Call for Papers

International Workshop on

**Islamic Peace Ethics**

Legitimate and Illegitimate Violence in Contemporary Islamic Thought

16-17 October 2015 ithf, Hamburg, Germany

With:

- Prof. Dr. Dirk Ansorge, Philosophisch-Theologische Hochschule Sankt Georgen, Frankfurt a.M., Germany

- Prof. Dr. Gerhard Beestermöller, Luxembourg School of Religion and Society, Luxembourg

- Prof. Dr. Seyed Hassan Eslami, University of Religions and Denominations, Qom, Iran

- Prof. Dr. Sohail Hashmi, Mount Holyoke College, USA

- Prof. Dr. Robert Gleave, University of Exeter, UK

- Prof. Dr. Heinz-Gerhard Justenhoven, ithf, Hamburg, Germany

- Prof. Dr. Oliver Leaman, University of Kentucky, USA

- Prof. Dr. Jamal Malik, Universität Erfurt, Germany

- Prof. Dr. Abdul Aziz Said, Mohammed Said Farsi Chair of Islamic Peace, American University, Washington, USA

- Prof. Dr. Udo Steinbach, Humboldt-Viadrina Governance Platform, Berlin, Germany

**Proposal**

The increasing violent conflicts in the Islamic countries in recent decades as well as the international conflicts that are justified seemingly by Islam raise the urgent question about the Islamic discourses on violence: How is violence defined, legitimized or delegitimized in Islamic tradition? And what are the sources, methodologies, and arguments in Islamic discourses on violence?

There is a huge literature about violence and Islam in Western scholarship. However, this literature is usually accused of misunderstanding, oversimplification and manipulation.[1] If Islam is,

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1   Ahmad Al-Dawoody, *The Islamic Law of War: Justifications and Regulations*, New York: Palgrave, 2011, p. 9-10; Onder Bakircioglu, Islam and Warfare: Context and Compatibility with International Law. New York: Routledge, 2014.

as Reuven Firestone holds, "perhaps the most misunderstood religion to the West, and many stereotypes still hinder clarity about its tenets and practices,"[2] *jihad* is according to James Turner Johnson the most misunderstood topic. Johnson writes: "between Western and Islamic culture there is possibly no other single issue at the same time as divisive or as poorly understood as that of jihad."[3]

Two main shortcomings of the current scholarship on war and peace in Islam are its focus on jihad as topic and its focus on the Islamic legal tradition as the almost exclusive normative field in Islamic tradition. There are for example competing debates about the nature of jihad and weather its is as equivalent to the just war theory or holy war in Western-Christian tradition.[4] However, these debates, regardless of their conclusion, all focus on jihad in *sharia,* the Islamic legal tradition, or *fiqh* (the discipline that studies sharia). There is little methodological debate about the nature of sharia, the general Islamic normative system as well as the normative disciplines in the Islamic knowledge culture. This legalistic character of Islamic normative debates has been interpreted by some authors as a legacy of colonialism and Orientalism.[5] Some other scholars has remarked already this problem in other applied normative fields. Abdulaziz Sachedina, for example, criticizes the legal-based approach to Islamic bioethics and plead for development of an systematic approach to *Islamic normative issues* with elaborated philosophical and theological foundations.[6] It is indeed a necessary introduction to any Islamic normative debate first to have a overview about the Islamic knowledge culture, the general normative system in Islamic tradition as well as the diverse normative sources and disciplines in the tradition. Therefore, a study on Islamic peace ethics should first propose questions such as; Which sources, for example reason and scripture, do Muslim scholars use in their argumentation? Which normative discipline(s) - for example jurisprudence (*fiqh*), ethics in theology, sufism or philosophy?- should be taken into account in a normative research on peace and war? What is sharia/fiqh and how can we locate it in the whole Islamic normative system and knowledge culture? What are the relationships among different Islamic

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2    Reuven Firestone, *Jihād: The Origin of Holy War in Islam.* New York: Oxford University Press, 1999, p. 13.
3    James Turner Johnson, *The Holy War Idea in Western and Islamic Traditions.* Pennsylvania: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1997, p. 19.
4    See for example: Majid Khadduri, *War and Peace in the Law of Islam.* Baltimore, MD.: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1955; Sohail H. Hashmi, "Interpreting the Islamic Ethics of War and Peace," in: Sohail H. Hashmi, Jack Miles (eds.) *Islamic Political Ethics Civil Society, Pluralism, and Conflict.* Ethikon Series in Comparative Ethics. Princeton University Press, 2002, PP. 194- 216; Ahmad Al-Dawoody, *The Islamic Law of War: Justifications and Regulations*, New York: Palgrave, 2011; Onder Bakircioglu, Islam and Warfare: Context and Compatibility with International Law. New York: Routledge, 2014; Rudolph Peters, *Islam and Colonialism: The Doctrine of Jihad in Modern History.* The Hague: Mouton, 1979.
5    Wael Hallaq. "The Quest for Origins or Doctrine? Islamic Legal Studies as Colonialist Discourse," *UCLA Journal of Islamic and Near Eastern Law*, 2, 1 (2002–03): 1-31, 1-2.
6    See for example: Abdulaziz Sachedina. *Islamic biomedical ethics: principles and application*. Oxford University Press, 2009; Abdulaziz Sachedina. "Islamic Ethics: Differentiations." In: Stanley Hauerwas and Samuel Wells (eds.) *The Blackwell companion to Christian ethics*. John Wiley & Sons, 2011, pp. 254-267.

normative disciplines as well as their relationship to non-normative Islamic sciences?

