



THE RE-EMERGENCE OF
ISLAMIC
ENLIGHTENMENT

ADDRESSES OF HIS HOLINESS
MIRZA MASROOR AHMAD

KHALIFATUL-MASIH V

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ENLIGHTENMENT**

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The Re-emergence of Islamic Enlightenment

A compilation of keynote addresses

delivered by

His Holiness Mirza Masroor Ahmad

Head of the Worldwide Ahmadiyya Muslim Community

Fifth Successor to the Promised Messiah^{as}

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**HIS HOLINESS HAZRAT MIRZA MASROOR AHMAD
KHALIFATUL-MASIH V^{ABA}**

ABOUT HIS HOLINESS MIRZA MASROOR AHMAD

His Holiness, Mirza Masroor Ahmad, Khalifatul-Masih V^{aba}, is the supreme head of the worldwide Ahmadiyya Muslim Community. He is the Fifth Khalifah of the Promised Messiah and Reformer, Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad^{as} of Qadian.

His Holiness was born on September 15, 1950 in Rabwah, Pakistan to the late Mirza Mansoor Ahmad and the late Nasirah Begum Ahmad. Upon completing his Masters Degree in Agricultural Economics in 1977 from the Agriculture University in Faisalabad, Pakistan, he formally dedicated his life to the service of Islam. He was sent to Ghana in 1977 where, for several years, he served as a principal of various Ahmadiyya Muslim schools.

Later, when His Holiness returned to Pakistan, he served in various capacities at the Headquarters of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community in Rabwah.

Elected to the lifelong position of Khalifah (Caliph) of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community on 22nd April 2003, His Holiness serves as the worldwide spiritual and administrative head of an international religious organization with tens of millions of members spread across more than 200

countries.

Since being elected Khalifah, His Holiness has led a world- wide campaign to convey the peaceful message of Islam, through all forms of print and digital media. Under his leadership, national branches of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community have launched campaigns that reflect the true and peaceful teachings of Islam. Ahmadi Muslims the world over are engaged in grass-roots efforts to distribute millions of ‘peace’ leaflets to Muslims and non-Muslims alike, host interfaith and peace symposia and organize exhibitions of the Holy Qur’an to present its true and noble message. These campaigns have received worldwide media coverage and demonstrate that Islam champions peace, loyalty to one’s country of residence and service to humanity.

In 2004, His Holiness launched the annual National Peace Symposium in which guests from all walks of life come together to exchange ideas on the promotion of peace and harmony. Each year, the symposium attracts many serving ministers, parliamentarians, politicians, religious leaders and other dignitaries.

His Holiness has travelled globally to promote and facilitate service to humanity. Under the leadership of His Holiness, the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community has built a number of schools and hospitals that provide excellent education and healthcare in remote parts of the world.

His Holiness strives to establish peace at every level of society. He constantly advises members of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community to carry out a ‘jihad’ (or struggle) of the self to strive to reform individually, which is the true and biggest form of ‘jihad,’ so that every Ahmadi Muslim can first establish peace on an individual level, and then be enabled to also help others find peace.

At an individual and collective level, on local, national and international platforms, His Holiness is striving to advise all others of the practical means of establishing peace, based on the true teachings of Islam.

His Holiness, Mirza Masroor Ahmad^{aba} currently resides in Islamabad, Tilford (Surrey). As spiritual leader of Ahmadi Muslims all over the world, he vigorously champions the cause of Islam through a refreshing message of peace and compassion.

FOREWORD

The Holy Qur'an is replete with verses encouraging man to ponder over the natural order and intricacy of God's creation. Though it has been the case for much of history that religion and science have hardly seen eye to eye, yet the Muslim scientists of the late-Middle Ages - by spearheading the intellectual advancement of mankind - proved that the Holy Qur'an and science were not opposites. The Golden Age of Islam is a period of history that the Muslim world feels proud of and there is a deep desire within every Muslim to once again witness that great age of scientific enlightenment.

This book comprises of two addresses of His Holiness Mirza Masroor Ahmad – Khalifatul-Masih V who is the leader of the worldwide Ahmadiyya Muslim Community, which were delivered at UNESCO (Paris) and the Ahmadiyya Muslim Researchers Association (AMRA) Conference 2019. In his addresses he not only draws upon the Islamic age of enlightenment, demonstrating the rich legacy of Islamic contribution to mankind's progress, but urges Muslim scientists in today's day and age to excel in the world of academia with the aim of serving mankind.

At the beginning of the UNESCO address whilst commenting upon its founding objectives he said, *'Islamic teachings require Muslims to work towards fulfilling these same objectives and to continually strive for the progress of humanity.'* At the AMRA Conference he emphasised the need for Muslim scientists to achieve great heights in their fields so that they are able to prove the existence of God in ever growing ways.

Whatever the academic inclination of the reader may be, this is sure to be a refreshing and distinctive treatise on science and religion, apt for the 21st century and one that doesn't merely explain the harmony between the two but delves into the profound philosophy of Islam on science.

The Publishers
September 2020

SPEECHES

**ISLAMIC PRINCIPLES
ON EDUCATION
&
SERVING HUMANITY**

UNESCO HEADQUARTERS, PARIS
8 OCTOBER 2019



His Holiness Mirza Masroor Ahmad^{aba} delivering the keynote address at UNESCO, Paris. Before the keynote address, several distinguished speakers spoke of their admiration of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community and its efforts to propagate Islam's message of peace across the world, as well as its commitment to serving humanity.





