

Fundamentals of Establishing Lasting Peace

The 15th National Peace Symposium was held on Saturday 17 March 2018 at the Baitul Futuh Mosque . The keynote address entitled 'Leaving a Legacy for Future Generations' was delivered by the Worldwide Head of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community, His Holiness Hazrat Mirza Masroor Ahmad.



An Overview of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community



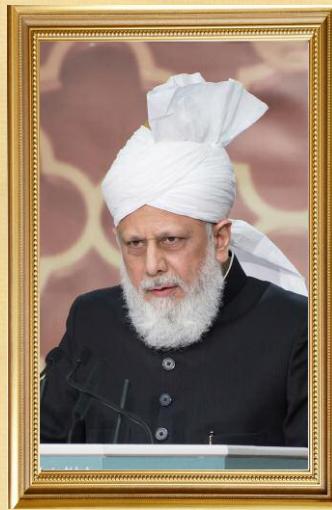
The Ahmadiyya Muslim Community is a religious organisation with branches in more than 200 countries. It is the most dynamic denomination of Islam in modern history, with an estimated membership in the tens of millions worldwide.

It was established in 1889 by Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad^(as) (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 more than a million 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), that became a Grade II listed building in 2018 in recognition of its historical significance to the UK. The Ahmadiyya Muslim Community is, therefore, one of the oldest and most established Muslim communities in Britain and it now has 134 branches across the UK.

The Khalifa of Islam: A Man of Peace



His Holiness, Hazrat Mirza Masroor Ahmad^(aba) was elected as the fifth Khalifa (Caliph) 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, the Canadian Parliament and the European Parliament and also written to world leaders urging them to inculcate absolute justice and peace in international relations, to avoid regional conflicts from engulfing the entire world.

“If we are to leave behind a legacy of hope for our children, and bequeath a peaceful world to our future generations, we, irrespective of our religion or beliefs, need to urgently change our priorities. Instead of being consumed by materialism and a desire for power, every nation, whether rich or poor, must prioritise the peace and security of the entire world above all else. Instead of embarking on an arms race, leading to death and destruction, we must join the race to save and protect humanity.”

(National Peace Symposium 2018)



THE 15th NATIONAL PEACE SYMPOSIUM

On Saturday, 17th March 2018, His Holiness, Hazrat Mirza Masroor Ahmad^{aba}, the Worldwide Head of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community, the Fifth Khalifa (Caliph), delivered the keynote address at the 15th Annual Peace Symposium UK, hosted by the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community UK. The event was held at the Baitul Futuh Mosque in London and was attended by over 900 guests from 31 countries. The guests included government ministers, ambassadors of state, members of both Houses of Parliament and various other dignitaries and guests. The full transcript of the address delivered by His Holiness on this occasion is presented in this brochure.



Leaving a Legacy for Future Generations

Keynote Address by Worldwide Head of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community at the 15th National Peace Symposium UK.

Hazrat Mirza Masroor Ahmad^{aba}, Worldwide Head of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community, Fifth Khalifah (Caliph) of the Promised Messiah^{as}, 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 thank all of our guests, for joining us here at our Annual Peace Symposium.

For the past 15 years, the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community has been organising and hosting this Peace Symposium, for the sake of promoting world peace. Perhaps, some of you may question the benefit of us organising this event each year, given that the peace of the world, both in Muslim countries and elsewhere, has not improved at all during this time; rather, it has deteriorated. Much of the world has been gripped by increasing division, hate and injustice. Society has become polarised, wars have taken place, nations have threatened one another and inequality has intensified in both the developing and the developed world.

Given this situation, your question is quite valid; however, our faith demands for us to try and urge people, in all parts of the world, whether rich or poor, whether powerful or oppressed, whether religious or irreligious, towards peace and justice. Hence, we will continue to play our role in making mankind realise its duty towards respecting and honouring basic human values. The core teachings of Islam are to fulfil the rights of our Creator and to fulfil the rights of our fellow human beings.

With these brief words of introduction, I now wish to take this opportunity to speak about some matters that I consider to be of great importance in these turbulent times.

