

Accordingly, I still possess these writings, by their own hands, some of which have been included in the record of the case of Dr. Clarke. But since even after this permission having been given, Dr. Clarke still mentioned those prophecies and concealed the true facts, so for the future⁴ I do not like to make any prophecies of doom on such requests. Rather, from our side the basic principle in future will be that if someone makes a request for such prophecies of doom, no attention will be paid to it, unless he produces a written order from the District Magistrate giving permission. This is a procedure in which there will not be left any room for deceit.

I also admit that in the published controversies with the opponents [of Islam], there was some harshness in my words, but that was not as an initiative. In fact, all those writings were in reply to highly scurrilous attacks. The words used by the opponents were so harsh and abusive that some severity in reply was advisable. This is borne out by a comparison of the strong language appearing in my books with that of the opponents' books which I have collected together and included in the book in which the record of the case has been published, which I have named *Kitāb al-Bariyya*. Besides, I have just mentioned that my harsh words are as a *rejoinder*. The *initiative* in using strong language was taken by the opponents [of Islam].

I could have even ignored patiently the vituperation of the opponents, but due to two considerations I had deemed it expedient to make a reply. *Firstly*, so that the opponents, finding their strong language replied to in harsh terms, change their attitude and speak with civility in the future. *Secondly*, so that

4. Some of our opponents who are in the habit of making fabrications and telling falsehood say to the people that the Deputy Commissioner has interdicted prophesying in future, especially prophecies which frighten, and prophecies of punishment have been strictly forbidden. So let it be known that these claims are entirely false. I have not been interdicted at all. Besides, the procedure adopted by me concerning the prophecies of doom, i.e. prophesying after obtaining permission [of the other party], is such that court and law have no objection to it.

the Muslim masses do not become incensed at the extremely insulting and provocative writings of the opponents, and finding the reply to the harsh words also to be somewhat strong they might console their excited minds with the feeling that if strong words were used by the other side, they have also received a reply with some severity. This way they will abstain from violent retaliation. I know well that because of religious writings such as the books of Lekhram, Inderman, Dayanand and the Rev. Imad-ud-Din, and most of the articles of the journal *Nur Afshan* of Ludhiana, there was a great apprehension of disorder and provocation. But since books were written against those books, replying to harsh words with somewhat strong language, the heated emotions of the Muslim masses were suppressed.

It is absolutely true that if in reply to vituperation somewhat strong words are not used by the other community, then it is possible that the wrath and anger of its ignorant men might find another outlet. It is a judicious policy for the release of pent-up emotions of the victims, that in controversies they also make strong replies to vituperative attacks. Nonetheless, this style is not very commendable; rather, it devalues the spiritual effect of the writings, and at the least the harm it does is to cause bad behaviour to spread in the country. It is the duty of the government to promulgate a wide-ranging, strict law, forbidding every religious group from using scurrilous language, to prevent the defamation of the Founder and the Book of any community. And no accusation should be levelled against a religion unless it is based on actual facts contained in the authentic and accepted books of that community. Such a law will result in great peace in the country and the mouths of the seditious and mischievous men will be closed, and all religious debates will take on a scholarly colour.

To achieve just this end, I have prepared a petition for presentation to the government, with the signatures of several thousand Muslims. However, there is delay because the number of signatures is not yet sufficient. But truly this is a matter

needing the attention of the government. For the preservation of peace, no arrangement is better than this that every community should avoid use of insulting and provocative words and should not accuse any religion of teaching something which is not believed by its followers, nor is any basis for it found in the authentic and accepted books of that religion. Nor should it bring forth an accusation which can also be levelled against its own established books and prophets. Anyone violating this rule should be liable to some penalty. Doubtless, the poisonous seed of religious mischiefs cannot be eradicated without these measures.

