

Today's Imams - Leaders on Peace

By: IIO Team

Peace, a one letter word which we believe as something that stands for harmony and equality. In today's world, mankind has a multitude of issues which range from war between nations to enmity in one's own community. We define peace as a virtue which instigates the moral values of love and welfare, and believes in a world where cast, creed and religions coexist without any conflict. But then the question arises, is the growing number of religions and divided nations really contributing to the establishment of peace? Today's world scenario is seeing the rise and growth of globalization and multilateral communication. Islam is one such religion where the religious leaders, called Imams have taken a step further to bring in peace and stability to this ever-changing face of the earth.

Islam which means submission to God is one of the oldest religions and is a part of Abrahamic religions which also include Judaism and Christianity. It is also one of the fastest growing religions and is the second most followed religion. Many see Islamic fanatics misinterpreting 'Jihad' as a military exertion over non-Muslims, but it actually refers to strive or struggle in the way of God. The Imams are now playing a vital role in establishing Islam as a religion which stands for peace and religious tolerance. Their teachings and practices have reinforced the fact that Islam stands for peace. One of the well-known Imams, John Mohammed Butt is actively involved in spreading the message of peace through Islam and also hosts a radio program featured on the BBC's international radio service. He has committed his life to spread the message of peace and tolerance in the tribal areas bordering Pakistan and Afghanistan. Another example is the World Congress of Imams and Rabbis for Peace which brings together Imams and Rabbis from around the world with an agenda to initiate rapprochement between Judaism and Islam. Three congresses have been held till now since 2005. Their main motive is to promote peace and dialogue between their communities and to stand together for peace and justice throughout the world. Such examples of initiatives for peace by the Islamic

community have reassured the world that Islam is for peace and so are the teachings of the Imams.

The role of Imams in establishing a repo of peace was more evident after the 9/11 incident which caused a worldwide stir accusing the Muslim community as a promoter of terrorism. This image of negativism has been tarnished by Imams who are emerging as leaders of peace to protect and to educate the world that peace and unity is the epitome of Islamic faith. The teachings and seminars organized around the world by Imams have shunned the idea of Jihad as a war on non-believers and have called for more tolerance against religions.

This earth of ours has seen many a wars in the past few hundred years; it has seen religions fighting and taking control over people's rights. Man's quest for peace has always followed with his longing to conquer lands, this has always resulted in a mayhem of bloodshed. But after every war, mankind has questioned the vagueness which lies in bloodshed and wars. It is evident throughout history that humanity has called for peace and brotherly love in times of crisis. The times which called for world peace and unity came soon after wars or after times of human discrimination in the name of slavery or castes. But eventually peace is what mankind yearns for and today the Imams are contributing to this cause. The present world set-up is a conjuncture of religions, beliefs and practices which vary in almost every part of the earth. What we humans can best do, is to strive to bring in a balance by calling for world peace and accord.

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