

CELEBRATING EID AL ADHA AT THE HOUSE OF LORDS



DIALOGUE OF FRIENDSHIP

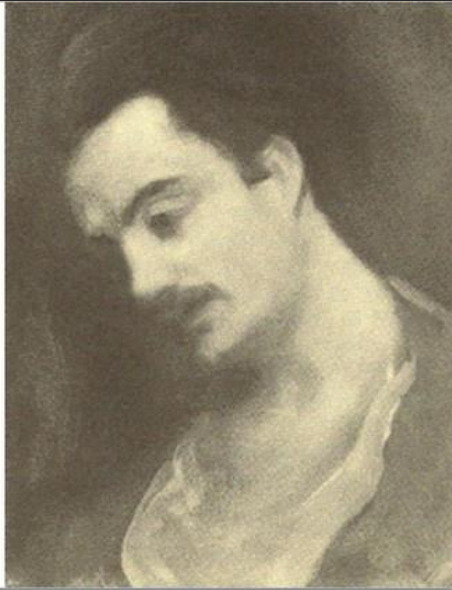


6TH SEPTEMBER, 2017
AT THE HOUSE OF LORDS

SPONSORED BY BARONESS FALKNER OF MARGRAVINE

“Life without liberty is like a body without spirit. Liberty without thought is like a disturbed spirit.”

- Kahlil Gibran,
“The Vision”



المملكة المغربية
ROYAUME DU MAROC

CCME

مجلس الجالية المغربية بالخارج
CONSEIL DE LA COMMUNAUTÉ MAROCAINE À L'ÉTRANGER
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ABOUT THE CCME:

CCME (French Acronym for Conseil de la communauté Marocaine à l'étranger) or Council for Moroccans abroad) was established by Royal Dahir in December 2007 for an initial four-year term. The CCME is responsible for monitoring and assessing public policies of the Kingdom of Morocco and how these affect its community abroad. 10% of the Moroccan population is thought to be living abroad. The CCME works to ensure the rights of the Moroccan diaspora are protected and actively encourages their participation in the political, economic, cultural and social development of the country, as well as advocating for co-existence and civic participation in their respective country of residence. The CCME is made up of five distinct working groups to monitor and engage in issues of migration, and generally contributing to the nurturing of better relations between Morocco, and the rest of the world.

The CCME is made up of 37 members, all appointed by Royal decree, representing the Moroccan diaspora across the world.

For the Moroccan Diaspora living in the UK, Souad Talsi MBE is the appointed member. She is also the founder of the only Moroccan woman organisation in the UK, Al-Hasaniya Moroccan women Centre.

For more information on this institution and its work, members and publications, please visit: www.ccme.org.ma

ABOUT AL-HASANIYA MOROCCAN WOMEN'S PROJECT:

Established in 1985, Al-Hasaniya Moroccan women centre seeks to serve the health, welfare, education and training needs of Moroccan and Arabic speaking women and their families. Based in North Kensington, this award winning organisation has been at the very heart of the Moroccan community, supporting the vulnerable and the marginalised. Its ethos is to eradicate discrimination and marginalisation due to both, language and cultural barriers. The centre has since its inception, become a champion for the muffled voices within the Moroccan community. It has published books, produced documentaries, won many awards including the Guardian Charity award. We have participated and continue to do so, on global platforms such as the UN as well as other organisations, to support and raise the profile of Moroccan migrant women across the world. In July 2017, the organisation was granted a special consultative status within the UN NGO.

“I am pleased to inform you that the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) at its Coordination and management meeting of 25 July 2017 adopted the recommendation of the Committee on Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) to grant special consultative status to your organization, Al-Hasaniya Moroccan Women's Project. On behalf of all staff of the Non-Governmental Organizations Branch/OESC/DESA, please accept our heartfelt congratulations” Marc-André Dorel Acting Chief, NGO Branch Office for ECOSOC Support and Coordination Department of Economic and Social Affairs United Nations

For more information on our work and how you can help and support us to continue, please visit

www.al-hasaniya.org.uk



A word for the chair of the Charities commission, Sir Wiliam Shawcross:

“I am delighted to be able to support the Al-Hasaniya Moroccan women centre and the valuable work it does in supporting the health, welfare, education and training needs of migrant Moroccan and Arabic speaking women and their families across the world.”



