AHMAD

The

Guided One

A Life of The Holy Founder
of The Movement To Unite
All Religions

By
IAIN ADAMSON

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By Iain Adamson

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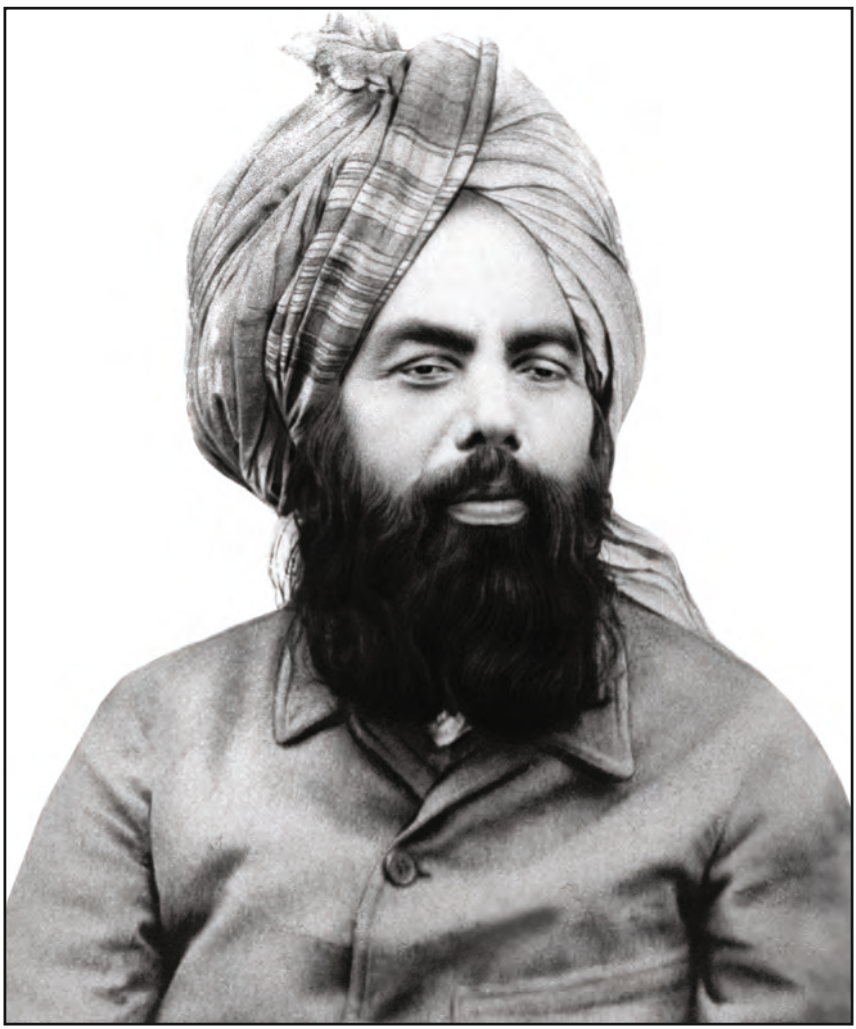

Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad of Qadian
The Promised Messiah & Mahdi
(peace be upon him)

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Many people helped me with the research for this Book. I worked in libraries in India, Pakistan and Great Britain. I travelled widely, visiting villages and areas which tourists avoid. I was shown relics that few people have seen. I talked to people in many different situations - in luxury homes and modest block-built houses.

Sometimes, I had my own personal bodyguard armed with an automatic rifle - an ironic situation considering. I was writing the biography of a man of peace!

I talked also with Ahmadi Muslim refugees who have found safety in Europe, in the United States of America and in Canada.

It could be dangerous for some people if I thanked. them publicly. So I have not mentioned any names. Icy gratitude is no less strong, however.

This book is written for a Western audience Islamic salutations and terminology have been omitted.

I am not a Muslim, but I became conscious of the glories of Islam when I was an 18 -year-old soldier and served with the Malay Regiment. Until then I knew only of the beliefs of the staunchly Protestant Church of Scotland.

I have believed ever since in the richness and Freedom of worship. This book may be banned in some countries because the Ahmadiyya Movement in Islam is proscribed as heretical by some governments.

But banning never works. Only the fullest knowledge helps mankind along the path to God.

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INTRODUCTION

The Promise Made By God

Muhammad, the Holy Prophet of God, declared that after him would come The Messiah. Among his tasks was the revival of Islam, the conversion of the world and the unification of all religions.

In the year 1889, in an undistinguished but commercially prosperous Indian town called Ludhiana, on the borders of the Punjab, a devout Muslim called Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, accepted a covenant of allegiance from his first followers. A year later he announced that God had revealed to him that Jesus did not die on the Cross. He had been taken down by Pontius Pilate, revived by his disciples. He recovered and journeyed on to India where he fulfilled his mission and died.

God had also told him, said Ahmad, that he was The Promised Messiah. His mission was to unite all religions in Islam.

His mission would be successful, Ahmad declared. God had told him,

"I will carry thy message to the ends of the earth"

It was an astonishing statement from a man whose followers at that time did not even number fifty. Yet he was not unknown. His writings had attracted attention throughout the world.

"Very profound and very true," the Russian philosopher Count Leo Tolstoy wrote of one of his books.

Today the Ahmadiyya Movement in Islam is considered the most potent religious force in the world. The first forty followers have become more than 12 million. It is a mathematical increase in 100 years unequalled since the rise of Islam.

Among his followers are a Nobel prize winner, a former president of the General Assembly of the United Nations, government ministers, army and air force generals, doctors, scientists, millionaires and millions and millions of ordinary people from countries as diverse as Indonesia, the United States, Poland, China and Spain.

An immense missionary organisation has established the Ahmadiyya Movement in 128 countries. The Holy Qur'an, or major portions of it, has been translated and printed in 120 languages, including Chinese and Russian. Mosques have been established in 100 countries.

In Third World countries, along with the missionaries, have come schools and hospitals, doctors and agricultural engineers, journalists and scientists from Europe and North America. Each Ahmadi, no matter what his age and position, considers himself a missionary, ready to answer the call of the successors of The Promised Messiah and serve where the need is greatest.

This biography investigates the life, revelations, prophecies and miracles of The Promised Messiah, including his discovery of the tomb of Jesus in Kashmir. It is drawn from the writings of The Promised Messiah, documents of the time and the testimony of his Companions. The biography also examines the interpretation of the verses of the Qur'an prophesying the coming of The Promised Messiah and the opinions of Islamic scholars down through the centuries.

CHAPTER ONE

The Taking Of The Covenant

In the town people were astir. His arrival had brought people in from outlying villages, eager to see him. Some shouting and jeering whenever he went out, others staring silently. In the teahouses, and in the shadow of the houses in the afternoon, they argued about what he said and what he was said to have said, Some argued violently, like those who shouted.

Others questioned. What was it that he said that was wrong, they asked.

His followers were discreet. Their clothes were unremarkable. There was nothing to distinguish them from the townsfolk. They avoided arguments about their beliefs. Only when their leader went to pray at the mosque did some of the younger men form a phalanx to deter anyone who wanted to jostle or insult him.

Today he sat alone in his room in the house which had been lent to him by one of his followers. It was a modest room in an equally modest house. There was only a small courtyard. His room, usually used for baking bread, overlooked the street. In the corridor of the house, and in the street outside, his followers waited. Then the first man entered and closed the door behind him. He was tall, bearded,

the former physician to a maharajah, a scholar of some repute.

In that bare room Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, who was soon to proclaim that he was The Promised Messiah, sat on the floor on a scrap of carpet. The former physician was the first to make the covenant. He stretched forth his right hand and Ahmad leaned forward and grasped the physician's hand in his own right hand. Then Ahmad put his left hand under his right elbow in order to support it - an accident in childhood had left his right arm weak.

"I repent today at the hands of Ahmad of all my sins," vowed the physician. When he had repeated the rest of the covenant Ahmad lifted up his hands in prayer and the physician did the same. When the prayer was finished the ceremony was complete.

On that day 40 people followed the physician, one by one. Then they came in groups. That first covenant was made on March 23rd, 1889. Over one hundred years later the Holy War of the pen to unite all religions under his Prophet-hood and to convert the whole world peacefully to his Islamic beliefs has suffered many martyrs.

In the 19th century they were tortured and then stoned to death. In this century they have been hacked to death by enraged mobs. Governments, especially in Pakistan, have passed laws against them. They have been told - by both Christians and Muslims - that they are heretics. But the missionary

zeal of the Ahmadiyya Movement has never faltered.

The swearing of the first covenant did not mean a break with other Muslims or confrontation with the Christian church. But a year later Ahmad proclaimed that he was The Promised Messiah and so the Apostle of God for all people and for all religions. He also declared that God had revealed to him that Jesus did not die on the Cross.

The Revelation by God to Ahmad that he was to wage a *Jihad*, a holy war of words to convert the world to Islam was all embracing. In that revelation God had told him that his followers were the chosen people. They would excel in every way every other person in the world.

This was the Revelation:

"God desires to found a community of the faithful to manifest His Glory and Power. He will make the Community grow and prosper to establish the love of God, righteousness, purity, piety, peace and goodwill among men. This shall be a group of persons devoted to God. He shall strengthen them with His own spirit and bless and purify them."

God also revealed to Ahmad that his community would flourish. God had promised, he said, that the Community would "*multiply exceedingly*".

"Thousands of truthful people shall join His ranks. He shall Himself look after them and make the

Community grow, so much so that its members and progress shall amaze the world."

Ahmad took the first covenant of allegiance from his followers in the town of Ludhiana in the Punjab, in the north-west of the Indian sub-continent. At that time Ludhiana had some 20,000 inhabitants. It was to become an important railway junction, but 100 years ago it was a town unknown to the rest of the world and even to most Indians. Yet Ahmad declared that God had told him that the missionary movement he was founding there would spread throughout the world.

"The Community shall be a lighthouse so high as to illuminate the four corners of the world. The members thereof shall serve as models of Islamic blessings."

His followers, Ahmad emphasised, were the chosen people. The revelation from God was that:

"My true followers shall excel every other person. There shall always rise among them, till Judgement Day, personages who will be chosen ones of God in every way."

The revelation ended ringingly, "So had the Almighty decreed. He does as He wills."

Mirza Ghulam Ahmad was a man of striking appearance. He was around 5 ft 8 inches with a black beard which, when he was only 30, was already streaked with silver and, by the time he was 50, had turned completely white. His eyes were dark and his eyelids always seemed to be half lowered.

His voice and manner were always exceedingly mild, but in later years, one of his followers remembered his reaction to news that his opponents were trying to attack a legal decision late on a Saturday. They planned it so he could be taken to jail over the weekend without the possibility of an appeal or the payment of a fine.

"Will they persecute The Lion of God?" cried Ahmad in a mighty voice.

It was not that he was concerned about his own character, but rather about the insult to God. Indeed, when there was a conspiracy to charge him with the attempted murder of a Christian missionary Ahmad shrugged off the allegations made against him. When the alleged assassin revealed that he had been coached in his 'confession' by the missionary himself the magistrate threw the case out of court.

The magistrate told Ahmad that if he wished to sue the missionary for perjury and malicious prosecution then the court would grant him leave to do so.

"I shall not do so. His case will come before a higher tribunal," said Ahmad.

Other opponents were not so fortunate. When one of them forecast his death Ahmad declared that he himself would not die as prophesied, but unfortunately his accuser would die a horrible death.

His prophecy proved to be correct.

CHAPTER TWO

Celestial Signs

Mirza Ghulam Ahmad was born on February 13th, 1835 in the village of Qadian, Punjab, India. He was the second son of Mirza Ghulam Murtaza. He was a twin but his sister died a few days after their birth, His birth was a period of rejoicing for the family for at that time, financial adversity also ended for the family. Five villages, part of the family estate confiscated when the Sikhs took power in the Punjab, were restored to them.

It was also the time forecast by tradition for the coming of The Promised Messiah. There was general agreement among Muslims that The Mahdi, which translates in English as 'The Guided One', would appear at the beginning of the 14th century of the Hijra, which corresponds roughly to the last decade of the 19th century of the Christian calendar. Jesus had also indicated that the time of second coming would be signalled by wars, epidemics and general tribulations. The First World War and the Spanish flu epidemic which killed millions, fulfilled these conditions.

And among many Christian denominations it was believed that the late 19th or early 20th century was the period when Jesus would come again to the world.

These beliefs were based upon a variety of indications contained in prophecies mentioned in the sacred writings of Islam and Christianity. Muhammad, The Holy Prophet of Islam, had also said very clearly how The Promised Messiah would be identified. This was contained in an oral tradition written down many years after his death.

Regarding the Mahdi, Muhammad is recorded as saying, "There are appointed two signs which have never been manifested for any other claimant since the creation of the heavens and the earth. They are that, at his advent, there shall occur an eclipse of the moon on the first of its appointed nights and an eclipse of the sun on the middle one of its appointed days and both will occur in the same month of Ramadhan.

The Holy Bible also mentions the darkening of the sun, and the moon not giving light, in connection with the signs of the second coming of Jesus Christ. (Matthew 24.29)

Normally the eclipse of the moon occurs on the 13th, 14th or 15th of a lunar month, while the eclipse of the sun takes place on the 27th, 28th or 29th. The conditions mentioned by Muhammad therefore meant that the moon would be eclipsed on the 13th and the sun on the 28th of the same lunar month which would be Ramadhan.

Lunar and solar eclipses occur according to the laws of nature. The moon is eclipsed when the shadow of the earth falls upon it and the sun is

eclipsed when the disc of the moon prevents the light of the sun from reaching the earth. The eclipses take place when the sun, the earth and the moon are in the same straight line, or very nearly so.

The celestial signs were not to announce the physical birth of the Mahdi but his spiritual arrival. On the 13th of Ramadhan, 1311 Hijra (Thursday, March 21,1894) the moon was eclipsed and on the 28th of Ramadhan, thus the same lunar month, (6th April, 1894) the sun was eclipsed. Both eclipses were seen in Qadian.

The same phenomenon was repeated in the North American continent the following year. Thus the criteria laid down by Muhammad were exactly fulfilled, being some five years after Mirza Ghulam Ahmad announced that he was the Guided Teacher whose advent had been foretold.

Such eclipses are known to occur from time to time in each century. It was not the fact that they were unusual, Ahmad declared, but the fact that they were to be recognised as the signs of the Mahdi.

It was also revealed to him, said Ahmad, that he was The Promised Messiah whose advent had been foretold not only in Islam, Christianity and Judaism, but in all the principal religions of the world such as Buddhism, Hinduism and Sikhism.

A further revelation by God allowed him to announce that he was:

"The Champion of God in the mantles of all the Prophets".

He added that he himself was nothing and claimed no merit. What Almighty God had bestowed on him in His Grace was in consequence of his utter devotion and obedience to Muhammad. He was thus a perfect spiritual reflection of Muhammad.

He was also a prophet. But he was not a law-giving prophet, he emphasised. Muhammad had been the last law-giving prophet.

His own task, said Ahmad, was to revive Islam and then unite all religions under Islam. This definition of the role that he said God had called upon him to play in the salvation of mankind produced a crescendo of denunciation from other Muslims, Christians and Hindus.

The priests and missionaries of Christianity, the *muftis* and other religious leaders of Islam were unanimous in their verdict: Mirza Ghulam Ahmad was not just mistaken in his views, he was a servant of Satan himself.

Every Muslim agreed that The Promised Messiah was expected. And it was generally agreed that when he did arrive he would arrive in the faith of Islam. Other faiths hold that the door to God's thoughts, and thus divine revelation, is now firmly closed.

It is not so with Islam.

Thus the advent of a divinely-inspired teacher is thought possible only in Islam. Islam is the only faith that requires belief in all the Prophets, wherever and whenever they might have appeared.

In the Qur'an Muslims are commanded to affirm: "We believe in God and in that which has been sent down to us and in that which was sent down to Abraham and Jacob and his children and in that which was given to Moses and Jesus and in that which was given to all Prophets from their Lord. We make no discrimination between any of them and to Him do we wholly submit ourselves."

Jesus had made it clear that a 'second coming' meant the coming of another prophet who was clothed in the first prophet's power and spirit. John The Baptist had been the second coming of Elijah, said Jesus.

The expectation of the second advent of a great teacher and religious guide prompts the question says a Muslim scholar: What would be his message and function?

As his advent had been prophesied in the principal faiths of the world, would there be a guided teacher for each faith and would their messages and functions be identical?

If the messages were identical then only one teacher would be needed. If the messages were different, then the arrival of so many religious teachers would not promote unity, peace, accord and spiritual fulfilment, but instead would foster hostility, discord, enmity and chaos.

Yet another question would be:

If each of these teachers arrived within the dispensation of their own faiths, would they uphold

the values of that faith as originally defined? If they departed from them what would be the scope of their doctrines and teachings?

Either contingency would raise problems that would be difficult to resolve.

Mankind has been constantly pressing forward to a unity of aim and purpose. All the developments that have taken place, say religious leaders, indicate that God's hand would therefore fall on one single human being and The Promised Messiah would be a single person, not a number of people in different faiths.

Muslims are in no doubt about the functions and duties of the Mahdi and The Promised Messiah. He would make Islam prevail over all other religions, even religions that Muslims associated with the worship of several gods or multiple gods in one Godhead such as the Hindu and Christian faiths.

A number of factors, it is argued, would appear to indicate that The Promised Messiah would emerge from Islam. There was, for instance, the universality of the mission of Muhammad. Consider, for instance, these statements from the Qur'an:

"Proclaim. "O Prophet: O Mankind verily I am God's Messenger to you all."

"We have sent thee as a bearer of glad tidings and a Warner for the whole of mankind, but most people know not."

"We have sent thee as a mercy for the Universe."

The Qur'an, it is argued, also contains comprehensive guidance for the whole of mankind for the whole of time as is indicated by the following verses:

"A Messenger from God reciting pure scriptures wherein are lasting commandments."

The Qur'an is a Reminder for all peoples."

"The Qur'an is a source of honour for the whole of mankind."

"Blessed is He Who has sent down the Discriminating Book to His servant that he may be a Warner to all the peoples."

The Qur'an has the unique distinction of all the scriptures, say Muslims, in that it alone, from beginning to end, is an exact and accurate version of the verbal revelations that Muhammad claimed God had given to him.

The words of God are safeguarded against perversion, says the Qur'an, under Divine Decree:

"Surely. We ourself have sent down this exhortation, and We will, most surely, safeguard it."

The divine guarantee of safeguarding the Qur'an is not confined to the integrity of the text. The same Muslim scholar has written: "It extends to all the factors that bear upon the preservation of the Qur'an as the perfect source of divine guidance for the whole of mankind for all time. For instance, it is a guarantee that the language in which the Qur'an was revealed, namely classical Arabic, would always continue as a living language in current use so that no

difficulty might be encountered in determining and comprehending the meaning of the Qur'an.

Classical Arabic is today spoken and written over a much vaster area of the earth and by many hundred times the number of people than was the case when the Qur'an was revealed.

Besides, the Holy Prophet predicted that at the beginning of every century God would raise someone from among his followers who would set forth from the Qur'an the guidance that might be needed by mankind from time to time. In the case of no other scripture has the integrity of its text, its language and its guidance been maintained.

Muhammad revealed that a prophet would be raised in Islam who would not only defend Islam against the concerted attacks of the followers and exponents of other faiths, but also would establish the superiority of Islam in every respect over all other religions. It was therefore totally within the teachings and beliefs of Islam when Mirza Ghulam Ahmad began to receive revelations which, he claimed, were from God. These started in 1876. As time passed the revelations multiplied and became more exact.

Every one of his revelations, says the Muslim scholar, "was clearly fulfilled according to its tenor at its due time. Some of them that related to future events have been fulfilled from time to time since his death.

"Some await fulfilment."

CHAPTER THREE

Chieftains Of Qadian

Mirza Ghulam Murtaza, the father of Ahmad. was a chieftain of the Punjab and principal landowner of the village of Qadian. His father had been entitled to a seat at the *durbars* or courts of the Moghul emperor and this was continued for him under the Sikh and British governments. He also owned houses in other towns. This did not imply riches, but it did mean servants and a recognised position of authority. It also meant that Ahmad was taught at home by various tutors.

The family was of noble descent. Around the year 1530 C.E. Mirza Hadi Beg, a central Asian chieftain of Persian descent, moved out of Samarkand and, accompanied by his family and about 200 retainers, entered the Punjab and settled down in an open area in the district of Gurdaspur, about 70 miles due East of Lahore. There he founded a walled and fortified village which he named Islampur.

Mirza Hadi Beg was a descendant of the uncle of the famous Amir Taimur and, as a scion of the royal family which had founded the Mughal empire, he was granted an estate of several hundred villages and appointed judge or *Qadhi* of the surrounding

district. Islampur, the village he had founded, came to be known as Islampur Qadhi. In the course of time the word 'Islampur' was dropped and the village was called Qadhi. This later became Qadian.

The family had its successes and failures over the next two hundred years while the Mughal empire expanded to encompass most of India But the family does not appear to have taken part in any of the great conquests that would have won it further fortune. In the early 1700s, however, when the empire had started to crumble and the outlying provinces had to rely on themselves for safety and security, Qadian became a semi-independent "state" of some sixty square miles and 85 villages.

Mirza Faiz Muhammad Khan, head of the family at that time, rendered such signal service to the Mughal emperor, Muhammad Farrukh Siyar Ghazi, in upholding law and order throughout the Punjab that he was given the title of *Azzud-ud-Daulah* 'the strong arm of the government'.

By a *Farman* of 1716 he was also appointed *Haft Hazari*, (entitled to keep seven thousand soldiers). It was one of the highest ranks and titles in the empire and was seldom awarded outside the Emperor's own family. It entitled the holder to keep a regular army of 7,000 soldiers.

With such an army, an ambitious man with royal blood might be tempted to make himself emperor. But the chiefs of Qadian remained loyal to the Mughal emperors and ruled their tiny territory so

well that it became, for a time, an oasis of peace in the disintegrating empire. Mirza Gul Muhammad Khan, the son of Mirza Faiz Muhammad Khan was renowned as a scholar and built up a library of sufficient importance to attract scholars to Qadian which could now be considered as a town. It is said that the library contained 500 hand-written copies of the Holy Qur'an.

He was known as a generous man and hundreds of people are said to have eaten daily at his expense. When some nearby Muslim chieftains lost their estates because of family dissensions he gave them some of his own villages.

When a high official of the emperor's court at Delhi visited Qadian and saw the way it was ruled compared to the corrupt rule in Delhi, he declared, "Oh would I had known that in this desert place there lived a member of the Mughal family with such attributes! If I had known I would have endeavoured to put him on the throne in Delhi."

Mirza Gul Muhammad Khan was to warn successive Mughal emperors of the dangers of the Sikh advances in the Punjab. There were promises of military help but nothing arrived. The tiny territory of Qadian could not withstand the Sikh armies and very quickly the lands of the Mirza family began to diminish. The Sikh confederacies took over village after village.

Finally, not long after the death of Gul Muhammad Khan, his son, Mirza Ata Muhammad, only ruled over the village of Qadian.

In the days of its importance, when it had been the headquarters of an army, Qadian had turned itself into a fortress. It was surrounded by a wall 22 feet high and 18 feet wide. They enclosed a built-up area estimated as around 23 acres.

There were four towers and four gates - Nangli, Mori, Pahari and Batalvi. Mirza Hadi Beg, the founder, had chosen the site as a defensive position and had chosen well. There was a low-lying area - almost a marsh - in front of the walls which in the rainy season, was transformed into a moat. There were other outlying defensive positions.

By the 1800s, however, the army of 7,000 men had shrunk to a few dozen men lodged in the four towers. Their guns were old, but it would still have required a considerable military effort to capture the town by a frontal assault.

The Sikhs did not attempt it. In 1802, some say by treachery of an inhabitant, the Sikhs slipped into Qadian through a door that had been left open. Mosques and homes were looted. The library of Mirza Gul Muhammad and most of the papers of the Mirza family were burnt. A number of people were killed.

The Mirza family itself was made prisoner. Not long afterwards they were expelled from the village and, as refugees, struggled across the nearby

river Biyas to Begowal. The ruler of that territory made them a small allowance and there they stayed in genteel poverty for the next 15 years.

By about 1818 the Sikh ruler, Maharajah Ranjit Singh, had consolidated his authority and taken over the conquests of the Sikh confederacies. He invited the head of the Mirza family, Mirza Ghulam Murtaza, to return to Qadian and restored to him a portion of the family estates. Mirza Ghulam Murtaza joined the Army of the Maharajah, fought in many campaigns, including the conquest of Kashmir, and, in 1834, as a reward for his services, the Maharajah returned to him five villages from the ancestral estate of 85.

In 1839 Maharajah Ranjit Singh died, the Sikh empire started to break up and shortly afterwards the British invaded the Punjab and added it to their colonial empire. The British confirmed Mirza Ghulam Murtaza's possession of Qadian and some hamlets near by, but refused to recognise his ownership of the five villages returned to him by Ranjit Singh. They granted him instead a life rent of 700 rupees a year.

They did nothing about the other 80 villages. The disputes about the missing villages were to grumble on for the next 50 years and to influence the thoughts of Ahmad about the value of property in this world.

The Mirza family had remained loyal to the Sikh maharajah when the British were subverting

their power by promising bribes of land and money to both Sikh and Muslim chieftains when they took over. It was alleged, perhaps with good cause, that this loyalty to the Sikh rulers was remembered by the British when it came to the question of returning the Mirza estates.

Certainly some Muslim and Sikh chieftains, who had given help to the British before the end of the Sikh rule, were successful in regaining control of, or enlarging, their ancestral estates. Or perhaps, looking at it pragmatically from the viewpoint of time, the British decided that to redistribute the land as it was before the Sikhs came to power would cause more grievances than it would assuage.

Mirza Ghulam Murtaza served the British government as faithfully as he had served the previous Sikh government. In 1857 the rebellion known as the Indian Mutiny broke out. Ghulam Murtaza and his elder son Ghulam Qadir organised at their own expense a troop of 50 horsemen and took part in various battles. As a result they received written commendations from various British generals.

General Nicholson, wrote in August, 1857, "After the suppression of the insurgents I will look to the welfare of your family".

But a month later General Nicholson was dead. And from then no British official had any personal interest in rewarding the services of the Mirza family by restoring their ancestral estates. All that

Mirza Ghulam Murtaza received was a pension of 200 rupees a year for his services during the rebellion.

On his death many years later, Sir Robert Egerton, the financial commissioner of the Punjab, wrote to Ahmad's brother, Mirza Ghulam Qadir, now the head of the family, "I will keep in mind the restoration and welfare of your family when a favourable opportunity occurs".

But that favourable opportunity never arose. Despite this failure to recover their ancestral estates it was often to be alleged in later years that the Mirza family - and Ahmad himself - had always been given preferential treatment by the British government.

The wearisome and apparently never-ending legal battles to recover the lost family estates were to occupy the time and the thoughts of Ahmad's father almost to the end of his life. And it was Ahmad he asked to conduct the cases for him.

CHAPTER FOUR

A Boy At Prayer

There were no schools or colleges in India when Ahmad was born. Education in Muslim households consisted of learning the Holy Qur'an and, at the best, learning to read Urdu and Persian. Ahmad's first tutor was engaged when he was about six or seven, around 1841. He taught Ahmad verses of the Qur'an and started on a few elementary Persian books. When he was about 10 another tutor was engaged. He worked hard with Ahmad and taught him the elements of Arabic.

A few other boys came to his house to share the services of the tutors. One tutor was often teased. It is not known whether Ahmad joined in, but it is unlikely. He was a serious, studious boy and when the day's lessons were done - they were held in what was a living room - he normally climbed the stairs to his room, which was immediately above, and continued reading.

When he was about 17 another tutor, Gul Ali Shah from the nearby town of Batala, was engaged. He lived in Qadian for several days and then returned to Batala. He taught Ahmad more Arabic and something of logic and philosophy.

Qadian was long past the days of its glory. Its importance as a fortress had vanished. The city walls still existed, but were crumbling. Three-quarters of the houses were in ruins and uninhabited. The remaining quarter of the houses were inhabited by some 500 people. Many of them paid no rent. So few people wanted to live in Qadian that the house owners were happy if they could merely have them lived in and maintained. .

From a bustling, thriving town, the most important in the district, Qadian had become a village of no importance. A visitor of that period has described it as "almost in a state of mourning".

The bazaars existed almost in name only. There were just three shopkeepers - a man selling sweets made from milk he had been unable to sell, another offering local medicines and one selling some general goods. Little money changed hands. It was done on a barter system. The barber would cut people's hair and be paid later when the harvests were in.

Flour was ground by hand. Milk was only occasionally available. Meat was almost uneatable. The people were desperately poor, many were without work or a legal means of gaining a livelihood. An unknown visitor to Qadian at that time described the women as clad in such pitiful rags that their dress was almost indecent.

The low-lying land, one of the reasons for Qadian's existence, was now a menace to its future.

It became a breeding ground for mosquitoes. Malaria was rife. In the rainy season you could sometimes paddle round the village in a small boat. People from nearby villages would strip naked and swim across to Qadian to the disgust of local Muslims.

The visitor to Qadian declared, "Cleanliness hardly existed. Open filthy drains were always full, blocked and overflowing. Even during daylight it was difficult to pass through the streets…

"Even before dark jackals, wildcats and foxes could be seen on the piles of rubbish ... wolves were in abundance, a pond was known as the wolf's pond."

Indeed wild animals were in such abundance and so destroyed the crops that, in one minor respect, Qadian became famous again, at least locally - it was noted for its hunting dogs!

The village's isolated position made it attractive to "thieves and vagabonds" said the early visitor.

There were "large sections of well-planted, beautiful fruit trees" but there were also areas of dense forest. People did not leave their homes at night.

When Gul Ali Shah, Ahmad's tutor, decided he could no longer undertake the three to five hour journey to Qadian there was no one well enough educated in the village to continue Ahmad's studies.

His father therefore arranged that Ahmad live in Batala and continue his studies under Gul Ali Shah.

These studies were not onerous. A historian of his early life has written, "The teachers ... were not men of great learning. Education and scholarship was at a discount and any person who had read a few books of Persian or Arabic was considered to be a learned person. The proficiency attained by him [Ahmad] consisted merely in the reading of Persian and Arabic and the ability to express himself fluently in the former and to a limited extent in the latter. His education went no further.

"As regards religious instruction he received little of it from any of his teachers."

Among the other pupils of Gul Ali Shah in Batala was a boy called Muhammad Hussain. His family lived in Batala and though there were rumours about his background, they were about his family and not about Muhammad Hussain himself. He, too, was a studious boy, intelligent and quick-witted. They enjoyed each other's intellectual ability and became friends. There was also a Hindu boy called Lala Bhim Sen.

Ahmad thus led a privileged life. Most village boys were herding goats from the time they were six or seven and their parents had no conception of education and no means to carry it out if they had. Ahmad's father, as well as being the hereditary chieftain of Qadian, was a trained soldier, used to commanding men and having his orders obeyed.

People were scared of him. He was equally choleric to people of his own rank and to British government officials. At a meeting with one British official the Briton asked him how far away Qadian was. It produced an immediate misunderstanding. For the British official it was a polite, innocuous generality, a way of starting off the conversation. That was not how Mirza Ghulam Murtaza took it.

He flared up. If you want to know how far places are apart then ask your servant he told the official. He rammed the point home "I am not your servant,"

The British official was nonplussed, then he apologised and the conversation started again.

If Mirza Ghulam Murtaza had a sense of his own dignity it might also be thought that beneath his gruff exterior was a kind heart. He had studied medicine and as there were no doctors in the area he looked after all the people in the surrounding district. He never charged for his services.

"My father was an expert physician and I read some books on medicine with him," Ahmad wrote later.

This belief in his ability was not confined to Ahmad. The rajah of Batala sent for Mirza Ghulam Murtaza when he was ill. When the rajah recovered he offered him the rents of two villages as a reward for his services.

Mirza Ghulam Murtaza refused. He never took any payment for his medical treatments and he

certainly could not accept the rents of these two villages. They were two of the villages in his ancestral estate and to accept them in this way, when he believed they were rightfully his, would compromise not only his honour but also that of his descendants. Ahmad could ride and swim - he was once saved from drowning by an old man who happened to be near - and he could run fast, but he never cared for games or sports and seldom took an active part in them. Usually his playmates asked him to be umpire. Most young men learned martial arts in those days fencing was a popular pastime - and for a member of the Mirza family it was considered almost essential to be skilled in the use of the sword, the bow and the gun. But Ahmad never became involved in any of these martial sports. Already his future life was starting to take shape. In that worldly household 'getting on' and recovering the family estates were the two main subjects of conversation.

"By that time I had become very fond of reading books, so much so that I paid little attention to anything else," Ahmad wrote later. ."My father repeatedly admonished me to reduce my study of books as he was afraid that too much concentration on books might have an adverse effect on my health. He was also desirous that, laying aside books I should begin to take an interest in his affairs and should become involved with the problems with which he was preoccupied."

Later he said, "My father gave up all hope for me and regarded me as little better than a guest who ate his bread and did nothing for him. Like a kind father he painted before me worldly greatness in very vivid colours, but in this matter found me quite deaf and blind. For me these pleasures had no attraction because I was attracted to the source of all enjoyment - the love of God."

Ahmad was interested in a different life. He recalled that when he was "quite young I found myself powerfully attracted towards my Lord and there dawned upon me the dim consciousness of a future when God would use me as His instrument in carrying out one of His great plans. I was like gold hidden in dust which, at some time in the future, was to display its brightness."

When he was a mere child he was with a cousin called Hurmat Bibi, the daughter of his maternal uncle, when the subject of prayer arose, as it does even with small children. Ahmad asked her, "Pray that I might be granted the grace of prayer".

When he was 17 he and Hurmat Bibi were married. It was an arranged marriage not a love match and it faltered from the start. There were two sons, Sultan Ahmad and Fazal Ahmad, born in the first four years, but after that the light of their marriage grew dim and finally went out. Hurmat Bibi and her two sons moved into the household of Ahmad's brother - whose only child, a boy, had died young.

Ahmad moved back into his single bachelor room. When he was not in his room reading the Qur'an the family always knew where to look for him - he was in the mosque. Indeed, one of his father's friends visiting them one day, said, "I know you say that you have two sons, but I have only ever seen one. Where is your other son?"

Ahmad was sent for, a shy, diffident boy, it is recalled, who stared at the ground and answered monosyllabically when he was spoken to.

On another occasion a friend arrived and found Mirza Ghulam Murtaza sweating profusely. A government official was arriving shortly and he had to arrange his accommodation. The friend asked why he had not asked one of his sons to arrange this matter. Mirza Ghulam Murtaza explained that his elder son now worked in Gurdaspur in a government office and only came home every seven or ten days.

"Come and look at the other one," he said. He led him to a room where Ahmad was lying reading a book about the traditions of Muhammad. Though they stood there some time Ahmad never realised they were there. When they got downstairs Mirza Ghulam Murtaza asked his friend, "Tell me, do you think he is in the land of the living?"

On another occasion he said that if they ever missed Ahmad they should look in the carpets in the mosque. He would probably have been rolled up in one when they were stored after the Friday prayers.

When Ahmad was reading the Qur'an he used to walk from one side of the room to the other and the rest of the household, hearing his footsteps, used to joke about the long walks he took in a small room. Most often he was barefoot in his room. This habit of walking from side to side when he was reading, annotating or writing continued all his life.

The principal books he studied at this period of his life - from 13 to 20 - were the Qur'an, then the *Bukhari* which he read constantly. The other books he read were *Dala-i-lulkhairat* and *Masnawi Maulana Rum*, both of which he liked very much. He also, used to read *Tazkiratul Aulia* and *Futuhul Ghaib*.

By the time he was 16 he had also studied intently both the Bible and the Vedas of the Hindus and the commentaries of Christian writers. He annotated them as carefully as he did the Qur'an. "I have given serious thought to the objections they raise against Islam," he told a friend. "In my room I have collected the objections raised against Muhammad. They number nearly 3,000."

The defender of Islam was already at work.

CHAPTER FIVE

Legal Battles

By the time Ahmad was in his 20s his father was seriously concerned about how Ahmad would survive financially after his death. There were constant bitter denunciations of his way of life.

Ahmad seemed not to understand what all the fuss was about. When he heard a family friend complain about a lost business opportunity he remarked that he did not understand why people worried so much about money and success.

Ghulam Murtaza finally decided that Ahmad should help manage the family estate. He would also help him in his legal battles to recover the lost family fortune.

In one of his 85 books Ahmad has recounted his father's feelings for him. He wanted him to be occupied with worldly affairs, even though this was not to his liking.

"Nevertheless, out of goodwill and in order to gain spiritual merit, but not for the sake of any worldly gain, I devoted myself to serving my father and for his sake I occupied myself with worldly affairs ...

He often said that he desired me to participate in worldly affairs out of a feeling of sympathy for me, though he realised that religion was alone worth

pursuing and that he himself was only wasting his time."

Courts in India at that time operated without much regard for time. A day was given for proceedings to begin and all those involved in the cases to be heard turned up at the same time. When the judge was ready to hear a particular case a crier would go outside and shout out the names of the plaintiff and defendant. If, after several days of waiting, you did not happen to be there, then you were unlucky - the case went ahead without you.

Ahmad used the time of waiting to study the Qur'an. His study of the Qur'an was so intense that the driver of a bullock cart recounted that once he took Ahmad from Qadian to Batala, some 11 miles away. The journey took five hours and throughout that time Ahmad read and reread only one page, that of the Sura Fatiha, the opening chapter of the Holy Qur'an.

Many of his father's legal cases were heard in Dalhousie, a hill station named after a former viceroy, which was some 100 miles from Qadian and 8,000 feet above sea level, or in Lahore, which is about 70 miles from Qadian. The roads were little better than tracks and there was no public transport which meant that Ahmad went on foot, taking several days on the journey.

His father would provide him with a horse and a servant, but Ahmad usually preferred to walk, sending the

servant ahead to arrange accommodation. He would cover 20 to 25 miles a day on foot.

Though he disliked the purpose of his journey, Ahmad said later but he enjoyed the grandeur of the scenery, the majestic mountains, the lush greenery of the vegetation and the sparkling, gushing mountain streams. It was totally different from the heat and dust of Qadian in the summer and the mud and damp in the rainy seasons

"I felt the infinite beauty and glory of God in these surroundings," he said later. "I felt closer to God."

As well as the legal actions to recover the lost family estates Ahmad's father occasionally got involved in law suits with his tenants. Once his father sued some tenants for cutting down trees in the fields that he rented to them. Ahmad felt that his father was wrong in his attitude. The trees were a product of the fields, just as the crops were, so surely some portion of the value of the trees belonged to the tenants.

The day before he left for these legal cases, after the Isha prayer, he would tell the people in the mosque that he was going to court on his father's instructions.

"Please pray to God that the truth may win. I do not ask that the judgement be given in my favour. God knows where the truth lies. Whosoever is in the right, in the sight of God, may he win and become victorious."

His opponents never doubted that Ahmad would tell the truth plainly and would not seek to slant it or embroider it to his own benefit. Once, in a much later case, when the family lawyer asked Ahmad what he was going to say, Ahmad said he could only tell the truth. After he had listened to Ahmad the lawyer shrugged his shoulders and said there was no point in going into court. When the case was called he went before the judge and withdrew the case.

In another later case the defendant called Ahmad as a witness for the defence. Ahmad's evidence was crucial and the case was decided in the defendant's favour. It caused a major family row.

"I cannot be expected to deny the truth" was Ahmad's only comment.

Indeed his reputation for telling the truth, no matter the consequences was so strong that often the defendants would tell the judge that they were happy to abide by Ahmad's statement regarding the facts in dispute. Ahmad would then set out the facts as he knew them and sometimes this resulted in the case being decided against his father.

In the case of the trees the villagers told the judge, "Ask Mirza Ghulam Ahmad what is the truth."

Ahmad gave his opinion which was in favour of the villagers, and the judge decided against Ahmad's father.

The servants who had gone with Ahmad returned home slightly earlier than him and when his father asked them how the case had gone they were afraid to answer. They said they did not know. When Ahmad appeared and was questioned he did not attempt to conceal that it was his evidence that had lost his father the case.

His father exploded in anger. He ordered him out of the house and declared that he would not be fed in his house any longer.

His mother, however, served him with meals for a few days while his father raged. Then Ahmad left for the family house in Batala. He lived there for two months until his father's temper cooled and he was told he could come home.

On one occasion Ahmad was at the noon prayer when his case was called. The defendant urged that the case be decided in his favour because no one was in court to represent the plaintiffs. But the judge rejected the plea, studied the papers previously submitted by Ahmad and questioned the defendant and then gave his judgement. Ahmad, his prayers finished, returned to court where he was told the case had already been decided.

Ahmad entered the courtroom and, believing the case must have been decided against him, told the judge that he had been at the noon prayer when the case was called and so could not attend. He asked that the case be heard again. The judge shook his head. Witnesses have written that he smiled. He

had given his decision and was not going to rescind it, he said. It was in favour of Ahmad's father.

His father's fight to recover the villages continued and as they rose to higher and higher courts the costs mounted. He was now pouring in vast sums of money. At the final count it was estimated that he had spent 70,000 rupees, a staggering sum when it is considered that his pension for military services was only 200 rupees a year and the life rent of the five villages was only 700 rupees a year.

The legal battle finally went to the court in Lahore. The case occupied several days and each day a servant of the family friends with whom Ahmad was staying brought his lunch to court. One day Ahmad told the servant to take it back to the house because he would return to the house and eat it there. He did not need to remain in court any longer, he said.

Shortly afterwards Ahmad arrived with a cheerful smile on his face.

Had he won? he was asked.

No, replied Ahmad. They had lost.

Why then was he so happy?

It meant that was the end of the litigation for ever, said Ahmad. The case could be taken no further. As a result he would no longer be occupied with this forlorn quest. He could forget legal technicalities and devote more time to prayer and the study of the Qur'an.

For his father, however, it was the end of a dream and he became bitter and disillusioned, comparing what the family now had with what they had possessed when he was a boy.

CHAPTER SIX

A Life Alone

His father's concern that Ahmad would be nearly penniless after his death grew stronger. His army pension would cease as would the life rent from the five extra villages. This was what they lived on.

They certainly owned most of Qadian and had ta-allukdari of five per cent on the revenue of the villages, but the money received was quite small. No one wanted to rent in Qadian. The land was practically worthless. Though they owned a few shops and houses in other towns it sounded much grander than it was. On the father's death the property would be divided between Ahmad and his elder brother.

It was not until 1864, when Ahmad was 29, that his father finally had his way. He secured for him a job as a court clerk in the civil administration of the district of Sialkot, some 150 miles away from Qadian. It changed the location, but not the tenor of his life. He rented a simple room and returned there almost immediately after his work was done. There he locked the door and it was only opened to his landlord who took up his evening meal. He also had

the use of a small courtyard where he could pray without being disturbed.

Naturally there was curiosity about how Ahmad spent his time and some neighbours managed to peep in when the door was opened. They discovered that Ahmad was praying or reading the Qur'an. Sometimes he had thrown himself into the Sajdah, a position of extreme supplication, where he stayed for long periods.

Once they heard him pray, "Oh God, My Lord. This is Thy Holy Word. It is not possible for me to grasp its meaning unless Thou help me in the task Thyself."

Some of the people who became involved in law suits followed Ahmad to his home with the intention of securing his personal intervention with the help of a modest bribe. Ahmad refused absolutely to see them and had his landlord explain that he would deal with the cases, in so much as he was able, when the offices were open during the day.

Though he would not help people dishonestly he did help them in other ways. His simple room and meagre diet consumed only a small proportion of his salary. He used the rest to help neighbours whose needs were very obvious. And as his father had trained him in medicine he also bought medicaments and treated them.

Nor would he impose on people he had to meet officially. He was occasionally sent to outlying

villages to record details of evidence in disputes that were to come to court. On these expeditions most officials expected to be provided with food and accommodation for themselves, the servant who went with them and their horse, even though they were given money for these expenses.

Ahmad did not. He took not only his own food but fodder for his horse. And it was the servant who rode most of the way. Ahmad said he preferred to walk.

Though he was little given to chit-chat about the affairs of the office he would pass the time of day with colleagues as they walked to their respective homes after work. A discussion arose as to who was the fastest runner. They decided to have a race and Ahmad, though he had not been involved in the discussion, took part. They raced in their bare feet.

Much to the surprise of his colleagues it was Ahmad who arrived first at the bridge, the agreed finishing post. His victory is not truly surprising because he walked several miles every day to the end of his life and his diet, though sparse, kept him lean and fit.

At Sialkot, though his life was quiet, studious and lonely, Ahmad found himself in demand for private discussions with Hindus and Christians as well as Muslims. Among his friends there was a Hindu lawyer called Lala Bhim Sen, who had been a fellow pupil at Batala, the courthouse caretaker, the

headmaster of a Christian school and a physician and chemist. One place where they often met was the shop of the physician and chemist, which was not far from where Ahmad now lived. With this physician and chemist Ahmad studied two books of medicine, namely Qanoon and Mujaz.

But mostly they discussed religion. Mere observance of prayer was not enough said Ahmad, during a discussion about prayer, it is recalled. Nor was it sufficient to attach yourself to a spiritual leader. Each man must strive for himself. And he quoted the verse from the Qur'an:

"And indeed those who strive in Our ways verily We shall guide them to the paths which bring them to Us."

Ahmad also met a number of Christian missionaries and their Indian converts. Their converts often preached in the bazaars and usually were vehement in their denunciations of Islam. Ahmad did not get involved in acrimonious public debate, but in earnest private discussion.

A Scot missionary, the Rev Butler, M.A., however, became a firm friend and, once or twice a week, he began to time his evening walk so that he met Ahmad when he was leaving the court. They would return to Ahmad's lodgings and discuss and debate together for hours.

