

**The Letter of His Eminence The Grand Ayatollah Sheikh Basheer Al
Najafi To The Faith In Human Rights Conference In The
Netherlands Dec. 10th 2008.**

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In The Name of God The Compassionate, The Merciful

Praised be the Lord of the universe, and peace be upon Mohammed, our messenger who was sent mercifully to humankind, and peace be upon his household, the upholders of humanity after him.

It is my pleasure to write to this gathering of international human rights supporters who gathered in this place so that they may continue their endeavor in servicing humanity and remove all injustices suffered by all people. This might be the first occasion that a representative of the holy city of Najaf, this metropolis of Islamic scholarship and the city of the excellent upholder of human rights Imam Ali bin Abi Taleb, has been invited to join the voices of those who uphold human rights: the individual, social and family rights. I thank the Lord for this opportunity so that I may contribute with my view on the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

I would like to say that despite all the bright aspects that the Universal Declaration of Human Rights contains, it was brief on many essential aspects. It calls for the respect and upholding of freedom and it calls for giving every individual his rights. Nevertheless it does not define the meaning of freedom nor the meaning and scope of the specific rights for individuals, groups or families. Therefore it cannot be considered as fulfilling the necessary needs.

Islam did not neglect those and other meanings. It explains right as that what is necessary for the human being to enter this life and what protects his safety and welfare (and of those of his peers) from all that endangers and hurts them. This meaning can not be defined by any man. For despite the efforts of man to establish rules, he cannot be immune to the influences that distract his sense of direction and keep off the tracks of the right path. The differences between all temporal laws and the necessity to always annul and change those laws are evidence to that.

The articles of the Universal Declaration which profess the utmost respect to the freedom of human beings are in need of further and clearer interpretations of their definitions and scopes; definitions and scopes that were supported and upheld by Islam for 14 centuries. Islam gives man his liberty and does not oppose his enjoyment of his rights that were bestowed on him by his Creator. It defines the ways to obtain those rights, and calls on those holding power to give those rights to all their subjects, for freedom is limited by the constraints of rights, not the other way around.

Freedom and rights are the pillars of humanity with which the ideal society could be established and dignified civilization could be achieved. Therefore, to protect them both, we must pull human beings out of the realm of ignorance and encourage them to learn and educate themselves so that everyone would know his rights and duties. It is therefore that Islam has as motto: seeking knowledge is a duty.

I send to you, from this metropolis of scholarship, some observations and points of view. This society of scholars is always ready to cooperate in enriching the interpretation of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, if its cooperation is invited is asked for.

Peace be upon you.

