From Conversion to Conversation: Interfaith Dialogue in Post 9-11 America

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The twentieth century witnessed a dramatic increase in the migration of Muslims to American shores. In the past century, Islam has become an integral part of the American religious landscape, and gradually Muslims have become a visible part of the fabric of American society. Even though the Muslim community has been present in America since the late nineteenth century, there was limited integration with non-Muslims before the events of September 11, 2001.

However, in the past three years Muslims have recognized that they cannot afford to live in impregnable fortresses and that living in a pluralistic milieu requires active engagement with the other. The events of September 11 also proved to the American Muslim community, if any proof was needed, that pluralism in America is a social reality from which it cannot escape. In fact, many Muslims have become more visible, vocal, and extrovert while others have stressed their American rather than homeland identities.

Muslims have also realized that because of the activities of terrorists, both their Islamic identity and their American citizenship are at stake. The Muslim community has acknowledged that the silent majority syndrome has to end simply because Muslim acquiesce once has encouraged an extremist expression of Islam. It is the extremists who have spoken on behalf of Islam as their acts of violence have drowned the silent voices of the Muslim majority. Thus, many Muslims have felt the need to integrate themselves in the mainstream of American society so as to make their voices heard. This indigenization of American Islam represents a silent revolution in which many Muslims have been engaged since September 11, 2001.

The Construction of an American Islamic Civic Identity

The process of the indigenization of American Islam is intertwined with the construction of a distinctly American Islamic civic identity. This process has expressed itself in different forms. Muslims have joined forces with various peace and anti-racist movements. Muslim groups have also been involved in various social programs such as food drives and providing help to homeless Americans.[1] For example, in October 2003, a new campaign called Ramadhan action for human rights was launched in Denver. In Duluth, Minnesota, Muslims have raised funds to support social services, including housing and health care initiatives for the poor. In addition, since September 2001, various Islamic centers have facilitated "open-mosque" hours and have tried to become more "people friendly" by encouraging their non-Muslim neighbors to visit the mosques.

In some cases, Muslims have expressed their patriotism in more tangible ways. American flags have been visible outside mosques, on Muslim houses, and in cars. The American Muslim civic identity can be also discerned from a recent advertisement placed by The Council of American Islamic Relations (CAIR) in some newspapers. It shows a Muslim girl wearing a headscarf, stating quite proudly, "I am an American, I am a Muslim." Interestingly, the American identity precedes the Islamic. Rather than focusing on American foreign policy, many Muslims now tend to concentrate more on reconstituting their identity as American Muslims. Increasingly, domestic rather than foreign issues have become very important for American Muslims. In all probability, this is because as the second generation of Muslims in America identify with and assimilate in American culture, they develop a sense of patriotism leading to a greater politicization of the community and a sense of American national consciousness. Furthermore, Muslims have realized that unless they become more vocal, they could become foreigners in their adopted homeland.

The terrorist attacks of September 11 revived such prejudices against Islam as that it is a religion that promotes violence and that Muslims are inherently militant and irrational people. In addition, the American global war on terror and the invasion of Iraq have invigorated these stereotypes and suspicions against Muslims, especially those of Middle Eastern origin. Furthermore, the vitriolic attacks on Islam and the Qurʾān by some Christian fundamentalists have clearly exacerbated the current conflict in America. They have posited and projected Islam as inherently violent and incompatible with Western values and norms. Such destructive mythification is often born in spaces of non-contact, adversarial contact, or ignorance. It therefore becomes imperative

that Muslims engage in dialogue to counter such depictions of Islam and Muslims.

