
*Celebrating the Life of the Holy Prophet Muhammad
(Peace & Prayers of Allah Almighty be upon Him):*

Creating a Culture of Peace & Tolerance for Humanity

2nd Annual National Conference
June 27th 2004
Newark, California

Conference Proceedings

First Edition



Islamic Educational and Cultural Research Center

Mailing Address: P.O. Box 1646, Union City, CA 94587, USA

Tel: 510-732-6786

Email: info@iecrna.org

Website: www.iecrna.org

INTRODUCTION

The Islamic Educational and Cultural Research Center (IECRC), a non-profit, non-political, 501(c)(3), community service organization held its 2nd Annual National Conference in Newark California in June 2004, entitled:

"Celebrating the Life of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (Peace Be Upon Him): Creating a Culture of Peace & Tolerance for Humanity".

The purpose of IECRC's annual conferences is to educate about essential human values and how these can be fostered for the betterment of societies and humanity at large, following the guidance and teachings of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (Peace Be Upon Him) and all those who followed in His Blessed Footsteps.

Participating at the 2004 conference were an esteemed panel of speakers whose presentations are documented in the following pages. These articles were either transcribed from their recorded speeches or entire papers have been included as submitted by the presenter.

The intent of these proceedings is to make public in print form the contents of the important remarks of the distinguished panelists. Your comments are welcome.

This First Edition contains transcripts from the following speakers:

Chief Ray Samuels	page 4
Imam Abu Laith Luqman Ahmad	page 6
Barbara F. Okun, Ph.D.	Page 8
Beatrice Orr Pressley Ed. D.	page 10
Lawrence Ziring, Ph.D.	page 11
Consul General Noor Muhammad Jadmani	page 17
Ms. Saadia Yousaf	page 18

The Second Edition will include all the speakers. We thank you for your patience.

Sincerely,
IECRC Staff



CHIEF RAY SAMUELS

Ray Samuels
Newark City Police Chief

Thank you for the kind invitation. My name is Ray Samuels and I am the police chief for the city of Newark. It is my honor to be here this evening to share some of my ideas about cultural diversity and community trust.

The community's trust of the police department is essential to maintaining the integrity of the department's initiatives. Mistrust can lead to skepticism about the officer's performance and judgment, which in turn can lead to complaints of bias or allegations of corruption against individual officers and the department as a whole.



One way to gain and keep the public's trust is through a well-developed diversity education and training plan for all police employees. Our society is far more diverse than it was 30, or even 20 years ago. Our rich diversity has presented law enforcement with new challenges in terms of language and culture and we have to be prepared to meet these challenges as part of our determination to provide service to all people fairly and equitably.

The Newark Police Department strives to recruit and retain a diverse group of employees; employees who will serve the community in a responsive and sensitive manner. My mandate is to ensure that the community has open access to all police services and that our police officers have access to the community. I believe managing and valuing diversity is a key component of effective law enforcement.

So how do we manage and value diversity?

We start by hiring only the best and most qualified officers. Candidates for police officer positions are subjected to rigorous academic and physical testing. If they are successful, they are invited to an oral interview designed to be stressful and realistic. Once placed onto an eligibility list, if selected to continue, they are required to submit an extensive background investigation that includes interviews of relatives, friends, neighbors, co-workers and supervisors. We examine work history, academic history, personal finances and personal associations. Finally, candidates submit to a polygraph examination, comprehensive medical examination and a psychological examination. Once hired, officers are provided training designed to assist them in the development of positive police-community partnerships. Each Newark police officer receives 16 hours of cultural diversity training as part of their basic academy training. They attend "Tools for Tolerance" at the Simon Wiesenthal Museum of Tolerance in Los Angeles and receive another eight hours per year during the advanced officer training. The training dimensions include topics focusing on gender, race, culture, age, family status, sexual orientation, religion and disability. In addition, emphasis is placed on cultural properties such as the beliefs, values, attitudes and practices of groups within the community, particularly those that are underrepresented.

We do it by building relationships with the community and respecting differences. When put on a Community Police Academy every year that is open to all members of our community. This ten-week program operates one evening per week for three and a half hours. It is designed to provide community members with an insight into police operations and to serve as the basis upon which community partnerships can develop. The next Community Academy is expected to be bilingual through the use of translators and headsets - an effort to reach some that have previously been excluded.

We conduct a youth academy at the High School during the lunch period, again designed to break down barriers that often exist between the police and youth. We are in the elementary and middle schools with programs like DARE and GREAT, and we participate in as many public special events as possible.

We conduct crime prevention programs and seminars designed to educate community members on topics ranging from home security to personal protection.

And finally, we do it by sharing departmental directives and values with the community. In doing so, we bridge gaps in issues concerning trust and promote understanding between the department and the community. It is profoundly important that the policing procedures we employ reflect the community's culture and it is equally important that the community understands that.

continued on next page

Valuing diversity pays dividends to the community and to the police department. Some of the benefits include more effective personal / interpersonal communication, greater capacity for problem solving, enhanced equality of opportunity, improved service and community satisfaction, and a positive police and community image.

Building trust through shared values and mutual respect among all groups that make up a community is essential to an effective police-community partnership. Thank you for your time and attention.

Questions?



IMAM ABU LAITH LUQMAN AHMAD

Imam Abu Laith Luqman Ahmad

Imam and Da'i

Masjid Ibraheem – Sacramento



In a Hadeeth of the Holy Prophet (Peace Be Upon Him), He said:

“None of you have believed until I become more beloved to him than his parents, his children and all of the people.”

The beginning of understanding our Beloved Prophet (Peace Be Upon Him) is to develop love for the Messenger of Allah deep in our hearts, as He is the quintessential environment of the ideal character. As Allah Almighty says:

“Surely You [O Prophet, Peace Be Upon Him] have excellent character.”

As scholars of Hadeeth through history have made painstaking efforts to record every moment of the Holy Prophet's life, prayers and peace of Allah Almighty be upon Him, from His precious birth and pure extraction, from the Tree of Nobility to the last breath while resting his blessed head on the Mother of the Believers, Hazrat Aisha (may Allah be pleased with her). The guidance of the Prophet Muhammad (Peace Be Upon Him) is expressed in various manifestations: as a worshipper. As in the Hadeeth when Hazrat Aisha (may Allah be pleased with her) asked the Holy Prophet in reference to his prayers all night to the degree that his blessed feet were swollen: “O Messenger of Allah! Why do you continue to pray?” He (Peace Be Upon Him) replied, “Should I not be a faithful servant? And we learn from His teachings. As in the Hadeeth says “Pray as you see me pray.”

