

Message of Peace

English Translation of

Paigham-i Sulh

by

Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad

Founder of the Ahmadiyya Movement in Islam



Ahmadiyya Anjuman Isha`at Islam Lahore Inc. U.S.A.

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The *Ahmadiyya Anjuman Isha`at Islam* (Ahmadiyya Association for the Propagation of Islam) was founded at Lahore, Pakistan, in 1914 by the prominent followers of Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad. It exists to promote a liberal, tolerant and peaceful picture of Islam, as found in the Holy Quran and the life of the Holy Prophet Muhammad. It has published a vast quantity of highly-regarded literature on Islam in various languages, and has branches and members in several countries.

Editor's Note

Paigham Sulh, or a “Message of Peace”, was written by Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad in the last two or three days of his life in May 1908, while he was staying at Lahore where he spent the last month of his life. It is an appeal addressed to the Hindus and Muslims of India to rid themselves of the mutual hatred, enmity and bigotry between the two communities by showing respect for each other's religions. Speaking for Islam, Hazrat Mirza declares that Muslims can accept, respect and indeed believe in the Hindu scriptures and their ancient religious sages as having been sent by God, since the Holy Quran teaches that prophets and books from God came among every people on earth. Hindus, he proposes, reciprocate by regarding the Holy Prophet Muhammad as truthful, and by refraining from making vituperative attacks against him. It may be noted that a militant Hindu sect, known as the Arya Samaj, had come into being in the late nineteenth century, and was producing the most scurrilous literature hurling the filthiest abuse against the Holy Prophet Muhammad. The inflammatory writings of this sect posed a threat to peace between the two communities. Hazrat Mirza proposed an agreement by which Hindus and Muslims would not only refrain from attacking one another's religion, but show respect and love towards the venerable founders of each other's faith, and, more than that, harbour feelings of human sympathy and brotherliness towards the other community.

Paigham Sulh was being prepared as a public lecture due to be delivered on 31 May 1908. However, as Allah Almighty had decreed, Hazrat Mirza fell ill and passed away on 26 May and returned to his Maker. He had not entirely completed writing the lecture, but the unfinished work covered most of the message he

intended to convey. It was therefore decided to proceed with the lecture at a re-arranged date and venue. Khawaja Kamal-ud-Din, a prominent member of the Ahmadiyya Movement and later founder of the Working Muslim Mission in England, had the lecture printed from the manuscript left by Hazrat Mirza, and delivered the address before an audience of thousands of Hindus, Sikhs and Muslims at the University Hall, Lahore, on 21 June 1908. It was also translated into English.

The Ahmadiyya Anjuman Isha`at Islam Lahore has published more than one edition of the English version, the last being at the tragic but opportune time of 1947 when communal hatred between Hindus and Muslims was escalating into bloodshed at an unprecedented scale. In producing the present English edition, I have thoroughly checked the previous translation and revised it extensively. A list of contents and an Index have also been added. It may be noted that the four brief footnotes, three being added in this edition, and the sub-headings, some of which are revised from the previous edition, were all added during translation for the facility of the reader, and are not part of the author's original work.

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Message of Peace

My God almighty! My Guide beloved! Guide us into the path by which Thy truthful and sincere servants find Thee, and save us from the ways of those who seek to gratify their base passions, and satisfy their feelings of revenge or hatred or their greed for things of the world!

And now Friends! all of us whether Hindus or Muslims, notwithstanding hundreds of differences, are one in believing in God as the Creator and Master of the world. Moreover, our cause is common not only because we are all human beings, but also because, as we are inhabitants of one and the same land, we are related as neighbours to one another. It is our duty, therefore, to live as true and sincere friends, and sympathise with one another in difficulties both temporal and spiritual, as though we are limbs of one body.

Broad sympathy.

My dear countrymen, that religion is no religion which does not inculcate broad sympathy, nor does that man deserve to be called man who does not have a sympathetic soul within him. Our God has not withheld His bounty from any people. The powers and faculties which He bestowed on the ancient peoples of India, have also been bestowed on the Arabs, the Persians, the Syrians, the Chinese, the Japanese, the Europeans and the Americans. For all of them, the earth of God serves as a floor, and for all of them His sun, moon, and stars give light, and also perform other functions. All of them derive benefit from the air, water, fire, earth and other things created by God, and all of them use the produce of the earth, its corn and its herbs, its flowers and its fruits. These liberal ways of God teach us that we also should do good to all mankind, and should not be narrow-minded, nor limit our sympathy.

Friends, know it for certain that if either one of us two nations should fail to honour the divine example, and its conduct is contrary to God's pure example, then that nation shall soon be destroyed, and not only itself but will invite destruction upon its unborn generations as well. Ever since the world came into existence, the righteous ones of all lands have proclaimed that man survives by cultivating the fine attributes of God, and that both the physical and spiritual life of man depend on his conformity to all the Divine morals from which all peace is to be obtained.

God of all the worlds.

The Holy Quran opens with the very verse which teaches this broad doctrine:

“Praise be to Allah, the Lord of all the worlds.” (1:1)

The `worlds' include all the different peoples, different ages, and different countries. Opening the Holy Quran with this verse, which embodies such breadth of view, is a reply to those nations who limit, each to itself, the universal bounty and providence of God, and regard other peoples as though they were not a creation of God, or as though, having once been created, they have since been completely forsaken and forgotten by Him. Jews and Christians, for instance, believe to this day that all the prophets and messengers that have appeared in the world have come only among the Israelites. Towards other peoples, God has been so unfavourably disposed that, finding them in error and ignorance, He has not cared or moved for them. Even Jesus, as the Gospels say, declared that he had been sent only to the lost sheep of Israel. If we suppose for the sake of argument that Jesus did claim Divinity, is it not then amazing that he should have understood his message in such narrow terms? Was Jesus God only of the Israelites? Was he not God also of other peoples, that He should have said that he had nothing to do with the reform and guidance of other peoples?

