

**THE GREAT MUSLIM  
REFORMER  
OF THE PRESENT AGE  
HAZRAT MIRZA GHULAM AHMAD**

**Dr. Basharat Ahmad**

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**An Overview of Services of Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad  
to the Faith of Islam**

**By Dr Basharat Ahmad**

English translation by  
**Capt. (Retd) Abdus Salaam Khan**

Revised and edited by  
**Kalamazad Mohammed BA, Dip. Ed.**

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## FOREWORD

When the late Dr. Basharat Ahmad of blessed memory, author of *Mujaddid-i A'zam* (three volumes), had finished writing the third volume in January 1943, he desired that urgent arrangements be made for its publication. But as paper could not be procured for it due to World War II, its printing had to be kept in abeyance.

Meanwhile, he decided to visit his son, Naseer Ahmad Faruqi ICS, Collector Bombay, in order to enlighten his promising young son with the light of the Holy Qur'an during the free days that were available to him. But the disease, from which he had been suffering for a long time, took a dangerous turn and he eventually breathed his last at noon on 19 April, 1943. *From Allah we came and to Him we shall eventually return.* His body was brought to Lahore by train, and after the *janaza* (funeral) prayers at the Ahmadiyya Mosque in Ahmadiyya Buildings, he was buried in the Miani Sahib Graveyard in Lahore on 21 April, 1943. "O Lord! Forgive him and have mercy upon him and grant him security and pardon him. O Lord! Make his stay there honourable and extend his place of entry and elevate his place in Paradise."

Dr. Basharat Ahmad retired in 1931 after a long period of service with the Government. Sometime in 1932 he was offered employment by a native state in India, but when he consulted me by mail on this matter, I responded in the form of a Persian couplet of the Holy Imam, Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad:

*'Umar ba-guzasht wa numand-ast juz ayam-i chand  
ba ke dar yaad kasey subh kunee shaam-e chand.*

Life is going by; not many days remain.  
How good it would be for you to make a few evenings  
Change to early dawn in remembering someone.

His heart was already with God, but he decided there and then to bid farewell to worldly affairs and to devote the rest of his life to the service of the Faith. He got the couplet framed and hung it on a wall in front of him. He soon immersed himself in a day and night scholarly service to Islam. His articles were already being published in the weekly *Paigham-i Sulh* and now these became more frequent and extensive. His articles proved to be a spiritual inspiration for

readers. In the meantime, he wrote many short booklets like *al-Ruh* (The Soul), *Tanasukh* (Doctrine of Transmigration), *Mas'ala-i Taqdir* (The Question of Predestination), *The Qur'an's Universal Message of Freedom*, *The Birth of Jesus*, etc.

In 1934, he wrote a commentary of the thirtieth part of the Qur'an viz. *Anwarul Qur'an*. It was an inspiring commentary which renewed and strengthened faith in and inspired love for the Qur'an into the hearts of its readers. Anyone who read the commentary found a new faith and light about the existence of Allah and the reality of reward and punishment in the life hereafter.

After some time he was able to write a second part of *Anwarul Qur'an* which consisted of the commentary of the twenty-seventh part. His love for spreading the knowledge of the Qur'an was so intense that wherever he went during his Government service, he delivered *dars-i Qur'an* (lesson in the Qur'an) and through it he inculcated love for the Holy Qur'an in the hearts of listeners. His *dars* on the occasion of the Annual Gathering of the Ahmadiyya Anjuman *Isha'at-l Islam*, Lahore, which proved to be his last *dars*, was so full of wonderful insight into the deeper meanings of the Qur'an and so inspiring that I declared at that Gathering my wish that he should have been the writer of the *Bayanul Qur'an* (my commentary of the Qur'an in Urdu).

But his love of the Qur'an was gradually pulling him towards another service. His heart filled with pain over the fact that Mirza *Ghulam Ahmad* of Qadian, that great lover of the Qur'an from whom he had also gained understanding and love of the Book, had not been given due appreciation by his opponents who had clouded his portrait under a veil of prejudice and rancour. And unfortunately, his extremist followers had also created confusion about his true status under a haze of extreme veneration. The heart of this truth-loving man bled from this grief. In 1936, he decided to write a detailed account of the Holy Imam's life and services to the cause of Islam. To take on such a gigantic project of writing a biography of the *Mujaddid* of the fourteenth century *Hijrah*, especially towards the declining years of his life when he was beset by health problems, looked like scaling a high mountain. But finally he undertook this great project, reciting the prayer: "In the name of Allah be its anchoring and its sailing." Health problems would often beset him during this time, but it seemed that a Hidden Hand was secretly

helping him. Sometimes so acute were the attacks that he was laid up for months, but Allah's mercy would make him stand up again as if Allah wished to say that there was still some work to be done for which this steadfast servant was needed.

I saw the hard work that he put in. I had the good fortune to remain close to him in these last years, in fact, so close that we met several times a day. And although I have been engaged in writing books for the past twenty years, and have penned thousands of pages, yet I used to be extremely amazed by the hard labour put in by the author of *Mujaddid-i A'zam*. It seemed as if a student were sitting in an examination room, with one eye on the clock, noting that time was running out, as he hurried to finish his paper on time. Finally, he was able to accomplish the assignment and the Great Examiner was so pleased with his beloved student that He recalled him to Himself as soon as the paper was completed.

The first volume of *Mujaddid-i A'zam* appeared in December 1939 and the second volume in December 1941. The two volumes together covered fourteen hundred pages. His health had been further affected by the added labour of correcting the proofs and of supervising the printing. At times he would give up and say that most of the contents of the third volume had already been covered in the first two volumes. But since he had already announced the publishing of the third volume, Allah granted him the opportunity to complete this volume also, in all respects. Had paper been available, this volume would probably have appeared in December 1942.

However, I am conscious of the fact that it was not possible to devote as much attention in correcting the proofs of this volume as he would have liked. Maulvi Dost Muhammad, who was entrusted with this work by the *Anjuman*, has put in a lot of hard work in doing it. May Allah reward him for it. But what the author himself can do, none else can. If readers find any defect or error they should draw my attention to it for future rectification and thus earn Allah's reward.

Muhammad Ali,  
Head, Jama'at Ahmadiyya, Lahore,  
10 January 1944

## INTRODUCTION

*In the name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful.  
We extol His praise and send benedictions on His gracious  
Messenger.*

*Ai-keh khwandee hikmat-i yunanian...hikmati imaniyan ra ham be-  
khwan*

O thou that hast read the wisdom of the Greeks...do also read the  
wisdom of the Believers  
- Maulana Rumi

### **An overview of the services of Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad to the Faith of Islam**

When worldly-minded people, who are not accustomed to judging with a fair and judicious eye, set out to appraise the work of a prophet or a *mujaddid* (reformer), they all come up with the same verdict - that is, they all follow their own opinion and selfish motives and complain that the prophet or the *mujaddid* did not accomplish this or that task. They never bother to examine what he had in fact accomplished. They also never care to observe whether or not what he accomplished comes up to the standard laid down by the Holy Qur'an or world history for judging the religious services of the appointees and messengers of God.

Unless one judges by these standards, one can never arrive at a correct verdict, for every individual has his own selfish desires. If the envoy of God works to meet the desires and wishes of one person, he would be judged as having gone against the wishes of another. Thus the criticism would continue as it was. As a matter of fact, when God, Most High, nominates someone to the grand mission of carrying out the work of reformation and renovation, He, Himself, lays down the plan of action and the goal of the work, though it may be against what the people want. In this regard, the Holy Qur'an says: *Is it then that whenever there came to you a messenger with what your souls desired not, you were arrogant? And some you gave the lie to and others you would slay* (2: 87).

In other words, human pride and vanity can induce a man to arrogate to himself the work of determining the mission and goal of an appointee of God, thus taking over the function of God. Alternately, such usurpers would deny God's appointee, would give him the lie and would devise plans to slay him. This is, and has always been their practice, and to this complete similarity between the behaviour of such detractors, the Qur'an testifies in the words: *Have they been bequeathing a will to one another?* (51:53). This is a very subtle form of expression. All the opponents of God's appointees have resorted to such ways of contradicting them as if they have been making a will about it all along, that is, telling their posterity that this is the way they should give the lie to God's appointees. So how could there be a different way of giving the lie to Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad when he was raised to the grand status of a *mujaddid*? Thus history repeated itself and every opponent who entered the field of criticism had only to say "the *Mirza* did not do this or he did not do that".

In the following pages is presented a brief survey of what Mirza Ghulam Ahmad did accomplish. The reader can judge for himself whether what he accomplished is what a *mujaddid* or an appointee of God should have done at that particular period of history.

## CHAPTER I

### THE CONDITION OF THE MUSLIMS BEFORE THE CALL BY THE HOLY IMAM

Before recounting the services of the Founder of the Ahmadiyya Movement to the faith of Islam, it would be appropriate to highlight the plight of Muslims prior to the call by the Holy Imam of the fourteenth century *Hijrah*.

#### **Muslims had reached the lowest level politically**

Before the advent of the *Mujaddid* of the fourteenth century, the political condition of Muslims had hit an all-time low. They had lost control of their rule over a lot of countries and some other dominions were in the process of being lost. In India, Moghul rule had come to an end. In Egypt, control had fallen into British hands. In Sudan, the British had established their hegemony after martyring the *Mahdi* of Sudan. France had set up its dominion over Northern Africa, gaining control over Tunis, Algeria and part of Morocco. Spain had occupied most of Morocco, and Tripoli (Libya) was taken by Italy. The entire Muslim dominion of Zanzibar had been divided between the Germans and the British. Turkistan had been completely swallowed by Russia, and Iran was giving up the ghost, being caught in the clutches of Russia. Afghanistan had been reduced to the status of a native princely state of India, and was completely under British influence. The Arabian Peninsula had no life left in it.

The erstwhile pride of the Muslims, the Sultanate of Turkey, which enjoyed the title, "The Servant of the Two Holy Places", was in its death throes, and political observers, looking at the frequent onslaughts by the Russians and the political intrigues of European powers, had given the verdict that this sick man of Europe would only last a few more days. The Muslim kingdom of Mysore in India had come to an end with the martyrdom of Sultan Tippu. In short, the political condition of the Muslims had reached its lowest point.

Unfortunately, an erroneous notion had crept into Muslim thought that political and material power were essential for the establishment of the Faith - and since political power had gone out of Muslim hands, there was no way, it was thought, that Islam could once again

gain ascendancy in the world. If one goes through the speeches by the Muslim 'ulama and leaders of the time, and reads the contemporary poetry, prose and literature, one would come face to face with nothing but despair. The Muslims in India in particular had come to the conclusion that the last stand had been taken by Sultan Tippu, and since this effort had been unfruitful, there was no way left for their survival.

This depressing plight of the Muslims moved Maulana Altaf Hussain Hali, the well-known poet and writer, to write an elegy for the Muslim people, a poem in which he has drawn such a pathetic sketch of their downfall that one's eyes are filled with tears and one's heart with grief and despair.

Here are two such stanzas:

*Amiron ki tum sun chukay dastan sab  
 Chalan ho chukay 'alamon kay bayan sab  
 Sharifon ki halat hay tum pe 'ayan sab  
 Bigarney ko tayyar baithey hain yan sab  
 Yeh boseeda ghar ab gira keh gira hai  
 Satoon markaz-e saql se hat chuka hai.*

You have listened to the sorry tale of the rich  
 And we have described the character of the 'ulama as well.  
 The condition of the genteel folk is apparent to you.  
 In fact, all of them are ready to fall into decay.  
 This derelict house is on the verge of tumbling down.  
 Its main pillar has shifted from its central place.

*Yeh jo kuch huwa ik shimma hai us ka  
 Keh jo waqt yaron pe hai aaney wala  
 Zamaney ney oonchay say jis ko giraya  
 Woh akhir ko mitti mein mil ker rahay ga  
 Nahin garchey kuch qaum mein haal baa-qee  
 Abhi aur hona hai pamal baaqi*

All this that has happened is only an iota  
Of what is going to happen to our friends (fellow-Muslims).  
Whoever is thrown down by the forces of time  
Is eventually going to bite the dust.  
Even though the nation has no life left in it,  
Yet further destruction is still in store for it.

In short, Muslims realised that they had now been reduced to the status of a permanently degraded and subject people, like the Jews, and seeing that not only this world was set against them, but also since no one had come down from heaven to their rescue, they even lost faith in their religion. The despair that had engulfed Muslims at that time finds no parallel even in the extirpation of the kingdom of the Ummayyads, the destruction of the Abbasids, nor in the decline of the majestic Muslim rule in Spain. This wave of despair was universal in dimension, and as every wise person knows, such despair is a very dangerous thing. Once it engulfs the heart of an individual or people, courage is extinguished and the will to act is lost. People lose their determination to struggle and the motivation to progress and effort evaporates. Such an individual or nation has nothing to wait for except its demise.

### **The religious decline of Muslims**

The political decline of Muslims was accompanied by the political ascendancy of Christian power, and the Christian preachers of Europe and America, in order to further their political ends, decided to spread the Christian faith throughout the world. Since they had nothing but myths in their religious beliefs to offer to the world, the only way to success, they thought, was to level a barrage of unfair criticism and objections against the faiths of other nations and thus make the followers disgruntled and disillusioned with their respective religions. Thus, they hoped to create a spiritual vacuum in people's life, to be filled by the false concepts of Christianity. Since they could find no worthwhile opponents to their faith except Islam, the main thrust of their onslaught was, therefore, aimed at it. They realised that the universal appeal of Islamic principles and their appeal to reason might catch the imagination of the world, thus causing damage to the Christian political interests and empires; hence they left no stone unturned in fabricating all types of charges against Islam and raising all types of untenable objections against it.

### The Christian onslaughts

The crusades that the Christian missionaries started against Islam at this time were not like the crusades of the past, waged with arms; these were waged with the pen. Their attack on Islam was four-pronged. The first thing that they exploited was the dominant position ascribed to Jesus through the wrong interpretation of the Qur'an and the *Hadith* by the Muslim *'ulama* and the exegesists. These made him not only look superior to the Holy Prophet Muhammad and endowed him with special characteristics and attributes, but a touch of divinity could easily be discerned in his person: for instance, his ability to create birds, to cure diseases, to quicken the dead to life, to have knowledge of the Unseen, his remaining intact in his original physical form in heaven even till today, and his salvaging the sinking ship of Islam in the Last Epoch. The Christians took advantage of these erroneous beliefs, and by arguing from the Muslims' own admitted doctrines, they managed to divert them from the path of Islam and made them Christians.

Secondly, they collected a horde of mythical and fabricated sayings of the *maulawis*, or the wrong exegesis of the *mutashabihat* (allegorical) verses of the Qur'an, or weak traditions and made these the basis of thousands of objections against Islam. Further, by fabricating myriad charges of their own, they succeeded in enticing Muslims away from their religion thus making them easy preys of the Christian faith.

Their third stratagem was that they collected all the objections raised by the atheists and the materialists against religion in general and brought them to the attention of the Muslim youth through numerous tracts, books, and through their schools and colleges. There was no doubt that these also cut at the root of their own Christian faith, but they did not care and were prepared to damage their own cause for the sake of subverting Islam. Their only objective in doing so was that Muslims should not remain Muslims. They rather preferred that Muslims should become atheists or agnostics. Once they had become agnostics, the lure of participating in the power and rule of the world would automatically draw them into the Christian fold. If religion should lost all esteem in their eyes, they would necessarily think it a boon to become part of a society that was in power and at the helm of affairs. Consequently, atheism and agnostic teachings

were given wide publicity and the Muslim youth became alienated from Islam by judging each tenet of Islam against the touchstone of these philosophies.

Fourthly, in spite of these unholy attacks on Islam, the Christian preachers still feared that the Christian nations of Europe might discover the sublime and judicious principles of Islam for this would automatically result in Islam gaining ascendancy. Therefore, they published numerous books in which they resorted to painting the worst possible picture of the Founder of Islam by indulging in diverse fabrications, even going so far as to publish pictures showing Muslims offering obeisance to the Holy Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be on him), or the Holy Prophet worshipping the sun. Again, numerous pictures were published in which the Holy Prophet had the Qur'an in one hand and a sword in the other whilst being surrounded by beautiful damsels, thus insinuating that the Holy Prophet, God forbid, had spread the faith by the sword and that he used to indulge in debauchery.

The divine punishment for this impudent and insolent disrespect shown to the most innocent and the most pious of messengers (peace and blessings of Allah be on him) is that all the Christian nations can be seen to be indulging in all types of debauchery, drunkenness and sexual licentiousness and more than that, they themselves are engaged in getting their principles accepted by other people by the use of force and attacks not only of the sword, but even by using artillery, tanks and air power for this purpose.

In short, the most scurrilous and the most fallacious propaganda against Islam was carried out by all possible means in Europe and the West by Christian missionaries, writers and even politicians.

### **The onslaught by the Arya Samajists in India**

The political power of the Christians helped them much in their propaganda against Islam. Along with the spread of their political ascendancy in the world, the propagation of their faith also kept expanding. Following their example, other communities were also encouraged to attack Islam, and one finds the Arya Samajists at the forefront in this activity. The reason for this was that the Hindus, like the Christians, also felt threatened by Islam.

The Hindu faith offers nothing but idol-worship and strict observance of the caste system. So when a Hindu got educated, he would most likely become a Christian or a Muslim. Christianity was the creed of a foreign government and the Hindus looked upon it as something alien, but Muslims had been living together with the Hindus in the same land for over a thousand years, and to the Hindus, the Islamic doctrines of *tauhid* (unity of God) and the equality and fraternity of the human race were very attractive and appealing. As a result, there was an apprehension in the Hindu camp that they would gradually be absorbed into Islam.

Dayanand Saraswati sensed this danger, and since the Hindu faith also had nothing to offer to its followers, the only thing they could do to save them from being attracted towards Islam was to criticise it in all possible ways and to paint the worst possible picture of the religion. The Arya Samajists found ready material for attacking Islam in the Christian literature produced against Islam and they tried their best to create prejudice and enmity in Hindu minds against Islam and Muslims.

### **Invasion of Western thoughts**

Many other insignificant religious communities followed in their footsteps and initiated a barrage of criticism against Islam. But the greatest effect on the religious world generally, and the Muslim world particularly, was made by the materialistic and the atheistic teachings contained in Western thought, and which Christian Europe considered their main weapon for spreading disgust and disillusionment among Muslims towards Islam.

The renowned scholar and historian, Maulana Shibli Naumani, in his treatise, *'Ilm al-Kalam*, vol. 1, observes:

“The danger that Islam is faced with now is greater than the danger that Islam had to face during the Abbasid period. Western thought has found its way into every home, and freedom of expression is so great now that telling the truth was not so easy in the past as telling untruth is nowadays. Religious thoughts have generally undergone a violent change, as if hit by an earthquake, and modern educated people have been totally overawed by Western thoughts. When the Muslim *'ulama* of the old-school peep out of their sanctuaries, all

they see is a hazy religious horizon; and there is a general outcry for a new dialectic. All admit the need for a new one, but there is a difference of opinion about the basic principles on which it ought to be based. The modern educated group argues that this new dialectic must be based on entirely new principles, because the old type of criticism of Islam had given way to entirely new attacks. In the old days, Islamic thought had to contend with Greek philosophy, which was based entirely on guesses and conjectures, whereas today Islam is faced with sound reasoning and practical scientific thought and these could not be countered by mere intellectual hypotheses and theoretical assumptions.

I myself have been witness to many such incidents, where a young man goes to a *maulawi* with a certain question about Islam and the *maulawi* comes up with some cooked-up reply, to which the young man makes an objection. This gets the *maulawi* irritated, and bursting with anger, he shouts: 'Go, rejected one! What damage would it do to Islam if scum like you leave the faith! Nay, it would be you who would burn like a log in hell!'" (pp. 3,4).

But what efforts were made towards development of this new dialectic? In fact, nothing was done. Our respected '*ulama* continued to beat the same old refrain and continued to use the old "spears" and "arrows" of Greek philosophy against the armour of modern Western thought and this proved quite ineffective. Today, the scientific world demands observation and experience in everything and the hypotheses, conjectures, pedantic terminology and the twists and turns of Greek theorems do not suffice in today's world. But what did our '*ulama* have in addition to these? Nothing! They were unacquainted with the English language, English sciences and Western philosophy, so when they heard some objection based on these from a third party, their usual response would be to stamp the critic as a *kafir* (unbeliever) and a heretic. And if they did gird up their loins to make a reply, the best they could do was to counter with a few terms from Greek philosophy and theorems, providing little satisfaction to the critic. If he countered them with Western philosophy and destroyed their arguments, they would flare up and, declaring him a *kafir* and a heretic, would pronounce him to be outside the pale of Islam.

Observe what a realistic sketch of the prevalent conditions Maulana Hali has drawn in his elegy:

That old computation of the Greeks,  
 The so-called wisdom...in fact, that veil of deception  
 Which has been proven to be useless through experience  
 And which practice has proved to be just rubbish.  
 But we consider it more than the Holy Writ.  
 Nothing should be added or subtracted from it.

Though as regards the Psalms, the Torah, the Gospels and  
 even the Qur'an  
 All agree that these are subject to abrogation  
 But the principles enunciated by the Greeks  
 For these, there is no possibility of any amendment or  
 abrogation.  
 Not even till the last vestige of life on earth remains,  
 Not a diacritical point of these ought to be changed.

Though the findings coming out of Western sciences and  
 technology  
 Have been shining on our Indian stage for a hundred years,  
 Yet prejudice has put a veil before our eyes  
 That we cannot perceive truth when we see it.  
 Aristotle's conjectures are ingrained in our minds  
 And even if divine revelation now comes  
 We will not believe it.

Those enamoured of Greek philosophy,  
 Agreeing wholeheartedly with the Greek philosophers,  
 Prostrating themselves at the door of Aristotle  
 And following in the footsteps of Plato,  
 Resemble nothing but the bull pulling the village oil-expeller  
 Going round and round,  
 Remaining where they have been all their life.

When they have finally attained this wisdom,  
And when the headgear denoting their having graduated  
adorns their head,  
And if they possess some intelligence in their minds,  
Then the greatest display of this ability is witnessed:  
When, once they declare day to be night  
They will insist on it till everyone agreed.

All they have to offer a student is to teach him what they  
know  
And tell him what they know.  
Teach all the refrains that they have learnt,  
And make him a parrot like themselves.  
This is the sum-total of their learning  
And this they boast of in the circle of their peers.

They are not worthy of finding employment with the  
government,  
Nor competent enough to open their mouths in front of the  
officials,  
Nor are they fit to graze sheep in the jungle,  
Nor able to carry a load in the market.  
Had they not been educated, they would have learnt a  
hundred ways to earn their living,  
But with this education they are a total loss.

If one asks them, Sir, what have you learnt?  
What was the objective of this education?  
Does it benefit your worldly affairs or your faith?  
Or does it have any other benefit?  
They will answer it with the delirious babble of a man out of  
his senses,  
Yet unable to answer the question.

Neither can they bring an argument in favour of the reality of  
 messengership,  
 Nor can they highlight the truth of Islam,  
 Nor can they show the grandeur of the Qur'an,  
 Nor can they throw light on the Divine Reality.  
 All their arguments have become defunct today  
 And their sword is useless against modern artillery.

When they speak, they speak to incite hatred:  
 Given to rhetoric that would make hearts bleed,  
 Dilating upon the humiliation of the sinners,  
 And engaging in *takfir* (declaring someone an unbeliever) of  
 their Muslim brethren.  
 This is the way of our *'ulama*  
 And this is the way of our leaders.

If someone goes to them with a question  
 He will come back with a heavy load on his head.  
 And if he displays the least doubt about it  
 He will surely be branded the inmate of Hell.  
 And if he brings an argument to his lips  
 It will be difficult for him to escape unscathed.

Sometimes they make their neck-veins swell  
 And sometimes bring froth to their mouths.  
 Sometimes they will call him a swine or a dog,  
 And sometimes they will lift their staff to hit him.  
 May an evil eye never fall on such pillars of the Faith  
 For they are wonderful examples of the Holy Prophet!