None of you have truly believed until his neighbor is safe from him. People today talk about humanism, but the Holy Prophet (Peace Be Upon Him) established a paradigm for humanitarianism. The Hadeeth says: “None of you truly believe unless he loves for his brother what he loves for himself.” One of the beauties of this religion is that the Holy Prophet (Peace Be Upon Him) exemplifies Allah Almighty's Intention for how human beings are to conduct themselves in this world. And this is what Hazrat Aisha (may Allah be pleased with her) said when they asked her about the Prophet's (Peace Be Upon Him) character and she said that it is the Quran. Allah Almighty sent Him specifically to demonstrate to people what Allah Almighty's objective is for mankind living on this planet. Allah Almighty says: “We have sent down to you this Quran to explain to them what was sent before so that they may reflect.” And Allah Almighty says: “Surely in the Messenger of Allah is a good example for those who want Allah and the Day of Judgment and those who reflect upon Allah most.” The guidance of the Prophet (Peace Be Upon Him) is a guidance not just for His time but a guidance for all time and it is the distinct duty of each and every Muslim to follow and capture the essence of the mercy and forgiveness and understanding that forms the foundation of tolerance that was codified by the Holy Prophet (Peace Be Upon Him). That is more necessary today than other times that we lean upon this guidance and reassert the practice of charity, of resistance to anger, of forgiveness, understanding, and mercy, all of which constitutes faith. We know from our scholars that faith has different levels as the Holy Prophet (Peace Be Upon Him) said that faith is seventy branches.

One of the Arabic words that describe tolerance is Sabr or patience, which is a tool for the Muslim. It is a tool for understanding and being able to connect with other people. This is why Allah advises in the Quran to seek help from patience and prayer. And surely this is something difficult except for those who are conscientious of God. Patience is one of the ingredients that is necessary for Muslim people to provide leadership to others. As Allah Almighty has mandated in the Quran: “Surely we have given Moses the Book and guidance for the tribes of Israel and we have made from amongst these people Imams, guiding by our command by virtue of their patience.” One of the other words in Arabic that approximates tolerance is 'afw, which means to recognize something has happened but to overlook it to a certain degree. As Allah Almighty says: “Those people who swallow their anger and overlook the faults of others”. And Allah loves those people who are righteous.

There was no one more tolerant than the Messenger of Allah (Peace Be Upon Him). He was a “people's person”. It is necessary for Muslims to understand our environment and open up our world to other peoples. The Holy Prophet (Peace Be Upon Him) said to transfer from Him even if it is one verse. He also said that the one who is present should inform the one who is not. In the Hadeeth of Kharija ibn Zaid ibn Thabit it is narrated that a group of people came asking about the Messenger of Allah (Peace Be Upon Him). Zaid ibn Thabit said that he was the Prophet's (Peace Be Upon Him) neighbor. And when the revelation used to come to the Holy Prophet (Peace Be Upon Him), He would send for Zaid who would write down what the Prophet (Peace Be Upon Him) instructed. Then he said that when they would talk about worldly things, He would talk about worldly things them and when they

continued on next page

would talk about the Hereafter, spirituality and religious issues, He would speak with us about that as well. And when they talked about food, He would talk to them about food, He would talk about food with them. This is significant of the Holy Prophet's understanding.

I want to talk briefly about the idea of tolerance and what it means, particularly for Muslims because we are in a tight situation. It is very easy to take on concepts that may not be the most appropriate for us to take as believers. Webster's Dictionary describes tolerance as this: "sympathy or indulgence for beliefs or practices different from or conflicting with one's own." Now for the Muslim who believes in the Oneness of Allah Almighty they are obligated to hold up the Boundaries (hudood) and Rules of Allah Almighty, and to perform proper worship, and have proper understanding. I want you to consider for a moment that perhaps tolerance may not be the best word to describe the attitude, which we see. As a Muslim i cannot tolerate everything. Allah Almighty does not tolerate everything, but He is Merciful to everything. So we should set our eyes on something even higher, which is mercy. Because Mercy is at the core of what the Holy Prophet (Peace and Prayers upon Him and His Family) mission is all about. As Allah Almighty has said: "We have not sent You except as a Mercy to all the worlds." The Prophet (Peace and Prayers upon Him) was merciful and mercy is nobler and a profound notion than tolerance. Tolerance is just a product of mercy.

I want to close my remarks by saying that an honest assessment of our condition would conclude that the true celebration of the life of the Holy Prophet (Peace Be Upon Him) comprehends the true essence of His character, humility and benevolence, and concern for the welfare of others. We have to inculcate within ourselves the principles of understanding, patience, charity and good will towards Allah Almighty's creation.

Thank You.



DR. BARBARA OKUN

Barbara F. Okun, Ph.D.

Professor & Doctoral Program Director

Department of Counseling & Applied Educational Psychology

I want to thank all of you here for including me and I am so emotionally touched by what I have experienced today. But in addition by all the reading material that Dr. Qadri sent to me it is just touching and I feel authentically grateful for being included here.

I want to reiterate some of the things that have been said. I am going to talk based on who I am and the multiple contexts from which I come. We all come from multiple contexts; we are all shaped by our gender, our religion, our race, our ethnicity, our generation (that's not acknowledge enough) and also by the geographical region, even if it is within the same country from which we come. I think I would also say that one of the major shapers of our identities and our personality is socio-economic class, and by that I am not just referring to money. People think that if they gain a lot of money they've gained a class. Class really refers to the kind of human values that have been talked about today and class in the socio-economic sense also refers to education and an expansion and integration of personal, human and social justice values. I have looked at the original scriptures of the three major monotheistic religions. They were all based on compassion, on suffering, and on forgiveness, and on sharing the human values that have been talked about today. Unfortunately over the centuries, there has been a lot of distortion, and we've ended up with major differences within each of the major religions. We've ended up with some sects being oppressive based on guilt and shame, some believing in a more Compassionate God who focuses on the human values that the Ten Commandments, the original Christian Scripture and the Quran profess. There's something else that's going on that we all know about and I think we need to look at some of the things that have been said here today. We talk about globalization and its impact around the world. What struck me today was that as we talk about peace and tolerance we could really turn technology into something very positive.

One of the things that I have learned and that I believe is important is that we are all shaped by whatever kind of marginalization or oppression we've experienced in the world. It is horrifying to look at the whole global world and see the difference between the super rich and the super disenfranchised increasing and the middle group is certainly being lowered. When we look at the distortions and the violence that occurs it ties in with what an American social psychologist, called the "hierarchy of needs". If your basic needs for food, and shelter aren't met, you are going to be very vulnerable to "mob psychology", to belonging to the gang, and be exploited by the dominant culture of whatever group you are in. That's where we get into trouble with the distortion of values and using the name of religion for acts and philosophies that counter the Prophet Muhammad (Peace Be Upon Him) and other major religious values.

So, what do we do about this? We need to be sensitive to what's in the Newsletters. I am so impressed with the Institute because you are talking about equalizing resources and providing services to people whether they have means or not. That is very important. When I work with families or any kinds of relationships, I refer to the three "Rs" of relationships and I am not talking about Reading, Writing, and Arithmetic, and this has been talked about today. I wouldn't use the word "tolerance" as much as I would "respect" which is the basic core of any relationship. If we respect somebody we can hear differences and co-value them and learn from them rather than go over a power struggle. These three "Rs" are not in order: Responsibility is for ourselves, for relationships, for social justice. Responsibility is very important, because it takes two to have a relationship, it takes everybody to create a community, and it does take a community to raise a child and sustain human connection. The third one is akin to patience that was talked about before as a major value of Muhammad (Peace Be Upon Him). I call it reflection, but it really is patience. It's not reacting; it's taking time to think about what somebody has said to you or what's happening so you don't shoot from the head, so that you can be responsible, and respectful, and create a sense of community, which will increase respect and connectedness and tolerance and peace.

