# A Survey of the Lahore Ahmadiyya Movement

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# A Survey of the Lahore Ahmadiyya Movement

- Introduction:
  - Jihad of peaceful propagation
- Challenges to religion and to Islam:
  - doubts about religion raised by science:
    - man can control nature, he doesn't need God
    - no proof of spiritual phenomena
    - creation theories of religion, wrong

#### Introduction:

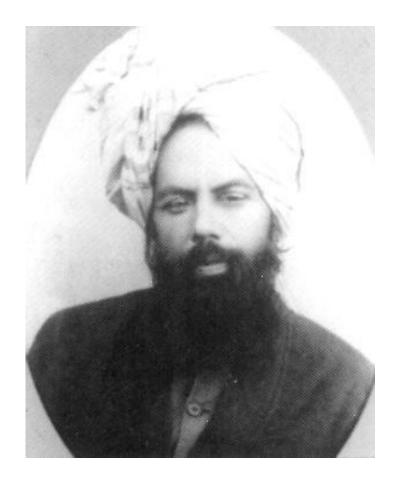
- Challenges to religion and to Islam:
  - objections against Islam by modern thought and Christian writers:
    - not of Divine origin
    - only suitable for primitive mind
    - character of Holy Prophet attacked
- Condition of the Muslims:
  - moral, political, social, economic, intellectual: all decreipt

#### Introduction:

- pre-occupied with worldly misfortunes, not caring for dignity or defence of Islam
- their own notions lent support to opponents, e.g.
  - wrong concept of jihad
  - wrong notions about life of Jesus
- Muslims themselves lament over their fallen condition

## Hazrat Mirza's appearance

- Born circa 1835
- From his youth, studious and spiritual, disliked worldly preoccupations involving deviousness
- Studies religion by himself (during 1860s to 1880s)



## Barahin Ahmadiyya

- Barahin Ahmadiyya: (written 1880 to 1884)
  - relation between *reason* and *revelation*:
    - Revelation should satisfy human reason, but reason itself cannot lead to the higher truths taught by revelation.
    - Revelation a necessity for the moral and spiritual development of human beings
  - Criteria of a Revealed book:
    - should put forward all its own teachings and arguments
    - should not depend on adherents to argue case on its behalf

## Barahin Ahmadiyya

- proved that only Quran satisfies criteria for a revealed book
- revelation, an actual experience
  - no phenomenon, esp. one like revelation, can be accepted by just being reported, but must be a matter of experience
  - revelation in the general sense of God speaking to human beings is recognised in Islam as continuing among Muslims
  - He put forward his own experience of receiving revelation from God

## Barahin Ahmadiyya

- In this age when revelation from God was doubted (Western science, Muslim rationalists, etc.), he showed its existence, theoretically and practically.
- Barahin Ahmadiyya earned tributes from Muslim religious leaders throughout India
  - It contained his revelations, yet the book was widely praised and almost no one raised any objection about the revelations.

## A famous review

- "In our opinion this book, at this time and in view of the present circumstances, is such that the like of it has not appeared in Islam up to now, while nothing can be said about the future. Its author too has been so constant in the service of Islam, with his money, life, pen and tongue, and personal experience, that very few parallels can be found in the Muslims. If anyone considers our words to be an Asian exaggeration, let him show us at least one such book which so vigorously fights all the opponents of Islam, especially the Arya and Brahamo Samaj, and let him name two or three persons who have supported Islam, not only with their wealth, lives, pen and tongue, but also by personal spiritual experience, and who have boldly thrown the challenge to all the opponents of Islam and the deniers of Divine revelation, that whoever doubts the truth of God speaking to man, he may come and observe it for himself, thus giving other religions a taste of this experience."
  - (*Isha`at as-Sunna*, vol. vii, no. 6, June to August 1884, pp. 169--170)

اکراس تجربه ومشاهده کرا اوراس تجربه ومشایده کاا قوام غیرکومزه جسی حکیها دیام و-

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190 مولف کے الهات کا وکر۔

# Mujaddid of the 14th century Hijra

- He made this claim in *Barahin Ahmadiyya*.
- In previous history, *Mujaddids* had made claims or been so recognised by people. Hadith about *mujaddids* was well known and accepted.
- Mujaddid is Hazrat Mirza's position in Islam. He referred to this claim throughout his career, and mentioned it even one day before his death.
   Inscribed on his tombstone originally with knowledge of whole Movement. Deleted by Qadianis 25 years later.

