A PUBLIC LECTURE BY PROFESSOR HOWARD ROBERT HORVITZ 2002, NOBEL LAUREATE - “BASIC BIOMEDICAL RESEARCH DRIVES THE DISCOVERY OF NEW TREATMENTS FOR HUMAN DISEASE”, MARCH 17, 2009

Biomedical science, world health and world peace are vitally interconnected. World peace is threatened by inequalities around the world in wealth, education and health, and without good health neither the education nor wealth of general populations can be substantially improved. An international focus on global health requires the active involvement of governments, foundations, pharmaceutical companies and dedicated individuals, and advances in methods for diagnosing, treating and preventing disease are dependent on discoveries driven by basic biomedical science. This was the primary idea that was delivered by Professor Howard Robert Horvitz, 2002 Nobel Laureate in his lecture held at the Dewan Tunku Canselor, University of Malaya on the 17th of March 2009 which was also attended by His Royal Highness, Raja Dr. Nazrin Shah, Prince of Perak, Pro-Chancellor of the University of Malaya. This lecture was a collaborative effort between the International Peace Foundation and the University of Malaya. It was strongly supported by Sime Darby, Sultan Azlan Shah Foundation, Le Meridien , Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia Airlines, PETRONAS and the Academy of Science Malaysia.

In his lecture Prof. Horvitz exemplified how basic research in biology can lead to discoveries that promise to provide new approaches to the treatment of disease. In particular, one of the most striking findings in the history of science is the discovery that genes - regions of DNA that make us what we are - are so remarkably conserved among different organisms that we can study what they did in a yeast that is used to brew beer, in a microscopic worm or in a fruit fly and learn how they work in humans and how we can intervene with them to cure human disease.

He focused on the studies from his research labora-

The Vice-Chancellor of University of Malaya, Prof. Ghaith Jasmon conferring with Prof. Howard Robert Horvitz.
When he first started with his studies, neither the generality nor the application of his efforts was at all clear. He studied an organism that was unknown in the general world and obscure even to professional biologists. He did not target any disease, and he did not know what he found would be relevant to any organism other than this tiny worm. Nonetheless, Professor Horvitz's studies established mechanisms that appear to be universal among animals, and his findings may prove that basic research is the driver of scientific knowledge.

He also raised the important issue of "how should basic research be supported?" True basic research cannot be supported by the private sector, as no company can confidently know ahead of time whether a research will lead to a finding of relevance to its business plan. For this reason, Professor Horvitz strongly advocates that governments and foundations allocate a significant portion of their research portfolios to basic research, as it is basic research that most often results in the truly unexpected discoveries that drive science and technology forwards. Only with support for such basic research can biomedical scientists make the discoveries that will lead to the novel pharmaceuticals that will improve world health and help us on the road toward world peace. This notion has definitely received strong support from the audience who were made up of people from diverse professions. This include mostly scientists, students of secondary and higher learning institutions as well as educators and policymakers form the government sectors. The lecture invited interesting questions from the public. Professor Horvitz himself is already a great motivator to the scientists trying to make discoveries through the conventional method. This lecture was one of the many series of lectures by Nobel Laureates under the Bridges program organized by the International Peace Foundation.

Background of Prof. Horvitz:

- Professor Horvitz is a microbiologist who shared the 2002 Nobel Prize for Medicine for discoveries concerning the genetic regulation of organ development and programmed cell death (apoptosis).
- He comes from a multi-disciplinary background. He did mathematics and economics for his undergraduate studies and only pursued biology for his doctoral degree.
- Professor Horvitz is a member of the U.S. National Academy of Sciences and a recipient of the Gairdner Foundation International Award, the Alfred P. Sloan, Jr. Prize from the General Motors Cancer Research Foundation, the Bristol-Myers Squibb Award for Distinguished Achievement in Neuroscience and the Louisa Gross Horwitz Prize from Columbia University. He received the MIT's James R. Killian Jr. Faculty Achievement Award for 2005-2006.

