

With Love
to the
Muslims of the World
THE AḤMADIYYA PERSPECTIVE

by

ḤAḌRAT MIRZĀ ṬĀHIR AḤMAD
(Khalīfatul Masiḥ IV)
The Fourth Successor of the Promised Messiah

2004

ISLAM INTERNATIONAL PUBLICATIONS LTD

With Love to the Muslims of the World

First published in UK in 2004

© Islam International Publications Ltd.

Published by:

Islam International Publications Ltd.

'Islamabad' Sheephatch Lane,

Tilford, Surrey GU10 2AQ

United Kingdom

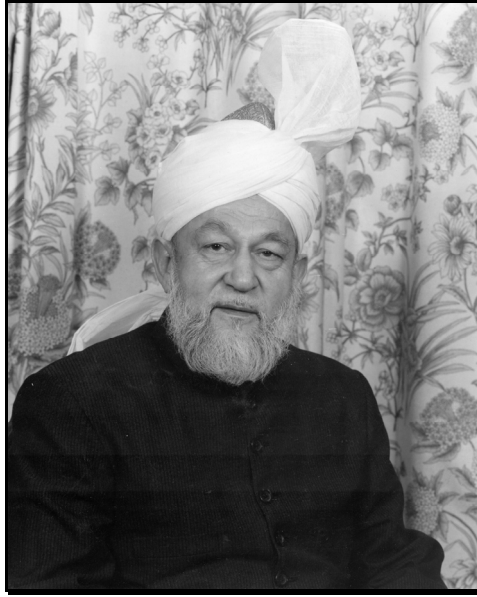
Printed in U.K. at:

Raqeem Press

Tilford, Surrey

Cover Design: Nasir Sajjad

ISBN: 1 85372 744 X



About The Author

Ḥaḍrat Mirzā Tāhir Aḥmad (1928-2003) (may Allāh have infinite mercy on his soul), a man of God, Voice articulate of the age, a great orator, a deeply learned scholar of phenomenal intelligence, a prolific and versatile writer, a keen student of comparative religions was loved and devoutly followed by his approximately 10 million Aḥmadi Muslim followers all over the world as their Imam, the spiritual head, being the fourth successor of Ḥaḍrat Mirzā Ghulām Aḥmad (the Promised Messiah and Maḥdi^{as}), to which august office he was elected as Khalīfatul Masīḥ in 1982.

After the promulgation of general Zia's Anti Aḥmadiyya Ordinance of 26th April 1984 he had to leave his beloved country, Pakistan and migrated to England from where he launched Muslim Television Ahmadiyya (MTA) which would

(and still does) telecast its programmes 24 hours a day to the four corners of the world, making it possible for him to reach out to his followers around the world in particular and to humanity (especially the Islamic world) in general.

Besides being a religious leader, he was a homeopathic physician of world fame, a highly gifted poet and a sportsman.

He had his schooling in Qādiān, India, and later joined the Govt. College, Lahore, Pakistan, and after graduating from Jāmi‘ah Aḥmadiyya, Rabwah, Pakistan with distinction, he obtained his honours degree in Arabic from the Panjab University, Lahore. From 1955 to 1957 he studied at the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London.

He had a divinely inspired and very deep knowledge of the Qur’an which he translated into Urdu. He also partially revised and added explanatory notes to the English translation of the Holy Qur’an by Ḥaḍrat Maulawī Sher ‘Alī (may Allāh be pleased with him). 'Revelation, Rationality, Knowledge and Truth' is his magnum opus.

Though he had no formal education in philosophy and science, he had a philosophical bent of mind and tackled most difficult and abstruse theologico-philosophical questions with great acumen and ease and his intellectual approach was always rational and scientific. For a layman he had an amazingly in-depth knowledge of science, especially life sciences which attracted him most. He also had deep knowledge of human psychology. His was an analytical mind of high intelligence — an intellect scintillating with brilliance, capable of solving knottiest problems with ease, leaving his listeners and readers spellbound.

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Foreword

This message was written on the occasion of an International games event in Baku, Azerbaijan to which the Muslim Tigers Ahmadiyya Hockey team had been officially invited by the Azerbaijan Council of the Union-wide Voluntary Trade Union Sports Federation. This invitation followed a recommendation of Azineftechim team from Baku that had played against the MTA Hockey club when it toured England in April 1990. Then the message was translated into Russian and published.

Originally addressed to the people of Azerbaijan and those of the former USSR, this message, with its universal import, is equally meant for peoples of all countries and religions.

The name of Muḥammad^{sa}, the Holy Prophet of Islam, has been followed by the symbol ^{sa}, which is an abbreviation for the salutation ‘may peace and blessings of Allāh be upon him.’ The names of other prophets and messengers are followed by the symbol ^{as}, an abbreviation for ‘on whom be peace.’ The actual salutations have not generally been set out in full, but they should nevertheless, be understood as being repeated in full in each case.

In transliterating Arabic words we have followed the following system adopted by the Royal Asiatic Society.

- ا at the beginning of a word, pronounced as *a, i, u* preceded by a very slight aspiration, like *h* in the English word ‘honour’.
- ث *th*, pronounced like *th* in the English word ‘thing’.
- ح *h*, a guttural aspirate, stronger than *h*.
- خ *kh*, pronounced like the Scotch *ch* in ‘loch’.
- ذ *dh*, pronounced like the English *th* in ‘that’.
- ص *s*, strongly articulated *s*.
- ض *d*, similar to the English *th* in ‘this’.
- ط *t*, strongly articulated palatal *t*.
- ظ *z*, strongly articulated *z*.
- ع ‘, a strong guttural, the pronunciation of which must be learnt by the ear.
- غ *gh*, a sound approached very nearly in the *r* ‘*grasseye*’ in French, and in the German *r*. It requires the muscles of the throat to be in the ‘gargling’ position whilst pronouncing it.
- ق *q*, a deep guttural *k* sound.
- ء ’, a sort of catch in the voice.

Short vowels are represented by *a* for $\overset{\curvearrowright}{\text{—}}$ (like *u* in ‘bud’); *i* for $\overset{\curvearrowleft}{\text{—}}$ (like *i* in ‘bid’); *u* for $\overset{\curvearrowright}{\text{—}}$ (like *oo* in ‘wood’); the long vowels by \bar{a} for $\overset{\curvearrowleft}{\text{—}}$ or $\overset{\curvearrowright}{\text{—}}$ (like *a* in

‘father’); \bar{i} for ع — or — (like *ee* in ‘deep’); *ai* for ع — (like *i* in ‘site’)[♦]; \bar{u} for و — (like *oo* in ‘root’); *au* for و — (resembling *ou* in ‘sound’).

Please note that in transliterated words the letter ‘e’ is to be pronounced as in ‘prey’ which rhymes with ‘day’; however the pronunciation is flat without the element of English diphthong.*

The consonants not included in the above list have the same phonetic value as in the principal languages of Europe.

It should also be noted that we have not transliterated Arabic words which have become part of English language, e.g., Islam, Mahdi, Qur’an, Hijra, Ramadan, ulema, umma, sunna, kafir, pukka etc.¹

Please note that for quotes straight commas (straight quotes) are used to differentiate them from the curved commas used in the system of transliteration, ‘ for ع, ’ for ء. Commas as punctuation marks are used according to the normal usage.

For further information please contact any branch of Aḥmadiyya Muslim Jamā‘at International.

The Publishers

♦ In Arabic words like شيخ (Shaikh) there is an element of diphthong which is missing when the word is pronounced in Urdu.

* This is not included in the system of transliteration by Royal Asiatic Society.

¹ Concise Oxford Dictionary records Qur’an in three forms—Quran, Qur’an and Koran.

THE AḤMADIYYA MUSLIM JAMĀ‘AT

Jamā‘at-e-Aḥmadiyya occupies a unique position in the world of Islam. It is not just like one of the 72 other sects. To understand the Aḥmadiyya position in relation to the rest of the Muslim sects and in relation to Islam as a whole, we suggest that the whole scenario should be observed from different vantage points.

AḤMADIYYAT AS VIEWED BY OTHER MUSLIM CLERICS

To begin with, let us examine the position of Jamā‘at-e-Aḥmadiyya in relation to the other 72 sects from the vantage point of the scholars of the most predominant sects and the leaders of some powerful Muslim states.

To an observer from this angle, the Jamā‘at-e-Aḥmadiyya would appear to be the blackest of the black and the ugliest of the ugly. It will appear to have no relation whatsoever with Islam—an outcast which was implanted in the world of Islam only to create rift and disorder and to play the most damaging role of a western spy in the world of Islam.

Members of such a Community as this, the great clerics of the predominant groups will tell you, are not only non-believers in the true sense of the word pukka kafir, but also they must be considered by every Muslim as worse than Christians, Jews and idolaters—even atheists!

No wonder, the ulema would tell their followers that the great Muslim states of Pakistan and Saudi Arabia and their camp-followers have officially declared this Jamā‘at to be

a non-Muslim Community which deserves to be uprooted and tossed out of the pale of Islam. Such roundly-condemning statements would always be followed by intriguing tales of the so-called Aḥmadiyya beliefs. It would be difficult to exhaust the catalogue of these alleged beliefs in a brief space, but a sample of them is presented below.

