



**Speech of His Highness Sheikh Nasser Al-Mohammad
Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah at the lunch banquet
held in honor of His Beatitude Patriarch John X Yazigi
of Antioch and All the East for Greek Orthodox
Wednesday, on the 14th of January 2015**

In the name of Allah the most merciful, the most graceful,

His Beatitude Patriarch John X Yazigi of Antioch and All the East
for Greek Orthodox,

His Excellency Mr. Jassim Mohammed Abdul Mohsen Al-Kharafi,
President of the National Assembly from 1999 to 2012,

Their Excellencies the Ambassadors,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

I would like to welcome our esteemed guest, His Beatitude
Patriarch John the tenth Yazigi of Antioch and All the East, on the
occasion of his visit to the State of Kuwait.

I would like to greet you with the greeting of Islam, May the Peace,
Mercy and Blessing of Allah be upon you.

Allah Almighty says in the Holy Quran, {They are not [all] the
same; among the People of the Scripture is a community standing
[in obedience], reciting the verses of Allah during periods of the
night and prostrating [in prayer]. They believe in Allah and the Last
Day, and they enjoin what is right and forbid what is wrong and
hasten to good deeds. And those are among the righteous. And
whatever good they do- never will it be removed from them. And
Allah is Knowing of the righteous.}

Allah Almighty says in His Holy Book, {And you will find the nearest
of them in affection to the believers those who say, "We are
Christians." That is because among them are priests and monks
and because they are not arrogant.}

I welcome you, Your Beatitude the Patriarch, as a guest of the
State of Kuwait, and I am happy to receive you in this Diwan,
which was honored over the past years, by the visits of clerics,



intellectuals, scientists and politicians. By welcoming you, I find myself diving in the deep history of the Orient, when Antioch was the third metropolis in the Romanian empire, the capital of thought and culture in Asia, and the destination of the righteous. Apostle Paul visited it and stayed there preaching and teaching the religion; Apostle Peter founded there the Holy See in 37 AD; Antioch was the first to call the followers of Christ Christians; it was called by the Byzantines the Great City of God, and whenever the Arabs liked something, they would attribute it to Antioch. Although the current headquarters of the Patriarchate is in Damascus, the roots of Antioch are the witness and proof of its leadership and precedence. In tribute to this majestic history and to your prestigious status, I warmly welcome you.

Your Beatitude,

Nowadays, people like you are the most needed. It's a time when humanity is elevated by knowledge, but at the same time, it's declined by the brutal aggression and barbaric fighting. It's a time that needs rational people who favor the human being over racism, and wise people who favor life over destruction and death, open the vast horizons of dialogue and demolish the walls of isolation, narrow-mindedness and fatal fanaticism. In our world, we need moderate scholars because violence, killing and cruelty surround us from all sides, wrapped with wrong religious interpretations. Under the religious appearance we find criminals, like the Latin proverb says "beneath the lamb's skin lurks a wolf's mind".

News of murder, displacement and destruction is carried to us every day, justified by perverted motivations that are far away from religion, ignoring what Allah Almighty says in his Holy Book: {Repel [evil] by that [deed] which is better; and thereupon the one whom between you and him is enmity [will become] as though he was a devoted friend.} And {Invite to the way of your Lord with wisdom and good instruction, and argue with them in a way that is best.} They also ignore the words of the Bible, {Repay no one evil for evil} or its peaceful call, {If possible, as much as lieth in you, live in peace with all people}, or its instructions, {Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good}.



Your beatitude

The spirit of tolerance that we ask for is not only for the afterlife, but also for this worldly life. It's a must for the social peace in the countries. It's a must for the French Muslim who lives among a Catholic majority, for the German Muslim who lives among the Protestant majority, for the English Muslim who lives among an Anglican majority, and for the Russian Muslim who lives among an Orthodox majority, but it is more necessary for the Arab Christian who lives in his homeland among a Muslim majority. His country is the same homeland of Moses, Jesus and Mohammed, peace and blessings be upon all of them. It's the spirit of tolerance that made the house of Mohammed, peace and blessings be upon him, a home for the three monotheistic religions, the home of Safiyah bint Nakhoum, Maria bint Sham'ûn, and Aisha bint Abu Bakr; it is that spirit that made them mothers of the believers without any distinction, and it's the same spirit that compels us not argue with the people of monotheistic religions but in a way that is best. Allah Almighty says in His Holy Book, {And do not argue with the people of the Scripture except in a way that is best.} It's that spirit that describes the holy books of the monotheistic religions as the books of guidance and light. Allah Almighty says in the Holy Qur'an: {And We sent, following their footsteps, Jesus, the son of Mary, confirming that which came before him in the Torah, and We gave him the Gospel, in which was guidance and light and confirming that which preceded it of the Torah as guidance and instruction for the righteous.} It's the same spirit that was revealed when two of the prophet's (pbuh) companions wanted to pray in the house of a Christian woman. One of them asked her: "Is there a pure spot in your house where we can pray? She answered: "Purify your heart and pray wherever you want". So one companion told the other: "Take it from a non-faqih (non-expert).

Finally, it's the same spirit that was revealed in the sermon your Beatitude pronounced on the day of your enthronement, when you said: "We the Antiochenes represent a Levantine church rooted deeply in our region and in the Arabic Orient. We are, with our Muslim brothers, the sons of this land, where the Lord wanted us to be the witnesses of His holy name, and where we should stay by promoting peaceful coexistence and rejecting rancor, fear and superiority. Dear Muslims, you and we are not only partners in this land and in destiny, we have built together the civilization of this



country, and we share the culture and the history, and together we must keep this precious legacy, as we are also partners in worshiping God the One and Single, the God, the Light of the heavens and the earth.”

In conclusion, I would like to express my sincere congratulations on the occasion of the enthronement of Metropolitan Ghattas Hazim to the Greek Orthodox Diocese of Baghdad and Kuwait and Dependencies.

I would also like to reiterate, Your Beatitude, our warm welcome to you and to your majestic church and its followers all over the world. Peace and blessings of Allah be upon you...