

CONTENTS

Preface to the English Edition	15
Preface	21
Pronunciation Guide for Transliterated Arabic Words	27

I. The Foundations

<i>A. Muhammad and the Birth of Islam</i>	31
1. What are the social and religious contexts in which Muhammad's preaching began?	31
2. Allah: Is he a specific Muslim god?	33
3. How was Muhammad's monotheistic preaching accepted by the pagan population in Mecca?	34
4. What was the significance of Muhammad's hegira from Mecca to Yathrib?	36
5. Muhammad: Is he a prophet, a legislator, or a political-military leader?	37
6. How did Muhammad support his followers after the rupture with the Jews?	37
7. What was the decisive attack against Mecca?	39
<i>B. Is the Qur'ān the "Uncreated" Word of God?</i>	40
8. How was the Qur'ān born?	40
9. What are the theological consequences of the Qur'ān as "the tongue of God"?	42
10. When were all the verses of the Qur'ān collected into a single book?	44
11. What are the suras of the Qur'ān?	46

12. Does the Qur'ān offer something extraordinary to Arabs? 46
13. What is the "miracle of the Qur'ān"? 47
14. If Muhammad was illiterate, could one deduce that the Qur'ān was "miraculous"? 48

C. The Five Pillars of Islam 49

15. What are the basic fundamentals of the Islamic faith? 49
16. Is Islam an easier religion to practice than other faiths? 50
17. What are the spiritual requirements for a Muslim? 52

II. Can Islam Change?

A. Unity and Plurality 54

18. Islam: Is it monolithic? Or is it open to plurality? 54

B. Religious Authority and the Problem of Representation 56

19. What role do authority and religious hierarchy play in Islam? 56
20. Does the suppression of the khalifate mean the end of the unification of the Muslim world? 59
21. Is dealing with Muslim representatives who hold contradictory opinions inevitable? 60

C. Jihād: A Holy War or a Spiritual Struggle? 62

22. What is the meaning of the very common but often misunderstood word *jihād*? 62
23. Are there precise rules for proclaiming *jihād*? And how can one explain the fact that Muslim countries fight against each other? 63

24. Is the action of the *mujāhidīn* (fighters of *jihād*) true to the spirit of Islam? 65
25. What about the Qur'ān's statement that there must be no constraint in matters of faith? 66
26. What is the sequence of the suras? 70
27. Can *jihād* be likened to colonialism or the Crusades? 71
28. Are there examples of peaceful conquests carried out by Muslim armies? 74
29. The application of the term "martyrs" to suicide bombers: Is it accurate? Is suicide in the name of Islam permissible? 75
30. What are the main reasons for the increase of Islam? 78

D. Tradition and Modernity 80

31. What are the conditions that would open Muslim societies to the stimulus of laity and modernity without renouncing the foundations of their identity? 80
32. How is it possible that the Muslim community, the one that the Qur'ān defines as "the best in the world", can find itself in a condition of "backwardness" when compared to the West, and what are the causes of the cultural, scientific, and technological gaps? 82
33. In the years between the two World Wars, what happened to the Islamic conception of modernity? 84
34. Khomeini and the Iranian revolution: Is it a return to authentic Islam? 86
35. What are the possibilities for the development of modernity in Muslim countries? 88

III. The Challenge of Human Rights

A. <i>Sharī'a and Human Rights</i>	90
36. What is the foundation for human rights in Islamic culture?	90
37. What are the basic characteristics of <i>al-sharī'a</i> ?	91
38. Why is the Universal Declaration of Human Rights criticized by many Muslim countries?	92
39. How are human rights expressed in the Cairo Declaration?	93
40. If a country is entirely Muslim, is the application of qur'ānic law legitimate?	95
41. What is the relationship between an individual's rights and the religious community in Islam?	96
42. Certain Muslims develop positions far from the traditional literal interpretation of the Qur'ān: What are the principal expressions of such phenomena?	96
43. What is the real impact of these positions on Islamic societies and institutions?	99
44. What is the relationship between the civil and the religious law, between the state and religion?	100
45. What is the actual level of application of <i>al-sharī'a</i> rules?	102
46. Is it possible to find in the Qur'ān any counterinstructions to the aberrant principles of <i>al-sharī'a</i> ?	103
47. Did Turkey, one of the most secular Islamic countries, succeed in achieving its goal of secularism?	104

B. The Condition of Women 106

48. Is it correct to say that in Islam, men are considered superior to women, or is this a cliché? 106
49. Are the qur'ānic statements that establish the authority of male over female similar to some passages from the Letters of Paul in the New Testament? 107
50. In practice, how is the theory of woman's inferiority to man translated? 109
51. Why are women required to wear a veil in public? 114
52. How is actual discrimination against women experienced in the Muslim countries? 116
53. What are the rules governing mixed marriages? 117
54. What happens to the children of mixed marriages? 118
55. Is it reasonable to hope for an improvement of women's rights in Islam? 119