ALLEGATIONS AGAINST AḤMADĪS

It is alleged that Aḥmadīs do not believe in the *Khatm-e-Nabuwwat* of Ḥaḍrat Muḥammad^{sa} and do not accept him as *Khātamun Nabiyyīn*.

That they consider the claimed "revelations" of Mirzā Ghulām Aḥmad as equal in rank to the Holy Qur'an and believe it to be a Book of Sharia.

That Aḥmadīs have a different *Kalimah* from that of all Muslims (*Lā ilāha Illallahu Muḥammad-ur-Rasūlullāh*).

That the mode of worship of Aḥmadīs is different from the Islamic mode of worship.

That their founder, Mirzā Ghulām Aḥmad of Qādiān, by claiming to be a prophet after the Holy Founder of Islam^{sa}, committed an unpardonable sin, so much so that he and his followers, according to Islamic Sharia, have forfeited their right to live.

That Mirzā Ghulām Aḥmad, not only insulted the Holy Prophet Muḥammad^{sa} by claiming to be his equal, but he also claimed to be his superior and freely insulted other prophets like Jesus Christ^{as} as well.

That his attitude to the holy progeny of the Holy Prophet^{sa} was also insulting to the extent of being intolerable.

That he also insulted and abused all ulema of Islam.

That he did not stop short at abusing the ulema but also abused the whole Muslim umma.

The list of allegations is not exhausted, of course; but enough is enough. The blood of the reader may be boiling already and seething with rage: What a man and what a Jamā‘at! No wonder, one may observe, that ulema had declared this Jamā‘at to be the worst of communities ever founded.

So, the reader can well imagine how, looking at the Aḥmadiyya Muslim Jamā‘at from this vantage point of utter hatred and mad hostility, this Jamā‘at appears to be a manifestation of the devil himself.

AḤMADIYYAT FROM A DIFFERENT VANTAGE POINT

Now let us change the vantage point and observe the Jamā‘at from a different angle and try to understand Aḥmadiyyat from the point of view of Aḥmadīs themselves.

First of all, it is surprising to note that all the above allegations are emphatically denied and rejected by the members of this rapidly growing international Jamā‘at. This denial does not bring the matter to a close, however; because other questions are immediately raised. For instance, one may ask, if all the above-mentioned allegations are totally false, then why should the ulema hate the Aḥmadiyya

Muslim Jamā‘at as they do and what do they gain by concocting such false stories about Aḥmadiyya beliefs?

The matter becomes more complicated and incomprehensible when one recalls that it is not the ulema alone who have joined forces to make this community a target of this most incriminating propaganda but many Muslim states as well support and finance anti-Aḥmadiyya campaigns throughout the world, foremost among them being Saudi Arabia and Pakistan.

THE AḤMADIYYA RESPONSE

In response to the questions raised above, the following is the Aḥmadiyya position:

It is the fundamental human right of every person to declare his own beliefs or to deny any. No man, nor any government for that matter, is empowered to attribute to a person and/or to a community, any beliefs which they fervently and vehemently deny. Hence, just the denial by the Aḥmadiyya Muslim Jamā‘at should be considered valid enough to absolve them of these accusations.

Aḥmadīs point out that the biggest crime that a man has ever committed to turn both foes and friends against him has always been the crime of falsely claiming to have been raised by God as an Imam and divine representative.

ALL PROPHETS WERE PERSECUTED

Aḥmadīs support this statement by pointing to the history of religions so accurately preserved by the Holy Qur’an.

Turning to the question put to them, they in their turn, ask, what crimes were committed by Adam, Noah, Abraham,

Moses or Jesus (peace be on them) and, above all, by the greatest of Prophets, the Holy Prophet Muḥammad^{sa}?

Were they not abused, were they not insulted, were they not persecuted and tortured, were they not deprived of all their fundamental rights and even declared to have forfeited their right to live? All sorts of allegations were hurled at them. They were accused of crimes they had never dreamt of. They were alleged to hold beliefs which they never held. Many among them were treated as foreign spies and were compelled to leave their homelands.

The atrocities committed against these claimants and their adherents are innumerable but the one and only "crime" they committed was none other than their belief in One God and in the fact that He had raised a Messenger to reform society. This is the "crime" which prophet after prophet and their adherents are alleged to have committed!

OPPOSITION TO GOD'S PROPHETS CREATES A SUPERFICIAL UNITY

When one scans the history of religions, one cannot fail to notice that all the prophets of God, though accused of creating disorder and disunity, do in fact become instrumental in uniting a society which before their advent was already shattered into sects and schisms with an ever-growing tendency to fall further apart in dogmas and practices.

Had Jesus^{as} not been raised, no power on earth could have united the warring factions of the Jews. Thus, it was only the hatred of Jesus^{as} that brought about the great miracle

that those who could not be united for the love of Moses^{as} were suddenly brought together and behaved like one people by their hostility to Jesus Christ^{as}, the Messiah and Messenger of Allah.

It is only in this negative way that the prophets of Allah unite a people. According to the Holy Qur'an, such bridging of gaps and of differences only creates a semblance of forged unity while in reality such people remain disunited.

تَحْسِبُهُمْ جَمِيعًا وَقُلُوبُهُمْ شَتَّىٰ

"Thou thinkest them to be united, but their hearts are divided." (59 : 15)

This is the unchangeable verdict of the Holy Qur'an.

THE TRUE UNITY CREATED BY PROPHETS

However, it is not only this ostensible unification of a divided people in this negative sense that is brought about by the Messengers of Allah, but there is also another type of brotherhood which is created by such godly people in the positive sense and which is, in fact, one of the ultimate objects of their advent. This process of creating one umma out of chaos is not brought about suddenly. Instead, it is a process which is accomplished through a long and painful journey of human sacrifices.

The Holy Qur'an refers to this creation of one umma out of a scattered people and declares that it is only God Who can transform hatred into love. This power of God when it works through the institution of prophets, works wonders.

Addressing the Muslim brotherhood of the time of the Holy Prophet^{sa} the Holy Qur'an says:

فَبِمَا رَحْمَةٍ مِّنَ اللَّهِ إِنْتَ لَهٗمٌ وَّ لَوْ كُنْتَ فَظًّا غَلِيظَ الْقَلْبِ لَأَنْفَضُوا مِنْ حَوْلِكَ

"And it is by the great mercy of Allah that thou art kind towards them, and if thou hadst been rough and hardhearted, they would surely have dispersed from around thee. "

(3 : 160)

The above seems to be a sufficient and befitting answer to the allegation that Aḥmadiyyat was created by anti-Islamic powers to produce rifts and divisions in the world of Islam.

MUSLIMS WERE DIVIDED EVEN BEFORE THE CLAIM OF ḤAḌRAT MIRZĀ GHULĀM AḤMAD^{AS}

These rifts and divisions were already prevalent before Ḥaḍrat Mirzā Ghulām Aḥmad claimed to be the Imam Mahdi^{as}.

The Aḥmadiyya Muslim Jamā‘at is the only community in the whole world today which can be described as one single brotherhood in the style of the brotherhood which was created by God through the blessed agency of the Holy Prophet^{sa}.

Again, it should have become very clear from the above that people, religious or otherwise, always show hostility to those who claim to have been raised by God to fulfil their appointed task. So it is a futile exercise to search for reasons other than this.

QUOTATIONS OUT OF CONTEXT

To adjudge the truth or falsity of these allegations and their denials by the Aḥmadīs, the latter claim that the most sensible thing to do is to read the entire text of the

writings of the Founder of the Aḥmadiyya Muslim Jamā‘at from which some out of context passages are selectively quoted by the anti-Aḥmadiyya ulema. Aḥmadīs claim that anyone who could find time and patience to investigate the truth in the prescribed manner would immediately reach the conclusion that the short excerpts picked and presented by the anti-Aḥmadiyya ulema from the writings of Ḥaḍrat Mirzā Ghulām Aḥmad are always quoted out of context and are twisted and distorted to a degree that they lose all bearing to the intent and purpose of the writer.

On the contrary, the profound writings of Ḥaḍrat Mirzā Ghulām Aḥmad of Qādiān bear incontrovertible testimony that the allegations are all false and that rather the opposite is true. Some relevant passages are quoted below for the reader to form his own judgement.

BASIC BELIEFS OF THE AḤMADIYYA JAMĀ‘AT

"We do believe that there is none worthy of worship except God Almighty and *Sayyidnā*² Ḥaḍrat Muḥammad^{sa}, the Chosen One, is His Messenger and the *Khātamul Anbiyā*'. We believe that Angels are a reality, that Resurrection is a reality and that the Day of Judgement is a reality; that Heaven is a reality and so is Hell. We do believe that whatever the Glorious and Majestic God has stated in the Holy Qur'an and whatever our Prophet^{sa}, has stated is all, according to the aforementioned statement, the truth. We do believe that the person who subtracts an iota from the Islamic law or adds to it as much, or lays the foundation in any manner for the rejection of Islamic injunctions, or attempts to declare unlawful

² Our master. [Publisher]

what has been made lawful in Islam, is an infidel and a renegade. We admonish our Jamā'at that they must adhere tenaciously to the fundamental article of Islamic faith: "*There is no God but Allah; Muḥammad is the Messenger of Allah,*" and that as long as they live they shall die holding fast to this belief. Also, they must have firm faith in all the Messengers of Allah and revealed Books authenticated by the Holy Qur'an. They should strictly abide by the Quranic injunctions, observe Prayers, keep Fast, pay the Zakāt and perform the Hajj. They should practice Islam by fully complying with all the injunctions, obligations and prohibitions prescribed by God and His Messenger. In short, all such matters on which there is consensus of belief and practice among our righteous predecessors, and all those matters which are considered Islamic on account of the collective judgement of the umma should be accepted, as a matter of course, to be a part of faith. We call to witness the Heaven and the Earth that this is exactly our faith."

