



DICID

مركز الدوحة الدولي لحوار الأديان
Doha International Center for Interfaith Dialogue

Selected Articles

SERIES NO. 1, OCT. 2011

Religious Education and the Spread of Values

*A speech delivered at the closing session of
8th Doha Interfaith Conference
Doha, 19th–21st October 2010*

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Doha International Center for Interfaith Dialogue

Doha International Center for Interfaith Dialogue was established as a result of a recommendation of the Fifth Doha Interfaith Conference on May 2007 in Doha. The center was opened officially in May 2008.

The main role of the centre will primarily be to spread the culture of dialogue, the peaceful coexistence of humanity and the acceptance of others.

Our activities:

- *Annual Conference.* The Centre holds annual conference for interfaith dialogue among religions, discussing important humanitarian issues. It will be addressed from the perspective of every religion, to reach common conclusions, and make them serve values of justice and peace.
- *Symposiums.* They are specialized symposiums and seminars discussing various topics of common concerns between different religions inside Qatar and abroad.
- *Scientific Journal.* The Centre publishes periodical journal "Religions" in Arabic and English language. The journal is scientific; it contains many researches, discussing various intellectual, humanitarian and dialogical issues.
- *Researches & Studies.* The Center sets researches and studies in numerous and various fields such as the common denominators among faiths and field studies of priority issues and indicator analysis of the Center performance.
- *Other Programs.* It is a series of educational programs and youth activities related to the dialogue including cultural trips and youth camps, inside Qatar and abroad.

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Selected Articles is a publication of DICID that provides a medium for diverse opinions, presenting a comprehensive view of the myriad perspectives pertaining to dialogue among the followers of different faiths and religions. This is done by publishing important contributions by experts and world leaders.

Our Mission

We strive for constructive dialogue between followers of different faiths towards better understanding and harnessing of distinct religious principles and teachings to the benefit of all humanity, on the basis of mutual respect and acknowledgement of differences and through cooperation with related individuals and organizations.

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Religious Education and the Spread of Values

By: HE Dr. Ghaith Bin Mubarak Al Kuwwari

I would like first to thank the organizers for allowing me the opportunity to attend this important and essential interfaith conference. The importance of such a meeting lies in the results it concludes, which aim at alleviating tension and stresses in the relations between various intellectual systems and reiterating the necessity to consider the mutual understanding in order to establish peace and justice in the world, to achieve coexistence and save man from falling into the calamity of conflict. This includes jeopardizing man's mission in fulfilling the role of succession in land as God's vicegerent on Earth, the demise of the species and the destruction of this beautiful planet. A planet which Almighty God has bestowed upon with all the requirements of well proportioned echo-system and a balanced environment which is instilled adequately, with means of sustenance to secure life for mankind and protect them from the shackles and restraints of need and poverty, so that they would worship God in peace and serenity. In such a state of existence, they can engage in contemplation of God's blessings and the signs thereof. By doing so, they will entertain peace and serenity in their hearts; achieve kindness and justice amongst themselves.

Therefore, justice on earth shall be realized, stand up against despotism and cooperate to come "to common terms" based on the objectives of God's Dogma "the Shar'a" and all the lively ideas that are based upon it.

Ladies and Gentlemen;

Many factors have contributed to the comeback of religion and its return to the forefront of life in our contemporary world. After centuries of conflicts and clashes between religious communities where the forms of zealotry, fanaticism and intolerance, had spread widely, differences and strife had deepened and other types of negative ideas had prevailed. All this had diverted people of faith, away from what religions call for: peace, submission to the Will of the Almighty God, refraining from anger, avoiding fighting and abstaining from committing what God has forbidden of deeds and practices. Religion has come back to the forefront once again to prove that it is able to bypass all the deficiencies, which have

narrowed down the bounds of coexistence and widened the areas of divergence.

Here are the religions coming back declaring the necessity of review, the thought of the “Age of Enlightenment” which followed the devastating Lisbon earthquake of 1755. This, in turn, was the most prominent result of the call to limit the authority of religion in the community and publicize “the power of science”. This led to new temporal philosophies of human subject of religion, which flooded the rights in the buildup, thinking that it has acquired the greatest power. Consequently, more ideologies were founded that bred ideas of fascism that destroyed the world through two world wars, and expanded the circle of imbalance and flaws.

