

# JUSTICE

## The Foundation for Lasting Peace

The 13<sup>th</sup> National Peace Symposium was held on Saturday 19 March at the Baitul Futuh Mosque in London. The keynote address entitled '**Terrorism was never justified by the Prophet Muhammad** (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him)' was delivered by the Worldwide Head of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community, His Holiness Hazrat Mirza Masroor Ahmad.



## An Overview of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community



The Ahmadiyya Muslim community is a religious organisation, with branches in more than 200 countries. It is the most dynamic denomination of Islam in modern history, with an estimated membership in the tens of millions worldwide.

It was established in 1889 by **Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad** (1835-1908) (*photo above*) in a small and remote village called Qadian in Punjab, India. He claimed to be the expected reformer of the latter days and the awaited one of the world community of religions (the *Mahdi* and Messiah of the latter days). The community he started is an embodiment of the benevolent message of Islam in its pristine purity that promotes peace and universal brotherhood based on a belief in the Gracious and Ever-Merciful God.

With this conviction, within a century, the Ahmadiyya Muslim community has expanded globally and it endeavours to practice the peaceful teachings of Islam by raising hundreds of thousands of pounds every year for charities, building schools and hospitals open to all and by encouraging learning through interfaith dialogue.

The UK chapter of the community was established in 1913 and in 1924 it built London's first purpose-built mosque (in Southfields). It is, therefore, one of the oldest and most established Muslim communities in Britain and now has 131 branches across the UK.

## The Khalifa of Islam: A Man of Peace



His Holiness, Hazrat Mirza Masroor Ahmad was elected as the fifth Khalifa of the worldwide Ahmadiyya Muslim Community in 2003.

His Holiness inspires his community to serve humanity with the spirit of kindness and humility that is integral to Islam. In accordance with the teachings of Islam he upholds the honour of all prophets of God and highlights the role of religion in the promotion of peace.

His Holiness has delivered addresses at the House of Commons, Capitol Hill and the European Parliament and also written to world leaders urging them to inculcate a true sense of justice and peace in international relations to avoid regional conflicts from engulfing the entire world.

*"Faith is, and always will be, a matter of the heart and so there should never be any form of compulsion in religion. Whilst, Allah the Almighty has deemed Islam to be a complete teaching, no one has the right to forcefully convert others to it. Anyone, whether religious or not, is free to accept Islam, but the key point is that it should be accepted freely and entirely of one's own volition and choice."*

(National Peace Symposium 2016)

## THE 13<sup>TH</sup> NATIONAL PEACE SYMPOSIUM

The 13<sup>th</sup> National Peace Symposium of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community UK was held on Saturday 19<sup>th</sup> March 2016 at the Baitul Futuh Mosque in South London. The theme of the event was 'Justice - The Foundation for Lasting Peace' and it was attended by more than 900 delegates from 26 countries including 17 Parliamentarians, a number of diplomats and faith and civic leaders. Speakers included Siobhain McDonagh MP (Chair of the All-Party Parliamentary Group for the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community), Zac Goldsmith MP for Richmond Park, Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon (Minister for Countering Extremism and Minister for Transport) and Rt Hon Justine Greening MP (Secretary of State for International Development).

The event also saw the Ahmadiyya Muslim Prize for the Advancement of Peace being presented to Hadeel Qassim for her inspirational work with refugees in Iraq.

The keynote address was delivered by His Holiness, Hazrat Mirza Masroor Ahmad<sup>aba</sup>, the Worldwide Head of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community.



## Terrorism was never justified by the Prophet Muhammad

(peace and blessings of Allah be upon him)

Hazrat Mirza Masroor Ahmad<sup>aba</sup>, the Worldwide Head of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community said:

*"Bismillahir Rahmanir Raheem – in the Name of Allah, the Gracious, Ever-Merciful.*

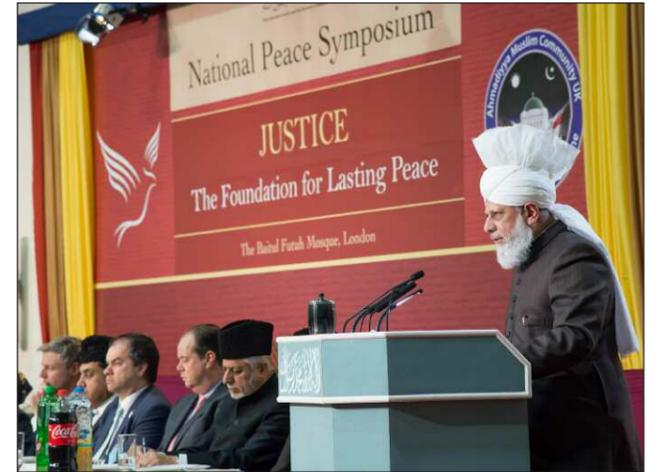
*Assalamo Alaikum wa Rehmatullah wa Barakatohu - peace and blessings of Allah be upon you all.*

First of all I would like to take this opportunity to express my sincere gratitude to all of our distinguished guests who have accepted our invitation and joined us here this evening. Your attendance is particularly noteworthy given that this event is taking place at a time when widespread fear of Islam is on the increase due to the horrific and disgraceful acts of terrorist groups.

