ABDULAZIZ SAUD AL-BABTAIN

# CONTEMPLATIONS FOR PEACE

Foreword by

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# Contents

- **Foreword by Michael Frendo:** Embracing Peace as an Ideology of Humankind 7

- **Introduction** 13

## - Part I: The Seven Rules for Peace

- **Rule 1:** Respect and honesty 19
- **Rule 2:** Peace is a necessity 21
- **Rule 3 :** Peace is a consensus 23
- **Rule 4 :** Peace is a historical endeavor 25
- **Rule 5 :** Peace is a continuous process 27
- **Rule 6 :** Peace is a culture: 29
- **Rule 7:** Peace means education 31

## - Part II: The Seven Ways to Achieve Peace

- **WAY 1:** The duty to do good is a path to peace 37
- **WAY 2:** The Duty of Reconciliation is a Step Forward towards Peace 41

- **WAY 3:** Mediating Between Countries as a Way to Establish Peace 45
- **WAY 4:** The Preparation of a Practical Plan as a Way to Achieve Peace 49
- **WAY 5:** Joint Interactive Work as a Path for Peace 53
- **WAY 6:** Making Peace a Unifying Ideal Is a Way to Achieve Lasting Peace 57
- **WAY 7:** The Doctrine of Peace as a Way for Peace 59

- **Abdulaziz Saud Al- Babtain: A Short biography** 63

"Since wars begin in the minds

of men , it is in the minds of men that the defenses of peace must be constructed"

The UNESCO constitutional Statement

# FOREWORD

**By Michael Frendo[1]**

## EMBRACING PEACE AS AN IDEOLOGY OF HUMANKIND

This gem of a book of reflections on the theme of peace by Abdulaziz Al-Babtain is a heartfelt cry for all of mankind to embrace peace as a value, a goal, and a way of life.

It reflects Al-Babtain's deeply held lifelong commitment to bring together humankind, with its diversity of beliefs and cultures and growing economic disparities, in a unifying sincere and open dialogue in the pursuit of peace amongst and within nations.

Bred in a nation and a region that has known terrible conflict, even resulting in loss of nationhood and of statehood, Al-Babtain craves for peace as a overwhelming need for all of mankind, grown from,

**(1) The Hon. Dr Michael Frendo is Speaker Emeritus of the Parliament of Malta and a former Minister of Foreign Affairs of Malta. He is currently a member of the European Commission for Democracy through Law of the Council of Europe (the Venice Commission) where he serves as a member of the Enlarged Bureau and as Chairman of the Sub-Commission on Democratic Institutions.**

and embedded in, the very roots of society and not just dispensed from above.

Peace is multifaceted and, to be lasting, one singular manifestation of peace must be that of justice which - in the words of the author - represents the real value of humanity.

The book presents us with the Rules of Peace and the Paths to Peace. It illustrates the pillars on which authentic peace is built and the collaborative process by which peace must be achieved.

In all this, the simple value of doing good is a way to light the candle of peace. "A world without peace is a dark world", the author states in urging us to light this candle.

The author reflects the thought attributed to Edmund Burke that "All that is necessary for the triumph of evil is that good men do nothing"[1], noting that "many people of goodwill" faced with the phenomena in a world where the spread of hate and division seems unstoppable, "become frustrated, give up any desire for reform" and resign their responsibilities to fight for peace "in societies and between societies". To overcome what he terms this "double failure", the author strives for a comprehensive vision that goes beyond the individual or

*(1) Edmund Burke (12 January 1729 – 9 July 1797), Irish political philosopher, Conservative politician and statesman.*

the community to a "supreme collective awareness of humanity"..."the spirit of humanity".

This universality of message is a major characteristic of this book. It is not directed at any one nation, at any one group: the message is global and universal addressing the needs of humankind as a whole and appealing to the best values and aspirations of the human being.

As always, Al-Babtain seeks to bring out the best of humanity appealing not to base instincts but to a human spirit that keeps seeking new heights in the pureness of a Teilhard de Chardin "noosphere" embodying peace and justice. It is in the minds of men that the values of peace must be constructed.

The Seven Rules of Peace presented by the author present peace as a necessity, a consensus to be built continuously, a historical endeavour which must continue at all times developing peace as a culture and a way of life for all men and women in our world. In all this, the values of respect and honesty in human relations are at the foundation of the rules of peace. And the process of education for peace at an early age is the key to success in the endeavour to develop the culture of peace. The author emphasises that "The origin of all assets in life is peace and the rest are branches". Peace is focal to the value and enjoyment of human living: Al-Babtain urges us to "make peace an uninterrupted lesson"! Only

then can "we realise that respect, tolerance, honesty, cooperation, altruism, justice, , freedom and equity are values in peace that are inseparable from each other." he rightly asserts.

In the second part of this monograph on Peace, Al-Babtain delineates the seven ways to achieve Peace. Seven rules and seven ways reflecting the Koranic and Biblical perfection of this number. In the achievement of Peace in societies and between societies, in humankind, Al-Babtain, and all of us, would be, to use my native language, Maltese,(1) " fis-seba' sema' ", in the seventh heaven.

The author now reminds us of our duty to dedicate our efforts for peace, doing good, seeking reconciliation and mediating for peace between countries. He advocates planning for peace, working together for peace and adopting peace as a unifying ideal which we must collectively strive for.

Al-Babtain calls for a doctrine of peace, making the achievement of peace our ideology, reminiscent of that great thinker of peace and non-violence, the Mahatma Gandhi who in addressing the All-India Congress on non-violence declared that "With me it is a creed" but he was content for the Congress

*(1) A fusion language deriving from, and grammatically based on, Arabic with strong influences from Italian and other romance languages. The Maltese are the only European Christians who pray to "Alla".*

"to accept it as policy" and then to adhere to it.[1] Al-Babtain asks us to emulate Gandhi and accept peace as ideology, as doctrine, as creed and then to be missionaries of this message of peace and justice.

