

## MUHAMMAD, THE BEST EXEMPLAR

*“Muhammad is not the father of any of your men, but he is the Messenger of Allah and the Seal of the Prophets. And Allah is ever Knower of all things” (33:40).*

*“Certainly you have in the Messenger of Allah an excellent exemplar for him who hopes in Allah and the Latter Day and remembers Allah much” (33:21).*

*“He it is Who has sent His Messenger with the guidance and the religion of Truth that He may make it prevail over all religions. And Allah is enough for a witness” (48:28).*

*“He it is Who raised among the illiterates a Messenger from among themselves, who recites to them His messages and purifies them, and teaches them the Book and the Wisdom – although they were before certainly in manifest error – and others from among them who have not yet joined them. And He is the Mighty, the Wise” (62:2-3).*

That the Holy Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) was the most pre-eminent of all the Prophets of Allah is a fact generally known and accepted by Muslims in every century and in every country. But a question mark still hangs over the question of whether he was truly the Last Prophet. Our Sunni and Shiah friends believe that the Israelite Prophet, Jesus (pbuh), was taken up alive into Heaven (from the Cross) and that he will return in later times and, together with the Promised *Mahdi*, will wage a bloody war with the infidels in order to restore the glory of Muslims to its former state.

Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, *Mujaddid* of the fourteenth century *Hijrah* [Islamic Era], Promised Messiah and *Mahdi*, has proven from the Holy Quran, the *Hadith*, historical records, his own researches, revelations, etc. that Prophet Jesus indeed did not die on the Cross but was saved by Allah and that he journeyed to Kashmir where he fulfilled his mission to the "Lost Sheep of Israel" and died at the ripe old age of one hundred and twenty years and that his tomb is still there in Khan Yar Street, Srinagar. (See *Masih Hindustan Mein*.) I must point out here that Lahore Ahmadi literature is replete with proof of the above and Khwaja Nazir Ahmad's *Jesus in Heaven on Earth*, a foremost example of erudite scholarship, is the definitive work on this subject.

Mirza Sahib has also pointed out that it is an insult to the honour of the Holy Prophet for another prophet to return to complete the work of Prophet Muhammad (pbuh). (No prophet, new or old, will appear, he affirms.) In fact, he says that if all Muslims should unanimously proclaim that Prophet Jesus is dead, then that will spell the death-knell of Christianity, but ironically it is we, Muslims ourselves, who are upholding Christianity and keeping it alive by insisting that Prophet Jesus himself will return. This erroneous view is in itself an enigma akin to the Christian dogma of the Trinity for it raises several troublesome questions: In what capacity will Prophet Jesus return? As a full-fledged prophet? Then the *Khatam-e-Nubuwwat* (Seal of Prophethood) would be broken. (Our Rabwah friends should ponder over the explanation of the word *seal* given here by the Founder.) Again, will he come back as an ordinary Muslim or as a *mujaddid*? In that case, will Allah demote a Prophet of His, or will He eject a Prophet from Paradise in contravention of His word in the Holy Quran? And then, what will be his age and his physical condition when he returns?

Mirza Sahib has given conclusive proof from the Holy Quran, the *Hadith* and the writings of the *mujaddids* and saints of Islam that he was the Promised Messiah – the spiritual counterpart of the Prophet Jesus, the first Messiah, and he was also the Mahdi – *la Mahdi illa 'Isa* (the Messiah and the *Mahdi* are really one person and not two separate individuals as understood by other Muslims – and he was sent, according to prophecy, in the fourteenth century *Hijrah* as Prophet Jesus (pbuh) was the Israelite Messiah in the fourteenth century after Prophet Moses (pbuh), in order to lay the foundation for the final regeneration and triumph of Islam over all religions).

On the other hand, our Rabwah friends, following the lead of Mirza Mahmud Ahmad, have also found themselves in a "monkey pants" when they explain *Khatam-an-Nabiyyin* not as "the Last of the Prophets" but as meaning that by following the Holy Prophet, more prophets (perhaps thousands) will be made in future and as such, Mirza Sahib was a *mustaqil* and *haqiqi* (genuine) prophet.

Again, Lahore Ahmadi literature abounds with arguments and definitive proof to counteract this blemish on the Founder's name and his Movement. I refer here specifically to *An Nabuwwat fil Islam* (Prophethood in Islam) and *Akhiri Nabi* (The Last Prophet, which is a part of *Prophethood in Islam* but was published separately) by Maulana Muhammad Ali (and translated into English by Maulana SM Tufail).

