

True conception of the Ahmadiyya Movement

From the book 'The Ahmadiyya Movement'

by

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www.aaiil.org

Ahmadiyya Anjuman Isha'at Islam Lahore Inc. U.S.A.

1996

*Originally published in Urdu as
Chapter 4 of the book 'Tahrîk Ahmadiyya'*
December 1931

*Published in English in 'The Ahmadiyya Movement'
(English translation of 'Tahrîk Ahmadiyya')*
1966

First U.S.A. edition (with revisions)
1996

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The *Ahmadiyya Anjuman Isha'at Islam* (Ahmadiyya Association for the Propagation of Islam) was founded at Lahore, Pakistan, in 1914 by the prominent followers of Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad. It exists to promote a liberal, tolerant and peaceful picture of Islam, as found in the Holy Quran and the life of the Holy Prophet Muhammad. It has published a vast quantity of highly-regarded literature on Islam in various languages, and has branches and members in several countries.

ISBN: 0-913321-28-1

Publisher's Note

True Conception of the Ahmadiyya Movement originally formed a chapter in the Urdu book *Tahrik Ahmadiyya* by Maulana Muhammad Ali, first published in 1931. The Urdu book was translated into English as *The Ahmadiyya Movement* by Maulana S. Muhammad Tufail, missionary of the Lahore Ahmadiyya Movement, who had also served as Imam of the Shah Jehan Mosque, Woking, England. Besides being a part of *The Ahmadiyya Movement*, this chapter was also published in English separately.

This is the first U.S.A. edition of the booklet, which has been re-typeset and re-formatted. In a few places the translation has been slightly revised, but it remains substantially as in earlier printings.

Ahmadiyya Anjuman Isha'at Islam Lahore, Inc., U.S.A.
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True conception of the Ahmadiyya Movement

Ahmediyyat is not a separate religion

There are many misconceptions prevailing among people about the Ahmadiyya Movement. The greatest of all is that it is a religion quite separate from Islam like Bābism or Bahāism. The basis of this false idea is that Mirza Ghulām Ahmad of Qādiān, Founder of the Ahmadiyya Movement, has laid a claim to prophethood. This allegation has already been refuted in the foregoing pages.¹ But there are some who go to the extent of declaring that Ahmadīs have a different *kalimah* (formula of Faith), a different form of prayer, a different Book besides the Qur'ān and a different *Qiblah*.² All these charges have no foundation at all.

It is apparent that had Ahmediyyat been a separate religion, like the Bābī or Bahāī faith, its activities obviously would not have been confined to the spread of Islam. Whatever work has been done in this age about the propagation of Islam, in Europe, America and other countries of the world, the greater part of it is due to the efforts of the followers of the Ahmadiyya Movement. In this connection the literature produced by Muslims is either the result of the activities of this Movement or has been done under its influence. Had Ahmediyyat been something different from or hostile to Islam, it would not have laid so much emphasis on establishing Muslim missions and spreading

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1. The reference is to the book of which this booklet formed one chapter.
 2. Place towards which one faces in prayer.

Islamic literature all over the world. Bābism was in existence fifty years before the inception of the Ahmadiyya Movement. Did it start any Islamic mission or publish any Islamic literature? If Ahmādīs had a religion different from Islam, they would have directed their full efforts to the advancement of that ‘new’ faith, but as they are entirely engaged in the service of Islam, they cannot, and in fact do not, owe allegiance to any other religion except Islam.

It is, indeed, true that a group from among the followers of Ḥazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, *i.e.* the followers of the Qādiāni movement, have ascribed a claim of prophethood to him but they are still in an intermediary state. Although on account of their belief in such a prophethood they have declared all the Muslims of the world to be unbelievers (*kāfirs*)³ they have not yet adopted a new formula of faith (*kalimah*) for themselves. And although according to their creed unless a person accepts Mirza Ghulam Ahmad as a prophet and formally takes an oath of allegiance to that effect, he does not enter the fold of Islam, they have, so far, refused to formulate a new *kalimah* for themselves and adhere only to the Islamic formula of faith:

Lā ilāha ill-Allāh, Muḥammad-ur rasūl-ullāh

“There is no God but Allāh, Muḥammad is Allāh’s Messenger.”

But this is, as I have said, only an intermediary position or a state of indecision. They will either, at last, have to give up the belief in the Promised Messiah’s prophethood or formulate a separate *kalimah* and a separate religion for themselves.⁴ The logical conclusion of their creed — that anybody who does not accept Mirza Ghulam Ahmad as a prophet is a *kāfir* and outside the pale of Islam⁵ — is that the *kalimah* is not valid any more.

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3. Mirza Bashīr-ud-Dīn Maḥmūd Ahmad, *The Truth about the Split* (Qādiān, India, Second Edition, 1938 C.E.), pp. 55, 140, 185 etc.
 4. Please see the Translator’s Note on page 47.
 5. See next page for note.

Therefore when the acceptance of the existing *kalimah* does not keep a person within the fold of Islam — and even the four hundred million Muslims of the world who declare their faith in it are declared to be *kāfirs* and outside the pale of Islam — then this *kalimah* must necessarily be considered as abrogated, and the messengership and prophethood of a person whose acceptance has become essential for entering the fold of Islam must form a part and parcel of the new *kalimah*. If the belief in the prophethood of Ḥazrat Mirza is not renounced, a time will come when these people shall have to formulate a separate *kalimah* and a separate religion, and their relation with Islam would become like that of Bābīs or Bahāīs who consider Islam a genuine religion of the past, but with regard to the present time they consider their own faith alone as true — Islam and its *kalimah* having been abrogated by them.

The Qādiānis have put themselves on the horns of a dilemma. They are trying to sail in two boats at a time. On the one hand they declare four hundred million Muslims — believers in the *kalimah* — to be *kāfirs* and on the other they include themselves among Muslims, refusing to adopt a new *kalimah* and a new faith. But this condition cannot exist for long. Either the repulsiveness of such a doctrine would at last create an aversion in the minds of the majority of these people and they would refrain from attributing a claim of prophethood to Ḥazrat Mirza or they would accept the ultimate result of their belief, which is that the old *kalimah* shall have to be discarded to give place to a new one. The Aḥmadiyya Movement, at any rate, was neither a new religion in its original form, nor has it, so far, grown to be a new religion among the followers of Ḥazrat Mirza Ghulām Aḥmad.

Note 5 from last page:

“That all those so-called Muslims who have not entered into his *bai'at* formally, wherever they may be, are *kāfirs* and outside the pale of Islam, even though they may not have heard the name of the Promised Messiah. That these beliefs have my full concurrence I readily admit.”

— Mirza Bashīr-ud-Dīn Maḥmūd in his book *The Truth about the Split, Qādiān, India, Second Edition, 1938 C.E.* pp. 55–56.

It is not even a sect in the general sense of the term

Every religion in the world is divided into sects which generally differ in their fundamentals with one another. For instance, some Christians regard Jesus Christ as God or son of God and others take him to be a human being and with advancement of knowledge this group is increasing in number. This means that believers in Triune God as well as those who believe in one God are all Christians. Similarly, among Hindus there are many who believe in one God and there are others who worship idols and have faith in three hundred and thirty million gods. Some consider the Vedas as the spoken word of God and others take them to be the composition of human beings. Such differences, in fact, should be termed as fundamental sectarian differences.

There are no differences and no sects in Islam in this respect. All the sects of Islam agree on the fundamentals of religion. All believe in one God and in the finality of the Prophethood of Muḥammad. All take the Qur'ān as the last revealed Book of God which has not suffered any change in text. All face towards the same *Qiblah* when praying. But with this uniformity of opinion that all believe in one God, one Messenger, one *Qiblah* and one Book there have been differences on minor points and details of religion. Some Muslim *Imāms* after due consideration have arrived at different conclusions with regard to certain matters of religious life. Various groups of Muslims have followed these *Imāms* according to their own choice, and this has resulted in the formation of different schools of thought in Islam. This is the real fact behind the growth of the so-called sects in Islam. Differences among these sects are not differences in the fundamentals of religion, but in matters of jurisprudence, or details of religious practices. This type of difference of opinion is, in fact, a blessing as the Prophet is reported to have said: *Difference in my ummah is a blessing*, because along with unity this opens a way for freedom of opinion. Liberty in views, and free exercise of judgement (*ijtihad*) is, in fact, a great blessing that helps in the advancement of knowledge and learning, and develops in every person the habit of deep

thinking. The sectarian differences of Muslims are, therefore, of no real importance. But the foundation of Ahmadiyya Movement has not been laid on any of such sectarian differences. The chief characteristic of this Movement today has been the same as it was before, *viz.* the defence and propagation of Islam. Whatever differences this movement has with other Muslims, these are definitely not connected with matters of jurisprudence or details of religious life but only with matters concerning the defence and propagation of Islam. The history of the Movement bears testimony to the fact that when Mirza Ghulām Ahmad founded this organization and made a declaration for an oath of allegiance, he did not differ with other Muslims on any religious doctrine. The object of the formation of this organization was only the protection and propagation of Islam. Although he had been devoting his whole time even before that to this noble objective but at this stage under Divine command he set up a permanent basis for the spread of Islam according to the Qur'ānic verse:

*“And from among you there should be a party who invite to good and enjoin what is right.”*⁶

Immediately thereafter he started writing *Fath Islam* wherein he divided the work of the spread of Islam into five main branches. At this juncture, it was manifested to him that the belief in the physical ascension and continued existence of Jesus Christ was an obstacle in the way of the progress of Islam. It was on this Divine manifestation that his claim was based and it was because of this that Muslims started opposing him.

Attitude towards jurisprudential problems

In all the matters of *fiqh* (jurisprudence) the attitude of Ahmādīs is completely liberal. The details of laws, *viz.* regulations of marriage, divorce, inheritance, prayer, fasting, ablution etc. which have caused great controversy among Muslim '*ulamā'* do not worry them in the least. They enjoy full liberty in these

6. The Qur'ān, 3:104.

matters. It would be quite correct to say that the Ahmadiyya Movement is rather a synthesis of the different schools of thought in Islam based on *fiqh* and invites them towards unity by tolerating and ignoring their differences. Whatever minor differences Ahmadiyyat has with other Muslim sects only relate, as already remarked, to the propagation and defence of Islam. Thus, if Ahmadiyyat is a sect in Islam, it is unlike the sects of other religions, for there are no sects in Islam in that sense. It is again unlike other sects in Islam which are based on differences in *fiqh*, for in that sense it is a synthesis of all these sects. It is a sect in Islam in the sense that for the furtherance of the cause of Islam it has laid emphasis on certain points and has devised effective means to face the hostile forces working against Islam. The task for the internal reformation of Muslims itself falls within the scope of its programme.

A Movement for Islam

Because of its distinctive features from other Islamic groups in certain respects, the Ahmadiyya group may be called a sect or school of thought in Islam, but it is in fact a great movement within the fold of Islam, the main object of which is to awaken Muslims and consolidate their efforts for the spread of Islam. Its object is not to concentrate on, and retain differences of, minor importance as is done by other schools of thought in Islam. Its ideal is, however, far superior and beyond all sectarianism.

If the only object of this movement is to prove the death of Jesus Christ and establish the truth of the claims of Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad as the Promised Messiah, Mahdi and *Mujaddid*, it may perhaps be classed as a sect like other sects in Islam. But that is not for which the Ahmadiyya Movement stands. These are only a means to achieve an end. And what is that end? Spreading and strengthening the cause of Islam in the world and rousing up of Muslims for this sacred task.

Death of Jesus Christ

Belief in the death of Jesus Christ is regarded to be the most important feature of the Aḥmadiyya Movement. There have been Muslim divines like *Imām Bukhārī* and *Imām Mālik* who believed in the death of Jesus Christ. *Imām Bukhārī* in his collection of *Ḥadīth* has reported from Ibn ‘Abbās that the significance of *mutawaffī-ka* is *mumītu-ka* (i.e. *I will cause you to die*).⁷ That is he has not accepted the meaning of *tuwaffā* as the taking of body and soul together as was accepted afterwards by some people. *Imām Mālik*, similarly, believed in the death of Jesus Christ: *wa qāla Mālik-un māta i.e.*, and *Mālik* said he died.⁸

Belief in the death of Jesus Christ by two persons of such great calibre shows that there must be others also from the earlier Muslim divines who entertained a similar belief. The companions of the Holy Prophet seem to be all agreed upon this point. Because at the death of the Holy Prophet, those companions who could not believe the sad news to be true were silenced by Abu Bakr by the recitation of the verse: “*And Muḥammad is no more than a messenger; messengers before him have already passed away.*”⁹ All the companions of the Holy Prophet were thus duly convinced that like *all* other prophets, their Prophet too had left this mundane life. This was the consensus of opinion of the companions of the Prophet over the death of Jesus Christ. Had anyone of them believed that Jesus was alive he should have pointed it out.

In this age too the late Sir Sayyid Aḥmad of Aligarh, *Mufī* Muḥammad ‘Abduh and *Sayyid Rashīd Raḍā* of Egypt, believed in the death of Jesus Christ. Many other ‘*ulamā*’ of India also share this belief but are afraid of declaring it in public, as such a belief is sufficient to stigmatize them as pro-Aḥmadī. People

7. Al-Bukhārī, 65:12.

8. Imām Muḥammad Ṭāhir of Gujrat, *Majma’ Bihar al-Anwār* (Lucknow, India, Nawal Kishore Press), Vol. I, p. 286, and *Ikmāl al-Ikmāl Sharḥ Muslim*, Vol. I, p. 265.

9. The Qur’ān, 3:144.

have grown suspicious to the extent that anybody who just mentions it, is considered to have secret alliance with the Ahmadiyya Movement. As the claim of Hazrat Mirza is based on the death of Jesus Christ, the Muslim '*ulamā*' and some of the present-day translators of the Holy Qur'ān are much hesitant in accepting this belief as true.