In today's world, we often see the major powers and the international institutions make schemes or plans that are aimed at bettering the lives of people around the world. In recent times, one of the issues that many politicians and intellectuals have debated and campaigned about, is climate change and specifically a reduction in carbon emissions. Certainly, striving to protect the environment and to look after our planet is an extremely precious and noble cause. Yet, at the same time, the developed world, and especially the world's leaders, should also realise that there are other issues that must be tackled with the same urgency.

People living in the world's poorest nations do not concern themselves with the environment, or the latest figures on carbon emissions; rather, they wake up each day wondering if they will be able to feed their children. Their economic plight is truly desperate and their poverty levels are far beyond our comprehension. For example, there are numerous countries where the majority of citizens do not have access to clean drinking water and are forced to survive by using dirty pond-water to fulfil their basic needs. Even that too is not easily available; rather, women and children have to travel each day, for miles on end, to collect water for their families, which they carry home in big vessels, balanced on their heads.

We must not consider such hardship as other people's problems. Instead, we must realise that the result of such poverty has severe implications for the wider-world and directly affects global peace and security. The fact that children have no option, but to spend their days collecting water for their families, means that they are unable to go to school, or to attain any form of education. They are stuck in a vicious cycle of illiteracy and poverty that is seemingly endless and hugely damaging to society. Today, their poverty and hardship is compounded by modern technology, through which, even people living in war-torn or deprived parts of the world, are able to see the comfort with which people in developed countries are living and the opportunities that exist for them. Witnessing the great disparity in their circumstances, compared to others, is cultivating further agitation amongst the local people and these frustrations are being preyed upon by extremists, who entice the impoverished with financial reward and by promising a better life for their families. Similarly, the targeting of illiterate youth means that the extremists have free rein to radicalise and brainwash them. The extremists take advantage of the fact that the rulers of those countries have, more often than not, failed their people.

Most regrettably, the ruling classes, in war-torn or deprived nations, are more often concerned about preserving their own status and power, than helping alleviate the suffering of their people. The result is that those who have nothing, come to view their own corrupt leaders with contempt and see the world's major powers as the enemy. Tragically, we are seeing the horrific effects of this in Muslim countries as well, and it is after observing the desperate state of their countries of origin, that some Muslims brought up in the developed world have been radicalised and have perpetrated horrendous terrorist attacks here in the West.

Hence, I firmly believe that if we truly wish to protect our world and to ensure we leave behind a legacy of opportunity for those who follow us, it is

essential that every effort is made to raise the standards of the developing world. Poor nations must not be looked down upon, rather we should consider them as part of our family – our brothers and sisters. By helping the developing nations stand on their own feet, and by giving their people opportunities and hope, we will actually be helping ourselves and safeguarding the future of the world. Otherwise, we are already seeing that the poverty and destitution in the developing world is negatively affecting the rest of the world as well.

Furthermore, as a result of recent terrorist attacks and widespread immigration to the West, there has also been a dangerous rise in nationalism in many Western countries, evoking fears of the dark days of the past. It is particularly disturbing that far-right groups have become increasingly vocal, and have seen their membership rise and have even made political gains. They too are extremists, who seek to poison Western society, by inciting the masses against those who have a different colour of skin or who hold different beliefs.

In addition, the rhetoric of certain powerful world leaders has become increasingly nationalistic and belligerent, as they have pledged to put the rights of their own citizens above all others. I do not dispute the fact that it is the responsibility of governments and leaders to look after their own people and to protect their interests. Certainly, as long as the leaders act with justice, and do not infringe upon the rights of others, attempts to better the lives of their citizens is a great virtue. However, policies that are based upon selfishness, greed and a readiness to forfeit the rights of others are wrong and a means of sowing discord and division in the world.

Moving on, another issue is the international arms trade. Today, the world considers itself far more civilised than at any time in the past, yet in 2018, there are countries that are being demolished and annihilated by weapons that can only be categorised as inhumane. In countries



“When the Holy Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) returned victoriously to Makkah, he did not take a single drop of blood in revenge; rather, according to the command of Allah the Almighty, he proclaimed that all of his tormentors and all those who had violently opposed Islam, were to be instantly forgiven. He declared that under Islamic rule, all people would be free to practise their own religions and beliefs, without any interference or cause for fear. His only condition was that each member of society remained committed to peace. He instructed that all people, no matter their caste, creed or colour, were to have their rights protected and be treated with respect at all times.”



like Syria, Iraq and Yemen, government forces, rebels and terrorist organisations are fighting one another. Despite their divergent interests, they all have one thing in common – that the vast majority of their weapons have been produced externally in the developed world. Quite openly and proudly, the major powers are trading arms that are being used to kill, maim and brutalise innocent people.

