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Interfaith and Cultural Dialogue in the Quran

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Abstract

Objective: This research explores the theme of interfaith and cultural dialogue within the Quran, illustrating how dialogue serves not only as a religious necessity but also as a vital human and cultural imperative. The study aims to uncover the Ouranic endorsement of dialogue as a means to foster understanding, peace, and coexistence among diverse religious and cultural groups. Methodology: The analysis centers on a comprehensive examination of Quranic verses and stories that exemplify dialogue. The research method involves a detailed exegesis of relevant Quranic texts, focusing on dialogues between prophets and their communities, dialogues among the followers of different faiths, and the divine dialogues as narrated in the Quran. By interpreting these narratives, the study seeks to highlight the methods and principles of dialogue advocated by the Quran. Findings: The Quran extensively promotes dialogue as a method to resolve disagreements and misunderstandings among different communities. Key findings demonstrate that the Quran encourages engaging in dialogue respectfully and wisely, using clear evidence and maintaining a calm demeanor. It emphasizes starting dialogue from common ground, aiming for mutual understanding rather than conflict. Prophets, as depicted in the Ouran, exemplify the best practices in dialogue—they approach their interlocutors with patience, wisdom, and clear reasoning, aiming to convey their messages effectively and compassionately. Discussion: The research discusses several instances of Quranic dialogue, including interactions between Prophets Noah, Moses, and Abraham with their respective peoples. Each example serves to illustrate different aspects of effective dialogue—such as patience in the face of rejection, the use of rational arguments, and the importance of kindness and clear communication. The Quranic stories also show that dialogue is not merely about conveying one's point but about listening and responding appropriately to foster greater mutual respect and understanding. Conclusions: The study concludes that the Quran provides a robust framework for interfaith and cultural dialogue, which is increasingly relevant in today's globalized world. The divine command to engage in dialogue underscores the importance of understanding and cooperation across different religious and cultural divides. The principles derived from the Quranic model of dialogue can guide contemporary efforts in conflict resolution and peace-building. Recommendations: Based on the findings, it is recommended that religious leaders and scholars promote the Quranic approach to dialogue in interfaith and intercultural interactions. Educational programs and workshops should incorporate teachings from the Quran about dialogue to equip individuals with the skills necessary for effective communication and coexistence. Future Research: Further research could explore the application of Quranic dialogue principles in modern conflict zones and analyze the outcomes of such interventions. Comparative studies with other religious texts on dialogue could also enrich understanding and provide a broader perspective on interfaith communications.

Keywords: Interfaith, Cultural Dialogue in the Quran

INTRODUCTION

Praise be to Allah who revealed the Book to His servant and made no deviation in it, praise be to Allah who said: "Say, O People of the Book, come to a word that is equitable between us and you—that we shall not worship except Allah and associate nothing with Him, and not take one another as lords besides Allah. But if they turn away, then say, 'Bear witness that we are Muslims."

As for what follows:

It is the Sunnah of Allah and His will in His creation that He created people differing in religions and sects, and He has informed us, exalted be He, that they will remain in this state until the Day of Resurrection. He said in His conclusive revelation: "And if your Lord had willed, He could have made mankind one community, but they will continue to differ, except those whom your Lord has given mercy, and for that He created them. And the word of your Lord has been completed: 'I will surely fill Hell with jinn and people all together.'"

Imam Muhammad al-Tahir ibn Ashur, explaining the meaning of the verse, says: "Indeed, the Lord, exalted is He, has created people with a nature that necessitates differing opinions and disputes, and He desired this

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nature and knew of it... Therefore, the difference among them is everlasting because it is a requirement of the minds they have been created with."

And because people were created with such a nature, which might lead some to assume that this human characteristic in them is a barrier preventing their convergence, dialogue, and coexistence with others; Allah, exalted be He, followed that matter by dispelling this misconception, stating in Surah Al-Hujurat: "O mankind, indeed We have created you from male and female and made you peoples and tribes that you may know one another. Indeed, the most noble of you in the sight of Allah is the most righteous of you. Indeed, Allah is All-Knowing, All-Aware." Thus, it contains a clear and explicit invitation from Him, exalted be His glory, to all people—individuals, peoples, and tribes, despite their differing ideas, colors, races, and religions—to meet and get to know and dialogue with each other.

From here come the verses of the Quran, which are abundant in many places of the Book of Allah Almighty, illustrating this great divine approach. In His verses, He tells us, exalted be He, that He Himself conversed with the angels about the creation that He would appoint as successors on earth, and He said, exalted be His glory: "And [remember] when your Lord said to the angels, 'Indeed, I will make upon the earth a successive authority.' They said, 'Will You place upon it one who causes corruption therein and sheds blood, while we declare Your praise and sanctify You?' He said, 'Indeed, I know that which you do not know.'" And also His conversation, exalted be He, with Iblis when he refused to prostrate to Adam, peace be upon him, when He, the Most High, commanded him to do so, and He said to Iblis: "What prevented you from prostrating when I commanded you?" Iblis said, "I am better than him; You created me from fire and created him from clay."

He also informed us that He, exalted be He, conversed with His prophets. He mentioned what will occur between Him and Jesus on the Day of Judgment concerning the people of Jesus who worshipped him instead of Allah. He, the Most High, said: "When Allah said, 'O Jesus, son of Mary, did you say to the people, 'Take me and my mother as two gods besides Allah?" He said, 'Exalted are You! It was not for me to say that to which I have no right. If I had said it, You would have known it. You know what is in my soul, and I do not know what is in Yours. Indeed, You are the Knower of the unseen." Thus, Allah, the Most High, listens to Jesus's argument, asks him, and hears his response. He also clarified for us that the messengers conversed with their people with the truth that came to them. He narrated to us the story of Abraham with Nimrod when he debated and discussed with him. He, the Most High, said: "Have you not considered the one who disputed with Abraham about his Lord merely because Allah had given him kingship? When Abraham said, 'My Lord is He who gives life and causes death,' he said, 'I give life and cause death.' Abraham said, 'Indeed, Allah brings the sun from the east; so bring it from the west.' So the disbeliever was overwhelmed [by astonishment], and Allah does not guide the wrongdoing people."