For example, last November, the world watched in horror when the terrorist attacks took place in Paris, and apart from this, there have been suicide bombings and attacks in various countries at regular intervals. In terms of the United Kingdom, very recently the Assistant Commissioner of Police warned that Daesh was planning "enormous and spectacular" terrorist attacks here in the UK, targeting high profile and public places.

Furthermore, there has been a sudden influx of refugees into Europe during the past year and this is causing a degree of fear, uncertainty and even panic in the minds of many people. In light of all of this, your attendance and willingness as non-Muslims to attend an event organised by a Muslim community, proves that you are courageous, tolerant and open-hearted people.

Nonetheless, the simple truth is that there is no need for anyone to fear true Islam. Whilst some people claim Islam to be a religion of extremism and one that promotes suicide attacks or other forms of terrorism, nothing could be further from the truth. Recently, a well-known English



columnist wrote about the rise of 'Islamophobia' in a national newspaper. He wrote that he had done extensive research on suicide bombings and found that the first such attack took place in the 1980s, despite the fact that Islam had existed for well over 1300 years.

He concluded that if Islam permitted or encouraged such attacks then they ought to have occurred from the outset of Islam and throughout its history. His point was valid and very well made and proved that such attacks were a modern-day evil, far removed from the true and peaceful teachings of Islam. Certainly, Islam has very clearly prohibited all forms of suicide and so there is no justification whatsoever for suicide attacks or any other forms of terrorism.

Such heinous acts lead to the murder and barbaric slaughter of innocent women, children and other members of the public. A recent research article of Dr. Considine of Rice University, in Houston Texas, clearly says that the persecution of Christians in the so-called Islamic state is not justified by Prophet Muhammad's<sup>(sa)</sup> writings. It further states that the Prophet's vision of a Muslim nation was one of religious pluralism and civil rights.

Thus let it be clear that such acts are absolutely contrary to Islamic teachings. If Islam has ever permitted warfare, it is only to the extent of a defensive war, where war has been forced upon you. For example, in chapter 22, verse 40 of the Holy Qur'an, Allah the Almighty has said that permission for warfare is given to those people upon whom war has been forcibly imposed.

In that same verse, Allah the Almighty said that

in the case of religious warfare He would help and support those who had been wronged. In early Islam, the wars that took place were genuine religious wars fought for the sake of upholding the fundamental principle of universal religious freedom. History proves that the wars fought with this intention made Muslims victorious, regardless of the fact that a handful of unequipped Muslims fought against huge, well-equipped armies.

However, as a Muslim, when I analyse the wars involving Muslims today, I am certain that they cannot be classed as religious wars. For one, most of the wars taking place in the Muslim world are either internal civil strife or with the neighbouring Muslim countries. Secondly if ever non-Muslim countries are involved, they have never declared the war as religious and rather helped both sides of Muslims. Thus present day wars are not being fought for the sake of Islam or for the sake of religion, but are for economic or geopolitical gains and are proving only a means of defaming Islam's name.

And so based upon what I have just said, I hope it is now clear that there is no need to fear Islam and that it is not a religion of extremism or one that permits suicide attacks or indiscriminate violence. There is no need for 'Islamaphobia' because Islam's true teachings are of peace, tolerance and mutual respect. Islam's teachings are of upholding human values and protecting the honour, dignity and freedoms of all people.

However, of course, we are all well aware that there are some extremists and so-called Islamic groups that are perpetrating the very worst forms of brutality in the name of Islam. Nevertheless, the verse of the Qur'an I quoted earlier makes it clear that such acts are not permitted or justified in any shape or form by Islam. Another significant matter, which instead of leading me as a Muslim towards warfare and violence, leads me towards exhibiting love for all of humanity, is the fact that in the second verse of the very first chapter of the Holy Qur'an, it is stated that Allah the Almighty is the "Provider and Sustainer of all the worlds." And the third verse states that He is the "Gracious, Ever-Merciful."

Thus, when Allah the Almighty is the Provider

and Sustainer of all people and Gracious, Ever-Merciful, how could it be that He desired for those who believed in Him to mercilessly murder, violently oppose or harm His Creation in any way? Of course the answer is that it is not possible. Nonetheless, Allah the Almighty has certainly permitted for action to be taken to stop cruelty, inhumanity and injustice.

Islam states that a Muslim should seek to stop the hand of an oppressor and to end all forms of injustice and transgression. According to Islam there are two ways in which this can be achieved. Firstly, it is far better if peace can be attained through mutual dialogue, negotiations and diplomacy. However, where this is not possible, only then force may be used in order to stop wrongdoing with the intention of establishing sustainable peace.

Outside of the religious context, in every society and nation, there are rules and laws that exist and if they are violated then punitive action is normally taken. If it is possible to reform without punishment or with just a mild sanction or reprimand that is better; however, if that is not possible then severe punishment is duly discharged for the benefit of the wider society and as a means of deterrent to others.

Moving to a religious context, according to Islam, punishment or sanction is permitted not as a means of revenge or retribution, but only as a means of ending cruelty or persecution and as a means of positive reformation. The Holy Qur'an has said that if a person or group can be rehabilitated through forgiveness and mercy then this method should be adopted.