**CANADIAN AUTHOR, TAREK FATEH SPEAKS ON ISLAM AND MULTICULTURALISM**

**MARCH 4, 2009**

Mr. Tarek Fatah, a prominent Canadian Muslim was a guest speaker at a forum jointly organized by the Center for Civilizational Dialogue and the International Institute of Advanced Islamic Studies, Malaysia (IAIS). The forum was held at IAIS on March 11, 2009. Mr. Fatah also attended the World Islamic Economic Forum (WIEF) in Jakarta on 2-3 March. Born in Pakistan and now a Canadian citizen, he founded the Muslim Canadian Congress in the aftermath of September 11. At the forum he spoke mainly about the Canadian Muslim experience of multiculturalism, which he said was far more positive compared to many multicultural Muslim majority countries. He believes Canadian Muslims enjoy more freedom and progress compared to other Western Muslim minorities.

Prepared by Emeritus Datuk Dr. Osman Bakar

"Malaysian Abstracting and Indexing System (MyAIS) is an open access system for abstracts and indices of articles published in refereed scholarly Malaysian journals. This system, managed by the Faculty of Computer Science and Information Technology (FSKTM), University of Malaya, also provides full-text access to scholarly articles in journals as well as conference proceeding published in Malaysia or abroad. MyAIS relies on the voluntary contribution from Malaysian academics and professional publishers. This is a non-profit making project that attempts to serve Malaysian educational and research community with information about what has been published in Malaysian refereed journals each year and in the various disciplines. Self-submission and archiving of abstracts and full-text articles is encouraged. As part of its internationalization effort the CCD decided to digitalized its journal into this system. This project took about 3 months to complete. Today, 17 articles from KATHA – The Official Journal of the Centre for Civilisational Dialogue and Jurnal Peradaban – Jurnal Rasmi Pusat Dialog Peradaban, Universiti Malaya can already be accessed online through MyAIS. In the long run, the CCD is planning to further use this open access system to promote all its new publications such as monographs and books. The CCD would like to thank the FSKTM especially Professor Dr Zainab Awang Ngah, UM and all individuals for making this project a success.

Source of quote:

http://myais.fsktm.um.edu.my/
INTERFAITH DISCUSSION ON “ISLAM AND CHRISTIANITY”, MARCH 10, 2009

On March 10, 2009 the International Institute Advanced of Islamic Studies (IAIS) organized a discussion on interfaith dialogue between Islam and Christianity. The main speaker was Dr. Fahad A. Alhomoud a guest of IAIS. Those in attendance included Reverend Michael Chua Ecclesiastical Assistant Arrodiocesian Ministry of Ecumenical & Interreligious Affairs (AMEIA). This discussion was moderated by Dato’ Osman Bakar.

Some of the main points covered during the discussion included Interfaith programs in Saudi Arabia. Since 9/11 dialogues between Islam and other religions/ organizations had mushroomed, so as to figure out why the conflicts have arisen and to find solutions. Most problems come from misunderstanding between the different of religions which bring chaos especially in The Islamic World. Islamic interfaith dialogues are also held in Saudi Arabia as a result of initiations by King Abdul-lah. This dialogue was being held among the various races in Saudi itself and include the main doctrines in Islam, the Sunni and Syiah group. The Centre for Civilisational Dialogue was represented by Mr. Amer Hamzaeni, Research Officer.

* Dr. Fahad A. Alhomoudi was born in Saudi Arabia. He obtained his PhD in Islamic studies from McGill University and his thesis was entitled On the Common Link Theory. The research areas include prophetic tradition, Islamic Law and legal thought. Dr. Fahad A. Alhomoudi currently is a Assistant Professor and Vice-Dean for Academic Research and Publication at IMSIU beside being a consult at Centre for Islamic Contemporary Studies and Dialogue of Civilization (CICSD).