Narrow Doctrines limiting God's providence.

In short, Jews and Christians hold that all the prophets and messengers of God were raised from out of the Hebrew race, and that the books of God were all revealed to members of that chosen race. And Christians further hold that Divine revelation ended with Jesus, and

after him the seal was set upon revelation from God. Beliefs similar to these are entertained by the Arya Samaj. Just as Jews and Christians regard the gifts of prophecy and revelation as the special privilege of the house of Israel, and consider other peoples unworthy of them, so the Arya Samaj, to the misfortune of the human race, believe that Divine revelation never went beyond the confines of India. It is from this land, they hold, that the four *rishis* are raised, again and again. It is only the Vedas which are revealed time after time, and Vedic Sanskrit is the only language employed by God for the expression of His will.

Thus these nations do not regard God as “Lord of all the worlds”. If they did regard Him so, there would be no reason why God, the Lord of all the worlds, and not the Lord of the Israelites or the Aryas alone, should have devoted Himself for all time to a single people, in a way so unfair and unjust!

It is to refute such erroneous doctrines that Almighty God has opened the Holy Quran with the verse: “Praise be to Allah, the Lord of all the worlds”. In many places in the Holy Book, He has clearly declared this belief to be an error that prophets have been raised from among only one nation, or been sent only to one country. On the contrary, God has not neglected any people or country. In the Holy Quran it is explained by various examples that just as Almighty God has been providing for the physical needs of the people of every country, so also has He been providing for the spiritual sustenance of every land and nation. In one place, for instance, the Holy Quran says:

“There is not a people but a warner was raised among them.”
(35:24)

It needs no argument, therefore, to say that the True and Perfect God in whom we must all believe is the Lord of all the worlds. His care is not limited to any particular people or any particular age. Rather, He is the Lord of all peoples, all ages, and all lands. He is the fountain-head of all grace, the source of all power, physical and spiritual. He nourishes all His creation; and on Him depends everything that exists. His grace is universal and is spread over all peoples, all countries and all ages. And it was so, in order that no people might complain and say that God had poured down His

blessings upon others but not upon them, nor that others had from Him books to guide them, but not they, nor that in other times He revealed Himself through revelation, signs and miracles, but in their time He became hidden. By making His bounty universal and eternal, God removed all such objections, and displayed wide sympathy for mankind, so that not a people, nor an age was excluded from His physical and spiritual favours.

Message of peace.

Divine bounty being so broad, it behoves us to imitate it. It is to invite you to do so, friends and countrymen, that I address you this short appeal which I have called a *Message of Peace*. In doing so I pray with a most sincere heart that Almighty God may inspire you with truth, and convince you of the sincerity that lies within my heart, that you may not ascribe this friendly invitation to any ulterior motive or selfish design on my part. Friends! the life hereafter remains obscure to most people, and the secret of that final realm is revealed only to those who are consecrated to higher things. But the good or evil that pertains to this life can be seen by every mind possessing foresight.

We all know that unity can remove evils and difficulties which it is impossible to remove otherwise. It does not become any of us, therefore, to deny ourselves the blessings of unity. Hindus and Muslims are two communities about whom it is impossible to imagine that either of them can, at any time, turn the other out of the country. On the contrary, the two communities are now inextricably bound together. If one is visited by any general affliction, the other must suffer along with it as well. If one should seek, out of scorn and pride, to bring the other into contempt, then it also cannot escape being brought into similar contempt. If one does not sympathise with the other, then it shall itself suffer the loss also. If someone belonging to one of the communities does anything to harm the other, he behaves like one who cuts off the branch upon which he himself sits. Friends! you are now an enlightened people, and it is time you cleared your hearts of all hatred, and advanced in mutual goodwill and friendliness. It is time that men of your intelligence gave up unkindness and took to charity. The problems of this life resemble a journey through the desert undertaken in the burning heat

of the sun. To mitigate the heat of the journey, and to quench the thirst on the way, you need the cool and refreshing water of union and goodwill which saves your life.

I invite you to peace at a critical time when peace is urgently needed. Disaster after disaster has come into the world. We have had earthquakes and famines, and the plague has not yet left us. Almighty God has even told me that if the world does not repent of its evil ways and does not forsake them all, disasters yet more terrible will visit the earth, and one disaster will not have left when another will have appeared; and at length man out of sheer helplessness, will begin to ask what is going to happen. And many, under the strain of suffering, will lose the balance of their minds. Beware, therefore, my fellow countrymen, and take care before that time arrives. Let Hindu and Muslim communities make peace between them. If one of them is doing to the other any wrong which prevents this peace, let it at once give up the wrong, or else it shall be responsible for all the ill-feeling between the two.

Religious differences.

It may be asked, How can there be peace when religious differences are making the gulf wider and wider everyday? But I say in reply that a genuine religious difference should be inspired only by considerations of reason, justice and observed facts. Why has man been endowed with reason if he is not to see that what he believes or does is in accordance with reason, justice and the proclamations of experienced fact? Minor differences cannot be a barrier to peace. Only those differences are a bar to peace which lead one party to vilify and denounce the honoured Founder and the holy Book of another. And with regard to this, all lovers of unity will be glad to learn that nearly everything that Islam teaches is to be met with in one or another of the Vedic schools. For instance, though the new Arya Samaj movement maintains as a fundamental doctrine that, after the Vedas, the door of all revelation has been sealed, yet the great *Avatars* who have appeared since in the Hindu faith, and are followed by millions in this country, have broken this seal by their claim to revelation. Among these *Avatars* is the great Sri Krishna who is deeply revered in this country, particularly in the province of Bengal. Sri Krishna claimed to be the recipient of revelation. His

followers indeed exalt him to the status of God Incarnate, but there can be no doubt at all that he was a prophet of his time and an *Avatar*, and that he was favoured by God with His word.

