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Ahmadiyyat Is Not a New Religion

Hazrat Mirza Bashir-ud-Din
Mahmud Ahmad

Ahmadiyyat IS NOT A New Religion

In this powerful speech, Hazrat Mirza Bashir-ud-Din Mahmud Ahmad Khalifatul-Masih II^{ra} explores the true essence of Ahmadiyyat and its role in reviving Islamic teachings. He dismantles the doctrine of Jesus^{tas} physical return and presents a compelling argument for the prophesied Messiah's emergence from within the Muslim ummah.

Hazrat Khalifatul-Masih II^{ra} also refutes the accusation of "*shirk fi nabuwwat*" (partnership in prophethood) against Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, the Promised Messiah^{as}, clarifying the context of his prophethood and demonstrating how it does not imply any partnership in the prophethood of the Holy Prophet Muhammad^{sas}.

This book is a must-read for anyone seeking to deepen their understanding of faith and the role of the Promised Messiah^{as} in the modern era.



Ahmadiyyat
Is Not a New Religion

Hazrat Mirza Bashir-ud-Din Mahmud Ahmad
Khalifatul-Masih II

ISLAM INTERNATIONAL PUBLICATIONS LTD.



Ahmadiyyat Is Not a New Religion
(English translation of *Bani Silsila Ahmadiyya Koi Naya Deen Nabi Laey*)

A speech delivered by
Hazrat Mirza Bashir-ud-Din Mahmud Ahmad
Khalifatul-Masih II^{ra}
at Jalsa Salana Qadian
on 27 December 1938

First English translation published in the UK, 2024

© Islam International Publications Ltd.

Published by
Islam International Publications Ltd.
Unit 3, Bourne Mill Business Park,
Guildford Road, Farnham, Surrey, GU9 9PS, UK

Printed in the UK at
Raqeem Press, Farnham, Surrey

Cover Design: Farhan Naseer

ISBN: 978-1-84880-369-5
10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

For further information, please visit www.alislam.org

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Hazrat Mirza Bashir-ud-Din Mahmud Ahmad
Khalifatul-Masih II^{ra}

About the Author

Hazrat Mirza Bashir-ud-Din Mahmud Ahmad^{ra}, known as Hazrat Musleh Maud^{ra}, was an exceptional spiritual leader with profound intelligence and insight. He served as the second successor of the Promised Messiah^{as} and guided the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community for 52 years. At the young age of 25, he was elected as the Khalifa, and under his leadership, the message of Ahmadiyyat spread globally.

One of Hazrat Musleh Maud's^{ra} significant achievements was the establishment of the first mosque outside India, the Fazl Mosque in London, in 1924. He initiated several other groundbreaking initiatives, including English-language publications such as *Muslim Sunrise*, to promote a better understanding of Islam in the Western world. Additionally, he formalised and strengthened the system of elected leadership, enabling the community to operate efficiently and effectively.

Hazrat Musleh Maud^{ra} was a staunch advocate of justice and human rights, supporting the rights of Kashmiri Muslims and advocating for Palestinians during the creation of Israel. He recognised the critical role of education, especially for women, in empowering

individuals and communities, and established several schools and colleges including the esteemed Jamia Ahmadiyya. Moreover, he oversaw the community's migration from Qadian to Rabwah, where he erected a hospital and founded several schools and colleges.

Despite facing numerous challenges, including attempted assassination, Hazrat Musleh Maud^{ra} remained resolute in his mission. His visionary leadership and dedication continue to inspire and guide the community. The legacy of this great man is one of progress, growth, and dedication to the mission of peace, tolerance, and love for all humanity.

Foreword

Ahmadiyyat Is Not a New Religion is an English rendering of a speech delivered by Hazrat Mirza Bashir-ud-Din Mahmud Ahmad, Khalifatul-Masih II (may Allah be pleased with him) on 27 December 1938. The original text of this address can be found under the title "بانی سلسلہ احمدیہ کوئی نیا دین نہیں لائے" in volume 15 of *Anwarul 'Uloom*.

The lecture encompasses two main subjects. Firstly, it delves into Jamā'at newspapers and periodicals, emphasizing the importance of increased readership among the Jamā'at and providing guidance to *Al-Fazl* management on strategies for enhancing reader interest and improving the quality of the daily paper.

In the second and main portion of the address, Hazrat Khalifatul-Masih II^{ra} expounds on the claim of the Promised Messiah^{as}—the revival of the teachings of Islam and the reformation of Muslims. Specifically he dismantles the false belief that Jesus^{as} is alive in the heavens and will come down to reform the world in the latter days, using one of the main argument set forth by the Founder of Ahmadiyyat. He further highlights why it was so pertinent the prophesied Messiah had to be raised from within the Muslim ummah.

Additionally, the speaker aims to dispel the accusation of *shirk fi nabuwwat* (partnership in prophethood) leveled against the Promised Messiah^{as}. He refutes this allegation, clarifying the context of his prophethood and demonstrating how his station does not entail any form of partnership in the prophethood of the Holy Prophet^{sas}.

This lecture was translated into English by the translation committee in Canada chaired by Hadi Ali Chaudhary.

The project was overseen by Usman Shahid who also translated it into English. It was reviewed by Shahzeb Athar. We also acknowledge the valuable services of Shazia Rahman, Uzma Urooj, Fazal Masood Malik, and Farhan Naseer.

May Allah grant them all the best of rewards. Ameen!

Munir-ud-Din Shams
Additional Wakilut-Tasneef
London, United Kingdom
May 2024

Publisher's Note

Words included in square bracket [] are those of the translator and merely added for the purpose of clarification.

The following abbreviations have been used for salutations:

ṣas: *sallallahu 'alaihi wa sallam*, meaning 'peace and blessings of Allah be upon him', is written after the name of the Holy Prophet^{ṣas}.

as: *'alahis-salam*, meaning 'peace be upon him', is written after the names of all other prophets.

ra: *raziyallahu 'anhul'anha'anhum*, meaning 'may Allah be pleased with him/her/them', is written after the names of the companions of the Holy Prophet^{ṣas} or the companions of the Promised Messiah^{as}.

