

**Dr Abdulaziz Othman Altwaijri**

**IMPEDIMENTS TO PEACE  
IN TODAY'S WORLD  
Dangers and Challenges**

---

Publications of the Islamic Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization  
(ISESCO) 1439A.H./2017

---



## TABLE OF CONTENTS

❖ Preface .....	5
❖ Quranic guidance .....	
❖ Diversity is a manifestation of Allah's greatness .....	
❖ The legitimate necessity of war .....	
❖ Peace from the Islamic perspective .....	
❖ Five major impediments .....	
❖ A comprehensive multi-pronged approach .....	
❖ Promoting the values of dialogue strengthens peace .....	
❖ Promoting the culture of peace .....	
❖ Establishing justice and equity .....	
❖ Ramifications of religious extremism .....	
❖ The war on Islam .....	
❖ No peace between nations without peace between religions	
❖ Integrated efforts .....	

## **PREFACE**

Today our world is witnessing a spiraling escalation in manifestations of hatred, racism, religious and ethnic intolerance, and also violence and terrorism, as international peace and security pursuing institutions stand by in helplessness, unable to fulfill their missions and shoulder their responsibilities. These manifestations are further compounded by the disagreements opposing superpowers over influence areas and interests, disagreements that have gone far beyond healthy competitiveness to evolve into loathsome conflicts. Before such challenges and grave dangers and with the demands for peace growing on many a front and threats worsening, international political circles have plunged into a state of disarray and uncertainty, despair almost extinguishing the last glimmer of hope. The international community is now prey to many apprehensions and fears, anxiously and expectantly hoping for the dawn of a new era where peace prevails, global conditions are once again stable, and nations and peoples coexist in all safety and security.

Global peace-building has become a permanent focus of the international conferences and symposia convened on various occasions by international and regional organizations and scientific, academic and cultural institutions that pursue similar interests. In this regard, the International Peace Conference was held in Cairo from 27 to 28 April 2017 at the invitation of al-Azhar al-Sharif and the Muslim Elders Council, and in the presence of many religious leaders and intellectual, scientific, cultural and academic elites from around the world. The conference was opened with a poignant speech of great scientific worth and humanitarian significance by

His Excellency Sheikh Dr. Ahmed al-Tayeb, Sheikh of al-Azhar al-Sharif and President of the Muslim Elders Council. A highlight of this Conference's closing session was the presence of Pope Francis who delivered a speech during which he stressed the shared human responsibility of removing all barriers to the edification of world peace.

I took part in this World Conference with a paper titled **Impediments to Peace in Today's World: Dangers and Challenges**. In this paper, I analyzed the concept of peace and highlighted its significance as underscored by the Quran. I reviewed five major obstacles to peace and security in the world, namely conflicts between superpowers, the arms industry and trade, religious and ethnic intolerance, the covetousness by superpowers of the riches of developing countries and the imbalance of the global economic system. I then explained the dangers of these impediments and reviewed the challenges facing human societies at this phase of their history, attributing them to some of the factors behind them. I concluded that dialogue, in its profound and broad sense, is the gateway to infinite peace. In the process of this analysis, and in light of this conclusion, I could only emphasize that the promotion of dialogue and peace values equates establishing security, reinforcing stability and consolidating peace.

I need not explain my reasons for choosing to address this important subject at this Conference. It has become abundantly clear that global peace is under siege in many ways, that the incentives to peace are much fewer than its many impediments, that the chances of overcoming all these negatives are weaker than the risks of their

proliferation and spread, and that the threats besieging humanity as a result of the volatile conditions prevailing in many parts of our world have become a threat to security and peace, not only in the hotspots of armed conflict and ethnic and religious strife, but throughout the world.

