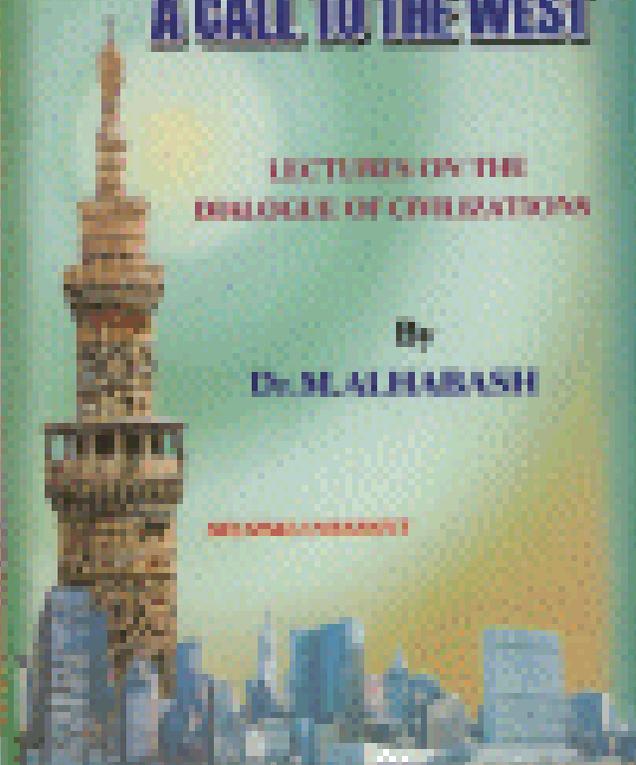


A CALL TO THE WEST

LECTURES ON THE
DIALOGUE OF CIVILIZATIONS

By
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A Call to the West
Lectures on the dialogue of civilizations

Dr. Muhammad
Helsinki University

Habash.



(وَلَا تَقُولُوا لِمَنْ أَلْفَىٰ إِلَيْنَا السَّلَامَ لَسَنَ مُؤْمِنًا)

“And do not say to anyone who offers you peace: You are not a believer”

[Sura Al-Nissa: 94]

A Call to the West

Lectures on the dialogue of civilizations



The prophet Muhammad (Peace be Upon him) said:

“I and the prophets before me, are like a man who built a house, and beautified and decorated all of it except one place for a brick in a corner. The people keep walking around it admiring it, but saying: “If only this brick were in place!” I am this brick, and I am the Seal of the prophets.”

Narrated by al-sheikhan and al-Termezie.

Introduction



*In the name of Allah, Most Compassionate,
Most Merciful.*

In his last book, *The Irreplaceable Fortune*, the American ex-president Richard Nixon describes his view of the future of the relationship between Islam and the West.

And contrary to the conclusions of Fukuyama in his book, *The End of History*, and Samuel Huntingdon in his book, *The Clash of Civilizations*, the American president, who is famous for his astute perception of world affairs, advises the Western World not to enter into a struggle with Islam, and recognizes that the gigantic Islamic Movement is not necessarily a foe that the West has to get ready to face. On the contrary, he sees it as an efficacious partner in human civilization; a partner which has a great history and culture of its own.

Nixon concludes that the West should reform its view of the Islamic World, and distinguish well between movements of revenge fuelled by the suffering caused by colonization, and sensible Islamic movements.

Surely the latter can see clearly those aspects of Islam that promote tolerance and brotherhood.

Nixon further asked Western people to confess and admit the historical errors that they had committed in their policies towards the Islamic World.

With this in mind, we offer the reader this study, which consists of some lectures that Dr. Muhammad Habash delivered during his tour of the West (Finland, Brazil, United States), calling for a confirmation of faith and truth, and a return to Islam as a great supporter of freedom, justice and development in the world.

This study is one of the essential topics that the Center of Islamic

Studies focuses on, in the interests of dialogue and mutual understanding.

“And Allah’s is the East and the West; therefore, whither you turn, there is Allah’s purpose;”

The publisher.



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The Message of Finnish Muslims as messengers of Brotherhood

On the occasion of the tenth anniversary of
Establishment of the Finnish-Islamic Group.

Helsinki 14/11/1998
Dr. Muhammad Habash.



In the name of Allah, Most Compassionate,
Most Merciful.

Praise be to Allah, The Lord of world.
Peace be upon our prophet Muhammad,
his father Abraham and his two brothers
Moses and Jesus.

It is my honor to address you on this special occasion, as we celebrate the 10th anniversary of this honorable Islamic-Finnish establishment.

I have come from Syria, which was honored to receive the Prophet's Companions after his death under the leadership of Khalid son of al-Waleed, Abu Ubaida son of al-Jarrah and Yihia son of al-Kalbi, whose graves still stand in Damascus as a source of light.

They reached
carrying with
message of
Muhammad
to complete the



the blessed land
them the
Prophet
(P.B.U.H), so as
message of the

honored Prophets Noah, Abraham, Jesus (son of Mary) and John, who settled in the holy Al-sham (P.B.U them all). And may Allah also bless and favor the land where Abraham arrived.

So Allah (Glory be to Him) says:

“But We delivered him and (his nephew) Lot (and directed them) to the land which We have blessed for the nation”.

ونجيناه ولوطاً إلى الأرض التي باركنا فيها للعالمين

In Damascus lies the hill Al Rabwah which is mentioned in the holy Qur’an, where Mary took refuge with her son for fear of being killed by the Jews.

“ And We made the son of Mary and his mother as a sign. We gave them both shelter on high ground as a security and furnished with springs”.

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وجعلنا ابن مريم وأمه آية وآويناهما إلى ربوة ذات قرار ومعين

Damascus, which has always been a source of knowledge, light and guidance, resumes her great role through the centers of Islamic Call; and the most important of them is the grand Mosque Abun-Noor Palace, from where I come as a representative of his Eminence Sheik Ahmad Kuftharo, the Grand Mufti of Syria.

Dear Brothers:

You are here on one of the horizons of Islam, in the North of the earth, representing Islam in spreading its civilization in order to protect ourselves and our children.

No doubt, this situation makes your duty here **accurate** and important.

Now it is suitable to start my word with the following tradition. The Prophet (P.B.U.H) says:



“The believer (Al Mu’men) is like the abundant rain: wherever it falls it benefits”,

مثل المؤمن كمثل الغيث أينما وقع نفع

And he says: “How righteous he is, how righteous he is...”

‘Who is he, prophet of Allah?’ They asked.

He said: “The righteous man who pastures his sheep on a top of a mountain and keeps on doing his prayers”.

ما أتقاه!! ما أتقاه! راعي غنم على رأس جبل يقيم الصلاة

And this is the Muslim’s message in keeping himself and his faith wherever he goes.

So the **understanding of life abroad** I aim to talk about, can be summarized in two words, good deeds and self-purification, or the Good Pattern.

١ ٤

Dear Brothers:

What is expected of a **Muslim immigrant** and what is his message and duty?

We have to talk courageously and honestly: many Muslims in foreign Western countries give the worst impression of Islam.

They consider those countries a pasture for their lusts and desires and a market for their profits, without feeling loyalty or fidelity towards the land that protects or welcomes them; and without practicing their duty or showing their affection and love for those **who work alongside them to build a healthy society.**

The best way in my opinion to study the Message of the **Muslim abroad** is to know the guidance of the Prophet (P.B.U.H) and his honored Companions as regards this message.

Prophet
(P.B.U.H)
Medinah when
driven him from



Muhammad
arrived in
the Quraish had
Mecca - in the

thirteenth year after he was sent. This is narrated in the Qu'ran in the following Verse:

“And when those who disbelieved devised plans against you that they might confine you or slay you or drive you away; and they devised plans and Allah too had arranged a plan; and Allah is the best of planners.”

No doubt, he hoped to have in Medinah a more respected life and more liberty and security, and I believe and I am sure that many of you, who came to Finland, have the same aim and wishes.

But his life in Medinah has taught us many things.

From his early days, he began to call upon Allah and to teach his Companions the following prayer;

*“Oh Lord, bestow on us
the love of Medinah like
You have bestowed on us
the love of Mecca”,*



اللهم حبب إلينا المدينة كما حبيت إلينا مكة

and he taught his Companions how to be faithful to this land which accepted them (actually and literally).

From the early days of his arrival, the Prophet Muhammad (P.B.U.H) organized an ambitious program to improve its environment.

He ordered the digging of fifty-four wells in chosen places of the city, and the removal of the rubbish from Medinah to al-Jahfah, and for the first time the land began to be irrigated by canals: before that it had been irrigated by ordinary well water.

He asked his Companions to revive the barren land in Medinah and said:

“Whoever revives barren land will become its owner.”

من أحيا أرضاً ميتة فهي



له

So the holy Medinah became the largest green land in the Arab Peninsula, as if it were a piece of Paradise.

Likewise **he mediated and brought a unity** that guaranteed security and safety to Medinah: he achieved internal unity.

Then he ordered Al-Suffa people, “poor Muslims” who had no shelter to retreat to, to defend Medinah from any attack or evil, and he ordered Tamem, son of Al-Aus Al-Dari to prepare lamps and light up the city till it became like a pearl.

Truly, the best gift the prophet Muhammad offered to Medinah is the honor and favor of guidance and faith, since he called them to unity under Allah’s Unity, whereas they used to worship idols.

Thus, he did not think of Medinah, the **foreign land**, as a waiting hall or temporary military training camp, but he loved the city and it loved him;

he loved its people and its people loved him; and he was true to them and they became faithful to him.

We can read about the love that grew between him and that land through his dialogue with the Helpers, 'Al-Anssar', when he distributed the spoils of Hunain Battle after al-Hijra (the Emigration) and the Conquest of Mecca.

On that day, the Prophet Muhammad (P.B.U.H) allotted none of the spoils to the people of Medinah, so they were depressed and thought that the Prophet (P.B.U.H) was intending to go back to Mecca.

So they complained to the Messenger of Allah (P.B.U.H) but he said quietly:

“Oh Helpers, what I have been told about you? Did not I find you astray and Allah guided you”?

‘Yes’, they said.

“Did not I find Allah gave you

‘Yes’, they said.

)

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you poor and wealth?”

“Weren’t you foes and Allah unified you”?

‘Yes’, they said.

“O tribes of Helpers, what prevents you from replying?” the Prophet (P.B.U.H) said.

‘What should be the reply?’ the Helpers said.

Then he added, “But by Allah! You may have answered and answered truly, for I could testify to its truth myself.

Say: “ You came to us **mistrusted** and rejected and we accepted you; you came to us helpless and we helped you; and poor and we comforted you”.

The Helpers wept till their beards were soaked with tears and said:

“It is for Allah the favour and gratitude”

He said: “Are not you satisfied, O group of Helpers, that people go with ewes while you go along with the Messenger of Allah?”

They said: ‘Yes, we are satisfied, O Messenger of Allah, with our lot and share.’

Here the Prophet (P.B.U.H) said: “My life will be with you, and my death as well! Allah, have mercy on the Helpers, their children and their children’s children.”

Indeed he lived in Medinah till he died.

The Companions emigrated to Abyssinia carrying away their religion from Quraish aggression.

The prophet had advised them in his saying: “Go to Abyssinia, where there is a king by whom nobody ever is treated unjustly.”

The Companions displayed the greatest wisdom - their manners and behavior were

an excellent witness that induced Negus to undertake himself their care and protection, and to refuse the demand of his friends, men of Quraish, who came asking him to give up those emigrants, in order to render them back to injustice in Mecca.

But Negus (the Emperor) stood up and said to the Quraish

“No! By God! I will never give them up” and turned to the Emigrants and said: “You are in peace in my land. Whoever insults you should be punished”.

The Companions were loyal to Negus and were great helpers for him, and when some rivals appeared and fought him, the Companions did not hesitate to help him in gratitude for the land that had received them warmly and done well for them.

So al-Zubier, son of al-Awam, led a squadron across the Nile with his companions, swimming to fight with Negus. Thus the Companions set the best example with their loyalty to the land that had welcomed them and to the king who had honored them.

This is our significant aim, the standard that we aspire to in any foreign country where Muslims live as citizens.

The Companions continued in  their loyalty and

love for Negus in spite of the religious difference, so that when Negus received a new baby, he named him (Jaa'far), although this name was not familiar in Abyssinia. That was because of Negus' love for the head of the Emigrants, the revered Companion Jaa'far, son of Abu-Taleb.

Although the prophet (P.B.U.H) emigrated to Medinah where he found safety and security and established the first Islamic State and Society, the Companions stayed in Abyssinia for seven years, where brotherhood ties had been deepened between them and Negus; and they were pleased with the approval of Negus for the call of prophet Muhammad (P.B.U.H) to Islam, and Islam became more accepted by the people of Abyssinia.

So this success that the Muslims achieved in Abyssinia should be repeated in Finland and in any country



where Muslim groups settle; according to the principle of love and affection which the Emigrants demonstrated through their activities in Abyssinia.

As we look at the world around us, we have to distinguish clearly and openly between different kinds of stranger.

Negus and Khosros (the Persian Emperor), were both not Muslims, but Islam did not treat them in the same way: similarly Abu-Lahab and Abu-Taleb, who were both not Muslims, were not judged the same; Abu-Lahab was damned in the Holy Qur'an, while the Holy Qur'an said about Abi Taleb: "Surely you cannot guide whom you love, but Allah guides whom He pleases, and he knows best the followers of the right way."

This is a bright declaration in the Qur'an about the deep relationship between the prophet and his uncle Abu-Taleb and this is a natural result of the support, loyalty and respect



between the prophet (P.B.U.H) and his uncle – quite unlike the widespread impression of hatred and hostility between Muslims and non-Muslims.