As Dr. Pressley said, communication is important. That means listening, that means having patience and empathy, which means that you can understand the way somebody feels, even if you don't agree with it, that you can learn to tolerate differences. And there is also another factor in communication. And that is using the method of discussion. Let's be sure we're hearing each other, understanding what they mean, instead of immediately going into a fight or power struggle assuming that someone is right or wrong. From my forensic family work, I have learned a lot about problem solving. Some of the bulletins from your Institute talk about mediation, arbitration, and negotiation. I am particularly interested in developing the family courts in many of the states where we call it "conferencing" which doesn't just involve members of the judicial system and the family but also people from the community: neighbors, people from the schools, it's a large network kind of problem solving where people don't just offer their advise but they'll say for example: "I'll see to it that you get to your AA meetings."

continued on next page



I think this holds great promise for building tolerance. The most important thing I think is what you are doing, and continue to do it, and that is to have cultural exchanges, interfaith & inter-racial dialogs. And use the media and use technology to expose (not impose) your values in view so we focus more on what we have in common than what we don't have in common. A further thought: I learned from a mentor in social psychology and that is: when we are trying to create social change, and create world peace, we need to go beyond the groups that are the staunch traditionalists wanting to hang on to the way things were, and they are usually the group in power, and most of you that are here today, that are affiliated with the Institute, and Dr. Qadri's people, they are called the creative critics. They are the people who are saying that we have to do something about this; we have to provide social services, and see what we can do to help people work together. And they are the two groups who are typically at odds with one another. There is a third powerful group that we have neglected and many of you are part of that group, and that's what we call the sluggish moderates. The people who think they don't have any power, and their voice won't make any difference in any way, so why bother? They are a large group. That's the group we need to work with to gain the peace and tolerance that's necessary for working for world peace. That's an ideal and wonderful goal. It's certainly not going to come in my lifetime or that little baby's lifetime, but it's something to hope for and something to create, respect for differences, sharing resources, and going back to the basic values that reject corruption and other sins that are self-destructive.

I want to say one final thing: not all people are good. We are finding out more and more from psychology that there are people who are born with some brain wiring that may dispose them to violence or irrationality. We have to accept that there are some times that we can help people and some times we cannot. But the most important thing is for us to have credibility, to practice what we preach, to be true to your own self within the context of your religion and your community so that people can't call you a hypocrite. Authenticity, connection, respect, and responsibility are our major objectives.

Thank you very much.



DR. BEATRICE PRESSLEY

*Beatrice Orr Pressley Ed. D.
Professor of Psychology
California State University – Hayward*



Thank you all for inviting me here. I am going to talk about tolerance and peace and talk about the three religions. In viewing the world religions, Judaism, Christianity, and Islam [one can see] that they teach the same religion, the differences are often political. The name "Islam" means submissive. Islam is the religion of submission to God. The root from which the word Islam comes means more deeply peace or completeness. Thus the religious sense of Islam is that we find completeness and peace only when we gratefully submit our lives to the guidance of God. One who lives ones life in submission to God is called Muslim, i.e. an adherent of Islam is known as a Muslim. In Arabic God is called Allah, which means "The God". The fundamental principle in Islam is the Absolute Unity of God. Allah alone is responsible for the creation and guidance of humanity. Human beings are created with the ability to recognize unity of the world and its source: God. Thus we are able to recognize that all we that we owe God our undying gratitude. We must avoid putting something else in God's place. We recognize our responsibility to care for God's world, and to participate in His peaceful Governance. Each of us is an agent in the proper management of the world. Since God is Just, there is reward for those who submit their lives in gratitude, and we cannot hide anything from God. It is entirely appropriate therefore to revere God and to be concerned about the Day of Judgment. We may be assured however that God understands human fallibility and judges mercifully as well as justly. The attribute used most to describe Allah is "The Merciful". Each chapter of the Holy Quran begins with the invocation "In the Name of Allah, The Beneficent, The Merciful".

Islam then is the Path of Light, the simple, natural, human life of good works and gratitude to God. While we have a natural tendency to be Muslim, we can also be forgetful. To remind human beings to call them back to the straight Path, God sent word to us through a series of Prophets, some of them being Adam, Noah and so forth. Unfortunately most of these Prophets were ignored; their prophecies were corrupted over time. Especially noteworthy of the Prophetic careers of Moses and Jesus which gave rise to the Biblical books, the Torah and the Gospel. The Jews and Christians are thus possessors of genuine revelations and it is possible to live a righteous life as a Jew or a Christian. There were some misleading traditions over time and Jews in history and saw themselves as equal to God. And Christians became guilty by worshipping Jesus as God. In Arabia Allah became associated with three daughters and the daughters were taken more seriously as objects of worship than Allah Himself. Allah chose Mohammed (Peace Be Upon Him) as the newest, greatest and final Prophet, and eventually he established himself as a powerful teacher and politician. Mohammed (Peace Be Upon Him) unified Arabia under one rule and religion of Islam. For all three religions peace and tolerance are revered, diversity is respected, love is honored. However, fanatics, religious zealots, the ultra-conservatives in the name of the religion are often rigid, punitive, revengeful, unforgiving and seek to hurt others who do not believe as they do. They do this in the name of whatever deity they profess to follow, but they are not following the dictates of their religion and their God, but following their own distorted views.

Many of you know about the movie "Fahrenheit 9/11" which i urge you to see, because it is a movie even if you don't like you should know what you don't like about it. You shouldn't just decide that you don't like it, and maybe you will like it. There is another movie out called "Saved" which is a movie about self-righteous Christians. One of the problems with people even referring to themselves as Christians is that people see them as ultra-conservatives when that is not true of all Christians. And so again, the ultra-conservatives often give a bad name to what the religion is. Most followers of Judaism, Christianity and Islam are tolerant and want peace. It's the few who misrepresent the views that cause the harm. It is essential that we communicate with one another. Listening is vital, and when there is a language barrier it even compounds the problem. Not understanding others' cultures and faiths gets in our way. So it is really important that we learn to appreciate other cultures and faiths because if we don't then it magnifies the issues we have with one another.

I believe that education is the key to tolerance and tolerance is the key to peace. So it is important that we listen more, talk less, ask questions when we don't understand.