The Rev Butler, had naturally, because of birth and education, a sound Protestant knowledge of the Bible. This knowledge he imparted so thoroughly to

Ahmad that in later years he could quote from the Bible nearly as easily as he could quote from the Qur'an. Missionaries and church dignitaries who met him in debate were perhaps to rue the Rev Butler's excellent instruction.

When Mr Butler was due to return to Britain he came to the offices in Sialkot to say goodbye to Ahmad. The British at that time, had a very strong belief that they were the governing class and nothing should be done which would lessen the people's respect for them. Mr Butler happened to meet the commissioner on his visit to the office and he presumed that Mr Butler had come to see him.

Well, no, confessed Mr Butler. He had come to say goodbye to Ahmad.

Lowly government clerks in those days did not have desks and Ahmad was sitting on a mat on the floor along with other clerks. Mr Butler sat down and chatted to Ahmad while he made his farewells, much to the astonishment of both the British officials and the Indian clerical staff.

Ahmad was a great religious thinker, Mr Butler explained later, and he was proud to have known him. They had clashed many times on religious points. Once, Mr Butler said that the reason why Jesus was born from a virgin was so that he should remain free of the taint of sin transmitted by Adam to all his progeny.

Ahmad asked how that could be since Mary herself was descended from Adam. And was it not

Eve who had tempted Adam to take the fruit of the forbidden tree so turning him into a sinner?

Mr Butler was unable to answer.

What was Ahmad like as a defender of Islam?

One description was, "There was a special kind of shine and quality in his eyes. His nature is humble but commanding. His temperament is cool but heart-warming. His ability to withstand harshness has brought balance to his humility. He talks so softly that he appears to be smiling."

This aspect of his character, his ready smile, was mentioned again and again throughout his life by both friends and opponents. One friend described him as having "a halo of spiritual radiance and serenity and a glow of supernatural glory". There was "a loving tenderness" that emanated from him which was "a natural manifestation of his self and soul". It was combined with "a beaming smile and everlasting calmness".

Other mellifluous descriptions talked of his "spiritual glow and serenity", of his "sparkling glow of spiritual light" and "his serene and peaceful brilliance".

More direct was a description of him physically. He had a very fair complexion - "almost like wheat," said his brother-in-law. But his skin had a faint red hue which is common in northern India. He never turned pale, it is said, even in moments of extreme anguish.

In moments of great personal tragedy did he cry in the privacy of his home?

No one is alive who can say whether he did or did not. No one has left a written record. But a few people have recorded that they eavesdropped by accident when Ahmad was praying privately and sometimes Ahmad wept copiously in anguish during prayer.

One description says "the ground was wet in front of his eyes."

A more direct description of his appearance at this time says that his hair was black, his beard thick, his eyes dark brown, his eyelashes "long and shadowy" and his forehead fairly broad, straight and upright".

In Sialkot, despite his discussions with missionaries and friends, Ahmad found that in life there was a great penance. "Sialkot is like a jail to me" he told a man from Qadian who had brought him some clothes from his mother.

[I lived there] "alone in company and single in a crowd", he said later.

His immediate office superior, a Hindu disliked Islam and never neglected an opportunity to pass a disparaging remark. Because he was Ahmad's superior he also thought that he should come off best in any religious discussion. That was difficult with Ahmad.

Once a friend advised Ahmad to let his superior win these arguments. "It will be easier for you", he advised.

But Ahmad refused absolutely. I cannot let Islam go undefended, he said.

So he suffered the consequences in the pinpricks of punctiliousness that a mean-minded superior can inflict on someone under his authority.

Later he also said how much he disliked the fact that his job forced him to meet with all kinds of people.

"I was surprised at their manner of life. I found that most of them were eager to collect money lawfully or unlawfully and all their efforts in this brief life were directed towards the world. I found few who cultivated the higher moral values like meekness, nobility, chastity, lowliness, sympathy and purity.

"I found most of them afflicted with arrogance, misconduct, neglect of religious values and all types of evil morals. As the wisdom of God Almighty had decreed that I should have experience of all types of people, I had to keep company with those of every kind. All that time I passed in great constraint and unease."

In 1868, some four years after his arrival in Sialkot Ahmad received a message from his father asking him to resign his position and return home immediately. His mother was dangerously ill. Ahmad did so, At Batala railway station his father

had sent out a yakka, a horse-drawn cart, to meet him. The driver told Ahmad that his mother was much worse. Ahmad's concern for his mother grew deeper. This was a stratagem, he feared, to break the news gently that his mother was already dead. And so it was.

His mother, whose name was Chragh Bibi, was a gentle woman, kind and generous to those in bereavement or in poverty. Ahmad missed her greatly and prayed often for her soul.

CHAPTER SEVEN

Islam In Decline

Ahmad now devoted the major portion of his day to the study of the Qur'an and the sayings and traditions of Muhammad. He had also gathered together a wide range of commentaries on the Qur'an and the sayings written over the centuries, sometimes in several editions. He also had the Bible in various editions, supplied by British and American protestant missionary groups and the Roman Catholic church and the Torah of the Jews. He also studied works and commentaries on Hinduism, Buddhism and Sikhism.

His study was also his bedroom, the same small bare room on the first floor in the outer male section of the house that he had occupied as a boy. So that he would not be disturbed by having to come down to meals, or be interrupted by a servant bringing up his meal, Ahmad arranged that his food be placed in a basket which he could then draw up to his room when he was ready. He could thus continue studying while he ate.

Ahmad and many other Muslims considered at this time that Islam was not only under attack but also in decline.The conquest of India by the British had opened the sub-continent to the proselytising of missionaries, mostly from Britain but also from the

United States, Germany and other European countries, and many of them considered this as a truly God-given opportunity to convert the East to Christianity.

The British military and civil Government did not, in the main, regard the establishment of Christianity as one of the reasons for its presence in India. Despite pressure from missionary societies they allowed all religions to compete without interference.This *Pax Britannicus* won the wholehearted approbation of Ahmad.

Christianity certainly did obtain a modicum of preferential treatment, but equally important was the fact that Christianity was the religion of the colonial power. If you wanted to improve your station in life then becoming a Christian could help, some people believed. It was not necessarily true. The British seldom tried to impose their culture. Indeed they were rather oblivious to the fact that they had a culture. But being a Christian could give you access to missionary schools and so western education and a chance to enter government service.

Christianity was a new religion for most of India and its presence was visible. While the missionaries won converts it seemed to many Muslims that Islam was rent by futile arguments over trifles. There were many mosques, but few worshippers.

Muhammad had prophesied that a time would come when Muslims would be more interested in the

outward signs of their faith than what it meant. They would beautify their mosques and produce gloriously decorated and worked silk covers for the Qur'an. But they would be absent from the mosque and neglect the guidance contained inside the Qur'an. As to the five obligatory daily prayers many would neglect them completely while for others their prayers would be empty of Spirit, reduced only to the formal postures of the Salat.

Muhammad summarised the arrival of this period in a well-known passage:

"A time would arrive when the Muslims will praise a person for his courage, his agreeableness, his grand manners and his wisdom, while there would not be a particle of faith in his heart."

How was it, Ahmad asked, that Islam was so divided while other religions were intensifying their missionary efforts?

He described his feelings in a poem he wrote in Persian: ''Before your very eyes Islam has fallen into the dust. What excuse will you offer to God, O Muslims, who pass your lives in luxury?"

There were Christian missionaries in India and in all the European colonies throughout the world, but there were no missionaries of Islam in Europe or in the United States. Islam was standing still where it was not actually decaying.

Muslims were neglecting the great moral values of Islam, said Ahmad. They should have confidence and pride in the eternal verities and

guidance contained in the Qur'an. These moral values should regulate all aspects of their conduct during their daily lives.

Christians were certain of the truth of the Bible, no matter their differences about other minor matters, Ahmad believed, but he declared that Muslims were divided into two camps regarding the very fundamentals of Islam

There were those who gave pre-eminence to the Qur'an, but practically rejected the reported sayings of Muhammad as unreliable. The other side attached so much importance to the sayings of Muhammad that they subordinated the Qur'an to them. Ahmad declared that the Qur'an was fundamental and supreme, but that the sayings of Muhammad were a source of guidance for the understanding of the Qur'an. Unless a reported saying was irreconcilable with the Qur'an then it should be accepted as authentic.

But he pointed out that the practices, or Sunnah, of Muhammad, had been filtered down through the centuries directly from the companions of Muhammad and so were a much surer source of guidance than the sayings, which had not been gathered until some two hundred years after Muhammad's death. He formulated a policy which allowed all the sayings to be judged by the same criteria and so preserved for Islam the great treasury of understanding and insight contained in them.

Of the total authenticity and validity of the Qur'an as the revealed Word of God, Ahmad admitted no argument. According to some Muslim divines many verses of the Qur'an, perhaps as many as six hundred, had been abrogated by subsequently revealed verses. Ahmad rejected totally the idea of any abrogation of a verse, a phrase or a word of the Qur'an. The words that God had dictated to Muhammad could not be altered or deleted by any man in any way, he said.

Muhammad Hussain, his boyhood friend in Batala, was to write later of the foundations on which Ahmad's convictions were built.

"From his very childhood he is known to have been very fond of *Darood* and *Wazaaif*. When a boy, at his lessons he used to keep such books as *Tohfa-i-Hind, Tohfa-tul Honood, Khal'atul Honood* as well as Shia, Sunni, Christian literature and books on *Munazarah*. He was always dominated by a desire to produce literature in support of Islam which should make this religion prevail over all others."

CHAPTER EIGHT

Defender Of The Faith

Mirza Ghulam Murtaza continued to press his son at intervals to take up some secure job which would provide him with a livelihood for the rest of his life. He was offered a post in the education service of the nearby state of Kapurthala, but turned it down.

Explaining his reasons to his father Ahmad wrote, "I have no desire to take up any kind of service. All I ask for is two suits of coarse homespun cloth and a little bread of whatever kind and quality might be available. That is all."

In another letter he wrote, "I therefore wish I could spend the rest of my days in some solitary corner, drawing myself away from the company of men and busying myself with the remembrance of God ... There is no stability in this world. All life is transient."

Ahmad's father remarked to a friend "It is his attitude alone with which I am pleased. I know it is the right path that he is pursuing."

But every so often his anxiety would resurface. "He does not know when the sun gets up or goes in", he told a friend. "He sits all day surrounded by books except when he goes to the mosque".

Though he came from such a well-known family Ahmad, because of his seclusion, was virtually unknown except to people interested in religion. They recognised him as an authority on the Qur'an and it was in that capacity he was asked to confront his former companion Muhammad Hussain.

Muhammad Hussain had gone to study in Delhi and when he returned he was a convinced member of the Ahl-i-Hadith, a sect with fundamentalist views. This aroused considerable antagonism among his neighbours. When Ahmad visited Batala a man who knew him seized upon his visit as an opportunity to discomfit Muhammad Hussain. Ahmad would be their champion and show Muhammad Hussain how wrong his new beliefs were.

With the reluctant Ahmad in their midst, they set out to find Muhammad Hussain. As with all crowds more and more joined as they walked, all eager for the forthcoming intellectual battle but perhaps even more eager for the discomfiture of a neighbour.

They found Muhammad Hussain in the mosque. Ahmad seated himself opposite him and when the hubbub died down the first question he put was to establish the basis on which they were to argue.

What was the position he took? What was his claim? asked Ahmad.

Muhammad Hussain replied, "My position is that the Qur'an has the first place - as the basis for all our views. The words of Muhammad as reported in the sayings come after the Qur'an. When anything is opposed or in conflict in any way with these two sources then they deserve no consideration at all, no matter who said them."

As soon as Ahmad heard this he exclaimed, "If that is your view it is most reasonable. There is nothing to be said against it." -

He got to his feet in order to return to Qadian. As far as he was concerned the discussion was over.

Immediately there was a great shout from all the spectators. Voices were raised in anger. The man who had been instrumental into bringing Ahmad into the confrontation was furious. "Disgraceful, disgraceful" he cried. "You have let us be humiliated. Can't you think of anything to say to him at all?"

Ahmad remained unmoved. How could he dare to say that decisions of God, revealed to Muhammad and recorded in the Qur'an, should be put aside? he asked.

How could he dare suggest that precedence should be given instead to words that Muhammad was only reported to have said? There was no comparison between the two, he said.

Ahmad was derided for having - in many people's opinion surrendered too easily. But he was not ashamed. He had only said what was correct.

Nothing can be held superior to the revealed word of God, he repeated.

He revealed later that he had had a revelation from God about his conduct. *"Thy God is well pleased with thee for this act and would bless thee."*

A Christian mission had opened in Batala but, unlike Sialkot, Ahmad never made contact with it. As he did not live in Batala he thought it better that the defence of Islam be left in the hands of Muslims who were immediately available.

One Muslim from Batala came to Ahmad for help in this battle to repulse the Christian missionaries. He was a revenue official called Nabi Bakhsh. Ahmad dictated notes to him about the subjects likely to be raised by missionaries.

Ahmad at this time was using a Bible published in Mirzapore. He made many notes in the margin and would prepare extracts of passages for Nabi Bakhsh to learn by heart.

In a private discussion with a seeker after truth, however, Ahmad suggested the *Tahqiqi* method which involved a profound comparison between Islamic teachings and the views held by other religions. If the *Ilzami* answer was first given to serious enquirers there was a real danger that the impression might be given that there was no real answer to the criticism contained in the question.

When major attacks were made on Islam, Ahmad decided to enter the fray. The three main religions of the Indian sub-continent, Islam,

Hinduism and Buddhism, to a very great extent, had tolerated each other. They did not attack each other. That situation changed abruptly with the rise of the Arya Samaj Hindu sect which had grown up around the person and teachings of Swami Dayanand. He was virulently anti-Muslim and preached against Muhammad and the Qur'an.

Ahmad decided that these attacks had to be answered. He did not wish to break his seclusion and therefore asked family friends if he could reply to these attacks under their names. They agreed. His first letters and articles were therefore published under various names. One of the older men whose name he wrote under was Sheikh Raheem Bakhsh, the father of Muhammad Hussain .

It was under his own name, however, that Ahmad issued a challenge. The foundation of all the virtues in human relationships was truthfulness, he said, and, to his mind, one could judge the worth of a religion by the measure of the emphasis which it laid on that quality. He had spent 20 years studying religion and he had come to the conclusion that no religion stressed the importance of truthfulness to the extent that Islam did.

"Could any Christian, Hindu or Sikh produce more quotations from their scriptures about the value of truthfulness than he could produce from the Qur'an?" he asked. "Could they even produce half or even one-third of the number that he could

produce?" He was willing to offer a prize of 500 rupees to anyone who could.

No one took up his challenge.

There was soon a practical demonstration that Ahmad lived his life by the tenets that he talked about. He had sent an article to a printer with the package open at both ends. In this way it counted as printed paper and was carried at a much lower rate. In this packet he enclosed a letter of instructions to the printer. If this was considered to be a normal letter then it was against post office regulations. There were surprisingly harsh penalties for infringements - a fine of up to 500 rupees or even six months in jail!

The owner of the printing shop to where the article was sent was a Christian - and he must be considered as a fanatical Christian - for he immediately told the authorities about the letter of instructions. Ahmad was summoned to appear in court in Gurdaspur on a charge of defrauding the post office.

He consulted a lawyer and was told that the only way to escape conviction was to deny that he had put the letter in the packet. He could claim that a servant had unknowingly put the letter in the packet in order to save Ahmad money.

Ahmad refused to be a party to this deception. His lawyer therefore refused to defend him and so Ahmad conducted his own defence. He admitted that he had put the letter in with the manuscript of the

article. But it was not a private letter, it contained only instructions about how the article was to be printed. He therefore believed that he had done nothing wrong.

The British post office official was eloquent about this offence - perhaps more eloquent than would seem justified for what was a very minor offence. But after each submission the magistrate shook his head and said no. In his summing-up he said the charge should never have been brought. It almost amounted to persecution. He was very impressed with Ahmad's forthright explanation. He dismissed the charge.

Ahmad had now decided that he should respond immediately to any attack on Islam. He also responded to any statement that he thought contrary to Islamic thought or even contrary to the mutual stands of all religions.

When Swami Dayanand declared that the number of souls was infinite and not known even to God, Ahmad refuted this belief. The arguments he put forward were so conclusive and convincing that the secretary of the Central Arya Samaj issued a statement saying that they were not blind followers of Swami Dayanand. They did not accept what the Swami said unless they found it reasonable.

Ahmad also decided that more was needed than just defence against attacks on Islam. Islam had to go on the offensive.

Says a Muslim scholar, "His study of the Holy Qur'an, his deep reflection over the eternal verities, his complete reliance on the grace and bounty of God and his experience of communion with Him had already equipped him with the qualities of an effective champion of Islam. Under a divinely inspired urge he was moved to embark on a project which would not only help to safeguard Islam against hostile attacks, but would clearly and demonstrably establish its superiority over all other faiths. He resolved to set forth the excellencies of Islam in a monumental work which he designated *Braheen-i-Ahmadiyya*."

In English the full title *Braheen-i-Ahmadiyya ala haqiqati kitabillah fil Qur'an wan-Nabuwwatil Muhammadiyya* translates as 'The Proofs of the Truth of the Book of God, the Holy Qur'an and the Prophethood of Muhammad'.

The compilation and composition of this monumental work was a tremendous undertaking. Ahmad had access to the family library which, though it had been destroyed during the Sikh invasion, had now been restored to a respectable size. He himself had his library, but that was all. Nor were there easy access to facilities outside Qadian.

It was now that the years of study, pondering the exact meaning of each verse came to fruition. His first-born son, Sultan Ahmad, speaking of these years, commented "I do believe absolutely that at

that time he must have read the Qur'an 10,000 times."

So, when it came to seeking the exact verse of the Qur'an that he wished to use to support an argument, his mind could recall immediately where it was to be found. His mind could sift and correlate verses and words quickly and comprehensively and with understanding.

His method of writing was interesting. He had two ink-pots at different sides of the room. They were placed in saucers and made secure with a little rampart of mud around them so that they would not slip around. As he walked across the room he wrote on the paper he was carrying, recharged his pen from the ink-pot on the side of the room he had reached, then walked back to the other side where he recharged his pen from the ink-pot which he had placed there. In that way he never needed to cease writing.

CHAPTER NINE

Columns Of Spiritual Light

It is worth considering Ahmad's life-style at this period. There are a number of witnesses. First of all there was his cousin, Mirza Din Muhammad, who had not known originally that he existed. He was to write, "I was under the impression that Mirza Ghulam Murtaza had only one son for Ahmad lived in such seclusion in the house that I seldom saw him. In the mosque I often saw him and came to know, by and by, that he was the second son of Mirza Ghulam Murtaza."

He decided to meet him. "I was sitting in the mosque with his father when I saw Ahmad leaving. Hastily I got up and followed him. I caught up with him after he had entered his room and was bolting the door from the inside. He opened the door to me and asked if I had any business with him. I told him that I wished to meet him. He asked me to take a seat and enquired where I came from ... Thus the two of us became acquainted."

After that, whenever Mirza Din Muhammad was in Qadian, he visited Ahmad and then studied under him. He also slept in his room when they had worked late into the night. The room was small and the only furniture was a *charpoy* a rough, wood-framed bed with interlacing string. This formed a

wide mesh on which a blanket or mattress was placed - and a wooden bench or *takhtposh.*

Ahmad insisted that Mirza Din Muhammad sleep on the *charpoy.* At around 2 a.m. Ahmad would rise for the prayer of *Tahajjud.* He woke Mirza Din Muhammad gently with a fine spray of water drops just as Muhammad had done with his followers in the Arabian desert more than 1300 years ago.

Once, when in later years a discussion arose about the difficulty of waking up at that time in the morning, Ahmad said they should follow his example. "I tell myself, 'Ahmad, wake up for the prayer.' Then I just wake up."

Ahmad did not return to bed. He lit a small earthenware lamp and began studying and praying until the call came for morning prayer, roughly an hour and quarter before sunrise. He thus spent the greater part of each night in silent vigil and prayer.

He talked often of the value of prayer. Once a visitor said he prayed, but he did not think his prayers did much good and so now he had little interest in them.

Ahmad said immediately, "Whether you like it or not you should continue offering your prayers. A sick person does not want to take food, but those looking after him try to induce him to eat something. Sometimes they almost have to compel him. In the same way, whether you like praying or not, you should certainly continue offering your prayers."

He added, "Whenever I cannot understand something or am confronted with a difficulty, I forget about the difficulty and start praying to God - that solves the problem."

At another time he said that praying was like digging a well. "Sometimes people lose heart and stop digging when, if they dug just another few feet, they would reach water. So it is with prayer. You must keep on praying. It is no use to pray intensively for a few days and then give up."

Even when he was in bed Ahmad never ceased thinking and praying to God. His lips never ceased moving, it was said, and those who ever slept near him were able to judge whether he was in a state of adoration of Muhammad or repeating praise of God.

He often gave this advice, "Make it a practice to be in a state of verbal prayer or remembrance whenever you wake up in the night or change your position."

In the Mirza household there was a ready welcome for any relatives or guests who dropped in for the family was large and, as the founders of the village, naturally the most important. Every visitor was offered a meal.

Ahmad did not join them. He still had his meal put in a basket which he hauled up to the window of his room on the first floor. When Mirza Din Muhammad stayed, his meal was also put in the basket. Occasionally another visitor, called Hafiz Mo'in-ud-Din, was there and Ahmad would ask

Mirza Din Muhammad to obtain a meal for him. When Hafiz was finishing Ahmad would often ask him if he would like some more.

"Then Ahmad would give him his own portion - and sometimes mine as well," said Mirza Din Muhammad. "Ahmad ate very slowly, taking a long time over each morsel."

Occasionally, when Hafiz had taken too liberal advantage of Ahmad's offer, eating the greater part of both their meals, Ahmad would give Mirza Din Muhammad a small coin to buy some roasted grain which was very cheap. This had to suffice for the rest of the day.

Ahmad took very little even of this. "He would put a few grains in his mouth and keep munching for a long time." said Mirza Din Muhammad.

An impression that Ahmad was a lonely, cheerless ascetic would be wrong. His friends recall that he talked cheerfully, slapping his thigh when he wished to emphasise a point. Though many people in the village were afraid to approach Ahmad's gruff, authoritarian father, this was not so with Ahmad.

Said Mirza Din Muhammad, "My experience was that he was always sweet-tempered. He never became angry. We never had the slightest hesitation or fear in approaching him whenever we wanted to. He never put us off because he was too busy or unwell. We sometimes disturbed him when he was sleeping. Even on such occasions he would get up

and open the door, never giving us the feeling that it would have been better if we had not disturbed him

"Since his door was always kept closed I would sometimes throw some pebbles at it from a distance. Even this small sound was enough to make him open the door."

Mirza Din Muhammad was studying medicine and in one of his books there was a discussion about melancholia, its causes and symptoms. One of the symptoms mentioned was a secluded life. At this Ahmad commented that the doctors had spared no one, categorising people as insane who only led secluded lives

Mirza Din Muhammad recalls, "I smiled and said laughingly, 'Just as they say about you."

"Ahmad joined in the laughter, without in any way taking me to task. Later I felt ashamed of this remark, but even then I did not think a formal apology was needed. I knew Ahmad never attached any importance to such things, never keeping anything in his mind with a desire to get even with a person."

Towards the end of 1875 Ahmad was told in a vision that he should now follow the example of the prophets and undertake a fast. In order not to worry his father he decided to do this secretly. He therefore arranged with some poor children that they should come below his window at certain times when he would distribute food among them.

He reduced his consumption so that he now took only one meal after sunset. After two or three weeks he began to reduce the quantity of this meal so that in the end he was eating only a few ounces of bread every 24 hours.

Later Ahmad wrote of this fast, "I continued this discipline over a period of eight or nine months and despite the extreme meagreness of the nourishment God Almighty safeguarded me against every kind of disorder. During this period I experienced many spiritual mysteries. I met several previous prophets and some outstanding Muslim saints who had passed away.

"On one occasion, in a state of complete wakefulness I beheld the Holy Prophet ... who was accompanied by his two grandsons, his daughter Fatima and his cousin and son-in-law Ali... This was not any kind of dream but was a species of complete wakefulness.

"Besides this kind of experience, I beheld columns of spiritual light, of different colours, white, green and red, that were beautiful and impressive beyond description. These columns were so related to my heart, that observing them, my heart experienced an ecstasy, the delight of which has no comparison.

"I imagined that these columns were an illustration of the mutual love between God and man. One light proceeded from the heart and ascended upwards and another light descended from

above. When the two met they assumed the shape of a column.

"These are spiritual experiences which are not within the ken of worldly people, but there are those in the world who are given knowledge of such matters.

"Another benefit that I derived from this exercise was that I discovered that, the need arising, I could endure starvation for a long period. I feel that if a strong wrestler were to compete with me in enduring starvation, he would die long before I would need any nourishment.

"I also feel that until a person's body is inured to such hardship he is not capable of experiencing the higher spiritual mysteries. But I would not advise everyone to embark upon such an exercise. Nor did I undertake it on my own volition. I adopted it under divine direction that was conveyed to me in a clear vision. At the end of eight or nine months I terminated it and have since reverted to it only on rare occasions."

By 1876 Ahmad's father, Mirza Ghulam Murtaza, was well advanced into his eighties and as he contemplated death he grew sad at what he declared were his wasted opportunities and his complete devotion to worldly affairs.

He related a dream he had, "I saw Muhammad, the holy Prophet, coming towards my house. I ran towards him to welcome him and to pay him my homage. As I got nearer it occurred to me that I

should also give him an offering of some kind and I put my hand in my pocket. But all that I could find was one rupee and, when I looked at it, I realised it was counterfeit."

Mirza Ghulam Murtaza interpreted this dream as an illustration that when the love of God was mingled with the dross of worldliness then it was like a counterfeit rupee.

Ghulam Murtaza also used to recite a poem by his own father, who, dying in exile and dispossessed of all his property, had written, "whenever I prepare a plan, Fate laughs at my endeavours".

He now often asked Ahmad to read to him in the evenings from the Qur'an and the Hadith. But, though he enjoyed the company of Ahmad he was still worried about how he would make a living after his death. They owned some houses and shops in Batala, Amritsar and Gurdaspur and also, of course, houses and lands in Qadian, but the rents were tiny. At his death the property would be divided between Ahmad and his elder brother and the rent from each half would not be sufficient.

When his mother had been alive she had acted as a shield from his father's wrath, but now it would sometimes boil over and he would accuse Ahmad of being a useless *mullah*, a village priest unable to earn his own bread and depending on the work of others to support him.

His father declared that he did not know how such a person could be his son. But though he

derided Ahmad's way of life, he also derided his own.

As a way of making amends for his life he decided to build a mosque. He tried at first to obtain the return of a former village mosque which, when the Sikhs overran Qadian, had been turned into a Sikh temple. But he lost this last legal case as well.

He therefore settled on a vacant site which had been occupied by the local authorities during the Sikh rule. When the owners heard why Mirza Ghulam Murtaza wanted the land they knew he would not be thwarted. So the price was drived up by imaginary other buyers until finally Mirza Ghulam Murtaza paid the then extraordinary sum of 700 rupees.

Work started straightaway at the end of 1875 and Mirza Ghulam Murtaza asked that he be buried in the grounds of the mosque. If he had not paid much attention to God during his lifetime, he could, in death, hear the word of God being glorified, he said.

It might be the means of his procuring forgiveness, he added.

By the middle of 1876 the construction of the mosque was almost complete. Ahmad was in Lahore when suddenly he had a premonition that the death of his father was approaching. He hurried back to Qadian.

"The news caused me that pang of grief instinctive to humanity and, since some of the

important sources of our family income were bound up with his life - the pension and the annuity - the thought also passed through my mind as to what would happen after his death. There came a flutter in my heart that perhaps there would now come days of poverty and pain. All these thoughts passed through my mind like a flash of lightning.

"Immediately there came over me a trance and I had a second revelation:

'Is God not all-sufficient for His servant?'

"This divine revelation was immediately followed by a feeling of mental relief, as though some painful wound had been suddenly healed by a potent ointment ... I understood that God would not allow me to perish."

"I then wrote down the words of the revelation and gave the paper to a servant. I also told him the whole story and sent him to Amritsar so that he should get the words inscribed on a stone and set into a signet ring ... in due course the ring was prepared at a cost of five rupees and it was forwarded to me. It remains with me still." That evening after sunset his father died. He was aged between 80 and 85 and, as he had desired, he was buried in the grounds of the mosque.

Ahmad was to talk later about life and death.

"Who said that life is long?" he asked. "There is no season for death - it may overtake us at any time. So we must value what time we have. We will

not have these times again. There will remain only memories."

CHAPTER TEN

A Treasury Of Truth

The death of his father gave Ahmad both more and less freedom. His brother, Mirza Ghulam Qadir, took over the management of the estate so that Ahmad was free to devote all his time to study. Though the rents should have been divided, it was the elder brother who controlled the finances. When Ahmad once asked for money to subscribe to a newspaper he was told they could not afford it.

His brother had much the same attitude as his father to Ahmad's way of life and constantly urged him to find an occupation that would provide him with a reasonable salary. But whereas his father's statements were characterised by an inner softness his brother's were not. He grew impatient at what he considered was Ahmad's dull obduracy.

His brother's wife was totally antagonistic towards Ahmad and, since the elder brother was away for seven to 10 days at a time in Gurdaspur, it was she who controlled the household. Ahmad's food was now what was left over from other people's meals.

Ahmad recalled this period in a couplet of Arabic which ran, "There was a time when my usual fare consisted of the remains from the tables of others.

A family friend who arrived with a dish of spiced kebabs as a small present for the elder brother found him away from home and presented the kebabs to Ahmad instead. His sister-in-law created a furious row when she discovered what had happened. Anyone who tried to intervene on his behalf, like his mother's sister, who lived in the family house, was attacked.

Ahmad suffered seven years in these austere conditions. However, he had enough to live on and could now devote all his time to finishing the writing of Braheen-i-Ahmadiyya.

He had no funds to pay for its publication - commercial publishers did not exist at that time in India - and an appeal for financial help did not produce much result. A few wealthy Muslims, however, made donations in excess of the price of the four planned volumes. This was sufficient to enable Ahmad to finance the printing of the first two volumes.

The writing of this book was an immense task. One of his followers, Zafrullah Khan, who later became the first Foreign Minister of Pakistan and then President of the International Court of Justice, was to describe it in these words.

"The author was a profound scholar of Islam and of comparative religion and already enjoyed the experience of communion with the Divine. He was a constant recipient of revelation. He also had access to the family library which, despite its destruction by

the Sikhs in the time of his grandfather, had been restored to a considerable size.

But these were the only facilities available to him. Qadian was situated 11 miles from the nearest railway station and telegraph office. It boasted few amenities. The nearest printing press was situated at Amristsar, a matter of 35 miles from Qadian. There was no one in Qadian who could have in any way assisted the author in the writing and production of this great work.

He wrote out the manuscript by hand and when the time came for committing it to the printing press, he himself took it to Amritsar. This involved a journey on a dirt track studded with potholes, which it was easier to traverse on foot than by means of one of the uncomfortable and perilous spring-less horse-drawn contraptions that were occasionally available. This was followed by a railway journey of 24 miles.

The book was thus conceived, written and published entirely through the efforts of a single individual, assisted only by the Grace and Bounty of the Divine."

The book contained many arguments about the truths of Islam. The verses, quoted at appropriate places in the book, amounted to some two-thirds of the Qur'an.

In his introduction Ahmad detailed his reasons for writing the book:

"Let it be clear to all seekers after truth that the reason why this book has been compiled is so that the proofs of the truth of Islam, of the excellence of the Holy Qur'an and of the prophethood of the Holy Prophet are made known with the greatest clarity ..."

To anyone who could refute these proofs and give even one fifth of these proofs in favour of another religion, scripture and prophet, Ahmad offered a prize of 10,000 rupees - which was what he thought his share of his father's estate was worth. This challenge printed in such large, bold letters that each 10 inch page had only seven lines of type on it, occupied 30 pages of the book.

The main points Ahmad dealt with were: First, the fundamental principles of the knowledge of religion. Secondly, three hundred proofs about Islam. The book then answered accusations made against Islam, examined the precepts of other religions and explained the wisdom of the Holy Qur'an.

The first two volumes of *Braheen-i-Ahmadiyya* appeared in 1880. The response was spectacular

Muhammad Hussain, his former schoolmate at Batala was now a leader of the *Ahle Hadith* sect and editor of a newspaper entitled *Ishaat-us-Sunnah*. He wrote a massive, two hundred page review which was spread over six issues.

He first of all drew attention to the fact that he had known Ahmad since boyhood.

"Our knowledge of the conditions and circumstances of the compiler of *Braheen-i-Ahmadiyya* is so great that very few contemporaries can claim to know him better than we do. On that basis we express our opinion in simple and unexaggerated words."

He then continued, "In our opinion, from the viewpoint of this modern age, this book stands unique in the history of Islam. No book like it has been published in the past. The work of the author in the service of Islam, through his life, his energy, his pen and his tongue, indeed in every form of activity, is almost unprecedented among Muslims. We challenge anyone to show us the like of this book.

"The author of *Braheen-i-Ahmadiyya*, according to the testimony of friends and foes, regulates his life according to the law of Islam and is a pious and truthful person. It is well-known that Satanic suggestions are mostly false, but not one of the revelations received by the author of *Braheen-i-Ahmadiyya* has been proved false up to this day ...

"Can any Muslim follower of the Qur'an believe that Satan can be given knowledge, like the Prophets and the angels, of that which is hidden, so that not one of his disclosures of the hidden should lack truth?"

He concluded with the following appeal.

"The excellence of this book and its benefit for Islam will be recognised by those who read it with an open mind ... Therefore, acting upon the principle

that the only return for beneficence is beneficence, we wish to point that helping the publication of this book through contributions towards the cost of printing is a duty laid upon the entire Muslim community.

"The author of *Braheen-i-Ahmadiyya* has, by writing this book, safeguarded the honour of the Muslims and has challenged the opponents of Islam emphatically and forcefully. He has announced to the whole world that anyone who doubts the truth of Islam should come to him and should witness the intellectual and spiritual proofs based upon the Qur'an and the miraculous manifestation of the prophethood of Muhammad in support of the truth of Islam."

This ecstatic review - it cannot be regarded as less - was not a case of an old school friend losing all sense of objectivity. Other Muslim scholars were equally enthusiastic.

A well-known Sufi, Ahmad of Ludhiana, wrote as follows, "This book convinces the disbelievers, activates the indifferent, warns the neglectful, perfects the understanding of believers, strengthens the roots of Islamic doctrines and wipes out the doubts that are expressed by the opponents of Islam.

It demonstrates the truth of Islamic teachings in such an excellent manner that everyone realises what a grand bounty are faith and Islam, and what a treasure is the Holy Qur'an, and what a grand verity is the faith of Muhammad...

It is clear, according to the sayings of the Holy Prophet, that God would raise among the Muslims at the beginning of each century one who would revive the Faith. The author of this book is the Reformer of the 14th century and is one of the most perfect individuals of the Muslim community."

No one was to object at this naming of Ahmad as Mujaddid, the Reformer of the Age. It was an honorific title and indicated the respect in which Muslim clerics now held him.

The editor of Manshoor Muhammadi, a journal of Bangalore, Mysore, in the South of India, wrote, "Islam is being attacked from all directions. Atheism is flourishing and irreligiousness is on the increase. Those of the (Hindu) Brahmo Samaj are making every effort to establish the superiority of their creed over Islam through their philosophic writings.

Our Christian brothers are devoting the whole of their efforts towards wiping out Islam. They are convinced that so long as the sun of Islam continues to shed its light upon the world all the efforts on behalf of Christianity would prove vain and the concept of trinity would gain no support. In short, the followers of all religions are eager to put out the light of Islam.

We had been most anxious over a long period that from the body of Muslim divines, someone, who may be inspired by God to stand up in support and defence of the faith, should write a book which should be in accord with the need of the times, and

which should set out, on the basis of reason and spiritual arguments, to prove that the Holy Qur'an is the Word of God and the Holy Prophet was a righteous Prophet of God.

We are deeply grateful to God that this desire of ours has at last been fulfilled. Here is the book, the writing of which we had been awaiting a long time. Its title is Braheen-i-Ahmadiyya and the author has set out in it 300 conclusive arguments in proof of the truth of the Holy Qur'an and the prophethood of Muhammad ...

The author of this book is the best of divines, pride of the Muslims of India, the accepted one of God Almighty ... God be praised!

What a wonderful compilation this is, whose every word proves the truth of Islam and displays the righteousness of the Qur'an and the prophethood of Muhammad. The opponents of Islam have been presented with bright, conclusive arguments. Every claim is reasonable and is supported by brilliant arguments of a character so positive that no one can question them and everyone must yield to them provided everyone approaches them with a just and open mind.

This is the book which, in truth, is matchless. The author claims that it cannot be controverted ... The truth is that if the opponents of Islam have any fear of God in their hearts they should, after perusing the book, affirm that there is no one worthy

of worship save God and Muhammad is His righteous Messenger."

He ended with a panegyric. "The author has proved the truth of Islam by such positive arguments that every just person would acknowledge that the Qur'an is the book of God, that the Prophethood of the Holy Prophet is righteous, that Islam is a faith established by God and that every Muslim is instructed in the truth.

There is here such a multiplicity of proofs that no way of escape and no way of denial has been left open to an opponent. Every argument is clear. Every proof is bright.

The book is a mirror of faith and is full of the Qur'an to the brim. It leads to the straight path. It is a torch that lights up the true way. It is a treasury of truth. It is a mine of guidance. It acts as lightning on the stores of the enemy and burns up all his arguments. For the Muslims it is a strong support for the Holy Book and it is a bright proof of the Mother of the Book. It has unsettled and disturbed every enemy of religion."

It is difficult to imagine a more enthusiastic reception of a work of religion. There were certainly a few Muslim divines who were critical of certain parts of the book and there were certainly many Hindus, Christians, Sikhs and members of other faiths who felt their beliefs had been insulted.

But that had not been Ahmad's intention. He had certainly intended to communicate with those

who did not agree with his religious beliefs, to put his total belief in front of them.

But he emphasised, "... it is not our aim ... that we should injure the religious susceptibilities of any person, or stir up or commence any controversy unnecessarily."

However, as he believed the views of the Arya Samaj and Brahmo Samaj were completely wrong these would have to be disproved and overthrown by reference to the Holy Qur'an.

The Christian missionaries he had met at Sialkot as a legal clerk and the ardent preachers of the Hindu Arya Samaj movement, one of whom was resident in his own village of Qadian, had convinced him that it was not enough to know the truth - he also had to carry the truth to those of other faiths or of no faith. There had to be missionary activity. He had put the essence of Islam, as he knew it, in *Braheen-i- Ahmadiyya.* Now people had to know of the book and read it.

His prize of 10,000 rupees achieved that purpose. There was wide publicity throughout India. One Muslim newspaper added a further 1,000 rupees to the prize.

When some Christians, Hindus and others complained about the way he had written about their religion, Ahmad gave them no quarter. He wanted them to investigate the truths of Islam. Islam had been quiescent too long he believed.

He therefore responded to their criticisms with another challenge. "Do not delay for one moment in entering the lists against me. Let them put on the guise of Plato, Aristotle and Bacon. Let them supplicate their false deities and then see whether our God is proved supreme or their false deities."

The enthusiasm of Muslims for Braheen-i-Ahmadiyya did not diminish over the years. Many years later an Urdu scholar of repute was to write, "Certainly he earned the title *Sultan-ul- Qalam* (The Sultan of Pen) that God conferred upon him.... His language is most eloquent, a remarkable circumstance in a man who renounced all art."

Another scholar was to comment that the format of the book was rational, logical and systematic.

But not all his opponents were so generous in their praise of his scholarship. The worst came from a man called Lekh Ram, a former police sergeant, who was editor of a magazine published by the Hindu Arya Samaj sect. He published a book called 'Refutation of Braheen-i- Ahmadiyya'.

He was to reappear tragically many years later in Ahmad's life.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

Revelations Of The Future

The marital relationship of Ahmad and Hurmat Bibi was never resumed and for some 26 years he lived as a bachelor.

In 1881, however, when he was 46 years old, he received a revelation that, at some time in the future, he would become a father again. He had started to receive revelations some time before the death of his father.

These revelations were completely free from doubt he was to explain later. The length of time since the death of Muhammad had led many people to believe that revelation was mere inspiration of the mind. This was due to the belief that as God was not a material being like man he would not speak in the way that men were forced to speak.

Ahmad declared that revelation was conveyed in words and was as certain and free from doubt as the speech of one man to another. Unless revelation was conveyed in words, he said, it could not be entirely free from doubt. If inspiration was thought to be revelation then many men could deceive themselves and mankind.

Revelation, he continued, is conveyed in words of extraordinary glory and majesty. A dialogue was possible. God did not need material means for the

expression of His desires He had created the Universe without actual hands and so He could speak without an actual tongue. God did not stand in need for words, but the man to whom the revelation had to be conveyed, stood in need of words.

"We give thee glad tidings of a handsome son," was the revelation. Some months later he received another revelation :

"Be grateful for My bounty that thou hast found My Khadeejah".

Khadeejah was the name of the first wife of Muhammad and Ahmad therefore realised that God intended him to marry again. He later received another revelation:

"All praise belongs to God who has bestowed upon you a noble relationship through marriage and a noble descent."

On November 17, 1884. he married Nusrat Jahan Begum, Her name in English means 'the lady who helps the whole world'. Her father, who had known Ahmad for many years, was not certain that the marriage would be a success. There was the difference in age - she was 18 years old and so was 32 years younger. His reputation of being completely indifferent to money was understandably not an asset in the eyes of his prospective father-in-law. But it was to be a long, happy and fruitful marriage. She bore him five sons and five daughters

His friends were worried when he first announced that he was contemplating taking a

second wife, for his health was not good - he suffered from diabetes and migraine and had only recently recovered from what was thought to be tuberculosis. Ahmad himself was conscious of the difficulties that a second marriage might entail. He wrote later, "On account of the retired life that I led, my mind shrank from undertaking the responsibilities of married life. In this pitiful condition I received a revelation:

'I shall provide all that may be needed in respect of your marriage.'

"God so blessed me that I was convinced that He had bestowed on me the full health and strength that are enjoyed by a person in normal health... were I not afraid that I might be suspected of exaggeration, I would set out in detail the miraculous change that was brought about in me so that it might be known that the signs of our Powerful God are exhibited in every shape and form, particularly for those of His servants whom He esteems."

But when he returned home on the first day back in Qadian he found his new wife in tears. The room that had been sufficient for him as a bachelor engrossed in his studies was not sufficient for a happy matrimonial home - all that it contained was a broken charpoy.

Ahmad's new wife was anxious to please him. When she discovered that he was especially fond of a kind of rice pudding, made with thick, raw sugar in

the form of molasses, she decided to surprise him. Not having the recipe she used four times the amount of sugar needed and the result was more like a sugar jelly than a rice pudding.

She was contemplating the awful result when Ahmad came in, she recalled. He looked at her and could see that she was distressed. He then said that he liked rice pudding made with a lot of sugar and ate it with what appeared to be relish.

"He kept on talking to me until my anguish and concern had gone," she said.

He was to value not only her love but her sage advice as the years went on and often quoted Muhammad's counsel: "He is the best among you who is the best in behaviour to his wife".

There is an immense recollection of their "perfect and ideal" marriage. Her younger brother Dr. Muhammad Ismail recalled that from his earliest childhood he could never remember Ahmad exchanging a harsh word with his sister. He always addressed her in the politest form of Urdu, whereas he spoke in the Punjabi dialect with their children.

The revelation that he was to marry again had come in 1881, but it was not fulfilled until 1884. In between had come the revelation that he was the Reformer of The Age. It was a title that many Muslims were already according him.

It is a title that has been accorded to a number of people since the time of Muhammad because the

Holy Prophet declared that not only was Islam the true religion, but it was also the living religion.

It has been recorded that he said, "Verily God shall raise for my followers at the beginning of every century a man who shall revive their religion for them".

This heavenly assistance, said Ahmad, had not been given to other religions. They have therefore become like a garden which has no gardener and so no one to water and cultivate it. As a result the trees which gave fruit have withered and died away and thorny bushes have grown up in their place.

But God had ordained, said Ahmad, that the garden of Islam will be ever-green and therefore He watered it anew at the turn of each century with the advent of the Reformer of the Age.

This was how Ahmad described the revelation which he said told him of his future task.

"One night I was busy writing, when a feeling of drowsiness overtook me and I went to sleep. At that time I saw The Holy Prophet Muhammad. His face shone like the full moon. He came close to me and I felt as though he wished to embrace me. I witnessed that rays of light came forth from him and penetrated into me.

I could see those rays of light just in the same manner as we see this common light and I felt that I was seeing those rays not only with my spiritual eyes, but with my physical eyes as well.

After The Holy Prophet had embraced me I felt as if I could not say whether or not The Holy Prophet had separated from me following that embrace. Then the doors of Revelation were thrown open on me and my Lord said to me,

'O Ahmad God has blessed thee. So the blow which thou hast dealt to the enemy was not dealt by thee but by God. God has endowed thee with knowledge of the Holy Qur'an that thou shouldst warn those whose forefathers had not been warned and that the way of transgressors should become plain and evident.

'Tell the people that you have been called to a Divine Mission and that you are yourself the first to believe in that Mission."

'The "blow," referred to was, of course, the publication of the *Braheen-i-Ahmadiyya*.

CHAPTER TWELVE

Forty Days Of Solitude

Ahmad continued to receive further revelations from God, he said, and in 1883, a year after the publication of *Braheen-i-Ahmadiyya*, God told him that he now held among men the position of Jesus.

This was how Ahmad disclosed the revelation.

"The writer has been given the knowledge that he is the *Mujaddid* of this era and that spiritually his qualities and attributes resemble the qualities and attributes of Messiah, the son of Mary, the two of us closely and intensely resembling each other. From the blessing of my obedience to the Holy Prophet Muhammad, as a sample of the attributes of Prophets, I have been given preference in rank and position over many of the eminent men who have gone before.