Dialogue Since September 11, 2001

Sulayman Nyang defines dialogue as "a process by which members of the two religious communities try to build bridges between their respective groups as they jointly and separately grapple with the basic issues of life, individually and collectively, in the United States and seek to bring about greater understanding between the two communities not only in terms of their different definitions of self and community, but also in terms of their attitudes toward each other's beliefs, rituals and festivals, and behavioral patterns."[2]

In the past two years, American Muslims have recognized the need to express themselves through a properly articulated intellectual discourse so that they may be both physically and intellectually visible. They have sought to go beyond the history of hostility, caricature, and power struggles that have characterized relations between Christians and Muslims in the past. It is correct to state that the Muslims' struggle in America has been not only to co-exist with the other, but also to make themselves comprehensible in the American milieu, to de-mythify and de-code Islam and to challenge its negative characterization in the media.

Especially since September 2001, both Muslims and Christians in America have realized that it is better to speak with, rather than about, the other. The increased dialogue and interaction between Muslims and Christians represents a significant paradigm shift, a shift from attempts at "conversion of" to those of "conversation with" the other. It has to be remembered that for most members of the Muslim community, dialogue between people of different faiths in an environment of mutual respect and acceptance is a relatively new phenomenon. In their own countries, Muslims did not, generally speaking, feel the need to dialogue or converse with the other. Hence, engaging in dialogue with non-Muslims is a relatively new experience for most Muslims, since many of them are accustomed to preaching Islam and to refuting the beliefs of the other.

The need to reach out and engage the wider American community has meant that the genre of religious programs offered at many Islamic centers has been re-structured to be more ecumenical and broader in outlook. For example, there is a greater emphasis on interfaith dialogue at the Islamic House of Wisdom (IHW) in Dearborn, Michigan. The IHW's ad book of 2001 carries a message from the imam of the center, Muhammad ʿAli Ilahi. In this he states, "Our friends and co-workers, the classmates of our children, our neighbors, our bosses, our elected officials — all these need to be educated to the truth and beauty of Islam in order that the Muslim community be

effectively integrated into American life. We need to be educated ourselves, in order that we may distinguish between insulating ourselves from the secular influences of American society and isolating ourselves from the rest of the world. That we cannot do, because we have a responsibility to propagate our faith, which isolation makes impossible."

The Nature of Interfaith Dialogue

According to Martin Buber, "true dialogue expresses an essential aspect of the human spirit, when we listen and respond to one another with an authenticity that forges a bond between us."[3] Dialogue has become a tool that fosters a better understanding between different faith groups, and promotes peaceful co-existence. However, dialogue needs to progress beyond negating misconceptions and understanding the beliefs and praxis of others. Dialogue is also interwoven with understanding in a fundamental way what it means to believe in a particular religious tradition, and to attempt to enter the heart of the partner in dialogue. Those who engage in dialogue not only relate their tradition but also what is meaningful in it, how they experience and relate to the sacred within their tradition.

An essential component in dialogue is the willingness to reexamine one's faith in the light of how others relate to their tradition and the ability to strengthen or adjust one's own engagement and interaction with the sacred based on the experiences of the other. Understanding the faith of others should strengthen rather than weaken a person's commitment to his or her tradition.

For example, I recently read that when Professor Cantwell Smith was asked if he was a Christian, he responded, "Ask my neighbor." That short yet profound reply made me reflect on my social responsibilities, especially in view of the fact that the festive season is approaching. We become enriched in our own faith tradition by interacting with the other. Dialogue between religions does not only entail relating the intensity or depth of our own faith but also witnessing and growing in it while understanding and respecting the faith of the other. Students in my comparative religions class, which I offer at the University of Denver, have often remarked that their faith and commitment to their own religious tradition has been strengthened by learning about other religions.

