PROMISED MESSIAH AND MAHDĪ

A study in the claims of Ḥadīrät Mirzā Ghulām Aḥmad of Qādīān, Founder of the Aḥmadiyyah Movement

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PART I

THE PROMISED MESSIAH

CHAPTER I

Why the name the Promised Messiah was given to the mujaddid of the fourteenth century Hijrah

There are many who think that Mirza Ghulam Ahmad’s claim of being the Promised Messiah was a later growth over his claim to mujaddidiyyat, because he claimed to be a mujaddid (renovator) in 1300 A.H. (1885 C.E.) and his claim to Messiahship was made in 1308 A.H. It has been concluded from this that he put forth new claims by stages. This is of course a great misunderstanding about him. These were, however, not two separate claims as will be seen from the statement about his claim to mujaddidiyyat. His claim to Messiahship was in fact another name for his original claim of being a mujaddid. And this was related to his activities with regard to the removal of external dangers which threatened the existence of Islam. Thus in 1300 A.H. when he claimed to be a mujaddid he wrote the following words:

"And the author has been given the knowledge too that he is the mujaddid of this age and that spiritually his excellences resemble those of Messiah, the son of Mary, and that the one of them bears a very strong resemblance and close affinity to the other."\(^1\)

In fact the idea underlying this claim was that the mujaddid of the fourteenth century Hijrah enjoyed extreme spiritual resemblance with Jesus Christ. He further clarified this point in his book Ā’inah Kamālāt Islām:

"This must be remembered that the claim of being the Promised Messiah is not in any way greater than the claim of being a recipient of Divine communication (mulham min Allāh) or a mujaddid from God. It is evident that anybody who enjoys this status of Divine communication, all his names from

\(^1\) *Iltihār* published 1885 C.E.
Allāh, such as the like of Messiah or the like of Moses, are justified for him. Whosoever attains to the excellence of Divine communication, and is appointed by God for any service in the cause of religion, God Almighty gives him any name in accordance with the need of the time. To give the name Promised Messiah to the mujaddid of this age seems to be based on this expediency, that his great task is to overthrow the supremacy of Christianity and counter their attacks, and to shatter with strong arguments their philosophy which is against the Holy Qur'ān and to fully establish the evidence of Islam against them. The greatest trial in this age for Islam is the rational and religious vituperations of Christians against Islam which could not be swept away without Divine support and for this purpose it was essential that someone should be raised by God.  

Christianity musters all its resources against Islam

Islam in this age, no doubt, has to contend with almost all the religions of the world and more or less such a situation has existed ever since the inception of Islam but never before has Christianity mustered all its resources to crush Islam out of existence. There had been wars on a large scale between Muslim and Christian powers, known as the Crusades, but the great conspiracy to root out Islam as a religion in this age,—the millions of pounds being spent for the purpose of free distribution of large quantities of literature against Islam and for sending armies of Christian missionaries in Muslim lands etc.—is something of which cannot be found in the history before. Even the Christian missionaries have felt and openly declared it that there are many non-Christian religions in the world but Islam is the only religion which is anti-Christian. A cursory glance over world’s events shows that in spite of Muslim’s weakness in all walks of life at present, a keen struggle is still going on between the Muslim and the Christian faith. Although it appears that the Christianity has an upperhand in this struggle, as far as the outward signs and resources are concerned, but a strange spectacle is also being noticed on the other side, that is, the principles of Islam as such are gaining ground in the world and the principles of Christianity are in fact loosening their hold on the minds of the people. This is, however, what we observe today, but the prophetic eye of the Founder of the Ahmadiyyah Movement saw this phenomenon happening about sixty years back and therefore he devoted his special attention to the Christian world. In 1864 C. E., when he was employed at Siālkot, he constantly

engaged himself in controversies with Christian missionaries and later on he also kept writing articles about their doctrines and dogmas. This is, however, strange that at the time of declaring himself a mujaddid he clearly stated that he bore a very strong resemblance to Jesus Christ and in his practical life he also showed the great trend of protecting Islam against the onslaughts of Christian missionaries. And his passion for disseminating the light of Islam in Christendom grew stronger every day with the result that the movement he organized for the defence of Islam predominantly reflected in its activities this strong desire for presenting Islam to the West. In short, he had started his actual work even before he had declared himself to be the Promised Messiah.

CHAPTER II

The mention of the Messiah in the reports of the Prophet

What is meant by the Promised Messiah and what is its significance according to the Shari'ah? is the question which we have to deal with first of all.

The coming of Jesus, son of Mary, has been mentioned in the reports (ahādīth) of the Prophet. In al-Bukhārī the hadīth (report) about the descent of Jesus Christ has been narrated by Abū Huraira thrice, i.e., in (1) Kitāb al-buyūt 34, (2) Kitāb al-maẓālim 45 and (3) Kitāb al-aṣbāḥ 60. In the reference last quoted the following hadīth occurs in the chapter entitled “Descent of Jesus, son of Mary”:

“I swear by Him Who holds my life in His hand that son of Mary will descend among you as Arbiter and Judge and shall break the Cross and kill the swine and postpone the war. Wealth will be multiplied to the extent that nobody will be there to accept it, that a prostration at that time will be better than this world and whatever is in it.”¹

And then there is another report which says:

كيف أنتم إذا نزل ابن مريم فيكم وما ملكتم منكم

i.e. What will be your condition when son of Mary will descend among you and he will be your imām from among yourselves?² In the first two references the words are almost the same as found in the quotation from Kitāb al-anbiyā’ except that Arbiter (‘ādil) is replaced by مقتضا (maqṣātā)

1. Al-Bukhārī, Kitāb al-anbiyā’, p. 60.
2. Ibid.
equitable and he will postpone the war (yaʿīl al-harb) by he will postpone the poll-tax (yaḍ al-jizyah) and the last part of the report beginning with that a prostration at that time.......has also been omitted. Again in al-Ṣaḥḥā of Muslim (204-261 A.H.) reports about the descent of Jesus, son of Mary have been mentioned at various places. At one place the words of the first two reports of al-Bukhārī have been repeated and at another place the brief and the last report of al-Bukhārī has been mentioned. Still at another place the following words occur:

كَيْفَ أَنتُمْ إِذَا نَزَلَ أَبُنَ مَرْيَمَ فِيكمُ فَامْكُمْ

i.e. What will be your condition when son of Mary will descend among you and he will be your imām? In another report instead of fa-amma-kum we find fa-amma-kum minkum (he will be your imām from among you). There is also one report by Jābir ibn ʿAbd Allāh. Similarly many other companions of the Holy Prophet, for instance Ibn ʿUmar, Anas, Thaubān have narrated such reports.

The coming Messiah shall appear from among the Muslims

If we look carefully into these reports, to our surprise we find that although the coming of the son of Mary has been described in them, but the various words added to at the end show that he will be raised from among the Muslims. These words are: imāmu kum minkum, fa-amma-kum, fa-amma kum minkum (إِمَامُكُمْ مَنِكمَ - فَامْكُمْ - فَامْكُمْ مِنْكُمْ).

The words imāmu kum minkum (your imām will be from among you), are supposed to refer to someone else who is thought to be the Mahdī. But there are two very strong arguments against this theory: 1. The reports in which these words occur are found in al-Bukhārī and al-Muslim and the coming of Mahdī has not been mentioned at all in these two books. When Bukhārī and Muslim do not even believe in the coming of Mahdī, how could they accept the interpretation that he would be the imām of Muslims at the time of the descent of Jesus Christ? (2) The Muslim has further clarified the point by repeating the words wa imāmukum minkum of al-Bukhārī on the one hand and adding alternative words on the other which cannot mean anything else except that the coming Messiah shall be raised from this ummah of Muḥammad. These words of the Muslim are reported in two ways:

كَيْفَ أَنتُمْ إِذَا نَزَلَ فِيكمُ أَبُنَ مَرْيَمَ فَامْكُمْ

(1) “What will be your condition when son of Mary will descend in you and he will be your imām?”

"What will be your condition when son of Mary will descend in you and he will be your imām from among yourselves?"

Now the expressions ammakum and amnakum minkum clearly indicate that Jesus son of Mary, whose descent has been mentioned here, is the imām of Muslims and shall be from among the nation of Muḥammad and not from any other nation. Perhaps the words what will be your condition (kaifa antum) which express surprise, have been used to show that people might be expecting the coming of Israeliite Messiah but his appearance from among the Muslims will astonish them. In short, the words imāmu kum minkum only signify the appearance of Messiah from this ummah and it is he who will be the imām of Muslims. Obviously a mujaddid is the imām of his time. Thus this only refers to his being a mujaddid.