In this latter book, Maulana Muhammad Ali has directed his attention specifically to the above belief of the Rabwah group (that more *haqiqi* prophets will appear in this *ummah*) and he has taken the arguments of Mirza Mahmud Ahmad one by one and demolished them so devastatingly that I fail to understand how a person who has read this book can still accept the false teachings of the Rabwites. But, I guess a *pir parast* is impervious to reason, or perhaps there may be other considerations that overshadow strict adherence to truth.

This small but deadly book – deadly to the misguided doctrines of the Rabwites – contains six chapters, namely:

1. The Question of Prophethood and Mirza Mahmud Ahmad
2. The Meaning of *Khatam-an-Nabiyyin* in the *Hadith*
3. Views of other Muslim Theologians and Companions of the Holy Prophet quoted by Mian Sahib
4. The Saying of Hazrat A'isha, the Righteous
5. Finality of Prophethood and the Founder of the Ahmadiyya Movement
6. Mian Sahib explained *Khatam-an-Nabiyyin* as "Last of the Prophets" in 1910

From the above, you can guess at, if you have not read the book, the complete demolition of the Rabwites' house of straw.

Besides the above, there are many other writings. For example, Hafiz Sher Muhammad's *La Nabiyya Ba'di*, *The Ahmadiyya Case*, compiled and translated by Dr. Zahid Aziz (which I consider the Lahore Ahmadi handbook), and many others too numerous to mention, that contain quotations from the works of Mirza Sahib in which he denied to the end of his life that he was a *haqiqi nabi* as claimed by his son, Mirza Mahmud Ahmad, in his book *Haqqatun-Nubuwwat*, Volume 1. It is interesting to note here that after Maulana Muhammad Ali replied with *An Nabuwwat fil Islam*, Volume 2 never came into being.

The following selections from Mirza Sahib's writings (after 1903) are a few references worthy of deeper scrutiny, especially by our friends from the other side.

Firstly, Rabwah missionaries are apt to shout at the top of their voices challenging all and sundry to produce a verse of the Holy Quran which supports the meaning of *Khatam-an-Nabiyyin* as "Last of the Prophets". Well, Mirza Sahib himself has given us the verse which is: "*This day I have perfected for you your religion and chosen for you Islam as a religion*" (5:3) and he has added the *hadith*: *La nabiyya ba 'di*, as further proof. On the other hand, Maulana Muhammad Ali has requested that they produce even one verse of the Holy Quran or one reliable *hadith* to support their claim that *Khatam-an-Nabiyyin* means more prophets will come after the Holy Prophet (pbuh).

Secondly, he has established the criteria for judging a full-fledged prophet as opposed to a *majazi* (metaphorical) or *zilli* (reflective) *juz'i* (partial) prophet. "A claimant to prophethood," he says, "must believe in Allah, the Unique. He should claim that Allah sends down on him *wahy* (revelation) which he must impart to the people. He should also form an *ummah* (community) who regard him as a Prophet of Allah and he should also bring a Book from Allah" (*Akhbar al-Hakam*, no. 2, vol. 7, 10 June 1903). We ask our friends: Does Mirza Sahib fall into the above category?

Thirdly, Mirza Mahmud Ahmad claims that there are three kinds of prophethood (in an earlier writing he asserted that there were only two kinds), and he quotes Ibn ' Arabi to support his contention. But this is what Mirza Sahib has to say on this point:

"Mohiyyidin Ibn' Arabi has written that whilst prophethood with law is unlawful, prophethood without law is. But my belief is this – that the door of all kinds of prophethood is closed except reflection of the Holy Prophet Muhammad."

In this connection, a woman once claimed to be a prophet, contending that only the prophethood of men had come to an end. (*La nabiyya ba'di* and not *la nabiyyata ba'di*.) But, Mirza Sahib, quoting the verse: "*Men are the maintainers of women*" (4:34), negated that belief saying that women were also subsumed in many of the Quranic ordinances given to men. (*Akhbar Badr*, no. 13, vol. 2, 17 April 1903.)

Lastly, the opponents of Mirza Sahib proclaimed that they had issued the *Fatwa* of *Kufr* against him because, although he was claiming with his tongue to be a *zilli*, *majazi*, *baruzi*, *juz'i nabi* and a *mujaddid*, yet in his heart he considered himself a *haqiqi nabi*. Mirza Sahib took a solemn oath declaring that that accusation was not true.

We ask our friends again: What kind of prophethood was he denying when he took that oath? Or, Allah forbid, was he a dissembler as the opponents claimed and his own son wittingly or unwittingly supports?

Now we come to the second part of the topic with special emphasis on the spread and final predominance of Islam through the Ahmadiyya Movement.