In the photo below:

Seated from right to left: Ashfaq Rabbani President Ahmadiyya Muslim Community France, Gregorie Dublineau Mayor of Eaubonne, Hazrat Mirza Masroor Ahmad Khalifatul-Masih ^V^{aba}, Jean-Christopher Auge Religious Affairs Councillor Ministry of Europe, Clement Rouchose Religious Advisor to Interior Ministry of France, Ouma Keita UNESCO Ambassador Mali



Preface

His Holiness - Hazrat Mirza Masroor Ahmad^{aba} delivered a historic keynote address on 8 October 2019 at the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) Headquarters in Paris. The event was attended by over 80 dignitaries and guests, including diplomats, politicians, academics and the representatives of think tanks, as well as business leaders and various other professions.

In this historic address His Holiness commends the foundational objectives of UNESCO highlighting that over 1400 years ago, Islam instructed Muslims to pursue these same goals in the interests of the peace and prosperity of mankind. His Holiness stresses the importance of education for all parts of society stating that access to education, for both girls and boys, is the means of ensuring peace and stability. Furthermore, he refutes the allegation that Islam is a religion that has failed to encourage intellectual advancement; rather, he emphasises how, from the very outset, Islam taught that human beings should continually seek to push the boundaries of human knowledge and that there is no contradiction between science and religion.

The entire address revolves around the discussion of Islamic values of intellectual advancement that have served mankind in the past and are continuing to do so.

ISLAMIC PRINCIPLES ON EDUCATION & SERVING HUMANITY

Bismillahir Rahmanir Raheem, In the Name of Allah, the Gracious, Ever Merciful.

All distinguished guests, *Assalamo Alaikum Wa Rahmatullabe Wa Barakatobu* - peace and blessings of Allah be upon you all.

First of all, I would like to take this opportunity to thank the UNESCO administration for graciously permitting us to hold this event today.

I would also like to place on record my sincere gratitude to all the guests who have accepted our invitation and have come to listen to a person, who is neither a politician nor a political leader nor a scientist, but, rather, is the Head of a religious community - the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community.

The founding objectives of UNESCO are excellent and praiseworthy. Amongst its objectives are fostering peace and respect, promoting the rule of law, human rights and education

across the world.

UNESCO also advocates for press freedom and protecting different cultures and heritages. Another of its stated goals is to eradicate poverty and to promote sustainable global growth and development and to try to ensure that humanity leaves behind a positive legacy from which future generations can benefit. You may be surprised to learn that Islamic teachings require Muslims to work towards fulfilling these same objectives and to continually strive for the progress of humanity. Such service is based upon the very first chapter of the Holy Quran, which states that Allah the Almighty is the *“Lord of all the worlds”*¹. This verse is central to the Islamic faith whereby Muslims are taught that God Almighty is not just their Lord and Provider but He is the Provider and Sustainer of all humankind. He is the Gracious and Merciful and so, irrespective of caste, creed or colour, God Almighty fulfils the needs of His creation. Given this, true Muslims firmly believe that all humans are born equal and that regardless of differences of belief, the values of mutual respect and tolerance must be firmly embedded within society.

A beautiful Islamic principle given in chapter 2, verse 139 of the Holy Quran, is that Muslims should seek to follow the ways of Allah the Almighty and adopt His attributes. As mentioned, Allah’s Grace is all-encompassing and He is the Provider and Sustainer for all people, including those who deny His existence. His Grace and Mercy remains even with those who continually speak ill of Him or who conduct cruelties in the world.

In Islam, the philosophy of punishment or sanction established by God Almighty is weighted more towards the Hereafter, whilst in this life, Allah the Almighty continues to manifest His Grace and Mercy upon the world. By instructing Muslims to adopt His ways, Allah the Almighty has instructed them to show compassion and sympathy to their fellow Creation. In light of this, it is a religious obligation on Muslims to fulfil the requirements of other people, culture or ethnicity and to always be kind and empathetic to the emotions and needs of others.

Moreover, the Holy Quran has pronounced that the Holy Prophet of Islam (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) was sent to the world by God Almighty as a source of unparalleled mercy and benevolence for all humanity². He was the practical manifestation of the compassionate teachings of Islam. After he founded Islam, the Holy Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) and his followers were subjected to brutal and inhumane treatment by the non-Muslims of Makkah, which they endured with patience and restraint. Finally, after suffering years of relentless persecution, they migrated to the city of Madinah where the Holy Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) formed a covenant of peace between the Muslim migrants, the Jewish people and other members of society. According to its terms, the divergent groups pledged to live peacefully, to fulfil the rights of one another and to foster a spirit of mutual sympathy, tolerance and cooperation.

The Holy Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) was elected as the head of state and under his leadership, the covenant proved to be a magnificent charter of human rights and governance and it ensured peace between the different communities. Underpinning the society was a justice system that was fair and in which the rule of law was upheld. The Prophet of Islam (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) established an impartial judiciary for dispute resolution. He made it clear that there would be one law for the rich and powerful. Rather, in what was a revolutionary concept, all people were treated equally according to the law of the land.

For example, on one occasion, an affluent lady committed a crime and many people suggested that, given her high standing in society, it was better to turn a blind eye to her crimes. The Holy Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) rejected their advice and stated that the law applied equally to everyone, regardless of their status in society. He made it clear that even if his daughter committed an offence, she too would be subject to the law and no favouritism or nepotism would occur.³

In addition, the Prophet of Islam (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) established an excellent education system, through which the intellectual standards of that society were raised. Literate and well-educated people were instructed to teach the illiterate. Special measures were put in place to provide education to orphans and other vulnerable members of society. This was all done so that the weak and powerless could stand

on their own two feet and advance. A taxation system was established, whereby taxes were levied on wealthier members of society and the proceeds were used to provide financial aid for disadvantaged members of society.

