On the Occasion of the Eid al-Fitr al-Mubarak 1428 A.H. / October 13th 2007 C.E., and on the One Year Anniversary of the Open Letter of 38 Muslim Scholars to H.H. Pope Benedict XVI,

An Open Letter and Call from Muslim Religious Leaders to:
His Holiness Pope Benedict XVI,
His All-Holiness Bartholomew I, Patriarch of Constantinople, New Rome,
His Beatitude Theodoros II, Pope and Patriarch of Alexandria and All Africa,
His Beatitude Ignatius IV, Patriarch of Antioch and All the East,
His Beatitude Theophilos III, Patriarch of the Holy City of Jerusalem,
His Beatitude Alexy II, Patriarch of Moscow and All Russia,
His Beatitude Pavle, Patriarch of Belgrade and Serbia,
His Beatitude Daniel, Patriarch of Romania,
His Beatitude Maxim, Patriarch of Bulgaria,
His Beatitude Iliia II, Archbishop of Mtskhet-Tbilisi, Catholicos-Patriarch of All Georgia,
His Beatitude Chrysostomos, Archbishop of Cyprus,
His Beatitude Christodoulos, Archbishop of Athens and All Greece,
His Beatitude Sawa, Metropolitan of Warsaw and All Poland,
His Beatitude Anastasios, Archbishop of Tirana, Duerres and All Albania,
His Beatitude Christoforos, Metropolitan of the Czech and Slovak Republics,
His Holiness Pope Shenouda III, Pope of Alexandria and Patriarch of All Africa on the Apostolic Throne of St. Mark,
His Beatitude Karekin II, Supreme Patriarch and Catholicos of All Armenians,
His Beatitude Ignatius Zakka I, Patriarch of Antioch and All the East, Supreme Head of the Universal Syrian Orthodox Church,
His Holiness Mar Thoma Didymos I, Catholicos of the East on the Apostolic Throne of St. Thomas and the Malankara Metropolitan,
His Holiness Abune Paulos, Fifth Patriarch and Catholicos of Ethiopia, Echeg of the See of St. Tékle Haymanot, Archbishop of Axium,

In the Name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful

This historic "open letter" is reprinted from the "A Common Word" website (www.acommonword.com). According to the website, the 138 signatories to this document represent "people with different profiles: religious authorities, scholars, intellectuals, media experts, professionals, etc... It also includes people from different schools of mainstream Islam: Sunni (from Salafis to Sufis), Shi'i (Ja'afari, Zia'di, Isma'il'i), and Ibadi. It includes figures from Chad to Uzbekistan, from Indonesia to Mauritania and from Canada to Sudan."

Readers interested in more information are encouraged to consult the site, which includes frequently asked questions, Christian and Jewish responses, media resources, downloads and translations, a list of new signatories and comments from around the world.
We as Muslims invite Christians to come together with us on the basis of what is common to us.

We as Muslims invite Christians to come together with us on the basis of what is common to us.

A Common Word Between Us and You: Summary and Abridgement

Muslims and Christians together make up well over half of the world’s population. Without peace and justice between these two religious communities, there can be no meaningful peace in the world. The future of the world depends on peace between Muslims and Christians.

The basis for this peace and understanding already exists. It is part of the very foundational principles of both faiths: love of the One God, and love of the neighbour. These principles are found over and over again in the sacred texts of Islam and Christianity. The Unity of God, the necessity of love for Him, and the necessity of love of the neighbour is thus the common ground between Islam and Christianity. The following are only a few examples:

Of God’s Unity, God says in the Holy Qur’an: Say: He is God, the One! / God, the Self-Sufficient Besought of all! (Al-Ikhlas, 112:1–2). Of the necessity of love for God, God says in the Holy Qur’an: So invoke the Name of thy Lord and devote thyself to Him with a complete devotion (Al-Muzzammil, 73:8). Of the necessity of love for the neighbour, the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) said: “None of you has faith until you love for your neighbour what you love for yourself.”

In the New Testament, Jesus Christ (pbuh) said:

‘Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is One. And you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength.’ This is the first commandment. And the second, like it, is this: ‘You shall love your neighbour as yourself.’ There is no other commandment greater than these (Mark 12:29–31).

In the Holy Qur’an, God Most High enjoins Muslims to issue the following call to Christians (and Jews—the People of the Scripture):

Say: O People of the Scripture! Come to a common word between us and you: that we shall worship none but God, and that we ascribe no partner unto Him, and that none of us shall take others for lords beside God. And if they turn away, then say: Bear witness that we are they who have surrendered (unto Him) (Aal ‘Imran 3:64).

The words: we shall ascribe no partner unto Him relate to the Unity of God, and the words: worship none but God, relate to being totally devoted to God. Hence they all relate to the First and Greatest Commandment. According to one of the oldest and most authoritative commentators on the Holy Qur’an the words: that none of us shall take others for lords beside God, mean “that none of us should obey the other in disobedience to what God has commanded.” This relates to the Second Commandment because justice and freedom of religion are a crucial part of love of the neighbour.

Thus in obedience to the Holy Qur’an, we as Muslims invite Christians to come together with us on the basis of what is common to us, which is also what is most essential to our faith and practice: the Two Commandments of love.

In the Name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful, and may peace and blessings be upon the Prophet Muhammad.

A Common Word Between Us and You

In the Name of God, the Compassionate, Call unto the way of thy Lord with wisdom and fair exhortation, and contend with them in the fairest way. Lo! thy Lord is Best Aware of him who strayeth from His way, and He is Best Aware of those who go aright (The Holy Qur’an, Al-Nahl, 16:125).

I. Love of God

Love of God in Islam

The Testimonies of Faith

The central creed of Islam consists of the two testimonies of faith or Shahadahs, which state that: There is no god but God, Muhammad is the messenger of God. These Two Testimonies are the sine qua non of Islam. He or she who testifies to them is a Muslim; he or she who denies them is not a Muslim. Moreover, the Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) said: The best remembrance is: “There is no god but God….”

The Best that All the Prophets have Said

Expanding on the best remembrance, the Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) also said:

The best that I have said—myself, and the prophets that came before me—is: “There is no god but God, He Alone, He hath no associate, He is the sovereignty and He is the praise and He hath power over all things.”