Thank You.



continued on next page

Islamic Educational & Cultural Research Center (IECRC)
A non-profit, non-political, 501 (c)(3) organization

June 27th 2004 Conference Proceedings

Dr. Lawrence Ziring
Professor of Political Science
Western Michigan University



The world of the twenty-first century is a miasma of contradictions. It has never been smaller or more divided. Smaller in the context of science and technology that has altered space and time in mobility and information flow; divided in the proliferation of politically defined geographic units, each expressing and projecting identities too often at variance with one another. The paradox between a world of unavoidable interaction, and another of more limited, self-contained and exclusive experience, nourishes the dynamics of struggle that is at the same time positive and negative. The events of the twentieth century influences our current behavior, much as the traditions of the ages shapes our present purpose and role-playing. We live in awkward times, straddling the past and the future, ever in search of balance and understanding. We flounder because we do not readily know how to adapt to global conditions that appear to demand more than we are prepared to yield. In uncertain times we fall back on what we believe to be the tried and true values and practices of our social origin, but we do not always grasp the significance of our extended ambience and how it modifies tradition we deem to be an anchor in stormy circumstances. In point of fact, we are today called to test the essential conditions of our lives. We must acknowledge and give tribute to our peculiar nature but we must also abide in a pluralistic world. We must recognize that the science and technology that promotes our integration also threatens our demise. The entire human enterprise is at risk when linkages between our common modernity collide with our uncommon differences. We must find solace not only in our special worldview, but also in the many worldviews of those who share our moment on the planet. Each of us is determined to remain true to our core beliefs, but no less so each of us must embrace a larger universe of diverse habits and expressions. No generation before us has faced such a test. This is not a matter of individual choice but rather something involving the collective spirit.

We are a single humanity but we are also separate peoples. Nor can we ignore the very few decades that distance us from the era of classic imperialism. Europeans, notably western Europeans, spread their influence to virtually every sector and corner of the globe and for several hundred years intruded themselves on people and cultures at obvious variance with their peculiar sense of order and decorum. The twentieth century, with its horrific global eruptions broke the grip the Europeans had imposed on their peripheral subjects. World War II witnessed the crashing of celebrated imperial systems and heralded the dawn of a new age of human experience. Most significant, the conflict that spread over the planet in time caused the retreat from empire and set in motion the liberation of the colonial peoples. The world underwent reformation when heretofore occupied-people were made free to choose a particular course. By the nature of their inherent genius they were called to select a standard that gave new meaning to their lives. Moreover, it was only natural that they should choose to reify their particular circumstance, and give expression to their personal sentiments and practices. But this proved to be no simple task. The major question was no longer freedom from alien rule, but how reborn people might fit themselves into a system of sovereign nation-states not of their making.

The largely western developed nation-state system had become the dominant representation of the post-colonial period. The manner of the European retreat from empire called the former colonial people to accommodate a design that was neither of their choosing nor of their mindset. Centrality of power was a familiar experience but notions of self-government emphasizing the role of the citizenry and the latter's responsibility for their own affairs was difficult to comprehend and even more difficult to execute. Accustomed to dictation and the writ of superior forces, there was no simple formula that instantly transformed subjects into responsible functioning citizens. Moreover, the new nation-states were virtually all products of imperial dispensation and there had been little tutoring on how to introduce the new concept of popular governance. Adding to the dilemma was the limited preparation for self-government. Poverty and illiteracy prevented the construction of contemporary societies that focused on the melding of disparate ethnic, religious and racial groups. Civil society had to be built from the ground up and there was little in the human experience among the newly emerged states that addressed the question of expanded community. Balancing and leveling experiences in the name of eclecticism or secularism did not come naturally to the former colonial peoples.

In the circumstances it was not surprising for authority to loom large, to assume postures that set direction and gave meaning to the new freedom. The emerging states were represented by leaders deemed to possess special abilities and it was to them that people turned for assurance and guidance. In the first wave of new leaders were men like Jawaharlal Nehru, Mohammad Ali Jinnah, Gamal Abdul Nasser, Kwame Nkrumah, and Bung Sukarno. Gifted men, they projected vision and purpose and sought to articulate the sentiments of their people. But all were mortal and they had been given only limited time to set a course for their young nations before others were called upon to succeed them. Building a nation is a long and torturous process and there were few guideposts to show the way. The new leaders sought ways to define national purpose for future as well as immediate

continued on next page

generations. But at the end of their time they could only hint at the collective objective. Dependent on those around them and hopeful that the extended society would accept and follow their vision, they could only dream that their message of national unity and common purpose would find meaning in the period after them. Life is cumulative experience, and the life of the nation is no less an expression of all that had gone before. National experience, however, was too remote and too abstract for so many people that had been left untouched by global changes. The failure of governments produced the phenomenon of failed states, and visions and realities were seldom in harmony. To the contrary, the tasks of nation building had been expropriated by the state-builders in the new societies, and state building and nation building were divergent goals. Leaders did not deliver what they had promised. Governments in too many of the new states ignored their responsibilities, causing the discrediting of noble experiments. Self-government was not conceived to render to the few while the many suffered, but in too many countries there was too wide a gap between promise and reward. On the one side, the vision of the founders proved too distant, while on the other, the practices of their successors were too constrained and hence more aggrandizing than selfless.

The popular need for guidance and the failure of established governors to fulfill their commitment to the people opened the channel for the demagogues to enter, and what began as a trickle, in the course of time became a flood. Vacuums in leadership are usually of short duration. There is always someone in the wings to fill the gap, to arouse the masses, and to direct their attention to another set of possibilities. Sensing the poverty of genuine leaders, the demagogues are quick to take advantage of the prevailing anomie or the subliminal desire to realize exclusive goals. Instead of peace and cooperation within the new states, divisiveness, distrust, and a refusal to compromise caused distress and threatened their dissolution. Instead of celebrating their common success, new states assailed their neighbors and made a mockery of independence and liberation. It was neither a time for cooperation or healing as vendettas emerged within and between the newly established states.

ISLAM, SECULARISM AND THE NATION-STATE

The central question to be raised is as follows: To what extent is Islam compatible with the nation-state, and to what extent are Muslims, by the very nature of their faith, in position to accept the nation-state as the key experience of their lives? If we can satisfactorily answer this question we can at the same time effectively deal with the subject of tolerance in the contemporary world. Muslims, as with all peoples, are members of this or that entity generally defined as the nation-state. The nation-state is the most recent of the geopolitical structures that divide the world into different, often competing global actors. The time of imperial states has past, and they, like the tribal and clannish orders of the past, no longer dominate the global scene. National states are the vogue and internationalism the central theme for their interaction. Within every nation-state, however, is a residual of what once was. Therefore monarchies and tribal orders are not too far removed from the central core of national life. Moreover, the alchemy of transforming subjects into citizens is no mystery but the catalyst for the transformation is not always readily at hand. Citizenship demands a level of responsibility and requires a degree of self-enlightenment that is both cerebral and practical. It is learned experience and it begins with a level of education and an admixture of civic consciousness. Citizenship is the equalizing condition that empowers society and establishes the parameters of government. Government is in fact the extension of citizenship and it is the collective citizenry that determines the character of a nation's constitutionalism as well as the limits of authority.

