QADIANISM

A CRITICAL STUDY

By

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Translated from the Urdu by

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Academy of
Islamic Research and Publications
P. O. Box No. 119, Lucknow-7 (India)

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Academy of
Islamic Research and Publications
P. O Box 119, Lucknow (India)

Series No. 28

Editions :

Arabic : 4th Edition, Jeddah, 1972
Urdu : 4th Edition, Lucknow, 1974
English : 3rd Edition, Lucknow, 1974
4th Edition, Jeddah, 1974
5th Edition, Lucknow 1979
6th Edition, Lucknow. 1980

Printed at
THE LUCKNOW PUBLISHING HOUSE, LUCKNOW.

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PREFACE

In the name of Allah, the Benevolent, the Merciful

Towards the end of December, 1957, and in the beginning of January, 1958, an International Islamic Colloquium was held in Lahore under the auspices of the Punjab University in which a large number of distinguished and noted scholars of the Muslim world and Western countries took part. Quite a few outstanding *ᶜulama* representing Middle Eastern countries were there. Despite having received an invitation to participate the writer was unable to reach Lahore until after the colloquium had ended. The points that had been raised during the colloquium continued to be debated by many people.

The scholars who had come from Egypt, Syria and Iraq to participate in the conference showed considerable keenness to collect correct information about the fundamental beliefs and doctrines of Qādiānism, the well-known religious movement of India and Pakistan. This curiosity on their part was justified and natural. For, it was in this part of the world that Qādiānism was born and developed. Hence, from here alone authentic material and information could be procured. The Pakistani and Indian friends of these guests felt the existence of a serious lacuna : the absence of any book on the subject in present-day Arabic which could be presented to them. It was owing to this feeling that when the writer reached Lahore he was ordered by his spiritual teacher and guide, Hazrat Maulānā ᶜAbdul Qādir Raipurī, to write a book on this subject in Arabic.

During his trips to the Middle East and his stay in Egypt and Syria the writer had himself felt the need of such a work, but the subject had failed to capture his imagination. The subject was on the whole, out of tune with his temperament. Despite his repeated efforts the writer did not succeed in forcing himself to study any of Mirzā Ghulām

Ahmad's writings. Hence, when he undertook the task, he had little familiarity with the subject. But the demand had been made from a personage the compliance of whose wish was a matter of deepest spiritual satisfaction, to the writer and this enabled him to devote himself to a thorough study of Qādiānism. Within a few days the room where the writer was staying at Lahore changed into a full fledged library on Qādiānism. The work then started in earnest and for one month the writer remained so deeply immersed in the subject that he lost almost all touch with the outside world and had his mind free for no other subject.

The writer's mental framework being that of a student of history, he launched upon his intellectual journey from the very beginning of the movement surveying every stage in its progress and development. The writer's observations, therefore, moved along the lines through which Qādiānism had passed during its course of development. This approach helped the writer to grasp the real nature of the Qādiāni movement, its gradual evolution, and its motivating factors. This approach uncovered a number of aspects which might have remained hidden otherwise. The writer delved deep into the writings of the founder of this movement, Mirzā Ghulām Ahmad Qādiānī and it is through this first hand source that he has tried to arrive at unprejudiced conclusions, trying to maintain the detachment of a historian in respect of the message, the movement, and the practical achievements of Qādiānism. The result of this study has been published in the form of *al-Qādiyānī wa al-Qādiyānīyah* in Arabic.

After the book had been prepared Hazrat Maulāna ʿAbdul Qādir ordered its translation into Urdu. Since actual excerpts in Urdu were required for the Urdu edition, an entire library of books available only in Lahore was required once again. Another trip was made, after which this book was rendered into Urdu. This Urdu edition could better be regarded as an independent work because a number of valuable additions and modifications have been made during the process of its

preparation.

For some time literature on controversial religious subjects has had a peculiar language and style, so much so that this language and style have come to be regarded as part and parcel of religious writings. This writer has not considered himself bound by this polemical tradition. This book has been written with historical objectivity rather than the bigoted zeal of a debater. This will perhaps disappoint those who have been used to polemical writings. For this the writer offers no apology. The class of people for whom it has been written and the purpose which actuated its writing did not warrant any other style of expression.

The writer thanks all those friends and well-wishers who have been a source of guidance in the study of the subject, who provided him with the material needed for writing this book and for facilitating the completion of the work. If this book serves Islam in any way, all such people share its reward.

The writer wishes to impress on his readers one thing: wisdom requires that a person should refrain from risking even as trivial a thing as one's monetary savings, and one should be careful in choosing the people to whom these should be entrusted. If wisdom demands such precaution in worldly affairs, it should not be difficult to guess what a tremendous amount of precaution should be exercised in the matter of faith on which depends a person's salvation and his felicity in the eternal life of the Hereafter. It is evident that in such a matter one should exercise extreme precaution; one should try to use one's discretion to the utmost, and to divest oneself of all emotional predilections, worldly attachments and material interests. This book, through its authentic and systematically arranged information obtained from the statements and writings of the founder of Qādiānism himself and through authentic historical information about the movement, can prove of help to many a person to arrive at an intelligent appreciation of Qādiānism.

11, Rabi al-Awwal, 1378 S. ABUL HASAN ALI NADWI

PART I

The Historical Background of the Rise of Qadianism

1

Muslim India in the Nineteenth Century

The nineteenth century is a period of unique importance in modern history. It is the century in which intellectual unrest and various kinds of conflicts and tensions found in the Muslim world reached their climax. India was one of the main centres of this unrest and tension. Here the conflicts and tensions between the Western and the Eastern cultures, between the old and the new systems of education, in fact, between the old and the new world-views, and between Islam and Christianity were mounting. The forces concerned were locked in a fierce struggle for survival.

The movement began at a time when the well-known struggle of 1857 for the country's independence had been suppressed. This had shocked the Muslims to the core; their hearts were bleeding, and their minds paralysed. They were confronted with the danger of double enslavement; political as well as cultural. On the one hand, the victorious power, the British, had launched upon a vigorous campaign to spread a new culture and civilization in India. On the other hand, the Christian missionaries were scattered all over India bent upon active proselytisation. To be able to shake the confidence of Muslims in their own beliefs and to make them skeptical as to the bases of the Islamic *Shari*ᶜ*ah*, even though they might not be converted to Christianity, was deemed by them an important enough achievement. The new generations of Muslims, which had not been thoroughly grounded in Islam, were their main target. The schools and colleges which were introduced along the foreign pattern were the main fields of their activity directed

at spreading intellectual confusion. The efforts were not altogether unsuccessful and even incidents of conversion to Christianity began to take place in India. But the main danger of that period was not apostasy (in the sense of ostensible conversion from Islam to Christianity), but skepticism and atheism. Religious debates between Muslim *ᶜulama* and Christian missionaries took place frequently, leading in general to the victory of the *ᶜulama* of Islam. This established the intellectual superiority and greater vitality of Islam as against Christianity. Nevertheless, intellectual unrest, skepticism, and weakness of faith grew apace.

This was one aspect of the situation: the situation *vis-à-vis* the external menace. Looked at internally, the situation was even worse. Mutual disagreements between Muslim sects had assumed frightful proportions. Each sect was busy denouncing the other. Sectarian polemics were the order of the day, leading often to violent clashes, even to bloodshed, to litigation over controversial sectarian issues. The whole of India was in the grip of what might be termed a sectarian civil war. This too had given birth to mental confusion and created breaches in the Muslim society and disgust in the people and had considerably damaged the prestige of the Muslim *ᶜulama* and of Islam.

On the other hand, immature *sūfis* and ignorant pretenders of spiritual excellence had reduced the *Sūfi* orders to a plaything. They gave wide publicity to their trance-utterances and inspired pronouncements. One found people everywhere making overly extravagant claims and going about proclaiming their ability to perform astounding miracles and to receive messages from on High. The result of all this was that the Muslim masses had developed an uncommon relish for things esoteric, for miracles, for supernatural performances, for inspired dreams and prophesies. The more a person had to offer people by way of these things, the greater was his popularity. Such people used to become the centre of popular veneration. Hypocritical *darūishes* and cunning traders of religion took full advantage of the situation. People had

developed such a liking for esoterics that they were readily prepared to accept every new fantasy, to support every new movement and to believe in every esoteric claim however baseless and imaginary. Muslims were generally in the grip of frustration and had fallen prey to defeatism. The failure of the struggle of 1857 and of a number of other recent religious and militant movements was fresh in their memory. Many of them had despaired, therefore, of bringing about any change and reform through normal processes and a large number of people had begun to await the advent of some charismatic personality, some divinely appointed leader. At places one heard that at the turn of the century the Promised Messiah would make his appearance. In religious gatherings people commonly referred to the numerous forms of misguidance and evil which were to appear on the eve of the Doomsday. Prophesies and esoteric statements such as those of Shāh Niᶜamat Ullāh Kāshmīrī helped people to forget the bitterness of the current situation and strengthened their morale. Dreams, prophesies and other esoteric pronouncements had magnetic appeal and kept their spirits high.

The province of Punjab, in particular, was the centre of mental confusion and unrest, superstitions and religious ignorance. This province had suffered for eighty years under the yoke of the Sikh Raj, an overbearing military tyranny. During this period the religious belief and devotion of Muslims had weakened considerably. True Islamic education had been almost non-existent for long. The foundations of Islamic life and Islamic society had been shaken. Their minds were seriously in the grip of confusion and perplexity. In brief, to borrow the words of Iqbal:

> The Khālsa (Sikhs) took away both the Qurʾān and the sword,
> In their realm, Islam was just dead.

This situation had paved the ground in the Punjab for the rise of a new religious movement based on novel interpretations and esoteric doctrines. The temperament of a good number of

people of the region where this movement arose has been portrayed by Iqbal in these words:

In religion, he is fond of the latest,
He stays not for long at a place; he keeps on moving;
In learning and research he does not participate,
But to the game of Mentors and Disciples, he readily succumbs;
If the trap of explanation anyone lays,
He walks into it quickly from the branch of his nest.

It was towards the end of the nineteenth century that Mirzā Ghulām Ahmad appeared on the scene with his unique message and movement. For the spread of his message and for the fulfilment of his ambitions Mirzā Ghulām Ahmad found a fertile ground and a congenial period of time. He had numerous factors to his advantage—the general unrest in the minds of people, the exotic-loving temperament of the people, the general despair with regard to the efficacy of moderate and normal means of reform and revolution, the decline in the prestige of and confidence in the *ᶜulama*, the popularity of religious debates which had vulgarised the religious curiosities and propensities of the people and made them, to a large extent, free-thinkers. Furthermore, the British rulers (who had had a bitter experience with Mujāhidīn movement and felt, therefore, considerable consternation for the spirit of *jihād* and the religious enthusiasm of Muslims), warmly welcomed this new religious movement which pledged loyalty to the British government and even made this loyalty an article of faith, and whose founder had had a long and close association with the government. All these factors provided the congenial atmosphere in which Qādiānism came into existence, won converts and developed into an independent sect and religion.

2

Mirza Ghulam Ahmad Qadiani[1]

Family Background

Genealogically Mirzā Ghulām Ahmad belonged to the Barlās branch of the Moghuls.[2] But after some time he came to know by means of 'inspiration' that he was, in fact, of Persian origin. To quote his own words:

> "The revelation (*ilhām*) about me is that: Were it that faith was hanging from the Pleiades it would still have been seized by the man from Persia.[3] And then, there is also a third revelation about me: Verily, those who disbelieved the man from Persia disproved their religions. God is thankful for his endeavour. All these 'revelations' show that our forefathers were Persian. And the truth is what Allah has made manifest."[4]

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1. This chapter purporting to lay down the biographical outlines of the founder's life is based chiefly on the statements and writings of the Mirzā himself, supplemented by the work of his son Mirzā Bashīr Ahmed, *Sīrat al-Mahdī* and other standard works of the Qādiānis.
2. Mirzā Ghulām Ahmad, *Kitāb al-Bariyah*, p. 134 n.
3. This tradition occurs in the *Sihāh* with a little variation of words. In some reports there occurs the phrase '*Rijal Min Faras*' (men from Persia) instead of *Rajul* (a man). The *'ulama* and the *muhaddithīn* interpret this *hadīth* to refer to Salmān al-Fārīsī and other *'ulama* and holy men of Persia famous for their devotion and service to the cause of faith including the Imām Abū Hanīfa, who was also of Persian origin.
4. *Kitāb al-Bariyah*, p. 135 n.

In one of his works he writes:

"It should be remembered that apparently the family of this humble one is that of the Moghuls. No record has been seen in the history of our family, showing that the family was Persian. What has been seen in certain records is that some of our grandmothers were of noble and noted Sayyid families. Now it has come to be known through the word of God that ours is a Persian family. We believe in this with all our conviction since the reality in respect of genealogies is known to none the way it is known to Allah, the Exalted. It is His knowledge alone which is true and sure and that of all others, doubtful and conjectural."[5]

Mirzā Gul Mohammad, the great grandfather of Mirzā Ghulām Ahmad owned considerable property. In Punjab he had a good-sized estate. Mirzā Ghulām Ahmad had mentioned in detail the aristocratic pomp and splendour of this ancestor of his, his habit to feed a large number of people at his table, and his religious influence.[6]

After his death, his estate declined and the Sikhs confiscated the villages of that estate. This decline continued to such an extent that no other land remained in the ownership of his grandfather, Mirzā ᶜAtā Mohammad, except Qādiān. Later on, the Sikhs occupied even that and drove the Mirzā family out of Qādiān. During the last years of Ranjit Singh's rule Mirzā Ghulām Murtaza, the father of the Mirzā, returned to Qādiān and the Mirzā later received five villages out of the landed property of his father.[7]

The Mirzā's family maintained very loyal and cordial relations with the recently established British power in the Punjab. Several members of the family had shown great enthusiasm in consolidating the new government and had come to its rescue on several critical occasions. To cite the words of

5. *Arabaᶜīn*, Vol. II, p. 17 n.
6. *Kitāb al-Bariyah*, pp. 136-42 n.
7. Ibid, pp. 142-44 n.

the Mirzā himself:

"I come from a family which is out and out loyal to this government. My father, Murtaza, who was considered its well-wisher, used to be granted a chair in the Governor's Durbar and has been mentioned by Mr. Griffin in his History of the Princes of Punjab. In 1857 he helped the British Government beyond his power, that is, he procured cavaliers and horses right during the time of Mutiny. He was considered by the Government to be its loyal supporter and well-wisher. A number of testimonials of appreciation received by him from the officers have unfortunately been lost. Copies of three of them, however, which had been published a long time ago, are reproduced on the margin. Then, after the death of my grandfather, my elder brother Mirzā Ghulām Qādir continually occupied himself with service to the Government and when the evil-doers encountered the forces of the British Government on the highway of Tammun, he participated in the battle on the side of the British Government."[8]

Birth, Education, Upbringing

The Mirzā was born during the last phase of the Sikh rule in the year 1839 or 1840 at Qādiān in Gurdāspūr District.[9] His own writings show that at the time of the struggle of Independence in 1857, he was sixteen or seventeen years old.[10]

The Mirzā received his education up to the Middle Class

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8. *Ishtihār Wājib al-Izhār*, September 20, 1897 pp. 3-6 appended with *Kitāb al-Bariyah*.

9. & 10. *Kitāb al-Bariyah*, p. 146, n. Mirza Bashīruddīn Mahmood in his Address to the British Crown Prince in 1922, has mentioned the year of his birth to be 1837 (p. 35). According to this, in 1857, his age would be 21. This alteration seems to have been made in order to vindicate the Mirza's prophecy which has been mentioned by him as a Divine inspiration in the following words: "We shall cause you to live a good life for eighty years or close to that" (vide *Arabaʿīn*, Vol. III, p. 39).

at home. He studied books on Grammar, Logic and Philosophy under the guidance of Maulavi Fazl-i-Ilāhī, Maulavī Fazl-i-Ahmad and Maulavi Gul ᶜAlī Shāh. He studied Medicine from his father who was an experienced physician. During his student life, the Mirzā was very studious. To quote his own words :

> "During those days I was so thoroughly engrossed in books as if I was not present in the world. My father used to instruct me repeatedly to curtail my reading, for, out of sympathy for me he feared that this might affect my health."

This, however, did not continue for long. Under the insistent pressure of his father, the Mirzā had to engage himself in the endeavour to get back his ancestral landed property which subsequently led to litigation in law courts. He writes :

> "I feel sorry that a lot of my valuable time was spent in these squabbles and at the same time my respected father made me supervise the affair of landlordship. I was not a man of this nature and temperament."[11]

The Mirzā later took employment with the Deputy Commissioner of Sialkot for a small salary. He remained for four years in this service, that is, from 1864 to 1868.[12] During this period he also read one or two books of English.[13] Moreover, he also took the examination of Mukhtar but flopped.[14] In 1868 he resigned this job and came to Qādiān and began to look after his landed property. But most of his time was spent on reflecting on the Holy Qurʾān and studying works of *Tafsīr* and Traditions.[15]

Moral Disposition

From his very childhood, the Mirzā was very simple. He

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11. *Kitāb al-Bariyah* p. 151.
12. *Sīrat al-Mahdī*, Vol. I., p. 44.
13. *Ibid.* p. 155.
14. *Ibid* p. 156
15. *Kitāb al-Bariyah*, p. 155 n.

was unaware of wordly matters and appeared to be a little absent-minded. He did not even know how to wind a watch.[16] When he had to know time, he took out the watch from his pocket and began to count, starting from one. And even then, while he counted with his finger he also kept on counting the figures aloud lest he should forget.[17] He could not just look at the watch and find out what time it was. Due to absent-mindedness, it was difficult for him to differentiate between the shoes of the left and the right feet. Mirzā Bashīr Ahmad writes:

> "Once some one brought for him gurgabi (a kind of shoes used in Punjab). He put them on, but could not distinguish between the right and the left. Often he used to wear them on the wrong feet, and then feel uncomfortable. Sometimes when he would be hurt by the use of the wrong shoe, he would get irritated and say that nothing of those people was good. Mother said that she had inscribed signs indicating right and left on the shoes for the sake of his convenience and yet he used to put the shoes on the wrong feet. Hence she later removed the signs."[18]

Due to very frequent micturition the Mirzā used to keep earthen-marbles[19] in his pockets. He also carried lumps of *gur*[20] for he was excessively fond of sweets.[21]

Mirzā's Physical Health

In his youth, the Mirzā was so afflicted with hysteria that sometimes he used to fall down unconscious as a result of hysteric fits.[22] The Mirzā used to interpret these fits variously

16. Qāzī Mohammad Zuhūruddīn Qādiyānī's article, *Yad-i-Ayyām*-Journal *al-Hakam*, 21 May, 1934.
17. *Sīrat al-Mahdī*, Vol. I, p. 180.
18. *Sīrat al-Mahdī*, Vol. I. p. 67.
19. Used after urination by Muslims for cleaning purposes, usually, when water is not available.
20. An unrefined kind of sugar used in India.
21. *Burāhīn-i-Ahmadiyah*, Vol. I, p. 67.
22. *Sirat al-Mahdi*, Vol, I, p. 17.

as hysteric and melancholia. He also suffered from diabetes and copious urination. Mentioning at one place that 'I am a permanently sick person,' he adds:

> "Headache and giddiness and insomnia and palpitation of the heart come by fits and the lingering ailment in the lower part of my body is that of diabetes. Often I urinate up to a hundred times during the day or night. And all the other disorders of debility and exhaustion which are the natural results of such excessive urination have also fallen to my lot."[23]

In his youth, the Mirzā engaged himself in vigorous spiritual exercises and courses of rigid self-discipline. He also fasted continuously for long periods of time. In one of his long spells of spiritual exertion, he fasted cxntinuously for six months.[24] In 1886, he passed another period of exclusive worship and prayer at Hoshiarpur.[25] Later on, due to ill health and debility, he had to give these up. On March 31, 1891 he wrote to Nūruddīn: "Now my health can no longer bear the rigours of supererogatory devotion and even a little bit of severe devotion and meditation or contemplation causes illness."[26]

Economic Condition

The Mirzā began his life in ordinary circumstances: a life of hardship and poverty. But as his mission spread and he became the spiritual head of a prosperous sect, he grew prosperous and began to lead a comfortable life. He, too, was conscious of this change in his state: the ostensible difference between his earlier and later periods of life. In 1907 he wrote:

> "Our living and our well-being had depended solely on the meagre income of our father. Among outsiders, none knew me. I was an unknown person, living in the

23. Appendix to *Arbaᶜīn*, pp. 3/4 and p. 4 (abbreviated).
24. *Sirat al-Mahdi*, Vol. I, p. 76.
25. *Ibid.*, p. 71.
26. *Makūbāt-i-Ahmadiyah*, Vol. V, No. 2, p. 103.

desolate village of Qādiān, lying in a corner of anonymity. Then, God, according to His prophecy, turned a whole world towards me and helped us by such continuous victories that I have no words to express my thanks. Considering my own position, I did not hope to receive even ten rupees a month. But the Exalted Allah, who raises the poor from dust and brings the arrogant down to the earth, helped me to such an extent that up till now I have received about three hundred thousand rupees or, may be, even more."[27]

In the footnote, he adds:

"Although thousands of rupees have come by means of money orders, yet more have been passed on to me directly by sincere friends as gifts, or in the shape of currency notes enclosed with letters. Some sincere people have sent currency notes or gold anonymously and I do not even know what their names are."[28]

Marriage and Children

The Mirzā's first marriage took place in 1852 or 1853 with one of his own relatives.[29] This wife gave birth to two sons: Mirzā Sultān Ahmad and Mirzā Fazal Ahmad. In 1891, he divorced the lady. In 1884 he took another wife, the daughter of Nawab Nasīr of Delhi.[30] The rest of the offsprings of the Mirzā were all from this wife. Three sons were born from her: Mirzā Bashīruddīn Mahmood, Mirzā Bashīr Ahmad (author of Sīrat al-Mahdī) and Mirzā Sharīf Ahmad.

Death

When in 1891 the Mirzā declared that he was the Promised

27. *Haqiqat al-Wahy*, p. 211.
28. *Ibid.*, p. 211, n.
29. *Sīrat al-Mehdī*, Vol. II, p. 150.
30. *Sīrat al-Mahdī*, Vol. II, p. 151.

Messiah,[31] and later on in 1910, that he was a prophet of God,[32] the Muslim *ᶜulama* began to refute and oppose him. Among those prominent in opposing him was Maulānā Sanāᵓullah Amritsari, the editor of *Ahl-i-Hadīth*. On April 5, 1907, Mirzā Ghulām Ahmad issued an announcement in which, while addressing the said Maulānā, he wrote :

> "If I am such a big liar and impostor as you portray me in each issue of your magazine, then I will die in your life-time, for I know that the life-period of a mischief-maker and liar is not very long and ultimately he dies an unsuccessful man, during the life of his greatest enemies and in a state of humiliation and grief. And if I am not a liar and impostor and have been honoured by God's communication and address to me, and if I am the Promised Messiah, then I hope that with the grace of God and in accordance with God's practice you will not escape the punishment of the rejectors (of Truth). Thus, if that punishment which is not in man's but in God's hand, that is, fatal diseases like plague and cholera, do not afflict you during my life-time,[33] then I am not from God."[34]

One year after the publication of this announcement, on May 25, 1908 the Mirzā fell ill, being afflicted with diarrhoea at Lahore. Along with loose motions, he also had vomiting. He was put under treatment at once, but weakness increased and his condition became critical. The next day, on May 26, he breathed his last in the forenoon. About his death his father-in-law Mīr Nāsir Nawāb has stated :

> "The night on which Hazrat Mirzā Sāhib fell ill, I was asleep at my place. When he felt very uncomfortable,

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31. *Refer* Part II, Chapter 2.
32. *Refer* Part II, Chapter 3.
33. It would be interesting to note that Maulānā Amritsari died at the age of eighty on March 18, 1948 some forty years after the death of the Mirzā.
34. *Tablīgh-i-Risālat*, Vol. X, p. 120.

I was awakened. When I went to Hazrat Sāhib he addressed me and said, 'Mīr Sāhib I am ill with cholera'. After this, in my opinion, he did not speak a clear word till he died the next day after ten o'clock."[35]

The dead body was carried to Qādiān. On May 27, 1908 the burial took place and Hakīm Nūruddīn became his successor, the first *Khalīfah* of the Qādiānī movement.

35. *Hayāt-i-Nasir*, ed. Shaykh Yaqūb ʿAlī ʿIrfānī.

3

The Qadiani Saint Paul

Hakīm[1] Nūruddīn Bhairawī occupies a position of unique importance in the history of Qādiānism, second only to that of its founder. In fact, some observers are of the view that the said Hakīm was the real brain behind the movement, that the intellectual currents of this movement sprang from his mind.

Birth and Early Education

Hakīm Nūruddīn was born in 1258 A. H. (1841 A. D.) in Bhaira, District Sargodha (Punjab).[2] Thus in 1857 he was 16 years of age, and was younger than the Mirzā by just one or two years. His father, Hāfiz Ghulām Rasūl, was an *imām* in a mosque in Bhaira, and was a Farūqī by lineage.

The Hakīm's early education took place in his home-village. He read the books on *Fiqah* in Punjabi language under the guidance of his mother. Then he went to Lahore. He was taught Persian by Munshī Qāsim Kāshmīrī and learnt calligraphy from Mirzā Imām Dayrawi. But neither of the two attracted him. Both his teachers were Shias. In 1272 A. H. (1855 A. D.) he returned home and remained for some time studying under Miān Hājī Sharfuddīn. It is around this time that he began to learn the Arabic language systematically.

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1. Hakīm means a physician practising the traditional system of Greek-Arabian medicine (Translator).
2. These are based on Akbar Shāh Khān Najībābādī's *Mirqāt al-Yaqīn fī Hayāt Nūruddīn*. Najībābādī was a pupil of the Hakīm. These biographical details were related to him by the Hakīm himself at the time when Najībābādī was his student as well as a devout follower.

Under the influence of a bookseller who belonged to the movement of Sayyid Ahmad Shahīd, there arose in him the urge to translate the Holy Qur'ān, and he anxiously read *Taqwiyatul Īmān* and *Mashāriq-al-Anwār*. A little later, he returned to Lahore and acquired some knowledge of Medicine. While his education was at a very advanced stage, he took employment with the Normal School, Rawalpindi. There he taught Persian and at the same time learned Arithmetic and Geography from another teacher. After passing a tahsil examination, he became headmaster in Pindi Dandān Khān and once more resumed the study of Arabic. After four years, he ceased to remain in service and began to devote all his time to his own studies. For some time, he studied under Maulavī Ahmaduddīn (who was known as Buggīwāle Qāzī Sāhib). Then, his love for knowledge made him travel to several parts of India. In Rampur he resumed his studies : studied *Mishkāt-āl-Māsābīh* under Maulānā Hasan Shāh, *Sharah-i-Wiqāyah* under Maulavī ᶜAzīzullah Afghānī, *Usūl* of *āl-Shāshī* and *Māibāzī* under Maulānā Irshād Husain ; the *Diwān* of al-Mutanabbī under Maulavī Saᶜdullah ; *Sadra*, etc., under Maulavī ᶜAbd al-ᶜAlī, and the higher books on Logic like *Mīr Zāhid Risālah* and *Mīr Zahid Mulla Jalāl*, half-heartedly. At this time, he enthusiastically supported Īsmaᶜīl Shahīd and sometimes used to speak to his teachers with great boldness. From Rampur he went to Lucknow and began to study medicine under a famous physician, Hakīm ᶜAlī Husain. When ᶜAlī Husain went to Rampur on invitation from Nawāb Kalb-i-ᶜAlī Khān of Rampur Nūruddīn accompanied him. During his stay in Rampur he further studied literature under Muftī Saᶜdullah. On the whole he remained with Hakīm ᶜAlı Husain for a period of two years and then went to Bhopal in order to complete his education in Arabic and to study *Hadīth*. Bhopal, in those days, had become a great centre of learning. The Governmental patronage of knowledge and learning had attracted a good number of scholars. In Bhopal he stayed with and was patronised by Munshī Jamāluddīn Khān, the Chief Minister. During his stay, Nūruddīn took lessons in *Bukhārī* and *Hidāyah* from

Maulānā ᶜAbdul Qayyūm (the son of Maulānā ᶜAbdul Hai Burhānwaī, who was a *Khalīfah* of Hazrat Sayyid Ahmad Shahīd). From Bhopal he went on a visit to the Holy cities—Mecca and Medina—in order to complete his education and also in order to attain other-worldly felicity.[3]

In Mecca, he studied *Abū Daᵓūd* under Shaykh Muhammad Khazrajī, *Sahīh Muslim* under Sayyid Husain and began to study *Musallam al-Thubūt* under Maulānā Rahmatullah Kayrānawī, the author of *Izhār al-Haqq*. Sometimes, he had heated discussion with his teachers and showed trends towards non-conformity and exaggerated confidence in the soundness of his own views and intelligence.[4]

At Mecca he finished his study of *Abū Daᵓūd* and *Ibn Mājah* under Shaykh Muhammad Khazrajī. In the meantime Shāh ᶜAbdul Ghanī Mujaddidī had arrived in Mecca. Later on when Shāh Mujaddidī returned to Medīna, the Hakīm joined him and after taking an oath of allegiance to him remained as his student for six months.