Guru Nanak.

Similarly in the latter days, the Hindu community had had Baba Nanak, the universally respected and honoured saint of this country, whose followers known as Sikhs number at least two millions. Baba Nanak openly claimed to be the recipient of Divine revelation, evidence of this being in the Granths, as well as in the various *Janam Sakhis*. In one of his *Janam Sakhis* he says that he had it revealed to him by God that the religion of Islam is true. It was because of this that he went on pilgrimage to Makka, and adopted all the tenets of Islam. It is a proven fact that miracles and signs were witnessed at this hands, and there can be no doubt that he was one of those chosen and righteous servants of God whom God favours with the gift of His love. He was raised among the Hindus particularly to bear witness to the fact that Islam is a Divine religion. His sacred relics at Dera Baba Nanak bear the clearest testimony to his profession of the Islamic *Kalima*, "There is no God but Allah and Muhammad is His Prophet", and those at Guru Har Sahai in the Ferozepore District, include a copy of the Holy Quran. Who can then doubt that Nanak, with his pure heart, pure nature, and sincere exertions in the way of God, had divined the secret which remained closed to the Pundits? By his claim to being a recipient of Divine revelation, and by the signs from God which he showed, Guru Nanak completely refuted the doctrine which holds that there is to be no revelation after the Vedas, nor any signs of God.

Nanak undoubtedly came as a blessing to the Hindus. He was, as it were, the last *Avatar* of the Hindu religion who strove hard to rid Hindus of the hatred which they entertained towards Islam. But, to the great misfortune of this country, Hindus did not benefit much from the teaching of Baba Nanak. On the other hand, the Pundits persecuted him for no other reason than that he proclaimed the truth of Islam wherever he went. He had come to establish peace between Hinduism and Islam, but his voice fell on deaf ears. Had his teaching been heeded, Hindus and Muslims would today be one. How much it grieves me to think that a great soul came into the

world, and passed away, but alas, ignorant men took nothing from his light. Nonetheless, he showed that the door to Divine revelation can never be closed, and that signs of God are manifested at all times at the hands of His chosen servants. He also proclaimed that enmity to Islam was enmity to the light that comes from heaven.

My own experience.

My own experience in the matter is the same, that revelation and experience of God have not been intercepted in our time; on the contrary, God speaks even now, as He spoke in the past, and He listens as He listened in days of yore, and none of His eternal attributes has or shall ever become lapsed. For nearly thirty years, I have been favoured with the word of God. He has manifested hundreds of His signs at my hands, and these have been witnessed by thousands of men, and published in books and newspapers. There is not a community that has not witnessed one sign or another.

In the face of this strong and cumulative testimony, how can we accept the doctrine which the Arya Samaj unjustly attribute to the Vedas, that the door of all Divine revelation was closed with the revelation of the Vedas, and that mankind has since been left to rely on stories of the past. And it is on the basis of this doctrine that the Arya Samaj treat the books of other religions as fabrications of man, God forbid! And this, in spite of the fact that other books can furnish stronger proof of their truth than can the Vedas. They have the hand of God behind them, and have heavenly signs in their support. Then how can it be that these books are not from God, while the Vedas are? As the existence of God is a matter of the deepest subtlety, reason also requires that to prove His existence merely one book is not sufficient. Rather, He should send prophets in different countries with His word and revelation, so that man, who is weak and prone to doubt, not be deprived of accepting Him.

Hindus, Jews and others limit revelation.

It is impossible to think that God, Who is the Lord of the whole world, Who causes His sun to shine upon all people from East to West, and Who sends down His rain upon every tract of land, according to need, that this same God should, in matters spiritual, become so narrow-minded and parsimonious as to limit His favours

for ever to one people, one country, and one language. I fail to understand what logic or philosophy there is in this doctrine, that while God does not hate to hear and understand the prayers of men in their different languages, He hates to reveal His word in any language but Vedic Sanskrit. This is a mystery which no one has been able to solve. As for myself, I regard the Vedas free from any such teaching, which is not only repugnant to reason, but which also casts the slur of favouritism and partiality on the Holy Person of God. The truth is that when a long time passes after the revelation of a book, its followers out of foolishness or design, consciously or unconsciously, begin to add their own interpretations to it. As these additions are made by people holding a diversity of views, one religion multiplies into hundreds of different creeds.

It is curious that, just as the Aryas believe that revelation has been limited to certain tribes in Arya Varta, and just as they say that revelation had had but one medium of expression, viz., Vedic Sanskrit, the language of God, the Jews believe the same about their own tribe and their own books. They too believe that Hebrew is the language of God, and His revelation was ever limited to the Israelites and their land. Anyone who claims to be a prophet of God, but does not belong to their tribe or speak their language, is considered by them to be a false prophet. Striking as this resemblance is, there are other religions holding the same belief about themselves, such as the Zoroastrians who regard their religion millions of years older than the Vedas. It seems that the idea of limiting Divine revelation to one's own language, country or nation is based upon sheer ignorance and prejudice. In earlier times, a people or country did not know about other peoples and other countries in the world. It was but natural, therefore, that when a book was given to them or when a prophet appeared among them, they thought that they were the sole recipients of Divine revelation and that whatever guidance God had meant to give to man, had been given to them, and had been laid down in their book, given to their nation and land, all others being deprived of it.

This belief has been the source of many evils. In fact, it is the seed which developed into the mutual hatred and rancour between various nations. For a long time one people remained ignorant of another, and one country was so much of a *terra incognita* for

another that the learned men of India thought that beyond the Himalayas there was no human habitation. When the veil was lifted, and the peoples of the world came to know about one another, the false beliefs relating to the appearance of prophets, and the revelation of sacred books, had already taken root in the minds of men. Every people believed that their country alone was the seat of the manifestation of the glory of God. As barbarous passions ruled supreme, and those who dissented from established beliefs were dealt with by the sword, no one dared to bring about peace and union between contending religions by cooling down the emotions of self-glorification.