If someone desires to meet them and be pleased with them,  
 One condition is that he should be from the Muslim  
 community.  
 The mark of prostration should be prominent on his forehead  
 And there should be no shortcoming in his appearance with  
 regard to the *Shari'ah*.  
 The moustache must be thick and the beard flowing,  
 And the waistband must be of the right length.

In doctrines he should be in agreement with his holiness  
And be in unison with him in all details and fundamentals of  
the Faith  
And should be very suspicious of his holiness' opponents  
And be full of praises for his disciples.  
If this is not so, then he is the reject of the Faith  
Not fit to be in the company of the Elders.

Let there be no accord and love between the Sunnis and the  
Shi'as,  
Nor a community of interest between a Numani and a Shafi'i.  
Let the hatred between a Wahabi and Sufi not subside,  
And let a *muqallid* (conformist) send curses on a *ghair-  
muqallid* (non-conformist).  
Let there be such strife among the followers of the *Qiblah*  
That the whole world should laugh at this God-inspired Faith.

Should someone resolve to reform this state of affairs,  
He should be considered worse than Satan.  
And if anyone obtains benefit from this mischief-maker  
Then his efforts have gone off the straight path  
For both have destroyed the *Shari'ah*.  
And both – the master and the disciple – are rejects of God.

(*Musaddas-i Hali*)

As portrayed by Maulana Hali, our '*ulama* did not have the time to create a new dialectic. For them, the hobby of making Muslims; the followers of the *Qiblah*; fight one another and of branding them as *kafirs* was so interesting a pastime that they had little time for anything else. There used to be endless debates between the *Muqallids* and *Ghair-Muqallids*, the Hanafis and the Wahabis; violent scenes between the Shi'as and the Sunnis; Hanafis and Wahabis would set about thrashing one another even inside the mosques. Court cases and strife over minor things like saying *Amin* loudly or in a low voice or over the different pronunciations of *dwallin* (those gone astray) were well-known.

Maulana Nazir Ahmad Dehlavi used to narrate an incident that occurred in his Court. Once two parties, one in favour of pronouncing the Arabic word, *dwallin*, as *dwallin*, and the other group pronouncing it as *zwallin*, came up before him for determination. He asked one group which party they were and they said they were the *dwallin*. He then asked the other group what they were and they said they were the *zwallin*. He laughed and said, "Both of you have gone astray!"

Those who found some spare time from these frivolities would try their talents at topics like whether crow is lawful or unlawful as food, or some other such petty subject. If they ever resolved to do something more impressive, they would start a discussion on the possibility of lying by God, or whether the Holy Prophet possessed knowledge of the Unseen. They would spend days in setting out the agenda of these debates and in deciding who would have the right to speak first and who would have the right to reply. In this connection they would quote authoritative books and current publications. In the meantime, people would be busy preparing food in big cauldrons and cooking *pulao* (meat and rice dish). Finally, the heat generated by the preparation of food would make the atmosphere more intense and the parties would even start manhandling one another over the settlement of the preliminaries. The police would be called in, the debate called off and peace would thus be restored.

As was the usual practice in those days, and it prevails even now, instead of giving logical and convincing arguments during the debate, they would make all efforts to arouse the feelings of the mob and thus try to conceal the weakness of their respective cases by inciting disturbances. Finally, they would end up by declaring the opponents as *kafirs* and outside the pale of Islam. This practice of *takfir* (declaring someone an unbeliever) is still so widespread, and so much pride is taken in it, that, according to Maulana Nazir Ahmad Dehlavi, if all the *fatwas* (edicts) of heresy were to be gathered together, not a single Muslim would be left in the fold of Islam. The *Shi'as* used to brand the Sunnis as *kafirs* and vice versa; the Hanafis were dubbing the Wahabis as *kafirs* and vice versa. So when each half considers the other half as *kafir*, who then are Muslims?

This market of *takfir* is flourishing on all sides. Once Maulana Sadr-ud-Din, who later became the *Amir* of the *Ahmadiyya Jama'at*, Lahore, said to Mufti Kafayatullah, the President of the *Jami'atul 'Ulama*: "You are the head of a major association of the '*ulama*. Pray, do something about this practice of *takfir*." Maulana Kafayatullah replied: "Why should we try and abolish this practice? This is the only weapon left in our hands for setting the Muslims straight! If we abandon it, what leverage do we have left in our hands, and how can Islam be safeguarded without it?"

In other words, if Islam can survive, it can survive only through *takfir*. *Takfir* seems to them to be the only way for the propagation, defence and establishment of Islam. Unable to convert non-Muslims to Islam, the least they can do to help Islam is to throw Muslims out of the fold of Islam!

Many Englishmen accepted Islam at the hand of *Khwaja* Kamal-ud-Din, the famous Muslim missionary in England. However, the *Khwaja*, being an Ahmadi, was locally known as a *kafir*. As a result, this situation was portrayed very beautifully by Maulana *Shibli* in one of his poems:

Are you not aware of the condition of the people of Europe?  
Said I once to a Maulawi Sahib.  
Thousands there are inclined towards Islam  
Though not yet ready to declare it openly,  
And even those who would flare up even at the mention of  
Islam  
Are not now showing any sign of the old prejudice.

But alas! We have been unable to produce missionaries  
And if there are some, they are not true Muslims according  
to you.  
But has none in your group any concern or worry for this  
duty?  
Are you yourself not prepared to undertake this work?

He got annoyed and said: What cheek! And how discourteous!

Must you say things that are impertinent?

Don't you see we are engaged day and night in the *takfir* of Muslims?

So we are not sitting idly by.

The *'ulama* had no time to spare from their preoccupation with making Muslims fight among themselves and in dubbing them *kafirs*. Where could they find the time to pay attention to the criticism levelled by the Christians, the Arya Samajists and the atheists? And how could they pay attention when they did not have the capability to face them? The only way of escape, the only method of guarding their scholastic reputation was, therefore, not to pay any attention to this onslaught. And if any Muslim brought these objections to their notice, he was to be branded a *kafir*, an agnostic, and driven away instead of being given a satisfactory reply.

### **Emergence of the dialecticians**

The reaction to this attitude of the *'ulama* was that there emerged a group of modern dialecticians, led by Sir Syed Ahmad Khan, in exactly the same manner as the emergence of the Mu'tazilah during the Abbasid period when Greek philosophical thought was translated into Arabic, and the philosophy of Plato and Aristotle and their creed of religious freedom gave birth to a lot of agnostics and heretics who started bombarding Islam with diverse objections in the light of the Greek dialectics.

Prior to this, Muslims used to believe in a straightforward doctrine without entering into any labyrinth of intellectual debates. Instead of useless semantic duels, they were more attuned to acting on the Islamic injunctions. With the passage of time and remoteness from the golden period of the Holy Prophet, a weakness crept into both the faith and the deeds of Muslims, and the practice of futile debates found its way into Muslim life. The arrival of Greek philosophy added fuel to this fire. People started raising all sorts of objections against Islam. The *'ulama* of those times did not like even to listen to these objections and would not allow the authors of such criticisms to enter their meetings.

This could not be a substitute for an enduring answer. This upheaval in the public's mind forced the learned '*ulama* to pay heed to this problem. A group of '*ulama*, influenced and affected by Greek philosophy, tried to mould Islam to fit this philosophy. No doubt this group contained some elders who argued very logically and rendered good service to Islam, but they were so overawed by Greek thought that they made Islam subservient to it. Wherever there was a contradiction between Islamic and Greek philosophies, they tried to interpret Islam to suit Greek philosophy.

The philosophy of Aristotle and Plato was made the standard of truth, and if any Qur'anic principle did not come up to that standard, it was not considered as true. The entire thinking of Ibn-i Rushd, the famous Muslim philosopher, revolves around this principle. No doubt these elders were well-intentioned and they wanted to prove the truth of Islam, but they were so overwhelmed by Greek philosophy that in their estimation the truth of the Qur'an could be proved only if it measured up to the philosophy of Plato and Aristotle. This group became known as the *Mu'tazilah*.

Opposed to these were the conservative '*ulama* who followed the *Hadith* of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be on him) and did not consider it lawful to enter into any interpretation. These were called the *Hanabilah*, for their main leader and imam was Imam Ahmad bin Hanbal. For instance, words like *Yad* (Hand), *Sami'* (One Who hears) and *Basir* (One Who can see) occur in the Qur'an in relation to Allah. This group did not make any interpretation of these words and silenced the critics by saying: "We are not aware of the reality of these, and your question is *bid'a* (undesirable innovation)."

Some extremists among the Hanabilah even believed in the corporeal existence of Allah; hence they were called the *Zahiriyyah* or *Mushabbah*. A detailed discussion of the different Muslim sects is not intended here. Suffice it to say that there were approximately two main divisions: the *Mu'tazilah* and the *Hanabilah*. Thereafter, when the '*ulama* of the *Ahl-i Sunnat-wal-Jama'at* (the Sunnis) realised that these two groups occupied extreme and opposing positions, another middle-of-the-road dialectical school came into being. Its principles were determined by Imam Abul Hassan Ash'ari and this group is

therefore called the *Asha'irah*. If the reader is interested in knowing more about them, he should read Maulana Shibli's book, *'Ilm al-Kalam*. A detailed discussion here is eschewed for fear of undue length.

Most of the Shafi'i 'ulama were from the *Asha'irah*. When Imam Abu Mansur Mataridi amended the *Asha'irah* principles after deep study, his followers were called the *Mataridiyah*. Most of the Hanafi 'ulama were Mataridiyah. Among the *Asha'aris*, Imam Ghazali and Imam Razi enjoy the highest position. Although Imam Ghazali belonged to the Ash'ari school of thought, yet he did not consider it essential to follow their rules of interpretation strictly. Imam Ghazali was the first person who boldly pointed out errors and contradictions in the philosophical expositions of Aristotle and Plato. He studied Greek philosophy deeply and derived much benefit from its wealth of knowledge, and used it extensively in the exposition of the teachings of Islam and was able to present them in a more rational way by inculcating philosophical reasoning. Still, he always kept religious truths as the basis while deriving benefit from the knowledge of Greek philosophy. Whenever there was a contradiction between the two, he tried to prove the truth of religion and the error of philosophy. How much he succeeded in this endeavour is another issue. But this was his principle and it was contrary to the Mu'tazilah's viewpoint. During this encounter, when Imam Ghazali, taking the side of religion, rejected Greek philosophy, Maulana Shibli, in anger, said: "Here Imam Ghazali has taken up the refrain of the *Asha'irah*."

But in this Maulana Shibli is mistaken, for it was the principle of Imam Ghazali that he was bound by his religion and not by philosophy. He was the *Mujaddid* of the fifth century *Hijrah* and it is a *mujaddid's* function to show the religion of Islam to be superior to the prevalent philosophy if the latter goes against the admitted doctrines of the faith.

For instance, Maulana Shibli became cross with Imam Ghazali over several issues, one of them being the eternity of matter. Islam does not believe in the eternal antiquity of matter. It does not consider anything to be eternal except Allah. But the Greek philosophers believed in the eternity of matter. Impressed by this belief of the Greeks, the Mu'tazilah also accepted this concept of the eternity of

matter and satisfied their conscience by saying that this is not a religious doctrine. But this was a false reassurance, as would be shown later on, God willing. When Imam Ghazali was confronted by this doctrine, he refuted the objections of Greek philosophy about matter having been created, by using the admitted axioms of their own philosophy. But Maulana Shibli disagreed, saying that it was only a play on words, and Imam Ghazali succeeded then, but if one were to confront him with the Western philosophy of today, all his arguments would vanish into thin air. For example, it is an observation of today's science that if we burn wood it would turn into ash but would not vanish into nothingness. Nor have we seen anything coming into being from nothingness. Therefore, according to him, all Imam Ghazali's arguments were futile. A reply to Maulana Shibli's objections mentioned above will be given later on.

It is appropriate to remark at this point that Maulana Shibli has not been fair to Imam Ghazali, for Imam Ghazali had to reply to the objections only through the axioms of the philosophy in vogue in his time. He did not have access to today's philosophy so that he could ponder over its scientific deductions; he had to use the same coin in which the objection was stamped. And so apt was his reply that even Maulana Shibli had to resort to modern Western philosophy to rebut the views expressed by Imam Ghazali and could not get any help from Greek philosophy. If Maulana Shibli accuses Imam Ghazali of indulging in twists and turns of semantics, were the objections also not phrased in similar terms? The whole of Greek philosophy is nothing but a labyrinth of semantics, so why complain?

Whatever work Imam Razi did on this question was a continuation of Imam Ghazali's work. He has raised his foundation on the same principles though sometimes in his zeal he rejects even the correct ideas of philosophy. Nevertheless, the basic tenets are the same.

Closer to our times, Shah Waliullah further raised this edifice. He not only proved the correctness of Islamic doctrines through philosophy and did so in a very logical and detailed manner, but he also tried to explain the philosophy and the wisdom of the commandments of the Shari'ah. This was a great service of his. The turning wheel of time has overturned everything and neither could Greek philosophy maintain its sway nor is any value set on its line of argument; and the

reason for this upheaval was modern Western philosophy and scientific experiments. The tide of materialism that originated in Europe engulfed all the Eastern countries and overshadowed the religious horizons. This materialism overwhelmed even spirituality.

### **The need for a new dialectics to cope with Western philosophy**

The time for semantics had gone. The Western philosophical challenge demanded proof of everything in common-sense terms, based on straightforward logical axioms and proven by experience and observation. It scornfully laughed at the logical antics of Greek philosophy. It was the challenge of Western philosophy that influenced and overwhelmed Sir Syed Ahmad Khan and his peers. These elders tried to clothe religion with reasonableness, but made the same mistake as was committed by the Mu'tazilah in the heyday of Greek philosophy; that is, they made religion subservient to Western philosophy. Wherever they found religion to be at odds with Western philosophy, they tried to interpret religious doctrines in order to suit the dictates of Western philosophy. In other words, they were the Mu'tazilahs of these modern times.

The dominant feature of Western philosophy was its materialism. In fact, it was nothing but materialism and it totally rejected the spiritual aspect of human existence. Hence accordingly, the new dialectics developed by Sir Syed Ahmad Khan turned the spirituality of religion into materialism. Matter was considered to be eternal; God, being made the Ultimate Cause, became a non-beneficent Personality; the efficacy of prayer was denied; prophethood was deemed to be a natural quality, and prophetic inspiration was considered to arise from within the human mind and then to enter human consciousness. Angels were declared to be another name for the forces of nature; miracles were negated through finding material causes for their occurrence; Heaven and Hell were lost in philosophical semantics, bereft of their substance and regarded as descriptions of the shape of the state of one's inner consciousness. Our *'ulama* had nothing to counter this new philosophy except their *fatwas* (edicts) of heresy, so they contented themselves with dubbing Sir Syed Ahmad Khan and his group as a band of Naturalists and issued *fatwas* of heresy against them.

The demand of these times, therefore, was that some divinely inspired reformer, who should be a herald of spirituality, should appear and should make Islam emerge triumphant in this confrontation with Western philosophy. Furthermore, he should use modern Western thought to give added support to the concepts of Islam.

In this context, it would be fitting to quote Maulana Abul Kalam Azad. Mentioning the darkness of the times of the previous *mujaddids*, he writes:

"These stories (about the darkness of the previous *mujaddids*) are the stories of epochs that were, when compared to the present times, like very prosperous times. Have a good look at the present times and their obscurity and then mourn the paucity of light and of persons who would serve as beacons of light. A cry is going around seeking servants (that is, servants of the faith – Author) and workers, but no such volunteers for this task are to be found anywhere. Sovereigns, bullion and diamonds are being offered as wages for just putting one brick in place in the fallen wall, because the smaller the number of workers, the greater the wages. The treasure of goodness has been thrown open for looting and the door to honour and status is open for every wayfarer. Is there anyone who would be so fortunate as to plunder these treasures and would enrich himself with this success and riches, riches for which we know not how many seekers had shed tears of eagerness and had made earnest prayers?" (*Tazkirah*, pp. 250-251).

The present epoch far exceeds the times of the previous *mujaddids* in its deviation, mischief and darkness, and is crying out for some *mujaddid* and divinely-inspired reformer. Again, Maulana Abul Kalam Azad writes:

"Though this was not the opportune occasion for dilating upon the topic of 'The Renaissance and Renovation of the *Ummah*', yet whatever came out through the tip of my pen was brought forth because of the thought that perchance the study of these conditions and occurrences might prove

beneficial to those interested in reform. Perchance some hearts may be stirred and eyes dazzled so as to follow in the footsteps of these *mujaddids* and righteous reformers of the *ummah*. Perchance some man of action and determination may say 'Aye' to the call of the times and thus become the answer to the cry of the age. If there is a worthy mission in this age, this is it. And if there is a search on, it is for such a person" (*Tazkirah*, p. 250).

### **The appearance of the *Mujaddid* of the times**

Evidently God, Most High, fulfilled His Qur'anic promise: *Verily We have sent down this Reminder and We are its Guardians* (15:9), at the lowest point of Muslim political and religious decline, and sent Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad at the head of the fourteenth century *Hijrah* with the mission of the renovation of the faith, in accordance with the promise of the *hadith*: "Verily Allah raises at the head of every century for this *ummah*, one who renovates its faith for it" (*Abu Da'ud*).

A cry went out from a remote and little known village called Qadian in response to the universal hopelessness of Muslims and in response to a dire religious need. It reassured Muslims thus: "There is no cause for losing hope and no need to get alarmed by the onslaughts of false faiths. Islam is a living faith and its God is a Living God. Even today He is as much alive as He was thirteen hundred years ago; nay, as He has always been. And He is the God Who sent down the Qur'an and declared Islam to be His eternal and everlasting faith. He is the One who has sent me as the *mujaddid* and the successor of Islam so that I may, in accordance with the divine promise, *that He might cause it to prevail against all other faiths* (HQ:48:28), cause Islam to overcome all other faiths of the world and to overcome this new Western materialistic philosophy. Though the worldly political dominance of Islam is no more, the time for its spiritual dominance has come. This is the time for the fulfilment of the divine promise so *that He might cause it to prevail over all other faiths* in all its glory; that is, that Allah will cause Islam to overcome all other faiths, whether these be of the Jews, the Christians, the Hindus, the Arya Samajists, the Sikhs or the Buddhists, or whether they be dazzling institutions, bewitching the eyes of the world, like materialism, Bolshevism, Fascism, Nazism, etc."

Just read the inspiring writing of the Holy Imam in this connection:

“Be sure that Islam has no need to sue for peace like a vanquished and helpless combatant. Nay, this is the time that is ripe for the display of the spiritual sword of Islam, just as it once displayed its temporal sword. Remember this prophecy, that the enemy will shortly retreat in a humiliating manner and Islam will achieve victory. However forceful might be the assaults of modern sciences and however new and modern might be their weapons, defeat is their ultimate destiny. I say out of thankfulness for the bounty, that I have been vouchsafed the knowledge of the inner strength of Islam and its powers, and I say, basing my conviction on this knowledge, that not only will Islam defend itself against the onslaught of modern philosophy, but it will prove the ignorance of these antagonistic sciences. God, Himself, is the Pilot of this ship. He will always save it from storms and adverse winds, as He has promised: *Verily We have sent down the Reminder and We are its Guardians* (HQ:15:19)” (*A’ina-i Kamalat-i Islam*).

The following incident reflects the spirit that the Holy Imam wanted to infuse in the hearts of Muslims in this universal time of despair - a spirit of hope and faith: Once Hazrat Maulana Nur-al-Din said to the Holy Imam: “Sir, you wish to propagate Islam in Europe and America. On the other hand, the people of these countries are getting allergic to the very name of religion.” To which the Imam replied: “So much the better. The slate is being wiped clean. This will cause a better imprint (of Islam on their minds). Let the imprint of the divinity of Jesus, son of Mary, be erased from their hearts so as to make room for Islam. Maulawi Sahib,” he went on to say, “the new moon is only visible to a sharp eye, not to everyone. But when the full moon shines, everyone, nay, the whole world, sees it. So my eyes have seen the crescent heralding the spiritual dominance of Islam. God willing, a time will come when it will shine as a full moon, and then the whole world will see it.”

### **He backed up his claim with actions**

The Holy Imam did not confine himself to just making a verbal claim, but he gave it a practical shape. Though he had been engaged in the rebuttal of false faiths from his very adulthood, yet the first demonstration of the freshness and power of his dialectics was made through his well-known and famous book, *Barahin-i Ahmadiyyah*, which left both Muslims and non-Muslims wonder-struck, and on reading which both friend and foe had to concede that no such defence and preservation of Islam had been done in the past thirteen hundred years.

After going through this book, Maulawi Muhammad Hussain Batalavi, a top scholar and a leading figure of the *Ahl-i Hadith* party of the Punjab, wrote the following review:

“In our opinion this book, at this time and in view of the present circumstances, is such that the like of it has not appeared in Islam up to now, while nothing can be said about the future. Its author, too, has been so constant in the service of Islam, with his money, life, pen and tongue, and personal experience, that very few parallels can be found in the Muslims. If anyone considers our words to be an Asian exaggeration, let him show us at least one such book which so vigorously fights all the opponents of Islam, especially the Arya and Brahamo Samaj, and let him name two or three persons who have supported Islam, not only with their wealth, lives, pen and tongue, but also by personal spiritual experience, and who have boldly thrown the challenge to all the opponents of Islam and the deniers of Divine revelation, that whoever doubts the truth of God speaking to man, he may come and observe it for himself, thus giving other religions a taste of this experience” (*Isha'at as-Sunnah*, vol. vii, no. 6, pp.169-170).

## CHAPTER II

### THE BASIS OF THE HOLY IMAM'S DIALECTICS ('ILM AL-KALAM)

A review of the literature and books written by the Holy Imam clearly shows that his dialectics is free of the exaggeration of the Hanabilah on the one hand, and the deficiency of the Mu'tazilah on the other. It is based on a moderate view as taken by the Asha'irah and the Mataridiyah schools of thought. Yet he is not bound by any one of them. Like Imam Ghazali, he wants to harness modern Western philosophy to the service of Islam and like Shah Waliullah Dehlavi, he makes all possible efforts to prove the truth of Islam. Hazrat Mirza's style is unique in this respect. Though Imam Ghazali harnessed Greek philosophy to the service of Islam, yet the basis of his arguments was the same Greek philosophy. Similarly, it is the way of all the dialecticians of Islam that the foundation of their dialectics are based upon the accepted philosophies of their times.

But the correct intuitive insights of the Holy Imam concluded that the dialectics which is based on worldly, mundane philosophies has a foundation that is like an undercut sandbank – sooner or later it is bound to collapse – for philosophies change with the change of time and with the change of people's knowledge and thinking. What appeared to be very reasonable yesterday appears like a child's fantasy today. Take, for instance, the very case of Greek philosophy, how until recently its every statement was considered to be on the same level with divine revelation and inspiration, but today it is considered a collage of childish ideas and a play on semantics. And consider Western philosophy, too, how till yesterday what was considered an undeniable truth has been blown away like dust by the latest findings.

When the materialists of the West set their stamp of approval on the idea that matter is eternal, the Muslim 'ulama and leaders like Sir Syed Ahmad Khan and Maulana Shibli surrendered in abject acquiescence to this notion, their inferiority complex not letting them stir up enough moral courage to stand up against it. They were browbeaten by Western philosophy. But had they been alive today, they would have seen that it has been proven by the same

materialistic people that matter is not eternal; rather, it is composed of minute particles called electrons, and when one comes to the end of the research one finds that matter is a form of energy, and the two are interchangeable. In other words, this whole universe is a display of energy emanating from some Great Source. This Great Source has willed that energy should take on various forms of matter. The greatness of matter can be gauged from the fact that if we can somehow gain access to the energy stored in a drop of water, a large ship will be able to go around the world eight times by using this energy. But we are not able to harness this stored-up energy yet.