Occupation

After pilgrimage and visit to the Holy places, Nūruddīn returned to his native place, Bhaira and stayed there for some time. During his stay he debated with people as to whether the current customs and usages conformed to the teachings embodied in the collections of *Hadīth* which turned some people against him. This led him to realise the ignorance and stagna-

3. An interesting anecdote is related in this connection, which was narrated by Nūruddīn himself. While leaving for the Holy cities, he asked Maulānā ᶜAbdul Qayyūm to tender him some advice. He said, "Never become God or Prophet." ᶜAbdul Qayyūm explained that by 'not becoming God' what he had meant was that if any of his desires were frustrated, he should not feel greatly dejected, for to be able to do what one likes is the attribute of God alone; by 'not becoming the Prophet' he meant that if people rejected his *fatwās*, he should not deem them to be condemned to hell, for it is the disobedience of the Prophet alone which condemns one to hell (*Mirqāt al-Yaqīn*, p. 79).

4. *Mirqāt al-Yaqīn* p. 95-97.

tion of the common people and his own superiority and intellectual excellence. He also went to Delhi during the Durbar of Lord Lytton and there met Munshī Jamaluddīn Khān, the Chief Minister of Bhopal, who brought him to Bhopal. After a short stay at Bhopal, Nūruddīn once more went back to Bhaira and started practising medicine there. Soon his reputation as a successful physician spread and he was invited by the Mahārāja of Jammu to serve him as his personal physician. For a considerable period of time he served the ruler of Jammu, Poonch and Kashmir and gained considerable influence there by dint of his ability as a physician, and his eloquence, knowledge and wit. He had become a very close confidant of the Mahārāja and thus quite powerful.

An Ardent Follower of Mirza

There were many similarities of character and temperament between Hakīm Nūruddīn and Mirzā Ghulām Ahmad. It is difficult to say how they came into contact with each other. Their first meeting, however, took place at Qādiān in 1885. When the Mirzā wrote *Barāhīn-i-Ahmadiya*, Nūruddīn wrote a book supporting it. His admiration for the Mirzā increased so much so that he took an oath of allegiance at his hands and accepted him as his spiritual guide, his leader, and pledged to follow him. The following letter of Nūruddīn shows the depth of his attachment to the Mirzā.

"My master, my guide, my leader : *Assalām-o-Alaykum wa Rahmat ullah,*

"It is my prayer to be ever present before you and to learn from you all that for which the *Imām* of the age has been made the *Mujaddid.* If it is permitted, I would resign my job and spend day and night in your exalted service; or if it is ordered, I would give up my present engagements and go around the whole world, summoning people towards the true religion and would lay down my life in this cause. I am a martyr in your cause : whatever I have is not mine; it is yours. Respected guide and

mentor, with utmost sincerity I say that if all my wealth and belongings are sacrificed in the cause of religious preaching, I will have achieved my purpose. If the buyers of *Barāhīn* in advance are uneasy at the delay in the publication of the book, please permit me to render the humble service of paying them all their dues from my pocket.

"Respected *pīr* and guide : this worthless one, ashamed of himself, says that if this offer is accepted it would be a pleasure for him. What I mean is that I may be permitted to bear the entire cost of printing *Barāhīn* and that whatever proceeds there might be from its sale, should be spent on your needs. My relationship with you is the same as that of Fārūq (with the Prophet) and I am prepared to sacrifice all in this path. Please pray that the end of my life be like that of *Siddīqs* (the truthful ones)."[5]

Nūruddīn's faith in the Mirzā was very deep indeed. It so happened that when the Mirzā wrote *Fath-i-Islām* and *Tawdīh al-Marām* someone asked Nūruddīn, before he had seen these books, if any other Prophet could come after the Holy Prophet. "No", he replied. "And if someone claims to be a Prophet?" he was asked. Nūruddīn replied that if someone did claim so, it would be seen whether he was truthful or not; and that his claim would be accepted if he was truthful. After narrating this incident, Nūruddīn himself adds :

"This was just the case of prophethood. My faith is that even if the Promised Messiah were to proclaim himself to be the bearer of a *Sharīᶜah* and abrogate the Quranic *Sharīᶜah*, I will not reject that claim. For, when we have accepted him (i. e. the Mirzā) to be truthful and to have been commissioned by God, then whatever he will say will of necessity be true and we will have to think that the (Quranic) verse in respect of *Khātim al-Nabīyīn* (the last of the Prophets) has a different meaning."[6]

During his association with the Court of Jammu, Nūruddīn

5. *Mirqāt al-Yaqīn fī Hayāt-i-Nūruddīn*, pp. 17-18.
6. *Sīrat al-Mahdī*, pp. 98-99.

wrote *Fasl-ul-Khitāb* in four volumes under the guidance of the Mirzā in which he refuted Christianity. He kept on contributing very magnanimously to the publication of the works of the Mirzā and quite often the Mirzā took large sums of money as loans from him[7] and praised him for his religious enthusiasm, his readiness to help the religious cause and his large-hearted generosity. The famous couplet of the Mirzā about Nūruddīn is :

> "How good would it be, were every one in the *Ummat* a Nūruddīn ;
> That would be so, if the light of faith burnt in the heart of everyone."[8]

For several reasons, particularly the intrigues of the courtiers, the Mahārājā's attitude towards Nūruddīn subsequently changed. In 1893 or 1894, his service with the Mahārāja was terminated and Nūruddīn returned to Bhaira. After a brief stay and practice of medicine there he moved to Qādiān permanently and dedicated his life to supporting the Mirzā and spreading his movement.

Accession to Khilafat

On the Mirzā's death on May 26, 1908, he became his first *Khalīfah*. The followers of the Mirzā paid their allegiance to him and he was proclaimed to be the "*Khalīfah* of the Promised Messiah", and "Nūruddīn the Great." For quite some time Nūruddīn remained hesitant whether he should consider those who did not believe in the Mirzā's prophethood to be unbelievers. Later, he was converted to the view that they were unbelievers.[9] There was some controversy about his nomination as the *Khalīfah*. Some people strongly opposed it. On one such occasion he said :

> "I say by God that it is God Himself who had made me the *Khalīfah*. So, who now has the power to snatch from me the robe (literally the covering sheet) of this

7. *Maktūbāt-i-Ahmadiyah*, Vol. V, *See* Letters to Nūruddīn.
8. *Mirqāt al-Yaqīn*.
9. *See* Mirzā Bashīr Ahmad : *Kalimat āl-Fasl*, Chapter VI.

Caliphate? It was the Will of God Himself, and was in the light of His Own wise consideration, to make me your *Imām* and *Khalīfah*. You can attribute to me a thousand shortcomings. They, in fact, will be attributable not to me, but to God Himself who appointed me the *Khalīfah*."[10]

On another occasion he said:

"God has made me the *Khalīfah*. Now, neither can I be dismissed (from Caliphate) by your biddance nor has anyone the power to remove me. If you force me any further, bear in mind that I have at my disposal many Khālid ibn Walīds who will punish you as (Khālid bin Walīd had punished) the apostates."[11]

Nūruddīn remained the *Khalīfah* of the Qādiānī movement for six years. In 1914 he fell from a horse and died on March 13, 1914. A few days before his death, his tongue had ceased to function.[12] He nominated Mirzā Bashīruddīn Mahmood, the eldest son of Mirzā Ghulām Ahmad, to be his successor and *Khalīfah*.

Temperament

A study of Nūruddīn's life shows that he possessed a mercurial nature and remained a prey to mental conflicts during the greater period of his life. From the very beginning he had a bent towards "free-thinking". First of all, he freed himself from the bonds of the four Muslim schools of jurisprudence and carried his non-conformism to an extreme. Then he came under the influence of Sir Sayyid Ahmad Khān's literature and assimilated his way of thinking. This was the time when some elementary knowledge of physical sciences was finding its way to India and the rationalists among Indian Muslims were becoming deeply impressed by it. Those who had a religious

10. Review of Religions, Qādian, Vol. 14 No 6, p. 234 (cited from Ilyas Barni's Qādiyani Mazhab).
11. *Tashkhiz al-Azhān*, Vol. 9 No. 11 cited by Barnī.
12. The Daily *Al-Fadhl*, Qādiān, 23 February, 1932, (cited from *Qādiānī Mazhab*).

inclination attempted to harmonise Quranic teachings with scientific knowledge. If this harmonisation presented any difficulty, they tried to overcome it by offering far-fetched interpretations of Quranic verses and the Quranic terminology. Nūruddīn's teaching of *Tafsīr* was representative of this intellectual trend.[13]

In *Sīrat al-Mahdī*, Mirzā Bashīr Ahmad writes:

> "In the beginning Hazrat Nūruddīn, the first *Khalīfah*, was deeply under the influence of the way of thinking and the work of Sir Sayyīd. But, subsequently, due to contact with Hazrat Sāhib, this influence gradually wore off."[14]

But a study of his ideas as well as those of his disciples makes it evident that either because of the influence of Sir Sayyid's ideas, or because of his own predilection he remained the same all his life. His mind had been moulded into a rigid frame and his mental attitudes had become too hardened to change.

A more careful study of his life reveals that along with his enlightenment and rationalism, there was a strong superstitious element in his personality. Despite all his non-conformism and rationalism he attached great importance to 'dreams' and 'inspirations'. It has been observed that not infrequently people who stand for intellectual freedom, in fact, for intellectual revolt, also have an inherent trait of superstitiousness. Their frame of mind is basically apologetic. Such people keep on raising the banner of revolt all their lives against certain institutions or personalities, but, at the same time, when they submit before someone, their power of free-thinking and independent judgement is totally paralysed. Man's life is a strange combination of action and reaction; and his personality a complex of divergent, even mutually conflicting elements. Nothing is more difficult to understand and analyse than the driving urges of a man's personality.

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13. A good example of his way of thinking is found in the *Tafsīr* of his pupil Maulavī Muhammad ʿAlī Lahori (His *Tafsīr* is found in English as well as Urdu).
14. *Sīrat al-Mahdī*, Vol. I, p. 159.

PART II

On the Road to Prophethood

1

Mirza as Champion of Islam

We have covered so far a part of the life of Mirzā Ghulām Ahmad, his life in his township in district Gurdāspūr where we saw him immersed in the study of religious books. His works published after 1880 indicate that the main subjects of his study were different religions, particularly Christianity and Indian religions such as Sanātan Dharma and Ārya Samāj.

This period is known for the religious polemics. The educated people of the time had a relish for religious debates and controversies. We have already seen that Christian missionaries were busy propagating Christianity and refuting Islam. The British Government, which was officially the defender of the Christian Faith, patronised these activities, considering India a gift of Jesus Christ. On the other hand were the preachers of the Ārya Samāj movement who were enthusiastically trying to undermine Islam. The British who were aware of the dangerous possibility of inter-communal concord in India, a manifestation of which was the struggle for Indian Independence of 1857, found it expedient to encourage religious controversies. The British political interest was served by these controversies in so far as they led to mutual hatred, intellectual bewilderment and moral chaos in the country so that the religious communities of India might be disposed at least to tolerate a government which sought to protect all of them and under whose shadow all could carry on their holy debates. In such an atmosphere, anyone why rose to defend Islam and falsify other religions naturally attracted the attention of all Muslims.

The ambitious and far-sighted Mirzā chose this field for his

adventures. He undertook to produce a voluminous work to demonstrate, on the one hand, the truth of Islam, the Divine origin of the Qur'ān, and the Prophethood of the Messenger of Allah by rational arguments, and to refute Christianity, Sanātan Dharma, Arya Samāj and Brahmo Samāj etc., on the other hand. He named this book *Barāhīn-i-Ahmadiyah.*

The Barāhīn and the Mirzā's Challenge

The writing of *Barāhīn* started in 1879.[1] The author undertook to put forward one hundred arguments in support of Islam. In this undertaking the Mirzā also had correspondence with other learned people whom he requested to communicate to him their views in order to help him in this venture. Those who complied with his request included Maulavī Chirāgh ʿAlī who was a noted colleague of Sir Sayyid Ahmad Khān. The Mirzā included some of his articles and researches in his work. At long last this work, which was anxiously awaited by hundreds of people, did break into print in four volumes. Along with this book, its author also published an announcement in Urdu and English and sent it to rulers and ministers of States, to Christian clergymen and to Hindu pandits. In this book the Mirzā announced for the first time that he had been appointed by God to demonstrate the truth of Islam and that he was prepared to satisfy the followers of other religions about his religion. The announcement categorically stated:

> "This humble slave (the author of *Barāhīn-i-Ahmadiyah*) has been appointed by the Glorious Almighty to strive for the reform of God's creatures and to show to the ignorant the straight path (which leads to true salvation and by following which the light of heavenly existence and of Divine pleasure and graciousness can be experienced even in this world) in the manner of the Israelite Prophet of Nazareth (Messiah) with utmost humility and self-denial, self-abasement and gentleness. It is for this purpose that

1. *Sīrat al-Mahdī*, Vol. II, p. 157.

Barāhīn-i-Ahmadiyah has been written, of which thirty-seven parts have been published. Its summary is to be found in the announcement enclosed with this letter. But since the publication of the whole book would require a long time, it has been decided that this letter along with the English announcement should be published and one copy of each sent to the honourable priests of Punjab, India and England and other countries wherever possible."[2]

The Mirzā challenged the world to come forward with any book parallel to this one, and invited the representatives of other religions to prove the truth of their religions by the same or even lesser number of arguments than he had put forward. He wrote:

"I, the author of this book, *Barāhīn-i-Ahmadiyah*, make this announcement with the promise to make a reward of 10,000 rupees to the followers of all faiths and religions who deny the truth of the Glorious Qur'ān and the Prophethood of Hazrat Muhammad Mustafa (God's benediction and salutation be on him) and in support of it I commit myself to a formal legal undertaking and a *Share'i* pledge that if any of these deniers can show that their scriptures have as many and as sound arguments as found in the Holy Qur'ān and which we have mentioned herein to demonstrate the truth of the Glorious Message and the veracity of the Apostleship of the *Khātim-al-Ambiya* (God's benediction and salutation be upon him) which have been derived from the Sacred Book (Qur'ān) itself; or if they cannot come forward with an equal number of arguments, then half, or a third, or a fourth, or fifth of the number of our arguments; or if they find that impossible, then at least to refute our arguments one by one—then, in either of these cases, provided three authors accepted by both the parties, unanimously express the view that the condition has been fulfilled in the manner it should have been fulfilled—the announcer (of this announcement) shall hand over to such a respondent without an excuse or hesti-

2. Supplement to *Barāhīn-i-Ahmadiyah*, Vol. I by M'erājuddīn 'Umar, p. 82

tation the occupancy and ownership of his property valued at Rs. 10,000."[3]

The Mirzā called upon the Muslims to make monetary contributions to this great service which he wanted to render to the cause of Islam and to participate in it generously.[4] It seems that the response of Muslims to this call was not as enthusiastic as the Mirzā had expected. In the later volumes of *Barāhīn* he has mourned their lack of enthusiasm.[5]

The announcements which formed the preface of the book are significant. In them we find some indications of the driving forces of the Mirzā's personality. In them we notice his habit of boastfulness and self-adulation and his confidence in 'heavenly signs' as means of establishing his claims and persuading people. Along with all that, the statements unmistakably smack of his commercial mentality.

Preaching and Politics

In the third and fourth volumes of *Barāhīn-i-Ahmadiyah*, the Mirzā openly praised the British government and enumerated at length its acts of benevolence towards Muslims in the sections entitled, 'An Important Appeal to Islamic Associations: The Precarious Condition of Muslims and the English Government.' In this appeal he urged all Islamic Associations to prepare a joint memorandum and send it to the government with signatures from all prominent Muslims. He also reiterated the services rendered by his family to the British and stressed the impermissibility of *jihād*.

Thus we find that even the first work of the Mirzā was not free from panegyrics to the British government, or from political admonitions to the Muslims to remain loyal to the British.

The Magnum Opus

The Mirzā worked on this book from 1880 to 1884. After

3. *Barāhīn-i-Ahmadiyah*, Vol. I, pp. 17-22.
4. *See* Iltimās-i-Zarūrī in *Brāhīn*, Vol. I.
5. 'Arz-i-Zurūrī ba Hālat-i-Majbūrī. *Brāhīn*, Vol. I.

the publication of the fourth volume there came a long period of gap and the fifth and the last volume appeared in 1905, that is, full twenty-five years after the commencement of the work. In the fifth volume the author mentioned that the publication of the last volume had remained in suspension for twenty-three years. During this period a large number of people who had paid in advance for all the five volumes but had received only four volumes had passed away. Several other people who had paid in advance had expressed their disapproval and resentment at not receiving the promised volume for which the Mirzā apologized in the fifth volume. In this volume he has also mentioned that previously he had in mind to bring forward 300 arguments to prove the truth of Islam, but later he gave up the idea. In the same way, instead of fifty, he would bring out only five volumes. The reason for this change of mind was that the difference between the two figures was merely that of a zero. In his own words :

> "Earlier I had thought of writing 50 volumes, but now I have confined myself to writing five since the difference between the figures fifty and five is just that of one dot (that is zero). Thus the promise has been fulfilled by the publication of five volumes."[6]

In *Sīrat al-Mahdī*, Mirzā Bashīr Ahmad writes :

> "Now that four volumes of *Barāhīn-i-Ahmadiyah* have come out in print, its preface and notes all relate to the time of publication and it contains very little of the original work, that is, not more than a few pages. This can be gauged from the fact that out of the 300 arguments which he had written the *Barāhīn-i-Ahmadiyah* contains only one argument and that too not in a complete form."[7]

Anyone who studies *Barāhīn-i-Ahmadiyah* is bound to be impressed by the author's prolificity, perseverance and diligence. These virtues, at best, could stand him in good stead as a

6. Preface of *Barāhīn-i-Ahmadiyah*, Vol. V, p. 7.
7. *Sīrat al-Mahdī*, Vol. I, p.7.

successful debater and and an able writer on religious polemics with Christians and Arya Samājīs. In this huge work, however, one does not find any worthwhile research. Nor does one find that familiarity with the sources of Christianity, its ancient literature, its doctrines and history, and that grasp of its fundamental concepts as one finds, for example, in the works of Maulānā Rahmatullah Kayrānwī (d. 1309 A.H. / 1891 A.D.), the author of *Izhār al-Haqq* and *Izālat al-Awhām*. Nor does one find that sweetness and elegance of expression, and that originality and brilliance of argument that one finds in works such as those of Maulānā Muhammad Qāsim Nānawatwī's (d. 1297 A.H./1879 A.D.) *Taqrīr Dilpizīr* and *Hujjat al-Islām*.

Inspirations and Bragging

The reader also frequently encounters in the Mirzā's book references to his Divinely inspired revelations, to miracles and to Divine communications and prophecies, and last but not the least, his boastfulness. All this leaves an unpleasant taste in the mouth and transforms the book which claims to embody a sober academic discussion and a dignified religious debate, into a work of personal bragging—a work in which, again and again, the author stoops to self-advertisement and self-glorification.

The central theme of the book is that Divine inspiration had not ceased and should not cease. This inspiration itself is the most powerful proof of the validity of any claim and the truth of religion and faith. Whoever will follow the Holy Prophet perfectly will be endowed with the external and internal knowledge which had been granted originally to the Prophets, and the person will, therefore, become possessed of sure, categorical knowledge. The intuitive knowledge of such people would resemble the knowledge of the Prophets. It is these people who have been called *Amthāl* in *Hadīth* and *Siddīq* in the Qur'ān. The time of their advent would resemble the time of the advent of the Prophets. It is such people who will establish the truth of Islam and their inspiration will be of a categorical nature.[8]

8. *Barāhīn-i-Ahmadiyah*, Vol. III, p. 231 and 244.

In trying to prove the continuity of this inspiration, he cites his own inspirations and writes :

> "We have several examples of this inspiration before us. But in the one which took place just now at the time of writing these notes in March 1882 it has been revealed as a prophecy that through this book and on becoming informed of its contents, the opponents will ultimately be defeated ; that seekers after Truth will find true guidance ; perversion of belief will be uprooted ; and people will help and turn their attention and come around (me) etc., since God will put this into their hearts and direct them to it... ....."[9]

This has been followed by a more recent lengthy inspiration which is almost an entirely incoherent collection of different Quranic verses. This inspiration embraces about forty lines of the *Barāhīn* and contains about fifty-three or fifty-four Quranic verses, interspersed with a few Traditions of the Prophet. Besides, there are a few sentences by the Mirzā himself which are an example of what might be termed as poor Indianized Arabic. The last lines of the inspiration which contain a comparatively smaller proportion of Quranic verses, read as follows :

> "Live in the world like a stranger or traveller. Become one of the righteous and the truthful. Bid whatever is good and forbid whatever is bad and send your salutations to Muhammad and his progeny. Prayer alone brings man up. Verily I will raise thee towards Myself and I have put love from Me (in the hearts of people). There is no god but Allah. So, write and let it be published and sent to the world. Grasp Unity (of God), Unity (of God), O people of Iran and give glad tidings to those who believed that they have a standing with their Lord. And read out to them what has been revealed to thee from thy Lord. And

9. *Barāhīn-i-Ahmadiyah*, Vol. III, p. 238.

do not swell thy face for the creatures of God and do not get tired of people. The people of *al-Suffah*. And who are the people of *al-Suffah*? Thou shalt see their eyes wet with tears and they will send their salutations to thee. O Lord of ours! We heard a herald calling towards belief, a summon towards Allah, and a bright lamp. Be of hope!"[10]

In the same way, an inspiration has been reproduced in the fourth volume of the same book. This inspiration too is an incoherent conglomeration of Quranic verses and Quranic expressions. It also contains some very obvious errors of Arabic language and grammar (which have been indicated by us by question marks):

"And when it is said to them believe as men believed, they say: Should we believe as they believe who are stupid? Beware! it is they who are stupid, but they know not, and wish that you should compromise with them (?) Say: Un-believers! I worship not that which you worship. It was said to you: turn to God, but you turn not; and it was said to you, subdue your souls, but you subdue them not. Doest thou seek of them any reward that feel burdened (in accepting your message). No, we brought Truth to them (gratuitously) and it is Truth to which they are averse. God is pure and free from whatever they attribute to Him. Do people think that they would be left by merely saying: We believed, and they would not be put to any trial? These people love to be praised for deeds which they have not performed, while nothing is hidden from God and nothing is good which God does not make good and no one can restore him to His favours who has fallen from His grace."[11]

Apart from these revelations in the Arabic language there are two revelations in English as well.[12]

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10. *Barāhīn-i-Ahmadiyah*, Vol. III, p. 242.
11. *Barāhīn-i-Ahmadiyah*, Vol. IV, p. 509.
12. *Ibid*, pp. 554 and 556.

Mirzā's beliefs in the Barāhīn

In the four volumes of *Barāhīn* (published 1880-1884), the Mirzā expressed merely the view that *ilhām* (Divine inspiration) had not ceased and would not cease, and that the legacy of the Prophets continues in respect of inspired comprehension of things, in respect of the illumination of faith and categorical knowledge. In this book he has also frequently mentioned that he had been commissioned by God to reform the world and spread the message of Islam; that he was *mujaddid* (renovator) for the present age, and that he bore resemblance to Jesus (peace be on on him).[13] In this book he also adheres to the notion of the ascension of Jesus to the heaven and that he would return to the earth. In the appendix to his book, *Nuzūl al-Masīh*, published in 1902, and in volume V of *Barāhīn*, which came out in 1905, the Mirzā has admitted that he used to subscribe to the above view and has even expressed his surprise at his having believed in the ascension and return of Jesus.[14] In *Barāhīn* he had also strongly rejected the idea of any fresh revelation and of the advent of any new Prophet. The reason for this belief was that the Qur'ān and its teachings were in no danger of being distorted nor was there any danger of Muslims reverting to pre-Islamic ignorance and paganism. On the contrary, he admitted that 'the attitude of the polytheists, owing to contact with the monotheists is gradually tending towards monotheism.' This being the case—that the main dangers which revelation and prophethood seek to avert were no longer real—there was no need for any new *Sharī'ah*, or any fresh *ilhām* (inspiration). This also established the termination of prophethood with the advent of the Holy Prophet:

> "Now, since it is rationally impossible and inconceivable that the true teachings of the Glorious *Furqān* will be distorded or changed, or the darkness of polytheism and

13. *Sirat al-Mahdi*, Vol. I, p. 39.
14. Appendix to *Nuzūl al-Masīh*, p. 6, and *Barāhīn* Vol. V. p. 85.

worship of God's creatures would predominate again it is also rationally inconceivable that there should be a new *Sharīᶜah*, or the sending down of a new inspiration (*ilhām*). For, that which leads to impossibility is itself also impossible. Thus, it is proved, that the Holy Prophet was in reality the last of the prophets (*Khātim-i-Rusul*)."[15]

Reception of the book

It seems that the book was enthusiastically welcomed in the religious and academic circles of the country. Indeed the publication of this work was very well-timed and the Mirzā as well as his friends publicised it with great zest. The secret of the success of the book seems to lie in the fact that it challenged other religions and instead of apologising on behalf of Islam it took the offensive against them. Noted among those who appreciated and enthusiastically supported this book was Maulānā Muhammad Husain Batālawī. In his magazine *Ishāᶜat al-Sunnah*, he wrote a long review eulogising the book in six issues of the magazine.[16] In this review the book was lavishly praised and commended as a great academic achievement of the time, a masterpiece of research and authorship. Not much later, the Maulānā felt alarmed at the big claims and 'inspiration' of the Mirzā and, subsequently, became one of his staunch opponents. On the other hand, there were many who were alarmed even by his first book and who began to feel that its author had set himself on a path which would lead him, in the near future, to claim prophethood for himself. Among these far-sighted people were the two sons of the late Maulānā Abdul Qādir Ludhianawi, Maulānā Muhammad and Maulānā Abdul ᶜAzīz. The *Ahl-i-Hadīth* ᶜ*ulama* of Amritsar and some ᶜ*ulama* of the Ghaznawī family opposed him from the very beginning and denounced his inspirations as fantasies.[17]

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15. *Barāhīn*, Vol. IV, p. 111 n.
16. Vol. VII, 1884 nos. 6-11.
17. *See Ishāᶜat al-Sunnah*, June, 1884, Vol. VII, No. 6.

This book brought the Mirzā out of obscurity and put him on the stage of public renown so that countless eyes were turned towards him. In *Sīrat al-Mahdī*, Mirzā Bashīr Ahmad has aptly observed how this book brought the Mirzā to the limelight:

"Before writing *Barāhīn*, the Promised Messiah spent a life of anonymity and in this isolation his was the life of a *darwīsh*. Before *Barāhīn* he had become known to some extent as a result of his having written a series of articles in some newspapers but all this was very meagre. In fact, it is the announcement of *Barāhīn-i-Ahmadiyah* which, for the first time and for good, placed him before the country and introduced him to those interested in academic and religious matters. The eyes of the people began to turn in amazement, towards this anonymous villager who had promised to write a great book about the truth of Islam in such a challenging manner and with the promise of a huge sum of money as reward (to any one who could refuse his arguments). Thus the sun of guidance which had already appeared on the horizon, now began to rise higher. Later the publication of *Barāhīn-i-Ahmadiyah* created an extraordinary stir in the religious circles of the country. In general, the Muslims welcomed him as a great '*Mujaddid*'. As for the opponents of Islam, this book came to them as a bomb-shell and created great turbulence in their camp."[18]

The Mirzā himself says the following about his life before the publication of *Barāhīn*:

"This was the time when nobody knew me; when nobody was either in favour of or opposed to me, for, at that time, I was a non-entity; I was just one among the people, hidden in the corner of anonymity."[19]

He adds:

"All the people of this town (i.e. Qādiān) and thousands

18. *Sīrat al-Mahdī*, Vol. I, pp. 103-104.
19. *Tatimmah Haqīqat al-Wahy*, pp. 27-28.

of other people are aware that at this period of time I was, in fact, like a dead body which had been buried in the grave for centuries and no one even knew whose grave it was."[20]

Debates with Arya Samājis

In 1886, the Mirzā had a debate with Murlī Dhar of Ārya Samāj in Hoshiarpur. He has written a full-fledged book about this debate, *Surmah-i-Chashm-i-Ārya* (Kohl for the eye of the Ārya). This is the second of his polemics on religions and religious sects.