This short intensive treatise on peace is another valuable and rich contribution to human thinking and to the human spirit by Abdulaziz Al-Babtain, a successful poet, philanthropist and businessmen who has lived the words of Rudyard Kipling in treating just the same the two imposters of triumph and disaster while always continuing to put his achievements to the service of humanity. It exudes his passion for justice, tolerance and peace among humankind. Abdulaziz Al-Babtain can with conviction express the words of the Mahatma Gandhi, "I regard myself as a soldier, though a soldier of peace".[2]

**Michael Frendo**

Valletta, August 15, 2017

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*(1) Mohandas K. Gandhi's speech (Excerpts) to the All-India Congress, Bombay, August 7, 1942 as reported in the New York Times, August 8, 1942.*

(2) Speech at meeting in Victoria Hall, Geneva, Switzerland, 10 December, 1931, held under the auspices of the International Women's League for Peace and Freedom.

# INTRODUCTION

I still feel that I can offer more to humanity. I find that what I have achieved and accomplished is not enough and I am still eager to serve humanity. After a long life experience in culture, poetry and business, and after I have visited most of the world's countries and known many of the people of most creeds and sects, I endeavor to write and to speak to the world in a way that might help in a way or another save humanity from the distractions of the soul and break the whims of senseless adventurers. I am fully convinced that there is nothing better than defining rules and means that can be easily applied to serve humanity in the path of peace. This would pave the way to the necessary reconciliations. All the ideas and suggestions expressed here are the result of my life experience and my own reflections. Whether they are unique or bear any similarity to other experiences, I would like to draw from them useful wisdom. I believe that any wisdom born of rich experience must be communicated to all peoples and not monopolized. The value of wisdom is that it becomes a guide for peoples, a real blueprint.

A world without peace is a dark world. Neverthe-

less, if we allow the good word to call up for peace, then it turns into a luminous candle that will not be obscured by darkness. "Peace is a candle," so we must light it up, bearing in mind that "the weak is the one who always loses peace." Peace establishes the value of justice without which the very existence of humanity would no longer be valuable.

I have carefully chosen my words, and I know that they need enough time to mature in people's minds.

The wise man has to understand the true nature of people. They are generally moody and versatile, and these different moods and fancies do in turn cause bitter rivalries and tense disputes. Life, in its ever increasing complexity, has exacerbated these passions without respect for virtues and values, and what made matters worse is that some hate ideologies have spurred racism and sectarian-religious conflict.

Upon observing such phenomena, many people of good will tend to become frustrated, give up any desire for reform, then end up literally secluded on the social level, resigning their responsibilities. We believe that such a state of affairs reflects a defeated, depressed and socially repulsive society. By minimal accounts, it is a double failure: Failure to face

improper and parasitic behavior, which in turn prevents social reform, and failure to fulfill the noble human task of establishing peace in societies and between societies.

In order to avoid this double failure, we must have wisdom and patience to formulate a comprehensive vision that is not limited to the awareness of the individual or the community, but one which is attached to a supreme collective awareness of humanity, its mission and role, or what we call "the spirit of humanity".

The motive for humanitarian action stems from our belief in the same work. We may be accused of candor. People might think that what we are doing would inevitably fall into oblivion. Yet, we will "do this good" because it is a noble act for humanity. Accordingly, I do agree with the American author and businessman Stephen Covey's opinion in his wonderful book 7 Habits of the Highly Effective People.

The wise say that fruitless trees never get stones thrown at them. I prefer to be a fruitful tree, even if the people throw me a stone, occasionally.

**Abdulaziz Saud Al-Babtain**

*Geneva - Monday, July 17, 2017*

# Part I

# The Seven Rules for Peace

## RULE 1: RESPECT AND HONESTY

The lesson we draw from reading the history of the nobles cannot be limited to the fact that they have done prodigious work for peace. Their deeds and achievements are nothing more than manifestations of peace or guiding signs on the path for peace. The main lesson lays in their firm belief that the active culture of peace has to be translated into an active behavior for the sake of peace. In other words, drawing on all the experiences of peace, we must conclude that the treatment of the problems of humanity lies in making the culture of peace an effective educational formula thanks to which we will educate the future generations. Only then, our own behavior will become one genuinely based on peaceful precepts. We need to make peace an effective rule in human development regardless of the evil or good nature of man.

The first active rule is that people are mostly concerned with their self-interests. Selfishness is both natural and instinctive, and while culture tries to bal-

ance selfishness, the latter remains a source of aversion, making people avoid those who are impregnated with selfishness, and sometimes even abandon them. Because of selfish behavior, an individual may end up being hated. Nevertheless, hate is a satisfactory feeling only for abnormal and unorthodox human beings, because a culture of active peace and a spirit of peace know no hatred. It is clear that these people may attract us to their dark impulses, but it would be a mistake to treat them according to their own pattern and behavior. Rather, we are supposed to carry them to our healthy, pure and effective culture. People's morality is a psychological barrier, but despite what they are, we must respect them and deal with them honestly. This is the first rule for peace: "Respect the others and be truthful to them."