In an attempt to avoid the impact of destruction, and away from religion, human beings resorted rather excessively to producing and developing what they thought will secure them their living and facilitate the means to do so. However, they ended up with submitting to what they have produced with their own hands. They could neither protect themselves, nor maintain the planet which they come from and will end up to. They subjugated each other, they fought wars, and some even enslaved others. Man realized eventually, that religion **“that driving force for good”** alone could restore the balance and equilibrium and secure him the deliverance he seeks from the yoke of dead and destructive ideas.

This return to religion, however, has taken many

different forms. This was as different and diverse as the diversity of the awareness of the returnees, the levels of their understanding of religious texts and their comprehension and following the rules of inference and understanding the mechanisms of application. In the case of some, the come back was marked with excessiveness and rigidity. With others, it was more the case of laxity and lukewarm application. A third party however, followed the path of moderation.

Whatever the case, returning to religion is a proof that the latter have been an inexhaustible reservoir of eternal values, a law and an approach which humans can never overcome. Without submission to Almighty God, human beings can never live in serenity, understand their existence and enjoy living contently.

The Almighty God says in the Holy Quran:

“It was We who revealed the law (to Moses): therein was guidance and light. By its standard have been judged the Jews, by the prophets who bowed (as in Islam) to Allah’s will, by the rabbis and the doctors of law: for to them was entrusted the protection of Allah’s book, and they were witnesses thereto: therefore fear not men, but fear me, and sell not my signs for a miserable price. If any do fail to judge by (the light of) what Allah hath revealed, they are (no better than) Unbelievers.” (Al Maida: 44).

And:

“And in their footsteps We sent Jesus the son of Mary, confirming the Law that had come before him: We sent him the Gospel: therein was guidance and light, and confirmation of the Law that had come before him: a guidance and an admonition to those who fear Allah.” (Al Maida: 46).

And in another chapter:

“Verily this Qur’an doth guide to that which is most right (or stable), and giveth the Glad Tidings to the Believers who work deeds of righteousness, that they shall have a magnificent reward.” (Al Israa: 9)

In addition to that, according to these verses, the continuation of the niche of prophecy, the language of communication and the focal point of the same divine mission, is that the achievement of guidance and securing salvation, can only be attained through submitting to the commands of Almighty God and to avoid prohibitions called for in the heavenly- revealed books.

These Books have organized the relationship of Man with his Lord, his relationship with his fellow Man, his relationship with his environment (the Universe), and whatever these relationships may entail of rights and duties.

Numerous volumes in Islam had been written on teaching religion and learning, the virtues of learning and scholarly knowledge, the conditions

of joining the ranks of scholars and their status before the eyes of God and Man are well explained. The holy Quran states:

“Allah will rise up to (suitable) ranks (and degrees), those of you who believe and who have been granted (mystic) Knowledge. And Allah is well-acquainted with all ye do.” (Al Mujadalah: 10);
“Those truly fear Allah, among His Servants, who have knowledge) (Fatir: 28).

Which means; that scholars are the ones who fear Allah most.

Allah also says: *“Say: Are those equal, those who know and those who do not know?” (Az Zumer: 8).*

The narrations of the prophet (PBUH) also indicate this clearly: Muslim reports that the prophet (PBUH) said: *“He who pursues a path for knowledge, Allah will facilitate a path for him to heavens”*, Sahih Muslim number: 2699.

The prophet is also reported to have said: **“Scholars are the inheritors of Prophets”** Sahih Al Bukhari, Bab Al Ilm Qabla Al Qawl Wa Al Amel.

Scholars have amply explained and elaborated the virtues of knowledge and learners and the aims and objectives of teaching and passing on knowledge, on knowledge, their methods and roles. As for the Old Testament, it has also taught

the Commandments of The Lord as follows:

6:4 Listen, Israel: The Lord is our God, the Lord is one!6:5 You must love the Lord your God with your whole mind,your whole being,and all your strength. 6:6 These words I am commanding you today must be kept in mind, 6:7 and you must teach them to your children and speak of them as you sit in your house, as you walk along the road, as you lie down, and as you get up. 6:8 You should tie them as a reminder on your forearm and fasten them as symbols on your forehead. 6:9 Inscribe them on the doorframes of your houses and gates. 6:12 be careful not to forget the Lord who brought you out of Egypt, that place of slavery. (Deuteronomy 6).