The evidence of the Qurʾān that the Messiah shall be raised from the nation of Muḥammad

1. Reports are only an exposition of the Qurʾān, the evidence of the Qurʾān being the strongest of them all. When we turn to the Qurʾān we find that it mentions the raising of khalifahs (successors) of the Prophet Muḥammad from among this ummah. In chapter the Light we observe:

2. 111

i.e. Allāh has promised to those of you who believe and do good that He will most certainly make them successors in the earth as He made successors before them."1 Here 'before them' refers to Israeliites. As the Prophet has been compared with Moses and called the like of him.—Surely We have sent to you a Messenger, a witness, against you, as We sent Messenger to Pharaoh—2 similarly his successors have been likened to the successors of Moses. Thus this verse cannot bear the possibility of

1. The Qurʾān, 24: 55.
2. Ibid, 78: 15.
the appearance of Jesus Christ in person who was a successor of Moses. The logical conclusion is that as in the nation of Moses, Messiah was raised by God, similarly a like of the Messiah will appear in the nation of Muḥammad. In other words this verse implies the coming of the like of Messiah and not Jesus Christ himself in person.

The second evidence of the Qurʾān

2. The second strong evidence is that prophethood has come to an end with Muḥammad (peace and blessings of God be upon him) and Jesus Christ was a prophet according to the Qurʾān. It is, therefore, not possible that he should appear after the Prophet Muḥammad. If he does come then Jesus Christ, and not the Prophet Muḥammad, will be the khātam al-nabiyyīn (the seal of the prophets). Obviously, prophethood will come to an end with a prophet who comes last of all. The thought, that although Jesus Christ would appear last of all but as the Prophet Muḥammad was the last in his appointment, therefore he was indeed the last of the prophets, is groundless. If a battle has to be fought and won, only that general would be called the last general who has won it irrespective of the date of his appointment. If A and Z were two generals appointed for this post, A being appointed before Z, and A was still alive when Z died and at last it was he who won the battle, then every wise person would call him the last general. Similarly if Jesus Christ, the prophet of God, would come after Muḥammad and the final victory and dominance of Islam would take place at his hand, then he would be called the last of the prophets. The correct view, therefore, is that no prophet, neither new nor old, shall appear after the Prophet Muḥammad.

Besides this there is another obstacle in the coming of Jesus Christ. According to the Qurʾān he was a messenger appointed for the Israelites,1 therefore he cannot be raised for any other nation. Moreover a prophet is only sent for a prophetic mission. If Jesus Christ, the prophet of God, has to come again, this means that even the work of prophethood was not brought to perfection by the Prophet Muḥammad, and this is absolutely against the clear Qurʾānic verse:

الِيُومُ أَكْمِلْتُ لَكُمْ دِينَكُمْ

i.e. Today I have perfected your religion for you.2

In view of these difficulties the Muslim scholars are forced to admit that Jesus Christ would not appear as a messenger but only in the

2. Ibid., 5 : 3.
capacity of a mujaddid as has been mentioned in Fath al-Bayān: When he will descend he will act upon the Sharī'ah of Muḥammad like other followers. And in Fath al-Bārī it has been stated: Jesus will judge according to the rules and regulations of this ummah.²

But here again we are confronted with several difficulties.

It is obviously meaningless that when there is neither a need of prophethood left nor of a prophet, God should, nevertheless, keep a prophet alive for two thousand years to be sent to the world in the later ages. In this case it has to be admitted that neither the prophethood was brought to perfection nor Islam made perfect by the Prophet Muḥammad. If Messiah has to come he must, by virtue of his previous office, come in the role of a prophet. And if he has to appear as a mujaddid it is futile for God to keep a prophet alive simply to fulfil the mission of a mujaddid. The second difficulty is that if he would appear as a mujaddid his connection with prophethood will naturally be severed. The dismissal of Messiah from his office of prophethood is also meaningless. To cause a prophet die is a Divine practice, to bring his period to termination is also intelligible, but his dismissal is absolutely against the principles of Divine religion.

Besides all this there is yet another problem to be solved. If Jesus Christ were to follow the Sharī'ah of Muḥammad and give decisions according to the Qur'ān and Ḥadīth, how would he educate himself for this work? In this respect the Divine law only operates in two ways. Knowledge is either obtained by revelation or by acquisition (iktisāb). Now if he would receive the knowledge of the Qur'ān and Ḥadīth by revelation, what doubt is left in his being a prophet? and if he would obtain it by acquisition he shall have to spend several years for the study of Arabic language and the Islamic Sharī'ah after his descent from heaven. In short the appearance of Jesus Christ in person goes against all the clear injunctions of the Qur'ān. The only way out is to interpret it differently.

CHAPTER III
DEATH OF JESUS CHRIST
Evidence of the Qurʾān

I have made a detailed discussion about Jesus Christ's death in my book Masih Mau'nd (The Promised Messiah). Here I quote a few verses of the Qurʾān which clearly establish this point.

(1) And I was a witness of them as long as I was among them, but when Thou didst cause me to die Thou wast the Watcher over them. And Thou art Witness of all things. This is Jesus Christ's reply to a question by God that: Didst thou say to men, Take me and my mother for two gods besides Allāh? The question was about the false doctrine of Jesus's followers who made him a god and his reply was that as long as he was among them he was a witness of their condition and that he did not find them holding the belief in his Divinity but when God caused him to die, then he did not know what false doctrines were introduced in his teachings. This verse clearly indicates that unless Jesus had died the doctrine of his Divinity was not formulated by his people. Thus if before the revelation of the Qurʾān such an alteration had taken place in his teaching, and the Qurʾān provides us with a sufficient evidence to that effect, then Jesus must have passed away from this world. It is not possible to deny such a plain conclusion, but a report in al-Bukhārī makes the whole issue further clear. It is reported that on the Day of Resurrection the Prophet would be shown some men from among his ummah being dragged towards hell. I would say, the hadith goes on, what the righteous servant (i.e. Jesus Christ) said: I was a witness among them but when Thou didst cause me to die, Thou wast the Watcher over them.

(2) And Muḥammad is but a messenger—messengers have already passed away before him. In the word al-rasūl (the messengers) al is of istighrāq (exhaustiveness) and does not yield any other meaning except that al-rasūl should include all the messengers. It was for this very reason that Abū Bakr argued on the basis of this verse about the death of the Prophet Muḥammad when some of his Companions thought that he was not dead. That is to say, when all the previous prophets had passed away, the demise of the Holy Prophet was also in accordance with the Divine practice. If this verse meant that some of the messengers have

1. The English translation of this book is also under preparation.
2. The Qurʾān, 5:117.
3. Ibid., 5:116.
4. Al-Bukhārī, Kitāb al-Tafsīr under the verse 5:117.
5. The Qurʾān, 3:143.
in fact died and some were still alive, this argument could not have satisfied the doubters in the Holy Prophet's death.

(3) The Messiah, son of Mary, was only a messenger; messengers before him have indeed passed away. And his mother was a truthful woman. They both used to eat food.\(^1\) These words, while contradicting the claim of Jesus's Divinity, show that when they were alive, Mary and Jesus both stood in need of food. As Mary is dead, Jesus must have also passed away from this world. Both have been mentioned together, having in common the most elementary characteristics of human beings, i.e., of taking food. They used to eat food when they were alive; as they do not partake of food now, they are not alive any more.

(4) He has enjoined on me prayer and poor-rate as long as I live.\(^2\) Offering prayers and giving of alms have been made obligatory on Jesus Christ. If in the heavens, let us suppose, Jesus has all the facilities of prayers, ablation and purification, whom could he be offering poor-rate (zakāḥ) which was made essential for him as long as he lived?

(5) And those whom they call on besides Allāh, created naught, while they are themselves created. Dead (are they), not living. And they know not when they will be raised.\(^3\) Evidently here those gods are spoken to who have been taken from among the human beings because there is a mention of their being raised after death. And it is said about all of them that they are dead. Jesus Christ stands first among those who are taken for gods. If he is alive the whole argument becomes null and void.\(^4\) Besides this there are many other verses in the Qur'ān which

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1. Ibid., 5: 75
2. Ibid., 19: 31.
4. It was in 1896 C.E. when I had not yet joined the Ahmadiyyah Movement that I asked a very prominent Maulāwī in confidence what he thought the Qur'ān had mentioned about Jesus Christ. He said: “There are some verses which prove his death and there are others which show he is still alive.” I was greatly astonished at this reply. How could such a thought be ascribed to the Qur'ān that there existed two contradictory statements in it. But unfortunately many Muslims are suffering from such a confusion. As the idea of the physical ascension of Jesus Christ is prevalent among them, therefore many of them do not pay any attention to even verses which mention his death. Their whole emphasis lies on the point that the Qur'ān refers to his raf' (exaltation), therefore he must be alive. Exaltation (raf') of believers is one of the attributes of God and al-Raf' (the Exalter) is one of His names, the meaning of which according to Lane's Lexicon is: One of the names of God, meaning the exalter of the believer by prospering (him), and of his saints by teaching (them). Where the raf' of a man to Allāh is spoken of in the Qur'ān or hadīth it is, without a single exception, in the sense of exalting or making him honourable. This meaning is made plain by the prayer which every Muslim repeats daily i.e. “Exalt me, O Lord!” (Allāh humm arfa'īnī). Of course no one supposes for a moment that such a prayer is meant for raising or elevating his body to the heavens. And in the reports the expression:

من تواضع لله رفعه الله
indicate that Jesus Christ had died like other prophets. But I leave
them for brevity's sake. In fact no Muslim can deny the point if it is
established even from a single verse of the Qur'ān.

