

# **An Overview of the Hizmet Movement: A Worldwide Social Movement Founded on the Theories of Fethullah Gülen**

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## **Abstract**

The Hizmet Movement is a transnational civic society movement, inspired by the teachings of Turkish Islamic scholar Fethullah Gülen. His teachings about Hizmet, which means altruistic service for the “common good,” have attracted a large number of supporters, first in Turkey, then in Central Asia, and increasingly around the whole world.

The movement is mainly active in education and interfaith and inter-cultural dialogue; however, there are also aid and rescue initiatives and investments in media, finance, and health. The movement in Turkish is called Hizmet or "Cemaat", and it is sometimes referred to in English as the Gülen movement.

This thesis covers Gülen's theory, the content of the movement, and the influence to the world society. This research also includes first-hand experience with the Hizmet Movement in Istanbul, Turkey, during September, 2012. In addition, the writer participated in the two-day *International Conference on the Hizmet Movement and the Thought and Teachings of Fethullah Gülen* in December, 2012, which was sponsored by the National Taiwan University College of Social Sciences and the Formosa Institute.

**Key words:** Fethullah Gülen, Hizmet Movement, Cemaat, International Conference on Hizmet, inter-cultural dialogue, interfaith dialogue, Fatih University, *Daily Zaman*, Kimse Yok Mu, Islam teaching, Turkey education, Sufi, Lao-tze, Confucius, Chuang-tze, Moh-tze, Han Fei-tze

## 海斯默社會運動研究

宣中文

海斯默社會運動現正在世界各地廣泛推廣，此一運動在倡導人與人，宗教與宗教，政黨與政黨，國與國，種族與種族之間的「對話」、「容忍」、「相互了解」、「友誼」及「和平」。

最早發起此一社會運動的是生於 1941 的土耳其思想家、哲學家、教育家、作家和詩人的法土拉·葛蘭。半世紀前他開始在土耳其安那托利亞各省的清真寺、學校、社團聚會甚至咖啡館發表演說暢談教育、科學、哲學及社會議題。強調智慧、信心、愛心、熱心、尊重、真誠、虔誠、靈敏度和服務人類的價值觀應被視為生活上的楷模。

他的觀念廣泛受到歐、美、亞、澳各洲知識份子的關注及認同，因此也在他們的本國推動此一運動。

此文根據作者 2012 年 9 月到土耳其親自瞭解運動的發源內涵及參加 2012 年 12 月在臺北舉行的海默斯運動國際會議的內容提出研究報告。

**關鍵字：**海默斯運動 法土拉葛蘭 無私服務 團體對話 包容 福爾摩沙學會 群體利益

## I. Introduction

In September, 2012, the writer went to Istanbul, Turkey to conduct research on the Hizmet Movement and visited many organizations, such as the English newspaper in Turkey Today's Zaman, "Kimse Yok Mu" (a charity and rescue organization), Fatih University, the Journalists and Writers Foundation, and the Hizmet affiliated television station. According to the people involved in Hizmet, the movement is arranged in flexible organizational network. It has founded schools, universities, an employers association, as well as charities, real estate trusts, student bodies, radio and television stations, and newspapers.<sup>1</sup>

They believe that the schools and businesses organize locally and link into networks on an informal, rather than legal, basis. During the discussions, everyone who was associated with the Hizmet Movement appeared to be sincere, caring, and service-oriented, in accordance with the highest principles of the movement.

Many internationally famous media have reported on this social movement. Forbes magazine wrote that the Gülen movement is not seeking to subvert modern secular states but rather encourages practicing Muslims to use to the fullest the opportunities those countries offer. The New York Times has described the movement is coming from a "moderate blend of Islam." Prospect magazine reported that Gülen and the Gülen movement "are at home with technology, markets and multinational business and especially with modern communications and public relations."<sup>2</sup>

Nilufer Gole, professor of sociology at the Ecole des Hautes Etudes in Paris, France, who is known for her studies on modernization and conservatism, has described the Gülen movement as World's most global movement.<sup>3</sup>

Even former US President Bill Clinton has praised Gülen and the Hizmet Movement for its contributions to society and the world.<sup>4</sup>

Some scholars and observers believe that in Turkey, the Gülen movement tries to keep its distance from Islamic political parties. The Economist described the Gülen movement as a Turkish-based movement that sounds more reasonable than most of its rivals, and which is vying to be recognized as the World's leading Muslim network. It stated that Gülen has won praise from non-Muslim quarters with his belief in science, inter-faith dialog, and multi-party democracy.

