

Mr. Gulerce is a famous journalist in Turkish media. He is a columnist in [Zaman Newspaper](#) and also makes programs for [Samanyolu TV](#).

He involved in left-right clash in late 1960's and early 1970's. This adverse experience grew desire to spread tolerance and dialog in his soul, and this became an ideal for him.

He is continuing to work to achieve this aim in [Journalists and Writers Foundation](#) , Turkey.

Gulerce in his speech touched upon dialog from domestic and interreligious points of view. Below are quotations from his speech.

Despite all the wars, clashes and fights, a dialogue season, whose winds of its existence blowing in the world can be felt, has started. There are a few aspects of the dialogue season that have really influenced me.

Firstly, people of dialogue from our generation have emerged. Our generation, that is people barely above and slightly below 50 years (the so-called generation of '68), was a generation of strife. We were just starting university life when we encountered fights and hostilities. We fought with sticks against people with whom we once exchanged sweaters and shirts at high school. Then these fights turned into armed clashes. Dozens of students were killed each day. And finally, on March 12, 1971, there came a military interference. However, our generation was scattered by the hurricane. We had never heard of the word dialogue, nor had we gotten our share of tolerance. All the rights belonged to us. Those, who were not one of 'us', (even though they lived in our neighborhood, whether they were right or left) were not accepted, and each case was pathetic. We were intolerant towards the thoughts of others and were enemies of their living styles.

However, after 25 long years passed by, starting from 1995, a dialogue and tolerance wind blowing over Turkey, began to awaken hopes and excitements in the conscience and soul of our entire generation's spectrum, even though the number was minimal at first. The season was spring and 'men of dialogue' took the stage, even more so, they were hand in hand. Without softened hearts, this scene could not have occurred.

If we do not take advantage of this dialogue, tolerance, and love season, we would be doing utmost disloyalty to humanity. The soil is suitable, the atmosphere is suitable, but who knows towards which direction the grating wind and the abundant clouds will carry the flowers, fruits and seeds of these grand trees?

Dialogue should not be squeezed into certain days and ceremonies. It should be taken seriously, internalized and maintained in spite of everything.

The Islamic World needs dialog with other religions. However, we must not neglect that it has weaknesses like the lack of intellectuals, weakness in practicing the faith and a loyalty crisis. In addition to this, it is also important for Muslims to be able to question themselves. Do we feel sad due to the torture and misery that the Islamic world is subjected to, as much as we feel when we have a problem in our homes, jobs or daily lives? As long as we are relieved by lies, no problem can be solved.

We muslims were the most trusted people and we must so so again because our world needs this. I would like to convey an anecdote that Republican People's Party (CHP) Deputy Mr. Kemal Dervis told during the Abant meeting in America:

"I worked in Bosnia-Herzegovina for six years. We were sitting with Mufti and the Chief Rabbi together in Sarajevo one day. The Chief Rabbi said: 'There is a very important book for us Jews that tells about the Jews that emigrated from Spain to Sarajevo. During the Second World War, Nazis searched everywhere for this book. The Chief Rabbi at that time gave our book to the mosque's Imam since he trusted him very much. The Imam returned our book after the war.' What the Chief Rabbi said proves that Ottoman and Turkish traditions were the same."

As Turkish society living in this country you are lucky because you live in a democratic country, ordinary people as well as leading members of religions are open to dialog. You must work harder than ever. You are lucky because you have this institution, the Interfaith Dialog Center. I learnt that IDC had organized an ♦Iftar Dinner♦, which was appreciated much by other religion members. You must frequently organize such dialog events throughout the year.

While some of our guests chatted after the speech and had fruites, some others continued conversation with Mr. Gulerce in Special Guest Room.