

Reply to allegation that Maulana Muhammad Ali earlier believed Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad to be a prophet

by Dr. Zahid Aziz

The Qadiani *Jama'at* has long been trying to prove that Maulana Muhammad Ali, in his writings before the Split in 1914, expressed the belief that Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad was a prophet. This is a complete misrepresentation, just like their misrepresentation that Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad claimed to be a prophet. Maulana Muhammad Ali answered these allegations several times during his life, from the Split in 1914 to nearly the end of his life.¹ He replied that Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, when using the words 'prophet' and 'messenger' about himself, had explained that he was using these terms in a *metaphorical, non-real sense* and that it is an allowable practice in Islam to apply these terms in those senses to one who is not a prophet, but who receives revelation in the manner of a saint (*muhaddas*) in Islam. Such a person is not a prophet in the terminology of Islamic theology. It was in these senses that Maulana Muhammad Ali had described Hazrat Mirza sahib as 'prophet' or 'messenger'.

The Maulana went on to add in his reply that some leading figures in the Qadiani *Jama'at* had themselves written, before the Split in 1914, that Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad could only be called 'prophet' in the literal, dictionary sense of this word in Arabic, as meaning one who makes prophecies, and that after the Holy Prophet Muhammad no prophet can come.

It is entirely unjustified for the Qadiani *Jama'at* to treat the words 'prophet' and 'messenger' in Maulana Muhammad Ali's writings as if he is using them **according to the Qadiani *Jama'at* conception** of the status of Hazrat Mirza sahib. Let us then explain what is the Qadiani *Jama'at* concept of Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad being a prophet:

1. The Qadiani *Jama'at* belief is that Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad was a prophet and therefore all other Muslims who do

¹ See *Meri Tahrir Main Lafz Nabi Ka Isti'mal*, 1918 and 1941 editions.

not believe in him are non-Muslims, just as Christians and Hindus are non-Muslims. They believe that a person cannot now become a Muslim by proclaiming the well-known *Kalima Shahada* but that he must, in addition, also profess and proclaim belief in Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad as a prophet.

2. The Qadianis believe that Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad first announced his claim of being a prophet in his booklet *Ayk Ghalati Ka Izala* published in November 1901. They hold that in this publication he cancelled and abrogated all his previous statements, made from 1891 onwards, in which he denied claiming to be a prophet, affirmed that no prophet can come after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, and explained that the words 'prophet' and 'messenger' applied to him in the linguistic or metaphorical sense in which these words can be applied to the *auliya* or Muslim saints.

Maulana Muhammad Ali, in his writings before the Split, including articles in the *Review of Religions*, never accepted the above two beliefs. In fact, as we will show later, in the *Review of Religions* he published pre-1901 writings of Hazrat Mirza sahib to show that the word 'prophet' applied to him in the metaphorical sense in which it applies to a saint (*muhaddas*).

Sense in which words 'prophet' and 'messenger' are used about Hazrat Mirza sahib

Let us look at Hazrat Mirza sahib's explanations of the sense in which he used these words:

1. "Do not level false allegations against me that I have claimed to be a prophet in the real sense. Have you not read that a *muhaddas* (saint) too is a *mursal* (messenger)?... We believe and acknowledge that, according to the real meaning of *nubuwwat* (prophethood), after the Holy Prophet Muhammad no new or former prophet can come. ... But in a metaphorical sense God can call any recipient of revelation as *nabi* or *mursal*.... I say it repeatedly that these words *rasul* and *mursal*

and *nabi* (prophet) undoubtedly occur about me in my revelation from God, but they do not bear their real meanings.”²

2. “I say repeatedly that, in these revelations, the word *mursal* or *rasul* or *nabi* which has occurred about me is not used in its real sense. The actual fact, to which I testify with the highest testimony, is that our Holy Prophet, may peace and the blessings of God be upon him, is the *Khatam-ul-anbiya* and after him no prophet is to come, neither an old one nor a new one. ...But it must be remembered that, as we have explained here, sometimes the revelation from God contains such words about some of His saints in a metaphorical and figurative sense; they are not meant by way of reality.”³
3. “From the beginning, as God knows best, my intention has never been to use this word *nabi* as meaning actually a prophet, but only as signifying *muhaddas*, which the Holy Prophet has explained as meaning one who is spoken to by God. ... Therefore, I have not the least hesitation in stating my meaning in another form for the conciliation of my Muslim brethren, and that other form is that in every place instead of the word *nabi* the word *muhaddas* should be understood, and the word *nabi* should be regarded as having been deleted.”⁴
4. “... by the word *rasul* is only meant ‘one sent by God’, and by the word *nabi* is only meant ‘one who makes prophecies’, having received intimation from God, or one who discloses hidden matters. As these words, which are only in a metaphorical sense, cause trouble in Islam, leading to very bad consequences, these terms should not be used in our community’s common talk and everyday language. It should be believed from the bottom of the heart that prophethood has terminated with the Holy Prophet Muhammad.”⁵

Statements in *Review of Religions* confirm ending of propethood

It is in the above senses that the words *prophet* and *messenger* have

² *Siraj Munir*, pages 2–3.

³ *Anjam Atham*, p. 28, footnote.

⁴ Public statement, 3rd February 1892. *Majmu‘a Ishtiharat*, 1986 edition, volume 1, pages 312 to 314.