Fethullah Gülen, a Turkish philosopher and educator, founded the beginnings of the Hizmet Movement in late 1960s, when the Turkish military coup underlined some of the

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<sup>1</sup> "Gülen movement," [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/G%C3%BClen\\_movement](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/G%C3%BClen_movement)

<sup>2</sup> "Fethullah Gülen," [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fethullah\\_G%C3%BClen](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fethullah_G%C3%BClen)

<sup>3</sup> "Gülen movement," [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/G%C3%BClen\\_movement](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/G%C3%BClen_movement)

<sup>4</sup> Clinton, William Jefferson, "Bill Clinton on Fethullah Gülen's Contribution to the World," <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MPIPOL9-EQs> September 30, 2008.

strengths and weaknesses of Turkish secularism. Gülen's philosophy is based on the highest principles of Islam, emphasizing peaceful inter-cultural dialog, respect, and communication.<sup>5</sup>

Fethullah Gülen was born in 1941 in a village in the northeastern part of Turkey. His father Ramiz was an imam in the region and his mother was the primary caregiver of the family and a major influence on Gülen's spiritual and religious upbringing. Fethullah Gülen attended his formal primary education in his home village, and after the family moved to a nearby village he began an informal religious education.<sup>6</sup>

In 1959, Fethullah Gülen was awarded a state preacher's license in Edirne, Turkey. He was then transferred in 1966 to a religious post in Izmir, Turkey. It was in Izmir that Gülen's progressive ideas education, science, the economy, and social justice began to take shape and his supporters began to increase.<sup>7</sup>

During this time, he traveled to various provinces in Anatolia giving lectures in mosques, coffee houses and other community meeting places. Fethullah Gülen spoke on important subjects ranging from peace and social justice to theoretical naturalism. His primary aim always remained, urging the younger generation to harmonize intellectual enlightenment with spirituality rooted in religious tradition, and to serve humanity.<sup>8</sup>

Throughout his life and until today, Fethullah Gülen has been greatly influenced by the ideas and writings of many great Muslim scholars. In line with these scholars, Gülen's philosophy and writings embody ideas of altruistic service to one's community and likewise to humanity in general; harmony between intelligence and heart; sincerity; a holistic view of the human; a profound devotion and love of creation. Throughout his life, Gülen has been noted for his support of democracy, science, dialogue and non-violence.<sup>9</sup>

He has written more than sixty books, hundreds of articles, and recorded thousands of audio and videocassettes. Most of his books have been translated into Chinese, English, German, French, Russian, Arabic, Albanian, Japanese, Indonesian, Spanish and others.<sup>10</sup>

Gülen has run more than 500 seminars, talks, and conferences around the world. The very recent one: "International Conference on the Hizmet Movement" was held in Taipei was conducted in cooperation with College of Social Sciences, National Taiwan University,

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<sup>5</sup> "Who is Fethullah Gülen, What is the Gülen [Hizmet] Movement?"

<http://www.hizmetnews.com/index.php/who-is-gulen>

<sup>6</sup> *Understanding Fethullah Gülen*, Journalists and Writers Foundation, Istanbul, Turkey, 2012, p. 9.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>8</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, p 10.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 11

on December 8 - 9, 2012. The list of topics in the seminars and conferences includes morality, metaphysical life, soul and spirituality, social life, economics, destiny, responsibility, issues and questions on society conflict, tolerance, and world peace.

According to the Hizmet News web site, "Gülen's discourse cherishes and his life exemplifies values like empathic acceptance, altruistic service of one's community and humanity in general, complementary roles of the intellect and the heart, sincerity, holistic view of the human, deepening faith and love of the creation. He is noted for his pro-democracy, pro-science, pro-dialogue and non-violence stances in critical junctures of the history of his society. In May 2008, Fethullah Gülen was listed among the top hundred public intellectuals in the world by Foreign Policy magazine."<sup>11</sup>

He hopes everyone would dedicate himself to an unselfish service to society, his call not only answered by the large number of Turks, but also received positive support from Asia, and then the whole world. The exact number of supporters of the Gülen movement is not known, but estimates vary from one million to eight million. The movement consists primarily of students, teachers, businessmen, journalists and other professionals. For various reasons, Gülen is living in self-imposed exile in the United States.