Regrettably, such nations are focused only on attempts to boost their economy and to maximise their nation's capital, without pausing for thought at the consequences. They desperately seek to attain the largest possible contracts to sell destructive weapons that, once fired, do not distinguish between the innocent and the guilty. They proudly sell weapons that make no exception for children, women or the infirm. They shamelessly sell weapons that engulf and obliterate towns and cities indiscriminately. Whilst the economies of the selling countries may attain short-term benefit, their hands are covered in the blood of hundreds of thousands of people. Countless children are seeing their parents being killed in the most inhumane fashion and all they can do is wonder why their parents have been taken away from them. Thousands of women are left widowed, hopeless and vulnerable.

What good can come of such devastation?

All I see is a generation of children being pushed into the arms of those who seek to destroy the peace of the world.

When a young child or a teenager, sees their parents taken away from them, in the most barbaric way, who can blame them for reacting? I mentioned before that extremists target those immersed in poverty and they are also targeting those children or youths who have been brutalised by war. They recruit such youngsters in the knowledge that their minds are not yet mature, and are easily manipulated, into seeking bloody revenge through terrorism. Instead of being in school, getting an education, so that they grow into decent, law-abiding citizens, the only education an entire generation of children is getting, is how to master grenades or rocket launchers, how to do suicide attacks and how to wreak havoc in the world. Moreover, some countries are unnecessarily involving themselves in conflicts taking place thousands of miles away, by deploying their own soldiers or by pounding foreign lands with airstrikes.

In many instances, it seems that the world has not learned from its past mistakes. It is widely accepted that the Iraq War of 2003 was unjust and

based on false pretences, whilst Libya has descended into chaos and become a hotbed of extremism, since Western powers took action there several years ago. Despite this, big powers have not learned a lesson from this. Cities and towns have been razed to the ground. Thousands of buildings have reverted to dust.

At the beginning, I mentioned that a major focus of the international community is climate change and a desire to keep the air that we breathe clean. Is there anyone who thinks that heavy bombardment has no effect on the atmosphere? Furthermore, if peace ever does prevail in the war-torn countries, their towns and cities will have to be rebuilt from scratch, and this in itself will be a huge industry that will cause an increase in harmful emissions and pollution. Thus, on the one hand, we are trying to save the planet, yet with our other hand, we are senselessly destroying it. In light of all of this, I firmly believe that world powers are being blinded by short-sightedness and tunnel-vision.

One of the main arguments made by those in favour of the arms industry is that procuring weapons is a means of deterrence and keeping the peace. However, we only have to switch on our televisions and watch the news for a minute to see that such arguments are misleading and patently false. Certainly, the thousands of innocent children who have lost their parents, or have lost their own limbs, will never be convinced by such logic, nor will the thousands of women who have been left widowed, or the millions of people who have been displaced from their homes. If we are to leave behind a legacy of hope for our children, and bequeath a peaceful world to our future generations, we, irrespective of our religion or beliefs, need to urgently change our priorities.

Instead of being consumed by materialism and a desire for power, every nation, whether rich or poor, must prioritise the peace and security of the entire world above all else.

Instead of embarking on an arms race, leading to death and destruction, we must join the race to save and protect humanity.

Instead of shutting down borders and ports in warring countries, causing for innocent children to be left starving and the sick being deprived of medical treatment, we must open our hearts to one another, knock-down the walls that divide us, feed the hungry and help those who are suffering.

In terms of political rivalries, the dispute between the United States and North Korea continues to threaten the peace of the world and any conflict between the two would also severely impact countries like South Korea, China and Japan. Whilst it is being said in the past few days that there has been a breakthrough, because the President of the United States has suddenly indicated his willingness to meet the North Korean leader, still, there are no guarantees that peace will prevail. It is not even clear under what conditions they would meet, or where and when such a meeting would take place. Even if a deal emerges, God only knows how long it will last, as there is a great deal of hatred entrenched on both sides. The Iran nuclear deal of a few years ago is a case in point, whereby a negotiated agreement was reached between Iran and the West, but now, just a few years later, the deal hangs by a thread.

