

*The Spirit of the Ship's*  
**PASSENGERS**

Human Values After Corona: Reviving Virtue in Times of Crisis

**7TH FRAMEWORK SPEECH**  
7th-9th December 2020



**By Shaykh Abdallah bin Bayyah**





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**7TH FRAMEWORK SPEECH OF THE  
ABU DHABI FORUM FOR PEACE**

7th-9th December 2020 , Abu Dhabi, UAE



**BY SHAYKH ABDALLAH BIN BAYYAH**

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## *In the name of God, the All-Merciful, the Most-Compassionate*

All praise belongs to God, the Lord and Cherisher of all Worlds of Being

Prayers and peace be upon our Master Muhammad, the Final Prophet, and upon his brethren, the Prophets and Messengers

Our Seventh Forum takes place in unusual circumstances and on a different platform. While we join together with hearts and minds, our bodies remain separated, for necessity demands that we remain socially distanced from one another in these difficult times.

The Forum has consistently pioneered a new model of dialogue and a unique meeting of minds. In addition to the many important presentations, discussions and working groups, there has been an equally vital point of connection. The Forum has facilitated deeply personal connections and a shared space and place of meeting for different societies and civilisations.. Here we share life and move and talk together. More importantly, we witness, observe and discover that, in the end, no matter how different our various perspectives and cultures, we are all siblings, who share much more in common than we have previously imagined.



This year's assembly takes place against the backdrop of an existential crisis. The current pandemic threatens humanity. It has disrupted the normal patterns of human life. It has forced us to rearrange our priorities and question our values.

The COVID-19 pandemic is not the first epidemic to strike the planet. Throughout our long history, mankind has witnessed manifold disasters and uncertainty. However, in recent times, this pandemic is unprecedented. Particularly given the widespread nature of its impact and its negative affects on almost every sector and society. This crisis is creating many other crises.

Things that once appeared disconnected, we now recognise as connected. The crisis is causing us to see the interconnectedness of healthcare, economics, politics, psychology, religion and ethics. Intertwined at many different levels, these disciplines feed one another, creating a web of extreme complexity.

The manifestations of this crisis can be viewed as a collection of struggles or dialectics that humanity must face and respond to immediately. In particular, these include:

The struggle between the challenge to protect human life and safeguard wealth: We face the choice as to whether we open-up or lockdown our communities and the challenge to strike a balance in between. Opening up enables people to continue their livelihoods, meets the needs of financial markets for movement and stimulation and prevents individuals and businesses from facing the effects of bankruptcy. On the other hand, lockdown provides the only means to ensure that the spread of the pandemic is limited, that is, until such a time as a vaccine is widely available. Based upon their visions and contexts, nations have chosen different ways to address this struggle.

The struggle between the logic of scientific research and the logic of the marketplace: This is yet another manifestation of the trade-off. The pandemic questioned the dialectic of objective scientific research, which is based upon cooperation and sharing of knowledge, versus the logic of markets which are based upon protection of intellectual property and copyrights, competition, and possession. This has also been made manifest by those multinational corporations that have taken advantage of people's vulnerability to make inordinate profits. Similarly, we have seen one part of the world turning its back on another, stubbornly adhering to a selfish logic that refuses to relieve the debts of the poorest countries. These countries, in turn, are crumbling under the weight of their financial obligations and find their opportunities for economic development further limited by the current circumstances.

The struggle between certainty and doubt; weakness and strength: The pandemic has made us realize that there is no class or race, no matter how developed or evolved, that is safe from this type of emergency and disaster. The journeys we take on this planet, are not always safe or guaranteed. This realisation has led to widespread fear, a lack of certainty, and for some, a complete loss of trust. Scientific and technological advances have provided modern man with a sense of certainty, trust and relaxation. This false sense of security has been dismantled by the realisation that he is ultimately unable to control his fate or even his environment.

The struggle between globalization and the nation state: This pandemic has proven that the nation state provides the natural and necessary refuge in a time of crisis. It alone can take the essential measures to enable communities to face these challenges. For this reason, people have returned to their homelands for safety and nation states have taken it upon themselves to put measures in place to protect their people from the

pandemic and confront the resulting challenges.

In light of the above, we have also witnessed the necessity for international cooperation and the inadequacy of isolated, individual efforts. There is a need to activate and facilitate cooperation between states in order to exchange data, collaborate on research, share ideas and maximise solidarity and mutual aid.

The struggle between the logic of freedom and that of duty: In this, we have witnessed the benefits of 'freedom' of movement and free interaction between citizens, especially for trade, education and religious observance. This often benefits societies and individuals. Likewise, we have heard the language of 'duty' return to public discourse, after decades of focus purely on personal freedoms and individual rights.

