

# QUEST AFTER GOD

GLIMPSES OF THE LIFE OF  
MIRZA GHULAM AHMAD

*Founder of the Ahmadiyya Movement*

*by*

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*Editor, The "Light", Lahore*

1966

[www.aail.org](http://www.aail.org)

THE AHMADIYYA ANJUMAN ISHA'AT-I-ISLAM  
LAHORE-7 (West Pakistan)

1st Edition	...	1949
2nd Reprint	...	1961
3rd Reprint	...	1966

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## FOREWORD

These pages were written twenty-five years ago. They came as the spontaneous expression of a feeling of adoration for a personality which exercised a charm and a spell on whoever came into contact with him. The urge behind these lines was to get at the real man and the secret of the charm that he wielded. Twenty-five years is a long time. But that adoration stands undimmed today as it did then. In fact what has happened in the meantime, in the life of the Muslim nation and the world at large, has deepened that adoration. Empires have crumbled. Nations have been made and unmade. But the light which the Seer of Qadian kindled shines with lustre as bright as ever, beāconing humanity, in the midst of the all-enveloping gloom and confusion of the present age, to the only path of abiding value—the path blazed by the Holy Prophet Muhammad.

I am thankful to my friend, Sh. Muhammad Tufail, M. A. who asked me to revise these pages for another edition and thereby enabled me to enjoy over again this spiritual treat which the life of Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, Mujaddid and Promised Messiah, Founder of the Ahmadiyya Movement, constitutes to a seeker after truth.

LAHORE :

MUHAMMAD YAKUB KHAN

July 23 1949

## THE GREAT MAN'S LOT

يا حسرته على العباد - ما ياتيهم  
من رسول الا كانوا به يستهزؤن - القرآن

Woe unto mankind ! Never did an Apostle come to them but they ridiculed him.—*Al-Quran*.

**I**T is a bare truism that the above verse of the Holy Qur'an embodies. Such happens to be the way of the world. Whenever a Great Soul appears amongst a people, be he a Prophet, a Reformer, a Seer or a Saint, up they rise in revolt against him. To begin with, they ridicule him. That failing in thwarting him in his great resolve, they ostracise him. Then comes persecution of all imaginable kinds. Strange psychology this, but not hard to understand. They cling to their received notions and would on no account part with them. The Great Soul comes with a wider outlook on life and out of sympathy wants to emancipate his fellow-men from the slough of the low and the mean. But all weaning is by its very nature an unpleasant process. They refuse to be weaned off from their conventional modes of thought and life. Any one who should dare attempt such a thing is considered a dangerous person. They declare a wholesale crusade against him.

Such happens to be the way of a fallen humanity. When alive, they send their Great Men to the gallows ; when dead, they raise memorials to them. The history of every nation, secular as well as religious, abounds in

such tomfoolery. Socrates whose name commands universal respect in the world of thought to-day, was, in his day, considered one such dangerous person. In the Greece of Pagan days, he had the vision of soul to see through the futility of the prevalent superstitions and had the courage of conviction to proclaim it from the house-tops. God is one, he preached and it was enough of ultimatum for the forces of conventionalism to be up against him. Charged with corrupting the youth, he had to pay for it with his life. The self-same Socrates who was made to take a cup of poison by his own compatriots for a fault none other than preaching the Unity of God, is to-day honoured not only in the land of his martyrdom but all the world over. Take another such great martyr to popular wrath, Jesus. To-day, he is given a seat on the right hand of God Himself but we all know what treatment he got at the hands of his own people in his day. Scoffed at, ridiculed, made to wear the crown of thorns and ultimately sent to the Cross! Such has been the common lot of all Great Men. Nor could the Holy Prophet Muhammad and his companions escape that fate. By their own kith and kin were, they subjected to the worst of persecutions. He came as *Rahmatul Lil Alamin*, mercy to the whole of mankind. But what was the reception he got in his own day? They ridiculed him, called him all sorts of names. While prostrating before God, they placed the entrail of a camel on his neck. They threw rubbish at him; they pelted him and were not content with anything short of taking his life and did everything they could to take it. Coming down to the history of Islam, we find the same story repeat itself over and over again. Hardly has there been one Muslim saint or scholar but has been meted out

the same treatment by the Muslims themselves. Take the first four Caliphs, the *Khulafa-i-Rashedin*. With all their love of Islam and devotion to Islam, there are hundreds of thousands of Muslims who consider it an act of piety to throw mud on someone or other of them. Imam Abu Hanifa, the well-known founder of the Hanafia School, was in his day condemned as a *kafir*, put in prison and ultimately poisoned. Imam Shafa 'i was called "worse than the devil", was sent as a prisoner from Yeman to Baghdad and on the way he was abused by the people all along. Imam Malik was made to stand on a camel's back, was taken around on show and given seventy stripes—and all this just for difference of opinion on a religious point! Imam Hambal was kept in prison for twenty-eight long months. Every evening they would bring him out, flog him in public and spit at his face. Imam Bukhari was banished from his birth-place and was not allowed to lay his head anywhere, till, tired of life, he prayed to God to call him back to Himself. Bayazid Bustami was seven times expelled from his hearth and home. Sheikh Shibli was actually condemned to death. Sheikh Abdul Qadir of Baghdad, Sheikh Mohy-ud-Din Ibn al-Arabi, Maulana Jalal-ud-Din, the renowned author of *Masnawi*, Imam Ghazali, the great Muslim philosopher, every one of them was decorated with this ungrateful insignia of *kufir*. Mujaddid Alf-Sani had for two years rot into Gawaliar Jail. Mirza Ghulam Ahmad would not have been the Great Soul of the day, had he escaped this common fate of his class. It was only something of a piece with the same mentality that held this Great Son of Islam up to public obloquy and gave him all sorts of uncharitable

epithets. His one reply to all these uncharitable *fatwās* of *kufṛ* that were issued against him was :

بعد از خدا بعشق محمد معزوم

گر کفر این بود بخدا سخت کافر

"After God, with the love of Muhammad I am intoxicated. If this be *kufṛ*, by God I am the greatest of infidels."

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## A GODLESS WORLD

چو غنچه بود جهانے خموش و سر بسته

من آمدم بقدمے که از صبا باشد

What was the meaning, what was the mission, what was the message of this Great Soul of our age, alas, it is not the lot of many men to understand, appreciate, admire and adore. Though in this world, such souls are not of this world. To all appearances, they live in our midst, they move in our midst and have their being in our midst, yet as a matter of fact, they are as far above us as those solitary silvery clouds high up in the heavens. There at those celestial heights, far above the din and dust of the earth, they live in the perpetual sunshine of Divine beauty and love. There they have the vision which false fears and false hopes of this world dim not. It is the mist of these mundane cares and worries that gives us the the blurred vision which we, the common run of worldly men and women, have. Through glasses thus befogged we look at things and events and give them values that must needs be false. But those who live at elevations beyond the reach of these mists and fogs, see things in their true perspective. And hence the divergence of our



mutual view-points. They tell us of the vast beautiful expanse where they dwell—free, unfettered, in eternal bliss. We, on our part interpret them in the light of our own false values and false standards. We set our own liliputian tapes to these giants of manhood. And as a foregone conclusion, we fail to see eye to eye with them and, consequently, the conflict. It is something like the case of the frog and the fish in the fable. The fish, fresh from the sea into the little pond of the frog, would vainly try to give the latter an idea of the vast expanse of the sea. When asked one day by one of his friends if in his prayers, there ever entered the slightest idea of *riyā* (show), how apt was the illustration Mirza Ghulam Ahmad gave! "Would you be in any way prompted by a motive of show", he replied, "if you were to say your prayers in a zoo in the presence of all those birds and beasts, with no human being about? Surely, none of us would care a fig for what a bear or an ass, a duck or a snake should think of us. Even so is the case with these Great Souls. What is this world of ours but a big zoo? Though in human forms how many of us are there who can boast of having a right human vision of life? If Circe's wand were once more brought into operation, this time on us instead of Ulysses' gormandizers, it would be interesting to see which particular shape each one of us takes—whether that of a wolf for our ferocity, or of a pig for our perversity, or of a peacock for our showy inclinations and so forth. These various passions are so many cages, so to speak, that keep us shut-up within the animal plane. These Great Souls, however, break open every one of these cages and when thus free, they soar high up to the throne of Divine glory. How sweetly Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad sings of this spiritual Godward flight :