## RULE 2: PEACE IS A NECESSITY

Peace -in the case of unity, diversity and difference- is not only possible but also necessary. It is necessary because human societies by nature do naturally communicate with each other and no society today is totally secluded. Closed societies are, actually, disappearing and vanishing. As for open, vivid and civilized societies, they obviously need greater exchange at all material levels such as cultural and technological goods and achievements, but also on the moral level such as justice, freedom and moral standards such as amnesty and tolerance. Today, more than ever, we need to transfer peace from the possible to the necessary to ensure the continuation of humanity. We must therefore go beyond the idea of a possible peace to the idea of a necessary peace. We must think about duty and social responsibility. We need a culture of necessity of peace, not a culture of possibility.

Aiming to spread peace as a necessity to the whole world means that we would marshal all our behavior, symbols, rituals and all means of communication to

the ultimate goal of peace. The world of peace is the essence of diversity. It has no exclusive language, color, culture, race, class or religion. It has languages in one language, colors in one color, cultures in a single culture, sects and religions in one religion. It is simply the multidimensional human world, which is a reflection of me, of you, of all of us.

We strive for a conflict-free life. The day peace becomes a necessity and not a possibility; we would establish the better world.

## RULE 3: PEACE IS A CONSENSUS

We must first distinguish between the social consensus on peace and the political consensus on peace. For decades, the paths of peace have been based on political consensus, rather than on social consensus around real, historical peace for humanity. The evidence for this is the lack of success in the paths of political peace and the abundance of failures. When we look at many examples, we note that the peace stemming out of political consensus does not last long. The consensus quickly breaks down and the process becomes fragile, then more intense rivalries arise. This can only be explained by the fact that the peace of political accommodation is connected to narrow interests.

We must determine the kind of peace that humanity needs, which is without a doubt the peace of political consensus. What should be achieved in the present status of humanity is a peace that brings together peoples and societies, not a peace agreed upon by political classes and contingent to governments. When peace emanates from what peoples and

communities agree upon it is less likely to disappear. It would last and turn into a culture and civilized behavior.

What we emphasize is the avoidance of peace based on political consensus. Even if we cannot do so, we can at the very least make the peace of political consensus a transitional step to move towards a lasting peace. Although it is necessary to take into account some interests, we need to make sure that the interest is one there is full consensus about, not just mere agreement.

The difference between consensus and agreement is that the human consensus is about issues and values around which differences are actually fictitious, caused by stubbornness and arrogance. Nevertheless, agreement is sought in cases that are really a matter of dispute between us. Humans do not argue about fixed values and principles, but there are frequent deviations, followed by the triumph of wisdom.

The peace begotten from consensus is a perpetual social need whereas the political peace is doomed to remain fragile and temporary. When peace becomes consensual, the grievance of all would follow.

## RULE 4: PEACE IS A HISTORICAL ENDEAVOR

In today's world order, media rhetoric, political speech and experts' research revolve around the concept of "global security". That is normal because there is a universal longing to reach security in all life's aspects as well as an ambition towards global peace. However, this concept was located mainly in the world of the image and the virtual sphere. Yet, the image in our world has become a mirror reflecting reality and establishing the truth. It has become a deceitful mediator because it presents the coexistence of people with a lot of illusion, and offers a world similar to our world, full of blur and distortion. This is due to the fact that it is based on selectivity, beautification, blocking and obliteration, and the truth is non-selective and naked. When we count on the picture, we are in the judgment of one who sees the world with one eye, evading facts and truths.

In this context, we perceive a real problem today: peace is constructed by the image and presented to us by political discourse that reflects social reality in

an ideological form, resulting in a secondary degree of perception. We are, indeed, living a double deception: the deception of the image and the deception of the political discourse. To get rid of it, we must actually vivify peace and seek to achieve it. It is true that a picture can sometimes be revealing, just as much as a political discourse can be, but those who need peace do not have the tools of the picture and have no political discourse at all.

Therefore, we do not need peace created by the picture and made by the political discourse; this temporary peace generally ends with the end of the campaign period.

In order to establish a "comprehensive security", the security of peace and development, and in order to transform it from a mere slogan to a true historical need, we must elevate peace from the level of the mere image to the level of the actual social reality that exists before us. In other words, peace in the picture must be made in accordance with reality: the peace bond with reality, that is to say, must become a definite historical need.

## RULE 5: PEACE IS A CONTINUOUS PROCESS

Since the beginning of creation, humanity has been an unfinished project, or a continuous process, but certainly not an establishment. The concept of perfect humanity is both utopian and meaningless as perfection pertains to God alone. In addition, the idea of completion is self- defeating since it means the end of evolution: When you finish something and stand without progress, you are going against the very nature of time and life, which lies in progress. Construction and demolition are consecutive, and whenever there is a building, it will be followed by demolition. There are in this world two forces or two tendencies: a positive force or a positive, constructive tendency and a negative force or a negative, destructive tendency. As we know that there is a destructive force in the hearts of people, we have to ignore it altogether as if it does not exist. Instead, we need to continue to build, and although we also know that construction is costly in terms of time and money and that it may fade, we must continue to build it because it confirms our desire and our determination to resist the evil tendency.

Humanity is about building, struggling for survival and continuity.

Peace is a permanent path of building that we must never stop. Since humanity is a forever-continuous project, peace is the instrument of its continuation. Whenever destructive forces emerge, we must insist on building peace. It is the only guarantee for humanity. The idea of demolition, the tendency towards demolition and the power of demolitions can be resisted only by counter-ideas, counter-counter-measures and counter-forces.

We know that humanity is constantly threatened, and that the project of its completion is constantly threatened by Man himself. Therefore, we must also realize clearly that we must constantly pledge peace and make it a permanent path. Peace is not a standstill but a building that has not been completed and will not be completed. Therefore, we must not relent in constructing and never break down. If we get tired, if we relent, if we believe that peace was built and completed, then we do not understand the logic of corruption in the land nor the logic of demolition. In any case, he who spoils and demolishes is like someone who actually builds up with you because he does not know that by spoiling and destroying it, he urges you to hold on and resist for the path of building peace.