Maulana Shibli, while supporting the Mu'tazilah and rebutting the arguments of Imam Ghazali in favour of the creation of matter, writes with great pride that "we do not observe any matter being annihilated into nothingness." But were he to observe the decay of radium through radiation, he would have to retract his argument. Yet I must make one observation about this argument by the Mu'tazilah. While the Mu'tazilah mock at the Hanabilah, Mushabbah or the Zahiriyah schools of thought for their view that God has hands, eyes and ears, though the last named maintain that this is only a conjecture they have made relying on their finite wisdom, but they do not know the reality as it exists, still the notion of these people that one should imagine God to be comparable to human form is laughable in the eyes of the Mu'tazilah. It is all the more surprising that when they come to the question of God's knowledge and power, the same Mu'tazilah begin to measure it according to human standards, saying that since we cannot destroy and annihilate matter, therefore God also cannot create or annihilate matter. Is this not the same logic as presented by the Mushabbah Zahiriyah? If they consider God to have hands, eyes and ears because we humans have them, they are dubbed as fools, for this leads one to accept that God has a corporeal body and leads to His being limited in space and thus finite. On the other hand, the Zahiriyah consider these sensory organs of God to be infinite. Yet the same Mu'tazilah consider God's power and knowledge to be finite like human power and knowledge, because they measure His power and knowledge by comparing these to human power and knowledge. Still, they consider themselves to be full of wisdom and intelligence. Their argument is erroneously based on the assumption that since man cannot create or annihilate matter, therefore God also cannot do so.

The logical conclusion of this is that God does not possess more power or knowledge than human beings. Therefore, some of these Mu'tazilah believe that God does not possess a detailed knowledge of His creation, thus making God finite and as a result, depriving Him of His Godhead. Instead of laughing and mocking at their own lack of wisdom, they laugh at the Hanabilah. There are many instances of such unjust attitudes of the Mu'tazilah. For example, in the time of Caliph Mamun Rashid, the biggest argument given by the Mu'tazilah in favour of the Qur'an being a creation of God was that God has declared Himself to be *the Creator of everything* in the Qur'an. So, how can the Qur'an be considered to be outside His ambit? However, the Qur'an, being the word of a non-created Being, it ought also to be considered as non-created!

Still, I do not wish to enter into this discussion at this juncture. Here I only want to highlight the fact that when the Mu'tazilah were forced to accept the Qur'an as created because of the verse, *The Creator of everything*, why did they forget this verse when it came to accepting that matter is also a creation of God? It was so because they were at that time very much influenced by the logical arguments based on Aristotle and Plato and no one was there to draw their attention to the Qur'anic truths. If matter is some tangible thing, then why should God not be its Creator? To this, these advocates of reasonableness have given us two childish lollipops:

One is that the question of the eternal existence of matter or its creation is not an Islamic question. But this is totally wrong. If matter is eternal like God, and a non-creation, then it is another god and this is against the doctrine of *tauhid* (monotheism), and it amounts to atheism. Because if matter is eternal, then it must be conceded that its properties are also eternal. Thus, we do not need God for the purpose of changing matter into various forms, and even if we did, there is no need to believe in Him, because out of these two eternal entities, one does not enjoy the right to rule over the other, whereas God, Most High, says in the Qur'an: *O people! Serve Allah your Lord Who created you and those before you, perchance you may guard against evil and keep your duty* (2: 21). That is, man is bound to worship his Lord because He is man's Creator. If He is not the Creator, then He controls neither good nor evil for us. So why should we subject ourselves to the useless rule of an impotent god? The

fact is that materialism and atheism are both born out of the theory of the eternal existence of matter and it is the root cause of the lack of spirituality and God-gnosis among mankind.

The second childish lollipop that these people offer to us is that though both God and matter are eternal, yet one is the Cause and the other the effect, and their relationship to one another is like the relationship between the key and the lock. The turning of the key and the opening of the lock are simultaneous, but one is the cause and the other the effect. What an excellent example of the deceptive tactics of philosophy. Let us get out of the labyrinth of semantics and try to solve this problem.

The question is whether God is the Creator of matter or not; whether He has created matter out of nothingness, instantly or gradually, and if He has not, then what is the object of giving this example? We are not discussing whether there is any interval of time between God's act and the result thereof. The question is whether God has the power to bring matter into existence out of nothingness. And if He cannot, and if He is dependent on some matter or spirit to bring this universe into being, then where is the aptness of this example of the key and the lock? It is just a labyrinth of semantics.

Scientific progress has brought about such rapid changes in philosophy that it would be a mistake to base any religious dialectics on this philosophy. During the time when the Holy Imam was still alive, materialistic philosophy not only considered matter to be eternal, but it also considered time and space to be so. But today, just as the theory about the eternity of matter has been discarded, similarly the very existence of time and space has been challenged. Einstein's theory, which has gained wide popularity, is that time and space are not entities in themselves. These are neither matter nor energy; rather they are symbols that delimit certain finite things. Just as the three dimensions – length, breadth and height – are accepted as three defining parameters of a finite thing, similarly the fourth dimension, that of time and space, is also a defining parameter. So time and space are the names of delimiting parameters of material things, and have no independent existence of their own.

Dayanand Saraswati had based his religious doctrines on the eternal existence of matter, the spirit, time and space, but today this foundation has been totally demolished because of the collapse of the eternity theory. Now the Arya Samajist may well try to draw out a fresh thread, like a spider's web, and try to make the web stand, but all these old threads have been snapped.

The Holy Imam did not know English, nor had he studied the present-day books of science and philosophy. He was like a recluse, living in a remote hamlet away from the populous cities, but he was vouchsafed the knowledge from God, the Wise and All-knowing, that it is a mistake to base religious dialectics on philosophy and science. He gave out a clarion call that the Holy Qur'an was a perfect book, and whatever it states or claims, it provides the supporting arguments itself. It is not befitting a perfect book that it should look towards its followers for supporting arguments to back up its claims. The Holy Quran says: *The month of Ramadhan is the month in which the Qur'an was revealed, a guidance to men and clear proof of the guidance and the Criterion (between Truth and falsehood) (2:185).*

In other words, the Qur'an not only provides universal guidance to the whole world, but it provides the supporting arguments and proof itself. Not only does it provide the rationale for its verities, but it proves false the teachings of other religions which may go against its guidance and thus sets up a criterion between truth and falsehood.

The Qur'an is not dependent on the dialectics of anyone, but it contains its own dialectics within its covers, so the Holy Imam declared that the dialectics presented by him is no other than the dialectics of the Holy Qur'an. Any philosophy which agrees with the Qur'anic philosophy is true, and any philosophy which is opposed to the Qur'anic philosophy is false, whether it be the philosophy of Aristotle or Plato, or whether it be the philosophy of Europe or America. Not only did he make a claim to this effect, but he always acted on this principle. Whenever he wanted to address any question, he would first go through the entire Qur'an, keeping the question in mind, and would try to find out what the Qur'an had to say about the question and what arguments it gave about it.

Whatever verses he found to be relevant he would note down. Only then would he proceed and write the thesis.

This style is to be found in all his writings. In his first book, *Barahin-i Ahmadiyyah*, a challenging treatise, we discern the same Qur'anic philosophy at work. In the great religious debate between the Holy Imam and Deputy Abdullah Atham on the topic, "Islam versus Christianity", held in Amritsar in 1893, a debate which was later published in book form under the name *Jang-i Muqaddas* (The Holy War), the Holy Imam challenged his opponent to the same thing, that is, he told his opponent that it was the duty of a perfect divine Book that it should give supporting arguments to back up the religious doctrines and principles propounded by it and not look to its believers to provide the arguments in favour of the claims that it makes. It should also prove fallacious any claims made by other religions that are counter to its own claim. "We will provide the rationale for the true teachings of Islam and the rebuttal of the false doctrines of Christianity from our Holy Book, the Qur'an, and the arguments in support thereof will also be provided from the Qur'an. So if the Evangel is a perfect Book, then bring forth the supporting rationale of the special Christian doctrines and also the rebuttal of special Islamic doctrines from your Book, and give supporting arguments from the Book as well," he challenges. The book, *Jang-i Muqaddas*, is even today available in the market and anyone who wishes to examine it may do so.

The Holy Imam kept to those principles throughout that debate. On the other hand, Deputy Abdullah Atham could not take even one step in that direction. Hence that debate proved to be a great victory for Islam.

In December 1896, a great religious conference was held on a grand scale at Lahore. In it all the major religions were represented and the following five questions were set:

1. What are the physical, moral and spiritual conditions of a human being?
2. What is the human condition after this life?
3. What is the real purpose of human existence on earth and how can it be achieved?

4. What is the effect of *karma* (deeds) on man, in this life and the next?
5. What are the sources of gaining *gyan* (knowledge, God-gnosis)?

In that debate, the condition was that every spokesman of a religion should answer the questions by referring to his own divine Book. But none could fulfil this condition except the Holy Imam. Every spokesman tried to give whatever replies he could to the best of his ability. But firstly, none of them referred to his revealed Book, and secondly, the answers were sketchy, incomplete and unsatisfactory. Whatever was presented was the brainchild of the spokesman himself.

However, the entire thesis presented by the Holy Imam in answer to these questions was taken from the Qur'an. Whatever arguments he gave were taken from the Qur'an and the answers were so complete and satisfactory that the entire assembly, Muslims and non-Muslims, were unanimous in their verdict that his thesis was the one that reflected the essence of the entire conference. Even the English press admitted this fact.

In short, this was the style of his dialectics, even to his last day, and this was the strategy that he taught to his disciples. I think it will be appropriate here to mention some special features of his dialectics.

#### **Dialectics based upon arguments offered by the Qur'an**

The Holy Imam's dialectics was based upon the principles and arguments offered by the Holy Qur'an. In his eyes, human philosophies, be they Greek or the present-day European philosophy, could only be considered correct if they were in accordance with the Qur'anic principles. If not, these were to be considered wrong.

A researcher, instead of trying to interpret the Qur'anic verses to fit these philosophies, should look for the fault in these philosophies. He emphasised that such a research was bound to succeed because the Qur'an, which is the Word of God, could not be wrong. On the other hand, philosophy, a man-made discipline, could be wrong. In this matter, the Holy Imam was in fact treading the path of the

prophets because it is an admitted fact in the eyes of all Muslim scholars that a philosopher leads the argument from outward observation towards the inner aspect, and a prophet argues from his inner experience towards the outward and the tangible. For instance, a philosopher, observing the universe and the principles of nature, may infer that there ought to be a god. But a prophet, because of his inner spiritual experience, by developing a personal relationship with God and by knowing Him through his inner senses, reaches a stage of 'perfect certainty and God-gnosis and declares to the world that God exists. If he now gives some further arguments in favour of the existence of God, he would do so by basing them on his personal spiritual experience. The conclusion drawn from his arguments cannot be wrong because his inner eyes have been opened and he is arguing while actually seeing or perceiving God.

On the other hand, a philosopher is like a blind man, groping in the dark, trying to discover some argument. It is quite possible that he may or may not find correct arguments by this blind search and he may or may not draw the correct conclusions from these. That is why God, Most High, has differentiated between a prophet and a philosopher in the Qur'an: *Can a seeing man and a blind man be alike?* (35:19). A man, seeing an elephant, says "This is an elephant," and if he now gives arguments to this effect to explain an elephant to some blind men, he would be doing so by basing it on his actual visual experience. But if some blind men try to discover an elephant by groping around its body, and if, on touching its leg, they take it to be something like a column, or like a rope on touching it on its trunk, it would not be surprising. Thus the difference between a philosopher and a prophet is the same as the difference between a blind man and a man with his sight. God, Most High, told the Holy Prophet in the Qur'an: *Say: This is my way. I invite (you) to Allah (basing this invitation) on actual experience, I (do so) and also those who follow me* (12:108). Hence all those perfect followers of the Holy Prophet who had tasted of the spiritual experience based their invitation to men on this personal experience of God and their spirituality.

But prior to our present times, those personal experiences were kept confidential and those saints avoided presenting their personal spiritual experiences to the public. For instance, Imam Ghazali says

in a very muted way that "I have had the taste of the spiritual through mysticism and spiritual exercises," but he is not very open about it, limiting himself to just hinting at it. In these times of ours, when materialism and atheism are at their zenith, the followers of these creeds contemptuously demand from the followers of spirituality and God-gnosis that the latter should back up what they claim by actual empirical evidence based on experience and observation. The materialists openly declare that unless a claim is supported by experience and observation, mere verbal talk and philosophical arguments definitely cannot satisfy anyone, because both parties have arguments on their side.

At such a time the Holy Imam made a bold announcement: "I have had the honour of going through the spiritual experience and observing it, and I achieved this through following the Qur'an and the *Sunnah*, an experience similar to the one claimed by the prophets and the saints of long ago, so whatever I am presenting to you is based on my personal experience. Along with the Qur'anic philosophy, I am presenting to you my personal spiritual experience and observation, because the religion presented by the Qur'an is not limited to philosophy. In fact, it is a regular science based on reality and it leads its followers to those heights of spiritual perfection to which it claims to lead."

How full of certainty are the following Urdu couplets of his:

*Ham nay Islam ko khud tajrubah ker kay daykha  
nur hai nur utho dekho sunaya hamnay*

We have ourselves experienced the effects of Islam.  
It is nothing but pure light; so arise. We have informed you.

*Thak ga-i ham-to inhi baaton ko kehtay kehtay  
Her taraf da'waton ka tir chalaya ham nay*

We have become tired saying these things over and over,  
So we have sent our arrows of invitation in all directions.

*Azma-ish key li-ye ko-i na aa-ya har chand  
Har mukhalif ko muqabil pe bulaya ham nay*

None came to try it personally, though  
We invited every opponent to come forward.

*Aa-o logo keh yahin noor-e Khuda paa-o gey  
Lo tumhain toor tassalli ka bataya ham nay*

Come hither, O men. It is here that you find God's light.  
Come! We have shown you the way to Mount Sinai.

*Aaj un nuron ka ik zor hai is 'ajiz main  
Dil ko un noor ka har rang dilaya ham nay*

Today there is a flood of these divine lights shining through  
this humble one  
And we have coloured our hearts with the colour of these  
lights.

*Mustafa par tera be-had ho Salam aur Rahmat  
Us say yeh noor li-ya bare Khudaya ham nay*

May the Holy Prophet be infinitely blessed with Thy peace  
and mercy,  
For from him we have borrowed this light, O Lord.

When the Holy Imam argues from the Qur'an, he has the knack of stating very intricate and delicate points in very easy and simple terms so that both an esoteric person and an unsophisticated one can equally benefit from it, and his arguments are in complete consonance with common-sense, reasonableness and intellectual axioms, yet so simple and easy to understand, that they go straight to the heart. The well-known Urdu poet, Ghalib, says in the following couplet:

*Daykhna taqir ki lazzat keh jo usnay kaha  
Mai ney yeh jaa-na keh goya yeh bhi baat meray dil main  
hai.*

See how simple and delicious is his talk  
That as he talked I thought all this was already in my heart.

His theses and arguments were always free of the conundrums of the theorems and the terminology of Greek philosophy. Rather, he developed those arguments from the Qur'anic verses so deftly that it left one wonder-struck, realising that though one had these Qur'anic words before one's eyes all the time yet one's mind never thought of these meanings. His explanations and exegeses would be based on such clear-cut and obvious axioms that one marvelled at how such an obvious explanation had escaped one's mind and one felt as if someone had removed a veil and made the arguments visible. Such is God-given knowledge, which in keeping with the promise contained in the Qur'anic verse: *On Us devolves the task of explaining it (75:19)*. This is vouchsafed to certain persons with the help of the Holy Spirit. No human mind can fathom it.

Moreover, his style of writing and his choice of expression are so simple and so appropriately worded that one does not even have to tax one's mind in the least to understand him. Unlike some literati, he does not aim at impressing the reader with his excellence of knowledge and learning, nor trying to adorn his writing with couplets from famous poets, but he expresses himself in easy flowing Urdu, using apt and eloquent expressions. His style is so effective and charming that the theme penetrates one's mind like sips of a delicious drink, and has such a supernatural effect and light in it as to make one's spirit dance with ecstasy. The intelligence of the reader follows him with ease, without straining his intellect. Soon the reader finds himself at his destination regarding the question under discussion. Keeping in mind all the doubts, misgivings and objections which may arise in people's minds about the question under discussion, he goes along shedding such penetrating light upon all of them that the reader finds the question answered fully and without even having taxed his own mind.

The Holy Imam did not believe in indulging in *tawil* (that is, interpreting a thing by taking it away from its obvious meaning). The term *tawil*, though its Qur'anic meaning is "the underlying reality", has been used by Muslim dialecticians to mean "turning language away from its apparent meanings". That is, wherever some

meanings do not conform to proven logical axioms, then the language should be turned away from its apparent meaning to some inner, allegorical or metaphorical meaning. The Holy Imam did not believe in indulging in this practice of *tawil*, for nothing in the Qur'an is against common-sense or against accepted logical axioms. However, if any word occurring in the Qur'an is explained in another place in the Qur'an itself, this cannot be called *tawil*, but is called exegesis through the Qur'an. Every word has several meanings, and no intelligent person would call it *tawil* if the speaker himself tells us in what sense he has used a certain word.

The Holy Qur'an has itself clarified this point in the verse: *He it is Who has revealed the Book to thee; some of its verses are decisive – they are the basis of the Book – and others are allegorical. Then those in whose hearts is perversity follow that part of it which is allegorical, seeking to mislead, and seeking to give it their own tawil (interpretation). And none knows its tawil save Allah, and those firmly rooted in knowledge. They say: We believe in it, it is all from our Lord. And none mind except men of understanding (3:6).* That is, those firmly rooted in knowledge and blessed with intellect believe that since the allegorical verses are from the Lord, how then can anyone interpret these in a way that would be against the verses with a clear import, for God is free from contradicting Himself, as the Qur'an says: *Had this Qur'an been from someone else besides Allah, they would have found a lot of contradictions in it (4: 82).*

So, in order to arrive at the real meanings of allegorical verses, it is essential that we refer to the sayings of the Speaker, Himself, that is, we should look for an explanation of the allegorical verses by referring to the decisive verses. Consequently, it was the Holy Imam's practice to bring the allegorical verses under the dictates of the decisive verses, and he would thus find the appropriate meaning of a word that had many meanings. For instance, when faced with the allegorical verses about the power of raising the dead vouchsafed to Jesus, he looked at the decisive verses of the Qur'an in this context and found the verse: *And it is forbidden to a town which We destroy: they shall not return (21:95).* Again, he found the following decisive verse in another place in the Qur'an: *Allah takes (men's) souls at the time of their death, and those that die not, during their sleep. Then He withholds those on whom He has passed the*

decree of death and sends the others back till an appointed term (39:42). From this we can infer that once a person is afflicted with death he cannot return to this world. Similarly, there is the verse: *And before them is a barrier, until the day they are raised* (23:100), meaning that no man will return to this world after death and he will stay in *barzakh* (the intermediate state) till the Day of Resurrection when he will be raised. Hence, if it is said about any prophet that he used to raise the dead, it cannot mean that he used to bring literally dead people back to life to this world, but rather, the intention seems to be that he used to give life to the spiritually dead. A similar power is ascribed to the Holy Prophet in the Qur'an: *O you who believe, respond to Allah and His Messenger, when he calls you to that which gives you (ah-ya) life* (8:24). Here, the obvious meaning of *ah-ya* is giving spiritual life.

So, when the Qur'an itself explains the meaning of the word *mau-ta*, we cannot say that *tawil* has been indulged in by giving to it the meaning "spiritually dead". Instead, we would call it an interpretation of the Qur'an by the Qur'an. When the Book itself attributes a certain sense to a word and negates all others, this cannot be called *tawil*. Instead, we will call it exegesis.

Another principle that the Holy Imam highlighted when arguing from the Qur'an was that there is no verse that is abrogated, and none that supersedes an abrogated verse. Unfortunately, when some of the exegesists found two verses to be contradictory in their view, they declared one to be abrogated and superseded by the other, even though there is no authentic *hadith* reported from the Holy Prophet abrogating any verse or superseding it by another.

There is no mention of abrogation of any Qur'anic verse in this verse of the Qur'an: *Whatever ayah (message) We abrogate or cause to be forgotten, We bring one better than it or one like it* (2:106). Rather, it pertains to the abrogation of old religious laws like the Mosaic Law. The people of the Book used to get angry on finding commandments in the Qur'an that were not contained in their Books or were against them. So God, Most High, has made the rationale of this process clear in this verse; that is, that some of the old commandments that have been omitted in the old Books or which people had forgotten, have again been revealed in the Qur'an, and

certain commandments that were specific for a certain people or for a certain time were cancelled and better and more universal laws were revealed instead; laws that would suffice for all humanity and for all times. What is mentioned in this verse is not the abrogation of certain old religious laws like the Mosaic Law, otherwise the words, *We bring its like*, would become meaningless. When a likeness was to be brought in, the act of abrogation becomes meaningless.

The Holy Imam not only presented this concept by way of a doctrine, but he and his disciples, working under his guidance, corrected this erroneous concept by bringing all those verses that were considered abrogated or those supposedly superseding the abrogated verses into conformity with one another. He further made it clear that no verse of the Qur'an is abrogated nor does any other verse take its place, and no command of the Holy Qur'an is such as may be considered outside the Holy Book and yet, according to some orthodox *maulawis*, obligatory in the matter of compliance. This last view is an entirely false notion.

The Holy Imam established another principle that should be observed when arguing from the Qur'an, and that is, he made a distinction between what is against common-sense and human intellect, and what is beyond our intellect. He first enunciated this principle in his book, *Surma Chasma-i Arya*. A summary of this concept is that to declare anything which we do not understand to be contrary to common-sense and human intellect is not prudent. Unreasonableness and contrariness to our intellect is one thing, and something being beyond our understanding and intellect is another. A fact contrary to common-sense and intellect is one that is against the known principles of knowledge and against obvious common-sense axioms.

For instance, two and two are four and if someone says these add up to five, then this is something against our intellect and worthy of rejection. But it would be foolish to reject that which is not against known principles and to reject something reasonable which we do not find in our daily lives, or is beyond our understanding and knowledge merely on the ground that our intellect cannot fathom its reality. We should not do so because firstly, our human intellect is finite. Secondly, the ambit of knowledge and intellect is different for

different persons; a thing which is incomprehensible to one is easily understood by another. Thirdly, due to constant scientific research, what at one time were incomprehensible things to us are now part of today's knowledge. For instance, when wireless communications were invented, the inventor was considered mad, and scientific circles, considering it against common-sense and intelligence, made a mockery of it. But today, the same thing is considered a major scientific invention. Hence the wireless was not against common-sense and intellect, but at the time of its invention, it was beyond our comprehension and intellect. Eventually our intellect grasped its reality when it got fully informed of the scientific knowledge underlying it.

There are hundreds of such similar matters pertaining to the spiritual sphere that are no doubt beyond our comprehension and intelligence but this does not mean that these are against common-sense and human intellect. Scientific and scholastic discoveries and spiritual experimentation eventually make the human intellect grasp these matters. What the human intellect was unable to understand at one time, it had to bow its head to it eventually. Hence to keep on hurriedly interpreting every spiritual matter or supernatural miracle materialistically is a cardinal mistake.

The Holy Qur'an mentions the *Sunnah* (Practice) of Allah and very emphatically it says: *Thou would not find a change in the Sunnah of Allah* (33:62). The earlier Mu'tazilah and the present-day Mu'tazilah (that is, Sir Syed's Naturalists) have taken this to mean those laws of nature that philosophy or science keep discovering through their limited experiments and observations. Therefore, these people have tried to make *tawil* of those verses of the Qur'an that they find contrary to the laws discovered by materialist sciences, and distorting the meaning of the Qur'anic verses, they try to make these conform to materialistic philosophy and science. This is a fundamental mistake. The limited vision of man cannot possibly encompass all God's laws of nature.