The struggle between the universal interests of life, versus religious freedom: One of the primary effects of this crisis is in the religious sphere. It affected both individual and communal acts of worship, as well as contracts and financial transactions and even ideals and questions of theology. In the Emirates Council for Legal Fatwa we addressed an important aspect of this struggle in our Conference on the Fiqh of Contingencies. This was conducted in conjunction with the Muslim World League. It was an opportunity to direct the attention of religious scholarship to the necessity of employing independent and novel legal reasoning to ascertain the position of sacred law regarding several new issues related to religious faith and practice in order to facilitate the religious observance of Muslims and put them at ease regarding their affairs.

This pandemic has taught us valuable lessons and caused us to acknowledge forgotten realities; having been blinded by a world of plenty, humankind now sees its own essential weakness: "man was created weak." (4:28) It has also demonstrated the limits of human knowledge and understanding, which are a cause for man's humility. "you have been given of knowledge but little." (17:85)

Even though this pandemic began as a health crisis, it quickly turned into a crisis of values and morality. It is a crisis which tests our values, our morals, and our very faith. It tests our character, both in our interactions with one another; at home and with our neighbours. Do we practice patience and solidarity, or do we submit to hopelessness and despair? It tests our values: Do we uphold the values of charity, love, and altruism with those near and far, or do we confine our goodness to ourselves and create a narrower sphere of kindness? This is a test not only for individuals but also for states. They surely have the responsibility to help those with less wealth and power, particularly the ones who do not have the means to confront the health crisis and subsequent economic crisis.

On the one hand, in a time of crisis, when an atmosphere of doubt, confusion and uncertainty abounds, many people claim that they can predict the future. These characters come bearing glad tidings of a brighter day to be born of its own accord. On the

other hand, there are many who are filled with sorrow and sustain themselves through difficult days through historical reminiscence and recourse to an idealised past. In this time of crisis, by locating ourselves between these poles, we will discover a unique opportunity to reassess many things.

The pandemic, which has drastically slowed down the speed of modern of life, has thus given us a timely opportunity to contemplate and reevaluate.

Through the virtue of humility, we become open to new ideas and discovery; not merely the discovery of a cure, which is very important, but the discovery of new opportunities unearthed by the pandemic. These opportunities, born from the womb of tribulation, exist on many levels and bear with them the possibility of a better world.

This is an opportunity that must be seized to stop ongoing warfare and put down arms – even if only for a short time. Humankind must respond to the call of reason and religion, as well as the Global Call of the United Nations and all people of intellect and goodwill, to cooperate and support one another, even if this is only relative or circumstantial. As the proverb goes, “crises bring together victims”. By practicing the virtues of mercy we can relate – even if only to a minor degree – to the reality that many face on a daily basis. We should use this time to recognise that a vast number of human beings face ongoing destruction, pain and warfare all around the world.

This is an opportunity to develop a new vision of life that balances all of our universal concerns and guarantees a more just and merciful economic system; one that considers the human being as an end rather than a means and concentrates on promoting human welfare, wellbeing, and peace instead of an economy of war.

It is a rare opportunity to discover ourselves, to find the hidden wellsprings of goodness and virtue inside ourselves and to restore the spirit of man, which strives for the Absolute to a state free of the limitations of his ego and selfishness.

This is not a utopian dream or impossibility, if we are able to draw lessons and inspiration from our present circumstances. The birth of a new human being will not take place in a single day, and it will not happen all at once. This birth will not take place unless the means for it are set in motion today. After all, the future is naught but the fruit of the present. In the flow of time, the future is constantly formed out of the present. In the same way that the present is made from the past, the conclusion is drawn from its premise as the branches shoot forth from the trunk.

The present is where the future is made. If our concern for the future is to be sincere, it must first manifest as a concern for the present. Otherwise, it will merely be false hope. Every desire for a better future, that is not founded upon present work, is simply a false hope; it is delusion. It is like waiting for harvest without having tilled the land and planted the seeds in the first place.

## THE SPIRIT OF THE SHIP'S PASSENGERS

Knowing and anticipating the future is not a form of fortune telling or speculation. It becomes possible because of careful analysis of the present and a deep understanding of the universal law of causation. There is a rule in life that says our future shall be like our present.

It is from this starting point that our assembly seeks to promote common universal values, such as justice, solidarity, and human fraternity, which are animated by a new spirit. This is the spirit of the passengers on board the same ship. We have entitled our conference, in Arabic, *Values for a Post-COVID World: The Spirit of Passengers on One Ship*.



