

# The Ahmadiyya Muslim Khilafat: *Essential Guidance for a Troubled World*

*This is the transcript of the keynote address delivered by His Holiness Mirza Masroor Ahmad, Head of the worldwide Ahmadiyya Muslim Community, and Fifth Successor (Khalifa) to the Promised Messiah, at a Banquet Dinner held at the Hilton Conference Centre, Markham, Ontario, Canada, on Wednesday, June 25, 2008 as part of activities organized in Canada to mark the Centenary Jubilee of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Khilafat.<sup>1</sup>*

The large number of distinguished guests at the Banquet included the Premier of the province of Ontario, Hon. Dalton McGuinty, and Hon. Jason Kenney, the Federal Secretary of State for Multiculturalism and Canadian Identity.

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*Bismillah ir Rahman ir Raheem  
(In the name of Allah, Most Gracious, Ever Merciful)*

All the Honorable and Distinguished Guests,  
Assalamo Alaikum wa rahmatullah wa barakatohu!

Peace and blessings of Allah be upon you all!

## **Note of Thanks**

First of all, I would like to thank all our distinguished guests who have taken the trouble to accept our invitation to attend this function.

It is very difficult, I know, this being a week day, for you all to come here and attend this function.

It is obvious that you are all blessed with a spirit of humanity and high ethical values.

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<sup>1</sup> Minor edits have been made to the text in order to facilitate easy reading.

It is only right, therefore, that I should thank people of such high moral standards.

### ***Special Significance of the Occasion***

I have been here twice before, to attend the Annual Convention of the Ahmadiyya Movement and some of you have met me on those occasions.

However, the event that has been arranged today has never taken place before.

I am directly addressing persons who are sympathetic to the Jama'at, or who have had personal contact with members of our Community.

And there are also some distinguished guests who have no previous relationship with the Community.

The local administration has organized this function, as you know, because the Community is celebrating the Centenary event in the year 2008. For, after the demise of the Founder of the Ahmadiyya Community, his successors have now completed their first 100 years.

### ***“Khilafat” and “Islam-Ahmadiyya”***

The Succession is known as “Khilafat” and, with reference to it, we are celebrating Khilafat Centenary. As I said, there are many amongst you who have a relationship with the Community and know the Ahmadiyya Muslim Jama'at very well.

It is a group within Islam, and which according to our teachings and beliefs, is the Community of the Promised Messiah (as)<sup>2</sup> on whom be peace, created in accordance with the prophecies of the Holy Prophet Mohammad (saw)<sup>3</sup>.

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<sup>2</sup> (as) stands for the Arabic expression “*Alais-salaam*”. It means ‘peace be on him’ and is usually invoked after mention of the name of any prophet.

<sup>3</sup> (saw) stands for the Arabic expression “*Sal-lallaaho-alaihey was-sal-lam*”. It means ‘peace and blessings of Allah be upon him’ and is invoked after mention of the name of Prophet Mohammad.

### ***Mission of the Promised Messiah***

The Promised Messiah was to appear in the 14<sup>th</sup> century after the Holy Prophet (saw), to make Muslims and non-Muslims alike aware of their true Creator and to make them become of those who bow down in His Presence.

With the passage of time, certain weaknesses had appeared in the understanding of the teachings Islam, and these needed to be removed.

Similarly, objections that had cropped up against the teachings of the Holy Qur'an had to be responded to.

### ***Duties to God and Duties to Man***

Man had to be reminded of the rights of other human beings. An atmosphere of love, affection and peace had to be established in the world.

In other words, the rights owed to God Almighty and to His creation had to be discharged in order to make this world become Paradise.

This brief introduction and clarification was presented for the benefit of those who are not familiar with the Ahmadiyya Community, and also so that the fear of Islam, which some may hold within their hearts, may be removed.

### ***Misrepresentation of Islam by some Muslims***

Indeed, when the name of Islam is used, the general impression in this present era is, naturally, of fear. This is not the fault of those who are frightened.

