



CONTACT: Donald Lehr – The Nolan/Lehr Group  
+1 (212) 967-8200 / mob +1 (917) 304-4058  
[dblehr@cs.com](mailto:dblehr@cs.com) / [www.templetonprize.org](http://www.templetonprize.org)

**Remarks by Heather Templeton Dill at the 2018 Templeton Prize Ceremony  
Washington National Cathedral, November 13, 2018**

Your Majesty. Your Excellency. Distinguished Excellencies and guests. Ladies and Gentlemen.

Good evening. I am Heather Templeton Dill, the president of the John Templeton Foundation. On behalf of the Trustees of the John Templeton Foundation, I welcome all of you to the Templeton Prize Ceremony honoring the 2018 Laureate, His Majesty King Abdullah the Second ibn Al Hussein.

Dean Hollerith, thank you for your beautiful introduction. And thank you for allowing the John Templeton Foundation the opportunity to present this Ceremony here in the majestic Washington National Cathedral, a house of prayer for all people.

It is also with great joy that we welcome to our stage, His Excellency António Guterres, Secretary General of the United Nations. Your Excellency, thank you very much for being with us this evening.

I would like to say a few words about the man whose vision has brought us here tonight—our founder, Sir John Templeton. Sir John established the Templeton Prize in 1972. It is a prize that is given annually to an individual who has made an exceptional contribution to recognizing and affirming life's spiritual dimension. Sir John created this prize because he believed that religion is important and under-appreciated in the affairs of humankind and he wanted to honor those who were making significant contributions to human flourishing that spring from deeply held religious convictions.

Sir John Templeton was a financier who pioneered global investing and created some of the world's most successful mutual funds because he looked outside of the US for investment opportunities. He was tenacious, bold and open to new ideas.

Yet he also embodied a spirit of curiosity and open-mindedness that extended far beyond the realm of business. "Is it possible," he wondered, "that there are some spiritual principles on which all major religions already agree? Can love and the vastness of divinity reduce our differences?" In asking these questions, however, he did not shy away from drawing conclusions: "The real wealth of a nation," he wrote, "does not

come from mineral resources but from the way it develops and harnesses love in the minds and hearts of its people.” We might easily dismiss this idea. Does love really make a difference in human affairs? Can love really be the bridge between religious traditions?

But tonight we recognize His Majesty’s efforts to promote peace and harmony among Muslims and between Muslims and Christians based on the twin commandments shared by both faiths, “love of God,” and “love of the neighbor”. The Amman Message, the Common Word and the United Nations Interfaith Harmony Week stress the moral imperative of understanding the values of peace inherent in all religions. We at the John Templeton Foundation cannot think of a more important message of peace and reconciliation for the world to hear and embrace in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

And that is why the Templeton Prize exists — to celebrate the deep and enduring significance of religion and the values that it promotes.

His Majesty King Abdullah the Second is a person shaped by temporal and political responsibilities, yet one who holds the conviction that religious belief and the free exercise of religion are among humankind’s most important callings.

In his letter endorsing King Abdullah II’s nomination for the Prize, the very Reverend Professor Iain R. Torrance said, “The immensely important work of King Abdullah II lies in his decisive leadership and convening authority in world-wide Islam to call a principled halt to sectarianism and to mutual denunciation...Through scholarship, example, encouragement and publication, King Abdullah has offered the inherently flexible structures of Islam space to re-set and look again at matters of justice, inter-faith relations and neighbourliness.”

In this way, His Majesty embodies the values that inspired my grandfather to establish the Templeton Prize and the John Templeton Foundation and it is a great joy to celebrate His Majesty’s contributions in this ceremony.

This evening I am pleased to introduce two scholars who will offer their insights on the importance and influence of the work of King Abdullah the Second. We will hear from each of them in the course of the program, and in lieu of introductions when they come forward to speak, I would like to introduce them now.

Shaykh Hamza Yusuf is president of Zaytuna College in Berkeley, California, America’s first accredited Muslim liberal arts college. A philosopher, theologian, public intellectual, and widely sought after speaker, he is, according to *The New Yorker*, “perhaps the most influential Islamic scholar in the Western world.” A convert to Islam at the age of 17, Dr. Yusuf is on the list of the 500 Most Influential Muslims; he advises

Islamic study centers, leaders and heads of states across the globe, and his influence on a generation of Islamic scholars has been transformative.

Professor Miroslav Volf is the Henry B. Wright Professor of Theology at Yale University and the Founder and Director of the Yale Center for Faith and Culture. In October 2007, he was the lead author of the Christian response to “A Common Word Between Us and You,” the historic open letter signed by 138 Muslim scholars, clerics, and intellectuals, which identified some core common ground at the heart of the Christian and Muslim faiths. His most recent book is *Flourishing: Why We Need Religion in a Globalized World*.

We will also be treated this evening to performances from some of Jordan’s most popular and esteemed musical artists: vocalists Zain Awad and Emanne Beasha, the Dozan wa Awtar choir, and Jordan’s National Music Conservatory Orchestra, all under the direction of producer and pianist Talal Abu Al Ragheb.

And finally, we welcome again His Excellency António Guterres, the ninth Secretary-General of the United Nations, who took office on January 1<sup>st</sup>, 2017. Prior to his appointment as Secretary-General, Mr. Guterres served as United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees from June 2005 to December 2015, heading one of the world’s foremost humanitarian organizations during some of the most serious displacement crises in decades.

Ladies and Gentlemen, again, thank you all for joining us this evening to celebrate and honor His Majesty King Abdullah the Second.

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