I am sorry to write that Dr. Clarke, after presenting some of my religious writings, made a statement before the court, contrary to facts, that those strong words were used about him by myself first. I assure the authorities that it is most certainly not my practice to hurt anyone of my own accord, nor do I approve of such a practice. On the contrary, whatever was written in harsh language was a reply to vituperative words, but far milder than the language of the opponents. However, even this technique is against my nature and practice. And as the Deputy Commissioner, in deciding the case, has directed me that in future, in order to avoid provocation, mild and appropriate words be used in debates, I wish to abide by this. And through this Notification, *I strongly impress upon all my followers*, living in the Punjab and in other places in India, that they should also adhere to the same rule in their argumentation and avoid every strong and provocative word. Further, as I have earlier taught in Article 4 of the Conditions of the Pledge, they should adopt true loyalty to the British government and true sympathy for mankind, refrain from provocative manners, and demonstrate an example of noble living by becoming temperate, righteous and inoffensive persons. If any of them does not follow these injunctions or employs unreasonable zeal, uncivil behaviour, or abuse, then he should remember that in such circumstances he shall be considered outside our Movement and have no connection left with me. Look! today I admonish you

people in the clearest words that you should avoid every way of mischief and sedition, develop further the quality of patience and perseverance, keep yourself aloof from all ways of evil and exhibit an example that demonstrates your superiority in every good quality. I hope that you people who are educated, learned, well-trained and good-natured, will act accordingly. But remember, and remember well, that whoever does not follow these instructions is not from among us.⁵

The gist of all my teachings is three precepts. *Firstly*, bearing in mind the duties towards the Exalted God, to remain occupied in His worship and obedience; to instil His honour in your heart, to love Him above all else, to discard base desires out of His fear, to believe in Him as one, without any associate, to maintain a noble life for Him, not to accord His status to any man or any other creature, and to believe Him in actual fact to be the Creator and Master of all souls and bodies. *Secondly*, to deal sympathetically with all humanity, to do good to everyone as far as possible, or at least to have the intention of doing good. *Thirdly*, to show true loyalty to the government under whose protection God has placed us, namely, the British government which is the guardian of our honour, life and property; and to remain clear of all such peace-disturbing activities which cause it anxiety. These are the three principles which should be safeguarded by our Movement, and in which the highest examples should be set.

Remember, too, that this Notification also serves as a *Notice* to the opponents. As I have promised before the Deputy Commissioner that I shall not use harsh words in future, therefore for the fulfilment of the objectives of the maintenance of peace I wish that all of our opponents also abide by the same promise. This is the reason why I did not choose to prolong the

5. My Movement includes highly respectable Muslims, among them being *Tehsildars*, Extra Assistant [Commissioners] and Deputy Collectors, lawyers, businessmen, aristocrats, landlords and *nawabs*, highly learned scholars, doctors, holders of the B.A. and M.A. degrees, and spiritual leaders.

argument before the court although all of my harsh words were used in response, and were, moreover, very few by comparison. *I wanted to give up strong language used even in reply* because I had desired long ago that no community should employ strong language in debate. It is on account of this desire that I procured signatures of Muslims on the petition that is intended to be sent shortly to His Excellency the Governor-General. So the religious opponents are generally *informed* through this Notice that after this decision they also should change their attitude in debate and in future entirely refrain from using harsh, provocative and insulting language in their newspapers and magazines. *If even now*, after the publication of this Notice, they fail to give up their former course, then they *should remember* that I or anyone from among us will have the right to seek redress *through the court*. It is the duty of every community, in order to ensure peace, that they should stop themselves from the use of mischievous writings. So whoever cannot refrain from strong words, abuse and insult even after the publication of this Notice, such a man is, in fact, an enemy of the objectives of the government and likes to cause disorder. It would be the duty of the court to reprove him in order to establish peace.