However, if clemency or forbearance does not prove effective then punishment should be administered as a means of reformation and improvement. Therefore the philosophy underpinning punishment in Islam is extremely far-sighted and quite unique. Its purpose is to reform, rehabilitate and improve. It is to develop the highest standards of human values amongst mankind so that, by adopting the Attributes of their Creator, all people come to respect and care for one another.

Therefore, where the rights of an individual or group are unjustly usurped, Islam permits

punishments that are proportionate to the crime, however it remains the case that if reformation can be achieved without sanction it is preferable. This is why Allah the Almighty has said in chapter 24, verse 23 of the Holy Qur'an that it is better to forgive and to manifest forbearance.

Similarly, in chapter 3, verse 135, Allah the Almighty has said that those who suppress their anger and who forgive and forget are those whom Allah loves and prefers. Furthermore, at many other places in the Holy Qur'an, it is stated that a person should forgive wherever possible, because the ultimate purpose is always moral reformation, rather than vengeance. In terms of conflict between nations or groups, Allah the Almighty has given a golden principle for the establishment of long-lasting peace in chapter 49, verse 10 of the Holy Qur'an.

In the verse, it states that if there is a dispute between nations or groups, third parties should seek to mediate and to bring about a peaceful resolution to the conflict. In the event of an agreement, all parties should act equitably, but if either party contravenes the settlement and takes aggressive measures, then the other nations or groups should unite together and even use force if necessary to stop the aggressor. However, once the aggressive party withdraws and adopts peace they should not be unduly restricted but should be permitted to move forward as an independent nation and a free society.

Therefore, as the Provider and Sustainer of all of mankind, Allah the Almighty desires for all people to live together in peace and to be free from all forms of persecution and injustice. In terms of belief, Islam enshrines the principles of universal religious freedom and freedom of conscience. According to Islam, every person not only has the right of freedom of belief, but also has the right to peacefully propagate their beliefs.

Faith is, and always will be, a matter of the heart and so there should never be any form of compulsion in religion. Whilst, Allah the Almighty has deemed Islam to be a complete teaching, no one has the right to forcefully convert others to it. Anyone, whether religious or not, is free to accept Islam, but the key point is that it should be

accepted freely and entirely of one's own volition and choice. Similarly, if a Muslim decides that he wishes to leave Islam then, according to the teachings of the Qur'an, he or she has the right to do so.

Whilst we believe Islam to be a universal religion and a timeless teaching, if anyone chooses to leave it then that is their choice and prerogative. In chapter 5, verse 55, Allah says that if anyone wants to leave, let them go. He will replace them with better and sincere ones. No government, group or individual has a right to punish them or sanction them in any way.

Thus, the allegation that Islam mandates punishment for apostasy is entirely unjust and without foundation. Therefore the teachings of Islam all revolve around Allah and His Being and the fact that He is the Sustainer and Provider for the entire universe. Consequently, if a Muslim seeks to inflict merciless cruelties or to indulge in any forms of extremism then they will have to reject God's Attribute of being the Sustainer of all of mankind.

Alternatively, it may be that certain Muslims accept Allah to be the Master of the Universe and the Sustainer of all the Worlds, but have not truly comprehended the meaning of this and have consequently moved far away from Islam's original teachings. Hence, it was to enlighten and educate mankind of the true Islam that we Ahmadi Muslims, believe that Allah the Almighty sent the Founder of our Community, as the Promised Messiah and Reformer of the Age.

He informed us that the era of religious warfare had come to an end and that God Almighty desired for mankind to live in peace and to fulfil the rights of their Creator and of one another. Addressing his followers about this, the Promised Messiah, Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad<sup>as</sup> of Qadian once said:

"According to the true spirit of the teachings of Islam there are only two parts of the religion, or it can be said that the religion is based upon two paramount objectives. First of all is to recognise the One God with absolute certainty and to sincerely love Him and to submerge yourself entirely in His

obedience, as per the demands of love and submission. The second purpose is to serve His people and to utilise all of your capabilities and faculties in the loving service of others and to always show sincere gratitude to whoever is kind to you and to favour them in return, whether they be your monarch or ruler or whether they be the most simple and humble of people. And you should always keep a loving bond with them.”

Furthermore the Founder of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community, has also explained the true meaning of chapter 16, verse 91 of the Holy Quran, in which Allah the Almighty states:

“Verily, Allah enjoins justice, and the doing of good to others; and giving like kindred.”

The Founder of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community states that in this verse Muslims are commanded by Allah to be just and fair towards all others. Therefore, Muslims are commanded to be kind and to extend favour to all other people, including those who have not been sympathetic to them or favoured them in any way. Finally, he explained that the verse required a Muslim to love God’s Creation to such an extent that they considered every person in the world to be like their own close family member.

In fact, he said that a true Muslim should love others, irrespective of their background or belief, in the same way that a mother loves her child. Certainly, this is the highest and purest form of love because in terms of the second stage, where a person exhibits kindness or favour, it is possible that an element of self-projection remains, whether covert or overt, and at some point, the individual may remind the person of their gesture and seek favour in return.

However, a mother’s love is truly selfless and altruistic and her unique bond with her child is such that she is willing to sacrifice everything for the sake of her offspring. She desires nothing in return and nor does she require any form of praise or tribute. Therefore, this is the ultimate standard that Islam advocates, whereby Muslims are taught to love all of humanity as a mother

loves her child. These are the true teachings of Islam.

