

PRESS RELEASE

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For immediate Release

MUSLIMS URGED TO WIN HEARTS AND MINDS

Revive Islam as religion of peace, tolerance and learning

Event: 38th Ahmadiyya Muslim Annual Convention
Venue: Tilford (near Farnham), Surrey
Dates: Friday 30th July to Sunday 1st August 2004
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The largest international convention of Muslims held annually in the UK will hear how Muslims need to redefine their public image in the West and spread the message of true Islam which is love, peace and brotherhood. 30,000 people are expected to join the convention, including leading scholars, professionals and political leaders of UK and other countries.

The faithful, gathered in a secluded corner of England, will pledge to liberate Islam from the negative stereotypes with which it has become associated. They are Ahmadi Muslims – one of the oldest Muslim groups in Britain. They recognise Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, a 19th century spiritual reformer from India, as the Messiah awaited by all major religions. The movement, now established in 175 countries, is at the vanguard of the revival of true Islam.

Hadhrat Mirza Masroor Ahmad, the Supreme Head of the Worldwide Ahmadiyya Muslim Community, currently based in West London, who will host the event, said:

“What has given Islam a bad name is an ugly and awful image of extremism presented, whether knowingly or unwittingly, by some Muslim groups and organisations, and these groups unfortunately had personal vested interests.

“The stand of the Ahmadiyya Muslim community is that the teaching of the Holy Qur’an promotes peace. We have to take this message to every corner of the world.

Founder of the Ahmadiyya Muslim community, Hadhrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, explaining the verse of Holy Qur’an (Al Maidah Ch.5: v.33) said: *a person who kills a person unfairly, or who kills someone who had neither rebelled nor became a source of violating peace amongst the people nor created disorder in the land, it is as if he has killed the whole of mankind. In other words to kill a person without any cause is according to God Almighty like the murder of the entire human race.*

“So this is the beautiful teaching given to us by God Almighty in the Holy Qur’an. Whosoever acts against this, acts against the teachings of Islam.

A Christian historian, Georgie Zeidan, said: *a primary reason for the rapid progress in Muslim education is that the Caliphs of Islam greatly valued the scholars of all faiths and all people... They had no concern with their religion or their nationality or their caste or*

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِیْمِ

Ahmadiyya Muslim Association U.K.

(ESTABLISHED 1914)

creed. Amongst them were Christians, Jews, Sabians, magicians, soothsayers and in fact people from every group. The Caliphs dealt with them with extreme reverence, respect and esteem. The non-Muslims had the same rights and freedoms that the Muslim leaders and governors enjoyed. (Tarikh Al Tamaddan Al-Islami Vol. 3 p.194)

“Now if after this anyone says that Islam is not a religion of peace, it would be a grave injustice.”

Mr Rafiq Ahmed Hayat, National President Ahmadiyya Muslim Association UK said:

“Our mission is to allow people to see Islam for what it is – the perfectly peaceful religion. That can only be done if the followers set an example by being strong in their own faith yet tolerant and understanding of other faiths. We urge like-minded Muslims of all sects to follow suit and to rise up against the fanatics by demonstrating in a practical way that Islam is a friend, not a foe.

“In essence we are calling for a Jihad – a battle for hearts and minds; to persuade people, through our conduct and good deeds that Islam is all about peace.

“Our history has taught us that those who wield violence never prosper. The message of Islam will spread through reason and not by violent means, as strongly emphasised by our revered founder.”

“We invite all Muslim groups to embrace our motto – Love for All, Hatred for None – which after all is what Islam is all about.”

NOTE TO NEWSDESKS

Ahmadi Muslims are extremely active in their communities; they raise tens of thousands of pounds for charities, have their own charity Humanity First that is serving humanity locally as well as in all parts of the world irrespective of colour, race or religion. The Ahmadiyya Muslims are the pioneers of interfaith dialogue. Last year they opened the largest purpose built mosque in Western Europe in Morden Surrey, which can accommodate more than 10,000 people. The community also built the first mosque in London in 1924.

The Press & Media office at the convention site Islamabad (Tilford) will open from Tuesday 27th July 10.00 AM to Sunday 1st August 8.00 PM for interviews, reporting, filming and photography. To arrange a site visit, and obtain directions, please email or telephone as above.

Also, Ahmadiyya Muslim branch offices located in all major towns and cities of Britain, from where the majority of conference delegates would arrive, are available for direct media contacts. Please ask for contact information.