

THE ASPEN INSTITUTE

ASPEN IDEAS FESTIVAL 2008

WHO SPEAKS FOR ISLAM?

JUNE 30 - JULY 6, 2008

PARTICIPANTS:

JEFFREY GOLDBERG  
Moderator

IRSHAD MANJI

DALIA MOGAHED

REUEL GERECHT

## 1 P R O C E E D I N G S

2

3 SPEAKER: Our moderator today is Jeffrey  
4 Goldberg, who is a colleague of -- mine at the *Atlantic*.  
5 He is the national correspondent and the author of the  
6 recent cover story of the *Atlantic* "Is Israel finished?"  
7 He joined the *Atlantic* from *The New Yorker* where he served  
8 as the Middle East and Washington, D.C. correspondent, and  
9 is also the author of *Prisoners: A Muslim and a Jew Across*  
10 *the Middle East Divide*.

11 So please join me in welcoming Jeffrey Goldberg.  
12 Thank you.

13 MR. GOLDBERG: Thank you very much. Justin,  
14 appreciate it, appreciate your attendance here today. I  
15 am going to just do very quick introductions because you -  
16 - most people know my colleagues up here anyway, and you  
17 have your bios in your books.

18 But very briefly, Dalia Mogahed, who many of you  
19 heard last night already, is the director of the Gallup  
20 Center for Muslim studies and is the author among other  
21 things with John Esposito of *Who Speaks for Islam?: What a*  
22 *Billion Muslims Really Think*, which is quite an area to

1 carve out for yourself.

2 Next to me is Irshad Manji who is the director -  
3 - who is well known to all of you, I think -- who is the  
4 director now of the Moral Courage Project at NYU, and I  
5 hope will talk about that a little bit, and author of *The*  
6 *Trouble with Islam Today*. Before I -- what we are going  
7 to do is we are going to have a conversation up here for a  
8 while.

9 We are going to settle all of the differences  
10 among the monotheistic religions by 11.30 a.m. and then  
11 we'll take your questions. What I want to do is we are  
12 going to have a conversation, then they'll be plenty of  
13 time for questions afterward.

14 I want to note one thing before I begin, which  
15 is that this is the subject of some interest in the Middle  
16 East and I need to say this at the outset. I, Jeffrey  
17 Goldberg do not, in fact, speak for Islam. There has been  
18 some confusion on that. I actually, however, speak for  
19 Judaism.

20 (Laughter)

21 MR. GOLDBERG: The only problem I have in that  
22 regard is that I have to get other Jews to agree --

1 (Laughter)

2 MR. GOLDBERG: -- to the fact that I speak for  
3 Judaism. This actually opens up an interesting question.  
4 I want both of you to take a minute or two on this first  
5 question. There is confusion about Islam in the west on -  
6 - in many areas. One of the roots of the confusion is  
7 that it is very hard to figure out who actually -- where  
8 the clerical authority resides in Islam.

9 We are, in the west, trained almost on a Vatican  
10 model. There is a Pope and the Pope says what goes, and  
11 then that's what goes. There is no Pope in Islam, and  
12 what I was hoping you could do is talk about how -- I mean  
13 this is a subject obviously of many scholarly works over  
14 hundreds of years, but if you could take a minute and a  
15 half, each of you, and talk about how power and authority  
16 is derived in Islam.

17 Why don't we start with you and then I'll go to  
18 Dalia.

19 MS. MANJI: Well, first of all, Assalaamu  
20 aleikum to the Muslims in the audience. Good morning to  
21 the non-Muslims and to the atheists, how the hell are you?

22 (Laughter)

1           MS. MANJI: I'm -- I hope there will be more  
2 such moments of levity in these proceedings because we are  
3 talking about very, very weighty issues obviously. Jeff,  
4 to your question directly, there is theory and then there  
5 is reality. In theory, as you pointed out, you know,  
6 Islam was never meant to have a clerical class.

7           In many ways, and I realize that this will rub  
8 some people the wrong way, but -- Islam, you know, started  
9 off really in a very sort of Protestant mode, though  
10 Protestantism came many, many centuries later having --  
11 with Muslims having a direct relationship to God.

12           And for all kinds of political reasons, reasons  
13 that in fact have corrupted the spirit of Islam, we now  
14 are inundated with clerics who call themselves authentic  
15 and everybody else inauthentic. The problem however with  
16 theory is precisely that it is theory, it is not reality.  
17 And let me give you a quick explanation of how I have had  
18 to take reality into consideration in the work that I do.

19           As many of you know, I am a reform-minded Muslim  
20 and we have now a global constituency of younger Muslims  
21 particularly from around the world. And over the last  
22 couple of years, the biggest question that has come to me

1 through my website is from young Muslims, male and female  
2 who have fallen in love with non-Muslims. Their parents  
3 and their imam insist that Islam forbids them from  
4 marrying outside the faith, and they come to me in  
5 desperation because that is the only time anybody ever  
6 comes to me.

7 (Laughter)

8 MS. MANJI: -- in desperation to ask "Is this  
9 true? Do I really have to give up the love of my life  
10 because my faith tells me to?" Now the tenth or the  
11 eleventh time that I got this kind of a question, I  
12 realized, you know, this is a bigger phenomenon than even  
13 I am acknowledging.

14 So instead of me merely giving these young  
15 people my interpretation of the Quran, because let us face  
16 it. What Imam is going to care what a spiky-haired  
17 western-raised Muslim Canadian feminist has to say about  
18 the Quran, all right?

19 So instead of you are giving them a personal  
20 interpretation, I took this question to a progressive Imam  
21 in the United States, who by the way had been trained very  
22 traditionally in Saudi Arabia and in Syria. And I asked

1 him to exercise Islam's own tradition of independent  
2 thinking known as Ijtihad, which we'll get into a little  
3 bit later and reinterpret for a 21st century pluralistic  
4 context, the very verses that have traditionally been used  
5 to prohibit women, in particular, from marrying outside of  
6 Islam.

7           He did exactly that. He came up with a two-page  
8 defense of intra-faith marriage from an Islamic  
9 perspective. I posted it on my website in English and  
10 only six months later, the demand for this document was so  
11 high that I had had to now get it translated into 19 more  
12 languages including many European languages for young  
13 Muslims living in Europe.

14           So the point here is two-fold. One is that, you  
15 know, the internet is certainly making it less difficult  
16 to communicate information and to a global -- a worldwide  
17 nation of Muslims particularly of a new generation that  
18 they would otherwise not get from their own households or  
19 their own mosques, but at the same time even I have had to  
20 contend with the fact and accept the fact that it is you  
21 know, the clerics who still hold the credibility for many,  
22 many parents.

1           And one final point before we turn it over to  
2 Dalia. Just so you know what kind of an impact that has  
3 had, when I was in Berlin about a year ago giving a  
4 lecture, not even about Ijtihad, a group of young Muslim  
5 women approached me to say thank you for posting this  
6 document online.

7           We are of marrying age, our parents are trying  
8 to force us into loveless marriages with Muslim men whom  
9 we don't know let alone love, and this document has saved  
10 us from this fate. Why? Not only because you have posted  
11 it in Turkish, Arabic and German, so at least one of those  
12 languages our parents will have to admit they understand  
13 and read, but also because it is written by an Imam.

14           And that was a very strategically important  
15 thing for you to do.

16           MR. GOLDBERG: Dalia.

17           MS. MOGAHED: Good morning everyone, and peace  
18 be upon you. I guess I'll start with the traditional  
19 thinking around where clerical where -- or religious  
20 authority comes from. And there is this concept and it is  
21 a very important one to Muslims called Ijazah. Ijazah  
22 literally means a license, a license to derive law from

1 the principles laid out in the Quran and in the Prophetic  
2 tradition.