"To walk in my footsteps now is a source of blessing while to go in opposition is a source of disappointment and despair."

Ahmad now waited for further revelations. He knew he needed further guidance and resolved to undertake *chilla*, as it is known in Islam, a period of 40 days of solitude, prayer and contemplation in which communion is sought with God.

This period of 40 days has been recognised among holy men down through the ages. Moses was

on the mountain for 40 days and 40 nights. Jesus was in the desert for 40 days and nights. Innumerable other men of God have sought guidance during a like period of prayer and contemplation.

However, Ahmad did not know where he should undertake *chilla* and it was not until January, 1886, that God told him that he should go to the little town of Hoshiarpur. A citizen of that town, when he heard that Ahmad wanted to come there, offered him the use of a small, two-storied house on the outskirts of the town. Ahmad accepted and, at the end of January, 1886, left for Hoshiarpur in a bullock-driven cart.

Three companions, who had asked to be allowed to go with him, accompanied him. As they crossed the river Biyas in a very old-fashioned and leaky boat Ahmad remarked that accompanying a holy man on such a journey as he was now undertaking was like crossing a river - there was the hope of a safe landfall on the other side.

But there was also the danger of being drowned!

Ahmad told his companions that one of them should bring up his two daily meals and should put them down and leave without speaking. No one should be allowed to come to talk to him, he said. After his vigil was over he would stay in the house for a number of other days - he did not know how many - and anyone who wanted could come at that

time. Ahmad left the house only on Fridays when they went to an isolated mosque situated in a park outside the town. There Ahmad led the Zohr prayers.

Ahmad did not talk to his companions about what happened during this period, but it has always been considered that this was a prelude and preparation to his official inauguration as God's ambassador to the world. The 'mighty sign' which Ahmad had sought from God was also granted to him and this was delivered to the world in February, 1886.

"God Almighty, the Lord of honour and Glory, Merciful, Benevolent, Exalted, Who has the power to do all that He wills (glory be to Him and Exalted be His Name) has vouchsafed to me the following revelation:

"I confer upon thee a sign of My Mercy according to thy entreaties and have honoured thy prayers with acceptance through My mercy and have blessed this thy journey. A Sign of power, mercy and nearness to Me is bestowed upon thee, a Sign of grace and beneficence is awarded to thee, and thou art Granted the key of Success and victory ...

"Rejoice therefore," the revelation continued, *"that a handsome and pure boy will be bestowed upon thee. Thou will receive an intelligent youth who will be of thy seed and thy progeny .... He is the light of God. He has been invested with a holy spirit and will be free from all impurity ...*

"He will be extremely intelligent and understanding and will be meek of heart and will be filled with secular and spiritual knowledge ... His advent will be greatly blessed and will be a source of the manifestation of Divine Majesty... He will pour His spirit upon and he will be sheltered under the shadow of God. He will grow rapidly in stature and will be the means of procuring the release of those held in bondage. His fame will spread to the ends of the world ... and people will be blessed through him. He will then be raised to his spiritual station in heaven.

This is a matter decreed.

Thy house will be filled with blessings! ... I will cause a great increase in thy progeny ... thy progeny will spread greatly in different lands. Thy progeny ... will flourish to the end of days. God will maintain thy name with honour till the day when the world comes to an end and will convey thy message to the ends of the earth."

These last words were taken as the most important words in the revelation. God not only wanted Ahmad to defend Islam. God now wanted Ahmad to spread the news of Islam throughout the world and He would ensure that it was carried throughout the world.

The revelation continued:

"I shall exalt thee and call thee to Myself, but thy name will never be erased from the face of the earth. .... all those who seek to humiliate thee and to

cause thee to fail and wish to ruin thee will be frustrated and will die, being brought to naught.

... I will cause an increase of thy true sincere friends and will bless their lives and their properties and they will grow in number, and they will always prevail over the other Muslims who are jealous of thee and are hostile to thee.

Thou art to Me as the prophets of the children of Israel. Thou art to Me as My Unity. Thou art of Me and I am of thee. The time is approaching .. when God will put thy love in the hearts of kings and nobles, so much so that they will seek blessings from thy garments ... "

A month later, on March 22, 1886, he stated, "This is not only a prophecy . It is a grand Heavenly Sign which Almighty God has shown for demonstrating the truth and greatness of the gentle and compassionate prophet Muhammad ...

This Sign is a hundred times greater, better, more perfect, more exalted and more complete than bringing a dead one back to life. Such an event, the possibility of which is open to question, merely means to bring a spirit back to life by supplication to God.

In this instance God, the Almighty, has .... promised to send a blessed spirit whose manifest and hidden blessings will spread throughout the earth ... "

A year after the revelation of Hoshiarpur Ahmad was directed to lay the foundations of the

Community. But it was not until December, 1888, that he announced this in public. The following month, on January 12, 1889, he gave the ten conditions on which the Ahmadiyya Community would be founded.

The members of the Community would vow that:

In their worship nothing should be associated with God.

They would keep away from falsehood, adultery, cruelty, dishonesty, rebellion and would not allow themselves to be carried away by their passions. They would perform the five daily acts of worship.

They would do no harm to God's creatures in general, and to Muslims in particular, neither by their hands, their tongue or any other means.

In joy or sorrow, in prosperity and in adversity, they would be faithful to God and ready to endure every insult and pain and in the hour of misfortune would not turn away from God but rather draw closer to Him.

They would not follow vulgar customs and would guard against evil inclinations.

They would discard pride and haughtiness and pass their days in humility, lowliness, courtesy and meekness.

They would hold their religion and the dignity and welfare of Islam dearer than life, wealth and even their children.

For the grace of God they would have sympathy for all His creatures and would devote their natural ability to the promotion of their welfare.

And finally, declared Ahmad, they would establish a relationship of brotherhood with him on condition of obeying him in all good things and should adhere to it till death and this relationship would be of such a high order that the like of it would not be found in other worldly relationship.

Two months later Ahmad went to Ludhiana and on March 23,1889, the formal inauguration began. The former physician, Nurud Din, was the first to grasp the right hand of Ahmad and make the vow. He had been building a clinic in Bhera when he had heard of Ahmad's preaching and had travelled to Qadian to talk to him.

He had intended staying only one night, but at Ahmad's invitation he stayed for a few days. The 'few days' became a few weeks. Then he sent for his library and gave instructions for his half-finished clinic to be sold. He lived in Qadian for the rest of his life.

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

In The Spirit Of Jesus

The pledge of allegiance to Ahmad at Ludhiana in 1889 took place nine years after *Braheen-i-Ahmadiyya* was published.

The inauguration of the covenant was in no sense a declaration by Ahmad that he was anything other than the Reformer of the Age - God had appointed him to serve the cause of Islam by pointing out false beliefs and ways that had grown on to Islam like barnacles. They had to be struck hard in order to dislodge them.

There have been many accepted reformers since the prophethood of Muhammad, usually at the beginning or end of each century. Ahmad declared that he was the Reformer of the 14th century of Islam and that his reformation had to be carried out in the spirit of Jesus.

In a letter to Nurud Din in 1885 he wrote that he had been "commissioned by God to try, in the spirit of the prophet of Nazareth, the Israelite Messiah, to regenerate mankind through perfect humility, meekness, humbleness and solicitude and to show the straight path to those unaware of the way; by walking in which true salvation is attained and, in this very world, are seen the signs of

heavenly life and the rays of acceptance and belovedness."

At this time Ahmad did not claim that he was the Mahdi or Guide. Nor did he claim that he was a prophet or Messenger of God. And he most certainly did not claim that he was the Messiah promised for mankind in all the major faiths of the world.

As to the covenant many holy men had allowed their followers to take up a covenant at their hands. So the announcement and the ceremony at Ludhiana raised no opposition from Muslim divines.

A Muslim scholar has written, "In fact, he was regarded as a great general of Islam, a holy man of uncommon piety and great virtue and one imbued with a moving enthusiasm for the service of Islam. He was thus looked upon as a great stalwart of the faith and its powerful defender.

Non-Muslims also regarded him as an outstanding Islamic general and were deeply conscious of his forceful writings."

But the acceptance by all Muslims of his role as a noble defender of Islam was not to endure.

The great controversy was about to break. At the end of 1890, some 18 months after the taking of the first covenant, Ahmad revealed that he had had a new revelation from God:

JESUS CHRIST WAS NOT ALIVE IN HEAVEN.

The immensity of this statement was as shocking for Muslims as for Christians. For though

Christians believed that Jesus, as the Son of God, was alive in Heaven and would come again to the world, Muslims believed equally firmly that he was physically alive in Heaven beside God and would come down before the Day of Judgement to punish the unrighteous and establish for ever the Kingdom of God.

But Ahmad said that not only Jesus was dead, God had also revealed to him that a great reformer would come to the world in the spirit of Jesus. God had told him that he was that chosen person. The exact revelation was:

"The Messiah, son of Mary, Prophet of God, is dead. It is thou who hast appeared in his spirit, according to the promise. And the promise of God is ever fulfilled."

The Muslim divines were outraged and Ahmad was denounced as a heretic, an impostor and an enemy of the Faith. As Muhammad was the Seal of the Prophets there could be no prophets after him they declared. *Fatwas* were issued against him from all over India. He was described as *Dajjal*, meaning a personification of all the vices, and the most wicked of God's creatures.

The most vehement of all his critics was his old friend, Muhammad Hussain. He had told the world that Ahmad was the Reformer of the Age. Now he declared that there was no one worse in the world than Ahmad. He was "a faithless infidel" and

the "worst of apostates". Indeed he was worse. He was "the playmate of the devil".

It was his praise, said Muhammad Hussain, that had raised Ahmad from obscurity. Now he would destroy him.

The storm of controversy did not shake Ahmad and he answered them with a reasoned exposition, calling to his side the evidence contained in the Holy Qur'an. The main objection to his claim of prophethood was that it appeared to be in direct contradiction of the statement in the Holy Qur'an:

'Muhammad is not the father of any male among you, but he is a Messenger of God and Khataman Nabiyyin'(33.41)

These words, *Khataman-Nabiyyin*, meant the Seal of the Prophets.

Ahmad declared that not only had his opponents misunderstood his claim, but that they had also misunderstood the Holy Qur'an. Indeed they had misrepresented what the verse of the Holy Qur'an meant and neglected altogether what was said in other chapters.

Ahmad, and his followers after him, declared that there were three types of prophethood in Islam, The most important were the law-bearing prophets such as Moses and Muhammad.

There would never again be law-bearing prophets such as them, said Ahmad.

Then there were the non law-bearing prophets, who were independent of any other prophets. Many of these had come after Moses.

The third type of prophethood was bestowed through allegiance to a law-bearing prophet as a reflection of his light and excellences.

Such was the prophethood claimed by Ahmad, who was a follower of the Holy Prophet and a reflection of the prophethood of Muhammad. These "reflection prophets" did not bring any new law nor did they have the right to cancel or alter in any way any of the laws proclaimed by the law-bearing prophets.

Such a prophethood, it was argued, did not contravene or violate in any way the fact that Muhammad was the Seal of the Prophets in that he was the last and best of the prophets and had attained a degree of Perfection beyond which it was impossible to go. "Seal" also meant authentication and so the "Seal of the Prophets" meant one who authenticates or ratifies the Prophets.

Muhammad had the power, said Ahmad, of raising others to the spiritual rank of prophet. He was the Prophet of Prophets.

Ahmad's opponents did not agree. They were to cite various traditions of the Holy Prophet as evidence that Muhammad was the last prophet. In particular they recalled the words 'I am the last of the prophets' and 'There is no prophet after me'.

Ahmad replied that the Hadith actually read 'I am the last of the prophets and my mosque is the last of the mosques' It meant that Muhammad was the last law-bearing prophet and no one could establish any new religion after him.

As to the phrase 'There is no prophet after me' the meaning of this was that no future prophet could abrogate the teachings of the Holy Prophet.

Ahmad quoted the words of Ayesha, the wife of the Holy Prophet: 'Certainly do say that he (the Holy Prophet) is the Seal of the Prophets, but do not say that there is no prophet after him'.

Muhammad had talked frequently of the prophets who would come after him. After the death of his son Ibrahim he had declared, "If Ibrahim had lived he would have been a prophet".

Indeed the Holy Qur'an is full of messages about prophets to come in future days. One of the most important was:

'O children of Adam, if Messengers come to you from among yourselves, rehearsing My commandments unto you, then whoso is mindful of his duty to Allah and acts righteously, on such shall come no fear nor shall they grieve.

"But those who reject Our Signs and turn away from them in disdain, these shall be the inmates of the Fire; therein shall they abide." (7:36-37)

The Holy Prophet himself used the word 'prophet' and talked of the time when the prophet

who was promised by God in all the great religions would come. This was the Promised Prophet.

'I am *that* Promised Prophet', said Ahmad. 'I am the Promised Messiah'. -

He explained that he was also the Mahdi.

In Islamic terminology what happened was *buruz*, the spiritual appearance of one person in another, the two bearing a striking resemblance to each other in their qualities and character.

"I am therefore a *buruz* of Jesus as well as of Muhammad and spiritually my person is a combination of the persons of these two prophets."

And so that there could be absolutely no doubt Ahmad wrote down his claim and published it abroad.

"I swear in the name of God Who has my soul in His hand that it is He Who has commissioned me, and it is He Who has conferred upon me the appellation of Prophet and it is He who has called me by the name of The Promised Messiah."

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

Where Did Jesus Die?

Not a single verse in the Holy Qur'an upheld the view that Jesus was taken physically alive into Heaven, said Ahmad, but there were many that said Jesus had died.

Muhammad had died so why should they believe that Jesus was physically still alive? Ahmad asked. He suggested that Muslims had been misled by certain allegorical expressions and that, unfortunately, over the centuries, the belief of Christians in a Jesus living in Heaven had also slowly been added on to the true beliefs of Islam.

Jesus himself had pointed out that the second coming of Elijah had been fulfilled by the coming of John the Baptist. In the same way his coming fulfilled the promise about the return of Jesus.

Ahmad said that as well as being the Messiah he was also the Guide or Mahdi who was promised at the same time. These were not two separate persons, he said, but two offices held by the same person. The promise that the Mahdi would kill all infidels and convert all nations to Islam did not mean that he would convert them by the terror of the sword, but that, gifted with powerful and cogent arguments, he would defeat all his opponents and prove the superiority of Islam.

The most important battle he had to win, Ahmad often declared, was to convince Christians of their grievous error in considering Jesus as God or part of God. Jesus had been a mortal man and a prophet just as Moses, Elijah and John the Baptist had been mortal men and prophets. Jesus himself had never thought of himself as anything but a prophet. Nor had his disciples.

Many of the original books of the Bible only said that Jesus was a prophet, said Ahmad. These had been suppressed by Church leaders in the first centuries of Christianity when, at various meetings, they had decided which Acts of the Apostles should be included in the Bible and which should not.

This 'editing' of the Bible by religious conferences was one of the elemental differences between the Bible and the Qur'an, said Ahmad. The Bible was the work of many men over more than a hundred years and had been shaped and altered by church conferences over the following few hundred years.

The Qur'an, on the other hand, was the revealed Word of God.

It was a long time after the death of Jesus, said Ahmad, that Christians had started to use words that implied that Jesus was himself God, as part of the Trinity.

To worship a mere man, prophet though he was, was a grievous sin, said Ahmad.

Only God can be worshipped. God was unique and alone. No one could be associated with God.

Merely to say that Jesus was dead was not enough however. Ahmad therefore sought insight from God as to what had truly happened at the Crucifixion. Eight years later, in 1898, after much study, Ahmad announced that though Jesus had indeed been crucified he had not died on the Cross. He had fallen unconscious because of the intense pain he was suffering from the nails driven through his hands and feet.

The Roman soldiers thought that he was dead - which was unlikely because he had only been on the Cross for a few hours and some people who were crucified stayed alive for days. Even so, they would normally have employed crurifragium to ensure that he was dead. This entailed breaking the crucified person's legs so that he could no longer rest his feet on the small ledge of wood below them. As a result he had to hang by his hands alone, the pain was immense and he became unconscious and death followed shortly from heart failure.

The disciples of Jesus had ensured that he would not be treated in that way, said Ahmad. Instead his side was pierced with a lance and blood and water gushed forth. That itself was a sign that his heart was still working and blood was circulating through his body.

When he was placed in the large, airy burial chamber after his body was rubbed with reviving herbs and ointments Jesus gradually recovered.

Down through the centuries many people have speculated that Jesus was alive when taken down from the Cross and commented on the fact that he was taken for a gardener, that he looked so ill that Thomas was not convinced that he was really Jesus until he had put his fingers in the holes caused by the nails.

Doctors have discussed whether the blood and water was from immense blisters raised by his earlier scourging while more recent medical knowledge has allowed them to discuss the exact medical conditions that would arise during a crucifixion.

On one thing, however, doctors are totally agreed. It would be perfectly medically possible for Jesus to have survived his crucifixion and to have sufficiently recovered three days later to meet and talk with his disciples.

Jesus had always maintained that he was sent only as prophet for the people of Israel and not as a prophet for the whole of mankind.

Thus he is reported as saying (Mathew:15, 24) "I am not sent, but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel".

And again, "And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold ... they shall hear my voice,"

(John 10,16).

In the great Diaspora, some 700 years before the birth of Christ, the 10 tribes of Israel had been scattered, driven out of Israel by Nebuchadnezzar, a king of Babylon. Not all had returned. It was therefore to these lost tribes that Jesus was referring, said Ahmad.

He could no longer stay in Palestine, because he would have been immediately rearrested once he revealed himself. But he may well have still been there 12 months after his supposed crucifixion when Saul, later Paul, was converted.

Indeed some people have concluded that Paul's conversion dates from an actual meeting with Jesus and it was after that that Jesus set out on his journeying to find the lost tribes of Israel.

Ahmad was convinced that Paul knew that Jesus had left the country and, perhaps accidentally, misinterpreted his instructions. It was Paul who first propounded the divinity of Jesus and so, said Ahmad, introduced polytheism.

Jesus and some disciples, Said Ahmad, reached the city of Nasibin, which is some 450 miles from Jerusalem. He then journeyed on through Persia into Afghanistan, visited Tibet and several parts of India before finally arriving and staying in Kashmir.

Jesus was named the Masih, which is Arabic for traveller. He is known as the Chief of the Travellers because he travelled about so much, says a Muslim writer.

In *Kanzul-Umnal*, a collection of the sayings of Muhammad, it is related that God sent a warning to Jesus in the following revelation:

"O Jesus, move from one place to another lest thou shouldst be recognised and persecuted".

In Kashmir Jesus was revered as a great prophet under the name of *Yus Asaph*. The word '*Yus*' is another form of '*Yuyu*' which means Jesus in the old Persian language. '*Asaph*' is a Biblical name meaning 'collector' or 'gatherer'. Jesus's mission, as he himself said, was to gather in the lost tribes of Israel,

There is much evidence pointing to the arrival of at least one of the tribes of Israel in the Punjab and Afghanistan and of a strongly Semitic influence. There are many words and names of villages and towns which correspond to those mentioned in the Bible; many travellers have remarked on the Semitic appearance of men and women and, perhaps most important of all, the people of Afghanistan, and other places between Iran and Kashmir, call themselves Bani Israel, meaning the sons of Israel.

The original inhabitants of Kashmir called their country Kashir literally 'Like Shir' or 'Like Syria', *Shir* being Syria.

Ahmad said that Jesus had lived in Kashmir, a country described by writers through the centuries as a paradise on earth: snow-capped mountains, tumbling waterfalls and fruit trees of all descriptions in the valleys.

The promise of God as stated in the Qur'an *"and we gave them* (Jesus and Mary) *refuge on an elevated land of green with streams of running water"* (5:51) was literally fulfilled.

There he died at the age of 120.

He was buried in a tomb which now lies in the street known as Khan Yar in the town of Srinagar. Ancient histories of Kashmir have long described it as the tomb of a 'prince prophet' who came from the West nineteen hundred years ago. The old inhabitants describe the tomb as the tomb of Isa Sahib.

In 115 AD., thus less than 100 years after the reputed death of Christ, a historian called Sutta wrote a book in Sanskrit entitled *Bhavisya maha purana*, which relates that a king who ruled over the valleys of the Kashmir between the years 39-50 AD, was out riding one day when he met a stranger who wore white robes.

The king asked his name and the stranger replied, "I am known as the Son of God and born of a virgin".

The stranger told the king that he had suffered much because he had preached the word of God. The king then asked him which religion he preached.

The stranger - *Mleechas* is another word for foreigners - replied:

When the truth had vanished,
And all bounds of propriety crossed;
In the land of the Mleechas
I appeared as Isha-Masih
I received the Messiah-hood,
In the land of the Mleechas"

And he ends his answer:

Perfect, pure and blissful frame of God
Has entered into my heart;
Thus my name has been established,
And promulgated as Isha-Masih.

Ahmad's revelation about the travels and death of Jesus in India were to strengthen the faith of his followers. But they were to unite other Muslims and Christians against him.

CHAPTER FIFTEEN

An Enemy Of God

Ahmad declared that both the Bible and the Qur'an supported his revelation that Jesus would not come again to the world, but that someone would come in his spirit.

"Ye shall not see me henceforth, till ye shall say, 'Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord'" (Matthew 24:39) clearly meant, said Ahmad, that Jesus would not reappear himself, but another person would appear in his name.

And Abu Huraira, one of the companions of Muhammad reported that Muhammad had told them, "It is just possible that he who lives of you might meet, the son of Mary, who is the Imam and a Just Judge ..."

This meant quite clearly, said Ahmad, that the person who would come to the world in the role of Jesus would also be the Mahdi.

When Jesus did come again he would 'break the Cross and kill the swine'. It was a way of saying that the mistakes made about the Crucifixion would be refuted by reason and by argument. By equally pacific means he would rid the world of avarice - the sin of the 'swine'.

Muhammad had added that the prophet who would come in the spirit of Jesus would be "from among yourselves." This was a clear indication, said Ahmad, that The Promised Messiah would neither descend from Heaven, as Christians believed, nor would he be physically the same son of Mary who had lived 19 centuries earlier, as most Muslims believed.

The Messiah promised to the world would therefore come in the spirit of Jesus, said Ahmad, and he would come from the Muslims themselves.

His claim was not self-assumed, he declared, but a decision of God. "I have been charged with the Mission to remove misunderstanding ... and to show the light of Islam to other nations,

Islam is like a radiant diamond, every facet of which sparkles. It is like a glorious mansion lit by many lamps .,. the light of Heaven is gleaming in it in every room .,.

I have been charged to help those who are seeking after the truth. Like the man who warns people to beware of robbers I; too, sound a warning. Whosoever takes heed saves himself, others lose their all ...

When there is a drought the wells dry up and when the rains come the wells refill. The Message of God is spiritual rain ...

The world of today was thirsty for spiritual rain and this has been provided in my person."

He had complete confidence in his claim. "I proclaim that God conversed with me in the same manner in which He addressed Abraham, Isaac, Ishmael, Jacob, Joseph, Moses, Jesus and lastly the Holy Prophet Muhammad".

The heavenly brilliance emanating from the Holy Prophet was almost intolerable he said. It was because he had so followed in the footsteps of the Holy Prophet that God had spoken with him.

"The message which came to me is definite and as certain as the radiance of the sun. It admits of no doubt. My belief in it is as staunch as my belief in the Holy Qur'an."

Muslims were Ahmad's first audience and it was therefore from them that there came the most violent denunciations of his revelation that he was the promised Messiah. He was a heretic, outside the pale of Islam and an enemy of the faith, said the Muslim Divines.

Not all the denunciations had the desired effect, of course. A man called Mian Nizam Din heard one religious leader state that Ahmad had contracted leprosy because of his insults to Muhammad. He decided to visit Qadian to see for himself and found Ahmad well and thriving. Mian Nizam Din became one of Ahmad's 313 Companions.

In reply to the denunciations Ahmad issued a statement from Ludhiana on March 26, 1891. It said, Of a truth Jesus, son of Mary, is dead and his soul in

the second Heaven. The Messiah for this age, whose advent in the spiritual sense was foretold in the authentic traditions, is myself. This is the doing of God."

There were several attempts to arrange a debate between Ahmad and his former friend Muhammad Hussain, and finally arranged to start on July 20, 1891, at the place where Ahmad was staying at Ludhiana. But after about six days, on the request of Muhammad Hussain the venue was shifted to the residence of Muhammad Hassan (Hon. Magistrate). The debate was to last 12 days and was to be conducted by means of signed papers which would be written by Ahmad and Muhammad Hussain and then exchanged and read aloud to the audience.

There was much discussion about preliminary matters before the debate started. Ahmad finally issued a statement to define the doctrines he was defending and those which had been wrongfully alleged against him.

"Be it known that the only matter which is under dispute is the belief that Jesus is still alive in the flesh in the Heavens. I do not believe it. There is nothing in the Qur'an or the authentic sayings to support it. The other accusations... are all entirely false and unfounded, My beliefs are exactly the same as those held by the orthodox community.... in short all other objections levelled against me excepting my claim to prove the death of Jesus and

to be The Promised Messiah - are wrong, absurd and based on misunderstanding."

At the end of the debate Ahmad issued a challenge. "Those who look upon me as an impostor and regard themselves as righteous and pious souls should know that I am prepared to vindicate my position against them according to the Qur'anic verse, 'Do ye work according to your ability; I too will work'.

"Let us fix 40 days for this purpose and seek some heavenly distinction, and the one who comes out righteous in this matter and is able to reveal some divine secrets, through His assistance, shall be considered truthful.

"Listen to me, all ye who are present here, that I declare on a most solemn oath, that if Muhammad Hussain can, by turning to God, show any heavenly signs or reveal any divine secrets as I can do, I shall be prepared to be slaughtered....

A Warner came into the world and the world accepted him not. But God will accept him and will establish his truth with mighty signs."

Some 300 to 500 people had attended the debates each day including the editors of two local daily newspapers. There was so much shouting and jeering that often little could be heard when the discourses were read out. Some of the spectators had stones concealed in their clothing and these clattered on to the platform where the two men worked. Most were obviously aimed at Ahmad.

Outside the house where the debate took place a huge crowd gathered on the final day, many of them brandishing knives and sticks. The local magistrate decided that a riot was likely to result and ordered that the meeting be closed.

A vehicle had been ordered for Ahmad and his party, but the drivers were too frightened to come through the crowd. As a result Ahmad was forced to wait in the middle of a crowd that every minute seemed more threatening. Finally the superintendent of police arrived with force of constables and opened a way through the crowd for him.

Even in the house where he was staying Ahmad was not safe. The mob encircled the house and tried to batter down the doors. They were repulsed. Then they tried to storm the house again, this time occupying the defenders at the doors and windows while others climbed up ladders and got on to the flat roof. Some managed to fight their way into the house, but were
ejected after a fierce struggle.

Muhammad Hussain was the main mob orator and, as a result, the District Magistrate ordered him to leave the town.

The news of Ahmad's claim that he was The Promised Messiah and the emotion stirred up during the 12 day debate had now made him known in every part of the Punjab and nearby provinces. His following was still small, but the march forward had begun. And the vituperation intensified.

Shortly afterwards it was no longer only vituperation. The Muslim divines issued decrees stating that Ahmad and his followers could no longer be considered as Muslims. They declared that it was now unlawful to greet Ahmad or any of his followers or indeed to have any kind of contact with them. The burial of his followers in Muslim graveyards was forbidden.

One decree declared "The Mirza of Qadian is one of the anti-Christ foretold in the sayings of the Holy Prophet. Muslims should shun such lying hypocrites and should not treat with him in religious matters...Nor should they seek his company nor follow him in prayers nor offer his funeral prayer... He, and people like him, are thieves of the Faith and are liars and accursed Satans ... There is no doubt about the heresy of this lying Qadiani ... He is an infidel ... he is the worst of creatures ... he is an enemy of God ... and God is his enemy ... whoever believes in the Qadiani is also rejected by God ..."

Another decree issued by Muslim divines declared that marriages of any women married to a follower of Ahmad were now dissolved. "Anyone who so wishes can marry them," it said.

But his followers had a different perception. One of his Companions, Muhammad Ismail, was to write:

"There is a world of difference between those who have seen Ahmad and those who have not. The

bliss of having seen and enjoyed his company pervades the hearts of those who have seen him.

There is a great deal of difference between a copy and an original picture. But the difference is perceived only by one who has seen the original picture. Instead of trying to give a detailed account of his physical figure and features, I may describe him in a single phrase as an excellent example of manly grace.

This description, however, will remain incomplete if I do not add that this manly grace was accompanied by a spiritual lustre and brilliance. Indeed he was sent to illustrate the beauties of Islam, but God also blessed him with physical grace, which attracted the hearts of those who have seen him.

He was fair of complexion. His figure was well proportioned. His blessed face ever shone like a piece of pure gold. A cheerful smile always played on it.

Those who saw him used to say, 'If this person was a liar, and were himself conscious of being a liar, how could he have this cheerfulness and these signs of bliss, victory and tranquillity on his face?'

These outward signs of piety and righteousness cannot reflect an evil inward. Likewise the light of faith cannot radiate from the face of an impostor.

There was never any sign of perplexity or grief on his face. The visitor always found a smile and cheerfulness playing on it. His eyes remained habitually

half-closed. There was always an expression of keen insight, farsightedness and intelligence on his forehead.

His bearing and dress betrayed no kind of formality. He had some regard for his appearance, but too much interest in it was alien to his dignified bearing."

CHAPTER SIXTEEN

Jihad

The many charges brought against Ahmad at this time included the occasion that he was a spy and was paid agent *provocateur* of the British Government. It was claimed that he received generous subsidies and that part of his task was to divide the Muslim Community and so stop Muslims uniting as a political force.

How else, it was argued, could he have financed his missionary activity?

The use of the word 'Spy' must be regarded as merely derogatory and part of the campaign to blacken Ahmad's character in front of potential converts. There was nothing on which he could spy. He lived in a small, isolated village and had no contact with what political activity there was at that time.

The other charge, that he was paid to divide the Muslim community by preaching against the concept of *Jihad* or Holy War, deserves further consideration for it is an historical accusation that continues to be made against Ahmadiyya Movement today.

It does not deserve much deeper consideration for the very essence of British colonial rule in the Punjab, says an American historian, "strict patriarchal rule by a British district officer, religious impartiality and defence and

maintenance of the village community, the landed aristocracy and the peasant cultivators".

The British colonial government therefore did not want the Muslim community divided in any way against itself. It wanted peace, stability, the education of an Indian clerical class for the jobs that it could not fill by importing people from Britain and, thus, the ability to develop the Empire.

There were laws that prescribed severe penalties for stirring up religious hatred. Newspapers could be called in. The same historian has written about district officers "were never reluctant to call in the Police or the Army to control and stamp out religious unrest."

British colonial government did not, at that time, give itself the task of guiding India to independent home-rule, but merely of providing efficient, stable and, as far as it deemed possible, impartial government.

A preacher such as Ahmad therefore was more likely to be viewed by the British with suspicion as a potential troublemaker than as an Indian worker in good colonial government.

Indeed the *Civil and Military Gazette*, a daily newspaper published in Lahore, was to say just that. The *Civil and Military Gazette* was privately-owned, but, nevertheless, it was a semi-official publication. It provided news of civil and military appointments and was a means of bringing views to the attention

of the authorities where it was thought these were being neglected.

The accusations that Ahmad was financed by the British colonial government to divide the Muslim community and so divert its attention from the need for political self determination in the future can therefore be dismissed.

In education and some other areas British policies did produce a 'divide and rule' result between Hindus and Muslims, but this was due to historical reasons, not to government policy. There never was a planned government policy of 'Divide and Rule'.

There was a belief among some British colonial officials that Muslims could never be loyal to the government. Some mullahs were still preaching about the need for *Jihad* against the British - though after the suppression of the 1857 'Mutiny' there was never any real hope of re-establishing the Mughal empire.

What is important, however, is Ahmad's understanding of *Jihad* as a "struggle in the name of God" for the ultimate Kingdom of God, not as a struggle for Islamic government and against government by foreigners. If Muslims were allowed to practise their religion without fear of persecution, if all citizens were equally protected and they had, in effect, good government, then a call for *Jihad* to overthrow the government was illegal.

They could, and certainly should, press for even better government and even more freedom. But there was no justification for the religious backing and blessing of an armed insurrection against the government, for *Jihad* against the British.

To call for *Jihad* in such circumstances was to distort the teachings of the Qur'an. The *Jihad* of the Qur'an was summarised, said Ahmad, in the verse from the chapter Al-Furqan:

'So obey not the disbelievers and strive by means of it (i.e. the Qur'an) *a great striving.'*

The hearts and minds of disbelievers were thus to be won by the beauty and truth of Islam, said Ahmad. They had to carry out the real *Jihad*, the *tabligh* or missionary work of converting the world to Islam.

He quoted also the verses from the Qur'an that there was to be no compulsion in religion, that one should fight in the cause of God against those who fought against them. They should fight against transgressors, against those who treated them unjustly, but they should not, in their turn, become transgressors .

A religious war was justified if Muslims were being forced to abjure their faith or were being unjustly treated in some gross way. That was patently not true under British rule. Nor was *Jihad* justified if it was an attempt to force other people to give up their own faith and convert to Islam.

Islam did not need such converts, it did not need converts by the sword.

A difference in religion did not provide a sanction for violence against the lives, the property or the honour of others. God did not favour transgressors under any circumstances.

Jihad against the British colonial government was therefore unjustified, said Ahmad. He said so often in his sermons. And he drew the attention of the British authorities to these sermons so that there could be no misinterpretation of his views.

He was preaching of the kingdom of God and he did not want a ban on his freedom of movement or, even worse, a ban on his freedom of speech to seek converts to Islam. He did not want any British colonial official, in some excess of duty, interfering in the work that God had given him to convert the world to Islam.

CHAPTER SEVENTEEN

A Christian Confrontation

The accusation that he was an enemy of God and of His prophets was the charge that hurt Ahmad most. He wrote, "They call me heretic, Satan and innovator. These are strange names that I have earned because I grieve for the good of Islam. My cherished Ahmad! I swear by thy face, for thy sake alone did I take up this burden,"

We answered the other charges, quoting extensively from the Qur'an, the sayings of Muhammad, the Bible and other recognised sources to support his claim. And he now journeyed to major cities like Delhi and Lahore to bring the people the message of his prophethood.

God Granted him repeated assurances of His support in further revelations Ahmad declared. One was:

"Thou wilt appear as one vanquished but shall triumph in the end and thine shall be the final victory .... God hath willed to spread thy uniqueness, thy greatness and thy perfection ... God shall reveal thy face and shall lengthen thy shadow ... I shall glorify thee unto the corners of the earth and shall exalt thy name and shall cause men to love thee."

Ahmad also received the revelation that among his tasks was the conversion of the West.

"The rising of the sun from the West means that Western countries, which have for centuries been in the darkness of unbelief and error, shall be illumined by the sun of righteousness, and shall share in the blessings of Islam."

In less than a decade Ahmad was to set about the conversion of the West. However, the Confrontation with Christians had already begun. The Church of England's Church Missionary Society had established a base in India as early as 1799. It was followed by many others and varied missionary organisations including the Church of Scotland, the American United Presbyterian Church, English Baptists, American Methodists and the United Brethren of Germany.

By 1851 there were 19 different missionary societies working in India and by the 1890s this had grown to some 73 missionary societies and a considerable number of missionaries not attached to any society. In 1851 it was calculated there were some 91,000 Indian Christians. Only thirty years later, in 1881, this had more than quadrupled.

In 1882 the Rev Dr Henry Martyn Clark established a branch of the Church Missionary Society's Medical Mission in the village of Jandiyala in the district of Amritsar. There had been missionaries there since 1854, but they had enjoyed only partial success. At first they encountered little

opposition for the missionaries preached the love of God. Then the tenor of their message changed as the empire expanded and they talked of how mistaken Islam was - and its follies.

From around 1890 the villagers no longer stayed silent when the missionaries began calling into question the validity of Islam. They raised objections and asked questions. The previous cordiality of life broke down. Tempers flared and fists were raised.

Dr Martyn Clark, who trained as a doctor in Edinburgh after taking a degree at Oxford/Cambridge, decided that the best way to propagate Christianity was to hold a public debate. It is not presuming too much to think that his intention was to expose the villagers' limited knowledge of Islam and, at the same time, highlight the advantages of Christianity.

He therefore put the proposal for a debate to the village elders. They passed his letter to Ahmad who wrote accepting.

Dr Martyn Clark did not want a debate with Ahmad. He immediately had a leaflet printed at the American Mission Press in Ludhiana which was distributed throughout the village. It was also reproduced as an advertisement in a local newspaper. Ahmad was not considered a Muslim so how could he represent Islam, said Dr Clark. He referred to the arguments and statements made by Muhammad Hussain.

But the village elders stuck to their decision - they wanted Ahmad to represent them. A deputation met Dr Clark in Amritsar. Jandiyala was a small village, they pointed out. They had no one there who was sufficiently learned who could act for them. They wanted Ahmad.

Dr Clark conceded the point. It was agreed that the debate would be divided into two parts, each of six days. It would start at 6 a.m. - in order to take advantage of the coolness of the morning - and finish at 11 a.m.. Only 20 Christians and 20 Muslims would be admitted and the agreed subjects of the debate would be strictly adhered to.

This debate was referred to as the Holy War by the Christians and when another missionary, the Rev Robert Clark, wrote his memoirs some years later under the title of *"The Missions of the CMS in the Punjab and Sindh"* he called it "the Great Controversy".

The subjects to be debated in the first six days were that each religion should firstly prove its truth by living signs and, secondly, the entire question of the divinity of Jesus. The first subject had been accepted reluctantly by the Christians who declared that fresh miracles were not necessary to show the truth of Christianity. But if Ahmad could produce any miracles, they said, they would be glad to witness them and would immediately become his followers.

Ahmad laid down a fundamental principle for the debate: that the advocate of a religion should put forward its claims with reasons derived from the recognised scriptures of the religion.

He referred to the Qur'anic verse which refutes the divinity of Jesus with an appeal to human experience and inductive truth. All messengers of God - including those in the Old Testament - have been human beings, he declared. Unless it was shown that there has actually been an instance which definitely contradicted human experience then the mere claim of Jesus to divinity could not be accepted as true.

His opponent, Mr Abdulla Aatham , contended that reason and experience could not be the sole guides of faith. Man cannot understand the doctrine of the Trinity, he declared, but Jesus was called the Son of God in the Bible.

This, for Ahmad, was begging the question.

Early on in the debate the Christians said that Jesus had been able to cure the blind and the maimed. Ahmad cast scorn on this demand for miracles and worldly advantages as a sign that one was a Messenger of God.

"Those who say they will not believe unless they get such and such a worldly advantage really think they are laying God under an obligation by declaring their belief in Him.

Fools that they are!

They do not know that it is an obligation of God that He shows them the right path by sending His Messenger for their guidance. Almighty God says to unbelievers that the Earth and Heaven are full of signs if they will but look for them.

The need for a prophet is the greatest sign of his truth. Why then should they seek other signs?"

Ahmad described the death of a true believer in these words: "The end of his life should find him truly faithful so that when he departs it should be with true contentment of heart and perfect peace.

If this end were kept in mind, then this impertinence, this demand for miracles before they will believe, would not be talked of. People say such things because in their hearts there is no fear of God, no awe of Divine Majesty. If they had known the Glory and Majesty of God, their hearts would have trembled. They would have come to God with a clean and humble mind and not tried to impose such debased conditions.

What would one think if a patient went to a doctor and said he would not submit to his treatment unless the doctor promised to pay him a certain sum of money on his recovery?

Yet that is what these spiritually sick people are saying to God - I will not believe in you unless you promise me worldly riches.

Sound judgement does not stand in need of a miracle for the acceptance of truth."

But the Christians declared that if Ahmad was truly the Promised Messiah then surely he could do what Jesus had done. On the last day the Christians brought this up again. Prove to us now that you are truly The Promised Messiah and the like of Jesus they said.

At that moment three men were brought into the room. One was blind, the second was lame and the third was dumb.

The room fell silent. Ahmad did not hesitate. It was the Christian scriptures that spoke of Jesus restoring sight to the blind, speech to the dumb and the lame being able to walk again. Personally he did not believe it. But he was sure that all the Christians in the audience sincerely believed it.

Ahmad was also certain that they had read in the Bible what Jesus replied when his disciples questioned him. Had Jesus not told them that if they only had as much faith as a mustard seed then they, too, could make the blind see and the dumb talk merely by laying their hands on them.

Now was their opportunity to prove their faith, said Ahmad. If they did so then he would immediately recognise the truth of Christianity.

The Christians who had laughed at the clever trap they thought they had prepared for Ahmad fell silent. The three men were hustled out of the room.

At the end of the debate Ahmad pointed out that Mr Aatham in his book 'The Inner Meaning of the Bible' said that Muhammad was an Anti-Christ.

God had given him the revelation that the person in the debate who was deliberately following a falsehood would be thrown into Hell within 15 months.

When Aatham heard the prophecy he turned pale and, in the Eastern manner of portraying absolute denial, touched both his ears, stuck out his tongue and shook his head. "I repent. I repent. I did not mean to be disrespectful," he declared.

There was no doubt about who had won the debate. An American missionary reporting the debate in a newspaper said that the replies of the Christian debater had been inadequate.

A number of people were to appear regularly during the lifetime of Ahmad. The first was Muhammad Hussain; the second was Lekh Ram of the Arya Samaj Hindu sect. The third was to be Dr Martyn Clark.

Dr. Clark, the Christian missionary, and Muhammad Hussain, the Muslim divine, were to be strange allies.

CHAPTER EIGHTEEN

Good News For Truth Seekers

The passions stirred up by his revelation that Jesus did not die on the Cross troubled Ahmad sorely. He had come in the spirit and humility of Jesus as the Reformer of the Age. His mission was the spiritual regeneration of mankind. His message was peace. He had no desire to attack any other religion, but that did not mean that religious debate should be stifled. There had to be debate, but that did not sanction scurrilous attack on the saints and martyrs of other religions.

Ahmad therefore made a public proposal that there should be certain limits in which discussion and debate could be carried on. These limits were:

- The advocates of a religion should not attack another religion on the basis of alleged faults.
- Controversy should be confined to the publicly recognised and accepted scriptures of each religion.

Some 5,000 people signed a memorial urging that religious debate should be carried out in this manner. However, other religious leaders did not take up his plea.

Ahmad's desire for reasoned religious debate, as opposed to invective, was occasioned by the

increasing attacks by Christians and Hindus on the character and life of Muhammad. The most virulent attacks were often by newly-converted Christians who sought to advance their point of view by defaming the beliefs of others. After one such attack by a Christian missionary Ahmad issued an 80 page denunciation of this kind of debate.

"We must make it clear that we cherish the best of beliefs with regard to Jesus. We are convinced that he was a true and beloved prophet of God .... of the hundreds of those who served the law of Moses he was also one. So we respect him in every way just as he deserves."

But this Jesus was not the person that Christians presented to the world, said Ahmad. They gave us a man who said he was the Son of God. This was blasphemy because it placed a man beside God. God was Omnipotent. No one could be beside God.

God was indivisible. He could not be divided up as the Christians argued. Nor was Mankind accursed as the Christians said. God had created Mankind. He had not cursed his own creation as a whole.

In the Holy Qur'an Jesus was "the humble servant of God" That is the Jesus that we Muslims know and love, said Ahmad. The Jesus of the Christians, who placed himself beside God, did not exist.

It was "impertinent and blasphemous" to suggest it. There was only one God - He was not

divided into three. So, when he criticised Jesus, said Ahmad, it was the "imaginary Jesus of the Christians" that he was criticising, not "Isa, the son of Mary".

Ahmad followed up his plea for an end to attacks on other religions by proposing a conference in which proponents of all religions could take part. In that way people might be able to make an informed judgement. The conference would last 3 days and the antiquity of the religion would determine the order of speaking - the first day would be devoted to the speaker who claimed that his religion was the most ancient. He would be followed by speaker on behalf of the second oldest religion and so on.

The purpose of the conference, said Ahmad, was to discuss:

- The reasons for belief in God, with special reference to the sacred writings of the speaker's religion.
- The necessity of religion in general, and belief in the speaker's faith in particular, in order to achieve salvation.

Ahmad was determined that such a debate should be conducted without the histrionics previously involved when the Christians brought in the dumb, the blind and the lame and asked him to cure them. Nor did he want it to descend into a slanging match of other people's religions.

These were his suggested rules for the debate.

Every speaker is requested not to make any reference or allusion to any other religion in his speech, but to give an exposition of only the beauties of his own and the excellence of its principles.

"Speakers will have full liberty to bring forward arguments in support of their claims, but giving offence to another religion or making remarks derogatory to other religions must be avoided most strictly."

He also wanted more than a parrot-like memory of translations of each religion's sacred writings.

"The arguments of each speaker must be based exclusively upon the words of his sacred book. He must quote it in the original with full particulars. For instance, a Muslim speaker shall recite the verses of the Qur'an and not rely upon a translation. Similarly a Christian or Arya Hindu theologian will have to quote from the Bible and the Vedas from the original with their translations and references."

"Only those who can read and translate their religious texts easily from the original should consider coming to this conference. Those who have only a second- hand knowledge through translation cannot be deemed reliable in the eyes of a truth-seeker."

Ahmad summed up the reasons for the conference with the words, "I request the learned men of each community to respond to my call ... to establish truth, purity and peace in the world. In my

opinion this can only be done by following the precepts of one true religion. I hope the conference will be conducive to manifold blessings. It will afford a safe and peaceful platform to various religions, whose advocates may vindicate their faiths by showing their beauties to the world."

The suggested period of 3 days was not too long for such an important conference, he declared.

"I hope that those noble-hearted people, whose soul is ever aspiring after virtuous study and research, shall spare this time with a willing heart. I appeal to their sense of humanity and philanthropy and wish to convince them that religion is the only source of human elevation ... I pray that God may inspire my fellow-men to come forward to assist me in establishing His true glory in the world."

