

**THE AHMADIYAH MOVEMENT:  
PAST AND PRESENT**

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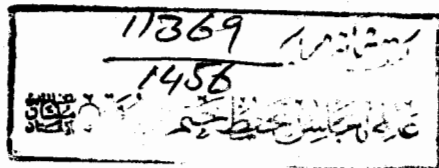
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## **F O R E W O R D**

With the needs primarily of the students of this University in mind, Dr. Spencer Lavan was requested to prepare a short, simple and scholarly monograph on the Ahmadiyah Movement. He has performed the task admirably well. I am happy to see this monograph, embodying the latest findings of research, published for the students. On their behalf and on behalf of the University I thank Dr. Lavan most warmly for his co-operation and help.

**Bishan Singh Samundri**

Vice-Chancellor

Guru Nanak Dev University

Amritsar

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## P R E F A C E

This short study of the Ahmadiyah movement is contributed to the Indian history curriculum being developed by Guru Nanak Dev University, Amritsar, Punjab, India in an effort to aid students in their understanding of religious developments in the context of modern Indian history. It comes as a shortened version of work originally prepared for a Ph.D. dissertation and later published in book form by the Manohar Book Service of Delhi. Materials used in the study were graciously provided by the Ahmadiyah Movement, Rabwah, Pakistan and by various libraries and archival depositories in India, England, and the United States.

In the text, non-English words (Arabic and Urdu) have been *underlined* but generally have been transliterated in a form commonly accepted in India and Pakistan, rather than in the form accepted by Islamic scholars. Each technical term is followed in brackets by an approximate meaning in English or by an explanation in a footnote.

Let me express my gratitude to Prof. J. S. Grewal of Guru Nanak Dev University, Amritsar and Prof. John C. B. Webster of Baring Union Christian College, Batala for encouraging me to this contribution and for arranging for its publication. My thanks also go to the Research Committee on the Punjab whose forthcoming publication, *Sources of Punjab History*, to

which I have contributed a chapter, should prove a great resource to all students of North Indian history. In addition, thanks go to Prof. N. G. Barrier, University of Missouri, Prof. C.J. Adams, McGill University, and Prof. Barbara Ramusack of the University of Cincinnati, all of whom were helpful in providing essential resources and guidance for the original study.

In closing, let me dedicate this work to my wife Susan, my three sons, Jonathan, Daniel and Timothy, and my young daughter, Joanna Be, an Asian by birth. Joanna was not with us when I first published Ahmadiyah studies—she therefore deserves special attention this time.

**Spencer Lavan**

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September 1, 1974.

## CHAPTER I

### ISLAMIC RENEWAL IN AN AGE OF CONFLICT

As recently as July, 1974, the *New York Times* carried headlines such as this: "Religious Dispute Plagues Pakistan".<sup>1</sup> The article under that heading pointed to a religious controversy among the Muslims of the Punjab dating back nearly one hundred years over the question: "Who is a true Muslim?"

According to the article in the *Times*, "restrictions on an unorthodox sect" were "being weighed" in Pakistan. By the time this study of the Ahmadiyah movement, a Punjab-based Islamic sect is published, it may be that the Ahmadiyah movement and its membership will have been declared a non-Muslim minority in Pakistan, the nation founded in 1948 as an Islamic state.<sup>2</sup>

Why should an Islamic sect whose membership is today only 300,000 in a population of 70,000,000 be either a threat or a problem in a nation entirely Muslim? Why should one undertake to study this sect, its founders and leaders, its history and teachings? The history of the Ahmadiyah movement is important both for modern Indian history and modern Punjab history because it presents in a micro-

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1. "Religious Dispute Plagues Pakistan", *New York Times*, July 4, 1974.

2. *Ibid.*

cosm the issues of religious and communal conflict so prevalent during the past century.

It is the purpose of this short study to present a detached and factual account of the origins and development of this religious movement against the background of other political and religious events in late nineteenth and twentieth century modern Indian history. To study a movement such as the Ahmadiyah will afford the occasion for a better perspective on and better understanding of the interplay of numerous religious organizations.<sup>3</sup> It will afford an opportunity to weigh the views of an uninvolved but critical historian against the more polemic and controversial views of the Ahmadiyah present in Indian and Pakistani society. Finally, this study will point out how controversies raging in the 1880's are not yet resolved.

The controversy which still hangs over the Ahmadiyah movement nearly one century after its founding is a controversy over the claim of its founder to be the Promised Messiah (*masihi maw'ud*) and *mahdi* of the Muslims. It has been a controversy over whether he actually claimed to be a Prophet (*nabi*), a claim which would be anathema to Muslims who believe Muhammad to be the "seal of the pro-

3. Bibliography detailing the background out of which this study has come, is enormous. Only two scholarly books have previously been written on the Ahmadiyah movement itself. These are, H. A. Walter, *The Ahmadiyah Movement*, Association Press, Calcutta, 1918; and the more recent work of H. J. Fisher, *Ahmadiyah Movement : A Study in Contemporary Islam on the West African Coast*. Oxford University Press, 1963. The most recent complete study of the movement in India is by this author, published as *The Ahmadiyah Movement: A History and Perspective*, Manohar Book Service, New Delhi, 1974. See Note 1, Chapter I for complete bibliography of shorter articles on the movement.

phets", (*khatm an-nabuwwah*). Or was it, as some would claim, that the founder of the Ahmadiyah movement only claimed to be a renewer of the faith, a *mujaddid*, a claim far more acceptable in Islam.

The answer to these questions cannot be resolved as simply or directly as many persons would think. The issues are not merely theological issues to be resolved among bickering Muslims of various views; they also reflect problems and conditions among Punjabi Hindus, Sikhs, Christians, and British government officials in the later decades of the last century. The issues raised by the founding and development of the sect such as the Ahmadi are issues common to many communities in North India upto and even after partition.

### **The Islamic Messianic Tradition**

In order to understand the Ahmadiyah point of view in its Islamic context or to ask questions about the controversial nature of the movement's claims and aims, it is first important to observe the emergence of this religious sect within Islam. That its founder claimed to be a Promised Messiah or a *mahdi* to Muslims was neither original nor unusual. The concept of a *mahdi*, a rightly guided leader who would come at the end of time, had existed within both the Sunni and Shi'ah traditions from the early centuries of Islam. For the Shi'ah, the concept of *imam* had a specific connotation referring to the descendents of the Holy Prophet's son-in-law, Ali. The Shi'ah believed them to be the rightful heirs to the leadership of the Islamic tradition. For different Shi'ah sects, the *mahdi* was the *imam* who, in the tradition

of that sect, had mysteriously disappeared. The faithful believed that this *imam* would return at an appropriate moment in history as the *mahdi* to lead the Shi'ah to everlasting glory, particularly in their struggle against Sunni Islam.

More relevant to this study is the Sunni view of *imam* as leader of a worshipping community. Sunnis believe in the *mahdi* as God's representative in the person of Jesus who would also come at the end of time to lead the believers in a bloody (*ghazi*) battle against the unbelievers (*kafirs*). During the medieval period, many religious saints declared themselves to be the *mahdi*, proclaiming religious or political reform. This often occurred at the end of an Islamic century, a time associated with the possible coming of the end of the world. Perhaps the most well-known *mahdi* was the one who proclaimed himself in the Sudan in the early 1880's (at the end of the 13th Islamic century). This *mahdi* claimed divine inspiration (*ilham*) and organized Muslims in a military *jihad* (holy war, or struggle for God) against the British and Egyptians.

Also important for this discussion are the two Qur'anic terms : *nabi* and *rasul*. These words were used in Islam to describe Muhammad's role as prophet and messenger of God. While early Muslim sages interpreted these terms to apply to the Holy Prophet who was declared to be the "seal of the Prophets", the final prophet, there was a possibility left open for continuing revelation as expressed in such concepts as *wahy* (revelation), *ilham* (inspiration) and *mujaddid* (renewer of the faith). Sufis had often

utilized these terms in speaking of a continuing revelation handed down from God through the Prophet to them. In India, attempts at religious renewal by men calling themselves *mujaddid* occurred during Mughal times, notably under Shaikh Ahmad of Sirhind and Shah Wali Ullah.<sup>4</sup>

### The Muslim Situation After 1857

The events of 1857 were a turning point for the history of Muslims in modern India. When the British suppressed the "uprising" that year, any hopes that Muslims might have entertained of re-establishing the long weakened and nearly defunct Mughal empire were ended. At the same time, the Muslim community became almost totally alienated from their British rulers. Although many Indian and Pakistani historians have described the Muslim condition after 1857 as entirely bleak and impoverished, this is not true. However, it is true that Muslim leadership was woefully lacking. Outstanding among Muslim leaders was the religious liberal Sayyid Ahmad Khan who broke fresh ground in the fields of education and religious thought by asserting the importance of *ijtihad* (reinterpretation) in religious matters to meet the needs of the times. He believed the 'ulama' (religious leaders) in India were neglecting their duty by refusing to recognize the possibility of a *mujtahid* or *mujaddid* coming, not in the millennial sense of the Sudanese *mahdi*, but to bring an awareness of Islamic

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4. For more detailed discussions of the contributions of Shaikh Ahmad of Sirhind and Shah Waliullah, See Muhammad Mujeeb, *The Indian Muslims*, Montreal, McGill University Press, 1967 and Aziz Ahmad, *Studies in Islamic Culture in the Indian Environment*, Oxford University Press, 1964.

needs for a modern world.

Sayyid Ahmad remained loyal to the British during the "Mutiny" and believed that the British would rule India for many years. He, therefore, urged Muslims to take advantage of what British culture and education had to offer. He founded the Anglo-Oriental College at Aligarh in 1875 and began the publication of journals there. Out of the college there emerged the "Aligarh movement" created to call attention to the problems Indian Muslims faced as a minority people in India. Fearing the negative possibilities should parliamentary democracy come to subcontinent with Hindus outnumbering Muslims four to one, Sayyid Ahmad urged Muslims not to join the Indian National Congress at its inception in 1885.

Sayyid Ahmad was not always in agreement with British policy and so found it necessary to explain Muslim interests to the Government. This he did through the Muhammadan Anglo-Oriental Defence Association founded at Aligarh in 1893. The Association's stated objects were :

- (1) to promote the political interests of Muhammadans by representing their views before the English people and the Indian government;
- (2) to discourage popular and political agitation among the Muhammadans;
- (3) to lend support to measures calculated to increase the stability of the British government and the security of the empire;
- (4) to strive to preserve peace in India and to

encourage sentiments of loyalty in the population.<sup>5</sup>

The reason for including this sketch of Sayyid Ahmad's religious, educational and political position is that it is closely related to many of the ideas expressed by Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, founder of the Ahmadiyah movement. Also Sayyid Ahmad expressed many of his ideas several decades earlier than did Ghulam Ahmad, although with less strong opposition.

There were other educational reform movements among Muslims after 1857 but none were so far-reaching in their implications or effects as was Sayyid Ahmad Khan's work. A seminary founded at De'oband near Saharanpur took a more conservative stance and did not include western sciences or subjects in its Islamic curriculum.<sup>6</sup> One sectarian development among Muslims of the Punjab was the Ahl-i-Hadith movement which was descended from the so-called "Wahhabi" movement of Sayyid Ahmad Shahid, a movement which had fought against the Sikhs in the 1820's. This movement was more theologically fundamentalist in its approach. It came strongly to oppose anyone, especially Ahmadis, who indulged in *taqlid* (accepting authority without question on religious matters, that is, authority from sources not found

5. Some recent books on Sayyid Ahmad Khan include, Aziz Ahmad, *Islamic Modernism in India and Pakistan, 1857—1964*, Oxford University Press. pp. 31-65; M. S. Jain, *The Aligarh Movement*. Sri Ram Mehra, Agra, 1965; Shah Muhammad, *Sir Sayad Ahmad Khan : A Political Biography*. Meenakshshi Prakashan, Meerut, 1969 and Wilfred Cantwell Smith, *Modern Islam in India*, Ashraf Press, Lahore, 1943.

6. For a fuller discussion of De'oband see Aziz Ahmad, *op cit.* (Modernism), pp. 103-108; and Z. Faruqi, *The De'oband School and the Demand for Pakistan*, Asia Publishing House. Bombay, 1963.

*The Ahmadiyah Movement : Past And Present* in *Qur'an* or *Hadith*.)<sup>7</sup> Another organization, the Anjuman-i-Islamia, originally founded at Lahore, came to model itself after Sayyid Ahmad's conceptions, building schools and publishing a newspaper.

The existence of Muslim associations for improvement in education and other areas was not an isolated phenomenon in the Punjab in this period. The Hindu reform movement, the Brahma Samaj had been imported to Lahore by Bengalis serving there, although this liberal religious movement had not spread widely among Hindu intellectuals. In 1877, Swami Dayanand toured the Punjab organizing numerous chapters of his Arya Samaj movement. This organization had a strong impact on both Hindus and Muslims because of its out-spoken position on such controversial issues as cow slaughter, Hindi, and *shuddi* (reconversion to Hinduism of those lost to Islam or Christianity).<sup>8</sup>

#### Ahmadiyah : Some Contrasts

Mirza Ghulam Ahmad and the Ahmadiyah movement represented yet another among these varied responses to the nineteenth century Islamic condition. In contrast to the urban-situated college, seminary, and educational movements, Ahmadiyah

7. The sources available in English include Muhammad Hussain, "The Successors of Sayyid Ahmad Shahid", in *History of the Freedom Movement*, II : 2, Pakistan Historical Society, Karachi, 1961; Qeymuddin Ahmad, *The Wahabi Movement in India*, Firma K. L. Mukhopadhyay, Calcutta, 1966; Aziz Ahmad, *op. cit.* (Modernism), pp. 113-122 and W. C. Smith, *op. cit.*, pp. 177-180.

8. The definitive study on the Arya Samaj is by Kenneth Jones, University of California (forthcoming) and that on the Brahma Samaj is by David Kopf, also unpublished. These two works will supercede any general books including these movements previously published. For brief articles, consult the *Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics*.

began as a rural and small town middle-class religious resurgence. Initially, it was not concerned with either educational or social reforms. While the large literary outpouring of Mirza Ghulam Ahmad had to be aimed towards an audience literate in Urdu, primarily a land-owning and professional class of Muslims, those who responded to Ahmad and his message could not, for the most part, be described as intellectuals of the variety found in the Aligarh or Brahma Samaj movements. As the Ahmadiyah movement became organized, developing schools and internal institutions, it increasingly attracted poorer and less educated Punjabis, men and women who could understand Ahmad's spoken message and respond to his personality. For these the new movement would provide upward mobility in a society in which it was difficult to change one's status.

During its earliest years, the last two decades of the nineteenth century, the Ahmadiyah movement was centered chiefly in Gurdaspur district north of Amritsar.<sup>9</sup> While Mirza Ghulam Ahmad took his message to such Punjabi cities as Ludhiana and Sialkot, he directed his programme primarily towards rural Punjab. There he challenged the increasing militancy of Christian missionaries, the Arya Samaj and the Sikhs. Although by 1900 there were only 4,000 Christians registered in Gurdaspur district, their impact was significant psychologically even when contrasted with 463,000 Muslims (49%), 380,000 Hindus (40%), and

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9. See the *Imperial Gazetteer of India*, Vol. XII, New Edition, Oxford, 1908. pp. 390-391 for a detailed description of Gurdaspur district and the *Census of India for Punjab* (1881) for population figures.

92,000 Sikhs (about 10%). These percentages were roughly equivalent to the religious distribution throughout the Punjab in 1900. The Punjab had had a history of religious conflict since the arrival of Muslims in the 11th century. Persecution of the Sikhs by the Mughals had added to that history. Now the arrival of Christian missionaries and foreign rule would stir further possibilities for direct conflict or confrontation among religious communities.<sup>10</sup>

Although Mirza Ghulam Ahmad and his followers disclaimed any political motive in their work or anything but the strongest support for the British government, the impact of Ahmad's message and claims brought him directly into conflict with every major religious community and with the Government as well.

Who was Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, then, the man whose mission and movement have been subject to such continuing dispute? Born in 1835 in the village of Qadian, Gurdaspur district in the Punjab, Ahmad was the son of a middle-class, land-owning family descended from a Mughal who had come to India with Babur in the 16th century. The village of Qadian received its name because Ahmad's original ancestor settled there and served as village *qadi* or judge. In the early 19th century the Sikhs as the political force in the area during the reign of Ranjit Singh, took over the family *jagir* thereby depriving the family of its

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10. For a definition and discussion of "Communalism" See W. C. Smith *op. cit.*, pp. 177-180.

income for a period of more than thirty years.<sup>11</sup> When the British established control of Punjab in the 1840's, Mirza Ghulam Ahmad's father professed his loyalty. He represented the kind of land-owner on whom the British had to rely in developing their provincial administration. He was therefore able to re-establish himself in Qadian. It was in this atmosphere, then, that Ghulam Ahmad received his education in *Qur'an* and *Hadith* from several tutors both at Qadian and neighbouring Batala.

Although Mirza Ghulam Ahmad claimed to have received direct revelations from God during his life as a religious leader and although he often used terms also used by Islamic mystics or *sufis*, it is clear from a number of sources that Ahmad was never a *sufi* nor was he trained by *sufis*.<sup>12</sup> He began his career, rather, as a law clerk at Sialkot in an effort to help his father with several pending suits involving family lands. After work, he would read the *Qur'an* and pray. While at Sialkot, Ahmad had his first contact with Christian missionaries, his first acquaintance with the Bible and his first awareness of the possibilities for missionizing Islam. This is not to suggest that the Ahmadiyah

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11. The principal Ahmadi biography of Mirza Ghulam Ahmad is that of A.R. Dard, published in Lahore, 1949 as *Life of Ahmad Part I*. It must be offset by comparison with newspaper articles, journals and other contemporary records on which this study is based.
  12. Muhammad "Ali", one of the early members of the movement and first editor of *Review of Religions* in a brief biography (Vol. V., No. 6, June, 1906) has emphasized that Ghulam Ahmad was never associated with *Sufis* during his education or career. Although he frequently adopted, *sufi* terminology in his lectures and used the practice of *bay'ah* or allegiance in gaining new members, these practices, the movement insists, are its own, admittedly with Islamic tradition behind them.

mission was entirely modelled after a Christian one. Ahmad would learn also from the work of the Brahmo and Arya Samajis. As well, he would include approaches of his own, more useful in a Muslim context. At Sialkot, however, he entered into friendly debate with Christians and also became familiar with Sayyid Ahmad Khan's commentary on *Genesis*. Later, he would outrightly reject Sayyid Ahmad Khan's *Tafsir* (*Qur'an* commentary) not only because of its naturalistic approach but because of its apologetic attitude, "as if there were anything in Islam that could not hold its own in the face of modern knowledge and science."<sup>13</sup>

With the death of his father in 1876, Ahmad returned to Qadian to manage the family estates and to turn his attention entirely to religious matters. By 1877, the Arya Samaj was becoming very active throughout the northern Punjab advocating a new and militantly self-conscious Hinduism. Ahmad felt the need to proclaim the truth of Islam and to challenge opponents, whether Hindu or Christian, to debate the truths of their scriptures and traditions. For the next thirty years, that is, until his death in Lahore in 1908, he continued to write voraciously in Urdu, Persian and Arabic while organizing, in 1889, the Ahmadiyah movement whose journals and newspapers would aid in propagating Islam in Africa, England and America.

What exactly was it that Mirza Ghulam Ahmad taught? What were the claims he made for himself and for Islam that attracted so much negative and

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13. Dard, *op cit.*, p. 40.

positive attention among both Muslims and non-Muslims? It is to these questions we must turn in the next chapter.

## CHAPTER II

### THE TEACHINGS OF MIRZA GHULAM AHMAD AND THEIR IMPACT ON PUNJABI RELIGIOUS GROUPS

The year 1880 marked a turning point in the career of Ghulam Ahmad. That year, he began publication of the four volume *Barahin-i-Ahmadiyah* or *Proofs of the Ahmadiyah*, a project which it took him four years to complete. The purpose of the work was the rejuvenation of Islam. The style of argument Ahmad used seemed to reflect the nature of the times in which he was writing. To a point the format was logical, rational and systematic. While it was Ahmad's purpose to communicate with those who did not agree with him in matters of religious belief, he also stated clearly that ".....it is not our aim. . . .that we should injure the religious susceptibilities of any person, or stir up or commence any controversy unnecessarily." At the same time, he almost contradicted himself by stressing that he would establish the proofs of Islam as contained without doubt or error in the *Holy Qur'an* and that such arguments would involve disproving and overthrowing, "the wrong beliefs of the Arya Samaj" and the Brahmo Samaj.<sup>1</sup>

While it would appear that Ahmad was attempting deliberately to antagonize the two Hindu reform movements, he already had considerable justification.