Gülen's values and views are exemplified by his comments about love, which is seen as the basis for the Hizmet Movement (unselfish service):

"Love is the most direct and safest way to human perfection. It is difficult to attain the rank of human perfection through way's that do not contain love. Other than the way of acknowledging one's innate impotence, poverty, and reliance on heaven's power, and one's zeal in his way and thanksgiving, no other way to truth is equal to that of love. If we do not plant the seeds of love in the hearts of every human being, whom we try to revive through science, knowledge, and modern culture, they will never attain perfection and free themselves completely from their carnal desires... Even if we have different feelings and thoughts, we are all people of society. Even though we may not have common grounds on some matters, we all live in this world and we are passengers on the same ship. In this respect, there are many common points that can be discussed and shared with people from every segment of society."<sup>12</sup>

## II. Unselfish Service to Society through Education

Dr. Mark O. Webb, Chairman of the Department of Philosophy, College of Arts and Science, Texas Tech University, USA, said that while many people take steps to share their good fortune to relieve suffering and poverty, many more do very little, and almost none think strategically about how to prevent violence, suffering, and poverty in the first place.

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<sup>11</sup> "Who is Fethullah Gülen, What is the Gülen [Hizmet] Movement?"

<http://www.hizmetnews.com/index.php/who-is-gulen>

<sup>12</sup> *Understanding Fethullah Gülen*, Journalists and Writers Foundation, Istanbul, Turkey, 2012, pp. 34-35.

Professor Webb noted that every society has at some time, possibly at all times, experienced decay of social ties, along with crime, social dislocation, and alienation. Consequently, the subject of social disintegration, its causes, and possible cures are a perennial topic of philosophical and political theorizing in every human culture and in every historical period.<sup>13</sup>

According to Professor Webb, Confucius believed that human beings innately possess the inclination to virtue; all they need is a good education and good role models. Confucius thought that, if he could make the ruler into a virtuous person, his mere example would serve to change all those around him for the better.<sup>14</sup>

Confucius said that to govern by statute and to reduce all to order by means of pains and penalties are to render the people evasive and devoid of any sense of shame. To govern upon principles of virtue and to reduce them to order by the Rules of Propriety would not only create in them the sense of shame, but would moreover reach them in all their errors.<sup>15</sup>

Other Chinese philosophers, such as Lao-tze, Chuang-tze, Moh-tze, and Han Fei-tze, had contradictory solutions to societal problems.

Universal education has always been a fundamental aspect of the Hizmet Movement. Professor Webb noted that the first educational institutions to be established, about half century ago, were the “Lighthouses”, which were houses provided to university students for a small monthly contribution, or free of charge for those unable to pay. The students live an average of five to a house, one of whom is senior to the others and responsible for the house. They live a moderately austere life together and keep a modest Islamic household. In return for the accommodation, they are asked to be available to tutor high school children, and almost all express their gratitude by doing so. All these institutions are built and maintained by the financing of sponsors, businessmen too want to return some of their prosperity to the community.<sup>16</sup>

The guiding principles of the movement are Hizmet (service) and “hosgoru” (“tolerance”, but with a more positive meaning, including something like “respect”), values that are rooted in Islam. They amount to the idea that it is an honor to serve the needs of others, and so people should be eager to serve, without expecting any reward. Further, to sacrifice for a good purpose is in religion a valuable act, so when a person’s service requires him to give up something he values, this kind of service is much greater.<sup>17</sup>

Over the past half-century, the Hizmet Movement has become a worldwide organization and has expanded its activities into establish schools, universities, hospitals, research institutes, and media outlets. Without any formal rules, hierarchy, or conditions of

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<sup>13</sup> Webb, Mark (Associate Professor of Philosophy, Texas Tech University), "Steps Toward Peace: The Philosophical Foundations of the Gülen Hizmet Movement", *Conference Proceedings: International Conference on the Hizmet Movement*, National Taiwan University, Taipei, Taiwan, December 8 - 9, 2013, pp. 3 - 5.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid., p. 9.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid., p. 11.

