

# AHMADIYYAH

*A Study in Contemporary Islām  
on the West African Coast*

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## INTRODUCTION

This study is threefold. Part I describes West African Islām, providing the necessary background for what is to follow. West African Islām is poised between two aims: one, to avoid too sharp a break with the Pagan environment, preferring rather to advance from small beginnings through a multitude of compromises towards doctrinal and ritual purity; and two, to build up a new Muslim community, more viable today than Pagan society. The Islāmic element will inevitably be of great importance in directing the independent life of most of the emerging West African states; and some appreciation of the condition of the faith on the frontiers is a valuable supplement to the study of the Muslim heartlands.

Part II takes up Aḥmadiyyah, a syncretist sect professing to be the true Islām. The founder, Ghulām Aḥmad, was born about 1835 in Qadian, a village of the Punjab. He was not a success in government service or as a man of affairs, and finally devoted himself entirely to religious study and controversy. At first he won support from the orthodox Muslims, but the special claims he advanced for himself ultimately estranged them from him altogether. About 1889 he received the first oaths of loyalty from his disciples, and in subsequent years announced himself as the Promised Messiah of the Christians, a prophet and the *Mahdī* for the Muslims, and the return of Krishna. After his death in 1908, Nūr-ud-Dīn became the first *khalīfah* or successor. He died in 1914, and the community split, the majority electing Maḥmūd Aḥmad, son of the founder, as his second successor, the minority withdrawing to Lahore. Maḥmūd Aḥmad, born in 1889, is still *khalīfah* today.

The Lahore Aḥmadīs have moved closer and closer to liberal orthodoxy. Because their character is less separate, and because they have little part in West African affairs, this study is mainly of the majority group, the Qadianīs.

The primary concern in this section is with Aḥmadiyyah doctrine. (A description of Aḥmadiyyah organization, as seen in Rabwah, the headquarters since the 1947 partition of India,

appeared in 1955 in the *Muslim World*.)<sup>1</sup> This doctrine, at least in the version of Qadian, is too far opposed to the principles of orthodox Islām to permit the sect to play a consciously co-operative part in the reformulation of Islām today. Nonetheless Aḥmadiyyah has had an effect on orthodoxy; and in many points of Aḥmadiyyah teaching may be seen examples, extensions and distortions of other more central modern trends in Islām. Divergent purposes work within Aḥmadiyyah: in the Muslim context, tension between extreme conservatism seeking a return to the original model, and adaptation to modern methods, science and rationalism; in the Christian context, between the attempt to absorb and utilize Christian scripture, organization, teaching and eschatology, and the desire to deny the whole structure of Christianity. Some of the developments which have taken place in Aḥmadiyyah during its 70 years of existence are indicated, instances both of the present condition of Islām and the direction in which it is moving. Professor Gibb wrote in 1946 that, of the three lines of modern Islāmic research suggested by D. B. MacDonald, 'the present religious attitudes and movements of the Muslim peoples' were 'the least-studied and most treacherous field'.<sup>2</sup>

Parts III and IV describe the work of Aḥmadiyyah in West Africa: that is, how the second part fits into the framework of the first, how on the borders of Islām an adjustment to modern conditions is attempted. Aḥmadiyyah, at least in its ideal form, jars by its reforming energies the first aim of orthodox West African Islām: gradual growth within a Pagan setting; and by its separatist nature thwarts the second: creation of a single new community.

The West African scene is described in part historically, in part topically. In both cases, Aḥmadiyyah is intimately involved with the general progress and difficulties of coastal Islām, considerably different from the Islām of the north and the interior, in the shadow of which it has been largely neglected. Aḥmadis are in some sense an *élite* of coastal Islām; that their example in some things has already been taken up and surpassed by the orthodox is a left-handed compliment to their pioneering work.

<sup>1</sup> S. E. Brush, 'Aḥmadiyyat in Pakistan: Rabwah and the Aḥmadis', *Muslim World*, April 1955, pp. 145-71.

<sup>2</sup> H. A. R. Gibb, *Modern Trends in Islam*, Chicago 1947, p. viii.

PART I  
THE WEST AFRICAN SETTING



## CHARACTERISTICS OF ISLĀM

The dual character of West African Islām, closely interwoven with the Pagan background and yet seeking to create a new community, is reflected in the five pillars of the faith. These are binding characteristics, bringing the Muslim congregation together; breaking characteristics, more concerned to weaken the Pagan community than to strengthen the Muslim, are *jihād* and eschatology. The binding characteristics correspond roughly to Nadel's three elements in religion: ritual action, the congregation, and doctrine.<sup>1</sup> Prayer, fasting and pilgrimage are ritual actions. They also publicly emphasize the congregation, to the welfare of which the fourth pillar, alms, is directly devoted. The fifth, the declaration of faith, provides doctrine.

My voice shalt thou hear betimes, O Lord: early in the morning will I direct my prayer unto thee, and will look up.

*Psalms. v. 3.*

Ritual prayer is of the greatest importance in the propaganda (conscious or unconscious) of West African Islām, for it is one of the most readily copied aspects. Its precise details are often imperfectly known; but the practice of folding arms at the beginning of prayer is sufficiently striking to the coastal Muslims to be the chief distinguishing feature of Aḥmadiyyah (see below p. 133).

Only a small proportion of West African Muslims perform the daily prayers, whether in the mosque or outside; attention to these prayers is often cited as distinctively Aḥmadiyyah. The Friday prayer on the contrary is a noble occasion, well attended. Where the Islāmic organization is unitary, as in Kano or Bathurst, all gather at a single cathedral-mosque, often filling the streets and squares round about. In Lagos, Aḥmadiyyah and other sects have fragmented this congregational unity; in Freetown, tribal allegiances are too strong for it.

<sup>1</sup> S. F. Nadel, *Nupe Religion*, London 1954, pp. 259-65.

Direct prayer to the Almighty is usually in West African traditional religion reserved for moments of crisis.<sup>1</sup> It may startle the Pagan to see his Muslim colleague addressing God as a matter of course. Yet modern life greatly increases the number of occasions on which men may need to call earnestly upon God Himself. The congregation likewise, replacing the family structure of Pagan rite, provides a new support, which can more easily receive the travelling trader, the countryman come to town, and all other strangers. The regimental discipline trains the bush African as it did the unruly Arab.<sup>2</sup>

The most westernized Muslims stress the egalitarianism of the communal prayer. However for many centuries past, and still in most places today, the Friday and Festival prayers have solemnized again and again the religious sanction of the ruler.

The fast of *Ramaḍān* is well observed in West Africa. It is an expression of communal solidarity: 'the plumbline of Islām, it rivets chains once more upon the wavering'.<sup>3</sup> A Catholic West African catechism, replying to the question, *Qu'y a-t-il de bon chez les musulmans?* mentions belief in one God, frequent public prayer, and the fast.<sup>4</sup> It is a time of especial prayer; a time when many teachers travel from the centres of Islām down towards the coast, gathering disciples and pupils; a time favoured for giving alms. Standing apart, the Pagan world observes and wonders. Moore, an eighteenth century trader, wrote of the Pagan Mandinka 'that tho' their Quarrels are never so great, yet they will not, upon any Account, go to fight till the Mahometans Lent is expired'.<sup>5</sup>

As a spiritual exercise in abstinence, the fast has little parallel in traditional African religion. Gouilly attributes this to the unorganized state of Pagan faith;<sup>6</sup> but it is rather owing to the life-affirming character of West African belief, in which eating is not only physical provision, but also the replenishment of vital force. Though fasting is novel, food restrictions are appreciated. These apply in Islām both to kinds of food and to

<sup>1</sup> G. Parrinder, *African Traditional Religion*, London 1954, p. 39.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. H. A. R. Gibb, *Mohammedanism*, London 1953, p. 48; P. K. Hitti, *History of the Arabs*, London 1956, p. 132.

<sup>3</sup> G. Simon, *The Progress & Arrest of Islam in Sumatra*, London [? 1912], p. 118.

<sup>4</sup> R. P. G. Pouchet, *Catéchisme Catholique*, Paris 1957, p. 174.

<sup>5</sup> F. Moore, *Travels into the Inland Parts of Africa &c.*, London 1738, p. 144.

<sup>6</sup> A. Gouilly, *L'Islam dans L'Afrique Occidentale Française*, Paris 1952, p. 182.

methods of slaughtering. These rules are demarcations of community. It is proof of the special relationship between Muslims and Christians that the former may eat food slaughtered by the latter. A Lagos paper protested in 1921 against the efforts of some churches to forbid a reciprocal partaking in the Greater Festival food of the Muslims; the paper, rather ineptly, cited Lamb's Dissertation on Roast Pig.<sup>1</sup> On the other hand, a few zealous West African Aḥmadīs refuse to eat with the orthodox, just as in Pakistan (though partly for caste reasons) one or two orthodox restaurants reserved separate utensils for Aḥmadīs and Christians.

Islām responds to the Pagan tradition of sacrifice and communion not so much by joining Worshipped and worshipper, as in expressing the unity of the congregation. In Robertson Smith's definition, the second sentence applies better without the first.

The one thing directly expressed in the sacrificial meal is that the god and his worshippers are *commensals*, but every other point in their mutual relations is included in what this involves. These who sit at meat together are united for all social effects; those who do not eat together are aliens to one another, without fellowship in religion and without reciprocal social duties.<sup>2</sup>

The Lesser Festival, closing the month of fasting, is the chief festival of the Muslim year in West Africa. Next to it is the Greater Festival, celebrating the sacrifice of Abraham, at the time of the pilgrimage. Others are the new year and the birthday of Muḥammad. The latter is generally observed quietly, though the first meeting of the Nigerian Muslim Congress, in 1950, recommended that the birthday be marked in a way comparable to the two chief festivals.<sup>3</sup> To some extent the festivals are communal occasions. The Lesser Festival follows *Ramadān*, a period of intense communal effort; the Greater is linked with rites at the very centre of Islām. Festivals also provide entertainment transcending dogmatic boundaries.<sup>4</sup> Muslims and Christians join in Pagan celebrations, just as Pagans are drawn to those of the new faiths.

<sup>1</sup> *African Messenger*, 18 August 1921.

<sup>2</sup> R. Smith, *Lectures on the Religion of the Semites*, London 1907, p. 269.

<sup>3</sup> G. Parrinder, *Religion in an African City*, London 1953, pp. 82-3.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. D. S. Margoliouth, *The Early Development of Mohammedanism*, London 1914, pp. 127-8.

Some of the purposes of Pagan festivals are carried over into the Muslim. Pagan festivals were often a period of license, a grotesque social safety valve; in a Muslim setting, this is sometimes restrained, sometimes more frantic. To balance, Pagan festivals were also a signal of some step in ordered social progress, such as youth initiation. This too continues: Camara Laye wrote of the conjunction between *Ramaḍān* and the tribal rites of Konden Diara, preliminary to manhood.<sup>1</sup> Festivals as part of the ceremonial of state serve the Muslim principalities, though a new imponderable has been added: for, while the Pagan religion was coterminal with its state, Islām ideally does not consider such local boundaries.<sup>2</sup> The limited purpose festivals of Paganism, against smallpox, witches, and so forth, are more ambiguously placed, between spiritism (lesser deities, ancestors, etc.), which Islām rejects, and dynamism (amulets, etc.) which Islām accepts.

And he hath put a new song in my mouth: even a thanksgiving unto our God.

*Psalms. xl. 3.*

Music and dancing are a chief feature of the festival, and of most of the ceremonies of life. Moore described the Mandinka:

They are naturally very jocose and merry, and will dance to a Drum or Balafeu sometimes four and twenty Hours together, dancing now and then very regular, and at other Times in very odd Gestures, striving always to outdo one another in Nimbleness and Activity.<sup>3</sup>

African affection for music scarcely needs demonstration. Music is an excellent example of the gentle transition from Paganism to Islām. Its divided affiliations and omnipresent significance are both reflected in the frequency of Aḥmadiyyah objections to it. That Aḥmadīs will not allow music and dancing at a funeral sharply sets them off from the West African orthodox.

The Brotherhoods in West Africa have spread Muslim songs, particularly in praise of Muḥammad. (In the eastern Sudan

<sup>1</sup> C. Laye, *The Dark Child*, London 1955, p. 94.

<sup>2</sup> Nadel, *op. cit.*, pp. 234 & 244.

<sup>3</sup> Moore, *op. cit.*, p. 110: a *balafeu* is described on pp. 119-20.

the doctrine of the *nūr al-muḥammadiyyah*, a sort of Muslim Logos, is popularized by community song.)<sup>1</sup> Mungo Park observed singers,

devotees of the Mahomedan faith, who travel about the country, singing devout hymns and performing religious ceremonies, to conciliate the favour of the Almighty, either in averting calamity, or insuring success to any enterprise.<sup>2</sup>

Music is sometimes a weapon of controversy. The final stage of the Kosoko civil war in Lagos, in 1853, was precipitated by abusive songs at *Ramaḍān* time.<sup>3</sup> Such songs are a recurrent trouble. The Freetown Muslim Companies sing against one another.<sup>4</sup>

The pilgrimage affirms the congregation of Islām on the largest stage. The participant is introduced to a group strikingly different from his customary connections. When he returns, he is more conscious of the difference between Islām and tradition: it has been youthful pilgrims who rashly challenge the secret society *Poro* in Sierra Leone.

Pilgrimage is also dramatic ritual action. There seems no point of contact here between Islām and Paganism, though even the more acclimatized West African Muslim sects, as the *Murīdiyyah*, have developed their own local pilgrimage with enthusiasm.<sup>5</sup> Particularly on the coast, the pilgrim is assured of special regard: an *imām* or chief may solidify his position by going to Mecca. Sometimes this respect is withheld: the *Bambarrans* laughed at Mungo Park, 'he has been at Mecca, says one, you may see that by his clothes . . .'<sup>6</sup>

Pilgrimage often involves cooperative effort. A rich man may take others with him; a poor man seeks contributions. Some Muslims believe that a substitute may be sent, even that a substitute is incumbent on the heirs of a man who died before visiting Mecca;<sup>7</sup> in Nigeria some say that a pilgrim may intercede at the Last Day for forty, or seventy, relatives on each side

<sup>1</sup> J. S. Trimmingham, *Islam in the Sudan*, London 1949, p. 210.

<sup>2</sup> Mungo Park, *Travels of . . .*, Everyman's Library, pp. 213-4.

<sup>3</sup> J. B. Losi, *History of Lagos*, Lagos 1914, p. 47.

<sup>4</sup> M. Banton, *West African City*, London 1957, pp. 166-70.

<sup>5</sup> Gouilly, *op. cit.*, pp. 125 & n., 196-7.

<sup>6</sup> Park, *op. cit.*, p. 148.

<sup>7</sup> Gouilly, *op. cit.*, p. 196; H. Lammens, *L'Islam: Croyances et Institutions*, Beirut 1943, p. 81.

of his family, a doctrine which must stimulate contributions. Both the strict orthodox, and the westernized, reject this idea for their various reasons.

Other sources of finance are employed: a good deal of the Sudan labour supply is provided by West African pilgrims. The pilgrim may take with him a slave, to sell in Arabia. Trade prospects may influence choice of a route. In Kaarta and Ludamar, wrote Mungo Park,

the women raise their hair to a great height by the addition of a pad (as the ladies did formerly in Great Britain), which they decorate with a species of coral, brought from the Red Sea by pilgrims returning from Mecca, and sold at a great price.<sup>1</sup>

The most scrupulous however will not trade. Simon says that the Indonesians are admired for this abstinence;<sup>2</sup> in local itinerant preaching, Aḥmadīs and orthodox are sometimes contrasted because the former come only to teach, never to trade.

European control in West Africa assisted the pilgrimage. In the nineteenth century the interior was in an uproar, and few routes were safe. In 1920, a Lagos paper told of Abeokuta pilgrims who had to go in disguise, as beggars, in order to preserve life and treasure.<sup>3</sup> (But even in the most troubled times Barth found occasional pilgrims.)<sup>4</sup> Gradually order was restored, and all kinds of transport became available. Shortly after the turn of the century, Blyden prevailed upon Sir Alfred Jones to experiment with pilgrim ships from the west coast to Arabia, but too few passengers offered.<sup>5</sup> Now special planes and lorries supplement ordinary ships; governments supervise many of the arrangements.

Pilgrims may stay in Mecca among their fellow countrymen. They may attend as scholar-servants upon some learned doctor, perhaps as young Thomas More served Cardinal Morton. A few stop at al-Azhar; Trimmingham said that in 1952 there were 105 pupils there from French West Africa, and about 50 from northern Nigeria.<sup>6</sup> (The Muslim Congress in Sierra Leone sent

<sup>1</sup> Park, op. cit., p. 15; cf. Qur'ān xxxv. 12.

<sup>2</sup> Simon, op. cit., p. 125.

<sup>3</sup> *Nigerian Pioneer*, 23 January 1920.

<sup>4</sup> H. Barth, *Travels and Discoveries in North & Central Africa, 1849-1855*, London 1858, vol. iv, p. 234 and elsewhere.

<sup>5</sup> *Nigerian Pioneer*, 23 January 1920.

<sup>6</sup> J. S. Trimmingham, *Islam in West Africa*, Oxford, 1959, pp. 85-6.

two or three people to al-Azhar; West African Aḥmadiyyah is presently helping students both in Cairo and in Khartoum.) Some pilgrims stay permanently, a few because stranded, others to earn the title, Neighbour of God; Trimmingham estimates at least 4,000 West Africans settled in Mecca.<sup>1</sup>

Alms find little or no parallel in Paganism, where group responsibility rather than individual generosity provides for the indigent. When Islām becomes wider than a certain tribe or class, and when individuals move more freely, congregating in towns, the traditional supports of group and locality may be lost, and alms help to meet the need. To a considerable degree alms, particularly at times of festival and ceremony, go to the clerics, guardians of the new congregation; it is at this point that Aḥmadis most object to the usual Muslim giving.

Voluntary alms are fairly popular. *Zakāt*, required alms, are much less readily given, partly because the central authority through which they should pass is lacking. Where the Orders are strong, they often collect and redistribute *zakāt*. Aḥmadiyyah and organized societies such as the *Anṣār-ud-Dīn* (the largest Muslim educational body in Nigeria) also attempt to arrange for it.

The declaration of faith provides the third element in Nadel's classification, that of doctrine. It is in two parts, the unity of God and the prophethood of Muḥammad. The simplicity of Islām, often overemphasized, is important in the stark affirmation that there is no other god than God. This is a primary element in the missionary preaching of Islām. It sweeps away local deities, replacing them with more direct awareness of the universal God. It is a change of fundamental necessity in an increasingly fluid society.

The ground was not unprepared in Paganism. The weight of evidence is overwhelmingly against those who deny the reality of the Pagan conception of the High God, though He be remote and inaccessible. A possible reason for Pagan unwillingness to approach God too directly is that He is more powerful, and consequently less predictable, than the intermediary deities, spirits and ancestors.<sup>2</sup> Islām carefully demonstrates the

<sup>1</sup> Trimmingham, *Islam in West Africa*, pp. 85-6.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. P. E. Champagne, 'La Religion des Noirs du Nord de la Gold Coast', *Anthropos*, 1928, pp. 852-5.

way of prayer, and defines the reactions which may be reliably expected from God. (Aḥmadiyyah contributes little towards a West African understanding of divine unity, being too involved in an arid quarrel with trinitarian doctrine.)

Muḥammad is relatively little regarded, having no corresponding element in Paganism, contributing nothing to the definition of community, standing only on the periphery of ritual. It may be that as a nationalist prophet, whose followers challenged two imperial powers, he will gain contemporary political significance in West Africa, but this is unlikely except among the westernized.

Put them in fear, O Lord: that the heathen may know themselves to be but men.

*Psalms. ix. 20.*

The five pillars all contribute positively to the construction of the Muslim community, sometimes by the adaptation of Pagan elements. In other cases Islām has been more concerned to break than to bind. The violent doctrines of *jihād* and *Mahdī* are the clearest examples.

Aḥmadīs are greatly concerned to preach a peaceful *jihād*. There is little precedent for this in West Africa. In 1061, Abū Bakr ibn ʿUmar, returning from the Maghrib to repair Almora-  
vide dissensions in the desert, opened the door of *jihād* to the south.<sup>1</sup> Holy wars, large or local, continued until the firm establishment of colonial rule, and are still regarded by many as a proper means of conversion.

Holy war has sometimes stimulated resistance, and even after a Muslim conquest and forced conversion peoples have returned to Paganism. If the Pagan society is closely knit, holy war will probably not suffice without more subtle penetration as well.

The *Mahdī* is often considered as a leader in holy war. While nervous exaggeration by missionaries and government officials may need correcting, the *Mahdī* tradition in West Africa should not be underestimated. It is the title most commonly given to Ghulām Aḥmad by his followers there.

Although Muslim ideas of the afterlife draw somewhat upon Pagan parallels, they serve primarily as a breaking characteristic, cutting the thread of Pagan philosophy at a vital point.

<sup>1</sup> Ibn Khaldūn, *Histoire des Berbères*, Paris 1927, vol. ii, p. 72, cf. p. 65.

West African Paganism acknowledges the afterlife, usually much like life on earth, somewhat subdued. Death is not an ultimate severing, but rather a transition which both follows and precedes birth. Respect for the ancestors, and belief in reincarnation, are vital. Because of this unbroken sequence, the afterlife customarily lacks conclusive characteristics. Judgment is an uncertain affair, vague, often influenced by bribery, effective where it is effective mainly through interference with rebirth: a bad soul may be indefinitely delayed in the beyond.<sup>1</sup> Curiously, there is little suggestion of rebirth into higher or lower status as part of the pattern of judgment.<sup>2</sup> There is little distinction, if any, between heaven and hell.

Trimingham found the following ideas shared by all West African Muslims: 'examination whether a Muslim or pagan, reckoning-up of good and bad deeds, Day of Judgement, and heaven and hell.'<sup>3</sup> Teaching about the afterlife has made considerable impression. The new ideas weaken the family unity, which was strong enough to bridge death, but which cannot unite heaven and hell as portrayed in the Qur'ān, nor summon a man back before or after the terrible Last Day. Two factors ease the transition. First, the ancestors were not always cooperative, but sometimes fierce and intractable, and something may be gained by having them out of the way. And second, Islām can reach into the beyond and convert the dead ancestors themselves. (A young man's father had forbidden him to leave orthodox Islām. When the father died, the son wished to adopt Aḥmadiyyah, and was encouraged in this by his father's appearance in a dream, as an Aḥmadī himself.)

<sup>1</sup> G. Parrinder, *West African Psychology*, London 1951, Chapter 9.

<sup>2</sup> Parrinder, *African Traditional Religion*, p. 138.

<sup>3</sup> Trimingham, *Islam in West Africa*, p. 61.

## CHARACTERISTICS OF PAGANISM

The first characteristics of West African Paganism in this review are those which Islām most thoroughly rejects. It is unnecessary to elaborate on the Muslim dislike for idols. A less immediately evident antagonism is towards the scheme of ancestor reverence. Secret societies, often the policemen of Paganism, are more openly challenged (if such challenge is feasible).

Next come certain Pagan characteristics which are neither broken by, nor bound up with, Islām. Spirits and spirit possession, although disapproved, are not under formal ban as is the secret society. Divination and witch-finding are elements wavering between outright incorporation within West African Islām, and a very gradual attrition of respectable status. Amulets are fully accepted.

In this sequence we can trace E. W. Smith's analysis, which divides the Pagan supernatural into three ranks: the High God, spiritism (including ancestors, lesser deities, etc.), and dynamism.<sup>1</sup> While acknowledging the highest and lowest, Islām rejects the connecting link of spiritism, and thus disrupts the coherency of Pagan philosophy.

I am wiser than the aged because I keep thy commandments.  
*Psalms. cxix. 100.*

They think that this remembrance of the virtue and goodness of the dead doth vehemently provoke and enforce the living to virtue. And that nothing can be more pleasant and acceptable to the dead. Whom they suppose to be present among them, when they talk of them, though to the dull and feeble eyesight of mortal men they be invisible. For it were an inconvenient thing that the blessed should not be at liberty to go whither they would. And it were a point of great unkindness in them to have utterly cast away the desire of visiting and seeing their friends, to whom they were in their lifetime joined by mutual love and amity. Which in good men after their

<sup>1</sup> E. W. Smith (ed.), *African Ideas of God*, London 1950, pp. 1-35.

death they count to be rather increased than diminished. They believe therefore that the dead be presently conversant among the quick, as beholders and witnesses of all their words and deeds. Therefore they go more courageously to their business as having a trust and affiance in such overseers.

The passage is from More's *Utopia*; the parallel with West African tradition is striking. Relationships there with the ancestors are constant and important. Mary Kingsley wrote,

I have often seen a man, sitting at a bush fire or in a village palaver house, turn around and say, 'You remember that, mother?' to the ghost that to him was there.<sup>1</sup>

The ancestors are intimately involved in family affairs. The naming ceremony may be the solemnization of rebirth; marriage joins not only individuals and families, but also groups of ancestors. Ancestors assist with farming; their spiritual forces are mustered in time of war (and thus Pagan philosophy hazards ordeal by battle with Islām). Emphasis is always on the group: the defection of an individual is not simply the expression of his own preference, for it renders the rites of those who remain faithful to the old ways less efficacious.

In general, the ancestors appear not to have been worshipped, in a strict religious sense. Nonetheless their position has to be severely curtailed in the religious framework. Trimmingham wrote that islamization had taken place when 'prayers for the dead are substituted for prayers to or through the dead'.<sup>2</sup>

Secret counsel, *najwā*, is condemned in the Qur'ān (lviii. 7ff), and this has been applied to secret societies in West Africa. In Ibadan in 1949 a member of the Reformed Ogboni died; despite the fact that he was also a leader of the *Anṣār-ud-Dīn*, many Muslim dignitaries in the town refused to attend his funeral because of the presence there of his Ogboni fellows.<sup>3</sup>

In many respects, the societies challenge Islām. They are the guardians of traditional law, and stand therefore against the law of Islām, with the supremacy of which the Islāmic way of life stands or falls. They are often instruments of tribal cohesion, and intersect the general brotherhood of Islām. Again, secret

<sup>1</sup> Mary H. Kingsley, *West African Studies*, London 1901, p. 54.

<sup>2</sup> Trimmingham, *Islam in West Africa*, p. 106.

<sup>3</sup> Parrinder, *Religion in an African City*, p. 181.

societies guide the course of West African life with many essential *rites du passage*, and it is at these points that the Muslim cleric seeks to make his own services indispensable. The societies have educational programmes, training specially selected initiates, which compete with Muslim education. Finally, the secret society and Islām both claim ultimate absolutism in the ordering, ecclesiastical and political, of society.

The Brotherhoods of Islām answer the secret societies more or less on their own ground. Islāmic mysticism, transformed early in its career into an occult science, satisfies 'ce goût de mystère qui, en milieu animiste, donne naissance aux sociétés secrètes'.<sup>1</sup>

Trimingham draws attention to 'cults of mystery societies', groups which transcend natural tribal limits, admission to which involves initiation. Examples are Mende *komo* and Hausa *bōri*. Such a development towards unlocalized religion in one sense prepares the way for Islām, in another stiffens resistance to it.<sup>2</sup>

Islām cannot accept these societies, yet cannot dispense with them altogether. *Poro*, in Sierra Leone, is too powerful politically; *bōri* too important in healing.

*Bōri* is a framework regulating relationships with the spirits. In this connection, the introduction of Islām results in a somewhat degraded status, and an uneasy harmony. None can utterly deny *bōri*, for all need the spirits, even, said Baba of Karo, the malams, secretly. The malams call on the *bōri* in private, in the darkness at night. Everyone wants the spirits, kings and noblemen want them, malams and wives shut away in their compounds—it is with them that we work in this world, without them would our labour be any use? The work of malams is one thing, the work of *bōri* experts is another, each has his own kind of work and they must not be mixed up.<sup>3</sup>

Spirits are connected with many affairs, with markets for example, and the founding of new towns. They can incorporate new elements.

*Bōri* in the Muslim setting has been transformed from a tribal matter to a general organization almost exclusively in the hands

<sup>1</sup> Gouilly, *op. cit.*, p. 89.

<sup>2</sup> Trimingham, *Islam in West Africa*, p. 107; cf. Banton, *op. cit.*, p. 153.

<sup>3</sup> Mary F. Smith, *Baba of Karo*, London 1954, p. 222.

of prostitutes. It may be that it is a reaction against the constricted status of women in a relatively orthodox Muslim society. It is not, however, the first step in the rejection of Muslim standards, for most adepts were prostitutes before they took up *bōri*, and many prostitutes are refugees from family-arranged first marriages, which are not peculiar to Islāmic society.

Let them be ashamed and confounded together, that seek after my soul to destroy it.

*Psalms. xl. 14.*

Witchcraft on our stage is not a subject for reflective plays, but a dread reality. Many elements strengthen belief in it, despite the advance of education. It is an individual matter, more adaptable and persistent than local deities. It is fierce, and explains some of the stress of modern life, even failure in school examinations. The inexplicable influence of trends in world economy on the cocoa farmer or oil trader may be attributed to witchcraft.<sup>1</sup> The perils of child-bearing are blamed on it; prevalent venereal disease exacerbates the situation. Various modern movements of witchfinding have arisen, such as the Atingas and Bamucapi, notable for the participation of modern youth.

Even learned Muslims approach the subject of witchcraft cautiously, and with interest. Pagan and semi-Pagan procedures, though linked to the secret societies, are tolerated when they promise protection against witchcraft. But Islām has its own armoury in this struggle, and Pagan methods are gradually losing respect.

Divination is a further important Pagan element ambiguously regarded by Muslims. In origin, West African divination may have borrowed something from Arabian example. In the most important system, Ifa, notation is from right to left; a young child may take part, just as one did when the Cairene magician (surnamed al-Maghribī) provided Lane with information about Lord Nelson;<sup>2</sup> the Pagan master of divination prays alone to Ifa nearly every day, but on the evening of the new moon the

<sup>1</sup> M. J. Field, 'Some New Shrines of the Gold Coast & Their Significance' *Africa*, 1940, p. 141.

<sup>2</sup> E. W. Lane, *Manners & Customs of the Modern Egyptians*, Everyman's Library, pp. 274 ff.

whole family gathers for prayer.<sup>1</sup> These early links are now so remote that the introduction of specifically Muslim divination results in dualism. Coastal Muslims have little confidence in the Muslim alternative; on the other hand, a few among the strictly orthodox regard any divination with suspicion.

The amulet—'ce noeud, ce centre vital, ce "signe" ou cette manifestation particulière de la force vitale', as Tempels described it<sup>2</sup>—or charm is a pure expression of the concept of dynamism in Pagan religion. It is fully accepted by Islām in West Africa, as indeed by all religions there: the amulet is the most convertible currency in West African religion. The catechism, already cited (see p. 4), warns Christians (although they should treat Muslims lovingly) never to marry with them, 'et ne jamais porter leurs amulettes'.

The uses of the charm are the same in Paganism and Islām: it protects the warrior and helps a baby teething; it wards off thieves, wild animals, and sickness; it drives out the co-wife, or brings to a woman her lover; and so on indefinitely. It may be protective, positive, vindictive or counteractive.<sup>3</sup>

The traditional amulet is made of natural materials of many kinds. A Pulo with whom Mungo Park stopped begged with much diffidence a lock of the explorer's hair, saying it would provide an amulet which would assure to its possessor all the knowledge of the European.<sup>4</sup> The principal novelty of Islām here is the introduction of writing, which has enhanced the reputation of the amulet. Qur'ānic verses are pre-eminent. Aḥmadīs are opposed to amulets, and this opposition is often expressed in the limited terms of Qur'ānic propriety. It is wrong to touch the Qur'ān when one is unclean, and how can one avoid doing so if a verse from the Qur'ān is constantly at one's neck or arm? It is wrong to conceal the Qur'ān, as in a leather pouch. The usual amulet is such a pouch, containing the text and other ingredients. A frequent variation is to prepare medicine by washing texts from a slate; the medicine may be drunk, or used for washing.

The amulet is interwoven with the whole fabric of West

<sup>1</sup> G. Parrinder, *West African Religion*, London 1949, pp. 152 ff.

<sup>2</sup> R. P. P. Tempels, *La Philosophie Bantoue*, Paris 1949, p. 54.

<sup>3</sup> Trimmingham, *Islam in West Africa*, p. 114.

<sup>4</sup> Park, *op. cit.*, p. 143.

African Islām. The horns of the ram sacrificed at the Great Festival become containers for such charms. The pilgrimage, though it may purify the religious conceptions of some, is more likely to produce a supply, real or spurious, of mementos, and to increase the magical powers which the pilgrim can impart to amulets of his own manufacture. The sale of amulets is an important source of income for the cleric.

## THE ORGANIZATION OF ISLĀM

The words of the Lord are pure words: even as the silver, which from the earth is tried, and purified seven times in the fire.

*Psalms. xii. 6.*

The Qur'ān is in constant use in the traditional Muslim schools in West Africa, and is, in a marked characteristic of Islām there, taught after the Friday prayers and every day during *Ramaḍān*. The election of the Qur'ān teachers for the month of fasting may be a delicate affair in coastal Islām, inflamed by controversies among the Muslims. The Qur'ān is recited in Arabic, sometimes by a blind man, and passages are explained in the local language, without direct translation. Although manuscript copies of the Qur'ān in the language of the Fulani exist,<sup>1</sup> and perhaps one or two in Hausa, outright translation is at the moment freely considered almost exclusively by the Aḥmadīs.

The reverence which Muslims pay to the Qur'ān and the mystery surrounding a Book often little understood contribute to the impression which scripture makes upon the Pagan. Such a Book is one of the great innovations of the Semitic religions in West Africa. It has been put to doubtful uses, in amulets and medicinal concoctions, but this sadly compromised beginning is typical of the way in which West African Islām gradually insinuates itself into the Pagan setting. One of the rare Aḥmadiyyah practitioners of these arts was Sulayman of Benin, whose shelf was lined with slates from which texts were washed for drinking, and whose mind was filled with the power of prayer (particularly prayer 'against' someone) and Qur'ānic recitation. The only Aḥmadiyyah influence on him was the conviction that these things should not be done secretly, and his books of charms were open for any to read. He died in 1959.

The educational system which rests upon the Qur'ān begins

<sup>1</sup> Trimmingham, *Islam in West Africa*, pp. 81-2.

on a very humble scale, the exchange of knowledge between friends, a father's instruction to his son. If there is a cleric in the village, the school will be held at his house. Teaching is not usually done in mosques; that Aḥmadīs do so is an innovation in West Africa, though common custom in eastern Muslim lands. Both boys and girls attend, but in general less attention is given to the education of women.

The commonest times of teaching are in the early morning and late afternoon or evening. Open fires light these lessons, with the children around; sometimes yams and other foods, acquired by various means during the day, are roasting in the embers. The pupils must have the day-time free for the government school, or for work with their parents, or with their teacher, who uses his pupils' labour as part payment for his teaching. Park found the student the slave of his teacher, working in return for instruction, and ransomed (if possible) by the parents' offerings at the time of his graduation.<sup>1</sup> That Aḥmadīs try to introduce cash payments, to the religious organization rather than to the individual teacher, is novel.

*Ramaḍān* is the most vigorous teaching time, favoured by travelling scholars; when the farm work is not demanding, these are again on their way.<sup>2</sup> The seasons sometimes close the country schools, Qur'ān and government, as in Sierra Leone when the rice is planted out.

The first subjects are the Arabic alphabet, and the memorization of certain Qur'ān passages; these are written on the pupil's slate, each washed off and replaced by another after memorization. More difficult passages are generally not memorised, but recited from the text. Little attention is given to understanding. Higher studies, especially in coastal Islām, are followed by very few. They include knowledge of the meaning of Arabic, and study of the Qur'ān and legal commentaries (in West Africa, primarily *Khalīl's Mukhtaṣar*).

Lord, what love have I unto thy law: all the day long is my study in it.

*Psalms. cxix. 97.*

<sup>1</sup> Park, *op. cit.*, p. 243.

<sup>2</sup> An excellent account of such journeying is given by Mary Smith, *op. cit.*, pp. 131-4.

Islāmic law (deliberately the basis of governmental law in Northern Nigeria) provides the standard by which to judge the practical condition of the faith. West Africa is united by the Mālikiyyah school of law; when the first Aḥmadiyyah missionary reached Lagos, some of the orthodox hoped that he would confess to Ḥanafīyyah allegiance, and thus relinquish his right to interfere in West Africa; but he refused to be tied to any one school.

Muslim law corresponds in many ways to West African custom, in polygamy and bride-price for example. Even where the law is fully acknowledged, adjustment is made to local custom. To take one case only, the Qur'ānic prescription that an adulterer should be stoned to death, the same rule that has caught the fancy of coastal idealists, has been greatly softened in northern practice.

Nonetheless the new law brings a duality into the local structure of authority, which is first felt at particular points, such as marriage law, inheritance and land tenure. Alterations in these mean alterations in the accepted arrangement of society. The principle underlying the change is twofold. Muslim law, in contrast to Pagan, is individualistic; people under its jurisdiction shed many of the communal obligations and restraints of Pagan society. They are made free, and at the same time enrolled in a new organization, Islām, which in West Africa stresses for ordinary people those requirements which mark them off as a separate group.

The practitioners of the law also change. Pagan law is an unwritten repository with the elders, who act together. Muslim law is drawn from books which any man, if he will learn, can read for himself. Park observed the inability of the Pagans to handle the new law, and the need for trained lawyers, who 'in the forensic qualifications of procrastination and cavil, and the arts of confounding and perplexing a cause . . . are not always surpassed by the ablest pleaders in Europe'.<sup>1</sup> The change in law and lawyers should not be overemphasized; often much of the old communal framework is incorporated, and there are instances (such as the freedom of individuals to contract their own marriages) in which Aḥmadiyyah stands to orthodox Islām much as orthodox does to Paganism.

<sup>1</sup> Park, *op. cit.*, pp. 13-4.

Written law is more suitable for the flexible situations of modern West Africa. The relatively defined law and judicial procedure stand in contrast to those of even the most advanced Pagan societies. This was markedly so for the European colonial officer. He accepted Muslim law only 'when not repugnant to natural justice and humanity, or incompatible with any local ordinance';<sup>1</sup> but he might bring with him his experience of other parts of the Muslim world, his recollection of reading western Orientalists. He might read the Arabic law books himself, and would feel comparatively more at home in the Muslim court. An instance is land tenure, for which both Muslims and Europeans share a concept of individual ownership.

I have declared thy righteousness in the great congregation: lo, I will not refrain my lips, O Lord, and that thou knowest.

*Psalms. xl. 10.*

Many different names are used in West Africa for the Muslim divine; Trimingham's choice of the term cleric as the most widely suitable seems sound.<sup>2</sup>

The training of the ordinary cleric is not distinguished from that of any other child who comes to the local Qur'ān school. Initiation into the clerical group generally requires very little knowledge, though there are in some places exceptional examination demands. To proceed further is open to any cleric who is able to join himself with a more learned man in his locality, or to travel to some centre of study, perhaps connected with one of the Orders.

The range of clerical qualification is important: in its superficial requirements, to root Islām firmly among the common people; in its protracted legal studies, to preserve definition of the faith. The concept of special clerical training is fairly common in West African Paganism, but the preparation there may demand a long withdrawal, and must take place within a fixed social framework,<sup>3</sup> while the Muslim course is more variable in timetable and individualistic in method.

<sup>1</sup> F. D. Lugard, *The Dual Mandate in British Tropical Africa*, London 1926, pp. 368 & 536-7.

<sup>2</sup> Trimingham, *Islam in West Africa*, p. 68.

<sup>3</sup> A. B. Ellis, *The Yoruba-Speaking Peoples of the Slave Coast of West Africa*, London 1894, pp. 93 ff; cf. L. S. B. Leakey, *Mau Mau & the Kikuyu*, London 1954, p. 47.

The cleric has manifold duties. He educates the faithful. Part of his school training is in the proper performance of prayer and he will lead the congregation in the mosque. Preaching is his, and sometimes takes him into the field against Paganism. He provides religious sanction for each of the turning-points in the life cycle, such as the naming ceremony or funeral. He is a medical practitioner, sometimes using herbs, etc., scientifically, more often employing amulets and other magical devices. The cleric may have also a political role. The ancient Pagan kingdom of Ghana employed Muslim state officials. Throughout the development of West African Islām the same pattern can be traced, in which the legal experience, literacy and other assets of the Muslim cleric recommend him to the Pagan chief.

All these tasks bring remuneration. There is, however, a strand of reluctance to join religious duties with purely commercial pursuits. A report in 1889, on Muslim education in British West Africa, mentioned that 'it is regarded as unbecoming for schoolmasters to be seen in marketplaces, and to be pushed hither and thither in the confusion incidental to Negro trading-life'.<sup>1</sup> Sometimes today Aḥmadīs and orthodox are compared in that the learned men of the latter earn their living by religion, while the Aḥmadīs have secular jobs as well.

Above the ordinary cleric is the *imām*, the religious leader of the Muslim community. The term means also simply one who leads the prayer. There has been much controversy in coastal Islām about the definition of the imamate; disputes occasioned by the introduction of Aḥmadiyyah have often centred on this question.

The Order or Brotherhood, *tariqah*, is an organizational development of Islāmic mysticism, in which rules of succession maintain the central office of the mystic *shaiḥ*, and below him the various lesser ranks, all drawing their authority from initiation, direct or indirect, by the founder. The Orders have everywhere carried the main burden of Muslim proselytizing. The bond of allegiance between the ordinary member and his spiritual preceptor, called in West Africa his *muqaddam*, helps establish the new Muslim community.

The Qādiriyyah, mother of all Orders, was the most impor-

<sup>1</sup> M. Sunter, 'Mohammedan Education in the West African Colonies', C. O. 17244 (CO/96/207).

tant Order spreading Islām in West Africa, chiefly through education and other peaceful means. In 1791 a new Order, the Tijāniyyah, was founded by the Berber Aḥmad al-Tijānī. This, more violent than its rival, has in many places challenged and displaced the Qādiriyyah. Initiative in introducing the Orders to coastal Islām is very much in the hands of the Tijānīs. On these frontiers, the Tijānīs stress the communal worship of the *dhikr*, performed publicly and volubly in the mosque; in Fanteland, the common word for *dhikr* is *tujāni*. The Qādirīs are more concerned with private devotions, such as the midnight prayer.

The Tijāniyyah seeks exclusive allegiance: its members should not have a dual affiliation. Some say that the Tijāniyyah is the last of the Orders, as Muḥammad was the last of the prophets. Some expect the *Mahdī* to give the same initiation as is practised in the Tijāniyyah.

The Tijāniyyah has had some contact with Aḥmadiyyah, though little as yet. In Bathurst Tijāniyyah is firmly entrenched while Aḥmadiyyah has not yet declared its separate status. Kano, where the *amīr* is Tijānī, may more quickly reveal the conflict; there is much Aḥmadiyyah criticism there of the Orders. In Sierra Leone, Tijāniyyah has stiffened the resistance of the Temne people to Aḥmadiyyah; one Aḥmadī there accused the Tijānīs of reverencing their founder as a prophet beside Muḥammad, an incongruous objection for an Aḥmadī.

All my delight is upon the saints that are in the earth: and upon such as excel in virtue.

*Psalms. xvi. 3.*

Saint worship is usually an important element of the mystical Orders; but this is not so in negro West Africa. The exception is the Murīdiyyah, who congregate in hundreds of thousands at the tomb of their founder in the month *Muḥarram*, commemorating his return from exile. There is a slight strengthening of links with saints at the time of pilgrimage. Some visit the tomb of ʿUthmān dan Fodio, great imperialist and Qādiriyyah affiliate, before leaving: others may call at the grave of al-Tijānī in Fās, in North Africa.

It is therefore not surprising that Ghulām Aḥmad's position as the founder of Aḥmadiyyah has not been unduly exalted by

his West African followers, and that there is practically no interest (even allowing for the expense of the journey) in visiting Qadian or Rabwah as well as Mecca.

I was glad when they said unto me: We will go into the house of the Lord.

*Psalms. cxxii. 1.*

Buildings for worship are uncommon in West African Paganism. The introduction of the mosque has been eased by the extreme simplicity of some forms: perhaps a small cleared space, marked off by tree-trunks or rows of bottles, often used for spreading laundry to dry during the week. The praying-place is prepared almost instantly wherever a few Muslims congregate, and prayer performed there can be seen of all who pass by.