Buddha.

Gautama Buddha tried to do this. He did not believe the Vedas to be the first and the last revelation of God, nor did he subscribe to the doctrine that Divine revelation was limited to any one country, people or language — that this language and this country and these Brahmans had been chosen in the Divine law for revelation. On account of this dissent, Gautama was severely persecuted; he was called atheistic and godless, just as those inquirers of Europe and America who do not believe in the divinity of Jesus, and are unable to accept that God can ever be put on the cross, are called atheists by churchmen. It was this kind of atheist that Buddha was called, and as is the practice of malicious opponents, false allegations were spread against him to incite hatred against him. At last he was expelled from his homeland India, and to this day Hindus look down upon the success which his teaching attained. But, as Jesus said, a prophet is not without honour save in his own country. Buddha attained marvellous success in his mission after he had gone to other countries. At present one-third of the human race is said to follow the Buddhist faith, the centres of its following being China and Japan, while it has spread as far as Russia and America.

Adherents of religions attack others' faiths.

To revert to the original subject, when the followers of one religion were ignorant of religions prevailing in other countries, every community naturally clung to its own book and its own creed as the sole repositories of truth. When, therefore, the inhabitants of different countries learnt of one another's existence, and one people

came to know the creed of another, each found it difficult to approve of the alien creed. Fancy had invested every religion with certain exaggerated distinctions and beauties, and it was no easy task to divest it of these. Consequently, the adherents of every religion gave themselves up to the task of refuting rival religions. The followers of Zoroaster, for instance, affirmed that there was no religion comparable to theirs, that prophethood was confined to the Zoroastrian dispensation, and that their scriptures were the oldest of all, so much so that even the Vedas paled into insignificance when compared with theirs in antiquity. The Hebrews also were not far behind in making claims for their religion. They fixed Palestine as the land where the throne of God had been placed, never to be removed to anywhere else. Only the elect of the Jewish race were eligible for the sacred office of prophethood. They were even forbidden to preach to other peoples. Revelation was held to be a gift which could be bestowed only on a member of their own race, and if there appeared any claimant among others, he could only be an impostor.

Exactly the same kind of views became established among the inhabitants of Arya Varta. According to them, *Parameshwara* is only a Raja of their country, a Raja who knows nothing about other countries of the world. The belief is cherished, without a semblance of reason, that *Parameshwara* has taken a liking to the climate of Arya Varta, and has never even thought of visiting other countries to inquire into the condition of those who had been left to themselves ever since He created them.

Friends, ponder for God's sake, and say whether such beliefs are acceptable to reason, whether there is anything in human conscience which responds to them. I cannot see how a rational being can believe, on the one hand, that God is the Lord of the whole universe, and yet say, on the other, that He has withdrawn His fostership and care from the greater part of the world, and that His love and mercy is confined to one people and one country. Is there anything corresponding to this in the distribution by God of His physical bounties? If not, why should His spiritual favours be distributed with such partiality? By using sense and reason, we can discover the good or evil of anything from the results it leads to. I need hardly tell you how terrible are the consequences of insulting and reviling those

holy prophets who count millions of human beings of all ranks among their devoted servants and followers. There is no community but has more or less tasted the fruit of such vilification. Friends, long experience and many trials have now proved that to speak disrespectfully of the holy leaders of other peoples, and to hurl abuses at them, is a poison which undermines both body and soul. It brings double ruin in its wake.

A country cannot have peace when different communities inhabiting it attack and abuse the religious leaders of one another, and two communities cannot live in harmony with each other when one or each of them speaks insultingly of the spiritual teachers of the other. Every man must have his feelings stirred when he hears his prophet or founder insulted. Particularly Muslims are a people who, without calling their Holy Prophet as God or son of God, believe him to be greater than all righteous men that were ever born of woman. So it is not at all possible to make peace with a true Muslim, unless the Holy Prophet is always spoken of in respectful terms.

Muslim attitude.

We Muslims, on our part, never speak disrespectfully of the prophets of other communities. On the other hand, our belief is that spiritual leaders who ever lived on this earth among various nations, who have been accepted by many millions of men, who have won the affection and respect of a large portion of humanity, and have been held in esteem for a very long time, were one and all true prophets of God, these circumstances alone being a sufficient evidence of their truth. If they had not been sent by God, they would not have found acceptance with so many millions of men. God never grants to others the honour which He gives to His chosen ones. If an impostor sits in the seat of the elect of God, he is soon brought to naught.

It is on this principle that we regard the Vedas as from God, and believe the *Rishis* to have been holy and sacred. It is true that the teachings contained in the Vedas have failed to promote the worship of the One God, nor were they suited to do so. Idolaters, fire-worshippers, sun-worshippers, Ganges-worshippers, polytheists, followers of Jainism, and professors of the *Shakat Mat*, in short all

sects of Hinduism that are to be found in India, base their respective creeds on the Vedas, the Vedas apparently being capable of all these divergent interpretations. Still our own firm belief, according to the Quranic teaching, is that the Vedas are not a fabrication of man, for a human fabrication does not have the power to draw millions of men to itself and to establish a system that can endure for ages.

Though we have not found the Vedas teaching the worship of stones, they teem with inculcations about the worship of fire, air, water, the moon, the sun, and so on, and there is not a single Vedic verse forbidding the worship of such objects. How are we to believe that all the long-established sects of Hinduism who worship these objects are wrong, and only the new born sect of Arya Samaj is right? Those who worship these various objects by reference to the Vedas put forward the strong argument that the Vedas clearly mention such worship and never prohibit it. For the Arya Samaj to assert that *agni* (fire), *vayu* (air), *jal* (water), etc., are only names of the Divine Being, is to make a claim for which there is so far no proof. Had this claim been satisfactorily proved, there is no reason why the learned Pundits of Benares and other Hindu cities would not have accepted the views of the Arya Samaj. Yet despite its exertions for over thirty years few Hindus have accepted the Arya creed, and the numbers of the Arya Samaj shrink into insignificance, when compared with the numbers of the Sanatana Dharma and followers of other Hindu sects. Nor do the doctrines of the Arya Samaj seem to have had much influence on the other sects of Hinduism.

