



*The Principles of the Abrahamic Faiths:
Traditions that Advance Education*



Sponsored by:
CREATIVE ASSOCIATES INTERNATIONAL[®]
and
The Caux Round Table

NDEX

Preface	pg. 1
Ms. M. Charito Kruvant President & CEO, Creative Associates International, Inc. Member, Global Governing Board, The Caux Round Table	
Synopsis of Proceedings	pg. 3
Dr. Kenneth Goodpaster Koch Chair for Business Ethics, University of St. Thomas Consultant, The Caux Round Table	
Educating for Global Citizenship	pg. 8
Dr. Abdul Said Mohammed Said Chair for Global Peace, The American University	
Global Challenges	pg. 16
Ms. Katherine Marshall Counselor & Deputy Director, The World Bank	
Faith, Education and Development, Principles for Progress	pg. 21
Dr. John Ryan Senior Education Advisor, Creative Associates International, Inc.	
Religion and Education	pg. 26
Dr. M. Haytham Al-Khayat Islamic Scholar Regional Advisor to the World Health Organization	
Panel Discussion and Question & Answers	pg. 43
Most Reverend Thomas Wenski Dr. David Elcott, Office of Inter-Religious Affairs, American Jewish Committee, Bishop of the Orlando Diocese, Florida, Hamd Alkhayat, Advisor to the Ministry of Education, Baghdad, Iraq Dr. Amr Abdulla, Professor, George Mason University Moderators: Dr Kenneth Goodpaster and Mr. Jeffrey Weiss Senior Advisor to the President & CEO, Creative Associates International, Inc. Members of the Audience	
Biographies of Participants	pg. 54

M. Charito Krwanc

President & CEO, Creative Associates International Inc.

Member, Global Governing Board, The Caux Round Table

February 12, 2004

International Trade Center

Washington, DC

P reface

On February 12, 2004, Creative Associates International, Inc. and the Caux Round Table sponsored an Interfaith Symposium on "The Principles of the Abrahamic Faiths: Traditions that Advance Education." **Why this Interfaith Symposium?** Can reexamining the traditions of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam provide insight into current problems? Creative Associates believes this is so and that the perspective that the Abrahamic vision offers can help us cope with the troubling issues that now beset societies around the world, especially in the Middle East.

We are closer to each other than we have ever been. Transformations in transportation and communication have overcome time and distance. The global village - until recently an idea - is now where we all live. Yet, while all people are now neighbors, there is no guarantee that tranquility and harmony will grace our relations with the folks next door. Indeed, scholars have warned of a "clash of civilizations" and the vivid images of conflict being constantly projected into our televisions may be an omen of increasing strife.

History has never been and will never be without both sunshine and shadows. The hatreds, rancor, and injuries of the past live on and have the capacity to pull us into the cauldron of conflict. Yet, the Abrahamic tradition contains the possibility of unity as well as the seeds of dissension. Janus, the two-faced Roman god associated with passages and new beginnings is a fitting symbol for our age. Which face will prevail: the face of anger and despair or that of peace and hope? If progress and hope are to prevail, that can only come about through the will and capacity of people to work together to shape a future of peace, justice, and harmony and to refuse to endure a new era of struggle, suffering, and sorrow.

It was against this background - at once threatening and promising - that the Interfaith Symposium was born. The Symposium explored the meaning and relevance of the common roots of the three Abrahamic faiths, and created a dialogue among Muslims, Christians, and Jews. I sensed a spirit among these people of faith that there is an important and sacred bond of unity that can draw us together rather than push us apart. To me, that spirit is a great potential force for promoting the peace and harmony that our world so urgently seeks and requires.

The presentations given at the Symposium were profoundly thought provoking; the broad congruence of their interpretations and views deeply reassuring. I will not seek here to summarize the

rich mosaic of thoughts and ideas articulated at the symposium which are presented in detail in the papers and synopsis that follow. Here I would simply express my deep thanks to all those who contributed so generously and effectively to the Symposium.

We thank the distinguished thinkers in the religious and education fields who made thought provoking presentations on their respective fields: Dr. Abdul Said, Founder and Professor of the Global Peace Center at American University where he holds the Mohammed Farsi Chair for Islamic Peace; Dr. David Elcott, Inter-Religious Affairs Director of the American Jewish Committee/New York; Ms. Katherine Marshall, Counselor and Deputy Director of The World Bank; Dr. M. Haytham Al-Khayat, Islamic Scholar and Regional Advisor to the World Health Organization; The Most Reverend Thomas Wenski, Bishop of the Diocese of Orlando, Florida; and Dr. John Ryan, Senior Education Advisor to Creative Associates International, Inc.

A special thanks to Dr. Amr Abdalla of George Mason University who joined the panel, and our moderators Dr. Kenneth Goodpaster of the Caux Round Table and St. Thomas University, and Jeffrey Weiss, formerly with the Department of Justice and currently with Creative Associates. Biographies of the participants can be found at the end of this publication.

The cosponsors of this Symposium are very different organizations, each with its own history and objectives. The Caux Round Table is dedicated to promoting principled business leadership. As leadership and governance are inherently ethical pursuits, it believes the world's great religions are sources for moral thinking and action in the business world.

Creative Associates International, Inc. is a professional services firm that has been serving communities, governments, non-governmental organizations, and the private sector for more than 25 years. It is a women and minority led firm with a highly accomplished, diverse, and dedicated staff and an extensive portfolio of projects related to education and training, democratic transition, and civil society development. It is working in many of the world's "hot spots" as well as in some of its most desperately poor countries. The critical nexus emphasized in this Symposium between peace and progress is a lesson learned and lived daily by Creative Associates and its staff.

On behalf of the sponsors, I wish to sincerely thank all those who participated in the Symposium in whatever capacity. It is my hope that we all emerged from this stimulating experience a little wiser, more humble, more disposed to listen than to instruct, and even more eager to get on with the enormous job of making our world a better and more just place for all of humanity. I also hope that if you did not attend the Symposium but are reading this publication, you will also find it valuable as you wrestle with the serious matters of peace and conflict.

Peace,
Charito Kruvant

Dr. Kenneth Goodpaster

Rock Chair for Business Ethics, University of St. Thomas

Consultant, The Caux Round Table

Moderator, Interfaith Symposium

The Principles of the Abrahamic Faiths: Traditions that Advance Education

February 12, 2004

International Trade Center

Washington, DC

Synopsis of Proceedings

Formal presentations were provided by **Dr. Abdul Said**, **Ms. Katherine Marshall**, and **Dr. John Ryan**. A discussion panel, following the presentations, was composed of **Dr. David Elcott**, **Bishop Thomas Wenski**, **Dr. Abdul Adballa**, and **Mr. Hamd Alkhayat**, as a representative for his father, **Dr. M. Haytham Al-Khayat**. The sessions were moderated by **Dr. Kenneth Goodpaster** and **Jeffrey Weiss**.

I was reminded this morning, of what I often say as I teach a Great Books seminar for MBA students. I tell the students, before we begin, that we are going on four journeys and on each of the journeys we are going to have a conversation. That framework, used in my Great Books seminar struck me this morning as very applicable to what we have been doing in this symposium.

The first journey is associated with an inner conversation, and that is a personal journey. Each one of us is on a journey internally with our God, as we understand him. That special, very private journey involves a conversation within our own hearts and between our hearts and the heart of that God, as we understand him.

Each one of us in the room this morning inevitably is on that journey. What brought many of us here was the ability to go on that journey, because we wanted to hear wisdom from others.

The second journey is a social journey which involves a conversation among us, and among the panelists and the audience. The social journey involves a conversation among human beings seeking wisdom and understanding from one another.

The third journey is a historical journey involving a great conversation across the ages, across the Abrahamic religious traditions. That means getting in touch with those traditions at a much deeper level than we are normally equipped to do.

I heard that theme in the discussion this morning. David Elcott first said, and was then echoed by other panelists, that paradoxically, as we try to create understanding between the faith traditions, as each one of them reaches out to the others, a sobering lesson is learned. That is; we are not as well acquainted with our own traditions as we thought we were.

In an effort to reach out, we find that delving deeper into our own faith's traditions is a prerequisite. Then the reaching out again is a kind of dialectic.

There needs to be a historical journey and a conversation with the great thinkers of the past, and that can happen. That's what a tradition really is, a historical journey and a historical conversation.

Finally, there is a fourth journey which I'll call the journey into the future. It is the journey that includes a conversation into the future, looking for a continuing dialogue that can support education of the youngsters who will populate the future, raising them in an environment and in a community that makes it possible to live together in peace and love.

What a dream that would be, if it could come true. The unrest and the violence and the polarization could be turned into something much richer for the future, at the same time honoring each of those traditions that gave rise to education initially.

So there's a personal journey, a social journey, a historical journey, and a journey into the future, and I think that that framework, which I used in connection with the Great Books seminar, applies to this symposium even more directly.

Let's look back over the morning. I am going to pick out some gold nuggets from what I heard.

Dr. Abdul Said started off the morning and offered us a whole host of insights. To me, the one that stood out was his call for "moral imagination," and how it is needed for global citizenship in the future. The fostering of moral imagination in children to allow them to take a place on the stage of global citizenship is an extraordinarily exciting idea and one that resonated with me.

Dr. Said made another point concerning education. He said it is a public good like air and water. This is a rich, rich observation. If education is a public good like air and water, it is important for us to protect and not to pollute, to make sure it stays clean, and stays true to the purposes of education. Those purposes are not just education in technique or technology. Technology is an incredibly important part of modernity, but there's a great deal more to education than technique.

There is resistance in each of our traditions to absorb modernity, whole cloth. As Dr. M. Haytham Al-Khayat mentioned; we can't absorb modernity whole cloth unless it includes the whole person, not just technique, not just technology.

If there's been resistance to modernity on the part of some or all of our religious traditions at some time or other, it was due to a fear that only part of the human person was being represented in that acceptance of modernity, and not the whole human person.

Dr. Said reiterated that the Abrahamic tradition includes spirituality at its foundation, not just technology, and that spirituality is an important part of the very idea of education. This is a challenging idea, and it is, for some, a scary idea. How can that be true? Can all education in some ultimate sense be religious education? Dr. Said was using the word spirituality in a more general sense than any specific religion. Because education must in some way deal with profound human values, all education is religious education.

Dr. Said also said that global citizenship requires embracing the good of all humanity, and that is what children need to be brought into, the new global citizenship.

Ms. Katherine Marshall said a number of wonderful things. The first added unity to the whole morning. She stated we cannot proceed effectively with remedies to our problems unless we have a healthy analysis and review of the religious traditions around education.

The planners of this conference seemed to understand that very well. That is why they chose the folks they did to be on the panel, to at least begin the process of analysis and review of the religious traditions and what those traditions bring to education.

Ms. Marshall asked a question that keeps ringing in my ears: We have to always ask, education for what? Education has a telos, a purpose, a goal. It is not just for its own sake. Education for what? We must have a vision of where we are going with education. That's a challenge to all of us. It is tempting to look at education as the three R's, i.e, reading, writing and arithmetic. It's more than that. It involves a conception of human beings and their dignity and the human community.

Dr. John Ryan had an enormous amount to say, and I'm not going to do him justice here. He said: we are not trying to modernize the educational system, but to ground it in its historical mission.

He also noted that modernization is losing its magic. Living in a technologically advanced society and being bombarded on a regular basis with marketing and commercial images can sometimes cause doubts, in some of us at least, as to how advanced we really are.

Dr. Ryan's point was that there is less magic, and more mirage than meets the eye. When I heard him say mirage, this old philosopher thought of Plato's Allegory of the Cave - of those prisoners watching the shadows on the wall and having to be liberated from a certain kind of insubstantial conception of what was real, and then being let out of the cave to a much more substantial conception of what is real.

So in many ways, modernization needs criticism as much as the religious traditions need criticism. As Dr. David Elcott pointed out later in the discussion, "religious traditions have been tremendous champions of education historically, but have also introduced a tremendous amount of human frailty and downright evil in certain cases."

The idea that religious traditions are always the source of the dark side needs to be balanced by the realization that modernity has its own dark side and can itself be a mirage.

When religious communities fear modernity and are resistant to globalization and what comes with it, we must listen to their reasons why. We ought to listen to why they are resistant, because those reasons can be very straightforward and very credible.

Bishop Thomas Wenski made a number of important points, particularly the image that he gave us from Pope John Paul II's encyclical of the two wings of the human spirit, faith and reason. But the point that stuck with me most in his remarks was this: all three of the Abrahamic traditions are teleological. They see a purpose to the journey of human life. A God makes the world a proper object of study, of inquiry, of knowledge. There is a purpose to the journey. So when I opened up by saying there were four journeys and four conversations, I was thinking partly of Bishop Wenski's remarks, the theme of a journey kept coming up again and again during the morning.

It is one thing to look at human life as the product of natural selection and random variation of

genes. It is a very different thing to look at human life as a journey toward a transcendent end. To the extent that the Abrahamic faith traditions bring to us the latter perspective on human life, they are offering us an alternative that we need to take seriously. In that same spirit, Bishop Wenski said we have as much to fear from injustice, poverty, and secularism, as from faith.

Dr. M. Haytham Al-Khayat's son, **Mr. Hamd Alkhayat**, was eloquent, and I will base my remarks on that eloquence. One of the core nuggets that I took away from those remarks was the message from the Quran, "We are on a life long journey back to God." Being aligned with nature is a constant theme within Islam, because this journey back to God is so celebrated.

Dr. David Elcott talked about the Abrahamic faiths having a mixed track record, a sobering message for us. The contribution of these faith traditions to literacy in our world has been enormous, but there has also been an enormous amount of bloodshed. There has been an enormous amount of suppression and oppression associated with certain versions of these faith traditions, and we must pay attention to harvesting the good and suppressing the bad.

Again, Dr. Elcott echoed Katherine Marshall when he asked, "education toward what?" He kept pressing the question. Dr. Said suggested global citizenship as a part of the "what."

Another point made by Dr. Elcott: there are two fundamental pillars of our ethic that need to undergird our educational systems. One is the dignity of each person. As he put it, each person is the whole world. The idea of human dignity complemented by the idea of the common good are the two pillars on which all of these faith traditions seem to agree. The second pillar is called *kyosei*, in Japanese which means something roughly like living and working together for the common good. So human dignity and the common good are the two key pillars of the ethic that we are being called to embrace here. Dr. Elcott described both of these as key elements from the Jewish tradition.

Dr. Abdul Adballa, said a number of important things, but the one that stuck with me the most was: God is not looking at my label, i.e., Muslim, Jewish, or Christian. He is looking at my actions. If we forget that fact, we are liable to find ourselves in the religious discrimination and suppression that stain our history.

He also said that there is a formalistic, legalistic side to Islamic education in its history, as well as a more informal side in the Sufi tradition. It is the informal side that needs further development. We must move away from form and pay more attention to essence.

In the discussion period following the presentations, there was some tension over whether God had many faces. Dr. Elcott believes that God has many faces, not just one. Is that consistent with believing in a genuine truth? Is pluralism consistent with conviction about truth? This is a difficult question, because if we don't believe there is a truth, it's hard to say we are being true to our traditions. But if we have an idolatrous conception of the truth, i.e., that we own it, and we don't rely on God to be the custodian of it, we encounter all kinds of problems.

There was tension between different members of our panel over the question of "there is truth, but it has many faces." Yes, pluralism is important, but not pluralism to the point where it is total relativism. This is a difficult puzzle that we are going to have to deal with on a regular basis.

One particularly striking way of thinking about truth was offered by Bishop Wenski. As he put it, truth grows. It grows like an oak from an acorn, and it has a kind of logic of its own, not imposed by us. It is dynamic, not static.

Winston Churchill once said, "First we shape our institutions, and then they shape us." The courage it took to call a symposium such as this by Charito Kruvant, shows that she personally accepts the mission of Creative Associates to shape positive institutions that will in turn shape us and our children. That is the significance of what Creative Associates has been asked to do, to shape institutions that will in turn produce better, more peaceful and tolerant societies.

I am reminded of a plaque I once saw that said, "I rejoice because you are my brother, and I laugh because there is nothing you can do about it."

I want that to be my parting thought here. I want to encourage us to think about siblings. Siblings are amazing! They are unique individual voices, voices that are often in conflict, sometimes violent, and they often have little patience with one another. But siblings' voices are also voices that interact, that reach out to each other, that rejoice in the fact that ultimately, "I'm your brother, I'm your sister."

I am Christian, and I rejoice in that fact, and there is nothing you can do about it. I laugh. I am Jewish, and I rejoice in that fact, and there is nothing you can do about it. I laugh. I am Muslim. I rejoice in that, and there's nothing you can do about it. I laugh. But we are brothers. We are siblings. We are sisters under the same God, in the same Abrahamic tradition.

So I am going to walk away from this symposium thinking about siblinghood -- and what it is like, not just for individuals to be siblings, not just siblinghood as relationships between individuals, but as a relationship between religious communities over time.

T.S. Eliot once said, "there is no city without community, and there is no community not lived in praise of God" - a powerful motto perhaps of the three Abrahamic traditions. If I think of these Abrahamic traditions and other human communities outside them, we are talking about siblinghood and how it can become citizenship in the future.

This is the mystery. This is the difficulty that we have been presented with today. If we take it seriously, we can't walk away the same as we came in.

Presentation by

Dr. Abdul Aziz Saïd

Mohammed Saïd Farsi Chair for Islamic Peace

The American University

February 12, 2004

International Trade Center

Washington, DC

E ducating for Global Citizenship¹

It is appropriate at this time to recognize the life and work of Hassan Fathy (1899-1989), he was an Egyptian architect who devoted himself to developing housing projects for the rural poor in Egypt by synthesizing traditional and modern building techniques. Fathy reminds our modern minds that, "The quality and values inherent to the traditional and human response to the environment might be preserved without a loss of the advances of science. Science can be applied to various aspects of our work, while it is at the same time subordinated to philosophy, faith and spirituality."

The work of Fathy represents the type of fusion between tradition, technology, and development that we should seek in educating for global citizenship.