Unfortunately, certain so-called Islamic groups, and certain others, have depicted Islam in such a way that it appears to be an uncivilized, extremist, belligerent and bellicose religion.

Just hearing the name of Islam leads to an impression of swords, bombings and suicide attacks.

### ***No Compulsion in Religion***

In any case, the purpose of the tasks I have described and that had been entrusted to the Messiah of Prophet Mohammad (saw) -- tasks that are to be completed by his Khilafat -- are not to be accomplished by force, but through winning hearts with love and affection. It is not possible to attain the nearness of Allah, or to discharge the rights of others, through compulsion.

The Holy Qur'an very clearly states that there should be no compulsion in religion. Chapter 2, verse 257.

The Founder of the Ahmadiyya Community has already expounded this beautiful teaching. He says that the Holy Quran clearly instructs NOT to take up the sword to spread the faith. Rather, one should present the individual beauties of the faith and attract others with one's exemplary behavior.

### ***Why battles were fought by Prophet Mohammad (saw)***

Do not think that, at the outset, there was the instruction to use the sword. Indeed, the sword was NOT used to spread the faith.

In fact, it was used only as a means of defense against the enemy or to establish peace. Indeed, it was never used to compel in matters of faith. Matters of faith are related to one's heart.

Sacrifices have to be made for the sake of religion. Thus, lives were offered in the first 13 years in Mecca. And even after the migration to Medina, when the enemies were attacking and despite being wholly ill-equipped, they fought back.

Could a person who had been forced to become a Muslim, ever offer such sacrifices? On the contrary, such a person would be greatly

pleased if Islam were attacked. He would think that it was good that someone had come to save him. Hence, these sacrifices prove that whosoever became a Muslim became one wholeheartedly. And if he fought, he fought for a purpose. And what were those purposes?

***If Islam means 'Peace', why did Muslims fight?***

THE FIRST PURPOSE was to defend themselves. The enemy always incited the attack and the Muslims were forced to raise arms in defense.

THE SECOND PURPOSE was that when un-armed Muslims were deceptively attacked and cruelly killed, in retaliation for the bloodshed, and as a punishment for the cruelty, fighting took place. This was an Arab custom, and was indeed necessary for keeping the peace -- and this continues to be so even today.

THIRDLY, if fighting took place, it was to weaken the opposition as it gathered together to annihilate the Muslims just because they worshipped the One True God. If fighting had not taken place in such conditions, then the disbelievers would have spared no Muslim. In fact, God Almighty says, they would surely have pulled down cloisters, churches, synagogues and mosques and cruelty would have continued to multiply.

***Fighting was NEVER to gain converts***

History bears witness to the fact that whenever Muslims engaged in a war, never was anyone compelled to become a Muslim. Each person had freedom of worship. On such occasions, the Holy Prophet (saw) particularly used to say, "Do NOT harm the elderly, women and children. And do NOT damage places of worship", and went on to such an extent that he said that even trees were NOT to be felled.

Christians and people of other faiths lived in Muslim states with all of their rights preserved. The *Djizia*, that is the protection levy, was taken from non-Muslims, and if someone did not have the means to pay it, that person was absolved of the payment.

During the Khilafat of Hazrat Umar, the Second Successor of the Prophet of Islam (saw), a Jewish person was killed by an unknown murderer, and Hazrat Umar became extremely anxious. So, he gathered all of the people in the mosque of Medina, and, having invoked the fear of God in them, enquired about it from them.

One of the Muslims present at the time, admitted that the murder had been committed by him. So, he was made to pay blood-money with the consent of the Jewish family.

### ***Muslims and non-Muslims Guaranteed Equal Rights***

These are just a few of the incidents that I have narrated, but they are evidence that even in a state of war, Islam requires kind treatment of the enemy; whilst in times of peace, it preserves the rights of non-Muslims.

Had force been used, then these examples, evident from the lives of the Holy Prophet (saw) and his Successors, would never have appeared in history.