(Ayyāmus Şulḥa, Rūḥānī Khazā'in, vol. 14, p. 323)

"We are Muslims, we believe in God Who is One, and we also believe in the *Kalimah*. We believe that the Qur'an is the Book of Allah and Muḥammad^{sa} is His Prophet and *Khāta-mul Anbiyā'*. We believe in the existence of the Angels, in the Day of Judgement, and in the existence of Heaven and Hell. We say our daily prayers, keep fast during Ramadan and turn towards Ka'bah to pray.

"We consider it our duty to refrain from whatever Allah and His Prophet forbid us to do and do whatever they command us to do. We have no authority to add or detract anything from the Islamic Sharia. We accept as part of Islam all that has come to us from the Holy Prophet^{sa}, whether or not we understand its *raison d'être*. By the Grace of Allah, we are true believers, Muslims and believers in the Oneness of God."

(Nūr-ul-Ḥaq, Part I, Rūḥānī Khaza'in, vol. 8, p.7)

Jesus Christ^{as}

"We would like to inform our readers that we hold Jesus Christ^{as} in high esteem and genuinely believe that he was a true prophet and beloved of God."

(Nūr-ul-Qur'an, Part II, Rūḥānī Khazā'in, vol.9, p.374)

The Holy Qur'an

"Of all the revealed Books which we find today, it is only the Holy Qur'an whose claim to be the Word of God is established on the basis of irrefutable arguments. The principles it lays down regarding salvation correspond exactly with the dictates of truth and human nature. The doctrines it propounds are so perfect and well founded that they are supported by powerful and irrefutable evidence. Its injunctions are based on absolute justice and its teachings are completely free from the contamination of *Shirk*—associating partners with God and innovative deviations. It is a Book in which there is great eagerness to manifest the Oneness and Greatness of God and to emphasize the perfection of the attributes of the One and Only God. It is a Book which has this outstanding quality that it is filled entirely and purely with the Unity of God and does not permit any blemish or defect or shortcoming or aspersion to be ascribed to God Almighty. Also, it does not impose any doctrine perforce.

"On the contrary, it establishes in advance the truth of what it teaches.

"It proves its aims and objectives with reasons and explains every principle it enunciates, it leads man to firm belief and absolute understanding of realities. Thus it removes, with the help of self-evident signs, all defects, impurities and irregularities which infest human beliefs, practices, words and deeds. It also teaches all etiquettes which are essential to actualize human potentialities.

"It resists every evil current today with equal force. Its teachings are straight, powerful and well-balanced as if they were a reflective mirror of nature itself and a true copy of the law of nature. It is like an enlightening sun for the inner eye and perceptive faculty of the heart."

(Brāhīn-e-Aḥmadiyya, Rūḥānī Khazā'in, vol. 1 pp.81-82)

Superiority of the Holy Prophet^{sa}

"There have been millions of pure-hearted people in the world and there will be many more in future, but we have found the best of them all and the choicest man of God, whose name is Muḥammad^{sa}.

إِنَّ اللَّهَ وَمَلَائِكَتَهُ يُصَلُّونَ عَلَى النَّبِيِّ يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا صَلُّوا
عَلَيْهِ وَسَلِّمُوا تَسْلِيمًا³

Leave aside any mention of the holy ones from among those whose circumstances have not been described in detail in the Holy Qur'an, we shall speak of only those Prophets who are mentioned in the Holy Qur'an like Moses, David, Jesus and others, peace be on them.

"We affirm it on oath, calling God to witness, that if the Holy Prophet(may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), had not come into the world, and the Holy Qur'an had not been revealed, and we had not seen with our own eyes the blessings that we have witnessed, the truth of all past Prophets would have remained doubtful to us. No truth can be attained from mere stories, for it is quite possible that they may not be true and it is also possible that the miracles that are attributed to these Prophets might be exaggerations, for no sign of them is visible today. We cannot even ascertain from the Scriptures

³ Allah and His angels send blessings on the Prophet. O ye who believe! you also should invoke blessings on him and salute him with the salutation of peace (33:57) [Translator]

revealed in the past that God does exist, because we are not assured that God speaks to man. But with the advent of the Holy Prophet, peace be on him, the truth of all these stories was confirmed. We now realize not merely as a statement, but as a matter of experience, what converse with God means and how God's signs are manifested and how prayers are answered. All this we have discovered by following the Holy Prophet (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). What others relate as stories we have witnessed it all. We have attached ourselves to a Prophet who actually shows God to us."

(Chashmah-e-Ma'rifat Part II, Rūhānī Khazā'in, vol. 23 pp. 301-302)

"All ulema are not the same: Some of them are God-fearing while others are wrongdoers. Those who fear Allah, we always think well of them; Allah will soon guide them and they shall perceive the truth. When they are told to declare this man a kafir who is claiming to be the Messiah, they say 'We will not say anything without full knowledge, and we fear Allah'."

(Al-Hudā, Rūhānī Khazā'in, vol. 18 pp. 320)

The foregoing quotations from the writings of Ḥaḍrat Mirzā Ghulām Aḥmad, the Promised Messiah are so self-explanatory, so powerful and convincing that it is impossible for an honest man not to be deeply influenced by their sincerity and devotion. With that we rest our case regarding the real faith of Aḥmadiyya Muslim Jama'at and leave it to the readers to draw their own conclusions. We hope and pray that Allah may lead them to the truth.

HOSTILITY AGAINST EARLIER MUSLIM SAINTS

Now we turn to another aspect of the issue involved in this controversy. Although from the study of Islamic history

one may not find another example of the entire Muslim umma joining their forces against one single Muslim community, it is not correct to claim that the entire Muslim umma has remained united even on the interpretations of the fundamental beliefs. Again it is wrong to conceive that no Muslim saints and scholars have ever been treated with such uncompromising hostility before as the Founder of the Aḥmadiyya Muslim Jamā‘at and as his adherents are being treated today.

In fact, any impartial student of Islamic history is bound to draw the tragic conclusion that, in every period and every century of Islamic history the ulema of the time always picked as their target, some contemporary saints and scholars and treated them with such cruelty that even reading such accounts makes one shudder. Again it is a matter of great wonder that these persecuted scholars of each century later on emerged in the sight of posterity as the greatest sons of Islam of their respective times.

Following are some examples to prove the case in point:

1st Century Hijra

The third Caliph, Ḥaḍrat ‘Uthmān, the fourth Caliph Ḥaḍrat ‘Alī and Imam Ḥussain (may Allah be pleased with them) were all branded as heretics and apostates by the obsequious section of the ulema.

2nd Century Hijra

The great Ṣūfī Junaid of Baghdad, Muḥammad AI-Faqīh, Imam Mālik Bin Anas and Imam Shāfi‘ī, all were learned

scholars and saintly men, who were branded as apostates and heretics.

Imam Abū Ḥanīfah, the founder of the Hanafite School of Jurisprudence, was branded as an apostate and an infidel. He was arrested, imprisoned, tortured and poisoned. He died in prison when he was praying.

3rd Century Hijra

The great Imam Bukhārī whose Ṣaḥīḥ Bukhārī is regarded as next only to the Holy Qur'an, was also branded as an apostate: 3,000 ulema and mullahs gave evidence of apostasy against the Imam. He was exiled from Bukhara to Khartang. Even there he did not have peace from his persecutors and he prayed in anguish to Allah for refuge. He was soon gathered to his Creator.

Another great scholar and a savant was Imam Aḥmad Bin Ḥanbal. He was imprisoned and shackled and made to walk from Tarsus to Baghdad where during Ramadan he was lashed in the burning sun.

4th Century Hijra

Manṣūr Al-Ḥallāj was the famous Ṣūfī of his time. He was arrested, imprisoned, lashed. His limbs were severed and he was eventually hanged.

5th Century Hijra

Even the famous and renowned Imam Al-Ghazālī did not escape from the bigoted mullahs. They branded him as an atheist, a free thinker and an apostate whose books were declared unorthodox and un-Islamic. His books were ordered to be burnt and Muslims were forbidden to speak

to him. His followers, if any, were ordered to be beheaded.

6th Century Hijra

Ḥaḍrat ‘Abdul-Qādir Jīlānī, who became known as the Sultān of Ṣūfīs was also denounced as a heretic and an apostate by more than 200 ulema.

7th Century Hijra

Sheikh ‘Abul Ḥasan Shāzī and Sheikh ‘Azīz Bin ‘Abdus-Salām were both notable Ṣūfī saints and authors. Yet they were declared heretics.

Niẓām-ud-Dīn Auliā’, the sultan of saints of Indian fame, was also branded as a heretic.

Imam Ibn-e-Taimiyyah was a highly distinguished scholar, who was imprisoned for a long time in Egypt and was tortured. He died in prison.

