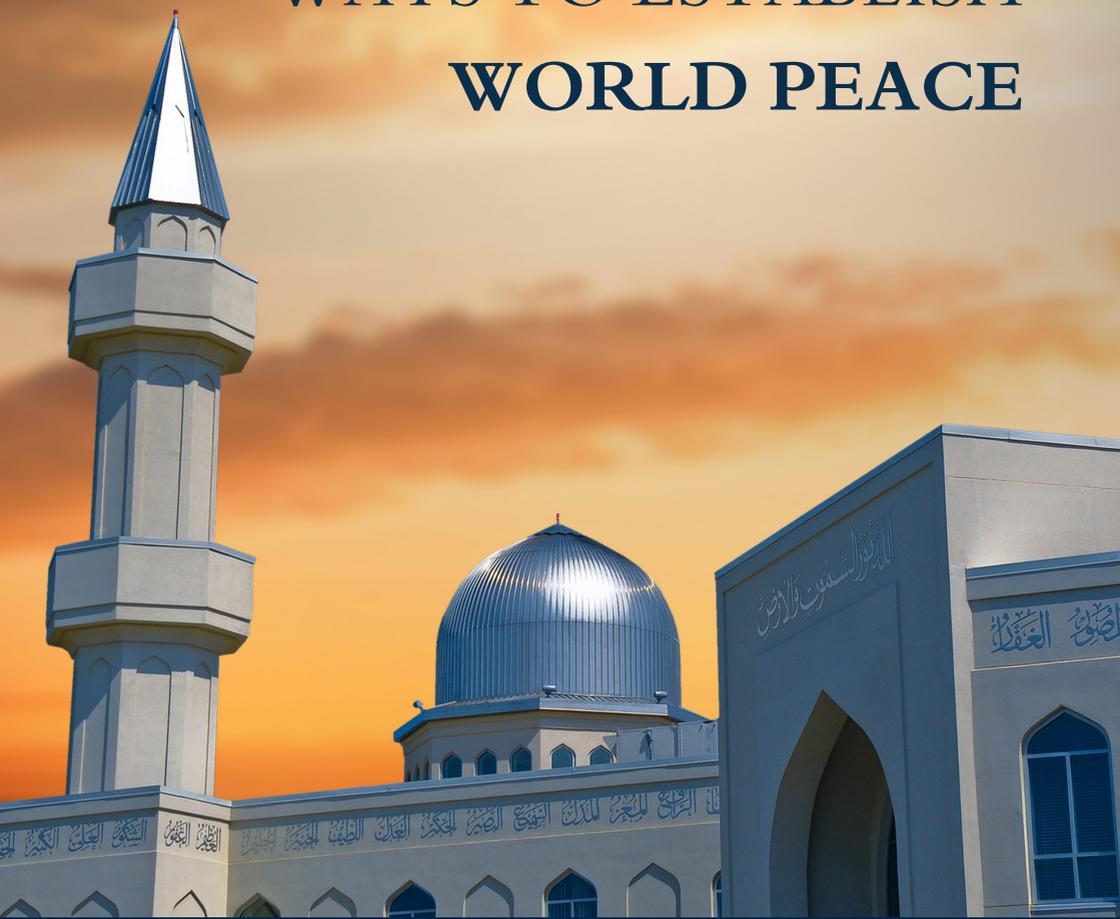


WAYS TO ESTABLISH WORLD PEACE



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ADDRESS BY WORLDWIDE HEAD OF THE AHMADIYYA MUSLIM COMMUNITY AT THE CALGARY PEACE SYMPOSIUM IN CANADA

On 11 November 2016, the Worldwide Head of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community, the Fifth Khalifa (Caliph), His Holiness, Hazrat Mirza Masroor Ahmad, delivered the keynote address at the Calgary Peace Symposium, hosted by the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community in Canada. More than 800 people, including over 650 dignitaries and guests, attended the event, including Canada's former Prime Minister, Right Honourable Stephen Harper, the Mayor of Calgary, Naheed Nenshi, Provincial Minister of Human Services, Irfan Sabir, and Federal Member of Parliament, Darshan Kang. Also attending were various senior representatives of the First Nations community, leading academics and media. We present below the keynote address delivered by His Holiness on this occasion.





In the name of Allah, the Gracious, the Merciful.

Hazrat Mirza Masroor Ahmad, Khalifatul Masih V, Worldwide Head of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community, said:

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

All distinguished guests, Assalamo Alaikum Wa Rahmatullahe Wa Barakatohu - peace and blessings of Allah be upon you all.