In this context, it is important to note that the etymology of the word "dialogue" is *dia* in Greek, referring to the act of seeing through.[4] Dialogue should empower us to 'see through' the faith of others, and enable us to re-examine our assumptions of the other based on the other's definition of itself. Each group is able to better express what it believes and, in the process, to understand more deeply the meaning of what it means to be committed to a

particular faith tradition. The process of self-definition also requires that each group express itself based on its own terms and for the partner in dialogue to accept and respect that self-definition. In the process, our preconceived notions of the other are challenged and often dramatically altered. This is the first step to moving beyond the stereotypes and misrepresentations of the past.[5] It is improper for Muslims, for example, to assume that their often-distorted image and understanding of Christianity is how Christians understand themselves. The ability to change one's views and perceptions about the other is an important component if interaction between people of different religious backgrounds is to lead to a more peaceful co-existence between them. The purpose of engaging in interfaith dialogue is not to reach doctrinal agreement but to increase sensitivity to others. As the Parliament of the World's Religions affirmed in Chicago in 1993, "The earth cannot be changed for the better unless the consciousness of the individual is changed first."[6]

Dialogue provides access to windows of understanding of how others define themselves and challenges us to grow in our own faith through the experience of the other. It necessitates a shift in paradigm, asking us to embrace those we have previously excluded or demonized. We tend to exclude or marginalize others in different ways. These range from assimilation, abandonment, indifference, and domination of the other.[7] Exclusion is also conjoined with the distortion of rather than simply ignorance of the other. As Miroslav Volf states, "it (exclusion) is a willful misconstruction, not mere failure of knowledge."[8]

Exclusion often entails cutting the bonds of humanity that connect us as moral human beings and can generate a wide range of emotional responses, from hatred to indifference, and even the cursing of or killing of the other. The other emerges as an inferior being that either must be assimilated by being made like the self or subjugated to the self.[9]

Dialogue is the first step toward accommodating or making space within oneself for the other. The challenge for both Muslims and Christians when they converse is to seek opportunities for interpretations that can make a community see the enemy in a new way. It is essential that we move away from defining ourselves over and above an enemy "other." This is an important measure in establishing a peaceful relationship. In this sense, I believe we need to go beyond tolerating or understanding the other.[10] More than ever, there is a need to embrace the other. This suggests a different function of dialogue, one that can bring the hearts, rather than just the minds, of people together. Especially after September 11, dialogue has become an effective act of affirmation, of listening, and of different hearts coming together. Muslims and non-Muslims have met to share their experiences of September 2001 and to engage one another so as to help construct a more humane and just world.[11]

Dialogue in the Community

For religious dialogue to be fruitful, it should not be confined to closed circles or groups of people. Most community members are not aware of the dialogues that occur or the results of these dialogues. It is also important that religious communities, rather than just scholars, talk to each other. When I am invited to dialogue, I encourage members of the Muslim community to join me. When refreshments are served after the dialogue, Muslims and Christians build bonds of friendship that are often renewed at various times during the year. Those who attend the dialogue get to know members from another community in a deep and personal way; they become real people and not simply representatives of certain other religious traditions. Peaceful coexistence is only possible when we no longer see a group as the other but as a concrete human community with ancient values and norms. When communities interact and talk, the fruits of interfaith dialogue can endure well past the initial dialogue itself.

One of the most moving experiences that I have had in an interfaith event was when the Muslim community in Denver was invited to an Episcopalian church. At the time for prayer, the call to prayer was recited in the cathedral and a local imam led the prayer. Many of our Christian friends were visibly moved both by the *adhan* (call to prayer) and the prayer and commented that witnessing Muslims pray in a cathedral was a very spiritual experience for them.

It is important to comprehend the multi-faceted dimensions of dialogue. Increasingly, dialogue takes place not only in conferences but also in schools, work places, and even in the neighborhood. Members of communities, not just scholars, talk about their beliefs and violence in the name of religion. It is important that those who dialogue are connected to their own communities, or the dialogue will be confined to a select group within a community. For dialogue to be productive, its results must be felt by the wider community, not just by the scholars who are engaged in the conversation. It is not possible to have a real understanding of religious traditions and the dynamics that permeate them if those who dialogue are not actively involved in their communities. It is essential that the participants of the dialogue relay their experiences and the views of their partners in dialogue to members of their own communities.