ازان قفس بپریدم برون کہ دنیا نام  
کنوں بکنگرہ عرش جائے ما باشد

“Of that cage which is known as the world, out have I flown. My abode now is on the pinnacle of God’s Throne of Glory.”

Perhaps never in the course of recent history has there been a period more Godless than the 19th century, especially the latter half of it. It was a period when Western achievements in the domain of physical sciences and arts had dazzled the eyes of the world. Man was subjugating the forces of nature and what would have passed for a miracle in olden days, was in this scientific age a commonplace thing. Natural phenomena were now explained by physical causes without any room for some Higher Power. This new awakening of man to his own powers almost intoxicated him. He had no need for any such thing as God. He was the master of all he surveyed, he thought. In other words, it was a grossly materialistic and mechanical age, so far as the West was concerned. There was a mad headlong rush after material things. And in the hurry and bustle of this feverish busy life, the voice of the High had virtually got drowned. The machine age had reduced man as well to just an automation, divesting him of all vision of a higher life. It seemed as if the very idea of a Superior Being was clean out of man’s mind. Under the influence of this matter-ridden machine age, there sprang up a literature and philosophy breathing the same spirit. With rare exceptions here and there which only proved the rule, there was a ring of atheism about all thought of the day. Materialism and atheism are twins. The one was bound to be followed by the other. This state of things went on at a great speed until only recently

the Great War exposed the hollowness of this Godless civilization and cried a halt to it. People's eyes were for the first time opened to the grim fact that with God left out of the game of life, they were only working out their own destruction all the while. The East was faring no better. Whereas in the West, it was an age of restless activity, here in the East life was at its lowest ebb. What the West was before the Renaissance, somewhat the same the East was about this latter half of the 19th century. Ancient civilizations had decayed; mighty empires had crumbled and what was left of religion was empty ceremonialism, blind letterworship. This was the case with all religions. The soul of religion had been lost. The form was all the people had. It was the darkest period in a Dark Age. God was as much out of man's heart in the East as in the West.

What about Islam, the youngest of all religions? Every whit the same. The original vision of the desert was lost. Instead, there had cropped up a big bundle of forms and formulas, rites and rituals, and trappings and underneath the sheer weight of these, all idea of a Living God had got completely crushed. A flowing beard, a long rosary, a longer robe, a huge turban—these formed the paraphernalia of a Godly person and whoever cared to wear them, was sure to pass for a pious and Godly person regardless of the inner beast in him. Daily prayers were also said but they were little better than parrot-like muttering and mumbling of certain words and going through a few gesticulations and movements. *Salāt* (prayer) had ceased to be a man's *Mi'rāj* i.e., a means of atonement with God, as the Holy Prophet described it. Nor was it anything like the pure crystal stream of water, as the Prophet put it, in which a man

took a dip and came out cleaner in mind and soul. It was just a thing blind, automatic, mechanical. The Living God, the sole purpose and quest of prayer, was nowhere to be found there. Five times a day they would pray to God and fifty times a day they would prey on His creatures. To such depths had the real meaning of this all-important institution dwindled. The same was true of all other Islamic institutions. Fast was no longer meant as a means of spiritual purification and ultimate edification of man to a higher plane of life with the generality of Muslims ; it was just starvation in obedience to no higher motive than the observance of a prevalent custom. The pilgrimage to Makka, instead of cultivating in the pilgrim a broad humanitarian outlook and impressing upon him the majesty of God, was just another mechanical process, considered like the atonement in Christianity to wash off all past sins. All his life a man would sow his wild oats and when he thought a large enough quantity of sin must have accumulated to his account, he would just take a trip to Makka to have it all struck off, at a single stroke. He came back, as he thought, with a clean slate. But this, instead of prompting him to turn a new page, put a premium on another free run of a low life.

The Qur'an likewise was, to the vast majority of Muslims, not the living word of a Living God but just a dead letter, having no place in work-a-day life. The only use for the Book was to produce it in a court of law to take a false oath upon or to find out such charms and incantations as might reveal hidden treasures, or win the heart of the beloved, or again to take omens from. All the pearls of deep wisdom embedded in its

pages, with potency to infuse life into dead bones as they actually did in the Prophet's day, were little better to them than so many empty shells. It never struck them that after all, it was a code of life and a Muslim must take no step in this rough and tumble of life but in the light of this code. Nor did it occur to anyone that nowhere could a spark of real life be found except in the pages of the Holy Qur'an.

The Word of God which was supposed to "take out of darkness into light" was absolutely shelved off, so far as practical life was concerned. The reason is not far to seek. There was no living faith in a living God, There was lip-reverence for the Book but that was due to blind custom. In the scheme of life, the Qur'an nowhere came in. For this, resort was had to other sources. There were two such sources—the *Mulla* and the *Pir*. Like the Christian clergymen of Medieval Europe or the Brahman of India, the Mulla had usurped to himself all authority of interpretation of the Qur'an. A layman dared not open it with a view to understanding it. This was considered a sacrilege. *Ghair muqallid* (i.e., one not binding himself by ecclesiastical authority) was an epithet almost synonymous with infidel. Religion, according to the Mulla, was that which had the hallmark of his conventional authorities. And what did it amount to? To a practical negation of the Qur'an. Instead of the Book of God, there were set up "authorities" in the form of this man or that. The door of the Divine Word was banged against all. Light and guidance must be sought, if at all, through those stereotyped channels of the *Mulla*. This meant the dethronement of God from the seat of authority and the installation of the Mulla on the pedestal of Divinity.

There was, however, yet another usurper of the throne of God. It was the Pir. If you wanted a moral or spiritual lesson, the Pir would have you knock at his door. He was the custodian of the spiritual secrets of Islam which he claimed to have inherited through a long chain of Pirs and sub-Pirs. It was a hidden treasure, not open to the profane eye of the uninitiated. It came down from bosom to bosom. The Pir's own bosom was the living repository of that treasure and if you wanted a "share" of that, you must formally enter the band of his disciples. If you wanted more of that "share", you must approach the Pir with more *nazrāna* (cash present). That was the quickest and the surest way of finding God. The Qur'an was of little account. I remember having once had a talk with one such Pir. When I told him of a certain man being a really Godly man, he sharply asked: Well what school of *Tarīqat* (spiritual instruction) does he belong to?" I replied he belonged to none of his so-called schools of spirituality, and had imbibed all his spirituality from the fountain-head of all Godliness, the Holy Qur'an. He turned round on me in a fit of fanatical rage, saying, "How dare you talk such blasphemy? Spirituality without being formally linked up to one or other of the *silsilās* (school of spirituality)! Nonsense!" "Yes", I replied, it is of such as you that the Holy Prophet complained long since: O Lord! My people have deserted this Qur'an altogether." And what in fact does this frame of mind mean, save that the Holy Qur'an is to all intents and purposes a dead letter?

