

From Sufism to Ahmadiyyat

The presence of Jama'at-i Ahmadiyya has reinvigorated the debate on Islamic orthodoxy in South Asia's Muslim mainstream. Assessing Mirza Ghulam Ahmad's career has been made difficult by the polarized nature of the questions surrounding his reputation which oscillates between messianic saviour and antichrist, where one extreme represents pristine orthodoxy and the other a perverse infidelity beyond the pale of Islam. The pre-eminence of Mirza Ghulam Ahmad over his disciples, the esoteric ambiguity of his spiritual claims, the emphasis he placed on internal and external reform, and the exclusivity of his early followers are indicative of a medieval Sufi order. The advent of modernity, however, with the community's lack of the isolation and the politics of colonial subjugation, influenced and shaped the development of an unexpected Ahmadi identity. The Ahmadi identity is not wholly based on Mirza Ghulam Ahmad's controversial claims, but also a result of the socio-political context of the early twentieth century South Asian environment from which it emerged. British rule in India initiated a reassessment of Muslim institutions and an evaluation of Muslim political autonomy leading up to the partition. Jama'at-i Ahmadiyya's involvement in major political crises such as the conflict in Kashmir, the partition itself, and the Punjab disturbances of 1953 gradually led to the politicization Ahmadi Islam. As the notion of Ahmadiyyat became increasingly politicized the formation of the Ahmadi identity evolved, and the dichotomy between Ahmadiyyat and Islam widened. This thesis traces the development of the Ahmadi identity from its Sufi style beginnings to a formalized construct that has the potential to shed its Islamic origins altogether. As this process continually progresses, Ahmadiyyat may develop into a unique religious movement with a unique religious identity distinct from Islam.

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**Mirza Ghulam Ahmad and the
Construction of the Ahmadiyya Identity**

by

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requirements for the degree of Ph.D.

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Abstract

The presence of Jama'at-i Ahmadiyya has reinvigorated the debate on Islamic orthodoxy in South Asia's Muslim mainstream. Assessing Mirza Ghulam Ahmad's career has been made difficult by the polarized nature of the questions surrounding his reputation, which oscillate between messianic saviour and antichrist, where one extreme represents pristine orthodoxy and the other represents a perverse infidelity beyond the pale of Islam. The pre-eminence of Mirza Ghulam Ahmad over his disciples, the esoteric ambiguity of his spiritual claims, the emphasis that he placed on internal and external reform, and the exclusivity of his early community of followers are all indicative of a medieval Sufi order. However, the advent of modernity and the politics of colonial subjugation influenced and shaped the development of an unexpected Ahmadi identity which evolved in an increasingly globalized world. The Ahmadi identity is not wholly based on Mirza Ghulam Ahmad's controversial claims, but is also a result of the socio-political context of the early twentieth century South Asian environment from which it emerged. British rule in India initiated a reassessment of Muslim institutions and an evaluation of Muslim political autonomy leading up to the partition. Jama'at-i Ahmadiyya's involvement in major political crises, such as the conflict in Kashmir, the partition of India itself, and the Punjab disturbances of 1953, gradually led to the politicization of Ahmadi Islam. As the notion of Ahmadiyyat became increasingly politicized, the formation of the Ahmadi identity evolved, and the dichotomy between Ahmadiyyat and Islam widened. This study traces the development of the Ahmadiyya identity from its Sufi

style beginnings to a formalized construct that has the potential of shedding its Islamic origins altogether. As this process progresses, Ahmadiyyat may develop into a unique religious movement with a distinct religious identity that is separate from Islam.

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Introduction

Jama'at-i Ahmadiyya is arguably the most controversial movement in contemporary South Asian Islam. My initial presumption when undertaking this study was that any modern reform movement within the context of South Asian Islam that was based on such extravagant claims by a charismatic leader must have had some connection to Sufism, since the success of Islam in South Asia has been intimately connected to the influence of Sufism amongst the mainstream. Interestingly, I discovered that the founder of Jama'at-i Ahmadiyya, Mirza Ghulam Ahmad of Qadian, India had a precarious connection to ecstatic Sufis and modernist teachers who rejected traditional methodology in favour of individual interpretation and individual experience of the Divine. In these regards, Mirza Ghulam Ahmad's mission was not unique. We find a precedent for tall claims based on ecstatic or mystical experiences throughout the history of Islam. We also find an impetus within the more immediate context of modernist movements in Islam for the rejection of the tradition and its methodology through the rejection of the four legalist schools of thought. The advent of modernity and the politics of colonial subjugation influenced and shaped the development of an unexpected Ahmadi identity, which evolved in an increasingly globalized world. In many ways, Ahmadi ideology represents this combination of medieval mysticism with modernist individualism, which developed under the sphere of British colonial rule. Although much has been written on Jama'at-i Ahmadiyya in almost every major language, few studies consider the broader scope of this context as instrumental in understanding Ahmadi Islam.

A considerable amount of Ahmadi literature can be characterized by aggressive proselytistic argumentation. Consistently choosing this type of writing style as the primary means of communicating the Ahmadi worldview may have contributed to the overall antagonism towards the movement. One could argue that this heightened state of controversy surrounding Jama‘at-i Ahmadiyya during its first century has significantly shaped the development of the Ahmadi identity. Although the movement has always been controversial, it is important to recognize that Jama‘at-i Ahmadiyya was not exclusively in a state of conflict with traditional Islam, but rather Ahmadi interpretations of religion were equally antagonistic towards Hindus, Christians, Sikhs, and Muslims alike. This style of religious argumentation has been a salient feature in Ahmadi literature and can be seen as early as Mirza Ghulam Ahmad’s first major work, *Barāhīn-i Ahmadiyya* (The Proofs of Islam).¹ However, it is important to recognize that an environment like 19th century Punjab was well suited for this type of inter-religious contestation, where a rich diversity of cultures and religious communities coexisted in close proximity until British colonial rule had upset the balance of power and initiated a search for a new equilibrium between religious rivals. The introduction of British rule as an unquestionably dominant force in the subcontinent had invigorated disputes amongst the prevailing theological proponents who represented the Sikhs, Hindus, evangelical Christians, and Muslims. As this dynamic unfolded, political authority became better established and more difficult to dispute, which enabled the struggle to restore religious authority amongst community leaders to take on a false sense of urgency before the new

¹ The title *Barāhīn-i Ahmadiyya* literally means ‘The Proofs of Ahmad’ though it is more appropriately translatable as ‘The Proofs of Islam’ or ‘Ahmad’s Proofs of Islam’.

balance of power could be resettled. For Muslims, the end result was that creative intellectuals and religious reformers scurried to re-establish their interpretive ideologies of Islam during the period that shortly followed the Mutiny of 1857.

The efforts of many leading individuals and movements towards the end of the 19th century had a profound impact on the face of South Asian Islam through the 20th century. It was this time period that saw the openings of the Dār al-'Ulūm at Deoband, Sir Sayyid Ahmad Khan's Anglo-Oriental College at Aligarh, and the Nadwat al-'Ulamā in Lucknow. It was also this time period that saw the emergence of the Ahl-i Hadith movement and Ahmad Riza Khan's Bareilwi movement. Within this context, Jama'at-i Ahmadiyya proceeded to introduce one more interpretation of Islam to a growing list of revivalist ideologies. Ghulam Ahmad's exception to the developing trend was that his mission was far more dependent on divine charisma than the majority of reform movements of that time. From a theological perspective, Jama'at-i Ahmadiyya more closely resembled a pre-modern Sufi order than its modernist counterparts. However, the Jama'at's concerted emphasis on external and internal reform from its earliest stages was indicative of its modernist disposition. And though the internal reform remained centred around purification of the heart and soul in classical Sufi fashion, the notion of external reform presented an opportune reaction to the ongoing political challenges of the day. It was no coincidence that Jama'at-i Ahmadiyya consistently aligned itself with its Imperial British rulers while setting out to spread the 'True' teachings of Islam all over the world.

Mirza Ghulam Ahmad Qadiani began his spiritual notoriety by claiming to be a renewer (*mujaddid*) of Islam as well as the two apocalyptic figures known as the

mahdī (guided one) and the *masīh* (messiah). Ghulam Ahmad used messianic claims to infer that his spiritual status had arrived at some level of prophethood. His prophethood was subservient to Muhammad, yet nonetheless commissioned by God Himself for the benefit of mankind. As one might expect, Ghulam Ahmad's spiritual claims led to voluminous justifications, which took the form of sectarian polemics against his numerous religious rivals. At first, Ghulam Ahmad's publications were primarily intended to sway the sentiment of Indian Muslims against the rising threat of Hindu revivalist groups like the Arya and Brahma Samaj. However, there was an additional threat from Christian missionaries who were intent on offering colonized Indians salvation through Christ. Ghulam Ahmad's first major works were attempts at establishing Islam's superiority as a religion through the use of rationalized justifications, logic, and argumentation. During this brief period before he began advancing his spiritual claims in 1891, many Muslims rallied around Ghulam Ahmad and supported his literary efforts against the non-Muslim evangelists. In 1891 however, three years after the formation of Jama'at-i Ahmadiyya, Ghulam Ahmad began to announce his true spiritual status to the general public. The inferences of prophethood that were derived from his claims of being the *mahdī* and the promised messiah were not being warmly received by the Muslim mainstream, which gradually led to the deterioration of his reputation. Over the next 15 years, Ghulam Ahmad devoted his attention to expounding the extraordinary nature of his spiritual status and disclosing his spiritual heights to the Muslim mainstream.

Testimonials of exceptional spiritual heights and unforeseen insights corresponding to extravagant unveilings of hidden realities are not as uncommon in

the history of Islam as one may initially think. The utterances of many Sufis have been termed ecstatic or described as intoxication in an attempt to reconcile heterodox ideas with the mainstream. Abu Yazid Bistami, the one most often credited as the founder of intoxicated Sufism,² may not be the Sufi who is most commonly known for his extravagant claims, though his legendary presence with the Divine is still widely celebrated within intellectual circles. Others like al-Hallaj are better known amongst non-scholars for making ecstatic claims, such as the one for which he was famously executed, 'I am the Truth (*ānā al-Haqq*),' because it affirmed his identity with the Divine.³ Classical memoirs like Attar's *Tadhkirat al-Awliyā* are full of astonishing tales of Muslim mystics and saints who had achieved fantastic heights through the highest levels of divine realization.⁴

As the Sufis expanded their ideas and ecstatic experiences became an acceptable part of the path, different terms were developed to describe the spiritual stages of the mystic traveller. The *awliyā* (saints) laid out the perils of the path in a didactic tradition which was passed down from teacher to student. The higher levels of *wilāya* (sainthood) were often associated with terms like *qutb* (pole/axis), *ghawth* (help), *abdāl* (substitutes), and many more. Although it was certainly not the norm, it was also not unusual for many mystics to claim to be the *mahdī* himself.⁵ An elitist tradition developed in which the highest levels of sainthood at times began to blur

² See H. Ritter, 'Abū Yazīd (Bāyazīd) Tayfūr b. 'Īsā b. Surūshān al- Bistāmī' *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, P. Bearman (ed.), Brill, 2008. Brill Online.

³ See Louis Massignon, *The Passion of al-Hallaj: Mystic and Martyr of Islam* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994).

⁴ See Farid al-Din Attar, *Tadhkirat al-Awliyā*, translated by A. J. Arberry as *Muslim Saints and Mystics: Episodes from the Tadhkirat al-Auliya* ('Memorial of the Saints') by Farid al-Din Attar (London: Arkana Penguin Books, 1966).

⁵ Annemarie Schimmel, *Mystical Dimensions of Islam* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1975), p. 200.

with prophethood. The inner secrets of veiled realities were only understood by the mystical elite who had experienced them. Even though treatises were written in early Islamic history to define the boundaries of *wilāya* (sainthood) and to safeguard those susceptible to religious deviance,⁶ alternative understandings still appeared.

There are several precedents for questionable claims that have been shunned by orthodox Muslims. Ruzbihan Baqli, similar to Ghulam Ahmad, characterized his unveilings with the term *wahy*, the type of revelation that is reserved for the prophets.⁷ Ruzbihan Baqli went on to obscure the distinction between the prophets and the saints in a way that even most Sufis would reject, following visions in which he was told that he himself was a prophet.⁸ The most prominent thinker to expand these ideas was Muhyiddin Ibn al-‘Arabi, who described the path of the saints as being ‘on the footsteps of the prophets (*‘alā aqdām al-anbiyā*).’ Michel Chodkiewicz’s work, *Seal of the Saints*, offered western scholars some insight into just how intricate these ideas may be,⁹ even though Ibn al-‘Arabi may not represent the best paradigm for Ghulam Ahmad’s thought. A more appropriate comparison would be Shaykh Ahmad Sirhindi, who shared the South Asian context and proclaimed his own status as *Mujaddid Alf-i Thānī* (the Renewer for the second millennium) in addition to being the *khātam al-awliyā* (the Seal of the Saints).¹⁰ It is not surprising that Ghulam Ahmad also took on the title *khātam al-awliyā* and

⁶ See Bernd Radtke and John O’Kane, *The Concept of Sainthood in Early Islamic Mysticism: Two works by Al-Hakīm Al-Tirmidhī* (Richmond: Curzon Press, 1996).

⁷ Carl W. Ernst, *Ruzbihan Baqli: Mysticism and the Rhetoric of Sainthood in Persian Sufism* (Surrey: Curzon Press, 1996), p. 51.

⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 24-26.

⁹ Michel Chodkiewicz, *Seal of the Saints: Prophethood and Sainthood in the Doctrine of Ibn ‘Arabi* (Cambridge: Islamic Texts Society, 1993).

¹⁰ See Yohanan Friedmann, *Shaykh Ahmad Sirhindi: An Outline of His Thought and a Study of His Image in the Eyes of Posterity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000).

frequently referenced the works of Ibn al-'Arabi and Ahmad Sirhindi as justifications for his claims that were intended to give his ideas religious credibility. However, when it comes to the community which he founded, the case of Jama'at-i Ahmadiyya is less intellectual and more political than the followers of either of these two predecessors.

This combination of political interests with messianic claims bears some resemblance to the early Isma'ili or Safavid dynasties, but there are clear limitations to both of these comparisons. There is a closer resemblance to the Sufi orders of the late medieval period like the Nurbakhshiyya whose founder, Muhammad Nurbakhsh, advanced the claim of being the *mahdī*, which he based on his own messianic visions.¹¹ The closest comparison to Jama'at-i Ahmadiyya in recent times is the Bahai community whose origins in messianic Islam eventually led to the formation of a new religious movement based on seemingly universal ideals.¹² Unlike Jama'at-i Ahmadiyya, the Bahai formalized their break with Islam, which put an end to the questions about their orthodoxy. Both of these groups used mystical revelations within a messianic framework to found a theology that emphasized the universality of all faiths. When first encountering Ahmadi theology, it is tempting to categorize the Ahmadis as religious pluralists, because of Ghulam Ahmad's claim to be the promised messiah for all faiths, but this does not reflect the patronizing attitude of Ahmadi Islam towards other religious outlooks. It would be interesting to see this comparison of the Ahmadis and the Bahai explored further in the future, especially if Ahmadis formalize their break with traditional Islam in a similar way. Perhaps the

¹¹ See Shahzad Bashir, *Messianic Hopes and Mystical Visions: The Nurbakhshiya Between Medieval and Modern Islam* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 2003).

¹² Oliver Scharbrodt, *Islam and the Baha'i Faith* (London: Routledge, 2008).

key difference between Ahmadi Islam and its various other sectarian counterparts is the community's response to the messianic claims of their founder. Whereas most Muslim communities with messianic origins have suppressed the heterodox views of their founders or at least adopted figurative understandings of their founder's questionable claims, Jama'at-i Ahmadiyya celebrates Ghulam Ahmad's prophethood and affirms a strictly literal interpretation of his spiritual worldview and prophetic status.

The majority of Mirza Ghulam Ahmad's works have been published in 23 volumes known as *Rūhānī Khazā'in* (spiritual treasures) with an additional three volumes of *Majmū'a-i Ishtihārāt* (collected pamphlets) and ten volumes of *Malfūzāt* (collected sayings). Although these works tend to be organized chronologically, they do not reflect a thematic progression through Ghulam Ahmad's career. Ghulam Ahmad's writing style involved a multilingual delivery in which he would frequently switch from Urdu prose, to Persian poetry, to an Arabic revelation or Qur'anic commentary, all within the span of a few pages. Additionally, Ghulam Ahmad would occasionally receive revelations in English or Punjabi. However, aside from the multiple languages in which many of his works were written, Ghulam Ahmad's longwinded discourses contain abstruse ideas that are difficult to penetrate. Most of his works seem to have been written in a stream of consciousness and reflect his confessional style of writing. Many of his works could easily be mistaken for secret diaries, private notebooks, or unfinished drafts that elaborated forthcoming manuscripts which may not yet have been ready for publication. This unedited mass of loosely structured religious argumentation was published by Jama'at-i Ahmadiyya

posthumously as an anthology of the promised messiah's work and included several texts that appeared in print for the first time. Some of the longer works incorporate a number of discussions on unrelated themes that appear as unusually long footnotes which extend through the body of the text. Some of these footnotes have later been published by the Jama'at independently as monographs on religious issues that were more neatly focused on limited theological questions. In the originals however, the writing may simply appear as footnotes, with footnotes to the footnotes, and sometimes even footnotes to the footnotes of the footnotes, compressed onto a single page with each note telling a different story through an entire body of work.

Many of the smaller works have been translated into English, but some of the more important works surprisingly remain untranslated. Unfortunately, most of the English translations are difficult to read and frequently misconstrue Ghulam Ahmad's allusions by divorcing them from their mystical context. In this way, the translations of his works are often disconnected from the subtle inferences that connect his ideas to the perennial themes that permeate the broader Islamic tradition. In their original form however, the works clearly display Ghulam Ahmad's literary mastery which appealed sentimentally to familiar motifs interwoven with his intense charismatic convictions. In this sense, the translated selections of Ghulam Ahmad's works tend to lose the bombastic tone of his writing style and edit away the frantic urgency with which he was trying to deliver his mixed messages. The reverence that accompanied the mythical mystique surrounding Ghulam Ahmad's uncanny approach has led to the development of a relationship between his works and Jama'at-i Ahmadiyya that is arguably comparable to scripture. Although it is difficult to regard his works as such

right now, there remains no other source that illuminates the Ahmadi enterprise with such authoritative esteem as the works of Mirza Ghulam Ahmad.

The earliest sources, aside from Ghulam Ahmad's own works, are the hagiographies produced by the movement itself. Although these sources are essential in understanding the self image of the early Ahmadi community, they do not provide a critical analysis of their beliefs or doctrines. We have already described above how much of Ghulam Ahmad's writing took on an argumentative tone, as is the case with many sectarian movements. The majority of insider Ahmadi sources were not intended to critically analyze any of the movement's positions within the broader religious context, but were to provide repeated accounts of Ahmadi ideology restated in different ways and in different languages. Similarly, the bulk of outsider literature on Jama'at-i Ahmadiyya has often been characterized by passionate polemics directed at Mirza Ghulam Ahmad and his followers. Few academics have taken up research on Ahmadi Islam, but we may now briefly examine the most important studies.

One of the first and most frequently referenced academic perspectives on Jama'at-i Ahmadiyya was a supplementary chapter in Wilfred Cantwell Smith's *Modern Islam in India*, which was first published in 1943 just prior to the partition.¹³ Cantwell Smith rightly placed Ahmadiyyat within the context of Islamic revivalist movements attempting to come to terms with modernity. Although he did not provide much commentary on Ahmadi theology, he noted that the reaction to Ahmadi Islam was having a greater impact on ordinary Indian Muslims than Ahmadi Islam itself. This reaction to Ahmadi Islam and the corresponding persecution of Ahmadi

¹³ See Wilfred Cantwell Smith, *Modern Islam in India: A Social Analysis* (New Delhi: Usha Publications, 1985), pp. 367-372, under the heading, 'A Note on the Ahmadiyah Movement'.

was only the beginning of its process of politicization. Cantwell Smith commented that the exclusivist nature of Ahmadis and their 'social aloofness rather than their theology (which is no more heretical than the respected Aga Khan)...occasioned the bitter antagonism between the Muslims.'¹⁴ He noted the growing influence of Jama'at-i Ahmadiyya on indigenous religious communities in the diaspora and listed the United States, Europe, and Africa as examples.

Most of Cantwell Smith's observations were sociological, as the subtitle of the book suggests, but they were nonetheless relevant to understanding the Ahmadi identity. For example, Cantwell Smith noted that the voluminous supply of literature published by Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, which spanned Urdu, Arabic and Persian, was intended to address a highly literate audience. As a result, Ahmadi Muslims were known to boast astonishing literacy rates for pre-partition India.¹⁵ This comment in particular, along with Cantwell Smith's subsequent discussion on Qadian's privately funded schools and its organizational infrastructure, such as its permanent *langar khāna* (free kitchen) to provide relief from unemployment, were often misquoted by later scholars studying Jama'at-i Ahmadiyya. There is no question that the early Ahmadi community in Qadian was made up of followers from privileged and educated backgrounds, but the population of the community at this time was significantly smaller than it is today. It is still possible to find lingering references to the highly educated Ahmadi elite that quote Cantwell Smith's early study, even though these observations are no longer representative of the Jama'at today. Excerpts from Cantwell Smith's commentary on Jama'at-i Ahmadiyya served as the basis for

¹⁴ Ibid., pp. 371-372.

¹⁵ Ibid., p. 370.

the main *Encyclopaedia of Islam* entry on the movement until the recent third edition appeared with an updated article in 2007.¹⁶

The next major study on Jama‘at-i Ahmadiyya was Humphrey J. Fisher’s *Ahmadiyyah: A Study in Contemporary Islam on the West African Coast*, which did not appear until 1963 and specifically looked at the West African context.¹⁷ Fisher’s study was an interesting contribution because it looked at the circumstances particular to African Islam and largely ignored the Indian context. There were occasional reminders of the subcontinent, such as where Fisher mentioned how racial tensions arose between indigenous members who disapproved of black Africans following an Indian Imam in prayer,¹⁸ but the study mainly focused on the African experience. His analysis of the Ahmadi communities in countries like Nigeria, Ghana, Sierra Leone, and Gambia would be useful in understanding the surging population of Ahmadi diaspora communities in Africa today.

Fisher did devote *Part II* of his book to ‘Ahmadiyyah Doctrine’ which was one of the first looks at key aspects of Ahmadi theology, especially in relation to Jesus.¹⁹ This was particularly interesting in conjunction with Fisher’s observations regarding *tablīgh* (missionary activity), which is a major component of Ahmadi ideology. For example, Fisher observed that the Ahmadi presentations of the life and

¹⁶ Wilfred Cantwell Smith, “Ahmadiyya” *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, (second edition), P. Bearman (ed.), Brill, 2008. Brill Online; see also Y. Friedmann, “Ahmadiyya” *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, (third edition), Gudrun Krämer (ed.), Brill, 2008. Brill Online.

¹⁷ Humphrey J. Fisher, *Ahmadiyyah: A Study in Contemporary Islam on the West African Coast* (London: Oxford University Press, 1963).

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 111.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 35-88. There is one book on Jama‘at-i Ahmadiyya which predates the studies done by Fisher and Cantwell Smith and devotes considerable attention to the relation between Ahmadi Islam and Christianity. However, the book is not as balanced as Fisher’s study and includes a number of errors and misunderstandings, even though it may prove useful for other reasons. See H. A. Walter, *The Ahmadiya Movement* (London: Oxford University Press, 1918).

death of Jesus varied and that the arguments were carefully chosen depending on the religious orientation of the audience. Arguments challenging the divinity of Jesus were reserved for a Christian audience, whereas arguments that highlighted the natural death of Jesus without the ascension were stressed to Muslims. His account showed the varying emphasis of Ahmadi doctrine in the face of Muslim and non-Muslim identities outside of South Asia. Fisher even spent some time explaining Jesus' survival from the crucifixion and subsequent journey to Kashmir, but implicitly dismissed the shrine identified by Mirza Ghulam Ahmad as the tomb of Jesus as a gimmick.²⁰

There are certain distinctive features that cannot be found in other sources which are unique to Fisher's study and are useful in gaining a better understanding of the Ahmadi identity. Although many works have discussed the issues relating to the separation and isolation of the Ahmadi community, typically from other Muslim communities, only Fisher addressed these issues in a non-Muslim context. The insistence on an Ahmadi identity posed a problem for coastal West Africans who customarily had identified themselves according to their tribal affiliations. The expectation of African converts was that their new Ahmadi identity would supersede their former tribal identity.²¹ In one case, known as the Okepopo split, a legal battle ensued over whether an Ahmadi or non-Ahmadi should be the rightful Imam of the Okepopo mosque in the Gold Coast.²² The leaders of the local Ahmadi community had felt that the Imam must have a formal allegiance (*bay'at*) to their caliph, despite

²⁰ Humphrey J. Fisher, *Ahmadiyyah: A Study in Contemporary Islam on the West African Coast*, pp. 70-71.

²¹ *Ibid.*, p. 186.

²² *Ibid.*, pp. 100-102.

the fact that the mosque had been frequented by all members of the Okepopo community regardless of tribal or sectarian loyalties. The Okepopo split established that simple participation in Ahmadi prayer services at an Ahmadi mosque was not enough to consider oneself an Ahmadi in West Africa.

In other cases, conflicts with local Tijani Muslims played an important role in defining the boundaries of Ahmadi *fiqh* (jurisprudence). According to Fisher, the most apparent difference between the Ahmadis and their non-Ahmadi Muslim counterparts in West Africa was the folding of the arms in prayer. Ahmadis folded their arms in prayer, in accordance with the Hanafi School, on which many of their rulings are based, whereas the Tijanis allowed their arms to fall straight along their sides, in accordance with the Maliki rulings.²³ Both methods are considered valid and accepted by the jurists of the Sunni mainstream, but the rigid adherence of Ahmadis to this specific trait created further tensions for the West African Ahmadiyya community. Fisher noted how Ahmadi missionaries would never commit to one specific school of thought, but instead would swear allegiance to the *khalifat al-masih* and the promised messiah.²⁴

The next major contribution was Spencer Lavan's *The Ahmadiyah Movement*, the first comprehensive survey of early Ahmadi history.²⁵ Lavan based his study primarily on an early unfinished biography of Mirza Ghulam Ahmad called *Life of Ahmad*, which was written by a prominent Ahmadi missionary in English.²⁶ Lavan completed his survey with references to newspaper articles, government reports, and

²³ Ibid., pp. 133-137.

²⁴ Ibid., p. 20.

²⁵ Spencer Lavan, *The Ahmadiyah Movement: A History and Perspective* (Delhi: Manohar Book Service, 1974).

²⁶ A. R. Dard, *Life of Ahmad* (Lahore: Tabshir, 1948).

later Ahmadi and non-Ahmadi publications. In many ways, this was the first critical analysis of Ahmadi history that offered a balanced look at the conventional presentation of Ghulam Ahmad's life and mission within the scope of the broader South Asian context.

Lavan considered how the religious affiliations of the three primary tutors of Ghulam Ahmad's youth may have affected his religious outlook and influenced the way in which he later interpreted his mission. This was a meaningful observation considering that one tutor was Hanafi, one was from the Ahl-i Hadith movement, and one was Shi'a.²⁷ All of these ideologies can be seen in Jama'at-i Ahmadiyya today. Lavan also commented on the use of Sufi metaphors and terminology to explain Ahmadi theology, noting that '[Ghulam] Ahmad came close to what might be considered a *sūfi* conception of his own role.'²⁸ There is a 20 year gap in Ghulam Ahmad's biography which begins at the time he finished studying with his final tutor and ends at the time he was preparing for his mission. Lavan questioned whether Ghulam Ahmad may have entered into a Sufi order or received some other specialized training.²⁹ An overt affiliation with a specific Sufi order, in addition to the above tutors, certainly would have made tracing the influences on Ahmadi theology easier.

Lavan's most significant contribution was his elaboration of the events that occurred after Mirza Ghulam Ahmad's death. He provided a fair account of the split in the movement between the Qadianis and the Lahoris and devoted considerable attention to dealing with the political controversy that emerged with the Ahrar in the

²⁷ Spencer Lavan, *The Ahmadiyah Movement*, p. 28.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 47.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 29.

early 1930s. Both of these events are crucial to understanding the development of the Jama'at and the development of the Ahmadi identity. Jama'at-i Ahmadiyya's political involvement during the crisis in Kashmir in 1931 led to a major sectarian conflict with one of India's most outspoken demagogues, 'Ataullah Shah Bukhari. This type of political involvement, along with their unwavering support for the British, remained a steady feature of Jama'at-i Ahmadiyya through the partition of India in 1947, which ultimately led to some unexpected outcomes. We will look at how the publicity of these events and the increasing notoriety of the Jama'at led to the politicization of the Ahmadi identity.

The official history of Jama'at-i Ahmadiyya is an ongoing project which is currently being compiled by Dost Muhammad Shahid as a part of his *Tārīkh-i Ahmadiyya* in Urdu.³⁰ As a senior missionary commissioned for the work, Dost Muhammad Shahid has devoted his life to chronicling the history of the Jama'at. Although the first volume of *Tārīkh-i Ahmadiyya* appeared in 1958, Lavan only referenced the Urdu *Tārīkh* occasionally despite listing the first nine volumes in his bibliography. I had the good fortune of meeting with Dost Muhammad Shahid at his office during a visit to Rabwah in 2006, which was an experience worth mentioning. After a quick security screening from his secretary, we sat in his office in the Khilafat Library complex surrounded by books and old photographs of Ghulam Ahmad's various *khalīfas*, where I listened to him explain the historical development of the Jama'at. There was a peg on the wall where he hung his turban, immaculately wrapped, and one for his *achkan* (overcoat) which dangled by the door. The

³⁰ Dōst Muhammad Shāhid, *Tārīkh-i Ahmadiyya*, Vol. 1-19 (ongoing work in progress), (Rabwah?, 1983).

combination of his advanced age and moderate celebrity status amongst the locals demanded a fulltime staff of four or five teenage boys who would fetch whichever books he needed from the adjoining library. He answered my questions by showing me the exact passage in an actual book, rather than simply providing me with the references. In the end, we discussed his forthcoming volumes of the *Tārīkh*, and he boldly insisted that he had told me things about Ahmadi history that no one (Ahmadi or non-Ahmadi) knew. Though the voluminous work is certainly the most comprehensive source of Ahmadi history available, it was not intended to serve as a critical analysis. Regardless, any subsequent commentary on Ahmadi history must take into consideration the authoritative accounts presented in Dost Muhammad Shahid's *Tārīkh-i Ahmadiyya*.

The next major study on Jama'at-i Ahmadiyya was perhaps the most relevant to this analysis. Yohanan Friedmann's *Prophecy Continuous* appeared in 1989 and was the first to look at how closely Ahmadi theology was rooted in the medieval Islamic tradition.³¹ Friedmann outlined the arguments that Ghulam Ahmad had used to substantiate his prophethood and began to trace their Sufi heritage. He provided a detailed discussion of Ghulam Ahmad's interpretation of the Qur'anic verse proclaiming Muhammad to be the *khātam al-nabiyyīn* (seal of the prophets),³² which traditionally has been used to justify the finality of prophethood in Islam. However, Ghulam Ahmad interpreted the designation of *khātam al-nabiyyīn* (seal of the prophets) to signify that Muhammad was 'the best of the prophets' rather than 'the

³¹ Yohanan Friedmann, *Prophecy Continuous: Aspects of Ahmadi Religious Thought and Its Medieval Background* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989).

³² See verse (33:40) which Friedmann translated in *Prophecy Continuous*, p. 53, as: 'Muhammad was not the father any man among you, but the Messenger of Allāh and *khātam* [or *khātim*] *al-nabiyyīn*.'

last of the prophets'. He maintained that it was possible for new prophets, who abided by the established *sharī'a*, to appear in the Islamic tradition after the death of Muhammad and welcomed such appearances as manifestations of divine mercy and a demonstration of the blessings upon mankind. Ghulam Ahmad had based his understanding of prophethood largely on the ideas found in the works of Ibn al-'Arabi and Shaykh Ahmad Sirhindi, which Friedmann duly analyzed alongside Ghulam Ahmad's interpretations. Friedmann explained Ibn al-'Arabi's concept of legislative prophets (*anbiyā tashrī'*) and non-legislative prophets (*anbiyā lā tashrī'a lahum*).³³ Legislative prophets were those who brought some type of scripture or legal code to mankind, whereas non-legislative prophets simply reinforced the previous scriptures that had already been revealed. Although Ghulam Ahmad did claim to be a non-legislative prophet, he acknowledged that no other legislative prophet could come after Muhammad and that the Qur'an was the last scripture. Friedmann showed how Ghulam Ahmad believed that non-legislative prophets would continue to come in the Islamic tradition, albeit in a capacity that was subservient or spiritually inferior to Muhammad who was *khātam al-nabiyyīn* (seal of the prophets). Friedmann's work highlighted Ghulam Ahmad's dependence on atypical interpretations of Sufis like Ibn al-'Arabi and Shaykh Ahmad Sirhindi and demonstrated how these interpretations were used to validate his own prophethood. This has allowed scholars to place some of the more controversial tenets of Ahmadi doctrine within a different, yet more appropriate, intellectual context.

The final and most recent group of literature on Jama'at-i Ahmadiyya deals mostly with issues related to their persecution. Although previous sources dealing

³³ Yohanan Friedmann, *Prophecy Continuous*, pp. 73-75.

with the Jama'at mention the exclusivity, isolation, and persecution of the community in some way, these sources specifically deal with the more recent political actions taken against Jama'at-i Ahmadiyya primarily in Pakistan. Antonio Gualtieri summarized the recent developments in his *Conscience and Coercion*, which was published in 1989.³⁴ Aside from the agitations with the Ahrar during the Kashmir crisis of the early 1930s, there have been three major waves of anti-Ahmadi protests in Pakistan. The first was the wide scale anti-Ahmadi rioting that occurred in 1953 shortly after the partition. These uprisings involved Maulana Mawdudi and his Jama'at-i Islami amongst others and resulted in the declaration of martial law throughout the Punjab. The second wave of protests took place in 1973 and resulted in a special session of the National Assembly of Pakistan declaring that Ahmadis were part of the country's non-Muslim minority. The third wave of disturbances occurred in 1984 and resulted in further changes to Pakistan's constitution regarding the self-identity and individual freedoms of Ahmadis.³⁵ Gualtieri's book focused on the most recent disturbances.

The theme was carried over into Gualtieri's subsequent book called *The Ahmadis*, which followed up *Conscience and Coercion* and was published in 2004.³⁶ In Part III of the book, Gualtieri included some insightful interviews with the then Minister of Religion and Minority Affairs of Pakistan, Lutfulla Mufti, and the then Canadian High Commissioner in Islamabad, Marie-Andrée Beauchemin.³⁷ Gualtieri

³⁴ Antonio R. Gualtieri, *Conscience and Coercion: Ahmadi Muslims and Orthodoxy in Pakistan* (Montreal: Guernica Editions, 1989).

³⁵ See *The Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan*, (Ordinance XX of April 26, 1984).

³⁶ Antonio Gualtieri, *The Ahmadis: Community, Gender, and Politics in a Muslim Society* (London: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2004).

³⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 145-153.

lamponed the diplomats and argued that Pakistan was in violation of basic human rights by enforcing the blasphemy laws which held Ahmadis accountable for the criminal charges associated with ‘posing as a Muslim’. Although Gualtieri thoroughly explained his firm conviction that all human beings had a basic right of self-identification, he did not explain the counterargument or address the theological reasons why such seemingly foolish allegations would be introduced, accepted, or upheld by the Pakistani government. Unfortunately, the interviews themselves did not provide the answer. Gualtieri pressed the diplomats by asking why there had been such consistent persecution of the Ahmadis and why such intense animosity was prevalent amongst the general public. Both diplomats suggested, rather disturbingly, that the overall rigidity maintained by the Ahmadiyya movement regarding their faith and some of their tendencies towards Islam instigated such harsh persecution. They dismissed the persecution and effectively vindicated the past episodes of vigilante violence by affirming that ‘the Ahmadis brought it on themselves.’³⁸ Discouraged by their responses and unable to establish a meaningful dialogue, Gualtieri ended both books with his contempt for religious intolerance and a sense of despair.

Outside the context of Ahmadi persecution, the beliefs and rituals of the Ahmadi community are still undergoing a process of formalization. The development of Ahmadi theology and an Ahmadi identity is worthy of further study, which may allow scholars to appreciate the Islamic context from which it emerged and better understand the direction in which it appears to be heading. In describing this religious context of the movement, Ghulam Ahmad’s second successor and son, Mirza Bashir al-Din Mahmud Ahmad, once said that:

³⁸ Ibid., p. 148.

The Ahmadiyya Movement, therefore, occupies, with respect to the other sects of Islam, the same position which Christianity occupied with respect to the other sects of Judaism.³⁹

This sentiment suggests that a thrust to establish a distinct Ahmadi identity has been present within the leadership of the movement for some time. Although it is not yet clear how the Ahmadis will choose to assert themselves in the future, there is the potential that they may one day choose to form a new religion.

Members of Jama'at-i Ahmadiyya have struggled to establish their identity from the very beginning, and the current literature on the movement reflects how insiders and outsiders of the community chose to define and redefine Ahmadi Islam. However, the literature does not reflect a comprehensive assessment of the progression of the Ahmadi identity from a blossoming brotherhood with a charismatic leader to the institutionalized religious construct of today, which exists in opposition to the Islamic tradition. Most of the studies on Jama'at-i Ahmadiyya that engage with Ahmadi theology tend to isolate one aspect of Ahmadi thought, which is often detached from its historical context. This study goes beyond singular aspects of Ahmadi thought and shows how Ahmadi Islam developed on the whole from the mystical mindset of Mirza Ghulam Ahmad to a globalized religious movement with one supreme *khalīfa* residing in central London. This study shows how the pre-eminence of Mirza Ghulam Ahmad over his disciples, the esoteric ambiguity of his spiritual claims, the emphasis that he placed on internal and external reform, and the exclusivity of his early followers are all indicative of a medieval Sufi order. Then we

³⁹ Mirza Bashir al-Din Mahmud Ahmad, *Ahmadiyyat or the True Islam* (Rabwah: Ahmadiyya Muslim Foreign Missions Office Tahrik-i-Jadid Anjuman Ahmadiyya Pakistan, 1924), p. 18.

look at the historical context in which Ahmadi Islam developed and show how Jama'at-i Ahmadiyya came to adopt a strictly literalist interpretation of Ghulam Ahmad's prophetic claims and establish a fixed religious hierarchy that has come to define its new identity. This study will trace the development of the Ahmadi identity from its Sufi style beginnings to a consciousness that revolves around a highly structured establishment and has the potential of shedding its Islamic origins altogether. As this process progresses, Ahmadiyyat is developing into a unique religious movement with a unique religious identity that is slowly distinguishing itself from Islam.

We begin with a look at Ghulam Ahmad's family background, education, and early spiritual training before his controversial claims. Ghulam Ahmad's privileged upbringing was the result of ancestral connections with the Mughal rulers of 16th century India who placed his family in charge of a budding settlement that later developed into his native Qadian. As the power dynamics in the subcontinent changed, Ghulam Ahmad's family established a lasting relationship with the British government, which later proved to be very beneficial. Following the Sikh conquests in the middle of the 19th century, the family rekindled their ties with the British in an attempt to restore their former prestige. Ghulam Ahmad was born in an uncertain climate which marked the beginning of the end of an old world of pomp and glory enjoyed by the previous generations in his family. He received a private education from personal tutors who taught him the languages necessary to pursue an Islamic education. As a young adult, Ghulam Ahmad moved to Sialkot to become a court reader where he came into contact with a number of evangelical Christian

missionaries who were eager to expand their mission. The experience gave Ghulam Ahmad his first interaction with people who aggressively challenged his religious beliefs and allowed him to develop a taste for religious argumentation. Ghulam Ahmad began debating Christians and Hindus on religious issues and started to write short articles defending Islam. The exposure gave him limited recognition amongst local Muslims and allowed him to found a small fellowship, which he called Jama'at-i Ahmadiyya. This process initiated a broader campaign which gradually led Ghulam Ahmad to making the controversial claims that disclosed his messianic aspirations.

It is necessary to take a careful look at Ghulam Ahmad's prophetic claims in order to understand the full scope of his mission in the appropriate Islamic context. In the second chapter, we look at Ghulam Ahmad's justifications for his prophetic status and the dependency of his mission on the rejection of Jesus' death by crucifixion. By claiming that Jesus was not alive in heaven, Ghulam Ahmad could assert that he himself was the second coming of the messiah. Ghulam Ahmad went to great lengths to show that Jesus had died a natural death in Kashmir and argued that he himself was the promised messiah who was sent to fulfil divine prophecy. He used Sufi ideas to justify a mysterious spiritual connection between himself and the Prophet Muhammad. He claimed that his profound love for the Prophet and his strict obedience to the Qur'an and sunna had led him to receive prophetic insights, which he described using the terminology of revelation. This eventually led many Ahmadis to affirm Ghulam Ahmad's prophetic status and to distance themselves from what they believed to be the antiquated interpretations of a stagnant Islamic tradition.

The subsequent presentation of Ghulam Ahmad's prophethood became the subject of a heated debate within the early Ahmadi community as members looked to the Jama'at leadership for answers following Ghulam Ahmad's death. In chapter three we look at how the question of prophethood raised questions of authority and led to the splitting of the movement into two camps, the Lahoris and the Qadianis. The Lahori-Qadiani split enabled the early community to formalize their positions on Ghulam Ahmad's role in the Islamic tradition and allowed the Qadiani leadership to initiate a process of institutionalization that transformed Jama'at-i Ahmadiyya into a hierarchical religious organization that is mediated by a *khalīfat al-masīh*, Ghulam Ahmad's spiritual successor.

We next turn our attention in chapter four to Jama'at-i Ahmadiyya's political involvement in pre-partition India under the leadership of Ghulam Ahmad's son and second successor, Mirza Bashir al-Din Mahmud Ahmad. Communal tensions in the 1920s and the Kashmir crisis in the 1930s provided Mirza Mahmud Ahmad with an international stage to demonstrate how his Jama'at could provide all Muslims with the solidarity and leadership that they lacked. Although Mahmud Ahmad's attempt was reasonably successful in the very beginning, he was not willing to accommodate the diversity of religious and political opinions that were being expressed by other Muslims, and similarly many Muslims were not willing to accommodate Mahmud Ahmad's political ambitions or his monochromatic vision of Islam. Bitter rivalries developed between Jama'at-i Ahmadiyya and other political organizations like the Majlis-i Ahrar who used a number of persistent socio-economic issues to fuse their religious ideals into a political platform. This political history leading up to India's

partition had a direct influence on the development of the Ahmadi identity. As the Pakistan movement gained popularity amongst the Muslim mainstream, Jama'at-i Ahmadiyya was forced to reassess its role in a divided subcontinent. Although Jama'at-i Ahmadiyya slowly tried to withdraw from the political forefront, it was too deeply associated with the political controversies of the time. The influential members of the Jama'at, along with their affiliates, who were actively participating in the politics of South Asia became the subject of open criticism and even persecution.

In this context of the ongoing political tensions of the time, we turn our attention in the final chapter to the role that persecution had on the Ahmadi identity. Ahmadi persecution began with a few isolated cases at the turn of the century and escalated into widespread rioting by 1953. As the political involvement of Jama'at-i Ahmadiyya increased, the Ahmadi identity became increasingly politicized. The prospects of partition forced many Muslims to put their sectarian differences aside and unite under a nationalist banner, which resulted in the creation of an independent Pakistan. Once the partition was complete, the religious rivalries resumed and Jama'at-i Ahmadiyya became the object of public condemnation that was allegedly based on Ghulam Ahmad's claim of prophethood. In 1974, the National Assembly of Pakistan moved to declare Ahmadis as non-Muslims for the purposes of constitutional law. In 1984, further changes to Pakistan's constitution forced Ghulam Ahmad's fourth successor to leave Pakistan in exile and re-establish the headquarters of the movement in central London.

The combination of the political struggles with the persecution of the Jama'at led to significant changes in the Ahmadi identity. The current Ahmadi identity is not

wholly based on Ghulam Ahmad's messianic claims, but is also in part the result of the socio-political context of the South Asian environment from which it emerged. British rule in India had initiated a reassessment of Muslim institutions and an evaluation of Muslim political autonomy leading up to the partition. Jama'at-i Ahmadiyya's involvement in major political crises like the conflict in Kashmir, the partition of India itself, and the Punjab disturbances of 1953 gradually led to the politicization of Ahmadi Islam. As the notion of Ahmadiyyat became increasingly politicized, the formation of the Ahmadi identity evolved, and the dichotomy between Ahmadiyyat and Islam widened. The current Ahmadi identity is not the necessary outcome of Ghulam Ahmad's messianic claims, but rather the result of complex influences over time, which occasionally were independent of religious factors.

Significant changes needed to take place which allowed the community to develop from a small group of Ghulam Ahmad's loyalists into the heavily politicized and persecuted international community that exists today. Although a history of the Ahmadiyya movement exists, a history of Ahmadi thought is missing from the existing studies on the Jama'at. This study aims to trace the development of Ahmadi thought through its process of formalization and up to its current form. These subtle variations in the way that Ahmadi doctrine has been emphasized over the past century correlate with the different stages of development of the Ahmadi identity. By mapping these changes in Ahmadi doctrine and placing them in their appropriate religio-political and historical context, we can gain a better understanding of Jama'at-i Ahmadiyya and observe how the movement has progressed over the past century. The external and internal influences on Ahmadi Islam have been diverse and complex

involving a number of religious and political reactions and innovations. Nonetheless, we have a fascinating opportunity to witness the transformation of this identity, which still has the potential of severing its ties with its Islamic heritage and forming an altogether new religious identity.

Chapter 1

Mirza Ghulam Ahmad Qadiani before his Prophethood

In this chapter we will begin with a look at Mirza Ghulam Ahmad's family background and its significance in the development of his subsequent mission. We will explore the historical background of his education and spiritual training, his family's involvement with the British government, and how his personal experiences with Christian missionaries may have influenced his thought and prepared him for his contentious religious career. As Ghulam Ahmad developed his skills in religious argumentation, he began writing books and argumentative articles that gave him limited recognition amongst the Muslim elite and enabled him to found a small community, which he called Jama'at-i Ahmadiyya. This process allowed Ghulam Ahmad to expand his views on other religions and to initiate his divine mission, which he based on messianic claims.

1.1 – Mirza Ghulam Ahmad's Family Background

The vast majority of the Ahmadi biographical literature relating the life of Mirza Ghulam Ahmad begins with an extensive account of the Mirza'i family's 16th century migration from Persian Central Asia to India.¹ Ghulam Ahmad's emphasis on his lineage played an important role in establishing the religious and social

¹ The chief source of biographical information on Mirza Ghulam Ahmad is his own autobiographical account, which takes up a considerable portion of the footnotes of his book *Kitāb al-Bariyya*. See Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, *Kitāb al-Bariyya*, in *Rūhānī Khazā'in*, Vol. 13, pp. 162-313.

legitimacy for his Jama'at. Recounting Ghulam Ahmad's heritage will allow us to develop a more complete picture of his mission and give us a better understanding of the Indo-colonial environment from which Jama'at-i Ahmadiyya emerged. The very fact that this lineage has been categorically presented in Ahmadi sources as a precondition for understanding the life and claims of the founder should give us a greater appreciation for the values of the early community and the Indian society from which it came.

The first recorded ancestor of Mirza Ghulam Ahmad was Mirza Hadi Beg,² an alleged member of the Mughal Barlas tribe, which was comprised of the ancestral descendants of Haji Barlas and originally lived in Kish, south of Samarqand.³ When the tribal leadership passed to Timur, members of the tribe moved west to Khurasan, where they remained until the early part of the 16th century. Mirza Hadi Beg

² Ghulam Ahmad presented a genealogical tree that clearly details his descent from Mirza Hadi Beg, who was the first family member to migrate to India. However, there are some discrepancies in Ghulam Ahmad's ancestry before Mirza Hadi Beg, which we will discuss below. See Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, *Kitāb al-Bariyya*, in *Rūhānī Khazā'in*, Vol. 13, p. 172, in the footnote to the footnote.

³ Haji Beg Barlas was the head of the Barlas tribe prior to Timur (Tamerlane). This aspect of Ghulam Ahmad's genealogy is problematic, because the Barlas tribe of Central Asia was of Turkic origin with a mixed Mongolian ancestry. Ghulam Ahmad's claim to have a Persian ancestry played a crucial role in providing supporting evidence for his broader spiritual mission. He emphasized the Persian lineage because it coincided with a hadith, which he interpreted to mean that the *mahdī* would be of Persian descent. This clearly went against the accepted view that the Barlas tribe was of Turko-Mongolian origin. Ghulam Ahmad acknowledged the contradiction but affirmed that his original ancestors were Persian, which he based purely on divine revelation. Similarly, many Muslims believed that the *mahdī* would be of Arab descent, which they based on a different hadith that suggested the *mahdī*'s lineage would emanate from the tribe of the Prophet. Ghulam Ahmad was able to resolve the conflict when it was revealed to him that his paternal grandmothers descended from an Arab ancestry which stemmed from the Prophet Muhammad himself. For more information on the ethnography and politics of the Barlas tribe, see Beatrice Forbes Manz, *The Rise and Rule of Tamerlane* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999). For classical views regarding the ancestry of the *mahdī*, see Ibn Khaldun, Franz Rosenthal (trans.), and N. J. Dawood (ed.), *The Muqaddimah: An Introduction to History* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1967), pp. 257-258. For Ghulam Ahmad's revelations regarding his own lineage, see *Haqīqat al-Wahy*, in *Rūhānī Khazā'in*, Vol. 22, pp. 81-82, in the footnotes, which include the strong assertion that his lineage is Persian, and not Mughal, as well as the revelation informing him that he had descended from Muhammad's daughter Fatima through his paternal grandmothers who were *sayyids*. Similar revelations appear in: *Tiryāq al-Qulūb*, in *Rūhānī Khazā'in*, Vol. 15, pp. 272-273, in the footnote; *Tohfa Golrawiyya*, in *Rūhānī Khazā'in*, Vol. 17, p. 117, in the footnote; and *Ek Ghalatī kā Izāla*, in *Rūhānī Khazā'in*, Vol. 18, p. 212, in the footnote.

migrated to India in 1530 with roughly 200 family members and attendants who founded a village called Islampur, approximately 10 miles west of the Beas River and 70 miles northeast of Lahore. Islampur was part of a large tract of land (*jāgīr*) that was given to Mirza Hadi Beg by the Imperial Court of the Mughal Emperor Babar.⁴ Mirza Hadi Beg was given some legal jurisdiction over the area as the local *qāḍī* (Islamic magistrate), and thus the village came to be known as Islampur Qadi. Over time, the name of the village evolved into various forms until eventually the 'Islampur' prefix was dropped altogether, and the name of the village became Qadian.⁵ It appears that the original area of the *jāgīr* encompassed at least 70 neighbouring villages, which was a sizeable domain. As such, the *jāgīr* more closely resembled a semi-independent territory in Imperial India than one family's oversized estate. Likewise, the head of the family, as the *jāgīrdār*, more closely resembled an Indian feudal ruler, rather than a mere landlord, and exercised a reasonable amount of sovereignty over the *jāgīr*. Consequently, the old city of Qadian was a walled settlement, as were many cities in India during that time. The fortress styled wall stood 22 feet high by 18 feet wide with four towers surrounding the homes of a standing militia. By the time that Ghulam Ahmad's great-grandfather, Mirza Gul Muhammad (d. 1800), inherited the *jāgīr*, a significantly reduced force remained at hand, which included a cavalry and three large guns. In addition to the military presence, Gul Muhammad's Qadian is often portrayed as a place that fostered the

⁴ Sir Lepel H. Griffin and Charles Francis Massy, *The Panjab Chiefs* (Lahore: Civil and Military Gazette Press, 1890), p. 49; see also Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, *Kitāb al-Bariyya*, in *Rūhānī Khazā'in*, Vol. 13, pp. 162-163.

⁵ Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, *Kitāb al-Bariyya*, in *Rūhānī Khazā'in*, Vol. 13, pp. 163-164.

growth of Islamic thought through generous endowments for Muslim intellectuals at a time of external hostilities.⁶

As the stronghold of the Mughals faded away, so did the glory days of the loyalist *jāgīrdārs*. When Mirza Gul Muhammad passed away, the *jāgīr* was inherited by his son and Ghulam Ahmad's grandfather, Mirza 'Ata Muhammad. By this point, the Sikh insurgency was gaining strength throughout the Punjab, and 'Ata Muhammad watched as the Sikhs captured the villages of his *jāgīr* until only Qadian itself remained under the family's control. Jassa Singh (d. 1803) and the Sikhs of the Ramgarhia *misal* seized Qadian in 1802.⁷ The hostility involved in the takeover of Qadian resulted in the burning of the library, which had been well endowed with Islamic texts and Qur'anic manuscripts through the previous generations. The main mosque of Qadian was converted into a Sikh temple, which still functions as such to this day. The remaining members of the family were expelled from Qadian and forced to take refuge in a nearby village, where they lived in exile for the next 16 years. This difficult time period for the family culminated in the murder of Mirza 'Ata Muhammad who was poisoned in 1814.

In the following years, Ranjit Singh consolidated his rule of the Punjab, which enabled the family to find relief from their predicament by negotiating a deal with the Sikhs.⁸ In 1818 Ghulam Ahmad's father, Mirza Ghulam Murtaza, and his brothers were permitted to return to Qadian with their families on the condition that they

⁶ Ibid., pp. 166-174; see also Muhammad Zafrulla Khan, *Ahmadiyyat: The Renaissance of Islam* (Tabshir Publications, 1978), pp. 1-2.

⁷ Muhammad Zafrulla Khan, *Ahmadiyyat: The Renaissance of Islam*, p. 2.

⁸ Khushwant Singh, *A History of the Sikhs: Volume I: 1469-1839* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), pp. 188-191; see also G. S. Chhabra, *Advanced History of the Punjab*, Vol. II, (Ludhiana: Parkash Brothers, 1973), pp. 37-39.

enlisted in Ranjit Singh's army. Accordingly, Ahmadis often stress how Mirza Ghulam Murtaza and his brothers performed favourably in the campaigns in Kashmir, Peshawar, and Multan; however, the Ahmadi portrayals often overlook that these campaigns were fought against other Muslims.⁹ By the 1830s, Ghulam Murtaza's loyalty and services were rewarded with the return of four villages from the ancestral estate including Qadian. Between the brothers, they received pensions of Rs. 700 per annum and managed to recover a total of seven villages from their ancestral estate.¹⁰ With the death of Ranjit Singh in 1839, the British were soon able to extend their rule over the rest of India in a relatively short amount of time, following the First Sikh War.

It was in this atmosphere, during the family's political and economic decline that Mirza Ghulam Ahmad was born in Qadian to a father who had witnessed the withering away of the fruits of several preceding generations. Although the affects of this decline played a key role in Ghulam Ahmad's portrayal of his childhood and Jama'at-i Ahmadiyya's grieving perception of the period pertaining to their founder's

⁹ Although Ahmadis are proud of this history, virtually no Ahmadi account discusses the fact that these campaigns were fought against fellow Muslims who were rebelling against the Sikhs as *mujāhidīn*. Griffin noted that Ghulam Murtaza 'was continually employed on active service' under 'Nao Nahal Singh, Sher Singh, and the Darbar.' It was Sher Singh's forces who stopped Sayyid Ahmad of Rai Bareilly (more commonly known as Sayyid Ahmad Barelwi or Sayyid Ahmad *Shahīd*) and Shah Muhammad Isma'il (the grandson of Shah Waliullah Dehlawi) at Balakot where both were martyred in 1831 on their way to Kashmir from Peshawar. Although Ghulam Murtaza's particular role in these battles is unclear, it is likely that he fought against other Muslims during this time. See Sir Lepel H. Griffin and Charles Francis Massy, *The Panjab Chiefs*, p. 50; see also Khushwant Singh, *A History of the Sikhs: Volume 1: 1469-1839*, pp. 262-265; see also Mirza Bashir al-Din Mahmud Ahmad, *Sīrat Masīh-i Maw'ūd* (Rabwah: Majlis Khuddam al-Ahmadiyya Pakistan, 1979), pp. 4-5.

¹⁰ Sir Lepel H. Griffin and Charles Francis Massy, *The Panjab Chiefs*, p. 50; see also Yohanan Friedmann *Prophecy Continuous: Aspects of Ahmadi Religious Thought and Its Medieval Background* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989), p. 2, in footnote 1. Friedmann suggests that the family history was based on the accounts given in Griffin's book, but it seems more likely that Griffin based his account on the family's own oral records, despite the fact that the family now quotes from Griffin to establish a greater sense of historic credibility. It is likely that this is all circular information which was originally based on the family's own accounts.

birth, the tragedy is no greater than the deterioration of many other aristocratic families following the advent of modernity throughout the period of colonial expansion. The successful campaigns of the Sikhs and later the British resulted in a steady decline of the Muslim aristocracy through the 17th and 18th centuries. One can appreciate the sense of apathy and resentment that the family had towards their waning influence in the 19th century through the descriptions that are found in the numerous passages in which Ghulam Ahmad lamented his family's losses.¹¹

1.2 – Education and Spiritual Training

Mirza Ghulam Ahmad was born in Qadian on Friday, 13 February 1835,¹² along with a twin sister named Jannat, who was born before him but died a few days later.¹³ He received private tutoring, which was the type of education that was standard amongst the aristocratic children of rural Punjab. This process began at age

¹¹ Ghulam Ahmad clearly placed a high value on his aristocratic background. There is evidence of this in the way that he occasionally signed his publications: Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, Chieftain (*ra'īs*) of Qadian. Even later publications appeared with this signature, but with less frequency. However, this is surprising because it implies that his status as a *ra'īs*, a socio-political title, took precedence over his spiritual claims, for example, *masīh-i maw'ūd* (the promised messiah). His failure to consistently drop the worldly title *ra'īs* in favour of his divine appointment demonstrates the importance that he placed on it.

¹² The accuracy of this date is questionable, even though it is the accepted date that presently appears on all Jama'at-i Ahmadiyya publications. Estimates regarding Ghulam Ahmad's birth date have varied considerably from 1831 to 1840. In his own account, Ghulam Ahmad said that he was born in either 1839 or 1840. See *Kitāb al-Bariyya*, in *Rūhānī Khazā'in*, Vol. 13, p. 177, in the first footnote. For several years during the reign of Ghulam Ahmad's second successor, the accepted date of birth was listed as 1836 until it was changed to the 1835 date given above. Once again, the primary motivation for adjusting the birth date revolved around issues relating to the fulfilment of prophecies concerning the coming of the *mahdī* and the messiah. Interestingly, the 1835 date was settled by combining the indirect implications of Ghulam Ahmad's statements regarding the phase of the moon during his divinely ordained birth along with the spiritual necessity of his birth taking place on a Friday, which is widely regarded as the holiest day in Islam. The most comprehensive account of the details involving these variations can be found in Dost Muhammad Shāhid, *Tārīkh-i Ahmadiyya*, Vol. 1, (Rabwah, 1983), pp. 48-50.

¹³ A. R. Dard, *Life of Ahmad* (Lahore: Tabshir, 1948), p. 27.

seven with a Hanafi tutor named Fazl Ilahi, who was a local resident of Qadian who taught Ghulam Ahmad the Qur'an and some elementary Persian. Around age ten, Ghulam Ahmad began studying with Fazl Ahmad, who was a member of the Ahl-i Hadith movement from Ferozwala, District Gujranwala who would travel to Qadian to teach Ghulam Ahmad intermediate Arabic grammar.¹⁴ These lessons were followed by a small break in his education around age 16, when Ghulam Ahmad married his maternal uncle's daughter named Hurmat Bibi. When Ghulam Ahmad resumed his studies shortly thereafter, he had a Shi'i tutor from Batala named Gul 'Ali Shah who taught him advanced Arabic grammar and logic. Initially, Gul 'Ali Shah would come to Qadian to teach Ghulam Ahmad, but then later Ghulam Ahmad began travelling to Batala for short periods of time to continue his studies. At the time, Gul 'Ali Shah was also teaching Muhammad Husayn Batalwi, who developed and maintained a close friendship with Ghulam Ahmad well into their adult lives, even though the two became bitter rivals after Ghulam Ahmad proclaimed his messianic mission.¹⁵

The instruction from these three tutors represents the entirety of Mirza Ghulam Ahmad's formal education and training according to the Ahmadi historians, who often emphasize its modesty in comparison to the curriculum for traditional *'ulamā* in Islam. Ghulam Ahmad's formal education was based almost entirely on language acquisition, which was only the basis for traditional Islamic scholarship. It would be useful to know the details of the other subjects (if any) that Ghulam Ahmad

¹⁴ It may be of interest to note that Fazl Ahmad's son, Mubarak 'Ali of Sialkot, later became an Ahmadi, which implies that the two maintained a good relationship despite Ghulam Ahmad's subsequent conflicts with the Ahl-i Hadith, which we will discuss below.

¹⁵ Spencer Lavan, *The Ahmadiyah Movement: A History and Perspective* (Delhi: Manohar Book Service, 1974), p. 28.

studied during this period. One cannot presume that Fazl Ilahi taught Ghulam Ahmad *fiqh-i hanafiyya* (legal theory) simply because he was Hanafi, or that Fazl Ahmad taught Ghulam Ahmad hadith criticism simply because he was a member of the Ahl-i Hadith movement, or finally that Gul 'Ali Shah taught Ghulam Ahmad the theological subtleties of the coming of the *mahdī* simply because he was Shi'a. This view of Ghulam Ahmad's Islamic education, or perhaps lack of education, is precisely the image that Jama'at-i Ahmadiyya maintains with firm resolve. When I questioned Sayyid Mir Mahmud Ahmad Nasir, the prominent Ahmadi scholar and longtime principal of the Ahmadi seminary in Rabwah, about the inconsistencies in Ghulam Ahmad's Islamic education, he made it abundantly clear that this is the point that clearly demonstrates that Ghulam Ahmad was *ummī* (unlettered) in the same way as the Prophet Muhammad. He further elaborated that this was because all prophets of God, including Ghulam Ahmad, received their knowledge from Allah, who has knowledge of all things.¹⁶

It is worth noting that Ghulam Ahmad was not linked to any religious institutions for his education, unlike the majority of scholars in the Muslim world who typically underwent some period of formal study of the traditional Islamic sciences. In many ways, Ghulam Ahmad was not a traditional Islamic scholar, which may account for some of the irregularities in his methodology that developed later on

¹⁶ This view was expressed to me in a conversation with Sayyid Mir Mahmud Ahmad Nasir at the Ahmadi seminary, Rabwah, Pakistan (1 April 2006). Ghulam Ahmad did express similar sentiments regarding the expectations of the promised messiah in which he said that the coming messiah would not be taught by anyone other than Allah. In addition, Ghulam Ahmad claimed that he was not taught by any human being but rather Allah taught him the Qur'an and hadith. See Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, *Ayyām-i Sulh*, in *Rūhānī Khazā'in*, Vol. 14, p. 394.

in his career. In comparison, even his first successor, Maulvi Hakim Nur al-Din,¹⁷ had spent a number of years formally studying Islam with traditional scholars while travelling through the Middle East.¹⁸ It is important to recall that the advent of modernity is often associated with the decline of the traditional *'ulamā* in the Muslim world and to recognize that many notable figures in 19th century South Asian Islam did not follow traditional courses of study and would not be considered traditional *'ulamā*.¹⁹ However, even though Ghulam Ahmad's fragmented scholastic background was consistent with a prevalent strand that was present within this historical context, it is unlikely that his language tutors provided the entirety of his religious education and training.²⁰

The years between Ghulam Ahmad's tutorials as an adolescent to the beginning of his mission are the most mysterious in his life. That Ghulam Ahmad had no links to a program of formal study with a specialist teacher makes it more difficult to trace his patterns of thought. Without a religious education, Ghulam

¹⁷ I have used 'Maulvi' and 'Maulana' instead of 'Mawlwi' and 'Mawlana' because of their common use.

¹⁸ Prior to his *bay'at* (allegiance) with Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, Hakim Nur al-Din had taken *bay'at* with Shah 'Abd al-Ghani while studying in Mecca and Medina. He had also studied with Maulvi Nazir Husayn Dehlawi and a disciple of Sayyid Ahmad Bareilwi. See 'Abd al-Qādir, *Ḥayyāt-i Nūr* (Qadian: Nizārat Nashar-o-Ishā'at, 2003), pp. 54-56; for a less detailed account in English, see also Muhammad Zafrulla Khan, *Hazrat Maulvi Nooruddeen Khalifatul Masih I* (London: London Mosque, 1983?), pp. 12-13, 24-25.

¹⁹ For a more detailed discussion on the tension between traditional Islamic learning, classical strands of rationalism, and modernist reform, see Fazlur Rahman, *Islam and Modernity: Transformation of an Intellectual Tradition* (London: University of Chicago Press, 1982).

²⁰ Although our primary concern is Ghulam Ahmad's religious education, it is interesting to note that he was also taught some medicine by his father who was a notable *hakīm* (herbal and natural medicine doctor). This tradition of herbal and alternative medicine has continued to evolve as an intellectual subculture within Jama'at-i Ahmadiyya and is tied in to their holistic view of physical and spiritual healing. If this strand were more dominant, one could argue that these aspects of Ahmadi ideology bordered on the New Age. At present, the majority of Ahmadi mosques include a homeopathic dispensary with facilities for personal consultations. For more information regarding the Ahmadi views on medicine, including specific prescriptions for various ailments, see the book by Ghulam Ahmad's fourth successor, Mirza Tahir Ahmad, *Homeopathy* (Tilford: Islam International Publications, 2005).

Ahmad appears to jump from being a grammar intensive recluse to the spiritual reformer (*mujaddid*) of the age. There is a gap of nearly twenty years that is largely unaccounted for in the Ahmadi biographies, which mention little more than Ghulam Ahmad's solemn practice of reading and re-reading the Qur'an in isolation. These discrepancies in conjunction with his educational deficiencies led Spencer Lavan to question 'whether or not Ghulam Ahmad ever entered a *sūfī* order or received any specialized spiritual training common to almost all Muslim religious teachers of the times.'²¹ However, this question presupposes that Ghulam Ahmad's religious education was incomplete at the time he finished his instructional sessions with Gul 'Ali Shah. One could better gauge Ghulam Ahmad's mastery of the Islamic sciences by comparing his level of proficiency to the progress of the other students with whom he had studied. For example, if Muhammad Husayn Batalwi had also completed his education at the same time as Ghulam Ahmad, then one could conclude that Gul 'Ali Shah's lessons were quite comprehensive since Batalwi was known to be a prominent scholar of the Ahl-i Hadith. This would imply that Gul 'Ali Shah's tutorials were sufficient to prepare Muhammad Husayn Batalwi for his subsequent religious career with the foundational Islamic knowledge that was necessary for a scholar of his calibre and arguably sufficient for Ghulam Ahmad to have advanced his claims of being the 'Imam of the age'.²² It is well known, however, that Muhammad Husayn Batalwi's studies did not end with Gul 'Ali Shah and that Batalwi travelled to Delhi where he remained for a number of years completing his education before returning

²¹ Spencer Lavan, *The Ahmadiyah Movement*, pp. 28-29.

²² See Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, *Zarūrat al-Imām*, in *Rūhānī Khazā'in*, Vol. 13.

to Batala as a recognized Islamic scholar (*maulvi*).²³ This comparison with Batalwi's progression implies that Ghulam Ahmad may only have studied languages as the Ahmadi sources suggest, and it confirms the Ahmadi position that his Islamic education at this point in his life was neither extensive nor complete.

Ghulam Ahmad continued his religious studies on his own after the period of formal instruction had finished, but the exact date of when these sessions ended is unknown. What is known in connection to this period is that during the Mutiny of 1857, Ghulam Ahmad's older brother, Mirza Ghulam Qadir, along with many other residents of Qadian, was urged by their father, Mirza Ghulam Murtaza, to enlist in military service. As a result, the Qadiani group, headed by Mirza Ghulam Qadir, joined General Nicholson's 46th Native Infantry.²⁴ The military service earned the family financial remuneration as well as the lasting appreciation of the British.²⁵ We can presume that Ghulam Ahmad must have been too young in 1857 to have been pressured into military service by his father, and instead he was directed towards the civil service shortly thereafter.²⁶ Around 1864 Ghulam Ahmad was sent to Sialkot to take a job as a court reader under the Deputy Commissioner, who had a connection to his father. Sialkot was a much larger city than Qadian and had become a centre for

²³ Dost Muhammad Shahid, *Tārīkh-i Ahmadiyya*, Vol. 1, p. 111.

²⁴ Sir Lepel H. Griffin and Charles Francis Massy, *The Panjab Chiefs*, p. 50.