In Denver, dialogue between the different religious groups is sometimes broadcast live on local television stations. This is an effective and important way to expose the local community to the beliefs and practices of other religious traditions. In some instances, viewers have even been invited to call in to the programs to voice their opinions or ask questions from the panelists.

The Challenges of Dialogue

Interfaith dialogue is also fraught with challenges that need to be addressed. Essentially, trust is an important element when human beings meet to discuss and share their personal beliefs. Muslims have yet to be convinced that dialogue is a way for reconciliation or expressing their beliefs. Given the history of Christian missionary work in Muslim countries, many Muslims see dialogue as a subtle form of evangelization. For example, in January 2004 the Kanuga Conference was scheduled to convene a Christian-Muslim reconciliation conference in North Carolina. To allay the fears of the local Muslim community, I was asked to write a letter assuring Muslims that the purpose of the conference was to reach a better understanding of rather than convert the other. Rather than treating their partners in dialogue as a threat that should be repudiated, it is important that Muslims treat them as a challenge that has to be understood. If Muslims continue to see the outside world as a threat, they will search for excuses, rather than solutions, to their isolation in the American milieu.

Just as Muslims feel that they are misunderstood and need to propagate the “correct and true Islam,” they, in turn, must undertake to understand the beliefs and practices of the other. When I initially offered a comparative religions class called “Judaism, Christianity, and Islam,” I noticed that many Muslim students did not enroll in it for fear that they might be influenced by the other monotheistic religions. It was only when I assured them that the class would educate them about other religions that some Muslim students felt comfortable enough to enroll. Interestingly, Christian and Jewish students showed no such apprehension. Within Muslim circles, there is a paucity of study groups to inform Muslims on the beliefs and practices of other monotheistic religions.

One of the major obstacles to reaching an understanding of the other is when we compare our ideals with the realities of the other. Viewed in this context, the violence perpetrated by members of one party is often contrasted with the ideals of peace and love of the other. A more appropriate basis of comparison is to contrast our ideals with theirs or our realities with the realities of those with whom we dialogue. When communities compare their respective realities, they often discover that both of them have been unjust to the other and, in the name of religion, have committed atrocious acts. Indeed, disputes between groups often arise when one party believes that it is the only injured group or victim and refuses to accept its role in the conflict. Dialogue provides the challenge and opportunity for both Muslims and non-Muslims to acknowledge that they have both inflicted and suffered much pain. For this to occur, dialogue needs to go beyond merely understanding the

other; it has also to provide the platform for people to acknowledge and experience the pain of the other. Since September 11, Muslims have tried to make others aware of what it means to be a Muslim in America, and that the demonization of Islam, increasing surveillance of Muslims, and restriction of civil liberties, especially of Arab Muslims, has been extremely painful for them. In particular, Muslims have expressed concern about the rise of Islamophobia at home due to events abroad. Muslims have also tried to express the ramifications of the Patriot Acts and other counter-terrorism measures. As they relate their experiences of the past two years, their partners in dialogue have both communicated and internalized the pain. As a friend commented, “By internalizing the other’s pain, dialogue enables me to view the other as a brother.”

Other factors challenge the Muslim community’s capacity to actively engage in dialogue. The arrival of newer migrants has impinged on the American Muslim community as it experiences Islam mainly through the phenomenon of “imported Islam” generally highly resistant to change. Newer immigrants tend to revive traditional norms and impose a conservative and extraneous expression of Islam. In addition, immigrants also bring with them a more intense form of Islam, one whose discourse is frequently more polemic, re-asserting thereby the traditional demarcating lines between Islam and other religions. As I have discussed elsewhere, increased migration of the Muslim community has also engendered increased tensions between the Sunnis and Shiʿis in America.[12] Resistance to engaging in dialogue within the American Muslim community can also be attributed to the relatively young age of the centers. Since most Muslim religious centers in America have been established recently, Muslims have used their limited financial resources to establish and consolidate their centers rather than to build bridges to the outside community.

