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PRESS RELEASE

The Attijariwafa Bank Foundation Analyzes Gratitude, Self-Giving and Forgiveness in Muslim Mystical Thought

Casablanca, April 26, 2021 - As part of its cycle of digital conferences «Exchange to better Understand», the Attijariwafa bank Foundation organized, on Thursday April 22, 2021 in live streaming on its YouTube channel, a high-profile philosophical meeting, in the presence of Mr. Ali Benmakhlouf, Professor of Universities, University of Paris-Est Créteil. In this holy month of Ramadan, the Foundation has chosen to dedicate this meeting to the theme: «Gratitude, Forgiveness and Self-Giving: A Look at some Teachings of Muslim Mystical Thought».

Moderated by Ms. Asmae Souitat, Journalist, the discussion focused on the definition of these three virtues, their interactions and their benefits, drawing from the wisdom of Muslim mystical philosophers.

In the current context of pandemic coupled with a socio-economic crisis, **gratitude** (الشكر) is of great importance because it is at the heart of wisdom and spirituality. «It lifts the veil of ingratitude to welcome divine grace». But to achieve it, it is important to work on one's own resistance, adopting a lifestyle based on spiritual exercises. «For mystical scholars, this value can be cultivated continuously through the «الذكر», because the recurrence of the call to God relieves the cosmos of its vicissitudes and relieves man of their anxieties. «In parallel, the lifelong learning of gratitude is possible through the practice of spiritual exercises such as Awakening (اليقظة), Examination of Consciousness (المحاسبة), and Resipiscence (الإتابة).



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Finally, gratitude implies keeping hope and determination, even in the situation of imbalance that the current crisis creates.

Where is the line between gratitude and fatalism? Muslim mystics speak of «التوكل» that is, the acceptance of fate, without being drawn into it. This refers to one of the principles of stoicism: acceptance is not resignation, because acceptance is accompanied by determination.»

As for **self-giving**, it must be seen from a cosmic point of view. For Abu Al Abbas Sebti, giving affects and nourishes existence and has a virtuous effect. But is this practice easy in times of crisis and adversity? «Yes, because self-giving is always possible if we place ourselves in a bundle of lives, calling upon solidarity. Later, Descartes would reinforce this conviction by saying: What costs us little, benefits the other much». Certainly, by giving, we are in a position to receive, but there is no obligation to return. «Do not ask, give!»

Finally, **forgiveness** is one of the most important virtues in Islam. For proof, all the Suras of the Koran invoke God as merciful, except for Sura 9 (Sura At Tawba). For Muslim mystics, if God is merciful, then Man, who possesses all the divine attributes, can forgive. «Forgiveness humanizes because it is in dynamic interaction with love (المحبة). The more I forgive, the more I welcome love». On the other hand, asking for forgiveness can be seen as self-serving. According to Rabia Al Adaouya, if we ask for forgiveness, we must be forgiven for our request. Ultimately, forgiveness is prayer.

Thanks to this new conference-debate, the guest answered with rigor and interest the many questions raised by Internet users. Thus, the Attijariwafa Bank Foundation demonstrates, once again, its willingness to promote debate and reflection on cultural and philosophical themes by calling on personalities renowned for their erudition and their sense of sharing.

Replay link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=N93A2qJsdX0>



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Mr. Ali Benmakhlouf Express Bio

Ali Benmakhlouf is a professor of philosophy at the University of Paris-Est Val de Marne, and a senior member of the Institut Universitaire de France. His research focuses on logic, history and philosophy of logic.

He has devoted numerous works to two logicians, G. Frege and Bertrand Russell, before turning to the history of medieval Arabic logic. He has translated the logical works of Al Farabi and Averroes and devoted monographic studies to them. He is also the author of «Why read Arab Philosophers» (Albin Michel) and «Bioethics and Human Rights» (Crossroads).

He is an expert for UNESCO in charge of the philosophical dialogue between the Arab and Asian worlds (2004-2011). He participates in numerous training sessions in Asian countries (South Korea, Thailand, Japan) and in Arab countries (Morocco, Tunisia, Egypt).

Currently, he is involved in debates on bioethics, after having been a member of the National Consultative Ethics Committee and the Ethics and Deontology Committee of the Institute of Research for Development.

Dr. Benmakhlouf is a member of the French Society of Philosophy, the International Institute of Philosophy, the Society of History of Pharmacy and a permanent member of the National Academy of Pharmacy.

Some great mystics quoted during the conference

Rabia Al Adaouya (713- 801)

Al Hakim Al Tirmidhi (820-910)

Abu Al Abbas As-Sabti (1129-1204)

Press contact - Attijariwafa bank

Ms. Ouafaâ Ghaouat

Press Relations Officer - Institutional Communication

Phone : +212 522 54 53 57

Mobile : +212 647 47 32 90

Email : O.Ghaouat@attijariwafa.com