Such was the condition of the general masses of Islam. With the Mulla on one side and the Pir on the other, they were between the devi! and the deep sea.

There was no way out of it. The living, throbbing Word of God was to them a forbidden fruit. Direct approach to God was an impossibility. To think of it was a profanity. There were only two gateways to God and the keys of these lay in the hands of these two monsters. Such was the slave mentality of the average Muslim. God was nowhere to be met within his mental make-up. It was either the Mulla or the Pir that held undisputed sway over his head as well as heart.

There was, however, yet another class of people which, though enlightened, was hardly more Godly. This was the small class of the "intellectuals," educated and brought up under the influence of Western culture—known as man of "new light," the school known as the Aligarh Movement. This was a revivalist movement and did, no doubt, a great good to the general awakening of the Indian Muslims. But its inspiration was purely Western and hence the lines on which it developed were essentially Western. It was an imitation copy of the West and its attitude towards the Western sciences was one of awe and reverence. It stood with its mouth wide agape at the miracles wrought by Western sciences and arts. Its fancy was wholly taken up with these and the mechanical civilization of the West seemed to it the be-all and end-all of life. And as was only to be expected, the movement, could not but imbibe the atheistic trend of Western thought. Agnosticism, scepticism, atheism found way into the young blood of the community. The danger was realised and attempts were made to find an antidote to the poison. But the antidote was little better than the poison itself. The attitude adopted was timidly apologetic and attempts were made to harmonize Islamic truths with the scientific and philosophic thought

of the day and this, unconsciously, spell the suicide of Islam. This new interpretation of life, like its prototype of the West, sought to explain things on a purely physical plane. In other words, it amounted to the banishment of God from human affairs.

It was to such a world that Mirza Ghulam Ahmad came with his message—a world Godless to the very core. The West sunk in materialism, the East stepped in formalism and mechanicalism, God nowhere in the hearts of men! Yes, to such a world came he with his message from on High. *God is*, he proclaimed. *God lives*, as He did in the days of yore. *God hears* our prayers. *God answers* our prayers. *God speaks* as he spoke of old. In God alone lay all the *happiness* of man. A *living* faith in a *living* God was the only panacea of all our ills and ailments, the only secret of success in this life and the only key to Heaven in the hereafter. And what could be a more appropriate message to a humanity so bereft of the last flicker of faith? It was of this message that the Holy Prophet spoke when he said that he could scent a fragrant breeze blowing from the side of India. It was to this high vision, this living faith that the Holy Prophet referred when he said :

لو كان الايمان معلقا بالثريا لنالته رجل من ابنا الفارس -  
(بخاری)

“Even if faith be gone up to the pleiades a man from amongst the sons of Persia will restore it”.—*Bukhari*.



## THE MAN

Before we proceed to understand more of the message of life which Mirza Ghulam Ahmad brought, it would be worth while to know something about the man himself. For what is the message that a great man brings but the music that vibrates the whole of his being? Let us therefore have a peep into the innermost heart of this Great Soul, if we would thoroughly enjoy the heavenly strains that flowed from it.

Unfortunately, of the early childhood of Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, we are not in possession of many details. He was born in 1839 at a country place, Qadian, some seventy miles from Lahore. He came of a good old stock of Central Asia and was the scion of a dynasty which originally belonged to Persia. As such he was one of the "sons of Persia" as was foretold by the Holy Prophet. It was in the reign of Babar, sometime about the year 1530 C.E. that his family migrated to India. They were granted a large estate in the fertile plains of the Punjab and they settled at the place where now stands the modern Qadian. They called it Islamabad, which shows the religious trend of the family. In the country-side round about, the place was known as Islamabad Qazi, for here dwelt the Qazi (Head) of the estate. And by a gradual process of contraction and corruption it assumed the present shape—Qadian. Anyway, the family lived here in power and plenty as the ruling family. The advent of the Sikh rule in the Punjab, however, spelt to them a hard turn of fortune. Their power was crushed and they were driven out of their estate. The rule of Ranjit Singh brought them some measure of relief. On the representation of Mirza Ghulam Murtaza, father of Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, the

house was restored to its ancestral home at Qadian, though not to its former glory. The once big estate shrank into just five petty villages.

Mirza Ghulam Murtaza was ever haunted by the vision of the lost power of his house. Though now in comparative comfort, of real peace of heart, he had none. With the death of Ranjit Singh which synchronised with the birth of our hero, began the disruption of Sikh power. At the advent of British rule Mirza Ghulam Murtaza tried his luck once more and he underwent lot of worry and expense to win back the rest of his ancestral estate. But this was a fond hope. He would incessantly brood over these disappointments and this went a long way to mould at that tender age, the trend of his young son, Mirza Ghulam Ahmad's mind. It impressed upon him the transient character of worldly glory and the hollowness of worldly ambitions. Of this, he himself tells us in a note on his early life: "On account of these disappointments, my father would ever keep in a deep whirlpool of care and worries. This made a deep impression on me and transformed the whole of my outlook on life. The bitter experiences of father had for me the message of a life free from all alloy of worldliness."

At the age of six, the would-be Mujaddid was put in charge of a private tutor who gave him coaching in the Holy Qur'an and the Persian language. There were no regular schools in those days and only nobility cared to educate their children by such special arrangements. At ten, an Arabic scholar was engaged to teach him Arabic. From him he learnt a few books in Arabic grammar. At the age of seventeen, a third teacher was employed who gave him lessons in Arabic syntax, in logic and in medicine. It is said that unlike other boys of his family who were

put under the same teacher, he was ever engrossed in his studies. The frivolities characteristic of that age were not after his heart. Gifted with a contemplative bent of mind, he loved solitude and books.

Mirza Ghulam Murtaza wanted his son grow up to the best traditions of his family—a man of the world bent on making a mark in life. So he put him in his own line of work which consisted mainly in looking after the agricultural interests of the family and knocking about the courts in the vain pursuit of regaining the lost estate. Now this was a work utterly foreign to the nature of the young Mirza whom Providence had designed for higher things. He was no good at this sort of job and his father, disappointed in him, would often scold him as a hopeless fellow. Nevertheless, in obedience to the wishes of his father he would do all he could to attend to the affairs entrusted to him. During this period he had to undertake long and weary journeys mostly on foot to follow up lawsuits in courts. His trips in this connection to the hill courts at Dalhousie however were not absolutely devoid of interest. He loved to tread the lonely tracks, up and down hills and dales, musing and chanting within himself on the beauties of nature, in accompaniment to the nodding tree and the murmuring streams. In older days he would often talk of those pleasant moments. "Whenever I happened to make a journey to Dalhousie, my heart would spontaneously gush forth with glorification of the Lord at the sight of vast tracts of rich verdure and flowing springs of water. I thoroughly enjoyed those solitudes, and would find my prayers particularly sweet."