Apparently, the question of the life and death of Jesus Christ is neither one of the fundamentals of Islam nor a part of its *furū'* (*lit.* branches). Why is it, then, that it has become one of the distinguishing features of this movement? As it has been discussed before, the main object of the Ahmadiyya Movement is the propagation of Islam, particularly in the West where it has to face the onslaughts of the *Dajjāl* (Antichrist); the belief in the corporal existence of Jesus Christ is the greatest obstacle in the propagation of Islam among Christians. If Jesus Christ is alive in heavens with his body of clay for the last two thousand years and does not partake of food and is above the needs and necessities of this material life without suffering any change in his body, he is certainly not of the human species. If he is actually endowed with these peculiarities, his body is immortal. This is the argument which is put forth by Christians very forcibly. Muslims who believe in the continued existence of Jesus Christ fall an easy prey to them. The natural corollary of their strange belief is that Jesus Christ is far above a human being, rather a co-sharer in Divinity. It is not worthwhile under these conditions to go and preach Islam to Christians. For this reason Hazrat Mirza Ghulām Ahmad laid emphasis on eradicating such a false view about Jesus Christ.

Significance of the Claims

The true conception of the Ahmadiyya Movement is only this, that it is a great movement for the propagation, spread and defence of Islam in the world, and all the distinguishing features it possesses are a means to achieve this great end. So much so that accepting the claims of the Founder is also not an object in itself but only a means to achieve the object of the spread of

Islam. The greatest thing is that with the acceptance of these claims one feels in oneself a very strong faith which invigorates one to make every sacrifice for the sake of Islam. The logic of this belief may or may not satisfy everybody, but the fact is that those who kept company with the Founder of the Movement or came into spiritual contact with him after his death, felt a real zeal for the propagation of Islam and became fully convinced that Islam was going to overpower the world. It seems something is lacking in us that we do not rise up to the occasion and acquaint the world with the real teachings of Islam, otherwise Islam possesses such a spiritual beauty within it that, whether it is materialism which seems at present to sweep away everything along with it or the net of Christianity which seems to be spreading all over the world today or the dominance of any other force, all of them are going to be subdued by Islam; all heads have to bow down before its invincible principles of peace and spiritual well-being. This faith and this love for the religion of Islam inspires every Aḥmadī to do his best for the cause of Islam.

Without faith and love the will to sacrifice cannot exist. The spiritual contact with the Founder stimulates in Aḥmadīs this faith and love. Thus a change occurs in them as it does in a tree which has been engrafted upon. That is why there is a tremendous difference between the attitude of an Aḥmadī and that of a non-Aḥmadī. The latter is waiting for somebody else to come and help him in the cause of Islam and the former is convinced that this is his work and it is he who is responsible for it and has the power to do it. Differences in the outlook of these two persons are quite obvious. Waiting for Jesus Christ to come down from heaven is an escapist's refuge. Belief in the claims of the Founder enlivens Muslims and they know for once and for all that nobody is coming from above to raise them from the slough of despondency into which they have sunk so deeply; they themselves have to struggle hard for their own deliverance.

Those who enter into fealty with the Founder know full well that the prophecies of the Holy Prophet have come true. It was

prophesied that the days of the glory of Islam would be followed by poverty and misery among Muslims, but Islam would again rise in its full splendor and overpower the world with its spiritual force and the era of the onward march of Islam would start anew. This is the age when the prophecies relating to the dominance of Islam with the advent of the Messiah are going to be fulfilled. It is our duty now to carry the message of Islam to all the corners of the world. The power to conquer the hearts is inherent in Islam. But the Muslims must work and sweat for its success.

The acceptance of the claims of the Founder has thus changed the lethargic attitude of his followers. It has given them a new power of faith which is palpable behind all the activities of the Ahmadiyya Movement. This is the only object in accepting Mirza Ghulām Ahmad as the Promised Messiah, Mahdi and *Mujaddid*. This does not mean that Islam was incomplete before and by accepting the Founder our religion has been perfected. Islam was indeed perfected at the time of the revelation of the verse: *This day have I perfected for you your religion*,¹⁰ but the faith in man keeps on waxing or waning, as we have it in *Bukhārī*: “The faith increases and decreases”.¹¹ Acceptance of the Promised Messiah’s claim is a great source of enhancing our faith in Islam. The uphill task of the propagation of Islam cannot be done without this strong faith, particularly when this path is not strewn with outward honours and glories and it does not have the thrills and attractions of an adventurous life like that of a politician.

Visions of the Holy Prophet Muḥammad come true

As a matter of fact, if we give just a little thought to the subject, we shall discover that the Ahmadiyya Movement has opened new avenues for the glory and success of the Holy Prophet’s mission. It has shown to the general Muslims how the prophecies made thirteen hundred years before have now come true.

10. The Qur’ān, 5:3.

11. *Al-Bukhārī*, 2:32.

This in fact has been a source of great help to increase their faith in the Holy Prophet. All the events in the world foretold by the Holy Prophet have happened before our eyes. The 'ulamā' read those prophecies day in and day out but did not realize their significance.

There was only one person who lifted the veil from these reports and interpreted them in our age. That one person was Mirza Ghulām Aḥmad of Qādiān. For lifting this veil of darkness one needed the light which comes from above. It was, of course, under heavenly guidance that he clarified many wrong notions about these reports. Reports about the Antichrist and the Gog and Magog, discussed elsewhere, which reveal the depth of the Holy Prophet's spiritual insight, are only a part of these prophecies over which the Founder has thrown light. There are other prophecies as well mentioned in the Qur'ān and the Ḥadīth which have come true and the Aḥmadiyya Movement has drawn attention towards them to enhance the faith in the Holy Prophet's visions. For instance, the great World War has been called *al-mulḥamat al-kubra* or *al-mulḥamat al-'uzmā*,¹² which means the Great War. The first World War (1914-1918 C.E.) is known exactly by that name. It is also reported that the Christians (*al-rūm*) would far exceed the other nations in numbers at that time,¹³ and Muslims would be treated most severely at their hands;¹⁴ *al-rūm* in the reports refers to Christian nations. And that Muslims would become so weak that it would appear that other nations would completely devour them up.¹⁵ Their internal wranglings, their declaring one another infidels (*kāfirs*), the disappearance of the knowledge of the Qur'ān from among them, their worship of the outward ceremony, their following in the footsteps of the Jews and the Christians, their mental and moral debasement, all these are mentioned in the Ḥadīth. The absence of faith and religious knowledge, the scarcity of people

12. *Mishkāt*, Chapter *al-Malāḥam*.

13. *Musnad Aḥmad*, Vol. IV, p. 230.

14. *Ibid*.

15. *Tirmidhī*, *Ibn Mājah*.

interested in the spiritual matters have also been repeatedly described therein. The irreligiousness about which the whole material world is proud today has also been foretold by the Holy Prophet thirteen hundred years before. As compared with this, the abundance of the material wealth was also recorded in the reports. Similarly the Qur'ān also mentions many prophecies relating to this age. The giving up of camels, for instance, for more comfortable and swifter modes of conveyance:

*“And when the camels are abandoned.”*¹⁶

And it is found in the Ḥadīth also:

*“The camels shall certainly be neglected so that they shall not be used for going swiftly (from place to place).”*¹⁷

Barbarous nations will be civilized:

*“And when the wild nations are assembled.”*¹⁸

And all the nations of the world will come into close contact with one another:

*“And when men are united.”*¹⁹

Magazines, newspapers, pamphlets etc. will be published in abundance:

*“And when the books are spread.”*²⁰

These and many other prophecies like these are found more or less about every age, but most of them can particularly be applied to our own times. The detailed description of the age we live in, which distinguishes itself from all the previous ages, has

16. The Qur'ān, 81:4.

17. Imām Muḥammad Ṭāhir of Gujrāt, *Majma' Bihār al-Anwār* (Lucknow, India, Nawal Kishor Press) Vol. III, p. 165; *Mishkāt*, Ch. Descent of Messiah.

18. The Qur'ān, 81:5.

19. *Ibid.*, 81:7.

20. *Ibid.*, 81:10.

been made with such a clarity in these reports that it simply baffles the human intellect. This engenders new faith in the Holy Prophet's visions. By directing attention towards all these aspects, the Ahmadiyya Movement has, in fact, opened up a new path for proving the truth of Islam and of Islamic traditions.

Ahmadiyyat is the only interpretation of these visions

The Holy Prophet was not only shown, thirteen hundred years ago, what was going to happen to Islam but also what catastrophe the world was going to face. He mentioned all these events in his prophecies. Similarly the appearance of the Promised Messiah and the coming into existence of the Ahmadiyya Movement is also a link in the chain of these events. As all other things indicate the truthfulness of the Holy Prophet, a similar purpose is served by the existence of the Ahmadiyya Movement in this age. All the events mentioned above were intimately connected with the appearance of the Promised Messiah. The coming of the Messiah before the fulfillment of these signs was not possible. If such signs have been fulfilled, then the Messiah should also come, as these happenings are intertwined with his appearance. But if only a few signs have come true and for the fulfillment of the rest we have to wait, then we could also wait for the coming of the Messiah. But if all such events have taken place, then why should the coming of Messiah, the centre piece of the whole evidence, be delayed indefinitely?

The prevalence of Islam over other religions according to Ḥadīth is connected with his advent. If Gog and Magog have dominated the globe we inhabit and they have captured all the wealth and power of the world, if the Antichrist is leading humanity astray, and if Muslims have entirely lost touch with the Qur'ān and are lamentably involved in wranglings and are slinging mud at one another over minor differences, if their '*ulamā*', devoid of all understanding of truth and reality, are engaged in only the externals of worship, and the real faith, as

the tradition goes, has been raised up to the Pleiades, if all this has happened and Islam has been completely surrounded with all sorts of misfortunes, then can it be the response of God Almighty and All-wise that Islam should suffer on all sides but His promise of its deliverance should remain unfulfilled in this dire hour of need? This is, however, not possible. If a little thought is given to this point it will be easily seen that the manifestation of the Promised Messiah is more evident than all these matters. Because it was he who directed our attention to these happenings in the world, to show that all these events go to fulfil the prophecies and visions of the Holy Prophet. Every sign was before us but we could not see into it; we read about it in the books of *ḥadīth* day and night but could not understand it. There was a veil of darkness over our eyes as well as over the eyes of those who were worldly-wise otherwise, or the '*ulamā*' or the so-called spiritual leaders. It was Mirza Ghulām Aḥmad who tore asunder this veil of ignorance and there appeared from beneath it, shining proofs for the truthfulness of the Holy Prophet. Had Ḥazrat Mirza not appeared, all these things would have remained hidden from the world. In spite of the fact that there are hundreds of events by which the dreams and visions of the Holy Prophet have been fulfilled, but the sole and single interpretation of all of them is Aḥmadiyyat.

Aḥmadiyyat is a true interpretation of Islam

Aḥmadiyyat is not only an interpretation of the prophecies and visions of the Holy Prophet but it is also a true interpretation of Islam. It is neither a separate religion nor a separate sect. But as has been explained before, it is a great movement for the propagation of Islam. But as the propagation of Islam required that Islam should be presented in its true form and all the stains and blots from it should be removed to make it a source of attraction to the people, so Almighty Allāh Who had given the insight to the *Mujaddid* of this age so that he was able to see the fulfillment of the visions of the Holy Prophet in the world events also favoured him with the spiritual insight to identify all the erroneous beliefs which stood in the way of the progress of

Islam. Ahmadiyyat is thus a representation of Islam in the simple and pure form which attracted the world before and is doing so even now. In other words, Ahmadiyyat is a true interpretation of the teachings of Islam and the Qur'ān. And the feature which distinguishes it from the other sects of Islam is only this that it removes the errors which had found place in Islamic teachings and it manifests the inherent beauties of Islam which had been forgotten by Muslims so that Islam may attract the world once again.

Islam is a **living religion** which presents a God Who is a living reality, Who spoke to His righteous servants before, and Who speaks with His righteous servants even now and will continue to do so forever. Like His attributes of hearing and seeing, His attribute of communication with human beings has never been suspended. Although prophethood has come to an end, God's communication with His servants has not been stopped. But Muslims generally thought that God spoke before, but after the Holy Prophet, the doors of revelation were closed forever. Special stress has been laid by the Ahmadiyya Movement on this point of God speaking with man. A religion which cannot make its followers attain the stage of communication with God, is a dead religion. And as has been promised in the Qur'ān and the Hadīth, God will always continue to speak with the righteous servants of this *ummah*.

Islam is a **natural religion** which appeals to the nature of man, human nature being spontaneously attracted towards it. Unfortunately some of the Muslim leaders fell under the impression that Islam could be propagated with physical force also. Such thoughts were given free expression in reports about the advent of Mahdī. The objections raised by non-Muslims with regard to the spread of Islam with sword were thus strengthened by Muslims themselves. This caused great hatred among non-Muslims against Islam which subsequently obstructed the way of the propagation of Islam. It was Ahmadiyyat which clarified the whole issue by emphasizing the point that there was

“no compulsion in religion”.²¹ Islam had been drawing people under its fold because of its beautiful teachings. It is the natural religion of mankind, a simple religion, devoid of all ethical and ritualistic intricacies. Even an illiterate person can understand its teachings. But *Fiqh* (jurisprudence) made the whole affair very complex. Simple beliefs and teachings of Islam gave place to hair-splitting logical discussions that did no good, except paralyse the practical life of Muslims. The Aḥmadiyya Movement regained the lost original simplicity of Islam by placing the Qur’ān, which is the real source of the teachings of Islam, above everything else. The Ḥadīth, wherein the Holy Prophet has explained and interpreted the teachings of the Qur’ān, comes next. *Fiqh* which is not the original source of the details of our life should not be given preference over the Qur’ān or Ḥadīth.