First of all I would like to take this opportunity to thank all of you for attending today’s event. Our local Ahmadi officials here in Canada have requested that I speak today about the means and ways to establish world peace. Certainly, everyone appreciates that the world stands in great need of peace and harmony, yet despite comprehending this, it seems as though people are unwilling to take the necessary steps to achieve it. It is very easy to speak about striving for peace, but in reality, the efforts being made in this regard are nowhere near enough.

Regrettably, in many parts of the world, far greater priority is being given, either directly or indirectly, towards asserting dominance and supremacy over others and satisfying a craving for power and authority. Upon hearing this, some of you may question what a Muslim leader can say about establishing world peace, given that the disorder in today’s world revolves primarily around Muslim countries or so-called Islamic groups. Indeed, in the interests of fairness and balance, I cannot deny the fact that today’s conflicts and wars do indeed centre upon certain Muslim countries.

Undoubtedly, the evil acts of certain so-called Islamic groups has caused for fear and panic to spread in the non-Muslim world. People in the West are becoming

increasingly frightened of Islam and consider it to be a threat to their civilisation and way of life. Consequently, I understand if some of you consider it a strange paradox that a Muslim leader is here to talk about developing



world peace. However, before casting judgement, it is essential that people are familiar with Islam's true teachings. No one should assume that the acts of extremists or terrorists are in accordance with Islam.

The Islam that I know and practice, is based upon the teachings of the Holy Quran, the most sacred and holy book for all Muslims, and upon the life and teachings of the Founder of Islam, the Holy Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). Therefore, in the time available, it is these original Islamic teachings that I will present, so that you can make an informed judgement about whether Islam does promote

violence and division, or whether it is a religion that fosters tolerance and mutual respect throughout society. First of all, I will mention a golden principle for establishing peace that is enshrined in chapter 16, verse 91 of the Holy Quran, where Allah the Almighty says:

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

Hence, the Quran does not only call upon Muslims to be fair and just, but rather it has established a far higher standard of treating others. Where Allah the Almighty says, “giving like kindred”, He requires a believer to favour others and to always desire the very best

for them. It requires Muslims to treat all other people like their close family members. It obliges that they strive to love others, without any desire for reward, just as a mother selflessly loves her child. Furthermore, the Quran does not say that a Muslim should treat only their fellow Muslims in this way, rather it says that they should love 'others' and this includes Muslims and non-Muslims alike.

Yet, when we see the state of certain Muslim countries today, it is clear that this Islamic teaching has been completely ignored. Many Muslim governments have failed to fulfil the rights of their people and this has led to long-term and deeply held frustrations developing amongst the public. As a result, rebel and terrorist groups have formed, and all parties have been guilty of inflicting the most horrendous acts of cruelty. Previously, successful nations have been torn apart and immersed in calamitous civil wars.

All of this conflict and warfare is based upon the fact that the majority of Muslims have forgotten the true teachings of their religion and are failing to fulfil the rights of one another. Rather than manifesting justice and integrity,

they are motivated solely by greed and a desire for power. Tragically, the end result is that peace is being eroded, as restlessness entrenches itself amongst the masses.

In terms of the standards of justice that Islam advocates, in chapter 4, verse 136 of the Holy Quran, Allah the Almighty says:

“O ye who believe! Be strict in observing justice, and be witnesses for Allah, even though it be against yourselves or against parents and kindred. Whether he be rich or poor, Allah is more regardful of them both than you are. Therefore, follow not low desires so that you may be able to act equitably...And if you conceal the truth or evade it, then remember that Allah is well aware of what you do.”

This verse demonstrates the fact that Islam's teachings are never cruel nor unjust, rather they are based upon unparalleled standards of fairness, wherein the Quran states that a person should be ready to testify against himself or his loved ones in order to uphold the truth. It is very easy to say that “I am ready to speak against myself”, however to practically live up to this standard is incredibly difficult.



Yet, this is the target and challenge that Allah the Almighty has laid down to the Muslims, wherein He has said that true justice cannot transpire until a person is willing to set aside all personal interests. If practiced, this unique principle is the means of establishing peace, not just in Muslim countries, but in every village, every town, every city and in every nation of the world. Whilst, it is commonly alleged that Islam promotes extremism, such allegations are based upon ignorance and a lack of understanding of its true teachings. A person who reflects and ponders upon Islam's teachings in a fair way, will see that they are diametrically opposed to all forms of cruelty, prejudice and evil. Islam lays the foundation for peace at every level of society and this includes the relationship between nations themselves. Hence, in chapter 49, verse 10, Allah the Almighty says:

“And if two parties of believers fight against each other, make peace between them; then if after that one of them transgresses against the other, fight the party that transgresses until it returns to the command of Allah. Then if it returns, make peace between them with equity, and act justly. Verily, Allah loves the just.”