⁵ Letter dated 7 August 1899, published in *Al-Hakam*, 17th August 1899, p. 6.

been used about Hazrat Mirza sahib in articles in the *Review of Religions* written by Maulana Muhammad Ali when he was editor, or translated by him from writings of Hazrat Mirza sahib. The clear proof of this is that in this magazine in the same period there are statements confirming that the Holy Prophet Muhammad was the last prophet and that after him only saints can come, Hazrat Mirza sahib being such a saint (*wali* or *muhaddas*).

1. In his translation of Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad's book *Tazkirat-ush-Shahadatain* serialised in the *Review of Religions*, Maulana Muhammad Ali has translated an extract as follows into English:

“In answer to this objection, I stated that **the Holy Prophet was the last of prophets** and, therefore, if his successors had been called prophets, the finality of prophetship would have become a moot point. On the other hand, if none of the successors had been called a prophet, the similarity with the Israelite prophets who succeeded Moses could not have been established. It was, therefore, ordained by Divine wisdom that the first successors of the Holy Prophet should not be called prophets, so that it may be a sign that **the Holy Prophet was the last prophet**, and that thus the finality of prophethood should be established. It was also ordained that the last successor of the Holy Prophet, the Promised Messiah, should be called a prophet, so that the resemblance referred to above, might be complete.”⁶

It is plainly stated here twice, in English words used by Maulana Muhammad Ali, that the Holy Prophet Muhammad was the last prophet, and that this was an established belief in Islam. If after this belief has been firmly established for centuries, the Promised Messiah comes, and the word 'prophet' is used for him, as for example in Hadith, then it cannot negate the fact that the Holy Prophet Muhammad was the last prophet. As explained in the statements of Hazrat Mirza sahib given earlier, the use of this word in his case is “in a metaphorical and figurative sense” and “not meant by way of reality”.

⁶ *Review of Religions*, November–December 1903, p. 436-437; bolding is ours.

2. In the April 1904 issue of the *Review of Religions* there are two articles containing extracts derived and adapted from Hazrat Mirza sahib's book *Ainah Kamalat-i Islam*, a book published in 1893. One of these articles is entitled *Restoring the Dead to Life*, which occurs on pages 126 to 137. It discusses the point that by following the Holy Prophet Muhammad a Muslim can even now rise to the great spiritual heights where he receives knowledge, revelation and assistance from God, his prayers are accepted and no one can stand against him. It says of Hazrat Mirza sahib:

“Such a one has been raised by God in Islam in this age and he is present among us.”⁷

Only a few lines further on, the article concludes as follows on page 137:

“The Muslims are the people who though not called prophets are like prophets spoken to by God, and though not termed apostles, the brilliant signs of God are manifested at their hands like apostles.”

The same article occurs in the Urdu edition of the *Review of Religions*, April 1904, pages 122–131. The above extract is given in it in exactly the words used by Hazrat Mirza sahib in *Ainah Kamalat-i Islam*. If we may translate the Urdu more literally, it reads:

“This is the *Umma* which, though not having any prophets (*nabi*) in it, has those who receive the word of God like prophets, and though not having any messengers (*rasul*) in it, has those who show God's clear signs like messengers.”⁸

The view here is clearly expressed that no prophet or messenger (*nabi* or *rasul*) can arise among Muslims, but only the *likes* of prophets and messengers among whom is Hazrat Mirza.

3. The other article in the April 1904 issue of the *Review of Religions* derived and adapted from *Ainah Kamalat-i Islam* is entitled *The Blessings of Islam*, and occurs immediately before the one

⁷ *Review of Religions*, April 1904, p. 136.

⁸ Urdu edition of the *Review of Religions*, April 1904, p. 131. See *Ainah Kamalat-i Islam*, p. 224.

mentioned above, on pages 117 to 126. Here, speaking of the highest spiritual stage that a person can reach, it is written:

“When a person reaches this stage, he is no more a man of this world, and is granted the guidance and high place granted to the holy prophets and messengers of God before him, as if he were their image. Such a man becomes the inheritor of the blessings granted to the prophets and he is their vicegerent upon earth. What is termed *mujiza* in the prophets is termed *karamat* in him, and what is termed *ismat* (sinlessness) in the prophets is called *mahfiziyyat* (protection) in him, and what is called *nubuwwat* (prophethood) in the prophets is designated *muhaddasiyyat* in him.”⁹

We have reproduced the extract above exactly as in the magazine. The words in parentheses and the terms printed in italics are as in the original. Thus it is stated here that the highest spiritual stage a person can reach is that of being a *muhaddas*, a saint who is not a prophet.

Again, the same article is found in the Urdu edition of the *Review of Religions*, April 1904, pages 115–122. The above extract in it is on page 117. In this Urdu article at this point there is some further text quoted from *Ainah Kamalat-i Islam* not included in the English version. We translate that text below:

“The sayings of the Holy Prophet Muhammad indicate that a *muhaddas* is potentially a prophet and if the door of prophethood had not been closed, every *muhaddas* possessed in himself the power and capability to become a prophet. It is according to this power and capability that it is allowable to apply the word *nabi* to a *muhaddas*. That is, we can say: the *muhaddas* is a prophet. ... It is this application that Allah indicates by shortening the Quranic reading ‘We did not send before you any *rasul* or *nabi* or *muhaddas*’ to the reading ‘We did not send before you any *rasul* or *nabi*’ and considering just these words to be sufficient.”¹⁰

⁹ *Review of Religions*, April 1904, p. 120–121.

¹⁰ Urdu edition of the *Review of Religions*, April 1904, p. 117. See *Ainah Kamalat-i Islam*, p. 238–239.

