



Nonviolence and Peace Building in Islam: Theory and Practice

Mohammed Abu-Nimer

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"Most approaches to violence or its opposite in Islam try to establish that the religion of the Prophet is one or the other, and thus get nowhere. Avoiding this trap, Abu-Nimer has given us a wide-ranging and thoroughly researched study that will be of interest to scholars and of use to peace builders."--Michael Nagler, University of California, Berkeley

Written by a Muslim scholar, lecturer, and trainer in conflict resolution, this book examines the largely unexplored theme of nonviolence and peace building in Islamic religion, tradition, and culture. After comprehensively reviewing the existing studies on this topic, Abu-Nimer presents solid evidence for the existence of principles and values in the Qur'an, Hadith, and Islamic tradition that support the application of nonviolence and peace building strategies in resolving disputes.

He addresses the challenges that face the utilization of peace building and nonviolent strategies in an Islamic context and explores these challenges on both local and global levels. Through a discussion of the structural and cultural obstacles to peace building and nonviolence, the author explains the gap between Islamic values and ideals and their applications in day-to-day reality.

To illustrate the actual practice of these values and principles of peace building, the book analyzes three case studies, drawing from the political, sociocultural, and professional arenas. The initial case study discusses the First Palestinian Intifada; it is analyzed as a nonviolent political movement in which Islamic cultural and religious values and rituals played an important role in mobilizing communities to join the movement. The second case study focuses on the role that such values play in traditional Arab dispute-resolution practices such as Sulha (mediation, arbitration, and reconciliation); it extracts lessons and principles used by Arab traditional elders who peacefully resolve family, interpersonal, and community disputes. The third case study discusses the obstacles and challenges facing professionals who provide peace-building and conflict-resolution training and initiatives within the Islamic world.

Combining theory with practical applications of peace building, conflict resolution, and nonviolent initiatives in Islamic communities, Abu-Nimer provides a framework for further developing and utilizing these principles in an Islamic context.

Mohammed Abu-Nimer is associate professor in the International Peace and Conflict Resolution Program at American University, Washington, D.C., where he is also director of the Conflict Resolution Skills Institute.

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