

Ambassador Akbar Ahmed, PhD
**“Being Muslim Today: Building Bridges in an Age of
Uncertainty”**



With Lord Rabbi Jonathan Sacks.



With Rabbi Bruce Lustig and Bishop John Chane being honored in a special Evensong at the Washington National Cathedral.



Lecturing Princess Diana in London.



With his team and students in the U.S. Department of State after a lecture there.

Brief Bio

Ambassador Akbar Ahmed is the Ibn Khaldun Chair of Islamic Studies at American University in Washington, D.C and the former Pakistani High Commissioner to the U.K. and Ireland. Named “the world’s leading authority on contemporary Islam” by the BBC and “perhaps the most influential living authority on contemporary Muslim societies” in the *Saudi Gazette*, Ahmed is a member of the Washington Muslim-Jewish Advisory Council. He also serves as a trustee for the World Faiths Development Dialogue, chaired by Lord George Carey, the former Archbishop of Canterbury, and is a member of the International Advisory Board for The Senator George J. Mitchell Institute for Global Peace, Security and Justice at The Queen’s University of Belfast. Previously, Ahmed has served as a Nonresident Senior Fellow at the Brookings Institution, the First Distinguished Chair of Middle East and Islamic Studies at the U.S Naval Academy in Annapolis, MD, and the Iqbal Fellow (Chair of Pakistan Studies) and Fellow of Selwyn College at the University of Cambridge. Ahmed has taught as well at Harvard and Princeton Universities. Ahmed belonged to the senior civil service cadre of Pakistan and has served as Commissioner in Baluchistan and Political Agent in the Tribal Areas, including Waziristan.

Ahmed has produced a number of noteworthy films and authored more than a dozen award-winning books. In the aftermath of 9/11, Ahmed conceived a quartet of studies published by Brookings Press examining relations between the West and the World of Islam, which includes *Journey into Islam: The Crisis of Globalization* (2007), *Journey into America: The Challenge of Islam* (2010), *The Thistle and the Drone: How America’s War on Terror Became a Global War on Tribal Islam* (2013), and *Journey into Europe: Islam, Immigration, and Identity* (2018). *Journey into America* and *Journey into Europe* were accompanied by documentaries of the same name (2009 and 2015). The *Journey into Europe* documentary was featured on Maryland Public Television in November 2017. Prior to the Brookings quartet of studies, Ahmed conceived and in the 1990s completed the Jinnah Quartet, which was comprised of the feature film, *Jinnah* (1998), with Christopher Lee in the title role; the documentary, *Mr. Jinnah: The Making of Pakistan* (1997); the graphic novel, *The Quaid: Jinnah and the Story of Pakistan* (1997); and the biographical study, *Jinnah, Pakistan and Islamic Identity: The Search for Saladin* (1997). *Jinnah* was featured on Turner Classic Movies in October 2016. A critically acclaimed playwright, Ahmed has written and staged the plays *Noor* and *The Trial of Dara Shikoh* around the world. A poet, Ahmed’s poems were broadcast from the Library of Congress in “The Poet and the Poem” podcast series. Ahmed consistently writes for a number of popular news publications around the globe, including a weekly column in the *Daily Times*, a leading English-language Pakistani newspaper. He is currently working on his latest play, *Gandhi and Jinnah Return Home*.

Ahmed is the recipient of a number of awards, including the Government of Pakistan’s Star of Excellence (Sitara-i-Imtiaz) for academic distinction and Medal of Excellence (Tamgha-i-Imtiaz), the first-ever Purpose Prize alongside Judea Pearl, and the inaugural Gandhi Memorial Center Peace Award. Ahmed has been consistently featured in *The Muslim 500: The World’s 500 Most Influential Muslims* and was named a 2015 Global Thought Leader by the Gottlieb Duttweiler Institute and *The Huffington Post’s WorldPost*. He is acknowledged as a “Notable Alumnus” of SOAS, University of London, was awarded the 2017 Sir Syed Day Lifetime Achievement Award for excellence in Poetry, Literature, Arts or the Sciences by the Aligarh Muslim University Alumni Association of New Jersey and Pennsylvania, and declared the 2017 Scholar/Teacher of the Year of the American University School of International Service, one of the top-ten international relations programs in the U.S. In July 2017, he returned to the Chautauqua Institution to deliver a lecture titled “Being Muslim Today: Building Bridges in an Age of Uncertainty.” In December 2017, Ahmed spoke at the American Anthropological Association Annual Meeting in Washington, D.C. In February 2018, Ahmed delivered the Ashe Lecture at the University of Tennessee’s Howard H. Baker Jr. Center for Public Policy. In spring 2018, he will be speaking about *Journey into Europe* in such venues as Politics and Prose in Washington, D.C., the 92nd Street Y in New York, the Sonoma Valley Authors’ Festival in Northern California, SOAS and Chatham House in London, the Woolf Institute in Cambridge, the Senate of Canada, and the Senate of Pakistan. *Publishers Weekly* describes *Journey into Europe* as “... this sweeping ethnographic exploration of Islam and its multiple narratives across the continent...this highly instructive work deserves careful and critical attention as people across the world wrestle with how to balance community with difference in an age of reinvigorated tribalism.”

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