All English renditions of the verses of the Holy Quran have been taken from the 2004 edition of Maulawi Sher Ali's translation.

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ نَحْمَدُكَ يَا وَنُصَلِّي عَلَى رَسُولِهِ الْكَرِيمِ¹

Ahmadiyyat Is Not a New Religion

Guidance for Jamā'at Newspapers and Periodicals

ALARMING LOW SUBSCRIPTIONS

Today, I first want to draw your attention to the newspapers and magazines of the Jamā'at. Among the periodicals we produce, *Al-Fazl* stands out as the premier newspaper. But sadly, I have to repeat that our community is not as attentive as it should be in publishing newspapers and literature. Despite its extensive membership across India, spanning thousands of local branches, our Jamā'at only has two thousand *Al-Fazl* subscribers. A community of our magnitude should have a subscription base of at least five to seven thousand. It is deeply concerning that a literary and religious movement like ours has so few buyers of *Al-Fazl*.

¹ In the name of Allah, the Gracious, the Merciful. We praise Allah, the Exalted, the Greatest, and we invoke blessings on His Holy Messenger^{SAAS}. [Publishers]

COMPARING EUROPEAN AND
SOUTH ASIAN READERSHIP

Europeans are so accustomed to reading newspapers that they buy two or three titles. Even the poor labourer carries one or two newspapers. Conversely, the people of our country refuse to buy even one title unless every single article piques their interest. Those who buy it often remark that only one or two articles were good and the rest were useless. It is as though they expect the newspaper to align with their preferences from cover to cover.

I have observed that people abroad will buy a newspaper, read one item of interest—such as an announcement of an upcoming horse race—and then discard it immediately. Similarly, individuals will buy a paper when boarding a train or tram, glance at the results of a horse race or a cricket match, and then set it aside.

The same is the case for women. They buy the paper, read news about parties, weddings, and obituaries as fodder for conversation, and ignore the rest. Political enthusiasts, on the other hand, only read the political news and leave the rest. Finally, those with leisure time peruse the articles in full.

On the other hand, people here are not satisfied until they get full value for their money by reading the entire newspaper.

Their example reminds me of a careless man who lived in Qadian. He was the nephew of a long-serving attendant of the Promised Messiah^{as}. Hazrat Khalifatul-Masih I^{ra} often urged him to offer daily prayers, hoping he would gain at least some understanding of religion. On one occasion, he bought some *ghee* [clarified butter] from the store for eight *anna*, only for a cat to gobble it down. Incensed, he chased after the cat and killed it with a staff. Using a knife, he then cut open the abdomen, squeezed out the 'butter' from the entrails, and stowed it away. When asked if he had recovered it, he said, 'I drew out ten *chataank* [583 g], not just half a *ser* [466 g].'

Similarly, our people want to extract 'ten *chataank* of butter' from the newspaper. Having spent minimally, they wish to squeeze out a maximum return. In truth, a person who learns even a single valuable point from the newspaper should consider it a return on their money; even one useful sentence surpasses the value of one *anna* spent on the newspaper.

THE REVIEW OF RELIGION
AN APPEAL FOR SUBSCRIPTIONS & SPONSORSHIPS

Another Jamā‘at magazine is *The Review of Religions*. Regarding this publication, the Promised Messiah^{as} expressed the desire that it should have ten thousand subscribers. How unfortunate that, at present, we have not fulfilled his desire even once. Our attendance at Jalsa Salana alone reaches twenty thousand. If all members focus on this goal, securing ten thousand subscriptions is not a formidable task. But alas, our Jamā‘at has not been able to meet this desire of the Promised Messiah^{as}.

If *The Review of Religions* is marketed to a non-Ahmadi readership, it will undoubtedly attract ten thousand buyers as it offers exclusive scholarly articles unavailable in other magazines. A large number of our English-literate members must buy this magazine.

However, if those who do not know English also donated some funds to support this magazine upon their marriage celebrations, it would not be much of a burden on them. People already give charity on such occasions, and even those who do not make any donations otherwise will offer some money to folk singers and entertainers who show up to congratulate

them.

If such people were to sponsor three to four Englishmen or other non-Ahmadi scholars with 1-year or 6-month subscriptions, instead of giving away money to entertainers on such occasions, they would constantly receive spiritual rewards for the entirety of the subscription period. If one cannot afford as much, they can even sponsor a three-month subscription.

If Islamic teachings reach people's ears for three consecutive months because of three or four rupees, the sponsors can understand how beneficial and blessed this spending would be for them. Besides, helping out entertainers is unacceptable from a moral and Islamic viewpoint because they use their earnings to continue singing and dancing.

On the other hand, assisting a magazine that serves to spread Islam in foreign lands is a blessing of colossal proportions because it aids the religion of God Almighty.

AL-BUSHRA
EXPAND CIRCULATION

Similarly, *Al-Bushra* is an essential magazine published from lands that have bestowed unique

favours upon us—favours we could never repay, even if our skins were flayed and sewn into clothes. The sacrifices of the Arabs acquainted us with Islam. Thus, conveying the message of Ahmadiyyat to them would not be a favour. Even if we devoted all our properties to the Arabs and sacrificed our wealth and assets for their sake, we could not repay their goodness. They enriched us with spiritual bounties, and we would only be offering them material goods.

But now, God has accorded us an opportunity to gratify them with spiritual bounties as they once offered us. Their ancestors gave us Islam, and now it is our duty to teach them Ahmadiyyat and return the favour they gave us by spreading Islam among us. Hence, by granting us Ahmadiyyat, God has provided us with an enterprise not given to other people. It is our responsibility to benefit from this opportunity by spreading Ahmadiyyat among the Arabs and, at least, expanding the circulation of this magazine, which the Jamā‘at publishes to convey the voice of Ahmadiyyat in the Arab countries.

AL-FAZL

ADOPT A PROFESSIONAL APPROACH

Now, I would like to delve into some specifics regarding newspapers. As far as I understand, managing *Al-Fazl* is an enormous responsibility upon its staff and Sadr Anjuman Ahmadiyya, under whose auspices it operates. I have consistently emphasised that this is an era driven by commerce, and therefore, our paper should be run with a professional mindset. Despite numerous reminders, such a strategy has yet to be adopted. The newspaper cannot thrive without embracing a professional approach.