Litigation, however, was not in the line of Mirza Ghulam Ahmad and as was only to be expected, he was not much of a success at it. His father thought of trying

another field—the Opportunities of Government service. At the age of 25, in 1864, he was made to accept a job in Government service at Sialkot. This brings us to what is known as the Sialkot period of his life. Here he went through the most momentous experience of his life, the transitional stage. Here he came in contact with men and matters. This sphere of life in which the hand of Providence placed him, as if with a purpose to try his mettle and bring him out as burnished gold from the crucible, was full of corruption. He saw the seamy side of human life and the filth and dirt in which so many of human beings were wallowing. Like a duck in the water, however, he never mixed with these men. On the other hand, he gave himself up all the more to solitude and meditation, and later on when he visited this town in 1904, as the Messiah, it was with no small amount of pride that he recalled his early life here. Addressing a public meeting, he said : "I am the self-same man who lived here in your city a number of years. But how many of you then knew me? I lived in obscurity but those were the sweetest days of my life. For though in society, I was yet in solitude, though in the midst of many, I was yet alone, though in a crowded town, I yet passed my days as if I lived in a desert."

His sojourn at Sialkot also brought him in touch with the Christian Missionary movement. Sialkot was the centre of the Scotch Mission. He held frequent discussions with the Christian missionaries. The head of the Mission Rev. Mr. Butler, M.A., held the Mirza in very high esteem for his piety and sterling qualities. When leaving Sialkot for England he expressly called on the Mirza in his office to say good-bye to him.

When the father saw that even in his new walk of life, his son was a round ball in a square hole, he called him back to Qadian. This was in 1868. Now most of the young Mirza's time was devoted to a critical study of the Holy Qur'an, of commentaries and books on tradition. This period immediately preceding the supreme spiritual experience was a distinct chapter in itself, characterised by numerous visions harbingering the approach of Dawn. These visions were mostly about coming events and came out surprisingly true.

I must not skip over this chapter of the Mirza's youth without referring to some of his compositions at this stage which will give a peep into the depths of this Great Soul. Here is an extract from an interesting letter which he addressed to his father :

"Father dear,—With all affection and respect I beg to tell you that these days I see with my eyes, and perceive with my mind, how year after year epidemics take a heavy toll of human lives, snatching friends away from friends, relations from relations. Not one year passes but I witness this great calamity befall mankind. This has thrown cold water on all my desires of this world. My whole being is filled with Divine awe and this couplet of Sa'di of Shiraz is ever on my lips :

مکن تکیہ بر عمر نا پائیدار      مباش ایمن از بازی روزگار

"Place no reliance in this unstable life. Nor be off your guard against the tricks of time."

And besides, this couplet of Farrukh of Qadian (his own poet name), ever aches my heart :

بدنیائے دوں دل مبند اے جوان      کہ وقت اجل میرسد ناگہاں

"Put not your heart in this base world, ye fellow. The hour of death may be on you any moment."

Therefore it is my heart's desire that the rest of my days I spend in the nook of solitude, keep aloof from society and live on the love of Him, the Pure One. May be, this may compensate for the past :

عمر بگذشت و نماند است جز ایامے چند  
بہ کہ در یاد کسی صبح کنم شامے چند

"Life is gone. But a few spans are left. Let me spend some nights in the thought of Some One."

So our hero, even at that youthful day, was already soaring in the realms of the spirit. Already in his inward self, he was musing on the meaning of life and gave form to those beautiful sentiments in verse. Here are some of his sweet lines depicting in unearthly tunes the love of a passionate soul for thy Heavenly Beloved :

من نہ پیچم سر از تو اے جانان	دامن خود دست من مرہان
من ز مادر برائی تو زادم	ہست عشقت غرض زا یجادم
روئی دلدار بر دل من تافت	دل من مقصد دو عالم یافت
تاسرا بر رخ تو سودائی است	از خلائق نہ غم نہ پروائی است
خلق در کاروبار خود ہوشیار	ماچوں مستان فتادہ ہر در یار
دل ز عشق کسی تپید مرا	اے مبارک کسی کہ دید مرا

"Never will I turn face from Thee ; snatch not away Thy skirt from me.

Of my mother, for Thee was I born ; Thy love is the purpose of my creation.

The face of the Beloved has shone on me, my heart found the good of both the worlds.

Since I have taken a fancy to Thy face ; of men, I have no worry nor care.

People are clever at their respective job ; like mad man I am lying at Thy door.

My heart burns with the love of Some One ; O ! how sweet the One that has cast a glance at me."

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## THE DAWN

اليس الله بكاف عبده

Is not God sufficient unto His servant ?

In this narrative of the Great Soul of our age I have but one purpose before my eyes. I want the reader to grasp, not so much what Mirza Ghulam Ahmad said or did, but what he was. For, what a man *is*, that he says and does. If I have to refer to his words or deeds, I do so in so far as they throw light on the inner Man within him. It is, to my mind, in this, that lies the meaning and value to us, of any great man. If we are to understand and appraise the worth of Mirza Ghulam Ahmad we are liable to be misled, unless we lay our hands right on the Man himself, unless we take a plunge down into depths of his very soul and watch its inner working at close quarters or unless we soar up with him to those heights from which he looked down on the world its why and its wherefore.

A glimpse of the Mirza's mind as we have had so far, leaves us in no doubt as to the dominant note of his personality. He was out to hit upon some sure solution of the riddle of life. Appearances could not deceive or hood-wink him. He must penetrate the veil and lay hold on the Reality behind it. Such was the cast of his mind and from very early days could be seen in him the germs of a Master Mind. As years rolled by, that great passion took a firmer hold of his head and heart, His Sialkot

life was characterised by the same detachment from earthly connections, the same longing to pierce through the all-enveloping darkness. Things went on like this till we reach a period somewhere in the seventies of the last century. This was for him a stage of intense groping for light.

Seekers after Divine light tell us that before that light comes in full blaze, they witness what might be compared to twilight on the distant horizon. In this twilight, Mirza Ghulam Ahmad lived ever since his Sialkot days. The spiritual experience known as a vision is something like seeing things in such light and this must, at best, mean a hazy, vague, dim perception. Of these 'visions' the Mirza was quite a frequent recipient for years in the past. In fact, among the small circle of his acquaintances he was noted for these. With such precision would they come out true. His biographers give lengthy details of these, how he would catch a glimpse of some distant event, communicate it to the person or persons concerned and to the surprise of all, it would come out exactly as foretold. But then this was just twilight as I have already said. The full blaze was yet to come. The sun was yet to dawn. And this is how that dawn came in all its brilliance, illuminating the innermost chambers of his heart.

It was on the eventful day of his father's death (1876) that the first bright ray came to him. The twilight was gone and it was full light. The curtain lifted, the mystery removed, he found himself in the full blaze of the Divine presence. The father was on the sick-bed and there was nothing unusual about it. It was one of his ordinary attacks. Yet what was a common sick-bed to the eye of man was shortly to be the father's death-bed. *Wassamāi wattāriq*" والطارق came the voice of the Unseen. And it shook



the whole of the young Mirza's being. It communicated to him his father's approaching end. "By the heaven and the event coming at sunset," said the revelation. This the young Mirza communicated to others and just at sunset, the hour foretold, the father breathed his last. But as soon as the Word of God brought him the news of his father's death, a sort of a vague fear overtook his heart. As we have already seen, the Mirza was not much of a worldly-wise man. The entire family depended upon the resources of the father which were to end with his life. The youthful Mirza naturally felt the coming responsibilities weigh on his mind. Hardly however had this apprehension flashed upon his mind when there came the all-powerful consolation: *Alaisallāhu Bikaffin abdahū*" (اليس الله بكاف عبده)—"Is not God sufficient unto His servant?" Words breathing the Majesty of God! All fears evaporated and his heart was filled with power which was not of this earth. This might be regarded as a big landmark in the Godward voyage of our hero. Here is his own account of this grand spiritual experience.