In this verse, Allah has stated that if two parties or nations are in a state of conflict then their neighbours and allies should seek to bring about reconciliation. If peace cannot be established through dialogue, then the other nations should unite against whosoever is perpetrating injustice and use force to stop them. I personally believe that this outstanding Quranic principle is not just of value to Muslims, but if acted upon by the United Nations and by the major powers of the world, would prove a means of stabilising the world and developing sustainable peace.

However, neither Muslim countries, nor non-Muslim countries are seeking peace along these lines.

For instance, following both the First World War and the Second World War this principle of mediation and conflict resolution was not observed and this led to grievances between nations that have simmered away ever since. Therefore, any efforts that were made to curb the growth of opposing blocs and alliances and to unify the world proved futile and unsuccessful. This is not a secret or something new that I am saying. Rather, in recent years, a number of



commentators and columnists have openly criticised organisations tasked with maintaining the world's peace and security, primarily the United Nations, and said that they have failed to fulfil their objectives because of an inherent lack of fairness.

Furthermore, in order to establish a just society, chapter 5, verse 9 of the Holy Quran states:

“O ye who believe! Be steadfast in the cause of Allah, bearing witness in equity; and let not a people's enmity incite you to act otherwise than with justice. Be always just, that is nearer to righteousness. And fear Allah. Surely, Allah is aware of what you do.”

This verse states that a Muslim is duty-bound to act fairly even with his greatest enemy and that hostility or enmity must never lead a person towards seeking revenge. Upon hearing all of this, some of you may query that if these really are Islam's teachings, and if it truly is a religion of peace and justice, then how is it that the concept of warfare and Jihad became associated with Muslims? To answer this question, I shall again refer to the Quran itself. History bears witness to the fact that following his claim of prophethood, the Founder of Islam, the Holy Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) and his early followers were subjected to thirteen years of relentless cruelty and bitter persecution in the city of Makkah.

Ultimately, they were forced to migrate to the city of Madinah in order to seek respite. However, the non-Muslims of Makkah still did not let them live in peace but pursued them to Madinah and waged war upon them. It was then, and only then, that Allah the Almighty permitted the Muslims to fight back for the very first time. This permission for defensive warfare was given in chapter 22, verse 40 of the Holy Quran, which states:

“Permission to fight is given to those against whom war is made, because they have been wronged - and Allah indeed has power to help them.”

In the subsequent verse, Allah the Almighty further clarified and elaborated this matter. Thus, chapter 22, verse 41 the Holy Quran states:

“Those who have been driven out of from their homes unjustly only because they said, ‘Our Lord is Allah’ - And if Allah did not repel some men by means of others, there would surely have been pulled down cloisters and churches and synagogues and mosques wherein the name of Allah is oft commemorated. And Allah will

surely help one who helps Him. Allah is indeed Powerful, Mighty.”

This verse stipulates that permission to fight back was not granted to the Muslims because of the cruelty they faced. Rather, they were instructed to fight back in order to safeguard the wider society and to defend the rights of all people to profess their faith and beliefs freely and without fear. It is a great manifestation of the enlightened teachings of Islam that the Quran did not grant the Muslims permission to fight in order to protect Islam, or out of a fear that all mosques would be demolished. Rather, permission was granted to protect all religions and all places of worship, whether churches, temples, synagogues, mosques or any others.

Thus those early Muslims did not risk their lives to defend themselves, but to shield mankind itself, and to uphold the universal values of freedom of conscience and belief. Those Muslims risked their lives in order to push back against the hand of oppression that sought to destroy the peace of the world. Moreover, Islamic history bears witness to the fact that where such defensive wars did take place, the Holy Prophet of Islam (peace and blessings of Allah



be upon him) laid down extremely strict rules of engagement to ensure that the Muslim armies perpetrated no cruelty.

He specifically instructed that churches, synagogues, temples and all other places of worship were never to be targeted. Similarly, Muslims were not permitted to attack priests, rabbis or any religious leaders. Nor were women, children or the elderly ever to be harmed and nor were crops or trees to be destroyed. It is a historical fact that the Prophet of Islam (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), his four rightly guided successors and

thereafter those Muslim rulers who followed Islam's true teachings, always honoured and protected the sanctity of all places of worship and of all religions. It indeed remains obligatory upon all Muslims to abide by such principles because chapter 2, verse 191 of the Holy Quran states:

“And fight in the cause of Allah against those who fight against you, but do not transgress. Surely, Allah loves not the transgressors.”

