



Message to The International Islamic Conference, Amman, Jordan – 4th-6th July, 2005

Bismillahir-Rahmanir-Rahim

I am happy that we have been invited to participate in the International Islamic Conference being held in Amman, from the 4th to the 6th of July, 2005, under the auspices of the Hashemite Kingdom. In light of the purpose of the Conference, I find it appropriate to reiterate, in my message of greetings, the statement that I made in a keynote address at a gathering of eminent Muslim scholars from 48 countries who attended the Seerat Conference in Karachi on Friday, 12th March, 1976, nearly 30 years ago, which I had the honour to preside at the invitation of the then Minister for Religious Affairs, Government of Pakistan.

In my presidential address, I appealed to our ulama not to delay the search for the answers to the issues of a rapidly evolving modernity which Muslims of the world face because we have the knowledge that Islam is Allah's final message to mankind, the Holy Quran His final Book, and Muhammad, may peace be upon him, His last and final Prophet.

These are the fundamental principles of faith enshrined in the Shahada and the Tawhid therein, which bind the Ummah in an eternal bond of unity. With other Muslims, they are continuously reaffirmed by the Shia Ismaili Muslims of whom I am the 49th hereditary Imam in direct lineal descent from the first Shia Imam, Hazrat Ali ibn Abi Talib through his marriage to Bibi Fatimat-az-Zahra, our beloved Prophet's daughter.

I applaud Jordan, under the leadership of His Majesty King Abdullah, for the foresight in hosting and organising this International Islamic Conference for the purpose of fostering unity in the Ummah and promoting the good reputation of our faith of Islam. Let this Conference be part of a continuous process of dialogue in the true spirit of Muslim brotherhood so that the entire wealth of our pluralist heritage bears fruit for the Muslim world, and indeed the whole of humanity; for ours is the heritage which premiates human dignity, transcending bounds of creed, ethnicity, language, gender or nationality.

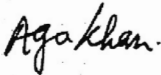
Our historic adherence is to the Jafari Madhhab and other Madhahib of close affinity, and it continues, under the leadership of the hereditary Ismaili Imam of the time. This adherence is in harmony also with our acceptance of Sufi principles of personal search and balance between the zahir and the spirit or the intellect which the zahir signifies.

I agree with our distinguished hosts and conference participants that there is a need today to define which Madhahib will apply to the Ummah. This clarity is critical for modern life in Islam as is evident in areas such as law, access to Islamic banking, or in dealing with the challenges of the rapid generation of new knowledge such as in bio-medical and other scientific fields.

In keeping with our historic tradition of ever abiding commitment to Muslim unity, we reaffirm our respect for the historical interpretation of Islam by our brother Muslims as an equally earnest endeavour to practise the faith in Allah and emulate the example of our Holy Prophet, may peace be upon him, which illuminates Muslim lives and which, Inshallah, will elevate all Muslim souls.

Once again, I congratulate His Majesty and the Hashemite Kingdom for this timely initiative, and I pray for the successful deliberations of the Conference in the spirit of Islamic brotherhood.

With fraternal greetings,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Aga Khan". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

His Highness the Aga Khan
49th hereditary Imam of the Shia Ismaili Muslims