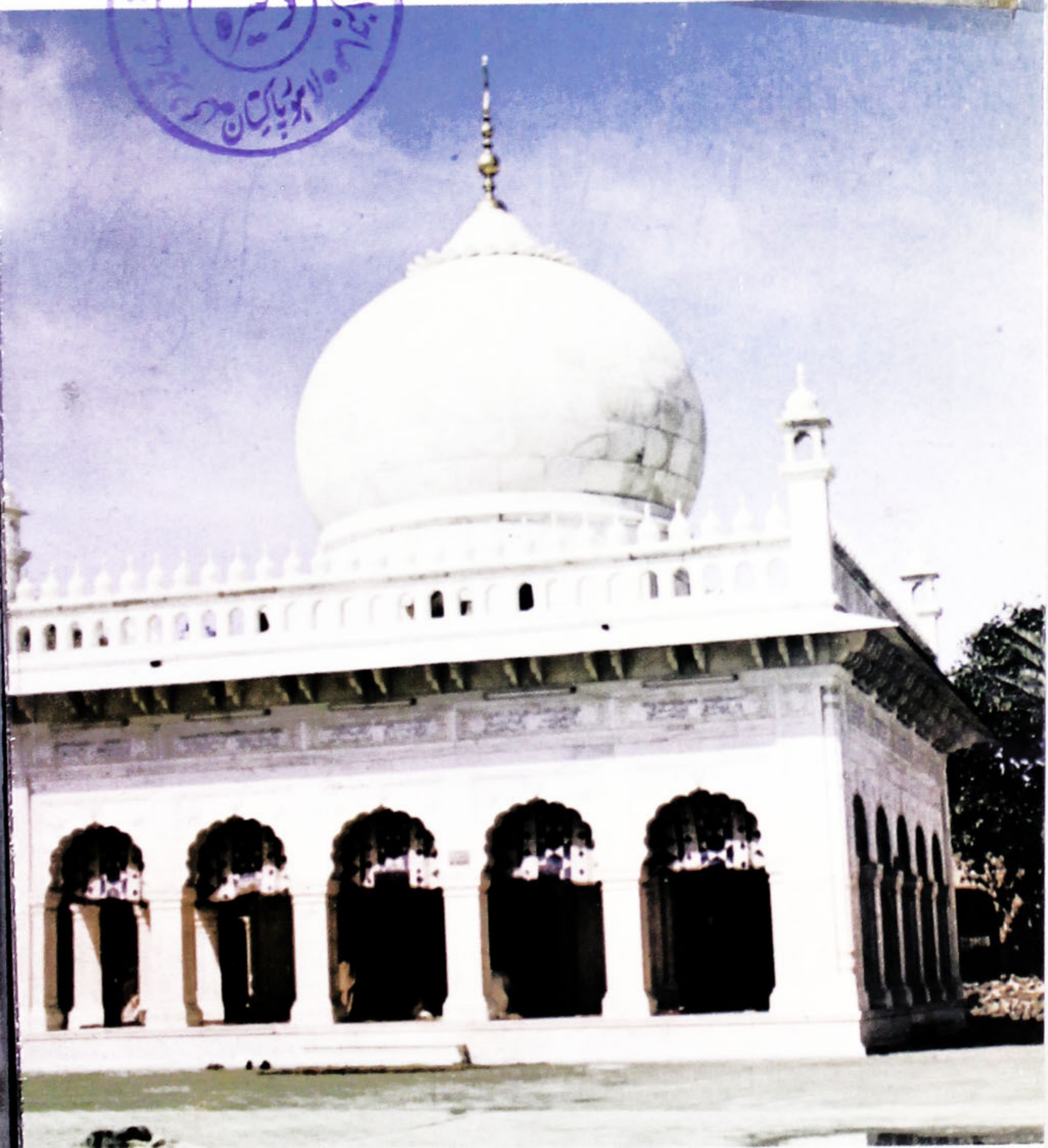


Hadrat Pir Meher Ali Shāh of Golrā Sharīf

577
تص



Brief Sketch of his Life, Work, Achievements and Spiritual Greatness

by

Dr. Muhammad Fāḍil Khān

وَمَا أَرْسَلْنَاكَ إِلَّا رَحْمَةً لِّلْعَالَمِينَ (الانبیاء : ۱۰۷)

(v) We sent thee not (O Prophet) save as a mercy for the worlds. (XXI, 107).

إِنَّا فَتَحْنَا لَكَ فَتْحًا مُّبِينًا ۚ لِيَغْفِرَ لَكَ اللَّهُ مَا تَقَدَّمَ مِن ذَنْبِكَ وَمَا تَأَخَّرَ (الفتح : ۱۰۱)

(vi) We have given thee (O Muḥammad) a signal victory, That Allāh may forgive thee of thy sin that which is past and that which is to come. (XLVIII, 1 – 2).

وَلَوْ أَنزَلْنَا مَلَكَاتٍ فَعَرَا لَافْتِرًا لَا يَنْظُرُونَ ۝ (الانعام : ۸)

68. (i) And had We sent down an angel, then the matter would have been decided; no further time would then be allowed them (for reflection). (VI, 8).

لَنزَلْنَا عَلَيْهِم مِّنَ السَّمَاءِ مَلَكَاتٍ مُّوَلَّاتٍ (الاسراء : ۹۵)

(ii) Say (O Muḥammad): If there were in the earth angels walking secure, We would have sent down from heaven an angel as messenger. (XVII, 95).

تَنزِيلُ الْمَلَائِكَةِ وَالرُّوحِ فِيهَا بِإِذْنِ رَبِّهِمْ مِنْ كُلِّ أَمْرٍ ۚ (القدر : ۴)

69. The angels and the Spirit descend therein, by the permission of their Lord, with all decrees. (XCVII, 4).

وَيَسْأَلُونَكَ عَنِ الرُّوحِ قُلِ الرُّوحُ مِنْ أَمْرِ رَبِّي (الاسراء : ۸۵)

70. And they ask thee concerning the Spirit. Say: The Spirit is by the command of my Lord. (XVII, 85).

الرُّوحُ جُنُودٌ مُّجَنَّدَةٌ ۚ فَمَا تَعَارَفَ فِيهَا أُسْلَفَ وَمَا تَأَخَّرَ مِنْهَا اخْتَلَفَ (الحديث)

71. The spirits are the assembled armies of God. Those which loved each other in that world (of spirits) love each other here also, and those that opposed each other there do the same here as well. (*Al-ḥadīth*).

that Ātham would die within 15 months. As mentioned in the relevant section of the booklet, however, Ātham lived for several years after this prophecy of Mirzā.

66. Ḥaḍrat Imām Ḥusain (ؓ), younger son of the fourth Righteous Caliph 'Alī (ؓ) and grandson of the Holy Prophet (ﷺ), was martyred in Karbalā (Irāq) in 61 A.H. along with most members of his family, in a battle in which only 72 ill-equipped persons (including women and children) were pitted against a heavily armed horde of several thousand men. The issue at stake was the Imām's refusal to pledge allegiance to Yazīd, who had assumed power as Caliph after the demise of his father Ḥaḍrat Amīr Mu'āviyah (ؓ), but who was known to be a man of impious habits and was therefore unworthy to be the ruler of Muslims.

67. (i) قُلْ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ تُحِبُّونَ اللَّهَ فَاتَّبِعُونِي يُحْبِبْكُمُ اللَّهُ
(آل عمران : ٣١)

Say (O Muḥammad, to mankind)! If ye love Allāh, follow me; Allāh will love you. (III, 31).

- (ii) لَا شَرِيكَ لَهُ ۚ وَبِذَلِكَ أُمِرْتُ وَأَنَا أَوَّلُ الْمُسْلِمِينَ (الأنعام : ١٦٤)

He (i.e., Allāh) hath no partner. This I am commanded, and I am the first of those who surrender (unto Him). (VI, 164).

- (iii) وَمَا رَمَيْتَ إِذْ رَمَيْتَ وَلَكِنَّ اللَّهَ رَمَىٰ (الأنفال : ١٦)

And thou (Muḥammad) threwest not (the dust) when thou didst throw, but Allāh threw it. (VIII, 17).

- (iv) سُبْحَانَ الَّذِي أَسْرَىٰ بِعَبْدِهِ لَيْلًا مِّنَ الْمَسْجِدِ الْحَرَامِ إِلَى الْمَسْجِدِ الْأَقْصَىٰ
(الأسراء : ١)

Glorified be He Who carried His servant by night from the Inviolable Place of Worship (i.e., the Holy Ka'bah) to the Far Distant Place of Worship (i.e., Jerusalem). (XVII, 1).

60. *Iqbāl Nāmāh: Majmū'a-e-Makātīb-i-Iqbāl* (The Collection of Letters of Iqbāl), Lāhore: Sh. Muḥammad Ashraf, p. 442.
61. Muḥammad is not the father of any man among you, but he is the Messenger of Allāh and the last of the Prophets. مَا كَانَ مُحَمَّدٌ أَبَا أَحَدٍ مِّنْ رَّبِّجَالِكُمْ وَلَكِن تَرْمُؤُلَ اللَّهُ وَخَاتَمَ النَّبِيِّينَ (الاحزاب : ٤٠)
62. *Hanafī* (حنفى) means a follower of the *sunni* school of *fiqh* (فقه, jurisprudence) attributed to *Imām Abū Hanīfah* (امام ابو حنيفه). The other three leading *sunni* schools of *fiqh* are headed by *Imām Mālik* (امام مالك), *Imām Shāfi'i* (امام شافعى), and *Imām Aḥmad bin Ḥambal* (امام احمد بن حنبل).
63. *Mujaddid* (مجدد, renewer or reviver) is a technical term applied in Islām to a religious scholar or reformer whose work is of such high and original quality as to constitute a revival of the true interpretation of religion on a wide scale. The periodic emergence of a *mujaddid* is a logical corollary to the doctrine of the finality of the prophethood of Muḥammad (ﷺ), mentioned at the beginning of this booklet. Traditionally, and according to an authentic *ḥadīth* of the Prophet (ﷺ), every *hijrah* century is expected to produce a *mujaddid*.
64. ﷺ abbreviates عَلَيْهِ السَّلَام, which means "peace be upon him", and is suffixed to the names of all prophets other than Prophet Muḥammad whose name is suffixed by (ﷺ) as indicated in footnote 1. According to Islāmic belief, Ādam, besides being the first man created by Allāh, was also Allāh's first prophet on earth.
65. 'Abdullāh Ātham was an aged Christian priest and debater, with whom Mirzā had held a religious debate in 1893. The book *Anjām-e-Ātham* was written by Mirzā after that debate and contained, *inter alia*, a prophecy