membership, and by purely voluntary association and action, they have made substantial, measurable improvement in the lives of Turks, and many other countries.<sup>18</sup>

### III. Hizmet Movement and Democracy

Fethullah Gülen's philosophy is based in part on freedom of thought and democracy. He said: "History shows that no idea was ever removed by suppressing it. Many great empires and states were destroyed, but an idea or thought whose essence is sound continues to survive... Democracy is undergoing a process of development. It's a process of no return that must develop and mature."<sup>19</sup>

Turkey was not always a democracy or anything close to it. For 600 years, the Ottoman sultans ruled with absolute or near absolute power. When the sultanate was abolished in 1922, there was a veneer of democracy, but the new regime seemed to model itself after France at the time of the revolution. Some scholars compare the founders of modern Turkey to the atheistic French revolutionaries.

Common sense tells us that freedom of expression and freedom of religion are essential elements of any modern democracy. Although 95% of Turks are Muslims, the Islamic faith was suppressed as a part of this so-call modernization in the early Republic, and there is still a degree of animosity between the "secular" government and Islam in Turkey today.

To an extent, the "Young Turks" of the early Republic of Turkey, especially Mustafa Kemal, viewed Islam as both a tool to mobilize the people against invading foreign armies and as a problem, which had to be contained. In the worst days of the early republican era, people could be executed for wearing the traditional Turkish fez, under the Hat Laws, which required men to adopt a Western-style hat.

"Everything resembling Islam was prohibited, including recitation of the Qur'an in Arabic. This anti-democratic authoritarianism of the Republican elite created a disenfranchised Muslim majority living mostly in the countryside." Despite being denied many of the privileges that were available to the secular elite, the people resisted the anti-religious "reforms" through non-violent means, such as founding civil societies, schools, and media outlets.<sup>20</sup>

Gülen's preaching and religious discourses did not always sit well with the secular government. Gülen and his small group of students were arrested for reading prohibited books in 1971. He was again arrested in 1986, but was released at the insistence of the Prime Minister. During the 1980s, the government allowed private education, which expanded the roles of the Hizmet schools. From 2002, civil societies, including Hizmet, prospered. Dr. Yavuz stated: "The Hizmet movement is one of the most influential faith-based movements

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<sup>18</sup> Ibid., p. 1.

<sup>19</sup> *Understanding Fethullah Gülen*, Journalists and Writers Foundation, Istanbul, Turkey, 2012, p. 41.

<sup>20</sup> Yavuz, Sait, "Turkish Democratization and Hizmet (Gülen) Movement through an Historical Perspective," *Conference Proceedings: International Conference on the Hizmet Movement*, National Taiwan University, Taipei, Taiwan, December 8 - 9, 2013, p. 23 - 25.

in contemporary Turkey... Each secularist repression pushed more people towards Hizmet's causes and spread Gülen's teachings on peace, dialogue, and education..."<sup>21</sup>

Professor Yeau-tarn Lee noted that from Gülen's thinking, we recognize that he agrees with the system of democracy and believes that democracy could respect the unique value of life, maintain independence of human beings, and promote humanity, justice, and enlightenment of human talents. Gülen's thoughts of love, tolerance, and peace have a positive effect on the acceptance of the core values of democracy, such as diversification, tolerance, and respect, thus leading to democratization.<sup>22</sup>

## IV. The Hizmet Movement as a Faith Based Movement for Peace

Dr. Jon Pahl, Professor of the History of Christianity in North America and Director of MA programs for the Lutheran Theological Seminary at Philadelphia, has been Visiting Professor of Religion at Temple University and Princeton University. In the recent International Hizmet Movement Conference, he pointed out that the vast majority of spiritually grounded people and communities around the globe are converging on the importance of democratic participation, social enterprise, education, and inter-religious cooperation as foundations for durable, if not perpetual, peace, as opposed to Samuel Huntington's "Clash of Civilizations" model of perpetual war.<sup>23</sup>