I have observed journalists and reporters in Europe. They have such a strong appetite for news stories that, at times, they know more about a story than the very individuals who are its subject. While they sometimes stretch the truth when they believe it benefits society, they generally adhere to the truth, gathering news stories through painstaking efforts.

When I went to Europe, even though our Jamā'at is a religious community, a representative from every newspaper met with me and asked rigorous questions about us. When we went to Brighton, representatives from its local paper accompanied us. When we came

to Paris, representatives from Parisian newspapers also joined us. In short, newspaper editors came day and night to learn about us. These were not ordinary journalists but professionals earning ten to twenty times the salary of our newspaper editors. Similarly, *Al-Fazl* must practice more diligence in providing Jamā'at news.

Anyone who reads my Friday sermons in the paper with a keen eye will notice a pattern: one long, one short. Just as the tertian fever rises one day and declines the next, my sermons alternate between long and short. Anyone who missed this observation can verify it by checking *Al-Fazl* and noting this recurring pattern. One transcriber accurately records my entire sermon, but the other only records it partially and omits various parts. Friends can compare the sermons upon their return home and observe the stark difference in length from week to week. I have noticed that sometimes, even a sermon I took ten fewer minutes to deliver appears longer in the paper than one I spent ten extra minutes on. This error occurs because one transcriber is inept at this task. Not everyone is capable of being a transcriber. This person might be a good editor, but he certainly cannot transcribe.

The issue remains ignored despite my pointing it

out for years. Every five or six sermons, I have to write to the staff and highlight parts of a sermon in *Al-Fazl* that were omitted or interpolated. These mistakes affect sales. Although I have shared my experience, members from outside Jamā'ats might be unaware. They can review the sermons in *Al-Fazl* and notice this glaring pattern. Still, it may not always occur; for example, if an exceptionally long sermon was delivered and the 'short' transcriber recorded it [the pattern would break]. But as a rule of thumb, the alternating pattern generally holds. This kind of neglect is also found in other aspects of the paper.

DIVERSIFY NEWSPAPER CONTENT

A daily newspaper can only run effectively if it caters to daily needs. I have advised the staff to diversify the content many times. *Al-Fazl* cannot exclusively comprise religious articles, but attention was not given to this aspect either. If people do not observe prayers all day and engage in numerous other activities, how can a newspaper solely focused on religious content capture their interest? Consider the Holy Quran. It does not merely discuss God and His Messenger^{sas} but is fused with discussions on water, clouds, winds,

earth movements, animals, wars, and politics. In other words, the Quran includes diverse subject matter. Is *Al-Fazl* even holier than the Quran that its language would lose its purity by publishing academic articles and essays on history, economics, and commerce?

I have repeatedly emphasised the need to create variety in the articles: to write scholarly and historical pieces, short essays on various topics, and articles based on academic, professional, and economic subjects. Additionally, we should periodically highlight the traditions of various nations, write about the state of non-religious people, and publish gripping news—and intersperse religious articles. This way, you will be sugar-coating the medicine so that everyone will take it willingly. I have not mentioned this point once or twice but frequently and continuously. Yet, it is still not implemented.

I stressed the matter to both the staff and the superiors, but their response was always passive, like a rooster perching on one leg. No one takes action to prompt them to move forward. All I could do was offer advice, and I did so to both the subordinates and the superiors. I urged the officers that if they could not implement these proposals, they should at least make some effort to push things forward, but even

that seems beyond their capability.

In reality, this newspaper can be made so appealing that despite being a daily that fulfils our religious needs, it can meet our secular requirements. I am convinced that the *Al-Fazl* staff can provide the daily news if they muster the necessary willpower. But it would require extreme effort.

Indeed, running a daily newspaper is an enormous task, demanding the complete dedication of one's life. European journalists are burdened with such an overwhelming workload that they seem almost driven to madness. During my visit to Europe, I expressed a desire to meet a renowned journalist, only to be informed by a friend that while meeting British Prime Minister MacDonald is relatively easy, meeting this journalist is a rare occurrence; he is scarcely seen for months at a time. The Punjabi proverb *Mach Marna* [working yourself to death] aptly characterises a journalist's state of work. It demands extensive labour, sharp acumen, attentive listening, and rapid deduction. A journalist's eyes must continuously scan story after story, akin to a marine creature effortlessly rising above the waves as it traverses the vast ocean.

Undoubtedly, some variety has emerged in *Al-Fazl* articles over the last two to three years. But this shift

can be attributed to Majlis Sultanul Qalam, which was established by Mian Bashir Ahmad Sahib^{ra}, and to the articles of Mir Muhammad Ismael Sahib^{ra}.

A few days ago, I received a letter from a conceited scholar, acknowledging that our newspaper has become more interesting in the past one or two years and offers slightly more variety in its articles. However, it has yet to achieve the level of diversification necessary to free the Jamā'at from its reliance on other newspapers.

ADVERTISEMENTS CAN BE USEFUL

I have noticed that we are not giving sufficient attention to our commercial advertisements, which play a crucial role in supporting a newspaper. This neglect is due to our failure to adopt the right approach. While newspapers worldwide feature a variety of intriguing advertisements, all we find in *Al-Fazl* are promotions for medications targeting a few select diseases, as though the entire world suffered exclusively from these ailments. Frustrated by this limitation, I have made the decision to ban such advertisements. From now on, they will not be published.

There is no shortage of diseases in the world, many

of which are serious, and there is no harm in offering effective medications for these illnesses. If a seller wants to advertise drugs for particular diseases, they can simply state that we offer all kinds of medications, and those in need can obtain our catalogue. This is the method used by European newspapers. Advertisements merely indicate what services are offered and how to receive more information. Product details and lists are sent directly to those who want them. Our newspaper should do the same.

In my opinion, the specific medications being advertised by us are primarily sought after by patients with hysteria. Therefore, lengthy advertisements are unnecessary. It would suffice to write: 'A Messiah [healer] has appeared. Order your medication now and experience its healing power.' Such individuals often find it difficult to accept the true Messiah. Still, if they are informed that a certain individual is the 'Messiah of the time' offering a potent medication, they will likely request it. People of this temperament do not require lengthy advertisements. All they need is an indication, and they will promptly seek further details. After that, the advertisers can sell their medicines.