The topic of the first day's debate was the rational and historical proof of the miracle of cleaving the moon. The Mirzā not only strongly affirmed this miracle but the miracles of other prophets as well. He showed that the occurrence of miracles and super-natural incidents was rationally possible. He took the position that because of the inherent limitations of man's intellect, knowledge and experience, he had no right to deny miracles and thus make the claim to comprehend this vast universe in its entirety. He repeatedly stressed that the knowledge of man was very limited and the range of possibilities very wide[21] (so that the notion that man's knowledge could be comprehensive was untenable). He also stressed that in religious matters faith in the unseen was essential and that this was not in conflict with reason, for the latter could not be all comprehensive in its range. In fact, whatever rational objections the Mirzā pointed out to the belief regarding the ascension of Jesus to the heavens and his descent in future and his stay in the heaven for several centuries and the so-called 'rationalist' trend in his later writings can best be refuted by the arguments that he himself advanced in this book. The personality of the author in this book is quite different from the one in his later writings.

These two books made the Mirzā excessively self-appreciative; he became aware of his ability as a writer and debater

20. *Ibid*, p. 28.
21. *Surma-i-Chashm-i-Ārya* pp. 557.

and became confident that he was capable of initiating a new movement and influencing his environment. It seems that this discovery proved to be the turning-point in his life. Henceforth, instead of debating with Christians and Ārya Samājis he turned towards Muslims and began to challenge them to debate with him.

2

The Mirza Becomes Messiah

Influence of Nūruddīn

We have seen earlier that when Nūruddīn was in Jammu in connection with his employment the Mirzā was staying in Siālkot, where he was employed in the District Commissioner's office. The two had a number of things in common : both relished religious controversies and debates, and both were ambitious. It seems plausible that each of them was influenced by the other's personality. Hence, correspondence between them began in 1885. In the collection of the Mirzā's letters, the earliest letter to Nūruddīn that we find is dated March 8, 1885. This correspondence continued without break and became so intimate as to include family and matrimonial problems. In January, 1888, the Mirzā undertook a trip to Kashmir in order to meet Nūruddīn and stayed with him for a month. The Mirzā kept Nūruddīn in touch with his inspirations, inspired predictions, and novel pieces of information and research. He even complained to Nūruddīn about the opposition of the *ᶜulama* and the alleged view of some of them that he was not a Muslim. In a letter of July 15, 1890 he wrote to Nūruddīn : "And I have heard that these people have begun to call me in hushed tones a kāfir. It was known from this that the Exalted Allah wants to show something great."[1]

Up till then (i.e. 1890), the Mirzā had only claimed that he was a *mujaddid* and that he had been commissioned by God, and according to Mirzā Bashīr Ahmad, he continued to say that he had been raised to reform the people in the manner of

1. *Maktūbāt-i-Ahmadiyah*, Vol. V, p. 79.

the Messiah of Nazareth and that he had a certain resemblance to him.[2] In the *Barāhīn* he expressed the opinion that the absolute predominance of Islam which has been promised in the Quranic verse: 'It is He who has sent His Apostle with Guidance and the Religion of Truth to proclaim it over all religions' would be fulfilled through the Promised Messiah, whose return to the world had been mentioned in the Traditions of the Prophet. As for himself, he merely resembled the Messiah in respect of the first phase of his life, that is, his life on earth. In his own words:

> "This verse ('It is He who has sent His Apostle') is a prophecy which, in the physical and political senses refers to the Messiah; and the promise of complete predominance of the religion of Islam which has been made will be fulfilled through the triumph of the Messiah. And when Hazrat Masīh (upon him be peace) will come into this world, Islam will spread all over the world, to all lands. But it has been revealed to this humble one that in view of his poverty and humility, his trust in God and his sacrifice, and in respect of signs and illuminations, he is an examplar of the first phase of the life of Messiah and that the natures of this humble one and of the Messiah are extremely alike as if they were two pieces of the same substance, two fruits of the same tree; and the similarity goes to such an extent that the distinction is very minor."[3]

Nuruddīn's Advice

In the life of the Mirzā as well as in the history of Qādiānism, the year 1891 is very crucial. It is in the beginning of this year that Nūruddīn, in one of his letters, advised the Mirzā to proclaim himself to be the Promised Messiah.[4] We

2. *Sīrat al-Mahdī*, Vol. I, p. 39.
3. *Barāhīn-i-Ahmadiyah*, Vol. IV, p. 495-98.
4. Although in his letter Nūruddīn used the expression Replica of the Messiah, the study of *Fath-i-Islam* and *Izālat al-Awhām* shows that Replica of the Messiah and Promised Messiah were treated as synonymous terms and were used by the Mirzā interchangeably. To cite an instance:

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have not been able to see this letter of Nūruddīn, but the reply sent by the Mirzā refers to this advice of Nūruddīn. This letter of the Mirzā is included in the collection of his letters and is dated January 24, 1891. This letter reveals the intellectual sources, the behind-the-scene director of the play, the actual author of Qādiānism. The following is an excerpt from this historic letter:

> "It has been said by you, Sir, that there is no harm in proclaiming myself to be the Promised Messiah even independent of the one referred to in the Damascene *Hadīth*. This humble one has no need of becoming a replica of the Messiah. I merely want Allah to include me among His humble and obedient servants. But we cannot escape from being put to test. The Exalted Allah has made trial the only way to advancement, as He says: "Do men think they will be left alone on saying 'We believe, that they will not be tested ?'"[5] (XXIX, 2)

What were the real motives of this advice? Was it merely Nūruddīn's far-sightedness and ambitious nature, or had it been made on some kind of encouragement from the powers-that-were? It is difficult now to say what actually lay behind the advice. As for the latter possibility, it appears nor far-fetched at all if we bear in mind the historical background of the rise of this new movement. The situation was that the British had witnessed the religious movement of Sayyid Ahmad Shahīd and had been put to considerable difficulty owing to that. In more or less the same period of time, there had risen another movement in the Sudan, led by the Sudanese Mahdī, and this too had given the British a very hard time. It is not unlikely that the British should have hit upon the desirability of the rise of a

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"This descent does not mean the real descent of the Messiah, the son of Mary; it is only a figurative expression which, informs the coming of the one like the Messiah which, according to Divine pronouncements and inspirations, is this humble one."

5. *Maktūbat-i-Ahmadiyah*, Vol. V, No. 2, p. 85.

reliable religious leader of their choice. If such a leader was able to win the confidence of the Muslims through his services to the cause of Islam, and capture the religious imagination of people by his religious zeal, he could serve as a good means to secure the British against the threat of anti-British religious movements. And since the Muslims already believed in the advent of the Messiah, their acceptance of such a person as the Messiah could not have been ruled out as impossible. Such a Messiah, if he preached loyalty to the powers-that-were in the name of God and Islam, could be of great service to the cause of the British. Nothing, however, can be said with complete certainty. Nevertheless the above cited letter of the Mirzā remains a significant document, and might have the clue to the origin of Qādiānism.

What is worth remembering at this point is that so far as the prophets of God are concerned, their mission does not depend on outside suggestions. They receive revelation from the heaven and are categorically informed of their position and mission. Their hearts are full of conviction and from the very first day they announce and keep on stressing what they believe to be the truth. Neither their own faith, nor their summons, depends upon someone else's drawing their attention towards it. From the very first day they keep on saying :

> This am I commanded and I am the first of those who bow to His Will. (VI : 163)

Belief about Jesus

The return of Jesus is an established article of creed in Islam.[6] Muslims have known this and have believed in it.

6. The ascension of Jesus to the heavens and his return to the world in the future is one of those beliefs of Muslims which have their basis in Qur'ān and is also proved by Prophetic Traditions, and in which Muslims have believed consistently. Ibn Kathīr says that the Prophetic Traditions regarding the return of Jesus are numerous enough to be regarded as one supported by an unbroken chain of transmis-

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Traditions from the Prophet mention it and, moreover, owing to the adversity of circumstances the Muslims had developed a mood to expect that some great, divinely inspired personality would appear suddenly and set things right for them. As the thirteenth century of *hijrah* drew close to its termination, this state of expectancy became even more intense. Nūruddīn, therefore, had reasons to presume that in view of the popularity won by the Mirzā by his religious services his claim to be the Messiah was likely to be accepted by Muslims.

The Mirzā accepts the suggestion

The manner in which the Mirzā declined to accept the suggestion made by Nūruddīn, and the spirit of humility and piety which he evinced in his letter on that subject are very valuable and add to his prestige. But for anyone who studies his works in a chronological order it is hard to retain this

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sion. Ibn Hajar also quotes Abul Husain Abari in *Fatah-al-Bārī* regarding the *tawātur* of Traditions on this question. Shawkānī has written a treatise just on this subject entitled *Tasdīq fi ma ja fī al-muntazir wa al-Dajjāl wa al-Masīh*. None of the important religious personalities has been recorded as denying this belief, not even the Mu'tazilah. Ibn Hazm, in his renowned work *Al-Fisal fi al-Milal wa al-Nihal* writes that this belief is established by the unbroken continuity of transmission. This question has been discussed in detail in Anwar Shāh Karhmīrī's *Aqīdat al-Islam*. As for the rational aspect of the question, if one accepts the omnipotence of God and affirms the perfection of His Attributes one can have no reason to doubt the possibility of statements found in those traditions whose authenticity and continuity are established. In an age of such tremendous scientific progress as ours when a number of things which were considered hitherto impossible are taking place before our own eyes, when man-made satellites revolve round the world after every few hours, when man has begun to pace the outer space, the idea that a man should ascend to the heavens and stay there alive for a certain period of time can hardly be regarded as inconceivable. To put forward objections which are based on Greek concepts of astronomy or on other worn-out notions appears palpably childish in this age of scientific advancement.

feeling of respect for long. For we find him quite soon accepting the suggestion of Nūruddīn—which he had turned down earlier—of proclaiming himself to be 'the Replica of the Messiah.'

If we survey the works of the Mirzā, they can be very easily divided into two phases. The first phase consists of those works in which he seeks merely to prove the validity of Islam and repudiate other religions. In these works there is no claim of being the Messiah. This is followed by the phase when he did make that claim, and went on making several other claims about himself, each more boastful and grandiose than the previous one. The first book that he wrote during this phase is *Fath-i-Islam*, published in 1891, the year which marks a major turning-point in the career of the Mirzā. In this work we find him claiming to be the Replica of the Messiah and the Promised Messiah.[8]

> "If you are honest, then be thankful and make prostrations of gratitude for this is the time for which your noble fore-fathers kept waiting until they passed away, the time which was awaited by innumerable souls who have journeyed (to the next world); for, verily, you have found that time. Now it is for you to value it or not, to benefit from it or not. I shall say this again and shall not cease announcing that I am he who has been sent at the proper time in order to reform people so as to revive religion afresh in their hearts. I have been sent in the same way as the one who was sent after *Kalīm Allāh*.....and whose soul, after great many pains during the rule of Herodius, was raised

7. *See Barahīn-i-Ahmadiyah, Surmah-i-Chashm-i-Ārya* and *Shahna-i-Haq*.
8. Mirzā Bashīr Ahmad writes in *Sīrat al-Mahdī*: "The Promised Messiah had written *Fath-i-Islām* towards the end of 1890. This is the first treatise in which he mentioned himself to be the Replica of Messiah and that the Messiah of Nazareth had died. In other words, this was the first proclamation of the claim of being the Promised Messiah." (Vol. I, pp. 267-268). This shows that the author too regards 'Replica of Messiah' and 'Promised Messiah' to be synonymous terms.

to the heavens. So, when the second *Kalīm Allāh*, who, indeed, was the first, and the leader of the Prophets, came for the suppression of other Pharaohs, the one concerning whom it has been said: '*We have sent to you (O men) an Apostle, to be a witness concerning you even as we sent an apostle to Pharaoh;* (LXXIII : 15) then he too, who is similar to the first *Kalīm* in respect of his work, and yet nobler in rank than he was promised a Replica of the Messiah. And this Replica of the Messiah, having been given the power, nature and characteristics of the Messiah, the son of Mary, descended from the heaven in an age, similar to his age, and around almost the same time that elapsed between the first *Kalīm* and Messiah, son of Mary, i. e. in the fourteenth century. And this descent was spiritual in the same way as after having risen; perfect people come down in order to reform people. And he too came down in a period similar in every respect to the period of the descent of the Messiah, the son of Mary, in order that it might remain a sign for those who understand.[9]

Even though this piece of the Mirzā's writing is terribly puzzling and complicated (and perhaps deliberately so), it clearly shows his new claim that he is the 'Replica of the Messiah'; Three of his works, namely *Fath-i-Islām, Tuwdīh-i-Maṛām,* and *Izāla-i-Awhām,* all deal with the same subject and frequently repeat this claim. In *Fath-i-Islām* at another place the Mirzā writes:

So aside from the resemblance with other venerable ancestors bestowed on this humble being, there is also a special resemblance with the nature of Hazrat Masīh (upon him be peace) and it is because of this resemblance that this humble one was sent after the name of the Messiah in order to shatter to pieces the crucifixional belief. Hence, I have been sent to shatter the cross and exterminate the pigs. I have come down from the heavens—accompanied

9. *Fath-i-Islām*, pp. 6 and 7.

by angels on my right and left.[10]

In his *Tawdīh-i-Marām,* which is his next book after *Fath-i-Islām* he makes this explicit statement :

> With a certain degree of disagreement Muslims and Christians believe that Messiah, the son of Mary was raised from this elemental existence to the heavens and that in some other age he will come down from the heavens. I have wriiten about the error of this notion in my treatise and have also stated that this descent does not mean the actual descent of Messiah, the son of Mary ; it is rather a metaphorical expression informing of the advent of a Replica of the Messiah and which on the basis of information and inspiration from God, applies to this humble one.[11]

Fanciful interpretations

Since Nūruddīn had a wide knowledge of the Traditions from the Prophet he used to draw the attention of the Mirzā towards the difficulties in justifying his claims and also used to help him in solving those difficulties. The problem as to how to relate the attributes which had been mentioned with regard to the Messiah required extraordinary intelligence. Here are a few examples of this intelligence—and of its having run riot.

The Traditions on which the Mirzā based his claim of Messiahship also mention a number of details relating to the descent of the Messiah. One of these is that the Messiah would descend in Damascus. Now, if the Mirzā was the promised Messiah, how could this be justified in the light of the above-mentioned Tradition ? It is obvious that Damascus and Qādiān are far away from one another. Nevertheless, the paradox did not occur to the Mirzā. It is Nūruddīn who drew his attention to it. Let us refer once more to the Mirzā himself on this question :

> "This humble one had so far not occupied himself with

10. *Ibid.*, p. 9 n.
11. *Tawdīh-i-Marām*, p. 2.

trying to find out the signification of this (i. e. Damascus), when a friend and trusted lover, Maulavī Ḥakīm Nūruddīn came here to Qādiān and he made a request to turn towards God to reveal the significance of Damascus and the two other ambiguous terms which occur in the Tradition concerned in *Muslim*. Since in those days I was sick and my mind was incapable of strenuous exertion I was unable to attend to these matters. Only a little bit of effort led to the explanation of a word, that is, the reality of Damascus was revealed to me."[12]

Later, he explains his inspired discovery of the meaning of Damascus in these terms:

Thus, it should be clear that in the interpretation of the word 'Damascus' it was revealed to me by God that that town has been called Damascus which is inhabited by a people who have the nature of Yazīd, who follow the practices and ideas of the filthy Yazīd, in whose hearts there is no love for God and the Prophet, no veneration for the commandments of God, who have become wont to follow their desires, whose enslavement to the commands of the baser self is such that even the blood of the pure and the sacred appears to them as easy and trifling, who do not believe in the Hereafter and for whom the existence of God is a complicated problem which eludes their understanding. And since the physician should come to the sick, it was essential that the Messiah should appear among such people.[13]

"Thus, 'the descent of the Massiah in Damascus' clearly indicates that there is someone who is a Replica of the Messiah, who also resembles Husain owing to the resemblance between these two venerable personalities (the Messiah and Husain), and who will descend in order to

12. *Izala-i-Awham*, pp. 32-33.
13. *Ibid.* pp. 33-34n.

warn the Yazīdīs for they are akin to the Jews."[14]

Later, he writes "Damascus has been used merely in a metaphorical way."[15] He also adds:

> "Then He told me that these people had the nature of Yazid and this town (Qāriān) is similar to Damascus. So, the Exalted Allah sent this humble one down to this Damascus for a great purpose (at the eastern side, next to the white minaret of the mosque wherein whosoever entered became safe. Blessed is the One who sent me down at this place).[16]

Two yellow sheets

In interpreting the Traditions which mention certain details of the descent of the Messiah and in applying them to himself, the Mirzā indulges in great extravagance of imagination, puts forward the most far-fetched meanings, and comes forward with the most ridiculous notions—as if he were sure of the absolute gullibility of his readers. For instance, his opponents pointed out that the Traditions on the basis of which he had argued his case and upon which he had based his claim also stated that at the time of his descent the Messiah would be clad in two yellow sheets. Replying to that, he says:

> "I am a permanently sick man. And the two yellow sheets which have been mentioned in the Traditions as those which would be worn by the Messiah when he would come down, these two sheets are with me—and these are, according to the science of interpretation of dreams, two ailments. Hence, one of these sheets is on my upper part so that headache and giddiness and insomnia and palpitation of the heart come to me in the form of fits. The other sheet which is on the lower part of my body is diabetes which has afflicted me for quite a long time so that often I

14. *Ibid* p. 34.
15. *Ibid.*, p. 34.
16. *Ibid.*, p. 68.

have urinated a hundred times during the night and day, and due to this frequency of urination I am afflicted with all those ailments of debility which generally result from such a disease.[17]

Eastern minaret of Damascus

Traditions from the Prophet also mention the eastern minaret of Damascus as the place where the Messiah would descend. Instead of interpreting it in some other fanciful manner, as was his wont, what he did in this case was to have a minaret constructed in the eastern part of Qādiān. He made this decision in 1900, according to *Sīrat al-Mahdī*, and invited people to donate generously.[18] In 1903, he even laid its foundation.[19] Its completion, however, could not take place during his life-time, and was accomplished by his son Mirzā Bashīruddīn Mahmood.

Satire and ridicule

The three above-mentioned works also crudely reveal the Mirzā's bad temper. They are full of satire and ridicule directed against opponents and contain such bitter vituperation that these books can hardly be reckoned among the books befitting the dignity of any serious cause. The style and mode of expression adopted by the Mirzā in these is not even becoming of sober and dignified writers, not to speak of prophets and religious reformers. The manner in which he scoffs at belief in the survival and the return of the Messiah to the earth and at those who subscribe to it reminds one of the type of wit associated with court-jesters rather than with serious intellectuals. Moreover, the kind of debating skill and quibbling which he employs had nothing to do with the prophetic mode

17. Appendices of Arbaʿīn, Nos. 3 and 4, p. 4.
18. *See* the announcement regarding the 'Minaret of Messiah', in *Khutbā-i-Ilhāmiyah*, p. 1.
19. *Sīrat al-Mahdī*, Vol. II., p. 154.

of expression. While trying to point out the rational impossibility of the Messiah's survival in the heavens, he writes:

> "Among others, one objection is that even if we were to assume that the Messiah did reach the heavens, along with his terrestrial body, then it would force us to admit that that body is bound to be affected in the heavens by the effects of time, like all other human and animal bodies and that this passage of time will inescapably and inevitably lead some day to his death. Thus in such a case, it will have to be accepted in respect of the Messiah that after having completed his course of life, he must have expired in the heavens[20] and must have been buried in the graveyard of the inhabitants of some planet (the possibility of habitation on which is being accepted in the present times). And even if we were to assume his being alive, there can be no doubt that he would by now have become a decrepit old man and will hardly be capable of rendering any religious service. Under such circumstances, his coming down to the earth seems hardly of any consequence except an unavailing botheration."[21]

At other place, he makes the following comment on that

20 In the Mirzā's days neither the physical sciences had developed to the present extent nor was man in possession of that extent of empirical knowledge about the outer space and other planets so as to visualise that terrestrial concepts of time and space are not absolute, and that measurements of time and space beyond the gravitational sphere of the earth might be quite different. He, therefore, could neither appreciate the possibility that a thousand years of this world could be equal to just a moment in some other world, or, that there might be a world which is quite different from our own in respect of change, death, feelings, requisites for survival, etc. Man seems to have the inalienable weakness of having blind faith in the knowledge and information of his own time and tends to deny all that has not been known or experienced till that time. In the words of the Qurʾān 'Nay, they charge with falsehood that whose knowledge they cannot compass, even before the elucidation thereof hath reached them.' (X : 39)

21. *Izāla-i-Awhām*. pp. 25-26.

part of the Tradition which mentions that the Messiah will "kill the swine."

"Will the excellent task that will be undertaken by the Messiah after he comes down to the earth merely be to go around, accompanied with a pack of hounds, hunting pigs? If this is true, then Sikhs, Chamars and Sansis and Gandils who love pig-hunting have reason to be glad, for they will prosper."[22]

At another place he makes the following observation about the future descent of the Messiah:

"Watch out lest you are deceived by someone who first boards some balloon and then alights from it in front of you. So, beware! Don't mistake such a person for the son of Mary because of your established belief."[23]

At still another place he refers to the same question in the following manner:

Brethren, this question stood on two legs:

"(1) One, the descent of the son of Mary from the heavens with his terrestrial body, towards the end of time. This leg has been broken by the Glorious Qur'ān and also some Traditions by informing of the death of the Messiah, son of Mary.

"(2) The second leg was the appearance of the promised Dajjāl towards the end of time. Now this leg has been broken into two pieces by the unanimously agreed Traditions of *Sahīh Muslim* and *Sahīh Bukhārī* which have been reported by important Companions and also by calling Ibn Sabā to be the promised Dajjāl and, at last, by killing him after making him join the body of Muslims. Now that both the legs of the question have been broken, how and with whose support can this corpse which lacks both the legs stand up after these thirteen countries"?[24]

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22. *Izāla-i-Awhām*; p. 21.
23. *Ibid.*, p. 143.
24. *Ibid.*, pp. 133-34.

Here is another example of his writing :

"Can it be proved that there has been a consensus regarding the Traditions that the Messiah will go around hunting pigs in woods and that Dajjāl will circumambulate around Kabah and that the son of Mary will perform the obligatory circumambulation of the Kabah like a sick man, supported on the shoulders of two men ? Is it not known that the exegetists of these Traditions have been letting their conjectures loose limitlessly ?"[25]

At another place, he had the following to address to the *Ahl-i-Sunnah*[26] scholars :

"O respected maulavis ! While the death of the Messiah is generally proved by the Noble Qur'ān, certain Companions and Exegetists have, from the very beginning, been continuously killing him (that is, holding that Jesus is dead—*Translator*). Then, why do you adopt your attitude of unavailing stubbornness ? Let the God of Christians die. How long will you go on calling him the living one, the undying ? Is there any limit to this ?"[27]

Impact of Modern Knowledge

The works of the Mirzā written during this period also show that he was deeply impressed with the advancement of natural sciences and with the scientific knowledge which was evoking great interest and curiosity in India in his days. The level of scientific knowledge attained by the West by that time would appear to be rudimentary when judged by the present level of scientific advancement. However, the Mirzā's acquaintance of the then scientific knowledge was second-hand and very superficial. It seems that one of the main props of his rejection

25. *Izāla-i-Awhām*, p. 214.
26. *Lit.* 'One of the path'. A term generally applied to the largest sect of Muslims who belong to one of the four juristic schools of orthodox Islam.
27. *Izāla-i-Awhām*, p. 235.

of the idea of the return of the Messiah was that the idea ran counter to the accepted facts of modern science. He thought that such a belief would expose religion to the ridicule of the educated people. He wrote in *Izāla-i-Awhām* :

> "In this philosophically-minded age, which has speedily brought with it mental refinement and intellectual advancement, it is a big error to think that one would be able to achieve religious success while holding on to this belief.[28] If such baseless things were to spread in the deserts of Africa or among the desert-dwellers of Arabia or in some islands of the sea or among groups of wild people, they might spread easily. But we cannot propagate such teachings which are totally opposed to reason and experience and natural sciences and philosophy and which also cannot be proved (to have originated) from our Prophet (upon him be the salutation and peace of God) ; rather traditions which are quite opposed to these are being proved among the educated people. Nor can we present them to the scholastically inclined people of Europe and America, who are getting rid of the absurdities of their own religion. How can they (whose minds and hearts have been illuminated by the light of new sciences) believe in such things which are out and out an insult to God and constitute an abrogation ofthe principles of His Book ?"[29]

While reading passages such as these, one finds it hard to

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28. It is hard to say how and why the Mirzā believed in such metaphysical propositions as revelation, angles, paradise, hell, etc. and how he accepted the demand of religion. Indeed, the very heart of religion is guided by faith in the realities beyond the ken of human perception. The above excerpt only illustrates the extent to which he was mentally over-awed by "modernism", and how he, like other superficial writers and ill-educated people of the nineteenth century, had deified modern science without appreciating its actual domain and its inherent limitations.

29. *Izāla-i-Awhām*, p. 135.

believe that they could have been written by the author of *Surma-i-Chashm-i-Aryā*; by the same writer who had strongly argued in favour of the possibility and actual occurrence of miracles and had refuted the view that metaphysical notions could not be denied on the basis of reason of limited human experience.

In this book the Mirzā has argued on the basis of the *Jummal*[30] numerals and here his mode of argument becomes very close to that of the missionaries of the *Bātīniyah* sect who used to employ these numerals as evidential arguments even in respect of fundamental religious beliefs.

> "My attention has been drawn through *Kashf*[31] towards the powers of the letters of the following name wherein I have been informed of the Messiah who was to appear at the end of the thirteenth century. (God has told me) that He had already kept in view the era (of Messiah's appearance) in giving this name (to me); and that name is, 'Mirzā 'Ghulām Ahmad Qādiānī'. The powers of the letters of this name add up exactly to 1300, and in this township of Qādiān there is none except this humble one whose name is Ghulām Ahmad. In fact, it has been put in my heart that at this time there is none except this humble one who has the name 'Ghulām Ahmad Qādiānī.' And this has been a favour bestowed by God to this humble one that He, the Pure One, reveals the mysteries to me through the powers of alphabetical letters."[32]

At another place he writes:

> "Now it is proved by this research that the Qur'ān contains the prediction of the coming of the Messiah, the son of Mary, towards the end of time. The time of the appearance of the Messiah, which has been fixed by the Qur'ān as 1400 (A.H.) has also been accepted by many saints on the basis

30. The reckoning of the alphabets by a system in which the letters have different powers.
31. Revelation of any secret to a mystic or saint by the grace and power of God.
32. *Izāla-i-Awhām*, p. 90.

of their *kashf*. The Qur'ānic verse 'And We certainly are able to drain it off'[34] has letters which, according to the Jummal, make up the figure of 1274; and this points to the moonless nights of the Islamic lunar months containing a hidden pointer to the rise of a new moon. And this mystery is latent, according to Jummal system, in the letters of Ghulām Aḥmad Qādiānī."[35]

In these books, while trying to explain the Traditions from the Holy Prophet and arguing that they referred to him, the Mirzā has been extremely heedless of all rules of exposition of such texts, giving full rein to his fancy. In fact, it is hardly conceivable that anyone should take such liberty in explaining even the writings or compositions of ordinary writers and poets not to say of Traditions from prophets. To suit his purpose the Mirzā has taken the position that the words of the Traditions are of a figurative or metaphorical nature. Again, in this respect, he seems to be following in the footsteps of the Bātinīs who used to explain religious terms—about whose text as well as meaning there is an unbroken continuity of agreement—in a far-fetched and ridiculous manner without any lexicological or rational basis to support them. And it is thus that they had opened the flood-gates of atheism and nihilism.

In *Izāla-i-Awhām* the Mirzā repeatedly asserts that knowledge about the son of Mary and Dajjāl had not been completely clear to the Holy Prophet and that in this regard God had endowed him only with some brief hints.[36]

The Messiah in Kashmir

The Mirzā kept on "reflecting" about the death of the

34. It should be noted that this verse refers to rain, and the whole verse reads thus: "And We send down water from the sky according to (due) measure and We cause it to soak in the soil; and We certainly are able to drain it off (with ease). (XL : 18)

35. *Izāla-i-Awhām*, Vol. II, p. 338.

36. *Ibid.*, Vol. II, p. 346.