These faith-based practices form what he called "the peace-building pyramid," which contrasts with "the violence iceberg" that Professor Pahl described in his book *Empire of Sacrifice: The Religious Origins of American Violence*. These practices of the peace-building pyramid indicate that nations, which are democratic, trade together, and are engaged in cooperative political structures, do not go to war with each other.<sup>24</sup>

Together, the various movements and individuals committed to the practices of the peace-building pyramid point to what Professor Pahl called "a coming religious peace." In recent decades, a leading contribution to this coming religious peace has become evident in the work of the Hizmet Movement associated with individuals inspired by the teachings and writings of Fethullah Gülen. The concepts of justice, freedom of belief, privacy, dialogue and tolerance, as expressed by Gülen, are in direct contrast to radical movements. Individuals adhering to Hizmet have been working within the systems of government to foster peace and understanding among different religious and ethnic groups.<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> Ibid., p. 33.

<sup>22</sup> Lee Yeau-Tarn, "The Contribution of Gülen's Thought to Turkey's Democratization," *Conference Proceedings: International Conference on the Hizmet Movement*, National Taiwan University, Taipei, Taiwan, December 8 - 9, 2013. pp. 148 - 149.

<sup>23</sup> Pahl, Jon, "Clashing Minorities, Converging Majorities: Toward a Coming Religious Peace," *Conference Proceedings: International Conference on the Hizmet Movement*, National Taiwan University, Taipei, Taiwan, December 8 - 9, 2013, p. 35.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid., p. 39.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid., pp. 47 - 49.



Professor Pahl hopes that Hizmet will contribute to "a growing movement toward inter-religious understanding." As a Christian, he said that he was impressed by the commitment of Hizmet volunteers. Professor Pahl believes that religious peace-building has largely been overlooked and that the Hizmet movement is part of the religious commitment to creating a more just and peaceful society.<sup>26</sup>

## V. Inter-religious Dialogue

Professor Douglas Pratt, University of Waikato, New Zealand, and UNESCO Chair in inter-cultural and Inter-religious Relations - Asia Pacific, expressed the view that Fethullah Gülen is absolutely correct in noting that desire for mutual understanding, a dedication to justice, and a priority on mutual respect are requisite principles for engaging in inter-religious dialogue. Gülen is of the view that, in today's world, the task of "representing faith with its true values has gained an even greater importance than before."<sup>27</sup>

Professor Pratt stated that Lester Kurtz noted that for Gülen, "spiritual practice and morality are more important than ritual and dogmatism." Gülen believes in tolerance, which is far more active, with the intention of fostering peace and harmony. Gülen asserts that "Muslims will lose nothing by employing dialogue, love, and tolerance," and that, indeed, there are many verses in Qur'an that extol these virtues.<sup>28</sup>

Fethullah Gülen arguably regards interfaith dialogue as an expression of a divinely-inspired love, for the primary theological verity that binds together all peoples of the Book - Jews, Christians and Muslims is the belief in God as Creator. The act of creation is not that of arbitrary whim but intentional love of the Creator for the creature. Love is expressed in terms of engagement; thus, "dialogue is the real remedy for terror, chaos, and intolerance". Gülen further stated: "Even though we may not have common grounds on some matters, we all live in this world and we are passengers on the same ship. In this respect, there are many common points that can be discussed and shared with people from every segment of society." As Gülen states, "Love is the reason for existence and its essence, and it is the strongest tie that binds creatures together. Everything in the universe is the handiwork of God."<sup>29</sup>

The above remark of Gülen is very similar to the thought of a great Chinese poet—Lee Bai, when he wrote thousand years ago in his famous article "Party in the Peach and Plum Blossom Garden in Spring Night" that we are all the passengers of the world.

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<sup>26</sup> "Hizmet efforts to build schools will not stop: scholar" (Sait Yavuz, a lecturer and president of the Gülen Institute at University of Houston), *Taiwan News*, December 12, 2012. [http://www.taiwannews.com.tw/etn/news\\_content.php?id=2095790](http://www.taiwannews.com.tw/etn/news_content.php?id=2095790)

<sup>27</sup> Pratt, Professor Douglas (University of Waikato, New Zealand, and UNESCO Chair in inter-cultural and Inter-religious Relations - Asia Pacific), "Fethullah Gülen on Inter-religious Dialogue and Islamic Inter-faith Relations, *Understanding Fethullah Gülen*, Journalists and Writers Foundation, Istanbul, Turkey, 2012. p. 23.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 23 - 26.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 26 - 27.

