

was a prophet in one sense and a follower in another. He has also written that this combination has a different entity.⁶¹⁶ In other words such a person cannot be a claimant to real prophethood; there is a difference in this position and that of a mere prophet. The Founder has also said:

"It is not at all permissible after Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) to apply the word prophet to any individual unless he is called a follower also, which means that he has received every grace by following the Holy Prophet of Islam and not directly."⁶¹⁷

Thus when the use of the mere word prophet is even not permissible, how could the Founder then, call himself a claimant to prophethood?

Prophet in the real and metaphorical sense

Another term, quite plain and intelligible, which the Founder has used in his writings, from the beginning of his claim to the end of his life, has also been misunderstood. It has been clearly indicated by him that the use of the word prophet in the Hadīth and in his own revelation did not mean real prophethood but was used by way of metaphor and simile. Had he only made a denial of being a real prophet and had not admitted of his being a prophet in the metaphorical sense there might have been some scope for the play of one's fancy; that by real prophethood was meant prophethood with a code in particular. But when the Founder had repeatedly announced that he had used this word by way of metaphor, ascribing of such views to him is extremely unfortunate. The expressions *haqīqī* (real) and *majāzī* (metaphorical) were explained by him before he used them. Anyone who does not accept his explanations may do whatever he likes, but one thing is certain that in spite of his claim of following the Founder he, in fact, goes against him. The Founder's denial of being a 'real prophet' clearly showed that he did not possess that reality (*haqīqat*) which

is found in prophets in the terminology of the *Shari'ah*. What that reality was has already been discussed by me in detail in the beginning of this book.⁶¹⁸ If my point of view is not correct then Mirzā Mahmūd Ahmad must show from the writings of the Founder that the reality of prophethood was found in him in a perfect sense. Otherwise, when the Founder made a denial of being 'real prophet', it has to be perforce admitted that he denied the existence of the 'reality of prophethood' in him in its perfect form. He made it clear, in the booklet published on 3 February, 1892 (which has been quoted before):

"God Almighty knows best, my intention has never been to use the word prophet as meaning a real prophet but only as signifying a *muhaddath*."⁶¹⁹

Anyone in search of truth cannot entertain any doubt about the point that the denial of 'real prophethood' decisively means the existence of such a prophethood which, in other words, is called *muhaddathiyyah* or *wilāyah*.

The Founder did not stop at that. As he made it clear what he meant by the denial of 'real prophethood', similarly, he gave the following explanation of 'prophethood in the metaphorical sense' in reply to the objection of some of his short-sighted opponents (in whose footsteps today some of his 'friends' are treading) who accused him of laying claim to prophethood:

"There is no claim of prophethood but of *muhaddathiyyah* which has been laid under God's command. And what doubt there is that *muhaddathiyyah* also possesses a strong element of prophethood. In which case good visions are a forty-sixth part of prophethood, then if *muhaddathiyyah* which has been stated in the Qur'ān along with prophethood and messengership, for which there is a report in *al-Sahih al-Bukhārī* also, be looked upon as prophethood

metaphorically or be regarded a strong element of prophethood, does this amount to laying claim to prophethood?"⁶²⁰

Here again it has been said that prophethood in the metaphorical sense means nothing but *muhaddath^hiyah*. As against this, it is said that in *Barāhīn Ahmadiyyah*, vol. v, the Founder has given a new interpretation to 'real prophethood' (*haqīqī nubūwwat*) in the following words:

"The answer to this is that all this misfortune has arisen out of deception, for due consideration has not been given to the real meaning of (the word) prophet. The meaning of prophethood is only that he should be the recipient of revelation from God and should be gifted with divine communion and communication. It is not necessary for him to bring a law (*Shari'ah*), nor is it necessary for him not to be a follower of a law-bearer prophet."⁶²¹

Those intelligent people who bring forward this reference in their support do not even think that if it is the definition of a 'real' prophet then every one who is endowed with the gift of revelation, divine communion and communication becomes a prophet, and that too a 'real' one. When it is admitted that *muhaddath^hūn* do receive divine revelation, then should all of them be called real prophets? Unfortunately, this is what is happening to the educated community of Qādiān (now Rabwah) that they throw on the head of their opponents whatever they get hold of and do not even stop to think what the real point is. If such a person is a real prophet, then thousands of such prophets have been raised in Islam before; even according to Mirzā Mahmūd Ahmad thousands of persons in this *ummah* have been endowed with the gift of divine revelation.⁶²²

It must be borne in mind that the Founder has not said here that a real prophet is he who receives divine revelation,

etc. Instead his words are that due consideration has not been given to the real meaning of (the word) prophet. By real meaning he means the real meaning in its literal sense (not in the technical sense) or the meaning which can be given to a word according to its original derivative (*asl ishtiqaq*) which, at another place, has been called the root meaning of the word in Arabic and Hebrew languages.⁶²³ The truth is that it is only the Qur'ān and the Hadīth which can throw light on the reality of prophethood and not the books of lexicon. If there was no lexicon in this world, even then the reality of prophethood would have been known to us as is the case today. If the Qur'ān had not been revealed, then all the dictionaries of the world put together could not have been able to tell us what prophethood in reality was!

Explanation of reality and metaphor by Mirzā Mahmūd Ahmad

The denial of his being a 'real' prophet and admission of being a prophet in the 'metaphorical' sense continuously occurs in all the writings of the Founder, i.e., those of the early, middle and last periods of his life. If I quote references from all his books, this chapter would become lengthy. Readers may consult the "Supplement" of this book where they will find all the references in a chronological order.