According to the teachings of the Holy Quran, the Prophet of Islam (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) established a code of business and financial ethics to ensure that trading was fair and honest. In an age, when slavery was rampant and slave-owners treated their slaves mercilessly, the Prophet of Islam (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) sought to bring about a revolution in society. Slave-owners were ordered to treat their slaves with compassion and respect and the Holy Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) repeatedly urged them to free them ⁴. Also, under the leadership of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), a system of public sanitation was developed. A city cleaning programme was implemented and people were educated about the importance of personal hygiene and physical health. The roads of the city were expanded and improved. A census was conducted to collect data and to identify the needs of the citizens.

Thus, during the 7th Century, under the government led by the Prophet of Islam (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), astonishing progress was made in Madinah to advance the cause of individual and collective rights. Indeed, for the very first time amongst the Arabs, an orderly and civilised society was

established.

In many ways, it was a model society - in terms of infrastructure, services and more importantly, in terms of the unity and tolerance displayed in what was a multicultural society. The Muslims were immigrants, yet they integrated smoothly into the local society and contributed to its success and development.

Moving on, in terms of the teachings of Islam, it is a cause of profound sadness that in today's world, the Holy Prophet of Islam (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) has been grievously mischaracterised. He has been branded as a belligerent leader, when nothing could be further from the truth. The reality is that the Prophet of Islam (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) spent every moment of his life championing the rights of all people and through the teachings of Islam, he established an incomparable and timeless charter of human rights.

For example, he taught that people should respect the beliefs and feelings of one another. They should abstain from criticising what others held sacred. Once, a Jewish person came to him and complained about the conduct of one of his closest companions. The Prophet of Islam (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) summoned his companion and asked what had transpired. He said that the Jew had claimed that Moses (peace be upon him) was superior in rank to the Prophet of Islam (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) and he could not tolerate this and so he had strongly refuted it and said that the Holy Prophet of Islam (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) was of a higher rank.

Upon this, the Holy Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) expressed his displeasure with his closest confidant and said that he should not have argued with the Jew and should instead have respected his religious sentiments ⁵. These were his peerless teachings and in my view, it is deeply regrettable that the principle of mutual respect, which is the means of establishing love and unity, has been sacrificed in the modern world in the name of so-called freedom and even in the name of “entertainment”. Even the Founders of religion are no longer spared mockery and contempt, even though their derision causes anguish and pain to millions of their followers around the world. On the other hand, the Holy Quran goes as far as saying that Muslims should not even speak ill of the idols of others, because it will cause them distress and in turn, they may speak ill of God Almighty ⁶. In this way, a vicious cycle of hostility could ensue and the peace and unity of society would suffer.

In terms of fulfilling the rights of the weak and poor, the Holy Prophet of Islam (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) forever defended the cause of the weaker members of society. He established various schemes and projects to raise their standards of living and to ensure that they were not deprived of their dignity. He said that whilst most people afforded a high status to those who were wealthy and powerful, a poor person who was moral and considerate, had far greater value than a rich person who cared not for the feelings of others and merely lived off his name.

Even in small matters, the Holy Prophet of Islam (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) paid great attention to ensuring that the feelings of underprivileged people were protected. For example, he instructed Muslims to always invite the poor and needy to their dinner parties or social gatherings.

If less affluent people were exploited by the rich or powerful, the Prophet of Islam (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) instructed his followers to help the weaker party attain justice.

I have already mentioned how in his capacity as Head of State, the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) always sought to eliminate slavery. In this regard, to his own followers, the Prophet of Islam (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) repeatedly advocated the freeing of slaves and instructed that if it was not immediately possible for them to release them, then at the very minimum, they were to feed and clothe them in the same way they fed and clothed themselves⁷.

Another issue often raised by critics of Islam is of women's rights and it is often alleged that Islam denies women's rights. Nothing could be further from the truth! Rather, Islam established the rights of women and girls for the first time. At a time, when women and girls were discriminated against and often looked down upon, the Holy Prophet of Islam (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) spoke of their great value and high status in society. He instructed his followers to ensure that girls were educated and respected. Indeed, he said that if a person had three daughters who they educated and guided in the best way they would be sure to enter paradise⁸.

On the one side, extremists, who have distorted the teachings of Islam, claim that a violent Jihad and the slaughter of non-Muslims will take a person to heaven. Yet the Prophet of Islam (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) taught that the way to enter heaven was by educating and instilling moral values within girls. Based upon these teachings Ahmadi Muslim girls across the world are educated and are excelling in various fields. They are becoming doctors, teachers and architects and entering other professions through which they can serve humanity. In countries like Pakistan, where the literacy rate of girls is just over 50%, we ensure that girls are given equal access to education as boys, and as such, the literacy rate of Ahmadi Muslim girls in the developing world is at least 99%.

Besides education, Islam was the religion that first gave women the right to inheritance, the right to divorce and many other human rights.

Furthermore, the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) strongly emphasised the rights of one's neighbours and said that Allah the Almighty had placed such great emphasis upon their rights that he came to think that neighbours would be classed amongst a person's rightful heirs.⁹

Thus, the Prophet of Islam (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) established universal human rights that were due to each individual, irrespective of their beliefs, social status or ethnicity.

