

GLOBAL BROTHERHOOD



AHMADIYYA ANJUMAN ISHAAT-I-ISLAM INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION, SYDNEY 2000

O you, who believe, let not people laugh at people, perchance they may be better than they; nor let women (laugh) at women, perchance they may be better than they. Neither find fault with your own people, nor call one another by nick-names. Evil is a bad name after faith; and whoso turns not, these it is that are the iniquitous.

O you who believe, avoid most of suspicion, for surely suspicion in some cases is sin; and spy not nor let some of you backbite others. Does one of you like to eat the flesh of his dead brother? You abhor it! And keep your duty to Allah, surely Allah is Oft-returning (to mercy), Merciful.

O mankind, surely we have created you from a male and a female and made you tribes and families that you may know each other. Surely the noblest of you with Allah is the most dutiful of you. Surely Allah is Knowing, Aware. (49:11-13)

Mr. President, Honourable Federal Member of Parliament, Lord Mayor of Black Town, overseas delegates, members of the Jamaat, ladies and gentlemen.

Assalaam-o-Alaikum wa Rahmatullah-hi wa Barakatohu.

On behalf of the Central Anjuman, and on my own behalf, I would like to congratulate the executives and all members of the Ahmadiyya Anjuman Ishaat-i-Islam (Lahore), Sydney, for organising this international convention. I am confident that the learned speakers will do justice to the theme of the convention, that is "Islam the Universal Religion" and their efforts will go a long way in achieving the objectives of the Jamaat.

I have recited before you verses 11, 12 and 13 of Sura Al-Hujurat (The Apartments; Chapter 49) and their translation. The first two verses deal with some of the evils which are rampant in civilised society and which corrupt a society to its core. These evils mostly arise with wealth. Living in ease, people are most concerned with seeking each other's faults. Thus mutual hatred takes the place of brotherly love and friendly concord. The third verse lays down the principle of the brotherhood of mankind on the broadest basis. In the first two verses the address is to the believers, but in the third verse men in general are addressed. They are told that they are all members of one family and their division into nations, tribes and families should not lead to estrangement from, but to a better knowledge of each other. Superiority of one over another in this vast brotherhood does not depend on nationality, wealth or rank, but on the careful observance of duty, or moral greatness. Development of this great human brotherhood was also the theme of the Last Sermon of the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). Addressing the vast gathering he announced:

O mankind, surely your Lord is One and your father is one [Prophet Adam]. An Arab has no superiority over a non-Arab, nor a black over a red or a red over a black. Surely the most honourable one with Allah is the most pious and dutiful one of you.

Here again the address is to the whole mankind and not the believers only. Islam, thus laid the foundations of a great universal brotherhood, based on the equality of all human beings irrespective of class, colour or creed.

While defining the attributes of the dutiful ones, the Holy Quran states in verse 4 of Surah Al Baqara:

And they believe in that which has been revealed to thee and that which was revealed before thee. (2:4)

Again in verse 285 of the same chapter it is stated

They all believe in Allah and His angels and His messengers. We make no difference between any of His messengers. (2:285)

In another verse it is stated:

Mankind is a single nation (2:213)

These verses again illustrate the breadth of the Muslim faith. It preaches not only love and respect for the founders of the great religions of the world, but much more than that – faith in them. The breadth of these teachings goes beyond mere religious tolerance. It preaches equal love for all, equal respect for all, and equal faith in all.

Islam is thus the greatest unifying force that forms the basis of human civilisation - not the civilisation of one nation or one country, but of humanity as a whole. Over fourteen hundred years ago, it was Islam that came to the help of a civilisation whose very foundations had collapsed and saved it from crashing into the abyss of savagery. It set about laying the foundations of an entirely new edifice of culture and ethics. An entirely new idea of the unity of the human race as a whole was introduced into the world - an idea so mighty that it welded together nations that had warred with one another since the world began. It not only welded together the warring tribes of Arabia, but also established a brotherhood of all nations of the world, even uniting those that had nothing in common, except their common humanity. It obliterated differences of colour, race, language, geographical boundaries and even culture.

Thus Islam laid the basis of unification of humanity of which no other reformer or religion had ever dreamt of; a brotherhood of man which knew no bounds of race, colour, country, language or even rank; of the unity of the human race beyond which human conception cannot go.

Unfortunately, the Muslims put these sublime principles of Islam and the Holy Quran behind their backs, and as a result sank into the depths of decadence. In recent times, efforts have been made by the international community to forge human brotherhood and promote world peace. The League of Nations was formed after the First World War and the United Nations Organisation after the Second World War. The Human Rights Charter, which in fact is a true reflection of Quranic teachings, has been adopted. But ethnic, territorial, ideological and economic conflicts continue to ravage the world, since there is no spiritual force behind these efforts.

Towards the end of the nineteenth century, Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad Sahib announced that Allah had appointed him the Mujaddid or Reformer of the fourteenth century Hijra, with the mission of reviving the true teachings of the Quran and presenting Islam to the world in its true and pristine form. He founded a Jamaat or association to carry this message to the corners of the world. We are indeed fortunate to be members of the Jamaat of the great Imam, and this stupendous task rests on our feeble shoulders. We may not be too many in numbers and may also lack resources, but the dedicated efforts put in by our devoted members have produced excellent results. Holding of this International convention in Sydney today is a living proof of this.

Let us pray to Almighty Allah that he may grant us the strength and will to carry the message of Islam to the world and provide the moral and spiritual force required for forging human brotherhood and universal peace.

Aameen.