

FETHULLAH GÜLEN AWARDED HONORARY DOCTORATE BY LEEDS METROPOLITAN UNIVERSITY

Deputy Chairman, Vice Chancellor, Graduands, Parents, Ladies and Gentleman;

I would like begin by conveying Fethullah Gulen's heartfelt gratitude to the University for the conferment of this honorary doctorate which he accepts on behalf of all those who work tirelessly for education and dialogue.

Fethullah Gulen is sorry for not being able to be here with us this afternoon due to poor health.

Can I say how privileged I am to be sharing the joy of so many graduates and their loved ones on this special day and extend Fethullah Gulen's congratulations to all those graduating today.

Fethullah Gülen considers this award as recognition of the work and efforts of what is known among academic circles as the Gülen Movement or what Gülen himself prefers to call, a Movement of Volunteers.

By honouring Fetullah Gulen, the university honours all of us who are inspired by his teachings and example. This award therefore connects the university to millions of people all over the world who are, I can assure you, thrilled by this recognition.

The aim of Gülen's life-long work and that of the Movement he inspires is to contribute towards the development of a more humane society which is committed to the well-being of others.

A central theme of Gülen's teaching is that we are human first; Muslim, Christian, Jew, Hindu, agnostic or atheist next; that this single truth necessitates mutual understanding, respect, love and cooperation.

What is important to note is that Gülen makes this claim because of Islam, not in spite of Islam. He often quotes the likes of the 13th century mystical poet Yunus Emre who teaches, 'we love the created because of the Creator', or the famous Sufi Master Mevlana Rumi who says 'come come whoever you are wonderer worshipper lover of leaving, ours is not a caravan of despair, come even if you have broken your vow a thousand times, come yet again come'.

He explains that we can only achieve a more humane, loving and peaceful society if we develop a sense of responsibility and consciousness towards each other and all existence. With that sense of responsibility, he teaches that we should invest in dialogue and education. In dialogue, because it is natural and humane to engage with one another. In dialogue, because only through dialogue can we come to know, understand and love each other. In education, because education is valuable in itself regardless of its instrumental advantages. In education, because it enables and empowers

UNEDITED TRANSCRIPT

EVENT TYPE

NOTICE

EVENT TITLE

FETHULLAH GÜLEN
AWARDED HONORARY
DOCTORATE BY LEEDS
METROPOLITAN
UNIVERSITY

SPEAKER(S)

OZCAN KELES,
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, DIALOGUE
SOCIETY

DATE & VENUE

15 JULY 2010
LEEDS METROPOLITAN
UNIVERSITY, LEEDS

individuals to better their condition, achieve prosperity and have the means and confidence to engage with the wider world.

From pulpit to lectern, articles to books, Gülen has tirelessly encouraged social responsibility and constructive activism. Through these teachings, Gülen has inspired a transnational Movement now active across the world. The Movement is civil, independent, non-partisan and held together through shared ideals and principles.

What is remarkable about the Movement is that it now attracts support and volunteers from among those of different backgrounds, cultures, religions or no religion, demonstrating that it is committed to shared human values and goals.

This is not a reactive or newly found emphasis on our common humanity over our respective differences. Rather it is an attitude that Fethullah Gülen has held from the start. It is captured in his own words as he says:

“Be so tolerant that your heart becomes wide like the ocean. Become inspired with faith and love of human beings. Let there be no troubled souls to whom you do not offer a hand and about whom you remain unconcerned.”

On behalf of Fethullah Gülen and myself, I'd like to wish all graduates every success in their future career or studies and thank the University once more for this award. Thank You.