"With this Divine revelation my heart was greatly strengthened, even so as a most painful wound heals all of a sudden, with some balm. It is a fact borne out by experience that a revelation from God has this peculiarity of its own, that it brings cheer and solace to the heart of the recipient and this is due to the deep, firm conviction that revelation brings along with it. For such revelations are accompanied by all the light and resplendence of the Lord and His power.....As soon as I received this revelation, deep conviction went home down into my heart that never shall God forsake me."

## THE PHILOSOPHER

نور فرقان ہے جو سب نوروں سے اجلا نکلا  
 پاک وہ جس سے یہ انوار کا دیا نکلا  
 سب جہاں چہاں چکے ساری دکانس دیکھیں  
 مئے عرفان کا یہی ایک ہی شیشہ نکلا

“It is the light of the Qur’an that turned out to be the most resplendent of all lights ; Pure is He from Whom gushed forth this flood of light.”

The entire world have I combed and all shops have I hunted ; Of pure wine of Divine knowledge, have I found but this one phial.”

Let not the reader mistake Mirza Ghulam Ahmad for a stereotyped theologian with narrow mental grooves stuffed with a few conventional books, nor for a self-centred idle visionary, knowing or caring to know little about contemporary thought. He will certainly miss the man clean if he take him for one or the other. One has only to refer to his works such as *Barhin-i-Ahmadiyya*—a deep rationalistic discourse in as many as four volumes—and *Aimu-i-Kamalat-i Islam*, to class him so far as critical research goes, with men like Spencer, Kant, Berkley and Nietzsche, with this difference that whereas these latter had only the eye of reason with which to explore the regions of thought, the Mirza had the advantage of having his light of reason supplemented by the light of revelation. Those who are accustomed to look upon reason and religion as two distinct things which may even run counter to each other may be surprised at this. But such was

not the Mirza's view of religion. He gave a beautiful illustration of the interrelation between reason and revelation. He compared the latter to a microscope to the eye of reason. Just as the naked physical eye is limited in its vision to things up to a certain degree of magnitude, so is the naked eye of reason. But if you want to see minute things, you must call in the microscope to its aid. Even so is the nature of the function of revelation with respect to the eye of reason. The one supplements the other.

In the preceding chapter I have shown how the Mirza was furnished with this microscope of Divine revelation and ever since he used it with distinct advantage in his criticism of all contemporary thought and in the exposition of the spiritual laws governing the life of man. He had made a grand discovery. He had found God. But it was only the God of the Qur'an that existed. All other gods were only the "big brother" of the Mumbo Jumbo of the primitive man. No other spiritual explanation of this Universe, he proclaimed, was in consonance with reason except that given in the Qur'an. This was not mere credulity. It was an enlightened conviction, the mature result of a thorough survey of all the existing religions of the world. This naturally drew him into the field of controversy, at which he displayed considerable force and acumen. And as the last word on comparative religion, he compiled his famous work, *Barahin-i--Ahmadiyya*, dealing with every existing shade of thought in the field of religion—from Hinduism in all its off shoots (Arya Samaj, Brahma Samaj, Dev Samaj and so forth) to Christianity,

and down to atheism. The work may rightly be called the Encyclopaedia of Religion.

The publication of this book created a stir in religious circles and brought Mirza Ghulam Ahmad to a position of prominence in the world of religious thought. The Muslims acclaimed him as the greatest servant of Islam. To give the reader an idea of the deep appreciation which his work won, I cannot do better than reproduce in brief the tribute which a leading theologian of the day, Maulvi Muhammad Hussain of Batala, who subsequently became the leader of opposition against him, paid to it. He devoted as many as 125 pages in several issues of his magazine, *Isha'at-us-Sunnah* (June to November 1884) to a review of this book. He winds up this lengthy review with the observation :

“This is the summary of the book. Now we would express our estimate of it in brief and in unexaggerated terms. In our opinion, this book, in view of the present age and the present conditions, is such that the like of it has never so far been published in the history of Islam and as for the future, we can say nothing. Its author has also displayed such steadfastness in helping forward the cause of Islam with money, with personal labour, with pen and tongue, that a parallel of it is rarely met with among the past Muslims. If someone should consider these comments of ours as Eastern exaggeration, let him produce at least one such book in which Islam has been so forcibly defended against all hostile critics, especially against the Arya and Brahmo sects of Hinduism. And over and above this, let him point to just a few of such

persons who may have undertaken besides these manifold services, to furnish proof of the spiritual fruits of Islam and have so manfully thrown out to all opponents of Islam and disbelievers in the fact of Divine revelation the challenge: "Whoever doubts the fact of revelation, let him come to me and have a personal observation of the truth of this spiritual experience."

It is no place to go into details. It is a pity the numerous admirers of the Mirza have so far done nothing to introduce the outside world to these beautiful writings of the Great Man. The wealth of thought contained in the pages of at least the *Barahîn* and the *Kamalât* should by now, have been made accessible to the Western reader. The East is unfortunately far too behind in its modes of thought to appreciate the scientific exposition of Islamic truths contained in these books. The Mirza's high philosophy, so strikingly in keeping with the scientific spirit of the West, is sure, if properly presented, to revolutionize the entire range of Western thought in the domain of science and philosophy. Besides, no one can understand either the man or his message but through these books. It is not enough to tell the people that a Messiah was foretold to appear in these latter days or to marshal quotations after quotations from the Qur'an and the Hadith in support of it. People must see the Messiah as he was. The Messiah must be his own argument. And the *Barahîn* and the *Kamalât* constitute two mirrors which reveal the lofty soul of their illustrious author.

But to give the reader just a sample of the pearls of thought in these books, for the first time in the history of

religion, Mirza Ghulam Ahmad postulated, of course, from the Qur'an that the laws and teachings of a revealed religion must not conflict with the laws of physical nature, inasmuch as the one is the Word of God and the other the Work of God. The laws emanating from one and same source must not be contradictory. That is why the Qur'an, when it wants to explain some abstract spiritual truth, calls attention to some concrete phenomenon of Nature. This is like explaining the unknown by the known. Under this general principle the Mirza, in the course of his exposition, has thrown light on some very subtle questions, e.g., the existence of God and the fact of Divine revelation. He takes some such line of argument. In the whole realm of physical nature there appears at work a law that may be called the law of demand and supply. There is no demand anywhere but without fail, there is corresponding to it supply as well somewhere in Nature. Hunger and thirst are the two primary demands of man's nature. The needful supply is there in the shape of food and water. Even before man's birth Nature ensures the requisite supply and fills the mother's breast with milk. Man wants to see with his eyes but this cannot be done without light. So comes the supply of light. The ear must hear and this creates a demand for something to bring sounds. That something is provided in the form of air. Generalizing from these natural phenomena, the Mirza asks: Is not there a deep hankering in the innermost heart of man after some Great Unseen Power to exist behind all this universe? If the hankering is there, the supply to satisfy that hankering must also be there. Two things there-

fore follow. Firstly, the Great Unseen Power must be there. Secondly, He must make Himself known to man. The next question that arises is, How is it possible for man to know God? By mere reason? No, he says. The highest flight of reason is, There ought to be a God. But *ought to be* would not do. For a thirsty man, it is no use telling him that somewhere on earth, there ought to be water. That would not satisfy his thirst. *Ought to be* is not the supply. Here is water,—that is what he wants and that is what alone can quench his thirst. Likewise, a mere *there-ought-to-be-a-God* cannot quench man's spiritual thirst. The demand wants something more—that there *is* a God. Now, how is it possible to bridge this gulf between the *ought-to-be* of the philosopher and the *is* that the thirsty-of-spirit wants? In one and the only one way—viz., that God should actually speak to man. Speech alone can remove all uncertainty and transform the philosopher's probable into the saint's actual. Hence' the fact of God speaking to man.