Islam is a **rational religion**. The Qur’ān repeatedly enjoins its readers to apply their intellect, reason and understanding in matters of faith. But the ‘*ulamā*’ in their narrow-mindedness reached the stage that anybody who tried to understand religious matters on an intellectual level was dubbed by them as a heretic. Aḥmadiyyat again threw light on this aspect and proved the authenticity of the principles of the faith on a rational basis and showed that reason and faith did not stand apart. They both supplemented each other. Reason proved the necessity and veracity of religion which gave light and guidance to reason. But some ‘*ulamā*’ of today regarded science and scientific knowledge against religion and forbade Muslims to have any secular education. The Aḥmadiyya Movement helped in removing such misunderstandings from Muslim minds and made it clear that the material progress of the world would also, in the long run, lead mankind to higher spiritual progress beneficial to the cause of humanity. The denial of spiritual values was only due to lack of real knowledge of faith. With the progress of knowledge Islam would also progress, for it was a rational religion, a religion that encouraged a scientific outlook on life.

21. The Qur’ān, 2:256.

Islam is truly a **liberal and tolerant religion**. It regards the entire human race as one nation and declares that like physical and natural laws, there is only one spiritual law for the whole of humanity and that every nation had its spiritual leaders who called people to righteousness. But this prominent feature of Islam had been completely ignored. It was Ahmadiyyat which threw light on this point as well and laid emphasis on the fact that the prophets were sent to every nation and thus revived the liberal and universal outlook of Islam.

Islam is a **progressive religion**. Although the principles of Faith have been laid down in the Qur'ān and their explanations have been given in Ḥadīth to some extent according to the needs, but as Islam is universal in its concept and man is faced with a host of new problems with the advancement of civilization, the doors of *ijtihād* (exercise of judgement) in Islam have not been closed. That is, according to the needs of every age and every country, people have the right to work out their own laws best suited to their own requirements under the guidance of the Qur'ān and Ḥadīth.

Islam is no doubt a **religion of unity and fraternity**. According to the clear injunctions of the Qur'ān nobody has any right to excommunicate a brother Muslim from Islam who declares his faith in the unity of God and Prophethood of Muḥammad. But in this age different sects among Muslims thought that salvation was their exclusive privilege and each declared the other to be heretics and the inmates of hell. Ahmadiyyat revived the principle again that all those who profess the *Kalimah* were Muslims and nobody could dub a person *kāfir* who declared that "*There is no god but Allāh, and Muḥammad is the Messenger of Allāh*".

Before Islam, religion was considered to be a combination of outward rituals and ceremonies, a source of getting future reward or escaping from future punishment. Islam gave a new turn to the conception of religion and associated it with day to day activities of man, and made it a source of development of human faculties. Muslims again had forgotten this great fact

about the teachings of Islam to which Aḥmadiyyat drew their attention. The Aḥmadiyya Movement has also thrown light on many other problems concerning Islam. Below I discuss in detail these distinguishing features of the Aḥmadiyya Movement.

Distinguishing Features of the Aḥmadiyya Movement

For the common people the question of Jesus Christ's death is perhaps the only distinguishing feature of the Aḥmadiyya Movement. This, however, is not correct. There is no doubt in it that this Movement has done a lot to clarify this point as it was an obstacle in the way of the propagation of Islam, and the claim of the Founder as the Promised Messiah is also based on this. If Jesus Christ is alive, his claim cannot be correct and if he is dead then certainly there is no other Messiah except Mirza Ghulām Aḥmad of Qādiān in this *ummah*, but the greatest distinguishing feature of Aḥmadiyyat is that it has revived the almost dead concept of God's communication with men.

The foremost task to which the Founder devoted his attention after his claim of being a *mujaddid* was to demonstrate this truth once more to the world that God still spoke to His righteous servants. This was, in fact, the main theme of his first book, the *Barāhīn Aḥmadiyya*; and even after this he has not laid so much emphasis on Jesus Christ's death as on this subject. The basis of his claim, in fact, was the point that communion of God with man has been continued and will remain so forever. His real claim was that of *mujaddidiyyah* and a *mujaddid* (renovator) is a *muḥaddath* whom God appoints to uphold the cause of religion. And *muḥaddath* is a person who is not a prophet but God communicates with him frequently. Thus the basis of the Founder's claim is that, in spite of the finality of Prophethood, God speaks with the righteous persons in this *ummah*. The claim of his being the Promised Messiah is a part and parcel of his claim to *mujaddidiyyah*; it is just one aspect of his claim of being a *mujaddid*. This aspect, no doubt, is based on the conception of the death of Jesus Christ but the basis of his real claim, that is of his being the *renovator*, is the phenomenon of

Divine communication. If we go through the matter a little carefully we find that for the revival of faith in religion the first point is to prove the authenticity of Divine communication with man as this is what has been most vehemently denied in this age. The conception of a mechanical God in the form of the cause of causes is even admitted by a materialist but the real foundation of religion was, and is, on the fact of God's communication with man. One book or another is considered to be the word of God by various nations of the world which shows that the basis of almost all religions is the phenomenon of Divine revelation. But there is no religion except Islam that advocates that even now God communicates with man as He used to do before. It has been expressly mentioned in the teachings of Islam that God's speaking with man is one of His attributes and God's attributes are never suspended. But this concept was so much weakened even among Muslims that for all practical purposes they had neglected this phenomenon. Wahābism was a strong movement in Islam which appeared before the advent of Ahmadiyya Movement, but its followers, called *Ahl Ḥadīth* (followers of Ḥadīth) also believed that God's communication with men was meant for times gone by, although in authentic ḥadīth it was clearly mentioned that there would be persons in this nation who would not be prophets and yet God would communicate with them. Under the influence of modern education, Sir Sayyid Aḥmad Khān of Aligarh went rather far in this respect and entirely rejected the conception of God's revelation to human beings. He thought that revelation only emanated from man's own heart. This was in fact the ultimate result of that attitude which Muslims had gradually adopted towards religion. If this fundamental fact of revelation was thrown overboard, nothing was left of religion.

As has been discussed before, the whole structure of religion stands on this foundation. If it is said that God used to speak before and has ceased to do so now, then His speaking only becomes a narrative of the past. Such an attitude creates serious doubts as to the very institution of religion. If God spoke

before, He speaks now. If He does not do so then we have no proof that He ever did so before. If speaking is a Divine attribute it could not be limited to one particular age. The first and greatest task of Ahmadiyyat was to clarify this point that God the Most High communicates with His righteous servants. Accordingly the Founder of the Ahmadiyya Movement established this point from the Qur'ān and Ḥadīth that Divine communication had not come to an end. The Qur'ān clearly mentions that besides prophets, the gift of God's revelation was also given to the pious and righteous servants of the previous nations, for instance, to the mother of Moses: "*And We revealed to Moses' mother*",²² says the Qur'ān, and to the disciples of Jesus Christ: "*When I revealed to the disciples*".²³ At both these places the word *waḥy* has been used. Again, about the righteous persons of the *ummah* of Muḥammad it has been mentioned:

*"Those who say, our Lord is Allāh, then continue in the right way, the angels descend upon them, saying: Fear not, nor be grieved."*²⁴

At another place we find:

*"They shall have good news in this world's life."*²⁵

Again, in an authentic ḥadīth it has been mentioned:

*"There has remained nothing of prophethood except mubashshirāt (good news)."*²⁶

In another report we find:

"Among those that lived before you of the Israelites, there were men who were spoken to by God, though they

22. The Qur'ān, 28:7.

23. *Ibid.*, 5:111.

24. *Ibid.*, 41:30.

25. *Ibid.*, 10:64.

26. *Al-Bukhārī*, 92:5.

were not prophets, and if there is one among my followers, it is 'Umar.'"²⁷

All the saints (*auliyā'*) of the *ummah* have agreed to this point — even Mujaddid Alf Thānī of Sirhind who has been very near to our times has particularly laid stress on it — that God communicates also with *muḥaddathīn* as He did with the prophets of yore.

The testimony of the Qur'ān and Hadīth and the saints of this nation could only be an evidence for Muslims but as atheism and materialism were rampant in this age, it became essential that all nations should be provided with a conclusive proof of this living reality. The *mujaddid* of this age was, therefore, appointed to show that God actually spoke with man, and this favour could be obtained even today by righteous Muslims. So he challenged the followers of other religions to give any proof of such a Divine favour by following their respective religions. He put his own self as an example to make such favour of God known to the world. In the *Barāhīn Ahmadiyya* he has mentioned many prophecies which had come true and had also made a very forceful assertion that it was only in Islam that Divine communication was continued and therefore Islam was the only living religion in the world. All the other religions failed to help their followers to achieve this high stage of communication with God. It was in this way that he put forward his own person as a living example for the truth and supremacy of Islam. The same fact lay concealed under his prophecies, that is to say, that they were advanced in support of the truth of Islam. They were indeed a sign for him but they were also signs for the truth of Islam.

The second distinction: Islam is not spread by sword

Islam, as pointed out, is a natural religion of man:

*"The nature made by Allāh in which He has made man."*²⁸

27. *Al-Bukhārī*, 62:6.

28. The Qur'ān, 30:30.

By natural religion is meant that its principles are such as have been reposed in man's nature which is voluntarily attracted towards them. So much so that according to a report by the Prophet every child is born in Islam whether it is born in the house of a Jew, a Christian or a polytheist. Obviously, there need not be any compulsion in accepting what is harmonious with man's nature. The next principle, therefore, laid down by Islam is that "*there is no compulsion in religion*".²⁹

If we search the records of history of the time of the Holy Prophet we find that no historian has made reference even to a single incident where a person was forced to accept Islam by the Prophet or where a war was waged by him against a nation for the purpose of spreading Islam among them. But in spite of all this, European writers have drawn such a picture of Islam and its founder as if people were converted to Islam at the point of sword. The main object of such a propaganda was only to create hatred among the Europeans against Islam. The Western domination in the world has also helped to spread this false view far and wide among all the nations of the world. In India the Arya Samājists lent a hand to the Christian missionaries in propagating such calumnies against Islam.

On the other hand the conception of the coming of a Mahdī among Muslims also strengthened such misunderstandings. Shi'ah, Sunnī, Ahl Ḥadīth and other sects of Muslims came to believe about the advent of such a Mahdī who was going to propagate Islam by means of the sword. The result was that from Muslim's side no attempt was made to remove the misunderstanding which had resulted in hatred against Islam thus creating formidable obstacles in the way of its progress. The Ahmadiyya Movement used all its resources to clear Islam of such a charge. The removal of this fundamental mistake has rather become a distinctive feature in all its literature. So much so that the Founder's claim of being the Mahdī was to root out this false notion about Islam from the minds of Muslims and

29. *Ibid.*, 2:256.

non-Muslims alike. This, in other words, means that Islam does not stand in need of any sword whatsoever for its propagation. Islam rejects the idea of the advent of a Mahdī who would wield sword for the spread of Islam. What was not lawful for and practiced by the Holy Prophet — that is the spread of religion by force — how could it be permissible for anybody else?

Ahmadiyyat and the killing of apostates

Islam believes neither in forced conversion nor keeping anybody within Islam at the point of sword. A general misconception prevails among Muslims that those who renounce Islam should be immediately put to death. This means that in a Muslim state if a Muslim goes over to another religion he can do so only at the risk of his life which implies that a sword is hung over the head of every Muslim to keep him in the fold of Islam. Ahmadiyyat made it clear that it is neither lawful to convert a person to Islam by force nor to keep him Muslim under the threat of sword. The firm principle of the Qur'ān:

“There is no compulsion in religion”,³⁰

applies under both the conditions with equal force. That is to say, if a person wants to come over to Islam from unbelief or wants to go over to unbelief from Islam, in either case, no force and threat can be used against him. The mistake committed by our Jurists was that when someone after recanting Islam murdered a Muslim and he was sentenced to death by the Holy Prophet for his crime they did not care to differentiate that this punishment was given to him for the murder and not for apostasy. Similarly anybody who deserted Islam and joined the hostile forces during the time of war was liable to be punished with death. The chief reason for such an action against him might not have been apostasy but his treachery and going over to the enemy's camp. Instances of mere apostasy or changing of one's religion have been referred to in the Qur'ān but the

30. The Qur'ān, 2:256.

punishment of death was never recommended for them. On the contrary, it was also not always necessary to wage war against such persons. For instance in chapter *The Woman*³¹ certain apostates have been mentioned who did not fight against Muslims, and Muslims were also enjoined not to fight against them. In another chapter, *The Family of Amran*, the plans of the Jews of Medinah have been exposed who wanted to dishearten Muslims by accepting Islam in the morning and denouncing it in the evening.³² If apostates were put to death the carrying out of such a plan was impossible. At another place it is mentioned that if anybody renounced Islam the religion of God would not be weakened. If a person turned back from his religion, Allāh would bring a party to Islam instead.³³ The Qur'ānic commandments and the historical records make this point clear that mere apostasy was not punishable with death. In this age it is Aḥmadiyyat which has clarified this issue and has thus removed the stain from the beautiful face of Islam that it could only maintain and spread itself at the point of sword or that it had no spiritual force to keep itself alive.

Aḥmadiyyat and Jihād

Emphasis by the Aḥmadiyya Movement on the point that sword has nothing to do with the propagation of Islam has led many people to believe that Aḥmadiyyat has abrogated the Islamic doctrine of *jihād*. This charge is absolutely baseless. Every Aḥmadī believes in each jot and tittle of the Qur'ān. When the doctrine of *jihād* forms a part of the Qur'ān, and every Aḥmadī believes that none of its commands can ever be abrogated, it follows that the doctrine of *jihād* is as valid for them as for other Muslims. *Jihād* was supposed to mean the spreading of Islam with sword and with this conception of course Aḥmadiyyat did not agree. It made it clear that the significance of *jihād* was to exert oneself for a cause and sword was not

31. The Qur'ān, 4: 89, 90.

32. *Ibid.*, 3: 72.

