

هَلْ جَزَاءُ الْإِحْسَانِ إِلَّا الْإِحْسَانُ (سُورَةُ الرَّحْمَنِ ٦٠)

"Is the reward of goodness aught but goodness?"

(Holy Quran 55:60)



The BRITISH GOVERNMENT and *JIHAD*

By

Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad

Mujaddid of the fourteenth century of the Islamic era

The Promised Messiah, the Mahdi

Translated by Masud Akhtar Choudry

Ahmadiyya Anjuman Lahore Publications, U.K.

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Translator's Note

All thanks are due to Allah the Exalted for enabling me to render into English the pamphlet *Government Angrezi aur Jihad* which was originally written and published in Urdu in July 1900 by Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, *Mujaddid*¹ of the Fourteenth Century of *Hijrah*,² the Promised Messiah and the Mahdi.

In this pamphlet the venerable author, in addition to explaining the true nature of the concept of *jihad*, has explicitly written that the declaration of *jihad* can only be made by a king or a ruler and not by just any religious leader. His request to the Ameer of Kabul in this regard is noteworthy. Further, his proposal for peace between various religious communities is the only viable choice available to mankind for reconciliation and peaceful coexistence of votaries of various religions. His subtle style of propagating Islam, even to the Viceroy of India, stands out even in this brief pamphlet.

Special thanks are due to Mrs Asma Majid for devotedly typing this work from my poorly, hand-written script. I pray Allah bless her with goodly rewards. Ameen.

Masud Akhtar Choudry
Louisville, Kentucky
U.S.A.
July 2011

Notes:

¹ A *mujaddid* is a religious reformer. In a hadith, the Holy Prophet Muhammad is reported to have said that in every century Allah will raise from among the Muslims a man for their reformation. Ahmadis believe that Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad was the reformer who appeared among the Muslims in the fourteenth century of the Islamic calendar.

² *Hijrah* refers to the migration of the Holy Prophet Muhammad from Makkah to Madinah. The Islamic calendar starts from that year, which was 1 A.H.

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*In the name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful.
We praise Him and call for blessings on His gracious Messenger.*

The British Government and *Jihad*

The philosophy of the doctrine of *jihad* and its true nature are such complicated and subtle matters that due to lack of their proper understanding, people, not only in present era but also in the middle period, have made serious errors. We have to admit most embarrassingly that due to these grave misconceptions the foes of Islam found an opportunity to subject to objections a pure and holy religion, which is a complete reflection of the Laws of Nature and excellently manifests the Eminence of the Living God.

Derivation of the word *jihad*

It should be understood that the Arabic word *jihād* is a derivative of *juhd*, which means ‘to exert’, and then it also came to be used, by way of a metaphor, for religious battles. And it appears that when Hindus call the religious war a *yuddha*, it is, in fact, a distorted form of the word *jihād*. Since Arabic is the mother of all languages and all other languages sprung from it, therefore, the Sanskrit word *yuddha* which is used for war is, in fact, *juhd* or *jihād* whose (first) letter *jīm* was substituted by *y* and with some alteration was pronounced with double *d*.

Necessity of *jihad*

Now we want to pen a reply to the questions: why did the need for *jihad* arise in Islam and what is *jihad*? Therefore, let it be clear that in its early days Islam faced great difficulties and all nations became its enemies. It is common that when a prophet or a

messenger is raised by God, and his followers can be seen as an intelligent, righteous, resolute and progressive community, then feelings of a kind of prejudice and malice against them develop in the hearts and minds of existing people and sects. Especially the scholars and keepers of the tombs of the saints of every existing religion exhibit extreme prejudice because, with the arrival of that divinely raised prophet or messenger, their financial interests and august position are threatened. Their students and disciples start escaping their entrapment because they find all the virtues of uprightness, morality and scholarship in that appointee of God. Thus men of wisdom and discernment from among them start to understand that those scholars no longer deserve the reverence once shown to them on account of their literary excellence, God-fearing nature and abstinence. They no longer deserve whatever honorific titles were conferred on them, such as *Najam-al-Ummah*, *Shamsul Aamma* and *Shaikh-ul-Masha'ikh*.¹ So men of wisdom turn away from them because they do not want to lose their faith.

Helpless because of these losses, the community of the religious scholars and the spiritual leaders has always been envious of the prophets and the messengers of Allah. Since these persons in truth are flawed and hardly possess any share of the Divine light in the era of the prophets and God's appointees, they are totally exposed. And their enmity against the prophets and righteous persons is simply selfish. Being completely subservient to their selfish desires they contrive mischievous plans. Though at times, in their hearts, they feel that by unjustly harming a pious man of God, they are coming under the Divine wrath. Their hearts keep revealing their blameworthy condition to them for the opposing evil deeds which, due to their prejudice, they keep doing at all times. Yet the engine of violent fire of envy keeps pulling them towards the pits of enmity.

These were the reasons, which, at the time of the Holy Prophet may peace and the blessings of Allah be upon him, not only deprived the religious scholars of the Polytheists, the Jews and the

Christians of the acceptance of the Truth but also prepared them for enmity. Therefore, they started contemplating somehow to completely annihilate Islam from the face of the earth. Since in the early days of Islam, Muslims were a tiny minority, therefore, their opponents, on account of the arrogance which naturally sets in the hearts and minds of people who, on the basis of their wealth, resources, numerical abundance and rank, consider themselves superior to the other community, treated Muslims of that time, i.e. the Companions of the Holy Prophet, with extreme enmity.

They did not want this heavenly plant to flourish on the earth. Rather, they were trying their utmost to destroy these righteous persons and did not leave unturned any stone of persecution. They were fearful, lest this religion establish itself and its progress become the cause of destruction of their religion and their community. As a result of this fear, which had taken hold of their hearts in an awe-inspiring manner, extremely violent and oppressive conduct from them was witnessed. They killed many Muslims through extremely torturous methods. And their conduct continued for a long period, which was spread over eleven years. The faithful men of God, who were the pride of mankind, were cut into pieces by the swords of these rapacious beasts in an extremely merciless way, and orphans and helpless and humble women were slaughtered in the streets and lanes. Even after this, the absolute Divine Injunction was not to confront evil and those, the chosen of mankind, behaved accordingly. Streets turned red with their blood but they did not offer any resistance. They were slaughtered like sacrificial animals but they did not utter even a sigh. The most Pious and Holy Messenger of Allah, blessed by both the Earth and the Heavens, was stoned until he was soaked in blood, but that mountain of sincerity and uprightness suffered all these woes wholeheartedly with love. Such patient and humble behavior emboldened the mischief-makers day by day and they considered this holy community as easy prey.

Then God who does not want mercilessness and tyranny in the world, considered His oppressed bondsmen and His wrath flared up against the wicked. He informed His oppressed people that He was watching all that was being done to them and from this day He granted them permission to confront their oppressors and that He was the Almighty God and He will not leave the tyrants unpunished. This was the Command that, in other words, was called *jihad*. The actual text of this Command, which is still present in the Quran, is this:

أُذِنَ لِلَّذِينَ يُقْتَلُونَ بِأَنَّهُمْ ظَلِمُوا ۗ وَإِنَّ اللَّهَ عَلَىٰ نَصْرِهِمْ لَقَدِيرٌ ﴿٣٩﴾ الَّذِينَ
أُخْرِجُوا مِن دِيَارِهِمْ بِغَيْرِ حَقٍّ

(lit., “Permission [to fight] is given to those on whom war is made, because they are oppressed. And surely Allah is Able to assist them — Those who are driven from their homes without a just cause”, 22:39–40.)

It means that God heard the cry of the oppressed who are slain and are driven out of their homes unjustly and they are permitted to fight and God is All Powerful to help the oppressed against the tyrants.² But this commandment was specific to that time and not eternal. It pertained to the time when those who entered Islam were slaughtered like lambs. Regrettably, after the time of the Holy Prophet and the *Khulafa-e-Rashideen*,³ people have grossly erred in understanding the real intent of this doctrine of *jihad*, the real basis whereof is the above quoted verse of the Quran, and the unjust killing of the creatures of God with the sword has been considered by them as a mark of the religion.

Error of Christians and Muslims

It is a strange coincidence that the Christians erred in the matter of the rights of the Creator and the Muslims have erred in the matter of the rights of His creatures. That is, in Christian religion by making a humble human into God, the rights of the Almighty and the Infinite God, whom none on the earth and in the heavens is

like, have been severely violated. And the Muslims, by unjustly wielding the sword against human beings, and calling it *jihad*, have greatly violated the rights of their fellow humans. In short, Christians have taken one path of violation of rights and the Muslims another. Unfortunately, both groups of violators of rights in the present era consider these violations as the approved path. Out of these two violations, arising from their respective beliefs, each one of these communities is insistent upon their respective violation. Each considers its belief a guarantee of their direct entry into Paradise and that there is no better way of ensuring entry into Paradise. Although the violation of the rights of God is a sin which exceeds all other sins, here our objective is not to discuss the sin that is being committed by the Christian community. Rather, we want to warn the Muslims about the violation of human rights, which is being committed by them against others.