# Mujaddid of the 14th century Hijra

 A mujaddid restores the religion to its original form, removing later errors. Also regenerates true faith in matters spiritual in people's hearts by his spiritual experiences and events of his life.

- Jesus died according to Islam:
  - General Muslim belief: Jesus was raised up in bodily form to God, is still alive and would descend in the latter days to complete his mission and life.
  - This supported the Christian belief that Jesus was not a mortal human being but something greater than that. Christian missionaries used this and other wrong Muslim beliefs (esp. about Jesus) to prove Jesus to be Divine.

- Allah intimated to Hazrat Mirza, as the *Mujaddid* who was to defend Islam, that Jesus had died like other prophets and that the prophecies of his return, given in Hadith, mean the coming of a Muslim *mujaddid* bearing resemblance to him in mission, circumstances, etc.
- Then Hazrat Mirza looked in the Quran and at Hadith and found evidence upon evidence that Jesus had died.

- "Let it be clear that it is confirmed by the authentic reports that, at the time of the mischief spread by Christianity, the man who would appear as the *Mujaddid* at the head of the century, in order to uproot the evil of the worship of Jesus, he is the *Mujaddid* who has been called 'Messiah'. Afterwards, by misunderstanding the Hadith reports, people came to believe that Jesus himself would descend from heaven to become the *Mujaddid* of the century, and would come at the head of the century, the majority of the *Ulama* holding that it would be the fourteenth century [Hijra]. But the error of this view is that the real intent of the Holy Prophet Muhammad was that the Mujaddid, from among the mujaddids of this *Umma*, who would have to come to the aid of Islam to defend it against the Christian onslaughts, shall have the name 'Messiah' because of his work of the reformation of the Christian religion." (Kitab-ul-Bariyya).

- The Messiah to come:
  - Prophecies in Hadith about the coming of Jesus were linked with other signs, esp. what work would he be doing on his return.
  - One such big work was to fight and defeat the socalled *dajjal*, who was portrayed as a monster who would dominate the whole world and greatly damage the Muslims, show great wonders, and deprive people of faith in God due to his control over nature.

- Signs of dajjal fulfilled in the religious and materialistic aspects of modern Western civilization.
   Islam was under attack by Christian missionaries; the sciences and philosophies of the West had undermined belief in spiritual matters.
- As Promised Messiah an important element of his mission was to counter these two forms of attack.
   He:

- defended Islam in the face of Christian criticism, establishing the true Islamic view of Jesus.
- defended spiritual phenomena (acceptance and efficacy of prayer, reality of revelation from God).
- refuted the Christian doctrines of Trinity, Sonship of Jesus, Atonement, etc.
- showed the power of prayer and revelation as against materialism.
- His mission was to make Islam triumphant in the world.

#### From Fath-i Islam:

• "Do not wonder that Almighty God has, in this time of need and in the days of this deep darkness, sent down a heavenly light and, having chosen a servant of His for the good of mankind in general, He has sent him to make uppermost the religion of Islam and to spread the light brought by the 'best of His creatures' [i.e. Prophet Muhammad] and to strengthen the cause of the Muslims and to purify their internal condition ... The truth will win and the freshness and light of Islam which characterised it in the earlier days will be restored, and that sun will rise again as it arose first, in the full resplendence of its light."

#### From Izala Auham:

- Referring to a sign in Hadith that "the sun will rise from the West", he writes:
- "What has been shown to me in a vision is this, that the rising of the sun from the West signifies that the Western world which has been involved of old in the darkness of un-belief and error shall be made to shine with the sun of Truth, and those people shall have their share of Islam. ... In reality, the Western countries have, up to this time, shown very little aptitude for religious truths, as if spiritual wisdom had in its entirety been granted to Asia, and material wisdom to Europe and America ... now Almighty God intends to cast on them the look of mercy."
- "In this critical time, a man has been raised up by God and he desires that he may show the beautiful face of Islam to the whole world and open its ways to the Western countries."

# Features of Islam needing emphasis

- The above are not merely claims, but Hazrat Mirza also:
  - established the ideological basis for the success of Islam in this age, among Western nations.
  - laid the practical basis of the doing of this work.
- Ideological basis:
  - He presented the principles of Islam, from the Quran and Holy Prophet's life, to answer the doubts and questions of the modern age, and even showed how many of its principles are more relevant now than ever before.

