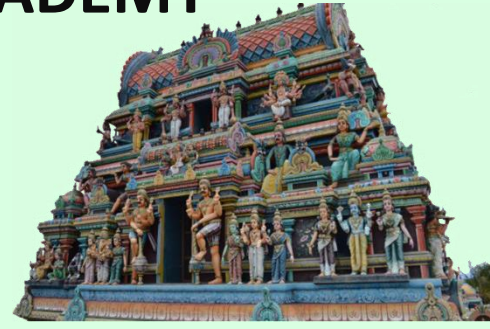
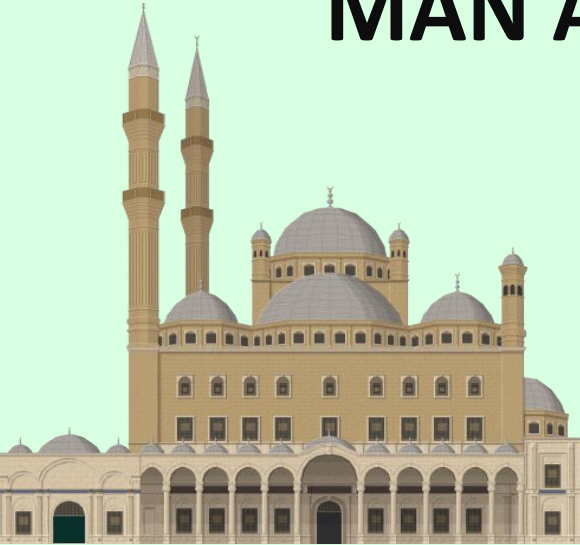


**DARUL ULOOM ISLAMIC ACADEMY  
OF BRISBANE**



**Presents**

**SPIRITUALITY AND SERVICE OF  
MAN ACCORDING TO MY  
TRADITION**



**Multifaith Lecture**

**Delivered by**

**Imam Abdul Quddoos Al Azhari**



**At**

**RAMAKRISHNA SARADA SOCIETY OF  
SYDNEY**

**20 JULY 2000**

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

الحمد لله رب العالمين والصلاة والسلام على أشرف الأنبياء والمرسلين



Firstly, I would like to thank the president of the Ramakrishna Sarada Society of NSW Reverend Mataji for organising this important multi-faith lecture series, "Spirituality and the Service of Man According to My Tradition".



I would also like to thank the society for inviting me to share with you some of the beliefs and practices of Islam about spirituality and the service of man.

Islam is not a religion in the same sense as many other religions. Islam is a total and complete way of life. It brings peace, harmony, balance and fulfilment into the lives of its followers. It guides them to the best way of interaction with God the creator, with each other and with the creations all around us.



Islam's Message is very simple: Submission to the Creator's Will and Commands, which liberates us from degradation and the humiliation of submitting to other than God.

### **MESSAGE & MESSENGERS OF ALLAH**



The information concerning these issues was conveyed to us through the Prophets and Messengers of Allah such as Nuh, Ibrahim, Musa, 'Isa and the final Messenger Muhammad (peace and blessings upon Him.). These Messengers led exemplary lives, which the Muslim must also aspire to.

Muslims have a responsibility, which is upon them up to, and including the time of death. After that, God will deal with us according to how we treated this responsibility.

### **SPIRITUALITY AND SPIRITUAL LIFE**

Reverend Mataji, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Spiritual life has been the most potent and powerful force that has guided and fashioned individuals and communities throughout history. Civilisations past and present have had some spiritual connection as the basis of their cultural outlook.



The concept of God and the moral humanitarian teachings that every tradition provides, however different they may be, have been the greatest contributions of spiritual outlook that humanity cannot do without.



However, in today's world, spiritual life tends to be the most victimised entity of all. The invaluable teachings concerning the spiritual needs of the individual and the community have either been lost, abandoned or forgotten.