## The Metaphor of Passengers on One Ship



**T**his crisis has underlined our common destiny as human beings. The pandemic destroyed all theories of discrimination based on race, language, or economic development when it refused to discriminate between the rich and the poor, the powerful and the weak. Instead, the pandemic treated everyone equally and revealed the eternal truth of the weakness of man and his constant need for his fellow human being.

Thus, it has become clearly manifest - perhaps more clearly than ever before - that the residents of this planet are like passengers on that ship that the Prophet (God bless him and grant him peace) described in the hadith<sup>1</sup>:

The similitude of the one upholding the laws of God and the one breaking it are like a group of people who drew lots on where they will sit in a ship. Thus some of them sat up on the deck and others were in the galley. When the ones in the galley were in need of water they would go on to the deck, passing the others by. At some point they decided that if they were to just bore hole in the hull they could draw water out of it without having to go upstairs onto the deck and annoying the others for water. If those on top of the deck allow them to do as they please, they would all drown; but if they restrained them, they would save themselves and the others.

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<sup>1</sup> This rigorously authenticated hadith is narrated by Bukhari, Ahmad, and Tirmidhi on the authority of al-Numan ibn Bashir (God be pleased with him).

Prophetic metaphors are a part of the Prophet's (God bless him and grant him peace) gift of concise and profoundly eloquent speech. In a few short words manifold meanings are conveyed, on various levels, that cannot all be explained and elaborated.

The hadith contains a profound metaphor for the state of humanity, their common trajectory, and their shared destiny. Even though the ship has different levels, all the passengers onboard share one journey and a single common destiny.

This fact has become clear in this age of the 'global village.' We are connected in the most intricate and yet explicit of ways. Whatever happens in one part of the world has knock-on effects in all the others. Whatever people do in one part of the world, likewise affects people in other parts of the globe. We share one interconnected system, with no ultimate means of separation or segregation from others.

On the environmental plane, the citizens of every continent bear the effects of the actions of those living on other continents. For example, the effects of the explosion of the nuclear reactor in Chernobyl were not limited to its immediate environs, and neither were they limited in any spatial-temporal manner, as the effects extended into the future. This is one environment which we all share. No country has its own private share of the Ozone layer that it can do with as it pleases, or its private air which it can pollute to whatever degree it sees fit. Rather, all of us have to foot the bill for environmental damage, without exception.



There is nothing that more profoundly demonstrates this interrelation of humanity than a microscopic virus that first appeared in a distant corner of the world and, in a matter of a few short weeks, managed to spread around the world. It left no countryside nor city, no town nor sprawling metropolis un-struck. And ironically it made use of man-made routes and modes of transport for its own ease of movement, trade, and enjoyment.

In the context of rediscovering and becoming conscious of this connection, man, who has been protected by the comforts of modern civilization, now notices other nations and communities of plants and animals that share the planet with him. What's more, he realises that the future of his natural environment is intrinsically intertwined with his own, in a finely balanced ecosystem. No part of this system can be damaged without the damage being experienced by all others.

In the age of globalization, man only needs to look at his dinner to see that the whole world has been brought before him: food from every corner of the world is present on

his plate. A significant disturbance in one part of the world will immediately result in a similar disturbance showing up somewhere else.

As for culture, it has taken trade and the economy as an aid and a prop. Wherever the goods of a place land, so too land the ideals and values of their origin. Globalization has manifested itself as the voluntary presence of another, but it is in fact necessarily predetermined by the nature of things.

This is the interconnection that the parable of the ship reveals. It is an interconnection based upon a shared situation and a positive causal relationship. The current pandemic makes us conscious of this: "There truly is a reminder in this for whoever has a heart or whoever listens while he is heedful." (50:37) Nonetheless, this consciousness must bear fruit as a spirit for positive action. It is the same spirit that animates the passengers on the ship. They believe in their shared responsibility, in a responsible and enlightened freedom, and in the necessity of solidarity and cooperation.

This spirit has a particular form, substance, and goal. Its substance is a faith in shared responsibility. Its form is solidarity and cooperation. Its goal is the preservation of universal interests which are in turn, expressed by the legal import of the hadith, as it mentions the limits of the sacred law.

On board this human ship, the spirit of one supportive team must prevail. Everyone contributes to the success of the journey and performs his role, which stems from his position and circles of influence and interest. This is the functional distribution referred to in the hadith as 'drawing lots.' It requires integration and harmony.