46. Cf. footnote 24 above.
47. 560–638 A.H.
48. Lāleh Bakhtiār, *Ṣūfī: Expression of the Mystic Quest* (New York: Avon Books), 1976, p. 104.
49. The followers of Mirzā Ghulām Aḥmad of Qādiān, discussed in greater detail on pp. 80–145 of this booklet.
50. Printed by Pākistān International Printers, Lāhore, and published from Golrā Sharīf, 1979.
51. Cf. *Fawāid-ul-Fawād*, *فوائد الفوائد* The sayings of Hadrat Nizāmuddīn Auliā, by Ḥasan ‘Alā Sajazī (Lāhore: ‘Ulamā Academy), 1973, p. 251.
52. Third edition, printed by Pākistān International Printers, Lāhore, and published from Golrā Sharīf, April 1986.
53. Printed by Hijāzī Press, Lāhore, and published from Sargodhā.
54. Printed by Pākistān International Printers, Lāhore and published from Golrā Sharīf, 1985.
55. كُنْتُ كَنْزًا مَخْفِيًّا فَأَحْبَبْتُ أَنْ أَعْرَفَ فَخَلَقْتُ الْخَلْقَ
56. لَا تَسْبُوَالِدَّ هُرَ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ هُوَالِدُّ هُرَ.
57. The Qur’ān, II–117 and VI–102.
58. The Qur’ān, II–117, III–47, and XL–68.
59. لَيْسَ كَمِثْلِهِ شَيْءٌ (التَّوْرَى : ١١)

whose rule over India he strongly and actively opposed.

42. *وَرَأَى هَبَانِيَّةَ بْنِ أَبِي عُرْوَةَ مَا كَتَبْنَا عَلَيْهِمُ (الحمدية: ٢٤٠)*
43. Cf. Maulānā Abul Ḥasan ‘Alī Nadavī (*op. cit.*, pp. 404–422.)
44. *Jehād* (جهاد) literally means “effort or endeavour”. Islām emphasizes such endeavour in every sphere of life and not only on the battlefield, even though the term is often loosely used to signify the latter. The Prophet (ﷺ) said, for example, that proclaiming the truth before a tyrant was the best form of *jehād*. This attribute was common among the ‘ulamā of the early period of Islām, and prevented many a Muslim ruler from violating the Islāmic principles of governance. On another occasion, the Prophet (ﷺ), returning home from a military campaign to Tabūk, observed: “We now go from the smaller (i.e., the military) *jehād* to the greater *jehād*, i.e., the battlefield of day-to-day life where a constant fight has to be waged against temptations and evils of all kinds.

Even for military *jehād*, Islām has laid down stringent conditions, requisites, and principles of conduct for the Muslim armies. These are meant to ensure recourse to *jehād* only in the most compelling circumstances, and primarily for elevating the Word of Allāh (إِعْلَانُ كَلِمَةِ اللَّهِ), and its actual conduct in such a manner as to minimize wanton killing or destruction of private and public property, and ensure humane treatment of the civilian population, especially of women, children, and aged persons. History provides many shining examples of adherence to these principles by Muslim army generals.

45. 604–672 A.H.

35. 470–561 A.H.
36. Founded in India by Bābā Gurū Nānak (1469–1538 A.D.), the Sikh religion is believed to have developed ‘out of Hinduism under the influence of Islām.’ (cf. *Encyclopaedia International, op. cit.*, Vol. 16, p. 480). The Sikhs were at first a pacific sect not sharply distinct from the Hindūs. However, their 10th and last “Gurū” (leader), Gobind Singh, reorganized them into a martial order, after which they steadily gained in military strength. By the early 19th century, the Sikh empire reached its widest extent under Mahārājah Ranjīt Singh, (1780–1839), who at the end of his rule controlled most of present-day Pākistānī Punjāb, Indian Punjāb, and Kashmīr. The Sikh state was conquered by the British East India Company in 1849 after two hard-fought wars.
37. Ceremonial celebrations of the death anniversaries of Muslim *ṣūfis*.
38. Cf. footnote 29 above.
39. The branch of the *Chishtiyah* school attributed to Ḥaḍrat Nizāmuddīn Auliā (ؒ) of Delhi (636–725 A.H.).
40. The branch of the *Chishtiyah* school traced to Ḥaḍrat Makhdūm ‘Alāuddīn ‘Alī Aḥmad Ṣābir (ؒ) of Kaliar, Distt. Sahāranpūr, U.P., India. Both Ḥaḍrat Ṣābir (592–690 A.H.) and Ḥaḍrat Nizāmuddīn Aulia (*ibid.*) were the spiritual successors of Ḥaḍrat Bābā Farīduddīn Ganjshakar of Pākpatan (584–670 A.H.) (Cf. p. 24).
41. 1213–1307 A.H. (1805–1899 A.D.); Ḥājī Imdādullāh was an eminent religious scholar of India, who had migrated to Makkah and settled down there following persecution by the then British Government of India

carrying news about the Prophet (ﷺ) and his mission, and who had been sending messages to the Prophet (ﷺ) to move into their midst and thereby grace Yathreb with his august presence. While these messages ostensibly resulted in the Prophet's ultimate migration, its actual execution as well as its timing were ordained by Allāh. The *hijrah* provided the Prophet (ﷺ) with an opportunity to conduct his mission in a favourable setting, and proved such an important turning point in the mission's progress that the Prophet (ﷺ) later adopted it as the starting date for the new Islāmic lunar calendar.

31. Besides being a highly eminent *Ṣufī* master, Makhdūm Ali of Hajvēr (400–465 A.H.) was the author of *Kashf-ul-Mahjūb* (کشف‌المحجوب, Disclosure of the Hidden), which is widely acknowledged as one of the oldest and most comprehensive books on Islāmic *ṣūfism*. Ḥaḍrat Nizāmuddin Auliā once observed about this book that in the absence of a *murshid* (مُرشد, spiritual guide), it could provide to the *sālik* (سالك, the wayfarer) all the required guidance about "the Path".
32. Meaning "The treasure-giver", this epithet is derived from a Persian verse spoken by Ḥaḍrat Khwājā Moīnuddin Chishtī of Ajmēr (A.H. 527–633) after performing a *chillah* (چلہ, or 40-day spiritual vigil) at the tomb of Makhdum 'Ali of Hajvēr, paying tribute to the latter's extraordinary spiritual powers.
33. *Sayyid* (سید), literally meaning the "Chief", is the epithet reverentially applied in the Indo-Pākistān Subcontinent in referring to a direct descendent of the Holy Prophet (ﷺ).
34. *Pīr* (پیر) literally means an old person, but is commonly used for a pious person whom people follow as a spiritual guide.

24. Quoted in Annemarie Schimmel, *op. cit.*, p. 7.
25. Maulānā Abul Ḥasan ‘Alī Nadavī, *op. cit.*, p. 156.
26. William Stoddart, *Ṣūfism: The Mystical Doctrines and Methods of Islām*, Lāhore: Suhail Academy, 1981, p. 19. (Reprint).
27. E.g., *Encyclopaedia International* (New York: Grolier Corp., 7th Edition 1969, Vol. 9, p. 274).
28. لَا إِكْرَاهَ فِي الدِّينِ (البقرة: ٢٥٦) (There is no compulsion in Religion) – II – 256.
29. One of the best known *ṣūfī* schools, known after Khwājā Abū I’shāq Shāmī Chishtī (ؒ); the other three principal schools in the Indo-Pākistān Sub-continent are: The *Qādiriyah*, the most widely spread school, whose adherents are found from West Africa to the Indo-Pakistān Sub-continent, and which is traced back to Ḥaḍrat Shaikh ‘Abdul Qādir Gīlānī (ؒ) of Baghdād, mentioned on p. 22; the *Suhrawardiyah*, which originated with Shaikh Shahābuddīn ‘Umar Suhrawardī (ؒ), also of Baghdād and mentioned on page 77; and the *Naqshbandiyah*, attributed to Ḥaḍrat Bahāuddīn Naqshband (ؒ).
30. “A. H.” abbreviates ‘After *Hijrah*’, which denotes the Islāmic lunar calender dating from “migration” (هجرة, *Hijrah*) of the Prophet (ﷺ) in the 13th year of his mission from Makkah, his birthplace and ancestral home, to Yathreb (يثرب), later re-named *Madīnatunnabī* (مدينة النبي i.e., The Prophet’s City), about 425 kilometres away. The migration was resorted to by the Prophet (ﷺ) at the invitation of the inhabitants of Yathreb, many of whom had embraced Islām in small groups under the influence of travellers from Makkah

Allāh and the Prophet (ﷺ) in all matters, mentioned on page 13); and (c) the Prophet's declaration in his sermon (*khuṭbah*, *خطبة*) during his last *Haj* (pilgrimage), that he was leaving the Qur'ān and his *sunnah* (record of actions) for the guidance of the Muslim community, and that so long as they followed these two they would not be led astray. The Muslims thus possess a prophetic model and ideal which can help them regulate their lives, in all basic essentials, according to divine injunctions as embodied in the Qur'ān for all time to come.

17. قُلْ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ تُحِبُّونَ اللَّهَ فَاتَّبِعُونِي يُحْبِبْكُمُ اللَّهُ وَيَغْفِرْ لَكُمْ ذُنُوبَكُمْ (آل عمران: ٣١)
and

وَمَنْ يُطِيعِ الرَّسُولَ فَقَدْ أَطَاعَ اللَّهَ (النساء: ٨٠)

18. وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا أَشَدُّ حُبًّا لِلَّهِ (البقرة: ١٧٥)

19. Cultivate the attributes of Allāh. تَخَلَّقُوا بِأَخْلَاقِ اللَّهِ

20. Quoted in Annemarie Schimmel, *Mystical Dimensions of Islām* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press), 1975, p. 9.

21. *Jinn* is a class of spirits that inhabits the earth and are not visible to the naked human eye, but can assume various forms, including human, and perform supernatural acts. According to the Qur'ān (XV, 26-27), the *jinn* were created from fire before man's creation from clay.

22. وَمَا خَلَقْتُ الْجِنَّ وَالْإِنْسَ إِلَّا لِيَعْبُدُونِي (التأيات: ٥٦) (I did not create the *jinn* and the humans except that they worship Me). LI-56.

23. إِنَّمَا الْأَعْمَالُ بِالنِّيَّاتِ

of his followers as one of the prime attributes of the Prophet of Islām (ﷺ) – cf. III-164 and LXII-2.