### ***Ahmadiyya Islam is Love and Peace***

The purpose of mentioning this history is to remove the misunderstanding that Islam is an extremist religion. The Promised Messiah, on whom be peace, has taught us to continue to implement these teachings and also to spread them. As stated in the excerpts that I just read, the Ahmadiyya Community knows only that Islam, which is the Islam of love and affection, and which offers a message of peace and security.

### ***How to Achieve Peace***

Now, I will present some instructions of the Holy Qur'an that aim to maintain peace within society.

It is oft-alleged that Islam is a war-like religion. But in fact, what are the circumstances in which Allah, The Almighty, permits Muslims to fight? Let us see. Allah, The Almighty, says: *“And fight in the cause of*

*Allah against those who fight against you, but do not transgress. Surely, Allah loves not the transgressors.” Ch. 2, v. 191*

### **No Right to Start Hostilities**

There is no right to initiate hostilities. In fact, you can only fight when you have been attacked. And even here, the instruction is not to transgress. What is meant by transgression?

At that time, the opponents of Islam used to mutilate the bodies of their fallen force. As this was an act of sheer contempt towards the corpse, it was forbidden in Islam. It was also forbidden to kill women, and children. It was forbidden to kill religious leaders – priests or rabbis – in their respective places of worship.

In other words, fighting could only take place on the battlefield. Or, if there was no other choice and they were forced to fight, in the towns. But even then, they could fight only against those who had initiated the hostilities.

### **Suicide Bombing NOT condoned by Islam**

Today, we see that no party acts upon these sound teachings. Suicide bombers indiscriminately kill women, children and the elderly, whilst invading forces drop bombs on towns and cities, and fire bullets and rapid fire. They cause mass destruction to cities and infrastructure.

### **Evil of the Atom Bomb**

These days, every major power possesses an arsenal of nuclear weapons, and even poor countries are joining this race. Mankind stands on the brink of the pit of destruction, whilst the Holy Quran teaches us not to harm the innocent.

The fallout from the atom bomb causes physical disabilities, generation after generation; and so, this crime is even worse than murder. After the use of the atom bomb, during the Second World War, one would have thought that the world would have refrained from ever again producing such weapons. But, in fact, they have

continued to develop them and, indeed, there is a race to develop these weapons of mass destruction.

### ***The Defeated in War Must Be Treated with Dignity***

In order to establish peace, Allah, The Almighty says do not impose unreasonable restrictions upon vanquished nations. Rather, if the aggressor is inclined towards peace, then you must cease fire immediately. Do not then search for excuses and do not impose such conditions that humiliate any nation, because this also leads to severe repercussions. If you are able to repress a nation temporarily, a time will nevertheless come when its self-esteem will rise, and then the old feuds and battles will start all over again.

Such restrictions are only ever imposed by a conquering nation to prevent the vanquished nations from ever rising again. Fear is instilled in them to such an extent that they may never take a step without the permission of their conquerors; and they may always remain enslaved by them. The conquering nations are therefore able to keep an eye -- and in fact, to spy -- on neighboring territories, whilst sitting within the geographical boundaries of a conquered country.

### ***Do NOT Covet Resources of Other Nations***

Or, they are able to derive advantages from the resources of that country.

Allah, The Almighty, commands the Muslims that these worldly interests should not be the cause of their fighting. Allah, The Almighty, says: "Stretch not your eyes towards what We have bestowed on some classes for them to enjoy for a short time."

Chapter 15, verse 89

Allah, The Almighty, teaches that worldly wealth is but a temporary means that you see. Even if you acquire it, this wealth will inevitably disappear and not only that, but it will leave behind a state of constant turmoil. Thus, it is important for the peace of the world that

each country and nation derives benefit from its own resources, and it should not look covetously upon the wealth of others.

### ***Islam on War and Peace***

To recapitulate, a Muslim is not permitted to engage in any war unless it is against those people who either prevent the practice and preaching of God's religion or they are the cause of destroying peace in the world. Is this not a beautiful teaching for maintaining peace?