Those who are at the top of the ship, who are in charge of managing public affairs, in all its levels and varying degrees, must assume their responsibility towards those at the bottom, and restrain those who want to compromise the integrity of the ship. The strong have a responsibility towards the weak, and the rich towards the poor. Scholars have a responsibility towards the laity, and, most importantly, people of virtue have a responsibility towards all others. This responsibility arises from the values of fraternity, human dignity, and hope in the possibility of real coexistence.

Onboard this ship, the principle of responsible freedom must prevail. This is a freedom which does not encroach on others, it does not lead to a breach of the peace, or disturb the collective order of the ship's passengers. The freedom of each passenger ends at the point at which his actions bear negative effects. At this stage, everyone must intervene to restrain their act and stand up, in opposition to it. That is a responsible and balanced freedom that takes into account the existence of others and respects their rights.

You can imagine what the condition of the ship's passengers would be if they quarrelled and squabbled instead of cooperating. Having untethered their selfish desires, their inevitable destiny is drowning in the stormy sea that surrounds them.

## THE SPIRIT OF THE SHIP'S PASSENGERS

The spirit of the ship passengers calls on us to stop polluting the environment and stop corrupting land and sea. It commands us to immediately stop warfare. It requires us to possess a spirit of tolerance and compassion; to love for others what we love for ourselves; to distribute vaccines to everyone without monopoly or exploitation. It calls upon wealthy countries to look at their poorer counterparts with empathy, allowing them a period of facilitation to repay their debts, or setting them off entirely, and thus relieving them of their burden.

It calls upon us to devise a developmental model that aids prosperity, affluence, and stability for all. It calls upon us to seek a world in which scientific research exists for the benefit of all without monopolization by the rich and powerful, a world in which nations compete in goodness, and in which states are proactive in offering an Abrahamic hospitality to migrants and the displaced.

It guides us to build societies founded upon tranquillity, societies in which security prevails, in which the weak are not afraid of oppression or aggression of the strong; societies in which man feels safe with his neighbours, and in which intolerance and sectarianism no longer exist.

The metaphor of the ship passengers inspires us for a future in which the dignity of every human being is preserved. This refers to the dignity of every human being despite their different races, colours, languages, and beliefs. It is the result of the Creator's breath (Mighty and Majestic), which was blown into their forefather Adam, peace be upon him. "We have honoured the children of Adam and carried them by land and sea; We have provided good sustenance for them and favoured them specially above many of those We have created." (17:70)

The metaphor of the ship passengers guides us to look for points of common love and harmony, solution of compromise, egalitarian mediation, and mutual concessions that are at the core of the logic of coexistence. In this way we can mediate between the principles of freedom and responsibility – like Paul Ricoeur's mediation between justice and love, or Thomas Aquinas's harmonization of justice and mercy.

The metaphor of the ship passengers renews virtue in the soul, underlines awareness of the unity of human destiny and calls for a universal gift of conscience that restores the effectiveness of cooperation, solidarity, and compassion. It presents a new vision of humanity that surpasses the discourse of equality and disregard for difference. It demands that we attain the positive virtues which enable others to feel the true warmth of our love and fraternity.

With this optimistic spirit, we bear the good news of a world in which peace will be all-encompassing - not merely by stopping warfare - but through the attainment of peace in and by the human heart.

## THE SPIRIT OF THE SHIP'S PASSENGERS

The present crisis has uncovered the shortcomings of a selfish world. If, as societies, we cannot see those things that we hold in common with others, we will be unable to deal with an indiscriminate danger that does not differentiate between nations, lands, ethnicities, or religions.

Nonetheless, this crisis has also fuelled the flame of solidarity. We have witnessed and heard of many inspiring examples of individuals who looked beyond themselves to spread goodness and love, and the values of solidarity and fraternity. We have witnessed countries that were able to transcend concerns of politics and international relations, to demonstrate lofty ideals of sympathy, cooperation, and association.

The metaphor of the ship's passengers has been powerfully present in the UAE's vision and strategy, in confronting the repercussions of this global crisis. The UAE played a pioneering role, by standing in solidarity with the countries affected by this pandemic, regardless of differences in religion and ethnicity. It mobilized its naval, land and air fleets, through the joint efforts of all state institutions, thereby providing a lifeline of basic healthcare and humanitarian aid to more than seventy countries. The UAE has worked tirelessly to limit the spread of the Coronavirus and to make relief available to whoever is in need of it; considering this to be the nation's highest purpose at this time.

Solidarity is a commitment to the welfare for others. It is a virtue that transcends mere recognition of the other and embraces positive acquaintance with him. Through solidarity we can overcome the narrowness of individual identities and enter into the shared spaces of what is common and what is shared among us. Solidarity allows us to move from the fragmentation of minorities and limited identities to the unity of the collective whole: the community of greater humanity.