## RULE 6: PEACE IS A CULTURE

According to the Cultural Studies scholars, culture is everything extra- biological, that is all we acquire and learn from our youngest age until the day we die. Culture is religion, literature, thought, art, understanding, speech, behavior, living, effort, awareness and information. As we seek to fortify existence, protect humanity and its noble values and virtues, we must live in peace in our daily lives and make it a form of existence. This is possible only if we turn peace into a way of life. It is not difficult; rather, it is possible.

The pure religion, unaffected by malevolent interpretations, is a culture of peace. Literature, in poetry and in prose, must become a tool for peace and promote peace in its themes. Our thought must make peace central, and our daily language in rhetoric and correspondence must become impregnated with peace.

The arts of theater, cinema and songs should serve peace. Our daily behavior must be a behav-

ior and an argument for peace and evidence of it. Our lives in themselves, in the dealings, the system of ethics, and the system of communication between us, must be based on sound foundations ... We should not waste effort on meaningless misguidance and evil, but on the values of peace.

When consciousness is sound and mature, unattained by corruption, it inevitably ends up serving peaceful purposes. Perhaps the most important yet the most dangerous tool is media: We have to act smartly to make the media specialize in peace, and to push for it.

In a word, our culture must be evidence of peace or, in other words, we have to make our culture both a significant of peace and a signifier for it. Thus, the culture of peace would turn us into beings of peace and this is what humanity needs.

## RULE 7: PEACE MEANS EDUCATION

Since peace must be the culture of people and be felt in the daily cultural behavior, and in order to ensure the continuation of this culture we must be working to raise a whole generation, gradually, on the teachings of peace: from kindergarten to school and then university. The learner must breathe peace and live in peace in every lesson and in every educational subject. As the proverb has it: "learning at a young age is like engraving on stone": If a child learns well in his early years, he will not forget, and the rules of living in peace in his family, in his life, with his colleagues and with the others will continue to serve as a guiding beacon.

It is very good that intellectual and legal schools offer teachings about Human Rights and the efforts of Human Rights activists are extremely laudable, but in my opinion, this education and activism are only complementary, as they require a prerequisite that is education based on peace, provided at an early age.

The origin of all assets in life is peace and the rest are branches. When we learn the rules of peace at a young age and make peace an uninterrupted lesson, we realize that respect, tolerance, honesty, cooperation, altruism, justice, duty, freedom and equity are values in peace that are inseparable from each other. They are like the members of a single body; if one gets sick, the whole body suffers.

We must all understand that if we want to immortalize something and make it eternal as a value, a symbol, or a wisdom, then it must be taught to an entire generation, and this generation will carry its banner and advance it and make it part of the culture.

There is no doubt that peace is a right to all human beings: it is the highest right, or in other words, the universal right of all human rights. Whoever wants to know this universal right, i.e., peace, he will not know it in his kin or his family. Therefore, it has to be learnt as a right per se, embodied in life, in every soul that helps us, in every word, in every behavior, and even in the realm of thinking and issues ... Let us therefore be brave, and enact a law that is committed to teaching the foundations of peace and the culture of peace.

# Part II

# The Seven Ways to Achieve Peace

In the following section, I will mention some of what I have done, and what has been forever engraved in my memory. I will also talk about some of what must be done, not as a matter of pride, but as a lesson and morale, as I consider it to be modeled for doing good and good work.

Man is not an example as of himself but he sees the good example in the actions of others

and gets to influence the others as well as the future generations.

The real treasure that I have kept preciously is the sum of lessons and the wisdom of life, eternal as they are.

## WAY 1: THE DUTY TO DO GOOD IS A PATH TO PEACE

I did not start charitable work after I got money or became rich, not so, but it has been a principle and conviction since my youth. I worked at the Ministry of knowledge in the years from 1954 to 1962, and my monthly salary at the time was sixty dinars, a very modest salary. In fact, in Kuwait at that time there were almost no rich people with wealth, but there were lots of poor families downtrodden and in need for help. That is why, with a group of friends well reputed among the people, we established a charitable group, as the so-called charities today. Every month, we took up a certain amount from every shopkeeper that we knew or collected money from some of our own acquaintances.

Then, we formed another committee to identify the poor, the needy or people who needed to be treated outside Kuwait. Since the government did

not help people in this area, we helped many of the poor get medication and treatment, which helped them recover good health.

We also worked to educate needy children and rebuild many houses destroyed by rain and floods. Our work in accordance with the two committees was organized: The first committee supervised, at the end of the third week of each month, the list of those who were most in need among the poor, the unemployed and the members of large families who were considered as deserving the subsidy. Then, the Commission would decide within the last week of the month the amount of subsidy depending on available money as well as on priorities.

We drove on that approach in several years of assistance, but had to dismantle the group after a few years, as we were all been taken by life's concerns and as I became more focused on developing my own business.

But I went back to that humanitarian duty in a much more organized way through the building up of solid institutions, including the institution named

after my father: The Saud Al-Babtain Kuwaiti Scholarship for Postgraduate Studies in Cairo, created in 1974. It specialized in giving scholarships for students from all over the world to continue their education, and in building schools and universities.

The other institution was set up in 2009 on behalf of my mother, God rest her soul, in the Comoros: "The Hassa Allaboon Center" which includes a clinic, a school and a Center of Studies. I also created my own Center of Studies in Kuwait including a Center for Social Development and Progress. It was financed through annual donations and destined to all the needy in the world, scheduling donations to hospitals, clinics and schools, as well as the drilling of wells and the delivery of drinking water and refugee aid and so on and so forth.