And the Noble Quran did not merely establish this great principle and explain its importance; but it also outlined the proper manner - the good way - that we should adopt in our dialogue with others, when He, glorified be His name, directed our Prophet Muhammad, saying: "And do not argue with the People of the Book except in a way that is best." And He also said to him: "So by mercy from Allah, you were lenient with them. And if you had been rude [in speech] and harsh in heart, they would have disbanded from around you. So pardon them and ask forgiveness for them." And other verses of the wise Reminder.

From these examples, we can say that the Noble Quran has made dialogue a companion to its legislations and various issues because dialogue is not only a religious necessity but also a universal human and cultural necessity. Discussing dialogue, its importance, exploring its methods, principles, and regulations serves humanity greatly, especially in our current times where the voices and calls of the malicious and their discourses have risen, in what is called the clash or collision of civilizations.

Therefore, the world today is in dire need of calls for dialogue, tolerance, and positive coexistence, more than ever before. Thus, studying this divine approach through its distinguished models, presenting it to people, and reminding them of it is undoubtedly a way of goodness and a door of truth. From here, to clarify this, I write this research to stand through it at those places, evidences, events, and proofs that speak about this great divine approach, through what is mentioned in the verses of the Holy Quran, especially those related to the stories of the Holy Quran, and what happened to the prophets with their people, with the aim of understanding the

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nature of this divine approach and highlighting its role with those we differ from, whether in their doctrine, creed, or ideas, in order to block the path of the malicious or alert the oblivious to the value of the great, overlooked values, we should follow the Quran and draw from its teachings and values.

In this context, this topic can be discussed within the following outlines and demands:

Introduction: Wherein, God willing, I will discuss disagreement, its causes, and that it is one of God's sunnah on His earth.

First Section: Preliminary Introductions

First Requirement: The concept of dialogue linguistically and terminologically.

Second Requirement: The concept of interfaith dialogue.

Third Requirement: The originality of dialogue and the universality of the message of Islam.

Second Section: Dialogue of the Faithful (its purposes and ways to achieve them) in light of the verses of the Quran stories:

First Requirement: Dialogue of the Faithful in Quranic stories (its goals and purposes).

Second Requirement: Regulations of dialogue in Quranic stories and methods to achieve its purposes.

Third Section: Models and examples of dialogue of the prophets with their people.

Conclusion and Recommendations. Then the References

And may Allah, exalted be He, help in completing this research properly, and may He benefit its writer and reader. Praise be to Allah first and last, and may Allah's blessings be upon our master Muhammad, his family, and all his companions.

First Section: Preliminary Introductions:

First Requirement: The concept of dialogue linguistically and terminologically

Dialogue Linguistically

The term appears in "Al-Qamus al-Muhit" as: "Al-Muhawarah... and Al-Hiwar is the revisiting of speech, and they engaged in Tahaawur, meaning they exchanged words among them" and in "Mukhtar al-Sahah": "Al-Hiwar means responding, and Tahaawur means reciprocating." In "Al-Tabiyan": "He engages him in Hiwar, meaning he addresses him. It is said that two men engage in Tahaawur if each of them responds to the other, and Al-Muhawarah: a conversation between two or more."

This term appears twice in the Book of Allah—in the sense of addressing and responding—as in His exalted saying: "And she confided in Allah and Allah hears your conversation." and His exalted saying: "So he said to his companion while conversing with him, 'I have more wealth than you and more people of honor,'" implying the idea of revisiting in speech. Imam Al-Baqaa'i said: "Hiwar is addressing with gentleness and kindness," and "He engages him in Hiwar means he revisits the speech." Ibn Ashur stated: "Al-Muhawarah is responding and revisiting the speech between speakers."

Dialogue Terminologically

In terminological usage, it doesn't stray far from the previously mentioned meaning. Scholars and researchers have provided many definitions, all revolving around the same concept. For instance, Dr. Bassam Dawood defines it as: "Dialogue is a conversation between two persons or teams, on a specific subject, where each has its own viewpoint, aiming to reach the truth, or to achieve as much alignment of views as possible, away from hostility or bias, in a manner that relies on science and reason, with both parties accepting the truth, even if it appears through the other party." Similarly, Dr. Abdul Sattar states: "Dialogue is a method conducted between two parties, each presenting what they believe and are convinced of, and reviewing the other party's logic and

thought, aiming to clarify and establish the truths from their perspective." Lastly, Saadi's definition which he defines as: "The exchange of speech between two individuals, each aiming to correct their own statement and invalidate the other's, with both having a desire for the truth to emerge."

Accordingly, it can be said that dialogue is merely one of the methods of purposeful communication, intended to reach a certain truth or to present an opinion that is originally a subject of disagreement, provided there is a sincere desire for the truth to appear and to be acknowledged.

It should be noted that these definitions are general in that they encompass all forms of dialogue and its various shapes, such as dialogue among people of different religions, or dialogue between different jurisprudential schools within the same religion. The expressions used by researchers may vary by adding some descriptions or reducing them, but they all are close to these earlier definitions.

Second Requirement: The concept of interfaith dialogue.

Interfaith dialogue means that participants from two different religions exchange ideas, facts, information, and experiences that increase each group's knowledge of the other in an objective manner, whether they find common ground or differences. Each party maintains their beliefs in an atmosphere of mutual respect and the best treatment, away from the motives of skepticism and the intentions of defamation. The ultimate goal of dialogue is to promote affection, the spirit of peace, understanding, harmony, and cooperation in matters where consensus is found for the general benefit of humanity.

Third Requirement: The authenticity of dialogue and the universality of the message of Islam

Allah Almighty sent Muhammad, peace be upon him, with the gracious message of Islam and obligated him to deliver it—clearly—to all people, regardless of nation, tribe, or people. He was also obliged to open the door of dialogue—in the best manner—with them, as it is the only means through which he could invite them—despite their different beliefs and schools—and deliver the message of Islam to them. This was explicitly stated in the Book of Allah Almighty, who said: "Say, O People of the Book, come to a word that is equitable between us and you—that we will not worship except Allah and not associate anything with Him and not take one another as lords instead of Allah. But if they turn away, then say, 'Bear witness that we are Muslims [submitting to Him].'" And He also said: "Invite to the way of your Lord with wisdom and good instruction, and argue with them in a way that is best. Indeed, your Lord is most knowing of who has strayed from His way, and He is most knowing of who is guided." And He also said: "And who is better in speech than one who invites to Allah and does righteous deeds and says, 'Indeed, I am of the Muslims.'" And He said: "Say, 'This is my way; I invite to Allah with insight, I and whoever follows me. And exalted is Allah; and I am not of those who associate others with Him.'" And other noble verses that are clear in the command to invite others to the table of dialogue for discussion and study.