Shams Tabreiz was a noble saint of his time and was the mentor of many who became famous saints later. He was skinned alive.

Jalāl-ud-Dīn Rūmī, famous Ṣūfī saint and author of the well-known Mathnawī, was declared an apostate, along with his followers.

8th Century Hijra

Those dubbed as ‘heretics’ in this century were two important personages: one was Imam Ibn-e-Qayyim, who was imprisoned, humiliated, lashed and tortured. The other was Ṣūfī Tāj-ud-Dīn Sibkī, who was also harassed by the mullahs.

9th Century Hijra

Maulānā ‘Abd-ur-Raḥmān Jāmī, a popular saint, was accused of heresy.

10th Century Hijra

Maulānā Aḥmad Bihārī (India), a venerable sage, was martyred in Delhi for his supposed blasphemous writings.

Şūfī Bā Yazīd Sarḥaddī went to Peshawar to preach his views. He was declared a renegade and an apostate.

11th Century Hijra

Sage ‘Alī Thānī was the Mujaddid and Reformer of this century. He was accused of heresy by the Muslim clergy before the Imperial Court of Delhi. He was imprisoned.

Şūfī Sarmad, an Armenian Muslim who had migrated to India, was attacked by the mullahs and sentenced to be beheaded.

Muḥammad Bin Ibrāhīm was a Persian exegete whose life was devoted to making the teachings of Islam easily understood by the common people. He was opposed by the clerics who declared him an infidel.

12th Century Hijra

Maulānā Ma‘şūm ‘Alī Shāh Mīr was a Şūfī in Deccan, South India where he got into debate with the clerics. They contrived to convince the king, ‘Alī Murād Khān that he was a backslider and a traitor to his kingdom. The Şūfī was murdered and the ears and noses of his followers were cut off and their beards shaved off.

Shāh Walī-Ullāh of Delhi was Mujaddid and Reformer of the century. He translated the Holy Qur'an in Persian—the then official language of India. This enraged the mullahs who stated that the Holy Word of God should not be translated from the original Arabic. They engaged ruffians to kill him, but he miraculously escaped unharmed.

Sheikh Muḥammad Bin 'Abdul Wahnāb was a Najdī Arab and a Reformer of Islam of the age. He was also the founder of the Wahnābī Movement. He was declared a heretic by the Muftī and Imam of the Holy Ka'bah in Mecca. As is well known, most of the Arabs of Saudi Arabia, including the Royal Family, are Wahnābīs now.

13th Century Hijra

Maulawī 'Abdullāh Ghaznawī, a steadfast scholar of Islam, was attacked by the half-educated mullahs at the Afghan Royal Court and was exiled. He was exiled in the reign of one Amīr and when he returned during the reign of the next Amīr, he was insulted, humiliated and thrown into jail where he died.

Maulānā Muḥammad Qāsim Nānutwī was a disciple of Shāh 'Abdul Ghanī of Delhi, the Founder of the famous Deoband (India) Seminary of Islamic studies. Maulānā Qāsim was a popular Muslim leader and a formidable debater and a scholar. He was declared an apostate and an infidel by twelve ulema of Mecca and 32 of Medina, because he held that the coming of a prophet could not and would not abrogate the position of the Holy Prophet Muḥammad as *Khātamun Nabiyyīn*, Seal of the Prophets.

AḤMADĪS ARE PERSECUTED FOR BELIEFS WHICH THEY DO NOT HOLD

In fairness, one should grant the opponents of the above - mentioned great servants of Islam the credit of possessing some measure of honesty in their mad antagonism; they attacked these scholars on the basis of what they actually believed and the controversy which ensued was about which of the two opposing views was true according to the Holy Qur'an and the Sunna.

Of course the clerics transgressed and showed little understanding or sympathy for others' point of view and tried to impose their own arbitrary conclusions upon them. But at least they displayed the decency of not attributing to their opponents such beliefs and doctrines as were not professed by them.

Alas, the same cannot be said about the contemporary opponents whose sole purpose in life seems to be opposition to Aḥmadiyyat by all means—fair or foul.

This brings to mind the history of prophets and the treatment they received at the hands of their enemies particularly those of the Holy Prophet Muḥammad^{sa}.

TRUTH OF ḤAḌRAT MIRZĀ GHULĀM AḤMAD^{AS} SHOULD BE JUDGED ON THE BASIS OF THE HOLY QUR'AN

There is yet another way to investigate and enquire into the truth or otherwise of the claim of Ḥaḍrat Mirzā Ghulām Aḥmad that he was appointed by God Himself. One should study the Holy Qur'an regarding such controversies and seek light and guidance from the Word of God itself.

When somebody claims to be from God, in order to judge the truth of his claim, the right approach would be to try and find out whether God has really spoken to him or not. His claim should be accepted or rejected on merit. But rejection should not mean physical assault on him and on those who accept his claim.

In short what is the right attitude prescribed by the Holy Qur'an which should be adopted by the society which is invited to God by such a claimant?

The situation is not new of course and the Holy Qur'an, with reference to the history of such people, lays down very clear and unambiguous instructions.

When anyone claims to be from God, how should he be treated by those whom he addresses? This is the paramount question which should be resolved before we proceed further.

GUIDANCE FROM THE HOLY QUR'AN

The Holy Qur'an is very specific about it. When Moses addressed Pharaoh and his people and claimed to be the vicegerent of God, their immediate reaction was to attempt to have him murdered for this 'false' claim.

This situation provides us with a very interesting study. If anyone claims to be a Messenger of God and the people believe him to be definitely false, do they have the right to murder or otherwise punish such a claimant?

The same question is raised by the Holy Qur'an in relation to the situation mentioned above and it is categorically answered once and for all.

When the elders of the people and Pharaoh were plotting to murder Moses, a wise man from amongst them—who had secretly believed in Moses—strongly counselled them to refrain from such a folly.

The powerful argument he gave was this: Either Moses is false in his claim or not. There is no third option. If he is false, then he has committed a crime against God and hence, it is for God to punish him. He will be punished for his crime, and not you; so why should you bother?

But also remember this: If he happens to be right, then God's wrath which he has been promising, is bound to befall you.

What a wise counsel indeed! How logical and how just! A counsel which was considered worthy of being recorded in His Eternal Book, the Holy Qur'an.

This advice is as good today as it was in the time of Moses.

The case of Ḥaḍrat Mirzā Ghulām Aḥmad's claim belongs to this category and should be treated alike by all those who have any regard for the Word of God.

ANOTHER GUIDING PRINCIPLE OF THE HOLY QUR'AN

Another guiding principle which has been very clearly laid down by the Holy Qur'an is the natural conclusion of the same argument which was put forward by that wise man of the time of Moses.

Applying this principle to the claim of the Holy Prophet, the Founder of Islam, God declares,

وَلَوْ تَقَوَّلَ عَلَيْنَا بَعْضَ الْأَقَاوِيلِ لَأَخَذْنَا مِنْهُ بِالْيَمِينِ ثُمَّ لَقَطَعْنَا
مِنْهُ الْوَتِينَ فَمَا مِنْكُمْ مِنْ أَحَدٍ عَنْهُ حَاجِزِينَ

"And if he had forged and attributed any sayings to Us, We would surely have seized him by the right hand, and then surely We would have severed his life-artery, and not one of you could have held Us off from him."

(The Qur'an 69 : 45-48)

As against the claim of non-believers of Mecca that the Holy Prophet Muḥammad^{sa} had concocted the entire Holy Qur'an by himself, God declares that even if he had falsely attributed to Us a single statement, We would certainly have held him by the right hand and severed his life-artery. In that case, none among you, even if he had so desired, could have stood between our punishment and him (the 'so-called false claimant').

Obviously, this is the development of the same theme as related above. Hence, it becomes evident that if Ḥaḍrat Mirzā Ghulām Aḥmad was a false claimant, as a large section of the Muslim clergy would have us believe, then it was none of their business to obstruct or to attempt to bring him any harm. The right to punish belonged to God and God alone. And if He had decided to destroy him, no power on earth could have stopped God from doing so.

It is interesting to note that Ḥaḍrat Mirzā Ghulām Aḥmad of Qādiān^{as}, who claimed to be the Promised Messiah and the Imam Mahdi, himself suggested the same line of action to his most hostile opponents. He wrote:

**"O ye people, be certain that I am being helped by a Hand
Which shall always support me. If your men and your**

women, your youth and your elders, your commoners and your elite, all join together to pray for my destruction, to the extent that through constant prostrations noses start to rot and hands become useless, even then Allah will not listen to your prayers and He will not stop until His will is accomplished.

“And even if not a single human being supports me, the angels of Allah will be with me.”

(Arba‘in, Rūḥānī Khazā‘in, vol. 17 p.400)

It is not intended to discuss at length all the arguments in favour of Aḥmadiyyat in this short treatise. What we most humbly wish to point out is the fact that blind hostility to any claimant to prophethood, however wrong one may consider him, is not a wise policy and is against the clear dictates of the Holy Qur’an. One should study and explore and investigate like an honest enquirer after the truth and, what is more, pray to Allah for guidance.

SOME DISTINCTIVE FEATURES OF AḤMADIYYA MUSLIM JAMĀ‘AT

Before we close this short introduction to Aḥmadiyyat, let us now turn to the question of its distinctive features. We have mentioned some of the false allegations against Aḥmadiyya beliefs. Now, we briefly list some of the distinctive features of the Aḥmadiyya beliefs which are not in agreement with the beliefs of many majority sects.