3           This Ijazah is obtained through study and  
4 scholarship and was always open to women and men. So the  
5 highest ranking female scholar in Al-Azhar University, the  
6 -- considered the highest authority in Sunni Islam in  
7 Egypt. Her name is Souad Saleh. She is a woman I profile  
8 in my book who speaks for Islam. And she has one of the  
9 highest levels of authority in Islam to interpret law.

10           And this idea of Ijazah did not mean a monopoly  
11 on the law, because it was open to anyone willing to go  
12 through the work and the scholarship to obtain this  
13 license to interpret, but it assured that we would not  
14 have the Ijtihad of ignorance that produced Osama bin  
15 Laden because when we open it up to simply anyone, anyone  
16 can interpret the faith and anyone can make law and issue  
17 fatwas, what we risk is the Ijtihad of ignorance.

18           The other extreme which is as fatal to the  
19 Muslim community is blind followership whereby Muslims are  
20 so ignorant of their text, so lavish in their -- simply  
21 following anything someone tells them that they simply  
22 don't question. They don't even read the Quran for

1 themselves.

2           And so between these two extremes is the middle  
3 ground whereby we have religious authorities who have gone  
4 through the scholarship where they have the requisite  
5 knowledge to interpret, and by the way they have a hugely  
6 vast array of opinions, and at the same time, the general  
7 community which is religiously literate.

8           And this religious literacy is absolutely  
9 essential so that people can choose the interpretation  
10 that they feel comfortable with because at the end of the  
11 day, religious interpretation is not binding. This is  
12 really important to understand. It is not -- it is very  
13 different from say, an edict by a religious authority  
14 because it is an opinion that you can either accept or  
15 reject, and you can choose someone else.

16           It is really much more like a medical opinion.  
17 So you go to a doctor, may give you their diagnosis. You  
18 can go get a second opinion and a third opinion. Now you  
19 shouldn't be able to write your own prescription without  
20 going to medical school, but you should be literate enough  
21 in medicine to ask the right questions to your doctor to  
22 get the opinion that you feel comfortable with.

1           But just as that it is dangerous to simply give  
2 anyone the right to write the prescription, it is equally  
3 dangerous to give anyone the right to issue a fatwa  
4 because that is, in fact, what produced Al-Qaeda.

5           MS. MANJI: Can I have a quick response to --

6           MR. GOLDBERG: You can have a very quick  
7 response.

8           MS. MANJI: Yeah. The only problem that I find  
9 with the medical analogy and this was actually brought to  
10 my attention by a scholar in Indonesia is that, you know,  
11 you can sue a doctor who does you harm based on his or her  
12 prognosis.

13           We still don't have that ability or that right  
14 to sue Mullahs and Imams in the Muslim world who do our  
15 faith and the people within that faith and outside of that  
16 faith that kind of harm, my point simply being it is not  
17 meant to be cheeky or clever.

18           My point simply is that I think Dalia, we do as  
19 Muslims, invest far too much authority in what we believe,  
20 not know, what we believe is the wisdom of the Mullahs and  
21 the Imams, and that is why while it is true that not  
22 anybody can issue a fatwa, it still has to be emphasized

1 vigorously that all Muslims have the right and indeed the  
2 responsibility to exercise independent thinking in ways  
3 that make sense to their lives.

4 MR. GOLDBERG: Let me come back to this in a  
5 second. But let me ask you a non-cheeky question, not  
6 that yours was cheeky by the way.

7 MS. MANJI: Thank you.

8 MR. GOLDBERG: You're welcome. But I want to  
9 lay groundwork for the rest of this conversation. I want  
10 to talk about your work for a couple of minutes, and then  
11 have Irshad talk about that work. You've done probably  
12 more polling than anyone has ever done in the Muslim  
13 world.

14 MS. MOGAHED: Uh-huh.

15 MR. GOLDBERG: And your findings are quite  
16 interesting. I'm not going to do them justice here, but  
17 what I understand you are talking about and we have spoken  
18 about this and I've read what you have written. Your  
19 findings might be somewhat of a surprise to people on the  
20 west. You find that most Muslims even after 9/11 reject  
21 violence.

22 Most Muslims, a vast majority of Muslims around

1 the world reject extremism. And you find that for those  
2 you embrace extremism, a relatively small minority, of  
3 course --

4 MS. MOGAHED: Uh-huh.

5 MR. GOLDBERG: -- we are talking about a  
6 relatively small minority of a huge population. So  
7 somewhere in the tens and millions, for these group -- for  
8 this group of tens and millions who are drawn to  
9 radicalism and drawn to violence that they are drawn to  
10 that not because of their -- not because edicts of the  
11 religion or the theology of their religion, but because of  
12 the political actions of the west. Is that a fair  
13 characterization?

14 MS. MOGAHED: Well, let -- I think -- let me  
15 take a step back and explain. I think you've said --  
16 everything you have said, I agree with. You're absolutely  
17 right. The vast majority do not approve of violence  
18 especially attacks on civilians, and as I indicated  
19 yesterday, they are no more likely than the American  
20 public to approve of a tax on civilians.

21 Those who told us that 9/11 was completely  
22 justified and have unfavorable opinions of the United

1 States who in our book we call "politically radicalized,"  
2 their justifications for that position, because we  
3 actually asked them, "Why do you say that? Why you do  
4 think 9/11 was completely justified?" Their  
5 justifications are purely political in nature.

6 Not a single one of the respondents cited a  
7 verse from the Quran, for example to explain their  
8 position on 9/11 being justified. In contrast, those who  
9 said it was not justified, that it was wrong, they were  
10 citing the Quran. They were explaining their moral  
11 objection to terrorism many times as a moral objection  
12 routed in faith.

13 So you are right. What we find in our research  
14 is that it isn't so much theology that motivates a  
15 sympathy for terrorism but a distorted political ideology  
16 --

17 MR. GOLDBERG: Okay.

18 MS. MOGAHED: -- and what is even more  
19 interesting I think is if you really analyze Osama bin  
20 Laden's rhetoric as I have, what you find is his religious  
21 language is quite superficial, that he starts out his  
22 statements praising God, he ends them by praising the

1 Prophet, and in the middle you have essentially a very  
2 post-modern political revolutionary ideology whereby he  
3 gets around the prohibition on attacks on civilians by  
4 explaining that the American people -- yes, Islam  
5 prohibits killing civilians in war, and he acknowledges  
6 this.

7 But the American people are not non-combatants.  
8 They are combatants. Why? Because they live in a  
9 democracy, and they vote for the leaders that then go and  
10 kill Muslims. They pay for those wars with their tax  
11 dollars. Therefore they are complicit and they are not  
12 non-combatant.

13 MR. GOLDBERG: Can I just ask you one question  
14 and then we'll have Irshad come in. But I want to push  
15 back a little bit on one thing that you have said. And  
16 yes, I have read all of Osama bin Laden's various speeches  
17 and pronouncements and fatwas. And you are right that the  
18 middle section of many of them read like a really, really  
19 angry Ralph Nader, not just like a normally angry Ralph  
20 Nader.

21 (Laughter)

22 MS. MANJI: Oh, come on.

1           MR. GOLDBERG: No, no, no, no, no, it is true.  
2 I mean when he starts lecturing -- no, no, no. When he  
3 starts lecturing Americans about greenhouse gases, you --

4           MS. MOGAHED: Right.

5           MR. GOLDBERG: -- kind of feel like he has lost  
6 the plot a little bit.

7           MS. MANJI: Doesn't do Ralph justice --

8           MR. GOLDBERG: But here is the thing. Like all  
9 of us up here, we spend a lot of our time with Muslim  
10 radicals. I remember various conversations I have had in  
11 Afghanistan and Pakistan, with the Gamaz Slamia in Egypt,  
12 where the conversation -- I'm steering the conversation  
13 toward politics, and they are sticking to theology. And  
14 they are talking about -- God's desire for a caliphate for  
15 instance. And they are talking about the immoral ways in  
16 which the west objectifies women, and how "when we take  
17 over, we will change that among many other things."