*i.e.* Allāh exalts him who lowers down for Allāh. (Kanz al-Ummāl, vol 2, p. 25).
This again does not mean raising of one's body to the heaven. Again it has been
stated that

an lā ḍurfū l-ʿawdl

*i.e.* Verily God exalts the just ().
It has also been mentioned in the Qur'ān :

wrfūn mākāna aʿlīya

*i.e.* And We raised him to an elevated state (19 : 57). Here in spite of the
words mākāna ʿaliyya, raf' does not mean uplifting the body to a certain height
or place. Another verse of the Qur'ān is :

wlu shēna l-rafūna bīha ṭamlākā aḥlād ilā l-ār'd

*i.e.* and if We had pleased We would have exalted him thereby; but he clings to the
earth (7 : 176). There is a clear reference to the earth here but the meaning of
raf' by all the commentators has been explained here as nearness to God. But,
strangely enough, when the question of Jesus Christ comes the people care neither
for the lexicon nor for the the Qur'ān and Ḥadīth that in what sense this word has
been used. In case of Jesus the context is particularly clear, the exalter is God and
the exaltation is towards Him : as, (I will) exalt thee in My presence (The Qur'ān
3 : 54). And as Divine Being is not limited to a certain place, therefore exaltation
towards Him could not mean lifting the body to a certain height whether it is to
the fourth or the seventh heaven. Again the Qur'ān records a saying of Abraham :

fain dāhib ilī rīn

*i.e.* surely I flee to my Lord (37 : 99). Fleeing towards Lord does not mean
going to Him with this body of clay. Similarly :

aʾrūjī ilī rībāk

*i.e.* Return to thy Lord (89 : 28) and again :

ānā ʿalīh rājūwun

*i.e.* To Him we shall return (2 : 156) only signify spiritual returning. The most
astonishing aspect of the story is that the word raf' has been used for Jesus Christ
after tuwaff; or his death such as :

aʾīn mātawīk wa ṭaʕfīk illī

*i.e.* I will cause thee to die and exalt thee in My presence (3 : 54) and exaltation
after death is always spiritual.
Evidence of the Gospels

When we turn to the Gospels we find that:

(1) Jesus remained on the Cross for a few hours only (Mark 15:25; John 19:14), but death by crucifixion was always tardy. (2) The two men crucified along with Jesus were still alive when taken down from the Cross; the presumption is that Jesus too was alive. (3) The breaking of legs was resorted to in the case of the other two criminals, but dispensed with in the case of Jesus (John 19:32-3). (4) The side of Jesus being pierced blood rushed out, and this was a certain sign of life. (5) Even Pilate did not believe that Jesus actually died in so short a time (Mark 15:44). (6) Jesus was not buried like the two criminals, but was given in the charge of a wealthy disciple of his, who lavished care on him and put him in a spacious tomb, hewn in the side of a rock (Ibid., 15:46). (7) When the tomb was seen on the third day, the stone was found to have been removed from its mouth (Ibid., 16:4) which would not have been the case if there had been a supernatural rising. (8) Mary, when she saw him, took him for the gardener (John 20:15) which shows that Jesus had disguised himself as a gardener. (9) Such

1. Muhammad 'Ali's English Commentary of the Qur'ān p. 231 under the v. 4:159. — Γ

Another argument against the death of Jesus Christ is deduced from the verse: They killed him not, nor did they cause his death on the Cross (4:157). In fact this argument has not at all a leg to stand on. A person's not dying or being killed on the Cross does not mean that he has been alive for the last two thousand years. The only logical conclusion of this would be that he did not die by these two methods but died a natural death especially when the promise of his natural death already exists in the Qur'ān in the words "O Jesus I will cause you to die (3:54) (a natural death), and the fulfilment of this promise has also been mentioned at another place: When Thou didst cause me to die (5:117). These two verses clearly indicate that Jesus Christ escaped death on the Cross and lived on this earth later on dying a natural death. Negation of killing (qatl) or crucifixion (Saţb) has been mentioned here because the Jews said:

اُنَا قَتَلْنَا الَّمُسِیِّحَ عِیسّی ابۡنَ مَرۡیمُ

i.e. We have killed the Messiah, Jesus, son of Mary (4:157). It must also be borne in mind that Saţb does not only mean to hang on the cross but as the compilers of Arabic lexicon have also made it clear that it is one of the types of killing therefore negation of killing and crucifixion only means that he did not die of these two methods but it does not mean that an attempt was not made to kill him or cause his death on the Cross.

As against They killed him not, nor did they cause his death on the Cross the words: Nay, Allāh exalted him in His presence have also been mentioned. And God's ra'f (exaltation) only means spiritual exaltation, as I have discussed before. The reason of special reference to his ra'f is because according to the Old Testament he that is hanged is accursed of God (Deut. 21:23). The Jews said that they had killed Jesus Christ on the Cross, therefore he was accursed and could not be called honourable in the presence of God. Christians also because of their erroneous belief in Attonement, thought that unless Jesus was accursed he could not take away the sins of the people as it has been said: Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us; for it
disguise would not have been needed if Jesus had risen from the dead. (10) It was in the same body of flesh that the disciples saw Jesus and the wounds were still deep enough for a man to thrust his hand in (John 20:25-28). (11) He still felt hunger and ate as his disciples ate (Luke 24:39-43). (12) Jesus Christ undertook a journey to Galilee with two of his disciples walking side by side with him (Matt. 28:10) which shows that he was fleeing for refuge; a journey to Galilee was not necessary to rise to heaven. (1) In all the post-crucifixion appearances Jesus is found hiding himself as if he feared being discovered. Arisen Jesus should have made a public appearance and should not have shown any fear of being discovered by the persecuting Jews. (14) Jesus Christ prayed the whole night before his arrest to be saved from the accursed death on the Cross, and he also asked his disciples to pray for him; the prayers of a righteous man in distress and affliction are always accepted. He seems to have even received a promise from God to be saved, and it was to this promise that he referred when he cried out on the Cross: *My God, my God, why has Thou foresaken me!* (Matt. 27:46). Heb. 5:7 makes the matter still more clear, for there it is plainly stated that

is written: Cursed is everyone that hangeth on the tree (Gal. 1:13). And for the redemption of their sins Christians believed that Christ descended into hell for three days. The Qur'ān contradicts the belief of Jews as well as of Christians i.e., neither did they slay him nor cause his death on the Cross but that he was made honourable in the Divine presence.

The words of the Qur'ān, And certainly those who differ therein are in doubt about it. They have no knowledge about it, but only follow a conjecture, and they killed him not for sure (4:157) in fact fully apply to the condition of Jesus Christ as mentioned in the Gospels. The evidence of the Gospels has been discussed separately. The verse of the Qur'ān, but he was made to appear to them as such (Ibid.) Wālâkin sluubiha la-hum may bear two interpretations: he was made to be like (it); or the matter was made dubious or obscure (LL). The Rūḥ al-Ma‘ānī says the meaning may be that the matter became dubious to them (Muhammad ‘Ali’s English commentary of the Qur’ān p. 646). The story that some one else was made to resemble Jesus, is not to be found in the Qur’ān or the Hadith. This is merely a tell-tale which has no foundation at all.

Sometimes the verse:

وَأَنَّ مَنْ أَهْلَ الْكِتَابِ الْأَلْبَابِ لَيْؤْمِنُنَّ بِهِ قِبْلَ موْتِهِ

i.e. And there is none of the people of the Book but will believe in this before his death (4:159) is brought forward as an argument and qibla mauti-hi before his death is made to refer to the Messiah and the verse is translated thus: before the death of Jesus Christ all the people of the Book will certainly believe in him. But for the last two thousand years Jews have been dying without believing in Jesus Christ. Now this is the first principle of commentary that no interpretation should be made which goes against the clear facts of history. Hence this meaning is by no means acceptable. The fact is that the Jews and the Christians were both doubtful whether or not Jesus was killed on the Cross, the evidence of the Gospels is against their alleged belief in his death. After mentioning their dubious belief, the Qur‘ān says that in spite of all this they both believe that Jesus had died on the Cross and was accursed (God forbid). A Jew cannot remain a Jew unless he believes in such a
his prayer was accepted: when he had offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto Him Who was able to save him from death and was heard in that he feared.

Evidence of Hadith and other sources

There is no mention of the physical ascension of Jesus Christ in any of the authentic reports (ahādīth). On the contrary there are reports which show that Jesus Christ is dead. The report about the Ascension (Mi'raż) itself proves this point. According to this the Prophet Muhammad saw Jesus and John at one and the same place.\(^1\) Now the death of John is agreed upon by all, and of course there are separate conditions and places for the living and the dead. There is not a single version of the report about the Ascension where Jesus is shown in a different condition than that of the other prophets. Besides this it has also been mentioned in a report that:

لوكا موسى وعيسى حبيبين لى ومعهما الدواباعي

(أوِ لَكَانَا مِنْ أَتْباعِهِ)

theory and for a Christian the whole doctrine of Atonement rests on the ‘accursed death’ of Jesus Christ. This meaning is not only incorrect according to the context of the Qurān but also according to the historical evidence. This shows how authentic and full of wisdom the statement of the Qurān is. Thus the pronoun in gabla mautihī refers to the people of the Book. That this interpretation is correct is borne out by the evidence that another reading of gabla mautihī is gabla mautihim (before their death) (Imām Abū J’afar Muhammad ibn Jarir Tabari, commentary of the Qurān, vol. 6, p. 15) in which case the pronoun necessarily refers to the followers of the Book.