While Negus lived as a Christian, he showed his great respect for Islam when he said: “This religion (Islam) and what Jesus was sent with truly come from the same source”.

Some sources mentioned that Negus embraced Islam through Amr, son of Omayya Al-Damri and Jaa’far, son of Abu-Taleb, but he kept on performing his religious rites and nobody mentioned that Negus prayed as a Muslim, nor that he paid Al-Zakat or completed the Pilgrimage or converted to the prophet (P.B.U.H), so Allah said:

“And (as for) those who believed and did not convert, not yours is their guardianship until they convert”. Nobody said that he changed

his patriarchs or his monks, or that he judged with Islamic law or called his people to Islam or denied the Trinity, etc...

The most that he did was to confess the prophethood of Muhammad (P.B.U.H) and his Message and to believe in the Oneness of Allah. This was enough to grant him a revered status among Muslims, so that the prophet (P.B.U.H) said to his Companions the day when Negus died:

“Tonight your brother Negus died: let us pray for him, (the absence death prayer)” and they prayed for him.

Some of the Companions, who did not comprehend the tolerance of Islam, wondered and said: “He prays for a non Muslim from the Romans who neither prayed our prayer, nor converted to us”, so Allah (Glory be to Him) sent down:

“And *most* surely of the
followers of the Book there are
those who believe in Allah

and (in) that which has been revealed to you and (in) that which has been revealed to them, being lowly before Allah; they do not take a small price for the communications of Allah; these it is that have their Lord; surely Allah is quick in reckoning.”

Moreover, Ibn Katheer, the great scholar and interpreter, mentioned in another text that some Companions rejected that prayer and said: ‘He used to face Jerusalem in his prayer, and not towards al-Kaaba.’ So Allah revealed:

“And to Allah is the East and the West; therefore, whither you turn, thither is Allah’s face; surely Allah is Ample-giving, all Knowing.”

فأينما تولوا ووجهكم

ولله المشرق والمغرب

واسع عليهم

فثم وجه الله إن الله

So

the



Prophet’s

attitude towards Negus should inspire in us the qualities of tolerance, brotherhood, friendship and love that must exist between Muslims and just people, even if there is no complete agreement in all doctrinal and faith concepts.

The Holy Qur'an is clear, since Allah (G.B.T.H) praised a Christian righteous group who came to the prophet Muhammad (P.B.U.H) and listened to some verses from the Qur'an; He said:

“ Certainly you will find the most violent opponents of those who believe (to be) the Jews and those who are polytheists, and you will certainly find the closest friends to those who believe (to be) those who say: We are Christian; this is because there are priests and monks among them and because they do not behave proudly. And when they hear

what has been revealed to the apostle, you will see their eyes overflowing with tears on account of the truth that they recognize. They say: “Our Lord! We believe, so write us down with the witnesses (of truth). And what (reason) have we that we should not believe in Allah and in the truth that has come to us, while we earnestly desire that Our Lord should cause us to enter with the good people?”

وإن من أهل الكتاب لمن يؤمن بالله وما أنزل إليكم وما أنزل إليهم خاشعين لله لا يشترون بآيات الله ثمناً قليلاً أولئك لهم أجرهم عند ربهم إن الله سريع الحساب

I find it necessary to talk about (or to allude to) an assumption that some writers have raised, claiming that this verse concerns those who adopted Islam, but in my point of view this is an unjust interpretation: that is because the verse is

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clear enough in describing them, as they said: “We are Christians”, and did not say: “We were Christians”, and because the verse reads: “There were among them priests and clergymen”, and did not read: “There were among them Companions, sheikhs, orators and leaders.”

We have to clarify what we mean when we call for the principle of tolerance. We do not talk about unifying the two religions, because this is not useful for either of them, and none of the followers of either religion accepts that. But we are talking about coexistence, about tolerance and about love that can exist between righteous men from different religions.

We, Muslims and Christians have two religions, monotheism (unifying God) as a religion, and Trinity as a religion; but why difference in faith should be a reason to incite hatred and enmity, which in turn lead to war

and aggression?

Now I say: Yes, Allah (G.B.T.H) prohibited loving non-Muslim peoples, and stated those whom he meant in the following verse. He says:

“You shall not find a people who believe in Allah and the latter day befriending those who act in opposition to Allah and His Apostle, even though they might be their (own) fathers, or their sons, or their brothers, or their kinsfolk; these are they into whose hearts He has impressed faith, and whom He has strengthened with an inspiration from Him: and He will cause them to enter gardens beneath which rivers flow, abiding therein; Allah is well-pleased with them and they have well-pleased Him; these are Allah’s party: now surely the party of Allah are the successful ones.”

The verse clearly describes those who are not to be loved as those who resist

Allah and His Apostle and who incite wars and fighting against Muslims. This is a fact that no wise man denies.

Therefore, I see that the first condition of the good pattern which we aspire to as **Muslims immigrants** is to show the quality of tolerance in Islam that came as mercy for the world.

Indonesia, which is the largest Islamic country, was converted to Islam through Muslim merchants who emigrated there for a living, but carried with them their message - their Islamic conduct and their righteousness - while dealing with and becoming acquainted with the people there.

So the acquaintance with them **was on a basis of a rare straight way and good behavior, righteousness in dealing with**

those merchants, and by and by, people began to adopt Islam.

Thus Indonesia, the  Malaysia, Borneo, the  Philippines and

Turkestan, whose combined population is three hundred million, all adopted Islam through Muslim merchants who represented Islam in the best way, by the good word, wisdom and good counsel, without carrying into these countries a single sword.

Dear brothers:

Your being here, as Muslims, in Finland, is very important. And your message here is very clear and honorable. You are part of **society** in this rich country, but you are here to be the brightest part of this society.

Finland did not participate in the Crusader wars, and did not come to the Islamic world as a colonizer, and her policy is positively neutral towards the Palestinian case.

All this makes Finland a good place to achieve Islamic-Christian East-West dialogue, and understanding, and makes your mission here to



represent Islam and to keep your children clearer and more successful.

I have met dozens of honorable people from Finland who visited Syria. In fact, I have found in them a true affection and respect for Islamic values.

Two weeks ago, a delegation visited us in Syria, from the Finnish Institute to the Middle East. Among them was Dr. Arne Toivainin.

They came to the Mosque of Abun-Noor to visit His Eminence Sheikh Ahmad Kuftaro in order to listen to his weekly lecture. His Eminence leaned on Dr.Arne's hand to help him walk, since he is old. After the lecture Mr. Arne told me: "When I touched this man's hand I felt that his faith was pouring into my heart. And now I feel that my hand is bright and I should never touch any thing impure again."

Mr. Yakko delivered a speech about Islam and Arabic civilization. He



talked about his rich experience that led him to translate the Holy Qur'an into the Finnish language.

When I introduced him as a translator of the Holy Qur'an, he interrupted me saying: "The Qur'an cannot be translated into any language because it is incontestable, but what I have achieved was the translation of its meanings only."

We can assert that the West, whose political leaders are mostly hostile to Islam, still contains cultural and religious leaders who consider Islam an inexhaustible spiritual fountain, and a true human project, just as was the situation at the time of the Messenger of Allah (P.B.U.H), when many verses were revealed describing this fact. Some of them are:

*"And most
followers of the
those who
and (in) that
revealed to you*



*surely of the
Book there are
believe in Allah
which has been
and (in) that*

which has been revealed to them, being lowly before Allah; they do not take a small price for the communications of Allah; these it is that have their reward with their Lord; surely Allah is quick in reckoning” [3/ 199]

من أهل الكتاب أمة قائمة يتلون آيات الله آناء الليل وهم يسجدون يأمرون بالمعروف وينهون عن المنكر ويؤمنون بالله وأولئك من الصالحين وما يفعلوا من خير فلن يكفروه والله عليم بالمتقين

“Then We made Our apostles to follow in their footsteps, and We sent Jesus son of Mary afterwards, and We gave him the Gospel; and We put in the hearts of those who followed him kindness and mercy; and (as for)

celibacy/monasticism, they innovated it - We did not prescribe it to them - only to seek Allah's pleasure, but they did not observe it with its due observance; so We gave to those of them who believed their reward, and most of them are transgressors"[57/ 27]

وقفينا على آثارهم برسلنا وقفينا بعيسى بن مريم وآتيناه الإنجيل وجعلنا في قلوب الذين اتبعوه رحمة ورفقة ورهبانية ابتدعوها ما كتبناها عليهم إلا ابتغاء رضوان الله، فآتيناه الذين آمنوا منهم أجرهم وكثير منهم فاسقون

It is an eternal truth that the Qur'an has expressed this fact; "They are not all alike."

We have to say that many anti-Islam positions are based on Muslims' mistakes. I have to say bitterly and frankly that the Islamic World's



situation - the internal Islamic conflicts such as in Afghanistan and the Arabian Gulf, and others such as the backwardness of some Islamic countries - all of these factors are the reason behind certain suspicions of some Western leaders.

Dear Brothers:

We have a lot to do. I think the message of the Muslims in the West is growing day by day, as much as the spiritual emptiness grows in the West.

Undoubtedly the Islamic world is still one of the cleanest parts in the world (from alcohol, rape, and crimes). Also our family relationships, and obedience to parents are still among the strongest and the purest.

I thank Allah that we have met, and I hope that this Islamic community will go forward to **convey** the message of love and honesty and to introduce Islam.

Peace be upon   you.

**Tolerance in
tradition**
In the Past and



Islamic
the Present

Helsinki-Turku

From 13/11 To 18/11/1998

In The Name Of Allah, Most Merciful, Most Compassionate, and most Allah's blessing be upon our prophet Muhammad, his father Abraham, his two brothers Moses and Jesus and all of their families and Companions.

I greet you with
Islam:



the greeting of

السلام عليكم ورحمة الله وبركاته

Peace, mercy and blessings of Allah be upon you. I call you by the call of Allah (Glory to Him) in his saying: “O My servants who believe! Truly, wide is my earth; therefore serve you Me (And Me alone)”.

First of all, please excuse me if I use simple language: but even if my language is weak, my love and determination are very strong.

Therefore, I hope I will be able to convey honestly my message to you using this easy and simple language. A few words with love and honesty are meaningful.

We have met here for a noble aim, which the Prophets came before to achieve on the earth. It is to invite mankind to enter under the shadow of faith and brotherhood, to save them from self-worshipping and from fanaticism, and to guide them to the kingdom of faith in Allah, the One, and to human brotherhood.



First, I have to appreciate the efforts that Helsinki University and the Finnish Institute for the Middle East are making towards achieving these great goals and to transform these good hopes and desires into a **tangible fact and actual application.**

I have come from Syria, the land that offered to the world, **as historical research shows,** the greatest men who built human brotherhood on the basis of faith; namely Noah, Abraham, Moses, John, Muhammad (P.B.U them) and his Companions, who are the great scholars, whose memory still conveys to the world the **meanings** of love and brotherhood.

We are sure that this message is constant and bears the same meaning that the Qur'an had expressed in the verses:

“ We have sent to you the Inspiration, as We sent it to Noah and the Messengers after him, We sent Inspiration to Abraham Tribes;, Isma'il,



Isaac, Jacob, and the to Jesus, Jacob, Joseph, Aaron and Solomon; and to David We gave the Psalms. Of some apostles We have already told you the story; of others We have not; and to Moses God spoke directly.”

إنا أوحينا إليك كما أوحينا إلى نوح والنبيين من بعده وأوحينا إلى إبراهيم وإسماعيل وإسحق ويعقوب والأسباط وعيسى وأيوب ويوسف وهارون وسليمان وآتينا داود زبوراً ورسلاً قد قصصناهم عليك من قبل ورسلاً لم نقصصهم عليك وكلم الله موسى تكليماً

I would like to take this opportunity to mention that I come here as a representative of the Islamic Center for the presentation of Islam and Arab culture, which is one of the establishments that belong to the Islamic Palace in Damascus. There we are especially trained in

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dialogue in a program that began more than sixty years ago.

His Eminence, Sheikh Ahmad Kufaro, the Grand Mufti of Syria, has organized dozens of dialogues in the East and in the West, and has developed many relationships which can play a great role in the field of religious fraternity.

I believe I can also assume that all of us here already agree on the basics of dialogue – the need to study the relations between religions through dialogues, in order to reach a reasonable faith, which unites and does not disunite, which spreads love, and struggles against hostility.

I see that it is enough to mention that faith in Islam is based on five principal pillars, two of which are:

To have faith in
and faith in the
(The simplest
belief appears
of the



the prophets,
Divine Books
evidence of this
in the necessity
domination of

love among the followers of these religions).

This concurrence between us allows me to shorten my introduction and enter directly into details, contrary to what occurs in other such meetings, where much time is spent on general dialogue without entering into details.

In the meantime, while I am giving this lecture concerning tolerance and Islamic-Christian fraternity, many fanatic groups, or rather hostile acts that are the result of religious incitement have begun to appear in various places of the Islamic world and also unfortunately in the Christian world, as is happening now in religious wars and collective cemeteries in Serbia, Palestine and Afghanistan.

And now, let me
opinion in
reasons for this
the ways of
There are three



clarify to you my
respect of the
fanaticism and
getting rid of it.
reasons for the

worsening of relations between the Islamic world and the Western world:

1- The crusades.

2- Modern colonization.

3- The West's support for Israel.

Recently, the West recognized that the crusade wars were a great error that caused terrible losses for both the East and the West, and that modern colonization was a **dishonest deed**.

No doubt, the West will eventually realize that the uprooting of the Jews of the world, settling and planting them in Palestine, so as to drive away its peaceful people was not a wise act, nor was it for the benefit of either the Arabs or immigrant Jews. It is a horrible injustice.

