Joint communique of the 6th Russian-Iranian Commission for Islam-Orthodoxy Dialogue

The Joint Commission for Orthodoxy-Islam Dialogue held its 6th meeting on October 6-7, 2010, in Teheran, the Islamic Republic of Iran. It discussed 'The Role of Religion in the Life of the Individual and Society'. The meeting was chaired by Bishop Feofilakt of Smolensk and Vyazma and Dr. Mahdi Mostafi, President of the Islamic Culture and Relations Organization, Iran. Dr. Mostafi opened the meeting with words of welcome. Bishop Feofilakt brought a message of greeting from His Holiness Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Russia.

Papers were presented on the influence of religion on the spiritual health of society, the role of religion in consolidating the institution of family and family values, the relationships of religious tradition and the doctrine of human rights and freedom and the influence of religious tradition on the morality of the individual. The meeting also discussed a historical similarity between the ways in which the Russian and Iranian civilizations developed.

In their discussion, participants proceeded from the conviction that religious tradition is of essential importance for the life of the modern society. The crisis of the modern society is linked to a great extent with the denial of religious tradition. During the dialogue, participants repeatedly pointed to the danger of aggressive secularism which views religion as a source of violence and conflict and insists on its exclusion from public life.

Secularism often uses the institution of human rights and freedoms for struggle with religion. Participants spoke unanimously against aggressive secularization and its imposition on the world.

Human rights and freedom cannot be set against religious tradition.

The meeting stressed the danger of subjecting religious views to legal norms which have been developed exclusively on the basis of non-religious ideas. On the contrary, the religious worldview should make its own contribution to the development of norms of national and international law so that they may acquire a really universal nature. It was deemed as necessary to unite the efforts of the Russian Orthodox Church and the Muslim community in Iran in developing a notion of 'traditional values' and to seek its recognition in international law and observance in the work of international organizations. Traditional values include the important role of religion in private and public life, the human desire of moral perfection, the preservation of family life as union of man and woman, respect for the elderly, diligence, aid to the poor and the protection of the weak.

The participants pointed to the special role that religion plays in forming and developing the institution of family and family values. They also expressed concern for today's tendency to blur the moral foundation of family life and to disseminate and propagate immorality and expressed readiness to hold further joint conferences aimed to consolidate traditional moral values in family and society.

The sides expressed concern over the fact that the major mass media are subjected today to the influence of bearers of secular worldview which prevails in educational institutions and educational standards. The sides condemned the cases of outrage against religious symbols and shrines.

The participants also noted the atmosphere of hospitality and openness in which the discussion was held. They also expressed satisfaction with the development of dialogue between the Russian Orthodox Church and the Muslim community in the Islamic Republic of Iran, which began fifteen years ago.

It was considered useful to continue the bilateral dialogue as contributing to the broadening of cultural and interreligious relations and creating the basis for an atmosphere of fruitful cooperation.

It is planned to hold the 7th meeting of the Orthodoxy-Islam Dialogue in 2012 in Moscow.

Source: https://mospat.ru/en/news/56581/