11. Daryābādī, *op. cit.*, p. 34.
12. *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 1974 edition, Vol. 9, p. 148.
13. F. Rosenthal, *The Muqaddimah: An Introduction to History by Ibn Khaldūn* translated from Arabic, abridged and edited by N.J. Dawood (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul), 1970, p. 358.
14. Righteous Caliph ‘Alī occupies a place of eminence among the scholarly and spiritual successors of the Prophet of Islām (ﷺ). This is borne out, among other things, by the Prophet’s saying أَنَا مَدِينَةُ الْعِلْمِ عَلَى بَابِهَا
(I am the City of knowledge and ‘Alī is its gate).
15. (رضي) abbreviates رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ which means “Allāh be pleased with him”, and is suffixed reverentially to the names of the Prophet’s Companions.
16. *Muḥaddith* (مُحَدِّث) is a scholar who specializes in mastering the *Ḥadīth* (حَدِيث), i.e., the sayings and traditions of the Prophet (ﷺ) of Islām. The Muslims are the only community that has preserved, with the utmost care and thoroughness and in the minutest detail, the record of almost every word uttered and every act performed by their great Prophet (ﷺ) in his exemplary day-to-day life, which Ḥaḍrat ‘Āyeshah, his wife of revered memory, described as “the living Qur’ān”. In doing so, they have been guided by three basic facts: (a) the culmination of God’s message to humanity in the mission of Muḥammad (ﷺ), the cessation of prophethood after him, and the resultant need to preserve every bit of the Prophet’s heritage for the guidance of posterity; (b) the stress laid in the Qur’ān on following

8. The importance of *dhikrullāh* (ذِكْرُ اللَّهِ), i.e., remembrance of Allāh, as one of the foremost obligations and qualities of a true believer, is stressed repeatedly in the Qur'ān. Some of the salient examples are: (1) فَادْكُرُونِي أَذْكُرْكُمْ (البقره - 152) (Therefore remember Me, I will remember you. And give Thanks to Me and reject not Me (II-152); (ii)

إِنَّ فِي خَلْقِ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَاخْتِلَافِ اللَّيْلِ وَالنَّهَارِ لآيَاتٍ لِّأُولِي الْأَلْبَابِ ۗ الَّذِينَ يَذْكُرُونَ اللَّهَ قِيَامًا وَقُعُودًا وَعَلَىٰ جُنُوبِهِمْ وَيَتَفَكَّرُونَ فِي خَلْقِ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ رَبَّنَا مَا خَلَقْتَ هَذَا بَاطِلًا سُبْحَانَكَ فَقِنَا عَذَابَ النَّارِ - آل عمران : ١٩٠ - ١٩١

Lo! in the creation of the heavens and the earth and (in) the difference of night and day are tokens (of His sovereignty) for men of understanding, such as remember Allāh, standing, sitting and reclining, and consider the creation of the heavens and the earth (and say): Our Lord! Thou Createdst not (all) this in vain; Glory be to Thee; Preserve us from the doom of Fire (III, 190-191); (iii) (يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا إِذَا قُمْتُمْ إِلَى الصَّلَاةِ فَاذْكُرُوا اللَّهَ قِيَامًا وَقُعُودًا وَعَلَىٰ جُنُوبِكُمْ - البقره ١٠٣)

When Ye have performed the act of worship, remember Allāh, standing, sitting, and reclining (IV-103); (iv)

وَاذْكُرْ رَبَّكَ فِي نَفْسِكَ تَضَرُّعًا وَخِيفَةً وَدُونَ الْجَهْرِ مِنَ الْقَوْلِ بِالْغُدُوِّ وَالْآصَالِ وَلَا تَكُن مِّنَ الْغَافِلِينَ (الاعراف: ٢٠٥) And do Thou (O Moḥammad) remember thy Lord within thyself humbly and with awe, below thy breath, at morn and evening. And be thou not of the neglectful (VII-205); (v) (نَظِيرُ الْقُلُوبِ كِبَرُ اللَّهِ (الرعد - ٢٨)) Verily in the remembrance of Allāh do hearts find comfort (XIII-28); and (vi)

إِنَّ الصَّلَاةَ تَنْهَىٰ عَنِ الْفَحْشَاءِ وَالْمُنْكَرِ ۗ وَلَذِكْرُ اللَّهِ أَكْبَرُ ۗ وَاللَّهُ يَعْلَمُ مَا تَصْنَعُونَ (العنكبوت: ٢٥)

Verily worship restrains from lewdness and iniquity; and remembrance of Allāh is the greatest (thing in life). And Allāh knoweth what ye do (XXIX-45).

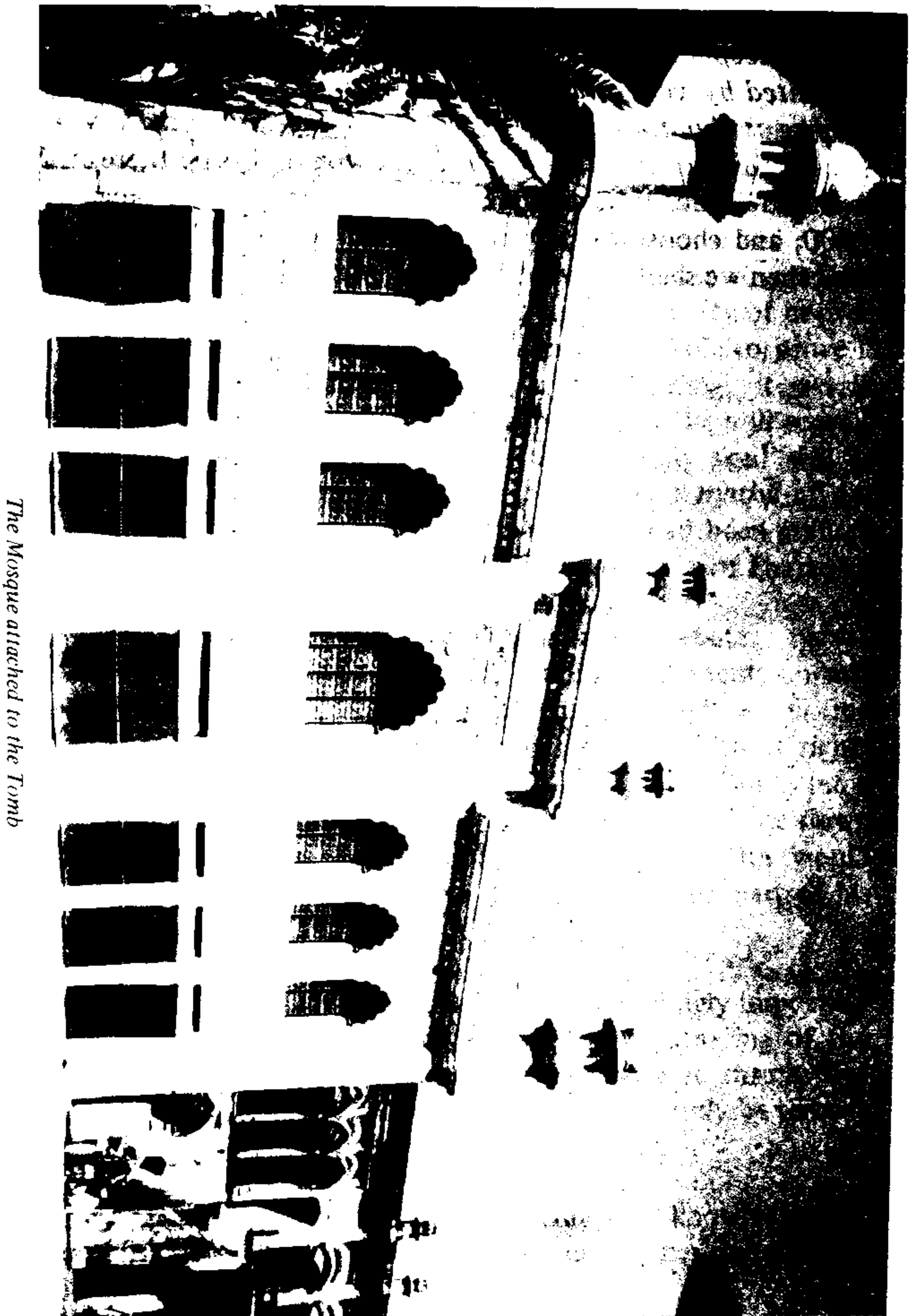
9. Quoted in *Tasawwuf-i-Islām* i.e., *Islāmīc Sūfism*, by 'Abdul Mājid Daryābādī (Lucknow, India: Nasīm Book Depot, 1970), pp. 22-43.
10. The Qur'ān describes the "purifying" (تَزْكِيَةٌ - *tazkiah*)

night on a raised platform in the Prophet's Mosque at Madīnah. (Among others, this group included such highly eminent narrators of the Prophet's *aḥādīth* (احاديث, traditions) as Abū Hurairah and 'Abdullāh bin Mas'ūd.) Between them, these suggested origins signify the three principal features of classical *ṣūfism*, viz., purification of self, austere and frugal living, and acquisition of knowledge.

6. This is borne out by: (a) the stress placed on the acquisition of knowledge at various places in the Qur'ān, particularly: (i) the reference to knowledge as the attribute that makes man superior even to the Angels (cf. Chapt. II, Verses 30–34); (ii) the fact that the very first verses revealed to the Prophet (ﷺ) refer to Allāh's bounty in giving man knowledge of what he did not know before (XCVI, 1–5); and (iii) the injunction contained in Verse 122 of Sūrah IX (التوبة, Repentance), that even in times of *jehād* (جهاد, holy war), “the believers should not all go out to fight, but out of every troop of them a party only should go forth, so that those left behind *may gain sound knowledge in religion*”, and in the Prophet's *aḥādīth* which make acquisition of knowledge obligatory on all Muslims (طَلَبُ الْعِلْمِ فَرِيضَةٌ عَلَى كُلِّ مَسْلُومٍ), enjoin upon them to continue acquiring it from the cradle to the grave (مِنَ الْمَهْدِ إِلَى اللَّحْدِ) even if they have to travel as far as China to do so (اَطْلُبُوا الْعِلْمَ وَلَوْ سَاكَانَ بِالْبَيْتِ), and the one in which the Prophet (ﷺ) said he had been sent (by Allāh to humanity) as a teacher, i.e., a dispenser of knowledge (اِنَّمَا بُعِثْتُ مُعَلِّمًا).
7. At numerous places in the Qur'ān, the words “those who believe” (الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا) are almost invariably followed by the words “and do good deeds” (وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ), making the two attributes complementary and mutually inseparable.