The phrases which follow the First Testimony of faith are all from the
The words: *He Alone*, remind Muslims that their hearts must be devoted to God Alone, since God says in the Holy Qur’an: *God hath not assigned unto any man two hearts within his body* (Al-‘Aţbah, 33:4). God is Absolute and therefore devotion to Him must be totally sincere.

The words: *He hath no associate*, remind Muslims that they must love God uniquely, without rivals within their souls, since God says in the Holy Qur’an:

> Yet there are men who take rivals unto God: they love them as they should love God. But those of faith are more intense in their love for God… (Al-Baqarah, 2:165). Indeed, [T]heir flesh and their hearts soften unto the remembrance of God… (Al-Zumar, 39:23).

The words: *His is the sovereignty*, remind Muslims that their minds or their understandings must be totally devoted to God, for the sovereignty is precisely everything in creation or existence and everything that the mind can know. And all is in God’s Hand, since God says in the Holy Qur’an:

> Blessed is He in Whose Hand is the sovereignty, and, He is Able to do all things (Al-Mulk, 67:1).

The words: *His is the praise* remind Muslims that they must be grateful to God and trust Him with all their sentiments and emotions. God says in the Holy Qur’an:

> And if thou wert to ask them: Who created the heavens and the earth, and constrained the sun and the moon (to their appointed work)? they would say: God. How then are they turned away? / God maketh the provision wide for whom He will of His servants, and straiteneth it for whom (He will). Lo! God is Aware of all things. / And if thou wert to ask them: Who causeth water to come down from the sky, and therewith reviveth the earth after its death? they verily would say: God. Say: Praise be to God! But most of them have no sense (Al-‘Ankabut, 29:61–63).³

For all these bounties and more, human beings must always be truly grateful:

> God is He Who created the heavens and the earth, and causeth water to descend from the sky, thereby producing fruits as food for you, and maketh the ships to be of service unto you, that they may run upon the sea at His command, and hath made of service unto you the rivers; / And maketh the sun and the moon, constant in their courses, to be of service unto you, and hath made of service unto you the night and the day. / And He giveth you of all ye ask of Him, and if ye would count the graces of God ye cannot reckon them. Lo! man is verily a wrong-doer, an ingrate (Ibrahim, 14:32–34).⁵

Indeed, the Fatihah—which is the greatest chapter in the Holy Qur’an⁴—starts with praise to God:

> In the Name of God, the Infinitely Good, the All-Merciful. / Praise be to God, the Lord of the worlds. / The Infinitely Good, the All-Merciful. / Owner of the Day of Judgement. / Thee we worship, and Thee we ask for help. / Guide us upon the straight path. / The path of those on whom is Thy Grace, not those who deserve anger nor those who are astray (Al-Fatihah, 1:1–7).

The Fatihah, recited at least seventeen times daily by Muslims in the canonical prayers, reminds us of the praise and gratitude due to God for His Attributes of Infinite Goodness and All-Mercifulness, not merely for His Goodness and Mercy to us in this life but ultimately, on the Day of Judgement⁶ when it matters the most and when we hope to be forgiven for our sins. It thus ends with prayers for grace and guidance, so that we might attain—through what begins with praise and gratitude—salvation and love, for God says in the Holy Qur’an:

> Lo! those who believe and do good works, the Infinitely Good will appoint for them love (Maryam, 19:96).

The words: *and He hath power over all things*, remind Muslims that they must be mindful of God’s Omnipotence and thus fear God.⁷ God says in the Holy Qur’an:

> …[A]nd fear God, and know that God is with the God-fearing. / Spend your wealth for the cause of God, and be not cast by your own hands to ruin; and do good. Lo! God loveth the virtuous. / … (Al-Baqarah, 2:194–5)…

> [A]nd fear God, and know that God is severe in punishment (Al-Baqarah, 2:196).

Through fear of God, the actions, might and strength of Muslims should be totally devoted to God. God says in the Holy Qur’an:

> …[A]nd know that God is with those who fear Him. (Al-Tawbah, 9:36)…

> O ye who believe! What aileth you that when it is said unto you: Go forth in the way of God, ye are bowed down to the ground with heaviness. Take ye pleasure in the life of the world rather than in the Hereafter? The comfort of the life of the world is but little in the Hereafter. / If ye go not forth He will afflict you with a painful doom, and will choose instead of you a folk other than you. Ye cannot harm Him at all. God is Able to do all things (Al-Tawbah, 9:38–39).

The words: *His is the sovereignty and His is the praise and He hath power over all things*, when taken all together, remind Muslims that just as everything in creation glorifies God, everything that is in their souls must be devoted to God:

> All that is in the heavens and all that is in the earth glorifieth God; His is the sovereignty and His is the praise and He hath power over all things (Al-Taghabun, 64:1).

For indeed, all that is in people’s souls is known, and accountable, to God:

> He knoweth all that is in the heavens and the earth, and He knoweth what
ye conceal and what ye publish. And God is aware of what is in the breasts of men (Al-Taghabun, 64:4).

As we can see from all the passages quoted above, souls are depicted in the Holy Qur’an as having three main faculties: the mind or the intelligence, which is made for comprehending the truth; the will which is made for freedom of choice, and sentiment which is made for loving the good and the beautiful. In another way, we could say that man’s soul knows through understanding the truth, through willing the good, and through virtuous emotions and feeling love for God. Continuing in the same chapter of the Holy Qur’an (as that quoted above), God orders people to fear Him as much as possible, and to listen (and thus to understand the truth); to obey (and thus to will the good), and to spend (and thus to exercise love and virtue), which, He says, is better for our souls. By engaging everything in our souls—the faculties of knowledge, will, and love—we may come to be purified and attain ultimate success:

So fear God as best ye can, and listen, and obey, and spend; that is better for your souls. And those who are saved from the pettiness of their own souls, such are the successful (Al-Taghabun, 64:16).

In summary then, when the entire phrase He Alone, He hath no associate, His is the sovereignty and His is the praise and He hath power over all things is added to the testimony of faith—There is no god but God—it reminds Muslims that their hearts, their individual souls and all the faculties and powers of their souls (or simply their entire hearts and souls) must be totally devoted and attached to God. Thus God says to the Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) in the Holy Qur’an:

Say: Lo! my worship and my sacrifice and my living and my dying are for God, Lord of the Worlds. / He hath no partner.