The Aḥmadīs, however, claim that although in some areas of doctrines they do not agree with majority sects, yet their beliefs are founded entirely on the Holy Qur’an and upon the Traditions of the Holy Founder of Islam which, according to them have been misunderstood and misinter-

preted during the course of history by ulema of later periods.

AḤMADIYYA BELIEF ABOUT JESUS CHRIST^{AS}

1. Aḥmadīs believe that Jesus Christ^{as} was a prophet of God, with messianic stature, yet he was a human being and had no supernatural powers as against the rest of the messengers of Allah.

2. Jesus Christ^{as}, according to the Aḥmadiyya interpretation of the Holy Qur'an and Traditions, did not die upon the Cross and his opponents failed to murder him. He was delivered from the Cross in a state of coma and was mistaken for dead by the onlookers. This confusion is referred to in the Holy Qur'an under the words *شُبِّهَ لَهُمْ* i.e. the matter was made obscure to them.

The Aḥmadīs believe that he lived many more years after the Crucifixion and migrated to find the lost sheep of the house of Israel—the ten Tribes that had migrated to eastern lands. The reader may refer to *Jesus in India*⁴ and relevant literature on the topic.

BELIEF OF NON-AḤMADI SCHOLARS ABOUT JESUS^{AS}

As against this, most of the non-Aḥmadī scholars belonging to majority sects believe that Jesus was saved from death upon the Cross in a completely different manner: A Jew was transformed by God into the image of Jesus so perfectly that when Jesus was bodily lifted to heaven by angels and this imitation of Jesus was planted in his place, everybody was completely duped and misled. So, it was

⁴ By Ḥaḍrat Mirzā Ghulām Aḥmad^{as}. [Publisher]

not Jesus who was crucified. He was lifted to heaven and preserved somewhere in space for his future descent on earth in the latter days.

AḤMADIYYA INTERPRETATION OF AḤĀDĪTH ON THE SECOND ADVENT OF JESUS^{AS}

Aḥmadīs, however, interpret the Traditions of the Holy Prophet^{sa}, concerning the second coming of Jesus, figuratively. They believe that Jesus being dead cannot come to this world again. Instead someone like him, with his characteristics would be raised from amongst the followers of the Holy Prophet^{sa} who would be entitled “Messiah”.

THE NON-AḤMADĪ INTERPRETATION

The non-Aḥmadī scholars on the other hand, interpret this prophecy literally and believe that Jesus Christ^{as}, who by now seems to have completed his 2,000 years somewhere in heaven, would descend bodily on earth and lead the Muslim umma to victory against Christendom.

OTHER DIFFERENCES BETWEEN AḤMADIYYA AND NON-AḤMADIYYA BELIEFS

This division between the Aḥmadiyya theology and non-Aḥmadiyya theology continues in the same direction and covers many more areas of belief. While the emphasis of the Aḥmadiyya interpretation is on the spiritual and metaphorical nature of prophecies, the non-Aḥmadiyya theologians rigidly stick to the literal, verbatim understanding of the same.

THE THREE MAIN TASKS OF THE PROMISED MESSIAH

Another illustration would further clarify the case in point. In numerous Traditions of the Holy Prophet^{sa}, it is mentioned that the second coming of Jesus Christ^{as} would take place for three main reasons:

Breaking of the Cross

Extermination of swine (domestic and wild boars, etc.)

Annihilation of the Antichrist.

BREAKING OF THE CROSS

According to the Aḥmadiyya understanding, the breaking of the Cross does not mean the literal breaking of crosses made of wood or metals but it refers to such powerful arguments as would break the backbone of the faith of the Cross.

The non-Aḥmadī scholars suggest that Jesus would literally perform this act of breaking all crosses: So he would roam the earth far and wide and would not rest until the material figures of the cross are physically broken in the whole wide world.

THE KILLING OF THE SWINE

The same difference of interpretation applies to other prophetic functions of Jesus Christ^{as}. Aḥmadīs interpret the word ‘swine’ as a symbol of uncouth and impure conduct. By the slaughtering of the swine, they mean the purification of the corrupt and their moral reformation.

The opposite school of thought would not let Jesus come to rest after his long awaited descent from heaven until (after finishing the task of Breaking the Cross!), he has

literally performed the gigantic task of chasing and killing every swine on earth, domesticated or otherwise!!!

The same applies to the third duty assigned to Jesus Christ^{as}.

THE ANTICHRIST

But perhaps the intricate nature of the concept of the Antichrist would require more elaboration as to the nature of Antichrist according to the prophecies of the Holy Founder of Islam^{sa}.

The Antichrist is described in the Traditions as a great and oversized giant, with his right eye being blind but the left eye having been gifted with a special and supernatural power of sight. With his left eye, he would be able to see far and wide like an exceptional story-telescope. He would also be able to penetrate, with the sight of that eye, the hidden objects beneath layers of earth. That giant would be so tall that his head would be touching the cloud line. He would also possess a donkey as oversized and supernatural as himself. The donkey is described in detail in different Traditions. What emerges from the study of these traditions is summed up below:

THE DONKEY OF THE ANTICHRIST

That donkey would be exceptionally huge. He would depend for his energy on fire power and not on fodder as ordinary donkeys do. He would have side openings in his belly through which passengers would be able to enter and sit comfortably inside his belly which would be illuminated from within.

This donkey would travel so fast that it would cover journeys of months' duration by traditional animal mounts, in days or even hours. It would stop at different stages for picking new passengers, and will always announce its departure before it resumes its journey. This unique donkey would not only travel fast on the surface of the earth but would also be able to fly above the cloud line.

The distance it would cover will be so vast that his one foot will be in the east and the other in the west. That is to say, his hops would be that wide.

The tale does not end there. It further speaks of the same donkey as being able to swim across oceans, but would not sink except for its knees. On some of his future sea journeys, he is described as carrying mountains of wheat and corn to poorer nations whom *Dajjāl* (the Antichrist) would like to decide to feed by way of aid.

This is the Antichrist and his donkey as described in so many Traditions of the Holy Prophet of Islam^{sa}. It is this Antichrist whom ultimately Jesus^{as} would destroy in his second advent.

AḤMADIYYA CONCEPT OF THE ANTICHRIST & HIS DONKEY

Of course, according to Aḥmadiyya understanding, this prophecy points to future modes of travel invented by such Christian powers as have distorted the faith of Christ^{as}—who never claimed to be the son of God and believed himself to be a humble human being and a

Messenger of Allah. Such Christian powers are referred to as Antichrist.

All the contemporary modes of travel, originally invented and manufactured at large by great Christian powers, be they trains, buses, ships and aeroplanes, all perfectly fit the image of the donkey of Antichrist we find described in the Traditions.

Finally, the non-Aḥmadī scholars of the majority sects would violently oppose this interpretation as absurd and roundly condemn Aḥmadīs for such misleading interpretations; for their part, they are entirely convinced that literally a huge giant as described above would also, possess a donkey of the above mentioned dimensions which would eat fire and carry its master over its back and help him conquer the world and bring to their knees the super powers of the world. Then and only then would Jesus Christ^{as}, again literally and bodily the same Jesus^{as}, descend from heaven to destroy this ultra super-powerful giant, single-handedly, of course.

THE ADVENT OF IMAM MAHDI

About the concept of Imam Mahdi, there are differences. These differences also hinge on the question whether the prophecies about Imam Mahdi^{as} should be taken literally or metaphorically.

According to some traditions, the Promised Imam of the latter days—Imam Mahdi—would distribute such unlimited wealth in the world that people would refuse to take more.

According to the mainstream non-Aḥmadī ulema, this prophecy again is to be fulfilled literally. They are expecting a Mahdi who would resolve all economic problems of the Muslim world in particular.

If this understanding is to be taken seriously, we should expect a complete collapse of the world economy and total chaos in the exchange system of values. If a people do not have to work to earn their living, why should they work at all?

If people do not work, either on the land or in industries, the entire system of production would come to a grinding halt. There may be as many buyers as one can imagine, but who would sell and what would they sell? If someone requires to buy even an egg for billions of dollars or roubles, none would be mad enough to sell because he too would have mountains of wealth received from Imam Mahdi.

TRUE INTERPRETATION OF ‘DISTRIBUTION OF WEALTH’ BY IMAM MAHDI

Aḥmadīs, on the other hand, interpret these prophecies in a far more rational way. They consider the language of these prophecies as a religious metaphor which should be understood in the same allegorical way.

They believe that what the Prophet of Islam^{sa} said was that like all other prophets of God, Imam Mahdi would also distribute unlimited spiritual wealth and like the people of earlier history the people of Imam Mahdi’s time would also refuse to accept spiritual treasures.

This phenomenon is most beautifully described in the Holy Qur'an:

وَإِذَا أَنْعَمْنَا عَلَى الْإِنْسَانِ أَعْرَضَ وَنَأْبِحَانِيهِ

"And when We bestow favour on man, he turns away and goes aside." (17 : 84)

IMAM MAHDI AND 'ĪSĀ^{AS} (JESUS)

Another difference between Aḥmadī and non-Aḥmadī interpretation relates apparently to the two reformers mentioned above under the title Jesus^{as}, Son of Mary and the Imam Mahdi.