18           So is it -- I'm asking and maybe you can jump in  
19 here. Is it entirely fair to say that what motivates the  
20 radical minority is mainly or solely politics? And then  
21 you could respond to that if you want.

22           MS. MANJI: So the question is to me?

1           MR. GOLDBERG: The question is to you, yeah.

2           MS. MANJI: No, it is not fair to say that it is  
3 solely politics and that religion plays no role in any of  
4 this. And again because Dalia quite justifiably asked us  
5 yesterday in her presentation to listen to ordinary  
6 people, listen to the voices of ordinary people, and to go  
7 with the facts on the ground rather than fear, I will ask  
8 you to transcend any fear of political correctness that  
9 you may be feeling at this moment to just let down your  
10 own defenses and hear what I'm about to say.

11           You know, two years ago, in Toronto, my city of  
12 Toronto in Canada, a group of 17 young Muslim men was  
13 arrested by the Royal Canadian Mountain police on  
14 allegations that they were plotting to be behead the prime  
15 minister and blow up the parliament buildings. And what  
16 the police did not tell us is that these young men called  
17 their campaign Operation Badr, B-a-d-r.

18           This refers to the battle of Badr, which is the  
19 very first military campaign that the Prophet and his  
20 ragtag army at the time actually achieved. It is the  
21 battle in which, you know, legend came forth that despite  
22 being outland and outgunned by the other side, the Prophet

1 won this war. And in Islamic lore, it is what transformed  
2 merely a prophet, merely a sort of a religious  
3 prognosticator into a full-fledged warrior.

4           Now here is my point. Clearly these young men  
5 whatever the root cause of their discontent living in  
6 upper middle class Canada, clearly whatever the root  
7 cause, they were motivated in some way by religious  
8 symbolism. And I'm not saying that we can what they are  
9 doing or what they did to religion, not at all.

10           But I'm saying when we, in our effort, not to  
11 reduce it, let us also not sanitize. Let us also not  
12 erase whatever potential role religion plays. And I give  
13 you this only as a very, very concrete example because I  
14 find in discussions like this, it is just too easy to  
15 throw broad generalizations out there and hope to feed  
16 into the uncomfortableness that people feel about actually  
17 to brass tacks.

18           So through out this discussion, I warn you and I  
19 promise you, I will be using as many concrete examples as  
20 I can.

21           MR. GOLDBERG: Well, if we are going to go into  
22 the discomfort zone, let me just go right ahead now --

1 (Laughter)

2 MR. GOLDBERG: -- and ask Dalia -- let me ask  
3 Dalia -- let me post you a question and then you can  
4 answer this question and her answer at the same time. Is  
5 George W. Bush right when he says that Islam is a religion  
6 of peace? How do you like that framing, huh?

7 Ms. MOGAHED: Yeah.

8 (Laughter)

9 MR. GOLDBERG: That puts you in a box, huh?

10 (Laughter)

11 MS. MOGAHED: Well, let me --

12 MR. GOLDBERG: I mean --

13 MS. MOGAHED: -- answer your question in what  
14 actually -- in answering or in responding to Irshad. To  
15 say that religion has nothing to do with it would be  
16 ridiculous. That is not what I'm saying in fact. There  
17 is a difference between an accessory and a root cause,  
18 okay? Let me explain it this way.

19 When we asked Muslims around the world if  
20 religion is an important part of their daily lives, the  
21 overwhelming majority, I mean as high as 99 percent in  
22 Indonesia and 98 percent in Egypt, even in Turkey, it is

1 86 percent say, "Yes, religion is an important part of  
2 their daily life."

3           So if religion is the dominant social medium of  
4 a society, what do we expect the language, the framing,  
5 and the symbolism of any movement to look like? Let's  
6 take ourselves 30 years back to the world of the PLO when  
7 they were the premier terrorist group and not Al-Qaeda.  
8 They were speaking in the language of the then social --  
9 the dominant social medium which was Arab nationalism.

10           They were committing acts of terror but their  
11 symbolism reflected the dominant social medium as any and  
12 all movements, whether they are violent or peaceful,  
13 always do. What we always forget is someone like Muhammed  
14 Yunus who invented or came up with micro-financing. Also  
15 if you read his autobiography, talked about how that was  
16 inspired by his faith.

17           We forget that Amr Khaled who conducted a  
18 campaign just a few months ago to fight drugs where  
19 millions of people were mobilized all over the Arab world  
20 used religious symbolism and religious rhetoric to  
21 mobilize.

22           So to say that by these people are using

1 religious symbolism and religious rhetoric, it is a  
2 problem of Islam is to ignore that all and every, whether  
3 you are fighting poverty or illiteracy or female genital  
4 mutilation, you are saying it is against Islam to do these  
5 things and Islam demands that we stop or we improve or we  
6 progress because when you look at the data, the one thing  
7 that people associate most often with the Muslim world is  
8 attachment to spiritual and moral values will help with  
9 progress.

10           And so anytime people want, anytime any group,  
11 whether it is good or evil, wants to get people's  
12 attention and mobilize them, they are going to use  
13 language that resonates with their audience. So in  
14 responding to the idea of terrorist groups using religious  
15 symbolism, of course they do. They would be stupid not to  
16 because, guess what? They understand their audience. But  
17 do we?

18           MR. GOLDBERG: Irshad?

19           MS. MANJI: I think I'd rather that you ask me a  
20 question, Dalia. I'm still ruminating on what you've just  
21 said.

22           MS. MOGAHED: Well, let me talk about Islam

1 being a religion of peace. We're still -- that the  
2 question is such -- it is such an interesting framing. Is  
3 Islam a religion of peace? I think we have to answer the  
4 question what is a religion of peace. And I would say  
5 that a religion of peace is one that prefers peace over  
6 war. If that is the definition, then I would say, yes,  
7 Islam is a religion of peace.

8 But I am -- I personally don't want -- as a  
9 Muslim, this is a personal statement not as a Gallup  
10 representative. I don't like Islam being called a  
11 religion of peace because it is a religion of life, of  
12 balance, of guidance for a wide variety of facets of life,  
13 and to label it a religion of peace, the reason it might  
14 seem strange is definitely better than calling it a  
15 religion of war.

16 But it is to reduce it to a very defensive mode  
17 and it is to reduce Islam to constantly being on trial  
18 proving itself rather than for a change helping people  
19 understand what Muslims can actually contribute, not just  
20 why they are not a threat.

21 MR. GOLDBERG: Let me just narrow it down for a  
22 second. Let me just narrow it down for a minute while you

1 ruminates. Are you still ruminating?

2 MS. MANJI: I've ruminated and I --

3 MR. GOLDBERG: All right.

4 (Laughter)

5 MR. GOLDBERG: Just hold the rumination just for  
6 one sec.

7 MS. MANJI: Bob (phonetic) back a few of my own  
8 ruminations?

9 MR. GOLDBERG: Good, because we are just  
10 ruminating here.

11 MS. MANJI: Right.

12 MR. GOLDBERG: That is all we are doing. The  
13 interesting thing I think is how we in the west sometimes  
14 interpret what a moral religion is. We filter it through  
15 the prism of Christianity because that is the dominant  
16 western religion. And when you study the origins of  
17 Christianity versus the origins of Islam, you notice many  
18 differences, but one of the most noticeable, obviously is  
19 that Jesus went willingly to his death as a martyr whereas  
20 the Prophet Muhammad spent much of his life, part of his  
21 life as a General.

22 The saying is that Muhammad was his own

1 Constantine. In other words, he militarized the religion.  
2 Jesus did not militarize his religion. Constantine came  
3 on later and militarized it. So the question is -- and  
4 this is the question that has plagued me for years is how  
5 relevant is it that Muhammad, Prophet Muhammad, the most  
6 admired man obviously in Islam, led his life as a warrior.

