
Ameen F. Rihani's Peace

by
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Peace is a goal that has been a mirage for long time in the sense that it has been so difficult to attain. Even the first two brothers born into this world were not able to maintain peace between each other. Kipling said East is East and West is West and never the twain shall meet, as if to say it is impossible to maintain peace in the world. Rihani's voice was the challenge; East and West should meet and produce the best in the world.

Long before the birth of the United Nations, Ameen Rihani had already echoed what certain world-famous individuals involved with the development of the Human Rights Charter have since proclaimed. Mrs. Eleanor Roosevelt in 1964 saw: "that the peace which the Universal Declaration of the Human Rights seeks goes beyond a no-war situation. It is the real happiness – man's happiness with nature, self and God; the two conditions for peace are freedom and justice. Peace is a career made by warm hearts; it is a practice manifested in human brotherhood."⁽¹⁾

On May 31, 1964, Charles Malek stressed the subject of basic freedom for individuals and groups which he tried to link to the freedom of belief and conscience. This was the message of his country Lebanon.⁽²⁾ Today Kofi Anan says: "Poverty and inequality are fertile ground for conflict."

Peace talks in the world have become a joke because they are knit on the loom of oppression. In almost every treaty for peace, the club of the strong is over the head of the weak and whatever peace is concluded is a mockery. What kind of peace agreements is the world experiencing in our present time? Rihani will call these agreements the peace of submission, not of mutual consensus. What he tried to uphold was a fair peace, one where human rights are

¹ Haj 264.

² Malek 50.

considered sacred, regardless of the parties. This is the kind of peace he advocated among the different factions that legislate for the behavior of human activities.

Rihani's life was not one of comfort and ease. He had roughed it with forces of power which were not humane in dealing with their fellowmen as he saw it, namely the clergy, the rich, the rulers and particularly those among them who had no compassion towards human issues. He confronted the clergy and rulers in the East and the rich in the West. Often his criticism was harsh and his policy of collision was a reaction to their flagrant misbehavior and a way to proclaim his indignation. Without hesitation he introduces himself as a sample peace maker.

Neither glory nor fame are my ultimate goal, neither supremacy nor greatness, neither money nor fortune but my basic goal is to be simple in my work, truthful in my words, straight in my principles and ideas, natural in my behavior and actions, free in what I love or hate. I have to face what confronts me of difficulties on the roads of life seriously, firmly, patiently, bearingly, smiling. I have to oppose corruption and ignorance in people, I have to live straight, truthful and peaceful, sometimes I feel that my personality is of aristocratic will, democratic behavior, seeking freedom and independence for all nations within the realm of human faith and in the shadow of brotherhood and peace. This is my line of conduct and it is for others to follow or have their own.⁽¹⁾

Rihani further charged his brothers in the world to believe and work for the following, saying:

The right of people in self determination is sacred; work for it; the small nation in the right is greater than the big nation in the wrong. The strong, free nation does not deserve its freedom and strength as long as there are in the world weak enslaved nations. Humanity

¹ Rihanyat 27.

cannot reach ultimate progress and compassion as long as its people are enslaved. Peaceful negative resistance for weak nations is legitimate. The Arab unity which is based on nationalism and not religion is a sacred unity, encourage it. There is no powerful comprehensive unity except in a civil democratic government established on justice and equality with all the rights and responsibilities.⁽¹⁾

The preceding quotations convey the message Ameen had himself embraced to uphold peace in the world. He was not explicit but definitely implied it as he made personal peace with most colliding forces, starting with the clergy, in order to have his own personal peace.

Peace with self

This paper deals with the issue of peace as related to Ameen himself, to the people around him, namely the Arabs in general, and finally the peace he wanted so badly for all humanity throughout the whole world. Ameen believed that peacemakers could come out only from among those who believe in the principles of love, equality, and the right to live a decent life. He himself went through many difficulties particularly health wise; his early life was not anywhere restful but through personal hard work he overcame most of the hurdles therein. He did not want to be a businessman but a writer – he became one. He wanted to master both Arabic and English in order to address both cultures and not need anyone to correct his grammar or ideas; he succeeded. He wanted to stand in the pulpits and correct the misunderstandings the West has for the East and vice versa and he did so; although not always successfully. These self-made successes brought peace to Ameen Rihani himself. But this was not his ultimate goal. He could now turn around to see what he could do for his people who were immigrants and elsewhere.