The call to be totally devoted and attached to God heart and soul, far from being a call for a mere emotion or for a mood, is in fact an injunction requiring all-embracing, constant and active love of God. It demands a love in which the innermost spiritual heart and the whole of the soul—with its intelligence, will and feeling—participate through devotion.

None Comes with Anything Better

We have seen how the blessed phrase: There is no god but God, He Alone, He hath no associate, His is the sovereignty and His is the praise and He hath power over all things—which is the best that all the prophets have said—makes explicit what is implicit in the best remembrance (There is no god but God) by showing what it requires and entails, by way of devotion. It remains to be said that this blessed formula is also in itself a sacred invocation—a kind of extension of the First Testimony of faith (There is no god but God)—the ritual repetition of which can bring about, through God’s grace, some of the devotional attitudes it demands, namely, loving and being devoted to God with all one’s heart, all one’s soul, all one’s mind, all one’s will or strength, and all one’s sentiment. Hence the Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) commended this remembrance by saying:

He who says: “There is no god but God, He Alone, He hath no associate, His is the sovereignty and His is the praise and He hath power over all things” one hundred times in a day, it is for them equal to setting ten slaves free, and one hundred good deeds are written for them and one hundred bad deeds are effaced, and it is for them a protection from the devil for that day until the evening. And none offers anything better than that, save one who does more than that. In other words, the blessed remembrance, There is no god but God, He Alone, He hath no associate, His is the sovereignty and His is the praise and He hath power over all things, not only requires and implies that Muslims must be totally devoted to God and love Him with their whole hearts and their whole souls and all that is in them, but provides a way, like its beginning (the testimony of faith)—through its frequent repetition—for them to realize this love with everything they are. God says in one of the very first revelations in the Holy Qur’an:

So invoke the Name of thy Lord and devote thyself to Him with a complete devotion (Al-Muzzammil, 73:8).

Love of God as the First and Greatest Commandment in the Bible

The Shema in the Book of Deuteronomy (6:4–5), a centerpiece of the Old Testament and of Jewish liturgy, says:

Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one! / You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart,
The Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) was perhaps, through inspiration, restating and alluding to the Bible’s First Commandment.

The commandment to love God fully is thus the First and Greatest Commandment of the Bible. Indeed, it is to be found in a number of other places throughout the Bible including: Deuteronomy 4:29, 10:12, 11:13 (also part of the Shema), 13:3, 26:16, 30:2, 30:6, 30:10; Joshua 22:5; Mark 12:32–33 and Luke 10:27–28.

However, in various places throughout the Bible, it occurs in slightly different forms and versions. For instance, in Matthew 22:37 (You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind), the Greek word for “heart” is kardia, the word for “soul” is psyche, and the word for “mind” is dianoia. In the version from Mark 12:30 (And you shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength) the word “strength” is added to the aforementioned three, translating the Greek word ischus.

The words of the lawyer in Luke 10:27 (which are confirmed by Jesus Christ [pbuh] in Luke 10:28) contain the same four terms as Mark 12:30. The words of the scribe in Mark 12:32 (which are approved of by Jesus Christ [pbuh] in Mark 12:34) contain the three terms kardia (“heart”), dianoia (“mind”), and ischus (“strength”).

In the Shema of Deuteronomy 6:4–5 (Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one! / You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your strength). In Hebrew the word for “heart” is lev, the word for “soul” is nefesh, and the word for “strength” is me’od.

In Joshua 22:5, the Israelites are commanded by Joshua (pbuh) to love God and be devoted to Him as follows:

But take careful heed to do the commandment and the law which Moses the servant of the LORD commanded you, to love the LORD your God, to walk in all His ways, to keep His commandments, to hold fast to Him, and to serve Him with all your heart and with all your soul (Joshua 22:5).

What all these versions thus have in common—despite the language differences between the Hebrew Old Testament, the original words of Jesus Christ (pbuh) in Aramaic, and the actual transmitted Greek of the New Testament—is the command to love God fully with one’s heart and soul and to be fully devoted to Him. This is the First and Greatest Commandment for human beings.

In the light of what we have seen to be necessarily implied and evoked by the Prophet Muhammad’s (pbuh) blessed saying:

The best that I have said—myself, and the prophets that came before me—is: “There is no god but God, He Alone, He hath no associate, His is the sovereignty and His is the praise and He hath power over all things,”

we can now perhaps understand the words:

The best that I have said—myself, and the prophets that came before me,
as equating the blessed formula:

There is no god but God, He Alone, He hath no associate, His is the sovereignty and His is the praise and He hath power over all things

precisely with the “First and Greatest Commandment” to love God, with all one’s heart and soul, as found in various places in the Bible. That is to say, in other words, that the Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) was perhaps, through inspiration, restating and alluding to the Bible’s First Commandment. God knows best, but certainly we have seen their effective similarity in meaning. Moreover, we also do know (as can be seen in the endnotes), that both formulas have another remarkable parallel: the way they arise in a number of slightly differing versions and forms in different contexts, all of which, nevertheless, emphasize the primacy of total love and devotion to God.

II. Love of the Neighbour

Love of the Neighbour in Islam

There are numerous injunctions in Islam about the necessity and paramount importance of love for—and mercy towards—the neighbour. Love of the neighbour is an essential and integral part of faith in God and love of God because in Islam without love of the neighbour there is no true faith in God and no righteousness. The Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) said:
None of you has faith until you love for your brother what you love for yourself. And: "None of you has faith until you love for your neighbour what you love for yourself." And: the neighbour: only to the love of God, of the love of the paramount importance, second Messiah, Jesus Christ (pbuh), about We have already cited the words of the ourselves love, we do not truly love God Without giving the neighbour what we our formal prayers—are not enough. They must be accompanied by generosity and self-sacrifice. God says in the Holy Qur’an: It is not righteousness that ye turn your faces to the East and the West; but righteous is he who believeth in God and the Last Day and the angels and the Scripture and the prophets; and giveth wealth, for love of Him, to kinsfolk and to orphans and the needy and the wayfarer and to those who ask, and to set slaves free; and observeth proper worship and payeth the poor— are not enough. They must be accompanied by generosity and self-sacrifice. God says in the Holy Qur’an: And: “None of you has faith until you love for your brother what you love for yourself.” There is no other commandment unattainable, therefore none of you has faith until you love for your brother what you love for yourself. And also: Ye will not attain unto righteousness until ye expend of that which ye love. And whatsoever ye expend, God is Aware thereof (Aal ‘Imran, 3:92). Without giving the neighbour what we ourselves love, we do not truly love God or the neighbour.