1. *Barahin-i-Ahmadiyah*, translated by Mirza Mas'um Beg, Ahmadiyah Anjuman Isha'at-i-Islam, Lahore, 1955.

Swami Dayanand, founder of the Arya Samaj had published his *Satyarth Prakash* (The Light of Truth) in 1847. This book had set forth the principles of a "true" Vedic faith and had then attempted to repudiate vociferously the teachings of Islam, Christianity and the Sikhs.

The *Barahin* emerged as the first Islamic response to the kind of polemic produced by Swami Dayanand. Although Ahmad's treatise was certainly not the first Islamic response in the chain reaction set off by the western and Christian presence in India, his debating and polemics reflected a new dimension of and a fresh approach to *jihad*. For Sunni Muslims, *jihad* had traditionally implied actual armed struggle to defend Islamic territory from attack or incursion by non-Muslim forces. Ahmad took the concept in a new direction. He meant to use it as a way of getting Islam to re-assert itself both in Punjab and throughout India against the growing militancy of the Arya Samaj Hindus, emerging Sikh self-consciousness, and evangelical Christianity. Because he felt it necessary to use the term *jihad* in this new sense, Ghulam Ahmad was constantly forced to profess his loyalty to the British Government for whom the word "*jihad*" was something of a danger signal.

### **Organizing a Community**

Finding the birth of a first son to his second wife to be an auspicious and religious occasion, Mirza Ghulam Ahmad announced early in 1889 a first step towards the organization of Ahmadiyah. He stated conditions under which followers of his reform movement could make *bay'ah* (allegiance) with him. Within

two months, he claimed to have received divine commands appointing him as *mujaddid* or a renewer of the faith. In making *bay'ah*, a follower had to commit himself to ten points, nine of which were standard in Islamic belief. These included abstaining from *shirk* (associating something with God), performing *salat* (prayers) five times daily, faithfulness to God and his Messenger, obedience to the teachings of the *Qur'an* and proper ethical behavior. There is no mention in these points about payments of *zakat* (alms tax) to the community (although a percentage of income pledge would become part of one's commitment to it later) nor a statement about the *hajj* (pilgrimage to Mecca). It is significant to note that Ghulam Ahmad himself never made the *hajj*. The reason generally given for his failure to do so was poor health and his pre-occupation with organizing the movement itself. The final point of the *bay'ah* referred specifically to Ahmad :

Tenthly, that he shall establish a brotherhood with me (Ahmad) on condition of obeying me in everything good, and maintain it to the day of his death; and this relationship shall be of such a high order that its example shall not be found in any wordly relationship either of blood relations or of servant and master.<sup>2</sup>

2. Although A. R. Dard sees a divine plan at work in the selection of Ludhiana, more important are the reasons he gives on pp. 158-159 that Ludhiana was a centre of Christian missionary activity and the site of publication for *Nur-i-Afshan* which had begun on March 6, 1873. As well, Ludhiana was one place where leading Muslim mawlawis had taken an active role in the 1857 uprisings. Ahmad's presence was an answer to both types of activity in the city. The total number of persons who made *bay'ah* on this occasion is not recorded by Dard (p. 156); however, he
- (Cont. on Page 17)

Interestingly, the first *bay'ah* did not take place at Qadian but instead at Ludhiana. The first subscriber was Mawlawi Nur-ud-Din, a physician who had come to Qadian. Nur-ud-Din was Ahmad's closest disciple and at time of Ahmad's death in 1908, first *khalifah* (successor to the leadership). About a dozen followers joined the movement that day. It is important to note, however, that in making *bay'ah* these men were not joining a sufi or mystic order but were simply pledging their allegiance to a charismatic Islamic reformer.

Two years later, Mirza Ghulam Ahmad made the controversial claim that he was *masih-i-maw'ud* and *mahdi* of the Muslims. The meaning of this claim for Ahmad was that it was the fulfilment of a Divine promise made to all Muslims

“that at the commencement of every century the Most High God will raise a man who will revive and resuscitate His religion...”<sup>3</sup>

In the book, *Fath-i-Islam*, Ahmad claimed that he was the man appointed to reclaim and restate the faith “afresh”. In all his books, Ghulam Ahmad wrote about the general decay of Islamic life and the need for a Messiah. On the basis of the *Qur'an*, he argued that just as Jesus had appeared 1400 years after the time of Moses, so a Promised Messiah must now appear, “invested with the spirit and power of Jesus,

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stresses the small number of persons reported by the *Qur'an* to have accepted *bay'ah* from the Holy Prophet at Mecca, 'Aqaba and later at Hudabiya. Bashir-ud-Din Mahmud Ahmad in his *Ahmad, The Messenger of the Latter Days*, Qadian, 1924, reports that 40 persons took the oath that day.

3. Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, *Fath-i-Islam*, Mirza Mas'um Beg, translated in *The Light*, Lahore, Vol. XXXCII, No. 10, March 24, 1958, p. 6.

son of Mary.”<sup>4</sup> It was now the fourteenth century after the appearance of the Holy Prophet.

Traditional Islamic belief, accepted by Sunnis, assumed the *mahdi* and the Messiah of the future to be two separate persons, each of whom would aid the Muslims in the bloody battle against the *kafirs* or unbelievers. In establishing his role as a peaceful Messiah and *mahdi*, Ahmad chose to assume both roles, minimizing the significance of the latter while stressing the former. Knowing how controversial his claims would be among Muslims, Ahmad wrote two more books in 1891 to explain his position on Jesus. Since that time, Ahmadis have written several other works supporting Ghulam Ahmad’s views that Jesus did not die on the cross, nor was he carried up into heaven as taught by traditional Islam. He found it inconceivable to accept usual Muslim belief that Jesus had been taken up to heaven from the cross and that he would return again as the *mahdi* on the final day. In a later work *Masih Hindustan Men*, Ahmad “proved” that Jesus had been taken from the cross on Golgatha, had indeed been placed in the tomb (as taught by Christianity) but that his disciples healed his wounds with a miraculous ointment, thus allowing him to escape. Jesus then proceeded to Kashmir via Afghanistan where he ministered to the lost tribes of Israel. He died there at the age of 120. As further proof of this theory, Ahmad located the grave of

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4. See also *Masih Hindustan Men*, Qadian, 1912 (written, 1899), p. 27; also *Tauzih-i-Maram*, translated by Iqbal Ahmad, Lahore, 1966 (Original Urdu edition, 1891); see also Mumtaz Ahmad Faruqi, *Truth Triumphs*, Lahore, 1965, for a discussion of this point.

Jesus who, he said, was buried on Khan Yar Street in Srinagar having died at the age of 120.<sup>5</sup>

The purpose of this elaborate theory about the death of Jesus was to give Ahmad his rightful place as both Messiah and *mahdi* of the Muslims. Citing *Hadith* and other Islamic sources to support his position, Ahmad argued that God had specifically designated him a *muhaddath* or “spokesman” for the present *ummah* (Islamic community). In defining what a “*muhaddath*” did, Ahmad continued to use the term ‘*nabi*’ or prophet to describe himself. By this he meant that “neither has prophethood in all its forms been terminated, nor has *wahy* (revelation) of every kind ceased to take place.”<sup>6</sup>

#### The Challenge of the ‘Ulama’

Even so broad an assertion as the one above was anathema to the Sunni ‘*ulama*’. Early in 1891, one ‘Abd al-Haq Ghaznavi a *mawlawi* from Amritsar challenged Ahmad to a “*mubahala*” on the question of the death of Jesus “whom (‘Abd al-Haq) believed to be sitting in the heavens in his physical body.” Ordinarily a *mubahala* was a debate in which Muslims would disprove the claims of non-Muslims and often end the argument by calling down the curses of God upon their opponent. Because Ahmad was looked upon as a heretic by most Sunni Muslims, men such as ‘Abd-al-Haq felt it legitimate to use *mubahala* against Ahmad. In addition, however, *fatwas* or

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5. *Masih Hindustan Men*, pp. 7-12. The point about the “Jewish” grave is mentioned on p. 1; see also H. A. Walter, *op. cit.*, who attempted to locate this grave unsuccessfully and who denies the veracity of Ahmad’s “proofs.”

6. *Tauzih-i-Maram*, pp. 16-17.

legal religious pronouncements were made against him throughout the country.<sup>7</sup>

The most extreme conflict with a Muslim was that which Ahmad had with Muhammad Husain, leader of the Ahl-i-Hadith movement in Batala and editor of an Urdu newspaper, *Isha'at-i-Sunnah*. Although Husain was a strong supporter of Ghulam Ahmad when he first read the *Barahin*, he turned strongly against the Mirza when Ahmad claimed to be *masih-i-maw'ud* and *mahdi*. Acrimony between the two reached its peak during 1897 and 1898 when articles in *Isha'at* against Ahmad were answered by *al-Hakam*, the newly established Ahmadiyah newspaper. When Ahmad challenged Muhammad Husain to public debate, he was answered by a new opponent, Mullah Muhammad Bakhsh of Lahore, editor of the newspaper *Ja'far Zatali*. Issues raised between the conflicting forces included the nature of Islamic leadership, the *khilafat*, and loyalty to the Government.<sup>8</sup>

These issues were related to each other because they concerned the question of whether Indian Muslims were to be predominantly loyal to the *khalifah*

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7. The word "*mubahala*" derives from the Arabic root which means "to curse". In the form employed here it means "to curse each other", a practice ordinarily permitted to Muslims in debating with non-Muslims but not previously known to have been used by Muslims against each other. The incidents referred to here take on unusual significance in light of this.
  8. Most of what is known of Muhammad Husain may be found in Dard's biography of Ahmad. He wrote a lengthy, praise-filled review of Ahmad's *Barahin*, but when Ahmad declared himself *masih-i-maw'ud* and *mahdi* Husain began a polemic against him. After, 1890, Husain was in league with Mullah Muhammad Bakhsh, editor of the *Ja'far Zatali* (Bufoon) newspaper of Lahore. The chief purpose of the paper was to ridicule the Ahmadiyah movement.

and *sultan* of the Ottoman Empire, or to the British crown. Sayyid Ahmad Khan and Mirza Ghulam Ahmad believed that Muslims owed no allegiance to the *sultan* since at best he was a symbol of an institution which had not been rightfully held for centuries. Muhammad Husain and other more militant Muslims believed that some loyalty to the *sultan* was essential as a way of keeping world-wide Islam together. The *khalifah* question would continue to be raised among Indian Muslims until well after the downfall of the Ottomans after World War One.\*

In the controversy between Ghulam Ahmad and Muhammad Husain, one may credit the growth of vernacular newspapers in the Punjab with raising what might seem to be a petty controversy to rather large proportions. Two papers with large circulations, *Akhbar-i-'Am* operated by Hindus and *Paisa Akhbar* operated by Sunni Muslims dramatized the controversy, thereby calling the attention of the Government to it. Early in December, 1898, the law intervened when a deputy inspector of police reported to a superior officer at Gurdaspur about the possibility of a breach of the peace resulting from the tensions between the two men. Husain had applied for a permit to carry a gun because he feared for his life since Ghulam Ahmad, in support of his own claims, had prophesied doom against his critic.

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9. Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, *Kashful-Ghita'*, Victoria Press, Lahore, 1898, pp. 8-9 and 17-19. The issue of the *sultan* was one of the few about which Sayyid Ahmad Khan and Mirza Ghulam Ahmad agreed. For further arguments by Ahmad against Muhammad Husain's position on the *sultan*, see *al-Hakam*, Qadian, January 10, 1899.

Ahmad had already been cited by the authorities on the protest of Christian missionaries for having prophesied in public against them. Both men were called into court in a case finally heard in January, 1899 and ordered to desist from their controversial activities.<sup>10</sup>

Before traditional Muslims, Ahmad had difficulty in defending his claims. During the crisis with Muhammad Husain he published a tract, *kashf-ul-Ghita'* (Unveiling the Curtain). This included statements of loyalty to the Government and a repudiation of "some ignorant *mullahs*.....who call me a *kafir* and attribute (my writings) to some secret and private relations of mine with the Government, believing me to be a hired eulogist and supporter of it....." Quoting a *fatwa* of Muhammad Husain which mocked him, Ghulam Ahmad cited this as an example of the insults being heaped on him, attributing the attacks of the '*ulama*' as due to his position on *jihad*.<sup>11</sup>

### Prophet or Prophetier ?

The question over which the controversy surrounding Mirza Ghulam Ahmad and his teachings really revolved was the question of how he designated himself and how he defined his role. This issue was later a matter of serious debate within the Ahmadiyah movement itself. There can be no doubt that Ahmad did make prophecies about his Muslim and non-Muslim opponents in public debates. Ahmadis have claimed that Ahmad never prophesied the doom of any oppo-

10. Dard, *op. cit.*, p. 449, says that Muhammad Husain "bought a sharp dagger".

11. *Kashf-ul-Ghita'*, *op. cit.*

ment "without the express request or consent of the person concerned". Ahmadis further claim that the Mirza stated this as early as 1886, long before the great controversies of 1896-1898. It is unclear whether Ahmad realized that his prophecies and the events resulting from them would lead to the kind of public uproar they did. Apparently, however, he so strongly believed in the revelations he received that he felt compelled to declare them publicly as the Holy Prophet himself had.

The Lahore Ahmadiyah Movement, whose origins and leadership are the subject of a later chapter, has attempted to show that Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, in his claim to be the Promised Messiah was not declaring himself a new prophet but only a *mujaddid* or renewer of Islam. One Lahore writer, quoting from Ahmad's *Izala-i-Awham* has pointed out that Ahmad defined the word 'nabi' or prophet as "one who receives tidings from Allah and announces the same."<sup>12</sup> Thus, as a Promised Messiah and one who had received revelations, he could rightly claim the title of *nabi*. In another of his books, *Mawahib-ur-Rahman* published in 1903, Ahmad stated he was only a follower of Muhammad, a *muhaddath* or *mujaddid* bearing a "strong resemblance" to a prophet.<sup>13</sup>

One of Ghulam Ahmad's last works, *Haqiqat al-Wahy*, published in 1907, has been the greatest source of controversy between the more conservative Qadian group and the Lahore Ahmadiyah. The latter have quoted numerous passages from this book

12. Mumtaz Ahmad Faruqi. *op. cit.*, p. 16.

13. *Ibid.*, p. 17.

and from Ahmad's "al-Wasiyah" or "Will" to prove his strong belief in the *khatm an-nabuwwah* doctrine, i. e. Muhammad was the "seal" of the prophets. On the other hand, Bashir-ud-Din Mahmud Ahmad, son and second *khalifah* of the Qadian Ahmadiyah movement, frequently declared that after 1901, his father had conceived of his role in a new light and that he was truly a prophet for the present age. The case was argued in many places, most persuasively in Bashir-ud-Din's *Invitation to Ahmadiyyat*, first published in Urdu in 1926. Earlier, he had suggested on several occasions that Muslims who did not follow Ahmad could be declared *kafirs* or non-believers. It was on this point that the Lahore group dissented most strongly, for while they wished to appreciate Ghulam Ahmad as a *mujaddid*, they also wished to be accepted by the Islamic community at large.

That Mirza Ghulam Ahmad walked a fine line on the question of prophecy is clear. He claimed everything except that he was another prophet in succession of Muhammad himself. By claiming to be in the "likeness" of Jesus as *masih maw'ud*, he should have overcome the problem of claiming to be another prophet. But by prophesying against Muslims, and not only against Hindus and Christians, and by using the term *nabi* to describe himself, he did grave offense to Muslim sensibilities. Nevertheless, Mirza Ghulam Ahmad stood fast for Islam against what he believed to be the aggressiveness of Christians, Sikhs and the Arya Samaj.

This chapter has touched on many Islamic theological issues not ordinarily examined in the context

of Indian historical studies. It was necessary to present them in order to draw an accurate picture of the founder of Ahmadiyah, his claims and challenges to established Islam in the late nineteenth century Punjab. His encounter with non-Muslim groups raises another series of issues to be discussed in the following chapter.

## CHAPTER III

### MIRZA GHULAM AHMAD : DEFENDER OF ISLAM : POLEMICS AND CONTROVERSY

Mirza Ghulam Ahmad had "proven" the death of Jesus in Kashmir through historical research in order to support his own claims as *mahdi* and Messiah and thereby to disprove the traditional Muslim position on the second coming. In doing so, Ahmad's chief purpose was to present a rational and argumentative approach which would attract Muslim followers. Successful in this, it did not take long before he came to see that such an approach could help him to win over followers of other religious traditions.

While *jihad* by the sword was no longer a legitimate option for him, *tabligh*, missionary effort, by persuasion was. While he could present a scholarly case for his cause, as he had in the "Jesus" question, he believed he could also attract public attention to himself by controversial and challenging statements. At the same time, professing loyalty to the Government, Ahmad could covet its protection, although the court case of 1898 against Muhammad Husain did require him to limit his more vociferous activities.

As an excuse to approach the Sikh community, for example, Ahmad cited Swami Dayanand's attacks on them in his *Satyarth Prakash*. Although he had

not heard of any Sikh responses to these attacks, Ahmad decided to take up "the cudgel against Dayanand to protect the honour of Nanak..." the first Guru of the Sikhs.<sup>1</sup> Thus, Ahmad began a book which would utilize Nanak for his own purposes. *Sat Bachan* not only sought to answer charges levelled by Dayanand but also sought to separate legendary lore from known facts about Guru Nanak (1469—1538). If Ahmad was to convince the Sikhs that he was the Promised Messiah, he would have to prove first that Guru Nanak was a Muslim and not connected closely with Hinduism as was commonly held. To prove his case, Ahmad again had to use "historical research".

The chief piece of evidence used by Ghulam Ahmad for his claim about Guru Nanak as a Muslim was the *chola sahib*, a cloak of cotton material which Guru Nanak is said to have received directly from God. The cloak was used as a head wrapping by the first five Gurus though later it passed into the hands of a descendant of Nanak who kept it as a relic in Dera Baba Nanak, near Qadian. Before Ahmad went to see the cloak on September 30, 1895, he sent a deputation who reported that it was covered with verses from the *Qur'an*. When Ghulam Ahmad went to visit the shrine, he had his followers make an exact copy of the writings, the lead section of which included the "*la allah illa allah wa muhammad rasul allah.*" When Ahmad added to this statements of the *janam sakhis* (biographies of the Guru) which attested that Nanak went to Mecca dressed as a Muslim saint, called out the *adhan*, and sat in the

1. Dard, *op. cit.*, pp. 333-334.

mosque for prayers, as well as his "discovery" that Nanak had performed *chil'as*, he linked Nanak more closely with Islam. Refuting Dr. Trumpp's view that Nanak did not make the *hajj*<sup>3</sup> he upheld the view of *Chishti* Muslims who said that Nanak went on the *hajj* twice and stayed in Mecca for two years. Ahmad also refuted any possibility of Guru Nanak's having been a Hindu since—and using M.A. Macauliffe as his source here—the doctrines set forth in the *Adi Granth* prohibit such traditional Hindu practices as caste, *sati*, use of tobacco or alcohol, and pilgrimage to sacred rivers.<sup>4</sup> Ahmad concluded that it would be a mistake to contend that Nanak was not a Muslim or even that he intended his teachings as a compromise position between that of the Hindus and the Muslims.<sup>4</sup>

The response of the Sikh community through its newspapers was prompt in repudiating Ghulam Ahmad's assertions about Guru Nanak and the *chola*. *Singh Sah'ai* of Amritsar specifically answered the claims set forth by Ahmad's "historical research":

When Guru Nanak took Mardana with him to Mecca and Medina and there performed his miracles and astonished the Maulvis and Kazis, the latter held a counsel and asked Guru Nanak to wear the *chola* which Muhammad had prepared by witchcraft. The Kazis were under the impression that the wearing of the *chola* would lead Nanak

2. A reference to Dr. Earnst Trumpp, a German scholar, who first translated *The Adi Granth* into English in 1877 at the request of the Punjab Government and who, like Ahmad, offended the Sikhs by some of his personal views displayed during the translation project.
3. Dard, *op. cit.*, pp. 334-338; see also Muhammad 'Ali, "Ghulam Ahmad...", pp. 16-17.
4. Dard, p. 341

to embrace Islam. When, however, the *chola* was brought before Nanak, it produced no effect on him, whereupon the Kazis asked him to wear it as a *khill'at*. The Guru put it on and brought it with him to India. Thus the Guru divested this *chola* of the virtues claimed for it, and it is kept as a testimony of his miraculous triumph over the Muhammadans.....<sup>5</sup>

While the Sikhs continued to protest and refute Ahmad's assertions about their founder, the Ahmadiyah movement continued to press its arguments about Guru Nanak regardless of the extent to which they were offending the Sikh community. Occasional public clashes continued into the 1930's.