I am informing you about this for two purposes: First, it is not necessarily to be rich to work towards good, but the seed of good and peace must exist in the character of the person and his mind since his youth. With little organization, one can serve humanity and contribute to community service.

The second is that my work and the work of the group I spoke about was not a charity, but an institutional work that was based on simple yet constructive self-awareness.

The wisdom behind all this is that society must not be based on charity but on the idea of duty: The duty to do Good is different from charity. I believe in the duty of humanity and not in the goodness of humanity.

## WAY 2: THE DUTY OF RECONCILIATION IS A STEP FORWARD TOWARDS PEACE

In 1985, President Zia-ul-Haq invited us to Pakistan for hunting and allowed us to access the area of Quetta up north. When we arrived, Sardar Osman, a respectable man of a certain age, received us. He organized a feast for us and we had lunch with him. Then he told us that his son Muzaffar would accompany us to secure our transport. We would be safe from any aggression or assault as the tribe already knew that the son of Sardar Othman accompanied us. When we went to the sniping we noticed that his nephew Mohammed was trying to draw us to him, and I learned that his father was the sheikh of this tribe, and that he had died leaving his son at a young age. Therefore he was adopted by his uncle Sardar Osman and his tribe, but when Mohammed grew up he was not allowed the leadership of the tribe as the tribal traditions imposed. It is to be mentioned here that the government rules only theoretically, as local government is in the hands of the sheikh of the

tribe. As I understood, Sardar Osman did not usurp the leadership of the tribe, but he earned his position strong with the support of the tribe members who appreciated Sardar's moral authority, prestige and respect. That is why the Uncle Sardar Osman and his nephew Mohammed have been involved in a conflict that has reached the point of carrying weapons against each other.

When we returned to Kuwait, Muhammad called me and informed me of his intention to pay me a visit. We prepared a visa for him, and he visited me and we welcomed him as an honorable guest. After that, Al-Sardar Osman contacted me and voiced out his desire to accomplish Hajj with a group of his family and companions and some of the state's dignitaries. We allowed them to drive from Kuwait to Mecca

In the following year, President Zia ul-Haq invited us back to Quetta again, and Sardar Osman welcomed us. I consulted with my group to reconcile the nephew and his uncle, and they welcomed the idea. When Sardar Othman called us to lunch, I stipulated that I would accept the invitation only on condition that he should reconcile with his nephew on the occasion. He told me that this dispute had been going on for 73 years and caused many problems, vengeance, territorial disputes

and other things. He also told me that Mr. Muhammad Ali Jinnah, the founder of Pakistan, Presidents ofter him, and many others have intervened to reconcile between the two sides, but in vain.

Then he said to me: "You are dear to me, but I am clueless." So I stuck to his words and tried to convince him, reminding him of the Holy Quran and the Prophet's Hadith and poetry. I answered him: "What is important is that you accept and we will take care of the rest." After that, his nephew Mohammed invited us to lunch, and I stipulated the same condition, that there is no lunch except by accepting peace with his uncle, so he resisted at first and used the same arguments. Then I ended up convincing him. It was then that we brought them together in a village called Qal'at Saif Allah, and we set to reconcile them. When the reconciliation was achieved, we heard the women screaming joyfully and we heard the firing of celebrative gunshots. The two sides came in groups and hugged one another. Upon seeing this happy event, God brought tears of joy to my eyes and to the eyes of my companions. Then Sardar Osman invited us and his nephew's group to dinner for peace and there were about 200 people. Then Muhammad invited us too and we went to his house where about 300 peo-

ple attended. As reward for reconciliation, we offered Sardar Osman scholarships for doctoral studies to ten students from his tribe at the universities of their choice. As for his his nephew Mohammed, we dug three deep wells for drinking water in the deserts.

The morality of this incident is that achieving reconciliation among people is a way to achieve civil peace. We must seek reconciliation and not remain idle. We must be proactive, bring people together, and not be passive. Peace is both a responsibility and a duty.

## WAY 3: MEDIATING BETWEEN COUNTRIES AS A WAY TO ESTABLISH PEACE

In the years 1993 to 2000, the relations between Algeria and Iran were cut off. It happened that one day I met with Algerian President Abdelaziz Bouteflika. I spoke to him on various subjects, and then the discussion drifted to evoke the relations between the two countries. I asked him about the reasons which led to the cut off, especially that we in the Gulf consider the Iranians as the neighbors of the Arab nation and regard them as strategic depth, just as they also consider us strategic depth. The president responded that the relations were cut off under President Ben Jedid, and he added that he hoped that relations would return to normal in order to promote peace between the two sides. After this discussion, he agreed that I intervene between the two countries in the most appropriate manner. When I returned to Kuwait, I informed His Highness the Amir of the State of Kuwait, Sheikh Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, may God have mercy on him. He said the following: "If you are able to heal the rift and restore normal

relations, it would be an honor for Kuwait." So I told him that a few years ago, the late Iraqi Defense Minister Adnan Khairallah had told me that he heard the Iranians threatening me personally because of my relationship with some Iraqi officials. Therefore, he advised me not to go to Iran. Then I asked for His Highness' advice. He thought for a while, and then he said: "O 'Abd al-'Aziz, who walks in the path of goodness, sees only good, so trust in Allah and go." I said to him: "I will go, but if it is three days and I did not call you, look for me and ask." He smiled, and said may God have mercy on him: "I trust in God and I wish you success." Then I contacted President Hashemi Rafsanjani, who was then the head of the Expediency Council. He agreed and asked eagerly about my arrival. At Tehran airport, five people were present at my reception. One of them told me, in fluent Arabic: "I am charged of translating between you and the president". In reality, I did not want a third person with us, and I was afraid that my message would leak to President Khatami or to Foreign Minister Kharrazi, in which case my potential meeting with one of them would lose interest. I knew that President Rafsanjani, may he rest in peace, was fluent in Arabic, because he studied in Najaf in Iraq. The translator told me: "The president wants to speak Persian." I asked him to inform the President