NOTES

1. ؑ is the abbreviation of the Arabic phrase صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ
(*Ṣallallāh-o-'alaih-e-wasallam*), which means "May Allāh shower blessings and peace upon him," and which has been made obligatory upon every Muslim to suffix to the name of the Holy Prophet of Islām both in writing and in oral pronouncement.
2. The Qur'ān is the Divine Scripture revealed to the Prophet of Islām (ؑ), gradually and according to need, over the 23-year period of his mission. It embodies the basic injunctions of the Islāmic faith pertaining to every sphere of human life.
3. Cf. the Holy Prophet's saying عُلَمَاءُ أُمَّتِي كَأَنْبِيَاءِ بَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ (The *ulamā*, i.e., scholars, of my community will be like the prophets of the Israelites).
4. Maulānā 'Abul Ḥasan 'Alī Nadavī, تَارِيخُ دَعْوَتِ دَعْوَتِ دَعْوَتِ (*History of Preaching and Endeavour*), Lucknow, India: Nudvatul 'Ulamā, 1969, Vol. I., p. 22.
5. In Arabic, *ṣūfism* (or Islāmic mysticism) is termed *taṣawwuf* (تَصَوُّفٌ), hence the word *ṣūfī* (صُوفِيٌّ) from which the anglicized word *ṣūfism* is derived. Views vary about the origin of the words *taṣawwuf* and *ṣūfī*: Some consider them to be derived from *ṣafā* (صَفَا) or 'purity'; others feel they are rooted in the word *ṣūf* (صُوفٌ), i.e., the garment of wool which the early *ṣūfī darvishes* used to wear; and still others think the words were inspired by the example of that group of the Prophet's Companions known as *Aṣḥāb-i-ṣuffah* (أَصْحَابِ صُفَّةٍ , people of the dais) who had devoted themselves wholly to the study of the Qur'ān and Islām and were engaged in it day and



The Mosque attached to the Tomb

conditions laid down by yourself, and if you insist that all your conditions must be accepted (as they are), then let it be so. We now give you the further concession that the Pīr Ṣāhib accepts all your conditions exactly as they have been presented by you, and challenges you that you should reach Lāhore without excuse or pretext on the appointed date, i.e., 25 August 1900. The Pīr Ṣāhib would also be there. If even now you do not come for the contest on 25 August 1900, and choose to stay away (which you would assuredly do), then we shall see what to do.

HAKĪM SULTĀN MAḤMŪD
Rāwalpindī, 21 August 1900

approval dependent only on a written discussion, and do they have nothing to do with oral debate? Does your "divine and heavenly power" desert you during oral debate? Perhaps this is what happens according to *Qādiānī* logic!

In all fairness, oral discussion is more relevant to extraordinary or miraculous happenings. Mirzā Ṣāhib himself admits that he does not have much literary knowledge, (and perhaps this is why he is afraid to come out into the open). Now if Mirzā Ṣāhib claims to have the power to perform miracles, let him pray to God to grant him ability of impressive speech. If this does happen, and he is able to prove it through superior speech in a large gathering, it would strengthen his position on two counts: *first*, he will score a literary victory; and *second*, a clear "heavenly sign" will be exhibited which would establish him to be a *mathīl* of not only Jesus Christ but also of Moses (who had been granted special power of speech by Allāh in the presence of Pharaoh).

If Mirzā feels concerned that in an oral debate, a person could possibly go back on his earlier statement on any point, does he expect an entire gathering of *'ulamā* and *sūfiā* to conceal the truth and refuse to say what is right? If he still does not feel reassured on this account, let a condition be laid down that two persons should write down *verbatim* the speeches of both the debaters. This would disallow any of the parties to go back upon any part of his speech later.

(Mirzā Ṣāhib!) It would have been exceedingly important for you to prove, through a speech in a gathering of the *'ulamā*, the written statements that lie scattered throughout your various books. Your refusal to do so can only be termed as a "flight" (from the truth).

Despite all this, if your deficiencies of knowledge and actions do not permit you to come out of the limits of the

opponents on the ground that if they had been in the right they would certainly have entered the contest. Against all their hopes, however, and by the Grace of Allāh, the Pīr Ṣāhib decided to take part in the contest. This left the *Qādiānīs* with no means of escape, forcing them to resort to excuses and pretexts to wriggle out of the situation. The poster *Nūr-ul-Absār* mentioned above, which was printed on 14 August 1900 and published on 18 August 1900, and a copy of which has been received by the Pīr Ṣāhib on 21 August 1900, is a part of these *Qādiānī* efforts.

(Addressing the *Qādiānīs*, the poster of Ḥakīm Sultān Maḥmūd says:) On what basis do you call the acceptance poster of Ḥadrat Pīr Ṣāhib as amounting to his "flight" or "refusal"? The fact is that he has accepted *all the ten conditions* proposed by you. He has further suggested that an oral debate should first take place in order to prove your various claims. This is because it is your duty to establish your claims for *Messiahship* and *Mahdiship* through such a debate in the presence of 'ulamā and pious men of God. Writing books and making claims to be the *Messiah* and the *Mahdī*, while sitting at home, amounts to nothing but self-praise. Mirzā Ṣāhib has been so taken aback by the proposal for an oral debate that all his so-called spiritual "power" seems to have faded away.

Under the present-day British rule, when paper, pen and ink are so easy to come by, anyone can write whatever he wishes in order to earn the cheers of people and enthuse his supporters. We do not wish to say anything in reply to the poster titled *Nūr-ul-Absār* mentioned above, except to draw the attention of the public to Mirzā's poster of challenge and the Pīr Ṣāhib's poster of acceptance, and to request them to say in all fairness whether it amounts to Pīr Ṣāhib's acceptance or refusal of Mirzā's invitation.

Gentlemen: (We ask you:) Are miracles and heavenly

ENGLISH TRANSLATION OF
 POSTER DATED 21 AUGUST 1900
 ISSUED ON BEHALF OF ḤADRAT
 PĪR MEHER 'ALĪ SHĀH
 BY ḤAKĪM SULṬĀN MAḤMŪD OF RĀWALPINDĪ
 (Cf. page 132 of the booklet)

— — —
The Flight of Mirzā

We have today read the poster titled *Nūr-ul-Absār* (نور الابصار, The Light of the Eyes) issued by Miān Muḥammad Aḥsan Amrohavī, in which he has stated that Ḥadrat Maulānā Pīr Meher 'Alī Shāh has refused to compete with Mirzā Ghulām Aḥmad. *Subḥān Allāh* (سُبْحَانَ اللَّهِ, Glorified be Allāh!) While the Pīr Ṣāhib is on his part preparing to leave for Lāhore to test the "inspirational power" of Mirzā Ṣāhib on the appointed date, Mirzā and his followers are on their side busy framing baseless and far-fetched pretexts like the above to claim victory for themselves.

Gentlemen! We already knew that Mirzā Ṣāhib and his party would never come out into the field, and that their only object was to deceive the public with empty threats. They knew full well that their claims had no value whatsoever in comparison with the respected 'ulamā and ṣūfiā. Nevertheless, they chose to issue the poster of challenge in the hope and belief that such eminent personalities, and especially Ḥadrat Maulānā Pīr Meher 'Alī Shāh who is both a scholar and a ṣūfī and who considers such debates to be a waste of time, would not like to come to such a gathering. This, in their view, would earn them fame and publicity for nothing. It might, moreover, help them lure some simple people into their trap, raise some much-needed funds for their party, and enable them to score a point over their

intellectual stature of those raising them. Their particular value lies in the fact that unlike *malḥūzāt*, which are recorded by others, they are written by the concerned *sūfīs* and *‘ulamā* themselves and therefore represent their carefully considered views.

10. *Majmū‘a-e-wazāif* مجموعہ وظائف “Collection of Recitations”

This is a compilation of Ḥaḍrat’s daily or occasional recitations. Reference to these recitations appears in the sub-section on “Daily Schedule” on page 41 of this booklet. They have been compiled and published primarily for use by those of Ḥaḍrat’s disciples who wish to do so for the sake of *barakah* (blessings) or as part of their spiritual regimen.

B. POETRY

11. *Mir‘āt-ul-‘Irfān* مرآة العرفان “The Mirror of Spiritual Knowledge”

This consists of Ḥaḍrat’s writings in verse. A list of the writings included in this compilation has been given on page 57 of the booklet.

The collection includes, among Ḥaḍrat’s other poetic writings, the widely acclaimed *Punjābī na‘at* (نعت) poem in adoration of the Holy Prophet) mentioned on page 29 above. The concluding verse of this *na‘at*, reproduced below, has become particularly immortal:

سُبْحَانَ اللَّهِ مَا أَجْمَلَكْ مَا أَحْسَنَكَ مَا أَكَمَّلَكَ
کتنے مہر علی، کتنے تیری ثنا، کتنے آغ اکھیں کتنے جاڑیاں

- Glorified be Allāh, Who created you (i.e., the Prophet) in the most beautiful, the best, and the most perfect mould.
- Who is (the humble) Meher ‘Alī to chant your praises; what heights have his impudent eyes ventured to reach.

also developed into a major point of conflict. Above all, he appealed to both sects to follow the path of moderation which is the hall-mark of Islām, and to view the issues involved objectively and in the correct perspective.

Unfortunately, Ḥaḍrat passed away before the final completion and publication of this book. After a careful review, the book has been recently published with suitable explanatory notes, alongwith Ḥaḍrat's other writings.

8. *Malfūzāt-e-Mihriyah* ^{مفوضات مہریہ} "The Sayings of Ḥaḍrat Meher 'Alī Shāh". (1394 A.H. – 1974 A.D.)

Like many other eminent *ṣūfī* masters, the sayings of Ḥaḍrat Meher 'Alī Shāh during his daily general sittings were sometimes recorded by persons attending them, both for their own use as well as for the benefit of other interested persons. A systematic compilation of these pronouncements over a limited period of time was, however, made only by two of Ḥaḍrat's scholarly disciples, Maulvī Gul Faqīr Aḥmad and Maulānā 'Abdul Ḥaḳ. Written and published originally in Persian, the *malfūzāt* were later translated into Urdū for the benefit of the general reader by Maulānā Faiḍ Aḥmad and, with some additions, were re-published in 1974.

The *malfūzāt*, even though spanning a limited period of time, cover quite a wide range of issues. Some excerpts of general interest therefrom have been reproduced on pages 58–65 of this booklet.