The next stage is a building, of the most elementary kind; gradually the scale increases, according to the resources and ambitions of the people. It is however Christianity which has been chiefly responsible for the adoption of large buildings in coastal areas. Some of the mosques, as the Aḥmadiyyah mosque in Ekrofol in Fanteland, are indistinguishable except in furnishings from a church. Others are built to match, at least in size, the city cathedrals. An extraordinary burst of mosque-building has swept Freetown. In 1954 the Hausa opened a splendid mosque. In 1958 the Fulani followed. Now a Mandinka mosque of equal proportions is nearly complete, and the Temne mosque has been renovated. It is a criticism by some modernist Aḥmadīs in Sierra Leone that too much money is spent this way, and too little on education. It is not a consistent criticism, for large sums have been spent on the Aḥmadiyyah mosque in Saltpond, which was opened in 1954 with Nkrumah attending, and again on the mosque in Wa.

The mosque may be the capital investment of the Muslim group, and disputes over possession are the melancholy corollary of doctrinal differences. When the Lagos Aḥmadīs divided in the Great Schism, the Independents kept the original mosque, a two-storey building, with loudspeakers to relay the service upstairs, large enough for some 600 worshippers as well as offices. The Loyalists had to build another mosque, on the same street.

## ISLĀM AND SOCIETY IN WEST AFRICA

The imposition of European colonial control, and the introduction of western civilization, have caused radical alterations in the old Pagan society, making more urgent the need of a new community such as in Islām. West African Islām itself has had to come to terms with the west, in politics, in trade, and every other aspect of life.

Under colonialism, the Muslim states lost their independent power, and Muslims in Pagan states their opportunity for a religious *coup d'état*. *Jihād* had to be abandoned. In retaliation, Islām sometimes flourished as the rallying-point for forces opposed to colonialism; this has had little relevance in British West Africa, where the amirates of northern Nigeria for example have moved towards independence more slowly than the southern regions of the country, while in Ghana the Muslim Association Party was accused of delaying independence (see below, p. 182). Crises such as the Suez catastrophe in 1956 had only slight reverberation; in contrast, it was reported in Indonesia in 1882, when Gladstone attacked Egypt, that civil war had broken out among the confused English, and that 'Arabi Pasha had married the daughter of Queen Victoria'.<sup>1</sup>

There were compensating political advantages. Pagan areas formerly barred to Muslims were opened, as the territories of the Mossi in French West Africa,<sup>2</sup> or in Nigeria where a Resident reported the advances of the Fulani herdsman into parts in which formerly the Pagans would have disposed of him 'by the complete method of eating both him and his cattle'.<sup>3</sup> The great forest belt guarding the coast was at last breached.

Further, European control narrowed the gap between Muslim ruler and Pagan ruled, or simply between Muslim and Pagan, by emphasizing the separation between both of them

<sup>1</sup> Simon, *op. cit.*, p. 106.

<sup>2</sup> J. Brévié, *L'Islamisme contre 'Naturisme' au Soudan français*, Paris 1923, pp. 234-5.

<sup>3</sup> Lugard, *op. cit.*, p. 92n.

and the imperial authority. While conversion was thus in some sense eased, it was virtually encouraged by the defined and dignified relationship which existed between the European and the Muslim, and which was largely lacking for the Pagan.

Despite the efforts of the colonial governments to maintain impartiality, it was inevitable that the Muslims should have had some priority. They were too valuable as a medium between the European and the peasant. Their political system was more developed, their laws more codified; their language was written, their religion familiar either from field experience in other imperial territories or from the works of European Orientalists. The Pagans saw that the Muslims were on a different footing with the authorities.

Be wise now therefore, O ye kings: be learned, ye that are judges of the earth.

*Psalms. ii. 10.*

European intervention created a situation in which the social and political benefits of conversion to Islām were more evident, though they have always been present. From the beginning, the conversion of chiefs has been important in West African Islām. Often this took place through the work of Muslim immigrants who became advisers to the local government: the Muslims might succeed in some enterprise in which the chief's Pagan councillors had failed; or their power might so increase that the chief would convert to avoid a state within a state.

On a broader scale, conversion to Islām has generally meant for the commoner a step upwards in society. There is the prestige of education and literacy, of the Book. There is the wider experience of the Muslim trader, the pilgrim, the affiliate of an Order reaching from the coast to the heartlands of Islām. There is more opportunity for dignity beside the European. Rank is indicated simply by Muslim dress. Nadel wrote: 'What counts is, first and foremost, the assimilation to upper-class culture, and only secondarily the deliverance from unbelief.'<sup>1</sup> The analysis is not altogether fair if applied in Christian terms, for Islām expects, in a concrete and confident way foreign to the Christian tradition, the material expression on earth of

<sup>1</sup> Nadel, *op. cit.*, p. 253.

God's majestic kingdom; and that a Muslim should be marked by social authority is not inappropriate.

There are exceptions to these generalizations, such as the earliest Muslims in Lagos and Freetown, ostracized and sometimes persecuted. Nor is it correct to say, as does Westermann, that the Negro convert is at once admitted without any restrictions into the Muslim society.<sup>1</sup> Tribal and racial divisions are keenly felt within much of West African Islām.

Nonetheless the main point is correct. Muslim soldiers, traders and preachers come as the representatives of a higher and more impressive culture. Equally important, that culture is not so radically removed from the indigenous one as is the European. A step upwards is invited, and it is a step of manageable proportions.

The rapid march of events in West Africa during recent years and months and the sudden granting of independence to most states there make most comment on the effect of European political control purely historical. Speculation about the future political philosophies of West African Islām, an interesting and obscure subject, is outside the scope of this study.

Trade is another, more continuing, point of secular European contact. Moore wrote of the Portuguese on the coast in the fifteenth century, who, 'furnishing the Natives with those Things which they before bought from the Moors, turned the Trade of Gold and Elephants Teeth from Morocco to Portugal'.<sup>2</sup> The change then was slight, but gradually the orientation has moved from the desert to the sea. Some of the great inland centres have declined, while Islām has appeared within living memory in seaports where it had been unknown before.

The progress of Islām in West Africa has always been closely linked with the progress of trade: in the eighth century the Muslim governor in North Africa was digging wells on the trade route south. Muslim traders have been the most successful propagandists of the faith, carrying the visible practice of their religion wherever they go. Sometimes the Muslim trader has particular purposes to serve by proselytizing. Conversion to Islām may increase sales of cloth, rosaries, etc. Members of the

<sup>1</sup> D. Westermann, 'Islam in the West and Central Sudan', *International Review of Missions*, October 1912, p. 644.

<sup>2</sup> Moore, *op. cit.*, p. vii.

trader's own Order are valuable contacts in otherwise strange territories. Al-Hājj 'Umar's success was to some extent prepared by the traders of the Ida-ou-Ali tribe, who popularized the Tijāniyyah, to which he belonged.<sup>1</sup>

The slave-trade suffered most by colonial control over the traditional economy. From time immemorial, slavery has been a part of West African society, and from the ninth century Muslims, bringing gold and slaves north, have been substantially involved both in the institution and in the trade which replenished it. A distinction should be drawn between the two. The vicious horror of the trade, whether in European, Arab or African hands, has been sufficiently described by early explorers. The condition of the slave once he was established with his Muslim owner was often much better.

The effect of slavery on the spread of Islām has been diverse. It is sometimes argued that because Muslim law does not allow a believer to be sold as a slave, Pagans were therefore tempted to convert for the sake of immunity. The argument seems more theoretical than real. Baba of Karo remembered that in her childhood, before the British came and the world was settled, even a travelling cleric was in danger of being kidnapped and sold.<sup>2</sup> How should a Pagan learn of the orthodox legal position, and what evidence had he of its application?

The Pagan already enslaved was in a different position. Blyden's sweeping statement, 'the slave who embraces Islām is free', is, like much of his apologetic for Muslim slavery, over-generous.<sup>3</sup> Nevertheless conversion might enlarge the slave's opportunities for advancement: Mālikiyyah law allows him for instance to lead the congregational prayer. Conversion might encourage the owner to think of freeing his slaves as an act of piety, a style of alms. For women, slavery might lead to concubinage, and thence to freedom if she bore her master a child; such children would automatically be Muslim, and the mother would probably join also.—For the slave-owner, possession of slave labour allowed more time for religious exercise and study.

<sup>1</sup> Gouilly, *op. cit.*, p. 111.

<sup>2</sup> Mary Smith, *op. cit.*, p. 132.

<sup>3</sup> E. W. Blyden, *Christianity, Islam & the Negro Race*, London 1887, p. 202; cf. p. 214.

While the prohibition of the slave-trade by European authority was a serious check to the traditional pattern of the economy, the end of war and the beginning of safe transport and communications have assisted the development of more constructive commerce. Some slaves, after regaining their freedom, returned to Paganism; some even of the former owners, driven to field labour by the loss of their workmen; worshipped again the Pagan deities of Nature.<sup>1</sup> But other slaves returned home and, finding that their new faith gave them prestige, served as missionaries of Islām.

Muslims have not everywhere in West Africa accepted the full implications of the abolition of slavery. Lord Lugard interpreted reluctance amongst the Muslims of northern Nigeria to end slavery as a result of the concubinage system: a free woman cannot be a concubine, and therefore an effective end of slavery would mean an end to concubinage.<sup>2</sup> In practice however neither the slave classes nor their owners acknowledge the right of an unbelieving overlord thus to alter accepted Muslim law; and the system of slavery, or of a client-patron relationship, continues in such matters almost unaltered though less ostentatious.<sup>3</sup>

. . . And that our daughters may be as the polished corners of the temple.

*Psalms. cxliv. 12.*

In the passing of Paganism, women have surrendered considerable religious authority and participation. West African orthodoxy does not allow women to take part in congregational prayer; at most, a separate room is provided for them adjacent to the mosque. Aḥmadīs allow women to worship at the back of the mosque, preferably behind a partition; there is little precedent in Islām for going beyond this. The Muslims, wrote George Sale, believe that the presence of women 'inspires a different kind of devotion from that which is requisite in a place dedicated to the worship of God'.<sup>4</sup>

Nor does West African Islām, at least among the Negroes (the Moors being more liberal both in this and in prayer), lay much stress on the religious education of women, though girls

<sup>1</sup> Brévié, *op. cit.*, pp. 170-1 & 246-7.

<sup>2</sup> Lugard, *op. cit.*, pp. 378-9.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 383; Trimingham, *Islam in West Africa*, pp. 133 & 168.

<sup>4</sup> George Sale, *The Preliminary Discourse to the Koran*, London [1921], p. 117.

may sometimes attend the Qur'ān schools. Women are entitled to membership in the Orders. Exceptional individuals may gain eminence; they serve important purposes in working out the dynastic relationships of the Orders. The expression of women's religious rights through spirit possession has already been mentioned (see above, p. 14-5). —

Thy wife shall be as the fruitful vine: upon the walls of thine house.

*Psalms. cxviii. 3.*

Polygamy is the Pagan family pattern in most of West Africa. Girls marry younger than boys. There is general belief that women are more numerous than men, which in the days of war may have been true. Wives help with farm work and trade. A mother will often remain apart from her husband during the period of suckling, as much as two years. But the chiefest aim in traditional polygamy is childbearing: children are the necessary helpers of this world, and the necessary officiants for the parents' safe reception in the next.<sup>1</sup>

Islām has not seriously altered this pattern. Most men can in any case not afford four wives; the very rich have the licence of the concubine clause. Adjustment comes in the social implications of marriage. Instead of a union binding two families and two groups of ancestors, Muslim marriage may be much more a matter involving two individuals, and thus more suitable for the rapid flux of modern life. Because of the background of society in flux, and perhaps also because of its individualism and non-sacramental nature, Muslim marriage in West Africa is often unstable. The law gives much of the initiative in divorce to the husband, but West African practice extends almost the same freedom to the wife.

Polygamy offers various compensations to the wife. Household work is divided. The husband's wealth and prestige are evidenced. On the other hand, it is not difficult to find instances of dissatisfaction among wives, and abuse by husbands. Islām introduces, in the system of seclusion, a new restriction. This is applied only in the towns, and even there very little on the coast; it may favour the pursuit of petty crafts and trade by the wife, and, particularly for the freedwoman, may be a sign

<sup>1</sup> I. O. Delano, 'An African Looks at Marriage', London 1944, p. 27.

of status, showing that field work with its former slave implications is past.

Women's participation in trade is a strong tradition in West Africa. Margery Perham wrote,

the traveller from East Africa must be struck at once . . . by the huge crowd of strenuous, excited women who fill the markets and stream along the roads in pursuit of trade, and whose manner is markedly free both towards himself and their fellows.<sup>1</sup>

Superior economic skill may account for the relatively higher position among Muslim women which Hausa and Mandinka women have maintained.

<sup>1</sup> Margery Perham, *Native Administration in Nigeria*, London, 1937, p. 211.



PART II  
AHMADIYYAH DOCTRINE



## AḤMADIYYAH DOCTRINE AND ISLĀM

The professed relationship of Aḥmadiyyah with Islām is clear from the title of one of Maḥmūd Aḥmad's principal books, *Aḥmadiyyat or the True Islam*: Aḥmadiyyah should not be ranked 'merely as one of the sects of Islam', being rather the sole contemporary example of 'the real Islām that was revealed thirteen hundred years ago'.<sup>1</sup> There is a great chasm between orthodox Islām and Aḥmadiyyah. Aḥmadīs have been martyred for heresy in Afghanistan, and in 1953 martial law was proclaimed in the Punjab in Pakistan to check an outbreak of violent popular feeling against them. The causes of disagreement are threefold: Ghulām Aḥmad's prophetic claims within Islām, which are discussed in this chapter; second, Aḥmadiyyah Christology; and third, the Aḥmadiyyah interpretation of Holy War.

*Prophethood*

Three basic principles make up the Aḥmadiyyah doctrine of prophethood: that prophets receive special divine protection; that prophets are free from sin, and perfect; that prophethood continues. Each has its particular elaboration and purposes.

The doctrine of divine protection guides, for example, the exegesis of Job's story, which in the Qur'ān (xxi. 83-4, xxxviii. 41-4)<sup>2</sup> is a brief summary of the Biblical account, with two additions. Aḥmadīs deny that the weariness and chastisement, *nush wa'adhāb*, with which Job was afflicted are diseases as mentioned in the Bible and accepted by orthodox Muslim commentators. 'How should we follow a leper?' asked one of the Pakistani missionaries in West Africa; 'would we not instead drive him away from us?' The troubles of Job are rather those attendant upon a journey he made. More importantly,

<sup>1</sup> M. Aḥmad, *Aḥmadiyyat or the True Islam*, Qadian 1924, p. 34.

<sup>2</sup> References to the Qur'ān are throughout according to the verse numbering of the standard Jerusalem Arabic edition. Some English translations such as those of Pickthall and Muḥammad 'Alī conform to this. The Qadianīs count the invocation as the first verse, and their numbers are consequently one higher.

this doctrine supplements the Aḥmadiyyah contention that Jesus did not die on the Cross. God would not permit such indignity to come upon a prophet. Although He allowed Jesus to be scourged and spat upon and nailed to the tree, He then rescued Him and let Him flee safely away in disguise.

The perfection of the prophets is of dual significance. One purpose is criticism of the Bible: if Aaron is said to have made a golden calf (Ex. 32), or David to have committed adultery (II Sam. 11), these passages must be interpolations, for a true prophet would not behave so sinfully. Why should the Jews and Christians wish to malign their own prophets? A writer in the *Islamic Review* simply remarked that they did so because they had 'no grand conception of prophethood or messenger-ship, no recognized standard of dignity for the prophets', such as is found in Islām.<sup>1</sup>

The second purpose is to reduce the unique status of Jesus to equality with all the prophets, for all, not only one, are perfect; and then to show how this perfection reaches its climax in Muḥammad. The word '*ummī*', applied in the Qur'ān to Muḥammad (vii. 157), which is usually rendered 'illiterate' or (in Arberry's phrase) 'of the common folk', is translated by the Qadianīs as 'the Immaculate One'. Zafrulla Khan said that all Muslims should take the life of Muḥammad as their ideal: another writer develops the same idea:

He passed through severest persecution so that he could be an example in patience and forbearance. He became king, ruler, judge, commander-in-chief, husband and father that he might set a good example for all of them.<sup>2</sup>

Although the Aḥmadīs are eclectic in their use of the early historical documents of Islām, setting aside for instance many of the *Mahdī* traditions, and calling Wāqidī (d. 822), the earliest biographer of Muḥammad whose work we have in the original, 'a well-known liar',<sup>3</sup> they are adamant about the reliability of the true records of the Prophet's life. With a slip of grammar, perhaps of unintended significance, the prominent Lahorī

<sup>1</sup> *Islamic Review*, (hereafter *I. R.*), originally a Lahori journal, October 1954, p. 9.

<sup>2</sup> J. D. Shams, 'Islam', Qadian 1943, p. 3.

<sup>3</sup> Kam l-ud-Dīn, *The Ideal Prophet*, Woking 1956, p. xxiii.

Kamāl-ud-Dīn wrote that 'Muḥammad is more definitely historic than any personality in history'.<sup>1</sup>

Arthur Jeffery has examined the dilemma of the modern apologetic biographers of Muḥammad, such as Amīr ʿAlī and the Aḥmadīs, unwilling to accept either the miraculous accretions of medieval writers, or the early unpolished story as in Wāqīdī, and therefore developing their own new interpretation.<sup>2</sup> The Aḥmadiyyah method in this historical study is revealed in the honest remarks of one of their missionaries in West Africa. Speaking of Muḥammad, he explained that Aḥmadīs adopt and advocate whatever aids 'his mission, his honour, his good name'; whatever protects the Prophet, he said, is right, while anything else is false.

In their principles of prophetic protection and perfection, Aḥmadīs are only very slightly, if at all, at variance with the orthodox. Divergence comes over the third principle, that prophethood continues. Muḥammad is the Seal of the Prophets: in what sense then can Ghulām Aḥmad be a prophet after him? The justifying argument is based on the Qur'ān, on grammar, and on mysticism. A favoured verse (ii. 4) taken to indicate Qur'ānic prescience of later prophets is that which concludes, *wabilākhīrati hum yūqīnūna*, 'and they are sure of the Hereafter'. The Qadianī Qur'ān (here, though not at other places) translates *alākhīrati*, 'the Hereafter', as 'what is yet to come', i.e. further prophets. Maḥmūd Aḥmad finds a similar significance in the phrase of the Fātiḥah, 'guide us in the straight path'.<sup>3</sup> Reference is made to the statement (xl. 34) that people attributed finality to Joseph, yet prophets came after him; sometimes a verse about Moses (xlvi. 30) is said to bear the same purport. Other verses quoted are ii. 285, iv. 69 (where Muḥammad ʿAlī is at pains to deny the Qadianī inference), vii. 35, xxxv. 24. In each case the argument is indirect, if not forced. A verse which is sometimes said to make specific mention of Ghulām Aḥmad (lxi. 6) is that in which Jesus speaks of one coming after Him, whose name shall be Aḥmad. (Muslims argue that the Paraclete, or Comforter, of John xiv. 16, is not *Parakletos* but *Periklutos*, illustrious, the equivalent of Aḥmad.)

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 15.

<sup>2</sup> *International Review of Missions*, July 1929, p. 395.

<sup>3</sup> M. Aḥmad, *The Truth About the Split*, Calcutta 1924, p. 47.

Lahorīs and orthodox accept Aḥmad as an alternative name for Muḥammad, and this is the commoner view among West African Qadianīs, though Ghulām Aḥmad claimed both the Biblical and the Qur'ānic prophecies for himself.<sup>1</sup>

The grammatical problem is to re-interpret the phrase 'the seal of the prophets', *Khātam-un-nabiyyīn* (xxxiii. 40). This is taken in orthodox Islām to mean that Muḥammad is the last of the prophets; the Lahorīs agree with this. The Qadianīs argue that 'seal' means that which validates all subsequent prophets, like a ring or ornament; how can Muḥammad be an effective seal, if the wax of continuing prophecy is not provided? Seal means the best. This semantic proof sets examples of Arabic idiom against the overwhelming verdict of Muslim opinion.

The mystical explanation involves the doctrine of *fanā' fī rrasūl*, self-annihilation in the Prophet. Ghulām Aḥmad describes this in his will, speaking of 'a complete identification' with Muḥammad, in which 'all bar of strangeness is removed'. The follower-prophet loses his separate identity to such an extent that nothing is left of his self-existence, and Muḥammad's 'spiritual body' finds its reflection in the follower-prophet's mirror of 'complete loss of self-consciousness'.<sup>2</sup>

Ghulām Aḥmad, being such a spiritual representation of Muḥammad, exceeded Abraham, Moses and Jesus in spiritual knowledge.<sup>3</sup> Sometimes he seems to slip into an equality with Muḥammad, being raised by God 'with the same spirit and power, the same blessings and favours, and the same miracles, with which He raised the Holy Prophet'.<sup>4</sup> Maḥmūd Aḥmad placed his father in the highest trilogy: Adam the perfect physical man, Muḥammad giver of the perfect law, Ghulām Aḥmad perfect interpreter and propagator of the law.<sup>5</sup> But he never surpassed Muḥammad, and a frequent similitude is that of a moon, shining with the reflected light of Muḥammad the sun.

The rank of prophethood has vital importance in the work

<sup>1</sup> *Review of Religions* (hereafter *R. R.*), vol. i, p. 266, quoted in H. A. Walter, *The Ahmadiyya Movement*, Calcutta 1918, p. 30. The earliest volumes of this official Qadianī journal have not been directly accessible, and all references to them are based on quotations in Walter's book.

<sup>2</sup> Given first in Urdu, 20 December 1906; in English in *R. R.*, September 1952; hereafter *Gh. Aḥmad. Will*; p. 48.

<sup>3</sup> M. Aḥmad, *Ahmadiyyat or the True Islam*, p. 128.

<sup>4</sup> *R. R.*, vol. i, p. 333; quoted in Walter, *op. cit.*, p. 37.

<sup>5</sup> M. Aḥmad, *Ahmadiyyat or the True Islam*, p. 35.

of Aḥmadiyyah. It is a measure of the difficulties involved in a quickened expression of Islām in the modern world, that no less than a prophet is needed to encompass it. Prophethood is as necessary in the Christian context as the Muslim: if Moses, in the Aḥmadiyyah theory, raised up the prophet Jesus, surely Muḥammad must have power to do as much. More specifically, if Ghulām Aḥmad is to match and surpass Jesus, he must have at least an equal spiritual status, prophethood. There is nothing in Aḥmadiyyah dogma stating that there will be no prophet after Ghulām Aḥmad, although it is doubtful whether another prophet of the same stature can come. No one has yet authoritatively advanced the claim.

### *The Qur'ān*

Another interpretation of the 'seal' is that it applies to law-bearing prophets: there can be no new law after Muḥammad. It is an essential refutation of the charge that Ghulām Aḥmad violated the finality of Muḥammad, to demonstrate the unswerving allegiance of Aḥmadīs to the Qur'ān. Consider the opening verse of the second chapter:

ذَٰلِكَ الْكِتَابُ لَا رَيْبَ فِيهِ هُدًى لِّلْمُتَّقِينَ

That book, there is no doubt in it, a guidance to the righteous.

Maḥmūd Aḥmad translates: 'This is that promised book which is referred to in previous scriptures. There is no room for doubt in it for it guides the righteous to still higher levels.'<sup>1</sup> The Qadianī English Qur'ān is more modest, but still begins, 'This is a perfect Book . . .' Another Aḥmadiyyah writer said of the Qur'ān, that it

contains all the right books, i.e. the right teachings, ordinances, and all the good points of the teachings of all the previous prophets, necessary for the guidance of mankind. If anyone thinks otherwise he should bring forth a good point necessary for the development of moral and spiritual condition, and we would show him the same or better in Islamic teachings.<sup>2</sup>

The passage is reminiscent of Muḥammad 'Alī's translation of

<sup>1</sup> M. Aḥmad, *Aḥmadiyyat or the True Islam*, p. 106.

<sup>2</sup> *Shams*, op. cit., p. 41.

the verse (xcviii. 3) describing the Qur'ān, *fiḥā kutubun qayyimatum*, 'wherein are right books', which he first rendered 'wherein are all the right books'; his 1951 revision fell back on 'wherein are (all) right books'.

The incomparable excellence of the Qur'ān is buttressed by its textual purity. Aḥmadiyyah maintains the absolute accuracy of each stage of the compilation of the Qur'ān. Variant readings are admitted, but they are exclusively differences in vowel pointing according to tribal and area dialects, never affecting the sense. The arrangement of chapters by length is denied, and essential relationships are posited throughout. That this pattern should exist despite the fact that the verses were revealed on many different occasions shows the guiding hand of God both in revelation and arrangement. Aḥmadīs go beyond the orthodox position, for they deny the doctrine of abrogation, which holds that some verses in the Qur'ān have cancelled others.

In another respect also the Aḥmadīs profess opinions generally regarded as heretical, for they say, as did the Khārijites long ago, that the Qur'ān was created by God, and has not existed eternally, uncreated. They refute the Psalmist (cxix. 89): 'O Lord, thy word endureth for ever in heaven.' This deviation perhaps stems from anxiety to break such links between Christianity and Islām as arose in the early centuries of the Muslim era, when Muslim scholars incorporated much Christian knowledge. An eternal Word of God, once recited, bears resemblance to the Johannine Word, eternal but once made flesh.

It is the peculiar difficulty of Islām to meet all the infinite sequence of human and divine problems from a short set text. (The peculiar difficulty of Christianity is to live up to a divine example humanly given.) Aḥmadīs would resolve this by endless resource in interpretation. Ghulām Aḥmad wrote,

the treasures of the Holy Qur'ān are inexhaustible, and as the wonders of the Book of Nature are limitless, and each succeeding age discovers fresh properties and new virtues in nature, the same is the case with the Word of God, so that there may be no disparity between God's Work and His Word.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Gh. Aḥmad, *Izala-i-Auham*, p. 311, cit. M. Aḥmad, *Aḥmadiyyat or the True Islam*, p. 32.

Far from discarding the Qur'ān, Aḥmadīs have been given a special inspirational responsibility for it. Maḥmūd Aḥmad states this clearly.

We have been chosen as the instrument for elevating the banner of the dominion of the Qur'ān. Deriving faith and certainty from the words and the revelations of God we are demonstrating the superiority of the Qur'ān to the world.<sup>1</sup>

Granted Aḥmadiyyah fidelity to the Qur'ān, it is necessary, in the terms of the comparison between Jesus and Ghulām Aḥmad, to prove that the attitude of Jesus towards the Mosaic dispensation was of that same fidelity. It is insisted that Jesus brought no new law. One of the verses most often quoted is this (Matt. v. 17): 'Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil.' The argument has little support from the Qur'ān, which speaks of the *Injil* of Jesus, the *Zabūr* of David (almost never mentioned by Aḥmadīs), and the *Tawrah* of Moses as separate books. It serves, however, not only to parallel, as we have said, the 'orthodoxy' of Ghulām Aḥmad, but also to restrict the message of Jesus to an Israelite setting. Footnotes are the additional evidence of interpolation provided by portions in the Bible which assert that Jesus was not simply the restorer of the Mosaic law, and the opportunity of charging Him with plagiarism.

### *Prayer*

Aḥmadīs do not vary the traditional pattern of the four fundamental outward duties of the faith: prayer, fasting, alms and pilgrimage. Their apologetic for these has sometimes a modern flavour, but is not different from any other slightly liberal contemporary teaching. Alms are stressed, for much giving is kept within the Aḥmadiyyah community. A devout member will give regularly 1/10 of his monthly income, in addition to special offerings: and will bequeath 1/10 of his property to the community when he dies.

The ritual of prayer is not altered, being defended as a

<sup>1</sup> M. Aḥmad, *Introduction*, to the Qadiani English-Arabic Qur'ān of 1955 (hereafter *Introduction*), p. 168. The introduction was originally published in London in 1947.

proper counterpart for inward devotion. Maḥmūd Aḥmad wrote,

a person whose heart does not accept the truth but whose tongue and limbs proclaim his faith in it is a hypocrite, and so is the person whose heart accepts the truth but his tongue and his limbs contradict his heart.<sup>1</sup>

Aḥmadiyyah controversy has introduced two unusual elements into the concept of prayer: retribution and separatism. Ghulām Aḥmad made frequent references to prayer duels, contests of revelation, in which the opposing parties would ask signs of God (cf. Qur'ān, iii. 61). He exhorted the Christians, adding an enticement of 2,000 rupees, to accept his challenge.

Now, O Lord, judge Thou between these two parties in such a manner that the false may perish within one year. It is better that a few should die for the salvation of the world.<sup>2</sup>

Invocation of divine anger was Ghulām Aḥmad's weapon against several of his leading antagonists. The clearest case was that of Pandit Lekh Ram, of the Hindu Ārya Samāj, whose death Ghulām Aḥmad predicted within six years, near the time of festival. Four years later, on the day following the festival, Lekh Ram died by an assassin's dagger. Two years afterwards, in 1899, Ghulām Aḥmad and one of his chief Muslim opponents were ordered by Government, 'to refrain from publishing any prediction . . . in which any one should be represented as an object of God's displeasure', 'to refrain from publishing any challenge to appeal to God to indicate by the signs of his displeasure . . . the party in a religious controversy which is in the wrong', and so on.<sup>3</sup> A recent Aḥmadiyyah pamphlet from East Africa remarks that 'this suited Aḥmad perfectly', for his opponent's 'main weapon—invective—was henceforth denied him'.<sup>4</sup>

The success of the prayer-duel continued to be proclaimed after the prohibition. The *Review of Religions*, said in 1907 that Ghulām Aḥmad

<sup>1</sup> M. Aḥmad, *Aḥmadiyyat or the True Islam*, p. 81; cf. C. C. Adams, *Islam & Modernism in Egypt*, London 1933, p. 169, for the opinion of Muḥammad 'Abduh.

<sup>2</sup> Gh. Aḥmad, *Anjam-i-Aatham*, p. 23, quoted in *Shams*, op. cit., pp. 20-21.

<sup>3</sup> Quoted in Walter, op. cit., pp. 43-4.

<sup>4</sup> 'Aḥmad: the Promised Messiah and Mahdi', Nairobi 1954, p. 6.

announced that whoever would pray for his death would himself fall a prey to a speedy and painful death, and that such a person would die before he dies. He has very often invited the world to test his truth by this criterion. Even if a host of men pray against him, they are sure, he says, to be consumed with the wrath of God in his lifetime, for the mighty Hand of God is in his support, and every one who rises against him is sure to be knocked down. And there have been actually men who made a response to his call and prayed to God against him, but they all died as he prophesied, and thus furnished a proof of his truth.<sup>1</sup>

Ghulām Aḥmad expected that his critics would turn his own weapons against him, but was confident of the inefficacy of their efforts. 'If all men,' he wrote,

all women, both young and old, low and high, collectively pray for my destruction so that blood issues from their noses through the efforts of prostration and their hands blister, even then God will not hearken and shall not cease till His work is accomplished. If not a single man shall help me, He shall send angels in my support.<sup>2</sup>

Duelling is still popular. Maḥmūd Aḥmad has invited the Pope and other Christian dignitaries 'to put forward the revelations received by them' against those received by himself, 'for the purpose of determining which of them are true manifestations of God's power and knowledge'.<sup>3</sup> Savage punishment however is no longer prominent. The *Review of Religions* in 1954 recalled how Ghulām Aḥmad had 'prayed for friends and foes alike and called on God to bless the former and mitigate the punishment of the latter. He wished no ill even to his most bitter detractors . . .'<sup>4</sup>

Aḥmadiyyah separatism is most clearly marked in prayer. An Aḥmadī makes no objection if the orthodox wish to pray behind an Aḥmadiyyah *imām*, but will not himself join behind a non-Aḥmadī. The basic reason for this is the vital difference of belief between Aḥmadī and orthodox. Any man, no matter how personally sinful, may act as *imām*, except one whose faith is faulty. The orthodox have sometimes taken the same stand; Aḥmadiyyah separatism may then be a retaliatory act. The air

<sup>1</sup> *R. R.*, vol. v, p. 459; quoted in Walter, op. cit., p. 45.

<sup>2</sup> Quoted in Shams, op. cit., p. 20.

<sup>3</sup> M. Aḥmad, *Introduction*, p. 169.

<sup>4</sup> *R. R.*, November 1954, p. 39.

has become charged with accusations: Zafrulla Khan refused to pray at the funeral of Jinnah, father of Pakistan, because the *imām* at the funeral had called him a renegade and apostate.

### *Revelation*

The question, was Ghulām Aḥmad a prophet? might be recast thus: does such revelation as he received demand acknowledgement by the believers? Revelation in orthodox Islām is divided into two chief categories, *waḥī* and *ilhām*. *Waḥī* (or *waḥī matlu*, recited revelation) is the recital of God's Word to the recipient; it must be promulgated generally, and anyone who rejects the recipient's message imperils his soul. *Ilhām* (or *waḥī ghair matlu*, unrecited) is an inward vision, such as the saints' experience, assuredly given by God, but not requiring public announcement and public acceptance.

Some Christian writers have suggested that Ghulām Aḥmad claimed only *ilhām* for himself.<sup>1</sup> Aḥmadīs, denying that there is any essential difference between the two forms of revelation,<sup>2</sup> reject this modification of their position. Ghulām Aḥmad made it clear in his will that prophets such as himself are recipients 'of Divine revelation like to the one given to the prophets of old'.<sup>3</sup> Aḥmadīs nevertheless do acknowledge some of the categories of lesser revelation, such as dreams and visions, and even in verbal revelation they admit various levels, for while many Aḥmadīs receive this revelation they are not all made prophets thereby.

Aḥmadīs usually do not vary the traditional view of *waḥī* as the literal speech of God given to a passive hearer. 'The first condition,' wrote Ghulām Aḥmad,

for the revelation of the word of God is that human faculties should be in a state of abeyance and inaction. There should be no thinking, no reflection, but man should be like one dead.<sup>4</sup>

There are exceptions: according to Maḥmūd Aḥmad, 'the Promised Messiah explained that revelation is conveyed in words possessing extraordinary glory and majesty, and that a

<sup>1</sup> M. T. Titus, *Indian Islam*, London 1930, p. 221; Walter, op. cit., p. 55.

<sup>2</sup> *R. R.*, June 1954, p. 25; *Dawn*, 16 January 1954 (reporting M. Aḥmad).

<sup>3</sup> Gh. Aḥmad, *Will*, p. 84; cf. Gh. Aḥmad, *The Philosophy of the Teachings of Islam*, Rabwah 1959, p. 84.

<sup>4</sup> *R. R.*, November 1954, p. 9.

dialogue is possible between God and man in the same manner as between two men'.<sup>1</sup> This does not affect the *verbatim* nature of revelation, concerning which Aḥmadīs are strongly conservative. This is evident in their criticism of the Bible. The number of Christians who still maintain a direct verbal and grammatical inspiration for the Bible is small, the number of Muslims who hold any other view about the Qur'ān is far smaller. Kenneth Cragg epitomized the difference in attitude, saying that in Islām God is understood to teach His prophets 'by word rather than by travail, by ear rather than by thought, by audition rather than by anguish'.<sup>2</sup>

Aḥmadīs are distinguished by the frequency with which they expect revelation. Maḥmūd Aḥmad, though not a prophet, has verbal revelation quite as precise as (and perhaps more immediate than) that of the prophets. 'He told us,' wrote a visitor after talking with him,

that he often feels God take possession of his tongue, forming the words, and, while writing, God often guides his pen. When this occurs the spoken and written words are God's while the *khalifah* merely functions as an instrument of revelation.<sup>3</sup>

It is estimated that about half the Aḥmadīs have received revelation 'in some form or other'.<sup>4</sup> The verses (xli. 30-2) which speak of the angels descending upon the steadfast with comfort and a reminder of heavenly rewards are quoted as proof that revelation will always continue.

Maḥmūd Aḥmad divided the subjects of revelation into three: the clarification of earlier revealed texts, the expression of divine love, and the prophecy of future events.<sup>5</sup> The clarification of earlier texts is a weapon to prove Islām from the Bible, and more importantly to justify the Qur'ān in the modern world. Ghulām Aḥmad explained that understanding

the deeper truths of the Quran is the result of divine assistance; the light of the reason unaided by God is too dim to bring those truths into view. Such divine knowledge as is conferred upon him touches

<sup>1</sup> M. Aḥmad, 'Ahmadiyya Movement', London 1924, p. 41.

<sup>2</sup> K. Cragg, *The Call of the Minaret*, New York 1956, p. 49.

<sup>3</sup> Brush, *op. cit.*, p. 148.

<sup>4</sup> M. Aḥmad, *Ahmadiyyat or the True Islam*, p. 119.

<sup>5</sup> *Dawn*, 17 January 1954.

on the nature and attributes of God as also the secret truths about life after death. This partakes of the character of a spiritual miracle which in the judgment of the wise far excels a miracle involving the suspension or the reversal of physical laws.<sup>1</sup>

The expression of divine love is part of the mystical heritage of Aḥmadiyyah: 'if relations between man and God are to be made warm by love and spontaneous inclination,' wrote the *Review of Religions*, 'then it is important for man to hear now and then the sweet and enchanting voice of God.'<sup>2</sup> Man is often described as the reflection of God, or of Divine attributes. Ghulām Aḥmad formulated his claims in mystical terms, such as these:

The mercy of Allah sought after a light. Behold, I am the Light; I am the Reformer by Command; I am the aided servant. I am the Appointed Mahdi and the Promised Messiah. Verily I have descended from my Lord on a place beyond the ken of man. Verily my mystery is hidden and remote, even from many a righteous soul—not to speak of the common run of men. Forsooth my place is deeper than the diver can fathom; and my ascent is loftier than Fancy can ever imagine. These my feet are swifter than the swift camel on the path of the Lord of men. Associate me not with anyone nor anyone with me. Ruin not your souls with doubt and duel. I am the kernel without the shell: the spirit without the flesh. I am the sun which the cloud of malice can never enshroud. Seek ye my like, and ye shall find him not, even though ye seek him with the torch. I speak not out of pride, but out of gratitude for the favour of Allah who has implanted this plant. Verily I have been bathed in the water of Light; and I have been purified in the holy fountain of all dirt and dross. My Lord has named me Ahmad. Chant ye, therefore, my praises and abuse me not. Turn not your affair to despair.<sup>3</sup>

A great deal of effort is given to tracing Muslim fulfilment of Biblical prophecies; strangely little of this attention is given to other scriptures, such as those of the Hindus. There is also, as we have seen, an attempt to justify Aḥmadiyyah by Qur'ānic prophecies and references presumed to indicate future prophets. Maḥmūd Aḥmad insists upon prediction as the great counter-

<sup>1</sup> R. R., February 1952, p. 8.

<sup>2</sup> R. R., June 1954, p. 27.

<sup>3</sup> R. R., July 1925, p. 15.

argument to the proposition that the Qur'ān has no miraculous character.<sup>1</sup> Many verses are cited, among them the well-known prophecy of the Greek recovery against the Persians (xxx. 2-6); here are two further examples. One concerns the opening verses of chapter lxxxix (which Richard Bell called 'so cryptic as to be unintelligible'),<sup>2</sup>

وَالْفَجْرِ . وَإِلَىٰ الْعَشِيرِ . وَالشَّفْعِ وَالْوَتْرِ . وَالتَّيْلِ الَّذِي تَأْكُلُ .  
 هَلْ فِي ذَٰلِكَ لَمَعْلَمٍ لِّذِي حَنْجِرِ .

· By the daybreak! And ten nights! And the even and the odd!  
 And the night when it journeys on! Is there in that an oath for a  
 man of understanding?

Maḥmūd Aḥmad takes the second verse, ten nights (to which both Aḥmadiyyah translations add the definite article), to point to the ten years of Meccan persecution between this revelation and the *Hijrah*. The night moving on is the period of uncertainty after the arrival in Medina, which, however, came to a successful end.<sup>3</sup>

Second, there is the opening of the chapter of the Moon, liv,

اقْرَأْ بِرَبِّكَ السَّاعَةَ ۖ وَأَنْشَقَّ الْقَمَرَ

The Hour drew nigh, the moon split.

This has been commonly taken as a physical event in the time of Muḥammad, though some commentators regard it as a description of what will happen at the Day of Judgment. Maḥmūd Aḥmad prefers to interpret the moon as the symbol

<sup>1</sup> M. Aḥmad, *Introduction*, pp. 124 ff. & 133 ff.

<sup>2</sup> R. Bell, *Introduction to the Qur'ān*, Edinburgh 1953, p. 76.

<sup>3</sup> M. Aḥmad, *Introduction*, pp. 125-6.

of Pagan Arab power, shortly to be broken by Islām.<sup>1</sup> Other instances are not more compelling.

Prediction is also part of the work of Ghulām Aḥmad and his followers. Various examples are given in this book (see above, p. 42, and below pp. 79, 80, 85). One may be added here, showing the development of a story with the passing of time. When plague broke out in India, Ghulām Aḥmad had a vision of a wild and savage animal with a head like that of an elephant, which ravaged mankind but sat obedient and submissive before him. This was supplemented by revelation.<sup>2</sup> Ghulām Aḥmad advised his followers not to obscure the gift of God's protection by indulging in inoculation. The plague eventually reached Qadian, where both Aḥmadīs and non-Aḥmadīs died; explanations were made.<sup>3</sup> At the beginning of 1906, Ghulām Aḥmad added some notes to his will, one specifying that an Aḥmadī who died outside Qadian of the plague, though he might have fulfilled all the conditions for burial in the honoured Aḥmadiyyah cemetery of Qadian, should lie first in another graveyard for at least two years, and might then be moved if both Qadian and the place of his death had become free from plague.<sup>4</sup> Maḥmūd Aḥmad later wrote that the plague had attacked Qadian for four or five years, but that none in Ghulām Aḥmad's house died. In 1952 the *Review of Religions* exclaimed that 'the village of Qadian was altogether secure . . . and not a single soul was lost'. Even those sick of the plague recovered when brought to Qadian; in Ghulām Aḥmad's house not so much as a rat died.<sup>5</sup>

The exuberant variety of the Aḥmadiyyah theory of revelation may perhaps be best understood in the light of the divine economy. Prophecy in the Biblical sense, born of thought and anguish, may in itself be sufficient fulfilment of man's obligations to God. Few Biblical prophets were practical politicians. On the other hand, revelation received entirely passively, as in the case of Muḥammad, left the prophet's energies unimpaired for the foundation of a state. Aḥmadīs, denying themselves this concrete hope, naturally return to a more lively (though scarcely Biblical) concept of prophecy.

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 127.

<sup>2</sup> M. Aḥmad, *Aḥmadiyyat or the True Islam*, pp. 174-5.

<sup>3</sup> *R. R.*, vol. i, pp. 417-8; quoted in Walter, *op. cit.*, pp. 49-50.

<sup>4</sup> *R. R.*, September 1952, p. 61.

<sup>5</sup> M. Aḥmad, *Aḥmadiyyat or the True Islam*, pp. 174-9.

### *Unbelief*

A second rephrasing of the prophethood question is this: does rejection of Ghulām Aḥmad's claims involve unbelief, *kufṛ*? *Kāfir*-calling, accusing one's opponent of being an unbeliever, is one of the most emotional points of the Aḥmadiyyah controversy. Both orthodox and Aḥmadīs have frequently indulged in it; Aḥmadīs sometimes justify their charges by saying the orthodox began, and quoting the tradition that whoever calls an innocent Muslim an unbeliever is by that act himself made guilty of unbelief. There is no doubt that Aḥmadīs have taken up the contest with zeal. Maḥmūd Aḥmad wrote that the following doctrine had his 'full concurrence':

that all those so-called Muslims who had not entered into his [father's] *Bai'at* formally, wherever they might be living, were *Kāfirs* and outside the pale of Islam, even though they may not have heard the name of the Promised Messiah.<sup>1</sup>

Various qualifications are offered. It is commonly argued that one may be a believer and an unbeliever at the same time, for there are various degrees of unbelief, some of which concern essentials (such as a denial of the Unity of God), some of which do not affect fundamental doctrine (such as the omission of a prayer). Rejection of Aḥmadiyyah is in this argument, at least implicitly, one of the lesser degrees. Again, Aḥmadīs explain that they do not condemn unbelievers to hell, but leave that in the hands of God. These qualifications do not deny that the orthodox are, in Aḥmadiyyah opinion, *kāfirs*.