Conscious of the nature of the threats that undermine world peace and wreak havoc, at varying degrees of gravity, with the stability of human societies, and fully cognizant of the fast-paced changes that the world is experiencing today, I stressed the crucial importance of a comprehensive and multipronged approach to handling the international crises resulting from the growing impediments to peace, and the need for the international community to close ranks in order to promote the culture of peace, the importance of justice and equity and of the need to lay the foundations of good governance to achieve the necessary measure of social justice and global sustainable development. I concluded that there can be no peace among nations without peace between religions. The latter is based on the promotion of dialogue among cultures, civilizations and the followers of religions, with the intent of building bridges of trust and seating human relations on a solid foundation of harmony, tolerance, mutual respect and coexistence between nations and peoples, as laid down in the Charter of the United Nations and the principles of international law.

The study, published also in Arabic and French, shows that many of the wars, conflicts and disputes unfolding in different regions were triggered by religious extremism, sectarian strife, the distorted understanding of the principles of religion, and the misinterpretation

of religious texts by groups claiming, and believing, to be right while others are wrong. This conclusion led me to understand that the most crucial duty of religious leaders, whether those speaking for Islam, Christianity or Judaism, or for other creeds adhered to by the world's different peoples, is to successfully accomplish the mission of disseminating the values of peace, since religion is the quintessence of peace.

I believe that an objective approach to peace issues and their implications, if widely disseminated and in different languages, will contribute to enhancing civilizational awareness of the message of peace, promote the values of dialogue and rapprochement between cultures and civilizations and mutual understanding and coexistence among the followers of religions, mobilizing all efforts to serve the peace-building industry.

May Allah grant us success and guide us onto the straight path.

**Dr Abdulaziz Othman Altwaijri**

Director General of  
the Islamic Educational, Scientific  
and Cultural Organization (ISESCO)

## Quranic guidance

Many verses in the Noble Quran indicate that the norm in interactions with non-Muslims is peace and understanding, not war and conflict. The word «peace», in all its forms, is mentioned in the Holy Quran one hundred and forty times, while the word 'war', with its derivatives, was mentioned six times only. Sheikh Mahmoud Shaltout, may God have mercy on his soul, considered that peace is a primordial state that favors cooperation and mutual acquaintance and the prevalence of goodness among people. If non-Muslims adhere to peace, they become the brothers of Muslims in humanity in the eyes of Islam.<sup>(1)</sup> Ali Ibn Abi Talib, may Allah be pleased with him, is reported to have written in his letter to Malik ibn al-Ashtar when he appointed him as governor of Egypt: **“People are two kinds, either your brothers in religion, or your equals in humanity.”**

Since peace is the norm in human relations, it automatically becomes the desired purpose of all human beings, Muslims and followers of other religions alike. They all share a predisposition to peace, are partners in building and sustaining it and in overcoming its impediments and removing the obstacles barring its path. Peace is the umbrella under which all people seek shelter from the heat of strife and the weight of tensions that engender wars and conflicts.

Mankind are one universal community [*Mankind was one single nation.*]<sup>(2)</sup> Differences in color and language are only a manifestation of God's creation [*And among His Signs is the creation of the*

---

(1) Sheikh Mohamed Shaltout: *al-Islam 'Aqida wa Shari'a*, page 394, 20<sup>th</sup> edition, Dar al-Shorouq, Cairo, 2010.

(2) *Al-Baqara*, verse 213.

***heavens and the earth, and the variations in your languages and your colours: verily in that are Signs for those who know.***"<sup>(3)</sup>

Good deeds undertaken for the greater good of all people are the only measure of difference: [***Those who believe (in the Qur'an), and those who follow the Jewish (scriptures), and the Christians and the Sabians,- any who believe in Allah and the Last Day, and work righteousness, shall have their reward with their Lord; on them shall be no fear, nor shall they grieve.***]<sup>(4)</sup> It is based on this rule that Islam defines its perception of people, as diverse in colors and creeds as they may be.