33. *Ibid.*, 5: 54.

necessary for such an exertion. Carrying the message of the Qur'ān to the world was also declared to be *jihād* by the Qur'ān.

*“And strive against them a mighty striving with it (the Qur'ān).”*³⁴

This chapter of the Qur'ān is admittedly Makkan in origin when fighting was not permitted to Muslims and still preaching of the Qur'ān had been called the greatest *jihād*. Indeed *jihād* with sword was only meant for the defence of Islam or for the defence of the Muslim nation, the chief condition of which was that the enemy should first attack Muslims by sword. It was then that it became obligatory on Muslims to defend themselves with sword. But contrary to this the killing of non-Muslims without any rhyme or reason was considered to be the real *jihād* by the ignorant people. This was absolutely against the teachings of Islam. Mirza Ghulām Aḥmad of Qādiān has thrown light on this point and has explained that there is a *jihād* which man can always carry on for Islam and that is exerting oneself spiritually in the way of God and doing one's best to preach the message of Islam to others, and there is a *jihād* with sword which can be resorted to under particular conditions for the defence of the nation or of Islam. For instance, the initiative of attack is taken by the other nation, and this condition is mentioned in both the places in the Qur'ān where permission to fight has been given to Muslims:

1. *“Permission (to fight) is given to those on whom war is made because they are oppressed”,*³⁵

and

2. *“Fight in the way of Allāh against those who fight against you.”*³⁶

34. The Qur'ān, 25:52.

35. *Ibid.*, 22:39.

36. *Ibid.*, 2:190.

It was this kind of *jihād* about which Hazrat Mirza Ghulām Aḥmad had written:

*“There is no doubt in this that the conditions of jihād are not to be found in this age and in this country.”*³⁷

This is true because there is no party at war with Muslims at this time in India. When a Hindu leader, *i.e.* Gandhi showed the path of non-violence to Indians even some of the ‘*ulamā*’ followed him but when the Founder said that conditions for *jihād* with sword did not exist, these ‘*ulamā*’ raised a great hue and cry against him. And today all Muslims believe that conditions of *jihād* with sword in fact do not exist at the time in this country. *Jihād* by virtue of its being a Qur’ānic command is never abrogated in the sight of an Aḥmadī, neither *jihād* in the general sense, nor in the particular sense which is carried on in the form of *qitāl* (fighting).

The third distinction: The Qur’ān must be given precedence over everything else

All Muslims agree that the Qur’ān is the real source of guidance for Muslims. All the Islamic principles are mentioned in it, and this pure book is in our hands in exactly the same form in which it was revealed to the Prophet Muḥammad. The status of Ḥadīth, though a collection of reports of the Holy Prophet, is not in any way equal to that of the Qur’ān, and that it has not been so carefully preserved as the Qur’ān. Firstly, because the ḥadīth gives only the sense of what the Prophet said and his actual words have not been preserved entirely and, secondly, the fabricated reports have also found place in the works of Ḥadīth.

Islamic *Fiqh* (jurisprudence), which although the result of the exercise of judgement (*ijtihād*) by the great *Imāms*, cannot be held above the Qur’ān or Ḥadīth. A jurist does err, sometimes in spite of his profound knowledge and good intentions. Moreover, *Fiqh* is concerned only with those matters which have not been expressly mentioned in the Qur’ān or Ḥadīth because it is

37. *Tuhfah Golarwiah* (1st September 1902 C.E.), p. 30.

only then that the need of *ijtihād* arises. As a matter of belief, though Muslims consider the Qur'ān above everything else, practically they attach more importance to *Fiqh* over the Qur'ān and the Ḥadīth. The general attitude of the *Ahl Sunnah wal Jamā'ah* relating to all matters of principles of religion or a portion thereof is that they should refer to one of the four *Imāms*, and according to the *Ahl Ḥadīth* (Wahābīs) reference should be made to the Ḥadīth of the Prophet. The argument brought forward in the first case is that *Imāms* had a better understanding of the Qur'ān than common Muslims and if perchance there seems to be a difference between the Qur'ān and the *ijtihād* of an *imām*, they should better follow the *Imām*, as his knowledge and understanding of the Qur'ān was much superior to their own knowledge. And according to the *Ahl Ḥadīth*, if any difference exists between a ḥadīth and a verse of the Qur'ān it should be solved in the light of the ḥadīth, the latter being the saying of the Holy Prophet who had again the better understanding of the Qur'ān.

Doubtless we should all bow our heads in complete submission to the sayings of the Holy Prophet but the difficulty is that all the words of a ḥadīth are not the actual words uttered by the Holy Prophet. Only the sense of his utterances has been conveyed to us and the words of the reports which are at present before us, are in most cases the words of the reporters. As compared to this the words of the Qur'ān are definitely the same which were revealed to the Prophet; therefore, if we place the Ḥadīth over the Qur'ān it would mean that we are giving a higher status to words, which are not certain, over the Divine communication which is absolute and certain in every respect. Besides this, the compilers of Ḥadīth have very often differed themselves about the authenticity of a ḥadīth. One ḥadīth may be accepted by *Tirmidhī* or *Abū Dāwūd* but not by *Bukhārī* and *Muslim*. Again, a ḥadīth accepted by *Muslim* may be rejected by *Bukhārī*. Even the reports collected in *Bukhārī* have been criticized although the book has been regarded as the most correct book after the Book of God. It has been, however,

declared the most correct book as compared only to the Qur'ān because the authenticity of the Qur'ān, unlike Ḥadīth, cannot be doubted. Thus if we observe any contradiction between the Qur'ān and a ḥadīth, in all cases the Qur'ān should be given preference over the ḥadīth. If a contradiction is found, the ḥadīth should be interpreted to make it fall in conformity with the Qur'ān or else it should be rejected.

The question of *ijtihād* of Muslim Imāms is more clear than this. No doubt their knowledge of the Qur'ān and Ḥadīth was greater than ours but they were after all not infallible. Was it not possible for them to commit an error at some place while interpreting the Qur'ān? Was their knowledge of the Qur'ān equal to God's knowledge and free from the possibility of all errors? Again many times it happens that an Imām gives a judgement on the basis of a Qur'ānic verse but fails to notice another verse which is more explicit on the subject. The instance of 'Umar is well known who exhorted Muslims not to exceed a certain limit in fixing up nuptial gifts (*mahr*), otherwise the excess amount would be deposited to the *Bait al-Māl* (Public Treasury). An old lady stood up and argued with him by quoting the verse:

*“And (if) you have given one of them a heap of gold, take nothing out of it.”*³⁸

This proves that even a heap of gold could be offered to a woman in marriage. 'Umar immediately apologized for his mistake as he had not thought of this particular verse at that time. This does not mean that the woman's knowledge of the Qur'ān was greater than that of 'Umar. Similarly, if a particular verse escapes any Imām's notice, this does not go to slight his knowledge of the Qur'ān. Again in matters of Ḥadīth also he may err in his judgement, either being unaware of a particular report or forgetting it while contemplating over a subject.

38. The Qur'ān, 4:20.

The Qur'an and Hadīth, therefore, should always be given preference over *Fiqh* or the *ijtihād* of the Imāms. This mistake which has been referred to above is found among all the Muslim sects. Practically, all of them give preference to the sayings of their respective Imāms over the Qur'an, with the result that this Divine Book has been relegated to the background. It is recited in prayers or for further reward of course but *Fiqh* is considered to be the real Sharī'ah of Islam. The natural beauty and simplicity of Islam has been lost in the labyrinth of arduous and nerve-racking questions which have ultimately sapped the energy of Muslim nation. The principles of Islam which had arrested the hearts of other people have become like riddles by the inclusion of such intricacies, which in the end blocked the progress of Islam. Books depicting the teachings of Islam written by European Christians were chiefly based on the works of *Fiqh* and they tried to excite hatred against Islam among the Europeans by presenting before them a confused and complicated picture of the simple doctrines and beliefs of Islam.

To remove all these misunderstandings and revive the movement for the preaching of Islam it was, however, essential that the original simplicity of Islam be restored. This was the work that Aḥmadiyya Movement accomplished by laying due emphasis on the importance of the Qur'an in a Muslims's life. The Founder explained not only the right place of the Holy Qur'an as compared to Hadīth and *Fiqh* but also directed his whole attention to the study and teachings of the Qur'an. For the reformation of Muslims and for the propagation of Islam among non-Muslims he used the Qur'an as his chief instrument. In his poems along with his expression of love for the Prophet Muḥammad, his love for and devotion to the Qur'an has also been fully manifested. The object of all this was that Muslims should develop a real thirst for the Qur'an and consider it a panacea for all their ills and the basis of all their progress. They should go ahead with it to conquer the world as they did before in the early days of Islam.

Whatever success the Ahmadiyya Movement has achieved in its missionary activities is due to the fact that it has placed the Qur'ān above everything else. Although the Ahmadīs fully respect the Ḥadīth and thereafter the *ijtihād* of the Imāms and after the Qur'ān they refer to and accept these two as sources of information on religious matters, yet their main energy is spent in disseminating the knowledge of the Qur'ān which was the real source of the life of Muslims before, and it is the Qur'ān which is still capable of giving them life. The *Fiqh* throws light on certain details of our religion and the Ḥadīth, apart from this, contains valuable teachings for high morals but the Qur'ān is far superior to both of them. It not only lays down the principles of religion, or sheds light on certain fundamental problems or teaches the highest morals to men but also generates faith in God and creates in man the will for action. And this faith is the real source of all religious life. In short, by giving preference to the Qur'ān the Ahmadiyya Movement has set up the right basis of reformation among Muslims and preaching of Islam among non-Muslims.

Glory of the Qur'ān manifested

Ahmadiyyat not only gave preference to the Qur'ān, not only expressed its love for it and not only popularized its teachings but also, above all, proved that it was a book of great knowledge and learning. Hazrat Mirza Ghulām Ahmad in his earlier writings based all his arguments on this Divine Book whether these were in support of Islam or for repudiation of some other false doctrines. In important discussions and controversies his usual practice was to go through the whole of the Qur'ān from beginning to end and derive all his conclusions from it. While debating with a Christian Missionary 'Abd Allāh Ātham, in 1893 C.E., he laid before him the principle that whatever claims or arguments were advanced from either party, should be based on their respective religious scriptures. He followed this principle throughout his written controversy and deduced all his claims and arguments in favour of Islam or against Christianity

from the Qur'ān.³⁹ But the Christian Missionary could not fulfil this condition. Similarly in his lecture delivered at the Religious Conference held at Lahore in 1896 C.E. in reply to the five fundamental religious questions put forward by the organizers of the meeting, the Founder kept in view the same principle.⁴⁰ This distinctive feature of the Qur'ān not only gives it preference over other sacred Books but also is a strong argument for its being revealed from God. For it is impossible for a man to comprehend all the claims and furnish all the arguments necessary thereof in establishing the truth and refuting falsehood in every form for all times to come. Thus in this way he firmly established the glory and grandeur of the Qur'ān which cannot be denied by any wise person. The literature published today by the Aḥmadiyya Movement reflects this main characteristic of the Qur'ān that its greatness can be manifested on rational grounds.

The fourth distinction: Islam is an intellectual and scientific religion

From among the sacred scriptures, the Qur'ān is perhaps the only Book that has laid emphasis on the application of reason and intellect. The principles of religion have been undoubtedly taught by Divine revelation. Human intellect does not discover them as their discovery is beyond its reach; these principles are according to the nature of man and are also in conformity with man's intellect. That is why the Qur'ān has enjoined the use of intellect in understanding whatever has been revealed therein. To discover God and His attributes is above the human faculties; because whatever is discovered by intellect is also subjected to it. If man was capable of discovering God and also His attributes, he was also capable of overpowering Him which is, however, not possible. Man can discover the laws of nature and the properties of matter and can overpower and utilize them for his own benefit but God is far above from him. It is God Who is his Lord and Master and it is He Who manifests Himself to

39. This controversy was published under the title *Jang-i Muqaddas* — Ed.

40. The *Teachings of Islam* is an English translation of this lecture — Ed.

man. This manifestation is done in the form of revelation, which is one of the sources of man's knowledge and is superior to his intellect. Nevertheless it is true also that matters which are revealed to man by God are not, and naturally should not be, against human intellect, because intellect after all is also a God-given power in man. Therefore, whatever is unacceptable to man's intellect and his nature cannot be meant for him. Now if we think over it a little carefully we find that the existence of God, His unity, His attributes of *Rabūbiyyat* (Lordship), His Beneficence and Mercifulness, His promise of reward and threat of punishment for man's actions etc. all these are understandable. But belief in the Trinity, *i.e.* Three in One and One in Three, or in the Atonement, *i.e.* the taking of all the sins of humanity by one person on his shoulders, or transmigration of souls cannot be accepted when judged on rational grounds.

As the principles of Islam are in harmony with man's intellect, therefore it has been enjoined on its followers that they should also apply their intellect for understanding the details of these principles. This is indeed what is called the exercise of judgement (*ijtihād*). Islam is thus a rational religion in respect to its principles and its details. For this reason there was no priestcraft, monkhood or papacy in Islam, but unfortunately in imitation of other religions a privileged class of the *Mullas* also came into existence among Muslims. If the use of intellect was encouraged, the authority of such people could not be maintained, therefore they prohibited the use of intellect in religious matters. Anybody who raised an intellectual question was dubbed as *kāfir* and atheist. In the progress of Islam this again was a great obstacle which was removed by Ahmadiyyat. Thus it was shown to the world that Islam was, in fact, the rational religion and its teachings and beliefs were open to intellectual criticism.