### Conflict with the Missionaries

Ahmad had initially debated Christian missionaries during his early years as a law clerk at Sialkot. When he first accepted *bay'ah* in 1889, it was at Ludhiana, a centre of missionary activity and a place where the most important Christian missionary Urdu language newspaper, the *Nur Afshan*, was published. Through its pages, several years before the *bay'ah* ceremony at Ludhiana, several Indian Christian missionaries had warned the Christian community of Ahmad's growing influence and the threat he posed. Those particularly anxious to oppose Ahmad were missionaries Imad-ud-Din, Thakar Das and Abdullah Athim. These men, all Punjabis, were connected both with the American Presbyterian Mission and the Church Missionary Society in the Punjab. After engaging these Christians in several preliminary "prophesying debates" Ahmad especially antagonized the Christians at a small village in

5. See *Singh Sah'ai*, February 12, 1896 for the rebuttal.

Amritsar district. It is important to realize that Punjabis who had chosen to become Christian were as sensitive about their religious commitment, if not more so, than Sikhs or Hindus who had inherited their identity. Christians were few in number wherever they lived and extremely defensive about their minority position, all the more so because they fervently held to their faith.

At Jandiala, the village in question, Christians and Muslims had been attacking each other verbally. Dr. Henry Martyn Clark, a medical missionary of the Church Missionary Society in charge of their work in that area, proposed a public debate to decide the validity of Christian claims against those of Islam. After some further dispute as to who would represent each side, Mirza Ghulam Ahmad was accepted as debater for the Muslims against Abdullah Athim for the Christians. The debate was set for late May and early June, 1893. In the first part of the debate Ahmad would explain his claim that "every religion should prove its truth with living signs." Then, he would question his opponent about the divinity of Jesus. Athim in return would question Ahmad during the second half of the debate on questions of God's mercy, free will and predestination, compulsion in religion, evidence of the *Qur'an* being the Word of God, and proof of Muhammad being the messenger of God.<sup>6</sup>

As the debate progressed, witnessed for twelve long days by many Muslims as well as Christians, relations between the two principal debaters became increas-

6. Dard, pp. 287-288.

ingly acrimonious. In his concluding statement, Ahmad told of a sign he had just received from God, that of two parties to the debate the one who was deliberately following a falsehood and forsaking the true God... would be thrown in "*Haviyah*" within fifteen months, each month corresponding to a day of this debate, and that he would be severely disgraced provided he did not turn to the truth; and that the person who...believed in the true God would be openly honoured...Now, I ask Deputy Sahib (Athim) : "If this sign is fulfilled, would you accept it or not as...divine prophecy... ? Would it be or not a strong proof that the Holy Prophet (peace be on him), whom you call a *Dajjal*...is a true prophet ?"

An entirely different view of the events at Jandiala appeared in the Annual Report of the Church Missionary Society for 1894 which reported :

The chosen champion of the Mohammedans was a certain Mirza Ghulam Ahmad of Qadian, a man of Moghal descent, and deeply imbued, Dr. Clark says, with rationalism; he had, indeed, been excommunicated by the orthodox Moslems. The Christian champion was Mr. Abdullah Athim, one of the earliest converts from Mohammedanism. The controversy took place in Amritsar, in the verandah of Dr. Martyn Clark's house, and lasted two weeks...

...The Mirza is a heretic. The vast majority of Mohammedans are ranked against him. Though he has made a great stir, his actual followers are extremely few; nevertheless the dispute between them (or rather the Mirza) and the orthodox has been long and exceedingly acrimonious. Things have come to such a pass that both parties finally resolved to resort to a *mubahilla*. In this each party states its position, commends its cause to God, appeals to Him as against its adversary, and prays that the most withering curses may blast whichever of the parties is in the wrong.

It is this imprecation of Divine vengeance which is more particularly technically termed *mubahilla*.

The Mirza wanted to have a *mubahilla* with us, but we told him that while the children of darkness might curse each other, we followed the Prince of Peace, and we were commanded to bless and curse not. Our prayer for him and his friends was that they might obtain eternal life—and that is, know the only true and wise God, and Jesus Christ His Son, whom He hath sent.<sup>8</sup>

It is important to observe here the very different perspectives that Ahmadi and Christian reporters have brought to this controversial event. Predicting an awful fate for Athim if he did not recant his Christianity for Islam, Ghulam Ahmad stirred highly emotional feelings. When the prophecy against Athim expired in 1894 with no harm having come to the missionary, the Christian press found reason for rejoicing and an opportunity to condemn the Mirza. Ahmad's biographer has retorted that the missionaries' jubilation was not called for since on that very day Ahmad had received the word of God "drawing attention to the qualifying words of the prophecy and declaring that Athim had turned towards the truth ...he had made no speech against Islam and had written no articles or book during all these months."<sup>9</sup>

One other aspect of Ghulam Ahmad's aggressive campaign against Christian missionaries should be noted. Some of the more evangelical missionaries had published books and tracts defamatory to Islam and the Prophet. Moderate educational groups such as the Anjuman-i-Himayat-i-Islam had petitioned the

8. *Proceedings of the Church Missionary Society*, 1891-1892, London, p. 115.

9. Dard, p. 313.

Government to stop publication of one particularly offensive tract. In May, 1898, Ahmad, in the Ahmadi newspaper, *al-Hakam*, chided the Anjuman for its position and argued that the damage was already done. If Muslims were too weak to defend themselves, little hope remained. Answering the points posed by the pamphlet, Ahmad asserted that stronger tracts aimed at the missionaries were the real answer to such challenges.<sup>10</sup>

### **Mirza Ghulam Ahmad and the Arya Samaj**

Mirza Ghulam Ahmad's first contact with the Arya Samaj and its programme came in his home village of Qadian during Swami Dayanand's whirlwind tour of the Punjab in 1877. His previous attempts to organize chapters of the Arya Samaj in other parts of India had not succeeded. However, Dayanand seems to have arrived in the Punjab at the right moment. His lecturing and public discussions met both with strong opposition and strong support from the outset. Of those in the latter category, some immediately responded to his call to reform Hinduism by throwing idols into the Ravi river. The combination of these overtly destructive actions and Dayanand's militant preaching against orthodox Hinduism created an uproar in the Hindu community of Lahore and forced many Hindus to take a position about Dayanand. Dayanand's appeal to the younger intellectuals of the Punjab was quite successful, despite the slight impact of transplanted Bengali Brahmo Samaj.

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10. The controversial missionary text in question was "Ummahat ul-Meminin" and Ahmad's answer was entitled "A Cry of Pain".

A brief comparison of Swami Dayanand and Ghulam Ahmad provides interesting parallels between the two men. Both were raised in upper class families, both received traditional religious training, both repudiated certain worldly ties which their families sought to thrust upon them, both, in a sense, withdrew from the mainstream of life for a time, yet neither chose to follow the traditional path of the *sanyasin* or the *sufi*. Both Dayanand and Ahmad saw the degeneration to which their respective religious communities had fallen and each sought to reconstruct his faith in terms that would speak to the modern late nineteenth century Indian while harking back for authority to the original scriptural source, the *Qur'an* or the *Vedas*. Each wanted to defend his renewed faith against the "threats" of the other and the Christian missionaries. The major differences between the two men were (1) Ahmad's claim to be Messiah and *mahdi*, i. e., something more than an ordinary *mujaddid* (a religious reformer), where as Dayanand never made such a claim, even if he was held in very high esteem by his followers; (2) Dayanand's repudiation of British and European domination in Indian life leading in the 1890's to the Arya Samaj's increasing role in the political life of India which contrasted sharply with Ahmad's view that India had never fared better than it had under British rule; and (3) the fact that Dayanand did not succeed in organizing the Arya Samaj in his native area but instead planted it in the Punjab, while Ahmad, a native Punjabi, did succeed in starting his movement for Islamic renewal at about the same time on home

ground, later spreading it to other parts of India and the world as well.

Ghulam Ahmad's first real encounter with the Arya Samaj came in his relations with one Sharampat Rai, a resident of Qadian, who was secretary of the local chapter of the Arya Samaj in Ahmad's home village. Ahmadi A. R. Dard has reported that it had fifteen members. Before publication of his *magnum-opus*, *Barahin-i-Ahmadiyah*, Ahmad's relations with neighbouring Aryas seem to have been reasonable. Although Ahmad clearly had no face-to-face meeting or even indirect relations with Dayanand, his biographer reports that by a registered letter dated April 20, 1883, Ahmad offered to send Dayanand copies of the *Barahin* and to debate with him the superiority of Islam. Dayanand never answered the letter. During August, 1883, Ahmad reportedly had a vision that the end of Dayanand was drawing near. Suddenly the *Swami* fell ill at the end of September and died at the end of October.<sup>11</sup>

If Dayanand's writings offended Muslims in general and Ahmad in particular during the first few years of the Arya Samaj's life, the blatant attacks on Muslim feelings by the Arya publicist, Pandit Lekh Ram, added a new dimension of conflict in Samaj-Ahmadiyah relations. Lekh Ram first wrote to Ahmad from Amritsar on April 3, 1885 that he would like to come to Qadian to see Ahmad perform heavenly signs. Thus a relationship which started on a note of taunting sarcasm in personal correspondence between two men would end in the murder of

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11. Dard, p. 82.

the Hindu twelve years later, an event leading to some of the worst communal tensions yet experienced in the Punjab.

Though raised a Brahmin in the Jehlum district of the Punjab, Lekh Ram had been educated in Urdu and Persian by Muslims with whom he came into serious religious controversy even as a young man. Serving as a policeman in Peshawar, he became a devotee of several religious movements finally making a commitment to Swami Dayanand when the Arya Samaj was organized in Peshawar. In 1884, resigning his police position after the death of Swami Dayanand, Lekh Ram went to Lahore where he became editor of the *Arya Gazette*. He held this position until 1890. During his tenure as editor, he regularly attacked Islam and issued sharp statements on cow protection and the use of Hindi in Government schools. These were all extremely sensitive issues in Hindu-Muslim relations.

A split in Arya ranks in 1893 placed Lekh Ram with the radicals who expanded preaching and press propaganda far beyond what it had previously been. His pamphlet, *Jehad or the Basis of Mohammedi Religion* (1892), especially offended Muslims of all shades. Blaming all India's ills on the devastations of the early Muslim invader, Mahmud of Ghazni and attacking the "naturalist" followers of Sayyid Ahmad Khan, Lekh Ram managed to enrage the feelings of Muslims throughout India.

Lekh Ram and Mirza Ghulam Ahmad began their acrimonious relationship in 1885 with an exchange of letters. Ahmad invited the Arya to come

to Qadian so that he could see some "heavenly signs." Lekh Ram responded that Ahmad should first deposit 2400 rupees in an account so that should the sign not come true, Lekh Ram could collect it. While this particular confrontation between the two did not materialize, enough others did, so that Ahmad felt compelled in 1893 to prophecy doom for Lekh Ram within six years.<sup>12</sup>

If prophecy was one way to strike back at the insults heaped upon Islam by a militant Arya Samajist such as Lekh Ram, another approach was to attack the Arya position on women and sexual relationships. As a strict follower of the *Code of Manu*, Dayanand had accepted the passages (9 : 56ff) which allowed both the possibility of widow remarriage or the practice of *niyog* as an alternative. In his chapter on family life in the *Satyarth Prakash*, Dayanand spelled out the distinction between remarriage and *niyog*. Dayanand made it clear, however, that *niyog* was to be performed only by widows and widowers but not between "bachelors and virgins."<sup>13</sup> Because *Vedas* specifically had prohibited remarriage, Dayanand developed this more complete doctrine of *niyog* as an answer to the practice of *sati* or widow burning in the modern age. The doctrine clearly was intended as a means of placing Indian family life in a more modern context.

Ahmad's response came in one of his strongest tracts, *Radd-i-Niyog*, or the *Rejection of Niyog*, published at Qadian, in November, 1895. Beginning the pamphlet

12. For details on the life of Lekh Ram see Kenneth Jones, *op. cit.* and a biography drawn from an obituary article in *Sat Dharma Pracharak*, May 21, 1897.

13. *Satyarth Prakash*, pp. 155-156 (in the 1960 translation, Allahabad).

by addressing Muhammad as '*khatm-i-nabiya*'<sup>14</sup> he described the prophet's marital relations and compared them to the practice of *niyog* which he had read about in *Satyarth Prakash*. Repudiating Dayanand's answers about *niyog*, Ahmad asked why a childless couple could not simply adopt a child of the same caste? Why should a widow not remarry and bind herself to one man? "If not, then she is loose, living with as many men as she wishes." The practice of *niyog* was nothing more than an excuse for transgressing what the *Vedas* forbid—remarriage. Ahmad felt it his responsibility via an *ishtihar* and this tract to urge the Aryas to give up this "shameful practice". Their response to his first *ishtihar* was to publish anonymous abuses from Jullundur. In reply, Ahmad offered 500 rupees to anyone who could disprove his position on *niyog*.<sup>15</sup>

What would the Islamic answer to the problem of widow remarriage be, Ahmad asked? Islamic law required that a widow should stay at home for four months after the death of her husband in order to avoid any illicit encounters. In this, he saw sensible legal approach to the problem, for if a widow was free to have intercourse at once, how could one determine if the child was of the first or the second husband? Ahmad's arguments were lengthy. Their significance lies more in the style and language of Ahmad's

14. This is an important point because many Muslims accused Ahmad of claiming the "prophecy" due to his use of the term *nabi* when describing himself as the promised Messiah and *mahdi*.

15. Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, *Radd-i-Niyog*, Qadian, 1895, p. 4; see also Dard's brief discussion, pp. 330-332.

argumentation against this Arya doctrine and the obvious tensions which it would provoke both in Hindu-Muslim relations and, more specifically, in Ahmadiyah-Arya Samaj relations than in any effectiveness Ahmad might really have had in winning the Aryas over to Islam.

Lekh Ram's activities during the years after 1893, despite Ahmad's prophecy against him, continued to contribute greatly to the growth of communal tensions in the Punjab. Charges brought against Lekh Ram by various Muslim groups were always dismissed, however. This led some newspapers to foresee "disastrous consequences" if his campaign against Islam was not stopped.

Those foreseen consequences occurred on March 6, 1897 when Lekh Ram was murdered by a Muslim while visiting a Hindu home in Lahore. The impact on Punjab through its press was enormous. The immediate reaction of some nineteen newspapers providing a spectrum of opinion both for and against Lekh Ram gives some indication of how the murder effected the various communities already under extreme tension from the polemics and controversy. Because Mirza Ghulam Ahmad published a notice indicating that Lekh Ram's death was a sign from God, several newspapers angrily suggested Ahmad's complicity in the event because of his prophecy and claims.<sup>16</sup>

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16. Ahmad's explanation of his own role in the Lekh Ram controversy may be found in his *Istifta'*, Qadian, 1897 a translation of which was prepared by 'Abid Ghazi and this author as Appendix "C" to a dissertation on the same subject, McGill University, Montreal.

New rumours came from Qadian that Ahmad had asked the Government for protection because he feared an Arya plot against his life. The Muslim press picked up the theme, if only to ask the inevitable question, why did the Mirza not believe that God would protect him. At the same time, the suggestion of a plot against Ahmad was vehemently denied in the Arya press. Thus, the worsening of relations between Hindus and Muslims continued to be reflected in what the latest press reports had to say of the Lekh Ram incident of 1897.

The first week of April, 1897 saw the press reflecting the increased communal tensions throughout the Punjab and especially in Lahore. Rumours of Hindus and Muslims poisoning each other and of retaliatory boycotts were rife. At the same time a number of papers reported that the District Superintendent of Police at Gurdaspur had searched Ahmad's house on April 8, more than a month after the murder. The press agreed this time that such a search would prove useless especially as Ahmad knew of the search already held at the Anjuman in Lahore. Ahmad's own *Istifta* of May 1, while referring to the search, mentioned it only as one of a series of incidents which he felt the need to report to the public. Since *al-Hakam*, the earliest regular Ahmadi newspaper, was not yet being published, the brief remarks on page two of the *Istifta* are the only statements available to present the contemporary Ahmadiyah point of view on these events. Ahmad's biographer has dismissed the incident, however, saying,

He was very glad when the Superintendent of Police told him that he had orders to search his house in connection with the murder of Pt. Lekh Ram. Ahmad at once took the officials and others, including some of his enemies, into his house which was surrounded by police. He took them to every room in the house. Bundles of all kinds of papers were opened and read out. By coincidence (sic) the first papers that came to the notice of the authorities...were the writings of Lekh Ram and Ahmad...In short, the police made a thorough enquiry and were perfectly satisfied.<sup>17</sup>

Despite his efforts to defend Islam, Ahmad received nothing but abuse from other Muslims. It is equally ironic to note that when the first reports of the arrested Muslim murderer appeared in the press of mid-November, 1897, of the five Punjabi papers reporting, each expressed joy that the murderer finally was coming to justice, but not one commented that Ghulam Ahmad should be vindicated of suspicions.

Controversy between the Ahmadiyah and the Arya Samaj continued during the lifetime of Ghulam Ahmad (to 1908) and in the years that followed. In the context of the important political events in which Indian religious communities were engaged after 1912, however, the controversy never again reached the extremes generated by the Lekh Ram affair of 1897. With the formal establishment of Ahmadiyah as a religious movement, concern with internal developments and conflicts about organizational policy would tend to dominate the movement especially in the years from 1905-1915.

17. Dard, pp. 391-392; *Istifta'*, p. 2.

## CHAPTER IV

### HOW AHMADIYAH FUNCTIONED : ORGANIZATION, PUBLICATIONS, THE SPLIT

This study has examined thus far the details of Mirza Ghulam Ahmad's teachings, outreach mission and interaction with various religious groups throughout North India. It is now necessary to examine the growth of Ahmadiyah as a sect within Islam, to observe the stages of organizational development and the growth of publishing as means of propagating the specific and unique message which distinguished Ahmadiyah from Sunni Islam. The "split" in the movement which occurred in 1913, is also closely related to these developments.

Although Ahmad first accepted *bay'ah* from a group of followers in 1889, the first *jalsah* or assembly at Qadian drawing followers from Jammu and Punjab was not held until 1891. The next year, new followers from as far away as U. P. and Delhi came to join in establishing the following aims for the movement :

To propagate Islam : to think out ways and means of promoting the welfare of new converts to Islam in Europe and America; to further the cause of righteousness, purity, piety and moral excellence throughout the world; to eradicate evil habits and customs; to appreciate with gratitude the good work of the British Government.<sup>1</sup>

The movement did not officially come into being until

1. Dard, p. 271-272.

a declaration by Ahmad in 1900. However, the decision to identify the movement as separate from Sunni Islam followed two years of intensive opposition by both Sunni and sectarian 'ulama'. *Al-Hakam*, the chief Ahmadi newspaper has recorded a membership of 1098 in 1901 when Ahmad requested a separate identification of his followers in the Census. The name "Ahmadiyah" was chosen at this time, not as an honour to Mirza Ghulam Ahmad but because it was a form of the prophet's name, a name by which he was called during the early Meccan period when he suffered severe persecution. Ahmadis had already been referred to derogatorily by their opponents as "Mirza'is" or "Qadianis", reference to their "worship" of Ahmad or to the village from which he came.