It is indeed something to be grateful to God for that the frequency of comments and reports arising in connection with spirituality has become quite noticeable lately. It proves that interest in religion and the spiritual side of life is increasingly becoming more dominant and that people are turning towards it more and more every day. It is a pleasant sign and it augurs well for us with our ambition to see spiritual life restored to its proper place in the life of the modern man, who is perhaps more in need of it than his forefathers. It is time for all God-conscious people to avail themselves of this opportunity and to do their best to redeem religion and spiritual life, which serve as a healthy basis of mutual love and understanding, peace, harmony and co-operation amongst people of various beliefs and practices. I am certain that this kind of multi-faith lecture series will help largely in achieving this goal.



### WHAT IS RIGHTEOUSNESS?

A truly good life is that life which is lived in accordance with the Law of God, and in the pursuit of God's good-pleasure and the things that please God the most are righteous deeds. We are given a beautiful description of righteousness in the Qur'an:



ليس البر أن تولوا وجوهكم قبل المشرق والمغرب ولكن البر من آمن بالله واليوم الآخر والملئكة والكتاب والنبين وآتى المال على حبه ذوي القربى واليتامى والمساكين وابن السبيل والسائلين وفي الرقاب وأقام الصلاة وآتى الزكاة والموفون بعهدهم إذا عاهدوا والصابرين في البأساء والضراء وحين البأس أولئك الذين صدقوا وأولئك هم المتقون

**'It is not righteousness that you turn your faces towards the east or west (in prayers); but righteous is the one who believes in Allah, the Last Day, the Angels, the Book, the Prophets, and gives his wealth, in spite of love for it, to his relatives, to the orphans, to the poor, to the wayfarer, to those who ask, and to set slaves free, and who performs prayer and gives the obligatory charity, and those who fulfil their covenant when they make it, and who are patient in extreme poverty and ailment, and at the time of fighting. Such are the people of the truth, and they are those who fear Allah and do their duty to Him'. (Surah al-Baqarah, 177)**



### ONENESS OF GOD AND BROTHERHOOD OF MANKIND

The first and foremost service that Islam rendered to humanity consisted of the faith in the oneness of God's divinity and right to be worshipped alone without



anything being associated with Him, and unity and equality of the human brotherhood. It was the first time that the world had received this Message on such a broad scale.

God also says in the Qur'an:

يا أيها الناس إنا خلقناكم من ذكر وأنثى وجعلناكم شعوبا وقبائل لتعارفوا إن أكرمكم عند الله أتقاكم إن الله عليم خبير

**'O mankind! We have created you from a male and a female, and made you into nations and tribes, that you may know one another. Verily, the most honourable of you with Allah is he who is the most pious. Verily, Allah is All-Knowing, All-Aware'. (Surah al-Hujurat, 13)**



The Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings upon Him) said:

*"O mankind! Verily, your Lord is One, and your father is one. You are all descended from Adam, and Adam was created from clay. Verily, the most honourable of you is the most righteous of you. There is no superiority for an Arab over the non-Arab except through virtue".*

This proclamation of the Prophet of Allah (peace and blessings upon Him) set the seal on the twin principles of unity of God and unity of humanity.

These are the two natural foundations for raising any edifice of peace and progress, friendship and cooperation between different peoples and different nations.



Today, we find the principle of human equality enshrined in the constitutions of different countries and being proclaimed from the forum of the United Nations Organisation in the shape of the Charter of Human Rights. Yet, almost fourteen hundred years before that, the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon Him) and the generations of Muslims who carried on his Message through their pioneering efforts and indefatigable hard work established a truly egalitarian society. It was this model, established through their toil and tears, that later came to be accepted as the standard for human existence in the world.

### **HUMAN HONOUR AND HUMAN DIGNITY**

Another important service that Islam rendered to humanity was the Islamic concept of human dignity. During the time when Islam made its appearance, none was so ignoble and humiliated as was the human being. Trees, stones and animals were regarded as more sacrosanct, owing to the then prevalent beliefs and traditions. These trees and animals seemed to enjoy a more coveted place than the human being did, and human sacrifice was not unheard of either.





