

SHAYKH HAMZA YUSUF

**The Oxford Union,
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SAPANA AGRAWAL

Oxford Union President, Hilary Term 2006

Good evening, ladies and gentlemen, honourable members and distinguished guests. Welcome to the Oxford Union Society. It is my absolute honour to introduce such a distinguished figure to the Society this evening.

Shaykh Hamza Yusuf came to prominence after the tragic events of 9/11 when President Bush invited him to advise the government on issues relating to the Islamic world. He importantly suggested that the name of the American military mission into Afghanistan should not be called “Operation Infinite Justice”, which he felt was blasphemous, so it was then changed to the more sensitive name of “Operation Enduring Freedom.” Shaykh Hamza was born and raised in America, and then converted to Islam following a car crash, aged eighteen. He then travelled the world, benefiting from mentoring of traditional Islamic scholars in the Middle East. He now leads a non-profit educational institute in America, namely the Zaytuna Institute. The Institute has the goal of re-capturing the true spirit of Islam and show how it can enhance Western culture. He has advised the White House, White Hall and the Arab League and has recently come back from the World Economic Forum in Davos.

Shaykh Hamza is currently in the UK as a global ambassador for Islam, as part of the initiative, “The Radical Middle Way.”

It’s such an honour that you have decided to visit the Union tonight. So, ladies and gentleman, please welcome Shaykh Hamza Yusuf.

[Applause]

SHAYKH HAMZA YUSUF

Bismillah Ar-Rahman Ar-Rabeem. Wa sal Allahu ala Sayyidina Muhammad wa ala anbiya wa’l mursaleen wa la howla wa’la quwata ila billah al-‘Alee al-‘Azem.

First of all, I want to thank all of you actually for coming out, for inviting me here. It’s a great honour obviously to speak in a place that has an immense amount of history and many, many great people, I am sure, have spoken from this lectern. So, it’s an honour to be a link in that chain.

I want to begin with a quote from a Scottish orientalist of the last century, actually, the beginning of the twentieth century when he wrote this, in 1902. His name was Duncan McDonald and he said, “If, as some say, the faith of Muhammad is a cul-de-sac, it is certainly a very long one. Off it, many courts and doors open. Down it, many peoples are still wandering. It is a faith too, which brings us into touching distance with the great controversies of our own day. We see in it, as in a somewhat distorted mirror, the history of our own past. It is a faith too, which brings us into touching distance but we do not yet see the end of this history, even as yet the end of Christianity is not in sight. It is for the student then to remember that Islam is a present reality and the Muslim faith a living organism, a knowledge of whose laws may be of life or death for us who are in another camp.” I’ll repeat that: “A knowledge of whose laws may be of life or death for

us who are in another camp. For there can be little doubt, that the three antagonistic and militant civilisations of the world are those of Christendom, Islam and China. When these are unified or come to a mutual understanding—then and only then—will the cause of civilisation be secure.”

I think that’s a very pertinent quote that was stated by a very knowledgeable, and also prescient, man who realised that we are indeed three great civilisations—China, Islam and the West, Christendom, which in some ways now is in a post-Christian era—certainly in Europe, not so much so in the Americas—but is still informed by Christian sensibilities.

If we look at how we view Islam in the West, there are two things—and Dr. Thomas Cleary raised this and I think it’s a very interesting way of looking at it. He asked if we are people who inform ourselves from Christianity – we could ask ourselves, “Do we have a very Christian attitude towards Islam?” Christianity, one of the great precepts that was articulated by Jesus is “Judge not, lest ye be judged for by the standard by which ye judge, you too shall be judged.” And then he followed that up by saying, “Why is it that you notice the speck in your brother’s eye and are unaware of the plank in your own eye?”—[which is] a call to introspection.

Now, if on the other hand, we can argue it would be naïve to ask us to take that seriously vis-à-vis Islam, we can also ask ourselves if we are informed by natural and social science—“Is our attitude towards Islam a scientific attitude? Are we looking at it with objectivity? Have we really studied this religion in order for us to articulate informed opinions about it, whether positive or negative?” One of the things about our current situation in the West, if you look at it is, when Islam is mentioned, people are willing to articulate the most prejudiced views without any hesitation and feel they are quite informed by doing so. They might have been informed by journalists, or what they saw on television, but if you ask them “Have you ever read the Qur’an? Have you ever read any of [sayings of] the collections of the Prophet Muhammad? Have you ever read a *seerah*, or a life of the Prophet Muhammad?” And more often than not, you will hear “No.” So, it’s very interesting that we are often very opinionated, vis-à-vis Islam, and it’s associated with some of the most backward aspects of the current situation.