In any case, hysteria is not the only ailment in the world requiring treatment. People suffer from

numerous diseases for which they need a cure but cannot find one. In our country, coughing is a common complaint. Similarly, tuberculosis is widespread in India. Various intestinal disorders also afflict people, with a large number suffering from piles. I have heard from medical doctors that 60% of our population is affected by this condition.

Similarly, large swaths of the population suffer from dysentery. Due to [various factors], the intestines become less efficient, leading to chronic diarrhoea. Illnesses can also turn chronic due to overwork or negligence. One might experience symptoms but fail to seek treatment due to lack of time, allowing the disease to take root. Alternatively, a person might exacerbate an illness through laziness; for example, a well-wisher might sit before a patient, urging them to take medication, but they refuse. In any case, a disease can become chronic for various reasons. If effective cures for such illnesses are presented to the world, they can benefit people immensely. The same applies to various dental, liver, and spleen-related diseases. Publishing effective prescriptions or advertising potent medications for such ailments can be very beneficial.

Similarly, many products from industry and trade could be advertised in *Al-Fazl*. However, we keep

repeating the same advertisements instead of other beneficial ones. We can also include advertisements related to legal services, provided we use the same approach as other newspapers.

BE READY TO ACCEPT CHALLENGES

Our competition is not against any particular nation or country but the entire world. We must always be mindful of what Christians and Jews are doing and how they are preparing to combat Islam and Muslims. This awareness will enable the Jamā‘at to mitigate the harmful effects of their actions. For this purpose, we must study newspapers daily, extract relevant stories, and promptly present them to the Jamā‘at so that it remains attuned to its responsibilities.

If the *Al-Fazl* staff follows these guidelines, working with vigour and tenacity, this newspaper will become more appealing. It will inspire a competitive spirit among Jamā‘at members, encouraging them to strive for excellence over other nations. Therefore, I urge Ahmadis to purchase Jamā‘at newspapers and develop a literary taste. I have observed that the children of members who do not read our newspapers remain unfamiliar with the teachings of Ahmadiyyat. Thus,

friends should ensure they buy our newspapers and magazines. One who unlearned should also buy the newspaper and have someone read it to them every day. It will enhance their learning and keep them informed about Jamā‘at affairs. (*Al-Fazl*, 16 November 1960)

AHMADIYYAT IS NOT A NEW RELIGION

When Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad^{as} appeared in the world and claimed to be the Promised Messiah, he did not bring anything new. That is, the founder of Jamā‘at Ahmadiyya did not claim to establish a new religion. In reality, when Muslims forgot [the true teachings of] the Holy Quran, and as a result, their love for the Holy Prophet^{sas} waned; when their passion for serving Islam disappeared, and their moral condition deteriorated so much that they avoided practising their faith—at such a time, Allah the Exalted chose a devout and obedient servant of Prophet Muhammad^{sas} to address their spiritual maladies. Raising this individual, God commanded him to serve Islam and bring people under the banner of the Holy Prophet^{sas}. This was the claim made by the Promised Messiah^{as} and the mission of his divine advent.

However, when he made this claim, announcing that God Almighty sent him to reform the world and named him ‘The Promised Messiah,’ the people raised objections. They said that Jesus^{as} sits alive in the heavens and will himself return to reform the world. They argued that the Holy Prophet^{sas} had foretold that

Ibn Maryam [son of Mary] would descend among the Muslims and serve as *Hakam* [Judge] and *Adal* [Arbitrator] and that this 'son of Mary' refers to the same Prophet Jesus^{as} who appeared six hundred years before the advent of the Holy Prophet^{sas}.

Thus, they contended that Jesus^{as} would himself descend from the heavens and reform the world as prophesied by Prophet Muhammad^{sas}. Given this prophecy, they questioned how Hazrat Mirza Sahib^{as}—a resident of Punjab born in the village of Qadian—could be the Promised Messiah. They asserted that his claim to this title left only two possibilities: either he was a madman or an imposter. This was the objection raised against his claim.

In response, Hazrat Mirza Sahib^{as} said that if Jesus^{as} were alive, it would be valid to ask how another individual could appear in his place when he has yet to return. He further explained that if the doctrine of Jesus' physical return served to honour the Holy Prophet^{sas} and Jesus^{as}, it could be reasoned that God would resent him to demonstrate the honour of other prophets to the world. However, neither of these scenarios is true.

JESUS^{AS} IS DECEASED

Hazrat Mirza Sahib^{as} clarified that Jesus, son of Mary, already passed away and the Holy Quran substantiates his death. Having died, he has no connection to this world, much less any possibility of returning to it.

One key argument he advanced to establish this point is from the last portion of *Sūrah Al-Mā'idah*². God Almighty says that on the Day of Judgment, He will question Jesus^{as} about how it came to be that he and his mother were deified in the world; did he ask the people to take him and his mother as gods and to worship them?

You are probably aware that Christians believe in the divinity of Jesus. During the era of the Holy Prophet^{sas}, certain Christian sects also believed in the divinity of Mary. In practical terms, Roman Catholics, to this day, prostrate before the image of Mary and

² And when Allah will say, "O Jesus, son of Mary, didst thou say to men, 'Take me and my mother for two gods beside Allah?'" he will answer, "Holy art Thou. I could never say that to which I had no right. If I had said it, Thou wouldst have surely known it. Thou knowest what is in my mind, and I know not what is in Thy mind. It is only Thou Who art the Knower of hidden things. "I said nothing to them except that which Thou didst command me — 'Worship Allah, my Lord and your Lord.' And I was a witness over them as long as I remained among them, but since Thou didst cause me to die, Thou hast been the Watcher over them; and Thou art Witness over all things. (*Sūrah Al-Mā'idah*, 5:117-118) [Publishers]

entreat her.

According to God Almighty, on Judgment Day, Jesus^{as} will be questioned about whether he encouraged people to worship him and his mother. Jesus^{as} will respond, 'O my Lord, absolutely not! While I was alive, they believed in the Unity of God and never practised idolatry. But after my death, my connection to them was severed, and You became their Guardian; I have no knowledge of their actions after me.' This response of Jesus^{as} to Allah is documented in the Holy Quran.