That Mirza Ghulam Ahmad seemed to be appealing largely to a literate, middle class group of followers who found his charismatic preaching and prophesying a much needed element in the stagnating Islam current in Punjab at the turn of the century, is evident from a list of 313 original "companions" of the Mirza. This list included 60 men addressed as *mian* (respected one), 49 *maulvi* (*mawlawi*, religious teacher), 42 *munshi* (writer or scribe), 22 *shaykh*, 19 *sayyid* (descendent of the Holy Prophet), 11 *qadi* (religious judge), and 9 *Mirza* (one of royal origin). In addition, persons listed as *haji*, *hafiz*, doctors, *mufti* and *khawajah* were included in the list.<sup>2</sup>

Within the leadership of the movement, however, it is possible to distinguish two groups whose identity

2. The list is found in an appendix to Dard.

became clearer during the split of 1914; a more intellectual, educated and urbane group led by Khawajah Kamal-ud-Din and Muhammad Ali of Lahore who wanted to direct Ahmadiyah closer to the mainstream of Islam and the middle-class part-professional, part-business group who remained more conservative in their adherence to the original teachings of the Promised Messiah.

### **The Need for Newspapers and Journals**

The year 1897 had brought notoriety for Mirza Ghulam Ahmad because his prophecy about the death of Lekh Ram had been fulfilled, even if by the hand of a non-Ahmadi Muslim. The publicity also helped spread the Ahmadiyah movement. A Middle School was established at Qadian and an extension to the mosque proposed. Ahmad had been fighting with the Arya Samaj and missionaries for more than seven years, with fellow Muslims a full decade, and with the Sikhs since 1895. Realizing that a journal which could deal regularly with crucial issues would be useful at this juncture, Ahmad established a weekly newspaper named *al-Hakam*, "in view of the ancient prophecy that the Promised Messiah would judge between all peoples". The editor was Shaikh Yaqub Ali who had previous experience of publishing a weekly paper in Amritsar. Although the first issue, published on October 8, 1897 was published in Amritsar also, the first number of the second volume, February 20, 1898, was printed at Qadian.\*

3. Dard, p. 417; the British record of the Punjab press indicates that the weekly circulation of *al-Hakam* rose from 400 in 1899 to 900 in 1905. Its first editor, Yaqub Ali had worked previously on the *Paisa Akhbar* in Lahore after coming from Ludhiana.

The other most significant publication undertaken by the movement was *Review of Religions* which began simultaneous publication in Urdu and English in 1902. Its first editors were Khawajah Kamal-ud-Din and Muhammad 'Ali, both of whom later led the Lahore breakaway group. Under their guidance up to 1914, *Review of Religions* in its English format certainly was responsible for making the Ahmadiyah movement known in the non-Muslim world. Established under a separate corporation, the *Anjuman Isha'at-i-Islam*, its original circulation was 760 copies a month, a figure which decreased substantially in the 1920's and 30's—after the split.

Considering the times and the context in which it was first written and published, *Review of Religions* was a remarkable publication. Although it devoted much space to the claims of Ahmad and the organization of the Ahmadiyah, it also contained many articles dealing with other religious movements. A series appeared about Baha'i, another criticizing various western translations of the *Qur'an*, others raising theological issues with Christianity. For example Volume V in 1906 published the entire text of Mirza Ghulam Ahmad's *al-Wasiyah* or Will, by far the most important organizational document for Ahmadiyah during the lifetime of the Promised Messiah. It was here that Ahmad established the 'Bahishti Maqbara' or Ahmadi cemetery and the conditions required of members who wished to be buried there. These included a contribution of ten percent of one's estate to the movement.<sup>4</sup>

4. *Review of Religions*, V, January 1906, pp. 24-36.

### Growing Divisions

The leadership of the Ahmadiyah movement during the last decade of Ghulam Ahmad's life had become increasingly diverse and well-educated. Two particularly outstanding men among Ahmad's close supporters were Muhammad 'Ali of Lahore, the scholarly English-speaking editor of the *Review of Religions*, and Khawajah Kamal-ud-Din, a Kashmiri who had practised law in Peshawar before becoming the first Ahmadi missionary to England. Muhammad 'Ali, born in 1874, had been educated at Islamia College, Lahore, where he first met Khawajah Kamal-ud-Din. Muhammad 'Ali passed his M. A. there in 1896, then joining the faculty of mathematics at Oriental College, Lahore until 1899. Although he first heard Mirza Ghulam Ahmad preach in Lahore in 1892, it was not until the Khawajah invited him to visit Qadian in 1897 that he joined his friend, already a follower, by subscribing to the movement. Although in 1899, Muhammad 'Ali had decided to begin a career as an attorney, he postponed this decision, indefinitely as it turned out, and moved to Qadian to work for the movement.<sup>5</sup> Khawajah Kamal-ud-Din also moved his law practice from Peshawar, going to work at Qadian until he was designated by Nur-ud-Din, the first *khalifah* (or successor) to the Promised Messiah to investigate the possibility of starting a mosque in London during a 1912 family business trip to England.

5. For a biography of Muhammad Ali, see, Mumtaz Ahmad Faruqi and Muhammad Ahmad, *Mujahid-i-Kabir : yani Suanah-i-Urmi Hazrat Maulana Muhammad Ali* (Lahore, 1962) or an abbreviated English translation *Muhammad Ali : The Great Missionary of Islam* (Lahore, 1966).

These two men, then, seem to have been a cut above many of Ahmad's other supporters. His followers, by and large, were not from the intelligentsia. Neither did they come from peasant or lower caste backgrounds. The bulk of the early Ahmadi community emerged from the Muslim middle-class, land-owners and former land owners, businessmen, doctors and attorneys. These were men who could read Ahmad's numerous Urdu writings, men educated in the Islamic and sometimes the English tradition. They could also be described as individuals who preferred to accept the authoritarian leadership and charismatic programme of the Promised Messiah, or, as individuals who could commit themselves to a new Islamic outlook. Muhammad 'Ali and Khawajah Kamal-ud-Din while impressed by and supportive of Ahmad's leadership, were thinkers, reformers, writers and leaders in their own right.

Tensions between these two men and Nur-ud-Din and his followers (including Bashir-ud-Din Mahmud Ahmad, son of Ghulam Ahmad and second *Khalifah* after 1914) began to grow when the editors of the *Review* had attempted to change its thrust by

refraining from making any mention of the Promised Messiah, and devote itself solely to propagating the general principles of Islam, (so that) it would be possible for the general body of Muslims outside the Ahmadiyah community to support and subscribe to the *Review*.<sup>6</sup>

Although the Ahmadiyah community repudiated the idea of using *Review of Religions* solely for this purpose and forced Muhammad 'Ali and Khawajah

6. Mirza Bashir-ud-Din Mahmud Ahmad, *The Truth About the Split, Qadian*, 1924 (1938 edition), p. 204.

Kamal-ud-Din to withdraw the proposal, the more universalistic emphasis of the *Review* was clearly dominant by the October 1908 issue. The conciliatory nature of Ahmad's last lecture, *Paygham-i-Sulh* or the *Message of Peace*,<sup>7</sup> the full text of which had been printed in July, 1908, Muhammad 'Ali noted, was being circulated free of charge by Khawajah Kamal-ud-Din for the purpose of bringing about "a union between Hindus and Muhammadans." To Muhammad 'Ali in 1908, such a position had very positive connotations. Citing the fact that this tract had been favourably commented upon both in England and India, Muhammad 'Ali called upon the Arya Samajists, in particular, to take note of Ahmad's last message and transcend the pettiness of narrow prejudice.<sup>8</sup>

A study of the articles published in *Review of Religions* from late 1908 throughout the termination of Muhammad 'Ali's editorship at the end of 1913 indicates a more intellectual and conciliatory tone with the exception of items answering the continuing attacks of the Arya Samaj. One theme involved portraying Islam in its historical and modern dimensions with references to Ahmad primarily in the context of his role as a religious reformer—though not exclusively so. The republication in the April issue of the *Review* of a paper read before the Convention

7. "Paygham-i-Sulh" or "The Message of Peace" was Ahmad's last written work meant to be delivered in Lahore. His death, May 8, 1908 caused postponement of the delivery of the address until June. It was later often published and circulated by the movement.

8. *Review of Religions*, VII, October, 1908, p. 415.

of Religions held at Calcutta, April 9-11, 1909, and delivered presumably by Muhammad 'Ali himself, exemplified this trend. The piece, entitled, "Islam as Interpreted by the Ahmadiyah Movement", began with a discussion of the attitude of Ahmadiyah towards "other religions" offering the most liberal and open interpretation possible, in the spirit of Ahmad's *Message of Peace*. 'Ali's discussion of the "Nature of the Movement" likened it to what Christianity had been to Judaism, that is, he saw Ahmadiyah as a cleansing reform of Islam. The universality of Ahmad's mission and teachings resulted from his claim not only to be the Promised Messiah and *mahdi* of the Muslims, but also the Promised Messiah of the Christians and the Promised Avatar of the Hindus. In a further discussion of the history and doctrine of the movement, Muhammad 'Ali stated that the coming of the Promised Messiah was the work of the Almighty. Without specifying further exactly what he meant, he went on to say, "It is such a prophet of God that the Ahmadiyah movement has found in its leader..."<sup>9</sup>

Explaining other teachings of Islam as interpreted by Ahmadiyah, Muhammad 'Ali emphasized the Ahmadi doctrine of Jesus and Ahmad's repudiation of *jihad*. He also asserted that Ahmadiyah

holds that the Holy Prophet is the seal of prophets and no other prophet can appear after him except one who is spiritually his disciple and who receives the gift of prophecy through him. It is only a true Muslim who walks in the footsteps of the Holy Prophet that can become a prophet. It is in this sense that this sect considers its founder to be a prophet.<sup>10</sup>

9. *Ibid.*, VIII, April, 1909, p. 153.

10. *Ibid.*, pp. 162-163.

There has been considerable controversy in both branches of the Ahmadiyah movement over Muhammad 'Ali's apparent change of position on the question of Mirza Ghulam Ahmad as a prophet. In 1911, he seems to have clearly asserted that the Promised Messiah was *nabi* in some form. In 1914, he seems to have repudiated that in favour of the concept of *mujaddid*.

That there was right and wrong on both sides of the growing division between the intellectuals Muhammad 'Ali and Khawajah Kamal-ud-Din on the one side and the incumbent *khalifah* Nur-ud-Din and the family of Ghulam Ahmad on the other, is evident from the differing perspectives with which both sides have examined the internal events of Ahmadiyah from 1908 to 1914. A further difficulty in getting at the "truth" about the "split" in Ahmadiyah is that Muhammad 'Ali's version of the events of those years was written in Urdu in 1922 while Mahmud Ahmad's more thorough reply was written as a rebuttal in English in 1924. Additional material representing the views of both sides appeared, of course, in other contemporary sources published by each group—"Qadian" and "Lahore"—but in all cases many years after the events had taken place.

### **The Clash of Personalities and the Split**

Writers representing both sides of the controversy have, in justifying their own positions, taken the issues back to the time when Khawajah Kamal-ud-Din and Muhammad 'Ali first joined the movement. From the Qadiani side, the two could never be trusted. From the Lahori side, they had had the foresight to

see that Ahmadiyah could only succeed if it reached out to be more responsive to the broad Islamic community. Here lay the basic conflict. The manner in which the two factions attacked each other, however, suggests that the distrust went deeper than theoretical issues and into the pettiness of a personality dispute.

When, late in 1910, the *khalifah* Nur-ud-Din fell from his horse and lay near death, the question of the succession arose again. Early in 1911, Muhammad 'Ali called a meeting in Lahore and invited Mahmud Ahmad and one of his associates to join. None of the Lahoris claimed designs on the *khilafat* and all agreed that Mahmud Ahmad would be a suitable successor as long as he was the unanimous choice of the community and as long as the decision was not made hurriedly in a moment of emotion. According to Muhammad 'Ali, both parties reached this agreement before the publication of an article, written by Mahmud Ahmad in April, 1918, in which he declared all non-Ahmadis to be *kafirs*.

Mahmud Ahmad's declaration of this position, which would cause violent opposition to the Ahmadiyah movement among Sunni Muslims for the next half century, almost totally alienated the Lahore party from the Qadian group. But Mahmud Ahmad took an even stronger position against the Lahoris when he condemned them, sometime after the Lahore meeting, declaring it a sin to discuss the issue of the *khilafat* prior to the death of the incumbent.<sup>11</sup> To

11. Muhammad 'Ali, *True Facts about the Split*, Lahore, 1922 (1966 edition), pp. 93-94; Mahmud Ahmad, *Split op. cit.*, pp. 248-250.

organise his own followers, Mahmud Ahmad created what he called the Anjuman Ansar-i-Allah (Society of God's Helpers) which would carry on the *tabligh* of Ahmadiyah according to the "disciplines he believed necessary to propagate the faith.

In 1912, both Khawajah Kamal-ud-Din and Mahmud Ahmad left India. The former, following the death of his wife, went to London to attend to family business but also to establish a mosque there. Although he returned to India again, Khawajah Kamal-ud-Din devoted the rest of his life to the propagation of Islam in England. Mahmud Ahmad went to Egypt and then on *hajj*, a *hajj* which his father, the Promised Messiah, never had made. Returning to Qadian in 1913, Mahmud Ahmad was impressed by the need to strengthen the press there. He criticized the majority of Ahmadis for reading *al-Hilal* the newspaper edited by Abul Kalam Azad, whose writings he described as "poisonous."<sup>12</sup>

Although the Ahmadis were publishing four different newspapers and journals from Qadian, Mahmud Ahmad argued that these could no longer be used for the real purposes for which they were needed.<sup>13</sup> A new newspaper, *al-Fazl*, began publication on June 18, 1913 with its stated purpose :

to clarify the position of the Promised Messiah; to impress upon the Community that he alone was its master and guide, the importance of whose mission could not be mini-

12. Mahmud Ahmad, p. 269.

13. A. Q. Niaz, *Fazl-i-Omar*, Qadian, 1939, p. 70. For details about the newspapers see Gerald Barrier and Paul Wallace, *The Punjab Press*, Michigan State University, E. Lansing, U. S. A., 1970, with references to *al-Hakam*, *Badr*, *Review of Religions* and *Nur*.

mised without depriving Ahmadiyyat and Islam of all that was alive in it.<sup>14</sup>

In the meantime, supporters of Muhammad 'Ali and Khawajah Kamal-ud-Din began another newspaper in Lahore, the *Paygham-i-Sulh*. The eight aims which appeared in the issue of July 10, 1913 stressed loyalty to the Government, the creation of unity among Muslims, the removal of misunderstandings relating to the Ahmadiyah community and the "position of the Promised Messiah", presenting the world with the model which the Holy Prophet had set up, the discussion of political, social and moral problems "in the light of Islam," and the bringing of Indian and foreign news to its readers.<sup>15</sup>

The aims of this Lahore journal were far grander than those of *al-Fazl*. Since propagation of "Ahmadiyyat" found no place in the proposal, the Qadianis saw it as bringing "to the surface the poison that had so long been accumulating in the body of the Community." Of it, Mahmud Ahmad wrote,

Praises were lavished upon the enemies of the Movement. The Sultan of Turkey began to be called Khalifatul-Muslimin. In short, every effort was made to obliterate the distinctiveness of Ahmadiyyat and to make Ahmadis and non-Ahmdis (sic) merge into one common mass.<sup>16</sup>

Muhammad 'Ali viewed the establishment of *al-Fazl* in a different but not entirely clear light. Mahmud Ahmad's opposition to those at Lahore, he said, had been the real stimulus for the decision to publish *al-Fazl*. It should have been opposed by

14. *al-Fazl*, April 8, 1914 quoted in Niaz, pp. 71-73.

15. *Paygham-i-Sulh*, July 10, 1913, quoted in Niaz, pp. 72-73.

16. Mahmud Ahmad, pp. 270-271.

Nur-ud-Din, the *khalifah*. Instead "Hazrat Maulvi Sahib was rather too much soft and lenient towards him." Muhammad 'Ali then offered as his proof the text of a letter from the *khalifah* to Sayyid Muhammad Husain of the Lahore party dated May 9, 1913.

The Mian Sahib is sickly and squeamish, weak of heart and shaky. Small wonder, then if he should fly into passion. You are a medical man. Can't you understand this? A long-suffering sickman becomes irascible and ill-tempered. No reproof on him; it can, however, be on you. May Allah be pleased with you all. Amen.<sup>17</sup>

This letter, Muhammad 'Ali felt, offered evidence of Nur-ud-Din's true feelings towards Mahmud Ahmad and of his leniency as well.

The divergent policies of the two newspapers emerged within two months of their first publication. This occurred when, because of new Muslim self-consciousness aroused in part by the Balkan war and the revocation of the Bengal partition, the North Indian Muslim press took up the cause of the Muslims at Kanpur in the U. P.<sup>18</sup> Muslim unrest at Kanpur centred around the decision of the local government to remove a portion of a mosque in order to straighten out a road, while at the same time, sparing a Teli temple from any changes. The issue was complex. The Kanpur incident led to a riot on August 3, 1913, in which about thirty Muslims were arrested. Among the newspapers leading in a most militant protest were the *Comrade* and *Hamdard* edited by Muhammad

17. Muhammad 'Ali, p. 96.

18. For more details on the incident, see, by this author, "The Kanpur Mosque Incident of 1913: The North Indian Muslim Press and its Reaction to Community Crisis", *Journal of the American Academy of Religion*, XLII, No. 2, 1974, pp. 263-279.

'Ali (the Muslim political leader and founder of the *khilafat* Movement) and the *Zamindar* of Lahore, edited by the radical Zafar 'Ali Khan. On this issue, the *Paygham-i-Sulh*, which could have remained silent or merely reported the events as news, chose to editorialize in a manner highly critical of the Government. As a result, the *Paygham* was compelled to forfeit its security and forced to comply with Government press regulations as the *Zamindar*, *Hamdard*, *Comrade* and *Rafiq* (Lahore) also had done.

The prosecution of the *Paygham-i-Sulh* for engaging in political agitation stirred the anger of Mahmud Ahmad and the Qadian Ahmdis. The movement, founded by Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, had remained staunchly non-political, even if many of its challenges to other religious groups could be interpreted as "separatist" in nature and thus as going deeper than purely religious controversy. While Muhammad 'Ali glossed over engagement in a torrid political issue in his own writings, Mahmud Ahmad attacked him for direct disobedience to the *khalifah*, Nur-ud-Din. Thus, under new restrictions from the Government, the *Paygham-i-Sulh* turned its pages principally to attack Ahmadis living at Qadian and to refute writings in *al-Fazl*. Apparently Lahoris were embarking on a conscious effort to divide the community. This effort was carried on not only in their newspaper but also through a series of pamphlets. The petty quarrelling between the two factions came to a sharp climax with the death of *khalifah* Nur-ud-Din on Friday, March 13, 1914.

While this study cannot pursue the details of the final separation of the Lahore and Qadian parties which occurred in the days after the *khalifah* Nur-ud-Din's death, two points about the split must be noted. The group which followed Muhammad 'Ali to Lahore was relatively small. The selection of Mahmud Ahmad, as *khalifah al-Masih* II, placed the *khilafat* as an institution clearly in the hands of the family of Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, and according to the Lahoris, in the hands of an immature young man of 25.

The much larger number of Ahmadis who, in fact, supported Bashir-ud-Din Mahmud Ahmad, were content to follow his more autocratic direction as it appeared in "An Important Resolution" published in a 1914 issue of *Review of Religions* :

The Majlis-i-Mu'tamadin Sadr Anjuman-i-Ahmadiyya, Qadian, has in a recent meeting adopted the following resolution and sanctioned its inclusion in the articles of the Sadr Anjuman-i-Ahmadiyya :—

In all affairs the orders of Hazrat Mirza Bashir-ud-Din Mahmud Ahmad, second successor to the Promised Messiah, shall be final and conclusive for the Majlis-i-Mu'tamadin and its subordinate committee or committees, if there are any, and the Sadr Anjuman-i-Ahmadiyah and all its branches.<sup>19</sup>

A radical change had taken place quickly in the organizational structure. In light of this report, it seems clear that in the Qadiani branch the *khalifah* was to have ultimate power, and questions of organization would not be allowed to debilitate the effectiveness of the *tabligh* or the work within the community itself. According to Mahmud Ahmad's

19. *Review of Religions*, XIII, April, 1914, p. 160.

biographer, this action was voted in an assembly of 200 delegates meeting at Qadian on April 12, 1914. The arguments given in favour of the proposal were that although the *Anjuman* had received its original authority from the Promised Messiah, this had not been clearly explained in the constitution. It was not until 1918, with further changes made in 1925 and 1935, that a major restructuring of the organization took place.