The workshop aims to discuss these questions regarding contemporary Islamic peace ethics with a international, interdisciplinary, and interreligious team. Prof. Soahil Hashmi, Mount Holyoke College, USA, expert in Islamic international law and leading scholar in jihad in Islamic legal tradition as well as Prof. Abdul Aziz Said, the head of Chair for Islamic Peace at American University in Washington, who tries to go beyond jihad and legal tradition and searches for peace resources in diverse Islamic traditions including mysticism, are among the participants.[7] In addition, scholars from other related fields including Islamic ethics (Prof. Seyyed Hassan Eslami, Iran), Islamic studies (Prof. Robert Gleave, UK; Prof. Jamal Malik, Erfurt; Prof. Udo Steinbach, Berlin), Islamic philosophy (Prof. Oliver Leaman, USA), Islamic peace studies (Prof. Abdul Aziz Said, USA) and Christian theology (Prof. Dirk Ansorge, Frankfurt; Prof. Gerhard Beestermöller, Luxembourg School of Religion and Society, Luxembourg; Prof. Justenhoven, ithf) will participate at the workshop as paper presenters or discussants. Twelve junior researchers from different countries and disciplines will enrich the workshop by presenting direct methodological-theoretical questions on Islamic peace ethics or presenting case studies about leading Muslim scholars' argument on violence from Indonesia (Habib Rizieq Syihab) to Pakistan (Ghamidi), Russia, Iran-Iraq (Ayatollah al-Khui), Syria (Jawdat Said), and Lebanon (Mohammad Husayn Fadlullah). Different positions from jihadist Islamists (Habib Rizieq Syihab) to pacifists (Jawdat Said) are included.

Through studying the peace ethics of these contemporary Muslim scholars the research team will try to analyze the methodology, argument structure, and resources of these scholars on violence. This workshop should help then to categorize the different methodologies in Islamic peace ethics, determine the shortcomings and richnesses of the debate as well as to find new possibilities on dealing with violence in Islamic knowledge culture. A main guiding concept in doing so will be the question of the Islamic normative system and Islamic knowledge culture. This approach should help to evaluate the dominate legalist approach in Islamic peace ethics. The result of this workshop will contribute to the long-term goal of the ongoing research project on Islamic peace ethics at ithf (July 2014-June 2017) that aims (re)locating of violence question in Islamic normative system through rethinking *fiqh*/*sharia*.

The presented papers at the workshop will be published after peer-review in an edited

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7   See for example: Abdul Aziz Said, Nathan C. Funk, and Ayse S. Kadayifci (eds.). *Peace and Conflict Resolution in Islam: Precept and Practice*. Lanham, Md: University Press of America, 2001; Mohammed Abu-Nimer. *Nonviolence and Peacebuilding in Islam: Theory and Practice*. Gainesville, Fl.: University of Florida Press, 2003; Qamar-ul Huda (ed.). *Crescent and Dove: Peace and Conflict Resolution in Islam*. Washington, D.C.: United States Institute of Peace Press, 2010; Nathan C. Funk and Abdul Aziz Said. *Islam and Peacemaking in the Middle East*. Boulder, Colo.: Lynn Rienner Publishers, 2008.

volume at the book series of *Studien zur Friedensethik* of Institute for Theology and Peace (ithf). A long-term goal of the workshop is establishing an international, interdisciplinary, and interreligous academic network in the field. Most of the participants, both professors and junior researchers, are engaged with Islamic peace studies in diverse countries and departments. This workshop will be the starting point for this network, which will help the development and improvement of the research on Islamic peace ethics through academic exchange and cooperation and will thereby help to deepen the mutual understanding of Christianity, Islam and secularity. Preparation of the presented papers for publication, future workshops and joined panels at other international conferences as well as creating and managing a mailing list with the title of "Islamic peace ethics" are some activities to be launched by the network shortly after the workshop. During the workshop the potential forms of further activities of the network will also be discussed.

**Important dates:**
- Abstract submission deadline: 01.06.2015
- Notification of selection/acceptance selected abstracts: 15.06.2015
- Paper submission deadline: 15.08.2015
- Notification of selected papers: 01.09.2015
- Workshop: 16-17.10.2015
- Submission of edited papers for publication in a peer-reviewed volume: 01.12.2015

Contact person for further questions and submission of abstracts: Heydar Shadi, shadi@ithf.de, +494067085921