9. *Maktūbāt-e-Tayyibāt* ^{مکتوبات طیبات} – "The Sacred Letters"

This is a very selective collection of letters written by Ḥaḍrat from time to time to different people, in response to requests for prayers, blessings, clarification of diverse religious issues and so on. Like *malfūzāt*, compilations of letters also provide important insights into the views of eminent *'ulamā* and *ṣūfīs* on various matters, depending of course upon the quality of the questions raised and the

7. *Taṣfiah Mābain Sunnī wa Shīah* تصفیه مابین سنی و شیعه
 “Reconciliation between the Sunnī and the Shīah”
 (1394 A.H. – 1979 A.D.)

This book represents an effort by Ḥadrat to amicably resolve the age-old schism between the *sunnī* and *shīah* sects of Islām. The major cause of contention between the two sects has been the divergence of views between them about the manner in which the question of succession to the Holy Prophet (ﷺ) was settled after his passing away, and especially about the order in which the four Pious Caliphs (Abūbakt, ‘Umar, ‘Uthmān, and ‘Alī) were installed in office. The Prophet (ﷺ) himself had not nominated a successor, and had left the question to be decided on the basis of democratic consensus in accordance with the true principles of Islām. Although the matter was settled with unison and amity at the time, issues seeking to sow seeds of dissension were raised concerning it, long after the event, by forces which could only be regarded as ill-wishers of the Muslim *ummah* that had attained dizzy heights of glory in a short period of time.

Because of the ruinous effects of this schism on the unity and integrity of the Muslim *ummah*, moderation-loving ‘*ulamā* have endeavoured from the beginning to bridge it through their writings and pronouncements. Unfortunately, the schism has continued to persist, largely because the voice of moderation has often been lost amidst the tumult of extremism. Realizing the grave and fundamental significance of this matter, therefore, Ḥadrat decided to write on the issue in yet another effort to effect reconciliation between the two sects. In the book named above, he quoted extensively from the Qur’ān and the *ḥadīth* to establish the legitimacy of the decision taken consensually on the question of *Khilāfat* (or succession) to the Holy Prophet (ﷺ), and to present the correct and balanced view about the respective eminence of members of the Prophet’s household (*ahl-e-baet*) and his distinguished Companions (*aṣḥab*) which has

of them. Ḥaḍrat, however, not only provided convincing answers to each question but also posed a dozen questions of his own to the opposing group which were never answered.

6. *Fatāwā-i-Mihriyah* فتاویٰ مہریہ “The Rulings of Ḥaḍrat Meher ‘Alī Shāh” (1382 A.H.—1960 A.D.).

The writing of *fatāwā* (فتاویٰ), or rulings on religio-juridical issues based on the Qur’ān and the *sunnah*, is an important branch of Islāmic learning. Its importance stems from the fact that the Islāmic *sharī’ah* comprehends every sphere of a Muslim’s life, be it religious, spiritual, secular or any other. *Fatāwā* are meant to provide correct guidance on matters of day-to-day concern to persons who are not themselves versed in religious knowledge, but who are nevertheless anxious to observe the *sharī’ah* in all matters as meticulously as possible. Because of its nature and importance, the writing of *fatāwā* calls not only for a thorough knowledge of every aspect of the *sharī’ah*, but also the ability to interpret this knowledge accurately in relation to the issue under reference and also to couch the *fatāwā* in convincing, realistic, and balanced terms.

Because of his numerous pre-occupations, Ḥaḍrat had delegated the task of providing *fatāwā* on issues referred to him by different people from time to time to other eminent ‘*ulamā* engaged in teaching at the *madressah* in Golrā. The rulings given by these ‘*ulamā* were reviewed and approved by him before being issued. However, in cases where the questions raised were of fundamental importance or intricate, or called for in-depth study, the *fatāwā* were written by Ḥaḍrat himself. This book brings together the *fatāwā* of Ḥaḍrat’s own writing. They were compiled by Maulānā Faīḍ Aḥmad, author of Ḥaḍrat’s biography mentioned in the Preface to this booklet, and were first published in book form in 1960 A.D. They have been further reviewed twice and their latest revised edition published in January 1988.

This book was written by Ḥaḍrat to present the correct and balanced view, according to the Qur'ān and the *sunnah*, concerning certain issues of day-to-day significance. These included: (a) permissibility of sacrificing animals in the name of Allāh and by way of thanksgiving to Him, but at the same time as an invocation of blessing to the souls of eminent religious and spiritual personalities; (b) legitimacy of making offerings at the shrines of *'ulamā* and *mashāikh* (spiritual leaders); (c) the true meaning and scope of the Qur'ānic injunction to the believers to place complete faith in Allāh in all matters; (d) intercession by Prophets on the sinners' behalf on the Day of Judgement; (e) ability of the deceased to hear after death, and the like. The book was meant to rectify the extremist and diametrically divergent views that had come to prevail among *'ulamā* of different schools on these points. Immediate occasion for writing it was provided by certain questions posed to Ḥaḍrat by a group of Pakhtūn and Afghān *'ulamā* from India's North West Frontier Province (N.W.F.P.). For the benefit of these *'ulamā*, Ḥaḍrat wrote the book in Persian. Later, on Ḥaḍrat Babūjī's initiative, the Persian text was republished along with its Urdu translation for the benefit of the general reader.

5. *Al Futūḥāt-uṣ-Ṣamadiyyah* الفتحاۃ الصمدیة (1325 A.H. – 1907/08 A.D.).

This book was written in answer to ten questions addressed by a group of non-conformist *'ulamā* to one of Ḥaḍrat's disciples, Qāim 'Alī Chishtī, who was a student at the Madressah No'māniyah at Lāhore. Since, in posing these questions Ḥaḍrat had also been involved as a party, he was persuaded to respond to them. The questions had been carefully chosen to pertain to several different branches of Islāmic sciences, e.g., linguistics, jurisprudence, scholastic theology, philosophy, logic, commentary, geometry, numbers, and so on, presumably in the hope that no single person could be so widely learned as to be able to do justice to all

books by way of rejoinders. During this period, Mirzā had advanced from his claim of being the *mathil* of Jesus Christ to that of being a full prophet in his own right – a claim which contravened the Qur’ān’s unequivocal declaration that prophethood had ended finally and for all time to come with the mission of Muḥammad (ﷺ) – XXXIII, 40. One of these books, titled *Shams-e-Bāzighah* (شمس بازند, The Shining Sun), was written by a close associate of Mirzā. The other, *I’jāz-ul-Masīḥ* (عجاز مسیح, The Miracle of the Messiah), was written by Mirza himself. It purported to contain a commentary on *Al-Fātehah* (الفتح), the opening *sūrah* (chapter) of the Qur’ān, and the author claimed that it was beyond human power to reply to the arguments contained in the book.

Saif-e-Chishtiyāī, much more detailed and comprehensive than *Shamsul Hidāyah*, was written by Hadrat as his final and decisive contribution to the anti-*Qādiānī* campaign. Besides replying to the points made in the two *Qādiānī* books mentioned above, it covered the entire range of issues relevant to the absolute finality of the prophethood of Muḥammad (ﷺ), which constitutes the cornerstone of Muslim belief and which Mirzā so daringly sought to challenge and violate. As intended, this book did effectively stem the advancing *Qādiānī* tide. It helped thousands of Muslims to rediscover the truth about the issues that *Qādiānism* had raised, besides making many *Qādiānīs* repent and rejoin the ranks of orthodox Muslims. More details of the contents of this book are contained on pp. 141–144 above.

4. *I’lā-u-Kalimatillāh Fi Bayān-i-Mā Uhillā Bihī Leghairillāh*

إِعْلَاءُ كَلِمَةِ اللَّهِ فِي بَيَانِ مَا أُهْمِلَ بِهِ لِغَيْرِ اللَّهِ.

“Exalting the Word of Allāh through the Qur’ānic *Āyat*
 “And that which hath been dedicated to anyone other than Allāh – V, 3”. (1322 A.H.–1904/05 A.D.).

Like other contemporary 'ulamā, Ḥaḍrat did not pay much heed to Mirzā's misguided writings and pronouncements in the beginning, assuming that what Mirzā sought was perhaps nothing more than some publicity and limelight for himself. However, Mirzā's tone increased in brazenness with the passage of time, his underlying objectives became more and more apparent, and his views started gaining currency, especially among the western-educated Muslim youth that was vulnerable because of its inadequate knowledge about religion. Ḥaḍrat and other 'ulamā were, therefore, compelled to take serious notice of this budding and potentially heretical creed. *Shamsul Ḥidāyah* was accordingly written by Ḥaḍrat to defend the orthodox Muslim beliefs on this important subject against the inroads threatened by Mirzā's writings. Effective refutation of Mirzā's claim to be the promised *mathīl* of Jesus Christ was the special focus of the book.

Compiled in the form of questions and answers, the book identifies every single point made in the writings of Mirzā and his supporters, and puts forward the unanimously accepted view thereon. Since Mirzā's views were based primarily on jugglery with Qur'ānic verses and words, the main emphasis in the book is on presenting the correct meanings of those verses, invoking authentic *aḥādīth* as necessary. At the end of the book, Ḥaḍrat posed some questions of his own to Mirzā and his associates and challenged them to provide convincing answers to these questions. A fuller treatment of the contents of the book is given on pp. 119–125 of this booklet.

3. *Saif-e-Chishtiyāi* سیفِ چشتیائی
 "The Chishtiyah Sword"

(1319 A.H.—1902 A.D.).

Within about two years of the appearance of Ḥaḍrat's *Shamsul Ḥidāyah* (2 above), the *Qādiānī* camp published two

the powerful case made by Maulānā ‘Abdul Raḥmān for his point of view. Thanks to this book, the controversy was amicably resolved and conclusively laid to rest for all time to come. In addition, the book provided a masterly exposition of the concept of *waḥdat-ul-wujūd* and helped clear many of the prevailing misinterpretations of the concept.

2. *Shamsul Hidāyah Fī Ithbāt-e-Hayātul Masīḥ*

شمس الهداية في اثبات حياة المسيح

—Guidance concerning the “livingness” of Jesus Christ (1317 A.H.—1900 A.D.)

