

Mirza Masroor Ahmad's *khutba* on the "ever-lasting" Qadiani *khilafat*

Misrepresents Promised Messiah's writings

Worried by his own elder's view that *khilafat* will decline after four *khalifas*

by Dr. Zahid Aziz

Mirza Masroor Ahmad, the *Khalifa* of the Qadian/Rabwah Section of the Ahmadiyya Movement, delivered a Friday *khutba* in London on 27 May 2005 on the topic of their concept of *khilafat*. This is the day every year when they celebrate the establishment of their *khilafat*. The original Urdu text of the *khutba* is published in their weekly Urdu organ *Al-Fazl International* for its issue dated 10 June, available on their website www.alislam.org.

The main thrust of his speech was that their *khilafat* is an institution that will last forever. He informs us at the outset that a specific reason for delivering this *khutba* is that some unknown person in their movement has been circulating an article written some years ago by Mirza Bashir Ahmad, younger brother of the second *khalifa* Mirza Mahmud Ahmad, in which the author argued that the *khilafat* in their Jama'at will not remain in its pure form forever, but will degenerate into a hereditary institution after the first four *khalifas*. Apparently, Mirza Bashir Ahmad drew a parallel with the history of the early *khalifas* of Islam, when after the first four *khalifas*, who were truly worthy of holding this office, the headship deteriorated into a worldly monarchy in which succession was by descent, and not by the true Islamic worth of a person.

As Mirza Masroor Ahmad is the fifth *khalifa* of his movement, he is naturally anxious to dispel any such suggestion about the decay of their *khilafat*. He says that this was a personal view of Mirza Bashir Ahmad, and that Mirza Mahmud Ahmad had, at the time this article was published, issued a clarification that there is no Divine law that a *khilafat* must always suffer the same fate that befell the early Islamic

khilafat after the four righteous *khalifas*. Whatever explanation of the comments of Mirza Bashir Ahmad may be given, the fact remains that a senior-most figure in the Qadian/Rabwah Jama'at believed that their *khilafat* institution would not endure in an uncorrupted form beyond four *khalifas*.

According to Mirza Masroor Ahmad, and also according to the clarification by Mirza Mahmud Ahmad as quoted in this *khutba*, the decline of the early Islamic *khilafat* after four *khalifas* is not a general law but was particular to the circumstances and conditions of that time. Otherwise, true *khilafat* continues to exist as long as the community remains on the right path. Explaining the meaning of the verse 24:55 of the Holy Quran, Mirza Masroor Ahmad declares:

“God’s promise of establishing a *khilafat* is with those people who are strong in faith and are doing good deeds. When believers are setting such a standard, Allah will continue the institution of *khilafat* according to His promises. Through a *khalifa* after the death of a prophet, and through the next *khalifa* after the death of every *khalifa*, the state of fear will be changed into a state of security. We have been witnessing this for the past one hundred years. But the condition is that the people must be worshippers of the One God and must not be involved in *shirk* due to the lure of the attractions of this world. If they are ungrateful, neglectful of worship, and prefer materialistic considerations over the commands of Allah, then due to this disobedience they will be deprived of this blessing.” (pages 5–6, *Al-Fazl International*, 10 June 2005)

Later, after giving examples of the devotion shown towards the institution of *khilafat* by his followers in Africa, Masroor *sahib* says:

“*Inshallah*, these good deeds and this sincerity will always be the basis for the establishment of the *khilafat* in the Ahmadiyya community. ... *Inshallah*, those who do good deeds will always continue to be produced and the institution of *khilafat* shall go on forever. ... It is a misgiving to say that, because there have been four *khalifas* as there were four *khalifas* in the early *khilafat*, therefore this has come to an end, and that Allah had only this much power that after bestowing the blessing of

khilafat for a period three times longer than that of the early righteous *khilafat*, His powers have been exhausted.” (page 7, col. 1)

According to Mirza Masroor Ahmad's interpretation, his present-day community of followers is adhering to such a high standard of religious faith and practice that *khilafat* continues to be bestowed upon them as a reward, but the early Muslims had fallen below the same standard just thirty years after the Holy Prophet Muhammad's death so that Allah withdrew from them the blessings of the institution of *khilafat*. Thirty years after the Holy Prophet's death many of his distinguished companions were still alive, eminent persons such as his wife Aisha were still alive, and the highly-esteemed *tabi'in* (those belonging to the next generation after the companions) were yet reaching their prime. But according to the Qadiani stance, those people were not a good enough Muslim community as compared to today's Qadiani Jama'at and hence they were punished by having the blessing of *khilafat* withdrawn from them, the same blessing which is still with the Qadiani Jama'at and will continue with it forever! In terms of verse 24:55, the Muslim community thirty years after the Holy Prophet had degenerated into a group of ungrateful sinners (*fasiqs*) while today's Qadiani Jama'at has true faith and does good deeds. Nothing could be further from the truth than this patently absurd, false and outrageous claim.