Similarly the doctrine of *niyoga*¹ which is attributed to the Vedas is unacceptable to human honour and decency. And, as I have already said, we cannot believe this to be the teaching of the Vedas. On the other hand, we are strongly disposed to believe that such teachings were later attributed to the Vedas, or inserted in them, from some ulterior motives. The Vedas being of great antiquity, it is very likely that various additions and alterations were made in them by Pundits of subsequent generations. That many millions in Arya Varta have for thousands of years believed them to be the

1. *Niyoga* was a practice advocated by the Arya Samaj, as a religious doctrine, allowing a wife who was childless from her own husband to form a temporary sexual connection with another man for the sake of procreation.

Word of God is, however, sufficient evidence for us of their truth. It is impossible that the word of an impostor should come to enjoy such honour.

When, in spite of many difficulties and out of the fear of God, we believe the Vedas to be the Divine Word, and attribute its errors to subsequent writers, why should such savage attacks be made on the Holy Quran which teaches the unity of God from beginning to end, which nowhere teaches the worship of the sun, the moon, or any such object, but, on the other hand, says in plain words:

“Do not bow in worship before the sun, nor before the moon, but prostrate yourselves before God who created them.”
(41:37)

Besides, the Holy Quran has the testimony of Divine signs, old and new, and like a mirror it shows us the face of God. Why do not the Arya Samaj do by us as we do by them? Why is the seed of discord and enmity sown in the land? Do you expect such a seed to bear good fruit? Is it fair dealing to cast stones at one who offers you flowers, and to throw dung at one who holds out milk?

Proposed agreement for peace.

If, in order to have perfect peace, the Hindus and the Arya Samajists are prepared to accept our Holy Prophet — may peace and the blessings of God be upon him — as a true prophet of God, and if they are prepared to give up denying and defaming him, I would be the first person to sign an agreement that we, followers of the Ahmadiyya Movement, will always believe in the Vedas, and will speak of the Vedas and the Rishis with respect and love. We will bind ourselves to pay the Hindus a penalty of Rs. 300,000 in case we fail to fulfil the agreement. If Hindus sincerely wish for this peace, they also should sign a similar agreement, in the same terms: “We believe in the apostleship and prophethood of Muhammad *Mustafa* (peace and the blessings of God upon him!), and regard him as a true prophet and apostle. We will always speak of him with respect and honour as a follower should. And if we fail to fulfil this agreement we shall pay to the Head of the Ahmadiyya Movement Rs. 300,000 as a penalty for breach of agreement.”

The members of the Ahmadiyya Movement now number not less

than four hundred thousand, and therefore the sum of Rs. 300,000 is not very large. Other Muslims who are outside the Ahmadiyya Movement have no unity of aim or view. They recognise no leader whom they feel bound to obey. So I cannot say anything about them. So far they regard even me as an infidel and an anti-Christ. Still, I hope that if Hindus make this compact with me, other Muslims will not be so unreasonable as to have their Holy Prophet abused by speaking insultingly of the scriptures and the leaders of so well-mannered a people. Such abuse will then be attributed to the Muslims themselves. In any case, as such behaviour is inconsistent with honour and decency, I do not think that after the compact has been made other Muslims will use bad language. But in order to make the agreement strong and secure, it will be necessary that it should be signed by at least 10,000 sensible men on both sides.

Dear countrymen, there is nothing like peace. Let us become one nation and one people by means of this compact. You see what discord there is in the land and how much the country has suffered on account of mutual recrimination. Come and try now the blessings of mutual respect. This is the only way to reconciliation. To try and seek peace along any other way would be to neglect a sore which is bright and smooth outside, but full of foul pus inside.

Political differences.

It is not my object here to deal with the proposition that the causes of the disunity between Hindus and Muslims, which is daily increasing, are not limited merely to religious differences, but extend to political aspirations and affairs as well. Hindus, for instance, have always been desirous of having a share in the government of the country, of having at least their opinion consulted on important political matters, of bringing their grievances to the notice of the rulers, and of being admitted, like the British, to high posts of administration. Muslims made the mistake of keeping aloof from the Hindus in their endeavours to attain this object. They thought that as their numbers were smaller than those of the Hindus, only the latter would gain from any outcome of these efforts, and not the Muslims. Not only did they hold aloof from the Hindus, they even opposed them and acted as a hindrance in their way. This added to the ill-feeling, and I accept that these causes aggravated the original enmity

between the two. I cannot believe, however, that these are the real causes of mutual hatred, and I do not agree with those who hold that ill-feeling between Hindus and Muslims is not due to religious differences, but really to political rivalry.

Everybody can understand why Muslims shrink from joining the Hindus in claiming their lawful rights, why they keep aloof from the Congress till now, and why, at last feeling that the Hindus were right, they followed their example, not however by joining the Congress, but by starting a separate, parallel association of their own, the All-India Muslim League?