Muslim scholars' misunderstanding the doctrine of *jihad*

Remember, the doctrine of *jihad*, as understood by the present day Muslim scholars, who are called Muslim priests, and the form in which they state this doctrine to common people, is absolutely incorrect. Its result is nothing except that they, through their passionate sermons, turn the men of brutish qualities into venomous beasts dispossessed of all pious virtues of humanity. Thus, so it happens. I know for certain that the sin for all the brutalities and unjust bloodshed that results at the hands of these ignorant conceited persons, who are quite unaware of why and for what reason, in its early period, the necessity for war arose for Islam, rests on the shoulders of these Muslim priests who secretly keep teaching such doctrines, which lead to such sorrowful bloodshed.

When these people meet the government officials⁴ they kneel so low to greet them as if they are ready to prostrate before them. But when they sit in the gatherings of their compatriots they repeatedly insist that this country⁵ is *Dar-ul-Harb*.⁶ In their hearts they consider waging *jihad* as their religious duty. There are few of them who are not of that view. These people are so firm in their

belief about *jihad*, which is completely erroneous and against the teachings of the Quran and Hadith, that if someone does not agree with their view about this they call him Anti-Christ and declare him deserving of the penalty of death. Accordingly, I am subject to such decree and some Muslim priests of this country have declared me an Anti-Christ and a heretic. Without any fear of the laws of the British Government they have issued a private decree about me that this person deserves to be put to death, his property looted and his women abducted. And, that one doing so is worthy of great Divine reward.

But for what crime! Only this: that my being the Promised Messiah and preaching against their doctrine of *jihad* and declaring the coming of their blood-shedding Messiah and blood-thirsty Mahdi, on whom they have pinned great hopes of pillage, as completely false doctrines became the cause of their rage and enmity. But they should remember that the doctrine of *jihad* as it is in their minds is not correct as its first step is shedding the blood of human sympathy. We have a two-fold response to their question that when *jihad* was permissible in the earlier period, what is the reason that it is now prohibited? Firstly, that the view about *jihad* is mere conjecture, which has exceptions. Our Holy Prophet did not raise the sword against anyone except those who first raised the sword and mercilessly slaughtered innocent and righteous men, women and children. And they killed them in such a distressing manner that even now reading those accounts makes us cry.

Promised Messiah to abolish fighting for religion

Secondly, even if it is assumed that Islam enjoined such *jihad* as these Muslim priests think, then that has not remained in force in the present era as it is written in Hadith reports that, when the Promised Messiah will appear, then *jihad* with the sword and wars in the name of religion will end because the Promised Messiah will neither pick up the sword nor hold any other worldly weapon in his hands. On the contrary, his prayer will be his weapon and his resoluteness his sword. He will lay the foundations of peace

and he will gather the lion and the lamb on the same bank and his era will be the time of peace, mildness and human sympathy.

Lo! Sorrow, why do these people not reflect on the fact that thirteen hundred years ago the expression *yaḍa'a al-ḥarb*⁷ was uttered from the mouth of the Holy Prophet about the Promised Messiah? This means that when the Promised Messiah comes he will put an end to wars. The same is indicated in the Quranic verse *ḥattā taḍa'a al-ḥarb auzāra-hā*⁸ which means keep fighting till the time of the Promised Messiah comes. This is what is: *taḍa'a al-ḥarb auzāra-hā*. Look, it is in the Sahih Bukhari,⁹ which has been recognized as the most correct of the books after the Holy Quran, and read it carefully. O ye, the scholars and the Priests of Islam, hear my words! I truthfully say that now is not the time for *jihad*. Do not become disobedient to the Holy Prophet. The Promised Messiah, who was to come, has come and he has commanded: desist from religious wars, which are conducted with swords and bloodshed. Then not to give up shedding blood and not to stop delivering such sermons is not the path of Islam. One who has accepted me will not only stop delivering such sermons, he will also consider such conduct to be evil and a cause of Divine Wrath.

Muslim and Christian religious leaders behave in same way

Here, regrettably, we have to write that on the one hand, ignorant Muslim priests, by hiding the real nature of *jihad*, have taught the people schemes of plundering and killing human beings in the name of *jihad*, and on the other hand, the Christian priests acted in the same way. They printed thousands upon thousands of advertisements and pamphlets in Urdu and Pashto alleging that Islam was spread with the sword and that the name wielding the sword is Islam, and published those in India, including the Punjab and the Frontier region.¹⁰ The result of which was that the common man, on receiving testimony from two sources, that is the Muslim priests and the Christian priests, increased in their ferocious passions.

I think it is essential that our benevolent government stop these Christian priests from making such false accusations that result in lawlessness and rebellion in the country. It is not plausible that, because of such false accusations, Muslims will give up their religion; however such sermons will always serve as a reminder of the doctrine of *jihad* to people and amount to waking them up from sleep.

In short, now that the Promised Messiah has come it is the duty of every Muslim to give up that false notion of *jihad*. Had I not come, then there might have been some excuse for this misunderstanding, but since I have now come and you have witnessed the day of the fulfillment of the Promise, therefore, for those who raise the sword in the name of religion, there is no excuse before God, the Exalted. Anyone who has eyes and reads the narrations in Hadith and looks at the Quran can realize it quite well that this form of *jihad*, which many savage-like people are pursuing, is not the *jihad* taught by Islam. In fact, these are criminal acts which are done through the arousal of base passions or in the vain hope of attaining paradise, which has become prevalent amongst Muslims.

Example of the Holy Prophet and his Companions

I have already stated that our Holy Prophet did not ever first raise the sword against anyone, rather for a long period he was persecuted by the idol-worshippers and he exhibited such patience which is beyond any human. Similarly, his Companions too adhered to the same highest principle and, as they were commanded to bear the persecution with patience, they exhibited the same sincerity and steadfastness and patience. They were trampled under the feet but they did not utter a word, their children were cut into pieces in front of them, they were tortured with fire and water but they restrained from offering any resistance against their persecutors as if they were infants. Who can prove that anyone from among the followers of all other prophets of the world, in spite of possessing the ability to avenge, on hearing the Divine Command made themselves humble and abstained from confrontation as they

did? Who has the proof of the fact that a community has ever passed in the world which, in spite of bravery, numerical and physical strength and power of confrontation as well as possessing all requisite courage and valour, patiently bore torture and painful persecution at the hands of blood-thirsty enemy for thirteen consecutive years.

The patience of our Leader and Master and his Companions was not due to some helplessness. On the contrary, during this period of patience he and his devoted Companions had the same mettle that they exhibited after the revelation of the permission relating to *jihad* when at times one thousand of their men defeated a strong army of a hundred thousand of their enemy. It happened so that people may know that the patience that was displayed by them against the bloodshed by their enemies in Makkah was not due to cowardice or weakness, but that they had laid down their weapons in obedience to the Divine Commandment and they made ready to be slaughtered like lambs. Undoubtedly, such patience is beyond the human power of endurance. If we study history of the whole world and all of the prophets we do not find any example of such high morals in any community or followers of any prophet. And if we hear of any instances of patience shown by some earlier people then circumstances pertaining thereto immediately bring it to mind that the reason for that patience really would have been cowardice or lack of ability to avenge. But when a community that actually possesses soldierly skills and a courageous and robust heart is persecuted and their children are murdered and they are wounded with lances and even then it chooses not to resist the evil, that was the masculine quality which was shown for thirteen years in an excellent manner by the Holy Prophet and his Companions in fulfillment of the Divine Commandment. This type of patience in which every moment one was facing great calamities and which was spread over thirteen years is in fact incomparable and unique in the history of mankind. If someone doubts it then let him show us where such an example is traceable in the history of righteous persons of the yore.

It is worth remembering that, at the time when this violence was being meted out to the Companions of the Holy Prophet, the Holy Prophet did not suggest any measures of avoiding it; using his own judgment instead he repeatedly told them to bear the pain patiently. If someone pleaded some way of resistance, he stopped him and said: "I have been commanded to be patient." In brief, the Holy Prophet always emphasized patience until the Divine Commandment for confrontation with arms was revealed. Now bring an example of this type of patience in the past and the later people. Then, if it is possible, bring a precedent from the people of Moses or the disciples of Jesus Christ and show it to us.