The Crisis

The modern world faces a crisis. The English poet William Blake captures the essence of crisis as our inhumanity to one another. This is true of both our individual relationship and the social structures we build. I hear his voice reminding me of this pain:

Cruelty has a Human Heart

And Jealousy a Human Face;

Terror the Human Form Divine;

The world has reached a point of crisis that will require an ever increasing social capacity for creative imagination and reason. We now find ourselves, as individuals, as states, and as a species, involved in a period of intense, and often bewildering change. The systems of government, production, culture, thought, and perception, to which we have become accustomed are not working. Within the growing milieu of crisis, our perception of the world grows increasingly intertwined. At the same time, our experience of the world is fragmented and disjointed, constructed by the increasingly large gaps in access to knowledge, wealth, and political representation.

1. The paper represents a keynote address presented February 12th 2004 at the "The Principles of the Abrahamic Faiths: Traditions that Advance Education" sponsored by Creative Associates International, Inc. and the Caux Round Table.

Our future depends upon conceiving an all inclusive model of citizenship that reconciles these gaps in access. We need to find a way to synthesize the traditional and the modern to create new educational processes and institutions that will give them the material, intellectual, moral, and emotional skills necessary to transcend the crisis of our world.

One such source of traditional wisdom is the Abrahamic faiths.

This is especially true in societies emerging from conflict and experiencing systemic social, political and economic change. Take the example of modern Iraq. Iraq is a 'nation of nations,' home to multiple ethnic and religious groups whose experience of history has often put them in conflict. In order to emerge with a unified understanding of citizenship in light of such a diverse and at times contentious history, the new Iraqi should embrace an inclusive model for citizenship. Such a model moves beyond the limited national constructions of identity in order to transcend the hatreds of the past. This global model of citizenship can bind Iraqis together by first looking to their shared traditions in the Abrahamic faiths and how these sources of traditional wisdom find modern articulation through the work and principles of Hassan Fathy.

The world needs a model of education that is capable of conceiving of a global model for citizenship. It must have the flexibility to discover new solutions to the world's increasingly complex and massive problems. Such a model can be reached by expanding the educational process to become more dialogical and open-ended, and less paternalistic and past-oriented. Such a shift will require transcending the ideological, cultural and spiritual caste system of education to engage in a genuine human dialogue based in the equal dignity of each individual.

In educating for global citizenship in the West and the Middle East, we must remember and honor our traditions. Specifically, we should look to the rich and vivid truths shared by the Abrahamic traditions and their conceptualization of the role of knowledge and education as a purposeful, ordered quest for meaning and beauty. These three traditions honor a God that sought to be 'known.'

The path of the Divine is thus a path of knowledge; one that promises redemption, transformation, and salvation. Because god is whole and unknowable, human beings should seek to know the Divine as truth and beauty. This divine path to meaning manifests itself socially as the process of education. In line with this guiding moral and epistemological order housed within the Abrahamic traditions, institutions of education should concede that their purpose is to improve the human condition and serve the whole human community, not only understand it.

Education as an institution should acknowledge its inherent role as a catalyst for social change. More than the accumulation of knowledge, education represents a dialogic guidance mechanism of social development. In this respect, education is not just the system of preparing individuals to become 'citizens.' Rather, it is the space of integrating and creating a national, transnational and individual (essential) consciousness founded in the pursuit of meaning. As such, education shapes social perception and thought in the construction of the boundaries of our knowledge. Whether these boundaries are elastic and open or inelastic and closed to new horizons of knowing is a function of our perception.

To manifest a dialogic character of social development, the essence of education must be the expansion of our repertoire of behavior. We don't just learn the 'right way' to do things, but teach the many paths to knowing as they reflect unique cultural, historical, and individual experiences.

As the seventeenth century German philosopher Gottfried Wilhelm von Leibniz writes, "Nothing is more important than to see the sources of invention which are, in my opinion more interesting than the inventions themselves."

Whether we choose to see the invention or the process of inventing as the more critical point of inquiry, there are many ways of knowing. We think with reason, making tight sequential connections. We think with wonder, making connections of the random kind. We think with images, making connections of visual kind. Each of these forms of thought and their expression as knowledge is part of the larger search for meaning that encompasses human existence in the Abrahamic tradition.

In the Abrahamic faiths, the divine is whole and as such is knowable. Since the divine is knowable, each individual has a responsibility to seek to know its essence through the search for meaning. Thus, in the moral tradition of the Abrahamic faiths and their articulation of this search as a guiding order, the global citizen should access 'knowing' as a mode of perspective consciousness. Education increases the boundaries of this perspective consciousness, thus opening new horizons to the individual in their search for truth, beauty and order. Knowledge liberates us from our presumptions and illusions. This liberation is balanced in dignity.

In line with the belief in a just order guiding the Abrahamic tradition, the acquisition of knowledge should be predicated upon transforming the structural and relational basis of inequity and social polarization. Education is a public good whose effectiveness is predicated upon expanding the perceptual basis of any given society to exist simultaneously and harmoniously in a local and global context.

We should reconcile the process of observation and participation, creating educational institutions and processes that combine the roles of social participation and criticism. This is most readily achieved by liberating our creativity to interact with the magnificent diversity and vibrancy of the many ways of knowing developed by different civilizations.

The Abrahamic tradition of the oneness of being expresses itself in this liberation. Because the inelasticity in our traditional ways of seeing the world is precipitating a global crisis of identity, we are unable to conceive of new forms of knowledge, as social perception, and through it, inclusive models of citizenship. The Abrahamic principle of oneness can facilitate the conceptual framework for expressing a transnational vs. a limited national consciousness.

In the new Iraq, what is achieved by liberating the population from Saddam if, we in turn, do not free minds to conceive of a global basis for citizenship? The movement from a national consciousness to a transnational consciousness is required to shift their understanding of citizenship from a local to a global context. To create a basis for global citizenship first entails acknowledging the capacity for social change as transformation at the individual and group level. The process of transformation enables us to take a broader view of our world to integrate reason, feeling, sensing, and intuition.

Pluralism and Coexistence

We experience an enlargement of consciousness in a fundamental sense and thus are able to exist simultaneously with multiple religious, social and national identities. The thirteenth century Islamic poet Rumi reminds us of the human experience of pluralism and coexistence as emerging from the individual:

*I am neither a Muslim nor a Hindu
I am not Christian, Zoroastrian, nor Jew
I am neither of the West nor the East,*

The global citizen lives within the context of a world cultural system. The Abrahamic concept of unity implies that the global citizen exists in every polity, cultural, and social network. At the same time, this global citizen balances past and present, preserving the values and accomplishments of the past with the prospects of the future.

In both its spatial (global) and temporal (nonlinear) manifestation, the coexistence that global citizenship strives for is predicated upon pluralism. Cultural diversity creates intellectual possibility. The pluralism necessary to create global citizens should reflect the natural progression of humanistic ethics. Different linguistic, ethnic, cultural, and national entities are all valuable. They flower in unique spaces and manners, whose richness is only understood in juxtaposition with the whole. To embrace differences with a critical eye and an open heart is to increase the variables underlying the mind's quantification of the heavens. The symphony of the spheres is heard when we take the time to listen to each and every voice.

In history, wherever a conscious decision was undertaken to integrate the many forms of knowing, a cultural renaissance has emerged. A dark age for the Western world was ended by a golden age for the Islamic world. In Andalusia, the coexistence of Muslim, Jew, and Christian made it the intellectual capital of the medieval world. The Abbassid capital of Baghdad in the tenth century comprised one of the most cosmopolitan cities ever known where Jewish, Muslim and Christian scholars searched for truth in harmony.

The process of education means learning to see the many faces of humanity, the essence unfolded in each person. The oppressor and oppressed are both people, experiencing life in all its vicissitudes. Reason and intuition are the two faces of truth. Planning and spontaneity are activities of one reality. Civilization and barbarism change into culture, propositional knowledge and anecdotal knowledge into the root of knowledge.

Harmony amid great cultural diversity is an exercise in awareness. This awareness reflects the progression of the individual's search to know the wholeness and oneness of the divine in the Abrahamic faiths. It comes from acknowledging basic differences in world-view among different peoples.

Acknowledgment of differences is appreciation, honoring the unique experience of each individual, citizen, believer, and civilization. This appreciation gains its wholeness through empathy. Once we are able through education to constantly shift subject and object, agent and structure in our dialogic analysis, we begin to experience the history of the other as our own, without judgment and without regret or hate. In recognizing the authentic individuality of others, we truly begin to understand our own unique contribution to the world, the part our own identity plays in the global mosaic of beliefs.

In addition to empathy, we should be conscious of the dual necessity of creativity and reason. If we do not interject reason in conjunction with creativity into the experience of knowing, we risk remembering only what has happened in our society rather than imagining what society is capable of becoming. The instability and negative social experience of years of protracted social conflict and weight of structural violence in post-conflict environments has a tendency to produce a social anxiety and expectation of perpetual violence. The individual, conditioned by their environ-

ment, experiences the world as singularly violent and hence produces all individual and social knowledge in a state of conflict.

The experience of violence becomes epistemic, reproducing ever greater monolithic claims and distancing itself from other forms of knowing in an attempt to isolate itself and the social pain upon which it is predicated. Over time, social and especially national consciousness becomes a function of the experience of pain.

You are a citizen to the extent to which you can claim a shared historical experience of exclusive deprivation and violence. To transcend this embedded cycle of experiencing and living violence will require that in constructing educational models for the global citizen we specifically acknowledge the necessity of a spiritual dimension. By spirituality, the point of reference is not the traditional sense of a set of religious principles or doctrines. Rather the emphasis is placed upon the act of imagining oneself in relation to a larger whole. Self-reflection increases our capacity for synthesis in public dialogue.

The Capacity for Individual and Social Transformation

History is understood not as just a series of relationships or social structures, but within the context of the unfolding spirit and your place within the world. In looking inward, we gather the strength required to meet the many challenges of the world, or in the words of Leibniz, we realize that, "The soul is the mirror of an indestructible universe."

This internal search reflects the just order of the Abrahamic faiths and their emphasis on the necessity of searching for meaning as a way of knowing the divine. Muhyiddin Ibn 'Arabi, a twelfth century Andalusian poet and philosopher, helps us to know this sacred search for meaning from the comfort of our human heart:

*My heart has become capable of every form:
it is a pasture for gazelles,
and a convent for Christian monks, a temple for idols
and the pilgrim's Ka'ba;
the tables of the Tora and the book of the Quran.*

To forge a transnational consciousness in the Abrahamic tradition of the oneness of being, we are acknowledging certain normative goals. Especially in post-conflict and transforming societies, education institutions should work in their community to raise the issues untouchable by politicians desperate to pander to elite interest groups. Education is one of the key pillars of civil society, where the discourse of social transformation is disseminated. Pragmatically, the education of the global citizen must avoid dictating the terms of good citizenship to individuals as often happens in transitional states.

In educating for global citizenship, we should be weary of the monolithic claims of any set of knowledge, whether religious, scientific or ideological or based upon individual or communal prejudices. Such selectivity in meaning is a function of the need to maintain rigid group boundaries and its exclusivity only serves to impinge upon the true nobility and nature of the mind and heart.

The Abrahamic tradition grounds the social function of knowledge as constituting a just order in the sense that the knower is transformed through the search for meaning. In the tradition of the Abrahamic faiths, because God is whole and knowable, knowledge is seen as a virtue, a quality capable of saving the soul. A never-ending process of searching meaning brings us closer to realizing the value of our individual soul.

All bodies of knowledge are subject to interpretation. In any tradition, this interpretation can be open or closed. We should continually be weary of any monolithic interpretation of the Abrahamic faiths and for that matter, any social ideology.

Monolithic epistemological (and even ontological) systems sustain themselves by decreasing the horizons for substantive questions. They are inelastic, unable to facilitate the social process of thinking (as accessing knowledge) to imagine other forms. They become increasingly rigid, requiring structural manifestations of intellectual discipline. You can not go against the state, you cannot question the church, you are cannot question capitalism or communism...the tale of the twentieth century is written in the violent consequences of this rigidity.

To transcend this legacy of monolithic knowledge will require engaging the natural diversity of our surroundings. This aspect of educating the global citizenship is especially important in societies emerging from social conflict and violent (whether manifest or structural) political transitions. In these societies, the social institutions and particularly the educational sector are in the process of becoming, reflecting the reordering of the social, political and economic infrastructure of society. This means that there always exists a moment of normative determination in constructing the institutions of education in a society undergoing radical change. This is a distinct window of time in which elite interests are often condensed and shaped into social institutions.

Pedagogy can become a function of reaffirming social stratification or a function of (re)discovering moral and philosophical orders through a spirit of inquiry at the heart of the Abrahamic spiritual traditions and their emphasis upon sacred knowledge. This rediscovery of Abrahamic tradition can be articulated in a modern (secular) space as 'ethical humanism,' as a just and ethical guidance underwriting the search for meaning.

Education as Liberation and Transformation

In educating for global citizenship, we are seeking to endow individuals with the capacity to embrace the greater good of all humanity as an ethical goal. This goal must be embedded in every social activity. The twentieth century poet and Kabbalah scholar, Gershom Scholem speaks to the transformation of our mortal life.

In Scholem's poem, we find the essence of our quest into the Abrahamic faiths and their ability to provide the conceptual framework in which to educate the global citizen. The goal of education is to awaken each individual, especially those in poverty, to the highest order of existence, human dignity:

*You, who caused life itself to forget,
in you, immortal, life now resurrects.
Because you died in poverty and disgrace,
to the Highest order you now awake.*

Creating global citizens will require conceiving of educational systems and institutions predicated upon freedom and guided by the Abrahamic traditions and their secular articulation as ethical humanism. To experience the search for truth and meaning unhindered, the global citizen requires freedom. In turn, open polities and democracies require an educated populace, one who is reflective upon their condition and believe in both development and progress.

If knowledge is built as an encounter between human beings, then its capacity for social change (freedom) is liberated as we embrace the cultural qualities of the many communities in which we coexist. Life is a path of learning where we are each constantly called upon to awaken ourselves and each other to search for freedom, truth, beauty, creativity, and above all, justice. In the end, one does not create a global citizen. Rather, we can create, restructure and develop the realm of education so that each human being can see themselves in a global context. In turn, this global context of perception and citizenship is balanced by acknowledging the dignity of each individual and the presence of truth in every language.

Living in a pluralist cultural community, we stand before a thousand revolutions. These revolts are internal to the culture as it finds its essential voice. They also exist externally as the truths in each culture and community emerge to become intertwined. Together they destroy the sources of dehumanization that inhibit human development.

In the process of this social transformation, each global citizen becomes individually aware. In the Abrahamic tradition of oneness, each community finds its expression in an inclusive citizenship. Each community in Iraq finds its natural expression in this inclusive, global model of citizenship.

To help the new Iraqi realize the many benefits of global citizenship will require nothing short of a renaissance grounded in the traditions of the Abrahamic faiths and their secular articulation as ethical humanism. A renaissance is a revival, a remembrance of the past to produce new artistic and intellectual forms for the future. It represents a period of expanding horizons in which a vast increase in knowledge of the world and its inhabitants leads to a new understanding of the society and the individual.

The renaissance the modern world needs today is grounded in ethical humanism and its articulation of the social value of truth and knowledge as founded in the Abrahamic tradition. In Iraq, this means that the international community should strive to work with local scholars, artists and historians to embrace the lessons of Andalusia and Abbassid Baghdad. Considering the problems posed by the legacy of Saddam's repressive political regime, we should make every effort to establish a memory of coexistence. The way the new Iraqi thinks about their own identity will have a profound impact upon their ability to know and experience peace.

Global citizenship should call upon the traditions of the Abrahamic faiths articulated in a modern context as 'ethical humanism' to reclaim their local identity while living in the modern world. Once again, reflect upon the state of affairs in modern Iraq. To create an inclusive open model of citizenship will require a complete restructuring of the traditional, liberal modernization approach to developing education systems in war-torn countries.

Because of the sacred place of knowledge as the gateway to oneness and wholeness in the Abrahamic faiths, the education system in Iraq should enable a reconciliation of tradition and modernity. There is a precedent for such a shift in the life and work of Hassan Fathy. Fathy's work used [six general principles](#) to preserve the context of local cultural identity as well as their articulation as art and social forms in the environment.

At the most general level, the creation of a global model of citizenship and emergent renaissance will be dependent upon the ability of local Iraqis, international policy makers and aid workers to, at the minimum, embrace these principles to conceive of new education policy in Iraq:

1. Belief in the primacy of human values in designing social spaces: Ground all education in a guiding ethical order. This means ensuring that there is first and foremost no relative deprivation based upon class, gender, ethnicity or religion in the classroom, and opening up a public space for rediscovering the applicability of past experiences and values to the present.
2. A universal rather than a limited approach to solving social problems: Avoiding the arrogance of ideological dogma or the educational methodologies in the East (rote learning) and West (standardized testing) that limit open, process oriented dialogue in the classroom.
3. Utility of technology in enabling innovative solutions: Iraq should realize its place in the Islamic world as one of the modern and historical centers of learning. We should work with Iraqis to bring this tradition to the forefront by embracing high standards of excellence in math and science based education. At the same time, we should explore innovative ways to use technology to explore the liberal arts including literature, music, visual arts, and theatrical and traditional performance forms.
4. The importance of community and socially oriented education techniques: Helping the new Iraq to coexist in a 'nation of nations' a country with a diverse ethnic, religious, and historical context means engaging the whole of society, through the education system, in a dialogic process of searching for truth and meaning. It means acknowledging the many voices and truths of Iraq, including disenfranchised communities like the Marsh Arabs and enabling each community to exchange the best of its values and experiences.
5. Importance of re-establishing pride and dignity through social development: In constructing a new educational system for the Iraqi state, every effort should be made to acknowledge the importance of human dignity. This means acknowledging both the worth of every individual and their perspective in the classroom as well as taking the time to acknowledge that poverty is more than just material deprivation. It represents a condition in which your dignity has been removed, and like the traditional ways of knowing the Marsh Arabs are felt as antithetical to modern progress. Instead of defining society in opposition (modern vs. pre-modern), the new education system should seek to critically engage local as well as global traditions. Within this, an emphasis should be placed upon the function of dignity in creating social cohesion. These educational activities therefore should not simply be targeted at K-12 or university level, but take on a continuing system of liberal as well as science and technical based education programs.
6. Essential role that tradition plays in social development: The fact is the whole world needs the whole world. Each culture needs to exchange its richness and traditions with other cultures to continually expand its horizons. Each tradition has an inherent basis of knowledge that can be drawn on to develop society.