As other Muslim scholars have already taken the rigid stance that Jesus^{as}, Son of Mary^{as} being the personal name of the first Messiah, they must accept it literally that the same Messiah of old would personally return to earth. As such, instead of one, there will be *two* sharing the same age. One would descend from heaven after the birth of the giant Antichrist and his donkey of gigantic proportions, and the second, the Imam Mahdi, who would be born in the umma of Islam.

Because of the same literal emphasis, these scholars would have us believe that the two spiritual titles are not given to the same Reformer of the latter days, but that actually *two* different persons would come to serve Islam simultaneously.

Aḥmadīs understand this differently, and because they believe and prove it from the Holy Qur'an and the Aḥādīth that the Jesus^{as} of old most certainly died much

before the advent of the Holy Prophet Muḥammad^{sa}, as the Holy Qur'an declares:

وَمَا مُحَمَّدٌ إِلَّا رَسُولٌ قَدْ خَلَتْ مِنْ قَبْلِهِ الرُّسُلُ

"And Muḥammad is only a Messenger. Surely, all Messengers have passed away before him." (3 : 145)

therefore, as promised, Jesus^{as}, Son of Mary^{as} has to be a figurative name or a title given to the Imam Mahdi himself. This kind of usage occurs in all languages. If someone, in his literary aptitude shows close similarity to Gogol, it will be no wonder if people start showering him with the title of Gogol.

THE EXPECTED MESSIAH AND IMAM MAHDI ARE ONE AND THE SAME PERSON

So, according to Aḥmadī interpretation, the old Jesus^{as} being dead, it is only the Imam Mahdi who would also perform the task entrusted to Jesus^{as}.

In this connection, amongst other arguments, the Aḥmadīs point out to a Ḥādīṭh of Ibn-e-Mājah which informs us:

لَا الْمَهْدِيُّ إِلَّا عَيْسَى

That is to say, Mahdi and 'Īsā^{as} would not be *two* separate persons. (*Ibn-e-Māja, Kitābul Fitan, Babu Shiddatiz zamāni*)

KHĀTAMUN NABIYYĪN

There are many other differences of course, invariably based on differences of interpretation. But, to close this discussion, we quote, last but not least the difference which has been so much exploited for some time past, i.e.,

the belief in the Holy Prophet^{as} being the *Khātamun Nabiyyīn*.

According to non-Aḥmadiyya interpretation, it only means the last and final in time, which leaves no room whatsoever even for a subordinate prophet in Islam. To believe in such a possibility is sheer, outright heresy, they assert.

THE MEANINGS OF ‘*KHĀTAM*’

Aḥmadīs, on the other hand, point out that the most outstanding and essential meaning of the word *Khātam* is not ‘last in time’ but ‘the ultimate in status’. Hence, according to numerous Arabic usages, the word ‘*Khātam*’ has always been applied to such scholars of unique distinction as reach the very summit of excellence in their branch of knowledge, so that they stand supreme and excel all others.

For instance, Avicenna, the Father of Medicine, is referred to as *Khātamul Aṭibbā*, which means ‘*Khātam* of Physicians’. Obviously, it does not mean the ‘last’ of the physicians!

Similarly, Mutanabbī, one of the greatest Arab poets, is entitled ‘*Khātamush-shu‘arā*’, which most certainly does not mean ‘last of the poets’.

Again, according to a reported tradition of the Holy Prophet of Islam^{sa}, Ḥaḍrat ‘Alī (may Allah be pleased with him) was referred to as ‘*Khātamul Auliyyā*’ or *Khātamul Asfiyā*. Aḥmadīs point out that it could not have meant by any means that after Ḥaḍrat ‘Alī (God be pleased with him), no holy person or Ṣūfī would ever be born in Islam.

AḤMADĪS BELIEVE THAT THE HOLY PROPHET^{SA} IS *KHĀTAMUN-NABIYYĪN*

We regret that in this short essay we cannot quote other similar examples, but to sum up the Aḥmadī point of view, it should be well understood that Aḥmadīs believe the Holy Founder of Islam^{sa}, to be *Khātamun Nabiyyīn* in every sense of the word. According to them, he is ‘*Khātam*’ the best of all the Prophets of Allah. He is ‘*Khātam*’ in the sense that he is the possessor of the Seal of Prophets. Without his certification, no one on earth will be considered as a true prophet.

He is also *Khātam* in the sense that like the signet ring, he can create his impression of his own character on everyone who is worthy and willing to receive it. He is ‘*Khātam*’ in the sense that his is the best and everlasting message, and his word the best and everlasting word.

No one can annul a single jot of the Holy Qur’an or cancel a single word of the Founder of Islam. So, in this sense, he is the last and final law-bearing Prophet whose authority remains valid till the end of time.

This means that after him no independent law-bearing prophet can ever come. But for a subordinate prophet to be born in his umma, in complete subordination to the Qur’an and the Sunna, cannot be ruled out.

INTERPRETATION OF ‘*KHĀTAMUN-NABIYYĪN*’ BY MAULĀNĀ RŪMĪ AND ḤAḌRAT IBN-E- ‘ARABĪ

Maulānā Rūmī says, when referring to the Holy Prophet (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him):

بہر ایں خاتم شد است او کہ بجود مثل او نے بود نے خواہند بود

He has been raised to the station of *Khātām* by the grace of God. There can never be his like before him or after.

Again he says:

چونکہ در صنعت برد استاد دست تو نہ گوئی ختم صنعت بر تو ہست

When a master excels all others in his art, don't you use the word '*khātām*' to convey the idea that he has excelled all others in his domain?

(Mathnawī, vol. VI, p.8, 1917 ed.)

And the greatest of the Muslim *Ṣūfīs*, *Ḥaḍrat Ibn-e-‘Arabī*, has so clearly explained:

إِنَّ النَّبُوَّةَ الَّتِي انْقَطَعَتْ بِوُجُودِ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ صَلَّعَ مِنْهَا هِيَ نُبُوَّةُ
التَّشْرِيعِ لَا مَقَامَهَا فَلَا شَرَعَ يَكُونُ نَاسِخًا لِشَرَعِهِ صَلَّعَ وَلَا
يَزِيدُ فِي شَرَعِهِ حُكْمًا آخَرَ وَ هَذَا مَعْنَى قَوْلِهِ صَلَّعَ أَنَّ الرِّسَالَةَ
وَ النَّبُوَّةَ قَدْ انْقَطَعَتْ فَلَا رَسُولَ بَعْدِي وَ لَا نَبِيَّ أَيْ لَا نَبِيَّ
يَكُونُ عَلَى شَرَعٍ يُخَالِفُ شَرَعِي بَلْ إِذَا كَانَ تَحْتَ حُكْمِ
شَرِيْعَتِي وَ لَا رَسُولَ أَيْ لَا رَسُولَ بَعْدِي إِلَى أَحَدٍ مِّنْ خَلْقِ اللَّهِ
بِشَرَعٍ يَدْعُوهُمْ إِلَيْهِ فَهَذَا هُوَ الَّذِي انْقَطَعَ وَ سَدَّ بَابَهُ لَا مَقَامَ النَّبُوَّةِ
(فُتُوْحَاتِ مَكِّيَّةِ جلد ۲ صفحہ ۳)

"The prophethood that came to an end with the advent of the Holy Prophet^{sa} was the law-bearing prophethood and not the institution of prophethood itself. No law can now cancel the Law of the Holy Prophet^{sa} or add any injunction to it. This indeed is the meaning of the saying of the Holy Prophet^{sa}, "*Lā nabiyya ba‘dī*" (there will be no prophet after me). This only

indicates that there shall be no such prophet who shall introduce a different Sharia. But whenever there appears a prophet, he will follow my Sharia."

(Futūhāt-e-Makkiyyah vol. 2, p. 3)

THE STATUS OF IMAM MAHDI IS THAT OF A PROPHET

In the light of the above, if one genuinely desires to understand the Aḥmadiyya point of view, it will further help to visualize the position and status of Imam Mahdi in Islam. If he is to be raised and commissioned by God as Imam of the latter days, and if by virtue of the same, no one is permitted to reject him, then, in essence, this is subordinate prophethood.

Prophets, one may recall, enjoy two distinctions over the rest of mankind:

1. They are always directly appointed by God.
2. Rejecting them is a grave sin in the sight of God.

Hence, in the final analysis, the Aḥmadiyya belief in the status of Imam Mahdi cannot be considered, even by the farthest stretch of imagination, to be in violation of the *Khatm-e-Nabuwwat* of the Holy Prophet Muḥammad^{sa}.

Of course there are some other differences of minor nature for which one has to study the Aḥmadiyya literature.

AḤMADIYYA INTERPRETATION IS BASED ON LOGIC AND REASON

The demarcation line will always remain to be the same between the Aḥmadiyya and non-Aḥmadiyya theology. The non-Aḥmadīs insist on literal acceptance while Aḥmadīs interpret religious terms in the metaphorical and

spiritual sense. This gives their beliefs a rational quality compatible with logic and science and realities of nature.

Aḥmadīs insist that religious terminology must be interpreted in a figurative and spiritual sense and should not be taken at its face value alone. The non-Aḥmadī scholars on the other hand insist that only the surface meanings of words are acceptable and that to delve deeper into their underlying sense is a futile exercise.

