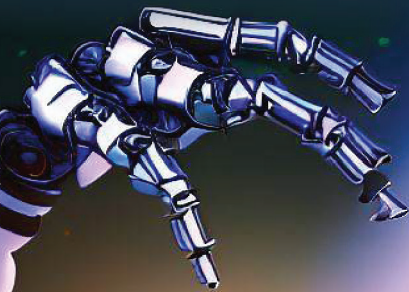


AI, FAITH AND THE FUTURE OF SOCIETY

15TH JUNE 2023 | LONDON



The
**Faraday
Institute**
for Science and Religion



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INTRODUCTION

Artificial Intelligence (AI) technology is rapidly advancing, and it is critical that faith communities and leaders are equipped to respond to the changes it brings. This important event builds upon the *2020 Rome Call for AI Ethics* and the recent Vatican conference, *AI Ethics: An Abrahamic Commitment to the Rome Call (January 2023)*. Given that caring for our neighbours and protecting the most vulnerable in our societies is paramount among all three Abrahamic Faiths, it is vital that our faith communities are quick to call out areas where these technologies could damage or exclude those for whom we are called to care, whether by the actions of AI directly, or indirectly through manipulation by human actors. To achieve this, those involved in creating AI technology and building ethical frameworks for AI need to also engage with insights from the faith communities which account for over 80% of the world's population.



Photo by Dorin Seremet on Unsplash

About The Faraday Institute for Science and Religion:

The Faraday Institute for Science and Religion is a Cambridge-based interdisciplinary research institute improving public understanding of science and religion. The Faraday Institute (www.faraday.cam.ac.uk) was founded in 2006 and has a vision to make the very best of academic scholarship available

as widely as possible. It seeks to shed new light on life's big questions through academically rigorous research in the field of science and religion; to provide life-changing resources for those with interests in science and faith through research dissemination, education and training; and, to catalyse a change in attitude towards science and faith, through outreach to schools, colleges, the scientific community, religious institutions and the general public.

About the Forum for Peace:



The Forum for Peace is an international platform for dialogue and cooperation aimed at promoting peace, stability, and prosperity, bringing together leaders from around the world to discuss issues related to peace and security. The Forum for Peace was founded in Abu Dhabi in response to a number of challenges faced by the global Muslim community and now has an active presence in the UK. Led by His Eminence Shaykh Abdallah Bin Bayyah, it has since been dedicated to strengthening Islamic theological narratives of peace building and tolerance.

BACKGROUND

The Abrahamic faiths represent prophetic traditions and bear a responsibility to deploy all of their resources (theological, intellectual and historical) to assess future challenges and opportunities. We cannot wait for AI to change the world and then respond. In uncharted territory it is our responsibility to begin drawing a map. As Shaykh bin Bayyah said at the Vatican Conference:

“AI is among the most momentous creative innovations of human genius that have emerged moving from theory to application in a very short time... However, along with the great potential offered by these technologies, they also open the door to risks and fears of abuse and misuse...in the light of this, concerned religious leaders, technology companies, government actors, and others must co-operate to maximise the benefits of these technologies and reduce their risks... by developing an ethical framework aimed at ensuring that the development of artificial intelligence complies with high and strict ethical standards which preserve human dignity and moral integrity.”



Portcullis House, Westminster

Having considered where the future of AI may take us, we must design a compass that allows us to build a better world for people of all faiths. This event aims to spark a wider discussion amongst faith communities about how

to curb the risks of AI and guide its development in line with shared values and human dignity.

KEY GOALS & OUTCOMES

By bringing together diverse perspectives from faith leaders, technologists and policy makers, this event will explore the opportunities and challenges for humanity created by the rise of AI. Looking beyond the foundations already established in contemporary AI ethics frameworks, we will explore the future of AI and society, considering broader themes such as values and virtue, and human identity, dignity and purpose.

Topics covered will include:

- The current AI landscape, the risks it presents and potential for further harmful developments in the future
- The shortcomings of existing measures aimed at regulating AI and why current approaches are insufficient
- The role of faith in shaping AI policy and regulation and how faith helps us think about human values, identity and purpose in this context
- The importance of including diverse perspectives and voices in the conversation about the development and use of AI technology
- What the next steps are following these conversations, and how faith leaders, academics, technologists and public policy experts can work together to make a meaningful contribution to the conversation.

AI ETHICS: AN ABRAHAMIC COMMITMENT TO THE ROME CALL JANUARY 10TH 2023, VATICAN CITY

Speech of
His Excellency Shaykh Abdallah bin Bayyah
President, Abu Dhabi Forum for Peace
Chairman, UAE Fatwa Council



In The Name of God, The Merciful, The Most Compassionate

Praise be to God, Lord of the worlds, and prayers and peace upon our master Muhammad, the last of the prophets, and upon his brothers the prophets and messengers of God.