Second Section: Dialogue among the people of religions (its purposes and ways of achieving them) in light of the verses of the Quran, especially the stories:

Quranic stories occupy a significant portion of the Book of Allah Almighty, nearly one-third of the Quran, which indicates the great importance of the Quranic story and its value in divine guidance. The dialogue contained in these stories is essentially the history that narrates the saga of calling to Allah Almighty with all its details. Allah Almighty said: "There was certainly in their stories a lesson for those of understanding. It was not fabricated speech but a confirmation of what was before it, a detailed explanation of all things, guidance, and mercy for a people who believe." Through the overall verses, one can identify the main goals and purposes of this dialogue, as well as the ways and methods that can be employed to achieve them.

First Requirement: Dialogue among the People of Religions in Quranic Stories (Its Aims and Purposes)

The aims and purposes mentioned in the dialogues within the verses of Quranic stories—which can be utilized in our dialogues with people of various religions and beliefs—are numerous. The most important can be summarized as follows:

Firstly - Dialogue with the Intent of Calling to Allah and Conveying Divine Messages, and that the call of the prophets is unified.

All dialogues in Quranic stories with people of different religions and beliefs primarily aim at calling to Allah Almighty, illustrating the unity of the prophets' call, which includes affirming revelation and the message. The Quran narrates through its stories the dialogues between all prophets of Allah and their people, emphasizing that they all brought the same message and addressed the same issue across generations, which is the monotheism of Allah Almighty. Prominent examples of this dialogue can be found in Surah Al-A'raf and Hud, where Allah says: "Indeed, We sent Noah to his people, and he said, 'O my people, worship Allah; you have no deity other than Him. I fear for you the punishment of a tremendous day" and "And to 'Ad [We sent] their brother Hud. He said, 'O my people, worship Allah; you have no deity other than Him. Will you not fear Him?" And Allah the Almighty said: "To Madyan, We sent their brother Shu'ayb. He said, 'O my people, worship Allah; you have no other god but Him." And Allah the Almighty said: "And to Thamud, We sent their brother Salih. He said, 'O my people, worship Allah; you have no other god but Him."

Secondly - Dialogue with the Intent of Exoneration.

Dialogue serves as our means of exoneration before Allah Almighty when He questions us about the trust of delivering the message. The verses of the stories in the Quran clarified this purpose through the narrative of the believers from the Children of Israel who engaged those who differed from them regarding the Sabbath, where Allah says: "And a community among them said, 'Why do you advise [or warn] a people whom Allah is [about to] destroy or to punish with a severe punishment?' They [the advisors] said, 'To be absolved before your Lord, and perhaps they may fear Him.'" They conversed with them and invited them until some of them questioned the usefulness of the call and admonition, knowing this. The response was: "An excuse before your Lord."

Thirdly - Dialogue with the Purpose of Developing the Earth:

Allah Almighty created humans as social beings by nature and intended for them to cooperate with their fellow humans in what assists them in life. Thus, He tasked them with being His vicegerents on Earth. Allah says: "It is He who has made you successors upon the Earth." Therefore, the messengers called their people to cooperate in developing the Earth; the stories' verses clarified this purpose, as when the Prophet Salih, peace be upon him, dialogued with his people saying: "O my people, worship Allah; you have no other god besides Him. He has produced you from the Earth and settled you in it."; that is, He commanded you to build what you need, such as constructing houses, planting trees, digging rivers, and other similar tasks.

Fourthly - Dialogue Aimed at Peaceful Coexistence and Preventing Corruption on Earth:

One of the purposes of this dialogue is for people to live in peace and harmony, based on respect that lays the foundation for recognizing the other, and preventing corruption on Earth. Among the Quranic stories that narrate this purpose is the story of Prophet Shu'ayb, peace be upon him, dialoguing with his people and calling them to stop corruption on Earth and to establish justice among people, where Allah says: "And to Madyan, We sent their brother Shu'ayb. He said, 'O my people, worship Allah; you have no other god but Him. The evidence has come to you from your Lord. So give full measure and weight, and do not deprive people of their due. And do not commit abuse on the earth after its reformation. That is better for you if you are believers."

Fifth - Dialogue Aimed at Establishing Principles of Justice, Equality, and Non-Discrimination Among Humans:

One of these objectives, with various religions, doctrines, and cultures, is that the spirit of justice prevails among humans. They are of a single origin, living in one world, and destined for a single worldly fate. The Holy Quran informs us that the messengers were sent and the books were revealed solely to establish justice among people. Allah says, informing about the dialogue between Prophet David (peace be upon him) and the two disputants: "And has the story of the adversaries come to you, when they climbed over the wall into the prayer chamber? When they entered upon David and he was alarmed by them. They said, 'Do not be afraid. Two disputants, some of us have wronged others. So judge between us with truth and do not exceed bounds and guide us to

the right path." Until Allah says: "O David, indeed We have made you a vicegerent upon the earth, so judge between the people in truth and do not follow desire, lest it should lead you astray from the way of Allah. Indeed, those who go astray from the way of Allah will have a severe punishment for having forgotten the Day of Account."

Sixth - Dialogue Aimed at Eliminating the Spirit of Hostility and Arrogance Found in Some Civilizations Towards Others:

Another objective of dialogue is to remove the spirit of enmity and prevent those who are arrogant on earth from oppressing others. We are all servants of Allah, created from clay. The Quran clarifies this objective through the dialogues of Allah's prophets with the arrogant among their people. Concerning Prophet Moses (peace be upon him) and Pharaoh, Allah says: "And [also] Qarun, Pharaoh, and Haman. And Moses came to them with clear proofs, but they were arrogant in the land, and they were not preceding [in doing good]." Moses said: "Indeed, I have sought refuge with my Lord and your Lord from every haughty one who does not believe in the Day of Account." And concerning the people of Thamud, Allah says: "The eminent ones who were arrogant among his people said to those who were oppressed – to those who believed among them, 'Do you know that Salih is sent from his Lord?' They said, 'Indeed, we in that which he was sent with are believers." A similar dialogue is narrated about the people of 'Ad: "As for 'Ad, they were arrogant in the land without right and said, 'Who is greater than us in strength?' Do they not see that Allah, who created them, is greater than them in strength? And they were rejecting Our signs." And concerning the people of Shu'ayb, Allah says: "The eminent ones who were arrogant among his people said, 'We will surely drive you out, O Shu'ayb, and those who have believed with you from our town, or you must return to our religion.' He said, 'Even though we detest it?'"