²⁵ See Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, *Kitāb al-Bariyya*, in *Rūhānī Khazā'in*, Vol. 13, pp. 4-7. The letter on p. 6, is from the Commissioner of Lahore, Robert Cust, (20 September 1858) and details the offer of a *khil'at* (land grant) made to Mirza Ghulam Murtaza worth Rs. 200 in return for the 50 cavalry units that he provided during the Mutiny. Multiple letters, including these ones, are also available in Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, *Kashf al-Ghitā*, in *Rūhānī Khazā'in*, Vol. 14, pp. 181-185, and also in *Majmū'a-i Ishtihārāt*, Vol. 2, pp. 459-462.

²⁶ Ghulam Ahmad said that he was sixteen or seventeen years old during the Mutiny of 1857 and that his facial hair had not yet begun to grow. See *Kitāb al-Bariyya*, in *Rūhānī Khazā'in*, Vol. 13, p. 177, in footnote.

evangelical Christian missionary activity in Punjab during the 19th century.²⁷ This period in Sialkot was when Ghulam Ahmad first came into contact with evangelical Christian missionaries, who appear to have had a considerable impact on his religious outlook. Though Ghulam Ahmad disliked the job, he stayed in Sialkot for a few years as a reader in the British-Indian court of Sialkot, despite having no previous knowledge of English.

Apparently, Ghulam Ahmad made an effort to learn English during his time in Sialkot, where English language courses were offered to government employees as a means of professional development. In one account, Ghulam Ahmad is said to have completed the first two levels of an English course before he withdrew.²⁸ The results of this language instruction may have carried over into the latter part of his mission, when Ghulam Ahmad began receiving some revelations in English, which he would write down in Urdu script.²⁹ Although these revelations were far less frequent than the revelations that Ghulam Ahmad received in other languages including Urdu, Arabic, and Persian, they appeared miraculous to devoted followers, like Maulana Muhammad 'Ali, who adamantly maintained that Ghulam Ahmad 'did not know a

²⁷ See Avril A. Powell, 'Contested Gods and Prophets: Discourse among Minorities in Late Nineteenth-Century-Punjab,' *Renaissance and Modern Studies*, No. 38, (1995), p. 41; see also John McManners (ed.) *The Oxford History of Christianity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990), pp. 511-526; see also E. M. Wherry, *The Muslim Controversy* (London: The Christian Literature Society, 1905); see also H. A. Walter, *The Ahmadiyya Movement* (London: Oxford University Press, 1918), p. 14.

²⁸ Dard emphasizes that the sum total of Ghulam Ahmad's English instruction was only enough for him to have the ability to read the alphabet and a few simple words. He also insists that Ghulam Ahmad soon forgot what he was taught after he discontinued his studies; A. R. Dard, *Life of Ahmad*, p. 39.

²⁹ For examples, see Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, *Barāhīn-i Ahmadiyya*, Part IV, in *Rūhānī Khazā'in*, Vol. 1, p. 563, in footnote, and pp. 571-572 in the bottom footnote; see also *al-Hakam* Vol. 10, No. 4, (31 January 1906), p. 3, which is available in Muhammad Zafrulla Khan, *Tadhkira* (Tilford, Islam International Publications, 2004), pp. 338-339; see also *al-Hakam* Vol. 11, No. 12, (10 April 1907), p. 2, in *Tadhkira*, p. 393.

word of English.’³⁰ However, there is something suspicious about the English revelations that is difficult for native speakers to ignore. The English revelations were typically only a few words in length and often included phrases with questionable grammar. For example, one English revelation warned, ‘God is coming by His army. He is with you to kill enemy.’³¹ Other English revelations followed: ‘I love you. I am with you. I shall help you. I can what I will do. We can what we will do.’³² Ghulam Ahmad’s English revelations were often supplemented with eloquent Urdu translations so that he himself could understand their meaning, while on other occasions, he would simply ask English speakers what the revelations meant. Although the above examples are not intended to mock Mirza Ghulam Ahmad or to discredit what Ahmadis may associate with divine revelation, they provide considerable insight into what Ghulam Ahmad’s understanding of ‘revelation’ actually entailed.

Although he spent much of his personal time pursuing religious devotions, the Christian missionaries in Sialkot provided new prospects for a religious dialogue with which Ghulam Ahmad was unfamiliar in Qadian. The exposure to such discussions must have opened up new avenues and new modes of thought for Ghulam Ahmad in his youth. He would debate the missionaries on points of eschatology and salvation, and ultimately endeavour to prove the superiority of Islam as a religion to his Christian counterparts.³³ These exchanges provided Ghulam Ahmad with the

³⁰ Muhammad ‘Ali, *The Founder of the Ahmadiyya Movement* (Newark, CA: Ahmadiyya Anjuman Isha‘at Islam Lahore, 1984), p. 37.

³¹ Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, *Barāhīn-i Ahmadiyya*, Part IV, in *Rūhānī Khazā’in*, Vol. 1, pp. 571-572 in the bottom footnote.

³² *Ibid.*, pp. 571-572 in the bottom footnote; a very similar revelation appears in English in *Haqīqat al-Wahy*, in *Rūhānī Khazā’in*, Vol. 22, pp. 316-317.

³³ Dost Muhammad Shahid, *Tārīkh-i Ahmadiyya*, Vol. 1, p. 92.

opportunity to improve and finesse his logical argumentation and to express his religious outlook in writing for the first time.³⁴ The discussions and debates in Sialkot were beneficial, because Ghulam Ahmad was still a young amateur theologian at the time, whereas his religious rivals were higher educated Christian missionaries. His encounters with the missionaries facilitated a second period of intellectual and spiritual growth for Ghulam Ahmad, even though he had a fulltime career as a court reader and was still not receiving any formal religious training. There is no doubt that these debates influenced and shaped the Ahmadi polemic against Christianity, which later came to define much of Ghulam Ahmad's career.

Ghulam Ahmad's increased religious exposure in Sialkot was not limited to Christianity, but also included encounters with Muslim intellectuals like Sir Sayyid Ahmad Khan who had recently published his commentary on the Qur'an. Ironically, Ghulam Ahmad's main criticism of the commentary regarded Sir Sayyid's assertion that Jesus had died and was not alive in heaven, which is a belief that eventually defined the greater part of Ghulam Ahmad's mission.³⁵ He also objected to Sir Sayyid's naturalism, which he felt diminished the belief in miracles and replaced it with the determinism of modernist science.³⁶ Eventually, Ghulam Ahmad wrote a full response to Sir Sayyid in his *Barakāt al-Du'ā* (The Blessings of Prayer) on the effects of prayer,³⁷ along with some other articles that were published separately.³⁸

³⁴ A. R. Dard, *Life of Ahmad*, p. 39.

³⁵ Ghulam Ahmad surprisingly maintained the orthodox view that Jesus was alive in heaven until relatively late in his career. Remnants of this position can be found as late as *Barāhīn-i Ahmadiyya*, Part IV, in *Rūhānī Khazā'in*, Vol. 1, p. 593, which was published in 1884.

³⁶ A. R. Dard, *Life of Ahmad*, p. 40.

³⁷ See Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, *Barakāt al-Du'ā*, in *Rūhānī Khazā'in*, Vol. 6.

³⁸ There is an interesting critique of Sir Sayyid's concept of revelation in Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, *Izāla-i Avhām*, in *Rūhānī Khazā'in*, Vol. 3, pp. 596-602. See also 'Sir Sayyad Ahmad of Aligarh and Hazrat

Ghulam Ahmad's disputes with the Aligarh scholars continued throughout the rest of his life, despite his subsequent adoption of Sir Sayyid's position on Jesus' physical ascension to heaven.

The biographies relate that Ghulam Ahmad developed a close relationship with a prominent Shaykh of the Naqshbandi order named Maulana Mahbub 'Alam while living in Sialkot, however, many of these accounts often conceal Maulana Mahbub 'Alam's Sufi affiliations.³⁹ The Ahmadi sources suggest that the two developed a close 'friendship', which is doubtful even though the nature of their relationship is unclear, considering Mahbub 'Alam's stature as a prominent Sufi Shaykh.⁴⁰ The sources depict a lighthearted camaraderie between casual acquaintances, which is improbable considering Ghulam Ahmad's youth and incomplete religious training. Given the cultural context and the customary practices of the time, it is unlikely that an established Shaykh of the Naqshbandi order,⁴¹ like Maulana Mahbub 'Alam, would have exchanged pleasantries or had casual conversations with a young court clerk about their shared passion for Islam, even if their exchanges were rather engaging. In accordance with the proper social etiquettes associated with an esteemed *pīr*, the only meaningful relationship that Ghulam Ahmad was capable of establishing with a Sufi Shaykh at that stage in his life was

Ahmad of Qadian Compared and Contrasted', *Review of Religions* (June 1933) Vol. 32, No. 6, pp. 292-297.

³⁹ Bashārat Ahmad, *Mujaddid-i 'Ālam* (Lahore?: Ahmadiyya Anjuman Isha'at Islam Lahore, 1939), p. 60. When Maulana Mahbub 'Alam's credentials and his affiliations with the Naqshbandi order are mentioned in Ahmadi sources they tend to be underrated.

⁴⁰ Dost Muhammad Shahid, *Tārīkh-i Ahmadiyya*, Vol. 1, p. 132; and also A. R. Dard, *Life of Ahmad*, p. 40.

⁴¹ Arthur Buehler's study on the Naqshbandis in India mentioned Mahbub 'Alam in relation to his position on reciting the *Hiẓb al-Bahr* of Abu Hasan al-Shadhili without permission, for which Buehler referenced, Mahbub 'Alam, *Dhikr-i Kathūr: Mahbūb al-Sulūk* (Lahore: Milli Printers, 1913). See Arthur F. Buehler, *Sufi Heirs of the Prophet: The Indian Naqshbandiyya and the Rise of the Mediating Sufi Shaykh* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 2008), p. 85.

one of student and teacher. It is more plausible that Ghulam Ahmad was going to Mahbub 'Alam as a student, although the formality and subject matter of his study is debatable and it is not known whether he was initiated into the Naqshbandi order. However, Maulana Mahbub 'Alam may still have served as a potential spiritual guide for Ghulam Ahmad, since it is possible for him to have developed a close relationship with the Shaykh without formally taking his *bay'at* (allegiance). Ghulam Ahmad's *bay'at* with the Shaykh is in many ways superfluous, because even though he may never have been formally initiated into the Sufi order, it appears as though he was going to Mahbub 'Alam to learn Sufism.

In 1867, Ghulam Ahmad returned to Qadian upon receiving word of his mother's poor health. Although he left Sialkot immediately, his mother, Chiragh Bibi, had passed away by the time he reached home. Rather than returning to Sialkot, Ghulam Ahmad remained in Qadian to help his father with the ongoing legal battles pertaining to the recovery of the family's lost estates. The new career required frequent travel to remote locations, which often lasted for extended periods of time. The seclusion provided Ghulam Ahmad with more opportunities to continue his Islamic studies on his own. Although his legal success varied from case to case, the family was never able to re-establish its previous influence in the region. Ghulam Ahmad's disinterest in worldly pursuits and financial stability apparently created some tension between him and his father. His father persuaded him to study for the qualifying examination that would have enabled him to practice law, but he failed the exam and soon lost interest.⁴²

⁴² A. R. Dard, *Life of Ahmad*, pp. 40-41.

Ghulam Ahmad's biographers mention that he visited the nearby saintly people (*ahl allāh*) while living in Qadian, but again, few details are present in their accounts. Dost Muhammad Shahid mentioned a Sufi Shaykh named Mian Sharaf al-Din, whose residence and instructional facility in Sum Sharif near Talibpur, District Gurdaspur, was frequented by Mirza Ghulam Ahmad before he initiated his spiritual mission. On one occasion when Ghulam Ahmad had gone to Sum Sharif to visit Mian Sharaf al-Din, he met a Sufi called Makka Shah who was a resident of Layl, near Dhariwal. Dost Muhammad Shahid states that Makka Shah soon began making the journey to Qadian to visit Ghulam Ahmad.⁴³ This was not unusual for Ghulam Ahmad who enjoyed a number of visitors in Qadian, especially during his tenure as messiah. It is unusual, however, that Dost Muhammad Shahid mentioned Makka Shah in his section on the *ahl allāh* in the same context as Mian Sharaf al-Din, which implies a strong connection between the two regarding their Sufi affiliations. Ghulam Ahmad came into contact with several prominent scholars in his life, most of whom are given due recognition in his biographies, including the ones who viewed *Jama'at-i Ahmadiyya* unfavourably. These interactions between Ghulam Ahmad and his rivals have been well documented by the Ahmadi historians, but the history that pertains to Ghulam Ahmad's spiritual mentors has repeatedly been obscured. Ahmadi sources consistently suppressed the names and affiliations of scholars capable of influencing Ghulam Ahmad's mission or thought in any way that would seem other than supernatural. It is worth noting that in Dost Muhammad Shahid's account, Ghulam

⁴³ I had great difficulty finding more information on these shrines, especially from external sources, which made it difficult to assess their significance, religious affiliations, or influence on Ghulam Ahmad. However, Dost Muhammad Shahid described them as big Sufi shrines that were frequented by the locals. Dost Muhammad Shahid, *Tārīkh-i Ahmadiyya*, Vol. 1, p. 132.

Ahmad travelled to Sum Sharif to visit Mian Sharaf al-Din, whereas Makka Shah was travelling to Qadian to visit Ghulam Ahmad. Perhaps his emphasis on this point was intended to infer Makka Shah's relative seniority in the Islamic world in relation to Ghulam Ahmad whose religious status at that time was nominal.

There is one final scholar who is mentioned by the Ahmadi biographers in connection to Mirza Ghulam Ahmad's pre-messianic biography named Maulana 'Abdullah Ghaznavi. Although Ghaznavi receives the most attention from the sources, his role is underrated.⁴⁴ However, this may have less to do with 'Abdullah Ghaznavi himself, who passed away before Ghulam Ahmad could announce his claims, and more to do with the other scholars who were affiliated with Ghaznavi and later opposed Ghulam Ahmad's mission. 'Abdullah Ghaznavi was himself exiled from Afghanistan when the local 'ulamā declared him a *kāfir* (nonbeliever) and prompted his sudden migration to India. Ghaznavi's biographical accounts state that he spent some time studying hadith in Delhi before settling in Amritsar.⁴⁵ During his stay in Delhi, 'Abdullah Ghaznavi studied hadith under the leading Ahl-i Hadith

⁴⁴ Dard's account makes a point to state that Ghulam Ahmad only visited 'Abdullah Ghaznavi twice in his life, although he is said to have brought Ghaznavi gifts, see *Life of Ahmad*, pp. 50-51. This image seems inconsistent with a description of their meeting given by Ghulam Ahmad himself in *Haqīqat al-Wahy*, in *Rūhānī Khazā'in*, Vol. 22, pp. 250-251, as well as the account given in Dost Muhammad Shahid, *Tārīkh-i Ahmadiyya*, Vol. 1, pp. 132-134.

⁴⁵ The biographical information on 'Abdullah al-Ghaznavi is available in various sources, including some books which have been published by his descendents' children and grandchildren. Considering the closeness of his relationship with Ghulam Ahmad, it would be particularly useful to examine the *fatwās* of *kufī* which led to his exile from Afghanistan. Although the sources mention that the *fatwās* were somehow related to 'Abdullah Ghaznavi's rejection of *taqlīd* or strict adherence to the four schools of thought (*madhhabs*), it would be interesting to see if Ghaznavi's numerous revelations and esoteric insights described by Ghulam Ahmad influenced their decision. Dost Muhammad Shahid's account states that the *fatwās* of *kufī* were linked to his interpretation of Bukhari and his rigid adherence to the sunna, which almost entirely avoids the question. See *Tārīkh-i Ahmadiyya*, Vol. 1, p. 132. Dost Muhammad Shahid references Maulānā 'Abd al-Majīd, *Sīrat al-Sanā'ī* (Amritsar, 1952), p. 369, which apparently discusses the migration from Afghanistan, but was not available to me; see also Muhammad Dā'ūd Ghaznavī, *Maqālāt Maulānā Dā'ūd Ghaznavī* (Lahore: Maktaba Nazīra, 1979), pp. 19-22; see also Jānbāz Mīrzā, *Kārvān-i Ahrār*, Vol. 1, (Lahore: Maktaba-i Tabassira, 1975), pp. 142-143.

scholar, Maulvi Nazir Husayn, who was a major proponent of the movement in India. Maulvi Nazir Husayn Dehlawi took the title Shaykh al-Kul (the scholar of all), which implied that he was not only a scholar of every subject but also everyone, Arab and non-Arab.⁴⁶ Shaykh al-Kul, Maulvi Nazir Husayn Dehlawi, taught ‘Abdullah Ghaznavi and his sons the science of hadith. He also taught Sana’ullah Amritsari and Maulvi Muhammad Husayn Batalwi, who was Ghulam Ahmad’s old friend and classmate under Gul ‘Ali Shah,⁴⁷ all of whom challenged Ghulam Ahmad’s mission in later years.⁴⁸ In fact, it was this group of Ahl-i Hadith scholars, headed by Maulvi Nazir Husayn Dehlawi, who issued the first *fatwā* of *kufir* (infidelity) against Ghulam Ahmad in 1891,⁴⁹ following his publication of *Tawzīh-i Marām* (Clarification of Objectives).⁵⁰ In many ways, this *fatwā* represents a milestone in Ghulam Ahmad’s career, in that it marked the beginning of his estrangement from orthodox Islam.

In this light, ‘Abdullah Ghaznavi’s connection to Ghulam Ahmad was pivotal to his development and is worthy of further attention. Ghulam Ahmad had asked Maulana Ghaznavi for prayers concerning an undisclosed personal matter on a visit to his village of Khayr di, in Amritsar, after which Ghaznavi immediately went home and began praying for Ghulam Ahmad. In the coming days after he had returned to

⁴⁶ See Claudia Preckel, ‘Ahl-i Hadīth’, *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, (third edition). Brill Online.

⁴⁷ Barbara Daly Metcalf, *Islamic Revival in British India: Deoband, 1860-1900* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1982), p. 292.

⁴⁸ In contrast, Maulvi Nazir Husayn Dehlawi had also taught Ghulam Ahmad’s first successor, Nur al-Din. See footnote 18 above.

⁴⁹ The *fatwā* against Ghulam Ahmad states that he is a *kāfir* (nonbeliever) and the *dajjāl* (antichrist). Ghulam Ahmad’s response to the *fatwā* is particularly relevant to this discussion because he inadvertently acknowledged the stature of Maulvi Nazir Husayn amongst the *‘ulamā* of Delhi in his reply. See *Āsmānī Fayṣala*, in *Rūhānī Khazā’in*, Vol. 4; also available in translation as *The Heavenly Decree* (London: Islam International Publications, 2006).

⁵⁰ Ghulam Ahmad wrote three companion volumes *Fath-i Islām*, *Tawzīh-i Marām*, and *Izāla-i Awhām*, in 1891. *Tawzīh-i Marām* and *Izāla-i Awhām* expounded some of his more controversial views regarding the death of Jesus, namely that Jesus Christ was not alive in heaven and would not return to the world in the same flesh as the orthodox believe.

Qadian, Ghulam Ahmad received a letter from Ghaznavi, which explained that he had received the following revelation in a dream concerning the matter:⁵¹ ‘You are our Protector, so help us against the disbelievers (*anta mawlānā fa’nsurnā ‘alā ‘l-qawm al-kāfirīn*).’⁵² ‘Abdullah Ghaznavi interpreted his revelation to mean that Allah would help Ghulam Ahmad in his matter, similar to the way in which Allah helped the companions of the Prophet Muhammad.⁵³ On a separate occasion, Ghaznavi saw a vision in which he described a light (*mūr*) descending upon Qadian from which his children were being deprived.⁵⁴ This particular revelation played a major role in Ghulam Ahmad’s proclamation of success following a *mubāhala* (prayer duel) in 1893 against ‘Abdullah Ghaznavi’s son, ‘Abd al-Haq Ghaznavi.⁵⁵ The *mubāhala* ended when two supporters of ‘Abd al-Haq Ghaznavi publicly attested to hearing this revelation from his father.⁵⁶ After ‘Abdullah Ghaznavi had passed away, Ghulam Ahmad saw a vision (*kashf*) in which Ghaznavi was carrying a large sword for killing the *kuffār* (infidels). In the vision, ‘Abdullah Ghaznavi disclosed Ghulam Ahmad’s

⁵¹ Again, the various accounts of this encounter have slight variations. For Ghulam Ahmad’s account, see *Haqīqat al-Wahy*, in *Rūhānī Khazā’in*, Vol. 22, p. 251.

⁵² ‘Abdullah Ghaznavi’s revelation was identical to the last verse of Sura al-Baqara (2:286). See M.A.S. Abdel Haleem (trans.), *The Qur’an* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), p. 33. It may seem surprising that an overwhelming number of Ghulam Ahmad’s revelations were identical to Qur’anic verses, similar to this revelation of ‘Abdullah Ghaznavi. It would be interesting to see if other alleged recipients of revelation also repeated portions of the Qur’an and claimed it as their own. However, if this format for receiving revelation is unique, then perhaps it was something that Ghulam Ahmad first observed in the revelations of ‘Abdullah Ghaznavi.

⁵³ A. R. Dard, *Life of Ahmad*, pp. 50-51.

⁵⁴ Dost Muhammad Shahid, *Tārīkh-i Ahmadiyya*, Vol. 1, p. 133.

⁵⁵ A *mubāhala* is a lengthy prayer contest in which two religious rivals curse each other and invoke the wrath of God upon each other, seeking a divine resolution to their unresolved debate. The *mubāhala* was often used between opposing claimants of divine revelation and is believed to bring about the humiliating death of the liar or false claimant. The textual foundations for the *mubāhala* can be found in the Qur’an (3:54). For more information on the classical background, see Yohanan Friedmann, *Prophecy Continuous*, pp. 6-7, in footnote 20, where Friedmann provides a number of additional sources about *mubāhala*.

⁵⁶ A. R. Dard, *Life of Ahmad*, pp. 276-279; see also Ghulam Ahmad’s book *Tohfa Ghaznawiyya*, which was a byproduct of the *mubāhala* and is available in *Rūhānī Khazā’in*, Vol. 15.

true spiritual rank (*maqām*) and said that God would make much use out of him later on in his life.⁵⁷

Maulana ‘Abdullah Ghaznavi was a critical figure in Ghulam Ahmad’s biography and there are constant reminders of him throughout Ghulam Ahmad’s career, including the first *fatwā* of *kufī* issued by Maulvi Nazir Husayn Dehlawi and some of the last *mubāhala* challenges at the end of his life. Consequently, many of Ghulam Ahmad’s publications dealt directly or indirectly with scholars connected to ‘Abdullah Ghaznavi,⁵⁸ which may be used as an indicator of the closeness of their association. It is unlikely that Ghaznavi’s relations would have taken such offense to Ghulam Ahmad’s messianic claims if nothing personal had been vested in their relationship. Since the close relationship between Ghulam Ahmad and ‘Abdullah Ghaznavi was well known amongst Ghaznavi’s students, it became imperative for the relevant scholars who were associated with him to denounce Ghulam Ahmad’s mission in an attempt to maintain their religious credibility and to salvage their reputations after Ghulam Ahmad’s views had begun to diverge from orthodox Islam. Had it otherwise been known that Ghulam Ahmad was an insignificant or occasional correspondent with ‘Abdullah Ghaznavi, perhaps the relevant scholars in question would have been willing to dismiss his prophetic claims as trivial nonsense rather than inflating them with a false sense of credence.⁵⁹ However, it was the fierce reaction of the followers of ‘Abdullah Ghaznavi that demonstrates the fondness that

⁵⁷ Bashārat Ahmad, *Mujaddid-i ‘Āzam*, p. 63.

⁵⁸ Some examples of these include: *Āsmānī Faysala* (1891), *Zarūrat al-Imām* (1898), *Tohfa Ghaznawiyya* (1902), *Tiryāq al-Qulūb* (1902).

⁵⁹ The negative response to Jama‘at-i Ahmadiyya appears to be tightly focused around a very specific group of South Asian scholars, whereas Ahmadi Islam appears to have been largely ignored in most other parts of the Muslim world. See section 5.7 below, called ‘Unconventional Explanations: The Case of the Common Lineage’.

must have been present between Maulana Ghaznavi and Ghulam Ahmad. On one occasion, Ghulam Ahmad attempted to exploit his relation with ‘Abdullah Ghaznavi by claiming that Ghaznavi would surely have been an Ahmadi had he been alive. The audacity of this claim in 1899 initiated a lengthy dispute with ‘Abd al-Jabbar Ghaznavi and Munshi Ilahi Bakhsh, who was one of ‘Abdullah Ghaznavi’s followers. Ghulam Ahmad’s comments led to years of quarrelling and several threats of *mubāhala* from both parties, but most of the threats went unanswered.⁶⁰ Munshi Ilahi Bakhsh eventually published *‘Asā-i Mūsa* (The Staff of Moses) in 1900, which contained his own revelations against Mirza Ghulam Ahmad.

1.3 – Transition from Scholar to Prophet

The death of Mirza Ghulam Ahmad’s father marked a turning point in Ahmadi history and was a major blow to Ghulam Ahmad, who no longer had a means of supporting his sequestered lifestyle. By the time of his father’s death in 1876, Ghulam Ahmad had begun writing articles for local journals and newspapers from Qadian. His contributions were too irregular to consider him a journalist, and they often included a number of Persian poems that were republished after his death in 1908.⁶¹ His publications did not provide a sufficient source of income, but he continued to write polemics against the Hindu Arya and Brahma Samaj movements, and also against the Christians.

⁶⁰ A. R. Dard, *Life of Ahmad*, pp. 578-584.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, p. 48.

The Arya Samaj was a Hindu revivalist movement founded by Swami Dayanand in 1875. Dayanand had gained acceptance following the publication of his book *Satyārth Prakāsh*, in which he expounded the Vedas in a manner that was purportedly rational and consistent with modernist science.⁶² Ghulam Ahmad viewed the accomplishment as an attack on Islam and criticized theological issues, which were related to the creation of the soul and the existence of God. He also disapproved of the moral implications of the doctrine of Niyoga, in which a couple experiencing difficulties conceiving sons invited another man into their relationship until the desired number of sons had been produced.⁶³ Although the Arya Samaj did not formally establish a branch in Qadian until 1887,⁶⁴ their confrontations with Ghulam Ahmad continued as a result of tensions that had been mounting for some time. In 1877, a ‘vagabond *Sadhu*’ came to Qadian to display his physical strength and natural abilities. He gained much notoriety amongst the local Hindus in the village who had begun to believe that he was an avatar of Shiva. When Ghulam Ahmad became aware of the situation, he promptly had the ‘vagabond *Sadhu*’ expelled from Qadian.⁶⁵

Similar incidents continued with the Aryas and the Christians, whose missionary activities were having a profound affect on the religious landscape of the

⁶² See Swami Saraswati Dayananda, *Satyārth Prakāsh* (1875), which is also available in English as, Durga Prasad, *Satyarthprakasa: An English translation of the Satyarth Prakash* (Lahore: Virjanand Press, 1908).

⁶³ H. A. Walter, *The Ahmadiya Movement*, pp. 103-104. Dard suggests that Ghulam Ahmad’s argumentation led to Dayanand’s rewriting of the *Satyārth Prakāsh* in which he omitted the doctrine of *Niyoga*, but I could not confirm the discrepancy between the original and the revised editions.

⁶⁴ Swami Dayanand had personally established Arya Samaj branches in Amritsar and Lahore by 1877, which are reasonably close to Qadian. See Kenneth W. Jones, *The Arya Samaj in the Punjab: A Study of Social Reform and Religious Revivalism, 1877-1902* (Ann Arbor: University Microfilms, 1966), pp. 67, 69.

⁶⁵ A. R. Dard, *Life of Ahmad*, p. 59. Dard provides a full account of the story.

Punjab. Multiple factors were contributing to the general disenchantment of the Muslim mainstream, as increasing numbers of disillusioned Muslims were turning to Christianity as a source of salvation. The decline of Muslim rule and the deterioration of the Muslim aristocracy at the hands of the Sikhs and then later the British, along with the sheer magnitude of Christian missionaries overwhelming the Punjab, had led many Muslims to renounce their faith and embrace what appeared to be a socially, economically, and theologically superior religion. The struggle for religious domination was not new to India, but the manner in which religious movements were competing with each other was changing.⁶⁶

The advent of modernity had introduced a renewed emphasis on rationalism that had coloured the religious arena. Rationality and logical argumentation was increasingly being perceived as a more credible approach to religion amongst the mainstream, even though the themes in question often remained irrational themselves.⁶⁷ Although many religious arguments still relied on miracles or an element of faith, it had now become necessary to present them in the style of a scientific discourse, which was becoming the preferred convention for evaluating truth values. Theological arguments that were based on the popular Orientalist belief that Islam had originated as a Christian heresy went unanswered by the Muslim mainstream. Islam's confirmation of the Christian belief regarding Jesus' ascension to heaven and the anticipation of his return had created a serious dilemma for many Indian Muslims. If Muhammad was indeed the superior prophet, then why was it

⁶⁶ See Avril A. Powell, *Muslims and Missionaries in Pre-mutiny India* (Richmond: Routledge Press, 1993).

⁶⁷ See Steve Bruce (ed.), *Religion and Modernization* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992), especially chapter 2, Roy Wallis and Steve Bruce, 'Secularization: The Orthodox Model', pp. 8-30.

Jesus whose arrival the Muslims were awaiting? For Muslim lay intellectuals this question presupposed an even greater problem: if Muhammad was indeed the superior prophet, then why was it Jesus who was alive in heaven while their prophet lay buried in Medina?

Many Muslims were at a loss, and it was in reaction to these embarrassments that Mirza Ghulam Ahmad composed his first and most celebrated work, *Barāhīn-i Ahmadiyya* (The Proofs of Islam).⁶⁸ The publication of *Barāhīn* was made possible by the donations of a number of affluent Muslims in India.⁶⁹ The work was originally intended to be a series of 50 books, which comprehensively addressed rationalist arguments in favour of Islam. Parts one and two were published in 1880, part three was published two years later in 1882, and part four soon followed in 1884, but the fifth and final part did not appear until 1905. Part five was essentially a new book altogether, despite sharing the title with the earlier unfinished series. In the introduction, Ghulam Ahmad explained that his inability to produce the remaining 45 books as promised was as negligible as the zero that differentiates five from fifty.⁷⁰ *Barāhīn-i Ahmadiyya* carried the same polemic tone found in Ghulam Ahmad's later works, but without the controversial claims that have come to define his legacy. The

⁶⁸ Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, *Barāhīn-i Ahmadiyya*, Part I and Part II, (Amritsar: Safir Hind Press, 1880).

⁶⁹ The introductory acknowledgments list the Indian patrons whose donations and financial contributions made the publication possible. Interestingly, the Begum of Bhopal, Nawab Shah Jahan Begum, was a major benefactor for the publication of the text. She also funded the construction of the Woking mosque, which was built in 1889 and eventually served as the first Ahmadi mission in the United Kingdom before the Lahori-Qadiani split. See *Barāhīn-i Ahmadiyya*, Part I, in *Rūhānī Khazā'in*, Vol. 1, p. 3.

⁷⁰ Ghulam Ahmad actually said that the difference was just a dot, since the numeral for zero in Urdu is written as a dot. He said that the only difference between ۵ and ۵۰ was just a dot. Perhaps it would be better explained as the difference between 5 and 50 is nothing (i.e. zero) and therefore Ghulam Ahmad said that his five volumes equalled fifty, hence his promise was complete. There was some subtle humour in this explanation which alluded to a tradition in which the Prophet was permitted to reduce the 50 daily prayers to five daily prayers during the night journey (*isrā* and *mi'rāj*). In Bukhari's version, the five daily prayers have the reward of 50. See Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, *Barāhīn-i Ahmadiyya*, Part V, in *Rūhānī Khazā'in*, Vol. 21, p. 9.

series focused on the broader scope of the Islamic tradition in light of the religious tensions that were specific to 19th century India. This theme was often overshadowed in later works by statements that emphasized and expounded the theology surrounding the profound implications of his spiritual claims.

Ghulam Ahmad's first revelation regarding his status as the *mujaddid* (religious renewer) of the 14th century was included in part three of *Barāhīn-i Ahmadiyya*.⁷¹ Advancing a claim of this magnitude may seem premature considering that Ghulam Ahmad had hardly published any substantial works before proclaiming his divine advent, which in comparison was succeeded by his voluminous output afterwards. Historically, Ghulam Ahmad's announcement of his spiritual status marked the beginning of his religious career rather than the evaluation of a lifetime's achievement. Intuitively, one would expect a prospective *mujaddid* to have already made strides in the way of Islamic reform worthy of such a bold claim, but for Ghulam Ahmad, the vast majority of his public efforts in the way of Islamic reform came after the publication of *Barāhīn-i Ahmadiyya*. The impact of *Barāhīn* was noticeable in small intellectual circles of the Punjab, but the book remained largely unknown and unread throughout the rest of the Muslim world. Nonetheless, Ghulam Ahmad as a defender of Islam had gained notoriety as a rising expert in formulating anti-Christian and anti-Hindu polemics.

⁷¹ Deducing Ghulam Ahmad's divine appointment as a reformer is not self-evident from the revelation in question. Nonetheless, the first revelation used to establish his status as a reformer was: 'Say, "I have been commissioned and I am the first of the believers"' (*qul innī umirtu wa anā awwalu 'l-mu'minīn*).⁷¹ *Barāhīn-i Ahmadiyya*, Part III, in *Rūhānī Khazā'in*, Vol. 1, p. 265, in the bottom footnote. It was not until much later that Ghulam Ahmad announced his interpretation of this revelation as being linked explicitly to his claim of being the *mujaddid* (renewer of the faith). Interestingly, even Ghulam Ahmad's Urdu explanation for his Arabic revelation only implicitly addressed his claim, despite being written much later (1892) after he had proclaimed the scope of his mission. See *Izāla-i Awhām*, in *Rūhānī Khazā'in*, Vol. 3, p. 193.

Ghulam Ahmad began staging debates with leading members of the Arya Samaj, many of which failed to materialize. He wrote to Swami Dayanand in 1883 and challenged him to a debate, but within a few months, Dayanand had fallen ill, after being poisoned and shortly before his unexpected death. Munshi Indarman Muradabadi accepted Ghulam Ahmad's challenge in Dayanand's stead, but the debate never took place due to a failure of communication between both parties.⁷² In March 1886 Ghulam Ahmad's first major debate took place in Hoshiarpur with the Arya Samajist, Lala Murli-Dhar.⁷³ This was immediately after Ghulam Ahmad's 40 days of spiritual retreat (*chilla*) and seclusion in the same city.⁷⁴ Murli-Dhar attacked the miraculous nature of the moon splitting event (*shaqq al-qamar*), which is described in the Qur'an,⁷⁵ while Ghulam Ahmad challenged Dayanand's explanations of the Hindu theological issues related to the creation of souls.⁷⁶ The two agreed to continue the debate in writing, in which both parties could have their responses read aloud, but even this attempt ended abruptly.

By the end of 1888, Ghulam Ahmad was making arrangements to formalize his spiritual authority over his followers by accepting their *bay'at* (allegiance). For

⁷² A. R. Dard, *Life of Ahmad*, pp. 82-84.

⁷³ There is a brief account of this in A. R. Dard, *Life of Ahmad*, pp. 111-114.

⁷⁴ Dost Muhammad Shahid, *Tārīkh-i Ahmadiyya*, Vol. 1, pp. 274-276.

⁷⁵ Ghulam Ahmad published his own lengthy account of the situation as well as the written exchange of arguments from the debate in his book *Surma-i Chashm-i Ārya* (Antimony for Clearing the Obscured Vision of the Arya), in *Rūhānī Khazā'in*, Vol. 2.

⁷⁶ Many of the classical commentaries of the Qur'an refer to the introductory verses of Sura 54 (*al-Qamar*) as a description of a miraculous event, which was witnessed by the companions of the Prophet, in which the moon was split in two. Recent commentators like Muhammad Asad in *The Message of the Qur'an* suggests that it only appeared to be split, whereas Abdel Haleem in *The Qur'an* says that it refers to one of the signs of the Day of Judgment. Needless to say, the supernatural and miraculous nature of every religion came under fire with the scientific revolution and the advent of modernity. One should note that Ghulam Ahmad defended the miracle, even though the Jama'at position seems to have changed by the time of his fourth successor's reign. For an example, see the discussion on evolution in Mirza Tahir Ahmad, *Revelation, Rationality, Knowledge, and Truth* (Tilford: Islam International Publications, 1998).

some reason, although Ghulam Ahmad had first claimed to be a *mujaddid* in 1882, he waited until 1888 to begin making the necessary preparations for laying the foundations for his community by taking *bay'at*. Ahmadis note that Hakim Nur al-Din, amongst others, had requested Ghulam Ahmad to accept his *bay'at* as early as 1883, but there is no clear explanation why Ghulam Ahmad waited so long to accept *bay'at* after already having claimed to be a *mujaddid* seven years earlier. It appears as though the delay in the formalization of Jama'at-i Ahmadiyya was linked to the birth of his son, Mirza Bashir al-Din Mahmud Ahmad, which had been foretold in a prophecy that we will discuss below. Spencer Lavan suggested that Ghulam Ahmad was waiting for the birth of his son to take *bay'at*, because it ensured the fulfilment of his prophecy and gave him confidence that an heir would lead his Jama'at.⁷⁷

In anticipation of his progeny, Ghulam Ahmad had begun receiving revelations as early as 1881,⁷⁸ even though he kept many of them private until much later in his life. Ghulam Ahmad had married his second wife,⁷⁹ Nusrat Jahan Begum (commonly known as *ammā jān*) in 1884, who was approximately 30 years younger than him.⁸⁰ In February 1886, he published a divine prophecy, which promised him that he would soon father a blessed and illustrious son whose name would be

⁷⁷ Spencer Lavan, *The Ahmadiyah Movement*, pp. 36-37.

⁷⁸ Iain Adamson, *Ahmad – The Guided One* (Tilford: Islam International Publications, 1999), p. 84.

⁷⁹ The details of the relationship between Ghulam Ahmad and his first wife have been inadequately documented by the Ahmadi historians. However, it is clear that the first marriage did not last very long. Despite the apparent tension between the couple, it appears that Ghulam Ahmad continued to support his first family while they lived in a separated state. The eldest son, Mirza Sultan Ahmad, was raised (and possibly even adopted) by Ghulam Ahmad's elder brother Mirza Ghulam Qadir. The friction continued between Ghulam Ahmad and his son well beyond his death in 1908. It was shortly before Mirza Sultan Ahmad's own death in the 1930s that he finally became an Ahmadi, after which most Ahmadi sources overlook their turbulent past.

⁸⁰ Mirza Ghulam Ahmad travelled to Delhi for the wedding, where the ceremony was performed by the same Maulvi Nazir Husayn Dehlawi (Shaykh al-Kul) referenced above for issuing the first *fatwā* of *kufi* against Ghulam Ahmad in 1891.

Bashir.⁸¹ When later that same year, Ghulam Ahmad's wife gave birth to a daughter named Ismat who died in infancy soon thereafter, his opponents took full advantage of the opportunity to ridicule the *mujaddid*. The reaction of Pandit Lekh Ram, Swami Dayanand's successor and leader of the Arya Samaj, was particularly offensive.⁸² The situation was made worse when many of Ghulam Ahmad's disciples lost their faith in him following the death of his next child, a boy named Bashir, who passed away in early November 1888.⁸³ By December 1888, Ghulam Ahmad issued an apologetic pamphlet that explained away the deaths of his children in an attempt to dispel the anxiety that was building amongst his supporters.⁸⁴ However, Ghulam Ahmad was far from being deterred and had good reason to be optimistic since his wife was pregnant once again. The third child, Mirza Bashir al-Din Mahmud Ahmad, was born on 12 January 1889, and the first *bay'at* followed soon after in March.

Devoted Ahmadis treated the multiple deaths of Ghulam Ahmad's children as divinely designed tests, rather than a breach in his prophecy. Ahmadis believe that these trials and tribulations distinguished the true believers from the weak-minded followers who had deficiencies in their faith and substandard convictions that were

⁸¹ Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, *Haqqānī Taqrīr bar Wāqī 'a-i Wafāt-i Bashīr*, in *Rūhānī Khaṣ-ā'in*, Vol. 2, (listed on the cover as *Sabz Ishihār*) pp. 447-470; although there are other publications around the same period concerning this specific prophecy as well, this is the most detailed and most frequently quoted by Ahmadi sources.

⁸² Kenneth W. Jones, *Arya Dharm: Hindu Consciousness in 19th Century Punjab* (London: University of California Press, 1976), pp. 148-151 as well as the footnotes. Jones provides some interesting information on the tensions between Ghulam Ahmad and Lekh Ram which is not often mentioned in the Ahmadi sources. See also A. R. Dard, *Life of Ahmad*, pp. 143-144. Dard reproduces some excerpts of Lekh Ram's jeering remarks towards Ghulam Ahmad. Although Lekh Ram's original publication was not available to me, see also the collected works of Pandit Lekh Ram, *Kulliyāt Ārya Musāfir* (Lahore: 1897), which is often quoted by secondary sources.

⁸³ This time Ghulam Ahmad had already issued a pamphlet in August 1887 stating that his earlier prophecy had been fulfilled, which made Bashir's death particularly humiliating. See the pamphlet called *Khush Khabrī* (7 August 1887) in Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, *Majmū'a-i Ishihārāt*, Vol. 1, pp. 141-142.

⁸⁴ See Mirza Ghulam Ahmad *Haqqānī Taqrīr bar Wāqī 'a-i Wafāt-i Bashīr*, in *Rūhānī Khaṣ-ā'in*, Vol. 2, (listed on the cover as *Sabz Ishihār*), pp. 447-470.

unbefitting the members of the early Ahmadi community. Only a reduced number of select followers were privileged with membership to Jama'at-i Ahmadiyya by taking the very first *bay'at* at Mirza Ghulam Ahmad's hand. Although the childbirth prophecy may seem like a blunder in retrospect, we can say with certainty that the remaining followers that came together to form the early Ahmadi community had a profound belief in the fulfilment of their spiritual expectations through the person of Mirza Ghulam Ahmad.⁸⁵

The timeline for the *bay'at* was as follows: Ghulam Ahmad had issued a small pamphlet called *Tablīgh* (announcement) in early December of 1888 containing a divine revelation commanding him to take the *bay'at* from his supporters. The strong wording of the revelation clearly indicated that 'those who pledge allegiance to you [Ahmad] pledge allegiance to God. God's hand is over their hands (*alladhīna yubā'ūnaka innamā yubā'ūna 'llah; yadu 'llah fawqa aydihim*).'⁸⁶ Ghulam Ahmad had expressed his intention to accept disciples in this leaflet, *Tablīgh*, but the

⁸⁵ This is a very controversial issue and polemics continue to be written on this subject at present. Following the deaths of Ismat and Bashir I, the eldest surviving boy from Ghulam Ahmad's second marriage was Mirza Bashir al-Din Mahmud Ahmad, who had poor health throughout his childhood. Ghulam Ahmad's next child was a girl named Shawkat (1891-1892?), who was followed by another boy in 1893. Apparently, Ghulam Ahmad was unsure whether Bashir al-Din Mahmud Ahmad was healthy enough to be the fulfilment of his prophecy by the time that his next son was born, because he named the newborn child Mirza Bashir Ahmad (1893-1963). Bashir al-Din Mahmud Ahmad remained a 'sickly child' with poor eyesight throughout most of his adolescence, which undoubtedly contributed towards his underachieving performance in school and eventual failure to pass the matriculation examination. That three of the first five children were boys named Bashir, two of whom survived beyond childhood and only one who reasonably fulfilled Ghulam Ahmad's prophecy, will never satisfy Ahmadi critics. However, Ahmadis celebrate the challenges that Bashir al-Din Mahmud Ahmad faced in his youth as proof of the Divine helping him to overcome insurmountable odds. Considering the lifelong accomplishments of Mahmud Ahmad during his *khilāfat* in conjunction with the fact that he arguably had a greater influence on Jama'at-i Ahmadiyya than even his father, it is understandable why Ahmadis annually commemorate his birth as the fulfilment of divine prophecy. See A. R. Dard, *Life of Ahmad*, p. 148, where Dard briefly mentions the challenges in Mahmud Ahmad's childhood.

⁸⁶ See the notice called, *Tablīgh* (1 December 1888) in Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, *Majmū'a-i Ishtihārāt*, Vol. 1, p. 188; it is also worthwhile to look at Yohanan Friedmann's discussion on the prophecy in *Prophecy Continuous*, p. 5, especially footnote 12, which details the composite Qur'anic verses that make up the revelation. The portion quoted here is from (48:10). See also Dost Muhammad Shahid, *Tārīkh-i Ahmadiyya*, Vol. 1, p. 335.

specifics of the ceremony had yet to be arranged. Rumours had been spreading about the *bay'at* for some time, and the ambiguity of the pamphlet only made things worse. It was not until 12 January 1889, which coincided with the birth date of his son, that Ghulam Ahmad issued a second pamphlet disclosing his ten conditions for *bay'at*.⁸⁷ Ghulam Ahmad issued a third pamphlet from Ludhiana on 4 March 1889 announcing that he would be accepting the *bay'at* from there and informing those interested in participating to begin making their travel arrangements.⁸⁸ Accordingly, it was in Ludhiana on 23 March 1889 when Mirza Ghulam Ahmad sat alone in a secluded room at the private estate of Munshi Ahmad Jan and summoned his companions one by one to take the *bay'at* at his hand. Nur al-Din, Ghulam Ahmad's closest companion and first successor (*khalīfat al-masīh*), was the first to be called.⁸⁹ The second person to take Ghulam Ahmad's *bay'at* was Mir 'Abbas 'Ali, but his name is rarely mentioned since he later abandoned the movement. A total of 40 disciples followed shortly thereafter.⁹⁰

⁸⁷ See the notice called, *Taknīl-i Tablīgh* (12 January 1889) in Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, *Majmū'a-i Ishihārāt*, Vol. 1, pp. 189-192.

⁸⁸ See the notice called, *Guzāriṣh-i Zurūrī* (4 March 1889) in Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, *Majmū'a-i Ishihārāt*, Vol. 1, pp. 193-198; see also A. R. Dard, *Life of Ahmad*, pp. 151-153.

⁸⁹ The term *khalīfat al-masīh* literally means 'successor to the messiah' and is used in conjunction with Mirza Ghulam Ahmad's successors as the official title of the Ahmadi caliphs.

⁹⁰ There is some discrepancy within the sources regarding the date of the first *bay'at* as well as the number of participants. Ghulam Ahmad's own handwritten account of the initiation, whose first page was mysteriously destroyed, begins with the ninth disciple on 21 March 1889. See Dost Muhammad Shahid, *Tārīkh-i Ahmadiyya*, Vol. 1, p. 344, for a reproduction of the surviving list. The remainder of the original handwritten register is still available in the *Khilāfat* Library in Rabwah, Pakistan. The three to four day variation in the date does not seem to have much affect on the Jama'at's subsequent presentation of the ceremony, but it is interesting to note that the number of disciples that were initiated into the community on the first day varies tremendously. Dard's account gives no exact number but implies that it was small. See A. R. Dard, *Life of Ahmad*, pp. 153-156. The surviving pages of the original register lists 46 names who took *bay'at* on 21 March but completely excludes the names of the women who took the *bay'at* on that day. If we assume that the missing page began with the first eight names on 21 March as the remaining register suggests, then significantly more than 40 people, both men and women, took the *bay'at* on the first day. However, if it began on the 20 March or before, then significantly fewer than 40 people took *bay'at* on the first day. Ahmadis have been asserting that precisely 40 people took *bay'at* on the first day ever since the second *khalīfa* deemed it

In the following weeks Ghulam Ahmad left Ludhiana for Aligarh, where he was scheduled to meet with important scholars regarding the scope of his mission. The trip ended in disappointment after Ghulam Ahmad received divine instructions forbidding him to speak on account of his poor health. Despite the fact that he was repeatedly invited to partake in some type of dialogue or debate during his stay, Ghulam Ahmad consistently refused. Had Ghulam Ahmad spoken, it would have been the first time that he addressed an audience of Muslim intellectuals of this calibre at an internationally recognized institution. The tenacity of his silence resulted in the aversion and general scorn from the Aligarh scholars, but Ghulam Ahmad would not disobey his divine instructions.⁹¹ The bitterness that lingered after Ghulam Ahmad's departure developed into a grudge with one mullah in particular named Muhammad Isma'il, whose disillusioning encounter with Ghulam Ahmad led to a jaded series of letters.⁹² The consequences of the anticlimactic journey from Qadian to Aligarh were more apparent in the missed encounter with Sir Sayyid Ahmad Khan himself. Ghulam Ahmad's withdrawal at Aligarh made him the target of Sir Sayyid's jeering remarks, which made a mockery of the financial stipulations that often accompanied Ghulam Ahmad's promises to show divine miracles to his sceptics.⁹³ Although the two never entered into a meaningful exchange face to face, the potential for such a forum did present itself during his visit to Aligarh. Ghulam

so. See also Mirza Bashir al-Din Mahmud Ahmad, *al-Fazl* (18 February 1959). For further discussion on the discrepancy in the date but not in the number of disciples, see Dost Muhammad Shahid, *Tārīkh-i Ahmadiyya*, Vol. 1, pp. 362-374.

⁹¹ A. R. Dard, *Life of Ahmad*, pp. 160-161.

⁹² Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, *Fath-i Islām*, in *Rūhānī Khazā'in*, Vol. 3, pp. 17-26, in footnote.

⁹³ Dard wrote that Sir Sayyid suggested that they travel to Hyderabad together where he 'would go round singing his [Ghulam Ahmad's] praises' as a disciple while Ghulam Ahmad showed some false miracles, and they could then split whatever money they coerced from the unsuspecting masses accordingly; see A. R. Dard, *Life of Ahmad*, p. 161, in footnote.

Ahmad's resolve to remain silent and his refusal to make any public appearances permitted the opportunity to pass before he eventually made his way back to Qadian.

It is clear that the Aligarh scholars equated Ghulam Ahmad's withdrawal with his inadequacy to perform appropriately before the congregation of *'ulamā*. At first glance, it does appear like Ghulam Ahmad was intimidated by his audience, although this may not necessarily be the case. Ghulam Ahmad repeatedly demonstrated throughout his religious career an overwhelming ability to sustain massive amounts of criticism and abuse. His unwavering conviction in his message never allowed him to shy away from proclaiming his mission, yet at Aligarh, he failed to utilize the opportunity to talk about his interpretation of Islam on an exceptionally grand stage. Similar to Aligarh, there were several other cases where Ghulam Ahmad either avoided entirely or significantly delayed potential debates with his opponents.⁹⁴ In this manner, his behaviour was inconsistent. At times, he hurled himself into religious confrontations by challenging anyone who denounced him to a *mubāhala*,⁹⁵ while at other times he shied away without stating a reason. He also tended to have a strong preference for a format that enabled him to write his responses before having

⁹⁴ Some other examples of major debates that never took place include the challenge directed towards Swami Dayanand, which was taken up by Munshi Indarman Muradabadi after Dayanand's death and is discussed above. On a separate occasion in 1885, Lekh Ram went so far as to actually make the journey to Qadian, solely for a debate with Ghulam Ahmad. Once again, a meaningful discourse never materialized, because the two could not agree on the logistics of the purse that was to be awarded to the winner of the contest; see A. R. Dard, *Life of Ahmad*, pp. 84-85. A similar occurrence happened in 1900 with Pir Mehr Ali Shah Golrawi. Pir Sahib responded to Ghulam Ahmad's challenge and went from Rawalpindi to Lahore for a debate upon Ghulam Ahmad's request, but Ghulam Ahmad never showed up. See section 5.7 called 'Unconventional Explanations: The Case of the Common Lineage' in chapter 5 below.

⁹⁵ At times, Ghulam Ahmad challenged virtually all of his opponents to *mubāhala*. See Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, *Majmū'a-i Ishihārāt*, Vol. 2, pp. 300-303; see also Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, *Anjām-i Ātham*, in *Rūhānī Khazā'in*, Vol. 11, pp. 69-72, where Ghulam Ahmad issued *mubāhala* challenges to over 100 scholars and *pīrs* by name. At other times, Ghulam Ahmad was not as harsh. On 15 July 1897 Ghulam Ahmad issued a pamphlet requesting every opposing scholar in India to seek divine guidance regarding his mission before dismissing his claims, and he challenged them to receive their own inspirations. See *Majmū'a-i Ishihārāt*, Vol. 2, pp. 443-451, especially from p. 449.

them read out by a reader, as opposed to a more improvisational format that required him to respond to objections verbally as they arose. His meticulous choice of opponents and his final decision at Aligarh are inexplicable.⁹⁶ Perhaps Ghulam Ahmad felt that the Aligarh environment was better suited for a modernist scholar than a *mujaddid*, or perhaps he was simply obeying his revelations as he claimed. It does seem odd for a claimant of divine revelation and a future prophet of God to be engaging in lectures at universities. Perhaps in anticipation of his future claims, Ghulam Ahmad wanted to dissociate himself from this particular genre of scholars in favour of something more spiritual. Nonetheless, all that remains of the encounter is an account of Ghulam Ahmad's poor health at Aligarh and his mention of a divine command that forbade him to speak.

Mirza Ghulam Ahmad had chronically suffered from a number of prolonged illnesses throughout his religious career. In 1890, the following year, Ghulam Ahmad suffered from a very serious illness and rumours began to circulate that he had died.⁹⁷ When he recovered from the illness, he began to write his next series of controversial works, *Fath-i Islām* (Victory of Islam), *Tawzīh-i Marām* (Elucidation of Objectives), and *Izāla-i Awhām* (Removal of Suspensions). The trilogy was published in 1891 as companion treatises and was the first time that Ghulam Ahmad had attempted to expound the implications of his revelations.⁹⁸ This also marked the beginning of a new era of Ahmadi history and the beginning of Ghulam Ahmad's messianic career.

⁹⁶ In May 1892, Muhammad Husayn Batalwi said that he would bring a Sufi scholar to Qadian to debate Ghulam Ahmad, but since he would not disclose the scholar's name the debate never took place; see A. R. Dard, *Life of Ahmad*, pp. 239-240. Dard states that the original correspondence was published in the *Punjab Gazette*, Sialkot, (14 May 1892) however, I was unable to verify this source.

⁹⁷ A. R. Dard, *Life of Ahmad*, pp. 161-162.

⁹⁸ All three books comprise the third volume of *Rūhānī Khazā'in*.

He explained that he was a *muhaddath*, which meant that God was speaking to him through revelation. He also claimed to be the promised messiah (*masīh*) and *mahdī* sent in the spirit of Jesus son of Mary. Foreseeing the natural objection that orthodox Muslims would make to his position, he clarified that the corporeal body of Jesus was not alive in the heavens as the majority of Muslims believe. He spent the next seventeen years up to his death engaged in a bitter controversy with the Muslims who rejected his claims.

Although Ghulam Ahmad continued to attack the misguided members of all other religious traditions, Jama'at-i Ahmadiyya eventually settled into a sectarian debate with other Muslims. A great deal of the Ahmadi understanding of Islam is based on the messianic claims of Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, which make up a crucial part of the Ahmadi identity. At this point, we will turn our attention towards gaining a better understanding of Ghulam Ahmad's messianic claims and the finer points of Ahmadi theology.

Chapter 2

The Prophetic Claims of Mirza Ghulam Ahmad

In this chapter we will look at the messianic claims of Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, the justifications for his prophetic status after the Prophet Muhammad, and the dependency of his mission on the prophets who came before him. We will see how he established himself as the second coming of the messiah by rejecting Jesus' death on the cross. We will see how Ghulam Ahmad used elitist Sufi terminology to describe his revelations, his status, and his role in the broader Islamic tradition, to the general public and the Muslim mainstream. We will also look at how his theological worldview poses intellectual problems and produces interesting questions of authority for the members of Jama'at-i Ahmadiyya as they attempt to reconcile his spiritual claims and begin their process of theological formalization.

2.1 – Mirza Ghulam Ahmad's Primary and Secondary Claims

Mirza Ghulam Ahmad's education and spiritual training shaped the way in which he understood and explained his religious experiences. His spiritual claims were complex and developed subtle nuances over the course of his life, but the controversy surrounding his claims was in many ways what made Mirza Ghulam Ahmad's mission most interesting. Any analysis of Ghulam Ahmad's claims must allow for the changes in the understanding and interpretation of his claims that have taken place over time. The development of these spiritual claims did not end with his

death, but rather continued through the successive generations of Ahmadis who interpreted and explained these claims differently. The ambiguous and sometimes paradoxical nature of his Sufi style of metaphysics has led to divergent opinions about Mirza Ghulam Ahmad. His views on theologically charged subject matter were often presented analytically in terms of argumentative value judgements with very specific consequences. In actuality, the more controversial aspects of Ahmadi Islam resulted less from Ghulam Ahmad's primary spiritual claims and more from the consequential inferences or secondary implications of what his primary claims entailed. The best example of this was Ghulam Ahmad's prophethood itself, which surprisingly was not one of his primary spiritual claims. Similarly, Ghulam Ahmad's rejection of violent jihad and his insistence on Jesus' survival from crucifixion were not primary claims, but resulted from the underlying claim that Ghulam Ahmad was the promised messiah. To better understand Ghulam Ahmad's mission and how he became a prophet of God one must look at the context and connotations of his primary spiritual claims.

Mirza Ghulam Ahmad's claims were intended to identify his role in the world and to delineate his spiritual rank. He claimed to be a *muhaddath*, someone to whom God speaks; a *mujaddid*, a renewer of Islam; the *mahdī*, the guided one who will return in the last days; and finally the *masīh-i maw'ūd* or the promised messiah and second coming of Jesus son of Mary. His status as the *mahdī* and messiah in conjunction led to the most recognizable and controversial aspects of his mission, which had theological implications that have since defined his role in Islamic history. It is clear that he understood and expressed these roles in terms of the long awaited

fulfilment of divine prophecy, which served as the basis for the broader scope of his mission of spiritual purification and Islamic revival. However, the process that enabled the members of Jama'at-i Ahmadiyya to acknowledge, accept, and adhere to Ghulam Ahmad's claims within a familiar Islamic framework was something that needed to be developed and further elaborated much later. This subsequent elaboration has laid the theological foundations for the current Ahmadi identity, and so we may first look at the spiritual claims as they were presented in their original form.

2.2 – Jesus as the Promised Messiah

In the western Christian context, there is nothing more provocative about Ahmadi Islam than Mirza Ghulam Ahmad's explanation for Jesus' survival from the crucifixion. By arguing that Jesus Christ survived the crucifixion, Ahmadis conclude that Jesus could not have been resurrected nor could he have subsequently ascended to the heavens. The argument was intended to invalidate the very basis for the Christian claim that Jesus died for the sins of mankind. If Jesus did not die for the sins of mankind and is not alive in the heavens, then according to Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, there is no viable reason for anyone to remain Christian. Ghulam Ahmad believed that if he could prove that Jesus survived the crucifixion, then he could prove Islam's superiority over Christianity as a religion. It is important to appreciate this rationale within the context of the rivalry between Islam and Christianity in 19th

century India.¹ This rivalry between the two religions was a serious concern for Indian Muslims who felt threatened by the advances of Christian missionaries, particularly in the Punjab. The socio-political context provided the appropriate environment for Ghulam Ahmad to fulfil his role as the *mahdī* and metaphorically 'break the cross'. The advent of modernity had aroused interest in rationality, which undoubtedly shaped the delivery of Ghulam Ahmad's ideas and message. Mirza Ghulam Ahmad believed that he could rationally prove that Christianity was a baseless religion and convince people of Islam's truth, purely through rational argumentation and proofs. However, it is important to recall that Christianity was not his only target. Ghulam Ahmad had devoted considerable attention throughout his career to debunking Hinduism as well and had been using this method of logical argumentation since his first major work, *Barāhīn-i Ahmadiyya* (The Proofs of Islam), the first part of which was published in 1880, nine years before his Jama'at was founded.

Aside from the general dismantling of the fundamental doctrine of Christianity, Ghulam Ahmad needed to prove that the first messiah, Jesus, was not alive in heaven awaiting his final return in the latter days. The reasoning for this was that Ghulam Ahmad could not claim to be the second messiah if the first messiah was still alive and well in heaven. The argument was equally important to the majority of Muslims who maintained that Jesus will descend from the heavens in the latter days to fight evil alongside the *mahdī*. With this in mind, Ghulam Ahmad's claim of being the second coming of Jesus was clearly dependent on there being no other messiah

¹ See Avril A. Powell, *Muslims and Missionaries in Pre-mutiny India* (Richmond: Curzon Press, 1993).

alive in heaven who was waiting to return. These ideas were first expounded by Ghulam Ahmad in 1891 with the publication of the trilogy *Fath-i Islām* (Victory of Islam), *Tawzīh-i Marām* (Elucidation of Objectives), and *Izāla-i Awhām* (Removal of Suspicions).² At first, the details of Jesus' survival from crucifixion were presented as purely intellectual arguments based largely on textual interpretations of the Qur'an, Hadith, and Bible. However, a substantial breakthrough in his argument for the death of Jesus came when Ghulam Ahmad identified a burial tomb in Srinagar, Kashmir as the final resting place of Jesus. In providing an actual tomb for Jesus, Ghulam Ahmad could conclusively show that Jesus had died a natural death and would never return in the flesh as the promised messiah of the latter days. This extraordinary journey of Jesus after surviving his own crucifixion was the basis for Ghulam Ahmad's book *Masīh Hindustān Meñ* (Jesus in India),³ which was not actually published until 1908 despite having been written in the late 1890s.

The book was heavily influenced by the work of a Russian traveller, Nicolas Notovitch, who had spent some time studying Buddhist texts in Tibetan monasteries from which he concluded that Jesus had travelled through Afghanistan and India and then on to Tibet prior to his crucifixion.⁴ The timeline for the journey according to Notovitch's theory was rejected by Ghulam Ahmad and restructured around the idea that Jesus had indeed travelled to India, but only after his crucifixion, and then on to Kashmir where he died at the age of 120. Over the past century, these arguments have been considerably expanded and are best outlined in a more recent work by

² These three works constitute the third volume of *Rūhānī Khazā'in*.

³ See Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, *Masīh Hindustān Meñ*, in *Rūhānī Khazā'in*, Vol. 15; see also the translation, *Jesus in India* (Tilford: Islam International Publication, 2003).

⁴ See Nicolas Notovitch, *The Unknown Life of Jesus* (Sanger: Quill Driver Books/Word Dancer Press, 2004).

Ghulam Ahmad's fourth successor and grandson, Mirza Tahir Ahmad, called *Christianity: A Journey From Facts to Fiction*. This restatement of Ghulam Ahmad's original premise relies more heavily on contemporary medical evidence than obscure interpretations of scriptures or ancient religious texts.

A broad synopsis of the current Ahmadi position begins with a firm affirmation of the impossibility for any human being to physically ascend to the heavens.⁵ To explain the whereabouts of Jesus, Ahmadis argue that even though Jesus was hung on the cross and crucified, he did not die from the crucifixion. The problem with this position is that it requires an explanation for what many Muslims consider to be a direct contradiction of the Qur'an. This can be illustrated quite well by comparing different translations of the Qur'anic account of the crucifixion. Abdel Haleem translated the crucifixion verse as:

They did not kill him [Jesus], nor did they crucify him, though it was made to appear like that to them. Those that disagreed about him are full of doubt, with no knowledge to follow, only supposition: they certainly did not kill him...⁶

Ahmadis favour a more creative rendition of the crucifixion verse, which is most apparent in the interpretive translation by Malik Ghulam Farid:

And *for* their saying, 'We did slay the Messiah, Jesus, son of Mary, the Messenger of Allāh;' whereas they slew him not, nor did they bring about his death upon the cross, but he was made to appear to them like *one crucified*; and those who differ therein are certainly in a *state of*

⁵ The following account of the Ahmadi belief regarding Jesus is taken from Mirza Tahir Ahmad, *Christianity: A Journey From Facts to Fiction* (Tilford: Islam International Publications, 1994). It may also be worth noting here that Ahmadis also reject the physical ascent of the Prophet Muhammad to heaven during the night journey.

⁶ See verse (4:157) in M.A.S. Abdel Haleem (trans.), *The Qur'an* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), p. 65.

doubt about it; they have no *certain* knowledge thereof, but only pursue a conjecture; and they did not arrive at a certainty concerning it.⁷

In the Ahmadi interpretation, Jesus did not hang on the cross long enough to die from crucifixion. Ahmadis argue that death by crucifixion is a long and painful process, which is precisely why it was used as a method of torture and intimidation. Death by crucifixion was a process that could easily be drawn out for several days if not longer. A person may continue to hang on the cross for an indefinite period until the innards ultimately collapse and bring about an excruciating death. Ahmadis believe that Jesus was crucified on a Friday afternoon and therefore could not have died by crucifixion, since it was the Jewish custom to remove all of the crucified bodies before the Sabbath, which began at sunset. Consequently, Jesus could only have hung on the cross for a few hours at most. This was not enough time to bring about his death on the cross, which makes it less likely that he died from crucifixion.⁸ Likewise, Ghulam Ahmad explained that the other two men who were crucified alongside Jesus did not die either, which is why their legs needed to be broken according to the Biblical account in John (19:31-34).⁹ In contrast, Jesus' legs were not broken because he was believed to be dead. Here, Ahmadis argue that Jesus was still alive in an unconscious state.

The Biblical account describes a soldier who pierced Jesus' side from which blood and water gushed out. According to Ghulam Ahmad, this description proved

⁷ See verse (4:158) in Malik Ghulam Farid (ed.), *The Holy Qur'ān: Arabic Text with English Translation and Short Commentary* (Tilford: Islam International Publications, 2002), p. 225. All italics exist in the original text itself.

⁸ Mirza Tahir Ahmad, *Christianity: A Journey From Facts to Fiction*, p. 74.

⁹ Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, *Masīh Hindustān Meñ*, in *Rūhānī Khazā'in*, Vol. 15, p. 27; see also *Jesus in India*, p. 30.

that Jesus was still alive after the crucifixion, because a dead body whose heart has stopped beating does not bleed profusely when stabbed. Instead, the blood inside a dead body begins to congeal and cannot rush forth in the same way when stabbed, especially following a traumatic crucifixion in which large nails through the hands and feet allowed the blood to drain from the limbs on its own. Ghulam Ahmad was convinced that the way in which the Bible described Jesus' bleeding after being stabbed substantiated the fact that he was still alive and that his heart was still beating, even though he was unconscious and appeared to be dead.

The Ahmadi translation of the next verse describing Jesus' ascension to heaven following the crucifixion is also worth comparing to non-Ahmadi translations. Abdel Haleem translated the verse: 'God raised him [Jesus] up to Himself (*rafa'ahu 'llāhu ilayhi*).'¹⁰ The Ahmadi translation of the verse reads: 'On the contrary, Allāh exalted him [Jesus] to Himself.'¹¹ The traditional interpretation, as seen in the two contrasting translations, is that Jesus was physically raised to the heavens, which is consistent with the Christian account of Jesus' ascension. The Ahmadi rendition reinterprets the verse to show that Jesus was only raised in spiritual status and not raised physically to the heavens. In his commentary on the verse, Malik Ghulam Farid says:

The Jews exultingly claimed to have killed Jesus on the cross and thus to have proved that his claim to be a Divine Prophet was not true. The verse along with the preceding one contains a strong refutation of the charge and clears him of the insinuated blemish and speaks of his spiritual elevation and of his having been honoured in the presence of God. There is absolutely no reference in the verse to his physical ascension to [the] heavens. It only says that God exalted him towards

¹⁰ See verse (4:158) in M.A.S. Abdel Haleem (trans.), *The Qur'an*, p. 65.

¹¹ See verse (4:159) in Malik Ghulam Farid (ed.), *The Holy Qur'an*, p. 226.

Himself which clearly signifies a spiritual exaltation, because no fixed abode can be assigned to God.¹²

The commentary on the verse reinforces the Ahmadi position that Jesus died a natural death unrelated to the crucifixion. Interestingly, some non-Ahmadis have also interpreted this verse similarly and concluded that Jesus was not physically raised to the heavens. For example, Muhammad Asad strongly stated in his commentary that:

The verb *rafa'ahu* (lit., “He raised him” or “elevated him”) has always, whenever the act of *raf'* (“elevating”) of a human being is attributed to God, the meaning of “honouring” or “exalting”. Nowhere in the Qur’ān is there any warrant for the popular belief that God has “taken up” Jesus bodily, in his lifetime, into heaven. The expression of “God exalted him unto Himself” in the above verse denoted the elevation of Jesus to the realm of God’s special grace – a blessing in which all prophets partake, as is evident from 19:57, where the verb *rafa'nāhu* (“We exalted him”) is used with regard to the Prophet Idrīs.¹³

Asad went on to reference Muhammad Abduh who held similar views denying Jesus’ bodily ascension. Other commentators have also denied Jesus’ bodily ascension, although most of them, including Sir Sayyid Ahmad Khan, tend to be modernists with an aversion to miraculous explanations.