Intellect and knowledge go side by side. When man applies his intellect to a matter he advances in his knowledge too. Thus, when Islam enjoined its followers to make use of their reasoning faculties and even in matters religious its use, unlike other

religions, was not forbidden, the result was that the Arabs who were an illiterate people became the torch-bearers of scientific knowledge to mankind and the light that was shown in Arabia illuminated the whole world. The Holy Qur'ān itself is a source of great knowledge and wisdom, that is why it has been named *al-Qur'ān al-Hakīm* i.e., the Qur'ān full of wisdom, for it has set up the very foundation of religion on science and has given a rational basis to the principles of religion. All the baffling problems of religion such as existence of God, His Unity, Divine revelation, reward and punishment of actions, conception of hell and heaven etc., have been explained in a philosophical way. It is not only the religious truths that have been explained rationally but also attention has been drawn to material sciences. By the use of this knowledge man can overpower the forces of nature and utilize them for his own benefit. Whatever is between heaven and earth is subservient to him. It has been repeatedly mentioned in the Qur'ān that man can control the seas, mountains, winds and other forces of nature.⁴¹ At one place such persons have been called "men of understanding"⁴² in the Qur'ān, that is the possessors of wisdom who both remember Allāh and also reflect on the creation of heaven and earth. It is evident that the starting-point of all the material sciences is the reflection on God's creation.

Religious narrow-mindedness has often stood in the way of scientific progress, several examples of which can be met with in Christian history. When Western scholars opened new avenues for scientific discoveries, after getting light from the Islamic sources, the priestly class declared them the worst kind of infidels, followers of Satan and heretics, and tortured them in every possible way. Contrary to this, in Islam, with the progress of spiritual and religious teachings, Muslims did not lag behind in scientific and philosophical knowledge. We find historians, philosophers and scientists working along with religious teachers, Imāms and jurists. It is a curious fact of

41. The Qur'ān, 14:32-33; 45:13; 31:20.

42. *Ibid.*, 3:190.

history that when Muslims gave up Islam for worldly gains their material progress also came to a halt. Disgrace, illiteracy and ignorance followed in its wake and their condition became like those Christians who once declared scientific progress to be a great heresy. This brought on their heads all sorts of miseries and misfortunes, and ignorance prevailed on a large scale among them. Ahmadiyyat once more established a healthy relation between intellectual and spiritual truths to combat the false conception that knowledge and human intellect were incompatible with religion and spirituality.

New light about interpreting the Qur'ān

The most beneficial work in this respect done by Ahmadiyyat was to interpret the Qur'ān in a scientific and literary manner. There was a time when ordinary matters mentioned in the Qur'ān were interpreted by fanciful and imaginary stories with the result that the new generation of Muslims having modern outlook on life thought such fantastic stories to be part of the Qur'ān and expressed their disgust at them and at the book which incorporated them. The '*ulamā*', instead of removing such doubts, started issuing *fatwās* of *kufṛ* (verdicts of heresy) against everybody who differed with them even in minor details of religion or who did not accept the stories of the Qur'ānic commentators as next to the word of God or who gave vent to any objection against religion. At this crucial moment Ahmadiyyat without caring for the *fatwās* of *kufṛ* fought against the ignorance and the narrow-mindedness of the '*ulamā*'. It showed to the world that the Qur'ān is clear of all such spurious matter and that scientific research in different spheres of knowledge, in fact, does not go against the spirit of religion. Religion was not subjugated by science, as was thought by the educated Muslims of the age, rather science was to follow the higher values of spiritual life to ensure real peace in the world.

While interpreting the Qur'ān, the Qur'ān itself should have the priority over everything else and then should come the Ḥadīth, but the Ḥadīth dealing with stories must be accepted

after great caution and scrutiny. While consulting Arabic lexicons care should also be taken in selecting meanings of words. If a verse can be interpreted two ways, according to the literal meaning of the words, preference should be given to that interpretation which does not go against history, human intellect or experience. Thus the Qur'ān at present is deemed as a book of great learning and science and has proved to be a guide and source of healing to ailing humanity. The whole Islamic literature, appearing today, seems to be saturated with this new spirit. As the *Moslem World*, a Christian quarterly, stated in its July 1931 C.E. issue, the English translations of the Holy Qur'ān done by other Muslims later on resemble very closely the version of Aḥmadiyyat.⁴³

The fifth distinction: Revival of Islamic Brotherhood

From the beginning the message of Islam was meant for the whole of mankind. Arabs or non-Arabs, Iranians or Abyssinians, were addressed by Islam. All these nations and religions, Christians or Jews, in short, all nations and religions who had deep-rooted enmity for one another were given a message of peace, brotherhood and tolerance. No religion can be universal in its teachings unless it is based on broad principles. In this respect no other religion can stand in comparison with Islam. Muslims were required not only to believe that truth was found in the other religions of the world, that the religious savants and the sacred scriptures of other nations were to be respected, that prophets and messengers were sent to every nation and country with Divine directions and revelations, and that there was light and guidance in the previous scriptures but also faith in the prophets and the sacred scriptures was made obligatory on every Muslim like faith in the Prophet Muḥammad and the Qur'ān. This liberal attitude attracted men's hearts towards Islam. It was not only a theory but Islam in fact wanted to develop amongst its followers an outlook that all humanity should be considered

43. For elaborate quotation see Maulānā Muḥammad 'Alī's Preface in his English Translation of the Qur'ān. — Ed.

one family, all mankind as one nation. The Qur'ān thus laid the foundation-stone of the unity of mankind when it declared:

*"All people are a single nation."*⁴⁴

They are, however, not a nation in name only but their Lord is also one:

*"All praise is due to Allāh, the Lord (Rabb) of the worlds or nations."*⁴⁵

And *Rabb* is He Who fosters, brings up and nourishes things gradually to make them attain perfection. Thus to make different nations to attain perfection He sent His messengers in every age for their spiritual and moral upliftment. Every community had a Messenger, every nation had a guide and a prophet,⁴⁶ there is not a single nation where a warner has not appeared,⁴⁷ such are the teachings of the Qur'ān not met with in any other scripture. Then amongst its followers Islam created such a spirit of brotherhood that after accepting Islam a monarch and a slave were treated alike in their capacity as Muslims. It was the result of this spirit of equality and fraternity that wherever Islam went, it attracted millions of people under its fold, because after accepting Islam nobody was asked to renounce the prophet or the sacred scripture in which he formerly believed. Thus every Muslim was enjoined to respect the spiritual leaders of every nation and country.

This basic aspect of the Islamic teachings was unfortunately lost sight of by the Muslim '*ulamā*' who started declaring their own brethren-in-faith infidels on minor differences. When narrow-mindedness takes such a strong hold on a nation, that its members fail to tolerate difference of opinion among themselves, how can they be tolerant towards other nations? In short, this mutual *takfīr* (denouncing one another as heretics)

44. The Qur'ān, 2:213.

45. *Ibid.*, 1:1.

46. *Ibid.*, 10:47.

47. *Ibid.*, 35:24; 16:63.

destroyed the spirit of Islamic tolerance and liberty which was a source of bringing other people under its fold. Aḥmadiyyat, however, revived once again this lost speciality of Islam. As far as other nations were concerned, the Founder of the Aḥmadiyya Movement took another bold step and declared that Rama-chandra and Krishna were also prophets of God raised in India according to the Qur'ānic verse:

“And (We sent) messengers We have mentioned to thee before and messengers We have not mentioned to thee”,⁴⁸

and the Vedas were also the revealed books of India.

Obviously, when the Qur'ān has declared it as a matter of principle that prophets have been raised in every nation and country, how is it possible that the Hindu nation which had a great civilization of its own should have also lately remained neglected by God, and no prophet should have been raised in that nation? At the time of the conquest of Iran, the companions of the Holy Prophet, under the same principle, treated the Fire-worshippers (Zoroastrians) as the People of the Book. The extension of this Islamic principle harbours the secret of the success of Islam.

The sixth distinction: The door of *ijtihād* is open

However good and perfect principles may be given to a nation, unless that nation has an opportunity for progress, such principles cannot be of much use. Principles are like the roots of a tree and the other details like its branches. If there is enough space for the tree to spread its branches far and wide, its strong roots indeed become a help for its proper growth. If there is no scope for its branches to spread, its roots shall also soon shrivel and cramp and cause an early death to the whole plant. The tree of Islam had strong roots in the form of sound principles and its branches had a great scope to spread because of the opening of the door of *ijtihād* (exercise of judgment). *Ijtihād* means to exert oneself and make use of one's intelligence for some cause.

48. The Qur'ān, 4:164.

This door was kept open in Islam in respect of details of *sharī'ah*. In matters of Law where no details were found in the Qur'ān and the Ḥadīth, Muslims could make use of their intellectual faculties for understanding and solving the new problems with which they might be faced from time to time. Islam is a universal religion in its scope and teachings, free from and above all limitations of race, colour and nationality. Although there was no religion to emerge after it, but human needs are limitless and every age, nation and country is faced with new problems for the solution and fulfillment of which human faculties must be utilized. In other words, after the Divine revelation existing in the Qur'ān in the form of *wahy jalī* or *wahy matluww* (revelation which is recited) and in the Ḥadīth in the form of *wahy khafī* (inner revelation), man's intellect has been given the status for the working out of laws for human needs.

It is also evident that if no use is made of human faculties, they become obsolete. Thus if Muslims were not guided to make use of their mental powers they would have suffered the same fate. Accordingly as long as they considered the door of *ijtihād* open and made use of their faculties of judgment they made progress in all walks of life. But after the death of some great Imāms when the door of *ijtihād* was considered to have been closed, their intellectual powers were also paralysed and their spiritual and material progress quickly came to cease. The Founder of the Ahmadiyya Movement removed this fatal misunderstanding from the minds of Muslims and showed them that the door of *ijtihād* was opened by the Prophet Muḥammad himself, and no one else has any right to close it. And none of the four Imāms had said anything contrary to it. The world of today has given rise to so many new problems that there is a growing need of rejudication and *ijtihād* in details of Law. By opening the door of *ijtihād* all over again, Ahmadiyyat has in fact opened new vistas for the progress of Islam and the Muslims.

The seventh distinction: Unity among Muslims

Islam which taught forbearance and tolerance to the extent that in spite of many vital differences it accepted the Divine origin of other religions, could not foster the feeling of intolerance and narrow-mindedness among its own followers towards one another. It could not teach them that for minor differences they should declare one another *kāfir*. The Qur'ān has, however, given a clear indication that anybody who accosts another brother Muslim with *assalāmu 'alaikum* (peace be with you) should not be declared an unbeliever:

*“Say not to one who offers you (Islamic) salutation, Thou art not a believer.”*⁴⁹

This means that we have no right to suspect or investigate his behaviour or go into the details of his beliefs for the sake of laying a charge of heresy against him. A person who accosts us with *assalāmu 'alaikum*, in fact, considers himself to be a member of the Islamic brotherhood, and he who includes himself in this brotherhood cannot be turned out of it by anybody else. This is what has been the practice of the Holy Prophet. 'Abd Allāh ibn Ubayy, a great hypocrite and a bitter opponent of Islam who never helped Muslims in their campaigns against the unbelievers and always instigated the enemy against Islam, was accepted as a Muslim by the Holy Prophet for the simple reason that 'Abd Allāh outwardly declared himself to be a member of the Islamic brotherhood. The Holy Prophet said the funeral service for him after his death and prayed for him. In one of the reports, the Holy Prophet has said:

*“Do not declare the people of your Qiblah as kāfirs.”*⁵⁰

This means that as long as a person includes himself among the Ahl Qiblah (People of the Qiblah) nobody has any right to denounce him as a heretic. The object of this teaching and the repeated emphasis on this point was to maintain unity among

49. The Qur'ān, 4:94.

50. *Al-Nihāya* of Ibn Athīr, vol. iv, p. 187.

Muslims, for unity is the basis of a nation's strength. The nation which is torn within itself can neither make any progress nor face its opponents. The first condition of unity in Islam, therefore, is that its followers should consider one another as brethren. The Holy Prophet also gave various illustrations to make Muslims understand this point. Once he said that Muslims were like one organism; if any part of this organism was injured the whole system was affected.⁵¹ Thus if a group or sect of Muslims was suffering it would affect the whole nation. At another occasion he said that a Muslim should refrain from attacking the life, property or honour of his brother Muslim.⁵² Again, once he compared Muslims to a strong wall every part of which contributed to its strength, and if a part was weakened it would bring the other parts to the ground.⁵³

The object of all this advice was to keep the unity among Muslims intact. The only result of *takfīr* (denouncing one another heretics) is destruction. By saying that *difference among my followers is a blessing*, Muslims were actually taught to tolerate differences among themselves; but they made every difference an excuse for *takfīr* and thus struck at the very root of their unity and strength. It was truly said by the Holy Prophet that their enemies would not be able to destroy them unless they destroyed themselves. And that is what Muslims have done to themselves. For minor differences they have declared one another *kāfir* and thus shattered to pieces the unity of Islam. It was in 1891 C.E. that the Founder of the Ahmadiyya Movement raised his voice against this habit of *takfīr*:

“Let this be evident that Jesus Christ came for this work and at such a time when Jews were divided into many sects like Muslims ... So the Holy Prophet has informed this nation that in the latter ages the same would be their condition and many sects would spring up among them

51. Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim, *Kitāb al-Birr*, H. No. 66,67.

52. Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī, *Kitāb al-Harām*.