Hence, there are many issues that are precariously hovering just under the surface and any one of them could erupt at any time and the consequences do not bear thinking about. However, Islam teaches that peace can only be achieved when all traces of ill-will and malice are removed from a person's heart and replaced by a spirit of mercy, love and compassion for others.

Islam is often branded an extremist religion that incites violence, and it is also alleged that large numbers of Muslims are disloyal to their countries, or seek to spread disorder within society. However, I consider such allegations to be false and unjust. Even though so-called Muslim

terrorists claim to act in Islam's name, I do not believe that we are witnessing a religious war; rather, the wars being fought and atrocities committed are only for geopolitical gains. The so-called Jihadi terrorists and extremist clerics serve only to tarnish the name of Islam and undermine the efforts of the vast majority of Muslims who are peaceful and law-abiding citizens. Unquestionably, from the outset, Islam has rejected all forms of extremism and the verses of the Holy Qur'an recited earlier tonight provide clear proof of this. These verses tell us that the early Islamic wars were fought in order to protect all religions and preserve the sacred principle of freedom of belief. The verses categorically mention churches, synagogues, temples and mosques to be saved.

This is a point I have made repeatedly, and I reiterate, that anyone who violates the universal values of freedom of belief and freedom of conscience, is far removed from Islam. Even within the Western media, there are publications that are accepting this and I commend them for standing up for truth and justice. For example, a column was recently published in *The Guardian*, in which the author writes:

'Muslim terrorism was never and, I would argue, still is not about furthering Islam. It was almost always about land rights, theft of natural and economic resources and global monetary policies that left entire populations in Muslim countries living in deprivation and destitution.'

These words accurately portray the reality of terrorism conducted by so-called Muslims. Furthermore, in a column published in a national newspaper, the journalist Peter Osborne provides compelling evidence that a significant number of Muslims are being radicalised, at least to some extent, as a result of the interference of certain Western intelligence agencies. In this regard, the journalist quotes a former British intelligence officer, who says:

'It is not right that, on one hand, domestic police services are straining every sinew to protect our societies by fighting terrorism, while, on the other hand, elements in our and America's security services, have been arming and training jihadists and colluding in terrorism.'

Furthermore, in an article published by *The Boston Globe*, Professor Jeffrey Sachs, Director of the Centre for Sustainable Development at Columbia University, states:

'The CIA toppled governments in the Middle East on countless occasions. Media pundits tended to overlook the US role in this instability.'

Speaking in favour of multilateral peaceful solutions to conflict, Professor Sachs writes:

'The United States should immediately end its fighting in the Middle East and turn to UN-based diplomacy for real solutions and security.'

There are many other columns published in recent times by non-Muslims that substantiate the fact that terrorist groups such as Daesh could not have thrived without external support. I am not saying that it is always wrong to intervene, but any action must be fair and proportionate and self-interest must be set-aside. Chapter 49, verse 10 of the Holy Qur'an states that the objective of any intervention should always be establishing long-lasting peace and instructs Muslims to be just even with their adversaries. Thus, where Islam gave permission, as a last resort, to the early Muslims to fight a defensive war, it also instructed them to fulfil the requirements of justice and to never be swayed by vested interests or to transgress once peace was established.

Certainly, this profound principle is just as beneficial today, both for Muslims and non-Muslims alike, that where force is required to stop an aggressor from inflicting cruelty, the action must remain proportionate and never enter the

“Whilst I accept that the evil acts of some Muslims have greatly damaged society, I do not accept that it is only Muslims who are to blame for the volatility of today’s world... Suffice to say, that now is the time that humanity distanced itself from the notion, that only Muslims are to blame for the problems in the world.”



realm of seeking revenge or plundering the wealth of the vanquished. Once the aggressor returns to peace, they should not be deprived of their rights, or taken advantage of in any way.