Next, Ghulam Ahmad introduced the existence of a special medicinal ointment known as the *Marham-i 'Īsā* (ointment of Jesus). Supposedly, when Jesus was taken down from the cross and enshrouded before burial, a medicinal ointment, the *Marham-i 'Īsā*, was applied to his wounds. Intuitively, Ghulam Ahmad asked why anyone would apply a medicinal ointment to the wounds of a dead body.

¹² Ibid., pp. 226-227 in footnote 700.

¹³ Muhammad Asad, *The Message of THE QUR'ĀN* (Gibraltar: Dar al-Andalus, 1980), pp. 134-135 in footnote 172.

Ghulam Ahmad was convinced that the application of the *Marham-i 'Īsā* to Jesus' wounds conclusively showed that a few of the disciples must have known that Jesus was still alive after the crucifixion. Ghulam Ahmad cited over thirty books that mentioned the *Marham-i 'Īsā*, the formula for the mixture with its ingredients, and its intended uses.¹⁴ He also claimed that the medicine can still be used to treat boils, ulcers, and the plague.¹⁵ Although the idea of dressing the wounds of a dead person is certainly counterintuitive, the historical authenticity of the *Marham-i 'Īsā* is difficult to verify. I was unable to find further discussions on the *Marham-i 'Īsā* in more appropriate sources, such as the potential analyses of the scholars of early Christianity, regarding the origins and intended uses of the *Marham-i 'Īsā* in relation to the crucifixion of Jesus.¹⁶ Even though the name of the ointment suggests some link to Jesus, the original *Marham-i 'Īsā* may or may not have been used to dress the wounds of Jesus following the crucifixion. It is not unreasonable or unlikely to presume that many products, including miracle ointments, have been falsely attributed to great religious figures like Jesus in the past. Until there is evidence to suggest otherwise, there is nothing conclusive to substantiate the origins of the *Marham-i 'Īsā* and Ghulam Ahmad's claim.

Ghulam Ahmad used numerous textual sources to construct his argument and to demonstrate that Jesus did not die on the cross, but his final piece of evidence was

¹⁴ Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, *Masīh Hindustān Meñ*, in *Rūhānī Khazā'in*, Vol. 15, pp. 58-59; see also *Jesus in India*, pp. 66-68.

¹⁵ See the notice called, *Dawā'e Ta'ūn* (23 July 1898) in Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, *Majmū'a-i Ishihārāt*, Vol. 3, pp. 52-54. There is a rare translation of this which is listed as *A Revealed Cure for the Bubonic Plague* (Lahore: Victoria Press, 1898) and is available in the British Library Oriental Collections, Shelfmark 14105.e.1.(2.).

¹⁶ Humphrey Fisher did criticize the ointment, its sources, and the 'swoon theory' regarding Jesus' survival from crucifixion in his study of Jama'at-i Ahmadiyya, although he did not explicitly say how he arrived at his conclusions. See Humphrey J. Fisher, *Ahmadiyyah: A Study in Contemporary Islam on the West African Coast* (London: Oxford University Press, 1963), pp. 69-71.

by far the most fascinating. Ghulam Ahmad believed that Jesus journeyed east after the crucifixion to escape further persecution and to reunite the lost tribes of Israel. Jesus continued travelling east through present day Afghanistan and on to India, until he finally settled in Kashmir. Ghulam Ahmad identified the shrine of an old saint in Khaniyar, Srinagar as the actual tomb of Jesus. Apparently, local legend attributes the tomb to an ancient 'Hebrew prophet' who came to Kashmir from some distant land around the same time as the crucifixion.¹⁷ The prophet buried in the tomb was named name Yus Asaf, which Ghulam Ahmad said was a corrupted Hebrew variant of Jesus 'the gatherer of people (*jamā'at ko ikatthā karne wālā*)' in reference to a biblical account of him bringing people together.¹⁸ Evidently the locals of Srinagar have believed that the tomb belonged to Jesus for quite some time prior to Ghulam Ahmad's discovery, which neatly fits into his crucifixion survival theory. By producing an actual tomb, Ahmadis believe that they have tangible archaeological evidence in support of their dead messiah. Once again, it would be difficult to argue that Jesus is alive in heaven when his corpse is enshrined in Kashmir. Likewise, proving that Jesus died a natural death is absolutely essential to Ahmadi Islam. To maintain the belief that Jesus physically ascended to the heavens is completely incompatible with Mirza Ghulam Ahmad's messianic claim. Ghulam Ahmad only becomes the second messiah when the first messiah is dead, regardless of the authenticity of this specific tomb in Kashmir.

¹⁷ See chapter 13 in J.D. Shams, *Where did Jesus die?* (Tilford: Islam International Publications, 1989), pp. 109-117.

¹⁸ See chapter 4, section 2 of Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, *Masīh Hindustān Meñ*, in *Rūhānī Khazā'in*, Vol. 15, especially p. 82; see also *Jesus in India*, p. 94. Ghulam Ahmad's reference in the original text is mistakenly given as Genesis 3:10 though later Ahmadi publications either cite Genesis 49:10 or 1 Chronicles 16:4-7 as the correction.

2.3 – In the Footsteps of the Prophets

In claiming to be the second coming of Jesus, Mirza Ghulam Ahmad had made an intrinsic claim to prophethood. It followed that since Jesus was a prophet in his first appearance, he would not suddenly be demoted or stripped of his prophetic status in his second appearance. Ghulam Ahmad's claim of being the *mahdī* did not carry the same implications, even though he had claimed that the *mahdī* and the *masīh* were the same person.¹⁹ This implicit claim to prophethood was expounded at length throughout his career, but it had always been present in some form since at least the early 1890s. His previous claims of receiving revelation from God were not as controversial and did not elicit the same backlash from Muslim critics as his being the promised messiah.

Revelation exists in many forms in the Islamic tradition. The language used to describe revelation varies from different types of divine inspiration to true dreams, none of which are considered sufficient for prophethood. Ghulam Ahmad's awareness of these subtleties made the reconciliation of his claims even more difficult for his contemporaries because he never openly claimed prophethood in the way that one would expect a prophet of God to do. Instead of making a forthright claim, his claims of prophethood were either qualified with elaborate explanations or placed within a certain religious context that did not denote prophethood in Islam, which

¹⁹ Mirza Bashir al-Din Mahmud Ahmad presented a detailed explanation of this view in his *Invitation to Ahmadiyyat* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1980), pp. 30-32; however, this is not a position that is unique to Ahmadi Islam. Several other Muslim scholars have maintained that the *mahdī* and the *masīh* are indeed the same person. For an example of classical views regarding this position, see Ibn Khaldun, Franz Rosenthal (trans.), and N. J. Dawood (ed.), *The Muqaddimah: An Introduction to History* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1967), pp. 257-259.

only added to the confusion. Making sense of the totality of these claims throughout Ghulam Ahmad's career is even more confusing due to the numerous contradictions, ambiguities, and the general ambivalence with which Ghulam Ahmad evasively expressed his ideas. The linguistic façade created by the intermittent jumps from Urdu to Arabic to Persian added yet another layer of complications, which for our purposes makes English translations that adequately express these subtleties rather difficult. This is even more problematic since each language has its own terminology and connotations for prophecy and revelation. However, one must recognize and appreciate that this linguistic complexity was as much of a sign of Muslim writing in 19th century South Asia as it was a display of Ghulam Ahmad's literary mastery.

In English, a prophet may be defined merely as someone who prophesizes the future, but this is not the case in an Islamic context where the terminology designated for the revelation of the prophets may denote a certain qualitative distinction in spiritual rank. An average Muslim may receive divinely inspired revelations that correctly prophesize the future, but this type of revelation does not entail prophethood in the traditional sense even though one may describe it as such in English. Understanding the context and navigating through these religious undertones is perhaps the greatest challenge to making sense of Ghulam Ahmad's theology. Typically, this type of technical jargon was only used with great care and with an appreciation for the sensitive distinctions in the religious symbolism, but Ghulam Ahmad's writing style tended to mix the different terms together and augment their traditional usages. Perhaps this was a technique used to add literary value to his writing, but it makes the analysis of his ideas less precise. We will look at some

examples of how Ghulam Ahmad made the figurative imagery in religious terminology and symbolism overlap below.

In *Fath-i Islām* (Victory of Islam), Mirza Ghulam Ahmad claimed to be a *mujaddid-i dīn* (renewer of the faith) similar to the other *mujaddids* (renewers) from previous centuries. In his explanation of *tajdīd-i dīn* (religious renewal), he stated that a *mujaddid* becomes the deputy (*nā'ib*) and successor (*khalīfa*) of the Prophet Muhammad; the inheritor of all of the blessings of the messengers and prophets; and the one whose heart is illuminated with revelation (*ilhām*) from God and guidance from the Holy Spirit (*rūh al-quds*).²⁰ Each one of these characteristics is a bold claim for any saintly Muslim, including a *mujaddid*, but they appear even more ostentatious when presented consecutively in this fashion. Each quality has its own specific connotation which normally never would appear together in this combination. Ghulam Ahmad's understanding of the status of a *mujaddid* is excessive, yet it is presented as unquestionable fact. One could treat this as hyperbole though it is not very compelling to argue that it was intended as such. Ghulam Ahmad went on in the text to distinguish himself from his predecessors and show why his rank was even higher than that of the previous *mujaddids*. Ultimately, he proclaimed his own advent as the second messiah in the same image of the first, referring to Jesus son of Mary.²¹

In these regards, the second coming of Jesus is something that the Muslim *umma* has been anticipating for centuries. Ghulam Ahmad used this discourse on the *mujaddids* and the second coming of Jesus to introduce his claim as the promised messiah who was modelled on the first messiah Jesus. However, he confusingly

²⁰ Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, *Fath-i Islām*, in *Rūhānī Khazā'in*, Vol. 3, pp. 7-8 and the footnote; see also *Victory of Islam* (Tilford: Islam International Publications, 2002), pp. 5-6 and note 1.

²¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 8-9 and in the footnote; see also *Victory of Islam*, pp. 7-9 and note 2.

phrased his statements in a way that spoke of the second messiah, himself, in the third person until he finally acknowledged his own claim. Maintaining these contradictory ambiguities was part of Ghulam Ahmad's writing style. Within the same footnote where he claimed prophethood, Ghulam Ahmad rebutted his own claim and denied his prophetic status. Moreover, he would often claim to be a prophet in a context that was contrary to prophethood by advancing ideas with conflicting connotations or by presenting his ideas through contradictory claims. In one example, he claimed to be both a *muhaddath* (one spoken to by God), which is a non-prophet, and the *khalīfat-ullāh* (representative of God on Earth), which is a term repeatedly used in the Qur'an to describe prophets, if not all of humanity.²² Typically, a *muhaddath* would never be connected to the *khalīfat-ullāh*, because the two ideas are radically different and have little to do with each other in the traditional sense. Within a few pages of this early treatise, Mirza Ghulam Ahmad made a number of very different and often conflicting spiritual claims that are difficult to comprehend.

Although it is tempting to dismiss Ghulam Ahmad's claims as ignorance of the tradition or an inability to distinguish between independent ideas, it is not appropriate to do so. Most scholars have tended towards treating each claim individually with the presumption that Ghulam Ahmad claimed to be either a *muhaddath*, or a *mujaddid*, or the *mahdī*, or the messiah, or a prophet, similar to the way in which they were first presented above. However, despite his contradictions, Mirza Ghulam Ahmad was not ignorant of the traditional usages of these terms. The

²² There are several examples of similar usages in the Qur'an. In (2:30) Adam is called a *khalīfa*. In (38:26) David is called a *khalīfa*. In some cases, such as (27:62) the term may refer to all of humanity. Additionally, the Prophet Muhammad's third successor, 'Uthman, took the title *khalīfat-ullāh*. See Mahmoud M. Ayoub, *The Crisis of Muslim History: Religion and Politics in Early Islam* (Oxford: Oneworld Publications, 2006), p. 50.

unprecedented combination of divinely bestowed honours truly reflects Ghulam Ahmad's extraordinary self-image. He unreservedly continued to propagate his mission and teachings in this august fashion with no regard for their potential inconsistencies. He saw his own status as exceptional and utterly unique from those who came before him. He was the fulfilment of all previous divine prophecies about the latter days and the culmination of every true religious tradition. Nevertheless, the condemnation of Ghulam Ahmad's claim to prophethood by the Indian *'ulamā* did not go unnoticed. Perhaps the unfavourable reaction to Ghulam Ahmad's presentation of his own spiritual status and divine commission may have persuaded him to soften the exposition of his self-image. As the opposition mounted, Ghulam Ahmad apparently felt obliged to further elaborate his position, and in his following book, *Tawzīh-i Marām* (Elucidation of Objectives), he was withdrawing into a more apologetic tone. A complete reversal following such extravagant claims was highly problematic and would have damaged Ghulam Ahmad's credibility as a scholar. Similarly, continuing to defend such unconventional claims was not an effective way of increasing his followers, even if he believed them to be true. Likewise, if Ghulam Ahmad did not believe his claims to be true in the fullest sense, he had a responsibility to acknowledge his eccentricity and clarify the confusion as the title of his book suggests.

Ghulam Ahmad's awareness of the unsettled situation resulted in a detailed discussion on the prophetic rank of the second messiah. Once again, since Jesus was a prophet of God during his first appearance in the world, it follows that he ought to be a prophet during his second appearance. Interestingly in *Tawzīh-i Marām*, Ghulam

Ahmad treated this rationale as an objection to his being the second manifestation of Jesus, which implies that he acknowledged that he was not really a prophet. He began his replies to this objection by mentioning that the Prophet Muhammad never explicitly made prophethood a requisite condition for Jesus in his second coming.²³ Ghulam Ahmad recognized that if there were some hadith or verses from the Qur'an which referenced the prophethood of Jesus in his second coming, he would not have been able to make such a claim. He went on to say that there was no doubt that God had designated the second coming of Jesus as a *muhaddath* for the *umma*, 'and a *muhaddath* in one sense is actually a prophet (*awr muhaddath bhī ek ma'ne se nabī hī hotā hay*).²⁴ He explained that this type of prophethood was not complete but was partial (*juzwī*) prophethood, since a *muhaddath* is spoken to by God and given insights about the unseen. He added that a *muhaddath* has revelations (*wahy*) that are free from satanic corruptions, similar to the revelations (*wahy*) of the prophets and messengers. A *muhaddath* is appointed by God, knows the essence of the *sharī'a*, and must publicly proclaim his mission. Furthermore, Ghulam Ahmad warned that a divine punishment was predestined for anyone who rejected a *muhaddath*.²⁵ In his conclusion to the discussion, Ghulam Ahmad proclaimed that he was that messianic *muhaddath* who had been sent by God in the image of Jesus.²⁶

As one can see, this was an elaborate way of divulging one's divine appointment and proclaiming one's prophethood. Ghulam Ahmad's reluctance to claim prophethood straightforwardly may have been a result of his awareness of the

²³ Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, *Tawzīh-i Marām*, in *Rūhānī Khazā'in*, Vol. 3, p. 59; see also *Elucidation of Objectives* (Tilford: Islam International Publications, 2004), pp. 15-16.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 60; see also *Elucidation of Objectives*, p. 16.

²⁵ *Ibid.*

²⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 61; see also *Elucidation of Objectives*, p. 19.

incompatibility of such a claim with orthodox Islam, even though the basic claim of being a *muhaddath* is in itself acceptable. The existence of a *muhaddath* after the death of the Prophet Muhammad is not incompatible with Islamic orthodoxy, but Ghulam Ahmad's expansion of the qualities of a *muhaddath* were coloured with the perfections of prophethood in such a way that they inappropriately overlapped. It is not surprising that many people were still confused about Mirza Ghulam Ahmad's mission and spiritual status by 1891 only two years after he began taking *bay'at* (allegiance) and accepting disciples. However, what is surprising is that his Ahmadi disciples themselves were still unclear about his spiritual status in regards to his prophethood more than a decade after the formation of Jama'at-i Ahmadiyya. In 1901 the confusion of some Ahmadis about the spiritual status of their leader prompted Ghulam Ahmad to write *Ek Ghalatī kā Izāla* (The Correction of an Error), in which he attempted once again to clarify his spiritual claims to his followers. At present, the Qadiani branch of the Jama'at treat this short booklet as the definitive tract affirming Ghulam Ahmad's prophethood, whereas in contrast, the Lahori branch uses *Ek Ghalatī kā Izāla* to show that Ghulam Ahmad denied being a prophet. Ironically, both branches use the same booklet to draw opposite conclusions. The only reason that this is possible is because Ghulam Ahmad's presentation of his prophetic status remained muddled with contradictions where clear statements affirmed his prophetic status and clear statements denied it.

The booklet opened with Ghulam Ahmad reprimanding one of his disciples who was confused about the claims of his mentor. When the disciple was faced with an opponent's objections to Ghulam Ahmad's claim of being a prophet (*nabī*) and a

messenger (*rasūl*), the disciple denied the claim without hesitation. Ghulam Ahmad warned that simply denying (*mahz inkār*) his prophetic status outright was wrong.²⁷ He explained his position by stating that his revelations contained words like *nabī*, *rasūl*, *mursal*, and *nazīr*, which referred to prophets, messengers and warners, and thereby affirmed his status as a prophet of God. Ghulam Ahmad went on to address the Qur'anic designation of the Prophet Muhammad as *khātam al-nabiyyīn* (the seal of the prophets),²⁸ which even in the context in which Ghulam Ahmad was using it, implied that Muhammad was the last prophet.²⁹ But if this was true and Muhammad was the last prophet, then how were these types of prophetic revelations possible and how could Ghulam Ahmad claim to be a prophet? Ghulam Ahmad's response was:

The answer to this is that without a doubt in this way no prophet, new or old, can come (*is kā jawāb yahī hay ke beshak is tarah to ko 'ī nabī nayā ho ya purāna nahīñ ā-saktā*).³⁰

After a brief rejection of the popular belief regarding Jesus returning from the heavens, Ghulam Ahmad supported the orthodox position by citing the famous hadith declaring that 'there is no prophet after me (*lā nabiyya ba'dī*),' in reference to Muhammad being the last prophet. He explained that all the doors of prophethood were closed except for one, which was *fanā fī 'l-rasūl* or the annihilation of one's

²⁷ Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, *Ek Ghalatī kā Izāla* in *Rūhānī Khazā'in*, Vol. 18, p. 206; see also the English translation, *A Misconception Removed* (Tilford: Islam International Publications, 2007).

²⁸ See verse (33:40) which states: 'Muhammad is not the father of any one of you men; he is God's Messenger and the seal of the prophets (*mā kāna muhammadun abā ahadin min rijālikum wa lākin rasūl-allāhi wa khātam al-nabiyyīn*)', translated by M.A.S. Abdel Haleem (trans.), *The Qur'an*, p. 269. The phrase *khātam al-nabiyyīn* (seal of the prophets) is interpreted by the Muslim mainstream to mean that Muhammad is the last prophet.

²⁹ Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, *Ek Ghalatī kā Izāla*, in *Rūhānī Khazā'in*, Vol. 18, pp. 206-207.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 207.

being through total obedience to the Prophet Muhammad.³¹ The concept of *fanā* (annihilation of the self) has long since been associated with Sufism but is rarely associated with Mirza Ghulam Ahmad.³² This raises the question of whether Ghulam Ahmad's experience of *fanā* influenced the formulation of his controversial claims in ways other than how he suggested. If this were the case, then his claims of prophethood may have been no more than ecstatic statements based on euphoric mystical experiences that need not be taken literally. There is certainly a precedent for this in the statements of countless intoxicated Sufis who preceded Ghulam Ahmad and notoriously claimed similar mystical experiences of the divine. In these regards, it is not surprising that Ghulam Ahmad justified his position most often by almost exclusively referencing the Sufi scholars before him. Most notably, Ghulam Ahmad heavily relied on the ideas developed by the Sufi masters Ibn al-'Arabi and Shaykh Ahmad Sirhindi to defend his position that prophethood following the death of Muhammad was acceptable in Islam.³³

Ghulam Ahmad proceeded to describe his prophethood as *zillī* (shadowy) or *bur-ūzī* (manifestational), in the sense that it was dependent on the prophethood of Muhammad. Ghulam Ahmad believed that it was only through his *fanā fī 'l-rasūl*, which resulted from his complete submission to the Prophet Muhammad, that his

³¹ Ibid.

³² Fazlur Rahman provided a clear overview of *fanā* in relation to Sufis like Dhu'l-Nūn al-Misrī and Abū Yazīd al-Bisṭāmī in his book, *Islam* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1979), p. 135. The *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, (second edition), entry under 'Bakā' wa-Fanā' is also useful.

³³ For an excellent and thorough analysis of the finality of prophethood in relation to Mirza Ghulam Ahmad's use of Sufi variations of prophethood stemming from medieval thought, see Yohanan Friedmann, *Prophecy Continuous: Aspects of Ahmadi Religious Thought and Its Medieval Background* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989), especially chapters 2-3; see also Yohanan Friedmann, *Shaykh Ahmad Sirhindi: An Outline of His Thought and a Study of His Image in the Eyes of Posterity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000).

prophethood had any meaning.³⁴ In other words, by imitating Muhammad so closely, Ghulam Ahmad identified with the Prophet's very being and thereby acquired his own prophetic status. With this identification, and in virtue of his receiving disclosures of the unseen (*ghayb*), one may 'call' Ghulam Ahmad a prophet. In this sense, Ghulam Ahmad is only 'called' a prophet since he reflected the perfections, virtues, and high moral character of the Prophet Muhammad so closely. He was the *khalīfat-ullāh*, Allah's representative on Earth.³⁵ However, in the sense that Ghulam Ahmad had no new scripture to disseminate or new law to supplement or supersede the *sharī'a*, he was not a prophet.³⁶ Ghulam Ahmad was only ascribed prophethood through his pure and perfect spiritual imitation (*burūz*) of Muhammad. Ghulam Ahmad paid considerable attention in his booklet to the *khatm al-nubuwwa* verse in order to explain how the seal on prophethood had not been broken. This undue attention affirming the soundness of the verse implies that he understood that no prophet could appear after Muhammad. As he had already explained, no prophet could exist in the world after Muhammad including Jesus, because if Jesus were to return to the world in the way that most Muslims expect, the seal of prophethood would be broken.³⁷ The summary of his thoughts at the end of the tract helps to clarify his final position.

This entire treatise is intended to show that my ignorant opponents accuse me of claiming to be a prophet or a messenger, whereas I make no such claim. In these regards, I am neither a prophet nor a messenger in the way that they think. However, in one sense, I am a prophet and a messenger in the context in which I have just explained.

³⁴ Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, *Ek Ghalatī kā Izāla*, in *Rūhānī Khazā'in*, Vol. 18, p. 208.

³⁵ Ibid., p. 210.

³⁶ Ibid., p. 211.

³⁷ Ibid., pp. 214-215.

So whoever maliciously accuses me of claiming prophethood or messengership is following false and filthy persuasions. It is my manifest spiritual imitation (*burūz*) [of the Prophet Muhammad] that has made me a prophet and a messenger, and it is on this basis that God has repeatedly called me a prophet of God and a messenger of God, but in manifestational (*burūzī*) form.

*(ab is tamām tahrīr se matlab merā ye hay ke jāhil mukhālif merī nisbat ilzām lagāte hayñ ke ye shakhs nabī yā rasūl hone kā da'wā kartā hay mujhe aysā ko'ī da'wā nahīñ – mayñ is tawr se jo wo khayāl karte hayñ na nabī hūñ na rasūl hūñ – hāñ mayñ is tawr se nabī awr rasūl hūñ jis tawr se abhī mayñ ne bayān kiyā hay – pas jo shakhs mere par sharārat se ye ilzām lagātā hay jo da'wā nubuwwat awr risālat kā karte hayñ wo jhūtā awr nā pāk khayāl hay – mujhe burūzī sūrat ne nabī awr rasūl banāyā hay awr isī binā par khudā ne bār bār merā nām nabī allāh awr rasūl allāh rakhā magar burūzī sūrat meñ).*³⁸

The reality of this explanation is that Ghulam Ahmad's conception of his own prophetic status was complicated. Aside from the apparently contradictory statements which he made throughout his career, Ghulam Ahmad went to great lengths to qualify his conception of prophethood and to show how he fitted in to the prophetic tradition. But once again, the greatest challenge for contemporary scholars is working out the semantics of the prophetic terminology within the context of Ghulam Ahmad's unique self-image. We must look at the language that Ghulam Ahmad chose to express his ideas to get a fuller picture of his spiritual self-image. We will examine below some of the complications surrounding Ghulam Ahmad's claims as well as the complications surrounding the presentation of his claims.

³⁸ Ibid., p. 216.

2.4 – The Terminology of Prophethood and Revelation

The words that are commonly associated with revelation and the prophetic tradition in Islam may be derived from Arabic roots, but they take on different meanings when used in the relevant languages of scholarship despite their shared religious context. In the case of Ahmadi literature, assigning a fixed meaning to a word for analytic purposes, which is based on previous usages in the religious tradition, is often inappropriate because of Ghulam Ahmad's intermittent jumps between Urdu, Arabic, and Persian. To further complicate things, Ghulam Ahmad would frequently switch his writing style between poetry and prose within the context of the same discussion, often switching languages as well. It appears that he may have used the same word differently, depending on his writing style, poetry or prose, and also on the language in which he was writing, be it Urdu, Arabic, Persian, or even at times Punjabi. Ghulam Ahmad blurred together the connotations of the prophetic terminology and ignored the religious precedence set by the tradition. In addition, he placed an unusual emphasis on uncommon terms like *burūz* (manifestation) and *zill* (shadow), which have negligible usage outside of a rare and exceptional genre of highly elitist Sufi literature. These terms were virtually never used in a prophetic context outside of the ecstatic claims of a minimal group of highly controversial figures.

Within a relatively short period of time, Jama'at-i Ahmadiyya's insistence on maintaining an intense proselytization campaign demanded the abandonment of their elitist terminology in favour of the more common and less sophisticated explanations

that were easily comprehensible by the mainstream. In trying to define irregular ideas with regular terminology, many Ahmadis reduced Ghulam Ahmad's claim simply to that of being a prophet without the additional qualifiers that routinely accompanied his own explanations. Since the vast majority of the Muslim mainstream did not understand Ghulam Ahmad's prophetic qualifiers (*burūz*, *zill*, 'partial', 'dependent', or 'non-lawbearing') that prefixed and limited his prophethood, the standardized terminology for prophets and revelation quickly took hold. It is important to emphasize that even within the prophetic context, Ghulam Ahmad's self-image was extraordinarily unique. Although his prophethood was a secondary and consequential outcome of his being a *burūz* (manifest spiritual imitation) of Muhammad, he was still the *mahdī* and the promised messiah of the latter days who received regular revelations from God.

Classifying these revelations appropriately poses other problems as well. Similar to the jargon associated with prophethood, several words have been used to describe revelatory or inspirational experiences in the Islamic tradition; for example, *wahy*, *ilhām*, *kashf*, *ru'yā*, *futūhāt*, *mubashshirāt* and so forth. Ghulam Ahmad also added Perso-Urdu words to the list like *pesh go'ī* and *khwāb*, which he used in a similar context when referring to his mystical experiences. It is interesting that he used all of these words interchangeably as revelation and ignored their theological connotations or implications. Even in the case of the revelations of the Prophet Muhammad himself, Muslims acknowledged that subtle distinctions in his *wahy* distinguished between Qur'an and *hadīth qudsī*, though both are unquestionably

accepted as divine revelation.³⁹ Unlike the English connotations, one cannot acquire prophethood through prophecy in an Islamic context, which is related in part to the idea that revelations and divine inspirations have qualitative distinctions. If Mirza Ghulam Ahmad did acquire a shadowy (*zillī*) or contingent prophetic status as he claimed, then how should one treat his shadowy revelations?⁴⁰

Fortunately, Mirza Ghulam Ahmad did attempt to qualify his own revelations in one of his more metaphysical works called *Haqīqat al-Wahy* (The Reality of Revelation). Alongside the philosophical subject matter, the book presents a thought provoking insight into the intended significance of Ghulam Ahmad's revelations in relation to his conspicuous self-image. As one of his last major works, *Haqīqat al-Wahy* was published in May 1907 only one year before his death. In this sense, it represents his final thoughts on his revelations and his prophetic status after a full yet bitterly contested career. Ghulam Ahmad organized the book into four chapters, each detailing one type of revelation. The first chapter categorizes people who have some true dreams or receive some true inspirations but have no spiritual connection to Allah. The second chapter describes people who periodically had some true dreams or some true revelations but maintained some connection with God, even though their connection was not a strong one in the sense that they are not representative of the spiritually elite. The third chapter details people who had a very strong connection with Allah and with great frequency received pure revelations, which were lucid, unambiguous, and illuminating. These people were consumed by the love of God and

³⁹ See William A. Graham, *Divine Word and Prophetic Word in Early Islam* (Paris: Mouton, 1977).

⁴⁰ Humphrey Fisher recognized this problem and raised a similar question in his study, but he did not attempt to answer or expound on what this question entailed for Jama'at-i Ahmadiyya, which has been done below. See Humphrey J. Fisher, *Ahmadiyyah: A Study in Contemporary Islam on the West African Coast*, p. 44.

included God's chosen prophets and messengers. The fourth and final chapter is devoted to showing the position of Ghulam Ahmad's revelations within this context and essentially gives him a unique status as the promised messiah.⁴¹

It is clear that Ghulam Ahmad's concept of prophethood was intimately connected to his concept of revelation. Throughout his career, Ghulam Ahmad was consistent in asserting that by receiving revelation, he received access to the unseen, which thereby granted him access to prophethood. But in terms of the act of revelation itself, Ghulam Ahmad never mentioned an intermediary that liaised between himself and God,⁴² which represents a peculiarity in Ghulam Ahmad's revelations when considering that a median is a necessary part of prophetic revelation in Islam. One must conclude, therefore, that Ghulam Ahmad's type of revelation was significantly inferior to the *wahy* of prophets like Muhammad who are believed to have received the word of God through the angel Gabriel.⁴³ I was unable to find any indication that Ghulam Ahmad received his revelations from the angel Gabriel or through any other median, which begs the question of why he insisted on calling his

⁴¹ See Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, *Haqīqat al-Wahy*, in *Rūhānī Khazā'in*, Vol. 22.

⁴² There was a noteworthy attempt at scientifically justifying the act of revelation by Ghulam Ahmad's fourth successor and grandson, Mirza Tahir Ahmad. Although his book was written and published nearly one hundred years after Ghulam Ahmad's death, it demonstrates an interesting example of the tendency for Ahmadis to reject miracles. Mirza Tahir Ahmad went to great lengths to show that revelation was a naturally occurring phenomenon in the universe that could be used to explain a range of experiences from psychic clairvoyance to prophecy. Ironically, his rationalized explanation of the mystical experience still ultimately depends on divine intervention. See Mirza Tahir Ahmad, *Revelation, Rationality, Knowledge, and Truth* (Tilford: Islam International Publications, 1998), pp. 239-254, and especially the section on Psychic Experiences other than Hallucinations.

⁴³ There are only two instances in the Islamic tradition where prophets received the word of God without the use of some type of median. The first was Moses during his interlude on Mount Sinai, and the second took place when Muhammad ascended through the heavens during his night journey. Interestingly, Ghulam Ahmad often took the name *kalīm-ullāh*, which was originally given to Moses in reference to his being spoken to by God in this direct manner. For an example of this, see Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, *Fath-i Islām*, in *Rūhānī Khazā'in*, Vol. 3, p. 8.

revelations ‘revelation (*wahy*)’.⁴⁴ The ability for non-prophets to tell the future is not celebrated in traditional Islam, which may be seen in the negative attitude towards soothsayers and oracles in the Qur’an.⁴⁵ Ghulam Ahmad explained:

And then there is this one other objection which is raised in order to provoke the ignorant, they say that I have claimed prophethood, whereas this accusation is completely false. In actuality, I have made no such claim to the type of prophethood that is well known to be forbidden by the Holy Qur’an. I only claim that on one side I am *ummatī* (a devout follower of the example of the Prophet Muhammad) and on the other side I am a prophet, purely because of the bounties of the prophethood of the Holy Prophet, may the peace and blessings of Allah be upon him. And by prophet, I only mean to the extent that I receive an abundance of God’s speech and conversation.

*(awr phir ek awr nādānī ye hay ke jāhil logoñ ko bharkāne ke liye kahte hayñ ke is shakhs ne nubuwwat kā da’wā kiyā hay hālāñke ye unkā sar-ā-sar iftirā hay – balke jis nubuwwat kā da’wā karnā qur’ān sharīf ke rū se mana’ ma’lūm hotā hay aysā ko’ī da’wā nahīñ kiyā gayā sirf ye da’wā hay ke ek pahlū se mayñ ummatī hūñ awr ek pahlū se mayñ āñ-hazrat sall-allāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam ke fayz-i nubūwwat kī wajah se nabī hūñ awr nabī se murād sirf is qadr hay ke khudā ta’ālla se ba-kasrat sharaf-i mukālama o mukhātaba pātā hūñ...)*⁴⁶

Although Ghulam Ahmad’s position does not represent the traditional understanding of prophethood or revelation, it explains his self-image rather well. Receiving numerous communications from the Divine does not make one a prophet in Islam. One may ask why Ghulam Ahmad insisted on using this terminology with mainstream Muslims when he knew that he intended something far more complex. It is even more interesting that Ghulam Ahmad attempted to justify his concept of prophethood by referring to Shaykh Ahmad Sirhindi, the Naqshbandi master who also

⁴⁴ Ghulam Ahmad certainly had claimed to have seen and communicated with angels, but in general he never claimed to receive his revelations from them in the traditional sense. In some of these instances or dreams, Ghulam Ahmad did describe angels who disclosed certain hidden truths, but they were never described to have played a significant role in his day to day revelations.

⁴⁵ For some examples of this, see (52:29), (69:42), (37:36).

⁴⁶ Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, *Haqīqat al-Wahy*, in *Rūhānī Khazā’in*, Vol. 22, p. 406.

faced intense criticism for similar unorthodox claims.⁴⁷ The glaring difference between the two figures is that Shaykh Ahmad Sirhindi's contribution to the Islamic tradition is firmly placed within a Sufi context, whereas Ghulam Ahmad has been distanced from both ecstatic Sufism and orthodox Islam. Receiving divine inspiration and claiming extraordinary spiritual heights is a typical feature in the writings of the intoxicated Sufis, but for various reasons that we will explore in later chapters, Jama'at-i Ahmadiyya has long since lost touch with this context. With the advent of modernity, the increase of technology, and the sharp decline of the traditional *'ulamā* in the subcontinent, Ghulam Ahmad's claims were disseminated through the masses as popular religion. To this day, many of Jama'at-i Ahmadiyya's members fail to appreciate why taking such a claim literally is problematic within orthodox Islam. As we saw above, Ghulam Ahmad himself acknowledged that even nonbelievers are capable of receiving communication from the Divine, which implies that revelation in itself does not entail prophethood regardless of how frequent or how vivid it may be. Yet, the persistent commitment of Ahmadis to affirming the authenticity of Ghulam Ahmad's revelation and prophethood has developed into a definitive feature of Ahmadi Islam. We will see below how the question of Ghulam Ahmad's revelation and prophethood later evolved into a question of authority.

It is easy to see how differences of opinion regarding Ghulam Ahmad's prophethood reappeared after his death and eventually contributed to the Lahori-Qadiani split. For the Qadianis, at least in terms of their theological interpretation, any type of prophethood was still prophethood regardless of its deficiencies. The Qadiani branch treats *Ek Ghalatī kā Izāla* as the definitive tract that establishes

⁴⁷ Ibid.

Ghulam Ahmad's prophetic status and has the tendency to overlook the later works like *Haqīqat al-Wahy*, which also qualify Ghulam Ahmad's prophethood in a way similar to the earlier books. In reference to *Ek Ghalatī kā Izāla*, the Qadianis maintain that 'for the previous ten years Ahmad had been assuring the world that he did not lay any claim to prophethood and now in this leaflet [*Ek Ghalatī kā Izāla*] he definitely declared that he was a prophet of God.'⁴⁸ This understanding of Ghulam Ahmad's claim of being a prophet is inconsistent with his later writings. There was no sharp break in the presentation of Ghulam Ahmad's prophetic status after 1901. In fact, he continued to make similar statements about his prophethood very late in his life as we have seen in *Haqīqat al-Wahy*.

2.5 – Reconciling the Revelations of the Promised Messiah

In terms of analysis, acknowledging that Mirza Ghulam Ahmad received revelations from God was only the first part of the problem, while determining how to treat those revelations in the context of the broader Islamic tradition was a far greater issue. There has always been a general consensus in Jama'at-i Ahmadiyya that Mirza Ghulam Ahmad did not bring any new law or *sharī'a*. The Qadiani branch emphasizes this point by asserting that he was a non-lawbearing prophet, as is often stated in Ghulam Ahmad's own writings. The problem with acknowledging that Ghulam Ahmad was a non-lawbearing prophet is that it admits that he himself must abide by the pre-existing *sharī'a*. In theory, this entails that no one can act on any of

⁴⁸ A. R. Dard, *Life of Ahmad* (Lahore: Tabshir, 1948), p. 607.

Ghulam Ahmad's revelations; and likewise, if any of his revelations happen to be inconsistent with the *sharī'a*, they ought to be abandoned. These questions of authority have yet to be addressed by the Jama'at, but the standard Ahmadi claim that Mirza Ghulam Ahmad was a non-lawbearing prophet entails that he himself was bound by the *sharī'a*. In one sense, maintaining this belief essentially renders Ghulam Ahmad's revelations meaningless, since no one has the right to act on them without appealing to valid forms of legal justification. The very act of using Ghulam Ahmad's revelations to clarify, amend, or newly create any rulings whatsoever would assign a greater value to his revelations than he himself intended, regardless of whether or not they are consistent with the *sharī'a*. This means that Ahmadi rulings should be subject to the same legal discretion under the same legal methodology of the classical Islamic tradition and subject to the same scrutiny from dissenting scholars who disagree with their rulings.

In actuality, this is not the way in which Ghulam Ahmad's opinions are treated within the Jama'at. His opinions and revelations have already acquired a unique precedence over all other legal rulings in Islamic *sharī'a*, even though this precedence has yet to be formalized into a rigorous legal methodology. The problem has been compounded in recent years as Ghulam Ahmad's *khalīfas* have acquired a status that is comparable to the familiar Shi'i notion of the infallible imam, in the sense that the Ahmadi *khalīfa* gives divinely inspired legal injunctions that cannot be breached.⁴⁹ The frequent assertion that the Ahmadi *khalīfa* is chosen by God is

⁴⁹ It may also be useful to compare the role of the Ahmadi *khalīfa* to that of the Aga Khan in the Isma'ili tradition. Antonio Gualtieri commented on his experiences with the Ahmadi community and made some interesting observations on the essential role of the Ahmadi *khalīfa* 'in bridging the divine-human gulf.' See Antonio Gualtieri, *The Ahmdais: Community, Gender, and Politics in a Muslim*

steadily becoming indoctrinated,⁵⁰ which poses other problems when the opinions of two or more *khalīfas* clash or when the *khalīfa*'s opinion clashes with the opinion of Ghulam Ahmad himself. There is no doubt that Jama'at-i Ahmadiyya will one day have to grapple with the problem of defining a formal legal methodology of '*fiqh-i Ahmadiyya*' that clearly defines a framework to rank the classical sources like the Qur'an and hadith against Ghulam Ahmad's revelations, writings, and sayings in conjunction with the opinions of the presiding *khalīfa*.⁵¹ At present, it appears rather informally that the opinion of the presiding *khalīfa* takes precedence over all of the above, but once again this has yet to be formalized into doctrine.⁵² Comparatively, the process of formalization took centuries to develop in Sunni and Shi'a Islam after a clear *khalīfa* or *imām* had ceased to exist, which drew attention to the need for a more rigorous legal methodology.

Society (London: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2004), pp. 38-44. The quotation is taken from p. 38.

⁵⁰ This sentiment appears to have been present in some form following the elections of virtually every Ahmadi *khalīfa*, but it appears to have first been emphasized in this way following the Lahori-Qadiani split in 1914. It resurfaced several times since then, including during Mirza Mahmud Ahmad's lengthy final illness, and has once again become a prominent theme in Ahmadi Islam today. See *Review of Religions* (July 1956) Vol. 50, No. 7, pp. 503-505, 521-524; see also *Review of Religions* (October 2007) Vol. 102, No. 10, pp. 48-51.

⁵¹ Ahmadi's claim to base their legal methodology primarily on the Hanafi *madhhab*, but they clearly reject strict adherence to any particular school of thought, which is most likely a direct result of Ghulam Ahmad's *Ahl-i Hadith* influence. In practice, Ahmadi's clearly prefer to obey the rulings of the presiding *khalīfa* under the presumption that his living awareness, and potentially his divine connection, makes him better equipped to address contemporary issues more appropriately as they arise. There are, however, two short volumes of Ahmadi legal rulings which were recently published by a committee of missionaries as a guideline for basic family issues and prayer in Jama'at-i Ahmadiyya. See *Fiqh-i Ahmadiyya* 2 vols. (Rabwah: Zia Islam Press, 1983?).

⁵² Humphrey Fisher presented an account of how the folding of the arms in prayer had become an issue amongst the West African diaspora community of Ahmadi's and the predominantly Maliki locals. This difference of opinion does not pose a problem between two conflicting schools of *fiqh*, which acknowledge the validity of both positions. However, the folding of the arms posed a serious problem for Ahmadi missionaries in the 1950s who had trouble committing to a particular school of thought, but instead would assert their allegiance to the *khalīfat al-masīh* and the Promised Messiah. See Humphrey J. Fisher, *Ahmadiyyah*, p. 20.

It is clear that this process of formalization for Jama'at-i Ahmadiyya will require an official position on the nature of Mirza Ghulam Ahmad's prophethood and the authority of his revelations in relation to the inspiration of his spiritual successors. This is not to suggest that Ghulam Ahmad never explicitly addressed the issue of his own legal authority. There is certainly the potential for a precedence in one instance where Ghulam Ahmad openly stated that the revelations (*ilhām* and *kashf*) received by the people of revelation (*ahl-i kashf*) are on the same level as hadith in terms of their legal authority. In this sense, he claimed to have complete autonomy in his legal discretion to make legal rulings as a *mujtahid*, however he saw fit.⁵³ Although this is a clear contradiction of classical legal theory and *usūl al-fiqh*, it is sufficient for our purposes to recognize that the potential for grounding this legal methodology has yet to be formalized.⁵⁴

If one could determine exactly what Ghulam Ahmad intended regarding his spiritual status it would make addressing the question of authority much easier. Although the most imperative question in relation to Ghulam Ahmad's prophethood may revolve around the question of authority, there are a number of other questions that must be considered first. Many of these issues revolve around a clarification of his path to prophethood. There is nothing that explicitly details how Ghulam Ahmad

⁵³ For the full discussion regarding the authority of Ghulam Ahmad's revelations in relation to hadith, see Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, *Izāla-i Awhām*, in *Rūhānī Khazā'in*, Vol. 3, pp. 175-177. For a more general commentary that broadly outlines Ghulam Ahmad's position on hadith, see the two books entitled, *al-Haqq*, in *Rūhānī Khazā'in*, Vol. 4.

⁵⁴ There is one instance where Ghulam Ahmad provided a bibliographic breakdown of classical sources in terms of their relation to the traditional Islamic sciences. Although the books essentially represent a cataloguing of the first *khalīfa* Nur al-Din's personal library, they are a potential starting place for future Ahmadis who wish to formalize their religious methodology. The list of approved sources are organized in terms their respective disciplines including hadith, *tafsīr*, grammar, history, *fiqh*, *usūl al-fiqh*, *kalām*, logic, Sufism, medicine, and many more. It is interesting to note that Ghulam Ahmad chose to list books of hadith before books of *tafsīr*, which may or may not be a reflection of his *Ahl-i Hadīth* background. See Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, *al-Balāgh*, in *Rūhānī Khazā'in*, Vol. 13, pp. 458-469.

acquired prophethood or what type of prophethood it is possible for one to acquire. We saw above that Ghulam Ahmad added a number of qualifiers to his prophetic status by using various prefixed terms to limit his prophethood. It is unclear whether these qualifiers were intended to create a qualitative or a quantitative distinction in his prophetic status. When Ghulam Ahmad referred to himself as being a partial (*juzwī*) prophet, he made a quantitative distinction about his prophecy, which he often justified by referring to the famous hadith about true dreams being 1/46 of prophecy.⁵⁵ In this sense, Ghulam Ahmad considered his portion of prophecy authentic but numerically incomplete. What is often overlooked when relying on this hadith is that it admits that Ghulam Ahmad's prophecy was incomplete by 45/46 parts or 97.8 percent. However, the importance for Ahmadis is that his prophecy was genuine and authentic. In other places where Ghulam Ahmad described his prophecy with terms like *burūzī* or *zillī*, he appeared to be making a qualitative distinction about his prophethood. In this sense, he was not the same type of prophet as those who came before him, but qualitatively a rather different one. That Ghulam Ahmad drew both qualitative and quantitative distinctions about his prophethood is paradoxical, but it was this contradictory and ambiguous usage of the terminology of prophethood that allowed (Ghulam Ahmad and) Jama'at-i Ahmadiyya to infer whatever they liked about his status. Sustaining these ambiguities indefinitely has

⁵⁵ Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, *Tawzīh-i Marām*, in *Rūhānī Khazā'in*, Vol. 3, pp. 60-61; see also *Elucidation of Objectives*, pp. 17-18. In the original Arabic text, Ghulam Ahmad said that this type of prophetic revelation was given to the elite saints (*khawāss al-awliyā*), which is an interesting statement because the *awliyā* (saints) are not prophets. It often seems like Ghulam Ahmad's conception of *nubuwwa* (prophethood) was much closer to a traditional notion of *wilāya* (sainthood) rather than anything else. At times in Ghulam Ahmad's writings, the two appear to be indistinguishable.

allowed for some indeterminate connection to prophethood to be invariably present in Ahmadi Islam.

One more question regarding the acquisition of Ghulam Ahmad's prophethood relates to the grammatical objects of the terms *burūz* and *zill*. As we have seen above, in some accounts, Ghulam Ahmad had based his claims of prophethood largely on the death of Jesus. Since Jesus had died a natural death and would not return from the heavens, Ghulam Ahmad had been raised by God in the image of Jesus. Given that Ghulam Ahmad was the second coming of Jesus, he became the second messiah and acquired a prophetic status in the likeness of the first prophet Jesus. In other accounts, Ghulam Ahmad described his absolute and complete devotion to the Prophet Muhammad by employing the Sufi concept of *fanā fī 'l-rasūl* in an unusually literal sense. Since Ghulam Ahmad had adhered to the sunna so closely and devoted his life to mimicking every virtue of the Prophet Muhammad, he became Muhammad's *burūz* (manifestation). His being itself was destroyed in his intense love for the Prophet and he acquired the being of his master, Muhammad. In this explanation, Ghulam Ahmad's prophethood was a *zill* (shadow) of the prophethood of Muhammad. This justification may also explain why many, if not most, of Ghulam Ahmad's revelations were simply verses of the Qur'an, which he claimed were re-revealed to him by God.⁵⁶

These two scenarios are problematic for the simple reason that in the first case, Ghulam Ahmad's prophethood results from him being a copy of Jesus, whereas in the second case, his prophethood results from him being a copy of Muhammad.

⁵⁶ See Yohanan Friedmann, *Prophecy Continuous*, pp. 136-137, in which Friedmann detailed the relation between Ghulam Ahmad's Arabic revelations and the Qur'an, hadith, and other classical sources.

When taken together, it is not clear who Ghulam Ahmad imitated to acquire his prophethood. The two conflicting accounts inconsistently detailed his ascent to prophethood. Perhaps one explanation could be that his messiahship resulted from copying Jesus whereas his prophethood resulted from copying Muhammad. Another explanation may be that the chronology of his particular advent, perhaps in some metaphysical way, allowed for the culmination of prophecy through his particular prophethood which represented all of the previous prophets universally. There are passages in Ghulam Ahmad's works, which suggest that he was indeed a manifestation of all of the prophets. In one place, when discussing the magnitude of his divine mission, he specifically listed the names of Adam, Seth, Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Ishmael, Jacob, Joseph, Moses, David, Jesus, Muhammad, and Ahmad as being prophets who were all manifest within him.⁵⁷ This explanation was far less common, but it still contributed to the problem of acquisition. In any case, Ghulam Ahmad's prophethood was vicarious in nature and contingent on at least one unrestricted and independent prophet who came before him. Since Jesus cannot return, Ghulam Ahmad appears in the place of Jesus; or since his being became absorbed in the being of Muhammad, he may now function on the Prophet's behalf. It will be interesting to see if Jama'at-i Ahmadiyya further develops the idea of vicarious prophethood in the future, either through Ghulam Ahmad's successors or through any other potential Ahmadi claimants to prophethood. It will be even more interesting if Ghulam Ahmad's contingent prophethood serves as the basis for the prophethood of other

⁵⁷ See Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, *Haqiqat al-Wahy*, in *Rūhānī Khazā'in*, Vol. 22, p. 76 in the footnote. Ghulam Ahmad said that his being Muhammad was his most perfect manifestation (*mazhar-i atamm*), which he further explained as being the *zill* (shadow) of Muhammad.

potential claimants within the newly developing Ahmadi tradition.⁵⁸ It would be rather disappointing, considering the sophistication of Ahmadi prophetology, if one day Jama'at-i Ahmadiyya concluded that prophecy ended with Mirza Ghulam Ahmad. This could potentially give way to several iterations of surrogate prophets who vicariously absorb a little less prophethood than their respective predecessors.⁵⁹

Jama'at-i Ahmadiyya had two ways of addressing these questions of authority, which eventually manifested themselves in the Lahori-Qadiani split following the deaths of Mirza Ghulam Ahmad and his first successor. On one hand, authority was left with Ghulam Ahmad and with the individual's interpretation of Ghulam Ahmad. And on the other hand, authority was consigned to a formalized institution of *khilāfat-i Ahmadiyya*. To see how the Jama'at interpreted these claims

⁵⁸ The idea of regulating subsequent Ahmadi prophets is not speculation, as there have already been several examples of inspired figures in Ahmadi Islam. In the footnote of the polemic tract *His Holiness*, the author wrote: 'One Chiragh Din claimed to be a prophet during Ghulam Ahmad's lifetime and was excommunicated by the Messiah. Abdullah Timapuri, Ahmad Nur Kabuli, and Yar Muhammad Qadiani have also advanced similar claims. Zaheer-ud-Din Aroopi is now an Emeritu[s]-prophet. Ghulam Muhammad of Lahore styles himself "the promised son."' See Phoenix, *His Holiness* (Lahore: Sh. Muhammad Ashraf, 1970), p. 151. It is worth noting here that Ahmad Nur Kabuli may not be an appropriate example. In his defence, Ahmadi Nur Kabuli suffered from a traumatic experience in Afghanistan as a disciple of Sahibzada 'Abd al-Latif, when he was punished severely for being Ahmadi. Amongst other methods of torture and abuse, Ahmad Nur Kabuli was permanently disfigured by having his nose cut off. Some Ahmadi elders, who met him in Qadian before his passing, believe that his maltreatment in Afghanistan may have compromised his sanity, see also chapter 5, 'The Role of Persecution', below. Howard Walter also wrote of some of these claimants including, 'Maulvī Abdulla of Timapur (a suburb of Shorapūr, in the Deccan) [who] had been successively Sunnite Muslim, Wāhhābī [*sic*], and Ahmadī, before he created his own sect, declaring, "I am the man from God: You must all follow me. I am the real Khalīfa of Qādiān." He has about three hundred disciples at present [in 1918], and is much more friendly to Christians than to Muslims.' Walter also mentioned that Chiragh Din of Jammu, another claimant, died in accordance to Ghulam Ahmad's prophecy. See H. A. Walter, *The Ahmadiya Movement* (London: Oxford University Press, 1918), pp. 45-46. There has been a recent claimant named Munir Ahmad Azim who claimed to be the promised reformer (*muslih maw'ūd*), the same title taken by Mirza Bashir al-Din Mahmud Ahmad. He described the challenges that he has faced with the two most recent Ahmadi *khaliḥas* in an interview, which is available on the website: <http://www.alghulam.com/ahmadiyyanews/Al-Mouslemeen-Interview.html> (October 2008).

⁵⁹ There are numerous passages in Ghulam Ahmad's writing that are capable of justifying future prophets within an Ahmadi framework. In one example, Ghulam Ahmad said that 30 antichrists (*dajjāl*) would appear in Islam, who demanded 30 messiahs to stop them, which in the original passage implied that Ghulam Ahmad was only one of these messiahs. See Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, *Izāla-i Awhām*, in *Rūhānī Khazā'in*, Vol. 3, p. 197.

of prophethood and responded to Ghulam Ahmad's divine mission, it is necessary to look more closely at the chaotic period that followed his death. We will see how the process of institutionalization began to formalize the ecstatic claims of the promised messiah and shifted Ahmadi theology away from the metaphysics of Sufi elitism towards the literalist conformity of mass market religion. This was facilitated by the abandonment of the Sufi context of Ghulam Ahmad's claims, which allowed for a more literal interpretation of his Sufi style metaphysics. Whereas in the beginning, there were only individual disciples struggling to understand the ecstatic experiences of their master, the formation of an organizational hierarchy introduced the type of consistent theological interpretations that accompany institutionalized religion. We will now turn our attention to how this process affected the Ahmadi identity and moulded the community in a way that more closely resembles the Jama'at of today.

Chapter 3

Authority, *Khilāfat*, and the Lahori-Qadiani Split

Interpreting the messianic claims of Mirza Ghulam Ahmad presented a challenge for the early Ahmadi community following its founder's death. In this chapter we will look at how unanswered questions surrounding Ghulam Ahmad's prophethood and the future leadership of the community resulted in the splitting of the movement into the Lahori and the Qadiani branches. We will look at how both groups used the same textual sources to justify their respective positions. As each faction began to formalize their interpretations of Ghulam Ahmad's spiritual claims, subtle changes in the Ahmadi belief system began to take place, which yielded changes in Ahmadi ritual practices. The Qadiani leadership institutionalized Ghulam Ahmad's charisma by forming a hierarchical organizational structure that was capable of embodying divine authority. We will see how these changes developed well beyond the split and influenced further changes in the Ahmadi identity.

3.1 – The Setting for the Split and its Circumstantial Context

Mirza Ghulam Ahmad passed away in the early morning hours of 26 May 1908 while visiting Lahore. His body was transported back to Qadian where his disciple and close companion Maulvi Hakim Nur al-Din led the funeral prayer after unanimously being chosen as his successor by those in attendance. Although the process may have taken some time, the decision was uncontested by the nearly 1200

members present who offered Nur al-Din their allegiance.¹ Nur al-Din had been the first one to take Ghulam Ahmad's *bay'at* in Ludhiana in 1889 and had always been regarded as one of his closest friends. During his reign as *khalīfa*, Nur al-Din did very little to assert his authority over the Jama'at. His mild mannered personality and strict adherence to Ghulam Ahmad had left little room for objections. It was not until his death six years later that the underlying differences in the Jama'at began to emerge. Tension had been mounting for some time when Nur al-Din passed away on 13 March 1914.² The primary source of these tensions were conflicting views of the future leadership of the Jama'at, which were based on different interpretations of Ghulam Ahmad's mission and claim. An underlying power struggle may have influenced the way in which these differences of opinion manifested themselves following Nur al-Din's death. We will first look at the objections from each camp and then explore some other possibilities that may have contributed to the split in Jama'at-i Ahmadiyya.

Mirza Bashir al-Din Mahmud Ahmad, the eldest son from Ghulam Ahmad's second marriage, had been the favoured candidate to take over the *khalīfat* upon Nur al-Din's demise. Whereas Nur al-Din had become the *khalīfa* without any disputes, Mahmud Ahmad's election was far more controversial. Although cultural mores placed an extraordinary value on Mirza Mahmud Ahmad being the eldest son of Ghulam Ahmad, he was only 25 when he was elected *khalīfat al-masīh* II on 14 March 1914 the day after Nur al-Din's passing. A minority group of roughly 50

¹ Dost Muhammad Shahid, *Tārīkh-i Ahmadiyya*, Vol. 3, (Rabwah, 1983), pp. 187-189; Muhammad Zafrulla Khan, *Hazrat Maulvi Nooruddeen Khalifatul Masih I* (London: The London Mosque, 1983?), pp. 103-108.

² Muhammad Zafrulla Khan, *Hazrat Maulvi Nooruddeen Khalifatul Masih I*, pp. 200-201.

members led by Maulana Muhammad ‘Ali, another close companion of Ghulam Ahmad, refused to give Mahmud Ahmad allegiance or accept his authority as their next *khalīfa*. Muhammad ‘Ali and his supporters soon decided to leave Qadian and set up their own organization in Lahore, from which their name ‘Lahoris’ is derived. The majority of members who stayed in Qadian retained the name ‘Qadianis’ from the context of this split.³ Maulana Muhammad ‘Ali had almost immediately published a few tracts detailing some of the group’s objections. However, the first publication to provide a comprehensive account of the grievances of the opposition party appeared in January 1918 in English under the heading *The Ahmadiyya Movement IV – The Split*. Since then, the book has undergone various revisions for subsequent editions, which have appeared under similar titles.

3.2 – Causes of the Split

Muhammad ‘Ali outlined three major objections to Mahmud Ahmad’s *khilāfat* in his book, *The Split*. The first objection was in regards to Mahmud Ahmad’s interpretations of a Qur’anic verse from *Sura al-Saff*, which describes how Jesus had prophesised the coming of the next prophet:

³ The term ‘Qadiani’ has developed a negative connotation and is often used in the pejorative in a derogatory tone to insult members of Jama‘at-i Ahmadiyya. The followers of Mirza Ghulam Ahmad refer to themselves as ‘Ahmadis’. In this context, the term ‘Qadiani’ is only being used to distinguish the followers of Mirza Mahmud Ahmad who remained in Qadian from the followers of Muhammad ‘Ali who migrated to Lahore and called themselves ‘Lahoris’.

Jesus, son of Mary, said, 'Children of Israel, I am sent to you by God, confirming the Torah that came before me and bringing good news of a messenger to follow me whose name will be Ahmad.'⁴

The verse is clear. Jesus addressed the Children of Israel and explained his mission as a fulfilment of the prophecies of the Torah and gave them the glad tidings of the forthcoming messenger, 'whose name will be Ahmad.' Some verses in the Gospel of John express similar sentiments to the Qur'an and are often referenced by Muslims as Jesus' prophecy for the coming of Muhammad.⁵ Muslims also use this Qur'anic verse as a confirmation of the Biblical prophecies by suggesting that Jesus informed his people of the coming of Muhammad, despite the fact that Jesus clearly stated that the messenger's name will be 'Ahmad' instead of 'Muhammad'.⁶ Traditionally, the overwhelming opinion of Muslim commentators has been that both names referred to the Prophet. The name Muhammad has a similar meaning to Ahmad and both were used synonymously by Muslims in reference to the Prophet. However, it is easy to see why some Ahmadi commentators were eager to establish a connection with Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, considering that the verse explicitly mentioned the name 'Ahmad'. Such an explicit reference in the Qur'an to a forthcoming messenger named Ahmad would certainly bolster the Ahmadi presentation of Ghulam Ahmad's prophethood.

⁴ See (61:6) in M.A.S. Abdel Haleem (trans.), *The Qur'an* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), p. 370.

⁵ See John 12:13, 14:16-17, 15:26, and 16:7.

⁶ Muhammad Asad noted in his commentary on the verse that the word used in the Biblical accounts is the Greek *paráklētos*, which is often translated as 'the Comforter'. He believed this to be a corruption of the word *periklytos*, 'the much praised', which was more appropriate as an exact translation of the original Aramaic *mawhamana*. Asad thought that the Aramaic *mawhamana* clearly resembles the two Arabic words, *Muhammad* and *Ahmad*, both of which are derived from the same root *hamida* meaning 'to praise'. See Muhammad Asad, *The Message of the Qur'an* (Gibraltar: Dar al-Andalus, 1980), p. 861.

Muhammad ‘Ali accused Mahmud Ahmad of exploiting the verse to claim that Jesus was speaking exclusively of his father. Conversely, Muhammad ‘Ali attempted to refute Mahmud Ahmad by suggesting that the verse referred exclusively to the Prophet Muhammad.⁷ Although the debate itself was straightforward, the implications of the debate were not simple. In refuting Mahmud Ahmad, Muhammad ‘Ali attempted to show that any Ahmadi who believed that the Qur’anic reference to Ahmad was referring to the Prophet Muhammad was directly contradicting Mahmud Ahmad’s exegesis and henceforth discharged of their loyalties to him as their *khalīfa*. Muhammad ‘Ali was attempting to discredit Mahmud Ahmad’s religious authority, his capabilities as a Qur’anic interpreter, and his competence as a *khalīfa*. Undermining Mahmud Ahmad’s authority would benefit the Lahori cause, if it convinced some members to abandon Mahmud Ahmad and the Qadianis. The underlying presumption in Muhammad ‘Ali’s argument was that adhering to Mahmud Ahmad’s interpretations of the Qur’an was a necessary part of the Qadiani belief system. Establishing his position was problematic because even though Mahmud Ahmad later admitted to maintaining the belief that the verse prophesied the coming of his father, he acknowledged that it could be interpreted both ways, since the Qur’an could be interpreted in many ways. Mahmud Ahmad said that he did not consider it wrong or sinful for someone to disagree with him on the matter of Qur’anic interpretation.⁸ The disagreement did not touch on any of the core beliefs of

⁷ Maulana Muhammad ‘Ali, *The Split in the Ahmadiyya Movement*, (Columbus: Ahmadiyya Anjuman Isha‘at Islam Lahore, 1994), pp. 19-20.

⁸ See Mirza Bashir al-Din Mahmud Ahmad, *Ā’ina-yi sadāqat* (Lahore: 1921) in *Amwār al-‘Ulūm*, Vol. 6, (Tilford: Islam International Publications, n.d.), which is also available in translation as, *Truth about the Split* (Tilford: Islam International Publications, 2007), pp. 56-61, under the section ‘Alleged Innovations’.

Islam or of Ahmadiyyat, and so Mahmud Ahmad dismissed the issue as a difference of opinion rather than serious theological contradiction.

Muhammad ‘Ali’s following two objections were far more serious. It is well known that Mirza Ghulam Ahmad’s prophethood has always been a problem for the Sunni mainstream, but it is often overlooked that Ghulam Ahmad’s prophethood was also a serious problem within Jama‘at-i Ahmadiyya. Ghulam Ahmad’s claims of being the *mahdī* (guided one) and the *masīh* (messiah) were the most problematic because they implied that his spiritual status contained some underlying strand of prophethood. Muhammad ‘Ali consistently argued that Ghulam Ahmad had never claimed to be a ‘real’ or ‘perfect’ prophet in the way that Muhammad was a ‘real’ and ‘perfect’ prophet who administered the *sharī‘a*. The wording used by Ghulam Ahmad indicated that he claimed to be a *zillī* (shadowy) or a *burūzī* (manifestational) prophet by mimicking the perfections of Muhammad in a manner that achieved God’s pleasure and eventually earned him a status equivalent to the ranks of the prophets. Ghulam Ahmad never claimed to establish any new religious law, but rather reinterpreted and re-administered the original law in its intended form. Muhammad ‘Ali believed that Ghulam Ahmad’s prophethood was imperfect and that Mahmud Ahmad was dangerously approaching *kufī* (infidelity) by exaggerating his father’s claims.⁹ Mahmud Ahmad responded by saying that pinpointing the specific rank of his father overlooked the fact that he was chosen by God for his mission. The details of his prophetic rank were superfluous, because only God could control the rank of the prophets and designate their elevated spiritual status. He argued that it did not matter whether Ghulam Ahmad was more of a shadowy prophet or a manifestational

⁹ See Maulana Muhammad ‘Ali, *The Split in the Ahmadiyya Movement*, pp. 50-78.

prophet, since the important part was recognizing that his father's privileged status had been assigned by God Himself. Ultimately, Mahmud Ahmad concluded that Ghulam Ahmad was still a prophet of God regardless of the specific variety of his prophecy, since his status had been predicated on a type of prophethood that was assigned by Allah.¹⁰

For the Qadiani supporters of Mirza Mahmud Ahmad, Muhammad 'Ali's concerns were inconsequential. Ghulam Ahmad, in a manner of speaking, earned his prophethood through his strict adherence to the Prophet Muhammad. Since Ghulam Ahmad copied Muhammad's perfections so closely, he literally acquired the Prophet's perfections through identification with him. Qadiani supporters argued that it was pointless to say that one perfection was better than another, especially since they were referring to the same perfections that had been manifested in two different people. Mahmud Ahmad believed that Ghulam Ahmad's perfections were qualitatively identical to the perfections of the Prophet Muhammad. In mirroring Muhammad's actions so precisely, Ghulam Ahmad claimed the Prophet's perfections for himself through *fanā fi 'l-rasūl*, which further enabled him to acquire a prophetic identity.¹¹ The Lahori position was closer to the orthodox view in that copying the Prophet's good actions does not make one a prophet. However, since the Qadianis were utterly convinced that they had found in Mirza Ghulam Ahmad the example of an individual who somehow managed to capture and exhibit all of the spiritual perfections of the Prophet Muhammad, they chose to call him a prophet. From the

¹⁰ For Mahmud Ahmad's elaboration on this issue, see Mirza Bashir al-Din Mahmud Ahmad, *Haqīqat al-mubawwa*, in *Amvār al-'Ulūm*, Vol. 2, §10, pp. 345-613.

¹¹ Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, *Ek Ghalatī kā Izāla* in *Rūhānī Khazā'in*, Vol. 18, p 207; see also chapter 2 above, 'The Prophetic Claims of Mirza Ghulam Ahmad'.

Qadiani perspective, it was meaningless to say that Ghulam Ahmad's prophethood was imperfect, because imperfect prophethood did not exist as an attribute in itself, but rather was contingent on the negation of the positive attribute of perfect prophethood. From an analytical perspective, everyone and everything that is 'non-prophet' displays characteristics of imperfect prophethood. To suggest that there is some essential quality that is capable of making 'imperfect' prophethood is vacuous.

The framework of the Lahori-Qadiani debates revealed important details about the nature of Ahmadi beliefs. Given the circumstances and the rationalized manner of debating, it is difficult to avoid comparisons of Jama'at-i Ahmadiyya to the early Mu'tazila.¹² In these regards, Jama'at-i Ahmadiyya's internal debate on Ghulam Ahmad's perfections and prophethood is far more characteristic of literalist strands of Islam or speculative philosophy than Sufism. It is likely that the finer points of Ghulam Ahmad's prophethood did not matter to those members of the Jama'at who were more attracted to his esoteric insights or his attacks on other religions. In this sense, Mahmud Ahmad's explanation of Ghulam Ahmad's prophethood was far more satisfying to the non-intellectuals of the Jama'at who simply wanted to hear a yes or no. The breakdown necessary for pinpointing Ghulam Ahmad's spiritual standing amongst the countless number of known and unknown prophets in the greater Judeo-Christian-Islamic tradition was simply irrelevant to the lay Muslims who had recently been joining the Jama'at from the rural areas of the Punjab shortly following Ghulam Ahmad's death. Presumably many of these people, as is the case with many religious movements, were not looking for an intellectual

¹² See Fazlur Rahman, *Islam* (London: University of Chicago Press, 1979), pp. 85-99, which is the chapter on the development of Dialectical Theology; see also W. Montgomery Watt, *The Formative Period of Islamic Thought* (Oxford: Oneworld Publications, 2006).

debate, but rather a familiar type of spiritual satisfaction that corresponded with their folk Sufi, Sunni, Punjabi backgrounds.

Muhammad 'Ali's final objection in *The Split* was related to the status of non-Ahmadis. Mahmud Ahmad was accused of declaring anyone who did not enter into the *bay'at* of Mirza Ghulam Ahmad a *kāfir* (nonbeliever).¹³ In declaring that all non-Ahmadis were guilty of *kufir* (infidelity), Mahmud Ahmad was excluding his Jama'at from the rest of the Muslim *umma*. Although there were several examples in Ghulam Ahmad's life where religious rivals had declared him a *kāfir*, his response to these allegations was inconsistent. Ghulam Ahmad had initially hesitated in retaliating and was reluctant to react with his own declarations of *kufir*. He had refused his first *mubāhala* (prayer duel) challenges by saying that it was not proper for one to enter into such contests with other Muslims.¹⁴ Muhammad 'Ali used this point to insist that Ghulam Ahmad would never issue an unsolicited declaration of *kufir* against everyone who did not enter into his *bay'at*, even though he later did accept the *mubāhala* challenges from his Muslim opponents.¹⁵ Muhammad 'Ali viewed these instances as special cases that were directed at a specific group of people who were giving Ghulam Ahmad difficulty with his mission. He did not think that they were intended generally for all Muslims, since the idea of declaring the entire Muslim *umma* to be *kāfirs* was absurd. However, this was precisely the position that Muhammad 'Ali attributed to Mahmud Ahmad by stating that 'all those who have not

¹³ Maulana Muhammad 'Ali, *The Split in the Ahmadiyya Movement*, p. 79.