I have just spoken about how the Holy Prophet of Islam (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) focused a great deal on the

importance of education. This was reflected in the aftermath of the first battle in the history of Islam. After the migration to Madinah, the Muslims were forced to defend themselves when war was waged upon them by the disbelievers of Makkah. Even though the Muslim army was extremely ill-equipped they were able to defeat the much stronger Makkan army with the help of Allah the Almighty. Thereafter, the Holy Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) offered to release those prisoners of war who were literate, on condition they first taught illiterate members of society how to read and write. In this way, many centuries ago, the Prophet of Islam (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) established a very successful model for the rehabilitation and re-integration into society of prisoners, which benefited society at large.

The war just mentioned was the Battle of Badr, which was the first occasion in which a Muslim army fought. It is often alleged that Islam is a religion of violence or warfare and so it is important to note that when God Almighty permitted the Muslims to fight in the Battle of Badr, permission was not granted merely so they could defend themselves or Islam; rather, Allah the Almighty stated in the Holy Quran that permission to fight back was granted to establish and preserve the principles of freedom of belief and freedom of conscience for all mankind. The Quran states that if the Muslims did not defend themselves against the Makkan army then no church, synagogue, temple, mosque or any other place of worship would be safe, because

the opponents of Islam were determined to eliminate all forms of religion.¹⁰ In reality, if the early Muslims engaged in warfare it was always defensive and fought for the sake of establishing long-term peace and to protect the right of all people to live with freedom. Hence, to make a blanket statement that Muslims are extremists is entirely unjust. If today, there are Muslims who have adopted extremist tactics or who preach violence, it is because they have abandoned Islam's teachings or are wholly ignorant of it. Where individuals or groups conduct terrorism, it is to gain power or to enrich themselves. Similarly, where countries adopt unjust and extreme policies, their goals are invariably linked to gaining geo-political benefit and asserting their dominance over others. Their conduct has nothing to do with Islam. The Holy Quran states very clearly that there should be no compulsion in matters of faith.

Islam prohibits Muslims from aggression and so the Prophet of Islam (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) and his four rightly guided Caliphs never sought war or violence, and at all times sought peace and reconciliation and made countless sacrifices in its cause.

Another allegation levelled against Islam by certain critics is that it is a backward and archaic religion or one that does not promote intellectual advancement. This is a lazy stereotype that is based on fiction rather than fact.

I have spoken already of how the Prophet of Islam (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) valued education and strived

to ensure that all people, including girls and those afflicted by poverty, were educated and given the means to progress. Furthermore, the Holy Quran itself has signified the importance of education by teaching the prayer “*O my Lord, increase me in knowledge*”¹¹. Where this prayer is a source of great help to Muslims, it also inspires them towards learning and advancing the cause of human knowledge. The truth is that the Holy Quran and the teachings of the Holy Prophet of Islam (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) inspired the works of generations of Muslim intellectuals, philosophers and inventors in the Middle Ages. Indeed, if we look back more than a millennium we see how Muslim scientists and inventors played a fundamental role in advancing knowledge and developing technologies, which transformed the world and remain in use today.

For example, the first ever camera was developed by Ibn Haytham and his revolutionary work was recognised by UNESCO when he was declared as a “*pioneer of modern optics*”. It is also interesting to note that the word ‘camera’ is derived from the Arabic word *qamara*.

In the 12th Century, a Muslim cartographer produced what was regarded as the most extensive and accurate world map of the medieval times, which was used for centuries by travellers. Furthermore, in the field of medicine, many Muslim physicians and scientists made great discoveries and pioneered many inventions that remain in use today.

Many surgical instruments were pioneered by the Muslim

physician Al-Zahrawi in the 10th Century.

In the 17th century, an English physician, William Harvey famously carried out what was considered as ground-breaking research regarding blood circulation and the functioning of the heart. However, it was later discovered that more than 400 years before Harvey's research, Ibn Nafees, an Arab physician, had already detailed the basics of pulmonary circulation in an Arabic textbook.

In the 9th century, Jabir ibn Hayyan brought about a revolution in the field of chemistry. He transformed what had previously been unscientific *alchemy* into true *chemistry*. He invented many of the basic processes and apparatus still in use today, such as crystallisation, distillation, purification, oxidation and evaporation.

Similarly, in the field of mathematics, Muslims played a vital role in advancing the knowledge of humans. The principles of Algebra were first developed by a Muslim, as was much of the theory of Trigonometry.

In the modern world, algorithms are the basis of modern computing technology and they too were first developed by Muslims. The contribution of Muslims to intellectual enlightenment has been recognised by UNESCO and by well-known Western researchers and journalists. For example, a New York Times article, published by their Science Reporter, Dennis Overbye, mentions the role of the Muslim polymath Al-Tusi. The author states:

“Al-Tusi thrived there, publishing many great works on astronomy, ethics, mathematics and philosophy, that marked him as one of the great intellectuals of his age... The road to modern astronomy, scholars say, leads through the work that he and his followers performed at Maragha and Alamut in the 13th and 14th centuries... Muslims created a society that in the Middle Ages was the scientific centre of the world. The Arabic language was synonymous with learning and science for 500 years, a golden age that can count among its credits the precursors to modern universities, algebra, the names of the stars and even the notion of science as an empirical inquiry...”¹²

Hence, from the outset, Islam emphasised the immense value of learning and pushing the boundaries of human knowledge.