This has become evident in this crisis. The need has arisen to promote solidarity from empty formulas and peripheral activities - which the marketplace had reduced it to - and to reconnect it with its ethical content: the values of mercy, aid, cooperation and benevolence. These values, while transcending the notion of rights, are also necessary for their very existence. They guarantee the potency and efficacy of human rights, as they are the common ground on which these rights are built.



## *The New Alliance of Virtue and the New Social Contract*



**T**he New Alliance of Virtue that we issued and ratified last year represents the finest conceptual and procedural embodiment of the metaphor of the ship's passengers. It can therefore be a strong reference point for this new beginning.

Our Charter is not merely a collection of ineffective words or theoretical principles disconnected from reality. Rather, it is to be translated and embodied as a practical curriculum. It is to be offered in schools, to educate, and in temples, as teachings for the faithful. It should be invoked in conflict zones to foster tranquility and facilitate hope.

We believe that the values on which our Charter is based, can guide the world and offer solutions to society's most challenging problems, especially at this difficult phase of human history. The Charter is based on promoting the principles of human dignity, freedom and justice, and at the same time calls for the principles of tolerance, peace, mercy and solidarity. It also calls for establishing a balanced model of polite tolerance, responsible freedom, positive citizenship, and a supportive economy. This in turn, can provide the model for a new social contract, to which all humanity aspires.

The Charter also embodies the spirit of the ship's passengers in its belief in human commonalities, as it is based on the solid ground of shared values that are common to the Abrahamic religions and to human ethical norms more generally.

The Charter also transcends the notion of rights to focus on the attainment of virtue.

## THE SPIRIT OF THE SHIP'S PASSENGERS

The discourse on rights requires specification, or the preference of the rights of one group over another, for a given reason. Dealing on the basis of rights means that we restrict ourselves to granting the other only what is theirs in the first place, or merely restraining ourselves from infringing upon him. On the other hand, dealing with others from the standpoint of virtue involves honour and benevolence; it becomes about generosity towards the other without the expectation that we must receive something in return. It involves a willingness on our part to step down and let him have that which was not his right to claim.

These are, O respected attendees, some thoughts, milestones, and landmarks on the path to restore humanity's moral conscience. The Second World War was a shock to the human conscience. Humanity, shocked by the horror of the disaster, emerged in its wake with a new conscience. This novel conscience produced a new world order that reflected, in some respects, the values later enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

Will this crisis be the occasion for a new start, and an opportunity for the birth of a new human being, with a new vision of the world that is based on virtue; a human who reconstructs himself and his relations with his fellow man and with other creatures besides him?

Any delay in taking the initiative to act in a timely manner imprisons the future of humanity and makes future generations captive to processes that they will not be able to take control of.

Mankind is now in a ship that is on the verge of being stranded. I fear the same thing that we all fear might take place if the spirit of the passengers on the ship does not prevail. I fear that if the spirit of the passengers does not prevail, a disaster will occur and humanity will only be saved by a miraculous ship, like Noah's ark (peace be upon him), appearing to carry the fortunate to safety.





## BIOGRAPHY OF H.E SHAYKH ABDALLAH BIN BAYYAH

**H**.E. SHAYKH ABDALLAH bin Bayyah is recognized by Muslim scholars around the world as perhaps the greatest living authority on the Islamic legal methodology known as Usul al-Fiqh (Principles of Jurisprudence). Beyond that, he is known for his scholarship drawing on scripture and traditional texts across all four major Sunni schools of jurisprudence to address the crucial contemporary concerns of Muslim communities. In recent years, he has been the driving force behind the establishment of the Abu Dhabi Forum for Peace, which seeks to unite Muslim scholars around the world in pursuit of peace, and to address the crises facing Muslim communities worldwide.

Born in eastern Mauritania in 1935, the Shaykh grew up in a family known for its grasp of the Mauritanian classical curriculum. His father, Shaykh Al-Mahfoudh bin Bayyah was a senior judge and chosen twice as the head of Ulema (religious scholars) of Mauritania upon the country's independence. From an early age, the Shaykh demonstrated his exceptional memory and understanding of the Mauritanian texts.

Under his father's tutelage, he developed an advanced understanding of Arabic grammar and rhetoric, and knowledge of pre-Islamic Arab poetry. He also developed an advanced understanding of the Qur'ānic sciences: legal theory, syntax, language, or-

thography and the ten forms of Qur'anic recitation. He specialized in the Maliki school of jurisprudence, and was qualified to give authoritative legal opinions (fatwas).