¹ Mawaqef 310.

He had a strong hatred for sectarianism, which he considered the worst enemy against peace. His words were:

Sectarian interests don't serve public national interests.

Sectarianism is another synonym for selfishness.

It is a kind of national treason.

In the weakness of sects is the strength of a nation.⁽¹⁾

Therefore he openly shocked his people when he delivered a long speech early in the first year of the 20th century claiming that tolerance is what we need – tolerance in the school, in the market, in the church, and in the mosque. In this Ameen appears to bring war not peace, but the truth is that peace cannot come except by cleaning the dirt first. He wanted peace among his Arab brothers that is built on a democratic and civil basis, not a religious one.

However he says:

Our friends men of religion prefer to pronounce prayers than to do good and prefer pretension in religion over truth and honesty because they have taken religion as a means of livelihood and as a stepping-stone to supremacy. How would the people keep their faith if they were to enter their own closet and pray to God directly? They call me the sinful heretic rebel. I have many brothers all over the world. We have a clear goal in life and we fear no one. Our goal is to distance people from lying and to draw them to the true living faith, to distance them from the humor of theology and draw them closer to divine truth.⁽²⁾

His motto: "Say your word and go ahead" helped him to freely say what he believed in. He stuck to principles and stood for the right and opposed the crooked ways of men that show deviation and injustice; he proclaimed: "Principles will never change unless they are played with by man. I therefore place the principle ahead of man. There is one thing I am certain of and that is

¹ Qawmiyat 347.

² Rihanyat 276.

that my thoughts shall never change though I have to live like a slave and act like one.”⁽¹⁾

Peace with others

Usually Rihani sided with the underdog: the suffering man, the unjustly treated and the poor. He was ready to risk his neck for the poor and the wretched everywhere. His eyes scrutinize everything around him. He sees the poor miner and his family suffering from the bitter cold while the mine-owners and monopolizers stop selling coal in order to double prices.

The rich fight the laborers, so the monopolizing companies kill the children for material gains... In this free independent Republic many a rich man scorns the common people and disdains his representatives. How many care if the people are warm or cold, if they live or die?

He looks at the bull in the stock exchange horning the small lamb and contrasts it with the miners in the nether darkness. He cannot be reconciled to the injustice and inequality among classes. How strange is this world. “How *marvelous* is this modern civilization which brings us these *super* miracles.”⁽²⁾ How touching is his sarcasm.

He believes that kingdoms may fall because of the people's poverty and republics could fall because of the individuals' fortunes. His loud cry was always, where are the just governments? Where is the compassion of the affluent? Do you think that peace is possible in the presence of these injustices inflicted on the majority of the people?

¹ Letters I; 2.

² Rihanyat 99.

The future city of his habitation should be ruled by truth, where government is for the people not the people for the government. The man who should inhabit it is healthy, understanding and cultured - body, mind, and spirit; should train himself for hardships, depend on nobody, respect people's learning, intelligence, and goodness, compromise not the truth and live for himself, God, and humanity.⁽¹⁾

In seeking true peace Rihani went as far as encouraging insubordination; he asks:

Is it not the right of a lover of truth and freedom to draw his sword against his government if he finds her unjustly fighting to kill the independence of a weak nation and loot its freedom! Did not Thoreau refuse to pay taxes in objection to his government's attitude and was placed in jail? His friend Emerson asked him: why are you in jail? Thoreau answered why are you outside the jail?⁽²⁾

This courage reminds me of the time he came back from Baghdad after his short exile imposed by the French Mandate which exiled him because of his speech "Between Two Regimes" [The Ottoman and the French]. To his friends who sent him notes of congratulation he answered "I thank you dear patriot citizens who congratulate me for the honor the Mandatory government has endowed upon me and wish for you the same and more for the good of our country."⁽³⁾

Ameen Rihani looks back to find that the rich are still abusing the poor, the employers mistreating their employees, the governments are not reforming their ways and his people are not assimilating his ideas. He is disappointed specially with his own people. He writes to his brother Joe early, in 1919 saying:

¹ Rihanyat 124.