Dialogue and the Challenge of Diversity

For dialogue to be meaningful, it is also important to convey to the other that religious space is contested by many factions and that there are many perspectives within each religious tradition. Hence, the partners in dialogue represent just one, rather than all, of these positions. The Muslim community, for example, constitutes an assembly of diverse actors and agents, interests, beliefs, values, and ideas that often differ and are in conflict with each other. An exposition of how diverse Islam really is will challenge the myth of a homogeneous and static Muslim world and will demonstrate the ‘rainbow nature’ of Islam. Furthermore, acknowledging the diversity and plurality of views held within one’s own tradition is indicative of that tradition’s ability to tolerate and accept views that are not considered normative.

Exposure to different interpretations within the Islamic world can educate non-Muslims not only about Islam but also about the differences within the Muslim community and the hermeneutical tradition within Islam. It is crucial that those who dialogue describe and explain what they represent in their religious families. It is also important to know to whom one is speaking and to whom one is not speaking. Inter-religious dialogue should make it possible for each partner to better understand the differences and conflicts that are present in other traditions.[13] Such an exposition would challenge the idea of Islam as a singular and undifferentiated phenomenon.

Furthermore, it is also important to realize that not only are there different and nuanced interpretations of Islam, there is also a wide variety of Muslims in America. Whereas early Muslim immigrants came mainly from the Arab world, post war immigrants represent a wide array of linguistic, cultural, and national origins. Increased immigration from various parts of the world has resulted in the American Muslim community becoming more fragmented as bonds of common faith are replaced by efficacious ties to common origins, ethnicity and culture.

It is tempting to delude oneself into believing that when they are engaged in dialogue, Muslims are talking to Christians and that each group is faithfully representing its tradition. Thus, some would believe that the *whole* of the Christian or Muslim world is represented in a dialogue. This is, of course, very misleading, because the majority group claims to represent the real or orthodox Islam. In fact, here lies the danger in dialogue, for it often marginalizes minority groups whose voices remain unheard in such conversations. Most of the dialogue in America occurs between Protestant Christians and Sunni Muslims, excluding minority groups within each tradition. Thus, the dissenting views of such groups remain unheard. It is common for one group to want to continue the dialogue with a partner that it feels comfortable talking to. This further perpetuates the conversation between dominant groups and alienates the voices of minority groups. One of the challenges of dialogue is to seek out and engage different groups, even though they may not represent the "official" or mainstream Islam.

Action-Oriented Dialogue

When people engage in dialogue, they soon realize that they hold a great number of convictions and values in common and face similar difficulties and challenges. Recognition of common values and human concerns allows a group to work with others. This is because peaceful relations between human beings are grounded on a community's construction of an order based on egalitarianism, justice, and a shared concern for the moral and social well-being of all its citizens. In their interaction with the other, Muslims need to

engage Americans as part of the greater human family that has emerged from the same common origins.[14] The principles of universal ethics and moral values as enunciated by the Qur'ān entail that human beings unite in their civil roles, so that, inspired by shared principles, they jointly uphold human concerns. The challenge for American Muslims is to translate and implement the universal ideals of the Qur'ān to the contemporary American scene.

Given the realities after the events of September 11, 2001, dialogue can no longer be confined to a room where partners talk about peace and understanding. It must also confront the realities of hate, discrimination, and violence in society. Collaborative actions have become more important as Muslims realize that conversations with their non-Muslim friends ought to lead to shared commitment so as to address humanitarian issues that concern both communities. This sense of shared commitment and concern to address humanitarian issues has resulted in dialogue in action rather than mere conversation.[15]

Generally, Muslims in America are freer to express themselves than those living in most Muslim countries. Thus, American Muslims need to unite with their co-religionists and speak out against injustices perpetrated by various Muslim governments against minorities, anti-Christian riots, and acts of violence in places like Nigeria and Pakistan. In the past two years, CAIR and other Muslim institutions in America have been more vocal in their denunciation of acts of terrorism committed by Muslims in different parts of the world. CAIR has also condemned the unjust policies of several Muslim states. It is also important that Muslims go beyond the classical bifurcation of the abode of Islam and the abode of war. They need to articulate a theory of international relations that will incorporate notions of dignity, freedom of conscience, rights of minorities, and gender equality based on the notion of universal moral values. Muslims also feel that their Christian partners need to speak against injustices meted out to various Muslim groups, such as the occupation in Palestine and the suppression of the rights of Muslims and their civil liberties in America after September 2001.