7 How relevant is that to the self creation of  
8 Muslim guerillas and terrorists? In other words, when you  
9 are a Christian and you are committing violence, you are  
10 out and out hypocritical, I think. I'm just saying this  
11 as a member of the third older religion.

12 (Laughter)

13 MS. MANJI: The one that gave us everything we  
14 know.

15 MR. GOLDBERG: The one that gave everything as -  
16 -

17 MS. MANJI: -- the reason (inaudible) --

18 MR. GOLDBERG: -- you can either blame Judaism  
19 or credit Judaism for this conversation. But Christians  
20 by the way, blames Judaism, as you all know. The -- but  
21 the question is how relevant is that connection between  
22 the Prophet Muhammad and his violence and the violence

1 that we see today?

2 MS. MOGAHED: Well, I would like to answer that  
3 in several -- by -- by explaining several things. First  
4 of all, in the words of Olivier Roy, what is important, I  
5 mean -- and I think this is a very important and profound  
6 point. He says what is important isn't what the Quran  
7 says. What is important is what Muslims say it says  
8 because the Quran is not an agent.

9 It is not a human agent that goes out and flies,  
10 you know, airplanes through buildings. People do that.  
11 And so we have to understand how it is understood by  
12 Muslims, who are the human agents that are going to go out  
13 and act. When we look -- and the way you find out is by  
14 asking Muslims what they believe. And when we do that, we  
15 find that Muslims are no more likely, in fact, in many  
16 cases, less likely than non-Muslims to approve of  
17 violence.

18 So if Muhammad being a warrior contributed to  
19 them being more predisposed to violence, then we should  
20 have been able to measure that empirically when looking at  
21 a scientific survey.

22 Secondly, I think that from a Muslim point of

1 view, the fact that Muhammad fought wars is not understood  
2 as a reason to militarize, but instead a very important  
3 example of how one should behave when they are in a  
4 position where they must fight a just war, because just  
5 war is a concept that transcends the Abrahamic faith  
6 (inaudible).

7 Muslims see the fact that the Prophet had to  
8 fight wars as an advantage in that there is an example of  
9 how one conducts a just war. We, as Muslims, because the  
10 Prophet had to fight wars, have very strict rules about  
11 how to conduct a war. You can't chop down trees, you  
12 can't kill animals; you can't poison wells; you can't  
13 target civilians. These are inherent in our tradition  
14 because the Prophet fought wars and therefore was able to  
15 explain how a war should be justly fought.

16 MS. MANJI: Once again, in theory, the problem -  
17 - and sometimes the opportunity when it comes to reform  
18 minded Muslims is exactly as Dalia has articulately laid  
19 out for us which is that it is we, Muslims, who interpret  
20 not just the Quran, but as she pointed out the prophet's  
21 life.

22 And on their own, the words of the Quran and the

1 facts of the prophet's life don't mean much. They mean  
2 something when human interpretation enters the picture.  
3 And so for example, and this kind of, I think, nicely ties  
4 both your previous question on which I had been  
5 ruminating, and now Dalia's interjection is that this is  
6 exactly why, you know, we see young Muslim men and  
7 increasingly young Muslim women, you know, invoking the  
8 prophet's life.

9                   When they, for example, leave behind shahid  
10 videos, I mean, Mohammad Sidique Khan,--

11                   MR. GOLDBERG: Martyrdom video.

12                   MS. MANJI: -- a martyrdom video, thank you.  
13 Mohammad Sidique Khan, the ringleader of the July 7th  
14 transit bombings in Britain. Before he invoked British  
15 foreign policy, before he pointed the finger at Iraq, he  
16 first said, "Islam is our religion and the prophet is our  
17 role model."

18                   Now that has to mean something, and it doesn't  
19 just mean something to him, it ought to mean something to  
20 us in the way that he has so cavalierly decided, as has  
21 the group that has helped him get there, to interpret the  
22 prophet's life. It didn't come out of nowhere. And they

1 were not wrong from their perspective. They operated with  
2 the facts on the ground as they saw it.

3 Similarly, Mohammed Bouyeri, the man who -- the  
4 young Dutch -- a Dutch born but of Moroccan heritage, man  
5 who stabbed and killed Theo van Gogh in Amsterdam in 2005.  
6 He -- when he went on trial, actually said, "Make no  
7 mistake about it, I acted from religious conviction." And  
8 he invoked the life of the prophet as part of what  
9 convinced him that this is what he had to do.

10 Now again, absolutely, you can shake your head  
11 and say, but that's not right, I couldn't agree more. It  
12 is not right. Morally speaking, it is not right, but he -  
13 - hold on a second.

14 MR. GOLDBERG: Well, we have questions in a  
15 minute.

16 MS. MANJI: But he interpreted the prophet's  
17 life in a certain way, and he wasn't making up these  
18 facts. He was thinking about them in a particular context  
19 that made sense to his life, which is why asking whether  
20 Islam is a religion of peace, a religion of war, it's  
21 almost as meaningless a question as if -- I may be  
22 forgiven for this, who speaks for Islam.

1           You know, it depends on who you are talking to  
2 and where you are coming from. And finally, speaking off  
3 the question who speaks for Islam, you know, part of the  
4 reason I find that kind of a question meaningless is that  
5 there are so many Muslims around the world, including  
6 right here in America, who still don't feel comfortable  
7 expressing themselves out loud because they operate in a  
8 context of fear.

9           And you know, I hope we get to the point where  
10 we can actually come up with some examples of this, but  
11 this is again why Dalia is right. Context is important,  
12 and it's important not just to analyzing Islam but also to  
13 analyzing Gallup poll results, results that, at least in  
14 my view, will never be sufficient to address the question  
15 who speaks for Islam because most of the people, in fact  
16 all of the people I gather that you guys spoke with, were  
17 not comfortable enough to step forward and say just as  
18 much as Islam needs to respect, and to me, just as much as  
19 the West needs to respect Islam and us Muslims, we Muslims  
20 have to start respecting each other.

21           MR. GOLDBERG: Well, you know --

22           MS. MOGAHED: Actually did, they did say that.

1                   MR. GOLDBERG: Yeah, well, I've got to say two  
2 things.

3                   MS. MANJI: Certainly not. I'm précising what  
4 they presented to the audience.

5                   MR. GOLDBERG: Two things -- let me just say two  
6 things. One is that when you ruminate, you really  
7 ruminate.

8                   (Laughter)

9                   MR. GOLDBERG: The second is I want to -- that's  
10 what active rumination. I want to give you a chance to  
11 respond to that, and then I want to go to another question  
12 which I think you can answer anecdotally from your  
13 personal experience and you can answer from your personal  
14 experience and from some data. And that's the question of  
15 what is a moderate Muslim?

16                   We hear this term all the time. If they were  
17 only be more moderate, or those guys are okay because they  
18 are moderate, but I don't think I myself don't have a  
19 baseline definition of what it means, if it's even a  
20 meaningful term, but before we do that, if you want to  
21 take a second to talk about what she just said, Dalia?

22                   MS. MOGAHED: Well, I guess, I'll start by

1 saying that, you know, go back to the point of -- I've  
2 created this model, and it's -- it comes from my  
3 scientific background where we actually studied  
4 radicalization of cells and cells, you know, in the body  
5 do become radicalized.

6           And what happens when cells become radicalized  
7 is they take on the medium that they are in. So if you  
8 have a group of cells in blue dye, when they become  
9 radicalized, they're still covered with that blue dye.  
10 And they look like the blue dye. And if you look at just  
11 the radicalized cells, it's very easy to think, as a  
12 scientist eye, its blue dye that made them radicalized  
13 instead of realizing that all the other cells that are not  
14 radicalized still in your Petri Dish are also covered by  
15 the blue dye.

