

## Message

By Sir Zafrulla Khan\*

I feel greatly honored that you should have directed me to give a brief message this afternoon for the opening of our discussion and dialogue here. My message is a very brief one; it is one of reverence and reflection. Reverence for all that each of us reveres and considers sacred. It is obvious that we, in each of the disciplines from which we have come here, do not necessarily accept all that is held sacred and is revered by everyone else. If that were so, we would all belong to the same discipline. But it is essential that we should have not only what used to be described as tolerance for each others' beliefs but reverence for them, and that for a very simple reason.

It is taken for granted that, for instance, if I have a friend, I revere his father without even knowing him. I revere him because he is revered by my friend whose father he is. And in matters of faith and doctrine and in the sphere of religion, we must accept that what is sacred to us will be respected and revered by a friend, and what is sacred to him must be respected and revered by me. I must adopt the attitude that that which is worth reverence to me in my own discipline is worth reverence to my friend in his discipline, that he is as much devoted to his own ideals and to his own faith as I am devoted to mine and to my faith and that, therefore, I must respect and revere them.

---

\* Sir Zafrulla Khan, president of the International Court of Justice at the Hague, is a leading Moslem spokesman, and former president of the sixteenth session of the United Nations General Assembly.

This does not mean, as I have said earlier, that I accept them to the degree to which he accepts them, and that is where the second part of my message comes in: that we must put into effect in our dialogues and indeed all the time the faculty of reflection. We must have, while completely sincere in our belief, a mind that is prepared to reflect upon any aspect of that which a brother regards as the truth. That is the only way of getting closer to each other. That is the only way of being utterly sincere in what we profess, and not when we approach whatever may be said by anybody else with a closed mind. The faculty of reflection among all of the other faculties is a divine gift, and it must be exercised in every sphere of our lives, equally in the sphere of religion.

So that is the message that I will leave with you that in our discussions today we should have an attitude of reverence towards each other and towards that which each of us hold sacred and worth revering and that we must reflect upon whatever every one of us has to contribute to the discussions.

Thank you very much.