All the previous verses involve dialogues of God's prophets with the arrogant and haughty on earth, aimed at preventing their issues from worsening and curbing their oppression over people.

Eighthly, dialogue is intended to solve emerging societal problems or to mitigate their effects.

The civilized way to solve any problem facing individuals in societies is through dialogue, by which they exchange ideas and solutions for emerging issues. For example, the problem of spiritual emptiness and the spread of atheism are among the most prominent issues faced by these societies. While advanced countries have managed to satisfy the material needs and desires of their communities, they simultaneously failed to find a path to happiness due to the spiritual void these societies endure. This has led them to search desperately for solutions, failing to find one ultimately, resulting in the widespread prevalence of psychological and nervous disorders and record-high suicide rates. The Holy Quran addressed a similar experience through the story it narrates to us about the dialogue of the people with Qarun, who was given immense wealth by God, thus he became tyrannical and oppressive; Allah Almighty said: "Indeed, Qarun was from the people of Moses, but he tyrannized over them. And We gave him of treasures whose keys would burden a band of strong men; when his people said to him, 'Do not exult. Indeed, Allah does not like the exultant. But seek, through that which Allah has given you, the home of the hereafter; and yet, do not forget your share of the world. And do good as Allah has done good to you. And desire not corruption in the land. Indeed, Allah does not like corrupters."

This spiritual emptiness leads to severe societal problems on a global scale, making it a fertile topic for dialogue among people of different religions to address or mitigate its effects. Moreover, these were the most prominent purposes outlined by the Quranic stories through the dialogues of God's prophets with their people, allowing for the opening of dialogue channels with people of different religions, creeds, and cultures in order to present and explain the objectives of our righteous religion, and to demonstrate its true nature and the nature of its people.

The second demand: Standards of dialogue in Quranic stories and methods to achieve its goals and purposes.

A large number of methodological foundations and means emerge to the observer and the researcher of the topic of dialogue in the Quranic stories, which ensure the achievement of the mentioned goals and desired purposes, forming what can be called a guarantee for the success of the dialogue with people of other faiths and creeds. Among these foundations and standards are the following points:

Firstly, the dialogue with people of other faiths should begin from a common ground.

The purpose is to consider the common points among people of religions, which are the belief in one God and a shared origin. The Holy Quran emphasizes this starting point and has highlighted it in many verses through the narratives of God's prophets with their people. For instance, the Quran says: "And if you ask them who created them, they will surely say, 'Allah.' So how are they deluded?" and "And if you ask them who created the heavens and the earth and subjected the sun and the moon, they will surely say, 'Allah.' So how are they deluded?" Another verse states: "If you ask them who sends down rain from the sky and gives life to the earth after its lifelessness, they will surely say, 'Allah.' Say, 'Praise be to Allah,' but most of them do not reason." Additionally, in his dialogue with the polytheists of Arabia, it says: "Say, 'To whom belongs the earth and whoever is in it, if you should know?' They will say, 'To Allah.' Say, 'Then will you not remember?' Say, 'Who is Lord of the seven heavens and Lord of the Great Throne?' They will say, 'To Allah.' Say, 'Will you not then fear Him?' Say, 'In whose hand is the realm of all things - and He protects while none can protect against Him - if you should know?' They will say, 'To Allah.' Say, 'Then how are you deluded?'" And in his dialogue with the Christians of Arabia, it says: "Say, 'O People of the Scripture, come to a word that is equitable between us and you - that we will not worship except Allah and not associate anything with Him and not take one another as lords instead of Allah.' If they turn away, then say, 'Bear witness that we are Muslims [submitting to Him].'" Meaning: "We and you believe that the world is created by one God, who alone controls it. He is its creator and manager, and He informs us through the tongues of His prophets about what pleases Him and what does not. Let us then agree to uphold these agreed-upon principles and reject any doubts that may arise."

These Quranic texts affirm and establish the bridge of understanding between people of religions based on the common ground that our Lord is one, the creator and sovereign, the Lord of the seven heavens and the great throne.

Secondly, dialogue should be conducted with gentleness, wisdom, and good preaching.

It is crucial that dialogue with people of other faiths is based on benevolence, avoiding insults and defamation. This approach reassures the other party, making them feel that the primary goal is to persuade and reach the truth, not for other ulterior motives. This fundamental and upright methodology is explicitly mentioned in many texts of the Holy Book in general, and in the stories' verses in particular. Allah Almighty said: "And do not argue with the People of the Scripture except in a way that is best..." and He said: "..and speak to people good [words]..", and He said: "And tell My servants to say that which is best..." In the verses of the Quran's stories, Allah Almighty commands His messengers to adopt this character even with those who transgressed the status of divinity or treated their people harshly. A clear example of this is Pharaoh, who told his people: "...I do not know of any god for you other than me.." and Allah Almighty said about him: "...He slaughters their sons and spares their women.." Despite all this, Allah Almighty said to Moses and Aaron, peace be upon them: "So speak to him with gentle speech that perhaps he may remember or fear [Allah]."

Thirdly, arming oneself with clear evidence and shining proof.

During dialogue, a Muslim must be equipped with clear evidence and shining proof that convinces sound minds and pure hearts that seek the truth. Our guide in this is what is mentioned in the stories of the Quran about the responses to the claims of the people of the Prophet of Allah, Hud, and the dialogue between them. Allah Almighty said: "To 'Ad [We sent] their brother Hud. He said, 'O my people, worship Allah; you have no other deity but Him. Will you not fear Allah?' The elite who disbelieved among his people said, 'We indeed see you in foolishness, and we think you are of the liars.' Hud said, 'O my people, there is no foolishness in me, but I am a messenger from the Lord of the worlds. I convey to you the messages of my Lord, and I am to you a trustworthy adviser. Are you amazed that a reminder from your Lord has come to you on a man from among you to warn you? And remember when He made you successors after the people of Noah and increased you in stature extensively. So remember the favors of Allah that you might succeed." The same applies to the story of Noah, peace be upon him, with his people, where Allah Almighty says: "Indeed, We sent Noah to his people, and he said, 'O my people, worship Allah; you have no other deity but Him. I fear for you the punishment of a great day.' The elite of his people said, 'Indeed, we see you in clear error.' Noah said, 'O my people, there is

no error in me, but I am a messenger from the Lord of the worlds. I convey to you the messages of my Lord and advise you, and I know from Allah what you do not know. Are you amazed that a reminder from your Lord has come to you on a man from among you to warn you and that you may fear Allah so that you may receive mercy."