This book was written by Ḥaḍrat to refute the claims made by Mirzā Ghulām Aḥmad of Qādiān (cf., the Section on Ḥaḍrat’s fight against *Qādiānism*, pp. 145), namely: (a) that the long-standing Muslim belief about Jesus Christ having been raised *bodily* and *alive* to heaven, and about a person bearing his likeness having died on the Cross instead, was incorrect and misconceived; (b) that Christ had in fact been nailed to the Cross, had somehow survived and had been removed by his companions and concealed somewhere, and had died a natural death a long time later in Srīnagar (Kashmīr, India) at the age of 87; (c) that based on these premises, the belief about Christ descending to earth *in person* sometime in future to complete his interrupted span of earthly life was also wrong; (d) that the person likely to descend to earth in future would be a *mathīl* (شیر) or “likeness” of Christ and not Christ himself since he had already died through natural causes; and (e) that Mirzā was the promised *mathīl* of Christ. To carry conviction, Mirzā had, like all impostors, based these claims on interpretations of the relevant Qur’ānic *āyāt* and the Prophet’s *aḥādīth* which were in clear conflict with those that had been unanimously accepted by the Muslim *ummah* on the authority of the Prophet (ﷺ) himself, and also with the inferential works of eminent Muslim scholars and historians over the centuries.

Muslim *ummah*, and declared those disagreeing with it as misguided and "strayers from the right path".

Because of their violation of the orthodox meaning of the *Kalimah*, which had been handed down by the Prophet (ﷺ) himself and had been unanimously accepted throughout the Muslim world ever since, the views expressed by Maulānā 'Abdul Raḥmān caused an understandable uproar among the 'ulamā of the Sub-continent. Many of them denounced the Maulānā as *kāfir* (infidel). Yet few among them were able to effectively counter the many learned and weighty arguments that he had advanced in support of his viewpoint.

Ḥaḍrat regarded the controversy caused by Maulānā 'Abdul Raḥmān's views with grave concern. At the same time, he considered these views to be based, not on any wilful or ill-intentioned distortion by the Maulānā, but on an "overpowering spiritual experience" and thus attributable to a state of mind beyond the Maulānā's own control. He therefore decided to intervene in a manner that could help convincingly defend the orthodox and time-honoured interpretation of the *Kalimah*, and at the same time absolve the Maulānā of the charge of *kufr* (infidelity) brought against him.

The book *Taḥqīqul Ḥaq Fī Kalimatil Ḥaq* was written with this dual objective. In it Ḥaḍrat proved, with the help of quotations from the Qur'ān and *ḥadīth* and a close analysis of Maulānā 'Abdul Raḥmān's various arguments, the error of the latter's viewpoint. A highly erudite and scholarly piece of writing, the book was hailed by the 'ulamā as a work of outstanding merit. Maulānā Ashraf 'Alī Thānavī, who occupies a position of eminence among the Sub-continent's 'ulamā, observed that if Ḥaḍrat Meher 'Alī Shāh had not produced this book, it would have become exceedingly difficult (if not well nigh impossible) for the Muslim community to preserve its age-old belief structure in the face of

Published Writings of Ḥaḍrat Pīr Meher 'Alī Shāh (۱۲)
An Annotated List

A. PROSE

1. *Taḥqīq-ul-Ḥaq Fī Kalimatil Ḥaq* تحقیق الحق فی کلمة الحق

“The Truth about *Kalimatul Ḥaq*” (Year of publication, 1315 A.H.—1897 A.D.).

This was Ḥaḍrat's first major book. Written in Persian language, which was one of the main vehicles used at the time for the writing of religious books and treatises, the book discusses in considerable detail all important aspects of Shaikh Ibn-ul-'Arabī's concept of *waḥdat-ul-wujūd* (Ultimate Oneness of Being). In 1962 A.D., an Urdū translation of it was published along with the original Persian text. Another edition of the book, based on further review of the translated text, is at present under print and is expected to be published shortly.

The book was written by Ḥaḍrat to contest and correct the views expressed about *waḥdat-ul-wujūd* in a pamphlet titled *Kalimat-ul-Ḥaq* (The Word of Truth) by one Maulānā Shāh 'Abdul Raḥmān, a well-known religious scholar and *sūfī* of Lucknow (India). In this pamphlet, the Maulānā had offered an interpretation of *Kalimah-e-Tawḥīd* (کلمة توحيد) There is no god but Allāh and Muḥammad is His messenger) which tended to make the *Kalimah* synonymous with *waḥdat-ul-wujūd*. It also seemed to erase the dividing line between the Creator and His creation, and between Allāh and the idols worshipped by non-believers as spurious gods. What is more, the writer claimed his interpretation to be the only correct one, held its acceptance as binding upon the entire

community being unanimously declared to be outside the pale of Islām by the elected legislature of the Islāmic Republic of Pākistān on 7 September 1974. To those pioneering crusaders must, therefore, go the ultimate credit for showing the real face of the *Qādiānī* creed to the world.

Following the above verdict of Pākistān's Parliament, the *Aḥmadiyah* community's missions are now reported to be working mainly in some European, African and other countries in the name of Islām. The *modus operandi* being used by these missions in those countries is said to comprise, *inter alia*, the following main elements:

- (i) They present themselves as orthodox Muslims and their objective as the propagation of Islām.
- (ii) They deny that Mirzā Ghulām Aḥmad ever made a claim to prophethood or any other claims contrary to Islām.
- (iii) To back up this stance, they are said to have taken careful steps to: (a) expunge the portions of Mirzā Ṣāḥib's writings that contain his prophethood and related claims; (b) place before their audiences only the writings belonging to the early period of Mirzā Ṣāḥib's life when his beliefs were still those of an orthodox Muslim; and (c) remove copies of the offending later writings of Mirzā Ṣāḥib from wherever they may still be available.

It is hoped that the facts about the *Qādiānī* (*Aḥmadiyah*) movement revealed in this booklet, in the context of Ḥaḍrat Pīr Meher 'Alī Shāh's struggle against it and on the basis of authentic *original* sources, would help overseas audiences to see the movement in its true colours, and to understand that enrolment in the *Aḥmadiyah* community would not amount to embracing Islām but to adopting a creed that is totally antithetical to that great faith.

the Day of Judgement. He also referred to the Qur'ānic account of the *Aṣḥāb-e-Kahf* (اصحاب کف , Men of the Cave, XVIII, 9), who had been kept alive by Allāh for over 300 years *even on earth* without food or drink.

(iv) With respect to the *ilhāmāt* (الهامات, inspirations) of Mirzā Ṣāhib, a selective list of which has been given earlier in this Section, Ḥadṛat divided them into three main categories:

- a. *False* inspirations, which had either been proved wrong through Mirzā's own actions and words, or had not been actually fulfilled;
- b. *Meaningless* inspirations, which made no sense at all; and
- c. *Satanic* inspirations, which had been derived either through another human being or inspired by Satan himself.

In short, *Saif-e-Chishtiyāi* proved to be the last nail in the *Qādiānī* coffin as far as scholarly refutation of the underlying principles and views of this creed was concerned.

A Summing Up

On the basis of the account contained in the preceding pages of this Section, it can be said without fear of contradiction that Ḥadṛat Pīr Meher 'Alī Shāh (ؒ) was in the forefront of those '*ulamā* and *mashāikh* who waged a heroic struggle to nip the evil of *Qādiānism* in the bud. He occupied a leading position among those who laid the foundations of what developed in course of time into a nation-wide *khatm-e-nubuwwat* (finality of prophethood) movement, and that resulted three-quarters of a century later in the *Qādiānī*

āyāt and *aḥādīth* on this subject in terms totally contrary to those in which they had been interpreted by persons (i.e., the Prophet's Companions) who had derived their knowledge directly from the Prophet (ﷺ) himself; and (e) Allāh, the Ultimate Creator of all natural phenomena, had the power to alter and modify those phenomena whenever and in whatever way He deemed proper. Had He not shown this power by making the blazing fire turn cold for Prophet Ibrāhīm (Abraham)?

- (iii) With reference to the view that Christ had not died on the Cross but had instead been raised alive to heaven, Muḥammad Aḥsan Amrohavī, close associate and spokesman of Mirzā, had objected as to how Christ could survive in heaven without food (e.g., wheat etc.), when the Qur'ān itself declared (*vide* its *āyāt* XXI, 8 , وَمَا جَعَلْنَا لَهُمْ جَسَدًا لَّا يَأْكُلُونَ الطَّعَامَ
(8— الانبياء) We gave them not bodies that would not eat food—and V, 75 — كَمَا نَأْيًا يُكْرَهُ الطَّعَامَ (المائدة : ٧٥)
They both, i.e., Mary and Jesus, used to eat food) that such survival was impossible. In reply to this, Ḥaḍrat explained that survival through material food applied to earthly life only. For the denizens of heaven, e.g., angels, it was the remembrance and *tasbīḥ* (تسبيح , glorification) of Allāh that served as the means of sustenance. It was obvious therefore, he argued, that Christ in heaven would also be governed by the rules of heavenly life and would survive through remembrance and *tasbīḥ* of Allāh. To prove this point, Ḥaḍrat quoted a *ḥadīth* of the Prophet (ﷺ) according to which the believing Muslims even on earth would survive through remembrance and *tasbīḥ* of Allāh when the entire earthly resources of food would fall into the hands of *Dajjāl* (Antichrist) during the period just before

fully awake. The very fact that this heavenly journey had found special mention in the Qur'ān showed it to have been an extraordinary occurrence, which certainly cannot be said of dreams or other spiritual experiences.

This, Ḥaḍrat said, was also borne out by the use of the word *سُبْحَانَ* (*Subhān*, Glorified) at the beginning of the *āyah*, which, according to Qur'ānic idiom, is used only when it is intended to describe highly unusual and improbable happenings. Ḥaḍrat argued that going to the heavens and being taken round the universe *during sleep* was by no means an extraordinary phenomenon which a prophet alone could experience. The conclusion was, therefore, inescapable that *Mi'rāj* had taken place while the Prophet (ﷺ) was fully awake.