The idea of a conference established under the auspices of Ahmad was more than his opponents could bear and his invitation was turned down. Ahmad was disappointed but not despondent.

The way to save mankind was to re-establish the truth of Islam - which was the mission which God had entrusted to him. The best way to achieve this end, he was convinced, was to put the beauties of Islam in front of the greatest number of people the greatest number of times.

If the idea of a conference under his auspices was not acceptable then let it be held under the auspices of other people.

He broached the idea in confidence to various possible sponsors in Lahore and the idea was taken up by a Hindu ascetic, Swami Shugan Chandra. As a result 'The Conference of Great Religions' was convened for Lahore on the 26, 27 and 28th December, 1896. The rules suggested by Ahmad for the conduct of the conference were agreed. It was to be a conference, not a debate. The speakers would read out previously-prepared dissertations on five separate subjects. These must not contain attacks on other religions. The five subjects to be discussed were:

- The Physical, Moral and Spiritual Conditions of Man
- The State of Man After Death
- The Objects of Man's Life on Earth and The Means of its Attainment
- The Effect of Actions in This Life and The Next
- The Means to Attain Spiritual Knowledge

Ahmad decided that he would not attend the conference, in order to avoid personal controversy. Instead he would write the discussion papers for the five subjects and have his answers read out by one of his followers. He completed the papers over several weeks and then assembled at Qadian those who were to read them on his behalf. One of those chosen was a lawyer called Kamal-ud-Din whose face grew longer as he listened to Ahmad's words.

When Ahmad finished, Kamal-ud-Din expressed his disappointment. The dissertations, he said, were flat and unimpressive. Famous theologians from all over India were attending the conference, editors were sending teams of reporters and thousands of people were expected. They would be laughed at, he declared, if this was all they could put forward on behalf of Islam.

His criticism astonished the other people present and distressed Ahmad. He was now forced to reveal that God had already told him that these dissertations would be acclaimed at the conference. Armed with that knowledge he had already written a poster which he wanted Kamal-ud-Din to have pasted up in the streets of Lahore.

It was headed:

GREAT NEWS FOR SEEKERS AFTER TRUTH

It read: "The Conference of Great Religions includes in its programme a paper by this humble one, the subject of which is the excellences and miracles of the Holy Qur'an. This paper does not represent the result of ordinary human effort, but is one of the Signs of God written with His special grace and help.

"It sets forth the beauties and truths of the Holy Qur'an and proves, like the noon-day sun, that the Holy Qur'an is, in truth, God's own word, a book revealed by the Lord of all creation. Anyone who listens to this paper from beginning to end, paying attention to my treatment of the five themes set

down for discussion , will receive, I am sure, a new faith and a new light. He will come upon a commentary on the whole of the Holy Book. The paper is free from human weaknesses, empty boasts and vain assertions.

"I feel moved on this occasion by sympathy for my fellow human beings to issue this notice. I invite one and all to come to witness the beauties of the Holy Qur'an, to come and see how unjust are our critics who love darkness and hate light.

"God the All-Knowing, has revealed to me that my paper will be revealed to be superior to all other papers at the conference. Its light, truth, wisdom and knowledge will glow in contrast to the other papers....

"This is so because Almighty God has decreed that on that day His Holy Book should reveal its resplendent countenance ... From that state of vision I passed to the state of reception of revelation and received the revelation 'Verily God is with you. Verily God stands where you stand.' This was an assurance of Divine help in metaphorical language.

"I inform everyone that they should come ... if they do so their increase in understanding and faith will be beyond all expectations."

Kamal-ud-Din was not persuaded by Ahmad's revelation and when he and his companions had arrived at Lahore he was reluctant to have the posters stuck up.

It will make us look ridiculous, he told his companions. They urged him to do as Ahmad had asked, but he refused. Then, at dead of night, on December 26, only hours before Ahmad's paper was to be read out, he agreed to have them pasted up. But he chose positions and places where they were least likely to be noticed.

The Companion chosen to read the paper was Abdul Karim. He began at 1.30 p.m. and was due to finish two hours later. But by 3.30 p.m. Ahmad's commentary on the first theme, The Physical, Moral and Spiritual States of Man, was not yet complete. However, the next speaker declared that Ahmad's commentary was so important that he would be glad if Abdul Karim would continue reading.

The audience applauded.

The commentary on the first theme was still not finished at 4.30 p.m., when the proceedings for the day were meant to end. It was then suggested from the audience that the conference continue until the first theme was finished.

The directors of the conference agreed. Ahmad's commentary on the first theme was finally finished at 5.30 p.m. As much of his papers were still unread it was suggested that the conference continue for an extra day to allow it to be completed.

It was estimated that between 7,000 and 8,000 people attended the conference.

The main newspaper of Lahore at that period was the *'Civil and Military Gazette'*. Its report of the conference read:

"Particular interest centred in the lecture of Mirza Ghulam Ahmad of Qadian, a master in the apologetics of Islam. An immense gathering of all sects from far and near assembled to hear the lecture, which ... was read by one of his able scholars. On the 27th the lecture lasted for about three and half hours and was listened to with rapt attention, though so far it dealt only with the first question..."

Even warmer praise was received when the lecture was translated and published in English under the title, *'The Philosophy of The Teachings of Islam'*.

Count Leo Tolstoy, the famous Russian philosopher, received a copy and wrote, "I approved very much of 'How to Get Rid of Sin' and 'The Life to Come'.

"The ideas are very profound and very true."

'Theosophical Notes', a much-respected religious journal of the period, wrote, "The best and most attractive presentation of the faith of Muhammad which we have come across."

'The Indian Review' wrote, "entertaining and pleasant reading, lucid, comprehensive and philosophical .. evokes admiration The book deserves to be in the hands of every Muhammadan

student and also in the libraries of those who wish to know something of the Muhammadan religion."

The *'Muslim Review'* wrote, "The reader will meet many true, profound, original and inspiring ideas which will interest Muslims and non-Muslims alike .. strongly commended."

In North America the *'Spiritual Journal'* declared it "pure Gospel" and the *'Chicago Daily News'* commented, "The devout and earnest character of the author is apparent."

In Great Britain it found its way into the hands of a religious reviewer of a West Country weekly newspaper who wrote, "Clearly this is no ordinary person who thus addresses himself to the West."

CHAPTER NINETEEN

The Philosophy Of The Teachings Of Islam

The dissertation prepared by Ahmad has since been translated into many languages and reprinted many times. In 1979 a new English translation was made by Sir Zafrullah Khan. It was published later that year and runs to 115 pages.

Dealing with the physical, moral and spiritual states of man Ahmad said that there were three types of human action described in the Holy Qur'an.

The first was: The Self That Incites to Evil.

There was an inclination in everyone towards self-interest which led to evil. Selfishness led man away from attaining a state of perfection. There was an animal instinct in all towards intemperance and this was man's natural state. So man was natural when he did exactly as he liked - like animals. When a person began to reason and understand others he began to be moral.

The second: The Reproving Self.

Man also has a conscience and feels when he has done wrong. This helps us towards living morally. Man lived morally when he tried to live virtuously and tried to understand God and when

they became annoyed with themselves for failing to live up to their ideals.

The Third was: The Soul At Rest

This was the state when man achieves some moral strength and begins to form a real relationship with God. A person who accepts God's will and what life brings and overcomes self is drawn to God. This, in its highest form, can even lead a person to be quite transformed and to be with God as it were, though still in this world.

Dealing with the natural urges and inclinations of man Ahmad said these were often dangerous and could destroy spiritual qualities. Being selfish led to being evil.

The Qur'an lays down how man can control these urges because the body affects the soul. When people laugh, even if at the beginning they are not as cheerful as they sound, in the end they begin to feel cheerful. To kneel or lie prostrate in prayer makes one feel humble.

Even the food one eats affects the intellect and mind and so the spiritual state. People who never eat meat are less forceful and brave so morals can be affected by eating. We should therefore aim to be moderate because excess may harm one's health and therefore our moral state. Mind, body and soul are interdependent, each one affecting the other.

Of the creation of the soul Ahmad said there was a mysterious relationship between mind and

body. God made each of us unique, directly creating each of us. He has no equal in any way.

The gradual progress of man led to the second birth of the soul. Sincere words, deeds and actions offered to God made the soul shine forth in a person and draw others to him. God wanted man to rise above acting like an animal and to regulate his life. God wants man to love Him and seek Him and to please Him. We should therefore be totally devoted to loving God and doing His will.

This was why the religion of Muslims was called Islam. It meant devoting oneself wholly to God in every way. It meant peace.

Dealing with salvation, Ahmad said, that a person who gave himself up to doing God's will and tried hard to live morally would be rewarded by God.

He gave four quotations from the Qur'an to support this contention.

"Whoever submits himself completely to Allah, and is the doer of good shall have his reward with his Lord. No fear shall come upon them, neither shall they grieve (2:113)

Tell them: My prayer and my sacrifices, my living and my dying are all for the sake of God, Whose providence comprehends everything and Who has no associate. So have I been commanded and I am the foremost of those who fulfil this concept of Islam and offer themselves as a sacrifice in the cause of Allah (6:163-164).

This is My straight path then follow it and do not follow any other path which will lead you away from His path (6:154)

Tell them: If you love God then follow me and walk along my path so that God may love you and forgive you your sins. He is Most Forgiving, Ever Merciful (3:32).

There was a difference, said Ahmad, between someone who is humble naturally and does not believe in God and the person who strives to be humble and to love God.

The purpose of the Holy Qur'an was to make men out of savages, to give them high moral qualities then, thirdly, to raise them to being with God as godly persons.

To be moral was to use reason to distinguish between good and evil, to begin to feel regret when an opportunity to do good is missed, to feel remorse when a wrong action is committed. We must become conscious of the existence of God and realise He has a divine purpose for us all. We need to work to understand this divine purpose. Every single thought and act produces an effect on our soul which we will understand in the hereafter.

Ahmad then dealt with many moral conditions, cleanliness, moderation and fairness. In Islam one had to share one's food and give to those in need. Mankind also had a duty to feed animals dogs, birds and other animals which looked to Man for food.

Moral qualities fell under two heads, he continued. First, the ability to keep away from evil and, secondly, the will and ability to do good. The moral qualities for the resistance of evil were known by four names in Arabic.

The first was *Ihsan* which means chastity. In order to maintain chastity, men should respect women, they should not act or look at women in any way that arouses themselves sexually.

They must keep their heart pure. They must avoid putting themselves in any kind of compromising situation. And women must do the same.

The second moral quality was honesty or integrity, we must provide fair goods for people. We must not squander what is not ours, or seek to gain what is not ours or give bribes. We must be fair to those who work under us.

The third moral quality is behaving peacefully and so avoiding inflicting physical or mental pain on anyone. It meant having a sense of proportion in all things, not taking offence easily, not arguing over small details, overlooking the thoughtlessness of others. In this way one gained friends, not enemies.

The fourth moral quality was courtesy. At the root of this was cheerfulness. Look for the good in others, be friendly, not suspicious, do not denigrate people by words or actions and return good for evil. God will reward you greatly.

The second type of moral qualities are those related to the doing of good. Again there are four.

The first is forbearance or forgiveness. To forgive is good. But we should not forgive blindly for sometimes it is in the interest of the offender and the public that there be punishment lest he continues in wicked ways.

The second is equity. We should return good to those who do good to us.

The third step is benevolence, to take the initiative in doing good. But the benevolence must include sincerity. If it does not then the act of giving is mere display.

The fourth and highest quality is graciousness between kith and kin as a mother does good to her child.

God has conditioned all these grades of doing good with their appropriate time and place for if these virtues are not exercised correctly they become vices, just as rain helps crops to grow excessive rain will ruin them.

Those who suppress their own feelings in doing good will become pure-hearted and gain in understanding and joy. They will then drink from a spring which they have caused to gush

forth by their deeds.

"This is a deep mystery of philosophy," Ahmad commented. "Let those who have understanding, understand it."

The truly good feed the poor, help orphans, prisoners and those in debt. They do this solely for the love of God to Whom each one of us is precious. They are neither extravagant or mean and they do not broadcast their charity. God loves the generous spirit and is sad when they are niggardly in spirit.

Dealing with courage Ahmad said that it was false courage if you did something brave because you did not foresee the consequences. True courage was not to give up hope and faith when things went wrong.

In the same way steadfastness became a moral quality when one accepts God's will when a great misfortune overtakes them such as the death of a child. Goodwill among groups of people was also a natural quality. It became a moral quality when it was extended to strangers, people of another religion and the like.

Ahmad now moved on to the words of God as set forth in the Holy Qur'an. It was a bounty which set the distinction between Man's natural state and moral qualities. It opened the doors to the holy understanding that leads man to spiritual heights.

Life after death was not a new life, but a reflection of this present life and for the evil person Hell could begin on Earth. The impress of every good or evil action is inscribed on the heart, face, and eyes of the person concerned.

Finally Ahmad dealt with prayer. The best prayer was the one that God had taught them in the first chapter of the Holy Qur'an.

> *"All types of perfect praise belongs to Allah alone, The Lord of all the worlds.*
> *Most Gracious,*
> *Ever Merciful,*
> *Master of the Day of Judgement,*
> *Thee alone do we worship and Thee alone do we implore for help.*
> *Guide us along the straight path - the path of those on whom Thou hast bestowed Thy favours, those who have not incurred Thy displeasure, those who have not gone astray."*

Finally Ahmad dealt with revelation. "It is the living and powerful converse of the Holy and Mighty God with a chosen servant and was full of delight, wisdom and grandeur.

Sometimes revelation comes to a person without full blessings and by way of trial. If he did not adopt the ways of the truly righteous then he was deprived of the fullness of this bounty.

Millions of virtuous people have been the recipients of revelation down through the ages but they were not all of equal standing in the sight of God. Indeed even the prophets of God were not of equal standing.

In the Qur'an God had declared:

"Of these Messengers some have we exalted above others." (2:254)

Ahmad then continued, "I would be guilty of doing great wrong to my fellow beings if I were not to declare that Divine Bounty has bestowed upon me the status which I have just defined. He has honoured me with this converse so that I should give to, those who accept the truth the GOOD NEWS of that holy fountain of which many speak, but which few find...

"Would that people were to see that which I have seen and hear what I have heard ... Let him whose soul seeks the truth arise and search. I tell you truly that if souls are charged with true seeking and hearts develop true thirst, people would search for the way and would seek that path.

"How can that way be discovered?

"How can the veil be lifted?

"I assure all seekers that it is Islam alone which conveys the good news of that path. All other people have long since sealed up the door of Divine revelation.

"Be aware, however, this door has not been sealed up by God ... The doors of His revelation and converse are always open. If you seek them along their proper ways you will find them easily."

But despite Ahmad's plea for goodwill to all men his enemies were uniting. If they could not silence him in debate then they would silence in some other way.

CHAPTER TWENTY

Prayer And Prophecy

One of the four pillars that must support a claimant to be a Messenger of God, declared Ahmad, was the acceptance of Prayer. This did not mean that if one or two prayers appeared to be accepted by God then here was clear proof that the person concerned was a messenger of God.

In the same way the failure of one, or even several prayers, did not mean that the person offering the prayer was not God's Messenger. It might be that the person for whom the prayers were offered was under an irrevocable Divine decree and could not be helped by any prayer or supplication, no matter who it came from.

What could be recognised, however, was the acceptance of a large majority of prayers and supplications. To this end Ahmad proposed the establishment of a committee which would call for the names and particulars of people who might be surely afflicted with illness or misfortune.

Prayer could help them, he said. Prayer could lessen their burden. Prayer could even sometimes pull back the dying from the brink of death. There was, however, no question of calling the dead back to life for life and death were divinely ordained.

Ahmad offered to enter into a contest with the divines of other religions, or other divines of Islam, so that his claim to be a Messenger of God, and so in receipt of divine help, could be truly tested.

The committee, said Ahmad, would compile a list of sufferers during an agreed period. On an appointed day those sufferers would appear before all the divines taking part so that they could be questioned and a decision taken as to whether it was right to seek Divine help. When the final list was produced their names would be distributed by lot to the priests and other divines seeking God's intervention on their behalf. Thus a Muslim divine might be praying for a Christian and a Christian praying for a Hindu.

For a period of a year afterwards the participants would, by praying every day on their behalf, seek alleviation of the sufferings of those allotted to them. If a sufferer should die in the period of 12 months then it would be taken that God, by His special design, had removed him in the middle of the trial to prove that the claim of the divine who was praying for him was false.

The result of the prayers by each divine would be judged on the condition of the majority of sufferers on whose behalf he had prayed to God. Ahmad pointed out that a large number of sufferers was needed for otherwise the result might be inconclusive. If only two or three people were being prayed for then the result might be false for it might

be that God had already taken a decision as to their end.

He added: "I have suggested the inclusion of people in the list of sufferers who are afflicted with diverse types of calamities so that Divine mercy may be manifested in diverse forms and people of different temperaments might be able to arrive at a true estimation of the result reached from different points of view."

If he were defeated in this trial, said Ahmad, he would declare that he had not been sent by God and that all his claims were false. "But I firmly believe that God will not so determine and will not let me be ruined," he said.

No one, however, Hindu, Christian, Sikh, Buddhist or other Muslim would take up the challenge. Indeed, after the debate with Aatham, missionaries of the Church of England had been told specifically not to become involved in any kind of public debate with Ahmad or his followers.

Judging the truth of a prophecy or miracle is not easy. How does one lay down the rules and regulations by which success or failure can be judged? Indeed what is a miracle?

Ahmad himself had earlier declared that there were four types of miracles -intellectual, scientific, spiritual blessings and apparent interference with the known laws of nature. The first three are of much greater importance than the last, he said. This evaluation reveals a certain mistrust of the many

miracles claimed on behalf of Christ and, later, on behalf of many saints who not only cured the sick but could speak to birds or even, if the whim took them, fly like birds themselves.

One of the earliest intellectual revelations received by Ahmad was:

"I shall carry thy message to the ends of the earth."

This revelation received wide publicity and was greeted with derision by his opponents. At that time Ahmad was merely a religious scholar living in a remote and unimportant village. But other prophecies regarding the acceptance of his teachings followed.

"I will add to the fold of thy sincere and loyal friends. I will add to their progeny and their wealth and increase them manifold."

Another said:

"God will make the Ahmadiyya group grow so that their size and their influence seem strange."

Of Qadian a revelation said:

"They (visitors) *will come in large numbers."*

Yet another forecast:

"Verily we will give you increase of everything."

Some of the revelations came to Ahmad in English, though it was not a language of which he knew much. One said:

"I will give you a large party of Islam."

Another revelation declared:

"A party out of the first and a party out of the latter (peoples)."

This meant, it was said, that the members of the Ahmadiyyat would come from the followers of earlier prophets and so other religions as well as from Muslims

Yet another revelation was:

"O prophet of God, I knew you not."

This revelation was put into the mouth of the earth, meaning people in general, and meant, it was said, that the people of the earth would be remorseful at their failure to believe in the arrival of the Promised Messiah.

A further revelation was:

"The Earth is our inheritance. We will devour it from all sides."

There is certainly no doubt that what Ahmad prophesied regarding the growth of Ahmadiyyat came to pass. In 1989, on the centenary of his acceptance of the first oath of allegiance, the Ahmadiyya Movement in Islam was established in 128 countries.

His prophecy regarding the growth of Qadian also no longer makes people smile.

He declared that Qadian would grow from year to year and, in time would become a large city.

It would extend eastwards from the present village until it reached the banks of the river *Biyas* nine miles away.

By the 1920s Qadian had more than doubled its population. Most houses were made of bricks. As

well as primary schools there were now three high schools to which pupils came from all over India.

By the 1990s, despite the agony and frustration of the partition, Qadian was once again functioning. The road from Qadian to Batala was now tarmaced.

Land prices started to soar as buildings, financed by Ahmadis all over the world, started going up.

Of Ahmad's other prophecies and prayers, one interceded with God on behalf of a person on the brink of death. It took place in 1907 and concerned Abdul Karim, later one of his followers. He was not the Abdul Karim who read his speeches, however. This Abdul Karim was 12 years old and had been sent to Qadian from Hyderabad, South India, roughly a thousand miles away, to pursue his religious studies.

At Qadian he was bitten by a mad dog and was rushed immediately to the Pasteur Institute at Kasauli for treatment. He returned to Qadian, but a few days later showed unmistakable signs of hydrophobia or rabies. A telegram was sent to the director of the Pasteur Institute asking for advice as to what should be done.

The telegram that came back said: "Regret nothing can be done for Abdul Karim".

When Ahmad was told of the reply he was deeply moved and, in earnest prayer, beseeched God for the return to health of the young man. Within 24 hours Abdul Karim's condition began to improve. In due course he recovered completely.

In the 19th century, once the signs of hydrophobia had appeared, recovery was so rare that

it was normally described as impossible. Today, with immediate hospital care and the use of the latest drugs, people bitten by a rabies-infected dog stand a chance of recovery, say medical authorities. They will go no further than that.

The telegram from the Pasteur Institute is still retained in the archives of the Ahmadiyya Movement.

Ahmad was to make a number of prophecies concerning worldly matters. Zafrullah Khan commented on this in the following words:

"At that time his power to reach the peoples of the world was severely limited. He knew only Urdu, Arabic and Persian ... [he] was completely ignorant of European languages, European sciences, European customs and institutions. He had never stepped out of his own province Only once did he go as far as Aligarh. ... No one thought that such a man would address himself to Western countries and win converts. Nobody would have said that people in isolated parts of Africa would accept the teachings of such a man.

"These insuperable difficulties were challenged by the Word of God and the Word of God came true. A man walked alone in the small yard of his house and wrote down the revelations of God as he received them."

One of the general prophecies he received concerned the condition of the world when rivers of blood would flow and terror would spread and so

great would be the catastrophe that even birds, animals and trees would be affected.

The revelation spoke of an earthquake, but Ahmad, who had prophesied an earthquake in the literal sense at another time, was not convinced that this revelation was also about an earthquake in the literal sense.

He wrote, "It is possible that the description relates ... to some other calamity, grave enough to remind us of the Day of Judgement and unusual enough not to have been known before."

He was to elaborate further: "The earthquake will bring destruction to human beings, villages and fields. A man caught naked will not have time to dress. The earthquake will entail special hardships for travellers. Many will stray from their appointed routes to escape ...

"Depressions will be produced in the earth. Streams of blood will flow. Streams of water running downhill will become red with blood. The calamity will involve the whole world. All men, great and small, all governments, will break under its impact. Especially will the Tsar be reduced to a state of misery.

And he ended, "Even birds will suffer. They will lose their sense and forget their sweet songs."

A further revelation came to him that this calamity was to occur in about 16 years time, but not in his lifetime. He was given the words of a prayer: "O God, do not let me see this earthquake."

When he announced his prophecies Ahmad asked his detractors not to rush into immediate denials and repudiations. Let time itself show whether I am correct or not, he said.

The Arabic word for earthquake or 'shaking' can also mean war and is so used in the Holy Qur'an. It was obvious therefore, said the companion who noted down the revelation, that it was not an ordinary earthquake since it involved the whole world.

Nor does an earthquake affect birds unduly. And what of the 'depressions' in the land and the blood flowing in streams?

The carnage of the First World War, the horrendous bombardments on the Western Front between the Allied Armies of France and Britain and those of Germany, when every tree was shattered, the land was littered with shell-holes, blood flowed in the streams, wild life was decimated, the carnage of that time bears a striking resemblance to the revelations of Ahmad.

So does the end of the *Tsar* of All The Russians and his family.

Ahmad reported that he had had the following revelation:

"I saw a vision as if the sceptre of the Tsar is in my hand ... and perhaps Bu Ali Seena was standing beside me ..."

The fall of the Tsar seemed to be a total fulfilment of the revelation. But in the 1990s came

the fall of the Soviet empire and even further confirmation of the revelation of Ahmad.

Even while the Soviet Union was apparently an undisputed world power, the Fourth Successor of Ahmad had declared that one of the most important areas for the conversion of the world to Islam was the old Russian empire. He had asked the Ahmadiyya Community to dedicate their unborn children to the missionary movement for the conversion of the old Russian empire.

Shortly afterwards came the collapse of the Soviet empire. It seemed as if the sceptre of the Tsars was truly in the hands of Ahmad!

What of Bu Ali Seena?

In the West he is known as Avicenna, which derives from the Hebrew rendering of his name. He is recognised as a universal genius, renowned both in the Muslim and Western world. He is recognised as a philosopher, scientist, physician , mathematician, astronomer, poet and administrator, thus all the qualities that are needed for the reconstruction and conversion of the old Russian empire.

Equally specific was Ahmad's revelation in Persian of the downfall of the Emperor of Persia. "The palace of the Emperor of Persia has been shaken," he declared on January 15, 1906.

At that time the Emperor appeared to sit securely on the famous Peacock Throne of one of the world's oldest monarchies. But he was dead less

than a year later and a revolution swept his son and successor and their dynasty from the Peacock Throne for ever.

Another prophecy concerned the partition of the province of Bengal which had been ordered by Lord Curzon, the then Viceroy of India. This was resented by many Indians and an intensive political campaign was started by the recently formed Indian National Congress to have the decision rescinded. But, despite the agitation, when a new viceroy, Lord Minto, arrived and was petitioned, he declared that the partition would not be revoked or even modified.

The Secretary of State for India, the British Cabinet Minister responsible for all Indian affairs, rejected equally firmly all representations made to him. It seemed as though the partition must be accepted.

In February, 1906, Ahmad received a revelation in Urdu which said:

"Regarding the order that was issued concerning Bengal, they will now be comforted".

This prophecy was received with scorn and derision by Hindus who had begun to accept the partition as something that would not be altered. As the years went on Ahmad's prophecy was constantly recalled by his detractors, both Hindu and Muslim.

In December, 1911, however, his prophecy was fulfilled. On the eve of his Coronation Durbar at Delhi, George V, Emperor of India, announced the cancellation of the partition of Bengal.

CHAPTER TWENTY ONE

The Wrath Of God

The prophecy concerning the death of Pandit Lekh Ram was to be totally specific and to involve Ahmad in considerable trouble. It came about after the publication of *Braheen-i-Ahmadiyya* in which Ahmad first announced that he was in receipt of revelations from God and was God's Reformer of the Age.

The *Braheen-i-Ahmadiyya* had set forth in chapter and verse the excellencies of Islam as compared to any other religion. Ahmad had challenged Hindus, Christians and others to compare their sacred writings against those of the Holy Qur'an.

Realising that his message could reach more people if he attracted more attention he added that he would give a prize of 10,000 rupees, secured on his houses and land, to anyone who demolished his arguments. It was a fortune almost beyond comprehension.

A number of people replied to Ahmad's challenge, but apart from Pandit Lekh Ram, a member of the Arya Samaj Hindu sect, they faded away. Lekh Ram's book, entitled *Refutation of Braheen-i-Ahmadiyya* could not be ignored even

though it did not amount to more than a spluttering diatribe against Islam and against Ahmad.

A Christian newspaper, *Noor Afshan* reviewed it as follows, "The author has certainly excelled even the worst of fanatics in abuse, trash, lies and fabrication. He has written such absurd and nonsensical things that no educated and civilised person would ever utter them, far less put them in black and white."

And although Lekh Ram's book lacked quality, it certainly did not lack quantity. It ran to 625 pages and was published in three parts.

Lekh Ram was to remain a virulent opponent of Ahmad for the rest of his life. He wrote 33 books, nine of them against Islam. He was born in 1856 at Syyedipur, Chakwal, in the district of Jhelum but when he was 15 he moved to Peshawar to live with his uncle. When he was 20 he joined the Police. He was undoubted a clever man and fairly quickly he was promoted to sergeant.

He had started studying the works of Hindu theologians Gurmukhi and Gita under the guidance of one of his uncle's friends shortly after his arrival in Peshawar. Later on he read the books of Inderman Muradabadi. He was introduced to Swami Dyanand Sersvati, the founder of the Arya Samaj sect, and founded the office of the Arya Samaj in Peshawar in 1881.

But his cleverness was uncontrolled and he revelled in theological disputes, both out of and

during office hours. He was noted for his street debates with Muslims in Peshawar. But what was acceptable - or just allowable - in his private life, was unacceptable in the police force. He had too many acrimonious disputes with his superiors and he resigned from the police in 1884. Shortly afterwards he moved to Lahore.

In 1885, in a letter sent to religious leaders throughout India, Ahmad added to the prize he had offered of 10,000 rupees. The letter read: "This letter is being published and despatched to you because you are a respected and renowned leader of your sect. I wish to bring before you the fact that the one true religion that has earned God's consent and pleasure is Islam and that the divinely protected and practical Book from Him is the Holy Qur'an.

"If you are in doubt regarding this you are invited to come to Qadian for a year and stay in my company and observe all the heavenly signs with your own eyes. The only condition is that your intention should be pure and that you are searching for truth.

"At Qadian you will certainly find the truth because this guarantee has been given by God and that never fails. Moreover, if you come here and fail to discover any sign of truth then I will exact on myself the penalty of 200 rupees a month. This will be paid to you for wasting your time and for failing to provide what we promised we would do.

"If you feel this amount is below your status then we will pay you whatever amount you wish, provided it is within our means."

Though he was not one of the religious leaders to whom the invitation was extended Lekh Ram declared that he would come to Qadian. He asked for 200 rupees to be paid to him each month.

Ahmad replied that the invitation had gone only to selected religious leaders, not to everyone. He added, "You are not the leader of any group on which you can have any influence, nor is your income so much."

If, however, he could prove by affidavit that he was accepted as the leader of the Arya Samaj sect in Lahore, Peshawar, Amritsar and Ludhiana, then, said Ahmad, he would welcome him wholeheartedly.

Lekh Ram was unable to produce such evidence but he came nevertheless to Qadian. Ahmad offered him double the stipend he had been paid as a police sergeant at Peshawar provided he stayed for one year. Later that period was reduced to six months.

Lekh Ram still did not accept. He asked Ahmad to deposit 2,400 rupees in a bank. Ahmad said that he would willingly do so provided Lekh Ram did the same. He was certain that God would give him victory.

Lekh Ram refused. Finally he said that he would accept 30 rupees a month. He also wanted a

public debate with Ahmad, which Ahmad accepted provided that it was confined to quotations and arguments from the Vedas and the Qur'an.

He was not prepared to provide a public opportunity for Lekh Ram to pour scorn on Islam and to vilify the Holy Prophet. Already he had said many harsh and unpleasant things about Muhammad in a way which could only arouse deep anger in a Muslim. It was the opposite of the way Ahmad had declared that he wished to conduct any religious debate.

Again Lekh Ram refused. After 25 days at Qadian he finally departed. In his letter, which announced that he was leaving, he asked Ahmad to produce a Divine sign so that a decision could be seen to have been taken as to who was telling the truth.

Ahmad replied that revelation was not a personal choice. It was not a water tap that could be turned on and off at will. Nor were all revelations necessarily about happy events. He had been given revelations about certain people, friends and opponents alike, which might cause pain. He did not want to disclose these revelations without the permission of the people concerned. Those who wished him to remain silent should therefore tell him so.

Lekh Ram's response was further ridicule of Ahmad. "You are at liberty to publish about me whatever you like. I permit you and I have no fear."

Ahmad then disclosed that Lekh Ram was to die a violent death.

Lekh Ram waved the prophecy aside. Tell me the date when I will die, he insisted. Tell me how I will die. He coupled his rejection of the prophecy with further attacks on the Holy Prophet and Islam.

The next revelation he received, said Ahmad, supplied the details that Lekh Ram insisted were necessary.

"Six years from today, February 20, 1893, this man will be overtaken by severe torment as a punishment for the disrespect which he has manifested towards the Holy Prophet.

"By announcing this prophecy I inform all Muslims, Christians and followers of other religions that if this person is not overtaken within the period of six years from today by a torment that is distinguishable from ordinary suffering, that should bear an extraordinary character and should be in the nature of Divine chastisement, then you can truly say that I have not been sent by God Almighty, nor do I speak under His spirit."

There was some criticism that the revelation was mere conjecture and that anything could happen in the space of six years.

Ahmad therefore amplified his revelation. "If nothing more happened than a fever or an ordinary ache ... that would not be a fulfilment of the prophecy ... no one is free from such disorders ... if the prophecy is fulfilled in a manner in which the

operation of Divine wrath is clearly perceived then you must understand it is from God.

"I do not bear any personal animosity to Lekh Ram or any other person .... but this man has proved himself the enemy of truth and has spoken contemptuously of the perfect and holy being who is the fountainhead of all truth."

Further revelations were even more precise. A man with bloodshot eyes would be his executioner.

Ahmad declared that the revelation had come to him one morning when he was semi-asleep.

"I saw myself sitting in a large house with some friends. Suddenly I saw a man in front of me, fearful-looking with blood-shot eyes. Not a human being I thought but a dreadful and dangerous angel. He struck terror into those who saw him. As I looked at him he said, 'Where is Lekh Ram?' He then named another man.

"I then understood that this person had been appointed to punish Lekh Ram and this other man."

In a book of Persian poetry Ahmad wrote of this impending tragedy, "Beware, O foolish and misguided foe, Fear the sharp sword of Muhammad".

A historian of the Ahmadiyya Movement has written that in all there were six disclosures regarding the death of Lekh Ram. These were:

1. He would meet with a dreadful end.
2. His death would take place within six years.

3. It would be on a day close to Eid, either before or after.
4. His body would be dismembered during the execution.
5. The execution would be carried out by a person with bloodshot eyes.
6. The sword of Muhammad would carry out the execution.

Once again Lekh Ram waved away the revelations. He was not going to be harmed. He would make a revelation himself, he declared. Ahmad would die of cholera within three years.

Meanwhile his vilification of Islam and Muhammad continued.

This conduct Ahmad refused to accept or forgive. On one occasion he was waiting for a train at Ludhiana railway junction when the time for prayer arrived. Ahmad began his devotions and shortly afterwards Lekh Ram arrived at the station. He tried to catch Ahmad's eye, going from one side of the platform to the other.

Ahmad acted as though he had not seen him. When a follower drew Ahmad's attention to Lekh Ram's presence Ahmad said, "He abuses my master The Holy Prophet and wishes to salute me. I do not even wish to see his face."

The years passed. Ahmad outlived Lekh Ram's revelation that he would die of cholera within three years.

But Lekh Ram did not outlive Ahmad's.

In the early evening, some time between 6 and 7 o'clock, on Saturday, March 6, 1897, in the securely-locked and guarded house of Lekh Ram, on the top floor room that Lekh Ram used as a study, a well-built man thrust a dagger into Lekh Ram's belly and rotated it, severing his entrails a number of times. The wife and mother of Lekh Ram. who were in an adjoining room, rushed in when they heard his cries. The mother was knocked to the floor by a man with blood-shot eyes.

No one saw this man after that time though there were many people on the ground floor and out in the street.

It was later disclosed that the man had been living in the house for some time and had become Lekh Ram's trusted companion.

Lekh Ram's death caused a great uproar. It was alleged that the murder must have been committed at Ahmad's behest because he had prophesied it so clearly. Ahmad dismissed the accusation, saying that no religious leader could command respect if he had to urge any follower to carry out such an assassination.

The death of Lekh Ram was merely as God had ordained and had revealed to him. It was the hand of God that had carried out his death - the man who had killed him was a hidden instrument of God.

"If I had been there I would have tried to save him because that would be my human duty," he added.

The manner and time of Lekh Ram's death exactly fulfilled the revelations of Ahmad. He had been killed within six years and within a day of the Festival of Eid. His body had been dismembered in that his entrails had been cut. The executioner had been a man with bloodshot eyes. The execution had been carried out by a sharp sword - the sharp sword of Muhammad.

The murderer was never found and many years later a lawyer, who was a member of the Arya Samaj, wrote that it was a coincidence that the prophecy of Ahmad was fulfilled with the death of Lekh Ram.

"God alone knows whether this was a torment inflicted by (God) or was the result of human intervention," he said.

The death of Lekh Ram meant that Ahmad had to be even better protected by his followers. A Hindu secret society was formed and a reward was offered for the person who succeeded in murdering him. Some rumours put the amount that was to be given to the murderer as high as 30,000 rupees, a truly immense sum and 10 thousand times more than the 30 rupees a month that Lekh Ram had been willing to accept during his lifetime.

To dispel any doubt that Ahmad was involved in the murder of Lekh Ram in any way, he

announced: "Even now if somebody doubts that I was a party to the conspiracy of this murder as Hindu newspapers expressed, I put forth the following suggestion by which this matter will be settled. Such a person should affirm before me on oath as follows:

"I know with certainty that this person is involved in the conspiracy of this murder or the murder has been committed on his command. And if it is not true then O Almighty God inflict on me within a year the punishment which should be dreadful, but not by the hands of any human-being nor any conspiracy could be even imagined therein.

Now if this person escapes the curse of God for one year then I would be guilty and liable to the punishment which a murderer deserves. If there is any bold and daring *Arya* who could dispel the doubts from the minds of the people, he should come forward and adopt this way"

CHAPTER TWENTY TWO

A Charge Of Murder

Abdullah Aatham died on July 27, 1896. This was three years and two months after the terrible prophecy made by Ahmad at the conclusion of their debate. He had declared that God had revealed to him that, within the space of 15 months, each month corresponding to one of the 15 days occupied by the debate, either he or Aatham would be thrown into Hell.

God would carry out this punishment because either he was deliberately expounding a falsehood - or Aatham was.

The only way to avert God's punishment, said Ahmad, was for the guilty party to retreat from his previous position. Would Aatham therefore retreat from his statement in his book 'The Inner Nature of the Bible' that Muhammad, the Holy Prophet, was a Dajjal?

There were therefore two parts to the prophecy, said Ahmad. If Aatham carried on as before he would surely be thrown into Hell. If he denied what he had previously maintained then, even though he was then aged 65 and so had long ago exceeded the normal lifespan of a man in India, if he retreated from what he had said previously,

then he would certainly live at least another 15 months.

God would have forgiven him and his continued existence would be a certain proof of his denial of his previous claims.

It might seem at first glance that no matter what happened Ahmad could claim that God had given him victory. But Ahmad also declared that if Aatham lived and wanted to claim victory then he would have to make a public statement that he had not changed his beliefs.

In the annual report of the Church Missionary Society for 1894, Dr Clark, when describing the debate, used expressions that now seem extraordinary insensitive. He referred to the Muslims as "children of darkness". He added that Christians were not willing to enter into the contest described by Ahmad because they followed 'the Prince of Peace'.

When the 15 months had passed and Aatham was still alive it seemed that Ahmad was a false prophet. Dr Clark, writing in the Church Missionary Society Annual Report for 1895, could not contain his joy. And his stated refusal to enter the contest had now apparently been abandoned. In addition, though Dr Clark had previously declared that Ahmad was a heretic and did not represent Islam, he had now decided that he did represent Islam .

"It is impossible to express the hold it [the contest] has taken on the public mind," he wrote. "It is a plain, clear issue: it is no longer a war of words,

or a drawing of distinctions - a sign of Heaven is to be vouchsafed: 'Yea, God Himself shall decide in this controversy.'

"It has been the theme of converse, of close attention during the past year. From Madras to Peshawar, through the length and breadth of broad India, thousands upon thousands of men have been watching with thoughts intent on the far Northern city where Islam had thrown down the wager of battle, and where God Himself would decide ..."

On the night that the prophecy apparently expired the Christians were jubilant - until Ahmad pointed out that there was a second condition to the prophecy. Had Aatham renounced his previous beliefs? Where had Aatham been for the last 15 months?

He had in fact ceased from all missionary activity on behalf of the Christians and, it was alleged, had become an alcoholic.

He was asked to declare publicly on oath that he had not filtered his views about Islam.

He refused. Instead he made a statement, but not on oath, that he still thought Christianity to be true. But he added that his conception of the divinity of Christ was different from the conception of other Christians.

Since the question of the divinity of Jesus is the absolute heart of Christianity it was a remarkable statement and certainly not to Dr Clark's liking..

Aatham was now asked if he would declare on a solemn oath that he entertained no doubts whatsoever about his religious beliefs, that the beliefs of Islam had not made the slightest impression upon him and that during the past 15 months he had continued to hold all the thoughts and beliefs that he had previously done.

Aatham declined.

Ahmad tried to tempt him out of his silence. If Aatham would take such an oath and did not meet with Divine punishment in the next year, then Ahmad would declare that he himself must be a false prophet. He offered a reward of 1,000 rupees if Aatham took such an oath.

Aatham again refused, saying that swearing on oath was forbidden in Christianity. When it was pointed out that every Christian in India took an oath when he was appointed to a public office or when he appeared in court, Aatham still stayed silent.

Gradually the reward offered to Aatham was raised to 4,000 rupees as Muslims all over India began to enjoy the discomfiture of the Christian missionaries. A Christian who said he had his own special views about the divinity of Christ was not a very stalwart champion.

Dr Clark, who had proposed the debate, believing that it would be a means of bringing many Muslims into the fold of Christianity, was particularly incensed at the result.

Equally angry were the Hindus of the Arya Samaj sect and Ahmad's own Muslim opponents. They therefore hatched a conspiracy to bring down Ahmad in a way that would silence him forever. It must be considered that Dr Martyn Clark was the instigator of the plot. He was certainly the main character.

The Ahmadiyya Community sees a certain resemblance between the trial of Jesus before Pontius Pilate, who was troubled by the obvious conspiracy of the *scribes* and the *Pharisees* against Jesus, and the trial of Ahmad before the District Magistrate of Gurdaspur on a charge of conspiracy to murder.

Captain William Douglas, the District Magistrate, became equally convinced that the charge was an attempt to silence Ahmad by putting him behind bars. All his religious opponents, Christian, Hindu and Muslim, had united in the conspiracy.

On August 1, 1897, Dr Martyn Clark filed a complaint in the Court of the District Magistrate at Amritsar that Ahmad had conspired to murder him. He produced a youth called Abdul Hamid who swore on oath that Ahmad had told him to go to Amritsar and murder Dr Clark.

The magistrate immediately issued a warrant for Ahmad's arrest. He also asked that Ahmad immediately pay 20,000 rupees into court as security and have two other people stand security for 20,000 rupees each.

The news of the warrant for Ahmad's arrest spread fast. His enemies were delighted. Each day a crowd gathered at Amritsar railway station hoping to see Ahmad being led from the train in handcuffs. They were disappointed, however. The Amritsar magistrate had shortly afterwards realised that he had no jurisdiction to issue such a warrant and had therefore transferred Dr Clark's complaint to Gurdaspur.

Proceedings opened there only seven days later, on August 8. That everything had started to move so quickly was due to Dr Clark.

He had called upon Captain Douglas, the young Gurdaspur District Magistrate, shortly after he knew the warrant for Ahmad's arrest had been transferred to Gurdaspur. He asked Captain Douglas to start Ahmad's trial without delay.

Many years later, Captain Douglas, by then much senior in rank and retired, told what then happened. "I told him, 'This is very serious. It should go to the police for enquiry. Then it should go to the Sessions."

This was a much higher court.

Dr Clark replied, "I am ill and I want to take leave. I'm afraid my witness may be tampered with. I want the case to go on at once."

Douglas said that was impossible. "I can't possibly charge Ghulam Ahmad with any offence until there has been an investigation. There isn't enough evidence."

After a few moments' thought he added, "But I see no objection to asking for security to maintain the peace - if the evidence you have justifies that course of action."

After some further discussion Dr Clark agreed. A summons was issued ordering Ahmad to appear in court in Batala on August 10. If Dr Clark was the main witness, but supporting him was a collection of Ahmad's opponents, including Muhammed Hussain. Officially the Hindus were not represented but, very strangely, Pandit Ram Bhaj Dutt, a well-known lawyer of Lahore, volunteered his services as legal adviser. He assisted the prosecution and it can thus be stated that the Arya Samaj sect was represented in a most peculiar and powerful way.

Thus the case was conducted by three of Ahmad's most bitter opponents -Dr Clark, representing Christian missionaries, Muhammed Hussain, representing the Muslim divines, and Mr Dutt, on behalf of Arya Samaj Hindus.

Dr Clark admitted as much in court when he was asked if he had paid any fee to Pundit Ram Bhaj Dutt. He replied, "We, all the people, are taking a concerted action against a man who is our common foe."

This statement, and the fact that Dr Clark could assemble so many witnesses from different parts of the country so quickly, did not tally with the statement he made in court that it was not until July 31 that he had

thought of complaining about Ahmad's alleged attempt to have him murdered.

The prosecution case took three days to outline. The would-be assassin, Abdul Hamid was a tall, gangling youth aged 17. He struck witnesses as both shiftless and lazy, a scrounger ready to pick up food, lodging and clothing wherever he could find them - so long as he did not need to work.

He was certainly not a fanatical Christian, said an American missionary Dr Grey. As far as his protestations about Christianity went he regarded him as an impostor. At different times he had also proclaimed that he was a Muslim and a Hindu.

It was to the American Mission that Abdul Hamid had gone immediately he arrived in Amritsar. The American Mission did not provide the food and lodging that Abdul Hamid hoped for and he therefore went on to the mission run by Dr Clark and his helpers .

Abdul Hamid had just come from Qadian where he had stayed for 14 days in the Ahmadiyya guest house. He had been sent away by Ahmad as a person of low character.

Had he been sent there by Dr Clark and his fellow missionaries with the intention of destroying Ahmad? Did Abdul Hamid stray from the pre-arranged plan of going straight to Dr Clark's mission with the fake intention of assassinating Dr Clark - as he claimed Ahmad had ordered him?

Or was it that when Abdul Hamid arrived at Dr Clark's he let slip where he had been for the previous 14 days - and Dr Clark seized what he thought was a golden opportunity to destroy Ahmad?

Dr Clark had certainly hoped to have the case heard at Amritsar where, not only was he well-known and influential but, as the immediate issue of the warrant shows, he had friends at court. Now that it had been moved to Batala he was anxious to have it heard as quickly as possible.

Captain Douglas was young and relatively inexperienced. He was to accept the offer of help from the Hindu lawyer. When Abdul Hamid said that his life was in danger Dr Clark offered to look after him. Captain Douglas, rather naively, agreed.