¹⁴ A. R. Dard, *Life of Ahmad* (Lahore: Tabshir, 1948), pp. 178, 374.

¹⁵ Maulana Muhammad 'Ali, *The Split in the Ahmadiyya Movement*, pp. 81-83.

entered into the bai'at of the Promised Messiah are outside the circle of Islam, i.e. non-Muslims.¹⁶

Ghulam Ahmad did acknowledge that anyone who affirmed the *kalima* or basic creed of Islam was a Muslim, unless they called him a *kāfir* in which case the *kufir* would revert back to them.¹⁷ In this case, Ghulam Ahmad elaborated that even the followers of the people who had declared him a *kāfir* were *kāfirs* by default, especially if they continued to follow their scholars without protest.¹⁸ For everyone else, he said that denying his mission would only lead towards sin, since it was deviating from the straight path, but importantly, it was not *kufir*. Ghulam Ahmad defended his position by asserting that he had brought no new *sharī'a* and was not a law-bearing prophet. He said that only those people became *kāfir* who denied the legislative prophets.¹⁹ Contrary to this view, in other books Ghulam Ahmad did claim that denying his mission was equivalent to denying Allah, and thus anyone who rejected him was a *kāfir*.²⁰ He elaborated by asserting his status as the promised messiah and the culmination of the prophetic tradition. His being and his teachings were identical to those of Muhammad, so by rejecting Ghulam Ahmad and his teachings, one was rejecting Muhammad. He maintained that he had been shown divine signs in support of his mission and that these signs were a direct manifestation

¹⁶ Ibid., p. 79.

¹⁷ The *kalima* is the statement, 'there is no god but Allah, and Muhammad is his messenger (*lā ilāha illa 'llāh muhammad rasūl allāh*).'

¹⁸ This is taken from an interview with Ghulam Ahmad during his final visit to Lahore in the weeks before his death. The original reference was cited as being from the periodical *Badr* on (24 May 1908), which is difficult to find, but it is easily available elsewhere in, Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, *Malfuzāt*, Vol. 10, (Rabwah: 1967), pp. 376-377. To legitimize his position, Ghulam Ahmad cited a hadith from *Sahīh Bukhārī*, *Kitāb al-Ādāb*, which affirmed that anyone who wrongfully called a believer a *kāfir* was a *kāfir* himself.

¹⁹ Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, *Tiryāq al-Qulūb*, (1902), in *Rūhānī Khazā'in*, Vol. 15, pp. 258-259.

²⁰ Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, *Barāhīn-i Ahmadiyya*, Vol. 5 (1905), in *Rūhānī Khazā'in*, Vol. 21, p. 82.

of God's power. With this rationale, Ghulam Ahmad claimed that by rejecting his mission, one was rejecting the divine signs that had been shown in his favour, and therefore one was rejecting God Himself.²¹

In actuality, this problem of *takfir* (calling someone a nonbeliever) was a subset of the previous problem of Ghulam Ahmad's prophethood. If one could pinpoint Ghulam Ahmad's prophetic status with some degree of certainty, then perhaps one could gauge the status of those who rejected his message. The case of legislative prophets was much easier for Ahmadis to evaluate. By definition, legislative prophets brought a message that was legally binding in terms of religious law. If Ghulam Ahmad's message was binding, then anyone who rejected him, or perhaps did not enter into his *bay'at*, could be considered a *kāfir*. However, since Ghulam Ahmad claimed to be a non-legislative prophet, rejecting his mission should not result in *kufir*. According to Muhammad 'Ali, there was a distinction between active rejection and passive rejection of Ghulam Ahmad's mission. Actively rejecting Ghulam Ahmad entailed being familiar with his writings, his mission, and his claims before consciously refusing to enter into his *bay'at* and denying his mission. Passive rejection of Ghulam Ahmad referred to someone who was unaware of his mission and unaware of Jama'at-i Ahmadiyya. Muhammad 'Ali had accused Mahmud Ahmad of not distinguishing between the two and deeming both active rejection and passive rejection of his father's mission to be *kufir*.²²

According to Mirza Mahmud Ahmad, although Ghulam Ahmad did not introduce any new religious laws, the laws that he was preaching were still binding,

²¹ Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, *Haqīqat al-Wahy*, in *Rūhānī Khazā'in*, Vol. 22, pp. 120, 163-165, 178.

²² Maulana Muhammad 'Ali, *The Split in the Ahmadiyya Movement*, pp. 79-80.

just as they had always been, since they were first revealed to Muhammad. With this rationale, Mahmud Ahmad maintained that rejecting Ghulam Ahmad was equivalent to rejecting the prophecies made by Muhammad, which is the same position that was already expressed above.²³ In later years, Mahmud Ahmad eventually revised his position by attempting to redefine the word '*kāfir*'. He claimed that linguistically it was not necessary for a *kāfir* to refer to a non-Muslim, but that the word '*kāfir*' had more general usages that included other connotations of denial. He said that when he used the word '*kāfir*' in reference to anyone who did not enter into the *bay'at* of his father, it only meant that they had denied the promised messiah and the *mahdī*, which was still *kufir* but not *kufir* of Islam. Mahmud Ahmad argued that these *kāfirs* were not considered non-Muslims, but that they were only considered non-Ahmadis.²⁴ In many ways, Mahmud Ahmad's reasoning resulted in a trivial position that was redundant. Of course anyone who did not enter into *bay'at* with Ghulam Ahmad was a non-Ahmadi. The argument was circular, and affirming this type of *kufir* is a tautology. Nevertheless, Mahmud Ahmad's interpretation stuck and was soon adopted as the official Jama'at position on non-Ahmadis. At present, Jama'at-i Ahmadiyya maintains that non-Ahmadis are *kāfirs* inasmuch that they reject the Imam of the age, which calls into question the sincerity of their faith.

It is clear that the debates that emerged during the Lahori-Qadiani split had an impact on the identity of average Ahmadis. The Jama'at's preoccupation with speculative theology, which had surrounded Ghulam Ahmad's claims of

²³ See Mirza Bashir al-Din Mahmud Ahmad, *Truth about the Split*, pp. 134-179, particularly the sections in relation to his article on 'Kufr-o-Islam'.

²⁴ See Mirza Bashir al-Din Mahmud Ahmad's article under Hazrat Khalifatul Masih II, 'Are non-Ahmadis Kafirs?', *Review of Religions* (July 1935) Vol. 34, No. 7, pp. 241-256.

prophethood, was surprisingly not limited to a small group of intellectuals. However, it is likely that participation in these debates isolated large portions of the early Ahmadi population. Realistically, the majority of Ahmadis had minimal influence on the actions or the outcome of the Lahori dissenters and the Qadiani leadership. Ultimately, the Lahori perspective adopted a softer position that was more consistent with Sunni orthodoxy,²⁵ while the Qadianis emphasized the controversial aspects of Ghulam Ahmad's inner religious experiences and prophethood, and they formulated religious doctrine that was based on it.

In many ways, the problem of Ghulam Ahmad's prophethood and his position on *takfīr* was a problem of semantics. It was a problem of distinguishing the correlations between the ranks associated with a *muhaddath* (one to whom God speaks), a *mujaddid* (renewer of the faith), a *bur'ūzī nabī* (manifestational prophet), a *zillī nabī* (shadowy prophet), a *juzwī nabī* (partial prophet), a *tashrī' nabī* (law-bearing prophet), a *lā tashrī' nabī* (non law-bearing prophet), a *rasūl* (messenger), a *mahdī* (guided one), a *masīh* (messiah), and so forth. Correspondingly, it was equally impossible to determine the exact degree of a *kāfir's kufīr*. The theological dispute was largely dependent on the semantics of the terminology, which had virtually no precedent in the Qur'an, sunna, or the greater Islamic tradition in the context of this debate. Given the impossibility in determining the spiritual rank of any person, much of the Lahori-Qadiani debate developed a political dimension.

Muhammad 'Alī had initially blamed the unorthodox interpretations of Ghulam Ahmad's prophetic status on Mahmud Ahmad's youth, inexperience, and

²⁵ In many ways the Lahoris have dissolved back into Sunni Islam although they still maintain their reverence for Mirza Ghulam Ahmad. They do not have sharply distinctive features in the same way as the Qadianis and largely define themselves in reaction to the Qadianis at present.

excessive admiration for his father. In the earliest explanations, Muhammad 'Ali, as a faithful disciple of Ghulam Ahmad, had also included an apologetic excuse for Mahmud Ahmad, perhaps to avoid maligning his reputation. He blamed the exaggerations on a rogue Ahmadi innovator named Muhammad Zahir al-Din who had allegedly corrupted Mahmud Ahmad's understanding of his father's rank. Zahir al-Din had written two tracts in which he attributed perfect prophethood to Mirza Ghulam Ahmad.²⁶ The first tract, *Nabī Allāh kā Zahūr* (The Appearance of the Prophet of God), was published in April 1911 and was supposedly the first time that Ghulam Ahmad's name was explicitly used in a way that inferred perfect prophethood. Muhammad 'Ali said that Zahir al-Din was the first member of Jama'at-i Ahmadiyya to entertain the heterodox view that Muhammad was not the final prophet. By July 1912, the controversy had reached Hakim Nur al-Din, who was then *khalīfat al-masīh* I, and Zahir al-Din was excommunicated from the Jama'at on charges of blasphemy.²⁷ Within a month, the conflict had subsided and Nur al-Din permitted Zahir al-Din to re-enter the Jama'at in accordance with his repentance.²⁸ In April 1913, Zahir al-Din published a second tract called *Ahmad Rasūl Allāh kā Zahūr* (The Appearance of Ahmad the Messenger of God), which apparently displayed a reworded *kalima* on the title page that said, '*lā ilāha illa 'llāh ahmad rasūl allāh* (there is no god but Allah; and Ahmad is the messenger of Allah)', instead of, 'Muhammad is the messenger of Allah'.²⁹ As one would suspect, Zahir al-Din was

²⁶ Maulana Muhammad 'Ali, *The Split in the Ahmadiyya Movement*, p. 10.

²⁷ Maulana Muhammad 'Ali cited the original letter of expulsion as appearing in *Badr*, (11 July 1912). He provides an excerpt of the original in, *Ibid.*, pp. 10-11.

²⁸ Maulana Muhammad 'Ali cited the follow-up letter as originally appearing in *Badr*, (1 August 1912) in, *Ibid.*, p. 11.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 11.

excommunicated from the Jama‘at for a second time. Interestingly, Muhammad ‘Ali said that the official reason for Zahir al-Din’s second expulsion from the Jama‘at was related to his unsuccessful attempt to claim the *khilāfat* for himself.³⁰ It is difficult to determine what influence Zahir al-Din had on Mahmud Ahmad, who was still in his early twenties at the time. Mahmud Ahmad denied the allegations in his response to Muhammad ‘Ali and renounced any close affiliation with Zahir al-Din, despite his continued belief that Ghulam Ahmad was a prophet.³¹

Although the issue of Ghulam Ahmad’s prophethood is crucial to reconciling the conflict between Ahmadiyyat and orthodox Islam, Muhammad ‘Ali’s criticisms of the Qadianis were often presented in a way that emphasized character flaws in Mahmud Ahmad rather than the issues at hand. Muhammad ‘Ali’s attacks on Mahmud Ahmad were often expressed in terms of his disapproval of the direction of leadership for the Jama‘at, rather than his theological inconsistencies. Given the commonalities between the Lahoris and the Qadianis, it seems odd that the two camps could not resolve their subtle differences regarding the semantics of Ghulam Ahmad’s prophetic status. Muhammad ‘Ali’s repeated references to Mahmud Ahmad’s immaturity and incompetence as a leader suggest a different motive underlying the split, which may revolve around a hidden desire for the *khilāfat*. Although this is the most common explanation for the split given by the Qadianis in casual conversation, the idea itself may not be unfounded. Muhammad ‘Ali clearly had more appropriate qualifications for being the *khalīfa* than Mahmud Ahmad,

³⁰ Ibid., pp. 11-12.

³¹ The full response is available in Mirza Bashir al-Din Mahmud Ahmad, *Truth about the Split*, pp. 96-120, in the section on ‘Factors Relating to Zahiruddin’s expulsion’, and also pp. 121-123, under ‘Zahiruddin’s Second Expulsion’.

whose only relevant qualification was his lineage. Muhammad 'Ali's knowledge of Ahmadi Islam is apparent from his numerous publications on the Jama'at, both before and after the split. He was a close companion of Ghulam Ahmad, the first editor of the *Review of Religions*, a translator of the Qur'an, an accomplished attorney, and a professor of English, but yet he never openly solicited the position.³² It is unlikely that the split in Jama'at-i Ahmadiyya was based solely on personal problems, but it does seem reasonable to suggest that many of the early disputes regarding the terminology of Ghulam Ahmad's prophethood could have been resolved had they taken place between two different people. In the end, the differences proved to be impossible to resolve when Muhammad 'Ali and his supporters left Qadian for good, nearly six weeks after Nur al-Din's demise. On 2 May 1914, Muhammad 'Ali and Khwaja Kamal al-Din, another early missionary and companion of Ghulam Ahmad, formed the Ahmadiyya Anjuman-i Isha'at-i Islam in Lahore.³³

Mahmud Ahmad went on to become the most influential *khalīfa* in Ahmadi history and eventually took the title *muslih maw'ūd* (the promised reformer). The Qadianis have always regarded his youth and inexperience, which characterized his early *khilāfat*, as divine proof of the legitimacy of his authority. The issue of *khilāfat* eventually overshadowed the Lahori-Qadiani split and displaced the deeper problems related to Ghulam Ahmad's prophethood which we discussed above. The split allowed the Jama'at to establish formal positions on Ghulam Ahmad's messianic claims and initiated a process of institutionalization that formally defined an overt authority for the community. The institution of *khilāfat* provided a means for this

³² For the biography of Maulana Muhammad 'Ali, see Muntaz Ahmad Faruqi, *Muhammad Ali: The Great Missionary of Islam* (Lahore: Ahmadiyya Anjuman Isha'at-i Islam, 1966).

³³ Maulana Muhammad 'Ali, *The Split in the Ahmadiyya Movement*, p. 2.

process to take place by centralizing authority for average Ahmadis. Once the split had taken place, justifications for the newly established doctrine of *khilāfat-i Ahmadiyya* needed to be retroactively rooted in Ghulam Ahmad's thought in order to give legitimacy to Mahmud Ahmad's authority. We will now turn our attention to the doctrinal justifications for *khilāfat-i Ahmadiyya* and see how the creation of an institutionalized *khilāfat* enabled Ghulam Ahmad's charismatic authority to be persevered.

3.3 – *Al-Wasiyyat* (The Will)

Although Ahmadis draw parallels between their caliphate and the first Islamic caliphate that followed the death of Muhammad, Ghulam Ahmad's succession developed rather differently. On 20 December 1905, Ghulam Ahmad wrote a short tract known as *al-Wasiyyat* (The Will) in anticipation of his death in 1908. The purpose of the tract was to announce Ghulam Ahmad's intentions and instructions for the community after his demise. Ironically, the book was unsuccessful in avoiding the later disputes between the Lahoris and the Qadianis when different interpretations of the text led to different conceptions of the organizational structure of the Jama'at. The Qadianis prioritized *khilāfat* whereas the Lahoris preferred spreading the community's authority into an administrative body or *anjuman*. Much of *al-Wasiyyat*, in addition to Ghulam Ahmad's own will, presented his inheritance guidelines for the creation of an endowment that would be subsidized by the assets bequeathed by Jama'at-i Ahmadiyya's religious elite.

Ghulam Ahmad's impetus for the scheme was based on a vision of an angel who appeared to him and warned him of his imminent death. Ghulam Ahmad was shown a special plot of land on which the angel was measuring out his future gravesite. The dirt surrounding the gravesite was described by Ghulam Ahmad to be shining brighter than silver. He was shown a place called *bahishtī maqbara* (heavenly graveyard) where the heaven bound members of his Jama'at ultimately would be laid to rest.³⁴ The enigmatic experience inspired Ghulam Ahmad to find a plot of land that could serve as this *bahishtī maqbara* and fulfil his divine vision. Ghulam Ahmad proposed that his own plot of land, which was adjacent to the family orchard in Qadian, be used to construct the *bahishtī maqbara*. He specified that only those members who were pure of heart (*pāk dil*) and who gave precedence to the true faith (*haqīqat dīn*) over worldliness would be given the privilege of participating in this divinely ordained scheme. He compared these exceptional members of his Jama'at to the companions of the Prophet Muhammad in their authenticity (*sidq*) and their detachment from the world.³⁵ To demonstrate this detachment, Ghulam Ahmad required potential candidates to donate at least one tenth of their inheritable wealth and assets to the Jama'at, in order to fund the propagation of Islam and to carry out the teachings of the Qur'an.³⁶ Along with some logistical details about the collection and the allocation of these endowments, Ghulam Ahmad concluded his scheme after giving Ahmadi hopefuls the opportunity of being buried in the *bahishtī maqbara* alongside their master, the promised messiah.

³⁴ Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, *al-Wasiyyat*, in *Rūhānī Khazā'in*, Vol. 20, pp. 315-317.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 316.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 319.

The *al-Wasiyyat* scheme represented Jama'at-i Ahmadiyya's first ever donation system and established a benchmark for financial sacrifice in the Jama'at. Prior to the *al-Wasiyyat* scheme, Ahmadis only paid the zakat in accordance with the rest of the Muslim *umma*. If a situation arose in which funding was required for a specific project, Ghulam Ahmad made a special appeal to his disciples, but there were no other financial obligations that were exclusive to the Jama'at. The *al-Wasiyyat* scheme offered individual Ahmadis the means to participate in a divinely ordained venture whose end result provided them with reasonable confidence in this world that they would enter paradise in the next world.³⁷ Even though it was never intended for every Ahmadi to partake in *al-Wasiyyat*, the exclusivity of the scheme contributed to the notion of a separate Ahmadi identity. This was the first step towards giving Jama'at-i Ahmadiyya the consistent and continuous funding that is necessary for financial independence, self-sufficiency, and a lasting autonomy from non-Ahmadi sources.

Ghulam Ahmad founded an *anjuman* (committee), which soon came to be known as the Sadr Anjuman Ahmadiyya (Executive Ahmadiyya Committee), to handle the collection and distribution of the revenues generated from the *al-Wasiyyat* scheme.³⁸ He placed an extraordinary amount of authority in the hands of one singular body by combining the responsibilities for the collection and distribution of funds. He personally presided over the Sadr Anjuman until his death, even though

³⁷ There is a common misconception amongst Ahmadis and non-Ahmadis that burial in *bahishī maqbara* guarantees one entrance into paradise, even though Ghulam Ahmad explicitly rejected this view in *al-Wasiyyat*. Contrary to popular belief, Ghulam Ahmad made it clear that there was no inherent quality in the land that automatically grants one entrance into paradise. He said that no one would enter paradise simply by being buried in the graveyard, but rather only those who were already bound for heaven would be permitted to be buried in the *bahishī maqbara*. See the footnote in, Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, *al-Wasiyyat*, in *Rūhānī Khazā'in*, Vol. 20, p. 321.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 318.

Nur al-Din officially occupied the most senior office of president.³⁹ The roles of the office bearers are vague, but they were definitely subservient to Ghulam Ahmad. Designating a hierarchy only posed a problem after Ghulam Ahmad's death when the community, on its own accord, decided to elect a separate *khalīfa*. It is not surprising that Nur al-Din served as the first president of the Sadr Anjuman Ahmadiyya before becoming *khalīfa*. Similarly, Nur al-Din appointed Mahmud Ahmad to head the Sadr Anjuman after becoming Ghulam Ahmad's first successor.⁴⁰

Ghulam Ahmad wrote an appendix to *al-Wasiyyat* about two weeks later on 6 January 1906 in which he elaborated the logistical details for the scheme and stipulated the necessary qualifications for being a member of the Sadr Anjuman Ahmadiyya. Section 16 of the appendix stated that at least two members of the Sadr Anjuman needed to be proficient in the Qur'an, hadith, and Arabic, as well as being versed in Ahmadi literature.⁴¹ Considering that the Sadr Anjuman Ahmadiyya as an organized body had the potential to succeed Ghulam Ahmad religiously and politically following his death, the minimum quota of two scholars seems rather low to establish significant religious authority. Perhaps this could be used to infer that Ghulam Ahmad never intended the Sadr Anjuman to have considerable religious authority, which may demand something like a *khilāfat*. Even though the size of the Sadr Anjuman was never predefined, the first committee only had six members excluding Ghulam Ahmad himself, which may suggest that it was intended to fulfil a

³⁹ Ibid., p. 330.

⁴⁰ There appears to be a trend developing in Ahmadi succession, because four of the five Ahmadi who became *khalīfat al-masīh* were serving as president of the Sadr Anjuman Ahmadiyya at the time of their predecessor's death.

⁴¹ Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, *al-Wasiyyat*, in *Rūhānī Khazā'in*, Vol. 20, p. 326.

purely administrative role.⁴² However, in some passages like section 13, Ghulam Ahmad said that the Sadr Anjuman would serve as his representative after his death.

Because the *anjuman* is the representative of God's appointed vicegerent, for this reason the *anjuman* will have to be completely free from all traces of worldliness and all its affairs should be extremely pure and founded on justice.

*(chūñke anjuman khudā ke muqarrar karda khalīfa kī jā-nishīn hay is liyē anjuman ko dunyā dārī ke rangōñ se bi-kullī pāk rahmā hogā awr us ke tamām mu'āmilāt nihāyat sāf awr insāf par mubnī honē chāhiyēñ).*⁴³

This was the only passage where Ghulam Ahmad used the word '*khalīfa*', and it was in reference to himself and his being represented by the Sadr Anjuman Ahmadiyya after his death. Ahmadis inferred the establishment of *khilāfat-i Ahmadiyya* from a different passage, where Ghulam Ahmad made provisions for the members of his community to accept *bay'at* on his behalf after his death.

Such persons will be selected according to the opinion of the believers. So whomever forty believers agree upon as competent to accept the *bay'at* from people in my name will be authorized to accept the *bay'at*. And he ought to make himself into an example for others. God has informed me that 'I will raise a person for your community (*jamā'at*) from your progeny, and I will distinguish him through his nearness [to God] and his revelations, and he will be a means to advance truth, and many people will accept truth'.

(ayse lōgōñ kā intakhāb mōminōñ ke rā'ē par hogā – pas jis shakhs kī nisbat chālīs mōmin ittifāq karēñge ke wo is bāt ke lā'iq hay ke mere nām par lōgōñ se bay'at le wo bay'at lene kā majāz hogā – awr chāhi'ē ke wo apne tā'ñ dūsroñ ke liyē namūna banāwe – khudā ne mujhe khabar dī hay ke mayñ terī jamā'at ke liyē terī-hī zurrīyat se ek shakhs ko qā'im karūñgā awr us ko apne qurb awr wahy se makhsūs

⁴² The minutes and attendance of the first meeting (29 January 1906) of the *Majlis-i Mu'tamidīn-i Sadr Anjuman Ahmadiyya* (Organization of the Trustees of the Executive Ahmadiyya Committee) is available in, *Ibid.*, pp. 330-332.

⁴³ Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, *al-Wasiyyat*, in *Rūhānī Khazā'in*, Vol. 20, p. 325.

*karūñgā awr us ke zarī'e se haq taraqqī karegā awr bahut se lōg sachā 'ī ko qabūl kareñge).*⁴⁴

This passage presents a challenge to the standard Qadiani interpretation in which it is impossible for there to be multiple *khalīfas* who are authorized to accept the *bay'at* at the same time. The passage shows that Ghulam Ahmad did not limit the number of people who were permitted to accept the *bay'at*, which means that the authority in question was not necessarily exclusive to one person. Any individual who acquired the confidence of forty believers had the potential to accept the *bay'at* in Ghulam Ahmad's name. Interestingly, Ghulam Ahmad did not allow for anyone to accept the *bay'at* in their own name. Although he prophesied that a member of his progeny would bring people towards truth (*haq*), he did not suggest that this confined the acceptance of the *bay'at* to the members of his progeny. The person from his progeny in question could have been one out of many people who were authorized to accept the *bay'at* in Ghulam Ahmad's name.

Taking *bay'at* is a standard feature in Sufi orders, where the authorized individual is often known as the *khalīfa*. It was common for the leader of the order to authorize several *khalīfas* to carry out his teachings before his death, although in many cases the *khilāfat* was hereditary.⁴⁵ With the exception of Nur al-Din, Jama'at-i Ahmadiyya adopted this practice, as did numerous Sufi orders in India, even though the Jama'at only acknowledged the authority of one *khalīfa* at a time. The reduction of the institution of *khilāfat-i Ahmadiyya* to one individual consolidated the domain of religious authority significantly. It seems odd that a prolific writer such as Mirza

⁴⁴ Ibid., p. 306, in footnote.

⁴⁵ Annemarie Schimmel, *Mystical Dimensions of Islam* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1975), p. 236.

Ghulam Ahmad would reduce his exposition of one of his Jama'at's most important institutions, *khilāfat-i Ahmadiyya*, to a mere footnote in one of his shorter texts. However, the institution of *khilāfat* became the primary seat of authority while the Sadr Anjuman Ahmadiyya took on a more supplementary role within this framework. According to the text, the Sadr Anjuman's authority was centralized in a headquarters which was to remain situated in Qadian.⁴⁶ In contrast, there were no geographical restrictions placed on the *khalīfa* whose authority could have arguably been shared between rival candidates. According to Ghulam Ahmad, the primary function of the Sadr Anjuman was to collect and distribute funds to support the propagation of Islam, whereas the individuals authorized to accept the *bay'at* were responsible for promoting spiritual guidance and gathering people to one faith.⁴⁷ At present, many Qadianis would differentiate between the spiritual authority of the *khalīfa* and the administrative authority of the Sadr Anjuman Ahmadiyya, even though the authority of the *khalīfa* remains supreme.

As a final instruction, Ghulam Ahmad ordered his community to wait for a second manifestation of God's power (*qudrat-i thānī* or *dūsarī qudrat*) and told them clearly that he himself was the first: 'I am an embodiment of God's power (*mayñ khudā kī ek mujassam qudrat hūñ*).'⁴⁸ He said that God always displayed two manifestations of power to dispel the two false joys (*dō jhūtī khūshāñ*) of the opponents.⁴⁹ He said that the second manifestation would descend from the heavens at an unknown time but that it was worth waiting for, 'because it is everlasting, and

⁴⁶ Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, *al-Wasiyyat*, in *Rūhānī Khazā'in*, Vol. 20, p. 326, in section 15 and also in the footnote.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 306-307, 318-319.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 306.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 305.

its continuity will not be broken until the day of judgment (*kyoñ-ke wo dā'imī hay jis kā silsila qiyāmat tak munqata' nahīñ hogā*).⁵⁰ Although the second manifestation was eternal and therefore preferable to first, it could not come until Ghulam Ahmad had passed away.⁵¹ Ahmadis now interpret the prophecies for the second manifestation to be implicit references to the institution of *khilāfat-i Ahmadiyya*. By combining Ghulam Ahmad's instructions for the *anjuman*, his stipulations for members of the community to accept *bay'at*, his prophecies for his blessed progeny, and the anticipation of God's second display of manifest power (*qudrat-i thānī*), the members of the Jama'at (both Lahoris and Qadianis) formed the institution of *khilāfat-i Ahmadiyya*. These instructions from *al-Wasiyyat* laid the foundations for Jama'at-i Ahmadiyya's two authoritative bodies, the Sadr Anjuman Ahmadiyya and *khilāfat-i Ahmadiyya*. Jama'at-i Ahmadiyya remained united within this framework of *khilāfat* throughout Nur al-Din's reign. It was not until Nur al-Din's death that tangential concerns stemming from the Lahori-Qadiani dispute led to a debate on the legitimacy of an authoritative institution of *khilāfat*. The Qadianis chose to give precedence to Mahmud Ahmad's *khilāfat* whereas the Lahoris rejected it in favour of their newly formed *anjuman*, the Ahmadiyya Anjuman-i Isha'at-i Islam Lahore.

In the years of Nur al-Din's *khilāfat* from 1908 to 1914, there was a consensus on the established framework for Jama'at-i Ahmadiyya's leadership, which allowed divergent views to exist within a singular community. Questions about leadership, the authority of the *khalīfa*'s religious interpretations, and the administrative structure for managing the community's affairs eventually led to irreconcilable differences

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ Ibid.

between the two camps. Although Muhammad ‘Ali did become the head of the Ahmadiyya Anjuman-i Isha‘at-i Islam Lahore, he never took the title ‘*khalīfa*’. Perhaps the authoritarian connotations associated with the *khilāfat* were simply too much for him, and so he took the title ‘*amīr*’ instead. In this role as the *amīr*, Muhammad ‘Ali maintained political authority over his community without imposing his religious rulings on his supporters in the same way that Mahmud Ahmad had done. The primary function of the *khalīfat al-masīh* under the reign of Nur al-Din still entailed presiding over the Sadr Anjuman Ahmadiyya, even though the Sadr Anjuman retained its appointed president. The divergent views the community’s leadership and the institutional responsibilities that they entailed, gradually developed as both groups continually pointed to the passages in *al-Wasiyyat* to validate their positions.

3.4 – Changes in the Ahmadi Belief System: From Theory to Practice

The split in Jama‘at-i Ahmadiyya left two sovereign factions with two divergent interpretations of Ghulam Ahmad’s message. The changes in ideology led to changes in the administrative structure and eventually led to changes in identity, even though both factions shared a common history through their founder and his first *khalīfa*. The problem of *takfīr* (calling someone a nonbeliever) began to have a sociological impact on members of the Qadiani Jama‘at who began separating themselves from non-Ahmadi Muslims during the prayer. Mirza Mahmud Ahmad forbade his disciples from praying behind non-Ahmadi Imams and from participating

in the funeral prayers of non-Ahmadi Muslims.⁵² The Lahori Jama'at expressed their outrage and accused Mahmud Ahmad of distorting Ghulam Ahmad's teachings and attempting to form his own religion.⁵³ The physical separation in congregational prayer made an undeniable statement to both insiders and outsiders and objectified what had previously been a theoretical debate. Internal differences in religious belief were manifesting themselves in external differences in religious practice.

Mahmud Ahmad soon placed restrictions on marriages with non-Ahmadis. Although the prohibition was more strictly enforced amongst Ahmadi women who desired to marry non-Ahmadi Muslim men, the ruling was applied to both genders.⁵⁴ This represented a critical change in the social structure for several families in the Jama'at who were now displaying their new Ahmadi identity through their social practices. Children born to Ahmadi parents were now being considered Ahmadis by birth, even though they were too young to take *bay'at*. This was a significant departure from most Sufi orders in the subcontinent whose members were still involved in every social aspect of Muslim civil society. A *bay'at* was typically a non-transferable allegiance between *murīd* and *murshid* (student and teacher), but the Ahmadi allegiance was now allowing Ahmadiyyat to be passed down from generation to generation as if it was a new religion.

⁵² Mirza Bashir al-Din Mahmud Ahmad, *Anwār-i Khilāfat* (Qadian: 1915), pp. 91-93; see also Spencer Lavan, *The Ahmadiyah Movement: A History and Perspective* (Delhi: Manohar Book Service, 1974), p. 114.

⁵³ See Zahid Aziz, *The Qadiani Violation of Ahmadiyah Teachings* (Columbus: Ahmadiyah Anjuman Isha'at Islam Lahore, 1995).

⁵⁴ Mirza Bashir al-Din Mahmud Ahmad, *Barakāt-i Khilāfat* (Qadian: 1914) in *Anwār al-'Ulūm*, Vol. 2, p. 220, where he says, 'Presently, the needs of our community dictate that members neither give their women to non-Ahmadis nor accept other women in marriage (*āj hamārī zarūriyāt chāhtī hayñ ke jamā'at is tajwīz par 'amal karē ke ghayr ahmadiyahōñ ko na larkī dē awr na un kī larkī lē*).' See also *Al-Fazl*, (23 May 1914), p. 8. Although the original *Al-Fazl* article was not available to me, excerpts are often quoted by Ahmadis and non-Ahmadis regarding Mahmud Ahmad's verdict on marriage in various other sources.

The (often self-imposed) isolation of Jama'at-i Ahmadiyya gave way to new Ahmadi rituals and practices that began to take precedence over conventional Islamic practices. Mahmud Ahmad developed an elaborate donation system to provide continual revenues for his Jama'at. Although Ghulam Ahmad's *al-Wasiyyat* scheme was firmly in place, it only provided the Jama'at with income upon the death of the members who had chosen to participate in it. In addition to the numerous other subscription fees introduced by Mahmud Ahmad during the course of his *khilāfat*, which we will examine below, the *al-Wasiyyat* scheme was revised to include annual donations and create a more consistent source of income for Jama'at-i Ahmadiyya. Ahmadis were expected to contribute finances to these schemes in addition to the zakat, which was slowly superseded by the other mandatory donations. Similarly, the *Jalsa Sālāna* (annual gathering) introduced by Ghulam Ahmad developed into a yearly convention that some believe has superseded the pilgrimage for hajj. Spencer Lavan commented on Ghulam Ahmad's failure to perform the hajj and suggested that the *Jalsa* itself now served as an Ahmadi pilgrimage.⁵⁵

This particular issue of the hajj in Ahmadi Islam is worth mentioning in some detail as Mirza Ghulam Ahmad's failure to perform the mandatory pilgrimage to Mecca has become a contentious issue. In actuality, Mirza Ghulam Ahmad never left India. However, Lavan's view on the *Jalsa* displacing the pilgrimage to Mecca may have been inappropriate considering the current political climate, which prohibits Ahmadis from performing the hajj as 'Ahmadis'. Consequently, many more Ahmadis attend their respective country's *Jalsa* each year than go for the pilgrimage

⁵⁵ Spencer Lavan, *The Ahmadiyah Movement*, p. 92. Lavan did mention how Ghulam Ahmad was prone to chronic illness in reference to the hajj on p. 42, in footnote 48. However, his comments on the role of the *Jalsa* were independent of this discussion.

to Mecca. The number of Ahmadis that travel internationally to attend the main *Jalsa* each year in London is exceedingly high in comparison to those who appear to make an effort to perform the hajj. When Ghulam Ahmad was questioned regarding his failure to perform the hajj, he said that his primary obligation, as someone appointed by Allah, was spreading his mission (*tablīgh*).⁵⁶ On another occasion, when Ghulam Ahmad was asked the same question, he said that his priority was killing the swine and breaking the cross, in reference to the popularly conceived duties of the *mahdī*. He further said that although he had already killed many swine, several stubborn souls remained.⁵⁷ Nonetheless, Ahmadis place extraordinary emphasis on attending the yearly festivals like the *Jalsa* gatherings. At present, to assert that the *Jalsa Sālāna* has become a substitute for the pilgrimage to Mecca would be premature, but these new rituals and practices have added a unique dimension to Ahmadi life and contributed to the emergence of a distinctive Ahmadi identity.

As the Qadiani interpretations of traditional Islam were beginning to distinguish themselves, the Lahoris were desperately trying to reaffirm their Sunni identity.⁵⁸ The subtle discrepancies in Ghulam Ahmad's claims to prophethood were eventually abandoned altogether by both sides. Current Lahori publications most often emphasize Ghulam Ahmad's status as a *mujaddid* (renewer of faith) and avoid any type of prophetic distinction whatsoever. Similarly, many recent publications by the Lahoris focus their objections on the Qadiani interpretation of *khilāfat*, in which

⁵⁶ Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, *Malfūzāt*, Vol. 5, p. 388.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, Vol. 3, p. 372. This specific question and answer was dated 26 August 1902.

⁵⁸ Sayyid Mir Mahmud Ahmad Nasir, 'Positions Taken by the Ahmadiyyah Anujman-e-Isha'at-e-Islam after March 13, 1914 on Nubuwwat and Khilafat in the Ahmadiyyah Muslim Jama'at', in Munawar Ahmed Sa'eed (trans.), *Nubuwwat & Khilāfat: Prophethood and its Successorship* (Tilford: Islam International Publications, 2006), pp. 51-59.

khilāfat-i Ahmadiyya is presented as something completely contrary to Ghulam Ahmad's desires, and Mahmud Ahmad is treated as the usurper of his father's authority.⁵⁹ There is very little difference between the authority of the Ahmadiyya Anjuman-i Isha'at-i Islam Lahore and the authority of the Sadr Anjuman Ahmadiyya over their respective communities. Neither Anjuman has ever had the ability to impose a substantial amount of religious authority over their respective Jama'ats. The primary difference between the leadership of the two communities has always been determined by the role of *khilāfat*.

3.5 – The Institutionalization of the Jama'at

The Sadr Anjuman Ahmadiyya remains the primary administrative authority in Jama'at-i Ahmadiyya under the *khilāfat al-masīh*, despite having gone through a number of changes and considerable expansion over the past 100 years.⁶⁰ The structural changes in the Jama'at are easier to observe than the changes in Ahmadi beliefs, although they both had an affect on the emerging Ahmadi identity. In order for Mirza Mahmud Ahmad to streamline his power and allow his Jama'at to function more smoothly on a global platform, he needed a way to exert his authority over the localized Ahmadi congregations that he was determined to establish throughout the world. A transfer of power needed to take place between the divinely guided

⁵⁹ See Zahid Aziz, *The Qadiani Violation of Ahmadiyya Teachings*. The section called 'M. Mahmud Ahmad usurps Anjuman's authority', which begins on p. 37, is particularly interesting.

⁶⁰ I am greatly indebted to Abdul Mannan Tahir, who was then a missionary at the Fazl Mosque, London for his detailed explanation of the inner structure of Jama'at-i Ahmadiyya. He was kind enough meet with me at his office on 1 April 2005 as well as a number of times thereafter. The knowledge that he provided was the primary source of information for the following section.

leadership of the promised messiah and the institution of *khalīfat* that had been established for his successors. Within the first month of Mahmud Ahmad's election, he set up an advisory council (*majlis-i shūrā*), which became a permanent part of the Jama'at's infrastructure in 1922. The *majlis-i shūrā* still plays a major role in advising the *khalīfa* on Jama'at policy, by developing proposals which are sent to the *khalīfa* each year from each local Ahmadi chapter.

The divisions in the Jama'at's hierarchy are based on geographic boundaries, with local, regional, and national regions. Each stratum in the hierarchy has executive representatives that are responsible for the administrative or spiritual spheres, both of which are embodied by the *khalīfat al-masīh*. The spiritual leadership of the Jama'at is the responsibility of Ahmadi missionaries, who are responsible for the daily affairs of worship, spiritual guidance, and the propagation of Islam. An Ahmadi missionary (*muballigh*) must attend a seven year training course at an Ahmadi seminary before being assigned to a local chapter, which is usually situated in a major city. The missionaries are under the direction of the national *amīr*, who serves as a liaison between the *khalīfa*'s administration and each local chapter. The missionaries focus on religious interests, and typically avoid political involvement, whereas the *amīrs* may be heavily involved in local politics and typically have no formal religious education or training. The missionaries are encouraged to remain neutral and resolve the disputes that may arise between members. Each local chapter also has a president,⁶¹ who serves as the administrative leader and is elected at regular intervals by the financially contributing members of

⁶¹ The English word 'president' is used for this office.

the community.⁶² Whereas the missionary often conveys the national or international interests of the Jama'at to local members, the president voices the concerns of local members to the *amīr* or the *khalīfa*. In local chapters without a missionary, the president is often responsible for religious guidance, even though the president, like the *amīr*, rarely has any formal religious education or training.

Mahmud Ahmad split his Jama'at into auxiliary organizations for men and women with the intention of giving women more of a voice in administrative affairs. The *Lajna Imā'illāh* (council for the handmaidens of Allah) was founded in December 1922 for Ahmadi women above the age of 15. *Nāsirāt al-Ahmadiyya* (female helpers of Ahmadiyya) was formed in December 1938 for girls under the age of 15. Each auxiliary organization for women meets at the local level and elects a local president. The local president reports to the country's national president (*Sadr Lajna Imā'illāh*) who directly reports to the *khalīfat al-masīh*. Ahmadi women appear to have some sense of administrative autonomy in terms of their ability to handle their own affairs.

The men were split into three groups, which are also based on age. The *Majlis Khuddām al-Ahmadiyya* (organization for the servants of Ahmadiyya) was founded in December 1938 and comprised of young Ahmadi men from ages 15 to 40. Members of the *Khuddām* are often responsible for issues that require physical labour and are usually the first to carry out new initiatives. Like the *Lajna*, each local *Khuddām* chapter elects its local leader (*qā'id*) and its national president (*Sadr Majlis Khuddām al-Ahmadiyya*) who also reports directly to the *khalīfat al-masīh*. In July

⁶² Members who do not or cannot contribute financially are barred from participating in the elections, unless they attain special permission from the *khalīfa*.

1940 the *Majlis Atfāl al-Ahmadiyya* (Ahmadiyya children's organization) was created for boys aged 7 to 15. It primarily functions as a subset of the *Khuddām*, which means that the boys fall under the responsibility of the local *qā'id*. The third and final auxiliary called *Majlis Ansārullāh* (organization of the helpers of Allah) was also founded in 1940 for men above the age of 40. As the *Ansār* comprise the elders of Jama'at-i Ahmadiyya, they are often a major source of intellectual and spiritual guidance for local members. The *Majlis Ansārullāh* has a local leader (*zāim*) along with a national leader (*Sadr Majlis Ansārullāh*) who is answerable to the *khalīfat al-masīh*.

The Kashmir crisis during the early 1930s increased tension with the Majlis-i Ahrar and demanded a significant increase in funding, beyond what had been available from the *al-Wasiyyat* scheme.⁶³ In November 1934, Mahmud Ahmad created the *Tahrīk-i Jadīd* (new movement), which was a fund established for the expansion and propagation of Ahmadi Islam in foreign lands.⁶⁴ A committee called the Tahrīk-i Jadīd Anjuman Ahmadiyya was set up as a subsidiary of the Sadr Anjuman Ahmadiyya to manage the new funds. Ahmadiis contribute to the Tahrīk-i Jadīd scheme in addition to their other financial obligations. Although the tensions with the Ahrar subsided, the Tahrīk-i Jadīd scheme remained in place as a permanent charity for contributions through a regular subscription each year. Mahmud Ahmad repeatedly solicited Ahmadiis to donate their time and money to the Tahrīk-i Jadīd project for the propagation of Ahmadi Islam. Apparently, he even urged Ahmadiis to limit their meals to one per day in order for them to save money and donate their

⁶³ See chapter 4 below, 'The Political Involvement of the Ahmadiyya Movement under Mirza Bashir al-Din Mahmud Ahmad'.

⁶⁴ *Review of Religions* (February 2002) Vol. 97, No. 2, p. 19.

savings to Tahrik-i Jadid. To increase the number of Ahmadi missionaries, he encouraged members to offer their lives to the Jama'at as endowments (*waqf*) and to work essentially as volunteers in return for minimal remuneration. He also asked members to encourage their children to dedicate their lives to the Jama'at and to enrol in the Ahmadi seminaries for missionary training.⁶⁵ Everyone was encouraged to participate by leading simple lives and donating time, money, and property to fulfil the mission of the promised messiah. Influential and educated Ahmadis were asked to give lectures or to publish works on behalf of the Jama'at. Students were advised to seek the *khalīfa*'s council before pursuing higher education, so that they could maximize their usefulness to the Jama'at.

In 1958, Mahmud Ahmad launched the *Waqf-i Jadīd* (new endowment) scheme, which was established to generate the revenues required to propagate Ahmadi Islam in rural Pakistan.⁶⁶ In 1986, the fourth *khalīfat al-masīh*, Mirza Tahir Ahmad, expanded the regional limitations to include remote and developing areas around the world, although the majority of funds are still spent primarily on the subcontinent. Accordingly, another subsidiary organization was established to oversee the collection and distribution of the *Waqf-i Jadid* funds, completing the three main administrative branches of Jama'at-i Ahmadiyya that exist today: Sadr Anjuman

⁶⁵ On 3 April 1987 the fourth *khalīfa*, Mirza Tahir Ahmad, launched the *Waqf-i Naw* (new endowment) scheme, in which parents were asked to endow their children's lives for Jama'at service. Although the children's future occupations were not limited to missionary work, parents could enlist their children even before birth. As the first generation of this group has only recently come of age, it appears to have provided Jama'at-i Ahmadiyya with an unending labour force at virtually no expense. See *Review of Religions* (April 2003) Vol. 98, No. 4, p. 22.

⁶⁶ *Review of Religions* (February 2002) Vol. 97, No. 2, p. 19.

Ahmadiyya, Tahrir-i Jadid and Waqf-i Jadid.⁶⁷ It is important to recall however that all three of these branches come under the domain of the *khalīfat al-masīh*.

In tracing the development of Jama‘at-i Ahmadiyya’s infrastructure, one can trace the process by which the Jama‘at was institutionalized. The institutionalized structure of the Jama‘at created an administrative hierarchy with formalized procedures and boundaries for individual Ahmadis. It externalized authority by creating a social system that was applied to every local chapter throughout the world. Now every local chapter could progress through the appropriate chain of command from their local president, to their national *amīr*, and finally the *khalīfa*, who was representing God’s chosen messiah and therefore God Himself. Individuals in isolated areas could apprehend their personal role within the greater community. Furthermore, there was an implicit internal hierarchy at a local level that distinguished office bearers from non-office bearers.

In this sense, Ghulam Ahmad’s Jama‘at-i Ahmadiyya was significantly different from the Jama‘at of today. Although he had complete control over his community, his authority was charismatic and derived purely from God. When Mirza Mahmud Ahmad took control of the Jama‘at, he needed a way of drawing on his father charisma to substantiate his authority and to justify his creation of the institution of *khalīfat*, so he redefined the role of the Sadr Anjuman Ahmadiyya. He did this by persistently publicizing his father’s prophecies in *al-Wasiyyat* that referred to someone from Ghulam Ahmad’s progeny who would someday lead people to truth.⁶⁸ In addition, Mahmud Ahmad referred to other prophecies pertaining to

⁶⁷ Ibid., pp. 7-23.

⁶⁸ Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, *al-Wasiyyat*, in *Rūhānī Khazā’in*, Vol. 20, p. 306, in footnote.

Ghulam Ahmad's progeny to reinforce his right to *khilāfat*.⁶⁹ Accepting the *khalīfa* in itself was no longer enough. Ahmadis also needed to accept the *khalīfa*'s divine appointment, which became a central theme in the Ahmadi identity and has been maintained by all of Mahmud Ahmad's successors to this day.⁷⁰

The Qadiani branch perceived Mahmud Ahmad's changes in the Jama'at as the fulfilment of divine prophecy. Before a gathering in Hoshiarpur on 20 February 1944, Mirza Bashir al-Din Mahmud Ahmad formally announced that he was indeed the *muslih-i maw'ūd* (promised reformer) that Ghulam Ahmad had prophesied.⁷¹ The date marked the 58th anniversary of Ghulam Ahmad's first publication of his prophecy regarding his blessed son. Claiming to be the fulfilment of divine prophecy put an exceptional burden on Lahori opponents who had difficulty explaining away Mahmud Ahmad's lineage and charisma, even though his charisma was still dependent on his father. Although Mahmud Ahmad was the *khalīfa*, it was his creation of the institution of *khilāfat* that embodied his father's charismatic authority, which was spread throughout the new structure of Jama'at-i Ahmadiyya. Each individual office bearer participated in this transfer of charisma and now shared in the fulfilment of divine prophecy. Whereas the spiritual experiences, divine prophecies, and charismatic authority were all part of Ghulam Ahmad's esoteric wonders, they were now transferred into exoteric offices under Mahmud Ahmad. The

⁶⁹ Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, *Sabz Ishtihar* in *Rūhānī Khazā'in*, Vol. 2, pp. 447-470; see also Mirza Ghulam Ahmad's pamphlet from (20 February 1886), p. 21 in the footnote; see also Muhammad Zafrulla Khan, *Tadhkira* (Tilford: Islam International Publications, 2004), pp. 85-86.

⁷⁰ Maulana Sheikh Mubarak Ahmad, 'Khilāfat-e-Ahmadiyyah and the Pledge of Allegiance to Khilāfat', in Munawar Ahmed Sa'eed (trans.), *Nubuwwat & Khilāfat*, pp. 27-45; see also *Review of Religions* (October 1956) Vol. 50, No. 10, pp. 503-505, 510-511, 519-524; see also *Review of Religions* (October 2007) Vol. 102, No. 10, pp. 49-51, 58, 59.

⁷¹ See Mirza Bashir al-Din Mahmud Ahmad's speech entitled *Da'wā Muslih Maw'ūd ke Muta'alliq Pur-shawkat E'lān* (20 February 1944) which was delivered in Hoshiarpur and is available in *Anwār al-'Ulūm*, Vol. 17, pp. 138-170.

bureaucratization of charisma meant that spiritual experience could itself be derived from the structure of the Jama'at. Ahmadis derive spiritual experience from participation in or obedience to the structural hierarchy or *nizām* of the Jama'at, which is viewed as a manifestation of God's favour.

Understanding the strata of authority in *khilāfat-i Ahmadiyya* is an exercise in institutionalized representation. Ghulam Ahmad as the *mahdī* and the messiah represents God's law and message, the *khalīfa* represents the promised messiah, the *amīr* represents the *khalīfa*, and the president represents the *amīr*, all of whom claim that their posts are authorized by divine will. In practice, it is interesting to note that virtually none of these representatives have any formal religious education or training but derive their legitimacy purely from Ghulam Ahmad's institutionalized charisma. Each individual Ahmadi is linked on a personal level to some vague sense of charisma through the institution of *khilāfat*, even though he/she may have little to no contact with the *khalīfa* himself. Paradoxically, the *khalīfat al-masīh* is the keystone that binds the Jama'at together, even though he too is bound by institutionalized charisma in the same manner.

3.6 – Beyond the Split: The Early Years 1914-1925

The series of events beginning with the death of Mirza Ghulam Ahmad followed by the death of his closest companion and first successor, Maulvi Hakim Nur al-Din, and finally culminating with the split of Jama'at-i Ahmadiyya into two factions, placed extraordinary strains on both the members of the Jama'at and their

leadership. The years that immediately followed Mirza Bashir al-Din Mahmud Ahmad's caliphal election are regarded as some of the most difficult in Ahmadi history. The uncertainty and overall confusion in the movement left many Ahmadis disoriented and looking for a sense of stability from their leadership. However, it was the instability itself that allowed Mahmud Ahmad the necessary flexibility to change the direction of the movement without an adverse reaction from his followers. The split in the movement was final, and the time for dissent had long passed. Those who had chosen to remain with Mahmud Ahmad were obliged to adhere to his discretionary decisions with a renewed sense of fidelity. The continual changing of the leadership had raised new questions regarding the developing identity of the Jama'at, which had prevented the community from normalizing the fluctuations in their evolving distinguishing features. It was not until the mid 1920s that the young *khalīfa*, Mirza Mahmud Ahmad, gained the confidence and foresight necessary to define for his members what he thought the future of Ahmadiyyat ought to be. For this reason, throughout the formative period of Ahmadi Islam, much of the Jama'at's efforts were exerted on coming to terms with the multiple changes in leadership, reconciling the ensuing fallout from the split, and resettling into an equilibrium that was consistent with Mahmud Ahmad's vision.

This period represented a time of inner exploration for the Ahmadi community. The turmoil that resulted from these multiple changes had forced individual Ahmadis to confront the broader questions of Ahmadi identity more directly than they had done in the past. The most obvious question had become the most difficult to answer: what exactly does it mean to be an 'Ahmadi'? For the

earliest followers the obvious answer was the most appropriate: taking the *bay'at* of Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, which meant that simply being a follower of Mirza Ghulam Ahmad was sufficient to designate one as an Ahmadi. Accordingly, as the leadership of the community ventured through its different manifestations, the response to this question demanded further clarification. In this manner, through these early stages of the Jama'at's development, the variations in the leadership had a correlation with the variations in sentiment being expressed by the members of the community regarding their own Ahmadi identity. Initially in 1889 when Ghulam Ahmad invited people to join him by taking his *bay'at* in Ludhiana, he had published a list of conditions for those who aspired to become his followers. The *bay'at* was clearly intended to be a privilege for both the existing spiritual elite themselves and for those who desired to join their ranks. At the time, being an Ahmadi was largely contingent on an individual's successful efforts to adhere to these conditions. These requisite conditions defined the Ahmadi identity by explicitly laying bare Ghulam Ahmad's expectations of his followers. The very notion that the *bay'at* was conditional implies that it had the potential of being revoked at any time. The ten requisite conditions of primary concern around which Mirza Ghulam Ahmad chose to pivot his movement may be abbreviated as follows:⁷²

- 1) Abstaining from *shirk*
- 2) Abstaining from dishonesty, adultery, and lustful transgressions
- 3) Strict observance of the five daily prayers with a special emphasis on voluntarily offering the supererogatory *tahajjud* (late night/predawn) prayer, seeking forgiveness, and prayers in praise of the Prophet

⁷² The original pamphlet containing the ten conditions of *bay'at* was published as *Takmil-i Tabligh* (12 Jan 1889). See Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, *Majmū'a-i Ishtihārāt*, Vol. 1, pp. 189-192.

- 4) Abstaining from verbally or physically abusing anyone or anything while maintaining a general sense of compassion towards everyone, especially other Muslims
- 5) Maintaining ultimate trust and dependence on God through both good times and bad times
- 6) Abstaining from un-Islamic behaviour by using the Qur'an and the sunna as a model for one's life
- 7) Abstaining from pride and arrogance, and adopting a general sense of humility
- 8) Giving precedence to Islam over everything, including one's wealth, honour, and loved ones
- 9) Maintaining a sincere commitment to the service of all of God's creation, including service to humanity
- 10) Remaining faithful and obedient to Mirza Ghulam Ahmad in an exemplary manner that transcends ordinary relationships

Of the above conditions, the only one that resembles anything inherently 'Ahmadi' is number ten. The first nine are all standard Islamic principles, to which any pious Muslim would presumably be willing to comply. Similarly, the final condition was a reasonable stipulation, which essentially prioritized Mirza Ghulam Ahmad's religious discretion, as the *murshid* of his disciples, over any alternative teacher. Although this provision is distinctly Ahmadi, it is not unreasonable for one to impose such conditions on one's spiritual disciples or *murīds*. For example, if we were to substitute the name of any other Sufi *pīr*, *murshid*, or *shaykh* in the Islamic tradition for Mirza Ghulam Ahmad's name in condition ten, it would lose its Ahmadi identity. In this sense, these ten conditions could easily have been the requisite conditions for initiation into any Sufi order throughout Islamic history. There is nothing extraordinary about Ghulam Ahmad's conditions for joining the Ahmadi community, in the sense that there is nothing that poses a challenge to Islamic orthodoxy. The extraordinary part of the ten conditions of *bay'at* however, is not in

what was said, but rather in what was not said.⁷³ The absence of what we presently would consider to be the distinctive features of Ahmadi Islam is far more interesting than Ghulam Ahmad's ten articles of accelerated moral conduct. It is surprising that there is no mention of any of Ghulam Ahmad's controversial claims or the contested issues which were later asserted by his successors. There is no reference to Ghulam Ahmad being a *mujaddid*, *muhaddath*, *mahdī*, or the *masīh* Jesus son of Mary. There are no references to the notorious consequences of these claims, particularly his prophethood or elevated spiritual status. There are no references to his interpretation of the Qur'anic verse declaring Muhammad to be *khātam al-nabiyyīn* (seal of the prophets) that could be used to indicate that he was anything other than the last of the prophets.⁷⁴ Likewise, there are no references to his categorical condemnation of violent jihad amongst his Indian contemporaries. And finally, there are no references to Jesus' survival from the crucifixion and his subsequent journey to his final resting place in Srinagar, Kashmir. Everything that we have come to associate with the distinctive features of Ahmadi Islam is astonishingly absent from Ghulam Ahmad's

⁷³ Spencer Lavan appears to be the first to comment on the simplicity of the ten conditions of *bay'at*, but his discussion is limited to Ghulam Ahmad's lack of emphasis on the *zakat* and *hajj*. Lavan noted that Ghulam Ahmad never made the pilgrimage to Mecca due to a life of chronic illness. Lavan's discussion is more interesting if one treats Jama'at-i Ahmadiyya as a new religious movement with a new religious identity, otherwise, if we accept that Jama'at-i Ahmadiyya belongs within the fold of Islam, then being a Muslim is clearly a necessary precondition to the ten listed above. There is no evidence to suggest that one could be an Ahmadi without first being a Muslim, since being Ahmadi presupposed that one was already a Muslim. In addition, the basic tenets of Islam, such as the five pillars, are implicitly included in the sixth condition's emphasis on the Qur'an and sunna as well as the eighth condition's emphasis on giving precedence to 'Islam' in one's life. For some unknown reason, Ghulam Ahmad specifically emphasized the observance of prayer in his second condition, but perhaps this was done in order to facilitate his additional requirement of imposing the supererogatory *tahajjud* prayer upon his followers. For Lavan's comments, see Spencer Lavan, *The Ahmadiyah Movement*, p. 37, especially his comments in footnote 48.

⁷⁴ See verse (33:40) which states: 'Muhammad is not the father of any one of you men; he is God's Messenger and the seal of the prophets: (*mā kāna muhammadun abā ahadīn min rijālīkum wa lākin rasūl-allāhi wa khātam al-nabiyyīn*)', translated by M.A.S. Abdel Haleem (trans.), *The Qur'an* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), p. 269. Ghulam Ahmad's prophethood was based largely on his reinterpretation of the phrase *khātam al-nabiyyīn* (seal of the prophets), which mainstream Muslims understand as meaning that Muhammad was the last prophet.

conditions for becoming an Ahmadi in his 1889 treatise. Although one may argue that Ghulam Ahmad did not fully explicate the details of his religious claims until much later, the fact remains that he never revised the conditions on which he accepted *bay'at*. These ten conditions of *bay'at* accurately demonstrate the values that Ghulam Ahmad prioritized to his earliest followers. However, it is inconceivable to delineate a set of criteria that establishes an 'Ahmadi' identity at present and neglects the three most controversial issues: *khatm al-nubuwwa*, the survival of Jesus from death on the cross, and the strict adherence to non-violent Jihad.⁷⁵ We will further examine why this gap occurs below.

Until his death in 1908, what it meant to be an Ahmadi hinged exclusively on Ghulam Ahmad's willingness to accept a candidate's *bay'at*. If Ghulam Ahmad decided to refuse, reject, or revoke a disciple's *bay'at*, then considering that person an Ahmadi was absurd.⁷⁶ After Ghulam Ahmad's death the situation grew more complex. The unresolved theological issues that instigated the Lahori-Qadiani split, along with the actual splitting of the movement itself into two geographically separate

⁷⁵ These three issues are presumed by most scholars, both Ahmadi and non-Ahmadi, to be the distinguishing features of Jama'at-i Ahmadiyya with no recourse to how or why they came to be. As a result, these idiosyncrasies are the standardized principles of Ahmadi Islam, which are echoed in most of the recent characterizations of Jama'at-i Ahmadiyya, for one example, see Francis Robinson, *Islam, South Asia, and the West* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2007), p. 69.

⁷⁶ Some important counterexamples are worth mentioning here. Considering the current trends in Jama'at-i Ahmadiyya, most people presume that a child born to Ahmadi parents is automatically Ahmadi, which more closely resembles a new religion or an exclusivist religious movement rather than a traditional Sufi order. A traditional Sufi order would typically require each member to take *bay'at* individually upon reaching the age of maturity. However, Mirza Bashir al-Din Mahmud Ahmad was not formally initiated at his father's hand until 10 March 1898. See A. R. Dard, *Life of Ahmad*, p. 148. Surprisingly, Ghulam Ahmad's second wife, Nusrat Jahan Begum (*ammā jān*), never took her husband's *bay'at*, which implies that the *bay'at* may not have been necessary in exceptional cases. Dost Muhammad Shahid said that it was not necessary for her to take her husband's *bay'at* since her allegiance to him was already implicit, which is a reasonable and convincing argument. However, this particular case is interesting in comparison to Mahmud Ahmad's harsh views on marrying non-Ahmadi women. See Dost Muhammad Shahid, *Tārīkh-i Ahmadiyya*, Vol. 1, p. 342. See also section 3.4 above called 'Changes in the Ahmadi Belief System: From Theory to Practice' for more on Mahmud Ahmad's views regarding marriages with non-Ahmadi women.

camps, led to more elaborate responses to the same question: what does it mean to be an 'Ahmadi'?

Although the original ten conditions of *bay'at* nonetheless remain unchanged to this day, they no longer represent the exclusive conditions for an individual's induction into Jama'at-i Ahmadiyya. The same ten conditions are indeed still necessary for one's initiation into the Ahmadi community, but they alone are no longer sufficient to join. The initiation process now includes an official Ahmadi 'declaration form' for induction, which ameliorates the ten conditions with amendments for asserting one's belief in *khatm al-nubuwwa*, Mirza Ghulam Ahmad's status as the *imām mahdī* and promised messiah, and a vow of loyalty and obedience to not only the *khalīfat al-masīh*, but also the institution of *khilāfat-i Ahmadiyya* itself.⁷⁷ The new additions are far more consistent with one's intuitive expectations for joining Jama'at-i Ahmadiyya, even though they do not demonstrate the emphasis placed by the Jama'at on these newly added declarations.

The amended clarifications that stress Ghulam Ahmad's prophetic status have grossly overshadowed the original ten conditions of *bay'at* and have become associated with popular conceptions about Jama'at-i Ahmadiyya. A new Ahmadi identity emerged around these three corrected beliefs: *khatm al-nubuwwa*, Jesus' survival from the cross, and *khilāfat-i Ahmadiyya*, which still excludes an explicit reference to non-violent jihad.⁷⁸ None of the Ahmadis with whom I had contact had

⁷⁷ The 'declaration form' is available in the appendix at the end as well as online in both Urdu and English at the official Jama'at-i Ahmadiyya website <http://www.alislam.org/introduction/initiation.html> (February 2007).

⁷⁸ We will examine conflicting interpretations of Ahmadi jihad below and see how the second and third *khalīfas* rejected Ghulam Ahmad's categorical denial of non-violent jihad and led military campaigns in Kashmir. Ahmadis are bound to the opinions of the presiding *khalīfa* whenever his opinions conflict with the opinions of the previous caliphs or even Ghulam Ahmad himself.

committed the ten conditions of *bay'at* to memory, which gave an impression of their relative importance to the Ahmadi identity. These Ahmadis were certainly familiar with the ten conditions of *bay'at*, but memorizing them or strictly adhering to them in daily practice was not a major factor in their Ahmadi self-identification. There appears to be minimal emphasis on memorizing or (perhaps more importantly) implementing these conditions in daily life. In this sense, there is a discrepancy between the theory presented in Ahmadi texts and the religious practice of the members of the community, even when considering the amendments to the ten conditions like the 'declaration form'. For example, the 'declaration form' is invariably accompanied by another form, which is used to determine a new initiate's mandatory financial contributions to the Jama'at's elaborate system of charitable donations (*chandā*).⁷⁹ Although contributing financially to the movement is not formally stipulated in writing, it is an essential part of remaining within the Jama'at in good standing, with few exceptions that are determined case by case. May it suffice

⁷⁹ In addition to the numerous mandatory and recommended contributions that finance Jama'at-i Ahmadiyya's worldwide activities, the Ahmadi *khalīfas* have developed the tendency of demanding financial 'gifts' from their spiritual disciples, which is an issue worth exploring. In preparation for the 100th anniversary of *Khilāfat-i Ahmadiyya*, the fifth *khalīfa*, Mirza Masroor Ahmad, approved a scheme to solicit and collect 'no less than one million sterling pounds' which were to be gifted to the *khalīfa* 'as a token of [Jama'at-i Ahmadiyya's] thanks to Allah.' This pattern was repeated throughout the world, so that millions of dollars were raised in each of the western congregations of the United States, Canada, and Britain. The money was supposedly presented to the *khalīfa* during the Khilafat Jubilee, which took place in London in May 2008, although there is no public record of the exact amount that was raised. The precedent was first set by Mirza Bashir al-Din Mahmud Ahmad who accepted a 'gift' of Rs. 300,000 in 1939 during his 25 year anniversary as the *khalīfa*. See *Review of Religions* (February 2006) Vol. 101, No. 2, pp. 62-63. Similarly, the third *khalīfa*, Mirza Nasir Ahmad, was anticipating a 'gift' of Rs. 25 million whose collections were already on target to reach Rs. 90 million in 1974. See *Review of Religions* (March 1974) Vol. 68, No. 3, pp. 77-79. It is arguable from an outsider's perspective that this pattern may be representative of deeply rooted corruption within the Ahmadi hierarchy. That the *khalīfas* have shown an affinity towards accepting large sums of money may or may not be surprising, but the chronic demands to solicit these funds from their largely underprivileged spiritual disciples may potentially be extorting and exploiting countless members of the Jama'at under the guise of attaining divine pleasure.

to say that a detailed anthropological study of Jama'at-i Ahmadiyya's beliefs and practices would be a welcome contribution to this study.⁸⁰

The *bay'at* in Jama'at-i Ahmadiyya has become far removed from its sacred ceremonial origins in Sufi initiation. The procedure more closely resembles the banal process of filling out an application form as opposed to a hallowed Sufi ceremony of allegiance to one's spiritual mentor. The annual Ahmadi convention (*Jalsa Sālāna*) is the exception where remnants of the Sufi ceremonial *bay'at* still linger today. Each year in London, thousands of Ahmadis gather to renew their *bay'at* at the hand of the *khalīfa al-masīh*. In a moving display, the *khalīfa* stretches his hand as each member does the same to join him. Those outside the immediate inner circle place their hand on the shoulder of the person in front of them creating an unbroken chain that leads to the *khalīfa al-masīh*. Aside from this annual exception, the Ahmadi *bay'at* ceremony has become wholly divorced from the deep expression of initiation rooted in the rich heritage of Sufi Islam. The community has largely abandoned the familiar procedure of the physical joining of hands as a demonstration of the spiritual connection between two individuals, *murshid* and *murīd*, and instead replaced it by the signing of a piece of paper.

This shift in character of the Ahmadi identity was a gradual process that has quietly evolved over successive generations through the first century following Ghulam Ahmad's death. The movement needed to refashion itself into a mould that was more conducive to the intense demands of proselytization, which have always

⁸⁰ For the beginnings of such a study see Antonio Gualtieri, *The Ahmadis: Community, Gender, and Politics in a Muslim Society* (London: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2004). Gualtieri makes interesting observations about the variations in Ahmadi religious practices in different parts of the world. His discussion on gender and the different veiling practices of Ahmadi women in rural Pakistan and those in urban Canada is particularly insightful.

been an important part of Ahmadi ideology. The original organizational structure of the Jama'at was intended for the elitist membership of the earliest community that had either direct contact with Ghulam Ahmad or the educational background to read and comprehend his complex works. The organization was not suitable to accommodate the Jama'at of the future when mass membership was destined to come from the sections of rural Punjab's population that are associated with lower class mediocrity. Mahmud Ahmad was clearly aware of the logistics of mass conversions and had immediately taken steps to adapt the structure of the Jama'at appropriately. With a stabilization period following the split and the changes in leadership settling down, the foundations for subsequent changes in ideology and structure were well established by the 1920s. Nevertheless, the changes in communal identity following Mahmud Ahmad's succession to the caliphate and the split in the Ahmadiyya movement were not inevitable. The split only acted as a catalyst for further changes by bringing the question of Ahmadi identity to the forefront, while Mahmud Ahmad's vision and intentions for his movement only allowed these changes to take place more smoothly and largely unopposed, following the purge of the Jama'at's Lahori members. In fact, it was the circumstances surrounding a number of events which little by little honed the identity of the movement with gradual change. We will now turn our attention to key events that punctuate Ahmadi history and offer some suggestions as to why the Ahmadi identity eventually changed.