Drawing from this verse, the Promised Messiah^{as} said: Consider, will Jesus' response on Judgment Day be truthful or deceitful? It is understood that a divine messenger cannot lie. According to your belief, if he is alive in heaven and returns to this world, he will become aware of the condition of his followers. In your perspective, upon his return, he would [literally] break crosses, kill swine, and compel Christians to embrace Islam. Thus, he would have undoubtedly learned that his followers had elevated him to a divine status.

Having witnessed the beliefs of his followers and rectified them accordingly, how could he claim to be unaware of their beliefs after his demise? Would not

God question him, 'My servant, how can you assert today that you have no knowledge of your people's actions after your death, when you lived another forty years, broke crosses, killed swine, and forcibly converted the world to Islam?

If Jesus^{as} had indeed returned to the world, his response to such a query on the Day of Judgment could have been: 'Oh God, what a peculiar question. You are the One who brought me back to the world, enabling me to fulfil my mission. Yet, instead of being rewarded today, am I met with Your displeasure?' Such a scenario would exemplify the expression *repaying good with evil*. Similarly, Jesus^{as} could have said: 'After enduring countless hardships day and night to accomplish the tasks You assigned me, today I am rebuked instead of rewarded and asked if I had taught idolatry?'

Strangely enough, however, he does not offer any of these responses. Instead, his only reply is to plead ignorance regarding his followers' misguided beliefs. The words of the Holy Quran unequivocally state that idolatry took hold after his passing, not during his lifetime. Hence, the crucial question arises: Do Christians presently believe in the divinity of Jesus or not? The answer is patently evident and undeniable.

Simply ask any Christian, and they will affirm: 'Jesus was the Lord.'

Therefore, if we consider the Holy Quran as the Book of God and Sūrah Al-Mā'idah as divinely revealed upon the Holy Prophet^{sas}, we must accept what it tells us about the explanation Jesus^{as} will offer on Judgment Day. It implies that there are only two possible scenarios: either Jesus^{as} is alive and his original teachings remain intact, or he is deceased and his teachings have since become corrupted.

ACCEPT JESUS^{AS} HAS DIED
OR JOIN CHRISTIANITY

Hazrat Mirza Sahib^{as} presented the above point, urging people to consider one of two options: Has Christianity become corrupt, or has it remained true and pure? If it has not strayed and still embodies a genuine faith, then all Muslims are obliged to convert. According to this perspective, Christians are on the right path because Jesus^{as} is only alive if his followers still adhere to his original teachings. Therefore, Muslims must decide whether to believe that the followers of Jesus^{as} have deviated or remained faithful to his teachings. If the latter is true, then Muslims

should embrace Christianity as well. However, if it is evident that Jesus^{as} is declared to be God and the son of God according to Christian doctrine, then it must be acknowledged that Jesus^{as} is deceased, as stipulated by the Holy Quran that belief in the divinity of Jesus and his mother, Mary, emerged after his death.

Thus, Muslims who believe that Jesus^{as} is alive must accept the truth of Christianity and forsake Islam. They are left with no alternative but to admit that he is dead or convert to Christianity, thereby abandoning the Holy Prophet^{sas}.

This is a straightforward point that does not require lengthy debate. According to the Holy Quran [5:117-118], Jesus^{as} will clarify that only after his passing did his followers stray. Therefore, if they are corrupt, Jesus^{as} is deceased. If they are not corrupt, then one could argue that he is alive; however, in that scenario, it must be acknowledged that Christians, rather than Muslims, are deemed most endearing to God Almighty.

AN INSULT TO GOD'S OMNIPOTENCE

Another perspective from which the death of Jesus^{as} is substantiated is to examine if belief in the return

of Jesus^{as} serves to honour the Holy Prophet^{sas} or degrades him. It is not just a question of the Holy Prophet's^{sas} honour. We could accept the doctrine of his literal second coming if it honours God Almighty, for we want to establish the glory of God in the world. However, if accepting such a belief not only disgraces the Holy Prophet^{sas} but also dishonours God Almighty, one can hardly envision a more detrimental belief.

So, let's consider the question of God's honour. Based on this doctrine, it is accepted that Allah the Exalted has preserved an individual for nineteen hundred years to keep him from perishing so that the task of reforming humanity does not end—as though God was an impoverished man cautiously saving his provisions. What distinguishes the poor from the wealthy? If there are any [leftovers] from breakfast, a poor person will keep it for supper. If he manages to obtain winter clothing, he stores it away after use for next year in a neatly packed bundle or trunk. If any flatbread is left over, he saves it for another meal.

Conversely, a wealthy person wears new clothes for a few days and donates them out of gratitude to Allah and consideration for the poor. After eating a desired portion of a cooked meal, he shares the rest

with his workers or has it distributed among the poor. Neither does he save his clothes nor preserve his food, assured he can have freshly prepared food or newly sewn clothes.

Yet, regarding Allah the Exalted—who is All-Powerful and has the divine imperative to provide whatever is needed for religion—Muslims believe that He kept Jesus^{as} alive in the heavens for nineteen hundred years, only because He had to make him descend upon the earth and revive faith of the Muslim ummah when it suffers from religious decadence in the latter days. How is this different from a helpless man storing leftovers for the next meal?

Besides, what feats did Jesus^{as} achieve during his lifetime that God specifically chose to resend him in the latter days? He preached for a few days and ascended to the heavens when the Jews sought to crucify him. Was he so profoundly successful in his own mission that his return in the latter days was indispensable? Ascending to the heavens means a person has turned their back on the world. So what could a person who spurned the world and failed in his mission do for the Holy Prophet's^{sas} ummah? Can we expect him to succeed? This doctrine is an extreme insult to the majesty of Allah the Exalted and a disgrace to His Omnipotence.

It suggests that God is not All-Powerful and cannot raise another individual within the Muslim ummah when needed.