16           And that's exactly the case when we look at the  
17 data. The 7 percent, who think that 9/11 is completely  
18 justified, about 91 percent of them say religion is an  
19 important part of their daily life. Guess what? The  
20 other 93 percent, 93 percent of them say religion is an  
21 important part of their daily life. They are  
22 statistically identical.

1           So I go back to the idea religion is not absent.  
2   When people become politically radicalized it will  
3   necessarily take on a religious motif because that is  
4   their dominant social currency. To ask who speaks for  
5   Islam, I think the question is rhetorical; the question is  
6   an open question that I think we need to answer because  
7   for too long a vocal fringe is the only voice we've heard.

8           It was the only voice that was speaking for  
9   Islam. And we need to broaden this discourse and listen  
10  to the vast majority who are telling us that they reject  
11  that extreme. And so I think who speaks for Islam is the  
12  vital question because for too long only a small handful  
13  have been speaking for the faith.

14           MR. GOLDBERG: Irshad, do you want to deal with  
15  that and talk about moderation?

16           MS. MANJI: Well, in discussing what I see as a  
17  moderate Muslim, I will hopefully address some of what  
18  Dalia has just said. You know, in this country, as in  
19  many countries around the world, the search is on for the  
20  moderate Muslim. And I continued to get asked the  
21  question five years after my book came out, you know where  
22  are the other voices like yours. But I say something in

1 response that may be a little bit counter intuitive.

2 I'm not a moderate Muslim. I'm sure Dalia  
3 appreciates, not moderate at all. I'm a reformed-minded  
4 Muslim. And for as it important as it is to make the  
5 distinction between extremists and moderates, I believe it  
6 is equally important to make the distinction between  
7 moderates and reformists. Now let me make that  
8 distinction.

9 Moderate Muslims certainly denounce violence  
10 that is taking place under the banner of Islam. I do not  
11 dispute that for a second. The problem is that moderate  
12 Muslims too often deny the role that religion plays in the  
13 very violence that is committed in its name. You often  
14 hear self-described moderate Muslim say, the next time a  
15 Muslim group takes responsibility for a kidnapping or a  
16 bombing or a beheading, you will hear self-described  
17 moderate say, "Islam has nothing to do with this."

18 The problem here is not just that this statement  
19 is dishonest, as actually we've both agreed already on  
20 stage, but worse such a statement is dangerous. And it's  
21 dangerous because in their denial a self-described  
22 moderate Muslims in effect, not intentionally, but in

1 effect, handover the ground and the opportunity for  
2 theological reinterpretation to those with already-  
3 malignant intentions.

4 In effect, moderate Muslims say to the would-be  
5 abusers of power, you guys get to walk away with the show.  
6 We're not going to come back at you with bold and  
7 competing reinterpretations of the very verses that these  
8 terrorists have used to justify their violence. And the  
9 reason we can't come back at you with bold, competing  
10 reinterpretation is that if we did, well, we'd be  
11 acknowledging that religion really does play a role.

12 And since the Quran is perfect, and it is we  
13 Muslims who are imperfect, we can't go there. Reform  
14 minded Muslims, I'll just finish up Dalia, reform minded  
15 Muslims say, hold on, we have to go there, just as liberal  
16 Christians and liberal Jews have reinterpreted the violent  
17 verses in there scriptures, we must do the same for our  
18 scripture.

19 And what that means is taking the Quran out of  
20 the seventh century tribal kind capsule in which even many  
21 moderates have left it in and update the interpretations  
22 for a 21st century pluralistic context, not unlike what

1 this progressive Imam did, vis-a-vis interfaith marriage.

2           And whenever I make this case to Muslims, the  
3 first challenge I hear is, you are saying that we need to  
4 rewrite the Quran, not at all. Rewriting is very  
5 different from reinterpreting. I'm saying, we keep the  
6 words that are already there. Obviously, I have no  
7 authority to suggest that the Quran ought to be rewritten.  
8 But there is sufficient ambiguity within the Quran that we  
9 can rethink many passages in the context in which we now  
10 exist.

11           And finally, for those Muslims who say even then  
12 Islam forbids this from happening, I remind them that that  
13 is to say, it forbids you from reinterpreting because the  
14 words are what they are. You must take them literally. I  
15 say to them, well, let's take a look at the Quran  
16 literally. Then let's play your game.

17           If you take it literally, you see that the Quran  
18 contains three times as many verses calling on us to  
19 think, and analyze, and reflect than verses that tell us  
20 only what is right or only what is wrong, in other words,  
21 three times as many verses encouraging critical thinking  
22 than blind submission. By that standard alone, I would

1 argue that reform minded Muslims are at least as authentic  
2 as the moderate mainstream and quite possibly more  
3 constructive.

4 MR. GOLDBERG: Dalia, as you answer --

5 (Applause)

6 MR. GOLDBERG: As you answer her statement,  
7 could you weave into your answer, an answer to the  
8 following question. I ask you this as a poster. What  
9 percentage of Muslims in the world, and then separately in  
10 America, would qualify to meet Irshad's definition of a  
11 reform minded Muslim? And while we are playing with that  
12 term, let me ask you a question. Do you believe that  
13 Irshad speaks for Islam, or a branch of Islam, or an idea  
14 of Islam?

15 MS. MOGAHED: I have a feeling that'll be easier  
16 to answer than is George W. Bush right, that Islam is a  
17 religion of peace.

18 (Laughter)

19 MR. GOLDBERG: Let's see where she goes?

20 MS. MOGAHED: I think my response to -- you  
21 know, I think the differentiation between a moderate  
22 Muslim and a reform minded Muslim is an interesting one.

1 Where I would differ with Irshad is that the bold  
2 reinterpretations of the verses that talk about violence  
3 have already occurred. They occurred with the terrorists.

4 The terrorists are reinterpreting these verses.  
5 The original classical interpretation is the one, the  
6 moderates if we are calling them that are using to in fact  
7 respond. The underlying premise, the underlying  
8 fundamental issue where I think we differ, though we might  
9 agree on many things is, is are the terrorists using the  
10 authentic orthodox interpretation of the verses that we  
11 now need to reinterpret because look what they are  
12 causing, or in fact are they the reformists, or the  
13 terrorists in fact reinterpreting the verses to justify  
14 what they are doing?

15 What I am saying is that when you analyze the  
16 rhetoric, when you look at Muslim opinion around the world  
17 who are for the vast majority sticking to a traditional  
18 orthodox interpretation, what you get is they are the  
19 minority and they are the ones reinterpreting and  
20 innovating, and used it in the wrong way what the Quran  
21 and the classical orthodox interpretations of those  
22 verses.

1           Why I say that is because when they issue  
2 statements for the public consumption, for the majority  
3 consumption, not their own inner group, but for other  
4 people to for everybody, they do not use those verses to  
5 justify their actions. In fact, if you look at the verse  
6 that they stick to and repeat over and over, it's the one  
7 that simply says an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth.

8           And then they go on to say, this means because  
9 America has killed 12 million Muslims, this is their  
10 calculation, that we then can 12 million Americans. So  
11 they use a verse that everyone understands to mean some  
12 kind of, you know, equal justice and then interpret it in  
13 this way.

14           They don't use the verses that are usually cited  
15 as ones of, you know, kill the infidel wherever you see  
16 them, because the classical orthodox, the ones that you  
17 find it at Al-Azhara, any other classical, you know,  
18 traditional seat of Muslim knowledge, is totally different  
19 from the way they're interpreting it.

20           So my fundamental difference with Irshad is the  
21 evidence does not support that these verses in their  
22 classical orthodox interpretation are motivating the

1 terrorists. The terrorists are in fact themselves  
2 reinterpreting those verses. So when moderates respond,  
3 of course, they are not going to reinterpret the verses to  
4 tell them they are wrong, they're simply saying Islam is  
5 against this in its classical -- in its classical  
6 traditional understanding.