The laws that we know today may take on another hue tomorrow. There are hundreds of subtleties hidden within these, subtleties that even years of study may not enable man to grasp. Along with these, there are other laws that we do not notice but which become

apparent with the passage of time. Thus, it is a grave presumption and a mistake to call the man-discovered laws of nature as Allah's *Sunnah*. Maybe the two could be the same, but it cannot be said so with certainty. Who can claim that man has discovered every aspect of God's law? Therefore, Allah's *Sunnah* mentioned in the Qur'an is definitely not the laws so far discovered by the finite intelligence of man. This *Sunnah* refers to those laws which are mentioned by Allah in the Qur'an. It can be said with certainty about the *Sunnah* of Allah, stated in the Qur'an and based on God's perfect knowledge, that this is Allah's *Sunnah* because God's knowledge cannot be defective. For instance, God has stated in the Qur'an the following *Sunnah* of His: *He withholds him on whom a decree of death has been passed* (39:42). That is, God, Most High, does not send back to earth anyone who has been afflicted with death. So this will now be termed as Allah's *Sunnah* and since His *Sunnah* does not change, we are forced to interpret those verses of the Qur'an in which mention of raising the dead is made to mean not the physically dead but the spiritually dead. Thus, by indicating the correct sense of the term, Allah's *Sunnah*, the Holy Imam closed the door on unjustified *tawil*, and made the exegesis of the Qur'an free of subservience to the materialist laws of nature.

The Holy Imam promoted the principle that the original philosophy is the one expounded by the Holy Qur'an and all the other philosophies, be they Greek or European, are subservient to it. "Accept man-made philosophy," he said, "if it conforms to the Qur'anic philosophy. Wherever the two do not conform, reject the man-made philosophy and get busy in trying to discover its flaws," was his advice. But the arrogance of the human intellect was not prepared to tolerate this, and it tried to measure the Qur'anic philosophy according to its own standards, and was inclined to declare the Qur'anic philosophy to be wrong when it did not conform to artificial standards.

It therefore became necessary to propound such arguments and signs in favour of the Qur'an being a book sent by God as would make this fact crystal clear and would create a living and perfect faith about the Qur'an in the hearts of men, a faith that would prepare them to accept every Qur'anic principle and doctrine without demur and debate. Once a perfect faith in the truth of the Qur'an is aroused

in the minds of men, a definite result would be that man would never give precedence to any man-made philosophy over the Qur'anic philosophy, because man's knowledge has no significance in comparison to God's knowledge. In fact, it is a human weakness that all sorts of doubts and misgivings are aroused in the mind by the objections of diverse philosophers. But a staunch believer and a visionary cannot at all be perturbed by such objections.

The Holy Imam used to say that any verse of the Qur'an which becomes a target of a detractor's objection indeed possesses a treasure of verities and subtleties which are hidden from his eyes. By virtue of the objection, a visionary's attention is drawn to it and he finds the treasure through thinking and meditation. In other words, the objection falls on this hidden treasure like a pickaxe, causing all the hidden treasures to be dug out.

Hence, unless this faith is there, man is not prepared to give precedence to the Qur'anic philosophy over man-made philosophies. It is therefore essential that one should develop a faith and a gnosis that are based on certitude. The Holy Imam says in his book, *Izalah-i Auham*:

“My dear ones! The sterile logic of this world is a Satan. And the ephemeral philosophy of this world is like *Iblis*. It greatly covers the light of faith and gives rise to bravado and takes one close to atheism. So you should guard yourself against this and develop a humble and meek heart and become such that you obey the commandment without dispute and dissent, just as a child obeys his mother.”

There can only be two ways to develop such a living faith: one, to bring forth such arguments and proof in favour of the Qur'an being from Allah as would make hearts bow before it; and two, to prove the Qur'an to be from Allah through the display of supernatural heavenly signs. These heavenly signs can be divided into two categories, as God says in the Qur'an: *We will soon show them Our signs in the afaq (farthest regions) and among their own people, until it is quite clear to them that it is the Truth (41:53).*

In the *afaq* (remote regions, heavens) means that God, Most High, keeps displaying hundreds of heavenly signs in every epoch as proof that the Qur'an and the Holy Prophet were sent by Him, and by *among their own people* is meant that thousands of people became heirs to all the spiritual perfection, which was promised in the Qur'an, by completely following the Holy Prophet and the Qur'an, and all those spiritual states which seemed impossible to achieve were attained by these followers.

It was this reason that made the Holy Imam spend all his energies on proving the Holy Qur'an to be the Word of God. His first challenging book had this issue as its main theme and its name was *Barahin-i Ahmadiyyah 'ala Haqiqatul Qur'an wan-Nubuwwatul Muhammadiyyah* (Ahmad's Proof about the Reality of the Qur'an and the Prophethood of Muhammad). In this challenging publication, the Holy Imam has given three hundred arguments in favour of the Holy Qur'an and the prophethood of Muhammad. To anyone who cherished the ambition to demolish any of these arguments, he offered a reward of ten thousand rupees. In this book, in addition to the arguments, he has also included the heavenly signs that God, Most High, has manifested, from time to time, in support of the Holy Qur'an and the prophethood of Muhammad. These signs are both personal and heavenly. In the personal category, he has presented his own prophecies and spiritual observations and experiences and has written:

"I have attained this spiritual perfection through closely following the Holy Qur'an and the Holy Prophet, and if the ultimate objective of religion is to develop a personal relationship with God, I have, by following the Qur'an and the Holy Prophet, achieved this objective. There is no other religion in the world that can transport a man to these heights. Islam is the only living and true faith, a faith by following which one attains to God-realisation."

How forcefully he states this theme in the following verses, originally in Urdu:

We have let our imagination traverse the universe,  
But could not find any religion like the religion of Muhammad.

There is no such religion that can show heavenly signs.  
We have eaten of this fruit only from the orchard of  
Muhammad.  
We have put the religion of Islam to test ourselves.  
It is nothing but pure spiritual light.  
So arise, you have been advised.  
When we examined other faiths  
There was no light to be found anywhere.  
We have become tired of saying the same things over and  
over.  
We have shot arrows of invitation in all directions but  
None came forward to try us out,  
Though we challenged every opponent to come forward.  
Come, folks, you will find spiritual light only here,  
Come, we have shown you the way to Mount Sinai,  
The way to inner satisfaction.

The Holy Imam not only presented his own observation and personal spiritual experience as proof of Islam being a living and a true faith, but he also challenged the opponents of Islam to come to him and remain in his company to observe fresh heavenly signs in support of the truth of Islam and observe his spiritual experiences from close quarters. And if nothing was witnessed as promised, he was prepared for a hangman's noose round his neck and to compensate the observer financially for his wasted time.

How forceful are the following verses on this subject:

O visitor, if you come to us,  
And spread your bedding in our street in good faith  
And spend a few days with us  
Sincerely, with fortitude and sympathy,  
You will certainly witness a sign from the Lord  
By which are attracted multitudes including the scholars.  
And if what I have said is untrue,  
I am willing for you to cut off my head.  
I am willing to be dragged to a scaffold by the people,  
And let them drag me there with a hundred tortures.  
I am willing if I am made to undergo this recompense  
To let the blood from my head flow and drench the ground.

I am willing for my wealth, my life and my body to be lost,  
 And for whatever other affliction there is to strike me.  
 But if you turn your face away from these words,  
 Then you, too, deserve the contempt of the Great Lord.  
 Everyone who turns his face away from these words  
 Is not an upright man but he is a robber of men.

This was a great challenge that could not have been issued except by a perfect *mujaddid* and a man blessed with glorious God-gnosis and spirituality.

It is also a fact that many intellectuals, philosophers and atheists, who were Muslim in name, became men of knowledge and God-gnosis through his spiritual friendship. Among these was the late *Khwaja Kamal-ud-Din*. He was an atheist and was prepared to become a Christian for worldly gains when he happened to glance through *Barahin-i Ahmadiyyah*. His thoughts took a sudden turn and he presented himself before the Holy Imam. He attained such God-gnosis and faith in the company of the Holy Imam that he abandoned his prosperous law practice and took up residence in England to preach Islam and thus become a source of guidance to hundreds of Englishmen.

This impact of the Holy Imam is not limited to *Khwaja Kamal-ud-Din* alone. Hundreds of philosophers and atheists became blessed with true faith and God-gnosis and sacrificed all their worldly interests for the true faith of Islam. Another of them is Maulana Muhammad Ali, who enjoys international fame for his services to the faith of Islam.

There is not a person who, having remained in the Holy Imam's company for some time, did not witness the spiritual experiences of the Holy Imam according to his own capacity and efforts, and who did not partake of the living faith in a living God to be found in the Holy Imam's company. This was the faith which was reported in the *Hadith* as having gone up to the Pleiades and which was brought back to this world by a son of Persia (that is, the Holy Imam).

The Holy Imam laid great emphasis on the need to inculcate in the hearts of men such a living faith in the Qur'an being from the Lord through arguments and heavenly signs that they would begin to give

precedence to the Qur'anic philosophy over every mundane philosophy. Moreover, wherever there was a contradiction, they should not get upset and make the Qur'anic philosophy subservient to the mundane philosophy, but they should get busy in research, and discovering the flaw in the mundane philosophy, they should disclose it to the people. In this way, not only would the people progress in their faith, their God-gnosis and their religious knowledge, but when the flaws of the mundane philosophies were pointed out, the tendency of the materialists would be to hasten towards religion, and especially Islam. Thus progress would be made both in the worldly as well as the spiritual spheres.

### **The results of the Holy Imam's new dialectics**

The new dialectics that the Holy Imam developed in the service of Islam can be divided into two categories: one, the defence of Islam, and two, the propagation of Islam. The defence of Islam can be divided into two sections: defence against the external onslaughts by the enemies of Islam, and the safeguarding of Islam against internal subversion.

The task of the propagation of Islam can also be divided into two categories: one, to preach the Islamic doctrines in their original sense and in a very reasonable way, so as to leave no room for denial by an intelligent person, and this sensible teaching should be derived directly from the Qur'an and the *Hadith*, without any *tawil* and distortion of meanings; and two, to adopt such ways and means as would help in the propagation of Islam.

### **Its defence against external enemies**

The foremost and the biggest enemies of Islam, or, of religion itself, are materialism and atheism. The Brahmo Samaj and the Dev Samaj of India, and all the new "isms" of the materialists of Europe, such as Nazism, Fascism and Bolshevism, all fall under this category.

The second enemy is the Christian religion, which has helped the growth of atheism and materialism.

Another is the Hindu religion, which could boast of nothing except idol-worship and a lot of superstitions. It was for the reformation of these very shortcomings that Dayanand Saraswati laid the

foundation of the Arya Samaj. Since no virtue or perfection could be found in their own faith, the only way for survival for the Arya Samaj was to follow in the footsteps of Christianity and by carrying out attacks on other religions, especially Islam, to prejudice their own followers so that they would deem it prudent and safe to stay in their ancestral religion.

Then there is Sikhism, which in fact is an outcome of Islamic interaction with Hinduism. It is not a regular religion because it has no religious law of its own. In fact, it is another form of mysticism. But in the present times, it has taken on a political hue and in order to subjugate Muslims, it adopted enmity towards Islam as a policy.

Buddhism is another enemy of Islam. Though it has not mounted a direct attack against Islam, and contains nothing but idol-worship, yet, because its idea of *nirvana* enjoys a certain amount of popularity among the philosophers, it comes in conflict with Islam in the area of principles.

The sixth enemy of Islam is Bahaism, which is in fact an offshoot of the Muslim sect, the Shi'ites. But now they have separated themselves from Islam and call Islam a fruitless tree and think that Islamic Law and the prophethood of Muhammad have been abrogated and superseded.

In addition to these, there are the Jewish and the Magian religions. But since they are, like Hinduism, confined within a particular community, and are not proselytising religions, they do not come into conflict with Islam. Secondly, with the passage of time, their original form has been completely disfigured.

Whether it is a country or a religion, two strategies are usually adopted for its defence: one, a defensive strategy and two, an offensive strategy. Unless both these strategies are adopted, a complete defence of religion cannot be ensured. That is, firstly, the objections of the antagonists should be rebutted and the truth of Islam be thus established, and secondly, the hostile religion should be proven to be false by attacking its principles. The Holy Imam used both these strategies very well in the defence of Islam.

### **Safeguarding Islam defensively**

The defensive safeguarding of Islam was carried out by the Holy Imam with such thoroughness and style that wherever a detractor laid an accusing finger against Islam, from the same spot the Holy Imam managed to unearth a whole treasure of wisdom and knowledge. And what looked like an objection either vanished like dust or turned out to be a hidden treasure which, to the short-sighted perception of the detractors, appeared like a fault.

The Holy Imam used to answer each objection both by way of scholastic research and also by counter-objection. To him it was not enough to make a reply through a counter-allegation, because, he argued, if someone calls us one-eyed, and if in return we also call him one-eyed, this is in a way an admission of our weak point in that we have tried to silence the opponent by pointing out a similar defect in him. If it is in fact something objectionable, then the objection still stands. The defect itself is not removed by merely saying to the opponent that the same defect exists in him. Hence a counter-allegation is only desirable when a researched reply has already been made. It ought to be proved that either the objection itself is a lie and a fabrication, or, if such a thing does exist in Islam, to which the detractor is objecting, then it ought to be proved that the very act of raising the objection is a mistake, because his viewpoint is not right, for the way the doctrine is found in Islam is in itself a reasonable and desirable thing. Whatever is said against it is condemnable and nonsensical. Having done this, if there is still the need for a counter-allegation, then it is worthwhile, because this would be tantamount to saying that the weakness and defect which was put forth about us is not to be found in us, but is certainly present in the objector.

If one goes through all the Holy Imam's writings, the same strategy is found to be at work in every one of them. He would first consider the enemy's objection with the clinical eye of a researcher, that is, to see whether such a thing existed in Islam. If it did, he would get hold of it very boldly and would then discuss it with such criticism and research that he would throw light on all aspects of the problem, so much so that his discussion always forced all sensible people to bow their heads in agreement. His discussion used to be couched in such simple and straightforward terms, quite free of illogical twists and

turns, that both the untutored and the philosopher would benefit from it. If in comparison to it something contrary was to be found in the objector's religion, he would ensure that the absurdity of such a defect was thoroughly highlighted.

Once, when the objections made by the Christians against Islam were collected, they reached several thousand, but the Holy Imam was not upset for a moment on reading these. He answered all these questions with great certitude and ease of mind in his various books from time to time in such a beautiful manner that the reader begins to marvel at it. And as stated above, he always remained steadfast in his dialectical style of replying, on the basis of the Holy Qur'an, to all objections. Whatever the question under consideration, he would go through the entire Qur'an, keeping the question in view, and would make notes on it. He would then make the relevant Qur'anic verses the basis of his thesis. The objections would be answered through a researched reply in the light of the Qur'an and the refutation of the false notions of the objector would also be based on the Qur'an.

This was in accordance with the Qur'anic claim contained in the verse: *The month of Ramadhan is that in which the Qur'an was revealed, a guidance to men and clear proofs of the guidance and the Criterion (between truth and falsehood) (2:185)*. That is, the Holy Qur'an not only contains universal laws and principles for all peoples for all times, but whatever guidance has been given is justified and supported by arguments and signs. Not only that, the Qur'an has differentiated between truth and falsehood by proving the falsehood of anything against the Qur'anic teachings which is to be found in any religion. In short, the Holy Qur'an is such a perfect book that it not only gives guidance but gives the rationale of the guidance also, and rebuts and proves false any doctrine opposed to this guidance and does not look towards its followers to do so.

This ultimate perfection of the Holy Qur'an, which had escaped the notice of the Muslim dialecticians for the past thirteen centuries, was first highlighted by the Holy Imam. And the secret of the external success of the dialectics developed by the Holy Imam lies in the very fact that it is founded on the firm and unshakable arguments of the Holy Qur'an which no human philosophy can challenge.

Philosophies keep on changing and it is quite possible that our observations and experiments may be wrong, but it is not possible that the knowledge and wisdom and the philosophy propounded by God, Most High, could be wrong. As the Holy Qur'an claims: *Falsehood cannot overtake it, neither from the front nor the rear (41:42)*. Hence the Qur'an is not vulnerable from the front nor the rear, neither outwardly nor inwardly, neither now nor in the future. It states further: *But We strike falsehood with Truth, so it crushes its skull and it (the falsehood) flees (21:18)*. Hence the dialectics whose foundations are based on the Qur'anic philosophy cannot be rendered ineffective even till the Day of Resurrection, and the beneficence of this service to the faith and this dialectics extend right up to the Last Day.

So, if in this context it is said that the Holy Imam was the *Khatam al Khulafa* (Last of the Caliphs) in the continuing chain of the caliphs of Muhammad, that is, the Muhammadan Caliphate ended in his person and now no caliph of Muhammad would come who would change this dialectics, it would be in order to say so. The prophecy in the *Hadith*, that there would be a war between the *Mahdi* and Satan in the Last Epoch and that Satan would be killed, does not mean that all the entities that motivate evil in this world would be wiped out, but what it denotes is that whatever onslaughts would be mounted by Satan against Islam would be met by the weapon of this new dialectics, which would provide a permanent antidote to them.

### **Safeguarding Islam through offence**

The security of Islam would have remained incomplete if there had been no offensive component to it, that is, the mounting of a counter-offensive against the attackers and making them run from the battlefield and making them bend and bow their heads before the glory, the grandeur, the truth and the dominance of Islam. That is why the Holy Imam mounted a counter-offensive against all those sects and religions that were attacking Islam, not only making them flee from the battlefield, but also crushing their might forever. As it says in the Qur'an: *But We strike falsehood with Truth so the Truth crushes its skull and it (the falsehood) flees (21:18)*.

### Refutation of atheism

Many *mujaddids* and dialecticians of Islam have been engaged in defending Islam against the attacks of atheism and materialism, but could do nothing more than give logical arguments. The effectiveness of such arguments can be gauged from the fact that often the arguments from both sides seem to have equal weight. If one hears one side, one thinks its arguments to be right, but when one hears the other side, one begins to feel that perhaps the latter could be right. Again, just as fashions, dress and tastes change with the change of times, philosophies also change. The arguments that sounded apt and reasonable two hundred years ago sound like a child's prattle today. That is why God, Most High, sends a *mujaddid* at the head of each century, that he can prove the truth of Islam according to the taste and philosophy of the time.

But atheism is such a thing that, though counter-arguments in favour of the existence of God seem quite reasonable, and when one looks at God's universe one's heart cries out that there must be a creator of the universe, yet, until and unless observation and experience testify that the God Who is the Creator and the Lord of this world really exists, one's heart is not fully convinced and set at rest. Philosophy's reach extends only to the point that it can say that there ought to be a creator of this universe and there could be a relationship between God and His servants, but a full conviction about this fact cannot be had except through the testimony of some visionary who has undergone the spiritual experience.

That is why God, Most High, has always selected the prophets and the saints, men with spiritual experience, who, after having had the spiritual encounter and having witnessed the Unseen, came and testified before the people saying: "God is a real entity. We have found Him and He converses with us." Philosophers were never able to produce godliness in people. Mere philosophy cannot generate that certitude and satisfaction in human hearts as is produced by the spiritual experience of the prophets.

Hence, is it not essential in the present times, when atheism is at its zenith, for God to appoint some seer who would declare to the world, basing this declaration on his personal observation and experience, that: "I have found God and He talks to me," and would thus

establish firm belief and faith in God in the hearts of men? Is it not a fact that just a few years earlier the grip of religion was so firm in people's hearts that even if someone wanted to remove the power of religion, he could not?

The belief in God was imbued in the nature of men. But nowadays, the materialists of Europe, with all their material progress and glitter, have promoted atheism as a symbol of fashion and wisdom in a manner that has affected a whole multitude of the modern educated classes with this *Dajjalīyyat* (Anti-Christ syndrome). As this syndrome permeated and subverted human hearts and intellects and caused human nature to be suppressed, the inner voice of nature also abated, and the grip of religion and the belief in God's existence continued to grow weak. Many men, enamoured with the new materialistic society, shut their eyes and ears to religion and became atheists and agnostics. That is the reason why even among religious-minded people, inaction, self-indulgence and love of material gains became rampant. Mere philosophy was not enough to wipe out this worship of the world, this agnosticism, atheism and materialism.

In these times, science is supreme, and today, more than ever, everyone demands proof through observation and experience, and questions why now, when atheism is reigning supreme and the existence of God has been denied, does He not signal His Presence and thus guide the world? What has happened to His attribute of *Hadi* (Guide)? If His Holy Person cannot develop a relationship with the worldly, why does He not light up the heart of some saint with His Light? So, if He does not exhibit Himself to anyone, why should we not agree with the proposition that the life-details of the religious leaders of the past and the stories of their relationship with God and the illumination of their hearts with God's Light are all stories having no reality? And if these were real, then why has this practice of God changed now?

It is true that the religion of Islam has already attained perfection and the need for prophethood has ceased to exist, but, in order to keep a perfect and complete religion alive, it is still essential that God should illuminate the hearts of some men in every epoch with His Light and should continue to demonstrate His existence through heavenly

signs. If this is not done, religion would take on the complexion of a story and would be erased from the world and from the hearts of men, especially in these times when there is a tempest of atheism raging all around the world and no religious philosophy remains acceptable unless accompanied by personal spiritual experience and observation.

At just such a time, how appropriate and how commensurate with the need of the times was the call made by the Holy Imam, Mirza Ghulam Ahmad of Qadian, which proclaimed: "God has illuminated my heart with His Light and He talks to me and has appointed me so that I should declare to the world on the basis of my own observation and experience, that God exists and He is a Living God. Even today He discloses Himself to His chosen servants and answers their prayers and converses with them as He spoke to His servants in olden times. Hence I am a person who has undergone the spiritual experience and whatever I say is not based on mere hearsay, but I speak from personal experience and, having personally felt the Person of God, I give the glad tidings to the world that I have realised the Living God and He is to be found through following Islam. Whoever wishes can come to me and can satisfy himself both through arguments and spiritual experience."

In this context, I will produce a couple of quotations from his writings:

"The real motivating source of the fervour of my sympathy is that I have discovered a gold-mine and I have come to know of a treasure-trove of jewels, and I have fortunately come upon a glittering and priceless gem from this mine, and were I to distribute it among my brethren, each one of them would become richer than the person who owns the greatest amount of gold and silver today. What is that Gem? The True God. To realise Him means to know Him and to have true faith in Him and to develop a truly loving relationship with Him and to receive such vast riches that it would be very unfair if I keep mankind unaware and deprived of this bounty" (*Arba'in*, No. 1).

"Is he not an unfortunate person who does not yet know that there is a God Who has power over all things and that our God is our Paradise and our highest enjoyment is to be found in our God, because we have seen Him and have found all possible beauty to be present in Him? This wealth is worth having though one has to give one's life to get it, and this ruby is worth buying though one has to lose one's whole self to buy it. O deprived ones! Run towards this spring of life, a spring that will save you. What shall I do and how shall I make this glad tiding penetrate the hearts of men? What drum shall I beat in the bazaars to proclaim that there is a God of yours; how can I proclaim so that people may hear? With what medicine shall I treat them so that people's ears begin to hear?" (*Kishti-i Nuh*).

In this epoch of materialism, when all the sciences are based on observation and experiments, the mere rhetoric of the *'ulama* and the theologians and the arguments of the philosophers cannot produce certitude and satisfaction in the hearts of men until and unless someone with spiritual experience gets up and announces: "By treading on the path taught to me by Islam, I have discovered that Living God Who is the Master of the entire universe and whoever wishes can come to me and satisfy himself."

He publicised this invitation to the public hundreds of times, and once he made this request in the following verses:

O visitor, if you come to us  
And spread your bedding in our street in good faith,  
And spend a few days with us  
Sincerely, with fortitude and sympathy,  
You shall certainly witness a sign from the Lord  
By which are drawn to us whole multitudes including the scholars.  
And if what I have said turns out to be untrue  
I am willing for you to cut off my head.  
I am ready to be dragged to the scaffold by the people  
And let them drag me there with a hundred tortures.  
I am willing to undergo such torture as retribution

That would leave on the ground blood spurting from my head.

I am willing to forego my wealth, my life and my body  
 And for whatever other afflictions there are to strike me.  
 Yet, if you turn away your face from these words of mine  
 Then you, too, will deserve the contempt of the Lord.  
 Everyone who turns his face away from these words  
 Is not true a man, but he is a robber of men.

These were the doctrines that established and solidified the foundations of every religion revealed by God, because the principle that upholds the foundations of religion is faith in a Living God. If there is no faith in God and His revelation, the whole edifice of religion comes crashing down to the ground.