AN INSULT TO GOD'S KNOWLEDGE

This belief not only undermines His Divine Power but also questions His Knowledge. It suggests that God assigned the mission of reforming the Muslim ummah to someone who previously faltered in the face of opposition. It is puzzling that He would treat Jesus^{as} in such an extraordinary manner, yet never once elevate the Holy Prophet^{sas} to the heavens, despite the constant dangers he faced throughout his life.

During the Battle of Hunain, four thousand trained archers rained arrows upon the Holy Prophet^{sas}. At one point, only twelve companions remained to shield him. They approached and said: 'O Messenger of Allah^{sas}, you cannot stay here. The life of Islam depends on your safety. Please retreat to a secure location. Once the intensity of their attacks diminishes, we will rally the Muslim army and counter the enemy.' Some companions eagerly took hold of his horse's reins, but the Messenger of Allah^{sas} replied: 'Release the reins, ﷺ

النبي لا كذب³—I am the Prophet, not a liar’.

In essence, God would seemingly prefer to let the Holy Prophet^{sas} die and be buried in the ground rather than allow Jesus^{as} to be crucified, intervening instantly by raising him bodily to the heavens. No honourable Muslim could tolerate such a belief. If there was ever a prophet worthy of being preserved, it was the Holy Prophet^{sas}. Despite his willingness to sacrifice his life, God Almighty did not save him. Yet, He promptly rescued Jesus^{as}, lifting him to the heavens.

One must also consider the trial that Jesus^{as} faced. If he was tested by God, he should have endured it patiently. However, instead of accepting it with resignation, he prayed fervently against it. The Bible even recounts that he spent the entire night supplicating and trying to awaken his disciples so they could join him in praying for this *cup* to be taken away from him. It is as though the one who pleaded to be saved from the cup of death was elevated to the heavens by God, while the one who was prepared to battle the enemy alone met with death. Essentially, the brave warrior on the battlefield was granted retirement with a pension, while the deserter was given an extension.

Therefore, accepting this doctrine does not honour

³ *Muslim* Kitabul Jihad, Baab Ghazwa Hunain [Publishers]

God, His Messengers, or Jesus^{as}. Though we believe that Jesus^{as} was saved from the cross, according to other Muslims, he escaped to the heavens. It is the greatest disrespect to a prophet to believe that he ascended to heaven and idly sat by instead of fulfilling his assigned mission.

MAULWIS DEMOTE JESUS^{AS}

Moreover, God designated him as a prophet, yet Muslims believe that when Jesus^{as} descends in the latter days, he will no longer hold this title. Instead, he will descend as an *ummati* [subordinate]. Consequently, they demote an independent prophet of God to a subordinate status, thereby defaming Jesus^{as}. If it were claimed that Jesus^{as} had to be downgraded to an *ummati* as a punishment for abandoning his mission—though still a disgrace to a prophet—it could be considered a somewhat logical explanation. However, Maulwis offer their perspective without attributing any fault to Jesus^{as}. Consequently, they insult and blame Jesus through this doctrine.

Furthermore, it does not occur to them that a person who failed to handle a minor disorder among the Israelites cannot possibly emerge in the Muslim

ummah and confront Dajjal, the worst disorder in world history. Thus, to regard Jesus^{as} as alive in the heavens is an insult to God Almighty, an affront to the Holy Prophet^{sas}, and a slight to Jesus^{as}.

BORROWING A LIGHT FROM OTHERS

I often compare this belief with going to a neighbour's house and asking for a matchstick to relight the extinguished lamp in yours. The analogy might not strike a chord with the affluent who are accustomed to using electric lamps, but it resonates with the impoverished, who are familiar with oil lamps. When the light runs out and no match is available, they go to a neighbour's house to borrow a matchstick or use their flame directly to relight the lamp. Considering this analogy, let's examine the implications of this belief. Essentially, it suggests that in a particular era, the flame of Islam will be extinguished and need to be relit. The Messenger of Allah^{sas} will search but find no light among the Muslims. However, a lamp will be burning in the house of the Jews. Upon seeing it, the Holy Prophet^{sas} will proceed to their house and use their lamp to relight the extinguished flame of Islam. Now, does this belief bring honour or disgrace to the

Holy Prophet^{sas}?

In summary, the doctrine of physical ascension and bodily return of Jesus^{as} is highly detrimental. It fails to honour God Almighty, the Holy Prophet^{sas}, or Jesus^{as}. Instead, it elevates Muslim clerics. But what value does the respect of Maulwis hold compared to the honour of God Almighty and His prophets? Any Muslim with a sense of honour should disregard it entirely.

On the contrary, we believe that once Jesus^{as} reformed his nation [as per his divine mission], Allah caused him to die a natural death. Thus, he will not return as a subordinate to reform the Muslim ummah. Allah will raise another individual from within the ummah of Prophet Muhammad^{sas} to reform humanity. This individual will draw from the spiritual light of the Holy Prophet^{sas}. He will draw from the spiritual knowledge of the Holy Prophet^{sas}. As a perfect servant of Prophet Muhammad^{sas}, he will re-establish people upon the true teachings of Islam. Therefore, the Prophet of Islam^{sas} will never be indebted to a mosaic prophet. These are a few key arguments that can resolve this contentious issue.

AN ALLEGATION ON PROPHETHOOD

Regarding the concept of prophethood, the opposing clergy delude Muslims into believing that our belief equates to *shirk fi nabuwwat* [partnership in the prophethood of the Holy Prophet^{sas}]. By using this term, they imply that we have made Hazrat Mirza Sahib^{as} a partner in the prophethood of the Holy Prophet^{sas}. But this is a false assertion; we do not believe in his prophethood as they present. They allege that the Promised Messiah^{as} is a claimant to such prophethood that insults the Holy Prophet^{sas}. Thus, they purport that this claim constitutes *shirk fi nabuwwat*. And since the term ‘*shirk*’ is to a Muslim what a red flag is to a bull, the moment they hear this term, they attribute a grave transgression to the Ahmadis.

LOVE VERSES IDOLATRY

In reality, those who label our belief as idolatry are oblivious to its real meaning. *Shirk* can manifest in two ways: outwardly, such as bowing before a person or object instead of God, which is unequivocally forbidden, and inwardly, which is always relative. If

you love a prophet as much as you love God, you are an idolator. However, the definition of idolatry also shifts if love could be quantified—let's say at one dollar, fifty cents, twenty-five cents, ten cents, and one cent. If your love for God is valued at ten cents and your love for Jesus^{as} or another prophet is valued at ten or fifteen cents, then you would be guilty of *shirk*. However, if your love for Jesus^{as} is valued at only two cents, it would not constitute idolatry.