## **Diversity is a manifestation of Allah's greatness**

For Islam, differences in color and language are a phenomenon that embodies the greatness of Allah the Creator, and how all mankind arose from a single origin and their religions sprang from one and the same source. Texts that set faith and good deeds alone as the criterion of superiority among people are highly significant. They clearly proclaim that if the followers of all religions adhere to the original teachings of their religions after purging them of additions, distortions, ambiguities and misunderstandings, there would be no reason to fear or be aggrieved about anything.<sup>(5)</sup>

Peace is indubitably the norm in human relations: [***O ye who believe! Enter into Islam whole-heartedly.***]<sup>(6)</sup> The formulation of greetings

---

(3) *Al-Rum*, verse 22.

(4) *Al-Baqara*, verse 62.

(5) Dr Mohamed Hamid Allah: *Dawlat al-Islam wal 'Alam*, page 70. Translated by Fathi Osman, Silsilat al-Thaqafa al-Islamiyya (38), Cairo. Undated.

(6) *Al Baqara*, verse 208.

in Islam is peace, and the promised heaven in Islam is called the peaceable abode. The source of peace is also one of the most beautiful names of Allah: ***[Allah is He, than Whom there is no other god;- the Sovereign, the Holy One, the Source of Peace (and Perfection), the Guardian of Faith, the Preserver of Safety, the Exalted in Might, the Irresistible, the Supreme.]***<sup>(7)</sup> Islam makes provision for an objective self-censorship from within and from outside the human psyche in order to preserve world peace by seeking reforms first through counsel and then progressing to the use of force for deterrence: ***[If two parties among the Believers fall into a quarrel, make ye peace between them: but if one of them transgresses beyond bounds against the other then fight ye (all) against the one that transgresses until it complies with the command of Allah; but if it complies then make peace between them with justice and be fair: for Allah loves those who are fair (and just).]***<sup>(8)</sup> These are the rules of a sound approach to stability and cooperation in what serves the greater and common good of the Islamic community.

Peace, therefore, is reconciliation and peacefulness. It is also the return to the state of peace after hostilities: ***[Therefore if they withdraw from you but fight you not, and (instead) send you (Guarantees of) peace, then Allah Hath opened no way for you (to war against them).]***<sup>(9)</sup>

---

(7) *Al-Hashr*, verse 23.

(8) *Al Hujurat*, verse 9.

(9) *Al-Nissaa*, verse 90.

## The legitimate necessity of war

War becomes legitimate by virtue of the necessity that makes the forbidden lawful, to fend off onslaughts and protect entities. Once war breaks out, Islam applies its own code of conduct which does not permit the killing of a woman, a child or a non-combatant monk, nor does it allow the pursuit of a retreating enemy or finishing off an injured person. Islam takes its guidance even to the battlefield in words and deeds **[If one amongst the Pagans ask thee for asylum, grant it to him, so that he may hear the word of Allah. And then escort him to where he can be secure.]**<sup>(10)</sup> When the enemy shows signs of retreating, this signals the need to return to the initial state which is one of peace **[But if the enemy incline towards peace, do thou (also) incline towards peace, and trust in Allah.]**<sup>(11)</sup> Peace or its guarantee is the ultimate goal from beginning to end, and bringing those seeking shelter to safety in times of war is a legitimate duty in order to reinstate peace on earth and spread the wings of security over society.

While some interpreters consider that the intention behind the verse **[O ye who believe, enter into peace all of you]** is the state of non-war, others take it further to mean obedience and peacefulness, or in other words (to do all things good and all forms of righteousness), or (enter into Islam in its entirety and with all its provisions and laws). If we contemplate this verse we will see that the link between entering into a full state of peace and not following

---

(10) *Al-Tauba*, verse 6.

(11) *Al-Anfal*, verse 61. Ibid, from the introduction of the translator, page 8.