Here it is clearly stated in the *Review of Religions*, quoting Hazrat Mirza, that a *muhaddas* can be called 'prophet' (*nabi*) and 'messenger' (*rasul*), and that this usage is explicitly allowed by Allah as well as the Holy Prophet Muhammad. (Note: If members of the Qadiani Jama'at do not understand his last statement, that Allah shortened the reading "We did not send before you any *rasul* or *nabi* or *muhaddas*" to the reading given in the Quran in 22:52, "We did not send before you any *rasul* or *nabi*", they should consult their scholars and ask them to publish the explanation of what this means!)

4. Further on in the article cited above, it is written in regard to the person who reaches the highest spiritual stage in Islam, the stage Hazrat Mirza sahib claimed to have attained:

"What is *walayat* (saintship) but the attainment of such a nearness to, and dignity in, the presence of the Almighty Lord as brings to one the gift and favour of having his prayers accepted most of all? The *wali* or the saint is the friend of God, and it is a test of sincere friendship that his requests be granted on most occasions."¹¹

Again, this is exactly how the extract appears in the magazine, with some words in italics and parentheses. The original Urdu text corresponding to the above is in the Urdu edition of the *Review of Religions*, April 1904, on page 118.

5. On the next page in this article it is clearly stated that Hazrat Mirza sahib has appeared as a *mujaddid* as one has always appeared before in Islam:

"...and in the commencement of every century, especially when the world goes astray from probity and righteousness and is involved in darkness, He raises a vicegerent of the Holy Prophet, in the looking glass of whose nature the person of the Holy Prophet is imaged forth. The representative so raised shows the excellences of the Holy Prophet whom he follows ..."¹²

¹¹ *Review of Religions*, April 1904, p. 122.

¹² *Review of Religions*, April 1904, p. 123.

The words *commencement of every century* shows that he is referring to the coming of *mujaddids*, of whom he is one. The words translated as “vicegerent” and “representative” of a prophet are *qa'im maqam nabi* in the original Urdu.¹³ Both the translation and the original term indicate that the person is not himself a prophet.

6. We see here that in the April 1904 issue of *The Review of Religions*, both English and Urdu, two articles are published from a book written by Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad long before in 1893, namely, *Ainah Kamalat-i Islam*, in which he discusses his own claim, and who can arise among Muslims after the Holy Prophet Muhammad. This is a plain rebuttal of the Qadiani standpoint that his claim of being a *muhaddas*, a non-prophet who receives revelation, rather than a prophet, expressed prior to November 1901, was abrogated at that date and changed into a claim of being a prophet.

7. We now turn to the November 1904 issue of the *Review of Religions* which contains a translation of Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad's famous lecture given at Sialkot that very month. It is written in it regarding the Holy Prophet Muhammad:

“Prophethood came to an end with him, not only because he came last of all, but also because the excellences of prophethood reached their climax in his holy person.” (p. 395)

8. A few pages further on, while discussing the qualities of those who upon whom the holy spirit is sent and who attain the highest degree of closeness to God, it is written:

“In Muhammadan theologic terminology such a person is called a *nabi* (prophet), a *rasul* (messenger), or a *muhaddas* (reformer).” (p. 409)

The terms shown in italics here are printed in Arabic letters in the magazine. This statement shows that the qualities that were attained by prophets and messengers before Islam are attained among Muslims by persons who are raised as saints or *muhaddas*.

Subsequent to the above extract, the article uses only the word ‘prophet’, as in: “The prophets are the recipients of Divine revelation

¹³ Urdu edition of the *Review of Religions*, April 1904, p. 120. See *Ainah Kamalat-i Islam*, p. 247.

and are spoken to by God". But that extract has already made clear that he is speaking about those attainments and qualities of prophets which are continued among Muslims through the saints that arise in Islam, known as *muhaddas*.

9. The following words of Maulana Muhammad Ali from an article in the July 1904 issue are presented by the Qadiani *Jama'at* to prove that he believed Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad to be a prophet:

"It is such a prophet that the world needs, and not the missionary "prophet" who knows very little besides abusing righteous men and sacred principles. Such a one has even now been vouchsafed to us by Almighty God but he is rejected as the former prophets were rejected. ... Such a prophet is Mirza Ghulam Ahmad of Qadian who claims to be the Promised Messiah..."¹⁴

As shown above, in the issues of the *Review of Religions* for April 1904 and for November 1904, the ending of prophethood with the Holy Prophet Muhammad and the coming after him of, not prophets, but saints (one who is a *wali* or *muhaddas*), is clearly stated. It is, therefore, impossible that in an issue published in between these two dates, namely the July 1904 issue, Maulana Muhammad Ali should be expressing a belief that conflicts with what he wrote earlier in April and later in November.

The context of the quotation from the July 1904 issue is that a Christian magazine suggested that a Christian missionary in India needs to be a "prophet" who denounces the sins of people. Maulana Muhammad Ali writes in reply that it is not sufficient to condemn sins but that such a prophet should bring about certainty in people's hearts that God exists, so that they refrain from sins. It is according to that prophetic function, i.e. showing people the existence of God by means of heavenly signs, that he is describing Hazrat Mirza sahib as "such as a prophet".

Immediately before this description, he has explained the sense of prophet that he is discussing. See pages 254-255 of the English edition. He gives the example of how *the Holy Prophet Muhammad* extirpated the evil of drink from Arabia, and then adds: "It is such a prophet that

¹⁴ *Review of Religions*, July 1904, p. 255. Urdu edition, July 1904, p. 248.

the world needs... Such a prophet is Mirza Ghulam Ahmad of Qadian". Does the Qadiani *Jama'at* take this to mean that Hazrat Mirza sahib was *the same kind of prophet* as the Holy Prophet Muhammad, i.e., a prophet with a new book and new law? After all, they have presented this quotation as a correct description of the claims of Hazrat Mirza sahib, and it is their responsibility to explain their interpretation of it!