*Presentation by
Ms. Katherine Marshall
Counselor and Deputy Director of the World Bank*

*February 12, 2004
International Trade Center
Washington, DC*

G lobal Challenges

*We shall not cease from exploration
And the end of all our exploring
Will be to arrive where we started
And know the place for the first time.
(T.S. Eliot)*

Starting Off

Many thanks for the privilege of being part of this special, thought-provoking Conference, aimed so explicitly at joint reflection and learning. Charito Kruvant's urging that we reexamine our basic assumptions and beliefs in the light of new challenges echoes the quotation I had chosen to begin my presentation: it reflects my conviction that we have much to learn from a reexamination of our own experience with a new lens; in my case building bridges to cross the divides that have separated the worlds of development and religion. We may gain as much wisdom and insight from looking at past and current experience in new lights as we do from the expansion of our horizons outward and in new directions.

My presentation aims to set some context for the later discussions. I will start with a story and build from it on three major global challenges that engage us all. I then reflect on dialogue, as a major avenue for bridging divided institutions and differing worldviews and approaches. I have set out some questions and challenges for this group springing from reflections on the Abrahamic traditions, and faith traditions more broadly, and global challenges for education.

A Story, Highlighting Three Global Challenges

Some years ago, visiting Niger as a World Bank official, I went to a school where there were 170 children in the first year class, with one teacher, one book, and no furniture. The children were

making heroic efforts to learn in the hot, bare class, and the teacher also was heroic, using a range of devices to keep attention of the group and pass on at least some knowledge and wisdom. Yet these children were the lucky ones as almost 80% of primary school age children in Niger at that time were not in school at all. My story has a second chapter, as two weeks later I visited schools in Washington D.C., for my own son. These classes were full of learning materials, bright, clean, with small classes of well cared for children and dedicated teachers able to focus on each child.

The first global challenge emerges starkly from this image: we live in a world badly out of balance and we need to act to fight the enormous poverty that still exists. Today's world situation, where billions live in poverty and hundreds of millions of children do not go to school at all, is morally unacceptable from any point of view. The "good news" is that for perhaps the first time in human history there is a powerful world consensus that the global community must act to ensure that all people, everywhere, have a minimally decent standard of living. The Millennium Development Goals, or MDGs, were affirmed by every head of state at the Millennium Summit at the United Nations in September 2000, and once again, at the Monterrey Financing for Development Conference in March 2002, voice after voice was raised in a chorus of agreement and determination to meet these goals by the target date, 2015. As Jim Wolfensohn, president of the World Bank, says again and again, there is no division on the need, no place to hide. The imperative is clearly before us. The sobering fact is that we are not doing well enough, not raising and using resources to achieve the end, but we can take real satisfaction from the sense of common purpose that echoes in so many quarters.

For education, one of the eight goals of the MDGs is that every child will at least complete primary school. This offers a clear framework which allows for monitoring at each step of the way. It offers the framework for new and stronger alliances and partnerships. This is one avenue where there is great scope for common efforts linking the worlds of development and secular management and the worlds of religion, as education is a strongly held common objective linking the two. It is also an area where dialogue and common effort have been far less than they might be. One of the most critical areas is to help bridge the divides that separate the worlds of religion and development on this topic.

The second global challenge also emerges from my story: the vast gulf of inequality that separates the opportunities for a child in Niger and that I could offer to my own son. In a sense, the issue of assuring a minimum standard of living, including education, is relatively straightforward, morally and even technically. Few would argue that the children in Niger deserve a much better chance at education. But the question of how much inequality is just and how to achieve some standard of fairness is one with which the human community continues to wrestle. There is inequality even within families, certainly within communities, but perhaps nowhere is it as starkly evident as in the inequalities among nations. And today these inequalities are visible to all, starkly written in news images and on daily television screens. It generates much pain and considerable anger, but the solutions are elusive.

It is important to recognize that these are not easy questions. Define, at least for a society, some minimum standard of living that seems fair is complex but not all that difficult, though even in a city like Washington we wrestle with some issues, most notably in how to assure the welfare of the homeless and of children in unhappy homes. It is far, far more difficult to define how much inequality is fair, and how much is too much, though again, the current levels of inequality in the world and in some particularly unequal societies seem to challenge the most basic notions of social justice. The cry for social justice that we hear from so many quarters (and especially from

many religious leaders and institutions) is closely tied to these conundrums of inequality. This is an area where we all need help in setting and following our moral compass.

Let us look at some numbers. The current estimate is that it would cost some \$3-5 billion dollars more each year to meet the Millennium Development Goal for education. The rough estimate is that \$50 billion a year more in development assistance is needed for all the goals. Some might say we do not have the resources, but that is an argument that should wilt against some facts about actual use of resources:

- \$56 billion spent worldwide in 1999 for diamonds for jewelry
- \$20.4 billion spent in the US for luxury cruises
- \$6.4 billion spent in the US on nail care
- \$11 billion spent in the US on pet food

Thus, it seems fair to say that we HAVE the resources, we HAVE much of the know-how, and we HAVE the common sense of purpose to achieve the MDGs and to assure each child at least a minimal standard of education. We need a careful reexamination of the many and complex reasons that we are not meeting the goals. Among the reasons are the sheer complexity of the practical work of delivering education services. Whether there is the real common sense of purpose and determination is also at issue, though here it is sobering to recall that time and time again when Americans are polled on how much is spent on foreign aid their answers are multiples of the real levels and their sense of a reasonable level is also far above what is actually spent. What we need to build toward is the fulfillment of the "covenant" that has been made: and I use Covenant in the sense set forth by George Carey, former Archbishop of Canterbury, as the core of spirituality - the determination to translate words and objectives into reality.

Probing a little deeper into the complexity of inequality, I personally have come to focus very sharply on education in my own answer to the question of that real social justice might entail. If we could work as a global community toward a situation where each child was genuinely able to have an excellent education, not just primary, not 170 children in a bookless class, but excellent and supportive instruction that offered each child a real chance to excel, then we might be well on the way to a world of justice. My inspiration here is a wonderful quotation (that has a clear root in Abrahamic tradition that few of you would guess):

"You see things that are and you ask 'why'? I dream things that never were and I ask, 'why not?'"

The third challenge is related to the first two and is still more complex. It calls on us to probe more carefully why the school system had so failed in Niger (and of course elsewhere, including Washington DC) and what needs to be done to improve it. The reasons go far beyond a simple lack of resources, to complex political, social, cultural and economic issues. Unless we recognize and address these we will not succeed in our common goals. To be more specific, in Niger, the onion layers of reasons for the education crisis included debates about the respective importance of higher versus universal primary education, poor relations between government and teachers, cultural barriers to enrollment of girls in schools, conflicts in some areas that limited all social services, and the country's geography, with many children living in remote areas. Perhaps most fundamental, to my mind, was a nagging question that hid behind pro-education rhetoric: "Education for what?" What purpose is there in educating rural children, girls, when there is no likely job awaiting them? What values will the children learn in school that may undermine their culture? Until

these questions are addressed, the passion of leadership, communities and families that is needed to bring about excellent universal education will remain illusory.

Dialogue

My next remarks focus on the central theme for this conference, which is also central to the challenge I have been given in the World Bank: dialogue. We say, and know, that dialogue is essential to better understanding and respect, as well as to ensure this translation of rhetoric into real action. But what is really involved?

Several key elements here are as follows:

- Dialogue is not explaining
- Dialogue is not preaching
- Dialogue is not debate
- Dialogue is not just words; it needs links to action

When we engage in dialogue, we need to enter with a willingness to engage and to be transformed. It requires that we work to understand the perspectives and assumptions of those with whom we engage in dialogue. It also requires that we understand how they see us. This can be sobering but is an essential part of the process.

Above all, dialogue requires that we be willing to tackle the difficult issues. A first stage can be, as we find in many dialogue processes in which we are engaged, to identify common ground and areas where we agree. Hans Kung has done a wonderful service in highlighting the many common elements among major religious traditions and bringing them together in a common global ethic. In the dialogue between the World Bank and the World Council of Churches, we have built a solid foundation in highlighting how far and in how many significant ways our mandates are grounded in a common passion to fight poverty. But to address the real problems and sources of tension, and work to real solutions that build on differences, we need to be willing to tackle the difficult issues.

Nowhere is this need to address difficult issues more true than in the dialogue among religions, but it also applies to the topic of globalization. In preparing for a presentation at a Fez Colloquium on globalization, that brought together radically different views in an effort to engage in dialogue, I prepared a two-sided canvas. On one side are dark images of globalization: greed (in the form of a dollar bill and images of obesity), war, terrorism, garbage including coke and McDonalds wrappers, and environmental destruction. On the other are the color and light of globalization, with diversity, music, food, and exploration of different cultures. They are radically different pictures, but they are part of the same canvas, part of the same realities.

Questions and Ideas for Action

Seven ideas came to mind as possible challenges for this conference:

- I. How can we make better use of the instruments we have to further this essential challenge of moving to translate rhetoric into action? In the development field we have instruments which offer promise for engaging different actors, including leaders and institutions that bring the perspective of different religious traditions. These include the Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs) and various strategic exercises that engage civil society. Dialogue on education issues can take place at every level. We need to focus on how and where to take the dialogues we are discussing here to new levels.

- II. It would be useful to have a thoughtful analysis of both common and different approaches by different faith traditions to issues for education. I have seen such efforts for both poverty issues and environment, and in both instances the work has been pertinent and of practical use in many respects. Does such analysis exist for education and could it be useful?
- III. The Millennium challenges set out in the MDGs demand many different forms of partnerships and alliances, in creative combinations. One example in education is the AVINA Foundation support of Centro Magis and the Fe y Alegria education system, which aims to bring the "best of business" to the passion of the movement that created Fe y Alegria. The Aga Khan Foundation work with madrasa pre-schools in East Africa reflects a similar creative partnership. We need many more to achieve our ends.
- IV. We find a hunger for information and ways to share experience in meaningful ways. Building information systems like the Global Gateway is one avenue, as is a probing and systematic use of case studies.
- V. There is an urgent need to work to deal with differing perspectives on the issue of accountability and honest use of funds. Corruption is a shaping issue in attitudes to development assistance, and accountability mechanisms an uncomfortable topic among faith and development institutions. It is a sad fact that education systems are particularly susceptible to insidious forms of corruption (textbook procurement, sexual misbehavior of teachers, payments for exam results etc). Yet effective mechanisms to address these issues are possible, and they are absolutely essential. Working together on messages on how to use transparency (as in Uganda where publishing information about financial allocations alone resulted in huge increases in resources that actually flowed), and how to implement clear and effective financial management and reporting systems is critical. This would be a good area for faith/development alliances on messages and action.
- VI. Common efforts could be made to address two of the most important global challenges today, both of which turn on education. Educating girls is the best single investment that can be made, but there is far to go. Faith and development leaders need to work together on the full range of challenges here, from political and community commitment to practical issues as simple as bathroom design. Second, there is an urgent need to put a positive and creative spotlight on the challenge of education in the Islamic world. Despite the deep and long traditions of educational leadership from Fez to Timbuktu, Al Ahzar, and Library of Alexandria, there are fundamental challenges, beginning with reflections on the boundaries and synergies among religious and secular education.
- VII. Finally, we can look to mechanisms and spaces for continuing dialogue on the issues and topics raised here, that link the social and global challenge of education and the need for continuing interfaith dialogue, with special focus here on the dialogue within the Abrahamic "family." Issues of ethics in education, the significance of life long education, the role of women and girls in society, as reflected in education systems, and how to handle standards and diversity are a few that might lend themselves to continuing reflection and dialogue.

Presentation by
John Ryan
Senior Education Advisor
Creative Associates International, Inc.

February 12, 2004
International Trade Center
Washington, DC

F **faith, Education and Development: Principles for Progress**

In nearly all societies, education and religion have long been tightly intertwined. Until quite recently, education was simply entrusted to religious authorities in most societies. This was true, in particular, of the three Abrahamic faiths we are discussing today. This long and rich religious heritage puts us, in a sense, in the same position as Moliere's protagonist, Monsieur Jourdain, in the *Bourgeois Gentilhomme* who discovers to his delight and surprise that he is speaking prose without even being aware of it. For our part, we are living within the educational traditions and practices established by the Abrahamic religions without being fully conscious of what they are, what they mean and what possible perils we may encounter in seeking to change or reform them or, as seems the greater danger, simply ignoring the valuable educational lessons enshrined in these long religious traditions.

The educational principles of the Abrahamic faiths

The commitment to education inherent in the three Abrahamic faiths - Judaism, Christianity and Islam, to cite them in the chronological order in which they appeared - derives from a shared conception of creation and the role assigned to human beings therein. Quite simply, women and men are created in the image and likeness of God. They are the centerpieces of creation. While they were made for and by God, all of creation was made for them and their fulfillment. They are set apart from the rest of creation by their freedom and intelligence. To be certain, as created and mortal beings, we remain forever imperfect and prone to failures and shortcomings and, as history abundantly demonstrates, capable even of unspeakable evil. Yet, having been created in the image of God, the Abrahamic faiths hold, human beings are endowed with an inalienable dignity that must always be acknowledged and respected.

Respect for dignity of all human beings

What this dignity implies, above all else, is that women and men - their welfare and their fulfillment - are the ends that education must serve and not simply the means to some more ultimate goal. This notion is the bedrock that underlies much of our inherited educational philosophy and practice. It means that the goal of education must always be the advancement and well-being of learners and the community of which they are a part. Human beings cannot be regarded as mere cogs

in a machine or means to other purposes and ends. This, of course, does not deny the right of individuals to dedicate their lives to the service of others and to find deep meaning and fulfillment in doing so. This is a choice freely made and in no way involves the subjugation of one individual to another person or objective.

Are we remaining true and faithful to these beliefs in our current practices of education? Even a very superficial examination would suggest there is room for doubt. We have, for example, developed the habit of loosely and excessively referring to people as "human resources" in business, government, economics and, alas, even in education. We intend no slight or insult by doing so. Terminology, however, is not a trivial matter. The words we use can influence and infect our thinking and values. When we observe the organization of work in many large enterprises - not to mention the organization of education in many large institutions - it is evident that the guiding concept is to fit the individual - the "human resources" - to the process and not, as would be more humane and effective, to try to fit the process to the talents and aspirations of the individuals concerned. This subordination of individuals to other ends not only affronts the dignity of those directly concerned, but chips away at our collective dignity as well.

As the stewards of God's creation, women and men require learning and knowledge. It is, thus, hardly surprising that all three Abrahamic faiths have perceived learning as an essential part of the human vocation and have developed extensive systems of education, including eminent institutions of higher learning to advance that goal. In all three Abrahamic faiths, learning and the pursuit of knowledge are perceived as means for both glorifying God and improving the human condition. Learning is thus endowed with powerful and ennobling social and spiritual purposes.

Here again, we might ask ourselves whether we are, perhaps, in danger of losing these lofty aspirations and values and ending up with a vision of education that is pragmatic rather than inspiring, one focused upon enabling individuals to better their economic situations, but blind to the aspirations and needs of society as a whole.

The late Paolo Freire, for one, feared that this was what was happening. He sharply and eloquently castigated tendencies and practices in education that he felt were de-humanizing and debasing its content and negating its contribution to the welfare of needy individuals and the society-at-large. To Freire, education was essentially a process of conscientization or awareness building, of learning not only to read the word, but more importantly and critically, to "read" the world that lurked behind the written message. He likened much modern education to a filling station or what one might call an "information pump." The goal of such education, if it deserves to be called "education," was not to explore thinking processes or question assumptions and conclusions - the very essence of education, as Freire understood it - but simply to "fill up" a passive learner with ready-made knowledge and information. Whether or not this is a fair critique of today's education - or some parts of it - I will leave for you to discuss and decide. Freire's notion - not surprisingly, given the deep Christian roots of his thought - was very much in keeping with the beliefs shared by the Abrahamic faiths that an essential goal of education must be to enable humanity to contribute to the completion of creation and the fulfillment of God's purposes on earth.

Thus, the first and foremost premise of the Abrahamic traditions is that education must acknowledge and respect the inalienable dignity and worth of the individual. Education conceived in this perspective has to be focused on developing to the fullest degree all the creative and critical faculties of the learner. Its aim is not to "fill up" learners with external content, but on the contrary, to draw out the divinely-inspired talents within them.

In the first Caux Round Table, which was the genesis of our meeting today, the representative of the Vatican, Paul Cardinal Poupard, related a charming fable of an eagle born among chickens. While born for the sky, the poor eagle, thinking himself a chicken, pecked at the earth and walked and jumped, but never dreamed of flying. The moral of the story, drawn by the Cardinal, was that we are and we remain what we think we are. To become something more, we must imagine ourselves to be more and discover a greater mission or purpose within ourselves. The rightful goal of education in the Abrahamic traditions is to make us aware of all our promise and potentialities, to teach us that we are not cogs in someone else's machine, but precious beings with a divine mission and destiny.

The duty of solidarity

A second essential lesson that derives from the traditions of the Abrahamic religions is the strong and unmistakable accent on ethics. In the Jewish Torah, which provides a common background for the three Abrahamic religions, God enters into a covenant with Noah and his sons - and through him with all succeeding humanity - to be "fruitful and multiply" and to "replenish the earth". Subsequently, God supplements this promise to all humanity with a special covenant with Abraham, whereby Abraham is required to render exclusive loyalty to God (a pledge of monotheism) and, in return for such fidelity, enjoys the blessings of God upon him and his descendants who continue to honor the covenant.

Two points in reference to this covenant deserve emphasis. First, while God is generous with the heirs of Abraham, He is also exigent. From those to whom much is given, much will be expected. Secondly, a belief in one God imposes a corresponding obligation of solidarity with all humanity. Here again, those that are most blest and best endowed have, as a consequence of the advantages accorded to them, a correspondingly greater responsibility for the least of their brethren. The three Abrahamic religions recognize, each in its own way, this obligation of human solidarity and the special duty it imposes upon the rich and strong to serve and assist the weak and needy.