## VI. Gülen's Views and Values

From the above, we can see that Gülen emphasized dialogue, respect, and tolerance. Gülen said that his primary values "peace, love, forgiveness, and tolerance are fundamental to Islam."<sup>30</sup>

There are many writings by Gülen on the core values of Love, People of the Heart, Tolerance, Humanity, and Personal Integrity. Below are a few quotes that give us a philosophical framework to understand the Hizmet Movement.

### **Love:**

"Love is the most direct and safest way to human perfection. It is difficult to attain the rank of human perfection through ways that do not contain love. Other than the way of acknowledging one's innate impotence, poverty, and reliance on God's Power and Riches, and one's zeal in His way and thanksgiving, no other way to truth is equal to that of love."<sup>31</sup>

"If we do not plant the seeds of love in the hearts of young people, whom we try to revive through science, knowledge, and modern culture, they will never attain perfection and free themselves completely from their carnal desires."<sup>32</sup>

From these quotes, we can understand that man is reliant on God. Just as God cares for us and teaches us through love, we must care for and teach love to the younger generation.

### **People of Heart:**

"People of heart are monuments of humility and modesty who are devoted to a spiritual life, determined to stay away from all the material and spiritual dirt, always vigilant to corporeal desires of the body, and ready to struggle with such evils as hatred, resentment, greed, jealousy, selfishness, and lust. They always endeavor to give what is right the highest esteem, to convey to others what they feel about this world, as well as the next, and they are always patient and courteous."<sup>33</sup>

"People of heart do not violate the rights of any other people, nor do they seek revenge. Even in the most critical circumstances, they tend to behave calmly, and do whatever a person of heart should do to the utmost. They always reply to evil acts with kindness, and, considering badness to be characteristic of evil, treating those who have harmed them as monuments of virtue."<sup>34</sup>

These quotes regarding people of the heart encapsulate many common beliefs that cross ethnic and religious boundaries, such as avoiding misbehavior and wrong thinking, as well as practicing the Golden Rule: "Do unto others as you would have them do unto you." These concepts fit perfectly with the ideals of the Hizmet Movement's dedication to unselfish service.

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<sup>30</sup> Ibid., p. 24.

<sup>31</sup> *Understanding Fethullah Gülen*, Journalists and Writers Foundation, Istanbul, Turkey, 2012. p. 34.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid., p. 35.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid., p. 35.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid.

**Tolerance:**

"Be so tolerant that your heart becomes wide like the ocean. Become inspired with faith and love for others. Offer a hand to those in trouble, and be concerned about everyone. Applaud the good for their goodness, appreciate those who have believing hearts, and be kind to believers. You approach unbelievers so gently that their envy and hatred melt away. Like a Messiah, revive people with your breath."<sup>35</sup>

"Take note of and be attentive to any behavior that causes you to love others. Then remind yourself that behaving in the same way will cause them to love you. Always behave decently, and be alert. In sum: in order to preserve your credit, honor and love, love for the sake of the Truth, hate for the sake of the Truth, and be open-hearted toward the Truth."<sup>36</sup>

The unselfish service of the Hizmet Movement must be based on tolerance and love, for without these attributes, any service would become selfish and ego-centric. To maintain the ideal of unselfish service, Gülen says that we must always act for the sake of Truth, which appears to mean for the sake of God.

**Humanity:**

"When interacting with others always regard whatever pleases and displeases yourself as the measure. Desire for others what your own ego desires and do not forget that whatever conduct displeases you will displease others. If you do this you will be safe not only from misconduct and bad behavior but also from hurting others."<sup>37</sup>

"There is no limit to doing good to others. Those who have dedicated themselves to the good of humanity can be so altruistic that they will even sacrifice their lives for others. However such altruism is a great virtue only if it originates in sincerity and purity of intention and if it does not define the "other" by racial preferences."<sup>38</sup>

Here we can see how Gülen integrates the concept of the Golden Rule for all of humanity. As he indicated above, we are all in the same ship and are all children of God, so there are no differences among the races. Sincerity becomes the measure of altruism - we serve other out of the goodness of our hearts, and not for ulterior motives.