² Letters I 394.

³ Letters II 717

Oh, I'm sorrowfully disgusted, disheartened, I who have preached religious toleration for fifteen years among the Syrians and thought that it had got a hold upon the enlightened element at least, to see that they are today just as bad, as rotten as bigoted, as ignorant, as selfish, as narrow, as prejudiced as they were before you and I were born. And I lay it all on the damned priests and the missionaries and the Imams... all of them accursed.⁽¹⁾

Anger could be proportionate to love. He turns around to fulfill another purpose for the Arabs in Arabia.

Rihani's dream to visit his beloved Arabs in the desert has always been a vivid desire although beset with many fears, discouragements and real dangers. He would not be deterred even by the closest, including his wife. Early in 1922 he started his trip to the desert, visiting King Hussein of Hijaz first. There he met his old friend Constantine Yanni, an officer in the Hijaz army whom he asked to accompany him after obtaining the king's permission. They both then moved to Yaman under Imam Yahya. The three-fold purpose of his trip was "to see the country, to write about it and to be of some service to its people and their cause."⁽²⁾ The awful experiences which he met with but did not make him give up are strong evidence for his genuine love and dedication of these brethren. For one reason or another in his letter of introduction sent to the Imam, King Hussein left out Rihani's name. This was a cause of suspicion, wariness and disrespect. Rihani heard with his own ears from the Zaidis (Yamanis) themselves, when asked what they would do with a foreigner or a Christian, "we shall slay him." Before he met the Imam, he had met his sons the Ameers, to whom he had to explain if he was a Hasani or Husaini. With much tact he evaded a direct answer; then when he at last met the Imam he had to admit that he was a Christian but a true Arab. "Although a Syrian by birth and an American by naturalization, I am in my blood an Arab; and although

¹ Letters I 394
² Peak 94, 95

Christianity is the religion of my inheritance I am also of the faith of the great poets and philosophers of Arabia.”

After this, Ameen Rihani and his companion Constantine Yanni were introduced thus: “This is Ameen and this is Constantine, two Christians from Lebanon.”⁽¹⁾ On the same day we met the superintendent of his cartridge factory, Georgy from Austria, who was introduced to us as “one of you.” During that same meeting the Imam received a note after which “he dismissed us with a wave of the hand; I felt as if I had been kicked out.” Both Ameen and Constantine realized that they were captives of the Imam. Nothing could happen without his permission. Meantime, Ameen was hearing complaints from the common people about the unbearable rule of the Sadaat (officers).

For one reason or another, the clouds were lifted and Ameen and his friend were honored by a visit from the Imam, who had many questions for Ameen to answer. They were questions that pertained to politics, society, and government, and they wanted frank answers.

Ameen reassured the Imam saying, “I am a self-appointed missionary of civilization and Constantine is here with me not as a captain in the Hijaz army but as a Rafiq (friend)”, and he mentioned again the three-fold purpose of his travels. Ameen was overjoyed and ready to give his intelligent constructive answers

A Yamani Hijazi alliance will be of great help to resolve, to your own satisfaction, the Hudaida problem. Substitute diplomacy for the sword; continue your negotiations with the British, therefore, and conclude a treaty of alliance with the Hijaz. Your people need protection from the cold and from ignorance and from poverty; they need clothes, they need schools, they need modern means of transportation and trade; and these will come only through peace and the broadening of the human mind. I do not want to see any wars between the East and the West. Of course I want to see Arabia

¹ Peak 94, 95.

mistress in her own house which is only possible if the rulers and chiefs stop fighting against each other and unite in a common cause, the cause of national integrity and international peace and goodwill. For the solution of all your political problems you have hither applied almost exclusively the sword, try peace once, give peace a chance.⁽¹⁾

He was given the green light to go and discuss matters with Saiyed Idrisi in Asir. Rihani thought that peace among the rulers of the Arab world was at hand. That was his burden, to help people whosoever they were and to bring peace and unity to all.