The meaning is clearly that the world needs someone who is more than a "prophet" as conceived of by the Christian missionary magazine, not merely one who denounces sins, but one who can continue the Holy Prophet's mission of delivering people from sin by making them certain of the existence of God. The meaning becomes clear if we refer again to the article *Restoring the Dead to Life*, published in the April 1904 issue of the *Review of Religions* (p. 126 to 137). After discussing how the Holy Prophet raised the dead sinners to spiritual life, it is stated on p. 133 that those blessings would continue in the future among his followers, and on page 134 that the Promised Messiah, having received life through the Holy Prophet, would act as a teacher to create a group like the companions of the Holy Prophet. After all this, it is then stated on p. 137 at the end of the article that the Muslim nation does not have among it prophets, but persons who receive the word of God like prophets, and it does not have messengers (*rasul*) but persons who show God's clear signs like messengers.

10. When Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad published his Will, entitled *Al-Wasiyya*, in December 1905 and January 1906, its English translation was published in the *Review of Religions*. In that translation, we find the following extract, in which he has clearly affirmed that prophethood ended with the Holy Prophet Muhammad:

"All truths which can lead a man to God are contained in it [the Quran]. Neither will any new truth come after it, nor was there any truth before it which is not present here. Therefore **all prophethoods end with the prophethood of the Holy Prophet**, and so it ought to have been, for that which has a beginning has also an end."¹⁵

¹⁵ *Review of Religions*, January 1906, p. 30; bolding is ours.

11. In the May 1906 issue of the *Review of Religions* there is a lengthy article entitled *A Short Sketch of the Ahmadiyya Movement* by Maulana Muhammad Ali, from pages 171 to 205. An Urdu version of this article appeared in the May 1906 issue of the Urdu edition of the *Review of Religions* from pages 163 to 192. Below, whenever differentiation is necessary, we refer to the former as the 'English article' and the latter as the 'Urdu article'.

Tracing the history of the Movement chronologically, it is stated near the beginning, after quoting the Hadith report that God will raise a reformer at the beginning of every century, that Hazrat Mirza sahib claimed to be the *mujaddid* of the 14th century *hijra*. Then his claim to be the Promised Messiah in 1891 is mentioned, after which the article goes on to deal with the fierce opposition to him that arose as a consequence. At this point Maulana Muhammad Ali writes:

“The claimant to Messiahship explained his position in three books issued soon after the announcement referred to above. These were the *Fateh Islam*, the *Tauzih-i-Maram* and the *Izala-i-Auham*.” (p. 173, English)

The books mentioned here contain plain denials by Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad of the allegation that he was claiming to be a prophet and state at length that his claim, as Messiah, was that of being a *muhaddas*. To quote from these books:

“Here, if it is objected that the like of Jesus must also be a prophet because Jesus was a prophet, the reply to this in the first place is that our Lord and Master [Prophet Muhammad] has not laid it down that the coming Messiah shall be a prophet; ... Besides this, there is no doubt that I have come as a *muhaddas* from God...” (*Tauzih Maram*, p. 17, 18)

“There is no claim of prophethood. On the contrary, the claim is of sainthood (*muhaddasiyyat*) which has been advanced by the command of God.” (*Izala Auham*, p. 421–422).

“Every sensible person can understand that if God is true to His promise, and the promise given in the *Khatam an-nabiyyin* verse, which has been explicitly mentioned in the Hadith, that now, after the death of the Prophet of God, peace and the blessings of God be upon him, Gabriel has been forbidden

forever from bringing 'revelation of prophets' (*wahy nubuwwat*) — if all these things are true and correct, then no person at all can come as a messenger (*rasul*) after our Prophet, peace be upon him." (*Izala Auham*, p. 577)

The article then covers the subsequent history of the Movement, through the 1890s and on to the early 1900s till the time shortly before this article was published. Nowhere in this chronological treatment is there any mention of Hazrat Mirza announcing in 1901 that he was now claiming to be a prophet and that his denials of such a claim, issued since claiming to be Promised Messiah, were mistaken and invalid.

The article gives the explanation of why the name 'Ahmadiyya' was given to the Movement in 1900, namely, that the Holy Prophet apart from his name 'Muhammad' had also the name 'Ahmad' and the Makkan period of his life was a manifestation of this name, and thus 'Ahmad' points to the peace and tranquillity that the Holy Prophet was to spread in the world. In the English article the explanation concludes with the words:

"In these last ages the manifestation of the name Ahmad is again destined to be the chief characteristic of the progress of Islam, and the Ahmadiyya movement is the true representative of that phase." (p. 179)

The same words in the Urdu article are as follows if we translate them back into English:

"Thus by naming the movement as Ahmadiyya it is intended to show that this is the age in which the attribute of beauty of the Holy Prophet will be manifested, as was the case at Makka during the first thirteen years of his mission, and it is in this sense that Ghulam Ahmad is the *bu-rooz* of Ahmad, may peace and the blessing of Allah be upon him."

Thus Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad came to spread in the world those aspects of the message of the Holy Prophet Muhammad which are signified by the name 'Ahmad' of the Holy Prophet. He himself is Ghulam Ahmad, who presents the teachings of Ahmad to the world.