Speech of His Excellency Sheikh Abdallah bin Bayyah
Given at The Ethics of Artificial Intelligence:
The Commitment of the Abrahamic Religions to the Rome Call
Vatican City, 10th January 2023

**Your Excellencies and Eminences,*

I greet each of you by your beautiful names and qualities, Peace, mercy, and the blessings of God be upon you.

At the outset, I am pleased to extend my sincere thanks to the organizers of this valuable initiative that focuses on the important topic, inspired by the 2020 Rome Call for AI Ethics and a continuation of its work.

The importance of this subject is evident since humanity has become, in a certain way, hostage to dangerous scientific developments such as nuclear weapons that have spread fear and terror in the heart of humanity, many of whom live under the threat of nuclear war that portends the possible annihilation of our species itself.

Dear participants,

Religions, at their core, seek to secure humanity's quest for happiness in both this world and the next. Therefore, all of our religious traditions urge us to seek out the means of felicitous wellbeing. In this regard, the religion of Islam encourages the acquisition of knowledge, seeking an understanding of the universe, and a perpetual increase in learning. The Qur'an states, "Say, 'My Lord, increase me in knowledge.'" Knowledge, in its exhaustive meaning, of which we perpetually seek an increase includes both religious and worldly knowledge, which is the foundation of any successful civilization both spiritually and materially. Thus, when religious civilizations flourished, discoveries and inventions were made that enhanced human life. Religion was not a hindrance to innovation, but rather a stimulus that motivated creativity and achievement.

However, religious laws and commandments, in their endeavour to promote wellbeing and guidance, are keen to ensure that achievements in science and technological take into account ethical frameworks that preserve human dignity and the nobility of man, and, most importantly, protect life itself.

In this context, AI is among the most momentous creative innovations of human ge-

nius that have emerged moving from theory to application in a very short time. Its use now spans both the private and public sectors, and whilst it has already succeeded in various fields, its development continues due to a passion for innovation, invention, and sustained investment. Hardly a field today exists that is not directly involved in it, especially healthcare, transportation, education, training, and manufacture.

Thus, these technologies opened the door to a wide range of potentials and promising opportunities in various fields that can contribute to improving human life, and this is something we support and encourage. However, along with the great potential offered by these technologies, they also open the door to risks and fears of abuse and misuse, which could lead to catastrophic consequences for our shared humanity.

I do not wish to be pessimistic here in the manner of the Arab poet Abu al-Fath al-Busti who described man's toil as akin to a silkworm weaving itself into annihilation. He stated:

Man toils like the silkworm which spends its life weaving only to perish confused inside its woven creation.

Nonetheless, many forms of AI raise philosophical and ethical questions related to liberty, free will, and responsibility which call for a careful response. For example:

1. *Who is responsible for the mistakes of artificial intelligence?*
2. *What will happen to communication between humanity because of these technologies?*
3. *How will artificial intelligence affect our behaviour and consequent actions?*
4. *How do we avoid artificial intelligence failures?*
5. *How do we control a system that may prove smarter than we are?*
6. *How can we be safe from the unintended consequences of artificial intelligence programs?*

Not to mention the many questions that will unfold with time.

These dangers could pose a threat to humanity from the perspective of what we Muslims term the five protected universals: religion, life, reason, property, and human integrity, the last of which includes family and individual human dignity. The preservation of these five higher objectives of our sacred law remains an overarching priority. Artificial intelligence may pose a threat to life as an uncontrolled weapon used against humanity. It also poses a danger to human integrity because of the absence of privacy and the subsequent violation of information security. It may also cause the loss of money and property through electronic theft, piracy, and intrusions. Moreover, it can cause further division and disunity in societies by contributing to the spread of false information and misleading news and influencing voter opinions.

In the light of this, concerned religious leaders, technology companies, government actors, and others must cooperate to maximize the benefits of these technologies and reduce their risks. They must do so by developing an ethical framework aimed at ensuring that the development of artificial intelligence complies with high and strict ethical standards which preserve human dignity and moral integrity.

To this end, it is necessary first to agree on the importance and the necessity of this matter, because failure to implement it threatens us with dire consequences, both morally and materially. Second, we must cooperate and participate as an alliance in designing an ethical framework that guides developers and helps them respond to the requirements of ethics with the demands of creativity and innovation.

This desired ethical system should be based on innate moral values, which are values common to all people, upon which no two people differ, and which are not affected by the vicissitudes of time, place, and human impulse. These are the natural rights of every human being by the very virtue of his or her humanity. “They are Divinely-granted rights granted to both the believer and the atheist,” as stated in the first amendment of the Charter of The New Alliance of Virtue in 2019.