### *The khilāfat*

A further importance of Ghulām Aḥmad's prophethood is that only prophets leave behind *khalīfahs*, or successors, who carry on their work. The importance of the *khilāfat* is a recurrent theme, from ideal statecraft formulated in India, to schism in West Africa: it is all linked with the prophethood of Ghulām Aḥmad. The second *khalīfah*, Maḥmūd Aḥmad, son of Ghulām Aḥmad, has not only the mantle of dignity of his office and of natural inheritance, but the special honour of a revelation to his father three years before his birth. Parts of this revelation may be given here, suggesting in what high

<sup>1</sup> M. Aḥmad, *The Truth About the Split*, pp. 55-6.

regard the present *khalifah* is held. The Biblical influence is transparent.

His name is Emmanuel and also Bashir. He is given the Holy Spirit. He is free from sin. He is the light of God. Blessed is he who comes from the heavens. He shall come into the world and he shall cure for the people many of their diseases through his Messianic power, and with the blessings of the Spirit of Truth. He is the Word of God because the Mercy and Jealousy of God have sent him with the Glorious word. He is a manifestation of the First and the Last; an image of Truth and Glory; as if God Himself had come down from heavens. God has anointed him with the scent of His pleasure. We shall put our Own Spirit into him.<sup>1</sup>

A publication of the East African Aḥmadīs says of the present *khalifah*, that 'of all the men alive today, he is without doubt the one with the deepest insight into the moral, social, economic and political problems facing humanity'.<sup>2</sup>

#### *Lahorī Aḥmadiyyah*

The first *khalifah* was elected peacefully. When he died in 1914, Maḥmūd Aḥmad was elected in his place, and a dissenting minority withdrew. Both in its first causes, and in its subsequent development, the split is tied to the question of prophethood. Personal rivalry there certainly was, between Maḥmūd Aḥmad on one side and Kamāl-ud Dīn and Muḥammad ʿAlī on the other; but the principle was whether the claim of Maḥmūd Aḥmad, supported by a prophet's revelation, to be the *khalifah* of a prophet, should be granted, or whether the movement should be governed by a more secular committee. The party of Muḥammad ʿAlī decided against the *khalifah* and withdrew to Lahore, forming their own organization. They believe that Ghulām Aḥmad was not a prophet, but a reformer, *mujaddid*; as such, rejection of him is not a matter of primary importance, and the question of unbelief does not arise: since there is thus no vital difference between Lahorī Aḥmadiyyah and orthodox dogma, there is no need of separate prayer. Ghulām Aḥmad has all but vanished from Lahorī teaching

<sup>1</sup> Quoted in N. M. Saifi, '50 Facts about Aḥmadiyyat', Lagos 1958, p. 4.

<sup>2</sup> 'Aḥmad: the Promised Messiah & Madhi', p. 3.

today, and there is little to distinguish the group from the liberal orthodox.

### *The Mahdi*

This is the second of Ghulām Aḥmad's principal titles. Attempts to trace the concept of the 'guided one', or *Mahdi*, in the Qur'ān are difficult. Aḥmadis sometimes refer to the verses (lxii. 2-3), with which the traditions associate the story of Salmān the Persian,

هُوَ الَّذِي بَعَثَ فِي الْأُمِّيِّينَ رَسُولًا مِنْهُمْ يَتْلُوا عَلَيْهِمْ آيَاتِهِ وَيُرَكِّبُهُمْ...  
وَأَخْرَجَ مِنْهُمْ لَنَا يَا لِحَقْوَانِهِمْ...

He it is who raised among the unlettered a messenger from themselves who recites to them His signs, and purifies them . . . and others from them who have not yet joined them . . .

The meaning seems to be that God raised Muḥammad for the unlettered, or common, scriptureless, folk, and for others somehow related to them. By taking 'others' as parallel not to the people purified, but to the people among whom a person was raised, it is possible to introduce the idea of a second person raised, the *Mahdi*. Another verse is when the sun and moon are gathered (lxxv. 9), which is related to the tradition that both sun and moon will be eclipsed in *Ramaḍān* in the *Mahdi's* time. The footnote to this verse is the only reference to the *Mahdi* in the 1951 edition of Muḥammad 'Alī's Qur'ān;<sup>1</sup> in his comment on lxii. 3. (and elsewhere) he refers to the Messiah but not to the Mahdī. Maḥmūd Aḥmad's *Introduction* mentions the *Mahdi* only once, without explanation (p. 165).

It is not surprising that the *Mahdi* traditions are very confused. Ghulām Aḥmad simply discarded those which did not suit his purpose, particularly those of blood and war. The pacific interpretation of the *Mahdi* is a corollary of the pacific interpretation of *jihād*, or holy war. Perhaps the controversy

<sup>1</sup> In the 1920 edition Muḥammad 'Alī's only reference to the Mahdī was in the footnote to ix. 33.

concerning holy war (see below, pp. 80-2) has distracted attention from the question whether the *Mahdī* has truly come or not. The *Munir Report* on the Punjab disturbances against the Aḥmadīs in 1953 does not discuss the *Mahdī* though it gives considerable attention to holy war. The *Mahdī* affair is not of central interest to the orthodox concerned with Aḥmadiyyah; it is still less important in the western Christian propaganda of the Aḥmadīs, in which Ghulām Aḥmad's messiahship is more strongly emphasized. Aḥmadiyyah terminology nearly always uses Messiah and *Mahdī* together, with almost interchangeable meaning. This is not inappropriate, since the idea of the 'guided one' came into Islām in the second century after Muḥammad, as a result of contact with Christian and other traditions. The Aḥmadiyyah insistence that the *Mahdī* and the Messiah are one and the same man is perhaps that point, in this matter, with which the orthodox disagree most, excepting the dispute over holy war.

The claim to be the *Mahdī* need not have figured so largely in this discussion, were it not for the fact that the title is the most popular among West African Aḥmadīs.

## AḤMADIYYAH DOCTRINE AND MUSLIM MODERNISM

The comparison sometimes made between the present travail of Islām and the European Reformation is helpful in understanding some of the tension within Aḥmadiyyah. In each case an uneasy balance is maintained between a return to the primitive practice of the faith, and a need for religious expression adapted to modern circumstances. Such reforming movements do not fall easily into any single category: Aḥmadiyyah has affinity both with the fundamentalist movement of Arabia, and with the westernizing followers of Sir Sayyid Aḥmad Khan in India. The complex of purposes, sometimes contradictory, within Aḥmadiyyah is more varied than that of the sixteenth century reformers of Christendom, and here the comparison with the Reformation is illuminating only as contrast.

Principal problems confronting Islām today and Christianity at the Reformation are numerous, such as the desire for a cleansed religion, and for religious organization more frankly recognizing the division of the ancient single empire into separate units. Intertwined with these are difficulties posed by the advance of scientific knowledge, with which Christendom was not inescapably confronted until the last century; difficulties posed by the rise of secular philosophies and social organizations, which Christianity and Islām alike face for the first time today; and finally, difficulties posed by the encircling presence of an alternative religion, zealous in mission, a challenge unknown to Christianity except perhaps in the Middle East at the time of the Arab conquest.

Consistency in Aḥmadiyyah is not a formal doctrinal affair. Indeed Aḥmadiyyah doctrine is often anything but consistent. The Movement's real consistency may only be seen as a response to all these challenges, which have come upon Islām in a troop together, and in particular as a response to the Christian invitation and argument.

Although Aḥmadiyyah cannot be fitted into a single category, progressive or reactionary, there are various affinities with liberal modern Islām in the Movement, and indications that some of these (such as the roles of reason and science) are being strengthened. A modern characteristic which has been evident from the beginning is the work of translation, particularly of the Qur'ān.

### *Reason*

Sir Sayyid Aḥmad Khan (d.1898) was a pioneer of rational argument in favour of Islām. Many more Indian Muslims have subsequently taken up the same strain. Amīr ʿAlī stressed the rationalism of Muḥammad, the absence of the miraculous about him.<sup>1</sup> Muḥammad Iqbāl confirmed this, saying 'the search for rational foundations in Islām may be regarded to have begun with the Prophet himself'.<sup>2</sup> And so on. This is not a peculiarity of Indian Islām. In Egypt, Muḥammad ʿAbduh advocated 'the precedence of reason over the literal meaning of the Divine Law in case of conflict between them'.<sup>3</sup>

Aḥmadiyyah was originally in part a reaction against this emphasis of Aḥmad Khan's school. Ghulām Aḥmad, zealous to champion Islām, did not do so by praise of Islāmic rationalism, but by demonstration that Islām was more surely authenticated by revelation and divine assistance. We have already considered the strength of the mystical tradition in Aḥmadiyyah revelation (see above, pp. 38, 45-6); it is in this context that Iqbāl's fears are to be understood, when he said that the real nature of Aḥmadiyyah is 'hidden behind the mist of medieval mysticism and theology'.<sup>4</sup>

The original aloofness to reason was almost at once under strain, for reason is a tempting weapon in the controversy with Christianity. Zwemer, an experienced Christian missionary to Muslims, wrote that the conflict between Muslim and Christian doctrine comes 'just at those points where reason has the best vantage-ground in opposition to faith', the mysteries of the

<sup>1</sup> Amīr ʿAlī, *The Life & Teachings of Mohammed: or, the Spirit of Islam*, London 1891, pp. 103 ff.

<sup>2</sup> M. Iqbāl, *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*, London 1934, p. 3; (hereafter *Reconstruction*).

<sup>3</sup> Adams, *op. cit.*, p. 129; cf. pp. 123 & 240.

<sup>4</sup> M. Iqbāl, 'Islam and Ahmadism', Lahore 1936, pp. 18 & 27.

Incarnation and of the Trinity.<sup>1</sup> Ghulām Aḥmad took up the argument:

It is surprising indeed that even in this age of reason the Christian missionaries have the boldness to preach these childish doctrines which on account of their absurdity are rejected by every sensible person.

He ranged over many matters of Christian belief: 'it is contrary to reason that Jesus chose the cross for himself and committed suicide'; it is 'equally unreasonable to suppose . . . that he is wasting precious years of his life by sitting idle in the heavens'.<sup>2</sup> Maḥmūd Aḥmad applied the same theme in some detail to the Bible.<sup>3</sup>

For this and other reasons, the Movement has gradually adopted more and more of a rationalistic garb. The Lahoris have been in the forefront. The Qur'ān, wrote Kamāl-ud-Dīn, 'does not enunciate even a single principle without giving some logical reasons in its support';<sup>4</sup> and again, 'Islamic tenets are not dogmatic in their nature, they are reasonable and consistent with intelligence'.<sup>5</sup> The Qadianis have scarcely lagged. According to the Qur'ān, in Zafrulla Khan's opinion, 'reason governs both in the realm of faith and in the fields of discretion and experiment'; mankind is invited 'to faith *through* the exercise of reason'.<sup>6</sup> Maḥmūd Aḥmad asserted:

all objections raised against Islam are due either to a lack of serious reflection or because passion is allowed to prevail over reason. Islam presents a teaching so perfect that, if it were submitted to the verdict of reason and reflection uninfluenced by sentiment or tradition, one would discover no better or more perfect code for the moral and spiritual advancement of man.<sup>7</sup>

### Science

The reconciliation of science and Islām is another apologetic

<sup>1</sup> S. M. Zwemer, *The Moslem Christ*, p. 180.

<sup>2</sup> Gh. Aḥmad, 'A Review of Christianity from a New Point of View', Lahore 1903, pp. 1 & 17; reprint from *R. R.*, September 1903; hereafter 'A Review'.

<sup>3</sup> M. Aḥmad, *Introduction*, p. 42 ff. & passim.

<sup>4</sup> *I. R.*, May 1932, p. 155.

<sup>5</sup> Kamāl-ud-Dīn, 'Islam & Other Religions', *I. R.*, December 1933, p. 435.

<sup>6</sup> In R. N. Frye (ed.), *Islam & the West*, Hague 1957, p. 200.

<sup>7</sup> M. Aḥmad, 'Ahmadiyya Movement', p. 46.

enterprise which in its modern form may be traced to Sir Sayyid Aḥmad Khan.<sup>1</sup> In Iqbāl's thought, the reconciliation reached a dizzy height.

The knowledge of Nature is the knowledge of God's behaviour. In our observation of Nature we are virtually seeking a kind of intimacy with the Absolute Ego; and this is only another form of worship.<sup>2</sup>

Some Lahoris have taken up the interpretation of science assiduously. There are four points to prove: first that the essence of Islām encourages scientific study; second, that former Muslims responded to this encouragement; third, that none of the results can be contrary to the Qur'ān in spirit or detail; and fourth, that science is incompatible with Christianity.

In Egyptian modernism, Qur'ānic verses referring to natural phenomena (particularly ii. 164) are quoted to prove Qur'ānic bidding to scientific research.<sup>3</sup> Aḥmadīs supplement this in various ways, for example through exegesis of the Divine Names. *Al-Hakīm* is the Great Scientist, *al-Khāliq*, in reference 'to the laws upon which the science of chemistry is based', is the Combiner of things in given proportions; this leads on to much the same conclusion as Iqbāl's: 'Theology and Science are one and the same thing.'<sup>4</sup> Although Muslims today are admittedly not pre-eminent in science, this has not always been the case. In the early days Muslim scientific primacy was indisputable. Science was 'a thing unknown before Islam'.

Science even in the western world has revealed no discrepancy between the Qur'ān and modern knowledge. On the same day that the newspapers reported the failure of the first American attempt to send a rocket to the moon, in 1958, I chanced upon an article from the *Islamic Review* of the 1930's, in which Qur'ānic prophecy in this matter was marshalled. The constant refrain, what is on the earth and what is in the heavens, was instanced, with other similar phrases. The chief verse was (xlii. 29),

And one of His signs is the creation of the heavens and the earth

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Gibb, *Modern Trends in Islam*, pp. 58-9.

<sup>2</sup> Iqbāl, *Reconstruction*, p. 54.

<sup>3</sup> Adams, *op. cit.*, p. 246.

<sup>4</sup> *I. R.*, Jan.-Feb. 1933, pp. 2-18.

and what He has spread forth in both of them of living beings; and when He pleases He is powerful to gather them.

The gathering is a forecast of inter-planetary travel.<sup>1</sup> Parallel arguments are found throughout the Muslim world.<sup>2</sup>

In more general terms, the study of the universe leads to reassured faith in the controlling Hand of God throughout. The thesis of the Great Designer is a frequent one. It is, however, advocated more by the Lahoris than by the Qadianis, for the latter have more cause to fear the decline in the importance of revelation which such scientific arguments threaten. Ghulām Aḥmad denied that the existence of God might be certainly known from a study of the universe.<sup>3</sup>

Science is called 'one of the principal adversaries of Christianity'.<sup>4</sup> Science is held to deny original sin, for 'it established that everything in its inception was perfect. Though it gradually passed through various phases to reach its complete state, it was, nevertheless, free from defects'.<sup>5</sup> Zafrulla Khan gives a similar scientific disproving of original sin.<sup>6</sup> Science denies the Atonement also, summarized for this purpose as the view that 'the mercy of God could not be manifested without some compensation'. 'Science saw that God's mercy and grace had found expression long before man came into existence, demanding no *quid pro quo*; so the principle of Atonement fell through.'<sup>7</sup> These arguments, whatever they may mean, are not so neat as those based on reason, which may explain the lesser attention given to science.

The evolutionary concept is exceptional among matters of science in the interest which it evokes among all Aḥmadis. It is found in several verses of the Qur'ān (lxxx. 17 ff., xx. 50, lxxi. 14). The Divine Names again do yeoman service, *al-Rabb* meaning 'He who puts things on a progressive course, from which they cannot turn back',<sup>8</sup> He who 'creates everything and

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 2-5.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. A. Jeffery, 'The Present Status of Qur'anic Studies: Report on Current Research—1957', Columbia University, pp. 10-11.

<sup>3</sup> Gh. Aḥmad, *The Philosophy of the Teachings of Islam*, pp. 81-3.

<sup>4</sup> *I. R.*, Jan.-Feb. 1933, p. 13; see also *I. R.*, Jan.-Feb. 1934, p. 44.

<sup>5</sup> *I. R.*, Jan.-Feb. 1933, p. 14.

<sup>6</sup> *R. R.*, July 1925, pp. 22-4.

<sup>7</sup> *I. R.*, Jan.-Feb. 1933, p. 14.

<sup>8</sup> *I. R.*, Jan.-Feb. 1933, pp. 15-6.

then fosters everything gradually towards perfection',<sup>1</sup> and again, 'evolver (of the worlds)'.

There is nothing here to compel an acknowledgement of evolution; the original prompting is elsewhere. It is threefold. There is zeal for the Law, which finds parallels with the natural law of evolution. More important is the rebuttal of Christianity, which in the evolutionary pattern is relegated to an earlier and therefore less complete stage.<sup>2</sup> There is some uncertainty in the Aḥmadiyyah scheme here, for while the relation between Jesus and Muḥammad may be expressed within the framework of temporal evolution, that between Moses and Jesus, much less between Muḥammad and Ghulām Aḥmad, cannot be. Since Muḥammad the better word is growth, not evolution. The third prompting lies in this idea of growth: it is the hope of change in the present circumstances of Muslims.<sup>3</sup>

Aḥmadīs carry growth into the Hereafter, which for them is distinctly activist. 'Death,' wrote Maḥmūd Aḥmad, 'hides nothing but opportunities of limitless progress.'<sup>4</sup> He translates the verse (xxiii. 115),

أَفَسَبِّحُوا مَا خَلَقْنَاكُمْ عِبْتًا وَأَنتُمْ إِلَىٰ رَبِّكُمْ لَا تُرْجَعُونَ

what, did you think that we created you only for sport, and that you would not be returned to Us?

as,

then, do you imagine that we have created you as a mere pastime and that you will not have eternal life and opportunities of eternal development after death?

Ghulām Aḥmad expounded his views on the life after death in some detail in the *Teachings of Islam*, Maḥmūd Aḥmad in his *Aḥmadiyyat or the True Islam*, Muḥammad <sup>c</sup>Alī in the introduction to his translation of the Qur'ān.

<sup>1</sup> M. Aḥmad, *Introduction*, p. 149.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Adams, *op. cit.*, p. 175.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. the present author's 'Concept of Evolution in Aḥmadiyyah Thought', *Muslim World*, October 1959, pp. 275-86.

<sup>4</sup> M. Aḥmad, *Aḥmadiyyat or the True Islam*, p. 191.

*Translation*

Translation is not part of a full adoption of modern scholarship. Aḥmadiyyah, particularly among the Qadianīs, is a century behind in its awareness of oriental research. There is no positive response to the work of men such as Goldziher, Lammens or Gibb. It is petulant to describe Gibb's choice of the title *Mohammedanism* for his volume in the Home University Library as 'a strange mental perversity', 'a typical instance of Christian fanaticism' suggesting 'that the Christian bias in the Professor has the better of his learning'. (Gibb explained that he chose this name because the first article of faith, there is no god but God, may be assented to by many besides Muslims; the Aḥmadiyyah criticisms are not established by quoting this, together with the bracketed addition, as 'may be assented to by many (sic) Muslims'.)<sup>1</sup> Nor does the following halting passage, condemning Arberry's *Sufism*<sup>2</sup> together with the studies of Nicholson and Gibb, indicate a firm grasp of historical method.

The Muslim Sufis, especially the leaders of thought among them, never diverged a hair's breadth from the path chalked out for them by Islam. As a matter of fact, they have been the true exponents of Islam, and during the decline of the Muslims it is they who held aloft the beacons of true Islamism. If some of the latter-day Sufis did introduce some extraneous practices wholly foreign to Islam, they held fast to what Islam taught as a matter of principle, and explained their innovations in the light of what they thought was only a sidelight. There was never any question of their departing from the Holy Quran or the traditions of the Holy Prophet. As a matter of fact, they gloried in Islam and put down all those beliefs or practices that savoured of asceticism, monasticism or esotericism as unIslamic and wholly foreign to their own convictions.<sup>3</sup>

Many of the writings of Ghulām Aḥmad and others have been translated, particularly into English. It is in the translation of the Qur'ān however that Aḥmadīs make their most significant contribution. Both parties base the requirements for Qur'ānic translation on the verse (xxv. 52),

فَلَا تُطِعِ الْكَافِرِينَ وَجَاهِلِينَ يَهْتَدُونَ بِأَكْبَارِهِمْ

<sup>1</sup> R. R., June 1952, pp. 49-50; Gibb, *Mohammedanism*, p. 2.

<sup>2</sup> A. J. Arberry, *Sufism*, London 1950.

<sup>3</sup> R. R., March 1952, p. 40.

so do not obey the unbelievers, but struggle mightily with them thereby,

'thereby' taken to mean by the Qur'ān.<sup>1</sup>

Work began on an English version before the split. This was finished in 1918 for the Lahoris by Muḥammad 'Alī, whose first edition included English notes and introduction, and parallel English and Arabic texts. Also in 1918 the first instalment of the Qadianī version appeared. Thus far two huge volumes with parallel texts have been completed. Better known is the shorter edition of 1955, complete in one volume, also with parallel texts but without footnotes. Maḥmūd Aḥmad's *Introduction* appeared twice in 1947, separately, and a third time in the edition of 1955.

The official claims of the Qadianīs are an unreliable index of the progress that has been made in western languages. In 1944 Maḥmūd Aḥmad appealed for translations of the Qur'ān into English, Dutch, German, French, Spanish, Italian, Portuguese and Russian.<sup>2</sup> In 1947 he wrote that all these were ready, and would be published 'as soon as post-war restrictions permit'.<sup>3</sup> Post-war restrictions relaxed sufficiently to allow the publication of the Dutch translation in 1953, the German in 1954, the English in 1955, all in the same pattern. In 1954 it was again announced that the French, Italian, Spanish and Portuguese versions were complete, and would appear 'as soon as conditions permit';<sup>4</sup> in 1955 this was repeated, and the Russian claim of 1947 was restored.<sup>5</sup> None of these five has yet appeared. Translations into several Indian languages have been in circulation for some time; a Swahili edition was published in 1953 (see below, pp. 191-2); a beginning has been made with other languages.

Qur'ānic translation is in part a weapon of polemic. In their first instalment, of 1918, the Qadianīs asserted that all earlier English translations had been done by those 'who had no acquaintance worth the name with the Holy Quran and the Arabic language', or 'who have been swayed by nothing but

<sup>1</sup> M. Aḥmad, *Introduction*, p. 168; the relevant footnote in M. 'Alī's translation of the Qur'ān.

<sup>2</sup> *R. R.*, February-March 1954, p. 44.

<sup>3</sup> M. Aḥmad, *Introduction* (1947 ed.), p. 440.

<sup>4</sup> *R. R.*, Feb.-March 1954, p. 44.

<sup>5</sup> M. Aḥmad, *Introduction*, p. 168.

religious prejudice'. This made no exception for the versions already prepared by Muslims, an oversight which Maḥmūd Aḥmad's *Introduction* in 1947 corrected: translations (save those in Urdu and Persian) by non-Muslims were still the work of people 'who generally had little knowledge of the Arabic language and who were, therefore, unable even to understand the Arabic text, not to speak of being able to translate it'.<sup>1</sup> This criticism was repeated in 1955. A second purpose prompting Maḥmūd Aḥmad to translation was to rectify the attention given by earlier scholars to traditional commentaries. 'A commentary,' he explained in a judgment difficult to reconcile with his and his father's view that revelation may guide Qur'ānic exegesis, 'is largely a matter of individual opinion.'<sup>1</sup> The Lahoris have been more mild; while Muḥammad <sup>c</sup>Alī does not hesitate to advance interpretations at variance with all other commentators, he refers wherever possible to the old authorities.

Produced thus without the guidance of modern translations or the ancient commentaries, the Qadianī version has many apparent variations. Since most of these can be related to particular Aḥmadiyyah doctrines, they are mentioned throughout this section in their various contexts. One further example may be given here, reflecting the blend of science and controversy. Five meanings of the word *jinn* are offered in the glossary: evil spirits, the agents of Satan, who inspire evil thoughts in the minds of men; imaginary beings worshipped by polytheists; the northern Europeans; any people of alien religion or nationality; pre-historic man before the time of Adam.

The degree of interpretation which Aḥmadiyyah translators allow themselves indicates that, under the surface appearance of modern scholarship, the old habit of thought remains ingrained, the idea that the Qur'ān is essentially untranslatable, and that any rendering in another language is more an explanation than a precise reproduction.

<sup>1</sup> M. Aḥmad, *Introduction*, p. 6.

## AḤMADIYYAH DOCTRINE AND CHRISTIANITY

### *Christ and Christianity*

The Aḥmadiyyah attitude towards Christianity is in logic contradictory. On the one hand, the validity of Christianity is almost utterly denied. On the other, the rank of Ghulām Aḥmad is buttressed by borrowing from Jesus, the Bible demonstrates the truth of Aḥmadiyyah, Christian organization is copied, and so on. The contradiction is in logic only: the purpose, of strengthening Islām in the comparison with Christianity, is always the same.

The Aḥmadiyyah reaction to Christ shows the logical dichotomy. Ghulām Aḥmad said he fulfilled the Second Coming of Jesus:

It is plainly indicated that some one from among the Muslims will first acquire the characteristics of Mary on account of his perfect righteousness, and be called by that name, and then the spirit of Jesus being breathed into him, he will be called by the latter name. In accordance with those words of the Holy Qur'an, Almighty God first named me Mary, and then spoke of the breathing into me of a soul, and lastly he named me Jesus.<sup>1</sup>

The claim that Ghulām Aḥmad inherited the perfection of Jesus<sup>2</sup> is the epitome of the positive relationship. Equality even was not enough for Ghulām Aḥmad: 'Jesus is from me and I am from God.'<sup>3</sup> Despite these uncompromising pronouncements, the link is gradually weakening. Maḥmūd Aḥmad explained that his father came in the spirit of Jesus as John in that of Elijah.<sup>4</sup> The chief missionary in West Africa wrote that the spirit of Jesus in Ghulām Aḥmad

<sup>1</sup> *R. R.*, vol. ii, p. 412, quoted in Walter, op. cit., p. 42; cf. vol. iii, pp. 340-41, quoted in Walter, op. cit., p. 32.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, vol. ii, p. 67, quoted in Walter op. cit., p. 36.

<sup>3</sup> From Ghulām Aḥmad's challenge to Dowie, an American pretender, quoted in Walter, op. cit., p. 33; cf. *R. R.*, vol. i, pp. 251 & 340, also quoted in Walter.

<sup>4</sup> M. Aḥmad, 'Aḥmadiyya Movement', pp. 13-4.

means nothing more than that Hazrat Ahmad was sent . . . just at a time which can be easily likened to that of Jesus and that he worked in much the same way and with the same spirit as that of Jesus.<sup>1</sup>

This withdrawal may point to the eventual victory of the purely critical judgment about Jesus. There is reluctance to give Him even His traditional titles, whether Christian or Muslim. 'We do not know,' wrote Maḥmūd Aḥmad, 'in what sense Jesus can be regarded as Prince of Peace.'<sup>2</sup> The Qadianī Qur'ān translates interpretatively to a similar end. The verse (iv. 171) is,

إِنَّمَا الْمَسِيحُ عِيسَى ابْنُ مَرْيَمَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ وَكَلَّمَتْهُ الْقَلِيلَمَا إِلَىٰ مَرْيَمَ وَرُوحٌ مِنْهُ

The Messiah, Jesus son of Mary, was only the Messenger of God, and His Word that He committed to Mary, and a Spirit (rūḥ) from Him.

The Qadianī rendering is, 'Verily, the Messiah, Jesus, son of Mary, was only a Messenger of Allah and a fulfillment of His word which he sent down to Mary, and a mercy from Him'.

Jesus is charged with all Christian (in Aḥmadiyyah terms, synonymous with western) wrongdoing: 'the deadliest sin is to be attributed to him that he is at the root of all Christian corruption.'<sup>3</sup> Biblical incidents are said to be derogatory of Jesus. His reply to His Mother at the marriage at Cana (John ii. 4), 'Woman, what have I to do with thee? mine hour is not yet come', is found rude; the *Review of Religions* speaks of the excuse 'that he was under the influence of wine'.<sup>4</sup> The charge of drunkenness is based on the Cana wedding, the cry of wine-bibber, and the Sacrament.<sup>5</sup> We need not examine the full range of immorality with which Jesus is charged, for it has been sufficiently described elsewhere.<sup>6</sup> Aḥmadis sometimes allege that they are only repeating what some Jews or Christians have said, or what is in the Bible, but it is clear that the presentation

<sup>1</sup> N. M. Saifi, 'Islam & Christianity', Lagos 1957, p. 45.

<sup>2</sup> M. Aḥmad, *Introduction*, p. 96.

<sup>3</sup> *R. R.*, vol. i, p. 159, quoted in Walter, *op. cit.*, p. 99.

<sup>4</sup> *R. R.*, vol. i, p. 463, quoted in Walter, *op. cit.*, p. 86.

<sup>5</sup> *R. R.*, vol. i, p. 114, quoted in Walter, *op. cit.*, p. 85.

<sup>6</sup> J. W. Sweetman, 'Modernism & Polemic in Indian Islam Today', *International Review of Missions*, April 1937; & Walter, *op. cit.*, *passim*.

is prompted by malice. Consider the passage describing the money-changers in the Temple, concerning which a writer in the *Review of Religions* doubts that

a man like Jesus, who every day of his life proclaimed at his loudest that he was the Prince of Peace, could like a whirlwind cause a furious havoc among the peaceful bird-fanciers and money-changers. It is recorded that scourge in hand he entered the Temple and poured out money, turned tables, and drove out all merchants, under the plea that the House of God had been turned into a 'place of merchandise' as one Gospel writer puts it. Such a conduct from a habitual peace-proclaimer who, we are told, deemed it better bravery to run away rather than face his angry hosts is a bit inconceivable. It is easier to believe in his case incidents like the one recorded in John viii. 59, which says that 'they took up stones to cast at him; but Jesus hid himself, and went out of the Temple', for it is all in accord with his general tenor of life, but to say that on one occasion facing a huge hostile crowd 'he made a scourge of cords' and 'drove them all out of the Temple', the sheep, the oxen, and poured out the money changers' money, while at the same time he passionately flung at his audience the opprobrious epithets like the 'den of thieves', etc. The incident may be right for all we know, but we can affirm that it is quite out of keeping with the whole character of Jesus. 'Den of thieves', etc., may be argued as being in consonance with his general teaching, for on various occasions we find him using strong terms with his hecklers, as well as those who gently inquired after truth, but the bold step and actual manhandling is far from according with what we know of him.<sup>1</sup>

Ghulām Aḥmad wrote the summary of the man whose perfection he had inherited:

We cannot even admit that such an evil-minded, overbearing man and enemy of the righteous could be called a gentleman, let alone a prophet.<sup>2</sup>

'Much of the new anti-Christian polemic,' wrote L. B. Jones, 'differs from the old in that Jesus Himself, not dogmas about Him, is made the chief object of attack.'<sup>3</sup> Except for the

<sup>1</sup> *R. R.*, January 1928, pp. 15-6.

<sup>2</sup> Gh. Aḥmad, *Anjam-i-Aatham*, p. 5, quoted in Sweetman, 'Modernism & Polemic in Indian Islam Today', p. 203.

<sup>3</sup> L. B. Jones, *Christianity Explained to Muslims*, Calcutta, 1952, p. 118.

Crucifixion and Resurrection, points of Christian doctrine receive relatively little attention. The Lahoris deny the Virgin Birth; the Qadianis conceal their acceptance of it by pseudo-scientific belittling, calling it 'an illustration of parthenogenesis which is normally seen in the lower animals, as a result of some pathological stimulus', 'a secondary or degenerate sexual reproduction'.<sup>1</sup> The overriding importance of refuting Christianity is clear in this passage, which flies in the face of both Biblical and Qur'anic accounts: in the Qur'an, Gabriel the archangel announces to Mary the conception, the creation of Jesus being, as that of Adam, by command of God (xix. 16 ff., iii. 59).

The Qur'an acknowledges Christ's power to heal the sick and raise the dead; in that Book, He also speaks in the cradle, and fashions birds from clay and breathes life into them (iii. 45 ff., cf. p. 156 below). The usual redress in the comparison with Muḥammad, deficient in miracles of this type, has been to attribute to him many such remarkable works. Ghulām Aḥmad described these in detail.

Another miracle of the Holy Prophet, the splitting of the moon, was a manifestation of the similar divine power. It was not the result of prayers; rather it was brought about simply by his finger filled with divine power. The Holy Prophet performed many other miracles of the same kind, which were unaccompanied by any prayers or supplications on his part. Several times it so happened that he dipped his fingers into a cupful of water and a whole army with camels and horses drank out of it, still the same quantity was left in the cup as before. Once he touched two or three loaves of bread and lo! they were sufficient to satisfy thousands of hungry persons. He blessed a small quantity of milk with his lips and it satisfied a large number of people. A brackish well was turned sweet by the fluid of his mouth. Serious wounds were healed by the touch of his hands. Eyeballs cast out during fighting were set in again properly by his blessed hands.<sup>2</sup>

Maḥmūd Aḥmad's allegorical explanation for the moon miracle has already been mentioned (see above, pp. 47-8). He does not, in his *Introduction*, refer to his father's view about the splitting of the moon, which is akin to much traditional exegesis,

<sup>1</sup> R. R., January 1927, pp. 17-23.

<sup>2</sup> R. R., January 1952, p. 7.

though in another context he speaks of the Old Testament miracles, such as 'arresting the sun and moon in their course', as fables for little babies in their cradles.<sup>1</sup>

Ghulām Aḥmad claimed impressive miracles for himself:

I say to you truly that if the heavenly signs which have been shown on my hands, had been shown by Jesus, son of Mary, the Jews would have been saved from destruction except such as were the sons of perdition.<sup>2</sup>

To round out the comparison, it is said that Jesus's own miracles were inferior even to those of Old Testament figures.<sup>3</sup>

A second Aḥmadiyyah approach to Christ's miracles refers to them specifically, and re-interprets them; special attention is given to the Qur'ānic miracles. Muḥammad 'Alī, in his commentary, says that all normal children speak in the cradle. The creation of birds means, for him, Jesus giving a new zeal to His disciples. (The incident bears striking similarity to that in the apocryphal Gospel of Thomas; the cradle is reminiscent of the Psalmist (viii. 2), 'out of the mouth of babes and sucklings hast thou ordained strength'.) The healing is of the spiritually sick, the spiritually dead are raised. Muḥmūd Aḥmad's *Introduction* does not mention these Qur'ānic verses, but is clearly concerned with them, citing verses that raising the dead and creating living beings are exclusively attributes of God.<sup>4</sup>

This attitude of interpretation is congenial to the tenor of modern scientific rationalism, and it is probable that the Aḥmadiyyah concept of miracles is, in its development, a symptom of a more fundamental change from the mystical to the rational. As so often, flexible translation may be found in support of this. In the Qur'ān (xxxviii. 42) Job is told to strike with his foot, for here is a cool washing-place and drink,

ارْكُضْ بِرِجْلِكَ هَذَا مُغْتَسَلٌ بَارِدٌ وَشَرَابٌ

This has traditionally been given its apparent meaning, that Job was to stamp his foot, and a spring would appear. The

<sup>1</sup> M. Aḥmad, *Introduction*, p. 136.

<sup>2</sup> Gh. Aḥmad, 'A Review', p. 18.

<sup>3</sup> R. R., vol. i, p. 196, quoted in Walter, *op. cit.*, p. 84.

<sup>4</sup> M. Aḥmad, *Introduction*, pp. 133 ff.

Qadianī Qur'ān gives, 'Strike and urge thy riding beast with thy foot. Here is cool water to wash with and a drink.' The miraculous element is removed; for Muḥammad ʿAlī, who gives the same interpretation, it is 'a lesson not to despair under difficulties'.

Returning to Christian doctrine, Aḥmadīs, in keeping with Muslim tradition, deny the Incarnation. Ghulām Aḥmad cited the Jews, saying that 'these people have always declared with one voice, without there being a single dissenting schism', that the Incarnation is 'utterly opposed to the Word of God'.<sup>1</sup> The Incarnation is sometimes an occasion for charging Jesus with blasphemy, though more usually He is said never to have accepted such a status for Himself.<sup>2</sup>

Similarly the Trinity is rebutted. Ghulām Aḥmad called it 'false and satanic' teaching.<sup>3</sup> The manner, he wrote,

is very amusing in which the three Persons of Trinity shifted the responsibility of the reformation of mankind from one to the other. There was the Father, who, having a certain superiority, in name if not in reality, thought of restoring man to his original state—one should think it means the savage state, for the human progress has been gradual from a lower to a higher stage—but he found his hands tied by the strong manacles of justice. Out of filial reverence the Son offered himself, but when he came into the world, he went away with the empty consolation that the third partner shall come and teach them all truths and guide them into all truth. The third Person, being only a pigeon, found himself unable to undertake the teaching of truths, but thought he had done his duty by teaching the apostles a few dialects, which they were thus able to speak stammeringly.<sup>4</sup>

Aḥmadiyyah sometimes calls the Atonement a blood-bath. The following is from Ghulām Aḥmad's challenge to Pigott, a London pretender to the Second Coming.

There are Jews in London, and their indignation will naturally be aroused against him on finding that their attempt to crucify him on the previous occasion was fruitless as his senselessness was then

<sup>1</sup> Gh. Aḥmad, 'A Review', p. 4.

<sup>2</sup> Walter, op. cit., pp. 86-7, which quotes *R. R.*, vol. i, pp. 141, 348, 452 & vol. iii, p. 416.

<sup>3</sup> Gh. Aḥmad, *Anjam-i-Aatham*, quoted in *Shams*, op. cit., p. 20.

<sup>4</sup> *R. R.*, vol. i, p. 280; quoted in Walter, op. cit., p. 95.

mistaken for actual death, and consequently having been taken down alive from the cross he fled to another country and, therefore, to ensure his death, they might think it necessary to crucify him a second time. Mr. Pigott may think he has too many friends as against the Jews but he ought to know that there is a greater apprehension to his life from the Christian quarter. The idea might be suggested to them that the first atonement is too antiquated to have any powerful effect, as the loss of its efficacy has been too clearly demonstrated by the prevalence of drunkenness and open iniquities and transgression among the Christian nations, and that, therefore, fresh blood must be shed to deliver them from the present evils.

The Atonement is said to overthrow the Law. Maḥmūd Aḥmad asserted that Christian teachers have 'released man from all moral and religious obligations'.<sup>1</sup>

It is not the meaning of Christ's death, but the fact of it, that is primarily disputed: this is the fulcrum of Aḥmadiyyah doctrine. The traditional Muslim view is that Jesus was not placed upon the Cross, but was transported to heaven (where He still lives) while a likeness suffered in His place. The Aḥmadiyyah view is that Christ was crucified, but did not die on the Cross, being taken down alive; He then travelled to Kashmir, and lived to a venerable age before dying as any other man.

How did this new opinion arise? Ghulām Aḥmad wished to relieve the Muslims of the disadvantage which they, followers of a dead prophet, suffered in discussion with the followers of a prophet admitted by both sides to be alive. And, if Ghulām Aḥmad were to maintain his claim to be the second Messiah, he must destroy the prospect of an ascended Christ returning as miraculously as He went.

Various details from the Gospels, such as the relatively short time that Jesus was on the Cross, are fitted rather clumsily into the 'swoon theory' of Venturini, the German rationalist. The points have been examined by L. B. Jones.<sup>2</sup> There is also indirect argument from the Bible. Jesus could not have left the world before He had attended to His other sheep not of this fold (by which is meant, in the Aḥmadiyyah scheme, the lost tribes of Israel, supposedly in Kashmir): 'a righteous man,' wrote Ghulām Aḥmad, 'shudders at the idea of ascribing such

<sup>1</sup> M. Ahmad, *Introduction*, p. 31.

<sup>2</sup> Jones, *op. cit.*, pp. 82 ff.

a grave sin to Jesus as that he went up to heaven before discharging his duties completely.<sup>1</sup> The verse (v. 7) in Hebrews, in which Jesus prayed 'unto him that was able to save him from death, and was heard in that he feared', is cited. More elaborate is the parallel between Jonah and Jesus. Jesus said that there should be no sign but the sign of Jonah (Matt. xii. 39). According to Ghulām Aḥmad, Jonah made a prophecy which proved to be false, whereupon he fled to another land. (This is not the Biblical account, for Jonah fled before prophesying, and when his prophecy, once made, was unfulfilled, he merely went outside the city to see what would happen. Muḥammad 'Alī's commentary, note 2121, dismisses the Bible story in typically *a priori* fashion: 'It is meaningless to say that Jonah fled from God. He was a prophet and knew that no one could flee from God, for God's kingdom is unlimited.') Ghulām Aḥmad continued, Jesus also made a false prophecy to the people: 'He told them that he would inherit the throne of David, establish a temporal kingdom and rule over Israel.' When this was unfulfilled, He meditated flight, as shown in His remark that a prophet is not without honour save in his own country. Passing to the crux, Jonah was in the whale three days, as Christ in the sepulchre; and as Jonah was alive when the whale swallowed him, so Christ must have been alive when entombed.<sup>2</sup> (The parallel of prophecies, incorrect for both Jonah and Jesus, is dropped by later writers.)<sup>3</sup> The popularity of this argument probably explains why the Book of Jonah has not been explicitly classified with the myths and superstitions of the Bible.

Christ is supposed, after being taken down from the Cross, to have been healed by a marvellous ointment, which is said to be common medical knowledge. The weight of evidence, wrote Ghulām Aḥmad,

drawn from this source can hardly be overestimated for it is found not in religious books but in scientific works, and thousands of the physicians of every nationality and creed attest to its truth.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Gh. Aḥmad, 'A Review', p. 13.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 4-6.

<sup>3</sup> e.g. M. Aḥmad, 'Aḥmadiyya Movement', pp. 34-5.

<sup>4</sup> Gh. Aḥmad, 'A Review', p. 8.

Ghulām Aḥmad announced that the medicine would be marketed as a revealed cure for bubonic plague, but the British Government prohibited its distribution.<sup>1</sup>

After His recovery, Jesus proceeded to Kashmir, where He died after many years, and was buried in Srinagar. One proof is the *Unknown Life of Christ*, by Nicolas Notovitch, who travelled through Kashmir in 1887, and spent some time at a Buddhist monastery in Tibet. Several years after his return to Europe, he published a book declaring that the monastic abbot had shown him a document about Jesus' residence and study there before His baptism by John. This contribution was immediately exploded by Max Müller and by J. A. Douglas (who visited the monastery himself).<sup>2</sup> The story can in any case be used only as a most indirect indication that Jesus went again to Kashmir after the Crucifixion. It is illustrative of the eclectic nature of Aḥmadiyyah scholarship that Notovitch's account should be mentioned, when the document he purports to cite clearly affirms that Jesus was God Incarnate, and died on the Cross. Again, Notovitch visited Srinagar twice, once for six days, and mentions no tomb at all, yet it is there that the Aḥmadīs say Jesus is buried.

The main argument is founded upon the revealed discovery of this sepulchre. It is a typical Muslim tomb, perhaps originally Hindu, but taken by the first Muslims in Kashmir for the tomb of a Muslim prophet called Yūs Āsaf; it has been in Muslim hands ever since. Ghulām Aḥmad argued from the word 'prophet' that it must be the tomb of Jesus; revelation confirmed this. Further, Āsaf is said to be the Hebrew verb of the same form, to gather; Jesus went to Kashmir to gather the ten tribes.<sup>3</sup> Documentary evidence was found in the *Ikmāl-ud-Din* of Muḥammad ibn al-Bāhwaih, a Persian of the XI century; and in the story of Barlaam and Josaphat, traditions relating to an Indian prince. The testimony of such 'ancient documents of unquestionable authenticity and veracity', an Aḥmadiyyah pamphlet explained,

receives considerable support from the statements of those who have read with their own eyes an old, now effaced, inscription upon the

<sup>1</sup> Walter, op. cit., pp. 41-2.

<sup>2</sup> *Nineteenth Century*, October 1894 & April 1896.

<sup>3</sup> M. Aḥmad, 'Aḥmadiyya Movement', pp. 36-7.

tomb, and who assert that it is the tomb of Jesus Christ . . . The incontrovertible testimony afforded by the tomb itself, backed as it is by the unanimous oral testimony of hundreds of thousands of men, and by the written evidence of ancient documents, becomes, in our opinion, too strong to be resisted by the most determined of sceptics.<sup>1</sup>

Walter, who visited the tomb in 1913, found that no such testimony exists.