# Ideological basis (1)

- Prophets arose among all nations (not just among Israelites), and Muslims must believe in all of them. Therefore the great figures of former religions were true prophets from God, and Muslims must respect them as well.
  - Belief in universality of revelation strengthens Islam's claim to be the international religion.
  - Establishes a peaceful basis for relations between Islam and other faiths.
  - He supported holding inter-faith conferences where advocates of different faiths would present the merits of their religions peaceful dialogue.

# Ideological basis (2)

- Islamic teaching on tolerance.
  - sympathy for all mankind, regardless of anyone's religion.
  - Jihad correctly explained, early Muslims wars explained.
  - peaceful preaching, Islam to succeed by force of truth, ruling out violence in religion.
  - acceptance of non-Muslim rule for secular life, but propagating
     Islam to the rulers.
- Freedom of religion/expression
  - Every human has right to follow, practise and preach the religion of their choice.
  - No punishment in Islam for apostasy (real or alleged).
  - No humanly-punishable offence of 'blasphemy' in Islam.

# Ideological basis (3)

 He regarded calls for banning anti-Islamic books as admitting your weakness.

#### • Real spirit of religion

- Showing the existence of a Living God was basic to his mission.
- To create true, effective faith, acts of worship must be performed with understanding and with feeling of heart, not merely mechanically.
  - » Ritual performance did not lead to reform of self, but created false satisfaction, vanity and self-importance.
  - » Led to over-emphasis on small details, while ignoring the real spirit ("straining out a gnat, but swallowing a camel").

## Ideological basis (4)

- » "Just as in the last days of the Mosaic law a prophet arose named Jesus, in a time when the moral condition of the Jews had deteriorated completely, they had strayed very far from real virtue ... and their knowledge was confined merely to formalism and worship of the letter ... similarly it is necessary that among the Muslim people too there should arise a *muhaddas* (i.e. inspired saint) in the likeness of that prophet and of his time, when they have also degenerated in the same manner as that of the Jews in the time of Jesus."
- » Testimony of the Holy Quran, p. 67
- Being a Messiah means stressing the *spirit* of religion rather than its *letter*.

# Ideological basis (5)

- » "Our religion is the same Islam. It is not new. There are the same prayers, the same fasts, the same pilgrimage, and the same zakat. But the difference is that these duties are now performed in outward form only, without any true spirit in them; we want to infuse in them the spirit of sincerity. We want these duties to be performed in such a manner that they are effective."
- Laid great stress on the point that the acts of worship must produce an observable change in a person's behaviour for the better; if not, it means he/she is failing to perform them truly.

## Name Ahmadiyya

- Given to movement 12 years after foundation
- Named after Prophet Muhammad's name Ahmad
- Name *Muhammad* reflects outward glory of Islam (Madina phase of Holy Prophet's life),
- Ahmad symbolises inward beauty (Makka phase)
- This movement projects inward beauty of Islam
- Present time resembles Makka phase of Islam

- Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad accused of claiming to be a prophet mainly because he claimed to be the Promised Messiah or like of the Messiah (Jesus).
- He affirmed the belief that the Prophet Muhammad was the Last Prophet after whom no prophet can come, adding "old prophet or a new one".
  - Affirmed it *in favour of his claim* by writing that the finality of Prophethood proves that the same Jesus cannot return to this world (or else he would be the last prophet):
    - » "The fact that our Holy Prophet is the *Khatam al-anbiya* also requires the death of Jesus because if another prophet comes after him, he cannot remain the *Khatam al-anbiya*" (*Ayyam-us-Sulh*, p. 146).

- Affirmed it when denying the allegation that he claimed to be a prophet.
  - » "Anyone who is fair-minded should remember that I have never, at any time, made a claim of prophethood or messengership in the 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 al-anbiya* and after him no prophet is to come, neither an old one nor a new one." (*Anjam Atham*, page 27)

- He denied the allegation of claiming to be a prophet in the clearest terms:
  - called this allegation a fabrication, a slander against him
  - said he too, like his opponents, cursed anyone claiming prophethood
  - called any claimant to prophethood after Holy Prophet as a liar and unbeliever, a wretched imposter
  - invoked curses on those who alleged that he claimed to be a prophet
  - Asked: "How could I claim prophethood when I am a Muslim?"
  - Declared "before Muslims in this house of God: I believe in the finality of prophethood"
  - Made sworn statement in debate, signed by witnesses: "I lay no claim whatever to actual prophethood."