These ethics include the values of virtue, mutual respect, solidarity, and cooperation in benevolence and the common good, as well as the values of honesty, justice, sincerity, integrity, responsibility, and transparency. These include the central values in the eth-

ical system of all religions and worthwhile human philosophies.

The integration of this ethical system in the development of AI has many advantages for both the end users of these products and their developers because these ethical frameworks give them a clearer vision of what should be worked on, with a list of priorities and clear objectives.

Technical development must develop and focus on the existential challenges facing humanity in the areas of health, food, education, and work. Efforts must be made to contribute to the protection of our children from inappropriate content online.

It should also be recalled that the desire for material gain – which is not evil in itself and is in fact supported and supportive of development and production – should not prevail over the values of responsibility and the common good. In addition, focusing on the question of “how?” instead “why?” may lead to the development of products that do not aim at lofty goals and do not serve useful purposes. On the contrary, the question of “why?” leads to the search for the purpose of every act, allowing it to be guided by ethics and higher ideals.

Distinguished participants,

It is important to support AI with ethical standards, solidarity, and cooperation so that its development can be increasingly beneficial. The proposed ethical framework may serve analogously to a brake which protects cars from collision and destruction, or as a compass that guides ships in the midst of a vast ocean. Therefore, what we require today involves an awakened conscience that remains vigilant regarding the unintended consequences of artificial intelligence, so that these systems may eventually become self-regulatory.

In sum, laws and regulators must set standards that ensure the prevention of harm to individuals and societies by companies developing artificial intelligence applications. The Prophet (peace be upon him) says, “There should be no harm nor reciprocation of harm.” This principle is a governing principle because it suppresses the human

desire for wealth under the pretext of development and discovery if this involves harm or reciprocation of harm with others. It also protects researchers and scholars from interference in their work as long as their work does not lead to harming others or reciprocating the harm from others.

Finally, the prosperity and stability of societies is not measured by technical and economic advances alone. Rather, it requires the ability to enrich the world with valuable content and noble ideals, and it needs a comprehensive view of life based on harmony, coexistence, and cooperation. All of this confirms the need for ethical frameworks that illuminate the path and guide us upon it.

These sentiments reflect well the vision of our country, the United Arab Emirates, which is rooted in rational foundations coupled with high developmental aims, the most important of which include a positive outlook at the outset, effectiveness in implementation, and excellence in all of our endeavours. These were the values that the founding leader, Sheikh Zayed, may God have peace upon his soul, built the UAE upon. This legacy has been continued by his noble sons and is conserved under the auspices of the UAE's President, His Royal Highness, Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, may God Almighty protect him, in his endeavour to make the United Arab Emirates a leading centre for innovation which includes artificial intelligence advancement.

I thank you once again for this kind invitation, and I wish our meeting every success.

Peace, mercy, and blessings of God be upon all of you."

AGENDA

Time	Topic	Who?
10:15	Guests Arrive	N/A
10:30	Welcome & Introductions	Jon Cruddas MP, Graham Budd Zeshan Zafar
10:40	Video Message	H.E. Shaykh Abdallah bin Bayyah
10:45	Keynote Speech	Dr Nick Chatrath
11:00	Faith Perspective	Fr Paolo Benanti
11:15	Public Policy Perspective	Jon Cruddas MP
11:30	Panel Discussion	Dr Yaqub Chaudhary, Dr Erin Green, Dr Harris Bor, Prof John Wyatt, Dr Ramon Harvey
12:30	Lunch	All
12:45	Roundtable Discussions	All
13:25	Concluding speeches & Next Steps	Lord Wei, Graham Budd, Zeshan Zafar
13:40	Guests Depart	All

SPEAKER



His Eminence Sheikh Abdallah Bin Bayyah
President, Abu Dhabi Forum for Peace, Abu Dhabi

A life-long advocate for peace, Shaykh Bin Bayyah is the President of the Abu Dhabi Forum for Peace and one of today’s most well-respected Islamic scholars. He has published numerous writings and has been distinguished in a variety of ways for his work in Islam, interreligious dialogue and peace building.



Jon Cruddas MP
Member of Parliament

Jon Cruddas is the Labour MP for Dagenham and Rainham and is a Professor at the Jubilee Centre for Virtue in Public Life, University of Birmingham.



Dr Nick Chatrath

Dr Nick Chatrath is a former McKinsey consultant and leading international expert on the potential impact of Artificial Intelligence on human lives and society. In addition to co-founding two technology startups, he has recently authored a book on the topic, entitled ‘*The Threshold: Leading in the Age of AI*’.