In the ideal nation state, no one is left out of this process. And irrespective of differences, all are participants in the weaving of social fabric. All contribute to the enhancement of social order and no one is threatened by differences in life style, decorum, or personal expression. Variety is heralded not demeaned, and tolerance begins with the acknowledgement of other peoples' traditions. This is the essence of the secular model; it also lies at the core of the creative state. We are one but we are different, we are exclusive but our communitarian nature makes us all conscious of the need for inclusiveness. We realize our own inner needs by understanding the inner needs of others. Neither religious doctrine nor dogma is involved. No one's faith is questioned. No one's faith is distorted. Faith is simply not at issue in a tolerant society. Faith can neither be diminished nor expanded by the secular nation-state. Faith remains the preserve of the individual and it is the individual that must determine the requisite manner and expression of faith. Faith is not a matter for government or public policy and the role of government in matters of religion ceases after assuring that diverse representations of faith are protected.

In an imperfect world, however, difficulties arise when faith becomes entwined with efforts to steer a course between a state's responsibility to all its citizens and the insistence that the state is a function of religious experience. With such exegesis the state is called to embody the precepts and perpetuate the practices of one segment of the society. The dilemma appears to relate to concepts of sovereignty and secularism. Muslims like other believers often find offense in contemporary explanations of sovereignty and secularism. The nation-state is not a response to some invisible force, however, nor is it the manifestation of an assault on Islamic practices. The nation-state emerged in the first instance in renaissance Europe as a consequence of a long and painful struggle within Christianity. The nation-state proved to be the answer to a bitter contest between rival European religious contenders. It represented the formula that would bring an end to the destructive wars of religion. Acknowledging that in matters of faith there are no compromises, the sages of seventeenth century Europe adopted a system that called for still another principle to guide the actions and behavior of men. Centering their attention on territoriality, the bounded state was conceived within which people of different traditions not

continued on next page

only could find opportunities to project their separate ideas concerning faith, but could also associate themselves with a common tangible, namely, the territorial state. Although some cited the elevation of the state over religion, the birth of the nation-state actually energized the notion that one could pursue the tenets of a chosen faith and at the same time express loyalty to a territorial entity housing people of many different religious persuasions.

The European model of the nation-state was tested in the Western Hemisphere and ultimately took root in the American Revolution. The United States adopted the secular state with the promulgation of the American constitution, but the seeds of the secular nation-state were spread by European colonization of much of the world. For Americans, secularism, and indeed, sovereignty, was an individually elevating and liberating experience. For Muslims, seeing their freedom denied and their culture intruded upon, secularism was a denial of their genius, and not insignificant, a rejection of the right to manage their own affairs. The Europeans could argue their purpose was to bring civilization and law and order to societies in conflict, in reality however their true intentions were domination and the publicizing of a superior cause. European imperialism therefore had a totally different consequence in Asia and Africa from that of North America. There was little that represented tolerance in the imperial/colonial tradition. The idea of absolute and centralized power, the demand for blind obedience and unconditional grants of authority were not interrupted, merely transferred from indigenous to alien rulers.

Thus the colonial recession that commenced in earnest at the end of World War II, the spawning of new states, moved in another direction from that taken by the United States two hundred years earlier. Identity became a major concern as the former colonies assumed independent status. Denied the social and economic underpinnings and the political conditions and mindset that made the nation-state a desirable objective, new states were added to the international system but they only in name reflected the character of the nation-state. In need of social fusion before self-determination could be realized, experiments in national existence were made dependent on the leaders receiving the transfer of power. It was the leaders that were charged with articulating the belief that the nation-state was a suitable vehicle for the realization of human aspirations. In the Muslim countries that gained their freedom during this period it was one matter to acknowledge the European retreat, it was another however to impress upon people that their present and future had changed for the better. The very concept of the nation-state, let alone the manner of its succession, was suspect. The new states were hardly free to address the issues of national integration and economic development. Dependent on those who were previously their masters, they did not possess the capacity for self-growth and in a world of disparate and unequal actors, they were little more than bit players, waiting upon the powerful to acknowledge their presence. The Cold War also framed the birth of the new nations and to get the attention of the major powers they allowed themselves to be manipulated in ways that reminded the disillusioned of their still sensitive colonial past.

The real problem however was the inchoate character of the new states and the paucity of leaders capable of sustaining national goals over extended periods. Weak leaders focused the public's attention on issues that were more intended to rally support than to direct attention to societal needs. Resources were needed to meet the peoples expectations for basic requirements, but instead what little was available was frittered away in futile struggle with neighboring states. Muslim countries from Indonesia to Pakistan to the Arab Middle East were more inclined to demonstrate their military prowess than to mobilize the masses for nation-building tasks. Moreover, the more they tested the resolve of their non-Muslim neighbors, the more they found themselves unable to realize the fruits of independence. Heretofore imposed upon and denied identity by alien rulers, Muslim populations were exposed to further frustrations and indignities that raised anew the question of leadership and its failed policies. There was no resolution for the Palestinian question or the Kashmir dispute, and brutal and protracted encounters took an increasing toll in the Western Sahara, Algeria, Sudan and Chechnya. War between Iraq and Iran pitted secular and religious forces, while the Soviet intrusion into Afghanistan threatened the stability of a vast region. None of these conflicts were resolved satisfactorily. None led to the reclamation of the nation-state. Indeed, Pakistan's several wars with India, like Arab inability to weaken Israel, provoked reactionary and radical movements.

With rare exception the nation-state had become less and less significant to Islamic peoples. Of the Arab nationalists, Gamal Abdul Nasser best represented the objective of an Arab state, albeit a would-be unified state, focused on secular objectives. Nasser's intention was the construction of a formidable Arab nation that could be competitively fitted into the larger system of nation-states. His failure to realize that ambition is mirrored in his struggle with Israel. Moreover, his inability to achieve basic objectives shifted attention to the Khomeini-induced Islamic revolution. Muslims were encouraged to abandon the secular nation-state as a western-imposed creature with virtually no meaning for members of the faithful. Secularism it was argued was the work of the greater Satan and anathema to Muslim traditions and practices. Nothing less was demanded than a reassertion of faith with its expanded doctrine of martyrdom. Weakness would be overcome by refashioning religious experience, by the displacement of leaders with western credentials, and by re-establishing religion as the prime object of one's loyalty. Thus, the ferment in the Islamic world brought new leaders to the fore, leaders who articulated a message more theological than that experienced earlier.

ISLAM AND SOVEREIGNTY

continued on next page

Sovereignty is central to the representation of the nation-state. Sovereignty defines the vesting of supreme power. From earliest times such power has been concentrated in the person of the king or total ruler, the person/office associated with the protection of the community. Islamic tradition has centered attention on the ruler and the obedience due the ruler by his subjects. European experience has run a similar course but the American Revolution challenged the authority, indeed the omnipotence and infallibility of the ruler. Royal absolutism was already waning when the American subjects of the English king demanded and acquired separation from the monarch and directed their efforts at the construction of a republican form of government. The Americans frowned on personalized offices, that is offices assumed to be personal; property, and called for the popular approval of leaders and the conditions whereby they governed or were replaced. Rejecting the custom of divine right, the Americans denounced their role as subjects of the monarch and redefined the meaning of loyalty as well as political legitimacy. Sovereignty was withdrawn from the monarch and his court. Aristocracy was rejected as ostentatious and dysfunctional, and the popular Will, as demonstrated at the ballot box and in free continuous debate, was adopted. Sovereignty

In effect was lodged with the people who were provided the procedural responsibilities for the selection of their leaders as well as their dismissal.