53. Tirmidhī, *Kitāb Shaḥqat 'ala-l-Muslim*, p. 351.

... And like Jews one group would consider the other one as *kāfir*. And if there were ninety-nine reasons for Islam, just one reason for *kufir* would be considered sufficient to declare others *kāfir*. So due to mutual *takfir*, deep hatred, jealousy and enmity would come into play and due to difference of opinion, vindictiveness, rancor and beastly tendencies will prevail among Muslims. And Islamic character which requires a perfect unity as in a single body and is full of mutual love and sympathy would be completely taken away from them. The one would consider the other so strange as not to hesitate to declare the other as *kāfir*." ⁵⁴

The Lahore Aḥmadiyya Movement by following such exhortations of the Founder for unity lay particular emphasis on the point that all the followers of the *Kalimah* are Muslims and anybody who declares his faith in the unity of God and prophet-hood of Muḥammad cannot be turned outside the pale of Islam. Such a doctrine is now having a wider influence among Muslims. But as opposed to this, unfortunately, the Qādiānis have made the declaring of all the Muslims of the world *kāfirs* a basis of their belief.⁵⁵

The eighth distinction: The significance of paradise and hell properly explained

Belief in the punishment or reward for one's actions in another life is common to all religions. But Islam has explained this phenomenon in a scientific manner. For instance, paradise and hell are not only meant for the life hereafter but also they have their beginning in this life:

"And for him who fears to stand before his Lord there are two Gardens." ⁵⁶

54. *Izālah Auhām* (3rd September 1891 C.E.), pp. 589, 590.

55. *The Truth about the Split*, pp. 55-56, 140 etc. The detailed references have been given earlier. — Ed.

56. The Qur'ān, 55:46.

The one garden (*jannat*, paradise) is of this life and the other of the life to come. The soul that attains perfection also sees its own paradise in this life. To the contented soul the Qur'ān says:

*"So enter among My servants and enter My garden."*⁵⁷

Similarly, the fire of hell is described as rising above the hearts of men:

*"It is the fire kindled by Allāh, which rises over the hearts."*⁵⁸

And the hell in the hereafter is just another form of blindness in this life:

*"And whoever is blind in this world, he will be blind in the Hereafter."*⁵⁹

But these matters remain hidden from the eyes of the common people and only come to light on the day of Resurrection, therefore on that day hell and heaven would become manifest.

*"Thou wast indeed heedless of this, but now We have removed from thee thy veil, so thy sight is sharp this day."*⁶⁰

Commencement of paradise and hell in this life shows that the reward or punishment in fact (whether we are conscious of it or not) takes place simultaneously with our deeds. Then another point is emphasized: that every action begets results according to whether the doer is a believer or non-believer. If a non-Muslim does a good work the result will naturally be good and if a Muslim does something bad it will have a bad consequence:

*"So he who does an atom's weight of good will see it and he who does an atom's weight of evil will see it."*⁶¹

57. The Qur'ān, 89:29,30.

58. *Ibid.*, 104:6-7.

59. *Ibid.*, 17:72.

60. *Ibid.*, 50:22.

61. *Ibid.*, 99:7-8.

Again it has been explained that hell is a place for the purge and betterment of human ills and shortcomings. This is a means of purification of man so that for this progress, he may get another opportunity in the life to come which he has wasted in this life. And because this is only by way of remedy, therefore, sooner or later all the inmates of hell will come out of it. According to a saying of the Holy Prophet a time will come when the morning breeze will be striking against the doors of hell;⁶² and it will become a devastated place. Similarly about paradise it should be remembered that man is capable of making unlimited progress therein. Those who have once entered into it will never be taken out of it again. This makes it abundantly clear that future reward in Islam means various aspects of man's progress, and punishment (*'adhāb*) the stages of his decline and decadence. But Muslims lost sight of these matters of deep wisdom and thought the *'adhāb* and *thawāb* only meant for future life of the world. They also thought that non-Muslims did not receive any reward for their good actions, and that Muslims will all go to paradise and the *kāfirs* will burn in the fire of hell forever. Ahmadiyyat, however, brought the original teachings of Islam to light and removed all such errors. It also explained that even the worship of God was also meant for man's own advancement, for by worshipping God man in fact tries to come into real contact with God for the purpose of imbuing himself with Divine attributes.

The ninth distinction: Theory of abrogation rejected

There were several other things which Muslims had accepted by mistake although there was no ground for their acceptance. For instance, Muslims had generally come to believe that there were verses in the Qur'ān which were abrogated by other Qur'ānic verses. And on this point they insisted so much that anybody who did not agree with them was not considered to be a Muslim. A verse can abrogate another verse only when it stands

62. For detailed references please consult Maulānā Muḥammad Ali's *The Religion of Islam*, Part II, Ch. 6.

in opposition to the other. By accepting such a view it has to be admitted that discrepancy was found in the Qur'ān whereas the Qur'ān clearly indicates:

*“And if it were from any other than Allāh they would have found in it many a discrepancy.”*⁶³

Thus to accept discrepancy in the Qur'ān is to accept it from any other source than Allāh. This is where this wrong belief had led the Muslims. But they kept on adhering to such an erroneous doctrine till it was removed by the Founder of the Aḥmadiyya Movement, who made it clear that there was no verse in the Qur'ān which has been abrogated by another verse, nor does the Qur'ān mention anything like that. Verses⁶⁴ from which such a conclusion was drawn only refer to the abrogation of some of the commandments, *i.e.* previous *sharī'ahs*. It was in this way that the dignity of the Qur'ān was manifested and established.

The tenth distinction: Faith in the dominance of Islam

Besides what has been mentioned above there are also other matters in which Aḥmadiyyat has differed from other Muslims but none of these differences is related to problems of jurisprudence (*Fiqh*). It is evident from the foregoing remarks that wheresoever Aḥmadiyyat has differed from other Muslims it is only in its efforts to restore the original beauty and simplicity of Islam, to make Islam a rational, scientific and progressive religion once again so that its influence may penetrate deep into the hearts of men and so that Islam may rise once more in the world. The Christian scholars have laboured to show that the Aḥmadiyya Movement is the result of the contact of European civilization with Islam. But in the history of modern India we find two separate movements among Muslims. The one started by Sir Sayyid Aḥmad Khān of Aligarh and the other by Mirza Ghulām Aḥmad of Qādiān. The work done by Sir Sayyid

63. The Qur'ān, 4:82.

64. *Ibid.*, 2:106; 16:101.

towards educating Muslims is unique in its own way and nobody should deny its manifold advantages to Muslims. But as far as his religious views are concerned, which are sometimes stigmatized as *naturiyyat*, they mark a clear distinction between the two movements. Sir Sayyid and Ḥazrat Mirza Ghulām Aḥmad both tried to solve problems facing Islam today in a rational way. But the religious movement of Sir Sayyid very often took the turn of slavish imitation of the European thought while the movement initiated by Hazrat Mirza had in view the conquest of Europe for Islam. The object of the former movement was also to save Islam from the onslaughts of the West but in this effort Islam was subjected to modern trends. But the latter Movement not only wanted to save Islam but also wanted to see it a triumphant religion of the world. This is not a mere presumption. The late ‘*Allāmah* Shiblī Nu‘mānī, who was one of the great admirers of Sir Sayyid, writes about him:

“This new thought is of two kinds. Either we find the same rotten stuff or far-fetched problems and arguments originated by the later Ash‘arites, or every European belief or thought is regarded to be the only right standard of judgment. The Holy Qur’ān and the Ḥadīth is later on dragged in to harmonize with these ideas.”⁶⁵

In the writings of Sir Sayyid the Qur’ān is *ipso facto* subjected to the European ideology but Ḥazrat Mirza wants Europe to kneel down before the Qur’ān. Sir Sayyid’s movement may be regarded a result of the impact of European thought on Islam in India but this is not true about the Aḥmadiyya Movement. It has, on the contrary, helped to remove the effects of European thought on Muslims’ minds. It is in fact a panacea for the poison which the materialistic civilization has brought to the world of Islam. The Founder had a great passion for seeing the cause of Islam dominant in the world. Before his advent Islam in Indian Sub-continent was attacked from three sides. The attack of atheism and materialism in the form of European

65. ‘*Ilm al-Kalām*, p. 8.

thought, the attack of Christian missionaries and the attack of the new Hindu sect Ārya Samāj. Whatever Muslims were doing in their defence was quite ineffective. Sir Sayyid came forward to save Muslims from the influence of modern education but he was himself swayed by it and thus he wanted to make an apologetic compromise with it. One or two other persons also stood against the onslaught of Christian missionary activities, but on the whole Muslims remained passive and the Christian missionaries became more severe and menacing in their attacks against Islam. And as to the attack of the Ārya Samāj nobody seemed to care for the defence of Islam.

It was at this time that Ḥazrat Mirza Ghulām Aḥmad came to the forefront to uphold the cause of Islam. He not only defended Islam but also took an offensive against all these hostile forces within a short time. This made a great change in the circumstances and the invaders themselves were put to their defence. In short, every Aḥmadi harbours a feeling in his heart to see Islam a dominant religion in the world. He is fully convinced that, however slender the outward chance may be, Islam will flourish and dominate the world. It is because of this faith and enthusiasm that he is ready to sacrifice his all for this object. There lies the secret of the success of Aḥmadiyya Movement in its preaching of Islam.

In brief, Aḥmadiyyat is not a sect distinguished on minor differences of *Shari'ah* from other Muslim sects. It is rather above all these petty differences. It is a movement for the spread of Islam and towards this its whole efforts are directed. It has done its best to remove all misconceptions about Islam which were a hindrance in the way of its propagation and progress. For this the Aḥmadiyya Movement has sometimes differed from the current thought of Muslims and only this makes it differ from other Muslim sects. Such differences are not in fact internal but they only relate to those matters which are connected with the propagation and progress of Islam in the world. The Holy Prophet has himself described this age as the "age of corruption" when Islam will be set on a wrong track by

its followers and its advancement will come to a standstill, and people will begin to despise this polluted form of Islam. By removing misunderstandings of this age of corruption the Aḥmadiyya Movement has opened new vistas for the success and glory of Islam. Islam is, thus, once again on the march and is arresting the attention of the entire world. ■

Translator's note 4 on page 2.

These words of Maulana Muhammad Ali are rather prophetic in their nature which found partial fulfillment in 1954 C.E. when a written statement by the delegate of the Qādiānis was submitted to the Munir Court of Inquiry in Pakistan that: "A Muslim is a person who belongs to the *ummat* of the Holy Prophet and professes belief in *kalimah tayyibah*" (*Report of the Court of Inquiry into the Punjab Disturbances of 1953*, p. 218). At another place in this report it has been mentioned that:

"On the question whether the Aḥmadīs [Qādiānis are meant – Ed.] consider the other Musalmāns to be *kāfirs* in the sense of their being outside the pale of Islam, the position taken before us is that such persons are not *kāfirs* and that the word *kufṛ*, when used in the literature of the Aḥmadīs in respect of such persons, is used in the sense of a minor heresy and that it was never intended to convey that such persons were outside the pale of Islam." (p. 199)

The above are the remarks by the judges. The actual answers given at the Court were as follows:

- "Q. Do you include Mirza Ghulām Aḥmad Ṣāḥib among the *māmūrs* [appointed ones of God – Ed.] whose acknowledgement is necessary to be called a Muslim?
- "A. I have already answered this question. No one who does not believe in Mirza Ghulām Aḥmad Ṣāḥib can be taken as out of the pale of Islam." (Proceedings of the Court of Inquiry, 84th sitting, dated 14th January 1954 C.E.)

“Q. Please look at page 22 of *Dhikr-i-Ilāhī*, which contains the following passage:

”میرا تو یہ عقیدہ ہے کہ دنیا میں دو گروہ ہیں۔ ایک مومن دوسرے کافر۔ پس جو حضرت مسیح موعود پر ایمان لانے والے ہیں وہ مومن ہیں اور جو ایمان نہیں لائے، خواہ ان کے ایمان نہ لانے کی کوئی وجہ ہو، وہ کافر ہیں۔“

[i.e., My belief is that there are two groups in the world, viz. one *mu'min* (believer) and the other *kāfir*. Thus those who declare faith in the Promised Messiah are *mu'mins* and those who have not believed in him, whatever reason there may be for their non-belief, are *kāfirs* – Ed.]. Is not the word *kāfir* used here in contradiction to the word *mu'min*?

“A. In this context the word *mu'min* means one who believes and the word *kāfir* means one who does not believe in Mirza *Ghulām Aḥmad Ṣāhib*.

“To Court: Is belief in Mirza *Ghulām Aḥmad Ṣāhib*, therefore, a part of *īmān*?

“A. No. The word *mu'min* here has been used merely to convey the sense of belief in Mirza *Ghulām Aḥmad Ṣāhib*, not of belief in the fundamentals of Islam.” (*Ibid.* 85th sitting, 15th January 1954 C.E.)

Thus Mirza *Baḥūr-ud-Dīn Maḥmūd Aḥmad*, Head of the Qādiānis, admitted that belief in the Founder of the Aḥmadiyyah Movement was not a part of faith (*juzw-e īmān*), but forty years before he had openly declared:

”مسیح موعود کا ماننا جزو ایمان ہے۔ پس کس کا دل گردہ ہے کہ ان کا مقابلہ کر کے کہے کہ حضرت مسیح موعود کا ماننا جزو ایمان نہیں؟“
(الفضل، قادیان، ۲۰ مئی ۱۹۱۴)

“Belief in the Promised Messiah is a part of faith (*juzw-e īmān*). Thus who can have the heart to say by standing in opposition to him that belief in him is not a part of faith?” (*Al-Faḍl*, Qādiān, 20th May 1914 C.E.)

The contradiction in the above statements is obvious.

Appendix 1

Was the doctrine of Jihād abrogated by the Founder? ¹

(The charge that the Founder of the Aḥmadiyya Movement denied the doctrine of jihād is baseless, but as this allegation is widely circulated by some people against him, further clarification of this point would not be out of place here. – Ed.)