Love of the Neighbour in the Bible We have already cited the words of the Messiah, Jesus Christ (pbuh), about the paramount importance, second only to the love of God, of the love of the neighbour:

This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: ‘You shall love your neighbour as yourself.’ On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets (Matthew 22:38–40).

And: And the second, like it, is this: ‘You shall love your neighbour as yourself.’ There is no other commandment greater than these (Mark 12:31).

It remains only to be noted that this commandment is also to be found in the Old Testament: You shall not hate your brother in your heart. You shall surely rebuke your neighbour, and not bear sin because of him. You shall not take vengeance, nor bear any grudge against the children of your people, but you shall love your neighbour as yourself: I am the LORD (Leviticus 19:17–18).

Thus the Second Commandment, like the First Commandment, demands generosity and self-sacrifice, and On likewise, God says in the Holy Qur’an: Say: He, God, is One. / God, the Self-Sufficient Besought of all. (Al-Ikhlas, 112:1–2).

Thus the Unity of God, love of Him, and love of the neighbour form a common ground upon which Islam and Christianity (and Judaism) are founded. This could not be otherwise since Jesus said: On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets (Matthew 22:40).

Moreover, God confirms in the Holy Qur’an that the Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) brought nothing fundamentally or essentially new: Naught is said to thee (Muhammad) but what already was said to the messengers before thee (Fussilat 41:43). And: Say (Muhammad): I am no new thing among the messengers (of God), nor know I what will be done with me or with you. I do but follow that which is Revealed to me, and I am but a plain warner (Al-Ahqaf, 46:9).

Thus also God in the Holy Qur’an confirms that the same eternal truths of the Unity of God, of the necessity for total love and devotion to God (and thus shunning false gods), and of the necessity for love of fellow human beings (and thus justice), underlie all true religion:

And verily We have raised in every nation a messenger, (proclaiming): Worship God and shun false gods. Then some of them (there were) whom God guided, and some of them (there were) upon whom error had just hold. Do but travel in the land and see the nature of the consequence for the deniers! (Al-Nahl, 16:36)

We verily sent Our messengers with clear proofs, and revealed with them the Scripture and the Balance, that mankind may stand forth in justice…(Al-Hadid, 57:25).

Come to a Common Word! In the Holy Qur’an, God Most High tells Muslims to issue the following call to Christians (and Jews—the People of the Scripture):
We therefore invite Christians to consider Muslims not against and thus with them, in accordance with Jesus Christ’s words here.

As Muslims, we say to Christians that we are not against them and that Islam is not against them so long as they do not wage war against Muslims on account of their religion, oppress them and drive them out of their homes, (in accordance with the verse of the Holy Qur’an [Al-Mumtahinah, 60:8] quoted above). Moreover, God says in the Holy Qur’an:

They are not all alike. Of the People of the Scripture there is a staunch community who recite the revelations of God in the night season, falling prostrate (before Him). / They believe in God and the Last Day, and enjoin right conduct and forbid indecency, and vie one with another in good works. These are of the righteous. / And whatever good they do, nothing will be rejected of them. God is Aware of those who ward off (evil) (Aal ‘Imran, 3:113–115).

Is Christianity necessarily against Muslims? In the Gospel Jesus Christ says:

He who is not with me is against me, and he who does not gather with me scatters abroad (Matthew 12:30).

For he who is not against us is on our side (Mark 9:40).

...for he who is not against us is on our side (Luke 9:50).

According to the Blessed Theophylact’s 23 Explanation of the New Testament, these statements are not contradictions because the first statement (in the actual Greek text of the New Testament) refers to demons, whereas the second and third statements refer to people who recognised Jesus, but were not Christians. Muslims recognise Jesus Christ as the Messiah, not in the same way Christians do (but Christians themselves anyway have never all agreed with each other on Jesus Christ’s (pbuh) nature), but in the following way:

...the Messiah Jesus son of Mary is a Messenger of God and His Word which he cast unto Mary and a Spirit from Him... (Al-Nisa’, 4:171).

We therefore invite Christians to consider Muslims not against and thus with them, in accordance with Jesus Christ’s (pbuh) words here.

Finally, as Muslims, and in obedience to the Holy Qur’an, we ask Christians to come together with us on the common essentials of our two religions:

that we shall worship none but God, and that we shall ascribe no partner unto Him, and that none of us shall take others for lords beside God. / And if they turn away, then are they rightly guided. / And if they believe in the like of that which ye believe, then are they rightly guided. But if they turn away, then are they in schism, and God will suffice thee against them. (Aal ‘Imran, 3:64).

Let this common ground be the basis of all future interfaith dialogue between us, for our common ground is that on which hangs all the Law and the Prophets (Matthew 22:40). God says in the Holy Qur’an:

Say: O People of the Scripture! Come to a common word between us and you: that we shall worship none but God, and that we shall ascribe no partner unto Him, and that none of us shall take others for lords beside God. And if they turn away, then say: Bear witness that we are they who have surrendered (unto Him) (Aal ‘Imran 3:64).

Clearly, the blessed words: we shall ascribe no partner unto Him relate to the Unity of God. Clearly also, worshipping none but God relates to being totally devoted to God and hence to the First and Greatest Commandment. According to one of the oldest and most authoritative commentaries (tafsir) on the Holy Qur’an—the Jami’ Al-Bayan fi Ta’wil Al-Qur’an of Abu Ja’far Muhammad bin Jarir Al-Tabari (d. 310 A.H. / 923 C.E.)—that none of us shall take others for lords beside God, means ‘that none of us should obey in disobedience to what God has commanded, nor glorify them by prostrating to them in the same way as they prostrate to God’. In other words, that Muslims, Christians and Jews should be free to each follow what God commanded them, and not have ‘to prostrate before kings and the like’,21 for God says elsewhere in the Holy Qur’an:

Let there be no compulsion in religion... (Al-Baqarah, 2:256).

This clearly relates to the Second Commandment and to love of the neighbour of which justice22 and freedom of religion are a crucial part. God says in the Holy Qur’an:

God forbiddeth you not those who warred not against you on account of religion and drove you not out from your homes, that ye should show them kindness and deal justly with them. Lo! God loveth the just dealers (Al-Mumtahinah, 60:8).