Messiah till, in the end, he concluded that his death had taken place in Kashmir and that it was there that he lay buried. In this connection, according to his wont, he did a lot of hair-splitting which shows the fertility of his imagination even if the level is childish. He has tried to prove that the pronunciation of Kashmir in Kashmiri language is "*Kāshir*", and it appears that this word, in fact, is a compound Hebrew word, composed of 'K' which is used to denote similarity, resemblance, etc. and of 'Āshīr' which in Hebrew means Syria. Thus the word 'Kāshīr' in Hebrew meant 'like Syria'. On this basis, the Mirzā went on to add that when Jesus (peace be upon him) migrated from Palestine to that part of India which due to the excellence of weather, agreeableness of its seasons and its greenery and freshness had close resemblance to Syria, God named it "Kāshir" in order to comfort and gratify him. The excessive use of the word led to the dropping of 'ā' with the result, that it became 'Kashir.' Then, he proved that the tomb of 'Budhasaf' (popularly known as the "prince") in the Khān Yār locality of Srinagar was in fact the grave of Jesus. In trying to support this piece of research, he marshalled all possible far-fetched arguments, with the result that his writing on the point appears closer to poetry and fiction rather than what is normally considered to be academic writing. The unbridled speculations of the Orientalists, who are noted for making the mountain out of a mole-hill simply pale into insignificance when compared with the Mirzā's writings.[37]

This brings us to a definite milestone in the spiritual experiences and claims of the Mirzā. At this stage he categorically claims to be the "Promised Messiah," and tries to prove this by his so-called 'rational' as well as traditional arguments.

37. *See Barāhin*, p. 228.

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From Messiah to Prophet

An objective, but critical study of the Mirzā's writings gives one the impression that his claims proceeded along a gradually ascending scale. All this seems to have been planned very carefully and the Mirzā appears to have exercised great patience and precaution in moving from one stage to the other. In the beginning he expressed the opinion that inspiration, intuitive experience and categorical knowledge were an essential concomitant of completely following the Prophet–a natural stage at which one arrives as a result of losing oneself in obedience to the Prophet. He does not explicitly claim himself to be a prophet, but talks about prophetic attributes and characteristics and tries to prove that these attributes and characteristics are bestowed upon the followers of the Prophet, particularly upon the more perfect ones, by virtue of their following the Prophet. This logic and its premises were bound to lead the Mirzā, sooner or later, to proclaim himself to be a prophet. It appears that throuhgout these years, he remained busy paving the way and trying to create the proper atmosphere for such a proclamation. He seems to have been trying to assess whether the devotion of his followers had reached the stage where they would not mind accepting even this claim, as they had accepted the rest of his claims.

Proclamation of Prophethood

At last that event did take place. In the year 1900, Maulavī ʿAbdul Karīm, the preacher of the Friday sermon, gave a sermon in which he used the words *Nabī* (Prophet) and *Rasūl*

(Messenger) for the Mirzā. This caused great irritation to Maulavī Sayyid Muhammad Ahsan Amrohawī. When Maulavī ᶜAbdul Karīm came to know of this, he gave another Friday sermon in which he addressed the Mirzā, requesting him to contradict his belief, if he was wrong in considering him to be a prophet and messenger of God. After the Friday prayers were over, Maulavī ᶜAbdul Karīm caught hold of the skirt of the Mirzā's apparel and requested him to correct him in his beliefs if they were erroneous. The Mirzā turned around and said that he, too, held the same belief. Meanwhile, Maulavī Muhammad Ahsan had been greatly agitated by the sermon and in anger was pacing the floor of the mosque. On Maulavī ᶜAbdul Karīm's return, he began to quarrel with him. When their voices rose very high, the Mirzā came out of his house and recited the Quranic verse: "O ye who believe! Don't raise your voice above the voice of the Prophet."[1]

(XLIX.2)

Thus the sermon of Maulavī ᶜAbdul Karīm inaugurated a new phase in the career of the Mirzā. This sermon provided him with the much needed assurance that his followers had such an unquestioning faith in him that they would accept whatever claims he might make. The Mirzā's own son, Bashīruddīn Mahmood has very ably described this development by pointing out that the Mirzā used to claim his self to be invested with the attributes which could be found in none except a prophet and yet he used to deny his being a prophet. When he became conscious of this inconsistency and became aware that these attributes were untenable with his denial of prophethood, he proclaimed himself to be a prophet. He writes:

> "In short, since in the beginning the Promised Messiah thought that the definition of *Nabī* is the one who brings a

1. This event is based on the report of a speech of Sayyid Sarwar Shāh Qādiānī at an annual conference held in Qādiān, and published in *al-Fadhl*, Vol. X, No. 51, dated January 4, 1923. *See* also *Haqīqat al-Nubūwat*, p 124.

new *Shariᶜah*, or abrogates some injunctions, or is a prophet directly (appointed by God): so, even though all the attributes and qualities required of a prophet were found in him, he used to decline from designating himself a prophet. When, later on, he became aware that the nature of his claims is that of a prophet and not of a *Muhaddath*, he proclaimed himself to be a prophet."[2]

However, whether the Mirzā refrained from proclaiming himself to be a prophet till his misunderstanding was removed and he was commissioned by God to proclaim his prophethood, or he had been waiting all this while for an opportune moment to make this declaration, there is no doubt that he was ultimately led to making the proclamation of his prophethood which was the logical result of his earlier claims.

Elucidation and Challenge

As stated by Mirzā Bashīruddīn Mahmood, the question was finally decided in 1901 and the Mirzā began to write about it explicitly in his writings. The collection of articles called *Arbaᶜīn*[3] is full of declarations and explanations about this new mission. This frankness increased steadily. In 1902 he wrote a treatise entitled *Tuhfat al-Nadwah*, which was addressed to the *ᶜulama* who were taking part in the deliberations of the Nadwah Conference held at Amritsar in 1902. In this treatise he wrote:

"Thus, as I have repeatedly said, what I recite unto you is categorically and certainly the word of Allah, in the same way as Qurʾān and Torah are the words of Allah, and that I am a *Zillī*[4] and *Buruzi*[5] prophet of God, and every

2. *Haqīqat al-Nubūwat*, Vol. I, p. 124.
3. The Mirza had promised to write forty treatises on the subject but he concluded the series only after the fourth one. *See Arbaᶜīn*, Vol. IV, p. 14.
4. Reception of the revelation through the grace of Muhammad (peace be on him) has been called "*Zillī nubūwah*" by the Mirzā. See *Haqīqat al-Wahy*, p. 28.
5. This kind of prophet, according to the Mirzā does not receive it (i. e.

Continued on next page

Muslim is obliged to obey me in religious matters. And every one who has received information about me, even though he be a Muslim, but does not consider me arbiter in his affairs, nor recognizes me as the Promised Messiah, nor considers my revelations as coming from God, he is liable to punishment in the heavens for he has rejected what he had to accept at its proper time. I do not merely say that I would have courted (the disaster of) death had I been a liar; I also say that I am true even as Moses and Jesus and Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be on them) were true, and that God has shown more than ten thousand signs to uphold my claim. The Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be on him) has testified and the earlier prophets had indicated the time of my advent, which is the present time. The Qur'ān has also indicated the time of my debut during the present times. Both the heavens and the earth have borne testimony in my support; nor is there a prophet who has not testified in my favour."[6]

In the same vein is what he wrote in *Haqiqat al-Wahy:*

"So, of all the people of this *ummah*, I am the only one who has received this large portion of Divine revelation and knowledge about the Unseen. None of the saints of this *ummah*, who have preceded me, was given such a big share of this bounty.[7] For this reason I alone was chosen to

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prophethood) for his own self, but for the majesty of his prophet. It is for this reason he claims, that his name in the heavens is Muhammad and Ahmad. This means that the Prophet Muhammad's *nubūwah* was received ultimately by (another) Muhammad. although ina *buruzi* way, and not by any body else". *Ek Ghalṭī ka Izālah*, p. 5.

6. *Tuhfat al-Nadwah*, p. 4.
7. This is merely a claim, and it is based on lack of religious knowledge and is against historical facts. In the *ummah* of Mohammad (peace be on him) there have been so many saints who have been graced by divine inspiration, but none ever claimed it to be a revelation, nor claimed prophethood on that basis.

be appointed a prophet and none else deserved this title."[8]

All the later writings of the Mirzā are full of similar categorical elucidations of his claim to prophethood. These are too many to be mentioned in this book. All those interested in a more detailed study of it should study his *Haqīqat al-Wahy*, and Bashīruddīn Mahmood's *Haqīqat al-Nubūwat*.

Independent Prophethood

The works of the Mirzā also prove that he believed himself to be an independent prophet and bearer of a *Sharīᶜah*. In *Arbaᶜīn* he defined the *Sharīᶜah*-bearing prophet as one whose revelation contains positive commandments and prohibitions and who makes some regulations even though these commandments and prohibitions might have been embodied in the scripture of some former prophet. According to him a *Sharīᶜah*-bearing prophet need not bring an altogether new set of laws. Then he goes on to declare himself to be such an independent *Sharīᶜah*–bearing prophet. To cite his own words.

> "Apart from this, you should know what is *Sharīᶜah*. Whosoever laid down some commandments and prohibitions through his revelation and framed some regulations for *ummah* becomes the bearer of a *Sharīᶜah*. So, even according to this definition, our opponents are blameworthy, for my revelations contain commandments as well as prohibitions. For instance, take the inspiration :
>
> 'Say to the believers to lower down their eyes and guard their hidden places—This is purer for them.' (xxvi.30)
>
> "All this is found in *Barāhīn-i-Ahmadiyah*. It contains commandments as well as prohibitions and the same is the case with my revelations till today : they contain both commandments and prohibitions. And if you say that by *Sharīᶜah* is meant that which contains new regulations then this is wrong. The Exalted Allah says : 'And this is in the Books of the earlier Revelations ; the Books of Abraham and

8. *Haqīqat al-Wahy*, p. 391.

Moses;' (LXXXVII, 18-19) which means that the Qurānic teachings are also embodied in Torah."[9]

The fact that the Mirzā abrogated a number of those important and categorical injunctions of the *Sharīᶜah* which have been continuously supported by Muslims also shows that he considered himself to be the bearer of an independent *Sharīᶜah* and regarded himself as one entitled to determine what was religiously obligatory or prohibited. One of the examples is the attitude he took in respect of the question of *jihād*. Even though *jihād* is a textual Quranic injunction supported by the unbroken belief and practice of the *ummah* throughout the fourteen centuries of our history and is supported by the Prophetic Tradition: '*jihād* will continue till the Day of Resurrection,' but the Mirzā prohibited it. In connection with the abrogation of *jihād*, just one excerpt from his writings on the subject will suffice:

> "*Jihād*—that is the harshness of religious wars—has gradually been lightened by God. During the time of Moses there was such harshness that even acceptance of belief could not save a man from being killed, and even suckling babies were put to death. Then during the time of our Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) the killing of the children, the old and women-folk was prohibited. Then, for certain nations, instead of accepting the faith, payment of *jizyah* was accepted as the means of saving them from punishment. Then, in the time of the Promised Messiah, the injunction of *jihad* has been absolutely repealed."[10]

Excommunication of the Deniers of Mirzā's Prophethood:

The natural and logical consequence of the claim to be a

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9. *Arbaᶜīn*, appendix 4, p. 7.
10. *Arbaᶜīn*, Vol. 4, p. 15n. For more detailed statements of the Mirzā on the subject *see* Section 2 of Chapter III of the book.

prophet was that all those who declined to believe in the new prophethood should be declared unbelievers (*kāfirs*). The Mirzā himself recognized that only a *Sharīᶜah*-bearing prophet was entitled to declare all those who did not believe in him to be *kāfirs*. He writes :

> "This point is worth remembering that to call those who reject one's claim as *kāfirs* is worthy only of those prophets who bring from God a *Sharīᶜah* and new injunctions. But all others besides the *Sharīᶜah*-bearing (prophets), that is, *mulhaim* (Divinely-inspired) and *muhaddath* (recipients of Divine Communication), no matter how high their station is in the sight of God and no matter how highly honoured they are by God, rejection of their claim does not render anyone an unbeliever."[11]

Nevertheless, all the subsequent works of the Mirzā are replete with denunciations of those who denied his Prophethood as *kāfirs*. A few examples will suffice :

> "During these days the foundation of a new sect will be laid in the heavens and in order to support this sect, God will blow (His trumpet) "Be" and by the sound of this "Be", every fortunate one will be drawn towards it except those who are eternally doomed and have been created to fill up the Hell."[12]

In his inspiration which the Mirzā published on May 25, 1900, he said :

> "I have received inspiration that whosoever will not follow thee and will not enter into thy oath of fealty then such a disobeyer of God and the Prophet will dwell in Hell."[13]

Take another instance : "God had revealed to me that every one who has received my call and has not accepted it is not a

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11. *Tiryāq al-Qulūb*, p. 130n.
12. *Barāhīn-i-Ahmadiyah*, Vol. V, pp. 82-83.
13. *Mīᶜyār al-Akhar*, p. 8 (cited from Qādiānī *Mazhab*).

Muslim.[14]

At another place, the matter has been dealt with in greater detail :

> "*Kufr* denotes two categories (of disbelief): first, that a person denies Islam itself and does not recognize the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be on him) to be the messenger of God. The second (category of) disbelief is, for instance, that he does not believe in the Promised Messiah and considers him false in spite of the matter having been made clear and even though God and the Prophet had emphatically urged that he be recognized as true, and there had been similar emphatic instruction in the books of the earlier prophets. Thus, since he is the denier of the command of God and His Prophet, he is a *kāfir*. And if one were to look at the matter closely, both these categories of *kufr* are basically the same; for, the person who does not accept the command of God and His Prophet despite his having recognized it to be so, he does not believe in God and the Prophet according to the explicit texts of the Qur'ān and the *Hadīth*.[15]

This constitutes an article of the Qādiānī creed. Its former head, Mirzā Bashīruddīn Mahmood writes :

> "All those Muslims who have not been integrated in the oath of fidelity to the Promised Messiah, regardless of whether they had heard his name or not, they are *kāfirs* and outside the fold of Islam."[16]

It is because of this belief that all non-Ahmadis are *kāfirs*, the Islamic legal ordinances in respect of *kāfirs* have been considered by the Qādiānī group to be applicable to those who are outside the fold of their religion. The Qādiānīs have, therefore, been prohibited from having matrimonial relations with Muslims. In one of his speeches, Mirzā Bashīruddīn Mahmood

14. *Zikr al-Hakīm*, No. 2, p. 24, compiled by Dr. Abdul Hakim, quoted from *al-Fadhl* January 15, 1935.
15. *Haqīqat al-Wahy*, pp. 179-80.
16. *Āīna'-i-Sadāqat*, p. 35 (cited from *Qādiānī Mazhab*).

observed: "One of the ordinances of the Promised Messiah, and an important one too is that no Ahmadi may give his daughter in marriage to a non-Ahmadi. This ordinance is mandatory for every Ahmadi."[17] In *Anwār-i-Khilāfat* he remarks: "A person asked him (i.e. Mirzā Ghulām Ahmad Qādiānī) again and again and put forward several pressing difficulties. Nevertheless, he instructed him to keep his daugther at home for all her life, but not to give her in marriage to a non-Ahmadi. When after the Mirzā's death the said person married his daughter to a non-Ahmadī, the first *Khalīfah*, Hakīm Nūruddīn, not only forbade him from acting as an *Imām* of the Ahmadīs but also excommunicated him from the Ahmadī group, and did not accept his repentance during the six years of his *Khilāfāt* despite his repeated apologies and repentance."[18]

Elaborating on the same theme at another place, he goes on to say:

> "The position of non-Ahmadis in relation to us is the same as that fixed for the *ahl-al-kitāb*[19] in relation to a believer by the Wise Qur'ān, which instructs that a believing man may marry an *ahl-al-kitāb* woman, but may not give a believing woman in marriage to an *ahl-al-kitāb*. Likewise, an Ahmadī may bring a non-Ahmadī woman into the fold of his marriage; but an Ahmadī woman, according to the Islamic *Shari'at*, may not be given in marriage to a non-Ahmadī male. *Huzūr* (the Mirzā) says: There is no harm in accepting a non-Ahmadī woman in marriage, for marriage with *ahl-al-kitāb* women is permitted. Rather, such a marriage is useful, because thus one more person receives true guidance, (but) one should not marry one's daughter to any non-Ahmadī. If you can have (a non-Ahmadī woman), take her. But to give away (an Ahmadī woman in marriage

17. *Barkāt-i-Khilāfat*, Collection of speeches of Mirzā Bashīruddīn Mahmood, p. 15, (cited from *Qādiānī Mazhab*)
18. *Anwār-i-Khilāfat*, pp. 93-94.
19. A follower of one of the revealed religions that is, a Jew or a Christian.

to a non- Ahmadī) is sinful."[20]

In the same way, to pray behind a non-Ahmadī is not permissible. The Mirzā himself wrote:

> "This Divine Message shows that those who declare (the Mirzā to be) *kāfir* and adopt the path of falsification (of the Mirzā) are a doomed people. Hence, they do not deserve that any one of my *jamāᶜat* (group) pray behind them. Can anybody offer prayers behind someone who is dead? So, keep in mind that, as God has informed me, it is prohibited for you, it is absolutely prohibited for you to pray behind anyone who declares (me to be) *kāfir* or falsifies (me), or is hesitant (to follow me)."[21]

Pursuing this logic, participation in the funeral prayers of the Muslims too has been prohibited for the Qādiānīs. According to the Qādiānī mouthpiece *al-Fadhl* 'the Mirzā did not offer prayer at the funeral of his son (late Fadhl Ahmad) because he was a non-Ahmadī."[22] Miān Bashīruddīn Ahmad in a letter published in *al-Fadhl* even goes so far as to say: "I believe that it is not permissible to offer prayers at the funeral of those who pray behind non-Ahmadīs, for, such a person, in my view, is not an Ahmadī."[23] He also expressed the view that it is not permitted to offer prayers at the funeral of even a non-Ahmadī infant. The argument was that just as prayers could not be offered at the funeral of a Christian child, even though he was innocent, one could not offer prayers at the funeral of a non-Ahmadī child.[24]

It was in compliance with this injunction, that even though Chowdhry Sir Zafrullah Khān, then Pakistan's Minister for External Affairs, was present at the funeral ceremony of Mr. Jinnah, he did not participate in the funeral prayers.

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20. *al-Hakam*, April 14, 1908 (cited in *Qādiānī Mazhab*
21. *Arbaᶜīn*, Vol. III, p. 34n.
22. *Al-Fadhl*, dated 15th December, 1921.
23. *Al-Fadhl*, dated 13th April, 1926.
24. *Al-Fadhl*, Vol. 9, No. 72 and Vol. X, No. 32.

One of the corollaries of accepting this belief is that whatever religious duties one had performed prior to entering into the fold of Qādiānism, would be deemed to be all null and void. In reply to a query raised by a Qādiāni, he was informed: "Whosoever performed his obligatory pilgrimage at the time when his (i. e. the Mirzā's) claim had become well-known and the proof of its validity had been made evident to the people of the country in general, and the Mirzā had interdicted praying behind a non-Ahmadī *Imām*, then that person's *Hajj* will not be reckoned as having been performed by him."[25]

Incarnation and transmigration of soul

Some of the writings of the Mirzā indicate that he also believed in the doctrines of incarnation and transmigration of souls and that the souls and essence of the prophets (upon all of them be the peace of Allah) were embodied in the person of the prophets one after another. In *Tiryāqal-Qulūb* he writes:

> "Thus, as has been accepted by the *Sufīs*, the levels of existence are cyclical. In this way, Abraham (upon him be peace) was re-born in respect of nature, temperament and familiarity of heart, two thousand and five hundred years after his death in the house of ʿAbdullah, the son of ʿAbd al-Muttalib and was called by the name of Muhammad."[26]

He also writes:

> "At this place this point needs to be remembered that during the periods of the internal degeneration of Islam, the spirituality of our Prophet (upon him be the peace and benediction of Allah) manifests itself and this incarnation of the essence of Muhammad shows itself in the form of some perfect follower. As for what has been reported in the Traditions that *al-Mahdī* would be born and that 'his name would be my name and his mode of conduct be (like)

25. *al-Hakam*, (Qādiān) of May 7, 1934.
26. *Tiryāq al-Qulūb*, p. 155 n.

my mode of conduct'—if these Traditions are correct, then the reference is to the descent of his spirit as I have mentioned above."[27]

In another of his works he wrote :

"It has been made known to me through *kashf* that when Jesus was informed about this sacriligiousness which has spread from the Christian people to the whole world, his soul moved for spiritual descent. Thereafter, God, according to His promise, granted him his replica, and in it was infused the Messiah's courage and character and spirituality, and the two—that is, the Messiah and his replica, were firmly integrated as if they were two parts of the same matter. Thus, in this sense, his being became the being of the Messiah, and the yearnings of the Messiah descended into him—and it is the descent of these which, in inspirational terminology, has been described as the descent of the Messiah."[28]

Two advents of the Prophet

The Mirzā also declared that the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be on him) has had two advents. He said :

"And know that our Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be on him), in the same way as he was sent in the fifth millenium, was also sent towards the end of the sixth millenium, in the form of the Promised Messiah."[29]

He even felt that this second advent was stronger, more perfect, and brighter than the first one :

"Rather the truth is that his spirituality (upon him be peace) at the end of the sixth millenium, that is, in these days, is more vigorous and stronger and more perfect than in those years ; rather, it is like the full moon."[30]

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27. *Āīna' i-Kamālat-i-Islām*, p. 346.
28. *Ibid.*, pp. 254-55.
29. *Khutba-i-Ilhāmiya*, p. 180.
30. *Ibid.*, p. 181.

Mirzā's boastfulness

The boastfulness of the Mirzā in respect to his prophethood and his attainments is a noteworthy feature of his life. This reflects a particular kind of psychological complex, and we need not try to analyse it. However, his urge to express his greatness was so pressing that he proclaimed himself to be of the same status as all other prophets. To quote one of his couplets:

He who gave the cup to every prophet,
Gave it to me filled to the brim!

Later, he proclaimed himself to be possessed of the virtues of all prophets. To quote him again:

Although prophets there have been many,
In Divine inspiration I am not less than any.[31]

He, further, went on to claim:

Every prophet became alive when I was raised;
Every Apostle lies hidden beneath my garment.[32]

Not only this; he proclaimed that it was he who had brought about the perfection of the human race; that without him, this garden of humanity was incomplete:

The garden of Adam which had been incomplete so far,
Has now burst into bloom, complete with leaves and fruits.[33]

He also seems to believe that the attainments of prophethood and spirituality evolve with the passage of time so that these attainments had found their most perfect form in his own personality. He wrote:

"In the same way, the spirituality of our Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be on him) appeared in the fifth millenium—and that time was not the apex of its advancement—but the first step towards the highest point of its

31. *Khutba-i-Ilhamiya*, p. 99.
32. *Ibid.*, p. 100.
33. *Barāhīn-i-Ahmadiya*, Vol. V, p. 113.

perfection. Then that spirituality radiated itself towards the end of the sixth millenium, that is, during the present time, in the same way as Adam was created towards the end of the sixth day by the command of Allah, the Best Creator. And the spirituality of our Prophet, the best of the prophets, made its manifestation in a member of his *ummah* so that this spirituality might reach the perfection of its manifestation and predominance of its light, as God had promised in his Radiant Book. So, I am that promised manifestation; I am the promised Light."[34]

In *Ajāz-i-Ahmadī* he even tries to place his miracles and signs above those of the Holy Prophet. He says: For him the moon was cleaved, but for me both the sun and the moon were eclipsed. So, will they still deny?[35]

These boastful claims of the Mirzā provided sufficient ground for his staunch followers and successors to build further on that foundation, as has always happened in the history of sects and religions. It is no surprise, therefore, that many of his followers explicitly declare him to be superior to most of the prophets. Mirzā Bashīruddīn Mahmood, the son and second successor of the Mirzā, wrote the following:

"Many prophets have passed in the world, but their disciples did not go beyond the stage of *muhaddath*, except for our Prophet (i. e. Muhammad), whose benediction became so effluent that besides many *muhaddath*, one achieved even the status of prophethood. And it is not only that he became a prophet but having attained perfection by way of reflection of the one whom he followed, went even ahead of some of the great prophets."[36]

The enthusiastic followers of Mirzā Bashīruddīn, however, did not stop even at that. The mouthpiece of the movement,

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34. *Khutba-i-Ilhāmiya*, pp. 177-78.
35. *Ajāz-i-Ahmadi*, p. 71.
36. *Haqīqat al-Nubūwat*, p. 257.

al-Fadhl, wrote:

> "The Promised Messiah was a prophet. His position by virtue of his status, was that of the disciple and the reflection of the Noble Messenger (upon him be peace and blessings of Allah). As for other prophets (upon them be peace), he excelled many of them; may be, he excelled them all."[37]

37. *al-Fadhl,* Vol. XIV, No. 85, dated April 29, 1927 (cited in *Qādiānī Mazhab).*

PART III

Some Aspects of Life and Character

1

Mirza's Life after the Spread of his Message

Early Life

Mirzā Ghulam Ahmad had started his life in poverty. In the early part of his life the situation was that a big part of his landed property had already gone and there was no other means of income. In his own words, he was concerned only with the dinning table and the bread."[1] Prior to the spread of his fame he had spent twenty five years of anonymity. To cite own words again: "In fact during this period I was like a dead body, buried for centuries in such a manner that it was not even known whose grave it was."[2] This state of affairs lasted until the appearance of the Mirzā as an author and champion of Islam. Then, his fame spread as a preacher and spiritual leader. He claimed to be the "Promised Messiah", and, subsequently, an independent messenger of God. In this phase, things changed for him. We see him from now on as the spiritual guide and leader of a nascent religious community and a prosperous group of people. Gifts poured in from all sides and he became the centre of adoration and love of thousands of people. It is obvious that the Mirzā's prosperity in this period of his life owed itself to his religious movement. It is religious sentiment alone which led the people to make sacrifices in order to help the Mirzā financially. The student is bound to feel curious as to

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1. *Nuzūl-al-Masīh*, 1st Edition, p. 118.
2. *Tatimmah Haqīqat al-Wahy*, p. 28.

the effect of this changed circumstance upon his life and character. The Mirzā had risen in the name of a great religious cause, and had come forward with the highest possible religious claims about himself. How far was his life in conformity with the ideals of this cause and the big claims he made about himself? Making a comparison between him and the noble life of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) would be sheer insolence. What can possibly be done is to compare his life and character with those followers of the Holy Prophet who have championed the religious cause of Islam and have won popular admiration among Muslims as their true spiritual leaders.

Character of Religious Reformers

A study of the history of inspiring religious personalities and dynamic religious movements in Islam makes one thing quite evident. Even while experiencing fame and the availability of material riches these noted religious personalities showed tremendous indifference towards wordly ambitions, an admirable sense of self-contentment and great sacrifice, and an ever-mounting keenness to strive for nothing except the felicity of the next life. The entire life of such people was subordinated to the conviction that the next life constitutes the real life. Their motto seems to have been the saying of the Prophet: "O God there is no life except the life of the Hereafter." They passed through worldly life the way a traveller passes through the various stages of his journey, always keeping the following saying of the Holy Prophet before their eyes:

> "What is my concern with the world? My relation to world is similar to that of a rider who stays (for a while) under the shade of a tree, then gets up and leaves."[3]

Their life embodies, to an appreciable degree, the following description of the life of Hazrat Ali (may Allah be pleased with

3. Reported in *Ahmad*, *Tirmidhī* and *Ibn Majah*.

him), by one of his friends:

> "He was weary of the world and its bloom and loved night and its darkness. He was, by God, profuse in tears, immersed in reflection, wondering at the march of time, always critically watchful of himself (literally, always addressing his soul). The dress that pleased him was the rough one; and the food that pleased him was the coarse and simple one."[4]

Not to mention the great personalities of the early period of Islam, nor even ᶜUmar ibn ᶜAbd al-ᶜAzīz, who was a rightly-guided caliph, we refer here only to personalities of much lower stature when compared with men of the above-mentioned genre. Among the humble followers of the Holy Prophet one comes across, among others, great rulers whose self-denial, detachment, piety and scrupulousness, absolute indifference to worldly life, its vanities and its false glories constitute man's pride and have left an indelible impress on history. Nūruddīn Zangī, Salāhuddīn Ayyūbī,[5] Nāsiruddīn Mahmood, Muzaffar Halīm and Aurangzeb Alamgīr: the lives of all these are excellent examples of indifference to the world and of self-denial. Even during the life-time of the Mirzā, there were numerous God-loving persons who had no love for wordly riches, and who distributed every cent of what they received among the poor and the needy. The more people turned towards these men, and the more they received by way of gifts from people, the greater was their detachment from these riches. In the life-time of the Mirzā we

4. *Sifat al-Safwah*, Vol. I. p. 122.
5. The biographer of the Sultan and his close confidant Qadī Ibn Shaddād writes: "The Sultan had left only 47 dirhams ās his inheritance! He left no estates, no house, no property, garden, village or cultivated area. In his burial, not even a cent was spent from his legacy, all was brought on loan, including even the grassloads for the grave. The arrangement for burial was made by his Minister Qazi Fādil by some permissible and legitimate means". And he was the sovereign of Syria, Egypt, the Sudan, Iraq, Hijaz and almost the whole area that is now known as the Middle East. (*Al-Nawādir-i-Sultānia*, p. 6).

find such illustrious men of God as Maulānā Fazlur Rahmān Ganj Muradābādī, Maulānā Rashīd Ahmad Gangohī, Maulānā Syed ᶜAbdullah Ghaznavī, Maulānā Muhammad Naᶜīm Frangī Mahlī who were admirable examples of Muslim piety and austerity.[6]

A Sign of Prophethood

Thus, a pure, self-denying life, whose character remains unruffled by vicissitudes of poverty and wealth was not unknown to the Mirzā. In fact, he reckoned it to be a proof of the truth of the Holy Prophet's prophethood. He wrote:

> "And when after a long time, Islam became supreme he (i.e. the Holy Prophet) did not accumulate any treasure for self-enrichment and self-glorification; nor did he erect any building or monument; nor did he devise means for a life of royal ease or luxury; nor did he seize any other opportunity for personal benefit. Whatever came was all spent on taking care of the orphans and the poor, on the widows and on those in debt; as for himself, he ate not even once to his full satisfaction."[7]

Religious Teacher or Political Leader

Now, let us attempt to study the Mirzā's life according to the above-mentioned standard which he himself recognizes as a criterion of piety. What we note in regard to the Mirzā, however, is the marked change in the two phases of his life, his earlier life of anonymity and poverty, and the latter phase, when he was adored by his followers and received lavish presentations from them. Instead of finding in his conduct any resemblance to the saintly and angelic lives of the religious personalities of Islam, we find his life resembling that of world-seeking political leaders or founders of non-religious movements. In the last phase of his life (when a man is conscious that the time of his

6. *See* an account of their lives in *Nuzhat ul-Khawātir*, Vol. VIII.
7. *Barāhīn-i-Ahmadiyah*, Vol. I, p. 117.

reckoning and meeting with God is close) we find him rolling in prosperity and luxury in a manner which reminds us of political careerists rather than of sincere servants of the cause of God. This question assumed such importance that it caused uneasiness among his sincere and close followers, some of whom were, in the end, forced to give vent to their feelings of uneasiness and disgust.

