

FROM THE MINBAR

CANADA DAY: PRIDE, LOVE & LOYALTY OF CANADIAN MUSLIMS

Khutbah delivered by Imam Dr. Zijad Delic at www.snm.ca on July 1, 2016 corresponding to Ramadan 26, 1437 H.

BACKGROUND

Indeed all praise is for God, Lord of the worlds. Peace and blessings of God be upon Muhammad (S), his family, Khulafai Rashidin, all his Companions, and all those who follow in their footsteps until the Last Day. All praise is for God! We praise Him.

We seek His help and ask for His forgiveness. We seek God's refuge from evils of ourselves and from our evil actions. I bear witness that none has the right to be worshipped except God, alone, having no partner, and I bear witness that Muhammad (S) is His Messenger.

My dear brothers and sisters in Islam. As *Salamu 'Alaikum Wa Rahmatullahi Wa Barakatuhu.*

INTRODUCTION

On July 1st every year, Canadians of all backgrounds cheerfully celebrate Canada's birthday. Indeed, our homeland deserves such a grand celebration from all its committed and blessed citizens!

Canada has weathered a number of ups and downs through nearly a century-and-a-half of official nationhood, but perhaps its most successful and prosperous time came during the years following the government's adoption of Multiculturalism in 1971. With this visionary policy, Canada became the first country in the world to recognize and embrace cultural diversity as the essence of who we are – an enshrined affirmation of value and dignity of all citizens, regardless of their racial origins, ethnic ties, gender, language, or religious affiliation.

Through multiculturalism, Canada recognized the potential of all Canadians, including Muslims, encouraging them to *constructively integrate* with society and to take an active role in the social, cultural, economic and political affairs of their country.

The application of this policy in all walks of life has made Canada one of the most desirable countries to live in, and the envy of the world. In fact, official multiculturalism is the single most important reason why I, and so many others, chose to become willingly Canadian citizens.



CANADA & CANADIAN MUSLIMS

A number of factors led Muslims from other parts of the world to choose Canada as their new homeland.

Like other immigrants, Muslims came to Canada for reasons such as: better economic opportunities; the threat or presence of political instability in their homelands; to seek educational opportunities for their children; a desire to join or reunite with family members and friends already living in Canada; and to enjoy the freedom of religious expression and association guaranteed by the Canadian constitution.

In short, "they all came for a better life."

CANADA: THE ABODE OF CONTRACT

I embrace Canada as my chosen land of treaty or contract (*Darul Ahd*), because Canada welcomed me and gave me opportunities to settle and become its full citizen. Canada is a land of peace (*Darul Sulh*) and of safety (*Darul Amn*) because I, as a Canadian Muslim, have the freedom to practice Islam here and to become engaged in debates about it at any societal level. Canada is not a land of conflict (*Darul Harb*) or a land of non-belief (*Darul Kufr*) as some assume; for Canadian Muslims are free to practice their faith here and to participate in professions and causes that are of benefit to themselves, their country, and the world.

Because Islam and Canada are based on similar values, such as justice and compassion, freedom and equality, one can be both a good Muslim and a good Canadian citizen. In fact, Canadian Muslims are uniquely situated to fulfill their true collective potential as followers of Islam. And they are equally advantaged in being able to actualize their citizenship and human qualities more fully than anywhere else in the world.

Speaking as someone who is proud to know both Canada and Canadian Muslims first-hand, I am confident that the great majority of our citizens of the Muslim faith (some 94% of them as Environics found in 2007) are proud to be who they are, and to set an example to all with their above-average commitment to Canada.

ISLAM & SOCIAL CONTRACT

The Qur'an commands Muslims to honor any contracts ('ahd, 'aqd or mithaq) into which they enter. Citizenship is a social contract between a citizen and a nation.

The Qur'an defines true righteousness as fulfilling our contracts: "It is not righteousness to turn your face towards East or West, but rather righteousness is...to fulfill the contracts which you make."²⁴

The Qur'an calls upon its followers to be accountable in fulfilling contracts: "And fulfill every covenant. Verily, you will be held accountable with regard to the covenants."