Surely your previous awareness of the hatred that both the Crusades and colonization caused in their time will enable me to forego further explanation. Yet I feel I must remind you that



one hundred and fifty thousand Arab Muslims and Melchite Christians were killed on the day Jerusalem fell into the hands of the crusaders; that one million martyrs were the price of liberating Algeria from the French Colonization, after a struggle of one hundred and twenty years; and that three million Palestinian refugees were driven away from their homes and are still in exile fifty years later, living in camps, as they have since the day of establishment of the State of Israel.

Let me ask one question:

Did those injustices which were committed in the name of the Cross, Moses, Jesus and for the glory of the Lord; did all that lead Muslims to reject Moses, David and Jesus (P.B.U

them); and can we find among Muslims all over the world anyone who uses a bad word which concerns the Prophet Moses and the Prophet Jesus (P.B.U them), in spite of the evils which were committed in their names?

Truly, all Muslims respect Moses, David and Jesus in spite of all those evils. This proves to us that the power of brotherhood between religions is more powerful than the illusion of schism and the voice of hatred; and the possibility of religious brotherhood is still a substantial reality and not an illusion.

All Muslim historians refused to define the wars which the West conducted against the Islamic countries as crusades. They chose to name them the Frankish Wars instead of the Crusader Wars, because those historians knew that the cross should be the symbol of love and not of war. So they gave the correct name to those



unjust colonial wars.

In fact, we do not find in Islamic history books the word “Crusades”, but “the Frankish Wars”.

In spite of all that happened, you find the most common names in the Islamic world are Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, David, Solomon, Jesus, John, Joseph and Mary.

All this evidence shows us that the way to achieve religious brotherhood is still open, and the power of faith in Islam **has proved stronger than even those circumstances.**

I wonder when Westerners will start to give their sons great names of unification, so as to continue the messages of the great prophets such as: Muhammad, Omar, Ali, Aisha, Haron, Mamoon and Saladin, according to the verse in the Qur’an:

*“When a man
meet him with a
better, or, at*   *greet you,
greeting still
least an equal*

one”.

وإذا حييتم بتحيةة فحيوا بأحسن منها أو ردوها

On the other hand, I do not claim that the Islamic world was free from fanaticism, and I can point to a number of historical faults which created fanaticism, during the 15th and the 16th centuries, between the two worlds (the Islamic and the Christian).

I will mention some of them:

The Turkish wars in Europe, which in fact did not comply with the Islamic teachings of conquest, as we can see if we compare these wars with the manner of Omar son of al-Khattab, the Second Caliph after the prophet Muhammad (P.B.U.H), when he conquered Jerusalem. At that time military conquests used to be internationally recognized, so, when he received the   keys of the holy

city from the Severenius, according to a peace treaty agreement, Omar wanted to pray to thank Allah for His grace (of peaceful victory). However, he chose not to pray in the Church, saying:

'I fear that people who come later would say: "Omar prayed here," and would take your church from you.'

And actually what Omar expected came true. Men came later and built a Mosque where Omar had prayed.

Now the Church of the Resurrection stands close to the Mosque, which is called the mosque of Omar Ben al-Khattab, in Jerusalem, the city of Peace, as a symbol of Islamic-Christian brotherhood.

Thus, I wonder: were the Turkish wars in Europe at the same level of tolerance? Or did they, as conquerors used to do, first destroy the churches and instead of building mosques converting them into mosques? Doing this is

certainly contrary to the teachings of the Prophet and his successors, the Wise Caliphs.

The misunderstanding of Jihad (Jihad: an Arabic word which means exerting utmost effort in the way of Allah, especially to fight enemies of Truth.); instead of understanding it to be a way of defending the nation, some or rather many have understood it as a way to force people to enter into Islam.

The latter is, in reality, an idea that Islam rejects or rather struggles against, according to the saying of Allah:

“There is no compulsion in religion”

لا إكراه في الدين

But, there are some this idea among although this fanaticism has



unfortunately, that believe in fanatic Muslims, detested never guided

Islamic states or armies throughout history. So, what is required here, from both of us, is a mutual effort to remove those obstacles which separate us and **cause us to perpetuate the conflict between us.**

Dear Sirs:

No doubt, we represent an open movement, and we, both, have a true desire to reform current attitudes, and spread love and tolerance. Otherwise we would not have met in this hall. However, I believe that there are still some fanatic elements in both Islamic and Christian society who would not be happy about this meeting, and see this lecture of tolerance that we, here, are offering, as no less than the renunciation of the essential elements of faith, which, according to their belief, must not be disregarded in anyway. I believe that this distressing fact makes our responsibility in

acting for tolerance greater and more precise, since we have to offer evidence from the texts.

Indeed, our efforts for rapprochement and tolerance do not represent disloyalty to the sacred texts: on the contrary, they are actually more loyal to the messages of the prophets.

The Prophet Muhammad (P.B.U.H) said:

“We, the family of prophets, are (like brothers from one Father); one is our father and our mothers are different,

نحن معاشر الأنبياء أبناء علات أبونا واحد وأمهاتنا شتى

And Christ (P.B.U.H) said:

“Believe not that I came to destroy the Law or the prophets. I did not come to destroy but I came to fulfill.” [Matthew 5/17]

الناموس والأنبياء، ما

جئت لأكمل.

٥ ٤

ما جئت لأحطم

جئت لأهدم ولكن

So, we can achieve, through the sacred texts, a society of tolerance, contrary to the ideas that dominate today's intolerant movements.

Let me give the following three examples: Some people who are fanatic, believe that nobody enters paradise other than them, that they are the only group who will be saved, and that the destination of all others is hell; and consequently, since God had no mercy upon them, why should we feel love and pity for them? Certainly this belief leads to hatred, hostility and malice.

It is also a horrible social malady which had affected former nations – a sickness about which the holy Qur'an spoke in the following verse:

“And they say; ‘None will enter the Paradise unless he who be a Jew or a Christian.’ Those are their desires.” Say: “give your proof if you are truthful” [2/ 111]

وقالوا لن يدخل الجنة إلا من كان هوداً أو نصارى تلك أمانيتهم
قل هاتوا برهانكم إن كنتم صادقين

And when some Muslims said the same thing, also Allah (Glory be to him) revealed:
“Not your desires, nor those of the people of the Book: whoever works evil will be requited accordingly, nor will he find besides God, any protector or helper; and whoever does good deeds - be they male or female - and has faith, will enter Heaven, and not the least injustice will be done to them” [4/ 124]

ليس بأمانيتكم ولا أمانيت أهل الكتاب من يعمل سوءاً يجز به ولا
يجد له من دون الله ولياً ولا نصيراً ومن يعمل من الصالحات
من ذكر أو أنثى وهو مؤمن فأولئك يدخلون
الجنة ولا يظلمون نقيراً

Likewise, once
priests and
people of the

٥٦

a number of
rabbis from the
Book came to

the prophet Muhammad (P.B.U.H). They listened to him and admired his talk, but they did not change their religion. Although they did not enter into Islam, God revealed with regard to them the following:

“And nearest among them in love to the Believers, you will find those who say: “we are Christians”; because among these are men devoted to learning and men who have renounced the world; and they are not arrogant. And when they listen to the revelation received by the apostle, you will see their eyes overflowing with tears, for they recognize the truth. They pray:

“Our Lord! We believe; write us among the witnesses.” [5/ 82]

ولتجدن أقربهم مودة للذين آمنوا الذين قالوا إنا نصارى ذلك بأن

وأنهم لا يستكبرون

الرسول ترى أعينهم

عرفوا من الحق يقولون

منهم قسيسين ورهباناً

وإذا سمعوا ما أنزل إلى

تفيض من الدمع مما



ربنا آمننا فآكتبنا مع الشاهدين

Also Allah (Glory be to Him) revealed his saying:

“(Of the People of the Book are) a group that stand (for the right); they recite the signs of God all night long and they prostrate themselves in adoration; they believe in God and the Last Day, they enjoy what is right, and what is wrong, and they hurry, in (all) good works: they are in the ranks of the righteous people. Of the good that they do, nothing will be rejected of them , for God knows well those that do right” [3/ ١١٥].

من أهل الكتاب أمة قائمة يتلون آيات الله آناء الليل وهم
يسجدون يؤمنون بالله
واليوم الآخر ويأمرون
بالمعروف وينهون عن
المنكر ويسارعون في
الخيرات وأولئك من
الصالحين وما



يفعلوا من خير فلن يكفروه والله عليم بالمتقين

Fanaticism (which we call “Monopoly of salvation”) appeared early on. That was when some of the Companions objected to the prayer of the Prophet asking forgiveness for some Christians who had died and who used to turn towards the Holy House, i.e. (Jerusalem) and not towards al-Kaba. Therefore God (Glory to Him) revealed:

“To God belong the East and the West: whithersoever you turn, there is the presence of God” [2/ 115]

ولله المشرق والمغرب فأينما تولوا فثم وجه الله إن الله واسع

عليم

‘This story is mentioned in Ibn Kather’s Tafsir.’
So, I believe that the monopoly of   salvation is not,

in religion, a correct idea, but it came from doubts, which prevailed throughout the various stages of Islamic and Christian history.

These doubts are contrary to the many Quranic texts and Biblical texts. I conclude this subject with one of these texts, which is the following verse:

“Those who believe in the (Qur’an) and those who follow the Jewish (scripture), and the Christians and the Sabians, and (those) who believe in God and the Last Day, and work righteousness, shall have their reward with their Lord: on them shall be no fear, nor shall they grieve” [2/ 62].

إن الذين آمنوا والذين هادوا والنصارى والصابئين من آمن بالله
واليوم الآخر وعمل صالحا فلهم أجرهم عند ربهم ولا خوف
عليهم ولا هم يحزنون

Also I conclude with this common verse:

“So. He who has done an atom’s weight of good shall see it. And he who has done an atom’s weight of evil shall see it.”

[99/ 7-8]

فمن يعمل مثقال ذرة خيراً يره ومن يعمل مثقال ذرة شراً يره

Some fanatics believe that an Islamic State’s duty is to include all its citizens under the fold of Islam; that the existence of non-Muslims within an Islamic society is weakness in the religion; and that those who refuse to enter into Islam should be killed or driven away from an Islamic country after being notified about and invited into Islam.

This understanding is in fact false in the view of Islam, because the Prophet Muhammad (P.B.U.H) accepted the existence of non-Muslim communities from the first

day of establishing the Islamic State in Medinah; and the constitution of this city considered the Muslims and the Jews as one nation that had to cooperate in protecting the city.

This is, in fact, the right application of citizenship on the basis of equality which is nowadays considered the ideal of democracy.

When the Prophet died, his shield was held with a Jew against a debt he owed to the Jew. This proves that the religious minorities who were found in Medinah had a strong economic attitude that enabled the Jew to lend money to the Prophet, while he could have borrowed from other than a Jew; but he wished to teach peoples that the earth of God is a vast shelter for all nations, and any citizen's right is guaranteed, even if his religion is different from the state's religion.

One day, a Christian Copt came from Egypt to Medinah to complain about the son of the governor of Egypt, son of al-Aas, because when he defeated the son of the governor in a horse race, the son of the governor whipped him and said:

‘How dare you overtake me while I am the son of a nobleman?’.

When the Caliph had investigated and was sure of the Copt’s complaint, he ordered the son of al-Aas, the governor of Egypt, to come straight to Medinah with his son, and here he held a just trial. The son of the governor confessed this doing. Then the Caliph gave the whip to the Egyptian Christian Copt and asked him to whip the son of Ben al-Aas, just as the son of the governor had done. Then Caliph Omar

said: ‘How could you enslave people while their mothers have borne them free?’
Such an attitude could never have been found during



those centuries, except under the rule of Islam - an Islam that established such equality between peoples that a head of state was called from Egypt to Medinah in order to be brought to trial for whipping a Christian Copt.

I hope that our brothers in the West comprehend the attitude of Islam with regard to the problem of minorities in the light of Omar's manner; and not through the crime committed by a criminal band in Luxor in the name of Islam.

We hereby mention the following Qur'an text in order to confirm this meaning. God says:

“God forbids you not, to those who do not fight you for (your) Faith or drive you out of your homes, from dealing kindly and justly with them: for God loves those who are just.”

لا ينهاكم الله عن الذين
ولم يخرجوكم من
لم يقاتلوكم في الدين
دياركم أن تبروهم

وتقسطوا إليهم إن الله يحب المقسطين

And the prophet Muhammad said:

“Anyone who hurts a Thimmi (non-Muslim) will have hurt me”

[Narrated by al-Khateeb from Ibn Masod]

من آذى ذمياً فقد آذاني

also Allah Says:

“Stand steadfast as you are commanded, nor follow their vain desires, but say: “I believe in the Book which God has sent down, and I am commanded to judge justly between you. God is our Lord and your Lord: for us our deeds, and for you the responsibility of your deeds. There is no contention between you and us. God will bring us together, and to Him is (our) final goal.”” [42/ 15]

٦٥

فاستقم كما أمرت ومن تاب معك ولا تتبع أهواءهم وقل آمنت
بما أنزل الله من كتاب وأمرت لأعدل بينكم الله ربنا وربكم لنا
أعمالنا ولكم أعمالكم لا حجة بيننا وبينكم الله يجمع بيننا وإليه
المصير.

This was the real situation of the Islamic countries during the early days of Islamic glory, where all minorities found good circumstances and a happy life, full of activity and progress under the shelter and protection of Islam.

We in the Arab countries are indebted to the Christian Arabs, because they were the cultural link that transferred to us the beauties of the Greek and Roman civilizations and added them to the Arab culture.

I can say that the sciences of chemistry, medicine, and translation, in the Arab countries, remained for several centuries

Christian sciences, because they found ideal circumstances for the development of science in **the Islamic world.**

Some people believe that Islam destroyed all earlier understanding, and that all the great ideas of prophets were abolished and considered no longer necessary when Islam came.