Family Life of the Mirzā

Among the followers, Khwājā Kamāluddīn was particularly suspicious and discontented with the luxurious way in which the Mirzā's family lived. He mentioned to his friends that the ladies of his own family who had observed the luxurious life and the high standard of living of the Mirzā's faimly were not prepared at all to make sacrifices and remain content with a simple, austere life in order to save money for the cause of the movement. Once he told Maulavī Muhammad ᶜAlī (a former Amīr of the Jamāᶜat-i-Ahmadiyah, Lahore), and Maulavī Sarwar Shāh Qādiyānī, a noted scholar of the Qādiānī movement:

> "I have a question for which I have no answer. Please provide me with one. Formerly we used to tell our ladies that we should live the lives of the Companions who ate meagre and coarse food, and wore rough dress and gave away whatever they could save to the cause of God. We urged them to do the same. By means of the admonitions, we used to save some money and send it to Qādiān. But when our ladies themselves went to Qādiān and came to know of the actual situation by living there, they defiantly came to us and told us that we were liars. They said that they had seen the manner in which the lives of the Prophets and Companions were being lived in Qādiān! Not even a fraction of the comfort and luxury enjoyed by the women there is available to those outside (Qādiān) although their money is of their own earning while the money used by them (i.e. in Qādiān) is that which is for

national purposes, and is national money. Hence, they said, we were liars who had been deceiving them and that they would never again be deceived by us. Hence, they refuse to give us any money to be sent to Qādiān."

Khwājā Kamāluddīn also added: "There is a favourite reply which you give to the people. This cannot hold in my case, for I know things personally."[8]

Objections relating to Financial Matters

It seems that the public kitchen which was in the charge of the Mirzā himself had caused grave doubts in the minds of many of his sincere followers. This controversy went quite far. Among those who protested the most important was Khwājā Kamāluddīn. Maulavī Muhammad ᶜAlī supported him. On one occasion the Khwājā told Maulavī Mohammad ᶜAlī:

"What a shame. You are aware how arduously the money of the people is collected, and then this money is not spent for the national purposes for which people donate it after slashing off their expenditures even on their bare necessities. Instead, the money is spent to gratify personal desires. And, then, the amount of money too is quite large. It is so large that only if the money specified for public kitchen was managed properly, it alone would be sufficient to meet the requirements of those projects which were started and then have been lying in suspense for want of funds."[9]

These objections also reached the ears of the Mirzā and he felt greatly incensed. Maulavī Sarwar Shah writes the following:

"I have reliably come to know that the Promised Messiah (upon him be the salutations and peace of God) has expressed great sorrow that despite his declaration that it is

8. *Kashf al-Ikhtilāf*, p. 13 (cited in *Qādiānī Mazhab*)
9. *Ibid.*, p. 15.

the desire of God that the management of the public kitchen remained in his hands, and that if anything else were to happen the public kitchen would come to an end, yet persons like the Khwājā are such that they constantly ask him to entrust the management of the kitchen to them and have invidious doubts about him."[10]

Before his death, the Mirzā referred with grief to the accusations of misappropriation of funds. In a letter to Maulavī Hakīm Nūruddīn, Mirzā Bashīruddīn writes:

"The Hazrat (i.e. Mirzā Ghulām Ahmad) said shortly before his (fatal) illness that the Khwājā (Kamāluddīn) and Maualvī Muhammad ᶜAlī, etc., cast aspersions about him that he had misappropriated national fund. They should not do so, (he said) or else it would not have good consequences for them. He said that the Khwājā had brought a letter from Maulavī Muhammad ᶜAlī the same day. He added that Maulavī Muhammad ᶜAlī wrote that the expenditure on the kitchen was quite meagre, and asked what happened to the rest of the thousands of rupees which had been received. When he came home, he expressed great anger and said: 'These people consider us to be misappropriators. What do these people have to do with this money? If I were to disassociate myself all income would cease.' Then (on another occasion) when a deputation had gone to collect funds for construction works the Khwājā said to Maulavī Muhammad ᶜAlī: 'The Hazrat (Mirzā) himself lives a life of great comfort and luxury and teaches us to donate by reducing our expenses.' To this Maulavī Muhammad ᶜAlī replied that although this could not be denied, this was an element of human shortcoming in him; and, now, why should it be essential for us to follow this element of human shortcoming in the Prophet."[11]

10. *Kashf al-Ikhtalāj*, p. 14

11. Letter of Mirzā Bashīruddīn Mahmood to Maulavī Hakīm Nūruddīn,

[Continued on next page

A novel Sources of Income

One of the biggest sources of income was the sale of title to burial in the "heavenly graveyard" at Qādiān. This had been instituted by the Mirzā himself who had ingenuously laid down the terms and conditions for buying the title to burial there. The high price of this title as well as the temptation-provoking manner of announcement[12] conjures up in one's mind the memories of the sale of indulgences by the Catholic Church during the middle ages. This, however, gave the Qādiānī head-quarters a permanent and large source of income. This, in fact, developed into one of the most important departments of the Qādiānī movement. *Al-Fadhl*, the official Qādiānī mouthpiece has aptly observed: "The 'heavently graveyard' is such a central point of this movement and an institution or department of such dimensions that it excels in importance all other departments."[13]

What has all this led to? Qādiān before the partition, and now Rabwah, its successor in Pakistan, developed into a quasi-religious state. In this state, the "Prophetic family" of Qādiān, and its head, Mirzā Bashīruddīn Mahmood,[14] enjoy all the appurtenances of governmental power, all the authority which is vested in a religious dictator and a despotic ruler and all those opportunities of self-indulgence which are available to the most wealthy and powerful men of today. The inner life of this "spiritual and religious centre" and the moral character of its head remind one of Hassan ibn Sabbāh and his Fort of al-Mūt, which was a mysterious centre of religious despotism and licentious self-indulgence in the fifth century of Hijrah.[15]

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the first *Khalīfah* of the Mirzā, in *Haqīqat-al-Ikhtilāf*, by Maulavī Muhammad ʿAlī, p. 50. On this subject we have confined ourselves to the statements of the closest confidants of the Mirzā, otherwise there is a good deal of material worth studying in such books as *al-Zikr al-Hakīm* by Dr. ʿAbdul Hakīm.

12. For details *see* the Mirzā's treatise *al-Wasīyat*, pp. 11-23.
13. *al-Fadhl*, Vol. XXIV, No. 65, dated September 15, 1936.
14. This was written when Mirzā Bashīruddīn Mahmood was alive and was head of the Qādiānī movement.
15. For details *see* Rahat Malik, *Dawr-i-Hāzir-kā Mahabī Amīr.*

2

Seedling of the British

Great Britain and the Islamic World

In the early part of the nineteenth century the onslaught of European powers on the world of Islam had already started and their authority and influence had spread to several Muslim countries. In this eastward expansion of European nations, Britain was in the forefront. She was in the vanguard of the military advance as well as economic and political predominance over Eastern countries. India and Egypt were already under her occupation. Ottoman Turkey was one of the main fields of British diplomatic operations and conspiracies. Her political ambitions also menaced the Arabian Peninsula.

In India the British domination had virtually been established even before 1857. The successors of Shāh Jahān and Aurangzeb had become idle pensioners of the British, and were paralysed politically. The reins of power in the sub-continent were in the hands of the British. In 1799, the gallant career of Tīpū Sultān came to an end with his martyrdom and the way was paved for further British penetration. Being confident of the stability of the British power in India, the Christian missionaries had launched upon their proselytising endeavours. The first targets of these missions were, naturally, the Muslims from whom the British had snatched their political power. The principles of Islam began to be ridiculed. The country was led to social breakdown and moral anarchy. The Islamic bases of social life were shaken. Western civilization began to make inroads into the homes of Muslims and into their hearts and minds. Atheism began to catch the imagination of

educated young men and developed almost as a fad.

The reaction against all these led to the famous Indian struggle for independence of 1857 which, as it is well known, was led by the Muslims. The British emerged as the triumphant power and India became part of the imperial domains of the British Crown. The infuriated victors took their revenge to the full upon the rebellious Muslims, who were responsible for the "Mutiny". The British launched on a policy to systematically humiliate them. They hanged many members of the aristocracy and quite a few *ᶜulama*. They confiscated their *awqāf* (religious endowments), closed on them the avenues of respectable employment and completely weeded them out of the country's administration.[1] Thus the Muslims had become members of a humiliated and vanquished nation. Their situation reflected the eternal reality embodied in this Quranic verse:

> "Kings, when they enter a country, despoil it, and make the noblest of it meanest." (27 : 34)

In this country, the position of the British was not merely that of ungodly and tyrannical rulers. They also represented a culture which became the mainspring of atheism, moral cynicism and social anarchy in the country. In practice, they were opposed to all those values, religious and moral standards, on which the Islamic way of life rests. They were a criminal nation whose history was replete with wrongs perpetrated against the world of Islam.

The attitude of Prophets

Now, if we were to consult the records of the prophets and their true successors and sincere followers, they clearly indicate that they have always opposed and resisted tyrants and wrongdoers and have abstained from whatever might support or strengthen such despots. The following statement of Moses (upon him be the peace of God) found in the Holy Qurʾān is

1. Details are given in W. W. Hunter's *Our Indian Mussalmāns* and Sir Sayyid Ahmad's *Asbāb-i-Baghāwat-i-Hind*.

significant :

"O my Lord ! For that Thou hast bestowed Thy grace on me never shall I be a help to those who Sin." (28 : 17)

The resentment that he had against unbelief and tyranny, and their standard bearers, is also borne out by the following prayer which he made to God in respect of Pharaoh and his courtiers :

"Our Lord ! Thou hast indeed bestowed on Pharaoh and his chiefs splendour and wealth in the life of the Present, and so, Our Lord, they mislead (men) from Thy path. Deface, Our Lord, the features of their wealth, and send hardness to their hearts, so that they will not Believe until they see the grievous penalty." (10 : 88)

God Himself instructs the believers to adopt the following attitude with regard to tyrants and oppressors :

"And incline not to those who do wrong, or the Fire will seize you ; and ye have no protectors other than God ; nor shall ye be helped." (11 : 113)

Then there is a well known Tradition :

"The best (kind of) *jihād* is (to proclaim) the word of Truth in the face of a tyrannical ruler."

The Holy Prophet, his noble Companions and his true successors never cooperated with any power which stood for falsehood and injustice. Their tongues were never soiled with praises and eulogies of tyrants. The history of Islam is replete with courageous expressions of protest and revolt against oppressors. There is no period in Islamic history, and no area of the Muslim world, which has not witnessed this noble struggle.

Protagonist of the British Imperialism

But contrary to the illustrious teachings of the Holy Qur'ān and the spirit of Islam and in violation of the noble example of the Prophets, their companions and their followers, Mirzā Ghulām Ahmad, who claimed to be a God-sent messenger, is full of praise for the greatest force of

evil of his age—the British Government. He never tires of praising that very government which had been the usurper of Islamic dominions, the greatest rival to the temporal power of Islam, and a great standard-bearer of atheism and moral degeneration. He praises the British with a vehemence which casts doubt on the motives of any conscientious man, not to say of a prophet. From the very beginning he was so greatly concerned with praising the British that there is hardly any work of his which has remained immune from flattery. We have already noted that in his first book, *Barāhīn-i-Ahmadiyah* (vol. I), he had lavishly praised the British, had recounted their benevolent achievements and services, had assured them of Muslim loyalty, and had expressed his views against the doctrine of *jihād*. These trends persisted in his writings right up to the end of his life. He almost produced a whole library of books on the subject. In these books he returned again and again to assuring the British of his unswerving loyalty and recounted the services of his family to the British along with his own support. At a time when the feeling of Islamic self-respect was in need of being aroused and the nation needed the impulse to resist its oppressors, he again and again repeated that *jihād* had become out-of-date. Below are a few excerpts from the Mirzā's own writings to illustrate his trend of thought:

> "The greater part of my life has been spent supporting and defending the British Government. And I have written so many books regarding the prohibition of *jihād* and obedience to the British that were they to be gathered together, they would fill fifty book-cases. Such books have been disseminated over all the countries: Arabia, Egypt, Syria, Kabul and Rūm. I have always endeavoured that Muslims became true well-wishers of this Government and their hearts were purged of baseless traditions about the bloody Mahdī and the bloody Messiah and those fanatical teachings which corrupt the hearts of the stupid."[2]

2. *Tiryāq al-Qulūb*, p. 15.

At another place, he propounds allegiance to the British as one of the two pillars of faith:

"My religion, which I have been explaining again and again, is that there are two parts of Islam: *one*, to obey the exalted Allah, and, *second*, to obey the government which has established peace, and has provided its shadow of protection as against oppression. Such a government is the British Government."[3]

In a request to the Lieutenant Governor of Punjab on 24th February, 1898, he wrote:—

"The other thing worth mentioning is that from my early age till now when I am about sixty years of age, I have been engaged, with my pen and tongue, in an important task to turn the hearts of Muslims towards the true love and good-will and sympathy for the British Government, and to obliterate the idea of *jihād* from the hearts of the less wise among them, since it stands in the way of cordiality and a sincere mutual relationship. And I notice that my writings have had a tremendous influence on the hearts of Muslims and hundreds of thousands of people have changed."[4]

At another place he observes:

"I have written scores of books in Arabic, Persian and Urdu with the view that *jihād* against the benevolent government was in no way justified; rather, wholehearted obedience to it was a religious duty. I had these books published at great cost and then had them distributed in Islamic countries. And I know that these books had a great influence even in this country. The people who owe allegiance to me are growing into a party whose hearts are filled to the brim with sincere fidelity to the Government whose moral condition is excellent; I think they will be a boon to this country for they are wholeheartedly ready to

3. "*Ishtihār Government Kī Tawajjuh ke Laiʾq*" in *Shahādat al-Qurʾān*, p. 3.
4. *Tablīgh-i-Risālat*, Vol. VII, p. 10.

sacrifice themselves for the government."[5]

At yet another place he wrote:

"The service which has been rendered for the sake of the British Government was that I published and distributed in this country and other Islamic countries about fifty thousand books, treatises and leaflets, stating that the British Government is the benefactor of Muslims and therefore it should be the duty of every Muslim to obey it sincerely and heartily feel grateful to it and to pray for it. And, I had these books published in different languages, that is, Urdu, Persian and Arabic, and then distributed them in all the countries of Islam, so much so that I had them distributed even in the two holy cities of Islam, Mecca and Medīna, and, as far as possible, also, in the capital of Rūm—Constantinople, and Syria, Egypt and Kabul and many other cities of Afghanistan. The result was that hundreds of thousands of people gave up their filthy ideas about *jihād* which had permeated their hearts due to the teachings of ignorant *mullās*. I am proud of this service which I have been able to render, and no Muslim of British India can boast of a parallel record."[6]

Abrogation of Jihād

The Mirzā's main concern was *jihād* which, indeed, had caused the greatest worry to the British not only in India but in all Muslim countries (quite a number of which had already been occupied by the British). The Mirzā proclaimed *jihād* to have been abrogated for ever, and put forward this as the sign of his being the Promised Messiah. He proclaimed:

"Thirdly, the clock which will be installed in some part of the wall of this minaret, would signify that the

5. *ʿArizah Baʿālī-i-Khidmat Government ʿAliyah Angrezī min jānib Mirzā Ghulām Ahmad Qādiānī Sāheb*, cited in Mīr Qāsim ʿAlī Qādiānī's *Tablīgh-i-Risālat*, Vol. VI, p. 65.

6. *Sitārā-i-Kaiseriah*, p. 3.

people should realise that the time for the opening of the doors of the heavens has arrived. From now on there shall be no terrestrial *jihād* and wars shall cease. It has been mentioned earlier in the Traditions that when the Messiah would come, wars for the sake of religion would be prohibited. From now on whosoever shall raise the sword for the sake of religion and slay the infidels by proclaiming himself to be a *ghāzī*, he will be a disobedient rebel of God and His Prophet. Open *Sāhīh āl-Bukhārī* and read the *hādīth* about the promised Messiah, that is, the one in which there occurs the expression which means that when the Messiah will come *jihād* would cease. Now the Messiah has come and it is he who is speaking to you.[7]

He regards this abrogation of *jihād* as the greatest object of his advent:

To cite his own words:

"In short, I have not come in order to stimulate war and strife. I have appeared in order to open, in the manner of the first Messiah, the doors of peace. If the foundation of peace is not amidst us, then our whole religious order is useless, and it is also meaningless to believe in it."[8]

At another place, he becomes even more explicit:

"I believe that as my followers increase, the believers in the doctrine of *jihād* will decrease. For, accepting me to be the Messiah and Mahdī itself means the rejection of the doctrine of *jihād*."[9]

Citadel of the British Government

In his Arabic treatise *Nūrul-Haq* he went as far as to say that he was the citadel and amulet for protecting the British

7. Khutba-i-Ilhamiyah, Appendix entitled *Ishtihār Chandah Mināratal Masīh.*
8. *Tiryāqal-Qulūb*, p. 335.
9. *Tablīgh-i-Risālat*, Vol. VII, p. 17.

Government :

"I am entitled to assert that I am unique in respect of these services. And I am entitled to say that I am an amulet and a citadel to protect it from afflictions. My Lord has given me glad tidings and has said that He will not chastise them as long as I am among them. So, the Government has no parallel and equal to me in supporting and assisting it and the Government shall know this if it is capable of knowing people."[10]

Seedling of the British

In an application submitted to the Lieutenant-Governor of Punjab on 24th February 1898, he wrote :

"I have to submit that in regard to a family which has proven itself to be loyal ; had ever been prepared to make sacrifices for the Government during the last fifty years ; of which the respectable officials of the exalted Government have borne weighty testimonies in their official letters about its being all long a well-wisher and servant of the British Government ; which is the self-implanted seedling (of loyalty), the Government should exercise utmost caution and make all possible efforts to know about it and pay attention to it. The Government should also instruct its lower officials that they should look towards me and my group with the eyes of kindness and benevolence in view of the established loyalty and sincerity of this family."[11]

In another application he refers to himself and his group as 'those who had been brought up as tried and true friends of the British : those who had earned a good name with the Government and had enjoyed its merciful kindness.'

Cause of opposition to Missionaries

The Mirzā was possessed of such a profound feeling of

10. *Nūr al-Haq*, p. 34.
11. *Tablīgh-i-Risālat*, Vol. VII, p. 19.

loyalty for the British that he used to adopt numerous measures in order to assuage the deep hatred and resentment of Muslims against the British. His enthusiastic opposition to the Christian missionaries, according to his own view, was also motivated by the same desire. The efforts of these missionaries to repudiate Islam and to slander the Holy Prophet, according to the Mirzā, had infuriated the Muslims and was likely to prove detrimental to the interests of the British Government. Hence, he showed great zeal, out of expediency and with deliberation, in order that the popular Muslim fury might abate and they might somewhat calm down. He writes:

> "I also confess that when some of the writings of priests and Christian missionaries became extremely severe and exceeded moderation, and especially when very filthy writings began to appear in *Nūr Afshān*, a Christian paper from Ludhiana, and when these writers used, God forbid, derisive language with regard to our Prophet (upon him be the peace and benediction of Allah), I feared that in the hearts of Muslims, who are a sentimental people, these words might have a highly provocative effect. In order to subdue their indignation, I thought that the proper policy would be to write rejoinders to these writings in a somewhat harsh manner so that the towering anger of these easily-inflammable people could be suppressed and no breach of peace in the country might take place."[12]

Spies of the British

The impact of these teachings, propagated with religious sanctions, was that loyalty to the British and zeal to serve it, became an integral part of the Qādiānī outlook and character. It is not surprising that the British Government found from among them quite a few who sincerely and loyally served the cause of the British and did not hesitate even to shed their blood for them. In Afghanistan, there was an enthusiastic Qādiānī

12. *Tiryāq al-Qulūb*. Appendix-3, p. 31 entitled "A Humble Request to the Exalted Government"

preacher by the name of ᶜAbdul Latīf. The main task that he had undertaken was to purge the Afghans of that spirit of *jihād* because of which the Afghans had never tolerated the rule of any non-Muslim power over their land, and which had always been a source of headache to the British. It was due to this kind of preaching that the Afghan Government executed him. Mirzā Bashīruddīn Mahmood has mentioned this on the authority of an Italian author. He says :

> "The Italian author writes that Sahibzādā ᶜAbdul Latīf was martyred because he preached against *jihād* and the Afghans had begun to fear that the spirit of freedom of the Afghans would weaken and the British would predominate."[13]

He adds :

> Had our people in Afghanistan remained silent and refrained from explaining the Ahmadī view-point in respect of *jihād*, they would not have been blameworthy from the view-point of the *Sharīat*. But they fell victims of the excessive zeal they had for the British Government, they courted punishment because of the sympathy for it which they had imbibed at Qādiān."[14]

In the same way, certain papers and letters were found with Mullā ᶜAbdul Hakīm and Mullā Nūr ᶜAlī Qādiānī which proved that they were disloyal to the Afghan government and were agents and spies of the British. *Al-Fadhl*, the Qādiānī mouthpiece, published this piece of news from *Amān-i-Afghān* :

> "The Minister for Home Affairs of the Afghan Government has published the following announcement :
>
> "Two persons of Kabul, Mullā ᶜAbdul Hakīm Chahār Āsiaᵓī and Mullā Nūr ᶜAlī, a shopkeeper, had become enamoured of Qādiānī beliefs and used to mislead people from the right path by preaching that creed. The people who were angered at this filed a suit against them. The

13. *al-Fadhl*, August 6, 1925.
14. *Ibid.*

result was that these persons having been proved guilty were transported at the hands of the people to the realm of non-existence on Thursday, Rajab 11. Against them there had also been pending a suit for long, and letters of foreigners of a conspiratorial nature and harmful to the interests of the Afghan kingdom had been captured which proved that they had sold themselves to the enemies of Afghanistan."[15]

In his address of welcome to the Prince of Wales on January 19, 1922, Mirzā Bashīruddīn Mahmood proudly mentions all these incidents, making it clear that all these sacrifices were because of their loyalty to the British.[16]

Miscalculation

Looking at the power, consolidation and extent of the British Empire, the Mirzā believed that the British power in India would remain for ever. Hence, tying up their own fate with that of the British Empire, and identifying their own future with the future of the British seemed very wise and an act of great political far-sightedness. And, indeed, from someone who is shorn of deep religious and political insight such a conclusion was not strange. It was impossible for the Mirzā to foresee that not even half a century would pass after his death when the seemingly unshakable power of the British would be shaken and the power which he considered to be "the shadow of God" and "refuge of religion" would leave India, lock, stock and barrel, and, not only that, it would collapse the world over.

The servile manner in which the Mirzā has given expression of his loyalty to this un-Islamic, indeed, anti-Islamic power, and the zeal he has shown in preaching to the Muslims that they ought to relish their state of political enslavement as a boon, is unbecoming of the position which he claims for himself. Iqbal

15, *Al-Fadhl*, March 3, 1925.

16. A Present to His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales, pp. 7-8.

has stressed this contradiction in some of his verses which say:

The Sheikh is a *murīd* of the *Firangī* Lord,
Speaks he, though, from the heights of Bāyazīd.
He said : Religion's glory lies in slavery;
And life consists of the lack of ego (*khudī*).
He reckoned the state of others to be a blessing;
Danced around the cathedral, and fell down dead.[17]

17. *Pas Cho Bāyed kard ay Aqwām-i-Sharq.*

3

Prophet as Mud-Slinger

Soft-spokenness of the Prophets

The Prophets of God and their pious followers have always been known for their graceful and decent mode of expression, patience and calm endurance, largeheartedness and magnanimity. Benevolent even to their enemies, they returned good wishes for abuses ; benediction for curses ; humility for insolence; and temperance and gracefulness for niggardly meanness. Their tongues were never soiled with abusive and filthy language. To sting people by harsh satires and invidious sarcasms, to scoff and jeer at the people, to pinch them by vulgar attacks—all these are far too low to be found in their noble lives. If they were ever forced to refute or denounce someone, they did so in clear, simple terms. They never stooped to adopt abject methods such as attacking the opponent's birth, denigerating his lineage, or ridiculing him in the manner of a court-jester. Their expressions, whether they were in favour of someone or against him, bear the mark of the decency and elegance of their natures, and the nobility of their minds. The Companions have left the following account of the Holy Prophet Mohammad's discourse :

> "The Messenger of Allah—upon him be the peace and blessings of Allah—was neither harsh-tongued by nature nor by will, nor did he ever indulge in undignified talk in market-places."[1]

The Prophet himself laid down the norm of speech for the

1. Tirmizi

believers :

> "The believer is not wont to attacking or cursing people nor does he use harsh and filthy expressions."[2]

On the contrary, according to the Prophet, the characteristic of a hypocrite (*munāfiq*) is that "whenever he quarrels, he resorts to abuses."[3]

The Mirzā himself admits that those who have been endowed with religious and spiritual leadership ought to be possessed of forbearance and self-control, forgiveness and patience. He writes :

> "Since the *Imāms* encounter all kinds of wicked, lowly and filthy-tongued people, they have to have a moral calibre of the highest order so that they might not be stirred by egotistic anger or fanaticism and thus people are not deprived of their blessings. It is a matter of great shame that someone is called "the friend of God" yet he remains afflicted with base morals, and is incapable of bearing obloquy with composure. As for a man who is called the spiritual leader of his age (*Imām-i-Zamān*), if he is so thin-skinned that even the least provocative remark sends him into a fit of rage, such a person can in no way be considered the *Imām* of his age."[4]

But contrary to the expectations raised by these words, the manner in which the Mirzā has dealt with his critics—and these included some of the most respected religious scholars and spiritual leaders—brings him out as a person who lacked even the most elementary sense of decency and decorum. "Offsprings of harlots" seems to have been one of the favourite nicknames which he very often gave to his opponents.[5]

The 'best' specimens of his abuses are found in his Arabic writings—prose as well as poetry. Here are a few of them.

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2. Tirmizi
3. *Bukhari and Muslim.*
4. *Zurūrat al-Imām*, p. 8.
5. *See* for example. *Āīnā-i-Kamālāt-i-Islām*, p. 547. *Nūr al-Haq*, Vol. I p 123. *Anjām-i-Ātham*. p. 282, etc.

"Now, since these people abuse me, I have already taken off all their clothes and have reduced them to irrecognisable carcases."[6]

"These enemies have become the swines of our wilderness, and their women are even worse than bitches."[7]

An Arabic poem indited by the Mirzā to denounce one of his opponents, Maulvī Saᶜad Ullah of Ludhiana, is much too unseemly to be reproduced here.[8]

For such illustrious religious personages of his time as Maulānā Muhammad Husain Batālawī, Maulānā Sayyed Nazīr Husain Muhaddith Dehlawī, Maulānā ᶜAbdul Haq Haqqānī, Muftī ᶜAbdullah Tonkwī, Maulānā Ahmad ᶜAlī Sahāranpūrī, Maulānā Ahmad Hasan Amorhī, and Hazrat Maulānā Rashīd Ahmad Gangohī, he used invectives, such as, 'wolves and dogs', 'accursed satan', 'blind devil', 'the gang of abducters', 'the doomed', and the 'accursed' etc.[9] In the same way, he composed a satirical poem about the well known scholar and spiritual leader of his time, Pīr Mihr ᶜAlī Shah of Golra. A few of its couplets reads:

"So I said: O Land of Golra, upon thee be curse. Thou hast been accursed because of the accursed ones; and thy abode shall be the place of torment.