Mirzā had also asserted that both the ancient and the modern sciences had clearly discounted the possibility of any human being to be capable of going *in physical person* even to the *Kurrah-e-Zamharīr* (*گرتة زمهریر* , the atmospheric Frigid Zone), what to speak of going to the lunar or the solar zone as believed by the Muslims in relation to the Prophet's *mi'rāj*. In response to this, Ḥaḍrat argued that: (a) it was wrong for any Muslim to put forward such views in the face of Qur'ānic *āyāt*, *aḥādīth*, and consensus of the *Ummah*, all of which spoke of the Prophet's *physical* ascent to heaven; (b) the so-called "laws of nature" relied upon by the physical sciences were based on partial and imperfect observance of natural phenomena, and could not therefore be regarded as final and unchangeable; (c) phenomena having remote probability could not be regarded as totally impossible; (d) Mirzā had interpreted the Qur'ānic

Shams-e-Bāzighah can be properly understood only by those well conversant with Arabic literary principles. They are, therefore, not reproduced in the present booklet which is meant primarily for the general reader. However, selected excerpts of a non-technical nature are given below:

Some salients excerpts from *Saif-e-Chishtiyāī*

- (i) In claiming to be a prophet, Mirzā had argued that he was a *mathīl* or *zill* (likeness or shadow) of Holy Prophet Muḥammad (ﷺ), and that his claim did not therefore violate the finality of the latter's prophethood which continued to remain intact. Ḥaḍrat, however, quoted from Mirzā's several other writings and statements to prove that his claim in fact was to be a prophet in his own right rather than a *mathīl* or *zill* only, and that the argument of "shadow prophethood" was a mere facade to conceal the real truth.
- (ii) To prove himself to be the Promised Messiah, Mirzā had rejected the Muslim belief about Jesus Christ having been raised by God to heaven "alive and in person". On the same premise, he later expressed the view that the *Mi'rāj* (ascent to heaven) of Prophet Muḥammad (ﷺ) had also been spiritual rather than physical as believed by the mass of Muslims. Ḥaḍrat proved conclusively on the basis of a detailed explanation of the relevant Qur'ānic *āyah* (صَبَّحَانَ الَّذِي أَمْرُ بِعَبْدِهِ لَيْلًا مِنَ الْمَسْجِدِ الْحَرَامِ إِلَى الْمَسْجِدِ الْأَقْصَا)

(الاسراء: 1) Glorified be He Who carried His servant by night from the Inviolable Place of Worship, i.e., the *Ka'bah* – to the Far Distant Place of Worship – i.e., the *Aqṣā* Mosque at Jerusalem – XVII, 1), and of the Prophet's various *aḥādīth* on the subject, that the *mi'rāj* had in fact been physical and had taken place while the Prophet (ﷺ) was

Saif-e-Chishtiyāi elaborated further upon the arguments contained in Ḥaḍrat's earlier book *Shams-ul-Hidāyah*, and also gave convincing replies to the objections raised by Mirzā concerning that book. In addition, it made nearly one hundred critical comments on the incorrect meanings and logic, errors of grammar, diction and idiom (which are crucially important in relation to the Qur'ān and the Ḥadīth, since even the slightest such error can completely change the meanings of the relevant *āyāt* and *aḥādīth*) in respect of *Sūrah Al-Fāteḥah* contained in Mirzā's *I'jāz-ul-Masīḥ*. Similar criticisms were made of the contents of *Shams-e-Bāzighah*, in which an effort had been made to spell out the meaning of the *Kalimah* as demanded by Ḥaḍrat in his *Shams-ul-Hidāyah*. The details of these various comments, which can be properly understood only by those well-versed in Arabic language and in religious issues, may be seen in the book itself.

Saif-e-Chishtiyāi was hailed by religious scholars as a masterpiece on the subject. It was quoted extensively by writers of Qur'ānic commentaries and other religious authors as a reference to prove their various points. Maulānā Ashraf Alī Thānavī, one of the eminent *'ulamā* of the Deoband school, wrote thus in his Qur'ānic commentary titled *Bayān-ul-Qur'ān* (بيان القرآن): "In the discussion on the life and death of Jesus Christ, the book *Saif-e-Chishtiyāi* is worth reading". Similarly, in his book *Aqīdat-ul-Islām Fī Ḥayāt-e-'Isā 'Alaihis-Salām* (عقيدة الإسلام في حياة عيسى عليه السلام), The Islāmic Belief in the "aliveness" of Jesus Christ, peace be upon him), 'Allāmah Anwar Shāh Kāshmīrī of the same school described *Saif-e-Chishtiyāi* as one of the best books and an authority on the subject. The *Maktūbāt* (Letters) of Ḥaḍrat also show that the book elicited generous acclaim from the contemporary religious scholars.

As stated above, the portions of the book *Saif-e-Chishtiyāi* in which Ḥaḍrat pointed out and commented upon the errors of grammar and idiom contained in *I'jāz-ul-Masīḥ* and

written by Mirzā Ṣāhib himself. It purported to contain a detailed commentary on *Al-Fāteḥah* (الفاتحة), the opening *sūrah* of the Qur'ān. In it the author attempted to prove his various claims (messiahship, prophethood etc.) on the basis of the said *sūrah* alone, besides describing the other truths and facts stated in the *sūrah*. Earlier, Mirzā had called upon Ḥaḍrat Meher 'Alī Shāh to write a similar commentary on the said *sūrah* for qualitative comparison within a prescribed time-limit, but Ḥaḍrat had not yet responded to this challenge. In his book, Mirzā put forward the claim that it was beyond human power to reply to the arguments contained in the book.

The second book, titled *Shams-e-Bāzighah* (شمس بازنه , The Shining Sun), was written and published by Mirzā Ṣāhib's loyal disciple and old-time associate, Maulvī Muḥammad Aḥsan Amrohī. In this book, an effort was made, besides other things, to give a detailed explanation of the *Kalimah* (لا إله إلا الله محمد رسول الله) There is no god but Allāh and Muḥammad is His Messenger), as had been demanded by Ḥaḍrat in his book *Shams-ul-Hidāyah* (cf. p. 121 above).

Saif-e-Chishtiyāī (سیف چشتیائی The Chishtiyah Sword), Ḥaḍrat's second book on *Qādiānism*

In reply to Mirzā's two aforesaid books, and in order to deal a final and decisive blow to *Qādiānism* without indulging in verbal argument or claims and counter claims, Ḥaḍrat wrote his now famous book *Saif-e-Chishtiyāī* (سیف چشتیائی The Chishtiyah Sword)⁷⁸ and had it distributed free of cost to the Sub continent's 'ulamā and *mashāikh* as well as among religious *madressahs* and institutions. As clarified in his introductory remarks, this book was also written by Ḥaḍrat on the insistence of some 'ulamā and other people rather than on his own initiative, and its real purpose was to explain the correct position of the related issues from the standpoints of the Qur'ān and the *ḥadīth* for the information of the people, rather than to indulge in controversy with Mirzā and his followers.

- (vi) Because of Mirzā's sacrilegious beliefs, the 'ulamā of India had unanimously declared him to be a *kāfir* (infidel).

The resolution criticized the activities of Mirzā under which he resorted to falsehood in all matters; indulged in unprincipled controversy, cunning and deceit; earned his living by humiliating respectable people and carrying out similar other ignoble activities; and, taking undue advantage of the religious freedom granted by the Government of the day, was trying to sow dissension among the various sects of India. For all these reasons, the Resolution concluded that Mirzā did not merit the attention of respectable people, and called upon the Muslims to treat his anti-Islām writings and pronouncements in future with the indifference and disdain that they deserved.

A full and authentic account of this encounter of Ḥaḍrat Pīr Meher 'Alī Shāh (?) with Mirzā Ghulām Aḥmad of Qādiān was published in an Urdu-language journal titled "*Rūedād-e-Jalsa-e-Lāhore*" (*رؤدآد جلسہ لاہور* , Proceedings of the Lāhore Conference) by Ḥāfiẓ Muḥammad Dīn of the Muṣṭafāi Press, Lahore. A collection of articles on the subject also appeared in the newspaper *Chaudhvīn Šadī* (*چودھویں صدی* , Fourteenth Century AH) of Rāwalpindī, which was later compiled and published in book form. Copies of other brochures and posters on the subject are also known to be available in different libraries having collections of old Islāmic literature of the Sub-continent.

A new challenge of Mirzā Šāhib

The next two-year period (1901-02) was spent by the Qādiānī camp in devising new ways of redeeming the serious loss of prestige that had resulted from Mirzā Šāhib's abortive contest with Ḥaḍrat Pīr Meher 'Alī Shāh. It tried to do so, *inter alia*, by publishing two books by way of rejoinders to Ḥaḍrat's *Shams-ul-Hidāyah*. One of these books, titled *I'jāz-ul-Masīh* (*عجائب* , The Miracle of the Messiah), was

remaining in some minds. Forcefully and convincingly, leading 'ulamā belonging to all the various Muslim sects demonstrated that Holy Prophet Muḥammad (ﷺ) was indisputably the last of all apostles of Allāh in this world, and that anyone who refused to accept the finality of his apostleship (as had been done by Mirzā Ghulām Aḥmad of Qādiān) was outside the pale of Islām. They quoted extensively from the writings and pronouncements of Mirzā to prove that his beliefs and actions palpably violated basic precepts of the Qur'ān and the Ḥadīth.

A Resolution based on the following major clauses was unanimously adopted at the meeting:

- (i) Mirzā had no interest whatsoever in the vindication of the truth. His sole object in starting this episode had been to earn cheap publicity and fame. In order to do so, he had not hesitated to put so many eminent and respected 'ulamā belonging to different and remote parts of the country (including Ḥadrat Pīr Meher 'Alī Shāh) to unnecessary trouble and expense, and to waste their valuable time.
- (ii) Mirzā's beliefs were totally against the Qur'ān and the Prophet's *Sunnah*.
- (iii) He had claimed that many of the Qur'ānic verses had been revealed to him, had likened Qādiān to the House of God (the Holy *Kābah*) and his own mosque in Qādiān to the *Al Aqṣā Mosque in Bait-ul-Maqdis* (Jerusalem), and had denied the Holy Prophet's *mi'rāj* (ascent to heaven).
- (iv) He had referred most irreverently to Jesus Christ and to Archangel Gabriel in his various writings and statements.
- (v) Many of the writings of Mirzā and his associates were couched in highly objectionable language.

The blatant falsity of the claims of victory put forward by the *Qādiānīs* is also borne out, *inter alia*, by the following observations made in the book '*Aṣā-e-Mūsā* (*صاۓ موسیٰ* *The Staff of Moses*) by Bābū Ilāhi Bakhsh, the *ex*-associate and disciple of Mirzā mentioned above:

“If Mirzā Ṣāhib was so afraid of going to Lāhore, why did he endanger his life himself by issuing the poster of challenge in the first place? He first invited the Pīr Ṣāhib and many many others for a contest at Lāhore through repeated posters and leaflets, and after the latter had assembled in response to this challenge, he cried off on the pretext that going to Lāhore would amount to ‘jumping into fire’. What an irony that while the true prophets of Allāh (such as Ibrāhīm) were actually cast into raging fire but had escaped unhurt through the Grace of Allāh, this fake claimant to prophethood did not even dare to step into the ‘imaginary fire’ which had been ignited by none but himself! Unqualified acceptance by the Pīr Ṣāhib of all the ten conditions put forward by Mirzā, and withdrawal by him of the only condition for an oral debate before the written contest, left no room whatsoever for the excuses and pretexts put forward by Mirzā Ṣāhib.”