There are many examples of action-oriented dialogue. Immediately after September 2001, many Christians risked their lives so as to protect mosques from being vandalized. On many university campuses, American women wore headscarves as a mark of solidarity with Muslim women. In Toronto, a local Shiʿa mosque was located next to a synagogue. Since the mosque and the temple had limited parking space, they decided to share their parking lots. The dividing line between the two lots was popularly known as the "Gaza strip." In 1990, during the first Gulf War, the shared parking arrangement led to the two communities visiting and talking to each other. They have even led to cooperation in various fields and projects. The communities participated in

many humanitarian projects, such as providing food and shelter for the homeless. Even the youths of the two communities started talking to each other. They shared their experiences on how to deal with peer pressure, how to attract the youth back to their places of worship, and ways of engaging senior citizens within the respective communities. In fact, when some anti-Muslim graffiti was put on the walls of the mosque, members of the Jewish community helped erase the offensive material. In 1995, to reflect and publicize the spirit of co-operation and collaborative action between the two communities, a documentary aptly called "A Lot to Share" was broadcast across Canada. Action-oriented dialogue that is constructed on the basis of kinship and collaborative works increases communal friendship and instills a sense of shared responsibility with others.

Words and dialogue cannot, by themselves, lead to reconciliation. We need to create institutions for dialogue, to institute cultural exchange programs, and create platforms for a common study of Muslim-Christian history and theology.[16] In particular, shared study and other modes of reconciliation can yield new intimacies and create empathy for the other.[17]

Themes in Dialogue

Given the commonly negative depiction of Islam and Muslims in the media, it is important, I believe, that the conversations in dialogue emphasize the history of Muslim co-existence with the other so as to negate the stereotypical images and myths that many hold. It is important to remember that extremist strands exist in all major religious traditions and that just as the Reverend Jerry Falwell does not represent the whole of Christianity, Usama bin Laden does not speak on behalf of all or even most Muslims.[18]

Historically, Islam has exhibited great tolerance to members of other faith communities such as in Spain, India, the holy lands, Turkey, Africa, and Indonesia. To portray Islam as intrinsically violent and incompatible with Western values is to ignore Muslim engagement with and contribution to Western civilization. The tendency to view Islam through hostile lenses distorts the fact that Islam has a rich cultural heritage and precepts that coexisted with and protected the other. Such anecdotes recounted in Christian-Muslim encounters serve two purposes: they not only destroy the myth of Islam as an intrinsically violent and militant religion but they also provide a paradigm for co-existence and collaborative action between the people of the two faith groups.

An important dimension in dialogue is the integrity and honesty of the participants. It is vital that all the religious traditions be involved in a kind of self-criticism and indicate to their partners in dialogue that religious positions in their own traditions are continuously being re-evaluated. Muslims, for

example, need to show that, especially after the events of September 2001, they are engaged in a process of self-critique and are confronted with the challenge of contextual hermeneutics in dealing with the pronouncements of the Qurʾān on issues like warfare, human rights, and freedom of conscience and expression. Muslim scholars and jurists have to engage in hermeneutic and interpretive exercises to provide a coherent re-evaluation of classical formulations and to reassert the Qurʾānic ecumenical and inclusivist vision of peace.