We thus as Muslims invite Christians to remember Jesus’s (pbuh) words in the Gospel (Mark 12:29–31):

...the LORD our God, the LORD is one. And you shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength.’ This is the first commandment. And the second, like it, is this: ‘You shall love your neighbour as yourself.’ There is no other commandment greater than these.

21 According to one of the oldest and most authoritative commentaries (tafsir) on the Holy Qur’an—the Jami’ Al-Bayan fi Ta’wil Al-Qur’an of Abu Ja’far Muhammad bin Jarir Al-Tabari (d. 310 A.H. / 923 C.E.)—that none of us shall take others for lords beside God, means ‘that none of us should obey in disobedience to what God has commanded, nor glorify them by prostrating to them in the same way as they prostrate to God’.

22 ‘The highest good, the ideal of justice, may be defined as the aims of a community which is social in the broadest sense of the word, and in which the individual is viewed as a member of a group and his actions as serving that group. Freedom of religion is not simply a matter for polite ecumenical dialogue between selected religious leaders. Christianity and Islam are the largest and second largest religions in the
international journal of frontier missiology

live in sincere peace, harmony and be fair, just and kind to another and each other only in righteousness and strife between us. Let us vie with each other only in righteousness and strive between us. Let us vie with... (Matthew 5:9), and also: For now we see in a mirror, dimly, but then face to face. Now I know in part, but then I shall know just as I am known. (1 Corinthians 13:12)

Wal-Salaamu Alaykum, Pax Vobiscum.


See: www.acommonword.org or www.acommonword.com

Notes

1 In Arabic: La ilaha illa Allah Muhammad rasul Allah. The two Shahadabs actually both occur (albeit separately) as phrases in the Holy Qur'an (in Muhammad 47:19, and Al-Fath 48:29, respectively).

2 Sunan Al-Tirmidhi, Kitab Al-Da'irwat, 462/5, no. 3383; Sunan Ibn Majah, 1249/2.

3 Sunan Al-Tirmidhi, Kitab Al-Da'irwat, Bab Al-Du'a fi Yarum Yafrah, Hadith no. 3934. It is important to note that the additional phrases, He Alone, He hath no associate, His is the sovereignty and His is the praise and He hath power over all things, all come from the Holy Qur'an, in exactly those forms, albeit in different passages. He Alone—referring to God (may He be exalted)—is found at least six times in the Holy Qur'an (7:70; 14:40; 39:45; 40:12; 40:54 and 60:4). He hath no associate, is found in exactly that form at least once (Al-An'am, 6:173). His is the sovereignty and His is the praise and He hath power over all things, is found in exactly this form once in the Holy Qur'an (Al-Targhibun, 64:1), and parts of it are found a number of other times (for instance, the words, He hath power over all things, are found at least five times: 5:120; 11:4; 30:50; 42:9 and 57:2).

4 The Heart

In Islam the (spiritual, not physical) heart is the organ of perception of spiritual and metaphysical knowledge. Of one of the Prophet Muhammad’s (pbuh) greatest visions God says in the Holy Qur’an: The inner heart lieth not (in seeing) what it saw. (al-Najm, 53:11) Indeed, elsewhere in the Holy Qur’an, God says: [F]or indeed it is not the eyes that grow blind, but it is the hearts, which are within the bosoms, that grow blind. (Al-Hujj, 22:46; see whole verse and also: 2:9–10; 2:74; 8:24; 26:88–89; 48:4; 83:14 et al. There are in fact over a hundred mentions of the heart and its synonyms in the Holy Qur’an.)

Now there are different understandings amongst Muslims as regards the direct Vision of God (as opposed to spiritual realities as such) God, be it in this life or the next—God says in the Holy Qur’an (of the Day of Judgement):

That day will faces be replendent, / Looking toward their Lord, (Al-Qiyamah, 75:22–23) Yet God also says in the Holy Qur’an:

Such is God, your Lord. There is no God save Him, the Creator of all things, to worship Him. And He taketh care of all things. / Vision comprehendeth Him not, but He comprehendeth (all) vision. He is the Subtile, the Aware. / Proofs have come unto you from your Lord, so whoso seeth, it is for his own good, and whoso is blind is blind to his own hurt. And I am not a keeper over you. (Al-An'am, 6:102–104)

Howbeit, it is evident that the Muslim conception of the (spiritual) heart is not very different from the Christian conception of the (spiritual) heart, as seen in Jesus’s (pbuh) words in the New Testament: Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God. (Matthew 5:8); and Paul’s words: For now we see in a mirror, dimly, but then face to face. Now I know in part, but then I shall know just as I am known. (1 Corinthians 13:12)

See also: Luqman, 31:25.

See also: Al-Nahl, 16:3–18.

7 Sabih Bukhari, Kitab Tafsir Al-Quran, Bab ma Ja'a fi Fatihat Al-Kitab (Hadith no.1); also: Sabih Bukhari, Kitab Fadda'il Al-Quran, Bab Fadda'il Fatihat Al-Kitab, (Hadith no.9), no. 5006.

8 The Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) said: God has one hundred mercies. He has sent down one of them between genii and human beings and beasts and animals and because of it they feel with each other; and through it they have mercy on each other; and through it, the wild animal feels for its offspring. And God has delayed ninety-nine mercies through which he will have mercy on his servants on the Day of Judgement. (Sabih Musl’m, Kitab Al-Tasawub; 2109/4; no. 2752; see also Sabih Bukhari, Kitab Al-Riqqah, no. 6469).

9 Fear of God is the Beginning of Wisdom

The Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) is reported to have said: The chief part of wisdom is fear of God—be He exalted (Musnad al-Shahab, 100/1; Al-Dulaymi, Musnad Al-Firdaws, 270/2; Al-Tirmidhi, Nawadir Al-Uslul, 84/3; Al-Bayhaqi, Al-Dala’id al-Bayhaqi, Al-Shi’ah; Ibn Lal, Al-Makarim; Al-Ash’ari, Al-Amtree, et al.) This evidently is similar to the Prophet Solomon’s (pbuh) words in the Bible: The fear of the LORD is the beginning

International Journal of Frontier Missiology
This blessed saying of the Prophet Muhammad’s (pbuh), is found in dozens of hadith (sayings of the Prophet Muhammad [pbuh]) in differing contexts in slightly varying versions.

