

Niagara Foundation Peace & Dialogue Awards 2013

[MCB is awarded the Fethullah Gulen Award]

MCB: well thank you JD, for this very warm introduction. It is, of course, a great honor to be associated with the Fethullah Gulen Award and a man like Fethullah Gulen who has done so much to advance the cause of human kind and the service of God by servicing one's fellow human being while on this earth. It is also a great honor to share with Ann Burke and Paul and others who have preceded us in these varying categories of awards. And it is particularly rewarding to have been here on the occasion of Ann receiving this very well-deserving award and hearing this very touching presentation by her husband, who is a dear, old friend. There are many dear friends here and I would be remiss if I didn't start by acknowledging my wife, my daughter Lisa, my son-in-law Attila, my grandson Antonio, Antonio Cherif actually, and so many other friends. I am delighted to see here the presence of the Dean of the College of Law, Dean Greg Mark, the Consul General of Egypt, Ambassador Magad and so many other friends that I have known over the years.

It was a little difficult for me to think of what to say on such an occasion, particularly because I also knew I was going to be the last one to speak and by then everyone is rather eager to move on. And having three minutes has never been enough time for me to make up my mind on anything I have to say. But I would like to just share with you a very brief thought and I hope to be able to articulate it succinctly. Scientists tell us that the universe started about five billion years ago. They also tell us that evolution may have started about six million years ago. And I have often wondered, what has really changed? Or maybe, what hasn't changed in the course of those six million years of human evolution? Well, the one thing that came to my mind, and I say that with all due humility in the presence of Professor Marty and other scholars, but it seems to me that notwithstanding all of the scientific evolution, the distance between what we know and what we don't know, seem to be relatively the same. No matter how much we learn, there is still the same relative gap between what we know and what we don't know. And that gap has invariably been filled by something we call faith. Faith is what we have, what we use to fill the gap of what we don't know, no matter how much we know. And the second factor that really hasn't changed in the history of human kind is the boundary between good and evil. Somehow,

notwithstanding what happens, how much science and technology we develop, how much knowledge we have, how much different means we have, that boundary remains the same. Whether you decide to stab somebody with a knife or press a button on a computer that directs a drone to kill somebody at several thousand miles away, that moral judgment remains the same. And so we have to ask ourselves the questions, well if really the distance between what we know and what we don't know remains relatively the same throughout the history of humankind and the boundary between good and evil is something that really doesn't change, what is it that we can do to advance a better human understanding? Well, when the DePaul University College of Law International Human Rights Law Institute was founded and I had the honor of being its founder, I decided to devise a motto if you will, and I came up with three different sayings, and they were on all of our posters. And the first saying is a saying by the Prophet Mohammed. And the Hadith of the Prophet Mohammed says, if you see a wrong, you must right it. You must right it with your hand if you can, namely with your deeds. You must right it, if you can't do it by hands, with your words. And if you can't, at least in your heart condemn it. But that is the weakest of all faith. And the second was a saying that Pope Paul VI said on the occasion of the International Congress of the International Association of Penal Law, which I had the privilege of presiding for fifteen years. He said it in a speech to our association, which I helped write in 1969, and he said, "If you want peace, work for justice." And the last is something quite old, and the saying comes from the Talmud, and it says, the world rests on three pillars; it rests on peace, it rests on justice, it rests on truth. And then a commentary adds to it, but if you have justice, you have truth, and in order to have truth, you have justice, but ultimately, if you have truth and justice, you have peace.

What the Gulen movement does, which calls upon all of us, to translate faith to action, to translate spirituality to service. This is the message of the Abrahamic faiths, that many others also share. And that is why we are all part of the same humankind. Thank you.