This emphasis on human solidarity - not merely as a virtue, but as an obligation - is an important lesson of the Abrahamic faiths that needs to be stressed again and again in this ever more unequal and increasingly interdependent world. In the long run, a greatly enhanced solidarity is probably the only effective response to a world beset by strife and clashes of civilization, both within societies and between them. We are not alone on this planet. We cannot retreat or hide. We must, in solidarity with others, address the problems, injustices, deprivations and strife that make the lives of so many millions so desperate and difficult. The provision of education for all is not only an important expression of this required solidarity, but also a means to enable individuals to take their fate into their own hands and make their own contributions to the common good, thereby playing their assigned role in the process of creation.

The world as a classroom

While I have tended, for convenience, to speak of schools and classrooms, the Abrahamic faiths perceive the world itself as the classroom in which teaching and learning take place. Learning is not limited to a particular time or place, but should be sought everywhere and at all times. The hadith or traditions attributed to the Prophet Mohammad, for example, enjoin learners "to seek knowledge from the cradle to the grave" and "as far away as China", at the very edge of the world as the Arabs knew it in the 7th Century. The notion of lifelong and society-wide learning - now

much in vogue and evidently essential in a rapidly changing world - trace their roots back to the practices and teachings of the Abrahamic faiths.

From principles to practices

In the time that remains, I would like to leave the realm of principles and enter the domain of practice. It is evident from a glance at the newspapers that education is caught up in a growing conflict of values in societies around the world. This struggle may be described in many ways: as, for example, between secular and religious values or, say, between modern and traditional perspectives on life. We witness this conflict in America in the growing number of children who opt out of public schools to attend private or parochial institutions or even to be home schooled. The motives behind this are certainly complex and diverse. The decisions of parents may be based on the failure of schools or, more generally, on the perceived evils of society. In developing societies, especially those that have experienced colonialism, which often leaves an indelible mark on education systems, there is often a conscious and systematic turning away from imposed values and towards traditional practices and positions more in tune with the values of communities.

In Morocco, where I worked for the last four years with the Morocco Education for Girls (MEG) Project, we were confronted with the challenge of increasing the enrollment and retention of girls in rural primary schools. Perhaps the greatest difficulty in doing so was that the schools were perceived by parents as instruments of the State, not as institutions of the community. Most parents - and nearly all mothers - had never put a foot inside the school and felt it inappropriate for them to do so. History certainly had a part in this situation. The modern Moroccan education system came into being under the French Protectorate during the early decades of the 20th Century. Not surprisingly, it was closely modeled on the prevailing French system. The French State at this time - against the vigorous opposition of the Catholic Church - was seeking to strengthen the nation's will and cohesion through a highly centralized and government-run school system that would provide a uniform course of studies for all children. Indeed, the Minister of Education could and did boast that by simply looking at his watch, he would know what every child in every grade throughout the Republic was studying at that very moment. With the coming of independence, in Morocco as in most countries, the education system both expanded many fold and was adapted to Moroccan conditions in numerous ways. Yet, in many essential aspects, it remained true to its French origins.

The challenge faced by the MEG Project was not only to introduce parents to the school that their children attended, but to get them to contribute and work to improve the infrastructure of these institutions to a point that they would feel comfortable, even proud, to have their children - girls and boys alike - attend them. What was interesting, even ironic, was that most communities had supported - and many continued to support - *koutabs* or religious schools. Such institutions tended to be modest, but were usually well maintained and spotlessly clean, whereas the public schools were often in deplorable condition. Thus, one might say that the Project - viewed by many as an effort to "modernize" rural education - had to call for a return to traditional practices and responsibilities to improve its pilot schools. Moreover, to give rural populations faith in education, it was necessary to ensure that schools, in turn, provide an education in the faith and values that these communities cherish. This could not be done by changing the curriculum - which is determined by the Ministry of Education and already included Islamic studies - but through ensuring dialogue between the faculty and the community and a deeper involvement of the latter in the life of the school.

MEG also had to address the fundamental issue: "What is education for?" During the colonial period and in the early years of independence - in Morocco, as in much of the developing world - the

answer was simple. Education got you a job and transformed your fortunes and those of your family. But by the 1990s, this era of opportunities was long over. Most of the so-called "educated" were unemployed and, in the eyes of many, unfit for whatever work was available. Education had clearly lost its magic. It no longer opened the doors of opportunity and social and economic advancement.

Well, if education won't make you rich or get you a job, might it make you wiser or a better person? In brief, if we could not convince skeptical parents of the practical and pragmatic value of education, could we perhaps persuade them that the traditional reasons for pursuing knowledge, as commanded by the Quran - "Read!, And your Lord is Most Bountiful, Who taught by the pen." (Sura 96, 3-5) - were a sufficient and compelling motive for sending their children to school? Of course, it was by no means that simple, but an emphasis on traditional values and the active involvement of pious men and women in the life of the school made an important contribution to achieving MEG's goals. School had also to be made safe for girls by providing, wherever possible, women teachers, directors and staff. Recognizing this need, the Ministry has over recent years greatly increased the recruitment and training of women teachers. This same end - ensuring the security and well-being of girls - was served by working with the communities to build latrines and enclose school yards. Indeed, the pilot schools were visually transformed by the communities with modest support from the Project. There is, of course, much more to education than meets the eye. We had also, in close cooperation with the Ministry, to train teachers and principals in the arts of education and, of even greater importance, in ways of working with their communities for the benefit of the school.

Did it work? Well, at the start of the Project girls made up, on average, only 16% of enrolments at the 6th grade level in the pilot schools. By the end of the Project, girls constituted 41% of far larger classes. By most standards, that is success. But the point I would emphasize here is that to succeed the schools had to be changed in ways that made them more acceptable to rural communities. Education had to be presented not as an antidote to traditionalism - as had been the case in colonial times - but as a means of achieving time-honored and religiously sanctioned values. In education, a cardinal principle is to begin where the learner is. In development, it is equally important to begin where the community is and with due respect for where it wants to go. Nor should one be shocked, if the way forward must begin with a few steps backwards. Enabling the community to gain confidence in its school is a prerequisite for long-term progress.

Yes, of course, education has also to prepare people for change--and Morocco, like most developing societies is experiencing dramatic change - but it need not uproot them in the process of doing so. In seasons of difficulty and tumult, religious values provide sustenance, orientation and stability. Without such moral support, the road to a new future may also prove to be the road to chaos.

Conclusions

I have cited my own experience and that of Creative Associates in Morocco, but I suspect the situation I describe is quite common in developing countries in much of the world, especially in the Middle East. Modernization is losing its magic. Thirty or forty years ago, the vision of modernity seemed fresh, appealing and seemingly achievable by many people in developing countries. Today, that same vision is ever present in the cinema and on TV screens, but it seems to most more of an appealing mirage than a potential reality.

And as the tides of modernity recede, the tides of tradition rise to take their place. This is part of the natural order and need not be a cause for concern. In a world in active dialogue, committed to solidarity and mutual respect, there is no need for anxiety. Our world is not endangered by faith, but by widespread injustice and desperation and the fanaticism they breed. Indeed, the Abrahamic faiths are a strength and unifying bond. They not only help to hold us together, but continue to demand of us the solidarity that may well be our planet's only hope for peace and progress.

Presentation by
M. Hayham Al-Rajab
Islamic Scholar and Regional Advisor
World Health Organization

February 12, 2004
International Trade Center
Washington, DC

R eligion and Education

Suppose for a moment that you lived among the people of Mecca at the time when the Quran was being revealed, sharing with them their social and cultural traditions, their concerns and priorities, their values and enterprises. Suppose also that you heard someone calling out to you, saying surprisingly nothing about any matter that might have been familiar to you or touching on anything in your personal life or in the life of your community, your living concerns, traditions or your worship rituals, but says something that is both concise and precise: *"Read!"*

What sort of surprise should that be to you, when you come from an unlettered community whose people do not read, write or know simple arithmetic? Yet as soon as he tells you to read he lifts you up from your world on this earth to the highest level: *"Read in the name of your Lord who created..."* (96: 1).

You may think that such an unexpected and fascinating beginning would be followed by a discourse about your relation with this Lord and how you should offer your worship and conduct your rituals. But this wonderful Quran gives you another surprise, alerting you to basic fact of embryology: *"He has created man from a hanging germ-cell."* (96: 2) this prepares you mentally and psychologically to understand the nature of the knowledge which the Quran will soon tell you, confirming that it had been taught to you by *"your Lord, the Most Bountiful, who had taught man through [what is written with] pen."* (96: 3-4)

These short verses then take you back to the moment of the first creation, to remind you, that it was God indeed who *"taught man what he did not know."* (96: 5) The verses that follow in this Quranic chapter take you onto diverse areas and disciplines. They give an important fact of psychology: *"Man certainly becomes arrogant whenever he believes himself to be self-sufficient."* (96: 6-7) They then draw your attention to the fact that you are certain to return ultimately to your Lord. The whole pattern is most wonderful, establishing a clear link between this present life and the life to come. It gives you a coherent mix of God's signs that are present in people's souls and in the great horizons of the universe, as well as those that you see through worship and piety, until it comes to its conclusion.

That the Quran should be closely related to all sciences comes as no surprise. All sciences and branches of human knowledge are the outcome of human pursuit of nature's secrets. Faith is nature, as expressed in a most fascinating Quranic verse: *"Set your face steadfastly towards the orthodox faith: that is the nature upon which God had created man. No change shall there be in God's creation: Such is the ever-true faith; but most people do not know."* (30: 30)

This verse does not describe Islam as the natural faith, but as nature itself upon which God has created man. This is a very concise, emphatic and comprehensive statement confirming the fact of complete identity between Islam and nature's norms, whether physical, mental or spiritual, relevant to the individual, family, clan, tribe, community or nation.

The consistency of all these norms in man and other creatures, and their harmony with one another and with other norms and laws operating in the whole universe are clearly indicated in the statement *"No change shall there be in God's creation."* Thus it further clarifies the meaning of nature, making it synonymous with creation. Whatever God creates follows perfect norms that can never be changed or altered in any way: *"No change will you ever find in God's norms; and no deviation will you ever find from God's norms."* (35: 45) Modern science is based on this Divine rule. Indeed, all science and its theoretical, practical and experimental methods depend on the fact that nature is consistent, harmonious and never-changing.

Let us now reflect on the verses that precede the one we have just quoted: *"Among His wonders is that He created you out of dust, and then you become human beings ranging far and wide! And among His wonders is that He creates for you mates out of your own kind, so that you might repose in them, and He engenders love and compassion between you: in this there are signs indeed for people who think. And among His wonders are the creation of the heavens and the earth, and the diversity of your languages and colors. In this there are signs indeed for all who are possessed of knowledge. And among His wonders is your sleep by night and your [ability to go about in] quest of His bounties by day. In this there are signs indeed for people who [are willing to] listen. And among His wonders is that He displays before you the lightning, giving rise to [both] fear and hope, and sends down water from the skies, giving life thereby to the earth after it had been lifeless. In this there are signs indeed for people who use their reason!"* (30: 20-24).

All these verses speak of natural phenomena which can be studied, and made subject to continuous research, aiming to fathom their secrets, only by modern scientific pursuit. In these verses we note how God presents both scientific knowledge and faith, making the two unexpectedly but wonderfully intertwined. Hence, in Islam, scientific knowledge is part of the faith. This unique characteristic distinguishing Islam is by all measures unequalled.

If we read again verse 22 above: *"And among His wonders are the creation of the heavens and the earth, and the diversity of your language and colors. In this there are signs indeed for all who are possessed of knowledge."* It is evident that the phrase referring to those 'who are possessed of knowledge,' does not speak of all scholars generally. It refers in particular to those scientists who pursue their studies of the heavens and the earth, trying to uncover their secrets, and study nations and peoples in order to learn the secrets of their diversity. These are the true scientists according to current scientific definition.

Further verses were revealed in succession over a period of 23 years, in which people found the same emphasis reflected in the very first revelation, reiterating the complete and perfect harmony between faith and science:

- *Do they not look at the sky above them?* (50:6)
- *Do they, then never reflect on the camels [and observe] how they are created? And on the sky, how it is raised? And on the mountains, how firmly they are reared? And on the earth, how it is spread out?* (88: 17-20)
- *Behold their fruit when it comes to fruition and ripens!* (6: 99)
- *Consider whatever there is in the heavens and on earth.* (10: 101)
- *Have you ever considered the seed which you cast upon the soil?... Have you ever considered the water which you drink?... have you ever considered the fire which you kindle?* (56: 63,68 & 71)
- *Are you not aware that God has made subservient to you all that is in the heavens and all that is on earth?* (31: 20)
- *Have they, then, never considered the earth: how much of every noble kind [of life] we have caused to grow on it?* (26: 7)
- *Turn your vision once more: can you see flaw?* (67: 3)
- *Behold! In the creation of the heavens and the earth; in the alternation of the night and the day; in the sailing of the ships through the ocean for the profit of mankind; in the rain which God sends down from the skies, and the life which He gives therewith to an earth that is lifeless; in the beasts of all kinds that He scatters through the earth; in the mobilization of the winds, and the clouds exploited between the sky and the earth; [here] indeed are signs for a people that are wise* (2: 164)
- *It is He who created the night and the day, and the sun and the moon: All (the celestial bodies) swim along, each on its rounded course* (21: 33)

One seventh (750) of the verses of the Quran are of this type.

In these verses, turned entirely toward nature, we find a complete acceptance of the world, a total lack of any sort of conflict with nature. In Islam, matter is lent to so many beautiful and noble things, as in the case with the body in salat and the estate in zakat. The material world is not Satan's kingdom; the body is not the seat of sin. Even the world to come, the object of man's greatest hopes, is portrayed in the Quran in the colors of this world.

Certain verses of the Quran awaken intellectual curiosity and give impetus to the exploratory mind: *"We made from water every living thing."* (21: 30) or *"The same water waters them [fruit trees] and yet they differ in taste. There are signs here for those who possess reason."* (5: 4)

A common element of all the cited passages of the Quran is the command of observation. The basis of the West's power lies in the observation and the experimental methods (*scientia experimentalis*) which Western civilization inherited from Bacon. Roger Bacon, the father of English philosophy and science was really a student of Arabic. He was strongly influenced by Islamic thinkers, particularly by Avicenna whom he considered to be the greatest philosopher since Aristotle (Bertrand Russell: History of western philosophy, NY, Simon and Schuster, 1945 pp. 452-453). A similar statement is given by Karl Prant, the author of the most extensive history of logic: "Roger Bacon had taken over from the Arabs all the results in the field of natural sciences which had been attributed to him" (Geschichte der Logic, III Leipzig, 1972 p. 121)

As Jean Fourastie (in the *Civilization of Tomorrow*) rightly puts it: "Observation of nature, society and people is the first stage in the basic education given to all children of Western world. It is useless to think that a people could join the route of progress if it had not adopted the principle of experimental thinking.

The Prophet's companions, their successors and those who wisely followed their footsteps in successive generations never classified human knowledge under headings like religious and worldly sciences. They simply followed the Prophet's guidance in classifying knowledge into that which is beneficial and that which brings no benefit or is harmful.

The Prophet makes the pursuit of beneficial knowledge a duty of every Muslim, male or female. When we reflect on the Prophet's statement establishing this duty and note that he says: "The pursuit of knowledge," we understand why Muslims of earlier generations exerted strenuous efforts in such pursuit, searching for knowledge everywhere, and having no objection to learn it from all sources. We also realize that it was only natural that shortly after the reign of the first rightly-guided Caliphs, in which people's hearts warmed to Islam, the Muslim community went out in search of beneficial knowledge of all types and in all disciplines.

Let us now look at the Muslim community in the period when it opened up to the world, having attained a stage of cultural and scientific maturity.

Its culture attained maturity when Islam severed the Muslim community from much of its pre-Islamic past, including unfair transactions, vengeance killings, and ignorant traditions. He replaced all that with a culture embodied in a **book** which gives its first order to 'Read,' and makes its first oath, 'By the pen and what [people] write down' (68: 1). Moreover, in many of its verses, this book calls on people to think, reflect, study and research so as to know more about the universe and whatever lives or exists in it. It draws a clear distinction between *those who are endowed with knowledge and those devoid of it*. (39:9) This book is recited and conveyed to us by a Messenger of God who prefers "time used for study and pursuit of knowledge to that used for the remembrance and glorification of God." He classifies people into "a learned person, a learning student and useless one devoid of knowledge." He equates "the ink used by scholars with blood of martyrs." He crowns all that with the maxim that "wisdom is the jewel a believer is constantly searching for; he takes it wherever he finds it."

It was a unique and most remarkable event in history, with no parallels in the past or since: a victorious nation, dictating the terms of peace to its defeated enemy, demands that the vanquished should submit to it their books of science and philosophy as part of war reparations. This is what the Muslims did when they concluded a peace agreement with the Byzantines.

This had its first precedent in the first battle between the Muslims and the pagans. The Prophet made teaching the illiterates the redemption of the literate prisoners of war. The only other means of redemption were an exchange of prisoners or monetary compensation. This is a key testament to the importance of education, as the Islamic coffers were empty at that time.

To further emphasize the value of education - the practical training to enable the people to apply knowledge - the Prophet is quoted as saying "Let people learn from their neighbors, and let people educate their neighbors, lest both will be punished."

When the Arabs settled in Persia and Egypt, they were attracted by the scientific studies that were going on in Gondeshapur, Harran and Alexandria. They tried to benefit by these, although they were first preoccupied with their general living conditions. However, we find Khalid ibn Yazeed, of the Omayyad ruling family, paying great attention at that early stage to chemistry, medicine and astronomy. He requested some specialized scholars in Egypt to translate a number of works in all these disciplines from Greek or the Coptic language. Omar ibn Abdulazeez, the fifth rightly-guided Caliph, requested Ibn Massarjoweih to translate Aaharon the Priest's book on medicine. Al-Mansoor, the Abbasid Caliph, went to the School of the Persian city of Gondeshapur looking for medical practitioners. He was able to identify the Bakhtishu family, who had a considerable influence on Arab medical studies, and contributed to the major movement of translation that was taking place at the time. Abdullah ibn al Muqaffa' also translated, during Al-Mansoor's reign, a number of books on logic and medicine, which the Persians had translated from Greek. Yahya ibn Al-Bitriq also translated a large number of books by Hippocrates and Galen when Al-Mansoor requested him to do so.