The decision of Mirza Bashir-ud-Din Mahmud Ahmad would be final in all affairs of the community. Mahmud Ahmad's programme for Ahmadi renewal included the sending of missionaries to Ceylon, Mauritius and Madagascar. A progress report on Ahmadi growth published in April, 1915 seems to have exaggerated figures. Probably to offset any claims by the Lahoris, 1500 members were said to have joined in the last year of Nur-ud-Din's *khilafat*, although an article in *Review* during January, 1915 cited only 600 new members. The April report also indicated the establishment of a "committee for the propagation of Islam." "The *Anjuman-i-Taraqq-i-Islam*", whose purpose was

- (1) The establishment of primary schools in various districts of the Punjab.
- (2) The establishment of a training College for Muslim Missionaries at Qadian.
- (3) Translation of the Holy Quran with copious notes, both in Urdu and English.

Other purposes included missionary work and publication of tracts "on the truth of Islam." In addition,

Ahmadiyah undertook its first plans for social service work by submitting to the Government of the Punjab a plan "for the reclamation of criminal tribes" in the Punjab.

The growing separation of Ahmadiyah from the main body of Islam was illustrated by the publication in May, 1915 of the "Conditions of Bai'at." The first ten resembled those which Ahmad had used during the first *bay'ah* at Ludhiana but these followed the *Articles of Faith*, a statement on the duties of the Ahmadiyah community, the management of the community and finally "Some Instructions for the new Ahmadis" which particularly pointed up the distinctions.

Since the Promised Messiah was a messenger of God and the denying of the Apostles of God is a dangerous boldness and deprives a man of faith, hence according to the Quran, the Traditions of the seal of prophets and the sayings of the Promised Messiah, it is the duty of every Ahmadi that he should pray under the leadership of Ahmadi Imams only. But in those places where Ahmadi Imams cannot be found, he should offer his prayers alone and should pray to God to give him a Jamaat...because a true believe (sic) can never remain alone. Similarly it has been prohibited that Ahmadis should give their daughters in marriage to non-Ahmadis, for wives are generally influenced by their husbands and thus it is making a soul apostate. Likewise, Ahmadis should not attend the funeral service of non-Ahmadis, for it would amount to interceding with God for a man who has proved himself an enemy by denying and opposing the Promised Messiah.<sup>21</sup>

If there ever had been uncertainty about the relationship between Ahmadiyah and *Sunni* Islam in

21. *Ibid.*, May 1915, p. 199.

India, those doubts now were removed. The decision of the *khalifah al-masih* II Mirza Bashir-ud-Din Mahmud Ahmad, to inform all new members of Qadiani Ahmadiyah of these requirements brought Ahmadis in new and greater conflicts with the Muslim community than Ghulam Ahmad experienced earlier. The persecution of Ahmadis already appears to have become a serious problem by 1916 because the *Review of Religions* of that year published five articles praising the British Government and giving thanks for its assistance in protecting persecuted Ahmadis. The article also reiterated the loyalty of the movement since Ghulam Ahmad first began his mission in Qadian.<sup>22</sup>

### **The Development of the Organization**

During the 1920's, Mirza Bashir-ud-Din Mahmud Ahmad reconstructed the Sadr Anjuman-i-Ahmadiyah to meet the complex needs of increased growth and widespread missions. In the Punjab, the membership of Ahmadiyah had increased from about 18,000 in 1911 to 28,000 in 1921. While the total numbers of Shi'ah or Ahl-i-Hadith Muslims still exceeded the Ahmadi totals in the Punjab, Ahmadis outnumbered Ahl-i-Hadith in 17 districts of the Punjab and the Shi'ah as well in Gurdaspur, where they numbered 6,176. Their second highest population was in Sialkot at 5,278.

At Qadian, the *Nazir-i-A'la* (Chief Secretary) now served as President of the Sadr Anjuman while seven other principal *Nazirs* had responsibility for treasury, community discipline, external and Government

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22. *Ibid.*, "God Bless the British Government", January, 1916, and February, 1916, "What the Ahmadiyah Movement has Done for the Government".

affairs, education, missionary work, publications and hospitality departments. The Sadr Anjuman prepared annual budgets and submitted them to the *Majlis-i-Mushawarat* (the khalifah's Advisory Council), for scrutiny by a sub-committee which consulted with the *khalifah* himself. Ahmadi sources indicate that while the khalifah was permitted an annual stipend, Bashir-ud-Din Mahmud Ahmad lived off private income and contributed more substantially than any other Ahmadi to the treasury. While Ahmadi living in Qadian came under the control of these agencies directly, those outside of Qadian, whether in India or elsewhere, related to central authority through appointed "amirs" at the local level where regulation of community life resembled that of Qadian.<sup>23</sup>

While every Ahmadi was annually assessed 6.25% of his income in the period up to 1945, many members contributed 10%. Members were called upon to support other related causes so that in some instances, Ahmadi may have contributed as much as 33% of their income. The *Majlis-i-Mushawarat* (Khalifah's Advisory Council) was established in 1922 and was made up of 500-600 member delegates of which 75% were elected from member branches of the Sadr Anjuman. The *khalifah* appointed the remainder although Ahmadi sources argue that this allowed the *khalifah* appointments of capable persons who might not be able to represent local chapters, it was also a source of enormous control for the *khalifah* over and above what he had established for himself. Since the

23. Sir Muhammad Zafrullah Khan, "The Head of the Ahmadiyah Movement in Islam", Chicago (n. d.).

*majlis* always sat in his presence and he had the right to go against a majority decision, the *khalifah's* position was that of a virtual autocrat.

In 1925, the *khalifah* instituted a special Qadiani judicial system, modelled after a traditional Islamic system. The system applied only to members of the community who, when in conflict, would attempt an adjudication before an Ahmadi *qazi*. The loser could appeal first to a board of *qazis* or beyond that to the *khalifah* himself. In the event the *khalifah* became involved in the dispute, the board of appeals would make the final decision. The *qazi* system applied to civil jurisdiction in areas not required by British law to be handled in public courts. To use civil courts, however, in other areas required permission of the appropriate department of the *Anjuman*. The close link between the judiciary and executive of the Ahmadiyah was made even more explicit by the fact that while judges rendered decisions in cases, various *Nazirs* and their departments had to carry out the ruling. The system only could succeed with the support of all Ahmadis, but their strong dedication to the community and their desire to use a tool which did not entail costs of an ordinary civil litigation appeared to serve the community well.

At Qadian, the sectarian nature of the movement was reinforced by a structure of schools, a college, and numerous organizations designed to serve women, children and older members of the movement both socially and intellectually. Publications, primarily in Urdu, but also in English and Punjabi, have continued to flow from Qadian throughout the years. Thus,

while not acquiring a large membership, the Ahmadiyah have had a substantial impact on Muslims and non-Muslim groups in North India. Moreover, the Ahmadiyah activities have influenced the Government's handling of tensions among religious communities. The growing involvement of Ahmadiyah in religious and political issues became especially important in the 1920's and 1930's.

## CHAPTER V

### THE AHMADIYAH ENCOUNTER WITH THE WORLD : POLITICAL ISSUES AFTER WORLD WAR ONE

In the years from 1910 to 1914, much of the energy of the Ahmadiyah Movement was consumed as it split into its Qadian and Lahore divisions. The "split" had focused on personality conflicts, but particularly on a divergent interpretation of the role of the Promised Messiah for Islam. In the years from 1914 to 1936 the image of the Ahmadiyah movement seemed to center around four major points: (1) Ahmadiyah's attitude towards Islamic concerns; (2) sectarianism and the continuing struggle against the Arya Samaj, the Sikhs, the Ahl-i-Hadith and even Shi'ah Muslims; (3) the mission to Europe and the conversion of Englishmen to Islam; (4) the political issues of those decades—the growing concern in India with "self-government", the issue of loyalty to the crown, and the problem of Hindu-Muslim relations. Of these four, the fourth came to assume greater importance for everyone than did the other three. During this period, the Ahmadiyah movement seems to have moved self-consciously and deliberately in its sectarian growth and missionary work. One may discern a pattern in the way the movement reacted and responded to crucial political events. The

reaction to those events, however, resulted from political situations with which the movement could not avoid coming to terms.

Details of the issues in the first two areas cannot be discussed here. However, in a later section of this chapter the notorious "Rangila Rasul" case which involved the Arya Samaj and the Ahmadis will illustrate how the two groups continued to attack each other. The missionary thrust of Ahmadiyah and the work of Khawajah Kamal-ud-Din in England created a significant stir, however, among both Hindus and Muslims in the Punjab. This is well worth recording here.

Before the "split", *Badr*, in its issue of March 6, 1913, published a letter from the Khawajah in which he described the great hostility to Islam by both the press and British politicians. This he attributed to the anti-Turkish attitude of the British in the Balkan situation, writing that as a result of this, "verily the Indian Mussalmans are living in a fool's paradise, now that the entire English people are hostile to the Turks." By November of 1913, the *Paygham-i-Sulh* was carrying regular reports from London on the progress of the mission. The Khawajah received commendations from such newspapers as the *Zamindar*.<sup>1</sup>

The *Paygham-i-Sulh* reported in January, 1914 on the work of the new convert Lord Headly ("El Farooq") who had received letters from all over England from those about "to embrace Islam." Reporting his correspondence with American Uni-

1. See the *Zamindar*, Lahore, December 26, 1913.

tarians and with contacts in China and Japan, the Khawajah was exuberant that his Islam in England helped "frustrate the powers of the anti-Christ." Continuing support for the mission came again from the *Zamindar* which republished the Khawajah's poem calling India's Muslims to awake from their lethargy. The lesser known Muslim paper *Shamsher-i-Qalam* supported the missionary work as well. On the Hindu side, the *Arjun* of Lahore warned Hindus about their lethargy and the negative effect that victories for Islam would have on Hindus even from England. Perhaps the most significant impact of the Khawajah's work was the news that Amir 'Ali and Mirza Abbas Beg had agreed to support the Woking programme by attending services and contributing 150 pounds.

While this event, far from the central scene of Ahmadi activity, might have appeared as the opportunity to bring Ahmadiyah back into the mainstream of Islam, such was not to be the case for long. *Paisa Akhbar* reported on January 23, 1914 that the *khalifah* Nur-ud-Din had sent orders to the Khawajah in Woking not to collect funds from non-Ahmadis on the grounds that Ahmadi faith (Islam) differed from that of ordinary Muslims. Regretting this attitude, *Paisa Akhbar* expressed the hope that the Khawajah would not close down the mosque at Woking because it received support from outside sources.

After the "split" Khawajah Kamal-ud-Din joined with the Lahoris and the Woking mosque fell to their leadership. Later, the Qadian branch would establish a mosque in London as well as many more centres throughout Europe, Africa and America than the

Lahoris. The latter continued to benefit during the World War period from their political allegiance to the causes of such noted Muslims as Muhammad 'Ali (editor of *Comrade*) and Zafar 'Ali Khan, editor of the Lahore paper, *Zamindar*. The Qadianis, on the other hand, attacked the Lahoris on the grounds of "denying the second caliphate of the Ahmadis" and for urging Ahmadis to take part in political movements in the name of religion.

### Issues in the Struggle for Self-Government

In 1914, the Lahoris, through the pages of *Paygham-i-Sulh* took up the cause of Zafar 'Ali Khan following his internment from Lahore on October 17. The editor of the *Zamindar* had continuously agitated against the Government and they had found it necessary to silence him. The *Paygham*, in response, cited the "good services" he had rendered the Urdu-reading public through his paper. Not to be forgotten were his relief campaigns for Turkish victims of the Balkan war, his fearless presentation of the views of Muslims to the Government, and his prompt coverage of war news from Europe. Again, in May, 1915, the *Paygham* supported the *Zamindar* in defending the 'Ali brothers, Muhammad and Shaukat, after their internment for advocating the Turkish cause. The internment of the 'Ali brothers during the war caused great controversy in North India.<sup>2</sup> That the *Paygham-i-Sulh* should have been among those papers choosing to speak out on their behalf gives some indication of the desire of the Lahoris to be with the

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2. *Paygham-i-Sulh*, Lahore, October 22 and 29, 1914.

*avantgarde* of Muslim activity, while repudiating the conservatism and sectarianism of the Qadianis.

By contrast, the Qadianis had spoken out publicly during November, 1914 calling on all Muslims to be loyal while emphasizing that the war in Europe had no direct effect on Islam *per se*. Arguing that the Prophet taught obedience to one's ruler, the *al-Fazl* insisted that Turkey had not declared war on the basis of an Islamic injunction but had acted solely out of political motives. As for the fear that the Holy Cities might be placed in danger because of the war, the editor of *al-Fazl* expressed the belief that the British Government would act to protect the cities. In another article the following week, *al-Fazl* cited the Promised Messiah as its authority for loyalty and obedience to Government.<sup>3</sup>

In February, 1915, *al-Fazl* spoke out against Sikh extremism in the Punjab, suggesting that Punjabi youth support the war effort and even enlist in the military and urged those who could to buy war bonds. How different was this stance from that of *Paygham-i-Sulh*, which applauded the 'Ali brothers' questioning whether Muslims in India should be loyal to the Turks rather than to the British. In the July 28, 1917 issue of *al-Fazl*, the Qadianis roundly attacked the notions of "Home Rule" and "self-government" as currently expounded by Hindu and Muslim politicians. Comparing the present condition of the Indians to that of children, unprepared for the responsibilities of adulthood, the paper again gave

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3. *al-Fazl*, November 5 and 12, 1914.

thanks for the presence of the British without whom India would not know its present prosperity.<sup>4</sup> The *Paygham-i-Sulh* of October 3, 1917 agreed with *al-Fazl* but for markedly different reasons when its editor Dost Muhammad wrote,

(I doubt) the fitness of Muhammadans for Home Rule on the ground that they never raised their voice for the release of Messrs. Muhammad Ali and Shaukat Ali who were interned three years ago. The voice for their release was at first raised by Hindus and Muhammadans only followed in their wake...So far, Muhammadans have not acquired the capacity for doing anything practical.<sup>5</sup>

Perhaps it was Mahmud Ahmad's concern that the Government not confuse the views of the two branches of the Ahmadiyah which led him to be very explicit about his loyalty to Government.

This new attitude on the part of *khalifatul-masih* II, Mahmud Ahmad, was manifested in a *Review of Religions* (Oct.-Nov., 1917) article entitled "Political Unrest in India : Voice of the Ahmadiyya Community". An introductory section by Bashir Ahmad, editor of *Review* and brother of the *khalifah*, announced that Ahmadiyah was sending a deputation to meet the visiting Secretary of State for India, Edwin Montague, in order to present Ahmadiyah views to him and Lord Chelmsford at Delhi. The reason for sending this deputation was explained by Bashir Ahmad :

The Ahmadiyya Community is a purely religious body and had nothing to do with politics. This is why so far it kept aloof from all political movements in India. But on the present occasion when a majority of the educated people of

4. *al-Fazl*, July 29, 1917.

5. *Paygham-i-Sulh*, October 3, 1917.

India are clamouring for Home Rule, in the grant of which the Ahmadiyya Community sees the ruin of its own interests, the head of the Ahmadiyya Community...thought it his duty to express the views of the Ahmadiyya Community...<sup>6</sup>

The delegation to Delhi, composed of ten Ahmadis, was led by Chaudhri Zafar Ullah Khan<sup>7</sup>, a young lawyer from Lahore, and *Review of Religions* editors Bashir Ahmad and Sher 'Ali. The selection of Zafar Ullah Khan as secretary of the deputation was significant. He was the one Qadiani who had both high education and a law degree from England. A Qadiani Ahmadi since his youth in Sialkot, he had now returned to an important role of lay leadership, continued to the present day. On behalf of the Qadiani Ahmadiyah, Zafar Ullah Khan presented to Montague and Chelmsford a statement which began with the unexpected assumption that India stood in need "of important and far reaching reforms". Although the majority of Indians had little understanding of "Home Rule", the statement suggested that the work of the educated minority in promoting the idea could not be ignored. Among the causes of the "present discontent", the report cited unsympathetic treatment by certain British officials toward Indians which "has turned some of the most loyal

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6. *Review of Religions*, XVI, October—November, 1917.

7. Chaudhuri Zafar Ullah Khan, born in Sialkot and educated in England, returned to Lahore to practise law. His family joined the Ahmadiyah movement in 1904 following the Promised Messiah's visit to Sialkot. Zafar Ullah remains a member of the Ahmadiyah to the present day after an illustrious career first in the service of the Government of India, later as Foreign Minister of Pakistan, President of the General Assembly of the United Nations and President of the World Court. As discussed in Chapters 6 and 7, he suffered considerable abuse for his religious beliefs.

subjects of His Imperial Majesty into malcontents". The special treatment accorded Europeans, the effect of radical economic changes in the country, and the lack of adequate and universal education in India also were noted<sup>8</sup>.

Although these may have been the causes for discontent, Mahmud Ahmad wished to state that while the country needed reform, the religious tensions and the persecution of religious minorities alone provided reason to deny Home Rule. As an example, he cited the Ahmadis whose twenty-seven years of existence had been marked by persecution, despite the movement's constant professions of peace. The British Government, he asserted, would be the only agency capable of "protect(ing) us from the religious fury of ignorant bigots". In proposing changes, then, the Ahmadiyah plea was that no change affecting the interests of small minorities should be permitted, nor should any Indian domination of a high government office be allowed.

The crux of Ahmadi concern about "Home Rule" was that it would leave Ahmadiyah a defenceless minority within the Muslim minority. At the same time, Ahmadis were also concerned that they should not appear to be agents of Government. Pre-war Government documents have clearly suggested they were not. The reform nature of three of the ten paragraphs submitted by the community to the Montague-Chelmsford delegation reflect the dimensions of Ahmadi concern with issues not strictly religious :

8. *Review of Religions*, XVI, October—November, 1917, pp. 352—364.

“(6) All those distinctions and special privileges which the Europeans enjoy by virtue of their race should be abolished.

(7) Europeans charged with offences against Indians should not be tried by Jury, or as an alternative, half the members of the Jury should be Indians professing the same religion as the person offended against; otherwise, justice is impossible, as is amply borne out by past experience.

(10) Mines, railways, etc. should be freed from the burden of foreign capital. They should be worked and managed either by Government itself or by means of Indian capital...”<sup>9</sup>

This 1917 declaration marked a turning point in Qadiani Ahmadiyah history. The problems of being an increasingly sectarian minority, a factor sharply delimiting Ahmadi from non-Ahmadi, had necessitated continued professions of loyalty to Government. Now, for the first time, self-conscious criticism of Government and a call for its improvement became an element in Ahmadiyah policy.

#### **Post-War Pressures : Khilafat and Gandhi**

When passive resistance against the Rowlatt Act led to considerable agitation and rioting throughout the Punjab in 1919, Bashir-ud-Din Mahmud Ahmad and the Ahmadiyah movement of Qadian remained loyal to the Government. The *khalifah* went so far as to urge Ahmadis not to participate in *hartals* or boycotts, urging Ahmadi businessmen to keep their shops open regardless of the threat of reprisals. In addition, the *khalifah* proposed publication of tracts

9. *Ibid.*, pp. 374—375.

to explain the meaning of these acts to the public. The Qadian branch of the Ahmadiyah seems to have gone out of its way to proclaim itself to the Government as a religious and completely non-political organization.

“The Turkish question” and the issue of the *khilafat* were foremost in the minds of the general Muslim population. With the defeat of Germany and their allies, the Ottomans, serious questions arose about the Muslim responsibility for maintaining even a figure-head *khilafat*, whether in Constantinople or elsewhere. An article in *Review of Religions* destined for an English-reading audience stated

religiously speaking, we do not admit owing any allegiance to the Sultan. We hold that only a successor of the Promised Messiah is entitled to be the spiritual head of the Mussalmans, and as for our temporal sovereign we recognize only the Power under whose rule we live.<sup>10</sup>

The Ahmadi position seemed clear enough. Yet, the movement was invited to participate in a *Khilafat* conference at Allahabad in 1920. Although Ahmad did not attend himself, he sent a delegation armed with a speech upholding the Ahmadi position. But the speech also raised serious political questions about the mandate in Palestine and the settlement of Jews there. One could not imagine such a position being taken a decade earlier by either his father or the first *khalifah*, Nur-ud-Din. Despite their professions to the Government that they were non-political, it seems that by 1920 the Qadian branch was ready for direct confrontation with the nationalist and *khilafatist*-oriented mainstream Muslims.