Muslims are often seen as misogynistic, against women’s rights; want to throw the clock out. There are a lot of Muslims that actually have a hard time with time, keeping time, and things like that so they might actually agree with that one. Jonathan Swift has a group of people that considered his character to actually worship the clock because he never did anything without consulting it. In the West, we tend to be very focussed on the importance of time. In the Muslim world, the anthropologists call their time “polychronic time” as opposed to Western “monochronic” time. So we haven’t yet invented poly-chronic watches that will enable people to be late for appointments and still be on time. But if you are informed by social sciences then it would seem you would be willing to examine this religion before you articulated your opinions about it.

Now, the first thing I think is interesting is that there is a verse in the Qur’an, “*La ikbraba fi deen*—There is no compulsion in this religion.” [Holy Qur’an, 2:256] And one of the things we tend to not think about is inward compulsion. In other words, we are often outwardly coerced, or we recognise outward coercion, but the idea of being inwardly coerced by our own biases and prejudices. The ability to actually suspend our

frames of reference —that are often quite negative—because many of us in the West have inherited an enormous amount of baggage vis-à-vis the Muslim world and so it becomes very difficult to actually look with objectivity at the Muslim world. Much of what is being articulated today is the rehashing of hackneyed canards about Islam that went on for centuries—really, it’s actually quite extraordinary. And many people who consider themselves to be educated will actually say these things that they have heard, grown up with or read in a journal or in a magazine. So, it’s very important if we are to move beyond the realm of prejudice that we actually begin to examine internally what’s going on, and what’s informing our opinions and our views.

Now, I could argue the very same thing in the Muslim world, trust me. But I’m speaking tonight here in the United Kingdom and so I’m speaking to us in the West. If I was speaking to the Muslims in the East, I would be saying many of the same things but directing them at them. I’ll tell you why and give you one example. Recently with the tragedy in Denmark, the Muslims broke out [in violent protest] all over, or some Muslims—actually, quite a small minority in reality when you look at the fact the Muslim world is over a billion people, the people that actually went out and demonstrated are a statistically insignificant number of people. But nonetheless the media magnifies this immensely and so what we see is this amplified far beyond its actual reality.

If you look at what the Muslims did, they basically took an entire country to account for the actions of a few individuals which is very ironic because the very thing that many Muslims are very troubled [by] about the West is this idea of taking the Muslims to account for a collective guilt for what a handful of Muslims have done. So, again, this is as the Arabs say, “*Ba’akum tajiru wa ba’ila tajur*—Your preposition works but mine doesn’t.” In other words, the rules of grammar apply for you and your worth, but they don’t apply for me. So, there is this double standard on both sides which is very problematic.

Tonight, I don’t want to in any way say there aren’t very serious problems in the Muslim world. But I really want to put the onus on us to look a little differently at our situation.

One of the major problems confronting us as an increasingly globalised community is the still very, very relevant problem of racism. And in many ways, race itself has [been] shown to be a very ungrounded unscientific way of viewing people. The idea somehow that we’re different from one another in some essential way has been really thrown out the window. We have differences in our complexion which is celebrated in the Qur’an. The Qur’an talks about: “Surely in the creation of the Heavens and the Earth and in the variety of your tongues and your complexions are signs of wonderment.” [Holy Qur’an, 30:22] - Signs of the Power of God. So, it’s actually celebrating this diversity. It’s not seeing it as a source of animosity, of antagonism, but actually seeing something to be celebrated.

Another very intriguing verse in the Qur’an is that, “O humanity! We have created you from a plurality of peoples and tribes—or people and clans—in order for you to come to know one another, *in order for you to come to know one another*. Surely, the most noble amongst you are the most conscientious.” [Holy Qur’an, 49:13] So, this verse actually once again, is giving us a reason for the plurality of complexions, of cultures, of

civilisation—it is this idea of mutually benefiting from one another. It's something very interesting.