Brethren, the cause of this is to be found in religion alone, and nothing else. If these very Hindus join Muslims today, declaring '*There is no God but Allah, and Muhammad is His Prophet*', or if Muslims embrace Hinduism and begin to worship *agni, vayu*, etc., according to the injunctions of the Vedas, and bid farewell to Islam, all the differences that are now termed political would disappear, as though they had never existed. This shows that what lies at the root of mutual hatred is religious antagonism. From the earliest times it is religious antagonism which, when carried to extremes, has been resulting in bloodshed. My Muslim brethren, since the Hindus look upon you as an alien people owing to your professing a different religion, and since you regard them as an alien people for the same reason, it is impossible that true and sincere relations can be established between you unless the real cause is removed. You may join hands with each other for some time like hypocrites, but real peace between the hearts can only be attained if, from the bottom of your hearts, you accept the Vedas and the Rishis as from God, and the Hindus likewise expel all malice from their hearts and accept our Holy Prophet as a true prophet of God. Remember that this is the only course which can bring about real unity between you and the Hindus. It will act like water and wash away all hatred from your hearts. If the time has come for these two long-separated peoples to unite, God will open their hearts to accept this proposal, as He has opened ours.

Muslims to show kindness, sympathy and respect.

But, along with this agreement, it will be binding on us to act sympathetically towards our Hindu brethren, and make it a rule of

conduct to treat them with kindness and fellow-feeling. We shall have to abstain from everything that offends them, provided that what we abstain from is not one of the obligations or duties of our faith. So if the Hindus sincerely accept our Holy Prophet as a true prophet of God, and believe in him, the gulf which separates us from them owing to our slaughtering of cows should also be made up. It is not obligatory for us to use everything that we believe to be lawful. There are many things which we consider lawful but which we never use. To be kind and tolerant to our fellow beings is as important a religious injunction as to believe in one God, and it is not against the law of God to abandon an unnecessary thing for the sake of a necessary and useful purpose. Believing a thing to be lawful is quite different from using it. Religion consists of abstaining from forbidden things, seeking the pleasure of God, doing good to and showing kindness and sympathy to all the creatures of God, believing in all the holy prophets and apostles whom God raised from time to time for the reformation of the world, without making any distinction between them, and disposing ourselves kindly towards all human beings. That is the substance of Islam. But how can it be possible for us to make peace with those who unjustly and fearlessly revile our Holy Prophet *Hazrat Muhammad Mustafa* (may peace and the blessings of God upon him!) and persist in calumniating and abusing him? I say truly that it is possible for us to make peace with the snakes of the desert and the wolves of the wilds, but it is impossible for us to be at peace with those who make vile attacks on our Holy Prophet, on him whom we hold dearer than our parents, and our ourselves. May we all remain Muslims to the end, we will never do a thing derogatory to our faith.

Unjustified attacks on Islam.

I do not mean to lay any unjust charge at the door of any particular community, nor do I intend to offend anybody. But with great pain and a deep sigh I feel constrained to say that great injustice is being done to Islam and the Holy Quran. Islam is a holy and peaceful religion which never attacked the leader of any community, and the Quran is an honourable book which laid the foundation of peace among nations by accepting the prophets of all nations — a distinction which the Holy Quran alone possesses among the

scriptures of the world. Regarding the prophets of the world, the Quran says:

“O believers, say, We believe in all the prophets of the world and make no distinction between them by accepting some and rejecting others.” (2:136)

If there exists any other revealed book with such a peaceful teaching, let it be named. The Quran does not restrict the universal providence of God to any particular race. It accepts all the prophets of the house of Israel, such as Jacob, Isaac, Moses, David and Jesus, and does not call any prophet, may he belong to Persia, India or any other country, a liar or an impostor. On the other hand, it plainly declares that there have been prophets among all peoples and in all lands, and thus lays the foundation of peace among mankind. It is painful, therefore, to find that this Prophet of Peace should be reviled and treated with contempt by every other community.

Grave warning.

My dear countrymen, I have not said this to offend you or to injure your feelings. I wish to tell you from the very best of motives that those who have made it a practice to abuse and revile the Prophets of other communities, as if this immoral conduct formed part of their religion, are not only sinners in the sight of God, for their transgressions and for making unfounded attacks, but they are guilty also of sowing the seed of discord and enmity between communities. Tell me, if a person abuses another's father or calumniates his mother, does he not really attack the honour of his own parents? And if the person whose parents he has abused pays him back in the same coin, may we not hold the person who abused first to be the cause of the abuse, and regard him as the enemy of his own parents' honour? Mark how God inculcates respect and regard for the honour of others in the Holy Quran. He says:

“Do not abuse the idols of the idolaters; for if you do so, they will abuse your God in return, not knowing Who God is.” (6:108)

Despite the Divine teaching that idols have no worth at all, nonetheless God enjoins upon Muslims to abstain from abusing the idols, and to preach gently, lest idol-worshippers become outraged and

begin to revile God, and Muslims themselves become the cause of this abuse. Compare with this the conduct of those who abuse the great Prophet of Islam, who speak of him in defamatory terms, and make wild and savage attacks on his honour and character. Our Holy Prophet is he, on the mention of whose name, great monarchs of Islam step down from their thrones, bow to his commands, and are proud to count themselves among the humblest of his servants. Is not this honour from God? To treat with contempt one who is honoured by God is to fight with God. Our Holy Prophet, *Hazrat Muhammad Mustafa* (peace and the blessings of God upon him!), is that chosen Prophet of God, to demonstrate whose truth and greatness, God has shown wonderful signs to the world. Is it not the hand of God that has made two hundred million Muslims² prostrate themselves at his door? Every prophet had some proof of the truth of his teachings, but the proofs which the world has witnessed of the truth of the Holy Prophet, which continue to appear till today, have no parallel in any other prophet.

Holy Prophet appeared at time of universal darkness.