Then, God Almighty, says in the Holy Quran, "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". Ch. 8, v.62

So, this is the Islamic teaching. There is no concept of extremism here. According to one of the most reliable traditions in the light of the teachings of Islam, the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), always taught his Companions that they should never desire to confront the enemy. They should always seek peace and well-being from God Almighty. This is a most beautiful teaching of peace that has no parallel.

### ***Justice for All - in All Circumstances***

To fulfill the requirements of justice, Allah, The Almighty has ordained very high standards and expects that Muslims will discharge these obligations. God Almighty says, "*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.*" Ch.5, v.9

This is a magnificent teaching to maintain peace in society, and to end enmities. It is indeed an extremely difficult task to fulfill the requirements of justice in relation to the enemy in the same way as one does with one's own kith and kin. Yet, history bears witness that the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) practiced such examples. He even took care of the needs of his enemies.

### ***Compassion of Prophet Mohammad***

Once, after the Prophet Mohammad had settled in Medina, there was a famine in Mecca. Despite the fact that the people of Mecca had cruelly restricted the food and water supply to Muslims for two and a half years when the latter lived in Mecca, the Holy Prophet (saw), nevertheless, sent them staple rations during these times of famine, out of compassion.

On another occasion, a tribal leader who had become a Muslim was arrested and beaten whilst performing the pilgrimage and was imprisoned. Finally, he was released at the request of some other leaders. The region of his tribe used to send grain to Mecca. So, the released prisoner said that grain would no longer be sent to Mecca, and he effectively stopped it.

Consequently, there was a shortage of grain in Mecca. The people of Mecca came to the Holy Prophet (saw) and said, "Order him not to stop the supply of grain".

Despite the hostility that the Meccans had maintained against the Muslims, the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), sent a message to the leader telling him not to stop sending the grain.

This is the practical effect of the teaching which declares "Let not the enmity of a nation prevent you from acting otherwise than with justice".

This, therefore, is the teaching of the Holy Quran. And, this is the example of the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him).

### ***Why allegations of 'Terrorism' against Islam***

Now, despite all this, the allegation is that the Holy Quran and the Holy Prophet (saw) taught extremism and committed terrorism. What can one say? In spite of being educated, these critics are unaware of the teachings and history of Islam.

In fact due to their malice and grudges, they do not want to know, and they are the people who become the means of destroying the peace.

### ***Terrorists defame Islam***

I admit that certain terrorist groups have defamed the name of Islam. Their practices are wholly contrary to these teachings of Islam. Though they use the support of the Holy Quran to engage in Jihad and to kill, they forget the conditions that are integral to it.

The Holy Quran completely forbids the practice of suicide attacks which cause severe loss to civilians. If there is a permission for fighting under certain circumstances, then it is for the government to issue it and not for a few organizations within the government. What they are doing is not Jihad, but terrorism.

### ***Judge a Religion on the Teachings and Practice of its Founder***

Justice requires that to judge a religion, one should view the teachings and the practice of its founder and one should not base one's judgment upon the actions of persons who followed much later on. One should not use the actions of the latter as an excuse to attack the teachings of their religion when those actions of theirs have absolutely nothing to do with the true teachings of their faith.

### ***The Promised Messiah on 'Jihad': True Teachings of Islam***

In any case, as I have mentioned before, I will now present certain teachings of the Founder of the Ahmadiyya Community regarding the so-called Jihad and terrorism.

This teaching, a part of which I have just mentioned, represents the true doctrine of Islam. In fact, it was the Founder of the Ahmadiyya Community, the Messiah of the Age, who presented the true understanding of the teachings of Islam so that the world could recognize their God and could create an atmosphere of mutual love, making this world into an earthly Paradise.

### ***Mullahs Preached Jihad against the British Raj***

As you may be aware, the sub-continent of India and Pakistan remained under the rule of the British Raj for a long time. The Founder of the Ahmadiyya Community created the Community and made his claim of being the Messiah and Mahdi at a time when the British government's rule was at its peak. Despite the British government's total control and rule over India, a very large part of the Muslim population was against the government, and they spread a lot of poison about it.