Allah the Almighty has said that those who believe in Him should adopt His Attributes and so it is impossible for a true Muslim to be cruel and it is similarly impossible for Islam to permit any form of injustice, violence or extremism. Over the years, I have made these points time and time again and have highlighted these core Islamic teachings.

I have repeatedly quoted the Holy Qur’an to prove that what I am saying is based on Islam’s authentic teachings. However, it remains that our peaceful and inclusive message is not covered extensively in the media, whilst on the other hand those relatively few people involved in brutality and carnage are given non-stop worldwide media coverage and attention.

There is no doubt that the media plays a huge role in influencing public opinion and so the media should use this power responsibly - as a force for good and as a force for peace. It should show the world what true Islam represents, rather than focusing on the merciless acts of a minority.

Publicity is the oxygen sustaining most terrorist or extremist groups and so I have no doubt that if the media takes on board what I have said we will soon find that the terrorism and violence afflicting the world will begin to die away. Personally, I cannot comprehend how the extremists who have plagued Islam and violated its noble teachings, can seek to justify their hateful acts in its name.

Islam’s teachings of peace prohibit all forms of extremism, to the extent, that even in a state of legitimate war, Allah has commanded that any action or punishment should remain proportionate to the crimes committed and that it is better if patience and forgiveness is manifest. Thus, all those so-called Muslims who are engaged in violence, injustice and brutality are inviting God’s wrath and anger to their doorstep.

At a time when fear of Islam is ever increasing, let me stress again that the Holy Qur’an has repeatedly enjoined love, compassion and benevolence. If in certain extreme circumstances the Qur’an permitted defensive warfare, it was only in order to establish peace. Today, we



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However, as we live in a climate in which Islam’s teachings are being targeted, we see that all cruelties or wars carried out by Muslims are immediately linked to the teachings of Islam.

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observe that the majority of governments or groups, whether Muslims or non-Muslims, involved in warfare, also claim that they are fighting for the sake of establishing peace.

In terms of perception, it seems that most people are willing to overlook the wars conducted by certain world powers or at least not affiliate their actions to any religion or belief. However, as we live in a climate in which Islam’s teachings are being targeted, we see that all cruelties or wars carried out by Muslims are immediately linked to the teachings of Islam. Yet the voices of those people and those groups who are earnestly striving to spread Islam’s true and peaceful teachings are not being heard and not being widely publicised.

In my opinion this is unjust and extremely counter-productive. At a time of worldwide conflict, we should remember this basic principle that it is better for all forms of evil and cruelty to be suppressed and for all forms of goodness and humanity to be endorsed. In this way, evil will not

spread far, whilst virtue and peace will spread far and wide and adorn our society.

If we promote the good that is happening in the world, we can overcome those who seek to undermine our cherished values of mercy and humanity. Yet the world does not seem to have accepted or understood this principle and that is why the media continues to prioritise its circulation or viewing figures over and beyond the peace of the world. The media, which gladly focuses on the tiny minority involved in brutality are feeding the propaganda machines of evil groups such as Daesh, yet they fail in their duty to highlight all that is good in the world.

This is an injustice that is sowing the seeds of further division and conflict. In terms of world politics and defeating terrorism, it is necessary to accept that establishing peace is our paramount objective and so compromise from all sides is required. In case you do not trust the words of a Muslim, let me present to you the views of eminent non-Muslims who are well-versed in

political affairs and who desire peace in the world. For example, when speaking about how to defeat extremism and in particular the terrorist group Daesh, Austria's Foreign Minister recently said:

"We need a pragmatic approach, including the involvement of President Al-Assad in the fight against Islamic State terror. In my opinion the priority is the fight against terrorism. This is not possible without powers such as Russia and Iran."

Further, Professor John Gray, a retired political philosopher who taught for many years at London School of Economics, recently wrote about the importance of prioritising peace over the type of political system in place. He wrote:

"The form of government – democratic, despotic, monarchical or republican – is less important than the capacity to deliver peace."

In my opinion, this was an extremely insightful comment, yet the world's major powers have continued to prioritise regime change in countries that were previously relatively stable.

For example, the West was determined to remove Saddam Hussein from Iraq and the painful consequences of that war 13 years ago continue to be felt to this day. Another prominent example is Libya, whereby President Gaddafi was forcibly removed from office in 2011 and ever since Libya has spiralled into a state of lawlessness and unbridled chaos.

A direct consequence of the political vacuum in Libya has been the fact that Daesh has now built a significant base and terror network in the country, which it is continuing to strengthen. The situation is now extremely dangerous, not only for the region, but also for Europe and this is something that I warned of some years ago. Therefore, the priority in such countries should not be regime change for the sake of it.

Rather, it should be to ensure that the members of the public are given their due rights and for long-term peace to be established. Going back to

Syria, I agree with the Austrian Foreign Minister when he says that the overriding objective should be to establish peace. Hence, the major powers should be willing to open the channels of communication with Syria's Government and to seek the help of other neighbouring countries that have influence in the region.

Remember, positive change is only possible if one is willing to set aside their personal interests for the greater good and is willing to act fairly at all times. As I have already said, Islam says that justice is the foundation upon which peace is built. And so we must pay heed to the urgent issues of our time. For many years I have warned that the world is moving rapidly towards another World War and now others are reaching the same conclusion.