Yet, if someone else's love for Jesus^{as} is valued at fifteen cents while their love for God is valued at one dollar—despite their greater love for Jesus^{as} than yours [valued at two cents]—it would not be considered idolatry. For, even though they have more love for Jesus^{as}, their love for God is proportionally higher. It would only amount to idolatry if their love for the two had equal value.

DEVOTION OF THE COMPANIONS^{RA}

It is a fact that Muslims' love for the Holy Prophet is unparalleled among the followers of other prophets. Allah instils in true believers a boundless love that extends beyond the realms of the heavens and the earth. Consider this example: When Jesus^{as} faced a crisis, his

disciples abandoned him, with one even cursing and disavowing him. In contrast, the companions of the Holy Prophet^{sas} stood steadfastly by his side through every trial, shedding their blood for his cause. Before the Battle of Badr, the Messenger of Allah^{sas} convened the *Muhajireen*⁴ and the *Ansar*⁵ to seek counsel on the upcoming battle. This consultation stemmed from an agreement made with the *Ansar* upon the Prophet's^{sas} migration to Madinah. According to this pact, the *Ansar* would assist Muslims only if an enemy attacked within Madinah; they were not obliged to help in battles elsewhere. As the Battle of Badr was to be fought outside Madinah, the Prophet^{sas} sought to understand the *Ansar*'s stance. To gauge their intentions, he invited the assembly to offer their advice. One by one, the *Muhajireen* expressed their unwavering readiness to join the Prophet^{sas} in battle.

As each *Muhajir* resumed their seats, the Prophet^{sas} persisted in seeking advice. The *Ansar*, however, remained silent, cautious that expressing their desire for battle might be misconstrued by the *Muhajireen* as a desire to harm their relatives [Makkans]. Yet, as the Holy Prophet^{sas} continued to seek input, one

⁴ Muslims in Madinah who emigrated from Makkah [Publishers]

⁵ Muslims who were natives of Madinah [Publishers]

Ansar eventually stood up and addressed him: ‘O Messenger of Allah^{sas}, perhaps you are directing your question to us.’ The Prophet^{sas} affirmed this, and the *Ansar* continued, ‘O Messenger of Allah^{sas}, you may be referring to our treaty upon your arrival in Madinah.’ ‘Yes’, said the Prophet^{sas}.

The *Ansar* continued, ‘O Messenger of Allah^{sas}, at the time of our agreement, we had not fully comprehended your greatness and status. We made an error in making that contract. However, after you have lived among us, we have come to understand your exalted rank. Therefore, that agreement no longer applies.’

Pointing towards the sea, the *Ansar* declared, ‘O Messenger of Allah^{sas}, if you command us to leap into the ocean with our horses, we are prepared to do so. As for this battle, by God, we will form a protective barrier around you. We will fight in front of you, behind you, to your right, and to your left. The enemies will not reach you without stepping over our dead bodies!’⁶

Such was their love that upon reaching the field of Badr, the companions erected an elevated spot and seated the Holy Prophet^{sas} on it. Then, they deliberated

⁶ *Seerat Ibn Hishaam*, Vol. 2, p. 12-13, published in Eygpt, 1295 Hijri [Publishers]

among themselves to identify the swiftest camel among them, which they tethered nearby. Perceiving this, the Holy Prophet^{sas} inquired, 'What is this?' They responded, 'O Messenger of Allah^{sas}, we are few and the enemies are many. We fear that all of us may be martyred; it is not our own life that concerns us, but rather the possibility of any harm befalling you. If we die, Islam would not suffer in the least, but its very survival and existence is bound to your life. Hence, it is imperative for us to ensure your safety.

O Messenger of Allah^{sas}, we have appointed Abu Bakr for your protection and tied this swift camel near you.

If, God forbid, we all fall in battle, you can mount the camel and ride to Madinah. Some of our brothers are back in Madinah. They are those who did not know about the battle and would have joined us if they had known. Find your way to them. They will provide security and protect you from the enemy.⁷

What a glorious sacrifice made by the companions. In comparison, the disciples of Jesus^{as} were not even in the same league. The companions had immense love for Prophet Muhammad^{sas}, but this did not make

⁷ *Seerat Ibn Hishaam*, Vol. 2, p. 15, published in Eygpt, 1295 Hijri [Publishers]

them idolaters. The love for God that he imprinted in their hearts was far, far greater.

Even if one loves the Holy Prophet^{sas} as much as God was loved in the time of Jesus^{as}, it still cannot be considered idolatry, because the Holy Prophet^{sas} elevated the level of divine love so high that loving him pales in comparison to loving God. Therefore, loving the Messenger of Allah^{sas} today as much as God was loved during the lifetime of Jesus^{as} would not be idolatry because the love for God has now been elevated to a much higher level. However, during the era of Jesus^{as}, loving him as much as God would have amounted to *shirk*. Similarly, if someone loves the Holy Prophet^{sas} today as much as they love Allah, they would be committing idolatry. The same principle applies to prophethood.

PERPETUAL GROWTH OF THE HOLY PROPHET'S^{sas} RANK

We believe that the status of the Holy Prophet^{sas} rises continually. With each passing moment, he transcends his previous spiritual level. I am certain that his stature has significantly increased since I began speaking. There is no moment when it is not progressing;

no time when it is not ascending. However, our opponents, like frogs in a well, mistakenly believe that the spiritual status of the Holy Prophet^{sas} has remained stagnant for the past thirteen hundred years. In reality, it has been ascending continuously.

Because his rank perpetually rises, so will that of his followers; following in his footsteps, they traverse the same stages long passed by the Holy Prophet^{sas}. Yet, they remain devout servants and followers of their Holy Master, never able to equal or surpass him, as his status and rank increase exponentially with every passing moment. No matter how much progress his followers make, they will always remain far behind.