### ***Mullahs Taught Hatred***

Even at that time, Muslim clerics – Mullahs – used their mosques to fan the fires of hatred against the government. They tried to create rebellion in one place after another. They tried to provoke unrest against the government.

In spite of this, the Promised Messiah's claim that he was the fulfillment of the prophecy of the Holy Prophet (saw), that states that the Promised Messiah and Reformer was to come in this Age – the literature and books of other religions, including Christianity, having also predicted the same – the Founder of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community, while counseling his Jama'at, announced that the British government was no doubt a Christian government, but the fact was that it duly discharged the rights of its citizens. Therefore, it was not permitted to take any severe step against it. And that it was forbidden to create any disorder under the pretext of Jihad.

Great debates were held between Christian missionaries and the Promised Messiah (as) over the religions of Christianity and Islam. And these have been mentioned in his literature. But, with kindness and wisdom, he always drew attention to the importance of expounding the beauties of Islam.

### ***The Promised Messiah Invited Queen Victoria to Islam***

It was during his lifetime that Queen Victoria celebrated her Diamond Jubilee, upon which the Founder of the Community

congratulated Her Majesty. He further expressed ways to establish reconciliation and harmony between faiths so that there could be permanent peace in the world.

Moreover, he expressed his gratitude for the just nature of the British government and extended the message of Islam to Queen Victoria.

His instruction to live peacefully under British rule were not because of any fear, but were in accord with Qur'anic teachings.

In this connection, I shall present some excerpts from his writings. He says:

*This prayerful, humble one who has come to this world in the name of Jesus, the Messiah (as), also feels proud to live in the Age of this great Queen of India, just as the Holy Prophet (saw) the Chief of both worlds, felt pride during the rule of Nau Sherwan, the Just.*

*It is obligatory upon every person to remember the kindness of Her Majesty on her Diamond Jubilee and by remembering her in their sincere prayers, to congratulate and to present a token of thanksgiving to Her Majesty.*

*However, I see that this duty lies most heavily upon me. God has preferred for me that for this divine mission, I should seek refuge in the peaceful rule of Her Majesty. So, Allah, The Almighty, has appointed me at such a place and at such a time where Her Majesty's empire acts as a steel fortress for the protection of the dignity, wealth and life of the people.*

*It is the biggest obligation upon me that I should express my thanks for the manner in which I have been able to spread the message of Truth whilst living here in peace.*

He wrote a book, *Tohfah-e-Qaisariyyah*, in which he mentioned all these things, and sent that book to the Queen.

## **Basic Principles for Inter-Religious Harmony**

Then, in order to bring an end to inter-religious hatreds, he states:

*Therefore, this principle is most appropriate and blessed, and it lays the foundation for peace, that we should consider all such Prophets to be true whose religion has taken firm root and has matured, and which millions have joined. This is a most prudent and good principle. And, if the entire world adheres to this principle, then thousands of disorders and religious blasphemies, that threaten the peace of the common man, will evaporate. It is obvious that those who consider others to be following a religion whose spiritual leader is, according to their reasoning, in reality a liar and a fabricator, are the cause of many feuds. And they most certainly are guilty of blasphemy. They use the foulest language against that Prophet and extend it to abuse. And they destroy the peace of the common people, even though this ideology is completely wrong. And in the eyes of God, they are cruel due to their foul language.*

*This principle is most attractive and peace-generating, and it sows the seeds of reconciliation and improves the moral conditions. We should consider all prophets who came to the world as being true, whether they appeared in India, Persia or China or any other country. For God has planted their dignity and greatness in the hearts of millions and strengthened the roots of their religions. Their religion continued for centuries.*

*This is the principle that the Holy Quran has taught us: namely, that we should respect the founder of each and every religion whose life has come under this definition. Whether it be the leader of the Hindu religion, or the Persian religion, or the Chinese religion, or the Jewish religion, or the religion of the Christians; but, sadly, our opponents cannot treat us in a like manner.*

This is an excerpt from another one of his books.