The Holy Imam has done a great favour to all the revealed religions in that he has set a seal of authenticity on the truth of every revealed religion. He did this by claiming to have discovered a Living God and by claiming to be in touch with Him through revelation, and by proving this claim to communion with God by propounding diverse arguments and by showing a multitude of heavenly signs, because initially, every religion which is based on revelation, was founded on righteousness and reality, and was not a fabrication. It is another matter though that, with the passage of time, it has become completely disfigured, but when it first came to this world, the person bringing it was not a forger, but a righteous person.

It was this feat of the Holy Imam that made fair-minded and research-oriented atheists bow their heads before him and made them see the Face of God. By the blessings of his company, they were vouchsafed such God-realisation and belief in His unity that, sacrificing all their worldly interests, they set their faces towards serving the faith. They turned out to be such beacons of light that they became instrumental in guiding whole multitudes, lost in the wilderness of deviation, back to the right path. One from among these is Khwaja Kamal-ud-Din, the Muslim missionary based at Woking, England, whose services to Islam as a missionary in Europe have been universally acknowledged. How apt is this couplet of his in praise of the Holy Imam:

If you want to see a heavenly sign  
Come and spend some time in the company of this beloved.

### **Refutation of the Dev Samaj and the Brahmo Samaj**

The Holy Imam struck at the roots of atheism and materialism and laid an axe to the foundation of the Dev Samaj, which is nothing but an offshoot of atheism and man-worship within Hinduism. He also uprooted the wrong ways of the Brahmo Samaj, a faith that does not believe in revelation and inspiration from God. He set forth his own revelations from God and time and again addressed the Brahmo Samaj and challenged them to come if they wished and stay with him and satisfy themselves about his being a recipient of divine revelation. He was always ready, he said, to make them taste of the spiritual experience.

### **Victory of religion over agnosticism**

By this, it must be understood that he rebutted atheism and its branches not only through his own spiritual experience, but he also gave hundreds of arguments in accordance with the philosophy of the times, in support of the existence of God, the truth of the Qur'an and the messengership of the Holy Prophet, arguments that even the harshest of critics had to accept.

The proof of the strength and power of these arguments is the fact that he issued a notice, while setting forth these arguments, promising that anyone who managed to rebut successfully any of these arguments would be paid a reward of ten thousand rupees. It was a grace of God that no atheist or opponent could refute any of these arguments. However, it is true that the last weapon that he used to strike at the root of atheism, after which it could never recover, was the public disclosure of his own spiritual experience and testimony, that he had found God and that He speaks to him. This was what caused the religious argument to triumph over the apologists for agnosticism and atheism.

### **Victory of Islam over all other religions**

Along with the public disclosure of his spiritual experience and testimony, the Holy Imam made another announcement that contained a victory over all religions. He announced that the only way to realise this Living God, the Master and Creator of the whole

universe, lies only through Islam, and the Holy Prophet Muhammad is the only living prophet, and by following the Book he brought from God, the Holy Qur'an, one can realise God. All other doors are closed except this door. He laid great stress on this fact and said:

"I have myself put Islam to the test and have realised God through following the Qur'an and the *Sunnah* of the Holy Prophet. He is the God Who is the Creator and the Master of the entire universe. So I am calling all men to God, basing my call on my personal observation, and whoever wishes can come to me and put my spiritual experience to the test. Today, there is no other religion except Islam through which one can realise God. If there is any claimant, let him confront me."

But it is a fact that no claimant came forward to confront him. They kept criticising him from a distance, but none dared to come near this lion of God.

If one goes through the Holy Imam's writings, one finds them full of such announcements. Below is a sample of his verses:

We ourselves have put Islam to the test.  
 Ah! It is nothing but pure divine Light,  
 So arise, we invite you.  
 We have become tired of saying these things over and over  
 So we have sent our arrows of invitation all around.  
 None came forward to try it out personally  
 Though we invited every opponent to come forward.  
 Come hither, O men! It is only here that you will find God's  
 Light.  
 Come, we have shown you the way to Mount Sinai, a mount  
 where you will find satisfaction.  
 Today a flood of these divine lights is shining through this  
 humble one  
 And we have immersed our hearts in the colour of these  
 divine lights.  
 May the Holy Prophet be infinitely blessed with Thy Peace  
 and Mercy  
 For from him we have borrowed this heavenly light, O Lord.

These were the various factors that carried the argument home to followers of all other religions. Though every follower of every religion makes verbal claims of God-realisation, to challenge the whole world, basing one's challenge on one's personal spiritual experience and observation and to invite them to God and His Messenger is a work that can only be accomplished by those who have been purified and sanctified by God's Own Hand, and who are appointed for the service of His faith by God Himself. This is not a job for any *maulawi*, *mullah*, *pir* (religious *guru*) or any *fakir*. In fact, it can be accomplished only by one who is in communion with God and who has been made to stand up for proclaiming the Word of God and for the service of the faith by God, Himself.

### **Muslims themselves became critical of this victory of Islam**

Here I have to say with regret that if this victory of religion over atheism, and again, if the victory of Islam over other religions was a glad tidings, it was a glad tidings most of all for Muslims. However, ironically, it was from Muslims that a flood of criticism and slander arose against this feat. Atheism and materialism held such a great sway over the minds of people that the Holy Imam's claim of receiving divine revelation was generally received contemptuously, and it was openly asked why Hazrat Mirza had once again raised this bogey of revelation and divine inspiration among Muslims. Indeed, it was absolutely essential to revive the belief in divine revelation in order to bring, once again, the spirit of religion to life.

Today, in this age of materialism, the biggest reason for the rejection of religion is this very denial of divine revelation. The philosophers of these times, whether they be Muslims like Sir Syed Ahmad Khan, or non-Muslims like Mahatma Gandhi, have conceded the possibility of divine revelation, but they have given it nothing more than the status of "an inner voice", that is, that it emanates from within the human consciousness and then affects it.

Therefore, the foremost duty of the Holy Imam, who had been appointed by God to the office of the *Mujaddid* of the Fourteenth Century, was that he should bolster this foundation of religion and should elucidate and prove the fact that the chain of prophethood and divine revelation and inspiration is true. That is, God, Most High, has been entering into dialogue with His chosen servants, and since

His attributes are perpetual, therefore, even today, He continues to converse with His chosen servants. There is no doubt that prophethood has come to an end and religion has been perfected because there remains no need for prophethood, but the revelation granted to saints still continues. That is, by way of giving glad tidings, the divine dialogue between man and God still continues in the same way as long ago, so that it can be an argument in favour of the chain of prophethood and so that the certitude and God-gnosis of man can be perfected.

The Holy Imam laid great stress in his writings and speeches on this fact and vehemently declared in this age of materialism and agnosticism that God speaks even now, as He did in the past, and proclaimed very loudly: "I am an experienced person in this field, having had personal spiritual encounters," and along with these, he presented his divine revelations, dreams and visions in which the news of coming events had been foretold, and he also produced witnesses to these in order to prove their authenticity. He challenged all atheists and materialists to come to him and stay with him in order to satisfy themselves over the truth of his divine revelations. Along with it, he also announced that divine revelation is not the name of any "inner voice" but it comes from external sources in the form of words and comes down on the inner consciousness of the recipient. However, this external voice comes in a manner just as a telephonic voice comes from an external source, and this could be called a spiritual telephonic message that is received by human consciousness. It is similar to the way the inner eye sometimes sees, while one is fully awake, scenes about coming events and sometimes sees some scenes from the spiritual world. We get news of such unseen matters through such divine revelation and inspiration as are beyond human power to know in normal circumstances. Sometimes a question and answer session can take place during this spiritual state of revelation which can go on between a human being and his Lord. Also, there is a wonderful majestic light which accompanies the divine words of God and one is so certain of its divine origin that this certitude enters one's consciousness like a steel peg. God's acts support this divine revelation. That is, anything that is foretold comes about as foretold, and if there are any impediments and difficulties in the way of its fulfilment, God, Most High, removes them through His Omnipotent

power to prove the truth of His Word. It is then that one develops a living faith in God's Word and His existence, and this faith is the root of all good deeds and high morals. By developing a high degree of God-gnosis and instilling His love in men's hearts, He makes them heir to all those rewards and spiritual progress for which they have been created by God.

Therefore, it is this ability to communicate and converse with God which provides the truest testimony, a testimony which sets up an argument for the truth of religion and for the chain of prophethood. Otherwise, anything that is not observed and experienced takes on the garb of mere stories, and does not lead men to absolute certainty.

### **Refutation of Nazism, Fascism and Bolshevism**

The Holy Imam proved divine revelation and inspiration to be a reality through his personal observation and spiritual experience and elucidated the fact that there can be no other foundation for religion except revelation and inspiration. When God, Most High, has programmed everything that He has created to attain its object of creation, there is no reason why He would not guide mankind after having created this species.

Since man is blessed with intellect and the ability to discriminate and has the capability to execute every work through the exercise of his will and resolve and also has the capability to distinguish between good and evil, therefore, God, Most High, did not give the guidance necessary for him to attain to his purpose of creation (and thus become a vicegerent of God) in the form of instinct, but He gave it to him in the form of knowledge. He was given such knowledge through divine revelation and inspiration, and having been informed of the purpose of his creation, he was shown all those paths that are necessary to gain God's pleasure and for the realisation of his own potentialities. He was placed in this world so that he could attain to this ideal through the exercise of his common sense and his efforts.

Similarly, the Holy Imam also proved the fact that today the said purpose, goal, progress and perfection can be attained by mankind only through Islam because Islam is the only true, complete and living faith which is existent in these times.

Thus Nazism, Fascism, Bolshevism, etc. which are not derived from divine revelation and are products of the human mind, automatically stand annulled and are proven false. Their own mutual differences of opinion prove that the true path to man's destination has been lost in these mutually contradicting opinions.

It is axiomatic that man's mentality develops according to the environment and education that he gets, and the human mind develops a certain plan of action for the attainment of objectives that are set before a particular people. Hence, such groups that devise a certain plan of action and make regulations for it and then act upon these regulations cannot be said to have developed a new religion. Religion is the name of God-given guidance, guidance which comes down to a prophet through divine revelation and inspiration, and cannot be the name of human imagination and concepts. Nazism, Fascism and Bolshevism are all products of the human mind. When compared to them, we find some religions and principles, which are proven by servants of God to be from God, and when these servants of the Almighty confirm them through logical arguments, and heavenly signs and prove that the salvation of mankind lies only in acting upon them, then these human inventions all stand nullified.

Today, by the grace of God, the reality underlying Nazism, Fascism and Bolshevism and the culture and morality spawned by them have been completely exposed. World War II has highlighted the brutality and shortcomings of their principles. This is the result of the beseeching of the man of God who was appointed by the Almighty to carry out this mission.

Below is an instance of the Holy Imam's entreaties that he rendered originally in Persian:

O my life, my heart, my mind, let every particle of my being be sacrificed for Thee, by Thy Mercy.  
 Pray open every door of gnosis to my heart.  
 Pray turn Thy Glance hither so that war and fighting may be cut short.  
 Thy creatures are in need of some display to prove Thy existence.

Pray display a sign so that Thy Light may shine throughout the world,  
So that every denier of the *ummah* may become an extoller of Thy praises.  
If the whole world is turned upside down, I am not worried.  
What I am worried about is that they have lost Thy shining path.  
It is a great pain to enter into endless debate and dialogue over religion.  
So kindly make the story short by displaying some grand sign from Thee.  
Shake the conscience of the enemies through earthquakes  
So that they may come fearfully to Thy court.  
Through the medium of earthquakes, make a fount of mercy to flow.  
How long will this crying servant of Thine continue to grieve and wail?

The grand earthquake which has been supplicated for from God, Most High, in these verses has manifested itself in the form of the First and the Second World Wars that find no parallel in the history of the world. In Arabic Lexicon, "earthquake" denotes every calamity which causes a commotion and which gives rise to a great revolutionary change. The Holy Imam, referring to this very calamity, says in one of his writings:

O Europe! Thou art not in peace,  
And O Asia! Neither art thou safe.  
And O dwellers of the Isles! No artificial god will help you.  
I see whole cities tumbling down  
And I find human habitations becoming desolate.

(*Haqiqat-ul Wahy*, p. 256).

Does World War II not prove the truth of the above words, letter by letter?

Again, he has the following to say in another poem:

My heart aches terribly on seeing the dire trouble in which  
our religion is,  
But now the Hand of God will soon give relief to my aching  
heart.  
Now, therefore, His loving zeal will show you something.  
The time is soon coming when this distressing calamity will  
become rampant everywhere.  
Some help will be rendered to the Faith through death.  
Otherwise the Faith would have met death in these days.

The "loving zeal of God" has manifested His sign of death in the shape of this world war, from which neither Asia nor Europe nor the dwellers of the Pacific Isles have been spared. God knows how far this great calamity will spread its tentacles. Is it not true that this war has manifested the deviations and errors of the civilisation and culture spawned by Nazism, Fascism, Bolshevism, atheism and materialism?

Eventually a critic like Bernard Shaw had to cry out: "What this world needs for achieving an end to mischief and strife and for attaining world peace and security is the dictatorship of Muhammad." And the learned author of *Whither Islam* had this to say: "Our present civilisation cannot survive until the spirituality of Islam is included in it."

After all, whose victory is it? Islam's. And the result of whose prayers? The result of the same *Hazrat Mirza* who had said:

Pray shake the foundation of the enemies through  
earthquakes  
So that they may come fearfully to Thy court.  
In the garb of earthquakes make a fount of mercy to flow.  
How long will this crying servant of Thine continue to grieve  
and wail?

See how the nature of these "enemies" is being motivated and is moving towards Islam. What is in store in the future, God alone

knows, but Hazrat Mirza had already said this, after getting information from God:

The fiery passion of my heart has eventually shown some effect  
So the days of raging fires engulfing this world have come.  
Comrades! Our Friend has noticed the dire straits in which the religion is,  
So the days of the revival of this garden are coming soon.  
For a long time atheism had been eating at the vitals of this faith,  
But now, rest assured for the days for the eradication of atheism would soon come.  
These are hard times indeed and we are facing a lot of fears and dangers,  
But these are the days to achieve God-realisation.  
There is a tumult in the heavens to extend help to the faith  
The autumn season is over and the time for tasting the fruit has come.

### **Refutation of Christianity**

The second strongest enemy of Islam is Christianity. The Christian scholars knew very well that Judaism, Magianism, Hinduism and Buddhism were all national religions and were so limited to their own national areas that the achievement of propagation and world-dominance had become impossible for them. For one, their life force was dissipated through the loss of their original form which suffered degeneration, and secondly, their importance was lost because the nations who followed these religions had become politically subservient.

Though Christianity was also a national religion because it came to the Israelites as such, yet the Israelites did not accept it. Consequently, its followers found that the only way for survival was to spread it among the sun-worshippers of Europe, so they mixed the beliefs of the sun-worshippers with those of the Christian religion and thus tried to make Christianity popular among the sun-worshippers of Europe. The only change they made was to put Jesus in the place of their god, Apollo. However, they left the rest of the principles and doctrines of the sun-worshippers intact. The result was that

Christianity spread in Europe and the European powers turned it into a powerful world religion.

Keeping their past successes in view, the supporters of Christianity tried to spread it throughout the whole world, and in this endeavour, their chief rival and antagonist they found to be Islam, which forcefully rebutted this new Christianity – which was nothing but a new form of sun-worship – and, wherever Islam went, Christianity kept receding and vanishing.

Hence, the Christian clerics employed all their resources to oppose Islam since they had no forceful arguments to offer, for they had nothing to offer but sun-worship, superstitions and misleading beliefs. For instance, the sonship of God and the doctrine of atonement were all beliefs borrowed from the sun-worshippers; therefore Christianity could not hope to cope with a unitarian and reason-based religion like Islam that abounded with arguments and proofs.

They, therefore, as far as politically possible, obliterated Muslims by the sword and stifled the call of Islam by force (as in Spain), and in places where they could not employ force, they tried to turn people's minds against Islam by diverse fabrications and by forging false accusations against the Founder of Islam.

Though their own religion in reality was a copy of the sun-worshipping cults, yet they spread the false propaganda in Christian countries that Islam was a religion based on sun-worship. Though they themselves made Jesus into God and started worshipping him, yet they said that Muslims worshipped the Holy Prophet. It is a long story how they painted the darkest possible picture of the Holy Prophet with a pen dipped in lies and false accusations and attributed as much falsehood and deception as possible to Islam and kept the entire Christian world under a veil of prejudice for centuries.

Eventually a time came when God, Most High, turned His attention towards this travesty of truth and appointed a humble slave of the Holy Prophet to crush the head of this deceptive dragon of these times. As the Promised Messiah himself says:

*Chun ma-ra noor-i pa-ai qawmay masihi dada-and  
Maslehat ra ibne Maryam nam-e man banehadah and.*

Because my light has been vouchsafed for the Christian people,  
It was for this purpose that I was given the name of "Son of Mary".

Since the Christian people had left no stone unturned in exaggerating the status of Jesus to Godhead and in heaping insults on the Holy Prophet, therefore a humble slave of the Holy Prophet was raised by God, Most High, as a likeness of Jesus, and he caused a commotion in the Christian world by declaring: "Because the infidel commits the error of worshipping Jesus, so God's Self-esteem made me equal in status to him."

He sings the praises of the Holy Prophet in the following verses, originally in Persian:

Since from me comes this eulogy of the high chief,  
A chief for whom even the earth, the sky, and the entire  
universe are unable to offer adequate praise,  
He enjoys such a close place in the court of the Eternal  
Friend  
That none knows its true glory except those who are lost in  
Him.  
I see a thousand Josephs in the dimple of his chin  
And from his (the Holy Prophet's) breath sprang up a  
hundred Messiahs of Nazareth.

### **The Holy Imam always critically analysed the basic principles of a religion**

While criticising diverse religions, even though there would crop up a hundred questions which were all dealt with by the Holy Imam's pen and thus a distinction was made between truth and falsehood, yet his special tactic was that when he took on a false religion, he would strike at its basic principles and at the root of the religion. It is axiomatic that when the root is cut, the branches automatically wither away. Therefore, he never wasted his time like ordinary scholars in going into mere questions of details. His special thrust used to be at

the root of the religion. He adopted the same strategy to rebut Christianity. He found that the Christian faith was based on two fundamentals: one, the godhead of Jesus and the second, the atonement of sins through crucifixion.

### **Jesus' divinity disproved**

The divinity of Jesus could be rebutted only in three ways: by criticising the life history of Jesus; by refuting the notion of his having been alive in heaven for hundreds of years with his corporeal body; and by showing that many people like him had existed in the human race.

It is not possible to recount the entire discussions made by the Holy Imam on this subject because these are spread over hundreds of pages and they cannot be made to fit into a brief review like this. For this purpose one must refer to his original writings. However, it is sufficient to give just a summary of his theses.

Firstly, the Holy Imam has subjected the life-history of Jesus, a history written not by just anyone, but the one contained in their accepted scripture, the Bible, to criticism. In his criticism, he has so torn to shreds the dogma of divinity of Jesus that, not only the Christian clerics, but even our own *maulawis* cried out that he had shown contempt for Prophet Jesus. In reply, the Holy Imam had to declare that we consider Jesus to be a chosen and true messenger of God. Our criticism is directed at that Jesus of the Bible who is projected by the Christian preachers as God. What we want to highlight is that in spite of all the special attributes that are attached to this person whom the Christians project as God, attributes that would prove his godhead, yet if one goes by their own accounts of Jesus as found in the Bible, he does not even come out as a perfect man, let alone God.

Secondly, by proving Jesus to have died a natural death and by proving that he is buried in Srinagar in Kashmir, he made such a thrust at his godhead that the very root of Christianity was severed. Though there have been some Muslim scholars who believed Jesus to have died a natural death, yet the forceful way the Holy Imam has presented his research, a research so well packed with arguments and proofs, is unique and has no precedence.

The result was that with the death of Jesus, Christianity died. And though this thrust of the Holy Imam made not only the Padres wince in anger, but also caused our own *maulawis* to erupt, yet they had nothing to offer in reply. Their mean rejoinders added up to nothing and they finally had to cool down. As a result, the death of Jesus was so entrenched in the minds of men that today no prudent *maulawi* can dare to talk of Jesus being alive in heaven. This was the attack that set the seal of death on Christianity, because the fact of Jesus being alive in heaven in his corporeal body and without any change in his physical state was a major argument of his divinity. "To be today as He was then" and to be "Ever-living and Self-subsisting" are God's attributes and these attributes had been given to Jesus. When these attributes were made to depart from Jesus, his divinity also vanished.

Thirdly, a major reason for the Holy Imam's claim to being the Messiah was to nullify the idea of the divinity of Jesus. When other human beings can be equal in status to Jesus, then the divinity of Jesus automatically falls to the ground. The following Persian couplet of the Holy Imam elucidates this point:

Since the infidel commits the excess of worshipping Jesus  
(as God)  
God's Self-esteem made me equal in status to him.

Muslims unjustifiably got irritated when the Holy Imam made a claim to being the Messiah along with his claim to being the *Mujaddid*, although "Messiah" is only a title of honour, his real appointment being that of *Mujaddid*.

According to the *Hadith*, the Holy Prophet said: "The '*ulama* of my *ummah* are like the prophets of the Israelites." So if the '*ulama* of the Holy Prophet's *ummah* are like the prophets of Israel, and if a *mujaddid* of this *ummah* made a claim to being the Messiah in order to confront the Christians, was it a catastrophe? He said, in response to the Christians about their claim to the divinity of Jesus, that hundreds of the followers of the Holy Prophet Muhammad had reached the status of Jesus by following the Holy Prophet and that he, the Holy Imam, was one of them.

He eulogises the Holy Prophet in the following verses:

I see a hundred thousand Josephs in the dimple of his (the Holy Prophet's) chin  
And his breath caused innumerable Messiahs to come into being.

Similarly, Khawaja Moinuddin Chishti (Allah's mercy be on him), says in the following couplet:

Every moment the Holy Spirit is shining inside Moin (the poet himself)  
Though I do not say it, but I have become Jesus, Son of Mary.

And Khawaja Hafiz (Allah's mercy be on him) says:

If the Holy Spirit once again comes to help,  
Others can also do what Jesus used to do.

Similarly Maulana Rumi (Allah's mercy be on him) says:

If the soul of man develops a relationship with God  
He becomes pregnant like Mary.  
And this gives birth to such a Jesus who is far greater than the Israelite Messiah,  
And then a whole multitude gets pregnant through the spiritual beneficence of such a Messiah,  
And this causes a revolution to come about in the world.

In short, there have been hundreds of such saints in the Muslim *ummah* who had attained this rank of Messiahship. But there was also a prophecy of the Holy Prophet mentioned in the *Hadith* about the appearance of a particular Messiah whose mission was stated by the Holy Prophet to be the refutation of Christianity and the breaking of the Cross, and the Holy Imam had made a claim to being this particular Messiah.

It is obvious that if there were to be an appropriate time for the rebuttal of Christianity and the breaking of the Cross, it would be the

present time when the misleading dogmas of Christianity had reached their zenith. So this Messiah from the *ummah* of Muhammad appeared at a very opportune time and he did destroy Christianity through forceful arguments and accomplished the task of breaking the Cross. The truth of the matter is that the death of any religion can only be brought about through arguments and not through the sword.

The Qur'an also says the same thing in this respect: ... *that he who perished by clear argument might perish, and he who lived by clear argument might live* (8:42).

### **Refutation of the doctrine of Atonement**

The teaching of the doctrine of Atonement says that the Messiah, carrying the burden of the sins of all sinners, went to the Cross, was crucified and was thus cursed and whoever believes in this event will find salvation from the retribution for his sins. The Holy Imam broke the rationale of this doctrine in five ways.

Firstly, he proved from the historical narrative contained in the Evangel and other recognised and authentic books that the Messiah did not die on the Cross, but was taken down alive. Subsequently, he kept circulating in the outskirts of Jerusalem and went on meeting his disciples and kept dining with them. Afterwards, he migrated from there and went to Afghanistan and Kashmir in search of the Lost Sheep of Israel and died a natural death after attaining the great age of one hundred and twenty years. So, if he were not accursed, then the doctrine of Atonement is proven wrong.