Chapter 4

The Political Involvement of the Ahmadiyya Movement under Mirza Bashir al-Din Mahmud Ahmad

In this chapter we will look at Jama‘at-i Ahmadiyya’s involvement in South Asian politics under its second and most influential *khalīfat al-masīh*, Mirza Bashir al-Din Mahmud Ahmad. Communal tensions springing from the *Rangīlā Rasūl* incident in the 1920s and the Kashmir riots in the early 1930s provided Mirza Mahmud Ahmad with the opportunity to display his Jama‘at’s abilities to deal with an international crisis and lead the Muslim mainstream towards their collective goals. Mahmud Ahmad’s relations with influential Muslim community leaders enabled him to further his political objectives. We will see how Mahmud Ahmad’s opinions regarding the military offensive in Kashmir following the partition conflicted with his father’s ban on violent jihad, which led to the creation and deployment of the first Ahmadi militia. Many portions of this chapter deal with obscure aspects of political history, which are only intended to further demonstrate the added political dimension of the Ahmadi identity and not to serve as a balanced account of these events beyond Jama‘at-i Ahmadiyya. Interestingly, many of these events are irrelevant to the development of Islamic theology even though they have significantly influenced the political development of the subcontinent and the development of the Ahmadi identity. Jama‘at-i Ahmadiyya’s continued involvement in political activism led to a number of unexpected conclusions including an increased emphasis on publicizing their activities and the politicization of Ahmadi Islam.

4.1 – The ‘*Rangīlā Rasūl*’ Incident: The ‘Playboy’ Prophet

By 1925, Mirza Bashir al-Din Mahmud Ahmad had missionaries diligently setting up Ahmadi centres all over the world. Ahmadi Islam had touched virtually every continent by establishing local chapters throughout Western Europe, America, both East and West Africa, Mauritius, Syria, and Palestine, but the communal tensions back home in India were creating the greatest stir. Hindu-Muslim tensions had steadily been building for some time before they came to a head in the late 1920s. Polemic pamphlets blaspheming the other religion had been gaining popularity amongst intolerant zealots and bigots on both sides when a spirited Arya Samajist published the *Rangīlā Rasūl* booklet in 1924, which attributed a number of sexual immoralities to the Prophet Muhammad and successfully captured the attention of Muslim India.¹ The Arya polemicist responsible, Rajpal, was initially convicted for the publication under section 153A of the Indian Penal Code in an attempt to keep communal tensions under control. The sentence would have entailed 18 months in prison with a Rs. 1000 fine, but the Punjab High Court overturned the decision in June 1927 and acquitted Rajpal of the crime. Furthermore, the deteriorating morale of the Punjabi Muslim community was exacerbated when the High Court’s Hindu justice, Dalip Singh, imprisoned the editor of Lahore’s *Muslim Outlook* for expressing his outrage following Rajpal’s acquittal. Consequently, the defence of the

¹ The title ‘*Rangīlā Rasūl*’ itself has a wide variety of offensive connotations. Although it literally translates as the *Colourful Prophet*, it more appropriately connotes the *Queer* or *Gay Prophet*. In addition to the *Rangīlā Rasūl* pamphlet, Ahmadi responses to the attacks on the Prophet Muhammad often referred to another popular blasphemous article known as the *Risāla Vartamān*, which was published by an Amritsar based monthly periodical.

Prophet and the preservation of the *umma* quickly became the primary focus of Muslims throughout India.

Historically, few things have united Muslims, despite their sectarian differences, as the defamation of the Prophet Muhammad. Jama‘at-i Ahmadiyya under Mirza Bashir al-Din Mahmud Ahmad was quick to respond to the attack, and Punjabi Muslims were willing to follow their lead.² Mahmud Ahmad printed a poster with a picture of Ghulam Ahmad and a substantial retort to the inflammatory anti-Islamic remarks.³ The poster had circulated the *khalīfa*’s impassioned words and effectively roused Muslim support while sharply defining the boundaries of Muslim tolerance, until the Deputy Commissioner ordered the poster to be torn down. It is possible that the cumulative Ahmadi response to the attacks on the Prophet, which resulted from the pre-existing communal tensions, materialized at the cost of a more subdued path towards reconciliation with the Hindus. Spencer Lavan argued that Ahmadi reactions, such as the polemic poster, further contributed to ‘creating the hostile climate of opinion’ that prevailed throughout the *Rangīlā Rasūl* incident.⁴ Nevertheless, the direction and the leadership of the Ahmadi *khalīfa* enabled the Muslim mainstream to find its voice during this brief period of communal discord. Perturbed Punjabi Muslims reaped the benefits of Jama‘at-i Ahmadiyya’s institutional hierarchy and framework, which was already in place and ready to deploy a global network of obedient missionaries at their *khalīfa*’s command.

² See Mirza Bashir al-Din Mahmud Ahmad, *Kitāb “Rangīlā Rasūl” kā Jawāb* (1 July 1927) in *Khutbāt-i Mahmūd* (Islamabad, Surrey: Islam International Publications, n.d.), Vol. 11, pp. 168-178.

³ Excerpts from the response are available in Dost Muhammad Shāhid, *Tārīkh-i Ahmadiyya*, Vol. 4, pp. 596-598.

⁴ Spencer Lavan, *The Ahmadiyah Movement: A History and Perspective* (Delhi: Manohar Book Service, 1974), p. 136, and also footnote 44 for the government’s concern regarding the poster.

The heightened communal tension and the High Court's failure to administer legal retribution had provoked an increase of anti-British sentiment throughout India, beyond the Punjab. Many Muslims now refocused their blame on the government for its weak response to one Hindu's degradation of their Prophet. Mahmud Ahmad ordered the London mission to solicit the British Secretary of State of India in protest of the injustices abroad, which also included the imprisonment of the editor of the *Muslim Outlook*. The Ahmadi missionary in London who was responsible for fulfilling the *khalīfa*'s orders was 'Abd al-Rahim Dard, one of the biographers of Mirza Ghulam Ahmad. Dard wrote a series of letters publicizing the event and informed the British government that 'Muslim leaders like the Head of the Ahmadiyya Community, Qadian, Sir Abdul Qadir and Sir Mohammad Iqbal [were] doing their best to keep the [Indian] masses under control.'⁵ The messages were clear, and they adequately conveyed that the Ahmadiyya community would continue with their loyalty to the British Raj during the strife. The Ahmadi mission in London followed up the correspondence with a petition that secured over 500 signatures that included several notable figures such as Sir Arthur Conan Doyle and other highly qualified individuals.⁶ The social stature of the dignitaries on the petition captured the attention of the British Parliament, who now felt compelled to respond to the worsening situation abroad.⁷ The impact of the distinguished persons supporting the petition became clear when the names of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle and Sir William

⁵ The letter is dated (5 July 1927) and is published in *Review of Religions* (October 1927) Vol. 26, No. 10, p. 22.

⁶ *Review of Religions* (October 1927) Vol. 26, No. 10, pp. 22-27.

⁷ The *Rangīla Rasūl* incident was brought to the attention of The Under-Secretary of State for India, Earl Winterton, also called Edward Turnour, on two occasions in the House of Commons. Captain Foxcroft raised the question on 27 July 1927 and Sir Frank Sanderson raised the issue again on 29 July 1927. See *Parliamentary Debates House of Commons Official Report, Fifth Series*, Vol. 209, (Hansard), for (27 July 1927), pp. 1258-1259, and also (29 July 1927), p. 1651.

Simpson were echoed back in the official response to Dard's letter as a justification to take action.⁸ The Ahmadiyya network had successfully raised awareness about the dysfunctional communal relations in India and prompted external action by Britain due to its systematic organizational structure, resolute missionaries, and excellent contacts with influential members of society.

Similar efforts were being made locally in the Punjab by Mahmud Ahmad who was at the helm of a major Pan-Islamic campaign that was no longer limited to his Ahmadi disciples in Qadian. His charismatic authority now reached beyond its conventional domain of faithful followers and extended over India's Muslim mainstream with surprisingly little opposition. Although a number of other eminent Muslim leaders were involved, the attacks on the Prophet had yielded widespread support from the usually uninfluential Muslim masses. The protest on the Punjabi front was a grassroots movement that included significant numbers of India's Muslim population. On one of the few occasions that India's Muslims were willing to unite under a single banner of Islam, sectarian differences were (perhaps grudgingly) ignored just long enough to retaliate against the attacks on the Prophet.

With the Ahmadis under Bashiruddin Mahmud taking a lead in propagating the way of life, and the work and character of the Prophet, there was no immediate danger of Muslims collectively turning upon enemies within. Individual Sunni Muslims might resent Ahmadis spearheading the veneration of the Prophet, but with one of Punjab's most indefatigable public speakers, Ataullah Shah Bukhari [co-founder of Majlis-i Ahrar-i Islam], temporarily in jail for creating a breach of the peace, there was for the moment no prospect of a concerted popular campaign against the Qadian faction.

⁸ *Review of Religions* (October 1927) Vol. 26, No. 10, p. 27.

⁹ Ayesha Jalal, *Self and Sovereignty: Individual and Community in South Asian Islam Since 1850* (London: Routledge, 2001), p. 296.

Mahmud Ahmad and his Jama'at had momentarily canvassed their way to the forefront of Muslim India's inner circle of political activists, and this was not the last time that Mahmud Ahmad would allow religio-political activism to dominate his agenda. Given the historical context of the situation, it was an understandable response shared by the majority of Muslims at the time. The *Rangīlā Rasūl* incident had come to represent the state of Hindu-Muslim relations at a difficult time in India's modern history. However, it served as a distraction from the internal sectarian debates that had come to dominate the Indo-Islamic scene by enabling Muslims to band together as defenders of the Prophet. The Ahmadiyya community had a significant role in the intensification as well as the resolution of the event. The second *khalīfa*, Mirza Mahmud Ahmad, may not have single-handedly prevented the situation from 'degenerating into violence' in the way that many Ahmadis fondly remember,¹⁰ but his role in the agitations cannot be ignored. The *Rangīlā Rasūl* incident marked a major turning point in Ahmadi history. The perceived success resulting from the *Rangīlā Rasūl* incident provided Mahmud Ahmad with the encouragement he needed to continue his political activism when other opportunities would soon present themselves in Kashmir.

4.2 – Panic in the Streets of Srinagar: The Kashmir Riots

Muslim rule in Jammu and Kashmir extends back from before the Mughal period, and accordingly, a Muslim majority population has dominated the Kashmir

¹⁰ *Review of Religions* (October 1927) Vol. 26, No. 10, p. 21.

valley for several centuries underneath various forms of government. There was a brief interlude of Sikh rule during the Ranjit Singh era, which lasted nearly three decades and ended soon after his death in 1839. At this point, the British consolidation of India led to successive treaties in 1846 signed first in Lahore and then in Amritsar, which resulted in the transfer of the State of Jammu and Kashmir to the loyalist Dogra chieftain, Gulab Singh, in exchange for a relatively nominal sum. This enabled the British to avoid the logistical formalities of rule while maintaining an active influence in the region through a reduced role of 'firm supervision'.¹¹ Since the new Dogra Maharaja and his successive heirs were Hindu, Kashmiri Muslims developed the tendency, as political tensions occasionally swelled, of looking to their co-religionists on the other side of the border for support from the Punjab. Likewise, Punjabi Muslims had an increased interest in assessing the state of affairs of Kashmiri Muslims, especially in contrast to their own state of affairs under the British. Compounded by the growing popularity of the independence movement, in 1911 Punjabi Muslims founded the All-India Muslim Kashmir Conference in Lahore.¹² In actuality, it was more of a symbolic gesture than a radical call to action, and it took close to twenty years of nearly complete dormancy before the committee was revived with wide recognition and mass publicity.

By the early 1930s the Dogra Maharaja of Jammu and Kashmir, Hari Singh, had developed a reputation for highhanded treatment of his Muslim majority subjects. Moreover, the growth of political dissent in Muslim areas coincided with a severe

¹¹ Mridu Rai, *Hindu Rulers, Muslim Subjects: Islam, Rights and the History of Kashmir* (London: Hurst & Company, 2004), p. 26.

¹² The name also appears as the Muslim Kashmiri Conference. For example, see Ayesha Jalal, *Self and Sovereignty*, p. 352.

international economic depression whose effects Kashmir could not escape. Heavy taxation resulting from the government's mistaken assessment of agricultural production had left many families in hardship. Additionally, within the urban areas many qualified Kashmiris were increasingly finding themselves without suitable work, which was only adding to the popular perception of Muslim victimization. Opportunities for Kashmiri Muslims were diminishing on many different social levels and half-hearted attempts to remedy the situation were failing miserably. Only recently in 1927, a state sponsored scholarship committee consisting entirely of Hindu members had selected eleven out of twelve possible awards to be given to Hindu students, leaving only one scholarship for a Muslim candidate. The selection, which the government defended as a decision based entirely on 'merit', fuelled the prevalent sense of injustice and inequality that led many to believe that the government was committed to truncating opportunities for Muslims before they ever entered the workforce.¹³ Still, Kashmiri Muslims bore their socio-economic plight with 'remarkably little organized resistance' until the summer of 1931 when things began to change.¹⁴

The underlying tensions, which had been building steadily for decades, reached their boiling point on 5 June 1931 when a Hindu head constable of police had reportedly ordered a subordinate Muslim constable to stop reading the Qur'an. After calling the recitation nonsense (*bakwās*), the head constable proceeded to snatch the Qur'an from the hands of the subordinate officer and throw it away in the trash.¹⁵

¹³ JOR R/1/1/2154 in the *Report of the Srinagar Riot Enquiry Committee* (24 September 1931), p. 17.

¹⁴ Ayesha Jalal, *Self and Sovereignty*, p. 354.

¹⁵ JOR R/1/1/2064 in the *Fortnightly Report for the first half of June 1931 from the Resident of Kashmir* (19 June 1931). The Riot Enquiry Committee later found that the Muslim constable had in

This was all that the Punjabi press needed to hear, and soon newspapers were full of colourful versions of the story with each trying to outdo the other. The socio-political climate made it seem as if each Kashmiri Muslim had his or her own story of unequal treatment and Hindu favouritism to tell and retell, and soon articles began to appear that depicted Muslims as the 'downtrodden slaves' of Dogra rule.¹⁶ India's Muslim population was livid, and a barrage of Punjabi protesters continued streaming across the border until the organized demonstrations began.

Towards the end of June 1931 a 'European's cook' named 'Abd al-Qadīr was arrested for making a seditious speech at Srinagar's *khānaqāh mu'allā*.¹⁷ His radicalized intonation and violent objectives involved inciting listeners 'to kill Hindus and burn their temples.'¹⁸ The government tried to control the hype surrounding the trial by conducting the proceedings in secret within the Srinagar jail where 'Abd al-Qadir was being detained. The *Darbār* believed that the privacy of a swift closed trial would prevent excessive public excitement and counter precisely what India's newspapers had been provoking for the past few weeks. However, when whisperings of a 'secret trial' mysteriously leaked out the night before the arraignment, imminent disaster was unavoidable. Thousands of demonstrators arrived at the Srinagar jail on

fact exaggerated the event. Officially, the Muslim constable was reprimanded for failing to put his bedding away in the early morning hours, which was beyond the permissible time, and not for his recitation of the Qur'an. Nevertheless, the head constable's reaction was to grab the wad of bedding and crassly throw it away. Wrapped up in the bedding was a copy of the *panj surah*, the first five sections of the Qur'an. Interestingly, the outcome of the incident resulted in the retirement of the head constable and the dismissal of his subordinate Muslim officer. For the official report, see IOR R/1/1/2154 in the *Report of the Srinagar Riot Enquiry Committee* (24 September 1931), p. 20.

¹⁶ IOR R/1/1/2154, see *Telegram R. No. 2017-S from the Viceroy (Foreign and Political Department) Simla to the Secretary of State for India, London* (13 August 1931).

¹⁷ The date recorded in the *Report of the Srinagar Riot Enquiry Committee* for the speech is 21 June 1931, whereas the *Fortnightly Report for the first half of July 1931 from the Resident of Kashmir* states that the arrest was made on 1 July 1931.

¹⁸ IOR R/1/1/2064 *Fortnightly Report for the first half of July 1931 from the Resident of Kashmir* (17 July 1931).

13 July 1931 to protest the proceedings inside. In retrospect, it is understandable why so many people believed that the secrecy of the trial was simply another Dogra conspiracy to continue oppressing Muslims. Though the police had been summoned in the early morning hours, their failure to appreciate the magnitude of the situation and their overall lackadaisical attitude prevented them from arriving at the jail until the afternoon, when they came ill prepared.¹⁹ As the protest intensified, the audacity of the crowd turned into belligerence. Irascible protestors began hurling stones and bricks at the guards as they surrounded the prison and proceeded to shake the telephone lines furiously until the lines were finally cut off. The guards intermittently fired warning shots with ephemeral effects, but the crowd became more hostile and tried to set fire to the prison. The guards opened fire killing ten protesters almost immediately and successfully dispersed the crowd away from the prison. The mob carried the bodies back to the city, shouting slogans and waving banners soaked in the blood of the dead, where rioters devastated the Maharaj-ganj bazaar, which was located in the Hindu quarters of Srinagar, and looted a number of shops.²⁰

¹⁹ Although this account was taken largely from government documents and reports, it differs from Spencer Lavan's independent reading of the same reports. Lavan said that 'the [Riots Enquiry] Commission upheld the actions of the Maharajah and commended his prompt dispatching of troops to prevent further troubles.' See Spencer Lavan, *The Ahmadiyah Movement*, p. 161, in footnote 8. However, the report of the Enquiry Commission also criticized the attitude of the police and their implementation of these orders. See IOR R/1/1/2154 in the *Report of the Srinagar Riot Enquiry Committee* (24 September 1931), pp. 4-5.

²⁰ See IOR R/1/1/2154 in the *Report of the Srinagar Riot Enquiry Committee* (24 September 1931) for the official report on the riots. Additionally, it is worth noting that Dost Muhammad Shahid's *Tārīkh-i Ahmadiyah*, Vol. 5, contains some rare photographs which are located in an insert between pp. 406-407, depicting some very disturbing scenes of the victims, including children, amidst the bereaved at the Jām'ī Masjid, Srinagar where the bodies were taken following the riots. He has also included photographs of large crowds of women protestors demonstrating and of the Maharaja's troops when they surrounded the mosque in the weeks following the riots. It is also worth noting that most Muslim accounts indicate substantially higher death tolls, including Shahid's own account, which numbers those injured to be in the low hundreds.

The riots marked the beginning of three long years of strife, disturbances, and political unrest throughout the State of Jammu and Kashmir. The communal tensions had taken decades to build up and took equally as long to simmer down. In the weeks that followed, Muslim shopkeepers declared a *hartāl* (strike) by refusing to open for business, which brought much of Srinagar's daily commerce to a standstill. Muslims continued their acts of noncompliance by refusing to take part in the official Riot Enquiry Committee, despite repeated offers from the *Darbār*. On 23 September 1931 a crowd of 15,000 dissidents armed with staffs and axes amassed at the house of Sa'd al-Din, one of the local Muslims who had become a celebrity in the past few weeks for refusing to take part in the Riot Enquiry Committee. This time the local Hindu population was fortunate because the rioters apparently had 'no quarrel with Hindus, but [rather] ha[d] declared Jihad against His Highness' government.'²¹

The following evening an ordinance was passed that gave ordinary members of the military and police extraordinary powers to control 'turbulent persons' by making arrests and taking possession of their property without any warrant.²² The ordinance even incorporated a clause, which made 'dissuading' others from military enlistment a prosecutable offence that was punishable by one year in prison, flogging, or both.²³ Reactionary responses and retaliation came from both sides. On 25 September following the Friday prayers in the town of Shopian (south of Srinagar), a mob of Muslims attacked a sub-inspector and eight constables who had been 'watching the prayers' and killed one head constable. Military reinforcements soon

²¹ IOR R/1/1/2155(1) in *Telegram No. 60-6* (24 September 1931) from the Resident of Kashmir.

²² *Ibid.*, which contains a booklet of the ordinance entitled *Notification of No. 19-L of 1938*.

²³ *Ibid.*

arrived opening fire, which killed another and wounded at least seven more.²⁴ Meanwhile, with the threat of the new ordinance looming, the British Resident of Kashmir was led to believe that a 'rapid improvement' of troop morale was taking place. His mistaken assessment only lasted until he began receiving reports from 'Europeans' who were complaining that Hindus were abusing their newly acquired powers. Some Hindu officers had interpreted the ordinance to justify thrashing any Muslim who failed to say, '*Mahārājā sāhib kī jay!* [victory to the Maharaja]' whenever passing a member of military or police. Indeed this unacceptable behaviour was corrected as soon as possible, but a few Muslims in Srinagar had already been 'severely' beaten.²⁵

From 1931 to 1934 demonstrations and communal disturbances were displacing diplomacy as preferred methods for expressing political dissent in Kashmir.²⁶ The pressures, which arose in these extreme circumstances, allowed a new Muslim leadership to emerge out of the broader movement for independence. Each leader saw manifest in Kashmir the exemplification of the Indo-Islamic cause, and therefore Kashmir became the paradigm for Indo-Muslim independence. The overall perception of the Kashmir crisis was a paradigmatic case for both the tyrannical subjugation of Muslims, as well as an idealized spiritual resistance that

²⁴ IOR R/1/1/2064 *Fortnightly Report for the second half of September 1931 from the Resident of Kashmir, F.9-C/30* (3 October 1931); See also, IOR R/1/1/2155(1)

²⁵ See *Ibid.*, for the full account including the above quotations.

²⁶ The above accounts are intended to present an idea of the critical situation in Kashmir from the perspective of the disenfranchised Muslim population. A comprehensive historical presentation is beyond the scope of this study, which is only intended to show how these circumstances later contributed to the evolution of Ahmadi theology and identity. For more comprehensive historical accounts, see Mridu Rai, *Hindu Rulers, Muslim Subjects* (2004); Ayesha Jalal, *Self and Sovereignty* (2001); Spencer Lavan, *The Ahmadiyah Movement* (1974); Ian Copland, 'Islam and Political Mobilization in Kashmir, 1931-1934,' *Pacific Affairs* (1981); and David Gilmartin, *Empire and Islam* (1988).

bordered on outright jihad. The new political parties emerging from the centre were eager to make the most out of this example, which had the potential to reinforce their own political visions in the event of a favourable outcome. In this sense, the idealized perception of the crisis in Kashmir provided an opportune moment for emerging Muslim leaders to demonstrate to the world exactly how their party's Islam was capable of transforming society in precisely the way in which they had claimed. In addition, the historical context of the Kashmir crisis corresponded with a time that was sufficiently removed from the failures of the Khilafat Movement, which allowed India's aspiring leaders to substantiate their claims once again through a seemingly new course of action.

4.3 – Mirza Bashir al-Din Mahmud Ahmad's Response and Jama'at-i Ahmadiyya's Political Involvement in the Kashmir Crisis

Kashmir has always played a significant role in Ahmadi explanations of Jesus' survival from the crucifixion.²⁷ Ghulam Ahmad himself wrote a tract which argued that both Jesus and Mary had travelled to Kashmir following the crucifixion to escape further persecution.²⁸ Subsequently, Jama'at-i Ahmadiyya has produced an extensive amount of literature pertaining to Jesus' journey to Kashmir and his burial in a particular Sufi shrine in Srinagar, which Ghulam Ahmad identified as the actual

²⁷ See chapter 2, section 2.2 above, 'Jesus as the Promised Messiah'.

²⁸ See Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, *Masīh Hindūstān Meñ*, in *Rūhānī Khazā'in*, Vol. 15.

tomb of Jesus Christ.²⁹ In addition, Maulvi Hakim Nur al-Din, *khalīfat al-masīh* I, had served as the chief royal physician (*shāhī tabīb*) to the Maharaja of Jammu and Kashmir for fifteen years, under Hari Singh's two predecessors.³⁰ Due to its importance to the community, Mahmud Ahmad had visited Kashmir on a number of occasions before and after his ascension to the *khilāfat*. Given this context, there is no coincidence that Jama'at-i Ahmadiyya was pursuing an aggressive missionary campaign in Jammu and Kashmir prior to the outbreak of the riots.

Soon after the riots on 25 July 1931, the Lahore based All-India Muslim Kashmir Conference held a meeting in Shimla to determine their course of action. Many notable dignitaries were present, including Sir Muhammad Iqbal, Sir Mian Fazl-i Husain, (the Nawab of Malerkotla) Sir Muhammad Zulfiqar 'Ali Khan,³¹ (*Shams al-'Ulamā*) Khwaja Hasan Nizami of Delhi, Khan Bahadur Shaykh Rahim Bakhsh, and several other Nawabs, a Deobandi professor, and high ranking administrators from both the *Siyāsāt* and *Muslim Outlook* newspapers. On Iqbal's nomination, the members unanimously agreed that Mirza Bashir al-Din Mahmud

²⁹ See Mirza Tahir Ahmad, *Christianity: A Journey From Facts to Fiction* (Tilford: Islam International Publications, 1994); see also J. D. Shams, *Where did Jesus die?* (Tilford: Islam International Publications, 1989).

³⁰ Muhammad Zafrulla Khan, *Hazrat Maulvi Nooruddeen Khalīfatul Masīh I* (London: The London Mosque, 1983?), p. 39. Presumably, Nur al-Din's status as the royal physician earned him the title '*hakīm*' which typically prefixes his name. Although Nur al-Din served as the royal physician for fifteen years (1877-1893) under Ranbir Singh and Pratap Singh, Dost Muhammad Shahid's account indicated that Nur al-Din was asked to leave Kashmir under seemingly unfavorable circumstances, see *Tārīkh-i Ahmadiyya*, Vol. 5, p. 369.

³¹ Nawab Sir Zulfiqar 'Ali Khan had a particularly impressive profile that may appear to be overshadowed by the other eminent figures like Iqbal and Mian Fazl-i Husain. Among other things, he was the Chief Minister of Patiala (1910-1913), a participant for the Simon Commission (1928-1929), and an Indian delegate to the League of Nations (1930). Interestingly, his brother, Nawab Muhammad 'Ali Khan, married Mirza Ghulam Ahmad's daughter, Nawab Mubarak Begum, which made both of the Nawabs the brothers-in-law of Mirza Mahmud Ahmad *khalīfat al-masīh* II. In addition, Ghulam Ahmad's other daughter, Amtul Hafiz Begum, married Nawab Muhammad 'Ali Khan's son, Nawab 'Abdullah Khan.

Ahmad should become president, with 'Abd al-Rahim Dard as his secretary, of what they called the All-India Kashmir Committee (AIKC).³²

This inaugural meeting at Shimla was important for several reasons. The motivating circumstances throughout the All-India Muslim Kashmir Conference's former period of impotence had not really changed by 1931. The All-India Kashmir Committee still had no clear grounds for agency in the sense that there was no official sponsorship from any of the three governments (Kashmir, India, and Britain) involved, no definitive goals or reasons for its existence, and no Kashmiri lobby officially asking for its help. For all intents and purposes, the AIKC was no different than it had always been during its quieter years throughout the earlier part of the 20th century. Prior to the meeting at Shimla, the committee was an unorganized group of influential and wealthy Muslims, predominantly from the Punjab, who were understandably upset about the conditions of their co-religionists in Kashmir. Nonetheless, their shared sentiment did not translate into practical power on the other side of the border in Kashmir. Shimla marked the beginning of several significant changes that altered the role of the committee and the struggle for Muslim independence in Kashmir. In virtue of the fact that the meeting took place in Shimla, instead of somewhere more convenient like the committee's previous headquarters in Lahore, the AIKC had already taken on a more national appearance that extended beyond the Punjab.³³ The new members who were present at Shimla, and those who

³² Dost Muhammad Shahid, *Tārīkh-i Ahmadiyya*, Vol. 5, pp. 415-416, has his account of the committee's formation and pp. 419-421, has the full list of members.

³³ Shimla traditionally belonged to the region of mountain states that is associated with the people of the Himalayas, until the British discovered the town and eventually made it their summer capital in 1864. Shimla continued to function as India's summer capital until partition in 1947. In 1972 the Indian government redefined the state borders on more traditional lines and made Shimla the capital of the new state of Himachal Pradesh.

joined them soon thereafter, were truly a better representation of an 'All-India' organization that stretched from the Frontier in the west to the Bengal in the east. The augmented geographic boundaries were a clear step towards establishing credibility. Now at the very least the All-India Kashmir Committee could produce non-Punjabi members who held meetings in one of the nation's capitals.

Other Muslim activists to emerge following the riots included a young Kashmiri named Shaykh Muhammad 'Abdullah,³⁴ who was an unemployed Master's graduate of Aligarh that was making a name for himself by delivering impassioned speeches in protest. Shaykh 'Abdullah's continued involvement in political activism eventually earned him the laudatory title *Sher-i Kashmīr* (the Lion of Kashmir) as well as the opportunity to serve as the state's Chief Minister from 1975 until his death in 1982.³⁵ The Kashmir crisis also marked the beginning of the recently formed Majlis-i Ahrār-i Islām, which was an organization that was trying to establish itself in opposition to the Ahmadi administered All-India Kashmir Committee.³⁶ From its inception, the Ahrari defence of Islam was reactionary in nature and unapologetically incorporated anti-*Darbār*, anti-British, anti-Sikh, anti-Hindu, and anti-Ahmadi sentiments all on a single platform.³⁷ This stance was reinforced through a militant enterprise that wielded gangs (*jathās*) of thousands of Punjabis who threatened to infiltrate the Kashmiri border at a moment's notice.³⁸ Sir Mian Fazl-i Husain

³⁴ The name also appears as Sheikh Abdullah in English works.

³⁵ For a sketchy autobiographical account, see Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah, *Ātish-i Cinār* (trans.) *Flames of the Chinar* (New Delhi: Penguin, 1993).

³⁶ See section 4.4 below.

³⁷ David Gilmartin, *Empire and Islam: Punjab and the Making of Pakistan* (London: University of California Press, 1988), pp. 96-97; see also Ayesha Jalal, *Self and Sovereignty*, p. 349, who noted that the appeal of the early Ahrar attracted 'communitarian bigots of varying measure.'

³⁸ IOR R/1/1/2155(1) in the *Letter from Chief Secretary to the Government of the Punjab* (10 October 1931), p. 12.

described them as the 'riff-raffs' amongst the Muslims.³⁹ Even though the Ahrar's tactics may have been crude in the earliest days, they nonetheless may have provided suitable opposition to Mahmud Ahmad who had been 'running the local administration [in Qadian] on the lines of an Ahmadi mafia.'⁴⁰

Mahmud Ahmad's objectives were to find 'Ahmadi' solutions to a set of sophisticated political problems. Leading a successful lobby on behalf of the AIKC in India was a challenge, but ensuring that they had a practical impact on the streets of Kashmir was an entirely different matter. Mahmud Ahmad knew that only Kashmiris could determine the fate of Kashmir. Offensively, he needed to mobilize Kashmiri Muslims against a stagnant Dogra government, while defensively, he needed to ward off the attacks and constant criticism from the Ahrari opposition. Neither of these were easy tasks. Had the *Darbār* been willing to respond to civil sentiments, either through the implementation of various changes in public policy or perhaps by initiating an attempt to bring about these changes in the near future, it is likely that a great deal of social anxiety could have been avoided. Resolving the problem of reconciliation after the crisis had begun was not a viable option once mainstream members of Kashmiri society had felt it necessary to resort to rioting and civil disobedience en masse. Many Kashmiri Muslims were weary of the government and were no longer willing to entertain the idea of diplomatic negotiations. Both the severity of the violence and the widespread consent that the masses expressed during the communal disturbances made it exceedingly difficult to stop the crisis by finding a tempered solution. Furthermore, reconciliation needed to take place in the backdrop

³⁹ Waheed Ahmad (ed.), *Diary and Notes of Mian Fazl-i Husain* (Lahore: Research Society of Pakistan, University of the Punjab, 1977), p. 141.

⁴⁰ Ayesha Jalal, *Self and Sovereignty*, p. 293.

of groups like the Ahrar, who based many of their activities on reciprocating a refined rhetoric of hatred back into the public ear.

Once again, Mahmud Ahmad's methodology in resolving the conflict in Kashmir was to utilize the Jama'at's excellent contacts in the region and its superb organizational structure as an asset. The organizational structure itself gave Mahmud Ahmad a considerable advantage over his opposition, as it was drastically different from any other Muslim group of the time with the exception of the Isma'ilis. Considering that Mahmud Ahmad was personally responsible for setting up the Jama'at's organizational structure in the first place, it is not surprising that he was quick to use the Jama'at's institutionalized framework to enter into an international political crisis. He had always intended for his Jama'at to compete for the dominant leadership of the Muslim world, thereby enabling the Ahmadi *khilāfat* (which is to say his own *khilāfat*) to reign supreme over the *umma*. This is why Mahmud Ahmad never had fully supported the Khilafat Movement, because it would have undermined his own claim to *khilāfat*.⁴¹

The AIKC needed authentication from the Kashmiri masses in order to have a lasting effect in Kashmir. Mahmud Ahmad knew that he needed to balance the support of the Kashmiri mainstream with the logistics of an international resistance. He established a Publicity Committee whose only function was to bombard the Indian Press with news and perspectives on the internal situation in Jammu and Kashmir. They publicized pertinent issues amongst Muslims throughout the subcontinent who

⁴¹ Yohanan Friedmann, *Prophecy Continuous: Aspects of Ahmadi Religious Thought and Its Medieval Background* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989), pp. 35-36. There are certain subtleties in Mahmud Ahmad's argument that are expressed in detail below. We will explore some of these questions further in chapter 5, section 5.3 'The Political Dimensions of Persecution'.

were potentially unaware of the most recent internal developments in Kashmir or the AIKC's response to the crisis.⁴² Then Mahmud Ahmad ordered the establishment of numerous Kashmiri Independence Offices (otherwise known as Reading Rooms) throughout Jammu and Kashmir, but shrewdly forbade his Ahmadi disciples from holding positions of leadership within them.⁴³ This further created the impression of a highly organized internal resistance that was taking shape with Muslims coming together from within the state's borders, which otherwise appeared to have been highly implausible. His strategy was devised to mislead onlookers who were trying to assess the threat of Kashmiri Muslims by showing them the borrowed framework of a well-organized institution that was already in place. Hence, government officials were thoroughly dismayed when they were confronted with an utterly unified network of Reading Rooms that were popping up throughout the state and were simply nonexistent in the weeks and months prior to the riots. This should have been impossible, and no one had predicted that the leaders of the agitations were capable of organizing themselves to a level of competence as rapidly as they had done in Kashmir. The *Darbār* faced an unfolding situation that gave the outward appearance of a disgruntled Muslim mainstream that was conflating into a collective resistance with unbelievable efficiency. Realistically, the underlying structure of Jama'at-i Ahmadiyya had taken nearly 40 years to establish itself in this fashion, but for the Dogra officials who were wondering how a similar organizational structure was materializing virtually overnight, it must have been terrifying. It meant that they had

⁴² Dost Muhammad Shahid, *Tārīkh-i Ahmadiyya*, Vol. 5, p. 433.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, pp. 444-445.

grossly underestimated the magnitude of the situation that was developing in their own state and radically misjudged the threat of Muslim resistance.

With the infrastructure beginning to take shape, Mahmud Ahmad needed to find an inspired Kashmiri spokesperson who he could use as a puppet for his own cause. He summoned roughly 15 to 20 potential candidates to Qadian for a personal interview, so that he could get a better idea of whom he would be working with in the future.⁴⁴ When the meetings were complete and Mahmud Ahmad had assessed the situation, he asked the Kashmiri delegation if they knew of any other potential leaders from within Kashmir's independence movement who had not joined them in Qadian. The entourage concurred that there was a Shaykh Muhammad 'Abdullah of Srinagar who could not risk leaving Kashmir out of the fear that the *Darbār* would not permit his re-entry into the state. This response was provocative enough to pique Mahmud Ahmad's interest, so he made arrangements to meet Shaykh 'Abdullah at a border town called Garhi Habibullah. In a true Bollywood style masquerade, 'Abd al-Rahim Dard smuggled Shaykh 'Abdullah, tucked under a blanket and hidden in the backseat of his carriage, across the Indian border into Garhi Habibullah to meet the AIKC's new president. When the meeting with Mirza Mahmud Ahmad was over, Shaykh 'Abdullah was smuggled back into Kashmir in the same manner in which he arrived.⁴⁵

⁴⁴ Ibid., p. 445. Dost Muhammad Shahid did not provide the names of the individuals in question, but his account inferred that they were all reasonably young activists who were already making a name for themselves in Jammu and Kashmir.

⁴⁵ Ibid., pp. 446-447. Although this story is not present in Shaykh 'Abdullah's autobiography, which is the only other source capable of verifying or rejecting its authenticity, it is consistent with the development of the subsequent history of Kashmir in regards to Shaykh 'Abdullah's close political affiliations with Jama'at-i Ahmadiyya through the early part of his career, which we will further discuss below.

The scheme was a success and the agreement was simple. Shaykh ‘Abdullah’s instructions were to set up an office in Srinagar from which he could devote his fulltime attention to the independence movement. Shaykh ‘Abdullah’s task was to establish some type of newspaper or periodical to disseminate information and publicize the resistance internally. He founded the *Islāh* newsletter, which introduced a rare Muslim mouthpiece from within the borders of Kashmir that was created purely for the promotion of the independence movement. Mirza Mahmud Ahmad was aware that it was inappropriate for him to intervene as the *khalīfa*, because the majority of Muslims in Kashmir were not his Ahmadi disciples. Likewise, at this point the AIKC was more of a facade for Jama‘at-i Ahmadiyya than anything else, despite the inherent potential of its influential membership. In the historical context, a newspaper was itself a major organ for communicating ideas throughout the subcontinent during this period. It was one of the few means by which major leaders of this era could spread their ideas beyond their immediate vicinities and beyond the crowds of the local mosques who emerged following the Friday prayers.⁴⁶ For this reason, Shaykh ‘Abdullah’s easy access to the press instantly made him a major player in the eyes of the government observers who were studiously tracking the development of the situation. In fact, the impact of Shaykh ‘Abdullah’s ideas circulating through the Kashmiri press may have been more influential than Mahmud Ahmad expected, due to other historical circumstances surrounding the Kashmiri press. In the early years of the conflict, Kashmir’s reinvigorated press was taking advantage of the Dogra rulers’ recent relaxation in censorship of Muslim

⁴⁶ See Francis Robinson, *Islam and Muslim History in South Asia* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), especially chapter 3, ‘Islam and the Impact of Print in South Asia’.

publications, which they had enforced up to 1932.⁴⁷ Shaykh ‘Abdullah fulfilled his obligations through the early 1930s by incessantly publishing articles that made explicit appeals to the All-India Kashmir Committee, virtually begging for their intercession in the ongoing affair. This alone gave Mirza Mahmud adequate legitimacy for the AIKC and enough leeway to enfranchise his organization’s authority from neighbouring India. Now he possessed the freedom to pursue matters in Jammu and Kashmir as he saw fit while acting on behalf of the AIKC as their rightful president. In return for the internal publicity of the AIKC and the public appeals for their intervention, Shaykh ‘Abdullah, who did not come from an affluent background and lacked his own resources, received the necessary funding to run and sustain his independence movement office in Srinagar. The initial amount agreed upon at Garhi Habibullah was a base allowance of Rs. 238 per month with a potential for increase, which was a generous figure for the time.⁴⁸

Shaykh ‘Abdullah was so convincing in aligning himself with the AIKC that he spent the rest of his career facing accusations of being ‘Qadiani’ from opposition parties, who would conveniently malign his reputation whenever the opportunity for political advancement arose. This was a serious problem for *Darbār* officials who were desperately trying to determine with whom they were dealing. Consequently, bemused local authorities now had to spend their time trying to determine if Shaykh

⁴⁷ Mridu Rai, *Hindu Rulers, Muslim Subjects*, p. 261.

⁴⁸ Dost Muhammad Shahid, *Tārīkh-i Ahmadiyya*, Vol. 5, p. 447. There are also several photocopies of handwritten letters from Shaykh ‘Abdullah to Mirza Mahmud Ahmad, which detail other donations and have been inserted at the end of vol. 5, between pp. 630-631; see also Ian Copland, ‘Islam and Political Mobilization in Kashmir, 1931-1934,’ *Pacific Affairs* (1981), Vol. 54, No. 2, (Summer, 1981), p. 237. Copland’s account is vague but reasonably consistent with Dost Muhammad Shahid, although he did not cite the sources for his information; see also Jānbāz Mirzā, *Kārvān-i Ahrār*, Vol. 1, (Lahore: Maktabah-i Tabassira, 1975), p. 369, for the similar sentiment that he expressed regarding their financial ties.

‘Abdullah really was a ‘Qadiani’. It took months until ‘Abd al-Rahim Dard could personally clarify the issue for government officials on a visit to the Resident of Kashmir.⁴⁹ Even so, the issue persisted and periodically re-emerged as a significant problem for unassuming Kashmiris who were caught in the fallout between political opportunists who were exploiting the latest scandal. There are examples of this in Shaykh ‘Abdullah’s memoirs:

Unfortunately, the Mirwaiz [Maulvi Yusuf Shah] became embroiled in their [Majlis-i Ahrar’s] intrigues. On 30 January 1932, he delivered a sermon at Khanqah-e-Naqshbandia in which he accused me of being a Qadiani. Everyone knew that I was a Sunni, of the Hanafī sect. This event took place in the dead of winter when most Kashmiris do not leave their houses without their *kangris* [braziers]. During the altercations which followed his allegation, these *kangris* were freely used as trajectories, injuring a number of people.⁵⁰

The affinity between Mirza Mahmud Ahmad and Shaykh ‘Abdullah developed over time as both remained true to their agreement and honoured their commitments. The details of each specific project varied case by case, but the underlying premise was always the same. On 23 May 1932 Mirza Mahmud Ahmad, this time on behalf of Jama‘at-i Ahmadiyya, established a new scholarship fund for Muslim students

⁴⁹ IOR R/1/1/2164 in *Fortnightly Report for the second half of October 1931 from the Resident of Kashmir*, F.9-C/30 (3 November 1931); see also IOR R/1/1/2531 in *File No. 91-Political* (17 January 1934), in which a warning was sent to B. J. Glancy of the Glancy Commission cautioning that Shaykh ‘Abdullah is an Ahmadi even though he may say that he is not. The conclusion expressed in the file was that the authenticity of the source was dubious and likely to be linked to the opposition (i.e. the Ahrar), who were threatening to publish the fraudulent letter when ‘it suits them’, as was repeatedly the case throughout Shaykh ‘Abdullah’s career. It is surprising that his affiliations with Jama‘at-i Ahmadiyya were persistently an issue with the *Darbār* as late as 1934, even though both Ahmadi officials and Shaykh ‘Abdullah himself consistently denied his religious commitment to the community.

⁵⁰ Sheikh Abdullah, *Flames of the Chinar*, p. 39. A *kāngrī* is a warming device that was traditionally used by indigenous Kashmiris. A *kāngrī* is a clay bowl filled with hot coals or cinder that is typically kept in a wooden pail throughout the winter months as a means to stay warm. The pail is small enough and light enough to be carried in one’s hands, usually underneath a thick Kashmiri shawl, which creates a portable individualized heat source for people who are walking outdoors in inclement weather.

studying in Kashmir. With an additional Rs. 200 per month, Shaykh ‘Abdullah could establish a suitable boarding house with a fulltime cook, which enabled 20 promising candidates the opportunity to pursue a higher education each year.⁵¹ Although this may not seem like a significant number of students at first, it was considerably larger than the government’s offer from 1927, which had created such a stir and was followed by accusations of Hindu favouritism. Nevertheless, the new scholarship fund contained enough awards to woo Muslim favour in Kashmir and increase positive publicity for Jama‘at-i Ahmadiyya at a reasonable price.

Pragmatically, increasing revenues was never a problem for Mirza Mahmud Ahmad. His foresight and ingenuity enabled him to construct somewhat of a fund raising industry that was beginning to perpetuate itself. There was a circular return as finances were being channelled back into the same system from which they emerged. Shyakh ‘Abdullah’s frequent public displays of approval for the AIKC’s initiatives had loosened the pockets of the committee’s wealthier members, which sparked an increase in donations as well as a broader ‘All-Indian’ membership to stretch its roster. Likewise, growing numbers of underprivileged Kashmiris were willing to support a movement that was having a visible impact on the ground and producing tangible results, such as stipends for the families of the deceased and medical provisions for those injured in the riots.⁵² Consequently, the increasing confidence of lower class Kashmiris in the AIKC was attracting even more donors from above. Mahmud Ahmad appropriated funds to the Kashmiri cause from every accessible channel that was available to him, including Jama‘at-i Ahmadiyya. *Khalīfat al-masīh*

⁵¹ Dost Muhammad Shahid, *Tārīkh-i Ahmadiyya*, Vol. 5, p. 448.

⁵² *Ibid.*, pp. 470-471.

II established the 'Kashmir Relief Fund' as a mandatory charitable 'donation' levied upon every earning Ahmadi in his Jama'at. Each Ahmadi was required to give at least one *pāī*' (1/192 of a rupee),⁵³ on every rupee that they earned, towards the Kashmir Relief Fund on a monthly basis, which the Jama'at continued to collect for decades after the riots.⁵⁴ It is likely that the vast majority of Ahmadis considered this a worthy cause and donated to the new Relief Fund openhandedly.

We have already mentioned above how there were significant numbers of Ahmadis working anonymously behind the scenes and contributing towards the hidden labour force underneath the independence movement's various banners, such as the AIKC and the numerous Reading Rooms. However, unskilled Ahmadi labourers were not the only ones who were compelled to give their time and efforts to the Kashmiri cause. Conversely, Mahmud Ahmad instructed skilled Ahmadis to contribute professional services to the Kashmiri cause as well. Throughout the stormiest years that followed the riots, major cities like Srinagar were occasionally subjected to bouts of martial law. Communal tensions and revolutionary threats had raised concerns amongst many members of the military and the police. The implications of the ordinance of 24 September 1931 mentioned above reflected the heightened state of paranoia that some officials in *Darbār* experienced regarding their own national security. Accordingly, an inordinate number of Muslims were arrested and sent to prison under false or misleading pretences that were precariously associated with various criminal offences. With the internal situation in Kashmir

⁵³ According to the old system of currency, there were 3 *pāī*' in 1 *paysā* and 64 *payse* in 1 rupee.

⁵⁴ Dost Muhammad Shahid, *Tārīkh-i Ahmadiyya*, Vol. 5, p. 436. It is unclear when the fund actually ceased to exist. It is likely that this specific scheme was eventually absorbed into the broader initiatives of the Ahmadi donation system that continue to this day under various names.

deteriorating, there was no independent judicial system in place to determine whether those incarcerated were being held on charges that were exaggerated or fabricated by hypersensitive officers. Additionally, the *Darbār* had used the ordinance to provide legal justification for the acquisition of property from those indicted at an alarming rate.⁵⁵ Since the ordinance permitted legal action to be taken that was based solely on suspicion, when such a case went to trial it invariably reduced to one individual's word against the other. The AIKC sent teams of attorneys to Kashmir and instructed them to assess the situation and defend any individual who had been wrongfully detained or whose property had been wrongfully confiscated. Although there appear to be several cases where wealthy Kashmiris had their properties or businesses seized by the *Darbār*, the majority of cases appear to involve lower class Kashmiris with no means of finding a recourse to legal counsel.⁵⁶ The lawyers went to major cities in Jammu and Kashmir at their own expense as volunteers of the AIKC and invested their own time and money. Naturally, the AIKC's legal team included several prominent Ahmadis who were primarily responding to their *khalīfa*'s instructions, such as Shaykh Bashir Ahmad (who later became a High Court Justice in Lahore), Chauhdry Muhammad Yusuf Khan, Shaykh Muhammad Ahmad Mazhar (who authored numerous lexicons pertaining to Ghulam Ahmad's linguistic theory),⁵⁷

⁵⁵ See the ordinance booklet entitled *Notification of No. 19-L of 1988* in IOR R/1/1/2155(1), particularly pp. 5-7, which deal with the legalities related to the seizure of private property.

⁵⁶ This also could suggest that their property may have been confiscated under genuine suspicion, since less fortunate people were less likely to own a lot of property.

⁵⁷ Mirza Ghulam Ahmad received revelations informing him that all languages were derived from Arabic, which was sacred because of its relation to the Qur'an. See his book *Minan al-Rahmān*, in *Rūhānī Khazā'in*, Vol. 9, pp. 126-248. Muhammad Ahmad Mazhar expanded the thesis and wrote numerous lexicons that traced the words of various languages back to their allegedly original Arabic roots through an elaborate system of phonetic substitutions, which he devised himself. Many of his works are still available, see *Arabic: The Source of All the Languages* (1963); *English Traced to*

Chauhdry Asadullah Khan (the younger brother of Zafrulla Khan), and several others. Remarkably, Dost Muhammad Shahid has recorded the details of hundreds of such cases that were acquitted or overturned due to the efforts of the AIKC's legal team and counsel throughout the early 1930s.⁵⁸

Some of the AIKC's internal support and services, such as the legal contributions, medical relief, and the scholarship funds, were unique in the sense that their interface with the Kashmiri public was deep rooted enough to directly impact the individuals who were presumably the most affected. Within the AIKC, Mahmud Ahmad had a number of other influential contacts with whom he was collaborating to support his initiatives. Iqbal's sentimental connection to Kashmir is well known and often attributed to his family's Kashmiri background. His lifelong contributions and poetry about the struggles of the Muslims of Kashmir and India overall have been well documented.⁵⁹ Similarly, it is known that Mian Fazl-i Husain's influence played an important role in stabilizing support for AIKC.⁶⁰ As with Iqbal, Mian Fazl-i Husain's contributions in the way of the broader independence movement have been recognized by the historians of South Asia,⁶¹ but their personal relations and social contacts alongside their professional affiliations are often overlooked. In the Ahmadi-specific context, Mian Fazl-i Husain claimed to have a 'great regard' for

Arabic (1967); *Yoruba Traced to Arabic* (1976); *Hausa Traced to Arabic* (1977); *Sanskrit Traced to Arabic* (1982).

⁵⁸ Dost Muhammad Shahid, *Tārīkh-i Ahmadiyya*, Vol. 5, pp. 535-554. This section is further split by each individual attorney's name and the details of their personal legal contributions.

⁵⁹ Ayesha Jalal, *Self and Sovereignty*, pp. 352-353.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 356; Ian Copland, 'Islam and Political Mobilization in Kashmir, 1931-1934,' *Pacific Affairs* (1981), Vol. 54, No. 2, (Summer, 1981), p. 236.

⁶¹ See Ayesha Jalal and Anil Seal, 'Alternative to Partition: Muslim Politics between the Wars,' *Modern Asian Studies*, Vol. 15, No. 3, (1981), pp. 415-454; see also Ian Talbot, *Khizr Tiwana: The Punjab Unionist Party and the Partition of India* (Oxford: Oxford University Press: 2002), pp. 84-87; see also Ian Talbot, *Pakistan: A Modern History* (London: Hurst & Company, 2005), pp. 71-73.

Maulana Muhammad 'Ali of the Lahori branch.⁶² Furthermore, he had been mentoring a young Chauhdry Muhammad Zafrulla Khan for some time, another devoted member of the Jama'at who had entered the movement at the hand of Mirza Ghulam Ahmad.

From 1930 to 1932 Zafrulla Khan participated in all three of the Round Table Conferences in London. In December 1931, Zafrulla Khan was elected president of the All-India Muslim League. Despite the overt animosity expressed by Ahrari protesters,⁶³ Zafrulla Khan continued as president of the Muslim League until June 1932 when he resigned from the position to fulfil his next task. Mian Fazl-i Husain had been a member of the Viceroy's Executive Council from 1930 to 1935 but his declining health had forced him to take a four-month leave of absence during the summer of 1932. Upon his recommendation, Zafrulla Khan took Fazl-i Husain's place on the Viceroy's Executive Council throughout the summer of 1932,⁶⁴ which was a bold move considering Zafrulla's age, inexperience, and lack of seniority. In his diary, Mian Fazl-i Husain admitted: 'If it comes off, it will be a startling appointment.'⁶⁵ However, Zafrulla Khan's political aptitude and reputation were developing quickly. His closeness to such eminent personalities afforded him the opportunity to discuss the Kashmir matter personally with the Viceroy in the early

⁶² Waheed Ahmad (ed.), *Diary and Notes of Mian Fazl-i Husain*, p. 36, Fazl-i Husain mentions this in regards to visiting Muhammad 'Ali's house in Lahore for a dinner party (27 October 1930, Monday).

⁶³ Jānbāz Mirzā, *Kārvān-i Ahrār*, Vol. 1, p. 238.

⁶⁴ Wayne Wilcox and Aislie T. Embree (interviewers), *The Reminiscences of Sir Muhammad Zafrulla Khan* (Maple, Canada: Oriental Publishers with permission from Columbia University, 2004), pp. 36-38.

⁶⁵ Waheed Ahmad (ed.), *Diary and Notes of Mian Fazl-i Husain*, p. 137, the entry is under (12 May 1932, Thursday).

1930s.⁶⁶ Zafrulla Khan was an invaluable asset to Mirza Mahmud Ahmad and the AIKC during the Kashmir crisis, and perhaps even more so following the partition, as we will see below.

All of these factors came together in the Kashmir crisis in the 1930s, which amounted to a large network of global support with vast resources that applied internal and external pressure on the three relevant governments (Kashmir, India, and Britain) involved, in order to resolve the conflict in Kashmir. The inability to determine the significance and role of each key figure in the Muslim leadership must have been frustrating for government officials. This enabled Mahmud Ahmad to exercise various levels of control over the government and the Kashmiri mainstream by voicing similar concerns through dissimilar outlets, which thereby influenced a broader constituency than he normally could access through his own personal reach. His connections with revolutionary demagogues like Shaykh ‘Abdullah, who represented the Muslim sentiment of a country, to idealized literary icons like Iqbal, who represent the Muslim sentiment of an era, enabled Mahmud Ahmad to impose his influence throughout the region. Mahmud Ahmad could now personally meet with the Viceroy and threaten him with various courses of action,⁶⁷ such as the increased civil disobedience and the mass boycott of shopkeepers (*hartāl*) of August 1931.⁶⁸ He would intimidate government officials by threatening to resign as president of the AIKC and requesting its supporters to comply with the Ahrar’s objectives, which presumably would have resulted in a more violent conclusion to the

⁶⁶ Wayne Wilcox and Aislie T. Embree (interviewers), *The Reminiscences of Sir Muhammad Zafrulla Khan*, pp. 49-50.

⁶⁷ Dost Muhammad Shahid, *Tārīkh-i Ahmadiyya*, Vol. 5, p. 452.

⁶⁸ Spencer Lavan, *The Ahmadiyah Movement*, p. 149.

crisis.⁶⁹ Mahmud Ahmad in his capacity as the president of the AIKC exerted whatever pressure he could on the British and Indian governments to intervene in Kashmir, since he was convinced that immediate British intervention was the best political solution for the conflict. He believed that immediate British intervention would displace Dogra rule and eventually give the Muslims of Kashmir the best chance for independence. Although this was an indirect route to Kashmiri independence, it may have been a reasonable plan considering the enduring violence and tension in Kashmir in recent years. Despite Mahmud Ahmad's attempts, the British were resolved to let the Kashmiris settle their own problems while they intervened sparingly and only when necessary. This attitude eventually exacerbated the ideological conflict between Mahmud Ahmad and his opponents, including Shaykh 'Abdullah, who from the beginning had insisted on the creation of an independent Kashmir.

4.4 – The Beginning of Opposition: The Majlis-i Ahrar

As popular as the AIKC had become amongst the mainstream, it did not succeed in winning the support of every Muslim in Kashmir. The Muslim opposition to the AIKC was centred around the newly formed Majlis-i Ahrar-i Islam.⁷⁰ In the early stages of the conflict, Mahmud Ahmad attempted to appeal to Ahrari

⁶⁹ IOR R/1/1/2154, see *Telegram: from the president of the All-India Kashmir Committee to His Excellency the Viceroy*, which is underneath *Telegram R. No. 2017-S from the Viceroy (Foreign and Political Department) Simla to the Secretary of State for India, London* (13 August 1931).

⁷⁰ There were eight founding members of the Majlis-i Ahrar: 'Ataullah Shah Bukhari, Chaudry Afzal Haq, Maulana Habib al-Rahman, Mazhar 'Ali Azhar, Zafar 'Ali Khan, Khwaja 'Abd al-Rahman Ghazi, Shaykh Haysam al-Din, and Maulana Da'ud Ghaznavi. See Jānbāz Mīrā, *Kārvān-i Ahrār*, Vol. 1, p. 82.

sympathies by repeatedly publishing articles that called for AIKC supporters to cooperate with the Ahrar on Kashmir. Additionally, Mahmud Ahmad sent Muhammad Isma'il Ghaznavi, the nephew of Ahrari co-founder Maulana Da'ud Ghaznavi, as a delegate to the Ahrar leadership to offer his resignation as president if the Ahrar agreed to collaborate with the AIKC.⁷¹ Janbaz Mirza chronicled the Ahrar's perspective on the events in an eight-volume history that illustrates their profound scepticism towards the offers made by Mahmud Ahmad, which appeared in popular newspapers like *Inqilāb*.⁷² In fact, the Ahrar questioned the motivations of any organization other than their own. Despite the dramatic calls for Muslim unity emanating from both camps, neither of these two groups trusted each other enough to work together towards their common goals. After a slow start, the Ahrar did make significant contributions to the people of Kashmir on their own terms. Although the details of Majlis-i Ahrar's contribution to the crisis in Kashmir are largely beyond the scope of this study, they are worth mentioning in brief.

The most celebrated member of the Ahrar's leadership, 'Ataullah Shah Bukhari, was a mesmerizing speaker who captivated Punjabi audiences and provoked political mobilization. Prior to the riots, the men who formed the Ahrar's leadership had seceded from the Congress party in protest to pursue their own political objectives. Even after they had committed themselves to their new organization following the riots, it took a couple of years before the Ahrar could impact Kashmir

⁷¹ Dost Muhammad Shahid, *Tārīkh-i Ahmadiyya*, Vol. 5, p. 432.

⁷² Jānbāz Mirzā, *Kārvān-i Ahrār*, Vol. 1, p. 190. The article in question appeared in the *Inqilāb* (22 September 1931). Mahmud Ahmad expressed similar sentiments in a *Siyāsat* article from Lahore (31 October 1931), which is available in translation in IOR R/1/1/2155(1), see *Demi-Official letter From C.C. Gorbett, ESQ, CMG, CIE, Chief Secretary, Government Punjab No. 15267-S.B. Dated the 2nd/3rd Nov. 1931.*

in the way that they had intended. Although initially their campaign in Kashmir was more of an annoyance than a serious threat to the government, it still affected the overall circumstances and altered the mood of the conflict. The assumptions that were aggressively expressed in the Ahrari stance represented the view of a significant number of Muslims in the subcontinent who were convinced that there was no peaceful way to achieve Kashmiri independence. As articulate as 'Ataullah Shah Bukhari was before a swarming crowd, he did not have to convince many people of his argument, since similar sentiments had already penetrated rural South Asia beforehand. This was a great advantage for leaders like Bukhari, who did not have to waste time reiterating their justifications for immediate action. This no-nonsense approach to regime change in India and Kashmir reflected an exasperated Muslim population that would not continue waiting for diplomacy to take its course.

When Ahrari *jathās* (gangs) started crossing the Kashmiri border from Sialkot in the summer of 1931, local military and police officials erroneously presumed that they had the situation under control. Especially after the ordinance had taken effect in late September 1931, exonerating any number of police tactics was no longer an issue, since it gave police the legal authority to take harsher measures against the agitators. However, the *Darbār* did not suspect that there were large numbers of Muslims who were not afraid of the legal consequences for their actions. Police began making arrests and continued to do so until Kashmir's prisons had reached their capacities. This was a misjudgement by the Dogra government, who had hastily passed the ordinance overnight without considering the pragmatic ramifications of such legislation. As defiant Ahrari insubordinates proudly filled the jails of Kashmir,

diplomatic negotiations were escalated to the next level rather abruptly. Fortunately for the government, the Ahrar had exhausted their makeshift resources and could not afford to support their Punjabi volunteers who had been camping on the mountainsides exposed to the elements. The unbearable weather forced most of the *jathā* volunteers to return to their homes as the punishing conditions of the Kashmiri winter months gradually appeared.

Majlis-i Ahrar did not have the institutionalized structure, finances, or labour force at their disposal in the way that Mahmud Ahmad had in Jama‘at-i Ahmadiyya, but this did not discourage their efforts. Although the Ahrar arranged to solicit regular donations (*chandā*) from their volunteers through a standardized induction form,⁷³ the urgency of the crisis did not permit the time needed for the money to be collected. The complications involved in establishing an adequate infrastructure demanded that the majority of their funding be spent on stabilizing their new organization. Even Shaykh ‘Abdullah had gratuitously acknowledged the forbearance and physical hardships that Ahrari volunteers had endured in the beginning, even though he respectfully noted that he had not received a single rupee from the movement.⁷⁴ By 1939, Shaykh ‘Abdullah’s messages had changed from mild irritation to telling the Ahrar to stay out of Kashmiri affairs.⁷⁵ However, a steady source of funding was not the Ahrari leadership’s only problem in trying to organize a sustainable movement.

⁷³ Jānbāz Mirzā, *Kārvān-i Ahrār*, Vol. 1, pp. 149-150, which shows the registration form and membership conditions.

⁷⁴ Dost Muhammad Shahid, *Tārīkh-i Ahmadiyya*, Vol. 5, pp. 445-446.

⁷⁵ Jānbāz Mirzā, *Kārvān-i Ahrār*, Vol. 1, p. 278.

4.5 – The All-India Kashmir Committee after Mirza Bashir al-Din Mahmud Ahmad

After two years of Mirza Mahmud Ahmad's leadership and services, it was time for the AIKC to move on to the next stage of its development. Mahmud Ahmad had made considerable progress in establishing the AIKC as a viable organization and had acquired a sense of legitimacy in the eyes of government officials. Despite the fact that the AIKC was accomplishing tangible results in Kashmir, there were still a number of logistical issues that needed to be addressed by its members. The AIKC had yet to formally define their objectives, which was a necessary part of moving forward as an organization. Initially, the committee had been formed under strenuous circumstances as a reaction to the riots in Kashmir. Although the founding members had chosen Mahmud Ahmad as their first president, the AIKC more closely resembled a small group of elitist associates and their highbrowed companions who mutually shared a genuine concern for their fellow Muslims in Jammu and Kashmir. Two years later, this group was beginning to resemble a formal organization, the All-India Kashmir Committee, which was successfully lobbying three governments (Kashmir, India, and Britain) on an international scale. To sustain the AIKC beyond the aftermath of the riots, the organizational façade of the committee had to be solidified as soon as possible by clearly defining their intentions in writing. By 1933, the AIKC still had no formal constitution, no formal objectives, and no formal procedures for carrying out their presumed goals. Realistically, Mahmud Ahmad had complete control of the AIKC, much like in his own Jama'at, although in this case it

was for very different reasons. In these regards, there was a sense of validity to the Ahrari criticisms that were beginning to resonate throughout the region, which were quick to highlight the potential for an Ahmadi conspiracy. Many people were afraid that Mahmud Ahmad was exploiting the situation in Kashmir to expand Jama'at-i Ahmadiyya. The only reasonable course of action for the committee's advocates was to consolidate the AIKC in a way that would formalize its legitimacy and give it longevity as a self-sufficient organization. In some respects, the familiar process and procedures involved in the act of institutionalization was Mahmud Ahmad's specialty, as it was exactly what he had done with his own Jama'at following the split.

In May 1933 at Lahore's Cecil Hotel, the AIKC decided to remedy the outstanding problems. Mahmud Ahmad resigned from his office of president, largely in response to the external pressure that was beginning to polarize the AIKC's internal roster.⁷⁶ Following what was described as a dignified ceremony, the committee selected Iqbal as an interim president to oversee the next election and to initiate the process of writing a constitution.⁷⁷ During this interim period, Iqbal recommended that the members prohibit other Ahmadis from becoming president of the AIKC, due to the inherent conflict of interest with their former president. Iqbal felt that any future Ahmadi president of the AIKC would only take orders from the *khalīfat al-masīh*,⁷⁸ which was a criticism that Mahmud Ahmad did not dispute. Mahmud Ahmad's resignation was a problem for both sides of the AIKC's

⁷⁶ Dost Muhammad Shahid, *Tārīkh-i Ahmadiyya*, Vol. 5, p. 643.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 644-662.

⁷⁸ This was the sentiment expressed in Iqbal's letter of resignation as interim President of the AIKC on 20 June 1933. See Syed Abdul Wahid (ed.), *Thoughts and Reflections of Iqbal* (Lahore: Sh. Muhammad Ashraf, 1964), pp. 301-303.

ambivalent members. It was no secret that the majority of Ahmadis who were supporting the AIKC's efforts in Kashmir were only involved out of obedience to their *khalīfa*. Had the AIKC revoked the membership of Ahmadis altogether, they would essentially have to recreate a new organization once again, which was something that they had failed to do for the twenty years prior to 1931. Categorically rejecting all Ahmadis from participating in the AIKC was too harsh a measure that was unnecessary at that time. Not only would this adversely affect the AIKC's source of Ahmadi funding, but it would also diminish their international pool of Ahmadi labourers.

Spencer Lavan and Dost Muhammad Shahid provide differing accounts of Mahmud Ahmad's resignation from the AIKC.⁷⁹ Spencer Lavan focused more on the external pressure that influenced the resignation, whereas Dost Muhammad Shahid was more concerned with positively preserving Mahmud Ahmad's legacy. It is unlikely that the tension within the AIKC was unbearable, since the committee never revoked Mahmud Ahmad's membership or refused Ahmadis from participating in the organization following his resignation. However, there was certainly a growing fear that the *khalīfat al-masīh* was using the AIKC to further the membership of his Jama'at. Perhaps the internal situation would have become worse if Mahmud Ahmad had continued in his role as president for a few more years, but at this point, there still seems to have been a cordial understanding between the members of the committee. Iqbal never personally attacked Mahmud Ahmad or any other Ahmadi, despite his

⁷⁹ See Dost Muhammad Shahid, *Tārīkh-i Ahmadiyya*, Vol. 5, pp. 641-644, in contrast to Spencer Lavan, *The Ahmadiyah Movement*, pp. 154-156.

public acknowledgments of their theological differences.⁸⁰ The committee continued to function for some time with the same Ahmadi membership, which included Mahmud Ahmad as a regular member instead of president.

Appreciating and understanding Mahmud Ahmad's resignation is an important part of establishing a context for Jama'at-i Ahmadiyya's later involvement in the conflict in Kashmir. It may be possible to reconcile the conflicting accounts of Mahmud Ahmad's resignation with a more moderate reading of the events. Mahmud Ahmad must have been aware that people inside and outside the AIKC had problems with his approach. Mahmud Ahmad never denied his high hopes for the Muslims of Kashmir whenever he was questioned about proselytization,⁸¹ even though he typically avoided the issue. Mahmud Ahmad's explanations depicted an image of Kashmir's Muslims embracing Ahmadiyyat after seeing the tremendous efforts, which individual Ahmadis had made in the way of Islam, but this conflicted with the views of the remaining non-Ahmadi supporters of AIKC. Moreover, Mahmud Ahmad's acute awareness of the situation suggests that he did not want to allow a rift to form within the AIKC, which would damage his credibility as a leader and potentially taint the Jama'at's ongoing efforts in Kashmir. Mahmud Ahmad knew that his Jama'at would follow him, regardless of outside opinion, but it was not prudent for him to cut all ties with the AIKC. Once again, labour and funding had never been a problem for Mahmud Ahmad, but he needed the recognition of his

⁸⁰ Syed Abdul Wahid (ed.), *Thoughts and Reflections of Iqbal*, pp. 304-305. For a conflicting view from Ahmadis, see the article called, 'Dr. Muhammad Iqbal's Bitter Attack on the Ahmadiyya Community' in *Review of Religions* (June 1935) Vol. 34, No. 6, pp. 201-213.

⁸¹ See Sheikh Abdullah, *Flames of the Chinar*, pp. 32-33, in which Shaykh 'Abdullah described the instance when he confronted Mahmud Ahmad about his intentions for propagating Ahmadi Islam in Kashmir.

fellow Muslims as well. Likewise, the non-Ahmadi members of the AIKC benefited from the Ahmadi funding and infrastructure that intrinsically accompanied Mahmud Ahmad's membership. When the initial meeting of the AIKC took place in Shimla promptly following the riots, no one envisioned that the AIKC would eventually become a permanent organization. As the temporary need arising from the circumstances developed into an ongoing crisis in Kashmir, the AIKC needed to take steps towards gaining long-term access to Ahmadi resources, which was impossible for several reasons. Firstly, Mahmud Ahmad would never allow his disciples to serve another organization without his direct involvement or his express consent. Second and more importantly, too many members of the unskilled Ahmadi workforce were only participating in the AIKC because of Mahmud Ahmad's explicit instructions for them to do so. Although many Ahmadis most likely had genuine concerns for Kashmir's Muslim population, their deep political involvement in the crisis was largely the result of other influences. Mahmud Ahmad needed an active leadership role in the AIKC to keep his disciples motivated and to keep them interested in participating in the conflict, because if he left the organization altogether, most of his Jama'at would leave with him.

