

NAAIMS 42nd ANNUAL CONFERENCE
[Formerly the Association of Muslim Social
Scientists of North America (AMSS)]

“Constitutions and Islam”

Cosponsored By:
Department of Near Eastern Studies
&
Program in Near Eastern Studies
Princeton University, NJ

Saturday, September 28, 2013

ABSTRACT

“Peacemakers Constitution”

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&

Layth al-Shaiban (Free Minds and Progressive Muslims)

The urge for freedom(s) in countries with predominantly Muslim populations is unprecedented. The results of unfolding revolutions prompted by the Arab Spring in the Middle East are reminiscent of how a similar uprising in 1979 against a corrupt and oppressive Shah was squandered by mullahs and turned topsy-turvy within a few years. Today’s revolutions are also vulnerable to distortions and counter-revolutions. It is imperative that those who are fighting for their freedom(s) and dignity should be resolute against the negative involvement of external and internal forces because they could derail a system focused on promoting the well-being of their nation’s citizens, environment and world peace. As co-founder of Muslims for Peace/Justice/Progress (MPJP), I worked with activists in Tunisia and Egypt, with my colleague, Layth al-Shaiban. Since we were privileged to know both the East and the West, perhaps by mere *chance*, we are in a better position to appreciate positives and negatives of both sides. This presentation is based on lessons learned from history, human nature, and the universal principles promoted by the Qur’an as I have discussed in *Manifesto for Islamic Reform*. The proposed Peacemakers Constitution provides a *federal secular* system that allows more room for cultural and religious differences within the limits of the constitution. It provides maximum protection for individual freedoms and rights, especially of atheists and heretics. It guarantees for each citizen the necessities of life, such as food, shelter, education and primary health care through work or social programs. It introduces a few novel methods for a progressive democratic state.