This very clear and categorical instruction lays down the conditions for warfare in Islam. It requires that Muslims must never themselves



wage war or take aggressive measures. Thus, those who claim that Islam permits belligerence or a violent Jihad are completely misguided. Furthermore, chapter 8, verse 62 of the Holy Quran states that Muslims must be ready to grasp hold of all opportunities for peace and reconciliation, regardless of the circumstances. In this verse, Allah the Almighty states:

“And if they incline towards peace, incline thou also towards it, and put thy trust in Allah. Surely, it is He who is All-Hearing, All-Knowing.”

This means that a Muslim should always pursue every possible pathway to peace. For example, even though an appeal for a ceasefire may simply be a military tactic in order to buy some time to regroup or to prepare for further aggressive assaults. Thus, in chapter 8, verse 63 of the Holy Quran, Allah the Almighty states:

“And if they intend to deceive thee, then surely Allah is sufficient for thee. He it is who has strengthened thee with His help and with the believers.”

Consequently, even if there is a fear that one's opponents may be engaged in deception, a Muslim has been told to set aside such fears and to place his trust in the Hands of God Almighty. In light of all that I have presented, can it still be suggested that Islam is an extremist and violent religion? Quite clearly the answer to this is 'No'. Rather, it has been clearly proven that if today's Muslims are perpetrating brutalities and conducting unspeakable acts then they are violating Islam's teachings. Therefore, how could it ever be permissible for Muslims to enter foreign lands



to engage in callous murder and ruthless savagery? Moving forward, whilst some people may accept that Islam's teachings are peaceful, they may question whether such teachings were actually practiced and implemented during the time of the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). In this respect, you do not have to take my word for it, rather see what non- Muslim historians and orientalists, who carefully studied the era of the Founder of Islam (peace and blessings of Allah be

upon him), have to say about him and his companions. For example, Stanley Lane-Poole, a British orientalist and archeologist, who was also Professor of Arabic Studies at Dublin University, wrote about the conduct of the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) following his victorious return to his hometown of Makkah after years of persecution. Professor Stanley Lane-Poole wrote: "The day of Muhammad's greatest triumph over his enemies was also the day of his grandest victory over



himself...He freely forgave the Quraish all the years of sorrow and cruel scorn they had inflicted on him, and he gave an amnesty to the whole population of Makkah. The army followed his example and entered quietly and peaceably. No house was robbed, no woman insulted... It was thus that Muhammad entered again his native city. Through all the annals of conquest, there is no triumphant entry comparable to this one.“ 1

hus, this writer testifies to the fact that at the time of triumph, the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) did not seek glory and nor did he seek vengeance against those who had tormented him and his followers. Rather, his response was to grant forgiveness to each and all alike. Therefore, let me again make it categorically clear that those who conduct terrorism or extremism are directly contravening the teachings of the Holy Quran and the practice of the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him).

Where the Prophet of Islam (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) forgave those who had tortured him and his loved ones, the so-called Muslims of today are the people who are persecuting and mercilessly killing innocent individuals. Nonetheless, it is also pertinent to mention that the wars being fought in the Muslim world today are being fueled, whether overtly or covertly, from outside of the region. None of the Muslim governments, rebel groups and terrorist organisations have the capability to manufacture the array of extremely destructive and

1 Lane-Poole, S. (1882), *The Speeches and Table Talk of the Prophet Muhammad*, London, MacMillan.

sophisticated weapons that they are using. Thus, the vast majority of the weapons being used in countries like Syria and Iraq are imported from abroad and so the nations that are manufacturing such lethal weapons and trading with Muslim states must also take their share of responsibility for today's disorder.

Many analysts and experts have proven beyond doubt that the weapons being used by the terrorist group 'Daesh' and by other rebel or extremist groups were originally produced in the West or in Eastern Europe. Consequently, instead of bringing an end to the wars plaguing the Muslim world, the major powers are actually further igniting them. Rather than prioritising peace, they have continually sought to influence and even profit from warfare. Whenever civil wars or conflict have erupted in Muslim countries it would have been far better if only the neighbouring countries had intervened and had undertaken the responsibility of restoring peace to their region.