The argument about Jesus's death is based mainly on the Bible, but the Qur'ān is relevant as well. In verse xix. 33 Jesus speaks,

وَالسَّلَامُ عَلَيَّ يَوْمَ وُلِدْتُ وَيَوْمَ أَمُوتُ وَيَوْمَ أُبْعَثُ حَيًّا

peace upon me the day I am born, and the day I die, and the day I am raised up alive.

Lahoris and Qadianis agree with this, the latter however making the first verb past, the last two future. Verse iii. 55 is as follows,

إِذْ قَالَ اللَّهُ يُعِيسِي إِبْنِي مَرْقُومًا وَرَافِعًا إِلَىٰ وَمَطْهَرًا مِّنَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا

and is translated by Arberry,<sup>2</sup>

When God said, Jesus,  
I will take thee to Me,  
and will raise thee to Me, [cf. p. 144]  
and I will purify thee  
of those who believe not.

The central question is the meaning of *mutawaffika*, literally 'I will take thee to Me', but frequently in idiom, 'I will cause thee to die'. Muḥammad 'Alī uses the latter phrase; the Qadianis do also, and add their own gloss, 'I will cause thee to die a natural death'. A third verse, iv. 157, is disputed in two

<sup>1</sup> 'An Important Discovery Regarding Jesus Christ', published by the Lahoris, quoted in Walter, op. cit., p. 94.

<sup>2</sup> A. J. Arberry, *The Koran Interpreted*, London 1955.

particulars. First, the Qur'ān says that the Jews 'did not kill and did not crucify' Jesus,

وَمَا قَتَلُوهُ وَمَا صَلَبُوهُ

The Qadianīs give this, but footnote 'crucify', 'i.e. kill him by crucifixion'. Muḥammad ʿAlī incorporates this in his text, 'they killed him not, nor did they cause his death on the cross'. The second point follows immediately,

وَلَكِنْ شَبَّهَهُ

which Arberry renders, 'only a likeness of that was shown to them', and L. B. Jones, 'but they had only his likeness'.<sup>1</sup> The traditional interpretation is that a similitude of Jesus suffered in His place. Muḥammad ʿAlī's translation runs, 'but he was made to appear to them as such'; and the Qadianī is roughly the same, 'but he was made to appear to them like *one crucified*'. Verse v. 117 poses again the choice between 'causing to die' and 'raising to God', both Aḥmadiyyah translations preferring the former.

At other points the Qadianī translation finds Qur'ānic support for Aḥmadiyyah Christology. Aḥmadīs affirm that God will not suffer His prophets to die at the hands of men. Accordingly, all references to the wicked slaying the prophets become references only to the attempts of the wicked to slay the prophets (ii. 91, iii. 181 and 183, v. 70, etc.);<sup>2</sup> Muḥammad ʿAlī does the same in some cases. When Jesus is specifically mentioned, as in v. 110,

وَإِذْ كَفَفْتُ بَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ عَنْكَ

and when I restrained the children of Israel from you, the Qadianī translation is, 'and when I restrained the children of Israel from *putting thee to death*'. It is however necessary to prove not only that Jesus did not die a violent death, but also

<sup>1</sup> Jones, op. cit., p. 76.

<sup>2</sup> There are occasional oversights such as ii. 87.

that He did die a natural death. The same pattern of general and specific statements is repeated. Verse iii. 144 begins,

وَمَا عَزَدَ إِلَّا رَسُولٌ قَدْ خَلَتْ مِنْ قَبْلِهِ الرُّسُلُ

and Muḥammad is naught but a Messenger; Messengers have passed away before him.

This is made more emphatic, 'all Messengers have passed away before him'. The particular reference to Jesus (iii. 55), 'I will cause thee to die a natural death', has already been mentioned.

Another passage is used by Muḥammad <sup>c</sup>Ali in this context, but not by the Qadianīs. The verses (ii. 72-3), which follow the selection by Moses and his people of a suitable cow for sacrifice, and its killing, are these,

وَإِذْ قَتَلْتُمْ نَفْسًا فَآذَرْتُمْ فِيهَا وَاللَّهُ غَفِيرٌ خَبِيرٌ  
فَتَلْنَا آمَنُورَهُ يَبْقَىٰ مَا كُنْتُمْ تَكْتُمُونَ . . .

Arberry's rendering is,

And when you killed a living soul, and disputed thereon—and God disclosed what you were hiding—so We said, 'Smite him with part of it'; even so God brings to life the dead . . .

The apparent meaning, accepted by the traditional commentators, is that the body of the murdered person is to be struck with part of the sacrificed cow, some sign then resulting to show the murderer; the origin of the story seems Biblical (Deut. xxi. 1-9). Muḥammad <sup>c</sup>Ali translated thus,

And when you (almost) killed a man, then you disagreed about it, and Allāh was to bring forth that which you were going to hide. So We said: Smite him with it partially. Thus Allāh brings the dead to life . . .

He commented that the man must be Jesus; introducing the word 'almost' he maintains that Jesus was not killed on the Cross, and then follows with the phrase, 'Smite him with it partially', interpreted as meaning that Jesus was not altogether killed. There is no support for this view elsewhere among the

commentators; even the Qadianīs do not adopt it, though it would further their purposes, and though they are at pains to exclude the miraculous element. Their translation is,

and *remember the time* when you slew a person and differed among yourselves about it; and Allāh: would bring to light what you concealed. Then We said: 'Smite him (the murderer) for a part of the offence against him (the murdered person).' Thus Allāh gives life to the dead . . .

The first words in italics break the sequence between the sacrificed cow and the verses in question; the second words in italics make clear that the smiting is not done with part of the cow; the words in brackets provide references for both the indirect and direct objects of the smiting, antecedents which do not however appear in the text.

### *The Bible*

In arguing in favour of the 'swoon theory' of the Crucifixion, Aḥmadīs accept the detailed reliability of the Bible text. So also, though somewhat ambiguously, they appear to accept passages with which they may attempt to besmirch Jesus's character. Most importantly, they use Biblical prophecy and reference to demonstrate the truth of Aḥmadiyyah. Maḥmūd Aḥmad gives 38 pages of his *Introduction* to this cause. Not all the analysis has the freshness of that which makes the Song of Solomon 'a rapturous description' of Muḥammad. We may examine one passage (Acts iii. 19 ff.) in detail.

19. Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord;

20. And he shall send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you:

21. Whom the heaven must receive until the times of restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began.

22. For Moses truly said unto the fathers, A prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren, like unto me; him shall ye hear in all things whatsoever he shall say unto you.

23. And it shall come to pass, that every soul, which will not hear that prophet, shall be destroyed from among the people.

24. Yea, and all the prophets from Samuel and those that follow

after, as many as have spoken, have likewise foretold of these days. 25. Ye are the children of the prophets, and of the covenant which God made with our fathers, saying unto Abraham, And in thy seed shall all the kindreds of the earth be blessed.

26. Unto you first God, having raised up his son Jesus, sent him to bless you, in turning away every one of you from his iniquities.

Maḥmūd Aḥmad quotes verses 21 to 24 only. He finds in them a 'clear hint' that until the prophet mentioned in Deut. xviii. 18 (to which Peter is referring) has come, the Second Coming of Jesus will not occur. He continues: 'the prophecy in Deuteronomy said that the Promised Prophet would bring a new Law'. The text in Deuteronomy does not say this; it says that the prophet will be like Moses, from which Aḥmadīs deduce that he will be a lawgiver in the same sense that Moses was. Having endeavoured to establish that Peter was speaking of a new law, Maḥmūd Aḥmad finds that the reference 'means clearly that the teaching of Jesus will be superseded by the teaching of the Promised One'. 'A new Law can have no other meaning.' Proceeding to verse 24, Maḥmūd Aḥmad says that, since Jesus came after Samuel, the verse 'can only mean that from Moses to Jesus every Prophet has foretold the advent of a Prophet', who is still to come, being of course Muḥammad.<sup>1</sup> Thus to say that the passage does not apply the prophecy of Deuteronomy to Jesus, and that Jesus Himself prophesied of another person coming to fulfil Deuteronomy, is to wrench and jar the manifest meaning.

Muḥammad ʿAlī has no patience for such exegesis, and says sweepingly that 'no other sacred book but the Holy Qur'ān ever pointed to anyone as fulfilling the prophecy' in Deuteronomy.<sup>2</sup> There are other instances in which Aḥmadiyyah critics have evidently failed to read the Biblical text, or at least to understand it. One critic found Paul a liar by this verse (Romans iii. 7),

For if the truth of God hath more abounded through my lie unto his glory; why yet am I also judged as a sinner?

Yet Paul wrote in the next verse that such argument was slanderously imputed to him, and justly damned. The same

<sup>1</sup> M. Aḥmad, *Introduction*, p. 110.

<sup>2</sup> M. ʿAlī, *Muhammad the Prophet*, Lahore 1951 (3rd ed.) p. 32.

critic found Paul encouraging 'many licentious adherents' by the verse (I Cor. xv. 32), 'let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die'. Be not deceived, continued Paul.<sup>1</sup> The prince of this world (John xiv. 30) has been called Muḥammad.<sup>2</sup> The general tenor of Aḥmadiyyah Biblical criticism on this point was summed up by a Nigerian Aḥmadī: 'The Bible must prove Muḥammad true or false; we don't care if it proves him false.'

The positive use of the Bible is balanced by outright rejection. The variable judgment is concisely revealed in the verses which are sometimes said to reflect on Jesus's character. For example, Ghulām Aḥmad, wishing to weaken Jesus, accepts the wilderness temptation story: 'When the devil told him to cast himself down from the pinnacle, he could not do it and thus gave proof of his powerlessness.'<sup>3</sup> Maḥmūd Aḥmad, concerned for the moment with the Bible's superstition rather than Jesus's weakness, said that the Devil, the angels and the wild beasts in the wilderness were only delusion, a fairy tale fit for Kipling's *Jungle Book*.<sup>4</sup> Jesus's replies to His Mother (Matt. xii. 48, John ii. 1-4), accepted in some of the arguments we have observed, are elsewhere rejected as interpolations. The cursing of the fig-tree (Mark xi. 12 ff., Matt. xxi. 18 ff.) is, for Maḥmūd Aḥmad, a 'caricature of a sane and decent person like Jesus'. The *khalifah* denies any allegorical message, insisting on literalism. The Lahoris are more enterprising, applying the curse to the house of Jacob, and referring to the promise of Jesus that the kingdom should be given to a more fruitful nation (Matt. xxi. 43), taken to be the Muslims.<sup>5</sup> Each of the two interpretations serves an apologetic purpose: one to refute the Bible, the other to support Muḥammad. But the incident can scarcely be both a textual interpolation and a valid prophecy.

The Bible is held to be contradictory, burdened by unreason and superstition, cruel and depraved. Descriptive phrases used by Maḥmūd Aḥmad are 'so foul', 'both stupid and savage',

<sup>1</sup> N. Aḥmad, *Jesus in Heaven on Earth*, Woking 1952, pp. 6-7; this book was banned in Pakistan in 1952, but is still advertised elsewhere by both Lahoris and Qadianis, for example in Lagos.

<sup>2</sup> 'Proof of Prophet Mohammad from the Holy Bible', p. 18; quoted in Jones, *op. cit.*, p. 18.

<sup>3</sup> Gh. Aḥmad, 'A Review', p. 16.

<sup>4</sup> M. Aḥmad, *Introduction*, pp. 56-7.

<sup>5</sup> 'Paraclete', Mansfield, Ohio, pp. 2-3.

etc. (His *Introduction* develops these criticisms through 36 pages.) A writer in the *Islamic Review* doubted, about the Bible,

if there is a person who does not shudder while reading its pages, filled as they are with blood-curdling slaughter, rapine and destruction, along with its tales of incest, rape and other vile obscenity. Indeed, after reading the Bible one cannot help but wonder as to the nature of this God of the Christians.<sup>1</sup>

A principal charge is that the Bible has been altered by its devotees. This is capably discussed by L. B. Jones, in his *Christianity Explained to Muslims*, and need not be detailed here. Insofar as Aḥmadiyyah charges are limited to instances of textual correction resulting from closer study and more ancient manuscripts, they reveal simply ignorance of Biblical scholarship. In attributing motives however, Aḥmadīs introduce a serious moral charge, for which evidence may justly be demanded. An instance is the verse (Matt. xvii. 21): 'Howbeit this kind goeth not out but by prayer and fasting.' This is omitted in some modern translations, not being found in the earliest manuscripts. Maḥmūd Aḥmad wrote that Muslim critics had cited this verse to prove that faith alone is not sufficient, but that works such as prayer and fasting are necessary.

This criticism was so vital that Christian exponents found themselves unable to give any reply. The only way of escape they found was in deleting the verse from the Gospel.<sup>2</sup>

This accusation is advanced without evidence, for there is no evidence.

Finally the whole Bible is condemned. 'I dare say,' wrote Ghulām Aḥmad, 'the Bible has undergone so many changes that it cannot be trusted anywhere at all.'<sup>3</sup> He described the Bible as 'a collection of myths and stories and fables and idle tales, fit for women only';<sup>4</sup> and again, the value of the Gospels in 'the eyes of impartial critics' is 'little more than waste paper'.<sup>5</sup> It would seem, therefore, that the many arguments designed to

<sup>1</sup> *I. R.*, August 1932, p. 258.

<sup>2</sup> M. Aḥmad, *Introduction*, p. 54.

<sup>3</sup> *R. R.*, January 1952, p. 44.

<sup>4</sup> Quoted in Walter, *op. cit.*, p. 54; cf. Jones, *op. cit.*, p. 33.

<sup>5</sup> Gh. Aḥmad, 'A Review', p. 4.

prove Muḥammad and Ghulām Aḥmad from the Bible are merely hollow exercises in debate, in which the Aḥmadī grants his opponent's premises for the sake of discussion, though he knows them to be false. This is however not the case, for the support of the Bible for Islām is argued with all seriousness, the argument turning on even so fine a point as the gender of a pronoun; Biblical prophecies are applied to contemporary political affairs in a way which indicates complete acceptance. Aḥmadiyyah (or Muslim) prejudices and opinions determine Aḥmadiyyah response to the Bible: in the story of Abraham, for example, much labour is spent tracing in detail the Arabian connections of Ishmael, while the statement that Isaac, rather than Ishmael, was offered in Abraham's sacrifice is (in Ghulām Aḥmad's words) 'an interpolation', 'an outrage' and 'a gross mistake'.<sup>1</sup> Aḥmadiyyah, constantly concerned with the Bible, is attracted by the heritage of Ishmael, and deeply offended by Paul's explanation (Gal. iv. 21-31) that the covenant of Ishmael 'gendereth to bondage'. The passage is specifically condemned in the *Review of Religions*,<sup>2</sup> and Paul receives much hard language.

An Aḥmadiyyah theory of Biblical criticism, in which certain principles are laid down to determine which portions are granted and which denied, with reasons given, would be a substantial contribution to the reform of the Movement. Its present views about the Bible are determined by propaganda, rancour and ignorance.

<sup>1</sup> *R. R.*, January 1952, p. 45.

<sup>2</sup> *R. R.*, February 1952, pp. 31 ff.

## AHMADIYYAH DOCTRINE AND SOCIETY

Aḥmadiyyah political theory straddles a basic dichotomy. Aḥmadīs are firm supporters of the established political order, which in the old days meant loyal citizens of the British Crown. On the other hand, denying that Islām separates secular and spiritual, Aḥmadīs claim that they have both perfect religion and perfect statecraft. The strength of this concept of unity is reflected in the Aḥmadiyyah inability to distinguish between Christianity and western power and society.

From the beginning there was an Aḥmadiyyah tradition of political loyalty to the British. Ghulām Aḥmad was proud that his father had not wavered during the Mutiny. The present *khalifah*, writing during the harassed interwar period in India, relied upon the British to maintain communal balance.<sup>1</sup> Aḥmadiyyah at that time looked forward to a qualifiedly independent India, in which British control would continue over the armed forces, and participation of Britishers in the civil service, the judiciary and the cabinet would go on for at least fifteen years.<sup>2</sup> The *khalifah* waxed eloquent: 'separation from England is not only impossible but it is also opposed to the Divine Scheme of things'.<sup>3</sup> (In 1946 a vision of Maḥmūd Aḥmad, received some years earlier, was reported. It indicated that the British would leave India, and then owing to the unwillingness of the people in Delhi to heed the *khalifah's* advice, would return.)<sup>4</sup>

Religious romanticism about the British Empire may have exasperated the orthodox more than would have a simple political affiliation. In the parallel between Jesus and Ghulām Aḥmad, the religious freedom of the British Empire is contrasted with the slackness of the Romans at the time of Christ;

<sup>1</sup> M. Aḥmad, *Some Suggestions for the Solution of the Indian Problem*, p. 41; & *The Nehru Report & Muslim Rights*, pp. 171-2.

<sup>2</sup> M. Aḥmad, *Some Suggestions*, pp. 244, 342.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 49.

<sup>4</sup> *R. R.*, September 1946, pp. 171-2.

the officer who acquitted Ghulām Aḥmad of certain charges brought against him was called the just Pilate. The British Empire was regarded as a step towards divinely-willed world brotherhood: one of the more mysterious ways in which God moves to perform His wonders. There was hope that England would become Muslim. (The European candidate changes from time to time. In 1954 the *khalifah* had a vision entrusting the conquest of Italy to him and him alone.<sup>1</sup> Attention now is centred on Germany, where the *khalifah* hopes to see fifty mosques before he dies; there are now two. The Germans are regarded as good missionary material, setting themselves single-mindedly to any object they are determined upon.)

Attention to international peace has continued on a wider scale than the British Empire. Much has been written about the Qur'ānic teachings concerning peace and international organization; Maḥmūd Aḥmad has repeatedly urged that standards of private morality be applied among nations. This strand of thought has been fostered in Aḥmadiyyah by Sir Zafrulla Khan. His career is adorned with manifold distinctions reaching well back into British rule. In December 1947 he was made Foreign Minister of Pakistan, and carried on his work vigorously, particularly in the United Nations, where he sharply criticized the proposal for the partition of Palestine, championed the cause of Tunisia, and in other ways advanced the aims of the Muslim world. His efforts were not sufficient in the eyes of his countrymen, who distrusted his devotion to Aḥmadiyyah. Constant criticism was voiced in the Pakistani parliament; in 1953, one member said that he had 'enslaved Pakistan to the United Kingdom and the United States and Pakistani foreign affairs would be conducted from London and Washington'.<sup>2</sup> For a time he retired from political life, but continued his active work for Aḥmadiyyah during his term of office as a member of the Hague International Court. His appointment as head of Pakistan's permanent delegation to the United Nations in New York was announced in July 1961.

The political loyalty of Aḥmadiyyah to the British has compromised, in orthodox eyes, the Movement's pacific interpretation of *jihād*, or Holy War. This interpretation, the anti-

<sup>1</sup> *R.R.*, December 1954, p. 11.

<sup>2</sup> *Hindu*, 20 March 1953.

Aḥmadīs claim, was adopted merely to suit the British: indeed, it did much to reconcile the imperial authorities to Aḥmadiyyah controversy, for as long as the Aḥmadīs renounced force, so long was British justice ready to prevent them from becoming the victims of force.

Aḥmadīs insist that war in the material sense is permitted for defense only. *Jihād* is rather a spiritual war, a battle of books, argument about faith. To this view, wrote Lammens, Aḥmadiyyah chiefly owes its appearance of Islāmic reform.<sup>1</sup> It is one of the chief points of difference with orthodox Islām. The Verse of the Sword, ix. 5, is the cornerstone of Holy War.

فَإِذَا انسَلَخَ الْأَشْهُرُ الْحُرُمُ فَاقْتُلُوا الْمُشْرِكِينَ حَيْثُ  
 وَجَدْتُمُوهُمْ وَخُذُوهُمْ وَأَخْضِرُوا لَهُمْ كُلَّ  
 مَرْصِدٍ لَّان تَابُوا وَأَقَامُوا الصَّلَاةَ وَآتَوْا الزَّكَاةَ وَخَلَوْا  
 بِسَيِّئِهِمْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ • وَإِن أَحَدٌ مِّنَ الْمُشْرِكِينَ  
 اسْتَجَارَكَ فَأَجِرْهُ حَتَّى يَسْمَعَ كَلِمَةَ اللَّهِ ثُمَّ ابْتَغِ لَهُ مَأْمَنَهُ

And when the sacred months have passed, then slay the polytheists wherever you find them and take them and lie in wait for them in every ambush. But if they repent, and perform the prayer and pay alms, let them go their way. Surely God is forgiving and merciful.

And if any of the polytheists asks your protection, protect him until he hears the word of God; then send him to his place of security.

Aḥmadiyyah apologists stress the second of these verses rather than the first, taking the polytheists in the first as limited to a particular group at the time of Muḥammad. The question is too complex to explore in detail here. Pacific *jihād* has great intrinsic appeal, but the task of making all the relevant Qur'ānic texts consonant with it is a delicate one. There is no clear reason why the first verse here should be of limited application and the second universal; even the second leaves the initiative

<sup>1</sup>H. Lammens, op. cit. p. 243.

in preventing war with the polytheist, not the Muslim. Other verses which are equally or more clearly in favour of limited defensive war are ii. 190 ff., viii. 60 ff., xxii. 39 ff., etc.

Aḥmadiyyah argument would be more convincing if the aggressive interpretation were not so often attributed to the wilful misconstruction of western orientalisks. There is also sometimes interpretative translation, as of verse ii. 193,

وَقَاتِلُوهُمْ حَتَّى لَا تَكُونَ فِتْنَةً وَيَكُونَ الدِّينُ لِلَّهِ

and fight them until there is no persecution (*fitnah*), and the religion is for God,

which the Qadianis present as, 'and fight them until there is no persecution, and religion is *freely professed* for Allah'.

Aḥmadiyyah is thus in practice a religious programme separable from political circumstances, asserting its loyalty to whatever government may rule. Aḥmadiyyah and its *khilāfat* have nothing to do with politics. This apolitical claim has a three-fold foundation. Ghulām Aḥmad was averse to political involvement; the willingness of some Aḥmadis to indulge in political agitation contributed to the 1914 schism. Second, as a minority first in British India and now in Pakistan the movement has had no opportunity for effective political experimentation. Third, the Christian example of separated church and state has some influence.

It is not, however, true that Aḥmadis have no views about proper government, *khilāfat* as statecraft. They have not so far broken with Islāmic tradition as to be able to distinguish altogether between politics and religion. A writer in the *Islamic Review* compared the blending of the two in the Qur'ān with that in Plato's *Republic*.<sup>1</sup> Maḥmūd Aḥmad asserted the necessity of good polity for good morals: 'it is only in a reformed and well-organized society that an individual has the best chance to show his moral qualities, because an ordinary person can make sacrifices to a certain extent beyond which he cannot go.'<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *I. R.*, Jan.-Feb. 1933, p. 48.

<sup>2</sup> M. Aḥmad, 'Aḥmadiyya Movement', p. 55.

At times *khilāfat* as ideal government is only partially political. Ghulām Aḥmad and his successors, wrote Maḥmūd Aḥmad, 'will perform the functions of a real League of Nations'. They will be involved principally with

the religious, moral, social and intellectual welfare of the people, so as to avoid their attention being monopolized by political matters, and important religious and moral affairs being neglected as was the case in the past. I have said, that they will *so far as possible*, remain aloof from and above politics. I have made this reservation to meet exceptional cases where the people of a particular country in a time of difficulty or crisis may request the aid of the spiritual *Khilāfat*, and it may become necessary to make temporary arrangements for the Government of that country. But such arrangements would be confined to the shortest possible time in each case.<sup>1</sup>

While the international authority is thus restricted in political action, the state governments have full competence in all the apolitical affairs which are the concern also of the international *khalifah*. The Islāmic state is defined as a shepherd, promoting the moral and material welfare of its people. The state is a national *khilāfat*. The national sovereign is elected for life, and must spend himself for the national welfare; he is assisted by an Advisory Council, by which his personal allowance is fixed, but over which in special circumstances he has power of veto and independent action; the views of the people are ascertained from the Council, and checked by occasional *referenda*. The sovereign has divine assistance, but is bound by the Islāmic constitution;<sup>2</sup> he is 'not to frame laws but to enforce divine laws'.<sup>3</sup>

The reconciliation of the national and international powers, both almost all-inclusive, is not attempted by the Aḥmadīs; the stated aim, the establishment of 'one Central Government for the whole of the world', seems to relegate the problem to a passing phase only.<sup>4</sup>

The expression of democracy within this somewhat unpromising framework has not been considered in detail, though Ghulām Aḥmad 'revived the spirit of true democracy which

<sup>1</sup> M. Aḥmad, *Aḥmadiyyat or the True Islam*, pp. 319-20.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 316-9.

<sup>3</sup> M. Aḥmad, *Introduction*, p. 164.

<sup>4</sup> M. Aḥmad, *Aḥmadiyyat or the True Islam*, pp. 346-9.

Islam was the first to introduce into the world'.<sup>1</sup> Zafrulla Khan in 1949 spoke of the possibility of an Islāmic democracy surpassing those of the United Kingdom, the United States and the U.S.S.R.<sup>2</sup> Aḥmadīs, however, have never been able to rid themselves of the authoritarian tradition of Muslim statecraft, which shows clearly in their arrangement of the *khilāfat*. Callard wrote of 'an outward respect for power in Pakistan', standing in the way of democracy, and explained that 'there was little in the history of the Muslims of India to prepare them for the conduct of government limited by public opinion and freely expressed opposition'.<sup>3</sup> Aḥmadiyyah attention to Germany, mentioned above, is a revival of an earlier admiration. In 1937 the following report was made on the inaugural address (not by Maḥmūd Aḥmad) at the annual Qadian gathering.

He exhorted all followers to have an unflinching faith in the truth of their mission and let no spirit of defeatism warp their determination.

A nation or community would begin to lose in vitality if it began to distrust its own energies. He said it was the crowning glory of Hitler that he combated defeatism and created robust confidence in his nation, which, under the effect of his regime, has become a force to reckon with.<sup>4</sup>

Zafrulla Khan reported in London about this time that 'India in unison has denounced Hitlerism and has resolved that its menace to world peace must be destroyed'.<sup>5</sup>

Maḥmūd Aḥmad did decide, after some uncertainty, to support women's franchise.<sup>6</sup> He admitted that it would mean a temporary disadvantage to the Muslim community in India because of the relative backwardness of education among the women. Given the tradition of seclusion, compulsory voting would probably be necessary if any women were to come to the polls at all.<sup>7</sup>

The *khālifāh* has spoken from time to time of converting a single state or island, no matter how small, in order to work

<sup>1</sup> M. Aḥmad, 'Aḥmadiyya Movement', p. 57.

<sup>2</sup> *Hindu*, 14 March 1949.

<sup>3</sup> K. Callard, *Pakistan: A Political Study*, London 1957, pp. 125 & 127.

<sup>4</sup> *Statesman*, 28 December 1937.

<sup>5</sup> *Observer*, 6 April 1952.

<sup>6</sup> M. Aḥmad, *Some Suggestions*, pp. 316-27.

<sup>7</sup> M. Aḥmad, *The Nehru Report & Muslim Rights*, p. 171.

out the practical results of Aḥmadiyyah political and social theory, which have not yet been seriously analyzed. This 'island in the sun' is unlikely to become a real possibility, for mission resources have never been concentrated in any such spot.

The Korean War brought into vivid relief an increasing Aḥmadiyyah concern with communism. The war was attributed to Christian missionaries;<sup>1</sup> Ghulām Aḥmad is said to have predicted it, though the same prediction had already served for the Russo-Japanese war. Chapters 38 and 39 in Ezekiel are pertinent prophecies: Tubal is the Asiatic forerunner of Tobolsk, Meschech is Moscow, and thus Russia's identity as Gog is proven.<sup>2</sup> (Elsewhere, anxious to explain Isaiah's references to Zion and Jerusalem in order to take these prophecies for Muḥammad, Maḥmūd Aḥmad wrote, 'names *qua* names do not constitute any part of the prophecies'.)<sup>3</sup> Maḥmūd Aḥmad advances grotesque accusations against the Russians, such as that forged currencies suitable to their various localities are supplied to communist workers everywhere.<sup>4</sup> The world is seen in conflict between communism and capitalism, Gog and Magog, with Islām waiting in the background with the golden *via media*.

Although Maḥmūd Aḥmad listed eight advices to help the United Nations in Korea, including a warning about General MacArthur's power and ending with a request to stop offending God by exalting Jesus, the challenge of communism is never fully faced. A writer in the *Review of Religions* marshalled the Islāmic bans on hoarding, gambling, interest and untrammelled inheritance, and the Islāmic exhortations in favour of alms and a pooling of resources, an array which scarcely takes the measure of its opponent.<sup>5</sup>

Social teaching is one of the strongest points in the argument that Aḥmadiyyah is fundamentally a reaction against, rather than towards, modernism. The Movement staunchly upholds

<sup>1</sup> R. R., May 1952, p. 31.

<sup>2</sup> M. Aḥmad, in *Muslim Sunrise* (an Aḥmadiyyah journal published in Washington, D.C.), December 1950, vol. xxiii no. 2, p. 6.

<sup>3</sup> M. Aḥmad, *Introduction*, p. 88.

<sup>4</sup> *Muslim Sunrise*, vol. xxiii no. 1, p. 5.

<sup>5</sup> R. R., March 1952, pp. 16 ff; cf. M. Aḥmad, *The New World Order of Islam*, Qadian 1945, & Brush, *op. cit.*, pp. 152-60, 167.

the Muslim models of polygamy and seclusion, and the Muslim rules of divorce. Social reform in Turkey is arraigned as 'slavish mimicry of the customs of the West', incompatible with true independence.<sup>1</sup> There is no sympathy with the modernist view, bluntly stated by Amīr 'Alī, that polygamy 'in our advanced times is justly regarded as an unendurable evil'.<sup>2</sup>

The Muslim pattern of society is defended in various ways: stress is laid on the degraded position of women in Arabia before Muḥammad; on the property rights accorded to women in the Qur'ān; on the criticism of women implicit in the Biblical story of the Fall, and explicit in the writings of some of the Fathers. The anti-Christian theme appears savagely in contemporary polemic: for the chief Aḥmadiyyah missionary in West Africa, woman in Christian lands is treated exactly as 'an article of luxury based on lust'.<sup>3</sup>

Aḥmadīs argue that polygamy, if the first wife is mad, diseased or barren, is 'a patriotic or religious duty'. Polygamy is 'a heavy burden which a man is sometimes compelled to carry'; each of Muḥammad's marriages for example was 'a heavy sacrifice made by him for his country and his people'.<sup>4</sup> Much of the less formal argument says simply that adultery is the practical alternative to polygamy, and that a man who can afford more than one wife ought to feel free to take more. When a former Prime Minister of Pakistan married a second wife, much agitation was raised in the country. The *Review of Religions* stood firm in favour of polygamy, claiming that the governments of England and France, among others, proposed to legalize polygamy as 'the only solution of certain important social problems'.<sup>5</sup> The *Islamic Review* was more sympathetic to the agitation, suggesting that measures be introduced to make polygamy definitely exceptional.<sup>6</sup> (Maḥmūd Aḥmad has declared against birth control, except in individual cases for medical reasons: Islām is international, and in the globe as a whole there is still plenty of room; again, the Qur'ān says that the present average production of food-grains per acre can be

<sup>1</sup> *R. R.*, October 1925, pp. 6-7.

<sup>2</sup> Amīr 'Alī, op. cit., p. 316; cf. pp. 327-8 & 349n.

<sup>3</sup> N. M. Saifi, 'Islam & Christianity', p. 32.

<sup>4</sup> M. Aḥmad, *Ahmadiyyat or the True Islam*, pp. 287-9.

<sup>5</sup> *R. R.*, August 1955, pp. 462-3.

<sup>6</sup> *I. R.*, May 1955, cf. *Muslim World*, October 1955, p. 385.

raised eighty times or more; and again, synthetic foods are possible.)<sup>1</sup>

The woman's point of view is slightly considered. Maḥmūd Aḥmad spoke of many complaints reaching him that Aḥmadīs, taking a second wife, neglected the rights of the first.<sup>2</sup> One of Ghulām Aḥmad's companions wrote,

everybody knows how deeply a woman loathes a co-wife, an aversion which has found expression in the Arabic word *Zarrah* (a co-wife, lit. an injury). Nothing is more repugnant to a woman than her co-wife.<sup>3</sup>

If the system is such a burden to both men and women, it is curious that it should be so strenuously advocated.

Seclusion for women is not only a means of protecting Muslim honour in untrustworthy surroundings, but a permanent ideal. Speaking of its application during courtship, when the affianced couple are allowed 'to have a look at each other, so that they may satisfy themselves as to each other's appearance,' Maḥmūd Aḥmad explained that woman is 'naturally more modest and emotional than man', and 'more readily becomes a victim of deception'.<sup>4</sup> Thus the underdeveloped dependent personality resulting from past seclusion is used to prove the necessity of future seclusion.

Maḥmūd Aḥmad has cautioned his followers against yielding to the pressure to give up seclusion in public life; he claimed that in the army promotion is sometimes involved.<sup>5</sup> In parliament, Zafrulla Khan was criticized for anti-feminism in the foreign service, and defended his private view in favour of seclusion.<sup>6</sup>

Divorce is to follow this pattern: any serious disagreement between man and wife, liable to lead to disruption, is to be laid before arbitrators. Should these fail in their work of reconciliation, the divorce is effected by three public announcements, at

<sup>1</sup> *R. R.*, April 1952, pp. 62-3.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, March 1955, pp. 15-6.

<sup>3</sup> 'Abd-ul-Karīm, 'A Character Sketch of the Promised Messiah', Lahore 1924 (written 1900), p. 29.

<sup>4</sup> M. Aḥmad, *Aḥmadiyyat or the True Islam*, pp. 279-81.

<sup>5</sup> *R. R.*, March 1955, pp. 13 ff.

<sup>6</sup> *Dawn*, 27 March 1953.

one month intervals. The wife can secure divorce through her own initiative by applying to a magistrate.<sup>1</sup>

'Islam does not recognize any difference of sexes in spiritual matters.'<sup>2</sup> Frequent reference is made to the equality of men and women in piety. But there are many points of religion where women labour under disabilities: a woman may not be a prophet; a woman may not be the *imām* of a mixed congregation, some say not even of a women's congregation; women never hold the central place in the mosque; a menstruating woman has no rights in religious ritual.

The goal is patient forbearance by men, rather than active partnership between men and women. Equality is not fully understood. (This is reflected in the large age disparities, sometimes of more than forty years, in some of the marriages of leading Aḥmadīs.) Ghulām Aḥmad is praised for never having quarrelled with his wives, despite the fact that they, belonging to 'the comparatively weak and uneducated sex', must certainly have done something 'provocative or disagreeable' occasionally, since experience proves 'that our female companions whose life is confined to their homes are not unoften the cause of immense trouble to us'.<sup>3</sup> Ghulām Aḥmad's own reason for patience has some condescension.

It appears to me to be highly disgraceful that we being *men* should quarrel with women. God has made us *men* which is indeed a God's favour on us and in token of gratitude for this favour of God we should treat women with kindness and gentleness.<sup>4</sup>

Beating is still the ultimate discipline for the wife, though of course not based on the example of the founder. It is hedged about with preliminaries and safeguards, and when it is finally resorted to, the wife's 'bones should in no case be injured and the beating must not be such as to produce a mark on her body'.<sup>5</sup> Children may be beaten, but not, for fear of permanent injury, on the head or face.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>1</sup> M. Aḥmad, *Aḥmadiyyat or the True Islam*, pp. 283-4.

<sup>2</sup> Shams, op. cit., p. 27, referring to the Qur'ān, xl. 40.

<sup>3</sup> Abd-ul-Karīm, op. cit., pp. 4-5.

<sup>4</sup> Quoted in *ibid.*, p. 7.

<sup>5</sup> M. Aḥmad, *Aḥmadiyyat or the True Islam*, p. 282.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 289.

PART III

AHMADIYYAH IN WEST AFRICA:  
HISTORY



## NIGERIA

*Lagos Islām before Nayyar*

The history of coastal Islām has been very little studied. Written sources are fragmentary, as for example the mention by Clapperton and Lander that there were Muslims from Bornu and the north in the Badagry area in the 1820's, distinguished by their dress, their abstinence from alcohol, and their position as advisors to the local chiefs.<sup>1</sup> If the matter is ever to be examined thoroughly, it must be done soon, for oral tradition is weakening. Here is only an outline background of Lagos Islām, necessary for the understanding of Nigerian Ahmadiyyah later.

The first Muslims in Lagos were northern slaves; these practised their religion in secret, because of the hostility of the local people.<sup>2</sup> A measure of toleration was accorded to Muslims by Adele I, King of Lagos, about the beginning of the nineteenth century, who allowed a certain Nafu to lead the prayer on Fridays. Adele was of catholic tastes in religion. It was by his devout attention to the rites of Ifa that he won his father's favour and that of the elders, displacing his older brother as heir to the throne; and it was, partly at least, by introducing Egungun into the royal palace, and granting some freedom to Muslims, that he later lost popular support, and was at last deposed.<sup>3</sup>

Henry Carr said that Islām continued as a hidden faith until 1836, when it became known through the commotion of civil war, and all Muslims were expelled from Lagos, returning however about 1840, since which time that faith has been

<sup>1</sup> H. Clapperton, *Journal of a Second Expedition into the Interior of Africa*, London 1829, p. 3: R. Lander, *Records of Captain Clapperton's Last Expedition to Africa*, vol. 1, London 1830, p. 270.

<sup>2</sup> Speech by Henry Carr (see pp. 181 and 182-3 below), reported in *R.R.*, February 1928, p. 19.

<sup>3</sup> J. B. Losi, *op. cit.*, pp. 19-23.

observed without hindrance.<sup>1</sup> These are the dates of Kosoko's first banishment and first return. When the British attacked Lagos at the end of 1851, Kosoko had again to flee. The *imām* at that time was Salu, a supporter of Kosoko; he followed his patron into exile. In Salu's absence, a man named Nafiu (perhaps the same man as had earlier enjoyed the favour of Adele I) led the prayer. In 1853 civil disorder broke out again, sparked by abusive songs sung at the end of *Ramaḍān* by Kosoko adherents.<sup>2</sup> It was not until 1862 that Kosoko at last returned to Lagos again; the Muslims then asked Salu to lead the prayer as of old, but he declined, saying that banishment might at any time be reimposed. So Nafiu continued until his death. Both these men were Hausa.

It was in the time of Nafiu that Nalla came to Lagos from Ilorin. He was a learned man, and became *nā'ib*, or assistant, to Nafiu. Nalla became involved in a personal quarrel, the details of which cannot, and need not, be determined today. The dispute acquired a theological aspect, the formal cause of division, which remains operative still. In 1876, a Nupe preacher named Sulaiman travelled south from Ilorin for the *Ramaḍān* preaching. He laid particular stress on the sufficiency of the Qur'ān, and seemed critical of too much reliance on commentaries. This distinction was seized upon by Nalla's opponents, who broke away to form the Quranic People, insisting on the Qur'ān alone and banning altogether the use of commentaries. Relations were very bad; in the following year one zealot was fined £200 for assault. The first leader of the Quranic People was Ali Afanya. In 1879 they secured land in Aroloya, Lagos, and built a mosque, where they continued for many years, worshipping alone and jealously preserving the fundamental tenet of their faith.

Not long after this peculiarly local sect was established Lagos Islām made contact with the heartlands. In 1884 the first pilgrims returned from Mecca, Yushau and another.<sup>3</sup> It is said of Yushau that he went with his son, and that in the press at Arafat they were separated, and could not find one another again. Yushau therefore waited a full year, and

<sup>1</sup> See note 2 on previous page.

<sup>2</sup> Losi, *op. cit.*, p. 47.

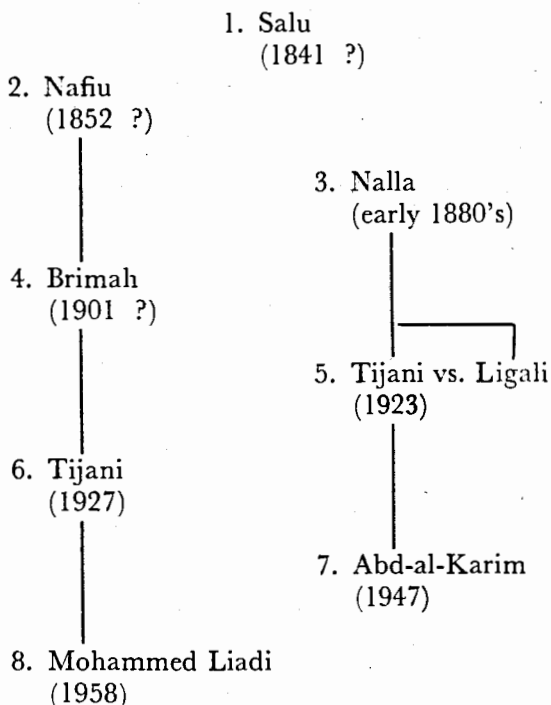
<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 67.

performed again the pilgrimage rites. In the midst of these, he and his son were reunited, but once more the multitude was too great, and they were parted. After he had seven times taken part in the rites, and never managed to keep touch with his son throughout, Yushau gave up and came home. Many such tales adorn the memory of these pious pioneers.

A more important pilgrim was Salisu, who returned about the turn of the century. He had been one of the Quranic People, but on his return he and many with him returned to the orthodox fold, partly because his travels had shown him no precedent outside Lagos for total neglect of the commentaries. (Salisu was later one of those who endeavoured to repair the 'Mohammedan Unrest'.)<sup>1</sup> Thus the strength of the Quranic People was gradually reduced. Principal among those who cheered the spirits of the Quranic People in these days was Ayanmo, a learned man and fiery preacher, who dreamt of a white man coming to confirm the doctrine of the sect. After Ayanmo died, this prophecy was remembered. Before succour came there was further decline, with schism in 1919. The succession to Eleto, the second *imām*, was disputed between his assistant, Ogunro, and a younger man named Dabiri who was elected with majority support. Ogunro took the matter to court, and lost, a precedent cited in the 1924 case between Tijani and Ligali, sons of Nalla. Thereupon Ogunro and his followers seceded, carrying on their own worship at the Atini mosque, one of the subordinate mosques of Aroloya.

Meanwhile, the main body of the orthodox had not been free from dissension themselves. By the time Nafiu, the early *imām*, died, Kosoko's friend Salu was dead also, and Nalla, Nafiu's assistant, succeeded to the imamate without opposition. Nalla's assistant in turn was Brimah (or Buraimo, Arabic *Ibrahim*), the son of Nafiu; he eventually succeeded Nalla. Brimah's assistant was Tijani, son of Nalla. At this point the orderly rotation between the two families broke down, for at the death of Brimah, some refused to accept Tijani ibn Nalla as *imām*, electing instead his younger brother Ligali. The following table illustrates the relationships. The dates are those on which the men took office.

<sup>1</sup> *Lagos Weekly Record*, 19 May 1923.



The cleavage between Tijani and Ligali arose from the 'Mohammedan Unrest', trouble which began during the tenure of Brimah. Those who supported Brimah were called the Lemomu (or *imām's*) party, those in opposition were called the Jamat. Brimah controlled the central mosque in Victoria Street, the Jamat centred on the Shitta Bey Mosque. The exact causes of the Unrest are obscure now. Tales are told of squabbles over money in the affairs of a social club. One paper spoke of 'an insignificant and idiotic but imaginary wrong'.<sup>1</sup> The development of the quarrel however raised many points of principle.