This is really a superficial understanding of the Islamic message and is in great contrast with the belief of Faith the Prophets and the divine Books. That belief is one of the basic Pillars of Faith in Islam.

Allah, (Glory be to him) says:

*“The messengers believed in what has been revealed to him from His Lord, **do** the men of faith each one (of them) believed **in** God, His angels, His Books and His messengers, our Lord, and to you is our final goal.” [2/ 285]*

آمن الرسول بما أنزل إليه من ربه والمؤمنون كل آمن بالله وملائكته وكتبه ورسله لا نفرق بين

أحد من رساله ،وقالوا سمعنا وأطعنا غفرانك ربنا وإليك المصير

Truly, the efforts of prophets and reformers complement each other and do not contradict each other; and all should cooperate so that **he who comes later can build on what his forebears achieved.**

And Allah says:

“Let the People of the Gospel judge by what God has revealed therein. If any do fail to judge by (the light) of what God has revealed, they are those who disobey.” [4/47]

وليحكم أهل الإنجيل بما أنزل الله فيه ومن لم يحكم بما أنزل

الله فأولئك هم الفاسقون

And He says:

“God! There is He...” “Who you in truth, the confirming what



no God but sent down to Book, went before it,

and He sent down the Law (of Moses) and the Gospel (of the Jesus)". [3/ 3]

الله لا إله إلا هو الحي القيوم نزل عليك الكتاب بالحق مصداقاً
لما بين يديه وأنزل التوراة والإنجيل من قبل هدى للناس وأنزل
الفرقان

Thus Allah (Glory be to Him) said:

"Confirming what went before it, in the Torah and the Gospel",

مصداقاً لما بين يديه من التوراة والإنجيل

and did not say destroying or canceling them and He said:

"O Muhammad, follow the ways of Abraham, the True in Faith". [16/ 123]

اتبع ملة إبراهيم حنيفاً

He did not say
abolish
ways, but said
This is the truth

٦٩

to cancel or
Abraham's
to follow them.
that the prophet

Muhammad (P.B.U.H) has clearly expressed:

“The prophets and I are like a man who built a house perfectly except for one block, so that people said when passing nearby: “What a house if this block were in place!” Then I am this block; I am the Seal of Prophets.”

[Narrated by al-Bukhari in ‘Al-Manaqeb’]

مثلي ومثل الأنبياء من قبلي كمثل رجل بنى داراً فأحسنها وأجملها إلا موضع لبنة فكان الناس إذا مروا بالدار يقولون ما أحسن هذه الدار لولا تلك اللبنة فكنت أنا تلك اللبنة وأنا خاتم النبيين

Dear Brothers and sisters:

This honorable dialogue and meeting is a unique opportunity to exchange counsels. The Messenger Muhammad (P.B.U.H) said:

“The Religion is the counsel.”



His Companions asked: “ To whom, Messenger of Allah?”

“To God, to His Messengers, to His Book and to the Leaders of Believers and to **the believers**”, replied the prophet.

الدين النصيحة .. لله ولرسوله ولأئمة المسلمين وعامتهم

From this start I have offered you a part of what we are doing in respect of reform on the Islamic side, and I now ask you to perform your role in correcting the view of the West as regards the Islamic World, and to struggle against the terrible idea which lately has spread after the fall of the Soviet Union – an idea which the ex prime minister of England, Mrs. Margaret Thatcher, clearly expressed when she said: ‘There was an apparent enemy of the West, which was Communism; and after the fall of the Soviet Union, the only remaining enemy of the West – and a

greater one - is Islam”!

We regret to see that this is the view of some politicians in the West concerning Islam, and we hope to present sufficient proof that both Islam and the West can reach into achieve integration (i.e. to complement each other); integration in soul and body, integration of morals and material.

Thus, from this starting point, I call on you as I call on everybody to study Islam as it is in reality and nature, and to correct the wrong ideas about Islam, especially as regards the following matters:

The problem of the rancor of Islam against the West: we have to realize that this is but an illusion – a false image with no basis in the essential spirit of Islam.

But if it exists in some countries, it would be a natural reaction to western policy, which stands against Islam, and we are endeavoring to deal with this



problem.

The time has come for our Christian brothers to say their word of belief in the Prophet Muhammad and recognize his prophethood.

Let me now, adopt the word of the reverend Mr gr.Robert L.Stern, the Deputy chief of bishops of America, He said:

‘If Muhammad, who converted a billion people from idolatry to monotheism is not a prophet; then who is a prophet?!)’

Also to stop accusing Islam of the following matters:

A-Polygamy, because it is a minor issue, that happens on a narrow scope and in rare critical social circumstances.

B- the right of divorce; because, certainly, it is not applied in some Islamic societies according to the wisdom and purposes of the Islamic Legislation.

C- Jihad: because it is lawful for the defense of



one's homeland, and is not to force people to enter in Islam.

D- Slavery; Islam did not set up slavery, but Islam brought freedom and fought slavery until all Islamic countries got rid of it through a wise and gradual program.

I look forward to seeing cultured people in the west talk about the great successes that Islam has achieved in the past in uniting the Middle East; in reviving therein the centers of civilizations, building upon them and itself becoming a base to build upon, to realize the dream of the sages of history – a tapestry woven from the contributions of different races and religions.

I also look forward to hearing cultured people in the West talk about the successes that Islam has achieved in the modern world. It is clear that the Islamic world is the cleanest region in the world - it is free from alcoholics, prostitution, illegitimate children and



rape.

The crime rate, generally, is still less than it is in other parts of the world, even though we have less technology and alarm systems.

No doubt, this bridge of understanding between Finland and the Islamic world has been strengthened by the efforts of a number of Finnish orientalists.

Dear brothers and sisters:

I would like to say: I am happy with this great meeting, and I am happy as well to know that Finland, despite belonging to the Western civilization, is Eastern from the geographical view, and Eastern from the spiritual point of view; and I believe that it is qualified to play an important role in effecting the understanding and the needed dialogue between the Islamic peoples and the Western civilization.

This is, in fact, the most difficult contemporary challenge of all.



Dear brothers:

I hope I haven't been too in presenting the important cases which we talk about during general dialogues, but I believe that no recovery can be achieved without medication and no medication can be done without pain.

Finally, I thank very much the University of Helsinki, which has made this meeting possible for us.

I also hope that I have brought us closer to our common goal, and look forward to hearing questions from you which will, I am sure, enrich and further clarify this subject.

I cannot forget to transfer to you the greeting of His Eminence Sheikh Ahmad Kufaro, the Grand Mufti of Syria and his love, and I do not doubt that we are tracing the steps of the great teacher, who has been calling for religious rapprochement for tolerance and for seventy years.



May Allah give him health and long life,
Amen.

I would like also to thank Mr.Palva, director
of the Finnish Institute in the Middle East,
who organizes these dialogues; and I thank
as well dear Mr. Arne Toivenen, who was
the cause of my coming here, after having
several meetings in Damascus.

Thank you for listening to me and bearing
with my weakness in English, and I hope
that I have been successful in expressing
myself.

“Our Lord! Forgive us if we forget or fall into
error”.

**Peace Be upon
Mercy and
God.**

**you and the
Blessings of**



ولقد كرّمنا بني آدم
وحملناهم في البر والبحر
ورزقناهم من الطيبات
وفضلناهم على كثير ممن خلقنا تفضيلاً

Islam and the West: from clash to cooperation

Dialogue group meeting

Islamic Studies
Damascus



Center
2001

عسى الله أن يجعل بينكم
وبين الذين عاديتم منهم مودة
والله قدير والله غفور رحيم

٨

In the Name of Allah, Most Beneficent,
Most Merciful. And may Allah's blessing be
upon our prophet Muhammad, his father
Abraham and his two brothers Moses and
Jesus as well.

Dear brothers and sisters:

I greet you with the Islamic greeting. Peace
be upon you. I welcome you to this center
for the dialogue of civilizations in Abu-Noor
Mosque at the foot of Qasion Mountain.

One more time I welcome you to this
ancient Islamic country, which is considered
a suitable place to learn about the history of
the world and the first human civilization.

First of all, please excuse
me if I use simple
language: even if my language
is weak, my love and
determination are very strong.



Therefore, I hope I'll be able to convey, honestly, my message to you using this easy and simple language.

A few words with love and honesty are meaningful.

Dear Brothers:

You have traveled a long distance to Syria for a noble purpose: namely dialogue, understanding and getting closer and closer to each other.

The importance of this was expressed in the Holy Qur'an a long time ago.

“O mankind! We created you from a single (pair) of a male and a female, and made you into nations and tribes, that you may know each other (not that you may despise each other). Verily the most honored of you in the sight of Allah is (he who is) the most righteous of you.”

خلقناكم من ذكر وأنثى



يا أيها الناس إنا

وجعلناكم شعوباً وقبائل لتعارفوا إن أكرمكم عند الله أتقاكم إن
الله عليم خبير

No doubt your intention to visit Syria places a special responsibility on us: in Islam we consider greeting people as (Sunna). This means it is not obligatory to greet, but to reply is obligatory.

Therefore, the prophet Muhammad (Peace be upon him) said:

“If two believers meet each other, the best of them is he who greets his companion first”.

إذا التقى المؤمنان... فخيرهما الذي يبدأ صاحبه بالسلام

Please let me tell you something about my country Syria and its historical message of friendly dialogue and religious brotherhood: a

far cry from the misunderstandings that have existed between us since the days of the crusades and colonization.

It is historically known that the lands of Sham (the title of the physical Syria which now comprises Syria, Jordan, Lebanon and Palestine) offered the world the first writing, as researchers discovered the first alphabet in Lattakia (Ras Shamra); and also offered the world the divine messages, and was the cradle of God's prophets - Noah lived in the north of Syria; Abraham, Moses and Jesus lived in the south; and at the summits of Hebron and Mount Sinai the holy books were revealed: Abraham's scrolls, Moses' Torah, David's psalms, and Jesus' Gospel. However I will focus on Damascus, to which you are welcome.

On one side of mountain on Qasion
standing, the which we are
located. the Blood Cave is
It is said that   after Cain killed

his brother Abel, as mentioned in Torah and in the Holy Qur'an, he buried him there. Though this tale does not have any constituent of scientific truth and is nearer to mythology, it reflects the aspirations of that ancient and friendly people to worship peace and love and refuse injustice and the jungle law.

But the sites which we have no doubts about have much more to offer. In the of Umayyad Mosque itself there is the tomb of Yuhana Al-ma'madan (Saint John the Baptist) who is regarded as a higher example. Besides, Syrians look at this tomb, which is still in the middle of the most important Islamic Syrian holy place, as a symbol of the love and brotherhood that we all hope to see between the two great religions, Islam and Christianity.

The holy Qur'an, immortalized a wonderful saying about John (Yahya):
"O Yahya! Take hold of the book



with might”: and We gave him wisdom even as a youth. And pity (for all creatures) as from Us, and purity: he was devout, and kind to his parents, and he was not overbearing or rebellious. So peace on him the day he was born, the day that he dies, and the day that he will be raised up to life (again)!”

يا يحيى خذ الكتاب بقوة وآتيناه الحكم صيباً وحناناً من لدنا
وزكاة وكان تقياً وبرا بوالديه ولم يكن جباراً عصياً وسلام عليه
يوم ولد ويوم يموت ويوم يبعث حياً

On the western side of Damascus, there is a wonderful hill that is mentioned in the holy Qura'an:

“And We made the son of Mary and his mother as a Sign: We gave them both shelter on high ground, affording rest and security and furnished with springs.”



وجعلنا ابن مريم وأمه آية وآويناهما إلى ربوة ذات قرار ومعين

This is the good earth to which the Virgin Mary with her son fled persecution by the Jews.

This is the firm view of some Qur'an interpreters, while some others say that hill is Ramalla in Palestine.

Between Mary's Hill and John the Baptist's grave there are tens of churches where priests still live and worship: and cathedrals were active carrying their spiritual messages during the Islamic history among these churches.

For example the great churches of John which were built by the Muslim Caliph Omar Ibn abdel Aziz.

Although these churches are clearly teaching and preaching the trinity, a dogma quite contrary to the Islamic doctrine of monotheism, all these

churches remained active with their libraries full of books which do not agree with the Islamic doctrine of monotheism. Yet nobody harmed them, because the prophet Muhammad in his clear Hadith said:
“Who ever harms Jews or Christians verily he is harming me.”

من آذى ذمياً فقد آذاني

This certifies the mercy and tolerance in Islam, and shows us that the ideas that are spread in the West accusing Islam with terrorism are unjust lies with no basis in fact.

Dear brothers:

How did people become Muslims? Actually this was not a direct result of Islamic conquest, because people remained as they were. In fact Christians remained the majority in Syria till the 1000A.D., practicing their



real role in all social and scientific activities, and spreading knowledge and science. Therefore we are all indebted to the Arab Christians, because they were the cultural bridge that translated all the Greek and Roman culture into Arabic.

I can say that chemistry, medicine and translation remained Christian sciences for several centuries.

The real reason for embracing Islam as a religion is that it completes the message of all the previous Prophets and revives their holy purposes.

Therefore, Jesus' mission and Muhammad's are the same.

This was expressed in the Holy Qur'an when it says that after the coming of the Virgin Mary and her son Jesus to Damascus:

"Prophets, eat unforbidden goods and do good deeds. I know your deeds, and this nation is yours   one and only,"

and I am your Lord, so worship and fear Me but no one else.”

يا أيها الرسل كلوا من الطيبات واعملوا صالحاً إني بما تعملون
عليم

This truth was emphasized by Muhammad (Peace be upon him) when he said:

“The Prophets and I are like a man who built a house perfectly except for one block, so that people said when passing nearby: “What a house! If only this block were in its place. Now I am this block; I am the Seal of the prophets.”

