



SeeJordan.Org

E-Newsletter

Jordan Tourism Board North America (JTBNNA)  
6867 Elm St. Suite 102 McLean, VA 22101  
(877) SEE-JORDAN Fax:: (703) 243-7406

February 3, 2006

Volume 37, Number 1

Experience  
Jordan Now!

Jordan Tourism Board  
North America  
(JTBNNA)  
6867 Elm St. Suite 102  
McLean, VA 22101  
(877) SEE-JORDAN  
Fax: (703) 243-7406

info@seejordan.org  
www.seejordan.org

**Dear friends,**

**This is the speech of His Majesty King Abdullah II at the National Prayer Luncheon in Washington, D.C. on February the 2nd, 2006.**

*Bismillah ar-Rahman ar-Rahim;*

In the Name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful.

Thank you for the kind welcome. It is an honor to join you. I am especially grateful for the prayers that were offered at the National Prayer Breakfast in 1999, on behalf of my father, King Hussein. Even in those last days of his life, he was still working for peace; peace for our region, peace for our world. His example taught us all that public service and duty to God are inseparable. Those who serve must, as the Psalm says: Seek peace and pursue it. (Psalms 34:14).

At this point in history, our service to God, our countries and our peoples demand that we confront extremism in its myriad forms. To overcome this common foe, we must explore the values that unite us, rather than exaggerating the misunderstandings that divide us.

Islam, like Christianity and Judaism is a monotheistic religion: Muslims believe that there is only One God; that is the basis of everything in Islam. The Holy Qur'an says:

*He it is who is God in Heaven and God on earth. He is the Wise, the Knower. (Al-Zukhruf, 43:84)*

Islam, like Judaism and Christianity, believes in the Abrahamic Scriptures. The Holy Qur'an says that God *hath Revealed the Torah and the Gospel (Aal-'Imran, 3:1)*.

Islam, like Judaism and Christianity, has three essential principles, that *The Lord our God, the Lord is One* [1][1][1] (Deuteronomy 6:4), and the two golden Commandments. Jesus Christ said (may peace and blessings be upon him), echoing the words of the Torah:

*The first of all commandments is, Hear, O Israel; the Lord our God is one Lord; / And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy understanding, and with all thy strength: this is the first commandment. / And*

*the second commandment is like, namely this, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. There is none other commandment greater than these.*<sup>2[2][2]</sup>

And likewise the Prophet Muhammad (may peace and blessings be upon him) said:

*By Him in whose Hand is my life, none of you believes until he [or she] loves for their neighbour, what they love for themselves.*<sup>3[3][3]</sup>

These two commandments — on which *hang all the law and all the prophets*<sup>4[4][4]</sup> — should bring us together, for Jesus Christ (may peace and blessings be upon him) said: *For he who is not against us is on our side* (Mark, 9:40).

And, similarly, the Holy Qur'an says:

*Truly the believers are brothers. Therefore make peace between your brothers and observe your duty to God that perhaps you may obtain mercy.* (49:10)

Our religions, Judaism, Christianity and Islam, should bring us together in other ways. They all demand of us both humility and strength. Humility – in knowing there is a Power higher than ourselves: the One God, who created and sustains us. Strength – that with God's help, we can do His will: leading lives of conscience, making a positive difference, and in honoring and loving our families.

In every generation, people of faith are tested. In our generation, the greatest challenge comes from violent extremists who seek to divide and conquer. Extremism is a political movement, under religious cover. Its adherents want nothing more than to pit us against each other, denying all that we have in common. We must therefore heed the words of the New Testament: *Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.* (Romans 12:21)

Like Christians and Jews, Muslims revile aggression against innocents – whatever their land or religion. The Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings upon him, taught “There is no harm and no requiting harm in religion.” He told us: *“The All-Merciful is merciful to those who are merciful. Have mercy upon those on earth, He who is in heaven will be merciful unto you.”* Jesus, peace and blessings upon him, also said: *Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy.* (Matthew 5:7)

By the Grace of God, my father in his day, and I in mine, have worked to combat the phenomenon of radicalism by promoting a sound understanding of our faith. More than a year ago, Jordan launched a religious initiative to reaffirm traditional moderate Islam, to expose and isolate extremism and to emphasize the common teachings of Judaism, Christianity and Islam.

The principles of our Reaffirmation of True Islam were adopted by the Organization of the Islamic Conference in Mecca last December as part of their ten-year plan for the future of the Islamic World. This strikes at the very roots of extremism by denying its Islamic legitimacy, and consolidates the traditional middle ground of Islam, to which the vast majority of Muslims belong. It constitutes a full frontal assault on extremist distortions of Islam by exposing the falsity of their ideologies to the light of truth. As God has said in the Holy Quran: *Truth has come and falsity has vanished. Lo! Falsity is ever bound to vanish.* (17:81)

September Eleventh; the train bombings in Spain; the underground and bus bombings in London – these outrages have led some to believe in a “Clash of Civilizations”. Nothing could please extremists more; that is their view of reality. Its falsity is made clear to all by the extremist bombings in the Islamic world ... in Jordan, Egypt, Morocco, Saudi Arabia, and more. Almost every day Muslims are killed by extremists in Iraq. Their targets are not Christians, not Jews, not Americans or Europeans, but indigenous innocent Muslims.

I will never forget visiting our hospitals after extremists bombed a Muslim wedding party in Amman last November. My wife Rania and I grieved with and for fathers, mothers, sons and daughters who saw their families viciously, deliberately, murdered. Such wanton acts demonstrate that extremist terror is not indicative of a clash between civilizations. Rather it is an attack upon civilization. As Dr. Martin Luther King said: “Civilization and violence are antithetical concepts”.

The violence unleashed by terrorist groups and the few who follow them stems from hatred. They do not preach the Islam of the Qur’an or the Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings upon him. Theirs is a repugnant political ideology which violates the principles and statutes of traditional Islamic law. No matter what grievance one may have or what evil one confronts, the Quran commands us: *Let not the hatred of others make you swerve to wrong and depart from justice. Be just! It is closer to piety.* (5:8)

Extremists, of any religion, who teach intolerance and violence, mutilate Scripture to advance their cause. We behold with horror and disgust the recent targeting of Christian churches in Iraq, breaking with a 1400 year tradition of Christian-Muslim friendship and mutual acceptance amongst the Arabs of the Levant. Equally, whilst we respect and revere freedom of speech, we condemn needless desecration and injury of Islamic sensibilities, such as the recent cartoons misrepresenting and vilifying my ancestor the Prophet (may peace and blessings be upon him).

If we allow such intolerance and ill will to polarize us, we betray all those who have died at their hands. And we do worse. We turn away from truth – truth expressed throughout our Judeo-Christian-Islamic heritage, *For a good tree does not bear bad fruit, nor does a bad tree bear good fruit.* (Luke 6:43)

Together, we have a duty to this generation and many to come, to witness to the

positive role of faith in public life. Humbled through that faith, strengthened by that faith; we can, with God's help, create a more just and peaceful future. It begins by standing together – and upholding the principles transgressed by those who oppose us. As the Bible says: *be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity.* (1 Timothy 4:12)

Thank you very much.

If you would like to remove your email address from the list simply reply to this e-mail with the word UNSUBSCRIBE.