



explosion of knowledge and understanding which took place under the Abbassids between the ninth and thirteenth centuries, when their capital Baghdad was a world centre of learning

I also spoke of how, sadly, despite this fertile flow of ideas, many on both sides had still been left with uncompromising prejudices towards each other's cultures.

I believe with all my heart that responsible men and women must work to restore mutual respect between faiths. That we should do all we can to overcome the distrust that poisons so many people's lives.

Scientific knowledge, which has brought us all so much that we value and are privileged to

take for granted, at the end of the day is not the same as wisdom.

I think we need to recover the depth, the subtlety, the generosity of imagination, the respect for wisdom that so marked Islam in its great ages. Islam called Jews and Christians the peoples of the book, because they, like Muslims are a part of a religion of sacred texts.

And what was so distinctive of the great ages of faith surely was that they understood that, as well as sacred texts, there is the art of interpretation of sacred texts – between the meaning of God's word for all time and its meaning for this time.

And I feel – and you must forgive me for I am no scholar – it was Islam's greatness to understand this in its full depth and challenge. And this is what you gentlemen, if I may say so, at this great and historic institution, can give not only to Islam, but, by example, to all the other children of Abraham.

Nor must we lose the single most important principle that unites the Abrahamic faiths: In Judaism "Love your neighbour as thyself"; in Christianity, "All things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye so to them"; and in Islam "no-one of you is a believer until he desires for his brother that which he desires for himself".

Respect for others, and for what is precious to others – in other words good manners, civility, and a willingness to listen – ensures respect towards our own values and ideals. The recent dreadful strife and anger over the Danish cartoons for instance shows that danger that comes of out failure to listen and to respect what is precious and sacred to others.

So, with all that in mind, my message for what it is worth, is that we must work together to create a world in which the fruits of faith – understanding tolerance and compassion – enrich and safeguard the world of our children, and our children's children. We must not let slip this opportunity and this challenge in an age of increasing which requires our determined, committed and heartfelt efforts to live in peace together.