When the earth becomes corrupt with sin and wrong-doing, and when mischief, wickedness and transgression outweigh virtue, then the mercy of God demands that a messenger should be raised to reform the world. Disease obviously calls for a doctor. Hindus should be able to understand this point, for you believe that the Vedas were sent not when the world was flooded with sin, but when it was free from it. Then do you consider it unreasonable that a prophet should arise when a storm of sin was raging with full fury over every part of the world? I do not think you are unaware of the historical fact that when the mantle of prophethood fell upon the Holy Prophet, it was an age of such darkness that there was not a corner of the world which was free from vice and corruption. As Pandit Dayanand³ has admitted in his book *Satayarith Parkash*, at that time even in Arya Varta idolatry had taken the place of the worship of God, and much corruption had found its way into the

2. This was the number of Muslims in the world at the time the lecture was written.

3. Founder of the Arya Samaj sect of Hinduism (d. 1883).

Vedic *Dharma*.

Similarly, the Rev. Mr. Pfander, a European missionary of the Christian religion, admits in his *Mizan-ul-Haq* that of all peoples, at the time the Holy Prophet Muhammad appeared, the Christians were the most corrupt. Their immorality and vice were a disgrace to Christianity. The Quran itself shows the need of its own revelation by saying:

“Both land and sea have become corrupt.” (30:41)

This means that all nations whether primitive or claiming to be civilized had become corrupt.

All testimony shows that, at the time of the Holy Prophet, all mankind whether they belonged to the East or the West, whether they peopled the land of Arya Varta, were the denizens of the sands of Arabia, or had their abode in the islands — all of them had gone astray and lost touch with God. Misdeeds had corrupted the surface of the earth. Can a thinking person not then see that, according to reason, that was exactly the time and age when a great Prophet should have appeared in the world?

Reform work of Holy Prophet.

As to the question, What reform did this Prophet accomplish, I say most strongly that this question with regard to the Holy Prophet can be answered by a Muslim so clearly and convincingly that no Christian, Jew or Arya can answer it in the same way with regard to his own prophet.

The immediate object of the Holy Prophet was to reform the Arabs who were then in such a degraded condition that they could hardly be called human beings. There was no evil but was found in them and there was no form of idolatry but prevailed among them. Thieving and highway robbery formed their business and the murder of innocent human beings was to them like trampling insects under foot. They killed orphans to appropriate their property, and buried their daughters alive. They took pride in adultery and openly spoke of these indecent acts in their poems. Drinking prevailed to such an extent that no house was free from it, and in gambling they were worse than any other people. Being worse than snakes and wolves they were a disgrace even to beasts.

But when the Holy Prophet rose to regenerate them and when he began to devote himself to purifying them and casting his holy influence upon them, then in a few days they turned from savages to men, from men to civilized men, from civilized men to Godly men, and finally they became so filled with the love of God that they bore every pain for His sake, as if they were unable to feel it. They were subjected to all kinds of tortures. They were lashed cruelly, dragged on burning sands, put in fetters, and starved to the point of death. But in the face of each affliction, they stepped further onwards. Many had their children slaughtered before their eyes, many were hanged in the presence of their children. A contemplation of the readiness with which they laid down their lives draws tears from the eyes. If it was not Divine influence upon their hearts, and the result of the Holy Prophet's purifying power, then what was it which drew them so powerfully towards Islam and which worked such a miraculous change in them that they threw themselves at the feet of one who once walked the streets of Makka as a poor, solitary, helpless individual? Some great spiritual power raised them from the depths of degradation to the heights above.

The wonder is that before they embraced Islam, most of them were the mortal enemies of the Holy Prophet and were thirsting for his blood. To my mind, there could be no greater miracle than that a poor, helpless and solitary individual should have so drawn them towards himself, having cleansed their hearts of all malice, that they cast away their costly raiment and then presented themselves to him in sack cloth as his humble servants.

Charge of Jihad — belied by Prophet's life.

Some unwise people bring the charge of *jihad* against Islam, alleging that all these men were compelled to become Muslims by the sword. Woe to those who have transgressed all limits in injustice and the misrepresentation of truth! What is the matter with them that they turn away so easily from the facts? Our Holy Prophet did not appear in Arabia as a king. It could not be said that as he had with him royal majesty and power, people flocked to his standard in order to have protection for their lives. The question is, as he was a poor, helpless and lonesome individual when he began to preach the Unity of God and his own prophethood, what sword did he then have, the

fear of which caused men to adopt his religion? If they did not accept his religion of their own free will, which king's armies did he summon, and whose aid did he seek, to compel people to enter his religion?

Seekers after truth! know it for certain that these charges have been fabricated by the sworn enemies of Islam. Consult history, and you will find that our Holy Prophet was an orphan whose father passed away shortly before his birth and whose mother also died when he was a child only a few years old. Then the child, sustained by the protecting hand of God, grew up under the care of God, unsupported by man. During the days of his orphanage and helplessness, he even tended the sheep of his employers. He had no guardian except God. He was twenty-five years old, but not one of his uncles would give his daughter in marriage to him, for, he had no means to support a family. He was not lettered and knew no trade or profession.

When he attained to the age of forty, his heart was drawn towards God. There is a cave, named Hira, at a distance of a few miles from Makka. He would go to that cave alone, hide himself there and worship God. Thus one day when he was secretly occupied in Divine contemplation, God manifested Himself to him, saying: The world has abandoned the path of God and the earth has become corrupt with sin, so I appoint you as My Apostle that you may warn the people and invite them to hearken to God before the Divine punishment overtakes them. The message filled him with awe, and he humbly said in reply that he was unlettered, and unable even to read. Then God opened his heart and filled him with Divine wisdom and spiritual knowledge, and illuminated his being with His light.

Persecution of early Muslims.