مثلي ومثل الأنبياء من قبلي كمثل رجل بنى داراً فأحسنها
وأجملها إلا موضع لبنة
فكان الناس إذا مروا
بالدار يقولون ما أحسن
هذه الدار لولا تلك
اللبنة فكنت أنا تلك
اللبنة وأنا خاتم النبيين

In this context, I would like to mention the attitude of the Canadian ambassador to Damascus in 1990 at the start of his mission.

It happened, one day, when he visited his Eminence the grand mufti of Syria, Sheikh Ahmad Kufaro, the chief of this great Islamic Palace. During the meeting the ambassador asked the Mufti:

‘What is the number of Christians in Syria?’

‘It is 15 millions’, the Mufti replied.

‘I beg your pardon: but I mean the Christians;’ the ambassador added.

‘Exactly, this is the number of Christians’, said the Mufti.

‘Excuse me sir! I have asked experts about that and I was told that they are 13% of the whole population’, said the ambassador.

‘Who is that expert?’ asked the Mufti. ‘I am the Mufti of this country - they rise up to 100%

one hundred percent.'

'I beg your pardon, sir. I don't understand what you mean!'

'Please listen to me', said the Mufti; 'I am going to explain to you what I mean:

The truth is that no Muslim is accepted as a faithful Muslim until he is truthfully sincere in believing in Jesus, to believe that he is an apostle of God and His word that He bestowed to Mary and a Spirit proceeding from Him.

This is what the Qur'an attested and these are in fact the descriptions of the real Christ.'

So, true Christianity is that which prophet Muhammad (P.B.U.H) came with.

If you wish to be a true Christian, who belongs to Christ (P.B.U.H); you have to believe in the oneness of God and in the prophet of Allah Muhammad (P.B.U.H): to worship Jesus Christ instead of Allah is rejected and refused by

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Jesus Christ himself.

Dear brothers:

Holding such dialogues between the East and the West is the correct way to the unification of religion which religions have called for.

We are not trying to unify the religions into one, but we are hoping to create love, affection and understanding.

In spite of the existence of two doctrines differing in many details, we are endeavoring to comprehend the unity of the purposes which the prophets came with.

I believe that the most honorable task in this respect is the efforts of cultured people who enjoy both knowledge and open minds. I'm sure that you are from this class.

Finally, I have to thank God (Glory Be to Him), for His allowing us to meet here, in



this place, the land of prophets.

I have wished you to listen here to his Eminence Sheikh Ahmad Kufaro, the General Mufti of Syria, chief of Abun-Noor Palace, who has played the greatest role in the presentation of Islam, to spread love and beneficence between peoples. His health does not permit him to hold many meetings.

I ask God for you to be successful in your mission in the west, in spreading the real Islam, and taking care of Islamic youth and the coming generation. This is indeed very important.

The world nowadays is working for mutual rapprochement after the removal of many obstacles, and I believe that the time has come for the West to understand what Islam is in its reality and its essential nature - far from fanaticism, far from bigotry, and far from the voice of war and military ambitions.

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One of the main principles of Islam is the equality of mankind, the acquaintance between peoples and good deeds. This is read in the following verse of the Qur'an:

“O mankind! We created you from a male and a female, and made you into nations and tribes, that you may know each other (not that you despise each other). Verily the most honored of you in the sight of God is he who is the most righteous of you”

يا أيها الناس إنا خلقناكم من ذكر وأنثى وجعلناكم شعوباً وقبائل
لتعارفوا إن أكرمكم عند الله أتقاكم

Finally, before I stop talking in order to answer your questions, I would like to say I am happy with this great meeting, and I am happy as well to know that Finland, where you came from, although it belongs to the western civilization, is Eastern from the

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geographical view, and Eastern from the spiritual point of view.

And I believe that your nation is qualified to play an important role in improving understanding and encouraging dialogue between the Islamic peoples and Western civilization.

This is in fact the most difficult contemporary challenge of all.

Oslo achieved great achievements in the field of effecting rapprochement between East and West with the agreement of 1993, and I hope with all my heart that Helsinki will fulfill the same role in the field of facilitating rapprochement between the East and the West.

Once again I greet you and welcome you in the name of his Eminence the Grand Mufti of Syria, Sheikh Ahmad Kufaro, and I hope to meet him together with you tomorrow, when there will

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be a meeting of a big multitude of Muslims in the Islamic Palace.

I thank specially dear Arne' Toivanen, who has made great efforts towards the holding of this **kind** meeting. He was patient enough with me to build this bridge of good **doing**.

I hope together we will be able to accomplish our wishes to strengthen the bonds of brotherhood and love between our two peoples.

Thank you for listening to me and for putting up with my poor English, and I hope to have been successful in expressing myself.

*"Our Lord!
forget or fall into*



*Forgive us if we
error".*

ربنا لا تؤاخذنا إن نسينا أو أخطأنا

Islam and the other

**A speech in Finland on the occasion of
starting the new century.**

Islamic Studies Center

In the Name of
Gracious, Most
Praise be to
Worlds.



God, Most
Merciful.
God, Lord of the

Peace and Blessings be upon our Prophet Muhammad, his father Abraham, his two brothers Moses and Jesus and the families of all of them.

My dear brothers and sisters:

It's really a rare opportunity that granted me the chance of talking here in this holy place, lying far at the end of the globe, and, in memory of two thousand years elapsed since the birth of Jesus Christ, teacher of love (P.B.U.H).

I have come from Syria, the land where Jesus came from, from the quarter where he dwelt, where he and his mother Mary had escaped to.

This fact is assured in the Qur'an in the following verse:

<i>"We gave</i>		<i>them both</i>
<i>shelter on a</i>		<i>high ground</i>
<i>that is</i>		<i>affording rest</i>
<i>and security</i>	<i>)</i>	<i>and is</i>
<i>furnished</i>	<i>♦ ♦</i>	<i>with</i>

incessant springs”.

وجعلنا ابن مريم وأمه آية وآويناهما إلى ربوة ذات قرار ومعين

This shelter lies directly west of Damascus, where there is a holy place: the Grand Omayyad Mosque, at the middle of which you can find the tomb of the prophet Yahya (Saint John the Baptist).

Here, beside his tomb, meet everyday and assemble Islamic scholars, lecturing and teaching people.

That is truly a clear indication of the great affection and fraternity between the sons of the two great religions: Islam and Christianity.

Near the Omayyad Mosque lies the Street called Straight, which Paul the apostle, intent on oppressing Christians, had taken, and where Jesus appeared to him and said: “Saul, Saul, why do you

persecute me?” This is quoted in the Bible. These sights and features in Syria live in the eyes and hearts of Muslims as a constant proof that love should prevail between the sons of the prophets, in order to build the glory of faith on earth.

Islam came to confirm these truths.

So the prophet Muhammad (P.B.U.H) considered the belief in Christ and his Gospel to be one of the principles of religion, and added that this belief should be distinguished from that in all other prophets.

To believe that Jesus is but the Word of God He bestowed to Mary and a spirit proceeding from Him, (that is from God); that he was born pure, without a father, he spoke when he was a baby in the cradle glorifying

he	healed		God, and that
people	and		blind-born
God's	leave;)	lepers
quickens	the	◊	by
		ʾ	that
			he
			dead
			by

God's leave, and that he was raised alive to heaven and he is in the vicinity of God (Glory Be to him).

All Muslims in the world believe that Christ will come down at the end of life, and he will land on earth in the city of Damascus on the white minaret that lies East of it.

This is predicted by Muhammad the prophet (P.B.U.H) and authenticated in Sahih Muslim.

“When he comes back, he comes down in sight of the world, carried by angels; then all Muslims and Christians on the earth shall follow him so as to build the Glory of faith.”

Now I am coming to you carrying with me the good tidings from the Islamic world, that counts more than one billion Muslims who share with you the joy of Christmas – the memory of the birth of Christ.

Dear Brothers;

Is not it time, for our brothers who believe in God to extend their hands to this vast world of Islam, in order to render favor and fidelity to the dignified prophet Muhammad?!

And to declare the belief in the Unique God, and in Muhammad, the Seal of prophets, he who came confirming what was sent before him, that is the Torah and the Gospel.

The religion of Islam has been wrongly understood by the West and imagined to be a religion coming to abolish the principles and statutes of the Torah and the Gospel and to do away with Christians.

This false thought was necessary for the barons of crusade wars, who called up and mobilized the troops, seemingly to defend Christianity, while, in truth, they were eager to gather the booty of war, and to extend their military domination.

Of the eleven crusade expeditions, four were not directed to Jerusalem, but were directed to Constantinople and Tunis in order to collect wealth in the name of the cross. In the meantime the other expeditions played a bad role by sowing hostility between Islam and the West.

Dear brothers;

How can Islam abolish Christianity and the Gospel? While the Qur'an attests in 18 verses that the prophet Muhammad came confirming what was sent before him, that is the Torah and the Gospel.

The text of the Qur'an is so clear that it says:

“Let the people of the Gospel judge by what God hath revealed therein, if any do fail to judge by what God hath revealed; they are those who rebel.”

الإنجيل بما أنزل

وليحكم أهل

يحكم بما أنزل الله

الله فيه ومن لم



فأولئك هن الفاسقون

Allah (Glory be to Him) also says:

“Those who believe (in the Qur’an) and those who follow the Jewish scripture, the Christians and the Sabians, any who believe in God and the Last day and who do righteousness; shall have their reward with their Lord, on them shall be no fear, nor shall they grieve.”

إن الذين آمنوا والذين هادوا والصابئين من آمن بالله

واليوم الآخر وعمل صالحا فلهم أجرهم عند ربهم ولا خوف

عليهم ولا هم يحزنون

God (Glory Be to Him) also says:

“And there are, certainly, among the people of the Book, those who believe in God, in the revelation that is revealed to you, and the revelation that is

revealed to them, bowing in humility to God: they will not sell the signs of God for a miserable gain! For them is a reward with their Lord, God is swift in account.”

وإن من أهل الكتاب لمن يؤمن بالله وما أنزل إليكم وما أنزل إليهم خاشعين لله لا يسترون بآيات الله ثمناً قليلاً أولئك لهم أجرهم عند ربهم إن الله سريع الحساب

Thus we see here that the text clearly states that Islam considers all religions a means of leading man to God, just as the prophet Muhammad's call.

Truly, we in Syria were happy with the visit of a number of Christian personalities, sons of Finland, from whom we heard talks full of love and the loyalty of the Christian feelings towards Islam and Muslims, and the warm hopes of the people of this cold country concerning both Islam and

Christianity.

At this very time we are preparing to receive the Reverend Dr. Parma, chief of the bishops of the Lutheran church in Finland during his future visit to Damascus in the middle of next February.

We'll receive him at the Islamic Palace of Abun-Noor and the center for the presentation of Islam and Arabic culture.

In the past few months, we have received in Damascus and at the Islamic center a number of the most prominent personalities from the Christian religion in the world. Some of them are:

Dr. George Carey, Archbishop of Canterbury, from Britain; Dr. Robert Shuller, chief of the reform church in America; and Dr. Baker, chief of an organization that works for peace, members of which are Muslims and Christians, who offered meetings, in Damascus,

with his Eminence the Grand Mufti of Syria, Sheikh Ahmad Kuftaro, the best example of that tolerance and love that should exist between the sons of heaven.

The time to shake hands has come: hand in hand we have to forget the faults of the past and unify the efforts of the sons of Muhammad and Christ, who form at present more than half of the world's population, and who are in fact the only guarantee of keeping men virtuous and their souls from the deep darkness of this material era.

The Islamic world in its entirety awaits the return of Christ to Earth.

His return is a sign of the approach of the resurrection.

Although the traditions of prophet Muhammad mention and limit the place where Christ will land, I see that his return and landing are a symbol of the



end of secretive and religious differences,
and the unity of all men under the banner of
the kingdom of Faith.

*“Our Lord: Accept this service from us, you
are the All- Hearing, the All-Knowing.”*

ربنا تقبل منا إنك أنت السميع العليم

Dialogue and Tolerance: Comprehension in Islam



South America Muslims Conference

Sao Paolo August /1995

In August 1995, I was invited to attend the conference of Latin American Muslims.

It is an annual meeting habitually attended by men of Islamic faith from different parts of Latin America.

The Islamic Group in Brazil was careful and wise enough to present the meeting as a cultural assembly for the Arab community.

They cooperated in that field with several authorities in the local Brazil. Also welcomed authorities this meeting.

So the meeting took place in the Parliament in San Paulo, and the President of the Parliament, who is a Brazilian Christian, gave a lecture about the dialogue between civilizations, and indicated that he was proud of Islamic civilization and of the participation of the Islamic Group in the building of Brazil.

Likewise several Christian members of the Parliament talked about their respect for Islamic morals, and expressed their support for the Islamic causes in Palestine and in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

After the opening, the President of the Parliament gave a dinner for those who were present.

The first speech was given by one of the Arab brothers who works at a Saudi university. It was about; 'Loyalty and hostility in Islam.'

This lecture talked about 'The necessity of

enmity towards non-Muslims”!, stating that it is not permitted to show affection and love between Muslims and non-Muslims. In his words :

“Certainly, the relation of the Muslim with a non-Muslim should be based on enmity, however much affection or love or good treatment a non-Muslim shows”.

This talk had a very bad effect on the feelings of the audience, which of course included non-Muslim journalists and translators, and caused a tense situation, especially after that splendid opening and the welcoming attitudes of the various leading Brazilian personalities.

Moreover this logic as a principle is rejected in Islam and by the Qur’an, and causes the worst result, creating doubts and



misunderstanding between Muslims and the followers of other religions.

