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One Year Later: Honoring the Legacy of Fethullah Gülen

Today marks the first anniversary of the passing of Fethullah Gülen, a globally recognized Muslim scholar, educator, and advocate for interfaith dialogue whose influence continues to inspire millions around the world.

The Alliance for Shared Values (AfSV) is committed to preserving Mr. Gülen's legacy as well as advancing the work of Hizmet, the civil society movement he inspired to promote peace and social harmony. AfSV invites the study of Mr. Gülen's life and work and engagement with his ideas.

A Life Dedicated to Education and Understanding

Fethullah Gülen dedicated more than six decades to promoting education, interfaith cooperation, and community service. Born in Turkey, he emerged as one of the world's most influential Muslim intellectuals, advocating for democracy, science, and non-violent approaches to social change. As part of his commitment to dialogue, he had a personal audience with Pope John Paul II in 1998, and he was recognized as an interfaith advocate by faith leaders worldwide.

Mr. Gülen was among the first Muslim leaders to publicly condemn the September 11 attacks and consistently spoke out against extremism, including issuing public condemnations of ISIS in major newspapers. His efforts earned him numerous honors, including the EastWest Institute's 2011 Peace Award, South Korea's 2013 Manhae Peace Prize, and the 2015 Gandhi King Ikeda Peace Award from Morehouse College. TIME Magazine named him among the 100 most influential people in 2013, and he received multiple Nobel Peace Prize nominations.

Mr. Gülen spent his final years in Pennsylvania's Pocono Mountains, having become a target of Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan's authoritarian regime.

An Enduring Intellectual and Practical Legacy

Mr. Gülen's legacy lives on through his extensive writings on faith, education, and social responsibility, as well as through the countless global institutions inspired by his philosophy. His teachings emphasized:

- **Education as the foundation of human development:** He inspired the establishment of more than a thousand schools, universities, and educational initiatives across six continents, providing quality education to students regardless of their background.

- **Interfaith and intercultural dialogue:** He rejuvenated the spirit of interfaith cooperation in Turkey and globally, building bridges between Muslims, Christians, Jews, and people of all faiths.
- **Service to humanity as service to God:** His concept of *hizmet* (service) emphasized compassionate action, community engagement, and humanitarian relief as expressions of faith.
- **Non-violence and democratic values:** He consistently advocated for peaceful approaches to social change, respect for human rights, and democratic governance.

His intellectual contributions encompassed theology, spirituality, philosophy, and social ethics, offering a vision of Islam compatible with modernity, pluralism, science, and democratic values.

The Hizmet Movement: Thriving and Growing

One year after Mr. Gülen's passing, Hizmet continues to flourish in democracies around the world. As he predicted, the movement's values and mission have proven greater than any individual. "Our values are not dependent upon any person," he once said.

True to his emphasis on consultation and collective decision-making, spiritual guidance for Hizmet is now carried forward by a group of his close friends and colleagues who have provided wisdom and inspiration for decades. There is no single "replacement" for Mr. Gülen, as he held no official position within the movement. Rather, participants continue to look to his words, writings, and example for guidance.

The movement remains committed to its core mission: advancing education, fostering dialogue, promoting mutual understanding and respect, and providing humanitarian relief to those in need. Educational institutions, dialogue centers, and service projects inspired by his vision continue to operate across the globe, touching the lives of millions. In 2021, Hizmet organizations worldwide have come together to write and publish the [12 core values of the Hizmet movement](#). Mr. Gülen celebrated this work, saying: "I have the belief and hope that the activities of Hizmet volunteers, devoted to the core values, on the trajectory of helping others live, with the high goal of God's pleasure, will contribute significantly to the formation of a more livable world of peace and tranquility."

Despite ongoing persecution of Hizmet participants in Turkey, the movement's principles and projects continue to thrive in democratic societies that protect freedom of thought, expression, and association.

Honoring His Legacy: A Call to Service

On this anniversary, the Hizmet community and all who were inspired by Mr. Gülen's vision are encouraged to honor his memory through action:

- **Support education initiatives** that provide quality learning opportunities to underserved communities.
- **Engage in interfaith and intercultural dialogue** that builds bridges of understanding.

- **Participate in community service projects** that address local and global humanitarian needs.
- **Promote democratic values** including human rights, freedom of expression, and the rule of law.
- **Study and share his teachings** on compassion, mutual respect, and peaceful coexistence.
- **Stand in solidarity** with those facing persecution for their commitment to these universal values.

As Mr. Gülen taught, the most meaningful tribute is not mourning what has been lost, but continuing the work of building a more compassionate and peaceful world.

Remembrance and Prayer

We invite people of all faiths and backgrounds to join us in remembering Fethullah Gülen's life and contributions. We pray for peace and mercy for his soul and rededicate ourselves to the values he championed throughout his extraordinary life.

His departure from this world does not diminish his impact; it challenges us to carry forward his vision with renewed commitment and purpose.

For more information about Fethullah Gülen, please visit <https://afsv.org/about-us/fethullah-gulen/>

For more information about the Hizmet movement, please visit <https://afsv.org/>

For more information about the Core Values of the Hizmet movement please [visit https://youtube.com/@AfSV](https://youtube.com/@AfSV)

For downloadable images of Fethullah Gulen, please visit <https://afsv.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/10/Fethullah-Gulen-Press-Kit-Pictures.zip>

About The Alliance for Shared Values

The Alliance for Shared Values (AFSV) is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit that serves as a voice for cultural organizations affiliated with Hizmet, a civil society movement inspired by prominent preacher and peace advocate Fethullah Gülen. The Alliance strives to promote peace and social harmony by helping reduce misinformation and false stereotypes about any or all ethnic, cultural and religious communities. To learn more about the Alliance, please visit www.afsv.org.

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