The Holy Quran itself testifies to the exalted status of the Holy Prophet as the following verses attest:

"*And surely thou hast sublime morals*" (68:4).

*“O Prophet, surely We have sent thee as a witness, and a bearer of good news and a warner and as an inviter to Allah by His permission and as a light-giving sun” (35:45-46).*

*“Certainly you have in the Messenger of Allah an excellent exemplar for him who hopes in Allah and the Latter Day and remembers Allah much” (33:21).*

*“And We have not sent thee but as a mercy to all the nations” (21:107).*

Khawaja Kamal-ud-Din, in his book, *The Ideal Prophet*, has explained the above verses by elucidating the following points: The Prophet's message was the ideal one, his call was the perfect one, he was the ideal personality, the ideal character, the ideal exemplar, the possessor of the noblest of virtues, the ideal success (and this point in particular is shared by non-Muslim critics who acknowledge the Prophet as the most successful personality in the history of mankind).

To appreciate the magnitude of the Holy Prophet's task and his consequent greatness, one has to look at the state of the society to which he was sent and the result he achieved.

The Holy Quran says:

*“Corruption has appeared in the land and the sea on account of what men's hands have wrought, that He may make them taste a part of that which they have done, so that they may return” (30:41).*

And according to historians, civilisation was on the brink of collapse and disintegration. Man was only one step away from becoming perfect beasts albeit in human form. Darkness prevailed in every corner of the earth but Arabia was the darkest spot with every imaginable type of sin and immorality being prevalent. A quotation from a non-Muslim source will suffice to illustrate the point:

*“From time beyond memory, Mecca and the whole Peninsula had been steeped in spiritual torpor. The slight and transient influences of Judaism, Christianity or philosophical enquiry upon Arab mind had been but as the ruffling here and there of the surface of a quiet lake; all remained still and motionless below. The people were sunk in superstition, cruelty and vice. Their religion was a gross idolatry; and their faith the dark superstitious dread of unseen things.... Thirteen years before the Hejira, Mecca lay lifeless in this debased state. What a change had these thirteen years now produced! Jewish truth had long sounded in the ears of men of Medina; but it was not until they heard the spirit-stirring strains of the Arabian Prophet that they too awoke from their slumber, and sprang suddenly into a new and earnest life” (Muir, *Life of Mahomet*, ch. 7).*

But look at the marvellous transformation wrought by the Holy Prophet in such a short space of time. Mirza *Sahib* tells us of this:

*“A strange phenomenal event took place in the deserts of Arabia, when hundreds of thousands of the dead became alive within a few days, and those who had been corrupted through generations took on Divine colour. The blind began to see, and tongues of the dumb began to flow with Divine wisdom. Such a revolution took place in*

the world as no eye had seen and no ear had heard of before. Do you realise what this was? All this was brought about by prayers during the darkness of night of one who had been wholly lost in God and which created an uproar in the world and manifested such wonders as seemed impossible at the hands of that unlettered helpless person. O Allah! Send down blessings and peace on him and on his followers in proportion to his concern and suffering for the Muslim *ummah* (the people of Islam), and shower upon him the light of Thy mercy forever" (*Barakatud-Du'a*, pp. 10-11).

Non-Muslim historians concur with the above as the following quotation attests:

"Never has a people been led more rapidly to civilisation such as it was, than were the Arabs through Islam" (H. Hirschfeld, *New Researches*, p. 5).

But if we look at the condition of Muslims presently and also over the past centuries, the casual observer may be tempted to agree with the non-Muslim Western propaganda that Islam is a spent force, a barbaric religion of the Middle Ages, totally un-suited to the demands and exigencies of a modern society – that Islam had its Golden Age but it peaked in the past and will now suffer the fate of all past civilisations.

But that is only a superficial view. It is true that the Holy Prophet is physically dead and the so-called Golden Age of Islam lies in the past. Nevertheless, the Holy Prophet is still alive spiritually and his message will also live to the end of time and triumph over all religions because Allah has made provisions for this success.

When Muslims were in the deepest despair, decay and decadence, Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad brought life and hope to Muslim hearts as prophesied by the Holy Prophet Muhammad:

"Most surely Allah will raise for this community at the head of every century one who shall revive its faith" (Abu Dawud).

And:

"What will be your condition when the Son of Mary will descend among you and he will be your *Imam* from among yourselves?" (Bukhari).

We are further directed:

"When you find the *Mahdi*, perform *bai'at* (pledge of allegiance) at his hands. You must go to him even if you have to reach across icebound mountains on your knees. He is the *Mahdi* and the Caliph of Allah" (Ibn Majah).