In fact, some prominent people are now saying that they believe that a World War has already begun. Nonetheless, I believe that we still have the time to stop such a war in its tracks but the solution remains, as I have already said, to act with justice and to leave aside all vested interests. On a number of previous occasions, I have spoken about the critical importance of cutting the funding and supply lines of extremist groups.

Yet it cannot be said that full efforts are being made in this regard. For example, a recent special investigative report published by the Wall Street Journal stated that Daesh was acquiring huge quantities of US dollars from auctions being held by Iraq's central bank.

Those same dollars were being provided to Iraq directly from the Federal Reserve in the United States. The article stated that the US Government had known about this since at least June 2015, but personally I believe that world powers knew about such trading for much longer.

Furthermore, in terms of the sale of oil, it is well-known that different groups and even governments are purchasing oil from Daesh. Why has this trade not been stopped? Why have comprehensive sanctions not been imposed to prevent such deals? It seems that when it comes to acquiring oil, morality goes out of the window. This is a point that was also made by Professor Leif Wenar of King's College London in a recent article where he said:

"The world tolerates all forms of atrocities for the sake of gaining oil. Thus countries have bought oil from Daesh and from Sudan where a lot of human rights abuses have taken place. This is a violation of proper fundamental market economics – whereby violence should not create property rights."

Furthermore, in a recent article, the Director of the Iraq Energy Institute explained how Daesh was selling its oil. The author wrote:

"Crude oil is transported by tankers to Jordan via Anbar province, to Iran via Kurdistan, to Turkey via Mosul, to Syria's local market and to the Kurdistan region of Iraq, where most of it gets refined locally. It defies logic to say that state officials are not complicit in this trade."

Therefore, whilst it is claimed that all possible efforts are being made to eradicate terrorism and extremism, the evidence does not substantiate this claim. Given all of this, how can it be said that there is true justice in the world? How can it be claimed that honesty and integrity are considered paramount? Similarly, recently there has been widespread media coverage documenting the global arms trade.

According to official reports last year the United States exported weapons worth \$46.6 billion dollars, which was an increase of more than \$12 billion dollars from the previous year. It was further reported that the majority of those weapons were sold to countries in the Middle East and in turn they were fuelling the wars in

Syria, Iraq and Yemen. I reiterate that if such trading is taking place, how is it possible for justice and peace to be established?

These few examples I have cited are all in the public domain and are the views of respected analysts and commentators. Until principles of justice are exhibited at all levels of society and between nations we will not see true peace in the world. Without justice it could take decades to defeat the evil that is Daesh and other extremist groups.

However, if the world heeds this message and comes to manifest justice and genuine efforts are made to restrict the funding and supply lines of terrorism then I believe – unlike a retired American Military General who recently said the war against Daesh will last between 10 and 20 years – that the networks of terrorism tormenting the world can be destroyed imminently.

In conclusion, it is my belief that unless the world comes to recognise its Creator and accepts Him as the Sustainer of mankind, true justice cannot prevail. Not only will true justice not prevail, but we will also experience a lethal nuclear war whose catastrophic consequences will be faced by our future generations. I pray that the world comes to understand this reality. I pray that we all play our respective roles in furthering the cause of humanity. And I pray that true peace, based upon justice, is established in all parts of the world. With these words I would like to once again take the opportunity to thank all of our guests for joining us this evening.

May Allah bless you all. Thank you very much."

#### Key for Salutations:

- sa Sallallaaho Alaihi wa Sallam – "May peace and blessings of Allah be upon him." This is written after the name of the Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup>.
- as Alaihis Salaam – "May peace be upon him." This is written after the name of Prophets other than the Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup>.
- ra Razi-Allaaho anhu/anha/anhum – "May Allah be pleased with him/her." This is written after names of the Companions of the Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup> and of the Promised Messiah<sup>as</sup>.
- aba Ayyadahullaahu Ta'aalaa binasrihil Aziz – "May Allah the Almighty help him with His powerful support" Written after the name of the current Khalifa of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community.

## The Ahmadiyya Muslim Prize for the Advancement of Peace

The Ahmadiyya Muslim Prize for the Advancement of Peace is an international award that was launched in 2009. It is awarded in recognition of an individual's or an organisation's contribution for the advancement of the cause of peace.



YEAR	RECIPIENT
2009	Lord Eric Avebury – UK
2010	Abdul Sattar Edhi – Pakistan
2011	SOS Children's Villages – UK
2012	Dr Boachie-Adjei – Ghana
2013	Magnus MacFarlane-Barrow – Scotland
2014	Mrs Sindhutai Sapkal – India
2015	Hadeel Qassim – Iraq

### Tribute to Lord Eric Avebury

At the 2016 Peace Symposium, the National President of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community UK paid tribute to Lord Avebury who was a true champion for the human rights of all. He was a dear friend of the Community and served in Parliament for more than 50 years. May God reward Lord Avebury abundantly for his noble work that he carried out throughout his life. Ameen.



### Introduction to the 2015 recipient of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Prize for the Advancement of Peace

Hadeel Qassim from Iraq has made a tremendous difference to the lives of refugees, especially children who have been displaced as a result of conflicts.