7           The second part of your question was what is a  
8 moderate Muslim? Again I --

9           MR. GOLDBERG: And how do you count them?

10          MS. MOGAHED: How do I count them? Well, we  
11 have to first define them. My definition of a mainstream  
12 Muslim is one who does not believe in violence. It's -- I  
13 mean, you can have any kind of theological outlook you  
14 want, you can be reform minded, you can be very  
15 conservative, you can be very traditional, as long as you  
16 stick to the universally accepted standards of human  
17 rights when it comes to targeting civilians, you fall into  
18 this category.

19          Now that category -- I don't actually like the  
20 word moderate Muslim even though I used it in my book, I  
21 prefer mainstream Muslim because moderate Muslim implies  
22 moderately Muslim, being less passionate about faith than

1 the extremists, who are the real zealists, but with other  
2 religious people who -- whether they're Jewish or  
3 Christian, they hate the word moderate Christian, moderate  
4 Jew. I am not moderate, I am passionate about moderation.

5 (Laughter)

6 MR. GOLDBERG: Irshad, quick response and then I  
7 want to move on to just one other subject.

8 MS. MANJI: Well, I mean, you make a very  
9 compelling case, Dalia for you know, why it is not  
10 necessary nor even desirable to be reinterpreting passages  
11 that in fact the terrorists, as you claim, are  
12 reinterpreting. Therefore, we must sort of you know, just  
13 return to the classical interpretation, but two points  
14 about that.

15 One is clearly the classical interpretation  
16 didn't convince them. You know, and therefore we have to  
17 actually like it or not pay attention to the reality on  
18 the ground that there is a small, but very, very  
19 disproportionately powerful group of people that is in  
20 fact doing harm to the faith of Islam and to real people,  
21 both Muslim and non-Muslim, to simply say they are the  
22 ones who are wrong and we are the ones who are right isn't

1 going to save anybody from their harm.

2 Therefore, it is important to take what they  
3 have been doing, and then figure out, and I'm not a  
4 theologian, so I'm not the one who's going to be doing  
5 this, but figure out what it is that they have been doing  
6 wrong. These are the interpretation, and clarify that for  
7 the vast majority of Muslim. But here is the problem.

8 MS. MOGAHED: I couldn't agree more.

9 MS. MANJI: Okay, but here is a problem. In  
10 fact, Muslim theologians have not been doing that. I mean  
11 I know that you say that they have, but I've read exactly  
12 what you've read. I come away with a very, very different  
13 conclusion. And I'll just give you again quick and  
14 concrete example.

15 You know, chapter V verse 32 of the Quran  
16 expressly states that if you kill a human being, it is  
17 like killing all of mankind, but here's the kicker, here's  
18 the catch, unless you kill that human being as punishment  
19 for murder or other villainy in the land, that clause  
20 beginning with the word -- beginning with the word  
21 "except" has become an escape hatch for terrorists.

22 They use exactly those words, and I'll tell you

1 something. Every time I go to a moderate cleric to ask  
2 him, you know, and it is to "him" all the time, right,  
3 tell me what you do with those words, I only hear,  
4 nothing. Literally, we do nothing with those words.  
5 Well, their problem with doing nothing is some other  
6 people are doing something with them. That's why they  
7 have to be reinterpreted.

8 MS. MOGAHED: But I would -- I've studied  
9 classical Quranic interpretation, and that "except" verse  
10 refers to capital punishment by the state after a trial.  
11 It's a -- refers specifically to the state's right to  
12 capital punishment if someone actually commits murder.

13 That is what the classical interpretation is.  
14 And so the fact that the clerics you've spoken to haven't  
15 been able to respond with something like that, and haven't  
16 been able to get their voices out to young people who are  
17 reading that verse and thinking that it means vigilantism  
18 that they can go and haphazardly choose who they want to  
19 kill.

20 It's certainly not the fault -- it's -- the  
21 answer isn't reinterpreting. The reinterperatation has  
22 already occurred by those who have taken it and used it in

1 their own way without knowledge. The point is this is the  
2 problem of lack of religious literacy that these young  
3 people can be preyed on by people with political  
4 motivation.

5 MR. GOLDBERG: Let me --

6 MS. MANJI: But doesn't that suggest to you that  
7 moderates have to get more active then --

8 MS. MOGAHED: Yes.

9 MS. MANJI: I mean, yeah.

10 MS. MOGAHED: Absolutely.

11 MS. MANJI: Okay --

12 MR. GOLDBERG: Well, okay.

13 MS. MANJI: -- which is why I say.

14 (Laughter)

15 MS. MANJI: Which is why I say, we've got a  
16 raise our bar higher okay? The search for moderates ought  
17 to be a search for reform minded Muslims.

18 MR. GOLDBERG: Irshad, what I wanted to do is to  
19 ask one more quick question to both of you and then we're  
20 going to go to some questions in the audience.

21 And by the way, I have to say that I find this  
22 so refreshing because I'm usually on panels of only Jews

1 yelling at each other.

2 (Laughter)

3 MR. GOLDBERG: So I feel as if I can go get a  
4 drink or something and come back, and we'd wait just be  
5 fine, everything will be fine. The final question is that  
6 --

7 MS. MANJI: We corrected Islam in our yelling at  
8 each other, I understand.

9 MR. GOLDBERG: The final question I have for you  
10 is the practical question which is, what is to be done to  
11 get us -- get the United States out of them, out of the  
12 problem that we have with large swaths of the Muslim  
13 world, a smaller swath that's actively engaged in  
14 terrorism, a larger swath that doesn't seem to like us  
15 very much.

16 Irshad, you seem to be arguing that the answer  
17 lies within Islam, and a reform within Islam will help  
18 lift us up out of these problems. Dalia, based on what  
19 I've read from your book and your studies, you seem to  
20 think that concrete foreign policy changes on the part of  
21 the United States and the West will ameliorate these  
22 issues. One minute each, deal with those, one minute

1 really, and then we'll have time for some questions.

2 Dalia?

3 MS. MOGAHED: My minute hasn't started, hold on.

4 MR. GOLDBERG: Your minute hasn't started.

5 MS. MOGAHED: Okay.

6 MR. GOLDBERG: There is too much rumination,  
7 obviously, that's another problem.

8 MS. MOGAHED: I want to make a case for the  
9 danger of fixing what is considered not broken, i.e. the  
10 classical understanding of Islam, is that once we open the  
11 door of reinterpretation of verses that have already been  
12 clearly interpreted to not promote violence as understood  
13 by the vast majority of Muslims who are -- who would  
14 consider themselves traditional or orthodox, and not  
15 reform minded, is that opening this process of Ijtihad of  
16 the non-licensed is it gives credibility to those who  
17 interpret those verses today in an unorthodox way to  
18 justify violence.

19 When we say it's okay to open this up, then they  
20 will say, well, now that we've democratized Ijtihad,  
21 great, our interpretation is just as good as Sheikh Ali  
22 Goma, the grand Mufti of Egypt, who has told us for all

1 this time that these verses don't mean violence. Now  
2 we're all on equal footing. He has 30 years of  
3 scholarship, we have none, but we are equal in our ability  
4 to tell the ummah what Islam is telling them to do.

5 So I would go back to -- we have licenses for  
6 selling real estate, and I just -- I'm -- my call to all  
7 of us is to have enough respect for Islamic scholarship to  
8 consider it equal to the medical field where you need to  
9 go to school and get a license before you write a  
10 prescription.

11 MR. GOLDBERG: Deal very quickly with my  
12 question --

13 MS. MOGAHED: Yes.

14 MR. GOLDBERG: -- on the concrete solution to  
15 the problem?

16 MS. MOGAHED: Yes, the concrete solution. What  
17 is happening according to our analysis is that people  
18 become politically radicalized according to their own  
19 words, not mine, and then take on religion as a mobilizing  
20 and justifying accessory to the actions that they want to  
21 commit. So we have to deal with the issue at its core.