Then the article makes the following statement:

“The central doctrine of the Ahmadiyya movement is that its founder is the *Promised Messiah* and the *Promised Mahdi*” (italics as in original, p. 179).

In explanation of these titles, a lengthy quotation of more than one page is given from the Supplement to ‘The British Government and Jihad’, by Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, published in July 1900 (see pages 179-180 of the article). In this quotation, after explaining the meanings of the words *Masih* (Messiah) and *Mahdi*, and declaring that “the grace of God and His mercy have made me the heir to both these titles in this age”, he writes the following, as translated in the *Review of Religions*:

“The way in which this manifestation has taken place is known in Islamic terminology as *baruz*.” (p. 180)

The question is quite simply: when Hazrat Mirza wrote the above words in July 1900 what did he understand by the concept of *burooz*? The Qadiani *Jama'at* admits and acknowledges that he meant by it a non-prophet who comes in resemblance of a prophet. In his book *Ayyam-us-Sulh*, published in August 1898, he had answered an objection as follows:

“Objection: Only a prophet can be the like of a prophet.

“Answer: The entire Umma is agreed that a non-prophet takes the place of a prophet by way of *burooz*. (p. 163)

In fact, in that very supplement to ‘The British Government and Jihad’ he writes that his claim is to be: “*mujaddid* of the time, *wali*, *qutub*, Messiah and Mahdi” (RK, v. 17, p. 24). This then is the claim of Hazrat Mirza sahib **in the same book** from which Maulana Muhammad Ali has quoted a long extract in his above *Review of Religions* article. This claim occurs in the original Urdu book only four pages before the extract that the Maulana has quoted in his article.

After giving this quotation Maulana Muhammad Ali writes:

“The most important doctrine of the Ahmadiyya movement arises out of the claim of its founder to be the Promised Messiah or Messenger of the last ages.” (p. 181)

By 'Messenger' here is meant a saint or *mujaddid* who appears as a *bu-rooz* of a prophet. A further proof of this is that in the Urdu article the word corresponding to 'Messenger' here is *khatam-ul-khulafa* (*Review of Religions*, Urdu, May 1906, p. 172, last line), which means the *khalifa* of the Holy Prophet who was to appear in the last days.

Further on, discussing what is the concept of Promised Messiah in Islam, Maulana Muhammad Ali first of all refers to the *khilafat* verse of the Quran (24:55) and writes that God promised that He would:

“raise successors to the founder of Islam like unto the successors that had been raised to Moses. In accordance with this promise it was necessary that the last successor of the Holy Prophet Muhammad should be the like of the last successor of Moses, i.e. a Messiah should appear among the Muslims like the Messiah that had appeared among the Jews.” (p. 188)

This is exactly the argument which the Maulana presented much later in the footnote to this verse in his English translation of the Holy Quran. He wrote there: “... and it was on this verse that the claim of the late Mirza Ghulam Ahmad of Qadian, the founder of the Ahmadiyya movement, was based.” His claim was based on the verse which promised that *khalifas* to the Holy Prophet would arise among Muslims in the likeness of the Israelite prophets after Moses, the last such *khalifa* arising in the likeness of Jesus. It was not based on any of the verses which the Qadiani Jamaat later presented to allege that prophets can come after the Holy Prophet Muhammad. He was thus a *khalifa* of the Holy Prophet, just as there were several *khalifas* of the Holy Prophet before him.

On page 192 of the article there is a paragraph in which the following point is argued:

“The existence of God ... is known only through revelation and through the wonderful manifestations of Divine power and knowledge which are shown through the prophets and messengers of God. It is for this reason that Almighty God has been raising His messengers from time to time, so that witnessing the manifestation of Divine power, people may have a certain faith in God which may work a pure transformation in their lives. ... Hence Almighty God has sent a messenger, the

Promised Messenger of the last ages — because He who promised knew that a heavenly messenger would be needed in the last ages for the regeneration of the world”.

The Maulana is referring to *a specific function* performed originally by the prophets and messengers of old, that of showing the existence of God by means of Divine signs, which is still required. Those raised in Islam to perform that function are the saints and *mujaddids* that have been arising throughout its history. This is what Hazrat Mirza sahib himself wrote about it:

“We can prove to every seeker-after-truth, conclusively and definitely, that from the time of the Holy Prophet Muhammad till the present day there have been, in every century, godly persons *through whom God has shown heavenly signs* to other communities to guide them [towards Islam]. There have been in Islam persons such as Sayyid Abdul Qadir Jilani, Abul Hasan Khartani, Abu Yazid Bustami, Junaid of Baghdad, Muhiyud-Din Ibn Arabi, Zul-Noon of Egypt, Mu‘in-ud-Din Chishti, Qutub-ud-Din Bukhtiar, Farid-ud-Din of Pak Patan, Nizam-ud-Din of Delhi, Shah Wali-ullah of Delhi, and Shaikh Ahmad of Sirhind. The number of such persons runs into thousands, and the miracles of so many people are recorded in scholarly and learned works that even a prejudiced opponent, despite his great bias, has to concede finally that *these persons showed miracles and extraordinary signs.*” (*Kitab al-Barriyya*, p. 67)

Elsewhere he writes that it is “essential that, after the death of the Holy Prophet, may peace and the blessings of God be upon him, there should arise among the Muslim people, at times of troubles and tribulations, *reformers who are assigned the particular task, out of the many tasks of the prophets*, that they call to the true religion, and remove every innovation that has been mixed with the religion, and show people the truth of the faith from every angle, through having received heavenly light, and draw people to truth, love and purity through their own holy example” (*Shahadat-ul-Quran*, p. 48, *Ruhani Khaza'in*, v. 6, p. 344–345).