On July 6, 1922 he telegraphed the Imam, "I am hopeful they are in favor of peace and also of meeting your demands..."

Two weeks from this date while suffering from the heat and pestilential air of Aden for the sake of the Arabs I received the following reply: "...but the Idrisi has no right in Al Yaman while our rights are indisputable. Peace is in the hands of the English government."

I think that was the last straw that broke the camel's back. Rihani concludes:

No better school for patience will a traveler find outside of Arabia. Anyone who desires to serve the Arabs for the love of their black eyes by establishing peace and good understanding between their ruling Ameers and Sultans and kings has to spend three years at least in the country going up and down and back and forth from one capital to another and he has to have three most essential things for this purpose, namely enthusiasm, money and health. I was fast loosing two of these essentials and I could not with enthusiasm alone continue my travels.⁽²⁾

¹ Peak 140 and 141.

² Peak 240.

One comfort that Ameen found when working among the Arabs was that “they came to me as Zaidis and they went back as Muslims to their broader faith whose founder himself says: ‘man is brother to man whether he likes it or not.’ ”

He never forgot that there was a people that needed to be helped in many ways and that there were rulers that needed to be united, in order for an initial peace to be reached.

Peace for the World

One of the major issues that has busied the world for more than half a century is the Palestinian question. Today, without risking contradiction, I can say that there is no part of the world that is not, in one way or another, affected by this ugly Palestinian-Israeli conflict. It definitely became a very major concern in Ameen Rihani's writings and life. Although he is very fair, moderate and understanding, he stands firm and sure that Zionism is the major cause because before this political regime which plans to displace one people by another through the means of force and war is surely disrupting the peaceful pleasant life that Arabs and Jews enjoyed for long time and which they can still enjoy but for the influence of Zionism. And because he was convinced of this fact, Ameen Rihani preached and lectured openly in the East and West, particularly in societies, universities and different congregations in the United States throughout the last 30 years of his life. His views were well known to the Zionists in the United States.

The Fate of Palestine, which is a compilation of some of his lectures on this issue, were given before 1940, and included such statements:

But Palestine is still in fetters. Palestine still groans under the heavy yoke, the double yoke of the Mandate and the Balfour Declaration. I hope that this Arab country Palestine is included in the Arab states and the British promise. It is indeed an Arab country in language,

race, customs, traditions and religion, having been so for more than 1300 years.

The native Jews are our brothers but the Jews of political Zionism who come into the country from Central and Eastern Europe are the vanguards of a dream of conquest. To make Palestine as Jewish as America is American, is the dream of Weizmann. And as long as there are groans of fear and suspicion, the resistance, the opposition, the violence and the strikes will continue. But the Balfour Declaration, no matter how it is interpreted or enforced, will always be the cause of agitation and disturbance in the Holy Land. Peace in the Near East depends on peace in Palestine. I go further and say without the least desire to be sensational that **the peace of the world depends in a measure upon peace in the Holy Land**. And peace in Palestine depends upon the settlement, the just and permanent settlement of this Zionist question Aye, the cradle of the Prince of Peace is still today as it was in the past a victim of satanic humor; it is rather the cradle of a Jewish-Christian-Muslim-belligerency that seems to be eternal, but should it be?⁽¹⁾

It is very important to point out here that Rihani's heart does not hold a grudge against anybody. He strictly upholds the principles he proclaimed in the beginning of this paper. With logic and objectivity he looks into the morality of the Palestinian-Israeli issue and the consequences thereof. He calls upon the Jews to sit with the Arabs at one round table in order for blood not to be shed. we find him in the midst of extreme fanaticism, in the heart of Yaman, defending a Jew, unjustly treated by a Zaidi soldier. "It was outrageous" Ameen says: "it was sickening, I protested and refused to go any further."⁽²⁾

¹ Fate 25-27.

² Peak 184.