Besides this, misunderstanding also prevails about the word tuwaffā. Tuwaffā-hu Allāh according to Lisān al-‘Arab signifies Allāh took his soul or caused him to die. And according to Tāj al-‘Arūs it means: He took his soul. Tuwaffā-hu Allāh does not convey any other significance than this in the Qurān, Hadith or the Arabic lexicon. This word has been used in the same significance in the Qurān as in the verse:

الله يتوفي الأنفُس، حين موتها والتي لم تُمَتَ في منا مها

i.e. Allāh takes the (men’s) souls at the time of their death, and those that die not, during their sleep (39:42). Tuwaffā whether at the time of death or sleep, however, means taking away of soul and does not signify taking away of body or taking away of soul and body together. In al-Bukhārī Ibn ‘Abbas is reported to have said mutawaffī-ka mu’nū-ta-ka i.e., the significance of mutawaffi is I will cause you to die, which makes the meaning of tuwaffā clear beyond the shadow of doubt. Because of the presupposed conception of Jesus being alive this word has been translated by some commentators as taking away of body or taking in full measure; this meaning is against the clear verses of the Qurān that have been quoted above. It has not been mentioned in any hadith as well that Jesus Christ is still alive or that he was taken alive to heaven with his body of clay.

1. Al-Bukhārī, 63:42.
i.e., Had Moses and Jesus been alive they would have but followed me\(^1\) (or they would have been his i.e. the Prophet’s followers). The conclusion from these words is obvious. The Holy Prophet considered Moses and Jesus to have passed away from this world. Again there is another report to the similar effect:

\[\text{ان عيسى ابن مريم عاش عشرين ومائة سنة} \]

i.e., ‘Īsa son of Mary lived for a hundred and twenty years.\(^2\) This is yet another proof that Jesus Christ is dead and his death occurred at the age of one hundred and twenty years. About this report it has been stated in Zurqānī that: this report, whose narrators are trustworthy, has been mentioned by Tibrānî in the Kabīr with an authority from ‘Āisha.\(^3\) and in the beginning of this report it has been ascribed to ‘Āisha that she said that this matter was talked over to Fātimah by the Prophet Muhammad during his last illness. The last part of the report mentions that he (i.e. the Prophet) was going to leave the world at the end of sixty years. It is obvious that such reports could not be mere fabrications because they mentioned of Jesus Christ’s death who was generally supposed to be alive at that time.

From among the four Imāms, Imām Mālik believed in the death of Jesus Christ as is mentioned in Majma’ Bihār al-Anwār under the explanation of the word ḥakam: قال مالك مات i.e. qāla Mālikun māta—(Imām) Mālik said: Jesus Christ died.\(^4\) And Imām ibn Ḥazm also believed the same as is mentioned in Jalālain ma‘ Kamālain that:

\[\text{وتمسك ابن حزم بظاهرة الإية وقال بمومته} \]

i.e. Ibn Ḥazm accepted the apparent meaning of the verse (i.e. يعسي ابن ملوك) and believed in the death of Jesus Christ.\(^5\) The belief of Muḥiyy al-Dīn ibn al-ʿArabi about the descent of the son of Mary was that:

\[\text{وجب نزوله في آخر الزمان بتعلقه بذن آخر} \]

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3. See also Ḥujaj al-Kirāmah, p. 429.
5. Jalālain ma‘ Kamālain (Delhi, India, Muḥiyy Press), p. 109, footnote.
i.e. His descent in later ages will be with a different body.¹ This appearance in the terminology of the mystics is called barūz (manifestation) as the following quotation would make it clear:

بعضی برآکند که روح عیسی در مهدی بروز کند و نزول عبارت از بروز است.

i.e. Some believe that the soul of Jesus will manifest in Mahdi and the descent only means this barūz.² Both these statements make the point about Jesus' descent abundantly clear.

CHAPTER IV

The descent of Messiah means the appearance of another person

It is evident from the above references that some Muslim saints had also previously held the belief that the descent (nuzūl)³ of Jesus Christ, as mentioned in the reports, is to be a spiritual manifestation i.e., the spirituality of Jesus will be transformed in another person. In reports quoted earlier the words imāmu kum minkum and amma-kum minkum point out that the coming Messiah will be the imām of Muslims, being one of them. And the clear mention of the death of Jesus Christ in the Qur’ān is yet another proof that the coming Messiah is not Jesus Christ himself but a person, having his spiritual characteristics, who would be raised from among this nation of Muḥammad. Other reports which are also mentioned in al-Bukhārī confirm the same view,

¹ Tafsir ‘Arā’is al-Bayān (Lucknow—India, Nawal Kishor Press) vol. 1, p. 292.
³ The word nuzūl should not be misunderstood here as it is used in a very wide sense in the Arabic language. “We have indeed sent down (anzalnā ‘alaihum) to you clothing to cover your shame,” says the Qur’ān (7 : 26), although our clothes are made of cotton which is a product of land. Again: “And He has sent down for you (wa anzala laikum) cattle” (39 : 6), and “We sent down iron (anzala l-hadīl)” (57 : 25). Now cattle and iron are not literally sent down from heaven. Even for the appointment of the Holy Prophet Muḥammad the Qur’ān has used the word anzala:

قد انزل الله إليكم ذكراء - رسولًا يتنوا عليكم آيت

الله مبين

i.e. “Allāh has indeed revealed to you (qod anzal-Allāhu ilaikum) a reminder, a Messenger who recites to you the clear messages of Allāh.” (63 : 10, 11). Hence the nuzīl of the son of Mary simply means his coming and not necessarily his descent from above.
for instance, the complexion of Jesus Christ and of the coming Messiah are different although the name is the same. It has been stated in al-Bukhārī in the ḥadīth about the Ascension that:

\[ \text{وَلَقَدْ عَسِى فَنَعَتُهُ النَّبِيُّ صلى الله عليه وسلم } \]

\[ \text{فَقَالَ رَبِّي احَمَر} \]

i.e., I met ‘Īsā... he was of fair complexion.\(^1\) Again in the report of ibn ‘Umar Jesus Christ has been described as having white complexion, curly hair and broad chest.\(^2\) Further when Messiah, son of Mary has been described with Masīḥ al-Dajjal the words are: tonight (in dream) I found myself near Ka‘bah. I saw a man of wheatish complexion, very fair from among the people of wheatish colour, the hair of his head rested on his shoulders below his ears and he had straight flowing hair. I enquired who was he? They said, it was the Messiah, son of Mary.\(^3\) Along with it the other report reads as follows: in a state of dream I found myself going round the Ka‘bah and there was a person of wheatish complexion having straight flowing hair.....I asked who was he? ‘It was son of Mary,’ they said.\(^4\)

In the first two reports quoted above in connection with the Ascension, Messiah in the company of the prophets has been described as having white complexion and curly hair. In the latter two reports which mention his going round the Ka‘bah with the Antichrist (Dajjal), he is of a wheatish complexion with long hair, which shows that this refers to the Messiah of this ummah. Thus according to the Qur’ān and the Hadith Messiah, son of Mary and the promised Messiah are two different persons. A common name has been given to both of them to show their spiritual resemblance and affinity.

**Prophecy of the descent or second advent in previous scriptures**

Another strong evidence in support of what has been stated above is that the descent or the second advent of a person, mentioned in the previous scriptures, does not mean the coming of the same person but only the appearance of another person in the power and the spirit of the person prophesied for. There is no instance mentioned in the previous books about the actual reappearance of the same person. There is a prophecy

\[ \text{1. Al-Bukhārī, Kitāb al-Mīrāj.} \]
\[ \text{2. Ibid.} \]
\[ \text{3. Ibid.} \]
\[ \text{4. Kanz al-Ummāl, vol. 6, p. 126.} \]
in one of the books of the Bible that the prophet Elijah would reappear before the advent of Christ: *behold I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord.* The Jews held the belief that Elijah was taken up alive to the heavens and that he would reappear before the advent of Christ. When Jesus claimed to be the Messiah the Jews raised this objection against him:

"And his disciples asked him, saying, Why then say the Scribes that Elias must first come? And Jesus answered and said unto them, Elias truly shall first come, and restore all things. But I say unto you, That Elias is come already, and they knew him not, but have done unto him whatsoever they listed .....Then the disciples understood that he spake unto them of John the Baptist."