It may also be noted that in the Urdu article the word for “messenger” is *mursal*: “Almighty God has sent a *mursal*, the Promised *mursal* of the last ages because He who promised knew that

a *mursal* would be needed” (p. 183). The word *mursal* is applied to those sent by God whether prophets or saints. Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad writes: “The prophet (*nabi*) and the *muhaddas* are on a par in terms of being sent ones (*mursal*). Just as God has called prophets as *mursal*, so has He termed those who are *muhaddas* as *mursal*” (*Shahadat-ul-Quran*, p. 27, *Ruhani Khaza'in*, v. 6, p. 323).

A passage in this article by Maulana Muhammad Ali, which the Qadiani *Jama'at* puts forward in its support, is as follows:

“This movement holds that the Holy Prophet is the seal of prophets, and no other prophet can appear after him except one who is spiritually his disciple and who receives the gift of prophecy through him. It is only a true Muslim who walks in the footsteps of the Holy Prophet that can become a prophet. It is in this sense that this movement considers its founder to be a prophet.”¹⁶

This passage is on par with what Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad had written in *Izala Auham* in 1891:

“The fact that our Holy Prophet is the *Khatam-un-nabiyyin* prohibits the coming of any other prophet. However, such a prophet as obtains light from the lamp of the prophethood of Muhammad, and does not possess full prophethood, who in other words is also called a *muhaddas*, is exempt from this restriction because, due to his obedience to the Holy Prophet and due to his being *fana fir-rasul*, he is included within the person of the Last of the Messengers, just as a part is included in the whole.” (*Izala Auham*, p. 575)

It is thus clear that the passage in the *Review of Religions* article in the words “except one who is spiritually his disciple” is referring to a *muhaddas*, since a *muhaddas* is described by Hazrat Mirza in *Izala Auham* as “such a prophet as obtains light from the lamp of the prophethood of Muhammad”.

In the Urdu article in the *Review of Religions*, the above passage is a little more amplified. It adds in the middle:

¹⁶ *Review of Religions*, May 1906, p. 195.

“After the Holy Prophet Muhammad, God has closed the doors to all prophethood and messengership. However, for his perfect followers, who obtain light from his perfect character by imbuing themselves in his colouring, this door is not closed because they are, as it were, images of his pure and holy personage.” (p. 186)

The “perfect follower” who is an “image” of the Holy Prophet, being coloured with “his colouring”, is a *muhaddas*. This is what Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad wrote in his book *Nishan Asmani* in 1892:

“I firmly believe that our Holy Prophet Muhammad is the *Khatam-ul-anbiya*, and after him no prophet shall come for this *Umma*, neither new nor old. Not a jot or iota of the Holy Quran shall be abrogated. Of course, *muhaddases* will come who will be spoken to by God, and possess some attributes of full prophethood by way of reflection (*zill*), and in some ways be coloured with the colour of prophethood. I am one of these.” (*Nishan Asmani*, May 1892, p. 28)

The Urdu article also adds the following words at the end of this passage:

“The finality of prophethood of the Holy Prophet Muhammad does not prevent the coming of someone who is his *burooz*, but no new Shariah can come after him.”

This concluding statement settles that Maulana Muhammad Ali is referring to non-prophets and *muhaddases* as the only ones who can arise after the finality of prophethood of the Holy Prophet Muhammad.

The article concludes with the following paragraph in the English article, which occurs similarly in the Urdu article:

“The founder of the movement predicts a great future for it. Two promises, he says, were made concerning the success and triumph of his mission, both of which are published in the *Barahin-i-Ahmadiyya*. The first of these related to his own life time and foretold an unparalleled triumph in spite of the hardest opposition. ... The second promise foretold the great success of the movement after the founder’s death which consists in its

triumph over all the religions of the world. In his will which has been published lately, he has clearly explained this point, and the wonderful fulfilment of the first promise is shown to be a clear indication that the second promise will also be fulfilled. It is also predicted that the movement will achieve great success under the guidance of one of his sons who will be Divinely inspired, but until God appoints such a person to accept *bai'at*, any member of the movement whose righteousness is borne testimony to by forty of his brethren may initiate persons into the movement, the management being under the control of an association which has already been appointed under the name of the Sadr Anjuman-i-Ahmadiyya.”¹⁷

Maulana Muhammad Ali has here in 1906 expressed *the same views* which he put forward at the time of the Split in 1914, and ever afterwards, on the main issue which became the source controversy with the Qadiani *Jama'at*. The basic doctrine of the Qadiani *Jama'at* is that *immediately* upon the death of Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad a *khilafat* came into being, whereby the *khalifa* or head has absolute power over the movement both for spiritual and administrative purposes. They assert that it is essential for all members to take the *bai'at* on the hand of this one man, the *khalifa*, who rules with absolute supremacy. They claim that the “second promise” mentioned by the Founder in his will (as referred to in the above passage) is the establishment of such a *khilafat*. However, according to Maulana Muhammad Ali in the above article, the “second promise” is that the movement, after the founder’s death, will triumph over all other beliefs, and he has described the systems of spiritual and administrative governance of the movement as quite the opposite of the Qadiani conception.

A frequent, main charge brought against Maulana Muhammad Ali by the Qadiani group is that he accepted the *khilafat* system upon the death of the founder when Maulana Nur-ud-Din became head in May 1908, but rejected this system at the time of the Split in 1914 due to being opposed to Mirza Bashir-ud-Din Mahmud Ahmad. The above quotation shows that the Maulana Muhammad Ali’s conception of how

¹⁷ *The Review of Religions*, May 1906, p. 204–205.

the movement would be governed was always the same, being that which was set out by the founder in his will in 1906.