He continues:

However let us examine all the possibilities of peace and common welfare. The Jews and the Arabs need each other and should cooperate in the development of Palestine for the benefit of all its people.” “Nevertheless political Zionism is the enemy of both the Jews and the Arabs. A Jewish state in Palestine is a danger to itself and to everything Jewish within it, for whether it is protected by Great Britain or any other power; a protectorate in either case is precarious, it must in the end either collapse or be absorbed by the Arab empire or confederation that is fast becoming a reality.⁽¹⁾ The intellectual Jews everywhere are in the vanguard of the internationalism that is the harbinger of universal peace. Their alliance is more to an idea than to a nation. Without a geographical nation themselves, they have the power to help destroy the unnecessary barriers that now exist among nations. This should be the highest goal of their mission as a chosen people.

But once they have a nation of their own they will become like every other people with frontiers to defend and a policy of expansion to realize. This means that they will exhaust all their energies in warfare. The Jews in the world are a power; but the Jews in Palestine will become a weak people depending always upon their brethren abroad and upon a foreign army to defend their Zionist State.⁽²⁾

At the end of these long quotations the reader cannot help but see the insight Rihani had many years before; he understands the present time and can not also help but see the injustice done to a people in the majority pushed out of their land to become refugees and remain, inside, a restless suffering minority.

¹ Fate 82, 83, 84.

² Fate 33, 34.

Rihani is very genuine in his desire for real peace in Palestine in order to help a stronger peace in the world. He writes on June 24, 1927, to Mr. H. Runham Brown, Secretary, War Resisters International, in Britain saying:

Dear Sir, every movement of any international interracial or inter-religious significance has my sympathy and support. The present difficulties in the way of the War Resisters' movement, in Syria and Palestine and Iraq at least, arise from the Mandate and the instrumentalities of its power. When Europe ceases to impose her political and economic will upon the Orient by force of arms, the oriental nations will cease to make war upon Europe and Europeans.

During the First World War, Rihani and most of the Syrians in the United States, were sympathetic to the Allies; many joined the American army and Rihani played a major part in rallying his people to stand with the Allies because he believed that they were the people who would administer true peace in the world if they were to win the war. He was a very active individual in this direction and had an active part in helping Syrians in Mexico to side with the Allies instead of with Germans. He wrote four letters which he directed to Uncle Sam showing the goodwill of his people towards America, while expecting reciprocation (see Uncle Sam p. 40-44).

Ameen Rihani was a leading figure in working for world peace. When the Foreign Policy Association of America called on him to give lectures in different societies and universities, they knew whom they were choosing. He was highly praised and recommended for every performance he had given. The Association wrote him on November 7, 1929:

On behalf of my Committee and the members of all the organization I wish to thank you for your kindness in addressing our organization, as well as to congratulate you on your able and stirring presentation of the situation in Palestine. We all liked so much the forceful and

yet restrained tone of your remarks; it was not an easy task we gave you and you acquitted yourself splendidly. I am sorry that there were so many Zionists against you, specially at the speaker's table, but I think you were more than able to meet them all.

Sincerely

Mrs. L.E. Holt Secretary

Ameen received another letter dated January 31, 1930 from the same Association as follows:

My dear Mr. Rihani: On returning to my office after a week at home with the flu I find on top of my pile of letters a tribute paid to you by Professor William Ernest Hocking of Harvard University, which I want to pass on to you.

Mr. Rihani... is doing a very courageous and rather lonely piece of work. He gave his views on Palestine at the Boston Luncheon meeting with Mr. D. Has and Navingson. Navingson was not kind but Rihani kept his temper admirably and the occasion served him well, for it illustrated how unconsciously a very good Englishman can touch the pride of an alien race.

Sincerely

Elizabeth P. MacCallum

Rihani was respectfully recognized in Jewish intellectual circles and was often called upon for comments and criticisms. Ameen received the following letter from Ocean Parkway Jewish Center, dated October 30, 1929:

I had the pleasure of reading your symposium article in the Current History Magazine concerning the Arab and Jewish situation in Palestine.

This is a momentous topic and concerns the Jew as well as the Arab. On Tuesday, November 26th 1929 at 8:00 P.M. we will have a symposium at our Center on this question entitled: "The Jewish-Arab Controversy in the Holy Land." It will be greatly appreciated if you would participate in this symposium and express your views favoring the Arab side.