The parallelism between the Word of God, the Holy Quran and the Work of God Nature, is so beautifully brought out at great length in the *Barahīn*. The very first attributes of God with which this Book of God opens are shown to be every inch the same we find at work in the book of Nature. A cursory glance at Nature around us reveals four laws universally at work. Firstly, everything is created with a set purpose. By a gradual process of evolution it attains to its appointed end. Take

for instance, a tiny seedling. The ideal before the seedling is some day to grow into a big tree. The process of its growth and development is marked by definite stages through which it must pass. This is the primary law regulating the life of everything in Nature, i. e., evolution from the lowest to the highest point along a set fixed route. This primary law of the Nature forms the fundamental attribute of the God of the Qur'an, viz., *Rab*. This word *Rab* literally means one who brings a thing up, step by step, from the lowest to the highest stage. The whole of Nature proclaims the working of the attributes of *Rab*. *Rab* alone therefore could be the God of man, who is part and parcel of the same Nature. And most appropriately the Qur'an depicts Him, first and foremost as *Rab*. Again, it is a common observation that the seedling would never see the light of day unless a number of other requirements are provided—viz., suitable soil, water, air, sunshine and so forth. The Qur'an represents this law of Nature by the attribute *Rahmān*, which means one who supplies these preliminary requirements but for which no growth is possible. This done, further success of growth depends on how far the laws of horticulture are observed. If these are observed, the result is proper growth. If not, the seed must either get atrophied or the result must be stunted growth. These two laws form further two attributes of the God of the Qur'an viz., *Rahīm* and *Mālik*. *Rahīm* is one who rewards effort on right lines. *Mālik* is one who has the power to punish or pardon in case the proper laws of growth are not observed. No evolution of man is possible



but along these lines. For his physical growth, for instance, he must want proper food. But food he cannot have ready-made. He must *exert* himself. In *exertion* lies the secret of his growth. He must grow his own food. This he cannot do unless air, rain, sunshine and so many other things which are beyond his control come to him as a free gift. *Rahmān* makes a free supply of these ; for the word means one who supplies such material without any effort on man's part. When the material has been supplied, man must use his God-given powers to put it to right use. When he does so he gets the desired results. The power which ensures that effort must be plentifully rewarded is called *Rahīm*. And to keep us to the right course of effort, we must be in no doubt as to the inevitability of results. Wrong effort must lead to undesirable fruit. The power which ensures this is known as *Mālik*. Any process of evolution whether in Nature or in man proceeds along these four-fold lines. Thus the Qur'anic God is the God we find manifested in Nature and hence the only true God.

It will be clear from the above that Mirza Ghulam Ahmad was nothing of credulous sort of man who is content with ideas, merely hereditary, customary or conventional. He took things far too seriously to be so cheaply satisfied. He had the keen, discerning eye of the scientific critic of the day and weighed and judged the comparative values of the existing religions on their own merits. It was after thorough investigation that conviction as to the Divine origin of the Qur'an was forced upon him. It was not the conviction either of

the over-credulous or of the self-duped. It was the enlightened conviction of critical scientific research that made him sing :

ہر طرف فکر کو دوڑا کے تھکایا ہم نے  
 کوئی دین دین محمد سا نہ پایا ہم نے  
 ہم نے اسلام کو خود تجربہ کر کے دیکھا  
 نور ہے نور۔ اٹھو دیکھو سنایا ہم نے

“My contemplation, I let go in every direction : but no faith like the faith of Muhammad did I find. In person did I test the truth of Islam. Listen ! I say, it is light through and through.”

### THE MESSAGE

موسم لالہ زار باز آید	چوں بیاید بہار باز آید
بیدلان را قرار باز آید	وقت دیدار یار باز آید
خور بہ نصف النہار باز آید	ماہروی نگار باز آید
باز خیزد زبلیلاں غنغل	باز خندد بناز لالہ و گل

When such a person comes, the spring comes back :  
 Back comes the season of flowers.

The hour of the Beloved's sight comes back ;

Back comes peace to the lover's heart.

The bright-faced Beloved comes back :

Back comes the sun to noon-tide.

Again the flowers smile sweet ;

The nightingales sing in joy again.

Mirza Ghulam Ahmad said and did many a thing in his lifetime. He turned out heaps of literature and this

of the most uplifting character. He compiled as many as eighty volumes, in addition to hundreds of pamphlets and tracts and thousands of handbills. He addressed huge public gatherings. He entered into heated controversies. But in this big mass of things, let us not lose sight of the man himself, the one supreme purpose running all through his manifold activities, the grand mission and message of his life. Let us not lose the wood in the trees. This would be repeating the very blunder he came expressly to rectify.

Mirza Ghulam Ahmad's life-mission may be summed up in one sentence—restoration of the soul of man. This has been the sole object of every religion. This was the one mission of Islam. As shown in a previous chapter, at his advent, the Mirza found man running after all sorts of things with never a thought for the great thing within him. Somewhere he was in mad pursuit after things of the matter which seemed to him the be-all and end-all of life. Somewhere he was rotting in the chains of custom, convention, man-worship, letter-worship and so forth. Nowhere was he himself. His own soul he had completely lost. Never for a moment would his eye turn from the appearance to the real, from the outside to inside. The little things of the earth and the false things had him to themselves, all in all. The Mirza came as a cry of halt to such a state of things. He was the soul of man in revolt against this soulless state of life. Within you, he shouted, lies the greatest of all things. Rediscover that and all the rest shall be added unto you.

It was to the life of the spirit that the Mirza turned

the eye of mankind. And in doing so had to do much of undoing. He had to cut asunder each and every chain that enslaved the soul of man. He overhauled the whole stock of man's notions, the whole code of man's standards. He gave a fresh interpretation to life. He revaluated existing values. To begin with, at a single stroke, he exploded the atheistic and agnostic tendencies of the age. "God is" ! he said to a Godless world, "and He actually speaks to me." This was the first and foremost item in his scheme of reformation. To establish this assertion, he gave irrefutable arguments which in themselves reveal the hand of a supernatural agency. Then, he pointed to his numerous prophecies which were published beforehand and came out marvellously true. But above all, the most convincing proof of his Divine mission was his own personality, his unblemished character, his lofty morals, his high vision, his deep philosophy. Like the philosopher's stone, you had only to come into contact with him to be brought nearer to God. His calm serene face reflected the God within him and you wanted no more arguments to be convinced. Men of great learning, of great piety, of great position went to him and came back changed men. A look at his face was enough to make them oblivious to the world with all its attractions. Their base metal was transmuted into pure gold and mere contact with the Mirza transported them to the regions of the spirit. They spent the rest of their days at his feet. This is no fable. This is a hard fact. We read in the scriptures that Jesus restored the dead to life. Even so did this Messiah of Islam. At his breath, the blind of the spirit regained their vision, the lepers were healed and the dead sprang to life.

