nigeria, The Centre for Religious Dialogue in Bosnia,²⁰ Program Pendidikan Damai (PPD),²¹ Asian Muslim Action Network (AMAN),²² Edhi Foundation,²³ and the Institute for Inter-Faith Dialogue in Indonesia.²⁴

Effective and lasting peacebuilding strategies and conflict resolution practices in Muslim communities should be constructed within an Islamic framework. Strategies must acknowledge Qur'anic evidence; other texts and narratives; the fields of jurisprudence, philosophy, and theology; and the essential foundational doctrines, creeds, beliefs, and practices of Islam. Islamic peacebuilding efforts at all levels reaffirm five basic principles. First, all of humanity has a common origin and human dignity must be recognized and respected, regardless of religion, ethnicity, or tribe. Second, the diversity among people encapsulates the richness of traditions. Third, Muslims striving to improve the world must cooperate, collaborate, and engage in dialogue with others and among themselves to foster peace. Fourth, to be actively involved with one's tradition means not to lead exclusivistic hermetic lives, but to be engaged with others in a respectful manner. And finally, practicing good deeds and striving toward justice must be present in everyday dealings with all human beings.²⁵ These essential principles do not contradict Western conflict resolution approaches; rather, the astounding similarities and overlapping themes among Islamic and Western peacebuilding efforts allow for more common ground in working toward ending conflict.

Notes

1. See Al-Tayib Zain al-Abidin, ed., *Islam wa tadraf al-dini* [Islam: Refuting the Narrative of Extremism] (Cairo: Maktab al-Sharq al-Dawliya, 2009).
2. The discourse on war and rebellion is usually categorized within the *ahkam al-bughah* literature. See Kahlid Abou El Fadl, *Rebellion and Violence in Islamic Law* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001).

3. By focusing on approaches to peacemaking within Islamic legal thought, the authors do not mean to exclude or devalue other approaches. They readily acknowledge that there are many other disciplines with different interpretative frameworks that can make just as important—if not more important—contributions to Islamic peacemaking.
4. See Pope Benedict XVI, “Faith, Reason, and the University: Memories and Reflections,” speech at the University of Regensburg, September 2006, <http://www.vatican.va/>. See also Organization of Islamic Conference (OIC) response, <http://www.oic-oci.org/press/English/2006>
5. Farhard Daftary, ed., *Intellectual Traditions in Islam* (London: I.B. Taurus Publishers, 2000); Seyyed Hossein Nasr and Oliver Leaman, ed., *History of Islamic Philosophy* (London: I.B. Taurus, 1996); Franz Rosenthal, *Muslim Intellectual and Social History* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 1990); Parviz Morewedge, ed., *Islamic Philosophical Theology* (Albany: SUNY Press, 1979); and Marshall Hodgson, *The Venture of Islam: Conscience and History in a World Civilization* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1974).
6. For etymological, scriptural, and theological definitions of religious peacemaking, see John MacQuarrie, *The Concept of Peace* (London: SCM Press Ltd., 1973); Howard Zehr, *Changing Lenses* (Scottsdale, PA: Herald Press, 1995); Jacques Ellul, *Violence: Reflections from a Christian Perspective* (London: SCM Press Ltd., 1970); Scott Appleby, “Catholic Peacebuilding,” *America*, vol. 189, no. 6 (2003), 1–15, www.americamagazine.com; and Joseph Bock, *Sharpening Conflict Management: Religious Leadership and the Double-Edged Sword* (Westport: Praeger Publishers, 2001).
7. See Michael Walzer, *Just and Unjust War* (New York: Basic Books, 1977), 41–42.
8. See Mohammed Abu-Nimer, *Nonviolence and Peace Building in Islam: Theory and Practice* (Gainesville, FL: University Press of Florida, 2003); Abdul Karim Bangura, *Islamic Peace Paradigms* (Dubuque, IA: Kendall Hunt, 2005); Glenn D. Paige, Chaiwat Satha-Anand, and Sara Gilliatt, eds., *Islam and Nonviolence* (Honolulu: Center for Global Nonviolence Planning Project, Matsunaga Institute for Peace, 1993); Abdul Aziz Said, Nathan Funk, and Ayse Kadayifci, eds., *Peace and Conflict Resolution in Islam: Precept and Practice* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 2001); Ralph Salmi, Cesar Adib Majul, and George K. Tanham, eds., *Islam and Conflict Resolution: Theories and Practices* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1998).
9. Chaiwat Satha-Anand, “The Nonviolent Crescent: Eight Theses on Muslim Nonviolent Actions,” in Paige, Satha-Anand, and Gilliatt, *Islam and Nonviolence*.
10. Satha-Anand, “The Nonviolent Crescent,” 23.
11. See Shaykh Ali Goma’a, *Al-jihad fi’l Islam* (Cairo: Nahdet Misr, 2005); Al-Taftazani, *Nabwa, Madkhal ila l-tasawwuf al-Islami* (Cairo: Dar al-Thaqafa, 1974); and *’Ilm al-kalam wa ba’d mushkilatih* (Cairo: Maktabat al-Qahira al-Haditha, 1966); and Mahmoud Ayoub, *Islam: Faith and Practice* (Ontario: The Open Press Limited, 1989).
12. See Khalid al-Qishtayni, *Nabwa l-la’uf* [Toward Nonviolence] (Amman: Dar al-Karmil, 1984); Abdul Aziz Sachedina, “Justifications of Violence in Islamic Traditions” in J. Partout Burns, eds., *War and Its Discontents: Pacifism and Quietism in the Abrahamic Traditions* (Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press, 1996); and Iftikar H. Malik, “Islamic Discourse on Jihad, War, and Violence,” *Journal of South Asian and Middle Eastern Studies*, vol. 21, no. 4 (1984), 47–78.
13. Ghazi bin Muhammad bin Talal, *True Islam and the Islamic Consensus on the Amman Message* (Amman: Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, 2006), 103; for the complete version, see appendix 1.

14. Bin Talal, *True Islam*, 104.
15. Bin Talal, *True Islam*, 117; see points 3f and 5 in appendix 2.
16. Bin Talal, *True Islam*, 119.
17. Bin Talal, *True Islam*, 154.
18. For the complete version, see the Fiqh Council of North America, www.fiqhcouncil.org.
19. See chapter 8 of this volume.
20. Tsjearl Bouta, Ayse Kadayifci-Orellan, and Mohammed Abu-Nimer, *Faith-Based Peace-Building: Mapping and Analysis of Christian, Muslim, and Multi-faith Actors* (The Hague: Netherlands Institute of International Relations “Clingendael,” 2005).
21. See chapter 9 of this volume.
22. See the Asian Muslim Action Network, www.arf-asia.org/aman.php.
23. See the Edhi Foundation, www.edhifoundation.com.
24. See the Institute for Interfaith Dialogue in Indonesia, www.interfidei.or.id/index2.php.
25. For Qur’anic verses pertaining to these themes, see 17:70, 4:1, 30:22, 10:99, 2:256, 17:107, 60:8, 31:23, 88:25–26, 42:48, 5:8, 4:135, 6:98, 11:188, 42:15, and 30:22.