And:

"Whoever from among you meets Jesus, Son of Mary, should convey my greetings to him" (Dar Manshoor).

We are also warned:

"He who dies in a condition that he has not recognized the *Imam* of his age, dies a death of ignorance" (Ahmad ibn Hanbal).

And as testimony to the truth of the *Mahdi*, the Holy Prophet prophesied:

"Surely two signs will appear which have never appeared before (as signs of truth for anyone else) since the creation of the heavens and the earth. In the month of *Ramadhan*, the moon will be eclipsed in the first of its night (of eclipse) and the sun will be eclipsed on the middle day (of its days of eclipse). Both these eclipses will take place in the same month of *Ramadhan*. And these two signs have never occurred before since Allah created the heavens and the earth" (*Sunan Dar Qutni*).

(See also 75:7-9 and Note 2610 of Maulana Muhammad Ali's English translation of the Holy Quran.)

It is interesting to note that these eclipses occurred twice in the life of the *Mahdi* and were seen both in the East and the West during the month of *Ramadhan* – 13 March (moon), 28 March (sun) in Qadian (1894) and 11 March (moon), 28 March (sun) in the West (1895).

But more than the above, the Holy Quran tells us:

*“He it is who raised among the illiterates a Messenger from among themselves, who recites to them His messages and purifies them and teaches them the Book and the Wisdom – although they were before certainly in manifest error – and others from among them who have not yet joined them. And He is the Mighty, the Wise”* (62: 2-3).

Mirza Sahib has explained verse 3 as referring to the second advent of the Holy Prophet and said that this was fulfilled in himself and his companions. He explained in *Tohfa-e Golarviyya* that although religion was perfected and completed yet the perfection of the propagation of religion was not because conditions in the time of the Holy Prophet were not appropriate. But in this age, all the necessary arrangements are in place – scientific progress has made the world a global village and the means of spreading the message are multitudinous. But since the designated task was that of the Holy Prophet, it was necessary for him to return to complete his mission. However, the law of God precludes the reappearance of a person who has died, so to fulfil 48:28 of the Holy Quran, a person who is the *zill* of the Prophet in heaven or someone possessing a portion of the Prophet's grace has to descend, and this is, of course, our *Imam*, Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, who incorporates in himself, but to a much lesser degree, all the excellence of the past prophets just as the Holy Prophet is the compendium of all the virtues of the previous prophets.

It was on this premise that he founded the Ahmadiyya Movement, which he prophesied would bring about the total dominance of Islam in the last thousand years of this Adamic Dispensation, in order to defeat the second manifestation of *Gog* and *Magog* and the *Dajjal*. Accordingly, he says that the mention of Dhul Qarnain in the Holy Quran is a prophecy of the conditions that will prevail in today's world and this is how he explains his journeys. This, of course, will help to underline the reality of our mission as Ahmadis.

In his first visit to the West, Dhul Qarnain *“reached the setting place of the sun and he found it going down into a black sea”* (or a black pool of mud) – (18:86). This, the Founder says, refers to the Western nations that were given the clear and pure teachings of the *Injil* (Gospel) and other scriptures but they corrupted and distorted them and turned them, as it were, into black mud.

His second journey was to the East. *“Then he followed a course. Until, when he reached the (land of the) rising sun, he found it rising on a people to whom he had given no shelter from it”* (18:88-90). These refer to the mass of the Muslims who have rejected all the *mujaddids*, and the present *Imam* of the Age in particular, and so are not privileged to remain under his shade and consequently are singed and scorched by the trials and tribulations, the shame and degradation, internal and external, that beset the whole Muslim world.

In his third journey, *“He followed a course. Until, when he reached (a place) between the two mountains, he found on that side of them a people who could hardly understand a word. They said: O Dhu-l-Qarnain, Gog and Magog do mischief in the land. May we then pay thee tribute on condition that thou raise a barrier between us and them? He said; That wherein my Lord has established me is better, so if only you help me with strength (of men), I will make a fortified barrier between you and them”* (18:92-95).

This, of course, refers to the Founder's *Jama'at* and we can see with dazzling clarity the only people who are safe from the depredations of the second coming of *Gog* and *Magog* are those who are truly under the protection of Mirza Sahib's teachings, for he was told in revelation (in 1891): “I shall make thee known with honour to the ends of the earth and shall exalt thy name,” and he himself, gives us the good news:

"Listen all of you. This is a prophecy of Him Who has created the heavens and the earth that He will spread this Community in all regions and will make it supreme over all, through arguments and proof.... The days are coming, indeed they are near, when there will only be one religion that is honoured in the world. He (Allah) will bless this Movement abundantly and will frustrate everyone who seeks to destroy it. This supremacy will endure forever till the Day of Judgement" (*Tazkiratus-Shahadatain*, p. 64).