Of this miraculous transformation the Messiah sang in such sweet strains :

به بیی که نور برین خانه ام همه بارد  
مگر چگونه به بینی اگر عما باشد  
بکنج خلوت پاکان اگر گزر بکنی  
عیان شود که چه نورے دراں سرا باشد  
کسے که سایه بال هماش سودا نداد  
بیایدش که دو روزے به ظل ما اشد  
کلمے که باد خزاں راگھے ند خواهد دید  
بیاغ ماست اگر قسمت رسا باشد

Behold ! Divine light showers on this my house. But how at all can you see with eyes blind-folded.

If ever you chance into the solitude of the pure one ; There shall you see what light that closet contains.

Those whom the shadow of the *humā* could do no good ; Let them in my shadow stay a couple of days.

The flower that never shall autumn see ; In my garden is to be found if thy hand of luck can reach it.

Such wholesale transformation is no doubt not easy to understand, much less to appreciate, in this twentieth century. But a large band of earnest souls was actually thus metamorphosed. Their angle of vision on life underwent a radical change, so much so that to the average worldly-wise man, they appeared only a band of mad men. But with them it is a case of, 'Where madness is bliss it is folly to be wise.' And to put it in a couplet of the Messiah himself :

تا نه ديوانه شدم هوش نيامد به سرم  
 اے جنون گرد تو گردم کہ چہ احسان کردی

“Until I became mad, sense did not enter my head ;  
 Thank thee, O madness ! what good thou hast done me.”

Surely, the world wants more of this madness—the realization of the fact that the world is not a haphazard routine-like affair and hence to be made the best of in the way of eat, drink and be merry, but that a moral and spiritual purpose pervades it. The Godless civilization of the West has failed. With banishing God it banished practically everything good and noble in the nature of man. Notwithstanding all its gloss and polish, it is rotten to the core. Selfishness and greed are the guiding principles in the most civilized council chambers. Men and men are no more brothers, children of the same God ; they are like so many denizens of the forest, running at each other's throats in a self-aggrandizing adventure. Germs of atheism which this materialistic culture has sown broadcast, are like so many dragon's teeth out of which has sprung up a whole crop of monsters rushing down upon their own author. Surely, the world has had enough of this so-called wisdom. It is time we had more of that “madness” of the Messiah which places self-sacrifice above self-seeking, God above matter.

Thus the first thing the Messiah did was to emancipate the soul of man from the false rule of matter. Soul was above matter and must rise above it. God was the ideal of man—nothing short of God. But then there are God and Gods. Every people have a God of their own, with features of His own. Men's superstitions

have woven a web around God and God was, to all intents and purposes, more of a figment of man's own imagination. To remove these webs was the next thing the Messiah addressed himself to. The God as depicted in the Qur'an was the only true God and the highest development of the soul of man was not possible but through modelling himself on the Qur'anic God. No other God answered the call of man. It was the God of Islam alone that did so and had actually answered his call, claimed the Mirza. A *living, hearing* God, if one exists, must reveal Himself to man. The God of Islam alone was such God. He had revealed Himself to him. The Qur'an alone was at the present day the fountain-head of all spiritual light.

In coming into a living contact with a living God, according to the Messiah, lay the life of the soul. Higher life was possible only in the living presence of God. The God of the Qur'an alone was such a living God. Unfortunately, the hand of man had woven a heavy web around Him as well. Therefore, the Messiah, when he pulled down all man-made deities that only served to enslave the soul of man, set about purging the conception of God of all human alloy. As observed before, Muslims as well were a chip of the same block. Here too, God existed only in name. It was a dead God that they worshipped and His throne had been usurped by the Mulla and the Pir. The Qur'an, no doubt, was the only repository of Heavenly light. But then, the Islam of the Qur'an and the Islam of the Muslim were poles asunder. People took their notions not from the source (the Qur'an) direct but from the two intermediaries above-mentioned.

The Messiah was thus constrained to cross swords with these as well, and strip them of their false Divine feathers. He had to emancipate the Muslim from slavery to man like himself. He dealt a death blow to the institutions of *Pir* system and priesthood which alone, more than anything else, have been the bane of Muslim society. The Qur'an was the only guide for a Muslim—the only authority; he declared the only fountain of spirituality from which anybody and everybody could drink direct. Naturally, the battle that ensued was bitter. On the one hand, the vested interests of these two classes were at stake. On the other, the dupes of these demi-gods clung to their long-seated prejudices and superstitions.

Again, there were several other chains on the Muslim's mentality. The Qur'an was to him, more of a dead letter. Instead, he went by what might be called custom and convention. His work-a-day life was regulated, not so much by the Word of God as blind custom. An average Muslim was a Muslim, not because he knew what Islam was or appreciated it but just because he was born one. He never cared to open the Qur'an for light and guidance. Thus, for all practical purposes, the Qur'an was a dead letter and the God of it, a dead God, and for the matter of that, the Muslim himself was reduced to something dead and lifeless. The Qur'an was the only powerhouse from which to get a spark of real life. But the Muslim never linked himself up to that source of life and consequently no artificial means could give him any current of life. He tried every earthly source but everywhere disappointment stared him in the face.



Letter worship and form-worship were the other two cankers of Muslim society. Like the Scribes and the Pharisees of old such of the Muslim Mullas as would care to find out the meaning of the Qur'an, had not the freedom and courage of spirit to dive deep beneath the surface. Their knowledge was therefore only skin-deep. To the real essence of the Book, the kernel, they were utter strangers. Of false reverence, they showed plenty to the Qur'an. In all solemnity, they would open it and kiss it and even recite it, but no more. Beyond a superficial knowledge and that too in the case of those considered 'learned', they knew little about it. If accidentally, they came across some stray pages of the Book, they had special boxes set up, to put these in. But so far as the essence went, the thing by virtue of which the pages commanded that sanctity, it was actually trampled in work-a-day life without the least prick of conscience. This state of mind might appropriately be described as book-worship. The Messiah so aptly depicts this slavish mentality :

نظر بازان علم ظاهر اندر علم خود نازند  
 زدست خود فکنده معنی و مغز و حقیقت را  
 بلفاظی بسر کردند عمر خود بلا حاصل  
 دمی از بهر معنی ها نمی یابند فرصت را  
 همه درهای قرآن را چو خاشا کے بیفکندند  
 ز علم نا تمام شان چهاگم گشت ملت را  
 مه اسلام در باطن حقیقت ها همه دارد  
 کجا باشد خبر زان ماه گرفتاران صورت را

Those learned in the letter only are proud of their

knowledge : The meaning, the kernel, the essence, they have dropped from their hand.

Their whole life have they wasted in empty words : Never for a moment do they pause to ponder over the meaning.

All those pearls of the Qur'an, they have thrown away as rubbish : How much has their imperfect knowledge cost the nation !

The moon of Islam has beauties within it : One taken up with the appearance, what can he know of it ?