It may be noted that the Qadiani belief in the founder being a prophet is inextricably connected with their *khilafat* system: that a prophet must be followed by *khilafat*. However, Maulana Muhammad Ali in this 1906 article does not present any such *khilafat* to be established as imagined by the Qadianis. Therefore they cannot argue that he believed the founder to be a prophet.

It may be said that the Maulana has mentioned the prophecy that “the movement will achieve great success under the guidance of one of his sons who will be Divinely inspired, but until God appoints such a person to accept *bai‘at* ...”. Mirza Mahmud Ahmad did not claim to be such a person at the time of the Split. In fact, he did not agree that the system of governance mentioned above by the Maulana (after the words “but until God appoints such a person to accept *bai‘at*”) was what Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad meant in the Will at all, or that it was ever in force before he became head in 1914. Therefore it cannot be claimed that Maulana Muhammad Ali earlier, in 1906, held the same views as the Qadiani *Jama‘at*.

12. Maulana Muhammad Ali followed the article dealt with above by one about the life of Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad entitled *The Founder of the Ahmadiyya Movement*, published in the June 1906 issue of *The Review of Religions*, from pages 229 to 256. An Urdu version of this article appeared in the June 1906 issue of the Urdu edition of *The Review of Religions* from pages 215 to 252.

Referring to his claim of being *mujaddid*, his popularity among Muslims after this claim, his later claim of being Promised Messiah, and the popularity giving way to bitter opposition, Maulana Muhammad Ali writes:

“...they [the Muslims] rejoiced at the appearance of a reformer among them in accordance with the prophecy which promised a reformer to the Muslims in the beginning of every new century. ... Matters remained in this condition for seven years during which time Ahmad was generally admitted to be the religious leader and inspired reformer of the Muslims. ... But the year 1891 was a time of great transition in his life, and it divides his life into two parts from more points of view than one. It was the

year in which he announced that he was the *Promised* Messenger of the last ages, the Promised Messiah and Mahdi. As a *Messenger of Heaven*, the Muslim submitted to his claims and had no fault to find with him, but as the *Promised* Messenger, there was no epithet of irreverence, no word of calumny, which was not applied to him. ... His virtues and his righteousness were recognised by all; he was hailed as the reformer for the fourteenth century of Hejira and was even accepted to be a recipient of Divine revelation and a messenger of heaven, but as soon as he said that he was no other than the promised messenger of the last ages, he was proclaimed to be an arch-heretic by the very men who had only a year or two before extolled his valuable services in the cause of Islam.”¹⁸
(Italics as in original article.)

It is **perfectly and undeniably clear** that ‘messenger’ here means *mujaddid*. He writes above:

“As a *Messenger of Heaven*, the Muslim submitted to his claims and had no fault to find with him, ...”

The *only* claim that Muslims accepted on his part was that of *mujaddid* of the fourteenth century *hijra*. It is a universally admitted historical fact, which is acknowledged by opponents of the Ahmadiyya Movement as well as the Qadiani *Jama‘at*, that the *only* claim he had made before 1891 was that of *mujaddid*. Therefore the words “Messenger of Heaven” mean nothing other than *mujaddid* sent by God, as shown by the plain fact that other Muslims *never* accepted him as anything more than *mujaddid*.

Moreover, it is acknowledged by the Qadiani *Jama‘at* that when he claimed to be Promised Messiah in 1891 he did not claim to be a prophet. They admit, at least, that from 1891 to 1901 he did not claim to be a prophet and that he denied any such claim.

13. In the article dealt with above, there is a paragraph which begins as follows:

“Notwithstanding the change from time to time of the attitude of the public towards the claims of Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, a

¹⁸ *The Review of Religions*, June 1906, p. 234–235.

reader of his writings cannot discover the least difference between the Ahmad of to-day and the Ahmad of the time of the Barahin-i-Ahmadiyya. ... The one theme of all his writings is the superiority of Islam over all other religions because of the continuity of the gift of Divine revelation in this religion. It is on this that he laid stress thirty years ago, and it is on this that he lays stress to-day.”¹⁹

According to the Qadiani *Jama'at*, however, a vast change was announced by him in 1901, in that before 1901 he denied claiming to be a prophet and from November 1901 onwards he claimed to be a prophet. It is written in this extract that he had been stressing the continuity of the gift of revelation in Islam *equally* since his earliest writings till now (i.e., 1906). The Qadiani *Jama'at* holds that he came to realize in 1901 that this gift which continues is prophethood, and not just revelation.

The extract quoted above continues as follows:

“In like manner, he has not from the time that he began to receive revelation entertained the slightest doubt as to the Divine origin and truth of the words he has been receiving. He was as sure of the truth of the words, “Is not God sufficient for His servant,” revealed to him at his father’s death thirty years ago, as he is of any words which he receives now.”

Thus Maulana Muhammad Ali writes in 1906 that the revelation received by Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, since the start of receiving it, has always remained of the same kind. It was, in 1876, the type of revelation received in Islam as promised for saints, and it was the same type in 1906.

The paragraph ends as follows:

“His belief with regard to the excellence of the Holy Prophet over all other prophets has also been the same throughout, and we find it stated in his earliest writings in poetry as well as in prose that no Divine blessing can be attained except through the Holy Prophet. This is the doctrine which he teaches now when he says that no old prophet can come back, but that it must be a

¹⁹ *The Review of Religions*, June 1906, p. 253–254.

follower of the Holy Prophet who should be raised to the dignity of the Messiah, because the Divine blessings which an old prophet attained to were not attained through the Holy Prophet.”