"This petty man, like lowly people has addressed me in abusive terms. Every man is tested in the time of hostility."[10]

These abuses were often not enough to gratify him. On such occasions he would not merely curse his opponents but write the word 'curse' with regard to them a certain number of times. For instance, with regard to Maulānā Thanāʾ Ullāh Amritsarī he wrote the word 'accurst' ten times consecutively. In

6. *Anjām-i-Ātham*, p. 158.
7. *Najm al-Hudā*, p. 15.
8. *Ibid.*, pp. 281-82,
9. *See* the long letter of the Mirzā in Arabic in *Anjām-i-Ātham*, pp. 251-52.
10. *Iᶜjāz-i-Ahmadī*, pp. 75-76.

regard to Christians, he wrote this word one thousand times.[11] This, indeed, makes a queer reflection on his nature.

We would close this section by reproducing just a few more examples of the Mirzā's vituperations against his opponents. Addressing the *ʿulama* he wrote:

> "O debased class of Maulavīs. How long will you conceal the truth? When will the time come for you to give up your Jewish habits? O tyrant Maulavīs, pity be on you, that you made the cattle-like common folk drink from the same cup of falsehood of which you had drunk."[12]

He also wrote:

> "Of all animals, the filthiest and most repellent is pig. But filthier than pigs are those who, owing to their base desires, conceal the testimony of truth. O corpse-eating Maulavīs! O filthy spirits! Pity be on you for you have concealed the true evidence of Islam out of hostility. O worms of darkness! How can you hide the radiant rays of truth?"[13]

> "Will these people be prepared to swear? No, never. For they are liars and are eating the carcass of falsehood like dogs."[14]

This subject is neither pleasant for the author, nor palatable for the readers. We, therefore, close the chapter leaving it for the readers to guess the bloom of the Mirzā's spring on the basis of the few flowers of his garden we have presented here as specimens.

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11. *See Nūr al-Haq*, pp. 121—25.
12. *Anjām-i-Āthom*, p. 21 n.
13. *Ibid.*
14. *Ibid.*, p. 25 n.

4

An Unfulfilled Prophecy

In 1888, when the Mirzā was fifty years old, he asked one of his relatives, Mirzā Ahmad Beg for the hand of his young daughter Muhammadī Begum. The Mirzā made it clear that he had been commissioned by God for that task and God had promised him, in unequivocal terms, and that this marriage would, therefore, certainly take place.

In a leaflet which was distributed on July 10, 1888 the Mirzā wrote:

> "The Omnipotent and Omniscient God has asked me that I should seek the hand of the elder daughter of this man (Ahmad Beg); should tell him that good conduct and courtesy to be shown to him would depend on this (i.e. his acceptance of the marriage proposal); her marriage with me would be a source of blessing and a sign of mercy for her father; and that he would have his share in all those blessings and mercies which have been laid down in the leaflet dated February 20, 1886 but if he declines to marry her, then the girl would meet an extremely tragic end. The other person to whom she would be married would die within two and a half years after the day of wedding; and so would die the father of the girl within three years, and her household would be afflicted with discord and poverty and adversity, and during the intervening period the girl would encounter several events of unpleasant and grievous nature."[1]

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1 This announcement has been reproduced in full by the Mirzā in *Āʾīnā-ī-Kamalāt-ī-Islām*, p. 286. It has also been reproduced by Qāsim ʿAlī Ahmadi in *Tablīgh-ī-Risālat*, Vol. I, pp. 111-18.

In his work, *Izāla-i-Awhām*, he mentions this prophecy in the following manner :

> "By way of propecy the Exalted God revealed it to this humble one that ultimately the elder daughter of Mirzā Ahmad Beg, son of Mirzā Gāmān Beg Hoshiārpūrī, would be married to me. These people would resort to great hostility and would place obstacles in the way, but in the end, it would surely take place. The Exalted God would, by all possible means, bring her to me, whether as a virgin or a widow, and would remove all impediments, and would, of necessity, fulfil this task, and none would be able to prevent it."[2]

Significance of the Prophecy

This problem related to the family life of the Mirzā and normally such problems should be of little interest to a historian. There are millions of people who strive for the hand of the girl of their choice. Some of them succeed, others do not. But the endeavour of the Mirzā to marry this particular girl is a case of uncommon significance, in so far as the Mirzā put it forth as the criterion of judging the veracity of his claim to prophethood. After mentioning his prophecy that he would ultimately marry the said girl, he said : "This should be clear to the people that there can be no better criterion of testing our truth or falsehood than our prophecy."[3]

One might perhaps be inclined to think that misunderstandings in respect of the messages from the unseen world are possible, for, sometimes people misinterpret these messages by mixing up the words of inspiration. In respect of this prophecy of the Mirzā, however, there is no question of any such possibility. The challenging tone of the prophecy rules out all such possibilities. In his own words :

> "The prophecies which are presented before opponents

2. *Izāla-i-Awhām*, p. 198.
3. *Āīnā-i-Kamālāt-i-Islām*, p. 288.

for the purpose of vindicating some claim, contain a peculiar kind of light and guidance since the inspired ones, who, by concentrating their attention on God, generally succeed in having a clear concept of their meaning and nature."[4]

It is also possible that some people might not attach much importance to this prophecy of the Mirzā, because of his habit of making prophecies all too frequently. It is true that his writings are replete with prophecies. This particular prophecy, however, has a uniqueness of its own in so far as the Mirzā put it forward as a heavenly sign and as a verdict in his favour. He not only made this prophecy the criterion of his own truth and falsehood, but also of the victory or defeat of Islam. On July 10, 1888 he announced :

"Then, when I repeatedly meditated in order to seek clarification and elaboration of the prophecy, it was made known to me that God has pre-determined that the elder daughter of the addressee (i.e. Mirzā Ahmad Beg) will ultimately be married to this humble one (after all impediments had been removed) and this event will make the irreligious people (true) Muslims, and provide guidance to the misguided."[5]

The original inspiration in Arabic in this connection when translated into English reads :

"They falsified our signs and they had been laughing at them for long. So, God will be your helper in dealing with those who are obstructing this task and in the end they will bring this girl to you. There is none who can put off the words of God. Your God is Omnipotent, so that whatever happens, takes place by His will. You are with Me, and I am with you; and you shall shortly reach the stage whereat you shall be praised. This means that even though the stupid and ignorant people indulge in vilification and utter unbecoming words for you, out of their

4. *Izāla-i-Awhām*, p. 202.
5. *Ā'na-i-Kamālāt-i-Islām*, p. 286, and *Tablīgh-i-Risālal*, Vol. I, p. 116.

inner corruption and invidious understanding, but they will ultimately feel ashamed after they have witnessed the succour of God and, as a result of the manifestation of truth, there will be praise for you all round."[6]

It was still possible for people to forget the matter. But the Mirzā was so confident about the fulfilment of this prophecy that he kept on reiterating it in an increasingly forceful and confident manner. He said :

"Wait for (the fulfilment of) the prophecy mentioned in the announcement of July 10, 1888, along with which there is also appended the inspiration: And they ask thee if this is true. Say: Yes, by my Lord, it is true and you cannot prevent it from taking place. We have Ourselves wed thee to her. There is none to change My words. And on seeing the sign they will turn their faces aside and will say: This is a thorough deception, and a thorough magic."[7]

In his letter addressed to the *ʿulama* and spiritual mentors of India in Arabic, the Mirzā said:

"Predestination is bound to prevail and God has finally decreed it, and so the time for it (i.e. marriage) will inevitably come. By the One who has sent to us Muhammad al-Mustafa, and made him the best of messengers and the best of creatures, verily this is truth and you will see it, and I shall make this news the criterion of my truth and falsehood. And I did not say this until I was informed about it from God."[8]

Emphasising the significance of this prophecy and stressing it to be the sign of God, he said:

"In respect of this (prophecy), some of the fair-minded Āryā authors have also borne witness that if this prophecy were fulfilled, it would indeed be an act of God. And this prophecy is against a harsh people who, it seems, have drawn the sword of enmity and spite, and whosoever knows

6. *Āʾīnā-i-Kamāltā-i-Islām*, p. 286; *Tabligh-l-Risālat*, Vol. I, p. 116.
7. *Āsmani Faisla*, p. 40.
8. *Anjām-i-Ātham*, p. 223

the state they are in, will be well aware of the great significance of this prophecy. Everyone who will read the announcement, no matter how prejudiced he is, is bound to agree that the content of the prophecy is beyond the capacity of man."[9]

When he felt agitated about the realization of this prophecy owing to some serious illness which caused him the suspicion of being close to death he received fresh inspiration to reassure him.

He writes :

"Soon after this prophecy was revealed and had yet to be fulfilled (as it has not been fulfilled as yet, that is, by April 16, 1891), this humble one encountered a severe ailment bringing him so close to death that he got even his will drawn up. At that critical moment the prophecy almost came before his eyes and it appeared that the last moment had come and that the next day would be his day of funeral. At that time he thought of this prophecy ; that, may be, it had some other meaning which he had not understood. Then, in that critical condition, he received the inspiration : This thing is truth from thy Lord. Why dost thou doubt?"[10]

Thus, the Mirzā's marriage with Muhammadī Begum was a settled matter—a matter which had been decided upon in the heavens and, hence, there was no possibility of any alteration. He announced that this was not only the criterion of his veracity, but also of the veracity of the One who had communicated it to him. And since he considered himself to be the true representative and advocate of Islam, and his own prestige to be synonymous with the prestige of Islam, he regarded the matter as one involving the victory of Islam itself.

Mirzā Stoops to Conquer

But as luck would have it, Mirzā Ahmad Beg spurned the

9. *Izāla-i-Awhām*, p. 199.
10. *Ibid.*

proposal and decided to give his daughter in marriage to another relative of his, Mirzā Sultān Muhammad. The Mirzā came to know of it. Owing to his exuberant enthusiasm and his intense confidence in regard to his ultimate success, the matter had already come to public knowledge. It had been mentioned in newspapers and magazines and had become an interesting topic of conversation. Hindus, Sikhs and Muslims all were keenly interested in the developments relating to this case. The Mirzā's matrimonial affair had evoked even greater interest than that of the royal families. The numerous challenges which he had published from time to time had rendered the matter even more delicate and complex. The members of the girl's family (who had religious differences with the Mirzā and whose family pride had been hurt by his public announcements), categorically rejected the Mirzā's proposal. From the Mirzā's point of view, however, the matter had become so serious that the establishment of matrimonial relationship had become inevitable. He had announced the prophecy in such categorical and definite terms that it was hard for him to back out of that position or to re-interpret the prophecy to mean something else than what it apparently meant.

Theoretically, however, the Mirzā believed that the inspired person should strive for the fulfilment of his own prophecies and that there was nothing incomptible between this effort and his position as the recipient of an inspired prophecy.[11] It was because of this view that he himself had the eastern minaret constructed at Qādiān for, it had been mentioned in the Tradition concerning the return of Jesus. Following the same principle, he set out to persuade, by all possible means, the father and other relatives of Muhammadī Begum to accept his proposal. He resorted to all the means of inducement and

11. He writes : "If Divine revelation makes something known as prophecy, and if it is possible that a man should fulfil it without fanning up a *fitnah* (evil) and resorting to illegitimate means, then making efforts for the fulfilment of such a prophecy is not only permissible, but also commendable (masnūn)" *Haqīqat al-Wahī*, p. 191

terrorisation which he could possibly employ. In his request as well as the announcement of July 10, 1888, both these aspects —inducement and terrorisation—are quite evident. In the event of the acceptance of the proposal of marriage he had promised Divine reward; whereas in the case of its rejection, he had threatened them with ruin.

The Mirzā also wrote letters to the relatives of Muhammadī Begum, to her father, Mirzā Ahmad Beg, to her uncle, Mirzā ᶜAlī Sher Beg, to her aunt and to other relatives who could have exerted some influence on the decision about her marriage. He asked all these people, with great meakness and humility, to use their good offices in his favour. To Mirzā Ahmad Beg (the father of the girl), he wrote :

> "If you accept what I say, it will be a matter of benevolence and gratification and kindness towards me, and I will pray to the Most Compassionate One for your long life. I promise you to transfer one third of my property to your daughter and I say honestly that I will give you whatever you will ask of me."[12]

In another letter to Mirzā Ahmad Beg he wrote :

> "I still make a request to your honour, with humility and respect I have for you, not to refrain from this (marriage) relationship. For, this will be a means of great blessing for your daughter and the Exalted Allah will open the doors of divine grace which you do not even conceive of."[13]

In a letter to Mirzā ᶜAlī Sher Beg he wrote :

> "If the people of your household had joined together and tried to persuade your brother, why should he not have given his consent? Do I belong to a low caste so that it would be a shame to marry the girl to me? On the other hand, he kept on seconding my proposal, but, quite recently, I have

12. *Kalmah-i-Fazl-i-Rahmānī*, by Qāzī Fazl Ahmad (cited in *Qādiānī Mazhab*). This book is a collection of the Mirzā's letters to the relatives of Muhammadī Begum. The letters are authentic and even the Mirzā did not deny having written them.
13. *Ibid.*

been left at the mercy of his brother and now all have united on the question of the girl's marriage. What do I have to do with a girl? She might be married to anyone. This was merely a test: those whom I considered to be my own and from whose daughter I wanted to have offspring and my heirs are now thirsty of my blood. They are now after my honour and want me to be put to shame and to have a blackened face. It is up to God to dishonour whomsoever He wills. But so far as these people are concerned, they indeed want to hurl me into the fire."[14]

To Mirzā Ahmad he also wrote:

"You will perhaps be aware that the prophecy of this humble one has become known to thousands of people and in my opinion, there would be perhaps more than one million people who have been informed of this prophecy..... In Lahore I found out that thousands of Muslims fervently pray in the mosques after (congregational) prayers for the fulfilment of this prophecy."[15]

The Mirzā also came to know that ᶜIzzat Bībī, his own daughter-in-law (wife of his son, Mirzā Fazl Ahmad), and the mother of ᶜIzzat Bībī, the wife of Mirzā ᶜAlī Sher Beg (who was also the aunt of Muhammadī Begum), were opposed to the Mirzā's proposal and favoured the marriage of the girl to Mirzā Sultān Muhammad. This infuriated the Mirzā and he wrote the following to ᶜAlī Sher Beg (the father-in-law of his son, Fazl Ahmad):

"I have already written a letter to her (i. e. to the wife of Mirzā ᶜAlī Sher Beg) that if she did not give up (pursuing) her idea and did not prevail upon her brother (i. e. Mirzā Ahmad Beg) to prevent this marriage (with Mirzā Sultān Mohammad), then, as your own intention

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14. *Kalma-i-Fazl-i-Rahmānī*, by Qāzī Fazl Ahmad (cited in *Qādiānī Mazhab*).
15. *Ibid.*

appears to be, my son Fazl Ahmad too will not be able to keep your daughter (ʿIzzat Bībī) in his marriage. Rather, the very moment the wedding (of Muhammadī Begum) will take place, Fazl Ahmad will divorce your daughter. And if he does not divorce her, I will declare him to be no longer regarded as my son, and will disinherit him. But if for my sake you oppose Ahmad Beg and try to prevent him from carrying out his design, then I am at your disposal on all counts with my heart and soul. Fazl Ahmad is still obedient to me. I will convince him in every way possible and will endeavour to rehabilitate your daughter Then whatever I have shall belong to her."[16]

The Mirzā also prevailed upon ʿIzzat Bībī, his daughter-in-law, to write to her mother that if they did not change their mind the Mirzā would have her husband divorce her and thus ruin her family life.[17]

After Muhammadī Begum's marriage, Fazl Ahmad did divorce ʿIzzat Bībī. Another son of the Mirzā, Sultan Ahmad, and his mother, were also of the same view as the members of Muhammadī Begum's family. Hence, consistent with what he had said earlier, the Mirzā declared Sultān Ahmad to be no longer regarded as his son. Besides, he disinherited him and divorced his mother.[18]

However, even after the marriage of Muhammadī Begum to Mirzā Sultān Muhammad (on April 7, 1892) the Mirzā did not despair. He kept on saying that ultimately the girl would become his wife. In 1901, he made the following statement under oath :

"It is true that that woman has not been married to me. But she will certainly be married to me as has been stated in the prophecy. She has been married to Sultān Muhammad, I say truly that in this court (i. e. the world)

16. *Kalmā-i-Fazl-i-Rahmānī.*
17. *Ibid.*
18. *Tablīgh-i-Risālā*, Vol. II, p. 9.

where people have laughed at things which were not from me, but from God, a time will come when the events will take a strange turn and the heads of all will be downcast with remorse.

"The woman is still alive. She will inevitably come to my wedlock. I expect this to happen, rather, I have full faith in this. These are divinely-ordained matters and are bound to occur."[19]

In his first announcement the Mirzā had prophesied that the person to whom Muhammadī Begum would be married, would die within two and a half years after the marriage. This period elapsed and Mirzā Sultān Muhammad remained alive, enjoying a happy married life. This forced the Mirzā to extend the lease of his life. In his announcement of September 6, 1896 he wrote :

"The time for divine punishment is conditionally predestined, which can be put off by fear (of God) and turning (towards God), as the whole of the Qur'ān testifies. But so far as it relates to the prophecy, that is, the marriage of that woman to this humble one, that is assuredly predestined, and cannot be waived off, for, in the Divine revelation it is clearly stated that 'My words will never change'. For, if they were to change, the words of God would be false."[20]

In the same announcement, he explains another reason for the postponement of his prediction :

"The Qur'ān tells us that the duration indicated in such prophecies belongs to the category of conditional predestination. Hence, owing to the appearance of factors causing some change or alteration, postponement of the stipulated term and period does take place. This is Divine Law, and the Qur'ān is replete with this. Hence, for every

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19. *Al-Hukm*, August 10, 1901 (cited in *Qādiānī Mazhab* and *Tahqīq-i-Lahānī*).

20. *Tabligh-i-Risālat*, Vol. III, p. 115.

prophecy which is made through inspiration or revelation, it is essential that its fulfilment should conform to the Divine Law as embodied in the Books of the Exalted God. And, at the present time, another benefit aimed at from this is that those aspects of Divine knowledge which have been lost sight of by the people should once again be manifested and thus insight into the Qur'ān should be renovated."[21]

Thus, the Mirzā insisted that his prophecy was true and he had no doubt about its ultimate fulfilment. He again insisted that:

"I say again and again that the prophecy about the son-in-law of Ahmad Beg (i. e. Sultān Muhammad), is assuredly pre-destined. Wait for it. If I am a liar, this prophecy will not be fulfilled and my death will come."[22]

Mirzā Sultān Muhammad had a long life. He took part in the first world war. He was wounded during the war but survived, and remained alive long after the Mirzā had died.

As for the Mirzā, he died in 1908, and his wedding which according to him had taken place in the heavens, could not take place on the earth. In the opinion of his more staunch followers, however, nothing can as yet be said unequivocally; for, so long as human life is in existence, there is still possibility of the realisation of this prophecy. Hakīm Nūruddīn, the successor of the Mirzā, has given a queer explanation of the matter, but very much in tune with Qādiāni casuistry. In the 'Review of Religions', he wrote the following in connection with the death of the 'Promised Messiah':

"Now, I would like to remind all the Muslims who have had and still have faith in the Noble Qur'ān that since those addressed in it include also their offsprings, successors and those like them, then, can this prophecy not include the daughter of Ahmad Beg, or the daughter of

21. *Tablīgh-i-Risālat*, Vol. III, p. 117.
22. *Anjām-i-Ātham*, p. 31n.

that daughter? Does your law of inheritance not apply the regulations regarding daughters to their daughters? And are the offsprings of the Mirzā not his agnates? I had often told dear Miān Mahmood[23] that even if the Mirzā were to die and this girl did not enter into his wedlock, my adoration of him would remain unshaken."[24]

23. Mian Bashīruddīn Mahmood, a son of the Mirzā and the second head of the Qādiānī movement after Hakīm Nūruddīn.
24. Review of Religions, Vol. VII, no. 726, June and July, 1908, p. 279 (cited from *Qādiānī Mazhab*).

PART IV

A Critical Analysis of the Movement

1

Independent Religion and a Parallel Community

One of the illusions about Qādiānism is that its emergence merely signifies the addition of one more sect to the large number of already existing sects and schools in Islam, and that the followers of Qādiānism are, at the most, a new sect. Thus, the popular impression is that Qādiānism does not represent a unique phenomenon in the history of Muslim sects and juristice schools.

A careful study of Qādiānism is bound to shatter this illusion and to convince every unbiased student that Qādiānism is a religion by itself, and the Qādiānīs a separate religious community (*ummah*), parallel to Islam and the *ummah* of Islam. The following statement of the Mirzā, which has been cited by the former head of Qādiānī movement, Mirzā Bashīruddīn Mahmood appears to contain no exaggeration. He said :

> "The words, which came out from the lips of the Promised Messiah, keep on reverberating in my ears. He said that it was wrong that our disagreement with others lay merely on the questions of the death of the Messiah or certain other similar issues. He mentioned in detail that we differed from them in respect of the Essence of Allah, in respect of the Holy Prophet (upon him be the peace and benediction of God), in respect of the Qur'ān, of prayers, of fasting, of pilgrimage, and, in short, in respect of each and every part (of religion)."[1]

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1. *Khutba* (Sermon) of Friday, *al-Fadhl*, July 3, 1931.

Mirzā Mahmood also affirmed that owing to these differences the first caliph of the Mirzā had declared that "their Islam (i.e., the Islam of Muslims) is different from our Islam."[2]

In the entire history of Islam, there is one movement alone which appears to bear some resemblance to Qādiānism in the sense that while it kept its activities confined to Muslims, it attempted to found a system of beliefs and practices parallel to that of Islam, and thus endeavoured to build, as if it were, a state within the state. This was the Batinite or Ismailite movement with which Qādiānism bears a striking resemblance.[3]

The Qādiānī movement tries to build a new structure of religious beliefs and practices as distinguished from that of Islam. It tries to give an orientation of its own to all aspects of religious life. It provides its followers with a new prophet, a new focus of devotion and loyalty, a new religious mission, a new spiritual centre, and a new set of holy places, new religious rituals, new leaders and new heroes. It is this feature of Qādiānism which marks it out from all other schools and sects which exist side by side within the bosom of Islam, and raises it to the level of a full-fledged independent religion. It definitely tends to lay fuondations of a new *ummah* on the basis of new religious teachings, and a new mould of religious life. The result is that for those who enthusiastically choose to join the fold of this movement, the old institutions and personalities which claimed their devotion are replaced by new ones, and thus they develop into an *ummah* all by themselves, independent of all others and by virtue of their peculiar connaturality of emotional predilections, outlook, and the resultant veneration for the new religious institutions formed around Qādiānism. This tendency towards isolation, this trend to distinguish themsleves from the Muslims has been a part of Qādiānism from the very beginning and has since gone the whole length that the Qādiānis have now become wont to compare Qādiāni rituals and holy places with Islamic

2. *Khutba* (Sermon) of Friday, *al-Fadhl*, December 3, 1914.
3. *See* Dr. Zahid Ali : *Hamara Ismāʿīlī Mazhab aur us ka Nizām.*

rituals and holy places, declaring the former to be parallel and equal to the latter. The companions of the Holy Prophet, for instance, occupy a central position in the religious system of Islam. The Qādiānīs place the companions of the Mirzā on the same pedestal as the 'companions' of the Holy Prophet. A responsible Qādiānī reflects this trend of thinking in the following words :

> "To make distinction between the two groups, that is, the companions of the Holy Prophet and those of the Mirzā, or to declare either of the two to be superior, on the whole, to the other, is not right. In fact both these groups are part of a single group: the difference is one of time alone. They had been trained under the earlier Prophet while these got instruetion at the time of the later prophetic advent."[4]

In the same manner, they consider the grave of the Mirzā to be similar and comparable to the resting-place of the Holy Prophet. *Al-Fadhl*, published on behalf of the Training Department of Qādiān, once deplored the religious insensitivity of those who came to Qādiān to participate in the religious conference, etc. and yet did not pay a visit to the grave of the Mirzā :

> "What is the state of the man who comes to Qādiān, the Abode of Security (Dārul-Amān), and does not bother to go a couple of steps further to pay a visit to the Heavenly Cemetery: in it is that purified grave (*Rawdha-i-mutahharah*)[5] wherein lies buried the body of that chosen one of God to whom the most superior of all prophets sent his *salāms*, and with regard to whom the *Khātim al-Nabiyīn* said: "He will be buried beside me in my grave." Thus, the radiance of the Green Dome of Medina is reflecting itself on this White Dome where one can partake of the blessings which are peculiar to the radiant resting-place of the Holy Prophet

4. *Al-Fadhl*, May 28, 1918.
5. It is significant that the same term is generally used by the Urdu-speaking Muslims for the grave of the Holy Prophet.

(upon him be the peace and blessings of Allah). How unfortunate is the man who, in the Great Pilgrimage (Hajj-i-Akbar) of Ahmadism, should remain deprived of this blessing".[6]

Owing to the religious and spiritual importance of the township of Qādiān in Qādiānism, being the nursery of a new prophethood and the new centre of 'Islam', the Qādiānis reckon it among the holy places of Islam such as Mecca and Medina, and never fail to mention it along with them. In one of his speeches Mirzā Bashīruddīn Mahmood said :

"By venerating Medina we do not affront the House of Kabah. In the same way, when we venerate Qādiān, we do not affront Mecca or Medina.....The Exalted God sanctified all these three places and chose them for the manifestation of His Light."[7]

Mirzā Ghulām Ahmad had himself drawn a parallel between Qādiān and the Holy land of Mecca. In one of his couplets he said :

The land of Qādiān is now a place of veneration.
Thanks to the rush of people, it is now a sacred area.[8]

The Mirzā even thought that Qādiān has been referred to in the Qurʾān itself, that the 'far-away Mosque' (Al-Masjid al-Aqsā) mentioned in the Qurʾān (XVII. 1) refers to the 'Mosque of the Promised Messiah' in Qādiān. He wrote :

"In the same way as God had taken the Holy Prophet specialiy from the sanctified Mosque (in Mecca) to Jerusalem, so He also shifted him temporally from the time of the Glory of Islam, the time of the Prophet himself, to the time of the blessings of Islam, the time of the Promised Messiah. Hence from this point of view, which is the spiritual transporation of the Holy Prophet to the extremity of the time of Islam, the far-away Mosque (al-Masjid al-Aqsā)

6. *Al-Fadhl*, Vol. X. No. 48.
7. *Al-Fadhl*, September 3, 1935.
8. *Durr-i-Thamīn*, p. 52.

means the mosque of the Promised Messiah which is located in Qādiān and in respect of which, in *Barāhīn-i-Ahmadiyah*, God has said : "Blessed, blessed and every blessed thing We shall make therein." And this word '*mubarak*' (blessed) which has been used nominatively, is in accord with the Quranic verse 'And We blessed that which is around it.' Therefore, there is not the least doubt that there is reference to Qādiān in the Qurʾān."[9]

The logical consequence of these beliefs was that the followers of the Mirzā developed the practice of making annual pilgrimage to Qādiān and they began to regard this act as sacredotal as the *Hajj* itself. It is no surprise that the Qādiānī leaders proclaimed visits to Qādiān to be a "shadow of the *Hajj*", and, for those who are incapable of going to Mecca, they proclaimed it to be its substitute. Mirzā Bashīruddīn Mahmood said :

"Those alone who have resources and are rich can go on pilgrimages. Although in the beginning divine movements spread and flourished among the poor, only those who have resources and are rich are able to go on pilgrimage. The poor are exempted by the *Sharīᶜāh*. Therefore, God fixed a *Zillī Hajj* so that those whom He wants to employ in the progress of Islam, and the poor, that is, the Muslims of India, should be able to participate in it."[10]

In this regard the Qādiānīs went so far as to rate these visits to Qādīān even higher than the pilgrimages to the Mecca. This, too, was a natural corollary of their belief in Qādiānīsm as a new religion which has its own centre of gravity and has undertaken to provide religious sustenance to its followers. It is for this reason that a Qādiānī leader observed :

"In the same way as the former Islam without Ahmadism, that is, without Hazrat Mirzā Sahib, is a dry Islam, so is the Meccan *Hajj* a dry *Hajj* without this *Hajj*,

9. *Tazkirāh* or *Mujmuʾāh-i-Wahy-i-Muqaddas*, pp. 345-46.
10- *Al-Fadhl*, December 1, 1932.

because in these days the objectives of *Hajj* are not fulfilled there."[11]

This trend among the Qādiānīs to assert their distinct entity and their consciousness of being the followers of a new religion, and their feeling that Qādiānism had opened a new phase in history reached such a point that they even introduced a new calendar of their own which has special names of the months. The twelve months of the Qādiānī calendar, according to its official organ, *al-Fadhl*, are as given here: *Sulh, Tablīgh, Amān, Shahādat, Hijrat, Ihsān, Wafā, Zuhūr, Tabūk, Ikhā', Nubūwat, Fath.*

Indian Islam

Thanks to this isolationist trend and the belief in a new prophethood the spiritual, intellectual and political centre of the Qādiānīs soon ceased to be the Arabian peninsula with its holy cities of Mecca and Medina. Then loyalties began to turn instead towards Qādian, the birth-place of the new religion. It was natural that the Qādiānīs should became increasingly cool towards Arabia. Hence, those Indian nationalists who felt that the idea of the one nationhood of India was threatened by the fact that a great part of the Indian population was deeply attached to a foreign country, and its religious centre, its spiritual personalities, its holy places and its most cherished memories of history all lay outside the boundaries of India, felt greatly relieved insofar as Qādiānīsm was a purely Indian movement and its spiritual centre lay not outside, but within India. This appeared to them as a very salutary development: a factor which could help the development of a common nationhood in the country.