Throughout his life, the Prophet of Islam^{sa} sought to bring people together in peace and was ever ready to forsake his own rights in favour of others. Many non-Muslim writers and academics, who have carefully studied Islam, attest to the fact that the Holy Prophet Muhammad^{sa} sought to unite communities and championed freedom of belief. For example, Peter Frankopan, a Senior Research Fellow at the University of Oxford, has mentioned the Holy Prophet^{sa} in his book, *The Silk Roads*. The author explains how the Holy Prophet Muhammad^{sa} sought inter-faith harmony and dialogue and worked closely with the Christian and Jewish communities of the time.

He speaks of the ‘common ground’ between the religious communities in that era and of how the message of the Holy Prophet^{sa} was one of ‘conciliation’. In one passage, the author refers to the period when the Prophet of Islam^{sa} was appointed as the administrative leader of the city of Madinah. He writes:

‘Leading Jews in the town [Madinah] pledged their support to Muhammad in return for guarantees of mutual defence. These were laid out in a formal document that stated that their own faith and their possessions would be respected now and in the future by Muslims.’

He further writes:

‘Muhammad and his followers went to great lengths to assuage the fears of Jews and Christians as Muslim control expanded.’

Thus, the truth is that Islam has always been diametrically opposed to any form of terrorism or extremism. Furthermore, whilst I accept that the evil acts of some Muslims have greatly damaged society, I do not accept that it is only Muslims who are to blame for the volatility of today’s world. Many commentators and experts are now openly saying that certain non-Muslim powers and groups have also played a role in undermining peace and social cohesion.

Suffice to say, that now is the time that humanity distanced itself from the notion, that only Muslims are to blame for the problems in the world.

Furthermore, it is also high time, that instead of prioritising the advance of their political parties or governments, our leaders prioritise the future peace and prosperity of humanity.

This is the way to bring about true peace in the world.

At a broader international level, we must recognise the fact that force rarely leads to any long-term benefit. Thus, when dealing with North Korea, Iran or any other country, the major powers should proceed with caution and wisdom and

endeavour to listen to the concerns of each party. As one columnist I quoted mentioned, world powers should pursue diplomacy and prioritise a de-escalation in tensions. They should strive to negotiate peace deals and agreements that are not biased in favour of one side, but that address the concerns of all sides. Furthermore, once peace is achieved, we should let go of any past enmities or hatred and march forward together with a spirit of mutual respect and regard.

Certainly, it is my firm conviction and belief that the single greatest example of forgiveness, benevolence and mercy in the history of mankind is the blessed example of the Founder of Islam, the Holy Prophet Muhammad^{sa}. For thirteen years, he and his followers were subjected to the most brutal persecution imaginable and were driven out of their homes and forced to migrate from the city of Makkah. During that period, the Muslims were brutally martyred, physically and mentally tortured and subjected to the harshest possible social deprivation. Muslims were forced to lie directly upon burning coals for long periods.

Muslim women had their legs tied to different camels that were then made to run in opposing directions, literally wrenching their bodies into two separate parts. Yet, when the Holy Prophet Muhammad^{sa} returned victoriously to Makkah, he did not take a single drop of blood in revenge; rather, according to the command of Allah the Almighty, he proclaimed that all of his tormentors

and all those who had violently opposed Islam, were to be instantly forgiven. He declared that under Islamic rule, all people would be free to practise their own religions and beliefs, without any interference or cause for fear. His only condition was that each member of society remained committed to peace.

He instructed that all people, no matter their caste, creed or colour, were to have their rights protected and be treated with respect at all times. This was the timeless and magnificent example of the Prophet of Islam^{sa} and it is this spirit of compassion, grace and mercy that Muslims and non-Muslims need to adopt in the world today. It is this spirit of forgiveness and benevolence that all nations, whether large or small, rich or poor, need to develop. Only then will long-term peace be attainable.

With all my heart, I pray that mankind comes to recognise its duties to one another, so that those who follow us remember us with pride and gratitude.

Let us look to tomorrow and not just today. Let us save our future generations. May Allah grant us wisdom.

