I bear witness that there in no one worthy of worship except Allah – the One, He has no partner and I bear witness that Muhammad is His servant and Messenger.

I seek refuge with Allah from Satan the Rejected.

I begin in the name of Allah, Most Gracious, Ever Merciful.

We are all the honored guests of the Promised Messiah (as) and it is my privilege and great honor to wish you all a most sincere: AssalamoAalikum!

The topic of my brief presentation is: Civic Order: The Principles of Islamic Governance.

Before I begin my speech proper, let me just say a few words about politics. Politics¹ is said to be amoral where self-interest, duplicity, deception, cunning, force and Machiavelli play a big role.
Truth, Justice and fair play do not figure into things very prominently and belief in God and Life after Death does not really figure into the equation at all, neither on the right nor the left!

I say all this up front because everything that will follow is about something totally different.

For you to be able to relate to what I am going to talk about, for you to give me the benefit of the doubt – and think that what I have to say has something to do with the REAL WORLD – You will have to look at things from a totally different angle.

I am going to say that God Exists, and that this is the biggest and most important and relevant Truth...even when we are talking politics!

I am going to say that truth, justice, and fair-play matter, that abusing force to get what is not rightfully yours is not just wrong – it is also counter productive.

The Holy Quran teaches us that there are laws in operation governing the spiritual universe – just as there are laws and forces working in the material universe that cannot be ignored with impunity!

This is not just a claim. History confirms the truth of the Quranic teaching.

Look at Jesus (peace be on him) and his weak and helpless early followers – they were fed to wild beasts in magnificent theaters to entertain their persecutors but Allah’s decree triumphed and made them victorious....

This is what happened with Moses and his hapless, enslaved, people 14 centuries before Jesus (as), and with Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) six centuries after Jesus (as).

When I was much younger, I had the good fortune to spend a lot of time in the righteous company of Hazrat Ch. Muhammad Zafrulla Khan (may Allah be pleased
with him). He was an accomplished, globally renowned giant in the field of law and religion.

**He was writing a book** in those days entitled, ‘The Agony of Pakistan’.

Again and again in this book, when he talked about the problems faced by that unfortunate nation and its people, he mentioned righteousness as an **essential but missing** ingredient.

I found this totally beyond my understanding.

You see I did have a sense, even when I was 19, that the world thinks politics and statecraft has to do with Machiavelli - not Muhammad (sa) but here was this giant telling me that what mattered was Muhammad (sa) and his teachings ..

Now-a-days when I ponder on these things my mind always goes instantly to the famous Peace Treaty of Hudaibiya....and I am able to make sense of things.

For the sake of peace, Muhammad, accepted such humiliating terms as left his Companions - **one and all** - totally stunned. O Allah shower your blessings on this Prophet of yours who showed to the world, again and again, and proved to the world that truth,

Yes, truth, and justice, and fair play, and right - are truly what matter -

All that followed the signing of this Treaty of Hudaibiya is known to everyone.

What seemed at the time to be a humiliation turned out to be the greatest victory of the Holy Prophet’s life.

It is only the short-sighted Machiavellian, **impatient, disbelieving** man, who in his misguided haste is willing to make a deal with Satan and sell out all these time tested principles.
NOW, I know better and do understand what Hazrat Ch Muhammad Zafrulla Khan Sahib, may Allah be pleased with him, was talking about.

The problems that the world faces today, in particular the problems that the Muslims are trying to solve, can only be solved by Muhammad (sa) and the teachings that he brought into the world.

Everyone is familiar with the ongoing social and political unrest in Muslim nations. This has led to revolutions, civil disorder, bloodshed and warfare and widespread and ongoing destruction: billions of dollars of self-inflicted losses and Muslim killing Muslim – on an even larger scale!

This is clearly not the heaven that God began teaching mankind how to build here on earth, when He began revealing Himself to Adam (as).

The First Lesson in Civics was given by God to Humanity through the Prophet Adam (as) – the verse I recited at the beginning:

*And We said: ‘O Adam, dwell thou and thy wife in the garden, and eat therefrom plentifully wherever you will, but approach not this tree, lest you be of the wrongdoers.’* [2:36]

People were taught to set down roots and live as communities so that they could grow and store the necessities of life in abundance and have them available whenever needed³.

They were told to follow laws that would sustain this mode of living and stay away from people who would create disorder.

This civilized, ordered, society had as its goal the provision of all basic necessities of life for all its members:

*‘It is provided for thee that thou wilt not hunger therein, nor wilt thou be naked. And that thou wilt not thirst therein, nor wilt thou be exposed to the sun.’* [20:119-120]
We appear to be talking here about mundane, material things, but provision of these basic necessities has a deep impact on preventing widespread commission of sin, looting, plunder, fraud and deception since a great cause of all these social and spiritual ills is poverty and lack of means for mere survival.

[Comment: People think religion is about adoring images and prostrating and other such pointless things that some kind of crazy god of their own invention is in need of – for some inexplicable reason...Religion and revelation, as Islam explains it, is all about recognizing the One True Creator of all that exists. Who is Independent and in no need of anything from His Creation, who in fact provides for us all; so religion and revelation are all about loving our Creator who has gone to tremendous trouble of making the earth a bed and the heavens a canopy (2:22-23) and when man was ready and in need of spiritual guidance so God began to reveal Himself and His purpose and guide us and teach us how to live our lives in peace and tranquility]

Another aspect of civilization is captured in the phrase “haitho shaytoma” wherever you will. [2:36]

The climax of civilization demands total freedom for people to be able to travel in God’s earth wherever they wish.

Depriving vast populations access to huge tracts of lands by laws and rules and regulations that contravene this principle sows hate and discord in the hearts and minds of millions of people.

According to the Holy Quran, Sovereignty over the universe belongs to God, but mankind is vested with authority in certain spheres, as a trust - the manner they discharge which; they would be questioned about by God.

Verily, Allah commands you to make over the trusts to those entitled to them; [4:59]

Several points need to be made here:

1. The address is to “An-Nas” – humanity, all men and women; sovereignty is, therefore, vested in the people;
2. They are commanded to entrust it to those who are best suited to discharge the responsibilities attached to it;
3. There is no mention of the person having to be male not female – suitability is the only criterion for selection; and especially worth noting:
4. Nowhere is it said that the person must be a Muslim.
5. Use of the words, “Verily, Allah commands you,” elevates the duty of electing representatives for the discharge of the various responsibilities of the state to the status of a sacred trust.

Clearly, the notion that in Islam a citizen’s political rights depend on his or her faith is rejected forthrightly in this fundamental pronouncement of the Holy Quran and clearly women, if deemed suitable, may be voted into office by the people.

The verse continues: *And when you are called upon to govern, you must do so equitably and with justice.* [4:59]

The emphasis on justice is clear and repeated in various ways in the Holy Quran.

Even enmity towards a people should not incite a believer to act unjustly or inequitably towards them:

*O ye who believe be steadfast in the cause of Allah, and bear witness in equity, and let not a people's hostility towards you incite you to act otherwise than with justice. Be always just, that it is closest to righteousness. Fear Allah, Surely, Allah is well aware of that which you do.* [5:9]

SO, ability – capability, suitability and justice, strict justice; are the **overarching principles of Islamic Governance** but the Holy Quran abounds in detailed guidance about many other related matters.

Let me highlight some that are particularly relevant today and that relate to the underlying causes of problems faced by the Muslim nations in particular.

**The First, Foremost and Ongoing Duty** of a government that meets the Islamic principles of governance is to ensure adequate provision of the basic necessities of life for all its citizens .... and this I have already mentioned. [20:119-120]

In early Islamic history the example of Hazrat Umar (may Allah be pleased with him) is often cited.
He was so anxious about the welfare of his people that he used to go around in the city of Medina at night, to see for himself if anyone was in need of help.

Once he observed a woman cooking something in a pot while her children were crying around her. He found out from the woman that her children were hungry for two days and the pot was put on the fire just to console them.

Hazrat Umar (ra) immediately went to the treasury, and brought all the necessary food items to the woman. On his way, one of his servants offered to carry the load but he stopped him saying: "On the Day of Judgment you will not carry my load."

**Contrast this with the tragic story of the Tunisian street vendor, Muhammad Bouazizi.**

Another important principle of Islamic governance is provision of religious freedom.

Look how emphatically the Holy Quran affirms religious freedom:

*There shall be no compulsion in matters of faith. Guidance has been clearly distinguished from error.* [2:257]

Complete freedom in the matter of conscience and belief is essential for the fulfillment of the Divine purpose. It would be easy for God to compel:

*If thy Lord had enforced His will, surely all who are on earth would have believed together. Wilt thou, then, force people to become believers?* [10:100]

The Muslim world today, unfortunately, is wanting so very much from this point of view also.

**LET ME QUICKLY ADD, IT WAS NOT ALWAYS LIKE THIS.** Let me just refer you to an article by Mr. Abdul Haq Compier – to illustrate how the world was totally the other way around a few hundred years ago.
Summarizing his article entitled: ‘Let the Muslim be my Master in Outward Things’ – References to Islam in the Promotion of Religious Tolerance in Christian Europe; the learned author states:

“Islam presents a policy of religious tolerance, rooted in teachings on the universal nature of man, his free relationship to God, and the divine origins of other religions. The prophet Muhammad (sa) separated his authority as a religious leader from his position as a governor, creating a religiously diverse society from the very start.”

“This contrasted to the Christian world, where men were regarded to be born in original sin, only to be redeemed by Christ through the one true Church. Ever since the Byzantine Empire, Christian rulers had governed by the motto ‘One State, One Law, One Faith’, leading to horrendous persecutions of heretics.”

“Throughout history, persecuted Christians have noticed the contrast to the tolerance within Islam. When, in the 16th century, persecutions in Europe became unbearable, **Christian advocates of tolerance referred to the Ottoman Empire as the model to adopt.**”

“The example of the empire was offered in debates on tolerance from Hungary to Germany, France, the Netherlands and Great Britain, up until the 18th century, by tolerance advocates such as Sebastian Castellio, Francis Junius, John Locke and Voltaire.”

“The Netherlands became a junction, adopting not only the Ottoman model of religious diversity, but also receiving political and military support from Ottoman sultans.”

The Holy Quran mentions many factors which destroy peace and order. Let me highlight a few to illustrate how the valuable guidance of the Holy Quran can help us achieve global peace!

**Interfaith relations** are hugely important on the global stage.
The Quran teaches that God has sent His revelation to all peoples from time to time & that no section of mankind was left without Divine guidance [35:25, 26].

Islam seeks to bring about reconciliation between the followers of different faiths and rejects the existence of a monopoly on salvation. [2:63]

The Holy Quran invites everyone to unite around common shared universal principles. [3:65]

**Domination of one group by another**, a potent cause of disturbance of peace, is strongly condemned. The Holy Quran cites the instance of Pharaoh and his treatment of the Children of Israel and assures us that whenever such attempts are made God's purpose works for the uplift of those who are dominated or oppressed.

*Pharaoh behaved arrogantly in the land and divided the people thereof into sections; he sought to weaken one section, slaying their male children, and sparing their female children. Certainly he was of the workers of corruption. We desired to show favor unto those who had been reduced into the position of subordinates in the land, and to make them leaders, and to make them inheritors of Our favors, and to establish them in the land.* [28:5-7]

**Economic exploitation** inevitably sows hatred and destroys peace. Prohibiting such exploitation the Holy Quran warns that economies based on such factors would not endure. Beneficial and enduring economic growth comes from the exploitation of a people's own resources and on equitable sharing with others of the bounties which God has bestowed upon all peoples.

*Do not raise thine eyes covetously after that which We have bestowed on some groups, to enjoy for a period, of the ornaments of this life, that We may try them thereby; the provision bestowed upon thee by thy Lord is better and more enduring.* [20:132]

The Holy Prophet of Islam is reported to have said that the upper hand is better than the lower, thus discouraging the tendency to beg; teaching self-sufficiency and contentment and encouraging the people to earn a living by their efforts.
When nations collect no taxes and live on money from outside powers they lose all sense of dignity, self respect and independence.

So far I have talked really about those who govern.

Let me turn now briefly to what are the duties and obligations of the subjects? Islam provides comprehensive guidance here also.

**DUTIES OF A SUBJECT**: It is the RELIGIOUS DUTY OF A MUSLIM to render full obedience to the authorities:

*O ye who believe, obey Allah and obey His Messenger and those who are in authority among you.* (4:60)

Hubbul watanay minal eemaan, the Holy Prophet’s famous words mean that Love of one’s watan – one’s place of residence, is part of a Muslim’s faith!

For a Muslim there is no issue of whether he must be loyal to his faith or his place of residence – whether his religion comes first or his country; his faith requires him to love his place of residence; loyalty, gratitude, belonging to, caring for, all these things and sincerely, are covered in love!

**What are we supposed to do in situations where Governments are unjust?**

This is a very important question and one that Islam gives a very unique answer to that needs careful evaluation to be understood.

The Islamic injunctions that relate to such situations are easy to understand if we keep in mind the Holy Quran’s absolute prohibition of disorder and rebellion.

*Do not promote disorder in the earth after peace has been established.* [7:57]

*Seek not to create disorder in the earth. Verily, God loves not those who seek to create disorder.* [28:78]
The Holy Prophet’s own conduct provides clear guidance.

For thirteen long years in Mecca the Prophet and his followers faced intense, daily growing persecution but they exercised patience and remained orderly, law-abiding citizens.

When the persecution became unbearable, the Prophet counseled migration and adopted the same course of action himself when life became impossible in Mecca.

The Holy Prophet is reported to have said:

‘After me you will see injustice, rights suppressed and others given preference over you. You will see matters that you will disapprove of. When asked what was the commandment in such situation, the Prophet (sa) replied, ‘discharge your duty to them and beg God for your due.’

The Promised Messiah (on whom be peace) said:

‘The Holy Qur’an states ‘obey Allah, and obey His Messenger and those who are in authority over you’ [4:60]. Therein is a clear directive to obey ‘those who are in authority over you’. If someone says that the government is not included in this, it is their clear mistake. Whatever a government does within Shariah is included in this regard’.

He said, ‘if the ruler is oppressive do not criticize him, rather, reform yourself. God will replace him or will make him pious. Any trouble that befalls does so due to one’s own bad deeds...my advice is this alone that you become a model of virtue in every way. Do not usurp the rights of God and do not usurp the rights of mankind.’

Explaining the same verse, Hadhrat Khalifatul Masih II (ra) said that some Muslims erroneously infer that this verse is only about Muslim rulers. He said this was against the rules of the Qur’an and here the significance is not of a co-religionist.

As members of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community we must remember the conditions of our Bai’at. We have pledged to keep away from mischief and rebellion; and have affirmed that we shall cause no harm whatsoever to the
creatures of Allah in general, and Muslims in particular, neither by our tongue nor by our hands nor by any other means.

The Promised Messiah (on whom be peace) said that destruction of peace is worse than killing. He said that to participate in strikes etc. in colleges and universities is against our teaching and it is like participating in rebellion.

When Hadhrat Khalifa tul Masih II (ra) was asked what should be the stance of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community about the strike action of 1929, he said they should not participate in it but could participate in rallies as the government had allowed that.

He was told that if Ahmadi shops remained open they were beaten to shut them. He instructed that the police should be informed, if they were willing to provide protection, the shops may be opened, otherwise not.

In short, Islam does not allow citizens to create disorder even if the rulers are unjust:

Verily, those whom the angels cause to die while they are wronging their own souls, they (the angels) will say to them: ‘What were you after?’ They will reply: ‘We were treated as weak in the land.’ They will say, ‘Was not Allah’s earth vast enough for you to emigrate therein?’ It is these whose abode shall be Hell, and an evil destination it is; [4:98]

At best they are told to migrate from the lands where they are persecuted and held out the promise that they would find plenty in Allah’s vast earth.

The underlying strength, wisdom and efficacy of these teachings derives from the Promise of God that He would bless those who obey His commands, do not create disorder, suffer injustice from their rulers but show patience and resort to prayer and counsel their rulers but do not rebel.

As opposed to this, the tragedy that we are all witnessing TODAY is that, ‘both sides’ are in conflict and Muslim is killing Muslim and both are causing incalculable financial damage to their own interests.
When I mention this teaching to people the general feedback I get is that somehow this is an impractical, unrealistic and idealistic approach...and I am always amazed;

There are disputes in many other spheres of life; families become dysfunctional, cities have problems; corporations run into conflicts with their employees..

There, the dispute resolution processes that we employ and that are studied in great depth at universities and are usually very successful do not teach that if a family becomes dysfunctional, THE SOLUTION IS TO BURN DOWN THE HOUSE AND HAVE IT FIREBOMBED BY THE NEIGHBORS?

If we sit and examine the teachings of Islam with a cool, dispassionate and fair mind we will see that they are full of wisdom and in the very best interest of humanity.