But by the third day of the trial he realised that there was something very much amiss with the evidence that was being placed before him. Waiting on a railway platform, he confided his fears to his court clerk. The clerk, perhaps better aware of the rumours that were flying around, suggested that Abdul Hamid be taken out of Dr Clark's custody and questioned separately.

Many years later Captain Douglas described his feelings at that time. "I thought Abdul Hamid's story highly improbable. There were inconsistencies between the version given in Amritsar, compared with that recorded by me. Nor was I satisfied with his demeanour while giving evidence.

"I noticed, moreover, that the longer he remained under the care of the mission at Batala, the more profuse and detailed his evidence became. There was much in his first statement to me which had not been revealed when he was examined by the District Magistrate at Amritsar. And when he was examined again by me a day later a mass of additional detail was added."

The inferences, said Captain Douglas, were that Abdul Hamid was being coached each night about what to say in court. Captain Douglas ordered the police to remove Abdul Hamid from Dr Clark's custody and to question him independently. It was undertaken by Police Superintendent Lemar Chand and an inspector of police. Abdul Hamid stuck resolutely to his story - Ahmad had asked him to murder Dr Clark and he had agreed to do so.

Finally, the police inspector declared, "It's no use. The boy adheres to his statement. He had better be sent back."

Mr Lemar Chand agreed. He decided, however, that there should be a record of their investigation. He started questioning Abdul Hamid again, writing down his answers. He had completed two sheets of questions and answers - all in agreement with the evidence previously given - when Abdul Hamid burst into tears and flung himself at Mr Lemar Chand's feet.

He had lied completely in all his statements, he said. Everything was untrue. There was no plot by

Ahmad and his followers to murder Dr Clark. The story had been made up by the missionaries. They had coached him over several days as to how he was to tell it. In one instance they had changed several words from his first statement to make the evidence much more damning.

When Abdul Hamid got it by heart one of them said, 'Thank you. Our object is accomplished."

In court one of the defence lawyers asked Abdul Hamid, "You are not a bird. How did you intend to escape after you killed Dr Clark?"

The missionaries coaching Abdul Hamid took note and primed Abdul Hamid with an answer in case the question arose again - he was to say that a certain man would have helped him to escape to Qadian where he would be safe. So that Abdul Hamid would not forget it one of them wrote it on the palm of Abdul Hamid's hand.

As though to illustrate the complete corruption in the way the charge and the evidence was being manufactured by the missionaries, Abdul Hamid added, "He wrote it with a pencil the one being used by Dr Clark's counsel".

Recalling the trial Captain Douglas said that his suspicions were first aroused because of the way Abdul Hamid gave his evidence - he spoke quickly and with a lot of precise detail which damned Ahmad, not at all like a truthful witness whose statements were usually diffuse. When Abdul Hamid admitted that he had first gone to the American

Mission, though he had come expressly to Amritsar in order to assassinate Dr Clark, Captain Douglas decided that enough was enough.

"That answer decided it in my mind that he had no intention of killing Dr Clark. I at once discharged Ahmad and ended the case."

Before the court rose, however, he told Ahmad that if he wished to sue Dr Clark for malicious prosecution then the court would grant him leave to do so.

Ahmad replied that he did not wish to prosecute Dr Clark before an earthly court. His complaint was already pending before the Highest Judge of All. There, in due course, Dr Clark would have to answer for what he had done.

Dr Clark died on May 16, 1900.

There were some moments of humour and honour during the trial. A crowd gathered round the courthouse each day, listening to a running commentary from those lucky enough to have gained admittance to the courtroom. They were bipartisan. The Muslims, even those who did not believe in Ahmad, scented a conspiracy.

Ahmad's arch opponent, Muhammed Hussain, one of the five prosecution witnesses, had at first taken a seat on the verandah of the court. He was asked to leave by a court orderly and did so with ill-grace. Thereupon one of the spectators offered him his *chaader*, that invaluable length of cloth used in India as a shawl to wrap round the shoulders when

there is a draught or at night when it is cold or during the day to protect the head from the sun or to sit on.

He could spread it on the ground to sit on while he waited, said the spectator.

The man who made the offer thought that Muhammed Hussain had come to give evidence on behalf of Ahmad. When he learned that Muhammed Hussain was a prosecution witness he was most upset. He forced him to rise and give him back his shawl.

In court, when Muhammed Hussain came forward to give evidence, he grumbled when he saw Ahmad sitting in a chair and he was not offered one. As a chieftain of the Punjab Ahmad was naturally entitled to one.

Muhammed Hussain declared that he was a *'Kursi Nashin'* as his father had been. It was an honorary rank which entitled the holder to a seat whenever he was involved in government business.

Captain Douglas would have none of it. He spoke very sharply. Unknown to Muhammad Hussain, Dr Clark had already asked Captain Douglas to provide a chair for Muhammad Hussain and his request had been rejected.

Now Captain Douglas told Muhammad Hussain, "Be quiet. No chair was ever provided for your father and no chair has ever been provided for you."

When Muhammad Hussain started to grumble again and slouch forward Captain Douglas told him brusquely, "Stand up straight when you're giving evidence in court."

His evidence was of little value. All that he could say was that he disliked Ahmad intensely. Captain Douglas dismissed him and made the following note in the court records, "I consider sufficient evidence has been recorded regarding the hostility of the witness to Mirza Sahib and there is no necessity to stray further from the main lines of the case."

Ahmad was to write later that Muhammad Hussain had come to court believing that the charge against Ahmad was still that of conspiracy to murder. He had hoped to see him led away in handcuffs to prison. Instead he had been publicly humiliated.

"I felt pity for Muhammad Hussain at that time because a death-like paleness overcame him. It was the sight of so much humiliation ... he was shaking from head to foot. Instantly the revelation came to my mind,

'I will humiliate those who intend to humiliate you'.

"These are the words of God so blessed are those who heed them."

The acquittal did not come as a surprise to Ahmad or his followers. Sher Ali, one of his original 313 Companions was with him in Qadian in July

that year, before Dr Clark laid his complaint. Sher Ali, a university graduate, was often to recall that month in later years.

Normally, when Ahmad received a revelation, he waited until prayers before telling his disciples. But one July morning Ahmad summoned his followers to his house. He read to them from a notebook in which he had recorded what he had seen and been told during the night.

Ahmad said that he had seen lightning coming to his house from the West. As it got nearer it changed into a star, when he received the Word of God.

"This is a threat from the authorities, but you will be discharged."

Ahmad thus knew that a legal action would shortly be brought against him, but that it would not succeed, said Sher Ali. Ahmad had also told them details of the allegations which would be made against him, he added.

Ahmad's conduct throughout the trial won admiration from people who were not his followers. His lawyer wanted to weaken the prosecution case by damaging the character of their witnesses. He therefore asked Ahmad's permission to question Muhammad Hussain about his parentage - his mother had been a prostitute.

Ahmad forbade it totally. "God forbids unseemly speech," he said.

His lawyer, who was not an Ahmadi, often recalled this in later years. "Here I was defending him on a charge of conspiracy to murder and he forbids it because it might bring shame on a witness who hated him."

The trial, which was meant to destroy Ahmad, had the opposite effect. It was Ahmad who had been shown to be telling the truth. And if he were telling the truth in this instance might it not be that he was also telling the truth about his revelations from God?

The number of people coming to Qadian to listen to his preaching increased.

The trial also did no harm to the career of Captain Douglas. He ended his career as a Colonel, Chief Commissioner of one of the states of India and holding the decorations of *Commander of the Star of India* and *Commander of the Indian Empire.*

He never had any doubts that his verdict was correct and that justice had been done. In his retirement he said, "As soon as Ahmad entered the witness box and I looked at his face I began to think there was something wrong with the accusations. I was certain that a man with such a good face could not have committed the deeds that he was accused of. His was a smiling, open countenance."

The enmity of Muhammed Hussain continued though his influence was now waning. It reached its nadir when he had to gain his livelihood by taking a poorly-paid teaching job while his sons attended the

school established by the Ahmadiyya Community at Qadian.

Abdul Hamid had been but a pawn in the conspiracy but he was to be pursued by the authorities for perjury and conspiracy. He could not be found at first, but later he was arrested and sentenced to nine months rigorous imprisonment with 44 days in solitary confinement.

CHAPTER TWENTY THREE

The Bishop Retreats

Christian missionaries were once again told not to get involved in debates with Ahmad. He was too knowledgeable about all faiths for the missionary who had a European presumption that Christianity must be correct. Ahmad knew the Bible better than most missionaries and could quote from it as easily as he quoted verses from the Holy Qur'an.

An example of this total belief in the superiority of Christianity was to occur some years later when the Rt. Rev. George Lefroy, Bishop of Lahore, gave a series of public lectures. The Bishop was a man of learning and knew Hebrew, Arabic and Persian and could speak Urdu with great facility. But he held Islam and Muhammad almost in contempt. And he had never heard of Ahmad

At a meeting in London some years earlier of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel one of the speakers, an archbishop, had ventured to suggest that Islam was not quite as some speakers had suggested. "No one can go into an Islamic place of worship without being struck with the evidence of sincerity, gravity, absorbedness and solemnity of the worshippers," he declared.

Lefroy said bluntly that he did not agree with that point of view.

In the series of lectures he gave in various places in Lahore it was evident that his views had not changed in the twelve months since he had been appointed Bishop of Lahore. His subject was 'The Innocent Prophet'.

Jesus alone, of all the prophets, was the only innocent prophet, he declared. He compared him to the prophets of other religions, especially the Holy Prophet, to their disadvantage.

When his lecture was finished he asked if any of the audience had anything to say.

One person had. He drew the Bishop's attention to the saying of Jesus,

"Why callest thou me good? There is none good but one, that is God " (Math 19-17)

The Bishop made a suitable reply and the meeting ended. But the Muslims of India had already had enough of this bishop of just 12 months standing who kept on insulting their religion.

Ahmad, when he heard of the Bishop's comments, decided to reply. The conception of sin in different religions was so different that comparison was not of much value, he declared. Drinking alcohol was a sin in one religion and a religious act in another. In some religions it was adulterous to look upon a woman with lust. In other religions the sexual act was looked upon as a social and religious necessity. To kill a bug or worm was a sin according to some while others regarded cows and sheep as no better than vegetables.

Jesus was put forward as sinless by Christians with claims to divinity, said Ahmad. But in Islam there were no greater sins than the worship of idols or symbols or associating anyone or anything with God.

Moreover, Ahmad continued, sinlessness was a negative virtue. To eschew evil was not a very great accomplishment. It is the doing of good which is creditable, he declared. A subject much more worthy of discussion, he suggested, was 'The Ideal Prophet'.

Some months later a public letter, signed by a large number of Muslims from all over the Punjab, was sent to the Bishop of Lahore. It was also sent to every newspaper. The letter, in English, was couched most elegantly and eloquently, with a touch of Eastern grace.

"As our transient worldly life is passing away like a summer cloud and the time draws near when it shall pass away into eternity.... it is our deepest concern that the pilgrimage of life should come to a close in true righteousness and heavenly bliss, that we may breathe our last as professors of a faith which shows the path to Divine Will. If we are not on the right path then we are ready, heart and soul, to accept the truth, provided it is elucidated to us with clear and cogent arguments.

"If anyone can pluck up the courage to come forward and prove to us the truth of the Christian religion, he shall lay us under the greatest obligation.

It is our hearts' inmost desire and we are always anxious that an enquiry be made into the comparative merits and excellences of Christianity and Islam."

They had heard of the Bishop's lectures, the letter continued, "and we are of the opinion that among Christians in this country you are unrivalled in religious learning. It has occurred to us that no one can better represent the Christian faith than yourself on account of your vast and practical knowledge, your acquaintance with the Arabic, Persian and Urdu languages and your amiable and polished manners."

They therefore proposed a debate between the Bishop of Lahore and Ahmad on five subjects.

The invitation caught the imagination of the public. An English language daily paper in Allahbad, 'The Pioneer', commented: "The letter has a great many signatures, of which the first few names will be sufficient to indicate the widespread interest and expectation with which the Mohammedan community is looking forward to the encounter."

The *'Indian Daily Telegraph'* was even more enthusiastic. "We reproduce on another page a most interesting religious challenge from the school of Islam in this country... The challenge throughout is worded in conciliatory terms and exhibits an evidently keen desire for a formal and set

controversy on fair terms to both parties on the comparative merits and excellences of Christianity and Islam. The challengers, who are large in numbers and hail from all parts of India, hope by adjuring the Bishop in the name of Jesus Christ to gain his consent to a controversy.

"We are of the opinion that the Bishop would do well to accept the challenge. To assume a superiority that cannot stoop to controversy would be a mistake as the challengers would be entitled from their point of view to conclude that the case, being undefended, went by default...

"The fact that the Muslims desire to pit their Messiah against the Bishop is the highest compliment they could desire to pay to his learning. They wish to intimate that they recognise him as the first authority in India.

"... He should on no account lose an opportunity of refuting, silencing and convincing such opponents, especially here he is desired to prove which of the two religions, Christianity or Islam, can be called the living faith; and of the teaching inculcated in the Holy Qur'an and the Bible, which is the more excellent and natural?

"We should like to see the challenge accepted because we think it would prove highly interesting."

But George Lefroy, Bishop of Lahore, was no St George. He would not venture out of his episcopal palace to slay any dragons. "I decline to meet Mirza Ghulam Ahmad in any such friendly

relationship as the discussion which you propose would involve," he replied.

By calling himself The Promised Messiah Ahmad had assumed name which Christians regard with the greatest reverence. This therefore offered, in his opinion, said the Bishop, "a most grievous insult and dishonour to Him Whom I worship as my Lord and Master.

"How then can I possibly consent to meet him in a friendly way?"

His letter was as long and carefully worded as the invitation. He said that he did not believe that the superiority of one religion over another could be settled by intellectual argument. He was glad to study writings which would give him a clearer understanding of the doctrines of Islam, but that was quite different from joining in a public debate where the desired result was the acceptance of the faith whose claims had apparently been best demonstrated by one of the speakers.

He concluded that he also could not afford the time for a public debate. As a bishop his time was greatly occupied by administrative duties.

The Bishop had not been quite true to himself in his reply as it was he who had initiated the public debate by making the comparisons and calling upon Muslims at his public lectures to discuss his remarks. He had also issued those invitations on ground that he had chosen - as the Muslim

signatories pointed out when they replied to his refusal.

"Your initiative in calling upon the Muslims to prove the innocence and life of their own Prophet against those of Jesus Christ - a sort of controversy in which one side was quite prepared and unrepresented - was a further inducement to Muslims to offer Your Lordship a field of discussion which the merits of both the religions and their founders could be more properly and fairly tested.

"To do justice to your position and your talents, an adversary was proposed who occupied no mean position .... With two such great and remarkable personages as the champions of the two great religious systems of the world, the public could not be left in the dark as regards the solution of a question which has occupied the greatest minds of every age."

And they queried why the debate would have meant the cessation of friendly relations and grounds for hatred. Did not the Holy Bible inculcate the doctrine of love towards enemies. Indeed it was the duty surely of all Christians, and specially the duty of a church dignitary, to preach to non-Christians.

Moreover, the letter continued, Ahmad did not claim that he was Jesus Christ in person, but that he came in that Prophet's spirit and character. He, like all other Muslims, honoured Jesus as a true and eminent prophet. This was not the case with millions

of people who were not Muslims and did not regard him as a prophet.

That was surely the greatest possible affront to the dignity of Jesus. The writers suggested that the Bishop must often have come in contact with these people yet they doubted if the Bishop had expressed the same hatred towards them as he had expressed towards Ahmad.

Busy as His Lordship was, could he not set aside five days for what promised to be a most interesting debate?

That was the suggested duration of the debate. After all, the writers of the letter added, it was the Bishop himself who had initiated the debate.

It was not such an ingenious question as it appeared. It put the Bishop on the spot. Pleading administrative duties did not sound very convincing.

The Muslim signatories added that when they had told Ahmad of the Bishop's statement that he could not meet him in friendship, Ahmad had replied,

"I do not look upon anyone in the world as my enemy. I hate not individuals but the false beliefs they entertain. As regards individuals, my feelings towards them are of the utmost sympathy and good wishes. How can I then regard anyone as my enemy who enjoys respectability among his coreligionists and, moreover, is honoured for his position and learning? I love him though I do not like his doctrines.

.... "I am not averse to meeting his Lordship in a friendly way, for it is possible that either party may reap some advantage from the other, as the seed of sincerity must bear fruit. It is the first requisite in the performance of a person's duties as a reformer or preacher that he should receive those who hold views differing from his own in the most cordial and cheerful manner.

"Nobody can do any good to a person who he regards as his enemy, but I say truly that if ever an opportunity offers itself when I find it in my power to do both good and evil to his Lordship, I will do him such good that will surprise the world. The power to call people to the path of righteousness and a zealous desire for their transformation grow in true love. Enmity obscures wisdom and extinguishes sympathy."

The exchange of letters, published in newspaper and journals throughout India, became almost the sole topic of conversation and discussion for a time. The Bishop's refusal fanned the controversy.

The 'Indian Spectator' wrote, "The Bishop of Lahore seems to have retired with more haste than dignity from a challenge which he had himself provoked. His Lordship some time back set before himself the task of proving to Muslim audiences that Christ was the true Messiah and the challenge was taken up....

"His Lordship speaks of Mirza Ghulam Ahmad as 'offering a grievous insult and dishonour to Christ venturing to call himself the Messiah'. The Jews of 2,000 years ago crucified Christ for the self-same reason. They felt insulted by his venturing to call himself the Messiah.

"What is even more strange is the Bishop's pointing to the fact of Mirza Ahmad's claims 'being treated with ridicule and contempt by an overwhelming majority of Punjab Muslims', as conclusive proof of the falsity of those claims.

"When Pilate asked assembled Jews as to whom they would like to be liberated on the day of the Passover - Christ or Barabbas - they unanimously voted for the impenitent thief.

"Did that prove that Christ's claim to Messiahship was unfounded?

"We are not among the followers of Mirza Ahmad and have no intention of upholding his claims in preference to those of Christ, but we object to the logic of the hustings being introduced into discussion on religion. If the whole Muslim world would have acclaimed the Mirza, would the Rt Rev Prelate of Lahore have altered his opinion of his mission?

"Religious beliefs in this country are in a state of dissolution just now. It behoves those who are anxious to see them crystallise around the truth not to employ arguments which are not of the purest temper."

No more damning indictment of the Bishop of Lahore's attitude would seem to be possible.

The five subjects suggested for the debate were:

- Which of the two prophets, Jesus and Muhammed, can be shown from their own scriptures or other arguments,to be perfectly innocent?
- Which prophet, on the same authority, can be deservedly called 'The Living Prophet' and possess Divine Power?
- Which prophet, on the same authority, is entitled to be considered the intercessor with God?
- Which of the two religions can be called the Living Faith?
- Which of the two teachings inculcated by the Holy Qur'an and the Holy Bible, Unity or Trinity, is more excellent and natural?

CHAPTER TWENTY FOUR

Revelations Regarding Sikhism

Ahmad's defence of Islam against the strictures of the Bishop of Lahore was not in any way a criticism of Jesus, he emphasised. Jesus was a prophet of God. HE WAS NOT GOD.

Down through the ages God had sent His prophets to many lands and to many peoples according to their needs at that time. Moses and Buddha were prophets. Jesus was another. The Lord Krishna of the Hindus and Maisodarbahmi of the Zoroastrians were equally prophets of God. So were the founders of most other religious groups, large and small. Their sole objective was the salvation of mankind.

Respect was due to all prophets, said Ahmad. They had been the recipients of Divine knowledge. And he quoted the verse from the Qur'an which said that God revealed His secrets only to those He had specially chosen - and those so chosen were His messengers.

All these messengers had told of the coming at a later date of a great reformer, The Promised One. But the question then quite naturally arose: If every great religion was to have its own Rasul, Nabi or Avatar, was there to be some kind of competition between them?

Ahmad said this would not happen. All the prophecies, despite the different names used, related to one and the same person. There was - and there could be - only one Promised Messiah.

The purpose of God in transmitting knowledge of The Promised Messiah to different religious communities in different ways at different times, said Ahmad, allowed each community to look forward to the coming of this Messiah. In the fullness of time the Promised Messiah would then arrive and proclaim the truth of Islam. He would invite the followers of all religions into the fold of the one true religion.

As each religion studied its prophecies, as they studied the signs of the time and the truth of the claim of the Promised Messiah, they would realise that he was no stranger, he was their kin. He was indeed their own Promised One. On his testimony and invitation therefore they would accept Islam and become Muslims.

He was that Promised person, said Ahmad. He was the Promised Messiah, the Divine Reformer.

One Muslim philosopher was to comment: "A prophet or messenger does not belong to any one community. He is of God. Whoever is willing to join him for the sake of God can claim him as his prophet or messenger. The Promised Messiah, therefore, belongs to all. The followers of all religions can claim him as their own. Their Spiritual advancement is linked with him. They have to

accept him as their leader and preceptor. They can do so only by accepting Islam and becoming Muslims."

What, however, of Sikhism?

God had sent Moses, the Lord Krishna, Buddha, Jesus and other prophets long before the advent of Muhammad, the Holy Prophet. Guru Baba Nanak the founder of the Sikh religion had been born some 800 years after the death of Muhammad.

All Muslims believe that Islam is the last and perfect message of God revealed to Muhammad and there can be no other divinely revealed religion after the advent of Islam. As such then, Sikhism must appear to be fake and the truth and holiness of its founders Guru Baba Nanak and other Gurus must appear to be questionable.

What was the opinion of Ahmad on this sensitive issue?

From his study of Sikhism and life history of Baba Guru Nanak, he was deeply convinced that he was a very holy man and could by no means be bracketed with impostors. To resolve the dilemma, his in depth study of Sikhism revealed to him that it was not a new religion but a Sufi sect founded by Guru Bawa Nanak who drew his followers from both the Hindus and Muslims alike.

His role was similar to that of a reformer within Islam; who was entirely dedicated to the cause of Unity of God. It was this mission to which

he dedicated his life and very successfully fulfilled it.

Ahmad believed that Sikhism rifted apart gradually and was more the political confrontation of the Punjab with the central Government of the Mughals in Delhi, which gradually embittered the Sikhs against their Muslim rulers to a degree that they no longer accepted their faith to be within Islam. Of course, this is very strongly contested by many Sikh scholars and sometime resentment is also observed among certain elements of the Sikh clergy. Such religious differences do exist everywhere in the world and interpretations vary. However the stance of Hadhrat Ahmad towards Sikhism is unique in the sense that he founded a way to express his deep appreciation of Bawa Guru Nanak's services to the cause of Unity without compromising his firm belief that Islam is the perfect and final religion.

This object he achieved by declaring that Bawa Guru Nanak is a Muslim, not arbitrarily, but with the support of many a writing of Bawa Guru Nanak and his repeated references to the Qur'an.

Although the rest of the world interprets differently it could not be denied by most of the Sufi scholars that Bawa Guru Nanak did worship God not only too frequently in Islamic style but also went for pilgrimage to Mecca.

Ahmad had studied the *Granth Sahib*, the Sikh sacred writings, as he had studied the Vedas of the Hindus and the Bible of the Christians and he rose to

the defence of Baba Nanak. He was, he said, a holy man and one of God's saints.

Baba Nanak was born near Lahore, in the Punjab, in 1469. His family were Hindus, but early on in life he became convinced of the unity of God and very much against the polytheism of Hinduism or the association of any person or thing in partnership or association with God as with the Christians. His thinking was therefore in accordance with the tenets of Islam and against the many gods of Hinduism and the belief in the Trinity of God of the Christians.

The Golden Temple in Amritsar, only 36 miles from Qadian, is the holy place of the Sikhs. It was in Amritsar that the words of Ahmad's revelation after the death of his father 'Is God not sufficient for His servant had been carved into a Signet ring.

This is certainly the opinion of the scholar who wrote about Sikhism in the Encyclopaedia Britannica and declared that Baba Nanak was a Muslim and the departure of Sikhism from the fold of Islam "was gradual and was as much due to political causes as to a steady departure from the teachings of the founder of Sikhism".

In the second half of his book *Sat Bachan* Ahmad recounted the researches he had made and the discovery of various relics of Baba Nanak which led him to declare that he testified to the truth of Islam.

From other Sikh books and records Ahmad was able to say that Guru Nanak had lived in the company of Muslim divines, spent time in meditation and joined in congregational prayer. He had travelled to Mecca for the *Hajj* and visited Medina and Muslim holy places.

There was other evidence to hand. Baba Nanak, born in the Punjab, had also spent most of his life there. Relics of this holy man were therefore preserved in many Sikh temples through the Punjab. The most important was the cloak known as the *Chola Sahib* or holy cloak. It was in the possession of a Sikh family who are his own descendants in the village of *Dera Baba Nanak* in the Gurdaspur district, some 30 miles from Qadian.

This cloak is believed by Sikhs to have been a direct gift of God to Baba Nanak. It was given to indicate the honour in which God held the Guru and also to provide him with security at any time of danger. There were many instances of how wonderful this security had been, said the Sikhs.

The cloak was known to be made of cotton, quite light in weight, though apparently quilted in some areas. It was of a golden-earth colour with a reddish tinge in places. On it, embroidered in gold thread, verses of the holy Qur'an were written on it.

The cloak was regarded with great reverence. Baba Nanak told his followers that God Himself had inscribed these characters on the cloak and asked him to wear it. After Baba Nanak's death his successors,

convinced that the cloak had been blessed by God, wrapped it round their heads on the occasion of their succession and on other ceremonial occasions or when seeking Divine guidance. The first successor of Guru Nanak talked of the miraculous powers of the cloak in his *Janam Sakhi* or memoirs and said that the cloak had descended from Heaven and that the words and symbols on it were the revealed word of God. He also recorded that a King had tried to steal the cloak but failed to do so.

When the great pool surrounding the Golden Temple at Amritsar was being dug, the then head of the Sikh sect, Guru Arjundas, wore the cloak over his head when he toured the site. Among the hundreds of men labouring with devotion at this task was a man called Tota Ram, whose exertions singled him out for special praise. To him Guru Arjundas said, "Your work has been so untiring that I want to reward you. Ask of me anything that you wish."

Tota Ram replied, "Grant me the Sikh boon". By this he meant a boon that would provide religious guidance.

The Guru understood immediately that he was asking for the holy cloak, for it contained all the guidance of their founder, Baba Nanak. He took off the cloak and handed it to Tota Ram, saying, " You have indeed asked for the entire capital of our house. All spiritual guidance can be found in this garment."

From that time onwards the cloak had been handed down from generation to generation. A small

temple was built to house it and, over the centuries, most of the famous princes in Sikh history had made a pilgrimage to the tiny village of *Dera Baba Nanak*.

Even in 1992, *Dera Baba Nanak* is still an insignificant village lost in the vastness of the Punjab. It is of minor importance because it almost straddles the Indo-Pakistan border. Oxen-drawn carts, however, are still more frequent than motor vehicles.

But the small temple where the cloak is kept is being enlarged and there is a vast auditorium at one end of the village for the thousands of pilgrims who now come to the village at certain festivals to view the cloak. It is kept under glass in a box covered with a golden cloth.

Ahmad sent four of his followers to *Dera Baba Nanak* to investigate. They reported that the cloak was wrapped in more than 300 rumals, fine coverings of silk cotton and wool, some of which bore the names and descriptions of the princes and other personages who had come to *Dera Baba Nanak* to view this holy relic. They had presented the rumals as a mark of respect. They were the same kind of *rumals* as the *Granth Sahib*. the Sikh holy book was always wrapped in.

Ahmad's four followers persuaded the guardian of the cloak to send for the silver key for the lock which allowed the cloak to be unwrapped. Slowly, one by one, the first wrappings were removed. Finally they could see parts of the cloak itself. The words

embroidered in gold thread were not of some unknown language. They were Arabic and were verses from the Holy Qur'an!

That was as much as the old man who was the guardian of the cloak would allow them to see.

On September 30, 1895, after the traditional *Istikhara* prayer for guidance, Ahmad and 10 of his companions went to *Dera Baba Nanak* to investigate the cloak more thoroughly. After much persuasion the silver lock was again unfastened and the first rumal unrolled. The guardian of the cloak was reluctant to continue, but was persuaded little by little. Ahmad's party of 10 had now grown to 20, many of them the local gentry, and their position had some effect on the old man. He allowed Ahmad and his companions to undo some of the *rumals* themselves.

After an hour the guardian had reached the last few *rumals*. He hesitated again, but then Sheikh Rahmatullah of Gujrat, one of Ahmad's companions, noticed that there were thick layers of dust upon the inner folds of the cloak. He told the old man that it must be cleaned if the cloak was to be preserved. "Come, let us do it now," he said and undid the folds of the cloak entirely. For the first time perhaps for hundreds of years the holy cloak was in full view.

Ahmad and his companions stood in silence for a moment then broke out in excited comment.

There were complete verses of the Holy Qur'an embroidered on the cloak, including the *Sura*

Fatiha. The most boldly written was the Kalima, the profession of faith, of Islam: 'There is no God but Allah and Muhammad is His Prophet'.

There was also the famous verse from the second chapter of the Holy Qur'an known as *"Ayatul Kursi"* (Verse of the Throne), The entire chapter 112 was also written on the cloak Verse 20 from chapter 3 was also written out in full: 'Surely the true religion with Allah is Islam'.

A sketch was made of the cloak showing exactly where the verses from the Qur'an were placed. [See Appendix One.] There were no writings from any other holy book.

Some time later Ahmad learned that another relic of Guru Nanak was held in a *gurdawara* or Sikh temple in a village called Guru Har Sahai in the district of Ferozepur. It was known as the Pothi or prayer book of Baba Nanak. He had carried it everywhere with him on his travels, it was said. This relic was also wrapped in many layers of silk and fine wool, given by Sikh pilgrims as a mark of respect.

Ahmad sent three of his companions to investigate. When the wrappings were unrolled the Guru's prayer book proved to be a small size edition of the Holy Qur'an specially prepared for travellers. It was designed to be slung over the shoulder in a special bag. In Urdu it is known as *Hima-il Sharif.* Ahmad was thus able to announce that Guru Baba Nanak was a true Muslim and follower of Islam.

There was no contradiction in the *Granth Sahib*, the words of the Guru. The books of the Sikh religion declare that the Guru would appear in the area of Batala - and Batala was the nearest town to Qadian. It was thus obvious, said Ahmad, that Guru Baba Nanak was prophesying his arrival as the Promised Messiah. He was the Promised One of the Sikhs just as he was the Promised One of the Muslims.

CHAPTER TWENTY FIVE

The Bonds Are Forged

Forty people had taken the covenant of allegiance to Ahmad in March, 1889, at Ludhiana. Seven years later, in 1896, the roll call of his followers numbered 313. It meant that he had gained only a further 273 followers in seven years or only some 40 new converts a year.

His second son, Mirza Bashir Ahmad, later wrote that this was a period of great hardship for the Community.

"At this period, when it was pitted against severe opposition from all sides, its progress was so slow that opponents waited hopefully for an early collapse. This was a period of great apprehension and distress for The Promised Messiah as well. The snail-like progress of the Community was a harrowing experience for his fast-moving soul. But he knew that it is the case with every reformer and that there was no escape from such hard trial, which was necessary for the consolidation and faith of the Community."

The first gathering of his followers had taken place on December 27th, 1891. The number of people who attended was small - between 75 and 80 - but it was so successful that on the last day Ahmad

announced that henceforth there would be an annual gathering at Qadian.

Everyone should make a special effort to attend, he said.

"Such truths and words of wisdom shall be heard during this meeting as are essential for the increase of faith, conviction and knowledge. Friends will also be entitled to special prayers and special attention. Effort will be made before the most Merciful Lord that He may draw them towards Himself and accept them and grant them great favours."

There was a further advantage in such an annual gathering, Ahmad added. Every year people would see and meet new converts and this personal acquaintance would develop into friendship and love. "We will make every effort through prayer to create a bond of spiritual union between all and remove every barrier of estrangement, aloofness and difference."

At the second conference the number attending had risen to 500, despite the opposition of Muslim divines who declared that such a gathering was a sin. More than 300 of those present came from outside the Punjab. In order to accommodate them a number of buildings were hastily erected which, over the years, were to become both bigger and more permanent.

A number of decisions were made at this conference which, though they seemed more

administrative than religious at the time, laid the foundations of the world-wide Ahmadiyya Movement. The Movement decided to finance their first missionary, who was called Sayyed Muhammad Ahsan, and to establish a printing press at Qadian. It was to print leaflets, then booklets and finally a newspaper. At a later conference it was also decided that a school should be established at Qadian.

These three decisions were to be the foundation stones on which the success of the Ahmadiyya Movement was to be built. The education of the children of all members by donations from every member meant a more prosperous Community in the future. The funding of missionaries meant that Islam was once again seeking converts. The decision to establish a printing press meant that Islam had embraced new technology as a means of converting the world.

One result of this decision was that Ahmad agreed that his photograph should be taken so that people whom he would never meet could see what he looked like. Islamic fundamentalists had declared that photography was idolatrous for it involved the making of images. Ahmad dismissed this objection. It was only idolatrous if the intention was that the image should be worshipped.

The photographer had a fixed Victorian notion of what a picture should be like. He kept asking Ahmad to open his eyes more widely, to look intently at the camera, but Ahmad, remembering the

Qur'anic injunction against the "conscious stare" kept his eyelids half-closed. Finally the photographer gave up.

He embraced other new techniques equally enthusiastically. Eddison had invented the gramophone only a few years earlier. Yet Ahmad experimented with it as a means of carrying the message of Islam.

Ahmad was determined that nothing associated with him should ever be turned into an object of veneration. Early on a follower had obtained one of his shirts. Ahmad did not ask for it back, but he insisted that when the man died the shirt be buried with him and thus destroyed. There was only one God and to Him alone could prayers be offered.

The financial schemes announced at the gatherings were financed by the members of the Ahmadiyya Movement. There were no fabulously wealthy men among them. Among them were doctors, local government employees, small landowners, merchants of various kinds, but the majority were ordinary working people. Many were very poor, but each month each member gave a stated sum. It did not matter how little a member could afford, perhaps just a tiny coin each month, but it had to be a regular sum each month. Later on each member gave a percentage of his income.

Financial management had now become essential for until then followers and guests had given what they wanted for their food and

accommodation. It might be sufficient to cover their stay. It might be so little that it did not pay for their food. Ahmad's family income made up the rest. Once, when he was told there was no food for their guests and no money to buy any, he sent a messenger to his wife. The messenger returned with a piece of jewellery which was pawned to buy food.

Suddenly the trickle of people coming to Qadian to listen to him became a flood. By 1900 there were 70, 80 and sometimes even a hundred visitors a day to Qadian. Most stayed for several nights in the guest-houses, which were constantly increased and enlarged.

The number of his adherents rose equally dramatically. Ahmad said that by 1900 they numbered more than 30,000. The number kept on increasing day by day so much so that his prophecy made many years ago that the road to Qadian would be worn into ruts by the people coming to see him had proved correct.

Once Ahmad chanced on a carpenter plaining smooth a plank of wood for a new building. That is not necessary, he told him, the essential thing is to get the building up so that people can sleep there. Luxury was not necessary.

In the guest-houses between 50 and 60 Volunteers cooked and cleaned for the guests and for the 150 boys who were now enrolled in the school. There were not enough classrooms so many classes were taken outside with the boys sitting on

the ground. In the printing shop some 15 men worked.

CHAPTER TWENTY SIX

Humility, Love And Courage

What brought about this transformation?

There have been great preachers, great leaders of religion in many lands and in many tongues, but the candle of their oratory has burned bright, grown dimmer as the years passed, flickered into sudden brightness again as the wax of the stub of the candle dissolved completely, then ... darkness.

What was different about Ahmad?

The first essential difference was his total, never wavering conviction that he was The Promised Messiah. He was God's Messenger, he said. No matter who stood against him, no matter how few stood with him, no matter if all deserted him, he would continue with the task that God had given him.

Muslim, Hindu and Christian religious leaders had united in condemning him, but ordinary people flocked to hear him. To understand his success, and the continuing success of the Ahmadiyya Movement, one must consider his character, his actions, the principles by which he conducted his life and by which he told his followers they must conduct their lives if they were to be members of the Ahmadiyya Movement and succeed in uniting all religions under Islam.

The qualities he praised were love, hospitality, tolerance, patience and sympathy. He regarded simplicity and industriousness as major qualities. "To me those persons who lead a life of simplicity are very dear," he said. He condemned pride, hard-heartedness and the love of luxury.

Ahmad did not suddenly become an efficient organiser of men and money. Nor did he convince people with the trappings of worldly success - richer and more exotic food, fine clothing, elegant house furnishings.

It was his character, the words he spoke and the life he led which convinced them that he was truly The Promised Messiah. His followers called him 'Hadhrat' meaning 'Holiness' as a sign of love and understanding. And he, in turn, addressed them politely as 'My brother'.

Sometimes they tried to make him dress in fine clothing that would distinguish him from ordinary people. One of them gave him a *shawl* made from a fine and expensive cloth. Most people would have used it carefully, keeping it for special occasions. Ahmad used it, a companion was to recall, perhaps with a little shudder in his memory, as though it were just an ordinary *shawl*.

On only one occasion did he ask for a particular piece of clothing - and that was because he was worried that someone might be offended. He saw one of the maids, looking rather disconcerted, carrying a man's coat. He asked what the trouble

was and she replied that she had been asked to give it to one of his followers by the man's uncle. But he had declined it, saying he was not interested in wearing other people's cast-off clothes.

"Give it to me," said Ahmad. "Tell the boy's uncle that I thought I would like it. If he doesn't mind I will keep it and wear it." In that way, he added, the boy's uncle would not be offended by the rejection of his gift.

It was not that Ahmad was not interested in clothing - he disregarded it. His mind was on other things. He frequently put the buttons of his waistcoat into the wrong buttonholes. When the buttons fell off - because of the strain put on them - he remarked, to the amusement of his companions, that waistcoat buttons wasted a lot of time. He was once presented with a pair of Western-style shoes, shaped for left and right feet. Ahmad marked them so that he could know at a glance which was left and which was right. But he often put them on incorrectly. This, for him, was wasting time for something that was of no consequence and he reverted to the slip-on sandals which he had worn all his life.

Ahmad wore a cap under his white turban. On one occasion, having made his ablutions before prayer, he asked the daughter of the friend in whose house he was, to fetch his cap from the room where he had made his ablutions. The daughter went

inside, looked around, but could see only an old worn cap which she was certain could not be his.

She returned and said his cap was not there. Ahmad said he was sure he had left it in there. Three times the daughter went in and searched, each time ignoring the old worn cap. Finally Ahmad's son went in and immediately returned with the old cap.

She never imagined, the daughter told friends later, that Ahmad would have such an old cap and live such a simple life that things like that were of no importance to him.

Once he complained to his servant Hamid Ali that he had had a pain in his ribs for the last three days whenever he sat down. Something in his clothes must be pinching him, he said. Hamid Ali, surprised, ran his hands over Ahmad's clothes and from a waistcoat pocket drew out a large piece of brick. Perhaps it was this, he suggested ironically, that was hurting Ahmad.

Ahmad smiled. "Ah, yes, I remember," he said. Mahmood his son had put it in his pocket and asked him to carry it for him. He said he might want to play with it one day.

The small room where he slept and worked was still bare and Spartan. Some visitors were invited in one day when Ahmad was unwell. Ahmad was sitting on the plain wood-framed *charpoy* or bed with his papers and books around him. There were no chairs and they had to sit on a green-painted wooden box, an iron chest and the floor. There was

not even a mat on the floor, one of them recalled, and the quilt on the bed was torn with its stuffing peeping out.

Sometimes he did not return to his room to sleep. One follower recalls that he stayed up all night on the flat roof of the mosque with Ahmad. After some time Ahmad wrapped a sheet round his body and lay down on the bare tiled roof.

"People think they cannot sleep without a bed. By the kindness of God I enjoy good sleep even on the floor," he said. "Saintliness and a love of luxury cannot go together."

It seemed to the follower, however, that Ahmad barely slept more than five minutes at a stretch. Then he would open his eyes, murmur "All praise be to God" and go back to sleep again.

During the debate with Aatham, Ahmad and his followers went up to the roof of the house where they were staying and Ahmad sat down on a piece of matting in the shade of a wall. The owner of the house, affronted that his honoured guest had so little comfort, said he would bring him a cotton carpet on which he could rest.

Ahmad refused. "I did not lie down to sleep. Sleep creates obstacles and these are not the days for sleep."

He was equally indifferent to food. In one town, where he was attending a meeting, he worked at his notes until late in the evening. He then realised that he was hungry. He had not eaten anything since

breakfast. There was consternation among his followers. They had forgotten to serve him a meal! Everyone else had eaten hours ago, there was no food in the house and all the markets were closed.

Ahmad shrugged his shoulders, smiled and said it was not important, he was sure there were some morsels of bread left in the baskets where everybody had been eating. He walked into the room where they had eaten, hunted around and emerged triumphant, holding three or four broken pieces of bread. This was quite enough, he said, and went back upstairs to continue working.

This simplicity of manner was to be recalled in many different ways by his followers. Abdul Karim said that one afternoon he was in Ahmad's room. It was the hot season and most people slept in the afternoon because of the oppressive heat. He lay down on Ahmad's *charpoy*, meaning to rest only for a few minutes, but he fell fast asleep. when he awoke he found Ahmad sitting on the tiled floor at the foot of the bed. Abdul Karim was understandably embarrassed.

Ahmad waived away his apologies. I stood guard because the children outside were making so much noise and you were obviously very tired, he said.

On another occasion, when Ahmad's servant was away, a follower asked if he could stay the night so that he could attend to any of Ahmad's needs. He sat down ready to respond to any request. Instead of

serving he found that he was being served. It was Ahmad who fetched the water for ablutions before prayer, Ahmad who fetched two glasses of milk before retiring. When he protested that he wanted to get these things in order to help him and free him for more important work, Ahmad replied that it was not important, he knew where everything was.

At dinner one evening, when his companions and guests were discussing their likes and dislikes regarding pickles, he suddenly got up and left the room. He returned with a bottle of the pickle that one person had said he was particularly fond of. "Why had he not asked a servant to fetch it, a guest asked. He was told that Ahmad did not think he was superior to anyone. He never acted the master who only gave orders. When beds, chairs or trunks had to be moved and Ahmad happened to be passing a servant would often find that Ahmad was on the other end of a bed.

When the great bubonic plague struck India Ahmad ensured that the government's hygiene recommendations were carried out - including counselling women to come out of *purdah* for inspection by doctors. But he also helped brush the yard and poured disinfectant into the drains round the house. In Hindu households dealing with drains and sweeping was most often done by a special caste - the Untouchables.

Ahmad never thought himself too grand for any task. One guest arrived well after midnight

when everyone was asleep. Ahmad and a porter answered his knock. Ahmad asked him to be seated, brought him a glass of milk and asked him to make himself comfortable while he and the porter arranged a bed. The guest waited a considerable time and then, attracted by the sound of banging followed the noise to its source.

He found Ahmad and the porter hurriedly banging together the framework for a *charpoy*. All the beds were occupied and, not wanting to disturb the people who normally looked after these arrangements, Ahmad had told the porter they would make the bed themselves while the guest waited.

His hospitality became as well known as his humility. When guests arrived he always enquired what kind of food they liked, what they did not like and any preferences regarding their sleeping arrangements. Once some guests arrived and the porters, being busy, told them rather brusquely to unload their own luggage from their cart. The guests took offence, remounted their vehicle and set off home again.

Ahmad, when he heard what had happened, set off after them on foot. He caught up with them some five miles away. He apologised for the casual reception they had received and accompanied them back to Qadian where he helped unload their luggage himself.

Ahmad did not reprimand the servants directly. This was never his method. Some days later,

however, in the mosque he said they must all think more of the welcome they extended to people who came to Qadian. When somebody had travelled many miles and suffered the hardships of the journey it was a relief to arrive. If they were not met with a ready welcome it was a great disappointment. Everyone should therefore strive to see that none of their guests was ever disappointed.

One guest, a well-known religious leader, fell seriously ill and appeared to be on the point of death. At midnight a companion went to Ahmad's house. It was in complete darkness. He went round the corner to where he knew Ahmad's bedroom was and called out. Ahmad answered. When the companion told him how ill the religious leader was Ahmad prayed silently. Then he mixed him a medicine and said, "Make him drink this. God will save him."

The next morning the religious leader was on the road to recovery. "Prayer is the real weapon in the armoury of a believer," Ahmad told the companion. "The medicine was only a palliative."

Ahmad also often ate with the guests to ensure that proper standards of cooking and service were maintained. He would actually eat only a little himself, but instead busy himself bringing food and freshly baked bread to the guests. Then he would nibble at some bread, helping himself to small, fresh pieces in case a guest noticed that he had finished

his meal and so be too embarrassed to continue eating.

He was equally polite and welcoming in the morning. Despite the hundreds of people who were now there he was always the first to offer the Islamic greeting 'Peace be with you'.

When a guest left Ahmad parted from him as though a very dear relative was leaving. He made a point of being there to say goodbye and would ask them to be sure to come again. Some of them made unexpected demands. Ahmad had a small-size Qur'an of which he was very fond. One guest said he would like to have it as a memento of Ahmad. Ahmad immediately handed it over.

When he was asked why he had done so, he said, "I liked it very much, but I thought of the verse of the Holy Qur'an which says *'ammas-saa-ila falaa tanhar'*. I therefore gave him the Qur'an."

CHAPTER TWENTY SEVEN

The Value Of Prayer

Ahmad's generosity and charity were not confined to his followers or other Muslims. There was no doctor in Qadian and patients therefore came to Ahmad for medicine. They arrived without warning, knocking at his door at different times throughout the day. A friend who watched told him that he had spent three hours that day dispensing medicine. Ahmad would also pay for a doctor to visit people and pay for their medicine.

