

*In the Name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful,  
And may Peace and Blessings be upon the Prophet Muhammad*

# OPEN LETTER TO HIS HOLINESS POPE BENEDICT XVI

*In the Name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful,  
Do not contend with people of the Book except in the fairest way ....  
(The Holy Qur'an, al-Ankabut, : ).*

Your Holiness,

September 11<sup>th</sup> 2009, we thought it appropriate, in the spirit of open exchange, to address your use of a debate between the Emperor Manuel II Paleologus and a “learned ifdl

You mention that “according to the experts” the verse which begins, *There is no compu*

as a counterexample. To say that for Muslims “ God’s will is not bound up in any of our categories” is also a simplification which may lead to a misunderstanding. God has many names in Islam, including the Merciful, the Just, the Seeing, the Hearing, the Knowing, the Forgiving, and the Gentle. Their utter conviction in God’s oneness and that *There is none like unto Him (al-Ikhlās : 1)* has not led Muslims to deny God’s attribution of these qualities to Himself and to (some of) His creatures, (setting aside for now the notion of “categories”, a term which requires much clarification in this context). As this concerns His will, to conclude that Muslims believe in a capricious God who might or might not command us to evil is to forget that God says in the Quran, *Lo! God enjoins justice and kindness, and giving to kinsfolk, and forbids*

war and describes circumstances where it is necessary and just, that does not make that religion war like, anymore than regulating sexuality makes a religion

for many others around the globe, yours is arguably the single most influential voice in continuing to move this relationship forward in the direction of mutual unders

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*Grand Mufti of Russia*

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