The one we have quoted throughout in the text (There is no god but God, He alone. He hath no associate. His is the sovereignty, and His is the praise, and He hath power over all things) is in fact the shortest version. It is to be found in Sahih al-Bukhari: Kitab al-Adhan (no. 852); Kitab al-Tahajjud (no. 1163); Kitab al-Unmab (no. 1825); Kitab Bad’ al-Khalq (no. 3329); Kitab al-Da’waw (nos. 6404, 6458, 6477); Kitab al-Riqq (no. 6551); Kitab al-Tasim bi’l-Kitab (no. 7378); in Sahih Muslim: Kitab al-Masajid (no. 1366, 1368, 1370, 1371, 1380); Kitab al-Hajj (nos. 3009, 3343); Kitab al-Dhikr wa’l-Du’a’ (nos. 7018, 7020, 7082, 7084); in Sunan Abu Dawud: Kitab al-Witr (nos. 1506, 1507, 1508); Kitab al-Jihad (no. 2772); Kitab al-Kharaj (no. 2989); Kitab al-Adab (nos. 5062, 5073, 5079); in Sunan al-Tirmidhi: Kitab al-Hajj (no. 965); Kitab al-Da’wawat (nos. 3718, 3743, 3984); in Sunan al-Nasa’i: Kitab al-Sabro (nos. 1347, 1348, 1349, 1350, 1351); Kitab Manasik al-Hajj (nos. 2985, 2997); Kitab al-Imam wa l-Nudbur (no. 3793); in Sunan Ibn Majah: Kitab al-Adab (no. 3930); Kitab al-Du’a’ (nos. 4000, 4011); and in Mawadda Malik: Kitab al-Qur’an (nos. 492, 494); Kitab al-Hajj (no. 831).

A longer version including the words yubbi wa yawmi—(There is no god but God, He alone. He hath no associate. His is the sovereignty, and His is the praise, and He hath power over all things)—is to be found in Sunan Abu Dawud: Kitab al-Mansik (no. 1907); in Sunan al-Tirmidhi: Kitab al-Sabro (no. 300); Kitab al-Da’wawat (nos. 3804, 3811, 3877, 3901); and in Sunan al-Nasa’i: Kitab Manasik al-Hajj (nos. 2974, 2987, 2988); Sunan Ibn Majah: Kitab al-Manasik (no. 3190).

Another longer version including the words bi yadibbi al-khawr—(There is no god but God, He alone. He hath no associate. His is the sovereignty, and His is the praise. In His Hand is the good, and He hath power over all things)—is to be found in Sunan Ibn Majah: Kitab al-Adab (no. 3931); Kitab al-Du’a’ (no. 3994).

The longest version, which includes the words yubbi wa yamit wa Huwa Hayyun la yamu bi yadibbi al-khawr—(There is no god but God, He alone. He hath no associate. His is the sovereignty, and His is the praise. He giveth life, and He giveth death, and He hath power over all things)—is to be found in Sunan al-Tirmidhi: Kitab al-Da’wawat (no. 3756) and in Sunan Ibn Majah: Kitab al-Tijarat (no. 2320), with the difference that this latter hadith reads: bi yadibbi al-khawr kulubu (in His Hand is all good).

It is important to note, however, that the Prophet Muhammad (pbuh), only described the first (shortest) version as: the best that I have said—myself, and the prophets that came before me, and only of that version did the Prophet (pbuh) say: And none comes with anything better than that, save one who does more than that.

(These citations refer to the numbering system of The Sunna Project’s Encyclopedia of Hadith (Jam‘ Jawami’ al-Abadith wa’l-Asanid), prepared in cooperation with the scholars of al-Azhar, which includes Sahih al-Bukhari, Sahih Muslim, Sunan Abu Dawud, Sunan al-Tirmidhi, Sunan al-Nasa’i, Sunan Ibn Majah, and Mawadda Malik.)

Frequent Remembrance of God in the Holy Qur’an

The Holy Qur’an is full of injunctions to invoke or remember God frequently:

Remember the name of thy Lord at morn and evening. (Al-Isran, 76:25)

Remember God, standing, sitting and (lying) down on your sides (Al-Nisa, 4:103).

And do thou (O Muhammad) remember thy Lord within thyself humbly and with awe, below thy breath, at morn and evening, And be not thou of the neglectful (Al-Araf, 7:205)... Remember thy Lord much, and praise (Him) in the early hours of night and morning (Aal‘ Imran, 3:41).

O ye who believe! Remember God with much remembrance. And glorify Him early and late (Al-Ahzab, 33:41–42).


Has not the time arrived for the believers that their hearts in all humility should engage in the remembrance of God...? (Al-Hadid, 57:16); ...[I]facken not in remembrance of Me (Taba, 20:42); and: Remember your Lord when even ye forget (Al-Kahf, 18:24).

13 Herein all Biblical Scripture is taken from the New King James Version. Copy-
right © 1982 by Thomas Nelson, Inc. Used by permission. All rights reserved.


17 In the Best Stature

Christianity and Islam have comparable conceptions of man being created in the best stature and from God’s own breath. The Book of Genesis says:

(Genesis 1:27) So God created man in His own image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them.

(Genesis 2:7) And the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being.

And the Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) said: Verily God created Adam in His own image. (Sahih Al-Bukhari, Kitab Al-Isti’shan, 1, Sahih Muslim, Kitab Al-Birr 115; Mumad Ibn Hanbal, 2: 244, 251, 315, 323 etc. at al.)

And We created you, then fashioned you, then told the angels: Fall ye prostrate before Adam! And they fell prostrate, all save Iblis, who was not of those who made prostration.

(Al-A’raf, 7:11)

By the fig and the olive / By Mount Sinai, / And by this land made safe / Surely I know that which ye know not. / And He taught Adam all the names, then showed them to the angels, saying: Inform Me of the names of these, if ye are truthful. / Then they said: Be glorified! We have no knowledge saving that which Thou hast taught us. Lo! Thou only art the Knower, the Wise. / He said: O Adam! Inform them of their names, and when they had heard informed them of their names, He said: Did I not tell you that I know the secret of the heavens and the earth? And I know that which ye disclose and which ye hide. / And when We said unto the angels: Prostrate yourselves before Adam, they fell prostrate, all save Iblis. He demurred through pride, and so became a disbeliever. / And We said: O Adam! Dwell thou and thy wife in the Garden, and eat ye freely (of the fruits) thereof where ye will; but come not nigh this tree lest ye become wrong-doers. (Al-Bagarah, 2:30–35)

18 Sahib Al-Bukhari, Kitab Al-Ism, Hadith no.13.

19 Sahib Muslim, Kitab Al-Ism, 67–1, Hadith no.45.

The classical commentators on the Holy Qur’an (see: Tafsir Ibn Kathir, Tafsir Al-Jalalayn) generally agree that this is a reference to (the last movements of) the Muslim prayer.


