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## **PRESS RELEASE**

### **NEW AHMADIYYA MOSQUE IN SHEFFIELD OPENED BY WORLD LEADER**

#### **‘New mosque will be a beacon of light’ – Head of Ahmadiyya Muslim Jamaat**

The Head of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Jamaat, Hadhrat Mirza Masroor Ahmad, officially opened the ‘Bait-ul-Afiyyat’ Mosque in Sheffield on 8<sup>th</sup> November 2008. The name of the mosque means ‘House of Peace and Security’ which aptly represents the true teachings of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Jamaat. The event was marked with a celebratory reception hosted by the Ahmadiyya Muslim Jamaat UK, attended by dignitaries from various spheres of the local community. The keynote address was delivered by Hadhrat Mirza Masroor Ahmad, which he used to clarify the true teachings of Islam, which were based upon fulfilling the rights of God Almighty and serving humanity.

The President of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Jamaat Sheffield, Mr Mohsin Abbas Rizwi, began the event by giving a brief history of the Community in Sheffield. He said that whilst Ahmadis began to arrive in the so called ‘steel city’ in the 1960’s, an official Ahmadi community was established some years later in 1985. He said that Ahmadis in the local area had contributed significantly to the local society and had developed excellent relations with the community at large. The site of Bait-u-Afiyyat was formerly used as a public house called ‘*The North Pole*’ until around twenty years ago; thereafter the land was used for office purposes and trade union meetings.

The National President of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Jamaat UK, Mr Rafiq Hayat, took to the stage to welcome all of the guests. He said that the Jamaat prided itself on its ‘*open door policy*’ and that wherever the Jamaat was present it always promoted community cohesion and mutual

harmony. He went on to speak of how this mosque had a special significance because its opening coincided with the 'Khilafat Centenary'. He explained to the audience that the year 2008 was being commemorated by the Ahmadiyya Jamaat throughout the world as marking 100 years of the system of spiritual leadership known as 'Khilafat'. He said the role of the 'Khalifa' was to promote peace in society and to inform the world of the true teachings of Islam.

The gathering was then addressed by Councillor Jane Bird, the Lord Mayor of Sheffield who congratulated the Jamaat on its continued charitable work and said that she was proud to live in Sheffield which she said was a city where people lived side by side, respecting each other's different cultures and beliefs. Next to the stage was Richard Caborn the Member of Parliament for Sheffield Central. He said that recently His Holiness had addressed many of his colleagues in Parliament at Westminster and that the words spoken by His Holiness had had a deeply profound effect on all those who participated. He further commented:

***"It is a pleasure for me to be associated with a religion that has as its motto the words 'Love for All, Hatred for None' and that is what we should all follow."***

Following Mr Caborn's address, Hadhrat Mirza Masroor Ahmad, the Fifth Khalifa of Ahmadiyyat, took to the stage. He opened his address by praying that the function proved to be a means for consolidating love and mutual tolerance within society. He said that the Founder of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Jamaat had taught that to achieve these goals two principles had to be followed. The first was that people grew closer to God Almighty and the second was that people cared for their fellow man and acted justly at all times. These teachings were the basis of the Jamaat's oft repeated motto of 'Love for All, Hatred for None'.

His Holiness went on to state that if Qur'anic teachings were followed then all hatred would be removed from the world. People would live together side by side in harmony rather than in fear. He said:

***“God Almighty has instructed us that ‘There should be no compulsion in religion’ in chapter Al-Baqarah, verse 257 of the Holy Qur’an. When each person is free to adopt any religion then there can be no reason for any hatred.”***

Developing this theme of peace in society, His Holiness said that time would prove the new mosque to be a ‘*beacon of light*’ which would shine forth. The reason for this was that the Holy Qur’an had taught the means for establishing true reconciliation. Referring specifically to verse 91 of Chapter Al-Nahl, he said that this verse alone gave Muslims a basis upon which to live their lives. It taught justice, goodness and treating each person as though he was part of your family. Furthermore it taught that indecency, evil and injustice were to be completely eradicated.

His Holiness concluded his speech by issuing a warning to the world. He said the world was moving towards another world war and that to prevent such an atrocity action had to be taken:

***“The current situation of the world indicates that despite understanding the fact that if there is another world war the entire world will be affected by its fall out, we are slowly moving towards it. My prayer is that may God Almighty enable man to discharge the rights owed to Him and His Creation so that the world can be saved from this horrific destruction.”***

Following the event members of the audience were given the chance to meet with His Holiness. Members from all spheres of the local society used the opportunity to congratulate the Jamaat on the opening of the mosque. One guest a member of clergy from the Unitarian Church said that she would use the words spoken by His Holiness in her address the next day. She said that such words would be of particular value coming at the time of Remembrance Sunday which is the anniversary of the end of hostilities of the First World War.

### **End of Release**

Further Info: Abid Khan Press Secretary