



News

Interfaith dialogues vital for world peace, says American scholar

PESHAWAR, Sept 30 : Underlining the need for inter-religion dialogue, Imam Yahya Hendi, an American Muslim scholar has said that open discussions could help followers of various religions understand diversities of faiths and remain peaceful with each other.

He was delivering a lecture on "Religious Diversities in the United States" at Sheikh Zaid Islamic Centre of Peshawar University here. Imam Yahya is a Muslim Chaplain in George University and spokesman of Islamic Jurisprudence North America.

Since the 9/11 incident Yahya has been very vocal for interfaith dialogues over several issues. He strongly believes that each every man should be tolerant and accommodative for others without harming his own religious sentiments.

Currently, he is on a brief visit to Pakistan to highlight the importance of interfaith dialogues among followers of different religions. During his visit to Peshawar the US Muslim scholar delivered three lectures one each to students of religious seminaries, at US Consulate and to the students of Peshawar University at Islamic Centre.

In his lecture at Islamic Centre, Yahya briefly talked about social development while setting aside the feelings of hatred, intolerance against the followers of other religions. Briefing students about American Muslims, he told them that 7 millions Muslims were living in the US.

Talking about the 9/11 incident, Imam Yahya said that the incident had not only shocked the Christians and Jews, but also the Muslims, as 600 Muslims were killed and a mosque located at 45th floor of one of the two buildings had been martyred. Dispelling the impression that Jews had hatched the 9/11conspiracy, the Muslim scholar said that hundreds of Jews had also been killed in the incident, adding that he himself had participated in funeral processions of Jews.

The visiting scholar also held some cultural values responsible for representing Islam wrongly and said in some parts of Islamic world, the Muslims some times prefer their centuries old cultural values over the true teachings of Islam, and such situation convey wrong message of Islam to the people of different countries. He further said neither the Muslims nor non-Muslims could live in peace, while they are at war with each other. "All this needs to bridge the gulf existing between them," Yahya remarked.

Regarding the Muslims' reservations against the US war on terrorism, the US scholar said that this was natural for Washington to beef up security and further clarified that not only the Muslims but all Americans irrespective of their religious affiliations faced inconvenience due to strong checking.

Imam Yahya maintained during the post 9/11 days the American Muslim scholars delivered thousands of lectures and in the first year of the incident 11,000 articles about Islam were published in US print media. As a result of these efforts the image of Islam improved and most of the people came to know about the teachings of Islam.

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