**Personal Integrity:**

"Those who want to reform the world must first reform themselves. If they want to lead other to a better world they must purify their inner worlds of hatred rancor and jealousy and adorn their outer worlds with Virtue. The words of those who cannot control and discipline themselves and who have not refined their feelings may seem attractive and insightful at first. However, even if they somehow manage to inspire others which they sometimes do, the sentiments they arouse will soon whither."<sup>39</sup>

"If we cannot accept the criticism of those we love and who love us, we may lose our friends and remain unaware of our defects. Do not remember the promises that others have

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<sup>35</sup> Ibid., p. 36.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid., p. 37.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid., pp. 37 - 38.

failed to keep; instead, remember your own promises that you did not fulfill. Do not blame others because they are not doing good to you; instead, remember the chances you missed of doing good to someone else." <sup>40</sup>

Although raised in the spirit of Islam, we can see that Gülen embraces the teachings of Jesus Christ - doing good for others, forgiveness, and righteousness. As Jesus said: "Let he who is without sin cast the first stone." Gülen advises us to avoid self-righteous and ego-centric thought and behavior as the way to personal integrity.

## VIII. The Educational Vision of Fethullah Gülen

The Hizmet Movement had its beginnings in the field of education with the Lighthouse programs and thus has always focused on education. Gülen said: "We are only truly human if we learn, teach, and inspire others. It is difficult to regard those who are ignorant and without desire to learn as truly human." <sup>41</sup>

Gülen also recognizes the importance of what is to be taught: "Right decisions depend on having a sound mind and being capable of sound thought. Science and knowledge illuminate and develop the mind. For this reason, a mind deprived of science and knowledge cannot reach right decisions, is always exposed to deception, and is subject to being misled." <sup>42</sup>

Gülen's perspective not only applies the problems of Turkish education, but also the problems of many countries, including Taiwan. He also says that despite the necessity of modernization, there are nevertheless risks involved in any radical break with the past.

Cut off from traditional values, young people are in danger of being educated with no values at all beyond those for material success. Non-material values such as profundity of ideas, clarity of thought, depth of feeling, cultural appreciation, or interest in spirituality tend to be ignored in modern educational ventures which are largely aimed at mass-producing functionaries of a globalized system. <sup>43</sup>

Students may be adequately prepared to find jobs, but they will not have the necessary interior formation to achieve true human freedom. Leaders in both economic and political fields often favor and promote job-oriented, "value-free" education because it enables those with power to control the "trained but not educated" working cadres more easily. The road to social justice is paved with adequate, universal education, for only this will give people sufficient understanding and tolerance to respect the rights of others. <sup>44</sup>

Thus, in Gülen's view, it is not only the establishment of justice which is hindered by the lack of well-rounded education, but also the recognition of human rights and attitudes of acceptance and tolerance toward others. If people are properly educated to think for

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<sup>40</sup> Ibid., p. 38.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid., p. 38.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid.

<sup>43</sup> Michel, Thomas, "Fethullah Gülen and the Gülen Schools," (February 18, 2003) in *Understanding Fethullah Gülen*, Journalists and Writers Foundation, Istanbul, Turkey, 2012, p. 48.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid.

themselves and to espouse the positive values of social justice, human rights and tolerance, they will be able to be agents of change to implement these beneficial goals.<sup>45</sup>

Gülen notes the "bitter struggle that should never have taken place: science versus religion." He feels that through an educational process in which religious scholars have a sound formation in the sciences and scientists are exposed to religious and spiritual values, that the "long religion-science conflict will come to an end, or at least its absurdity will be acknowledged."<sup>46</sup>

It is to be remembered that the republican elite, like the French revolutionary counterparts over 100 years earlier, waged a virtual war of suppression against religion. It would be difficult to expect that religion or perhaps even moral teaching in the schools would be exempted.