Secondly, he proved from the lexicons that the correct connotation of the word *la'nat* (accursed) was "someone becoming disgusted with God and becoming His enemy, and God in turn becoming disgusted with him and becoming his enemy and driving him out of His Court". Hence, if one entertains the belief about the Messiah that he was accursed by his death on the Cross, it would mean that the Messiah had at that time become an enemy of God and had become disgusted with Him, and that God also, had become a bitter enemy of the Messiah and was disgusted with him and that God had declared the Messiah to have been driven out of His Court. What bigger insult to the Messiah can there be? It seems that the Christian

Priests consider *la'nat* (accursed) to be a halter or a burden which one can wear at will or lift at will and can put off at will.

*La'nat* connotes a state of one's inner self and one's mentality which comes into being through one's sins. To harbour such a belief about Jesus, that for a time at least he had developed a mentality which made him disgusted with God and made Him his enemy, and that God also had become disgusted with him and was His enemy, is a very unholy, nonsensical and erroneous belief. May God save us from such beliefs! Hence, when Jesus' becoming *mal'un* (accursed) is an impossibility, the doctrine of Atonement stands nullified.

Thirdly, he maintained that the doctrine of Atonement is contrary to God's attributes of justice and mercy. To punish a culprit is to exercise justice, and to forgive him is to exercise mercy. But to punish an innocent person for the sin of the sinners is *zulm* (injustice). According to the doctrine of Atonement, God neither punished the sinners – that would be justice – nor did He forgive them – that would be showing mercy – but He hanged His Own sinless son, Jesus, on the cross as an atonement for the sinners' sin. This is sheer injustice. If it is said that he, himself, was God and went to the cross of his own will and consent, is there any sense in the judge not punishing the culprit but committing suicide himself?

The sin of the sinner remained intact and was neither punished nor forgiven, and by committing suicide, God, Himself, committed another sin. God forbid! What was the benefit to the society of which the culprit was a member, or to the culprit himself, by this senseless act of God? For example, if someone commits a theft, he should be punished in order to be reformed and also for the benefit of the society. But what would the public think if instead of punishing the accused, the judge himself commits suicide with a pistol? A mental patient, to be sure.

Fourthly, Christianity invented the dogma of original sin, inherited by humanity, without any justification, but merely for the sake of upholding the doctrine of Atonement. According to their belief, Adam and Eve committed the sin and it came down as an inheritance to all mankind. The punishment for this sin, as mentioned in the Bible, is that man would earn his living through toil and the sweat of his brow

and woman would give birth to her offspring by going through labour pains.

If Atonement were a true doctrine, it would have become mandatory after the crucifixion of Jesus that Christian men believing in Atonement would not have to toil for their living and Christian women believing in atonement would give birth to their children without labour pains. But when the punishment for the original sin continues to be dealt out to all Christian men and women, it is obvious that the doctrine of Atonement is false.

Just as the belief that sin is an inherited thing is wrong (because sin connotes disobedience to God for which each person is individually responsible), similarly, the belief that by believing in the crucifixion of Jesus and his becoming accursed one gains salvation from the punishment for one's sins is also wrong. That is, Atonement is a false belief.

Fifthly, the Holy Imam said that if one attains salvation from the ability to commit sin by a belief in Atonement, then the question arises about how such a salvation is achieved. Does the power to commit sins vanish from human nature, or does it mean that one can keep on sinning and not be punished for these sins? If the power of committing sin is said to vanish through this belief, then why is such a large segment of the Christian population engaged in committing sins? And if the intention is that one does not get punished for one's sins, then among mankind there can be no doctrine greater than this for encouraging sin. Obviously no intelligent person can subscribe to such a misleading doctrine. Therefore, the absurdity of the doctrine of Atonement is obvious.

What the Holy Imam has written in rebuttal of Christianity would add up to many books. He has struck at the root of Christianity in diverse ways. Some of the salient points have been mentioned here. Anyone interested in a detailed study of his writings on this subject should refer to his books, *Nur al-Qur'an* (two volumes), *Anjam-i Atham*, the supplement to *Anjam-i Atham*, *Jang-i Muqaddas*, *Sirajuddin Isai key Char Sawalon ka Jawab*, *Chashma-i Masihi*, etc.

The grand work of breaking the Cross, which was accomplished by the Holy Imam, sounded the death knell of Christianity. Leaving aside his arguments, it was as a result of his spiritual power that the love of Christianity began to wither away in the hearts of the inhabitants of Christian countries and the hearts of men developed disgust for the false doctrines of the Trinity and the Atonement.

### **Appearance of the Arya Samaj**

The Arya Samaj is another form of Hinduism, a form that was developed by Dayanand in accordance with the dictates of the times. The Hindu religion is a religion full of extreme forms of polytheism and idolatry, superstition and caste-consciousness, and is a religion that cannot be acceptable to any intelligent person in this age. Dayanand realised that it would not be long before all the Hindus either became Muslims or Christians. In case they wanted to participate in the State and the Government, Christianity would be beneficial for them, and if they were inclined towards religious enquiry, then Islam's monotheism, and its equality and fraternity, would attract them towards itself. He was not apprehensive about Christianity from a religious point of view, because Christianity itself was steeped in polytheism, Trinity, and class-prejudice between the rich and the poor. The greater threat he felt came from Islam.

Since Dayanand had nothing to offer his people from his own religion, Hinduism, in comparison to Islam, therefore the only way out for him was to follow the Christian missionaries in fabricating all sorts of accusations against Islam and to concentrate all his efforts in developing a hatred of Islam in the minds of the Hindu people. His point of view was that once the Hindus developed a hatred for Islam, they would not have anywhere to go outside their own faith and would thus reconcile themselves to remaining in the fold of Hinduism. The chief attributes of Islam were its monotheism and its idea of human equality and brotherhood.

Dayanand was not afraid of the concept of equality and brotherhood because the Hindu society had been so chained to the caste system for several thousand years that the very idea of equality and brotherhood of mankind, a very pure and reasonable doctrine, could not sink into their minds. Therefore Dayanand did not touch it, but instead, he supported the idea.

However, monotheism was an idea that attracted people's hearts, so what he did was to reject all the mythological Hindu literature except for the four Vedas. By coining far-fetched interpretations of the polytheistic teachings of the Vedas about worshipping fire, water, the sun, the moon, etc. he tried to establish a unitarian doctrine. Along with it, having been impressed by modern materialism, he propounded that matter and souls were just as ancient and eternal and non-created as God Himself, and thus set up three gods instead of one.

It seems that he considered the soul to be a kind of matter. Once, when talking about reincarnation, he said that when a soul leaves the human body, it gets cooled as it ascends and so falls down again; and if it falls on some vegetation and such vegetation is eaten by a woman, she gets impregnated by it. The reason was that Dayanand was utterly unfamiliar with spirituality and his vision could not separate itself from the confines of matter. Though he conceded that the soul was an eternal entity distinct from matter, yet when he sat down to write about it, he made it into a form of matter like water vapour which falls down when it cools, and falling on a vegetable, it enters the body of a woman and thus the soul takes a new birth.

This notion about the soul is no doubt ridiculous, for what would happen if a man were to eat the soul-ridden vegetable instead of a woman? The incorrectness of his theory about the soul is obvious, but even about matter his knowledge was not based on some divine book but he followed the materialistic modern sciences in this field.

In those days, scientists considered the atom to be the smallest particle of matter and also to be eternal, and Dayanand followed them, though he attributed this belief to the Vedas, even though there is nothing in the Vedas about it. What the Vedas do mention is the story of a banyan tree on which two birds are sitting. One is eating fruits and the other is looking at him. Only God knows how Dayanand concluded from this that the banyan tree is matter, the bird that is eating the fruit is the soul and the one looking on is Ishwar Maharaj (God), hence all three are eternal. How he derived this doctrine is not known. Nowhere in the Vedas is it mentioned that this is the meaning of the parable. It is obvious that Dayanand, keeping in mind modern material sciences, fabricated this forced

interpretation in order to please the materialistic Hindus. But a problem arose when, after the death of Dayanand, scientists changed their theory and refused to consider the atom as eternal. The result was that a wrong and nonsensical dogma was left as a blot on the Arya Samaj slate.

### **Refutation of the Arya Samaj**

Dayanand was still alive in the time of the Holy Imam. When the former started preaching his new-fangled doctrines, the Holy Imam began to highlight the errors in his doctrines, and also challenged him to a debate, but Dayanand avoided a confrontation.

Debates were also held with Arya Samaj pundits and the Holy Imam furnished a befitting reply to their objections against Islam. But an offensive against the Arya Samaj was still pending on the agenda, so the Holy Imam finally struck at the root of the Arya Samaj dogma.

Obviously a religion is best tested on the following two counts: firstly, a correct appreciation and knowledge of God's unity and of His attributes, and secondly, the rule of justice, equity and *taqwa* (performance of duty to man and God). The Holy Imam tested the Arya Samaj on these two criteria and thus severed their roots. Regarding "duty to God", he took up the issues of the unity of God, His attributes and the doctrine of reincarnation. Concerning "duty to his fellow-men", he took up the issues of discrimination based on caste and sexual relations between men and women.

### **Erroneous beliefs regarding the unity of God and His attributes**

Obviously if a religion does not teach the unity of God in all its aspects and some attributes of God are found to be defective in it, then its teachings cannot be from God and must be the product of human imagination. The polytheistic aspect of the Hindu religious teachings is quite apparent. Apart from over thirty million gods, the Hindus, like the Christians, have also divided the Supreme God into three parts. One is *Brahma*, the next is *Vishnu* and the third, *Shiva*.

When Dayanand stood up to demolish this trinity, all he could do after developing his theory was to get entangled in another trinity after demolishing the first. That is, he got rid of the trinity of *Brahma*, *Vishnu* and *Shiva* by declaring them to be three attributes of the

same God, only to surrender before the supposed theory of the materialists, a theory which was later on proved to be wrong, and thus set up another trinity, by accepting the three elements, *Parmeshwar* (God), matter, and soul to be eternal and uncreated.

This was the weak point that the Holy Imam seized upon. He argued that if these three entities are subsisting independently with their individual attributes and are all eternal and uncreated (not created by someone), then these three must all be gods, because the greatest attribute and definition of God is that He is a non-creation and is eternal, self-subsisting and is not dependent on any other agency. If these qualities are also found in matter and soul, then these are also gods. Hence, all three must be gods, each one existing independently, self-subsisting, and not dependent on any other agency. Obviously, if one of them disappears, the other two would not be affected. For instance, if *Parmeshwar* vanishes, the other two entities, matter and the soul, would not suffer any loss.

It is a tyranny of *Parmeshwar* that he has unjustifiably set up this dominion over matter and soul and makes them worship him, otherwise when all three are self-subsisting, non-created and are eternal and not dependent on anyone else, what right has *Parmeshwar* to establish his governance over them by force since independence demands that matter and soul should join hands to overthrow such an unjustified government based on coercion? When their attributes and properties have existed from eternity in their persons and are not created by *Parmeshwar*, then where lies the need for such a *Parmeshwar*? When the natural tendencies and properties of matter and soul can join hands to give birth to the universe, then the person of *Parmeshwar* becomes a superfluous entity, trying to enforce His rule needlessly over the other two, and forces the other two entities, who are autonomous entities like himself, to worship him. Thus, when the entity called *Parmeshwar* is a superfluous entity, one fails to appreciate the need for a *Parmeshwar*, especially when matter and soul and their respective properties and attributes, which are giving birth to this universe and making it function, are eternal and uncreated. Thus no need remains for the existence of a *Parmeshwar*.

In fact, the atheists originated this theory and the result of believing in such a theory is to walk along the path of atheism. This doctrine leaves no room and no need for God, nor does there remain any argument in favour of His existence. Thus the unity of God that Dayanand established in the Arya Samaj is a trinity and not monotheism, and a trinity eventually leads one to atheism.

His description of God's attribute is so deficient that he has made God to be dependent on matter and soul, thus depriving Him of His Godhead. The chief attribute of God is that He is *Samad* (on Whom all depend), that is, He is not dependent on anybody and all depend on Him. But Dayanand explained the attributes of God thus: that though matter and soul are not dependent on God for their creation, nor their attributes and their properties, yet God is definitely dependent upon them. Were there no matter and no soul, He could create nothing.

What sort of god is it who cannot create anything? Today, if matter and soul should separate themselves from God, His Godhead would come to an end! How well-judged was the Holy Imam's comment that Dayanand had based his estimate of God's attributes on human attributes. Just as a man cannot make anything without matter, similarly Dayanand also put forward the view that, unless matter and souls are available, God cannot create anything.

But man needs two agents for executing any of his works: one agent from within him and the other from outside. For instance, for the act of seeing, man is dependent on the eye, an agent within him, and he also needs an external agent in the form of light. Similarly, for the act of hearing, he needs an internal agent, the ear, and an external agent, the air, otherwise, he would not hear anything. Similarly, for doing any physical work, man also needs two agents, one the internal agent, such as the hand, and any external agent in the form of matter.

In short, for the exercise of every faculty in man, he is in need of these two kinds of agents. So when Dayanand, imagining God to be similar to man, made Him dependent on matter, it follows that He must be in need of a hand, hence a corporeal body becomes mandatory for God. Similarly, God sees and God hears, so for the

exercise of these two faculties, we will have to admit that for the act of seeing, God will need two agents, an eye within Him and light externally, and will need an ear within and air externally for the act of hearing.

If we concede the necessity of other agents besides God's Own attributes, then His Godhead vanishes, because His self-sufficiency and non-dependence have vanished. If to bring any of His faculties into play an external agent is needed, then the integrity of all His attributes disappears and the need for external agents for bringing His faculties into play is established. So what sort of god is He? He must be a helpless and dependent human being!

The fact is that Dayanand had no knowledge of God's attributes. Otherwise, if he also agreed that man needs the eye and light for the act of seeing, and the ear and air for the act of hearing, and God does not need light and air for the acts of seeing and hearing respectively, then if man needs hands and matter for making something, why should God need them also? Dayanand does concede that God does not need a hand to make something, yet, against his own accepted principles, he maintains that God needs matter to create things. This, in fact, was the result of surrendering to materialism.

If the source of his knowledge had been some divine Book, he would not have taken such a dangerous fall. Whatever he wrote was written with the materialists' theory in view and thus he stumbled into attributing such things to God as would render Him unfit for Godhead.

### **Refutation of the doctrine of Transmigration of the Soul**

On the question of *Tanasukh* (Transmigration of the Soul), the Holy Imam also shed light in a very subtle way. He said that the Arya Samajists believe that the number of souls is limited and *Parmeshwar* cannot create new souls. For overcoming this difficulty, *Parmeshwar* has adopted the strategy of inflicting the vicious circle of *awagawan* (transmigration) on human beings as a retribution for their sins. And what a circle it is! It is comprised of no less than one hundred and eighty-four thousand *juns* (lifetimes) and by the time a soul has endured several lifetimes, thousands of fresh sins keep it

entangled in this vicious circle. In short, it is a never-ending circle, and this circle exists just to prop up God's sovereignty, otherwise if these souls were to somehow attain *mukti* (salvation) and thus get their release from this circle, from where would fresh souls come to keep the sovereignty of God functioning?

Is this justice? Would it be termed as fair to perpetuate such a tyrannical arrangement just to make the divine system function? As it is, there is no concept of divine mercy in the Arya Samaj doctrine. Even if a man begs pardon a thousand times and cries and beseeches God for forgiveness for his sins and completely reforms himself, yet God shows no mercy to him and would never forgive him. He would not let him off until He has made him go through the vicious circle of one hundred and eighty-four thousand rebirths. So mercy was already absent from the beginning in the Arya Samaj doctrine, and as for justice, there is a vicious circle going round, of one hundred and eighty-four thousand rebirths, so that God's sovereignty keeps on operating. This theory of the transmigration of the soul was exposed by the Holy Imam as a mere tale of injustice and coercion, not of justice and equity.

### **Why is there variety and diversity in the universe?**

All they can say in support of the theory of Transmigration of the Soul is that there is a great variety in this universe and this is attributed to *karma*, the result of deeds.

The Holy Imam, arguing from the Holy Qur'an, said that variety in life is not the result of deeds, but rather, deeds are the result of variety. Had there been no variety, there would be no deeds. This variety can be observed in the very nature of the universe and is not the result of any deeds. If one looks at the origin of creation, one finds a difference and a variety in all the celestial bodies like the sun, the moon and the earth. There is also a difference in their orbits. Had this difference of orbits not been there, they would have collided and perished. Then cast a glance at the earth. There is variety in the minerals, in the vegetation, in the animal kingdom. Among humans, there is the difference between man and woman; there is a difference in the nature of men and their inclinations. Had there been no variety, from where would such a vast assortment of grains, fruits and vegetables come? From where would the vast variety of animals

so necessary for the existence of mankind have come? Had there been no difference between the sexes, from where would the continuity of the human race have come about? Had there been no difference between human natures, from where would different professions and methodologies, so necessary for human civilisation, have come? In short, had there been no difference, where would we get different spheres of action for each one? It is through the outcome of these differences that we become useful to one another and it is this variety which gives rise to actions. So the difference comes first and the actions follow it.

The differences of this world are temporary. Every person has been given a different environment and a separate situation, and a separate sphere of action has been prescribed for him, a sphere in which he must operate according to God's pleasure in order to achieve the purpose of his creation. His present state is not the end, but the purpose is that he should act. For instance, if a test of counting up to a hundred is to be given to a class of children, and some are given diamonds and some are given pebbles for counting, can anyone allege that the children have not been given a fair deal when everyone knows that all the examiner wants to see is whether the children can count? The pebbles and diamonds are not the property of the children; they have been given these just for counting and they have not been bestowed as a gift. When they have finished counting, the diamonds and the pebbles will be taken back.

Similarly, God has provided man with many physical faculties, blessings, and other bounties. Whatever he has been vouchsafed, whether it is scant or vast, of a low standard or of a high standard, the real purpose of being granted these things is to see how he interacts with and through them; to see whether he uses these faculties and bounties properly and acts according to the pleasure of his Lord in his particular sphere of action.

After a time, these blessings will be taken back from him, and after death, he will start a new life that will be the outcome of his deeds. His actions will accompany him to the next life, and all these worldly possessions will be left behind. It is quite possible that a poor man may become deserving of a very exalted and perpetual life in the next world by performing good deeds in this ephemeral life, and a

rich man may be punished with a life full of suffering in the next world for committing foul deeds in this temporary life.

Hence, this world is a stage set for actions, and the next world is for the recompense of one's actions here. The variety in this world is for facilitating actions, and that is why this world is temporary and ephemeral. The next world will be the result of our diverse actions and that is why it will be eternal and everlasting.

The Holy Imam used various methods and lines of arguments to reject the concepts of the antiquity of souls and matter, and of the transmigration of souls. What is given above is just a summary of one or two of his arguments, and whoever is inclined to go into detail should go through his books like *Surma Chasm-i Arya*, *Shahna-Haqq*, *Nasim-i Da'wat* and *Arya Dharam*.

### **Discrimination based on caste**

The web of caste discrimination is so strong in Hindus, be they Sanatan Dharmis or Arya Samajists, that no reformer has been able to break it. Those who tried to cover it politically always failed.

The Holy Imam thoroughly exposed the absurdity of this custom based on injustice and tyranny, juxtaposing it with Islam's principles of fraternity and equality. He took up a universal standpoint in this matter by which he aimed at the reformation of those Muslims, who, following in the footsteps of the Hindus, harboured notions of belonging to a high caste and believed in discrimination based on the caste system. He set forth the following verse of the Holy Qur'an: *O mankind, surely We have created you from a male and a female, and made you tribes and families, that you may know one another. Surely the noblest of you with Allah is the one who is most dutiful from among you. Surely Allah is Knowing, Aware (49:13).*

Here we have been clearly told that tribes and castes are merely a means of recognition; otherwise we are all the progeny of a single set of parents. In God's sight, the criterion for nobility, honour and gentility is one's deeds: the one most dutiful is the noblest with Allah. And as Allah has full knowledge of the actions and the obedience of each one of us, none can be clever and hypocritical with Him, nor can the worldly eminence of one's family be of any worth with Allah,

nor merely being the offspring of some high-ranking person or some religious divine be of any use in His sight. By emphasising the freedom and equality of Islam, the Holy Imam fully highlighted the injustice and tyranny of the caste system of the Hindus. A religion that considers such discrimination based on caste to be mandatory cannot be from the Creator, the Master, the Most Just God.

### **The custom of *niyog***

Sexual relationship between man and woman occupies a very important place in human society. Unless this relationship is based on a chaste and sanctified bond, no society can remain pure and no human values can be maintained. Islam has laid great stress on placing this relationship on a lawful and holy foundation, and has not allowed any other form of such relations except through *nikah* (marriage). It was also made mandatory that at the time of marriage, the intention of the man and the woman should be that they would enter into a lifelong conjugal relationship and would maintain a lasting companionship. That is why the Holy Qur'an has laid down the mutual marital obligations and has given detailed instructions about the rights of offspring, and has greatly stressed compliance with these and has issued stern warnings in the case of non-compliance. To avoid adultery, it has been stressed that if the marriage is unsuccessful, if there is a loss of love and sincerity in the relationship and there is instead hatred and disgust, which can result in the commission of adultery, then both parties are commanded to sever their relationship through *talaq* (divorce). The parties can then enter into a fresh marriage of their choice.

In any case, the Holy Qur'an has not allowed any liaison between the sexes which is of a temporary nature because that is nothing but open fornication. The offspring of such a liaison is not granted any rights over the parents, nor is the man and woman given any rights over each other. It also says that if one of the marriage partners dies, the surviving partner, man or woman, ought to enter into a fresh marriage after the expiry of the *'iddat* (waiting period).

Though the Hindu religion also contains the institution of marriage, it also allows other ways for developing sexual relations between man and woman. Dayanand came out with a new method called *niyog*. The way *niyog* operates is that if the husband dies, the widow is not

allowed to marry again. However, if the widow wishes, she can go to bed with any man of her choice, get impregnated and produce children, as well as satisfy her passions. In fact, this facility is not confined to a widow. Even a married woman has been allowed, in case she does not get pregnant through her husband, to sleep with a series of men until she gets pregnant. Even if she sleeps with ten men, the children born out of this type of liaison would be counted as the husband's and the responsibility for their upkeep and upbringing would be that of the husband. Not only this, if the husband has gone on a journey, or is sick, and the wife's passions are aroused, she may enter into a *niyog* liaison with any man to satisfy her lust.

The Holy Imam, finding the institution of *niyog* in Dayanand's book, *Satyarth Parkash*, highlighted it before the public and pointed out the unholiness of this practice. He exposed the impurity of the system of *niyog* by writing a book called *Arya Dharam*, and pointed out that a religion that cannot maintain the sanctity of the marriage bond and does not provide for the mutual rights of the marriage partners and the offspring cannot be from God.

The above is just a sampling from the literature produced by the Holy Imam in refutation of the Arya Samaj. Anyone who wishes to go into greater detail should consult his books on this subject.

### **Refutation of the Sikh religion proved Guru Bana Nanak to be a Muslim**

As mentioned earlier, the Sikh religion is not a special religion; it does not possess its own revealed Book or *Shari'ah* (religious Law). Whatever shape the present followers may wish to give it now, the fact is that in the beginning, the Founder, Guru Baba Nanak, just initiated a teacher-disciple order, like the Sufis.

Guru Baba Nanak had himself gained spiritual training from a Muslim saint, Hazrat Farid Ganj Shakkar, and used to accept *bai'at* (the disciple's pledge of fealty) from both Hindus as well as Muslims. He thought that with the passage of time his disciples would come closer to Islam. The first thing he tried to do was to make them abandon idol-worship. After his death, the Muslim disciples remained Muslim but the group of Hindu disciples that had abandoned idol-worship, instead of accepting Islam became a separate sect, called the *Sikhs*.

