

UNITED ARAB EMIRATES  
THE UAE COUNCIL FOR FATWA



الإمارات العربية المتحدة  
مجلس الإمارات للإفتاء الشرعي

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

*God bless and send peace upon the Prophet Muhammad, the Prophet of Mercy, and all of his brethren,  
God's emissaries to humankind.*

## “Cooperate in Goodness and Piety”

A Position Paper of the Abrahamic Monotheistic Religions on Matters Concerning the  
End-of-Life

Vatican City State  
October 28, 2019

His Excellency Shaykh Abdallah Bin Bayyah

President of the Fatwa Council of the United Arab Emirates  
President of the Forum for Promoting Peace in Muslim Societies (Abu Dhabi)

His Holiness, the Supreme Pontiff, Pope Francis, Pope of the Catholic Church; Your  
Excellencies and Eminences; and children of the greater Abrahamic family:

I am pleased to convey to you the greetings of His Highness Sheikh Khalifa bin Zayed Al Nahyan, President of the United Arab Emirates, May God protect him, His Highness Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Vice President and Prime Minister of the UAE and Ruler of Dubai, God bless him, and His Highness Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi and Deputy Supreme Commander. I would also like to reiterate that the UAE always strives to uphold the common virtues of the Abrahamic family and all human values that aim to advance



common good and promote happy coexistence. In this year, the year of tolerance in the UAE. We still remember the historical visit of His Holiness Pope Francis and the signing of the Human Fraternity document with Sheikh Al-Azhar, Dr. Ahmed Al Tayeb, under the patronage and utmost care of His Highness Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed and the rulers of the UAE, May God protect them.

I address each of you by your name and your beautiful qualities. May God's peace, blessings, and mercy be upon all of you. I will try to keep my comments short and my message brief. The first aspect of my talk will discuss the virtue of cooperation, the second the Abrahamic family, the third the value of life, and the final the New Alliance of Virtue between various religions.

Before that, please allow me to express my gratitude and appreciation for the organizers of this gathering. I would like to thank the Pontifical Academy for Life as well as all of its partners who oversaw the preparations for this unified stance by the Abrahamic family on the rejection of actively engaging in ending human life.

Respected attendees, this great ceremony reflects a sincere belief in the value of working together for the common good as well as a deep awareness that we are indeed like passengers on one ship, our fates and destinations inevitably bound together. None are saved unless all are saved. There is no deliverance for one people and not another, or for one religion but not the other. None will be saved except by working together towards goodness. This is what both Holy Scriptures as well as enlightened minds tell us. Addressing all people with their varied faiths and races, the Holy Qur'an says, "Help each other in furthering virtue and piety, and do not aid one another towards sin and hostility" (5:2).



Such cooperation towards goodness is what guides our meeting here today, for we all feel the need to complement each other in our roles, from our various lands and spheres of influence, to work towards the restoration of the moral conscience of humanity. This will restore the efficacy of the values of mercy, relief, helping one another, and benevolence.

Respected attendees, this meeting of ours also expresses our shared conviction that religious values are still capable of guiding the world towards salvation from its incurable problems by setting forth a new understanding of humanity that takes us from the neutral principle of human rights to the positive values of love and brotherhood.

We, the children of the Abrahamic family, share the same origin for our values, virtues, and ethical foundations. This, in turn, provides the basis for peace and coexistence amongst us. Though we are different peoples, we have many commonalities, the ignoring of which has led to much conflict and destruction, and humanity, as a result, growing farther away from the values established by the prophets, such as the values of goodness, love, and compassion.

We share, first and foremost, our humanity, which is an ontological value over which no reasonable people can differ. It is unchanged by the alteration of time, the determinants of place, or the inclinations of people, because it has roots and origins beyond the reach of the vicissitudes of time or the abuses of men.

We, the children of the Abrahamic family, also share particular beliefs, which can be found throughout the scriptures and teachings of the prophets. It was these prophets whom Nietzsche inadvertently referred to when he said that a small group of people has historically determined the values of humanity. These commonalities revolve around what Muslim jurists called the Five Core Values:



1. religion
2. life
3. intellect
4. property
5. honor and family

According to Islamic teachings, these core values are the shared religious foundation of all religions and sects, particularly of the Abrahamic family. All of these core values came with protections and safeguards, for all religions hold them to be their ultimate ends which, in turn, protect human dignity.