Hadeel was a refugee herself when her family fled to Syria when the Iraq war started in 2003. They stayed there for one year and while living as a refugee in Syria, she experienced first hand how children, fleeing their home need special care and attention. This moved her to help other children – in particular to support Syrian children as Syrians helped her family and other Iraqi refugees during the Iraq conflict.

On returning to Iraq Hadeel decided to leave home and live in the dangerous and inhospitable refugee camps in extreme temperatures to serve in the field of child protection.

The children live in dire conditions – in dilapidated tents and many are contaminated to a degree where children get respiratory diseases from living in them. The children have faced abuse, torture, sexual violence, beatings and threats. Many have also lost their entire family in the war and they are in desperate need of psychological and social support.

Hadeel has worked tirelessly to provide children with hope and a small but vital degree of security.

Hadeel worked to support and assist children during the terrible conflicts and who had witnessed the horrors of war. She has also worked in Erbil to alleviate the sufferings of Kurdish child refugees. More recently Hadeel has been working with displaced people in Baghdad again to do what she can to help them.



### Address by Hadeel Qassim

First of all, I would like to take this opportunity to thank the worldwide head of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community, Hazrat Mirza Masroor Ahmad, for this wonderful award and for inviting me to this event today. I am honoured for I did not think anyone would know about me.

I am from Iraq where I do my best to help children – children who have suffered terribly and need protection.

I have been working in the field of child protection for many years because I believe we must do everything we can to support children's rights and to improve their lives, because they have the right to survive and thrive in spite of all the conflicts and disputes in Syria and Iraq .... Life is very difficult in refugee camps and is difficult to imagine. People cannot get the basic needs such as food, shelter, health and education.

We are all human, we are all equal and those children are our shared responsibility. Their voices need to be heard, and their right to live in dignity with their beloved ones must be respected. It is heartbreaking to see children orphaned, or to have lost their family members. They must know that we all are there to help them.

I, like many other refugee workers, do what we can in very difficult conditions. There are problems, threats and the ongoing war but I am determined to go on. You don't know how happy it makes me to see children smile, when they see that they can come to child friendly space and play with their peers. It was a real relief for me to hear the voices of their laughter. It was a great experience for me and only few people can feel the difference who went through the same situation. They are children so should enjoy a happy childhood.

The majority of children when they were first attending the camps were so fearful and worried and one could notice that through their drawings about tanks and military aircrafts but I work to change that thinking and after few months, they started to draw optimistic things like being teachers or even humanitarian workers to assist conflict uprooted families.

I want to say a few words about the current situation for displaced people and Syrian refugees living in Iraq; Around 10 million people are in need of humanitarian assistance and protection in Iraq. 3.2 million people are internally displaced. In addition, Iraq hosts around 250,000 Syrian refugees. They are all fleeing from violence and conflict and have the right to seek safety and protection.

All I ask is that all parties to the conflict must ensure that displaced people can move freely in order to access lifesaving humanitarian assistance and protection.

Syrian refugees face hard issues when they try to travel to Europe to live a better life. They are vulnerable to death while passing all the dangerous route to Europe. It is a horrible choice – to stay and survive in a war zone or to leave and take a dangerous journey with little else but hope. I pray the conflict ends soon.

Finally I would like to take this opportunity to thank all of you for listening to me. I appreciate the wonderful work the Ahmadiyya Muslim community is doing to help those suffering. I pray that all of us can do more to end the conflict and end the suffering, especially of our children.

Thank you.

## INTRODUCTION AND GUEST SPEAKERS



### RAFIQ HAYAT

National President (Amir) of the  
Ahmadiyya Muslim Community UK

It is distressing that the world today is steeped in much conflict and turmoil. In just this past month we have seen bombings in Pakistan and Turkey and innocent civilians murdered in Ivory Coast. If we reflect wider we see that there are growing tensions in many countries with an increase in supremacist and extremist views as countries face economic hardships. Additionally as the terrible conflicts rage on across the Middle East the displacement of millions of people adds further strain on international relations.

It is a bleak picture and one that leaves little room for real hope. However as ever in such times it becomes even more important to retain hope and it becomes even more critical for people to see how such challenges can be overcome and how peace can really be achieved.

This is one reason why this event is held, so that we can unite for the sake of saving, serving and preserving humanity. Indeed we believe that it was for the sake of uniting humanity that the founder of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community was commissioned in 1889, by God, as the reformer of this age. Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad – whom we accept as the Promised Messiah – founded the community in India and sought to revive the true teachings of Islam which are teachings of peace.

And it is this message and absolute belief in peace, compassion and justice, coupled with a desire to win the pleasure of God, that the community has grown and expanded to 207 countries of the world. The community is entirely self-funding, is focused on education, humanitarian work and the jihad of self-improvement and of spreading peace. These are principles of peace that are based on an

unequivocal belief in a compassionate, living God.

After the demise of the founder the community has been led by a series of Caliphs who have held aloft the torch of peace for the past 127 years. Today the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community is the world's largest organised Muslim community led by a global spiritual leader and it is our distinct honour that tonight our Caliph, His Holiness Hazrat Mirza Masroor Ahmad is with us and will deliver the keynote address.