The Perfect Role Model ignored

To summarize, when the Muslims have this example of patience, abstinence from wrongdoing and highest morals, which has superiority over all the people of the world, how stupid and unfortunate it is that this example has completely been ignored. Ignorant Muslim priests, may Allah give them guidance, have wholly deceived mankind and have declared this act (i.e., *jihad*), which is manifest injustice and cruelty and an affront to human morality, as the key to Paradise. Can it be a virtuous deed that there is a man going about in the market place, we have no connection with him so much so that we do not know his name and he does not know our name, but despite this we fire a gunshot at him intending to kill him? Is this religious behaviour? If this is a virtuous deed, then undoubtedly ravenous beasts are superior in performance in doing such virtuous acts.

God be praised, how righteous were those people and had the spirit of the prophets in them! When, in Makkah, God commanded them not to resist the evil-doers even though they are cut into pieces; on hearing this command they became humble and weak like infants as if neither their hands had any strength nor their arms have any power. Some of them were killed in this way that their legs were firmly tied to the legs of two camels which were made to stand side by side. Then these camels were made to run in

different directions tearing them, in one minute, like a carrot or a radish is cut into pieces.

It is regrettable that Muslims, especially Muslim religious leaders, have forgotten these events. Now they consider the whole world as their prey. The condition of the majority of the Muslims today is like a hunter who, after locating a deer in the forest, walks stealthily towards it and finding an opportunity opens fire from his gun on it. The same is the condition of these Muslim religious leaders. They have not learnt even a word from the lesson of human sympathy. Rather, opening fire with a pistol or gun on an unmindful person for no fault of his is considered a religious act.

Where are such persons among them who will undergo persecution and suffer torture like the Companions of the Holy Prophet but remain patient? Has God commanded us to cut to pieces with a knife or kill with gunfire, at random, a person who knows us not, nor we know him, without proof of any crime, finding him not on his guard? Can such a religion be from God which teaches that if you go on randomly murdering innocent, blameless people, who know nothing of your faith, you will enter Paradise? It is a matter of great regret and shame that we could open fire, without reason or concern, on a man with whom we have no previous enmity, in fact we do not even know him, while he is purchasing something from a shop for his children or is busy in some other lawful errand, and in an instant render his wife a widow and his children orphans and turn his home into a place of mourning. In which hadith or verse of Quran is it so written? Is there any Muslim priest (*maulvi*) who can answer this question?

Ignorant ones have heard the word *jihad* and then using it as an excuse, they have sought to fulfill their selfish desires or they shed blood out of lunacy. We have already written that when at the time of the Holy Prophet, Islam raised the sword under Divine Commandment, it was raised when many Muslims had been laid in the graves by the enemy's sword. Finally, Divine Honour desired that those who kill with sword be killed with swords too.

God is very generous, merciful and forbearing but at the end He is covetous about His righteous persons. I am amazed that, when no one is murdering Muslims in this era for their religion, then under what commandment do they choose to murder innocent people? Why do their religious leaders not stop them from committing these unlawful acts, which bring Islam into disrepute?

Can someone determine how much peace the Muslims are now enjoying under this British Government? Many persons such as those who have seen something of the Sikh rule would still be alive. Let them say what the condition of the Muslims was during the Sikh reign. An obligatory practice of Islam, which is the Call to prayer, was declared a form of a crime. Who could dare give the Call in a loud voice and remain safe from the spears and lances of the Sikhs. Then what wrong did God commit that He rid Muslims of the unjust coercion practiced by the Sikhs and brought them under the peaceful British Government. And with the advent of this Government, it was as if Muslims of the Punjab embraced Islam anew. Since return for favour is favour,¹¹ therefore, it is not fitting that we reject this Divine Blessing, which we have received in replacement of the Sikh rule after thousands of prayers.

Advice to my group

I specially advise my group, who believe in me as the Promised Messiah, that they should always abstain from such corrupted practices. Since God has sent me as the Promised Messiah and has robed me in the garb of Jesus, son of Mary, therefore, I exhort you to avoid mischief and discharge the duty of sympathy towards mankind. Purify your hearts of rancour and prejudice such that by doing this you will become like angels. How soiled and polluted is that religion in which there is no sympathy for mankind and how fouled is that path which is full of thorns of selfish prejudices.

You who are with me, be ye not such. Ponder, what is to be gained from such religion? Only this, that, at all times, oppression be your custom? No! Religion is for attaining a new life, which is

Godly, and that life has never been attained, nor shall it ever be attained by anyone unless the Divine attributes are infused to humans. Be merciful to all for the sake of God so that Heaven is merciful to you. Come, I show you such a path whereby your light will prevail over all light, and that is to give up inner prejudices and jealousies and become sympathisers of mankind and lose yourselves in God. And, with this, achieve the highest degree of purification. This is the way through which miracles transpire, prayers are accepted and angels descend to help. But this is not a matter of a day, keep progressing and keep evolving.

Learn a lesson from the washerman who first boils the clothes in a cauldron and keeps boiling until ultimately heat separates all the dirt and ordure from clothes. Then he wakes up early in the morning and reaches the water-point and soaks the clothes in water and repeatedly strikes them against stone so that dirt which had settled down in clothes suddenly starts separating from the clothes partly due to heat and partly due to the thrashing in water at the hands of the washer-man. Ultimately, clothes are white as they were originally. The same is the method of purifying the human Self. Your total salvation depends on this purification. This is what God, the Exalted, has stated in the Holy Quran, *qad aflaha man zakkā-hā*,¹² that is, that soul attained salvation which was purified of all types of grime and dirt.

Look, I have come to you with a Commandment, and that is: now *jihad* with sword is abolished but the *jihad* of cleansing your own souls continues. This is not from me; rather it is the Will of God. Ponder over that hadith of the Sahih Bukhari where it is written about the Promised Messiah, *yada'a al-harb*, that is, when the Messiah comes, he will terminate religious wars. Therefore, I command those who are included in my army to retreat from such thoughts, cleanse their hearts, promote feelings of human mercy in themselves and become supporters of the compassionate. Spread peace on earth for this will propagate their religion and wonder not how it shall come to pass.

Preparations for spreading the word

God, without the agency of customary means, in order to meet mankind's physical needs, has created inventions in the present day, utilising the earth's elements and its resources and has exhibited trains running much faster than horses. Similarly, He will put angels to work to meet the spiritual needs without the agency of human hands. Grand heavenly signs will manifest and many splendors shall glitter whereby many eyes shall open. Then, at last, people shall understand that taking human beings and other things as God rather than the Lord were all mistakes. So keep waiting patiently because God is more jealous than you for Unity of Godhead. Pray incessantly, so you may not be written amongst the disobedient. O ye, the hungry and thirsty for truth, listen, these are the days promised from the very beginning; God will not prolong the fulfilment of these matters.

As you see that when a lamp is placed on a high minaret its light spreads far and wide or when the lightning flashes in one place in the skies, all directions light up instantly. So shall it happen in these days, in order to fulfill His prophecy, the Calling of the Messiah shall flash across four corners of the world like lightening or the light of a lamp on a high minaret. All the resources have been provided on the earth such as the railways, telegraph and steamboats, and good administration of mail and easy means of tourism have been perfectly implemented. All these have been provided so that the Divine promise is fulfilled that the invitation of the Promised Messiah will enlighten every corner of the world like lightening.

The meaning of the Minaret of the Messiah, which is mentioned in Hadith reports is, in fact, also the Call of the Messiah and his Light will so speedily spread in the world as the voice and the light from a tall minaret spread far and wide. Therefore, railway, telegraph, steamboats, post offices and all means of convenience of propagation and conveniences of travelling, all are special signs of the era of the Messiah that have been mentioned by many

prophets. The Holy Quran too says: *wa idhā al-'ishāru 'uṭṭilat*,¹³ that is, the age of general invitation, which is the era of the Promised Messiah,* is when the camel will be rendered useless — that is, a new means of transport will become available and the camel will no longer be required. And it is mentioned in Hadith too: “camels will be abandoned, so they will not be used for going swiftly”.¹⁴ That is, in that era camels will be rendered useless and this sign has not been given to the era of any other prophet.

So be grateful that there are preparations in the Heavens to spread the light. The earth too is swelling with earthly blessings — that is, on a journey as well as at home you are enjoying such ease and convenience, which your ancestors did not see. It is as if it is a new world; out of season fruits are available, six months' journey can be performed in a few days, news from thousands of miles is received in an instant, machines and instruments are available for conveniently performing every job. If you desire, you can enjoy facilities of your home and garden during travel by train. Thus, when a wondrous revolution has occurred in the world, Almighty God desires that a wonderful revolution occurs in the Heavens too. Both of these are the signs of the age of the Messiah. A revelation, which was written in my book *Barahin Ahmadiyya* twenty years ago, points towards these signs and reads: *Inna-s-samāwāti wa-l-arḍa kānatā ratq-an fa-fataqnā-humā*,¹⁵ the meaning being that the earth and the heavens both were tied together as a bundle, whose secrets were hidden, then We untied both in the age of the Messiah and the secrets of both were revealed.†

* *Author's Note:* I have written repeatedly that the Promised Messiah is not an Israelite Prophet, rather he has come with his demeanour and nature; since in the Torah our Holy Prophet was declared to be the like of Moses, so it was necessary that, as in case of the successors of Moses, in the case of the successors of the Holy Prophet Muhammad too there should be a Messiah at the end.