It is easy to see that any one who accepts the Holy Qur’ān and the Holy Prophet Muḥammad cannot deny *jihād*, injunctions relating to which occupy a considerable portion of the Holy Qur’ān. The orthodox Muslims believe that some verses of the Holy Qur’ān have been abrogated by others. The Aḥmadiyya Movement has long been fighting against this doctrine, and many enlightened Muslims now accept the Aḥmadī view that no verse, not even one word or one jot of the Holy Qur’ān was abrogated. Under the heading, *A statement of some of our beliefs*, the Founder of the Aḥmadiyya Movement wrote:

“God speaks to His servants in this *ummah* and they are given the semblance of prophets and they are not really prophets, for the Qur’ān has made perfect the needs of Law, and they are given only an understanding of the Qur’ān and they cannot add to, or detract from it aught; and whoever adds to, or detracts from it, he is of the devils who are wicked.” ²

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1. Maulānā Muḥammad ‘Alī, *The Founder of the Aḥmadiyya Movement*, 1984 edition, pp. 70–78.
 2. *Mawāhib al-Raḥmān* (14th January 1903 C.E.), pp. 66–67.

It is therefore impossible that, holding such a belief, Hazrat Mirza Ghulām Aḥmad could say that he abrogated *jihād* which was made obligatory by the Holy Qur’ān and which was one of the five fundamentals of Islam. The following passage from his pamphlet entitled *The Jihād* would show that he differed from the ‘*ulamā*’ only in his interpretation of *jihād* as inculcated by the Holy Qur’ān:

“It should be remembered that the doctrine of *jihād* as understood by the Muslim ‘*ulamā*’ of our day, who call themselves Maulawīs, is not true ... These people are so persistent in their belief which is entirely wrong and against the Qur’ān and Ḥadīth, that the man who does not believe in it and is against it is called a *Dajjāl*.”³

It would appear from this that, according to the Founder of the Aḥmadiyya Movement, the doctrine of *jihād* as understood by the ‘*ulamā*’ was opposed to the true teachings of the Holy Qur’ān and Ḥadīth. What the Founder rejected was not the doctrine of *jihād* but the orthodox interpretation thereof which had given rise in the West to grave misconceptions regarding the doctrine of *jihād*, so that even unprejudiced Western writers thought the word *jihād* to be synonymous with war undertaken forcing the religion of Islam upon non-Muslims. Thus, in the *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, the article of “Jihād” opens with the following words: “The spread of Islam by arms is a religious duty upon Muslims in general”. Klein, in his *Religion of Islam*, makes an even more sweeping statement: “Jihād ... The fighting against unbelievers with the object of either winning them over to Islam, or subduing and exterminating them in case they refuse to become Muslims”. In the Muslim popular mind there was an even greater misconception, that the killing of an unbeliever was *jihād* and that such an act entitled the perpetrator to be called a *ghāzī*. This conception, coupled with the prevailing belief in the advent of a Mahdī who would put all non-

3. *The Jihād*, pp. 5–6.

Muslims to the sword if they refused to accept Islam, opposed as it was to the plain teachings of the Holy Qur'ān, was doing immense harm to the cause of the spread of Islam among non-Muslims. With very few exceptions, even educated Muslims were victims of the wrong impression that Islam enjoined aggressive war against non-believers, and the Founder of the Ahmadiyya movement had to carry on incessant war, not against *jihād* as inculcated by the Holy Qur'ān but against the false conceptions of it prevalent both among Muslims and non-Muslims.

The way was cleared for removing these misconceptions by establishing two principles:

1. That *jihād* means *exerting oneself to the extent of one's ability and power, whether it is by word or deed* and that the word is used in this broad sense in the Holy Qur'ān.
2. That when it is used in the narrower sense of *fighting*, it means fighting only in self defence.

If, therefore, all exertions to carry the message of Islam to non-Muslims by simple preaching, or what may be called spiritual warfare, fell within the purview of *jihād*, a war carried on for the propagation of Islam, if such a one was ever undertaken by a Muslim ruler, was quite outside the scope of its true significance, as it was against the basic principle laid down in the Holy Qur'ān that "there is no compulsion in religion."⁴ If he ever spoke of the abrogation of *jihād*, it was for this misconception of the word *jihād*, not of the *jihād* as inculcated by the Holy Qur'ān, every word of which he believed to be a Divine revelation which could not be abrogated till the Day of Judgment. Here is another passage from the pamphlet quoted above:

"Their contention that, since *jihād* was permitted in the early days (of Islam), there is no reason why it should be prohibited now is entirely misconceived. It may be

4. The Qur'ān, 2:256.

refuted in two ways; firstly, that this inference is drawn from wrong premises and our Holy Prophet never used the sword against any people except those who first took up the sword (against the Muslims) ... secondly, that, even if we suppose for the sake of argument that there was such a *jihād* in Islam as these Maulawīs think, even so that order does not stand now, for it is reported that, when the Promised Messiah appears, there will be an end of *jihād* with the sword and of religious wars.”⁵

It will be seen that the prevalent idea that Islam allowed a *jihād* for the spread of religion is refuted in two ways. In the first place, it is stated that this conception of *jihād* is against the Holy Qur’ān and Ḥadīth, as the Holy Prophet drew the sword only in self-defence, not for the propagation of religion. Further, it is added that, even if for the sake of argument it is supposed that a *jihād* for the propagation of religion was ever undertaken — that such was never undertaken by the Holy Prophet has been definitely stated in the first part — such *jihād* cannot be undertaken now, for, it is said of the Promised Messiah that he will put down (religious) wars, *yaḍ al-ḥarb*, as plainly stated in the *Bukhārī*. What is aimed is really this that a *jihād* contrary to the teachings of the Holy Qur’ān and of the practice of the Holy Prophet, if ever there was one, was undoubtedly the result of some misconception, and, according to the ḥadīth quoted above, the Promised Messiah will remove the misconception and thus put an end to such wars.

This position is made still more clear in an Arabic letter, addressed to the Muslims of the world, and forming a supplement to his book, *Tuhfah Golarwiya*. In this letter he says:

“There is not the least doubt that the conditions laid down for *jihād* (in the Holy Qur’ān) are not to be met with at the present time and in this country; so it is illegal for the Muslims to fight for (the propagation of)

5. *The Jihād*, p. 6.

religion and to kill anyone who rejects the Sacred Law, for God has made clear the illegality of *jihād* when there is peace and security.”⁶

Here it is made clear that *jihād* with the sword is allowed by Islam only under certain conditions and, as those conditions are not met with at the present time in the country in which the writer lives, therefore *jihād* with the sword is illegal here at the present time. This argument leads to the definite conclusion that *jihād* may be legal in another country in which exist the necessary conditions laid down in the Holy Qur’ān, or even here when the conditions have changed. These conditions are expressly stated in the Holy Book:

“And fight in the way of God against those who fight against you and be not aggressive, for God does not love the aggressors.” (2:190)

In this connection may be mentioned another charge relative to his attitude towards the British Government in India. The Sikhs, who ruled the Punjab before the advent of the British rule, had not only ousted Ḥazrat Mirza’s family from their estate but, in their later days, there was such lawlessness in the country as made life impossible for the Muslims who were not allowed a free exercise of their religion and whose very culture was on the verge of being swept away. It was at such a time that the British Government stepped in and saved the Muslims from annihilation. Thus, people who with their own eyes had seen the woes of the Muslims, or even their descendants, considered the British Government as a blessing, for through it they were saved. For allowing full liberty of religion and conscience and for establishing peace where before there were anarchy and lawlessness, Mirza Ghulām Aḥmad was not alone in praising the English rule. All writers of that time considered it their duty to give vent to similar expressions of loyalty and thankfulness. Sir Syed Aḥmad Khān, who occupied a position among the Muslims

6. *Tuhfah Golarwiya*, Supplement, p. 30.

which has not been vouchsafed to any other leader since his time, wrote exactly in the same strain as did Mirza Ghulām Aḥmad. Even the Wahābīs, who remained for a long time in the bad books of the Government, declared from the house-tops their loyalty to the Government. Thus wrote Maulawī Muḥammad Jabbār, the famous Wahābī leader:

“Before all, I thank the Government under which we can publicly and with the beat of drums teach the religious doctrines of our pure faith without any interference whatsoever, and we can pay back our opponents whether they are Christians or others in their own coin. Such religious liberty we cannot have even under the Sultan of Turkey.”⁷

Another famous *Ahl Hadīth* leader, Maulawī Muḥammad Hussain of Batāla, wrote:

“Considering the Divine Law and the present condition of the Muslims, we have said that this is not the time of the sword.”⁸

Nawāb Şiddīq Ḥasan Khān, another great leader and writer, went even further:

“A perusal of the historical books shows that the peace, security and liberty which all people have received under this rule have never been obtained under any other rule.”⁹

“Whoever goes against it (*i.e.*, loyalty and faithfulness to the British rule), not only is a mischief-maker in the eyes of the rulers but also he shall be farthest from what Islam requires and from the way of the faithful, and he shall be regarded as a violator of the covenant, unfaithful in his religion and a perpetrator of the greatest sin, and what his

7. *Barakāt-i-Islam*, Title page, 2.

8. *Ishā'at al-Sunnah*, Safar, 1301 A.H., p. 366.

9. *Tarjumān Wahābīa*, p. 8.

condition will be on the day of judgment will become evident there.”¹⁰

There was another reason for Hazrat Mirza Ghulām Aḥmad’s attitude towards British rule. He claimed to be the Promised Mahdī and, as the name of Mahdī was associated with the sword, the Government for many years regarded the Aḥmadiyya movement with distrust, thinking that the Founder might at any time rise in revolt against it. It was to remove this wrong impression that Ḥazrat Mirza laid stress on his faithfulness to the British rule. Moreover, he was laying the foundations of a missionary society with the grand aim of spreading Islam throughout the world, and such a society could do its work only by remaining loyal to the Government established by law in any country and by remaining aloof from all political agitation.

10. *Ibid.*, pp. 23–24.

Appendix 2

Did the Founder make slanderous attack on Jesus Christ and his mother? ¹

This again is a gross misrepresentation of what he wrote. How can a man who professes the faith of Islam abuse a prophet of God, when he is required to believe in that prophet? Jesus Christ is expressly mentioned in the Holy Qur'ān as a prophet, and every Muslim must honour him as such. In order to understand the nature of the writings to which objection is taken, two points must be clearly borne in mind.

The first is the nature of the controversy which was carried on by the Christian missionaries in India in the last quarter of the nineteenth century. The preaching of the Christian missionary until a short time ago was of a quite different character from what it is today. In those days, the Christian missionary was under the impression that the darker the picture he drew of the Prophet of Islam, the greater would be his success in winning over converts from among the Muslims; and this impression became stronger as the missionary reviewed the results. Not only some well-to-do people from among the Muslims but even some Maulawīs of great repute went over the Christian camp and, to win the favour of their European masters, these new disciples carried the vituperative propaganda against Islam to an extreme which made the Muslim blood boil. Some of the Christian controversial books of those days must indeed be

1. *The Founder of the Ahmadiyya Movement*, 1984 ed., pp. 78–88.

ranked as the filthiest religious literature that has ever been produced, apart from the fact that the founder of the Ārya Samāj and some of his blind votaries imitated the Christian missionary, and, later on, the Ārya Samājist preacher even surpassed the Christian missionary in the art of vituperation.

It is difficult even to conceive today how all those things could be written in the name of religion. The *Masiḥ al-Dajjāl* by Ramchand (1873), *Sīrat al-Masiḥ wal Muḥammad* by Rev. Thakurdas (1882), *Andrūna Bible* by Abdullah Atham, in which an attempt has been made to show that our Holy Prophet was the anti-christ and the Dragon of the Revelation, *Muḥammad kī Tawārīkh ka Ijmāl* by Rev. William (1891), *Taftīsh al-Islām* by Rev. Rodgers (1870), *Nabī-i Ma'thūm*, published by the American Mission Press of Ludhiana (1884), and dozens of other books and hundreds of tracts, are all strings of abusive epithets heaped upon the Holy Prophet and his companions, each writer trying to outdate the others in scurrility. To call the Holy Prophet an imposter, *Dajjāl* or anti-Christ, a deceiver, a dacoit, the slave of his sensual passions whose lust knew no bounds, and to attribute every conceivable crime to him became a habit with these Christian controversialists. Page after page of the writings named above and of others of the same type are full of such descriptions as the following:

“If he (the Prophet of Islam) abrogated the Gospels there is no wonder, for all those who are bent low on the world and are worshippers of their lust do like this.”

“Sensual lust ... is to be met with in Muḥammad to an excessive degree so that he was always its slave. Muḥammad, like other Arabs, from his very appearance seems to be a lover of women.”

“The occasion of the law relating to marriage with an adopted son's wife was the flaming of the lust of Muḥammad on seeing Zainab naked.”

“The religion of the Pope and the religion of Muḥammad are two jaws of the Dragon.”

“Ringleader of dacoits, a robber, a killer of people by secret conspiracies.”

“When by chance his eye caught a glance of her beauty, sinful love took possession of his heart, and to have his wicked desire fulfilled he arranged to get permission from Heaven.”

“We cannot give any name to his claim to prophethood except fraud or cunning.”

“All this is the fabrication of Muḥammad, he was a slave of his passions.”

“His character in no way befits the office of a prophet; he was a slave of his passions, full of the spirit of revenge and a selfish man, an extreme follower of his low desires. The Qur’ān is a falsehood, his own fabrication, which encouraged his slavery to passion and his lust.”

“His speech and his ways increased in wickedness with his age.”