He set aside a tenth of whatever money he received to be given away in charity. Usually, his wife recalled, he gave away much more than a tenth of their money in charity. It was a good idea, he told his followers, to physically set aside a tenth so that it could not be considered as money that was available. Otherwise, when expenditure was more than expected, it was the charitable tenth that was raided.

On one occasion, during winter, the postman delivering letters remarked how cold it was and that he had no coat. Ahmad immediately went inside and brought back two coats.

"Which one would you like?" he asked.

The postman said he would like them both. So Ahmad gave him both coats.

He found it hard to reprimand people, even when a reprimand was deserved. When a maid was discovered stealing rice a shouting and crying match developed. Ahmad happened to pass by and when he heard of the reason he said gently, "Well, perhaps she had greater need of it than we can know. We should not, therefore, judge her too harshly. Adopt forgiveness which is the attribute of God."

He once asked Nurud Din, the first person to take the covenant, for his comments on a poem he had written. He asked him to hand it to his secretary when he had finished. After a time the secretary, who knew the printer was waiting, approached Nurud Din and asked for the poem. Nurud Din turned pale searched his clothing and confessed he had lost it. When Ahmad was told Nurud Din expected a reprimand, but all that Ahmad said was that he was certain that God would provide him with an even better poem without delay.

He made the same reply some years later. His son Mahmood, then aged about four, had discovered a box of matches and come into Ahmad's room with some of his friends. He started striking the matches and finally set fire to several pages of a manuscript. The room filled with acrid smoke but the fire burned itself out on the tiled floor. All this time Ahmad continued working. He had not noticed anything.

Then he started to look for the pages and a boy told him what had happened. "Good," he said smilingly, "Perhaps this was the right thing to

happen, God in His Grace may guide us to a better subject."

He was equally unaware when food arrived - or disappeared. It is related that a meal was set beside while he worked. A dog came in, ate the meal and went out again. People were constantly knocking at his door. One of his children came in 20 times. Outside was the laughter and conversation of the people who worked in the guest-houses. How could he concentrate he was once asked.

"I do not heed what is going on around me so I am not disturbed, " he said.

Ahmad exhibited gentleness and forgiveness without exception. Hamid Ali, his servant once placed some valuable registered letters in his pocket, meaning to post them. They slipped out when he was emptying some rubbish. A Child found them and handed them to Ahmad.

"You're becoming a bit forgetful, Hamid Ali," said Ahmad gently.

Among the crowds coming to Qadian were naturally many sceptics. One religious scholar said he had been nominated by a particular group to investigate Ahmad's claims. He spoke in a rather ornate and flowery style, using words designed to impress his listeners rather than convey his meaning. At one stage he launched a personal attack on Ahmad, making derogatory remarks about his Punjabi accent.

An Afghan scholar and nobleman, Sahibzada Abdul Latif, who was in Qadian at that time, became greatly enraged and started talking in Persian which the newcomer did not understand. Ahmad was sitting beside Sahibzada Latif and, hearing the anger in his words, took his hand in his and held it tightly and so forced Sahibzada Latif to listen silently to the denunciation.

Sahibzada Latif said later that the insults were so great that he could not have stopped himself hitting the man, had not Ahmad ensured that he could not move by holding his hand so tightly.

Ahmad remarked, "Prayer should be said even for disbelievers. This purifies the heart, opens it up and gives it courage. Therefore unless the members of this Community adopt this attitude there will be hardly any difference between them and other Muslims. To me this is important ... the greatness of God lies in forgiving the wicked along with the righteous."

As the years passed Ahmad asked why, if he were an impostor, he was still alive.

"No harm has reached me whereas, according to the Holy Qur'an, I ought to have been struck down long before this if my claims were false ... the fact of my living and preaching so long proves to the very hilt the faithfulness of my mission and my claim."

And he added, "If all mankind deserts me, angels will come to my aid. If everyone were to

conceal the evidence of my just claim than the very stones of the earth would speak and attest to my ordination.

"I will not flinch from the work of God for fear that men will oppose me for I am created to fulfill my mission and I will be adamant in my resolve.

"There is a time for Men of God to appear as assuredly there is a time for their departure. Therefore, be assured, that I have come at a time which is selected for me by God."

And he confessed, "I never had any desire to claim to be the Promised Messiah. I loved to remain in solitude and to be quite unknown to the world abroad. But Divine wisdom ordained it otherwise and God enjoined me to come out of the corner of solitude which I enjoyed."

At another time he emphasised that every wickedness does not deserve to be opposed and that instead forgiveness - as perhaps indicated in the case of the stolen rice - should be adopted.

"Be patient. Be tolerant he said. "Suppress your emotions. Often you enter into discussion or talk about a religious matter, polite words should be used and decent behaviour observed. If someone is rude to you then say goodbye and leave immediately. If bad language is used about you then be careful - do not pay back in the same coin. Stupidity should not be reciprocated by stupidity.

"So expel from amongst you the person who is a symbol of wickedness, mischief, disruption and

evil. That member of our Community who cannot live with poverty, piety, goodness, tolerance, politeness and decent behaviour should depart, because our God does not wish that he should remain among us. Therefore be warned and be good at heart and adopt humility and truthfulness as your way of life."

Ahmad practised what he preached. On one occasion in Lahore he and a Hindu religious scholar were involved in a discussion when another Hindu came in and began vilifying Ahmad in gutter language. The Hindu scholar, ashamed of his coreligionist, asked him to stop, but Ahmad signalled that he should continue.

Ahmad listened silently with his hand over his mouth, Sometimes he would put the end of his turban in his mouth. finally his accuser fell silent. Ahmad then said, "Brother, if you wish to say more then please carry on."

But the man rose and went away.

The Hindu scholar was greatly impressed with Ahmad's self control and often spoke of it. We have heard of Christ's humility. Now I have witnessed the like with my own eyes."

He added, "It is impossible for such a person not to succeed."

When Ahmad was questioned about his refusal to become annoyed when people vilified him, he replied, "I have such control over myself and God has made me such a Muslim that even if a person

keeps abusing me in the filthiest language for a whole year, ultimately it shall be he who will be ashamed and shall have to admit that he could not dislodge or defeat me."

He urged this same patience and self control on his followers. "It is your duty to be patient," he told them. "A branch never exceeds the tree. Consider how long they can abuse you. They will get tired in the end. Their bad language, plots and mischiefs can never tire me. If I were not ordained by God then perhaps I would be afraid of their abuse. but as I am certain I am chosen by God why then should I care for such cheap things?

"Who has been harmed by this abuse? Them or me? Their followers have decreased while mine have increased. If their claims were of any value why is it that my Community has so increased?"

He showed the same self-control when, for almost three days, a Muslim scholar who was staying in one of the guest-houses attacked him personally whenever there was a discussion. One day, when he could not find an answer to a statement by Ahmad, he fell silent.

But not for long. "Now I truly know that you are an Antichrist because they have the power to make people silent against their will," he declared.

On the day of his departure, which was greeted with relief by members of the Community, he sent a note into Ahmad's house saying that he was a poor

man and needed money to pay for his journey back home. Ahmad came out and gave him 15 rupees.

The members of the Community knew nothing about Ahmad's charity until the Muslim scholar himself produced a handbill which related his visit to Qadian and his final request to Ahmad.

Ahmad told his followers that they could not establish the truth of Islam by logic alone. Nor could they emerge victorious merely by ridiculing others in reply to their taunts. Those who did so would become hard-hearted.

He added, "If you seek salvation then adopt the faith of the humble and, with all humility, put your neck in the yoke of the Holy Qur'an. Destruction awaits the wicked and Hell is for tyrants. But he who bends his knee shall be saved from destruction. Be like a child in obeying the commandments of God. Let humility and simplicity reside in your hearts and obey without demur."

CHAPTER TWENTY EIGHT

Family Life

In the mosque Ahmad was always inconspicuous. He usually stood at the far right in the front row and not in the middle as most visitors expected - Abdul Karim usually stood there and it was to him that most visitors introduced themselves. Once there had often been six or seven people at prayers, now there was often a thousand. When the mosque was full Ahmad would stand at the back near to where people had taken off their shoes. For a little while, however, he said his prayers in an annexe of the mosque. This was because a feeble-minded person had taken to standing beside him. In the annexe his antics could not distract the rest of the congregation.

Though important dignitaries were not infrequent visitors to Qadian - a representative of the Sultan of Turkey was one of them - ordinary people never felt ill at ease with Ahmad. He always had time to listen to them, though sometimes his companions grew impatient when a small farmer would ramble on and on with tales of his crops and other mundane matters. But to these very ordinary people Ahmad listened with such interest and love that they considered him as their dearest friend.

On one occasion Ahmad noticed that an old man, who had been sitting near him, had to move further and further away as more and more important people arrived. Finally he was practically outside the door. When the evening meal arrived Ahmad stood up and took his plate and went over to the old man and sat down beside him.

"Let us eat together," he said.

Children were equally at ease with Ahmad. They climbed on his lap and told him their nursery tales of frogs, crows and animals. He told them stories, too, it is remembered. They treated him as a companion. One of his wife's friends often stayed with them for a month. Her little daughter occasionally amused herself by coming into his room and fanning him as he worked. One day she found it more interesting to sit by the window. She told him, "Come and sit over here. It's easier for me,"

Ahmad duly got up and sat where she had directed.

When the boys of the school were going off to sit the matriculation examination they sought his blessing before they left. He was about to return to his house when his coat was suddenly tugged violently from behind. "Please, Sir, I've been left out", said a small boy.

Ahmad turned, smiled and shook hand with the boy. "May all of you pass," he said.

With his own children he was always an indulgent but caring parent. The prayers of parents for

their children and children's for their parents were always pleasing to God, he said. Children should be guided by good example and they should not be punished physically, he said. Fathers who beat their children were putting themselves alongside God and so were guilty of a kind of polytheism, believing they shared His attributes of being a true and absolute guide. Those who pushed their children unwillingly in a certain direction, believing they were masters of their children's destinies, were guilty of the same sin.

His sons and daughters remember Ahmad playing with them as small children, riding on his shoulders when he went for a walk, teasing them gently when they were in bed. He did not consider himself above nursing a fractious child. "Look how brightly that star shines," a follower heard him saying to his son Mahmood late one night when the child could not sleep.

"Father, I want to go to that star," the child replied.

The follower heard him remark to his wife, " I devised a way to distract him, but he has found it another cause for crying."

He guided them, too, to have respect for God's other creatures. When Mahmood, as a little boy, tried to catch sparrows by shutting the door of the mosque, he told him, "No one catches the little sparrows of his own abode. One who has no compassion has no faith."

And when Mahmood was older and went out shooting and returned with a parrot Ahmad told him, "It is flesh, so morally it is not forbidden to eat it. But God has not created all birds for eating. Some beautiful birds are there for us to see and enjoy while other birds are gifted by nature to delight us with their songs."

He took a constant interest in their education. When Mahmood arrived home one afternoon he told his younger brother Mian Bashir that their teacher had asked them to discuss which was more valuable - wealth or knowledge.

Which do you think is more valuable, he asked his brother. Ahmad interrupted. "Neither," he said. "It is the bountiful Mercy of God alone which has real value and is worth seeking." On another occasion he said, "The wealth of this world, its kingdoms and grandeur, are not to be envied. What one should truly envy is the act of prayer to God."

He was very certain that he needed prayers of support. He had asked his first wife to pray for him when they were still children. Now He asked Mahmood, when he was nine years old, to pray for him. He also asked other children to pray for him.

He instilled in his children great respect and love for their mother, recalling the verse in the Qur'an that says paradise lay under the feet of mothers. Once when his wife and her mother had a disagreement and were both in tears, he took his wife and led her in front of her mother where she

bowed her head. Her mother immediately raised her daughter's head and embraced her. All annoyance was gone. Without having said a word Ahmad left the room and went upstairs.

When his eldest daughter Ismat fell ill he nursed her devotedly night after night. She died. Later his youngest son died. After he had told people of their death he never again spoke about them in public. His followers knew he grieved deeply.

Ahmad was exceedingly conscious of his duty as a husband. He told his followers, "Your wives are the first witnesses of your moral and spiritual calibre and your relationship between you and God. A man who is not honourable and kind to his wife, how can he possibly be good to other people? You must first of all be good to your wives."

And to a friend whose wife had died he wrote with feeling, "Marriage is such a bond of human relationship that one is unable to be away from one's wife for more than a few weeks. Husband and wife are so much together, share so much of each other, that they become part of each other. With the blessings of marital relationship, worldly worries and trials are forgotten. The impressions and memories of marriage are so deep that, when one's wife dies, one cannot remember this relationship without tears. God has reminded us constantly about this mutual love and loyalty in marriage. It is the fountainhead of all human relationships.

Ahmad never interfered with his wife's control of the household. On a minor matter one of his followers said he disagreed with a decision she had made about an alteration to a building. Ahmad replied that it was a matter that was under her control and her decision should not be discussed.

His marriage had proved totally successful. He believed that it had taken place under a Divine plan for the year they married was also the year that he put forward his claim that he was the Reformer of his age. Indeed Amman Jaan herself sometimes remarked with pride that her arrival had started this happy period in his life.

On such occasions one of their sons remembers that he would smile and say, "Yes, that's true".

She was a deeply religious woman attached great importance to the five daily prayers - she rose regularly for the midnight prayer. One of her sons recalls, "She offered these prayers with such joy and ecstasy that those around her also were considerably touched with that inner happiness ... she often sought strength and peace of mind with prayer at other hours of the day and at night.

"In prayer in the general sense she excelled. These were for her children and other relations and for all members of the Ahmadiyya Movement all of whom she looked upon as her own children. These prayers, and those for the progress of Islam, she offered with the greatest emotion."

Her charitable works were many. When the annual call came for funds for missionary work she sent in the money along with her promise. "No reliance can be placed upon life and so there is a weight on the mind until I have paid the sum promised," she would say.

More personal and more time-consuming was her work for orphans. There was usually a boy or a girl being looked after in her house. She took care of all their needs ... bathed them, combed their hair, changed their clothes. She did these things herself, always treating them in a manner calculated to develop in them a proper sense of self-respect.

She liked doing things herself. She enjoyed cooking, spinning, weaving and feeding their milking buffalo.. She always had flowering plants, creepers of Indian beans or medicinal galo inside the house which she looked after herself.

She was most generous with her hospitality, he added. There were few visitors who did not stay for a meal. And with the festivals of the two Eids it was her delight to have all her children and grand children gather for dinner at her table.

When Abdul Karim complained to Ahmad of the attention he had to give his mother now that she was old and frail Ahmad told him that he had a sacred duty to love and respect his mother, he recalled the saying of Muhammed that there were two especially unlucky people, the person who had the opportunity to fast in the month of Ramadhan

and did not do so, and so allowed the holy month to go past without his sins being forgiven. The other unlucky person was he whose parents were alive and who did not serve them with devotion and obedience.

Ahmad's constant admonition to his followers that they must be humble, truthful and generous resulted in many people joining the Community because they had been so impressed by the actions of one of his followers. The first sermon that a man called Umar Din heard stressed the duties owed to relatives. He felt it applied totally to himself and when he returned to his home in Kashmir he gave back to his brother the share in a property which he had usurped.

A Hindu religious scholar wrote that Ahmad was always patient, kind and courteous, but he was a lion in debate. Said Ahmad, "I make it plain to all Muslims, Christians, Hindus and Aryas that I have no enemy in the world. I love mankind as a loving mother loves her children. I am only against their false beliefs which destroy truth."

Of the threats to kill him he was scornful. They came in unstamped, anonymous letters in nearly every post. He said, My soul is not to be annihilated. Failure is not something I will ever have to face. I have the courage and truthfulness which can move mountains. I am not afraid of any trial. In a jungle I will push forward. In battle you will never see me turn back though you may see my head lying bloody

in the dust. There is but one life but if I had a thousand lives it would be my wish to sacrifice each one of those lives for God"

He warned converts, "When you leave here people will tell you that you have given allegiance to a leper and a liar. Do not worry about this. Pray for them. God may guide them as He has guided you. If you find they do not heed your call, then desist. If a person does not want to follow in my footsteps he can leave.

"I do not know what jungles full of thorns are in front of me. Those who are feeble cannot face these trials. But those who belong to me cannot separate from me, no matter what trials are set."

He added, "All the prophets have been abused. That is the inheritance of the Prophets so how can I be deprived of it? Yon must have such perfect control of anger that you have no capacity for anger. God enjoins patience and we must obey Him. Understanding God's revelation leads to forbearance."

CHAPTER TWENTY NINE

The White Minaret

Ahmad had never shirked controversy and now he found himself involved in debates all over India and, later on, in Britain, the United States of America and other countries. There were petty annoyances, too, and now also came the time of the first martyrs, executed in great cruelty because they would not renounce their belief in the prophethood of Ahmad.

As the Ahmadiyya Movement grew in esteem and Influence throughout India and the world there were naturally those in Qadian whose jealousy grew apace. There had always been opposition from Hindu, Muslim and Sikh opponents in Qadian and at one time the abuse and annoyances inflicted on his followers and himself were so great that Ahmad considered leaving Qadian. A prophet has no honour in his own country and Ahmad was discovering the truth of this old saying.

When his followers tried to get as simple a thing as mud from the village pond to make bricks they were jostled and their loads upset. When Abdul Karim preached one Friday one of Ahmad's cousins, who hated him, had a band of drum and woodwind players at the ready. Each time Abdul Karim began speaking the band struck up. Abdul Karim was

noted for the strength of his lungs, but even he was finally reduced to repeating a single verse from the Qur'an, "Woe unto you" repeatedly and again "Woe unto you".

Ahmad preached patience and tolerance but one day, when he was away, one of his followers was set upon. This time there was no restraining influence and a street fight developed with the Sikhs pillaging the house of an Ahmadi. The police were called in and, as there was clear evidence of looting, the Sikhs were arrested, handcuffed and taken off to jail.

Ahmad, who had severely admonished his followers for reacting to the provocation, was appealed to by the Sikh leaders. He used his influence and the Sikh rioters were released.

The persecution continued and Ahmad again considered moving to a bigger town. Other prophets, even the Holy Prophet, had been driven from their homes so he was not suffering any more than they had. Ahmad was immediately offered houses in various towns in the Punjab, but he finally decided to stay in Qadian.

One of the people who hated him most in Qadian was the widow of his brother Mirza Ghulam Qadir. Hers was a personal dislike, not a religious difference. It is always more difficult to accept the success of people you have looked down upon and she had always done so with Ahmad.

Early on he had stood in the way of her husband's sole possession of the family estate. She resented the fact that he had a right to half the income and could live on in the family house. The fact that he occupied only a small room and ate sparingly only seemed to increase her dislike.

After the death of her husband her hatred increased. They had never had any children and, as a result, Ahmad was now the chief of Qadian.

She and her husband had adopted in all but name Ahmad's two sons by his first marriage. His eldest son, Sultan Ahmad, had married the daughter of her brother, Mirza Nizam Din, who lived in an adjoining property. As a result of this marriage, Sultan Ahmad was brought into a conspiracy against his father.

For many years Mirza Nizam Din had catcalled and abused any visitors to Ahmad that he happened to meet when they passed his house. Now he thought of a more grievous stratagem to harass Ahmad.

In January, 1900, Mirza Nizam Din built an 8 ft wall across the lane that led to Ahmad's house. It meant that, from now on, anyone who came to see him or wanted to go to the mosque had to take a long and circuitous walk through Qadian's back streets. Most were unpaved and, in the rainy season, were ankle deep in mud. The route also took them past the houses of many people opposed to Ahmad and, as a result, the visitors were nearly always

abused verbally, sometimes spattered with mud and occasionally physically assaulted.

The visitors to the mosque also did not have access to the well for water for the necessary ablutions before praying. Ahmad tried to reach some kind of agreement with his cousin about the wall, but this was rejected with laughter. Finally, reluctantly, he decided to take legal action. His son was on the other side.

When the documents of the case were deposited in court one of them appeared to confirm that Nizam Din owned the land on which the wall was built. Ahmad's lawyers counselled him to try to buy the land in order to settle the dispute as it appeared that Mirza Nizam Din was bound to win.

The proposal was turned down with contempt. Not only was he going to retain the wall across the lane, said Nizam Din but he was, he boasted, going to build a wall right round Ahmad's house so that no one could get in.

He claimed victory too soon, however. A further search for documents revealed one with the name of Ahmad's father, Mirza Ghulam Murtaza, on it. It proved that Ahmad was an equal owner of the land.

The judge declared that the witnesses produced by Mirza Nizam Din were not reliable whereas those produced by Ahmad were reliable. He therefore ordered that the wall be pulled down and that Mirza Nizam Din pay compensation for the trouble he had

caused. The compensation was not paid and Ahmad's lawyers, without his knowledge, obtained a court order. A bailiff arrived at Qadian and when Nizam Din could not produce the money he started to sequester his goods. That night Mirza Nizam Din and his brother, who had also been involved, sent a message to Ahmad asking for mercy.

He had no money, he said. He would have to sell property in order to pay the court costs. Ahmad wrote back immediately saying that he had given orders for the summons to be withdrawn.

To his followers he explained, "We are not interested in such litigation. That's an occupation for people who have nothing else to do but worry about worldly gains. God has not sent me on such a mission. That is not my work. If my cousin meant some harm to me, it is not our job to repay him in the same coin."

There was to be a further legal action concerning the building of the white minaret at Qadian which, in a very special way, symbolised the coming of The Promised Messiah. The word *minarah* in Arabic - which is translated as minaret- means literally the time and place of light. It comes, it is said, from the first *minarah* or lighthouse built by Alexander The Great at Alexandria in Egypt.

White stands for purity, spotlessness and brilliance. There is a tradition in Islam which says that The Promised Messiah will descend by the White minaret to the East of Damascus.

This, said Ahmad, should not be taken too literally. It meant that The Promised Messiah would come when there should be light throughout the world and distance could not keep things hidden from view. It meant also that the truth of Islam would tower up like a minaret and attain a height which would establish its superiority over all other faiths.

Ahmad nevertheless decided to fulfil this prophecy literally as well as spiritually. His aims were threefold:

So that the *Muezzin* could call out the time of prayers five times a day, proclaiming loudly that there is only one God and that He alone is worthy of worship.

Secondly bright lights would be fixed to the top of the minaret to dispel darkness and to show people that the age of heavenly light and spiritual advancement had arrived.

Thirdly, a clock which would strike the hours and indicate that here, at this very moment, the doors of Heaven were open and there was no need for a war with the sword in order to convert the world to Islam

The opponents of Ahmad in Qadian united against his proposal. It would infringe their privacy. People in the minaret could peer into their houses. It was all very trivial, but tempers and emotions were aroused. When a local government official arrived in Qadian to take evidence one of the most vociferous

opponents of Ahmad was a man called Lala Budha Mal.

Pointing to him Ahmad said, "Ask him if there was ever an opportunity to do me an injury and he neglected it. Ask him also if there was ever an opportunity to do him good and I neglected it."

Lala Budha Mal hung his head and said nothing.

When the report on the dispute reached the appropriate authority it was decided that there was no reason at all why the minaret should not be built. Though the foundations were laid it was not built until many years after Ahmad's death. It is depicted today on all the publications of the Ahmadiyya Movement and on the flag which flies at their gatherings.

CHAPTER THIRTY

Islam Looks To The West

These were the pinpricks of personal malice and envy. Now he was to enter into disputes that attracted attention world-wide. The minaret and the muezzin calling the faithful to prayer represented the old tradition of Islam. If he were to reach the millions of people who had not yet even heard mention of Islam then he had to utilise every modern means of communication.

Newspapers provided the ability to talk to people all over the world in their own languages. Already the press in Qadian was turning out newspapers in different languages which were distributed throughout India. But the language of communication for the educated and administrative classes in India was already English. It transcended class and religion as well as the old-fashioned state boundaries of *Rajahs* and *Maharajahs*.

Moreover, it opened the door to the Western world. With English, Ahmad realised, he could speak to the United States and to every country in the British Empire. At that time it meant most of Africa, large portions of South East Asia and toeholds into China and South America. He therefore proposed the establishment of a journal in English that would appeal to thinking people.

And just as he had propelled Islam into public consciousness throughout India by demonstrating its beauties alongside those of other religions, he now did the same with his new magazine. It was entitled 'The Review of Religions'. The editor was Muhammad Ali, a Barrister of Lahore.

The prospectus stated that it "expects to offer not only an impartial review of the various religions, sifting truth from error, but also the solution for the vital questions for which religion exists and upon which it is founded...

"The editor shall feel obliged to receive all contributions, from all gentlemen, of whatever persuasion, who have any sympathy for the objects with which the magazine is started".

" We do not start the magazine as a speculative venture, but with the sincere object of doing our duty to man ... We have started it to satisfy the search after truth and we do not care for the approbation or disapprobation of any particular sect."

" There is not a single instance in history in which abuses have not been hurled at the head of the man who proclaimed the truth. None of the prophets and the reformers have been an exception to the rule. Human nature has not undergone any alteration as to make us expect any other treatment, but we will in true sincerity, advise every seeker after truth and well wisher of humanity to weigh our reasons before forming an opinion against us."

The Editor then continued, "Our object in starting '*The Review of Religions*' is twofold. Firstly, to draw the world to truth - to teach true morals, to inculcate true beliefs, to disseminate true beliefs and last though not least, to make men act upon the principles of truth ordained."

Mere knowledge of the virtues cannot make a man good so the second objective of the magazine was, he said, "to draw them with a magnetism so mighty in operation that it may create in them a power to act upon the doctrines taught."

The Editor concluded his prospectus by defining the six areas to which the magazine would devote most of its pages:

- to show who is the Inspired Reformer
- to show the signs and enumerate the arguments which support his claim
- to expound his moral teachings
- to explain the beliefs he inculcates and those he rejects
- to show the truths and knowledge of his teachings and to show in which of the Divine books they are to be found
- to light the path which he has described in order to seek union with God,

The contents page of the second issue showed that the contents lived up to the editor's desires. There were articles on Jesus and the Jews, Christian Missionaries and Government Officials, Religion as

a Science, Unity versus Trinity, the Christian Doctrine of Salvation, Evidence from Natural Laws,

Evidence from Human Nature, Evidence from the Holy Bible, Evidence about the Divinity of Jesus, Jesus and Muhammad compared.

The magazine was printed on the Movement's new printing press in Qadian and distributed throughout India. It was also distributed in Great Britain, United States of America and other English speaking countries.

'The Church Family', a journal published under the auspices of the Church of England, commented,

"We should make no attempt to refute the literature published under the auspices of Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, for he will create such a volume of literature against Christianity as will destroy the authority of the Bible altogether."

'The Review of Religions' has now been published continuously since 1902, making it one of the oldest religious journals in the world.

As he had refused to let any criticism of Islam go unanswered in India, Ahmad now refused to let any criticism of Islam go unanswered in the United States or Great Britain. The first person to come to his attention was John Alexander Dowie. He was a Scot, born in Edinburgh, who had been trained for the ministry and emigrated to Australia. There he gained a reputation for healing. In 1888 he moved to the United States and, in 1901, started building a city in Illinois which he called Zion City.

He was a bitter enemy of Islam In his inappropriately named journal, 'Leaves of Healing' he wrote "I think of the falsehood of Muhammad with great contempt".

And he continued, "I warn the Christian people of America and Europe that Islam is not dead. Islam has great strength, though Islam and Muhammadism must be destroyed."

Ahmad rose to the challenge. "We wish to point out respectfully that there is no need to subject millions of Muslims to destruction for the fulfilment of his purpose. There is a very easy way of determining whether Mr. Dowie's God is true or our God. Mr. Dowie need not repeatedly announce his prophecy of the destruction of all Muslims, but should keep me alone in his mind and should pray that, of the two of us, the one who is false may die before the other ... Mr Dowie believes in Jesus as God and I consider him a humble creature and a prophet."

He continued, "I have not been the first to propose such a prayer. It is Mr. Dowie who, through his announcements, has put himself in that position. Observing this, God, Who is jealous, has urged me towards this confrontation. It should be remembered that I am not just an average citizen of this country. I am The Promised Messiah, who is awaited by Mr Dowie. The only difference is that I am that person. Hundreds of signs have appeared in my support in the earth and from Heaven. My Community

numbers a hundred thousand and is rapidly increasing."

Mr. Dowie was aged 56 at that time. Ahmad was 10 years older and in poor health because he suffered from diabetes, amoebic dysentery, migraine and had a blood deficiency, His life did not depend upon the state of his health, however, Ahmad said, but on the command of God.

He concluded, "If instead of the destruction of all the Muslims Mr Dowie's purpose can be served by my death alone, he will have established a great sign, in consequence of which millions of people will acknowledge the son of Mary as God.

"The truth is that Jesus, son of Mary, is from me and I am from God. Blessed is he who recognises me and most unfortunate is he from whose eyes I am hidden."

The promised Messiah's challenge received great publicity throughout the United States. *'The Argonaut'* of San Francisco, then a newspaper with a large circulation, commented that Ahmad had given a challenge that would be difficult to ignore.

In so many words he had said, "Mr. Dowie and I should each pray that whoever is false, God should take him away in the lifetime of the other. The one whose prayer shall be heard shall be considered from the true God.

"This indeed is a most reasonable and just position," concluded 'The Arrogant'.

Dowie did not accept the challenge. Instead he prayed publicly, "I pray to God that Islam should soon disappear from the world. O' God, accept this prayer of mine. O' God, destroy Islam."

It was Dowie who was destroyed, however. His health deteriorated. He encountered financial difficulties. In 1905 he suffered a stroke and had to move first to Jamaica and then Mexico in search of a warmer climate. The affairs of Zion City were turned over to a nominee who turned against him. His wife and children deserted him and he was charged with a number of illicit and immoral practices. He died a miserable death on March 9, 1907. Some comments by an American newspaper were:

"Ahmad and his adherents may be pardoned for taking some credit for the accuracy with which the prophecy was fulfilled."

"The Qadian man predicted that if Dowie accepted the challenge he would leave this world before his eyes with great sorrow and torment. If Dowie declined, the end would only be deffered; death awaited him just the same and calamity would soon overtake zion. That was the grand prophecy:

Zion would fall and Dowie would die before Ahmad."

"Dowie died a miserable death with Zion city torn and frayed by internal dissensions."

The biggest headline was in a Boston newspaper:

GREAT IS MIRZA GHULAM AHMAD, THE MESSIAH.

CHAPTER THIRTY ONE

The First Martyrs

The rich tapestry of history is that India has chronicled the rise and fall of tyrants, kings and emperors. Invasions, both peaceful and military, have produced vast movements of population. Mother India had accepted them all.

Muhammad had preached tolerance of all people and all religions. Islam would conquer because of the truth, not because of the sword.

Under the British rule this acceptance of the liberty of belief had been embodied in the rules of law. The British administrators were Christians and there was naturally a certain predisposition to the Christian faith, but the rights of all other religions were respected. Everyone had the right to propagate their own beliefs. They had no right to attack the beliefs of other religions, though it is true that this was not always punctiliously observed.

There were perhaps two main reasons for the civil laws of India upholding this liberty of belief. The first was that this liberty of belief, having been finally won in Britain, had been exported throughout the Empire. Pragmatism went hand in hand with this liberty - the first priority of British rule in India was to maintain the Empire. They did not want anyone to stir up inter communal strife.

Ahmad was to praise wholeheartedly this liberty of religion. Just as the Pharisees and scribes had rejected Jesus as a prophet so had the *mullahs* with their *fataawa* rejected him. But they could not stop him preaching and so they could not stop his adherents increasing. Ahmad therefore rejected the calls for a *Jihad* against the British. If every Muslim could preach his faith without fear of persecution then there was no need, he said, of *Jihad*. *Jihad* was only needed when there was unjust rule.

This viewpoint was not accepted in neighbouring Afghanistan. The ruler of that country had accepted that the British rule in India and their military might was superior to his, but that did not mean that he was willing to accept infiltration, religious or political, that might lessen his power. By preaching the sword his mullahs maintained their authority and kept the British on their own side of the frontier.

The British, on the other hand, as a result of a disastrous defeat when they invaded Afghanistan, had accepted that Afghanistan would not become part of the Empire and, besides, that a nominally independent Afghanistan could be a valuable buffer state against the perceived threat of Russian imperialism.

There was a natural mountain frontier between most of Afghanistan and India but the areas under dispute were to be settled by the Durand Commission. One of the representatives of the King of Afghanistan at those discussions was a nobleman

called Sayyed Abdul Latif. He was a chief of the area of Khost and one of the most influential and richest men in the country. He owned vast stretches of land in India as well as Afghanistan. He had been a tutor of the King when young and at his coronation it was he who had wound the turban round his head, signifying the Kings ascension to the throne.

He was also learned. He was renowned for his knowledge of the Holy Qur'an, the Traditions of the Prophet and of Islamic jurisprudence. As a result he had been accorded the title of *maulavi* (The Learned Person), *Sahibzada*, and *Akhwandzada*. People came from all over Afghanistan to study under him and to take advantage of the considerable library he had gathered together at his palace..

During the deliberations of the Durand Commission, after business of the day was over, it was natural that there should be mutual hospitality. At one of these evening meetings, a member of the Indian representatives told the Sahibzada that he had taken *bai'at* at the hands of Ahmad. He has recognised Ahmad, he declared, as the Messiah- Promised in Islam. He gave Sahibzada several books written by Ahmad.

As a result the Sahibzada entered into a correspondence with Ahmad which finally resulted in the Sahibzada sending one of his retainers to Qadian to study there and report back to him. This man was called Abdul Rahman.

Abdul Rahman stayed some three months at Qadian and on his return told the Sahibzada what he had learned and how greatly impressed he had been by the teachings of Ahmad. The Sahibzada agreed that he should return to Qadian to study still further. During this second visit he took the oath of allegiance to Ahmad and recognised him as the Promised Messiah.

When Abdul Rahman returned to Kabul he talked openly of the preaching of Ahmad and especially of his repudiation of the erroneous concept of *Jihad*. When the king heard of this he ordered the immediate arrest of Abdul Rahman. Trials rarely took place in Afghanistan. Either the person was too important or not important enough to be put on trial. It was simpler just to get rid of them. One night, therefore, while in custody, Abdul Rahman was strangled.

Some two years later the Sahibzada asked the King for permission to travel to Mecca to perform the *Hajj*. The King not only granted his request, but, as a token of their friendship, presented him with a considerable sum of money to pay for his journey. The Sahibzada, after inspecting his properties in India, decided that he would use the opportunity afforded by his pilgrimage to visit Qadian and meet the man with whom he had such a long correspondence. He would then continue on to Mecca.

The Sahibzada never reached Mecca. When he arrived in Qadian he stayed at the newly erected

guest house which Ahmad's followers had built. It lay just a few minutes walk from the main mosque and from Ahmad's house. There they met and had long discussions. In the late afternoons, when Ahmad walked to his orchard of , mango trees his route took him past the guest house. The Sahibzada therefore joined in his afternoon walk and sat with Ahmad's followers in the shade of the trees, sharing not only his thoughts, but also occasionally a mango from the many different varieties of trees.

The Sahibzada was to find himself in complete agreement with Ahmad's claims. When Ahmad asked him how he came to be drawn to him the Sahibzada replied, "Above all it was the Holy Qur'an which guided me towards you."

He added, "I had already reached the conclusion that the period which we were passing was a time when a great majority of Muslims had gone astray. They called themselves Muslims, but their hearts were devoid of true faith and their actions did not conform to what they professed. In doctrine and in practice, in words and deeds, they were involved in serious errors, innovations and transgressions of the Divine commandments. The religion and righteousness which the Holy Prophet had preached to his companions, and the sincerity, certainty and faith which they had, had almost vanished from the earth.

I perceived that the present condition of faith in Islam demanded the appearance of a Reformer. I

read the books which contained your claim. I critically examined the arguments and tested them by the Holy Qur'an and found the Holy Book supporting every argument of your claim. They confirmed every one of your statements."

The point which at first had made him lean towards Ahmad's views, he declared, was that the Qur'an says that Jesus is dead and will never return yet there is a clear promise that God would continue to send Successors and Reformers to the Holy Prophet like the Successors of the Prophet Moses. This had led to the conclusion that as the line of Moses' Successors was terminated by a Messiah who did not resort to religious wars so the terminating link in the chain of the Holy Prophet's Successors was to be a Messiah in the spirit and after the manner of the first Messiah.

Ahmad was to describe the Sahibzada's love and affection as like a "clear crystal phial filled with the most fragrant perfume."

"His heart, like his radiant face, was very pure," he said. "The most enviable quality was that he always gave preference to matters of faith over worldly affairs. He was among those true and righteous persons who, through fear of God, piety and obedience to Him would gladly sacrifice their reputation, their glory, their possessions, indeed their very lives, as if all these were mere chaff as compared to seeking the pleasure of God.

"His zeal and enthusiasm for the Faith was so great that it would not be an exaggeration to liken it to some lofty mountain."

After some weeks at Qadian the Sahibzada decided not to continue with his pilgrimage to Mecca. "I stand in need of knowledge and wisdom which is a source of strength to one's faith."

It is known that Ahmad and the Sahibzada discussed the Heavenly Signs that Ahmad said had been manifested in his favour and that the Sahibzada agreed with him. They also discussed the question of how Ahmad could be a prophet whereas none of the successors of the Holy Prophet was deemed to be a prophet.

The Holy Prophet was the Seal of the Prophets and no law-bearing prophet could come after him, said Ahmad. As the Promised Messiah, however, he was a prophet but he did not hold the gift of prophethood in his own right, but merely as a reflection of his master's prophethood.

This status had been bestowed upon him by God, he said, because he had so excelled in perfect obedience to his master that he had become his zill or shadow. In a revelation God had said to him:

" Oh Ahmad, thou hast been exalted as a prophet."

After some months at Qadian the Sahibzada recognised that Ahmad was indeed the Messiah Promised by God. He took the oath of allegiance to him.

Not long afterwards the Sahibzada decided to return to Afghanistan. He believed that he would be returning to his death. In a revelation he had received the message, "Offer your head. Offer your head."

To Ahmad he said, "I have a foreboding that my end is near. I may not be so fortunate to ever see your holy face again."

On the day of his departure Ahmad declared that he awoke with a heavy heart. He was losing a true friend. He walked with the Sahibzada the first three miles from Qadian, miles that they had often covered in happier days. Then he turned and retraced his steps to Qadian while the Sahibzada continued onwards.

In the days that followed the Sahibzada told His companions that he knew he was going to his death as a martyr for the renewal of Islam. "Afghanistan has need of blood," he said.

Having been given money and special permission from the King to go on the *Hajj*, he decided, while still in India, to write to the King explaining why he had not done as he intended.

His letter was inflammatory as far as the King and his religious advisers were concerned. The Sahibzada told them that he had found the Messiah who had been promised to Muslim for 1,300 years, In obedience, therefore, to God and his Prophet he

had been obliged to stay at Qadian and change his resolution regarding the pilgrimage to Mecca.

The reply from the King urged the Sahibzada to return to Afghanistan and then to come to Kabul with all haste. If Ahmad truly was the Promised Messiah then he wanted to know of him immediately, he declared. The Sahibzada was not convinced that the letter was honest. The King's brother and the *Qadhi* or religious judges would be unlikely to accept so easily the advent of the Messiah. The *Pharisees* and *scribes* had not accepted the Prophet Jesus and the *Qadhi* were no different. He decided, however, that, truthful or not, he must return to Afghanistan. He must accept the Plan that God had ordained for him.

His arrival at Khost was celebrated with joy by his family and tribesmen. To them he gave the news of the arrival of the Promised Messiah. But he himself was often sad. One day, sitting in his house, he raised his hands and, looking at them, said, "O my hands, will you bear the handcuffs with good grace?"

His wife, becoming alarmed, asked, "why do you talk like this? What is wrong?"

The Sahibzada replied, "You will know after *Asr*, the afternoon prayer." That afternoon, as he had foretold, a troop of the King's horsemen arrived at Khost. He was to accompany them to Kabul, they said.

Before he left he said to his family and retainers, "I am going away. Be mindful of what I have taught you. Be firm and steadfast in the belief and faith that I hold."

The Sahibzada arrived in Kabul riding his own horse, the townspeople of Kabul were to say later, but already his disgrace was talked about publicly. The Sahibzada himself was in no doubt. As he looked at the crowds which had gathered he remarked, "I am the bridegroom of this procession."

When he appeared before the King there was no doubt about the wrath of the King. "Make him stand further away from me," he ordered the guards. "He has an obnoxious smell. He is an infidel."

He ordered that he be chained with a *gharg-harab*, a heavy chain of iron weighing some 17 lb. be attached to his ankles. He was then locked in one of the dungeons of the Kings palace.

For the next six weeks the Sahibzada was kept in vile conditions - he could hardly move because of the chains and fetters, there was no sanitation, little light and less food. He was a man in his fifties, used to study and intellectual debate, so it must have seemed to the King that he would soon realise that his only hope of release was to renounce his newly-acquired faith in Ahmad.

It was not often that prisoners of the King had that option - once in prison they stayed there until, in a very short time, they died or were executed, But continual attempts were made to make the Sahib-

zada declare that he had been mistaken and that Ahmad of Qadian was not the Promised Messiah. The Sahibzada after all had been the King's tutor, he had become one of his advisers, he was a chieftain to whom many thousands of families paid homage. It would be far better if he recanted than that he was executed.

He was promised that if he did so his lands and titles would be restored to him. His children, who had been driven from his place and were now living in poverty as well as great danger, could return home.

From all these very great inducements the Sahibzada turned away. It was not that he was not conscious of the danger into which his actions put his wife and children, he said. It was not that he did not suffer greatly from his chains and fetters and the horrible conditions in which he found himself. But he was an intelligent and knowledgeable person and equipped by God with sufficient intelligence to be able to distinguish between right and wrong. He knew the difference between truth and falsehood, he said.

"I have found the truth after much careful searching and I believe that he is indeed the Promised Messiah. My faith may cost me my life, but I hold my faith more dear to me than my life and all worldly relationships."

He gave the same answer each time he came before the King. "I have found the truth and cannot

depart from it, even at the cost of my life. I shall die with the truth."

After some six weeks the Sahibzada was again brought before the King. His patience was exhausted, said the King. If he would recant not only would his lands and titles be restored, but further honours would be given to him, the King said. If he did not recant then he would be condemned as an apostate and heretic. The punishment was death by stoning.

The Sahibzada still did not recant. He could not recant from the truth, he said. Besides, tortures and trials on earth would soon come to an end, but if he denied the Promised Messiah, the Messenger of God, then his torment would be everlasting.

He knew, he said, that Ahmad was the Promised Messiah. He could prove it by the Holy Qur'an. He was willing to debate this with any divines that the King wished to nominate. If the arguments in support of his claim were justly refuted then he should be condemned and punished.

The King took this as a final opportunity to keep peace in the lands of the Sahibzada. Eight divines were selected to enter into a debate with him. The debate was held in the largest mosque in Kabul. There was a huge crowd of spectators, but they heard nothing. They were not going to give the Sahibzada the opportunity to express his views publicly. The debate was to be held in writing with all views and comments and references written down and passed to the opposing party.

The debate started at 7 a.m. and finished at 3 p.m. The chains and fetters were removed from the Sahibzada so that he could write but guards with drawn swords stood round him all the time. At the end of the written discussions, when the time of *Asr* prayer was about to finish, the divines asked him out loud, "If this man from Qadian is the Promised Messiah, what then do you say of the Prophet Jesus? Will he come back to the world?"

The Sahibzada, it is recounted, standing in the rags and tatters of the clothing in which he had arrived in Kabul six weeks ago, still answered in a firm and dignified manner. "The Prophet Jesus is dead just as the Holy Prophet is dead. The Holy Qur'an says so and I believe in every word of the Qur'an."

And he quoted the verse that Abu Bakr had read out when some of the Holy Prophet's Companions wanted to believe that he would come again: "Muhammad is only an apostle and all the apostles have passed away before him."

There was no prophet who was not dead so the death of the Holy Prophet was not strange, it was the common lot of all mortals. In the same way as Muhammad would never return to the earth, neither would the Prophet Jesus.

At this the divines burst out with furious denunciations. There was now no doubt that he was an infidel. He had renounced the faith of Islam for they believed that Jesus was alive in Heaven and would

return as the Messiah on the Day of Judgement. They therefore prepared the formal declaration of his apostasy and he was returned to his cell, burdened once again with heavy chains and fetters.

The declaration was delivered to the King who pronounced sentence of death. The next morning the Sahibzada was taken in chains to the audience hall of the King where a large crowd was already gathered. When the King arrived he told him, "You have been declared an apostate. Will you now repent?"

The Sahibzada said that he could not repent of the truth and he would not lie to save his life. The King again urged him to repent, but again the Sahibzada said he could not repent for he would not give up the truth. He was obeying the Word of God.

"Take pity on your family, if not on yourself," he urged. They would be tainted, dishonoured and disinherited by his apostasy.

Once again the Sahibzada refused.

"God forbid that I should deny the truth. This life is worth little and none of kith and kin shall avail me in the life hereafter. It is not possible that I should renounce my faith for their sake. I value my faith more than my life. I shall die for my faith."

At this the divines shouted that there was no doubt that he was a traitor to Islam, an apostate, and must be stoned to death. He must die.

Amid the clamour the Sahibzada began reciting the verse from the Qur'an which helps all Muslims adhere to their faith and when peril is near.

"Lord, let not our hearts become perverse after Thou hast guided us. Bestow mercy upon us from Thyself. Surely Thou art the Great Bestower."

The King, his brother, Nasrullah Khan, and Abdul Ahad, the Chief Qadi or judge, were riding on horses with the rest of the crowd on foot. The Chief Qadi who should cast the first stone. He was the head of *Sharia*, the religious law, and the Sahibzada had been condemned under the *Sharia*. He was the repository of the law and it was his sentence that was being carried out.

The *Qadhi* therefore dismounted from his horse and picked up a stone. As he prepared to throw it the Sahibzada recited the verse from the Qur'an which is the help and strength of Muslims who know they are about to die:

"You are my helper in this world and the Hereafter, cause me to die in complete submission to Thy will and join me to the Righteous."