It appears that the Ahmadi withdrawal from the AIKC (and the AIKC's subsequent manifestations under similar names) took a period of several years to become final. Periodically, there were a few half-hearted attempts to keep both factions of the AIKC working together on the Kashmiri front, but eventually both sides followed pursuit of their own interests. Prior to his death, when Iqbal was being harassed by the opposition parties regarding his involvement with Jama'at-i

Ahmadiyya, he explained his theological objections to the movement in writing. Iqbal issued a number of criticisms in response to public demand, but he did not make baseless allegations about the Jama'at or enter into polemic slandering.⁸² Dost Muhammad Shahid suggests that Iqbal's critique of Jama'at-i Ahmadiyya was an attempt at seeking political gain, rather than an expression of his frustrations or his dissatisfaction with Mahmud Ahmad's role in the AIKC.⁸³ However, Iqbal's criticisms never vilified Mahmud Ahmad or maligned the members of Jama'at-i Ahmadiyya. Mirza Mahmud Ahmad's resignation and his subsequent break with the AIKC did not prevent him from continuing his Jama'at's involvement in Kashmir. We will see below how this involvement in the Kashmir crisis developed over time.

4.6 – Partition and Kashmir

With the presidency of the AIKC behind him, Mahmud Ahmad continued his campaign in Kashmir as the head of Jama'at-i Ahmadiyya, which was a temporary transformation of his image to that of a less political *khalīfa*. Although he attempted to preserve some affiliation with the AIKC, the relationship proved to be impossible. The support from Jama'at-i Ahmadiyya itself was enough to provide Mahmud Ahmad with a platform to continue working towards Kashmir's independence without the help of the AIKC's more distinguished members. After various phases under different names, the AIKC settled back into the same role it had prior to the riots, as an ineffective body of well-known Muslims without any real power as an

⁸² Syed Abdul Wahid (ed.), *Thoughts and Reflections of Iqbal*, pp. 304-305.

⁸³ Dost Muhammad Shahid, *Tārīkh-i Ahmadiyya*, Vol. 5, pp. 642-644, 651-654.

organization. By 1939 Shaykh ‘Abdullah had shifted his discourse away from the sharp communal distinctions that highlighted religious differences, and more towards an inclusive Kashmiri nationalist movement, which was illustrated by the name change of his All Jammu and Kashmir Muslim Conference to the All Jammu and Kashmir National Conference. Shaykh ‘Abdullah’s new platform incorporated Hindus and Sikhs, in addition to Muslims, as the victims of an irresponsible Dogra government’s negligence towards its people, which marked an entirely new approach to Kashmiri politics and Kashmiri identity.⁸⁴

The political situation drastically changed when Britain announced the conditions for India’s partition, in which Princely States like Jammu and Kashmir would not necessarily fall into the boundaries of either India or Pakistan, but rather could remain under independent rule. Shaykh ‘Abdullah responded by launching the Quit Kashmir Movement (*Kashmīr Chhor-dō*), which denounced 100 years of unwelcome Dogra rule in Jammu and Kashmir since the Treaty of Amritsar in 1846. The Quit Kashmir Movement demanded that the Maharaja leave Kashmir immediately and allow the people to set up whichever form of government they desired. One year later in 1947 when the partition had been finalized, local Kashmiri factions began an insurgency to reclaim the state from Dogra rule. Shortly thereafter, Muslims from the neighbouring frontier regions and Afghanistan began pouring in to the state to assist with the removal of the Maharaja. The *Darbār* acceded to India, as many Muslims had feared, and asked for Indian troops to intervene and quell the insurrection. When India’s military encroached the Kashmiri border with armoured

⁸⁴ Mridu Rai, *Hindu Rulers, Muslim Subjects*, p. 275.

vehicles and attacked Kashmiri guerrillas, Pakistan sent its troops to counter them, and the Indo-Pakistani War of 1947 (First Kashmir War) erupted.

Jama'at-i Ahmadiyya was tangled in the web that accompanied partition, similar to the rest of the Muslim population whose homes fell on the Indian side of the border. Jama'at-i Ahmadiyya's theological worldview prevented them from abandoning Qadian, since Ghulam Ahmad's divine revelation had ordained it as a sacred land for his followers, which he described in his *al-Wasiyyat*.⁸⁵ Mahmud Ahmad initially instructed the members of the Jama'at to stay in Qadian following the partition while he himself went to Pakistan to make further arrangements, but when the conditions of the surrounding areas became too dangerous, he sent large trucks across the border to collect his disciples.⁸⁶ Mahmud Ahmad instructed 313 Ahmadis to stay in India as the defenders of Qadian, which he likened to the 313 companions of the Prophet who participated in the Battle of Badr. He gave them the title *Darveshān-i Qādiyān* (the dervishes of Qadian), while the remaining members of the Jama'at went to Pakistan to seek out new prospects for the future. The majority of Muslims from the Punjab, including Mirza Mahmud Ahmad, initially went to Lahore as refugees. By the summer of 1948, Mahmud Ahmad had secured a permanent location for his disciples on the west bank of the Chenab River opposite the village of Chiniot. The Jama'at purchased the empty plot of land from the Pakistani

⁸⁵ See the discussion on the significance associated with Qadian in the section 3.3, '*al-Wasiyyat*' in chapter 3 above. See also Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, *al-Wasiyyat*, in *Rūhānī Khazā'in*, Vol. 20, pp. 299-332.

⁸⁶ IOR L/PJ/7/12415 in a letter (13 November 1947).

government and founded a new village called Rabwah, in reference to the hillside described in the Qur'an (23:50) where God gave Jesus and Mary refuge.⁸⁷

Mahmud Ahmad's professional network and his personal connections did not disappear with the formation of Pakistan in 1947. For example, Sir Zafrulla Khan held a senior position in the new administration as the country's first Foreign Minister, and he remained in the office for seven years (1947-1954) under Muhammad 'Ali Jinnah's successors. In addition, there were a few Ahmadis serving as highly decorated generals in the Pakistani army, who maintained regular contact with their *khalīfat al-masīh*. Zafrulla Khan had been directly involved in the diplomatic effort, which accompanied the military conflict in Kashmir by leading Pakistan's first delegation to the United Nations.

A valuable collection of interviews with Zafrulla Khan details his recollection of the events at the UN.⁸⁸ According to Zafrulla Khan, India had taken the Kashmir case to the UN Security Council in early January 1948. Following the first meeting in New York, both India and Pakistan agreed that the accession of Jammu and Kashmir should be determined directly by the people through 'a free and impartial plebiscite to be held under the auspices of the United Nations.'⁸⁹ The Secretary of State for Commonwealth Relations, Phillip Noel Baker, had personally come to New York as the British representative to the UN Security Council and worked diligently to find a swift and reasonable solution, which entailed an immediate ceasefire and a plebiscite

⁸⁷ See (23:50) in M.A.S. Abdel Haleem (trans.), *The Qur'an*, p. 217, which reads, 'We made the son of Mary and his mother a sign; We gave them shelter on a peaceful hillside with flowing water.' See also Yohanan Friedmann, *Prophecy Continuous*, p. 39.

⁸⁸ See Wayne Wilcox and Aislie T. Embree (interviewers), *The Reminiscences of Sir Muhammad Zafrulla Khan*.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 170.

under fair and impartial conditions. Prime Minister Clement Attlee intervened from London by sending a 'disastrous telegram' that redirected British interests and disrupted Baker's progress.⁹⁰ Prime Minister Attlee had independently received threats from India that the conditions for the plebiscite in Kashmir would 'push India into the arms of the USSR.'⁹¹ This was a problem within the newly developed cold war context of the conflict. The Security Council resolution of 6 February 1948 had six sponsoring members who were about to vote on the terms when India withdrew from the talks for further consultation.⁹²

When the Security Council reconvened on 26 April 1948 it adopted a much weaker resolution. The following week, Pakistan's Commander-in-Chief, the British General Sir Douglas Gracey, received intelligence reports that India was preparing to launch a military offensive in Kashmir, which contradicted the Security Council resolution. In response, Pakistan deployed its troops in early May to counter India's anticipated offensive.⁹³ Another Commission was set up to oversee the implementation of the first resolutions and to take action to stop the fighting. According to Zafrulla Khan, the Commission began working on potential solutions, which were never solely rejected by Pakistan, until an agreement was reached at the end of December 1948. A ceasefire went into effect on 1 January, even though the resolution was dated a few days later, on the 5 January 1949.⁹⁴ The Commission reconvened in an attempt to determine a Truce Agreement, whose first condition

⁹⁰ Ibid., p. 171.

⁹¹ Ibid.

⁹² Ibid., pp. 170-172, has the full discussion and breakdown of the first UN Security Council resolution.

⁹³ Ibid., pp. 172-174.

⁹⁴ Ibid., p. 175.

stipulated that all tribal insurgents who had come to Azad Kashmir with the intention to fight must leave immediately. Shortly after the ceasefire, the Commission certified that this condition had been met. The second condition stipulated the complete withdrawal of Pakistani troops and a withdrawal of the majority of Indian troops, so that a UN plebiscite administrator could carry out the final duties in relation to voting procedures. The process froze at this stage and the Truce Agreement was never settled. The Commission disbanded and an official representative was appointed in its place to carry out the remaining process of demilitarization.⁹⁵

The first representative to be appointed, in April 1950, was Sir Owen Dixon, an Australian High Court Judge who later became Chief Justice. After multiple failed attempts at finding an agreement and several trips between Delhi and Karachi, Sir Owen Dixon offered a new suggestion in which 'certain areas of the State contiguous to India which had a clear non-Muslim majority acced[ed] to India and the Azad Kashmir territory with its solid Muslim population acced[ed] to Pakistan, leaving the future of the rest of the State, including the Valley, to be determined by Plebiscite.'⁹⁶ The religious demographics of the Kashmir valley indicated that 93.6 percent of the population were Muslim while 4 percent were Hindu.⁹⁷ Although Liaquat 'Ali Khan reluctantly accepted this proposal, to Dixon's surprise, Jawaharlal Nehru rejected it. According to Zafrulla Khan, the proposal fell through when Dixon refused, amongst other things, to declare Pakistan as the aggressor in the conflict, because he claimed that he was not authorized to do so by the Security Council. Dixon's successor was

⁹⁵ Ibid., p. 176.

⁹⁶ Ibid., p. 177.

⁹⁷ See Mridu Rai, *Hindu Rulers, Muslim Subjects*, p. 37, where she provides a lucid breakdown of castes and social classes in her section, 'The Social Structure of Kashmir'. She takes these specific numbers from the *Census of India*, Jammu and Kashmir, 1941.

the American Senator, Frank Graham, who continued to try to find an agreeable solution for demilitarization. Meanwhile, by 1951, India had set up a Constituent Assembly in Kashmir to begin the process of framing a new Kashmiri constitution as well as settling the problem of accession. However, the Security Council had previously clarified that any resolution made by Kashmir's new Constituent Assembly would not absolve India of its obligations that resulted from the previous UN Security Council resolutions.⁹⁸ India created the Constituent Assembly and named Shaykh 'Abdullah the Prime Minister in exchange for cooperation on the issue of accession to India. Although Shaykh 'Abdullah was prepared to acknowledge the current position of Kashmir's status under the Indian dominion, he presumed that Kashmir would be autonomous while working towards a plebiscite that could mediate an option for independence.⁹⁹ This agenda was unacceptable to the Indian government, so Shaykh 'Abdullah was arrested in 1953 under fraudulent charges and spent most of the next 11 years in prison. When he was finally released in 1964, he remained in police custody for several years as hearings took place and his case went to trial. Shaykh 'Abdullah had already developed a positive reputation long before the partition by habitually going to prison for the Kashmiri cause, but this extended period in prison solidified his reputation as the *Sher-i Kashmir*, Kashmir's premier freedom fighter.

⁹⁸ Wayne Wilcox and Aislie T. Embree (interviewers), *The Reminiscences of Sir Muhammad Zafrulla Khan*, pp. 178-179.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 180-181.

4.7 – Mirza Bashir al-Din Mahmud Ahmad’s Continued Jihad in Kashmir

While Sir Zafrulla Khan was assiduously attending to a diplomatic resolution of the conflict in Kashmir, Mahmud Ahmad was exploring alternative options. Soon after his arrival in Lahore in 1947 Mahmud Ahmad called a council (*shūrā*) of his top advisers and informed them that the promised messiah’s era for suspending violent jihad (*yaz‘a al-harb*) was coming to an end and that the members of the Jama‘at should start preparing for a violent jihad (*jihād bi‘l-sayf*).¹⁰⁰ Immediately following the Pakistani Army’s intelligence reports of an impending Indian offensive towards the end of May 1948, Mahmud Ahmad arranged for the establishment of his own Ahmadi militia for deployment in Kashmir. In June 1948, the Furqan Battalion (also known as the Furqan Force) came into being and set up a camp on the Kashmiri border with the permission of the Deputy Commissioner of Sialkot. The first unit primarily consisted of 40 to 50 highly proficient ex-military officers under the command of retired Colonel Sardar Muhammad Hayat Qaysrani. They suffered minor losses in some scuffles and air raids from the Indian Army. Shortly thereafter, a more adequate force was set up under the administrative leadership of Mahmud Ahmad’s son and future successor, Mirza Nasir Ahmad (*khalīfat al-masīh* III), whose

¹⁰⁰ Dost Muhammad Shahid, *Tārīkh-i Ahmadiyya*, Vol. 5, p. 699; see also IOR L/PJ/7/12415 in a letter to the Under Secretary of State, Colonial Office (3 October 1947), which notes that there were reports in the press of large amounts of illegal weapons and ammunition that were being stockpiled in Qadian. Although the letter notes that these charges are probably baseless, it cites an article from the *Hindustan Times* (18 September 1947) as a reference.

purpose was to offer permanent support to the Pakistani Army. Dost Muhammad Shahid split the members of the Furqan Battalion into four categories:¹⁰¹

- 1) Elite officers from the Pakistani Army – either retired officers or active officers who were forced to take some type of temporary leave from military service with a reduction in pay before being eligible to serve in the Furqan Battalion
- 2) Employees of Jama‘at-i Ahmadiyya – such as missionaries and students who were training to become missionaries, totalling approximately 125 altogether
- 3) Unpaid volunteers with military or police training – lower ranking officers who may have actively been involved in military or police service but received no financial compensation, unlike the first two groups
- 4) Unpaid volunteers with no military or police training – average Ahmadis who volunteered with no prior commitment or obligation to the military and no financial dependence on Jama‘at-i Ahmadiyya, totalling approximately 3000

Members of the Furqan Battalion received minimal training through the summer of 1948 before they were armed and deployed on the Kashmiri front in September as a volunteer battalion ‘under Commander MALF’.¹⁰² Commander-in-Chief Sir Douglas Gracey wrote a glowing letter of recognition that shows his appreciation for the battalion’s services:

Your B[attalion]n was composed entirely of volunteers who came from all walks of life, young peasants, students, teachers, men in business; they were all imbued [*sic*] with the spirit of service for Pakistan; you accepted no remuneration, and no publicity for the self sacrifice for which you all volunteered... In Kashmir you were allotted an important sector, and very soon you justified the reliance placed on you and you nobly acquitted yourself in battle against heavy enemy ground and air attacks, without losing a single inch of ground.¹⁰³

¹⁰¹ Dost Muhammad Shahid, *Tārīkh-i Ahmadiyya*, Vol. 5, pp. 699-703.

¹⁰² *Ibid.*, p. 705.

¹⁰³ See *Ibid.*, in which there is a quoted reproduction of the letter as well as a photocopy of the original letter by General Gracey, which appears as a picture insert between pages 710 and 711. There are also various other pictures of the Furqan Battalion in the same location.

Commander-in-Chief Sir Douglas Gracey disbanded the Furqan Battalion on 17 June 1950 after almost exactly two years of service that extended well beyond the ceasefire agreement of January 1949. From the Ahmadi perspective, these soldiers are remembered as *mujāhidūn* and those who died in service are believed to possess the highest level of martyrdom. I was fortunate to speak to a few of the ageing members of the Furqan Battalion who currently reside in London. They speak of their experiences with nobility and a sense of pride, and other Ahmadis who are aware of their contributions treat them with great respect at the mosques.

Aside from Mahmud Ahmad's general political involvement in Kashmir, the case of the Ahmadi militia, the Furqan Battalion, raises a number of theological questions that must be addressed. Long before the partition of India, Mirza Ghulam Ahmad had created a stir in legalist circles by conclusively condemning violent jihad against the British Raj.¹⁰⁴ Although for centuries Islamic scholars have debated the various interpretations and specific cases for jihad, Ghulam Ahmad's opinion was more contentious because he appeared to abolish violent jihad forever.¹⁰⁵ Unlike some of Ghulam Ahmad's other disputed claims, like his claim of prophethood, he expressed his justifications for condemning violent jihad straightforwardly in clear and unambiguous language. Ghulam Ahmad's condemnation of violent jihad is a recurring theme in Ahmadi literature that underlies a great deal of his writing. One of the more concise examples of his view on jihad was a *fatwā*, which was written as a

¹⁰⁴ See Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, *Government Angrēzī Awr Jihād*, in *Rūhānī Khazā'in*, Vol. 17, pp. 1-34. The current view of Jama'at-i Ahmadiyya is consistent with the understanding that violent Jihad is no longer permissible in Islam.

¹⁰⁵ Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, *Arba'in*, in *Rūhānī Khazā'in*, Vol. 17, p. 443, in footnote. For a full analysis of Ghulam Ahmad's concept of jihad, see also Yohanan Friedmann, *Prophecy Continuous*, pp. 165-180.

poem called *Dīnī jihād kī mumāna‘at kā fatwē masīh-i maw‘ūd kī taraf sē* (The Promised Messiah’s Legal Opinions Prohibiting War in the Name of Religion). A few lines from the beginning and the end of the poem have been reproduced to illustrate Ghulam Ahmad’s rhetoric:

Now friends, leave the idea of jihad
Wars and fighting in the name of religion are forbidden now
(*Ab chhor-do jihād kā ay dosto khayāl*
Dīn ke līye harām hay ab jang awr qitāl)

Now the Messiah has come as the leader in religion
All religious wars are finished now
(*Ab ā-gayā masīh jo dīnī kā imām hay*
Dīnī kē tamām jangoñ kā ab ikhtitām hay)

Now from the heavens descends the light of God
To sanction war and jihad is foolish now
(*Ab āsmāñ se nūr-i khudā kā muzūl hay*
Ab jang awr jihād kā fatwā fuzūl hay)

Now he who performs jihad is an enemy of God
Only one who rejects the Prophet maintains this belief now
(*Dushman hay vo khudā kā jo kartā hay ab jihād*
Munkir nabī kā hay jo yē rakhtā hay e‘tiqād)

Oh People, why do you leave the traditions of the Prophet?
Abandon as wretched, whoever abandons these...
(*Kyoñ chhortē ho logo nabī kī hadīs ko*
Jo chhortā hay chhor-do tum us khabīs ko...)

...Just tell people that the time of the Messiah is now
Wars and Jihad are forbidden and disgusting now
(*...Logoñ ko ye batā‘e ke waqt-i masīh hay*
Ab jang awr jihād harām awr qabīh hay)

I have fulfilled my mandate now, friends
And if you still do not understand, then God will make you understand
(on the Day of Judgement)
(*Ham apnā farz dosto ab kar chukē adā*
Ab bhī agar na samjho to samjhāegā khudā)¹⁰⁶

¹⁰⁶ Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, *Tohfa Golarawīyya*, in *Rūhānī Khazā‘in*, Vol. 17, pp. 41, 44; the entire poem runs from pp. 41-44.

In contrast to the above poem expressing Ghulam Ahmad's formal opinion that was written in 1900, Mahmud Ahmad expressed his opinion in a couplet of a poem in 1946 just prior to sending the Furqan Battalion to Kashmir:

The blessed hour for Islam's wars has come
Commence it I may; but only God knows its end
(*Hay s̄a 'at-i sa 'd āyī islām k̄ jangōñ k̄*
Āghāz to mayñ kar dūñ anjām khudā jānē)¹⁰⁷

Any *fatwā*, regardless of its subject matter, must adhere to certain criteria to be considered valid. A specific *fatwā* invariably pertains to specific conditions, in which a particular scholar may offer a particular opinion that is dependent on the circumstances of the time. Ghulam Ahmad's *fatwā* on jihad notoriously caused alarm because of the universality of its application. It appeared to go beyond the particular conditions of British rule in India and categorically to abrogate violent jihad in Islam forever. This was further demonstrated by Mahmud Ahmad's extra precautions and sensitive treatment of the *yaz'a al-harb* and *jihād bi'l-sayf* issues with his advisory council in Lahore, which were mentioned above.¹⁰⁸ Permanently repealing violent jihad in Islam is impossible without nullifying aspects of the *sharī'a*. When Ghulam Ahmad's problematic opinion regarding jihad is considered alongside his ambiguous inferences of possessing a prophetic status, two possibilities arise: either Mirza Ghulam Ahmad was in fact abrogating violent jihad, which thereby alters the immutable *sharī'a* and contradicts his status as a non-law-bearing prophet, or everyone including Mirza Mahmud Ahmad misunderstood Ghulam Ahmad's opinion,

¹⁰⁷ Mirza Bashir al-Din Mahmud Ahmad, *Kalām-i Mahmūd* (Amritsar: Nazārat-i Nashr-o-Ishā'at Qadian, 2002), p. 195, poem §120 is listed under the heading *Ta 'rīf kē qābil hayñ yā rab tere dīvāne*. The footnote states that the poem originally appeared in the (2 January 1946) issue of *al-Fazl*.

¹⁰⁸ Dost Muhammad Shahid, *Tārīkh-i Ahmadiyya*, Vol. 5, p. 699.

which alternatively must have been dependent on the particular circumstances that arose in the world during that particular point in Islamic history. Furthermore, Ghulam Ahmad's rejection of violent jihad is no longer applicable since these particular circumstances no longer exist.

Ghulam Ahmad's contemporaries clearly interpreted his *fatwā* as being universally applicable, which is why they condemned him as someone who was changing Islam rather than reviving or reforming it. Mirza Mahmud Ahmad's comments to his advisory council in Lahore also imply that he had understood Ghulam Ahmad's opinion to be eternally binding, while his military actions in Kashmir and his poetry at the time represent a departure from this view. This raises the question of whether Mahmud Ahmad's decision to overturn Ghulam Ahmad's ruling was a special case that was only applicable at that time in Kashmir, or if it was a general ruling that permanently re-legalized violent jihad in Ahmadi Islam. The lucid and unambiguous language of both opinions makes it difficult to reconcile their contradiction. To argue that either of these opinions referred to a special case would be unconvincing and apologetic. At present, Ahmadis maintain that violent jihad is an incorrect interpretation of the 'True' understanding of jihad in Islam, which would be more appropriately described in terms of an inner spiritual struggle. In maintaining such inflexible and absolutist positions, Jama'at-i Ahmadiyya could be in danger of undervaluing the sacrifices of the Furqan Battalion by potentially negating their spiritual merit or undermining the religious implications of being *mujāhidūn* and replacing them with the secular connotations of Pakistani soldiers.

Jama'at-i Ahmadiyya's current position on the matter acknowledges that Ghulam Ahmad could not abrogate jihad, yet it asserts that the situation in the world has sufficiently changed so that the prerequisites for violent jihad no longer exist. Moreover, the conditions in the world will not revert to a situation that permits violent jihad before the Day of Judgement. With this explanation, the Jama'at argues that the notion of violent jihad is inconceivable (but perhaps not impossible) to justify in the modern world, which is consistent with Ghulam Ahmad's claim of preserving the entirety of the *shar'īa* without adding or subtracting from it. However, this argument treats the Furqan Battalion as a special case and ignores the provocative language of the two *fatwās*. This is one example in Ahmadi Islam where two claimants of divine charisma, *masīh maw'ūd* (the promised messiah) and *muslih maw'ūd* (the promised reformer), advanced conflicting truth claims that were supposedly eternally binding. Perhaps, the Jama'at will one day reconcile the contradiction by developing a response with a more convincing explanation.

In traditional Sunni Islam, dissenting views and disagreements between scholars are not as serious a problem as in Ahmadi Islam. Conflicting opinions of scholars are reconciled through a systematized legal tradition of jurisprudence (*fiqh*), which has a methodology and principles (*usūl al-fiqh*) to establish precedence and authority in the sources for interpretation. Ultimately, it is acceptable for scholars to disagree on a ruling within a fixed margin, given that they consistently use the appropriate legal methodology as defined by the tradition to arrive at their conclusions. Disagreement itself is permissible because a scholar's opinion is not binding, and perhaps more importantly, because mainstream Sunni Muslims do not

presuppose the divine origins of their legal rulings, since a jurist does not possess divine charisma. This methodology enables trends to develop over time that distinguish strong legal opinions from anomalies, which are based on the consensus of scholars throughout the broader tradition. Unlike the flexibility that allows for legal disagreement and legal diversity in traditional Islam, the contradictory views of Ghulam Ahmad and Mahmud Ahmad produce an embarrassment for Ahmadi theology. If Ahmadi theologians attempt to reconcile differences of opinion in the future, they will either have to revise their understanding of Ghulam Ahmad's legal authority, or revise their understanding of the institution of *khilāfat-i Ahmadiyya*.

4.8 – Implications of the Kashmir Crisis on the Ahmadi Identity

Until the international conflict in Kashmir unfolded, Jama'at-i Ahmadiyya had avoided becoming deeply involved in politics; however, this is what makes the political history of modern South Asia so interesting, because it was the religious organizations whose leadership stepped forward to influence the development of the political scene. In this sense, it is inappropriate to talk about a sharp dichotomy between religion and politics in South Asia at that time, because the political leaders, like Shaykh 'Abdullah, were influenced by religious concerns, and religious leaders, like Mirza Mahmud Ahmad, were preoccupied with political problems. Accordingly, nationalism itself and national identity was mixed with religious identity, as reflected in the name '*Pāk-istān*' which represents a pure and holy (*pāk*) land for Muslims.

Considering the high value that South Asian politics has placed on religious issues, addressing religious concerns has become a pragmatic part of political life in the subcontinent. And even though these issues may not underlie the public's primary concerns, they certainly have been used to provoke broader political discussions.¹⁰⁹ With this in mind, we can see that Mahmud Ahmad was as much the leader of a new political party, Jama'at-i Ahmadiyya, as he was *amīr al-mu'minīn* (commander of the faithful) the *khalīfat al-masīh*. As such, his contemporaries treated him accordingly with a sense of religious reverence fused with political esteem. In fact, the extensive list of invitations to the All-India Muslim Conference in Delhi in 1928 listed Mirza Bashir al-Din Mahmud Ahmad amongst prominent Muslim leaders of the Punjab, while it listed one of his most trusted missionaries, Mufti Muhammad Sadiq, under the different heading of 'Leaders of Muslim Political Parties' representing of the 'Ahmadiyya Association'.¹¹⁰

Mahmud Ahmad was in a unique position because he had developed an indispensable network of highly influential contacts, which was largely based on the reputation of his father. Mirza Ghulam Ahmad had a spiritual orientation and his influence was grounded in theology, but Mahmud Ahmad used his father's religious reputation and the trust of his father's companions to achieve political objectives. This process was facilitated by the fact that political activism in South Asia in the 19th and 20th centuries demanded an intimate connection with religion, such that those

¹⁰⁹ For example, just before the outbreak of riots in 1931, Maharaja Hari Singh was immersed in a controversy surrounding the legality cow slaughter for meat. The politicized debate was a major source of communal tensions between Hindus and Muslims in the days leading up to the riots. See IOR R/1/1/2064 See *The Jammu and Kashmir Government Gazette* (9 July 1931); see also Ayesha Jalal, *Self and Sovereignty*, pp. 302, 353, 355; see also Mridu Rai, *Hindu Rulers, Muslim Subjects*, pp. 278-279.

¹¹⁰ K. K. Aziz, *The All India Muslim Conference 1928-1935: A Documentary Record* (Karachi: National Publishing House, 1972), pp. 33, 35.

who wanted to enter into politics were expected to first disclose their religious affiliations. All of Mahmud Ahmad's high profile relationships had some link to his father. It is easy to confuse the cultural context in which Ghulam Ahmad's Muslim contemporaries read his theology with the dogmatic perceptions of his mission that exist today. Underneath the sharp polemics of Ahmadi Islam is an unexpectedly ecumenical message of religious unity from a man who claimed to be the messiah for all faiths. At times, the universality of Ghulam Ahmad's message was appreciated by his contemporaries with spiritual leanings who were sympathetic towards inclusive ideologies, especially those within proximity of the Punjab. Acknowledging a calculated degree of tolerance towards Hindus, Sikhs, and Christians by accepting the divine origins of their faith, albeit with an inherent favouritism towards Islam, was an appealing concept. It won favour with many of South Asia's mystically inclined Muslims who had an affinity for political activism or a desire to bring about civil reforms in their communities. For this reason, the leaders of some of Muslim India's most influential movements before the partition had close ties to Mirza Ghulam Ahmad in some way. This was not because of his controversial theology, but rather because of the perception of his mission in which people conceived a broader message of Indian unity.

Despite the controversy, Mirza Ghulam Ahmad did have tacit support from ample amounts of sympathizers, and there are several examples of prominent non-Ahmadi Muslims who were connected to Ghulam Ahmad that illustrate this point. The celebrated duo of Maulana Muhammad 'Ali and Shawkat 'Ali, who are renowned for their formative contributions to the Khilafat Movement and the Muslim

League, had a third older brother named Zulfiqar ‘Ali Khan who was a faithful companion of Mirza Ghulam Ahmad.¹¹¹ On occasion, Maulana Shawkat ‘Ali would visit his brother and Mahmud Ahmad in Qadian, which made it possible for Mahmud Ahmad to make influential contacts without leaving his home for a more cosmopolitan location.¹¹² Similarly, Iqbal’s father, Shaykh Nur Muhammad, and brother, Shaykh ‘Ata Muhammad, were members of Jama‘at-i Ahmadiyya. Iqbal himself supposedly took Ghulam Ahmad’s *bay‘at* in the 1890s even though he clearly distanced himself from Ahmadi theology towards the end of his life.¹¹³ His early sympathies towards the Jama‘at were strong enough for him to send his eldest son, Aftab Iqbal, to the Ahmadi administered *Ta‘līm al-Islām* high school in Qadian.¹¹⁴ Sir Mian Fazl-i Husain also had a long-standing relationship with Jama‘at-i Ahmadiyya. In 1927, the *Review of Religions* proudly pictured him at the newly built Fazl mosque on a visit to London, even though he does not appear to have an overt familial connection to the community.¹¹⁵ When Mian Fazl-i Husain’s son, Na‘im, passed away during his studies at Cambridge, he was buried in the Muslim cemetery near the mosque at Woking.¹¹⁶ Both the Woking mosque and cemetery were administered by Khwaja Kamal al-Din, the trusted companion of Ghulam Ahmad

¹¹¹ Dost Muhammad Shahid, *Tārīkh-i Ahmadiyya*, Vol. 5, p. 311. Zulfiqar ‘Ali Khan was the elder brother of Maulana Muhammad ‘Ali and Shawkat ‘Ali. The brothers are more commonly known by their pennames (*takhallus*), Zulfiqar ‘Ali *Gawhar* and Muhammad ‘Ali *Jawhar*.

¹¹² *Ibid.*, p. 240.

¹¹³ Maulana Hafiz Sher Muhammad, *Dr. Sir Muhammad Iqbal and the Ahmadiyya Movement* (Columbus: Ahmadiyya Anjuman Isha‘at Islam Lahore, 1995), pp. 8-9; see also Syed Abdul Wahid (ed.), *Thoughts and Reflections of Iqbal* (Lahore: Sh. Muhammad Ashraf, 1964), p. 297, where Iqbal expresses his early optimism towards the Ahmadiyya movement prior to 1911; see also Spencer Lavan, *The Ahmadiyah Movement*, p. 172. Lavan based his information on a citation of Dost Muhammad Shahid that I could not find in the location where he specified.

¹¹⁴ Maulana Hafiz Sher Muhammad, *Dr. Sir Muhammad Iqbal and the Ahmadiyya Movement*, p. 11.

¹¹⁵ *Review of Religions* (October 1927) Vol. 26, No. 10, pp. 28-29, with a picture of Sir Mian Fazl-i Husain on the inside cover.

¹¹⁶ Waheed Ahmad (ed.), *Diary and Notes of Mian Fazl-i Husain*, pp. 59-60; the entry is under (1 May 1931, Friday).

who helped to establish the Lahori branch of the Jama'at following the Lahori-Qadiani split.¹¹⁷ Mahmud Ahmad maintained an extensive network of contacts who neither considered his father to be a heretic nor a messiah, which he used to his advantage in addition to the support from his own disciples who regarded him as their *khalīfa*.

Mahmud Ahmad's role as a leader pertained more to organizing and managing the reality present before him, rather than creating a new reality from nothing. During his tenure as *khalīfa*, Mahmud Ahmad mastered the art of manipulating the Punjab press. He consistently used the international network of disciples that he created to publicize contemporary issues around the world with great ingenuity. Somehow, Mahmud Ahmad ensured that the local Punjabi press refrained from publishing news bulletins that detailed the whereabouts of political leaders who would visit him in Qadian. This enabled famous leaders to come to Qadian in privacy and in confidence that they would not be maliciously associated with a heretical sect.¹¹⁸ In the late 1930s, to be labelled a Qadiani by the press was equivalent to slander. We saw above how these allegations caused Shaykh 'Abdullah difficulty Kashmir, even though he clearly benefited from Ahmadi publicity on other occasions. The title *Sher-i Kashmīr* (the Lion of Kashmir) itself was supposedly coined by Mahmud Ahmad, who would incessantly publish sensationalized articles about Shaykh 'Abdullah that referred to him as the *Sher-i Kashmīr*. As other papers became acquainted with the *Sher-i Kashmīr* title, and Shaykh 'Abdullah's contributions to the Kashmiri cause were proven over time, *Sher-i Kashmīr*

¹¹⁷ See chapter 3, section 3.2 above, 'Causes of the Split'; see also Humayun Ansari, *The Infidel Within: Muslims in Britain since 1800* (London: Hurst & Company, 2004), p. 126.

¹¹⁸ Dost Muhammad Shahid, *Tārīkh-i Ahmadiyya*, Vol. 5, p. 438.

eventually became synonymous with Shaykh ‘Abdullah.¹¹⁹ Mahmud Ahmad’s mastery over certain aspects of the press gave him some control over his public image and the image of his non-Ahmadi associations, which enabled his political relationships to develop more smoothly. Had his contacts been stigmatized by the press and treated as heretics, it could have strained Mahmud Ahmad’s professional relations.

There is still the lingering question of why so many influential Muslims were willing to work with the leader of such a controversial community. Although the majority of Muslims at the time considered Jama‘at-i Ahmadiyya to be a valid representation of Islam, there was still a sense of taboo surrounding the movement. It is ultimately unclear why Muslim leaders tolerated close relations with Mirza Mahmud, but one explanation might depend on the cultural context of the time. Cultural etiquettes entail that the non-Ahmadi admirers of Mirza Ghulam Ahmad would have regarded Mirza Mahmud Ahmad with a sense of fondness that was purely based on the sentiment that they had for his father. The South Asian Sufi tradition in particular customarily places an inherent value on family lineages, which is analogous to what we see in Shi‘a Islam’s reverence for the *ahl al-bayt*. There are many cases in South Asia where it has become a tradition for the descendents of the *awliyā* (saints) to inherit the religious rights of their spiritual benefactors and become the keepers of their burial shrines. Similarly, much of the respect and religious authority that was attributed to Mahmud Ahmad outside of Jama‘at-i Ahmadiyya was unquestionably due to this cultural context, which was almost a right of inheritance

¹¹⁹ See Ibid., p. 433, where he provides citations from Maulana Zafar ‘Ali Khan’s fiercely anti-Ahmadi newspaper, *Zamīndār*, which criticized Mahmud Ahmad’s scheme to promote Shaykh ‘Abdullah by redundantly referring to him as the *Sher-i Kashmīr*.

that was based on his father's acclaim. The majority of South Asian Muslims, particularly in the Punjab, who were not Ahmadi but had some familiarity with Ghulam Ahmad, his teachings, or his followers, yet still refused to label him a *kāfir* (nonbeliever), most likely would have regarded him as some type of village *walī* (saint) instead. Even if they associated his reputation with some sense of controversy, those who did not consider him a *kāfir* would simply presume that he was the local *buzurg* (sage) of Qadian. The same is true of the people who knew nothing about Ghulam Ahmad but only saw Mahmud Ahmad as the head of a major religious movement. Cultural intuition in Muslim rural Punjab entailed that whoever he was, Mahmud Ahmad was important.

This point is essential to understanding Mirza Mahmud Ahmad's image in the eyes of his non-Ahmadi contemporaries. The magnitude of Ghulam Ahmad's claims and their theological consequences make it implausible for non-Ahmadis to have been able to reconcile other positions between the two extremes, *kāfir* or *walī*. Only a small group of scholars were willing to engage with the subtleties of Ghulam Ahmad's claims or deal with the theological complexities of their repercussions. The presumed hypothetical distinctions between the spiritual levels of the various unnamed messengers of God in comparison to the prophets Muhammad and Jesus, with reference to the advent of the *imām mahdī*, was not a pressing question in the early twentieth century. Mainstream Muslims in India simply did not care enough about speculative religious philosophy to enter into such high-level debates that were otherwise unessential to daily Islamic practice. Therefore, those people with minimal exposure to Ghulam Ahmad or his followers saw an indistinguishable difference

between Ahmadi religious practices and the religious practices of other Muslims. However, the aura of controversy surrounding Ghulam Ahmad's claims was enough to make the justifications that he was an ordinary Muslim unrealistic. As a result, Ghulam Ahmad's image became polarized into two extremes, either a fraudulent deluded *kāfir* or a pious yet misunderstood *walī*. For most unassuming Muslims, this was an easy choice to make, because it is far too dangerous to mistakenly call someone a *kāfir* in traditional Islam. The only alternative was to tolerate Ghulam Ahmad's notoriety and accept Mahmud Ahmad as his son and legitimate heir.¹²⁰

Most respectable non-Ahmadi Muslims treated Mahmud Ahmad as the pious leader of the Ahmadiyya community in a gesture of good faith. Their initial inclinations were often validated by their personal contact with Mahmud Ahmad, which enabled them to observe his genuine Islamic behaviour, his sincere concern for the wellbeing of the *umma*, and his resolute determination to follow through with his charismatic convictions. It is likely that many of Mahmud Ahmad's colleagues, like Shaykh 'Abdullah, never knew the details of Ahmadi theology, even after several years of a political partnership. Mahmud Ahmad's lineage made him a legitimate Muslim leader in the eyes of his contemporaries in spite of the controversy surrounding his movement.

It was the result of these underlying associations and etiquettes that justified his authority, rather than a rationalization of the theological arguments regarding

¹²⁰ There were also several influential Muslims, like Maulana Zafar 'Ali Khan, who led virulent campaigns against Jama'at-i Ahmadiyya from the beginning. Aside from his editorials in the *Zamīndār*, Zafar 'Ali Khan wrote anti-Ahmadi poetry as well. See Zafar 'Ali Khan, *Bahāristān* (Lahore: Urdu Academy Punjab, 1937), pp. 543-578 in the section called '*Qādiyānī Khurāfāt*' (Qadiani Nonsense).

Ghulam Ahmad or his 'illustrious son' presented by Ahmadis today.¹²¹ This cultural context, and not a logical analysis of his father's religious claims, won Mahmud Ahmad favour with his non-Ahmadi admirers. Correspondingly, his appeal as the head of a large Muslim Jama'at created a favourable impression amongst an inner circle of political activists in pre-partition India. In some cases, this was reinforced by vague perceptions of an underlying theology with Islamic themes that encouraged religious unity. Mahmud Ahmad was still the leader of one of the Punjab's premier self-sufficient religious communities that was superficially urging Muslims towards unity. In virtue of his father's reputation, Mahmud Ahmad inherently had extraordinary potential on the political scene in India from his birth.

There was a mutual relationship between Mahmud Ahmad and his political colleagues who were benefitting as much from the *khalīfa* as he was benefiting from them. Both sides were trying to create the external appearance of Muslim unity in colonial India, even though it may have been for different reasons. Mirza Mahmud gained new access to a political platform with participation for his movement, which he used to disseminate his religious ideology and attract even more activists whose motivations may still have been largely political. Paradoxically, Mahmud Ahmad's theological interpretations were ultimately what drove them away. Mahmud Ahmad was in a good position for political advancement because many of his father's sympathizers had significant roles and were directly involved in key positions of the Muslim leadership of the pre-partition independence movement. In addition, Ghulam Ahmad's broader message of Islamic unity was perceived as a politically empowering idea. Ironically, Mahmud Ahmad's interpretation of the problem of *takfīr* (calling

¹²¹ See chapter 1, section 1.3 above, 'Transition from Scholar to Prophet'.

someone a nonbeliever) and his corresponding exaggeration of his father's significance in the Islamic tradition isolated him (and eventually Jama'at-i Ahmadiyya) from the sympathies of the Muslim mainstream, who had been looking for a message of Pan-Islamic unity rather than obstinate sectarianism.¹²²

Although Mahmud Ahmad's attitude was far more compromising towards other political viewpoints and other politicians than it was towards other interpretations of Islam, we must recognize his role as an influential political leader nearing the end of British colonial India. From a political perspective, Mirza Mahmud Ahmad's leadership and vision was noteworthy, considering that few people had the capacity or resources to follow through with such grand schemes. His political contributions were meaningful to Muslims even though his reputation has been tarnished by his questionable theology. From a religious perspective however, Mahmud Ahmad was not his father. There was a significant departure in Ghulam Ahmad's spiritual worldview that Mahmud Ahmad not only expressed but also emphasized. He lacked the theological insights, the esoteric abstractions, and the overall creativity that was present in his father's spiritual conceptualizations. Mirza Mahmud Ahmad's narrow view of Islam and his simplistic reduction of his father's prophethood led to reckless *fatwās* of *kufri* whose implications undermined the very idea of Muslim unity. While in contrast, he used wide interpretations of the concept of revelation to reinforce his own charismatic authority.

A conflict of interest was developing between Mahmud Ahmad and his political companions. Mahmud Ahmad's colleagues did not want or need another visionary politician, since there was an abundance of candidates who were willing to

¹²² See chapter 3, section 3.2, for more on the *takfir* issue in Jama'at-i Ahmadiyya.

satisfy that role. Instead, they wanted to create the external impression of Muslim unity by inspiring the *umma* to come together for the greater good of their shared nation. Ghulam Ahmad's underlying message had the potential of offering this image under the leadership of a single *mahdī* who had come, as *mahdīs* always do, to unite the *umma* against oppressive unjust rulers. India's political elite cooperated with Mahmud Ahmad and his community in hope of Muslim unity until the brash deviations in his theological worldview were exposed, at which point they abandoned him by removing him from the limelight. That Mahmud Ahmad's sectarian outlook sanctioned *takfīr* and encouraged further divisions in Islam was problematic for this type of politics during that era, when opposing a particular party could be perceived as opposing Islam.

This was a difficult situation for Mahmud Ahmad because it forced community leaders like Iqbal and Shaykh 'Abdullah to state their official positions in regards to Ahmadi Islam. Naturally, Mahmud Ahmad's non-Ahmadi relations were not members of his Jama'at for a reason, which is not to say that they hated Ahmadis, because they were clearly willing to interact with them socially, politically, and religiously. Nonetheless, all of these associates ultimately disagreed with the Ahmadi interpretation of Islam on some level, which was often reduced to the problem of *takfīr* that resulted from Mahmud Ahmad's presentation of his father's prophethood. Although Mahmud Ahmad's contacts still maintained their relations with him, they had to publicly renounce Ahmadi Islam and denounce the Ahmadi practice of *takfīr*. Interestingly, the issue of Ghulam Ahmad's prophethood did not dominate criticisms of Jama'at-i Ahmadiyya until much later, which we will discuss below. The process

of dissociating from Mahmud Ahmad and Jama'at-i Ahmadiyya was focused more on a public display of alienation rather than breaking private contacts with individual Ahmadis. Iqbal, Fazl-i Husain, Muhammad 'Ali, Shawkat 'Ali, and Shaykh 'Abdullah undoubtedly still met with, sat with, and prayed with Mahmud Ahmad as Muslims who shared common interests but maintained conflicting perspectives on Islam, which was different from rival groups like the Ahrar who opposed Jama'at-i Ahmadiyya from the onset.¹²³

Mahmud Ahmad could no longer represent the face of mainstream politics that was associated with the independence movement in any capacity whatsoever, except as *khalīfat al-masīh*. Although Mahmud Ahmad continued to serve as an active member of the AIKC for a brief period following his resignation,¹²⁴ he could not receive the same publicity for his Jama'at as before. Had Mahmud Ahmad left the AIKC abruptly, it may have raised difficult questions concerning his previous efforts in Jammu and Kashmir and may have damaged his reputation. It is likely that Mahmud Ahmad understood the implications of his actions and willingly accepted his new role as a follower of Indian politics rather than a leader, which was made easier by the political achievements of his more prominent disciples. As the Ahmadi controversy continued to erupt with more frequency in the coming years, Ahmadis like Zafrulla Khan still managed to attain high-level political positions including (the first) Foreign Minister of Pakistan, which was followed by a successful career in the United Nations as the President of the General Assembly and the President of the

¹²³ See chapter 5, section 5.3 below.

¹²⁴ In contrast, see Spencer Lavan, *The Ahmadiyah Movement*, p. 172. Lavan suggests that Iqbal may have had a personal dispute with Mahmud Ahmad that led to deeper problems and a sharp break with the AIKC.

International Court of Justice. Interestingly, Zafrulla Khan's high-level positions and his accomplishments in international politics did not enable him to receive public recognition for his religious affiliations.

The Kashmir crisis served as a testing ground for political parties and for Muslim leaders and allowed a new leadership to emerge from Muslim South Asia following the partition. The continued strain of communal tensions coupled with the need for socio-economic reform provided the backdrop for Muslim leaders and organizations to prove their claims through the implementation of political policies. Mahmud Ahmad's involvement in communal politics and his involvement in the formation of modern South Asia's political machinery added a new political dimension to the Ahmadi identity. As Jama'at-i Ahmadiyya abandoned the other-worldliness of Ghulam Ahmad's Sufi metaphysics, they began to move away from the elitist circles that are affiliated with the upper classes, towards a populist approach that offered this-worldly gains for average Indian Muslims. With each new crisis, the Ahmadi identity changed little by little to appropriately accommodate each situation, which thereby made future changes a little easier. It is worth noting that none of the events discussed above have deep implications for Islamic theology, whereas all them had a profound impact on the political history of South Asia. Likewise, the above accounts are not intended to serve as a comprehensive source of history but rather as historical highlights of Jama'at-i Ahmadiyya's involvement in the politics of South Asia. Although Jama'at-i Ahmadiyya has made a number of contributions towards the political development of South Asia, the focus of this study is limited to the influence of this involvement on the Ahmadi identity. As individual Ahmadis

became more accustomed to civic involvement, self-promoting publicity campaigns, and political activism, the process of changing their identity began to accelerate until it reached the point where political events in the 1970s and 1980s were no longer changing the Ahmadi identity as much as they were reinforcing it. In this sense, a great deal of the current Ahmadi identity is as much a reaction to the world around it as it is a response to theological concerns, but to get a more complete picture of the further development of the Ahmadi identity, we must turn our attention to the outsider reactions of other Muslims to its presence in-the-world and to role of Ahmadi persecution.

Chapter 5

The Role of Persecution

In this chapter we will look at outsider influence on the Ahmadi identity through the role of Ahmadi persecution. We will see how some early cases of hostility towards Ahmadis shaped their perception towards non-Ahmadi Muslims. We will also look at how Jama'at-i Ahmadiyya's increased political involvement in the Kashmir crisis contributed to the politicization of the Ahmadi identity and moreover contributed to the politicization of Ahmadi persecution as it occurred. Soon after the partition in 1953, anti-Ahmadi disturbances led to Martial Law in the Punjab. Pakistan amended its constitution in 1974 to redefine Ahmadis as part of the non-Muslim minority. In 1984 stiffer sanctions were taken against Ahmadis which brought about the relocation of the movement's headquarters to London. Finally, we will see how the role of this politicized persecution of Jama'at-i Ahmadiyya has gradually influenced the reassessment of Ahmadi self-identification.

5.1 – The Beginnings of Persecution

In recent years, the basis for the international attention surrounding Jama'at-i Ahmadiyya has been for reasons other than its founder intended. The constant and consistent persecution of Ahmadis, primarily in South Asia, has stimulated a wave of humanitarian interest in the modernist messianic movement. This interest demands a basic overview of Ahmadi theology, which unavoidably highlights the distinctive

features of the movement and emphasizes the differences between Ahmadi Islam and the Muslim mainstream. Consequently, Ahmadis themselves have become rather efficient at pointing out the differences in their beliefs with the rest of Islam, and rather inefficient at recognizing their similarities with other Muslims. Over the past century, the negativity associated with Jama'at-i Ahmadiyya has developed into an extreme animosity, which amongst Muslims has transformed the perception of Ahmadis well beyond the tolerable yet taboo movement that we saw in the heyday of the Kashmir struggle of the early 1930s, when Ahmadi and non-Ahmadi Muslims were still willing to work side by side. In many ways, the social stigmas attached to the Ahmadi identity no longer represent differences of opinion within a single religious tradition, but rather different religious traditions altogether. This treatment of Ahmadiyyat as other-than-Islam by non-Ahmadi Muslims has had a profound impact on how Ahmadis perceive themselves and how they view their own identity in relation to the identity of the Muslim mainstream. Now, Ahmadis themselves are beginning to detach their own tradition from its inherent Islamic context and establish 'Ahmadiyyat' as something altogether unique and separate from contemporary Islam. To get a better understanding of this process, we will look at how the transformation of the Ahmadi identity corresponds to the community's persecution.

Most accounts of Ahmadi persecution centre around a historical approach, which establishes the chronology of specific events of persecution and aims to substantiate the severity of Ahmadi persecution or the gravity of the issues surrounding it. Although this approach is certainly worthy of further attention and scholarship, only a sketch of the history will suffice for this study. I fully

acknowledge that the persecution of Ahmadi Muslims is a weighty problem, which too often pertains to matters of life and death, but this study is more concerned with how these cases relate to the emergence of the new Ahmadi identity, and how this identity is still pending a process of formalization. For this reason, there will be no analysis of the definition of religious persecution and no examination of the ethical or legal 'justifications' for the numerous cases of persecution throughout the past century, even though they are indeed topics that are worthy of further discussion. Instead, we will look at how this persecution has influenced the precarious nature of the Ahmadi identity and significantly altered the overall theology of the movement in a way comparable to the injunctions brought forth from the Ahmadi hierarchy or even the *khalīfa* himself. With this in mind, we will look more at some of the potential causes for Ahmadi persecution, the Ahmadi responses to persecution, and the details of how the most intense cases of persecution have affected the Ahmadi identity.

Mirza Ghulam Ahmad's controversial claims and interpretations of Islam have always provoked a sense of scepticism and distrust from the Sunni scholars of South Asia, and hence it was not long before their theological objections manifested themselves in a hostile and violent response. The first cases of Ahmadi persecution date back to the early 1900s during Mirza Ghulam Ahmad's lifetime. The precise details of the earliest accounts vary considerably in some respects, even though the overall course of events yields the same conclusions. One Muslim scholar and intellectual named Sahibzada 'Abd al-Latif of Khost had a prominent position in the Afghan court of the Amir 'Abd al-Rahman.¹ In 1893 'Abd al-Latif was sent as a

¹ There are three main versions of the events that detail these earliest accounts of persecution, which loosely overlap: Mirza Ghulam Ahmad in *Tazkirat al-Shahādatayn* (Qadian: Riyaz Hind Press, 1903),

member of the Amir's delegation to negotiate the border between British India and Afghanistan. The demarcation of the boundary resulted in the Durand line (named after Sir Henry Mortimer Durand) and contentiously split the Pashtun tribal lands on each side of border. Here 'Abd al-Latif met Chan Badshah of Peshawar, a staff member of the British delegation and an Ahmadi. Chan Badshah presented 'Abd al-Latif with a copy of Mirza Ghulam Ahmad's recently published *Ā'īna-yi Kamālāt-i Islām* (Reflections of Islam's Perfections), which sparked an interest in 'Abd al-Latif.²

This curiosity motivated 'Abd al-Latif to start sending some of his disciples and students to Qadian to investigate further, including Maulvi 'Abd al-Rahman, Sayyid 'Abd al-Sattar Shah, Maulvi 'Abd al-Jalil, and Ahmad Nur Kabuli.³ Each visit must have lasted a few months which gave them the opportunity to grasp a better understanding of Ghulam Ahmad's teachings. During one of these visits, Ghulam Ahmad had been writing some tracts condemning jihad, and he had convinced 'Abd al-Rahman that violent jihad against the British was un-Islamic.⁴ Upon Maulvi 'Abd al-Rahman's return to Kabul, he stopped briefly in Peshawar where he met Khwaja Kamal al-Din, the devoted follower of Ghulam Ahmad who later co-founded the Lahori branch of Jama'at-i Ahmadiyya. 'Abd al-Rahman's visit with Khwaja Kamal al-Din only reinforced his view censuring jihad. Maulvi 'Abd al-Rahman must have

Mirza Tahir Ahmad in his Friday Sermon (14 July 1989), and the compilation of accounts given by 'Abd al-Latif's students and family, which are described in B. A. Rafiq's *The Afghan Martyrs* (London: Raqeeem Press, 1995); see also Yohanan Friedmann, *Prophecy Continuous: Aspects of Ahmadi Religious Thought and Its Medieval Background* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989), pp. 26-27.

² See Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, *Ā'īna-yi Kamālāt-i Islām*, which makes up Vol. 5, of *Rūhānī Khazā'in*.

³ This Sayyid 'Abd al-Sattar Shah is not to be confused with the Ahmadi Doctor, Sayyid 'Abd al-Sattar Shah, from Rawalpindi whose daughter, Mariam (Umm Tahir), married Mirza Bashir al-Din Mahmud Ahmad, *khalīfat al-masīh* II.

⁴ Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, *Tazkirat al-Shahādātayn*, in *Rūhānī Khazā'in*, Vol. 20, p. 48.

already taken Ghulam Ahmad's *bay'at* by this time, because when he returned to Kabul he was openly preaching his Ahmadi views. The Amir had Maulvi 'Abd al-Rahman imprisoned for his wilful disobedience where he died shortly thereafter from being strangled to death in 1901.⁵ It is not clear whether Maulvi 'Abd al-Rahman's death was officially an execution ordained by the state or whether he was simply murdered in prison. Either way, his arrest was due to his public denunciation of jihad, which resulted from his Ahmadi views, and he is considered to be the first Ahmadi martyr.

In October 1901, the Amir of Afghanistan, 'Abd al-Rahman, died leaving the throne to his son Sardar Habibullah. The coronation of the new Amir Habibullah was described by a British engineer present at the event, and even though this account does not mention 'Abd al-Latif by name, it describes how he placed the turban on the head of the new Amir, Habibullah, at the Juma Masjid.⁶ One year later in 1902 'Abd al-Latif sought Amir Habibullah's permission to leave Afghanistan and perform the hajj at Mecca. The Amir honoured his request and funded the expedition for 'Abd al-Latif and a small entourage of students. For unknown reasons, the group began their journey travelling southeast to Lahore, presumably to fulfil some prior commitments. Due to the outbreak of plague at the time, restrictions had been placed on all pilgrims travelling through India, which prevented 'Abd al-Latif from completing his hajj. Rather than returning to Kabul at once 'Abd al-Latif decided to visit Ghulam Ahmad at his home in Qadian, which was within reasonable proximity of Lahore. 'Abd al-Latif spent a few months in Qadian, where he spent considerable time with the

⁵ Ibid., pp. 47-48.

⁶ Frank A. Martin, *Under the Absolute Amir* (London: Harper & Brothers, 1907), pp. 132-133.

promised messiah and his first *khalīfa* Nur al-Din. ‘Abd al-Latif took Ghulam Ahmad’s *bay‘at* and recounted several visions and dreams during his stay. When they returned to Kabul, ‘Abd al-Latif announced his revised views on the death of Jesus and the prohibition of jihad against the British government to his colleagues and companions. Amir Habibullah had ‘Abd al-Latif imprisoned for his infidelity and ordered that the case be taken to trial. ‘Abd al-Latif remained in prison for several weeks while he attempted to convince others of his Ahmadi interpretations, which at times took the form of written debates. Refusing to desist, his views were deemed unacceptable and ‘Abd al-Latif was stoned to death in a public execution in July 1903. Ghulam Ahmad declared that the ordeal was the fulfilment of one of his previous prophecies, and he wrote a confessional tract honouring the passion of the two martyrs.⁷ The sensitivity of Ahmadis regarding the martyrdom of Maulvi ‘Abd al-Rahman, and especially of Sahibzada ‘Abd al-Latif, has been largely shaped by Ghulam Ahmad’s grievous response and poignant retelling of the story. These two martyrs are undoubtedly amongst the most revered figures in Ahmadi history. Ghulam Ahmad argued in detail how ‘Abd al-Latif’s sacrifice ‘may even surpass the sacrifice by Hadhrat Imam Hussain,’ who is unquestionably the quintessential martyr in Islamic history.⁸

The context of the circumstances surrounding the martyrdom of Sahibzada ‘Abd al-Latif is uniquely interesting, primarily because of his social standing in Afghan political and religious society. Although it is difficult to determine the scope

⁷ See Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, *Tazkirat al-Shahādātayn*, in *Rūhānī Khaṣā‘in*, Vol. 20, pp. 49-60, which contains Ghulam Ahmad’s account of ‘Abd al-Latif’s martyrdom, but the full booklet is from pp. 1-128.

⁸ See Mirza Ghulam Ahmad in *Badar* (8 January 1904), quoted in B. A. Rafiq, *The Afghan Martyrs*, p. 33.

of his influence as a dignitary or to appreciate his capacity as a scholar, we find enough relevant information from the family account to put these events into a broader perspective. ‘Abd al-Latif had devoted considerable time towards furthering his religious education, which demanded travelling to the various luminaries and educational institutions of India including Delhi, Lucknow, and Peshawar. He apparently spent significant time studying under Maulvi ‘Abd al-Hayy Lakhnawi (d. 1886) the renowned hadith scholar of the Farangi Mahall. ‘Abd al-Hayy Lakhnawi’s Sufi affiliations were with the Qadiri order, even though he also had strong connections with leading members of the Ahl-i Hadith movement like Nawab Siddiq Hassan Khan of Bhopal. ‘Abd al-Hayy Lakhnawi’s affiliation with the Qadiri order may have been what influenced ‘Abd al-Latif to take the *bay‘at* of ‘Abd al-Wahhab Manki after resettling in Kabul upon completing his education in India.⁹ ‘Abd al-Wahhab Manki was a prominent *khalīfa* of the Qadiri shaykh ‘Abd al-Ghafur the *Akhūndzāda* of Swat.

Swat’s marginal location on the border of Afghanistan with British India made it a centre for political tension during the various boundary disputes that had been taking place over the frontier region for several decades. ‘Abd al-Ghufar’s *khalīfas*, including ‘Abd al-Wahhab Manki, ‘were active in spreading the gospel of jihad throughout the region.’¹⁰ In actuality, Afghanistan had been militarily threatened by the British in the east and by the Russians in the north for the greater part of the nineteenth century, from the time of the First Anglo-Afghan War

⁹ Ibid., pp. 36-37.

¹⁰ Senzil Nawid, ‘The State, the Clergy, and British Imperial Policy in Afghanistan during the 19th and Early 20th Centuries,’ *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, Vol. 29, No. 4, (November 1997), p. 593.

beginning in 1838. And although the installation of ‘Abd al-Rahman as the Amir of Afghanistan was partially a direct outcome of British influence at the end of the Second Anglo-Afghan War (1878-1880), it did not persuade him to take a softer approach towards diplomacy. Amir ‘Abd al-Rahman used the idea of jihad as a means of forging unity amongst rival Afghan tribes against non-Muslim invaders or against ambitious dissenters seeking to spark an internal rebellion.¹¹ The underlying threat of internal rebellion from influential religious leaders moved ‘Abd al-Rahman to expand his religious jurisdiction by seizing the traditional source of income of the ‘*ulamā* and nationalizing the distribution of the *awqāf* (endowment) funds through a central administration.¹² When the ‘*ulamā* questioned his religious motivations or alleged manipulative treatment, he would torture or execute them.¹³

Amir ‘Abd al-Rahman tried to repress the activities of the tribal clergy by transferring the authority to declare jihad to the state. To justify the usurpation, he ordered books written asserting that no one but the caliph, amir, or sultan was authorized to declare jihad. At the same time, the amir enhanced his image as a pious amir, or sultan, possessing religious and secular powers—the imamate and the amirate. Heresy, even contact with ‘infidels,’ was severely punished.¹⁴

In this respect, Maulvi ‘Abd al-Rahman and Sahibzada ‘Abd al-Latif’s rejection of violent jihad posed a serious threat to the Amir’s religious and political authority at a time of uncertainty and armed hostility. The very idea of waging jihad against a common imperialist enemy of infidels was a major factor in binding the

¹¹ Frank A. Martin, *Under the Absolute Amir*, p. 299.

¹² Senzil Nawid, ‘The State, the Clergy, and British Imperial Policy in Afghanistan during the 19th and Early 20th Centuries,’ p. 593.

¹³ Frank A. Martin, *Under the Absolute Amir*, pp. 269-270, and also chapter 10 on ‘Tortures and Methods of Execution’, pp. 157-172.

¹⁴ Senzil Nawid, ‘The State, the Clergy, and British Imperial Policy in Afghanistan during the 19th and Early 20th Centuries,’ p. 593.

otherwise independent tribes of Afghanistan into a single unified nation. Otherwise, the nationalistic idea of uniting its inhabitants together under a single political authority as 'Afghans' purely for the preservation of 'Afghanistan' was largely a foreign one and was anyway unnecessary in the era before colonialization. 'Abd al-Rahman and 'Abd al-Latif were not executed purely for their heretical views, but also for posing a threat to the state. It is not clear that they would have undergone imprisonment or execution simply for being Ahmadi had this threat been absent, even though the formal rejection of violent jihad is considered to be an essential part of the Ahmadi interpretation of Islam. Both Amirs, 'Abd al-Rahman and Habibullah, made examples of their opponents, and these two Ahmadis were treated as instigators of sedition.¹⁵

Sahibzada 'Abd al-Latif's symbolic martyrdom set the Ahmadi standard for maintaining pious integrity and toleration in the face of abuse and punishment, and also introduced the generalization that all non-Ahmadi *mullās* are the enemy.¹⁶ Although his martyrdom has become immortalized by Ahmadis, it is regrettable in the sense that Sahibzada 'Abd al-Latif was one of the few members of the Jama'at who had the potential to shape the community more in life than in his exemplary and untimely death. Although he may not have been one of the most influential scholars outside of his immediate circle, 'Abd al-Latif had a respectable education under some of the more distinguished scholars of the subcontinent at his time. His spiritual

¹⁵ For a contrasting view that argues that the Ahmadis rightfully deserved to be executed, see Sirdar Iqbal Ali Shah, *Afghanistan of the Afghans* (London: The Diamond Press Ltd., 1928), pp. 211-215.

¹⁶ Whereas the word '*mullā*' should be an honorific term used with dignity and veneration, it has interestingly acquired a derogatory usage amongst most Punjabis, including Ahmadis, who use it exclusively in the pejorative. See the poem by *khalīfat al-masīh* IV Mirza Tahir Ahmad on *mullās* in his book, *Kalām-i Tāhir* (Tilford: Islam International Publications, 2001), p. 104, 106, poems §41 and §42.

lineage consisted of taking sacred knowledge from authorized scholars, such as the notable hadith master ‘Abd al-Hayy Lakhnawi of the Farangi Mahall, and his mystical training that followed his induction into the Qadiri order at the hands of the Shaykh ‘Abd al-Wahhab Manki is unparalleled in the restricted context of Ahmadi intellectuals. Virtually none of the early members of the community, including Mirza Ghulam Ahmad,¹⁷ had such an extensive education in traditional Islam taught in the traditional method, with perhaps the exception of Maulvi Hakim Nur al-Din, who spent several years studying at the sacred mosques of Mecca and Medina where he was also initiated into the Naqshbandi order.¹⁸ Perhaps it was this lack of emphasis by early Ahmadis on the traditional conceptions of sacred Islamic knowledge and education that enabled such a smooth transition away from the classical Islamic sciences in favour of the divine charisma bestowed upon a virtually infallible *khalīfa*.

By the 1920s nearly ten Ahmadis had been stoned to death in Afghanistan. Once the precedent had been set, the association of Ahmadiyyat with heresy deepened. The Afghan penal code introduced in 1924-1925 stipulated being an Ahmadi as a capital offence.¹⁹ Meanwhile, the Jama‘at’s administration was pushing forward with its practices of proselytization around the world. Oddly enough, Jama‘at-i Ahmadiyya faced its most bitter opposition from within the Muslim world, despite the fact that one of the main objectives of the promised messiah was breaking

¹⁷ The extent of Mirza Ghulam Ahmad’s exposure to traditional Islamic scholarship is debatable despite the fact that the community contends that he was *ummi* (unlettered). For further discussion on Ghulam Ahmad’s education and training see chapter 1 above.

¹⁸ Prior to his *bay‘at* with Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, Nur al-Din had taken *bay‘at* with the Naqshbandi Shaykh, Shah ‘Abd al-Ghani, while studying in Mecca and Medina. He had also studied with Maulvi Nazir Husayn Dehlawi and a disciple of Sayyid Ahmad Barelwi. See ‘Abd al-Qādir, *Hayyāt-i Nūr* (Qadian: Nizārat Nashar-o-Ishā‘at, 2003), pp. 54-56; for a less detailed account in English, see also Muhammad Zafrulla Khan, *Ḥazrat Maulvi Nooruddeen Khalifatul Masih I* (London: London Mosque, 1983?), pp. 12-13, 24-25.

¹⁹ See Yohanan Friedmann, *Prophecy Continuous*, pp. 28-29.

the cross. Once again, the reasoning for this involves a rather complex explanation of Islamic legal injunctions for dealing with apostasy (*irtidād*) and infidelity (*kufīr*). It is the overall perception and presentation of Jama‘at-i Ahmadiyya in relation to these legal injunctions, which we will proceed to examine below.

5.2 – Converting the Arabs

Ahmadis had some minimal contact with the Arab world almost from their very beginnings. Mirza Bashir al-Din Mahmud Ahmad had toured the Middle East and performed the hajj in 1912 at age 23, two years prior to becoming the second *khalīfa*. Although the Ahmadi mission in Britain had been established in 1912, proselytization efforts in the Arab speaking world did not materialize until the 1920s.²⁰ The first Ahmadi missionaries to the Middle East, Sayyid Zayn al-‘Abidin Waliullah Shah and Jalal al-Din Shams, were dispatched to Damascus in 1925 by the second *khalīfa* where they set up their base. Around the same time, Maulvi Abu’l-‘Ata Allah Ditta Jalandhari was sent to Jerusalem. The missionaries were able to travel to some nearby cities like Haifa, Beirut, and even Cairo, as well as smaller locations throughout Syria and Palestine where they spread their Ahmadi mission. The reports given in the *Review of Religions* of that era acknowledged difficulties in Damascus, yet assured the readers that the mission was a success and that still ‘many joined the movement.’²¹ At some point between Mahmud Ahmad’s hajj and Jalal al-Din Shams’s arrival, Zayn al-‘Abidin Waliullah Shah acquired a lectureship at

²⁰ There is a good discussion on these efforts in *Ibid.*, pp. 24-25.

²¹ *Review of Religions* (November 1931) Vol. 30, No. 11, pp. 290-291, with a picture of Maulvi Abu’l-‘Ata Jalandhari after the title page.

Sultania College, Damascus, although it is unclear what subjects he was teaching.²² This appointment suggests that the reception of Ahmadis in Damascus was not entirely unfavourable.

When Zayn al-‘Abidin Waliullah Shah returned to Qadian, Jalal al-Din Shams was left alone in Damascus. The same account in the *Review of Religions* goes on to describe the opposition against Jalal al-Din Shams, including the refusal of local shops to serve him and the publication of cartoons in local newspapers that mocked the missionary. The tension appears to have escalated when ‘bigotted [*sic*] Mullahs’ got involved and issued statements against Ahmadi interpretations of Islam.²³ At the height of the tensions in December 1927 Jalal al-Din Shams was stabbed by a local fanatic, at which point the French authorities in Syria expelled him from the country in January 1928 for his own safety.