about my desire to speak Arabic and so I did not need an interpreter. The next morning, at the President's residence, I was surprised to realize the presence of the interpreter at the meeting. As he noticed my disapproval, the President said to me: "Abdul Aziz, I want to speak to you in Persian, but the translator will be speaking to you in Arabic, and there is no need to translate your words to me because I am fluent in Arabic." When I explained the reason for my meeting with him and expressed my wish for the return of relations between Iran and Algeria so that peace and love between the Arab and Iranian peoples would grow, he replied that former president Ben Jedid thought that we financed the Algerian political activist Ali Belhadj, who had notoriously insulted Iranian Imam Khomeini, so how would we support such a person? I told him: "So there was a misunderstanding, and the time has come after you have made it clear, as you said, that relations shall be restored." After a discussion that lasted more than half an hour, he grew convinced by my opinion, and said that they should appoint an ambassador to Iran and that an Iranian Ambassador to Algiers was ready to take office. I remember that I went back to Kuwait and told the late Sheikh Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, and he was very happy about these developments. Then I traveled on the next day to Algeria,

met with President Abdelaziz Bouteflika, and told him the details of the meeting, and he thanked me very much. Algeria appointed Abdelkader Al-Hajjar as its ambassador in Tehran after an eight-year break. I recall that President Abdelaziz Bouteflika led an official visit to Iran in October 2003. Former Iranian President Mohammad Khatami responded with a similar visit to Algeria in October 2004. He was the first Iranian president to visit Algeria since the 1979 revolution, and he announced his support to Bouteflika's policy of national reconciliation.

The wisdom behind this story of mediation is that whenever we find an opportunity to mediate and help heal a rift between peoples, states, communities and sects, we must not hesitate to do so honestly and even if we do not find the opportunity, we must create one.

The rain of peace shall benefit humanity wherever it pours down.

## WAY 4: THE PREPARATION OF A PRACTICAL PLAN AS A WAY TO ACHIEVE PEACE

As I stated earlier, I believe that peace is not a behavior but a culture that we acquire from childhood through the curricula of education until we assimilate it fully to the point that it reflects on our behavior and our daily lives. It is clear today that attempts have been made by international actors to consider peace and to examine outstanding issues related to its promotion in the current context. In fact, despite all this effort, it is necessary to re-ask questions or rather rearrange them. In most action plans for peace, the first question is: What causes wars and how can we eliminate them?

This question always comes after the disaster of war happens, so it is a follow up, a reaction to an event that has occurred and has de facto caused human destruction. As it stands, there exists no guideline and no preventive tools to anticipate the declaration of war in societies. Therefore, the safest question is: How do we build societies able to maintain peace? To answer such questions, we must look at what links cul-

ture to peace, security and development. What is commendable here is that this trend has become evident in the agenda of the 2030 Sustainable Development Plan and Sustainable Peace, through the resolutions of the UN General Assembly and the Security Council in April 2016. We must proceed accordingly, mainly through the idea of developing a "culture of peace" that can be achieved. We are not inventing anything new, but we are simply reminding of what has already been started as part of UNESCO's program in 1992, that is the necessity to develop the concept of a "culture of peace".

The culture of peace implies refuting, rejecting and preventing violence. It imposes a general commitment by all to promote peace building, mediation, conflict resolution and compromise. It also includes promoting a culture of peace within educational curricula, promoting tolerance and acceptance of others, mutual respect and dialogue among cultures, religions and reconciliation.

At the end of the last century, the United Nations began to promote a culture of peace through eight areas identified in the Plan of Action adopted by the General Assembly in 1999 (resolutions A / 53 / 243B). These are education, sustainable development, human rights, gender equality, democratic

participation, understanding, tolerance and solidarity, free flow of information and freedom of knowledge, and the promotion of international peace and security. In September of each year, the United Nations General Assembly holds a high-level forum on the culture of peace. This forum is a follow-up to the Plan of Action and the decisions of 1999. In our institution, we chose that to work within this context. Because we also believe in cooperation and collaborative work, we chose to deal with an institution specialized in the subject, the International Peace Institute, by partnering with it to make a serious contribution to the development of a culture of peace through research, events and strategic communication for four years to come starting from 2017.

The development of a culture of peace for peace requires participation at the local, regional and international levels. In other words, we need multilateral cooperation at different levels with both member States and international organizations. Our aim in this project is to cooperate with all actors and lead efforts to shed more light on and seek to achieve a culture of peace. It has been a wonderful coincidence that the President of the General Assembly and the Secretary-General of the United Nations has placed conflict prevention, sustainable development and sustainable peace on the list

of priorities for this year, and the culture of peace obviously plays an important role in achieving these priorities. Our goal is setting up a vision and working on its improvement, as well as the conceptualization and implementation of targeted activities.

A meaningful blueprint for promoting a culture of peace must include the following elements: defining the concept of a culture of peace, identifying linkages between modern multilateral frameworks in the agenda of the 2030 Sustainable Development Plan, making decisions on sustainable peace, providing studies on the mechanisms for the implementation and realization of a culture of peace and examining how the development goals of the sustainable development plan serve the cause of conflict prevention and the maintenance of peace.

The wisdom of mentioning this project as witness to our work goes beyond the Arab saying "Examples clarify" to the assertion that peace is a collective project of action pertaining to all countries of the world, to international organizations and to civil institutions.