This is why the Promised Messiah^{as}, despite being raised to the status of prophethood, can never become equal to or a partner of the Holy Prophet^{sas}. He attained this rank only through his perfect and complete obedience to the Holy Prophet^{sas}. This subject is highlighted by the Promised Messiah^{as} in the following couplet:

ہم ہوئے خیر اُمم تجھ سے ہی اے خیر رُسلؐ
تیرے بڑھنے سے قدم آگے بڑھایا ہم نے⁸

⁸ O Messenger, it is because of you that we became the best of people; your advancement enabled us to make progress. [Publishers]

O Muhammad Messenger of Allah^{sas}, people ask me how I became a prophet. I was raised to this status because you are best of the prophets. Your advancement allows me to progress in proportion, yet you always remain far ahead while I lag far behind. Yet, maulwis claim that this amounts to *shirk fi nabuwwat*. How so when I can never reach your status and rank, and my progress depends entirely on yours?

The Messenger of Allah^{sas} constantly ascends in status and rank with every passing moment, but the opponents fail to understand it. Their example is like that of a blind man who attended a banquet. When a sighted person joined his table, the blind man assumed that since he could see, he would eat more. Consequently, the blind man began to eat hastily. However, he soon thought the sighted person might have noticed his actions and found a way to outdo him. So, he started using one hand to eat and the other to pour rice directly onto his lap. Meanwhile, the sighted man, amused by his antics, was merely observing instead of eating.

The blind man, unaware of the actual situation, assumed that the sighted man had found another method to eat faster. Thus, he grabbed the entire serving dish and declared, 'Enough, the rest is my

share.’

The same applies to those who neither ponder the truth nor acknowledge reality. The Holy Prophet^{sas} has reached vastly superior heights, yet they sit there claiming we have done *shirk fi nabuwwat*. It is like when a king walks, so do his guards; when he stops, so do his guards. Now if the guards were criticised for standing where the king had previously stood, it would be considered foolish.

Similarly, the Holy Prophet^{sas} is progressing every minute, and it is due to his constant spiritual ascent that his followers also continue rising in ranks. However, the opponents raise objections, insisting that Hazrat Mirza Sahib’s^{as} claim to prophethood amounts to *shirk fi nabuwwat*. Thus, the concept of *Khatm-e-Nabuwwat* is not complicated, but people have made it so.

THE NEED TO REVIVE TRUE ISLAM

We believe that the status of the Holy Prophet^{sas} is so elevated that no person can ever reach it. However, if a person attains the rank of a prophet through subordination, servitude, and perfect obedience to the Holy Prophet^{sas}, it is not an affront to him; rather,

such an individual would always remain his devoted servant. Hence, these issues are not complicated; rather, they are straightforward. But if someone still fails to comprehend these points, they can simply focus on one key question: Does Islam currently hold prestige and honour, or is it in a state of decadence?

If Islam maintains the same grandeur and majesty it did thirteen hundred years ago, it needs no remedy. But if it is evident that Muslims are deprived of the true blessings of the Holy Quran, ignorant of its teachings, and facing challenges such as the stripping away of monarchies and the loss of governments, then we must ask ourselves: What measure has God Almighty taken to elevate the honour of the Holy Prophet^{sas}? Islam, which was dearer to Prophet Muhammad^{sas} than his own life, is facing relentless attacks. Yet, some Muslims persist in denying the need for reform.

If God says He is sending someone for reform, the maulwis say, 'No, no, we do not need a reformer.' If Islam is in good condition, then it may be declared that, God forbid, Hazrat Mirza Sahib^{as} was an imposter. But if people have turned away from the Holy Quran, become ignorant of Islam, and neglected their practical condition, it must be admitted that the Promised Messiah^{as} was a true claimant who appeared

at the right time to protect Islam from the onslaughts of its enemies. If God Almighty did not turn His attention to help His religion even in this age, when would He?

Today, those who call themselves Muslims have stopped practising Islamic teachings. The Beloved of Allah, who is the Chief of the First and the Last, is being attacked by Christians, Hindus, and Sikhs. The honour and respect of the Messenger of Allah^{sas}—the holiest of all creation, the Chief of Mankind, whose grandeur exceeds all human beings past, present, and future—is being tarnished. Such horrors have kindled God's jealousy for the Holy Prophet^{sas}. Through the Promised Messiah^{as}, God shattered every hand raised against the Messenger of Allah^{sas} and silenced every tongue that defamed and abused him. And in the future, too, He shall thwart those who seek to attack him. We are confident that anyone who even remotely loves the Holy Prophet^{sas} will join us, whether today or tomorrow.

AHMADIS WILL GUARD THE HONOUR OF
THE HOLY PROPHET^{sas}

We, Ahmadis, are soldiers standing on guard to

shield Muhammad the Messenger of Allah^{sas}. Just as the *Ansar* pledged to fight in front of the Prophet^{sas}, behind him, to his right and left, we are ready to defend his honour from every direction. Our members are spread across every country to establish the honour of the Holy Prophet^{sas} globally. I say to all those who attack us, do as you like. Your onslaughts will not deter us. Though you may outnumber us now, we firmly believe that every person who loves the Messenger of Allah, even in the slightest, will eventually join us. Anyone who fails to join us cannot be called a true lover of the Holy Prophet^{sas}. Their heart is as good as dead, and what good would they do us anyway? (*Al-Fazl*, March 28, 1958)

GLOSSARY

Aana a former currency in British India equivalent to 1/16 rupee.

Chataank former measure of weight equal to the sixteenth part of a ser equal to about two ounces.

Daumon a sub caste of people scattered across india that were traditionally drummers and singers.

Ghee traditional clarified butter used for cooking in south asian countries. It is made by separating butterfat from the milk solids and water in butter.

Khatm-e-Nabuwwat the Seal of the Prophets; the Best of the Prophets.

Ma'rifat cognition and knowledge of God. Spiritual knowledge

Maulwi Muslim clerics or scholars.

Miraasi community of folk singers and dancers in northern India and Pakistan. They have many sub

groups.

Ser a measure of weight that was used in different parts of India. 1 ser is about 2 lb.

Shirk fi Nabuwwat becoming a partner in the prophethood of the Holy Prophet^{sas}.