Arnold Toynbee said a lot of things that did not happen and he had some overarching theories that a lot of more recent historians have trashed. But in his essay “Islam and the West”, it's really one of the most prescient things I've ever seen in history because [one] of the things he said was: “Islam may awaken humanity once again, as it has done in the past. And it might be precipitated by a race war between the West and the peoples of the South”—Africa, Asia, South Asia and also South America. But one of the interesting things he said was that the zealots are a constantly re-emerging group within the Islamic tradition. He says they are basically unsuccessful in the long run, but they do create problems. He identified three areas where he felt they would be problematic—Saudi Arabia, Yemen and Afghanistan—and this was in 1947.

And he said it would probably be left to one of the Western nations to have to deal with this “nuisance”, and that's actually the word he used to describe it. But in that essay, he said, “We have an immense amount to learn from the religion of Islam. One of the things we can learn from the religion of Islam is the issue of the plurality of races.” I think that's something. The fact that he acknowledged that is quite extraordinary, which does not mean there is not behaviour that's prejudiced in the Muslim world but Islam has never, ever, justified racism. Moreover, the founder of Islam himself articulated in no uncertain terms in his farewell pilgrimage. He said, “There is no preference over a white man over a black man, or a black man over a white man. There is no preference over an Arab over a non-Arab, or a non-Arab over an Arab. All of you are from Adam and Eve, and Adam and Eve were from *dust*.” And so he articulated, very clearly, the idea of the brotherhood and sisterhood of humanity and this is something that we should celebrate about Islam. It is one of the great gifts of Islam, because I find no historical precedence for this articulation and I would love for somebody to edify me if there was. I've never seen it articulated so clearly, so early, over 1,400 years ago. I haven't seen a historical personality articulate the brotherhood of man in that way and it something in many ways Muslims are proud of.

Another thing that's very interesting about Islam is the idea of commerce by mutual benefit and mutual agreement. The Qur'an says, “*La ta'kul amwalukum baynakum bil batil*—Do not consume your wealth amongst you unjustly, but rather let your commerce be with mutual agreement.” [Holy Qur'an, 4:29] And it's followed up by a verse immediately saying, “And do not kill yourselves.”

One of the main reasons for wars is economic injustices, imbalance in distribution of wealth—the idea of appropriating the wealth of certain peoples without giving them their just due. This is a major problem that the Qur'an beautifully articulates that all of commerce should be with this mutual agreement; a win-win situation. And this is something I feel. If you look currently at much of the Muslim world, a lot of the problems relate directly to this immense economic disparity. The exploitation of an immense amount of Muslim wealth and the fact that much of that wealth is not recycled back into the Muslim community. I can give you two examples of that. One, the seventh largest purchaser of arms on the planet is Saudi Arabia—the seventh largest—immediately, after India. In essence, much of that wealth is corporate welfare for armaments builders in the United States and Britain—wealth that should really be building infrastructure for the people from whom that wealth is derived, from their lands. There are many Muslims

that recognise these problems and it creates an immense amount of animosity. When there is not commercial parity, when there is not respect for the other in one's commercial transactions, an immense amount of resentment builds up.

Now, the Muslim world (and this is another aspect) - is that I think there's an immense amount the Muslim world can learn from the West—I really believe there are things we can learn from Islam—but I also believe there's an immense amount that Muslims today can learn from the West. One of the great tragedies in the Muslim world is the tragedy of failed states. And many of us have no idea what it is like to live in a country where you do not have redress to the basic wrongs that occur in society, when court systems do not function, when there is no judicial review. These are immense problems in the Muslim world. Currently, the problem is not democracy because democracy cannot be established in the Muslim world.

I do not believe democracy can be established currently in the Muslim world because the social institutions that are necessary for democracy to come about simply do not exist. And I'll give you one example because I'm an adherent to the congruence theory in sociology and one of the basic principles of that theory is that governments are only effective to the degree in which the governing model is congruent with the other social institutions of society. So, government is effective to the degree in which the model of governance permeates the other social institutions of society. So, if you have a despotic government, it is effective when you have despotic schools, when you have despotic families, when you have despotic unions, when you have despotic trade unions and when you have despotic political parties.

Like or contrary-wise, democracy is only effective to the degree with which you have democratic institutions. I'll give you one example that many people in the West have no idea of. In much of the Muslim world, in the schools today there is not the idea of asking questions, or questioning the authority of the teacher. The teacher's authority is almost absolute. And this is still widespread, and it [is] absolutely hard to believe. You have very despotic educational institutions and therefore people who grow up in that despotic environment naturally—if they ever get into positions of power, whether it's at the most basic governmental level—they begin to express those despotic models that were imbibed in their schools, often in their families, where the father has an absolute word. And these models, which were quite common in the West not that long ago—but an immense amount of work went into eradicating many of these models.