Baroness Falkner
of Margravine

May the magic of Eid bring happiness in your life and fill your heart with love and friendship.

I grew up in a country which was founded on the basis that different religious groups could not live together – hence the breakup of India, and the formation of Pakistan. By my teenage years we had fought two interstate wars, and the second one in 1971, was the direct result of a ruling minority (the West of the country) not recognising the outcome of a democratic election - hence the breakup of Pakistan itself.

I moved to the Middle East, where I lived in Lebanon, only to leave eventually due to a civil war. That legacy of conflict lives on and in the MENA region today we see the ravages of sectarianism, which is manipulated by power politics. I arrived in the UK with the iconic single suitcase 40 years ago. However, the power of an amazing education, the equality that democratic societies offer; and a thirst to integrate, to belong, is evidenced in the fact that I am able to welcome such a distinguished audience to the House of Lords.

In that progress through life I live, and have been a parliamentary and council candidate, in Kensington and Chelsea. Like everybody, I have been saddened, shocked and appalled by the Grenfell Tower disaster, and have pressed Ministers for rapid analysis of and action upon causes to safeguard and reassure all those who live in similar buildings.

Islam is not a monolithic religion, and a few cannot speak for or dictate to or label the many. I prefer to think of myself as a “secular Muslim”, influenced by my heritage, the values of my parents and my reading of the Holy Qu’ran, but defining myself in my own way, just as many millions of “secular Christians” living in the United Kingdom do too.

So a pious Muslim woman need not be a submissive wife and mother, as can be seen in the life of Aisha, the third of the Prophet’s eleven wives (Peace be upon him).

An Islamic scholar, an inspiration to champions of women’s rights, a military commander riding on camelback, and a fatwa-issuing jurist, Aisha’s intellectual standing and religious authority were astonishing, by the standards of both our own time and hers. Her example should be constantly before us.

Thank you CCME for enabling us meet together at the heart of Britain’s democracy to express in the language of friendship our common commitment to a happy, secure and prosperous future for all those men and women who were born here or who have moved here to help build and share a better life for all of us.



DR ABDELLAH BOUSSOUF

I'm delighted to see CCME partnering with Al-Hasaniya Moroccan Women Centre at the House of Lords in this year's special Eid Al Adha celebrations, with a message of hope and positive change.

In these troubled times we live in, cultural heritage and good will to spread peace and co-existence have never been so vital and nowhere more so needed than in the continent of Europe as we know it today.

The recent barbaric attacks and loss of innocent lives demand a rethink of the way we deal with our young people in any continent, country, city, community or indeed family. Appropriate educational guidance in all spheres of public and private establishments is needed and is paramount to maintaining a decent social fabric.

Citizenship is about increasing skills, promoting debate, enabling action and empowering citizens to take full ownership of their lives. Citizenship is about rights and responsibilities."

Rights and responsibilities are indeed the key active ingredients in any true democratic citizenship. Participation in dialogue, sharing information

and taking responsibility for one's actions, are important components in any such exercise.

We hope today's event will contribute to that key ingredient, bringing hope and lasting peace.

Wishing all Muslims a peaceful Eid.



Souad Talsi MBE

There was a time when the world was truly vast and people were very much apart; a time when everyone relied on scarce forms of obtaining news; a time when one wrote a letter to a loved one, and waited days if not weeks to have news back.

Today's technology has shrunk the world into a minute entity and with the abundance of news providers, social media and fast and instant messaging, we have come to learn about events as they occur, good, bad or ugly.

The news of the devastating tragedy on the 14th June spread across the world as fast as the fire itself. The results of the Grenfell Tragedy have left us all grief stricken and bewildered. Our organization was one of the first ones to be at the scene. We witnessed at first hand the disturbing scenes as the fire raged. Although overwhelmed by it all, the experience has made us all realise what truly brings us together and not what divide us. The Royal borough of Kensington and Chelsea has not only been my home since the age of 12 but also the home to over 10000 Moroccans.

