

THE KINGDOM OF BAHRAIN DECLARATION

“Ignorance is the enemy of peace, it is, therefore, our duty to learn, to share, and to live together, by the tenets of faith in the spirit of mutual respect and love.”

-His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa-King of the Kingdom of Bahrain

For hundreds of years, different religious groups have lived harmoniously, side by side, in the Kingdom of Bahrain, fully practicing the tenets of their respective faiths in blessed, peaceful coexistence with each other.

We humbly offer the centuries-old traditional Bahraini way of life as an example to inspire others around these principles.

I. Religious Faith and Expression

WE CELEBRATE that religion has been amongst the greatest forces of good in our world, and has principally inspired people to share that same good with their fellow man.

The world community recognizes that religious faith and expression are basic inalienable rights. However, now, as in certain times in the past, religion is too frequently used as a divine sanction to spread hate and dissension.

Rather than sustaining people through crisis, religion has been used to contribute to the crisis, and sometimes it has created those crises. We begin to address this negativity by learning to differentiate between healthy and unhealthy forms of religious teaching and activity. We recognize that this can only be counteracted through inter-faith dialogue and the sharing of knowledge, thus leading to the positivity of enlightenment and understanding.

We declare that when extremist clergy preach hatred, violence and seek to sow the seeds of discord, that they are inciting the desecration of the name of God.

II. Freedom of Choice

WE RECOGNIZE that God instructs us to exercise the divine gift of freedom of choice, and therefore we declare that compelled religion cannot bring a person into a meaningful relationship with God.

Therefore, we unequivocally reject compelled observance.

Furthermore, we declare that every individual has the freedom to practice their religion, providing they do no harm to others, respect the laws of the land, and accept responsibility, spiritually and materially, for their choices.

III. The Determination of God's Will

WE ACKNOWLEDGE that religions may disagree with each other in interpreting God's will, yet all enlightened religions reject invoking His name to legitimize violence against innocent people. This is a clear desecration of His name, rather than a fulfillment of His will.

We, therefore, declare that any act that is found morally repugnant by the vast majority of mankind and is insulting to our collective moral conscience cannot be part of God's revealed will. We call upon all good people of Faith to disown practices such as the sowing of terror, the encouragement of extremism and radicalization, suicide bombing, promotion of sexual slavery, and the abuse of women and children.

IV. Religious Rights and Responsibilities

WE ACKNOWLEDGE that God expects more of those in positions of spiritual and temporal authority.

People of all faiths should be accorded the right to congregate to worship, educate, celebrate, and practice the requirements of their respective faiths.

It is the responsibility of governments to respect and protect equally, both religious minorities and majorities. Neither should be subjected to threats, shame or incitement nor should they be discriminated against as a result of their faith. Those in positions of authority must ensure that individuals who leave their homes for their houses of worship can do so without fear of intimidation, violence, or worse.

Equally, all people of faith and their communities have a special responsibility to demonstrate to their neighbors that extremism is not holier than moderation.

We, therefore, declare that each of us has an active role to play in creating a fully inclusive environment that fosters mutual respect and cooperation.

V. The Hope of Faith

WE PLEDGE to teach our children and demonstrate to them by example that by performing simple acts of kindness and compassion we are acting upon God's command that we invoke His good into the world.

We commit to working for a world where people of sincere belief join together to reject that which divides us and concentrate instead on celebrating and expanding on that which unites us. In this way, we harness the enormous power of collective faith to unite a world in peace, where religion is a blessing to all, and for all, where the blessed spirit of mutual respect and love prevail.

It was from within this region the three Abrahamic Faiths emerged.

Accordingly, their principles have made this region home to countless millions from across all the world's religions.

Therefore, we people who use religion, who teach religion, and who are in positions of influence, declare that we will do all within our power to ensure that religious faith is a blessing to all mankind and the foundation for peace in the world.

“Faith Illuminates our Path to Peace.”

-His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa-Manama, Kingdom of Bahrain

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