Later on, Guru Gobind Singh turned it into a political party. Nowadays the Sikhs are busy carrying on a vehement campaign for recognition as a separate religion for the purpose of getting their share in government, though internally they are merged with the Hindus.

The Holy Imam desired that the Sikhs should be reminded of the original message that they were given by Guru Nanak and also reminded them that their Founder was a Muslim. This one stroke of the Holy Imam will suffice to restore the present mutilated form of Sikhism to its original shape, provided the Sikhs lend an ear and try to be reasonable. If the Founder of Sikhism was a Muslim, there is no reason why his followers should not accept Islam.

In his book, *Sat Bachan*, the Holy Imam gave four reasons to prove that Baba Nanak was a Muslim. Firstly, he quoted some sayings of Baba Nanak which are to be found in Sikh literature like *Granth Sahib* and various *Janam Sakhis* in which he, Baba Nanak, openly declared his belief in the doctrines of Islam, in the necessity of offering *salah* (Islamic prayers), his belief in the Holy Qur'an, and also his saying in the *Granth* that one's fortunes are not made without reciting the *Kalimah* (Muslim formula), etc.

Secondly, he gathered together the life events of Baba Nanak mentioned in various *Janam Sakhis*, for example, his remaining in the company of Baba Farid Ganj Shakkar and deriving spiritual benefit from him; accompanying the latter on his journeys; Hindus treating both of them as untouchables and purifying the place wherever they sat by wiping it with cow dung; Baba Nanak's going on a pilgrimage to Makkah, and on the return journey, going into a forty-day spiritual retreat in Multan at the tomb of Shah Shams and his stay there in a *hujrah* (room); the proximity of a mosque to his place of sequestration so that *salah* could be conveniently offered; the existence, even today, of the words *Ya Allah* (O Allah) written by Baba Nanak on the south wall of this tomb; similar spiritual retreats for forty days at the tomb of Shah Abdus Shukur in Sarsah; the existence of a seclusion room, (called *Chilla Baba Nanak*), facing Makkah, attributed to Baba Nanak at this tomb so that he could conveniently offer his *salah*; Baba Nanak's offering *salah* with Nawab Daulat Khan and the Qazi at Sultanpur; Hanafi Muslims becoming

his disciples and their offering funeral prayers at his death - it is an established fact that Muslims do not pledge *bai'at* and become disciples of non-Muslims, nor do they offer funeral prayers for non-Muslims; etc. By gathering together all these incidents, the Holy Imam proved that Guru Baba Nanak was a Muslim, because his life-events were such that they could not have occurred except in the life of a Muslim.

Thirdly, he drew attention to the relics of Guru Baba Nanak, including the *Chola Sahib* (Holy Cloak). The Holy Imam disclosed by quotations from the *Janam Sakhi* of *Angad* that the *Chola Sahib* that is preserved at Dera Baba Nanak today in its original shape was, according to the beliefs of the *Sikhs*, sent down to Baba Nanak from heaven and some heavenly words were inscribed on it. People from all over, including some notables, would present themselves at this shrine to pay respect to and derive blessing from the *Chola Sahib*. Every rich visitor would cover the site of the *Chola* with a precious silk cloth resulting in the *Chola* being covered with hundreds of such cloths. Whenever the *Sikhs* find themselves in some difficulty, they believe that if they pray with their foreheads on the *Chola Sahib*, God will rid them of their difficulty.

The Holy Imam, accompanied by his friends, went to Dera Baba Nanak especially to see the *Chola Sahib*. How he managed to gain a glimpse of the *Chola Sahib* is an interesting detail that he has written in his book, *Sat Bachan*. Briefly, when he looked at the *Chola Sahib*, he found it to be covered with inscriptions of verses of the Holy Qur'an. In one corner, the Muslim *Kalimah*, *La ilaha illal-Lah Muhammadur Rasulullah*, was written beautifully in a bold hand along with the verse of the Qur'an, *Innad-dina indallahil Islam* (Verily the only true religion in God's sight is Islam - 3:18). He also found it to be inscribed with *Surah Fatihah* (The Opening Chapter), *Surah Ikhlas* (chapter 112) and also found repeated inscriptions of the verse, *La ilaha illa Anta subhanaka inni kuntu minaz-zalimin* (There is none worthy of worship except Thee; Holy art Thou; verily I have been among the transgressors - 21:87). The ninety-nine names of God are also written on it. In the lower front margin of the cloak, *Kalimah-i Shahadat* (I bear witness that there is none worthy of worship except Allah and I bear witness that Muhammad is His servant and Messenger) is also inscribed. This shows that Baba

Nanak was so passionately enamoured with Islam that he went around wearing this cloak after having it inscribed with verses of the Holy Qur'an. The Holy Imam had very wisely drawn a detailed sketch of the *Chola* at the time of his visit and then published it in his book, *Sat Bachan*.

Fourthly, the other relic of Guru Baba Nanak is called the *Pothi Sahib* (The Book). The Holy Imam had commissioned an investigation into this book by sending a party of his friends to its repository in Guruhar Sahai, District Ferozepur, in April 1908. This *Pothi Sahib* is a relic of Guru Baba Nanak and has been in the possession of the descendants of Guru Ramdas. Guru Ramdas was the fourth Guru of the Sikhs, and the Golden Temple in Amritsar, called Darbar Sahib, is named after him. In the time of the Holy Imam, the Guru occupying the seat was Guru Bishan Singh. It is an established belief among the Sikhs that Guru Baba Nanak used to have this sacred book hanging around his neck wherever he went. He would often read it, and considered its recitation an act of worship. Many an orthodox Sikh comes to pay homage to this shrine and to render offerings to this relic. As a general practice, this book, which is covered with a multitude of silken scarves, is shown to visitors in its cloth-covered state. The Sikhs would depart after prostrating themselves before it. It is very rare that someone is shown the actual book because of the lengthy procedure involved. First, an offering of one hundred and one rupees must be made to the Guru and then the interested person has to take one hundred and one baths to be in a purified condition to touch it. Only the very rich and very eager Sikhs make the effort of offering the required sum for having a look at the book itself. How the party of disciples sent by the Holy Imam for investigation managed to get a glimpse of the book is narrated in the Holy Imam's book, *Chashma-i Ma'rifat*. In short, when they had the wrappings off and looked at the book, they found it to be the entire Holy Qur'an, in pocket-size, with golden borders. "We cannot understand the dialect in which it is written," said the Guru. "This seems to be a heavenly language which only Guru Sahib could read." This sacred relic set the seal on the fact that Guru Baba Nanak was a Muslim. Whether the Sikhs accept the fact or not, is another matter.

There is no doubt that it has been clearly established now that Guru Baba Nanak was a Muslim and his teachings were based on the Qur'an.

### **Refutation of the doctrine of *Nirvana***

Apparently Buddhism neither mounted an onslaught against Islam nor is there anything of interest or attraction in it – except the philosophy of *Nirvana* – which would bear comparison with Islam. At present, it is entirely a religion immersed in the worship of humans and idols. Its philosophy of *Nirvana* appeals to some philosophers, and they consider it to be superior to Islam and it thus constitutes some sort of indirect challenge to Islam. The sum and substance of this philosophy is that one should annihilate one's desires and emotions by putting an end to all kinds of enjoyments and so abandon all worldly attachments. It aims at a complete annihilation of one's self in this very life. This principle of monasticism is not the central principle of Buddhism alone. In fact, the Christian institution of monkery and the Hindu idea of abandoning the world are all different forms of the same philosophy. By repudiating the underlying idea of this philosophy, the Holy Imam negated Buddhism and all other forms of monasticism.

The Holy Imam proved that the emotions with which the Creator Himself has endowed man should be cherished; to try and fight these emotions is to fight against the intentions of the Creator. If one's salvation depended on the annihilation of emotions, why did He create these in the first place? Hence the teaching that tells us to erase our emotions, our faculties and our potentialities cannot be from a God Who has bestowed upon us these precious gifts. This idea is an after-thought conceived by flights of human fancy. If Gautama Buddha was a prophet of God, then these teachings could not be his, because it is against the intentions of our Creator.

It is only through the proper use of our God-gifted emotions and faculties that we can achieve great heights of progress and perfection in our personalities. If there is a capability called sight in our eye, it cannot be God's intention that one should give up seeing. His intention can only be that man should use his power of sight in a proper way and should avoid looking at unlawful things, and by the lawful use of his eyes he should benefit himself and others. If God

has endowed man with sexual powers, it can never be His intention that one should never use these powers, and by leading a celibate life or by castrating himself, he should wage a war against God by impeding the progress of human survival and continuity. The intention of the Creator is that by the lawful use of these powers, one should fulfil one's obligation to one's wife and children, and carry out all one's social and cultural obligations properly and thus fulfil the intentions of the Creator. It can never be the intention of God that man should try to efface and annihilate all the emotions and powers with which God has endowed him, otherwise their very creation would be not only futile, but harmful. This is contrary to God's Holiness. To use these faculties and emotions properly and according to God's intentions and in accordance with His commandments is tantamount to fulfilling His intentions.

Hence, any religion that teaches the annihilation of these emotions can never be from God, the Creator of man. The only true, perfect and Divine religion is the one which gives us guidance about how to use human emotions and powers properly and guides and teaches us how to attain their proper growth and evolution. Islam, no doubt, is the only such religion in the whole world. Thus by one stroke of the Holy Imam's argument at the root of this erroneous concept of self-annihilation, the concept of Buddhism's *Nirvana* and all the practices of renunciation of this world in the Hindu and Christian religions were completely disproved.

### **Refutation of Bahaism**

As I stated earlier, Bahaism is in fact an off-shoot of the Sheikhiyah sect of the Shi'ite faith. When it kept growing in its extremism and exaggeration, this sect itself opted out of Islam and turned into its enemy.

The central principle of this sect is that the effective tenure of the messengership of the Holy Prophet Muhammad has ended and his Shari'ah has been abrogated. So Baha'ullah, who ascribes to himself the title *Mazhar-i Uluhiyyat* (A Manifestation of Divinity), framed a new Shari'ah in his book, *Kitab-i Aqdas*, and presented it to the world. He claimed that mankind's salvation could only be achieved by following this Shari'ah. He clearly declared that the message of Muhammad is no longer suitable and appropriate for these times and

the world cannot accept it now, so one should give up all hope in and all expectations from this message. He proclaimed:

“The message that I have brought, that I am giving, because I myself am a ‘manifestation of God’, is the key to salvation. The world can only attain salvation by following it.”

In other words, Baha’ullah’s message was a message of despair and hopelessness concerning Islam, but in reality it contained the seeds of its own destruction.

The Holy Imam raised his voice against Baha’ullah’s claims, and compared to Baha’ullah’s message of doom and despair, his was a message of hope and glad tidings for Islam. He said:

“God has sent me and appointed me to declare to the world that Islam is a living faith and its *Shari’ah* can never be abrogated because it contains eternal truths which can never decline. Islam’s God is a living God, and Islam’s Messenger, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, is a living Prophet, whose tenure of messengership extends up to the Day of Resurrection, and the spiritual benefits of his prophethood will always keep flowing. The Holy Book of Islam, the Qur’an, is a living Book and the *Shari’ah* that Islam has brought is an eternal verity. I am a living testament to all these facts because I have attained God-realisation and nearness to the One and Only Living God, the God of all the worlds, by following this very Book and this very Messenger. There is no other religion besides this religion, by following which one can achieve God-realisation. If there is anyone who has found God, let him come to me and either listen to my incontrovertible proofs and perfect arguments in favour of Islam being a living religion, and see heavenly signs as samples of God’s help being vouchsafed to me, or else he should tell me his side of the story and exhibit his spiritual feats.”

Evidently this claim of the Holy Imam amounted to the total destruction of the root of Baha’ullah’s claims, for just as nobody came forward to confront the Holy Imam from any other religion,

none, too, came forward from the Bahai faith. The Holy Imam's claim to being a *mujaddid* and later of being the Promised Messiah came about in the lifetime of Baha'ullah, but this claimant to being a manifestation of God could not muster the courage to come for a confrontation with the Holy Imam, nor would any of his successors, who are themselves considered manifestations of God, or at least occupying the seat of the manifestation of God, dare to come forward.

If in spite of this challenge some Bahais today ask why Hazrat Mirza did not confront Baha'ullah, then their objection is absolutely baseless. Every intelligent person can surmise that the very claim of the Holy Imam to being a *mujaddid* and a messiah was in fact an antithesis to the claim made by Baha'ullah and his message. Baha'ullah had already announced that the *Shari'ah* of Muhammad had been abrogated and that his religion was dead, and it was only after this that the Holy Imam's voice was raised, and this echoed in the four corners of the world through literature and leaflets, proclaiming that the *Shari'ah* of Muhammad was certainly not abrogated and the religion of Muhammad was alive and anyone calling it dead was a liar:

"I am myself living testimony to the fact that the religion of Muhammad is alive, for I have come close to a living God through following this very religion, and after passing through all the stages of spirituality I have attained to the perfection of spirituality and humanity which is the purpose of man's creation. There is no other way leading to God-realisation except by following the Qur'an and the Holy Prophet. Anyone who forsakes this straight path goes astray and will soon meet his doom. If I am in the wrong, let him who so desires come forward and confront me with solid arguments and clear proofs on the one hand, and with heavenly signs on the other."

Was it not Baha'ullah's duty to come forward and confront the Holy Imam on hearing this loud challenge thrown down by the Holy Imam, a challenge which was a direct blow at the very root of all of Baha'ullah's claims? But how can falsehood dare to confront the truth? A deathly silence overtook him and his claims and falsehood

vanished when confronted with the truth. It was the typical style of the Holy Imam that he would lay his axe to the roots of false religions, and this would automatically result in the withering away of their trunks and their branches and thus death would overtake them. This is the method he adopted here and his very claim proved to be a death knell for Baháism.

### **Challenge to prove the truth of Islam**

The Holy Imam did not remain content with just refuting the opposing religions through arguments and proof, but he also challenged them to a spiritual confrontation, saying:

“If there is any truth in your religion and if there is any life in it, then come forward to confront me and prove the truth and life of your religion. I have myself tested Islam practically and have tested its truth on the touchstone of observation and experiment and I have found it to be a living religion. That is, I have found a living God by following it. Today He listens to my prayers and converses with me and manifests heavenly signs at my hand. If any person from among you has attained this station by following his religion, let him come and confront me, so that we can hold a *mubahila* (prayer and imprecation contest) for proving the truth or falsehood of either of us. Let us pray concerning the person who is lying and is making a false claim of being in communion with God, that God may humiliate and kill him in the lifetime of the truthful one, so that it may be a sign for the true religion.”

But none came forward for the confrontation - neither any Christian priest from the Christians, nor any Arya Samaji, nor anyone else from among the Muslims. They kept hurling their criticism from a distance but none dared to come forward for this spiritual contest because it is a fact that today none can attain communion with God, nor gain deep spiritual experience and insight by following any other religion besides Islam, because all these religions are devoid of any living spiritual experience.

The truth is that except for the appearance of the Holy Imam, none from among the Muslims, neither any religious scholar, nor any religious divine, had made this claim of being in touch with God.

Everyone was armed with mere dry logic, which neither provides satisfaction to the hearts nor takes one to a state of certitude in the matter of proving the truth of any religion. In this age of materialism, the greatest stalwarts from among the scholars of Islam, on whom the eyes of the Muslims were focused, could not escape from the vicious circle of materialistic philosophy. In such an age, this challenge of the Holy Imam of spirituality and of being in touch with God and having a personal relationship with Him is so grand that one's heart is filled to the brim with a living faith in the truth of Islam. An intelligent person has to concede the grandeur of the Holy Imam's personality. Leaving prejudice aside, if one looks at just this aspect of his personality with a heart fearful of God and with a fair mind, one has to bow one's head before the Holy Imam's truth and greatness.

Today, when, as a result of the grand defence of Islam made by the Holy Imam, the clouds of the opponents' criticism against Islam have been dispersed and the beautiful face of Islam has been lit up like the sun, and when the hearts of Muslims have once again been filled with certitude about the truth of Islam, people may feel free to criticise the Holy Imam and make insulting remarks about him. But those who remember the days when Islam was under a hail of objections hurled at it by the Christian priests, the Arya Samajists and the atheists, and a blackened picture of the Holy Prophet was being painted before the whole world, and Muslims were lying prostrate before these onslaughts, and the educated Muslim class was gradually becoming disillusioned with Islam under the influence of these attacks, it was the Holy Imam alone who started the grand defence of Islam and thus turned the tables on the opponents: a grand defence which, scattering the clouds of objections, wiped clean the face of Islam of all blemishes and projected it before the whole world and thus filled the hearts of Muslims with a daring faith and a firm belief in the truth of Islam.

Just as the rain, when it pours down, fills not only the rivers and the springs but even the far-off wells, similarly, the literature produced by the Holy Imam not only filled the minds of those who read it with the light of faith, but it also filled up with the light of faith those far-flung hearts that had no access to his literature. A general trend in favour

of the truth and dominance of Islam began to be felt, a trend which made every dried-up pasture of faith become green.

Obviously this divinely-inspired spiritual revival can only be brought about by spiritual people and is a direct result of their entreaties to the Almighty, as mere logic and philosophy cannot produce this effect. Even a philosopher like Dr. Sir Muhammad Iqbal cannot explain God better than by calling him the Ultimate Reality. Thus, it is people with God-gnosis and with spiritual perfection who manage to prove God as a personal God to us. That is to say, God is not only the Ultimate Cause for the entire universe, but each one of us can develop a personal relationship with Him, and He is the *Rabb* (Nourishing Lord) in Whose lap His servant grows and evolves like a child and for Whom he can have a personal love as he has for his parents and can benefit from it.

### CHAPTER III

#### SOME COMMENTS BY THE MUSLIM PRESS ABOUT THE HOLY IMAM'S SERVICES TO ISLAM

Reproduced below are a few quotations from the Muslim press indicating their sense of bereavement on the death of the Holy Imam and their appreciation of the theological dialectics that the Holy Imam developed for the defence and preservation of Islam. "The excellence that is testified to even by opponents is the real excellence," goes the Arabic adage.

#### **Maulana Abul Kalam Azad**

He was a very famous Islamic scholar, author and journalist in India of this century. He was also President of the Indian National Congress before Independence, and after the Independence of India he held high posts in the Federal cabinet of the Indian Republic. At the time of the death of Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, he was acting as the editor of a well-known Muslim newspaper, the *Wakeel* of Amritsar. We give below extracts from the lengthy obituary of Hazrat Mirza that Maulana Abul Kalam Azad wrote in it:

"That man, that very great man, whose pen was a magic wand and whose tongue spell-binding; that man whose brain was a complex of wonders, whose eye could revive the dying and whose call aroused those in the graves, whose fingers held the wires of revolution and whose fists were electrical batteries; that man who for thirty years was an earthquake and typhoon for the religious world, who, like the trumpet of Doomsday, awakened those lost in the slumber of life, he has left the world empty-handed. This bitter death, this cup of poison, which entrusted the deceased to dust, will remain on thousands, nay millions of tongues, as words of bitter disappointment and regret. The stroke of death which slaughtered, along with one who was very much alive, the hope and longings of many, and the wails it raises of lament, will remain in memories for a long time to come.

"The demise of Mirza Ghulam Ahmad Sahib of Qadian is not such an event that a lesson should not be learnt from it, nor

should it be consigned to the passage of time to efface. Such people who produce a religious or intellectual revolution are not born often. These sons of history, in whom it rightly takes pride, appear but barely on the world scene, and when they do they bring about a revolution for all to see.

"In spite of our strong differences with Mirza Sahib in respect of some of his claims and beliefs, his separation for ever has convinced the educated and enlightened Muslims that one of their very great personages has left them. And with him the mighty defence of Islam against its opponents, which was linked with his person, has come to an end. His special characteristic, that he acted against the enemies of Islam as a victorious general, compels us to express openly our feelings that the grand Movement which for so long defeated and trod over our opponents should be continued in the future also.

"Mirza Sahib appeared in the front line of devotees who, for the cause of Islam, accepted the dedication to sacrifice their time from the cradle, through the springs and autumns, to their graves in fulfilling the pledge of loyalty to their beautiful beloved Islam.

"The literature produced by Mirza Sahib in his confrontation with the Christians and the Aryas has received the seal of general approval, and for this distinction he needs no introduction. We have to acknowledge the value and greatness of this literature from the bottom of our hearts, now that it has done its work. This is because that time cannot be forgotten nor effaced from the mind when Islam was besieged by attacks on all sides, and the Muslims, who had been entrusted with the defence of Islam by the Real Defender, as the means of defence in this world of means and causes, were lying flat sobbing in the aftermath of their shortcomings, doing nothing for Islam or not being able to do anything for it.

"On the one hand, the extent of attacks was such that the entire Christian world, considering the lamp of Islamic

spirituality to be a great hurdle in the way of their progress, wanted to extinguish it completely, and the great forces of intellect and wealth were eager to give them all out support in this onslaught. On the other hand, the state of weakness of the defence was such that there were no arrows even to fend off the artillery. In fact, there did not exist any sign of defence or counter-offensive whatsoever."

"Then began that counter-attack from the side of the Muslims in which Mirza Sahib had a part. That defence not only shattered to pieces the initial influence of Christianity, which it really had due to support from the government, and saved thousands, nay millions of Muslims from this dangerous attack which would have succeeded, but the talisman of Christianity itself was blown away like smoke.

"By turning the defence into an offensive mode he has made the vanquished the victor. Today, if we overlook our new and old differences and consider only the service to Islam as the ultimate purpose - than even in the very life of that over-zealous Bishop who, being oblivious of the intrinsic power of Islam, and who, while speaking on the fiftieth anniversary of a Christian Mission, had evinced an unworthy desire to make the Grand Mosque of Delhi the venue of the next Jubilee celebrations - a time has come when the spiritual conquests of Islam may turn the Cathedral of Saint Paul into a house of worship of God instead of a place for worshipping Jesus and his mother; and in lieu of the tolling of church bells, the divine chant of the *Kalimah-i Shahadat* (I bear witness that there is none worthy of worship except Allah, and I bear witness that Muhammad is His servant and His messenger) may reverberate in the air."

"So, this service rendered by Mirza Sahib will place the coming generations under a debt of gratitude, in that he fulfilled his duty to the defence of Islam by joining the front rank of those engaged in the *jihad* by the pen, and he left behind him as a memorial such literature as will last so long as Muslims have blood flowing in their veins and the urge to support Islam remains their prominent national characteristic.

Besides this, Mirza Sahib performed a very special service for Islam by crushing the poisonous fangs of the Arya Samaj.... His writings against the Arya Samaj shed clear light on the claim that, however much the scope of our defence will be widened in the future, it is impossible that these writings could ever be overlooked."

"Natural intelligence, application and dexterity, and continuous debates, had lent Mirza Sahib a special splendour. He had vast knowledge, not only of his own religion, but also of other religions. And he was able to use his vast knowledge with great finesse. In the art of preaching and teaching, he had acquired such accomplishment that the person whom he addressed, of whatever understanding or religion, was thrown into deep thought by his spontaneous reply. India, today, is an exhibition house of religions, and the number of great and small faiths found here, along with their mutual struggles which announce their existence, cannot be matched anywhere else in the world. Mirza Sahib's claim was that he was the arbiter and judge for them all, but there is no doubt that he possessed a special talent to make Islam pre-eminent among all these religions. This was due to his natural ability, taste for study, and hard work. It is not likely that a man of this grandeur will be born again in the Indian sub-continent, a man who will devote his highest desires in this way to the study of religions."

(*Wakeel*, Amritsar)

### **Maulana 'Abdullah Al-'Imadi**

He was the permanent editor of *Wakeel*, and he added his own tribute a few days later as follows:

"Although Mirza Sahib had not received formal education in current knowledge and theology, yet an assessment of his life shows that he had a unique nature not granted to everyone: by the aid of his own study and his upright nature, he had attained sufficient mastery over religious literature. In about 1877, when he was 35 or 36 years old, we find him charged with unusual religious fervour. He is leading the life

of a true and pious Muslim. His heart is unimpressed by worldly attractions. He is as happy in solitude as if he were in congenial company, and when in company he is enjoying the bliss of solitude. We find him restless, and it appears as if he is in search of a lost thing, no trace of which can be found in the mortal world. Islam has so overwhelmed him that he holds debates with the Aryas, and writes voluminous books in support of Islam. His debates in Hoshiarpur in 1886 were so delightful that the feeling of enjoyment has still not been forgotten....

