

Honorable Chief Guest,

Distinguished Religious Leaders,

Diplomats,

Ladies and Gentlemen:

Assalam-o-Alaikam!!!

1. It is a great honour to speak before such distinguished religious leaders and guests about harmony and interfaith harmony. First, I would like to thank "Tehrik-e-Akhuwat-e-Islami" for organizing a conference on "Interfaith Harmony and our Responsibility" and giving me this opportunity to share my views, on an issue that, I believe, is essential in the current global context.

2. The aim of the conference is to make the peace efforts successful, to unite the followers and representatives of different religions on one platform and to promote the message of peace in their respective areas. The basic teaching of every religion is love. Every religion's foundation lay in love and harmony, thus love peace and national unity is a recipe for confronting challenges of terrorism, hatred and a culture of violence.

3. Our great martyred leader, Shaheed Mohtrama Benezir Bhutto, once said that "democracy can permit the flowering of a multi ethnic and multi cultural society where races, religion and genders co-exist peacefully, in harmony to the mutual benefit of all."

Ladies and Gentlemen:

4. Islam prescribes co-existence when it says that only those will survive on earth who are beneficial for humanity. Peace on earth can return when co-existence is practiced as a code of international life. Islam accepts the reality of change and embodies a lucid awareness of the perpetual movement of life. It lays down the principle of Ijtehad as a mechanism of interpreting the basic Islamic principles in terms of changing realities and requirements of life.

5. The specific reference in the Holy Quran to the existence of righteous people among followers of other scriptures provided a foundational principle on which the edifice of interfaith harmony rested. The Charter of Madinah and the permission given by the Holy Prophet (peace be upon him) to the Christian delegation to pray in the Mosque were shining examples of interfaith harmony 'from which we must draw appropriate lessons'

6. Muslims in Iraq, Afghanistan, Palestine and Kashmir continue to face insecurity, death and destruction. Such is the nature and magnitude of the challenges facing the Muslim world in recent times. The most important response required of us at this critical juncture is to project the

true spirit of the Islamic faith and to remove the cobwebs of prejudice and misperceptions, which hang around it. Islam as a way of life enshrines the values of moderation, tolerance, justice and interfaith harmony.

Ladies and Gentlemen:

7. There is a need of spreading awareness among world communities to respect one another's norms and patterns of civic lives. But this needs affluence, helping the needy to get into the mainstreams of the affluent societies. In promoting more communication between religions, every component of a country has a role to play, every individual, the civil society as a whole, the media, and the government.

Ladies and Gentlemen:

8. We should bring changes in our curriculum and youth should be engaged in promoting interfaith harmony and minorities should be given equal rights. Followers of all religions should work together to eliminate the scourge of terrorism and sectarianism and sectarian violence. Since world has squeezed into a global village, therefore interfaith harmony is essential for its peace.

9. The media also bear a great responsibility in ensuring that they display a true image of religious issues. The media have a great power in Pakistan and it stands as an evidence of freedom and democracy. The media have a role to play in promoting knowledge and moderation. They need to be fully aware of this daunting responsibility.

10. Hope today's conference will allow the participants to share their views and accomplish some progress in identifying the ways to achieve our common goal.

Thank You