Since it was founded in 1889, the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community has always promoted education amongst its members and, to the best of our abilities, we seek to provide access to education in the developing world.

With the Grace of Allah, the very first Muslim Nobel Laureate was an Ahmadi Muslim, Professor Dr Abdus Salam, an eminent physicist who won the Nobel Prize for Physics in 1979 for his contribution to the development of electroweak unification theory. Throughout his life, Professor Salam spoke of how Islam, and the Holy Quran in particular, was the inspiration and guiding light behind his work. In fact, he used to say that there were around 750 verses in the Holy Quran directly related

to science and which enhanced our understanding of nature and the universe.

Furthermore, the Third Caliph of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community desired for a new dawn of great Muslim scientists and academics to emerge and so, within our Community, he started a tradition of awarding gold medals for academic excellence and this tradition continues to this day. Each year, hundreds of Ahmadi Muslim boys and girls or men and women are awarded gold medals due to their high academic achievements. Certainly, we believe that access to education is key to breaking the cycle of poverty that has plagued economically weak countries for generations. We learn this from the Holy Prophet of Islam (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) who urged Muslims to fund the education of vulnerable members of society, such as orphans.

He taught that spiritual advancement was intrinsically linked to serving humanity and so a Muslim could not attain the love of God Almighty just through worship and prayer, rather the love of God Almighty required Muslims to serve humanity. Thus, in chapter 90, verses 15 to 17 of the Holy Quran, Muslims are instructed to work to eradicate hunger and poverty, to fulfil the needs of orphans and to educate vulnerable and poor children, so that opportunities open up for them to develop.

In all parts of the world, the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community acts upon these noble teachings to the best of its abilities. We believe that Islam is a religion of love and compassion and so

we serve humanity without making any distinction based on the religion or ethnicity of those who we help. Our primary and only motivation is to attain the love of God Almighty.

Therefore, in remote and poverty-stricken parts of Africa, we have established primary and secondary schools and we have also opened hospitals and clinics. We are providing clean running water in remote villages, which mean that children are free to go to school, instead of spending their days travelling for miles seeking to collect pond-water for their domestic family use.

We have also set up a project of building model villages, which include community halls, access to clean water, solar energy infrastructure and various other facilities. All of these services are provided to the local people, irrespective of their background or beliefs and are motivated entirely by our religion. Where, out of human sympathy, we seek to eradicate poverty and destitution, we also consider it to be the key to developing sustainable peace in the world. Only if people have food to eat, water to drink, shelter, schooling for their children and healthcare will they be able to live in peace and escape the deadly clutches of frustration and resentment that lead people towards extremism. These are all basic human rights and so until we help people flee poverty and destitution, we will not see true peace in the world.

I reiterate that whatever humanitarian projects we Ahmadi Muslims are running are delivered irrespective of beliefs, and we desire no praise or recognition for our efforts. We only desire the pleasure of our Creator, Allah the Almighty.

At the end, I pray with all my heart that mankind forsakes greed and forgoes the pursuit of narrow self-interests and instead focuses on relieving the pain and anguish of those who are suffering in the world.

With these words, I would like to once again thank you for joining us here this evening. Thank you very much.

**AHMADI MUSLIM
RESEARCHERS -
RESTORING ISLAM'S
GOLDEN AGE**

10TH ANNUAL AHMADIYYA MUSLIM RESEARCH
ASSOCIATION CONFERENCE
MASROOR HALL, ISLAMABAD, TILFORD
14 DECEMBER 2019





Moments from Masroor Hall, Islamabad, Tilford where the first international Ahmadiyya Muslim Researchers Association Conference took place. The event was organised by the Ahmadiyya Muslim Youth Association - Majlis Khuddamul Ahmadiyya UK. After lectures and presentations delivered by Ahmadi researchers from around the world, His Holiness Hazrat Mirza Masroor Ahmad^{aba} delivered the keynote address in the concluding session.



Preface

On Saturday 14 December 2019 the first international Ahmadiyya Muslim Researchers Association Conference took place at Masroor Hall adjacent to the Mubarak Mosque, Islamabad (Surrey). Over 250 people attended the event throughout the day including 60 researchers with delegates originating from 9 countries around the world.

At the concluding session His Holiness Hazrat Mirza Masroor Ahmad - Khalifatul-Masih V^{aba} delivered an inspiring address encouraging Ahmadi Muslim researchers to excel in their respective fields with the objectives of bringing people closer to God and serving mankind through technological advancements.

In this address His Holiness speaks about the golden age of Islam in which Muslim scientists spearheaded the world of academia, he comments on the decline of such an era and how today, Ahmadi Muslim scientists can re-ignite another era of Islamic scientific enlightenment.

AHMADI MUSLIM RESEARCHERS - RESTORING ISLAM'S GOLDEN AGE

○ إِنَّ فِي خَلْقِ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَالاخْتِلافِ اللَّيْلِ وَالنَّهَارِ لآيَاتٍ لِأُولِي الْأَلْبَابِ
الَّذِينَ يَذْكُرُونَ اللَّهَ قِيَامًا وَقُعُودًا وَعَلَىٰ جُنُوبِهِمْ وَيَتَفَكَّرُونَ فِي خَلْقِ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ رَبَّنَا مَا خَلَقْتَ هَذَا بَاطِلًا سُبْحَانَكَ فَقِنَا عَذَابَ النَّارِ ○

These verses of the Holy Qur'an I have just recited are verses 191-192 of Surah Aal-e-'Imran and the translation is as follows:

“In the creation of the heavens and the earth and in the alternation of the night and the day there are indeed Signs for men of understanding; Those who remember Allah while standing, sitting, and lying on their sides, and ponder over the creation of the heavens and the earth: ‘Our Lord, Thou hast not created this in vain; nay, Holy art Thou; save us, then, from the punishment of the Fire.’”