A better method for participants in debate would be that they should not raise baseless objections against a religion; rather, they should present their doubts based on its standard and reliable books in a civil manner. They should spare themselves the use of mockery, ridicule and insult, and adopt a scholarly attitude in discussions. Nor should they raise objections which are applicable to their own books. For example, if a Muslim criticizes Christian belief, he should in his criticism have due regard for the glory and eminence of Jesus, on whom be peace, and should not disregard his dignity and position. Certainly, he can raise objection in a mild and civil manner in the following way: that if God has sent His son to this world, has He done this according to His ancient practice or against it? If He did it according to His practice then in the past, too, many of His sons must have come to the world and also been crucified, or only

one son might have come again and again. On the other hand, if this act was against His practice, then it cannot be attributed to God because He does never abandon His eternal, everlasting practices. Or, for example, he can raise this objection that this belief is not right that — I seek refuge with God — Jesus became accursed in the eyes of God on account of the sins of the people, because the dictionary meaning of ‘curse’ (*la‘nat*) is that God becomes disgusted with the one who is accursed, the latter conversely becomes disgusted with God, mutual enmity is established between the two, and the accursed goes far away from proximity to God. Such a degraded condition can never be of a man who, in fact, is a beloved of God. So when ‘curse’ becomes inadmissible then atonement becomes false. In short, those objections which point out the error in the beliefs of a community in reasonable language, it is the right of every seeker of truth to present these in a polite and civil manner. And as far as possible, effort must be made to ensure that all objections are of a scholarly kind so that people benefit from them, and there is no disorder or provocation produced.

It is a matter for praising the Exalted God that we Muslims hold as one of our fundamental principles that we should not accuse of falsehood any of the ancient prophets whose people, communities and followers have spread out in the world in large numbers. For, according to our Islamic principles, the Exalted God never bestows the honour on an imposter that, like a true prophet, he becomes accepted among the masses, thousands of groups and communities accept him, and his religion becomes established on the earth for a long time. Accordingly, it should be our duty to accept as true messengers the prophets of all the nations, who claimed revelation from God, were accepted by the masses and their religion was established on earth, whether they were Indians, Persians, Chinese, Hebrew, or belonged to some other nation. And if any untrue beliefs have spread among their followers then these should be considered as errors which entered subsequently. This principle is so attractive and appealing that due to its blessing man protects himself from all

kinds of abuse and ill manners. And it is true in actual fact that the Exalted God never grants a false prophet acceptance among millions of people, nor gives him the honour that is given to the truthful. His popularity cannot at all last over centuries and long periods; rather, his following becomes dispersed very soon and his movement ceases to exist.

So, friends, hold on to this principle firmly. Deal gently with each community. Gentleness enhances wisdom and patience begets deep thoughts. Whoever does not follow this course, is not one of us. If any person belonging to our Movement cannot tolerate the abuses and the vituperation of the opponents, he is free to seek redress from the courts, but it is not proper that he should create disorder by employing severity against severity. This is the instruction that I have given to my Movement. He who does not act upon it, I forsake him and expel him from my following.

But I also expect from our just government that as to the people who in future make hostile attacks, with insults and abuses, on us or our Holy Prophet, may peace and the blessings of Allah be upon him, or on the Holy Quran or on Islam, some proper measures should be employed to check their abuse. I have already written, and repeat, that this Movement of ours is loyal to the British government and shall always remain loyal to it. All members of my Movement are, in fact, humble, peace-loving and loyal in the highest degree to the British government. Further, they are respectable and decent.

The notion of some ignorant people, that I have falsely laid claim to revelation, is wrong. Rather, this is in fact the doing of that mighty God Who created the heaven and the earth and made this universe. In an age when people's faith in God becomes weak, at that juncture a man *like me* is raised to whom God speaks and through whom God reveals His miraculous works, until people understand that *God exists*. *I make this public announcement* that if any man, whether Asian or European, comes and stays in my company, he will after some

time undoubtedly discover the truth of these statements of mine.

Be it known that what I have said does not harm the establishment of peace. We have come to this world to lead a life of humility. Sympathy for humanity and sincerity towards this government, under which we live, i.e. *the British government*, is our principle. We by no means approve of disorder or breach of the peace. *We are ready to help our British government at all times and thank the Exalted God Who has placed us under the protection of a government like this.*

20th September 1897
Mirza Ghulam Ahmad
from Qadian.