Satan's temptations is an injunction from the Almighty not to fall into the state opposite to peace, which is any state in which the lead of Satan is taken. This is the state of turmoil and chaos that God described as worse than murder itself. This is how it is possible to understand this noble verse in light of verse 61 of *al-Anfal* where peace is described as the antithesis of war.

Peace, one of Allah's beautiful names, is used to convey the sense of peacefulness that Allah described himself by, using the noun form to express the ultimate in peacefulness or the quintessence of peace and intimating that the Almighty's attributes can only be devoid of injustice or tyranny. There is one hadith that states that «*Allah is peace*»<sup>(12)</sup>. This is the true source of peace in Islam and it permeates the Muslim persona, turning it into an advocate of peace in words and deeds. The Muslim promotes the values of peace, contributes to overcoming the obstacles hindering the road to this peace and avoids any elements that could result in a declaration of war.

## **Peace from the Islamic perspective**

These are the profound meanings that convey the sense of peace as perceived from the perspective of Islam and which must remain alive in the Muslim conscience. These meanings are the true source of the contemporary notion of peace that is enshrined in international law. Much can be said on this subject though now is not the time to

---

(12) Narrated by al-Bukhari.

indulge in it, and I have published a number of in-depth studies on some of its aspects, both in English and in French.<sup>(13)</sup>

There is no doubt that the classic definition of peace is the state contrary to war and violence. In this state, an atmosphere of tranquility, serenity and quietude prevails, as opposed to fear, anxiety and turmoil. Peace is the opposite of conflict and the antithesis of verbal and physical violence, be it between individuals or groups and States. It is also proof that mankind's primordial state is one of peace. However, conflict has existed on earth since humanity numbered less than the fingers of one hand. This landscape later evolved into one of conflict between man and the environment, causing Earth to lose its peace.<sup>(14)</sup> The situation also evolved into conflicts between nations and peoples, and in many cases into conflicts that divide the same people, under the pressures, manipulations and influences of foreign parties that plot to destroy the cohesive fabric of national unity and jeopardize social peace.

## Five major impediments

In today's world, there are many obstacles to the establishment of peace and security, undermining oppressed peoples' rights, dignity and freedom. The most important of these obstacles are:

- 
- (13) Such as '*Islam and Religious Coexistence on the Threshold of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*' (1998), *Human Rights in the Teachings of Islam* (2011), *The State and Human Rights in Islamic Thought* (2014), *Democracy from an Islamic Perspective* (2005), all of which are publications of the Islamic Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization.
- (14) Emile Amine: *Dawr al-Adyane fi Siyadat Mafhoum al-Salam al-'Alami, al-Tafahum Magazine*, issue 37, 2012, Muscat.

- 1- Conflicts between powerful countries holding the veto right at the UN Security Council and which give precedence to their own interests and serve their strategies at the expense of world peace and security. This right has been used many times to abort decisions that could have contributed to establishing peace and preventing injustice and oppression, and thus would have protected the world from the pitfalls of conflict and extremism.
- 2- The industry and trade of arms that feed and thrive on wars, conflicts and tension. These are a corrupt industry and trade since their outcome is invariably desolation and murder, evolving outside the scope of United Nations resolutions. In fact, superpowers often seek to test their new weapons in fabricated wars that massacre innocent people in different parts of the world.
3. Religious and ethnic fanaticism that spawns violent extremism and hatred and is a source and a motive of terrorism.
- 4- The greed and covetousness of major powers for the wealth of developing countries and their markets, and their support of corrupt regimes that facilitate the fulfillment of these ambitions. This results in conflicts and domestic strife and maintains these countries in a constant state of chaos, backwardness and dependency.
- 5- The imbalance of the global economic system and the deep disparities it creates among social strata where the poor grow poorer and the wealthy amass more riches. This fuels anger and resentment and leads to unrest, conflict and the squandering of efforts and time.