The British government’s records provide a fuller account of the politics surrounding the missionary’s departure. Jalal al-Din Shams’s expulsion from Syria in 1928 had a number of interesting aspects. Apparently, the British and French authorities in Syria had become concerned with Shams’s safety towards the end of 1927. Although Shams was willing and eager to leave much earlier, Mirza Mahmud Ahmad refused to allow him to leave Damascus. It appears that Shams was expelled as a courtesy following his attack when local authorities saw that he could not leave Damascus on his own accord, and Qadian had refused to recall its missionary. In fact, when he left Damascus after the stabbing incident, Jalal al-Din Shams was

²² Ibid., p. 290; see also Bashir Ahmad, *The Ahmadiyya Movement: British-Jewish Connections* (Rawalpindi: Islamic Study Forum, 1994), p. 65.

²³ *Review of Religions* (January 1932) Vol. 31, No. 1, p. 30, with a picture of Maulvi Jalal al-Din Shams after the title page.

dispatched directly to Haifa rather than being permitted to return home to India. The French authorities felt that the only way to ensure public order and Shams's personal safety was to expel him from the country. In a letter drafted by Mufti Muhammad Sadiq, Mirza Mahmud Ahmad protested from Qadian and demanded that Shams get the same rights and security granted to other missionaries in the region, such as the Christians. The response of the British Under-Secretary to the Government of India is interesting. He wrote that:

...the French authorities in ordering the expulsion of Maulvi Jalal-ud-din Shams was based on considerations of public order and the Maulvi's own personal safety as it was felt that the activities of Maulvi Jalal-ud-din Shams which differed from those of other missionaries in Damascus in that they were a dissemination of a new religion rather than the ministrations to adherents of established religions, were of a nature to provoke disturbances.²⁴

Furthermore, a different letter from another British official reiterates the same sentiment, stating that:

...the missionaries of other denominations are...in a somewhat different position from that of the Ahmadi[s], as they are considered to provide for the spiritual welfare of an established community, whereas Jalal-ud-Din Shams was engaged in creating a new one.²⁵

The perception of the Ahmadi mission expressed above is insightful, bearing in mind that the British government officials were not in a position to determine what is or is not Islam. For this reason, we can presume that they must have been repeating the same allegations of the Syrian *'ulamā*, who did have some religious authority in

²⁴ IOR L/P.S./11/263 in a letter from the Under-Secretary of the Government of India, Foreign and Political Department, under tab 4399.

²⁵ Ibid. in a letter addressed to The Right Honourable Sir Austin Chamberlain, Foreign Secretary (26 Jun 1928) under tab 4399.

this regard. Mufti Muhammad Sadiq found it necessary to point out in his letter that the opposition confronting Jalal al-Din Shams was based specifically on the Ahmadi interpretation of jihad,²⁶ as opposed to other theological issues disputed by Ahmadis. It is difficult to determine how strong the opposition was in Damascus or how successful a couple of missionaries were at disseminating Ahmadi interpretations of Islam. The only hint of this emerges in a letter published by the *Review of Religions* nearly five years later by Muhammad Hashim Rashid, a local *khatīb* of Damascus who, according to the editors of the *Review of Religions*, spearheaded the opposition against Jalal al-Din Shams.²⁷ However, his letter did not take on a fanatical tone. Instead, his letter praised the commonalities between Ahmadis and other Muslims. Rashid wrote:

Members of the Ahmadiyya Community! You have no disagreement with the Muslims in most of their beliefs and religious practices. You are at one with the orthodox Muslims in fighting the false doctrines of the God-head of Jesus Christ and other similar polytheistic beliefs. I, therefore did not like the statement recorded by you in your tract made by a certain person to the effect that the *Ulema* of Islam look askance at the evangelistic activities of Ahmadiyya preachers. This statement is a lie and a libel against the Muslim Ulema. Disagreement in our views regarding the death of Jesus Christ cannot stand in the way of our presenting a united front to the preachers of false beliefs and in demolishing the edifice of totally wrong and erroneous doctrines. [I] have written these few lines to show that my unqualified and unreserved sympathy and support go with you in your discussions with the up-holders of idolatrous and polytheistic doctrines and in your endeavours to establish the true belief of the One-ness of God and to refute and to repudiate the doctrine of the Divinity of anybody else beside Him. I request and hope that you would send me 15 or more copies of *'ain-uz-zia* that I may distribute them among Muslim

²⁶ Ibid. in the letter from Mufti Muhammad Sadiq under tab 4399.

²⁷ *Review of Religions* (September-October 1934) Vol. 33, Nos. 9-10, pp. 402-403.

brethern [*sic*] so that they may like me know of your great services in the cause of Islam and recognize and appreciate them.²⁸

Rashid's tone is not consistent with someone advocating the murder of Ahmadi missionaries. Furthermore, as a local *khatīb* in Damascus, Rashid may not have been a very influential scholar. His theological objections appear to be limited to the issue of the death of Jesus, which he was clearly willing to overlook. Interestingly, neither Rashid nor Mufti Muhammad Sadiq mentioned *khatm al-nubuwwa* (finality of prophethood) as a contributing factor to the Ahmadi-Sunni divide, with the exception of an inconclusive statement mentioned briefly by Rashid in the earlier part of his letter. Surprisingly, it appears that the biggest theological differences between Ahmadis and mainstream Muslims were centred on jihad and to some extent the death of Jesus. The centrality of Mirza Ghulam Ahmad's prophethood did not play as critical a role in the justifications for Ahmadi persecution as it does today. Even in the foreword of his 1933 tract, *The Cairo Debate*, Maulvi Abu'l-Ata Jalandhari wrote that his foremost duty as an Ahmadi missionary 'in the Arab Lands has been both to defend Islam against the onslaughts of Christian missionaries and to regenerate the true spirit of Islam among the Muslims.'²⁹ He said nothing of *khatm al-nubuwwa* or of Mirza Ghulam Ahmad's advent as the promised

²⁸ Ibid., pp. 403-404. The italics were included in the original. The reference to '*ain-uz-zia*' was expanded earlier in the same article as '*ain-uz-zia-fir-rad-i-'ala*' *Kashf al-Ghata* (the Fountain of Light in refutation of "a misconception removed" [*ain al-ziyā fī radd 'alā Kashf al-Ghitā*]).' But this translates as 'The Fountain of Light in Refutation of "The Unveiling of the Covering".' It may have been a reference to something written about one of Ghulam Ahmad's less popular books, *Kashf al-Ghitā* (The Unveiling of the Covering), which is available in *Rūhānī Khazā'in*, Vol. 14, pp. 177-226. However, Ghulam Ahmad also had a book called *Ek Ghalatī kā Izāla*, which has frequently been translated and publicized by the Jama'at, usually under a title similar to 'A Misconception Removed'. See Mirza Ghulam Ahmad *Ek Ghalatī kā Izāla*, in *Rūhānī Khazā'in*, Vol. 18, pp. 205-216; see also chapter 2 section 2.3 above. Ultimately, it is unclear which obscure booklet the *khatīb* was referring to in his letter.

²⁹ Abu'l-Ata Jalandhari, *The Cairo Debate* (Rabwah: The Maktaba-al-Furqan, 4th ed., 1963), p. iii.

messiah and *mahdī*, which presumably should have been crucial information for fellow Muslims.

The attack on Jalal al-Din Shams must have involved other non-theological factors as well, but regardless of what they were, his stabbing was a serious incident that effectively deterred Ahmadis from proselytizing in Syria and increased their fear of other Muslims. Ahmadi missionaries remained confined to Haifa for the greater part of the twentieth century with few exceptions. In the century following Mirza Ghulam Ahmad's death, Jama'at-i Ahmadiyya expanded its mission considerably, but not in Muslim lands, with the exception of rural parts of India, Pakistan, and more recently Bangladesh. The majority of Muslim countries that constitute the greater Middle East including Afghanistan, Iran, and Turkey rejected the efforts of Ahmadi missionaries almost completely.³⁰

Perhaps the lack of urgency in spreading Ahmadi ideology to Muslim lands also reflects the different mentality and different priorities of the members of the earlier Jama'at who more closely identified with Islam. Furthermore, we have thus far completely ignored the most evident problem in this discussion. One cannot convert from Islam to 'Ahmadiyyat' unless 'Ahmadiyyat' is its own religion separate from Islam. Perhaps it was for this reason, as well as the early incidents of hostility towards Ahmadis by non-Ahmadi Muslims, that Jama'at-i Ahmadiyya relaxed its missionary activities in Muslim countries outside India. For whatever reason, since the 1930s Ahmadi missionaries have restricted their efforts almost exclusively to non-Muslims or the Muslims with whom they have contact much closer to home.

³⁰ Yohanan Friedmann, *Prophecy Continuous*, p. 24.

5.3 – The Political Dimensions of Persecution

The events in Afghanistan and the Middle East distinctly influenced the Jama'at leadership's outlook towards the greater Muslim community. The violent hostility towards Ahmadis thwarted further missionary activities in the Muslim world and caused a re-evaluation of the original approach to propagating the Ahmadi message to other Muslims. Although the revised ideals, which now included the administration's added precaution with other Muslims, filtered their way down through the hierarchy over the years, they had a limited impact on the Ahmadi identity. As alarming as the martyrdoms and the subsequent aggression may have been, they remain isolated cases of individual Ahmadis in conflict with their fellow Muslims. Even though the numerous other incidents of the violent treatment of Ahmadis outside the subcontinent at the time certainly contributed towards a gradual reassessment of the Ahmadi self-identity, they appear only to have amounted to little more than an added element of caution in dealing with unfamiliar Muslims. As the incidents increased, the precautions increased, but the general temperament of the members of the movement remained reasonably unchanged, in the sense that most Ahmadis still envisioned themselves leading normal lives as a legitimate part of the Muslim *umma*. Jama'at-i Ahmadiyya was not isolated from its surroundings, however, and the attacks on Ahmadis were taking place in the broader context of global development and political change. If we consider this wider context, with respect to the above incidents of Ahmadi persecution, we will see how outsiders'

perceptions of Ahmadis, as well as the internal self-identity of the movement gradually began to change.

By 1912, Khwaja Kamal al-Din had stationed himself in Woking, near London, as a barrister turned missionary. Although he represented the Lahori branch of the Jama'at, his personal relations with several non-Lahori Ahmadis were still quite strong, and his presence in Woking facilitated an easy transition to Britain for Zafrulla Khan. As international tensions were rising in Europe, Muslims throughout the world were concerting their efforts into movements with Pan-Islamic sympathies. When the First World War broke out in 1914, Muslims at Khwaja Kamal al-Din's Woking Mission attempted to rally support for Ottoman Turkey against popular opinion and against Britain, which was a bold move for an immigrant community at that time.³¹ In contrast, Mirza Bashir al-Din Mahmud Ahmad was rallying support for the British from Qadian, where Ahmadis were once again volunteering their services and support for Imperial Britain upon the firm request of their *khalīfa*. One letter of appreciation from the Lieutenant-Governor of the Punjab to Mirza Mahmud Ahmad acknowledged the receipt of his 'generous offer' of 5000 rupees on behalf of Jama'at-i Ahmadiyya, which was a sizable contribution in 1918.³² Such acts of hyper-fidelity towards the British were incomprehensible to the Muslim mainstream and frankly still may seem a little surprising today.³³ This was at a time in India

³¹ Humayun Ansari, *The Infidel Within: Muslims in Britain since 1800* (London: Hurst & Company, 2004), p. 127.

³² Sufi 'Abd al-Qadīr and Mirza Bashir Ahmad, *The Family of the Founder of the Ahmadiyya Movement* (Qadian: Book Depot Talif-o-Isha'at, 1934), p. 33, and also, pp. 32-36, for some other letters and notes regarding the war.

³³ The secular British authorities in colonial India certainly made it possible for small dissident groups, like the Ahmadis and the Isma'ilis, to pursue their religious objectives without the fear of a backlash from the Muslim orthodoxy. The Ahmadis clearly valued this protection under the British and often showed their support in public. Over the years, these types of issues have given way to a slew of

where the political atmosphere was such that most prudent Muslim loyalists preferred to remain silent on the issue rather than openly campaigning for the British against fellow Muslims.

Ahmadi relations with the Muslim mainstream only worsened after the war as the Muslim population of South Asia occupied itself with the Khilafat Movement.³⁴ The Khilafat Movement was attractive to both activists and *'ulamā* alike, in that it incorporated theological and political aspirations deeply rooted in Islamic symbolism.³⁵ The sentiment of the region conveyed an extraordinary confidence in the ability of Pan-Islamic ideology to prevent and overcome the imminent partitioning of the Ottoman Empire and the dismantling of the last Sunni *khilāfat*. While the subject of *khilāfat* dominated the agenda for most of the *umma*, Jama'at-i Ahmadiyya only committed partial support to the Khilafat Movement for various reasons. Mirza Mahmud Ahmad was keenly aware that the fantasy of a unified *khilāfat* was a crucial part of his Islamic vision. The problem was that he could not support anyone else's right to *khilāfat* while maintaining his own divine appointment as manifest through the fulfilment of his father's prophecy.³⁶ No one besides the Ahmadi *khalīfa* could have a legitimate claim to *khilāfat*, because the Ahmadi *khalīfa* was appointed by God. Had Mirza Mahmud Ahmad supported the Khilafat Movement, he would have provided a precedent for dealing with the challenges of

elaborate conspiracy theories regarding the inner motivations of Mirza Ghulam Ahmad or other leaders behind Jama'at-i Ahmadiyya. For example, see Bashir Ahmad *The Ahmadiyya Movement: British-Jewish Connections* (Rawalpindi: Islamic Study Forum, 1994).

³⁴ See also M. Naeem Qureshi, *Pan-Islam in British Indian Politics: A Study of the Khilafat Movement, 1918-1924* (Leiden: Brill, 1999).

³⁵ See Gail Minault, *The Khilafat Movement: Religious Symbolism and Political Mobilization in India* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1982).

³⁶ Yohanan Friedmann, *Prophecy Continuous: Aspects of Ahmadi Religious Thought and Its Medieval Background* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989), pp. 35-36.

dissenting opinions that otherwise had no voice within the Jama'at. This precedent would have opened the door to an unending debate on the authenticity of the charismatic authority of the Ahmadi *khalīfa*, the jurisdiction of his rule, and the legitimacy of rival claims; yet on a superficial level, Mahmud Ahmad still needed to pose his Jama'at in support of the Khilafat Movement to avoid looking like the only Muslim leader who opposed Muslim unity. The end result was a convoluted justification of Mahmud Ahmad's own rule as *khalīfa* in conjunction with a clouded attempt to win favour with the Muslim mainstream. In its essence, Mahmud Ahmad did support the idea of a single supreme *khalīfa* who enjoyed complete and total sovereignty over the greater Muslim *umma*, but it was his contention that he himself was that *khalīfa*. Mahmud Ahmad's Islam represented God's final message to the promised messiah and *mahdī* and could only be broken down into two subdivisions, Ahmadi and non-Ahmadi, where one was far superior to the other. In a half-hearted attempt to maintain Muslim unity, Jama'at-i Ahmadiyya officially endorsed the movement. Zafrulla Khan attempted to elaborate the official view:

I [Zafrulla Khan] did not take any active part in the Khilafat Movement myself. For one thing, I was rather young at that time; and for another, from the religious point of view, the Ahmadiyya Movement did not look upon the Turkish Sultanate as representing the Khilafat. Nevertheless, in one of the Khilafat Movement Conferences in Allahbad, an Ahmadiyya delegation, which was led by me, made it quite clear that we were in full support of the objectives of the Movement without accepting the claim or the position of the Sultan as spiritual head of Islam.³⁷

³⁷ Wayne Wilcox and Aislie T. Embree (interviewers), *The Reminiscences of Sir Muhammad Zafrulla Khan* (Maple, Canada: Oriental Publishers with permission from Columbia University, 2004), p. 8.

A major theological contradiction was averted in favour of a minor one, which resulted in Mahmud Ahmad's paradoxical support for the Khilafat Movement without the *khilāfat*. As Zafrulla Khan stated above, Ahmadis officially supported the Khilafat Movement without supporting their *khalīfa*, which most people interpreted as rejecting the movement altogether.³⁸ Jama'at-i Ahmadiyya was seen as one of the few highly organized movements, if not the only one, that effectively opposed the grand unification of Indian Islam through the Khilafat Movement. Other prominent Khilafatists included Abu'l-Kalam Azad, Zafar 'Ali Khan, 'Inayatullah Khan Mashriqi (Khaksar Tahrik), Muhammad Ilyas Khandhalwi (Tablighi Jama'at), and even the Aga Khan (Isma'ili). Mahmud Ahmad's rigidly uncompromising stance undoubtedly left many Khilafatists distraught and bitter, especially when in 1918 wartime celebrations in Qadian officially marked the British defeat of Ottoman Turkey.³⁹

The dissolution of the Khilafat Movement posed a serious problem for Jama'at-i Ahmadiyya, because it meant that the monolithic movement would subdivide into a number of non-Ahmadi alternatives for the Muslims of India. Given the political turmoil of the time, this begs the question of whether the inflexibility of Mahmud Ahmad's stance led many of the ex-Khilafatists to hold some type of grudge towards Ahmadis following the breach in their support for the movement, which

³⁸ This is how Friedmann simplified the Ahmadi position by asserting that Mirza Mahmud Ahmad just opposed the Khilafat Movement, which is a fair stance in itself, even though it is not what Mahmud Ahmad would have said himself. See Yohanan Friedmann, *Prophecy Continuous*, pp. 35-36.

³⁹ Government of Punjab, *Report of the Court of Inquiry Constituted under Punjab Act II of 1954 to Enquire into the Punjab Disturbances of 1953* (from here on *The Munir Report*) (Lahore: Superintendent Government Printing, Punjab, 1954), p. 196.

raised concerns regarding their loyalties to other Muslims and created a sense of apprehension towards the Jama'at.

In the coming years, the opposition to Jama'at-i Ahmadiyya was taken to another level by two organizations in particular, Majlis-i Ahrar and Jama'at-i Islami. Both groups were headed by ex-Khilafatists including 'Ataullah Shah Bukhari, Mazhar 'Ali Azhar, and Muhammad Da'ud Ghaznavi for the Ahrar, and Sayyid Abu'l-'Ala Mawdudi for Jama'at-i Islami. The Majlis-i Ahrar and Jama'at-i Islami engaged with Jama'at-i Ahmadiyya differently from the way that others had done in the past, in that they did so from a political frame of reference. One observation in these regards is that these organizations represent Indo-Pakistani political parties as opposed to different schools of thought (*madhhab*) or sects (*firqa*) within Islam. And though both Ahrari and Jama'at-i Islami ideologies were profoundly shaped by Islamic idealism, neither were sectarian movements. This is in contrast to Jama'at-i Ahmadiyya, which does claim to represent a new sect in Islam that is apolitical.

When the Kashmir riots broke out in 1931, fuelled by the Dogra government's unjust treatment of Muslims, Jama'at-i Ahmadiyya responded. Mirza Mahmud Ahmad spearheaded the Muslim opposition as the president of the All-India Kashmir Committee (AIKC). As we saw in chapter four above, many Muslim leaders (perhaps grudgingly) came forward to offer their support to the AIKC and Mirza Mahmud Ahmad, but even this outward political compliance was too much for Majlis-i Ahrar. Despite their differing approaches to the handling of the Kashmir crisis, there was a deeper element of distrust underlying the Ahrar's non-compliance with the AIKC that was arguably not altogether unfounded. We saw how Muslim

rivalries clearly hurt the Kashmiris more than they helped them, but given the context of the situation, we now see that these rivalries were not based on frivolous concerns or mere differences of opinion. However, we have yet to see how the resolution of these issues turned communalism into fanaticism.

Returning from his tour of London for the Round Table Conferences, Zafrulla Khan was elected president of the All-India Muslim League in December 1931 months after rioting had broken out in Kashmir. Following the election, Zafrulla Khan hurried back to Delhi from London to accept the nomination and give his inaugural speech. Ahrari protesters greeted him at the station in Delhi waving black banners in protest.⁴⁰ The demonstration did not prevent him from continuing at the post even though he could only do so for a few more months. By the summer of 1932 he was forced to resign as president of the Muslim League in order to join the Viceroy's Executive Council in place of Mian Fazl-i Husain who had fallen ill.⁴¹ Zafrulla Khan's rapid progress through the political ranks, from a Round Table Conference delegate, to president of the Muslim League, to member of the Viceroy's Executive Council was enough to validate the rumours that the Ahrar had been spreading in a suspicious and increasingly paranoid environment. Given the instability of the time, it was reasonable for many to conclude that these honours were far too great for someone in his thirties to have achieved on his own without the aid of some sort of government conspiracy. Many began to re-evaluate the motivations of Jama'at-i Ahmadiyya with a renewed sense of scepticism.

⁴⁰ Jānbāz Mirzā, *Kārvān-i Ahrār*, Vol. 1, (Lahore: Maktabah-i Tabassira, 1975), p. 238.

⁴¹ Wayne Wilcox and Aislie T. Embree (interviewers), *The Reminiscences of Sir Muhammad Zafrulla Khan*, pp. 36-38.

For the greater part of 1931 to 1933 both groups were preoccupied with the crisis that was unfolding in Kashmir.⁴² In addition, the Majlis-i Ahrar had to spend a significant amount of this time period building up its internal resources and establishing its internal organizational structure in order to give itself a chance at competing with the AIKC, the Muslim League, and Jama'at-i Ahmadiyya. As the organization began to stabilize, the anti-Ahmadi activity could proceed to the next stage. In October 1934 the Ahrar decided to hold a *Tablīgh* Conference in Qadian to refute false Ahmadi doctrines. In an attempt to avoid a potentially serious public agitation, the government of Punjab intervened, banned the conference from taking place in Qadian, and restricted any corresponding processions from passing through the village. Cleverly, the Ahrar made arrangements to move their conference to the grounds of the Dayanand Anglo-Vedic High School in the village of Rajada about a mile away.⁴³ *Khalīfat al-masīh* II, Mirza Mahmud Ahmad, made a call for 2500 Ahmadi volunteers from the greater Punjab region to report to Qadian for security duty. As the date of the conference approached, reports were made that large amounts of sticks and spears were being produced as weapons in Qadian in preparation.⁴⁴ Three days prior to the conference the government of Punjab ordered Mahmud Ahmad to desist, unaware that he had already withdrawn his call for outside assistance on the previous day. The Ahrar carried on with their arrangements and the conference took place on 21 October 1934. *Amīr-i Sharī'at* (as he is fondly remembered by his supporters), 'Ataullah Shah Bukhari, engaged a crowd of

⁴² See chapter 4 above.

⁴³ Government of Punjab, *The Munir Report*, p. 12.

⁴⁴ Spencer Lavan, *The Ahmadiyah Movement: A History and Perspective* (Delhi: Manohar Book Service, 1974), p. 165.

thousands in a five hour tirade that vilified Jama'at-i Ahmadiyya and spouted professions of peace that 'alternat[ed] with abuse and wit of a very low order.'⁴⁵ The potential for a major agitation was quite high, even though the route of the procession that followed the conference had been defined by the Punjab government in advance, and an additional 400 police and two superintendents were called in to Qadian as a precautionary measure in anticipation of mass violence.⁴⁶

Bukhari was prosecuted for this speech and convicted at the conclusion of a sensational trial which created more interest and anti-Ahmadiya feelings than the speech itself. Since then every Ahrar speaker of note has been saying one thing or another against the Ahmadiis, their leaders and their beliefs.⁴⁷

'Ataullah Shah Bukhari's conference was a considerable success in terms of its value as an anti-Ahmadi campaign. The mere fact that thousands of people came out to express opposition against Jama'at-i Ahmadiyya was very troubling for government officials. Nearly 300 *maulvīs* came from as far away as Deoband, though the vast majority of the participants came from the areas in the local vicinity surrounding Qadian.⁴⁸ One might presume that the people who were geographically closest to Qadian, and therefore had the most contact and the most familiarity with Ahmadiis, would be the most sympathetic towards their predicament. But in fact, the inverse was true. Those people who lived closer to the headquarters and were more likely to be familiar with the Jama'at were the ones joining the opposition. Some of the Ahrar's leaders themselves were also originally from within a reasonably close

⁴⁵ Government of Punjab, *The Munir Report*, p. 12.

⁴⁶ Spencer Lavan, *The Ahmadiyah Movement*, p. 165.

⁴⁷ Government of Punjab, *The Munir Report*, p. 12. Ahmadiyya was spelt with one 'y' in the original.

⁴⁸ Spencer Lavan, *The Ahmadiyah Movement*, p. 166.

proximity to Qadian. Mazhar ‘Ali Azhar was from Batala, and Maulana Da’ud Ghaznavi was from Amritsar. Chief Secretary of the Punjab C.C. Garbett noted that ‘there is no doubt that many orthodox Muslims, who are ordinarily opposed to the Ahrars, are in sympathy with this side of their activities.’⁴⁹ Garbett also noted in his explanation that ‘the Government often had received complaints from non-Ahmadi residents of Qadiyan that they had been harassed by Ahmadis.’⁵⁰ Although the Ahrar’s political platform had many faces in the early 1930s, from British withdrawal to Kashmiri independence from Dogra rule, the acute sensitivity of the Ahmadi issue which now revolved around the dignity and stature of the Prophet Muhammad had struck a chord with the Punjabi Muslim mainstream.

5.4 – The Politics of Partition and the 1953 Riots

Khalīfat al-masīh II, Mirza Bashir al-Din Mahmud Ahmad, remained immersed in the Kashmir conflict through the remainder of the 1930s. Ahmadi tensions with the Ahrar remained in the background while both groups concentrated on other issues throughout the Second World War. By the 1940s the political focus was shifting again, this time towards ending the war and achieving political independence from Britain. As the end of the war drew near and talk of independence increased, India’s leaders began finalizing the various schemes that

⁴⁹ This was from a *Letter from C.C. Garbett to M.G. Hallett* as quoted in Spencer Lavan, *The Ahmadiyah Movement*, p. 166.

⁵⁰ Spencer Lavan, *The Ahmadiyah Movement*, p. 166. Lavan spelt Qadian as ‘Qadiyan’.

ultimately resulted in partition.⁵¹ There was no shortage of ideas projecting the ideal political outcome for an independent India, most of which date back well into the nineteenth century. As initial ideas developed into theories and then into movements for governance, it was clear that there was one divide that sharply demarcated Indians into two camps, those of nationalism and religious separatism. The nationalist movements called for a single united India, whereas the religious separatist movements urged public opinion towards the formation of new religiously inspired states. As these ideas went through their respective formulations, it gradually became clear that India would be partitioned on religious grounds upon achieving its independence. The role of religion in the new states was not intended to dominate government policy, but rather was more of a means to determine international boundaries. The state of Punjab was problematic for partition advocates, because of the rich complexity and the heterogeneous distribution of its religious demographic.⁵² Confusion and quarrelling about the population distributions stalled a forthright solution that could have identified an international border much earlier.

Mirza Mahmud Ahmad changed his opinion a number of times as the politics of partition evolved. In the very beginning, it is clear that Jama'at-i Ahmadiyya favoured an undivided India, but as partition grew nearer and the viability of such an idea waned, Mirza Mahmud Ahmad found himself in a predicament. For at least some time shortly before the partition, Mahmud Ahmad had been considering the idea of establishing a separate Ahmadi state in Qadian, though he must have realized

⁵¹ See Sugata Bose and Ayesha Jalal, *Modern South Asia: History, Culture, Political Economy* (Lahore: Sang-e-Meel Publications, 1998), especially chapter 15, pp. 156-164.

⁵² See David Gilmartin, 'Religious Leadership and the Pakistan Movement in the Punjab,' *Modern Asian Studies*, Vol. 13, No. 3. (1979), pp. 485-517.

that the idea was impractical under the current circumstances. After this, Mirza Mahmud Ahmad had been petitioning for the separate representation of Ahmadis in India with separate electorates from the non-Ahmadi Muslims. He argued that since Parsis had been given their own electorates, yet numbered half as much as Ahmadis, that Ahmadis too should be given their own electorates separate from the Muslims.⁵³ Moreover, the Hindu community apparently used the discrepancies in the Ahmadi position to further argue that Qadian should remain on the Indian side of the border since Ahmadis wanted separate electorates, which implied that they did not consider themselves Muslim.⁵⁴ Justice Muhammad Munir commented on the inconsistencies in the Ahmadi stance:

Some of their [Ahmadi] writings from 1945 to early 1947 disclose that they expected to succeed to the British [as self-sovereigns in Qadian] but when the faint vision of Pakistan began to assume the form of a coming reality, they felt it to be somewhat difficult permanently to reconcile themselves with the idea of a new State. They must have found themselves on the horns of a dilemma because they could neither elect for India, a Hindu secular State, nor for Pakistan where schism was not expected to be encouraged. Some of their writings show that they were opposed to the Partition, and that if Partition came, they would strive for re-union. This was obviously due to the fact that uncertainty began to be felt about the fate of Qadian, the home of Ahmadiyyat, about which several prophecies had been made by Mirza [Ghulam Ahmad] Sahib. Provisional Partition had placed Qadian in Pakistan, but Muslims in the district of Gurdaspur in which Qadian was situated were only in a majority of one per cent, and the Muslim population in that district was mostly concentrated in three towns including Qadian. Apprehensions about the final location of Qadian, therefore, began to be felt, and since they could obviously not ask for its inclusion in India, the only course left for them now was to fight for its inclusion in Pakistan.⁵⁵

⁵³ See *al-Fazl* (13 November 1946), which was quoted in Maulānā Allāh Wasāyā, *Tārīkh-i Khatm-i Nubūwwat 1974: Qawmī Assemblī meñ Qādiyānī Muqaddama*, Vol. 2, (Multan: ‘Ālamī Majlis Tahaffūz-i Khatm al-Nubūwwat, 1994), p. 162.

⁵⁴ Maulānā Allāh Wasāyā, *Tārīkh-i Khatm-i Nubūwwat 1974*, Vol. 2, pp. 162-163.

⁵⁵ Government of Punjab, *The Munir Report*, pp. 196-197.

By July 1947 when the time the Punjab Boundary Commission finally heard the Jama'at's case, Mirza Mahmud Ahmad's position had changed again, and he was trying to have Qadian included in Pakistan.⁵⁶ This has major implications for the current situation in Pakistan, where Ahmadis have been declared non-Muslim for purposes of constitutional law.⁵⁷ The idea that Ahmadis initially wanted separate electorates from Muslims undermines their primary objection about the Pakistani Constitution classifying them as non-Muslims, because it means that they willingly entertained the idea of being counted separately from Muslims when it suited their interests and there was a potential to transform Qadian into an independent princely state.

As the idea of partition developed, Mirza Mahmud Ahmad had opposed the idea of Muslim majority lands going to Pakistan in favour of giving the Hindu majority lands to India. In this scenario he believed that the Punjab, which included large numbers of Sikhs and Ahmadis, would undoubtedly go to Pakistan. However, as it stands, the Sikhs, as non-Muslims were grouped with India, instead of as non-Hindus with Pakistan, which thereby forfeited large and otherwise disputable districts of the Punjab to India. The consequences of this decision had a major effect on district Gurdaspur, which contained large numbers of Sikhs and Ahmadis and most importantly Qadian. Nonetheless, one can not overlook the fact that it was the Muslims, and more specifically the Muslim League, who were making the call for

⁵⁶ See Mian Muhammad Sadullah (ed.), *The Partition of the Punjab 1947: A Compilation of Official Documents*, Vol. 2, (Lahore: National Documentation Centre, 1983), pp. 244-252. In addition to religious concerns, Shaykh Bashir Ahmad, the Ahmadi advocate who represented the case before the Boundary Commission, interestingly placed considerable emphasis on the logistical difficulties of collecting revenues in Qadian, India from disciples in Pakistan, which implies that this was one of Mahmud Ahmad's main concerns.

⁵⁷ See section 5.6 below.

partition, as opposed to the Congress party who only wanted independence from Britain but not from Islam.⁵⁸ Of course, it is well known that the Hindus had a comfortable majority in undivided India and did not need to exclude anyone to maintain their democratic dominance.

To some extent, the subtleties of these controversies subdued many Muslim activists who backed partition with India and supported the formation of Pakistan. For this reason, the majority of Muslim activists who favoured the Pakistan solution were apathetic towards the anti-Ahmadi polemic being propagated by the Ahrar. Many feared that any major controversy involving the mass excommunication of Jama'at-i Ahmadiyya from the Muslim *umma* could potentially have a detrimental effect on the partitioning of the Punjab in particular. As a result, many Pakistan supporters were quite comfortable with diverting their attention when confronted by the dubious parts of Ahmadi theology. This fear of losing the entirety of the Punjab to India was exacerbated by the ambiguity of the actual size of Jama'at-i Ahmadiyya, which was difficult to determine given the exaggerated figures that the Jama'at has been boastfully circulating since its inception.⁵⁹ Additionally, Mahmud Ahmad's continued involvement in the Kashmir crisis had been carried out rather smoothly,

⁵⁸ It is interesting to note that Zafrulla Khan was representing the Muslim League's position but not Jama'at-i Ahmadiyya's position before the Boundary Commission. This confirms that the Ahmadi position was somehow separate from the Muslim League's position, which represented the Muslim mainstream. Considering that Zafrulla Khan was a key Ahmadi spokesperson, Mirza Mahmud Ahmad could easily have utilized the opportunity to preserve unity and to compromise a solution with the Muslim League in order to present a unified Muslim front, but instead Jama'at-i Ahmadiyya designated a different representative to the Boundary Commission. For the full account of Zafrulla Khan's arguments, see Mian Muhammad Sadullah (ed.), *The Partition of the Punjab 1947: A Compilation of Official Documents*, Vol. 2, pp. 252-538.

⁵⁹ Official numbers on Jama'at-i Ahmadiyya are not known, however the Jama'at still claims that the total Ahmadi population is around 200,000,000 worldwide. In my estimation, according to the latest available census figures, there are roughly 2-5 million Ahmadis worldwide at present, which is likely to be a generous estimate. For example, see *Review of Religions* (April 2003) Vol. 98, No. 4, pp. 4, 25-26. On page 26, there is a helpful chart which shows the alleged figures of Ahmadi conversions in recent years.

demonstrating that the Jama'at could sustain their subsidiaries and affiliates with uninterrupted finances and volunteers for an extended period of time without a major bureaucratic breakdown. There was enough doubt in the size of the Ahmadi population and enough ambivalence towards Ahmadi theology to make political leaders reluctant to pursue sectarian issues that had the potential of eroding the solidarity of the *umma* in a time of political crisis. Minor fluctuations in the religious demographic could sway the Punjab in either direction. Besides, individual efforts by Ahmadis like Zafrulla Khan, who had demonstrated unqualified support for the Pakistan movement, had played an important role in raising the call for Pakistan and appeasing the Jama'at's leaders. Nevertheless, none of this mattered once the partition had taken place and the division between the two countries had become permanent. After partition, intolerant leaders were free to excommunicate as many Muslims as they liked without having to deal with the recourse of a political pan-Islamic backlash that had all but lost its influence by 1947.

In juxtaposition to the Pakistan movement were the nationalist parties, along with the Majlis-i Ahrar, who wanted an independent and unified India. The discussion in chapter four of the conflict in Kashmir has already shown how the Ahrar party's founders came together in 1931 following their fallout with Congress. The party exhibited individuality during the first couple of years of the Kashmir crisis, but this was largely a result of their opposition to the Ahmadi-inclined AIKC. When the AIKC disbanded in 1933 and Mirza Bashir al-Din Mahmud Ahmad left the committee for good, the Ahrar were left without their favourite antagonists. There was a brief interlude following the Kashmir crisis when Ahraris flirted with an

allegiance to the Muslim League and even considered helping Iqbal and Muhammad ‘Ali Jinnah set up the League’s parliamentary board in the Punjab. But in August 1936 the Ahrar officially broke off their relations while refusing to pay the election fee and demanding that the League declare Ahmadis non-Muslims.⁶⁰ Despite their previous differences, the Ahrar continued to support the nationalist ideology with the Congress party, occasionally through their contact with the editor of the *Zamīndār*, Maulana Zafar ‘Ali Khan, during the times when they were not bickering amongst themselves in the years leading up to partition. On 29 November 1941 Maulana Da’ud Ghaznavi issued a statement announcing the Ahrar’s decision to merge once again with Congress. Soon after, in 1943 they passed a resolution officially declaring themselves against partition,⁶¹ which posed another challenge in that it put them in direct opposition to the Muslim League. The sectarian side of the response was an attempt to smear Jinnah’s reputation and paint him as an impious infidel. Mazhar ‘Ali Azhar mocked Jinnah’s marriage to a Parsi woman in his famous couplet which is still quoted as an example of the ease with which the Ahrar were willing to commit *takfīr* (calling someone a *kāfīr* or non-believer).

He left Islam for a non-Muslim woman
 Is he a ‘great leader’ or is he a ‘great infidel’?
 (*Ek kāfīra ke vāste islām ko chhorā*
Ye qā’id-i a’zam hay, ke hay kāfīr-i a’zam?)

⁶⁰ Ayesha Jalal, *Self and Sovereignty: Individual and Community in South Asian Islam Since 1850* (London: Routledge, 2001), pp. 374-375.

⁶¹ Government of Punjab, *The Munir Report*, p. 11.

As partition drew near, in a last effort three Ahrar candidates stood against Muslim League candidates in the 1946 elections, but all were defeated.⁶² Every attempt to salvage a united India failed as partition became inevitable. When the partition of India took place in 1947 and the Punjab was split by an international border, many from the Ahrari leadership were left with no choice but to move to Pakistan. The experience of partition was traumatic on many different levels, but it was also politically disillusioning for the members of the Ahrar. Of course, Qadian was on the Indian side of the border, which meant that the Ahmadi headquarters had to be shifted to Pakistan. The setbacks from partition were too great to allow things to carry on as normal for both groups. The Ahrar's primary political objective of preventing the partition of India had failed, and it appeared that the party would be no more. A meeting was held in December 1947 to discuss all of the possible options for continuing their activities, from joining the Muslim League to accepting the reality of the situation and abandoning the party altogether. The only agreement they reached was that there was a desire to continue the party in some capacity and that they needed to make the necessary arrangements to create an All-Pakistan Majlis-i Ahrar. At the next meeting in June 1948 in Lahore the Ahrar affirmed their loyalty to Pakistan and concurred that they would not join the Muslim League due to the League's tolerance of Ahmadis. June 1948 was the same month that Mirza Mahmud Ahmad had created his *Furqān* Battalion of volunteer Ahmadi soldiers for deployment in the escalating conflict in Kashmir. In the next Ahrar meeting in January 1949, again in Lahore, the decision was announced 'to cease functioning as a

⁶² Ibid., pp. 11-12.

political party and to continue their future activity as a religious group.⁶³ All of these decisions were a bit puzzling because they entailed that the Ahrar would have to realign itself as a pro-Pakistan movement that largely conceded control of political affairs to the Muslim League, which in many ways contradicted nearly two decades of enthralling Ahrari activism. But there was no point in pursuing the antiquated political ideologies of pre-partition India any further.

The Ahrar attempted to create agitations without success in 1948, which resulted in the arrest of some Ahrari leaders. In 1949, after turning purely towards religion, the Ahrar began focusing much of their activity on denouncing Zafrulla Khan, who was then serving as Pakistan's first Foreign Minister. Personal attacks on Zafrulla Khan were beginning to resonate with the Pakistani public ever since he had made headlines for refusing to say the funeral prayers of Muhammad 'Ali Jinnah.⁶⁴ Many Pakistanis found this point unsettling, especially since it was well known that Zafrulla Khan and Jinnah had a close professional relationship. Although Zafrulla Khan's reason for abstaining from the funeral prayers ultimately reduced to the Ahmadi doctrine of *takfir*, in this particular funeral there was one more reason why Zafrulla Khan refrained from joining the congregation, which goes all the way back to the stoning of Sahibzada 'Abd al-Latif in Afghanistan nearly 50 years prior.

Once the precedent had been set in the trial of Sahibzada 'Abd al-Latif in 1903, the sporadic execution of individual Ahmadis had continued in Afghanistan up to the 1920s. These cases received increasing publicity in the Indian press, until they peaked with the stoning of Ne'matullah Khan in 1924, around the same time that

⁶³ Ibid., pp. 12-13.

⁶⁴ Ibid., p. 199.

Mirza Mahmud Ahmad was discovering the power of propaganda. The stoning of Ne'matullah Khan was bitterly criticized by many prominent Indians, including Maulana Muhammad 'Ali and Shawkat 'Ali, and led to a minor controversy on the punishment for apostasy in Islam in the Indian press.⁶⁵ To bolster support for the execution, Afghans looked outside to the Indian 'ulamā to provide further justification for the stoning and to settle the dispute.

The request resulted in a pamphlet being written by a prominent Deobandi scholar named Maulana Shabbir Ahmad 'Usmani, which upheld the opinion that Ahmadis were apostates and worthy of execution. The pamphlet remained largely unknown and uninfluential until the Ahrari leaders obtained 'Usmani's permission to issue a reprint.⁶⁶ By this time 'Usmani had become a leading politician as well, primarily because of his role as the first president of the Jam'iyat-i 'Ulama-i Islam, a party established in 1945 as a pro-Pakistan response to the Jam'iyat-i 'Ulama-i Hind, which served as the Muslim wing of Congress and opposed partition. The Jam'iyat-i 'Ulama-i Islam had received the Muslim League's support and uniquely attracted both Deobandis and Bareilwis alike, due to a mixed leadership.⁶⁷ One could argue that this political relationship with the Muslim League was ultimately what influenced the decision, but for whatever reason, when Jinnah died in 1948, it was Shabbir Ahmad 'Usmani who led the funeral prayers. Although the connection with 'Usmani may not be an adequate justification for Zafrulla Khan's actions, the

⁶⁵ Yohanan Friedmann, *Prophecy Continuous*, p. 29.

⁶⁶ Government of Punjab, *The Munir Report*, p. 18.

⁶⁷ For more on 'Usmani and the religious politics of the Jam'iyat-i 'Ulama-i Islam, see Ayesha Jalal, *Self and Sovereignty*, p. 454; see also David Gilmartin, 'Religious Leadership and the Pakistan Movement in the Punjab,' *Modern Asian Studies*, Vol. 13, No. 3. (1979), pp. 511-512.

publicity of the event only showed an Ahmadi refusing to join in Qa'id-i A'zam's funeral prayer, which was considered extremely insulting.

The Ahrar began to make public appeals for Pakistan to legally classify Ahmadis as a non-Muslim minority in May 1949, which was something that they had been doing in India for a considerable amount of time. The Ahrar began organizing other *Tabligh* Conferences almost monthly from November 1949, which again proved to be rather successful. The speeches at the conferences often attacked Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, Mirza Mahmud Ahmad, and Zafrulla Khan, and at times even carried iconic representations of the Ahmadis which could be dramatically abused in effigy. The Ahrar also made an appeal to have Zafrulla Khan removed from the cabinet. The Ahmadi response to the Ahrar's *Tabligh* Conferences was to counter with their own conferences, which on one such occasion in January 1950 ended in violence.⁶⁸ The Ahrar hurled bricks and stones on the Ahmadis until finally 'the police had to resort to a mild *lathi* [*lāthī* (club)] charge,' to disburse the rioters. The Ahrar reassembled at a short distance and began making their demands on a loudspeaker.⁶⁹

Incidents and violence began to increase steadily. In October 1950 some Ahmadis had gone on a proselytizing mission to a village, Chak Number 5, near Okara, district Lyallpur (now Faisalabad) when they were assaulted and chased out of the village. On the following day, one of the villagers pursued an Ahmadi, Ghulam Muhammad, and stabbed him to death.⁷⁰ In May 1951 an Ahmadi mosque was burned down and a number of worshippers were pursued and beaten.⁷¹ The Ahrar

⁶⁸ For the details of the above account, see Government of Punjab, *The Munir Report*, pp. 15-17.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 17.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 24.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, p. 30.

increased their anti-Ahmadi propaganda in the Punjab, which often resorted to elaborate conspiracy theories involving high-ranking Ahmadis with the British or Pakistani governments. Although there were more speeches taking place in urban environments, it appears that the incidents of violence remained largely confined to rural areas. The Home Secretary of Pakistan had been considering banning Majlis-i Ahrar since early in 1950, but never followed through with the recommendations out of fear of provoking a public reaction that could make things worse.⁷²

The Sadr Anjuman Ahmadiyya announced that they were having a public meeting on the 17 and 18 May 1952 at Jahangir Park, Karachi, where Zafrulla Khan would be a key speaker. He spoke on the second day and said that Ahmadis fully believe in the Prophet Muhammad being *khātam al-nabiyyīn*, no law or messenger could ever abrogate or supersede his final message, and that Mirza Ghulam Ahmad had been commissioned by God for the renewal of religion (*tajdīd-i dīn*).⁷³ He concluded by stating that without Ahmadiyyat, 'Islam would no longer be a live religion but would be like a dried up tree having no demonstrable superiority over other religions.'⁷⁴ On the first day, demonstrators hurled bricks and stones on the audience and attempted to disrupt the meeting. The agitators were arrested, but fifteen police constables were injured in the process. On the second day, a belligerent crowd surrounded the audience and had to be dispersed with tear gas. A gang of rioters regrouped following the tear gas and proceeded to a number of well-known Ahmadi businesses in central Karachi, where they vandalized the buildings and

⁷² Ibid., p. 57.

⁷³ Ibid., p. 75.

⁷⁴ Ibid.

properties. The Shehzan Hotel and Shahnawaz Motors had their windows broken, and fire was set to an Ahmadi owned furniture store and library.⁷⁵

Zafrulla Khan's speech was widely condemned in the Pakistani press far beyond Karachi. Many believed that it was inappropriate for a government minister to be giving public endorsements of Jama'at-i Ahmadiyya and Mirza Ghulam Ahmad. Many also believed that this was proof of the Jama'at's manipulation of the Pakistani government. Some believed that the riots were a pro-British plot, while others accused the American involvement in the region for instigating the riots to serve their own post-war interests.⁷⁶ Analogies were made in the press to the ongoing conflict in Kashmir and Zafrulla Khan was blamed for failing to resolve the Kashmir crisis.⁷⁷ Additionally, Zafrulla Khan was often attacked personally and accused of having numerous character flaws.

It was around this time, soon after the partition and after the Ahrar had downgraded from their political role to a more religious role, that 'Ataullah Shah Bukhari began to expand the religious functions of the group through various sister organizations under a variety of names. Some were localized and had minimal formal connections with the Ahrar, whereas others had stronger endorsements and eventually took on more prominent roles in fighting Jama'at-i Ahmadiyya in Pakistan and throughout the world. The most successful affiliate that grew out of Ahrari ideology was the Majlis-i Tahaffuz-i Khatm al-Nubuwwat (Organization for the Preservation of 'the Finality of Prophethood'). The exact origins of the organization are unclear, but it appears that Bukhari himself served at least as a symbolic leader in the early

⁷⁵ Ibid., pp. 75-76.

⁷⁶ Ibid., p. 76.

⁷⁷ Ibid., p. 105.

days when the movement was being heavily publicized through the pages of the *Zamīndār*.⁷⁸

In the summer of 1952, allowing enough time to let Zafrulla Khan's speech, the agitations in Karachi, and the subsequent reaction of the press to take hold, Ahrar leaders and their associates met in Karachi and decided to hold an All Muslim Parties Convention in Lahore the following year. The agenda of the conference was intended to be focused on the protection of the doctrine of *khatm al-nubuwwa*, which entailed the explicit demands to declare Ahmadis as non-Muslims, to terminate Zafrulla Khan's tenure as the country's Foreign Minister, and to remove all Ahmadis from any high posts in the Pakistan. In the *Zamīndār* of 3 July 1952 an advertisement appeared calling on all '*ulamā, khatībs, pīrs, and sajjāda nishīns* to attend. Formal invitations for the conference were sent out to many important leaders and movements including Jam'iyat-i 'Ulama-i Pakistan, Jam'iyat-i 'Ulama-i Islam, Jam'iyat-i Ahl-i Hadith, Majlis-i Tahaffuz-i Khatm al-Nubuwwat, Majlis-i Ahrar, and the promising new reform movement, Jama'at-i Islami, which was headed by Sayyid Abu'l-A'la Mawdudi.

Mawdudi, like many of his anti-Ahmadi contemporaries, had his first serious encounter with political activism in the Khilafat Movement, which put him in contact with many of India's prominent '*ulamā*. Despite his youth, he was allowed to work from 1924 to 1927 as the editor of the *Jam'iyati*, the monthly mouthpiece of India's

⁷⁸ One should note that Bukhari (b. 1891) was himself about 60 at this point and no longer capable of maintaining the same energetic lifestyle of his youth, especially after partition. The anti-Ahmadi rhetoric of the *Zamīndār* had passed from the pen of Maulana Zafar 'Ali Khan to his son, Maulana Akhtar 'Ali Khan, who was now the editor of the paper and responsible for promoting Majlis-i Tahaffuz-i Khatm al-Nubuwwat. See *Ibid.*, p. 111, for Akhtar 'Ali Khan's role in campaigning for Majlis-i Tahaffuz-i Khatm al-Nubuwwat.

pro-Congress Muslims involved in the Jam'iyat-i 'Ulama-i Hind.⁷⁹ This exposure enabled him to meet other notables in the 1930s such as Iqbal, who was able to help Mawdudi find the necessary funding, despite the differences in their outlook, to establish a revivalist religious school that catered to his political ideology.⁸⁰ By the end of August 1941 Mawdudi was able to formally establish the Jama'at-i Islami, which at that time was intended to serve as another political rival to the Muslim League. In defiance of partition in 1947, 'the Jama'at[-i Islami] forbade Pakistanis to take an oath of allegiance to the state until it became Islamic.'⁸¹ He even opposed the government action in Kashmir, claiming that a covert war was not a proper jihad, and ended up serving two years in prison for sedition.⁸² The Pakistani public did not look favourably upon anti-government conspirators, and as a result the Jama'at-i Islami fell into disrepute. Mawdudi's release in 1950 coincided with a rise in anti-Ahmadi agitations. The Ahrar had begun to reach out to the Muslim masses of the Punjab and polarize the political landscape by convincing Pakistanis that Jama'at-i Ahmadiyya was the source of elitist politics. Mawdudi opportunistically aligned himself with Ahrari leaders, perhaps in hope that their populist patronage would help him achieve his own revivalist agenda, even though Mawdudi maintained rather different views of political Islam. When Ahrari leaders reacted to Zafrulla Khan's controversial speech by forming the Majlis-i 'Amal (Action Committee), Mawdudi first joined but then

⁷⁹ F.C.R. Robinson, 'Mawdudī, Sayyid Abu'l-A'īā' *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, (second edition), P. Bearman (ed.), (Brill online: 2007).

⁸⁰ Seyyed Vali Reza Nasr, *Mawdudi and the Making of Islamic Revivalism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), pp. 35-36.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, p. 42.

⁸² *Ibid.*

later withdrew as a result of his disdainful views towards Muslim vigilantes.⁸³ Nonetheless, an open debate on the reordering of an Islamic constitution for Pakistan was too tempting an opportunity for Mawdudi to pass by, even if the debaters were largely fixated on the Ahmadi controversy. It was no coincidence that Mawdudi chose this period to write his short tract *Qādiyānī Masala* (The Qadiani Problem), which conveniently discharged him of his religious responsibility to warn the *umma*.⁸⁴

In January 1953 the Majlis-i 'Amal met outside of the Punjab in Karachi. Their course of action was to present the Prime Minister, Khwaja Nazim al-Din, with an ultimatum to address their grievances by accepting their demands regarding the role and status of Ahmadis. By 22 February 1953 about a month after addressing the Prime Minister, the ultimatum had expired, which was followed by a few peaceful days. The committee decided to have five representatives march to the Prime Minister's residence with placards visibly bearing their demands and to remain there until their demands were met. If arrested, they were to be replaced by five more volunteers. Orders were sent from Karachi to the major centres of the Punjab to start a program of public disturbances and civil disobedience on 27 February. With news of the arrests on the following day, hostile crowds began to assemble in Lahore, Sialkot, Gujranwala, Rawalpindi, Lyallpur (now Faisalabad), and Montgomery (now Sahiwal). By early March, 'streams of [Ahrari] volunteers had now started pouring

⁸³ See Seyyed Vali Reza Nasr, *The Vanguard of the Islamic Revolution: The Jama'at-i Islami of Pakistan* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994), pp. 131-141.

⁸⁴ I have only seen the reprints, but the copyrights for the original first editions vary from 1951 to 1953. See, Government of Punjab, *The Munir Report*, p. 250, which says *Qādiyānī Masala* was published on 5 March 1953; see also the bibliography in Seyyed Vali Reza Nasr, *Mawdudi and the Making of Islamic Revivalism*, p. 199, which cites 1951 as the publication date.

into Lahore by rail and by road.’⁸⁵ Various rumours began to spread about both, the Ahmadis and the agitators. In one such case, Maulana Akhtar ‘Ali Khan of the *Zamīndār* gave an inflammatory speech in the Wazir Khan mosque of Lahore to dispel false rumours that he had abandoned the Khatm al-Nubuwwat Movement, which resulted in a crowd of 10,000 supporters the same evening.⁸⁶ The Wazir Khan mosque had become a hub for launching the next riot, and many of Lahore’s mullahs were taking full advantage of its reputation. The curfews put in place by the government had little avail. By 4 March the aggressive mood of the crowds had turned into militancy and the police had resorted to firing on the mobs, but the situation was still getting worse.⁸⁷

The riots fragmented urban areas throughout the Punjab, and regional violence had brought the legal system to a standstill. Pakistan as a new country was facing its first domestic crisis since partition. Government buildings and post offices were being burned, shops were being looted, and several Ahmadis were being lynched by mobs at will. Even some unfortunate non-Ahmadis attempting to dissuade the angry mobs from persisting in their violence were dealt with brutally.⁸⁸ A number of Ahmadis were forced to renounce their faith.⁸⁹ When rioters advanced on the home of Shaykh Bashir Ahmad, a prominent attorney and *amīr* of Jama‘at-i Ahmadiyya Lahore, he resorted to opening fire on the crowd in self-defence, but he was later tried

⁸⁵ Government of Punjab, *The Munir Report*, p. 155.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 153.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 157.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 172.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 176.

and acquitted.⁹⁰ By 5 March Maulana Mawdudi was openly declaring the situation to be a 'civil war' between the government and the public.⁹¹ The following day was a Friday, and the government was determined to bring the disturbances to an end. Civil unrest was bordering on anarchy. When the government balked at meeting public demands, it lost control of the situation and was left with no clear resolution. The Chief Minister, Mian Mumtaz Daultana, panicked and called Karachi to request military support. He prepared a statement to be read in mosques during the Friday prayers, which conceded the Majlis-i 'Amal's demands. Although he never intended on actually giving in to the demands, Daultana was hopeful that the announcement would temporarily pacify public sentiment.⁹² The military arrived by prayer time and Martial Law was declared at 1:30 on 6 March 1953 for the first time (of many) in Pakistan's turbulent history.

5.5 – Between the Disturbances: 1953-1974

The upheaval resulting from the 1953 disturbances had religious and political consequences. In many ways, the imposition of Martial Law was a success for the Khatm al-Nubuwwat Movement. They had succeeded in effectively bringing down the government of the Punjab, even though their demands were never actually implemented. Political leaders had lost power to mullahs, who had been largely

⁹⁰ Ibid., p. 166. This is the same Shaykh Bashir Ahmad mentioned above in reference to the Ahmadi advocate who represented the Jama'at before the Punjab Boundary Commission prior to partition; see also chapter 4, section 4.3 above.

⁹¹ Government of Punjab, *The Munir Report*, p. 160.

⁹² For some other considerations regarding Daultana's disinterest in the Majlis-i 'Amal and their demands, see Ian Talbot, *Pakistan: A Modern History* (London: Hurst & Company, 2005), p. 141.

excluded from the political process until now. Many Muslim Leaguers had broken ranks during the disturbances and announced their support for the *Khatm al-Nubuwwat* movement. When coping with the fallout, political leaders had to recognize the power and potential danger of being seen as adverse to the doctrine of *khatm al-nubuwwa*. Although the brute force of military rule quieted rioters, it could not subdue the idea that lay underneath. Even Mawdudi was apprehended during this period and sentenced to death by a military tribunal for his sedition, but when civil law finally returned, the sentence was repeatedly reduced through a series of appeals. He eventually went free in 1955 after serving only two years of the original sentence.⁹³ The power of the doctrine of *khatm al-nubuwwa* was serving as a catalyst for Islamization in Pakistan, and the word 'Ahmadi' had taken on a new meaning that had become synonymous with anti-Islamic. Mawdudi had his chance to contribute towards the drafting of the new Constitution of 1956, largely because of a longstanding relationship with the Prime Minister of the time, Chaudhri Muhammad 'Ali. This shows that Jama'at-i Islami had taken significant strides in the political arena. Seyyed Vali Reza Nasr noted that:

Acceptance of the constitution as Islamic paved the way for the Jama'at[-i Islami] to become a full-fledged political party. In 1957, despite reservations in some quarters within the party, Mawdudi directed the Jama'at[-i Islami] to participate in the national elections of 1958. The constitutional victory was short-lived, however. The armed forces of Pakistan, under the command of General Muhammad Ayub Khan (d. 1969), and with a modernizing agenda that opposed the encroachment of religion into politics, assumed power in 1958 and shelved the constitution.⁹⁴

⁹³ Seyyed Vali Reza Nasr, *Mawdudi and the Making of Islamic Revivalism*, p. 43.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 44.

The role of military intervention in Pakistan's government in the 1950s was in opposition to those in favour of Islamization, like Mawdudi. But aside from the military's stamp on the political process, non-Muslim Leaguers were still making considerable strides in the way of Islamization, albeit at the expense of the Ahmadis.

It is not surprising that the economic situation in Pakistan leading up to the 1953 riots was less than ideal.⁹⁵ Food shortages in the summer of 1952 had tested the country's patience with regards to the political process. In the meantime, opposition leaders had discovered an effective way of capturing and exploiting the attention of a large section of the public's uneducated classes.⁹⁶ With the Hindus, Sikhs, and British out of the picture, the time was right to unleash a new enemy of the state. In regards to the inflammatory speeches of the Ahrar, one government official noted:

The significant feature is that after attacking the Ahmadis, most of the speakers run down the Government and accuse it of inefficiency, corruption, food situation, etc. This inclines one to the view that the anti-Ahmadi agitation is used as a device for mobilising public opinion with a view to ultimately arousing contempt and hatred against Government.⁹⁷

By scapegoating a controversial sectarian movement, the former activists from the anti-Pakistan movement had recaptured a share of political authority in their new country. We must not overlook the fact that the politicization of the anti-Ahmadi cause was primarily what shifted the balance of power away from the pro-partition Muslim Leaguers in favour of their ex-Congress opponents for the first time. Once again, this correlation is not coincidental. It is not surprising that the most effective

⁹⁵ Ian Talbot, *Pakistan: A Modern History*, p. 141.

⁹⁶ Ayesha Jalal, *The State of Martial Rule* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), p. 152.

⁹⁷ Government of Punjab, *The Munir Report*, p. 115.

Ahrari arguments revolved around the perceived political threats of Ahmadi conspiracies with whichever respective government in question, whether Britain, India, Pakistan, Kashmir, Israel, or America. For whatever reason, these conspiracy theories and loaded accusations against Ahmadi Muslims were the most convincing arguments that eventually led to Ahrari success through repeated mobilization of the masses. This was certainly the case in the Karachi demonstrations which followed Zafrulla Khan's speech and ultimately served as the watershed for the riots. Likewise, it was these government conspiracies that served as the most significant part of the justification for subsequent anti-Ahmadi persecution, which was reflected in all of the demands made by the Majlis-i 'Amal in 1953. We recall that each demand was underlined by an implicit fear that Ahmadis were advantageously using their political influence to exploit various resources in the country for their own nefarious ends. Interestingly, this has nothing to do with what many Muslims consider to be the numerous theological shortcomings in the fundamentals of Ahmadi 'aqīda (creed).⁹⁸

By the mid-1950s, public tensions simmered down and returned back to a situation similar to the one that had preceded the Martial Law. Much of the next decade's armistice may have been related to Ayub Khan's secularist reforms from which many religious minorities in Pakistan benefited. However, the unresolved issues of the status of Ahmadis continued to underlie political discussions throughout the country, and public opinion remained largely unsympathetic towards Ahmadi

⁹⁸ Even if one is willing to entertain the idea that the Ahmadis were in fact exploiting their power and wealth for their own malicious reasons, technically it would not be an act of *kufri*. The charge of *kufri* can only be linked to problems in their theology, which at most could result in an individual Ahmadi being subject to due process before a *qāḍī* (religious judge) on a case by case basis.

Islam. The hostility of the environment was changing more than the outsiders' perceptions of Ahmadiyyat, and the persecution itself was acting as a catalyst for internal changes in the Jama'at. Considering the numerous speeches by angry mullahs throughout the course of the riots, and the countless attacks on innocent victims by Muslim vigilantes intent on lynching potential Ahmadis, it was only a matter of time before some over-enthusiastic individual assaulted the *khalīfa* himself. By this point, Mirza Bashir al-Din Mahmud Ahmad was surrounded by professional bodyguards who accompanied him at all times. Nevertheless, on 10 March 1954 a local youth named 'Abd al-Hamid from nearby Lyallpur aged around 15 stabbed Mirza Mahmud Ahmad with a knife following the prayers. The knife penetrated deep into the neck, but missed the most critical areas, so rather than killing the *khalīfa* the attack led to chronic medical complications for the remaining 11 years of his life.⁹⁹ Mahmud Ahmad initially remained in Rabwah, but eventually had to seek further medical treatment abroad in London. Although his mental faculties apparently remained intact, Mahmud Ahmad was forced to spend the remainder of his days confined to his personal quarters, often retired on a large stiff board that aided his comfort.¹⁰⁰

Until Mahmud Ahmad's death in 1965, Jama'at-i Ahmadiyya was stuck in limbo with a charismatic leader who had seemingly lost his charisma. While Mahmud Ahmad was still being consulted on the biggest issues confronting the

⁹⁹ Dost Muhammad Shāhid, *Tārīkh-i Ahmadiyya*, Vol. 17, (Rabwah, 1983), pp. 21-37 contains the police report, and pp. 230-234, has Shahid's account.

¹⁰⁰ This is a difficult situation to assess because so little has been written about Mahmud Ahmad being stabbed. Perhaps the absence of these accounts was itself a conscious decision by Jama'at-i Ahmadiyya to preserve what many Ahmadis consider to be a dignified memory of their beloved *muslih man 'ūd* (promised reformer). In my own assessment, I have prioritized the oral accounts of those Ahmadi elders who witnessed Mahmud Ahmad's condition and the sentiment of Rabwah throughout the various stages of the latter part of his life.

Jama'at, the face of Jama'at-i Ahmadiyya was increasingly being represented by his eldest son, Mirza Nasir Ahmad. Even though Mirza Nasir Ahmad eventually did succeed his father as *khalīfat al-masīh* III, for the ten year period following the attack he was still not the *khalīfa*. The ambivalent situation brought a number of theological ambiguities to light that had never been addressed by the Jama'at in the past. If the *khalīfa* indeed was appointed by Allah, as many had believed, then was it even possible for him to abdicate his *khilāfat*? And since Mirza Nasir Ahmad was acting in full confidence of his ailing father, did this imply that he embodied the charisma of the *khalīfat al-masīh*? Mian Nasir (as most Ahmadis affectionately called him) avoided further controversy by maintaining a low profile when formally acting as the official representative of his father, which consequently entailed receding from the political spotlight whenever possible. Whereas Mahmud Ahmad had made a point of thrusting his Jama'at into virtually every political conflict that he could successfully publicize in rural Punjab, Mian Nasir took a more prudent approach, especially in the years between 1954 and 1965 that preceded his ascension to *khilāfat*.¹⁰¹

From a historical perspective, one could further argue that this time period was characterized by a bitter power struggle that was taking place underneath the surface of *khilāfat-i Ahmadiyya*. Mian Nasir's subsequent position of elevated authority in the Jama'at, which directly resulted from the attack on his father, was not received without internal opposition. The dubious nature of the transference of power following Mahmud Ahmad's attack was questioned by a few key members of the Ahmadi hierarchy. It appears that a rivalry unfolded when Mian Nasir's authority

¹⁰¹ Once again, this period corresponded with Ayub Khan's administration who took a tougher approach to dealing with Pakistan's internal dissidents. This certainly made it easier for Mirza Nasir Ahmad to avoid the political limelight.

and Mahmud Ahmad's competence as *khalīfa* were questioned by a few other family members as well as by two sons of the first *khalīfat al-masīh*, Nur al-Din. The fate of Nur al-Din's lineage has been treated as an unspoken secret by Ahmadi historians whose silence on the issue itself speaks volumes. Many Ahmadis themselves would be surprised to learn that Nur al-Din married three times over the course of his life and had over 20 children, whose whereabouts are consistently missing from the Ahmadi biographical sources, with minimal exceptions; only two of his sons, 'Abd al-Mannan 'Umar and Abd al-Wahhab 'Umar, from the second marriage to Sughra Begum are mentioned in rare circumstances.¹⁰² By itself, this observation is hardly significant. It is only in comparison to the excessive celebratory nature of the inexhaustible literature on Mirza Mahmud Ahmad and his descendants that the absence of the members of Nur al-Din's progeny appears abnormally pronounced. It appears that the majority of Nur al-Din's children, meaning his sons in particular, had left the Jama'at fairly early in Ahmadi history. This must have taken place some time before 1950, if not much earlier, assuming that the children were brought up specifically as Ahmadi Muslims. With the exception of a few daughters who had married descendants of Ghulam Ahmad, practically none of the other children appear to have had any significant ties to the Jama'at, which is odd considering that their father had been Mirza Ghulam Ahmad's closest companion and first *khalīfa*. Unlike their siblings, 'Abd al-Mannan 'Umar and 'Abd al-Wahhab 'Umar had followed in their father's footsteps and demonstrated enduring loyalty and devotion to Jama'at-i Ahmadiyya throughout their lives. Most notably, 'Abd al-Mannan 'Umar taught at

¹⁰² For more on the biographical information concerning Nur al-Din, including his marriages and children, see 'Abd al-Qādir, *Hayyāt-i Nūr* (Qadian: Nizārat-i Nashar-o-Ishā'at, 2003).

the Ahmadi seminary for over ten years, which shows that he was respected enough and trusted enough to instil Ahmadi orthodoxy into future missionaries. He had given public speeches at the *Jalsa* (convention) in Rabwah as late as December 1954,¹⁰³ and in 1956 the offices of the *Tahrīk-i Jaādīd* were still willing to hold ‘tea parties’ in his honour.¹⁰⁴

Even though Mahmud Ahmad’s physical demeanour had visibly declined, he continued on as *khalīfa*. The worst instances of his weakened condition were rare occasions when he went into paralysis, which caused mass alarm throughout Rabwah.¹⁰⁵ It is clear that Mahmud Ahmad was perturbed by the uncertainty of his predicament and by the questions that were being raised by some of his closest relatives and companions. Before his departure from Rabwah to seek medical treatment abroad, Mahmud Ahmad issued a stark warning to ‘mischief mongers’ who questioned the practicality of his rule and made it clear that any dissension in the Jama‘at during his absence would not be tolerated, even if it originated from his own ‘kith and kin’.¹⁰⁶

It was at this time period that the Jama‘at leadership found it necessary to issue numerous statements clarifying how the *khalīfa* was divinely appointed and how, therefore, he could not abdicate under any circumstances.¹⁰⁷ Although similar issues regarding the divine authority of the *khalīfa* had been dealt with implicitly and explicitly during the split with the Lahoris, it was only now that these interpretations

¹⁰³ *Review of Religions* (January 1955) Vol. 49, No. 1, p. 57.

¹⁰⁴ *Review of Religions* (July 1956) Vol. 50, No. 7, p. 395.

¹⁰⁵ *Review of Religions* (March 1955) Vol. 49, No. 3, p. 192.

¹⁰⁶ *Review of Religions* (May 1955) Vol. 49, No. 5, p. 294.

¹⁰⁷ For examples of a few articles that illustrate the insecurities of the Ahmadi hierarchy, see *Review of Religions* (Oct 1956) Vol. 50, No. 10, pp. 503-505, 510-511, 519-524; *Review of Religions* (November 1956) Vol. 50, No. 11, pp. 579-581.

were becoming core Ahmadi beliefs. Additionally, rumours had been circulating in the Karachi press which detailed Mian Nasir's ambitions of consolidating his authority of the Jama'at during his father's absence to ensure a smooth transition to his own *khilāfat*. The *Review of Religions* then had to publish its own responses, which reassured the members of the Jama'at that Mian Nasir did not have any ambition whatsoever of becoming the *khalīfa*.¹⁰⁸ As the allegations continued, it is clear that the Ahmadi hierarchy, primarily centred around Mirza Nasir Ahmad, held Nur al-Din's sons responsible for the upheaval. Unsurprisingly, Nur al-Din's two sons were expelled from the Jama'at shortly thereafter, most likely under Mian Nasir's personal discretion while fulfilling the duties of the *khalīfa* at the time. Since then, nasty rumours questioning the integrity and inner motivations of 'Abd al-Mannan 'Umar in particular have been circulating within the Jama'at, which have little historical basis and are impossible to confirm.¹⁰⁹

5.6 – Constitutional Islam: 1974 and 1984

By the late 1960s and early 1970s, the Pakistani electorate was indulging the charm of Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, the founder and leader of the new Pakistan People's

¹⁰⁸ The article in question is in *The Times* of Karachi (20 August 1956), which was rebutted in *Review of Religions* (Oct 1956) Vol. 50, No. 10, p. 548.