† *Author's note:* Is it not true that in this age the secrets of the earth have been so revealed that thousands of new truths, qualities and inventions

Finally, it should be remembered that, although in this treatise we have written in detail that the present practice of attacking the followers of other religions which is prevalent in Muslims under the name of *jihad* is not *jihad* according to the Shariah,¹⁶ rather it is clearly opposed to the Divine teachings and the teachings of the Holy Messenger of Allah and is a great sin, but as following this path has become an old habit of some Muslim nations so it is not possible for them easily to give up this habit. Rather it is possible that they may become the mortal enemy of such a person who advises them to quit this habit and out of their warrior-like zeal they may choose to kill him.

A plea to the ruler of Afghanistan

Indeed, one approach comes to my mind and that is, if the Ameer of Kabul, whose awe among the Afghan people is so great that an example of it is not found in any previous Ameer of the Afghans, may gather together Islamic scholars and debate this doctrine of *jihad*. Then, through the Islamic scholars inform the common people of their erroneous behavior in the matter of *jihad*. Rather he should get some magazines written in the Pashto language by the Islamic scholars of this country and publish those widely. I am sure such action shall have great impact on people, and the passion, which ignorant Muslim priests have spread among the masses, will gradually decrease.

Certainly, it will be a great misfortune for the subjects of the Ameer if he does not pay attention to this necessary reform. The final result of this is that the government, which chooses to remain silent on such religious opinions of the Muslim priests, will be in trouble ultimately. Because these days it is the habit of these Muslim priests that, on a trivial religious difference, they declare a

continue to appear? Then why should heavenly secrets remain hidden? About the heavenly secrets the previous prophets had also prophesied that women and children too shall receive revelation and it shall be the age of the Promised Messiah.

person or a sect to be a heretic. Then their religious opinions such as those regarding *jihad* against the unbelievers are proclaimed against these persons and sects too. In such a state of affairs even the Ameer cannot remain secure from such religious decrees. It is quite possible that these Muslim priests, on becoming estranged from the Ameer on a trivial matter, may expel him from the sphere of Islam and those decrees of *jihad* that are proclaimed against the unbelievers may be issued against him. Undoubtedly, such persons in whose hands is the making of a person a true believer or a heretic and then based on this to issue a decree of *jihad* against him, are dangerous and the Ameer should not remain unconcerned about them.

Undoubtedly, such persons are fountainheads of rebellion, for the pitiable masses are in their hold. The key of their hearts is in their hands and they may turn it in whatever direction they may choose and may raise a tumult in a moment. Thus, it is not a sin to save people from their claws and to gently make them understand the true nature of the doctrine of *jihad*. Islam most emphatically does not teach that Muslims become like robbers and highwaymen and fulfill the low desires of their Self under the pretext of *jihad*. And since in Islam *jihad* is not permissible without the command of a king or ruler and common people know it too, there is every apprehension that those who are not aware of the truth blame the Ameer in their hearts, that all this is being done on his suggestion.

Therefore, it is a duty incumbent upon the Ameer that, as far as it is possible, he makes an erudite effort to halt this incorrect decree. In this way, the exoneration of the Ameer will shine like the sun and he will also have Divine reward. For in the view of human rights there is no greater virtue than saving the necks of the oppressed from the swords of the oppressors. Since the majority of such people who wield the sword, intending to become warrior-heroes, are Afghani people who live in a considerable part of the Ameer's country; therefore, Allah, the Exalted, has granted him this opportunity to leave behind in history the mention of this

reform as a great achievement of his kingship and rid the Afghani people of those beastly habits that are giving Islam a bad name. Otherwise, now that the era of the Promised Messiah has come and, God, the Exalted, will nevertheless create such heavenly means that the earth, which is full of oppression and unjust bloodshed, will now be full of justice, peace and reconciliation. And blessed are those Ameer and the Kings who partake from it.

A plea to the British Government

After all this writing, I want specially to petition our benevolent government. Although I know that our government is wise and intelligent, yet it is our duty to offer it any good suggestion, which comes to mind whereby the government and the common man may benefit. It is this. In my view it is certain that there are two causes for the vicious habit that is prevalent in the Afghani of the Frontier region, the result of which is that blood of an innocent person is shed every day. First, those Muslim priests part of whose belief is that the murder of a person belonging to another religion and especially Christianity is the source of great heavenly reward and it entitles them to receive those magnificent blessings of Paradise that are not attainable through prayers, *Hajj*, *Zakat*¹⁷ or any other virtuous deed. I know it full well that these Muslim priests privately keep delivering such sermons to the masses. Hearing these day and night, a great impact is made on the hearts and minds of such people between whom and the animals there is hardly any difference. They become wild and not a speck of mercy is left in them. They shed blood so mercilessly that one trembles. The Frontier region and the Afghani territories are full of Muslim priests who deliver such sermons, but, in my opinion, even the Punjab and India in general are not devoid of such Muslim priests. If this noble government has become assured that all the Muslim priests of this country are free and far removed from such views then without any doubt such assurance is worth review.

I think that such ignorant short-tempered Muslim priests who are not free from such rotten views occupy a majority of mosques. Had they held such views in concurrence with the guidance provided by the Holy Word of God, the Exalted, then I would have considered them excusable. But I say it truthfully that, having forgotten its favours, they are hidden enemies of this just government, in the same way they are disobedient culprits of God because, as I have already explained in detail, the Divine Word does not teach us to shed the blood of innocent persons in this manner and whosoever thinks that it does is rebellious against Islam.

Christian priests also bear responsibility

The second cause for such criminal bloodshed, which is resorted to in an enthusiasm to become a warrior-hero, in my opinion are the Christian priests who vehemently stress that *jihad* is a duty in Islam and killing the followers of other religions is a matter of heavenly reward according to the teachings of the religion of Muslims. In my view, the people of the Frontier region were not aware of the doctrine of such *jihad*. It was the Christian priests who put this into their heads. I have, in support of this view of mine, the argument that, until newspapers, books and pamphlets containing such allegations by the Christian priests had been published and distributed amongst the people of Frontier region, very few instances of such incidents were heard of. Or, one can say that such incidents did not occur. Rather, when the kingdom of Sikhs was ended from this country and the British came in their place, Muslim masses were delighted by this revolution and the residents of Frontier region too were very happy.¹⁸

Thereafter, in 1849 Rev. Pfander¹⁹ wrote his book *Meezan-ul-Haqq*, in which he not only used defamatory language against Islam and the Holy Messenger of Islam but also publicized amongst hundreds of thousands of people that in Islam killing people of other religions is not only permissible but also is a matter of great heavenly reward. On hearing these things wild animals of the Frontier region who had no knowledge of their religion,

woke up and became certain that, in fact, according to their religion killing people of other religions is a matter of great heavenly reward. After thorough consideration, I think that the cause of most of the incidents and the zealous enmity that had arisen in the people of Frontier region, are the books written by Christian priests in which they have exceeded all limits in reckless language and repeatedly mentioned *jihad* with the sword to the people.

Ultimately, after the general publicity and poisonous effects of *Meezan-ul-Haq*, the government had to enact Act Number 23 of 1867 for stopping the warrior-like thoughts of the people of the Frontier region. This law was promulgated for six Tribes of the Frontier region and it was hoped that incidents will cease by its enactment. But it is a matter of great sorrow that after this, the lewd writings of Rev. Imad-ud-Din²⁰ of Amritsar and some other abusive Christian priests caused great damage to the state of internal peace and friendship in the country. Similarly, books written by Christian priests, going into detail whereof is not necessary, have no small role in sowing the seeds of enmity in the hearts of people. In short, these persons have been a great hindrance in the way of peace-promoting policies of the government. The admirable policy of the government in not stopping the Muslims from responding in somewhat sharp language to that reckless language that has been used by Christian priests in their books stands as proof of the broadmindedness of the government. At the same time, evidence of the government's good intention and just action helped avoid the expected rioting resulting from these defamatory books.

Although we have regrettably to admit about the priests of Islam that, through following a wrong doctrine about *jihad*, they have taught the people of the Frontier region to redden their swords with the blood of the officers of a benevolent government and thus cause trouble to the government. At the same time, we have also to say regrettably that European priests, called reverends, through their unjustly impetuous and factually false writings

have incited the ignorant masses. By making the charge of *jihad* thousands of times they have helped implant in the hearts of ignorant brutal Muslims that *jihad* is such a tenet of their religion whereby entry to Paradise is attained quickly.