Graham Budd
The Faraday Institute for Science and Religion

Graham Budd is the Director of The Faraday Institute for Science and Religion. He has over 30 years experience in computing and the global semiconductor industry, including his work leading the development of several of Arm’s pioneering early single-chip computer designs.



Sheikh al-Mahfoudh Bin Bayyah
Secretary General, Abu Dhabi Forum for Peace

Sheikh al-Mahfoudh Bin Bayyah, is an influential diplomat. He played an instrumental role in establishing the flagship programs like the Marrakech Declaration, New Alliance of Virtue, and Charter for Inclusive Citizenship in the MENA region. He also contributed significantly to the field of countering violent extremism and supported the establishment of Zaytuna College, the first accredited Muslim liberal arts college in the US.



Fr. Paolo Benanti
Pontifical Gregorian University in Rome

Fr Paolo Benanti is an academic of the Third Order Regular of St Francis, Professor of Moral Theology, Bioethics, Neuroethics, and Ethics of Technologies at the Pontifical Gregorian University in Rome and a member of the Task Force on Artificial Intelligence of the Agenzia per d'Italia Digitale and the Prime Minister's Officer. He has a particular interest in technology ethics having recently published, *'The Urgency of an algorethics'* (2023).



Dr Harris Bor
London School of Jewish Studies (LSJS)

Dr Harris Bor is a commercial barrister, Research Fellow and a Lecturer at the London School of Jewish Studies (LSJS), and rabbinic scholar with the Montefiore Endowment. He is also the author of "Staying Human - a Jewish theology for the age of Artificial Intelligence", and an advisor to the US think-tank, AI & Faith.



Dr. Yaqub Chaudhary, Cambridge Muslim College

Dr Yaqub Chaudhary is a Research Fellow in Science and Religion with an interest in AI and cognitive science in connection with Islamic conceptions of the mind and intelligence. He is also a founding member of *AI and Faith*.



**Prof John Wyatt
University College London**

Professor John Wyatt is Professor of Ethics and Perinatology at University College London. He has a particular interest investigating the implications for human self-understanding of recent advances in artificial intelligence and robotic technology, and co-authored *The Robot will see you now – AI and the Christian Faith*.



**Dr Ramon Harvey
Cambridge Muslim College**

Dr Ramon Harvey is a lecturer in Islamic Studies at Cambridge Muslim College and leads the John Templeton Foundation funded research project ‘Beyond Foundationalism: New Horizons in Muslim Analytic Theology’.



**Dr Erin Green
Pax Christi International**

Dr Erin Green is the Head of Communications and Creativity at Pax Christi International. She is also a theologian and has particular expertise in looking at the social impact of AI and related technologies and has undertaken extensive novel research into the social impact of robotics and AI from a theological perspective.



Lord Wei
Member of the House of Lords

Lord Wei is a member of the House of Lords, having previously had a successful career in the consulting and social sector. He has a particular interest in equipping the next generation with the tools and understanding to transform society in today's changing world.



Zeshan Zafar
Chair, Forum for Peace - London

Zeshan Zafar, Executive Director of Abu Dhabi Forum For Peace & Chair of UK Forum For Peace-London, unites diverse individuals to foster dialogue and collaboration. Welsh-born, he empowers the British Muslim community, spearheads international initiatives like annual assemblies, Marrakesh Declaration, & the Charter for a new Alliance of Virtue.

LIST OF GUESTS IN ATTENDANCE

Denis Alexander

Qari Asim

Dan Bacall

Tariq Badis

Stephen Backhouse

Nicholas Beale

Paolo Benanti

Alfred Biehler

Mahfoudh Bin Bayyah

Yoni Birnbaum

Colin Bloom

Harris Bor

Malcolm Brown

Andrew Brown

Graham Budd

Nick Chatrath

Yaqub Chaudhury

Richard Cheetham

John Cruddas

Davide De Persis

Daniel Epstein

Erin Green

Ramon Harvey

Dilwar Hussain

Alice Jackson

Sarah-Jane King

Jonas Kulberg

Ben MacArthur

Ibrahim Malik

Yasir Mirza

Nathan Mladin

Esme Partridge

Peter Phillips

Kathryn Pritchard

Peter Robinson

Russell Rook

Lyndsey Seale

Collin Seale

Amna Al Shehi

Uldduz Sohrabi

Austin Tiffany

Marie Van der Zyl

Adrian Weller

Lord Wei

Sam Wells

John Wyatt

Salman Younas

Abaas Yunas

Zeshan Zafar

Raphael Zarum

Wael Zubi

Francis Martin

** As confirmed on 7th June 2023*



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