¹⁰⁹ When 'Abd al-Mannan 'Umar left the Qadiani branch he began offering his services to the Lahoris. He claimed to have never taken formal *bay'at* (allegiance) with either side, which (although in fact it may be true) is irrelevant to his participation in both communities. He most notably appeared before the National Assembly on behalf of the Lahoris during the 1974 inquiry. Unfortunately, I was unable to speak to him before his recent death on 28 July 2006 in America. Before his passing he had published a new translation of the Qur'an and compiled a dictionary of Qur'anic words based on his father's notes, both of which are easily available. See *The Holy Qur'an* (Hockessin, DE: Noor Foundation International, 2002); see also *Dictionary of the Holy Qur'an* (Hockessin, DE: Noor Foundation International, 2004).

Party (PPP). The promise of a more liberal and potentially more secular Pakistan had inspired many Ahmadis to support the party in their quest for a new regime. On an institutional level, many members of the Jama'at-i Ahmadiyya hierarchy openly campaigned for the PPP and urged subordinate Ahmadis to support Zulfikar Ali Bhutto's candidacy for president. Mirza Tahir Ahmad, the younger half-brother and successor of Mirza Nasir Ahmad, had first met with Bhutto as a representative of the Jama'at in the 1960s before his *khilāfat*. He appears to have forged a strong political relationship with Bhutto during the campaign and continued to meet with him on a monthly basis following the elections.¹¹⁰ Ironically, Bhutto was the Prime Minister of Pakistan at the time when the first constitutional changes declaring Ahmadis as non-Muslims were passed. Although Zulfikar Ali Bhutto and the PPP achieved enormous political success in a short amount of time, tension arising from the religious opposition parties manifested itself in the form of the Ahmadi controversy once again.

In the spring of 1974, news of violent clashes between students at the train station in Rabwah had spread through the nation like wildfire, rekindling the old debate. Although Bhutto was initially reluctant to respond to the issue, when the opposition staged a walkout of the National Assembly, he was forced to take immediate action.¹¹¹ The popularity of the anti-Ahmadi movement was remarkable, considering that at the time, one of the major religious opposition parties, Jama'at-i Islami, had only four seats in the National Assembly.¹¹² On 30 June 1974 the

¹¹⁰ See Iain Adamson, *A Man of God: The Life of His Holiness Khalifatul Masih IV* (Bristol: George Shepherd Publishers, 1991), pp. 92-96.

¹¹¹ Yohanan Friedmann, *Prophecy Continuous*, pp. 41-42.

¹¹² Seyyed Vali Reza Nasr, *Mawdudi and the Making of Islamic Revivalism*, p. 45.

National Assembly of Pakistan appointed a Special Committee of the whole House to determine the status of people who did not believe in the finality of the prophethood of Muhammad (*khatm al-nubuwwa*).¹¹³ The Special Committee met with various representatives from both sides, including the presiding *khalīfa* Mirza Nasir Ahmad himself and the head of the Anjuman-i Isha‘at-i Islam Lahore. The results of the deliberations concluded on 7 September 1974 when all 130 members of the National Assembly of Pakistan unanimously moved to amend Article 260 of the Constitution with the following clause:¹¹⁴

(3) A person who does not believe in the absolute and unqualified finality of the Prophethood of Muhammad (Peace be upon him) the last of the Prophets, or claims to be a prophet, in any sense of the word, or of any description whatsoever, after Muhammad (Peace be upon him), or recognizes such a claimant as a prophet or a religious reformer is not a Muslim for the purposes of the Constitution or law.¹¹⁵

¹¹³ *The National Assembly of Pakistan Debates – Official Report*, Vol. 4, No. 26, (30 June 1974), pp. 1302-1309.

¹¹⁴ The names of the National Assembly members who voted on the motion were recorded in the government’s official report. Normally, this would not be worth mentioning, however, there is a popular misconception that there were 72 members of the National Assembly who unanimously voted against the one Jama‘at-i Ahmadiyya, which provided the literal fulfilment of a hadith narrated by Imam Tirmidhi regarding a chosen sect in the latter days. Neither the members of the National Assembly nor the members of the National Assembly’s Special Committee consisted of 72 members or represented 72 different sects in Islam. For the names of the members who voted, see *The National Assembly of Pakistan Debates – Official Report*, Vol. 5, No. 39, (7 September 1974), pp. 571-574. Although this belief is based on false information, it appears that the source of the erroneous claim stemmed from two newspaper articles that mistakenly drew a literal connection from the vote of the National Assembly to the hadith. It is most likely that an Ahmadi initially provided the information (perhaps correctly) to the journalists, who confused the hadith with the number of National Assembly members who participated in the vote. Since then, numerous Ahmadis quote the two newspaper articles as literal fulfilment of the hadith. See *The Guardian*, (9 September 1974); see also *Nawa-i-Waqt*, (10 October 1974). One Ahmadi author wrote, ‘In 1974, some newspapers published headlines that seventy two sects of Islam had agreed in this declaration about Ahmadis. We are proud and happy to be in the minority 73rd sect as predicted by the Holy Prophet, peace be upon him.’ See Aziz Ahmad Chaudhry, *The Promised Messiah and Mahdi* (Tilford, Surrey, UK: Islam International Publications Limited, 1996), p. 171. In addition, the fourth *khalīfa*, Mirza Tahir Ahmad, discussed the literal fulfilment of the hadith in a question and answer session at the Fazl Mosque, London (23 August 1984).

¹¹⁵ *The National Assembly of Pakistan Debates – Official Report*, Vol. 5, No. 39, (7 September 1974), p. 561.

This effectively defined all Ahmadis, both Qadiani and Lahori, as non-Muslims according to Pakistan's Constitution. Politically, Ahmadis have been declared non-Muslims by the 1974 National Assembly of Pakistan, but it is important to understand the theological subtleties of this decision. Theologically, one could at best, only show decisively that a certain individual Ahmadi maintained heretical beliefs, but the ruling cannot be applied to the entirety of Jama'at-i Ahmadiyya, even if the individual who was deemed an infidel was Mirza Ghulam Ahmad himself. When the leader of a community is deemed a *kāfir* (infidel) or *murtad* (apostate), the designation does not inherently filter down to every member of that community.

For the sake of argument, even now after his death, if we assume that a *qāḍī* declared Mirza Ghulam Ahmad an apostate (*murtad*) on the basis of previous publications and writings, the ruling could not be intrinsically applied to every subsequent member of Jama'at-i Ahmadiyya, especially if the member in question was born into the Jama'at. Firstly, one would need to distinguish between Muslims who converted to this new hypothetical religion 'Ahmadiyyat' and those Ahmadis who were born into the Jama'at, because Ahmadis born into 'Ahmadiyyat' could not be accused of apostasy by other Muslims since they were never 'real' Muslims in the first place. In contrast, each Ahmadi who converted to 'Ahmadiyyat' from Islam, and therefore was not born into the Jama'at, would still be subject to a trial by a *qāḍī* to determine whether he or she was guilty of heretical beliefs as an individual. The remaining Muslim converts to 'Ahmadiyyat' would not be affected by the outcome of such a trial and would not be liable for accusations of apostasy until it was firmly established, by something like a classical notion of consensus (*ijmā'*), that any

individual affiliated with the Ahmadiyya community was a non-Muslim.¹¹⁶ Logistically, this scenario is extremely difficult if not impossible to implement, but even so, the Pakistani National Assembly simply does not fulfil the qualifications to make this judgment theologically binding. Again, the 1974 ruling only represents a constitutional change made by one country's National Assembly, presumably under political concerns for order and classification. This is not to say that the National Assembly's decision was theologically unsound, but simply nonbinding and theologically invalid. The decision has no theological validity whatsoever and still to this day has the potential of being reversed by some subsequent government of Pakistan at anytime, unlike a theological consensus (*ijmā'*) which would remain unchanged and irreversible forever.

Aside from the theological subtleties of the decision, the government added a clarification to Section 295-A of the Pakistani Penal Code, which stated that:

A Muslim who professes, practises or propagates against the concept of the finality of the Prophethood of Muhammad (Peace be upon him) as set out in clause (3) of Article 260 of the Constitution, shall be punishable under this section.¹¹⁷

The wording of this amendment to the Penal Code is confusing and contradictory in that it explicitly refers to those who do not believe in the 'absolute and unqualified finality of the Prophethood of Muhammad' as Muslims. The verdict should have granted Ahmadis the right to have their own separate electoral

¹¹⁶ It may be useful to see a classical perspective such as al-Ghazali's work on the issues of *kufr* and *takfir*, *Faysal al-Tafriqa bayn al-Islām wa'l-Zandaqa*, which is available in translation in Richard Joseph McCarthy (trans.), *Deliverance From Error: An Annotated Translation of al-Munqidh min al-Dalāl and Other Relevant Works of al-Ghazālī*, (Louisville: Fons Vitae, 1980).

¹¹⁷ *The National Assembly of Pakistan Debates – Official Report*, Vol. 5, No. 39, (7 September 1974), p. 561.

representation in the National Assembly along with the other non-Muslim minorities. However, Ahmadis have never taken advantage of this opportunity because it requires them to acknowledge and accept that they are a part of the non-Muslim minority.¹¹⁸ Only one such attempt was made in 1976 by Bashir Tahir, an Ahmadi candidate who tried to claim the seat but was consequentially excommunicated from the Jama'at as a result.¹¹⁹ Since then, no further attempts have been made.

Despite the efforts of the National Assembly, Zulfikar Ali Bhutto's government was soon overthrown by a military coup in July 1977 that was headed by his commander in chief General Muhammad Zia-ul-Haq. This new government, headed by the military general, imposed even more stringent sanctions on Jama'at-i Ahmadiyya in Pakistan in late April 1984 when president Zia-ul-Haq passed Ordinance XX. Technically, the 1974 amendment only classified Ahmadis as non-Muslims, which had relatively small legal implications in comparison to the 1984 ordinance which made most aspects of religious life for Ahmadis in Pakistan illegal. Equally, the ability for civil society to maintain a laissez-faire attitude towards Ahmadis became virtually impossible, which led to the continual and often unprovoked harassment of many Ahmadis who were otherwise politically disinterested. Section 298(C) of the ordinance states:

298C. Person of the Qadiani group, etc., calling himself a Muslim or preaching or propagating his faith.

Any person of the Qadiani group or the Lahori group (who calls themselves 'Ahmadis' or by any other name) who, directly or indirectly, poses himself as a Muslim, or calls, or refers to, his faith as Islam, or preaches or propagates his faith, or invites others to accept his faith, by words, either spoken or written, or by visible

¹¹⁸ See section 5.4 above.

¹¹⁹ Yohanan Friedmann, *Prophecy Continuous*, p. 45.

representations, or in any manner whatsoever outrages the religious feelings of Muslims, shall be punished with imprisonment of either description for a term which may extend to three years and shall also be liable to a fine.¹²⁰

The wording in this section of the ordinance is rather loose and ambiguous, especially considering the severity of the consequences. For example, an action that 'outrages' Muslim sentiments is punishable by up to three years imprisonment. It is impractical to determine and to regulate which actions rightfully qualify for such legally reprehensible 'outrage'. Unlike the ordinance, classical Islamic law recognizes the fact that it is impossible to determine between those hypocrites who 'pose' as Muslims and genuine Muslims, and thereby removes the responsibility of making such a distinction from any authoritative person or body. Once again, it is important to note that from the traditional perspective of Islamic jurisprudence (*fiqh*), this is a different issue from determining a *murtad* or a *kāfir* which is not a question of *fiqh* but rather '*aqīda* (creed). Classically within Islam, anyone who takes *shahāda* is legally a Muslim for purposes of Islamic law, unless they adopt an unsound '*aqīda*, which is determined through a lengthy process case by case. The idea of determining an authentic Muslim from an inauthentic one who only poses as a Muslim is outside of both *fiqh* and '*aqīda*. Determining sound '*aqīda* is different from determining if someone is posing as a Muslim, but this is part of the broader theological problem, because many mainstream scholars consider Mirza Ghulam Ahmad to have unsound '*aqīda*.

¹²⁰ See *Ordinance No. XX of 1984* as published in *The Gazette of Pakistan. Islamabad, Thursday, 26 April 1984*.

Other parts of the ordinance are much more specific about explicitly defining some of these actions, such as Ahmadis who give the 'azan' (call to prayer), refer to their mosques as '*masjids*' (mosques), or add '*Razi Allah Anho*' (may God be pleased with him) to the names of anyone other than the Prophet, his companions, or his caliphs.¹²¹ Since 1984 the precedent has been set to include other offences such as saying the standard Muslim greeting, *al-salāmu 'alaykum* (peace be upon you), or even reciting the *kalima*, there is no God but Allah and Muhammad is his messenger.¹²² Once again, this is problematic, because the very utterance of the *kalima* is precisely what causes one to leave their former religion and enter into Islam. Pakistani legal authorities attempted to resolve the paradox by insisting that Ahmadis who recited the *kalima* were insincere in their beliefs and simply 'posing' as Muslims.

That changes in the external political situation coincided with major internal changes in the Jama'at's leadership was of no help in stabilizing the identity or diffusing Ahmadi anxiety. Mirza Nasir Ahmad passed away on 9 June 1982 eight years after the first constitutional changes had taken place. The following day Mirza Tahir Ahmad was elected as his successor, *khalīfat al-masīh* IV. In many ways, this timing was extraordinary. Within two years of Mirza Tahir Ahmad's ascension to the *khalīfat*, on 26 April 1984 Zia-ul-Haq's Ordinance XX went into affect. On 30 April 1984 the newly elected fourth *khalīfa* fled Pakistan forever, seeking asylum in London.¹²³ Ahmadis often compare the story of his remarkable escape from Pakistan

¹²¹ See Section 298(B) of *Ordinance No. XX of 1984*.

¹²² Antonio R. Gualtieri, *Conscience and Coercion: Ahmadi Muslims and Orthodoxy in Pakistan* (Montreal: Guernica, 1989), pp. 49, 57-58.

¹²³ Jain Adamson, *A Man of God: The Life of His Holiness Khalifatul Masih IV*, pp. 198-199.

to the *hijra* of the Prophet from Mecca to Medina. By establishing a new base in London, the *khalīfa* was in a much better position to recast Ahmadi/non-Ahmadi tensions in a new light. In London, he found an avid western audience whose sympathies were increasingly responding to a fresh and fervent consciousness that was steadily evolving into a movement for Human Rights.

The re-centring of the *khilāfat* in London was significantly different from the previous move from Qadian to Rabwah for several reasons. The migration of Ahmadis from India to Pakistan coincided with the flow of the Muslim mainstream, whereas the move from Pakistan to the UK had Ahmadis leaving an Islamic environment in favour of seeking refuge with non-Muslims. The overall success of this move depended on convincing their western European hosts that they were in fact a persecuted minority. Even though the constitutional changes of 1974 and 1984 ensured this was a reality for the majority of Ahmadis living in Pakistan, it had an unforeseen impact on the Ahmadi identity. The growth and development of the diaspora community was inherently based on emphasizing the dichotomy between Ahmadis and non-Ahmadi Muslims, particularly in the west where obtaining immigration by conventional means was far more difficult. Accordingly, the new location of *khilāfat-i Ahmadiyya* required some explanation, even for Ahmadi adherents who were not the only ones questioningly watching as the fourth *khalīfa* himself was now carrying out the apocalyptic reforms of the *imām mahdī* from central London. The primary justification, for insiders and outsiders, would always return to the emphasis of a fundamental incompatibility between Ahmadis and non-Ahmadi, even though such an incompatibility may never have existed. Likewise, the

perception of Ahmadis being incompatible with non-Ahmadi Muslims has increasingly taken root in the Ahmadi identity, amongst insiders and outsiders, since the constitutional changes in Pakistan have taken place.

One can only speculate how that identity may have developed differently had the *khalīfa* stayed in Pakistan or in any other Muslim country, even potentially under the continual threat of imprisonment, as opposed to moving to London. It is clear that the move to London encouraged a restatement of the Ahmadi worldview in a completely different context. Suddenly the western context reinvigorated Mirza Ghulam Ahmad's attack on Christian theology while simultaneously leaving his other religious rivals, such as the Hindu revivalist Arya Samaj and Brahmo Samaj, to fall by the wayside. Similarly, the western context has placed an extraordinarily high value on differentiating between Ahmadi Islam and non-Ahmadi Islam as a superficial explanation for the persecution. Some insiders themselves now acknowledge that many Ahmadis have begun to treat fellow Muslims as though they belong to an altogether different religion.

The situation has become even more complex in recent years since diplomatic relations between India and Pakistan have improved. At present, the presiding fifth *khalīfa*, Mirza Masroor Ahmad,¹²⁴ has the potential for the first time, to return his Jama'at's headquarters to Qadian with minimal restrictions, even though this would involve foregoing the worldly benefits of heading an internationally involved global institution from London. It will be interesting to see whether Mirza Masroor Ahmad

¹²⁴ Mirza Masroor Ahmad was elected *khalīfat al-masīh V* in London on 22 April 2004. He is the great-grandson of Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, but unlike his two predecessors he is not a descendent of the second *khalīfa*, Mirza Bashir al-Din Mahmud Ahmad. Instead, he is the grandson of Mirza Bashir al-Din Mahmud Ahmad's youngest brother, Mirza Sharif Ahmad.

or any of his future successors succumb to religious concerns and return to the sacred village of Qadian where Mirza Ghulam Ahmad's remains lie in waiting. Perhaps one day the lure of the desire to build a magnificent shrine and mosque around the tomb of Mirza Ghulam Ahmad in the consecrated lands of the *bihishtī maqbara* will be too great for Ahmadis to ignore and will not be postponed any further. In the meantime, there is no longer anything to prevent this from happening, and the political situation in India is stable enough to support an Ahmadi *khalīfa* who may at any time choose to return.

5.7 – Unconventional Explanations: The Case of the Common Lineage

We have seen how the persecution has been a part of Jama'at-i Ahmadiyya from the very beginning in various forms for differing reasons. Interestingly, we still have no satisfactory explanation as to why this persecution persists with such intensity one hundred years after Mirza Ghulam Ahmad's death, except for certain aspects of the development of Pakistan's religious politics. It is important here to distinguish between the causes for controversy and the causes for persecution. Once again, we have seen how and why Ahmadi interpretations of Islam, at times, radically conflict with those of the Muslim mainstream; however, this is no different from several other messianic movements, like the Isma'ilis or the Bahai, throughout the

history of Islam.¹²⁵ Although Ahmadi interpretations of Islam are indeed controversial deviations from the orthodoxy, we have not addressed why or how such subtle positions on randomly tangential points of Islamic theology became so heavily politicized. Surely, the subtleties regarding the indeterminable status of the *mahdī*, the true fate of Jesus immediately after his crucifixion, and a circumstantial rejection of violent jihad are peripheral issues in Sunni Islam at best. Even amongst these contentious issues, the rejected notion of violent jihad was reinstated in 1948 by the second *khalīfa*, Mirza Mahmud Ahmad, with his deployment of the Furqan Battalion in Kashmir.¹²⁶ Similarly, many non-Ahmadi Muslims have held the belief that Jesus died naturally and is not currently alive in heaven, in the same way that Ahmadiis themselves now claim. The only remaining issue is that of *khatm al-nubuwwa* (finality of prophethood). Even this is not a straightforward problem in the sense that Ahmadiis do not reject *khatm al-nubuwwa* outright, but rather they interpret its meaning in an uncommon and potentially un-Islamic way. However, even if this interpretation amounts to straight *kufri* (infidelity), it does not justify the persecution of Jama‘at-i Ahmadiyya that has taken place over the last century and continues to take place today.

We have already seen how many Muslim political leaders like Maulana Muhammad ‘Ali and Shawkat ‘Ali, Iqbal, Mian Fazl-i Husain, Shaykh ‘Abdullah of Kashmir, and Zulfikar Ali Bhutto were willing to cooperate with and work alongside Mirza Mahmud Ahmad or other Ahmadi representatives despite their theological

¹²⁵ See Oliver Scharbrodt, *Islam and the Baha’i Faith* (London: Routledge, 2008); see also See Shahzad Bashir, *Messianic Hopes and Mystical Visions: The Nurbakhshiya Between Medieval and Modern Islam* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 2003).

¹²⁶ See chapter 4, section 4.7 above.

differences. This again raises the question of why some Muslims were so tolerant whereas others were so intolerant.

It is interesting to note that many of the primary instigators of Ahmadi persecution had close personal ties to Jama'at-i Ahmadiyya in some way. For example, the first *fatwā* of *kufī* against Mirza Ghulam Ahmad was written in 1891 by his former teacher and friend, Maulvi Nazir Husayn Dehlawi, in response to the publication of *Tawzīh-i Marām*.¹²⁷ Maulvi Nazir Husayn was not a random scholar who incidentally decided to publicize his theological disagreement with Mirza Ghulam Ahmad. Maulvi Nazir Husayn Dehlawi had been close enough to Ghulam Ahmad to have carried out the marriage ceremony to his second wife in Delhi. Their previous history together and Maulvi Nazir Husayn's closeness to Mirza Ghulam Ahmad clearly had an impact on the way in which he chose to handle their disagreement. Even as such, writing a *fatwā* of *kufī* against a religious rival was not altogether uncommon in the subcontinent during this period of Islamic history. And it certainly did not carry the weight that a *fatwā* of *kufī* could carry in a different context or even today. As might be expected, Maulvi Nazir Husayn's other students from the Ahl-i Hadith took an equally offensive approach to Ghulam Ahmad's theology.

Maulvi Muhammad Husayn Batalwi was another student of Maulvi Nazir Husayn Dehlawi and one of the more commonly quoted antagonists in early Ahmadi literature. He was a long time class fellow and childhood friend of Mirza Ghulam Ahmad. Once again, it is not unreasonable to presume that the closeness between

¹²⁷ See chapter 1, section 1.2 above. Mirza Ghulam Ahmad expounded some of his more controversial views regarding the death of Jesus in *Tawzīh-i Marām*, namely that Jesus Christ is not alive in heaven and will not physically return to Earth in the same corporeal flesh as the orthodox believe.

Muhammad Husayn Batalwi and Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, in addition to the tension between Ghulam Ahmad and Batalwi's principal teacher, Maulvi Nazir Husayn Dehlawi, affected the severity of Batalwi's response to Mirza Ghulam Ahmad. Similarly, amongst Ghulam Ahmad's other enthusiastic adversaries were Sana'ullah Amritsari and the sons of Shaykh 'Abdullah Ghaznavi, both of whom had also been trained by the Ahl-i Hadith master, Maulvi Nazir Husayn.¹²⁸ We saw how this tension between Ghulam Ahmad and the sons of 'Abdullah Ghaznavi periodically led to *mubāhala* (prayer duel) challenges between the supporters of both camps, but most notably with Ghaznavi's two sons, 'Abd al-Jabbar Ghaznavi and 'Abd al-Haq Ghaznavi.¹²⁹ In the case of the Ghaznavis, their negativity towards Ghulam Ahmad may have been exacerbated by the fact that his theological offences were most likely perceived as having tarnished the reputations of not only their Ahl-i Hadith teacher, Maulvi Nazir Husayn, but also their father. The bitterness expressed by the Ghaznavi brothers was more than the mere result of a theological disagreement. Their close association with Mirza Ghulam Ahmad was a poor reflection on themselves, their teacher of Islam, and their father. Their outspoken responses were neurotically overstated in an attempt at salvaging the sanctity of their own reputations and distancing themselves from Ghulam Ahmad, who would have been seen as the renegade student of both their teacher and their father. Rather than softening their response, Mirza Ghulam Ahmad's close personal connections and relationships made things worse. The alienation from his former teachers and mentors exaggerated the adverse reaction to his theological outlook. Furthermore, the adversity from this

¹²⁸ Barbara Daly Metcalf, *Islamic Revival in British India: Deoband, 1860-1900* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1982), p. 292.

¹²⁹ See chapter 1, section 1.2 above.

opposition did not end with these individuals, but rather intensified through the successive generations when the personal rivalries entered the religious and political mainstream.

It is evident that the politicization of the anti-Ahmadi movement was in many ways a direct reaction to the politicization of Jama'at-i Ahmadiyya itself by the second *khalīfa*, Mirza Mahmud Ahmad, during the Kashmir crisis. In relation to Ahmadi persecution however, it was really the Majlis-i Ahrar who historically turned the anti-Ahmadi stance into a communal priority for South Asian Muslims. The natural next step would be to look at the founders of the Ahrar, their personal and religious affiliations, and their potential motivations for placing such an extraordinary emphasis on maligning what was then a rather obscure messianic movement of rural Punjab. The most dedicated members of the Ahrari leadership were 'Ataullah Shah Bukhari, Mazhar 'Ali Azhar, and Maulana Sayyid Muhammad Da'ud Ghaznavi. Maulana Da'ud Ghaznavi was the eldest son of 'Abd al-Jabbar Ghaznavi, who was the eldest son of Shaykh 'Abdullah Ghaznavi.¹³⁰ It is clear that Shaykh 'Abdullah Ghaznavi's relationship with Mirza Ghulam Ahmad was that of his mentor and potentially even his *murshid*. The relationship was close enough that 'Abdullah Ghaznavi married his son, 'Abd al-Wahid Ghaznavi, to Imama, the daughter of Ghulam Ahmad's closest companion and first *khalīfa* Nur al-Din, before Ghulam Ahmad had made any of his controversial claims. Although 'Abd al-Wahid Ghaznavi

¹³⁰ Muhammad Dā'ūd Ghaznavī, *Maqālāt Maulānā Muhammad Dā'ūd Ghaznavī* (Lahore: Maktaba Naziriyya, 1979), p. 19. This account describes Da'ud Ghaznavi as the *sache jā nishīn* (true successor) of his father 'Abd al-Jabbar Ghaznavi, which is a peculiar way of describing their relationship in that it may imply that 'Abd al-Jabbar had a false *jā nishīn* (successor).

remained opposed to Ghulam Ahmad despite his marriage,¹³¹ at least one of the couple's four children, Muhammad Isma'il Ghaznavi, was raised as an Ahmadi.¹³² This explains Mirza Mahmud Ahmad's rationale in sending Isma'il Ghaznavi on behalf of the All-India Kashmir Committee to negotiate with his uncle, Da'ud Ghaznavi, who represented Majlis-i Ahrar.¹³³ Although Da'ud Ghaznavi was himself born in Amritsar, he too had spent some time studying in Delhi under Maulvi Nazir Husayn.¹³⁴

The personal connection of the dominant spokesperson for Majlis-i Ahrar, 'Ataullah Shah Bukhari, to Mirza Ghulam Ahmad was slightly different from the other rivals above, however, it is nonetheless revealing. 'Ataullah Shah Bukhari was born in 1891 in Patna, Bihar but made his way to the Punjab to pursue Islamic studies. Bukhari went to the Golra district where he studied under the famous Chishti master Pir Mehr 'Ali Shah, whose shrine still stands at Golra Sharif between present day Islamabad and Rawalpindi. In 1915 'Ataullah Shah Bukhari formalized his affiliation with Pir Mehr 'Ali Shah by taking his *bay'at* and becoming his spiritual disciple (*murīd*).¹³⁵ Pir Mehr 'Ali Shah Golrawi and Mirza Ghulam Ahmad had a number of exchanges from 1899 to 1902.¹³⁶ Aside from the smaller pamphlets, posters, and notices, Pir Mehr 'Ali Shah had written two books, *Shams al-Hidāya* and

¹³¹ Similar to his brothers, 'Abd al-Wahid Ghaznavi had also been challenged to a *mubāhala* (prayer duel) by Mirza Ghulam Ahmad. See Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, *Anjām-i Ātham*, in *Rūhānī Khazā'in*, Vol. 11, p. 70.

¹³² See 'Abd al-Qādir, *Hayāt-i Nūr* (Qadian: Nizārat Nashr-o-lshā'at Qadian, 2003), p. 79; this was confirmed by Jānbāz Mirzā in his *Kārvān-i Ahrār*, Vol. 1, p. 319.

¹³³ See chapter 4, section 4.4 above.

¹³⁴ Jānbāz Mirzā, *Kārvān-i Ahrār*, Vol. 1, p. 143.

¹³⁵ Jānbāz Mirzā, *Hayāt-i Amūr-i Sharī'at* (Lahore: Maktabah-i Tabassira, 1970), p. 37.

¹³⁶ There are a number of leaflets pertaining to Pir Mehr 'Ali Shah Golrawi under various headings in Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, *Majmū'a-i Ishtihārāt*, Vol. 3, pp. 325-341, 346-355.

Sayf-i Chishtiyā'ī, in direct response to Ghulam Ahmad and his theological claims.¹³⁷ Mirza Ghulam Ahmad's written contribution included *Tohfa Golrawiyya*, *Arba'īn*, and *I'jāz al-Masīh*.¹³⁸ Despite the numerous attempts at holding a public debate from both camps, an oral discourse never took place. On one occasion in 1900, when threats and insults were mounting on both sides, a frustrated Pir Mehr 'Ali Shah made his way to Lahore in response to one of Ghulam Ahmad's challenges. However, the dramatic display resulted in an anticlimactic ending when Ghulam Ahmad failed to appear.¹³⁹ This shared history between Pir Mehr 'Ali Shah Golrawi and Mirza Ghulam Ahmad puts 'Ataullah Shah Bukhari's heightened animosity towards Jama'at-i Ahmadiyya into a more appropriate context.¹⁴⁰ Once again, it is not as surprising in this new context that the dispute between Pir Mehr 'Ali Shah and Mirza Ghulam Ahmad carried on into the next generation between 'Ataullah Shah Bukhari and Mirza Mahmud Ahmad.¹⁴¹

Although I was unable to find biographical information for the final Ahrari spokesperson, Mazhar 'Ali Azhar, it is well known that Mazhar 'Ali Azhar was born and raised in Batala, which is the closest neighbouring town to Qadian and home to the other Ahl-i Hadith rival, Muhammad Husayn Batalwi. This may or may not have been a significant factor in Mazhar 'Ali Azhar's theological outlook.

¹³⁷ See Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, *Haqīqat al-Wahy* in *Rūhānī Khazā'in*, Vol. 22, p. 356.

¹³⁸ All of these are available in *Rūhānī Khazā'in*, Vol. 17-18.

¹³⁹ A. R. Dard, *Life of Ahmad* (Lahore: Tabshir, 1948), pp. 592-593.

¹⁴⁰ In addition to the direct rivalry with Pir Mehr 'Ali Shah, Ghulam Ahmad had also challenged Mian Allah Bakhsh Sangari, the *sajjāda nishīn* of Sulayman Taunswi, to *mubāhala*. Sulayman Taunswi was the teacher of Shams al-Din Siyalwi, who also taught Pir Mehr 'Ali Shah. This is not likely to have improved their relations. For the *mubāhala* challenge, see Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, *Anjām-i Ātham*, in *Rūhānī Khazā'in*, Vol. 11, p. 71.

¹⁴¹ In his letter to me on (7 March 2006) Dost Muhammad Shahid listed the name of a Chishti scholar, Hazrat Imam al-Din Gujrati (possibly from a place called Goliki?), who took *bay'at* with Mirza Ghulam Ahmad. Interestingly, prior to his *bay'at* with Ghulam Ahmad, Imam al-Din Gujrati was a *murīd* of the Chishti Shaykh Shams al-Din Siyālwi, who was the also the *murshid* and teacher of Pir Mehr 'Ali Shah Golrawi.

Maulvi Zafar ‘Ali Khan was another outspoken opponent of Jama‘at-i Ahmadiyya who is best known for his role as the editor of the *Zamīndār*. Although Zafar ‘Ali Khan had attended the foundational meeting of the Majis-i Ahrar, his allegiance to the group wavered erratically.¹⁴² His views expressed against the Jama‘at through the editorials of the *Zamīndār*, however, were far more consistent.¹⁴³ Zafar ‘Ali Khan inherited the *Zamīndār* from his father, Maulvi Siraj al-Din, who founded the newspaper and edited it before him. Siraj al-Din had known Mirza Ghulam Ahmad from his early days as a reader in the Sialkot court during the early 1860s. Although the nature of their relationship is unclear, I have found nothing to suggest that they were particularly close. However, Maulvi Siraj al-Din paid Ghulam Ahmad a personal visit at his home in Qadian in 1877. It is likely that their relationship was more of a businesslike nature later on in their lives when Siraj al-Din was in a position to assist and advise Ghulam Ahmad regarding his publications, which he appears to have done a number of occasions. When Ghulam Ahmad passed away, Maulvi Siraj al-Din published a dignified obituary of him in the *Zamīndār*, which is still frequently quoted by Ahmadi sources today.¹⁴⁴ Even though Maulvi Siraj al-Din never took *bay‘at* with Ghulam Ahmad, it is possible that Zafar ‘Ali Khan found the connection with his father particularly irritating. Similarly, perhaps Zafar ‘Ali Khan thought that any connection with Mirza Ghulam Ahmad would have tainted his father’s reputation. For whatever reason, Zafar ‘Ali Khan persistently

¹⁴² Jānbāz Mirzā, *Kārvān-i Ahrār*, Vol. 1, p. 83.

¹⁴³ See Zafar ‘Ali Khan’s anti-Ahmadi poetry in the section called ‘*Qādiyānī Khurāfāt*’ (Qadiani Nonsense), in his *Bahāristān* (Lahore: Urdu Academy Punjab, 1937), pp. 543-578.

¹⁴⁴ Maulana Muhammad Ali, *The Founder of the Ahmadiyya Movement*, 3rd ed. (Wembley: Ahmadiyya Anjuman Lahore Publications, U.K., 2008), pp. 11, 104-105; the original obituary, which I have not been able to access is from: *Zamīndār* (8 June 1908).

publicized anti-Ahmadi sentiment through the pages of the *Zamīndār*, which was often during some of the more turbulent periods of Jama‘at-i Ahmadiyya’s political history. In this matter, he was succeeded by his son, Akhtar ‘Ali Khan, who took over the editorship of the *Zamīndār* after his father. Similarly, Akhtar ‘Ali Khan’s role in politicizing anti-Ahmadi sentiment was well documented in the by the Pakistani government following the 1953 disturbances.¹⁴⁵

We now turn our attention to Jama‘at-i Islami. We have seen above how Sayyid Abu’l-A‘la Mawdudi played a significant role in the spread of anti-Ahmadi activism, most often under the banner of his own Jama‘at-i Islami. Even though Jama‘at-i Islami’s opposition to Jama‘at-i Ahmadiyya was far less sensational than the grandiose theatrics of the Ahrar’s political strategies, it was nonetheless meaningful. Mawdudi descended from a long line of Chishti *pīrs*, and even though his father, Sayyid Ahmad Hasan, was eventually authenticated into the mystical lineage himself, it was Mawdudi’s grandfather who was a well-known and respected personality in the twilight years of the Mughal court.¹⁴⁶ But, it is not well known that Mirza Ghulam Ahmad once challenged Mawdudi’s grandfather, Sayyid Husayn Shah Mawdudi of Delhi, to a *mubāhala*.¹⁴⁷ The details of the interactions between Sayyid Husayn Shah Mawdudi and Mirza Ghulam Ahmad are not known, but the *mubāhala* challenge indicates a certain level of aggression between the two of them. It is also worthwhile to note that Sayyid Husayn Shah was affiliated with the Chishti order. It

¹⁴⁵ See Government of Punjab, *The Munir Report*, for numerous accounts of the role of Akhtar ‘Ali Khan and the *Zamīndār* during the disturbances.

¹⁴⁶ Seyyed Vali Reza Nasr, *Mawdudi and the Making of Islamic Revivalism*, p. 10. For a more thorough account of Mawdudi’s father and his childhood, see also Seyyed Vali Reza Nasr, ‘Mawlāna Mawdūdī’s Autobiography,’ *The Muslim World*, Vol. 85, No. 1-2, (January-April 1995), pp. 53-56.

¹⁴⁷ Sayyid Husayn Shah Sahib Mawdudi’s name is listed in the section of *sajjāda nishāns* who Ghulam Ahmad challenged to *mubāhala*. See Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, *Anjām-i Ātham*, in *Rūhānī Khazā’in*, Vol. 11, p. 71.

is certainly possible that many of these Chishti *sajjāda nishāns* and *pīrs* simply united against Ghulam Ahmad in an exhibition of fraternal solidarity. We see from Ghulam Ahmad's own account that he issued the *mubāhala* challenges in reaction to those scholars who publicly renounced his views as heretical deceptions.¹⁴⁸ Interestingly, some of the scholars on the list appear to have resolved their differences with Ghulam Ahmad at a later date.¹⁴⁹ However, it is not surprising that Mawdudi rigidly maintained a stern attitude towards Jama'at-i Ahmadiyya considering his grandfather's difficulties with Ghulam Ahmad in the past.

The final grouping of scholars with an overt affiliation to Mirza Ghulam Ahmad and an active anti-Ahmadi agenda seems to be centred around Dar al-'Ulum, Deoband. The Dar al-'Ulum connection is unique in comparison to the other connections discussed above, because the others largely represent individuals and their spiritual disciples, whereas Dar al-'Ulum represents an institution with entire generations of the subcontinent's Muslim scholars who followed their path and religious methodology. Ghulam Ahmad experienced hostility from Maulvi Rashid Ahmad Gangohi, Muhammad Qasim Nanautwi, and their mutual *murshid* and teacher of Sufism, Hajji 'Imadullah Makki. All three scholars played an instrumental role in the founding of Dar al-'Ulum, Deoband.¹⁵⁰ Rashid Ahmad Gangohi was another one of the scholars Mirza Ghulam Ahmad had challenged to *mubāhala*,¹⁵¹ but again the

¹⁴⁸ Ibid., p. 69.

¹⁴⁹ In the *sajjāda nishān* section, Ghulam Ahmad listed the name of 'Mian Ghulam Farid Sahib Chishti from Chācharān district Bahawalpur' whose relationship with Ghulam Ahmad is worthy of further discussion. Although these two may have experienced some tension, they appear to have resolved their differences at a later date. See, Ibid., p. 71.

¹⁵⁰ For a biographical account of the three scholars that describes their relations, see Barbara Daly Metcalf, *Islamic Revival in British India: Deoband, 1860-1900*, pp. 75-80.

¹⁵¹ Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, *Anjām-i Ātham*, in *Rūhānī Khazā'in*, Vol. 11, p. 69.

challenge was never fulfilled.¹⁵² Ghulam Ahmad's tension with the founders of the Deobandi school and tradition filtered down through the successive generations of scholars as well.¹⁵³ We saw above how the pamphlet written by the Deobandi scholar Shabbir Ahmad 'Usmani played a pivotal role in justifying the stoning of Ahmadis in Afghanistan in the 1920s.¹⁵⁴ We also saw how Ahrari leaders later republished the pamphlet to publicize anti-Ahmadi sentiment in India and later in Pakistan. Shabbir Ahmad 'Usmani's involvement with Jama'at-i Ahmadiyya climaxed in 1948 at Muhammad 'Ali Jinnah's funeral when Zafrulla Khan refused to pray behind the Deobandi scholar.¹⁵⁵

Following the partition, Shabbir Ahmad 'Usmani, along with some of his more eminent colleagues, established Dar al-'Ulum, Karachi. One of the prominent scholars involved in this establishment of Dar al-'Ulum Karachi was a former student of Shabbir Ahmad 'Usmani named Muhammad Shafi ('Usmani) who since then has been renowned for his dedicated service as the Grand Mufti of Pakistan. Mufti Muhammad Shafi had a significant role in the aftermath of the 1953 riots when Pakistan's Muslim leaders were struggling to declare Ahmadis as a non-Muslim minority.¹⁵⁶ His political and religious influence remained quite strong through the time of his demise in 1976 and certainly laid the groundwork for the National

¹⁵² Ghulam Ahmad did write a lengthy response to Maulvi Rashid Ahmad Gangohi regarding his objections to Ghulam Ahmad's claims concerning the coming of the *mahdī* and the *masīh* in his supplement (*zamīma*) to part five of *Barāhīn-i Ahmadiyya*. See Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, *Barāhīn-i Ahmadiyya*, (Part V), in *Rūhānī Khazā'in*, Vol. 1, pp. 371-410.

¹⁵³ Dost Muhammad Shahid expressed these ideas to me during my visit to Rabwah in March, 2006. I also have personal correspondence with him (7 March 2006) in which he included the name of Maulvi Ashraf 'Ali Thanwi with Rashid Ahmad Gangohi, Muhammad Qasim Nanautwi, and Hajji 'Imdadullah Makki as opponents of Jama'at-i Ahmadiyya.

¹⁵⁴ See section 5.4 above.

¹⁵⁵ Ibid.

¹⁵⁶ Government of Punjab, *The Munir Report*, pp. 77-78, 133, 136.

Assembly's 1974 decision.¹⁵⁷ However, Mufti Muhammad Shafi's activities had declined by the 1970s by which point his mantle had been passed to his son and Pakistan's next great Deobandi Mufti, Mufti Muhammad Taqi 'Usmani. Mufti Taqi 'Usmani had a more active role in the constitutional changes of 1974 than his father.¹⁵⁸ Similarly for Jama'at-i Ahmadiyya, the passage of time meant that in 1974 it was no longer Mirza Ghulam Ahmad or his son, Mirza Mahmud Ahmad, but rather Ghulam Ahmad's grandson, Mirza Nasir Ahmad, who was left to counter the government offensive. At present, Mufti Taqi 'Usmani remains one of Pakistan's leading jurists with an esteemed and active role in society that has extended into his retirement.

¹⁵⁷ See Muhammad Anwar Shah Kashmiri, *al-Tasrīh bi mā Tavātar fī Nuḥūl al-Masīh* (Aleppo: Maktab al-Matbū'āt al-Islāmiyya, 1965), in which Mufti Muhammad Shafi apparently wrote a lengthy refutation of Jama'at-i Ahmadiyya's beliefs regarding the death of Jesus. Unfortunately, I did not have access to the original source.

¹⁵⁸ See Muhammad Taqi Usmani and Maulana Samiullaḥq, *Qadianism on Trial: The Case of the Muslim Ummah against Qadianis presented before the National Assembly of Pakistan* (Karachi: Idaratul-Ma'arif, 2006).

Conclusion

We see that the politicization of Ahmadi persecution has been far from the inevitable consequence of maintaining questionable theology. Remarkably over the past century a very limited group of people have been promoting Ahmadi and anti-Ahmadi interests throughout the subcontinent and throughout the world. The politicization of Ahmadi persecution has turned into somewhat of a neo-tribal conflict with affiliations that have extended back through multiple generations. The allegiances that had been drawn towards the end of British colonial rule have been passed down from father to son or teacher to student since the 19th century and now into the 21st century conflict of today. Each camp has maintained their links and ensured the transmission of these loyalties in uncorrupted chains that can be traced back to the time of Mirza Ghulam Ahmad himself.

In addition to the various chains and lineages discussed above, there appears to be an even larger pattern emerging between the instigators of the anti-Ahmadi conflict. Virtually all of Mirza Ghulam Ahmad's rivals appear to have maintained some connection to the Chishti order at some point in their lives. Although I have found no evidence to support a working hypothesis in these regards, it is an observation that should be duly noted. I can only speculate that this may have its origins in the dubious relationship between Ghulam Ahmad and Shaykh 'Abdullah Ghaznavi.

Once again, we cannot use these lineages to offer any satisfactory explanations of the anti-Ahmadi conflict. What the above affiliations do not show is

why some people hate Ahmadis. The affiliations only show a potential reason for why some groups and some community leaders may have been exceedingly passionate about the issue. In fact, it is not the persecution itself that resulted from and was maintained through these affiliations, but the politicization of the persecution. The politicization of Ahmadi persecution was in part a direct result of the persistent efforts of a specific group of Muslims who repeatedly prioritized the issue for the *umma*. Otherwise, there is no longer any substantial reason to suggest that Jama'at-i Ahmadiyya should retain any significant influence in South Asian politics. But the publicity of the Jama'at and the politicization of the persecution continues to be at the forefront of discussions of religious corruption, deviant Islam, or Islamic authenticity and Muslim purification in South Asia today.

Since the 1980s the Ahmadi identity has shifted even further from its original position and has moulded itself around the outsider's imposed identity which has been defined by the Pakistani Constitution. The increasing population of asylum seekers in Britain and North America have sufficiently reinforced an identity based on victimization, such that a problem has arisen from significant numbers of deceitful non-Ahmadis who take advantage of this perception to claim asylum and acquire western immigration. Jama'at-i Ahmadiyya continues to present itself in a way that highlights victimization and emphasizes persecution, as the persecution itself and the threat of persecution is indeed a very serious and imminent reality in rural Pakistan today. However, the notion of Ahmadi persecution as a political tool is still something that corresponds more with the political reality of a Muslim politics that emerged out of the Islamic State seeking to define a clear boundary between authentic

and inauthentic Islam. Furthermore, it is a result of what is entailed by the politicization of the Ahmadiyya debate that has had an even greater affect on Ahmadi self-perception and self-identification by widening the gap with non-Ahmadi Islam under the threat of violence. From the outside, politicians blame Ahmadis for social disparity and scapegoat Jama'at-i Ahmadiyya on a public platform for political gains. Correspondingly, the Ahmadi hierarchy portrays non-Ahmadi Muslims as malicious fundamentalists who are intolerably insistent on stamping out Jama'at-i Ahmadiyya from the *umma* by any means necessary. In recent years, the persecution of Ahmadis has spread most notably to Bangladesh and Indonesia, where political factions exploit the volatile nature of the sentiment surrounding the Ahmadi issue to win political favour.¹

Unfortunately, it is most often the Ahmadis from underprivileged backgrounds who suffer the most abuse. Perhaps nothing can adequately justify the violence, discrimination, and harassment expressed towards Jama'at-i Ahmadiyya or any other persecuted religious organization. Simultaneously, it is rather misleading to conclude that the current political situation, including the role of Ahmadi persecution, spontaneously developed as the inevitable response to Mirza Ghulam Ahmad's controversial claims. We have seen above how the justifications for Ahmadi persecution vary from time to time, from explanations based solely on jihad to explanations based solely on *khatm al-nubuwwa*. Despite what many anti-Ahmadi

¹ Anti-Ahmadi rioting and demonstrations intensified in Bangladesh following a government ban on the publication of Ahmadi literature in January 2004. See http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/south_asia/3985785.stm (May 2009). Similarly, anti-Ahmadi demonstrations in Indonesia intensified in 2008. See <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/asia-pacific/7370650.stm> (May 2009). For an Ahmadi website with general information and current incidents of Ahmadi persecution, see www.thepersecution.org (May 2009).

propagandists suggest, Ahmadis in no way bring such mindless persecution upon themselves; however, the persecution is undoubtedly an indirect result of the very issues that the Ahmadi hierarchy diligently publicized over the course of the past century. We have seen how Jama'at-i Ahmadiyya has exerted great efforts to ensure the publicity of a distinctly Ahmadi Islam. We have also seen how the Ahmadi hierarchy consistently initiated and sustained virulent campaigns that vigorously propagated and hence politicized Ahmadi social involvement throughout the world, whether through their efforts in the way of humanitarian relief, their endeavours to alleviate social duress, or even in some cases their attempts at political and military mobilization.

The resulting politicized view of Ahmadi Islam, which has been adopted by both Ahmadis and non-Ahmadis, developed as a consequence of their mutual interactions and interplay, which facilitated a polemic perception of Ahmadis and created the alienation required for an environment conducive to religious persecution. In these regards, it still may be possible for Ahmadis themselves to help reduce their own alienation through individual interactions and organizational participation in social and religious affairs with non-Ahmadi Muslims, which eventually may help to reduce the persecution of many innocent people. Otherwise, if the alienation intensifies and the gap with non-Ahmadi Muslims continues to widen, Jama'at-i Ahmadiyya may soon choose to dissociate itself from Islam altogether and form an altogether separate Ahmadi identity.

There are a number of findings that have emerged from this study which have been uniquely arranged to support this conclusion. We saw in the first chapter how

the relationships between Mirza Ghulam Ahmad's family and the Imperial British were consistent with the political attitude that Ghulam Ahmad expressed throughout his career, which likewise contributed towards the development of his religious ideology. Although his formal studies were limited to language acquisition, Ghulam Ahmad continued his religious education and training with specialist teachers whose influence has been understated in the traditional biographical accounts. This enabled Ghulam Ahmad to develop a number of relationships with mentors like Shaykh 'Abdullah Ghaznavi, who himself claimed to receive divine revelation, and *pīr* Mahbub 'Alam, who was a celebrated Sufi master of the Naqshbandi order. Additionally, the Ahl-i Hadith influence on Ghulam Ahmad's thought from individuals like 'Abdullah Ghaznavi, Muhammad Husayn Batalwi, and Maulvi Nazir Husayn Dehlawi is clear in Jama'at-i Ahmadiyya's rejection of strict adherence to the legalist schools of thought (*taqlīd* of a *madhhab*) and their unsubstantiated and often arbitrary approach to *fiqh*.

These influences were elaborated in the second chapter when we examined the depth of Mirza Ghulam Ahmad's claims of being a prophet. Although the influence of medieval Sufi thought has been connected with Ghulam Ahmad's spiritual claims in the past,² we expanded these claims beyond the mere use of Sufi terminology and showed how some of these ideas were used to accommodate the development of an inherently Ahmadi version of Islam. This included the expansion of Ghulam Ahmad's explanation of Jesus' survival from crucifixion and his subsequent journey with his mother Mary to his final resting place in Kashmir. Ghulam Ahmad exerted considerable effort to prove the natural death of Jesus in

² See Yohanan Friedmann, *Prophecy Continuous*, especially chapters 2-3.

order to substantiate his own claim of being the second messiah. In contrast to this, he claimed that he acquired prophethood through his flawless display of the perfections of the Prophet Muhammad and his perfect imitation of the Prophet's example and character.

Our analysis further showed that when expressing his claims, Ghulam Ahmad blurred the meanings and the connotations of the terminology of *wilāya* (sainthood) with the terminology of *mubuwwa* (prophethood) in order to sustain an indefinite ambiguity surrounding his revelations which corresponded to his extraordinary self-image. Since these ideas previously had not been expanded in this way, we were able to show how they entailed particular consequences that were apparently contradictory and arguably outside the Islamic tradition, such as the implications of Ghulam Ahmad's spiritual rank and its dependence on the prophets Jesus and Muhammad. Although in his own explanations, Ghulam Ahmad consistently used descriptive terminology to further qualify his spiritual rank and place limitations on his prophetic status, the confusion surrounding his claims led many Ahmadis to indoctrinate a literalist interpretation of his claims and to draw on his charisma in order to establish their own religious authority in a way that he apparently did not intend.

The consequences of these interpretations by members of Jama'at-i Ahmadiyya resulted in a power struggle within the community following Ghulam Ahmad's death, which was discussed in chapter three. This study has shown how the ambiguity regarding Ghulam Ahmad's prophetic status gave way to the ambiguity regarding the status of the people who rejected his claims and raised theological questions regarding *takfir* (calling someone a nonbeliever). The Qadiani branch

removed all of the qualifying terminology that accompanied Ghulam Ahmad's prophetic claims and adopted a strictly literalist interpretation of his prophethood. This was combined with the sentiment and the revelations that were expressed in Ghulam Ahmad's final will (*al-Wasiyyat*) and used to establish the institution of *khilāfat-i Ahmadiyya*.

The Lahori branch abandoned the members in Qadian and renounced their literalist interpretations of Ghulam Ahmad's mission by apologetically arguing that his repeated claims of prophethood were purely metaphorical. As the Lahoris desperately tried to realign themselves with the members of the Sunni orthodoxy, the Qadianis institutionalized their literalist interpretations of Ghulam Ahmad's teachings and attempted to formalize their perspectives on his Islamic vision. This entailed a significant departure from Ghulam Ahmad's original conditions of *bay'at*, which were effectively replaced by an allegiance to the resulting institution of *khilāfat-i Ahmadiyya*. This study showed how the bureaucratization of Ghulam Ahmad's charisma introduced a rigid hierarchical structure with an overt chain of authority that extended from God Himself to the most menial Ahmadi disciple.

The changes in the ideological interpretations of Ghulam Ahmad's message led to changes in the community's administration and then to changes in Ahmadi religious practices. This study has shown how Mirza Mahmud Ahmad's insistence on the authenticity of his father's prophethood led to the sociological isolation of his community, when he virtually forbade intermarriage with other (non-Ahmadi) Muslims. The marriage restrictions facilitated a new identity for the children of Ahmadi parents, by further isolating Ahmadi families and treating newborns as if

they were born into a new religion, Ahmadiyyat. This was a sharp contrast from other Muslim children whose parents may have maintained some type of formal allegiance (*bay'at*) with a particular spiritual teacher or openly professed their affiliation with a particular Sufi order, but still prioritized their Islamic identity. This permitted other sociological changes to take place in Ahmadi ritual practice, such as the separation of Ahmadis from other Muslims in the congregational prayer. Now, the absence of Ahmadis from non-Ahmadi mosques was being felt five times a day. This absence of Ahmadis from Islamic prayer rituals was particularly pronounced during the funeral prayers of fellow Muslims who may well have been friends, colleagues, or neighbours of the Ahmadis in question. Given the cultural context, it is understandable why funerals were regarded as an untimely occasion for Ahmadis to assert their religious identity or to imply their disapproval of non-Ahmadi Imams, which ultimately reduced to the Mirza Mahmud Ahmad's interpretation of his father's prophethood and his divisive stance on *takfir*.

We have also traced the process of how more subtle ritual changes which took more time to develop were introduced into Jama'at-i Ahmadiyya, such as the elaborate financial schemes and the subsequent regulations surrounding the Ahmadi donation system (*chandā*). We discussed how these financial regulations have been used to determine an Ahmadi's standing within the community as well as one's eligibility for participating in the institutional hierarchy. The extraordinary value placed on the Ahmadi donation system (*chandā*) has arguably superseded the zakat in a similar way that the Ahmadi annual conventions (*Jalsa Sālāna*) may soon supersede the ritual hajj. Although the formalization of this process continues to this day, it is

clear that the devaluation of zakat and the devaluation of hajj in Jama‘at-i Ahmadiyya has occurred as a direct result of the organizational hierarchy’s overemphasis and promotion of inherently Ahmadi rituals which are exclusively intended for the members Jama‘at-i Ahmadiyya.

In chapter four we looked at Mirza Mahmud Ahmad’s political involvement in events like the *Rangīlā Rasūl* incident in the late 1920s and the Kashmir crisis in the early 1930s. We saw how Mahmud Ahmad’s dual role as the president of the AIKC and the *khalīfat al-masīh* created a unique platform for Jama‘at-i Ahmadiyya to expand its spiritual mission amongst members of the general public. Mahmud Ahmad devoted considerable time and resources from his Jama‘at towards swaying public sentiment in his favour. His publicity of the events in Kashmir were intended to show the Muslim world how Jama‘at-i Ahmadiyya could solve contemporary political problems. This study has shed light on the details of how Mahmud Ahmad forged a special relationship with Shaykh ‘Abdullah, the *Sher-i Kashmīr*, and generously funded a movement that combined his political ambitions with his spiritual aspirations. This self-promotion campaign was strongly opposed by the Majlis-i Ahrar, who were trying to promote their own religious and political agenda in the subcontinent. However, Mahmud Ahmad’s relations with influential leaders who had some connection with his father, like Maulana Muhammad ‘Ali, Shawkat ‘Ali, Iqbal, and Zafrulla Khan, enabled him to sustain his activities in the region and endure the external criticism from the Ahrar.

Finally, when the partition of India had taken place and Kashmir had acceded to India, Mahmud Ahmad assembled a force of Ahmadi volunteers for deployment as

a militia in Kashmir. This study has detailed how Mahmud Ahmad's actions undermined Ghulam Ahmad's ban on jihad and adequately demonstrated the authority of an Ahmadi *khalīfa* over the Jama'at. The cost of Mahmud Ahmad's continued political involvement in the Kashmir crisis and the prolonged publicity of his efforts in the region was the politicization of Jama'at-i Ahmadiyya. The politicization of the Ahmadi identity made it increasingly difficult to ignore the differences between Ahmadi Islam and the Muslim mainstream and increasingly difficult to defend Mahmud Ahmad's theological positions.

We then turned our attention to the role of Ahmadi persecution in chapter five and saw how a few isolated cases of persecution were used by Jama'at-i Ahmadiyya to create a dichotomy between Ahmadi Islam and the rest of the non-Ahmadi *umma*. Ahmadis focused their missionary efforts in Western Europe and North America following discouraging confrontations with Muslims in the Middle East and Afghanistan. The politicization of Ahmadi Islam, which resulted from the Jama'at's involvement in South Asian politics, led to the politicization of Ahmadi persecution. Interestingly, we have argued that the differences between Ahmadis and non-Ahmadi Muslims were overlooked during the partition, when many community leaders were struggling to bolster the figures of Punjab's Muslim population. Despite Jama'at-i Ahmadiyya's attempts at gaining special recognition, either through the formation of an independent state at Qadian or ironically through the campaign for separate Ahmadi electorates, many Ahmadis were eventually left facing migration to Pakistan from the Indian side of the border. We next saw how the formation of Pakistan brought questions of Islamic authenticity to the forefront of a public discourse on the

status of Ahmadis, which contributed to the riots and the imposition of Martial Law in the Punjab in 1953. In 1974, the National Assembly of Pakistan moved to consider Ahmadis as part of the non-Muslim minority in Pakistan according to constitutional law. Further sanctions were imposed on Ahmadis in 1984, which prompted the migration of Mirza Tahir Ahmad, *khalīfat al-masīh* IV, to London where he continued to publicize the dichotomy between the Ahmadi interpretation and Islam.

Although the justifications for Ahmadi persecution varied from time to time, this study showed how the instigators of anti-Ahmadi sentiment and the promoters of Ahmadi persecution shared similar influential figures in their biographies that were connected to the opponents of Mirza Ghulam Ahmad. Likewise, the Ahmadi hierarchy has remained tightly focused around the immediate descendents of Mirza Ghulam Ahmad and has excommunicated any potential dissenters or internal rivals from the Jama'at. We have suggested that this process has ensured that the promoters of Ahmadiyyat and the antagonists of Ahmadi persecution have remained steadfast in their adherence to their respective ideologies, which has made reconciling the religious differences between Jama'at-i Ahmadiyya and Islam appear daunting.

Although other studies on Jama'at-i Ahmadiyya have discussed the Islamic foundations for certain aspects of Ahmadi theology, or have highlighted the historical context of certain aspects of Jama'at-i Ahmadiyya's political involvement, or have drawn attention to humanitarian concerns regarding certain aspects of Ahmadi persecution, they have not provided a comprehensive assessment of how Ahmadi theology developed from the messianic mission of Mirza Ghulam Ahmad into the controversial community that is persecuted around the Muslim world today. We have

seen through this study how Ahmadi theology emerged out of the context of 19th century South Asia and developed under the influence of 20th century circumstances into the movement of today.

Considering Mirza Ghulam Ahmad's divine authority, the Jama'at's emphasis on blind obedience to an infallible charismatic *khalīfa*, and the doctrine of *takfīr*, the theological foundations for a separate identity are already in place. Furthermore, Jama'at-i Ahmadiyya's social isolation from other Muslims, which includes the hierarchy's discouraging attitude towards intermarriage and their emphasis on separate congregations for ritual prayer, indicates that the possibility of a new religious identity may soon become a reality.

In recent years Jama'at-i Ahmadiyya has gone to great lengths to raise international awareness of the situation by attempting to rally western support against the countries and regimes that condone the persecution of Ahmadis. Although this may be an appropriate first step in ending Ahmadi persecution, unfortunately it may not be enough, especially if the Jama'at itself consciously continues choosing to isolate itself from other individuals and organizations in the non-Ahmadi Muslim community simply because their Islam is not Ahmadi-Islam, even when they may not have hostile attitudes towards Ahmadis. Ultimately, it is the role of this politicized persecution of Jama'at-i Ahmadiyya that has played a factor, gradually over the course of the last century, in influencing a continual reassessment of Ahmadi self-identification which has facilitated the development of the Ahmadiyya identity.

Appendix

The Ahmadi Declaration Form

نَحْمَدُكَ يَا نُصَلِّىْ عَلَى رَسُوْلِكَ الْكَرِيْمِ

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِیْمِ

Registration Number: _____

Hadhrat Mirza Masroor Ahmad,
Khalifatul Masih V

Assalamo Alaikum Wa Rahmanullahe Wa Barakatuhoo

I hereby submit my Declaration of Initiation duly completed and signed. Please accept me into the fold of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Jama'at and pray for me.

أَشْهَدُ أَنْ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ وَحْدَهُ لَا شَرِيكَ لَهُ ۚ كَمَا كَانَتْ قَوْلَ رَسُوْلِهِ مُحَمَّدًا عَبْدَهُ وَرَسُوْلَهُ
أَشْهَدُ أَنْ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ وَحْدَهُ لَا شَرِيكَ لَهُ ۚ وَأَشْهَدُ أَنَّ مُحَمَّدًا عَبْدُهُ وَرَسُوْلُهُ
أَشْهَدُ أَنْ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ وَحْدَهُ لَا شَرِيكَ لَهُ ۚ وَأَشْهَدُ أَنَّ مُحَمَّدًا عَبْدُهُ وَرَسُوْلُهُ

*I bear witness that there is none worthy of worship except Allah. He is One and has no partner.
And I bear witness that Muhammad is His Servant and Messenger.*

I enter this day the Ahmadiyya Jama'at in Islam at the hand of MASROOR AHMAD. I have firm faith that Hadhrat Muhammad Rasoolullah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) is *Khataman Nabiyyeen*, the Seal of all the Prophets. I also believe that Hadhrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad (peace be upon him) was the same *Imam Mahdi* and Promised Messiah whose advent was prophesied by Hadhrat Muhammad Rasoolullah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) I promise that:

- I will always try my best to abide by the ten conditions of *Ba'at* (initiation) as prescribed by the Promised Messiah (peace be upon him).
- I will give precedence to my faith over all worldly objects.
- I will always remain loyal to the institution of Khilafat in Ahmadiyyat and will obey you as Khalifatul Masih in everything good that you may require of me, Insha'allah.

أَسْتَغْفِرُ اللّٰهَ رَبِّي مِنْ كُلِّ ذَنْبٍ وَأَتُوبُ إِلَيْهِ
أَسْتَغْفِرُ اللّٰهَ رَبِّي مِنْ كُلِّ ذَنْبٍ وَأَتُوبُ إِلَيْهِ
أَسْتَغْفِرُ اللّٰهَ رَبِّي مِنْ كُلِّ ذَنْبٍ وَأَتُوبُ إِلَيْهِ

I beg pardon from Allah. my Lord, from all my sins and turn to Him.

رَبِّ إِنِّي ظَلَمْتُ نَفْسِي وَاعْتَرَفْتُ بِذُنُوبِي فَأَغْفِرْ لِي ذُنُوبِي فَإِنَّهُ لَا يَغْفِرُ الذُّنُوبَ إِلَّا أَنْتَ

O my Lord, My Allah, I wronged my soul and I confess all my sins; pray forgive me my sins, for there is none else except Thee to forgives. Ameen!

Signature: _____ Date: ____ / ____ / _____

Bibliography

Mirza Ghulam Ahmad's Major Works

The anthology of Mirza Ghulam Ahmad's works has been collected into 23 volumes which are known as *Rūhānī Khazā'in* (Spiritual Treasures) and were most recently published in Rabwah in 1984. Many of the tracts were either unfinished manuscripts or other unpublished works that were only first published after Ghulam Ahmad's death. Many works were known by multiple names and some pages included two or three alternative titles for the same work. Jama'at-i Ahmadiyya later published excerpts from some of the larger works as independent pieces, but *Rūhānī Khazā'in* includes all of Ghulam Ahmad's major works from 1880 to his death in 1908. I have tried to include, wherever possible, the date that each tract was written rather than the date of publication, even though *Rūhānī Khazā'in* itself appears to have been loosely organized in chronological order.

Volume 1:

Barāhīn-i Ahmadiyya (The Proofs of Islam), Vol. 1, (1880)

Barāhīn-i Ahmadiyya, Vol. 2, (1880)

Barāhīn-i Ahmadiyya, Vol. 3, (1882)

Barāhīn-i Ahmadiyya, Vol. 4, (1884)

Volume 2:

Purānī Tahrīreñ (A Collection of Previous Writings: Three Tracts on the Arya), (1879)

Surma Chashm Aryā, (Antimony for Clearing the Obscured Vision of the Arya), (1886)

Shahnah-i Haq (Guardians of the Truth), (1894)

Sabz Ishtihār (Green Pamphlet), (1888)

Volume 3:

Fath-i Islām (Victory of Islam), (1891)
Tawzīh-i Marām (Elucidation of Objectives), (1891)
Izāla-i Awhām (Removal of Suspicions), (1891)

Volume 4:

Al-Haq (Ludhiana) (The Truth), (1891)
Al-Haq (Delhi) (The Truth), (1891)
Āsmanī Fayṣala (Heavenly Decree), (1891)
Nishān-i Āsmānī (Heavenly Sign), (1892)

Volume 5:

Ā'īna-yi Kamālāt-i Islām (Reflections of Islam's Perfections), (1893)

Volume 6:

Barakāt al-Du'ā (The Blessings of Prayer), (1893)
Hujjat al-Islām (The Proof of Islam), (1893)
Sachchā'ī kā Izhār (Appearance of Truth), (1893)
Jang-i Muqaddas (Holy War), (1893)
Shahādat al-Qur'ān (Testimony of the Qur'an), (1893)

Volume 7:

Tohfa Baghdād (A Gift for Baghdad), (1893)
Karāmāt al-Sadiqīn (Miracles of the Righteous), (1893)
Hamāmat al-Bushrā (A Shower of Good News), (1893)

Volume 8:

Nūr al-Haq (Light of Truth), (1894)
Itmām al-Hujjat (Perfection of Proof), (1894)
Sirr al-Khilāfa (The Secret of Succession), (1894)

Volume 9:

Anwār al-Islām (The Lights of Islam), (1894)
Minan al-Rahmān (The Blessings of the Most Merciful), (1895)
Ziyā al-Haq (Light of Truth), (1895)
Nūr al-Qur'ān (Light of the Qur'an), (1895)
Me'yār-i Madhhab (Standard of Religion), (n.d.)

Volume 10:

Āryā Dharam (Arya Customs), (1895)
Satt Bachan (Acknowledging the Truth), (1895)
Islāmī Usūl kī Falāsaḥī (The Philosophy of the Teachings of Islam), (1896)

Volume 11:

Anjām-i Ātham (The End of Atham), (1897)

Volume 12:

Sirāj-i Munīr (Illustrious Lamp), (1897)
Istifā (Taking a Legal Position), (1897)
Hujjatullah (Proof of God), (1897)
Toḥḥa Qaysariyya (A Gift for Caesar), (1897)
Mahmūd kī Āmīn (Upon Mahmud's First Completion of the Qur'an), (1897)

Sirāj al-Din 'Īsā'ī ke Chār Su'āloñ kī Jawāb (Siraj al-Din the Christian's Four Questions Answered), (1897)

Volume 13:

Kitāb al-Bariyya (The Book of Exoneration), (1898)
Al-Balāgh (Eloquence), (1898)
Zarūrat al-Imām (The Need for an Imam), (1898)

Volume 14:

Najm al-Hudā'e (Star of Guidance), (1898)
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Ayyām al-Sulh (The Days of Reconciliation), (1899)
Haqīqat al-Mahdī (The True Nature of the Mahdi), (1899)

Volume 15:

Masīh Hindustān Meñ (Jesus in India), (1899)
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Toḥḥa Ghaznaviyya (A Gift for the Ghaznavis), (1900)
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Government Angrezī awr Jihād (The British Government and Jihad), (1900)

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Volume 18:

I'jāz al-Masīh (Miracles of the Messiah), (1901)

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Nuzūl al-Masīh (The Descent of the Messiah), (1902)

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Sīrat al-Abdāl (Biographies of the Virtuous), (1903)

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Chashm Masīhī (The Christian Perspective), (1906)

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Volume 21:

Barāhīn-i Ahmadiyya, Vol. 5, (The Proofs of Islam), (1905)

Volume 22:

Haqīqat al-Wahy (The Reality of Revelation), (1907)

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