Had these priests no ill intentions in their hearts then they would have compared the *jihad* of Moses and Joshua with the *jihad* of the Holy Prophet and they would have discovered the truth and would have remained quiet. Even if we suppose that Muslim priests are the main movers of inciting the people to mischief yet the call of our justice compels us to admit that, to some extent, those writings of the Christian priests, about which Muslims complain too, are responsible for incitement of trouble. It is regrettable that some ignorant stand aside after their misdemeanour and difficulties are created for the British Government.

The best proposal for the removal of these difficulties is the one that the Turkish government²¹ has recently adopted, which is that, on an experimental basis for a few years, followers of every religious denomination should be absolutely forbidden from mentioning anything, directly or indirectly, in their writings or speeches, about any other religion but feel free to write or say whatever they like about the virtues of their own religion. In this way, the process of sowing seeds of new and fresh prejudices will stop, old stories of rancor will be forgotten and people will revert to mutual peace and love. When the wild men of the Frontier region will see that reconciliation and love has been born among various religious communities then, ultimately, they too will be influenced to have such sympathy towards a Christian as a Muslim has towards a Muslim brother.

Another suggestion is that if the Muslim priests of the Punjab, and India generally, are really against the erroneous understanding of the doctrine of *jihad*, then they should write papers about this and after getting those translated into the Pashto language publish those in the Frontier region. Undoubtedly, these will have great

influence. But for all these matters there is a condition that all this is done with an honest intent and fervour, not hypocritically.

And peace be on him who follows the guidance.

Proclaimant,

Mirza Ghulam Ahmad

Promised Messiah and Mahdi in Islam

Written, 22nd May, 1900, Qadian

Notes:

¹ “Star of the *Ummah*, Sun of the Imams, and Chief of the Spiritual Leaders”. – T

² The Holy Quran, 22:39. – T

³ The Righteous Caliphs — an expression used to refer to the first four successors to the Holy Prophet Muhammad. – T

⁴ Officials of the British Government of India. – T

⁵ British India – T

⁶ Literally, “land of war”; a technical legal term coined by Islamic jurists of old to denote countries regarded as being at war with Muslims. – T

⁷ These words, which occur in the prophecy made by the Holy Prophet Muhammad about the Messiah to come, mean: “He will abolish war”. – T

⁸ “...till war lay down its burdens” — The Holy Quran, 47:4. – T

⁹ In many editions of Sahih Bukhari, instead of the words “he will abolish war”, the words “he will abolish *jizyah*” are found. Here we cite two examples of the version “he will abolish war”.

1. Maulana Syed Abul Ala Maududi has quoted this hadith in his book *Finality of Prophethood* (under the heading about Hadith reports relating to the descent of Jesus), and used the version which says “he will abolish war”. This book is included in Maududi’s commentary of the Quran, *Tafhim-ul-*

¹⁰ The North West Frontier of India bordering Afghanistan. – T

¹¹ “Is the reward of goodness anything but goodness?”, the Holy Quran, 55:60. – T

¹² “He is indeed successful who purifies it (i.e., his soul)”, the Holy Quran, 91:9. – T

¹³ “And when the camels are abandoned,” The Holy Quran, 81:4 – T

¹⁴ *Sahih Muslim*, Book of Faith, ch. 71: ‘Descent of Jesus, son of Mary’, hadith number 155c. – T

¹⁵ *Barahin-i-Ahmadiyya*, v. 4, p. 511, footnote to footnote 3. – T

¹⁶ Islamic religious law. – T

¹⁷ Obligatory charity for a Muslim. – T

¹⁸ The Sikhs ruled over the Punjab and the North West Frontier region of India. – T

¹⁹ Karl Gottlieb Pfander (1803–1865), Christian missionary of German origin who worked in India to convert Muslims to Christianity. – T

²⁰ A Muslim scholar who converted to Christianity. – T.

²¹ The Turkish Ottoman government was the main Muslim government of the time in the world and ruled over the holy places of Islam. It was traditionally known in the east as the ‘Roman’ government (as the author calls it here in the original Urdu) because Turkey had been part of the eastern Roman Empire. – T

Appendix

to the Paper on *Jihad*

**The nature of, and the truth about, the claims of
being Jesus the Messiah and Muhammad the Mahdi.**

And a petition to

His Excellency Honourable Viceroy of India

Although I have explained in many of my books that my claim that I am Jesus the Messiah and also Muhammad the Mahdi is not based on the view that I am actually Jesus, peace be upon him, and actually Muhammad Mustafa, may peace and the blessings of Allah be upon him. Even so, those persons who have not read my books carefully might erroneously think that I have claimed that the souls of these two venerable prophets have appeared within me by transmigration. But in fact this is not so. Rather, the truth is that these prophets of yore prophesied about the last age that it would be a time which will be filled with two types of injustice.

One injustice will relate to the rights of the creatures and the other injustice pertains to the rights of the Creator. Injustice pertaining to the rights of the creatures will be that the blood of humans shall be shed under the name of *jihad* so much so that one who will kill an innocent person will think that by shedding that blood he is becoming entitled to a great heavenly reward. Apart from this, many other types of violations of human rights will be carried out simply in the name of religious honour. Accordingly, this present era is that age because every God-fearing person, in response to the call of his honest true belief and justice, has to

concede that, for example, daily some barbarous person of the Frontier region murders those British officers who are protectors of their and their brethren's lives and honour. Clearly, this is an outrageous act and a violation of human rights.

Do they not remember the time of the Sikh rule, which would hasten to murder for saying aloud the Call to prayer? What sin has the British Government committed for which their officers are punished like this? On entering the Punjab this government granted complete religious freedom to Muslims. Gone is the time when one was punished for calling out the Call even in low voice. Now you give the Call from the minarets and offer prayers in congregation in your mosques; no one interferes. During the Sikh era Muslims were living like slaves and now through the British rule their honour has been restored afresh. Their lives, property and honour, all three, have become secure and doors of Muslim libraries have been opened.

Then, has the British Government done good to them or evil? During the Sikh era graves of the revered Muslim saints were demolished and the incident of Sarhand cannot have been forgotten by anyone. But the present government is a protector of our graves as well as a protector of our lives.

We are living in peace and safety under a government which has not demonstrated even an iota of religious prejudice. Any Muslim may perform any of his religious worships like performing *Hajj*, paying *Zakat*, offering prayers or claim that he has been Divinely raised as a *mujaddid* (reformer) of the era, a *Wali* or a *Qutb* (saint), or Messiah or Mahdi, this just government has no concern about this except that he may be prey to rebellious thoughts forsaking the path of compliance. In spite of such benevolent behavior of the government towards the Muslims, in return Muslims unjustly murder innocent and blameless officers who, adhering to justice, are busy rendering service to the country day and night.

And if it were said that those are the acts of the people of the Frontier region and what is the sin of the Muslims and Muslim priests of this country in this matter? Then, in response, we respectfully say that, whether one accepts it or not, there certainly is one sin. And this is that on the one hand we see zeal in the wild tribes of the Frontier for becoming warrior-heroes, while on the other hand we do not see similar zeal in the Muslim priests of this country for real sympathy towards this government and its officers. If they are truly well wishers of this government then why do they not issue a unanimous religious decree and publicize it in the Frontier region so that the excuse of those ignorant people be demolished that they are real warrior-heroes, who will enter Paradise on their death.

I fail to understand the claim of so much obedience by these Muslim priests and spiritual guides, while they cannot show any great service in this behalf; rather, this claim is the way of degradation. There are many Muslim priests about whom there is a greater objection than this. May God reform their hearts! In short, in the matter of the rights of the creatures, our Muslim people are doing great injustice. When this is our behaviour towards our generous king then what will we do to others? God in heaven saw this injustice and for its rectification He raised a person having ways and nature of the Messiah Jesus. He named him Messiah in this way that as a reflection of the thing which appears in water or mirror can metaphorically be called that thing. The teachings now which we emphasize are '*love thy enemy*' and '*wish the best for the creatures of God*'. The person who originally emphasized these teachings was the great prophet whose name is Jesus.

In the present era, the condition of some Muslims is such that, instead of loving their enemies, they unjustly murder them through a shameful religious excuse though they have not done them any wrong; rather they have done them good. That is why it was necessary that, for the reform of such people, a person having received revelation from God is raised; one who has in him the

ways and nature of Jesus, son of Mary, and who has brought the message of peace and reconciliation. Was a person who resembles Jesus not needed in the present era? Undoubtedly, he was needed when among the Muslims millions of such persons are found on the earth who habitually murder people of other communities under the excuse of *jihad*. In spite of living under a benevolent government, some of them can neither love them with a wholly pure heart, nor take true sympathy to the pinnacle of perfection nor be completely free of hypocrisy and double standards. Therefore, it was the call of time that someone comes in the colours of the Messiah. So I am the likeness-of-Messiah raised to resemble him spiritually, in habits and in the nature.

