

Spread a culture of peace and tolerance

Tuesday 8 May, 2018

For the last two hundred years, a debate has ranged in the Muslim world about how Muslims living under non-Muslim governments should live and behave. The Holy Quran is clear on this. It states: "O you who believe, obey Allah and obey the Messenger and those in authority from among you ..." (4:59) Rather than take this simple statement at face value, convoluted arguments were used to show that it means that Muslims are to obey only Muslim governments, *although actual history negated such arguments*. During the lifetime of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, Muslims lived in peace under the Christian ruler, the Negus, obeying his government and its rules. The Holy Prophet referred to the Negus as 'our brother'.

120 years ago, His Holiness Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, who was divinely raised to correct the Muslim misunderstanding of the Holy Quran, declared that so long as Muslims have the freedom to practice and preach their religion, they should live in peace under a non-Muslim government. He further declared that when dealing with people a Muslim should never consider a petitioner's religion or sect, telling a newly qualified doctor: "only think: Allah has put the gift of healing in my hand by which I can benefit humanity".

It has taken our brothers and sisters a long time to

accept this. *Gulf News*, on

7th May 2018, underneath the headline "Good Muslims must strive to be good citizens, scholars say", reported on a two-day international conference on Muslim minorities held in Abu Dhabi. Dr Ali Rashid Al Nuaimi, chairman of the Supreme Committee of the conference is quoted as saying: "The conference aims at spreading the culture of peace and tolerance between adherents of religions and cultures and contributing to safeguarding the children of Muslim minorities against violence and extremism and defending the rights of these religious and cultural minorities according to international conventions and treaties".

The article quotes another contributor, Abaas Yunas, head of the think tank Futures Initiative, who said: "The same issues which face Muslim minorities face other minorities — discrimination, the rise of nationalism and xenophobia, identity politics and so on. What is important in such a time is the need to work towards alliances of common good that are not restricted to people of the same religion or ethnicity. Many Muslims are proud citizens of their towns and cities and just like others, they want to see good for them".

"Professor

Akbar Ahmad", continues the article, "author, poet and playwright, who currently serves as the Ibn Khaldoun Chair of Islamic Studies at American University in Washington, DC, said the holy Quran very emphatically speaks of all humanity as being a part of the same divine order", and it quotes these words from Prof. Ahmad: "Muslims in the minority must learn to live comfortably both as citizens of their country and as Muslims. Indian Muslims should feel both Indian and Muslim; British Muslims should feel both British and Muslim. It is this sense of compatibility that must evolve in order for majority and minority communities to live together in peace".

This organisation has been making just these points for over a century, struggling against the erroneous understanding of the Holy Quran on the part of Muslims and non-Muslims alike. There is no disputing that Muslims are a target of hatred and

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discrimination, but we need to accept that *the outdated views of our brothers have contributed to rise of Islamophobia*. We praise Western governments for upholding the rule of law, providing us with protection and prosecuting those indulge in hate speech.

We,
yet again, invite our brothers to reflect upon the time they have lost by rejecting the correct interpretation of the disputed verses of the Holy Quran put forward by His Holiness Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, the Promised Messiah of Islam. The time which could have been better spent in moving forward to provide humanity with the solutions to its problems. It is still not too late, let us join hands and move forward.

The Ahmadiyya

Association for the Propagation of Islam (*Ahmadiyya Anjuman Ishaat Islam*) was established in Lahore in 1914 to promote the informed understanding of Islam in the West. In the UK it operated the [Shah Jehan Mosque in Woking](#) until the early 1960s. Its new headquarters is at *Dar-us-Salaam*, 15 Stanley Avenue, Wembley, HA0 4JQ, UK. In 1924, in Berlin, it built the first mosque in Continental Europe of the modern era. The German Government recognises the [Berlin Mosque](#) as part of the German national heritage. From its European and other centres around the world this organisation has taught that Islam promotes peace, harmony and mutual respect between all communities and nationalities.

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