It may be pertinent to ask: how could the Muslims attain such a remarkable stage of scientific maturity over such a short period of time? The answer is provided by the Quran itself, which taught man the essential principle of scientific methodology. It does not provide these under a separate heading, but it imparts them within its verses so that people, who read the Quran with understanding, could assimilate these principles and they become a natural, but essential part of their thinking.

Science does not say that a particular thing is true unless there is solid, irrefutable evidence to support that. Muslims acquired this principle from several Quranic verses such as: *"Say, submit your proof!"* (21:24 & 27:64), *"Provide an evidence for what you are claiming, if what you say is true!"* (2: 111), *"Have you any certain knowledge which you can reveal to us?"* (6:148), hence laying the foundation of evidence-based knowledge.

Scientists are always wary of any attempt to treat what is doubtful as a confirmed truth, or to give a guess any added weight so as to make it highly probable. This, Muslims take from numerous Quranic verses such as: *"They follow nothing but surmise and their own wishful thinking. (53: 23), they have no knowledge whatsoever; they do nothing but guess."* (45:24), *"Most of them follow nothing but conjecture; but conjecture can never be a substitute for truth."* (10: 36)

Science disapproves of following any point of view without first looking at convincing evidence in its support. It pays little attention to who supports that view among eminent scholars or scientists, if no proof is given in its favor. This is a principle a Muslim takes from such Quranic verses as we are quoting here: *"When they are told, 'Follow what God had revealed,' some answer, 'We shall follow [only] that which we found our forefathers believing in and practicing.' Why, even if their forefathers did not use their reasons at all, and were devoid of all guidance?"* (2: 170)

In its application of the rules of logical thinking, science relies on two main principles: firstly, there can be no contradiction whatsoever between different facts. Secondly, nature is both consistent and independent. Whatever is proved to be true at one time remains true for all time, because truth is independent of time and place. Both these principles are well established in the Quran. We find the first in several verses, such as *"No flaw will you ever see in the creation of the Most Gracious."* (67: 3) *"No change will you ever find in God's norms; and no deviation will you ever find from God's norms."* (35: 43) *"No change shall there be in God's creation."* (30: 30)

Science relies on accurate usage of our faculties of perception as a method to arrive at the truth. The Quran frequently directs us to the need to use our senses together with our reason. We have already quoted numerous verses urging Muslims and all people to look around them and try to learn how natural phenomena operate. We will, therefore, quote here only a couple of these: *“God has brought you forth from your mothers’ wombs knowing nothing; but He has endowed you with hearing, sight, and minds.”* (16: 78) *“Never concern yourself with anything of which you have no knowledge. Indeed, [your] hearing, sight and mind - all of them - will be called to account for.”* (17: 36) This last verse includes three main principles which combine the total sum of the basis of scientific research. Firstly, a human being must follow nothing except what is known for certain. Secondly, the means to arrive at the truth is accurate perception and sound thinking. Thirdly, human beings must uphold the truth at which they arrive through perception and thinking, because they are accountable for that.

The terms of reference for the Prophet are summarized in the following verse of the Holy Quran:

“He [god] is the one who raised up in the midst of the unlettered a messenger from among themselves to recite to them His verse, to cultivate them, and to teach them the book and the (prophetic) wisdom.” [62: 2]

It is clear from this verse that the Prophet had been entrusted with the following Functions:

1. Recitation of the verses of God
2. Educating/cultivating the people
3. Teaching them the book of God
4. Teaching them the prophetic wisdom

Thus, the Holy Quran leaves no ambiguities in the fact that the Prophet is not supposed to merely recite the verses and then leave people to interpret and apply them in whatever manner they like. Instead he is sent to “teach” the book. Then, since teaching the book is not enough, he is also required to teach the prophetic wisdom, which is something in addition to the book: annotations, commentaries, and explanatory remarks - this is the Sunna. Still, this is not enough - therefore the Prophet has also to educate/ cultivate people, this is to make his teachings action-oriented.

The Prophet himself stated this when he said “God sent me as an educator and a facilitator.”

Before I go any further, I would like to take the precaution of saying that I am speaking of Islam rather than the practices of Muslims. Islam is embodied in the verses of the Quran and the authentic sayings and practices of the prophet. After the death of the Prophet, the practices of the rightly-guided caliphs are, according to the Prophet, the only practices that one should “stick to firmly.” After them, practices of many Muslims have been, even in those resplendent ages, very far removed from Islam. In excluding these practices from Islam, I observe the criterion set for us by the Prophet himself: “Whoever does a deed which is not in agreement with our directives, will be considered as null and void.”

Allow me now to recall a number of the value concepts of Islam, a religion which is a set of values, as described in the Holy Quran *"Say, indeed my Lord has guided me to a straight path, a religion [which is] a set of values."* (5:161). They are pillar values, and any understanding of Islam is doomed to fail if it ignores any of them. In addition to "knowledge" with which I started this talk, I would like to mention six other cardinal values: Liberty, Plurality, Dignity, Justice, Morality, and Environmental awareness.



The first of these value concepts is that **freedom**, as seen by Islam, is more important than life itself. The evidence in support of this is found in the two Quranic verses: *"Oppression is worse than murder"* (2:191) and *"Oppression is more serious than murder"* (2:217). This is a clear declaration that oppression, which means a denial of freedom, is worse than murder, which is the taking away of life. It is only logical to conclude that freedom has more importance than life itself. This is by no means surprising if we remember that the very humanness of man lies in freedom, and that God made his angels prostrate themselves before man, a free creature, who, with his free will, has the option to believe or disbelieve, obey or disobey, and do good or do evil *"Say: the truth [has now come] from your Lord. Let him who wills, believe in it, and let Him who wills, reject it"* (18: 29)

In addition to the fact that God has allowed man freedom of choice, He has also given him the tools with which to think and make an enlightened choice. He sent him messengers and bestowed on him revelations in order to help him make the right choice, but the ultimate choice stayed with man him/herself.

Man's humanness is expressed through his freedoms, and those freedoms have no meaning without accountability. Islam's middle position can be recognized by the fact that Islam has always been attacked from the two opposite directions: from the side of religion that it is too natural, actual, and turned to the world; and from the side of science that it contains religious and mystical elements. There is only one Islam, but like man, it has both soul and body.

The second value, plurality, is that Islam recognizes *the other*, and a recognition of contempt and patronizing, as suggested by the discriminative formula of "Greeks and barbarians" or "Romans and barbarians", but rather a recognition of parity and equality:

- *"You have your religion, and I have mine"* (109:6);
- *"Jews have their religion, and Muslims, theirs."*
(as stipulated in the Islamic Magna Carta or the Constitution of Madinah).

Naturally, such recognition entails ethics of dialogue, as stipulated in the Quran:

- *"Call [people] to the path of your Lord through wisdom and nice preaching, and reason with them in the most graceful manner."* (16:125);
- *"Don't argue with the People of the Scripture except in the most graceful manner"* (29:46).

This recognition of the other always calls for a search for a common ground:

- *"Come to common terms between us and you"* (3:64);
- *"Our God and yours is the same God"* (29: 46); and

- *"God is our Lord and yours. Our deeds are credited to us and yours to you. There is no dispute between us and you" (42:15).*

The recognition of plurality entails the admission of diversity. God declares that He has created people to be different and that they will persist in being different; He says: *"Had your Lord so willed, He would have made all mankind one single community. As it is, they shall continue to differ"* (11: 118), *"And for this end He created them"* (11: 119). God, then, would not allow any suppression of these differences, having created people to have them. He rules that: *"There shall be no coercion in religion"* (2: 256), and He tells His Prophet, *"You are not to be domineering over them"* (138: 22) and *"You are not an oppressor to them"* (50: 45). He also tells him, *"Had your Lord willed, all the people on earth would have believed. Do you then, try to compel people to believe?"* (10: 99)

In whichever way people's differences manifest themselves, in faith, direction or practice, all men and women are accountable to God. However, accountability will not take place in this life. There will be a second life when people are held to account for what they do in this life, and they are given their reward or suffer punishment. But this is all left to God Almighty. This gives us perfect reassurance, because the One who judges us is God who allows no injustice to be suffered by anyone. *"Should they argue with you, say: 'God knows best what you are doing.' God will judge between you one the Day of Resurrection with regard to all on which you dispute."* (22: 68-69) *"Then advocate [God's message], and pursue the right course, as you have been bidden [by God], and do not follow their likes and dislikes, but say: 'I believe in whatever revelation God has bestowed from on high; and I am bidden to bring about justice between you. God is our Lord and your Lord. To us shall be accounted our deeds and to you, your deeds. Let there be no contention between you and us; God will bring us all together, for with Him is all journey's end."* (42: 15) *"As for the believers, the Jews, the Sabinas, the Christians, the Zoroastrians, and those who associate partners with God, God will decide between them on the Day of Judgment. God is witness to everything."* (22: 17)

Islam has always maintained a relationship of mutual respect with other faiths. Some of these, such as Christianity, Judaism, Zoroastrianism and Hinduism, have lived for centuries side by side with Islam, including periods when the Muslims were the main superpower in the world. It would have been easy for Muslims to compel such people to adopt Islam, but nothing of the sort has ever taken place. Islam does not permit any aspect of coercion in spreading its message. Its acceptance must rely on free choice.

All such communities lived under Islam according to a civil contract that gave them the same rights and obligations as Muslims. They enjoyed complete religious freedom, having their churches and places of worship, as well as their religious symbols and distinctive attire. No one was ever forced to change attire so as to adopt Islamic dress. On the contrary, some reports, albeit unconfirmed, suggest that they were ordered to observe their own dress codes. When people have the freedom to choose their own faiths, they must also have the freedom to practice their different faiths. Islam went further than that, laying down a rule that a non-Muslim should not be forced to abstain from something his faith permits only because it is forbidden for Muslims, such as pork or wine. Christian communities in the Muslim world have been allowed to drink and raise pigs for food, because these are permissible in their religion. Furthermore, according to the Hanafi School of law, if a Muslim spills wine that belongs to a non-Muslim, he has to compensate him for that, even though Islam considers wine as the mother of evil practices.

Islam treats man as honored and respects his/her **dignity** by virtue of being human: *"We have indeed dignified the children of Adam, and borne them over land and sea, and provided them goodly sustenance, and favored them far above many of Our creatures."* (17: 70) God has favored man with abundance of blessing, some of which are manifest and some not so. He has placed man in charge of the earth, making him the most honored creature, regardless of the color of his eyes or skin, softness of his hair, shape of his nose, social class, or even his religious beliefs. Man is honored for no reason other than his being human. An authentic account relates: *"A funeral procession passed by the Prophet and he stood up in respect. People close to him said that the dead man was a Jew. The Prophet said: "Is it not a human being's funeral?" Thus, the Prophet taught his companions and all Muslims that such respect is due to all human beings, because man is respected and Islamic law ensures protection for all human life, as Quran states: "If anyone slays a human being, for anything other than in punishment of murder or for spreading corruption on earth, it shall be as though he had slain all mankind, and if anyone saves a human life, it shall be as though he had saved all mankind."* (5: 32)

Man's dignity could not be discovered by biology, psychology, or by any other science, Man's dignity is spiritual question. After "objective observations," it is easier for science to confirm the equality of man, and so, "scientific racism" is quite possible and even logical.

Practical moral experience shows man's greater inclination to sin than his striving to do well. His ability to fall deep into sin seems to be greater than to soar up into the heights of virtue. Negative personalities always seem truer than positive ones, and the poet who describes negative characters had an advantage over the one who describes heroes.

Anyhow, men are always good or bad but never innocent, and this could be the ultimate meaning of the biblical story about the fall, the original sin. From the moment of the expulsion from paradise, Adam (man) could not rid himself of his freedom, nor escape from the drama, to be as innocent as an animal or angel. He has to choose, to use his freedom, to be good or evil; in one word, to be man. This ability to choose, regardless of result, is the highest form of existence in the universe.

Humanism is not charity, forgiveness, and tolerance, although that is the necessary result of it. Humanism is primarily the affirmation of man and his freedom, namely, of his value as a man.

Everything that debases man's personality, that brings him down to a thing, is inhuman. For instance, it is human to state that man is responsible for his deeds and to punish him. It is not human to ask him to regret, to change his mind, to "improve", and to be pardoned. It is more human to prosecute a man for his beliefs than to force him to renounce them, giving him the well-known chance called "taking into consideration his sincere attitude." So, there is punishment which is human, and pardoning which is most inhuman. The inquisitors claimed that they burned the body to save the soul. Modern inquisitors do the opposite: they "burn" the soul as the compensation for the body.

Every manipulation of people, even if it is done in their own interest, is inhuman. To think for them and to free them from their responsibilities and obligations is also inhuman. When God gave man the ability to choose and threatened him with severe punishments, He confirmed in the highest way the value of man as a man. We have to follow the example set by God: let us leave man to struggle for himself, instead of doing it for him.

Education, too, can be inhuman: if it is one-sided, directed, and indoctrinated; if it does not teach one to think independently, if it only gives ready-made answers; if it prepares people only for different functions instead of broadening their horizons and thereby their freedom.

The third value is justice. Islam regards this also as an essential value, being a fundamental purpose for sending messengers: *"We have sent Our messengers with explicit indications, and sent down with them the Book and the [just] balance, so that people may exercise justice"* (57:25).

- There is in His Glorious Book indications that justice should be manifest in every thing: in speech: *"...and if you speak, be just"* (6:152);
- in judgment: *"...and if you judge between people, judge in justice"* (4:58);
- in conciliation, *"So reconcile the two of them with justice, and be fair"* (49:9);
- and in guardianship, *"...and to be guardians for orphans in fairness"* (4:127).

God warns against anything that may upset a just attitude:

- *"Do not be led by desire, lest you swerve from justice"* (4:135).
- *"Allow not the hatred of some people to make you act unjustly"* (5:8).
- *"Maintain justice; be God's witnesses even if it is against yourselves, your parents, or your close relatives"* (4:135).

In Arabic, the language in which the Quran was revealed, the word for "justice" also connotes equality. Reference to that is made in the Islamic Magna Carta or the constitution of the Islamic state in Madinah, indicating an equal and just treatment of all those affiliated with the Muslim community, whether they themselves are Muslims or non-Muslims:

- *"...And the Jews who join us will be on a par and enjoy our full backing..."*

God Himself abstains from injustice, and He makes it forbidden for people:

- *"God is never unjust, not by an atom's weight"* (3: 40)

The equality and brotherhood of people is possible only if man is created by God. The equality of men is a spiritual and not a natural, physical, or intellectual fact. It exists as a moral quality of man, as the human dignity, or as the equal value of the human personality. On the contrary, as physical, thinking, and social beings; as members of groups, classes, political groupings, and nations; people are always very unequal. If man's spiritual value is not recognized - this fact of religious character - the only base of human equality is lost. Equality, then, becomes a mere phrase without a base and content and, as such, it will soon retreat, faced with the evidence facts of human inequality or with the natural human desire to rule and obey and thus to be unequal. As soon as the religious approach is removed, the empty room is filled by different forms to inequality - racial, national, social, or political.

God draws the attention of His servants to the fact that their **environment** is much vaster than they possibly imagine, and that simplified and compliant, it is placed at their disposal. All they have to do is get the best benefit out of it. God says, *"He placed at your disposal the Sea"* (45:15); *"He subdued rivers for you"* (16: 32); *"He placed at your disposal the Sun and the Moon"* (16: 33);

"He placed at your disposal Night and Day" (16: 12); and "God has placed at your disposal what there is on earth" (22: 65). He even says, "He placed at your disposal what there is in the sky and on earth, all" (45: 13).

God has created this environment rightfully, and "rightfully" in the Islamic terminology implies a manner that serves the interests of human beings. Therefore, maintaining the environment is achieved through observing what serves people's interests and wards off any harm to which they may get exposed.

At the same time God forbids indecency, wickedness and transgression. The Arabic word for "transgression" implies aggression and corruption.

God draws our attention to what may happen - which is actually happening nowadays - when man over-exploits his environment with indifference to balances. He says: *"If God had bestowed abundance on His servants, they would have transgressed in the earth" (42: 27). He also says, "Do not obey the command of the extravagant who causes corruption in the land" (26: 151-152).*

The problem then is not that of exploiting the boons of the sky and blessing on earth, because that naturally goes along with having things at one's disposal and with settlement and construction. It is rather the problem of unjustifiable extravagance, tyranny, and transgression, all of which are synonymous in expressing the meaning of excess over the limit and indifference to balances, and all of which result in upsetting balances in a manner that spoils the environment and makes it unfit for people to live in. In several places in His Glorious Book, God warns against corruption on earth.

- *"Do no corruption in the land" (2: 60)*
- *"Cause not corruption in the land" (7: 85)*
- *"Seek no corruption in the land" (28:77)*

God even names in particular the type of corruption that uproots plants and annihilates animals. He says, *"There are some people whose statements please you in worldly life, and they call God to testify for what is in their hearts, yet they are the deadliest of opponents. As soon as they take over, they strive throughout the land to cause corruption therein and destroy crops and animals. God detests corruption" (2: 204-205).*

In His Glorious Book, God cites an example of a village which *"was secure and peaceful, abundantly supplied with provisions from every quarter, but [its people] abused the blessing of God. So God made them [through his laws of nature] taste living in hunger and fear for what they had been doing" (16: 112). Speaking of similar villages, God says, "Your Lord would not have punished them severely" (29: 40), but they used to "transgress on earth with no justification. Men, it is against yourselves that you transgress!" (10: 23).*

Morality is a religion transformed into rules of behavior - that is, into man's attitude toward other men in accordance with the fact of God's existence. To have to fulfill our duties regardless of the difficulties and risks we face (this being moral behavior as distinguished from behavior motivated by interest), such a demand can be justified only if this world and this life are not the only world and the only life. This is the common starting point of morality and religion.