I assure you that you will be well received as our gatherings are usually of the intellectual type and open-minded...

Respectfully yours
Chairman Forum Committee

In another letter from the Menorah Journal, a Jewish magazine, dated January 8, 1931, the managing editor called Rihani's attention to an article written by Mr. Herbert Solow entitled "The Realities of Zionism", asking him to read it with the hope that it would stimulate him to some public discussion or comment not only on Zionism but also on the Jewish problem in present-day Western civilization.

It was signed
E.E. Cohen
Managing Editor

America and the East were not the only subjects of his correspondence for he was in contact with the whole world, sending and receiving.

On August 12, 1930, The Joint Peace Council of Austria sent Rihani the following letter:

Dear Sir,

The Joint Peace Council, an associative committee of the above-mentioned international Peace Organizations, is preparing an international campaign against conscription and the military training of youth. This campaign is to be started simultaneously on October

12th 1930 in as many countries as possible. It will be opened with the publication of an international Manifesto which will be signed by a small number of men and women of international renown.

The Council has authorized me to approach you, dear Sir, with the request to sign our international Manifesto of which I enclose the wording. I further enclose a list of those names which will be invited for the international edition of the Manifesto.

Hoping that you will see your way to complying with the request of the Joint Peace Council, and thanking you in advance for any trouble you may take on our behalf,

I remain, dear Sir,

Yours faithfully

Oskar F. Bock

Below find the names of the list of men and women of international renown whose signatures are to be invited for the manifesto with a check against the names of those who have agreed to sign it.

Austria: Sigmund Freud ✓
 China: T.Z. Koo
 Czechoslovakia: Hon. Radl ✓
 England: H.G. Wells
 France: R. Roland, Georges Duhamel
 Germany: A. Einstein ✓, Thomas Mann ✓
 Holland: Henriette Roland-Holst ✓
 India: M. Gandi, R. Tagore, Sir Jagadis Bose, S. Naidu
 Japan: Dr. L. Nitobé, Kagawa
 Norway: Dr. Christian Lange
 Russia: Birrookff
 Sweden: Salman Lagerlöf ✓
 Switzerland: A. Forel ✓

Spain: Miguel de Unamuno

USA: Jane Adams, Upton Sinclair, John Dewey

Rihani wanted to crown his work for international peace by involving people from all over the world, particularly those of the American University of Beirut. Once, during a visit to the mosque of Al Aqsa in Jerusalem, he said:

I was standing before the kiosk outside the mosque where the Arab philosopher Al Gazali used to sit among his circle of disciples where he taught his philosophy, which was a link between logic and faith. Between the Aqsa Dome and the Mount of Olives and the place that was once Solomon's Temple, what a sight, what an atmosphere, what a center for raying out a higher and more practical philosophy – the philosophy that teaches not only national but world interdependence – the philosophy that will be a friendly link between the sects, the religions and the nations of the world.⁽¹⁾

Ameen Rihani repeatedly reminded his readers and listeners that education is a major factor in men's aspiration for progress and peace. He stressed that "people are not born Christians, Muslims, Jews or any other religion, but it is human laws that enslave and religions that divide. No one should be honored or favored over another except for his thoughts, soul, ethics and decency."⁽²⁾

In a letter dated March 26, 1929 he wrote to Doctor Bayard Dodge, President of the American University of Beirut, saying:

Revolutions have not helped much; education is the only sure remedy. When I return to Freike next year, I want to start a work which will supplement in a more practical way the work of the university and my own. I want to open my home to say a dozen guests, graduates from the different colleges who would have an

¹ Letters II: 614.

² Rihaniyat 195.

opportunity to share my thoughts, my aspirations and my life. An Alawi, a Maronite, an Orthodox, a Catholic, a Protestant... They will all live with me and hear a talk from me an hour each day; the discussions will include religion, sociology, ethics, economics and the arts and crafts. The oneness of God will be stressed in the religious teachings and, while everyone will be free to retain his own faith, the ideal of practical religion based upon the fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man will be inculcated.