Fourthly, progressing gradually in dialogue and starting with the most important points.

Presenting arguments and evidence all at once may overwhelm the other party, rendering them unable to discuss further, which contradicts the scientific approach in dialogue. We have a model in the Quran's method in this gradual approach; this is Abraham; he progressed in presenting the evidence in his dialogue with the king of his time, Nimrod, as it came in the Quran: "Have you not considered the one who argued with Abraham about his Lord [merely] because Allah had given him kingship? When Abraham said, 'My Lord is the one who gives life and causes death,' he said, 'I give life and cause death.' Abraham said, 'Indeed, Allah brings the sun from the east, so bring it from the west.' So the disbeliever was overwhelmed [by astonishment], and Allah does not guide the wrongdoing people." Abraham, peace be upon him, progressed in presenting the evidence; he started with saying: "My Lord is the one who gives life and causes death," which is a clear proof. But when his interlocutor opposed him by saying: "I give life and cause death," he moved him from one proof to a stronger and clearer one by saying: "Indeed, Allah brings the sun from the east, so bring it from the west." Similarly, Joseph, peace be upon him, also followed this gradual approach in his dialogue with his prison mates; he started with the issue of monotheism by asking a question that provokes thought in those he was conversing with, saying: "O my two companions of the prison, are many lords better or Allah, the One, the Prevailing?" Then he moved them to another step, saying: "You worship not besides Him but [mere] names you have named, you and your fathers, for which Allah has sent down no authority..." All this to eventually lead them to the natural conclusion, which is submission to the decree of Allah Almighty, saying: "Judgment is not but for Allah. He has commanded that you worship not except Him. That is the right religion, but most of the people do not know."

Fifthly - Accommodating in dialogue and then responding appropriately:

The Quran provides examples of prophets accommodating their people during discussions. An example of this is Prophet Noah's various dialogues with his people. Allah Almighty says, "Has there not come to you the news of those before you, the people of Noah and 'Ad and Thamud and those after them? None knows them but Allah. Their messengers came to them with clear proofs, but they returned their hands to their mouths and said, 'Indeed, we disbelieve in that with which you have been sent, and indeed we are in doubt about that to which you invite us, it is suspicious.' Their messengers said, 'Can there be doubt about Allah, the Creator of the heavens and the earth? He invites you that He may forgive you of your sins and delay you for a specified term.' They said, 'You are but humans like us; you wish to turn us away from what our ancestors were worshiping. So bring us a clear authority'" (Quran 9).

Sixthly - Humility in dialogue, patience, forbearance, and perseverance:

Humility towards the interlocutor, broad-mindedness, forbearance, and patience without haste pave the way for the dominance of love, affection, and brotherhood during dialogue, which is more likely to convince the other party and quicker in obtaining a response. The Quran provides us with the best example in the dialogues between Prophet Shu'ayb and his people. He addressed his people with all politeness and humility, without arrogance or pride. Allah Almighty says, "They said, 'O Shu'ayb, does your prayer command you that we should leave what our fathers worship or not do with our wealth what we please? Indeed, you are the forbearing, the discerning! He said, 'O my people, have you considered: if I am upon clear evidence from my Lord and He has provided me with a good provision from Him? And I do not intend to differ from you in that which I have forbidden you; I only intend reform as much as I can. And my success is not but through Allah. Upon Him, I have relied, and to Him, I return."

Seventhly - Being fair in judgment of others:

One of the principles of dialogue with people of other faiths is to be fair and recognize and mention their merits. Allah Almighty says about the people of Moses, "From the people of Moses is a community which

guides by truth and by it establishes justice." Regarding the People of the Book, Allah says, "Among the People of the Scripture is he who believes in Allah and what was revealed to you and what was revealed to them, [being] humbly submissive to Allah. They do not sell the verses of Allah for a small price; those will have their reward with their Lord. Indeed, Allah is swift in account." And He also says, "They are not all the same; among the People of the Book is a community standing [in obedience], reciting the verses of Allah during periods of the night and prostrating [in prayer]."

The Noble Quran does not differentiate between a believer in Islam and others from different religions when any of them commits a bad act, as the just tradition of God refuses to favor a Muslim over others as long as the crime is the same.

Eighthly - Dialectical submission to the possibility of the other's correctness:

Sometimes a participant in dialogue must concede, for the sake of argument, to the other party to continue the dialogue and allow it to progress. The Quran gives us an excellent example of this in the dialogues between the Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him, and the polytheists of the Arabs. After a long dialogue and presenting evidence of the oneness of Allah, this verse from Surah Saba comes: "Say, 'Who provides for you from the heavens and the earth? Say, 'Allah. And indeed, we or you are either upon guidance or in clear error." Then, he immediately adds in a significant concession to encourage the other party to accept the dialogue: "Say, 'You will not be asked about what we committed, and we will not be asked about what you do" thus equating his choice with wrongdoing despite being correct, and describing the other party's choice merely as an act, finally stating that the ultimate judgment belongs to Allah: "Say, 'Our Lord will bring us together; then He will open the matter between us with truth, and He is the knowing judge."

Ninthly - Ease of style and clarity of language:

The interlocutor must speak clearly and eloquently, as this is more likely to make the dialogue successful. The Quran indicates that the prophets were of high eloquence and had a good style of speech, which aided them in conveying their message and engaging in dialogue with their people. For example, Moses, peace be upon him, asked Allah to aid him in making his speech understandable, saying, "My Lord, expand for me my breast [with assurance]; and ease for me my task; and untie the knot from my tongue that they may understand my speech." The Quran also mentions the clarity and eloquence of Aaron, who was more fluent than Moses, as Moses said, "And my brother Aaron—he is more fluent than me in tongue, so send him with me as a support to confirm me. Indeed, I fear that they will deny me."

