

Our Shared Values Symposium

Bahçeşehir University

29-30 March 2010

Main Findings of the Workshop on 29 March 2010

“Any alliance of communities dedicated to responsible citizenship and the health of wider society needs to be an alliance not only between followers of the ‘Abrahamic’ faiths and the composite Judeo-Christian-Islamic heritage which underpins our civilization, but between all people who seek to advance higher civilisation values and ethical principles for the common good, whether those values and principles are integral to other faith or wisdom traditions or based simply in a vision of what it means to be fully human.” (Jeremy Henzell-Thomas)

Historical consciousness is important to understand ourselves and the point we have reached.

Without knowing the historical development of the existing cultural and religious structures in Europe and the Middle East, it will be hard to find solutions.

We need a new paradigm of living in unity. Accordingly, the new paradigm is an expression of a global citizenship that can be summarized as cosmopolitanism. This cosmopolitan paradigm where everyone is considered as a member of human society, where a consensus is achieved through human rights and in which a political mechanism built by new international institutions will prevail, will make the society stronger and more tolerant. And for this, we need to construct a new consciousness of self.

There is a need for a new spirit of recovery at a new level. This needs to be achieved pragmatically.

The discussions should also include the criticism of capitalism.

A non-hierarchical dialogue is needed.

Dialogue should not be eliminating differences.

It takes a dialogue that does not divide the society into compartments. And this could only be achieved through a constructive engagement.

Such a dialogue should be based on knowledge, be aware of its moral responsibilities, have political foresight and wisdom, be based on a mutual conversation and bring forward peace and respect. The main values for dialogue should be manageability, [communicability](#) and essentialism.

Ambiguity and ambivalence of concepts and opinions should be avoided. The social life is made up of a system of behaviour codes and these can as well be constructed secularly. Yet the issue is in fact a problem of equality.

The idea of imagined communities (e.g. nation-state) is losing validity.

The main emphasis should be on the deconstruction of values.

It is difficult to talk about the essence of the values.

It is claimed that we have reached the end of the nation-state construct and there is a need for a new one.

Plurality can only be possible through “friendly conversation” and for this we need a common ground and target reaching a holistic mankind.

Love is necessary for “friendly conversation” and it needs to be developed if not present.

The concept of “Gained/Deserved Europeanism” needs to be emphasised.

A complicated set of identities and values stands before us and the politicians are expected to play an important role in settling these issues.

The deconstruction of values is crucial and there is no room for any imposition.

‘What is good’ needs to be inquired from a pragmatic perspective.

Value is what is veracious, good and beautiful. The veracity is a logical principle; the goodness is a moral value and the beauty is an aesthetic value. Values can be shared starting from the common denominator of humanity (disposition, creation). Such sharing will in fact not be based on European values but the values of humanity and its spontaneity is very important.

It is necessary to build a universal system of values and this will be possible through participation, dialogue and a pluralist approach. Yet the values should be open for revisions to the extent of wisdom and justice. The keyword here is ‘virtue’. The fundamental maxim will be finding a middle way and avoiding extremes. Eliminating

the knowledge gap, recognition, understanding and accepting the other as equal are pre-conditions for dialogue.

Rapporteurs: Kaan H. Ökten and Mustafa Kaçar (29.03.2010)