Moses, (PBUH), was a teacher who conveyed the message of his Lord and taught the Israelites. Allah the Exalted says:

“Moreover, We gave Moses the Book, completing (Our favour) to those who would do right, and explaining all things in detail,- and a guide and a mercy, that they might believe in the meeting with their Lord.” (Al Anaam: 154.)

In the same context of guidance, enlightenment and teaching religion to spread its noble objectives between His creatures, Almighty God had revealed the Injeel (The New Testament) upon Maryam (Mary), i.e. Prophet Issa (Jesus) (PBUH), God says:

“And in their footsteps We sent Jesus the son of Mary, confirming the Law that had come before him: We sent him the Gospel: therein was guidance and light, and confirmation of the Law that had come before him: a guidance and an admonition to those who fear Allah.” (Al Maida: 46.)

In the Injeel (The New Testament), we read:

“Think not that I am come to adestroy the blaw, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfill. (Mathew chapter 5:17.)

God the Almighty says in the Quran:

“When Jesus came with Clear Signs, he said: “Now have I come to you with Wisdom, and in order to make clear to you some of the (points) on which ye dispute: therefore fear Allah and obey me.” (Al Zukhruf: 63.)

Issa (Jesus) was a teacher and a “Master”. The phrase (O’ Master) was regularly used by his disciples when referring to him, take for example:

“And he was in the hinder part of the ship, asleep on a pillow: and they awake him, and say unto him, Master, carest thou not that we perish?” (Mark chapter 4:38.)

Also see Mathew: chapter 19: 16-18:

“And, behold, one came and said unto him,

Good Master, what good thing shall I do, that I may have aeternal life?"

Ladies and Gentlemen:

It is expected from people of monotheistic religions today to reach a consensus on the confines of a "common word" based on the objectives of the Divine Laws in order to isolate the ideas of clashing which are built on the premise of aggression and usurping the rights of others, to differ in their thinking and violate and usurp their lands and resources. People of monotheistic religions should also agree on upholding justice and kindness based on peace-making and give up waging war and fighting in the name of religion. They should also renounce forcing others to leave their homes and work instead to liberate mankind from the yoke of the materialism and what their hands have wrought, because, after all, they are the ones who are charged with the mission of being God's vicegerents on earth.

The speed with which knowledge and knowhow is departed and decimated nowadays, is very fast indeed. The greater the momentum created as a result of such speed, the greater becomes the burden of responsibility on the shoulders of the wise and reasonable people among peoples of monotheistic religions, especially amongst those who believe in the necessity of reaching an agreement on the confines of the kinds of values and ideals which protect peace, uphold human rights and guarantee the respect of people's beliefs and the rest of their freedoms.

Teaching religion should be conducted insightfully and in a manner, which will lead to establishing its eternal values, which call for harmony, rejecting excessiveness and extremism, respecting the other and protecting their right to differ within the framework of diversity, which Almighty God has accepted and as expressed in the Quran:

"If thy Lord had so willed, He could have made mankind one people: but they will not cease to dispute. Except those on whom thy Lord hath bestowed His Mercy: and for this did He create them: and the Word of thy Lord shall be fulfilled: "I will fill Hell with jinns and men all together." (Hud: 118-119.)

Almighty God also says:

"And among His Signs is the creation of the heavens and the earth, and the variations in your languages and your colours: verily in that are Signs for those who know." (Ar Rum: 22.)

Thus, teaching religion should also be based on the family as an institution, which is well considered in the Heavenly-inspired religions. That institution is the one which embraces the child, right from the beginning, give it its style and bring it up according to its systems of belief.

Ladies and Gentlemen:

The theme of this conference is very important

indeed. We, as participants bear a huge responsibility in enacting its recommendations among the followers of the religions we represent. We even bear another responsibility before God. The first building brick that we may use is, perhaps, to achieve a minimum degree of common grounds, so that we may highlight the aim of this conference. Each one of us should use his own dogma, as a point of departure to facilitate reaching a consensus. What matters to us now is: How to expand the circle of good and narrow down and isolate the circle of evil? How to return the usurped rights to their rightful owners? How to lay the foundations of global peace, where we can all stand in solidarity to elevate need and poverty? How to cooperate for the sake of protecting planet earth? How to protect the right of future generations to breath clean air? How they can eat from the providences of this generous soil, drink from pure water sources, enjoy the fruits of seas? and, How to safeguard and conserve the riches and diversity of our planet?