C. Religious Freedom and Apostasy 120

56. How is religious freedom conceived in Islam? 120
57. What level of religious freedom are Christians granted in Muslim countries? 122
58. What are the theological and juridical foundations of and punishments for Muslims who convert to another religion? 125
59. What are some examples of how apostasy is punished? 127
60. What are some famous cases of condemnations pronounced toward apostates? 128
61. What is the current status of the debate on apostasy in the Islamic world? 130

<i>D. A Provocation: Reciprocity</i>	131
62. What is at stake in the notion of reciprocity?	131
63. Why does the defense of religious freedom seem to be of so little interest for the West?	133
64. Can reciprocity become a theme to enable us to progress together?	134
65. Does reciprocity unjustly consider Muslim immigrants responsible for the unjust measures taken by their countries of origin with regard to religious freedom?	134

IV. Islam among Us

<i>A. European Islam or Islamized Europe</i>	137
66. Are the terrorist attacks on New York City; Washington, D.C.; and several European cities the consequence of isolated radical groups, or are they part of a global project of Islamization?	137
67. Is the influx of Muslim immigrants an Islamic invasion of Europe?	139
68. What does public Muslim activity symbolize?	142
69. Why is the veil a sign of controversy?	144
70. Is a "long march" of Islam in European societies developing?	145
71. What dynamics can be expected in the further development of modern Europe as an increasingly multireligious continent?	147
72. What role does Christian culture play in the construction of the European Union?	148
<i>B. The Role of Converts</i>	150
73. Why would a European convert to Islam?	150
74. Can native converts serve as a bridge between Muslim immigrants and the host countries?	153

75.	Can the Muslim youth of the second and third generations act as protagonists in the process of integration of Islam in Europe?	154
76.	What factors could favor the processes of integration of Islam in Europe?	156
<i>C. Minarets in Italy: Requests for Recognition</i>		158
77.	Can we speak of Islam as the second-largest religion in Italy?	158
78.	Should there be an agreement between the Muslim community and the government of any European nation?	159
79.	What are the requests advanced by the Muslim communities?	160
80.	How do Muslims observe Friday as a day of rest?	162
81.	Do Muslims have the right to interrupt work to pray?	163
82.	Should Islam be taught in the schools?	164
83.	Should Muslim marriages be acknowledged?	165
84.	Should the civil government accept all the civil effects of Islamic <i>sharī'a</i> with regard to marriage?	165
85.	What general rules should be applied with regard to requests for recognition?	167
<i>D. The Mosque: A Muslim Church?</i>		167
86.	What does a mosque represent to a Muslim?	167
87.	Is the mosque a place of worship?	168
88.	How should we respond to the increasing number of Muslim requests for plots of land on which to build mosques?	170
<i>E. Models of Integration</i>		172
89.	What are the models adopted in the West for foreign integration?	172

90. From what source does the idea of a multicultural utopia derive? 174
91. How can an authentic integration of immigrants be realized? 175

V. Islam and Christianity:

The Unavoidable Encounter, the Possible Dialogue

- A. Islam and Other religions* 177
92. How does Islam relate to other world religions? 177
93. How did the break between Muhammad and the faithful of the other two monotheistic religions occur? 180
94. From which sources did Muhammad derive his biblical knowledge? 182
95. Do Muslims consider Christians as monotheists? 185
- B. Jesus and Muhammad: Two Prophets?* 186
96. How is the life of Jesus presented in the Qur'ān? 186
97. What are the main aspects of Qur'ānic Christology? 188
98. How are the Gospels presented in the Qur'ān? 192
99. What fundamentals of Christianity are denied by Islam? 193
100. How is Muhammad seen from a Christian point of view? 196
- C. No to a Masquerade, Yes to the Search for Truth* 197
101. What are the values and limits of and requirements for Christian-Muslim dialogue? 197

102.	What are the authentic foundations for Christian-Muslim dialogue?	200
103.	Islam and Christianity: What are their similarities and differences?	202
104.	Islam and Christianity: Are they both religions of the Book?	203
105.	Is Abraham a common ancestral tradition among monotheists?	204
106.	What was Pope John Paul II's position regarding interreligious dialogue?	207
107.	Welcoming the immigrants: How can it be an occasion for dialogue?	208
108.	Can the migratory experience contribute to modifying the traditional vision and prejudices of Muslims toward Christianity and Christians?	210
109.	Are the recent attempts at dialogue bearing fruit?	212
110.	What insights can be derived from the historical experience of Arab-Christians?	213
111.	Are Christian Arabs a potential bridge between the two civilizations?	215

Appendices

A.	Chronology of Islam	219
B.	Muslims in the European Union	224
C.	Islam in Italy	226

Glossary	232
Bibliography	241
Index	247