22 According to grammarians cited by Tabari (op. cit.) the word ‘common’ (‘asas’) in ‘a common word between us’ also means ‘just’, ‘fair’ (‘adl).

23 The Blessed Theophylact (1055–1108 C.E.) was the Orthodox Archbishop of Ochrid and Bulgaria (1090–1108 C.E.). His native language was the Greek of the New Testament. His Commentary is currently available in English from Chrysostom Press.

Signatories (in Alphabetical Order)

His Royal Eminence Sultan Muhammadu Sa’ad Ababakar: The 20th Sultan of Sokoto; Leader of the Muslims of Nigeria

H.E. Shaykh Dr. Hussein Hasan Ababakar: Imam of the Muslims, Chad; President, Higher Council for Islamic Affairs, Chad

H.E. Prof. Dr. Abdul-Salam Al-Abbadri: President of Aal Al-Bayt University; Former Minister of Religious Affairs, Jordan

Prof. Dr. Taha Abd Al-Rahman: President of the Wisdom Circle for Thinkers and Researchers, Morocco; Director of Al-Umma Al-Wasat Magazine, International Union of Muslim Scholars

Imam Feisal Abdul Rauf: Co-founder and Chairman of the Board of the Cordoba Initiative; Founder of the ASMA Society (American Society for Muslim Advancement); Imam of Majid Al-Farah, NY, NY, USA

Sheikh Muhammad Nur Abdullah: Vice President of the Da‘wa Council of North America, USA

Dr. Shaykh Abd Al-Quddus Abu Salah: President of the International League for Islamic Ethics; Editor of the Journal for Islamic Ethics, Riyadh, Saudi Arabia

H.E. Prof. Dr. Abd Al-Wahhab bin Ibrahim Abu Solaiman: Member of the Committee of Senior Ulama, Saudi Arabia

Dr. Lateef Oladimeji Adegbite: Acting Secretary and Legal Adviser, Nigerian Supreme Council for Islamic Affairs

H.E. Amb. Prof. Dr. Akbar Ahmed: Ibn Khaldun Chair of Islamic Studies, American University in Washington D.C., USA

H.E. Judge Prince Bola Ajabola: Former International High Court Judge; Former Minister of Justice of Nigeria; Former Attorney-General of Nigeria; Founder of the Crescent University and Founder of the Islamic Movement of Africa (IMA)

H.E. Prof. Dr. Kamil Al-Ajlouni: Head of National Centre for Diabetes; Founder of the Jordanian University of Science and Technology (JUST), Former Minister and Former Senator, Jordan

Shaykh Dr. Mohammed Salim Al-Awa: Secretary General of the International Union of Muslim Scholars; Head of the Egyptian Association for Culture and Dialogue

Mr. Nihad Awad: National Executive Director and Co-founder of the Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR), USA

H.E. Prof. Dr. Al-Hadi Al-Bakkoush: Former Prime Minister of Tunisia, Author

H.E. Shaykh Al-Islam Dr. Allah-Shakur bin Hemmat Bashazada: Grand Mufti of Azerbaijan and Head of the Muslim Administration of the Caucasus

H.E. Dr. Issam El-Bashir: Secretary General of the International Moderation Centre, Kuwait; Former Minister of Religious Affairs, Sudan

H.E. Prof. Dr.allah Shaykh Abd Allah bin Mahfuz bin Bayyah: Professor, King Abdul Aziz University, Saudi Arabia; Former Minister of Justice, Former Minister of Education and Former Minister of Religious Affairs, Mauritania; Vice President of the International Union of Muslim Scholars; Founder and President, Global Center for Renewal and Guidance

Dr. Mohammed Bechari: President, Federal Society for Muslims in France; General Secretary of the European Islamic Conference (EIC), France; Member of the International Fiqh Academy

Prof. Dr. Ahmad Shawqi Benbint: Director of the Hassaniyah Library, Morocco

Prof. Dr. Allama Shaykh Muhammad Sa’id Ramadan Al-Buti: Dean, Dept. of Religion, University of Damascus, Syria