As Muslims, we will embark upon this mission from the principle of acquaintance the possibility of prevailing peace, bringing security. All of this can only be achieved through submitting to the Will of Almighty God by enjoining what He had ordered and refraining from what He had forbidden. It can be achieved through piety, which is a positive concept that leads to establishing the values of safeguarding the rights of others and spreading goodness, justice and kindness.

Prophet Muhammed (PBUH) said: ***“Mankind is from Adam, and Adam is from dust”***. (Narrated by Ahmed in his Musnad (8736), it was also reported by Abu Dawoud in the Adab (5116) and Tirmithi in Al Manaqib (3956).

The Almighty God says in the holy Quran:

“O mankind! We created you from a single (pair) of a male and a female, and made you into nations and tribes, that ye may know each other (not that ye may despise (each other)). Verily the most honoured of you in the sight of Allah is (he who is) the most righteous of you. And Allah has full knowledge and is well acquainted (with all things).” (Al Hujurat:13.)

The building of a just human society which bypasses evils and wrongdoing and unites for the sake of achieving what is good for humanity at large, is in dire need to considering ethnic, cultural and religious diversity. The fulfillment of high objectives is already present amongst us, since we get together and hold meetings, where we set down to engage in dialogue, each emanating from his own creed and system of beliefs. We all seek piety to gain the pleasure of Almighty God and guidance, by what He has revealed to His Prophets and Messengers of Revelation, Books and Glad Tidings and in accordance to what has each one of us accumulated of experiences and wisdom over the years.

May the Almighty God guide us to doing the good and may He lead us to a common ground.

May the peace and blessings of Allah be upon you.

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Dr. Ghaith bin Mubarak Al-Kuwari

Dr. Ghaith bin Mubarak Ali Imran Al-Kuwari was born in 1969.
Education:

1. Bachelor's degree in Islamic law from the Institute of Islamic and Arabic Studies - Islamic University of Imam Muhammad bin Saud, Ras Al Khaimah, United Arab Emirates, 1996.
2. Master's Degree in Islamic Sciences (Branch - Maliki Jurisprudence and its Fundamentals in the Islamic West), Dar Al-Hadith Al-Hassania, Islamic Post-Graduate Studies - Rabat - Kingdom of Morocco, May 2001.
3. Ph.D. in Islamic studies: critical and methodological studies in the heritage of the Islamic West, dissertation entitled: "alerting the Minds to the Prophet's talk "peace be upon him"", study and revision, Faculty of Arts and Humanities, University of Ben-Tufail, sector of Higher Education, Training and Scientific Research - Ministry of National and Higher Education, training and Scientific Research, Morocco, June 2006.

Career

1. Head of Da'wah and Guidance Department, Da'wah Administration, Ministry of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs, 1996-2000.
2. Director of Da'wah Administration, Ministry of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs, 2006-2008.
3. Director of Planning and Follow-up, Ministry of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs from 2008 till now.

Public and community activities:

1. Member of the National Commission for Human Rights, as Representative of the Ministry of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs in Qatar - 2006.
2. Head of the Organizing Committee of the Holy Qur'an memorization competition of Sheikh Qasim bin Mohammed Al Thani, fourteenth, fifteenth, and sixteenth, held annually under the auspices of the Ministry of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs in Qatar.
3. Member of the Board of Trustees of the British Muslim Heritage Centre in the city of Manchester, UK, as a representative of the Ministry of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs, as of 09-10-2008.
4. A participant in the Conference of Ministers of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs in Jakarta, Indonesia, 1997.
5. A participant in the conference of Arab women and poverty in Casa-blanca, the Kingdom of Morocco, 2001.
6. A participant in the forum of peoples via international students scholarships, sector of Cultural Affairs, Ministry of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs, Kuwait, 2008.
7. Professor of Islamic culture, Military Faculty of Ahmed bin Mohammed, for a year and a half, Doha - Qatar.
8. A teacher of course (how to manage yourself), Organized by the Institute of Islamic West in collaboration with the unit of methodological and Shari'ah studies, the Institute of Islamic West for Training and scientific Research, the Faculty of Arts and Humanities, University of Ben-Tufail, 01/17-18/2001, Qunaitira - Kingdom of Morocco.
9. Obtainer of many certificates of appreciation from the state for the contributions and efforts made to improve and enhance the performance of work.

