

Peace among Religions¹

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In the name of Allah; the most merciful; the most passionate

I am addressing those who have come together in the conference held by Cultural Foundation of Religious Harmony and World Peace. I am so pleased to hear that the choicest men of different religions, in our time, are thinking of peace, harmony and affinity among religions and sects. Because, religion is an ideal believing in which, cannot be imposed on by force and coercion. In effect, each of us has consciously chosen it. We, the Muslims have chosen Islam and we believe it is the last divine religion and the most complete amongst all. But, this belief cannot be imposed on the others, since anyone has to do research in order to consciously arrive at such conclusion. Therefore, as long as followers of religions have not reached a mutually acceptable conclusion, to maintain the world peace, all the religions should be respected, valued and provided with possibilities so that they can be able to continue seeking in order to succeed in the path of unification of religions. As it was said earlier, we cannot talk about religion unification without respecting different ideas. And for this reason, I, who believe that the Islamic mysticism is the most modern mystical methods among the other religions' mysticisms, do not impose my idea on the others, but, I hope that they will come up with the same idea as I have reached.

In recent times, many choicest men and leaders of the world have taken this subject matter into consideration. For example, late John Paul II, who was a learned man and observant of such niceties, went to Jerusalem and met with orthodox bishops after a long-term dispute among Christian sects. Although, religion followers must not abandon their own religious beliefs, they must respect others' as well, and also they should have a kind of social cooperation with one another without leaving their own ideas or even compromising on them, and this has to be kept in minds of all religious people. Fortunately, this subject matter in Islamic mysticism has always been given attention to, and Muslim mystics have developed friendship with followers of different religions and have respected them. And mysticism books, too, can verify the validity of this saying so.

In Islamic mysticism, every human individual is considered to have a distinctive personality; they are given possibilities to research, understand and adopt their own ideologies after comprehending the subject, as it was experienced when Islam first entered Iran. Despite the fact that Arabs first welcomed religion of Islam and conquered many countries, it is not true to

¹ The text which was sent to the conference of Peace among Religions held in India by Cultural Foundation of Religious Harmony and World Peace in April 2005.

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say that Arabs conquered Iran, as entering of Islam into Iran was as far as the city of Rey (district of Tehran) by warfare and battles; but after that, Iranian people willingly accepted the teachings of Islam and then put them into practise. But how did they arrive at converting to Islam? They liked the teachings, and embraced Islam because there were lessons of respecting humans and their rights and protecting freedom of speech and thought.

Unfortunately, in today's world, the political storm is so raging that it has struck even the most transcendental teachings of religions. Even supporting peace is accompanied by political motives, as if this is to either support or oppose a certain party. High-ranking religious leaders should make efforts to keep religious beliefs out of the political domination so as not to be manipulated by different political views and opinions. It is obvious that from the spiritual aspect, people are certainly free to adopt their favorable political and social attitude and follow a divine religion spiritually. But that some people evoke the religious feelings of any tribe and nation and then abuse their reactions -as it is prevailing in the world of politics- is a dangerous matter which not only ruins people's beliefs, but also eliminates the possibility of electing the most reasonable belief; consequences of which will increase more disputes among followers of religions. Hence, this Foundation's duty to harmonize religions is vitally important and also the universal peace is an opportunity for such foundations to continue seeking and selecting the most reasonable choice.

I highly appreciate your effort. Wassalam.

I should have added that I had earlier received a letter from the Honorable Maharishi Kapil Advait; the director of the Foundation, to inform and invite me to this conference and since every letter has to be replied, in response to that invitation letter, I wrote the following:

April 3, 2005

Dear Mr. Maharishi Kapil Advait,

I am writing to send my warmest regards (Salam) to you and also to confirm that I have received your invitation letter to attend the conference of Religious Harmony and World Peace. I hereby agree to establish such a foundation for the above-mentioned intention. History of the recent centuries has warned us to remain vigilant against enemies penetrating into the spiritual world of religious people apart from falling victim to the flood of pessimism, considering “**casting some suspicions are sins**²”, we need to be sufficiently careful, and consider God’s saying “**We have honored the sons of Adam**³” as the basis of honoring mankind.

Religious beliefs are absolutely personal and cannot be imposed on anybody else. It is obvious that followers of any religious belief know their own belief superior to others’, and for this very reason they have adopted that very religion amongst all religions. The common aspect of all of them is the “religiousness” which means approving of spiritual beliefs and teachings,

² Quran, Al Hujuraat, 12: إِنَّ بَعْضَ الظُّنُونَ إِنْمَّا

³ Quran, Al Isra, 70: وَلَقَدْ كَرَّمْنَا بَيْتِ آدَمَ

and dedication and devotion to a certain spiritually social system. We; the Muslims, have adopted Islam. We have appreciated it as religion of peace, affection and liberty, and we have had spiritual fondness and interaction with all the honored (sons of Adam). Due to believing in “**There shall be no (forcing) reluctance in religion**”⁴, we know everyone’s right; let us say the duty, to seek a superior spiritual system, and we believe, establishing world peace is essential for such free-of-compulsion seeking, and from our point of view, duty of mankind and especially religious people of the globe is to maintain and establish such peace. We believe practicing mysticism, in particular, is necessary for the followers of all religions.

Mysticism, in effect, is the in-depth meaning and soul of all divine religions and is the common ground and dialogue intermediary among them. My spiritual ancestors and precedents and I, as a humble servant of God, have endeavored along this path, and have made sacrifices to maintain the mysticism and according to “**When talking to the ignorant, they speak calmly**”⁵ have endured unjust violence tolerantly or defensively. For a long period of time, India has been the center of Islamic mysticism and efforts such as what the legendary Muslim mystic; Dara Shikoh, made on the road of syncretizing Islam and Hinduism, have been approved and affirmed by all sincere followers of religions. At the present moment, too, India is the embodiment of world peace and mysticism, and it will remain likewise in the future In Shaa Allah (hopefully).

Mr. Hussein Ali Kashani Baydokhti who has carried out theoretical studies on mysticism, began practicing mysticism years ago under instructions from Sufi masters and my ancestors, and also has pursued it up to now, will come to this conference and he will give explanations, if needed. This very invitation letter and its reply are stages of the mystical path from a theoretical and practical viewpoint of mysticism. I greatly express my desire for God-given validities for you on the straight path.

I wish you success and I have the greatest respect for you

⁴ Quran, Al Baqara, 256: لا إِكْرَاهٌ فِي الدِّينِ

⁵ Quran, Forqan, 63: وَإِذَا حَاتَبُهُمُ الْجَاهِلُونَ قَالُوا سَلَامًا