Today, with the Grace of Allah, you are holding the first

International AMRA Conference. I hope and pray that the event has proven beneficial and a source of learning for all of the participants.

In many verses of the Holy Qur'an, including those just recited, Allah the Almighty has mentioned the creation of the heavens and the earth and He has instructed us to reflect upon the true purpose of our creation. He has encouraged us to use our brains, to ponder upon His creation and to search for new roads of human progress and innovation, through research and reflection.

Indeed, Allah the Almighty has deemed humans as the *'best of creation'*¹ because of the fact that we have been granted intelligence and understanding. We have been granted the ability to differentiate between right and wrong. We have been given the ability to think and comprehend. Unique amongst all creation, Allah the Almighty has given mankind the insight to appreciate that whatever He has created has been made for our benefit, on condition that we use it in the right way.

Certainly, out of all the heavenly scriptures, the Holy Qur'an is unique in terms of the vast amount of insight it has given about the universe and its inception and how it has encouraged scientific research and the pursuit of knowledge.

In this regard, the Promised Messiah^{as} has stated that when a believer studies and ponders over the celestial bodies and the entire universe, it causes their minds to open up and for them to become enlightened. The result is that they are led towards a firm belief in the existence of God Almighty, as they see the signs

and evidence for His existence all around them.² On the other hand, the interests of worldly and non-religious researchers are finite and narrow. When they study something, they assess it in a limited way. However, a righteous person is not satisfied by merely identifying the dimensions of the world, its material form or calculating the gravitational forces. Nor are they content by simply determining the main characteristics of the sun, the moon and the stars; rather, a true believer will continually strive and struggle to observe and understand the perfect harmony of nature and the world around us. He or she will have an unquenchable thirst to identify the hidden characteristics or potential of the physical world and as they realise its brilliance and perfection, they will inevitably be drawn towards their Creator and their faith in the existence of God Almighty will be enhanced.

Consequently, when an intelligent person reflects carefully upon the heavens and the earth, the universe and why the length of the night and day remains constantly in a state of flux, it causes them to perceive God Almighty and appreciate His perfect creation. When they see God Almighty in this way and recognise His majesty, they turn towards him with increased fervency and passion and seek His Help and Grace, in their efforts to further understand and unlock the mysteries of the universe. In order to attain His blessings and help, they remember Him whilst standing, sitting and resting, just as has been described as the state of a righteous believer in the verses of the Holy Qur'an recited. When they pray to Allah for guidance, He grants them

clarity of thought, He enlightens their minds and washes away the haze of incomprehension that previously existed. He grants them an understanding of the universe and planets and they come to recognise with certainty, that such a perfect and precise natural order could never have come about by chance or on its own; rather, it is a reflection and indicator of a Great Creator. Indeed, it is a testament to the existence of a Universal Creator.

Those people, whose minds are opened in this way, bow down before their Creator and pray that they are saved from His Wrath and that He guides them towards prosperity and a deeper understanding of His creation.

In a similar vein, the Promised Messiah^{as} has stated that the continued study of physics, astronomy and the sciences will always lead a righteous person towards God Almighty. The more they learn about God's creation and the world around them, the more they will appreciate the beauty of Allah the Almighty through the wonders of the universe.³ Once a believer gains such knowledge and insight, he or she is not just able to guide others about the latest scientific developments, rather they will also be armed with the armoury to prove to the world the existence of that One God, who is the Creator of all creation. This is the symbol of a true believer, the means of their success and their path to attaining real honour and prestige in the world.

It was in this way, reflecting upon the universe, that Professor Dr Abdus Salam Sahib spent his life and he used whatever insight he gained as evidence to prove the existence of God. Hence, all Ahmadi researchers or academics should continually

keep in view the Oneness of God Almighty before, during and after conducting any research or study. They should seek to conduct their investigations with the firm intention of eliciting evidence that will enable them to prove the existence of the One God to sceptics and disbelievers and to refute those who claim that science and religion are irreconcilable. When they research in this way and seek the Help of Allah the Almighty at each step, no doubt He will assist them at every juncture and be their guiding light.

As I said before, the research of a secular person is based on a purely worldly approach and they use their intellect for the sake of material progress. Their efforts can lead to scientific advancement, but the research of a believer has a far greater potential impact. Their research will not only lead to scientific progress and the development of modern technologies, but will also serve to offer proof of the existence of God Almighty.

Therefore, Ahmadi Muslim researchers, especially those who pursue the sciences, should not only have the intention of enhancing the understanding of their chosen field, but should also maintain an everlasting resolve to find proofs of the existence of God. As I have said, this was how Dr Abdus Salam Sahib conducted his work and he attained phenomenal success as a result.

Remember, that the Promised Messiah^{as} has said that people of true intellect and wisdom are those who never forget God Almighty and always remember Him. Thus, where our scientists and researchers strive to excel in their academic pursuits, they

must always safeguard their faith, fulfil the rights of Allah the Almighty and fulfil the demands laid upon them to search for additional evidence proving the existence of an All-Powerful God. Hence, there should always be a clear distinction between Ahmadi scientists and researchers and others who pursue similar fields of study. And the difference ought to be that the pursuit of knowledge of an Ahmadi must be based upon *Taqwa* – righteousness.

