

Transcript of talk on Sunday 10 September 2017 – a Sikh perspective

“Thank you and welcome to the Gurdwara.

I hope you’ve all enjoyed the walk today and that you’ve been busy exchanging ideas as to how we can take steps to bring about a more peaceful world.

It seems increasingly important to be able to come together in this way given the events that have been taking place across the world in recent weeks.

- *We had the far-right riots in Charlottesville during which a woman was killed; and*
- *then the counter-protestors made up of interracial and interfaith groups;*
- *We had the bombings in Barcelona during which many innocent civilians died.*
- *Recently we’ve been hearing accounts of the Rohingya being displaced from their homes in Myanmar and who are fleeing to Bangladesh.*
- *Going back to August, many people were celebrating the independence of India and Pakistan – but alongside the celebrations were countless harrowing eyewitness accounts of the atrocities that took place during that time. There was widespread communal violence, revenge killings, starvation and sickness, rape and shattered families amongst people who were forced to leave their homes, the repercussions of which can still be felt today. Over 20million people were displaced and over 1 million people were killed.*

And these are just the stories that we hear about – there are many stories behind the stories and of course, many events that go unreported in our mainstream media.

With so many examples of hate and division in our society, how can we possibly think that we can build a lasting peace in our world?

- *In our Ardaas, Sikhs pray for the wellbeing of everyone (Sarbat de Palla) – not just one group over another group; and*
- *we recognise that we all come from one source – there’s no “your God” or “my God” – there is only one Creator and no one faith group has a monopoly over that Creator.*
- *I don’t know if you’ve seen the van outside the Gurdwara but on it, it says “Recognise the human race as one”.*

And may be that’s a message we can all take away from today and on which we can build.

Let’s look at the messages that are being taught in our churches, mosques, viharas, mandirs, synagogues, gurdwaras and other places of worship and community centres.

It’s up to our religious leaders to make sure that there are message of peace and reconciliation in our places of worship and to ensure that these messages are being spread at a grassroots level to all members of our communities:

- *That all religious groups have a right to co-exist;*
- *That all religions should be respected; and*
- *That all religions talk about the same creator.*

If we’re able to do this through humility, respect and understanding, then may be we won’t have to wait until death before we can “rest in peace”; may be it will be possible for us to be able to LIVE in peace.

Thank you for listening and please forgive me for any mistakes I have made.”