In his early 20s, he was selected as part of a group of scholars to go to Tunisia for training in modern legal systems, which were to be introduced to Mauritania. He graduated at the top of his group, and on his return to Mauritania was appointed a judge, rising to become Minister of Justice, Minister of Islamic Affairs, and eventually Vice President.

When some government officials criticized his lack of fluency in French, he taught himself the language by listening to French radio with a dictionary in hand. He later surprised his critics by addressing a ministerial meeting in the language. His mastery of French has allowed him to study European thought and the history of ideas. He is rare among contemporary Muslim scholars for his knowledge of the work of Western philosophers and social theorists.

In the 1980s, Shaykh joined King Abdulaziz University in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, where he taught several subjects, including Qur'anic studies, jurisprudence, and advanced level of Arabic, for over three decades. This allows him to combine the study of the scriptural sources of Qur'an and Hadith, the various schools' approaches to Usul al-Fiqh (the principles of jurisprudence), and Maqasid al-Sharia (the purposes of Islamic law). This breadth of study has allowed the Shaykh to develop a universal framework in which Islamic jurisprudence can be adapted to local contexts while maintaining its essential principles and purposes and ensuring its continued relevance in the lives of an increasingly diverse global Muslim population.

The Shaykh has developed theories of Islamic jurisprudence in secular or non-Muslim societies, called the Jurisprudence of Minorities (fiqh al-aqalliyyat). He is also an outspoken critic of terrorism, authoring several articles and books exploring Islamic responses to the issue. He has applied this work practically, not least in the successful efforts to secure the release of French war correspondent Florence Aubenas, and her translator Hussein Hanun, in Iraq in 2005.

Over the past 25 years, the Shaykh has taught students who have become some of the most prominent scholars in the Middle East and North Africa. In the late 1990s he started to visit the West, particularly teaching British and American students, gaining a following amongst prominent Western Muslim leaders. He has written several books and hundreds of articles and essays, mostly in Arabic, which are used by scholars around the world.

The Shaykh's work has not been focused on scholarship for its own sake, but on applying it to address some of the most pressing issues facing global Islam. In 2008, he be-

came the founding President of the Global Centre for Renewal and Guidance (GCRG), a London-based think tank that applies scholarship to strategic solutions to pressing intellectual and spiritual issues facing global Islam. This reflects the Shaykhs belief that ideas can only be defeated by ideas, and that Islamist extremism must be answered by sound reasoning drawn from orthodox, accepted sources of Islamic jurisprudence.

This approach was applied in Mardin, Turkey, in 2010, when his organisation convened a conference to examine a fatwa issued by the 14th century scholar Ibn Taymiyya. His Mardin Fatwa is widely used by jihadi groups to justify attacks on both non-Muslims and Muslims who do not follow their understanding of Islam. The 2010 Mardin Conference revealed that a transcription error had been introduced in a 1909 edition of Ibn Taymiyya's fatwa, turning the verb "to treat" into the verb "to fight" and that jihadi groups were relying on the incorrect version. Under the Shaykh's leadership, the conference published a report entitled, *Challenging the al-Qaida Narrative: The New Mardin Declaration*, correcting the jihadi understanding of the fatwa. Three separate spokesmen of al-Qaida responded to this threat, attacking Shaykh Abdallah bin Bayyah by name.

In 2014, the Shaykh established the Abu Dhabi Forum for Peace (ADFP) in Abu Dhabi, under the patronage of Sheikh Abdallah bin Zayed, the Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of the United Arab Emirates. The vision of the ADFP is to address the crises facing global Islam from a framework of Islamic tradition and legal theory, applied to local contexts. Over 1,000 of the world's leading Muslim scholars from a variety of traditions, as well as academics and thought leaders, attended the ADFP's launch. The ADFP is the first global gathering of scholars designed to provide a response to extremism, sectarianism and terrorism.

Since the 2014 Forum, the Shaykh has travelled widely to advance its work, in North Africa, the Middle East, Far East and the West. This included a conference with the African Union on tackling the religious conflict in the Central African Republic, and the release of the Chibok girls by the Nigerian jihadi group Boko Haram. He has led Imam training initiatives in the US, UK and Europe, and spoken widely on the issue of global peace, including at the World Economic Forum in 2015 and 2017, and at the UN Countering Violent Extremism Summit in 2015. In 2014, the Shaykh's work and that of the ADFP were referenced by President Barack Obama at the UN General Assembly. Shaykh Abdallah bin Bayyah thus became the only Islamic scholar ever to be publicly quoted by a sitting President of the United States.<sup>1</sup>

In January 2016, the Shaykh convened the Marrakesh Declaration, as the culmination

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<sup>1</sup> The White House Archives, 2014. See: <https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/the-press-office/24/09/2014/remarks-president-obama-address-united-nations-general-assembly>

of an effort running since 2011 to address the issue of violence and oppression against minorities in Muslim majority countries. The Declaration applied traditional Islamic texts, and in particular the Prophet Muhammad's ﷺ Charter of Madina, to affirm the Islamic principle of equal citizenship as prescribed by the Prophet ﷺ. It was signed by scholars and politicians from across the Muslim world.