This is only a sample of the writings of the Christian missionaries of those days. In fact, so scurrilous was this literature growing that, when Rev. Imād-ud-Dīn, a Maulawī who had become a convert to Christianity, published his writings, they were found to be so grossly abusive that even Christians began to complain about them, and the *Shams al-Akhbār* of Lucknow, itself a Christian missionary paper, was compelled to give a warning against the offensiveness of Imād-ud-Dīn’s writings, saying that “if there was again a mutiny like that of 1857, it would be due to the abusive and scurrilous language of his writings.” There was not the least exaggeration in the warning given by this Christian paper. The Muslim is never so offended as when his Prophet is abused. He can submit to the greatest insult but the one thing to which he will not submit is the abuse

of the Holy Prophet Muḥammad. Recent years have brought before us many instances of this deep-rooted love of the Muslim for his Prophet. How many young Muslims have lost their mental balance and turned a revolver against a reviler of the Prophet, knowing fully well that they must pay for this with their lives! Nobody can gauge the depth of the love of a Muslim for his Prophet. It is a fact that the sting of the Prophet's abuse affects the Muslim's heart so deeply that he gets excited beyond all measure, and cognizance of this fact should be taken by the highest executive authority, even if the High Courts of Justice cannot give a more liberal interpretation to the law of the land and must inflict a death penalty on youths who have become mentally unbalanced by such excitement.

It would have been no wonder if the highly scurrilous tenor of Christian controversialists had excited a Muslim defender of the Faith like the Founder of the Aḥmadiyya movement to such an extent that he made remarks unworthy of himself and of the cause which he supported. Nevertheless, he kept his mental balance and adopted a method of controversy which, within a very short time, made the Christian missionaries realize that their methods needed a change, and this is the second point which must be borne in mind. It was a simple method. What would be the picture of Jesus Christ if he was criticized and found fault with in the manner in which the Christian missionaries criticized and found fault with the Holy Prophet of Islam? In fact, nothing short of this could make the Christian missionary realize how deeply he was offending the Muslim feeling. Therefore, when Ḥazrat Mirza first adopted this method he wrote in plain words:

“As the Rev. Fateḥ Masīḥ of Fateḥgarh, Gurdāspūr district, has written to us a very scurrilous letter, and in it he has accused our Lord and Master, the Holy Prophet Muḥammad, of adultery, and has used about him many other scurrilous words by way of abuse, it is, therefore, advisable that a reply to his letter should be published. This pamphlet has therefore been written. I hope that

Christian missionaries will read it carefully and will not be offended by its words, for this method is entirely the result of the harsh words and filthy abuse of Fateh Masih. Still, we have every regard for the sacred glory of Jesus Christ, and in return for the abusive words of Fateh Masih, only an imaginary Messiah (*farḍi Masih*) has been spoken of.”²

This position was again and again made clear by the Founder in his writings, but interested persons carry on false propaganda ignoring the explanation. Thus M. Zafar ‘Alī, of *Zamindār*, attributes the following words to Hazrat Mirza:

“Jesus Christ was evil-minded and overbearing. He was the enemy of the righteous. We cannot call him even a gentleman, much less a prophet (*Anjām Atham*, p. 9).”

Any one who refers to page 9 of the book referred to, will find that the writer is guilty of making a false allegation. The passage as met with in the book runs thus:

“In the same way, the impious Fateh Masih has, in his letter to me, called our Holy Prophet adulterer and has abused him in many other ways. Thus this filthy section ... compels us to write something about their Yasū‘ (Jesus), and let the Muslims know that God has not made any mention of this Yasū‘ in the Holy Qur’ān. The Christian missionaries say that Yasū‘ was that person who claimed to be God and called Holy Moses a thief and a cheat, and disbelieved in the advent of the Holy Prophet, and said that after him only false prophets would come. We cannot call such an evil-minded, overbearing person and the enemy of the righteous, a gentleman — still less a prophet.”

Between the quotation given by M. Zafar ‘Alī and the passage actually found in the book, there is the difference between

2. *Nūr al-Qur’ān*, p. 1.

heaven and earth. The Founder of the Aḥmadiyya movement never wrote that Jesus Christ was evil-minded and overbearing. On the other hand, adhering to the principle which he had made clear in the *Nūr al-Qur'ān*, as quoted above, he merely tells his opponent, Fateḥ Masīḥ, that the imaginary Messiah of the Christians (*fardī Masīḥ*), who is not the same as the Messiah of the Holy Qur'ān (the real Messiah), may, on the basis of the Christian writings, be described as an evil-minded and overbearing person, if the method of criticism adopted by the Christians in the case of the Holy Prophet Muḥammad, whom they called an adulterer, was to be followed in the case of their Christ. It is the imaginary picture of the Messiah which the Christian missionary has drawn that is condemned by the Founder of the Aḥmadiyya movement, and not the Messiah himself. Now, according to the Muslim faith, if a man calls himself God and also denounces the righteous servants of God as being thieves and cheats, he is undoubtedly an overbearing and evil-minded man. The Muslims believe, and so did the Founder that Jesus Christ never said that he was God, and he never denounced the other righteous servants of God; therefore they hold that the picture of the Messiah drawn by the Christians is not the picture of a man who actually lived, but that of one who exists only in the Christian imagination. It is this imaginary picture which Ḥazrat Mirza denounces, and that too he did merely because the Christian missionaries would not refrain from abusing the Holy Prophet of Islam.

It should be borne in mind that this method of paying back the Christian missionaries in their own coin was adopted by other recognized Muslim leaders before the Founder of the Aḥmadiyya movement. Thus Maulānā Raḥmat Allāh writes in the introduction to his book, *Izāla Auhām*:

“As the Christian missionaries are disrespectful in their speeches and writings towards the best of men, our Holy Prophet, and towards the Holy Qur'ān and Ḥadīth of the Prophet, ... so we have been compelled to pay them back

in the same coin ... By no means it is my belief that I should speak of a prophet in disparaging terms.”

Very recently, even the official organ of the Jamī‘at al-‘Ulamā’ of Delhi, *al-Jam‘īyya* dated 20th Nov. 1932, wrote in reply to certain Christian missionaries:

“The person whom the Christians erroneously take for the Messiah was really the enemy of the Messiah and he has nothing to do with Islam and the Qur‘ān. Nor does any Muslim believe in him.”

An example of how false propaganda is being carried on against the Founder of the Aḥmadiyya movement is the statement published very widely by M. Zafar ‘Alī in his paper, the *Zamīndār*, bearing the heading, “An open letter to the King of England” in which he states that Mirza Ghulām Aḥmad accused Mary of adultery and called Christ a bastard. When he was challenged to produce a single quotation in support of this statement, he remained silent, though he continued to repeat the false allegations. It is clear on the face of it that a Muslim who believed in the Holy Qur‘ān could not make such a wild statement as that attributed to the Founder of the Aḥmadiyya movement, but the public is being fed on these lies by the sworn enemies of the movement. Far from accusing Mary of adultery and calling Jesus a bastard, Mirza Ghulām Aḥmad again and again speaks of the miraculous birth of Jesus Christ. The following three quotations will suffice for this purpose:

“One of the doctrines we hold is that Jesus Christ and John the Baptist were both born miraculously ... And the secret in creating Jesus and John in this manner was the manifestation of a great sign ... And the first thing He (God) did to bring this about was the creation of Jesus without a father through the manifestation of Divine power only.”³

3. *Mawāhib al-Raḥmān*, pp. 70–72.

“The ground on which this is based is his (Jesus Christ’s) creation without the agency of a human father, and the detail of this is that a certain section of the Jews, *i.e.*, the Sadducees, were deniers of the Resurrection, so God informed them through some of His prophets that a son from among their community would be born without a father, and this would be a sign of the truth of Resurrection.”⁴

“The (Ārya Samājist) lecturer also objected to Mary bearing a child by the Holy Spirit and to Jesus being born from Mary alone. The reply is that this was done by the same God Who, according to the Ārya Samāj teachings, creates millions of people in the beginning of every new creation, just as vegetables grow out of the earth. If, according to the Vedic teachings, God has created the world millions of times, nay, times without number, in this manner, and there was no need that men and women should unite together in order that a child should be born, where is the harm if Jesus Christ was born similarly.”⁵

The above quotations should be sufficient to convince even the greatest enemy of the movement that its Founder sincerely believed that Jesus Christ was born of Mary without her coming into union with a male. The Founder not only states his own belief on this matter but he replies to the objections of the Ārya Samāj, and lays stress on the point that Jesus Christ was born without a human father. How could he then accuse Mary of adultery when he states again and again that she had not even a lawful union with a man before the birth of Jesus Christ? In the face of these clear statements, to say that he regarded Mary as having committed adultery or that he called Jesus Christ a bastard is a barefaced lie, yet it is calumnies such as this that the public is expected to take, and actually takes, for gospel truth.

4. *Hamāmat al-Buṣhrā*, p. 90.

5. *Chashma Ma'rifah*, p. 217.

Appendix 3

The use of strong language against the ‘ulamā’¹

Another charge against the Founder is that, in his dealing with the orthodox ‘ulamā’, he was very severe. As a matter of fact, Hazrat Mirza Ghulām Aḥmad, in this case also, paid back the opposing ‘ulamā’ in their own coin. No sooner had he announced that Jesus Christ was dead and that he himself was the Messiah who was to appear among the Muslims than they denounced him in the most scurrilous terms and applied to him every hateful epithet which they could think of. The following are only a few examples taken from the pages of *Ishā‘at al-sunnah*, a periodical issued by Maulawī Muḥammad Ḥusain of Batāla, which had become the mouthpiece of the ‘ulamā’:

“Hidden enemy of Islam”; “The second Musailma”; “*Dajjāl*”; “a liar”; “he should have his face blackened, and a rope should be tied round his neck and a necklace of shoes put over him, and in this condition he should be carried through the towns of India”; “a satan, an evil-doer”; “*Zindeeq*”; “most shameless”; “worse than *Dajjāl*”; “has the manners of ruffians and scavengers, nay those of beasts and savages”; “progeny of Halākū Khān and Changez Khān, the unbelieving Turks, this shows that you are really a ...”

The literature produced against Hazrat Mirza teemed with such scurrilous epithets, and even worse than these; no abusive

1. *The Founder of the Aḥmadiyya Movement*, 1984 ed., pp. 88–92.

word could be thought of which was not applied to him merely because he claimed to be the Promised Messiah. In addition to this, *fatwās* were issued against the Founder and the members of the Aḥmadiyya movement, declaring them to be too polluted to set foot in a mosque, declaring even their dead bodies to be unfit for a Muslim graveyard, and pronouncing their marriages to be illegal and their property to be a lawful spoil for others, so that it was no sin to take it away by any means.

It was '*ulamā*' of this type whom the Founder of the Aḥmadiyya movement sometimes dealt with severely, and, if he occasionally made a retort in kind and gave a bad name to such irresponsible people who had lost all sense of propriety and decency, he could not be blamed according to any moral code. Thus he writes in one of his latest books:

“Those '*ulamā*' of the latter days whom the Holy Prophet has called the *Yahūd* (Jews) of this *ummaḥ* are particularly those Maulwīs who are opponents of the Promised Messiah and are his sworn enemies and who are doing everything possible to bring him to naught and call him *kāfir*, unbeliever and *Dajjāl* ... But those '*ulamā*' who do not belong to this category, we cannot call them *Yahūd* of this *ummaḥ*.”²

Elsewhere, explaining his attitude, he says:

“This our description of them does not apply to the righteous but to the mischievous among them.”³

It cannot be denied that a certain class of '*ulamā*' is spoken of in very strong words in Ḥadīth itself. Thus, in one ḥadīth, the '*ulamā*' of the latter days are described as “the worst of all under the canopy of heaven”, and it is added: “From among them would the tribulation come forth and into them would it turn back”.⁴ According to another ḥadīth, the Holy Prophet is

2. *Barāhīn Aḥmadiyya*, Part V, p. 114.

3. *Al-Hudā*, p. 68.

4. *Baihaqī*, kitāb *Shu'b al-Īmān*.

reported to have said:

“There will come upon my *ummah* a time of great trial, and the people will have recourse to their ‘*ulamā*’, and lo! they will find them to be apes and swine.”⁵

There is almost a consensus of opinion that what was stated about the evil condition of ‘*ulamā*’ had come true in the present age. Writing shortly prior to the Founder of the Ahmadiyya movement, Nawāb Ṣiddīq Ḥasan Khān wrote in his book, *Kashf al-Lithām*, to this effect, admitting clearly that this condition of the ‘*ulamā*’ could be plainly witnessed at the present time. It is at least certain that the debasement of the ‘*ulamā*’ and the advent of the Messiah are described as contemporaneous events. Equally certain it is that the ‘*ulamā*’ in this age have done the greatest disservice to Islam by wrangling among themselves and wasting all national energy in internal dissensions and not caring in the least for the sufferings of Islam itself. They have entirely neglected their prime duty of upholding the cause of Islam as against the opposing forces and have brought further discredit on it by their narrow-mindedness in fighting among themselves on the most trivial points,⁶ thus making themselves and Islam itself, whose champions they are supposed to be, the laughing-stock of the world. If these people, when reminded of their duty,

5. *Kanz al-'Ummāl*, vol. vii, p. 190.

6. A very severe contest has been raging in the Muslim world over the accent of the *Āmīn* recited after the *Fātiḥah* in prayers, the majority holding that it should be pronounced in a low voice, and a small minority, the Wahābīs, holding that it should be pronounced loudly. How often has the sacred and serene atmosphere of a congregational prayer been disturbed by the taking-up of cudgels to belabour an unfortunate member of the congregation who happened to pronounce the *Āmīn* aloud! Cases have gone up to High Courts of Judicature to determine the right of one section to say their prayers in certain mosques which were built by Muslims of another persuasion. Even this becomes insignificant when one finds that a great struggle is carried on over the pronouncement of the letter *dzād* which some read as *dād* and others as *zād*, the real pronunciation lying somewhere midway between the two, and *fatwās* of *kufṛ* have been given against one another on a matter of which a man possessing a grain of common sense would not take notice.

turned against the man who was commissioned to lead Islam to triumph and heaped all sorts of abusive epithets upon him, thus hampering the great work which he was to accomplish, he was justified in calling them unworthy sons of Islam, and, in a spiritual sense, the illegitimate offspring of their great ancestors.