Indeed, the Holy Prophet of Islam^{sa} said that a person should fear the acumen and perceptive nature of a believer, because their knowledge is based upon righteousness.⁴

In summary, the love and majesty of Allah the Almighty should be forever ingrained and imprinted in your hearts and minds. If you research and seek to evolve your work in this way, then Allah the Almighty will bestow upon you great success, Insha'Allah.

Some of you may be aware that once, a well-known Western researcher and traveller, Professor Clement Wragge, travelled to Qadian to meet the Promised Messiah^{as}. During their conversation, the Promised Messiah^{as} explained that Allah the Almighty has created the sun and the moon, the stars and planets to serve human beings and for the benefit of humankind.⁵ In light of this, whilst conducting research to answer questions that remain unsolved, an Ahmadi researcher must keep at the forefront of their mind that whatever has been created by Allah the Almighty has been made for the benefit of humanity. It should be their objective to uncover and derive the benefits

and to ensure that whatever intellectual progress is made is utilised in the right way for the betterment of mankind. In his discussions with Professor Wragge, the Promised Messiah^{as} affirmed that there was no contradiction between science and religion and that no matter how far science progressed, it would never prove a single letter or word of the Holy Qur'an, or the teachings of Islam, to be untrue. Rather, every discovery and every development would serve as additional proof of the truth of the teachings of the Holy Qur'an and the existence of the One God.

Certainly, the Holy Qur'an does not shy away from science or discourage its followers from study. Quite the opposite – the Holy Qur'an instructs believers to explore, to investigate and to utilise their intellect and God-given faculties.⁶ Indeed, those who strive to advance human knowledge for the benefit of humanity will reap the rewards of Allah the Almighty for their efforts. However, the Holy Qur'an has also warned humans from interfering with the laws of nature or from seeking to change or modify the creation of Allah through unnatural means.⁷

For example, in recent years, the boundaries of scientific ethics have gradually eroded, whereby there have been attempts to pursue immoral and dangerous pursuits such as genetic engineering and the cloning of living creatures. The results of such undertakings, where humans far exceed their limits and seek to 'play God', will surely be catastrophic and be the means of driving mankind towards its destruction. It will not only lead the protagonists towards Hell in the Hereafter, but they will

also be responsible for creating a living hell on earth. This is something every Ahmadi Muslim researcher and scientist must guard against.

You must only pursue those avenues that are for the benefit of humanity and which are according to the limits prescribed by Allah the Almighty. Always remember that to stay within the confines of the Holy Qur'an is the hallmark of a believer. If you conduct your work in this way, you can achieve great things and revive the once distinguished reputation of Muslim scholars and academics.

With the Grace of Allah, during the Middle Ages, countless Muslim scientists, philosophers and intellectuals left an indelible mark on humanity by advancing the cause of human knowledge and understanding. Their pioneering efforts brought about a remarkable revolution in the world and their research and discoveries continue to be the basis for modern science and mathematics. They utilised their God-given talents and faculties, whilst seeking the Help of Allah the Almighty and reflecting upon His creation and as a result, have been recognised through history and continue to be acknowledged and respected today. For example, an article published by the National Geographic in 2016 titled *How early Islamic Science advanced Medicine*, identifies the contributions of Muslim scientists in the early period of Islam. The article states:

“Physicians from Islamic countries during the late Middle Ages enjoyed great respect. Their reputation was well deserved, for the study and practice

*of medicine was then led by Muslim societies across their immense territory, which extended from modern-day southern Spain to Iran.”*⁸

It further states:

*“By the 900s, drawing from a growing body of Greek, Persian, and Sanskrit works translated into Arabic, Islamic medicine quickly became the most sophisticated in the world. Christians, Jews, Hindus, and scholars from many other traditions, looked to Arabic as a language of science. Doctors of different faiths worked together, debating and studying with Arabic as the common tongue.”*⁹

The article continues:

*“The brightest star in the Baghdad firmament was undoubtedly the extraordinary Ibn Sina...Already a doctor at age 18, his great volume *Al-Qanun fi al-Tibb* – Canon of Medicine – became one of the most famous medical works of all time...[Ibn Sina’s] attempt to harmonize the medical practices of the Greek thinker Galen with the philosophy of Aristotle reveals the multiple nature of the debt owed to Muslim scholarship, which did not merely revive Greek authors, but stimulated new patterns of thought for the centuries ahead. The reconciling of practical science, thought, and religion ensured *Al-Qanun* was studied by European medics until the 18th century.”*¹⁰

Moreover, the National Geographic article labels the period of Muslim rule in Spain as a “*period of scholarly development*” and

describes Cordoba in the 10th Century as the “*most cultured city in Europe*” and “*a great centre of study and exploration.*” In another article, published by The New York Times, “*How Islam Won, and Lost, the Lead in Science*” the contribution of early Muslim scientists is also openly praised. The author writes:

*“Civilisations don’t just clash... they can learn from each other. Islam is a good example of that... The intellectual meeting of Arabia and Greece was one of the greatest events in history. Its scale and consequences are enormous, not just for Islam but for Europe and the world.”*¹¹

However, the article also notes that many of the contributions made by the early Muslims were not preserved. In this regard, it states:

*“...historians say they know very little about this golden age. Few of the major scientific works from that era have been translated from Arabic and thousands of manuscripts have never even been read by modern scholars.”*¹²