In February 2018, following the Shaykh's initiative, hundreds of American religious leaders, scholars and politicians, as well as others from around the world gathered in Washington, D.C., to discuss the 'Alliance of Virtue for the Common Good'. This conference promulgated The Washington Declaration, calling on the leaders of the Abrahamic faiths to join together in a new Alliance of Virtue, using their shared values to promote the global commonweal.

In 2019 the Shaykh launched The Charter of the New Alliance of Virtue, a voluntary document that seeks to bring together religious leaders of good-will for the benefit of humanity. It is an effort across religions to enable their members to live side-by-side in peace and happiness and cooperate on the basis a theology of God-given human dignity that actualizes virtue and benefit for all. In 2020, the Shaykh used this document to press for an attitude of 'the Spirit of the Ship's Passengers' which is a Prophetic metaphor for the status of human beings as the passengers of single ship with a common destiny. The Shaykh continues to argue that this is the only possible means for facing the challenges of war, pandemics, and climate change that threaten humanity.

The Shaykh has received multiple awards recognizing his work and serves in the leadership of many organizations seeking peace, including as one of four Executive Co-Presidents of Religions for Peace, the largest interfaith organization in the world.





## ABOUT THE ABU DHABI FORUM FOR PEACE

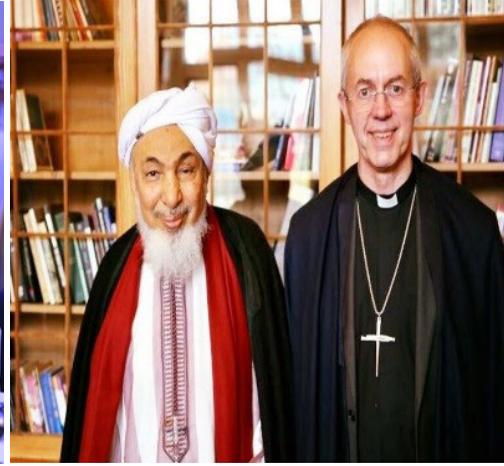
The Abu Dhabi Forum For Peace, under the patronage of H.H. Sheikh Abdullah bin Zayed Al Nahyan, Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of the United Arab Emirates was established during the pinnacle of social strife in the Muslim world following the Arab Spring. The Forum works earnestly to bring an end to conflict and establish peace through facilitating spaces for dialogue and the dissemination of a discourse of moderation. It strives to allow its participants to put behind them the differences of the past and focus on a secure, peaceful societies future together.

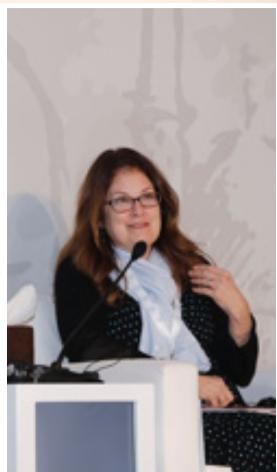
The Forum takes an academic and theological approach to the problem of violence, holding that any violent act begins as ideology before emerging as action. Wars are waged in the realm of ideas before they devastate the physical world. Shaykh Abdallah Bin Bayyah, the Forum's founder, teaches that we must construct defenses of peace in the heart and mind and inculcate a correct understanding of Islam. This is one of the primary roles of the scholarly elite and religious leadership in our time.

Likewise, the Forum focuses on securing the rights and safety of religious minorities living in Muslim lands. The Marrakesh Declaration launched in 2016 calls on Muslim states to accord the rights of equal citizenship to all minorities in their midst on the basis of the Charter of Medina and the Islamic values of benevolence, solidarity, human dignity, peace, justice, mercy and the common good. Most recently, the Forum has focused on elevating interreligious cooperation from the discourse of shared rights and responsibilities to the heights of a common conscience and genuine loving kindness towards the other. This is profoundly showcased in the promulgation of the 2019 Charter for a New Alliance of Virtue and the 2021 Abu Dhabi Charter of Inclusive Citizenship.