Misrepresentation of the Promised Messiah

Just before the extract quoted above, Mirza Masroor Ahmad puts forward the following statement from the Promised Messiah's book *Shahadat-ul-Quran* to claim that he had written that the *khilafat* in the Ahmadiyya Movement will last forever:

“Now it should be remembered that although there are many verses of this kind in the Holy Quran, giving the glad tidings of an ever-lasting *khilafat* in this *Umma*, and Hadith is full of reports about this as well, for the moment this much will suffice for those who accept proven facts like a great treasure. There could be no worse misgiving about Islam than to consider it to be a dead religion and to believe its blessings to be limited only to the first generation.” (*Ruhani Khaza'in*, v. 6, p. 355).

A reading of the book *Shahadat-ul-Quran* will show that to present the words “an ever-lasting *khilafat* in this *Umma*” as referring to the so-called *khilafat* in the Ahmadiyya Movement after the Promised Messiah is nothing but deceit and distortion. What he is discussing at length in this book is that the *khilafat* of the Holy Prophet Muhammad did not end after the four righteous *khalifas*, as believed by many Muslims, but that it continued throughout the history of Islam in the form of the appearance of *mujaddids* and saints, and that he is one of those *mujaddids* and saints. Leaving aside the rest of the book, if we simply continue the above statement, it reads as follows:

“Does the Book (i.e. the Quran) which opens the door to everlasting blessings teach the disheartening lesson that there is no blessing or *khilafat* to look forward to, but that all has been left behind? **Prophets certainly cannot arise in this *Umma***, but if *khalifas* of the Holy Prophet do not come either, showing the marvels of spiritual life from time to time, then the spirituality of Islam comes to an end. In that case, such a faith can bear no comparison to the spiritual power and glory of the Mosaic religion in which thousands of spiritual *khalifas* continued to arise over a period of fourteen centuries.” (p. 355–356)

He says that because “prophets certainly cannot arise in this *Umma*”, hence in their place *khalifas to the Holy Prophet* have been coming throughout all the centuries of Islam, not just for the first thirty years, and he himself is the *khalifa* of his time. But Mirza Masroor Ahmad says the *opposite*: that the institution of *khilafat* of the Holy Prophet Muhammad was closed after the first thirty years, and it was restarted only after the appearance of the next prophet, namely, Mirza Ghulam Ahmad.

Similarly, only a few lines before the statement quoted by Mirza Masroor Ahmad, the Promised Messiah writes:

“Given that God had explained by use of an analogy that He would raise *khalifas* in this *Umma* in the same manner as He raised *khalifas* after Moses, one should see what course did God follow after the death of Moses: did He send *khalifas* for only thirty years, or did He extend this series for fourteen hundred years? The grace of God upon our Holy Prophet, may

peace and the blessings of God be upon him, was far greater than that which was upon Moses ... how could it be that the series of successors of Moses should be continued for fourteen hundred years, but here the *khilafat* terminate after a mere thirty years?" (p. 354–355)

It is absolutely crystal clear from a reading of *Shahadat-ul-Quran*, without the least doubt whatsoever, that the ever-lasting *khilafat* that the Promised Messiah is writing about is the coming of the *mujaddids* and *auliya* throughout the history of Islam, of which he himself is one, and there is no mention whatsoever in this book that it refers to a *khilafat* to be established after the alleged prophet Mirza Ghulam Ahmad.

Mirza Masroor Ahmad, explaining the meaning of a hadith, says:

“The Holy Prophet Muhammad has declared the institution of *khilafat* after the Promised Messiah to be forever” (p. 6, col. 1).

But the position outlined in the book *Shahadat-ul-Quran* can be expressed as follows:

The Promised Messiah has declared the institution of *khilafat* after the Holy Prophet Muhammad to be forever.

Observe the contrast between these positions.

In this book Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad has discussed at length the *khilafat* verse of the Quran (24:55), the verse ever being repeated by Mirza Masroor Ahmad and his Jama‘at. The explanation given by the Promised Messiah is that in this verse it is promised that just as after Moses God instituted “a long chain of temporal as well as spiritual *khilafat*, by way of reward and favour, which continued for about fourteen hundred years, and ended with Jesus” (p. 322), by analogy the same would happen after the Holy Prophet Muhammad:

“For fourteen hundred years, Moses was granted servants of the law who were messengers of God and His inspired ones; and this series ended with a messenger who invited to the truth, not with the sword, but merely by mercy and good morals.