How can a civilized society comprehend or agree to the aims of such a conference, where preachers come from far horizons and **different countries** in order to meet with a small group within a big society, only to plant in the thoughts of some people hatred, hostility and resentment?!

And when will our Islamic message reach the hearts of those it wants to reach if our souls quietly accept such hostile sentiments?

The next lecture was about “The Good Pattern” delivered by myself.

So I prayed to Allah and focused on correcting that bad comprehension, and spreading love on the base of “The good pattern”.

The complete
lecture



text of my
follows:

In the Name of Allah, Most Beneficent,
Most Merciful.

Grace be to **God, the Lord of** all, and peace
be upon our Prophet Muhammad, upon his
father Abraham, upon his two brothers
Moses and Jesus and upon all his brothers
prophets and Apostles, and upon families of
all and Companions of all.

I have to
(Glory be to
facilitated my
brothers here
distant land



thank Allah
Him) who
meeting with
living in a
in the new

world, who are holding fast to their religion, glorifying God, and hoping their efforts and struggles will find favor with God.

I have traveled approximately half of the globe in order to reach Sao Paulo, and this is what makes me feel the challenge that faces our believing brothers in this **foreign** world.

But believers solidify each other. The verse of the Qur'an says:

“And (as for) the believing men and the believing women, they are guardians of each other, they enjoin good and forbid evil and keep up prayer and pay the poor-rate, and obey Allah and His Apostle;(as for) these, Allah will show mercy to them, surely Allah is Mighty, Wise.”

والمؤمنات بعضهم

بالمعروف وينهون

بالله ويقيمون الصلاة

ويطيعون الله ورسوله

والمؤمنون

أولياء بعض يأمرون

عن المنكر ويؤمنون

ويؤتون الزكاة



أولئك سيرحمهم الله إن الله عزيز حكيم

I had asked the administration office of the conference to give me the chance to talk about 'The Good Pattern' – the way of life of Muslims.

I am very enthusiastic about this topic and I think it is one of the most important demands to which the **Alienated** Muslim should be oriented in foreign countries.

Without doubt, a conscious study of the Prophet's message (P.B.U.H) as it is stated in the Qur'an will clarify that the best tradition that the Prophet followed was the way of the good pattern, or good manners:

“Certainly you have in the Apostle of Allah an excellent exemplar for him who hopes in Allah and the latter day and remembers Allah much”,



لقد كان لكم في رسول الله أسوة حسنة لمن كان يرجو الله واليوم
الآخر وذكر الله كثيراً

Likewise God says: “Certainly Allah conferred a benefit upon the believers when He raised among them an Apostle from among themselves, reciting to them His communications and purifying them, and teaching them the Book and the wisdom, although before that they were surely in manifest error.”

لقد من الله على المؤمنين إذ بعث فيهم رسولاً من أنفسهم يتلوا
عليهم آياته ويزكيهم ويعلمهم الكتاب والحكمة وإن كانوا من
قبل لفي ضلال مبين.

Islamic history
affirms the greatest
historic changes in
respect of Islam were
the result of the good

pattern of men of calling to Allah: men whose steadfast good behavior led men from personal admiration to admiration of the message, and to conversion to Islam.

Starting from this logic, any brother here may be a caller to God through his manner and his righteousness.

We find a clear basis for this understanding in the early emigration of Muslims to Abyssinia.

The Companions emigrated to Abyssinia carrying away their religion from Quraish aggression.

The prophet had advised in his words:

“Go to Abyssinia, where there is a king who treats no-one unjustly.”

The Companions displayed the greatest wisdom - their manner and behavior were an excellent witness,

which induced Negus to undertake himself their care and protection, and to refuse

the demand of his friends, the men of Quraish, who came asking him to give up those Emigrants, in order to render them back to injustice in Mecca.

Then Negus, the Emperor stood up and said to the Quraishians: 'No! By God! I will never give them up', and turned to the Emigrants and said: 'You are in peace in my land. Whoever insults you should be punished'.

The Companions were faithful towards Negus and were great helpers for him: when some rival against him appeared and fought him, the Companions did not hesitate to help him in gratitude for the land that had received them warmly and done well for them.

So Al Zubier Ben Al-Aoam led a squadron across the Nile, swimming to fight for Negus.

Thus the Companions gave the best example in



being loyal to the land that had welcomed them and to the king who had honored them.

This is our significant aim; the goal that we hope to achieve in any foreign country Muslims are in.

The Companions continued in their loyalty and love for Negus in spite of their different religious views. So when Negus received a new baby, he called him Jaa'far, although this name was not familiar in Abyssinia. That was because of Negus' love for the head of the Emigrants, the revered companion Jaa'far, son of Abu-Taleb.

Although the Prophet of Allah (P.B.U.H) emigrated to Medinah where he found safety and security and established his first Islamic state, the Companions stayed in Abyssinia for seven years: there ties of brotherhood were deepened between them and Negus, and they were



pleased with the approval of Negus for the request of the prophet; and Islam became more accepted by the people of Abyssinia.

So this success that the Muslims achieved in Abyssinia should be repeated in Brazil and in any place that Muslims settle, according to the principle of love and affection which the emigrants practiced through their activities in Abyssinia.

Here, precisely, I find myself obliged to add to the words of the lecture of Dr. Dweshan, who spoke before me.

I must say that, in spite of the high thoughts which we heard about standing fast by the Book and the Sunnah, I find myself in great contradiction with him as for the enmity between Muslims and non-Muslims.

In fact, this saying is dangerous to a degree that we should not be careless and pass it by, if we want to maintain respect for Islam. Even though I do not deny



the noble purpose to which he (Dr. Dweshan) aspires, i.e. **caring for the Islamic faithful** in foreign countries, I see that this pure purpose does not justify this dark means, since we have access to noble aims through noble means.

It is true to say:

‘A Muslim has to maintain enmity and hatred to non-Muslims, and this is the advice of Prophet in his saying:

*“It is one of the **most vital** ties of faith, the love for Allah’s sake and the hatred for Him.”*

إن من أوثق عرى الإيمان أن تحب لله وتبغض لله

And why should the relations between Muslims and non-Muslims be based on enmity?

And why not and justice, the saying of be to Him):

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on charity according to Allah (Glory

“Allah does not forbid you to respect those who have not made war against you on account of (your) religion, and have not driven you forth from your homes, that you show them kindness and deal with them and deal with them justly; surely Allah loves the doers of justice.”

لا ينهاكم الله عن الذين لم يقاتلوكم في الدين ولم يخرجوكم من دياركم أن تبروهم وتقسطوا إليهم إن الله يحب المقسطين

Clearly this enmity should be reserved for those who fight Muslims and usurp their lands, which is, in fact, exactly what the Zionist enemy is practicing nowadays.

Allah (Glory be to Him) says in the Qura'n:

“Allah only forbids you to respect those who made war upon you on account (of your) religion, and drove you forth from your homes and aided (others) in

١ ٢ ٤

your expulsion; that you make friends with them, and whoever makes friend with them, these are the unjust.”

إنما ينهاكم الله عم الذين قاتلوكم في الدين وأخرجوكم من دياركم
وظاهروا على إخراجكم أن تولوهم ومن يتولهم فأولئك هم
الفاسقون

As we look at the world around us, we have to distinguish clearly and openly between different kinds of stranger.

Negus and Khosros were not Muslims but Islam did not treat them the in same way; and Abu-Lahab and Abu-Taleb were not Muslims and they were not regarded same. Abu-Lahab was damned in the Holy Qur'an, while the Holy Qur'an said about Abu-Taleb:

“Surely you cannot guide
whom you love, but
Allah guides whom He
pleases, and He knows
best the followers of

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the right way.”

إنك لا تهدي من أحببت ولكن الله يهدي من يشاء

This is a bright declaration by the Qur’an about the deep relations between the prophet and his uncle, and this is a natural result of the respect and loyalty between the prophet (P.B.U.H) and his uncle – quite unlike the widespread impression of hatred and hostility between Muslims and non-Muslims.

Negus, who lived as a Christian, showed his great respect for Islam when he said: “This religion (i.e. Islam) and what Jesus was sent with truly come from the same source”.

He stood with the Companions in his land and protected them from their enemy, the unbelievers from Quraish. Some sources



mentioned that Negus embraced Islam through Amro, son of Omayya Al-Damri and Jaa'far, son of Abu-Taleb; but he kept on performing his religious rites, and nobody mentioned that Negus prayed like Muslims or paid Al-Zakat like them, or performed the Pilgrimage or converted to the prophet (P.B.U.H)

Nobody said that he changed his patriarch or his monks; or that he judged with Islamic Law or called his people to Islam or denied the Trinity, etc.....

The most that he did was to confess the Prophethood of Muhammad (P.B.U.H) and his message and to believe in the Oneness of Allah.

This was a cause of giving him a revered status, so the prophet (P.B.U.H) said the day when Negus died:

*"Tonight your brother
Negus died. Let us pray
for him (the absence
deathbed prayer)"*

When the Prophet Muhammad (P.B.U.H) prayed, some of the Companions who did not comprehend the tolerance of Islam wondered, and said, “He prays for a non Muslim from the Romans, who did not convert to us, nor he did pray our prayer”, so God (Glory be to Him) sent down:

“And most surely of the followers of the Book there are those who believe in Allah and (in) that which has been revealed to you and (in) that which has been revealed to them, being lowly before Allah; they do not take a small price for the communications of Allah; these it is that have their Lord; surely Allah is quick in reckoning.”

وإن من أهل الكتاب لمن يؤمن بالله وما أنزل إليكم وما أنزل

يسترون بآيات الله

لهم أجرهم عند

الحساب

إليهم خاشعين لله لا

ثمناً قليلاً أولئك

ربهم إن الله سريع



Moreover Ibn Katheer, the great scholar and interpreter, mentioned on another occasion that some Companions rejected that prayer and said: “he used to face Jerusalem in his prayer, and not towards Al-Kaba”.

So Allah revealed:

“And Allah’s is the East and the West; therefore, whither you turn, thither is Allah’s purpose; surely Allah is Ample-giving, Knowing.”

ولله المشرق والمغرب فأينما تولوا فثم وجه الله إن الله واسع

عليم

So the Prophet’s attitude towards Negus should inspire in us the qualities of tolerance, brotherhood, friendship and love that must exist between the Muslims and

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just people, even though there is **no complete agreement in matters of doctrine.**

The Holy Qur'an is clear, since God (G.B.T.H) praised a righteous Christian group who came to the prophet Muhammad (P.B.U.H) and listened to some verses from the Qur'an:

“Certainly you will find the most violent opponents of those who believe (to be) the Jews and those who are polytheists; and you will certainly find the closest friends to those who believe (to be) those who say: “We are Christian.” This is because there are priests and monks among them and because they do not behave proudly. And when they hear what has been revealed to the apostle, you will see their eyes overflowing with tears on account of the truth that they recognize.

*“Our Lord!
so write us
the witnesses*



*They say:
We believe,
down with
(of truth).*

And what (reason) have we that we should not believe in Allah and in the truth that has come to us, while we earnestly desire that Our Lord should cause us to enter with the good people?"

لتجدن أشد الناس عداوة للذين آمنوا اليهود والذين أشركوا
ولتجدن أقربهم مودة للذين آمنوا الذين قالوا إنا نصارى ذلك بأن
منهم قسيسين ورهباناً وأنهم لا يستكبرون وإذا سمعوا ما أنزل
إلى الرسول ترى أعينهم تفيض من الدمع مما عرفوا من الحق
يقولون ربنا آمننا فآمتنا مع الشاهدين وما لنا ألا نؤمن بالله وا
جاءنا من الحق ونطمع أن يدخلنا ربنا مع القوم الصالحين

I find it necessary to talk about a problem that some writers have raised, claiming that this verse concerns those who adopted Islam.

But in my point of view
this is an unjust

interpretation, because the verse is clear enough in describing them, as they said:

“We are Christians” and did not say: *“We were Christians”*. And because the verse reads:

“There were among them priests and clergymen”

and did not say:

“there were among them Companions, Sheikhs, orators and leaders.”

We have to be clarify what we mean when we call for the principle of tolerance. We do not talk about unifying the two religions, because this is not useful for either of them, and none of the followers of either religion accepts that. But we are talking about coexistence, about tolerance and about love that can exist between righteous men from different religions.

We Muslims
Christians
religions,
(unifying



and
have two
monotheism
God) as a

religion, and Trinity as a religion; but why should differences in faith be a reason to incite hatred and enmity, which in turn lead to war and aggression?

Now I say: yes, God (G.B.T.H) prohibited loving non-Muslim peoples, and stated those whom he meant in the following verse. He says:

“You shall not find a people who believe in Allah and the latter day befriending those who act in opposition to Allah and His Apostle, even though they be their (own) fathers, or their sons, or their brothers, or their kinsfolk; these are they into whose hearts He has impressed faith, and whom He has strengthened with an inspiration from Him: and He will cause them to enter gardens beneath which rivers flow, abiding therein; Allah is well-pleased with them and they have well-pleased Him; these are Allah’s party : now



surely the

party of Allah are the successful ones.”

لا تجد قوماً يؤمنون بالله واليوم الآخر يوادون من حاد الله ورسوله ولو كانوا آباءهم أو أبناءهم أو إخوانهم أو أولئك كتب في قلوبهم الإيمان وأيدهم بروح منه ويدخلهم جنات تجري من تحتها الأنهار رضي الله عنهم ورضوا عنه أولئك حزب الله ألا إن حزب الله هم المفلحون

This verse clearly describes those who are not to be loved: they are those who resist Allah and His Apostle and who incite wars and fighting against Muslims. This is a fact that no wise man denies.