The propriety of having a written constitution for Muslim religious organization was discussed, foreshadowing later Ahmadiyyah constitutional controversy, and reflecting the constant tension in coastal Islām between the thoroughly traditional and the more modern. The debate opened at least as

<sup>1</sup> *Nigerian Pioneer*, 28 July 1922.

early as 1915. At the beginning of 1920, the Lieutenant-Governor, Colonel Moorhouse, discussed the question with representatives of the Jamat. Moorhouse gave the opinion of the Lemomu party, that no precedent existed, in any Muslim country under Qur'anic law, for a constitution. Adam Animashaun replied as follows:

In Mohammedan countries, under independent Mohammedan or Moslem Government, it is the rule or Law acknowledged, that if anybody is convicted of stealing one of his wrists will be cut off. If a man commits adultery with another man's wife, he is to be drowned and so on. This is well known to the Lemomu Brimah and his party, for these rules are based on Koranic quotations. But we know, as everybody else knows, that we cannot be allowed to put into force any such effective and wholesome rules in Lagos, as we are British Subjects, and we live in a British Country under the British Flag where such punishments are not permitted for such offences which are very grave and heinous in the Islam religion; hence it was advisable and expedient to have a constitution for the British mohammedan subjects in the Colony of Nigeria in the form now under discussion.<sup>1</sup>

Finance was another problem, again one by which the Ahmadis were later most seriously affected. Recurrent crises arose in the Victoria mosque, as both sides attempted to control the congregational collections. Brimah temporarily suspended all such offertories. But in July 1922 he entered the mosque to find members of Jamat making a collection. He forbade them, they persisted. There was a fracas, and weapons were used inside the mosque itself. Many were arrested. Eventually the Fire Brigade cleared the building. (Another mosque incident occurred when Brimah refused permission for the Jamat to use the mosque for a meeting. The Jamat came, and found the mosque locked. Without further consultation, they brought a basketful of padlocks and doublelocked all doors and windows. The Lemomu party broke their way in next day, and were summoned by the Jamat for forcible entry.)

Political differences inflamed the unrest. Brimah supported the Government in the water-rate affair of 1916, the Jamat opposed. In 1919 the King of Lagos, Eshugbayi Eleko, became involved. Both parties had put forward their own candidates

<sup>1</sup> *Lagos Weekly Record*, 10 January 1920.

for certain religious offices. Without informing the Government, Eleko suddenly confirmed the Jamat candidates, who had opposed the water-rate. Government recognition was accordingly withdrawn from him for a month.<sup>1</sup> The poor King lost both recognition and stipend altogether in 1920, the Government believing that he was allowing himself to be exploited by political adventurers.<sup>2</sup> In 1922 members of the Jamat helped organize a petition (unsuccessful) for his reinstatement.

In 1924, after the death of Brimah, a meeting was held at the home of Ali Balogun of the Lemomu party, to reconcile the rival pretensions of Tijani and Ligali, sons of Nalla. Herbert Macaulay and J. Egerton Shyngle, leaders of the Democratic Party, attended, and most probably contributed to the unyielding position adopted by the Jamat. The Jamat representatives simply demanded that the Lemomu party's candidate be set aside in favour of their own. Ligali and the Jamat joined in festival prayers with Eleko in 1925, but in that year the bonds being woven amongst the Jamat, the unrecognized King, and the Lagos politicians were relaxed by the banishment of Eleko. He did not return until 1931.

During these political developments, the religious situation had rapidly deteriorated. When Brimah died, both factions elected their own *imāms*, Tijani with the Lemomu party, Ligali with the Jamat. For some time the Jamat practised a sort of prayer filibuster, fortified with bananas and tins of sardines, in the Victoria mosque; Tijani retaliated by locking the mosque when it was once empty. The matter went to court, and the decision went against the Lemomu party. The Victoria mosque passed to the Jamat. After this, the two parties began to pray separately, as they had once done for a time earlier in the Unrest. Ali Balogun built his own mosque for the Lemomu party.

The definition of imamate had been a matter of friction throughout the period, and was later to bedevil the Nigerian Aḥmadīs. It was argued at length before the court. The Jamat claimed that an *imām* is appointed only to lead the prayer and deliver the *khutba*, or sermon; he is elected by the *rātibis*, or

<sup>1</sup> Margery Perham, *op. cit.*, p. 265.

<sup>2</sup> A. C. Burns, *History of Nigeria*, 5th ed. London 1955, p. 235.

*imāms* of the subordinate mosques (of which there are about 38 for the Victoria mosque), and the appointment is approved by the congregation; his office is 'purely elective', and he may be deprived of it at any time. There is no requirement that the *imām* be succeeded by his own assistant.<sup>1</sup> This argument was accepted by the court, though it is clearly an oversimplification. The Jamat themselves had not allowed pure election to depart from the principle of two alternating families.

After this nadir, climax of a decade of argument, disorder, violence and mosque-locking, passions waned. Tijani ibn Nalla died, and was succeeded by Tijani ibn Brimah as head of the Lemomu party. Then Ligali died, and the Jamat accepted Tijani ibn Brimah as their *imām* as well, reuniting the two groups.

During the First World War, Aḥmadiyyah found a foothold on this troublous scene. A few young Muslims became concerned to find a more modern expression of Islām. To some extent this interest arose from the contrast between the Muslims, already nearly half the Lagos population, and the relatively westernized Christians, a contrast particularly abrupt in education.

A group, including Oba Adele, the present (1960) King of Lagos, developed around K. R. Ajose. Then L. B. Augusto joined, and attention came to centre on him; meetings were transferred to his house. Aḥmadiyyah literature from India formed an important part of the basis for the thinking and planning of these young men. In 1916 Augusto sent to Qadian 21 membership forms duly signed. It was about this time that a number of new adherents came forward, including some, such as Jibril Martin and Boonyanin Qasim, who were later to play important parts.

It was also in 1916 that Augusto embarked upon a Muslim school, catering for young children and held in Augusto's home. Such schools came and went with rapidity, but were important as the first efforts of local Muslims to provide for themselves western education within an Islāmic framework. Augusto's school lasted about a year. The need for properly qualified teachers was a major consideration leading the Lagos Aḥmadīs to request missionary help from India. Zeal for the propagation

<sup>1</sup> *African Messenger*, 6 March 1924.

of Ahmadiyyah doctrine was probably secondary. There is a parallel in the Gambian situation today.<sup>1</sup> In 1920, before anything had been done in response to this request, Augusto sailed for England to take up the study of law.

### *Nayyar*

'Abd-ur-Rahim Nayyar, first Indian missionary in West Africa, had been a companion of Ghulam Ahmad. He was of slight build, often troubled by ill health. Rumours of his death spread sometimes in Lagos; but, although he had to leave the coast within two years he lived to see Partition in India. He was regarded in West Africa as a man of learning, and was sometimes called Professor. He was gentle and unassuming, vague and supple in dogma, susceptible to dramatic myth, one of the old school of Ahmadis in his emphasis on Empire loyalty. His memory today is held in affection. Lagosians who long ago severed their Qadiani connection refer to him still as 'a father, loved by everybody', 'actually a man of God'.

Nayyar left London in February 1921. His assistance had been requested by the Fante Muslims of the Gold Coast also, who had paid his passage, so he stopped first in Saltpond. He arrived in Lagos on 8 April. Lagos Islām was divided into five: the Jamat, the largest group; the Lemomu party, enjoying a measure of official support; the Quranic People of Aroloya, declining and rather weak; the followers of Ogunro, a tiny body; and finally, smallest of all, the Ahmadis. On arrival, Nayyar was at once interrogated by the authorities, who feared lest he aggravate the Unrest. Passing this examination without difficulty, he took lodging with the local Ahmadis.

A Lagos paper interviewed Nayyar shortly afterwards. Nayyar, it reported, defined Ahmadiyyah as an organized movement of reformed Islām. He made four points of difference with the orthodox. First, 'We recognise no Khalifat outside the law of the land where we live, that is, His Majesty King George is my temporal sovereign and the Head of the Ahmadi Movement, in a word its spiritual Khalif. We do not look to the Hedjaz, Afghanistan or Turkey for our spiritual Khalif.' [If Nayyar really said this, the West Africans may be pardoned

<sup>1</sup> See pp. 126-9 below.

for some confusion about *khilāfat*; it is possible that the report is erroneous.] Second, the *Mahdī*-Messiah will not be a warrior, but comes to a spiritual kingdom; he has appeared in the Punjab. Third, 'we do away with all evil customs that have crept into Islam and ask the people to go back to the Quran.' Fourth, among the prophets are acknowledged not only Jesus, Moses and others, but all holy men. Here Nayyar waxed eloquent, as fond of Krishna as of Jesus, of Buddha as of Confucius, of Zoroaster as of Muḥammad. He said he was not hostile to other creeds, for no one can accept Muḥammad without accepting Jesus and others.

He said that he had come at the request of the Lagos Aḥmadīs, and the Fante Muslims, to educate the West African Muslims, to 'make them recognise their own weakness and the good their rulers are doing for them', so that 'instead of looking to other kingdoms and wasting their time in useless agitations', they might set their own house in order. He would make Muslims obedient to the law of God and man, 'peaceful citizens of the Empire'. Nayyar concluded with some remarks about the pacific nature of Aḥmadiyyah in India, the benefits of impartial British protection, and the beauties of the British constitution.<sup>1</sup>

Nayyar established an early connection with the Jamat at the Shitta Bey mosque. His first lecture was delivered there two days after his arrival: its title was, The essence of loyalty to the British Government and Islām. He hoped to win the Jamat, and even in September that year he wrote to a friend, 'There is all possibility of Shitta Bey party coming over to us Insha Allah.'

This hope was fond. Nayyar's message awkwardly straddled the Unrest. He might be in sympathy politically with the Lemomu party, but the medieval religion of that faction was anathema to him. And while his advocacy of a more formally organized, up-to-date Islām might appeal to the Jamat, his insistence on devotion to established government bored them. He failed to capture either side, and long before his September letter he had turned to the third sect, the Quranic People.

He lectured before them, as he did before each of the Lagos groups; at the end, one of the congregation recalled Ayanmo's prophecy about a white Muslim. This fitted very well, and

<sup>1</sup> *African Messenger*, 5 May 1921.

the prophecy as given by later Aḥmadiyyah apologists is richly ornate.

Their late Alfa Ayanmo reported to them of his vision of the Promised Messiah and Mahdi, how the Mahdi had promised him that though he will not personally visit this country but a great follower of his (Mahdi) will come and reform, guide, elevate and make stronger the position of the people and that whosoever will hearken to his voice with the Holy Quran in hand will prosper but whosoever will not hearken to him will perish.<sup>1</sup>

Further, Nayyar and the Quranic People shared concentration on the Qur'ān and disregard for the commentaries. Nayyar, coming from Ḥanafīyyah India, would in any case scarcely have employed the Mālikīyyah books current in Lagos, even if the double purpose of Aḥmadiyyah, to refute medieval orthodoxy and to prove Ghulām Aḥmad's fidelity to the Qur'ān, had not predisposed him to treat all commentaries somewhat lightly.

One month after Nayyar's arrival, *Ramaḍān* commenced. One of the Kosoko civil wars had begun in *Ramaḍān*; the Quranic People themselves had broken away in *Ramaḍān*; the Chief Justice in the final court case between the Quranic People and the Aḥmadīs in 1934 called *Ramaḍān* a time 'when nerves are excited, a time of religious exaltation'. On 6 June, two days before the festival which concludes the fast, a deputation of some forty leading members of the Quranic People, under their *imām* Dabiri, waited upon Nayyar, and took the Aḥmadiyyah oath, Dabiri placing his hands in Nayyar's and each man behind grasping his neighbour's shoulder. Nayyar sent a telegram to India reporting the conversion of 10,000, though the highest number, men, women and children, which can be accepted is about 2,500. The amalgamated group went together to the festival prayers: the former Aḥmadiyyah *imām*, Ajose, yielded place to his senior, Dabiri; Nayyar delivered the sermon—he seems never to have led the prayer.

Did the Quranic People know what they were doing? The shortness of Nayyar's time in Lagos, the extraneous factors encouraging the alliance, the excitement of *Ramaḍān*, and the very early outbreak of subsequent dissatisfaction all suggest

<sup>1</sup> N. M. Saifi, 'Alhaj Maulana A. R. Nayyar', Lagos 1948, pp. 3-4.

that the conversion was for most, though not for all, superficial.

Nayyar promptly arranged a new administration, with an Executive Committee and a Council of Elders. The balance of power between these was apparently never defined, and occasioned disagreement later. The Committee was almost exclusively composed of original Aḥmadīs, the Council was drawn from the Quranic People.

In the late summer, Nayyar returned to the Gold Coast for a visit, and did not come again to Lagos until the middle of December. The year 1922 opened inauspiciously. On the second Friday in February wrangling in the Aroloya mosque reached such a pitch that the police had to intervene. Thereafter the newspapers report a tangled skein of controversy. Government was drawn in, and Nayyar apparently agreed, at the suggestion of the authorities, to absent himself for a time from the Aroloya mosque. Aḥmadiyyah grip on the mosque was tightening nonetheless: at the beginning of *Ramaḍān* some of the anti-Aḥmadī faction, who had been locked out, forced their way in. They were bound over to keep the peace. This led on to the first division in Nigerian Aḥmadiyyah, the Okepopo split.

On Saturday, 13 May 1922, in *Ramaḍān*, a meeting of dissatisfied elements within the Quranic People was held before the Okepopo mosque. Amode, one of the leaders, made a speech reviewing the alliance with Aḥmadiyyah, at the end of which Dabiri was deposed from the imamate by acclaim, and one Alliyu put in his place. The Okepopo group continued separate until 1932, when it joined with further dissidents. What caused this first division, unhappy harbinger of many more?

Dabiri, the *imām*, had been only recently elected to office; he was a stubborn man, pursuing his own will. Some resented his part in leading the Quranic People to Aḥmadiyyah; on the other hand however, some kept loyal to Aḥmadiyyah only for Dabiri's sake, and departed after he died.

There was concern about doctrinal variations. The first Nigerian Aḥmadīs, before 1921, had disputed with the orthodox about the coming and character of the *Mahdi*; this argument now resumed within the ranks of the Quranic People. Questions were raised about the finality of the law and of prophethood.

Aḥmadiyyah rationalism was criticized, for example for its naturalistic explanation of the Red Sea crossing, or its spiritual interpretation of Muḥammad's visit to heaven. Translation of the Qur'ān was thought irreverent, yet Nayyar encouraged it. He replaced the traditional authoritarian exposition of the faith with a more flexible question and answer approach.

More serious than doctrine were matters of ritual practice. Nayyar did not make the mistake of his successor, Hakīm, of displacing the local *imām*. But he did introduce a novel form of sermon. In place of the Arabic sermon read almost by rote, he spoke freely in English on any Qur'ānic text, and employed a Yoruba translator (often Ajose). This *khutba*, or *wutuba*, sermon, was a sore point. Other aspects of worship were the use of rosaries, which Aḥmadīs condemned; and the Aḥmadiyyah allowance of ablution and prayer in European dress (particularly socks).

The participation of women in prayer was yet another novelty. It is very likely that before June 1921, when Dabiri led the united party to the festival prayer-ground, Muslim men and women had never prayed together in Lagos. The chasm to be bridged here is indicated by a court hearing in 1922-3, in which the Okepopo people tried to recapture the insignia of office from Dabiri. He was charged with heresy, and two of the points of deviation concerned women: Dabiri was accused of believing that women have souls, and of disbelieving that they suffer complete annihilation after death.

Accepted procedures on special occasions were a further ritual difference. The Aḥmadīs objected to the recitation of Qur'ānic passages over a corpse in the funeral ceremonies; to the sacrifice of fowls and rams at various stages in one's study of the Qur'ān; to divination; to the propitiatory sacrifice of a black cow in the time of plague.

It is generally believed today that administrative affairs, particularly affairs of finance, were the root cause of the Okepopo division. The Quranic People had had some sort of effective financial system; at least three mosques were theirs, at Aroloya, Atini and Okepopo, and when the 1921 conversion took place they held a cash balance of more than £80. When Nayyar left for the Gold Coast at the end of the summer in 1921, a purse of £50 was given him. Money was thus available: it was the

method of handling it that caused trouble. At the time of the conversion, the Lagos Aḥmadīs had themselves about £60. A joint fund between them and the Quranic People was established, and somehow increased to £600. Members sent to bank this put it under the name of Aḥmadiyyah, not the Quranic People.

The name of the account was a symptom of a deeper change. In traditional Islām, part of the mosque monies would from time to time be divided among the poor and needy, including clerics. Saved sums were sometimes available on loan for the private use of members: even today, Aḥmadīs occasionally ask that the funds of the Movement be advanced to them for trading and other purposes. Aḥmadiyyah swept this board clean. A system of monthly dues was established, 1s. for men and 6d. for women, thus stabilizing income to some extent. This money was carefully preserved in the bank, in part towards an Aḥmadiyyah Muslim school, which opened at the Aroloya mosque in September 1922. Gifts and loans ceased. Aḥmadiyyah finance thus pinched the clerics directly, and indirectly also through the restriction of customary ceremonies. The conservatives, prompted by purse and principle, took up the Aḥmadiyyah gauntlet at Okepopo.

Nayyar, before he was confronted with schism in his own ranks, had turned his hand to resolving the Mohammedan Unrest, without effect. On the whole the two quarrels, that between the Lemomu party and the Jamat, and that between the Quranic People and the Aḥmadīs, pursued separate courses. The local newspapers, which took an agitated interest in these things, struggled to find the same principles involved in both. Led astray by the superficial categories of *imām* and congregation, the same papers which supported the highly conservative Lemomu Brimah, supported also the doctrinal innovations and administrative reforms of Dabiri and Nayyar; while those which favoured the relatively radical and modern views of the Jamat, favoured also the reactionary Okepopo group.

This lack of parallelism perhaps explains why the two affairs did not intertwine more. Once the Jamat did interfere with the Aḥmadīs. Shodeinde, an important Aḥmadī, was preaching to a gathering in Balogun Square. Such open-air

exhortations were from the outset a distinguishing mark of Ahmadiyyah propaganda. Hecklers from the Jamat moved from insulting songs to physical violence, and at a subsequent court session bonds were forfeited and two men given prison sentences.

Nayyar's whereabouts at this time are uncertain. He visited Kano and Zaria in the north in 1922, returning to Lagos at the beginning of September. About the end of the year he left West Africa forever. Some twenty months separated his first arrival in Nigeria from his final departure, and that period was broken by two lengthy trips, one back to the Gold Coast, the other into the north. The Nigerian Ahmadis were left to manage their own affairs, as they had done for five years previously, for more than twelve years.

#### *The interregnum*

Agusto, who had gone to England in 1920, returned to Lagos in February 1924, a qualified barrister. Something had happened to him while he was in England; amid the claims and counter-claims today it is impossible to discover what. Nor is it possible to discover whether the doctrinal differences which became involved were a later gloss on, or an original prompting to, separation. It appears that Agusto fell out with the Qadianis in London, and transferred his allegiance to the Lahoris. When he returned to West Africa, he was no longer willing to observe the rigid separatism of Qadian in belief and ritual.

It was known in Lagos before 1924 that some trouble had occurred; perhaps at this early stage the rivalry began between Agusto and Jibril Martin (who left for England for his own legal studies not long before Agusto came home), a rivalry in religion and at the bar which lasted four decades, until Martin's death in 1959.

Relations between Agusto and Nayyar (they met in London both before and after Nayyar's Nigerian visit) cannot have been very cordial. Agusto says that Nayyar had promised to go to Nigeria solely to revive Agusto's school, engaging in no proselytizing activity; this is scarcely credible in one whose profession was missionary work, and the story is probably a reflection of Agusto's unwillingness to see the initiative pass

from his hands. The Aḥmadiyyah school, begun in 1922, was in no real sense a revival of Augusto's effort six years before; indeed, it proved a cause of argument, for Augusto advocated the investment of funds in economic ventures such as transport, while the others preferred to spend money on the school.

When Augusto left the Qadianī Aḥmadīs, a small number followed him, and the Islamic Society of Nigeria (now the *Jamā'at Islāmiyya*) was established. (Augusto believes the *Jamā'at* to be the *première* Muslim community in Nigeria.) At first the group tried to maintain a far-reaching catholicism: at the celebration of Muḥammad's birthday in 1925 both Muslims and Christians took part. But sectarian characteristics have crept in. Separate prayer is generally observed, even at festivals. To this day the group is very small. It maintains however some vitality and includes among its members Dr. Fafunwa, the founder of the Muslim Association of Nigeria (see below, pp. 115-6).

The Augusto affair distracted attention only momentarily from the tension still resulting from the conversion of the ten thousand. The Okepopo people made repeated attempts to unseat Dabiri, who nonetheless maintained his position until his death in 1928. There is nothing to indicate that his adoption of Aḥmadiyyah was not sincere, or that his loyalty faltered at any time after 1921. Equally, there is nothing to indicate that he gave up at any time the principal point of the Quranic People, the all-sufficiency of the Qur'ān.

At his death, he was succeeded by Jinadu (or Junaid), his assistant and former pupil. Jinadu had never differed with Dabiri, and his election was according to the normal pattern. But he was on the right wing of the Quranic People who had joined Aḥmadiyyah, and the Executive Committee took the precaution of making him sign a lengthy oath of office.<sup>1</sup> For the most part this was replete with unexceptionable sentiments. The third article was particularly agreeable to the Quranic People:

I believe in the Holy Quran as the revealed book of Allah wherein are all right discourses and directions. I will consider it my Quiblat Deen, that is its decision in all things social and/or religious shall be binding on me.

<sup>1</sup> Reproduced in *Nigerian Daily Times*, 19 April 1934.

But a good deal was ostentatiously Aḥmadiyyah, affirming the prophethood of Ghulām Aḥmad, the supremacy of the *khalifah* at Qadian, the necessity of loyalty to the British throne. In the seventh article Jinadu promised always to 'obey the orders and instructions of the Executive Committee'. Resolution of possible conflict between articles three and seven is not offered in the document; Jinadu said later that when he was installed he raised this question, and was told that in the last resort the Qur'ān should take precedence over the Committee. Nor does the document make any reference to the Council of Elders; nevertheless Jinadu felt that he was appointed by both Council and Committee.

In September 1928 Jinadu signed; by June 1930 the situation had so far deteriorated that the Executive Committee preferred formal charges against him, warning him to toe the line more closely in future. In October 1931 the Committee made a report on Jinadu's first three years in office, and issued further instructions. Early in 1932 two members (one of them Brimah Igbo who, it is said, had first linked Nayyar with Ayanmo's prophecy) were put under a ban of silence with threat of excommunication. They had apparently been scheming with Jinadu to resist the attempt by some of the original Aḥmadīs to introduce commentaries in the services at Aroloya. The offenders replied that such a ban could be imposed only by the *imām*; the Committee represented merely a society, they said, an auxiliary to the mosque.

In March 1932 W. Tete Ansa, a wealthy African merchant, invited the four principal Lagos *imāms*—of the Lemomu party, the Jamat, the Quranic People of Okepopo, and the Aroloya Aḥmadīs—to attend a meeting of reconciliation. The Executive Committee at once advised Jinadu that an *imām* had, in its view, no power to conclude a settlement independently. But Jinadu went ahead, and on 9 March, at Ansa's house, he and the Okepopo congregation signed a pact of peace, calling themselves the Aḥmadiyya Alquranic party; the Jamat were witnesses, the Lemomu party did not attend. On 10 March Shodeinde, a member of the Committee, locked the Aroloya mosque. The pro-Aḥmadīs met, without the Council of Elders, and appointed Ajose *imām* in place of Jinadu; more than ten years after his first displacement by Dabiri, Ajose came again

into his own. The committee wrote to Jinadu, informing him of his deposition, and forbidding him to come any more to the Aroloya mosque except as a private worshipper. Jinadu appealed to the police, and a meeting was arranged on 13 March.

At this meeting, Jinadu related the history of his period of office, drawing attention to the dual nature of his responsibility, on the one hand to the Committee and Council (he stressed it was to both, though the Council had sunk into eclipse), on the other to the Qur'ān. He protested that the present quarrel should not be resolved by balloting, which had no scriptural sanction. The Committee were adamant, and when votes began to be taken, Jinadu and his followers withdrew. The final vote, including many people not from Lagos proper, was 453 to 2.

The following Friday prayer was observed at the Atini mosque, Ogunro's refuge when the Quranic People split in 1919, by the Okepopo and Jinadu groups together. If the figures of the *Lagos Daily News* can be believed (although it was a violently partisan paper, the Nigerian Supreme Court, even when ruling in favour of the Aḥmadīs, seems to have accepted its estimates), there were present 1,800 people, 800 of whom came from Okepopo. A week later numbers at Aroloya had dropped to fewer than 80.<sup>1</sup>

Jinadu took the matter to court, and in April 1934 judgment was given in favour of the pro-Aḥmadīs. Sir Donald Kingdon was judge; Martin was among the lawyers who defended the Aḥmadīs, Augusto among those supporting Jinadu. Kingdon found the original conversion of 1921 a valid one, and likewise the deposition of Jinadu in 1932.

Jinadu went to the West African Court of Appeal, which gave its ruling in November 1934.<sup>2</sup> Chief Justice Deane of the Gold Coast argued thus. The Quranic People began as a sect with a particular doctrine. The Aroloya mosque was indisputable theirs in origin, a trust for the safeguarding of their doctrine. The conversion in 1921 did not involve all the Quranic People, though it may have involved the great

<sup>1</sup> *Lagos Daily News*, 19 & 26 March 1932.

<sup>2</sup> *Select Judgments of the West African Court of Appeal*, 1934-35 (wrongly printed 1935-36), vol. II, Lagos 1939, pp. 135 ff.

majority; nor did the adjustment of doctrine, insofar as there was any at all in so brief a time, involve tampering with the principal tenet of the all-sufficiency of the Qur'ān. The administrative arrangements, and breakdowns, indicate that the Quranic People maintained a corporate being after 1921, even among those technically Aḥmadī. In due course those of the Quranic People who had never been Aḥmadī, and those who had become disillusioned about the new sect, united to claim the Aroloya mosque for its original trust. Deane ruled that they were in the right. He reversed the decision of the lower court, and the Aroloya mosque, after twelve-and-a-half years under Aḥmadiyyah control, returned to the Quranic People. It is their mosque today.

Thus ended the conversion of the ten thousand, having faltered through two principal divisions and endless squabbles and court argument. Perhaps fifty Aḥmadīs had welcomed Nayyar in 1921; perhaps 500 were left to bind up their wounds in 1943.

### *Hakīm*

Faḍl-ur-Raḥmān Ḥakīm first came to West Africa at Nayyar's request for assistance. He joined Nayyar in Lagos, but soon went back to the Gold Coast to take charge. Of more significance was his second visit, in 1929, on his way to India. He arrived in July, and left again in August, visiting within that short compass Epe, Ijede, Agbado, Ibadan and Zaria. He was given an address of thanks by the Nigerian Aḥmadīs who asked for a permanent Indian missionary in Nigeria. Martin and AJose were among the signatories, Jinadu was not. This request was supplemented by others. In 1933 Ḥakīm was back in the Gold Coast, and the Nigerians were told that he would come to them if they would pay his fare. The treasurer pulled a wry face. The women took matters into their own hands, raising £70. When they attempted to send this themselves, the Executive Committee interfered and despatched the money in its own name. Ḥakīm came to Nigeria in 1935, and continued until his final retirement from the coast in 1947. He died in Lahore on 28 August 1955.

Although Ḥakīm had come at the invitation of local Aḥmadīs, he startled them almost immediately into dissension. In June

1935, while he was on a return visit to the Gold Coast, an eight-hour meeting was held to thrash out differences of opinion, a meeting of which full minutes were taken, which have happily survived in Nigeria in several typescript copies. Even at this early date, two parties were clearly taking shape: the Loyalists, who accepted the effective supremacy of Qadian expressed in Nigeria by the Indian missionary; and the Independents, acknowledging Ghulām Aḥmad, but believing that each national group of his followers should exercise local autonomy. In 1937 the matter was in court. In 1939 the back of Nigerian Aḥmadiyyah was broken in two.

In 1935, people tried to formulate the disturbance in the familiar terms of *imām* and congregation, as in the Lemomu and Jinadu troubles. Within this framework, *imām* Ajose represented the conservative elements, the Executive Committee the progressive, with which of course Ḥakīm was to be identified. The categories however did not fit, for the grounds of controversy had shifted.

The traditionalist wing, deprived of its most spirited individuals and the bulk of its adherents by the divisions of Okepopo and Jinadu, was passive, even inclining towards Ḥakīm. At the June meeting, a spokesman for this group presented its plaintive view.

We elders speak Yoruba language. You youngmen speak English. All that we noticed was that there was a warfare of letters between one Division to the Executive Committee or from the General Secretary to a Division and so forth. We could not adopt the White-man's way to do things. We have indulged too much in this and we have become spoilt thereby. If things have been left to be done in Native ways we would have settled the matter before it developed to the extent it is now. But it is all done in English.

His judgment, following a cautious Yoruba proverb, was: 'Where there is majority there is the side for one to join and that I have joined'. To balance this the Committee itself was divided for and against Ḥakīm: Martin, vice-president, was Ajose's chief supporter.

Sharpening each aspect of the dispute was Ḥakīm's own rather domineering nature. His character must be set against that of Nayyar, moreover against that of Nayyar as seen across

the mellowing distance of twelve years of independence. Even in physique, Ḥakīm was Nayyar's contrary, heavily built and bearded, a bulky man. His temper was acid and direct, but not a sour temper harbouring grudges. He was constantly active in the cause of Aḥmadiyyah. He had also a keen sense of his own dignity. He insisted on the high place; he travelled first class, and stayed in government rest houses. He cultivated high acquaintance. A Pakistani missionary now in West Africa said that a man might be swept off his feet, coming from the most humble circumstances at home, and suddenly vaulted to eminence on the coast. Ḥakīm was a stickler for detail, severe in the standards he would apply to all Aḥmadīs. In this, headquarters restrained him somewhat, refusing his request that some twenty items, such as a ban on horse-racing, be incorporated as by-laws for the Nigerians. It was Ḥakīm who drew up the present marriage form; he had also a form for funerals, which required the payment of debts, proof of membership, witnesses and so forth, but this has fallen into disuse. He was authoritarian, and liked to keep all affairs under his own eye. He was too cunning a schemer; at one stage of the controversy, he sent letters to the loyal Nigerian branches, enclosing copies of the replies which they were to send to him.

The struggle for the imamate revealed the conflict of personality. Ajose, the first Aḥmadiyyah *imām*, had stepped down for Dabiri, and had remained quiet when passed over in favour of Jinadu; he was stung to resistance by Ḥakīm. Where Nayyar had been content to leave the leadership of prayer to Dabiri, giving to Ajose the compensating honour of translator, Ḥakīm seized the pre-eminence for himself. He asked if he might lead the festival prayers at the end of *Ramaḍān*; this was granted. He led the prayers at the Greater Festival without asking. An attempted compromise, in which Ajose and Ḥakīm were to lead on alternate Fridays, broke down. Nigerian Aḥmadīs were fiercely divided. Those who supported Ḥakīm argued that as a pilgrim and one who had prayed behind the *Khalīfah* he was entitled to this priority.

In this country we had preached to condemn those who did not recognise the Khalīfah as the Imam of the Age and here in our own midst is the Representative of the Khalīfah whom we do not

recognise. What then is the difference between us and the orthodox Muslims? We cannot forego the spiritual advantages which would accrue to us by the Maulvie leading us in prayers. Herein lies the chief reason for our opposition to Imam Ajose.

It was argued on the other side that Ajose had been the chief *imām* after Jinadu, and could not simply be set aside. 'In the Christian Churches, ecclesiastical etiquette would forbid a senior Minister to take the pulpit without seeking first the consent of the junior Minister in a Parish.'

Ḥakīm's authority was built upon his status as legate of the *Khalīfah*: the point of principle to be decided was the extent to which the Aḥmadīs would accept foreign control. Racial and national feelings appear for the first time. Ajose is said to have asked, should not black men have a black *imām*? Martin, after the split had become final, wrote a brief letter to Ḥakīm.

Mr. Hakeem, Africans are not fools as you seem to think. They judge not mere words but actions. I am an African, and I am proud to be an African; and if in spite of the Islamic principles and teachings, certain Indian Muslims still glorify in superiority complex in matters religious, I think their much vaunted spiritual attainment is a farce.

There were of course exactly opposite arguments as well. A white Muslim was a proud accession, and an overseas connection a grand affair. One speaker at the June meeting said, 'It is an indisputable fact that both in colour and in position Maulvie Hakeem is by far superior to Imam Ajose.'

Ḥakīm's sense of his powers as the *Khalīfah*'s delegate led him to treat the Executive Committee in rather cavalier fashion. When he arrived, the Committee assigned two offices to him, but it was only after considerable discussion that he accepted them, for he resented the implication that he was under the administrative authority of the Committee. Modern administration had been regularly a point of argument amongst Lagos Muslims; when at last the conservative elements of the Quranic People had departed, there should have been no further trouble over this in Aḥmadiyyah, but Ḥakīm ineptly offended some of his followers over just this matter.

The constitution was another focus of tension between Africa and India. The Nigerian Aḥmadīs had for many years

been operating under their own constitution, though it was registered with the Government only about the time of Ḥakīm's arrival. Ḥakīm tried to substitute a constitution from headquarters, and in November 1935 a hurriedly summoned meeting of the Executive Committee approved this change. Ḥakīm's opponents secured a reversal of this in court. So important did the issue of a constitution seem to the people, that the split is today often attributed to this alone.

Finance was another tender point. Ḥakīm managed all financial affairs himself, often taking important decisions without consulting his African colleagues. Nor was it his habit to keep orderly financial records. Nor did he economize about his own expenses, in the way that Saifi, now in charge in Nigeria, does. In view of all this, it is not surprising that Ḥakīm's critics should have advanced charges of wilful misuse of funds against him.

Following the melancholy habit of Lagos Islām throughout this period, the matter was often in court. In particular, there was struggle for the properties of Aḥmadiyyah. The fortunes of law have swayed back and forth, the Independents in the main successful, so that the Loyalists have had to build a second time. It was over a case concerning the ownership of the Elegbata school, the first full-scale Aḥmadiyyah school in Nigeria (which the Independents finally captured), that the split came to a head.

This was at the very end of 1939. Qadian had instructed Ḥakīm to disaffiliate all Nigerian Aḥmadīs, requiring an individual oath of each before he could return again to the fold. The disaffiliation orders were published in the papers on 29 December, and at 11 a.m. that morning Ḥakīm wrote to the Nigerian movement, resigning his position with it. The Great Schism had become irrevocable. While in 1935 those antagonistic to Ḥakīm had been a minority, in 1939-40 most of the Aḥmadīs declined to renew their loyalty to Qadian, setting up instead their own organization with Jibril Martin as president. The two groups may appropriately be called Independents and Loyalists: their official titles are, respectively, the Aḥmadiyya Movement-in-Islam (Nigeria) and the Sadr Anjuman Aḥmadiyya.

To this day the memory of Ḥakīm arouses the keenest

passion. Many of the Independents refuse to talk of him: *de mortuis nil nisi bonum*.

In the two decades following the arrival of the first Indian missionary, the Nigerian Aḥmadīs averaged one division every four years. The last of these was the birth of the Muslim Mission Community, founded by the son of *imām* Dabiri in June 1941, an off-shoot from the Independents. Since the group has always been small, we may pass over its origins, partly financial and partly administrative, without detail. Its constitution, a document of sixteen foolscap pages, is of more interest, reflecting some of the foregoing arguments. The motto of the Community is, appropriately enough for the son of an *imām* of the Quranic People, 'The Holy Qur'an, Our Guide', but the traditions are also approved. Ghulām Aḥmad is accepted only as *mujaddid*, reformer. Membership in the Community is incompatible with membership in any other religious body, but prayer behind an *imām* who is not of the Community is acceptable.

More than a quarter of the articles deal with the Executive Committee, which is the supreme authority. The drafters of the constitution seem not to have examined carefully the powers they were allotting: it appears possible for but four members of the Committee, acting in agreement, to amend the constitution and to do anything they please to the Community, within 'the teachings of Islam'. The office of the chief *imām* is described at length. He is to be appointed by the Executive Committee and remains under its authority. He shall give the Friday sermons, and lead the festival prayers. Article 47 begins with a trumpet blast against Ḥakīm.

No person shall, on his own, lead a prayer or deliver a sermon in a Mosque to which an Imam is attached, without the permission or against the wish of the Imam in charge thereof . . .

The Community professes twelve aims. One speaks in the typically proprietary Aḥmadiyyah way of 'defending Islam against all attacks and aggressions from within and without'. Another sets forth the exhilarating ambition 'to reform mankind morally, intellectually, socially, religiously and spiritually by devising ways and means and establishing institutions that tend to the attainment of that object'.

Half-hearted attempts at reconciliation between the two main groups, Loyalists and Independents, continued. In March 1943 Zafrulla Khan visited Lagos in passing. Hoping to repair the schism, he went to the Independents' mosque, and made a plea for unity. A joint telegram was sent to Qadian, in which the Independents offered to renew as a group their allegiance to the *Khalifah*, if the Loyalists would accept the constitution in use before Ḥakīm's time. Qadian declined the compromise. So deep was the suspicion of Ḥakīm that some said he had himself drafted the *Khalifah's* reply, and sent it to Qadian to be returned. After this disappointment, there was a further shift from Loyalists to Independents. Al-Ḥājj B. D. Oshodi, who in 1959 succeeded Jibril Martin as the Independents' president, was among those who changed at this time.

Ḥakīm left the coast in 1947. His departure seems to have caused a relaxation of tension, for in the years immediately following, both main parties were busy inaugurating schools. Nūr Muḥammad Naṣīm Saifī, who had worked for a time as Ḥakīm's lieutenant, succeeded him, and is today the chief missionary in West Africa. During Saifī's tenure, the principal alignments of Nigerian Aḥmadiyyah have remained steady, and progress has been made (particularly among the Independents) in education and other constructive things. These developments are discussed in later chapters.

From the beginning, Nigerian Aḥmadiyyah has been a Yoruba affair. A limited foray in Benin is described in the chapter on education. Efforts at northern penetration have also been made. Nayyar travelled to Kano and Zaria in 1922; Ḥakīm was in Zaria in 1929. The spread of the sect was not the result of these fleeting calls, but of government and commercial transfers taking Yoruba Aḥmadīs into the north. In April 1926 these immigrants laid the foundation-stone of their mosque in the *sabon gari*, or strangers' quarter, of Zaria; it is still today a neat and pleasant building. This mosque became a centre of controversy in the 1940's. Non-Aḥmadī Yoruba, who had been attending services at the new mosque, tried to introduce a practice called 'assalātu', meaning not simply prayer, but evening gatherings for singing, praying and taking collections. The Aḥmadīs opposed this, on account of the ostentatious dressing which it evoked, and the mingling of the

sexes. (West African Aḥmadiyyah has never adopted the 'revivalism' which marks many of the splinter Christian churches.) A quarrel flared, and the orthodox began to renovate their own mosque, which had fallen into disuse. They held their own Friday prayer there. The scandal of two Friday prayers side by side in the *sabon gari* brought the affair to the attention of the authorities, who seemed inclined to put both parties under a ban. (Sīdī Khalil, the Mālikiyyah jurist, laid down that Friday prayer should be said in the oldest mosque in the district; in practice, this is taken to mean the largest. The idea of a single Friday prayer for the city is firmly held in northern Nigeria, Gambia, and elsewhere; Freetown and Lagos are deviationist.) Ḥakīm went north to resolve the difficulties. He gained permission for the Aḥmadīs to perform the full cycle of worship separately, both in Zaria and Kano, but at the cost of pleading as a separate sect. He took the opportunity of lecturing, and created an impression through his ready quotation of Arabic, his use of several versions of the Bible in the attempt to prove alterations, and his convincing answers to questions.

Today there are Independent congregations in Kaduna and Minna, Loyalists in Jos and Zaria, both in Kano. But for many years virtually the only northern convert was the present *imām* in Zaria, a Hausa who came over in the 1930's. Two of the Pakistanis now in Sierra Leone, Shah and Qureshi, laboured without evident effect in Kano, where there are now a small *sabon gari* mosque and mission house. In the autumn of 1958 a third missionary, a young man named Muḥammad Baḥīr Shād, took up the thankless post. By Christmas a largely inactive group of about 100 Yoruba adherents had been almost doubled by northern additions. The implications of this sudden change in fortune are taken up in the chapter on politics.

One final Nigerian note remains. In January 1959 the Muslim Association of Nigeria was founded by Dr. Babs Fafunwa, a Yoruba Muslim who joined Augusto's party because he found it more progressive. Fafunwa is a young man with western education overseas, as are many of his Association colleagues. The Association is in part designed to nurture the religious loyalties of such students, whom the old-fashioned orthodox often gave up as lost to religion as soon as they left

Nigeria. It is consciously modelled on the Y.M.C.A.<sup>1</sup> Although it is still in fact limited to Lagos, and its activities have not extended much beyond the novel celebration of the end of *Ramaḍān* by a ballroom dance, it hopes to establish hostels, endow scholarships, and so forth. It would cater for Muslim leisure, supplementing the already established educational bodies. The Association is also taking an interest in the progress of the fund for a mosque at the University College, Ibadan. This fund remains extremely low, and appeals made to the Nigerian Muslim public have evoked negligible response (the Lebanese have been more generous).

The Association is non-sectarian. Its fast-breaking dinner was held in one of the Independents' schools and the main address was given by Ekemode, chief missioner for the *Anṣār-ud-Dīn*. There is a religious committee, with an *Anṣār-ud-Dīn* principal as chairman, and one of the Pakistani missionaries as secretary. It remains to be seen whether the Association can avoid drifting into sectarianism.

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Gibb, *Modern Trends in Islam*, p. 55.

## GHANA

Islām entered the Gold Coast from both north and south. In 1817 Muslims were reported in Ashanti, about three hundred people, mainly northern immigrants but with some local following. Some could speak Arabic.<sup>1</sup> The first Muslim settlements on the coast were in 1836, when liberated slaves were landed.<sup>2</sup> At the time of the Ashanti War, Hausa soldiers and constabulary came from Nigeria. In 1872 a cleric, Abū Bakr, came to minister to the spiritual needs of the troops.

Abū Bakr is an important precursor of Aḥmadiyyah. About 1885, he converted two Fante, Benjamin Sam and Mahdi Appah.<sup>3</sup> Ben Sam, a trader and Wesleyan teacher-catechist, was prepared for conversion by visions, once of a figure in Muslim dress, again when he was called to lead the prayer. The prayers of Abū Bakr were efficacious in bringing a child to Mahdi Appah, whom Ben Sam had brought from Paganism to Christianity, and who again followed his friend.

The two men unfolded a vigorous Muslim propaganda from Ekrofol. Ben Sam exploited his connections as trader and teacher. Fante Islām expanded rapidly. Differences between Islām and Christianity were not emphasized: many converts came from Christian schools, and could not discard their education. Also, they knew no Arabic, and preached from the Bible.

A school was opened in Ekrofol in July 1896, one of the earliest Muslim-western schools in West Africa.<sup>4</sup> Appah was manager; there were 41 pupils; the largely secular curriculum was taught in English. The school was the first Muslim school in the Gold Coast to gain government assistance; in 1902 this was enlarged with exceptional generosity, the Government

<sup>1</sup> J. Dupuis, *Journal of a Residence in Ashantee*, London 1824, pp. 94 ff., 142 & passim; see also T. E. Bowdich, *Mission from Cape Coast Castle to Ashantee*, London 1819.

<sup>2</sup> A. A.-A. Brown 'Historical Account of Mohammedanism in the Gold Coast', *Gold Coast Review*, July—December 1927, pp. 195 ff.

<sup>3</sup> A report on Fante Islām, written in 1913 by a Basel missionary, is printed in the *Ghana Bulletin of Theology*, December 1959 & June 1960.

<sup>4</sup> Selections from the log of this school are published in the *Muslim World*, October 1961.

agreeing to pay the head-teacher's salary. By mid-1903 Mahdi Appah's writing in the log is that of an old or sick man. His last comment, late in 1905, was this: 'I visited school so the school was low but am sorry of looking therefore I trust every thing to god that he will do what is like because he is knowing and wise.' Sometime later entries by Priest Benjamin Sam begin. In 1908 guinea-worm struck the school; attendance dropped to 15 out of 40; it was also the yam-planting season. In February the register began to fall; at the last entry, in May, it stood at 22. The last attendance figure, in June, was 12. The log then stops, without explanation.

Oral tradition supplements the log. Northern clerics continued to visit Fanteland, and prophesied that this venture into English education would lead to damnation. Mahdi Appah retreated, Ben Sam stuck to his guns. Ben Sam was too tolerant also about alcohol, and did not insist upon circumcision. The argument went before the District Commissioner. Finally Appah withdrew from Ekrofol; the departure of his supporters, reflected in the drop of the school roll by nearly a half, was the effective cause of the school's collapse. It is imaginable that the itinerant clerics diagnosed the guinea-worm as an expression of divine displeasure, but this is not mentioned in oral tradition. Two subordinate schools closed. Soon after, Ben Sam died, and Appah returned to Ekrofol. Muslim propaganda continued, now more orthodox, less western.