This incident is described in almost similar words at another place in the *Mark*. In the *Luke* the following words occur about John: *and he shall go before him in the spirit and power of Elias*. The Synoptics are thus agreed that there was a prophecy about the reappearance of Elias in the Old Testament. This could not be rejected as a case of alteration because there is a strong evidence of the Old as well as the New Testament on this point. Moreover, this record could not have been altered by Christians for the matter stood as an objection against the claims of Jesus Christ. By adopting this explanation there remains not the least difficulty in connection with the prophecies of the second advent of Jesus Christ himself, for his own explanation settles the point beyond all doubt. And this is another testimony besides the testimonies of the Qur'ān and Ḥadīth that the second advent means the appearance of another person. The coming of Jesus Christ therefore only means the raising of a *mujaddid* in this *ummah* in the power and spirit of Jesus Christ. When the Founder laid claim to be the *mujaddid* of the fourteenth century Hijrah his words implied his claim to be the Promised Messiah as well though the actual position dawned on him after a few years. The following words of his are worthy of note:

"The author has been given the knowledge that he is the *mujaddid* of this age and that spiritually his excellences resemble those of Messiah, son of Mary, and that the one of them bears a very strong resemblance and close affinity to the other."
CHAPTER V

Metaphors in prophecies

These arguments are too strong to be put aside lightly but it is sometimes said that when Jesus son of Mary is clearly spoken of in the reports why should his name be interpreted metaphorically and applied to a person possessing his spiritual characteristics? The reason is obvious. When a statement does not yield to literal interpretation we must take it metaphorically. The literal meaning does not collaborate with the Qur'ān, Ḥadīth nor even with the reports about his descent, therefore we are forced to interpret it metaphorically. If we reflect a little deeply we find that the very words of these reports cannot be explained otherwise. It has been mentioned that Jesus son of Mary will break the Cross and kill the swine (يكسرا لصليب و يقتل الحنجر). If the apparent significance is accepted, does it mean that after his descent Jesus will break all crosses in the world and slaughter all swines? No prophet or saint or mujaddid has ever been entrusted with such a bewildering task. If God appoints a prophet or a mujaddid, he is assigned the task of reforming his people. Thus we cannot but take the metaphorical meaning of these two characteristics of the coming Messiah. Cross is a symbol of Christianity and swine, dirty animal as it is, stands for impure habits of a nation. Killing the swine means removal of such habits. Otherwise the sole mission of breaking the Cross and hunting the swine is simply against the dignity of a prophet or a mujaddid, or even of an ordinary religious leader. Has God Almighty kept Jesus alive for this ‘sacred’ task for the last two thousand years? The fact is that metaphors and similes often form a part and parcel of prophecies. Similar is the case about the prophecy regarding the appearance of the Messiah where expressions such as Jesus son of Mary, breaking the Cross and killing of the swine have been used metaphorically. Any person who insists on taking the literal meaning of this prophecy does not only assign a meaningless task to an appointed one of God but also invites world’s ridicule and censure for this office.

If the prophecy about the Promised Messiah is not interpreted metaphorically, that would only prove the unreliability of Ḥadīth

If these expressions are not taken metaphorically we cannot but consider a large portion of the reports as pure fabrications. This particular report about the descent of Jesus Christ is inter-related with quite a number of Ḥadīth such as reports concerning Antichrist, Gog and Magog, downfall of Muslims and so forth. Some of the trials mentioned therein with which Muslims will be faced, refer
to the present age and there are prophecies which have been fulfilled so clearly that even Muslims who have not joined the Ahmadiyyah Movement also accept their truth. If these prophecies have come true it necessarily follows that the prophecy about the advent of Jesus Christ has also been fulfilled. These reports are found in books of Ḥadīth such as al-Bukhārī and al-Muslim, and have been traced back to as many as fourteen different companions of the Holy Prophet. To shelve these reports off is no light matter for a person who believes in God and His Messenger. There may be hundreds of differences in matters of minor importance: one may disagree with a report on the authority of the other, this being only the question of accepting one Ḥadīth and rejecting the other. But reports about the descent of Jesus Christ are intertwined with a host of other subjects such as the appearance of Antichrist, feats of Gog and Magog, trials of Muslims, reports about the signs of the Last Day etc. There are only two possibilities. Either they should be accepted as a whole or rejected as a whole. Accepting them entirely does not mean that every word should be taken literally. These may be accepted literally or metaphorically according to the context or the cannons of testing the Ḥadīth. If we entirely reject them it would amount to the belief that all the reports mentioned above are a collection of lies and falsehoods. No Muslim who believes in God and His Messenger can dare go to such an extent! Moreover such an unreasonable attitude would also set at naught the whole evidence of history and nothing would remain trustworthy in the world. This would be a great injustice to Islam that all the prophecies which have been fulfilled in their real or metaphorical sense and which would have gone to increase the knowledge and faith of Muslims should only be rejected because, otherwise, the descent of Jesus, son of Mary, has to be admitted.
In spite of the weakness and discrepancies of the reports about Mahdī their collective evidence cannot be rejected

There is a clear distinction between the two sets of reports one relating to the advent of Messiah and the other to the appearance of Mahdī. The reports about Messiah have been accepted by all the great authorities of Ḥadīth whereas the reports relating to Mahdī have been rejected not only by Imām Bukhārī and Imām Muslim but also by many eminent scholars of Ḥadīth. There is no doubt that all these reports have been greatly tampered with for various reasons, so much so, that even those who believe in the coming of Mahdī only accept the fundamental fact of his advent. Because of the extreme differences and discrepancies found in their details they refuse to approve of these reports in toto. Nawāb Siddiq Ḥasan (an Ahl Ḥadīth scholar of India) who was expecting an early advent of Mahdī, even during his life-time wrote: There is no doubt in it that the bases of these reports are very often defective.1 At another place, in the same book, he has written that all the details about the reports of Mahdī only show this much that he would certainly appear though his appearance may occur in any form. The question here naturally arises: when al-Bukhārī and al-Muslim have not accepted these reports and other scholars of Ḥadīth have also regarded their bases as defective, why should not these be considered as absolutely weak or fabricated and should be rejected entirely? The attitude that if there is discrepancy in details the basic fact itself should be rejected does not only go against all the principles of accepting Ḥadīth but also of history. On the other hand the difference in the details show that there is somewhere a fundamental reality behind all this. If in reports relating to Mahdī different parties for their own ulterior motives have mixed up false reports, this is quite feasible, although this again proves that behind these reports there is

something substantial which both the parties had wanted to seize upon to serve their own ends. The original is, therefore, grossly distorted. When historical reports (and even a non-believer in *ahādīth* gives at least this much status to them) differ in details the common factor among them is at least accepted as true. In reports concerning Mahdī the appearance of Mahdī itself is such a common factor; therefore this cannot be at any rate put aside. The reason why Bukhārī and Muslim did not accept them is the weak and defective way of their reporting. But when weak and defective reports have at least gained the historical status, then according to the rules of history we are forced to consider and accept their common and collective testimony as true. Besides that we cannot reject the possibility of different persons being referred to in these reports and that some signs may be fulfilled in one person and others in another as the word *mahdī* is also used in a very broad sense. It means one who is guided and the heir to all truths and in whom the attribute "Guide" for God is fully represented and thus this word can be applied to every guided person as for instance the first four righteous successors of the Holy Prophet had also been called Mahdīs. In his *Tārikh, Imām* Sayūṭī has reported a saying of Wahb ibn Munabih: “If there has been any Mahdī in this *ummah* it is ‘Umar ibn ‘Abd al-‘Azīz.” In view of this wide significance if different signs are fulfilled in different persons they can all be called Mahdīs.

CHAPTER VII

Common factors in the reports about Mahdī

Abū Dāwūd and Tirmidhī mention a report by Ibn Mas‘ūd that The world will not come to an end unless a person from the people of my house becomes the ruler of Arabia whose name will be identical to mine.² A report from Umm Salmah reads thus: Mahdī is from me having bright forehead, high nose and will fill this earth with equity and justice as it was filled with oppression and violence.³ In Abū Dāwūd it has been again mentioned that Ḥadrat ‘Ali looked towards his son Ḥasan and said: A person will be born from his seed whose name will be the name of your prophet and he will resemble him in disposition but not in outward form.⁴ In Musnad of Aḥmad it is again reported from

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3. Ibid., p. 240.
4. Ibid., p. 241.
‘Ali that the Holy Prophet said: *Mahdī is from the people of my house.* In another report we find: *Even if a day is left from the age of this world God will certainly raise a person from among us who will fill the whole world with justice as it was filled with oppression.* In another report by Ibn Mas‘ūd it has been mentioned that: *There will be no Qiyāmah unless there is a person from among the people of my house who is raised as a ruler, whose name will be my name.* There are many reports by Abū Sa‘īd Khudrī. In one of them we find: *Mahdī will be from my ummah... will fill the earth with fairness and justice,* and in another: *I give you the glad tidings of Mahdī who will be raised in my ummah at a time of digression and distress of people. He will fill the earth with equity and justice as it was filled with oppression and violence.* Yet in another it has been stated: *He said that we feared that new things will crop up after the Holy Prophet, then we asked him and he said: Mahdī will be raised in my ummah, five, seven or nine (years).* Similarly Ibn ‘Asākir has reported in his *Tārīkh*: *A person from the family of Ḥasan will appear from the Eastern countries. Even if mountains stood in his way he will demolish them and make his way through.* And in *Ṭibrānī and Abī Nā'im* the following report occurs: *I swear by my Lord Who appointed me with truth, that Mahdī of this ummah will be of these two i.e. of Ḥasan and Ḥusain.* And it is reported from Dār Qutnī that: *Mahdī will be from the family of my uncle ‘Abbās.* Yet there is another report which reads: *O ‘Abbās! God started this matter with me and will end it with a young man of your progeny who will fill this earth with justice as it was filled with violence.* And there is a report in *Ibn Mājah*:


1. *Imām ‘Abū ‘Abd Allāh ʿĀḥmad ibn Ḥanbal, Musnad ʿĀḥmad ibn Ḥanbal,* vol. 1, p. 84.
2. Ibid., p. 99.
3. Ibid., p. 376.
5. Ibid., p. 57.
6. Ibid., p. 21.
8. Ibid., p. 356.
Now the common factors in these reports are reduced to this that a Mahdí would appear in this ummah in the latter ages having a strong resemblance with the Holy Prophet filling the earth with equity and justice. But these reports differ as to which family he would belong. He might be "from me" (i.e. the Prophet) or from the people of his house, or from the seed of Ḥasan and Ḥusain or of ibn ‘Abbās and it has also been mentioned that he might be only a person from the nation of Muḥammad. The reports of his being from the seed of Ḥasan, Ḥusain or ‘Abbās, definitely contradict one another, therefore, this part of the reports has to be given up but the reports which contain expressions such as "from me", "from the people of my house", "from my ummah" can easily be reconciled, for they may imply his spiritual resemblance with the Holy Prophet, as the Prophet is reported to have said about Salmān of Persia:

سَلَمَانُ مِنْ أَهْلِ الْبَيْتِ

i.e. Salmān is from the people of my house.¹ Similar expressions have been used as well for other persons. Thus a member of this ummah having strong resemblance with the Holy Prophet can be regarded as from him or from the people of his house. The common factor in these reports, therefore, is that Mahdí will be a person belonging to the nation of Muḥammad. This view is supported by the report in Ibn Mājah where only ʿĪsā has been called Mahdí.

Another important point which is clear from these reports is about the Divine appointment (biʿiḥrat) of Mahdí. Now the word appointment for human beings (in the Islamic terminology) is used either for prophets or for mujaddids. But as prophethood has come to an end with the Holy Prophet, therefore Mahdí can be raised in this nation only as a mujaddid. As to the reports in which his equity and justice have been mentioned, it must be borne in mind that one type of law and order is the responsibility of the government of the day and the other type of justice is connected with the appointed ones (māmūrin) of God whether they are in possession of temporal power or not. What type of justice has been referred to in these reports will be discussed later. Oppression and violence which have been particularly mentioned here are the same which have been spread by the followers of the Religion of the Cross. On the one hand they have raised a humble servant of God to the pedestal of Divinity as the Qurān says: The heaven may almost rent thereat, and the earth cleave asunder, and the mountains

fall down into pieces, that they ascribe a son to the Beneficent ¹¹ and on the other they have inflicted sufferings on their fellow beings by their peculiar philosophy that it is only the white people who have the right to rule over other nations; the latter being created for the service of the white.

CHAPTER VIII

Whether Mahdi will spread Islam by the sword

Strangely enough, a common misconception prevalent among Muslims about Mahdi—that he would spread Islam at the point of sword—has not been mentioned at all in these reports. Not only the Muslims but the non-Muslims as well have come to associate the very name of Mahdi with bloodshed and fighting. The book Iqtārāb al-Sā‘ah supposed to be written by the son of Nawāb Ṣiddiq Ḥasan Khān contains the following words about Mahdi: He will call people towards God with sword. The one who refuses will be killed.²

When we look into the aḥādīth we find only the words yamlīk al-‘Arab (صاحب العرب) i.e. he will be the ruler of Arabia, and for the spread of equity and justice the earth has also been mentioned in these reports. The words yamlīk al-‘Arab which confine his territory to Arabia are either an interpolation of a reporter or meant for another person whose kingdom will be limited to Arabia.³ Reference to his kingdom on one side and the abundance of wealth on the other may have led people to believe that Mahdi would propagate Islam with force. This view is supported by a statement in Iqtārāb al-Sā‘ah which says that: Wars will be waged at his hand, treasures will be dug out, city after

3. Apparently these words seem to apply to ‘Abd Allāh ibn Zubair who did not enter into bā'at of Yazīd. When Yazīd died in 64 A. H. ‘Abd Allāh ibn Zubair was elected as the khāṣṣah. The people of Hijāz, Yemen and Iraq also submitted to his rule. Mu‘awiyah ibn Yazīd’s rule was limited to Egypt and Syria, but after his death the people of these countries also took bā'at of Zubair, but soon after they revolted and separated themselves from him. Thus Zubair’s kingdom remained confined to Arabia. In 73 A.H. during the reign of ‘Abd al-Malik, Zubair was attacked by Kajjaj and was martyred by him. Thus his reign was spread over a period of nine years. Reports concerning Mahdi mention seven or nine years of his rule. These words, therefore, may refer to ‘Abd Allāh ibn Zubair. If it is kept in view that these aḥādīth have been greatly tempered with, the part mentioning the period of Mahdi’s kingdom for seven or nine years can be applied to him as well.
city will be conquered from East to West.\(^1\) It seems that on account of such conjectures the wrong conception of a warrior Mahdi gradually got its way among Muslims. Some reports might have also been fabricated in this connection. But Šīlah Sittah (six authentic collections of ḥadīth), and Musnad of Ahmad which refer to the benevolence of Mahdi do not mention any report to show that Mahdi will wage wars or conquer the whole world or convert unbelievers to Islam at the point of sword. How was it possible when the coming of such a Mahdi was decidedly against the clear verdict of the Qurʾān that: There is no compulsion in religion.\(^2\) How could indeed such a Mahdi come who would act against this injunction and wield sword to convert the people to Islam?

This wrong conception was removed by the Mahdi himself

May God bless Ḥaḍrat Mirza Ghulām Aḥmad of Qādiān who has completely rooted out the false conception of Mahdi’s spreading Islam with sword which has opened the eyes of Muslims and has made them realize that the story which was forged by their enemies to stem the progress of Islam was unwittingly accepted by Muslims themselves. Had there been no other argument for his being a Mahdi, this alone was sufficient to prove that Mirza Ghulām Aḥmad’s claim of being the guided one (mahdi) of God was correct. The greatest obstacle today in the progress of Islam was the world-wide misconception that Islam was propagated at the point of sword. The enemies of Islam made full use of this weapon to scare the people away even from the name of Islam. As for Muslims themselves, instead of removing this blot from the beautiful face of Islam they lent a helping hand to its opponents by their wrong belief in a warrior Mahdi. No doubt there had been other Muslim scholars also who had rejected the reports, about the advent of Mahdi, or doubted their authenticity such as Ibn Khaldūn\(^3\) and the Muʿtazalites but it had no general effect on Muslims. There was also a reason for this attitude, because the complete rejection of these reports meant the rejection of a fundamental reality as well i.e. the coming of Mahdi himself which was basically true and was a prophecy of the Prophet Muḥammad. It was necessary, therefore, that unless the truth had manifested itself and the promised Mahdi had come the total rejection of this prophecy should not have any effect on the general body of Muslims. When the real claimant appeared he lifted out the truth from falsehood and showed that in what way the

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1. Nawāb Sayyid Nūr al-Ḥasan Khān, Iqṭarāb al-Sāḥah, p. 64.
2. The Qurʾān, 2 : 256.
3. Muqaddamaḥ.
4. Ḥujaj al-Kirāmah, p. 386.
true part of the prophecy was fulfilled. The rest he showed was added either by the carelessness of the reporters or by the wilful interpolation. There have been, of course, several other claimants to Mahdihood also but every one of them was interested in his own person and claim and cared nothing about making Islam free from false objections. Every one picked up certain words and expressions from the reports and tried to apply them to himself but paid no attention to the removal of this false belief that Islam was propagated by sword. There had been some pious persons from among these claimants as well and they might have identified their own temporal victory with the victory of Islam but the extermination of this outlandish conception of a warrior Mahdi who would wield sword for the spread of Islam was destined at the hands of Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, and thus a great obstacle was removed which stood in the way of the progress of Islam. His claim of being a Mahdi showed to the world that the secret and glory of Islam was co-related with such a claim. Not one, but let hundreds of such claimants appear for the glory and success of Islam, and Muslims should welcome them with open arms. To obstruct their cause, under suspicions and misunderstandings, is to obstruct the cause of Islam and the Muslim nation. Hazrat Ahmad was no doubt a claimant to Mahdihood but he made his claim a source of the onward march of Islam. The prophecy relating to Mahdi has been fulfilled today with such clarity that the fundamental fact behind it has been gradually accepted by all Muslims. The conception that Islam was, or will be, thrust upon non-Muslims with sword is losing its hold on their minds. Islam has never stood in need of violence for its progress, and never shall a time come when such a course will be applied for its propagation. Even non-Muslims have also started realizing that the advancement of Islam was simply due to its spiritual force and not to the use of any sword. And it is indeed a fact that the real success of Islam was brought about not by a powerful emperor but its conquests were mainly due to its dynamic spiritual force. The following passage by an American scholar confirms this view:

"The other great religions won their way slowly, by painful struggle, and finally triumphed with the aid of powerful monarchs converted to the new faith. Christianity had its Constantine, Buddhism its Asoka, and Zoroastrianism its Cyrus, each lending to his chosen cult the mighty force of secular authority. Not so with Islam. Arising in a desert land sparsely inhabited by a nomad race, previously undistinguished in human annals, Islam sallied forth on its great
adventure with the slenderest human backing and against
the heaviest material odds."¹

In short the real Mahdī of Islam is he who has clarified the real mean-
ing of Mahdihood and has shown to the world that the Mahdī of Islam
is a spiritual Mahdī and that Islam's success depends on its intrinsic
spiritual values and not on outward force.