22 The core are political issues, and instead of

1 trying to reformulate Islam which is the, which should be  
2 the job of Muslims and not America, we should instead give  
3 people an alternative, because the real battle going on in  
4 the Muslim world is not a battle over the soul of Islam.  
5 It is the battle about the road to reform.

6 People want change. We have to let them have  
7 options toward that change that don't involve violence,  
8 valid and viable options to a different way into the  
9 future.

10 MR. GOLDBERG: Irshad, very quickly.

11 MS. MANJI: Agreed that foreign policy has to  
12 change, but not in the conventional way that you are  
13 always told about. You know, it's not just about Israel  
14 Palestine, it is also about, for example, liberating the  
15 entrepreneurial talents of women in the Muslim world  
16 through microfinance, something that Dalia referred to,  
17 and it's a policy plan that I believe all rich countries  
18 around the world, including rich Arab countries ought to  
19 be buying into.

20 You know, we talked about the Prophet Muhammad's  
21 life, and Dalia quite rightly pointed out. It's how you  
22 interpret his life that matters, not just the facts on the

1 ground. Well, one of the ways that Muslim women in  
2 Southeast Asia, thanks to the Grameen Bank which is the  
3 bank that Muhammad Yunus started to give loan to the  
4 poorest of the world's poor, one of the ways they've been  
5 using or interpreting the Prophet Muhammad's life is by  
6 reminding their husbands that the Prophet Muhammad himself  
7 was married to a wealthy self-made business woman for whom  
8 the prophet worked for many, many years.

9 She was his boss, and so my dear husband, if you  
10 are going to be a pious Muslim man, you won't just grow a  
11 long beard, you will be very open to letting me work for  
12 myself. And that is a -- an idea, a big idea, if I may  
13 say at this festival, that the next U.S. administration  
14 whoever leads it, I believe ought to be considering very  
15 seriously as for reform within the Muslim world and among  
16 Muslims, there is a concept that you've heard at least a  
17 couple of times about on this panel called ' Ijtihad '.

18 And what -- and this is Islam's own tradition of  
19 critical thinking and independent reasoning. While it is  
20 true that you simply cannot let anybody issue a fatwa, it  
21 is equally true that if you leave a theological  
22 interpretation only to a very thin and verified layer of

1 elites, then I believe Dalia, all we are doing is  
2 cementing or reinforcing this pattern of submissiveness,  
3 not of submission, of submissiveness that we Muslims have  
4 had to God's self-appointed ambassadors for the last  
5 several hundred years.

6 And frankly that's not going to change much  
7 which is why, as a final thought before we get to the  
8 questions, just as further education for all of you I have  
9 brought with me a scholarly article, not written by me,  
10 hence scholarly, that is also taking the concept of  
11 Ijtihad and explaining why this tradition has been, not  
12 just the right but the responsibility of ordinary Muslims  
13 throughout Islamic history.

14 Finally enough, Dalia emphasizes classical  
15 interpretation, this document does too and yet it reaches  
16 quite different conclusions than she does. Once again, a  
17 lovely reminder that it's all in the interpretation.

18 MR. GOLDBERG: Thank you, you two very much  
19 here.

20 (Applause)

21 MR. GOLDBERG: Quite fantastic, you really are,  
22 -- if we had more you can take this on the road probably

1 forever, right? Let's go very quickly over here and I'm  
2 going to issue my own fatwa, if you don't mind, which is  
3 that keep the questions very short and keep them in the  
4 form of a question, yes.

5 SPEAKER: Of course the question who speaks for  
6 Islam is very broad and has many possible answers if any.  
7 What would you propose to believe, if any, to give the  
8 currently unheard Muslims a voice if you believe there's  
9 any way to do that?

10 MS. MANJI: Well, I think the first thing we  
11 need to do is ask them. I think we need to allow their  
12 voices to be heard, and not take representatives of  
13 Muslims who may or may not really represent the vast  
14 majority, to speak for them. And I think one way to do  
15 that and what we try to do is through scientific surveys  
16 where we simply ask them questions in the privacy of their  
17 homes, and when we understand -- and take that voice to  
18 the world.

19 So that's the contribution that Gallup has given  
20 in -- for seventy years helping ordinary people be heard,  
21 whether it's the United States or all over the world.

22 MS. MANJI: Okay. My response to your question

1 and of course there are many responses, and you know, our  
2 brother here is giving us so little time that I'll stick  
3 with just one, the Internet. It sounds logical, but in  
4 fact five years ago, it wasn't that logical to me to use  
5 the internet.

6 Here's what happened, immediately after my book  
7 came out in English and because of burst of international  
8 press that it received, my e-mail inbox overflowed with  
9 messages from young Muslims in the Middle East asking me,  
10 when you are going to get this book translated into Arabic  
11 so we can share these ideas with our friends.

12 My standard and thoroughly unimaginative  
13 response to them was, come on, name one Arab publisher in  
14 this fragile geopolitical movement that will have the guts  
15 to translate a book like this, let alone circulate it.  
16 And you know what most of these kids wrote back and said,  
17 brilliant question, so what? You get the book translated  
18 into Arabic, then post it on your website.

19 And when we can download it as a PDF or as a zip  
20 file, which is very difficult to hack, then that means we  
21 will be able to read it in privacy and therefore safety,  
22 something we wouldn't have if we were carrying a physical

1 copy of the book around with us, and that in turn meant we  
2 will create the opportunity to share these ideas with our  
3 friends.

4           Just over 2-1/2 years later, we've had more than  
5 500,000 downloads from the website in Arabic, Urdu for the  
6 country of Pakistan and Farsi, for the country of Iran  
7 where the book not surprisingly has been banned outright.  
8 So my point simply is that these young people know what  
9 their realities are and that they are dealing with daily  
10 censorship. I'm not telling them to read the book. They  
11 have told me how to make the book accessible and this kind  
12 of information accessible to them, and then leave them  
13 alone.

14           Trust them to figure out how to use this  
15 information for ways that make sense to their lives.

16           MR. GOLDBERG: You, over there?

17           SPEAKER: As young Muslim myself, like trying to  
18 find where I stand in the spectrum, I was wondering how  
19 Muslims gained access and where they find which reform  
20 interpretations to educate ourselves, some kind of  
21 resources, where do we get this information from.

22           MS. MANJI: Well, because you mentioned reform,

1 I guess I'll just jump in here. I mean, first of all it  
2 really depends on what you mean by credible. You know  
3 some people, some young Muslims see me as credible enough,  
4 some others don't. Some young Muslims see the Imam whom I  
5 referred to, who exercise Ijtihad and created this defense  
6 of interfaith marriage from an Islamic perspective, some  
7 see him as credible because not only does he have a Ph.D.  
8 in Islamic law, but he also has been traditionally  
9 educated in Saudi Arabia and in Syria.

10 And yet I can tell you that there are others,  
11 mainly older Muslims who immediately decide that because  
12 he is saying things they don't like, he is not credible.  
13 So the first thing that I would simply ask you to sort of  
14 define for yourself is what do you mean by credibility and  
15 then based on that, you can certainly use my website as a  
16 starting point.

17 There is no shortage of resources there and a  
18 ton of links to many other parts of the Muslim world and  
19 many other websites run by Muslims that have, you know,  
20 interesting interpretations for you simply to consider.  
21 No one is going to tell you what to conclude, that's the  
22 point of Ijtihad, is you get to marry your experiences in

1 your own life with what make sense given what you are  
2 hearing. And that means having integrity.

3 SPEAKER: (off mike)

4 MS. MANJI: irshadmanji.com.

5 MR. GOLDBERG: Dalia, would you want to do --

6 MS. MOGAHED: I -- and I go back to actually my  
7 original point about the importance of religious literacy  
8 among the general public, and how, in order to find  
9 credibility and know who to listen to, we have to educate  
10 ourselves. We have to be -- we have to create a  
11 relationship with the text and with the Quran, and we have  
12 to think critically about that text for ourselves so that  
13 we can decide who is credible and who is not.