Therefore, so it was that our Holy Prophet was also granted servants of the law who, in accordance with the hadith ‘The

learned ones among my followers are like the prophets of the Israelites', were Divinely inspired (*mulham*) and recipients of Divine communication (*muhaddas*). And just as in the last era of the Mosaic law was sent Jesus who, not with the sword, but with good morals and mercy invited to the truth, likewise for this law God sent the Promised Messiah so that he too should invite to the right path only by good morals, mercy and heavenly lights. ... thus the dispensation of Muhammad attained complete analogy with the dispensation of Moses.

If it is said that in the Mosaic order those who were raised for the advocacy of the faith were prophets, and Jesus was also a prophet, the reply is that the prophet (*nabi*) and the saint (*muhaddas*) are on a par in terms of being sent (*mursal*). Just as God has called prophets as *mursal*, so has He termed saints as *mursal*. ... As our Master and Messenger, may peace and the blessings of God be upon him, is the *Khatam-ul-anbiya*, and after him no prophet can come, for this reason saints (*muhaddas*) have been substituted for prophets in this religious system. ... it is proved conclusively that the saints (*muhaddas*) of this *Umma*, in terms of their number and the length of their order, are equal to the apostles of the Israelites. In fact, another verse to the same effect is as follows." (p. 323–324)

Then he quotes the *khilafat* verse, 24:55, indicating that this is the explanation of that verse.

The Promised Messiah claims that he himself has come as a *muhaddas* and a *mujaddid* in fulfilment of the promise in the above verse to raise *khalifas* to the Holy Prophet Muhammad:

"Now it has been proved from the Holy Quran that in this blessed *Umma* a system of ever-lasting *khilafat* has been established in the manner and likeness of the one which was established in the dispensation of Moses, and there is merely a verbal difference to the effect that at that time, for the support of the Mosaic religion, there used to arise prophets, but now saints (*muhaddas*) come. This proof implies the acceptance of the proposition that just as in the last days of the Mosaic law a prophet arose named Jesus, ... similarly it is necessary that in

this *Umma* too there should arise a *muhaddas*, in the likeness of that prophet and of his time ...” (p. 356–357)

“Secondly, the perfect and complete likeness between the *khilafat* to the Holy Prophet Muhammad and the successorship to Moses renders imperative the coming of the Promised Messiah, as is understood from the following verse: ‘God has promised to those of you who believe and do good that He will surely make them *khalifas* in the earth as He made those before them to be *khalifa*’ (24:55). This clearly conveys that a *mujaddid* must come bearing the name of the Messiah in the fourteenth century, because the Muhammadi *khilafat* can only attain the most complete and total likeness to the Mosaic successorship if the first and the last respective phases have a high degree of mutual conformity.” (p. 363–364)

Thus it is Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad who was raised as *khalifa* according to the promise in verse 24:55, and not the so-called ‘*khalifas* of the Messiah’ after him.

Qadiani Jama‘at disagrees with beliefs in *Shahadat-ul-Quran*

While Mirza Masroor Ahmad quotes from *Shahadat-ul-Quran*, yet he and his Jama‘at hold totally the opposite beliefs to the beliefs expressed by Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad in this book about his claims. We list these differences below:

1. Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad writes that the Holy Prophet Muhammad being the *Khatam-ul-anbiya* means that no prophet can come after him (p. 323–324), and “prophets certainly cannot arise in this *Umma*” (p. 355). The Qadiani Jama‘at holds that prophets can most certainly arise in this *Umma* despite the Holy Prophet Muhammad being the *Khatam-ul-anbiya*.
2. Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad writes that the *khilafat* of the Holy Prophet Muhammad has **continued** throughout the history of Islam after the righteous *khilafat* of the first thirty years (p. 323). The Qadiani Jama‘at holds that the *khilafat* of the Holy Prophet Muhammad **came to an end** after the righteous *khilafat* of the first thirty years, and was only re-established after Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad in the form of *khilafat* to the Promised Messiah.

3. Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad writes that the Messiah to arise among Muslims should be a saint (*muhaddas*) and reformer (*mujaddid*) of this *Umma*, and not a prophet. The Qadiani Jama'at holds that *muhaddas* and *mujaddid* is not a sufficiently high rank for the Promised Messiah and he must be a prophet.
4. Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad writes that he has come in fulfilment of the *khilafat* verse of the Holy Quran as a *khalifa* of the Holy Prophet. The Qadiani Jama'at holds that he is not a part of the *khilafat* of the Holy Prophet but is himself a prophet who establishes a *khilafat* after him.