In light of these impediments, developments and the fast-paced transformations unfolding in today's world and that carry within them momentous challenges and grave dangers in many ways, the al-Azhar World Please Conference will discuss the challenges to world peace, examine ways to overcome these challenges, and develop a road map with the intent of improving the security of nations and societies and building a solid foundation of social peace, harmony and co-existence under universal justice, security and global harmony.

## **A comprehensive multi-pronged approach**

The pragmatic study of these challenges and threats, regardless of their nature, can yield very important results that pave the way for dealing with their ensuing complications and halt their repercussions. Multi-pronged political and security processes, though crucially important and with an undisputed impact, are not always cost-effective if they are not backed up by thorough methodological studies by experts, researchers and academics with extensive know-how and specialized knowledge. Thought is combined with action, and theory with application on the ground. It is thus essential to link the promotion of peace with the consolidation of the culture of dialogue as a means of highlighting the strong correlation between peace and dialogue. There can be no durable and firmly-seated peace without a responsible dialogue between stakeholders within the same country and then between stakeholders within a given region, after which dialogue ascends to the plane of the entire human family, regardless of the diversity of cultures and religions.

In its profound sense and broad meaning, any dialogue that serves as a prelude to peace can have neither threshold nor limit, and that

is the dialogue of cultures and civilizations and the followers of all religions. It is also the dialogue of citizens within the same state, regardless of their different inclinations, doctrines and orientations, South-South dialogue, and the dialogue of the Mediterranean Basin countries, a region to which the roots of all three divine religions can be traced. The common objective of all these forms of dialogue, despite their different fields and motivations, is to build peace in minds and on earth in order to bring about a safe and prosperous future for all mankind.

## **Promoting the values of dialogue strengthens peace**

With this theoretical foundation in mind, the promotion of dialogue and peace values becomes a guarantee of security, of the prevalence of stability and the consolidation of peace at all levels. Exploring the optimal and most effective ways of promoting these values also becomes the gateway to establishing peace, with the profound connotations such statement entails. The correlation between dialogue and peace becomes irreducible since dialogue paves the way for and leads to peace. The noble values common to these two components are the lofty moral values that predominantly arise from the divine messages and human cultures that have accumulated over the course of time and have come to embody the sum of inherited wisdom and profound human contents that constitute the thread running down the ages. These values need to be anchored in minds and hearts through educational curricula, advocacy platforms, thought and culture forums and through the media.

## **Promoting the culture of peace**

The culture of peace serves as a broad base for the culture of dialogue and on all fronts and stems from divine religions. Cultural peace is the cornerstone of actual peace on earth because it embodies peace of mind, spirit and conscience. It is a consolidation of security, the strengthening of cooperation, and the achievement of political integration, economic prosperity and social development in the effort to confront escalating threats of violence, extremism and fanaticism, the spread of terrorism under all its forms, the high rates of forced and voluntary migration, human trafficking, spiraling organized crime, drug trafficking and arms smuggling, as well as the spread of atheism and debauchery and their role in the corruption of human life.

All of these are serious challenges and dangers that hamper peace-building efforts. They can only be confronted and overcome by advancing the principles of a global peace founded on values of a creative dialogue that promotes healthy relations between nations and peoples, based on mutual respect, the rejection of fanaticism and extremism and the promotion of the culture of peace, harmony and peaceful coexistence.

One of the weighty challenges and threats facing the world today, particularly in the Middle East and North Africa, is the spiraling phenomenon of terrorism. This senseless and savage phenomenon is utterly rejected by Islam and criminalized by international law. Terrorism, in all its forms and under any name, is the farthest removed from Islam which advocates justice, compassion, mercy, peace, the respect of human dignity and the prevention of bloodshed and of

all kinds of corruption on earth. Thus, when politicians, intellectuals and media institutions in the West associate terrorism with Islam they are in fact expressing contempt for the true faith, fabricating fallacies and distorting the truth. Islam is innocent of terrorist groups, terrorism is utterly reprehensible and terrorists are despicable murderers who are totally condemned by Muslims.