14 You cannot simply blindly follow or in words of  
15 Irshad submissive to the religious or the scholarly elite.  
16 At the same time, that's one extreme and it's a fatal  
17 extreme, the other extreme is to -- is the Ijtihad of  
18 ignorance where anyone without any background or knowledge  
19 is doing a lot of harm by interpreting according to their  
20 own words.

21 MS. MANJI: Don't forget to pick up a copy of  
22 this scholarly document because I think that that'll be a

1 great first step, you know, start for you.

2 MR. GOLDBERG: I want to go with you and then  
3 over there and I think we are probably done after that,  
4 yes, you.

5 MR. WOOLSEY: Jim Woolsey, thank you all first  
6 of all Jeff, and Irshad and Dalia for fascinating panel.  
7 Two words I haven't heard mentioned here Saudi and Arabia.

8 When I was the chairman of the Board of Freedom  
9 House a few years ago, we had a group of American Muslims  
10 come to us from a dozen or so mosques with hideously  
11 virulent documents that the Saudi religious police had put  
12 into their mosques. About the same time, in Lawrence  
13 Wright in *The Looming Tower* wrote that 90 percent of the  
14 world's Islamic institutions are controlled by just over  
15 one percent of the world's Muslims in Saudi Arabia.

16 If you read the fatwas of Saudi Imams today,  
17 they are somewhere between murders and genocidal with  
18 respect to Shiite Muslims, Jews, homosexuals, and  
19 apostates massively repressive with everyone else  
20 including particularly women, wholly opposed to Ijtihad  
21 and reinterpretation.

22 We have had problems like this in Christianity

1 in the past, Spanish inquisition. I would suggest to you  
2 that today one very good reason that moderate Muslims or  
3 mainstream Muslims don't speak up for Ijtihad  
4 interpretation and all the rest is that they are  
5 frightened.

6 They are very frightened of being called  
7 apostates, and they are frightened of the kind of physical  
8 harm that a number of them have seen, would both of you  
9 care to comment?

10 MS. MANJI: Can I comment on this to start with.  
11 One of the greatest corruptions that the Saudi government  
12 and Saudi royal family have imposed upon the practice of  
13 Islam is conflating tribal culture with the faith of  
14 Islam, and in particular, the concept or the tradition of  
15 honor.

16 Honor is that tribal tradition that requires  
17 women to give up their individuality in order to maintain  
18 the reputation of the men in their lives, and this in  
19 effect turns women into property of the community so that  
20 their lives don't in fact belong to them, their lives  
21 belong to a wider group of people, their families, their  
22 tribes, even their nation so that when a Muslim who

1 operates under the code of honor, is accused of  
2 dishonoring or shaming or breaking moral codes, the  
3 punishment against her -- because we are getting to point  
4 about fear, Jim, the punishment against her can be so much  
5 bigger than even the so called crime that she has been  
6 accused of merits.

7           Why, because remember and this is counter  
8 intuitive to our mentality in this part of the world, her  
9 life doesn't belong to her. It belongs to a wider group  
10 with the punishment having to be large enough to  
11 compensate that wider group. Now, here is where this  
12 place into the fear you're talking about. I mentioned  
13 earlier, Jeff, that right here in America many, many,  
14 young Muslims feel too much fear to express themselves  
15 freely.

16           I know that's hard to imagine, after all this is  
17 the country of, you know, of the first amendment and  
18 freedom of expression. Very briefly, you know, my PBS  
19 documentary "Faith without Fear" was brought to Detroit  
20 last year prior to it being aired on PBS, and the public  
21 broadcaster put the mother and me on the road to promote  
22 this.

1           So they sent us, of course into the lion's den,  
2   Detroit to talk to a bunch of, you know, Arab Americans  
3   and afterwards, during the reception, my mother noticed  
4   under the corner of her eye, an increasingly large group  
5   of young Muslims, male and female, some in hijab, some  
6   not, gathering. They waited until all of the cameras, all  
7   of the radio microphones, all of the news -- paper  
8   reporters had left, and then they came over to my mother.

9           And they said to her, "Thank you for not  
10   disowning your daughter. Thank you for supporting what  
11   she is saying." And my mother replied, "Why are you  
12   telling this to me now? Why didn't you say this when the  
13   camera's were here," not because my daughter needs the ego  
14   boost, but because reform minded Muslims need to know that  
15   they are not alone. And you know what their answer was?  
16   "Mrs. Manji, you have the luxury of being able of walk  
17   away from this theatre two hours from now. We don't, and  
18   we can't afford to be accused of dishonoring our families  
19   for openly supporting Irshad's perspective."

20           Now what are a group of second and third  
21   generation Muslim Americans doing? Worrying about how the  
22   tradition of honor, which is a tribal tradition, not an

1 American one and not even as Islamic one, a tribal  
2 cultural tradition, why are they so inhibited to speak  
3 their minds freely, given that this is not what their  
4 Islam and this country is supposed to be about? And it  
5 goes to show how much legs this Saudi interpretation of  
6 Islam actually has.

7 MR. GOLDBERG: Dalia, I imagine you might have a  
8 thought or two in what Irshad just said. Do you want to  
9 deal with that question real quick?

10 MS. MOGAHED: No, I think, a number of important  
11 points were brought up, and I think what Irshad says about  
12 the conflation of tribal culture and Islam is extremely  
13 vital for us to keep in mind and understand. Because this  
14 happens all the time where people's culture, whether they  
15 are tribal or anything else, whether it's the Taliban or  
16 some aspects of Saudi culture, all conflated with Islam  
17 and Islam has in fact blamed for them rather than these  
18 things happening in spite of Islam.

19 As far as the idea that 90 percent of the  
20 mosques are controlled by the one percent of Muslims, I  
21 just can't quite believe that just because when we look at  
22 our data, we have majorities of Muslims saying that they

1 would -- vast majorities say that they would support  
2 freedom of speech if they were to draft a constitution for  
3 a new country, that they would support freedom of  
4 religion, if they were to draft a new constitution for a  
5 new country. So to say that that radical interpretation  
6 that calls for what you're saying, I mean, somewhere  
7 between murders and genocidal is -- has taken over and is  
8 controlling the world's Muslims is simply not supported by  
9 the evidence.

10 MR. GOLDBERG: Only one final question from  
11 here.

12 SPEAKER: Dalia, do you believe that there is a  
13 correlation between repression, poverty, and radicalism,  
14 and if so, are they geographical and regional differences  
15 that we may have learned from?

16 MS. MOGAHED: Yes. There is the correlation, I  
17 shall -- I'll just explain what the correlation is. The  
18 correlation is very strong between repression and  
19 radicalism, but not between poverty and radicalism.  
20 That's what we counter intuitively found out that those  
21 who sympathize with 9/11 are actually on average more  
22 educated and more affluent than the mainstream.

1           However, when you repress people who are more  
2           educated and more affluent, who have higher egos, higher  
3           aspirations, you get a more angry person. And so it'd  
4           actually make sense that it's repression that correlates  
5           and not so much poverty.

6           SPEAKER: Who is doing the repressing?

7           MS. MOGAHED: Local governments, the two things  
8           that correlate the strongest with sympathy for radicalism  
9           are people's views of their own government's repression,  
10          and people's views of American foreign policy. Those are  
11          the two most -- those are the two strongest correlations.

12          MR. GOLDBERG: I want to thank every body very  
13          much for coming.

14          (Appause)

15          MR. GOLDBERG: Irshad's article is here if you  
16          may want to pick up. Thank you very much to both of you.  
17          It's great.

18          (Whereupon, the PROCEEDINGS were adjourned.)

19

\* \* \* \* \*