Muslims need to differentiate more clearly between sacred scripture and the later exegesis that is imbedded in many sacred texts. Scholars need to explain to the Muslim community that much of the exegetical literature was formulated when Muslims were in conflict with Christians. Thus, there is a need to reformulate or reinterpret the traditional exegesis, otherwise Muslims will continue to perpetuate that conflict. This exercise is contingent on recognizing that Muslims are not bound to erstwhile juridical or exegetical hermeneutics. Hence, there is a need for Muslims to separate the voice of God from the voice of human beings, and to differentiate between the Qurʾānic vision and the socio-political context in which that vision was interpreted and articulated by classical and medieval exegetes.

The tension between the peaceful and militant strains of Islam can be resolved only through reexamining the specific contexts of the rulings and the ways in which they were conditioned by the times. This re-interpretive task demands that Muslims re-evaluate the classical and medieval juridical corpus, even though some may construe this as a kind of disloyalty toward their own community.

Such topical issues, when discussed with non-Muslims, are important in conveying the view that far from being a static and rigid tradition, there is much discourse within the Muslim community and that the community is attempting to distance itself from the extremist articulation of Islam. The recently published book *Progressive Muslims* is a clear attempt to seek alternative interpretations of Islam and refute the views of those who present a static and monolithic Islam. It is only through such self-critique and an admission of past failings that dialogue can generate both an understanding of and empathy for the other. In this way, dialogue can attract the mind and the heart of the other.

Endnotes

1. A good example of this is the social programs of the Muslim Intent on Learning and Activism (MILA), a group established in Denver in 2002. Among the many outreach activities it performs are providing food to indigent and homeless Americans.

2. Sulayman Nyang, "Challenges Facing Christian-Muslim Dialogue in the United States," in *Christian-Muslim Encounters*, ed. Y. Haddad, 328.

3. Douglas Johnston, *Faith-Based Diplomacy: Trumping Realpolitik* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), 56.

4. *Ibid.*, 57.

5. For rules that govern inter-faith dialogue, see M. Darrol Bryant, "Overcoming History: On the Possibilities of Muslim-Christian Dialogue," in *Muslim-Christian Dialogue:* ed. M. Darrol Bryant and S. A. Ali, 34.

6. David Chappell, "Interreligious Dialogue, Globalization, and Human Rights: Buddhist Reflections on Interdependence and the Declaration," in *Human Rights and Responsibilities in the World Religions*, eds. Joseph Runzo, Nancy Martin, and Arvinda Sharma (Oxford: Oneworld, 2003), 191.

7. Miroslav Volf, *Exclusion and Embrace, A Theological Exploration of Identity, Otherness and Reconciliation* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1996), 75. On the different forms that exclusion and othering can take see Marc Gopin, *Holy War, Holy Peace: How Religion Can Bring Peace to the Middle East* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 67.

8. Miroslav Volf, *Exclusion*, 76.

9. *Ibid.*, 67.

10. The root of the term tolerance comes from the medieval toxicology and pharmacology, marking how much poison a body could tolerate before it would succumb to death. See Omid Safi, "Introduction: The Times are A-Changin; — A Muslim Quest for Justice, Gender Equality, and Pluralism," in *Progessive Muslims: On Justice, Gender and Pluralism*, ed. Omid Safi (Oxford: Oneworld, 2003), 24.

11. On specific steps toward building new relationship see Marc Gopin, *Holy War*, chapter 10.

12. Liyakatali Takim, "Foreign Influences on American Shiʿism," *The Muslim World*, 90 (Fall, 2000).

13. Tariq Ramadan, *Western Muslims and the Future of Islam* (Oxford, NY: Oxford University Press, 2004), 209.

14. See Qurʾān verse 4:1.

15. See the collaborative social programs that I discussed above.

16. See the details cited in Jacques Waardenburg, *Muslims and Others*, 438–41.

17. On the forms of reconciliation see Marc Gopin, *Holy War,* chapter 7.

18. On examples of violence in different religious traditions see Mark Juergensmeyer, *Terror in the Mind of God: The Global Rise of Religious Violence* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000).