I thank all of you once again for joining us here this evening. 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^{sa}.
- as Alaihis Salaam– “May peace be upon him.” This is written after the name of Prophets other than the Holy Prophet^{sa}.
- ra Razi-Allaaho anhu/anha/anhum – “May Allah be pleased with him/her/them.” This is written after names of the Companions of the Holy Prophet^{sa} and of the Promised Messiah^{as}.
- 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 by His Holiness Hazrat Mirza Masroor Ahmad^{aba}. 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
2016	Mrs Setsuko Thurlow – Canada
2017	Dr Leonid Roshal – Russia



DR LEONID ROSHAL – 2017 Peace Prize Winner

Peace Prize Winner Introduction – Dr Leonid Roshal, Russia

Dr Leonid Roshal is a distinguished paediatrician from Moscow, an expert for the World Health Organisation and the Chairman of an International charity fund to help children in disaster and wars.

Dr Roshal has been leading the emergency surgery and children's trauma department of Moscow's Paediatric Scientific Research Institute since 1981.

In 2003 he took over Moscow's institute of children's emergency surgery which is currently treating sixty thousand children a year.

Dr Roshal ensures that all sick children should get medical help for free, and his international emergency team helps children across the world and has assisted at sites of natural disasters and conflicts in Egypt, Japan, Georgia, California, India, Palestine, Afghanistan and Turkey as well as in combat zones in Romania, Yugoslavia, Georgia, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Israel and Chechnya.

Dr Roshal is critical of all governments down playing casualty numbers in conflicts, and is a

promoter of human rights.

He holds a professor's degree and has authored over 200 scientific papers and seven books.

He is also the chairman of the World Association for Disaster and Emergency Medicine, and member of the Human Rights Commission under the President of Russian Federation.

Dr Roshal has been recognised for his work and received many awards including the Order of Courage, Russian of the Year and Doctor of the World.

Dr Roshal's pressing duties meant he could not attend the National Peace Symposium in person but his personal representative and international director, Mrs Angelina Alekseeva, travelled from Moscow to receive the award on behalf of Dr Roshal.



Video message from Dr Leonid Roshal



“Ladies and gentlemen, I am not a young man anymore but I am not too old either. Over the years I have had time to reflect on different religions and their impact on the life of humans. And what was my conclusion? I have arrived at the following simple idea; there are no bad religions. Each religion is good in its nature. Unfortunately there are individuals who abuse religion in order to achieve their own goals.

It is important that religions should unite, but we see the opposite today. Instead of bringing people together they divide them. Even those belonging to the same religion, generally may be found to be warring against each other. I cannot comprehend the current state of affairs where

Sunnis and Shias kill each other, when fellow believers in Gaza and Palestine fail to find common ground or Catholics and Protestants being at odds with each other. Sadly I could continue with these examples. It is not good.

Naturally, top figures of each religious group have a significant impact. More peacefulness is needed. Doing good is necessary. We must eradicate evil, we must eliminate hatred that spoils relationships. There is a need for religions to become kind and instead of separating people, to facilitate understanding between them.

I wish you health and prosperity. May the Lord be with you.”

“I have had time to reflect on different religions and their impact on the life of humans. And what was my conclusion? I have arrived at the following simple idea; there are no bad religions.”



Your Holiness, members of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community, ladies and gentlemen, unfortunately, Dr Roshal could not be present at this ceremony today and he asked me to say some kind words to you.

Thank you for awarding him the Ahmadiyya Muslim Prize for the Advancement of Peace. He is a person who really deserves it. It is very important for everybody to make every possible effort to strengthen worldwide peace in their own way.

As you have heard journalists of the world called him the Children's Doctor of the World and it is true because his idea was to help injured children, victims of national and technological disasters, war, conflicts and terroristic acts; to help them in the best way.

And his idea was to send to the site of disasters, specialist paediatrics to help children, because in most cases such help is normally provided by adult specialists and it makes a big difference.

As statistics have shown later Dr Roshal was right. Through such an approach when mobile teams of paediatric specialists arrive at the site of disasters, when many children are injured, this work helps to significantly reduce mortality and morbidity rates, disability and the rate of ampu-

tations of limbs in children and you all understand how important this is for the growing person.

Dr Roshal and his mobile team were in many countries of the world, where different nations and people of different religions live. And his guiding idea is to provide medical aid to children victims irrespective of the political or religious views of their parents.

From time to time he was on both sides of the conflict area, like for example in the Caucasus, the Middle East, Yugoslavia and other countries. Sometimes he was even imprisoned by one of the parties to the conflict. Dr Roshal is devoted in his opposition to war and stands up for peaceful coexistence of different people and religions in the world.