Yet, they themselves at some places abandon this hard and fast rule and are compelled to look beyond mere words. For instance, according to the terminology of the Holy Qur'an, wives are fields for fertilization; also husbands are the wives' clothes and vice versa.

Similarly, the Holy Qur'an tells every human being:

وَكُلَّ إِنْسَانٍ أَلْزَمْنَاهُ طَائِرَهُ فِي عُنُقِهِ

‘And everyman’s works have We fastened to his neck’

(17 : 14)

Of course, these statements have to be interpreted. On this there are no two opinions.

AḤMADIYYAT AND SHIITE BELIEFS

Herein are the salient features of the Aḥmadiyya view of the Shia sect of Islam:

The Founder of the Aḥmadiyya Muslim Jamā‘at loved the Holy Prophet Muḥammad^{sa} intensely and profoundly. So intense and profound was this love that by virtue of it he also loved and held in high esteem not only all the spiritual relations of the Holy Prophet^{sa}—i.e. all true

Muslims—but he loved doubly those who were, in addition, his blood relations.

Regarding the family of the Holy Prophet^{sa}, the following excerpt truly reflect the feelings of the Founder of the Aḥmadiyya Muslim Jamā‘at:

”مگر حسین رضی اللہ عنہ طاهر مطہر تھا۔ اور بلاشبہ وہ ان برگزیدوں میں سے ہے جن کو خدا تعالیٰ اپنے ہاتھ سے صاف کرتا اور اپنی محبت سے معمور کر دیتا ہے۔ اور بلاشبہ وہ سرداران بہشت میں سے ہے..... یہ امر نہایت درجہ کی شقاوت اور بے ایمانی میں داخل ہے کہ حسین رضی اللہ عنہ کی تحقیر کی جائے اور جو شخص حسین یا کسی اور بزرگ کی جو آئمہ مطہرین میں سے ہے تحقیر کرتا ہے یا کوئی کلمہ استخفاف کا اس کی نسبت زبان پر لاتا ہے وہ اپنے ایمان کو ضائع کرتا ہے کیونکہ اللہ جل شانہ اُس شخص کا دشمن ہو جاتا ہے جو اسکے برگزیدوں اور پیاروں کا دشمن ہے“
(تبلیغ رسالت جلد ۱۰ صفحہ ۱۰۳)

"Ḥadrat Ḥussain (may Allah be pleased with him) was pure himself and also had the capacity to purify others, and, no doubt, he was amongst Chosen Ones whom Allah purifies Himself and fills with His love. He was no doubt among the leaders of the inmates of Paradise... Only a stonehearted and faithless person could belittle him. Anyone who attempts to humiliate or utters a word of dishonour about him or about any other elder from among the "A'immaḥ Muṭṭaḥharīn" (the purified Imams), destroys his faith. Allah becomes the enemy of such a person who shows enmity towards His Chosen and Beloved ones."

(Tabligh-e-Risālat, Rūḥānī Khazā'in vol 10 p. 103)

And about his love for Imams Ḥassan and Ḥussain and the progeny of the Holy Prophet^{sa}, the following verse speaks for itself:

جان ودم فدائے جمال محمد است خاکم نثار کوچہ آل محمد است

"My heart and my soul are enamoured with the beauty of Muḥammad^{sa}. May my entire self be sacrificed in the path of the descendants of Muḥammad^{sa}"

(Majmū'ah Ishtihārāt, vol. 1, p. 97)

RIGHTEOUSNESS IS NOT INHERITED

All the same, according to Aḥmadiyya understanding of the philosophy of Islam, no one inherits righteousness or virtue from his parents in such a way that the children of the righteous automatically become righteous and the children of the wicked become wicked.

The study of religious history does not support this notion. On the contrary, there is irrefutable evidence from the Holy Qur'an that Ḥaḍrat Ibrāhīm, one of the greatest prophets and a pinnacle of light, was born in an extremely idolatrous and ignorant family. The son of Noah, on the contrary, emerged from light and ended up in darkness.

The fountain of Islam sprang up from the idolatrous Arabia . The purest form of the Unity of God sprang up from the Arabian desert which had become the breeding ground of ignorance and idolatry and the verse:

ظَهَرَ الْفَسَادُ فِي الْبَرِّ وَالْبَحْرِ

"Disorder had truly encompassed both the land and the sea," (The Qur'an 30:42), was more applicable to Arabia than to anywhere else in the world.

It reminds one of the universal truth expressed in the Holy Qur'an: The supreme principle which overrides every other consideration is as follows:

إِنَّ أَكْرَمَكُمْ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ أَتْقَىكُمْ

‘Verily, the most honourable among you, in the sight of Allah, is he who is most righteous among you’ (49 : 14)

Only those are most honoured in the sight of God who are the most God-fearing.

As a logical consequence of the same principle, although Aḥmadīs hold in high esteem all the Imams belonging to the Shia sect, this is because of their piety and religious knowledge and not by virtue of their birth and inheritance.

Last but not least, the Aḥmadīs do not believe in an absent Imam who is believed to be alive and in hiding for the last hundreds of years.

The Aḥmadīs believe that most probably that Imam came to a mysterious end, but because of the exigencies of the time it was not considered expedient by the Shia leadership to make it known to the public. For a while, he might have gone into hiding, but like all human beings he was called back by the Almighty. Therefore, waiting for the same Imam to reappear is like waiting for something which can never happen.

To help Shia brethren understand the grievousness of this error, Aḥmadīs politely point out that such tales about prophets or saints and other holy personages having disappeared only to return later are common everywhere in the world, in many countries and many religions. Many are believed to have either ascended to heaven, but none has ever reappeared personally anywhere in the world so far. So the Aḥmadīs try gently to persuade them to recon-

sider their views in the light of the realistic history of religions as described by the Holy Qur'an.

Any supernatural phenomenon which did not happen from the time of Adam to the time of the Holy Prophet Muḥammad^{sa} is most unlikely to occur afterwards.

THE IMAM MAHDI WILL COME TO THE WORLD LIKE OTHER HUMAN BEINGS

The long-awaited Imam Mahdi therefore, as prophesied in the Traditions of the Holy prophet (peace and blessing of Allah be upon him) was meant to be born like all other holy personages before him like a humble human child and was destined to lead a life of humility and sacrifice like all other prophets.

To conclude, we most humbly point out that even scholars fall prey to hostile and one-sided propaganda against Aḥmadiyyat.

Sometimes this hostility becomes so intense and infuriating that it would not allow them to read or listen to anything about Aḥmadiyyat from the Aḥmadiyya sources.

MISUNDERSTANDINGS ABOUT AḤMADIYYAT CAUSED BY MISINFORMATION

Recently, when an Aḥmadī scholar went to Moscow to read his paper in a symposium, he also visited the central mosque of Moscow. There he found a group of ulema and their pupils busy in religious discussions. After the exchange of felicitations in the Islamic manner, they became interested in the message he had brought for them, which of course he readily conveyed.

In the beginning, all proceeded well and he was heard very cordially; but then something was said by the interpreter which changed the mood dramatically, and signs of displeasure appeared on every face. When he enquired as to what had brought this change, he was told by the interpreter, simply and frankly, that it was because he—the interpreter—had told them that the Aḥmadīs had changed the Holy Qur’an substantially. The interpreter said it so innocently that it was clear he obviously believed in this allegation.

Fortunately for the Aḥmadī scholar, he was carrying a copy of the Russian rendering of the Holy Qur’an which had been recently published by the Aḥmadiyya Muslim Jamā‘at. He immediately presented this copy to the ulema for scrutiny and comparison with other copies which they had. It did not take them long of course to change their opinion and to apologize for this accusation.

AḤMADIYYAT NOT NEW TO RUSSIA

Since a large majority of Russian Muslims have not even heard of the name of Aḥmadiyyat hence the need for writing this brief introduction. Historically speaking, Aḥmadiyyat is not altogether new to Russia. In 1919, an Aḥmadī who was in the service of the British army was sent to Iran together with the members of his battalion. His name was Fatih Muḥammad.

He was posted along with his battalion somewhere near the Iranian border with Russia. There, through his convincing preaching, another Muslim officer joined Aḥmadiyyat. During one of the expeditions into Russian

territory, Fatih Muḥammad and this new Aḥmadī happened to be members of an expeditionary force. It was quite common for the British army to send surreptitious fact-finding expeditions deep into the Russian territory. This new Aḥmadī was also included in one of these expeditions.

It so happened that one day, they came upon a town where they found a domed building which looked very much like a mosque. But when they entered, they found a different type of arrangement inside: Instead of mats and carpets in the prayer hall, there were chairs which are not customarily provided in the prayer halls. Fortunately there were some people present who, when questioned about the presence of these chairs in the mosque, explained that they regularly held preaching sessions in the mosque which were attended frequently by members of other faiths, like Jews, Christians, etc.. As such, they considered it necessary that comfortable seating be made available for the visitors. Hence the chairs.

They were then questioned further as to who they were, and they said they were Muslims of course. Fatih Muḥammad enquired whether they believed that Jesus was alive in heaven. They said that he had passed away like all prophets of God. Thereupon, Fatih Muḥammad observed that since Jesus was to come back and what did they think of that. They replied that it would not be the same Jesus who was to be sent back but someone from the umma of the Holy Prophet^{sa} was to be raised as Jesus^{as}, in the spirit

and character of Jesus^{as}. As such he too would be entitled Jesus or the Messiah.