Tenthly - Persistence and forbearance in dialogue:

Patience in dialogue involves continuing the discussion sometimes, and at other times enduring the poor manners and mockery of the other party. The Quran tells us of Noah's patience in his dialogue with his people, as he said, "My Lord, indeed I invited my people [to truth] night and day. But my invitation increased them not except in flight. And every time I invited them that You might forgive them, they thrust their fingers into their ears, covered themselves with their garments, persisted, and were arrogant with [great] arrogance." Similarly, the Prophet Hud also showed patience in dealing with his people and endured their harsh words to achieve his goal. Allah Almighty says, "And to 'Ad [We sent] their brother Hud. He said, 'O my people, worship Allah; you have no other deity but Him. Then will you not fear Him?' The elite who disbelieved among his people said, 'Indeed, we see you in foolishness, and indeed, we think you are of the liars.' Hud replied, 'O my people, there is no foolishness in me, but I am a messenger from the Lord of the worlds."'

The Quran also highlights this approach when it tells us about the people of Noah and how they did not engage in the discussion about what he brought them, simply accusing him of being in clear error. Noah responded, "O my people, there is no error in me, but I am a messenger from the Lord of the worlds. I convey to you the messages of my Lord and advise you, and I know from Allah what you do not know."

Eleventh - Ending the dialogue calmly regardless of the results:

The interlocutor must end their dialogue calmly without the need for tension or agitation. The Quran provides a model for this. After years of dialogue, the response of Prophet Noah's people was only to say: "O Noah, you have argued with us and prolonged our dispute, so bring us what you promise if you are truthful." Noah ended the dialogue calmly as stated in the Quran: "Or do they say, 'He invented it? Say, 'If I have invented it, then upon me is my crime, but I am innocent of what you commit." And in his dialogue with the pagans of Arabia, Allah Almighty said: "And when they hear idle talk, they turn away from it and say, 'For us our deeds, and for you your deeds. Peace be upon you. We do not seek the ignorant." And Allah also says: "And if they deny you, say, 'For me my deeds and for you your deeds. You are innocent of what I do, and I am innocent of what you do," and Allah says: "Say, 'You will not be asked about what we have committed, and we will not be asked about what you do. Our Lord will gather us together and then open between us with the truth, and He is the Opener, the Knower." Thus, the Quranic methodology in dialogue guides to end it in such a manner that does not offend the other party if they are not convinced, and it emphasizes respecting the other party's freedom of choice and independence.

Third Section: Examples and forms of dialogue of the prophets with their people.

In the Quran, there are many dialogic forms and models that occurred between the prophets of Allah and their people—from different religions and beliefs—where it can be said that the Quran is the most important reference in the matter of dialogue between people of religions and the foundation and codification of it in Islamic thought. In this brief research, we will not be able to refer to all these dialogues, so we will only refer to three main models from them, through which what we aim for may be achieved. They are as follows:

The first dialogue model: The dialogue of Noah with his people:

The dialogue of Prophet Noah with his people occupies a large space in the stories and verses of the Quran, considering the length of his stay among his people, where he invited them for 950 years. These long years he spent with them included thousands of dialogues with them to the point where they said to him: "O Noah, you have argued with us and have prolonged our argument."

The Quran explains the general content of their dialogues in six Meccan surahs: (Al-A'raf verses 64-95), Yunus verses (71-73), Hud verses (20-49), Al-Mu'minun verses (23-41), and Surah Noah verses (1-28). This collection of dialogues illustrates the rules and foundations that represent the divine method in dialoguing with others in the verses of the Quranic stories. The most important of these are outlined as follows:

Firstly - Defining the purpose of the dialogue and its goal.

This is what Prophet Noah did when he clarified his issue and the principles of his call, which is the call to monotheism and worshiping Allah alone. Allah Almighty says, "And indeed, We sent Noah to his people [saying], 'Indeed, I am to you a clear warner that you worship none but Allah. Indeed, I fear for you the punishment of a painful day."

Secondly - Avoiding personal desires and biases.

Noah announced from the beginning of his dialogue with his people the purpose of his message and the truth of his demand. He did not ask them for money or status. Allah Almighty says on his behalf: "And O my people, I ask you not for wealth in return. My reward is only from Allah."

Thirdly - Being gentle in expression and good in speech.

This is indicated by his gentleness from the beginning and his addressing his people by saying "O my people." Allah Almighty says, "He said, 'O my people, indeed I am to you a clear warner," even when they accused him of misguidance, he said to them: "He said, 'O my people, there is no error in me, but I am a messenger from the Lord of the worlds. I convey to you the messages of my Lord and advise you well, and I know from Allah what you do not know."

Fourthly - Using clear arguments in dialogue.

Prophet Noah provided clear evidence in his dialogues and moved in his discussion with his people from one proof to another, especially in matters related to proving resurrection. Noah said to his people: "What is [the matter] with you that you do not attribute to Allah [due] grandeur while He has created you in stages? Have you not considered how Allah created seven heavens in layers and made the moon therein a light and made the sun a lamp? And Allah brought you forth from the earth as a plant, then He will return you into it and bring you forth [again]. And Allah has made for you the earth an expanse that you may traverse through it broad paths."

Fifthly - Gradually introducing the most important points.

This is what Noah did in his initial dialogue with his people: he said, "O my people, indeed I am to you a clear warner, worship Allah, fear Him, and obey me." He called them from the beginning to the fundamental principles of his message, which are the worship of Allah alone, fearing Him, and obeying His messenger.

Sixthly - Encouraging through the blessings and favors of Allah.

One of the greatest incentives that a speaker can offer the other party is the forgiveness of sins in the hereafter and salvation from the punishment of Allah. This is evident in Noah's dialogue with his people when he told them: "He will forgive you of your sins and delay you for a specified term." Also, incentives such as an abundance of wealth, ample provisions, the descent of rain, increase in money and children, etc., are used as enticements. Noah did this when he said to them: "He will send [rain from] the sky upon you in [continuing] showers and give you increase in wealth and children and provide for you gardens and provide for you rivers."

Seventh - Choosing the appropriate time and place and varying the style:

The long period that Noah spent with his people necessitated using various methods and changing means, which Noah clarified by stating that he had exhausted all means in his dialogue with his people to invite them to the truth. Allah Almighty says: "Then I invited them publicly, then I announced to them and also confided to them secretly."