If Qadiani *khilafat* is ever-lasting, no prophet can come in future

If the so-called Qadiani *khilafat* is considered by its adherents as ever-lasting, then this contradicts their own vociferous belief that the door of prophethood is open for all time after the Holy Prophet Muhammad. For, if a prophet arose in future his own *khilafat* would be established after him. On the other hand, the same Qadiani Jama'at has been vigorously proclaiming for ninety years that, according to the Quran and Hadith, prophethood continues after the Holy Prophet Muhammad and prophets will always be arising among Muslims. In his book *Anwar-i Khilafat*, published in 1916, Mirza Mahmud Ahmad argued as follows against those who believe in the finality of prophethood:

“Likewise they say that however much a person may advance in virtue and goodness, ... but God will never make him a prophet, never raise him to that dignity. Their thinking thus is due to not assigning to Allah the attributes due to Him; otherwise, to say nothing of one prophet, ***I say there shall be thousands of prophets*** ... They question the prophethood of the Promised Messiah, ***but I say, even now there can be a prophet.***” (p. 62; p. 124 of the online edition; emphasis is ours)

“I ask, Is prophethood a mercy or a curse? If it is a mercy, then why has it come to an end after the Holy Prophet Muhammad? It should have increased all the more after him. He was a prophet of a very great status. Therefore a prophet who comes after him must also be of a great status, not that no one could at all become a prophet.” (p. 64; p. 126 of the online edition)

“Even if someone placed a sword on my neck and told me to say that no prophet can come after the Holy Prophet, I would say to him: you are a liar, a great liar, prophets can come after the Holy Prophet, most certainly they can.” (p. 65; p. 127 of the online edition)

(The online edition of *Anwar-i Khilafat* is on the Qadiani Jama‘at website at the address: <http://www.alislam.org/urdu/au/AU3-5.pdf> . The page numbers for that edition have been indicated above.)

Mirza Masroor Ahmad needs to explain what would happen to the *khilafat* in his Jama‘at if one of these many prophets arose, who can come according to Mirza Mahmud Ahmad.

Does a *khalifa* know beforehand that he will be elected?

Mirza Masroor Ahmad answers an objection of someone who wrote to him saying: “you have become a *khalifa* by a great deal of pre-planning”. Within his reply he also mentions:

“Often outsiders ask me this question. I always give them the reply given by the third *khalifa*. Someone also asked him: Did you know that you would be chosen as *khalifa*? His reply was: Even the thought of that would not occur to any person having any sense.” (page 6, col. 1)

According to Mirza Nasir Ahmad’s reply, even the thought of becoming *khalifa* had not occurred to him. For the interest of our readers, I refer to an article in *Paigham Sulh* by the Lahore Ahmadi missionary Sayyid Akhtar Husain Gilani, published in 1944, some 21 years before Mirza Nasir Ahmad became *khalifa*. It is written in it:

“Mirza Mahmud Ahmad has prepared his son Nasir Ahmad for the *khilafat*. ... Mirza Nasir Ahmad is the president of Khuddam-ul-Ahmadiyya etc. The young are being instructed to render obedience to him, and in every way he is being put forward for the *khilafat* in various ways. It is definite that the *khilafat* will pass down as an inheritance in the family of Mirza Mahmud Ahmad. Its foundation is being laid on concepts such as the ‘promised progeny’, and it is impossible now that a non-related person could become *khalifa*.” (*Paigham Sulh*, 31 May 1944, p. 13)

It appears that it was being publicly discussed for years before Mirza Nasir Ahmad became *khalifa* that he was being prepared for this office, and yet it is claimed that even this thought had never occurred to him!

In connection with whether a “non-related person” would be eligible for becoming *khalifa*, Mirza Masroor Ahmad seems to have given an indication of this in his *khutba*:

“So, instead of being crafty and cunning, you should become righteous and remain engaged in prayer so that this gift of *khilafat* continues among you forever. To preserve this honour, which for the past 97 years has been bestowed upon people of a certain country or upon the family of the Promised Messiah, what is required is prayers and good deeds. Whichever nation excels in sincerity, devotion and piety, will be the one which holds aloft this banner because it is the promise of God with the Promised Messiah that this power is eternal.” (p. 6–7).

Mirza Masroor Ahmad should clarify more explicitly whether he means by this statement that any person belonging to any nation, and far from being related to the Promised Messiah’s family, is eligible for becoming *khalifa* on the sole basis of righteousness, sincerity and doing of good deeds.

Whose fear?

We are repeatedly told, as Mirza Masroor Ahmad also says in his *khutba*, that a *khalifa* arises when the community is in a state of desperate fear and anxiety, and he changes their fear into security. However, from his *khutba* the reverse appears to be the case. Here it is the *khalifa* who is in a state of deep apprehension about his position and he appeals to his community to change *his fear* into security by stopping criticising him and accepting him as worthy of his office. Those who are truly appointed by Allah, whether a prophet or a *mujaddid* such as Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, do not rely on, or ask for, or even care for, the support of any human beings in order to remain in their Divinely-appointed office.

6 July 2005.