Perhaps the Christian mocked the Muslims for having no white man. A cousin of Ben Sam dreamt of white men called Muslims, as Ayanmo prophesied in Lagos of a white Muslim. Through the *Review of Religions* the Fante Muslims made contact with the Aḥmadīs, and requested a missionary. Qadian ruled that his expenses from London must be met by the Africans. This condition had been imposed on the Nigerians, who failed to meet it. Some of the Fante wondered: they knew of ordering cloth from England, but not men. The money was raised, and Nayyar sailed from London. His first landing was a fleeting visit to Freetown, and in March 1921 he arrived in Saltpond. His success among the Fante Muslims was almost complete. On the whole orthodox resistance was left to northern immigrants: the *imām* then in Ekrofol was Hausa; eventually he withdrew.

After only a month, Nayyar went on to Lagos. He returned later in the year, and when he left a second time he sent Ḥakīm to the Gold Coast permanently. Headquarters were established in Saltpond, where Ḥakīm began a primary school in 1923; now, there is also a middle school there, a spacious mission house and an excellent mosque. Work has from the first been primarily among the Fante Muslims, who form the largest single community in West African Aḥmadiyyah.

There are two qualifications to this creditable record. The Fante Muslims are primarily an agricultural people, often uneducated. This assuredly does not make them less devout, but it has hampered the appeal of Aḥmadiyyah as progressive Islām. Further, Saltpond, the headquarters, has become a backwater: It is not a capital city, like Lagos; it is no longer a commercial centre, like Bo in Sierra Leone. There is talk of moving to Accra, but the concentration of membership in the Saltpond hinterland, and the investment in building in Saltpond make this difficult.

Nayyar preached in Accra, but with little effect. Between 1915 and 1923 the Muslim community there was divided; there was a breach of the peace, and the mosque was closed; but Nayyar did not take part in local factionalism, as he did in Lagos. The present *imām* in Accra, Aḥmad Futa, remembers how Nayyar addressed the Muslims, saying that he had come to join Christianity and Islām. Aḥmad al-Mahdī is a prophet after Muḥammad, but with the same Qur'ān. Just as 'Isā came to fulfil and not to change, so Aḥmad brings no new law. The orthodox replied that they had known Islām long but had heard of no new prophet; nor did other missionaries claim as Nayyar did; nor could separate prayer be granted.

There is a mission house in Accra, but no mosque. A Pakistani missionary is usually stationed there; the congregation is perhaps a dozen men. Kumasi is a more important centre: the only Aḥmadiyyah secondary school in Ghana is there, and in addition to the Pakistani missionary there are several Pakistani teachers.

Aḥmadiyyah in the Northern Territories has a complex history. Mallam Sālifu, a native of Wa, was trading and teaching in the Kumasi area. One day in 1932 he came upon a village crowd gathered to hear a preacher, the Pakistani Nazir

Aḥmad ʿAlī. The chief asked Sālifu to judge the message. Sālifu found that for the most part it accorded with the Qurʾān and Muḥammad; but two things 'held his throat', that the Promised Messiah (which title Sālifu used in English) had come, and that Jesus was dead. Sālifu disputed these points with ʿAlī, arguing from the commentaries. In the end he stayed in the village for a month, and then went to Saltpond where he joined Aḥmadiyyah. He returned to his Ashanti station, and converted his pupils and some of his fellow traders.

News of these innovations came to Wa, and the *imām* wrote to Sālifu telling him not to return. But return he did, in 1933. Orthodox opposition forced him out, and he went a second time to Saltpond. Twice more he returned, twice more he was expelled. Not until June 1936 was he able to resume permanent residence in Wa. As a proof of the good relations of that period, Sālifu took part in the orthodox funeral ceremonies of people he had known. In 1939 Sālifu visited the small group of Aḥmadīs in Tamale, and preached in villages on the way. On his return, police protection was necessary. In November 1943 violence recurred, as an attempt was made to break down the Aḥmadiyyah mosque being built in Sālifu's compound. The Aḥmadīs submitted a petition to the Governor, Sir Alan Burns, early in 1944. Consultations followed, and the climate of relationships improved.

This had been a troubled time politically as well. The District Commissioner complained to the Aḥmadīs about Sālifu: 'it is very inadvisable to send one of your preachers to his own locality where his actions are bound to be interpreted in the light of family claims and intrigues.' Wa is divided into three gates, and the Na (or ruler) of Wa is chosen in rotation from the gate chiefs, there being thus strictly speaking no election. In 1929 a chief's son, Mu'min Koray, sent his membership form to Ḥakīm. Twenty years later this same man, despite opposition, became Na. He made Sālifu *imām*. Mu'min died in 1953, and the office of Na reverted to an orthodox Muslim. Two years later Sālifu was thrust from the imamate.

The latest stage in the controversy was in 1958, when Sālifu was denounced to the Ghana government. This episode is examined in Chapter 17 (see p. 182).

## SIERRA LEONE

As in Nigeria, the first membership forms were returned from Sierra Leone before the arrival of a missionary, by a handful of Freetown Muslims influenced by Aḥmadiyyah publications. At least six members joined in 1916. The first missionary was Nayyar, who stayed overnight in Freetown, in February 1921, on his way to Saltpond and Lagos. He lectured at the Fourah Bay mosque, where he was welcomed by the chief *imām*. Ḥakīm also stopped on his way to Lagos in 1922, and won approval for his educational ideas. Neither visit brought conversions. For many years no effort more concentrated than this was made.

Nazir Aḥmad °Alī, the founder of Sierra Leonean Aḥmadiyyah, came to the coast first in 1929, working for four years in the Gold Coast, during which time he converted Sālifu of Wa. In 1936, after leave in India, he came again to the Gold Coast, and in the following year was transferred to Freetown, the first permanent missionary in Sierra Leone. This first tour lasted until 1944. °Alī stands somewhat in the background of the annals of West African Aḥmadiyyah, lacking the gentle persuasiveness of Nayyar, the authoritarian zeal of Ḥakīm, or the organizing capacity and spiritual intensity of Nazir Aḥmad Mubashshir, the present *amīr* in Ghana. His achievement in establishing Sierra Leonean Aḥmadiyyah is nonetheless solid; he worked through individual conversions, and did not win groups as was done (fruitfully) in the Gold Coast or (disastrously) in Nigeria. He is the only Pakistani to have given his life on the coast.

°Alī spoke first at the Wilberforce Memorial Hall, telling of his coming as a Muslim missionary, and of *Mahdī*; he said that he would collect the Christians as well as the Muslims, for the *Mahdī* was also the second Jesus. After this ecumenical call, he went to the Islamia school beside the Mandinka mosque and addressed himself specifically to the Muslims. Orthodox

resistance was strenuous. ʿAlī lived in the house of the present Kande Bure, now Temne headman in the city and a Cabinet Minister, almost as a sanctuary.

Although there is a large Yoruba Muslim community in Freetown, the tribe which has provided almost all the Aḥmadīs in Nigeria, only two or three have gone over. It may be that the original Yoruba Muslims, the Aku, who are proud of their communal continuity, are instinctively aware of the point beyond which controversy must not be carried if the community is to be preserved. They have been divided by an intermittent religious quarrel since the 1880's, but, wiser than their colleagues in Lagos, they have not taken the crucial step of building two rival central mosques. Aḥmadiyyah requires just this step. The newer Yoruba Muslim immigrants live in Fulatown, rather than Fourah Bay, and work and worship with the Hausa, being thus more closely bound to orthodoxy.

Rebuffed in Freetown by all the tribes, ʿAlī moved north. First he went to the ferry town of Mange Bure, where Kande Bure's father was an influential figure. There also he had little success, and went on, to Rokupr the port. He won here some of the ruling class, and established a small community, with a school which continues today. There has been recurrent controversy, and relations are still bad. The orthodox *imām*, with his congregation, affirmed bluntly in 1959, 'There is no Muslim school here'. He meant that there was no school combining, in the orthodox view, proper religious studies and ritual with the standard secular course. He spoke rather pathetically of the way in which orthodox children at the school are turning away from the old people.

Three efforts had yielded only limited returns. It was late in 1939 that ʿAlī made the crucial move in the history of Sierra Leonean Aḥmadiyyah, leaving Rokupr and travelling across the country to Baomahun, near Bo. It is said that a Syrian trader in Baomahun, having read Aḥmadiyyah literature, wrote to ʿAlī in Rokupr. Again, perhaps a subordinate chief named Droman, now dead, heard of the fame of ʿAlī as a man of religion, and invited him to come. Droman hoped to enlist powerful 'medical' support in the contest for a higher chieftancy, and was presumably disappointed. In any case, Baomahun was at that time a flourishing goldmining centre,

and would have seemed attractive to the wandering preacher. So ʿAlī came.

All welcomed him, for his renown had spread. He preached at once of the *Mahdī*. The Baomahun Muslims countered with their expectation (very widespread in Sierra Leone) that the *Mahdī* would be heralded by the beating of a great drum, at the sound of which the unbelievers will perish (a p̄rospect which explains some conversions from Paganism). ʿAlī interpreted this as a parable. When the drum beats, all will be dismayed, knowing that it is too late to repent; similarly, Aḥmadiyyah dismays the wicked, for it condemns their practices. ʿAlī said that he brought Muḥammad's law, pared of corruptions. He emphasized the necessity of folding the arms in prayer, and of a more dignified pace in one's prostrations. He attempted to correct other customs. Many people joined. Some were miners; some were the secondary and tertiary producers of the boom town, relatively better educated.

There was a mosque in Baomahun, but no organized hierarchy of religious officials. ʿAlī lodged with the man who had built the mosque, Sanpha Tulla, and captured it easily. A school was opened very soon after ʿAlī's arrival. The first teacher was from Rokupr, and later another came from Saltpond. Muḥammad Ṣiddīq, now in Liberia, joined ʿAlī in March 1940, and the Baomahun headquarters boasted two Indian missionaries, a mosque and a school.

About this time ʿAlī made an important trip further east, and converted two of the Sierra Leonean Aḥmadīs most prominent today. In Fala, he met Qāsim, chief of Baama, one of the richest diamond magnates. Qāsim describes the incident. ʿAlī arrived with a considerable party, including Ṣiddīq. He asked the chief for permission to use the open-air courthouse, and this was accorded to him. He led the prayer and preached and invited followers. From Fala, ʿAlī went on to Boajibu, where the late Khalīl Gamanga was Paramount Chief. Khalīl was an educated man, and joined Aḥmadiyyah. His son, now Paramount Chief, continues in the faith. While Qāsim and the present Gamanga have made substantial contributions to Aḥmadiyyah—Qāsim for example took Ṣiddīq and two others on pilgrimage in 1958—the new sect has not spread much among their peoples. Both Boajibu and Baama

have Aḥmadiyyah mosques, but in the chief's compound, and not frequented by many beside the chief's family and dependents.

In 1942 the mission established itself at Magburaka, not far from Baomahun but (like Rokupr) in Temne country. A school was opened the next year. A number of wealthy and influential individuals have become members, including the builder of Adams Hotel; a substantial mosque was nearing completion in June 1959. But the community is numerically very small, perhaps twenty adult men. Rokupr and Magburaka remain the only outposts of Aḥmadiyyah in the Northern Province and Temneland.

As time passed, Baomahun threatened a repetition of the Saltpond disappointment, for the gold was gradually exhausted and the companies declined and went away. Sickness and smallpox were there. Now, there are many days on which not a single lorry visits the village. The dispersion of the inhabitants meant the spread of Aḥmadiyyah. This, together with ʿAlī's preaching, founded the community firmly in Mendeland, where the main membership continues today. (In curious contrast, many of the educated minority of Sierra Leonean Aḥmadiyyah are Temne.) While this expansion of the faith went on, it was clearly necessary to rescue the Baomahun headquarters from impending oblivion.

Oral tradition says that ʿAlī selected Bo as the new site, and that the District Commissioner there summoned a public meeting between orthodox and Aḥmadīs, which ʿAlī attended bringing (delightfully typical Aḥmadiyyah touch) five boxes of books with him. In the middle of 1944 ʿAlī returned home on leave, and Şiddīq took charge. It was Şiddīq who first reported to the Government the beginning of a religious school in Bo, in March 1945; a year later he announced that the school in Baomahun had been evacuated to Bo. Bo today has a diverse collection of institutions connected with Aḥmadiyyah: the largest Aḥmadiyyah primary school in Sierra Leone, two mission houses, a library in English, Urdu and Arabic, a printing press, and a general chemist's shop. Of the four Pakistani missionaries usually in the country, one is in Freetown, and three either in or touring from Bo.

Early in 1946 ʿAlī and his family came to Sierra Leone for

his second tour. He was in charge of the whole West African province, so that Bo had for a time the prestige now attaching to Lagos. Before the end of the year <sup>c</sup>Ali had gone to the Gold Coast, where he worked until 1950. Ill health forced him to spend some months in England on his way home for leave. He came a third time in 1954. This tour was as short as his second, for on 19 May 1955 he died at Bo.

It was about 1948 that Aḥmadiyyah finally found a noticeable foothold in Freetown. A small plot of land was purchased, and a small new mosque-mission house erected. There is always a Pakistani missionary in Freetown now, but thus far progress has been very slow. The establishment of a government-assisted Aḥmadiyyah school in 1959 may help.

An unofficial attempt to root Aḥmadiyyah in a new area, the diamond lands of Kono, has petered out. A small congregation grew up there, immigrants attracted by the diamond trade; but tightening government restrictions have whittled it down to two. One of these, once the *imām* of the Kono Aḥmadīs, was in Baama in June 1959, seeking refuge with Chief Qāsim.

## GAMBIA, THE FORMER FRENCH TERRITORIES, LIBERIA

Aḥmadiyyah comes to Gambia through publications, and the reports of traders returning; save for the recent visit of a Nigerian, there has been no formal missionary activity. The strength of the sect is hard to assess. A petition was submitted in Bathurst in 1955 on behalf of a Pakistani missionary applying for entrance; this document is said to have had perhaps 250 signatures, all of whom Saifī suggests were Aḥmadī. Unfortunately the document is lost: the Government never saw it, the Bathurst Aḥmadīs say they sent it to Saifī, Saifī cannot find it. The relevant letter in government files has only four signatures. Of 302 new memberships forwarded to Rabwah from Lagos in 1958 'fewer than ten' came from Gambia; one Gambian became an Aḥmadī while studying at Achimota. Aḥmadīs in Gambia are more likely to be in tens than in hundreds.

As in Nigeria about 1920, the chief attraction of the Movement is in education. The traditional pre-eminence of the Christian missions in this respect is manifest, particularly in Bathurst. There is one 'Muhammadan School', where the chief *imām* gives some Arabic instruction. Most Muslims are agreed that more should be provided. One obstacle is that Bathurst is too small to hold all her sons: a Gambian Mandinka, educated in Egypt, has gone to Dakar, where he has established two Arabic schools.

The Muslim Congress of Gambia includes the advancement of Islāmic education among its purposes. A small group felt that not enough diligence was being shown by the Congress, and about 1952 formed the *Jamā'at ul-Mu'minīn*, which has become partially (perhaps largely) Aḥmadī. It set up an Arabic school in Bathurst. A teacher, who had been trained by the Tijāniyyah in Senegal, was employed. The school did not receive government assistance. The teacher's salary and the building rental overtaxed the financial resources of the school's patrons, and it closed within a year.

It had been hoped to bring a Pakistani Aḥmadī to take full charge; the school opening had been an interim arrangement pending his arrival. The secretary of the *Jamā'at* had been negotiating with the Pakistanis, and in February 1953 he wrote to the Secretary of the Colony, requesting permission for a teacher to come. Mubārak Aḥmad Sāqī, from Sierra Leone, was the first candidate. The matter went to the Executive Council; towards the end of 1953 a negative answer was returned.

Although the school shut, efforts to introduce a Pakistani continued. His proposed work shifted from education to missionary endeavour, and the initiative passed more and more from Bathurst to Lagos. In 1955 Saifī wrote reviving Sāqī's case. The London Mosque pricked its Member of Parliament, Hugh Linstead, into writing to the Colonial Secretary. Muḥammad Ishāq Sūfī, pioneer in Liberia, replaced Sāqī as candidate. In November 1955 a petition (the missing one) was submitted on his behalf. The Government consulted the elected Muslims of the Legislative Council, and the chief *imām*. A general meeting of Muslims was called at the Muḥammadan School. Two sessions were held, and the *Jamā'at* argued the case of the missionary. A very large majority voted against admitting him. The Government accepted this advice, and sent an explanatory telegram to the Colonial Secretary. Blocked again, Saifī approached another M.P., Fenner Brockway; this inquiry did not pass the Colonial Secretary, no new evidence having been adduced. In 1958 Saifī made yet another attempt, asking permission to come himself; this also failed. After this, an African member from Nigeria visited Gambia for some weeks.

What are the reasons against the Pakistanis? Orthodox Muslims in Bathurst have considerable knowledge of Aḥmadiyyah doctrine and activity. In doctrine, it is objected that Aḥmadiyyah is not among the four accepted schools of Islām, and must therefore be in error. Aḥmadīs call those who do not accept Ghulām Aḥmad as the Promised Messiah unbelievers. Aḥmadīs are wrong in believing that the Messiah is only the likeness of Jesus, not Jesus Himself; that the *Mahdī* and Messiah are one person, not two; that the *Mahdī* is a prophet.

In practice, Aḥmadiyyah separatism is disliked. The

orthodox expect that zealous Aḥmadīs would pray separately, with their own *imām* and mosque, having no dealings with other Muslims. Bathurst is a unitary Muslim organization. There are many secondary mosques, but only one cathedral mosque, where all the male believers gather each Friday. This is in marked contrast to Freetown, where almost every tribe has its own central mosque.

This unity is not broken by loyalties to the different Orders, though both Tijāniyyah and Qādiriyyah are known in the city, and a few Murīdīs have recently been coming. The Tijāniyyah is much the strongest: the usual name for a subordinate mosque is *zāwiya*, defined locally as 'a place where the Tijāniyyah rite is practised'. All the leading *imāms* are Tijānīs, and the Tijāniyyah *dhikr* is observed in all mosques. The fact that Aḥmadiyyah has a quarrel with these brotherhoods is known.

Nonetheless, the sting of Aḥmadiyyah particularism is not yet directly felt. Orthodox fears are theoretical. The Bathurst Aḥmadīs do not in fact pray separately. Their leader stoutly denies that any principle requires separate prayer, and hazarded that the Pakistanis observed it because it was fitting that the most qualified man should lead, meaning in West Africa usually the Pakistani. Similarly, Aḥmadīs continue as active members of Tijāniyyah. A Pakistani missionary would certainly cause more strained relations.

The same is true concerning charms, which are very prominent in Bathurst. No orthodox Muslim mentioned the Aḥmadiyyah criticism of charms, but it may be that some of the amulet makers have a certain anxiety about the future of their livelihood. Bathurst Aḥmadīs do not object to charms in general, but only to such as contain some part of the Qur'ān, for it is wrong to conceal that Book; charms without the Qur'ān Aḥmadīs say they do not themselves use, but they will not preach against them. A further point of dissension upon the arrival of a missionary might be the status of women. At present, no woman ever enters a *zāwiya*, and in the central mosque they have a separate room for their prayers.

To these points, the Government adds its own concern lest Aḥmadiyyah disrupt the present harmony between Muslims and Christians. The Government is also suspicious that the

Aḥmadīs may be encouraged by persons whose political objects would be served by the division of the Muslims; no evidence is given for this belief.

Aḥmadiyyah in Gambia is neither passionate in dogmatic conviction, nor zealous in particularist action. It seems a reflection of the general coastal concern for education which combines Islām and secular modernity. Despite the past wrangling, the inauguration, either by the Government or by the orthodox, of a vigorous Muslim school programme would probably cure the discord.

All the objections of the Gambian orthodox are underlined by the example of the former French territories, from which the Gambians (and many Sierra Leoneans) take their religious inspiration: why, it is scornfully asked, is Aḥmadiyyah not found in the French lands, if it is all that it claims to be? Some French connection would be an asset to the Aḥmadīs, but no formal endeavour has yet been made to establish this. At the time of Guinea's independence there were rumours of an attempt to be made there.

Aḥmadiyyah reticence has been in part owing to an impression that the French authorities would be obstructive,<sup>1</sup> though there is little real sign of this. André says that an Aḥmadiyyah missionary was refused permission to enter Dahomey,<sup>2</sup> but no Pakistani in West Africa could remember this. There is also a language difficulty. This is not insuperable, for Aḥmadiyyah publications in French exist, and some of the Pakistanis embarked upon their present work with practically no English. African languages of course do not respect the boundaries imposed from Europe. Probably the main reason against a French attempt has been the strong tradition of a British imperial connection.

Such Aḥmadiyyah as exists in the former French territories has spread more or less accidentally, following the movement of traders. There are some Yoruba Aḥmadīs in Porto Novo; Aḥmadīs have spilt over into the Ivory Coast from Wa. One Aḥmadiyyah trader from Ashanti went north into French territory, preaching as he went along. He claims forty converts; two lads returned with him to Saltpond for the annual Aḥmadiyyah

<sup>1</sup> Trimmingham, *Islam in West Africa*, p. 232.

<sup>2</sup> P. J. André, *L'Islam Noir*, Paris 1924, p. 84.

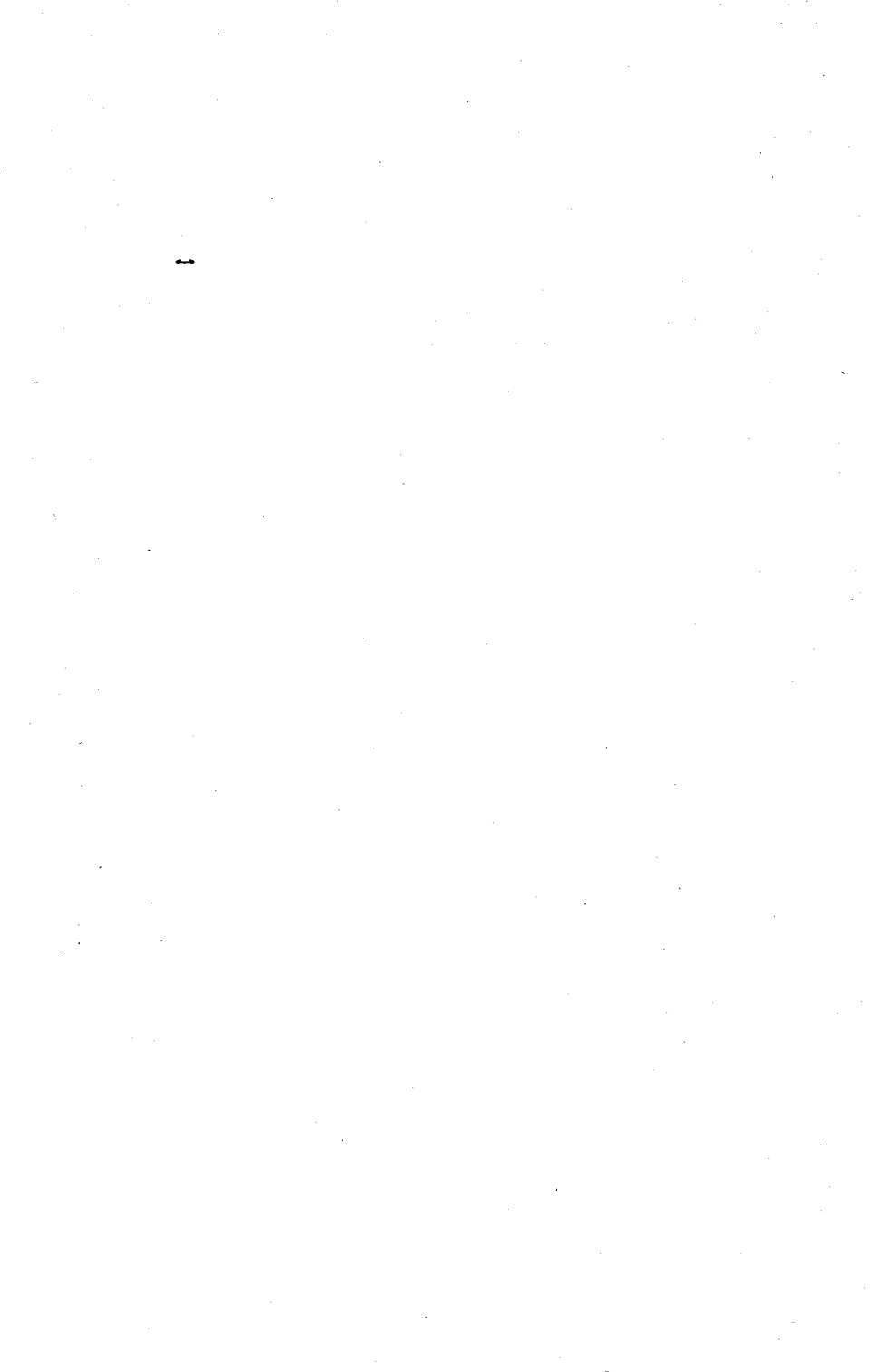
conference in 1959, and all three then went north again, fortified with Aḥmadiyyah pamphlets in French which Mu-bashshir had prudently ordered. It is probably to these adherents that J. P. Roux, one of the most recent writers about West African Islām, refers when he mentions the establishment of Aḥmadiyyah in the Upper Volta. (He describes the nine-year-old Aḥmadiyyah secondary school in Ghana as 'Universités'.)<sup>1</sup>

An Aḥmadiyyah mission was established in Liberia in 1956, by Sūfī. Şiddīq had visited in 1952, and given President Tubman an English Qur'ān. There is a mission house, on the same modest scale as that in Freetown, which is used as a mosque and a religious school. There is hope of securing land for a separate school, but the claim of the 1959 Sierra Leone Aḥmadiyyah calendar, that Tubman had assured Şūfī 'of his and his Government's full support', and had 'promised him a suitable piece of land in Monrovia proper for an Aḥmadiyyah Muslim School', is exuberant. The mission has made very few converts. Orthodox opposition is firm and sometimes bitter. Şūfī returned to Pakistan in 1959. Şiddīq, until then *amīr* in Sierra Leone, took his place, much to the chagrin of the Sierra Leonean Aḥmadīs, who did not wish to let him go.

<sup>1</sup>J. P. Roux, *L'Islam en Occident*, Paris 1959, p. 272.

PART IV

AHMADIYYAH IN WEST AFRICA:  
DOCTRINE & ORGANIZATION



## AḤMADIYYAH BELIEF IN WEST AFRICA

Aḥmadiyyah belief, with the exception of a few outstanding points, is usually vague in West Africa. It falls into two parts: first and better known, the ritual actions of prayer, pilgrimage and fasting; and second, teachings about the founder. The chief heads of disagreement with the orthodox are, in descending order of importance, prayer, the *Mahdi*, and prophethood.

*Prayer*

A different procedure of prayer is in West Africa almost universally felt to be the most prominent characteristic of Aḥmadiyyah. Aḥmadīs, following Ḥanafīyyah practice, fold their arms hand to elbow at the beginning of prayer; the coastal orthodox, of the Mālīkiyyah school, leave their arms at their sides. For many, both Aḥmadī and orthodox, this is the only known divergence, and constitutes the reason for separate prayer. Each of the four schools in Islām has its own peculiar variations in prayer, such as this, and all are accepted. Embroiled in such controversy now, Aḥmadīs are involved in arid argument exhausted centuries ago by medieval schoolmen. Mālīkiyyah practice is variable: some Mālīkiyyah Tījānīs, for example, prefer to fold. Perhaps for this reason, the orthodox are slightly more tolerant than the Aḥmadīs: in Wa, the orthodox teacher said that the position of the arms was unimportant, while Sālifu, the Aḥmadiyyah chief, said that to leave them at the sides was *bid'ā*, innovation or heresy. One Pakistani missionary said that folding is 'our sign'. Very few Aḥmadīs are aware that the question is immaterial.

Various rationalizations and myths circulate to explain the two positions. For example, it is said that Mālīk was so badly beaten for refusing to curry a king's favour (or Muḥammad suffered so much on the flight from Mecca), that he could not fold his arms though he wished to; alternatively, Muḥammad folded only in order to relieve a pain in his arm. And again,

Muḥammad forbade folding because people were concealing idols under their armpits.

There are less noticeable differences as well. In many places Aḥmadīs take longer over their prayers than the orthodox. Aḥmadīs at prayer should sit straight on their feet, not with their feet to one side; and so on. Orthodox conclude their prayers with the ritual repetition of phrases, such as, praise be to God, counted out on a rosary: Aḥmadīs dislike the rosary (at least in theory, though it is common among them in Sierra Leone) because Muḥammad did not have one. An additional purpose may be served, unconsciously, by this objection, for in West Africa the rosary is an integral part of the ceremony of the Orders. It may be presented by the *shaikh* to the new member at initiation, and is a symbol of the indissoluble link there established.<sup>1</sup> A Tījānī may return the rosary to his *shaikh* for *tashdid*, or renewal, if he wishes to make exceptional atonement for a fault. Aḥmadiyyah criticism of rosaries is a blow at the Orders.

Aḥmadīs have only one criterion in prayer, that is, what they believe to have been the practice of Muḥammad. Arguments in the modern style justify certain parts of the ritual, such as the democracy of the congregation, but other parts which cannot be so justified are not therefore discarded. Aḥmadiyyah prayer is radical, returning to a root form; it is not reformist, altering anything in the original. Aḥmadīs do not use rosaries, but the set words are still repeated a hundred times, counted on the joints of the fingers. Aḥmadīs still feel that it is important that the number of rows in the congregation at funeral prayer be uneven; and that the worshipper cross the threshold of the mosque with his right foot entering and his left when leaving.

Aḥmadiyyah allowance of women in the congregational prayer is a point of contrast with much orthodox Islām, where the commoner practice is to have a small women's room adjoining the central mosque. In fluid areas, as Yorubaland, the Aḥmadiyyah example has been adopted by some of the orthodox. This privilege for women, though creditable, is not sweeping. In all mosques the women are kept apart from the men, if possible behind a wall or screen which renders them invisible. (Orthodox Muslims more often remark on the

<sup>1</sup> Gouilly, op. cit., p. 97.

participation of Aḥmadiyyah women at the festival prayers, when they pray some distance behind the men, for then they are outdoors and can easily be seen.) Because of this separation, the women can sometimes scarcely hear the service. No Aḥmadiyyah woman can be *imām*; only among the Independents can a woman address a mixed congregation. Aḥmadīs, like the orthodox, forbid a menstruating woman to take part, even at home, in any religious rite (except the Annual Meeting, which cannot be made up later like *Ramaḍān*).

Aḥmadīs are conspicuous finally for their attention to certain prayers not usually much regarded in coastal Islām. One is the *tahajjud* or midnight prayer. Another is *istikhāra*, asking blessing or foreknowledge. The approved method for this is to perform two ordinary prostrations, followed by a special Arabic passage, and to go to bed without talking to anyone. The prayer may be simply a request for God's blessing, or that God may send direction (as in a dream, of powerful significance in the West African mind). This prayer is adopted at times of decision, before a marriage for instance. Several Aḥmadīs were converted after submitting the truth of Aḥmadiyyah to God's judgment by *istikhāra*. One of these asked that a favourable answer be expressed by his seeing a number of Muslims, or something blue or something white.

Underlying all these considerations is the fact that Aḥmadīs pray separately, and will not join behind an orthodox *imām*. This is particularly evident at the festival prayer, when all Muslims gather in the customary plain or glade, and it is seen that there is no longer one congregation, but two or more. Fortunately the prickly questions of unbelief, which cause separate prayer, are not explicitly understood in coastal Islām. Separatism is however galling on the coast, where a main task of Islām is to create and define a new community amid the decay of the old. Aḥmadiyyah splits the new creation.

Respect for pilgrimage is widespread in coastal Islām, both Aḥmadiyyah and orthodox. Martin was chairman of the Pilgrims' Board of the Western Region; he died in Arabia in 1959, on his second pilgrimage, which was to have had the secondary purpose of preparing better facilities for West African pilgrims. West African Aḥmadīs apparently do not maintain obvious separatism either in travel on the pilgrimage, or in the

rites in Arabia. Sometimes they say that while a separate witness is necessary amid the imperfect Islām on the coast, everything is done properly in Arabia and Aḥmadīs there have no complaint to make. One man in Kumasi said that congregational prayers with the orthodox were permissible in Mecca, but that the Aḥmadī there must afterwards repeat the prayer for himself.

At least two Aḥmadīs from West Africa, both now among the Lagos Independents, have visited Qadian. A few have gone to headquarters to study: two boys from Sierra Leone and two from Ghana, and two sons of a marriage between a Pakistani missionary and an African woman. There is no sign that Rabwah will ever replace, or even supplement, Mecca as the focus of pilgrimage from West Africa.

Sometimes pilgrimage reduces the grounds of controversy between orthodox and Aḥmadī, for the West African pilgrim sees that the position of the arms in prayer may legitimately vary. About more important matters, orthodox clerics are likely to hear their suspicions of Aḥmadiyyah confirmed by their fellow pilgrim-theologians.

It is not on the pilgrimage, but in rites at home which parallel those in Mecca, that an Aḥmadiyyah variation appears, for the Festival of Sacrifices is observed by the Aḥmadīs, as are most other festivals, with less outward *éclat* than among the orthodox. The same situation is repeated in the fast.

Aḥmadīs and orthodox fast alike during *Ramaḍān*. The Pakistani missionaries encourage fasting at other times, as a weapon of self-discipline and even penance. There is no relaxation of the rules of fasting except within the traditional framework: a pilot may claim exemption under the old rule for travellers, the radar operator at the airport may not. The Independents are sometimes willing to consider setting the date of the fast by calculation beforehand, but the Loyalists are resolute that the choice between the two possible days be left to the moon's visibility; even though it is known that the fast has begun in Rabwah on the first day, that will not be followed in Lagos if the moon is not seen there too.

The Aḥmadiyyah ban on extravagant celebration applies in marked degree to the festival at the end of *Ramaḍān*, which is sometimes pared to nothing more than the festival prayers.

The stricter Pakistanis do not allow processions to or from the praying grounds, but not all their African adherents adopt this advice. *Lailat-ul-Qadr*, that night late in the month of fasting when angels bend near the earth to hear the prayers of men, is dramatically observed by both orthodox and Independents, but the Loyalists are opposed to this, partly because the exact night cannot be determined by man. (The orthodox commemoration is flexible: different groups within a single town may choose different nights; the *Anṣār-ud-Din* in Ibadan cheerfully postponed their 1959 meeting for twenty-four hours on account of rain.) The Loyalists are even reluctant to accept the exceptional preaching opportunities of *Ramaḍān* evenings, though (like the orthodox) they hold special mosque classes.

### *The Founder*

A small proportion of West African Aḥmadīs know elementary facts about Ghulām Aḥmad: his name, his dates, where he lived. A small proportion enjoy the wildest fancies about these things: one said the Founder's name was, Peace and the blessing of God be upon him (in Arabic), another that he lived before Muḥammad, another that his home was in Arabia, a country in Africa. In between are the majority, knowing the Founder perhaps as Hazrat *Mahdī*, aware that he is now dead, locating him in India.

Ghulām Aḥmad's titles, *Mahdī*, Messiah, *mujaddid*, reformer, prophet, and even *khalīfah* (for there is sometimes confusion between him and his successors), shift and shade into each other with rapidity. It is not unnatural that Messiah and *Mahdī* should be confused, applied as they are in Aḥmadiyyah to a single person; Zaria was an exception, for the Aḥmadīs there spoke of the Messiah as an ardent supporter of the *Mahdī*, not exploring however the ramifications of Ghulām Aḥmad an ardent supporter of himself. The weight of opinion seems against the prospect of anyone coming again with the status of *Mahdī* or Messiah, while reformers, prophets and *khalīfahs* may be expected. One Aḥmadiyyah teacher in Sierra Leone commented that if Aḥmadiyyah set the world to rights, there would probably not be need for any further prophets; nor would there be if nuclear war brought the world to an end. Escaping Aḥmadīs on the one hand and A-bombs on the other, we might

have another prophet. The fact that Ghulām Aḥmad has in the title of *Mahdī* and Messiah unique honour introduces an element of finality in his position, which one of the Pakistanis in Sierra Leone sought to counter by saying that, although no other *Mahdī* may come, a prophet is the highest rank, subsuming all others, and that a future prophet may thus be 'a sort of *Mahdī*'.

The *Mahdī* title is the one most commonly given to Ghulām Aḥmad by his West African followers. There is a pervasive though ill-defined current of interest running through much of coastal Islām in the idea of *Mahdī*, and Aḥmadiyyah has capitalized on this familiarity. One Nigerian ex-Aḥmadī has taken the status of *Mahdī* for himself.

Dispute whether or not the *Mahdī* has come is the second main head in the orthodox controversy with Aḥmadiyyah in West Africa. There is occasionally a curious willingness to suspend judgment: some orthodox say that the *Mahdī* may have come without their knowledge, and some cautious Aḥmadīs in Sierra Leone explained that they had not themselves been in India and could not therefore speak with authority. In general however the Aḥmadīs say that he has come, and the orthodox deny it. The denial rests on the traditional expectation that the *Mahdī* will be of the family of Muḥammad, will arise in the heartlands of Islām, and will be distinct from the Messiah. There is discussion about the signs which are to indicate the coming of *Mahdī*. Among the best known to the orthodox are the increasing immorality of wives, the decline of learning with the clerics, etc. Aḥmadīs tend to stress the more fantastic trimmings of tradition, giving modern interpretations: ears and eyes are lengthened by telescopes and telephones, the train is the creature with fire inside, etc. These and other details are often confidently asserted to be in the Qur'ān.

There is argument whether or not the *Mahdī* is to be a man of war. Peaceful *jihād* is one of the few principles of Aḥmadiyyah which most Aḥmadīs in West Africa know. A handful of West African orthodox agree, either because of the spread of Aḥmadiyyah ideas or from an older mystical heritage, but the vast majority still expect a violent figure.

A small number of West African Aḥmadīs know the real meaning of the term *Mahdī*, one who is guided. Sālifu of Wa

would apply the title to anyone who teaches rightly the difference between good and evil, a good example of the way in which Aḥmadiyyah attention to verbal precision may overturn the effective meaning of words. One Lagos Independent relied for his definition on the Concise Oxford Dictionary, and rather incongruously quoted about insurrectionists in the Sudan.

The Pakistani missionaries use the title a good deal, but usually without exactness. Shād in Kano referred to the tradition that *Nabī* ʿĪsā will return to break the Cross and kill pigs; he attributed this to the *Mahdī*, for his teaching in Kano hinges upon the *Mahdī* and *Dajjāl*, and explained that breaking the Cross means overthrowing the crux of Christian dogma—killing pigs is Shād's amiable parallel for dealing with the orthodox Muslims.

Whether Ghulām Aḥmad was a true prophet or not is debated only slightly less than his claim to be the *Mahdī*. Most Loyalists affirm his prophethood, adding the qualification that he brought no new law. There has been however a considerable retreat from this in some places. Although the personal activities of the Lahorīs in West Africa have been limited to a visit by one of their missionaries, Shams-ud-Dīn, in the 1930's, who did not leave any permanent organization behind him, the doctrines of the sect are fairly widespread. Something of this owes to the dissemination of publications, in particular Muḥammad ʿAlī's *Qur'ān*; something also to the indigenous attempt to reconcile Aḥmadiyyah modernity with traditional scruples.

Lahorī tenets which may be found in appreciable strength among West African Aḥmadīs and ex-Aḥmadīs are the two fundamental ones: that there can be no prophet after Muḥammad, Ghulām Aḥmad having been only a reformer; and that separate prayer is not necessary. One Lagos Muslim left Aḥmadiyyah for a Lahorī-flavoured orthodoxy because of the separatism of Aḥmadīs at funeral prayers: he knew that one should not pray at the funeral of a Pagan, and wondered what were the implications of the Aḥmadiyyah refusal to pray for a non-Aḥmadiyyah Muslim. The question of prophethood did not so much disturb him, for he felt that title should be more widely distributed anyhow, for example to a man like Einstein.

Such faltering from Qadianī views is most common among

Nigerian Aḥmadīs. Two splinter groups, the followers of Augusto and Dabiri, affirm Lahorī belief outright (though Dabiri still admits the virgin Birth of Christ, against the teaching of Lahore). The Independents, though they emphasize that they have no formal connection with Lahore, and though Qadianī doctrine has considerable support among them, appear on the whole more inclined to the Lahorī side; this is particularly true in the Benin area. To questions of prophethood and prayer they add a common grievance about the Qadianī *khilāfat*. The Pakistani missionaries are anxious to prevent the Great Schism in Nigeria from becoming a doctrinal division along the lines of the 1914 split; they prefer to define the Nigerian trouble as constitutional only.

### *The Scriptures*

The qualification to Ghulām Aḥmad's prophethood, that he brought no new Law to replace the Qur'ān, is well grounded in West African Aḥmadiyyah. The seed of disagreement has been sown by the Aḥmadiyyah belief that the Qur'ān is created, not uncreated (see above, p. 40), but at present almost no African Aḥmadī is aware of the two views, much less of the history and theological import of the debate between them. In West Africa the comparison between the eternal Qur'ān, and the Word which was in the beginning with God, may be a fruitful first step in explaining the Trinity. Aḥmadiyyah would disrupt the parallel.

The idea of translating the Qur'ān (though not the Arabic formulae of prayer) is gradually gaining wider acceptance, largely but not exclusively through the work of Aḥmadīs. The Loyalists' annual meeting in Lagos proudly displays Aḥmadiyyah publications in French, Swahili, Urdu and other languages. Several Aḥmadīs owe their conversion to the fact that Aḥmadiyyah provided them with an English Qur'ān which they could both read and understand. Muḥammad 'Alī's is the most widely known on the coast, though western versions are not uncommon, particularly Rodwell's. One orthodox cleric in Bathurst was able to compare Sale and Prideaux. The Qadianī translation, being more recent, is rarer.

In contrast with the situation in East Africa, little attention is paid to African languages. There is no missionary fluent in

an African language, though some have spent ten years and more in a single language area. (Some indeed have first to learn English after their arrival.) A few pamphlets, one for example giving Yoruba and Arabic texts for the first one-and-a-half chapters of the Qur'ān, are available in some of the leading languages, but only a few pages in Hausa, the most important Muslim tongue.

Progress towards rendering the Qur'ān into Hausa goes on among the Nigerian orthodox. Traditional resistance to translation extends beyond the Qur'ān to the life of the prophet. Despite this, the North Regional Literature Agency (an independent non-commercial enterprise financed by the government, which closed in 1959 because of the need for official economy) was able to publish a life in Hausa, *Tarihin Annabi*, by Abū Bakr Imām, with a foreword by *Shaikh* Awad, principal of the Kano School of Arabic Studies. The principal is from the eastern Sudan, Imām is Nigerian. About 1957 the Agency inquired from the Sultan of Sokoto about translating the Qur'ān into Hausa, and received a discouraging answer. Nonetheless another northern teacher, Haliru Binji of Zaria, has published a number of popular school pamphlets which include selections from the Arabic Qur'ān, translations into Hausa, and a summary in Hausa. Now Imām and Binji are working together on an annotated Hausa translation of the Qur'ān. Binji is careful to emphasize that the miracle of the divine style makes translation forever impossible, though the sense may be given, as Arberry's translation is called *The Koran Interpreted*. Saifī sent Binji an Aḥmadiyyah English version; Imām is considerably influenced by Aḥmadiyyah thought, particularly in its anti-Christian aspect. It is therefore not unreasonable to expect Aḥmadiyyah traces in this new translation, should it ever appear.

The Independents are an exception to the Aḥmadiyyah lack of interest in local languages. A group of three translated the entire Qur'ān into Yoruba. A committee of twelve, including one woman, is now checking and annotating this. Martin was chairman of this committee at the time of his death; the work goes on despite his loss. A letter in September 1959 said that the committee was 'very active at the work and by the grace of Allah we have been inviting quotation from abroad so that as

soon as the review is completed we would pounce on its publication'.