When the Prophet (peace and blessings upon Him) proclaimed the dignity of mankind, humanity came to appreciate the fact that the human being, this glorious creation of God, was entitled to much more regard, dignity and honour than any other creature. The rank that Islam accords to the human being is next only to God, for He Himself proclaimed in the Qur'an:

هو الذي خلق لكم ما في الأرض جميعا

**'He it is Who created for you all that is on earth'. (Surah al-Baqarah, 29)**



The human being is declared as the best of creation, for whom all of the other things were created.

ولقد كرمنا بني آدم وحملناهم في البر والبحر ورزقناهم من الطيبات وفضلناهم على كثير ممن خلقنا تفضيلا

**'And indeed We have honoured the Children of Adam, and We have carried them on land and sea, and have provided them with the good and pure things, and have preferred them above many of those whom We have created with a marked preferment'. (Surah al-Isra', 70)**



In order that the honour of the common human being was not usurped again, the Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings upon Him) announced: *"The whole of mankind is the family of God; the one who does good to others is dearest to Him"*. A tradition narrated from the Prophet (peace and blessings upon Him), in which he reports the words of God, says:



### CARING AND KINDNESS TO HUMANITY

Allah will ask a person on the Day of Resurrection: *"I was ill, but you did not visit Me."* The person will reply, *"How could I visit You, when You are the Lord of the Worlds?"* Allah will say: *"Do you not remember that one of My servants was ill? Had you gone and visited him, you would have found Me there."*

Then Allah will ask a person: *"O son of Adam! I asked you to feed Me, but you refused."* The person will reply: *"How could I feed You, when You are the Lord of the Worlds?"* Allah will say: *"Do you not remember the servant of mine who had asked you for food? Had you given food to that person, you would have found it with Me."*

Then Allah will ask a person: *"O son of Adam! I asked you for water to drink, but you refused."* The person will reply: *"How could I give You water to drink, when You are the Lord of the Worlds?"* Allah will say: *"Do you not know that had you given water to that thirsty person, you would have found it with Me."*







The Prophet (peace and blessings upon Him) taught that the surest way to attract God's blessings and good-pleasure is to serve humanity and to be kind and considerate to others. The Prophet (peace and blessings upon Him) said:

*"Allah is kind to those who are kind to others. If you would show kindness to those who live on the earth, He, Who is in the Heavens will shower His blessings on you."*



Islam places serving humanity on the same footing as prayer, fasting, pilgrimage and Jihad. The Prophet (peace and blessings upon Him) said:

*"A person who works to support a widow or the poor is like a fighter in the Cause of Allah, or like a worshipper who prays all night long, or like a fasting person who never breaks his fast"*.

### JUSTICE AND FAIRNESS

The Qur'an commands the Muslims to be fair and just in their treatment of people without any distinction, showing a sympathetic attitude towards the entire humanity and taking care of all needy people. This has been mentioned in several places in the Qur'an:

إن الله يأمر بالعدل والإحسان وإيتاء ذي القربى وينهى عن الفحشاء والمنكر والبغى يعظكم لعلكم تذكرون

**'Verily, Allah enjoins justice, kindness, and giving help to near relatives; and He forbids indecency, evils and oppression. He admonished you, that you may take heed'. (Surah an-Nahl, 90)**

واعبدوا الله ولا تشركوا به شيئا وبالوالدين إحسانا وبذي القربى واليتامى والمساكين والجار ذي القربى والجار الجنب والصاحب بالجنب وابن السبيل وما ملكت أيمانكم إن الله لا يحب من كان مختالا فخورا

**'Worship Allah and join none with Him in worship; and do good to parents, relatives, orphans, the poor, the neighbour who is a relative, the neighbour who is a stranger, the companion by your side, the wayfarer, and those whom your right hands possess. Verily, Allah does not like such as are proud and boastful'. (Surah an-Nisa', 36)**