This Issue 'From The Minbar' presents:



**CANADA DAY:
Pride, Love & Loyalty of
Canadian Muslims**



**In the next issue: ISTIQAMAH: Living
the spirit of Ramadan after Ramadan**

Khutbah Prepared & Delivered
by Imam Dr. Zijad Delic
Email: imam@sbnmc.ca
Phone: 613. 898.7662

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The Qur'an teaches that Almighty God instructs the faithful Muslims to properly discharge their contracts: *"O you who believe! Fully discharge (the obligations arising through) contracts."*

The Qur'an calls those who care about the integrity of their contracts as "blessed ones" in God's sight: *"...those who truly care for their trusts (left by others in their care) and their covenants."*

The Qur'an also praises those who do not violate their agreements: *"It is those who are endowed with understanding that receive admonition, those who fulfill the covenant of God and do not violate their agreements."*

The Qur'an condemns those who break their covenants, describing them as untrue to their faith: *"It is not the case that every time they make a covenant, some party among them throws it aside. Nay! The truth is most of them believe not."*

The prophet Muhammad (S) described people who betray contracts as hypocrites in the following words: *"When he/she enters into a covenant, he/she proves treacherous."*

The Prophet Muhammad (S) warns that those who betray their trust are being sinful: *"When God gathers all earlier and later generations of humanity on the Day of Judgment, He will raise a flag for every person who betrays a trust (ghadir) so that it might be said that this is the perfidy of so-and-so, son/daughter of so-and-so."*



SINCERE LOYALTY TO CANADA

Those who know Canadian Muslims well and interact with us on a regular basis know that in general, Canadian Muslims are far more law-abiding than their mass-media portrayals; some in fact are shown to be more loyal to Canada than most average citizens, as a 2007 Environics study showed.

Allow me to explain why I believe Canadian Muslims are more loyal and law-abiding than current stereotypes might suggest.

In recognition of living in Canada and benefiting from the freedoms and opportunities that this great nation presents to its naturalized citizens, I gave an explicit pledge of loyalty by taking an Oath of Allegiance during the ceremony in 2000 at which I became a citizen. My formative religious principles demand that I *"faithfully observe my trusts and my covenants"* (Qur'an 23:8; 70:32), while my citizenship Oath of Allegiance similarly demanded that *"I will faithfully observe the laws of Canada and fulfill my duties as a Canadian citizen."*

Being faithful and compliant to the laws of Canada and fulfilling my duties as a citizen do not make me more loyal to my homeland than to God. Neither God nor Canada demands exclusive loyalty. God requires that I worship none but Him, but does not prohibit loyalty to others outside the sphere of worship. Canada's constitution and civil laws rightly require that we be loyal to our nation, but at the same time, they do not prohibit loyalty to God.

Similarly, there is no conflict between being loyal to and caring for the worldwide Muslim community (*Ummah*) and being loyal to and caring for our Canadian neighbors and citizens of all faiths, or for that matter, the entire global human family. Actually, there is nothing in Islam that suggests Muslims should not be caring toward all human beings. As Prophet Muhammad said; *"The best among the people are those who benefit other people"* – and in this he meant *all* people everywhere, regardless of background, nationality, or belief.

Muhammad's message was, and always has been, a universal one; we are all one family!

Among the historical recorded sayings of Muhammad (or hadith), the theme of caring for "neighbors," our fellow human beings, is a recurring obligation. When the Prophet once repeated three times, "By God, he is not a believer!" he was asked, "Who is that, O Messenger of God?" Muhammad replied; *"One whose neighbor does not feel safe from his/her evil."* Another narrative reports Muhammad as saying that, "He will not enter Paradise whose neighbor is not secure from his/her wrongful conduct," and that *"Angel Gabriel kept recommending treating neighbors with kindness until I thought he would assign for a neighbor a share of inheritance."*

There is no evidence in the Qur'an, or in the Prophetic tradition that comprises Islamic intellectual heritage, that I as a Canadian Muslim am asked to be disloyal to, or to betray my country and my people. On the contrary, Islamic sources provide ample encouragement and commendation to loyalty, faithfulness and respect for the nation and government under which we live.

This does not mean that I must blindly obey or believe whatever our national leaders tell me.

For the well-being of Canada and Canadians, each citizen must be both self-critical and critically vigilant toward the government in power. There are times when citizens need to speak up on issues important to the welfare and image of Canada and oppose decisions that could threaten us both internally and internationally. Of course, this has to be demonstrated in a democratic manner.

Loyalty to Canada thus means working toward domestic and foreign policies that are in Canada's best interests and opposing those that Canadians believe are harmful. As citizens in a democratic society, we will never agree unanimously on everything; but we need to agree on matters of common concern and relevance to us all.

CONCLUSION

Citizens are not born, they are made! (Spinoza) They cannot be forced into any preconceived mould of good and faithful citizenship – such values can come only from a deep inner conviction and respect for Canada, their homeland. Canadian Muslims are convinced that it is their social but also religious responsibility!

This realization of all the rights, freedoms, comforts and opportunities provided to them by the state motivates them consciously and passionately to render loyalty to the county they purposefully chose to live in and call their home!

**To All Canadian citizens:
HAPPY CANADA DAY!**

**To OUR CANADA:
Happy 149th Birthday!!!**



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