- Words *nabi* (prophet) and *rasul* (messenger) have been applied in Muslim religious and other literature to non-prophets because their life or work reflected some aspect of the lives of prophets.
- Hazrat Mirza discussed extensively as to the ways in which these words are applied to non-prophets:
  - God gives a saint in Islam knowledge of the future to make prophecies, so in a *literal* sense the word 'prophet' could apply to him. This is not the same as the proper, defined meaning of 'prophet' in Islam.
  - A word can be used metaphorically, and not in its real sense.
  - The great Muslim scholars who wrote about spiritual matters in Islam called the saints as 'image of a prophet', 'likeness of a prophet' etc.

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- At the same time Hazrat Mirza:
  - stressed that the real fact was that no prophet can come after the
     Prophet Muhammad
  - cautioned his followers against using these terms in ordinary talk because, being misunderstood, it would cause dissension among Muslims
  - told Muslims in general that these words, when used in this way,
     only mean 'saint', so much so that they can be considered as
     having been replaced in his writings by the word 'saint'.

## An announcement 1/2

- words as occur in my writings Fath Islam, Tauzih Maram and Izala Auham, to the effect that a muhaddas is in one sense a prophet, or that being a muhaddas is partial prophethood or imperfect prophethood, are not to be taken in their real sense, but have been used according to their root meaning in a straight-forward way; otherwise, I lay no claim whatever to actual prophethood. On the other hand, as I have written in my book Izala Auham, page 137, my belief is that our leader and master Muhammad mustafa --- may peace and the blessings of God be upon him --- is the last of the Prophets.
- "So I wish to make it clear to all Muslim brothers that, if they are displeased with these words and if these words give injury to their feelings, they may regard all such words as amended, and instead consider me to have used the word muhaddas.
   For I do not like to create dissension and discord among the Muslims

الحديثة والصلوة والسداد على رسوله خات النبيتن - اما يعديم مسلانون كى خدرت بين گذارش ب كراس عاجز كررساله فتح الاسلام و توضيح مرام وازاله و بام بس تدراليس الفاظ موبود بين كرمورث ايك معنى بين نبي بوتاب يا بيركه محدثيت جردى نون ب يابير كمعد شيت نبوة ناقصه ب بيتام الفاظ عيقى مصول برممول نبيل صرف ساد كى سے ان كے لغوى معنول كے درسے بيان كئے گئے ہيں۔ ورند حاشا وكلا۔ مجھ نبوت قیقی کا ہرگذہ وی کانبیں ہے۔ بلکت جبیا کہ میں کتاب اڑالہ او ہام کے صفحہ ۱۳۷ میں اکسے بیکا بول ميراس بات برايان ب كربهاد \_ سيّد ومولى محدمصطف صدا ورعليه والم خاتم اللهب بياديب سومين نمام مسلمان بهائيول كى خدوت مين واضح كرناميا بهتا بول كراگروه ان نفظول سے ناراص ہیں اور ان کے ولوں برید الفاظ شاق ہیں تو وہ ان الفاظ کو ترمیم شد تصور فرما کر بحیائے اس کے محدّ ہے کا نفظ میری طرف سے سمجد لیں۔ کیونکہ کسی طرح مجمول کو میں تغرقہ اور نفاق ڈالنامنظور نہیں ہے جس مالت میں ابتداء سے میری نیت میں جس کو السُّرَيِّلُ شَانَهُ وَبِ بِمِانَمَا سِيعاس لفظ نبي مُراونبو يَحْقِيقَى نبين سِي بلكصرف محدّث مُراوبو حس كے معنے أنخفرت صلى الدعليد وأله وسلم في مُكلًم مراولتے ہيں ليني محدثوں كي نسبت فرمايا بعدعت ابى هريدة رضى الله تعالى عنه قال قال النبى صل الله عليه ولم قد ال فيمن قبلكر من بني إسرائيل رحال يكلمون من غيران يكونوا

## An announcement 2/2

- "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.' Of muhaddas it is stated in a saying of the Holy Prophet: 'Among the Israelites who were before you, there used to be men who were spoken to by God, though they were not prophets, and if there is one among my followers, it is Umar.'
- "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."