Eighth - Humility and lowering one's wing during dialogue:

Humility engenders affection and thus opens hearts, making it more conducive to a response and acceptance of the message. This humility was apparent in his dialogue with his people, as Allah Almighty says: "O my people, who would support me against Allah if I drove them away? Will you not remember? I do not tell you that I have the treasures of Allah, nor do I know the unseen, nor do I say I am an angel, nor do I say of those whom your eyes look down upon that Allah will not grant them any good—Allah knows best what is in their souls; for then I would indeed be among the wrongdoers."

Ninth - Patience, endurance, steadfastness, and not despairing:

This is evident from his mission, which lasted 950 years, and only a few believed with him. Allah Almighty says: "And indeed, whenever I called them that You might forgive them, they put their fingers in their ears, covered themselves with their garments, persisted, and magnified themselves in pride."

Tenth - Mercy, compassion, and showing fear and care for the other party:

Noah provides a prime example of this in his dialogue with his people. Allah Almighty says: "He said, 'O my people, worship Allah; you have no other deity but Him. I fear for you the punishment of a great day.""

Second Dialogue Model: The dialogues of Moses with Pharaoh and his people

The dialogues of Moses with Pharaoh and his people in the Quran are a model of religious dialogues, being the most repeated and detailed, indicating the Quran's care for this type of dialogue. Moses' dialogues appear in various phases across eleven Surahs (Al-Baqarah, Al-A'raf, Yunus, Hud, Taha, Al-Mu'minun, Al-Shu'ara, An-Naml, Al-Qasas, Ghafir, Az-Zukhruf), providing valuable insights for scholarly dialogues with others. The most important points are summarized as follows:

First - Dialogue with gentleness:

This is evident from the verse in Surah Taha, where Allah commanded His prophet Moses and his brother Aaron to speak to Pharaoh gently, hoping he might remember or fear. Allah Almighty says: "Go, both of you, to Pharaoh. Indeed, he has transgressed. And speak to him with gentle speech that perhaps he may remember or fear."

Second - Good presentation and request:

He excelled, peace be upon him, in his good request from Pharaoh to see what indicates the truth of his claim, without rudeness or harshness. Ibn Atiyyah said in Al-Muharrar Al-Wajiz: "And Moses had from the command of Allah what frightened him of Pharaoh's threat, so Moses said to him in a way that was gentle to him and hoping for his belief: "Said [Moses], 'Even if I brought you something clear?" . It becomes clear to him with it, my truthfulness, would you then imprison me? Al-Shawkani explained, saying of God: "He said, 'If you take a god other than me, I will surely place you among those imprisoned." . Meaning: I will make you among the imprisoned... When Moses heard this, he treated him kindly hoping for his response, and relaxing the reins of the debate with him, intending to conquer him with a considerable argument in the matter of prophethood, which is the showing of miracles, so he presented it in a manner that compelled him to request the miracle."

Third - Defining the purpose of the dialogue and sticking to it

The goal of Moses was clear and divinely ordained. Allah Almighty says: "When your Lord called out to Moses, go to the wrongdoing people, the people of Pharaoh. Will they not fear Allah?" and "So go to Pharaoh and say, "We are the messenger of the Lord of the worlds." It is the supreme goal from which no caller to Allah, the Almighty, deviates.

Fourth - Moses' concern and sense of fear

Knowing the difficulty of his task, Moses felt fear and apprehension, which motivated him to be cautious to make the dialogue successful. Allah recounts Moses' words: "He said, 'My Lord, indeed I fear that they will deny me," and "They said, 'Our Lord, indeed we are afraid that he will hasten [punishment] against us or that he will transgress." So the Almighty said: "Fear not, for I am with you both, hearing and seeing. So go to him and say, 'We are the messengers of your Lord, so let the Children of Israel go with us and do not torment them. We have come to you with a sign from your Lord, and peace be upon those who follow the guidance."

Fifth - Seeking support and backing

So Moses, peace be upon him, sought help from his Lord, Glorious and Exalted, to send his brother Aaron with him in this mission, so the Almighty narrated about Moses, peace be upon him: "Send Aaron," and in another verse He says: "And my brother Aaron is more eloquent than I am, so send him with me as a support."

Sixth - Eloquence of speech

And Moses, peace be upon him, also asked his Lord to loosen the knot from his tongue, so the Almighty narrated about him: "And loosen the knot from my tongue, that they may understand my speech," so that he could be more eloquent in expressing what he wanted to explain to Pharaoh.

Seventh - Assurance of God's company

Reliance on God gives complete tranquility. Allah Almighty says: "No indeed! Go both of you with Our signs; We are with you, listening."

Eighth - Following scientific methods and adhering to them

When Pharaoh tried to divert the discussion, which was about the oneness of God, to another topic by asking Moses: "What about the former generations?" Moses, peace be upon him, gave him a concise reply that brought the discussion back to the main topic: "The knowledge of it is with my Lord in a record. My Lord neither errs nor forgets."

Ninth - Presenting evidence in a sequential and logical manner, not all at once

And the best example of this is what Allah Almighty said, when Pharaoh asked Moses about the Lord of the worlds, he said: "Pharaoh said, 'And what is the Lord of the worlds?" Moses, peace be upon him, answered clearly saying: "The Lord of the heavens and the earth and all between them, if you are convinced." And when Moses, peace be upon him, noticed Pharaoh evading, he reiterated his answer, saying to him: "The Lord of the heavens and the earth and all between them, if you are convinced."

Third Dialogue Model: The dialogue of Abraham with his father and his people

This is another model in this study of dialogues in the stories of the Quran, rich in arguments and evidence that enhance the culture of dialogue with people of other religions in a well-structured manner, aiming to convince others in the best way.

Abraham, the father of the prophets, was chosen by God to have prophecy among his descendants, which highlights the significance of his dialogues. The Quran explains his dialogues at various stages of his mission with his father, his people, and with Nimrod across approximately eight Surahs; they are: Al-Baqarah (2:258), Al-An'am (6:74-83), Maryam (19:41-50), Al-Anbiya (21:51-72), Ash-Shu'ara (26:69-89), Al-Ankabut (29:16-27), As-Saffat (37:83-113), and Az-Zukhruf (43:26-31).

