

Press statement on alleged Hate Speech

“O mankind, indeed We have created you from male and female and made you peoples and tribes that you may know one another. Indeed, the most noble of you in the sight of Allah (God) is the most righteous of you. Indeed, Allah (God) is Knowing and Acquainted.” (Quran 49:13)

I wish to make it absolutely clear to those who have watched the video and who have commented that I have given hate speech in regards of people of other faith that I do not hate any human being regardless of their faith, place of origin, race, color and political affiliation. As an individual and one of the FIANZ religious advisors, I have always preached for peace and harmony in the society. The cut and paste version reported by “Whaleoil” is the misrepresentation of my views as an Islamic scholar.

I have been asked to formally respond to some of my lectures on YouTube which have gained negative attention. Sadly and falsely, I have been accused of giving hate speeches and being anti-Semitic. First and foremost, I would like to take this opportunity to inform everyone that all the programmes at our Masjid (Mosque) are open for all to attend at any time. All the programmes are advertised on our Facebook page. All the lectures are streamed live and recorded for everyone to watch. In fact, our Masjid is the only one in New Zealand which always invites everyone to join our regular lectures and programmes. We have non-Muslim visitors who visit us on a regular basis.

I was made aware of a post by Cameron Slater from “Whaleoil” on Saturday morning (19/11/2016) regarding my past lectures. In that post, he has unfairly cut and pasted various short sections of my lectures and presented them as complete. He has thus taken my lectures entirely out of context and completely misrepresented me. Furthermore, none of my complete lectures were referenced by Whaleoil or other sites for people to have an opportunity to view them and analyse them for themselves. Unfortunately, after this was published on the Whaleoil YouTube channel, it was later picked up by various other websites and none of them did any fact checking either or approached me.

The first quoted video is available here, youtu.be/CusE_MuUzPk – the lecture starts from 1:16:00. If the video is watched in its entirety, viewers will clearly see that I was not attacking the Jewish people but rather I was explaining that the region of Shaam (Palestine, Jordan, Syria and Lebanon) will be the place where mankind will be resurrected and judged by almighty God. The second quoted video is available here, youtu.be/Z8deDFsspKk – again if the video is watched in its entirety, it is very much self-explanatory. I was simply discussing Islamic history.

The rest of the quoted videos are available here, youtu.be/u36hX4c3rbc, youtu.be/i6SBFbj3cDQ, youtu.be/umjZ3bC2ljY. Those who have watched all the complete videos will find that I have not at all incited any hatred towards others. Nowhere in these videos have I asked anyone to attack or harm anyone. In fact in Islam, inciting hatred and promoting violence is sinful. Everyone has freedom of choice to believe in what they want. I personally hold no hatred towards anyone.

The press statement by Hon Peseta Sam Lotu-liga on 21st of November, available on beehive.govt.nz implied that the President of FIANZ, Hazim Arafah and some other Muslims believe that I have given hate speech. I have spoken to Hazim Arafah and he clarified that this is incorrect and that the Minister has absolutely twisted his words. I will not write further with regards to this issue as I understand FIANZ will issue a formal response soon.

This slander and attack is not just on me, but it is on all Muslims in New Zealand. Sadly, it is at a time when there is so much misrepresentation about Muslims in the media and this unfortunate attack is perpetuating this. Muslims have always lived peacefully in New Zealand and this kind of rhetoric promotes division in the community.

I suggest that Hon Peseta Sam Lotu-liga and Race Relations Commissioner, Dame Susan Devoy view the whole video to get the complete story before reaching any decision as I have been accused of something of which I am not guilty. My intention was completely different from the reported distorted version conveyed by the bloggers by doing a “cut and paste.” I sincerely deserve an apology. I would love to meet with the honourable minister and Race Relations Commissioner and anybody else to clarify the issue.

I would like to invite everyone in New Zealand who reads this letter and is keen to know more about Islam to get in touch with us. We have extensive free resources and materials for everyone, God-willing. If anyone would like to have further discussions regarding any issues, please do get in touch with me via formal means only.

“O you who have believed, if there comes to you a disobedient one with information, investigate, lest you harm a people out of ignorance and become, over what you have done, regretful.” (Quran 49:6)

Shaykh Dr. Mohammad Anwar Sahib

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