One of the things that my Arab friends are very surprised about when they come to America, and I've seen this on many occasions, is the idea of offering your child a choice for what it's going to eat for dinner—"What would you like to have for dinner tonight?" I've seen Arab friends of mine that said, "That's so crazy to ask a child what it wants for dinner!" But that question is part of enfranchisement. It's part of having a democratic household where children actually have a say, where children can choose. It's learning how to choose which is a process. And this unfortunately does not exist in many parts of the Muslim world—the idea of an elective system. I've had people who have come from the Muslim world to study in America and went into shock when they were asked to choose their classes because it was the first time in their life when they were not told what to study. And some of them were at a loss because they had never really thought about that. What Ericson calls "identity foreclosure" is very common in the Muslim world—where you do what your father tells you to do. You study what your

father tells you to study. You do not follow your passion which is actually very alien to the Islamic tradition, but unfortunately quite common in the Muslim world.

One of the things that one of the early educational theorists of Islam, Qadi Abu Bakr ibn al-Arabi, who is a great Andalusian scholar, said was, “It was very important to observe a child’s natural intellectual inclinations and then to encourage them to pursue those intellectual inclinations because the natural genius of that child would emerge. If a child was forced to study what it did not have natural propensities towards, it would thwart its intellectual development.” This was in a text that was written in the sixth Islamic century. Imam al-Ghazali, for instance, in his book on pedagogy, talks about never humiliating a child in front of other children, quite a common occurrence in much of the Muslim world in classrooms where children are humiliated. I mean these are very serious problems that result in many of the social conditions that we find very troubling in the Muslim world.

Now, just as the West has gone through an immense amount of transformation—not always positive by the way, but we have gone through an immense amount of transformation—we tend to forget that much of what we have inherited is a result of extraordinarily stupid (and there’s no other word, really - asinine, perhaps)—extraordinarily stupid religious wars that occurred in the sixteenth, the seventeenth and even the eighteenth century. Wars that really led intellectuals in some ways to really question this whole idea of a religious intolerance. It led to people like Thomas Hobbes, somebody who was also influenced by Henry Stubb, an extraordinary man who was very impressed with the Ottoman tradition of religious tolerance and wrote a book during that time, in the mid-seventeenth century, called *The Rise and Progress of Mohammedanism* and had a immense amount of praise.

Another extraordinary seventeenth century character here at Oxford, Edward Pococke—there’s actually a picture of him on the wall. Edward Pococke was a man who went to Aleppo to study Islam and this is in 1630. And you can imagine this is an extraordinary time to go to the Muslim world. One of the things that struck him about the Muslim world was the tolerance. He became very well-acquainted with the Muslim scholars of Aleppo and writes very lovingly about these scholars. He also became acquainted with the Jewish scholars. He sat in circles where the Jews, the Christians and the Muslims discussed their religious texts in ways much more enlightened than the current dialogue going on today.

And when he came back to Oxford, he collected over four hundred Arabic manuscripts that are still here in the Bodleian Library. The Chair of Arabic studies was founded and he was its first Chair. I believe this an extraordinary event in Western history.

He had an immense respect for the Muslim world. He was a teacher, but also a friend of John Locke—and John Locke was very influenced by his ideas. The extraordinary fairness of Edward Gibbon, given the limited resources that he had, in *The Decline and the Fall of the Roman Empire* towards Islam. If you look at his sources, many of his quotes are taken directly from Edward Pococke’s works in which he recognised some of the really beautiful qualities of Islam. It’s also very interesting that Gibbon mentions in his history that “Had the Muslims conquered—that is, in 732, defeated Charles Martel—perhaps the students of Oxford today would be circumcised and be studying the truths of the Qur’an and the teachings of Muhammad.” So, he actually envisaged that possibility because it was a real possibility—but it did not happen.