From these dialogues across these Surahs, some principles or guidelines can be discerned that could benefit scholars and preachers in their dialogues with people of other religions:

First - Clarity of the dialogue's purpose

The verses in Surah Ash-Shu'ara clearly mention the purpose of Abraham's dialogue with his people, which was to remind them to worship God and to fear Him. Allah Almighty says: "Recite to them the story of Abraham when he said to his father and his people, 'What do you worship?' They said, 'We worship idols and remain to them devoted.' He said, 'Do they hear you when you call? Or do they benefit or harm you?' They said, 'But we found our fathers doing thus.' He said, 'Then do you see what you have been worshiping, you and your ancient forefathers? Indeed, they are enemies to me, except the Lord of the worlds, who created me, and it is He who guides me. And it is He who feeds me and gives me drink, and when I am ill, it is He who cures me; and who will cause me to die and then bring me to life; and who, I hope, will forgive my sin on the Day of Recompense."

Second - Gentleness, politeness, and softness in dialogue:

Abraham was gentle in his expressions and soft in his speech; he used the term "O my father" each time he spoke to his father. Allah Almighty narrates from Abraham: "O my father, indeed I have received knowledge that has not come to you, so follow me; I will guide you to an even path. O my father, do not worship Satan. Indeed Satan has been disobedient to the Most Merciful. O my father, I fear that a punishment from the Most Merciful will touch you, so you would be to Satan a companion."

Third - Patience in dialogue

The Quran tells us of Abraham's patience despite being threatened with stoning. Allah Almighty says: "He said, 'Are you averse to my gods, O Abraham? If you do not desist, I will surely stone you, so avoid me a prolonged time.' But Abraham said, 'Peace be upon you. I will ask forgiveness for you from my Lord. Indeed, He is gracious to me. And I will leave you and those you invoke other than Allah and will invoke my Lord. I expect that I will not be in invocation to my Lord unhappy."

Fourth - Gradual Presentation of Evidence

This is learned from the story of Abraham with Nimrod. Allah recounts Abraham's debate with Nimrod, saying: "Have you not considered the one who argued with Abraham about his Lord [merely] because Allah had given him kingship? When Abraham said, 'My Lord is the one who gives life and causes death,' he said, 'I give life and cause death.' Abraham said, 'Indeed, Allah brings the sun from the east, so bring it from the west.' So the

disbeliever was overwhelmed [by astonishment], and Allah does not guide the wrongdoing people." Here, Abraham leads him from one argument to another that he cannot counter.

Fifth - Clarity of Argument by Addressing Common Grounds

This is derived from Abraham initially questioning the nature of the gods and idols they worshiped and devoutly followed: "He said to his father and his people, 'What are these statues to which you are clinging?" These idols in reality cannot hear prayers, nor can they benefit or avert harm. Building on this truth, Abraham says, how can you worship gods such as these that are so powerless and feeble: "O my father, why do you worship that which does not hear, nor see, nor can benefit you at all? Do they hear you when you call? Or do they benefit you? Or do they harm you?" Their only response was: "We found our fathers worshippers of them." Abraham then asserts and reaffirms: "Do you then worship besides Allah things that can neither benefit you nor harm you?"

Sixth - Showing Concern for the Opposing Party

This is more likely to elicit a response from the other party, as they feel your concern for them. Allah says: "O my father, indeed I fear that a punishment from the Merciful will touch you, and you would be to Satan a companion."

Seventh - Ending the Dialogue Peacefully

Despite his father's anger and his threat to him, saying: "If you do not cease, I will surely stone you; so leave me alone for a long time," we find him, peace be upon him, concluding his dialogue with peace to his father and praying for him, saying: "Peace be upon you. I will ask forgiveness of my Lord for you; indeed, He is ever Gracious to me..."

And thus, these were three models of dialogues of the Prophets with their people, in which some of the rules and methods prescribed by the Quran, which the Prophets of Allah, peace be upon them (Noah, Abraham, and Moses), followed throughout their long journey in calling to Allah Almighty, and in their dialogue with their people. Altogether, they represent what we might call the Quranic method in dialogue among people of different religions and beliefs in the Quran.

In conclusion, this research is merely a building block added to the efforts of those who have written on this subject before, all for the purpose of understanding the nature of this approach and highlighting its role with those we differ with, to cut off the detractors, or to alert the oblivious to this great value that some try to overlook. Thus, we follow the Quran and draw from its teachings, considering its admonitions and stories. And our last prayer is that all praise is due to Allah, Lord of the Worlds.

May Allah send blessings and peace upon His servant Muhammad and upon his family and companions.

Results and Recommendations

This research focused on demonstrating the impact of Quranic stories in establishing a culture of dialogue among various religions. Several results were derived from the study, which can be formulated in the following points:

First - The optimal foundations for dialogue with others are derived from the Holy Quran, as evident in the dialogue methods used by the prophets of Allah in their interactions with their people.

Second - No dialogue, regardless of its type, achieves its objectives and goals unless it is based on a set of foundations and regulated by a set of guidelines, such as humility, engaging in dialogue in the best manner, bringing clear evidence and definitive proof, starting from agreed principles, fairness to the interlocutor, language correctness, and good style. The topic of the dialogue and its purpose, starting from agreed principles, fairness to the interlocutor, language correctness, and good style, and ending the dialogue calmly regardless of the results.

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Third - Through dialogue, conflicts of all types and in all forms are averted, and it is the highest means to regulate condemnable differences and activate values of cooperation and harmony, which is a fundamental pillar of Islam.

Fourth - Dialogue topics in Islam extend beyond its narrow limits to include issues related to the human commonality; such as cultivating the earth, combating injustice, corruption, and arrogance.

Fifth - One of the most important methodological foundations of dialogue in the Holy Quran is the recognition of the other and that the difference between humans is a natural fact.

Sixth - The numerous, varied, and extended dialogues in many verses of the Quranic stories highlight the dialogic nature of the Holy Quran and that the idea of dialogue is a fundamental and entrenched concept in the Quran.

Seventh - The dialogues of the prophets, mentioned at the end of the study, have demonstrated that dialogue was the approach of the prophets with their peoples across different times and places, from the prophet Noah to the seal of the prophets, Muhammad, may the best prayers and peace be upon them all.

Important Recommendations

First - Increase the number of scientific conferences and seminars addressing those leading dialogues with others to clarify the righteous method of engaging with people of other religions based on wisdom and good admonition.

Second - It is necessary to strive to form a generation of scholars and thinkers who possess the tools to engage in dialogue with others across various levels and in all directions.

Third - Arab universities should play a major role in all dialogues held with others.

With this, I ask Allah for success and accuracy in speech and action, and may Allah's peace, blessings, and mercy be upon our Prophet Muhammad, his family, and his companions.

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