

On Wednesday May 26, 2010 at noon at Episcopal House, in Newark, three speakers gave a speech on forgiveness, which was very informative. We also enjoyed some great Turkish food provided by the IDC. At the end of the program guests asked the speakers some great questions that the speakers answered happily.

Rabbi Matthew Gewirtz started of the speech with a great story on forgiveness. The story was basically about three wealthy Jewish men, who made all sorts of contributions and etc. They looked very highly upon themselves; they were dressed well and carried an attitude that they were better than the people around them. One day a poorly dressed man walked by them. They started talking about this man in a very negative way, saying things like "look at how he's dressed" and so on. Little did they know that this man was the Rabbi, someone they were dying to meet, so the day they finally meet him, and they find out that he's the Rabbi, they begged for his forgiveness. The Rabbi replied no, "I will not forgive you, ask the forgiveness of all the people you hurt who are not wealthy, and dressed poorly. Basically it meant "Don't judge a person on their appearance, everyone is equal".

The Rev. Canon Gregory Jacobs was the next speaker. He talked about "God's Love", All of God's creation must be loved and cared for, and God did create no junk. Forgiveness as much about us as it is about the other person, that forgiveness is not all about feeling sorry about the other guy in a way that you can really mean it. It's about wanting to be in right relationship with yourself and with others in the same way God is in relationship with you. In the Old Testament u hear this reference, "Someone walking with god", and that's what he understands is right relationship to be, walking with God. Adopt God's view point of the world at the expense of our own view point. God loves us completely and unconditionally regardless whether we deserve it or not.

Levent Koç of the IDC, talked about the Muslim perspective on forgiveness. We start anything positive by saying Bismilah er-Rahman er-Rahim, which means “In the name of God the most Compassionate the most Merciful”. This phrase is a continuous reminder for the servants of God of His endless mercy and great bounties. An entire chapter in the Qur'an is named after Allah's divine attribute Ar-Rahman or “The Most Compassionate.” God's wide variety of bounties and bestowments upon humanity are mentioned in this chapter.

Allah assures us that whoever commits a sin will be forgiven if he repents and ceases this act, where He says: “Your Lord has inscribed for Himself (the rule of) mercy: verily, if any of you did evil in ignorance, and thereafter repented, and amend (his conduct), then, He is Forgiving, Most Merciful” (Al-An'am 6:54). This verse is affirmed by a hadith qudsi, where Allah says: “My mercy prevails over My anger.” Another verse related to endless mercy of God in the Qur'an is: "Say: 'O my Servants who have transgressed against their souls! Despair not of the Mercy of God: for God forgives all sins: for He is the Forgiving, Most Merciful.'" (Qur'an, 39:53)

Reward for kindness and compassion was also assured by the Prophet Muhammad (pbuh): “The merciful are shown mercy by the All-Merciful. Show mercy to those on earth, and He Who is in heaven will show mercy unto you”.

In fact God is asserting in the Quran that “We have not sent you but as a mercy to the worlds” (Al-Anbiyaa' 21:107), which assures that Islam is founded on mercy, and that Allah sent Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) as mercy to all creatures with no exception and He showed how to be merciful with his life.

Dr. Koç finished his speech with a supplication of Prophet Muhammad (pbuh): “O Allah, You are most Forgiving One, You love to forgive, so forgive me.”

### Speakers:

The Rev. Canon Gregory Jacobs, Canon to the Ordinary for the Episcopal Diocese of Newark  
Rabbi Matthew Gewirtz, Senior Rabbi at Congregation B'nai Jeshurun, Short Hills  
Dr. Levent Koc, IDC

### Moderator:

The Rev. Robert Corin Morris, Executive Director, Interweave

### Venue:

Episcopal House, Newark

### Date:

Wednesday May 26 Noon.

### Pics from the Event Below:



