

Friday Sermon: Proclaim the bounties of Allah - USA and Canadian Tour 2013

May 31st, 2013

‘And as for the bounty of your Lord do relate *it to others*’. [\(93:12\)](#)

Bounties of God can be worldly, regarding faith as well as spiritual. Worldly bounties are granted to one and all, across the board. Those who have faith and consider God to be the source of all blessings are also grateful for worldly bounties. While their appreciation of gratefulness is on personal level, they also tell the world that blessings are only from God. Then there are bounties of faith and spiritual bounties. We Ahmadis are the servants of the true and ardent devotee of the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be on him), the Promised Messiah (on whom be peace) and we have attained these bounties. It is obligatory on each Ahmadi to relate bounties and blessings of God. One way to do this is to abide by the commandments of God while another way is to announce it to the world, via Tabligh, that come and share this spiritual light that we have been given and become recipients of God’s blessings. It is this light of God alone that will facilitate to adorn everyone’s worldly life as well as ending.

It is also a manifestation of God’s bounties when He graces our meagre efforts and blesses them manifold and beyond our expectations. This again draws our attention to Him. A true believer needs to have a real insight into this subject in order to continue to be a recipient of God’s grace. God sent the Promised Messiah (on whom be peace) in this age to spread the message of the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be on him). God sent him with His support and corroborative signs which we are witnessing to this day. These corroborations are in accordance with Divine promises for God had foretold the Promised Messiah (on whom be peace) that he would not be able to encompass His bounties. It was revealed to him: ‘If you count the favours of God, it will not be possible for you to do so.’ [Tadhkirah, pp. 120 – 121 2009 edition] Another revelation stated: ‘Keep proclaiming the bounty of your Lord.’ [Tadhkirah, pp. 557 – 558]

The Promised Messiah (on whom be peace) wrote: ‘Owing to the commandment **‘And as for the bounty of your Lord do relate *it to others*’** this humble one sees nothing wrong in expressing that merely out of His grace and favour, the Noble and Merciful God has given this humble one a generous measure in all these matters. He did not send this useless one empty-handed and did not appoint him without any signs. On the contrary, all the signs were given which are now materialising and will continue to do so. Until God Almighty manifestly establishes the process of reasoning, He will continue to exhibit these signs. [Translated from ‘Tafseerul Qur’an, Vol. VI, p. 649] The Promised Messiah (on whom be peace) also wrote: ‘Humility and meekness...are essential conditions of Ubudiyyat (devotion of God/being His servant), however, owing to the commandment in the noble verse: **‘And as for the bounty of your Lord do relate *it to others*’** it is also extremely necessary to relate Divine bounties.’ [Translated from ‘Tafseerul Qur’an, Vol. VI, p. 649]

Whenever we experience grace and blessing of God, we recount and relate it by virtue of the commandment of this verse, as indeed we should. However, this is done with humility rather than as recounting any sense of self-importance. Hazrat Khalifatul Masih has recently been on a tour of USA and Canada where different programmes were held with outside guests. God enabled to relay the real message of Islam and this message spread on such an extensive level that it proved beyond

the expectations of the local Jama'at. This is a blessing among the blessings of God, and is not due to anyone's efforts.

The Jama'at was introduced in the West coast of USA by virtue of this tour where Hazrat Khalifatul Masih had not been before. He went to Los Angeles. The city, the area and its Hispanic population and the tasks the Jama'at there has to undertake were mentioned in a previous Friday sermon. Today Huzoor recounted the introduction of the Jama'at to outside guests. A reception was organised at a hotel in LA by the Jama'at. Management thought that being worldly-minded, perhaps many people would not turn up and till the last day responses were coming in. Such arrangement are made on the basis that an estimated number of people are expected to attend from all those who are sent invitations. However, the response was so huge that it was gave cause for concern to the management. In the end, the seating arrangement had to be increased and some friends who had said they would bring along their friends had to be apologised to. The reception was attended by notable section of society where Hazrat Khalifatul Masih gave a discourse. He briefly expounded the Quranic term 'Lord of all the worlds' and with reference to it spoke about the love and affection of the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be on him) for mankind and explained that his blessed model is an example for us to emulate, how could Islam be an extremist religion? There was a specific impact on the guests as regards the blessed model. Everyone said such a teaching should be disseminated; the world is in need of it. People came up to Hazrat Khalifatul Masih and repeatedly expressed these sentiments and some recorded them for MTA.

The reception took place on 11 May and people belonging to different walks of life attended it. The total number of guests was 291 who liked the teaching of Islam constituting peace, love, respect and justice in the world. Among the guests were 5 members of US Congress, 14 representatives of renowned media, academics, 17 various governmental officials, 37 professors, 13 diplomats, representatives of NGOs, representatives of 29 religions, people belonging to think-tanks and the armed forces. Below are some views of the guests.

Barbara Goldberg said: 'I am writing to express my deep appreciation for inviting us to be part of your welcome lunch for His Holiness. You created a very moving programme, which was not only an expression of respect but also one that conveyed a community that many of us didn't know much about.'

Another guest said: 'His Holiness represents a denomination that I have had limited exposure to and yet his words fit my religious philosophy perfectly. Love for all, hatred for none; acceptance of others; there is one God and his God is my God...every word emanating from his lips was truth. His goal of world peace and his timely warnings of nuclear war are words that our leaders need to hear and heed.'

Mayor of Redlands, CA said: 'I wanted to personally thank you for the invitation to join you Saturday to hear His Holiness deliver the message of tolerance and peaceful relations within our world...I was very appreciative to hear the message from His Holiness about the separation of church and state... we need to be aware that many others throughout the world are discriminated against because of their religious beliefs...I agree with His Holiness that peace cannot be achieved without an end to oppressive viewpoints and cruelty to others. My hope is that through continued education of our young people we can open their eyes to a world of tolerance and appreciation for each other that will lead to a better and more tolerant world.'

On the one hand there is the USA where proclamations are made against Islam and on the other hand here, the teaching of Islam is being acclaimed.

Lee Baca, LA County Sheriff who is very well-known said: 'His Holiness Mirza Masroor Ahmad's visit to Los Angeles resulted in the message of peace, love and justice to five hundred people of all faiths. The audience consisted of public safety leaders, members of congress, city councils and educators. His Holiness emphasized "Love for all- hatred for none" as the true teaching of the Prophet (peace and blessings be on him). World peace is a responsibility that all faiths can embrace was a common feeling by those in attendance.'

This indeed is the same country in which many erroneous things were said about Islam and the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be on him) and now that the teaching of Islam was taken there, they could not but concur with what was said. May God also give sense to the Muslims that they may establish the beautiful teaching of Islam through their practice.

Honourable Grey Davis, former Governor of California said: 'I really enjoyed his message of peace, understanding, and respect for all of God's children... You know, I think that we have to realize that we are all God's children... There is one God, He made us all, and He wanted us to love him and to love our neighbours.' He sat next to Huzoor and had a good conversation in which he showed great interest in MTA and took its channel frequency saying he will be watching it.

Eric Garcetti, a member of LA City Council said: 'His Holiness' speech described a clear path of brotherly cooperation and respect as the foundation for peace and prosperity in the world... [we] wish him all the best in his mission to spread a message of love, empowerment, and tolerance throughout the world.'

Dana Rohrabacher, US Congressman said: 'His Holiness today gave a set of remarks that were reaching out to all of us . . . His message of tolerance and love and of accepting one another is important to bind all of us here . . . This was the first time I met him, and I'm impressed by his very academic, thoughtful and logical approach to issues he presented as well as his analysis of the world. He has a message that can be accepted by people of various faiths . . . His message of peace bears listening to -- he has a gravitas when he speaks about peace.'

Rachel Moran, Dean, University of California School of Law said: 'It is an honour and a privilege to be part of such an event that promotes peace and tolerance. We took home an important ethical lesson today, that each of us has a responsibility to seek harmony and build bridges in our everyday lives and in every opportunity. What could be more inspiring than that? ... His Holiness represents a sense of spirituality and idealism that provides us with an important message in a world that is rife with conflict. He reminds us that peace is a collective obligation and that there is a strong ecumenical part of his kind of thinking and his philosophy that is that regardless of religion we are all objects of love and we all have an obligation to love others.'

Honourable Mohamed Samir, Consul General of Egypt said: 'He is a leader of wisdom... I was highly inspired but what he said today... his words are very inspiring and I encourage people to cooperate and coexist ... we have to apply his every advice to coexist...'

Sophia Pandya, Professor of Religious Studies, California State University said: 'I particularly enjoyed His Holiness' comments on world peace and love of all humanity. The world needs more humanitarian points of light such as the Ahmadiyya movement.'

Aziza Hasan, a former Director of Muslim Public Affairs Council said: ‘Congratulations on an incredible event this last Saturday. I walked away refreshed and energized as both an Inter-faith professional and Muslim community member. His Holiness was eloquent and relevant. I really appreciated that he tackled violence accusations against the Prophet Mohammad (peace and God's blessings upon him). Many people try to avoid or dance around the issue. His remarks addressed them head on to a distinguished audience with a great number of followers.’

John McMahan, from San Bernardino County Sheriff's Department said: ‘The message was on point and we all agree that working together towards peace is the direction we need to travel.’

Dr Frank Leivo, a distinguished physician said: ‘His Holiness represents a denomination that I have had limited exposure to and yet his words fit my religious philosophy perfectly...every word emanating from his lips was truth. His goal of world peace and his timely warnings of nuclear war are words that our leaders need to hear and heed.

Revered Jan Chase said: ‘I'm grateful for this opportunity to meet His Holiness and to attend this grand gathering. I particularly liked that fact that he addressed the subject of terrorism so directly in his remarks.’

Dana Rohrabacher is a Republican Congressman whose views are usually seen as anti-Islamic. He had remarked after the Boston bombing that Islam incites children to kill and it is a danger to the world today. His comments after attending the reception at LA have been cited above. Later, he sent a letter to our director of Public Affairs (external affairs) in US and wrote: ‘His Holiness should enjoy a sense of accomplishment that his visit to Southern California planted some seeds that will reap goodness of heart for years to come.’ Thus was the change brought about to his viewpoint after Huzoor's tour!

Hazrat Khalifatul Masih was interviewed by LA Times. Below is the published version of the interview:

Q: How do you spread the message of Islam as a religion of peace in the circumstances you find in the United States where, because of terrorist attacks by Muslim extremists, some people harbour misconceptions about the nature of Islam?

A: Muslims have been persecuted and attacked by their opponents throughout history, and have found themselves at war, compelled to retaliate for the mistreatment. But there is now no such religious war. Whenever any jihadist organization stands up in the name of Islam and misconstrues its true teachings, we have to stand up to this and speak out. Not only in the United States but everywhere in the world you see the name of Islam being defamed by opponents, those who don't have a true understanding of Islam. These are militant groups, not followers of the true religion, and we always stand against them.

Here in the United States, we have a program of good works. For the past two years we have been conducting the “Muslims for Life” campaign. We organize the donation of blood. The first time this drive was conducted we collected 10,000 blood donations and distributed them to hospitals.

Q: Your community is committed to separation of church and state, which is a distinction from some Muslim-majority countries in the Middle East where political leaders are trying to establish Islamic governments in the place of the authoritarian regimes ousted in the Arab Spring

revolutions. Would the region be more stable, in your opinion, if new secular governments were created instead?

A: In Egypt, what we have seen after having removed Hosni Mubarak is that nothing has changed. We have a government that still doesn't discharge its duties to the public and isn't respecting the rights of the people. In Libya, every tribe has its own government. The defence minister warned recently that some are attempting to overthrow the elected government and that unless some steps are taken there will be another disaster. In Tunisia, everyone says they are changing the country for the best and in the name of religion, but there is no peace. If there is going to be true democracy in the region it has to be practiced as in the West [without religious domination].

Q: How does the international community go about restoring peace in the region now racked by war and violent opposition?

A: A few months back, President Shimon Peres of Israel said the United Nations should send forces into these disrupted countries, but only forces comprised of Arab soldiers, not Western troops. It is the proper role of neighbours to get together and try to stop the conflicts in their region. It's the duty of neighbouring countries to stop the atrocities in Syria.

Q: How do you imagine the fighting in Syria could be brought to an end?

A: The government of Syria is predominantly Alawite, while the majority of Syrians are Sunnis. The government mistreated Sunnis and created inequality. Now there are others with vested interests coming into the country, including extremists, to help the rebels. So there is now conflict among the rebels as well as with the government. The atrocities and persecution were started by the government, but now both parties are guilty. They won't resolve it themselves, so there should be some initiative to find a way out and bring an end to the fighting.

Q: You say it is the responsibility of neighbouring countries to help find a path to peace. Do you see the efforts recently announced by Russia and the United States to bring the Syrian parties together in negotiations as a desirable response by neighbours, or are these powers too far removed from the region?

A: The world is now a global village, so the idea of neighbourhood is broader. But there are still two blocs in the world, with Russia supporting the Syrian government and Western governments supporting the rebels. It will be a test of the goodwill of the United States and Russia to stop the violence there. It must be stopped, because if it continues it will draw in the whole world.

Q: The Ahmadiyya Muslim Community leadership has been driven from Pakistan into exile. What is at the root of your differences with other Muslims, and how does the rift affect the cohesion and unity of Islam's message?

A: We believe that the Messiah has come as a subordinate, non-law-bearing prophet in the person of the founder of Ahmadiyya Muslim Community [in 1889]. Other Muslims disagree and believe after the Holy Prophet of Islam comes, there can be no other prophet, either one bearing a new law or not.

In Pakistan, the regime has passed a law against Ahmadis, saying we are not Muslims for the purposes of law and the constitution. The Ahmadis number in the millions, not only in Pakistan. But there you can see it was the fear of Pakistani mullahs that if they did not stop the Ahmadis

from freely practicing their religion, the Ahmadis might attract every Pakistani Muslim into their fold.

Q: Where is the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community strongest in the world, and where is it growing fastest?

A: We have millions of followers in Asia, but the following is increasing fastest in West Africa. Pakistan used to be the biggest Ahmadi community, but now certain African countries have greater numbers. We are increasing day by day, every year by 100,000s.

Some people are afraid of Islam. Some people have become indifferent to all religions. They don't believe in any God. But after a certain period they will come back and find religion. When they reach this state, we believe and we hope that we will help people fill this spiritual gap with the true teachings of our religion.

Hazrat Khalifatul Masih said most of the time a lot is not reported in interviews but LA Times published a good account of the interview. Huzoor had told the correspondent that if their current generation is not inclined to Ahmadiyyat, InshaAllah the next one will be and Ahmadiyyat will fill the spiritual vacuum that is felt by many.

Hazrat Khalifatul Masih was also interviewed by Wall Street Journal, a high-brow newspaper with an international circulation. The correspondent asked why Huzoor was visiting California? He responded by saying that the entire Earth is ours and we have to take our message everywhere. Besides, he was there to meet members of his Jama'at. Perhaps this question stemmed from a preconception based on politicians visiting USA to make worldly gains. Hazrat Khalifatul Masih's response was that he was there neither to seek anything for himself nor for his Jama'at. He said: 'The only gain I want from [U.S. leaders] is to make some programme to create and develop peace in the world.' He also warned against an impending world war if necessary steps were not taken and brought up the issue of drone strikes causing loss of innocent lives and said that these drone attacks are increasing anti-West sentiments!

Through the coverage of the tour by LA Times, Wall Street Journal, Chicago Tribune and few other newspapers in print media, the message reached 5.5 million people whereas it reached 5 million people via online sites and 1.5 million people through radio broadcasts. This could have never come to pass through our efforts. Indeed, all this was from God and was a brief glimpse of His omnipotence. Now, all these Jama'ats need to reap benefit from this and take the task onwards and upwards.

Next stop on the tour was Vancouver, Canada where Baitur Rahman mosque was inaugurated. Outside guests were invited and the event received good coverage by the media. On the whole, in Canada our message reached 8.5 million people through the mosque inauguration and through various interviews of Hazrat Khalifatul Masih. CBC a national channel like the BBC here reported the mosque inauguration watched by an estimated 1 million viewers. Over 2 million viewers got the message via CTV, a news channel whereas 600,000 viewers received the message through Global TV. Eleven newspapers covered the event. Radio stations also broadcasted it and in particular the radio stations of the ethnic media relayed the message to 600,000 listeners.

Manmeet Singh is an old friend of the Jama'at, he is a minister in the provisional assembly of Alberta. He said that he had prepared text for a speech on peace that he has to deliver in Geneva. However, after listening to the address of Hazrat Khalifatul Masih, he said he would revise the text

of his speech and include some points raised by Huzoor. A representative of a radio station called 'Sher e Punjab' said that he found the address very courageous. Another comment praised Huzoor's remark in his address that when we inaugurate a new mosque, we initiate a new chapter of religious freedom. CBC correspondent reported in news that Hazrat Khalifatul Masih replied satisfactorily to all the questions. A business man remarked that he had found out at the inauguration that peace is not only a teaching in Christianity. He said he would relate this to his children. A Muslim from Morocco said that he hoped this promotion of message of peace will help counter the misconceptions about Islam as an extremist religion. He said he was a Muslim but had learned many new things from the address. Another guest said that the address was extremely thought-provoking and encompassing wide range of matters. The highlight of the address was that it dealt with the fears of the ordinary person. It was extremely lucid and carried foresight. Another guest said that the message of Tawheed (Oneness of God) in the address was significant for the world.