And the second type of injustice, which pertains to the rights of the Creator, is the belief of the Christians of this era, which has reached its climax in exaggeration. There is no doubt that Jesus is a great prophet of God, the Exalted, and he was a beloved of God, Divinely Exalted, light of the world, the sun of guidance and an intimate of God who has a station near His throne and millions of people who have true love for him and who act upon his teachings and who follow his guidance will find salvation from Hell. But notwithstanding all this, it is a great error and faithlessness to make that elect of Divine a God.

The beloved of God stand in a special relationship with Him. If they call themselves the son of God and claim that it is God who speaks in them and it is He whose manifestation is through them, on account of that relationship such statements are correct, keeping in view their state (of ecstasy) at that time but they need interpretation. When a person, through being subsumed in the Divine, and after being reared in His Light, is born again then saying such words in the metaphoric sense, that it is not he himself but God who is manifested in him, is an ancient axiom of the devotees of God. But it does not mean that that person has really become the Sustainer of the worlds (that is, God).

At this subtle point most common persons slip into error. Thousands of elects of God, saints and *avatars* who have been made God, it is in fact the result of these errors. The fact is that when spiritual and heavenly matters come into the hands of the masses they cannot get to their root and ultimately, with some distortion, taking the metaphor as fact they become prey to great error and become misguided. Thus, the present day Christian scholars are caught in this very error. They emphasize that somehow or other Jesus Christ may be made God. And this is a great violation of the rights of the Creator.

In order to establish this right of God and for establishing the magnificence of the Unity of Godhead in the hearts of mankind, a great Prophet appeared in Arabia whose name was Muhammad and Ahmad, may countless blessings of God be on him. Religion was divided into two parts. Its supreme part was: *There is no God but Allah* — that is the Unity of Godhead. The other is: be sympathetic and compassionate for mankind and desire for others what which you desire for yourself. Out of these two parts, Jesus' mission emphasized sympathy and compassion for mankind because that was the need of his time. The other, and the supreme part, that is, *There is no God but Allah*, which was the fountainhead of the Divine Majesty and the Unity of Godhead, was emphasized by the Holy Prophet Muhammad because that era needed that emphasis.

Then, after that, came our time in which we are now. At this time both these evils achieved perfection. The violation of the rights of mankind and shedding the blood of innocent people, as a result of which thousands of innocent persons were put to death with the sword by the wild ones, had made its way into the beliefs of Muslims. And, on the other hand, the evil of violation of the rights of God too had reached its climax. It had crept into the Christian belief by claiming that the God, whom human beings and angels should worship, is the Messiah. And it was so much exaggerated that according to their belief there are three parts of

the Unity but in practice there is only one who is worshipped and to whom prayers are addressed — that is Christ.

Both of these violations of the rights of mankind and of the Sustainer of mankind are at their pinnacle, so it is difficult to distinguish which of the two has touched extreme in exaggeration. So at this time, God has named me the Messiah in respect of the rights of mankind and He has sent me in the likeness of Jesus in ways, colours and character. Similarly, in respect of the rights of the Creator He has named me Muhammad and Ahmad, and for the dissemination of the Unity of Godhead He has sent me, clothing me in his garb, in the likeness in practices, colour and character of the Holy Prophet Muhammad.

So in these senses I am Jesus the Messiah and Muhammad the Mahdi. Messiah was a title which was given to Jesus which literally means, ‘one who touches God and partakes some from the Divine favours’, and His heir and the one who chooses truth and righteousness. And Mahdi is a title which was bestowed upon the Holy Prophet Muhammad *Mustafa* which means, ‘one who is by nature the guided one and inheritor of all guidance and repository of the complete reflection of the noun “the guide”’. The Grace and Mercy of God, the Exalted, has made me the inheritor of both these titles and unified both of these titles in my person. Thus in these senses I am the Messiah and Muhammad the Mahdi and it is that form of manifestation called image (*burūz*) in Islamic terminology. Thus two images have been conferred on me — the image of Jesus and the image of the Holy Prophet Muhammad.

Thus, my personality is a combination of the personalities of these two great Prophets (peace be on them) by way of this imagery. In the position of the Messiah, my work is to stop the brutal and blood shedding attacks of Muslims, as has been clearly stated in Hadith reports that when the Messiah will come to the world again he will stop all religious wars. So it is happening now. Till this date about thirty thousand or more persons who reside in various parts of British India are in my group (those having sufficient

knowledge and understanding are about ten thousand but all types of persons including the illiterate are thirty thousand or perhaps more). And every person who enters my pledge of allegiance and believes in me as the Promised Messiah, from that very day he has to believe that in this era *jihad* is absolutely prohibited because the Messiah has appeared.

Especially, in view of my teachings, he has to become a well-wisher of the British Government truly and not hypocritically. And it is the unfolding of that standard of reconciliation, which, if a hundred thousand Muslim priests had desired to establish such an effective organization to stop the brutal *jihad* then it would have been impossible to do. And I am hopeful, if Allah so wills, in a few years this peace-loving group, which is erasing the thoughts of such *jihad* and of becoming warrior-heroes, will number in hundreds of thousands and those who indulge in brutal *jihad* will change their garb.

In the capacity of Muhammad the Mahdi it is my duty to re-establish in the world the belief in the Divine Unity through heavenly signs because our Leader and Master, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, had established the Majesty, Power and Authority of God in the hearts of the idol worshippers of Arabia simply through heavenly signs. So, in the same way I have been supported through the Holy Spirit. The God who showed Himself to all the Prophets and manifested Himself to Moses, the *Kaleemullah* (one to whom God spoke), at Mount Sinai and Who revealed Himself to Jesus at Mount Seir and Who shone to the Holy Prophet Muhammad on Mount Paran, the same Almighty God has manifested Himself to me. He spoke to me and told me that He is the Exalted One for whose worship all the Prophets were raised. He alone is the Creator and the Master and Who has no associate. He is neither begotten nor does death overtake Him.

And it was revealed to me that the beliefs of the majority of the Christians about Christ, that is Trinity and atonement, all are human errors and are a clear deviation from Jesus' real teachings.

God, without any mediator, informed me through His Living Word. And He said to me that if I am confronted with the difficulty of people saying how can they believe I am Divinely raised, then tell them His heavenly signs in my favour are sufficient testimony as proof. Prayers are accepted. Matters of the unseen are disclosed before their happening and those secrets which none except God knows are opened to me. And, the second sign is that if someone chooses to combat (with me) in these matters, be he from the East or the West, he will be defeated. For example, in acceptance of prayer and the knowledge of its acceptance before it comes to be and the knowledge of matters unseen which are outside the limit of human knowledge.

These are the signs, which have been granted to me so that through these signs I may draw people towards the true God — Who, in reality, is the God of our souls and our bodies and towards Whom everyone of us has to walk. It is true that the religion that does not have heavenly power in it, is nothing. All the Prophets have declared that the sign of a true religion is that it has heavenly power in it.

This, too, is worth remembering: that these two names, that is Jesus the Messiah and Muhammad the Mahdi, which God has chosen for me are not recent; rather both names have been mentioned about me in the revelation from God, the Exalted, which was written in my book *Barahin Ahmadiyya*, which was published twenty years ago so that I may deliver the above-mentioned message to both these communities, Muslims and Christians. Alas, if there was a desire in their hearts and fear of the Day of Judgment then every seeker after truth had been provided with a chance to receive satisfaction from me. The true religion is only that which has Divine power in it and manifests the face of God, the Exalted, through supernatural deeds. I am an eyewitness that such a religion is the religion of the Unity of Godhead, which is only Islam, in which the status of the Creator has not been assigned to the creatures. Christian religion too was from God but alas it no longer retains those teachings.

It is deplorable that the Muslims of the present era have become deprived of the other part of the Islamic Law, which pertains to sympathy for mankind, compassion and service of humanity. And they, after claiming belief in the Unity of Godhead, are involved in such barbarous behaviour, which is quite shocking. I have tried many a times to liberate them from these habits. But, alas, some such incidents come to pass with them which revive their barbarous sentiments. And these are the writings of the Christian priests of poor understanding, which have that poisonous effect. For example, the books of Rev. Imad-ud-Din, Rev. Thakur Das, Rev. Safdar Ali, the pamphlets of Rev. Rewari and the book *Ummahat-ul-Mominin*¹ etc., which are full of extremely despicable and false allegations against our Holy Prophet. These books are such that, if a Muslim who does not have a very large measure of patience and humbleness reads these then involuntarily he will be extremely infuriated. For, instead of intellectual discussion, there is extremely abusive language in these books, which cannot be tolerated by common Muslims. For example, one esteemed Christian priest observes in his newspaper, which is published from Lucknow, that if the recurring of the 1857 uprising is possible, then Rev. Imad-ud-Din's books will instigate it. Now it is worth considering how dangerous is the work of Rev. Imad-ud-Din, that even an honourable Christian priest has expressed such an alarming opinion about it.