This is the *only* change which took place in his belief between the time of writing *Barahin Ahmadiyya* in the 1880s and the time when Maulana Muhammad Ali wrote the above article in 1906. He realised, around 1890, that Jesus could not come back and that it would be a follower of the Holy Prophet who would appear as the Messiah. There was *no further change*, as alleged by the Qadiani *Jama'at*, along the lines that when he claimed to be the Promised Messiah in 1891 he considered his position to be that of a *muhaddas* or saint but in 1901 he realised that his position to be that of a prophet.

14. In the same issue of the *Review of Religions* (June 1906), the preceding article examines certain Christian revivalist movements and their claims to spiritual revival and deliverance from sin. On the last page of the article the Islamic conception of revival is briefly discussed, from which we quote below:

“... if Revival can now be brought about in the world, it can only be brought about through a Messenger of God. ... To the Muslims is promised a revival in the beginning of every new century of Hejira, but this revival is in accordance with the Divine law, for of it we are told in a tradition of the Holy Prophet that ‘Almighty God will raise in the beginning of every century one who shall revive for it its faith.’ The Muslim faith, therefore, witnesses in the beginning of every new century a revival which is completely in accordance with the Divine laws and the Divine promise. Regarding the last ages, Almighty God had given a promise of a marvellous Revival to be brought about through the advent of the Messiah which is quite in accordance with Divine laws ... God’s way of bringing about a spiritual and moral regeneration in the world is to raise a prophet, and such a one He has even now raised in the person of the Promised Messiah...”²⁰

²⁰ *The Review of Religions*, June 1906, p. 228.

It is perfectly clear from this that the Maulana regards Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad as one of the *mujaddids* of Islam, who arose from time to time. No doubt is left that the word *messenger* at the beginning of this extract and the word *prophet* in the closing lines refers to *mujaddids*.

15. Upon the death of Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, Maulana Muhammad Ali wrote an obituary in the *Review of Religions*, in the June 1908 issue, pages 222–230. Regarding his claims, for which he was opposed by other Muslims, the Maulana writes that “Up to the year 1889 he was universally admitted” by the Muslims to be “the best champion of Islam against hostile religions and the ablest exponent of its doctrines”, but that in 1889 he found fault with certain of their beliefs “with regard to the advent of the Mahdi and the Messiah”. He then writes:

“These declarations combined with the claim which he advanced on the basis of Divine revelation, *viz.*, that he himself was the Promised Mahdi and Messiah, led to the raising of an outcry against him ... The leading Mullas prepared a *fatwa* against him in which he as well as his followers were declared to be heretics deserving to be murdered. The hostile attitude that was thus assumed by the orthodox Muslims towards the new sect still exists, but of late it has softened in a marked degree.” (p. 228)

In tracing the history of his claims and Muslim opposition to them, it is nowhere mentioned that he later, in 1901, declared himself a prophet, as held by the Qadiani *Jama'at*.

The obituary ends with the following words:

“The great works of the secular and religious education of the Muslims and the propagation of Islam which he had commenced will now be conducted, as even they were conducted in his life-time since the publication of his will, by the Sadr Anjuman-i-Ahmadiyya, while Maulvi Hakeem Noor-ud-Din has been selected as the successor of the Promised Messiah in the leadership of the movement.” (p. 230)

There is no mention here of the doctrine that a *khilafat* has been established after his death because he was a prophet, which is the basic tenet of the Qadiani *Jama'at*. On the contrary, the Maulana has

expressed the same views which he expressed, from the publication of *The Will* in 1906 ever afterwards, that Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad created the Sadr Anjuman Ahmadiyya to run the affairs of the Movement.

16. In the Urdu edition of the *Review of Religions*, June-July 1908, pages 257–280, there is an article by Hazrat Maulana Nur-ud-Din entitled 'The death of the Promised Messiah'. In listing the achievements of Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, Maulana Nur-ud-Din begins as follows:

“In our country, or from our country, (1) Sayyid Muhammad Jaunpuri, (2) Shaikh Abdul Haqq Muhaddith of Delhi, (3) the Mujaddid Alif Sani, (4) Shah Waliullah, and (5) Sayyid Ahmad Bareilvi, are the men who claimed to be mujaddids, and people accepted them as mujaddids. Their achievements, praise be to Allah, are not hidden from us, but as regards what this man achieved, may Allah forgive him, only the wise people can make a comparison.” (p. 261)

The achievements of Hazrat Mirza sahib are clearly stated here to be those of a mujaddid.

Maulana Nur-ud-Din also writes in this article that, at the death of the Promised Messiah, Allah united his followers so that:

“Even though there exist not one but four sons of Hazrat Mirza and a grandson, there exists Mirza’s son-in-law who combines the names Muhammad and Ali [Nawab Muhammad Ali of Malerkotla] and is able and worthy, and there exists Mirza’s father-in-law who is like a father, yet the entire community took the pledge at the hand of an outsider.” (p. 260, see also p. 263)

The fact that a successor was chosen by the community who is an unrelated outsider, instead of a close relative, is regarded as a matter of pride and a favour of God by Maulana Nur-ud-Din. Does the Qadiani *Jama'at* consider it a matter of pride and a favour of God that an unrelated man can be chosen to be Head of the Movement instead of a family member of Hazrat Mirza sahib?