In harmony with the rebirth of nature, the Iranian New Year, or Norooz, always begins on the first day of spring on March 21st of each year. Norooz ceremonies are symbolic representations of two ancient concepts - the End and Rebirth of Life. Norooz, at the beginning of spring is considered as the rebirth, is a time of great joy and celebration. Shahnameh, - the Persian epical poet- rie-s dates as far back to the reign of Jamshid, -ancient Persian emperor who saved mankind from a killer winter that was destined to kill every living creature. The Islamic scholar Abu Rayhan Biruni of the 10th century A.D., in his book "Kitab al-Fathih li Awail Sina’at al-Tanjin" says: "It is the belief that Norooz marks the first day when the universe starts its motion". Norooz in Persian means “New Day” and brings hope, peace and prosperity to the world and has been celebrated among people regardless of ethnic background, political views or religions in many countries around the globe from the western part of china until the south east of Europe. Countries as such Iran, Afghanistan, Azerbaijan, Turkey, Uzbekistan, Pakistan, Georgia, Iraq, Tajikistan, Syria, Armenia and north India, celebrate Norooz in different beautiful ways.

On the 26th of March 2009 , UMUC celebrated its own NOROOZ with the theme : “A Celebration of the End and the Rebirth of Life” as its first group activity for 2009. As explained by the president of the club, Rahim Kaviani, the main objectives of NO ROOZ are; to Introduce Norooz as a cultural activity with a 7000 year history to UM UNESCO CLUB members and international students as a cultural activity that is relevant to current ideas about respect for nature and culture. To celebrate Norooz with others in order to share joy and happiness and hence enhance collegiateship among members of the club. NOROOZ is also celebrated festively among diverse nationalities by club members. It was attended by at least 70 people and it was held at the KATHA Seminar Room, Centre for Civilisational Dialogue, University of Malaya. Throughout the evening, guests and members alike were enlightened by a warm welcoming speech by YBhg. Prof. Datin Dr. Azizan Baharuddin, The Director of the Centre for Civilisational Dialogue and also an introduction on NOROOZ by the President of UMUC himself, Rahim Kaviani. Apart from that, a performance on Iranian traditional music by the well known Saba’ Group was definitely a hit among the guests. A major Tradition of Norooz is the setting of the Haft seen (the seven S) seven items with letter s or seen in Persian alphabet on table cloths was definitely new to many of the members and many took opportunities of photography with it. It was a great honour for the club, to have had the Honourable Mr. Vahedi, The Cultural Counsellor of The Embassy of The Islamic Republic of Iran, graced the humble ceremony. He sincerely expressed his thanks and would love to participate in future activities by UMUC . At the end of the day, the members and guests embrace of this festive celebration as an occasion that transcend cultures, race and religion as it shares a common point of celebrating the goodness of life by starting over with positivities and leaving behind negativities. UMUC ALSO RECORDS ITS APPRECIATION to the Iranian Embassy for its support for the event.
Delegasi dari Sudan bersama Pengarah dan Timb. Pengarah, Pusat Dialog Peradaban, UM serta Pegawai-pegawai daripada Jabatan Perpaduan Negara


Ketua rombongan iaitu En. Abdul Majeed Khalifa Khajali menyatakan bahawa Suruhanjaya ingin mencari idea-idea dan contoh-contoh untuk meningkatkan keamanan dan keharmonian antara kumpulan Muslim dan Kristian yang mempunyai sejahteraan peringkahan sejak tahun 1955 lagi.

Dr. Deng Awur iaitu seorang lagi ahli rombongan yang merupakan Dekan Fakulti Undang-undang di Universiti Juba yang juga pengamat agama Kristian menjelaskan bahawa sebenarnya terdapat pelbagai faktor lain lagi yang mengebahkan berlakaknya pertengkahan ini antaranya termasuklah persepsi negatif golongan Kristian terhadap penggunaan hukum syariah bagi seluruh Negara Sudan, jarang perbesaan dan peluang ekonomi yang tidak saksama di antara bahagian Utara dan Selatan bahagian Sudan serta adanya campur tangan oleh pihak luar. Suruhanjaya ini telah dilantik oleh Presiden Sudan. Ia mempunyai seramai 27 orang ahli yang terdiri daripada pelbagai agama yang mana ia bertanggungjawab memberi nasihat kepada Presiden dalam mengendalikan hal-hal yang berkaitan dengan isu-isu hubungan antara agama di Sudan. Di akhir pertemuan, ketua rombongan iaitu En. Abdul Majeed Khalifa Khajali telah menyuarakan harapan untuk menjalin kerjasama dengan Pusat Dialog dan Peradaban dalam bentuk latihan bagi resolusi dan juga persidangan-persidangan tentang isu-isu yang berkaitan dengan dialog peradaban.