Then came form-worship. When prayers were said, they were of an utterly mechanical nature. The prescribed words were muttered and the forms observed, without caring to get into the spirit of the thing. They just scrambled through the whole thing not as a means of self-purification but as something like a tax they owed to God. It was all of the nature of a cinematographic or radio performance. So devoid was the whole thing of all meaning. Fasts were kept merely as a blind custom and likewise all observances had been shorn of their real significance. Islam was considered as a bundle of these mutterings and these observances. No wonder that the Muslim fell on evil days. Islam and degeneracy cannot go hand in hand. But it was the mechanical Islam of the cinema and the radio type that the Muslim had. The Messiah exposed the futility of such worship. He laid emphasis on the inner side of prayer and other observances. Our daily prayer must be like our daily spiritual food to us. We must relish this as we do our physical food. The inner beauties of our prayer which he brought out at great length

in his *Barahīn* are simply fascinating. It is all a question of realizing the thing. And when once you have imbibed the true spirit, you cannot help enjoying it. To give the reader just a glimpse of it. Two things, the Messiah says' are such as have a tremendous fascination for man—beauty and benevolence. Beauty attracts the heart of man with all the force of a magnet. So does an act of kind shown us by anybody. We spontaneously feel drawn towards our benefactors. Now Islam, being a religion of nature, draws upon these two tendencies of the nature of man, and gives a prayer (*the Fātiha*) that is beyond the power of man to surpass, in sweetness of language, in loftiness of thought, or in force of attraction. To begin with, it draws a portrait of God as the most exquisite beauty, the beauty of beauties and as One to whom man owes countless blessings. To address such a being and commune with Him in prayer must be the greatest and purest of enjoyments that can fall to the lot of man. Then he proceeds to unearth the rich treasures from underneath the rest of the *Fātiha*. But what the Messiah depicts in over a hundred pages, I must not spoil in a brief and hasty sketch.

Custom, convention, book-worship, letter-worship, form-worship, Mulla-worship, Pir-worship—these, in short, were the so many fetters on the Muslim's soul, keeping it in a state of perpetual slavery. Death and decay had consequently marked Muslim society for their own. Slavery is only another name for lifelessness, whereas life means free play. When the soul was robbed of its birthright of freeplay, decay followed as a matter of course. It was, therefore, one of the Messiah's pro-

gramme, as a preliminary to all further progress, to emancipate the Muslim. One by one, he smashed these fetters to pieces restoring the Muslim once more to that freedom of the desert which knew no middle-terms between man and God. Freedom of the soul, he taught, was a prerequisite of the freedom of body. Mental emancipation must always precede physical emancipation. That was the lesson of all history. That in particular was the lesson of Islamic history. It was not until Arab mind had been liberated from bondage to idolworship and superstition that Arabia set her foot on the path of progress. The only abode for a slave mind is a slave-body. If the mind was set free the body would follow suit. For no free mind could long dwell in a slave body. There was only one way open for the Muslim, if he wanted to recover his lost temporal glory. Let him first rediscover his lost soul.

The message of the Messiah cannot be put better than in the Messiah's own verse at the top. It is just like the message that the gentle showers of rain from heaven whisper into the ear of the dead, dry sod and forthwith the sod quickens to life, as if by the touch of magic. Out comes flora. Out comes foliage. Out comes a whole spring. Even so, every message from Heaven. The germs of life lie dormant in man. They only await that spiritual downpour from Above to spring to life. The Messiah came with that message of life. "Within you," he proclaimed, "lie the seeds of all things high, and noble. Here are the showers of a living faith in a living God. Like a good soil, lay open your bosom to this heavenly water and life abundant shall be yours."

## THE PERSONALITY

من مے زبم بوحي خدائى كه باسن ست  
پیغام اوست چون نفس روح پرورم

I live by the word of God that comes to me ;  
His message is to me as the food of soul.

It was no small opposition that the Messiah was confronted with. He was out to establish Truth and of necessity he had to destroy all that was in the way of Truth. This brought him into conflict with the Arya Samaj, and the Christian Church. The controvercies between him and the founder of the Samaj, Swami Daya Nand were bitter and heated. And so were those with the Church. He refuted the very basic doctrines of these and other religions and thus made enemies on all sides. Among the Muslims, however, he commanded considerable popularity for his learning and devotion to Islam. With the publication of the *Barahin* in 1880 popularity amongst the Muslim reached its zenith. And in 1889 (March 4) when he announced his Divine commission as the *Mujaddid* of the 14th century, his claim was universally acclaimed by Muslims. The general impression was that he was the right man in the right place. Never was he known to have told a lie all his life. His career was one perpetual devotion to the service of Islam. And as a scholar of religion, he had already made a mark. He was enthusiastically acclaimed as a *Mujaddid*. But only two years later in 1891, when he claimed to be the Messiah foretold in the Hadith these friends also turned into enemies. But he could

not help it. Friends or no friends, he was out to do as he was bidden to. Popularity was not in his line. He was the servant of God. He could lose his popularity, his friends, but not his Master.

The opposition from the Mullas and the Pirs was the bitterest of all. For they had much to lose, So far they were the demi-gods of the masses, They were not going to part with that power without striking a blow. They threw all sorts of mud on him, in the press and from the platform. No day passed but the mail brought him letters full of vituperation and of these he had a whole box filled in a short time. But this caused not so much as a ripple on the serenity of his mind. This was meant, he would say, to give him some spiritual exercise as the long fasts that he had been keeping were meant for subjugation of his physical nature.

Several times he was dragged into court to involve him into trouble. Once he unwittingly enclosed a letter in a book-packet, a thing against postal rules. Even such a small opportunity was seized upon by his enemies to get up a case against him. His counsel advised him that the only way to escape the clutches of the law was to deny the charge. But no was the prompt reply. He would rather be disgraced in the eye of man by being punished than in the eye of God by telling a lie. He told the plain truth and was acquitted. He was universally noted for his truthfulness and even his enemies were convinced of it. In a law-suit against his son the plaintiffs summoned him as a witness, trusting he would

say nothing but truth. And gave evidence against his son.

Once a united attempt was made by all his opponents to bring a case of abetment of murder against him. This was in connection with his prophecy about a Christian missionary who was a habitual vilifier of the Holy Prophet, that if he persisted in his vilification he would meet with a violent death at the hands of an assassin. This gave his enemies an opportunity to involve him. A scamp was hired to hang about the missionary's house in suspicious circumstances and then give himself up as having been deputed by the Mirza to do the black deed. The whole thing was cleverly got up. It was a most serious case, but never for a moment was the Mirza's tranquillity perturbed on that account. Christian missionaries wielded tremendous influence with the Government in those days and that influence was used to the utmost against the Mirza. Whom God, however, would preserve no man can injure. The court saw through the whole game. The plot was discovered and he was acquitted.

The one dominant trait of his personality was his ever-green faith in God. It seemed as if he lived, breathed and had his being in God. His face ever radiated calm and content which is the fruit of such a living faith. This serenity of mind had become a second nature with him. When his young son playfully burnt to ashes a manuscript which he had taken much pains to prepare, there was on his face not the faintest ripple of displeasure when he saw it. Cheerful as usual, he simply smiled, saying that perhaps God would give him

better thoughts to write another. When Mubarik, one of his sons who was very dear to him died, he simply said : "He who has sent for Mubarik is the dearest of all." When a maid-servant of the family pinched some rice he, rather than scold her, said : "Poor woman ! She must be wanting it. Let her have more." Such imperturbable composure and deep human sympathy was due to that one thing ever-living sense of God. Such like incidents, though insignificant to look at, are a true index to the dominant note of a man's being. Living faith in a living God, a faith which knew no wavering and which kept him ever drunk with the love of God —this was the keynote of Mirza Ghulam Ahmad's personality. This was the sole panacea which he prescribed for all the ills of humanity.