Nonetheless, the teachings of Islam should be taught here and they should be taught with fairness. People should be open to listen to that voice, a voice that in the deepest way possible informs the sensitivities and sensibilities upon millions and millions of people walking the Earth—one out of five people. If we are really to promote dialogue, to promote civil discourse, these things we hold very dear, I think the onus is on us to open this dialogue up, to have a broader vision. Much of what you are witnessing in the Muslim world is the frustrations of peoples whose dreams have been deferred. And people who do not dream, perish, as the Bible says, “A people without a vision, perish.” Dreams are what make us human and I really want to stress this idea of dreaming. The moral imagination, the ability to actually envisage things different to the way they are. Much of what we have inherited was not of our making, but nonetheless we have inherited social institutions, ways in which we view the world. And we as the current residents of this planet in a long, long chain of inhabitants, we have to ask ourselves, “Are these institutions serving us? Are they fulfilling the functions they were created to fulfil? Is the commonwealth being enhanced or diminished?”

These are questions we have to ask ourselves because we have inherited an immense amount of baggage and that baggage might not be the best to carry on our journey. But we are increasingly becoming interdependent and globalised. In many ways, we have always been interdependent. The meal that you ate, if you ate one this evening, this afternoon or this morning, if you contemplate what went into it coming to your plate—people picking rice in Ceylon, people picking tea-leaves and rolling them in Assam, the plate that might have been made in China, the fork that might have been made in America or Germany, the people that delivered them—all of us, interdependent and often failing to recognise how much we owe to each other. One of the Arab poets said, “Everyone, whether they are Bedouin or they are settled, is serving, without realising it, each other.” We have to really question the conditions we find ourselves in and how we can get out of them and I believe much of it is through increasing dialogue, speaking to each other with respect.

One of the tragic realities of this fiasco in Denmark is that many people in the West suddenly began defending this idea of “freedom of expression”, this sacred right, instead of enjoining civic responsibility and just this idea of mutual respect. We can perhaps criminalise something but sometimes things should be condemned because they are simply breaches of basic common decency. I am all for people examining Islam, criticising Islam, discussing Islam but the idea of gratuitous insults, of denigrating people, we really have to question whether it’s worth it—the amount of madness that was created. We have to in some ways recognise that if that potential exists, then there’s a need for some type of responsibility. It’s very important that we question what we are doing to promote a more civic society.

I really hope, especially amongst the students here, about “the deferred dream”. Langston Hughes asks that question from *The Harlem Renaissance*, “What happens to a dream deferred? Does it dry up like a raisin in the sun or fester like a sore and then run?” It’s a question—what happens to dreams deferred? He is talking about the black people in the United States. Then he says, “Or does it stink like rotten meat or crust and sugar over like a syrupy sweet? Or maybe it hangs like a heavy load? Or does it explode?” I think all of those responses occur in the human heart, but the idea of holding on to this ability to envision a different world and set out to do something about that.

I was saying to somebody tonight—at the dinner table he was too young to be a cynic already—that’s why it’s important for you to hold on to those ideals and to take them into the world. In many ways, some of the highest ideals we treasure and cherish in the West are being entirely undermined. In some ways, we’re not aiming high enough and we end up shooting a fellow hunter in the back when we have our sights set too low.

The fact we can ask “The Torture Question” is very troubling to me because I know enough of the history of Western civilisation to know that people died so that torture would no longer be a practice in the jails and prisons of the West. I don’t accept the idea we are under some grave threat that necessitates extreme measures. We lived under the threat of nuclear annihilation during the Cold War and nobody justified torture during that period—whether they practised it or not is another matter—but it was certainly not justified.

We, I think in the West, have an immense about to do, especially the young people in this room and I don’t envy you for the journey you have ahead. I don’t envy you. We’re facing immense calamities; we should be facing them collectively as a species as opposed to groups or nations, because these calamities are much greater than the individual problems we have that separate us. In some ways, those individual problems that separate us, it is the aggregate of those problems that’s causing much of these calamities. So, both cannot be ignored.

I truly believe that we have to envision a different world and I think it’s possible. I believe in dialogue. I believe much of what we can do in the West is simply to listen to the Muslims. Simply to listen to the Muslims, listen to the pain. I don’t think we’ve done enough listening. I’ve lived in the Muslim world. I’ve listened to people. There’s much validity in what’s said and a lot of it is totally invalid. But what you do when you listen is that you suspend those types of judgments in order for some kind of healing to come about.

I believe the same is due in the Muslim world. That they also need to listen and the only way we can encourage that is through dialogue, through discussion. The path of civilisation is a path of discussion; it’s a path of dialogue. Civil society is something we should encourage not only at home, but abroad also. But if we don’t have a civil society ourselves, if we’re not encouraging a civil society ourselves, how can we take it to other people? How can we help other people to do that?