To most West African Aḥmadīs the Qur'ān is much less known than the Bible. Long before Aḥmadiyyah was heard of on the coast, the Fante Muslims were using Barth's illustrated Bible stories.<sup>1</sup> The Bible continues in constant use today. It is far more widely available, in English and in African languages, than the Qur'ān; and the mission schools, which account for most of West African education, always include Biblical instruction. Aḥmadiyyah missionaries introduce the customary exegesis proving Muḥammad from the Bible, and the customary objection that the Bible is full of contradictions and interpolations. The predictions of a prophet in Deuteronomy xviii. 18, and of the Comforter in John xvi. 7, are commonly linked to Muḥammad. The dishonourable charge that Christians are wilfully tampering with the text of the Bible, a charge equally melancholy whether made from ignorance or malice, is quite widely accepted among West African Aḥmadīs, though very few can cite any of the textual corrections which are said to support the accusation. The combination of these circumstances explains why a speech by an eminent Nigerian member, on the Qur'ān as the Word of God, should contain a great deal about the Bible, and very little about the Qur'ān.

The most common points of specific criticism are the Biblical allowance of alcohol, and the fact that whereas God commanded Moses to take off his shoes, Christians do not do so when entering church. Sometimes Christian disregard for the Old Testament requirements of prayer ritual is mentioned. Equally important are mythical assumptions about the Scriptures: that the Qur'ān forbids smoking, or that the Bible does not condemn adultery—one Aḥmadī said that Christians neglect instructions about ablution given on the last page in the Bible.

Perhaps the main effect of Aḥmadiyyah in this respect has been to provide a reservation and mistrust concerning the Bible which cushions its impact on the Aḥmadiyyah mind. Aḥmadiyyah students have distinguished themselves in the Bible classes of the mission schools. Some find the Bible more satisfactory to work with than the Qur'ān, since it can be comprehended without commentaries while the Qur'ān cannot.

<sup>1</sup> F. Würz, 'Die mohammedanische Gefahr in Westafrika', Basel 1904, p. 3n.

Yet they do not feel compelled to accept it. To give a particular instance: one Aḥmadī in Sierra Leone became a Christian because, in his words, the Qur'ān has no New Testament; the point of this thought is blunted for most Aḥmadīs by the counter argument that the differences between the Old and New Testaments are proof that someone has been tampering with the two Books which were originally identical.

### *Aḥmadiyyah and Christianity*

The Bible brings us to the third of Ghulām Aḥmad's principal titles, that of Messiah. This is a known term in West Africa but there has been little effort to develop it as a positive contribution to Ghulām Aḥmad's stature. Much more important is the Aḥmadiyyah story that the first Messiah did not die on the Cross; this is widespread among Aḥmadīs, though the details are sometimes uncertain, as for the man in Kano who thought that Jesus had gone to Krishna. The positive link with Christ may sometimes be felt even as an embarrassment: some of the Pakistani missionaries say now that Ghulām Aḥmad had no connection with him, either physical or spiritual. To say that one comes in the spirit of Jesus, having no spiritual connection with Him, is a summary of Aḥmadiyyah cross-purposes.

We may relate here in some detail a Friday sermon given by Mubashshir, *amīr* in Ghana, in 1959; it illustrates the way in which Aḥmadiyyah Christology is presented, and may be compared as an example of Aḥmadiyyah preaching with the talk on *khilāfat* given below (see pp. 156-7).<sup>1</sup>

Mubashshir began, I will tell you about the works of the Promised Messiah. The first of these was to declare the death of Jesus. The orthodox view about Jesus is not in the Qur'ān, and those traditions which support it are of weak authority and contradict the Qur'ān; the idea that Jesus is in the sky was brought to Islām by Christian converts, who deluded the original Muslims (just as West Africans bring into Aḥmadiyyah certain corrupting influences, such as funeral customs).

<sup>1</sup> Mubashshir, who has read this account, says that an 'entirely wrong conclusion' has been drawn from his sermon, which is also put in 'wrong form concerning its detail'. He gave no example of wrong detail. The sermon was delivered in English, very slowly to allow a sentence by sentence translation into the local language, and is, I believe, reproduced here without substantive error. Readers may judge for themselves the validity of the conclusion.

One proof that Jesus is not in heaven is that Elijah returned not bodily, but in John moved by Elijah's spirit. The Jews fell into a pit expecting Elijah himself; the Christians have done the same expecting Jesus. He will never come. He will never come. He will never come.

If someone did come, people would say he is just a Syrian dropped by parachute from an aeroplane. Did not Jesus say that He would come as a thief in the night, secretly? If He came, He might be shot. Do you say that God would protect Him? Why then did God not protect Him on the Cross? There was trouble then, there would be trouble again.

As Ahmadis, Mubashshir went on, we believe that Jesus lived 120 years on this earth. He went to heaven only spiritually, as other prophets have done. Consider the difficulties that confront American pilots, who must have all sorts of special preparations before they fly up. Here Mubashshir gave several examples of *rāfa'a* (iii. 55), he raised up, used in a figurative sense (*cf.* p. 71 above).

The Promised Messiah was sent in the colour of Adam sometimes, sometimes of Abraham, of Moses, of Jesus, of Muḥammad, or any other. He said indeed, I am Abraham, I am Moses, I am *Mahdī* but not a bloody *Mahdī*. My work is to kill my opponents, not with sword and arrow but with argument. The garden of Muḥammad was withering, and Ghulām Ahmad came to refresh it. He brought cups of medicine for spiritual sickness.

Is it fair to start a pupil a second time in class I, after he has successfully finished the whole of his course? Jesus cannot be expected to come back and to begin again His ABC's. The Promised Messiah scoffed at the orthodox Muslims for supporting a nation which worships a dead man. In any case, is it right to have a Jew as Messiah? If Muḥammad was the best prophet, why could he not produce someone as Moses produced Jesus?

The Promised Messiah added the death of Jesus to each of his writings. This was his major work; thus he fulfilled the tradition that Jesus will break the Cross. The day will come when Jews, Christians and orthodox Muslims will weep that they missed the chance of accepting the Promised Messiah at first. Within three hundred years (we cannot be sure of the

exact date) sole honour in religion will be given to Aḥmadiyyah. There are many troubles confronting us; some of us will die, some will be stoned to death, but after all Aḥmadiyyah will succeed. This is the destiny of God; it must come to pass. There is to be a new heaven and a new earth, blessed are those who take part in the change.

I will speak of the other works of the Promised Messiah, Mubashshir concluded, when next I come to you. (He had been visiting an Aḥmadiyyah congregation near Cape Coast.) There has been time today only for this, the greatest work.

The mood of the argument is clear, determination more to prove Christianity is not something, than that Islām (or Aḥmadiyyah) is. Further examples might be taken from the teaching of almost any of the other Pakistani missionaries on the coast. One in Nigeria, discussing a speech to be given on Islām as a universal religion, said: 'As long as we prove that Christianity is not a universal religion, that is sufficient.'

Saifī, head of the province, is the most open assailant of Christianity, for most Aḥmadiyyah publication in West Africa is his. He summed up his view in one pamphlet: 'We want truth. Christianity has no atom of truth in it. It should be discarded.'<sup>1</sup> Saifī said once that the special characteristic of the *Mahdi's* time is the great effort being made to extend Christianity. He rejected the suggestion that the conversion of Europe represented an achievement comparable to the mission work of the nineteenth century. The conversion of a whole country, he replied, is not worrying; it is the conversion of groups here and there within a nation that is the real danger. Such an opinion may probably be traced to the Muslim suspicion in India in the last century that Christian conversions were weakening the united front of Islām against the Hindus and other outside pressures. The orthodox objection to Aḥmadiyyah today is couched in very much the same terms.

In keeping with the pugilistic outlook of Aḥmadiyyah towards Christianity, the Christians are sometimes called *Dajjāl*, roughly the equivalent in Islām for the concept of anti-Christ in Christianity. (The term, as *Mahdi*, has no clear Qur'ānic foundation.) Only in Kano is this point stressed (see below, pp. 183-4). Saifī elaborated on the question when asked.

<sup>1</sup> N. M. Saifī, 'Mohammad & Christ', Lagos 1957, p. 32.

*Dajjāl*, he said, means a great deception. Therefore the term may be applied to anything which (in his view) involves deception, such as the Christian missions, or the Bahai movement. *Mahdī* killing *Dajjāl* does not necessarily mean that the Christians will convert to Islām, but simply that they will accept some views, such as that Jesus did not die on the Cross. Nor does it mean that everyone will desert the old theory of Christianity: the theory is as it were killed only theoretically: there will always be a remnant of stubborn old-fashioned Christians. *Dajjāl* is a two-edged sword. The Fula *imām* in Freetown, on pilgrimage in 1957, was told by his Arabian landlord that the Aḥmadīs are *Dajjālīūn*, like *Dajjāl*.

### *The after-life*

Aḥmadiyyah doctrine concerning the after-life has not made much impression in West Africa. There is among the African Aḥmadīs no knowledge of resurrection as a new birth, or of the after-life as an opportunity for further growth. Details of eschatology, if they are known at all, are taken from the orthodox traditions in West Africa; the rewards of heaven are not often mentioned, and are interpreted in rather material terms. In contrast, resurrection is more often expected to be spiritual than physical. The most widely known element of Aḥmadiyyah teaching about the life after death is the temporary nature of hell, which shall serve as a prison or reformatory, and will at last be emptied. Very occasionally an Aḥmadī is aware that scientific discoveries make the old idea of heaven in the clouds difficult; there is no trace of an Aḥmadiyyah reconciliation between faith and science at this point.

## AḤMADIYYAH AND THE LIFE CYCLE IN WEST AFRICA

Professor Trimingham, in *Islam and West Africa*, described how orthodox Islām brings an essential Islāmic minimum into the traditional ceremonies of the life cycle. Aḥmadiyyah goes a step further, building on the Islāmic minimum and cutting out the Pagan trappings. It hopes to reduce the extravagant conspicuous consumption of the old ways, particularly the expense on clerical participation. Perhaps this point most stimulates orthodox resistance. Aḥmadiyyah clashes with the orthodox cleric, entrenched in an old situation of blended Muslim and Pagan elements. The argument between Aḥmadī and orthodox over such ceremonies, particularly funerals, is sharp, important in defining the difference between the two groups.

Initiation into Aḥmadiyyah is by convincement or birth-right. One who is convinced simply signs the conditions of allegiance. There is no regular requirement of preliminary instruction or examination, no formal observance apart from the signature, no guarantee of subsequent active participation. Of sixty memberships from the trade school in Kano, only one came from a convert who felt strongly enough about the change to pray separately. The turnover is fairly rapid: new membership figures, now about 300 a year each for Nigeria and Ghana, help little in judging the size of the community. The conditions are the same for both Loyalists and Independents, though the latter of course send their forms to Lagos not Rabwah. The requirement that each Independent renew his oath individually, upon which Rabwah insists, has been resolutely rejected by the Independents.

The first condition of membership is abstention from *shirk*, setting up equals to God. All kinds of other evil are to be avoided, including 'looking at women other than near relatives'. Prayer must be observed, even the midnight prayer. No harm

must be done to any of God's creatures; the welfare of all should be sought. Trust in God must increase even in the face of hardship. Vulgar customs must be avoided; the Qur'ān and Muḥammad are the models to follow. Pride must be set aside. 'The well-being of Islām' must be held dearer than life itself. A transcendent relationship with Ghulām Aḥmad must be maintained.

More attention is given to the first ritual of the birthright Aḥmadī, on the seventh day after birth, than to the ceremony of convincement. The Pakistanis prefer the Arabic term, *ʿaqīqah*, to the more commonly accepted 'naming ceremony'. Wrong terms, they argue, lead to wrong practices. The *ʿaqīqah* has nothing to do with naming; the name is given without any ceremonial, not upon any set occasion. *ʿAqīqah*, cutting, implies three things: it is cutting when the baby's hair is shaved and weighed against alms money; when the baby, if a boy, is circumcised; and when the ram is sacrificed. The sacrifice of a ram, if possible two for a boy, is not essential; for reasons of economy it may be indefinitely postponed, and Aḥmadīs do not believe, as do some orthodox, that he for whom no *ʿaqīqah* ram has been killed cannot kill his own ram at the Greater Festival. These three things should not be done at the mosque; it is permissible, though discouraged, to gather at the mosque for a friendly celebration of the day.

The Pakistanis press their views about *ʿaqīqah*, but most of the Loyalists know no other term than 'naming ceremony', in English or their own language, and compromise with orthodox practice. Two brothers in Sierra Leone, both noted Mende Aḥmadiyyah preachers, gave quite different pictures of *ʿaqīqah*, one speaking from experience with the Pakistanis in Bo, the other from experience in the bush. The latter was almost indistinguishable from orthodox practice. (The Bo brother said that the orthodox clerics do not weigh hair against alms, for the odd results would demonstrate the falsity of their scales.) The Independents are less strict about *ʿaqīqah*, accepting the occasion as a name giving, and performing it in and adjoining the mosque.

Aḥmadīs and orthodox, Loyalists and Independents, dispute over details, such as whether the seventh day following a Tuesday birth is Monday or Tuesday, or whether it is proper to

observe the sacrifice and the circumcision on the same day. The chief contrast comes between the orthodox acceptance of the cleric's important role, with its right to payment, and the Aḥmadiyyah arrangement in which no cleric need take part; and between the orthodox acceptance of festivity and dancing, and the more puritanical view of the Aḥmadīs. Some Aḥmadīs use *‘aḳīqah* as a disciplinary measure, denying it to illegitimate children.

Marriage plays a special part in differentiating between orthodox and Aḥmadī because of the rules against intermarriage. In general, Aḥmadīs will not marry their daughters to non-Aḥmadīs; where feelings run high, as in Wa, the orthodox reciprocate in kind. A dispute over this arose in Freetown recently. The local Aḥmadīs wished to allow the marriage of an Aḥmadiyyah girl to a non-Aḥmadī. The missionary then in Freetown said that this was against Islām, and against the policy of Aḥmadiyyah from the beginning. The Africans urged that, if he would perform the marriage, he might win the groom for Aḥmadiyyah. He replied that one should join the society, and continue in membership for a year before marrying, in order to prove oneself. The matter was referred to Bo, where the *amīr* ruled that the marriage might take place, but that the missionary should not attend. In Nigeria there is more severity: a man was under social boycott for several months in Lagos for yielding to his wife's wish to marry their daughter to a non-Aḥmadī.

In preparing for a marriage, Aḥmadīs generally follow the customs of their locality. In some Muslim circles in Pakistan and India, it was a liberalization by the Aḥmadīs when they permitted the betrothed couple to see each other once before marriage. Such a policy would be an inconceivable restraint on the West African coast. The Pakistanis try sometimes to keep abreast of the situation among the eligible unmarried people in their communities, but no real control can be imposed.

Changes are made in the actual performance of the marriage. First, it takes place in the mosque, in a ceremony which combines the traditionally acknowledged requirements of a guardian (if the bride is a maiden), four witnesses, and dowry, with readings from the fourth chapter of the Qur'ān and exhortation

from the cleric. Second, the bride may come from the section behind the women's partition (where her party must stay throughout) and sit with the groom in the men's section during the ceremony. And third, in the better organized branches a form is used, recording details of the couple and other relevant information. Some of the Independents, and some orthodox, use rings at weddings, which the Loyalists criticize as an innovation copied from the Christians. (The *Anṣar-ud-Dīn* use rings, and are careful to explain that the symbolism is not monogamous.) Amongst the Independents there is disagreement about the amount of festivity which may follow a wedding, a group inclining towards orthodox munificence against the judgment of the majority. The Loyalists are still more disapproving. Festivity, with dancing and other license, is the crux of the argument between orthodox and Aḥmadī here as at other points in the life cycle.

There is no distinct Aḥmadiyyah contribution to the procedure of divorce. Aḥmadiyyah leaders spend a good deal of time trying to resolve marriage difficulties, which are the most common complaint referred to them. Divorce is apparently frequent. The marriage form of the Independents asks the bride the date of her last divorce, the reason for it, and whether the claim (if any) of the last husband has been settled. At least three times Pakistani missionaries have taken West African wives, and all these marriages have ended in divorce.

Aḥmadiyyah approves polygamy. It is a point of distinction between Aḥmadiyyah and orthodoxy that the former insists, usually effectively, on a limit of four wives, while the latter, through laxity or the concubine clause, allows more. Sometimes it is said in West Africa that Aḥmadīs are allowed five wives; this seems altogether an unfair charge. There is almost no trace in West Africa of the western-oriented justification for polygamy, such as the second wife caring for the sick first wife. The only requirements are sufficient material means to support more than one wife, and willingness to divide those means equally. One of the most sophisticated Sierra Leonean Aḥmadīs explained that in Aḥmadiyyah there is 'nothing that can tighten a person at all'; if, for example, 'your nature is not able to be satisfied with one woman, it is proper that you should take another'. Most Aḥmadīs, as other men, cannot afford

more than one wife, but there are several who have four. A few are monogamous by choice: one man said that in his opinion polygamy made the proper education of children very hard.

Seclusion for women is very strictly observed by the Pakistani missionaries. Their wives never venture out unveiled; the male visitor to the mission house practically never sees them. An exception was the only European Aḥmadī on the coast, an English lady, the wife of Sāqī, *amīr* in Sierra Leone; she was advised by Rabwah that seclusion was not essential for her. Among the African Aḥmadīs seclusion is almost unknown. One member suggested that Muḥammad had secluded only one wife, leaving any others to roam about, indicating that we should do the same. Naomi Mitchison described the Aḥmadiyah women in southern Nigeria as 'no more veiled than Aberdeen fish-wives', and accepted as the main property owners.<sup>1</sup> She was describing more the whole Yoruba scene than the specifically Aḥmadiyah; it may even be that Islām appeals in Yorubaland in part because it promises the possibility of some restraint on women. Madame Tinubu, the trader who was as powerful as the King of Lagos, and is said to have had a private alliance with the King of Dahomey, is not an atypical figure in Yoruba affairs.

The due performance of funerals is a requirement of social custom, and it is a disgrace to a family to slight it. Fortes has examined, among the Tallensi, the deeper pattern of social compulsion, in which the funeral is the transitional rite between family authority centred on the father, and lineage deference to the ancestors: the funeral inaugurates the 'ritualization of filial piety'.<sup>2</sup> To break the accepted programme of the funeral is thus an act of both religious and social revolt. Adoption of Islāmic funeral customs indicates the disruption of the faith of Paganism, and of the old structure of society.

The same outline of controversy, transferred from the original Pagan setting to a newer Muslim one, is repeated when Aḥmadiyah is established among the orthodox. In a coastal village east of Lagos, the people say they will convert from

<sup>1</sup> Naomi Mitchison, *Other People's Worlds*. London 1958, p. 91.

<sup>2</sup> M. Fortes, *Oedipus and Job in West African Religion*, Cambridge 1959, p. 29 & passim.

orthodoxy to Ahmadiyyah as soon as they have buried their mothers in the old way. Ahmadiyyah deviations are keenly felt, in what is among the orthodox a highly standardized pattern.

It is a remarkable testimony to the unity of Islamic practice to travel through the Sudan from the Atlantic coast to the Red Sea and find all Muslim peoples performing the same burial rites.<sup>1</sup>

In the preliminary details of a funeral, there is much variation among the Ahmadis. The Pakistanis are often unwilling to take a personal part in preparing a funeral, and cannot therefore insist on precise policy. There is uncertainty whether the dying man should face Mecca; whether the declaration of faith should be recited (there is general agreement that the *sūrah Yā Sin* is appropriate); whether incense is permissible; how the water for ritual washing is prepared; what the preferred number of grave-clothes is; and so on.

There is rather muddled discussion about coffins. The standard coastal practice has for long been to carry but not to bury in coffins; as early as 1903, the *Lagos Standard* objected to this on grounds of health.<sup>2</sup> The Loyalists agree with the orthodox; the Independents, and some among the coastal orthodox, both carry and bury in coffins, and this occasions dispute. (In fact, both fashions are legal, according to the nature of the soil.)

There is confusion too about funeral prayers. These are customarily said in any suitable outdoor spot, normal prayers but without prostration. The prayers are not held in the mosque, nor is the body taken there. This is the advice of the Pakistanis as well as the orthodox. There is no clear current reason for excluding the body from the mosque. Saifī denies that the corpse is in any way unclean; the orthodox in Magburaka, in Sierra Leone, say that God is everywhere and may be prayed to anywhere, the mosque being for ordinary prayers only. The Independents on the contrary allow the body in the mosque and a few among the orthodox (even among the Loyalists) agree. The *Anṣār-ud-Dīn* frequently bring the bodies of their dead to the school for prayer before burial. Coastal Muslims,

<sup>1</sup> Trimmingham, *Islam in West Africa*, pp. 42-3.

<sup>2</sup> *Lagos Standard*, 4 February 1903.

though it is against Mālikiyyah teaching,<sup>1</sup> generally supplement funeral prayers with a recitation from the Qur'ān over the corpse; the Aḥmadiyyah objection to this caused remark as early as 1922.

Controversy continues about the participation of women in funeral prayers. In Wa, the chief orthodox teacher made three criticisms of Aḥmadiyyah: that it claims a prophet after Muḥammad, that it allows girls and young women as well as old to come to the mosque, and that it allows women and children to pray for the dead. Sālifu the Aḥmadī replied with three counter-objections, one relating to funerals: the inclusion of funeral sacrifices, and the exclusion of women from funeral prayer, are innovations. The commoner Aḥmadiyyah view is that women are discouraged from attending; Sāqī in Sierra Leone wrote:

The Aḥmadis in Sierra Leone or elsewhere do not allow their women to attend the funeral prayer. Of course it is nowhere forbidden but generally they are not allowed to do so.<sup>2</sup>

Reluctance to allow women to approach the graveside at a burial is stronger than that against their participation in prayer and processions: here all Muslims are agreed. Many Aḥmadīs have fabricated feeble rationalizations for this almost absolute ban. Some think that women will dash their heads against the gravestone, or tumble into the open grave; Mubashshir finds women 'less patient and naturally weak-minded'; Saifī says women's lamentation does not show a proper faith in God. Aḥmadiyyah funerals are often described as funerals without the weeping of women.

The clearest contrast between Aḥmadiyyah and orthodox funerals is in the ceremonial following the burial. Gathering and sacrifice on the first, third, seventh and fortieth days after the death, and sometimes on the anniversary, are a distinctive mark of orthodoxy, and an important source of revenue for the cleric. They are rejected by almost all Aḥmadīs.

Many of these points arose in an incident in Freetown in 1959. Musa Goaba, an Aku, one of the Aḥmadīs of the pre-Indian era, died. He had requested burial in the Aḥmadiyyah

<sup>1</sup> F. H. Ruxton, *Māliki Law*, London 1916, p. 27.

<sup>2</sup> Letter of 21 August 1959.

style, although none in his family had followed him in his conversion from orthodoxy. There was at the time no Pakistani missionary in Freetown, and African members took charge. There was argument for several hours between the Aku relatives and the Aḥmadīs concerning the place of burial; finally the relatives prevailed, and Musa was buried with his fathers, not in the Aḥmadiyyah cemetery. Another point, when the relatives wished to recite the Qur'ān over the body, was won by the Aḥmadīs.

Two Pakistanis returned a day or two later, and found some things amiss. One was the addition of prayers at home for the dead man. To introduce a prayer that was not the custom of Muḥammad, remonstrated the Pakistanis, was 'mixing new things in religion', and wrong. Are not the daily prayers and the funeral prayers together enough? If, however, you still want to pray, do so at the grave, either individually or congregationally. The missionaries warned against giving kola, much less meat, to consoling visitors. In Rabwah, it is rather the custom that friends and neighbours send food to the bereaved, not that they take it from him; in West Africa, the bereaved family may go into debt in order to meet its supposed social obligations. Cautionary advice was given also about offerings on set days after the death, which have no warrant from Muḥammad. Whenever we want to do anything, concluded the Pakistanis, let us consider whether Muḥammad did it or not, and in what way he did it.

## AḤMADIYYAH ORGANIZATION AND FINANCE IN WEST AFRICA

How many Aḥmadīs are there in West Africa? One example will demonstrate the difficulty of answering with precision: Rabwah insists that there are about 45,000 Aḥmadīs in Ghana, despite the remonstrance of the *amir* in charge there that there are between 18,000 and 28,000. No sufficient records are kept by Aḥmadīs in this. I give my own estimates with the utmost caution.

There are perhaps 25,000 Aḥmadīs, men, women and children, in Ghana: about 10 per cent of these are in the Northern Territories, about 25 per cent in the Kumasi area, and about 65 per cent in Fanteland in the South. In Nigeria there are perhaps 4,000 Independent Aḥmadīs, rather more than one-half in Lagos, and 3,000 Loyalist Aḥmadīs, one third in Lagos. There are about 3,000 Aḥmadīs in Sierra Leone, 5–10 per cent in Temneland, the rest Mende. This is a total of about 35,000. It cannot be too much emphasized that these figures are rough guesses only.

In order to set the total in context, it may be compared with the figures for the Murīdiyyah, an Order begun in the Senegal in 1886, which had by 1912 grown to an estimated membership of 70,000, and by 1958 had passed 350,000.<sup>1</sup>

The apex of Aḥmadiyyah organization is the *khalifah*. His office is understood in various ways by the West African Aḥmadīs. Augusto's party follows closely the Lahori rejection of the *khalīfat* of Muḥmūd Aḥmad. The Independents reject it also: they are loyal to the *khalifah*, but by this they mean to Ghulām Aḥmad himself. He is himself successor to the four rightly-guided *khalīfahs* of Muḥammad; his own successors are *amirs* only. (This subtlety is not known to the rank and file.) Martin said that the Loyalist acknowledgement of Maḥmūd Aḥmad as *khalīfat* is to introduce a papacy into Islām. This is sometimes praise: one Sierra Leonean, defining the difference between

<sup>1</sup>Trimingham, *Islam in West Africa*, p. 95.

Aḥmādī and orthodox, exclaimed: 'This is the most important thing! A noble religion like Islām to be without an owner, without a sole dictator—it is not workable, it is not smooth, it should not be so!'

The speech of Ishāq, a Pakistani missionary, at the annual gathering in Nigeria in 1958, indicates how *khilāfat* is presented locally. *Khilāfat*, Ishāq began, is literally succession. The *khalifah* is a 'man who puts the commandments of God into force and action'. He is the *imām* above whom there is no *imām*. He is 'the vice-regent of God on earth'. He is the successor to the prophet. Ghulām Aḥmad was the first prophet after Muḥammad, and foretold that God would later manifest Himself in the *khilāfat*. The *khalifahs* are appointed by God. They fulfil the purpose of the prophets, that is, asserting the oneness of God. *Khalifahs* after Moses and Jesus were of this type. Nūr-ud-Dīn, the first Aḥmadiyyah *khalifah*, was elected by the members, but was nonetheless appointed by God: this is most important, God guides the votes. The *khalifah* cannot be dethroned. *Khilāfat* will now remain in Aḥmadiyyah until the Day of Judgment. Since the Promised Messiah has come ('in the person of Jesus Christ', said Ishāq rather carelessly), *khalifahs* now are like those of Jesus; but not too much like, for Christianity was only for the Jews, and besides the Christian *khilāfat* has violated its trust by adopting the Trinity.

*Khilāfat*, he continued, has nothing to do with politics. Islamic governments will indeed exist, and believe in *khilāfat*. But for one country to have as its leader the *khalifah* is unsatisfactory, since other countries will regard acknowledging him as an infringement of their liberty. It would not do, for example, to have the head of the Egyptian state as *khalifah*. The *khalifah* will be separate, over all.

Islām is the only universal religion; it will not always remain in the same 'wretched condition' as today. The prophets are bulbs in transparent glass, the *khalifahs* are reflectors. The prophets explain the philosophy of the Book, and give an example in their lives; the *khalifahs* do the same. The *khalifah* fosters peoples. Jesus once said that He would look after the people as a hen looks after her eggs, nursing them until they become flying birds (see above, pp. 65–6).

People have often sent letters to the present *khalifah* asking

his prayers in a certain difficulty; and even as the letter was posted the difficulty was resolved, because the *khalifah* and the suppliant had established mystical union. It is 'only through *khilāfat* that we have communion with God'. The present *khalifah*, so great is his zeal, has sometimes established missions quite by himself, thus proving that *khilāfat* will triumph. We should pray for him, and write to him. After the Indian schism, God sent revelation to Maḥmūd Aḥmad that the Qadianīs would dominate over the Lahorīs, those who reject *khilāfat*. It is our duty to establish *khilāfat* in our hearts. Ghulām Aḥmad said in his will that God manifests His first power through him, and His second power through *khilāfat*. *Khilāfat* must be established and maintained until the Day of Judgment. (For the manner of Aḥmadiyyah preaching, compare the other Pakistani speech given in detail, above, pp. 143-5.)

The *khalifah's* control is absolute. In certain matters his participation in West African affairs, directly or indirectly, is routine. It is from Rabwah that the disposition of the headquarters' fourth of *zakāt* and monthly subscriptions is ordered, to be sent from one African mission to another, or perhaps to the financially weak centres in Europe. Again, the international placing of the Pakistani missionaries is arranged by headquarters. Sometimes this remote control, which may be apparently erratic, mystifies the local people. The *khalifah* has also an intermittent role as a court of appeal. This was an element in the Ḥakīm controversy: he was suspected of interfering with the direct connexion between *khalifah* and local member. The Aḥmadiyyah president in Bo has appealed straight to Rabwah in a dispute over his marriage. The Pakistanis themselves ask for advice on particular points.

In May 1959, Maḥmūd Aḥmad fell ill, and concern was felt for his life. Special messages from him appeared in the Urdu Aḥmadiyyah paper, and formed the body of a sermon delivered by the *amīr* in Sierra Leone. The first began by urging people to dedicate their lives for Islām and the Prophet, so that Islām might dominate over all other religions. European Aḥmadīs are exhorted to help their Asian brethren towards this conclusion. Did not Lenin's followers do as much in only a few years? All that is needed is will-power. But we should not transgress, and should do everything in a kindly way.

All blessings are in the institution of *khilāfat*. The *khalīfahs* preach the truths which were first told by the prophets. Therefore let us be very particular about this, and keep to the true *khilāfat*, which will ensure blessings here and hereafter. Remind my children and the children of the Promised Messiah about this.

Missionaries are the true soldiers of Islām. Surely God will help us. Was not Jesus a prophet only? and was not Muḥammad the master of prophets? Surely it is then impossible that the followers of Muḥammad should ever be let down, or that their opponents should make improvements, or that their opponents should dominate over them.

Aḥmadīs overseas are just as near God as those in Rabwah. Maḥmūd Aḥmad prays that Aḥmadīs may never be transgressors: that they may lay the foundation of justice on earth. The followers of the first Adam transgressed. And God has sent a second Adam, the Promised Messiah, to uproot evil altogether, that the kingdom of God may be on earth as it is in heaven.

The second message began by urging that we should try to have a close relation with God. Jesus came nineteen centuries ago. God in that time has given Christianity such power that none can stand against it: all speak well of Jesus, all are compelled by force so to do. Let us therefore have a close relationship with God and the Promised Messiah. The Promised Messiah stands to Muḥammad as Jesus to Moses. If the followers of Jesus have had such success, why may not we also? Therefore let us be close to God, and preserve unity amongst ourselves. Let us indeed bring all the Muslims of the world into unity. Propagate Islām. The children of the Promised Messiah are to establish peace on earth.

In these passages, the customary stress on peaceful action is tempered by the customary wistful admiration of totalitarian success; there is confusion between western power and Christian power, with the implicit underlying confusion between coercion and conversion. The main pertinent interest is the emphasis on the *khilāfat* and unity, the caution given to the family of the Promised Messiah, and the conciliatory mention of Aḥmadīs overseas. The first two *khalīfahs* have been elected by vote, but on a very limited franchise and by acclamation. It is not considered

proper to delay more than a day or two after the death of the predecessor, and voting is confined to those present in Rabwah at the time. Many Aḥmadīs in Pakistan itself have thus no chance to make their voices heard; those overseas have no influence at all. If present methods continue, the West African Aḥmadīs and others like them are forever to be ruled by *khalifahs* in whose choosing they have no part. It is perhaps not fanciful to think that Maḥmūd Aḥmad is here warning against a repetition of the split which occurred at the time of his own election, and against a new kind of division which the coupling of an antique local election system with a global organization might engender. (The *amīr* Sāqī, who gave the sermon, rejects this interpretation.)

The *ra'īs ut-tabligh*, or head of propaganda, is the officer in charge of the whole West African province. At present he is Saifī, *amīr* in Nigeria; Saltpond and Bo, as well as Lagos, have at various times been the provincial headquarters. Instructions from Rabwah are transmitted through the *ra'īs*; his advice may be asked, and taken, by Rabwah. Saifī tries to visit both Ghana and Sierra Leone once a year at least, if possible at the times of the annual meetings.

Beneath the *ra'īs* are the *amīrs*, who exercise within their respective territories almost absolute control. While they are in varying degrees assisted by local committees, these committees have no real check on the *amīrs*, who are bound only by Rabwah and the constitution (if there is one) of each territory. They are the final authority in any 'judicial' dispute unless appeal is made to Rabwah; financial policy is in their hands; the two Aḥmadiyyah newspapers in West Africa, in Lagos and Bo, are under the immediate supervision of, are indeed largely written by, the local *amīrs*; African Aḥmadīs wishing to publish religious literature (something which in fact happens very rarely) must first submit to the censorship of the *amīr*, just as theoretically (though not in fact) the *amīr* should submit to the censorship of Rabwah; the *amīr* leads the prayer wherever he may be; he is the general manager of the schools; he is responsible for government relations; and so on.

Beneath the *amīrs* are the ordinary Pakistani missionaries, three in each of the main countries, Nigeria, Ghana and Sierra Leone. A fourth is planned for Nigeria, to be sent to the Eastern

Region. The *amir* in Liberia is alone. Of these nine missionaries, five are engaged fully or largely with educational projects, and one other with the Aḥmadiyyah press in Bo. Only three are free for continuous proselytizing effort, though all contribute to this as they are able. So demanding can incidental duties become, that it is a firm point of policy that Shād in Kano shall not begin an Arabic school, lest his preaching be hampered. There is one trading missionary, in Cape Coast.

The position of these Pakistanis in the territorial organization of Aḥmadiyyah is not clear. They do not hold office in the 'local government' arrangements as a matter of course, but may be given one by the *amir*, for example that of local school manager. They tend to take complete charge wherever they are stationed. It is rare for a Pakistani to pray behind an African. In Kano, some complaints were made against Shād, to the effect that the local organization had almost ceased to function since his arrival, all business having passed into his hands.

All these missionaries have the status of *waqif*. A *waqif* is one who has pledged his life to Aḥmadiyyah, confessing himself willing to go anywhere and do anything as the *khalifah* may instruct. One or two Africans have made a roughly equivalent pledge.

Apart from the Pakistani missionaries are the Pakistani teachers, in state-supported Aḥmadiyyah schools. They meet government standards and receive government salaries, though they may surrender part to the Movement later. There are one or two in Nigeria, several in Kumasi. Since many of the missionaries are also involved in teaching, the distinction between the two groups is not sharp in practice.

In all the foregoing, the Pakistani retains considerable if not complete supremacy over the African. There is little indication that a devolution of control to local members has been seriously considered. It is probably still true that an overseas connexion is more profit than loss; and there is prestige in white colleagues, to balance the European Christians and the Arab orthodox Muslims. But the balance is surely tipping against these arguments in the newly independent states.

The participation of Africans in the structure of Aḥmadiyyah organization varies in detail from territory to territory. Here

is a sketch of that in Ghana, which is the most precisely arranged.

The *amir*, Mubashshir, is assisted by an executive committee of four members, all resident in Saltpond. The committee should meet about once a month. (The Nigerian counterpart, called the Management Committee, is much larger; it meets four times a year, and cannot always be sure of a quorum.) Two members of the Ghana committee, the secretaries for finance and for propaganda, are men in poor health. The secretary for education is headmaster of the Saltpond Ahmadiyah primary school; he also hears in the first instance disputes referred to headquarters from outlying districts. The fourth member, the general secretary, is a fulltime salaried person in the Saltpond office; there are two other paid office employees. More influential than the full committees are individual Africans in each territory, often committee members, who by their loyalty prove their worth to the Pakistanis, and are in constant attendance at the territorial headquarters.

Ghana is divided into seventeen Ahmadiyah circuits, roughly by numbers. The most populous circuits are the nine in the south; in Ashanti there are six, and in the north two. Mubashshir attempts to visit each circuit twice a year. Each circuit has one African missionary, and a chief *ra'is* or headman, who share the work of the circuit, touring, sending reports to Mubashshir, preaching, settling disputes, collecting dues, performing marriages, and so forth. Mubashshir said that he appoints as circuit missionaries any who have sufficient knowledge. Usually, he went on, with a store of Biblical quotations by heart the missionaries are able to handle the local minister or priest; trouble comes when someone appears who is able to hurl retaliatory Arabic. In Nigeria, the circuits are organized around local executive committees. These are markedly more democratic than the central meetings under the charge of the *amir*.

The final authority among the Independents is their Executive Committee, of 24 members; its president is Head of the Movement. According to the constitution, the Head has few powers independent of the Committee, but the figure of Martin, who was ultimately made life president, dominated the Movement for many years. The missionary board is a parallel

central body. In the provinces these two groups, often with overlapping membership, are duplicated on a smaller scale.

The procedure of the Independents, particularly in the provincial councils, is democratic in the extreme. The chairman appeals frequently for advice on proper democratic method; for each office there may be several candidates, with votes so well distributed that a man might win by a margin of one over his nearest rival and with far less than half the total vote.

The Independents differ from the Loyalists in three fundamentals of organization: they are purely national, they are more democratic, and they accord much freer participation to women. Both groups have separate women's organizations; but while the men and women among the Loyalists (at least when the Pakistanis are there) never join in any functions together, co-operative effort is common among the Independents. There are women missionaries; at the main gatherings before the mosque the women's leaders give their speeches along with everyone else; women attend the annual meetings with the men.

The annual meeting, or *majlis shūrā*, is the high point for each of the four Ahmadiyyah communities in West Africa. The Nigerian Loyalists exploit their meeting as an opportunity for much preaching, particularly by the Pakistanis, in open-air sessions by the mosque. In the closed business sessions, which representatives of each circuit attend, reports from the chief secretaries are presented. Saifī plans the whole course of discussion beforehand, and the situation is never for a moment out of his control. General discussion is severely limited, with no chance of affecting the final decisions. Both public and private meetings are times for special financial contributions. The annual meeting of the Independents consists mainly of the report of the general secretary (a post recently made full-time and salaried). His report, which relies to a considerable extent on reports submitted earlier from the various missions, covers the whole range of the year's activities.

The Loyalists in all the territories use English; the Independents, although the secretary's report is in English, debate in Yoruba, and their Benin representatives asked that various votes be explained to them beforehand in English, so that they might know about what they were voting.

The superior organization of Aḥmadiyyah allows the application of more or less regular discipline, particularly among the Loyalists. The pattern is generally one of stringency and order at national headquarters, with reduced penalties and increased vagueness in the provinces. The most common punishments are warnings, and on more drastic occasions social boycott; these are theoretically applicable everywhere, even at the discretion of the local African authorities. There are also fines, officially called 'repentance fees'. On rare occasions these may be as high as £10. In theory, this punishment is for serious cases arising anywhere within the territory, but in fact it is almost exclusively applied by the *amirs* for offences in the headquarters neighbourhood. Most of the complaints are about marriage troubles. Saifī mentioned also non-observance of separate prayer, and the Ghanaians added irregular attendance at prayer, unclean eating, and so on. In Ghana, an animal is sometimes sacrificed, in place of giving money. The Independents impose only nominal fines, for example for late arrival at Executive Committee meetings, effective through shame rather than deprivation.

Finance has always been in West Africa a point of contrast between Aḥmadīs and orthodox. Aḥmadīs advocate an unostentatious way of life, without conspicuous consumption. This is considered worthy in itself. It is also part of the adaptation to modernity, when frugality is coupled to effective financial organization.

A Loyalist Aḥmadiyyah Qur'ān school in Ilaro provides a neat illustration of the transition to contemporary cash economy. The pupils are charged 6d. a month for learning the alphabet, 1/- for reading and memorizing the Qur'ān without understanding, 1/6 for learning to understand. These fees are remitted for very poor families. The orthodox schools in Ilaro keep to the old way: each student, on completing one-twelfth of the Qur'ān, contributes a chicken, and when the whole Book has been read a cow is killed. The Aḥmadīs sadly confess that the old fashion is still the more popular.

The rub in Aḥmadiyyah methods comes when the traditional clerics find themselves deprived of income. Aḥmadīs reduce or eliminate contributions to the clerics at naming ceremonies etc. The mosque funds are banked, and are generally not

available for loans or gifts to clerics and other members. A main cause of the Okepopo division, the first division in West African Aḥmadiyyah, was the desire of the clerical party to maintain the old practices. In April 1922 they wrote to the general secretary, Martin, requesting for their own use the money 'now lying dormant at the Bank'. The request was refused. Finance was a bone of contention in Ḥakīm's time. Even today, members suggest that the funds of the society be made available as trading loans.

The biggest item in income is government assistance to Aḥmadiyyah schools; in this, Aḥmadiyyah is merely serving as administrator for such money on behalf of the Government. There are three main independent sources of income: *zakāt*, monthly contributions, and special gifts at festivals and the annual meetings.

*Zakāt* is one of the pillars of Islām. It is an obligatory annual levy, assessed at 2½ per cent on commercial capital and profits; there is a different rate for agriculture, but it is practically unknown among West African Aḥmadīs. The Aḥmadiyyah commentators in Pakistan give an exalted position to *zakāt* for its social benefits. In West Africa, Saifī, though he admits that *zakāt* even properly collected would have to be supplemented by other taxes, feels that the spirit of *zakāt* generates a feeling which leads harmoniously to socialism. Communism is the poor snatching from the rich: how much better it is for the rich to give freely to the poor, for then there is no ill-feeling.

In West Africa, *zakāt* is often applied to other gifts. *Sadaqāt-ul-Fitr*, alms given at the end of *Ramaḍān*, are commonly called *Zakāt-ul-Fitr*, regardless of their relation to the fixed levy. In Sierra Leone, ʿAlī called most contributions *zakāt*, and almost no other term is known. In some places the people distinguish between 'zakāt' and 'real zakāt'. The definition of real *zakāt* is uncertain. It is not uncommon to find African Aḥmadīs who know that the rate is 2½ per cent, 6d. in the £, but there is wide divergence of opinion about the property on which this is levied, whether on capital, on profits, on any goods held longer than a year, on savings, on annual income, and so on.

Real *zakāt* is a trifling item in the accounts of the Loyalists, perhaps averaging £100 a year in each territory. Wealthy Aḥmadīs in Sierra Leone emphasize that there is no investigation

connected with *zakāt*: it is God's law, and He will enforce it Himself. The Independents on the contrary derive perhaps two or three times as much from *zakāt* as from monthly contributions, which are the chief source of Loyalist income.

Since *zakāt* should be a centralized fund, there is sometimes confusion amongst the relatively unorganized coastal orthodox as to whom it should be paid. The *Anṣār-ud-Dīn* try to collect it from their members, and issue regular receipts, bearing a proverb translated from the Yoruba, May God bless you and cover your secrets.

The official Aḥmadiyyah rate for monthly dues is 1/16 of income, with women usually exempt, but few in West Africa know this method of assessment. Instead, monthly contributions are thought of as a fixed sum, between 6*d.* and 2*s.* 6*d.* for men, half that for women. Such sums have been charged from the early 1920's onwards. Ḥakim was exceeding strict about monthly dues, and sometimes reported individuals to Qadian for irregularity in payment. Saifi has occasionally returned contributions from the provinces, insisting upon itemized lists of donors, which he hopes will shame people out of giving too small sums. Wherever a Pakistani missionary happens to be, there the contributions will increase. Monthly dues are sometimes found among the coastal orthodox: the *Anṣār-ud-Dīn* levy them, and in Freetown the Fulani people hope to utilize them for building a school.

Special gifts are made at many religious festivals. For the orthodox the Night of Power, *Lailat-ul-Qadr*, is a particularly suitable time. This is so too for the Independents, but not the Loyalists. Among the Aḥmadīs, gifts at annual gatherings are more important than those at the traditional festivals. Usually the offerings are in cash, but in Sierra Leone each community is assessed a contribution in kind as well.

There are many incidental funds. Special collections are made for building mosques, maintaining Qur'ān schools, etc. A rather uncertain source of income is from the two Aḥmadiyyah presses, in Lagos and Bo. There is a bookshop in Lagos, a cloth-goods shop in Cape Coast, a druggist's shop (run by a Syrian) in Bo.

The importance of exceptional individual gifts should not be overlooked; these are witness to the spirit of devotion which

Ahmadiyyah evokes in some cases. Martin did a great deal in this way for the Independents; the Bo press was financed largely by two generous Sierra Leoneans; and so on.

