

**Message delivered by Imam Feisal Abdul Rauf**

***Daniel Pearl Memorial  
February 23, 2003  
B'nai Jeshurun,  
257 West 88th Street, NYC***

***Bismillah irrahman irrahim  
In the Name of Allah, the Almighty and All-Merciful God.***

I would like to begin by expressing my gratitude to my dear brothers and beloved friends, the Rabbis of Bnai Jeshurun, and the Reverend K Karpen, for this event, for providing me with the opportunity to understand how beneath differences of faith and religious interpretation lie similarities of values and principles, eternal values that embody respect for the humanity of all.

People in general can be split into two classes:

The first are those who make great demands upon themselves, The second are those who demand nothing special of themselves, but for whom to live means to be every moment what they are without imposing upon themselves any effort towards perfection.

This is no new distinction. Nor do I need to remind in which category Daniel Pearl stood.

Indeed, for many centuries it has been entirely familiar in our spiritual practices as the distinction between the Greater path and the Lesser Path, a distinction known to all of us in the religious as well as in the humanitarian traditions.

But for us today, our quest must be for moral and social perfection. And it must be a natural outcome of our commitment to tread the Greater Path within the authentic practice of our collective human tradition, an impulse that propels us to build a heightened consciousness, first within ourselves and then among humanity.

With this brief message, we join together in being ushered into a state of collective worship: invoking You, our Lord, the One Almighty God, to be reminded of who we are—beings fashioned in your image, our great purpose to apply our best efforts in perfecting this image that You have breathed into us by throwing ourselves before you, loving you with all of our heart, mind and soul, submitting most humbly as a sign of our intelligence and of our inner depth.

Our prayers and meditation are the protocols we follow to obtain the required passes that admit us into Your Divine and Most hallowed and sanctified Presence. Help us O God, to enter into proximity with You, in a state of worshipful remembrance, of mindful humility before Your Almighty, Magnificent and Magnanimous Divine Presence, of Your most perfect Creative and Beatific light. Fill

us with Your qualities so that we become perfected reflectors of Your Divine Attributes and Being.

All Glory and Might belongs to You, and all the beautiful and powerful attributes. May your Divine Names be hallowed and glorified, and fill us with radiance.

O Lord! Today we have come to pray for the soul of Daniel Pearl, who lost his life in the name of religious difference. We have also come to fulfill the spirit of the prayer his father Judea Pearl made—in an op-ed piece in Thursday's Wall Street Journal, (and I paraphrase)—for a “multi-faith statement against intolerance (of any against any) on the basis of religion, towards a unifying global spirit of the day that will serve as catalysts for building alliances against the rising tide of fanaticism, dehumanization and xenophobia.”

O Lord, we are people who are not usually in the same room with one another, and all too rarely with an opportunity to talk to each other.

We are people of faith and perhaps people without any professed religion: practicing and perhaps not. Today we are members of many faiths: Christian, Jew and Muslim. But we have come together to confirm the common ground of our faiths, on which we all stand united, to assert our common values, values that constrain us to act in the highest sense of what it means to be human.

We are here to assert the Islamic conviction of the moral equivalency of our Abrahamic faiths. If to be a Jew means to say with all one's heart, mind and soul Shma` Yisrael, Adonai Elohenu Adonai Ahad; hear O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is One, not only today I am a Jew, I have always been one, Mr. Pearl.

If to be a Christian is to love the Lord our God with all of my heart, mind and soul, and to love for my fellow human being what I love for myself, then not only am I a Christian, but I have always been one Mr. Pearl.

And I am here to inform you, with the full authority of the Quranic texts and the practice of the Prophet Muhammad, that to say La ilaha illallah Muhammadun rasulullah is no different. It expresses the same theological and ethical principles and values.

We are here especially to seek your forgiveness and of your family for what has been done in the name of Islam.

But as you have asked of us, we are here to go further, and to affirm the value of this service today both for the shaping of shared convictions and for the action that we can accomplish together. Further, we intend to deepen our belief that effective public engagement around difficult issues facing our faith communities can include, and in fact, requires, our collective religious voices. From our own experience, we affirm that multiple religious voices praying together can serve our deepest common good.

Our conversations must continue where many end. Some of us may be suspicious of the religious voices and believe that these voices ought to be kept out of public discussion and policy. Others may fear that entering into constructive dialogue and common ground with the “other side” must be wrong, sinful or at best useless and naïve. We disagree.

We are here both as individuals and as representatives of our religious traditions. We must take advantage of this unusual breadth, a breadth not only of religion and geographical views of each other, but also of social vantage points. We have experienced the reality that there is a multiplicity of religious voices in the world, and have come to affirm, importantly, that common religious, moral and policy grounds can be found in an exchange among these voices.

Where once many of us may not have cared to speak, much less listened, to others, now we must. We shall find ourselves with good people, of deep faith, and we shall locate many important, shared values: justice, compassion, service, faithfulness, and love. Though many of us may have come skeptically, we have all come seeking to leave with hope and expectation of Your guidance, O Lord, and with a determination to encourage others to embark on this kind of fruitful exploration. For ourselves, and in different ways, we want to continue to convey the message—not only among us, but also in the communities and arenas of service to which we shall be returning, that we are all created imago Dei, in the image of God.

We pray that you admit the soul of Daniel Pearl into Your acceptance.

We intercede with You that You place us on the path of righteousness and direct us towards actions done in fulfillment of the commandment taught by Your Great Prophets and Messengers Moses, the Messiah Jesus son of Mary, and Muhammad, which is to love our fellow humans as we love ourselves. Help us O Lord, in courage and commitment, in reducing ethnic and religious hatred, strife and violence, to build the kingdom of heaven on earth.

O Allah! Among Your Divine Attributes and Glorious Names is as-Salam, which means Peace, and from which You have named the faith of Islam, and grounded Your holy city Jerusalem. We invoke Your Divine Name as-Salam, Peace, and by it call upon You, O Almighty Allah, to inspire all of us present with this simple but powerful insight: that in our mandate and efforts towards establishing a deeper global commitment to world peace lies one of the highest roads to achieving human self-perfection and intimacy with You. We pray to you God, and worship You in many names, and in our various languages, with one heart and with one overarching prayer: that You bless this gathering, bless our efforts, and bless us as peacemakers, whom You have asserted shall be called the children of God.

Amen.