



Address of Grand Ayatollah Mohammad Taqi al-Modarresi



Grand Ayatollah Mohammad Taqi al-Modarresi was born in the holy city of Karbala in Iraq, from a family that has worn the robe of religious authority for over a century. He received his degree in Islamic jurisprudence when he was only 20. He has contributed with his instructions and guidance to many Islamic movements, and is currently the leader of the Islamic Action Organization in Iraq. He has established many religious seminaries in different countries, the most distinguished being the Al-Qaem circle, with students from over 35 countries who carry out missionary duties. He has enriched the Islamic library with a large set of studies and over 400 books treating various issues with a modern Islamic vision inspired by the Holy Quran and the sayings of the Imams.

CEREMONY FOR THE SIGNING OF THE JOINT DECLARATION OF RELIGIOUS LEADERS AGAINST SLAVERY

Casina Pio IV, Tuesday, 2 December 2014

In the name of God, the Gracious, the Merciful

“O mankind! Lo! We have created you from male and female, and have made you nations and tribes that ye may know one another. Lo! the noblest of you, in the sight of God, is the best in conduct. Lo! God is Knower, Aware.”

Peace be upon Adam and Noah#. Peace be upon Abraham and Ishmael. Peace be upon Isaac and Jacob. Peace be upon Moses and Jesus. Peace be upon Mohammad; God’s Messenger, and upon his immaculate progeny. Peace be upon the Prophets of God and His# righteous servants.

Dear religious leaders and heads of denominations, I greet you with the salutation of Islam; Salam!

God created creatures and embedded within their conscience the intellect, inscribed with His glorious names and blessed words, thus providing them with a roadmap to their perfection and happiness. For God is the Beneficent and Merciful. He, therefore, planted the seeds of mercy within our souls. God is the Invulnerable and the Honorable, so there exists a yearning for honor in all of us. God is Great and Lofty, and every human seeks greatness and perfection.

But perhaps the greatest of all divine blessings upon us is dignity, for He was the one who dignified the children of Adam. From dignity emerges freedom, and from freedom originates every virtue.

God, then placed the burden of carrying His words and his names upon righteous men and women, who are appointed as messengers and godly preachers, to remind humankind of the names reflected within them. We, the leaders of the world’s religions and scholars of the faiths, carry a tremendous burden and a great responsibility; to deliver to humankind the injunction that they must revert back to their conscience and safeguard their dignity, for doing so will allow us to uproot all the causes of evil and corruption. We must also remind them of God’s words and revelations that guide us towards connecting with Him to rid ourselves of aberration, darkness, and delusion.

No one must take others as slaves, nor to transgress on their rights, be it in part or in whole, big or small. Humankind is the creation of God, and so is every living being. So even corrupting the environment or any living organisms is cause for being distanced from our Lord, thus isolating us from our happiness.

It is, therefore, the perverted understanding of religion which is the greatest evil. Caused by ignorance, it has led to division and discord as well as the creation of barriers between those who genuinely strive to seek divine guidance. It is these very barriers that have contributed to religion being undermined and weakened in the public sphere. Today we must exert additional efforts to tear down those walls and destroy those barriers so that religions can be united under the umbrella of a united word. This must be followed by joint action in order to establish the glorious names of God on earth and preach a better future and a more fulfilling life for humanity, a life of love and peace, a life of mutual perfection and cooperation. God says: “Say, #O people of the Book#! Come to a common word between us and you, that we do not worship but God”. Therefore, every servitude towards other than Him is utter humiliation, as well as a perversion of our very nature which God Has made as a lantern of guidance for all human beings.

Distinguished conveners; we must work in unison to salvage humans from the darkness of bondage, from poverty and disease, from the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, and from the egregious inequality among the classes of human society, and the destruction of the environment, precisely because religion is linked to the Lord who is dominant over all things. So if religious leaders and scholars, with the backing of believers, carried out their duties, God's hand will be with them and help them achieve their lofty objectives, allowing them to contribute towards creating a better life for all people. God says: O you who believe! If you help God, He will help you and will make your foothold firm." [47:7]

The legacy of our Prophet, the prophet of mercy, and that of his immaculate Household, embodied these noble ideals. The the reformation movement carried out by his grandson Imam Hussein – the greatest martyr in history who was slain in Karbala – was for emancipation from slavery in all its forms and manifestations. In his darkest moments Hussein equated between a slave and the dearest of his sons, by placing his cheek on Salem – a Turkish slave – as he did with the fruit of his eye Ali Akbar. It was the Prophet and his Holy Household who asserted time and again that as far as humanity is concerned, the Lord is One, and the Father is one, any deviation from this principle is a declaration of war against humanity and its conscience.

I invite you with determination, confidence, and insistence to discover these personalities, for they are symbols of good and the epitome of virtue and purity. Connecting to them is to connect to true liberation from shackles and from bondage. I urge you in this historic summit to open up to this ocean of morality, one without an end to its depth nor a limit to its breadth.

In conclusion, I would like to offer a set of recommendations:

1. Let us unite around the axis of divine religion for the salvation of humanity, to rid it of partisanship and war by inviting all towards the Lord, not to ourselves.
2. To break through the barriers and walls erected between the spectra of the singular divine religion of God.
3. Let us not call for a mere dialogue of civilizations, but also to the integration of civilizations and all peoples on the basis of love and renunciation of hatred.
4. I call for the heads of divine religions to take courageous initiatives to save humanity from the agony of poverty and deprivation, the suffering of preventable and treatable diseases, the horrid global arms race, environmental damage, as well as slavery in all its forms.
5. The formation of a permanent body recognized internationally (akin to UNICEF) to uproot the evil of slavery on a cultural level, and see criminals prosecuted and punished for forced labor and slavery.

Thank you and may God bless you.