Hence, the historic contributions of Muslim scholars is unquestioned. Yet, most regrettably, the recent intellectual state of much of the Muslim world has been lamentable. Over time, as Muslims moved away from God Almighty and the qualities associated with a believer diminished rapidly amongst them the Muslims, who had previously led the world in science and research, gradually moved to an age of intellectual ignorance that persists to this day. Instead of continuing to be the leaders

of innovation and discovery, the period of Muslim academic enlightenment drew to an end and the Muslims relied on the discoveries and modern technologies made by others. Instead of being those who gave to the world, the Muslims became those who only took. As a result, where the world recognises the outstanding historic contribution of Muslims to science and learning, it considers the intellectual status of the modern-day Muslim world to be woeful. The truth is that, generally speaking, the Muslim world has lost its passion for education and pushing the boundaries of human knowledge. Muslim nations have become immersed in the luxuries and comforts of the world and so they no longer have the drive or motivation to toil in the pursuit of knowledge or to reflect upon the universe.

The failure of the contemporary Muslim world to excel in science and learning has been discussed by Hillel Ofek, a Research Fellow at the Clements Centre for National Security in the United States, in an article titled "*Why the Arabic World turned away from Science*". He describes how Muslims have gone from leading the world in science and the development of human civilisation to a state where their contributions are now mocked amongst the academic community. He quotes a professor of history who notes that until around the year 1600, "*nothing in Europe could hold a candle*" to the intellectual advancement made by Muslim scientists and scholars. Furthermore, he notes how many scientific and mathematical terms, such as algebra, algorithm, alchemy and alkali derive from Arabic and reflect Islam's contribution to the world. Yet he goes on to paint

a modern-day picture of science in the Muslim world that is completely at odds with its illustrious past. For example, he notes that there have only ever been two scientists from Muslim countries who have won the Nobel Prize, despite the fact there are approximately 1.6 billion Muslims in the world.

Another stark statistic he presents is that 46 Muslim countries combined contributed just one percent of the world's scientific literature. In a similar vein, he states that in 1989, the United States published over 10,000 scientific papers that were frequently cited, whilst in the entire Arab world just four commonly cited papers were published in the same period. He also notes how between 1980 and 2000, just one country, South Korea, granted over 16,000 intellectual patents, whilst nine Arab countries, including Egypt, Saudi Arabia and the UAE granted a combined total of just 370. The article also quotes the Nobel Laureate, Professor Steven Weinberg, speaking about the dearth of scientific material originating from Muslim countries. Professor Weinberg states:

*“Though there are talented scientists of Muslim origin working productively in the West, for forty years I have not seen a single paper by a physicist or astronomer working in a Muslim country that was worth reading.”*¹³

Thus, in intellectual and scientific terms, Muslims and the Islamic nations have gone from leading the world, to being treated with scorn and derision. At this time of intellectual

ignorance amongst the Islamic world, it is the great challenge for Ahmadi Muslim scientists and researchers to revive the honour and dignity of Islam in the global academic arena. Indeed, it should be your ambition to take up the glorious mantle of enlightenment adorned by the great Muslim scholars and inventors of the Middle Ages. Each year, it is a tradition that our Jama'at awards gold medals for outstanding educational achievement in various fields. However, when the scheme was initiated by Hazrat Khalifatul-Masih III^{ra}, he instructed that the gold medals and scholarships were specifically to reward those who excelled in science. He started the scheme shortly after Dr Abdus Salam Sahib won the Nobel Prize and it was his ardent desire that at least 100 Ahmadi Muslims would soon follow in the footsteps of Dr Abdus Salam and become eminent scientists by the time our Jama'at entered its second century. Three decades of the second century of Ahmadiyyat have now passed and regrettably, I do not think we have even produced a scientist who has become world-renowned in that time.

In addition, for the past thirteen or fourteen years, I have instructed Ahmadi students either directly, or through Majlis Khuddamul Ahmadiyya, to enter the field of academia and research and to endeavour to reach the highest echelons of their fields. However, so far, it cannot be said that the results have been anywhere near as good as I had hoped. As far as I know, hardly any Ahmadi has played an outstanding or extraordinary role in the scientific and intellectual development of the world. Here I would also like to appreciate the efforts of the USA Chapter of

the Association of Ahmadi Scientists, who are somehow active and hold regular meetings on science and the Qur'an. Yet, we cannot say they have achieved that exceptional mark expected of them.

Consequently, having gathered here and held this conference, you must all consider it your mission to pursue excellence within your chosen field. You must leave here with a firm determination in your hearts to follow in the footsteps of Dr Abdus Salam and those outstanding Muslim scholars and researchers, who left behind a rich legacy of knowledge many centuries ago. You must reflect upon how you can develop a greater understanding of the world and develop new technologies or systems through which humanity can benefit. As scientists and researchers, it is up to you to exercise your minds and talents to seek out the ways and methods to accomplish great feats of learning. You should stay in contact with one another and particularly with those who are working in similar areas of research and learn from each other. Through mutual discussion and coordination, you may be able to achieve better results.

Work with diligence, passion and above all, constantly seek the Help of Allah the Almighty at every step of your academic journey and keep His Majesty at the forefront of your minds. With these words, I pray that may Allah the Almighty enable you to flourish and to achieve great success in your fields of expertise. And may we soon come to witness the dawn of a new Islamic golden age of intellectual progress and advancement, led by Ahmadi Muslims across the world - *Ameen*.

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