## WAY 5: JOINT INTERACTIVE WORK AS A PATH FOR PEACE

We must build peace in a context of "interaction" based on "building bridges between open hearts and minds, willing to work together", and all of us need to establish new areas of mutual understanding.

Even if we compete, this must be cooperative rather than exclusionary.

In order to achieve the ultimate goal of lasting and "sustainable" peace among peoples and in harmony with the philosophy of the United Nations and our partnering institutions such as the International Peace Institute and others.

We must look at this interaction and joint action as a supreme life need rather than a mere temporary stage.

This "interaction" cannot be carried out by just

one organization, it is not enough. It requires the cooperation of the various international organizations and institutions active within their societies, to support each other.

No one holds the full truth and the different actors must operate in a rational intellectual environment and be able to paint a common picture, vision or international approach available to all. It is indeed a collective road map.

We must take advantage of all the possibilities we have to transform this goal from rhetoric into action.

This is a collective task involving civil institutions of societies, governments, democratic institutions, cultural circles, technical departments of all kinds, scientific institutions, cultural institutions, human rights organizations and translation institutions.

Private Capital must also participate as private companies have a social responsibility: it is only through this way that we can create a serious interaction.

Positive interaction can be achieved if we all agree about a set of principles:

-The principle of non-discrimination on the basis of race, religion, color or language; respect for the right of all societies to choose ways of organizing their life and developing their skills without interfering in their internal affairs;

-Protection of cultural diversity; accepting the right to difference and the need for difference; looking at culture as the unifying factor of human creativity; respecting the different characteristics enriching our lives to build a platform for all, so that you and I can "assert our identities", "our religion" and "our language"; accepting positive differences. After all, at the end of the previous century, it was agreed that the world is "one village, one homeland, one family";

-Ensuring equality of participants and mutual respect between equal partners;

-Believing that interactivity is in the common interest of all peoples and nations;

Interaction for an issue should not be reduced to a set of recommendations imposed by a party, but must become a culture in itself, a global culture or a universal language that must be spread among all actors in societies.

## WAY 6: MAKING PEACE A UNIFYING IDEAL IS A WAY TO ACHIEVE LASTING PEACE

I remember that one philosopher said that reason is the fairest of things shared among people or the common denominator of humanity, and I think that common sense commands that peace must be the fairest of things to be divided amongst us: our common denominator.

In other words, when a person thinks rationally, he proves his existence, but his existence cannot be established except on when peace itself is established. Therefore, the condition of existence is peace.

Reason is both the pre- condition and the guarantee; it is found to think about peace, and peace itself is the means of the continuity of reasonable thinking. If peace is missing, reason ceases to exist.

So the task of reason, which is the fairest of things divided amongst us, is primarily to think of making peace a common denominator between us.

The great welfare lies in peace and in the sustainability of peace and Man shall seek peace as the ultimate ideal. Peace does not need proof and evidence because it is evidence of itself.

## WAY 7: THE DOCTRINE OF PEACE AS A WAY FOR PEACE

Peace is a collective human demand that must be spearheaded by an intercontinental civil movement; That is to say, groups of civil society should be formed within all countries of the world, groups that advise and support all governments and international organizations to make peace and seek peace rather than war. These groups collectively constitute the "doctrine of peace". History witnessed the emergence of various ideologies such as communism, fascism and liberalism, and they influenced the world in some way or another. Today, we need something like this, as a positive ideology or a positive global trend. There is no call in the world worth the trouble of thinking and worth sacrificing an extraordinary effort, but the call for peace. The world has known dark times caused by the worst of the callous, but it also changed for the better by calling for the better. It was in the history of the apostles,

prophets and historical figures such as Buddha, Gandhi, Nehru and Mandela. That is the doctrine of the people of peace.

What is the mission of the "doctrine of peace" today?

The first task to ask of those who advocate the doctrine of peace is to question the differences and contradictions in societies and try to understand them in order to understand the nature of peoples. Their task is to study the problems of the present for the future. They must answer questions like: Why do we need the doctrine of peace? How do we work for peace? To whom is our work on peace destined? I am convinced that peacemaking is a means for the continuity of history, that is, for the continuity of humanity. History advances in the development of our knowledge and our bright ideas against destructive ideas.

The second task is to re-examine the prefabricated forms or concepts that many consider to be essential in life. The first is the concept of place: Does 'place' belong to me only or is it inclusive of others too? There is also the concept of borders: Does humanity need boundaries or is all land com-

mon to all? There is also the concept of migration: Is there migration and return or are we all immigrants? I sum it up in a simple sentence within my humble understanding: I have no boundaries limiting me, neither boundaries of time, nor land, nor borders, nor homeland: All times are my times, all lands are my lands, all boundaries are my boundaries and all nations are my nations. I transcend dates, homelands, lands and borders.

Let me introduce myself to you: I am a dove of peace soaring all over the world. There is no homeland for that dove but you.

**Abdulaziz Saud Al-Babtain**

**Kuwait, June, 2017**

## ABDULAZIZ SAUD AL-BABTAIN: A SHORT BIOGRAPHY

In his youth he was a passionate reader of eminent Arab poets and was greatly inspired by them.

He worked at the Ministry of Education in Kuwait from 1955 until 1962, when he resigned to pursue an entrepreneurial career path and eventually became one of the most prominent businessmen in the country.

His poems have been published in several newspapers and magazines in Kuwait as well as Arab and foreign countries.

He published his first book of verse *Bauh Al-Bawadi* (Intimations of the Desert) in 1995, with a second collection, *Musafir fi Al-Qifar* (Wastefarer), in 2004. His third collection of poems, *Oghniat Al-Feyefi* (The Songs of the Deserts), will be published this year. The first two books were translated into English, French, Italian, Spanish and Polish.