The evolution of the nation-state from its original dynastic model to one emphasizing a popular diffusion of power was accelerated in the twentieth century. The passing of supreme power to the people provided the general population with a role in the making of decisions, and actions could only be legitimated if sanctioned by institutionalizing the relationship between the people and those chosen by them to be their governors. In other words, actions of government could only be deemed legitimate if the people through acknowledged constitutional processes gave their assent. The nation-state since the end of World War II has centered on limited government or the peoples' right to inform their leaders on the extent of their authority. Such understanding of sovereign power is a critical dimension of the nation-state. Above all it is inherently secular in that each citizen is an equal participant and government performance is measured through rational approaches to efficiency and functional necessity not abstract exegesis.

Muslims have difficulty adjusting to such process. From the earliest stages of the Islamic experience focus has been on the central leader of a religious community who is deemed to possess broad and unassailable powers. Religion in this context is total experience and cannot be separated from the more mundane aspects of daily life. Social and economic activity and certainly political actions combine under the rigors of a religious code that demands complete submission. The Prophet's role was multidimensional and covered all aspects of human experience. As God's vicegerent there was no questioning his authority or his actions. Indeed his every action is cited to this day in the *hadiths* that are at the core of Islamic practices. The Prophet's mortality however required successors, and the Rashidun, following the experience of their mentor, performed the tasks that gave unity and substance to the early Islamic community. It was judged then as now, however, that neither the Prophet nor his disciples were sovereign. In matters of sovereignty only God reigned supreme. The Prophet was God's messenger and his successors were only responsible for the perpetuation of His message.

The spread of Islam to distant places and the growth of the Muslim community did not change the understanding that sovereignty belonged to God alone. What did change were the development of more complex organizational structures, and initially the institution of the Caliphate, commencing with the Ummayyad and subsequently the Abbasid, and after the latter's demise in the thirteenth century to lesser Caliphs ending with the Ottoman in the twentieth century. But whether centered on the Caliphate or the many Muslim authorities and dynasties down through the ages, the contention that only God was truly sovereign persisted, and it persists into the twenty-first century. Muslim rulers today as in historic terms have been known to wield awesome powers but never have they been judged sovereign. Vicegerents of God's will on earth, Muslim rulers yesterday and today, possess significant powers. In fact so significant are these powers that the thought that they are called to share power with the masses, let alone that they are constrained by an empowered public, is seldom reflected in Muslim governance. Government of the people remains distant from Muslim experience and authority is uniformly strong along a wide spectrum of Muslim life.

The many Muslim nations of today are in large part a consequence of the decline of European imperialism, or an offshoot of that experience. In the absence of the colonial era it is doubtful the world would be witness to the number and variety of Muslim-dominant states currently extant. The Nasserist Revolution gave credence to the emergence of the many independent Muslim nations and the national model permeated the Islamic world after World War II. The incongruity of that model however is witnessed in the Khomeini Revolution and the tendency in the Muslim community, especially since the early 1980s, to reject the nation-state as divisive and a perpetuation of Muslim weakness. Muslims today are urged to revisit the notion of Islamic commonwealth, but it is also a call to separate from, not join the constellation of nation-states. The call to Muslims to assist in the defense of Afghanistan gave physical meaning to the belief that Islam was in danger and Muslims were threatened if they did not confront the infidel with peculiar determination. Palestine involved similar beliefs. The terrorism that has long been associated with the quest for a Palestine free from Israeli influence is at its heart an assault on established Arab states that have repeatedly failed to stamp out the Jewish nation. The power of Muslim theologians in Iran, or the rule of the Taliban in Afghanistan, indeed, the high profile role played by Muslim clerics in the contemporary era, are all manifestations of Islamic revivalism. The movements they represent would indicate Muslims have had enough of nation-states and see only an enlarged community of believers as an answer to Muslim woes.

continued on next page

The clash between established Muslim governments and the forces represented by amorphous groups affiliated with Al-Qaeda illustrate the weak appeal of the nation-state and its concomitant concepts of secularism and sovereignty in the modern Muslim world. Moreover, the decision taken to make war on the United States by forces espousing global *jihad* point directly to a desire to destabilize Muslim regimes and bring about their transformation. Nor has the United States decision to destroy the Taliban diminished the recruitment of Muslims for the jihadi armies. Repeats of September 11 are anticipated as lines are drawn and violent actions and counteractions are planned and executed. Given the character of what has become protracted war we possess only limited capacity to comprehend our destiny. Muslim governments are caught between forces they have themselves nurtured, and their dependence on a mode of global organization that remains alien to the genius of their people. Muslim governments are today trapped between those among their brethren who would seek their demise and those in the outer world who alone seem to assure them a future. Muslim rulers are not sovereign. It remains to be determined who speaks for God's Will on earth. In the current contest between those seeking to perpetuate what has long been judged illegitimate rule and those who would claim to restore Muslim pride and purpose in the world, outcomes are unpredictable. The only certainty is that the struggle for the allegiance of Muslims everywhere will continue and that the reverberations of this encounter will be felt worldwide.

THE CONTINUING SEARCH FOR PEACE AND TOLERANCE

The most costly war in the Middle East since the Middle Ages was the bloodletting involving Iraq and Iran. For eight years the two Muslim countries savaged one another but it is only today, a score of years later, that the underlying causes of that conflict can be explained. Reference has been made to the two principal models of contemporary Islamic Revolution, the one represented by Nasser of Egypt and the other by Khomeini of Iran. What the searing Iran-Iraq war represented was nothing less than the opening salvo in what was destined to be a long campaign between the forces pressing for the formalization of the secular nation and those insisting that the only genuine objective was the realization of the expanded Islamic state. Nasser's theory of revolution centered on the notion of three concentric circles, the Egyptian, the Arab, and the Muslim, and his belief that a great leader would awaken the masses and by their combined energy create the new Muslim kingdom. Nasser's dream began with the consolidation of his power in Egypt and his charismatic appeal to other Arab governments to join with him in a common endeavor. The result, for a brief period, was the subsuming of Egypt within a United Arab Republic that included Syria and sought to envelop Yemen. The UAR failed when the union could not retain its initial members or entice other Arab governments to join. Frittering away vital resources in a costly war in Yemen, Nasser suffered humiliating defeat at the hands of the Israelis in the 1967 War, and his efforts came to a virtual end. Nasser's death in 1970 did not terminate the quest for a combined Arab state but without its celebrated leader it was even more difficult to orchestrate his plan.