10. *Review of Religions*, XVIII, March—April, 1919, pp. 108—117.

If the Qadiani Ahmadiyah had moved far from its original position of non-involvement in political matters, the Lahori Ahmadiyah had gone ever farther. In a 38-page pamphlet published by the "Ahmadia Anjuman-i-Ishaat-i-Islam" in 1920 their leader, Muhammad 'Ali, strongly defended the *khilafat* position. Muhammad 'Ali traced the origins of the institution in the *Qur'an* and showed its religious relationship to the holy places of Islam on the Arabian peninsula. He attacked both the Christian European tendency to equate the *khilafat* with the papacy and the European assumption that non-Muslims could design the political and religious destiny of Muslims. He also refused to accept the solution which would pass the *khilafat* on to the family of the *sharif* of Mecca. Muhammad 'Ali concluded his tract with a plea for the re-establishment of the *khilafat* in conjunction with the Turkish empire.<sup>11</sup>

When Muhammad 'Ali (of the *Comrade*) called on all Muslims to refuse military service on the side of the British in their war against the Afghan Muslims, the *Paygham-i-Sulh* supported the Government in its arrest of Muhammad 'Ali for his remarks, citing statements by the Amir of Kabul that the war was not waged against Islam. Although the Punjab Government rigidly censored the press following the massacre at Amritsar in April, 1919, the *Paygham-i-Sulh* (issue of July 13) expressed joy in learning that a Commission of Inquiry would investigate the disturbances.

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11. Muhammad 'Ali, *The Khilafat in Islam According to the Holy Qur'an and the Sayings of the Holy Prophet*, Lahore, 1920.

Throughout the disturbances of 1919, the Ahmadis of Qadian stood staunchly with the Government and opposed any form of passive resistance, *satyagraha* or *swaraj* as expounded by M. K. Gandhi. In the two weeks after the Amritsar incident, *al-Hakam* twice supported Government efforts to "keep the peace" while decrying any attempts at Muslim unity with Hindus. Statements of loyalty and sharp attacks on Gandhi appeared in Ahmadi writings while in late June, the *khalifah*, in the pages of *al-Fazl* called on Ahmadi youth to join the British army and requested the army to establish a double company of Ahmadis whose Indian officers would be Ahmadis. This would create a sectarian atmosphere among Ahmadi troops, some of whom, he asserted, were suffering from subtle and even overt discrimination because of their religious beliefs. The Qadiani press also attacked the use of the political poem, sermon and song as means to express nationalist feeling.<sup>12</sup>

### **Ahmadis and Communalism**

In 1927, when Lahore experienced a major communal disturbance, the Ahmadiyah played a tangential but not insignificant role in creating the hostile climate of opinion which prevailed in the city. Although the original disturbances took place in May, tensions continued throughout the summer as the result of a decision by Justice Dalip Singh not to imprison the Arya Samaj publisher of the infamous pamphlet *Rangila Rasul* (The Gay Prophet). According to recorded correspondence between two members

12. Aziz Ahmad, *Islamic Modernism, op. cit.*, see p. 101 for a discussion of the Muslim political poem.

of the Government, the Ahmadis helped to circulate a poster on June 4, under the signature and picture of Ghulam Ahmad, attacking the *Rangila Rasul* and quoting another anti-Islamic periodical, the *Risala Vartman*.<sup>13</sup>

While it is not possible to prove whether the Ahmadiyah actually circulated the poster in question, their past history of making a strong defence against attacks on Islam, especially in tracts, would suggest culpability. At the same time, the Qadianis appeared to be acting in just the opposite manner, anxious to get the Government to stop any future publications such as *Rangila Rasul*. In a letter dated August 27, 1927, written by M. Mahmud Sadiq, "Foreign Secretary to His Holiness the Khalifatul Messiah", and addressed to Edward Frederick Lindley Wood (Lord Irwin), Viceroy and Governor General of India, the Ahmadiyah community officially sent a draft copy of a proposed memorial "about amendment in the law to safeguard the honour of Prophets, Avatars and Founders of all religions." Further correspondence sent directly from Mahmud Ahmad on August 31st suggests that a new law already was being considered by the British. While he applauded the Government for the proposal, he was emphatic that

- (a) It is necessary in our opinion that the words 'Prophet', 'Avatar', 'Founder of religion' should be clearly mentioned in the proposed section so that there may remain no loophole for misinterpretation.

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13. Government of India, Home Department, File No. 132/27 including a confidential letter from the Deputy Commissioner, Punjab to a deputy officer citing a poster against *Rangila Rasul* "under the signature of the Mirza of Qadian".

(b) The second portion of the proposed section is too wide in its significance and stands in need of certain limitations.

At the same time he asserted that the Ahmadiyah movement was supporting such a bill "with a view to improve intercommunal relations..."

During the communal strife of 1927 and the years following, Bashir-ud-Din Mahmud Ahmad and his staff not only maintained a regular correspondence with the Government about Ahmadi views on communal relations, but Mahmud Ahmad also published two books on the subject. The first of these, *Hindu-Muslim Problem and its Solution*, although published by the Sadr Anjuman, was printed at Calcutta in February, 1927. The pamphlet was addressed directly to Lord Irwin as a response to his well circulated speech of July 17, 1926 in which he had called for an end to communal strife in India.

While rejecting communalist assumptions, Mahmud Ahmad sought to establish a position for his own movement, on the one hand as a defender of Islam, and on the other as a loyalist to the Government. However, in writing such a book, he could not have been communicating his views effectively to a mass audience. He continually alluded to Ahmadi loyalty and emphasized the importance of recognizing that communal differences did exist among Hindus and Muslims to the extent that complete peace could not be established in the country without British cooperation. He called for a separate electorate for Muslims as the only way for them to survive among

the Hindu majority. Concluding, he re-emphasized the need for British presence in India.<sup>14</sup>

In 1930, Mahmud Ahmad wrote a longer and more detailed book, *The Indian Problem*, in response to the unpopular report of the Simon Commission and the decision of the Government to hold the Round Table Conference in London. On the crucial question of whether India should become independent of Britain, he argued, eventually "yes". But separation in 1930 was out of the question and "opposed to the Divine Scheme of things." He further insisted that England was not to blame for continued communalism in India.<sup>15</sup>

One studying the modern history of India, aware of the tensions among religious communities, is likely to ask whether or not Mahmud Ahmad, second *khalifah* of the Ahmadis was a "Communalist". Opposing independence on the grounds that Hindu-Muslim tensions did exist, yet professing a desire for inter-communal peace, Mahmud Ahmad still attacked what he called the "Hindu mentality" which, he insisted, had always displayed a hatred for Muslims. While these remarks do not suggest that Mahmud Ahmad was a militant "communalist", his own and his father's experiences with Hindus, most notably with the Arya Samaj, had led him to distrust the prospect of a free and unified India overwhelmingly dominated by Hindus. The issues between Muslims and Hindus in Kashmir, emerging in 1930, would bring him and his movement into the forefront of political

14. Bashir-ud-Din Mahmud Ahmad, *The Hindu Muslim Problem*, Qadian, 1927.

15. Bashir-ud-Din Mahmud Ahmad, *The Indian Problem*, Qadian, 1930.

action as a defender of Muslims. In this action, he did become something of a communalist.

What Mahmud Ahmad proposed for the consideration of the Round Table Conference was a provisional form of Central Government which gradually could ease India into a scheme for permanent self-government. The detailed 450 page study was not pro-Ahmadi propaganda. Rather, it represented a sophisticated and informed consideration by the Qadiani leader, even if probably too conservative in the eyes of more radical Hindus and Muslims. Ahmad discussed, for example, details of India's military requirements in order to survive as an independent state; in his estimate, her backwardness in this area alone sufficed to show how ill prepared she was for independence.

Among the Muslim delegates present in London was Zafar Ullah Khan, the Qadiani Ahmadi whose public career during the 1920's had widened his influence and respect both with the British who appointed him Crown Counsel on the Delhi Conspiracy Case in 1930-31 and also among Muslims. His election to the presidency of the All-India Muslim League in December, 1931 lasted only six months because his acceptance of a Government post in June, 1932 necessitated his resignation. During that short period, however, he valiantly attempted to unite various splintered factions without much success. Although his activities do not mean there was a growing rapprochement between Ahmadis and either Sunni Muslims or even the Government itself. Zafar Ullah Khan's role in Government and the

Muslim League provide evidence that a qualified Ahmadi could attain a position of leadership within the Muslim community at large as well as in Government. One cannot assume that because he played so many roles, the groups Zafar Ullah served were necessarily compatible with each other. He was the first Ahmadi, however, to hold high office. After partition, he would serve as Foreign Minister in Pakistan, Ambassador from Pakistan to the United Nations, President of the General Assembly, crowning his career as a Justice to the World Court at The Hague.

Such achievements were not easy for an Ahmadi. In 1936, during the height of the controversy with the Ahrar movement, Zafar Ullah became the chief target of anti-Ahmadi attacks, while being considered by Government as the most reliable Ahmadi source available to Government. Although it appeared that the movement's fear of independence was based on a fear of Hindus, it turned out that the real enemy of Ahmadiyah was another Muslim organization, the Majlis-i-Ahrar-i-Islam, the subject of the following chapter.

## CHAPTER VI

### THE AHMADIYAH AND THE AHRAR : KASHMIR AND QADIAN (1930-1936)

The increasing self-awareness of the Ahmadiyah movement and its participation in the critical political and religious events of the 1920's reached a peak during the Kashmir crisis of 1931-1934 and subsequent inter-communal strife in Punjab during 1936. Kashmir, fourth largest in population among the Princely States, had been a creation of the British. Ruled by Ranjit Singh from Lahore after 1819, it was turned over to a Hindu maharaja, Gulab Singh, following the treaty of Amritsar in 1846. Despite an overwhelmingly Muslim population, the state had been ruled by Sikhs and a hereditary Hindu dynasty for more than a century.

Ahmadis had always been interested in Kashmir. In his book, *Masih Hindustan Men*, as well as in his earlier claims, the Promised Messiah had "proven" the death of Jesus in Kashmir and his burial in Srinagar. During the early years of Mahmud Ahmad's *khilafat*, he had travelled in Kashmir, later organizing a scholarship program to bring Muslim boys to Qadian for education.<sup>1</sup> As a result, the Ahmadiyah movement had made some progress in Kashmir.

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1. A history of Ahmadi involvement with Kashmir may be found in Dost Muhammad Shahid, *Tarikh-i-Ahmadiyah*, Vol. VI.

By themselves, the Ahmadis did not have enough influence to initiate a major agitation among the Muslims of Kashmir whose discontent with the Hindu maharaja's leadership had begun to show itself in the late 1920's. Muslims had received few provincial appointments, there was little education available in Urdu, and few opportunities existed even for the educated elite among the Muslims. Many Muslim intellectuals felt that the Hindu *dogra* Maharaja Hari Singh, was carrying on an open oppression of Muslims. Communal tensions surfaced in 1931 following a rumour that a Hindu head police constable had prevented a Muslim policeman from reciting the *Qur'an*, declaring it to be "nonsense".<sup>2</sup>

Existing sensitivity among Punjabi Muslims to the tensions in Kashmir and Jammu, had led Punjabi Muslims to reconstitute an old organization, the All-India Muslim Kashmir Conference, to begin agitation through both the press and the Government for amelioration of the Muslim situation in Kashmir. The committee included among its leading members not only such prominent Muslims as Sir Muhammad Iqbal and Zulfiqar 'Ali Khan but also the Ahmadi *khalifah*, Mahmud Ahmad and Abdur Rahmin Dard, another prominent Ahmadi.<sup>3</sup> As the Kashmir situation became more complex, following riots in Srinagar during July 1931 when nine Muslims were killed, it became increasingly evident that a political

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2. The Government viewpoint on the Kashmir crisis may be found in the Representative Crown Papers, Government of India, 1931-1934.

3. See Report of the *Court of Inquiry*, Lahore, 1954 (to be discussed in detail, Chapter 7) and Shahid, *op. cit.*, Vol. VI, pp. 186 ff.

organization led by Muslims of such different types could not function for long.

In the midst of attempts by the British to work out a compromise between Hindu and Muslim factions, a twenty-five year old graduate of 'Aligarh, recently dismissed as a school teacher because of his political activities, Shaikh 'Abdullah, emerged as leader of the Muslims and was arrested. When the Muslims threatened a *hartal* and more disorders unless Shaikh 'Abdullah was released, the Government of the province worked out a temporary truce in August 1931.<sup>4</sup>

### The Emergence of the Ahrar

The *Majlis-i-Ahrar-i-Islam-i-Hind*, the organization of Islamic Freedom Fighters in India, emerged as a caucus among Muslims attending the 1930 session of the Congress at Lahore. Among its founders were several articulate Muslims who had worked in the *khilafat* movement during the twenties and who were generally anti-Ahmadi. 'Ata Ullah Shah Bukhari, most militant spokesman for the group became its first president, for by 1931, the Ahrar was operating separately from the Congress because of a disagreement with the Nehru Report which had called for Joint rather than Separate electorates.<sup>5</sup>

The withdrawal of the Ahrar from the Congress marked a sharp turn in the Muslim movement towards

4. P. N. K. Bamzai, *A History of Kashmir*, Delhi, 1965, p. 658.

5. The term "joint electorates" meant that all Indians regardless of religion or caste would vote for legislative candidates in their own district. Most Muslims supported the concept of "separate electorates" so that religious and caste minorities who might find themselves politically powerless could elect their own representatives.

communal activities and a decision to enter the Kashmir controversy after observing what they felt to be an overly pro-government attitude on the part of the Kashmir Committee. Blaming the Ahmadis for this attitude, the Ahrar moved to appoint Mazhar 'Ali as "dictator" for a Kashmir programme and therefore entered Kashmir as much to oppose Ahmadis as to aid the Muslims there. Early in September, 1931, Mazhar 'Ali gathered 400 red-shirted Ahrars in Sialkot and threatened to lead a *jatha* across the state line to Jammu. The Prime Minister of Kashmir, hoping to defuse the situation, invited Mazhar 'Ali into Kashmir if he would not head the *jatha*. Accepting the invitation, Mazhar 'Ali disbanded his troops and entered Kashmir on September 4.

It is not possible to detail the continuing controversy among Kashmiri Hindus, Muslims and the British Government. Two Kashmiri groups of Muslims, however, one lead by a Mir Wa'iz urging suspension of agitation so as to allow the maharaja to work out communal problems, and the other calling itself an '*Azad*' or free party, urging with Shaikh 'Abdullah continuing agitation, caused considerable controversy within the Muslim community. Because the latter group, with some Ahmadi financing through Shaikh 'Abdullah, managed to continue its anti-government work, the Ahrar saw this as a pretext to send *jathabandis* into Jammu. By the end of October, 1931, 3600 Ahraris had been interned in Kashmir.

During the crisis, the Government of India had appointed Sir Bertrand Glancy to chair a Commission

and recommend ways of alleviating Muslim grievances in Kashmir. Despite recommendations to improve the Muslim situation, the maharaja did little to affect change. Ahmadis, both as members of the All-India Kashmir Committee and as representatives of their organization supporting Shaikh 'Abdullah, became subject to the serious scrutiny and criticism of the Government.

During 1933, a split occurred in the Kashmir Committee exacerbated by hostility towards Ahmadis by non-Ahmadi Muslims. In mid-July a new committee headed by Sir Muhammad Iqbal and Zafar 'Ali Khan and excluding Ahmadis from its membership became active in Lahore. Seeing themselves as moderates in the Kashmir situation by this point, Ahmadis were shocked when two of their representatives, Farzand 'Ali and Zain-ul-'Abedin were expelled from Kashmir by the Government there. From the Government's point of view, any outsider could turn agitator and upset the delicate balance. Shaikh 'Abdullah tried to shake off some of the Ahmadi image laid on him by Ahraris, while a pamphlet by *Khalifah* Mahmud Ahmad, "Haqiqat-i-Hal", written early in 1934 indicated the Mirza's continued support of 'Abdullah, thereby adding more fuel to the intra-Muslim disputes in Kashmir.<sup>6</sup> Acting on its own, the Ahmadiyah movement first sent A. R. Dard to England to publicize the issue in the press and parliament. The *khalifah* provided funds for legal assistance for Muslims arrested in Mirpur. Other

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6. These facts are reported in the Crown Papers cited above.

leaders were dispatched to carry on high-level talks with government officials.

### **Shaikh 'Abdullah in the Kashmiri Spectrum : 1934**

A Kashmiri Franchise Commission Report in favour of joint electorates so upset various Muslim leaders in and outside of Kashmir that much confusion and competition arose among them as to how to proceed. While the Mir Wa'iz Yusuf of the Azad party decided to remain loyal to the *Darbar* and work within the new electoral system in preparation for the September elections, Shaikh 'Abdullah, apparently on the advice of Mirza Mahmud Ahmad and others, agreed to attempt a disruption of an Azad Conference supporting the *Darbar*. In the meantime, a new "left" among 'Abdullah's supporters formed a Young Men's Muslim Association or Naujawan Party which pushed 'Abdullah into negotiations with the Ahrar. Since the Ahrar were making overtures to every Muslim group in Jammu and Kashmir, 'Abdullah remained ambivalent about tactics. The Ahmadi tract *Haqiqat-i-Hal* indicates he had been negotiating with Qadian, but the record of a meeting of the All Jammu and Kashmir Muslim Conference held at Sialkot, February 10, 1934, shows that 'Abdullah staunchly denied being an Ahmadi. 'Abdullah did criticize the Franchise report but proposed no immediate action. Frustrated the Naujawan party joined hands with the Ahrars and began a new civil disobedience campaign. The arrest of the agitators, however, made the campaign short-lived. When no new replacements could be found, even the Ahrar and Mazhar 'Ali agreed with

'Abdullah that electing Muslims to the new Representative Assembly should receive higher priority than agitating.

Throughout all these events the Ahmadiyah attempted to keep a missionary foothold in Kashmir despite the disclaimers of Mahmud Ahmad. They had good reason to be on the defensive as in September 1933 the Srinagar Urdu newspaper, *Islam*, initiated a continuing series of vicious articles against the movement. These included reports of anti-Ahmadi meetings by the Azad and the Ahrar, a call for boycotts against Ahmadis and allegations against the movement suggesting complicity with the Government. On July 16, 1934, Ahmadi Zain-ul-'Abedin met with R. E. L. Wingate, Political Secretary of the Government of India, and drew his attention to these articles and to the expulsion of Mubarak Ahmad, another Ahmadi missionary in Kashmir. Claiming that the Azad party had turned both the Government and the Muslims of Kashmir against Ahmadis, Zain-ul-'Abedin urged Wingate to inform the *Darbar* that Ahmadis were "peaceful and loyal". While not promising any action, Wingate noted in his report that Col. Lang, the new Resident in Kashmir, and Col. Colvin should, in fact, be informed of this information.

The death-knell on Ahmadi activities came a few days later. C. C. Garbett of the Punjab Government informed Wingate that while legal action could not be taken against the Mirza Mahmud's polemical tracts, the Government should give no future interviews to Ahmadis as they were using these occasions

as propaganda. Garbett's critical but perceptive remark soon became a policy of both the Punjab and Delhi Governments and helps explain the ambiguous role the Government took towards the Ahmadis in their direct confrontations with the Ahrar in the Punjab during late 1934-36. The documentation of the events, claims and counter-claims of the Ahmadis, the Ahrar, the Azad, 'Abdullah and the several governments involved in the Kashmir crisis of 1931-1934 demonstrates clearly how religious, political and economic forces could not be separated. The Ahmadiyah, while claiming to be in Kashmir for religious reasons and intensely loyal to Government, were in fact acting in a most political manner. This ran counter to British support of the *Darbar* in Kashmir.