Gülen believes that a new style of education is necessary, one that will include religious and scientific knowledge together with morality and spirituality, to produce genuinely enlightened people with hearts illumined by religious sciences and spirituality, minds illuminated with positive sciences."<sup>47</sup>

## IX. Conclusion - Similarity with Confucius

Fethullah Gülen, the founder of this popular worldwide social movement, shows a remarkable similarity to the greatest Chinese philosopher and educator Confucius, who lived from 551 to 479 B.C., during the Period of Spring and Autumn. Confucius established basic concepts for Chinese education in a number of important ways. He believed that moral training is an essential part of education. Knowledge cannot be purely academic, but must emphasize good behavior. Confucius said that a good teacher must provide a good moral example. Confucius taught four concepts: culture, conduct, loyalty, and faithfulness. He also believed that education should be open to all, with no class distinction, since almost everyone is capable of improvement through education.

As Fethullah Gülen said: "Real teachers sow the seed and preserve it. They occupy themselves in what is good and wholesome, and lead and guide the children in life and whatever events they encounter. In addition to setting a good example, teachers should be patient enough to obtain the desired results. They should know their students very well, and address their hearts, spirits, and feelings."<sup>48</sup>

Commenting on the educational principles of the Hizmet Movement, Professor Mark Owen noted that parents of the children believe the spirit of Hizmet "makes schools that produce well-trained citizens of strong moral character." He said schools affiliated with the Hizmet movement emphasize science, math, and language education. Religious subjects are not taught, but teachers are expected to model good moral character. The schools are financed by sponsors and businessmen and offer the same curricula as public schools. If the

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<sup>45</sup> Ibid., p. 49.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid., p.50.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid., p. 51.

<sup>48</sup> *Understanding Fethullah Gülen*, Journalists and Writers Foundation, Istanbul, Turkey, 2012, p. 38.

changes in southeast Turkey, where there is a Kurdish rebel problem, can be attributed, even in part, to the Hizmet movement, it is a powerful argument for the educational theory that people have the resources to live together in peace and need only the support of good education to realize their basic goodness.<sup>49</sup>

The Confucian ideal of universal education and the use of merit as criterion to determine students' access to schools became the foundation for generations of the Chinese system of education. Confucius worked for the revitalization of culture in its role as a means of cultivating individual aspirations, as well as maintaining the integrity and well-being of the people, as a whole. Confucius believed that social order guided by reasonable, humane, and just sensibilities, not by the passions of individuals arbitrarily empowered by hereditary status, and warned of the social consequences if men in positions of power considered personal profit and advantage over public humanity and justice. Confucius believed in the regeneration of public and private conscience through education and the influence of unifying cultural ideals.<sup>50</sup>

Some of Confucius' sayings point out the similarities between Confucius and Fethullah Gülen.<sup>51</sup>

Confucius said:

“Cultivated people have nine thoughts.

When they look, they think of how to see clearly.

When they listen, they think of how to hear keenly.

In regard to their appearance, they think of how to be warm.

In their demeanor, they think of how to be respectful.

In their speech, they think of how to be truthful.

In their work, they think of how to be serious.

When in doubt, they think of how to pose questions.

When angry, they think of trouble.

When they see potential gain, they think of justice.”

Someone asked Confucius about humaneness, Confucius replied: “Be respectful at home, serious at work, faithful in human relations. Even if you go to uncivilized areas, these virtues are not to be abandoned.”

Confucius said to Zichan, a famous prime minister of the state of Cheng, “The way of exemplary people is fourfold. They are deferential in their own conduct, respectful in their service of employers, generous in taking care of people, and just in employing people.”

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<sup>49</sup> "Hizmet movement could be powerful argument for education: scholar" (Mark Owen Webb, chairman of the Department of Philosophy at Texas Tech University), *Taiwan News*, December 11, 2012. [http://www.taiwannews.com.tw/etn/news\\_content.php?id=2094625](http://www.taiwannews.com.tw/etn/news_content.php?id=2094625)

<sup>50</sup> "Confucius," <http://www.livinglifefully.com/thinkersconfucius.htm>

<sup>51</sup> *ibid.*

Confucius also said: "Don't worry about having no position; worry about that whereby you may effectively become established. Don't worry that no one recognizes you; seek to be worthy of recognition."

Confucius advocated kindness, love, tolerance, understanding, selfless service, and peace for all. These elements are also the core of the Hizmet Movement founded by Fethullah Gülen.

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