

TURKEY AND AZERBAIJAN MUST UNITE AS TWO STATES, ONE NATION

■ The foundation of the Turkish-Islamic Union is being anticipated with great enthusiasm and excitement by the whole Islamic and Turkic world. The first and most important step towards that union is the unification of Turkey and Azerbaijan as two states but a single nation. That union must be based on the maintenance of the unitary structure of both states. There must be an end to passport and visa formalities and trade must be made easier. A more powerful military alliance must be established between Turkey and Azerbaijan with the formation of a Turkish-Azeri military pact. This unification, the first phase of the Turkish-Islamic Union, must be realized as a matter of urgency, with no loss of time and no further delay.

■ We must ensure that tragedies such as the recent Hocali Massacre are never repeated. And the Lachin Corridor, invaded and closed in 1992, must be opened up for peace and security to return to these lands. The Nagorno-Karabakh region must be freed from occupation. All kinds of diplomatic initiative must be taken to have the Lachin Corridor opened.

■ Raising tension and constantly inciting feelings of enmity is in no-one's interest. Our age is one of friendship, love, understanding and co-operation, not of anger and hatred. The days of anger and vengeance are over. Armenia must adopt a brotherly and friendly stance, and emphasize love and peace instead of hostility. It must abandon the concept of "hostility to the Turks." These feelings of enmity are incompatible with contemporary social norms. Living in this manner has to date been of no economic or cultural advantage to Armenia. If the politics of enmity persist, Armenia's current economic circumstances will worsen still further, and poverty and want will rise. The way to a bright and prosperous Armenia lies in brotherhood and love.

■ Armenians are also a people of the Book. Muslims' attitudes towards the People of the Book are made crystal clear in the Qur'an. Our Prophet (saas) always treated the Peoples of the Book with tolerance and compassion. Throughout the Seljuk and Ottoman empires, the Armenians enjoyed a well-being and security they never found anywhere else. The Ottomans referred to the Armenians as the Millet-i Sidika (The Trustworthy Nation).

However, the Armenians must free themselves from feelings of anger and hatred rooted in the past. It is essential they adopt a reconciliatory attitude. That is what their faith also demands of them. Many passages in the Bible emphasize the special importance of loving one's neighbor and even say that believers must do all they can for the good of their neighbors. The Armenians must adopt love and compassion as the basis of their policies towards their neighbors, as they are told in the Bible.

... *Jesus replied, "Do not murder, do not commit adultery, do not steal, do not give false testimony, honor your father and mother, and love your neighbor as yourself." (Matthew 19:18-19)*

Love does no harm to its neighbor. Therefore love is the fulfillment of the law. (Romans 13:10)

Each of us should please his neighbor for his good, to build him up. (Romans 15:2)

■ If Armenia behaves in a friendly and brotherly manner, and if it sets aside everything left over from the past, then commercial and cultural relations with Armenia can be established. Armenia will obviously benefit from a climate of friendship resulting from Azerbaijan and Turkey uniting together. Economic, political and commercial union will benefit all parties, and a region enjoying great well-being will emerge under those conditions. Armenians will enjoy greater freedom and security in commerce, and in their religion, language and their life styles. The constant tension in the area will thus be replaced by peace. That peace will obviously be to the advantage of all involved.



Lachin Corridor



■ What needs to be done today is to forget the past and look to the future. Instead of talking about what happened in the past the whole time, we should talk about what can be done in the future, how economic conditions in the region can be improved, what cultural steps can be taken, how stability can be established and how all disputes can be eliminated. That is what we must concentrate on. There is no point in bringing up the past and raising tensions again. Violence, tension and fanaticism are of no benefit to any society. The most rational and logical way of achieving a solution is to avoid violence of all kinds, to choose moderation over extremism, to behave in a moderate, tolerant and patient manner, and to resolve any problems that may arise through negotiation.

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FOUNDATION ON THE PRESERVATION OF NATIONAL VALUES