As the daughter of a migrant worker in the UK, I remember being petrified of the BIG change that my late father had imposed on us. Arrived here in 1968, he later on insisted that we follow. My education in Morocco was founded on diversity, tolerance and how to accept my fellow human beings regardless of all else. We had Jewish neighbours, black neighbours, white neighbours and indeed neighbours who spoke other than Arabic, Berber YET all were Moroccans. That taught me what diversity is all about from a very young age.

Within weeks of arrival I found myself at school pleasantly welcomed and warmly accepted. I began to see my foundations being nurtured by the open transparency and democracy of this great nation. I found a voice that I didn't think I had in me and I soon used it. It was April 1975, in a lesson of social Studies, I argued with a teacher over the subject of the day. It was a lesson about "Africa" and I had refused to accept it, as simply Africa. I pointed out that Africa was a continent and I, as an African didn't recognise the images I was seeing. The short of it was, due to my refusal, I was sent home by the head teacher and asked to reconsider my "disobedient behaviour".

The BBC got to learn about the expulsion through my French teacher and with parental consent I agreed to go on camera and speak about my experience, encouraging others from a diverse ethnic mix across London to do the same. The results were spectacular. We provoked a debate that brought about a change in attitude and a policy in place on how to improve teacher training and recognise the diversity within our schools in this great city of London. That was my first taste of democracy, empowerment and true civic engagement.

I remain grateful therefore to this wonderful democracy that has allowed me to grow, learn and contribute to humanity. And so it is vital that we do not lose sight of optimism and perseverance, and ensure opportunities to educate, engage and empower are made available to ALL our young people of today. They are the generation of tomorrow and the guardians of our democracy.

The night of the Grenfell tragedy proved just that, as many of our young people risked their lives to support and ensure victims were taken to safety. Their efforts unfortunately were lost amidst the media's frenzy and obsession on who was documented or otherwise! Losing sight of the fact that those they often demonise saved lives that night. The unyielding support so positively delivered by our young people has been overwhelming and I'm deeply grateful to each and every one of them.

A balance of fairness is needed, a recognition of good deeds is vital and a call for social justice cannot be ignored.

A very blessed Eid Al Adha to you all.



Lady Borwick

As the former Member of Parliament for Kensington I'm deeply grateful for the opportunity to be part of this great event.

Our village that is the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea, has changed tremendously since the '70s, and it has changed for the better, precisely because of tolerance and peaceful coexistence. Whether as immigrants, refugees, asylum seekers or business people, a significant number of the UK Arab community in all its superb ethnic and cultural mix, has chosen this borough as its permanent home.

The Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea is a home that boasts superb Arab presence; from our local Moroccan Garden in the North of the borough to the Borough's own Nour Annual Art festival, which attracts an international audience.

Golborne Road is often referred to as the London Marrakesh, with its colourful Moroccan shops, cafes and Moroccan merchandise. It is worth taking a stroll on a Saturday to see, feel and smell the strong Moroccan presence and may be, even practice Moroccan Arabic dialect and pick up few items after a good haggle!! Always haggle; it is the pleasure of doing business in Golborne Road, W10)

Arabic is now the second most spoken language in this wonderful borough of ours. It is only through tolerance, mutual respect and indeed coexistence that two so different cultures have been able to be part of our integral lives here and in perfect harmony.

The good examples are too many to mention and I hope that the efforts, hard work and indeed positive energy ploughed in by all concerned, will continue to bear the fruit of positive citizenship and tolerance. Nowhere has this been spectacularly demonstrated as in the recent tragic events of Grenfell. The community has been exemplary in conducting its grief and loss with dignity, humility and indeed peacefully.

We are all very grateful for their support, patience and deliverance.

On behalf of the Royal borough of Kensington and Chelsea, a very Happy Eid to all our Muslim residents.

With special thanks to:

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