In the past, after observing fury in the Muslims on account of such abusive books and writings, I too had published some writings wherein I used somewhat harsh language in response. By this harsh response my intention was that on seeing *repayment in the same coin* the fury of the Muslims may somewhat subside. Although Muslims benefited to some degree from such writings, and on seeing a response in this manner their sentiments cooled down, the difficulty is that, even now such inciting writings of Christian priests are being published daily, which cannot be tolerated by sensitive and short-tempered Muslims. It is an extremely danger-

ous affair that, on the one hand, Christian priests level false allegations against Muslims that the Holy Quran commands them always to carry on *jihad* in every era and thus keep refreshing the memory of the custom of *jihad*, and on the other hand through their abusive writings keep provoking them.

One does not know whether they are such simpletons as not to comprehend that there is a likelihood of fearsome results by the use of both these methods together. We have repeatedly written that the Holy Quran absolutely does not teach such *jihad*. The truth is only this much: that in its early period some opponents had violently sought to block, rather annihilate, Islam with the sword. Therefore, Muslims were permitted to pick up the sword in self-defence. The commandment that 'they either be killed or accept Islam' applied to those opponents. Thus, this commandment was time-specific to that era and not forever. Islam is not responsible for those actions of kings that were committed by them through erroneous interpretation or selfish desires after the era of the Holy Prophet.

Now any person who, in order to deceive ignorant Muslims, keeps repeatedly reminding them of the doctrine of *jihad* in fact seeks to instigate their poisonous habit. It would have been better if the Christian priests, keeping in view the true facts, had emphasized that there is no such *jihad* in Islam nor it is permissible forcibly to convert anyone to Islam. The scripture in which the commandment "there is no compulsion in religion"² is present till this day, can we surmise about it that it teaches such *jihad*? In short, how can we complain about the Muslim priests! We have a complaint against the Christian priests that they have not chosen the path of truth, which was useful for the policies of the government.

Out of this compassion I had twice requested His Excellency, the Viceroy of India, that, for some period, such debates in which each party indulges in fault finding in the religion of the other party must be banned. But till now no attention has been paid to my request. Therefore, now for the third time, I repeat my request,

that at least for a period of five years this practice of attacking other religions may be banned. It should be absolutely prohibited that the followers of one religion may indulge in hostile attacks on the religion of others because this results in ever-increasing malice in the country so much so that friendly mingling between various communities has been given up. Sometimes a party, due to lack of knowledge, makes such an objection against the other, which in reality is not correct and thus really injures the feelings of the other. At times it creates great mischief, for example, objection of *jihad* against Islam. Rather, such objections remind the opposing group and refresh their forgotten fury and ultimately become a cause of mischief. If our wise government issues a five-year decree that all the religious communities of British India, including the Christian priests, are prohibited from making hostile attacks against the religions of others, meet each other with compassion and goodness and everyone only explains the good in his own religion then, I am sure, the poisonous tree of discord and rancor, which is growing within our country, may quickly disappear. Such action by the government shall be considered praiseworthy and have an effect on the people of the Frontier region and will result in peace and reconciliation. It seems to be the Divine intent in the heavens that the course of conflict be abolished and, through the course of reconciliation, paths to mutual compassion may be opened. If any religion has any truth in it then that truth should be demonstrated rather than finding fault in others' religion.

It is not the status of every officer to grant approval and to act upon the proposal that I am presenting. It is the station of the highly placed and brilliant officials only that they may understand its nature. And we are hopeful that His Excellency, Lord Curzon, the Viceroy of India, out of his personal extensive good qualities and understanding of the opportunity, will certainly pay attention to this request and through his royal resolution will promulgate this proposal. If this be not possible for some reason then during his tenure he should at least test, by personal examination, which present religions of this country have Divine Power in it. And for this

purpose orders may be issued to renowned scholars from all religious communities such as Muslims, Christians, Sikhs, Sanatan Dharmies, Brahma Samajists, Judaism, etc., calling upon them that if there is any Divine Power in their religion, be it in the form of prophecy or any other form then they should exhibit it. After that if such great Power which is the Supreme Power may be proved then such religion may be considered true and worthy of reverence; and since I have been granted the Spirit for this purpose from the heavens, therefore, on behalf of my group I am the first one of the applicants who is willing for such a test in comparison to all other parties. At the same time I am praying that God, the Exalted, may ever grant prosperity to this government under whose reign we have this chance that, being an appointee of God, we may make such request for the manifestation of Divine Majesty.

Peace

Petitioner,

Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, from Qadian.

7th July, 1900

Notes:

¹ This is the name of a book, which means ‘Mothers of the Believers’, in which abusive allegations were made against the Holy Prophet Muhammad and his wives. – T

² The Holy Quran 2:256. – T

Publisher's Supplement

Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad and other Muslim scholars on the meaning of *Jihad*

Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad is condemned for declaring during the British rule of India that *jihad* — in the sense of an armed struggle against British rule — was not allowed by Islam. His critics allege that he “abolished” the Islamic teaching of *jihad* at the behest of the British to help them to rule over India. They forget that the British arrived in India in 1612 C.E. when their ambassador, Sir Thomas Roe, was instructed by James I to visit the court of Mughal Emperor Nuruddin Salim Jahangir to ask for trade concessions. By the time Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad was born in 1835 C.E. the East India Company ruled most of India either directly or indirectly. Therefore, there was no need for them to engage someone's services to propagate that *jihad* is abolished.

The Punjab, where Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad was born, was ruled by the Sikhs at the time. There had been a long history of fighting between the Sikhs and the Mughal rulers of India during the wars of succession between the various Mughal princes until weakening of the Mughal power and Ranjit Singh's foundation of the Sikh kingdom in the Punjab. In their Kingdoms, the Sikhs reduced Muslims to the state of untouchables. They confiscated lands of Muslim nobles, including Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad's ancestors, and banned all public display of religious rituals by the Muslims. Even *Adhan*, the Call to prayer, was banned. It seemed that the Sikhs were taking their revenge for losing the political struggle during those wars of succession.

In 1849 C.E., the British defeated Ranjit Singh's successors and annexed the Punjab, which included the North West Frontier

of what is now Pakistan. Muslims breathed a sigh of relief because religious freedom was restored and some lands were returned to the nobles. At the time, Muslims generally praised British rule and held that *jihad* against them was unlawful in Islam because they were afraid that if the Hindus and Sikhs came to rule India they would be returned to the state of untouchables and subjected to restrictions on their religion.

Furthermore, Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad claimed to be the Mahdi. The British had had a bitter experience at the hands of the Mahdi in Sudan. They still held Muslims responsible for the uprising in India in 1857 C.E. and looked upon any claimant to being the Mahdi with great suspicion. Their suspicions were fuelled by false reports from Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad's opponents that he was preparing for an uprising against them. In a number of his books Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad commented upon such reports. He said:*

1. "Muslims in government employment are constantly endeavouring to prove me a traitor to this benevolent government. I hear that efforts are always being made to report false things about me [to the government], whereas you know well that I am not a man of rebellious nature." (*Tiryaq-ul-Qulub*, p. 15)
2. "Some of them [i.e., the opponents] write false complaints against me to the British government, and they put these forward, dressing themselves up as informers, and concealing their enmity." (*Anjam Atham*, p. 67–68)
3. "In this book of his, he has given an account of my circumstances, by way of fabrication, and has written that I

* Quotations given here are taken from the book *The Ahmadiyya Case*, which contains the English translation by Dr Zahid Aziz of the evidence compiled by Hafiz Sher Muhammad and presented to the South Africa High Court in Cape Town in 1985 to show that Ahmadis are Muslims.

am a spreader of disorder and an enemy of the government, and that signs of rebellion can be seen in my behaviour, and that he is certain that I shall do such things, and that I am an opponent of the government.” (*Nur-ul-Haq*, Part I, p. 24; reference here is to a Christian preacher, Rev. Imad-ud-Din.)

4. “It should be mentioned that Dr. Clarke [a Christian missionary opponent] has said in his [court] statement, at some places implicitly and at others explicitly, that I am a danger to the British government.” (*Kitab-ul-Barriyya*, p. 3)
5. “They are trying to turn the government against me. The government is excusable to some extent if it were to turn against me, because it is not the knower of the unseen. This is why I often had to send memorials specially addressed to the government, and to acquaint it myself with my circumstances, so that it would know the true and correct facts.” (*Malfuzat*, 1984 edition, Part I, p. 209; date of statement: 21 January 1898)

It is astonishing, therefore, that the opponents first take false complaints against Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad to the government, and act as false informers, alleging that he was a rebel against the British government. But when he clears himself of this charge, they try to incite people against him by accusing him of praising the government!

Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad wrote the book *The British Government and Jihad* in this context. In this book he shows from the Holy Quran and Hadith that *jihad* does not necessarily mean war. Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad did not say the *jihad* is forbidden under all circumstances; rather that fighting the British rule in India cannot be given the name of Islamic *jihad*. He wrote:

1. “In short, Islamic battles fall into only three categories: for self-defence; for punishment, i.e., blood for blood; for

establishing freedom, i.e., to break the power of those who kill converts to Islam. Since there is no direction to force a person into the faith by means of coercion and threat of murder, it is utterly vain and pointless to wait for a blood-shedding Mahdi or Messiah, for it is not possible that such a person could come, against the teachings of the Quran, and make people Muslims by the sword.” (*Masih Hindustan Main*, p. 10)

2. “We are commanded that we should make the same kind of preparation to face the unbelievers as they do to confront us. Or that we treat them as they treat us, and as long as they do not raise the sword against us, we do not raise it against them till then.” (*Haqiqat al-Mahdi*, p. 19)

Views of some prominent Muslims of the time are given below.

1. Sayyid Ahmad Bareilvi

He was a Muslim military and religious leader who fought against Sikh rule in the North West of India, and is regarded as a *mujaddid* of the thirteenth century *Hijrah*. It is recorded about him:

“When he was going forth to conduct *jihad* against the Sikhs, a man asked him: ‘Why do you go so far to fight *jihad* against the Sikhs, when the British are ruling the country and they are deniers of Islam. Conduct *jihad* against them in every house and wrest India from them; millions of people will support and help you’. ...

“He replied: The British government may be deniers of Islam, but they are not oppressing the Muslims, nor preventing them from religious obligations and worship. For what reason then can we fight *jihad* against them, and needlessly shed the blood of both sides, contrary to the principles of religion.” (*Musalmanon Ka Roshan Mustaqbil*, by Tufail Ahmad Manglori, 3rd edition, 1940)

2. Sayyid Muhammad Ismail Shaheed

He was the deputy of Sayyid Ahmad Bareilvi, and was killed along with him in a battle against the Sikhs. It is written about him:

- i. “A man asked, ‘Why do you not give a pronouncement of *jihad* against the British?’ He replied: In no way is it obligatory to fight *jihad* against them. Firstly, we are their subjects. Secondly, they do not interfere in our performance of our religious duties. We have every kind of freedom under their rule. In fact, if someone attacks them, Muslims must fight the attacker and let not their government be harmed a whit.” (*Hayyat Tayyiba*, biography by Mirza Hairat of Delhi, 1972 edition, published in Lahore, p. 364)
- ii. “This was the reason why Maulavi Ismail of Delhi, who knew the Quran and Hadith, and acted upon them, did not fight in his country India against the British, under whose peace and protection he lived, nor did he fight the states of this country. Outside this country, he fought the Sikhs who interfered in the religious practices of the Muslims, prohibiting the loud sounding of the Call to prayer.” (*Al-Iqtisad fi masa’il al-jihad*, by Maulavi Muhammad Husain Batalvi, published 1876, pp. 49–50)

3. Maulana Sayyid Nazir Husain of Delhi

He was the highest Ahl-i hadith theologian in the late 1800s.

- i. In a *fatwa*, he wrote: “Since the criterion of *jihad* is absent from this land, to conduct *jihad* here would be a means of destruction and a sin.” (*Fatawa Naziriyya*, vol. iv, p. 472)
- ii. It is noted about him: “In terms of the true meaning of *jihad*, Sayyid Nazir Husain of Delhi did not consider the 1857 rebellion to be Islamic legal *jihad*. He thought it to be faithlessness, breach of covenant, and mischief, and

declared it to be a sin to take part or help in it.” (Magazine *Isha‘at as-Sunna*, vol. vi, no. 10, October 1883, p. 288)

4. Maulavi Muhammad Husain Batalvi

He was an Ahl-i hadith leader and editor of *Isha‘at as-Sunna*, who opposed Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad after his claim to be the Promised Messiah. In a book on *jihad*, he wrote:

“Uninformed Muslims should examine this implication and bear it in mind, and not consider fighting with every rival faith on account of its unbelief to be legal *jihad*. To fight with peaceful or covenanted people most definitely cannot be legal *jihad*, whether national or religious, but is rebellion and sedition. The Muslims who took part in the 1857 rebellion were serious sinners, and according to the Quran and Hadith they were rebels, mischief makers and wicked. Most of the ordinary people among them were like beasts. Those known as the prominent and the Ulama were unacquainted with true faith, or lacking in understanding.” (*Al-Iqtisad fi masa’il al-Jihad*, p. 49)

5. Nawab Siddiq Hasan Khan of Bhopal

He was an eminent Ahl-i hadith religious scholar as well as political leader. In his book *Tarjuman-i Wahhabiyyat*, he wrote:

- i. “This book has been written to inform the British government that no Muslim subject of India and the Indian states bears malice towards this great power.” (Edition published in Lahore, 1895, p. 4)
- ii. “Be concerned about those people who are ignorant of their religious teachings, in that they wish to efface the British government, and to end the current peace and tranquility by disorder under the name of *jihad*. This is sheer stupidity and foolishness.” (p. 7)
- iii. “During the mutiny [of 1857], some rajas and so-called

nawabs and men of means interfered in the peace and calm of India under the name of *jihad*, and they fanned the flames of battle till their disorder and hostility reached such a level that women and children, who cannot be killed under any law, were thoughtlessly slaughtered. ... If anyone lets loose such mischief today, he would also be the same kind of trouble-maker, and from beginning to end he would stain the name of Islam.” (p. 15)

Hazrat Mirza is accused of having described *jihad* as *haram* (forbidden by the religion). Below are quoted writings of some Ulama in which they have used the word *haram* in the same context.

1. Maulavi Muhammad Husain Batalvi:

- i. “To fight against this government [i.e. British rule of India] or to aid those who fight against it, even though they be one’s Muslim brothers, is clear treachery and *haram*.” (*Al-Iqtisad fi masa’il al-jihad*, p. 49)
- ii. “It is not permissible for Muslim subjects to fight, or aid those who fight, against their government, whatever be the religion of that government, when they are performing their religious obligations with freedom under its peace and law. On this basis, it is *haram* for the Indian Muslims to oppose, and to rebel against, the British government.” (*Isha‘at as-Sunna*, vol. vi, no. 10, p. 287)

2. Dr Sir Muhammad Iqbal:

“I do not support war, nor can any Muslim support it bearing in mind the limits imposed by the Shari‘ah. According to Quranic teachings, there can only be two types of *jihad* or war: defensive and corrective. In the first case, it is only under the condition ... that when Muslims are wronged and expelled from their homes, they are permitted, not ordered, to raise the sword. ... For territorial ex-

pansion, it is *haram* in Islam to conduct war, and it is also *haram* to raise the sword for the propagation of the faith.” (*Makatib Iqbal*, collection of letters of Iqbal, Part I, p. 203)

3. Sayyid Abul Ala Maudoodi:

“No true reformer can decide to adopt only one of the sword or the pen for the execution of his reform work. He needs both of these to accomplish his task. As long as preaching and exhortation by the tongue can be effective in teaching people morality and civilisation, to raise the sword is not only not permitted, but it is *haram*.” (*Al-Jihad fil-Islam*, 3rd edition, p. 27)

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Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad (1835–1908) arose in India at a time when the faith of Islam was under the heaviest attack by its critics, being misrepresented as a primitive, crude and violent ideology. Muslim leaders, with their out-dated knowledge, narrow vision and their own misconceptions about Islam, were failing to meet these challenges. In his writings and lectures, he put forward the captivating picture of Islam as found in the Quran

and the life of the Holy Prophet Muhammad — a religion of reason, peace and tolerance. He refuted all charges against Islam and established the supremacy of its beliefs. He repeatedly denied the false allegation made against him of claiming to be a prophet; on the contrary, his mission was to preach Islam in its pristine purity, as taught by the Holy Prophet Muhammad, the Last of all the Prophets.

In this book, he has strongly refuted the false notion that Islam teaches Muslim to wage a war against non-Muslims known as *jihad*. He writes:

“Anyone who has eyes and reads the narrations in Hadith and looks at the Quran can realize it quite well that this form of *jihad*, which many savage-like people are pursuing, is not the *jihad* taught by Islam. In fact, these are criminal acts which are done through the arousal of base passions or in the vain hope of attaining paradise ... Can it be a virtuous deed that there is a man going about in the market place, we have no connection with him so much so that we do not know his name and he does not know our name, but despite this we fire a gunshot at him intending to kill him? Is this religious behaviour?”

Although written in the year 1900, this book reads very much as if it has been written for today to condemn violent extremism.