*“And do not dispute with the followers of the Book **except to find the best**, except those who act unjustly. **And** say: We believe in that which has been revealed to us and revealed to us and revealed to you, and our God and your God is One,*

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and to Him do we submit.”

ولا تجادلوا أهل الكتاب إلا بالتي هي أحسن وقولوا آمنا بالذي
أنزل إلينا وأنزل إليكم وإلهنا وإلهكم واحد ونحن له مسلمون

“Say: O followers of the Book! Come to an equitable proposition between us and that we shall not serve any but Allah and (that) we shall not associate ought with Him, and (that) some of us shall not take others for lords besides Allah; but if they turn back, then say: Bear witness that we are Muslims.”

قل يا أهل الكتاب تعالوا إلى كلمة سواء بيننا وبينكم أن لا نعبد
غلا الله ولا نشرك به شيئاً ولا يتخذ بعضنا بعضاً أرباباً من دون
الله فإن تولوا فقولوا اشهدوا بأنا مسلمون

“The apostle believes in what has revealed to Lord, and (so **١ ٣ ٥** *him from his do) the*

believers; they all believe in Allah and His angels and His books and His apostles; We make no difference between any of His apostles; and they say: "We hear and obey, our Lord! Thy forgiveness (do we crave), and to thee is the eventual course."

آمَنَ الرَّسُولُ بِمَا أُنزِلَ إِلَيْهِ مِنْ رَبِّهِ وَالْمُؤْمِنُونَ كُلٌّ آمَنَ بِاللَّهِ
وَمَلَائِكَتِهِ وَكُتُبِهِ وَرُسُلِهِ لَا نُفَرِّقُ بَيْنَ أَحَدٍ مِّنْ رُّسُلِهِ وَقَالُوا سَمِعْنَا
وَأَطَعْنَا غُفْرَانَكَ رَبَّنَا وَإِلَيْكَ الْمَصِيرُ

*"Alif Lam Mim * Allah (there is) no god but He, the Eternal, the Self-subsisting by Whom all things subsist . He has revealed to you the Book with truth, verifying that which is before it, and He revealed the Torah and the Gospel aforetime, a guidance for the people, and He sent the Furqan"*

الم اللَّهُ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا
نَزَّلَ عَلَيْكَ الْكِتَابَ
هُوَ الْحَيُّ الْقَيُّومُ
بِالْحَقِّ مُصَدِّقًا لِّمَا

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بَيْنَ يَدَيْهِ وَأَنْزَلَ التَّوْرَةَ وَالْإِنْجِيلَ مِنْ قَبْلُ هُدًى لِلنَّاسِ وَأَنْزَلَ
الْفُرْقَانَ

But , you can see in the Holy Quran:

“O you who believe! Do not take the Jews and the Christians for friends; they are friends of each other; and whoever amongst you takes them for a friend, then surely he is one of them; surely Allah does not guide the unjust people.”

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَا تَتَّخِذُوا الْيَهُودَ وَالنَّصَارَى أَوْلِيَاءَ بَعْضُهُمْ
أَوْلِيَاءُ بَعْضٍ وَمَنْ يَتَوَلَّهُمْ مِنْكُمْ فَإِنَّهُ مِنْهُمْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يَهْدِي الْقَوْمَ
الظَّالِمِينَ

This means they are not all alike, exactly as Allah said:

“And among the followers of the Book there are some such that if you entrust one (of them) with



a heap of wealth, he shall pay it back to you; and among them there are some such that if you entrust one (of them) with a dinar he shall not pay it back to you except so long as you remain firm in demanding it; this is because they say: **There is not upon us in the matter of the unlearned people any way (to reproach);** and they tell a lie against Allah while they know.”

وَمِنْ أَهْلِ الْكِتَابِ مَنْ إِنْ تَأْمَنَهُ بِقِنطَارٍ يُؤَدُّهُ إِلَيْكَ وَمِنْهُمْ مَنْ إِنْ تَأْمَنَهُ بدينارٍ لَّا يُؤَدُّهُ إِلَيْكَ إِلَّا مَا دُمْتَ عَلَيْهِ قائمًا ذَلِكَ بِأَنَّهُمْ قَالُوا لَيْسَ عَلَيْنَا فِي الْأُمِّيِّينَ سَبِيلٌ وَيَقُولُونَ عَلَى اللَّهِ الْكَذِبَ وَهُمْ يَعْلَمُونَ بلى من أوفى بعهدده واتفى فإن الله يحب المتقين

In another verse Allah mentions clearly:
“They are not all alike; of the followers of the Book there is an upright party; they recite Allah’s

communications in the night and they adore (Him) * They believe in Allah and the last day, and they enjoin what is right and they strive with one another in hastening to good deeds, and those are among the good. * And whatever good, they shall not be denied it, and Allah knows those who guard (against evil).”

لَيْسُوا سَوَاءً مِّنْ أَهْلِ الْكِتَابِ أُمَّةٌ قَائِمَةٌ يَتْلُونَ آيَاتِ اللَّهِ آنَاءَ اللَّيْلِ وَهُمْ يَسْجُدُونَ يُؤْمِنُونَ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ وَيَأْمُرُونَ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَيَنْهَوْنَ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ وَيُسَارِعُونَ فِي الْخَيْرَاتِ وَأُولَئِكَ مِنَ الصَّالِحِينَ وَمَا يَفْعَلُوا مِنْ خَيْرٍ فَلَنْ يُكْفَرُوهُ وَاللَّهُ عَلِيمٌ بِالْمُتَّقِينَ

These verses that talk about fighting the people of the Book and hating them **refer to** those who arouse enmity and incite battle against Muslims. ١٣٩ Then it is not

just or wise to interpret one text as referring to all the people of the Book, without distinguishing between their righteous and their wicked.

It is a fact that the Qur'an has expressed in two words: *"They are not all alike"*.

This expression *"are not all alike"* provides a real way to deepen the roots of the idea of dialogue, to mature it and to orientate it in the right way.

I do believe that by throwing light on this idea of tolerance and love, our message will help Muslims who live here in the New World to fulfill the good pattern: a pattern that not only takes care of their own, but attracts the hopes of others to them, so that they study it eagerly and it will lead them, by the will of God, to guidance.

I would like to comment on the moral decline spread in the general, and



add a further comment here: this moral decline that has spread in the West in especially in

Latin America, which has combined the economic weakness of the East with the corruption of the West, should not go on. The natural substitute of this decline is to go back towards Allah, and to reach for religion, in which the mind follows and obeys the light of revelation.

This the world can only find in Islam. It certifies for the Muslim sons of this land that their duty is to be preachers of the Islamic message wherever they may be.

Finally, I thank from all my heart our noble brothers who arranged for this august meeting in this good land, and I hope from within this conference to arrange the ranks and cure our worries and to protect our souls in the field of mental and spiritual troubles, on the light of the straight way and love and affection and the ideas which the Qur'an brings.



Peace and Mercy of Allah be upon you.

Inspirations
from the **Immigration** of the
Prophet and early
Muslims

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**Seira of prophet p.b.u.h. Conference
Los Angeles December 2000**

This speech renewed by Faysal Burhan

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وإنك لتمضي إلى صراط مستقيم
صراط الله الذي له ملك السموات والأرض
ألا إلى الله تصير الأمور

In the Name **بسم** of Allah, the

Gracious, the Merciful.

Peace and Blessings be upon our Prophet Muhammad, his father Abraham, his two brothers Moses and Jesus

(peace be upon all of them)

لَقَدْ كَانَ لَكُمْ فِي رَسُولِ اللَّهِ أُسْوَةٌ حَسَنَةٌ لِمَنْ كَانَ يَرْجُو اللَّهَ وَالْيَوْمَ الْآخِرَ
وَذَكَرَ اللَّهَ كَثِيرًا

“Certainly in the Messenger of Allah, you have an excellent exemplar for him who hopes in Allah, and the last day and remembers Allah much.” Al-Ahzab: 21

Immigrant Muslims in the west and other places of the world are in dire need of relevant guidance and enlightenment for life in their new homeland. This text explores the original example of morals and actions for those living abroad provided by the greatest models of behavior for all Muslims: the Prophet Muhammad (pbuh), as

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well as his companions (pbuh). We pray that this work will be of great benefit to our sisters and brothers in their new homes.

As we know Prophet Muhammad initiated and carried out a plan for his companions to migrate to Abyssinia as a solution to resolve some of his crisis, which he and his companions were facing in the city of Mecca in the Arabian Peninsula. The purpose of this migration was to escape the tortures and execution they were receiving from the Quraish. The immigration to Abyssinia was made in two phases dictated by the relevant circumstances. What is significant to us about this immigration is that it was made to a foreign country ruled by a Christian king. This is much like the modern-day case of many Muslims who have migrated

from the Middle East to Europe, Asia and the American Continents in the hope of a better life.



We will therefore study this migration carefully, see what courses and actions the companions of the Prophet, peace be upon all, took, and attempt to consider these principles to fulfill our Islamic duties properly in our homes.

In addition to the migration to Abyssinia, the Prophet's strategy was to carry out another migration to the city of Yathrib, located north east of Mecca. Yathrib was the city where two major tribes were at war for an exhaustingly long time and an element of peace and reconciliation would have been eagerly welcomed. The reason for the Prophet's plan of migration was to seize the opportunity of calling both parties to the brotherhood of Islam, and to save the lives of his companions from execution at the hands of the Quraish in Mecca.

The
Yathrib
with

his



migration to
started first
companions,

then with the Prophet himself. As a result of the Muslims migration to Yathrib and their contribution to it, the city took on a whole new look and a new name, reflecting the Muslim's contributions. We will soon learn what those contributions that led to the new names were.

The Migration to Abyssinia. As we know the disbelieving Quraish tribes of Mecca were torturing and executing the Muslims for their faith. To ease this crisis, the Prophet Muhammad started looking for a new homeland that would protect his companions, including the migration to Abyssinia. In this regard he stated the following:

“I propose that you migrate to Abyssinia, where there is a Christian king, well known for his justice. He is said to have not wronged any one in kingdom.”



"لو خرجتم إلى الحبشة فإن بها ملكاً لا يظلم عنده أحد أبداً"

By studying the Prophet's proposal, we deduce that this migration was planned to resolve the crisis of injustice at home and was made in the hope of a new life where the people would not be wronged. Since the companions were being persecuted, the recommendation that the Prophet made to migrate to a land where no one would be wronged, was certainly a solution to this crisis. Note that the Prophet's proposal of the new home governed by the Christian King was **not normal doctrine**. This underlying fact shows some of the most momentous principles of Islam. First, Muslims and Christians were not on a collision course; and second, even though Muslims have differences with Christians, the Christians of the Arabian Peninsula were viewed as allies of the Muslims.

against the disbelieving idolaters. In fact the Qur'an, and the Prophet reflected these facts in several places within the fabric of Islam. Look at the following two quotations as an example:

“And dispute not with People of the Book (Christians and Jews), except with means better (than mere disputation), unless it be with those of them who inflict wrong and injury.”Qur'an, 29:46.

ولا تجادلوا أهل الكتاب إلا بالتي هي أحسن إلا الذين ظلموا منهم

The Prophet (p) also said:

“Let it be known, if any one (Muslim) commits injustice, insults, aggravates, mistreats or abuses a person of the People of the Book (protected, by the state or an agreement), he will have to answer me (for his immoral action) on the Day of Judgment.”



Abi Yousef,

Khiraaj, see Izzeddin Blaque, Minhaj Alsaliheen, Page 106

What we must realize here is that it was the early Muslims' beliefs and their understanding of these principles that made them so favored by the Christian King and welcomed in a Christian land. Let us see if our claim and the anticipation of the Prophet about the Christian King were right. We learned from the Sirah of the Prophet (p) that Negus, the King of Abyssinia welcomed the companions of the Prophet into his kingdom, fed them, sheltered them and granted them protection. This protection continued despite the fact that the Quraish attempted to get Negus to expel the believers from his Kingdom. It was reported that the Quraish had sent Arm Ibn Alas to King Negus with lots of precious gifts to persuade him to turn

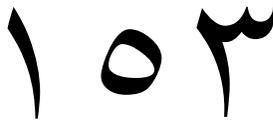
down the companions' request for protection, and to send them back to their masters in Arabia. However, when King Negus heard the companions' testimony regarding their new faith, the good manners they were promoting, and the mission of peace they were carrying, he refused to let them down and told them: "You are free to go about where you may wish in my kingdom. Wherever you go you will be protected."

If Muslims in the West, particularly the United States of America and Canada, determine to follow these principles, irrespective of the more recent Christian Crusades, wars etc., they will be better representatives of Islam than otherwise, and Islam then may have a better chance of growing even faster in this land. Above all, Almighty Allah will be pleased at their course of action in following the footsteps of



the prophet and his companions.

In return for King Negus' good treatment and protection, what did the Muslims do in their new home country? Did they rebel against the "Christian Government", its laws and traditions?" Did they look down upon its citizens, because they were "kufar", unbelievers or "Najis" (filthy)? Did they work to abolish the "un-Islamic Rule" of the King? Or were they respectful, compliant and good citizens? History testifies that the latter is right. In fact they were not only respectful, but loyal and showed allegiance to the country that hosted them. Historians tell us that the immigrant Muslims in Abyssinia fought alongside the Christian forces against rebels in his country. It was reported that al Zubier Ibn al-Awam, who was the leader of a squadron, swam across the Nile river with his companions to fight the King's enemy on the other



side. This act was certainly motivated by a good Islamic principle. Is it not the Sunnah of God that said:

“Is there any Reward for good other than good?” 55:60.