"Believe and do good deeds" - this sentence, which is repeated in the Quran more than eighty times, points out the necessity of uniting something that people tend to separate. It expresses the difference between religion ("believe") and morality ("do good") as well as the imperative that they should go together. The Quran uncovers a reverse relation and shows how religion can find a strong incentive in morality: "You will not believe until you give amply of what is dear to your heart." It is not: "Believe and you will be a good man," but the reverse: "Be a good man and you will believe." To the question of how one can strengthen his faith, the answer is: "Do good and by so doing you will find God."

Morality is not profitable in the common sense of the word. Can we say that the maxim "Women and children first!" is useful from the social point of view? Is it useful to do justice and to tell the truth? We can imagine numerous situations in which injustice or falsehood is profitable. For example, religious, political, racial, and national tolerance are not useful in the usual sense of the word. To destroy the adversaries is more profitable from the pure rationalistic point of view. Tolerance, if it exists, is not practiced out of interest but out of principle, out of humanity, out of that "aimlessly purposeful" reason. The protection of the old and decrepit, or the care of the handicapped or the incurable patient is not useful. Morals cannot be subjected to the standards of usefulness. The fact that moral behavior is sometimes useful does mean that something had become moral because it has proven useful in a certain period of human experience. On the contrary, such coincidences are very rare.

While religious morals declare the principle of resistance to evil, a principle that can be found in an explicit or implicit form in all morals based on religion, utilitarian morality declares the opposite principle, that of reciprocity. The alliterations clearly assert that anyone who obeys the moral norms at a time when nobody obeys them works against reason, which is the consistent conclusion from the utilitarian point of view. Moreover, this fact also shows very clearly that utilitarian morality is not a true morality and that it belongs to politics rather than to ethics.

There is no automatism between our belief and our behavior. Our behavior is neither exclusively nor primarily one of our conscious choice. It is more a result of education and attitudes formed in childhood than the result of later conscious philosophical or political beliefs. If someone had learned to respect his elders, to keep his word, to judge people by their character, to love and help others, to speak the truth, to hate hypocrisy, to be a simple and proud man, then that would be the characteristic of his personality regardless of his later political opinion and formally accepted philosophy. All the same, this morality also owes to a religion: this time to a transmitted one. Education transmitted certain authentic religious views concerning the relations between man and woman, but it did not transmit as well the religion from which that morality derived. In this case, there is only one step between abandoning that religion and abandoning its morality. Some people never make this step, and thus they remain "split" between a religion they do not follow and that religion's morality which they continue to follow even though they no longer believe in the basis of its morality. This gave rise to the appearance of two phenomena which complicate the research: the moral atheists and the immoral believers.

Duty and interest, opposed to each other, are the two moving forces of every human activity. They can in no way be compared; duty is always beyond interest, and interest has no connection with morality. Morality is neither functional nor rational. If one risks one's life by entering a burning house to save a neighbor's child and comes back carrying the dead child in one's arm, can we say that the action was worthless since it was unsuccessful? Morality is what gives value to this apparently useless sacrifice, to this attempt without success.

The sight of defeated justice, which even in defeat wins our hearts, appears not to be a fact "of this world." After all, what reasons of this world (natural, logical, intellectual, or otherwise) can justify the action of a hero who falls because he remains on the side of justice and virtue? If this world exists in space and time only, and this nature is indifferent to justice and injustice, then the sacrifice of a hero is senseless. Nevertheless, as we refuse to consider it senseless, it then becomes a revelation of God, tidings of another world with meanings and law opposite to this world of nature and all its law and interests. We approve of this "absurd" act with all our heart, without knowing why or asking for any explanation. The greatness of a heroic deed is not in success, as it is very often fruitless, nor in reason, as it is very often unreasonable. Drama retains the brightest trace of the divine in this world. Here lies its unsurpassed and universal value and its significance for all people in the world.

The existence of another world should appear to us even more possible since we cannot but consider tragic defeated heroes as winners. Obviously, they are not winners in this world.

There are not many people who work according to the law of virtue, but this small minority is the pride of mankind and every human being. There are not many moments in our own life when we act according to the law of duty. However, the rare moments when we rise above ourselves by neglecting interests and benefits are the only undying essences of our life.

Every man may aspire to live in harmony with his conscience - according to certain moral laws. This may not be easy for some, but every man admires righteousness. Many people have no way to remove an injustice, but every man can hate injustice and condemn it in his mind and in this very fact lies the meaning of repentance. Morality is not in the very act; it is in the desire to live righteously, in the strain of the will, in the struggle of salvation. It is not human to be perfect and therefore sinless. To sin and to repent is to be man.

The question then arises whether deeds should be judged by their intentions or their consequences. The first is the message of every religion, while the other is the motto of every ideology or revolution. These are two opposite logics. One reflects the negation of the world; the other reflects the negation of man.

Man is good if he wants to be good as he understands it. However, this "good" may be bad in somebody else's opinion. Man is evil if he wants to be evil, even if that were "good" for others or from the point of view of others. The question is always of the man himself and of the world that belongs solely to him. Within that relationship, which is definitely inward and spiritual, every man is completely alone and equally free. This is the meaning of Sartre's statement that every man is absolutely responsible and that "there are neither innocent victims nor innocent convicts in hell.

To realize these seven cardinal value principles in the daily life of Muslims, five main approaches are to be considered. These are: devotion, strive, gracefulness, civility and lawfulness. I used the term "**devotion**" and not "worship" to deal with the Islamic value which is called "Ibadah" in the language of Quran to keep away from the shadows that cast over this term in the West. Even the term "religion" has in the West the meaning of faith as an esoteric experience which does not go beyond a personal relationship with God and as such express itself only in dogmas and rituals. Accordingly, Islam is more than a religion for it embraces life. Islam is the name of the unity of spirit and matter, the highest form of which is man himself. The human life is complete only if it includes both the physical and the spiritual desires of the human being. Islam considers that all man's failures are either because of the religious denial of man's biological needs or the materialistic denial of man's spiritual desires.

Another approach is called “ihsan” in Arabic, for which we can use the term “gracefulness” in English with some permissiveness. This is one of the most expressive terms in the language of the Quran. It denotes goodness, perfection, compassion, tenderness, prosperity, and beauty at the same time. God commends his servants *“who listen [closely] to all that is said, and follow the best of it”* (39: 18). Good quality and perfection are required in everything. The Prophet says: *“God had decreed that whatever human beings do should be done with gracefulness (perfection).”* The term connotes in addition a kindly and caring touch which we now lack in contemporary communities. That is the readiness to give, and even to give preference to one’s brother or sister over oneself. Gracefulness also connotes a fine conscience and watching God in every action. The Prophet says: *“Gracefulness is to worship God as if you see Him”*. All these connotations are topped with an aesthetic touch that should reflect on everything and every action. It is motivated by God’s own beauty as in the Prophet’s saying: *“God is beautiful and he loves beauty.”*

Islam sets the relationship between human beings in a form of absolute fraternity, be it a relationship between man and woman or a Muslim and non-Muslim. The Prophet used to say in his daily prayers: *“I testify that human beings, all human beings are brothers or sisters to each other”*.

A society comes into existence when every individual becomes a person. That does not mean that individuals lose their identity within the community. It means rather that all its members keenly feel the solidarity which establishes a bond of unity between them. The Prophet’s explanation is most lucid: *“In relation to one another, believers are like a structure: each part strengthens the other parts”*. When the Prophet said this he clasped his fingers together. Drawing on this concept of solidarity, the Prophet gives us another beautiful simile: *“In their mutual love, compassion and sympathy for one another, believers are like one body: When one part of it suffers a complaint, all other parts join in, sharing in the sleeplessness and fever”*. Let us reflect on the fine touches in this saying, emphasizing the elements of solidarity which are all expressed in the mode of mutual interaction. This gives us the feeling that love, compassion and sympathy are felt by all, extended to all and reciprocated by all.

The Prophet said: *“The best of human beings is the one who is of most benefit to them”* This saying is of similar import to the other saying which states: *“The person who is loved best by God, is the one who is of most benefit to humanity”* The Prophet also said: *“He of you who is able to extend some benefit to his brother/sister should do so”* A Muslim is, then, supposed to help his brother/sister and spare no effort in trying to serve his/her interests. Islam does not allow any of its followers to take a passive or indifferent attitude towards social responsibility. It is sufficient here to quote the Prophet’s saying: *“He who does not care about the affairs of the Muslim community does not belong to it.”*

The Prophet also said: *“One Muslim is the brother of another: He neither does him injustice, nor does he ever give him up. Another version of this saying adds: “Nor does he let him down”* It is not lawful for any Muslim to stand idle when he sees any individual in the Muslim community being subjected to injustice. He must give him support. Unless he does, he is guilty of giving him up and letting him down. Indeed, he unjustly denies him a right which he can claim from all his brothers and sisters in the Muslim community.

The Muslim community must always be in a permanent state of progress and development to give practical effect to the description expressed in the Gospel as related in the Quran. This describes

the Muslim community as *"the seed which puts forth its shoot and strengthens it, so that it rises stout and firm upon its stalk, delighting the farmers"*. (48:29). Every member of the Muslim community is, therefore, like a shoot or a branch of a tree, not representing a burden to it, but on the contrary, fulfilling its duty of strengthening it. With this support forthcoming from all, the community swells up, becomes stronger, stands straight and wins admiration.

The underlying principle in all this is that Islamic society places a duty on every individual to support the community until it has reached the stage of self-sufficiency. A Muslim, as the Prophet said, *"Works with his own hands to benefit himself and to give others in benefaction."*

Islam commands each one of its followers to work for his living. God says in the Quran: *"Seek a portion God's bounty"*. [62:10] It encourages him to do any type of work which gives him an income to make him self-sufficient. The Prophet said: *"He who seeks to be contented with his lot, God will help him to be so; and he who seeks self-sufficiency, God will make him so"*. He also said: *"For any of you to take a rope and go to a mountain where he gathers a bundle of dry wood and carries it on his back to sell it, thus sparing himself the need to beg, is better than seeking other people's help, be it readily forthcoming or denied"*. He also taught us that: *"No one ever eats any type of food better than what he buys with his earnings from his own work. The Prophet Dawood (David) used to eat of what he earned through his own work."* Thus, Islam builds a society which we can aptly term as *"the society of the upper hand"*, meaning the one which is productive. For the Prophet said: *"The upper hand is superior to the lower one."*

Islam does not allow extravagance and waste of resources. The Prophet *"prohibited wasting wealth"*. God warns us against extravagant spending: *"Do not hold your fist tight and do not open it fully and irrationally"*. (17:29) He describes His good servants as *"those who spend without extravagance or being stingy"*. (25:67) He commands us: *"Do not be wasteful, for He does not like the wasteful"*. (6:141) The Prophet ordered us to economize even when we use water for ablution. Moderation is the best practice in all affairs.



Another approach that is considered a very important component of gracefulness is called *Sadaqah* in Arabic.

Sadaqah is a beautiful term which Islam uses to refer to what we describe today as 'civility' or 'civilized behavior'. By its very connotation, *sadaqah* provides true evidence of the individual's belonging to the civilized Muslim community.

Islam requires every Muslim, male and female, to prove at least once a day, his or her belonging to the Muslim community by undertaking at least one civilized action. Issuing a general directive to all Muslims, the Prophet says: *"It is an incumbent duty for everyone to fulfill a civility (sadaqah) every day the sun rises."*

One person in the Prophet's audience thought only of the financial aspect of *sadaqah*, which is charity. Therefore, he asked: *"How could I give a sadaqah when we do not have enough money?"*

The Prophet's answer gave a full clarification, indicating the numerous aspects of civility (*sadaqah*) in the Islamic sense. He said: *"Among the ways of civility (sadaqah) are enjoining what is right and forbidding what is wrong; removing a thorn, a bone or a stone from people's passage way; guiding a blind person; helping a deaf or a deaf-mute person to understand; giving directions*

to someone who wants something you know where to find; rushing to provide help to someone appealing for urgent assistance; helping someone to lift something that is too heavy for him. All these are aspects of civility (*sadaqah*) you bestow upon yourself.”

In another version the Prophet says: “Turning to your brother with a smile on your face is a civility (*sadaqah*); enjoining what is right and forbidding what is wrong is a civility; giving directions to someone who has lost his way is a civility; helping a person with poor eyesight through his difficulty is a civility; removing a stone, thorn and bone from people’s pathway is a civility; and pouring water out of your bucket into your brother’s bucket is a civility.”

However, the Prophet did not leave the question about financial charity unanswered. He is quoted to have said: “It is a duty of every Muslim to pay *sadaqah*”. People asked him: “What if he has nothing to give?” He said: “He does some hand work so that to benefit himself and give away in charity.”

In a third version the Prophet’s companion said: “I asked the Prophet, ‘What if I do not do that?’ He replied: ‘You help someone in what he is doing, or you do something for an unskilled person.’ I said: ‘And what if I do not do that?’ He answered: ‘You spare people any evil you could do. This counts as a civility (*sadaqah*) which you bestow upon yourself.”

In a fourth version the Prophet says: “Every kind word is a civility; a help provided by one person to another is a civility; a drink of water given to someone is a civility; and removing harmful objects from people’s passage is a civility.”

“Doing what is lawful”, or *maarouf*, is a part of civility (*sadaqa*) and the fifth of the main approaches to realize the seven cardinal values in the day to day life of a Muslim. The Prophet said: “Every lawful thing is a civility”. To define what is meant by *maarouf*, or doing what is lawful, we refer to the Prophet himself who said: “Do what is lawful, and refrain from what is unlawful. Consider what you would like to hear from people when you leave and do it. Consider also what you dislike people to say to you when you leave them and refrain from it.”

By *maarouf* (lawful), we mean an expression of conscience of good Islamic society. *Munkar* (unlawful), in contrast, refers to everything which is rejected by this duty which strengthens bonds and relations within Islamic society. This is what is meant by “enjoining what is lawful and forbidding what is unlawful.” In order to protect society, individuals must take care of themselves: *Believers, take care of yourself* [by enjoying what is lawful and forbidding what is unlawful]. When they have done that, they are not affected by anyone who strays. They, who represent the majority which submits to God’s commandments, are then following right guidance: “*Believers, take care of yourself, so that you will not be affected by anyone who strays, if you follow right guidance*”. (5: 105)

This concept is most beautifully expressed in the well known hadith which speaks of the passengers in a ship and their attitude to a small group of them who want to open a hole in their area of the ship. “If they let them do it, they will drown and drown altogether. If they prevent them from doing so, they will be saved and saved altogether”. It is also expressed in the Prophet’s statement: “Support your brother when he commits or suffers injustice”. A man asked the Prophet: “Messenger of God, I understand that I should support him when he suffers injustice. How do I support him when he is the committer of injustice?” The Prophet answered: “You prevent him from doing injustice. That is the best support you give to him.”

To conclude, I would like to say that education by itself does not bring men up, nor does it make them better, more free, or more human; it makes them more capable, more efficient, and more useful to society. History has proven that educated men and peoples can be manipulated and can also serve evil, even more effectively than backward people. The history of imperialism is a series of true stories about civilized peoples who waged unjust, extirpative, and subjugating wars against less-educated and underdeveloped peoples who defended their liberty. The high educational level of the invaders had no effect on their aims or methods; it helped only their efficiency and forced the defeat of their victims.

School education in the civilized world is too intellectual and insufficiently humane. If we use the usual terms, we can say it is too technological and insufficiently classical. Today, it is quite possible to imagine a young man who has passed through all educational degrees, from primary school to college, without ever having been told to be a good and honest man. First he learned to write and reckon, then he studied physics, chemistry, ethnology, geography, political theories, sociology, and many other sciences. He gathered a mass of facts and, at best, learned how to think, but he was not enlightened. We hear increasingly less about history, the arts, literature, ethics, and law.

This is why drill has no influence on the moral attitude of man. You can drill a soldier to be tough, skillful, and strong, but you cannot drill him to be honest, dignified, enthusiastic, and brave. Those are spiritual qualities. It is impossible to impose a belief by means of decree, terror, pressure, violence, or force. Every pedagogue can give a number of examples of how children resist persistent guidance in one direction and how they can consequently develop an interest in completely opposite behavior. This is due to the "human quality" of man. Man cannot be drilled like an animal. The inefficiency of drill and the uncertainty of education are the "palpable" proof that man is an animal endowed with a soul - that is, with freedom. This is why every true upbringing is essentially self-upbringing and a negation of drill. The aim of true upbringing is not to change a man directly (because, strictly speaking, that is not possible) but to incite an inner stream of experiences and to cause an inner decision to the benefit of good by means of example, advice, sight, or the like. Beyond that, man cannot be changed; only his behavior may be changed, and that could be feigned or temporary. Behavior which does not engage our deepest will is not an upbringing but rather a drill. Upbringing includes our participation, our effort. This is why the result of upbringing is always different and cannot be foreseen.

Upbringing is an immeasurable and subtle influence upon man's soul. It is completely indirect through love, examples, forgiveness, and punishment with the intention of initiating an inner activity in man himself. Drill, being essentially bestial, is a system of measures and action taken to force a certain behavior, the so-called right behavior, upon a human being. Upbringing belongs to man; drill is designed for the animal. By means of drill, it is possible to form citizens who obey the law not out of respect but out of fear or habit. Their insides may be dead, their feelings withered; yet, they still do not break the law because they have been drilled. The stories about so-called blameless citizens who are morally empty and trespassers who are essentially good and noble very often appear in literature. Hence, there exist two kinds of justice: man's and God's, the first looking at deeds and the other at the essence of being.

*February 12, 2004
International Trade Center
Washington, DC*

Panel Discussions/Questions and Answers

Dr. Elcott: And to those who say there's only one answer, only one truth, only my way, I am the law, I own it - we as a group have to say that's heresy, that's idolatry, and stand against that belief. As I said, we must be as passionate about pluralism as are those who are passionate about fundamentalism.

Dr. Goodpaster: And does that passion about pluralism include the enemies of religion?