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CHAPTER IX

Messiah and Mahdī are one

There was yet another great misunderstanding about Mahdī which
the Founder of the Ahmadiyyah Movement removed. Messiah and
Mahdī were considered to be two separate persons although it was
indicated in a report of Ibn Mājah. (لا مهدی الا عباسی) i.e. There
is no Mahdī except Īsā.² There is a positiveness about these
words that there is no other Mahdī. This can only be interpreted
that the Promised Mahdī is another name of the Promised Messiah. If
the name Mahdī in some other reports has been given to some one else,
it is to be accepted in a general way, as for instance, the first four
Khalifāhs have also been called Mahdis. ‘Umar ibn ‘Abd al-‘Azīz too
has been given this name. Now this report of Ibn Mājah could not be
untrue as it was against the general conception among Muslims about
Mahdī and such a thought could not have occurred to the reporters. On
the other hand this hadīth supports the reports by Bukhārī and Muslim
as they also mention the coming of only one person in later ages and that
is Jesus. The coming of any other person is not at all mentioned
in these two authentic collections (Ṣahihain). Thus the report of Ibn
Mājah has made it clear that if in some reports the appearance of Mahdī
is suggested besides the coming of Jesus Christ, this also refers to Jesus.
Now here we should stop and think that if we do not try to solve the
difficulties involved in the reports about Mahdī in the light of this
hadīth we shall have to admit that besides al-Bukhārī and al-Muslim other
works of Ṣīhāh Sittah (six authentic collections of reports) have incor-
porated a lot of fabricated matter in their collections. And if these
reports were not fabricated, why did Bukhārī and Muslim reject a
prophecy of such magnitude and did not even care to mention it
in their works? The report of Ibn Mājah: There is no Mahdī except Īsā
solves both these difficulties. al-Bukhārī and Al-Muslim have only

². Sunan Ibn Mājah, (Maṭbah Nizamiyyah, Delhi,) 1905 C.E. Ch. Al-ḥa-rāt
al-Sā‘ah, p. 302.
reported the second name of this reformer and other books of Ṣiḥāḥ have mentioned both the names of ʿĪsā and Mahdī.

This is not the only ḥadīth which shows that Messiah and Mahdī are one, but if we carefully study other reports they also point out towards the same conclusion. Evidently there cannot be two Amīrs (leaders) or Khalīfahs at one and the same time. Ḥadrat Abū Bakr immediately after the death of the Holy Prophet gave a reply to the Anṣār (helpers) who said: One leader from us and one from you¹ that this was not possible and there could not be two leaders at the same time. If this report is true, how could there be two leaders i.e. the Promised Messiah and Mahdī, simultaneously? If it is said that one will be an assistant to another we do not find it mentioned in the reports. Both Messiah and Mahdī have been called imāms. In al-Bukhārī and al-Muslim: imāmu kum minkum and amma kum minkum occur for the Promised Messiah who has also been called Arbiter and Judge. Ḥakam and imām are identical. In Musnad of Aḥmad he has been clearly referred to as “Arbiter, judge and imām.”² About Mahdī it is a widespread belief, that he will be an imām and some think that he will be a king also. In this case Messiah must be his wazir (aider, assistant). But on the other hand this is also acknowledged that the Messiah will be superior to Mahdī as Nawāb Siddīq Ḥasan Khān quotes in his book a saying by imām Shaukānī:

\[ \text{ولا شك أن عيسى أكرم من المهدى} \]

**i.e. There is no doubt that Jesus is superior to Mahdī.**³ At any rate there can be only one imām at a time and when Jesus and Mahdī are both called imāms then it necessarily follows that Jesus and Mahdī are also one.

The third argument in favour of this view is that Promised Messiah has also been called Mahdī in the reports. Accordingly there is a ḥadīth from Abū Hurairā to the effect that:

\[ \text{يوشك من عاش منكم أن يلقي عيسى ابن مريم أماماً} \]

\[ \text{مهدياً وحكماً عدلاً} \]

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i.e. *Whoever lives from among you shall meet Jesus, son of Mary who is imām, Mahdī, arbiter and judge.*\(^1\) Besides all this if we look deep into the matter we observe many other similarities to show that these are only two different names of one person. The time of their advent is the same, they shall have the same office, the same work and the same complexion, then how could they be two separate persons? That the time of their appearance is the same is acknowledged by all. About their office I have discussed above that both of them have been called Imām, Amīr, Khalifah and Mahdī. Their work and duty is also the same. The making of Islam dominant over other religions is the work of the Messiah and the same has been assigned to Mahdī as well. So much so that the breaking of the Cross and killing the swine, thought to be the special jobs of the Messiah, have also been attributed to Mahdī as has been mentioned in *Hujaj al-Kirāmah*:

*"The religion of Islam in his time will be established as it had been in the age of grace of the Prophet Muḥammad. He will be a ruler over all the world and shall break the Cross and kill the swine. All these signs have been briefly discussed by Ibn Ḥajar in connection with the coming of Mahdī."*\(^2\)

Spreading of peace and justice has also been assigned to both. It is frequently reported about Mahdī that he will fill the earth with justice and Messiah has also been called arbiter and judge. Their complexion is also the same. The coming Messiah is of wheatish colour, quotation has been given before.\(^3\) Mahdī is of the same complexion as is found in report by Naʿīm ibn Ḥammād that: *He will be of wheatish complexion from among the people (of the land).*\(^4\)

**A prophecy becomes a great miracle after its fulfilment**

The prophecy about the advent of Mahdī is from among those prophecies which are related to this age. The Mujaddid of this century has shed such light on them that all the darkness which surrounded them has been dispelled and they have become a manifest sign for the truth of the Prophet. These prophecies were buried under so many obscurities that there were many who denied their authenticity and even those who believed in them were also bewildered (at the great contradictory mass of such reports) and were at times inclined almost towards its rejection. Accordingly it was said: *We admit that Mahdī will not*

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appear. What harm there is if he does not.¹ Or: Leave Mahdi aside. The descent of Jesus is at least unanimously agreed by Christians and Muslims alike. Let him descend.² And in another book it has been mentioned that: We admit that Mahdi may not come. This does not contradict any important belief of the people of Islam. But son of Mary will indeed appear according to all of them. May God bring him soon, for his coming will serve the same purpose as well for which we expect the advent of Mahdi.³ That person has indeed rendered a great service to Muslims who has removed all the cobwebs from these prophecies and has thus placed before us a clear evidence of the truthfulness of the Holy Prophet. It is easy to say that what difference does it make to Islam whether Mahdi comes or not, but the first advantage of Mahdi's advent has been that it has brought to light a new testimony in favour of Islam or in other words a miracle of Islam has manifested itself in this age. The miracles of all the prophets have come to an end with their death but the miracles of the Prophet Muhammed have continued to manifest themselves ever since and will remain so till the Last Day. As a matter of fact the faith which the fulfilment of a prophecy creates in one's heart is not even created at the occurrence of a great miracle, because a miracle may contain some elements of doubt in it, but the fulfilment of a prophecy is in fact a 'talking witness' which stands before friends and foes alike. Moreover at the occurrence of a miracle there are only a few persons present who witness its truth but a prophecy after its fulfilment does not stand in need of another evidence. It becomes an evidence itself. Has that person not done any service to Islam who has explained the hidden truths behind these prophecies and has thus helped to increase our faith in Islam? Ḥadrat Aḥmad's interpretations concerning the prophecies about Mahdi do not seem to be the result of his intellectual investigations but was the work of Divine light given to him which helped him to discover the truth underlying these reports. This discovery consisted of two great facts. Firstly, it was wrong to associate the name of Mahdi with sword and wrong to believe, as the opponents did, that Islam was spread at the point of sword—the authentic reports being devoid of any such mention—and secondly, that Jesus and Mahdi were not two separate persons but two names of the same reformer.