The net result of Mirzā Mahmūd Ahmad's efforts to determine the meaning of 'reality' and 'metaphor' after he has pondered over the relevant books on the subject, may be summed up in the following way:

Firstly, by 'real prophet' (*haqīqī nabī*) the Founder, according to Mirzā Mahmūd Ahmad, meant a prophet with a Law (*Shari'ah*).

Secondly, by 'prophet in the metaphorical sense' (*majāzī nabī*), the Founder meant a *majāzī nabi* in accordance with the terminology of the common people.

The original words of Mirzā Mahmūd Ahmad are:

"According to the conception of the reality of prophethood, as explained by the common people lacking knowledge, the word prophet is used in the metaphorical sense for the Promised Messiah. But this would only mean that he was not a prophet according to the terminology of the common people, that is to say, he did not bring a new Law (*Shari'ah*), but this would not mean that he was also not a prophet in the metaphorical sense according to the terminology of the *Shari'ah*."⁶²⁴

It was easy for him to say whatever he liked about the reality of prophethood as explained by the common people lacking knowledge, but he did not fully realize that it was not the 'unlearned common people' who had such a belief about the reality of prophethood, but this was something which was admitted by the Founder himself and many other elders of this *ummah*. Thus his charge of lack of knowledge is directed against the Founder himself who advocated such a view as has been admitted by Mirzā Mahmūd Ahmad on the first page of his book:

"And the Promised Messiah, too, has given this very meaning to real prophethood (*haqīqī nubūwwat*) that the recipient of which is he who brings new Law (*Shari'ah*)."⁶²⁵

Thus the meaning which was given by the common people in sheer 'ignorance' has been proved to be the one offered by the Founder himself in his books. Is there any other way out to exclude the Founder from the wide circle of the common people's ignorance? Granting, for the sake of argument, that he committed an error which was corrected by Mirzā Mahmūd Ahmad, but there is an unsurmountable difficulty that this knowledge to the Founder was given by God. He writes:

"I repeatedly say that the words apostle, messenger and

prophet no doubt occur in my revelations from the Most High God, but they are not applicable in their real sense. And as they are not so applicable, similarly, the name prophet by which the Promised Messiah is called in the reports does not apply in its real sense. This is the knowledge which God has granted me. Let him understand who may!"⁶²⁶

How daring it is that the conception of prophethood which the Founder declared to be based on God's given knowledge was described by Mirzā Mahmūd Ahmad as merely an interpretation of the common unlettered people! What exactly was the intention of Mirzā Mahmūd Ahmad is not clear? But one wrong step led to many others. He wanted to rebuke the opponents but even the Founder could not escape his unsavoury remarks and he declared his writings, prior to 1901, abrogated.⁶²⁷ However, what can one say to the clear statement by the Founder in his book *Haqīqat al-Wahy* where he declared:

"I have been called a prophet by God by way of metaphor and not by way of reality."⁶²⁸

Mirzā Mahmūd Ahmad writes that the Founder was a prophet in the metaphorical sense in the terminology of the ignorant laymen but the Founder says that it is God Who has given him the name prophet by way of metaphor. This means that the Founder's *Haqīqat al-Wahy* should also be considered abrogated! Why stop at this? Why not abrogate all his writings? What is the use of keeping outward pretensions?

And then again how contrary to facts is the assertion that by 'real prophet' (*haqīqī nabī*) the Founder understood a prophet with law. If such was the case, he would not have written in *Sirāj Munīr* that "when a real prophet (*haqīqī nabī*) (e.g. Jesus Christ) appeared after the Qur'ān and the order of prophetic revelation (*wahy-i-nubūwwahī*) was resumed,

then tell me how and in what way prophethood has come to an end?"⁶²⁹

This clearly shows that *haqīqī nabī* (real prophet), according to the Founder, did not mean a prophet with *Shari'ah* but a prophet in whom the reality of prophethood (*haqīqī nubūwwat*) was found, i.e., the reality of prophethood according to *Shari'ah*. Again the Founder has mentioned more than once, that the giving of the name prophet to him was by way of metaphor (*majāz*) and simile (*isti'ārah*). While interpreting the *majāz*, Mirzā Mahmūd Ahmad has passed the verdict of 'lack of knowledge' against the Founder. I wish he had thrown some light on the subject of *isti'ārah* as well. This expression is not only found in the Founder's book *Arba'īn*, enlisted among the abrogated ones but also in *Nuzūl al-Masīh* where it is mentioned that the coming Messiah in the *ummah* of Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) "was called *rasūl* and *nabī* by way of simile (*musta'ār taur pūr*)."⁶³⁰

It is indeed regrettable that, by denying such a plain fact, Mirzā Mahmūd Ahmad has unnecessarily put the Ahmadiyya community on a wrong track.

Perfect and partial prophet

Although it is said that the terms *kāmil* (perfect) and *juz'ī* (partial) prophet were given up after 1901 but here too, due attention has not been paid to the subject. In *Tauḍīh Marām*, after declaring *mubashshirāt* (good news) to be part of prophethood (as mentioned in the authentic *Hadīth*), the Founder has called the *muhaddathīn* — partial prophets and as compared to them, the *nubūwwat* of the real prophets has been called 'perfect and complete prophethood' (*nubūwwat kāmilah tāmmah*).⁶³¹ This, in fact, is another way to express the same meaning. If the same meaning is expressed in another form it would not be fair to say that previous term or its conception has been abandoned. The expression *juz'ī*