In his speeches in parliaments and other forums across the world, His Holiness has repeatedly urged mankind to focus on unity as opposed to division and stressed the need to work together to eradicate every form of extremism and terrorism. He has also called upon the international community to work on the principle of absolute justice so that all have equal opportunities to live in peace and to work for the cause of peace. Indeed it is under His Holiness's wise leadership that the Ahmadiyya Muslim community has instigated global campaigns for peace. In the UK alone this has included an outreach programme that has already reached more than 5 million households in person.

We are delighted that you all have chosen to be with us tonight and if only everyone had the same desire to learn, increase understanding and make sincere efforts for peace, then I am sure the world would be a much more harmonious place. We thank you and hope that the evening provides food for thought and brings us all closer for the sake of peace.

### SIQBHAIN MCDONAGH MP

Siobhain McDonagh Member of Parliament for Mitcham and Morden, Chair of the All Party Parliamentary Group for the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community



It's a great pleasure to be invited to today's symposium, which continues to grow from strength to strength after many years. I welcome His Holiness Hazrat Mirza Masroor Ahmad to Merton as an internationally respected voice of peace. I would like to pay tribute to an individual who dedicated his life to serving the cause of peace, a former winner of the prestigious Ahmadiyya Muslim Peace Prize, which we are celebrating today. Lord Avebury, sadly passed away earlier this year after a life dedicated to the protection of human rights, religious and of ethnic minorities throughout the world. His loss is felt greatly, and his life of fighting for justice is a model to us all.

I crave your indulgence in remembering a great friend of mine and colleague and a great friend of the Ahmadiyya community and of Baitul Futuh

Mosque in particular, Councillor Maxi Martin cannot be with us tonight because she is unwell. It is the first peace symposium that she has ever missed and it would be a great comfort to her if I could tell her that you will remember her in your thoughts and prayers. I am so proud that the Borough of Merton is the UK and worldwide headquarters of the Ahmadiyya Muslim community, which makes an incredible contribution to the richness and diversity of our community. It is a community that contributes greatly to this country and your belief in peace and religious tolerance is an example to us all – as you would expect from a community whose motto is, "Love for All, Hatred For None". I am very proud to chair the All Party Parliamentary Group for the Ahmadiyya Muslim community to make my small contribution to the vital aim of justice, thank you.

**"I am so proud that the Borough of Merton is the UK and worldwide headquarters of the Ahmadiyya Muslim community, which makes an incredible contribution to the richness and diversity of our community."**

### ZAC GOLDSMITH MP

MP for Richmond Park and North Kingston



Your Holiness, members of the congregation, I want to thank you for inviting me to this magnificent occasion. I have never left this mosque yet without a feeling of deep inspiration and also positivity, even after the fire that affected this mosque very badly, at the end of last year. I want to thank Stephen Hammond, a very

good friend of mine and a local MP - your local MP. He has been a loyal friend of this mosque in parliament, working hard always across party lines to make sure that you have a voice at the highest levels of government.

Today more than ever, that voice is needed, it must be heard. London is one of the most diverse

cities on earth. Eight and a half million people 300 languages and the whole world effectively walks the streets of our great city. People make their lives here because of the freedom we offer to be who you want to be.

“Love for All Hatred for None”, it is an ideal this community holds dear but really it should be a motto for the whole of Greater London and many of you here in this hall know from direct personal experiences the scale of the challenge that we are up against. For over a century the Ahmadiyya Muslim community has taken a stand against hatred, but you have faced it down with compassion, with love and with practical help to bring communities together.

Everyday, you put those values into practice,

**“But there is one image for me, which sums up what the Ahmadiyya are all about. And it is the red double decker bus emblazoned with the words ‘United Against Extremism’, an iconic symbol of London carrying a universal message of peace and solidarity.”**

from the young Ahmadi Muslims who go out on the street of London every autumn and sell poppies for the Royal British Legion, to Lord Ahmad, my very good friend here who serves this country as a minister of the Crown working day in day out at the Home Office to tackle the scourge of extremism. But there is one image for me, which sums up what the Ahmadiyya are all about. And it is the red double decker bus emblazoned with the words ‘United Against Extremism’, an iconic symbol of London carrying a universal message of peace and solidarity...I look forward to working very closely with this community and more importantly I look forward to learning from this community. Thank you very much for inviting me here today.



**RT HON JUSTINE GREENING MP**

Secretary for State for International Development



It’s a real privilege to be able to join all of you and so many distinguished guests along with His Holiness for tonight’s event. We have a record number of people now who rely on humanitarian support just to literally be able to stay alive, it’s 125 million people and the problem that they face is it’s really the size of a country, but they don’t have a head of state. So when I go to the United Nations like I did on Monday this week, there isn’t that head of state there to talk about what their issues are and to make sure that their children are in school, that they have the kind of health that they need. That’s left to the rest of us to make sure that that happens and I am very

proud that our country is one of those that does play a key role in making sure that people around the world who need help, whether they are affected by the Syria crisis or whether they are in places where the cameras often aren’t, whether it’s Sudan or Central African Republic that we are one of those countries who is there tirelessly working away. I say the word country because although I am obviously very involved in what the UK government is doing, actually one of the things I have been proudest of in this role is to meet the many British people and British charities that are working alongside the Department for International Development to help provide

support to the people that we work for. Many of them do it with funding from DFID, but actually we wouldn’t be able to do the work we do without UK charities like Save the Children, like Mary’s Meals and so many others, but one of those of course is Humanity First and another one of course is the Ahmadiyya Muslim Youth Association. Both of these elements of the community play their own important role in helping to rise to the challenge that these massive numbers of people who need so much

support to stay alive.