Yet the foreign policies and business interests of the major powers dictated otherwise. For example, a number of Western nations have continued to sell billions of dollars



worth of heavy weaponry to Saudi Arabia, despite the fact that those very weapons are being used to inflict devastating cruelties upon the very small Arab nation of Yemen. The indiscriminate firing and bombardment is destroying millions of lives, razing towns and cities and resulting in the deaths of thousands of entirely blameless people. Even places of refuge, such as hospitals have also been targeted.



The same is true in Syria and Iraq where the doctors and nurses who have bravely taken on the mantle of trying to help the victims of those wars have themselves been attacked. Likewise, places of worship are being routinely targeted, as are multi-storey residential buildings in which innocent women and children are being killed. How can any of this be justified? How can it be tolerated in this day and age? And what is the end result of such unjust policies? It is that the youth of those nations are being radicalised. Having lost all hope for

their own futures, they are reacting by perpetrating horrific acts of terrorism in the West against those nations that they believe have played a leading hand in their misery. Hence, I say again, that the world stands in urgent need of peace. Today is being commemorated as Remembrance Day here in Canada and also in many other parts of the world, and if we look back to the Second World War we see how around 70million people lost their lives. Even after the passing of many decades, when a person reflects upon the destruction and

brutalities that took place, it sends a shiver up one's spine. That fateful war taught us that modern day warfare is not aligned to religion, but is a culmination of greed and an unquenchable thirst for power. It was also a war in which the world had to contend with the use of nuclear weapons for the very first time. Writing about their use by the United States, and contrasting this grave cruelty with the example of the Prophet of Islam (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), Ruth Cranston, a prominent 20th century author, wrote in the 1949 book, *World Faith*, that:

“Muhammad never instigated fighting and bloodshed. Every battle he fought was in rebuttal. He fought defensively in order to survive... and he fought with the weapons and in the fashion of his time... Certainly no Christian nation of 140million people who today dispatches 120,000 helpless civilians with a single bomb, can look askance at a leader who at his worst killed a bare five or six hundred.”

This is not the statement of a Muslim or someone prone to bias, rather was made by a fair and respected non-Muslim author. The

reality is that the wars taking place today are not fought for religious reasons, but are being fought for geo-political purposes and for the sake of obtaining wealth and power. At that time of the Second World War, only the United States possessed nuclear weapons, whereas today many nations, including some extremely small countries, have acquired them and there is also an increasing risk of such weapons ending up in the hands of trigger-happy terrorist groups. Consequently, there is no question that the world stands on the precipice of a great catastrophe. Storm clouds forewarning us of a Third World War are getting heavier by the day. The effects of such a war would last for decades to come. Generation after generation of children would, more than likely, be born crippled or with genetic defects due to the lasting effects of the radiation. Thus it is the urgent need of the time for mankind to work towards safeguarding our future.

Instead of only blaming Muslims for the global disorder, the world's major powers should also take a step back and look at themselves. Rather than publicity-seeking politicians stating their intentions



to ban Muslims from entering their nations, the world needs leaders who are sincere in their efforts to bridge the differences that divide us.

Instead of coveting the wealth and resources of others, world powers should focus all of their energies on ensuring the continued prosperity of mankind. Our foremost objectives should be to protect our future generations from the perilous consequences of warfare and bloodshed. Hence, governments and policy makers should realise the immense weight of their duties as custodians of the world. They should strive earnestly to ensure that those who follow us are not born disabled or raised in a broken world, but are born healthy,

happy and into a world of ever greater peace and harmony.

This can only happen if absolute justice, founded upon a spirit of selflessness, prevails over all forms of greed. May Allah grant sense and wisdom to those who have promoted warfare and enable them to understand the consequences of their acts, before it is too late. May the people of the world recognise their Creator and come to realise the importance of striving for peace and of fulfilling the rights of one another. May Allah enable us all to witness a better and brighter future for mankind, Ameen. With these words, I thank you all once again for accepting our invitation this evening. Thank you very much.”



The Ahmadiyya Muslim Community are Muslims who believe in the Messiah, Mirza Ghulam Ahmad (peace be on him) (1835-1908) of Qadian. Mirza Ghulam Ahmad founded the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community in 1889 as a revival movement within Islam, emphasizing its essential teachings of peace, love, justice, and sanctity of life. Today, the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community is the world's largest Islamic community under one Divinely appointed leader, His Holiness, Mirza Masroor Ahmad (may Allah be his Helper) (b. 1950). The Ahmadiyya Muslim Community spans over 200 nations with membership exceeding tens of millions.