The question, of course, is what to do when one party becomes intransigent?

Again the Holy Quran offers perfect guidance⁸:

And if two parties of believers fight against each other, make peace between them; then if after that one of them transgresses against the other, fight the party that transgresses until it returns to the command of Allah. Then if it returns, make peace between them with equity, and act justly. Verily, Allah loves the just. [49:10]

So what message does this discussion contain for the Muslims of the world TODAY?

The Holy Quran says this perfectly:

Surely, Allah changes not the condition of a people until they change that which is in their hearts. And when Allah wishes to punish a people, there is no repelling it, nor have they any helper beside Him. [13:12]
The Muslims must effect a holy change in themselves.

Hazrat Khalifatul Masih – may Allah help him with His Mighty Support – summed up the state of affairs in the Muslim world recently.

He said the Qur’an does not only direct the masses, it also enjoins the rulers, telling them not to be arrogant about their power and not be unjust. In the current state of affairs the same story can be heard across the board, that national revenues have been plundered and the masses deprived of their rights.

Those in authority have a great responsibility over their public and by not honouring that, these rulers are creating disorder and God greatly disapproves of disorder.

Muslim leaders should follow in the footsteps of the examples that are there for them; Hadhrat Umar (may Allah be pleased with him) ruled in a manner that had people [not just Muslims] distraught during Christian rule, wishing for Muslim rule to return.

I think it is worth citing here what the Editors of Encyclopedia Britannica wrote in 1888 and 1907 about Hazrat Umar (ra):

“The saying with which he began his reign will never grow antiquated, ‘By God, he that is weakest among you shall be in my eye the strongest, until I have vindicated for him his rights; he that is strongest I will treat as the weakest, until he complies with the law’. It would be impossible to give a better general definition of the function of the state.”

The current online version of Encyclopedia Britannica states that Hazrat Umar (ra) was “universally respected for his justice and authority” – this is the description that would be applied to the Muslim leaders of today if they were to heed the teachings of the Holy Quran and follow the sunnat, the personal example of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him.
What is needed is Taqwa, love of God, righteousness, a mindfulness of God...the same that drove Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, to govern with justice and authority.

And this, recall, is what Hazrat Ch Muhammad Zafrulla Khan (ra) said was missing and essentially the agony of Pakistan!

**So the question now is: How will the Muslims make this righteous change?**

In brief, the Holy Quran tells us that it has always been the practice of God, in such times of darkness and despair to send guidance and Himself arrange to lead humanity into the light.

And so in the latter days, in accordance with the promises contained in the Holy Quran and the prophecies made by the Holy Prophet, the Imam of the Age – the Promised Messiah and Imam Mahdi came and told all of humanity, and the Muslims in particular, that they would be able to effect the needed righteous change only by accepting him.

The clear instruction for us from our Khalifa (may Allah strengthen him with His Mighty Support) is to protect ourselves from all disorder and pray most sincerely; God will one day listen to our sincere prayers.

**I had said in the beginning that God, Truth and Justice matter.**

I had said that history bears witness to the truth of the Holy Quran’s teaching that laws operate in the spiritual universe to ensure and enforce these things.

I had cited the examples of Moses (as), Jesus (as), and Muhammad (sa) and their followers as proof from history of the truth of the Holy Quran’s claim.

**But people who follow Machiavellian politics always say, “that is just history.”**

So let me end today by saying to them in particular:
These teachings of Islamic governance and civic duty are not just empty words found in old ancient books that no one heeds.

Certainly not!

They are being acted upon TODAY by the members of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community the world over – we are the Muslims who believe in the Messiah, Mirza Ghulam Ahmad Qadiani, may peace be on him.

He had prophesied that by acting on the teachings of Islam we shall be able to win the hearts of the whole of mankind and thus usher in an era of peace and plenty the world over.

This is the Garden of Eden that Allah began teaching man how to build, right here on Earth, 6,000 years ago.

The Promised Messiah (as) prophesied:

"The people of the world may be inclined to think that perhaps it is Christianity which will in the end spread throughout the world, or that it may be Buddhism which will prevail."

“But they are wrong in so thinking.”

“Remember that nothing can take place on Earth till it has been so permitted in Heaven. Know that it is the God of Heaven who has told me that in the end it will be the religion of Islam which will win the hearts of the people."
Our last word is: All praise belongs to Allah, Lord of the worlds.