Following the effort to elect 'Muslims' to the Assembly in September, 'Abdullah retired from political activity in Kashmir and attempted to raise money to study law in England. Although funds could not be found, he remained quiescent except for his participation in the Third Annual All Jammu and Kashmir Conference held at Sopore, November 11-13, 1934. Among some 31 resolutions passed there, the conference expressed gratitude to Shaikh 'Abdullah for the work he had done on behalf of the Kashmiri Muslim community. The Ahmadis received no credit in the resolutions of that conference. They did receive abuse from other groups in Kashmir, however, and soon felt the sting of the militant *Majlis-i-Ahrar-i-Islam* in their home town of Qadian.

**Sectarian Muslim Conflict (1934-1936) In Qadian**

The encounter of the Ahmadiyah and the *Majlis-i-Ahrar-i-Islam* in Kashmir had demonstrated how two Muslim groups with very different perspectives could fight with each other and undercut the very cause both ultimately sought to serve. When the tensions in Jammu and Kashmir subsided, and as the Ahrar grew in strength and militancy throughout the Punjab, the two groups fell into new and intensified conflict between 1934 and 1936. During these events the Ahrar were on the offensive, the Ahmadiyah on the defensive, and the Government of the Punjab in the middle. The reluctance of the British to side totally with the Ahmadiyah proved very discomfoting to the *khalifah* and his supporters at Qadian, especially because of the militant, anti-British stance of the Ahrars.

The Ahrar initiated the clash by planning a conference in Qadian itself, October 21—23, 1934.<sup>7</sup> The reasons for the conference were explicit and controversial: "(i) the refutation of false doctrines; and (ii) laying the foundations of an institution (Jammia Muhammadiya) which would include a mosque". Although the Government of the Punjab knew about the conference and its potential difficulties, it decided not to ban the meetings lest the Ahrar claim undue interference with their religious rights. The Government did try, without success, to convince the Ahrar to abandon the confrontation. As an

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7. Government of India, Home Department in a letter from C. C. Garbett in Punjab to M. G. Hallett, Secretary to the Government of India; Delhi.

alternative, then, Government took four steps to maintain the peace at Qadian. The bureaucracy insisted that the conference not be held in lands immediately adjacent to the town, that no procession be allowed through Qadian, that the Ahmadis be permitted no counter demonstrations, and that both parties be fully aware of constant security.

That the Ahmadis were preparing for trouble, however, is seen in C. C. Garbett's letter from the Punjab Government to the Government of India.

A few days before the conference was to begin, it was reported that sticks of a highly dangerous character shod with iron, and which were to all intents and purposes spears, were being made in Qadian...It was also reported to Government that the Ahmadiyya organisation at Qadian had summoned 2500 volunteers from various parts of the province to be present at Qadian for the purpose of protection during the conference.

To prevent the possibility of violence, the Government issued orders to Mahmud Ahmad requiring that he withdraw his call for outside Ahmadi assistance. The Government took this action on October 17, only three days before the conference was to begin. They discovered, however, that the Ahmadis already had decided to cancel the request for aid. Although the *khalifah* withdrew his order for assistance a day before the Government order, the fact that defensive measures had gone so far reflected how much more defiant the Mirza had become despite his professions of obedience.

The Ahrar had been equally recalcitrant. They had agreed not to march through Qadian, but they

were planning to pass through the town in such a way as to antagonize the Ahmadis. Because of this, the District Magistrate ordered the Ahrar to remain outside Qadian and limit themselves to a route surveilled by police. During the conference, a force of more than 400 police and two additional superintendents were stationed at Qadian. The government attempted to observe "strict impartiality" and made reports on all activities. The official summary of the Ahrar conference suggested that the speeches, even the more militant ones against Ghulam Ahmad and his son, the *khalifah*, were not sufficiently abusive to warrant prosecution. Moreover, the Government of the Punjab felt that prosecution would only lead to more trouble. Despite the official position, however, subjects discussed at the public conference included the following :

- (a) The Ahmadiyah religion and the claim of the present head and his predecessors to be prophets. The quotation of abusive sayings attributed to them gave the opportunity for retaliatory abuse.
- (b) The alleged attempts of the Ahmadis to establish a position of temporal and religious independence at Qadian under the protection of Government.
- (c) Strong attacks on the appointment of Chaudhri Zafrulla Khan as a Member of the Viceroy's Executive Council.<sup>8</sup>
- (d) Criticism of the action recently taken by the local Government under the Press Act against the "Zamindar" and "Ahsan" newspapers.
- (e) Electioneering speeches in favour of Mr. Gauba, a candidate for the Assembly elections against Khan Bahadur Haji Rahim Bukhsh, who was supported by the Muslim Conference and League.

8. *Ibid.* Because of Zafar Ullah's role in government, and often as confidential consultant in crises, the Ahrar attack upon him was of considerable concern.

The Government documents show that close to ten thousand persons had attended the conference, about half of whom lived near Qadian. This indicated that significant opposition to the Ahmadis had remained constant in Gurdaspur District over the years. But of greater interest to the British was the presence of 300 *mawlawis* including many from as far away as De'oband and the North West Frontier. "Their presence in such numbers", the Garbett report summarized, "can only be explained by the appeal which the campaign against the Ahmadis had made to religious preachers; and there is no doubt that many orthodox Muslims, who are ordinarily opposed to the Ahrars, are in sympathy with this side of their activities. It is here that the danger lies. With the present state of feelings, the movement might grow in strength and become a real menace..."<sup>9</sup> The report also noted the resentment expressed by the Ahmadis because of the Government order against the summons for their followers to come to Qadian. The unique position which the Ahmadis had created for themselves at Qadian was one source of tension, Garbett indicated, "out of which the Ahrars make considerable capital". When the Ahrar had attempted to establish an office in Qadian in 1933, the Ahmadis, claiming the building in question to be theirs, tore it down and built latrines on the site. In addition, the Government often had received complaints from non-Ahmadi residents of Qadian that they had been harassed by Ahmadis. Such oppression, Garbett suggested, might have been the reason that the Ahrar

9. *Ibid.*

had so many sympathizers in the immediate area of Qadian. Of key significance was the closing statement of Garbett's sixth paragraph :

On the other hand, apart from the part which the Ahmadis took in the Kashmir agitation, the head of the community and his followers have always been strong supporters of Government and in civil disobedience and other subversive movements have come out openly on the side of law and order.<sup>10</sup>

The most virulent of the resolutions passed by the Ahrar at the October meeting called upon Government to designate Ahmadis as non-Muslims :

As Mirza Ghulam Ahmad of Qadian has clearly declared that those who do not recognise him as a Prophet are excluded from Islam and (as) the Ulema of the whole world consider the Mirza of Qadian to be an apostate and to be excluded from Islam because of his claim to prophethood and for his blasphemous beliefs and (as) his followers are excluded from Islam because they consider him to be a prophet and the Promised Messiah, this Conference demands that in its census report the Government should recognize all Ahmadis as non-Muslims.<sup>11</sup>

This resolution attacked the Ahmadis in a fashion reminiscent of the sharp *fatwas* of the 1890's and the propaganda by Muhammad Husain Batalwi and the newspaper *Mullah Ja'far Zatalli* in 1898. All had been far from peaceful during the intervening years but the "enemy" had most often been the Arya Samaj, the Christian missionaries, or the Maharaja of Kashmir. As a defender of Islam, Ghulam Ahmad and his successors had not directed their attacks against other Muslims but rather, because of the

10. *Ibid.*

11. In the return letter from Hallett to Garbett, November 7, 1934.

interpretation placed upon Ahmad's teachings, had invited attacks upon themselves. The bitterest always seemed to come from Muslims who felt especially threatened. Now that expressions of nationalist feeling not involved in the 1890's crisis were part of the picture, and the Ahmadis appeared to the outside world in an increasingly sectarian perspective, the emergence of a right-wing such as the *Majlis-i-Ahrar-i-Islam* tended to polarize the situation in a new way.

Not content to attack the Ahmadis and the Government for alleged "favouritism" to Ahmadis, the October Conference of the Ahrar also criticized the Muslim League, the Muslim Conference and "all Muslim associations which have allowed Qadianis to become members and office-bearers of their bodies, thus helping to promote the Ahmadiyah cause in the name of Islam." Similarly, the Ahrar urged all Indian Muslims never to elect to any government post a "Mirzai or pro-Mirzai."<sup>12</sup>

Ahmadis all over India quickly responded to this situation. The Government of India proceedings contain 22 resolutions of protest by separate Ahmadi chapters submitted prior to January 1, 1935. Mahmud Ahmad prepared several attacks against the Government's activities with regard to the Ahrar. During 1935 government censorship of Ahmadi and non-Ahmadi tracts became far more aggressive as well. One Ahmadi tract, written to answer an Ahrari one, was cited for some 35 passages which the censor believed would be offensive to Sunni Muslims. Such censorship was not applied to the Ahmadi and Ahrar

12. *Ibid.*

controversy alone. The Government was also moving against other disruptive forces such as a radical Sikh movement against the Maharaja of Patiala and the Hindustan Communist Party then lauding the Soviet Revolution.

A brief excerpt from one anti-Ahmadi tract banned by the Government in 1935, *Hansi ka Gol Gappa Urf Qadian Wala* will indicate the state of inter-Muslim relations as a Sunni addressed Ahmadis :

...O great fraud ! Seeing this falsehood of yours we have to take you to task...All say, "curse be to you, O Qadian !"...where any person eulogizes you...Nobody can be so pious as you, (how then) did you meet sudden death in a latrine ?<sup>13</sup>

### **The Iqbal—Nehru Controversy**

The struggle of the Ahmadiyah movement to maintain its own identity and existence took on a national scope in 1934 and 1935 when a debate erupted between the noted Muslim poet and lawyer, Sir Muhammad Iqbal, long-time opponent of the Ahmadis, and Jawaharlal Nehru, noted Hindu leader of the Congress. Ahmadi historians argue that Muhammad Iqbal and his father had been supporters of the movement during Iqbal's younger days in Sialkot at the turn of the century.<sup>14</sup> There seems to be no evidence that he was a critic of the movement prior to the pressure on him at the time he resigned from the Ahmadi-dominated Kashmir Committee in 1932 and founded a new Kashmir Committee. No doubt various factors contributed to his writing

13. From the Urdu pamphlet, *Hansi ka Gol Gappa Urf Qadian Wala*, Lahore, a reference to the fact that Ahmad had died of dysentery.

14. Dost Muhammad Shabid, *Tarikh*, Vol. II. p. 289.

during 1934 the article "Qadianis and Orthodox Muslims" in which he asserted that

any religious society historically arising from the bosom of Islam, which claims a new prophethood for its basis and declares all Muslims who do not recognize the truth of its alleged revelations as *Kafirs* must therefore, be regarded by every Muslim as a serious danger to the solidarity of Islam. This must necessarily be so; since the integrity of Muslim society is secured by the idea of the finality of Prophethood alone.<sup>15</sup>

Nehru, writing in the liberal periodical, *The Modern Review* edited from Calcutta by Ramananda Chatterjee, had called for openness and toleration pointing to the great diversity in Islam.

The issues raised by the controversy between Muhammad Iqbal and the Ahmadiyah were but symptoms of the greater problem the Ahmadiyah still faced. Iqbal's challenge rested on his own authority and prestige among Muslims. As for the Ahrar, Iqbal's article fueled their cause. They operated more effectively now because they were a voluntary association of religiously and politically committed Muslims. Seeking in their militant way to bring solidarity to the Indian Muslim community, the organization chose the Ahmadiyah as a scapegoat. The Ahmadiyah could not meet the Ahrar challenge in head-on confrontation, because this had been made almost impossible by a late January 1935 decision of the Punjab Government to forbid public gatherings in Qadian and its decision to prosecute those who

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15. See Muhammad Iqbal in Shamloo, "Islam and Ahmadism", answered by Jawaharlal Nehru. "The Solidarity of Islam", *Modern Review*. Calcutta, November, 1935, Vol. 58, pp. 524-525.

published inflammatory material. Instead, the Ahmadis had to turn to their most eloquent spokesman, Farzand 'Ali, already in bad repute with the British as a frequent complainant to those at higher levels of government.

### **Kufr as a Political Issue**

The most volatile issue affecting the Ahmadiyah through their stormy history involved the declaring of non-Ahmadiyahs to be *kafirs*, or the notion of *kufr*. The controversy arose early in Ahmadiyah history and quickly affected relations with other Muslims. The Sunni '*ulama*' probably raised the question against Ahmadis first in regard to Ghulam Ahmad's claim that he was the *masih-i-maw'ud*, *mahdi*, *nabi* and *ibn-i-maryam*. Even in the days when young Bashir-ud-Din Mahmud Ahmad stated that he felt non-Ahmadis should not support Ahmadi missionary work and that Ahmadis should not pray behind a non-Ahmadi *imam*, the issue was religious and sectarian in nature.

The forces pushing Qadiani Ahmadiyah in an increasingly sectarian direction already have been discussed. In 1914 when Mahmud Ahmad became *khalifah*, the issues of political involvement through the press as well as the nature and discipline of the Ahmadiyah organization helped shape the movement at Qadian. The issue of *kufr*, while it had appeared in the press controversies, was significant only to the extent that it reflected the political-nonpolitical split between the Lahoris and Qadianis.

By the time of the controversies with the Ahrar in 1935, the issue of *kufr* had taken on strongly

political connotations. In his major exposition of the ideas of the movement, *Invitation to Ahmadiyah* (written in Urdu in 1926), Mahmud Ahmad made no reference to the idea of the *kufir* of non-Ahmadis. He seems to have given the issue its final definition in his *khutbah*, delivered in Urdu on April 26, 1935 at Qadian.<sup>16</sup>

Objecting to the manner in which certain Muslims lately had been disturbing the peace, Ahmad pointed directly to the Ahrar whose "activities are obviously detrimental to the best interests of the Muslim community..." The demand that Ahmadis be excluded from the Muslim community was being promoted by such zealots as Zafar 'Ali of the *Zamindar* and Ahrari leaders Sayyid 'Ata Ullah and Habib-ur-Rahman, who claimed to speak for all the Muslims of India. Ahmadis, the *khalifah* continued, had more right to be Muslims than the Ahrar, for Ahmadis had spoken out for separate electorates against the *Nehru Report* while the Ahrar supported joint ones, a point Ahmad had made in his 1930 book, *The Indian Problem*. Ahmadis assisted the Indian Muslim delegation to the Round Table Conference, while the Ahrar were quiet, Ahmad asserted in a very political statement :

The Ahrars again have always supported joint electorates, and have vigorously worked in this behalf whereas a majority of Muslims are decidedly against the principle of joint electorates. The proposal of excluding a part of the Muslim community, emanating from such a faction...

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16. The text of this sermon was published in *Review of Religions*, XXXIV, No. 7. pp. 241-256.

is utterly baseless, is extremely ridiculous and injurious to Muslim interests.<sup>17</sup>

Mahmud Ahmad responded to Ahrar threats in anger. The statement was political in that Ahmadis could not be excluded from the Muslim community without doing damage to the political future of Muslims in India. In the recent elections, Chaudhri Zafar Ullah Khan had won overwhelmingly in the Sialkot district when no other Muslim would run against him. In another district, an Ahrari candidate asked Ahmadis privately for support when he realized they were going to support his opponent. How hypocritical of the Ahrar to suggest that Ahmadis be excluded from the Muslim community !

Although Ahmadis numbered less than 60,000, their size was no ground for exclusion. The Ahrar claim that Ahmadis called other Muslims *kafir*, even if it were true, would then mean the expulsion of the true Muslims (the Ahmadis themselves). What sect of Muslims had not been styled *kafirs* by some other sect ? Had not Zafar 'Ali Khan, Mawlana Habib-ur-Rahman and Sayyid 'Ata Ullah Shah Bukhari been declared *kafir* by some 'ulama or other ? Among the Ahmadis, it was Khawajah Kamal-ud-Din who was first responsible for raising the issue. As for Ahmadis now, the *khalifah* continued, their definition of *kufr* differed from the usual Muslim definition.

According to our definition of *kufr* the denial of a fundamental doctrine of Islam renders a person *kafir*... We never go about calling a person *kafir*. It is only when we are compelled in answer to the enquiry of a person to say what

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17. *Ibid.*, p. 246.

we think of him that we have to give expression to our belief...(and) we believe that there exists no such community whose every member is foredoomed to everlasting hell.<sup>18</sup>

Charging in the end that politics lay behind efforts to remove such prominent Ahmadis as Zafar Ullah from power, this was the root cause of the disturbances against the movement. The *khalifah* thus took a stand on the issues of *kufr* and the future of Ahmadiyah and linked both to politics. Mahmud Ahmad could no longer claim he was acting in a purely religious framework.

Following a sensational court case in 1936 in which 'Ata Ullah Shah Bukhari, the Ahrari leader, was prosecuted for his anti-Ahmadi speeches, tensions between the Ahrar and Ahmadiyah as well as between the Ahmadiyah and other groups died down. In the larger perspective of Indian history in the 1930's, the Ahrar-Ahmadi controversy played a minor role. None the less, the issues raised by this controversy reflected, in a microcosm, issues concerning the Indian Muslim community as a whole: the role of a minority religion in a free India, the kind of country a free India should be, and the future relationship, subject or free, India should have towards Great Britain. But the polemical involvement of Ahmadiyah in the 1930's differed significantly from that in which Ghulam Ahmad engaged in the 1890's, because in the thirties Ahmadis asserted themselves in a way never imagined by Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, when he declared himself to be *masih-i-maw'ud* and *mahdi* in the Punjab of 1890.

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18. *Ibid.*, p. 252.

The Ahrar attacks brought Ahmadis together as never before, and publicity from the controversy attracted new membership and support. The *khalifah al-masih* utilized the widened resources and renewed spirit to call his followers to new personal and financial commitments. The crisis of 1936 thus helped precipitate a burst of non-political activism which focused on missionary work both in India and abroad.

## CHAPTER VII

### PARTITION AND AFTER : THE AHMADIYAH AND PAKISTAN

The controversies of the 1930's did not stop the progress or expansion of the Ahmadiyah movement. With the establishment of the *Tahrik-i-Jadid* or new organization for missions in 1934, the conscious expansion of Islam to other parts of the world was strengthened. The new *tabligh* or missionary movement came partly as a response to continued years of Christian missions in India, not now as strong as they had been during the time of Mirza Ghulam Ahmad. It came also from the increasing awareness of the negative perception of Islam which Muslim travellers—Ahmadi and non-Ahmadi—experienced in Europe. Views of Muhammad, referred to in post-Crusader Europe as "Mahound", even after the translation of the *Qur'an* in European languages, was an exceedingly negative one.

With the decline of the Sufi movement in 18th century India, conversion to Islam had all but ceased. The advent of Christian missionaries coupled with the domination of the sub-continent by Britain had proven a stronger threat to Indian Muslims than it had to Hindus. The development in Punjab of such a militant Hindu movement as the Arya Samaj, and with Sikhs reasserting themselves in new organization as well, the growth of Islamic self-consciousness in

Punjab became inevitable. Of the several educational and religious organizations described in chapter one, Ahmadiyah was certainly the one with the broadest base of appeal to upper and middle class Muslims.

Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, in attempting to prove that Guru Nanak was a Muslim, had awkwardly attempted to win Sikhs to the movement. The small newspaper, *Badr*, published from Qadian had been directed to Sikhs in particular. In his lecture at Sialkot in 1904, Ahmad had claimed to be an incarnation of Krishna. Whether or not one could take this seriously today, the point is that he meant it as an appeal for Hindus to follow him and the teachings of the *Qur'an*.

As early as 1909, Ahmadis reported difficulties with Sunni Muslims in Hong Kong over the question of burying an Ahmadi in a Muslim graveyard. The establishment of the mission mosque at Woking near London in 1913 by Khawajah Kamal-ud-Din and the conversion of Lord Headley and other English persons to Islam made a considerable impact in India. The establishment of a strong mission in Mauritius in 1915, which exists to the present day, has had a major impact on the predominantly Hindu population of that island. In addition to mission stations in Indonesia, Borneo and the Philipines, the movement spread to Germany, Holland, Switzerland, Scandanavia and in 1921 established its first American mosque in Chicago.<sup>1</sup> Since that time the American Fazl Mosque has been operated in Washington, D. C. with Ahmadi communities in several other American

1. See Mirza Mubarak Ahmad, *Our Foreign Missions*, Rabwah, 1958.

cities. Related to the mission movement has been the strong emphasis on translation and publication. The *Qur'an* has been translated in many languages through Ahmadi effort. The writings of the Promised Messiah and Bashir-ud-Din Mahmud Ahmad have been translated and made available. The Lahore Anjuman has also published considerable material, though its missionary effort has not been nearly so extensive as that of the Qadian-Rabwah branch.