Thus, different media outlets played a role in broadcasting this message. It reached about 4% of the population of USA, although in terms of West Coast population it reached 25%. In Canada the message reached 25% of total Canadian population. This was merely by the grace of God.

A question was asked in Canada in relation to it being a religion of peace and whether Muslims today were exhibiting this. Hazrat Khalifatul Masih replied that the teaching of the Holy Qur'an is that of peace but if any leader or the public is not exhibiting this, the blame lies with them. The Muslim world is not abiding by this teaching and this is why God sent the Promised Messiah. Time and again various incidents were referred to; the train incident in Canada, the Boston bombings and the London [Woolwich] killing. Hazrat Khalifatul Masih responded that all this was due to people turning away from God and it was not the teaching of Islam. It is a small number of people who carry out these atrocities in the name of Islam. He also praised the resolute and strong response issued by the Muslim Council of Britain following the Woolwich killing in which it called it an un-Islamic act. Question was put as to what are we doing to stop extremism in the world. Hazrat Khalifatul Masih said we are constantly trying to spread peace in various countries by serving people. We do not possess any power to bring peace about but we are doing it by spreading the beautiful teaching of Islam and will continue to do so. Answering a question about extremism in mosques, Hazrat Khalifatul Masih replied that our mosques always give message of peace and love and this is why generally speaking there are not many criminally minded people in our community. In case of the odd person, the community ex-communicates him. The CBC correspondent repeatedly and with different angles tried to somehow get Huzoor to say Islam does not promote peace. Huzoor told her no matter how she tried his answer was not going to change. She later admitted to some Ahmadiis that this was her tactics. Indeed, Islam's true teaching comes through; we do not follow any pretensions. CBC correspondent then asked how was our message going to spread and she was told that we will tirelessly take our message to the world. There was a time the Promised Messiah (on whom be peace) was alone. Then, within his lifetime, he had almost 500,000 followers and now, 125 years later we number in tens of millions. InshaAllah Muslims as well as non-Muslims are coming in the fold of Ahmadiyyat.

With the grace of God, according to a cautious estimate more than 20 million people received the message of Ahmadiyyat true Islam in this north American tour of Hazrat Khalifatul Masih. To spread the message on such a scale and then to have positive, supportive responses cannot come to pass with human endeavour. This is from God. A few Fridays ago Hazrat Khalifatul Masih related a dream of Hazrat Khalifatul Masih IV (may Allah have mercy on him) in Los Angeles and said that he had seen a surging sea of humanity. In fact in the dream he had only heard sounds coming

from the ground in support of Islam and Ahmadiyyat. Certainly, the supportive voices/comments of this tour are also an aspect of this. The attention and the reviews received now corroborate that these voices will now continue to be raised from this area and will greatly resonate in favour of Islam.

Hazrat Khalifatul Masih said he feels it is a special phenomenon/coincidence from God that a month ago he went on a tour of Spain and an extensive introduction of the Jama'at took place there. The country that was once under Islam is now Christian and Islam is now being re-introduced there. A month later the region of USA that Hazrat Khalifatul Masih visited was where a large number Spanish/Hispanic people live. It is now our task to take care of this and the message taken to the Spanish of the East and the Spanish of the West is fostered and these people are brought under the banner of Islam. As mentioned in the Friday sermon from LA, the Hispanic Americans say that they are ten times the number of people inhabiting Spain and attention should be given to them.

Hazrat Musleh Maud (may Allah be pleased with him) once said that there was a USA connection to 'the sun rising from the West'. We should make specific Tabligh programmes in USA but should also be mindful not to overlook our own Tarbiyyat and the Tarbiyyat of the newcomers. This should be done by being thankful and exhibiting this through our practices. Likewise, a quarter of Canada has received our message. Canadian Jama'at should also take this further with Tabligh, Tarbiyyat, by expressing gratefulness and by attaining high levels of worship of God. InshaAllah. May God enable both the Jama'ats, and the rest of the world, to achieve their goals in an excellent manner!

Hazrat Khalifatul Masih said that in USA and Canada, God has enabled the younger members or the relatively young members to work on the new avenues that are opening up. This generation should try and work harder than before and try to discharge their responsibilities. Secretaries of external affairs in both the countries are young people and their teams have also worked well with the grace of God. Both have done extensive work through their networks. Now it is the work of the Tabligh and Tarbiyyat departments to avail further benefit from the new avenues. May God reward them all and increase them in humility. There should be no pride in this, rather humility should increase. The Promised Messiah (on whom be peace) had said that humbleness and humility were very important. May God enable everyone to abide by them.