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**Remarks by Shaykh Hamza Yusuf at the 2018 Templeton Prize Ceremony
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I want to first thank Heather Templeton and the John Templeton Foundation for the honor of paying homage to someone I truly respect, King Abdullah II of Jordan. I believe Heather's grandfather, Sir John Templeton, would consider this year's recipient an altogether fitting one for his esteemed prize: Sir John, a true visionary, understood the great moral burden that comes with *privilege*. It is unfortunate that the current zeitgeist scorns privilege and fails to recognize that not only is privilege a natural part of our world, but that it entails a concomitant social responsibility and tribulation. The Qur'an reminds us that privilege has a purpose: "God has privileged some of you over others as a test to reveal who is the best among you." Sir John, it can be said, seems to have passed that test by using his wealth and privilege to encourage others to do their utmost for the good of the common weal. The Prophet Muhammad said, "The best of you in the eyes of God are the most beneficial to God's creation." Tonight, we honor someone of rare privilege, a king no less, who has used his prestige and his privilege, like his remarkable father before him, in service of his fellow countrymen and neighbors.

The Arabs say, "Something from its source should cause no surprise." King Abdullah hails from the illustrious Hashemite clan whose family line, replete with peacemakers and philanthropists, goes back to the eponymous father of the Abrahamic religions. Abraham pitched a grand tent in which all were welcome, and his two sons, Ishmael and Isaac, spawned the two great Semitic branches: the Jews and the Arabs. King Abdullah's work, above and beyond his duties as head of state, is helping to restore that resplendent Abrahamic tent where all are welcome as guests of God. The great Persian poet of the 14th century, Hafiz, wrote:

If God had invited you to a party and said, "Everyone in the ballroom tonight will be my special guest," how would you treat them when you arrived? Hafiz knows there is no one in this world who is not upon God's jeweled dance floor.

A quintessential teaching of the great sons of Abraham—Moses, Jesus and Muhammad—calls upon us to see the Imago Dei in our fellow wayfarers of the world. In seeing the ennobling hand of the divine in all earthly creatures, we honor the One who created them.

That teaching has informed the major initiatives of King Abdullah for the promotion of peace. We live in a world characterized by too much misunderstanding, and riven by too many misbegotten wars and revolutions, so the tireless efforts of a leader like King Abdullah in the service of peace, empathy and understanding must be honored and celebrated as we do here tonight.

In a region mired in a miasma of crises, and in an era of spiritual, intellectual, and political decline for Muslims, he has waged a battle of the heart, deploying the weapons of generosity, courage, wisdom, and words. Faced with the scourge of extremism, militarism, and fanaticism, he has countered with pluralism, in an effort to restore the moderate, intelligent, and prophetic way of Muhammad, who said, “Beware of extremism in faith, for it is that which destroyed the previous religious peoples.”

During the month of Ramadan in 2004, King Abdullah issued the Amman Message reminding his fellow Muslims of Islam’s great tradition of religious pluralism, compassion and tolerance, and its science of “the courtesies of differing.” That tradition still survives in places like Jordan and Morocco among others, where Muslims and Christians, Jews and Jains, Buddhists and Hindus, humanists and secularists are all treated with the dignity deserving of all guests upon “God’s jeweled dance floor.” In countless parts of the pre-modern Muslim world, despite its many faults and shortcomings, tapestries of diversity lent kaleidoscopic beauty to their respective places. Muslims, Christians, and Jews lived together in the Middle East and North Africa with churches, synagogues, monasteries, and mosques for centuries.

In 2006, with increasing tensions and flare-ups between Muslims and Christians, King Abdullah launched “A Common Word Between Us and You,” an open letter from Muslim leaders to leaders of the Christian faith. Once again, King Abdullah was reminding fellow Muslims—and informing fellow Christians who might be unaware—that the world’s 1.8 billion Muslims are members of the Abrahamic family and that the Qur’an commands us to respect the other family members, to protect them when threatened, and to honor them when safe. We have a shared faith in all of the Biblical prophets, the messianic reality of Jesus and his virgin birth, not to mention a firm belief in an afterlife of final judgment with its rewards and retributions.

Just as numerical common denominators are used to unite fractions, spiritual common denominators must be used to unite factions.

In 2010, King Abdullah used his pulpit as a head of state at the United Nations to call for a World Interfaith Harmony Week expanding “love of God” by adding “love of the good” and “love of one’s neighbor,” promoting harmony among all people, regardless of their faith background.

The tie that binds all of King Abdullah's work is the Islamic teaching that connects love of God to love of His creation. This was perfectly articulated by the 13th century theologian and jurist Fakhr al-Din al-Razi who said, "All of Islam can be reduced to two concepts: devotion to God and service to His creation." This reflects the Message of Moses, unforgettably summed up by Rabbi Hillel when he said, "That which is hateful to you, do not do to your fellow. That is the whole of the Torah; the rest is explanation; go and learn." Christ too, masterfully reduced the Ten Commandments to two, which, nonetheless, contain the other eight: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets." Our Prophet Muhammad said, "None of you truly believes until he loves for his fellow men what he loves for himself."

The way of the golden rule honors the Imago Dei in each human person. My own teacher, Shaykh Abdallah bin Bayyah, who has been honored by King Abdullah, said, "We don't want a place where Muslims feel safe and others don't. We want a land where everyone feels safe." This is the path of Islam, a path to peace with God, with one's self, and with others, regardless of their faith or lack thereof.

King Abdullah's magnanimous outreach efforts exemplify that path. Lest we forget, we should note that his small nation has taken in, almost to the brink of collapse, two million refugees and provided them a safe haven. With majestic finesse and adroitness, he continues to navigate the rough waters of a militarized region in constant crisis. His leadership in such matters is courageous and principled. King Abdallah looks to the future in a culture that often revels in their prestigious past.

Generally speaking, imagining a future does not come easily for many Muslims; many incline more towards looking nostalgically to the past for inspiration. King Abdullah clearly breaks that mold; while rooted in the past, he looks ahead with hope and imagination. The Arabs say—and they really do say many wise things— "The camel is honored by God, and the donkey is censured for the simple reason that the camel sets its eyes upon the horizon, while the downcast donkey cannot see beyond its own hooves." King Abdullah, rightfully optimistic for a man of his age and of his faith, looks upon the light of dawn on the horizon and calls others to expect a glorious sunrise that will restore light in the midst of darkness, hope in the midst of despair, and peace in the midst of war.

I want to conclude by citing the great American orientalist, Duncan MacDonald, whose legacy remains honored at the Hartford Seminary, who wrote this over a hundred years ago:

“Islam is a present reality and the Muslim faith a living organism, a knowledge of whose laws may be of life or death for us who are in another camp. For there can be little doubt that the three great antagonistic and militant civilizations of the world are those of Christendom, Islam, and China. When these are unified, or come to a mutual understanding, then, and only then, will the cause of civilization be secure.”

King Abdullah has done more than his part toward that end. As a man of prestige and privilege, he has shouldered his moral burden admirably, and he continues his efforts to secure a future of peace and prosperity for the people of his country, and the people of the world, guided by his unshakeable commitment to love God and to serve His creation.

May God bless the Templeton Foundation for the wisdom to recognize and honor this humble grandson of a Prophet, a visionary, a peacemaker, and in the elegant words of Sir John himself, an “honest spiritual entrepreneur.”