“ The state of ecstasy created by reading his invaluable books which were written to counter other religions and to uphold Islam, still has not faded. His *Barahin-i Ahmadiyyah* overawed the non-Muslims and raised the spirits of the Muslims. He presented to the world a captivating picture of the religion (of Islam), cleansed of the blots and dust that had collected upon it as a result of the superstition and natural weaknesses of the ignorant. In short, this book raised a loud echo in the world, at least within India, which is still reverberating in our ears. Though some Muslim religious leaders may now pass an adverse verdict on *Barahin-i Ahmadiyyah*... the best time to pass judgement was 1880 when it was published. At that time, however, Muslims unanimously decided in favour of Mirza Sahib.

“As to his character, there is not the slightest trace of a blot on it. He lived a virtuous life, the life of a righteous, God-fearing person. To conclude, the first fifty years of his life, in terms of high morals and commendable habits, and in terms of services to the religion, raised him to an enviable position of distinction and honour among the Muslims of India” (*Wakeel*, Amritsar, 30<sup>th</sup> May 1908).

**Editor of *Sadiq al-Akhbar*, Rewari**

“Since Mirza Sahib, by means of his forceful speeches and magnificent writings, has forever silenced the critics of Islam through giving befitting replies to their absurd objections and has proved that truth, after all, is truth, and since he has left no stone unturned in discharging his obligation of service to

Islam, fairness demands that we should express our sorrow at the sudden and untimely death of such a resolute supporter of Islam, of such a ready helper of the Muslim cause, of such an excellent and unique scholar and savant."

**Editor of the *Aligarh Institute Gazette***

"No doubt the deceased was a great champion of Islam."

**Editor of the *Curzon Gazette***

In its issue of 1 June, 1908, the Editor of the *Curzon Gazette*, Mirza Hairat Dehlavi, writes:

"Those precious services of the deceased that he rendered to Islam while debating with opponents like the Arya Samajists and the Christians, are deserving of the greatest praise. He changed the whole complexion of the debate and laid the foundation for a new literature in India. Not only because he was a Muslim, but because he was a researcher, we concede the fact that not even the most prominent Arya Samajists or the most exalted Christian priest had the courage to open his mouth in front of the deceased. Except for the most uncivilised abuse heaped on him, we have not seen even till this day any reasonable reply by the Arya Samajists to the silencing rejoinders that he offered to the opponents of Islam, and to the unique books written by him in refutation of the Arya Samaj and the Christian religions, or on the leaders, or the principles of Islam.

Though the deceased was a Punjabi, yet his pen was so powerful that there is none today in the Punjab, or for that matter, in the whole of India, who can match him in such forceful writing. His brain was full of spiritual and powerful expressions and when he sat down to write, the rapid flow of suitable and apt words was such as to defy description.

Those unacquainted with Maulawi Nur al-Din mistakenly believe that Mirza *Sahib* had taken a lot of help from him, but we say through personal knowledge that Hakim Nur al-Din cannot write even a few lines in comparison with the

deceased Mirza. Although in some places in his spirited Urdu literature his Punjabi background shows up, still, his grand literature is unique in its magnificence and no doubt one goes into ecstasy on reading some of his passages. Although he had received no formal education in Arabic literature, or grammar, or syntax, yet, by dint of his God-given intelligence and his natural capability, he had developed enough mastery over Arabic to write the language freely."

**President, *Jami'at-i Ahrar***

On page forty-six of his book, *Fitna-i Irtidad aur Political Qalabazian*, the President of the *Jami'at-i Ahrar*, says:

"Before the emergence of the Arya Samaj, Islam was like a lifeless body from which the proselytising spirit had completely disappeared. For a while, Muslims were aroused by the aspersion cast on Islam by Swami Dayanand, but they fell back into slumber as usual. Though no proselytising group could emerge from among the various sects of Muslims, however, one heart became restless over the heedlessness of Muslims and after gathering a small band of followers around him, came forward for the propagation and spread of Islam. Although he cannot be absolved from the charge of sectarianism, yet he infused a spirit of proselytisation in his community, a spirit which is not only a role model for the various sects of Muslims, but is also a pattern for all the communities in the world."

**The charge of sectarianism is wrong**

How valuable the admission of an adversary that even when the whip of the Arya Samaj onslaught could not shake the Muslims out of their heedless slumber, there was just one heart which was agitated for the propagation of Islam and that heart was Mirza Ghulam Ahmad's. He was the first to found a community in those days, when Islam was in such danger, for the defence and propagation of Islam, a community which is a standing example for the entire world's communities.

As for the charge that he could not be absolved of the blemish of sectarianism, it is totally wrong. In fact, it was he who set up such a principle for the eradication of sectarianism in Islam that if the Muslims were to follow it, no trace of sectarianism would be left in them today. Just as there is a difference in various human beings in their physical appearance, in spite of belonging to the same line of descent, similarly there is a difference in temperaments, and hence a difference of opinion and thinking is unavoidable. Hence, in order to promote unity and solidarity among Muslims, the basic principle of a natural faith like Islam should be to develop unanimity and consensus over the fundamental principles, overlooking the details and minor issues. By overlooking it does not mean that these things should not be discussed, or the mistaken group should not be told of their mistakes, but it means that we should not brand any Muslim as a *kafir* (unbeliever) over some minor difference of opinion, nor drive him out of the pale of Islam. Point out the mistake, but do not call him a *kafir* because of it.

The Holy Imam drew the attention of Muslims to this very principle and he also enjoined on his community this policy that no one who declares his belief in the *Kalimah* of Islam should be called a *kafir* and if someone does engage in *takfir* (branding others as unbelievers), we should stop him. If he persists, we should boycott him. He laid down this punishment simply for the purpose of eradicating the disease of sectarianism and *takfir* from Muslims. He strongly emphasised, like Imam Abu Hanifah, that if someone exhibits ninety-nine elements of *kufr* (heresy) and only one reason in favour of his being a Muslim, even then he is not to be declared a *kafir*.

Hence, the only community that can be considered free of sectarianism is the one that considers all believers in the Islamic *Kalimah* to be Muslims and considers those who dub anyone a *kafir* so vile as to be ever ready to boycott them. The only community that strictly adheres to this principle is the *Ahmadiyya Jama'at* based at Lahore, and till such time as this policy is adopted by all Muslim groups, the curse of sectarianism cannot be eradicated from the Muslim *ummah*.

The magnificent defence of Islam by the Holy Imam, as shown by the above quotations, has been accepted by friend and foe alike. There are many more such plaudits but they are omitted for lack of space. Anyone interested in confirming this should refer to the Holy Imam's original works like *Barahin-i Ahmadiyyah*, *Surma Chashm-i Arya*, *A'ina-i Kamalat-i Islam*, *Anjam-i Atham* and the supplement thereof, *Arya Dharam* and *The Teachings of Islam*.

## CHAPTER IV

### THE PROPAGATION OF ISLAM

#### **Idea of presenting Islam to the West**

The Holy Imam not only carried out a defence of Islam, but he also went a step further and presented Islam very forcefully to the whole world at a juncture when it was overcome by materialism and atheism, and at a time when Muslims were labouring under an inferiority complex and were suffering political decline. The Muslim heart had been so intimidated by the Christian and the materialistic civilisations, that it was gripped by total despair over the prospect that the Christian nations of Europe, which were in the vanguard of scientific and political progress of the world, might turn their attention towards Islam.

A Muslim could not for a moment imagine that he could present his religion, Islam, to these developed nations. On the contrary, he began to think it an embarrassment even to mention his religion and felt ashamed at being called a Muslim. Even those Muslim elders who did write something about Islam, such as Syed Ameer Ali and Sir Syed Ahmad Khan, did so by way of apology. Anything that they found in Islam to be contrary to the taste of the European people they apologetically tried to explain away as if the European philosophy and their tastes were proven verities, and if anything contrary to these were found to exist in Islam, they apologetically tried to reinterpret it to suit European thought.

This was the inferiority complex that had engulfed the educated Muslim class, so much so that the very idea of presenting Islam to the West never even crossed their mind. At such a time a proclamation went forth from Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad from the little-known hamlet of Qadian, a proclamation quite unique and distinct from anything in the whole world, saying that though the political decline of Muslims had reached its lowest point, the time for its spiritual dominance had come, in accordance with the divine promise of the Holy Quran: *So that He may make it dominant over all other religions* (61:9).

The political decline of Muslims is a matter distinct and separate from the spiritual dominance of Islam. Historically speaking, this has been an ongoing process, that at the time of the political descent of Muslims, God has caused the conquering and ruling nations to accept Islam and then become its servants. When the Tartars razed Baghdad to the ground and when the vanquished Muslims were trampled under their feet, God, Most High, threw the whole world into amazement by showing the miracle of the Tartars entering the fold of Islam and by making these people the servants of Islam.

When the material sword of the Muslims wanes, its spiritual sword begins to wax. God, Most High, shows such miracles to demonstrate to the world that Islam is not dependent on any material sword for its dominance. Its dominance has always come through spirituality and will always come about through it. Truth and Godliness are never in need of a government or a sword for their spread and propagation. Truth is always recognised through its own merit.

Hence, if the eternal verities of the Holy Qur'an and the excellent example of the Holy Prophet are presented to any people in a correct and sensible manner, there is no reason why the human mind should not accept these. The Holy Imam did not confine himself to merely making a verbal claim, but he implemented it practically by writing a voluminous book, *Barahin-i Ahmadiyyah*, about the truth and the reality of the Holy Qur'an and the Holy Prophet's prophethood, and very boldly presented it to the world. He made an announcement, both in Urdu and in English, throughout India, Europe and America, that if anyone could refute any of its three hundred arguments, the Holy Imam would give him a reward of ten thousand rupees. It was this advertisement which caused Mr. Alexander Webb, the well-known American convert to Islam, to accept the religion. No one has so far dared to respond to the challenge contained in this book and the challenge still stands.

This book, *Barahin-i Ahmadiyyah*, offers no apology for Islam; rather, the unique and wonderful thing that stands out in this book, apart from its intellectual arguments, is that it has taken Islam to be the real basis of its authority and has presented its spirituality vis-à-vis the materialism of Europe and has demonstrated the dominance of the spirituality of Islam over Europe's materialism. It tells us that by

denying the spiritual dimension of man, Europe has closed its eyes to the most important factor of mankind's destiny. That is to say, out of the two eyes, one of spiritual knowledge and the other of material sciences, Europe's right eye, the eye of spirituality, is closed. In its race for scientific knowledge, it has become like a one-eyed person who is blind in the right eye.

Just as Europe is the standard-bearer of scientific knowledge, so is Islam the standard-bearer of spiritual knowledge. Europe should not become so proud because of its progress in material sciences that it should go beyond its limits and deny the existence of spiritual science without putting it under observation and under test. It should bear in mind that if the East must become a humble student of the West in learning material sciences, the West also needs to be a humble student of the East in learning spiritual sciences and knowledge. We should go to the expert for instruction in any branch of knowledge. An expert in spiritual knowledge is not necessarily an expert in material sciences and the expert in material sciences cannot claim that he is also an expert in spiritual knowledge. We shall not go to a prophet to enquire about the method of construction of an aeroplane, but we shall go to the expert in this field. Similarly, it will be utter foolishness to go to an expert in material sciences instead of a prophet or a seer to enquire about Godliness and spirituality. To build a house we will consult an architect and not a doctor, but we will not go to an architect to get a disease diagnosed.

If this is the state of affairs within the material sciences themselves, then as regards the boundaries of the spiritual and the material sciences, we find that a distinct difference exists between the two. So the material progress of Europe should not overawe Muslims and frighten them into making far-fetched interpretations of the decisive principles of Islam and presenting them apologetically to the Europeans. We should, instead, make up the deficient aspect of humanity, left deficient because of materialism, through the spirituality of Islam, and should try to rectify the errors and mistakes committed by materialism about spirituality.

The Holy Imam has projected Islam in a glorious manner in his book, *Barahin-i Ahmadiyyah*. In doing so, contrary to the practice of worldly philosophers, he adopted the way of the prophets and their perfect

followers. That is, his line of argument runs from the inward to the outward. For instance, in talking about the existence of God and spirituality, the first thing he announced was:

“I have acquired a sure knowledge of the existence of God by being a witness to things spiritual, and He responds to my entreaties and enters into dialogue with me, and I give testimony to the truth of Islam after having received intimation from Him.”

Having said this, he went on to give his philosophical arguments which were free of errors and mistakes, having been based on his being a visionary, and so strong and firm were they that he very boldly offered a reward of ten thousand rupees to anyone who could repudiate any of his arguments.

One should never forget this speciality of the Holy Imam, that the picture he painted of Islam was based on the Holy Qur'an and the *Sunnah* of the Holy Prophet. Even his arguments were inferred from the Holy Qur'an. To add anything of his own to heighten the effect while presenting Islam, or to hide any aspect for fear of people, or to take refuge in far-fetched interpretations, he considered as cardinal sins. It was an axiom with him that a religion which is not clearly based on the Qur'an and the *Sunnah* cannot be Islam and must be the product of the exponent's own imagination. That is why he greatly disliked the Naturalist tendencies of Sir Syed Ahmad Khan or the Chakralvi interpretation of the sect called *Ahl-i Qur'an*. His pen was always busy opposing them. He considered all innovations, which some of the jurists of Islam and the latter-day Sufis intermingled with pure Islam, to be very bad.

He carried out the duties of a *mujaddid* in a perfect manner, and in that way he rid Islam of all the adulterations and innovations that had been made in it by the ignorance of the public, by blind *taqlid* (blindly following the four Imams), by the erroneous practices of the so-called Sufis and by the forced interpretation of the Naturalists and the Chakralvis as they reacted to the pressures of modern philosophy. He then presented to the world the pristine and original Islam based on the Qur'an and the *Sunnah*.

He neither made out Islam to be a dry collection of questions of Law, bereft of any spiritual content, as the *Ahl-i Hadith* scholars did, nor did he adopt a wrong connotation of spirituality, nor did he follow the innovations of the latter-day Sufis. Instead, he presented a pristine Islam to the Muslim public after ridding it of all these errors so much so that even for the derivation of his arguments, he would not stray from the Qur'an, for it was his firm conviction that human philosophy was liable to error.

Greek philosophy neither carried any worth in the Holy Imam's sight nor was he daunted by modern philosophy. He had not been even remotely touched by the inferiority complex that had affected the modern educated Muslims towards Western philosophy because of their slavish mentality. Whenever there was a conflict between the viewpoint of Western philosophers and that of Islam, he would never be intimidated by Western philosophy, but he would very manfully and boldly take up the question and would review it deeply through the eye of a researcher and would pinpoint the errors of Western philosophy. This work was done by him with such facility that the discerning observer would be left wonder-struck by the ease with which a resident of a small village, and one who was unfamiliar with the English language and Western sciences, could pinpoint the errors of Western philosophy and could make the truth of Islam come out triumphant.

It was clearly obvious that this was God-inspired knowledge given to him from Above. He had undergone the spiritual experience and was at that stage of certitude and God-gnosis where there could not be a moment's doubt or misgiving in his mind. His belief in Islamic principles was as certain as two and two make four. Therefore, he never became perturbed when there was a confrontation with Western philosophy, and would throw a researcher's glance at the disputed point with great courage, bravery and with a definite belief in his success, and would eventually defeat the falsehood like a victorious general, pointing out the error of Western philosophy and highlighting the truth of Islam. Again, he would make a presentation of the truth of Islamic principles in such a beautiful and attractive manner that people would become enamoured of these principles and their hearts would melt and flow like water.

### **The Great Religions Conference at Lahore**

Those who attended the Great Religions Conference at Lahore in 1896 cannot forget the ecstasy that the public experienced by listening to his lecture. In this religious declamation contest, many a champion scholar was present to throw light from his own religious point of view on the five questions set by the organisers, and representatives of all the major religions of the world - the Christians, Sanatan Dharmi Hindus, the Arya Samajists, the Brahmo Samajists, the Dev Samajists, the Sikhs, the Jews and the Muslims, etc. - were present at this conference. The five questions on which each representative read out his thesis were:

- The physical, moral and spiritual conditions of man.
- Man's life after death.
- The real purpose of man's existence in the world.
- The effect of *karma* (one's actions) on man's life in this world and in the Hereafter.
- Sources of knowledge (*gyan* or gnosis).

Obviously, these five questions covered all the aspects of the aims and objectives of religion and every representative had to shed light on these questions from the viewpoint of his own faith. But regrettably, the replies given by all the representatives of religions, with the exception of the Holy Imam, could not provide the public with any satisfying insights. The biggest shortcoming was that whatever presentation they made was mostly based on their own imagination. They hardly presented anything from their religion's revealed Books, and whatever little they read out, was not the presentation of their religion, but was a representation of their own ideas.

However, the replies given by the Holy Imam to these questions were so satisfying and full of knowledge and wisdom that it must be taken as fact that his essay was the gist and the essence of the whole conference. His essay handsomely fulfilled the purpose of the conference. Whatever presentation he made was based on the Holy Qur'an and there was nothing in it from himself. On each topic of the lecture a quotation of a Qur'anic verse was given, and whatever he inferred from these verses and the verities and insights that he expounded through these verses caused all the educated and

knowledgeable class, Muslims and non-Muslims alike, to nod their heads in amazement. As for the Muslims, they swayed with ecstasy on hearing the masterful exegesis of the Qur'anic verses, and the representatives of the other religions were amazed by listening to this endless ocean of verities and insights and many a prominent atheist and heretic bowed his head before these truths. The magical spell was so intense that no one was aware of himself anymore. Friend and foe alike, whether Muslim or non-Muslim, were all sitting transfixed like statues, and the lecture had such a supernatural effect that it appeared as if the angels were descending from heaven with bowls full of light.

Every heart that was present was drawn to it as if a hidden hand were driving it to this world of ecstasy, so much so that, in this intense state of rapture, none noticed the expiry of the time limit set for the end of the conference. When the chairman of the conference announced the end, the listeners were greatly shocked, because not even the reply to the first question given by the Holy Imam had been completed. While these pearls of wisdom and knowledge were in the process of being scattered, the spell was suddenly interrupted and anxiety arose because of the running out of time.

It was the turn of Maulawi Mubarak Ali of Sialkot after the Holy Imam and he announced that he would gladly donate his allotted time to the Holy Imam's lecture. The audience showed such happiness and joy over this announcement that it was a cause of wonder to see this public reaction. The result was that Maulawi Abdul Karim of Sialkot, who was given the duty of reading this essay, continued reading until four-thirty in the afternoon and the time allowed for the conference ran out. Still the reply to the first question had not been exhausted.

Eventually, the audience insisted that the lecture should be read out to its end without interruption, so the organisers of the conference, which included representatives from all the religions, announced that this essay would continue to be read irrespective of the time taken. The first question came to an end at five-thirty, but the public kept insisting that the essay should be read to its end. Eventually, the organisers of the conference extended it for one more day, especially to accommodate this essay.

It took seven and a half hours spread over two days to complete the essay. During the reading of it, the public was in such a state of transport that some had tears of joy in their eyes and soft-hearted people in the audience even kept crying profusely. The listeners felt as if they were ascending stairs of faith and God-gnosis. One felt as if a vial of the elixir of life was being poured into one's heart through the ears as each point of gnosis was made and as each pearl of knowledge and wisdom was disclosed. The entire city of Lahore was greatly stirred by this lecture. Not only the organisers and judges of the conference, but all and sundry, those for and those against, all conceded that "the essay by Mirza *Sahib* was triumphant". Even the opposition press conceded the excellence and superiority of this essay. The English daily of Lahore, *The Civil and Military Gazette*, admitted in clear terms that "in this religious conference, the essay by Mirza *Ghulam Ahmad* of Qadian, was superior to all the others." At this conference, Islam was granted such a clear victory over other religions that one felt that the Qur'anic promise: *So that He can make it overcome all other religions* (61:9) had found its fulfilment.

Today the proceedings of this meeting are available in book-form under the title, *Jalsa-i A'zam Tehqiq-i Mazahib ki Ru'idad*, in which the speeches by all the religious representatives have been reproduced. If one reads these, one feels as if all of them are nothing but dim earthen lamps whose flickering light has been obliterated by the light of the sun-like splendour of the Holy Imam's essay. On reading his essay, one's heart is filled with the light of faith in the truth of Islam and the soul goes into ecstasy from the enjoyment of God-gnosis.

When Maulana Muhammad Ali translated the Holy Imam's essay under the title, *The Teachings of Islam*, and when it was published in England, it became the source of guidance for hundreds of Englishmen who consequently became Muslims. The well-known Russian writer, Count Tolstoy, was amazed on reading it in the pages of the *Review of Religions* and greatly praised it in one of his letters.

Not only this essay, but the entire literature on Islam produced by the Holy Imam is so magnificent and full of truth, knowledge and wisdom, that even the most inveterate opponent, if not bereft of

justice and fairness but searching for truth, would be greatly impressed by it. His head would bow before the truth and the beauty of Islam. Very eminent judicious minds, though disagreeing with his claim, conceded that the services that he has rendered to Islam find no parallel in the thirteen-hundred-year history of the religion.

I have reproduced earlier in this book the review of *Barahin-i Ahmadiyyah* by Maulawi Muhammad Hussain Batalvi, the chief opponent of the Holy Imam, but it bears repetition, so ponder over it again.

“In our opinion this book, at this time and in view of the present circumstances, is such that the like of it has not appeared in Islam up to now, while nothing can be said about the future. Its author, too, has been so constant in the service of Islam, with his money, life, pen and tongue, and personal experience, that very few parallels can be found in the Muslims. If anyone considers our words to be an Asian exaggeration, let him show us at least one such book which so vigorously fights all the opponents of Islam, especially the Arya and Brahmo Samaj, and let him name two or three persons who have supported Islam, not only with their wealth, lives, pen and tongue, but also by personal spiritual experience, and who have boldly thrown the challenge to all the opponents of Islam and the deniers of Divine revelation, that whoever doubts the truth of God speaking to man, he may come and observe it for himself, thus giving other religions a taste of this experience” (*Isha'at as-Sunnah*, vol. vii, no. 6, pp.169-170).

There is no doubt that the acclaim by many persons in praise of the services rendered by the Holy Imam to Islam was stifled by the fear of *takfir* (being declared a *kafir*) by the *maulawis*. But the admission of his services to Islam by the eminent and judicious minds of India on his death, made through the national press, has been highlighted above in chapter III for the benefit of the reader. This was just a glimpse. If anyone wants to go into further detail let him peruse the literature produced by the Holy Imam and satisfy himself.

### **The means adopted for the propagation of Islam**

The Holy Imam adopted diverse ways for the propagation of Islam. Apart from lectures, leaflets and books, he started a monthly journal under the name, *The Review of Religions*, under the editorship of Maulana Muhammad Ali, MA, and many incisive articles from the pen of the Holy Imam and that of Maulana Muhammad Ali appeared in it. These dealt mostly with the doctrines and principles of Islam and other topical questions of religion. Maulana Muhammad Ali translated the Holy Imam's articles, which were in Urdu, into English.

This journal caused quite a stir both in the Christian and the Islamic worlds and the recognition of Islamic superiority and excellence started to appear from friend and foe alike. The dominance of Islam over all other religions became an actual possibility. A favourable breeze swept through the four corners of the world and this strengthened the faith of Muslims in the truth of Islam and compelled non-Muslims to abandon their hatred of Islam and to develop a respect for and a recognition of its greatness.

But he was not content with this alone. Since it was a mission that would take centuries for fruition, he founded a community in order to ensure the continuity of the movement under the Qur'anic directive: *And from among you there should be a party who invite to good and enjoin the right and forbid the wrong. And these are they who are successful* (3:103). From this community, he took a pledge of "making the Faith take precedence over one's worldly concerns". He exhorted his followers to sacrifice their all, their lives, their minds, and their wealth in the way of the Lord and in the mission for the propagation of Islam.