Respected attendees, we gather here today in remembrance of the core value of life, which is being encroached upon by meddlers from every direction—whether by abortion before birth, terrorism and belligerence during life, or terminating life near its end. These are the early signs of a disruption of values and an illness of the social body of humanity that is sustained by material advancement void of any framework or foundation rooted in the values of goodness, love, and peace.

As Muslims, we believe that God is the Creator who blessed humanity with life and endowed us with the gift of dignity, and He alone decrees for us our definitive lifespans. We believe that a human being does not have the right to take his or her own life or the life of another. This is one of the Ten Commandments for believers decreed by God through His prophets, upon all of them be peace. We believe that the life of one human individual holds the same sanctity as the combined lives of all of humanity, as, in the Holy Qur'an, God revealed to Moses, upon him be peace, “If anyone killed a person, other than for murder or corruption on earth, it would be as if he killed all the people” (Qur'an 5:32).



In light of this, Muslim jurists consider the gift of life to be a kind of loan; hence, since our lives belong to God and not to ourselves, we have no right to do with life as we please: we may not destroy it, squander it, or sell it. Life is a gift from God Almighty. He alone gifts it, and He alone takes back that gift. According to the Qur'an, our Patriarch Abraham, peace be upon him, described God as the one “who created me and who guides me, and who feeds me and gives me drink, and who heals me when I'm sick, and who will cause me to die and then revive me, and who I hope will forgive me on the Day of Judgment” (26:78–82).

We believe that human dignity is immutable—it is not removed or altered by the demise of health or the alteration of one's strength. Our duty to our brothers and sisters in humanity is to stand by them in their illness until their very last moment, extending the hand of support and easing their pain without complaint and without the desire to hasten their end. This is what human dignity demands of us and even what divine mercy demands of us, as God said, “Do not kill yourselves; for God is merciful to you” (Qur'an 4:29).

We also believe that despair is an incurable illness that weakens the soul and incapacitates the mind. It is one of the most mortal of sins because none despairs of the mercy of the Generous One except a person who either does not recognize or know His generosity. In light of this, our appeal to all—the ill, the family of the ill, the doctors, and the caretakers—is to have hope, just as Prophet Jacob, upon him be peace, appealed to his sons: “Do not despair of the mercy of God” (Qur'an 12:87).

Respected attendees, our meeting today signifies a new step on the road of religious cooperation: it is the first time that our religions' representatives meet to incorporate their agreement upon values and foundational principles, and to bring these to the level of practical application.

UNITED ARAB EMIRATES  
THE UAE COUNCIL FOR FATWA



الإمارات العربية المتحدة  
مجلس الإمارات للإفتاء الشرعي

Our awareness of the imperative of cooperation and our belief in shared values and virtues, and the need bring these ideas to the level of application in a unified stance with practical applications, has led to an initiative, both in Washington D.C. and in Abu Dhabi, in the form of an ethical pact between the three children of the Abrahamic family, with all of our denominations and sects, along with all lovers of goodness from the broader human family. We called this pact “The Alliance of Virtue,” as it was inspired by the spirit of the historic pact bearing the same name that took place on the Arabian Peninsula before the advent of Islam. The Prophet of Islam, Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings of God upon him, praised this pact for its distinction as an unprecedented pact that was sealed by people with no shared religious, tribal, or ethnic affiliations. Instead, it was based on their shared values and virtues.

The new Alliance of Virtue, out of the firm spiritual grounding of the Abrahamic family, strives to offer field initiatives characterized by perpetuity and novelty. These initiatives seek to unite, not divide, to benefit, not harm, and are congruous with the spirit of religion, responding to the needs of humanity.

I, therefore, declare my support for the unified stance of the allied Abrahamic family for the prohibition on ending life. I also declare my support for more united stances by which the positive force of religion may be restored so that it may be a hope for humanity, a salve for its wound, a cure for its calamities, and a source of serenity for all hearts and love for all souls.

May God’s peace, mercy, and blessings be upon you all.