Dr Roshal has come to the decision to hand this award to a charitable fund which helps children with severe consequences of brain traumas and spinal traumas.

In conclusion allow me to wish, on behalf of Dr Roshal, Your Holiness and all present here good health and prosperity. Thank you.

INTRODUCTION AND GUEST SPEAKERS

RAFIQ HAYAT

Welcome Address by Rafiq Hayat, Amir (National President) Ahmadiyya Muslim Community UK



Most beloved Huzur (Your Holiness), respected parliamentarians, Worshipful Mayors, Your Excellencies, Lords, ladies and gentlemen.

Assalamo alaikum wa rahmatullahe wa barakatuhu, may the peace and blessings of Allah be upon you all.

It is a great honour and privilege to welcome you to the 15th National Peace Symposium that is being held on the theme of the 'Fundamentals of Establishing Lasting Peace'.

Recent events have shown that humanity stands in dire need for peace. In the past year, the ongoing conflict in the Middle East, the relentless destruction of homes and cities in Yemen, Iraq and Syria and the barrage of human rights abuses across the world has yet again highlighted the scale of the challenge facing the world. Seeing pictures of children looking for their deceased parents, hospitals being bombed and children starving in man-made famines showcases the heart-wrenching state of affairs across the globe.

It is estimated that 8.4 million children in Syria alone have been affected by conflict, whilst 22 million children are in dire need of humanitarian assistance in Yemen. Innocent children, who are suffering only because their life is seen as a bargaining chip in the global race for the accumulation of wealth and power. It is on their faces that one sees the cold, harsh reality of war, the harsh reality of a world that condones murder be it by the bomb, bullet or the billion dollar deals.

Thus today more than ever we must engage in the quest of establishing lasting peace, not only in these regions but right across the world.

Here in the UK we have also seen the spillover

of international extremism, through the radicalisation of people and the rise of hate ideologies. The notion of us versus them sows the seeds of division rather than unity. Our message to all who spread hate is clear: Extremism and terrorism will not succeed and that through means of cohesion and unity we will defeat it.

I can assure you that our community, the Ahmadiyya Muslim community, will continue to play its part in the promotion of peace. Our founder, Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad (peace be on him) – whom we accept as the Promised Messiah and Mahdi – came with a very clear mission to revive the true teachings of Islam, to reject the concept of violent jihad and to rejuvenate the link between man and God. The community is now established in more than 207 countries and our work is inspired by our Caliph, His Holiness Hazrat Mirza Masroor Ahmad. We are truly honoured that he has joined us this evening and will deliver the keynote address. He has addressed parliaments across the world including Westminster the European parliament and Capitol Hill in the US.

His Holiness is a man of peace who has repeatedly called for greater justice at every level of society. Under His Holiness's wise leadership the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community has instigated global campaigns for peace, which is the true essence of Islam and indeed of all faiths.

I welcome you once again and thank you for taking time out this evening to join us and hope that together we can work to guide the world from conflict to cohesion.

DR AARON RHODES

President of the Forum for Religious Freedom Europe



Your Holiness, members of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community and other friends, it is an honour to address you, because as a campaigner for human rights and religious freedom I deeply admire your principles of equality, freedom and respect, and your commitment to tolerance and social peace.

But I am gravely worried about the situation of Ahmadi Muslims in Pakistan and other countries. You are a community being punished for your moral and social achievements. You insist on political freedom for all, but are denied right to vote and other citizen's rights, unless you forsake your most cherish sacred vows. New legislation aims at permanently denying Ahmadis their most fundamental political rights.

You stand for the rule of law, but endure murder, torture and discrimination, as the perpetrators enjoy impunity and are encouraged and protected by state authorities.

You believe in religious freedom but are denied the right to profess your faith, and risk prosecution if you defend yourselves.

You want to live alongside those of other confessions in mutual respect, but you are demonised, ostracised and marginalised. No one can accept the new High Court ruling [in Pakistan] that would exclude Ahmadi Muslims there from serving their country, encourage more mob violence and add to their burden of insecurity. We appeal to the government to stand for human rights and challenge this ruling.