انب ياء فان يك في استى منهم احد فعمر صحيح بخارى علدا دل صفحرا ٢ ه ياده ١١٠٠ باب مناقب عرفت تو مير مجه اينے مسلمان مهائيول كى دلجوئي كے لئے اس لفظ كو دوسر سے بيرابد میں بمان کرنے سے کیا عذر ہوسکتا ہے ۔ سو دوسرا بیرایہ بیرسے کہ بجائے افظ نبی کے محدث كالفظ مرايك عبر مجملين اورائس كو رليني نفظ نبي كوا كاثا جوا خيال فرمالين - اورنيز عنقريب بدعاجزابك دسالم تقنه تكالنے والا سے حس میں ان شبهات كي تفصيل اور بسط تشریح کی جائے گی جومیری کتابوں کے بڑھنے والول کے دلول میں بیدا ہوتے ہیں اورمیری بعض يخرات كوخلاف عفيده المسدّت والجاعت خيال كرتي بي سومي انشاء المدنع عنق سنان او المم كم الألدك لئ يوري تشريح كم سائد اس رسالدس لكد دول كاادر

#### Practical Work 1/6

- Having laid down the ideological basis for the success of Islam, Hazrat Mirza took practical steps for this objective:
  - creation of appropriate literature:
    - starts The Review of Religions:
      - » "It was always a matter of concern and anxiety for me that all the truths, spiritual knowledge, solid arguments in support of the religion of Islam, and things to satisfy the human soul, which were disclosed to me, and are still being disclosed, had not given any benefit to the modernly-educated classes of this country and to the students of truth among the Europeans. This pain was so great as to be unbearable any more. ... Therefore, to fulfill the object which is the real purpose of my life, a proposal has arisen, and that is to bring out a magazine in English for the objects mentioned above."

#### Practical Work 2/6

- Proposes English translation of the Quran:
  - » "I would advise that ... writings of an excellent kind should be sent into these countries. If my people help me heart and soul I wish to prepare a commentary of the Quran which should be sent to them after it has been rendered into the English language. I cannot refrain from stating clearly that this is my work, and that no one else can do it as well as I or he who is an offshoot of mine and thus is included in me."
  - » This work accomplished by Maulana Muhammad Ali

## Practical Work 3/6

- Proposes compiling book on teachings of Islam, and tells
   Maulana Muhammad Ali:
  - » "It is my wish that, to fulfill the duty of propagation of Islam to Europe and America, a book be written in English. This is your work. The reason why Islam does not spread in those countries at this time ... is that those people do not know its real teachings nor have these been put before them. They have the right to be shown the real Islam ... All those matters with which the honour of Islam is connected in this age, and all those arguments which God Almighty has given me to prove the truth of Islam, should be collected together so as to compile a comprehensive book, from which these people can greatly benefit."

#### Practical Work 4/6

- Creation and organisation of Movement:
  - Instituted the taking of a pledge (bai`at) to join Movement,
     which says: "I will hold religion above the world." Purpose to
     create a group and community:
    - » to whom the interests of Islam would matter more than their personal, worldly interests;
    - » which would make sacrifices of all kinds (money, time, talent) for the advancement of Islam.

#### Practical Work 5/6

- Created an organisation to continue the work after him. Wrote in his Will:
  - "If Allah wills, this system will continue to function after the death of us all. For this purpose, an Anjuman is required which shall spend, as it determines fit, the funds which shall accumulate from this income, coming in from time to time, on proclaiming the teachings of Islam and propagating the message of the Oneness of God."

## Practical Work 6/6

- » "9. The Anjuman, which is to hold these funds, shall not be entitled to spend the monies for any purpose except the objects of the Ahmadiyya Movement, and among these objects the propagation of Islam shall have the highest priority."
- The income mentioned above to come from donations and bequests of the members.

## Conclusion

#### Several facets of Ahmadiyya Movement

- Spiritual Movement: spiritual phenomena have real, objective existence. God known through spiritual means. Man must attain nearness to God.
- Rational Movement: test of reason to be applied to belief.
   Blind, unsubstantiated faith not acceptable. Reason required behind supernatural occurrences.

#### Conclusion

• Liberal Movement: Interprets
Islamic teachings and law in a
liberal (rather than rigid) manner.

• Fully faithful adherence to letter and spirit of Holy Quran and Holy Prophet's teachings.

• Modern Movement: Muslims must adapt to the modern world.

• Modern world needs Islam for its moral and spiritual survival.

#### Conclusion

- Tolerant Movement: Islam allows fullest freedom of belief to all.
   Great importance of Inter-faith dialogue and harmonious relations with other religions, and between Muslim sects.
- Missionary Movement: strong conviction in the triumph of Islam, strives with all its resources to propagate its message.

www.ahmadiyya.org