So I just want to say how proud I am to be able to play a role in representing the community as a local MP but also to say that in my broader role within government. It’s a privilege to be able to work alongside Humanity First and to see the fantastic fund raising that the youth association does to enable Humanity First to do so much work, so thank you very much and I hope we have an enjoyable evening. Thank you.

**It’s a privilege to be able to work alongside Humanity First and to see the fantastic fund raising that the youth association does to enable Humanity First to do so much work...”**



**LORD AHMAD OF WIMBLEDON**  
Minister for Countering Extremism  
and Minister for Transport

It’s an immense pleasure and privilege for me to address this august gathering once again and I do so as the minister responsible for countering extremism. The challenge we face which is both domestic and indeed international. But there can be no better example than that exemplified by the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community and indeed that under the Divine and inspirational Leadership of His Holiness, Hazrat Mirza Masroor Ahmad, who confront and counter extremism, not just by words but by actions, not just domestically but internationally. A living walking example of how a Muslim community, a true Muslim community guided by God with a Khalifa at the helm, a Khalifa guided by God, the Khalifa of Islam; who inspires not just his own community but people around the world. Indeed as we have heard His Holiness has addressed many parliamentarians and I am

delighted I am joined by colleagues from across the political spectrum today but in particular by my colleagues within government, those who are serving, such as Justine Greening, such as Paul Scully and others who are serving and raising the voice of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community about the justice and the inspiration that you provide. Equally I am also delighted we are joined by the former Attorney General, Dominic Grieve, who also has been a good friend of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community. All of us stand by the community, I perhaps have a personal connection because I am of the community. But that also instills in me that desire to serve humanity, an example which is inspired by our Holiness Hazrat Mirza Masroor Ahmad. So ladies and gentlemen, I think we are here not just to listen today but also to learn but it is a delight and honour to be with you once again.

**“.. a true Muslim community guided by God with a Khalifa at the helm, a Khalifa guided by God, the Khalifa of Islam; who inspires not just his own community but people around the world.”**

## Message of Support from The Vatican



Ahmadiyya Muslim Community  
National Peace Symposium  
"Justice: The Foundation for Lasting Peace"  
London, 19 March 2016

On behalf of the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, I welcome the opportunity to offer this prayerful greeting to the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community on the occasion of the National Peace Symposium dedicated to the important theme, "Justice: The Foundation for Lasting Peace".

Following the teaching and example of Pope Francis, an attitude of openness in truth and in love should characterize every instance of dialogue, "in spite of various obstacles and difficulties".

Such dialogue is "a necessary condition for peace in the world," and so it becomes our happy duty, and we gladly embrace every opportunity.

"A dialogue which seeks social peace and justice is in itself, beyond all merely practical considerations, an ethical commitment which brings about a new social situation."

Accordingly, may you deal with the great theme of "Justice as the Foundation for Lasting Peace" in a process of mutual listening. Thereby all participants can be purified and enriched, encouraged and transformed. "These efforts, therefore, can also express love for truth."<sup>i</sup>

Allow me to offer for your consideration, an interpretation of present-day challenges by Pope Francis that might enrich your discussions. He teaches that: "When a society - whether local, national or global - is willing to leave a part of itself on the fringes, no political programmes or resources spent on law enforcement or surveillance systems can indefinitely guarantee tranquillity. This is ... because the socioeconomic system is unjust at its root." Justice indeed is the fulcrum, the axis for reorienting societies from degradation to fulfilment and peace. "Just as goodness tends to spread, the toleration of evil, which is injustice, tends to expand its baneful influence and quietly to undermine any political and social system, no matter how solid it may appear. If every action has its consequences, an evil embedded in the structures of a society has a constant potential for disintegration and death. It is evil crystallized in unjust social structures, which cannot be the basis of hope for a better future."<sup>ii</sup>

In addition to hosting this annual conference, I note from your literature that you promote public education about peace. With Pope Francis, I commend you for actively taking on this responsibility, and for your efforts "to favour justice, promote reconciliation and build peace."<sup>iii</sup>

May your gathering and deliberations be enriched by God's guidance and inspiration, and may His Peace be with you all!

Cardinal Peter K.A Turkson,  
President

<sup>i</sup> Please see Pope Francis' Exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium* of November 2013, especially § 250.

<sup>ii</sup> *Evangelii Gaudium* §59.

<sup>iii</sup> Pope Francis, *Address to Representatives of the Different Religions*, 20 March 2013.

## The 2016 National Peace Symposium



Over 900 people attended the Symposium and were also given a tour of the Baitul Futuh Mosque complex.



Meeting with Parliamentarians and diplomats.



Meeting with members of the British press.



Meeting with members of the Asian press.



Various exhibitions about the community's work were featured at the event.

**Loyalty**

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**Freedom**

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**Equality**

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**Respect**

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**Peace**



**[www.LoveForAllHatredForNone.org](http://www.LoveForAllHatredForNone.org)**

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