When questioned that Muslims were expecting the advent of Jesus himself, how could they explain this contradiction? If Jesus was dead, how could he come back? At their answer, Fatiḥ Muḥammad exclaimed that the beliefs they were holding were those of Aḥmadiyya Muslim Jamā‘at founded by Ḥaḍrat Mirzā Ghulām Aḥmad of Qādiān. They responded, “We are his followers, of course”.

The name of this town was Ashkhabād. According to the account of these early Aḥmadīs, they were facing many difficulties because of the hostile orthodox clergy who referred to them as ‘ṣābī’.

This indicates clearly that the message of Aḥmadiyyat had already reached Russia before the Second World War. But unfortunately, the ulema of India had also succeeded to some extent in spreading negative propaganda to poison the Russian minds against Aḥmadiyyat.

AḤMADĪ MISSIONARY VISITS RUSSIA

Later, on December 10, 1924, a dedicated and zealous Aḥmadī Missionary, charged with the spirit of service for Islam, Maulawī Zuhūr Ḥussain, proceeded to Russia on his own to deliver the message of Aḥmadiyyat to the people of Russia under the instructions of the Second Khalīfah. His mission was very hazardous and challenging in nature, because in the wake of the newly established Bolshevik revolution, every British citizen was treated with great suspicion. Any such citizen who ventured to enter Russia was assumed to be a spy. No exception was

made in the case of Maulawī Zuhūr Hussain who was arrested.

Soon after his arrival, he was put through severe interrogation and mental and physical torture.

Although, later on, this Aḥmadī Missionary lost his mind through unrelenting torture and extremely hard and trying conditions in Russian prisons in those days, but before that he continued delivering the message of Aḥmadiyyat to the inmates of the prisons. There were also many other converts through the efforts of ‘Abdul Qādir, one of the later converts.

At last this pioneer missionary, in that precarious state of mind and body was thrown out somewhere across the Turkish border with Russia. Properly taken care of by the Turkish authorities, he slowly recovered and returned to Qādiān. His book is a very interesting record of extreme hardship and hazards which religious movements face during their nascent periods.

Another Aḥmadī, who undertook a journey to Russia on his own and voluntarily for the purpose of delivering the message of Aḥmadiyyat was Muḥammad Amīn Khān. He too visited Russia in 1922 en route from Baluchistān and Iran. He was repeatedly imprisoned by the Russian police and escaped time and again with the help of Russian Muslims and thus delivered the message for about a year before he was ultimately thrown out of Russia. He was more fortunate than Maulawī Zuhūr Hussain in having a smaller share of punishment and torture and having

enjoyed a greater opportunity to travel more widely and successfully delivering the message of Aḥmadiyyat.

During that time he visited Samarkand, Bukhara and Tashkent and made some converts there, especially someone called ‘Abdullah in Tashkent and another person called Muḥammad Ḥussain in Bukhara. One wonders if their progeny still belong to the Aḥmadiyya Muslim Jamā‘at. One can only hope so.

THE REBIRTH OF THE INSTITUTION OF KHILĀFAT IN AḤMADIYYAT

The Head of the Aḥmadiyya Muslim Jamā‘at is incidentally referred to as Imam but it does not have the same connotation as that of the Ithnā ‘Asharah or Ismā‘īlī Imams. It means only a spiritual and religious head. The correct title however is that of Khalīfatul Masīḥ, Successor to the Promised Messiah. This also gives Jamā‘at Aḥmadiyya a unique position in the community of Muslim sects. After the break of the institution of Khilāfat in early Islam, it is only the Aḥmadiyya Muslim Jamā‘at in Islam which has been blessed with Khilāfat. And the institution of Khilāfat has been established and the Khalīfah plays the same role of head and heart as was played by the Holy Successors of the Holy Prophet Muḥammad (may peace and blessings of Allah be on him). He does not succeed the previous Khalīfah after his death by virtue of inheritance but is elected by an electoral college and immediately after his election, the entire worldwide Aḥmadiyya Muslim Jamā‘at take the oath of allegiance at his hands as they had taken it at the hands of the earlier

Khulafā'. He combines in his person religious, administrative and spiritual functions. There is a very strong bond of spiritual love between him and members of the Jamā'at from all over the world.

EXTRAORDINARY PROGRESS OF AḤMADIYYA JAMĀ'AT

Aḥmadiyya Muslim Jamā'at, despite all the hostility and gigantic efforts to obstruct its passage has progressed in the last 100 years so rapidly and widely that one is left with wonder and amazement.

Ḥaḍrat Mirzā Ghulām Aḥmad of Qādiān raised a lone voice when he was commissioned by God on 23rd March 1889 to invite mankind to Islam and to rejuvenate and revive the Muslims and under divine guidance to rectify their beliefs and practices. These errors of belief and practice had strongly infiltrated into the Muslim umma particularly in the 13th century since the demise of the Holy Prophet^{sa}. Some of the major tasks assigned to him as Imam Mahdi were to revive the spirit and quality of Muslim faith and practice and to resolve their differences under divine guidance. In a short span of 100 years ending on 22nd of March 1989 that one man had grown into 10 millions according to some estimates and the Jamā'at had spread and got firmly rooted in 120 countries of the world. This reminds one of a promise given to him by God in the early days of his ministry when the world at large seemed to have rejected him. That promise gave him assurance:

میں تیری تبلیغ کو زمین کے کناروں تک پہنچاؤں گا

'I shall cause thy Message to reach the ends of the earth'

The end of the 1st Century of Aḥmadiyyat did see without any doubt the fulfilment of that promise.

PROGRESS IS BASED ON SACRIFICE

The spectacle of an organization as wide and as demanding as mentioned above may prompt people to ask where do the finances come from to support and maintain the work of this dynamic and progressive Jamā‘at?

The brief answer to this question will be found in the following verse of the Holy Qur’an:

إِنَّ اللَّهَ اشْتَرَى مِنَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ أَنفُسَهُمْ وَأَمْوَالَهُمْ بِأَنْ لَهُمُ الْجَنَّةَ

‘Surely, Allah has purchased of the believers their persons and their property in return for the Garden they shall have.’

(9 : 111)

All true religious movements not only require extreme financial sacrifices but also require personal sacrifice by way of dedication of one’s life for the sake of the noble ideals of religion. As such the worldwide Aḥmadiyya Muslim Jamā‘at is run entirely on the voluntary contributions of its members. But that is not all. Thousands of devout Aḥmadīs, men and women, young and old all offer and dedicate their lives unconditionally for the service of Islam.

They make no demands whatsoever about pay or remuneration. Whatever the Jamā‘at deems fit they accept willingly and thankfully perform their duties and consider it a blessing of God to be able to do so. They constitute the central core of the Aḥmadiyya workers who work in various capacities in the Centre and various countries of

the world. They do not belong to any one country or class but hail from different countries, nationalities and different walks of life and get completely assimilated into one united brotherhood which is bonded together with the double bond of love for God and love for humanity.

AḤMADIYYAT PRESENTS A LIVING GOD WHO ANSWERS PRAYERS

A characteristic distinction of Aḥmadiyya Jamā‘at is its belief in the power of prayer and communion with God. By prayer we do not mean just the prescribed daily obligatory or supererogatory prayers.

The Aḥmadiyya Muslim Jamā‘at profoundly believes in a Living God Who cares for His servants and responds to their prayers and displays the Signs of His existence to every seeker by responding to their prayers.

The Jamā‘at is unique in this respect. Its members pray to God whenever they face a difficulty or problem and whenever they stand in need of anything the first thought that crosses their mind is recourse to God.

As such it is not a few legendary saintly figures who are reported in every religion to have achieved communion with God, it is the experience of a large number of Aḥmadīs who establish personal, live and constant relationship with God and become witness to the Signs of His existence in their personal day to day experience.

Similarly they seek help from each other with regard to their problems, not by begging for material help but imploring them to pray for them and not infrequently God

reveals to many of them through dreams, visions and revelations, the fulfilment of which as predicted immensely enriches the quality of Aḥmadiyya faith.

This is the greatest blessing they are granted by responding to the call of the Imam who throughout his life is a living Sign of the power of prayer and teaches his followers to directly reach God and make it a constant habit to remember Him, to pray to Him and to seek His help every moment of their lives.

Following is an excerpt from the writings of Ḥaḍrat Mirzā Ghulām Aḥmad (on him be peace) about the need and power of prayer:

"Have you any notion of the strange things that happened in the desert of Arabia when hundreds of thousands of the dead were revived within a short time and those who had been misguided through generations put on divine colour, and those who were blind obtained sight, and those who had been dumb began to speak of the understanding of the Divine, and the world underwent a revolution which had never been seen or heard of before. It was the supplications during dark nights of one who had lost himself in God which brought about this transformation, and manifested such wonders as appeared impossible in the case of that unlettered and forlorn prophet. Send down Thy blessings and peace O Allah on him and his people according to the amount of grief and sorrow he felt for his fellows and pour down upon him the light of Thy mercy for ever."

(Barakāt-ud-Du'ā, Rūḥānī Khazā'in, vol. 6, pp. 10-11)

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