**He holds the following positions:**

- Chairman of Abdulaziz Saud Al-Babtain Cultural Foundation
- President of the Scientific Board of Abdulaziz Saud Al-Babtain Cultural Foundation in the European Union, based in Rome Italy
- Honorary President of the World Poetry Academy, which is based in the Italian city of Verona, succeeding the world-renowned poet Leopold Senghor Former President of Senegal (June 2011)
- member of the Chancellor's Court of Benefactors of the University of Oxford (September 2016)

He established the Saud Al-Babtain Kuwaiti Scholarship for Postgraduate Studies in 1974 from which thousands of students graduated.

He established the Foundation of Abdulaziz Saud Al-Babtain's Prize for Poetic Creativity in 1989 in Cairo, which became known as "Abdulaziz Saud Al-Babtain Cultural Foundation after expanding its field of work since 2004 to include the Dialogue of Cultures, Al-Babtain's Translation Center in 2004 in Beirut, the Abdulaziz Saud Al-Babtain's Center for Dialogue among Civilizations in 2005 in Cordoba, the Al-Babtain's Center for Authenticating Manuscripts in 2007 in Alexandria.

In 2001 he founded the Al-Babtain Central Library for Arabic Poetry in Kuwait, the largest reposi-

tory of Arabic poetry in the world, with hundreds of thousands of books, periodicals, manuscripts and academic theses.

In 2012, he founded Al-Babtain institute for intercultural Dialogue in Rome and in 2016, he founded Al-Babtain Academy for Arabic Poetry in Kuwait.

In 2016, After his generous re-endowment of the oldest Chair in Arabic Language in the University of Oxford and Europe, the Laudian Chair was named Abdulaziz Saud Al-Babtain Laudian Chair in Arabic.

He also established a number of chairs for the Arabic culture in several universities in Europe, USA, Asia and Africa.

**He has received 14 honorary doctorates from several Arab and foreign universities, namely:**

- the University of Tashkent, Uzbekistan in 1995 for his role in enriching Islamic culture
- the University of Baku, Azerbaijan in 2000 for his efforts in the fields of Arabic literature, culture and poetic creativity
- the Yarmouk University, Jordan in 2001 for his distinctive contributions in the fields of literature, culture and poetic creativity
- the University of GOI, Kyrgyzstan in 2002 in Humanities, and the Kyrgyz-Kuwaiti University in 2002 in Humanities

- the University of Algiers in 2005 for his great contributions in the fields of poetic creativity and culture
- the Sidi Mohamed bin Abdullah University in Fes in 2006 for his creative contributions and efforts in the fields of culture and the promotion of intercultural dialogue
- the University of Khartoum, Sudan in 2007 for his contributions in the fields of education, culture and poetry
- the Al-Farabi National University in Kazakhstan in 2009 for his contributions in the fields of learning and education
- the University of Córdoba on November 7, 2013 in recognition of his scientific and cultural efforts in Andalusia and its universities. This is the first honorary doctorate to be offered by the University of Cordoba to an Arab figure.
- the University of Tehran , the Islamic Republic of Iran on May 26, 2014 in recognition of his cultural efforts.
- the University of Kuwait on May 27, 2015 in recognition of his scientific and cultural efforts for more than 25 years.
- the Academy of Arts in Egypt, the most prestigious academy of arts in the Arab world, on June 21, 2015 as an influential icon in the Arab cultural life.

- the University of Stirling, Scotland, June 2017, in recognition of his outstanding contribution to creative writing and poetry, and his exceptional profile as a humanitarian and philanthropist in driving forward an agenda for peace and better intercultural relations and understanding.

**He has received numerous prestigious awards including:**

- The Tunisian Order of Cultural Merit from the President of Tunisia, for his efforts in the cultural sphere, 1996
- The Order of Independence of the first class from HM King of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, for his remarkable efforts to promote cultural and poetic practices in the Arab world, 2001
- The National Order of the Cedar (Officer Grade) from the President of the Republic of Lebanon, 2004
- The Kuwait Order of the Sash (First Degree) from HH the Amir of Kuwait, in recognition of his outstanding efforts in literature and culture, which benefit Kuwait's reputation nationally, regionally and internationally, 2005
- The Prize of the President of the Republic of Sudan, the Gold Medal of Science, Literature and Arts for his contributions in the fields of education, science, literature and arts, 2005

- The Knight Order from the President of Italy in appreciation of his efforts in the fields of culture and dialogue, 2009
- The high-level Order of Civil Merit from the King of Spain in recognition of his cultural efforts in Andalusia, 2009
- A badge of honor from the Speaker of the Maltese House of Representatives, 2011
- Honorary Commando Badge from the President of the Republic of Comoros, 2011
- The Palestine Order of Merit for Culture, Sciences and Arts" (level of creativity)" from President Mahmoud Abbas, on March 13, 2014, in appreciation for his abundant literary and poetic works; his initiatives enriching the Arab culture; his contributions to support the Palestinian people; and their cause.
- The Presidential Medal of Merit of the first class for Social Responsibility from the Sudanese President Omar Hassan Al-Bashir, on December 27, 2015.
- The higher rank of the "Cultural Order of Merit" from His Excellency Tunisian President Beji Caid Essebsi, on January 27, 2016, in recognition of his cultural efforts around the world to consolidate the culture of love and peace.
- Legion of Honor given by President Marcelo Rebalo de Sousa President of the Republic of Portugal, in appreciation for his role in spreading the culture of peace around the world, and for his efforts to achieve communication between peoples of the world for the year 2018.