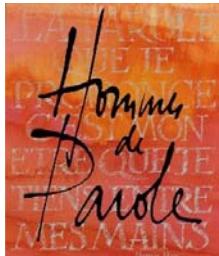




Intervention by Alain Michel,



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and the *Hommes de Parole* Foundation

At the 7th Conference for Interreligious Dialogue in Doha

### **“Am I my brother’s keeper?”**

“Am I my brother’s keeper?” This was Cain’s answer (Cain is called Qâbîl in the Koran) when God, after the murder of Cain’s brother Abel (or Hâbîl) asked him “What have you done with your brother?”.

This is positive of course, but the answer to this question is the only response that could solve the terrible problems facing humanity today.

In the three monotheistic religions, the writings clearly, unambiguously assert that all men are the sons of the same Father, which means that they are all brothers.

The response thus is “yes”.

So, if I am my brother’s keeper, my brother is my keeper.

To be my brother’s keeper means that I have obligations to him, and vice versa.

All believers, - Jews, Christians and Moslems, - are united by a single God, a “God of love, unity and truth”, all believers belong *de facto* to the same brotherhood and thus are the custodians of the sacred character of life and peace.

So my first duty to my brother, the Other Person, in other words, all other people, is called “solidarity” which is a tangible dimension, a primary value of brotherhood.

For a very long time, the loss of this value has generated so great an identity withdrawal that religious rights and the individual’s freedom are recoiling a little more every day.

This situation contributes to individualism, a search for power, social inequalities, a reign of money, the strong oppressing the weak, in other words, increasing numbers of conflicts of all sorts the world over as well as ecological and climatic imbalances.

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So, since we know that the conflicts shattering today's world cannot be settled through military means, the time, perhaps, has come to understand that there can be no permanent solution without the determination and the involvement of the religious leaders and all believers in the search for peace.

And as confirmed in the scriptures, "*the promises of God are identical for everyone and the human being was created free to choose the path to death and malediction or the path to goodness and blessings*"; let us choose, once and for all, the path of goodness and blessing, the path of life.

We are engaged in a historical process, since we all know that the world is at a fateful turning point in the history of mankind and that one of its main components is the pursuit of war or the accession to peace.

The spiritual leaders, who have the power to make war, also have the powers of peace, since they can install peace in each and every human being. Peace in the world, thus, is possible.

The spiritual leaders are the depositories of peace, and we know that peace has become vital for all of humanity.

Their role today is to teach the values of brotherhood and solidarity by considering them as priorities.

Their role is to relentlessly act so that all the faithful of all religions share these objectives and that all of us embark on the only possible road of the future, the role of tolerance and justice, the road of freedom, in other word the road of brotherhood.

The moment, thus, has also come to make our voice heard so that the government leaders, supported by our determination and commitment, will have the political wisdom and will to give priority to the values of fraternity and solidarity. These are values that can overcome the barriers we, or others, have built and thus consolidate a future of peace, shared by all of mankind.

Yet all efforts in favour peace will be destroyed by fanatics who reject the Other person, who reject universal brotherhood if we do not permanently condemn and delegitimise all violence perpetrated "in the name of God".

Now is the time for us to return to the word of God that has been stolen and perverted by the extremists.

We know that keeping silent, not taking a stand towards, and condemning terrorism and all religious violence makes us accomplices, gives us a share of the responsibility.

All men of faith, all real believers are subjected to grave humiliation when attacks, regardless of origin or type, are committed "in the name of God".

For each act of terrorism committed by a fanatic Moslem, whether or not alone, all of Islam, all the Moslems of the world suffer the consequences. When this happens, hundreds of millions of Moslems are linked to the violence and terrorisms.

For each act of violence, contempt, or injustice committed by a Jew, whether or not alone, in the name of God and the holy scriptures, all of Judaism and all Jews suffer the consequences. Millions of Jews the world over are linked to this violence, contempt and injustice.

Being identified in this manner generates hate of the Other person, which thus instigates the rise of anti-Semitism, Islamophobia, and racism of all types the world over.

It is essential for us, as of now, to marginalise and "outlaw" fanatics and fanaticism by focusing on men of good faith, all believers who have the intellectual, spiritual and human courage to "theologically" condemn attacks, condemn assaults on human life.

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This Seventh Doha Conference for Interreligious Dialogue is a sign of hope, an unquestionably strong source of confirmation that the present crisis must be accepted as an opportunity for change and not as a catastrophe. If all of us, spiritual leaders, believers of all religions, if we commit to peace here, in public and we make it known and if we give testimony to peace through our words and actions, we are convinced that the people will follow.

I know that the religious dialogue of Doha will be successful in an original feat, an extremely urgent one, namely, giving hope to the people who despair of the current situation, the defeatists, people who lapsed into absolute suffering, everyone who is convinced that they will never live with justice of peace.

Today, although conflicts stretching over so many years all around the planet prevent us from peacefully taking each other's hand, there are many indications that public opinion is ready to work towards the rebirth of true brotherhood. Thus slowly but surely, the world will see the reappearance of a glimpse of the justice and truth that generate peace, and the strength of solidarity and brotherhood will be greater than the strength of violence and exclusion.

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