His spiritual powers attracted the low and the humble towards him, and they became his devoted servants. The great and the haughty girded up their loins to oppose him, until at last they determined even to put him to death. Many of his followers, both male and female, were killed, and at last his own house was besieged. But who can destroy him whom God wishes to save? God sent His word to the Holy Prophet, informing him of the intentions of his enemies,

bidding him leave the town, and promising him assistance. The Holy Prophet accordingly left the town in the company of Abu Bakr, and the two hid themselves in a cave called Thaur, where they stayed for three nights. The enemy pursued them, and reached the cave Thaur with the help of a tracker. Their guide could not see any footsteps beyond the cave, and told them to search inside it, saying that the Prophet and his companion were in the cave or they had gone up to the heavens. But who can encompass the wonders of Divine Power? In a single night a spider had covered the opening of the cave with its web, and a pigeon had made its nest at the mouth of the cave, and had laid its eggs. So when the tracker urged the men to enter the cave, an old man among them cried: "This man is mad! I have been seeing this web at the mouth of the cave before Muhammad was born". Hearing this, all dispersed and nobody cared to examine the interior of the cave.

From here then, the Holy Prophet escaped to Madina, where most of the people accepted him. This infuriated the Makkans all the more. They were furious at losing their victim. Thenceforth all their efforts were concentrated on bringing about the annihilation of the Holy Prophet. The small band of Makkans who had accepted the Holy Prophet had also left their native town to seek protection in other lands, and some of them had sought shelter under the King of Abyssinia. The few that remained in Makka, because they were too poor to migrate, were bitterly persecuted. Their cries of pain are referred to in the Quran.

The cruelties that the Makkans perpetrated on the poor Muslims exceeded all limits. They began to murder poor women and orphans in tender years. Some women had their legs tied to camels which were then made to run in opposite directions, tearing the poor women thus in two pieces each.

When the barbarities of the disbelieving Quraish reached the limit, God at last took pity on His people and sent word to the Holy Prophet that the cries of the oppressed had been heard. The faithful were now permitted to take up arms against their oppressors. Those who had smitten the innocent with the sword, were to perish by the sword. Still, the faithful were not to transgress the limit in retaliation, for God did not love the transgressors.

Sword or spirit?

This is the truth about the Islamic Jihad which has been most cruelly misrepresented. God is indeed tolerant, but when the excesses of a people transgress all limits, He does not let the oppressors go without punishment, and Himself brings about their destruction. Whoever told our opponents that Islam was propagated by the sword? God says in the Quran:

“There is no compulsion in religion.” (2:255)

So who gave orders for the exercise of compulsion? And what means were there to compel people to accept the faith? Does compulsion create the kind of devotion and faith which enabled the followers of the Holy Prophet, when numbering two or three hundred, to fight thousands without any recompense, and when numbering thousands to fight hundreds of thousands? To protect Islam from the attacks of the enemy, they had their heads cut off like sheep and goats, and with their blood, they bore testimony to the truth of Islam. They had such a passion for spreading the message of the Unity of God that, under severe privations, they went to the deserts of Africa only to preach the message of Islam. Suffering all manner of hardship they went to China, not as warriors but as preachers to call to Islam, and their preaching was blessed with such good results that millions of Muslims came into being in those lands. Then as dervishes in sackcloth they came to India and delivered their message to the natives of Arya Varta, large numbers of whom accepted Islam. And they carried the proclamation “There is no god but Allah” up to the borders of Europe.

Now say truly, Was this the work of those who had accepted Islam at the point of the sword, of those who professing to be believers by tongue were unbelievers at heart? No, it was the work of those whose hearts were full of the light of faith, and in whom the love of God reigned supreme.

Previous faiths limited to certain nations.

Turning again to the question, What is the teaching of Islam, let it be clear that the chief object of Islam is to establish the unity and majesty of God on earth, to extirpate idolatry and to weld all nations into one by collecting all of them around one faith. Other religions

and other prophets had each to look after only one people or one country. If they taught morals, their object was to guide only one people. Jesus, for instance, plainly said that his mission was only for the house of Israel, and when a woman who was not an Israelite approached him saying, "Have mercy on me, Lord," he repelled her saying, "I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of Israel"; and when humbly she approached him again with the same request, he again put her off saying, "It is not meet to take the children's bread, and to cast it to the dogs".⁴ But the Holy Prophet never said that he had been sent only to the Arabs. On the other hand, the Quran says:

"Say, O Prophet, to mankind: I am the Apostle of God to you all." (7:158)

But it should be remembered that it was not Jesus' fault that he rebuffed the woman. The time was not ripe for a universal teaching, and Jesus accordingly had been commanded to confine his preaching to the Israelites, and to have nothing to do with others. As I have said before, the moral precepts of Jesus were only addressed to the Jews. The Law of Moses laid emphasis on a tooth for a tooth and an eye for an eye, the object of this teaching being to establish justice among the Jews, and to check them from violating others' rights; for having lived in slavery for four hundred years, they had developed the traits of injustice and greed. Similarly in the time of Jesus, God's wisdom required that the zeal with which they inflicted retribution and vengeance should be remedied by enjoining upon them leniency and mercy, and so Jesus laid great stress on forgiveness. The moral teaching contained in the Gospels, therefore, was addressed only to the Jews, not to the world as a whole, for the simple reason that Jesus had no concern with any other people.

The truth is that the moral teaching of Jesus is defective not only because it is not based on universal sympathy, but also because, just as the Torah goes to one extreme by laying too great an emphasis on retaliation, the teaching of the Gospels goes to the other extreme of forgiveness and pardon. These two scriptures do not aim at the development of all branches of the human tree. The Torah nourishes

4. See Matthew 15:22–26.

one branch while the Gospels confine themselves to the other, both lacking in moderation in their teachings. Just as it is not expedient always to punish the offender, so it is inconsistent with the harmonious cultivation of human morals always to forgive. It is for this reason that the Quran rejects both extremes and follows the golden mean by saying:

“And the recompense of evil is punishment like it; but whoever forgives and amends, his reward is with Allah.”
(42:40)

i.e. the punishment of evil should be proportionate to the evil, as the Law of Moses teaches, but forgiveness of the Gospels is permissible and desirable when it is productive of good, and when its object is to reform the culprit. Otherwise the law is that of the Torah.



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