Saddam Hussein sought to pick up where Nasser failed except his movement to integrate the Arabs rested more on coercion than volunteerism. Nasser had no sympathy for the Arab monarchies but it was Saddam who registered an antipathy for all the reigning kings and he did not conceal his belief that their survival only perpetuated Arab weakness. By toppling the monarchs Saddam expected to win the favor of the masses and after Egypt's debacle in 1967, he placed Iraq on a war footing and raised the most impressive military force in the Arab world. Ultimately concerned with the defeat of Israel and his intention to become modern Arabia's *Salahuddin*, Saddam was distracted by events in Iran that brought an end to that country's long line of royal dynasties. Unimpressed with the Ayatollah Khomeini and failing to understand the revolution that he led, Saddam set his sights on Iran's oil wealth and anticipated broad Arab support when he launched his attack across the Shatt al-Arab. What the Iraqi leader had failed to address was the call to Muslims, Arabs and non-Arabs, to seek their future in a re-acclamation of faith. Nasser's secular national model had failed to realize Arab goals and Saddam was too brutal a leader to pick up the cause. Saddam's ideological secularism merely intensified the shift toward the Khomeini model. Khomeini's approach to Islamic renaissance had captured the sentiments of Muslims along a broad spectrum of lifestyles, while Saddam's invasion of Iran bogged down in a death struggle that neither side was destined to win. Moreover, the earlier Soviet invasion of Afghanistan spread the seeds of Islamic revolution to Muslims of different denominations and the idea of the collective Islamic state, wedded to Islamic practices and at war with everything non-Islamic, assumed even wider credence.

Like the war between Iraq and Iran, the Soviet imposed war in Afghanistan dragged on for eight long and bloody years. The idea of the secular state, albeit the Muslim nation-state, was consumed in the struggle. But the fires that destroyed the experiments in national reconstruction had fueled the quest for an expansive if not worldwide Islamic polity. Pakistan, suffering dismemberment at the hands of India only a few years earlier, sensed the need for a new Afghan strategy in its running conflict with India. Made the beneficiary of huge stores of military supplies by the United States, Pakistan centered its support on the *jihadists* who were expected to hold India at bay in Kashmir while more concerted efforts were made to force the Soviets to withdraw from Afghanistan. It is apocryphal that both the war between Iran and Iraq and the other in Afghanistan should draw down at roughly the same time. It is no less paradoxical that Saddam should launch an assault on Kuwait just as the Soviet Union, Baghdad's major supporter, began to crumble. The forces of Islamic revolution not Saddam and not his vision of a broad secular state drew strength from all these events. Islamic revolution had its purpose confirmed by the crushing of Iraq's forces in the 1990-91 Gulf War by a United States-led coalition that had enlisted the services of a number of Arab and Muslim governments. Saddam's failure to subdue Iran and

continued on next page

now his humiliating surrender to the United States and its partners occurred almost simultaneously with the rise and spread of the Pakistan-prompted Taliban of Afghanistan. The Taliban quickly metamorphosed into a modern expression of the resurrected caliphate under the tutelage of the Mullah Mohammad Omar who declared himself the emir of a new Afghan Islamic state. Omar's success was aided and abetted by elements of the Pakistan army; the Taliban also were the recipients of assistance from Saudi Arabia, and not surprisingly from Osama bin Laden whose al-Qaeda organization intensified efforts at rallying Muslims to a violent vision of worldwide Islam.

The nation-state had proven itself more meaningful to Diaspora Muslims than those in their respective homelands. In distant places, living as minorities, Muslims showed little difficulty in adjusting to their multi-varied environments. Moreover, Diaspora Muslims did not have to contend with issues of poverty, with nation building, or pressing matters of public policy. Nevertheless, side by side with the Muslims of the Diaspora are those Muslims who articulate the vision of a reborn, worldwide Islamic community, even if it meant the perpetration of violent acts against the society providing refuge. The latter's attraction to the network of overseas operatives bent on committing mayhem in the major secular countries in Europe and North America was made all the more compelling by their experiences in the lands of their adopted domicile. Convinced that the power of western achievement emerged from the exploitation of other cultures, they succumbed to the call to action from figures like the exiled Bin Laden.

The essential conundrum therefore seems to focus on people of goodwill, Muslim and non-Muslim alike, who despite their differences or their grievances can still pool their energies in the effort to salvage their humanity. The world is threatened as never before. The fragile planet earth has passed into an era where all the cumulative effects of history burden passage to a more enlightened future. The time demands a new formula for righting past wrongs, but it also demands an appreciation of what it is that will enable people of divergent belief and custom to join together in common endeavor, to reject leaders whose only message is the perpetration of death and destruction. In the Islamic world it is time to take more seriously the work of the reformers and thinkers who in their expression of Islamic tradition are prepared to recognize their faults and light a path through the debris of history. Egypt has historically provided opportunity for reformers to revisit the human condition and to postulate a frame of reference that not only elevates religious experience but also offers guidance for new beginnings in difficult times. That role today is served by the Egyptian *wassatteyya*. Speaking for the moderate Islamic tradition, these reformers reject the association of Islam with death and destruction, with restrictions and punishment. Centering attention on Islam and life, their humanity-centered paradigm repeats the Quranic assertion that above all is the equality of all humankind. Muslims, it is argued, make no distinction between one worshiper and another and spiritual satisfaction is found in the blending of cultures and customs not their separation or rejection. Cooperation and accommodation, indeed toleration, are core values of Islamic tradition, and *sharia* extends to all that extol the wonder of creation. Islam and *sharia* is adaptive not rigid, cannot be made or unmade, imposed or exposed, but prevails wherever there is acceptance of love and charity. The *wassatteyya* would remind us that Islam is not a justification for disciplining people or denying their creativity, but a way of life that centers on assuring human needs and peoples' happiness.

Modern Muslims must still come to grips with the nation-state. A way must still be found to adjust the nation-state to that other call for an Islamic State. Most important Muslims will have to determine if extremism is the preferred way to represent their spiritual needs. Ultimately the question will be the nature of the test of religious faith, whether it is to be found in peace or war, in tolerance or bigotry. Indeed, this is the same test people of other faiths must also submit themselves to. Our future, the future of our children, and their children, depend upon how we confront this life-moving challenge.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Baker, Raymond William, ISLAM WITHOUT FEAR: EGYPT AND THE NEW ISLAMISTS. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2003.
- Black, Antony, THE HISTORY OF ISLAMIC POLITICAL THOUGHT: FROM THE PROPHET TO THE PRESENT. New York: Routledge, 2001.
- Butterworth, Charles E. and I William Zartman, BETWEEN THE STATE AND ISLAM. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001.
- Mandaville, Peter, TRANSNATIONAL MUSLIM POLITICS: REIMAGING THE UMMA. London: Routledge, 2001.
- Nasser, Gamal Abdel, THE PHILOSOPHY OF THE REVOLUTION. Buffalo, NY: Ecoomica Books, 1959.
- Shadid, Anthony, LEGACY OF THE PROPHET: DESPOTS, DEMOCRATS, AND THE NEW POLITICS OF ISLAM. Boulder: Westview, 2001.
- Ziring, Lawrence, PAKISTAN: AT THE CROSSCURRENT OF HISTORY. Oxford, U.K.: Oneworld Publications, 2003



CONSUL GENERAL NOOR MUHAMMAD JADMANI

Noor Muhammad Jadmani
Consul General of Pakistan



In the Name of Allah the Beneficent the Merciful
We praise Him and send Prayers upon His Noble Messenger

I consider it a great honor for me to be here this evening among personalities of high esteem and a great gathering and over an above on an occasion where we are celebrating the Birth of our Beloved Prophet: Hazrat Muhammad Mustafa (Peace and Blessings be Upon Him and His Family). What else could one expect and desire? I drove this morning from Los Angeles to come and join you all and benefit from this great event, be a part of you and gain something from the insight of great speakers who spoke earlier. Thank you very much Dr. Sahab for inviting me and giving me this opportunity to be here and again i congratulate you on such a successful event. I wish you such events in the future.