Rihani keeps on detailing the curriculum dividing the year into three terms of three months each and he was ready to go on:

I am willing to devote ten years of my life to this great task and I may go on, Alla willing, to the end. I also propose to extend the work to the Arabian Peninsula, setting a term each year exclusively to the Arabs in Najd, Hijaz, Asir, Yaman, Hadramout, Masquat, Bahrain, Oman, Kuwait and Iraq, a guest from each district. The rulers of these districts, most of whom are my friends, will help to promote the cause, sending the young men whom they deem most likely to profit by the experience.

He wrote concerning this project to different people in America and Europe and began preparing to finance it. In April 24, 1929 President Bayard Dodge wrote back to Ameen saying:

Of course I am tremendously interested in the scheme which you have suggested for training a number of young men... if any of the foundations or other persons ask about the value of paying a certain sum to enable young men of promise to live with you year by year, I feel that I can highly recommend the scheme, provided the men have reached enough maturity to profit by this type of study.

The letter continued by giving pointers to some of the difficulties that might face the project.

Much time and effort was given to completion of this project. However, I am not going into further details here except to wonder at the sublime thinking of this man who sought no personal gain but was ready to give all he could for world peace.

How much Ameen Rihani accomplished in his mission for peace is not easily measured. However, he surely did his best in the most adequate way he knew; he scattered the good seed of peace in every soil he reached and had a vision for the solution of our social, political and religious problems. He firmly believed that the combination of the soundness and correctness in the cultures of the East and the West united are the best medicine for all our diseases. The West should go back to God and the East should lift some of its burdens off God. "I am, I say it in all humility, of both worlds. And I am – I say it with pride – affiliated with both worlds, with the broader liberalism, the humanitarianism of the advanced thinkers of the world."⁽¹⁾

Finally, here is an Ode to America written by Ameen in September 18. 1935. How does it sound today?

(I)

*No more shalt thou alone grieve or rejoice.
No more shalt thou withdraw the party sign
From thy front door;-- there's everywhere a voice
Of purest strain and purpose raised with thine
For peace and freedom and the people's weal,
And for democracy their wall of steel.*

¹ Letters II, 734.

*Aye, those who for them bravely fought
Are still the world's cherished thought;
Those who for them nobly died
Will ever assure, inspire, and guide—
Their sacred pledge is echoed far and wide.*

*O Mother of our Faith, we ask of thee
That thy light
And thy might
Now and forever inseparable be.*

*Voices arise from depths of melting fear,
Voices that bridge the peaks of bard and seer,
Winging the words of him who spoke
For all the people who bear it yet?
Shall thy remembrance fail? Shall God forget?*

(II)

*America, the striving world appeals.
But not for arms nor bread—an ideal speaks;
For in the crimson furrows, where the wheels
Of conquest ploughed, it finds not what it seeks.
Thou art the sower true, upon whose band
The earth hath pressed the seal of her command.*

*Cast forth the seed! The wind and soil
Have eyes and hands that naught can spoil.
Cast forth the seed! And never cease,
The wind and rain their toil increase
That the whole world might reap, and reap in peace.*

*O Mother of our Vow, we ask of thee
That thy creed
And thy deed
One and inseparable ever be.*

*Over its alps of sorrow everywhere,
The world would rise thy simple faith to share;
Its young apostles lift thy name
Above the despot's power and claim;
For with thee, peace and freedom are supreme,
Without thee, they are but a troubled dream.*

(III)

*O Kindred of the Dawn, even thy day
Of doubt and darkness would again reveal
That truth is not a fashioned thing of clay,
And right is not a mighty thing of steel.
Give thou the sign that shall emancipate,
Utter the word the struggling people await.*

*Memory holds a promise made,
When valor drew a shining blade;
And so the bloom of poppies red,
Which heard the vow of our own dead,
Whose word and blow were one, indeed, to dread.*

*O Mother of our Power, we ask of thee
That thy soul
And thy goal
Unchanging and unfeigning ever be.*

*Go forth unheralded by giants of steel;--
Thine to inspire, to assure, to heal.
In freedom's name, through grief and pain,
The nations call to thee again.
O shall they be re-plunged in gory gloom,
Whom thine own hand bath saved from direst doom?*

Ameen Rihani

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