If we look at the paucity of members and means of the Ahmadiyya Movement and the internal dissension, that is, the deviation of the Rabwah group, then this may seem like an idle dream of a false visionary. But Mirza Sahib has told us that Allah does not need earth-shattering events or equipment to bring about a mighty revolution. Sometimes the weakest and most insignificant of creatures can perform His will with telling and devastating effect. And this is how he explains chapter 105 of the Holy Quran:

*"In the name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful. Hast thou not seen how thy Lord dealt with the possessors of the elephant? Did He not cause their war to end in confusion? And send against them birds in flocks? Casting at them decreed stones – so He rendered them like straw eaten up?"*

The birds which destroyed the first Abrahah were a foreshadowing of today's Ahmadi who will similarly destroy the present Abrahah, that is, *Gog* and *Magog* and the *Dajjal*.

To this effect, he has given us detailed instructions and counsel on how we can prepare the way for this crushing victory. He advises us, the members of his *Jama'at*, who consider and accept him as the Promised Messiah, to rid ourselves of unclean habits and all kinds of sinfulness, hidden and manifest, and to show sympathy to all mankind – to cleanse our hearts of spite, hatred, envy, malice, resentment; in short, of all things negative, and to imitate the angels in obedience and purity – the only way that leads to a pure religious life is to colour ourselves with Divine attributes. We must show compassion to all on earth so that

Heaven may shower mercy on us. He invites us to a way of life that will make our light brighter than everyone else's light, but that path demands the eradication of all kinds of envy and low passion and the inculcation of love for all in our hearts and the immersion of our identity in the ocean of the love of God. In addition, we must develop in ourselves the most sublime virtues, for this is the way to procure blessings, grace and favours from Allah and to gain acceptance of our supplications and to be blessed with assistance from the angels.

But this is not the work of a single day. Rather, we must make steady, consistent progress every day of our lives. "Leave off idleness and sloth and choose the path of lowly *tazarro'* (humility). In privacy, make deep supplication to Allah that He may keep your faith sound and that He should be pleased with you," he exhorts.

We should take a lesson from the washerman who first places dirty clothes overnight in a kiln or furnace so that the heat cleanses the clothes of all kinds of impurities; then the next morning he carries them to the river, alternately beating them with a stone and washing them so that they come out as lily-white as they were in the beginning. In this way, we, too, must apply heat and beating and washing on our vile passion for our salvation lies in the purification of our souls, for Allah tells us in the Holy Quran:

“*Successful is he who purifies his soul*” (91:9).

Mirza *Sahib* also exhorts us thus:

"I have said many times that in the point of name, there is no distinction between my *Jama'at* and other Muslims. You are Muslims and they, too, are called Muslims. You profess belief in the *Kalimah* (declaration of faith) and so do they. You claim to follow the Holy Quran and they, too, make the same claim. In short, as regards claims, both groups are equal. But Allah is not pleased with mere claims, and He is not happy until there is truth in what you say and in your actions there is proof of what you profess, and there is evidence that your condition is undergoing transformation.

I notice that there is a steady increase in the number of *bai'at*-takers but is everyone aware of the reality of the *bai'at* and what it entails? This is the essence of the *bai'at*: that there be discernible change in the personality of the taker and fear of God is born in his heart, and the true purpose of life having been discovered, he makes himself a true and worthy exemplar."

He further exhorts us to engage in *taubah* (repentance) and *istighfar* (asking for forgiveness) continuously and with weeping hearts and make *du'a* (supplication) to Allah. In our daily lives, we must always obey the commands of Allah and the *sunnah* (practice) of our Holy Prophet. We should be careful in speech and must hasten towards the doing of righteous deeds and always be on the lookout for opportunities for beneficent service.

We must train ourselves to become like this: Allah's will must become ours, His pleasure ours, and we must have no private ambitions and motives but everything must be done for His sake alone.

Finally, he warns his *Jama'at* that if there is no true brotherly love amongst members, then destruction is inevitable and Allah will raise others in our place.

In conclusion, I fervently hope and pray that we all uphold the conditions of the *bai'at* and do whatever we can to hasten the time of the final triumph of truth over falsehood and prove to the world the truth of the prophecies of the Holy Quran:

*“And say: The truth has come and falsehood vanished. Surely falsehood is ever bound to vanish” (17:81).*

*“He it is Who sent His Messenger with the guidance and the religion of Truth, that He may cause it to prevail over all religions, though the polytheists are averse” (9:33).*