Many speakers have spoken about our Holy Prophet (Peace Be Upon Him). We all know, He was a complete code of conduct, a life one would aspire to live, I wish to be a small percent of what our Beloved Prophet was. He had in Him the kind of living that humanity today would look forward to. We know that we are all passing through difficult days. I wish we could just pick up a few of His teachings, and adhere to them. I am sure the world would be full of peace, tranquility, tolerance, love, and affection. That is what we as Muslims have been taught. Unfortunately certain elements smear the great teachings of our Holy Prophet (Peace Be Upon Him).

Islam advocates peace and harmony. Islam emerged on the world scene as flag bearer of a just, lawful, tolerant and value oriented society. We have faith in human exaltation through knowledge and enlightenment. In fact we were the fountainhead of learning till the middle ages. We exemplified tolerance within ourselves and with people of other faiths. Our religion places great emphasis on resolution of problems through dialog and always stood for peace, justice and co-existence. The armies of Islam die not march forward to convert people to Islam through the sword, despite what many perceptions be, but to deliver them from darkness they were under through the visible example of their virtues. Muslims reflect their exalted values in all their actions and not through their devotional practices alone. What projection can be found of these deeper values of Islam than the personal example of our Holy Prophet (Peace Be Upon Him) who personified justice, compassion, tolerance of others, generosity of spirit, austerity with a spirit of sacrifice, concern for the weak, respect for learning, gentle piety and above all a burning desire for raising humanity to a better world.

We Muslims unfortunately today are distant from many of these values. We have been left far behind in social, moral, and economic development. It was in cognizance of this reality that our President, General Pervez Musharraf presented before the Islamic Ummah, the concept of enlightened moderation that he had launched before the international community last year at the United Nations General Assembly. The objective is a win-win for all, the Muslim and the Non-Muslim world. It is a two-pronged strategy. On prong to be delivered by the Muslim world of shunning militancy, extremism and adopting the path of socio-economic uplift, for their own emancipation; the other prong to be delivered by the West and the United States in particular must aim at resolutely resolving all political disputes with justice and also assisting in the socio-economic uplift of the deprived Muslim world. This message of President Musharraf, I am reiterating before this august audience, an audience that has an effective voice and strength in this great country, to let this message gets translated with the spirit it has been presented. Both the prongs must be addressed simultaneously and both must succeed. Let no one make the disastrous mistake of putting the onus on one side alone. We need to understand the root causes which lie in political injustice, denial and deprivation. Political injustice when combined with stark poverty and illiteracy makes the explosive mix leading towards an acute sense of deprivation, hopelessness and powerlessness.

I want to avail this occasion to convey these sentiments which i sincerely feel is the need of the hour through you, whether it be the Pakistani American community, Muslim American community, or the activists of the interfaith, the leaders or the friends who are promoting interfaith harmony and promoting peace. Please carry forward jointly, this two-pronged strategy so that we can bring peace, harmony to this world that we so cherish to live in, that we love to be with. Thank you so much for giving me this opportunity and all the best with the event.



Ms. Saadia Yousaf

President, Pakistan Women Association



First of all I am grateful to the IECRC for giving me the opportunity to address you all today. Today's age is one of trials for humanity. These trials are not limited to any specific group; in reality humanity is the victim of trials at both an individual as well as social level. In this regard, today's conference is an excellent service to humanity.

Islam is a comprehensive way of life in which the human being has been given importance at a fundamental level. The entire Holy Quran teaches us to serve humanity and tells us what the standards for humanity are from its perspective. The Holy Quran divides humanity into two groups - one that is successful and one that is not. The successful ones are those who sincerely with the light of faith and certainty serve humanity. The unsuccessful ones are those who debase humanity.

The question then arises: How does one become successful in today's age? The answer to this will need to be sought in the light of the Holy Quran. The Holy Quran refers to "those who have faith and did good deeds". Allama Zamakhshari (may Allah have mercy on him) expounds on these "good deeds" in the following words:

"Success is those good deeds of the human being that he or she does to give peace to others, and forgives and overlooks their mistakes."

Similarly Allama Ibn Katheer (may Allah have mercy on him) says that:

"Success can be achieved through tolerance and overlooking the faults of others and it is these very principles, which are the cornerstones of a successful Islamic society."

Similarly in the famous Fatawa Shami, Allama Ibn Abideen (may Allah have mercy on him) says:

"Tolerance protects the human from misusing false power, and instructs the human at the social level to adopt the principles of peace and tolerance as much as possible."

All of these mentioned words are of those great scholars who are accepted today and this is proof that the foundation of the Quran and the Sunnah is the path for the betterment of humanity.

Allah Almighty says in the Holy Quran that:

"O mankind! We have indeed created you from one man and one woman, and have made you into various nations and tribes so that you may know one another; indeed the more honorable among you, in the sight of Allah, is one who is more pious among you; indeed Allah is All Knowing, All Aware." [Hujurat 49:13]

In the light of the above verse, a blessed Hadeeth of the Holy Prophet (Peace Be Upon Him) is paraphrased as follows:

"The property of the non-Muslim is like our properties, and their blood, i.e. life is like our blood."

This shows that in Islam when it comes to the rights of people, there is no distinction of faith. For Allah Almighty the property, life, dignity, and honor of a Muslim & non-Muslim is the same; however piety or God consciousness (*taqwa*) is the yardstick for measuring degrees among people. This is why it becomes incumbent upon us all that we spend our lives living in accordance with the teachings of the Holy Prophet (Peace Be Upon Him), and make this world a cradle of peace. We should make a promise that we will forgive the mistakes of others, that we will not consider anyone inferior, and will not harbor hatred, grudge or ill feelings towards anyone. Because this is the message of Islam and it is our responsibility to take this message to the people.

I pray to Allah Almighty that He grants us the Divine help (*taufeeq*) that we live our lives in the way that our Holy Prophet (Peace Be Upon Him) has taught. Aameen. Once again I would like to thank everyone and IECRC through whom I got the opportunity to deliver this message of Islam to you all.