## **Establishing justice and equity**

This confirms in absolute terms the need for fairness and equity in the way Islam is perceived by those who direct the arrows of slander at it and consider it liable for what is in fact extraneous to it. The culture of peace in Islam is much nobler than a mere political culture or a transient fad. It is so deeply-seated and well established as to be part and parcel of the perennial components of the Muslim personality. Peace is a lofty value that has been promoted by all religions, except when perverted by some the followers of these religions who prefer to sow dissent and enmity among people and to spread injustice and tyranny in violation of the rights of peoples.

Religious leaders from all backgrounds and levels and who carry the torch of peace, shoulder today and at all times the weighty responsibility of disseminating the culture of peace, religious coexistence and the values of tolerance. These leaderships have the advantage of the ability to strongly influence their followers by steering thoughts towards rationality and religious awareness, both of which keep human beings at shelter from the pitfalls of deviation and extremism and from sliding into the perils of harming themselves and others, violating rights and undermining dignity.

These leaders are the peacemakers, as long as they are guided by divine messages. Once they deviate from this divine guidance, they become, unknowingly, the makers of war.

## **Ramifications of religious extremism**

Today's reality has shown that many of the wars and conflicts playing out in various parts of the world are the result of religious extremism, sectarian strife, the corrupt understanding of the principles of religion, and the misinterpretation of religious texts by groups claiming to be right and considering all others as wrong. This prompts us to say that those who use religion to justify belligerence and to corrupt the earth, those who see themselves as religious leaders with the divine mandate to change the world by the force of arms, are in fact the enemies of God, the nemeses of religion and the guardians of evil. They must be dealt with carefully, using different methods of influence and an enlightened mind, resorting to tight coordination and cooperation to join efforts in order to instate peace on earth and spread the values of tolerance, coexistence and harmony among nations and peoples.

This is the key duty of religious leaders, whether they speak for Islam, Christianity, Judaism, or any other creeds followed by the world's tapestry of nations, because these leaders are meant to hold the torch of peace high and because religion is in truth the quintessence of peace.

## **The war on Islam**

The war waged today on Islam by extremists, both abroad and at home, is in fact a war directed at all religions. Its goal is to eliminate

religiosity and break the bond between man and religious faith, in order to give free rein to fallacies, deviant principles and global chaos. His eminence the Grand Imam Sheikh Dr. Ahmed al-Tayeb shed more clarity on this bitter reality when he said at the conference on **"Freedom and citizenship: diversity and integration"**: *"If religious institutions in the East and the West do not join efforts to confront it, Islamophobia will soon or late extend its claws to Christianity and Judaism. When that happens, no good will come from repeating the old piece of wisdom, «You killed me when you killed the black ox". Those who lie in wait to ambush religion are all atheists who proclaimed the death of God and are singing the tune of material philosophies. They rise from the dungeons of Nazism and Communism, advocate drug use, the destruction of the family, the establishment of the gender system and abortionism.»*<sup>(15)</sup>

The Sheikh of al-Azhar went on to say at this Conference: *«This is the appeal that is gaining in momentum and evolving today, demanding that this become one of the prerogatives of the European Union. All these calls and many others are rearing their heads in full force and will sweep divine religions on their path because, for them, they are the source of all wars. Christianity was the cradle of the Crusades, Islam spreads terror and blood, and there is no better solution but to obliterate religion from the face of the earth. Yet, they choose to remain as silent as a tomb about the casualties of the*

---

(15) Speech of the Grand Imam at the International Conference on **Freedom and Citizenship: diversity and integration**, jointly organized in Cairo on 28 February-1 March 2017 by al-Azhar al-Sharif and the Muslim Elders Council.