The significance of the two names

As has been discussed above that there was a profound reality hidden behind these two names, therefore the mujaddid of this age was

¹ Ḥadith al-Ḡāṣlāyyah, p. 843.
² Ibid.
³ Nawāb Nūr al-Ḥasan Khān, Iqtārāb al-Sā'ah, p. 147.
assigned two great tasks which entitled him to receive the names of Messiah and Mahdi. On the one hand Islam had a big encounter with Christianity,—for, according to the Qur'ān and Ḥadīth, Christianity was going to attain great power in the world,—and on the other the present age was particularly suited for the propagation of Islam among Christians. Islam had won the hearts of millions of people of other religions before, but Christianity had not offered its due quota to Islam. It was, however, destined that the Sun of Islam should rise over Eastern countries first, therefore it was mostly in the East that the light of Islam spread in the beginning but then according to the law of nature this Sun was going to shine over the Western countries as well. In a report of the Prophet this had been described as the rising o. the sun in the West. Again it is to the same effect that the Holy Prophet has referred to when he said:


drittunhum ahamro abīṣ
d. i.e. I have been given two treasures; one red (Eastern Nations) and another white (Western nations).1 As encounter with Christianity and the propagation of Islam in Christendom were the two tasks of the mujaddid of this age, therefore the title Ibn Maryam or 'Īsā was given to him. He mentions that fact in the following couplet:

Joona rau'aye bi'īnūm misihiyī dado ānd
Msilhata ra abīn sārim hām min bnhadāh ānd
d. i.e. As I have been given light for the Christian people, the name of the son of Mary has been given to me for this reason. Again because he was commissioned to strengthen the inner solidarity of Islam, save Muslims from going to immoderate extremes, cure them of the habit of takfīr (denunciation of Muslims as heretics) and place before them the sublime object of preaching of Islam which was in fact the object of the life of the Prophet Muḥammad, therefore the name Mahdi was also given to the mujaddid of this age. The only reality behind all this is that the perfect mujaddid of the fourteenth century was like the full moon that was going to shine in the world. For shedding the light of Islam in the Christian world he was called Messiah or son of Mary and for illuminating the hearts of Muslims with the light of Islam he was called Mahdi. That is why the Holy Prophet declared that: He has been given my name.2 The

2. Ibid., Kitāb al-Malāḥim, Vol. 2, p. 239.
point that Mahdí is superior to Jesus though Jesus was a prophet of God, only means that as a Mahdí he will manifest the truth of Muḥammad and as a Messiah the truth of Jesus, the former being superior to the latter; it is because of this that Mahdí is superior to Jesus.

CHAPTER X

Other prophecies about Mahdí

Prophecies about the advent of Messiah and Mahdí have been discussed by me elsewhere. Here I should only like to mention about the place of his advent. There is no doubt in it that some reports also suggest Makkah or Madinah as the place of his appearance and the sanctity of these places might have turned the attention of the reporters towards these towns. But there are reports which not only indicate the place of his advent in the East but even his companions are also reported to be from among the Eastern people. The reporters' own imagination in normal circumstances could not have gone to that extent. Accordingly following are the words of the reports of Abū Na‘īm and Ibn `Asākir: From the offspring of Ḥasan ibn ‘Ali, a person (i.e. Mahdí) will appear from the East. If mountains are in his way he will demolish them and make his way through.\(^1\) Here the reference to his being the offspring of Ḥasan ibn ‘Alī has been due to the wrong impression that Messiah and Mahdí were considered to be two different persons. A report in Ibn Mā‘īh says: Some people will come out from the East and will support Mahdí i.e., they will help him in his domination.\(^2\)

Nawāb Śiddīq Ḥasan Khān writes in Ḥujaj al-Kirāmah:

"Men of Divine gnosis will enter into fealty with Mahdí by God's guidance and Divine visions. Holy people will be with him to strengthen his message and to support him... These will be nine persons in the footsteps of the Companions (of the Prophet); they would prove their covenant true which they made with Allāh. They would all be non-Arabs (‘ajami) and none would be an Arab from among them.\(^3\)"

If the companions and supporters of Mahdí are non-Arabs it clearly shows that the place of his advent is not Makkah but some other

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country outside Arabia and it has been just stated that his companions would be coming from the East. There is no doubt left in view of this that the place of Mahdi's advent should also be an Eastern country. Again it has been mentioned in one of the reports that:

\[ \text{يخرج المهدى من قرية يقال لها كدبعة} \]

i.e. Mahdi will appear in a village the name of which will be Kadi'ah.\(^1\) This name is so identical with Qadi'an (or Kadi with which Qadi'an was formerly known) that if read with the reports of the general signs of Mahdi it becomes clear that such reports are only applicable to Hadrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad of Qadi'an.

Some of the signs are only in the form of metaphors in the prophecy about Mahdi.

There are some signs of course about Mahdi's advent which do not apply in their literal sense to the Founder of the Ahmadiyyah Movement. For instance, that he will be a king for seven years or that he will possess large treasures. This is, however, accepted on all hands that prophecies are couched in metaphorical language, because the future events are shown in the form of visions and dreams which are subject to interpretation like other prophecies. The Qur'an has also called ru'yā\(^2\) and kushāf as God's speaking from behind a veil,\(^3\) therefore the apparent expressions should not mislead a person. About the Promised Messiah, for instance, it has been mentioned in a report that he would come with two yellow mantles.\(^3\) A yellow mantle is interpreted with a disease and this in fact pointed out to two diseases with which the Promised Messiah was going to suffer. It is surprising to note that about Mahdi it has also been mentioned that:

\[ \text{عليه عبائتان قطوا نتتان كأنه من رجال بنى إسرائيل} \]

i.e. On him there will be two shining mantles as if he is from among the men of Israel.\(^4\) About possessions of kunūz (treasures) as well the same mistake is committed and kunūz is taken to mean treasures of gold and silver. But when the Holy Prophet says:

\[ \text{1. Jawāhir al-Asrār p. 55. The original name of Qadi'an was Islām Pūr Qadi Mājhi which was gradually shortened to Qadi, being generally pronounced as Kadi. If it is kept in view that the form of foreign words in the Arabic language undergoes a little change, for instance, London (لندن) is altered into (لندر) Landaruh the change of Kadi into Kadi'ah is easy to understand.} \]

\[ \text{2. The Qur'an, 42 : 51.} \]

\[ \text{3. Al-Ḥāfṣ Abū ʿIsā Muḥammad ibn ʿIṣa, al-Ṣāmiʿ al-Tirmidhī, vol. 1, p. 38.} \]

\[ \text{4. Abū Naʿīm, Iqṭarāb al-sāʾah, p. 128; Ḥujaj al-Kirāmah, p. 380.} \]
i.e. I have been given two treasures, red and white\(^1\), no one takes them to be treasures of gold and silver and it is only interpreted as signifying two groups of people. Similarly a saying of Ḥaḍrat ʿAlī has been recorded in Ḥujaj al-Kirāmah that: Blessings of God be upon the renouncers (tāliqān) that at that place there are treasures of God, but these are not of gold and silver but consist of people who have recognized God as they should have and they would be the helpers of Mahdi.\(^2\) When in such reports treasures of Mahdi have been considered as his helpers there should be no difficulty in interpreting metaphorically the expression kunāz appearing in other traditions. It has also been mentioned in a ḥadīth that:

\[ لا حول ولا قوة كثر من كنوز الجنة \]

i.e. Lā ḥaula wa lā quwwah (there is no power except His power) is a treasure from among the treasures of paradise.\(^3\) Now this is not a treasure of gold and silver but only, as it is stated in al-Nihāyah, the reward which has been stored.\(^4\) Again it has been mentioned in some of the reports that Mahdi will also dig out treasures from under the Ka‘bah. Now gold and silver are not buried under this holy place. On the other hand it is the riches of knowledge and wisdom which were manifested by the Prophet Muḥammad and have been concealed from the eyes of the world with the lapse of time. The real treasure is in fact the wisdom and Divine gnosis which were lost in the Age of Currupption and only letter and form worship was left with the Muslims. Thus whoever restores the lost glory of wisdom it is he who really digs out treasures and distributes them among the people. The istikhrāj kunāz (i.e. the digging out of treasures from earth) therefore, in the case of Mahdi does not mean digging of gold and silver but it is only a metaphorical expression which implies the imparting of knowledge and wisdom by Mahdi to his people which is indeed the task of all God-sent reformers. Their kingdom is also a spiritual one, and if God wills, He may favour them with temporal power as well. But their actual kingdom is always spiritual. Now if a person insists on the literal meanings of these reports it would be impossible for him to accept all the reports which are so contradictory in their details that even those who

\(^2\) Nawāb Siddiq Ḥasan Khān, Ḥujaj al-Kirāmah, p. 896.
\(^3\) Ibn al-Athīr, al-Nihāyah fi Gharīb l-Ḥadīth wal-Āthari, Vol. 4, p. 36.
\(^4\) Ibid.
generally believe in them also entertain doubts as to their literal fulfilment. The contradictions in them are so great that either the whole lot has to be rejected under the principle *when two things contradict, they cut each other*, or only their general and collective testimony should be accepted. A part of them should be interpreted metaphorically and a part of course has to be left aside. When we follow this principle these reports invariably apply to Ḥadrat Mirza Ghulām Aḥmad of Qādiān, the Founder of the Aḥmadiyyah Movement. That Mahdī will not spread Islam with sword and that he and the Messiah are one, these two points have made it definitely clear that Ḥadrat Aḥmad is indeed the Promised Mahdī. It does not make any difference if a ruler Mahdī may also appear at some future time, but just for the sake of mere possibility it is not right to reject the sayings of the Prophet Muḥammad which have been fulfilled.