It's just appalling what is happening in Pakistan when even in the parliament itself, hate speech and incitement of violence is voiced against the Ahmadi community, and unfortunately there has not been very much political outcry against this around the world.

Our job as human rights defenders is to not simply criticise state authorities. We are there to assist the state to abide by its international human

rights commitments. Along with members of the International Human Rights Committee and other human rights defenders I have seen these things myself. We have looked into the eyes of families whose loved ones have been murdered, whose clever children are pushed down in school, we have heard the heart breaking testimonies of women who are excluded from normal social activities, all because they want to follow their conscience. I would like to draw your attention to a report about our fact finding mission last year, in which we spoke to about two or three hundred people and I think got quite a clear and objective picture of what is going on.

But my friends I want to tell you, a noose is tightening around the neck of the Ahmadi Muslim Community in Pakistan. Four million people are at risk refugees from this frightful situation and [thousands] languish in Thailand and Malaysia, waiting to be accepted by countries where they can find security. The United Nations human rights authorities and a number of national governments confirm what we are saying, and your problems are not unknown around the world, and you have much political support. Many are insisting that the Ahmadis need international protection, but it will not happen if member states look the other way. So let me use this occasion to implore anyone with governmental power and influence here today, use your leverage to support and protect the human rights of these people, who themselves uphold human rights principles, because if they are allowed to be murdered and abused, our own standards and values will be exposed as empty rhetoric. Thank you very much.

DR LUIGI DE SALVIA

Vice-President of Religions for Peace Europe



Your Holiness, Excellencies, distinguished guests, dear friends of Ahmadiyya Muslim Community, it's a pleasure and an honour for me to address you on behalf of Religions for Peace Europe.

This symposium, you organise annually over the past 15 years, is one of the most important meetings in our continent, dedicated to reflection of risks and commitments related to the common good par excellence - peace, in its concrete meaning of sustainable and possibly harmonious coexistence.

We all are conscious of the delicate phase Europe is crossing due to several factors, both historical and emerging – immigration, the arrival of refugees, high tensions in international relations, terrorism, sectarianism etc. What to do in this climate of poor trust, latent desperation and increasing fears?

Can we take care of these fragilities both personal and systemic? As people of faith, prayer and meditation we have a particular resource in facing adversities and witnessing hope. This resource is, in my perception, one of the most important of the fundamentals of establishing lasting peace, the title of this symposium. Indeed, our commitment to justice and peace is a visible sign of gratitude for the gift of spiritual trust we received.

Religions for Peace Europe is an active regional network of religious organisations and people of faith and goodwill, inspired by the call to uphold the rights and dignity of every person as the most effective path to peace. As Religions for Peace Europe we are part of the global network Religions for Peace International, born in Kyoto Japan in 1970. Our activities are projected and carried forward by national structures, as chapters and inter-religious councils.

We have here, in this beautiful gathering, our Ahmadiyya friends actively committed both in

Belgium and Italy in Religions for Peace. They are wonderful persons who give a precious service in fostering inter-religious dialogue and cooperation.

Last, but most important, in this special occasion I want to express all our fraternal solidarity to the members of Ahmadiyya Muslim Community victims of persecution perpetrated by religious extremists, who cannot tolerate and who hate your interpretation of Islam that is inspired to respect of sanctity of life and to non-violence.

We will be always at your side in defending religious freedom of expression. Thank you, beloved friends, for your authentic, strong testimony of peace and love.

God bless you, God bless our friendship.

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PRESS CONFERENCE

Prior to the main event, a press conference was held with His Holiness. Journalists from the UK and international media organisations were in attendance and asked His Holiness a number of questions on a range of issues.



“A major focus of the international community is climate change and a desire to keep the air that we breathe clean. Is there anyone who thinks that heavy bombardment has no effect on the atmosphere? Furthermore, if peace ever does prevail in the war-torn countries, their towns and cities will have to be rebuilt from scratch, and this in itself will be a huge industry that will cause an increase in harmful emissions and pollution. Thus, on the one hand, we are trying to save the planet, yet with our other hand, we are senselessly destroying it.”



(From the address of Hazrat Mirza Masroor Ahmad delivered at the National Peace Symposium 2018)

Loyalty

Freedom

Equality

Respect

Peace



www.LoveForAllHatredForNone.org

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