This orientation of Qādiānīsm was for obvious reasons welcomed with great zest by those nationalists of India who have always complained that Hijaz has been the real centre of the loyalty of Muslims and that they are always wont to look

11. *Payghām-i-Sulh*, Vol, XXI, No. 22.

towards Arabia. To such people this movement appeared as a new ray of hope. A Hindu writer, Dr. Shanker Das Mehra, has very ably represented this standpoint. He has clearly grapsed the change in outlook that results from embracing Qādiānism. He has also realised the fact that instead of being an Islamic sect, the Qādiānīs believe in an independent religion and constitute a separate religious community, and that they are engaged in propagating a new religion and building a new community. Dr. Mehra writes:

> "The most important question that confronts the country is in what way can national feeling be inspired among the Indian Muslims. At times pacts and agreements are concluded with them, at times we bargain with them, and, at times, attempt is made to persuade them to unite. But nothing proves of any avail. The Indian Muslims have come to consider themselves a separate nation and they keep on singing praises of Arabia, day in and day out. Had they the power, they would christen India as Arabia. In this darkness, in this state of despair, the Indian nationalists and patriots see only one glimmer of hope. That glimmer of hope is the movement of Ahmadīs. The more Muslims will be attracted towards Ahmadism, the more they will begin to consider Qādiān to be their Mecca and will become, in the end, lovers of India and true nationalists.
>
> "The progress of Ahmadism among Muslims can alone deal a death-blow to the Arabic culture and Pan-Islamism. Let us study the Ahmadi movement from the national point of view. From the land of Punjab there arises a man, Mirzā Ghulām Ahmad Qādiānī, and summons the Muslims:
>
> "O Muslims! I am the prophet whom God has promised to send in the Qur'ān. Come! Gather under my banner. If you don't come, God will not forgive you on the day of judgement and you will abide in hell.
>
> "Without entering into any discussion about the truth

or falsehood of this claim of the Mirzā, I would like to point out the change that takes place when a Muslim becomes a Mirzāī. A Mirzāī Muslim holds it as his creed that:

(1) From time to time God sends someone to guide people. Such a person is the prophet of his time.

(2) During the time when moral confusion prevailed in Arabia God sent Hazrat Muhammad (peace and blessings of God be on him) as His Prophet to that country.

(3) God felt the need of a prophet again and so He sent the Mirzā in order that he should guide the Muslims.

"My nationalist brethren will ask: What have these beliefs to do with nationalism? The reply is that when a Hindu becomes a Muslim, his loyalty and devotion are transferred to the land of Arabia; similarly, when a Muslim becomes an Ahmadī, his angle of vision changes. His devotion to Hazrat Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be on him) begins to decrease. Besides, if his caliphate had been in the past in Arabia and the land of the Turks, now it comes to Qādiān. Mecca and Medina then remain holy places for him merely in a traditional sense.

"An Ahmadī, whether he is in Arabia, Turkistan, Iran or in any corner of the world, turns towards Qādiān for spiritual salvation. The land of Qādiān is the land of salvation for him and therein lies the secret of the superiority of India.

"Every Ahmadī will have love for India for Qādiān is in India. The Mirzā too was an Indian and his Caliphs who are leading this sect till now are all Indians."

He adds:

"This is the one reason why Muslims look at the Ahmadī movement with suspicion. They know that Ahmadism is hostile to Arabic culture and Islam. In the Khilāfat movement too Ahmadīs did not join hands with

Muslims. For, instead of Turkey or Arabia, they want to establish the Khilāfat at Qādiān. This fact, no matter how disappointing to the common Muslims who are always dreaming of Pan-Islamism and Pan-Arab solidarity, is a matter of great joy for a nationalist."[12]

12. Dr. Shankar Das Mehra's article in Bande Mātram, April 22, 1932, (cited in *Qādiānī Mazhab*, by Prof. Ilyās Barnī).

2

Revolt against Muhammad's Prophethood

The belief that religion has now been perfected, that Muhammad (peace be on him) is the last messenger of God, and that Islam is the last message of God to mankind and the most perfect way of life, is a Divine gift and an honour conferred exclusively on this *ummah*. It is for this reason that a Jewish scholar had said to Hazrat ʿUmar (may God be pleased with him) that there was a verse in the Qurʾān which the Muslims recite. Had that verse been found in the Jewish Scripture, they would have regarded the day of its revelation as a day of national rejoicing and celebration. This Jewish scholar was referring to the Quranic verse which proclaims the termination of prophethood and the perfection of Divine benediction:

> "This day have I perfected your religion for you, completed My Favour upon you, and have chosen for you Islam as your religion." (v. 4)

ʿUmar did not dispute the majestic glory of this Divine proclamation. He only said that the Muslims needed no new celebration for the verse had been revealed on a day which is a day of great devotion and congregation in Islam. The day on which this verse had been revealed was the day of two *Īds*: the Day of *Arafah* and Friday.

Security Against Intellectual Chaos

This creed has stood as a great barrier against the disintegrating movements which arose from time to time in the wide expanse of the world of Islam. It is this creed which prevented Islam from becoming a plaything of false pretenders to

prophethood and hypocrites. This creed has been like a fortress wherein this *ummah* took refuge from the inroads of inposters and adventurers who tried to demolish the entire structure of Islam and to replace it by a new structure. It is, again, this very creed which maintained the religious and ideological unity of this *ummah* to an extent no other prophet's *ummah* has been able to do in the past. Had this creed not been there, Muslims would have disintegrated into numerous *ummahs*, each of which would be having a separate centre of spiritual inspiration, a distinct heritage of cultural traditions and history, and a different set of heroes.

Implications of the Termination of Prophethood

The belief that prophethood has been terminated is a matter of great honour and distinction for mankind. This, in effect, proclaims that mankind has reached the age of maturity and attained the capacity to respond to the last message of God. It means that human beings no longer require any fresh revelation, any further heavenly communication. This belief inspires self-confidence. For man knows that religion has assumed its perfect and final form, and man need no longer look backwards; that humanity need no longer look towards the heavens for fresh revelation; rather, it should now direct its efforts to make good use of the resources created by God. And in trying to fashion its life according to the fundamentals of religion and morality, it has to look now only towards the earth, and towards its own self. This creed directs the vision of man to the future. It provides an incentive for the creative utilization of man's capabilities. It fixes for man the right goal, and points to the direction in which man should proceed for the achievement of that goal. Without this creed, man would be in a state of doubt, diffidence and hesitation. He would always be looking towards the heavens, instead of looking towards the earth. He would always feel uneasy about his future. Every now and then some pretender would rise to tell him that "the garden of humanity had remained incomplete" and that it was his

advent which had given it its full bloom; leaving man to remain diffident that if it had remained imperfect so far, what was the guarantee for the future! Thus, instead of striving to water that garden, he would always remain waiting for some gardener to come out from above and do the needful.

Qādiāni Insolence

Among the different anti-Islamic movements which have arisen in our history, Qādiānism is unique. For, if other movements had been directed against Islam as a whole, Qādiānism is a conspiracy which is specifically directed against the prophethood of Muhammad (peace be on him), and challenges the finality of Islam and the unity of Muslims. By repudiating the finality of prophethood, Qādiānism obliterated the very borderlines which distinguish this *ummah* from all others. Dr. Sir Muhammad Iqbāl has clearly brought out the innovation impudently set afloat by Qādiānism.

> "Islam is essentially a religious order which has defined limits, that is, belief in the Unity and Omnipotence of God, faith in the prophets and termination of prophethood on the advent of His last Messenger, Muhammad (peace be upon him). Faith in the last mentioned creed is, in reality, the distinguishing feature between a Muslim and a non-Muslim and a determinant whether a certain individual or group forms part of the Muslim community or not. Take, for example, Brahmo Samāj which has faith in God and acknowledges Muhammad as a Prophet of God, but its votaries cannot be treated as Muslims, for, like the Qādiānīs, they believe in the continuance of revelation and do not regard the Prophet of Islam as the Last Prophet. As far as I am aware, no sect of Islam has ever tried to go beyond this line of demarcation. In Iran, the Bahāites denied this essential creed but they also confessed that they constituted a distinct religious order and were not a sect of the Muslims. We believe that Islam, as a religion, has been revealed by God; but, Islam as a social order owes its existence to the

person of the Blessed Prophet. The Qādiānīs have, in my opinion, only two ways open to them. They should either follow the Bahāites or accept the creed in regard to finality of Muhammad's prophethood *in toto*, with its full implications, and give up those far-fetched interpretations which are designed to let them remain within the fold of Islam with a view to enjoying political benefits."[1]

In another article on the subject, Sir Muhammad Iqbāl wrote:

"Muslims are unusually sensitive in regard to those movements which pose a danger to their unity. Therefore, every religious group which deems itself historically associated with Islam but has its bases in a new prophethood, and, treats every Muslim not having faith in its revelations as a non-believer, would be regarded by the Muslims as a danger to the unity of Islam. This is because the sense of Islamic unity springs from the belief in the finality of Muhammad's prophethood."

He adds in the same article that:

"It is obvious that Islam which claims to unite its different sects on the basis of a uniform creed for all, cannot show any sympathy to a movement which presently endangers its own solidarity and is fraught with the danger of further dissension to humanity in future."[2]

Proliferation of Prophets

The natural outcome of the Mirzā's preaching against the idea of the finality of prophethood was that the halo of sanctity and veneration, honour and dignity around the office of prophethood was gone. The eloquence he waxed on stressing that the process of prophethood had not stopped, the importance he attached to "inspiration", enhancing it to be considered the basis of prophethood, was bound to reduce prophethood to a

1. Iqbāl: *Harf-i-Iqbal*, pp. 136-37.
2. *Ibid.*, pp. 122-23.

child's play, even though his argument supporting the continuity of prophethood was confined merely to his own case and he considered himself to be the last prophet. To borrow the remarks of Iqbāl:

> "The founder's own argument, quite worthy of a medieval theologian, is that the spirituality of the Holy Prophet of Islam must be regarded as imperfect, if it is not creative of another prophet. He claims his own prophethood to be an evidence of the prophet-rearing power of the spirituality of the Holy Prophet of Islam. But if you further ask him whether the spirituality of Muhammad is capable of rearing more prophets than one, his answer is "No". This virtually amounts to saying, "Muhammad is not the last Prophet, I am the last." Far from understanding the cultural value of the Islamic idea of finality in the history of mankind generally and of Asia especially, he thinks that finality, in the sense that no follower of Muhammad can ever reach the status of Prophethood, is a mark of imperfection in Muhammad's Prophethood. As I read the psychology of his mind he seems to be interested only in his own claim to Prophethood; for he avails himself of what he describes as the creative spirituality of the Holy Prophet of Islam but, at the same time, limits this spiritual creative capacity to the rearing of only one prophet, i.e., the founder of the Ahmadiyya movement. In this way the new prophet quietly steals away the finality of one whom he claims to be his spiritual progenitor."[3]

What eludes the grasp of people of normal intelligence is the confinement of Muhammad's prophet-rearing spirituality to one person alone, and that it should have produced no results during the last thirteen hundred years before the advent of the Mirzā nor is it capable of producing any other prophet in the future till the end of time. It is this logic of things which has made

3. Speeches and Writings of Iqbāl, pp. 150-51.

Mirzā Bashīruddīn Mahmood to make the following observation.

> "The Exalted God says about the unbelievers that they did not form a true estimate of Allah and have come to think that the treasures of God have become exhausted and hence He could not now give anything to anybody. In the same way, (such people) say that no matter how much a man advances in righteousness and piety, and even if he goes ahead of several prophets in divine gnosis and spirituality, God will never, never make him a prophet. This concept is owing to a mis-estimation of God, otherwise I say that not one but thousands of prophets will be born."[4]

This trend of denying the finality of prophethood emboldened several people to lay claim to prophethood. So far as we know about the history of Muslim India, there had been none except Akbar who has had the cheek to deny the finality of prophethood and try to promote a new religion. However, even Akbar had not done all that with the outspokenness and vehemence of the Qādiānīs. The door of prophethood flung open by the Mirzā attracted many an adventurer and pretender. In 1355/1936 Professor Ilyas Barni mentioned seven such pretenders. However, were one to undertake a thorough census of the pretenders in the province of Punjab alone even their number would be much more than seven. This sudden proliferation of 'prophets' caused concern even to the Qādiānīs and Mirzā Bashīruddīn Mahmood remarked :

> "Look at the number of claimants to prophethood who have arisen from the ranks of our own party. Of these, but for one, I believe that none of these is consciously lying. The fact is that in the beginning they received inspirations, and it would be no surprise if they receive them even now. But the mishap was that they erred in the interpretation of their inspirations. I personally know some of these people and I can testify that they possessed sincerity and fear of

4. *Anwār-i-Khilāfat*, p. 62.

God. The Exalted God alone knows how far this opinion is correct, but in the beginning they were sincere. A part of their inspirations was from God, but the mistake was that they did not grasp the wisdom of the inspirations and foundered."[5]

Dissension Among Muslims

The very idea of the extent to which Muslims will become divided among themselves, and the tragic disintegration that will follow as a result of the rise of these new prophets makes a Muslim tremble with fear. Secular trends of thought have made people disinclined to make claims of divinity and prophethood. What would happen, however, if the writings of Mirzā Ghulām Ahmad and the preachings of his followers awaken this idea and there is a proliferation of 'prophets' all over the Muslim world; and each 'prophet' begins to denounce all those who do not come under his banner as *Kāfirs*. What a colossal intellectual and religious chaos would follow? The world of Islam would become divided into different hostile religious camps and who knows if Muslims too will not experience the religious wars which devastated Europe a few centuries ago. Thus, the *ummah* which had been raised in order to weld the whole of humanity into one fraternity would itself become a house divided against itself. This danger was realized by one of the followers of the Mirzā, Maulavi Muhammad ᶜAlī. Muhammad ᶜAlī did not realise, however, that the door to this danger had been opened by his leader, the Mirzā himself. For, in the history of Islam the Mirzā is the only person who initiated a full-fledged movement to prove the unceasing continuity of prophethood. Anyhow, the views of Muhammad ᶜAlī are noteworthy:

"Reflect, for the sake of God, that if the belief of Miān Sāhib[6] is accepted that the prophets will continue to come

5. *Al-Fadhl*, January 1, 1935.

6. That is, Mirzā Bashīruddīn Mahmood. In fairness, however, it should be noted that Mahmood was not the proponent of this idea; he merely reiterated the views of his leader and father, Mirzā Ghulām Ahmad.

and that thousands of prophets will come, as he has written explicitly in *Anwār-i-Khilāfat*, will not these thousands of groups denounce one another as *Kāfir*? And so, what will happen to Islamic unity? Let us assume that all those prophets will be confined to the Ahmadī group alone. Then, how many factions will there be in the Ahmadī group? After all you are aware of what happened in the past, how one of these groups became favourable to and another opposed to the Prophet after his advent. Then, will that very God who has expressed the will to unify all the peoples of the world at the hands of Muhammad (peace and blessings of God be on him), will He now divide Muslims into numerous factions, each one of them calling the other *Kāfir*, having no Islamic relationship and unity among themselves. Remember that if the promise to make Islam predominant over all religions in the future is true, then that tragic day when thousands of prophets will go about with their own separate factions, when there will be thousands of separate exclusive mosques, each with its own group of mentors of true belief and salvation, denouncing all other Muslims as infidels, will never dawn in the history of Islam."[7]

A Dangerous Hypothesis

A hypothesis of the Mirzā which causes unrest in a Muslim's mind and opens the door of chaos and anarchy in Muslim society is his view that "Divine revelations and communications" are essential for the validity of a religion and a natural outcome of obedience to God and earnest endeavour in His way. In his view the religion in which "Divine revelations and communications" do not continue unceasingly is a dead and false religion; rather it is a Satanic religion which leads towards the hell. If the followers of a religion who apply themselves to the practice of austerities and devotion remain deprived of the honour of

7. *Rādd-i-Takfīr-i-Ahl-i-Qiblāh*, pp. 49-50.

Divine illumination despite hard efforts and sacrifices in the way of God, they are misguided, unfortunate and blind. In *Barāhīn-i-Ahmadiyah* (Vol. V), he wrote :

> "What honour, what position, what influence and what Divine strength does that prophet possess, whose followers are merely blind, sightless people, whose eyes have not been opened by Divine communication? How stupid and false is it to believe that after the Holy Prophet (peace and blessing of Allah be on him), the door of Divine revelation has been closed for ever; and in the future, till the Day of Judgement, there is no hope of it being opened again. Keep on worshipping mere fables and stories! Can such a religion, in which there is no direct relationship with God, be a religion in the real sense of the term. What then remains in such a religion except paying devotion to mere fables. Even if a person were to sacrifice his life in His way, even if he were to lose himself completely in striving to gratify Him and prefer Him to everything, even then He does not open the door of His knowledge and does not honour him with communication! I swear in the name of Exalted God that there would be none in this age who would be more averse to such a religion than I. I call such a religion Satanic and not a Divine one, and believe that such a religion leads to hell."[8]

Logical Consequences

Assuming "Divine communication" as essential for knowledge and salvation, and holding it up as the criterion for the truth and veracity of a religion, the Mirzā turned religion into a highly complicated and an immensely straitened affair even though God had made it simple and practicable. God says :

> "God intends every facility for you. He does not want to put you to difficulties."
>
> (II. 185)

8. *Brāhīn-i-Ahmadiyah*, Vol. V, p. 183.

"And has imposed no difficulties on you in religion." (XXII. 78)

"On no soul doth God place a burden greater than it can bear." (II. 286).

But if Divine communication is essential for knowledge and salvation there can be nothing more difficult than religion. For, by nature, an overwhelming majority of people are not disposed to that kind of communication. No matter how hard they try, the door of Divine communication will always remain closed for them. Then, there are those who do have a natural predilection for this, and others there are who do not have the leisure or the Divine help to undertake the vigorous striving essential for such a spiritual achievement. The universal religion which has been designed for the salvation of the whole of mankind and summons all towards God cannot possibly impose such impossible conditions for obtaining the knowledge of God, His propinquity and blessings and salvation.

If one were to study the Holy Qur'ān from one end to the other, one could never find direct communication from God mentioned as an attribute of the believers or of those who merit salvation. Instead, one finds verses which mention characteristics such as those given in the following verses:

"The Believers must (eventually) win through: those who humble themselves in their prayers)," (XXIII : 1-2).

"And the servants of the Merciful (God) are those who walk on the earth in humility." (XXV : 63).

Or one might even turn the first page of the Qur'ān to find these verses:

"Alif, Lam, Mīm. This is the Book; in it is guidance, sure, without doubt, to those who fear God; who believe in the Unseen, are steadfast in prayer, and spend out of what We have provided for them:" (II, 1-3).

Nowhere does one find Divine communication mentioned in the Qur'ān as essential for being rightly guided or for achieving salvation? On the contrary, the stress is primarily on faith in the Unseen. And faith in the Unseen means a man's

acceptance of facts relating to supra-physical matters which cannot be grasped by reason or senses alone, an acceptance based on faith in God's prophet (who had been chosen by God for His revelations). Now, if one were to accept the Mirzā's view that Divine communication is essential for true knowledge and salvation, the need for faith in the Unseen becomes superfluous and the persistent Quranic strees on it difficult to comprehend. Furthermore, we have before us the lives of the illustrious companions of the Holy Prophet. One might ask: how many of them were honoured by Divine communication? How many can be proved by history or Hadīth (Traditions) to have enjoyed that privilege? Nobody who knows the history of those times and understands the temperaments and the circumstances of those people—in fact, no one who grasps human psychology and human nature can say that these companions of the Prophet of God—and their number exceeds the figure of one hundred thousand—had enjoyed Divine communication. When such is the case in respect of the companions, what can be said of those who came after them?

Repudiation of Prophethood

The concept of Divine communication as mentioned above was, in fact, a hidden conspiracy, a clandestine revolt against prophethood as such. If this process were to be considered a widespread one and one of unceasing continuity, prophets would no longer remain necessary at all. The Qurʾān and other scriptures link true guidance, knowledge of God, of His Attributes, of His will and all matters relating to the Unseen world, with prophethood. The Qurʾān mentions, in the words of the truly-guided believers:

> "Praise be to God who hath guided us to this (felicity): Never could we have found guidance, had it not been for the guidance of God. Indeed, it was the truth that the Apostles of our Lord brought unto us."
>
> (VII : 43)

At another place, while refuting polytheistic and pagan

notions, God says:

"Glory to thy Lord, The Lord of Honour and Power; (He is free) from what they ascribe (to Him). And peace be on the Apostles. And Praise be to God, the Lord and Cherisher of the Worlds!" (xxxvii : 180 : 82).

The Qur'ān also explains the purpose of the advent of prophets as follows:—

"That mankind after (the coming of) the Apostles, should have no plea against God." (iv : 165)

If one were to examine carefully the concepts preached by the Mirzā regarding the continuity of Divine communication, and takes note of his view that it was essential for one's salvation, it would reveal not only a spirit of revolt against the finality of prophethood, but would reveal symptoms against the very idea of prophethood. In fact, if these concepts were to be taken seriously, religious faith would become something akin to the spiritual feats such as occultism which are becoming popular in the present times.

Source of Divine communication

Then, what is the criterion of these communications? And what is the guarantee that these communications did not reflect either the inner being of the person himself, or his environment, or his peculiar upbringing, or his sub-conscious desires, or else the complex of factors related to his heredity? Those who have studied the ancient collections of these communications know that the bulk of them consists of completely erroneous hypotheses and concepts which had their origin in ancient mythology. Look at the spiritual experiences and Divine communications of the neo-Platonists of Egypt. Were they not merely geared to the support of the idolatrous mythology and philosophical hypotheses of the time? Even during the Islamic period some of the people who had a deep faith in things such as Divine communication and craved for gnosis mention having met Aristotle and having talked to him, which reflects the peculiar mental outlook of ancient philosophy, or Greek mythology. And if one studies

the Divine communications which the Mirzā claims to have received one finds in them incontrovertible reflections of the time and environment of his life, his upbringing, his subconscious urges; on the whole; a reflection of the degenerate and decadent society in which he had been reared and wherein he preached his message. In fact, these communications contain far enough evidence to force anyone who knows the political history of modern India to the conclusion that the real source of the Mirzā's inspiration was the political authority ruling over the country. Iqbāl, who was a man of rare insight and had also studied the Qādiānī movement thoroughly, has made the following observation:

> "I dare say the founder of the Ahmadiyya movement did hear a voice, but whether the voice came from the God of Life and Power or arose out of the spiritual impoverishment of the people must depend upon the nature of the movement which it has created and the kind of thought and emotion which it has given to those who have listened to it. The reader must not think that I am using metaphorical language. The life-history of nations shows that when the tide of a people begins to ebb, decadence itself becomes a source of inspiration; inspiring poets, philosophers, saints and statesmen and turning them into a class of apostles whose sole ministry is to glorify, by the force for a seductive art or logic, all that is ignoble and ugly in the life of their people. These apostles unconsciously clothe despair in the glaring garments of hope, undermine the traditional values of conduct and thus destroy the spiritual virility of those who happen to be their victims. One can only imagine the rotten state of a people's will who are, on the basis of Divine authority, made to accept their political environment as final. Thus the actors who participated in the drama of Ahmadism were, I think, only innocent instruments in the hands of decadence."[9]

9. Iqbāl; Speeches and Writings, pp. 157-58.

3

The Lahori Branch

The branch of Qādiānism which has had its headquarters until recently at Qādiān, and was later transferred to Rabwah under the second *Khalīfah* and the Mirzā's own son, Bashīruddīn Mahmood, has made the Mirzā's prophethood its fundamental article of faith. With great frankness and courage this group adheres to this belief. No matter how objectionable this creed might be from the Islamic view-point, this group deserves the credit for having adopted a clear and categorical standpoint and showing moral courage. It is also beyond doubt that this group faithfully represents the teachings of the Mirzā, in so far as he had claimed prophethood for himself in clear and vigorous terms.

But the standpoint of the Lahore branch, whose leader until a few years ago was Maulavī Mohammad ᶜAlī (d.1952), is enigmatic to the core. Anyone who has studied the writings of the Mirzā knows that he explicitly claims prophethood and regards all those who disbelieve in his prophethood to be *Kāfirs*. If the meanings of words are fixed, and they have to be taken in the sense in which the speakers of that language understand them, and if Mirzā had written his books in order to convey his message to his compatriots, then there can be no doubt that he did say that he was a prophet, that he had received revelation, that he was entitled to prescribe divine ordinances and injunctions, that he was the bearer of *sharīᵓah* (Divine Law), and that the one who rejected him was a *Kāfir* and doomed to hell-fire. But Maulavī Muhammad ᶜAlī seems to have had greater sympathy with the Mirzā than he had for himself or his offsprings have for him. It appears that Maulavī Muhammad ᶜAlī is keen to

protect the greatness of the Mirzā and his religious services and perhaps is trying, both consciously as well as sub-consciously, to keep his own deep attachment to, and veneration of, the Mirzā intact and, at the same time, to spare his soul and his religious conscience the torment caused by the Mirzā's shocking claim to be a prophet and the consequent ex-communication of the Muslims, who rejected him, as *Kāfirs*. Muhammad ᶜAlī tries to show that the Mirzā never claimed prophethood in the technical sense of the word. Wherever the Mirzā used terms like prophethood (*nabūwah*) revelation (*Wahī*) and disbelief (*Kufr*), in Muhammad ᶜAlī's opinion he used them in a mystical (Sufī) sense, that is, these words have an allegorical and metaphorical import. It is obvious that if well-known and commonly used religious terms were to be taken as sufistic mysteries, or as allegories and metaphors, then the writings and statements of any person can be interpreted in all possible ways and no connotation can be fixed for any piece of writing.

Maulavī Muhammad ᶜAlī considers the Mirzā to be the greatest *Mujaddid* and reformer of the fourteenth century (of Hijrah), and above all that, the Promised Messiah. It is at this point that the two branches of Qādiānism meet. Even in his commentary of the Holy Qurʾān, there are indications that he considered the Mirzā to be the Promised Messiah. For instance, at one place in his Urdu commentary of the Holy Qurʾān he writes:

> "Muhammad (peace and blessings of God be on him) was sent to all mankind and his time extends to the Day of Judgement. And, hence to consider oneself to be in need of some other messenger or prophet is ingratitude to this great benefactor. Thus, the prophecy about the advent of the son of Mary in the *Hadīth* can only mean that someone of this *ummah* will come bearing resemblance to the son of Mary. This corresponds to the prophecy of the second advent of Elijah (Ilyās) which was fulfilled by the coming of John (Yahyā) in the manner of Elijah. This statement of the Noble Qurʾān prevents Jesus from coming back

personally to the Muhammadan *ummah*."[1]

In his works, too, he generally refers to Mirzā as "the Promised Messiah.[2] However, here we would confine ourselves to a glance at his commentary of the Holy Qur'ān in order to find out his religious attitudes and tendencies.