Dr. Elcott: The enemies of religion? You mean people who are going to murder other people in the name of religion?

Dr. Goodpaster: No, no, I mean the enemies of religious faith who want to secularize all of society.

Dr. Elcott: As I said, the great gift of nonbelievers has been that they haven't waited around for God to act, and I have great respect for that. Obviously, I may interpret their actions as being from the hand of God, but I can't impose on them to see it that way. For me the world is divided between those who will destroy, whether it's in the name of God or in the name of atheism or communism, or in the name of any ism that's going to be destructive, and those who are going to heal and build.

I sound like I am polarizing the world between good and evil. I don't mean it that way. I think we have to teach a Torah of pluralism as being what God wants. That's where God wants us to be in the 21st Century, as opposed to falling back to murdering, burning, and slaughtering people in the name of the God. That is not the God any of us here believe in.

Dr. Goodpaster: Bishop Wenski?

Bishop Wenski: To reject idolatry is not to say that truth is relative, or that there are no such things as moral absolutes. In fact, that is what our religion does teach us, that there is truth that is outside of us. It is absolute truth. There is objective truth and it's objective because it is outside of us, because it has been revealed to us. That revelation is not something that we have power over. It is a gift we receive. However, even though we might say there is one absolute truth, we have

a certain amount of ability to understand, appreciate, and to know that truth is bigger than us. Therefore, we must evolve and grow with humility in understanding truth. At the same time we must understand that a correlative of truth is freedom, and in that sense man has to be free to embrace the truth, which cannot be imposed on him.

Therefore, the basic human right on which all other human rights are built is the right to freedom of religion, which is another way of saying freedom of conscience. Without freedom of religion, there are no other human rights.

Dr. Abdalla: I would reiterate the notion that there is truth, and I think it is not emphasized enough. However, part of that truth is to accept a very significant value that emerges out of the Quran, which is that Allah, or God, is the judge of people's beliefs. It is not the business of human beings to judge others on how they would believe or not believe. As a matter of fact, there is a verse in the Quran chapter number 99, which clearly states if Allah wished to make everyone on earth a believer, he would have done so.

The question then goes to the prophet Mohammed who said, "Are you going to force them to believe?" meaning one cannot do that, because God did not wish for everyone to be a believer. It was up to Him who will be a believer and who not a believer.

This is a fundamental principle that must be inherent in any kind of education, especially in the Islamic context. The art of the liberal is to accept peace, peace with self, peace with others, whether they are Muslims or non-Muslims, as the standard state of affairs. It is peace not war. There are many verses in the Quran to support this notion. However, my concern is, as we look back at some of the old interpretations that were driven by historical events, times of conflict or tranquility, we believe those interpretations established at those times are the ones that we need to live by. For Muslims especially, I think this is a great challenge; how to move from such interpretations and deal with events of today, based on the principles I mentioned: God is the judge, and peace is the standard state of affairs.

Dr. Elcott: What is unique in at least the Catholic, Islamic, and Jewish traditions, is we all have primary texts. We have our core canon, and yet none of us have accepted those canons as absolute. We continue an interpretative process, which means that we believe the truth is unfolding. So what I'm saying is God knows truth. We only have an approximation of the truth. That's the reason why we continue to interpret. That being the case, I can never claim any absolute truth. I can only claim my own close approximation of that truth, recognizing that what was true 50 years ago or 100 years ago or 500 years ago, has already altered. Our traditions now come with a deeper and more profound truth.

That's what I mean. It's not that there isn't truth in the world or I am relativizing truth. I am relativizing us as the interpreters of truth, and it's a big difference. That's what I was referring to as idolatry. If my truth becomes absolute, that's idolatry. God's truth is there, but I own only a piece of it. I don't own all of it, which is the reason why I need you all in the room with me, because without you I am that much more limited.

Mr. Alkhayat: In reference to an earlier question: Can education be both a tool for evil and for good, such as with Israelis and Palestinians and in Northern Ireland? Absolutely! Education is a tool of technology. It's a very powerful weapon, if you want to use the word. That is why it is very critical to identify what is being taught. Is religion being taught as rituals, as in "we versus them," or is it being taught as systems of values? I respect your freedoms. I respect your dignities.

I think that's where the question lies, if we all agree to say we respect other people, we value

each other's freedoms and dignities, if we are compassionate in our treatment with each other, I don't think we would have the same blatant mistrust between educated Palestinians and educated Israelis. We might have it with other people, but at least not among the educated.

Bishop Wenski: Well, again, truth can grow. I'm not sure if I would use the same language as truth being altered, but it can grow. I think St. Augustine and John Henry Newman spoke to this; an acorn becomes an oak tree, as the oak tree was always present in the acorn. So the acorn doesn't become a coconut tree, and in that sense truth grows and evolves, but there is a consistency.

This is no contradiction, which is also what makes the prospect of people of faith and people of learning being able to work together, because even though some truths come from divine revelation and the other truths come from the workings of reason, they are in no fundamental sense contradictory to each other, because truth - all truth - has the same source, which is God.

Dr. Goodpaster: Are there any other comments that people on the panel wish to make before we give the audience a chance to interact with you? Jeffrey, can I ask you to take over the podium?

Mr. Weiss: Who would like to begin? Congressman Fauntroy followed by Dr. Said. Reverend (Former Member of Congress) Fauntroy: I share two fundamentals about religion in the world, in terms of my understanding of comparative religions.

One is that they are all unifying systems of value that give meaning and purpose to a person's life. Second, we would all agree that to be religious you must act justly, show love, have mercy, and walk humbly with your God. The third fundamental that David (Elcott) raised is what I call the concept of good and evil sin. Sin in my experience, has been defined as the arrogance and self-seeking of man. I think all would agree that that is the essence of sin.

As a matter of fact, during my 20 years in the Congress I insisted that I be known as the Reverend Congressman. When asked what I was doing, I said I'm fighting sin. I'm fighting the arrogance and the self-seeking of man, which uses religion, race, and everything else to deny others the elements that make for the quality of life.

I think the major problem with all of our religions is that we say one thing, and we do another. That is the essence of sin. For that reason, if religion or religiousness can be treated as being interdependent, interrelated, and of equal importance to all that we do in education, we might have a chance of winning some of the fights. But the arrogance of people who think that my way is the way, and everybody else ought to be damned - and no one has what I have, a direct contact as the chosen one.

Mr. Weiss: Thank you, Congressman.

Bishop Wenski: Well, Ph.D.s and peasants can both be sinners. All our faiths give a prominent place to the need for personal purification, repentance, and reconciliation. We do it according to our different traditions, but each of our traditions recognizes that.

Dr. Abdalla: I want to add that I really appreciate, Congressman, that you included justice as a basic human need. I think very often some of those who have written about basic human needs tended to not recognize the need for justice. I appreciate you for that.

Dr. Elcott: I feel like I'm the one who is complicating matters. I've never heard of anyone in recent

years, having seen the damage done in the name of God, stand up and say "I was planning to be a sinner; I'm doing injustice, and I'm being arrogant facing God."

In fact, when I read them, they are saying I am doing justice in this act of violence; I am humbly accepting God's obligation to do this. So again, it seems to me that part of the courage that we have to face in all of our traditions is to say that such language, and such violent actions in the name of God, are no longer acceptable under any circumstance. Perhaps once, 100 years ago, 500 years ago it might have been acceptable, but in today's world, in the 21st Century, such actions aren't acceptable, not in the name of ethical humanism, and certainly not in the name of the religious traditions that we share.

To proclaim that takes courage. It takes courage to stand up and say no to a body of literature, experience, and history that has said such actions are acceptable.

Whether it's on issues of women, minorities, or violence in the name of God, to say no is going to be very hard in each of our settings. It's going to be very hard to do, and we are going to have to work at it.

Bishop Wenski: Just to follow on that, as John Paul II said at the beginning of the war, "War always represents a defeat for humanity."

Mr. Weiss: Thank you, Bishop Wenski. Dr. Said, would you please step up to the mic?

Dr. Said: Experience with truth - those who insist on defining truth violate it, reduce it, minimize it. That has been my experience with those who insist on defining it. Second, in my experience with fundamentalists when I meet with them - and this happens frequently - when they say to me: can you deny that the Quran is the absolute truth, or the Testament, or the Torah? They ask me: can you deny that it is absolute truth? My answer to them: do you have an absolute understanding of the Quran, of the Testament? Do you have absolute understanding?

Truth is scattered all over the place. Our task is to gather it, to find it. I reach this conclusion, because when I came to the United States 53 years ago, I learned from some of my professors that the road to truth is paved with pebbles of Hellenic rationalism. Others said, no, the road to truth is paved with pebbles of febrile Messianism. I have heard in my years that it was paved with pebbles of Islamic revelation. But what have I discovered? The road to truth is paved with a mosaic of Hinduism, Buddhism, Islam, Christianity, Shintoism, Judaism. That's the road to truth, the mosaic. So we are color blind, in that we don't see the unity of it all. Thank you.

Mr. Weiss: Thank you. Other people? Step up to the mic.

Mr. (Sean) Tate: Good afternoon. I have one specific question. In many Arab and Islamic countries, despite the teaching of the Quran that education is open to all, the schooling of girls lags far behind that of boys. So what are Islamic educators, scholars and authorities doing to address this particular disparity and ensuring education for all, as is called for by the United Nations? I don't know who on the panel would like to address that, but I would appreciate it. Thank you.

Dr. Abdalla: Thank you for this question. Definitely there is a problem in the Arab and Muslim world with education of girls that is lagging behind boys' education.

There is a quick answer that most people will give. They will say it's a culture thing. In many of the Islamic countries there are traditions and cultures that are not necessarily coming from Islam that do influence people's behavior, especially when it comes to the role of women, including their right to education. I think, to a great extent, this is absolutely true. I can give illustrative examples of how some of the cultures and traditions put women in a very difficult position, when this has nothing to do with Islam.

Let me give an example quickly from something I saw on ABC News a few years ago when there was an interview about honor killing - a female relative suspected of committing adultery or had some kind of relationship or affair out of the expected norms of the community.

In an interview with the individual who killed his sister because of such suspicion, the young man said that he did so because the Mullahs, the religious leaders, told him that Islamically, this is the right thing to do. He was insistent and proud that he fulfilled his religious duty.

Anyone who knows just a bit about Islam will know that there is nothing in Islam that will dictate to any man to kill another person, including a woman in this situation, or because he suspects that she committed such an act. However, this is an example of how religion and traditions in certain cultures have become mixed together.

Groups who have interests make sure to color many of those traditions with a religious flavor in order to give them legitimacy. That young man who killed his sister believed he had done a good job, because he was fulfilling a religious duty, which he was taught as a religious mandate.

The other part of your question was about what is being done to address education. Efforts have been made for the last 50 plus years to include girls in education. I grew up in Egypt in the Fifties, when it wasn't necessarily under the banner of an Islamic society. It was very clear to us, at that time, the government mandated everyone to send his or her children to school, at least to elementary level. It was a violation of law if you did not send your children to school.

While the modern approach of the government was to encourage education even to the point of making it free of charge, there were people in rural areas, who would not agree to the mandate, as they needed the children to help with their work or because they wanted the daughter to get married early. All stemmed from traditional beliefs. However, over the past century, definitely there have been changes. But I think we need to give it a new push, a push not coming from modernity. Meaning we don't have to rely only on modernization as a justification for education. We also could say religion means education. We need to send this message via media to people so they understand it is the responsibility of every father and mother to educate their children.

I believe there is an opportunity for this, but this is one of the areas we have not explored. As I mentioned earlier, unfortunately, the Islamic tradition has been dominated by legalistic thinking without exploring other options. I think education and the emphasis on education for girls, is a great part in Islam that requires study and action.

Mr. Alkhatay: I could add my personal feelings to this. I have a 6 year old Muslim daughter and the thing I worry about for her is what the world culture, the nonreligious part, is doing, or might do to her and to millions of sisters like her. I worry the way the Arab culture treats the woman, and I worry the way the French Parliament yesterday voted that they are going to stop Muslim women from learning in France.

That's my worry. The worry is when you become secular, heritage and cultural issues manifest themselves on something that we could call girls' education in Islam, or what other Muslims do. Identifying those differences and saying, look, let's deal with this situation. That is the first part of the solution.

Bishop Wenski: And I think that was brought up earlier when they talked about the schools in Morocco, that they had success when they moved out of the state model, because the people felt that the state was imposing a view, a world view, on those children when they adopted a model more consistent with the values of the community.

That's a concern even in this country now, because of secularized education, and the French actions of this past week are to be deplored, because it shows a great intolerance to religious faith and the role of faith in society. It is reducing people who wish to be people of faith, and honor their faith, to the rank of second class citizens in whichever society they are found. It is a marginalization of faith. I think that is where we have conflict today. I said earlier, when we talk about education, we have to test our assumptions about what we mean by education and what we are offering.

The Abrahamic traditions have indeed promoted education. Sometimes the conflicts are not over the value of education but what some people are marketing as education.

Mr. Weiss: Thank you. We have time for a few more questions.

Ms. Wilson: My name is Jessica Kruvant Wilson. I work at Creative Associates. I have a comment and a question for the panel. My comment is this. When I was growing up, in my home there was a painting of one large building, and in the building was a church, a mosque, a temple and a stupa, and it said; "In the house of my Father, there are many homes." So I'd like to thank you all for coming and representing some of those homes.

Also, when we were listening to the comments from Dr. Al-Khayat, I was struck by the correlation between faith and science and the real modernity of that. I'd like the panel to talk a little bit about the extent of Islamic countries experiencing conflict between religious traditions, cultural traditions, and the influences of modernity. If you could tell me a bit about how Islamic scholars are addressing those conflicts, I'd appreciate it.

Mr. Alkhayat: If I could start with throwing some ideas out, I think again that the problems that we are having are cultural issues. There is a big difference between the culture that's prevalent in the countries where Islam is the dominant religion and what Islam is about and what Islam preaches. I view myself as a Muslim. I was brought up Muslim, and I totally dissociate with a lot of the actions that many Muslims in the world do today. So we can't just say, well, these are Islamic scholars, why aren't they advanced in engineering or in something similar.

Here, I want to boast a little bit. My father is a scholar. He is really a scholar in medicine and pathology, and in dictionary writing. The guy writes dictionaries for a hobby.

He is a scholar of Islam because he has studied it on a personal basis. So when we ask whether there are Islamic scholars that are pushing advances of technology or science or the other scientific fields, I don't know if we could just look at the countries and say, well, these countries are backwards in this, so it's really the problem of the Islamists in those countries failing on that. I would love to take a look at the famous scientists that are of Muslim origin and say, well, do these guys really know their religion. And I would venture to bet yes, they do.

Dr. Abdalla: I would add to that. I think you accurately described three elements coming together, modernity, tradition, and religion, and how they influence the situation. One of the problems in the Muslim world over the last 200 years was that most of the advances in technology came from the West or what would be considered the modern world. Diligent efforts were made, especially by Orientalists, to separate the introduction of technology from what societies held in terms of tradition or religion.

It came to the point in the minds of many people of Muslim societies, to say technology and modernity needed to be separate and dichotomous in relation to how they understood their religion.

Of course, this is totally in contradiction with what was described in Dr. Said's presentation.. If there is an issue of separation of science from religion or if there is tension within some traditions, in Islam there is not. However, it was that introduction of modernity via the colonizers and via the West in the last 200 years that made it appear that to be modern was to be Western, and not really Muslim, not really religious.

I think there are efforts being made today to try to combine the two. Scholars in Islam are not all using the same approach. They are as diverse as those who try to interpret Christianity, Judaism, Hinduism or any other tradition, or even the Constitution here in the United States.

I think you will find there are scholars who will not really see the connection, who will continue to focus on interpretations that are void from understanding how knowledge and science is so significant to being a Muslim. I think it is a matter of changing the view that we have of Muslims in general, and trying to embrace our religion in a holistic way. We need to take the comprehensive picture that includes the knowledge, science, love and mercy wholistic.

Bishop Wenski: From the Christian perspective, we have the same tensions. There's a confrontational modernity. There are some groups, because of a lack of confidence in their faith, who have different types of religious expressions of holding on to the antique forms or antique translations, etc.

As there is a movement toward light, there is also a movement toward surrender, of just going with the flow and becoming as modern as everything else and, hopefully, what we are trying to represent today is a third response to modernity, which is engagement, dialogue. It's certainly possible in a country from a position of confidence that the religions - the Abrahamic faiths can dialogue with the world, because we have something to say.

Mr. Weiss: Thank you. Questions? If you would like to ask questions or make a comment, step in line behind a mic, and we are delighted that you are participating. Yes, ma'am?

Ms. Zasloff: My name is Barbara Zasloff, I would ask each one of you from the great faiths of Abraham, what can be done to bring up young people in a way that is both honorable to their own faith and respectful to the others?

Mr. Weiss: Thank you for the question. Good panelists?

Dr. Elcott: We have instituted programs in which Rabbis go to Catholic schools to teach about Judaism, and priests or nuns to Jewish schools to teach.

Part of the dilemma is, you know, our kids don't spend an enormous amount of time learning their own traditions. I've got even more concern about those inaccuracies. Most of the Jewish kids in this country are not great interpreters of Judaism. So part of the dilemma is not only what they don't know about the other religions. It's what they don't know about their own, or the pieces of what they know which actually can be destructive.

Dr. Abdalla: I agree with the Rabbi. Actually, in one project that was mentioned in my introduction, Project LIGHT, which stands for Learning Islamic Guidance for Human Tolerance, our goal is to explain the misperceptions and misconceptions about Islam to non-Muslims in the Washington area. In order to do that, we started first with groups of Muslims. We are very aware that there are misunderstandings and misconceptions in the midst of the Muslim communities as well. If we do not alter this, if we do not move people to understand the truths of tolerance and peaceful coexistence from their own heritage and tradition, how then can we ask those people to speak to others of tolerance and peaceful coexistence?

So in our process we started with what we called a grounding workshop intended to instruct groups of Muslims as to how concepts of tolerance and peaceful coexistence are inherent in their religion, and how they cannot be good Muslims if they do not embrace those concepts and understand that they come from their own religious tradition.