The records of Ghanaian Ahmadiyyah are better kept than those for the other West African Ahmadiyyah communities; here is the income account for 1955-60.

	INCOME IN GHANA, 1955-60				
	1955-6	1956-7	1957-8	1958-9	1959-60 (estimated)
Monthly contributions	£2,057	2,552	1,684	2,252	1,700
<i>Ɔakal</i>	136	177	60	82	40
Festivals & annual meetings	1,602	1,920	2,632	1,853	1,350
Building funds <sup>1</sup>	853	433	230	169	1,700
Miscellaneous	515	122	174	369	118
Govt. aid to schools	4,645	7,388	7,130		7,607
Local Council schools	429	481	738		400
Primary school fees	573	523	615		700
Govt. aid to the secondary school	—	3,600	?		16,389
Secondary school fees	2,278	7,243	1,600		4,290
Totals	£13,088	24,439	14,863	34,963	34,294

Educational institutions

<sup>1</sup>A fund made up of voluntary local contributions.

The estimated expenditure for 1959-60 was as follows:

Pakistani missionary allowances	£ 607 10s. 0d.
African mission workers allowances	1,998
General expenditure	945
Building fund	1,700
Schools	29,386
Headquarters' fourth	435

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£35,071 10s. 0d.

Aḥmadiyyah expenditure is straightforward. We may look in more detail at missionary expenses. The Independents inaugurated in 1956 a missionary training scheme. Under this, each mission should make an annual payment to a central fund; in fact, almost all comes from Lagos. This fund helps train missionaries in Lagos, the congregation from which the candidates come paying half and the fund half. The fund assists trained missionaries with transport and maintenance; there is one now in Benin City, another in Kano. Finally, it helps other studies: one boy at the School of Arabic Studies in Kano has assistance, and a second at Khartoum.

The Loyalist counterpart to this, though not organized as a permanent fund, is twofold: missionary passages, and missionary salaries. It has been customary from the very beginning, even in the case of Nayyar, that the local people should pay the passages of missionaries coming to West Africa, though not their passages on leave (taken at irregular intervals, usually after several years). The salaries of Pakistani missionaries are also paid where possible from local funds; if these are short, as was for long true in Sierra Leone, supplementary grants may be allocated by Rabwah, perhaps part of the 'headquarters' fourth' from wealthier West African territories. Salaries in the past have varied a good deal; now there is a set rate. The basic allowance is £9 a month. For a married man, there is an addition of £5 12s. 6d.; there is no set policy concerning missionaries with more than one wife, and none in West Africa have been able to afford more anyhow. For a child there is an allowance of £3 12s. 6d.; formerly this applied to every child, but now only the first two in each family get the additional

sum. The *amir* gets an extra £1 10s. 0d. Such wages are perhaps not even comfortable, but they do not compare unfavourably with wage levels in West Africa and Pakistan, contrasted with those in the West.

AHMADIYYAH EDUCATION IN  
WEST AFRICA

The Aḥmadīs were the first Muslims in West Africa to establish permanent schools combining their religion with secular study, and education has continued one of their main concerns. In Nigeria they have been overtaken by other Muslim groups; in Sierra Leone, although more than half of Muslim education is non-Aḥmadiyyah, contemporary initiative is in Aḥmadiyyah hands; in Ghana their contribution is pre-eminent.

The secular side of this programme has profited enormously by government help, which finances now most of the work in all three territories. The religious side has developed erratically, and intermittent efforts continue to be made to foster an interest in Arabic and Islamic subjects. Specialization in these is very rare; even to supply teachers for the daily Religious Knowledge classes is sometimes difficult.

There are approximately 55 Aḥmadiyyah schools in West Africa, employing perhaps 295 teachers. In Nigeria a majority of the teachers are Christians, in Ghana and Sierra Leone, Muslim. There is a tendency, particularly among the orthodox, for teachers to become Aḥmadīs when they work in Aḥmadiyyah schools.

The part which their schools are to play in fulfilling the basic purposes of the Movement has not been analyzed by the Aḥmadīs themselves. The programme of school development is based chiefly on the two considerations underlying Aḥmadiyyah itself: a desire to match the Christians, and to show Islām not incompatible with modern learning. The acute shortage of qualified staff means that this second desire can be answered only superficially. There is also proselytization, which varies greatly from teacher to teacher. In Benin there is particular fervency; in the Kumasi primary school also, where one teacher regards it as the bounden duty of each Aḥmadī to

'break a cross', by which he means to convert a Christian, every Sunday, and who on this ground justifies the policy of the Ghanaian Aḥmadīs in closing their schools on Friday and Saturday and opening them on Sunday. In general, however, the schools are not actively determined to make their pupils into Aḥmadīs. To match the Christians and to appear modern are the essential purposes.

### *Before Aḥmadiyyah*

Education combining secular and Muslim subjects is not an Aḥmadiyyah innovation on the west coast. The Ekrofol school, unique in the Gold Coast, ran from 1896 to 1908; it has already been described (see above, pp. 117-8). The first efforts were made in Sierra Leone.<sup>1</sup> The college at Fourah Bay employed both Christian mission and local Muslim scholarship. In 1876, the Rev. Alexander Schapira, a converted Rabbi, was appointed Professor of Arabic; he opened a school for Muslim children, which was carried on by the C.M.S. after his retirement. Among the teachers, European and African, who followed him was Hārūn-ur-Raṣhīd, first pilgrim from Sierra Leone to Mecca, who died in 1897. Another was Muḥammad Sanusi, whom Winwood Reade described.<sup>2</sup> He died in 1907, called by Blyden the greatest Arabic scholar in West Africa.<sup>3</sup>

In 1889 the Rev. M. Sunter, Inspector of Schools for the West African Settlements, submitted to the Colonial Office a report entitled 'Mohammedan Education in the West African Colonies'.<sup>4</sup> He proposed government Muslim schools, centrally located in Muslim areas, in simple buildings. The expense of both buildings and equipment should be borne if necessary entirely by the Government, though Muslim assistance would be encouraged. A small tuition charge should be levied, except in cases of poverty. Qur'ān teachers in the traditional schools should not be interfered with; they might visit the government schools to give religious lessons, or the timetables of the government schools might be arranged to avoid overlap. The secular

<sup>1</sup> I am indebted for much of my information about Sierra Leone to Christopher Fyfe, formerly archivist there.

<sup>2</sup> Winwood Reade, *African Sketch-Book*, London 1873, vol. ii, pp. 365-6.

<sup>3</sup> *Sierra Leone Weekly News*, 20 April 1907.

<sup>4</sup> 29 August 1889, C.O. 17244 (CO/96/207).

teachers should be paid by the Government; the schools should be open to inspection.

London reaction to this was rather chill. Government Muslim schools are impossible 'either from a missionary or a Moslem point of view', and would be too expensive. It would be better to encourage the Qur'ān schools gradually to enlarge their scope. Sunter stuck to his guns; the Lagos Muslims in particular were 'unmanageable people' who had already rejected such ideas as the London alternatives. He granted however that Sierra Leone, under the influence of Sanusi, was more progressive.

Later the Colonial Office asked the Governor in Sierra Leone to investigate the possibility of government encouragement for Muslim schools; hitherto not even grants had been given. Working in conjunction with a Muslim committee, the Governor arranged that *Madrāsas* should be provided for the Muslim community. In 1891, at Pratt's Farm in Freetown, the first government Muslim school in West Africa commenced. Gheirawani was in charge; Blyden did some teaching there. During the next two decades four other schools were founded: one, like that at Pratt's Farm, was in Fourah Bay, begun by Gheirawani's rivals in a dispute over the imamate, part of the Fourah Bay quarrel which has continued for 70 years. In 1928 an Amalgamation Scheme was arranged, by which two of the schools in Freetown were limited to infants only, and one became a higher primary school. In 1946 the Sierra Leone Muslim Association began another Muslim primary school, for boys only, covering the full primary programme.

In Lagos too an early start was made, but it did not carry on as successfully. In 1887, only 300 or 400 children, out of a total of 2,500 in school in Lagos, were Muslim.<sup>1</sup> The Board of Education set up a committee to inquire into this, which discovered various causes: poverty; the assumption that expensive European clothing was essential; the need for children to earn wages; religious and social prejudices; and the fear of weakened parental control. The committee recommended a limited drawing together of the Qur'ān schools, which should add Yoruba, English and arithmetic to their *curricula*, and the mission schools, which should add Arabic. Neither responded. In

<sup>1</sup> Henry Carr, reported in *R. R.*, February 1928, pp. 19 ff.

1889 an annual school exhibition began, which continued for thirty years.

Blyden was in Lagos several times in the 1890's. He persuaded the Lagos Muslims to establish their own school, with Arabic, Yoruba, English and arithmetic. The Muslims stipulated that in the first instance it should be for one year only, with none but Muslim teachers, in a simple building owned by the Muslims and not open to inspection. The venture was accordingly made. The first headmaster was Idris Animashaun, a well-to-do and dedicated Muslim who worked for the year without any remuneration. The year went well, and when it was time to consider continuation of the school the Government agreed to pay Animashaun. The first Muslim school offering western education in Nigeria was established; branches in Badagry and Epe followed. The Lagos school survived several changes of site, but eventually relinquished its specifically Muslim character owing to shortage of suitable staff.

#### *Aḥmadiyyah Education in Nigeria*

Despite this background, and the undoubted spirit of men like Idris Animashaun, to Aḥmadiyyah belongs the principal credit for establishing schools without government prompting.

A fillip to Muslim education was given by an unfortunate resolution (never fully implemented) of the Anglican Synod in Lagos in May 1922. It was decided that Muslim children should be excluded from the Christian schools in Lagos; it was said that they 'were debased, untrained and come only to corrupt the morals' of Christian children.<sup>1</sup>

On 11 December 1922 the *Ta'lim-ul-Islām* school (this is still the name of the Independents' schools, the Loyalists calling theirs *Fazl-i-Umar*) was formally opened in the Aroloya mosque. (The Okepopo schism had in part arisen from the measures necessary to finance this school.) In his speech at the opening ceremony, Henry Carr, Resident of the Colony, spoke of the traditional Muslim objections to western education. Forty years before, he had suggested a Muslim school to Shitta Bey, and it had been turned down because the Muslims believed 'it would make their children thieves and liars as Christian boys'. Carr hoped that the Aroloya school would help dispel the fear

<sup>1</sup> *African Messenger*, 1 & 15 June 1922.

that education led to lawlessness: rather it was education without religion which was dangerous.<sup>1</sup>

Some indication of the Muslim resistance to western education may be gleaned from the celebrated case of Miss Thomas, early in 1924. An educated Catholic, aged about 23, she was carried by her Muslim father's order to the home of a pilgrim returned from Mecca, who detained her for three days under threat of forced marriage. The police rescued her. The father and suitor were both charged with deprivation of liberty, and the latter fined £20. The *African Messenger*, reporting the case, said that 'among enlightened Mohammedans the preponderance of sympathy' was with the father and suitor. The *Messenger* agreed that the court had been too harsh. After all, if Miss Thomas had been illiterate, these troubles would never have occurred.

One begins to fear not only for the weakening of parental authority but also the probable feeling which will be created among Mohammedan parents as to whether there is any sense in sending their girls to school.<sup>2</sup>

Some months later the Aḥmadīs began work on a separate school building, in Elegbata in Lagos, which was opened early in 1928. There was some government help, but the greater part of the burden was borne by the Aḥmadīs themselves. Carr spoke again here, and particularly commended the Aḥmadīs for allowing girls to come to the school.<sup>3</sup> This school was not a herald of further Aḥmadiyyah progress, for attention was distracted by the Jinadu division of 1932, and then by Ḥakīm.

In 1929 the *Anṣār-ud-Dīn*, now the largest Muslim educational society in Nigeria, began its first school. In 1917, about the same time that the Nigerian branch of Aḥmadiyyah was established, an orthodox society was founded with the hope of setting up a Muslim school in Lagos. This society foundered in the 'Mohammedan Unrest'. Its aspirations were taken up again in December 1923, when the *Anṣār-ud-Dīn* was inaugurated.

There was never an official connexion with Aḥmadiyyah,

<sup>1</sup> *African Messenger*, 28 September 1922.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, 17 January 1924.

<sup>3</sup> *R. R.*, February 1928, p. 23.

but some of the pioneers of the *Anṣār-ud-Dīn*, particularly Boonyanin Gbaje-Biamila (or Qasim), who was general secretary of the society for fifteen years, had had a strong Aḥmadiyyah affiliation. It is hard to learn why these people left Aḥmadiyyah: it is said that they could not withstand orthodox persecution; that their connexion was not in fact as close as it seemed; even that Boonyanin, wishing to be a member of the Aḥmadiyyah school committee, was excluded because of his talkative nature, and therefore began his own group.

Declining an affiliation with Aḥmadiyyah, the *Anṣār-ud-Dīn* has consistently and effectively refused involvement with any Muslim party or sect. Another problem remains, whether it can avoid becoming a sect itself. *Zakāt* is collected by the society; prayers are said in the schools, even funeral prayers. On the other hand, there is no separate mosque or chief *imām*, nor any rule of separate prayer. The society strenuously rejects the charge that it is moving towards sectarianism.

The first school, begun in 1929, was completed within two years. In 1942 another was begun, in Okepopo. Five chief *imāms* attended the ceremony, not including the Aḥmadīs however. The first sod was turned by a distinguished company of ladies, all of whom had contributed to the society's educational enterprises. Further building was supplemented by the incorporation of already existing schools.

After Ḥakīm's departure, the Aḥmadīs suddenly returned to the school scene. In 1948 the Independents opened a co-educational high school in Lagos. They had retained control of the Elegbata school, which is today the largest Aḥmadiyyah school in West Africa, a primary school, with 44 teachers and 800 pupils. Fewer than one in five of the teachers are Independent. The Loyalists, who had lost not only this school but also the central mosque in Ojo-Giwa Street, built a new mosque in the same street, and in 1949 started a school within the mosque. This school, with 300 pupils, continues today. In 1953 the Loyalists opened a second primary school in Ilaro.

The introduction of universal primary education in the Western Region, in 1954-5, was a great blessing to all these societies. By this scheme, the Loyalists have gained a further seven primary schools, which, with one from the federal authorities and two of their own work, make a total of ten. The

Independents have been more vigorous, and now possess fourteen primary schools and five post-primary. Most of the Aḥmadiyyah schools are in or near Ibadan, Lagos and Benin; none are outside the Western Region. The Aḥmadīs have been greatly outdistanced by the orthodox. The *Anṣār-ud-Dīn* alone, which is only one of several orthodox bodies, although it is the largest, has over 200 primary schools and nineteen post-primary.

At the suggestion of the Council of Muslim School Proprietors (of which Martin was president at the time of his death), a government committee in 1958 considered the place of Arabic and Islāmic teaching in the new programme, and a syllabus was drawn up. This is limited in scope, for there is general agreement that to teach three languages extensively, English, Arabic and a vernacular, would overtax both schools and pupils. The Council has accepted this view, in effect relegating Arabic to the Religious Knowledge class once a day, but has stipulated that the teaching of the Qur'ān in Roman script be introduced.<sup>1</sup>

The primary education programme has made it clear that Muslim education is severely hampered by shortage of staff and resources. If the new schools were to have been distributed in proportion to already existing schools only 5 per cent would have been Muslim. The Council was offered a further 10 per cent, but was unable to take advantage of this preferential treatment: in 1959, only 447 out of 6,708 schools, less than 7 per cent, were Muslim.<sup>2</sup>

A partial answer to the basic need for more teachers may be the Muslim Teacher Training College, an inter-denominational undertaking which started in 1958 near Lagos. Considerable Colonial Development and Welfare help has come, and each participating agency has been asked to contribute £200. Saifī is the chairman of the college committee, and an Aḥmadī has come from Pakistan to be headmaster. In 1959 there were two Aḥmadīs and two Christians in a staff of four, with 54 pupils, twelve of them girls. The Loyalists hope to establish their own religious school for teacher training, as well as a secondary

<sup>1</sup> *Report of the Commission appointed to enquire into the fears of Minorities and the means of allaying them*, Cmnd. 505, July 1958, Chap. 3, paras. 54-5.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, chap. 3, para. 53.

school, but these projects seem hampered by a lack of coherent planning.

The Aḥmadiyyah schools in the Benin area may be described separately here, for they illustrate the tension between sectarianism and education, and also the sterner resistance of northern Islām to innovation. About 1930, a small group called the Muslim Brotherhood Society formed around an immigrant Ijebu trader in Benin. It is said that they took membership from Lahore, after seeing the *Islamic Review*, and that a missionary from Woking visited them. A school was begun, supported by the whole Muslim community (which scarcely exceeds 2,000), on land given by the King of Benin. By 1945 government assistance had become necessary, but could only be gained through some voluntary agency. Sulaiman, the Ijebu, chose Aḥmadiyyah. The school became Aḥmadiyyah and remains so today despite orthodox objections: a flourishing institution with 22 teachers and about 600 pupils. The orthodox built a second school in protest. Ḥakīm visited Benin City several times, but Sulaiman's connexion had been with Martin, and Benin City has been steadfast in the Independents' camp. There are only a handful of Loyalists there, while the Independents have a fine mosque and a congregation of 150.

Agbede, not far from Benin, is an outpost of northern Islām. The Agbede orthodox sent a young teacher to Lagos, to study with Ḥakīm: this was done at the suggestion of a European Educational Officer, neither he nor the Agbede people realizing what doctrinal risks were involved. The teacher returned a convinced Aḥmadi, thus destroying the whole investment made in his theological training, for orthodox suspicion is so strong that he is allowed to teach only English.

Jagbe is a small village on the fringe of Agbede influence. For a time it appeared that the Benin example might triumph, but orthodoxy was too strong. A Muslim school had been opened there in 1944, all the local orthodox sharing in the expenses. It fell into financial and staffing difficulties, and, on the advice of an Education Officer, affiliated itself with the Independents. In 1952 government grants began, and a trained teacher was supplied. The Aḥmadiyyah school manager in Benin City looked after the school; the Aḥmadiyyah missionary there came visiting once a month. But the Jagbe people were

dissatisfied with their position, and in 1955 were allowed to break away without losing the benefits of government aid. The staff of the school, who had become Aḥmadīs, returned to orthodoxy. There is still an Aḥmadiyyah mosque in Jagbe, and a small congregation.

*Aḥmadiyyah Education in Ghana and Sierra Leone*

Work in Ghana began early. In 1923 Ḥakīm began a primary school in Saltpond, which was placed on the government Assisted List in 1926. When Mubashshir arrived in 1936, there were four schools. His administration has been a time of educational expansion. In Wa, in the Northern Territories, there are now a primary and an Arabic school. The first establishment in Ashanti was a primary school in Kumasi in 1941; now there are two more primary schools outside the city, and Kumasi has also a secondary and a developing middle school. Altogether there are two Arabic schools, nine primary, four middle and one secondary, under Aḥmadiyyah control. Most have government aid: of a planned expenditure of about £30,000 on education in 1959-60, almost five-sixths comes from the Government.

The secondary school opened in 1950. A Pakistani was selected as headmaster, and sent to England to prepare himself. This he did in the rather improbable fashion of reading for a London doctorate in Urdu poetry. This qualification obliged him to retire before the school could be placed on the Assisted List, which happened in 1956. There is now a staff of thirteen, mainly Pakistanis. (There is a small untidy library: under the label Christian Religion were only Muslim books, the Christian volumes were classified under Fiction and Science Fiction!)

There are six Aḥmadiyyah schools in Sierra Leone, all primary. The oldest is that founded by ʿAlī in Rokupr in 1939. In 1950 this almost lost government assistance, inspectors observing a staff shortage and too much 'management by remote control from Bo'. In 1952 there was a teachers' strike over late salary payments. In 1958 the school roof blew off, and the walls began to collapse. This final catastrophe had a good result, for the local authorities were stimulated to erect new and well-equipped buildings, which are now in use.

The next school was in Baomahun, began at almost the same

time; this was transferred to Bo in 1946. The third school was at Magburaka, opened in 1943; this was removed from the Assisted List, in 1951, after an unsatisfactory inspection. It struggled gamely on for more than a year, then closed. Siddiq, then *amir* in Sierra Leone, would not admit defeat. He wrote to the local Education Authority asking permission to reopen, and help. In an oratorical burst he added, 'the record of this school's practical work during the past twelve years has been satisfactory and exemplary'. Rather surprisingly, permission was granted, and the school is now functioning again.

Work began in Bo in 1945, when a class 'of religious instructions' was reported. Formal permission to open was received later in the year. The school has grown steadily, and is now by far the largest Aḥmadiyyah school in Sierra Leone, with just over 300 pupils and nine teachers. There are 21 boarders, all boys.

Aḥmadiyyah education in the territory has suddenly leapt forward. In 1958 there were three schools; Rokupr, Magburaka and Bo. Now there are six. The Baomahun school has reopened, with 30 pupils. A school in Freetown was inaugurated in January 1959. The Government placed the school on the Assisted List from the very first, and gave additional grants; this was exceptionally generous, since 1959 was a time of financial stringency and a restricted education budget. There are four teachers; 72 pupils were 'enrolled for admission as foundation stones'. The third new school is at Shenge, on the same small scale as Baomahun.

The school in Freetown called forth a strange claim. A pamphlet, 'Our Foreign Missions', written by the head of the propaganda office in Rabwah, a son of the present *Khalifah*, appeared recently. Of Freetown, the author said that no one had succeeded in establishing a school for Muslims, and that accordingly the Muslim public appealed to the Aḥmadīs for a remedy, the Aḥmadiyyah school being the result.<sup>1</sup> To describe as the first Muslim school in Freetown one which follows by more than half-a-century government-encouraged Muslim schools, and by more than a decade a school founded at the initiative of the Muslims themselves (see above, p. 171), reveals a generous margin of interpretation.

<sup>1</sup> Mubārak Aḥmad, 'Our Foreign Missions', Lahore 1959, p. 11.

Arabic and Islāmic instruction is given in all the Aḥmadiyyah schools in Sierra Leone, though government policy restricts it to one period a day. The teaching of Arabic is of course rudimentary, but there is, particularly in Bo, Freetown and Magburaka, an attempt to break away from the Qur'ānic rote learning, and to teach household phrases of common use. More vigorous teaching of Arabic is available in Freetown, where the Pakistani missionary and his colleagues hold daily classes in the mosque, and in Bo, where the boarding students spend a good deal of time with the language.

The Muslim Brotherhood, recently begun in Magburaka, is an attempt at more concentrated Arabic and Muslim schooling. The *imām* of the Aḥmadīs there feared that Arabic studies might die out, for were not the old Qur'ān schools around the fires in the evening disappearing? Seeing how much was done by the Government in education, for so little direct taxation, he imagined what might be accomplished if each Muslim would give ten shillings for Arabic tutors and 'schools with benches'. He started the Brotherhood, which had its first meeting in November 1958. Officers have been elected, all Temne Aḥmadīs except one. An orthodox *alfa* at the first meeting asked if the design were to convert people to Aḥmadiyyah, and was assured of the contrary. Most of the members are orthodox, but power is clearly in Aḥmadiyyah hands, and the group is often regarded as an Aḥmadiyyah affair. Just over £500 was collected in the first six months, one-third coming from Syrians. Membership cards have been printed at the Bo Aḥmadiyyah press, and are to be sold at two shillings each.

## AHMADIYYAH AND POLITICS IN WEST AFRICA

The tradition of loyalty to the British connexion is somewhat muted in West African Ahmadiyyah. Union Jacks decorated Ahmadiyyah mosques in Nigeria at festivals, at least before independence; but Ahmadis have learnt bitterly from Pakistan the dangers of being regarded as a British fifth column. The older missionaries maintain the original fulsome style: Siddiq in Sierra Leone invoked 'the *golden principles of religious freedom, tolerance and justice and fairplay*, which are the hallmarks of the benign British Empire'. Their young successors, in Kumasi and Kano, may inveigh against colonial oppression; a recent report from Qadian spoke of the 'slavery' of British rule.

The concepts of a peaceful *Mahdī* and of *jihād* by argument are not abated. For some, dissatisfaction with the orthodox expectation of a miraculous warrior *Mahdī* was a reason for conversion. Holy War is sometimes defined historically, battles fought by Muḥammad; more often it is interpreted as a contemporary war of words. The sword is permissible only in self-defence. It is doubtful, however, whether the Ahmadis profoundly contemplate the meaning of persuasion rather than force, beyond lexicographical revision of the word *jihād*. One *amir* said that when Turkey followed the Qur'ān, and veiled her women, she beat the whole of Europe. Now she has given up Islām, and become the sick man of the continent. Let her become Muslim again, she will again dominate. He admitted that the westward offensives of the Turks were contrary to Islāmic teaching. At another time, he said Hindus and Jews cannot be trusted: Hitler, he remarked, understood the Jews.

The Ahmadiyyah *khilāfat* is presented in West Africa in strictly religious terms, though these are only part of Rabwah doctrine. Similarly, Islāmic law is rarely considered as a weapon for the political implementation of the faith. Ahmadiyyah of course stresses 'law', in an undefined sense, in the argument

that Ghulām Aḥmad restored the true Qur'ānic law. One Sierra Leonean chief explained his conversion in terms of law. The Mālikiyyah laws, he said, do not make one's heart strong to pray to God; Aḥmadiyyah laws are very strong, and provide proof of the truth of the Movement. An Aḥmadī in Wa commented succinctly, Aḥmadiyyah 'brings in plenty law'.

The idea set forth by Maḥmūd Aḥmad, that the law of God is politically correct and effective in a way which the law of man is not, finds echoes in West Africa, particularly among pilgrims Aḥmadiyyah and orthodox. An experienced Freetown pilgrim, advising those about to start the journey, insisted that the law of Islām does not rely on 'majority', but upon 'actuality'; mere man's law cannot be guaranteed. It is only the sensational elements, hand-chopping and stoning in particular, which have mildly captured the coastal imagination. The school manager for the Lagos Independents said that in Mecca it is 'soul for soul', with no crown counsel nonsense. The thief, if taken at all, is taken red-handed, and the only dispute is which hand did the thieving, so that it may be cut off. The Independent would prefer crown counsel himself: such contradiction between what one believes to be ideally required, and what one would willingly practice, is common.

Political action is as sparse among West African Aḥmadīs as political theory. A few of the Independent Aḥmadīs in Western Nigeria are involved in the complex succession of Muslim political and cultural organizations there. Such men are unusual. In most cases, the individual has to make a choice between his religious and his political interests. Martin was a political candidate of the Nigerian Youth Movement before he withdrew from politics to devote himself to Aḥmadiyyah. Adele II, the present King of Lagos, was a foundation member of Aḥmadiyyah, and became general secretary. At the time of the Great Schism he worked for reconciliation. But since he succeeded to the throne, he has felt it a state duty to worship with the orthodox, and the Independents with whom he was affiliated have disowned him despite his continued adherence to Aḥmadiyyah belief. In Sierra Leone, Kande Bure, now Temne headman in Freetown and a cabinet minister, has lost all evident Aḥmadiyyah sectarianism, though he was formerly Nazir Aḥmad 'Alī's patron.

In two cases Aḥmadīs are being drawn into political involvement willy-nilly, in Ghana and in Kano. The orthodox Muslims in Ghana organized the Muslim Association Party. This was opposed to the Convention People's Party of Nkrumah, and was sometimes accused of having retarded independence. It was disbanded. Muslims, including officers of the former Association Party, were among the first to be deported. In November 1958 Abbas, *imām* of Accra for many years, abdicated in favour of a People's Party candidate. The Accra Muslims are sharply divided: the supporters of Abbas say simply that now there is no chief *imām*. *Amīr* Mubashshir had to forbid the intervention of the Ashanti Aḥmadīs in support of Abbas and the Association Party. When the fate of Abbas indicated that none could lead festival prayers without government approval, the Pakistani missionary in Accra prayed indoors with his tiny congregation, but Mubashshir remonstrated with him for this timidity.

In the same year, 1958, the quarrel in Wa flared up again in a political guise. Sālifu, the Aḥmadiyyah leader, wrote to the Government in Accra saying he was shocked to find himself denounced by his opponents as 'a political agitator, a pessimist, and a danger to the progress of the Government's party in Wa'. An unofficial commission of the People's Party, touring the north, visited Wa, and cleared Sālifu of the accusations. The Prime Minister also stopped there, and confirmed the commission's view. In 1959 Sālifu called on the general secretary of the People's Party in Accra. This particular episode seems closed, though clearly the dispute in Wa is not.

An elderly Aḥmadī in Accra, asked if he himself feared deportation, pursed his fingers to his mouth: if he kept quiet, he would be all right. This is in essence Aḥmadiyyah policy. Mubashshir remains aloof from all politics, even from discussion. He has however submitted a new constitution for the Movement in Ghana, against the day when Ghana may leave the Commonwealth. Formerly, the *amīr* held all property himself; now there are to be (as in Nigeria) three trustees. The Movement is divided into six areas, after the present political arrangement of the country.

The success of the policy of reticence depends on the Government's willingness and ability to distinguish between one

Muslim and another, between Aḥmadī and orthodox. For an international movement, led entirely by expatriates, to rely on this in a flamboyantly nationalist state seems short-sighted. It is melancholy in such an uncertain situation to find no unity among the Muslims of Ghana, and little resistance on principles of religious freedom to government interference. Indeed, many Muslims by giving priority to political aims invite and justify government action.

Kano in 1959 was tense: questions which could be frankly discussed in any other place where Aḥmadīs are found, from Bathurst to Benin, received no answer in Kano. This political tension gripped the Kano Loyalists, involved because the sudden influx of northern converts (see p. 115) has been largely an influx of members of the Northern Elements Progressive Union, the opposition party. Both Shād, the missionary in Kano, and Saifī say that not all the converts were originally from the Progressive Union, but that it is increasingly difficult for the northern Aḥmadī to remain apart, since if one is not of the Union one is assumed to be with the Northern Peoples' Congress, with all the antagonism which that implies.

The Pakistanis are well aware of the danger that an equation might be formed in the public mind between Aḥmadiyyah and the Progressive Union, between religious teaching regarded as heretical and political action regarded as subversive. Two points help quietness. The group in Kano is still very small, perhaps 200 souls in all; and the northern arrivals are so recent that all branch offices continue in Yoruba hands.

The situation is further complicated by Shād's message. He opens his teaching with the death of Jesus, which he finds effective. The corollary of this is not the positive claim that the *Mahdī* has come, but a step further: if the *Mahdī* has come, then *Dajjāl*, anti-Christ, must also have come. Who is *Dajjāl*? the Europeans and Christianity.

Shād has found in Kano an Arabic book, of which he knows neither author nor title by memory, giving many details about *Dajjāl*, and he preaches from this with success. Here are one or two examples. *Dajjāl* will occupy all the world except Mecca and Medina: the European nations and America have nearly done this. Having seized the earth, *Dajjāl* shoots his arrows at the heavens. These are the rockets and missiles. An

unexplained point is that the arrows are to return bloody. *Dajjāl* will call himself God. The Americans, Europeans and Russians have not done that, but they have arrogated to themselves the divine attributes. God is the Helper, and these nations say that they are helpers which the underdeveloped countries need. Heresy and radicalism are thus flavoured with antagonism to Christian and European elements.

## CONCLUSION

Is it possible to estimate the future of Aḥmadiyyah in West Africa? The Movement is sometimes presented by its adherents as a missionary force extending the fold of Islām there. In fact, Aḥmadiyyah contributes almost nothing to the conversion of the Pagan world. There are only a few Aḥmadis here and there who were born Pagan, and most of these were first converted to Islām, then to Aḥmadiyyah. Aḥmadiyyah draws almost all its membership from orthodox Islām and from Christianity. In Ghana, the principal strength derives from the mass conversion of the Fante Muslims forty years ago; it is probably true that a majority of the Ghana Aḥmadis are birthright members. In the Kumasi area conversions have been made among Christians and Muslims: in Wa, among Muslims alone. In Nigeria, the proportion of converts from Christianity is lower; in Sierra Leone, negligible. Less than 5 per cent of Aḥmadiyyah in West Africa, so far as one can judge, is won from Paganism (excluding those who came *via* orthodoxy), perhaps 15 per cent from Christianity. For a group so dogmatically missionary and anti-Christian, these proportions are small. The rest, more than four-fifths, is a parasitic growth on the body of orthodox Islām. (The loss to orthodoxy is not the sole responsibility of Aḥmadiyyah: some of the converts would have gone to Christianity, but for the preventive action of Aḥmadiyyah apologetic.)

Relations with the orthodox are of primary importance. The vitality of the sect depends upon its doctrine, which defines Aḥmadiyyah as a separate body demanding exclusive allegiance. Without doctrine, there is no reason why the various activities of Aḥmadiyyah should not pass to orthodox organizations able to carry them on more extensively. In Nigeria, for example, doctrine is the difference between Aḥmadiyyah as an educational agency, and the much larger *Anṣār-ud-Dīn* school system.

Doctrinal differences are not yet firmly rooted in West Africa. Among the Aḥmadis, knowledge of their own belief is

uncertain and confused. Nor, especially in the coastal areas, is their knowledge of orthodoxy more reliable. Very few can have made a conscious choice between two patterns of dogma. Blurred doctrine can facilitate conversion: the Quranic People would probably not have followed Nayyar if they had understood the tenets of his faith completely. But the advantage is limited: increasing knowledge may lead to repentance of the change, continued unclear belief makes both the change to Aḥmadiyyah, and the change back, of indifferent significance.

Doctrine defines the difference between Aḥmadīs and orthodox: it insists also that difference be expressed in separatist action. This is against the grain of religion on the West African coast. Tribal loyalties are still generally strong; within any single tribe, there is often considerable tolerance. Where Aḥmadiyyah separatism is effective, it may be a gloss on a tribal division: the difference today in Fanteland between orthodox and Aḥmadī is largely the difference between Hausa and Fante. In Yorubaland, orthodoxy has a more developed following, and it is a charge against the Loyalist Aḥmadīs that they try to set brother against brother, disturbing the remarkable inclusiveness of the Yoruba family. (I stayed with an immigrant Yoruba household in Kaduna which included under one roof Methodists, Catholics, Independent Aḥmadīs and orthodox Muslims.) Personal, sectional and other rivalries do of course exist within a tribe, and may lend spice to Aḥmadiyyah religious separation, as in Wa; these rivalries may on the other hand as easily rend Aḥmadiyyah, as in the disagreement between Augusto and Martin in Lagos.

Aḥmadiyyah doctrine is designed to serve two purposes: to assert Islām and to deny Christianity. The assertion of Islām is in turn twofold, a call to primitive purity and modern suitability. The appeal of a faith restored and purged is not yet strongly felt in West Africa, but the amulets, Qur'ān water, purchased priestly incantation for almost any purpose, superstitious reverence for writing not understood, and all the other abuses of much of coastal Islām seem certain to bring some reaction in favour of a cleansed way. Aḥmadiyyah has made no willing compromise with these practices, and may reasonably expect to benefit from any swing of opinion against them. Such reforming reactions however may restore more of the

early practice of Islām than Aḥmadīs can accept: warlike *jihād*, for instance, may revive.<sup>1</sup>

The expression of Islām in modern terms is both practical and philosophic. The better organization of Aḥmadiyyah is on the West African coast an asset which no orthodox group is likely soon to match, but it has not yet tested itself against any disciplined opposition, such as the Tijāniyyah in Gambia. Aḥmadiyyah organization is built on overseas control and expatriate management. Overseas control is an inalterable doctrinal necessity; expatriate management may theoretically be replaced, but there are few indications yet that this possibility is seriously considered by those in charge. The educational work of the Aḥmadiyyah organization is, among Muslims, still pre-eminent in Ghana and (less so) in Sierra Leone; the Nigerian experience shows clearly that the orthodox can, if the challenge is once accepted, far outdistance the Aḥmadīs on their own terms. In the work of translation and publication the Aḥmadīs have a commanding lead for some time into the future, though West African languages are neglected.

The philosophic expression of Muslim modernity has barely scratched the surface in West Africa. Tension between faith and reason, scripture and science, is only dimly appreciated. Aḥmadiyyah apologetic on these points is likely to become increasingly influential. Aḥmadiyyah makes its most active appeal to the relatively educated Muslim in West Africa: mechanics, commercial and government clerks, a few university graduates; the success of the appeal is qualified by the inadequate English education of a few of the Pakistani missionaries. Where a substantial allegiance has been gained among the illiterate population, as in Fanteland, this is sometimes a hindrance to the presentation of Aḥmadiyyah as the faith of the enlightened and educated Muslim. The sect is generally in a position to profit from the spread of education among Muslims.

The denial of Christianity, perhaps the ultimate purpose of Aḥmadiyyah, has only limited pertinence in West Africa. Speaking generally, British colonial policy prevented the establishment of Christian missions in thoroughly Muslim territories, chiefly northern Nigeria, and has thus prevented concern arising, as happened in India, over the conversion of Muslims

<sup>1</sup> Gibb, *Mohammedanism*, p. 172.

in the midst of the Muslim community. Conversions among Pagans present no such urgent challenge. The coming of independence, and the fact that West Africa has no foreign Christian settlers, allow Christian churches there to develop in varying degrees an indigenous character, more indigenous than that of Aḥmadiyyah itself.

The future is therefore not secure for Aḥmadiyyah. A careful assessment of the realities should guide policy. It is exactly such an assessment which, by reason of their strong propagandist bias, Aḥmadis are likely to have great difficulty in making. By too great a profusion of unjustified claims, the directors of Aḥmadiyyah blind themselves to the true needs of their position, and weaken their argument in the minds of their hearers, for the West African is as shrewd as another in discerning disparity between vaunt and achievement.

## APPENDIX I

### AHMADIYYAH AND HINDUISM

The claim to be the reincarnation, the *burūz* or *avatār*, of Krishna was first made public by Ghulām Aḥmad in 1904, in Sialkot. In the *Message of Peace*, which he composed a few days before his death in May 1908, Ghulām Aḥmad suggested that Ahmadiyyah should form a pact with Hinduism, in which the Hindus would accept the prophethood of Muḥammad, and the Ahmadīs would believe in the Vedas, and both would refrain from quarrelling.

This claim had little effect, save to injure further Ghulām Aḥmad in the eyes of the orthodox Muslims. Callard wrote that the unity of Indian Islām rested on two principles: that Muslims are (or at least ought to be) brothers among themselves, and that Muslims are not Hindus.<sup>1</sup> Ahmadīs violate both, the first by their separatism, the second by these Hindu pretensions. The positive Hindu connexion continued to be put forward for some years: in 1923 the *Light*, a Lahorī journal, referred to the prophets and revealed books of the Hindus; Titus described the Ahmadīs as 'the most modern and persistent' of those who would liberalize Islām towards Hinduism.<sup>2</sup> The *Review of Religions* said of Hindu scripture:

That millions of people have been believing it to be the word of God, is, however, a sufficient reason of its truth, for it is impossible that the word of an imposter should enjoy the honour which the Vedas have enjoyed.<sup>3</sup>

Despite this, attack has generally had the upper hand over alliance. In Maḥmūd Aḥmad's *Introduction*, nine pages are devoted to interpolations, savage teachings, superstitions, contradictions and polytheism in the Vedas; to remove two sentences would be to expunge every even ambiguously friendly reference to the books which Ghulām Aḥmad professed himself willing to accept. Maḥmūd Aḥmad, describing his father's status, does not mention the return of Krishna.

<sup>1</sup> Callard, *op. cit.*, p. 198.

<sup>2</sup> Titus, *op. cit.*, pp. 162-3, where the *Light* references are given.

<sup>3</sup> *R. R.*, vol. vii, p. 256, quoted in Walter, *op. cit.*, p. 104.

Although the original concern of Aḥmadiyyah with Hinduism was religious, stimulated in part by Hindu revivalism, particularly the militant Ārya Samāj (the party of Lekh Ram, see above p. 42), politics later entered in. Maḥmūd Aḥmad wrote of many political aspects of the Hindu-Muslim crisis.<sup>1</sup> He admitted the relative backwardness of the Muslim community, but listed various flaws on the Hindu side: racial pride, lack of recent experience in government (in contrast to both British and Muslims), recollection (or imagination) of past Muslim oppression, influence as money-lenders, and the discriminatory tactics of the Congress. The conviction of Hindu oppression occasionally bordered on extravagance:

Untouchability is not at all a religious question. At the back of it lies the economic boycott of the Muslims. All talk of religion is mere humbug. The sole idea is to hoodwink the Muslims by cloaking this economic boycott under a religious garb.<sup>2</sup>

Maḥmūd Aḥmad hoped for continuing British influence to curb Hindu ambition. On the other hand, this very strength of the Hindus would win over the British.

When we see that in Ireland the English ignored the opposition of men of their own race and religion, and acceded to the wishes of people of South Ireland, how can we then expect them to support the Indian Muslims against their own interests?<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *The Nehru Report and Muslim Rights, and Some Suggestions for the Solution of the Indian Problem*, both Qadian 1930.

<sup>2</sup> M. Aḥmad, *Some Suggestions*, p. 76.

<sup>3</sup> M. Aḥmad, *The Nehru Report & Muslim Rights*, p. 51.

## APPENDIX II

### AHMADIYYAH IN EAST AFRICA

The first missionary on the East African coast landed at Mombasa in 1934; he was Mubārak Aḥmad, still in charge of the East African province today. He came in response to the request of Asian Aḥmadīs in East Africa, who paid his passage; there were at that time no African adherents. Headquarters were first established at Tabora. In 1942 the building of a substantial mosque there began, and was completed at the end of 1944. (The style of Aḥmadiyyah mosque in East Africa is more oriental than that in West Africa, where only the mosque in Saltpond is replete with minarets.)

An Aḥmadiyyah press was established in Tabora, but had to be closed. As the mission expanded, more missionaries came to help, one during the war and several shortly after. Mosques have been erected in Nairobi, Mombasa, Kisumu, Dar-es-Salaam, and Jinja; work is proceeding on a seventh, at Kampala. The headquarters have moved from Tabora to Nairobi. Schools have not kept pace with mosques; the first, in Tabora, shut down; a second is now open in Jinja. The Aḥmadīs have tried to stimulate more government action in providing Muslim schools; a protest to this effect was sent to the Trusteeship Council in 1956.

Organization is more unitary than in West Africa. Mubārak Aḥmad is the single *amīr* for all East Africa; he is directly responsible to Rabwah. In each of the three former British territories Aḥmadiyyah is registered with the Government, specific acknowledgement being made of the supreme authority of the *khalīfah*; there may have been some appreciation of the dangers of constitutional schism, as in Nigeria, though in fact registration took place only when the Government required it of all societies after the Mau Mau emergency was declared in 1953. The link with Rabwah is reinforced by East African students, eight of whom were studying there in 1959.

Mubārak Aḥmad began a translation of the Qur'ān into Swahili in 1936. A commentary was also prepared, based on that by Maḥmūd Aḥmad, with the usual pugilism towards

Christianity. The volume was published in 1953, in an edition of 10,000. The *Review of Religions* reported in May 1955 that a second edition was to be issued at once, the first being nearly out of stock,<sup>1</sup> but in fact there were still, in 1959, about 4,000 volumes on hand. A committee of Africans and Pakistanis has been established to consider a revised edition. Copies of the Swahili version have been sent to Mau Mau detention camps, including that at Hola. Work has begun on translations into Luganda, Kikuyu, and Kamba.

A few years after his arrival Mubārak Aḥmad started a Swahili paper, which continues today as a monthly publication. In 1957, on instructions from Rabwah, he supplemented this with a paper in English, called the *East African Times*, which is now fortnightly. There is also a Luganda paper. All three are edited by Pakistanis. The *East African Times* is a better paper than its West African counterpart, the *Truth*, more substantial, including real news as well as religious propaganda and controversy, nicely printed.

There are also pamphlets, as for example a Swahili version of Ḥakīm's 'Life of Muḥammad'; most of these are in Swahili, but other languages are represented. The work of writing and translation goes on in a more lively way than in West Africa; some of the missionaries have learnt Swahili, and some African members are sufficiently versed in the faith for part of the publication work to be transferred to their hands.

Orthodox resistance appears to be considerable. Mubārak Aḥmad says that it was this that closed the Tabora school. A Swahili pamphlet has been written in reply to criticism from the orthodox about the Aḥmadiyyah translation of the Qur'ān into Swahili.

<sup>1</sup> *R. R.*, May 1955, p. 320; M. M. Aḥmad, 'Our Foreign Missions', p. 17.

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