As the last words left his lips the stone thrown by the Qadi struck him with great force on the forehead. He slumped forward, but then raised his head again. The King then picked up a stone and flung it hard at the Sahibzada. Then each man in the crowd picked up a stone and threw it at him. In a few minutes he was buried under a mound of stones.

The day of execution was July 14, 1903.

As the Sahibzada had claimed that he would rise after six days the King ordered that the body be closely guarded. He had also claimed that a great

calamity would overtake Afghanistan and that both the King and his brother would suffer.

This is how F. Martin, an eyewitness, described what happened in Kabul that night. "About eight o' clock at night the day the *mullah* (Sahibzada) was killed, a great storm of wind suddenly enraged with violence for half an hour, and then stopped as suddenly as it came.

"Such a wind was altogether unusual so the people said: this was the passing of the soul of the *mullah* (Sahibzada).

"Then cholera came and, according to former outbreaks, another visitation was not due for four years to come, and this was also regarded as part of the fulfilment of the *mullah's* prophecy, and hence the great fear of the Amir (King) and the prince, who thought they saw in all their own death...."

If he were killed then he would rise on the sixth day. He would be a martyr for Islam. He would be granted a new life, such as is granted to the transformed and righteous ones, he said. After six days, and before the seventh day, which is the Lord's Day, he would be raised from the dead.

And he quoted the verse of the Qur'an:

"And say not of those who are slain in God's path that they are dead; nay, they are living."

The King therefore wrote out the order for his execution by stoning. This was hung around his neck. A hole was bored through his nose and a rope

inserted so that he could be led like an animal to the place of his execution.

Accompanied by a large, jeering mob and by the King, his courtiers, judges and divines, the Sahibzada was taken in chains and fetters to the place of execution. Only one European was living in Kabul at that time, an engineer called F. Martin. He later wrote his memoirs called '*Under the Absolute Emir*'.

The place of execution was called *'Siyah Sang'*. "This is a small hill of black rock, about two miles out of the city, surrounded by a stony tract of ground."

A pit had already been dug there. The Sahibzada was made to stand in it and the pit was filled up until it was waist high.

The King then addressed him once more. "Even now if you repudiate this man from Qadian who claims to be the Promised Messiah then I shall save you.

It was said that the wife and child of Nasrullah Khan were the first to die. The divines who had given the verdict against the Sahibzada lived in constant fear of their lives, Mr. F. Martin added. One of them certainly contracted cholera.

For forty days there was a constant watch on the heap of stones beneath which he lay buried, but then, despite the knowledge that the slightest disregard of the King's orders could result in their own death, the watch was relaxed. The soldiers and

people of Kabul had many other worries for the day after the execution of Sahibzada cholera broke out.

When Ahmad Noor, one of the Sahibzada's disciples, realised that the watch was no longer strictly kept, he and several companions crept out one night and disinterred the body. They took it to the graveyard and buried it with reverence. They later said that though the Sahibzada had been dead for more than 40 days the body had not been corrupted in any way. The wounds were still fresh and the body gave forth a sweet smell like musk.

Ahmad condemned the martyrdom of the Sahibzada with dramatic words. "O land of Afghanistan, bear witness that a grave offence has been committed in thee. O, unfortunate land, thou hast fallen in the estimation of God in that this great tragedy was enacted in thee."

Even in his grief Ahmad counselled forgiveness and resolution. To his followers he said, "If you adhere to truth and faith, angels will instruct you, heavenly comfort will descend upon you and you will be helped by the Holy Spirit. God will be with you at every step and no one will be able to overcome you. Await the Grace of God steadfastly. Listen to abuse and keep silent. Endure being beaten and be steadfast. As far as possible do not resist evil, so that you may be accounted acceptable in heaven."

And he promised, "Hearken, all ye people. This is a prophecy of Him Who had created heaven and earth. He will spread this community of His in

all countries and will make it supreme over all, through reason and arguments. The days are coming, indeed they are near, when this will be the only religion which will be held in honour. God will bestow extraordinary blessings upon this religion and Movement. He will frustrate everyone who seeks to destroy it. This supremacy will last until Judgement Day."

He reminded them that no one would descend from Heaven because Jesus was dead. As the centuries passed and still Jesus did not appear people would abandon the belief that he was still alive. Then there will be only one religion that will prevail in the world and only one leader.

"I have come only to sow the seed, which has been sown by my hand. Now it will sprout and grow and flourish and no one can arrest its growth, He said.

In the years that followed there were to be many other martyrs. But the growth of the Ahmadiyya Movement was never arrested.

CHAPTER THIRTY TWO

The Resurgence Of Islam

In 1901 Ahmad was sixty six years of age. Physically he hardly appeared to have changed from when he was fifty. His skin was smooth without a wrinkle on his face or a line on his forehead. His hair, silver-white since shortly after his fiftieth birthday, gave him a venerable appearance, but this was belied by his physical agility. He still walked several miles a day, sometimes four or five and occasionally seven. And for a short time he also went to Indian health clubs to keep his body fit and active.

He did not lessen his work load. His son Mahmood remembered that when he was working on a book he sometimes would not sleep. "Quite often I would see him busy and I would go to bed. When I woke up I would still find him writing and he would continue all through the day."

Very often, said Mahmood, he would forget to eat unless he was interrupted and told it was mealtime.

His eldest daughter Nawab Mubarka Begum had her memories, too. "He had absolute confidence and unshakeable faith in his destiny and spiritual appointment. There was an absolute feeling of certitude in his objectives and undertakings. The

more faith he had in his mission the more responsibility and passion he displayed in his task."

So, when one of his followers declared that he had never directly claimed to be a prophet, Ahmad felt himself forced to reveal what God had told him.

"The truth is that the Holy word that descend upon me contains the words 'messenger, 'message-bearer' and 'prophet', "he said.

He continued, "If the Holy Prophet is the Seal of the Prophets, then how, it is contended, can a prophet appear after him? The answer is that all the windows to prophethood are sealed except the window of righteous obedience, which is the spirit of complete immersion in the love of the Holy Prophet.

He added later, "I swear by God, in whose hands lies my life, that He has sent me and He had named me a Prophet ... my early belief was that I was nothing compared to the Messiah, son of Mary, he being a prophet and one of the favourites of God ... but afterwards, as God's revelation descended upon me like rain, it undermined this belief and I was openly given the title of prophet - in one aspect as 'prophet' and in the other aspect as 'follower'."

The essential qualification for prophethood, he explained, was an abundance of Divine revelation and a great knowledge of the unknown. In his own time and later, Ahmadis have emphasised that this claim to prophethood in no way lessens the supreme position of Muhammad.

After all, it has been asked, what is prophethood?

The answer given is that it is a high spiritual position elevating a man to a point where he is granted abundance of Divine communion and knowledge of future events and is named a Messenger of God.

This does not detract, it is argued, from the position of Muhammad. It is a misunderstanding, the argument continues, of the meaning of the word 'prophethood'. A prophet does not need to bring a new law nor need he be independent of all the prophets who have gone before.

The advent of the Promised Messiah, it was therefore argued, had given Muslims good ground to exult for it had proved that Muhammad did not come to restrict the blessings of God, but rather to throw open wide the gates of His mercy and to show that, for all men and all nations, every kind of bounty was within reach.

Ahmad's unequivocal statement that he was a Prophet of God was followed shortly by a decision to call his mission 'The Ahmadiyya Movement In Islam'. Until now there had been no legal distinction between the followers of Ahmad and other Muslims, In 1901, however, a national census, was being prepared and the question arose as to how the Ahmadis should distinguish themselves from other Islamic sects.

Ahmad declared that from reading the Qur'an it was apparent that Muhammad would be granted two manifestations. One was of majesty, which took place through his own person under the name Muhammad. The second manifestation of Muhammad would be one of beauty and this would take place through a reflection of himself under the name Ahmad. That was what was meant by reflex prophethood.

Those who knew Ahmad at this stage of his life remembered his 'personal magnetism'. They spoke of his moral and spiritual influence and of his recognisable goodness. Even those who were only associated with him for a few days were to recall this as the most beautiful and uplifting period of their lives. His opponents categorised this personal charm as 'magic' and warned people against visiting him in Qadian lest they fall under his spell.

Ahmad had written of Muhammad , "O Seeker after truth, if thou seekest an argument for the truthfulness of the Prophet Muhammad, then fall in love with him. Muhammad is his own argument."

This argument can be applied equally forcefully to Ahmad himself. Hundreds, then thousands, accepted him on sight, saying, "This is not the face of an impostor. This is the Promised Messiah."

Another great reason for the increase in numbers of the Ahmadiyya Community was the influence of the signs, miracles and other revelations

which Ahmad declared God had vouchsafed to him. The first of these were tidings about individuals - friends and opponents alike - and about nations. These strengthened the faith of the people.

Prophecies, said Ahmad, consisted of signs of knowledge and power, the two pillars on which rests the Dominion of God. They were not necessarily immediately understandable. They did not shed a bright light which could be compared to midday brightness. If such were the case, said Ahmad, faith would be fruitless and no one would merit any reward for such faith.

Instead Ahmad compared them to the moonlight available on a cloudy night whereby those who were observant could easily find their way, but those who were weak of sight were left with room for doubt.

Many of his new converts spoke also of Ahmad's ability to help them in time of trouble by direct prayers to God. They wrote to him in their thousands and Ahmad mentioned them in his prayers. Ahmad declared that as God had appointed him The Promised Messiah with the special task of the reformation of mankind, God therefore gave a special hearing to his prayers.

When the plague was ravaging India one person heard him praying. "There was such pain and heart-burning in it that the listener's heart would melt," he said afterwards.

In 1896 the plague had appeared in Bombay. It had stayed for a year and then disappeared. It seemed as though the work of the public health authorities had proved successful. Apart from one or two villages the Punjab had been untouched.

But on Monday, February 6, 1898, Ahmad revealed that the plague was about to ravage the Punjab. "I saw in a dream that the angels of God were planting black seedlings in different parts of the Punjab. The seedlings are ugly, dangerous looking, black and stunted. I asked the angels about them and they told me that they were the seedlings of the plague which was about to come to this country. "

The plague that arrived was one of the worst that ever hit India with up to 30,000 people dying each week. The Government of India introduced inoculation throughout India.

Ahmad commended their efforts, but said that inoculation was not needed for him or his followers. God had told him, he said,

" I shall protect thee from the plague and also deliver all those from this accursed death who live within the four walls of thy dwelling and those who follow thee, provided that they purge their hearts ... and with heartfelt sincerity and humble submission swear repentance on thy hands and rebel not against the commandments of God and His Messenger ... "

Ahmad said it was not sinful to have recourse to medicines and preventive measures for the Holy

Qur'an declared that there was no malady for which God had not created a remedy. But he added that as God had told him that he and his followers would be safe there was no need for inoculation.

"I cannot insult and discredit this sign of mercy by submitting to inoculation and be guilty of unbelief in the promise of God. I declare the promises of God are true."

The plague which devastated the Punjab and continued on and off for some nine years, left Qadian practically untouched.

His access to God did not mean that all his prayers for mankind were heard in all circumstances, said Ahmad, but most often they were.

Yet another reason for Ahmad's continuing success was his actual continuing success. The Muslim divines preached against him. The Hindus denounced him. So did the Christian missionaries. They had money, position and power. But they were never able to silence him.

He was always ready to debate, to put his beliefs before the people and let them judge. His opponents were not so ready and the Christians were absolutely adamant that they would not debate with him.

When he was questioned why this was so Ahmad replied, "God never favours the wicked with His support. He never lets down His good servants."

But, undoubtedly, the most powerful and cogent reason for the success of his mission was the

picture he drew of Islam and the effect of his words and his life on the lives of his followers. The Qur'an was an inexhaustible spring of holy wisdom, said Ahmad. It was quite wrong to think that the knowledge of the Qur'an was now complete and that the commentaries of learned men of earlier generations represented the last word. Just as the physical world of the earth and the sea and the air yielded new treasures to every age so the Qur'an yielded spiritual treasures according to the requirements of every age.

He added that though the law had been made perfect the development and growth of Qur'anic knowledge would continue and this constituted one of its great miracles.

One of his followers wrote that Ahmad's explanations presented the beauty and perfections of the Holy Qur'an in the full glory of open daylight. They were pearls of purest water, said another disciple.

Those who joined the Community had to stand by the vows they had made. If they did not they were no longer considered members. The result was that there were no casual or lackadaisical Ahmadis.

Said one commentator, "When people saw an irreligious type of person, who had formerly ridiculed the teachings of Islam, suddenly become pious, God-fearing and an ardent follower of the faith, loving its teachings and adopting them in daily life, and seeking delight in the service of Islam, they

felt in their heart that such a conversion could not be the result of a faith that was mistaken.

Those who took the covenant of allegiance at Ahmad's hands said they felt it was the beginning of a new life.

His devotion to old friends, and friends who had become enemies, never wavered. Muhammad Hussain was included in his prayers. He wrote of his despair that "the tree of mutual love nurtured in our childhood" had been uprooted. He added, "I can never forget the springtime of our friendship for the valley of my heart is not a desert nor strewn with rocks."

But when his devoted companion Abdul Karim died and people bewailed his loss and said they did not know how anyone could replace him, Ahmad rebuked them. "To believe that his passing will create a vacuum is to indulge in a form of idolatry. We should not idolise a person. If Almighty God takes an able person from us, He shall surely provide us with his successor."

CHAPTER THIRTY THREE

The Revealed Sermon

Ahmad's campaign was thus not to be confined to reasoning and argument alone. He claimed that Islam was the only religion that was living. Zafrullah Khan, the Pakistan statesman, was to comment on this in one of the books he wrote about the Ahmadiyya Movement.

"He [Ahmad] claimed that Islam was the only religion that was living in the sense that it brought forth life-giving spiritual fruit which should be the purpose of every religion. No other religion even claimed to do so. He drew attention to the fact that he was a constant recipient of Divine revelation, which was the pure and delicious fruit of Islam, while all the other religions denied even the possibility of Divine revelation in this age."

Ahmad claimed, Zafrullah Khan continued, that the truth of his claim could be judged by any of the recognised, relevant criteria that were applicable to such a claim and which are clearly set out in the Holy Qur'an.

"The only response made to his challenge was derisive and contemptuous rejection.. This challenge did not expire with his life. Its effecti-veness continues to be demonstrated today, both through the fulfilment of some of his prophecies, from time

to time, and the manifestation of the blessings of Islam in the lives and conduct of a large number of the members of the Movement.

"In his own case, ample proof of the righteousness of his claim continued to be furnished throughout his life ..."

One of the arguments now advanced against him by the Muslim clergy was that he had very little formal education and that he had not studied under any well-known scholar. It was as though one needed a certificate of matriculation before one could be the recipient of Divine revelation!

And it was not a criticism that had been put forward when *Braheen-i-Ahmadiyya* had first been published.

The Muslim clergy also pointed to his inadequate knowledge of Arabic - at that time - as proof that he did not have the capacity to penetrate the true meanings of the Qur'an. He could not therefore have been chosen by God as an instrument of His will. It became for a time one of the main criticisms of Ahmad.

Ahmad referred to this objection in a book he wrote in Arabic entitled *Sirrul Khilafah*. "They allege that I have no knowledge of Arabic and possess no literary qualifications ... What they said was true and so I supplicated the Divine that if He so pleased, He might bestow upon me adequate knowledge of Arabic.

"He granted my prayer and by His Grace, I acquired mastery in this language and was bestowed the capacity to express myself in it at a high level. Under Divine direction I wrote two books in Arabic and challenged my opponents to produce their match, but they did not."

The two books Ahmad referred to were *Karamatus-Sadiqeen* and *Nurul Haq*. Thereafter he wrote a total of 20 books in Arabic as well as a number of poems.

God had granted him a vocabulary of 40,000 Arabic roots in a single night, said Ahmad, because He was not prepared to see him discomfited. God also granted him unique insight into the structure of languages he said. Arabic was the mother of all languages and that was why the Holy Qur'an had been transmitted to Muhammad in Arabic.

The Holy Qur'an says that a prophet is spoken to by God in the language of the people he is to address and Ahmad quoted the verse: *"And We have not sent any Messenger except with the language of his people"(12:5)*

As Muhammad was to address all Mankind it was therefore proper that he should give him the Qur'an in Arabic, the mother of all languages.

At first Ahmad's critics scoffed and said that the books must have been written for him by someone else. But they fell silent when Ahmad said that they could have the help of as many Arab

writers as they wished if they wanted to try to equal his works in Arabic.

The silence became almost deafning when Ahmad preached an hour-long sermon in Arabic upon the philosophy of sacrifice. He was given the revelation that on April 13, 1900, which was *Eid-ul-Adha* - The Festival of the Sacrifices, he was to preach entirely in Arabic. It was not a sermon that he was to compose in the previous week by dint of hard study and thought. It was to be a sermon that was to come to his lips as he was standing in the mosque.

So that the sermon should not be forgotten he directed Nurud-Din and Abdul Karim to take down the words as they issued from his lips. His followers were to recount later that he stood in the Aqsa Mosque with his eyes half-closed as he were in a trance. Then he began to speak.

It lasted more than an hour, "The sermon rolled out from his lips in a sustained succession of grand thoughts" was one description of his words. After he had finished Abdul Karim conveyed the substance of the sermon to the congregation in Urdu.

While this was being done Ahmad, as he related later, felt himself overtaken by rush of gratitude towards God for the great bounty He had bestowed upon him. He went into prostration. The entire congregation followed his example.

After the prostration Ahmad said that he had just seen the word *Mubarak* (felicitations) spelt out in scarlet letters in front of him.

Ahmad later added four chapters in Arabic to the text taken down by Nurud-Din and Abdul Karim and it was published under the title *Khutbah Ilhamiyyah* in book form in October, 1902. Translations were also published in Urdu and in Persian.

In the mosque today a place indicates the spot where Ahmad stood. It relates the story of the revealed sermon.

CHAPTER THIRTY FOUR

The Lion Of God

Whenever he now left Qadian Ahmad was besieged and special arrangements had to be made to protect him against the crush of well-wishers as well as against those who wished him ill. As the number of his followers grew so did the virulence of his detractors. And their virulence overflowed into incipient violence. If he were to die, it would not be murder but justice, said the mob orators.

A woman taken on as a temporary cook by Ahmad's wife when they were staying in Delhi told her, unaware of who she was, "A man has come to Delhi who claims he is The Promised Messiah. Our leaders say we must kill him. My son yesterday took a knife and went to kill him. He could not get near enough though he made several attempts. He got to the house, but the doors were all locked."

Normally, however, armed police patrolled the streets around any house in which he was staying. His opponents had to be content with meetings and demonstrations as near to the house as the police would allow.

In January, 1903, Ahmad had to appear in a legal action in Jhelum, a town of some 20,000 people which is 150 miles from Qadian. It was known that he was coming and the result was a

crowd of many thousands gathered to meet him at the railway station.

One person who was at Jhelum was to write that there was "a sea of human heads, rippling like waves, and stretching far into the distance". Not all were townsfolk. Many had come in from the surrounding districts, some of their own free will; others invited to demonstrate against Ahmad by Muslim divines.

The legal action was adjourned, but the journey was a success for Ahmad for it is recorded that, during that period, nearly one thousand people took the covenant of allegiance. Many of them were from the people brought in to demonstrate against him.

"It was obvious that a new epoch in Ahmadiyyat had started, said the same writer.

In Lahore, in August, 1904, the crowd that gathered to meet him at the grandiose railway station just outside the city walls was as great as that at Jehlum. He had agreed to speak on the subject of 'Islam and other religions of the country'. Again his opponents had alerted people to his coming and, as a result, the reception arranged by his followers was swelled by people incited by the mullahs to demonstrate against him and also by both the curious and the uncommitted.

He stayed in the house of one of his followers which was not far from the railway station and for 15 days there were demonstrations outside the house. One

Muslim preacher harangued the people with an abusive denunciation of Ahmad as an apostate. When he was moved on by the police for obstructing the highway he crossed the road and climbed a tree and continued his denunciation from there.

Some Ahmadis wished to silence him, but Ahmad forbade them. "Let him have his say and do not answer him." The crowd appreciated the tree-top eminence of the Muslim preacher and called him *'Maulvi Tahlywala'* or Mullah of the *tahly tree*.

As a result, on September 3rd, the day scheduled for the speech, there were few people in Lahore who were not aware that this was the day he would speak.

Though his health had not become noticeably worse he was now 70 and his voice was no longer as strong as it had been. A considerable crowd was expected - in the event between seven and eight thousand people attended - and he doubted if he could make himself heard over the expected troublemakers. He therefore asked Abdul Karim, who had a strong and resonant voice and the skills of an orator, to read his speech for him.

The meeting was an outstanding success. The police, alerted by the two weeks of demonstrations outside his house, were determined that the meeting should not be the occasion of a riot - despite the inflammatory denunciations of the mullahs that the very devil himself was among them. Police, with the long *lathis* or batons used for crowd control, lined

the streets. Their officers patrolled with drawn swords. An escort of mounted police, in front and in the rear, conducted his carriage from his house.

The speech read by Abdul Karim was met by acclamation and, at the end, the audience asked that Ahmad himself say some words. He spoke for a few minutes and there was warm applause. The police escorted him back to his house and he left the next day. There was an immense crowd at the railway station to witness his departure.

Again the plans of his opponents had gone awry. Of those who had come to mock, many stayed behind and became converts.

Two months later, on October 27, he journeyed to Sialkot. His followers in that town had asked him to come. He had once been a lowly clerk in the courthouse of that town, they said. Now he was one of God's special messengers and they wanted to honour him.

His train journey from Batala to Sialkot repeated the scenes at Lahore at every station en route. His followers turned out to meet him and when Hindus, Sikhs, Christians and other Muslims heard that he was coming, they, too, went to the railway stations. At Lahore, where he changed trains, the crowd was so great that the booking office sold out of platform tickets and there was almost a riot as those who could not buy a ticket to enter the station, struggled to get in.

At Sialkot itself the crowd exceeded the number of those who had gathered at Jhelum. The crowd not only packed the ground and street outside the railway station, but also the entire length of the roads to the house where Ahmad was to stay, which was more than a mile away. The houses and shops in Sialkot at that time were mostly one or two storeys high and the people crowded on to them as well. They climbed the trees that were there and perched among the branches. They climbed everything that gave them a better view of the man who claimed that he was a prophet of God.

Naturally not all in the crowds were well-wishers. A woman called Mai Hayat Bibi recalled later in life that she was at school at that time. "Our teacher told us to gather dirt and pebbles and took us up on the roof of a house where we could throw them at him. So we did as we were told."

His opponents had learned from their experiences at Jhelum and Lahore that it was not a good idea to urge people to attend his meetings and try to break them up because too many of them were converted to his cause. They therefore announced in all the mosques that no one should attend his meetings. They stuck up posters with the same message. And to dissuade those who still tried to attend they arranged for groups of muscular men to be near the entrances to prevent them, with strong physical arguments, from going any further.

They also arranged to hold an opposition meeting in a neighbouring location. But Ahmad had stayed for a week in Sialkot before the night of the meeting. There had been constant argument and discussion about his claims. It was obviously much more important to see and hear him themselves rather than to listen to a denunciation. As a result people came in their thousands. There were several attempts to disrupt the proceedings, but the police were there in large numbers and there were no serious disturbances.

Again it was Abdul Karim who read out his speech. He was originally a resident of Sialkot so he was well known. Again his strong, resonant voice with its mellifluous cadences charmed the audience.

On this occasion Ahmad presented not only the arguments about the truth of Islam and Ahmadiyyat, but also of his likeness to the Lord Krishna, the great spiritual leader of the Hindus. Just as God had told him, he said, that he was the like of Jesus, of Moses and many other prophets, so was he also the like of the Lord Krishna. It was God's purpose, he said, to unite all religions in him.

The meeting lasted two days. There were many converts and when Ahmad left he was escorted to the railway station by a crowd of thousands.

He returned to Gurdaspur, the principal town of the region which bore its name and in which Qadian lay. The libel action which had been adjourned at Jhelum had been transferred to Gurdaspur

and as it was constantly being brought forward before a judge with very little notice in the hope that he would not be present, Ahmad had taken up temporary residence in the town.

This libel action was one of many legal cases which crowded in on Ahmad as the Community grew. His opponents believed that they could stop him from preaching by occupying his time with legal wrangles and, if they won one of them, they could diminish his reputation. This case concerned a man called Karam Din who had written to Ahmad pretending to be a sympathiser. In his letter he had said that an opponent of Ahmad's was writing a book about him but that he had stolen most of his material from the writings of other people.

It was an attempt to trap Ahmad into some kind of stratagem that might be used against him. But his stratagem was easily discovered and when Ahmad denounced Karam Din as a mean-spirited man and a liar to boot, Karam Din launched a libel action.

Though it was a fairly simple libel action it was to drag on for two years because members of the militant Arya Samaj Hindu sect had suborned the magistrate. The magistrate was a Hindu and this was the time when they could revenge themselves for the death of Lekh Ram, the Arya Samaj members told him.

There was a meeting at his house and the members of the Arya Samaj sect told him, "He is

like a bird in your hand. you can wring his neck like a chicken if you wish. If you let him go you will be an enemy of your people."

The magistrate had no qualms about agreeing to their request. He would make life as difficult as possible for Ahmad, he said - and for anybody who gave evidence on his behalf. He had the power to hold witnesses and Ahmad himself, as the defendant, in prison without any question of bail, he said.

Fortunately for Ahmad the discussion was overheard by the legal clerk of the magistrate. He revealed the plot to Ahmad's lawyer. The clerk was a Muslim, though not an Ahmadi Muslim, but he was not prepared to see a chieftain of the Punjab dishonoured in such a way.

The conversation was disclosed to Ahmad when he was lying ill in a room at Gurdaspur. His face became suffused with passion despite the pallor of his illness.

"I - A BIRD WHOSE NECK IS TO BE WRUNG! I AM NO CHICKEN WAITING TO BE KILLED. I AM A LION.
"I AM THE LION OF GOD
"LET THESE PEOPLE LAY THEIR HANDS ON THE LION OF GOD AND SEE WHAT HAPPENS.
"WHO WILL HAVE THE COURAGE TO CATCH HOLD OF THE LION OF GOD?
"LET THEM DARE!"

His voice was so loud that people outside the room stopped and then entered the room to find out what was amiss.

After a little time his colour subsided and he held out his hands. "What can I do?" he asked. "I have many times submitted to God that I am prepared to wear the bangles of steel on my wrists but He tells me every time,

'I will not let that happen. I am standing guard over thee and no one dare lay his hands on thee.'

Suddenly he put his head between his knees and vomited blood. A doctor was called who happened to be British. After an examination he told Ahmad's companions that Ahmad must rest. To vomit blood when one was old was dangerous.

He signed a medical certificate saying that Ahmad was too ill to attend court for the next month. The magistrate was incensed that Ahmad did not appear. He summoned the doctor before him to verify that the medical certificate was not a forgery. Then he formally framed charges against Ahmad.

And so the case dragged on, with adjournment after adjournment. Then the magistrate was demoted and transferred because of another case. The case started before another magistrate. He was also a Hindu. He refused to allow Ahmad the use of a chair, which he was entitled to because of his rank as a chieftain of the Punjab, as well as his age. He even refused permission for him to drink some water during the proceedings.

Finally he announced that he would give his judgement on a certain day. Then he changed the day to a Saturday. Ahmad's lawyers discovered that his intention was to announce a heavy fine just before the court closed on Saturday afternoon. Ahmad would not be immediately able to pay and would therefore have to spend the rest of the weekend in jail.

Just before the court closed he summoned Ahmad before him and gave the police orders not to permit anyone to enter the courtroom. But Ahmad's lawyer brushed past the police guard, saying it was illegal to try to stop him entering the court as he was Ahmad's counsel. He entered just as the magistrate was imposing a fine of 500 rupees, an extraordinary sum at that time. Forewarned, the lawyer immediately produced the money and put it on the table in front of the magistrate and asked him to take formal notice of the fact that the fine had been paid. The magistrate tried to protest, then realised that he had been outmanoeuvred and accepted the fine.

Ahmad had previously revealed that, though he would be found guilty by the magistrate, God had told him that the sentence would be set aside by a higher legal court.

And so it was.

His lawyers took the case to the court of appeal which overturned the magistrate's decision and had the fine returned. There had been no libel, the judge said, just a plain statement of fact which had been

totally justified in the circumstances. The extremely bad manners of Karam Din justified the criticism by Ahmad. He added that he found it very strange that such a minor case had dragged on for so many years with so many hearings.

Though it seemed that the legal actions launched by his opponents succeeded in their objective of so occupying his time that he did not have the opportunity to continue his preaching, they were to have an unforeseen advantage. During his journeying to the various courts his companions had the opportunity to be with him for longer periods. When an action was adjourned for one or two days, then again adjourned for seven days and then again adjourned for a different time, his companions would be with him.

They would spend the time listening and asking questions of Ahmad. One Ahmadi historian says that many of the traditions mentioned by the Companions about his habits and behaviour belong to that period. It was perhaps a design of God, he says. The time of preaching was coming to an end. The time of training for his Companions for the days, not too far in the future, when he was no longer there had begun.

CHAPTER THIRTY FIVE

The Prophet Of God

In October, 1905, Ahmad lost the disciple who had spoken his words when age began to lessen the power of his own voice. Abdul Karim was only 47 when he died. He had been quite young when he came to Qadian as a result of an invitation from Nurud Din. At first he recognised Ahmad as a great preacher and a profound Islamic scholar. Then he realised that he was much more - he recognised him as a true Messenger of God and pledged him his total devotion.

He continued his studies under Ahmad and grew in stature. He became a great scholar and then, with maturity, a remarkable speaker and writer. His language was forceful and fluent yet also simple. He had a special ability in explaining the verses of the Holy Qur'an in a way that all could understand. As a preacher he was outstanding. His voice was powerful, his diction clear, his understanding of the poetry of the soul made words vibrant with joy and pregnant with feeling. He was astonishingly eloquent.

He developed a malignant tumour that kept him bedridden for two months. Then he contracted pneumonia. He died on October 11. His death brought great sadness to Ahmad for he had watched him grow almost as a son. He had delighted in his progress and

with the ease with which he had dealt with so many things in the Movement. He had become almost a personal assistant to Ahmad.

But when some people bewailed his loss, saying they did not know how anyone could replace him, Ahmad rebuked them. "We should not idolise a person if Almighty God takes an able person from us, he shall surely provide us with his successor."

And he repeated the famous words of the Qur'an, "From God we come and to God we will return."

There was little worry at his own health though in the year that Abdul Karim died, 1905, Ahmad celebrated his 70th birthday. He still ate sparingly. He still walked every day whenever possible. He still observed all the five daily prayers, rising unfailingly at 2 o'clock in the morning for the *Tahajjud* prayer. He still studied the Qur'an assiduously for hours and was in constant demand by officials of the various committees and sections that now organised the work of the Community. And the Community was now world-wide. The first missionaries had already departed.

Ahmad had never enjoyed vigorous good health, but he had never let his migraines and diabetes affect his ability to work. Just after Abdul Karim's death he went to Delhi. His opponents organised a mass demonstration and Ahmad was almost unable to be heard because of their continuous shouting. Even so more converts came into his fold. In November, on his way back to

Qadian, he stopped at Ludhiana, where he had first accepted the oath of allegiance of Nurud Din, the first of his followers. It was a most successful meeting with thousands of people in the audience.

He then went to Amritsar where he spoke to an audience of thousands from a stage erected in an open space. Here his opponents were highly organised. Time after time they organised diversions and then attempted to charge the stage. Each time they were beaten back by the police. Finally the commotion was such that the police suggested that the meeting be ended prematurely. They escorted Ahmad into a closed carriage which they provided. But again and again his opponents charged and managed to get close enough to beat upon the roof and windows with sticks until the police repulsed them. Then they pelted the carriage with stones.

One of them broke a pane of glass in the carriage and cut the face of Mirza Bashir Ahmad the second son who was sitting beside his father. But the cut was not serious and there was only a minor injury to one of Ahmad's followers. Mirza Bashir Ahmad was to say later that he was proud to be the first member of the family of the Promised Messiah to be injured by his opponents. And he was especially proud that he was sitting by Ahmad when it happened.

The antagonism of the Hindu Arya Samaj sect had seldom lessened, but when he received an

invitation to take part in a conference organised by them in Lahore it seemed that mere denunciation was a thing of the past. The subject of debate was 'Is there truly any revealed book in the world and, if so, which one?'

The representatives of many religious communities had been invited and the Aryas assured Ahmad that no attacks on other religions would be permitted. Despite their protestations Ahmad learned in a revelation that Islam would be attacked most savagely at this meeting. He determined that it would not go undefended.

He therefore asked Nurud Din to read out his paper at the conference where he would be accompanied by various members of the Community. It was a serious and impressive paper, full of the fruits of his years of study in comparative religion. It was received with respect. The next day, however, it was the turn of the Aryas and, contrary to the agreement, their speaker launched into a violent attack against Islam and the Holy Prophet.

When Ahmad heard that Nurud Din and his companions had sat in silence during this speech he was aghast. Why did you not walk out of the meeting? he asked Nurud Din. Why were you prepared to listen to abuse of the Holy Prophet?

Nurud-Din and his companions acknowledged that they had been at fault. By sitting silent it was as if they acquiesced in the criticisms. Ahmad therefore decided that the criticisms had to be answered

publicly. He therefore wrote a book entitled *Chashma-i-ma'arifat* which dealt with the transmigration of the soul and other teachings of the Vedas.

He declared that to imply that God was not the Creator of the soul and of matter was to suggest that God was governing the world by manipulating the two. It was a polytheistic belief. Moreover it suggested that God was not the master of the world and the Almighty. With mankind's limited faculties and powers how could we measure God's creation he asked.

Regarding the transmigration of the soul he wrote that this belief had arisen because of not differentiating between the laws of Nature and the laws of religion. Wrong conclusions had been attributed by observing natural differences in accordance with the laws of nature and attributing them to the laws of religion. From these wrong conclusions the idea of transmigration of the soul had emerged.

Ahmad went on to deal with the idea that revelation was confined to the period of the Vedas and that afterwards the door of prophecy was closed. This was incorrect said Ahmad. If the tree of faith was not continually watered by the signs of God and by His revelations then the tree would die. The religion which closed the door of revelation would die.

That was why, he said, that though the revelation of Divine Law culminated in the Holy Prophet,

the door for further revelation did not end with his death. Other prophets would come and he was the most important of them, he was the Promised Messiah who would unite all religions under Islam.

People from many lands were already coming to Qadian, though it was still an isolated village which could be reached only along a rutted dirt track after leaving the town of Batala. The only transport was a cart drawn by oxen and the journey was slow and dusty and uncomfortable and occupied most of a day.

Nevertheless the influx continued. A representative of the Sultan of Turkey arrived

Then, for the first time since the British had taken control of the Punjab, an emissary of the Government arrived in Qadian. Qadian was just one of thousands of villages of similar size in India. The inhabitants supported themselves by the crops they grew. Money rarely changed hands.

The village was of no military, financial or political importance yet one day the Financial Commissioner of the Punjab, the most important dignitary after the Governor, accompanied by a retinue and bodyguard of hundreds of soldiers, arrived outside the stumps of what had been the defensive walls of the village.

Ahmad, as Chieftain of Qadian, had been alerted to his coming so that, in accordance with normal custom, he could prepare the food that would be provided for the Commissioner and his retinue. It

was suggested that he should also provide wine and spirits for his guest, but Ahmad demurred. They were prohibited and he was not going to disobey the laws of God no matter how important a temporal visitor he had.

Ahmad had sent important members of the Community to welcome the Commissioner, but he had not gone himself. He was a man of religion, not of politics, he said. After a day however, the Commissioner sent a message to Ahmad asking him if he would be kind enough to come to his camp. Ahmad accepted. They talked for several hours, the Commissioner putting questions about Ahmadiyyat to Ahmad. He left the next day.

There were other less well-known visitors. One professor at a Scottish university. Then came two Americans. After he had explained to them his claim to be the Promised Messiah they asked if there was some sign that could prove the truth of his claim.

Ahmad replied that they themselves were one of the signs.

"If you ponder over this you will realise that a few years ago I led a life of complete anonymity and Qadian was hidden from the eyes of the world. At that time God told me that he would carry my message to the ends of the world and that people from far and near would come to Qadian to see me."

"God has fulfilled his promise. No one in America has heard of me or of Qadian. Now you

have come to see me. You are one of the signs of the truth of my Claim."

CHAPTER THIRTY SIX

The Will

Though Ahmad's proselytising vigour did not slacken he knew that he was already old in years. Every year from now, every day from now, was a bonus from God. One day, and that not very far away, he, too, would return to Allah.

He had already received revelations that his death was not far off. These were so extensive and so frequent that, for a time, life lost its warmth for him. The first revelation came in the form of a dream in which he was presented with a small panicking of cold, clear water. There was just enough for two or three draughts.

Then he was told,

"This is the water for the rest of your life."

A little later he received another revelation,

"God has sent sadness for all of you."

In September, 1905, he was told,

"The appointed hour has almost struck. Glorious signs in support of you shall remain behind."

In November he was told,

"The time is close at hand. We shall not leave anything behind which may in any way be humiliating for you."

As a result of these revelations he wrote a book called 'The Will' which gave a summary of his teachings. Hold fast to these truths, he told his followers. Do not fear the trials and tribulations that would surely come for these were necessary according to the practice of God.

The main task of a prophet, he declared, was to sow the seed. This he had done. Now, with God's grace, the sect would germinate. Soon there would be a sapling. It would grow into a strong and sturdy tree with branches reaching out in all directions.

It often seemed, he continued, that the death of a prophet was untimely and likely to bring to an end all that he had worked for. At such a time the opponents of the prophet would laugh and jeer, believing that what they had shouted about was now coming to pass. Faced with this barrage of disbelief the less staunch followers would stagger and stumble.

But God's second manifestation was that what appeared to be a crumbling structure was suddenly firmly supported by the successors of the prophet, his caliphs.

"This has been the practice of God since the appearance of humans on the earth," declared Ahmad in 'The Will'. God always supports His prophets, He makes them sow the seeds of truth and virtue which He wants to augment in the world. But the completion of this task does not take place at their hands. by making them die at a time when, apparently, the fear of failure lurks, gives a chance

to opponents to indulge in ridicule, to jeer and scoff at them, after which there is another manifestation,

"In short, "he continued, "there are two types of manifestation. The first is at the hands of the Prophets. Secondly, when the difficulties accumulate and their enemies gain in strength and have a feeling that all is lost, then the second and powerful manifestation of God appears which supports the Jama'at (Community) and its crumbling structure.

"So he who is patient till the last, witnesses the miracle of God, just as it happened in the days of Abu Bakr when the death of the Holy Prophet was considered untimely and many dwellers of the desert became apostate and even the Companions became mad with grief.

"Then God brought in Hadhrat Abu Bakr and this was the second manifestation which saved Islam from apparent extinction.

"Therefore, O Friends, since it has been the ancient practice of God that there are two Manifestations so that the false joys of the opponents may be demolished, it is not possible that God would give up the ways He considered best. Hence, what I have told that you will witness the second Manifestation. Its appearance will bring you great joy for it will be everlasting. The bonds that will then be forged will last until the Day of judgement."

He then made the pronouncement:

"I AM A PERSONIFIED MANIFESTATION OF GOD. AFTER ME THERE WILL BE OTHERS WHO WILL ALSO BE HIS MANIFESTATION."

Ahmad therefore turned his attention to the question of the education of future religious scholars of the Movement when those were his companions had died. The existing Talim-ul-Islam High School, which catered for boys up to the age of 18, did not meet this need. (A school for girls was also set up)

What was wanted was a college of religious education where future missionaries of the Movement would be educated. As well as a thorough and deep knowledge of Islam in every facet and of course, of Arabic, they should study other religions. They should learn English and Sanskrit, study the sciences and geography and learn how to write and speak fluently.

It was a curriculum that was only to be adopted many decades later in the West and then only in the most liberal colleges of religious studies. In the years that followed this college provided the Ahmadiyya Movement with a legion of educated young men who went to other countries, strong and sure in their faith, ready to debate with Christians, Hindus, indeed people of all faiths and those with none. The course lasted 5 years.

At first the college was housed in a wing of the boys' high school, but later, as the number of students grew, members of the Community

instituted, at Ahmad's request, a special tax on their own earnings and so provided the funds to build separate new buildings for the college.

A society was set up under the guidance of Ahmad. This society was called the *Tashhizul Azhan*, the society to sharpen the intellect of young men. Its objectives were to train their members in writing and speaking more fluently and they organised weekly or monthly meetings as appropriate. They also issued a monthly magazine.

The affairs of the Movement were now so varied and extensive that it was obvious that it needed an efficient central organisation to look after them. Ahmad therefore set up the *Sadar Anjuman Ahmadiyya* or Central Ahmadiyya Association. It took over the running of four societies which had been set up earlier - the groups which had been set up earlier - the groups which looked after the High School, the Religious College, "The Review of Religions' and the 'Heavenly Graveyard.'

The Heavenly Graveyard provided a method by which members of the Community could continue their work for Ahmadiyyat after their death. God had revealed the need for this graveyard to Ahmad several years before.

Sincere believers who deserved to be in Paradise should be buried in this graveyard. Succeeding generations would refresh their faith and find inspiration in this graveyard. After a further revelation from God Ahmad said that the graveyard

should be instituted in some land adjacent his orchard of mango trees.

There were two essential conditions for burial there. The first was that the deceased should have been a sincere and true believer who abstained from all that was forbidden and who had avoided all forms of polytheism and any departure from the laws laid down in the Holy Qur'an. The second condition was that he should bequeath in his will at least one-tenth and a maximum of one third of all his property for the services of the Movement.

If he did not have any property then all that was needed was the proof that he or she had devoted his life to the service of Islam. Burial in the Heavenly Graveyard did not mean that a person was automatically entitled to Paradise, but God would so arrange it that only those persons who would go to Paradise would be buried in the Graveyard. Those who would not automatically go to Paradise would be denied such a privilege.

Earlier, in 1902, he had reorganised the methods by which members contributed to the expenses of the Community, These had risen dramatically as more and more guests came to Qadian and to the annual gathering; in addition there was a constantly increasing need of financial help for the old and poor, for children left fatherless and for the school where boys were fed and housed and taught yet only those whose parents could afford it paid anything towards their upkeep.

Originally members of the Community contributed only to special appeals, though a few made regular contributions. Ahmad therefore announced that each member should now make a regular monthly contribution to the expenses of the movement. They would fix the amount they had levied on themselves, this amount had to be paid regularly.

If a member failed to pay the subscription decided by himself for three months then he would no longer be a member of the community. He had indeed already departed from the Community in spirit, said Ahmad, because he was not prepared to make this small sacrifice for the sake of the true Islam. He could not therefore be considered a true Ahmadi.

It was on this voluntary taxing of their income for the work of the Movement and the betterment in health, education and social conditions of all members that laid the foundations on which a worldwide organisation was to be built. Later this voluntary taxing was put on a more consistent basis with members being asked to contribute a fixed percentage of their income.

The rules and regulations governing the Central Ahmadiyya Association were approved by Ahmad in January, 1906. There were 14 directors of the Association headed by a president and a secretary. The president was Nur-ud-Din and the secretary was Muhammad Ali who was editor of the

Review of Religions. One of the directors, though only 17, was Mahmood Ahmad, Ahmad's eldest son.

The office work and administration previously carried out by the societies was now entrusted to the Association, though where a decision about policy was now involved, this was always taken by Ahmad. The Association was only there to lighten his burden in routine matters.

Ahmad kept the administration of the guest house and kitchen in his own hands, however, though this was time- consuming and inconvenient. When it was suggested that this could be done by an efficient administrator Ahmad declined. The guests were his personal responsibility, he said. He needed to look after them himself.

CHAPTER THIRTY SEVEN

The Elixir Of Life

Naturally, not all who entered the fold of Ahmadiyyat stayed there. Some of the disciples of Jesus had deserted him. And so, too, did some of Ahmad's followers.

One of the most important was Dr. Abdul Hakeem Khan, a surgeon of Patiala. Though an ardent follower of Ahmad for many years in 1906 he declared that he now believed that it was not essential to have faith in any prophet for the purpose of salvation. It was sufficient to believe in God.

Ahmad told him that faith which cast aside the prophets and their books and was based merely on the laws of nature was defective and trivial. Indeed, it could not truly be called a faith. It was merely a conjecture which did not take a person beyond the idea that there should be a God.

Elaborating this point he explained that a faith which is dependent on the word 'should' is no faith at all. What is necessary is the conviction that there certainly is a God. Such a faith requires dependence on the Prophets and Messengers of God.

Real faith, he continued, requires signs, miracles and heavenly effulgence and these can appear only when there is a prophet or messenger of God. Hence the religion which is confined to 'should' is

mere conjecture. It does not instill faith, knowledge and satisfaction in the believers. These are the requirements which can result in the purification of the soul and the improvement of human actions and so bring the believer closer to God.

The question raised by Dr Abdul Hakeem Khan about faith in the prophets was so important that Ahmad decided to answer it in full in a book which he called *Haqiqatul Wahi* or 'The Nature of Revelation'. He dealt at length with the reality of revelation, the forms that revelation can take and the accompanying signs of these revelations. He also pointed out proofs in various ways of their truthfulness and piety and declared that God wanted ordinary people to become familiar with revelations so that they might comprehend the revelations of the order which were given to the pious and the prophets.

He gave account of the hundreds of signs with which he said he had been blessed, the fulfilment of his prophecies and the favours conferred upon him and his companions.

There were other apostates, of course, but in numbers remarkably few. The reason for this could be because of the training that Ahmad normally insisted upon before accepting the pledge of allegiance of a new Ahmadi. It was not a question of saying that you were an Ahmadi Muslim. You had to live as an Ahmadi Muslim. You could not have a duality of interests and separate your religious life

from your everyday affairs. Your religious life must govern every action and every thought in your life, both night and day, he said.