### RETURN EVIL WITH KINDNESS

Besides these principles of serving humanity, there is another formula prescribed by the Qur'an for establishing friendship and serving humanity. It is to reply to evil with goodness, and to hostility and hatred with kindness and sympathy. The Qur'an says:

ولا تستوي الحسنة ولا السيئة ادفع بالتي هي أحسن فإذا الذي بينك وبينه عداوة كأنه ولي حميم





**'The good deed and the evil deed cannot be equal. Repel (the evil) with one which is better, and then verily he between you and whom there was enmity will become as though he was a close friend'. (Surah Fussilat, 34)**

The Prophet (peace and blessings upon Him.) told us to:

*"Reconcile with those who break of ties with you, forgive those who oppress you and do good to those who wrong you".*

### **PHILOSOPHY OF PILLARS OF ISLAM**



It should be noted then that the performance of the five daily prayers, observing fasts, paying the obligatory charity, and going for Hajj are enjoined on Muslims with a view to keep them always conscious of their faith, spiritual and moral values, and their duty to serve the community and their fellow human beings.

The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon Him) reminded us to help our fellow human beings whether they are being wronged or whether they are doing wrong. He explained this by saying that the way to help a person who is doing wrong is to prevent him from doing wrong.

### **PRAYER (SALAAT)**

About prayer, the Qur'an says:

وأقم الصلاة إن الصلاة تنهى عن الفحشاء والمنكر ولذكر الله أكبر والله يعلم ما تصنعون

**'And perform the prayer. Verily, the prayer prevents one from indecency and evil. And the remembrance of Allah is greater indeed, and Allah knows what you do'. (Surah al-'Ankabut, 45)**

### **FASTING (SAWM)**

About fasting, the Qur'an says:

يا أيها الذين آمنوا كتب عليكم الصيام كما كتب على الذين من قبلكم لعلكم تتقون

**'O you who believe! Observing the Fast is prescribed for you as it was prescribed for those before you, that you may fear Allah and do your duty to Him'. (Surah al-Baqarah, 183)**

### **PILGRIMAGE (HAJJ)**



About the Pilgrimage to Makkah (Hajj), the Qur'an says:

الحج أشهر معلومات فمن فرض فيهن الحج فلا رفث ولا فسوق ولا جدال في الحج وما تفعلوا من خير يعلمه الله وتزودوا فإن خري الزاد اتلقوا واتقوا اي أولي الألب



**'The Hajj is in the well-known months. So whosoever intends to perform Hajj therein, then he should not have sexual relations with his wife, nor commit sin, nor dispute unjustly during the Hajj. And whatever you do, Allah knows it. And take a provision for the journey, but the best provision is piety. So fear Me and do your duty to Me, O men of understanding!'** (*Surah al-Baqarah, 197*)

### **CONCLUSION**



Reverend Mataji, Ladies and Gentlemen,

The human being amidst the vastness of the other creations of God is like a drop in the ocean. A human's knowledge is so little, the human vision so imperfect, and the human experience so limited that no human has yet been able to determine the phenomena that makes or mars life. When a person is not able to understand himself, how can he interpret the universe and lay down his own rules and laws ensuring his safe conduct through life?

Spiritual life is the sum total of man's lifetime problems and their solutions. It is his very existence. If we look at the spiritual and religious life in this perspective, we cannot but adhere to it strictly and sincerely as it serves as a guiding light in this dark and confusing world. It is the duty of every sensible person to follow it in their own interest during his sojourn in the kingdom of God with other fellow human beings.

Once again, I extend my thanks to the president of the Ramakrishna Sarada Vedanta Society of NSW for organising this remarkable and commendable multi-faith lecture series which I am sure will serve as a healthy basis for inter-religious dialogue, mutual love and understanding, peace, harmony, and cooperation amongst the people of various religious and spiritual groups.

Thank you all very much.

May peace and blessings of God be upon you all