هل جزاء الإحسان إلا الإحسان

These principles and beliefs proven by actions were what made Negus accept Islam. It was reported that when the Prophet (p) heard the news of Negus' death, he conducted a formal prayer, Salatul Gha'ib, for his soul. This prayer can only be made for a Muslim. When, some of the companions objected to the Prophet's prayer, Allah revealed the Verse:

“And most surely of the followers of the Book, there are those who believe in Allah, and (in) that which has been revealed to you, and (in) that which has been revealed to

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them, being lowly before Allah; they do not take a small price for the communications of Allah; these it is that have their Lord; surely Allah is quick in reckoning.” [A’lay Imran:199]

وإن من أهل الكتاب لمن يؤمن بالله وما أنزل إليكم وما أنزل إليهم خاشعين لله لا يشترون بآيات الله ثمناً قليلاً أولئك لهم أجرهم عند ربهم إن الله سريع الحساب

Good behavior, a friendly spirit, and love and affection toward every human being were **the esteem and thrust** of the early Muslims, which certainly impressed kings. In fact King Negus was not only **impressed by and open to** Islam, but he had so much love and respect for Muslims that he named his new born baby “Jaa’far” after Jaa’far Ibn abi-Taleb, the cousin of the Prophet (p) and spokesman of the



immigrants.

It is such a great honor for the Muslims to see kings at their doorsteps. The companions of the Prophet were certainly true models and representatives of Islam.

Feelings of enmity and hatred toward others are the worst thing a Muslim, especially an immigrant Muslim, can do to damage the image of Islam and Muslims. It is the duty of all Muslims to act and function with all gratitude, loyalty, and respect to the country that hosts them, just like the model of the Prophet's companions, peace be upon them all.

It is worth noting a significant point: that the immigrant Muslims to Abyssinia continued to live there seven years after the establishment of the Muslims in Medina.

In other words, when the initial reasons for the action of migration was no longer valid, the action did not



terminate. This fact supports the opinion that Muslims are permitted to live among Christians as well as others, as long as they are safe and causing no harm to their mother land by this action.

The Migration to Yathrib. Let us turn our focus to the Muslims' migration to Yathrib and study the extent of rejuvenation of the city as they made it their new home.

Two years prior to his immigration to Yathrib, Prophet Muhammad (p), sent Mes'ab Ibn Umair as an emissary to deliver the message of Islam. Mes'ab's mission was successful, and it served as a precursor to the migration of many more Muslims. Mes'ab and the new Muslim immigrants with the new Faith were welcomed in Yathrib. Moreover, after the Prophet's arrival major urban and social development projects were undertaken in addition to the teachings of the

spiritual disciplines and beliefs of Islam. The city was about to take on a whole new look.

During the first year after the arrival of the Prophet (p), the city witnessed improvements and changes that gave it a totally different look. Among the many urban improvements were: 1) cleaning the streets of the city from accumulated waste and garbage, 2) improving the insufficient water and irrigation system, and 3) lighting the city streets with lamps. Socially, the city experienced major reforms. The first was the establishment of peace between the two fighting tribes, al Auws and al Khazraj, and the establishment of brotherhood between the immigrants (Muhajireen) and those who received them from the city, the Helpers (Ansar). The second was the writing of the city's constitution and agreement between the Jews and

Muslims to live in peace in a pluralistic community. A brief discussion of each of these reforms follows.

A- Urban Development

1- Cleaning the streets of the city from accumulated waste and garbage. As the new immigrants arrived in Yathrib, many of them, having no immunity against the kind of diseases that existed there, had fallen sick. Standing by the sick and raising their morale, the Prophet (p) made a prayer of encouragement, saying:

“Oh Allah make us love Medina in the same way You made us love Mecca.”

اللهم حبب إلينا المدينة كما حببت إلينا مكة

Unlike many Muslims today, the Prophet (p) did not stop at saying the prayer as a way to cure the illness of the immigrant Muslims, but rather he established a task force to haul the rubbish away from the city

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streets to a place called “al-Jahfah”. As a result of this operation a healthier environment for all the citizens of the city was realized. One can only imagine how happy and pleased the inhabitants of the city were after seeing their city cleaned and refreshed, and how much the Muslims were appreciated.

2- Improving the insufficient water and irrigation system.

Another basic area for municipal and agricultural improvement was the water system of the city. It was determined that the city water was insufficient for its inhabitants, and that more water resources must be found. At this point, the Prophet (p) drew up a plan for drilling 54 water wells in and around the city. This project was completed under the direction of the companion, Talhah Ibn Ubaidillah.

Upon its completion, irrigation of the existing and new land was made through canals instead of the old streams from a few water wells. Agriculture in the city grew and prospered as a result. The Prophet (p) had issued a land deed for those who improve barren land. He said:

“Anyone who improves barren land will have the right to own it “

"من أحيا أرضاً ميتة فهي له وليس لعرق ظالم حق"

In a few years the city turned into a green valley of palm trees and other vegetation. The factors that led to this land and agricultural reform are an integral part of the Muslim faith. This faith does not stop at prayers, but goes beyond that by displaying the elements of faith, loyalty and ethics in actions.

3- Lighting streets with lamps As far as the city immigrant

Muslims providing lights for the streets of Yathrib, it has been reported that Tamem Ben al-Aus al-Darie, had invented a lamp which he used to light the Mosque of the Prophet. Later the Prophet (p) provided Tamem with a few young companions and supplies, and assigned them the task of providing lamps for all the city streets. Upon the completion of this task, in an **inauguration ceremony**, the Prophet (p) said:

“May Allah enlighten the heart of Tamem al Darie. **If I had** a daughter I would have asked her to marry him.”

"اللهم نور قلب تميم ، لو كانت لي بنت لزوجتها لتميم الداري"

The city then was like a glowing **jewel** in the surrounding desert. After it was dressed with lights, the city took on the name “al Medina al Munawarah,” meaning the enlightened city, **and or** “Madinatu l al    city, **and or** the

“City of the Prophet,” or simply Medina.

One may find these names often interchangeable in the literature. Thus the city took on the name and the **dress** that reflected the immigrant Muslims names and contributions to it.

B- Social and Constitutional Development.

The establishment of peace and brotherhood between the immigrants and the Muslims of the City of Medina

Upon his arrival in the city, the Prophet (p) made peace between the tribes of al Auws and al Khazraj, who had been at war for many years. Both of these tribes accepted Islam and became known as the Ansar or the Helpers. Next, the Prophet (p) conducted what is known as “Mu’akhah” or the establishment of brotherhood. The process of

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“establishment of brotherhood” was combining or pairing individual immigrant Muslims (Muhajireen) with Muslims from the city of Medina (Ansar). This social welfare operation tackled a temporary problem, and was aimed at caring for over 100 immigrant families that had arrived in the city of Medina. This process provided that a host family from Medina share its resources with an immigrant family. In return the guest family provided its resources too, either by assisting the host family in their business or establishing its own. The host families played an extraordinary role in offering assistance, homes, and essential commodities to the immigrant ones. This was a remarkable achievement for the social welfare of the community as a whole.

Those who were what those they received, individuals



needing assistance in their businesses or farms got the help they needed, and a few new jobs and businesses were opened. The entire community benefitted from this pairing process.

The success of this brotherhood action was owed to the Prophet's remarkable wisdom in initiating and supervising this operation. The Prophet (p) appointed Mes'ab Ibn Umair to head up and manage this task. As we mentioned earlier, Mes'ab Ibn Umair had migrated to the Yathrib two years prior to the migration of the Prophet. He was thus **the better informed of both the** Muhajireen and Ansar and best fit for this assignment. Furthermore, Mes'ab did not do his job haphazardly and false tawakul (relying on God's help without the required work and discipline). Instead he relied on study and the matching of several

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complementary human factors, such as hobbies, profession, position and marital status. For example, Abu Ubaidah Ibn Al Jarrah from the Muhajireen was partnered with Sa'd Ibn Mu'th, from the Ansar, each of whom was a leader of a tribe. Sa'eed Ibn Zaid from the Muhajireen was selected to be the brother of Ubai Ibn Ka'b from the Ansar, each of whom was a reciter of the Holy Qur'an; Abdullah Ibn Mas'ud and Mu'ath Ibn Jabal from the Muhajireen and Ansar respectively were memorizers of the Holy Qur'an; and Abu Huthaifah Ibn Utbah from the Muhajireen and Ubaydah Ibn Bisher from the Ansar were selected for this brotherhood - Huthaifa had a farm and Ubaydah was a strong man, who was able to work on it.

The single men of the Muhajireen, known as Ahlu al Mosque Sufah, made of the Prophet (p) their



temporary home, and were given several tasks such as front line defense group against raids, municipal workers, fire prevention and other emergencies.

Writing the city's constitution

One of the major contributions of the Muslim immigrants to the city of Yathrib was developing a constitution to regulate the internal and external affairs of the city. Again, this magnificent and extraordinary work was developed and administered by the Prophet (p) in the first year after his arrival in the city. This **work task** with its many civil, judicial, and political articles including defense and **alliance ship**, had to be coordinated and approved by the leaders of eleven Jewish tribes, the leaders of the Arab tribes in and around the city, and by the Muslims.

One can just imagine the number of meetings, the extensive coordination, discussions, amendments,



and the collection of the various inputs of customary rules and regulations between the various tribes required to finalize the articles of this pluralism-governing document. This document is known as “Saheefatu al Madenah” or the “Constitution of Medina.”

The Constitution of Medina was the first written civil and political law spelling out the freedom of worship, trade and speech. It supported the defense of the community against enemies, and it promoted justice and goodness, and the fight against evil. Jews and Muslims lived in peace side by side defending their city against the disbelievers of Quraish for many years. For a full account of the passages and articles of this constitution.

We need to understand that these reforms were the product of the

Muslim's deep faith and their loyalty and love for the land that hosted and opened itself to them. These achievements were not intended to make the city a base for war or personal profits. The prophet (p) has said: Mount Uhud belongs to us, we love it and it loves us."

"أحد جبل يحبنا ونحبه"

Conclusion

In conclusion, the Prophet Muhammad (p) was sent as a mercy to all creatures. The example of his migration to Yathrib, and the reforms and improvements he made for its economic, social, political and spiritual systems, were **but a small indication** of this mercy. On the other hand, the morality, ethics and good citizenship of his companions in their new homeland of Abyssinia were and still are a guiding light for today's and future Muslim immigrants.

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Let us all be good Muslims and continue to carry the same torch that our ancestors carried. Let us be as the Prophet (p) described the believers saying:

“The believer is like the rain: wherever it falls, it benefits.

مثل المؤمن كمثل الغيث أينما وقع نفع"

This is only a small, bright page of the real and true experience from the early Muslim immigrants that we have presented to our sisters and brothers in their new homeland. It is our hope that this contribution will serve as a model in all matters of life for this and future generations of Muslims.



**The final statement of the
Dialogue Symposium in Noor Assembly.**

Organized by

Dr Mohammad Habash

Director of

Islamic

Center

Damascus

Studies



Hall of Meridien Hotel
March 2000
Damascus

قل يا أهل الكتاب

تعالوا إلى كلمة سواء بيننا وبينكم

إلا نعبد إلا الله ولا نشرك به شيئاً

ولا يتخذ

بعضنا بعضاً

أرباباً من دون

الله

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فإن تولوا فقولوا اشهدوا بأنا مسلمون

**The final statement of the
Dialogue Symposium in Noor Assembly.**

In the Name of Allah, Most Beneficent,
Most Merciful.

Under the auspices of His Eminence,
the grand Mufti of
Syria, the head of
Abon-noor Islamic
Academy the Shiekh
Ahmad    Kuftaro and

His Holiness D. Ukka Parma, the Chief of bishops of Finland and Turku, and in the memory of the second millennium of the birth of Jesus Christ (P. B. U. H), a selected group of Islamic and Christian thinkers and scholars from Syria and Finland met in the presence of His Eminence the Metropolitan, Reverend Munib A. Yonan, the head of the **Angelic** Lutheran Church in the Middle East, and Dr. Riad Jarjour, the general Director of the Middle **East Church's House.**

And after the dialogue and the discussion the participants **issued the following statement:**

- The call to renew our essential faith in order to be able to enter the twenty-first century.

- The call to believe in Allah, the One, the Unique, is a common aspect between the sons of the prophets,



and which is a real guarantee to establish a pure society.

- The participants agreed to believe in the honored prophets' instructions, as Jesus Christ and Muhammad (P.B.U. them) had taught, as well as to confirm the common ties between the two faiths.

- The participants agreed that the European Wars and western colonization were but military actions that do not relate to Christian Tolerance.

- The participants are to encourage tolerance between the followers of both religions, and to struggle against all kinds of bigotry and hatred and to work for the sake of peace and justice.

- The participants call all believers in God to endeavor to spread virtue, chastity and

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righteousness, which are the main aims of religions, and to strive against fornication, permissiveness and all other evils.

- The participants call to **direct the religious dialogue to be changed from enthusiastic arguments** to a mutual integral dialogue, aiming at construction.

- To assure and confirm that the land of the Near East is the cradle of **the variety** of cultures and it is playing a leading role in the field of religious tolerance through the **historical existing and the standing national unity.**

- Calling to support the cooperation to serve the religious brotherhood between Abon-Noor Islamic Foundation in Syria and the Angelic Lutheran Church in Finland and in the Arab countries as well as **The Council of the Middle East Churches.**

-To send a cable including his greetings to Excellency



Hafez Al-Assad, the president of the Syrian Arab Republic for his remarkable role in achieving national unity and the religious fraternity over Syria, the land of prophets.

The grand Mufti
of Syria
Ahmad Kuftaro,

The archbishop
of Finland,
Dr. Ukka Parma.



الخلق كلهم عيال الله وأحبهم إليه أنفعتهم

لعياله

All the creatures are family of God
The best of them in front of God
is the more benefit to his family



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