

Speech of Sheikh Daneel Abdel Khalek:

Praise be to Allah, Lord of the Worlds, Praise and Peace be upon our Prophet Muhammad and all the Prophets and Messengers and upon those who follow them in goodness until the Judgment Day.

Brothers and sisters, the custodians, whose gaze is fixed on what is on high, seekers of righteousness and makers of good; the Truth is transcended with your intentions, and charity is increased through your efforts, and the Ultimate Truth blesses your work.

If the children of the Truth fight, it is due to the absence of the light of God, for when a light is gone, darkness takes its place.

I hope that my talk about "dialogue and encounter" won't be conventional although both words are significant, specifically after most enlightened clergymen have been convinced that their words expresses their own will and not the will of religion. The Holy Books were not written all at the same time but they were revealed (sent down) or written in a specific chronological order according to the sequence of events; the clergyman can read from the book what suits his will and intention, if he wishes to get closer to the "different other" he would find what supports his desire, and if he wishes exclusion and rejection he would also find what supports him. However, the general constant in all religions is that the commandments of God are Mercy and Charity, not killing and elimination. The proof of God's abundant Mercy is His saying: "

"Indeed, those who believed and those who were Jews or Christians or Sabeans [before Prophet Muhammad] - those [among them] who believed in Allah and the Last Day and did righteousness - will have their reward with their Lord, and no fear will there be concerning them, nor will they grieve." (Al-Baqarah: 62)

From our point of view as Druze, we see that the world with its diversity, colors and differences, is nothing but the various facets of One Truth. Our Holy Koran guarantees this diversity and difference "O mankind, indeed We have created you from male and female and made you peoples and tribes that you may know one another. Indeed, the most noble of you in the sight of Allah is the most righteous of you." (Al-Hujurat: 13). In Addition, we maintain that true faith and sincere adoration must be translated into a good treatment to others, that is why our Sheikhs and Scholars repeat a short saying: "we can find out whether a person has good religion (or faith) from how good they treat others"; that simple saying carries the spirituality of our noble Prophet's saying: "the Muslim is the one from whose tongue and hand the people are safe."

On The other hand, as a Lebanese citizen, my faith does not contradict the civil law. Religion, for us Muslims, is two parts: devotions and behavior. As for the devotions, my country's constitution guarantees them since it considers sacred the freedom of belief, and every denomination practices its rites as it wishes. As for the behavior, which deals with treatment of others, it agrees categorically with all the laws, mainly when it comes to protecting people's rights and not violating them.

But the most delightful to my heart is to speak as a human being, because I haven't seen a bigger, wider and more solid bridge that unites us other than that of humanity. That is the level where all humans meet. They are all in one boat and no one can leave it. And to be short, I haven't found other than two

reasons for human fighting: greed and fear of others. Is there other reasons for wars to break out? Is there other reasons for peoples to race for armament? I didn't need to search for a long time in order to discover that what has been spent, on wars and the arms race, would have been enough for humanity and its needs for many decades, but we are still in the same spiral until this day.

That's why I will end by saying: there is no salvation for the human race in any of the past practices. The past must only help us to draw lessons and teach us not to repeat the mistakes. In order to reach salvation we need to wait for a Divine Mercy that is beyond the will of humans, or to start a new human approach that is unlike anything in the past.

Sheikh Daneel Abdel Khalek