I believe in many of the principles of this society, Great Britain. I think truly it’s a great country. I love many of the great people of this country. I love the Hannah Moores, the Edwin Arnolds.

Edwin Arnold was an extraordinary man. He was actually the editor of *The Daily Telegraph* and wrote two great poems. One of them was *The Light of Asia* in which he tried to introduce Buddhism, the Chinese culture and civilisation into the West because he felt it was very important that we came to know Asia. Then he followed that up with *The Ninety-Nine Names of God* from the Islamic tradition. In the introduction to that book, he said, “Islam cannot be scornfully thrust aside but it must be conciliated—*We cannot scornfully thrust aside Islam, we must conciliate it*—because it shares a task with its sister religions in the edification of the peoples of this planet.”

I really truly and honestly believe we have an immense amount to learn from our religious traditions. I believe Islam has an immense amount to teach us, if we're open to it. You don't have to believe in Islam as a Divine revelation but [only] to recognise it as the genius of human possibility. George Sale translated the Qur'an and it was published in 1734—[and] in one its fair translations. In the introduction, he said it's time we stopped denigrating this man – and this is 1734 – and we have failed to learn this lesson today. He said it's time we stopped denigrating this man and simply recognised him as one of the great law-givers of humanity. He's honoured it the fresco at the Supreme Court of United States of America with the other great law-givers of the world—honoured as a law-giver.

I really believe we need to come to know who the Prophet Muhammad was as a human being—what he stood for, what he believed in.

I didn't embrace Islam to join a tribe and to stand and "Rah-Rah" with my tribe, right or wrong. It's not what I joined Islam for. I joined Islam because it was something I believed to be true. It was the truest thing that had appeared to me up to that point and I have yet to find something truer. And if I did, to be true to myself, would have to go to that thing.

But even if you don't see it as true in its totality, to recognise the great truths in it and the great benefits of it, it would do an enormous amount to you own personal edification.

I believe truly, all of us, have something to learn from Islam and if we acknowledge that and acknowledge the already existing debt that Europe—and by extension the United States—owes to the great civilisation of Islam that has been acknowledged by some of the great historians of human civilisation. I think if that is acknowledged, that would be an immense step towards reconciliation between these two great civilisations. Many Muslims feel they are constantly scornfully thrust aside, that the past of Islam and much of its greatness is not recognised, the indebtedness of the West to the Islam of Spain, of the Renaissance in Italy, three hundred years of Islamic rule in Sicily, six hundred years of rule in Greece. The Parthenon was used as a mosque for seventy years. This is a great deal of history and the influences need to be examined and we can begin by digging up some of these treasures like Edward Pococke. I hope somebody takes that seriously here and goes and finds out who he was and what he stood for because he had a great influence of John Locke. Locke's biographers say that he was one of the greatest influences on Locke's thinking and ideas—and "The Treatise of Toleration", I believe, is indebted to the Ottoman practice of the *millet* system and the idea of a pluralistic culture.

I want to see pluralism. People are saying the multicultural state has failed. I don't think it's been tried yet, I really don't. We're assuming a failure before we've even attempted to practice this. But we need to help each other get beyond our prejudices. Prejudice is an antipathy that results from inflexible generalisations that are uninformed. There is too much prejudice on all sides and I really think we need to examine ourselves, to really look in ourselves and ask that question.



I want to finish this by a quote from another great historian, Samuel Scott, who wrote a history—*The History of the Moorish Empire in Europe*. It's a three-volume work that was published over a hundred years ago and he really records the immense indebtedness of the West to Islam.

He says: “To undertake the radical amelioration of such political and social conditions that existed in the pre-Islamic Arabian world was a task of apparently insuperable difficulty. Its fortunate accomplishment may not indicate the active interposition of Divine authority, the glories which invest the history of Islam may be entirely derived from the valour, the virtue, the intelligence, the genius of man. If this be conceded, the largest measure of credit is due to him who conceived his plan, promoted its impulse and formulated the rules which ensured its success. In any event, if the object of religion be the inculcation of morals, the diminution of evil, the promotion of human happiness, the expansion of the human intellect, if the performance of good works will avail on that Great Day when mankind shall be summoned to its final reckoning, it is neither irreverent nor unreasonable to admit Muhammad was an Apostle of God.”

Thank you very much.

[Applause]