The pledge of allegiance was more than a simple matter of uttering some words or signing a piece of paper, Ahmad emphasised. *Bai'at* means sold and a man or woman who did *Bai'at* therefore sold himself to the person who accepted it. It was therefore a solemn ceremony.

Ahmad insisted that the convert place his hand in his while repeating the solemn pledge that he accepted all that he Ahmad, the Promised Messiah, professed and that he sought forgiveness for all his sins and promised that in the future he would try to shun all evil and in all matters prefer *Deen*, religion to worldly matters.

This solemn pledge provided a solid foundation on which his total allegiance to the Ahmadiyya Movement was built. It brought about, said new members, a total change in their lives and their moral and educational development. It allowed them to gain spiritual heights through greater purity, piety and moral reformation.

After prayers he would take the opportunity to sit down in the mosque and discuss informally with those who gathered around. There was no platform for him to sit on, no special chair. Indeed often someone was sitting on a chair and he was sitting on a mat.

One of his sons, Mirza Bashir Ahmad, was to recall that the topics were completely spontaneous. Doctrines, ideas and actions were reviewed. They talked of opponents and friends. They talked of public as well as private things and nations as well as individuals came under discussion.

"The talks could take any turn and all were able to present their point of view," said Bashir Ahmad. He, in his reply, would be simple and informative. It was a lesson in love, affection, loyalty and knowledge. A fountain of knowledge flowed out from him which everyone benefited.

"A similar opportunity was afforded during his walks which he had daily with his friends. Each one of them on these occasions was thus able to drink the elixir of life and spirituality."

He continued, "His personal spiritual influence generated an electric current of high spiritual voltage in every person who approached him. Everyone, according to their ability, therefore became a source of power almost like a battery just as small pieces of iron are magnetised when they come into contact with a large magnet. His own moral and spiritual example transformed the people around him.

Mirza Bashir Ahmad was to sum up the methods Ahmad used in his teaching of his companions and the members of the Community.

He helped them first to progress in knowledge and understanding. He helped them concentrate on the religious and international tasks that they had. It

meant they had to set a noble example for others and their actions should conform to what they preached. They were thus constantly occupied in carrying out God's will for the Kingdom of God was to be achieved not by passive defence against evil but by forthright attack.

He also constantly asked members to make maximum financial sacrifices for the sake of Islam and Ahmadiyyat and so aroused in them consciousness to attach the utmost importance to faith compared to which money and position in the world was valueless and so infused in them a spirit of selfless sacrifice.

CHAPTER THIRTY EIGHT

All Men Must Die

In April, 1908, his wife, who had been feeling unwell for some time, asked Ahmad to accompany her to Lahore to visit a doctor. He agreed, but on the night before they were to leave he had a revelation which he revealed to various people. It was:

"Feel not secure at this time. Do not seek peace in this life."

His son was ill in bed at this time and as he was not sure of the meaning of the revelation Ahmad therefore postponed his departure. The next day, however, his son was much better and he therefore left for Lahore. He stayed at the house of one of his followers, Khawaja Kamal-ud-Din.

There, in the middle of May, he received another revelation:

"Departure, again departure. God will take up thy burden."

This clearly meant, he knew, that the time of his death was approaching though there was no sign of it in his physical well-being.. In line with the practice of the prophets that revelations should also be fulfilled in a worldly way - as he had done with the White Minaret - he left the house of Khawaja Kamal-ud-Din and moved next door to the house of Dr. Sayyed Muhammad Hussain.

His wife was now receiving medical treatment which would take some time to complete so Ahmad arranged to give a lecture to the notables of the city at a private dinner. Very few, he realised, had ever heard him speak because they were unlikely to attend a public meeting.

The night before he was due to speak he received another revelation.

"Rely not on this unstable life," he was told.

This revelation, he realised, pointed even more firmly to his approaching death, but he worked on at his usual tempo and, at the dinner, he spoke for two hours.

He told them, "I claim that God has sent me for the reform of the current widespread corruption. I cannot conceal the fact that God speaks to me and honours me frequently with his converse. This amounts to prophethood, but I do not enjoy this honour in my own right. In a way this is a verbal contention. Continuous and frequent receipt of revelation is called prophethood."

He recalled the words of Ayesha regarding Muhammad when she said, "Say 'He is the Seal of the Prophets', but do not say, 'There will be no prophet after him'.

He continued, "If there is no longer any prophethood in Islam, then be sure that Islam has also died like other religions, and does not possess any distinctive sign."

Though many of his listeners were opposed to him there was marked respect for the profundity of his Islamic knowledge and his obvious deep sincerity.

Despite this apparently clear statement a newspaper reported that he had repudiated his claim to prophethood. He thereupon issued a fuller statement.

He was not a prophet who brought a new law or in any way had abrogated the law of Islam, he declared. "The basis on which I call myself a prophet is that I am honoured with the converse of God Almighty, that He speaks to me frequently and responds to me, and discloses many hidden things to me and informs me about future events in a manner that He adopts only towards who enjoys special nearness to Him. On account of the multiplicity of these matters He has designated me a prophet.

"Thus, I am a prophet in accordance with Divine command and it would be a sin on my part to deny it. I shall continue to be firmly established as a prophet until I pass away from the world.

" I am not a prophet in the sense that I separate myself from Islam, or abrogate any commandment of Islam. I bear the yoke of the holy Qur'an and no one dare abrogate a single word or vowel point for the Holy Qur'an.

"I affirm, not out of a desire for self-praise, but on the basis of God's Grace and His Promise, that if the whole world were on one side and I alone were on the other side and a matter was put forward for

determining the truth of the word of a servant of God, then I would be granted supremacy by God in such a contest.

God would be with me in every aspect of the contest and would grant me victory in every field. It is on this basis that God has designated me a prophet."

Before he issued that statement he had told his immediate disciples and family that death was fast approaching for he had received yet another revelation.

"Departure, departure. Death is at hand. Do not depend upon this life which is passing away," he was told.

This revelation left no room for misunderstanding and his wife proposed that they should immediately return when God took them there.

He continued working on his new book, entitled 'A Message Of Peace', which proposed a scheme whereby Hindus and Muslims would show respect for the holy men of each other's religions, recognising that they were all children of one God and inhabitants of one country so they must live together in peace.

He finished this manuscript on May 25,1908, handed it to a secretary to be transcribed and, after late afternoon prayers, started out on his daily walk. A horse-drawn taxi took him out of the city so that he could walk more freely in the country. He

returned within the hour and went to bed at the normal time.

He felt ill during the night and doctors were called. They did what they could to treat him, realised that he was seriously ill. He lapsed in and out of consciousness.

At the time for morning prayers, he asked, "Is it prayer-time?"

One of his followers, standing beside his bed, replied, "Yes Sir, it is".

He then made the signs of symbolic ablutions and started praying. He lost consciousness in the middle of the prayer, but then recovered and started again, finishing it slowly. He was then semi-conscious, but whenever he recovered consciousness he could be heard repeating, "O God, My beloved God".

His wife, his sons and daughters who were in Lahore and his most immediate disciples were now gathered round his bedside. His wife had remained calm and in constant prayer throughout the night now knew that death was approaching.

As the agony of death began she said, "O God he is leaving us. Do not forsake us at this time."

At 10:30 it seemed to those around him that they heard him breathe deeply twice.

Then he died.

The unthinking Muslims who had opposed him in life rejoiced in his death and within half an hour the street outside the house, which was long and

broad, was crowded with the riff-raff of Lahore. They chanted and shouted, capered and danced and held mock funeral processions.

Some members of the Community, enraged, wanted to rush out and disperse them, but they were held back. They were reminded of Ahmad's instructions:

"Pray for them even if they abuse you. Provide comfort for them even if they torture you. When they display their pride, show them humility. When they exult, be not downcast.

"To our children and their children - the generations which shall be crowned with success - we say, "When God grants you power and the ability to crush your opponents, do not remember the cruelties of the past. Protect the honour of the days of our weakness so that they cannot say that when we were weak we were humble yet when we became strong we became tyrants.

"Be patient. Leave vengeance to God. He knows when to forgive and who to punish. Forgive also the children of those who persecute you. Behave unto them with kindness."

The body of Ahmad was washed and wrapped in winding sheets and, in an atmosphere of forgiveness and sadness, the funeral prayers were said at three o'clock that afternoon in courtyard of the house. They were led by Nurud Din.

When certain women of the household began to bewail their loss, Amma Jaan told them to control

their grief. To her sons and daughters she said, "Do not imagine that your father has left you only an empty house. He has laid up for you a great treasure of prayers in Heaven, which will continue to yield its beneficence to you all in time to come."

His eldest son Mahmud Ahmad, standing at the head of the bed, gave expression of the high resolve that was to characterise his future life with the words, "If all others should leave you and I should be left alone, yet will I stand against the whole world and shall not heed any opposition or hostility."

That night his coffin was carried on the shoulders of his followers to the station to catch the evening train for Batala. They were pelted with stones as they walked. From Batala his followers carried his coffin for 11miles throughout the night until they reached Qadian at nine o'clock the following morning.

Twelve hundred Ahmadis, alerted by telegrams, reached Qadian by midday. Many of them had thought the telegrams a cruel jest by their opponents for the revelations of Ahmad about his impending death had been disclosed only to his family and his closest followers. They had come to Qadian to be reassured, but when they failed into the rose garden adjoining the small cemetery of the mosque and saw the body of their leader lying there in the winding funeral sheets, their grief knew no bounds.

In mid-afternoon there was a meeting of all the members of the Ahmadiyya Community present in Qadian and Nurud-Din, who had taken the first covenant of allegiance to Ahmad, was unanimously elected his first successor. Nurud Din sat on a scrap of carpet under a mango tree in the rose garden and one by one, in exactly the same way as Ahmad had done, accepted their right hand and their pledge of allegiance to obey him in all godly things as to the conduct of their lives.

When the last pledge of allegiance had been given and accepted the First Successor of Ahmad and so the First Khalifa of the Ahmadiyya Movement led the funeral prayer and at six o'clock the body of Ahmad was buried in the small cemetery. Already some of those who had been among his first 313 Companions were buried there. In the years that followed his other Companions were to lie there.

In contrast to the vulgar delight of the mob who had danced outside his house on news of his death, the worldwide obituaries painted a different picture. The daily paper in Delhi commented: "He changed entirely the structure of polemics and laid the foundations of new literature in India. His vigorous literature has a novel grandeur... and a study of some of his writings transports the reader to a state of ecstasy."

A newspaper in Lahore said that, though the writer did not believe Ahmad was The Promised

Messiah, there was no doubt that he "was an exceedingly holy and exalted leader who had a force of piety that conquered even the hardest hearts. He was a well-informed scholar, a courageous messenger of peace, a reformer of great resolve who set an example of pious life... His guidance and leadership had a truly messianic quality for the spiritually dead. He infused new life into dead souls as did Jesus."

A newspaper in Amritsar wrote, "A great personality has departed. With his death an epoch comes to an end. He has completed his mission. We do not think that so glorious a person will ever again appear in the religious life of India."

Another newspaper in Amritsar commented, "... he was born with a unique temperament. By virtue of his study and upright nature ... we find him charged with an unusual religious fervour. His mind is immune from worldly temptations. He is as happy in solitude as if he were in congenial company. Even when he is in company, he is busy enjoying the pleasures of solitude. His books have given a captivating picture of religion. He has washed off the dust of superstitions and human weaknesses which had settled on it.

"As to his character, there in not a trace of any bolt on it. He lived a pious life. He was God-fearing all his life. In short, his fifty years of moral integrity ... raised him to an enviable position of great prominence."

A newspaper in Calcutta wrote, "He lived the life of a *dervesh*. Hundreds of people ate in his free kitchen every day. His followers comprise all categories of people. They are scholars, they are religious teachers, they are men of influence, aristocrats, educated rich men and business men."

His constant opponents, the newspapers of the Hindu Arya Samaj sect, commented that while his name brought back memories of bitter disputes it was true to say that his ideas about Islam were much more liberal than those of most Muslims and that he resembled Muhammad in the quality of perseverance. "He stuck to it to his last breath and never wavered in slightest degree."

A historian of the Brahmo Samaj sect was even more forthright about the effect of Ahmad's preaching. This "eminent Muslim savant", had challenged the leaders of Brahmo Samaj to public debate.

"It is deplorable that none among the Brahmo Samaj scholars paid any heed to these challenges. The result of this was that those Muslims who had joined Brahmo Samaj withdrew, while those who were on the point of entering its fold, also turned their back on it."

An English newspaper in Allahabad wrote, "If one of the prophets of Israel came back and started preaching he would not be as misfit in the conditions of today as Mirza Ghulam Ahmad.

"The Mirza Sahib never had any doubt about his claim... With all sincerity and truthfulness he believed that he was the recipient of God's revelations and that he had been endowed with unusual and extraordinary powers ... This Prophet of Qadian belonged to that class of people who do not often appear on this globe.

"Those who have moved the world in religion have been much more akin to Mirza Ghulam Ahmad than to a modern Archbishop of Canterbury."

The Times of London, in a long obituary covering his teachings, said that many men of high standing and good education were numbered among his followers. The writer recalled the words of one of his Christian opponents. He was, he said, "venerable in appearance, magnetic in personality and active in intellect."

Ahmad had sown the seed. It would take three hundred years to unite the religions of the world he had prophesied. But only a hundred years later the harvest from the seed he had sown was coming in.

CHAPTER THIRTY NINE

His Successors

Some days before he took the decision to leave Qadian for Lahore to seek medical advice for his wife, Ahmad asked his daughter Mubarka Begum to pray for advice about a matter he now had under consideration. He did not tell her what this matter was.

She carried out his instructions. She told her father that in a dream she had seen Nurud-Din sitting in a room with a book in his hand. Nurud-Din looked up at her and said, "This book contains the revelations given to Hadhrat Ahmad concerning me. I am Abu Bakr."

As Abu Bakr was the first Khalifa, of Muhammad, the Holy Prophet, this was a clear indication that Nurud-Din was to be first successor of Ahmad and that the time of his death was approaching. After Mubarka Begum had related her dream Ahmad warned her not to mention anything to her mother.

Nurud-Din's election as the First Khalifa of the Ahmadiyya Movement was made without any other name being proposed. He was, said the elders of the Community, "the most learned and most righteous of us all … the most sincere and most long-standing friend of our departed leader."

He was the exemplar they needed, they said. If he would now be the successor of Ahmad they would be fortunate indeed. Every command of his would have the same authority for them as had the commands of Ahmad. Their very being would be filled with delight if they could take the covenant of allegiance in the name of Ahmad from Nurud-Din.

Nurud-Din did not immediately accept. After some reflection he said that he would give his reply after supplicating the Almighty in *nafal* prayers. When these were finished they went to the Garden of Ahmad where his followers were waiting. There the written request of the senior members of the Community was read out to murmurs of approval from the assembled members of the Community.

Nurud-Din then spoke. He had never desired to become their leader, he said. He had not sought a place of honour in the world, his only desire was that God would be pleased with him. It was this desire that had led him to settle in Qadian.

He had considered what would happen after the death of Ahmad and wondered whom God would appoint as their leader. There were many among them whose work for The Faith put him to shame.

He mentioned the names of seven people who had come to mind. Three were members of Ahmad's family, Mahmud Ahmad, Ahmad's eldest son, Mir Nasir who was Ahmad's father in law and Muhammad Ali Khan who was Ahmad's son in law.

There were also Muhammad Ahsan, a descendent of the Holy Prophet, who had written several books about Ahmad and Muhammad Ali who was the editor of ' *The Review of Religions'*. All of them, he declared, were better qualified in different ways than he was.

He was in indifferent health, he said, and the responsibility of becoming the Khalifa was both heavy and dangerous. We are the servants of God and the burden of servitude he found difficult enough to carry for himself. How then, he asked, could he carry it for others as well?

He did not believe that he possessed the necessary temperament for such a task, he continued. He was a weak man and did not have the necessary courage. If they decided to elect any of the people he had named then he was ready to make the covenant of allegiance immediately and with a whole heart.

If, however, you insist on making me your Khalifa then bear in mind that taking Bai'at means being sold. If you elect me your leader then I will accept this burden and you must accept my decisions, for a Community that has no chief, is already dead.

His speech was received with acclamation and the members of the Community surged forward to take Baiat at his hands.

Nurud-Din was known widely throughout India long before he met Ahmad. He was one of the

most eminent physicians in the sub-continent, practising the *Unany* system of Medicine. His book of medicines is still in use today, nearly a hundred years after his death. He treated rich and poor alike - he was the personal physician of the *Maharajah* of Jammu and Kashmir -never asking for a fee, accepting happily whatever his patients wanted to give him.

As a result he was moderately wealthy for he was successful. He was a fine scholar and had a library of rare manuscripts which he had bought for considerable sums. Though he did not speak English he had read the whole of Shakespeare in Arabic translation. A meeting was convened in Lahore by those in favour of such a view and then a meeting was convened in Qadian who were opposed to this.

Meanwhile the Khalifa had taken soundings of his own. He then summoned a meeting of some 250 delegates who represented the various branches of the Movement. He expressed his displeasure at those who had organised the meeting in Lahore and those who had organised the opposition meeting in Qadian. No one had the right to organise such meetings, he declared.

"I am not dependant upon any of you," he declared. God had told him that if any one of them deserted Ahmadiyyat then he would be replaced by a whole group of people. He expressed his severest displeasure at the conduct of Muhammad Ali, editor of *'The Review of Religions'*, and Khawaja Kamalud-

Din, who had criticised Ahmad's speech regarding the teachings of the Philosophy of Islam, and also Shaikh Yaqub Ali who had organised the opposition meeting. He ordered all three to renew their covenant of allegiance.

All three did so, but the opposition of Muhammad Ali and Khawaja Kamalud-Din continued in secret. When Nurud Din heard of it he castigated them for impertinence in the sermon he delivered at the Festival of the Breaking of the Fast in October 1909.

The dissident group organised by Muhammad Ali did not flourish. Within a few weeks one of his most prominent supporters had left him. Others followed and, over the years its importance, declined. Religion did not need a parliament Nurud Din had replied to critics. Religion needed leaders guided by God.

The Khalifas of the Ahmadiyya Movement never had any doubt that they were so guided. Nor did their followers.

The Second Khalifa, Mahmud Ahmad, was 25 when he assumed his office. He died 51 years later. The number of people who attended the annual conference in the year before he took office was around 3,000. In 1964, the last conference during his Khilafat, the attendance was over 75,000.

He had guided the Movement in some of its most dangerous years. He had led his followers from a beleaguered Qadian when the partition of India

began and founded in Pakistan a new city called Rabwah. The third Khalifa experienced the first years of persecution in Pakistan when Islamic Justice was whittled away for political advantage and Ahmadi Muslims lost all political rights.

The Fourth Khalifa found himself under even worse persecution. His followers were beaten and killed. Their homes and businesses were burned. Thousands left Pakistan for a new life in Britain, Canada, Germany, The United States and other countries.

Finally, too, the Fourth Khalifa had to leave. But the year before he left Pakistan the attendance at the annual gathering was around two hundred thousand.

In 1991, as had been prophesied, the Ahmadi Muslims returned to Qadian. There were delegates from all over the world. Nothing, they declared, would stop the advance of the Ahmadiyya Movement in its bid to carry out the task which Ahmad said God had ordained for him - the uniting of all religions under Islam.

There were those who said that the diaspora of the Ahmadi Muslims was the work of God for God worked in wondrous ways to perform His miracles.

CHAPTER FORTY

The Second Century

The Ahmadi Muslims were deprived of their political rights in Pakistan by Prime Minister Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto in an attempt to ensure his own political survival. Down through the centuries, whenever a leader feels a rising swell of unpo-pularity, a well-tried method of survival is to divert the dislike of the population on to some real or imagined wrongs perpetrated by a small group. The essence of the strategy is that the small group is unable to protect itself. In the ensuing clamour the real wrongs are forgotten.

Persecuted in their own land the diaspora of the Ahmadi Muslims began. Their heart surgeons and scientists, trained specialists of every desc-ription, along with hard-working businessmen and small entrepreneurs found a ready welcome in the West. Ahmadi communities began to flourish in Britain, the United States, Canada, Germany, France, Holland, Sweden and other countries.

Their leader, the Fourth Khalifa, was already in exile in Britain. Alerted to the fact that Zia planned to arrest and then execute him in the same way as he had arrested and executed Bhutto, the Fourth Khalifa had flown out from Pakistan immediately after Zia's ordinance was introduced.

At first it was thought that the Khalifa, isolated from most of the Ahmadi Community, would be unable to function as their leader in any real way. The reverse proved to be true. London was a world centre of communications. The Khalifa was therefore able to visit Ahmadi Communities throug-hout the world without difficulty.

The intense missionary campaign to convert the world to Islam, which had been begun by Ahmad with the publication of 'The Review of Religions' and the appointment of the first missionary to London, took on renewed vigour.

Africa was the first continent to benefit . By the early 1990s the Movement was funding 28 hospitals, 37 secondary schools, 44 junior secondary schools and 204 primary schools. The schools and hospitals were open to all. There was no need to be an Ahmadi. Naturally, however, many of the Africans who were educated and cared for by Ahmadi teachers and doctors became Ahmadis.

There were no Ahmadis in Ghana in the 1920s. But in the early 1990s it was reckoned that more than 10 percent of Ghana's 13 million people were Ahmadis. And because the Movement funded the senior education of Ahmadis the number of Ahmadis who were doctors, scientists, lawyers, journalists, indeed professional people of all types, began to increase.

Ahmadis in richer countries like Germany, Canada, the USA and Britain imposed a further

voluntary tax on themselves in order to support missionary work in the poorest countries of the Third World. Some Ahmadis, who had become very rich in their new countries, undertook to pay for all missionary work in certain countries by themselves. They paid for the translation of the Holy Qur'an into local languages.

In Pakistan the persecution of Ahmadis continued. General Zia declared that the Ahmadiyya Movement was "a cancer" that had to be eliminated from Pakistan. The Fourth Khalifa warned him that God always punished the unjust. Those who persecuted people would be dealt with most severely. Finally, in 1988, he pronounced a *mubahala* against him. It was an appeal to God to show who was telling the truth. The sentence on the man who was lying would be death.

Five days later, on August 17, the Presidential plane of Zia-ul-Haq was blown out of the sky. Why it happened the official enquiry was never able to determine.

The Ahmadis were not puzzled. God had once again come to their rescue as He had in the past. God had taken the decision. He had destroyed the tyrant who persecuted them when they were going about His business.

Less than a year later, 23rd March 1989, the Ahmadiyya Community celebrated the foundation of their Movement. It was a hundred years since Ahmad's acceptance of the first oath of covenant. That had taken

place in a room used for baking bread in a very modest house in Ludhiana.

Their centenary dinner was still simple but, out of consideration for their guests, it took place in a luxury hotel in Park Lane, London. There were men and women from many lands -government ministers, members of parliament, writers and professors, doctors and lawyers, theologians and businessmen. The Ahmadiyya Movement was now established in 120 countries. Mosques had been built in South America and the South Pacific where no mosques had ever been. Mosques had been re-established in Spain and other countries where Islam had once flourished.

The Fourth Khalifa told them they had accomplished much in 100 years, but even bigger sacrifices were needed. Five thousand new missionaries were needed in the first two decades of their second century, The USSR was crumbling, China would follow and South America was practically virgin territory.

"Dedicate your unborn children to the service of God," he urged his followers. "Encourage them to learn Russian, Chinese and the languages of other Communist bloc countries so that they are ready for the task that is almost at hand."

The path to the unity of all religions under Islam might sometimes be dark and dangerous, he said, but the future was bright.

He recalled the words of Ahmad:

"The rebirth of Islam demands a great sacrifice from us. What is this sacrifice? It is our lives. On this sacrifice depends the life of Islam, the life of Muslims, the manifestation of God in our times. Sacrifice is the essence of Islam. That is the Islam God wants to restore.

"I call upon God as my witness that the message of Ahmadiyyat is nothing but truth. It is Islam in its pristine purity.

"The salvation of mankind depends upon accepting this religion of peace. Islam is the religion which does away with all discriminations between Man and demolishes all barriers of race, colour and creed which divide humanity.

"Islam liberates man from the bondage of sin and strengthens his ties with his Creator. It is a religion so simple yet so highly organised that it meets the demands and challenges of the changing world.

"Islam permits no exploitation -be it social, political, economic or religious. The Political Philosophy of Islam has no room for false or deceptive diplomacy. It believes in absolute morality and enjoins justice and fairness to friends and foes alike in every sphere of human interests. "Islam neither permits coercion for the spread of its own message nor gives licence to other religions to do so. Indulgence in terrorism, even in the name of the noblest objectives, is entirely incompatible with the teachings of Islam.

"Islam is the cure for all maladies and ailments of suffering humanity today. Islam teaches us that unless man learns to live at peace with himself and his fellow human beings, he cannot live at peace with his God.

The Fourth Khalifa ended his message with these words: "It is to this Islam that I invite all mankind."

Ahmad had prophesied that, at some time in the future, the Ahmadis would be exiled from their holy city of Qadian. This had happened.

But he also prophesied that they would return. That also happened.

Legally the Ahmadiyya Movement had never left Qadian. As the fighting raged and Muslims trekked towards Pakistan and Hindus towards India 313 Ahmadis, the same number as the Companions of the Holy Prophet, walled themselves up in Qadian. The Second Khalifa had asked them to stay behind to protect the mosques and the birth place of Ahmad.

At first, protected by soldiers of the Indian army, they lived almost as in a siege. Food and money came in to support them, but their lands and schools and businesses had been taken over so few people went out to work. Gradually, however, over the years, conditions grew better. The number of soldiers guarding them was reduced and finally withdrawn. Some people were able to start work in

the nearby town of Batala and later in the Sikh town of Amritsar.

Gradually, too, there was a natural increase in their numbers. And there were good memories of the past. Hindus and Sikhs alike remembered that when the Ahmadis had been in the majority Qadian had been an oasis of prosperity and education. Visitors and pilgrims came from all the world to Qadian and boys, girls and students came from all over India to the two schools and the religious college.

In December, 1991, the Ahmadis returned in force to Qadian. One hundred years earlier Ahmad had welcomed 75 people to Qadian for the first annual gathering. In the last year before partition some 30,000 people had attended. In Rabwah, before the Pakistan authorities banned their meetings, about 200,000 people attended.

For the centennial gathering there were restrictions. Representatives of the 50,000 Ahmadis who lived in India travelled there without difficulty. So did Ahmadis from Europe and North America. But only 5,000 Ahmadi Muslims were allowed to travel from Pakistan to India.

Most important of all, however, the Fourth Successor of Ahmad also returned to Qadian from his exile in London.

The prophecy of Ahmad had been fulfilled!

In 1992 the first missionary set off for some of the new republics established after the break-up of the USSR. They spoke Russian and various other

languages. The Russian empire, then China and South America these were their targets.

Ahmad had prophesied that the unification of all religions under Islam would take three centuries. In the first century they had established Ahmadiyyat in 150 countries.

Appendix One

The inscriptions on the holy cloak of Guru Baba Nanak are:

Neck

In the name of Allah, the Gracious, the Merciful (1:1)
There is none worthy of worship save Allah and Muhammad is His Messenger (The Kalima)

Right Sleeve

Surely, the true religion with Allah is Islam (3:20)
And however much the disbelievers may dislike it (61:9)
None shall touch it except those who are purified (56:80)

Left Sleeve

There is none worthy of worship except Allah and Muhammad is Allah's Messanger (The Kalima)

Right Front

Allah, there is no God save Him, the Living, Self-Subsisting and All-Sustaining. Slumber seizes Him not, nor sleep. To Him belongs whatsoever is in the Heavens and whatsoever is in the Earth. Who is he that dare intercede with Him save by His permission? He knows what is before them and what is behind them; and they encompass nothing of His knowledge except what He pleases. His knowledge extends over the Heavens and the Earth; and the care of them wearies Him not, and He is the High, the Great. (2:256)

When the help of Allah comes and the victory; And thou seest men entering the religion of Allah in troops; glorify thy Lord with His praise and seek His forgiveness. Surely, He is oft-returning with mercy. (110:2-4)

Left Front

I solemnly bear witness that there certainly is no God except Allah and I solemnly bear witness that Muhammad certainly in His vassal and Messenger (Kalima Shahada - the initiation pronouncement of a Muslim)

Say, He is Allah, the One; Allah the Independent and Besought of all. He begets not, nor is He begotten. And there is none like unto Him (112:2-4)

Allah will perfect His light, however much the disbelievers may dislike it. (61:8)

There is no God but Thou: Holy are Thou. I have indeed been of the wrongdoers. (21:88)

Verily, those who swear allegiance to thee, indeedm swear allegiance to Allah. (48:11)

Centre Front

All praise belongs to Allah alone, Lord of all the worlds, The Gracious, The Merciful, Master of the Day of Judgement. Thee alone do we worship and Thee alone do we implore for help. Guide us in the straight path, the path of those on whom Thou hast bestowed Thy favours, who not incurred Thy displeasure and those who have not gone astray.

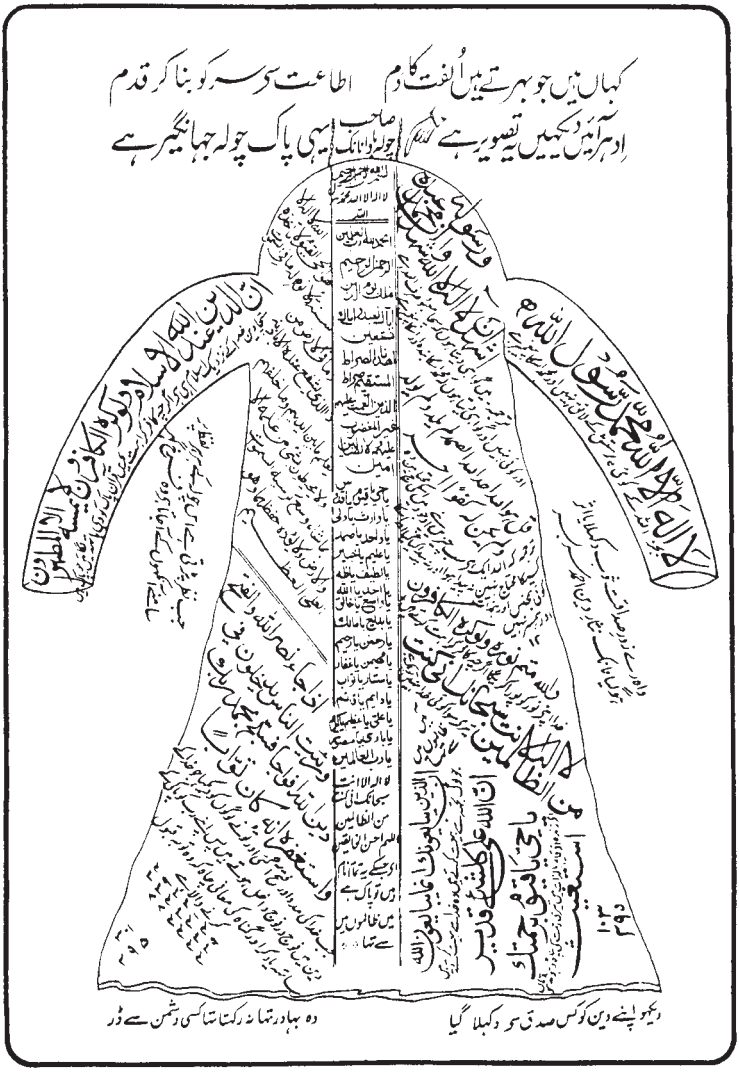
O the Living, O the Self-Subsisting and All-Sustaining; O the Holy One; O You the Warith, who remains after all creatures have perished; O the Ruler; O the One; O the All-

Knowing; O the All-Aware; O the Incomprehensible, the knower of all subtleties; O the Unique, the Lord of Unity; O Allah; O the Protector; O the Great- Forgiver; O the Overlooker and coverer of faults; O the Oft-Returnig with compassion; O the Acceptor of repentance; O the Everlasting; O the Self-Existent; O the High; O the Great; O the Noble; O the Maker; O the Fashioner; O the Sustainer of all the worlds.

There is no God but Thou. I have indeed been of the wrongdoers (21:88)

God, my Lord Who is thus named, Thou Art Holy. I was indeed one of the transgressors.

Picture of chola



Appendix Two

The Books And Writings Of Ahmad

Ahmad wrote some 85 books, some of considerable length, others quite short. Some, such as 'The Philosophy of the Teachings of Islam', were translated into English almost immediately. Others were translated over the years.
He also wrote many articles for newspapers, took part in written debates and produced many *ishtiharaat* or public notices. The following are considered his most important writings.

Braheen-i-Ahmadiyya Ala Haqiqate Kitabillahil Qur'an Wan- Nubuwwatil Muhammadiyya
(The Proofs of the Truth of the Book of God, The Holy Qur'an, and the Prophethood of Muhammad)
The first and second volumes were published in 1880, the third in 1882, the fourth in 1884 and the fifth in 1905. The first and second volumes contain truths based on the knowledge of religion, 300 proofs of the truth of Islam, answers to criticisms, a discussion on other religions, an explanation of the Word of God.

The third volume deals with the conditions of Muslims and external and internal truths of the Holy Qur'an. Volume four deals with revelations, prophecies, miracles and how salvation can be won. The fifth volume asserts that a true and living religion must have a manifestation of the words and deeds of God. Living miracles are the sure sign of a living religion.

Purani Tahrirain (Old Writings)
This volume discusses the theory of transmigration, revelation and the belief that souls are eternal and uncreated.

Sabz Ishtihar (Green Poster)
Originally entitled *A speech full of Truth*, this public notice, issued in December 1888, became known as the Green Poster simply because it was printed on green paper. It deals with the death of Ahmad's first son Bashir by his second wife. At the end of the poster Ahmad, for the first time, invites followers to take bai'at, the oath of allegiance, at his hand.

Fat-he-Islam (Victory of Islam)
This book, published in 1891, contains the claim by Ahmad that he has been sent by God to revive religion and establish it in the hearts of people.

Tauzeeh-e-Maraam (Explanation of Objectives)
This book, the second part of Fath-e-Islam, discusses the second advent of the Messiah. Ahmad asks readers to reserve judgement until they have studied the third part of Victory of Islam.

Izala-e-Auhaam (Removal of suspicions)
The third part of Fath-e-Islam, discussed the coming of the Promised Messiah as the second advent of Jesus who has come to give spiritual life to those who are spiritually dead. Ahmad talks of the need to carry Islam to Europe and America and discussed tawaffa, the keyword in any discussion about the life or death of Jesus.

The Ludhiana Debate
This debate, between Ahmad and Muhammad Hussain, started on 20th July, 1891, and lasted for 12 days. Muhammad Hussain had written to Ahmad asking him to withdraw his claim that he was the Promised Messiah. The debate, therefore, centred on the death of Jesus Christ.

Aasmani Faisla (The Divine Decision)
This book, published in 1892, is an invitation to those who have attacked Ahmad to reconsider their decision. God has promised true help for true believers, says Ahmad. There are four signs of the true believer - they receive good news before it happens, they are given news about what will happen in the future regarding world affairs, their prayers are accepted and they are given insight into the secrets of the Word of God, The Holy Qur'an.

Nishaan-e-Aasmani Shahadatul Mulhameen
(The Heavenly Sign)
This book, published in 1892, contains the predictions over the centuries about the coming of the Promised Messiah and the testimony of people who have supported the claim of Ahmad.

Aaeena-e-Kamaalaat-E-Islam (The Mirror of the Excellencies of Islam)
This book, is in two parts. The Arabic section was published in 1892 and the Urdu section in 1893, It deals with the excellencies of Islam, the prophetic revelations and declares that he has been called upon to uproot the evils that have crept into the world.

Barakaat-Ud-Du'aa (The blessings of Prayer)
Ahmad was totally opposed to the belief that prayer was some kind of consolation that one felt in one's heart after prayer. Ahmad details the principles of commentary on the Holy Qur'an.

Hujjatul - Islam (The Convincing Proof of Islam)
In this book Ahmad says that one of the proofs of a living religion is that God opens up the hearts of its followers so that they have certainty in His existence and He talks to them.

Jang-e-Muqaddas (The Sacred Battle)
This is the record of the written debate between Ahmad and Abdullah Atham at the bungalow of the Christian

missionary Dr Henry Martyn Clarke. It took place between 22nd May and 5th June, 1893.

Nur-Ul-Haq (The Light of Truth)
After the debate with Abdullah Atham a Christian missionary wrote an abusive book about Islam which was denounced even by Christian news-papers. Ahmad suffered the distinction of being accused by Muslims of working against the gover-nment and accused by Christians and Hindus of working against the government.

Sirrul - Khilafa (The Secret of Khalifat)
Published in Arabic in July, 1894, this book deals with the Khalifas who succeeded Muhammad and with his own claim to be the Hadi or Guided One.

Satt - Bachan (The True Word)
In this book Ahmad dealt with the attacks against the character of *Baba Nanak* and recounts the history of the *Chola Sahib* or Holy Cloak of Baba Nanak which is covered with verses from the Qur'an.

Islami Usul Ki Philosophy (The Philosophy of The Teachings of Islam)
Originally written as an address for a conference of religions, held in Lahore, this book has become the best known of Ahmad's works, being reprinted many times in many languages.

Kitabul - Bariyya (The Acquittal)
This book recounts the attempt of the Christian missionary Dr Henry Martyn Clarke to have him imprisoned for conspiracy to murder.

Ayyamus-Sulh (The Days of peace)
Ahmad deals with his warnings about bubonic plague and explains why prayer is obligatory for Muslims and the various tests that can be exacted to discover the truth of his claim to be the Promised Messiah.

Masih Hindustan Main (Jesus in India)
Ahmad details the proofs that Jesus was taken down alive from the cross, how his wounds were healed and how he left Palestine to Journey to India.

Tiryaqul-Qulub (Elixir for the Hearts)
The Holy Prophet had two names - Muhammad and Ahmad. Muhammad indicated that the Holy Prophet would repel those who attacked him with the sword. His second name 'Ahmad' indicated that he would spread peace. Ahmad declares that this is the age when the significance of 'Ahmad' was to be shown and so declares the use of the word 'Ahmadiyya' to describe his followers.

Khutba Ilhamiyya (The Revealed Sermon)
On April 11, 1990, Ahmad was told in a revelation that he was to speak in Arabic on the philosophy of sacrifice even though he had little knowledge of spoken Arabic. His sermon was taken down by two of his followers.

Lujja-Tun-Nur (The Sea of Light)
Written in Arabic with a Persian translation Ahmad explains the needs of the time and why God has raised him as a Reformer.

I'Jaaz-Ul-Masih (The Miracle of the Messiah)
Ahmad wrote this commentary on the Sura Fatiha and challenged anyone to do better. A certain religious teacher took up the challenge. He died before he could complete his commentary. He had stopped at the words 'May God's curse be on the liar'.

Ek Ghalati Ka Izaala (A misunderstanding removed)
This book was written to remove any doubt about the task given to him by God. The revelations he had had contained the words 'prophet' and 'messenger' hundreds of times, Ahmad declared.

Kashti-E-Nooh (The Ark of Noah)
This book deals with Ahmad's revelation that his followers would not suffer during the bubonic plague. He urged true believers to come to his ark, the ark of Noah.

Tazkiratush-Shahaadatain
(A Narration of Two Martyrdoms)
Ahmad deals with the martyrdom of Abdul Latif and Abdur Rahman in Afghanistan.

Islam Aur Iss Mulk Ke Doosre Mazaahab
(Islam and other religions of this country)
This is the text of the address Ahmad gave in Lahore in December, 1904. He declares there are two parts to religion: beliefs and practices. He mentions also his claim to be the Promised Messiah and cites proofs of the truthfulness of his claim.

Al-Wasiyyah (The Will)
Written and published in December, 1905, this book deals with the revelation that his death is to occur shortly. He describes his vision of the graveyard where he will be buried among the people who are destined to enter Paradise. He instructs his followers in the tasks that lie ahead.

Haqiqatul Wahi (The Nature of Revelation)
In this book, published in May, 1907, Ahmad details the conditions that determine the validity of true revelations.

Glossary Of Urdu And Arabic Words

Adhan	the call to prayer
Ahl-i-Hadith	a Muslim sect of fundamentalists
Arya Samaj	a reforming Hindu sect known for militant positions against caste and favouring favouring conversion of Muslims and Christians
atfal-ul-Allah	children of God
auliya	Saints
azad	free
baqa	immortality
ba'ait	oath of allegiance to a religious leader
chilla	period of fasting (from word for 40)
chola Sahib	Holy cloak, especially that owned by Guru Nanak inscribed with Qur'anic verses.
Dar-ul-harb	Abode of war (non Islamic territory)
Dar-ul-Islam	Islamic territory
darbar	court of Indian or British rulers
Eid	a Muslim feast day
fana	passing away (mystical experience)
fatwa	a religious legal opinion/pronouncement
ghadr	revolt, revolutionary
Granth Sahib	name of the Sikh scripture
gurumukhi	script of the Punjabi language

Hadith	Sayings of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, traditions of Islam, a basic source for Islamic law and customs after the Holy Qur'an.
Hajj	Pilgrimage in Islam
Ijtihad	re-interpretation (in reference to Islamic law)
ilham	inspiration, revelation
imam	leader of Muslim Prayers
ishtihar	public notice
istifta	fatwa or legal opinion
jagir	land given by government as a reward for services
Jihad (jehad)	struggle in the name of God (Holy War)
jizyah	Islamic poll tax collected from non-believers
kafir	un-believer - from Islamic viewpoint
Khalifa	successor
Khilafat	the institution of rule by a Khalifa
Khataman-Nabiyyeen	"Seal of the prophets"
madrasah	an Islamic school
masih mauood	the Promised Messiah
maulvi	the religious teacher
mubahala	prayer duel, calling down the curses of God
muhaddith	renewer of the faith
mullah	religious teacher

nabi	prophet
nubuwwah	prophethood
pir	sufi, saint or guru
qadi	Islamic judge
rasul	messenger (title applied to Holy Prophet)
salat	prayer in Islam
shariah	Islamic (God's) Law
shi'ah	sect, specially shiat sect
shirk	associating something with God, in Islam the equivalent of un-believers
shuddhi	Arya samaj doctrine of reconversion an Islamic mystic
sufi	an Islamic mystic
sunni	the way; orthodox or mainstream Muslims as opposed to Shiats
tabligh	missionary movement - preaching Islam
tafsir	commentary on the Holy Qur'an
taqlid	imitation (in theological context)
ulama	learned in Islamic religion and faith
ummah	the Islamic community
wahy	inspiration, revelation
wasiyah	a will
zakat	Islamic alms tax
zamindar	landowner, absentee landlord

What The Papers Say Of Other Books
By *Iain Adamson*

The Old Fox
Sunday Times, "a most readable biography … Mr Adamsom had drawn a faithful picture of his subject, warts and all."

Times Literary Supplement "An interesting book and plainly the fruit of careful preparation."

The Times "never a dull moment.."

Scottish Daily Record "particularly good…"

Western Mail (Cardiff) ".. a gifted and responsible writer … a fascination and invaluable pen-portrait of one of the greatest courtroom figures and human enigmas of our time…"

The Irish Times "… a book which Igibbled at a sitting … a portrait of an unusual man…"

Manchester Evening News "A fascinating picture of one of the courtroom personalities of his age."

Evening Argus (Brighton) "a legal tour-de-force … brilliant"

Evening Times (Glasgow) "I hail with delight The Old Fox .. the chapters on the Liberace case are wonderful.."

Evening Advertiser (Swindon) "Beyfus's life was like a torchlike processing … Mr Adamson is just the biographer such a man needed …

Illustrated London News "…admirable..."

Solicitors' Journal "… a good biography…"

Press and Journal (Aberdeen) "… a biography that will find many appreciative readers…"

Books and Bookmen "invariably interesting…"

Erle Stanley Gardner (creator of Perry Mason) " … a fascinating behind-the-scenes account of courtroom strategy…"

Police Review "fascinating.."

Sydney Daily Telegraph "a well-drawn picture"

Daily News (South Africa) "writes with sympathy and understanding … valueable…"

Punch ".. effective.."

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Straight Times (Singapore) "… a saga, a sad tale yet with a tang of pride in it…"

The Messiah, promised for all the world in the Qur'an, the Bible, the Torah, The Vedas and the scriptures of all the world's great religions, has arrived! *'I will unite all religions and all mankind. I am the Promised one.'*

This was the claim of Ahmad more than a hundred years ago. On that first day, in a small Indian Town, just 40 followers took the covenant of allegiance to him. Today 12 million people - among them a World Bank Director, a Nobel Prize winner, Government Ministers, Judges, Surgeons, Millionaires, people of all descriptions follow his teachings. They believe that Ahmad was sent by God to unite the world under Islam over the next 200 years. Already his Movement is established in 154 countries.

This is the first biography in English of Ahmad who said that he came in the gentle spirit of Jesus. But Christian, Hindu and Muslim priests alike received him with Physical violence. His followers, as in early Christian times, have been murdered and martyred.

Iain Adamson, a former foreign correspondent and the author of four highly-acclaimed biographies, has studied the Ahmadiyya Movement in India, Pakistan, Europe and North America.

The result is a fascinating biography relating the story of a religious movement that is widely acknowledged as the most dynamic missionary organisation in the world. It is also an enthralling detective story. Adamson examines and wonders why the Holy Cloak of the first Sikh Guru is embroidered with Qur'anic verses. He investigates the astonishing claim that a tomb in Kashmir is that of Jesus.

What they say of Iain Adamson's books: 'Sunday Times' *most readable* 'The Times' *never a Dull moment,* 'Western Mail' *a gifted and responsible writer* 'Manchester Evening News' *fascinating,* 'Evening Argus' *a tour-de-force.. brilliant,* 'Irish News' *frank and fearless,* 'Glasgow Herald' *a vivid writer .. so entertaining a biographer,* 'Straits Times' (Singapore) *a saga,* 'New Zealand Broadcasting Corporation' *covers a vast canvas .. a joy to read.*

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