

UPF Madrid, Spain hosts influential Iraqi religious leader Imam Seyed Ali Talqani

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Madrid, Spain—As part of UPF’s commitment to interfaith dialogue, UPF-Spain had the privilege to host Imam Seyed Ali Talqani, one of the most famous and influential religious leaders of Iraq who is affiliated with the Kufa Mosque. Imam Talqani’s quest is to work with the youth in Iraq to help them gain hope in the future and to see a different perspective of the Shia Islam religion. He spoke on May 3, 2018 at the Espacio Ronda, a cultural center in central Madrid, on the topic “A Vision of Islam for Today’s World.”

Imam Talqani told the gathering, “We need an Islam that serves the people. Religion needs to serve human beings and not the other way around. Human rights and dignity are above any blind faith. We need to cooperate with all different religions and defend the rights of religious minorities.” ...

His speech was truly liberating. His actions, too, are exemplary. He has prayed at the Madrid memorial to the 193 people who died in a terrorist attack in 2004 and in Madrid’s main Roman Catholic cathedral and Greek Orthodox church. In Barcelona, he prayed and laid flowers in the memory of the victims in the 2017 Ramblas attack. He is presently going through different European countries, spreading a message of peace and reconciliation.

The speech was attended by the ambassador of Iraq to Spain as well as by many Iraqis. In a dialogue session after the speech, it became clear that the tensions between different groups is due to people’s longtime, ongoing suffering.

A video of the event in Arabic and Spanish may be seen at www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=801&v=9v7eTEWxZqc

The program was one of a “Spirituality Workshop” series put on by UPF-Spain. The website is tallerdeespiritualidad.es/