*civil wars triggered by atheists and secularists early and towards the middle of the previous century, wars that had absolutely nothing to do with religion. Yet, any child beginning his learning journey can effortlessly pass in review the victims of modern social trends, to establish that out of all the victims of religion, from pre-religious to modern times, history has inventoried numbers that do not even represent one tenth of the tenth of the millions of victims felled, murdered, exiled and tortured in the name of prophecies of which not a single one materialized. Instead, it was simply proven beyond doubt that such prophecies are impossible to materialize.»<sup>(16)</sup>*

Reality on the ground attests to the veracity of the words of His Eminence the Grand Imam. The rising tide of hatred and what has become known as Islamophobia is strong evidence that the world will witness further nefarious developments that will exacerbate the threats to world peace. Atheism, religious denigration and the battle waged by the non-religious against these religions all constitute threats to world peace.

## **No peace between nations without interfaith peace**

In his famous book Islam: ***Past, Present and Future***, Swiss writer Hans Kung<sup>(17)</sup> stresses that no peace can exist between nations in

---

(16) Ibid.

(17) This book was translated into Arabic and authenticated by Rania Khallaf as “*al-Isam ram ala’ml: alkim ala’khalkiah almshtkrah lla’dyan*”, and published in 2007 by Dar al-Shorouq in Cairo.

the absence of peace between religions. An in-depth analysis of Hans Kung's thought leads us to the conclusion that this author earnestly perceives religions as messages of peace and not as tools for adversity. He believes that we live at a time when man possesses modern, old and in between technological means and that the followers of religions, especially the three revealed religions, should do everything in their power to avoid war and to disseminate peace instead. To achieve this, there is no other way but to reread and reinterpret each of the stories that make up their religious legacies<sup>(18)</sup>

The state of relations between the followers of religions, influenced by the state of turbulence prevailing today on the international scene, betrays a considerable failing of the culture of peace in minds and hearts, widespread mistrust and apprehension, and sometimes even hatred and rejection. It is therefore necessary for the concerned leaders of religious groups, thinkers and opinion makers to close ranks in order to spread the values of tolerance in a culture where the Other is accepted and engaged in dialogue to bring hearts closer and confront the currents of fanaticism, hatred, violence and terrorism. The ultimate aim of this worthy endeavor is to spread peace among people and empower them on earth.

## **Integrated efforts**

Many efforts are undertaken by al-Azhar al-Sharif and other Islamic and international organizations and institutions such as the **King**

---

(18) Ibid.

**Abdullah Ibn Abdulaziz International Centre for Interreligious and Intercultural Dialogue** which launched the program **«United against violence in the name of religion»**, and the Islamic Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (ISESCO) which has and continues to implement programs and activities for the promotion of the culture of peace and intercultural and interfaith dialogue. These include events such as the International Conference on **«Promoting a culture of mutual respect and human solidarity among the followers of religions»**, carried out in cooperation with the Pontifical Council for Dialogue in Buenos Aires, Argentina. All these efforts, if reinforced by similar actions by religious institutions and bodies from other religions, will be an important step towards the edification of world peace.

The culture of peace is a lofty value in religions, and its dissemination is a noble mission. That is the mission that brings us together with the followers of other religions who share our sense of this historic responsibility at a difficult juncture and in these perilous circumstances. God Almighty says: **[Mankind was one single nation, and Allah sent Messengers with glad tidings and warnings; and with them He sent the Book in truth, to judge between people in matters wherein they differed.]**<sup>(19)</sup>

Allah the Almighty also says: **[Verily thy Lord will judge between them on the Day of Judgment, in the matters wherein they differ (among themselves).]**<sup>(20)</sup> Let us then strive to reduce the chasm

---

(19) *Al-Baqara*, verse 213.

(20) *Al-Sajda*, verse 25.

between us and expand the base of harmony, as only thus would we have obeyed Allah and dedicated all devotion to Him [***Is it not to Allah that sincere devotion is due?***]<sup>(21)</sup>

---

(21) ***Al-Zumar***, verse 3.