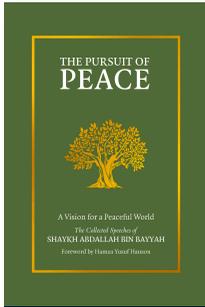




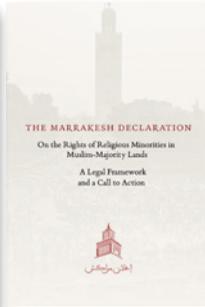




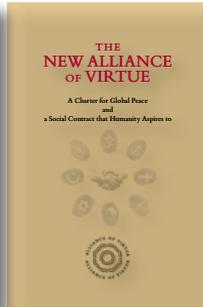
# OTHER PUBLICATIONS



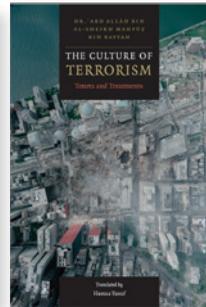
**The Pursuit of Peace**  
June 2022



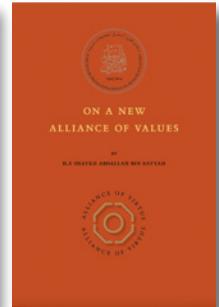
**The Marrakesh Declaration**  
January 2016



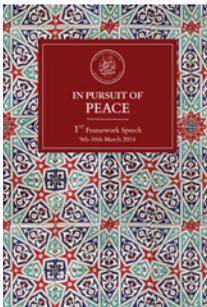
**The New Alliance of Virtue: A Charter For Global Peace**  
28<sup>th</sup> September 2019



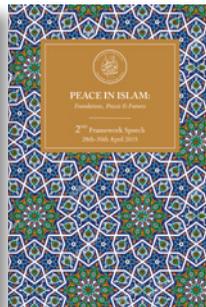
**The Culture of Terrorism: Tenets & Treatments**  
November 2014



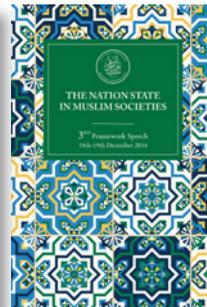
**On A New Alliance Of Values**  
October 2007



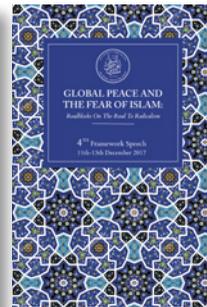
**1<sup>st</sup> Assembly  
In Pursuit of Peace**  
2014



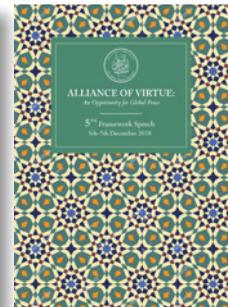
**2<sup>nd</sup> Assembly  
Peace In Islam:  
Foundations, Praxis  
and Futures**  
2015



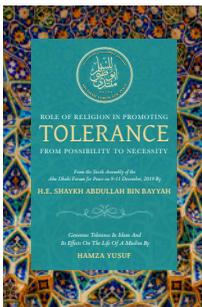
**3<sup>rd</sup> Assembly  
The Nation State  
in Muslim Societies**  
2016



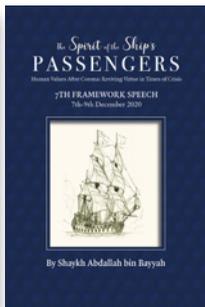
**4<sup>th</sup> Assembly  
Global Peace And  
The Fear of Islam**  
2017



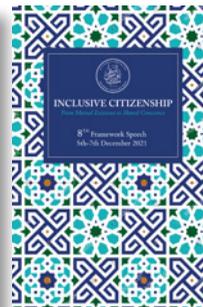
**5<sup>th</sup> Assembly  
Alliance of Virtue:  
An Opportunity for  
Global Peace**  
2018



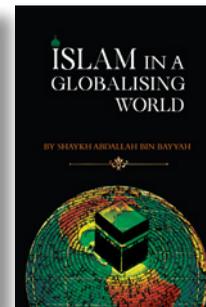
**6<sup>th</sup> Assembly  
Role of Religion in  
Promoting Tolerance**  
2019



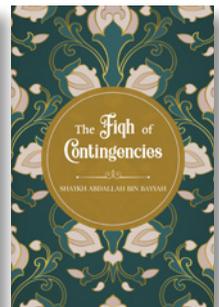
**7<sup>th</sup> Assembly  
The Spirit of the  
Ship's Passengers**  
2020



**8<sup>th</sup> Assembly  
Inclusive Citizenship:  
From Mutual  
Existence to Shared  
Conscience** 2018



**Islam in a Globalizing  
World**



**The Fiqh of  
Contingencies**  
2020



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