Most impressive has been the Ahmadiyah mission programme in Africa. The first Ahmadi missionary to Nigeria, 'Abd-ur-Rahman Nayyar, an early follower of Mirza Ghulam Ahmad arrived there in 1921 at a time of great religious unrest.<sup>2</sup> Although a split occurred in the Nigerian movement by 1924, another missionary arrived in 1929 to take up the movement in the Gold Coast (Ghana) and to assist in Nigeria. Nayyar visited Ghana and Sierra Leone, early in his ministry in Nigeria. The movement was founded in the latter country in 1929 with Nazir Ahmad 'Ali coming from India as full-time missionary in 1936.<sup>3</sup> Because Islam in West Africa was less highly organized than it had been in the Arab World, Persia or India, the Ahmadiyah movement existed with far less difficulty and managed to convert more easily.

### Issues at Partition

During the decade from 1937-1947, controversy surrounding the Ahmadiyah movement was relatively

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2. Humphrey Fisher, *Ahmadiyah : A Study of Contemporary Islam on the West African Coast*, Oxford, 1963, p. 98.

3. *Ibid.*, p. 121.

absent. One must recall that from 1939 to 1945 Britain was engaged in war with Germany and Japan and that in 1942, Japan threatened an invasion of India. Many Indians, Ahmdis included, served in the British armed forces in Asia and North Africa. The struggle for independence within the Congress and Muslim League continued, however, culminating in the decisions of 1947 to partition India into two nations, one predominantly Muslim and one predominantly Hindu.

The concept of Pakistan had been first enunciated by Sir Muhammad Iqbal in a speech to the Muslim League in 1931. The name had been worked out by an Indian Muslim student and was an anagram based on the letters "P" for Punjab, "K" for Kashmir, "S" for Sind and "stan" for Baluchistan, the principal areas of present day Pakistan. The decision to add East Bengal, now Bangla Desh, came just before partition itself.

Because the Ahmadiyah movement's position on *jihad* had made them avowedly pro-British throughout their history, it is natural that they would be ambivalent about independence either in a Hindu or a Muslim state. Mahmud Ahmad's writings of 1930, while speaking favourably of self-government for India, had also set out a long list of problems which he believed India was not yet prepared to handle. Ahmadi literature published about 1945-47 indicates that the movement was uneasy at the prospect of their role as a minority within a Muslim minority after independence. It would be difficult for Ahmadis to opt for a Hindu secular state on the one hand, but

equally difficult to opt for Pakistan where schism within Islam might not be tolerated.

Part of their uncertainty came over the question of Qadian itself. An early partition plan placed Qadian in Pakistan. The Muslim majority in Gurdaspur district was barely one percent and in that district it was concentrated in three towns including Qadian. Once this proposal was offered the movement felt compelled to seek the inclusion of Qadian in Pakistan. However, the Boundary Commission finally divided Gurdaspur so as to let Qadian fall on the Indian side. When civil strife emerged in East and West Punjab, almost the entire Ahmadi community left Qadian and migrated to West Pakistan, finally to establish their new community at Rabwah, near Chiniot on the Chenab River<sup>4</sup>.

Not long after the establishment of the Ahmadi community in Rabwah, controversy arose over their sectarian teachings and practices. Among the charges levelled against the movement was the one that suggested Qadian had fallen in India because of Muhammad Zafar Ullah Khan's position on the Boundary Commission. This argument was refuted by Justice Muhammad Munir in the decision he rendered in 1954 as chief justice of the Court of Inquiry investigating disturbances in which many Ahmadis were killed and injured.

One of the major forces responsible for causing the persecution of Ahmadis in Pakistan in 1953 was their old enemy, the Ahrar. The Ahrar were not appreciated by many elements of Pakistan leadership

4. *Report of the Court of Inquiry, Lahore, Punjab, Pakistan, 1954, pp. 196-197.*

any more than the Ahmadis were. They had declared through a public resolution in March, 1940, their disapproval of the Pakistan plan and in some subsequent speeches Ahraris had dubbed Pakistan, "Palidistan". In 1940, they rejoined the Congress and openly opposed the Muslim League, chief proponents of the Pakistan plan. In public speeches Ahrari leaders declared Muhammad 'Ali Jinnah, Quaid-i-Azam as "*kafir-i-Azam*".

With partition, the Ahrar movement also did not know which way to turn. They were without political power or any potential for power in either country. While two of their principal leaders decided to remain in India, the remainder moved to isolated locations in Pakistan. Late in 1947, after much indecision about their future, the Ahrar founded an All-Pakistan Majlis-i-Ahrar.<sup>5</sup> At a Lahore meeting in January, 1949, they announced their intention to desist from political activity and become a purely religious group. In political matters they agreed to follow the Muslim League and began holding a series of *tabligh* or missionary conferences in cities throughout West Pakistan.

#### **Ahmadiyah in Renewed Controversy**

At one of these conferences in May 1948 at Rawalpindi, the Ahrar first called for the declaration of Ahmadis as a non-Muslim minority in Pakistan. Particularly cited for criticism were the Promised Messiah Mirza Ghulam Ahmad and Chaudhri Zafar Ullah Khan, foreign minister of Pakistan. The latter was particularly declared to be a threat to Muslim

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5. *Ibid.*, p. 12.

unity because he had not participated in the funeral prayers of Muhammad 'Ali Jinnah when they were led by a non-Ahmadi *imam*.

The police did little to prevent the kinds of inflammatory speeches which Ahraris made for the next several years declaring them to be nothing more than the usual political demagoguery well-known in the Punjab. Yet, the brutal murder of a young Ahmadi military officer, Major Mahmud, while the *khalifah* himself was vacationing in Quetta during 1948 was an early sign of the emerging hostility against the Ahmadiyah movement.

'Ata Ullah Shah Bukhari, noted Ahrar leader who had been prosecuted in 1936 for his anti-Ahmadi polemics, came out of retirement to arouse public interest in his party by villifying Ahmadis. While Government suspicions became aroused when he began to describe Zafar Ullah and the Ahmadis as "traitors" and to recirculate an old anti-Ahmadi tract "Ash-shahab", the government did little to prevent the anti-Ahmadi cause from developing further.<sup>6</sup>

At Rabwah, the community was developing its international centre. The establishment of schools, colleges, a hospital and a missionary training programme occupied the efforts of many Ahmadis. But members of the movement continued to live as they had in un-divided India throughout cities and towns now part of West Pakistan. It was these members, shopkeepers and businessmen with their families, who would suffer extensively when riots against Ahmadis spurred by the Ahrar spread throughout the country.

6. *Ibid.*, pp. 20-21.

In early July, 1952, by a secret letter, the Home Secretary of the Punjab province of Pakistan wrote local administrators warning of the impending danger of Ahrar agitation. He reported Ahraris to be using three slogans to "enlist popular feeling in their support :

- (1) propagation of the *masla-i-khatm-i-nubuwwat*;
- (2) the declaration of Ahmadis as a non-Muslim minority; and
- (3) the removal of Chaudhri Zafar Ullah Khan."

The first point was a deep matter of concern as the propagation of the "seal of prophethood meant to the secretary nothing more than "radd-i-mirzaeeat"—the eradication of the Ahmadis. He questioned what might happen to Christians or Shi'ah Muslims if any strictures or condemnations of blasphemy were placed on Ahmadis.<sup>7</sup>

The hydra which the Ahrar are trying to raise should be killed before it is hatched otherwise it will devour our freedom...This religious belief cannot be enforced by the Ahrar and other non-Ahmadis on the Ahmadis without creating problems of law and order...

The report spoke just as strongly against the second and third claims of the Ahrar and called on all local governments to pursue "with a heavy hand all persons who incite to violence."

The Government was not pleased with some of the Ahmadi response to the tense situation. Chaudhri Zafar Ullah Khan, Foreign Minister of Pakistan and the subject of Ahrar agitation had addressed an Ahmadi rally in Jehangir Park, Karachi in mid-May,

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7. *Ibid.*, p. 71.

1952. Although Zafar Ullah had been asked by the Prime Minister himself to refrain from speaking, Zafar Ullah declined on the grounds of his commitment to the Anjuman. If the Prime Minister still insisted on his not speaking, Zafar Ullah was prepared to resign. Although there were disturbances on the first day of the Ahmadi conference, when Zafar Ullah spoke the second day, law and order was maintained during the speech. The title of his speech was "Islam zinda mazhab hai", or "Islam is a Living Religion". According to Justice Munir

The speech was a learned discourse on the superiority and finality of Islam as a world religion...the speaker made it clear that the *Qur'an* was the last revealed book, that it contained the final code for humanity, that this code was not to be abrogated or superceded by any subsequent code, that the prophet of Islam was *khatim-un-nabiyin* who had given the last Divine message to humanity and that no new prophet would ever appear with any new law or any law in suppression, abrogation or repeal of the law contained in the *Qur'an*. The only reference in the speech to the Ahmadiyah creed was in connection with the promise of the appearance of persons who would be commissioned by God for *tajjid-i-din*, namely for reforming or renovating the original religion with a view to preserving its purity and originality, and if mistakes, errors or innovations had crept into it, to removing them. Such a renovator, he claimed, had appeared in the person of Mirza Ghulam Ahmad. Concluding his speech, he said, that Ahmadiyyat was a plant implanted by God himself, that this plant had taken root to provide a guarantee for the preservation of Islam in fulfillment of the promise contained in the *Qur'an*, that if this plant were removed, Islam would no longer be a live religion but would be dried up like a

tree having no demonstrable superiority over other religions.<sup>8</sup>

Even so mild a speech as this one was cause for later rioting in Karachi during which the business property of Ahmadis was destroyed. Protests in both the Punjab and Karachi blamed Zafar Ullah in league with "foreign powers" for the riots. Two weeks later, an amalgam of Muslim right-wing groups called All-Pakistan Muslim Parties Convention in Karachi which formulated again three anti-Ahmadi demands : (1) that Ahmadis be declared a non-Muslim minority (2) that Zafar Ullah Khan be removed from the office of Foreign Minister and (3) that Ahmadis be removed from all key posts. Among the fourteen groups represented were the Ahrar, the Jam'aat-i-Islami of Maulana Sayyid 'Abdul 'Ala Maudoodi, the Jami'at-ul-Ulama-i-Pakistan and two branches of the Ahl-i-Hadith.

From the point of the Karachi meetings of 1952 up to the institution of marshal law in Punjab in March, 1953, a martial law which remained in effect until May of that year, the conflict between the Ahmadis and their opponents grew more intense. Disturbances reached their peak during the early months of 1953 following the delivery of an ultimatum by a *majlis-i-amal* deputed by the All-Pakistan Muslim Parties Convention delivered to and rejected by the Prime Minister of Pakistan, Mr. Khawajah Nazim-ud-Din. The ultimatum threatened direct action if Ahmadis were not declared a non-Muslim minority and if all Ahmadis, Zafar Ullah Khan

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8. *Ibid.*, p. 75.

included, were not removed from high positions in the Government.<sup>9</sup>

### **The Munir Investigation**

On June 19, the Governor of the Punjab promulgated an ordinance which set up a court to inquire into the circumstances leading up to the declaration of martial law, the responsibility for the disturbances, and the adequacy of measures taken by various governmental authorities to prevent and to deal with the civil disturbances. The inquiry, which ran from July 1, 1953 to January 23, 1954, involved thousands of pages of written statements and thousands of pages of evidence. The impact of this case on the entire nation and particularly on West Punjab was considerable. The printed summary report runs to 387 pages, involving substantial discussions of the meaning of Islam in the context of Pakistan.

It is in the sections of this report dealing with the nature of the Islamic state, its foundations and essentials, that the judgment turned in favour of the Ahmadiyah movement. Pointing first to the difficulties involved in creating a modern political state on a rigid religious basis, Justice Munir quoted the words of Muhammad Iqbal when he first proposed a consolidated all-Muslim state for Northwest India.

Nor should the Hindus fear that the creation of autonomous Muslim States will mean the introduction of a kind of religious rule in such states. The principle that each group is entitled to free development on its own lines is not inspired by any feeling of narrow communalism.<sup>10</sup>

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9. *Ibid.*, p. 91.

10. *Ibid.*, p. 201.

Before partition, the earliest public picture of Pakistan portrayed by the first president, Quaid-i-Azam, Muhammad 'Ali Jinnah, was one in which all members would have equal rights of citizenship regardless of their religion, caste or creed. He quoted from a speech in which Jinnah reiterated the point that the state would exist to serve all and religion would be a purely personal matter.

Such a conception of the state, the Justice continued, was now anathema to the representatives of the Ahrar and the Jama'at-i-Islam although both had opposed the concept of a religious state before partition took place. The Justice found the *'ulama* divided when they were asked to cite some precedent from Islamic history for the theory they now espoused. He therefore proceeded to get a clear definition to the question: "What is Islam and who is a mu'min or a Muslim?" The response was disappointing.

We cannot refrain from saying here that it was a matter of infinite regret to us that the *ulama* whose first duty should be to have settled views on this subject, were hopelessly disagreed among themselves.

Justice Munir then went on to describe that he conceived of Islam as a system including five points:

- (1) the dogma, namely, the essentials of belief;
- (2) the cult, namely, religious rites and observances which a person must perform;
- (3) ethics, i. e. rules of moral conduct;
- (4) institutions, social, economic and political; and
- (5) law proper.

"The essential basis of the rules on all these subjects is revelation", the Justice continued, "and not reason, though both may coincide". Expressing a strongly

Sunni position, Munir articulated why human reason was faulty while an error by God was an impossibility. "The test of reason is not 'the acid test' and a denial of this amounts to a denial of the supreme wisdom and designs of Allah—it is *kufr*."<sup>11</sup>

Although he did not say so directly, on these grounds the Ahmadis were surely safe, for nowhere in their teachings did they give reason precedence over revelation. After detailing the background of *hadith*, *sunnah* and the *shari'ah*, or law of God, the Justice went on to discuss the essentials of an Islamic state. In particular, he pointed to five factors which would make it exceedingly difficult for a modern "Islamic" state to conform fully with the *Qur'an*, *hadith* and *sunnah* and yet live as a state fully involved at an international level in the modern world.<sup>12</sup> For example, Pakistan could not be a democracy and still function as an Islamic state because there is no place in God's law for individual citizens not trained as religious justices to have any role in decision-making in the state. "In an Islamic state", he wrote, "sovereignty, in its essentially juristic sense, can only rest with Allah."<sup>13</sup>

In questioning the '*ulama*' as to how they would define Ahmadis as a non-Muslim minority, most used the traditional Islamic term *dhimmi*, and insisted that a *dhimmi* could not hold a major position in an Islamic state. Justice Munir asserted, then, that if

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11. *Ibid.*, pp. 205-206.

12. *Ibid.*, pp. 207-210.

13. *Ibid.*, p. 210.

Ahmadis were to be declared *dhimmi*, a clear definition of a Muslim must be obtained from the 'ulama' in order to make clear what constituted *kufir* or disbelief. Asking each 'alim to give an absolute minimum set of conditions a person would have to satisfy to be called a Muslim, the Justice received a wide variety of responses from nine men, many of whom represented the groups most strongly opposed to the Ahmadiyah. Maulana Muhammad Ahmad Qadiri, president of the Jami'at-ul-Ulama-i-Pakistan listed six points including belief in the unity of God (*tauhid*), in the Prophet of Islam as a true prophet as well as all previous prophets, in Muhammad as *khatm an-nabiyin* (the seal) in the *Qur'an* as revealed, in the *sunnah* as binding, and in the resurrection. The president of the Jami'at of West Pakistan 'ulama' gave only two requisites, belief in the *Qur'an* and what has been said by the prophets. "Any person who possesses these two qualifications is entitled to be called a Muslim without his being required to believe in anything more or do anything more", this respondent stated.

Maulana Maudoodi of the Jam'at-i-Islami included only five points : (1) *tauhid*, (2) all the prophets (*ambiya*), (3) all the books revealed by God, (4) angels (*mala'ika*), and (5) the day of judgement. In response to Justice Munir's question whether the mere profession of belief in these articles would entitle a man to call himself a Muslim and be treated as such in an Islamic state, Maudoodi answered affirmatively. In answer to the question that if "he believes in all these things, does anyone have a right to question the existence of his belief?" Maudoodi answered that

the five requisites are fundamental and any deviation from them would take someone "outside the pale of Islam." The succeeding definitions were as varied as the three quoted here while the Ahmadi definition stated that a Muslim "is a person who belongs to the *ummat* (community) of the Holy Prophet and professes belief in the *kalima-i-tayyaba*" (words of commitment to God and his Prophet).<sup>14</sup>

It was on this failure of the *'ulama* to define unanimously what a Muslim is, that the case turned. Every *'alim* offered a definition by which every other *'alim* would be excluded. On such a basis, how could anyone exclude the Ahmadis for their variant view of *jihad*, Jesus, and the role of a renewer or *mujaddid* who might call himself a Promised Messiah and *mahdi*? In addition to recognizing the right of Ahmadis to consider themselves Muslims, this noted court hearing went on to place the responsibility for the civil disorders squarely where it belonged—with the *'ulama* of the associations represented in the All-Pakistan Muslim Parties Convention and particularly with the Ahrar.

### What Future ?

In the two decades since the disturbances of 1953, the communities at Rabwah and Lahore have lived relatively at peace. Missionaries from Ghana, Nigeria and Indonesia have come to study at Rabwah and a Ghanian educated at Rabwah presently serves the

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14. *Ibid.*, pp. 215-218. Maudoodi and the Jama'at have led in publishing polemical literature against the Ahmadis, though they are not alone in doing so. For a complete list, see notes in "Sources of the Ahmadiya" in Jones and Gustafson, *Sources of Punjab History*, Delhi and Lahore, 1974.

London congregation of the movement. Ahmadis have reported that for the first time in elections held in 1972, politicians openly solicited their support as a community.

Yet, the summer of 1974 has demonstrated that the controversy over the Ahmadiyah movement is not yet settled. Disturbances following an incident at Rabwah where some medical students waiting for a train shouted anti-Ahmadi slogans led to widespread anti-Ahmadi rioting in the Punjab during late May and early June. One result of the riots has been that the Government has agreed to a new commission of inquiry on the status of Ahmadis. The matter has not been settled at the time of writing.

How can one summarize the role and significance of the Ahmadiyah movement for the modern history of North India and Pakistan? In numbers, it has always been a small community both whether among Muslims or in North India as a whole. Yet, the founder, Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, and his followers held a deep commitment to a renewed Islam in the context of missionary incursions and British imperialism in the Punjab.

Faith in a revelation is a strong faith and commitment to a charismatic individual has always played an important role in the intensity with which religious faith is supported and promoted. Commitment to Ahmadiyah gave its followers a renewed sense of meaning in life and an opportunity for upward mobility in a society dominated by the Hindu conception that everyone is born to his or her place. Any

evaluation of the significance of Ahmadiyah must also consider in detail, as this study has, the manner in which the movement challenged and was challenged by Muslims, Hindus, Sikhs and Christians. Any understanding of the history of the Punjab in the past century must certainly be developed in the light of an understanding of the way in which religious communities and sects have related to each other as well as to the crisis, events and decisions which progressively shaped India as an independent nation.

A study of the Ahmadiyah points up the ambiguities in the many forces at work in the Punjab during the decades when independence was being considered. The issues surrounding independence and the one-nation or two-nation approaches to it were by no means unanimously agreed upon by Muslims. The fact that Qadian remains in East Punjab with its holy places overseen by a staff of Ahmadis including one grandson of the Promised Messiah when virtually no Muslims live any longer in East Punjab, testifies to the Ahmadi commitment to their place of origin. The fact that India still has fifty million Muslims indicates that despite difficulties it has been able to integrate a sizable religious minority which did not emigrate to Pakistan, and which includes Ahmadis among it. The difficulties in toleration, as this study has shown, lie more with Pakistan and its struggle to enunciate an ideology for itself. The military defeat at the hands of India in 1971 and the loss of the East wing have contributed to the difficulties which both Ahmadis and Christian minorities in Pakistan have experienced from time to time. Those engaged seriously in the

study of modern Indian history owe it to themselves to follow future events closely and to participate in them.