It's only when we are comfortable that we have modified their knowledge and attitudes about those issues that we are able to prepare them to go and talk to others. Now that we are more comfortable, they are going to others, seeing them with love and ability to embrace what they are saying, and to connect with them.

So I think that every group - again, not just those with Abrahamic creeds but others as well - need to start from within, especially with their children, and get them to see the beautiful light in their own traditions, then to spread it to others.

Mr. Weiss: Thank you. I am going to have to go to the next question.

Ms. Finerberg-Sylvan: My name is Rachel Fineberg-Sylvan. I am with Creative Associates. I want to connect three things that I heard today, and then a question.

First, from our panelists I heard about the great commonality in terms of values and the really wonderful foundation that all of these religions lay for advancing education. I heard from John Greysel and I was inspired by the way he talked about how each of these religions has taken responsibility to act and to actually educate children, not just talk about it, not just say that we have these values. Then I also heard from Katherine Marshall how we are failing in terms of meeting our global educational goals.

So my question is; what responsibility do all three of these global religions have for advancing education in general for all of our children?

Secondly, what are the most likely forums for collaboration among these religions, or how could collaboration be possible on an institutional level for these religions to work together to advance education and to ensure that we can meet our educational goals for all children globally?

Mr. Weiss: Thank you. Would one of the panelists like to start?

Mr. Alkhayat: I think religions are very responsible. I think the responsibility, again, of education is for people who care most about the people, and I can't think of a group that would care more about its citizens and its followers than, let's say, a religious fundamentalist group.

I think the best forum is what we are doing here. You know, when you get people that are willing to come and talk about it, to find the common elements -- I think 98 percent of what we are discussing we all agree on -- you start with that as a foundation. Then you will see amazing things happen.

Wenski: We have to acknowledge those people of faith that, with great personal sacrifice, and at the grassroots level, are opening up schools and working in very difficult circumstances throughout the world. In many countries, the main providers of education are faith based groups, Catholic nuns or whomever in different places. I don't know the statistics now, but I think a few years ago when I was visiting Jerusalem, there were as many kids enrolled in Catholic schools in Jerusalem as there were in the Archdiocese of Miami, and that didn't mean they were all Catholic kids enrolled in those schools.

Dr. Elcott: We have two pulls there. When we talk about education, we're talking about a socializing process of taking values that a society and a culture has, and people experiencing those in a formal educational setting. Most often it is quite informal. It's not even clear to any of us in this room how we became socialized into the culture of which we are a part.

So I don't see it as one or the other. You are trying to have a harmony. The identity crisis is the disharmony between the inner self and society of which you are a part. It causes revolution, causes nervous breakdowns, causes all different types of things. We are trying to seek balance. In that light, we need to be careful that we are not creating another pull between religious education and secular education. Probably every single person in this room has had secular education.

You may have had secular education in religious settings, but they divide it between religious studies and secular studies. Many of us have had significant religious education as well. All of this contributes to who we are as human beings, as leaders involved in producing things.

The Jewish community has the highest college education rate of any ethnic or religious group in the United States. Ironically, many of our kids study Jewish studies for the first time in the university.

Both of these, both the religious education side and secular education are incredibly important. We are looking for all different vehicles.

So part of, I would think, the conversation here is how to use religious connections, religious communities, as a resource for promoting education, not to the exclusion of other resources but of trying to combine them all. Then we wouldn't have those pulls. We would have an integrated self.

Mr. Weiss: Yes?

Dr. Abdalla: I think your question about the truth and whether it is separate from the individual is very intriguing. The emphasis is on the fact that every individual, every human being, has the capacity within herself or himself to understand and reach that truth. How that truth translates into action is what matters. It is not how I see love or God, but it is what I am going to do with it. There is a beautiful verse in the Quran that talks about piety or to being a good person as not about turning your face right or left, meaning turning your face to pray in that direction or in the

other direction, but piety is - and then the verse continues on to list what I would say, what the Congressman described as the five basic human needs, including justice and shelter and helping the needy.

Those seem to be what God, in the Quran, emphasized to be the truths that we need to work toward. This leads me also to add to one question about what we can do in our forums. In forums like this and in other interfaith forums, we need to keep the emphasis, as Dr. Said mentioned earlier, on doing things to address what the Congressman said, the five basic human needs. Translate our actions to reflect what we have in our tradition.

Mr. Weiss: Thank you, Professor. Last questioner.

Ms. Forbes: My name is Phyllis Dicter Forbes. I have to thank all the speakers we had this morning. I think the session turned out, at least for me, to be a lot different than what I expected it to be, and I already expected a lot. So you can imagine, I am happy that I received even more than I expected.

The thought that I am left with is this. We began by saying that education - our speaker told us that education should lead to transnationalism, should take people out of their own culture, and that that transnationalism is built on the ability to dialogue and understand each other and to value diversity, which is what our religion is supposed to teach us, and we are supposed to share our values, our belief in God.

What I think was not discussed - perhaps it is for a later session - is the sense of community that those shared values raise, because it's that sense of community that allows us to face diversity. When communities face diversity and appreciate and honor that diversity, that is what leads to peace and, hopefully, to prosperity and the meeting of all these human needs.

Now where we are lacking today in teaching communities, is in honoring the diversity of other communities. We don't have to go overseas to see that. We see it here today.

This sense of not valuing diversity is being enforced in our everyday lives to the extent that religious leaders such as yourselves must go out and teach about valuing diversity. In this manner you will help us then deal with people in other countries and to value that diversity.

To return to what we began with, we were told by a wonderful mother in this room, and maybe a mother to more than one person in this room, at least spiritually, if not physically? "If you are not for others, what are you?" So, I thank you very much.

Mr. Weiss: Thank you.

Bishop Wenski: Well, you know, perhaps the value or the purpose of education is basically to help us to be comfortable with others, because the human person only realizes himself through a gift of himself to others.

It's through the transcendence of himself - and education and all the human institutions, whether they are family or communities, governments, should serve the human person so that the human

person can in fact make a gift of himself and become a person for others - that the person really finds happiness and meaning and everything.

Dr. Abdalla: I would add to the point of diversity and how to address diversity and make it appreciated in communities. I think the approach of having people first get to understand the notion of tolerance and peaceful coexistence from their own tradition should be a first step.

Then let people talk to other people. It is one thing to have the scholar speak to people about his or her tradition, but I think when you have the average ordinary person, well-educated and strong in their understanding of those concepts, go and speak to people also of the grassroots, I think that builds a kind of connection and bond, and it helps us to overcome some of the misperceptions and to appreciate the diversity.

Mr. Weiss: Thank you very much.

Ms. (Charito) Kruvant: Thank you for coming here. I have the great joy of once more thanking you for being here, for having given us the opportunity to hear what was expressed. So, thanks to all of you for having challenged us.

This facility is usually where big businesses meet, and for us to be here as educators and as people who are struggling to be sure that we tell the world that education matters, values and beliefs matter, tolerance matters, is crucial - for all of us personally and professionally. There will not be trade and there will not be leadership unless we together accept the fact that we need to really change our actions, that none of us knows the whole truth, and that somehow the children need a better opportunity throughout the world.

If we want to continue being the leaders that we are in this nation, throughout the world, commerce will matter, but it will only matter if it does not usurp the rights of others.

So thank you again for being here, and enjoy.

*February 12, 2004
International Trade Center
Washington, DC*

B

Biographies of Participants

(in order of appearance)

Ms. M. Charito Kruvant is founder and President & CEO of Creative Associates International, Inc., a professional and technical services firm that specializes in communities in transition, education, mobilization, & communication, and analysis & information management.

Prior to launching Creative Associates, Ms. Kruvant worked with the Advisory and Learning Exchange as a prominent advocate and program designer for bilingual education and learning disabled programs. Since then, she has been responsible for the founding of centers for bilingual education in several states and has fostered the establishment of community development and education programs in Africa, Asia, Latin America, and the Middle East.

Ms. Kruvant has received numerous awards for her excellence and success in business. Among them are the U.S. Small Business Administration's Women Business Owner of the Year (1985 and 1988); Avon's Women of Enterprise Awards (1988); the National Association of Women Business Owners' Top Women Business Owners (1993-97); the National Association for Women in Education's Women of Distinction Award (1997).and the Entrepreneurial Visionary Award (2003) from the Women's Business Center.

Born in Bolivia and raised in Argentina, Ms. Kruvant received her Bachelor of Arts degree from Colegio Ward in Argentina, and her Master of Arts degree in Early Childhood Development from the University of Maryland. She is a long-time resident of Washington, D.C.

Mr. Jeffrey L Weiss is a Senior Advisor to the President & CEO of Creative Associates International, Inc. Mr. Weiss is a former Peace Corps Volunteer and Peace Corps Country Director, VISTA Volunteer regional training Chief, and U.S. Small Business Administration Deputy District Director. During his 30 years of federal service, Mr. Weiss also was a member of the Department of Justice Senior Executive Service, where he directed the Department's community relations programs, and later the political asylum and refugee programs. At the Department of Justice, Mr. Weiss received both the Attorney General's Distinguished Service award, and the Presidential Rank Award.

Mr. Weiss received his undergraduate degree at Yale University, and his graduate degree in public administration at Southern Methodist University.

Dr. Abdul Aziz Said is the senior ranking professor at The American University and the first occupant of the Mohammed Said Farsi Chair of Islamic Peace. He founded the university-wide Center for Global Peace, which undertakes a range of activities, both on and off campus, aimed at advancing our understanding of world peace. He founded and serves as director of the International Peace and Conflict Resolution Division, in the School of International Service, and is responsible for developing several educational, research, and outreach programs such as the Center for Cooperative Global Development, Project PEN (Providing for Educational Needs), the Washington Semester in International Peace and Conflict Resolution, the Summer Institute for Teachers: Education for Global Citizenship, the Center for Mediterranean Studies, and the Community for Social Change and Political Participation in the Middle East and Africa.

Dr. Said is a frequent lecturer and participant in national and international peace conferences and dialogues and is deeply involved with a number of professional associations and Service Academies. He has lectured in more than one hundred universities in the United States and all over the world. His past and current public service includes consulting with the U.S. Department of State, the Department of Defense, the United Nations and the White House Committee on the Islamic World. He has served as the president of the regional chapter for the International Studies Association and as moderator for the Ecumenical Council of Washington. He advises and serves on the Board of Directors for various international non-governmental organizations including Search for Common Ground, Global Education Associates, the National Peace Foundation, PAX International, International Youth Advocate Program, The Omega Institute, Nonviolence International, and Global Alliance for Transnational Education, International Center for Religion and Diplomacy, and the Jones International University-University of the Web. He also serves on the editorial boards of Human Rights Quarterly and Peace Review.

He has written, co-authored and edited more than fifteen books including Peace and Conflict Resolution in Islam: Precept and Practice, Concepts of International Politics in Global Perspective 4th Edition, Human Rights and World Order, Ethnicity in an International Context, The New Sovereigns: Multinational Corporations as World Powers, Theory of International Relations: The Crisis of Relevance, Ethnicity in an International Contexts, Ethnicity and U.S. Foreign Policy and articles on various aspects of world politics. Professor Said's deep commitment to nonviolence, human rights, political pluralism, cultural diversity, and ecological balance has furthered the expansion of Peace and Conflict Resolution as a field of study throughout the world.

Ms. Katherine Marshall works in the field of international development, with a focus on issues for the world's poorest countries. She is a senior officer of the World Bank, where she has worked since 1971. She is currently responsible for a broad range of issues turning around ethics, values, rights and faith in development work, and serves as Counselor to the President of the World Bank. Until September 2000 she was Director for Social Policy and Governance in the East Asia and Pacific Region, where she helped to lead and coordinate the World Bank's work across the social sectors during the East Asia crisis years, striving to keep the focus on the fight against poverty, and against corruption. Ms. Marshall also served as Country Director in the World Bank's Africa region, focusing on the Sahel region, and on Southern Africa, and had assignments also working on Eastern Africa and Latin America.

Ms. Marshall is a graduate of Wellesley College and the Woodrow Wilson School at Princeton University (MPA '69). She serves on the Boards of several NGOs, and most prominently was engaged in the creation and development of the World Faiths Development Dialogue (WFDD). She speaks and publishes widely on issues for international development.

Dr. John Ryan, currently Senior Education Advisor to Creative Associates International, Inc., was the Chief of Party of the Morocco Education for Girls (MEG) Project from 1999-2003. The MEG Project, implemented for USAID by a consortium headed by Creative Associates, sought and succeeded in substantially increasing the enrollment of girls in rural primary schools in pilot zones across Morocco. Overall, nearly a million Moroccan children, girls and boys alike, benefited from the impact of the MEG Project. Prior to joining Creative Associates, Dr. Ryan served UNESCO as Senior Advisor on Basic Education, Coordinator of the United Nations International Literacy Year (1990), Chief of the Literacy Section responsible for UNESCO's worldwide programs in literacy, and Director of UNESCO's research institute on Literacy.

Dr. Ryan is a former Fulbright scholar and holds a Ph.D. from Stanford University and a Master of International Affairs from Columbia University. He has worked in over 30 countries and has lived for extended periods in Iran and Morocco. His presentation concerns the nexus between religious faith and educational philosophy and practice.

Dr. Kenneth E. Goodpaster is the David and Barbara Koch Endowed Chair in Business Ethics at St. Thomas. He teaches undergraduate, MBA, and executive educational classes. Prior to joining St. Thomas, he taught at the Harvard Business School and University of Notre Dame.

Dr. Goodpaster's research has spanned a wide range of topics, from conceptual studies of ethical reasoning to empirical studies of the social implications of management decision making. He is the author of three books and numerous articles. He also serves on several editorial review boards and the boards of directors of the Center for Ethical Business Cultures (CEBC) and CommonBond Communities. Work in progress includes a monograph for executives on ethical awareness and a new casebook on business ethics.

Dr. Goodpaster earned his Ph.D. and A.M. in philosophy from the University of Michigan. He has an A.B. in mathematics from the University of Notre Dame.

Most **Reverend Thomas Wenski**, born in West Palm Beach on October 18, 1950, grew up in Lake Worth, Florida where he attended Catholic school at his home parish, Sacred Heart. He studied at St. John Vianney Minor Seminary in Miami and later at St. Vincent de Paul Major Seminary in Boynton Beach, and was ordained a priest of the Archdiocese of Miami on May 15, 1976. He earned a B.A. Degree in Philosophy (1972), a Masters of Divinity (1975), from the Boynton Beach Seminary, and in 1993 an MA from the School of Sociology of Fordham University in New York. He has also taken summer courses at the Catholic University of Lublin (Poland).

Bishop Wenski served three years as associate pastor of Corpus Christi Church, a mainly Hispanic parish in Miami. In 1979, after briefly ministering in Haiti, he was assigned to the newly established Haitian Apostolate of the Archdiocese. He was associate director and then director of the Pierre Toussaint Haitian Catholic Center in Miami from that time to his appointment as a Bishop in 1997. Bishop Wenski also served concurrently as pastor of three Haitian mission parishes in the Archdiocese - Notre-Dame d'Haiti in Miami, Divine Mercy in Fort Lauderdale, and St. Josephin Pompano Beach. Through the 1980's he also conducted a circuit-riding ministry that led

him to help establish Haitian Catholic communities from Homestead in the south to Fort Pierce to the north, Immokalee to the West and Fort Lauderdale to the east. In the early 1980's his outreach to Haitians led him to preach in migrant camps near Lake Wales and Winter Haven. The Pierre Toussaint Haitian Catholic Center in addition to providing for the pastoral and spiritual needs of the Haitian communities of South Florida also provided numerous social, educational and legal services to newly-arrived Haitian immigrants.

Dr. David Elcott, the U.S. Inter-religious Affairs Director of the American Jewish Committee, is an author, lecturer, and organizational consultant who has brought his insights and analyses of contemporary life and our relations with the wider world to well over 100 communities across North America. As the former Vice-President of the National Jewish Center for Learning and Leadership, Dr. Elcott was responsible for helping communal leaders, rabbis, Jewish communal professionals, and youth leaders address issues of pluralism and the core Jewish values we bring to the challenges of leadership. In his present role, Dr. Elcott represents American Jewry to all the religious communities of the United States with a passion for social justice, peace, advocacy of the Jewish people, and communal change.

Dr. Elcott holds a Ph.D. in Political Psychology and Middle East Studies with a specialty in Islam and Arab culture.

Dr. M. Haytham Al-Khayat is Senior Policy Adviser to the Regional Director of the World Health Organization (WHO) Eastern Mediterranean Regional Office and the Director of the WHO Arabic Programme. He taught at the Faculty of Medicine at Damascus University and Brussels University for 22 years. Dr. Al-Khayat is a member of the Academy of Arabic language in Damascus, Cairo, Baghdad, Aligarh and the new Academy of Science and is a member of the Board of Governors of the Islamic Organisation for Medical Sciences. In addition, he is a member of more than 20 scientific societies in various Arab, European, and American countries, including the Royal Society for Health (UK), the Academy of Political Sciences (USA), the National Geographic Society (USA), the Planetary Society (USA), American Institute of Biological Sciences, and American Association for the Advancement of Science.

Dr. Al-Khayat is Editor-in-Chief of the Eastern Mediterranean Health Journal, author of 20 books in Arabic, French and English, including some dictionaries, and published more than 70 articles in various fields, in Arabic, English, French, German and Italian.

Dr. Al-Khayat holds an M. D. from Damascus University and a Ph. D. from Brussels University in Belgium. He has studied Islamic Sciences in Damascus for almost 20 years.

Dr. Amr Abdalla serves as an adjunct Professor in the Department of Peace and Conflict Resolution, George Mason University, Fairfax, VA. He recently accepted a position as a visiting Professor to the University of Peace, San Jose, Costa Rica. Early in his career Dr. Abdalla served as an Assistant District Attorney for the Egyptian Government. He has extensive experience in conflict resolutions situations, and has served on Missions to Ruanda, Iraq, and Northern Ireland.

At the request of the Agency for International Development Dhaka Mission, Dr. Abdalla recently traveled, with a team, to Bangladesh and conducted an assessment of the Bangladeshi Madrassa Education system.