International Journal of Frontier Missiology
Pehin Dato Haj Suhaili bin Haj Mohiddin: Deputy Grand Mufti, Brunei
Ayatollah Sheikh Hussein Muayyad: President and Founder, Knowledge Forum, Baghdad, Iraq
Prof. Dr. Izzedine Umar Musa: Professor of Islamic History, King Saud University, Saudi Arabia
Prof. Dr. Mohammad Farouk Al-Nabban: Former Director of Dar Al-Hadith Al-Hasaniyya, Morocco
Prof. Dr. Zaghloul El-Naggar: Professor, King Abal-Al-Asiz University, Jeddah, Saudi Arabia; Head, Committee on Scientific Facts in the Glorious Qur'an, Supreme Council on Islamic Affairs, Egypt
Mr. Sobail Nakhooda: Editor-in-Chief, Islamica Magazine, Jordan
Prof. Dr. Hisham Nashedeb: Chairman of the Board of Higher Education; Dean of Education at Makassed Association, Lebanon
H.E. Professor Dr. Seyyed Hossein Nasr: University Professor of Islamic Studies, George Washington University, Washington D.C., USA
Prof. Dr. Aref Ali Nayed: Former Professor at the Pontifical Institute for Arabic and Islamic Studies (Rome); Former Professor at International Institute for Islamic Thought and Civilization (ISTAC, Malaysia); Senior Advisor to the Cambridge Interfaith Program at the Faculty of Divinity in Cambridge, UK
H.E. Shaykh Sevki Omarbasic: Grand Mufti of Croatia
Dato Dr. Abdul Hamid Othman: Advisor to the H.E. the Prime Minister of Malaysia
Prof. Dr. Ali Ozek: Head of the Endowment for Islamic Scientific Studies, Istanbul, Turkey
Imam Yahya Sergio Yahe Pallavicini: Vice President of CIWRE, IS, Italy; Chairman of ISESCO Council for Education and Culture in the West; Advisor for Islamic Affairs of the Italian Ministry of Interior
H.E. Dr. Yukihiko Itagaki: Former President of the Islamic Center of Japan
H.E. Shaykh Dr. Nahid Ali Salman Al-Qudah: Grand Mufti of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan
H.E. Shaykh Dr. Izkima Said Sabri: Former Grand Mufti of Jerusalem and All of Palestine, Imam of the Blessed Al-Aqsa Mosque, and President of the Islamic Higher Council, Palestine
AyatollahFaqih Seyyed Hussein Ismail Al-Sadiq: Baghdad, Iraq
Mr. Muhammad Al-Sammak: Secretary-General of the National Council for Islamic-Christian Dialogue; Secretary-General for the Islamic Spiritual Summit, Lebanon
Shaykh Seyyed Hasan Al-Saqqa: Director of Dar Al-Aim, Al-Nawawi, Jordan
Dr. Ayman Fadil Saayida: Historian and Manuscript Expert, Former Secretary General of Dar al-Kutub Al-Misriyya, Cairo, Egypt
Prof. Dr. Suleiman Abdullah Schleifer: Professor Emeritus, The American University in Cairo
Dr. Seyyed Reza Shah-Kazemi: Author and Muslim Scholar, UK
Dr. Anas Al-Shaikhili-Ali: Chair, Association of Muslim Social Scientists, UK; Chair, Forum Against Islamophobia and Racism, UK; Academic Advisor, IIIT, UK
Imam Za'id Shakir: Lecturer and Scholar-in-Residence, Zaytuna Institute, CA, USA
H.E. Prof. Dr. Ali Abdullah Al-Shamlan: Director General of the Kuwait Foundation for the Advancement of Sciences (KFWAS), Former Minister of Higher Education, Kuwait
Eng. Seyyed Hasan Shariattmadari: Leader of the Iranian National Republican Party (INR)
Dr. Muhammad Alwani Al-Sharif: Head of the European Academy of Islamic Culture and Sciences, Brussels, Belgium
H.E. Dr. Mohammad Abal Al-Ghaffar Al-Shari: Secretary-General of the Ministry of Religious Affairs, Kuwait
Dr. Tayba Hassan Al-Shari: International Protection Officer, The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, Darfur, Sudan
Prof. Dr. Muhammad bin Sharifa: Former Rector of Wajda University; Morocco; Fellow of the Royal Moroccan Academy
Prof. Dr. Muzammil H. Siddiqui / on behalf of the whole Fiqh Council of North America: Islamic Scholar and Theologian; Chairman of the Fiqh Council of North America, USA
Shaykh Ahmad bin Sa‘ud Al-Siyabi: Secretary General of the Directorate of the Grand Mufti, Oman
Al-Haici Yusuf Maitama Sule: Former Nigerian Permanent Representative to the United Nations; Former Nigerian Minister of National Guidance
Prof. Dr. Mohammad Abd Al-Rahim Sultan-al-Ulama: Deputy-Dean of Scientific Research Affairs, United Arab Emirates University, UAE
Shaykh Dr. Tariq Saeedan: Director-General of the Risalah Satellite Channel
H.E. Shaykh Ahmad Muhammad Mut‘i Tamim: The Head of the Religious Administration of Ukrainian Muslims, and Mufti of Ukraine
H.E. Shaykh Izz Al-Din Al-Tamimi: Senator; Former Chief Islamic Justice; Minister of Religious Affairs and Grand Mufti of Jordan
H.E. Shaykh Dr. Tayseer Rajab Al-Tamimi: Chief Islamic Justice of Palestine; Head of The Palestinian Center for Religion and Civilization Dialogue
Prof. Dr. H.R.H. Prince Ghazi bin Muhammad bin Talal: Personal Envoy and Special Advisor of H.M. King Abdallah II; Chairman of the Board of the Royal Aal al-Bayt Institute for Islamic Thought, Jordan
Prof. Dr. Ammar Al-Talibi: Former Member of Parliament, Professor of Philosophy, University of Algeria
Ayatollah Shaykh Muhammad Ali Taskhiri: Secretary General of the World Assembly for Proximity of Islamic Schools of Thought (WAPIST), Iran
H.E. Prof. Dr. Shaykh Ahmad Muhammad Al-Tayeb: President of Al-Azhar University, Former Grand Mufti of Egypt
Prof. Dr. Muddathir Abdel-Rahim Al-Tayib: Professor of Political Science and Islamic Studies, International Institute of Islamic Thought and Civilization (ISTAC), Malaysia
H.E. Amb. Prof. Dr. Abdel-Hadi Al-Tazi: Fellow of the Royal Moroccan Academy
H.E. Shaykh Naim Trnava: Grand Mufti of Kosovo
H.E. Dr. Abd Al-Aziz bin ‘Uthman Al-Twejiri: Director-General of the Islamic Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (ISESCO)
H.E. Prof. Dr. Nasaruddin Umar: Rector of the Institute for Advanced Quranic Studies; Secretary General of the Nahdhatul Ulama Consultative Council; Lecturer at the State Islamic University Syarif Hidayatussala, Jakarta, Indonesia
Shaykh Muhammad Hasan ‘Usayrani: Jafari Mufti of Sidon and Al-Zabruni, Lebanon
Allamah Justice Mufti Muhammad Taqi Usmani: Vice President, Darul Uloom Karachi, Pakistan
Prof. Dr. Akhtarul Wasey: Director, Zakir Husain Institute of Islamic Studies, Jamia Millia Islamia University, India
Shaykh Dr. Abdul Hakim Murad Winters: Shaykh Zayed Lecturer in Islamic Studies, Diwan College, University of Cambridge; Director of the Muslim Academic Trust, UK
Prof. Dr. Mohammed El-Mokhtar Ould Bah: President, Chinguat Modern University, Mauritania
H.E. Shaykh Muhammad Sodiq Mohammad Yusuf: Former Grand Mufti of the Muslim Spiritual Administration of Central Asia, Uzbekistan; Translator and Commentator of the Holy Qur’an
Prof. Dr. Shaykh Wahba Mustafa Al-Zahayli: Dean, Department of Islamic Jurisprudence, University of Damascus, Syria
H.E. Shaykh Mu’ammar Zoukoulî: Mufti of Sanjak, Bosnia