The Promised Messiah then further says,

*Those who subscribe to the belief that they should consider the prophets of different peoples to be liars and should continue to speak ill of them, they are always the enemies of peace and reconciliation. This is because there is nothing worse than to cause disorder by abusing the saints amongst people.*

### ***Slander of Prophets is Not Freedom of Speech***

Today, the people who entertain and spread such thoughts about the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), and the Holy Quran, are certainly amongst those who destroy the peace. This is not freedom of thought, nor is it freedom of speech, but a means of playing with the sentiments and feelings of others, as a result of which peace is destroyed. The Promised Messiah says in connection with the views held on Jihad:

*The second principle for which I have been appointed is the reform of the incorrect concept of Jihad that is widespread among some ignorant Muslims. So, God has made me understand that the prevailing concept of Jihad is opposed to the Quranic teachings.*

*There is no doubt that there was permission to fight in the Holy Quran. It was based on the fact that those who took up the sword unjustly, murdered Muslims without cause, and took oppression to extremes, be killed by the sword. But, even then, this punishment is not as severe as the battles of Moses, on whom be peace.*

Then, he goes on to say:

*During the time of our Prophet (saw), the basic reason for the Islamic Jihad was that Allah's anger was aroused against those who inflicted cruelty, whilst you are living under the shade of such a just-natured government, as Her Majesty's empire. To resort to revolt against such a rule cannot be classed as Jihad. Rather, this is the height of ignorance and savagery. As for a government under which one lives free and in total peace, and under which religion's obligations can be discharged in full, to bear ill intentions against it would be a criminal act and not Jihad. God Almighty has made me stand on the principle*

*that a kind government such as the British government should be obeyed and true gratitude ought to be expressed. So, my Jama'at and I completely adhere to this principle.*

### ***The Message of Islam-Ahmadiyyat***

So, this is the teaching which is given to us by the Founder of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community in light of the Holy Quran. It was given to us by that person sent in this Age as the Messiah and Reformer by Allah, The Almighty, who was to establish peace in the world.

I hope that those of you who are aware of the teachings and practices of the Ahmadiyya Community will bear testimony that there is a very clear distinction between Ahmadi Muslims and non-Ahmadi Muslims, or, indeed, others.

Indeed, we desire only peace, and nothing else. We want mankind to recognize the Omnipotent God. For this purpose we are very active in Africa, Europe and the Americas, as well as in islands all over the world. The service of mankind is our primary objective.

### ***Service to Humanity***

Moreover, the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community offers its services without seeking any worldly reward, nor are we interested in any verbal praise. This spirit exists in the Community because it is linked in chain of the institution of Khilafat, and at all times this Khilafat enjoins the members of the Community to adhere to these peaceful teachings.

God Almighty sent the Promised Messiah to establish these principles.

In other words, today we do not just float the cliché of “Love for All, Hatred for None”, but we are actually endeavoring to put this principle into practice.

### ***Prayers for Canada***

I now end this subject with the prayer that all Muslims and non-Muslims carry the fear of their Creator in their hearts, so that they only have good feelings for His creatures. At the same time, I am most grateful to the Canadian government and the Canadian people, who are bringing together all religions and all peoples open-heartedly. The members of the Ahmadiyya Community are also living peacefully here, and are free to practice their religion and to openly express it.

In view of this cosmopolitan quality of Canada in which people of different religions and different faiths can live together peacefully, my predecessor, Hazrat Mirza Tahir Ahmad, the Fourth Khalifa, stated, in admiration of Canada, that he wished that the whole world becomes Canada and that Canada becomes the whole world.

May Allah enable this quality to remain forever. May you, the people and government of Canada, continue to live up to the expectations of justice, and to display open-heartedness, so that, as a result, the bounties of God Almighty, conferred upon you, continue for ever!

Once again, I would like to thank all our distinguished guests who have spared us their valuable time. Thank you again. Thank you very much.

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