DIALOG MENGENAI “GAP BETWEEN ISLAM AND WEST”, - 11 FEBRUARI 2009


Dialogue on the “Gap between Islam and West”, Feb. 11, 2009

Together with the Institute for Advanced Islamic Studies (IAIS), on the 11th of February 2009 the Centre for Civilisational Dialogue held a dialogue on the gap between Islam and the West. The main participant was CCD’S visitor Mrs. Alia Hogben Executive Director of the Canadian Muslim Women’s Committee. Among others Mrs. Hogben stressed the importance of respect for the choice of adhering to religious in the context of a secular society.

Puan Alia Hogben menyampaikan hujah-hujahnya.


Selain daripada itu, ilmu sains itu sendiri boleh dijadikan sebagai hujah-hujah dalam menyampaikan dakwah. Seminar Islam dan Sains ini telah dihadiri seramai 200 orang peserta yang terdiri daripada wakil-wakil NGO, wakil-wakil Kementerian dan operasi kerajaan yang ada kaitan dengan Sains dan Teknologi, pensyarah dan para pelajar dari seluruh Malaysia. Keseluruhannya, seminar yang dijalankan merupakan kerangka konsep umum yang mampu untuk menumbuhkan Islam dan sains. Penerobohan ilmu dan pengetahuan yang didapat daripada seminar ini perlu disebabkan bukan saja dalam komuniti masyarakat Negara ini bagi mendapat kesan yang menyeluruh secara optimum. Dalam wahyu pertama yang diturunkan kepada Nabi s.a.w. menerusi Jibrail sebagai wakil Allah untuk menunjukkan kembali kepada umat Islam untuk melangkah ke dalam era modern.

SEMINAR “ISLAM AND SCIENCE IN CIVILISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT”
26 – 27 MARCH 2009

The main focus of this 2-day seminar was to highlight the critical role of science and technology in the development of civilization in general and in the Islamic civilization in particular. In his opening speech, Dato' Nakhaie, Director of YADIM highlighted among others the need from Muslim scientists, ulama and the believers in general to first of all realize the harmonious nature of the relationship between science and religion (values) in Islam. The conference was well received in terms of participation by paper presenters and participants who came from the academic as well as the government sector related to science and technology. The main objective of wanting to create the understanding that science cannot be divorced from religious life was well received.
On the 20th February 2009, a public lecture was held in Balai Ilmu, Academy of Islamic Studies, University of Malaya, Kuala Lumpur. Emeritus Datuk Dr. Osman Bakar was the speaker and Prof. Mohd Fakhruddin Abdul Mukti from the Department of Akidah was the chairman of the session. This event involved about 200 participants consisting of lecturers and students of the university.

There are many important points raised during this lecture: the classification of knowledge was an important intellectual and scholarly activity in Islamic civilization; this activity was pursued with the following objectives in mind. First, Muslim scholars were greatly interested in cataloguing, systematizing and classifying all the known sciences according to principles that would help to protect and preserve the Islamic worldview and belief system. Second, they wanted to uphold the unity of the sciences which is an important corollary of the principle of al-tawhid, the core teaching of Islam. Third, they wanted to put in place an educational curriculum that would maintain a harmonious balance between the permanent needs of man and society and their changing needs. Fourth, they wanted to secure a good balance between generalization and specialization in the human pursuit of knowledge. All the above mentioned objectives are not merely of historical interest but is important to us today. These are perennial problems confronting all highly civilized societies. These objectives are certainly relevant to Malaysia and the global community at large, not only to Muslims but to all humankind. The Muslim intellectual tradition of classification of knowledge is therefore important to be studied and discussed in our contemporary civilizational setting.