A study of his commentary of the Holy Qur'ān shows that Muhammad ᶜAlī's mind had almost completely assimilated Sir Sayyid Ahmad Khān's mode of thinking as well as his method of interpreting the Qur'ān. His close contact with Hakīm Nūruddīn and his lessons in exegesis (*Tafsīr*) of the Qur'ān from the latter further reinforced the tendencies he had imbibed from Sir Sayyid Ahmad Khān. In fact, Mohammad ᶜAlī is a typical example of the kind of people found among the Muslims today. He is keen to present Qur'ān before the modern world and before those educated in the modern tradition. At the same time, his own mental framework and his intellectual upbringing prevent him from accepting facts relating to the Unseen World and the facts not comprehended by limited human intellect. He represents, therefore, the attitudes of those Muslims who have accepted all the results of modern scientific researches, or to be more accurate, they have accepted the well-known concepts of science—as distinguished from scientific facts—as axiomatic and have set them up as the criterion for the acceptance or rejection of everything, including the teachings of religion and the contents of heavenly scriptures. Such people have a frame of mind which is, on the whole averse to belief in the Unseen World and in miracles. At the same time, they also have a religious inclination which makes them disinclined to repudiate the clear texts of the Qur'ān. Hence, they try to strike a middle path. They interpret the Quranic texts relating to the Unseen World and miracles in such a manner as would not go counter to the concepts and ideas in vogue in the present times. In short, it is an attempt to make Islam palatable to the modern mind. To

1. *Tafsīr Buyān al-Qur'ān*, Vol. I, p. 317.
2. *See* for instance, his *al-Nabūwah fī al-Islām* and also *Radd-ī-Takfīr ahl-i-Qiblah*.

achieve this end, Muhammad ᶜAlī interprets Quranic verses in a highly arbitrary and exotic manner. He goes to a ridiculous length of casuistry in order to support his interpretation on the basis of the feeblest of evidences. In these explanations he sets aside all that might stand in the way of making Qurʾān conform to the whims and inclinations of the modern man. The accepted principles of *Tafsīr*, the rules of language and literature, the known usages of terms, the understanding of these terms on the part of the companions of the Prophet and Arabic-speaking people, the exegesis of the earlier scholars, all these are rejected out of hand to show that Quranic verses have nothing which can be regarded as 'out of fashion' in the present age. In this his comments are very similar to those of Sir Sayyid Ahmad Khān. Below are a few examples which will show Muhammad ᶜAlī's adventures in the realm of Quranic exegesis:

(1) In the Second Chapter of Qurʾān it has been said that when Moses (peace of God be on him) prayed to God (for water for his people in a wilderness), he was asked to strike with his staff. This made twelve springs gush forth and the twelve tribes of the Israelites drank to their full. The Quranic verses read:

> "And when Moses prayed for water for his people, We said: Strike the rock with thy staff. So there flowed from it twelve springs. Each tribe knew its drinking place."
>
> (II : 60)

If one were to interpret this verse in the light of the words in which this incident has been conveyed and in the way it has been understood by all since the day it was revealed to the Prophet, one would be forced to the conclusion that this was a supernatural event brought about in a manner contrary to the natural law of causation. However, such an occurrence is, obviously, contrary to normal human experience and runs counter to our understanding of physical and geological laws. This forced Muhammad ᶜAlī to interpret it in quite a novel way. Let us reproduce what he has to say on the point:

> "The words *idrib bi ᶜasā ka-l-hajara* may be translated in two ways, strike the rock with thy staff, or march on or go

forth or hasten, to the rock with thy staff. *Darb* means striking, smiting, marching on, going from place to place, setting forth a parable, and carries a number af other significances. In fact, *darb* is used to indicate all kinds of actions except a few (*Taj al-ᶜArus*). When *arda* (land or earth) is its object, it carries the significance of going about or seeking a way. Thus *daraba-l-ard* or *darab fi-l-ardhi*, both signify he journeyed in the land or went forth or hastened in the land (Arabic-English Lexicon by Lane). The object of *idrib* here is *al-hajar* which means a rock or a mountain to which there is no access. ᶜ*Asā* ordinarily means staff or rod, but its primary significance is a state of combination (*Taj al-ᶜArūs* and Lane's Lexicon), and the word is metaphorically used to speak of a community. Thus, of the *Khawārij*, a Muslim sect, it is said *Shaqqa ᶜasā-l-Muslimīna* (lit. they broke the staff of the Muslims which means that they made a schism in the state of combination and union, or in the community of the Muslims—*Lisān al-ᶜArab*). Hence, the words may mean strike the rock with thy staff, or march on to the mountain with thy staff or thy community. What the words of the Qurʾān signify is either that Moses was commanded by God to smite a particular rock with his staff from which water flowed forth miraculously, or to march on to a mountain from which springs flowed."[3]

What is significant about this interpretation of the verse put forth by Muhammad ᶜAlī is that the latter alternative has been preferred by him because affirmation of miracles appears old-fashioned and "un-scientific".

(2) Another instance is his explanation of the following verse :

"And when you killed a man, then you disagreed about it. And Allah was to bring forth what you were hiding. So, We said : Smite him with a part of it. Thus

3. Muhammad ᶜAli's English Commentary, p. 29.

Allah brings the dead to life, and He shows you His signs that you may understand." (II : 72-73)

Now, the general Muslim interpretation of the incident is that an Israelite had been killed and the Israelites were not succeeding in tracing out the murderer. The successors of the dead asked Moses to find out from God who the murderer was. Earlier, the Israelites had been asked to slaughter a cow which they had done after considerable hesitation and with a feeling of remorse. In order to show the wisdom and reward of their compliance with Divine commandment, God ordered them to smite the dead man with some part of slaughtered cow which would make the dead man tell the name of the murderer. This was a very effective means of teaching the Jews the blessings of honouring and obeying God's commandments. In fact, anyone who goes through these Quranic verses without any preconceived notion is bound to interpret it in no other manner. But since this involved a categorical affirmation of miracle, Mohammad ʿAlī explains the verses quite differently :

"The story generally narrated by the commentators to explain this passage is not based on any saying of the Holy Prophet, nor is it met with in the Bible. The very indefiniteness of the incident is an indication that it refers to some well-known event in history, and as almost all incidents of the stubbornness of the Jewish nation prior to the time of Jesus have been mentioned, it becomes almost certain that this incident refers to Jesus himself, as it was with respect to his death that disagreement took place and many doubted his death. This inference becomes stronger when we compare the incidents narrated here with the same incidents as narrated in the fourth Chapter vv. 153-57, when after enumerating almost all the incidents narrated here in the three previous sections, the Qurʾān goes on to accuse the Jews in the following words "And they are saying : Surely we have killed the Messiah, Jesus, son of Mary, the messenger of Allah : and they killed him not. nor did they crucify him, but he was made to appear to

them as such, and those who differ therein are surely in doubt about it; they have no knowledge representing it, but only follow a conjecture" (4 : 157). The part quoted answers exactly vv. 72 and 73, only the name is omitted here. The comparison makes it clear that it is the apparent killing of Jesus that is referred to here. The words that you killed (Arabic : *qataltum*) are used, because in the first place the Jews asserted that they had killed him, and, secondly, because metaphorically a man may be said to have been killed when he is made to appear as if he were dead."[4]

As for the part of the verse which mentions the order to smite the dead body, he explains the phrase "a part of it", as follows :

The construction of the phrase *idritrbuhū bi baᶜdi-ha* is rather diffieult, but a comparison with 4 : 157 makes the meaning clear. *Darb*.....conveys a number of significations. It means striking as well as likening, and as an instance of the latter significance we find in the Qurʾān itself, where it is said *Yadribū-Ilahū-l-Haqq wa-l-Bātila*, 'Allah compares truth and falsehood." (XIII : 17)

"In *baᶜdi-ha* (lit, a part of it) the personal pronoun *ha* i.e. it refers to the act of murder. The act of murder was not completed in the case of Jesus, as the Gospels show, for after he was taken down from the cross his legs were not broken as in the case of the thieves. The meaning of the sentence is therefore according to the signification of *darb* that we adopt: strike him with partial death, or liken his condition to that of the partially dead man, and thus he was made to appear as a dead man, as stated in 4 : 157. There is no other case of murder or an attempted murder in Jewish history of which the whole nation could be said to have been guilty, and which might answer to the description of these two verses."[5]

4. Muhammad ʿAlī's English Con mentary, p. 34.
5. *Ibid.*, p. 35

This type of reasoning is fairly illustrative of the mentality we have spoken of above. In order to avoid affirming a miracle all kinds of involved reasoning is employed, including the contention (see the above citation) that the feminine pronoun was used as masculine, and the incident of Jesus (peace be on him) was tagged on to these verses, without there being for it any contextual relevance whatsoever.

(3) The Qur'ān repeatedly mentions that to provide evidence of his prophethood, Jesus made from clay the form of a bird, and then he breathed into the model which sprang into life and flew into the air like a real bird.

> "And I made for you from clay the form of a bird, then I breathe into it and it came a bird with Allah's permission." (III:49)

The verse obviously suggests a miracle. In order to avoid that, Muhammad ʿAlī gives an out-and-out figurative interpretation of the verse. His interpretation of the verse is novel since he assigns an altogether novel signification to the four terms used in the verse: *Khalq*, *tīn*, *nafkh*, and *tair*. *khalq* according to him, here means the determining of a thing. As for *tīn* and *nafkh*, he says "Man is spoken of as being created from *tīn* or dust, which stands for his humble origin, but the *nafkh* or breathing into him makes him deserving of respect by the angels." Then comes the word tair which, says Muhammad ʿAlī, means a bird just as the word *asad* (lit, a lion) is figurativly used for a brave man. In a parable it is quite unobjectionable, says Muhammad ʿAlī, to take the word *taīr* as signifying one who soars into the higher spiritual regions and is not bent low upon earth or earthy things. In the light of these novel significations given to the words, Muhammad Alī considers the verse to mean:

> "So that is meant here is that Jesus, by breathing a spirit into mortals, will make them rise above those who are bent upon the earth, and the apostles of Jesus, who were all men of humble origin (which is referred to in the word dust in the parable), whose thoughts had never risen higher

than their own humble cares, left everything for the master's sake and went into the world by the command of the master, preaching truth. Here was, no doubt, mere dust having the form of a bird, which the messenger of God converted into high-soaring birds by breathing the truth into them."[6]

(4) The Qur'ān mentions Solomon enumerating the favours of God unto him. He said:

"On man, we have been taught the speech of birds, and we have been granted of all things." (XXVII : 16).

Since knowledge of "speech of birds" is contrary to normal human experience, Muhammad ʿAlī considers the knowledge of speech of birds to mean Solomon's use of birds for conveying messages. In his own words:

"Solomon's understanding of the speech of birds may imply that he made use of birds to convey messages from one place to another, these messages being metaphorically called the speech of birds."[7]

The following verse reads:

"Till when they came to the valley of the ants, the she-ant said: "O ants, enter your abodes." (XXVII : 18).

Here again Muhammad ʿAlī gives a free rein to his imagination. According to him, *Wad al-Naml* does not mean, as it apparently does and as it has been interpreted by exegetists, the 'valley of ants', but the valley of an Arab tribe called Banu Namlah, and the word *namlah* (she-ant) mentioned in the verse has been explained by him as follows:

"It is the name of a tribe. ...The name Namlah used also to be given to a child in whose hand an ant was placed at its birth, because it was said that such a child would be wise and intelligent"[8]

(5) In the Quranic chapter entitled *Saba* it has been mentioned about Solomon:

"But when We decreed death for him, naught showed

6. Muhammad ʿAlī's English Commentary, p. 144.
7. *Ibid.*
8. *Ibid.*, p. 731.

them (the *jinn*) his death except a creature of the earth who ate away his staff." (XXXIV : 14)

The Muslim exegetists in explaining this verse point out that Solomon was having his temple constructed by jinn. When he came to know that the time of his death had arrived, he explained the plan of construction to the jinn, shut himself up in a house of glass, and devoted himself to the worship of God. In this state, the angel took the breath of life out of him. His corpse kept standing by the support of a wooden staff. The jinn kept on working for long. None sensed that Solomon had died. When the construction was completed, the staff which had supported his corpse fell down because of its having been eaten up by a moth. It was then that his death became known. The jinn also realised the limitations of their knowledge of the Unseen. Their human followers too came to realise that had the jinn become aware of Solomon's death by virtue of their capacity to know the Unseen, they would have got rid of the humiliation they had been enduring so long.

Now, since all this could be accepted only if supernormal things are affirmed, Muhammad ᶜAlī again comes forward with a strange explanation. This is what he has to say on the question:

> "The reference in the creature of the earth that ate away his staff is to his son's weak rule, under whom the kingdom of Solomon went to pieces. It appears that Solomon's successor, Rehoboam, led a life of luxury and ease, and instead of acting on the advice of older men, he yielded to the pleasure-seeking wishes of his companions (Kings: 12 : 13), and it is to his luxurious habits and easy mode of life that the Holy Qurʾān refers when it calls him a creature of the earth. The eating away of his staff signifies the disruption of the Kingdom. The jinn, as already remarked, mean the rebellious tribes who had been reduced to subjection by Solomon, and who remained in subjection to the Israelites for a time, until the Kingdom was shattered."[9]

9. Muhammad ᶜAlī's English Commentary, p. 825.

(6) Another example of the same trend is his explanation of the following verse:

"And he reviewed the birds, then said: How is it I see not *hudhud*, or is it that he is one of the absentees." (27 : 20)

The word *hudhud* has been understood as signifying a particular species of birds (hoopoe). The same view is corroborated by the context because a little earlier there is a mention of Solomon's knowledge of the speech of birds and, again, since it is the birds that he is reviewing. But since it is not normal that a human being should converse with birds and call it to account, and the bird should explain its conduct before him, Muhammad ʿAlī let his imagination loose and interpreted *hudhud* as the chief officer of Solomon's Department of Intelligence. He wrote:

"By *Hudhud* is not to be understood lapwing, but a person of that name. In many languages many of the proper names given to men will be found to be identical with the names of animals. The Arab writers speak of a king of Himyar as Hudāḍ (*Lisān al-ʿArab*), which is almost identical with *Hudhud* mentioned in the Qurʾān.....The verses that follow show clearly that Solomon was speaking of one of his own officers....."

In his Urdu *Tafsīr* he elaborates the situation, pointing out that Hudhud was an intelligence officer and that when Solomon reviewed the birds who were used to carry on intelligence work, he found the officer of the intelligence department, Hudhud, absent. (See his *Tafsīr al-Bayān*, VOL. III, P. 1413)

(7) The Qurʾān mentions the existence of a distinct species called Jinn, inter alia, in the following verse:

"Say: It has been revealed to me that a party of the jinn listened, so they said: Surely we have heard a wonderful Qurʾān." (LXXII : 1)

The testimonies of Qurʾān and *Hadīth*, the continuity of

10. Muhammad ʿAlī's English Commentary, pp. 731-32.

Muslim belief, as well as human observations, are too overwhelming on the question to warrant the denial of existence of a separate species of ethereal beings. Muhammad ᶜAlī too could not explicitly reject this belief as erroneous. He merely seems to evade the question. He tries, therefore, to give other meanings of the term, depending upon the contexts in which the term occurs. At one place he considers the word jinn to signify "great potentates or powerful leaders who, through their importance and detachment from the masses, do not mix freely with them, so they remain distant or "hidden" from their eyes."[11] No less strange is his feat of imagination in trying to explain that the term in the Quranic verse mentioned above refers to Christians.[12] He regards the opening verses of this chapter as prophetical, "speaking of some future time when Christian nations forming the bulk of mankind—such being one of the significances of the word jinn (Lane's *Lexicon*)—will accept the truth of the message brought by the Prophet."[13]

These are just a few examples. The huge Commetary of Muhammad ᶜAlī is replete with such distortions under the immature impression that modern science was opposed to belief in miracles or in the occurrence of an event which is of a supernatural order.

At this point a sound thinking person is bound to ask himself the question: did the Companions of the Holy Prophet, who were the first addressees of the Qurʾān, and in whose mother-tongue the Qurʾān was revealed and who had the honour of having been instructed by the Holy Prophet himself, also understood the same import of the verses as has been explained by this new-fangled exegetist? Did they also think that 'strike the staff on tho rock' meant 'march on to the mountain with thy community'? Did they also think that 'And strike him with part of it' meant 'kill him only partially'? Did they also think that the claim of

11. Muhammad Alī's English Commentary, p. 306.
12. *Ibid.*, p. 1107.
13. *Ibid.*, p. 1107.

Jesus of 'creating birds out of clay' meant 'infusing the spirit to rise above earthly concerns'? Did they also think that 'the speach of birds' meant 'message-carrying birds', that the 'creature of the earth' referred to Solomon's son, Rehoboam, and that 'jinn' meant the 'Christian nations of Europe'? In the same way, did any of the followers of these companions, or any Arab linguists, or scholars and exegetists understand something similar to what Muhammad ᶜAlī understood from them? It would be hard to say 'Yes' for we have before us the entire treasure of *Tafsīr* literature and it testifies to the originality of Mohammad ᶜAlī's brain. None of the profound scholars of Arabic and its literature can even imagine that these verses could, by any stretch of imagination, mean what this non-Arab scholar thinks they mean, almost for the first time after more than thirteen hundred years.

This being the case, one is left wondering about the significance of the Quranic claim of being a 'clear book' which has been revealed in 'clear Arabic.' The Qurʾān itself makes the claim in these words:

> "And surely this is a revelation from the Lord of the Worlds. The faithful spirit has brought it on thy heart so that thou mayst be a Warner in plain Arabic language."
> (xxvi: 192-95)

> "These are the verses of the Book that makes manifest. Surely we have revealed it—an Arabic Qurʾān—that you may understand." (xii: 1-2).

Another verse says:

> "And certainly We have made the Qurʾān easy to understand. Now, is there any one who will ponder"? (liv: 17)

If Muhammad ᶜAlī's approach were to be considered sound, it would mean that for more than thirteen hundred years the Qurʾān remained an incomprehensible mystery, an unsolved puzzle. To disregard the obvious meaning of Quranic verses, to set aside the well-known rules of Arabic language and grammar, to neglect the interpretations of Qurʾān made by the companions of the Prophet, to overlook the context of relevant

Prophetic Traditions—all this means subjecting the Qur'ān to distortion and reducing it to a plaything. This is a great danger and portends ill for Muslims if people promoting this kind of approach find an encouraging response from them. Long ago Mirzā Ghulām Ahmad made a very apt remark about the *Tafsīr* of Sir Sayyid Ahmad Khān. Nothing could apply more adequately to the *Tafsīr* of Muhammad ʿAlī. He said:

> "These interpretations of the Holy Qur'ān which were neither in the knowledge of God's Prophet, nor in the knowledge of his companions, nor in the knowledge of saints and *aqṭāb* and *ghāwth* and *abdāl*, nor have any direct or indirect textual evidence, have caught the imagination of Sir Sayyid."

4

Contribution of Qadianism to the Muslim World

Now that we have studied the life of the founder of Qādiānism, traced the evolution of its doctrines; and noted its doctrinal emphasis, etc., we are in a position to attempt historical evaluation of Qādiānism and see what achievements go to its credit in the history of the reformist movements in Islam? What has it given to the present generation of Muslims? What has been the practical outcome of this religious hullabaloo which has been going on for about three quarters of a century? The founder of the movement has bequeathed a whole library of his works on all kinds of religious subjects, particularly controversial matters, and they have been under discussion for over seventy years. What is the essence of these works and what are they really driving at? What is the message of Qādiānism for the present age?

To answer these questions, we should cast a glance at the Muslim world itself wherein this movement arose. We should also have a look at the state of the Muslim world during the second half of the nineteenth century, and its problems and difficulties.

The most important event which took place during this period of time which can be ignored neither by a historian nor a reformer is the aggression of Europe on the Muslim world, particularly India. The educational system that came in its train was devoid of the spirit of god-consciousness, and the culture which sprang from this new world-view was permeated

with ungodliness and sensuality. The world of Islam fell an easy prey to this nascent but militarily well-equipped European power because it had become impoverished in all respects: in respect of faith, of knowledge, and of material resources. This was the time when a conflict of colossal importance took place: the conflict between religion (and Islam alone was in the field to represent religion) and the ungodly and materialistic culture of Europe. This conflict gave birth to a large number of political, cultural, intellectual and social problems—problems which could have been solved only through strong and unshakeable faith, profound and extensive knowledge and extraordinary self-confidence and perseverance. To encounter this situation, the Muslim world needed a great spiritual and intellectual personality who could infuse the spirit of *jihād* (struggle) in the Muslim world, unite the Muslims, be able to withstand the least distortion of Islamic teachings, bring about a rapprochement between the eternal message of Islam and the restless spirit of the present age by dint of his strength of faith and intellectual acumen, and meet squarely the challenge of the zestful and buoyant West.

This was one aspect of the problems faced by the Muslim world of that time. The other aspect of the Muslim world was that it appeared to be infested with religious and moral ailments, the most gruesome of which was the rise of doctrines and practices which bore the imprint of polytheistic influences. *Tāziās* and graves were worshipped. People swore in the names of others than God. Innovations in religion were popular everywhere. Superstitions and meaningless beliefs were rampant. This situation called for a reformer of tremendous dimensions: a reformer who could purge the Islamic society of anti-Islāmic influences, remind the Muslims of the true doctrine of *Tawhīd*, and stress the obligation of adhering to the *Sunnah* of the Prophet; in short, one who could thoroughly purify the religious life of Muslims.

Besides this, the contact with foreign nations and a materialistic culture had begun to corrode the Muslims socially and degenerate them morally. Moral degeneration had gone to the

extent of unabashed sinfulness; love of extravagant and luxurious living to the extent of licentious self-indulgence; docile obedience to their rulers to the extent of intellectual subservience and loss of self-respect; and, the tendency to imitate the Western culture and the way of life of their British masters to the extent of the repudiation of the teachings of Islam. The situation obviously demanded the rise of a great crusader against these degenerating tendencies, a crusader who would put a stop to the tidal waves of moral and intellectual decline and counteract the harmful effects of political slavery and its offshoot of mental bondage.

Again, there was the problem of ignorance :- the ignorance of even the rudiments of Islam on the part of a great majority of Muslims. As for the people educated along modern lines, they were unaware of Islam, of the normative principles of the Muslim way of life, of the history of Islam, and of the greatness of their own past, and were, on the whole, pessimistic about its future. Islamic religious sciences were in a state of decay, and the old centres of learning appeared to be on the verge of collapse. All this meant that a new, vigorous educational movement was needed, a movement to set up new schools and *madrassās*, as well as to produce forceful books in order to improve the knowledge of Muslims about their religion, awaken their religious consciousness and create in them a deep faith in the teachings of Islam.

Even more important than all these was another crying need of the Muslim world: the need to summon the Muslims in the manner of the prophets, to live a truly Islamic life characterised by strong faith and righteous action. It is this alone which entitles the Muslims to the help of God, to their predominance over the enemies, and to their salvation in this world as well as in the next and every kind of felicity and honour. The fact is that the real need of the Muslim world has never been, nor will it ever be a fresh religion : all that it has needed is a fresh and deeper faith in Islam. Never has the world of Islam needed a new religion, or a new prophet. It has merely

been in need of a fresh faith in, and fresh enthusiasm for, the eternal truths: the beliefs and the teachings revealed to the last of all the prophets, Muhammad (peace be on him). This faith is adequate enough to encounter the evil tendencies that might arise in any age and resist the new temptations that the changing time brings along with it.

In response to the crying needs of the Muslim world mentioned by us there arose numerous personalities and movements in the Muslim world. They made no big claims, nor did they try to create a new *ummah*. All they did was to fulfil these important needs as best as they could, and in so doing they inspired a great number of Muslims. They neither tried to promote a new religion, nor invited people to rally around some new prophet, nor did they create anarchy in Muslim ranks. They wasted none of their capabilities in futile tasks. Such personalities and movements proved to be an unmixed blessing to the Muslim world: their mission was free from all possibilities of harm, and their work, commendable beyond any shadow of doubt. Without having lost anything, the Muslims benefited from them and to them they owe a heavy debt of gratitude.

At such a critical movement, in the most crucial area of the Muslim world, India, which was the main scene of intellectual and political conflicts, there also arose Mirzā Ghulām Ahmad to initiate a new movement. What is noteworthy about him is that he totally disregarded some of the most important problems which were confronting the Muslim world in his days and focused all his attention on one question alone. Now, what was it? The question of the death of Messiah and the claim on his own part to be the Promised Messiah. Whatever time and energy was left after concentrating on this issue was spent on propagating that *jihād* had become prohibited and that loyalty to the British Government was a religious imperative. For about a quarter of a century these very questions continued to be debated by him at great length. If the writings of the Mirzā on the question of Messiah were to be expunged from his works, hardly anything of significance will be left in them.

Moreover, it is also to be noted that the Mirzā raised the standard of his prophethood and declared all those who did not accept his claim as *kāfirs* in a Muslim world which was already torn by dissensions. By so doing, however, the Mirzā raised an iron wall between himself and the Muslims. On the one side of this wall there are a few thousand followers of the Mirzā, and on the other side is the rest of the Muslim world which stretches from Morocco to China and has great personalities, virtuous movements of reform, and valuable institutions. They stand isolated from and opposed to the whole of this world. Thus he unnecessarily added to the difficulties of Muslims, further aggravated their disunity and added a new complication to the problems facing them.

The Mirzā has made no worthwhile contribution to the intellectual and religious heritage of Muslims which would call for his recognition and because of which he might deserve the gratitude of the present generation of Muslims. Nor did he initiate a broad-based movement for the revival of Islam which could profit the Muslims as a whole, nor help Muslims to solve any of the major problems facing them, nor did his movement contain any message for the contemporary civilization which is in the grips of a major crisis and is interlocked in a life and death struggle. Nor can he even be credited with any significant achievement *vis-ā-vis* the expansion of Islam either in India or Europe. His message remained addressed to the Muslims and of necessity could only lead to mental confusion and unnecessary religious squabbles within the Muslim community. If the Mirzā can be considered successful, it is only in so far as he bequeathed to his family the legacy of spiritual leadership and worldly prosperity, the legacy of a kind of theocracy in which respect he is comparable to the Aghā Khān and his ancestors.

The fact is that it is merely a set of favourable circumstances and not any inner vitality which accounts for the survival of Qādiānism for several decades. It owes a good deal to the intellectual bewilderment found in India, and particularly in

Punjab in his time. Qādiānism is also indebted to the dominance of the British in India which had weakened the bases of Islamic life so that the rising generation of Muslims had become profoundly ignorant of the teachings of Islam and the characteristics and attributes of prophethood and true spiritual leadership. It owes a debt of gratitude to the encouragement and patronage it received from the British rulers. Had it not been for these factors, Qādiānism which bases itself mainly on inspirations, dreams, fantastic interpretations of religious texts and dry and lifeless theological quibbling, which have no moral and spiritual message for the present age, nor any imaginative solution for the problems of our time, could never have remained alive as long as it has managed to do in this degenerate and confused generation. It seems to me that we have been punished by God for the ingratitude that Muslims have shown to Him in the past by deviating from the teachings of Islam, and the crimes we have committed by not fully recognizing the true servants of the cause of Islam who rose amidst us. For all these crimes we have received what we unfortunately deserved—this intellectual plague and the rising up of this man amidst us who has sown the seeds of perpetual discord and disunity.

A few years ago while lecturing at the University of Damascus on the movements of reform and revival of true Islam in the past I made the following observation about Bātinite movement which appears worth reproducing in the context of Qādiānism:

> "When I read the histories of Bātinite movement, of *Ikhawān al-Safā*, of Bahāism in Iran and Qādiānism in India, it seems to me that when the founders of these movements read the history of Islam and the life of the Prophet it struck them that a man, all by himself stood up with a mission in Arabia, without any money to back him, or any army to support him; he summoned people towards a creed, towards a religion and not after very long there came into existence a new *ummah*, a new state, and a new culture. They also noticed that single-handed he changed the

direction of human history, and forced events to flow into a different channel. The ambitious natures of these men then whispered to them: "Why not try?" These people knew that they had intelligence, remarkable mental capabilities and organising ability. They thought, therefore, that history might repeat itself in their case, following the natural pattern of cause and effect. These people had expected the same kind of miraculous success to crown their efforts, as had crowned the efforts of the unlettered Prophet of Arabia in the sixth century, for, they thought that human nature remained always the same, and if it had responded to Muhammad in the past, there was no reason why it should not respond to them now.

"These persons did have a glimpse of the greatness of Muhammad (peace be on him), who carried his movement to a successful end, but could not see the Divine support which was his real strength, nor the Divine Will of which he was an instrument.

"The result was that for a very short period of time, the efforts of these ambitious people did bear some fruit. There gathered behind them a following, sometimes of several hundred thousand people. Some of them (e. g. Bātinites) even succeeded in establishing a state of their own (the Fātimide State) which for some time covered a fairly wide area from Sudan to Morocco. But all this remained only as long as they were able to maintain their organisational efficiency, their wizardry and their secret administrative network. But when these things were gone, all their power and glory also became a poignant memory of the past. With the loss of worldly power, the religious movement shrank and obscured and lost all significance for human life. Against this, is the true Islam preached by the last messenger of Allah (peace be on him). It constitutes today, as it constituted yesterday: a great spiritual force in the world, the guiding star and inspiration of a great *ummah*. It still possesses a distinctive culture which sprang from the spirit

of its teachings. It is still the religion of a number of states and peoples. The sun of Muhammad's prophethood is still shining brilliantly in the sky. Never in history has it suffered an eclipse and it never will."

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