The discussion segment attracted a great interest from the audience. Most wanted similar programs to continue in the future.
March 18, 2009: Took part in a forum organized by the Institute of Islamic Hadhari, UKM. The forum was entitled “Islamic Science—Catalyst for the Ummatic Civilisation”.

ASSOC. PROFESSOR DR. RAIHANAH ABDULLAH

LATEST PUBLICATIONS

Title: INTEGRITY - Monograph Series Centre For Civilisational Dialogue
Author: Alastair S. Gunn
Year: 2009
Price: RM 15.00

About The Book
This monograph is intended as a small contribution to the goal of establishing integrity as a social norm. While it is impossible to say whether corruption is increasing, there is certainly increased awareness of and public concern about breaches of it. Factors include greater public access to increasingly sophisticated investigative technologies and media as well as the work of organizations such as Transparency International. The concept of integrity is not straightforward. This monograph also concentrates on integrity issues from the academic perspective in terms of the increasing in numbers of plagiarism by students in the university. The author considers the first year of tertiary education as the ideal time to provide values education because it is a time when students are very open to new ideas. The author also provides an outline of a course on integrity, drawing from his own experiences with a variety of professional and business groups as well as in university ethics courses. Finally, he identifies obstacles to integrity, which may include pressures to compromise in order to achieve results, bad governance and poor institutional structures.

Title: SOME IDEAS ON CIVILISATION AND GHANDHI'S PRINCIPLE OF NON-VIOLENCE - Monograph Series Centre For Civilisational Dialogue
Author: Ravindra Kumar & Alastair S. Gunn
Year: 2008
Price: RM 15.00

About The Book
This monograph is a collection of writings on civilization and Ghandi’s philosophy of non-violence. Dr. Kumar was a Visiting Scholar at the Centre for Civilisational Dialogue in 2005; Dr. Gunn was a Visiting Scholar in 2006 and 2008, and Visiting Professor in 2007. The first section focuses on non-violence, morality and freedom as the three fundamental characteristics of civilization. The downfall of a civilization, according to Ghandhi, is caused by relations of dominance and destruction of freedom. The authors propose that Ghandhi’s way of non-violence provides a way to achieve harmony within a civilization, including harmony with the environment. Ghandhism is a mixture of Ghandhi’s concepts and practices, grounded in non-violence, which is central to Ghandhi’s philosophy. The authors review the relevance of Ghandism at the operational level of modern politics with India as a case in point and the significant role Ghandhi played in the pursuit of democracy for the men and women of different social classes in India. In Ghandhi’s terms, the pursuit of true democracy is through non-violence.

Title: OCCIDENTALISM AND ORIENTALISM
Editors: Azizan Baharuddin & Faridah Noor Mohd. Noor
Year: 2008
Price: RM 30.00

About The Book
This book is a collection of papers presented by renowned academic figures in the field of dialogue and philosophy. Amongst the contributors are: Shamsul Amri Baharuddin, Hans Van De Ven, Shad Saleem Faruqui, Mohd Hazim Shah, Khaw Lake tee, Badariah Sahamid, Sharifah Suhanah Ahmad, Shaharil Talib & Gareth A Richards, Khoo Kay Kim and Lee Poh Ping. It focuses on issues such as; Colonial knowledge and the Deepening of Orientalism; Orientalism At War: Shanghai 1937; Human Rights – Reflections of the East, Perceptions of the orient by the occident; Twisted visions, false dreams and embracing the other, the reception of English law-Eastern customs and practices through the eyes of English judges in Malaya; fluidity and fixing in the making of Southeast Asia; the impact of the Dualization of the Orient and the Occident and East – West Interaction and the future: Three scenarios. The authors of the papers aim at exploring the concepts of Orientalism and Occidentalism through multidisciplinary analysis (e.g.: philosophy, law and sociology) in attempts at defining and understanding the culture that both concepts depicts.

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