Muslim public meeting in Bādshāhī Mosque, Lāhore

Having despaired of Mirzā’s arrival in Lāhore for the contest, a huge public meeting of Muslims was held on 27 August 1900 in the Bādshāhī Mosque, Lāhore, in which over 5,000 persons (a number considered very large in those days) participated. In this meeting, the various ‘*ulamā*’ narrated the events leading to the contest and the failure of Mirzā to make his appearance at the last moment. They also placed a lucid picture of the real face of *Qādiānism* before the people so as to allay any doubts and misgivings still

oral debate should have been announced by Ḥaḍrat *personally* instead of through his associate Ḥakīm Sulṭān Maḥmūd. It was pointed out to him that withdrawal by proxy had been done because Mirzā's own rejection of Ḥaḍrat's suggestion for oral debate had been conveyed through the same procedure, i.e., through his associate Muḥammad Aḥsan Amrohavī and not by Mirzā personally. Nevertheless, Ḥaḍrat even then showed his readiness to withdraw his condition in his own writing provided Mirzā did the same in respect of the rejection of the condition. Mirzā, however, not only declined to do so but also refused point-blank to come to Lāhore. According to him, the *maulvīs* had conspired to have him assassinated under cover of engaging him in a debate to disprove his claim to prophethood. (In making this allegation, he ignored the fact that the debate was being held *at his own initiative* and not at the instance of the "*maulvīs*"!)

Reaction among Mirzā's followers

When the *Qādiānī* representatives failed to persuade Mirzā to come to Lāhore for the debate, a wave of dismay swept through the community. Many disillusioned *Qādiānīs* repented and deserted the party. Many others (e.g., Bābū Ilāhī Bakhsh, who had previously been a long-time *Qādiānī* activist but had then repented and rejoined the ranks of orthodox Muslims) even published posters and pamphlets lauding Ḥaḍrat's learning and erudition and acclaiming his victory in the contest. The die-hards, however, not only refused to acknowledge defeat but in fact declared the episode to be a resounding victory for their side. Posters were splashed all over Lāhore announcing "the flight of the Pīr Ṣāḥib of Golrā" against the *Latter-day Imām* (i.e., Mirzā), and "the crushing defeat of the *maulvīs* and the *pīrs* by the heavenly sign". All this despite the fact that the entire city of Lāhore was witness to the presence of Ḥaḍrat Pīr Meher 'Alī Shāh in Lāhore, and to the fact that Mirzā of Qādiān was refusing to come to Lāhore despite repeated calls to do so.

very large gathering of people received Ḥaḍrat on arrival at Lāhore. On the night before the contest date, a detailed discussion and exchange of views was held among 'ulamā on all the various issues relevant to the main subject of the contest. During this session, Ḥaḍrat gave a masterly exposition of the arguments both for and against *Qādiānism*, which left even this gathering of distinguished 'ulamā and *mashāikh* virtually spell-bound and enabled everyone to acquire a clearer understanding of the issues involved.

Many 'ulamā opposed the withdrawal of the condition of oral debate before the written contest in deference to Mirzā's wishes. Ḥaḍrat felt, however, that his main object in agreeing to this withdrawal was to avoid providing to Mirzā even the slightest excuse to stay away from the contest. Moreover, he said, he sincerely felt it was quite possible that Mirzā might relent from his monstrous claim and come back to the right path just through the spiritual influence of a gathering of such eminent 'ulamā and *mashāikh*, about whom the Holy Prophet had said in one of his *aḥādīth* that "those who sat in their company would not be unblest"

(مَمَّنْ تَرْتَمُ لَا يَشْقَى جَلِيسُهُمْ)

Mirzā's failure to reach Lāhore

Ḥaḍrat and his associates, as well as all others who had assembled in Lāhore in large numbers to witness this epoch-making contest, waited for two full days, i.e., 25 and 26 August 1900, for Mirzā to arrive. Meanwhile, the *Qādiānis* kept giving assurances that Mirzā Ṣāhib's arrival was being delayed only due to negotiations about the applicable terms and conditions, and that he would come as soon as these were finalized. However, Mirzā failed to turn up. Many influential *Ahmadīs* of the *Lāhorī* faction reportedly tried hard to induce Mirzā to come to Lāhore but did not succeed. His main objection was that the withdrawal of the condition of

lms belonging to all schools of religious thought (Shiāh, Sunnī, *Ahl-e-ḥadīth* etc.) and all walks of life started arriving in Lāhore from various parts of the country. Major Islāmīc *madressahs* and centres of learning (e.g., those in Delhi, Sahāranpūr, Deoband, Ludhiānā, Amritsar, Multān etc.) sent their representatives, and even some public servants from far-flung areas took leave of absence and came to Lāhore to witness the historic contest. In a period when people as a rule took keen interest in religious matters, the participation of a scholar and *shaikh* of the eminence of Ḥaḍrat Meher 'Alī Shāh (?) in the historic debate which was to decide the fate of the twentieth Century's leading impostor generated unprecedented enthusiasm. In this moment of destiny, 'ulamā of various shades of thought sank their traditional differences and unanimously declared Ḥaḍrat to be their sole spokesman and leader. They thus displayed once again that all-pervading Islāmīc spirit of brotherhood which has helped unify the Muslim *ummah* at every critical turn of history against its common enemies, and of which no parallel can be found in any other religion or creed. The fact that many of these 'ulamā were far senior to Ḥaḍrat, who was then only 42 years of age and in barely the tenth year of his mission of teaching and spiritual guidance, underscores the high esteem in which he had come to be held in the religious circles.

Ḥaḍrat's arrival in Lāhore

On leaving Golrā Sharīf for Lāhore by train on 24 August 1900, Ḥaḍrat had two telegrams sent to Mirzā Ghulām Aḥmad at Qādiān, first from Rawālpindī and then from Lālā Mūsā railway station *en route* to Lāhore, in order to ensure that he was duly informed about Ḥaḍrat's expected arrival in Lāhore. About 50 eminent 'ulamā accompanied Ḥaḍrat from the Golrā railway station, and many more from other areas either joined him at various points on the way or reached Lāhore directly to join the group of welcomers. A

Aḥsan Amrohī, a close associate of Mirzā. The letter rejected, on Mirzā's behalf, the proposal made by Ḥaḍrat for an oral debate and insisted on a written contest in commentary-writing only. One of the reasons given for this was that as a result of his past debates with the Christian priest 'Abdullāh Ātham, Mirzā had already vowed in his book *Anjām-e-Ātham* (op. cit.) not to engage in oral debates with anyone ever again.

Through a poster issued on Ḥaḍrat's behalf on 21-22 August 1900 by Hakīm Sulṭān Maḥmūd of Rāwalpindī, one of Ḥaḍrat's associates, Mirzā was promptly informed that although Ḥaḍrat still considered an oral debate to be the best method of deciding the issue, he was ready for only a written contest also on Mirzā's own conditions and was therefore leaving for Lāhore to participate in such a contest. A copy of the poster was sent by registered post to Mirzā at Qādiān. All those who could be contacted within the very short time then left until the date of the contest were also notified, although the poster could not be publicized as widely as would have been necessary and desirable.

In their various subsequent writings and statements, Mirzā and other *Qādiānī* writers have contended that in the poster published by Ḥakīm Sulṭān Maḥmūd, the condition for oral debate, which was unacceptable to Mirzā, had been allowed to stand and had not been withdrawn by Ḥaḍrat. Because of this, they say, Mirzā Ṣāhib could not have participated in the contest under any circumstances. To enable the reader to arrive at his own judgement about the truth or otherwise of this contention, an English translation of the full text of the poster in question is enclosed as Appendix II to this booklet, with the relevant portions italicized.

Huge Muslim assemblage at Lāhore, venue of the contest

As the appointed date approached, hundreds of Mus-

invitation extended by Mirzā to all other 'ulamā and *mashāikh* of the country in the supplement to his poster, Mirzā received a poster signed by sixty other 'ulamā and *mashāikh* as well. In this, the 'ulamā expressed their readiness to join the proposed contest as proposed by Mirzā. They also endorsed Ḥaḍrat's suggestion for an oral debate prior to the written contest proposed by Mirzā. In their opinion, it was impossible to arrive at any judgement concerning the points at issue without an oral and face-to-face exchange of views between the two sides, and the need for such exchange would remain even after the written contest, so as to apprise the audience in detail about the respective points of view. Furthermore, they felt it odd that such a large gathering of 'ulamā should be made to spend one whole day sitting as silent spectators of an exercise between two persons in complementary-writing. In short, Ḥaḍrat's proposal for an oral debate appeared to everyone to be sound and reasonable from all angles in order to arrive at a decisive solution of the issue.

The challenge extended by Mirzā Ghulām Aḥmad to Ḥaḍrat Pīr Meher 'Alī Shāh (؎) and Ḥaḍrat's acceptance of it, particularly his suggestion for an oral debate to precede the written contest, generated keen popular interest throughout the country. It brought the ten-year-old struggle between *Qādiānism* and Islām to the stage of settlement through direct confrontation. It also produced an air of expectancy among all those who desired this contentious issue to be settled once and for all, and the Muslim *ummah* to be rid of disunity and division.

Qādiāni objection to Ḥaḍrat's proposal for oral debate before a written contest and its consequent withdrawal

Just four days before the appointed date for the contest (25 August 1900), a copy of a printed letter was delivered in Golrā Sharīf, which had been written by Muhammad

however, that the two contestants should first engage in an *oral debate* elaborating their respective points of view, and that the written contest in commentary-writing proposed by Mirzā should take place only after the audience had expressed its judgement about the oral debate. Ḥaḍrat gave a powerful argument for this suggestion. The Holy Prophet (ﷺ) of Islām, Jesus Christ and all other prophets of Allāh, he said, had presented and propagated their messages to their respective audiences and communities orally rather than in writing. Since Mirzā was a claimant to be the Promised Messiah and the *Mahdī*, he should also establish the truth of his claims orally in accordance with the tradition set by the previous prophets. Furthermore, as far as written presentation was concerned, the many books written by Mirzā were already filled with his various claims and views, and these had already been read and commented upon in detail in writing by the various *'ulamā* and also by other fair-minded intellectuals from time to time. Because of all this, Ḥaḍrat concluded, it seemed but appropriate to give first priority to an oral debate and a secondary one to a written contest.

Ḥaḍrat also offered to come for the contest alone instead of putting forty respected *'ulamā* to unnecessary trouble and expense as suggested by Mirzā. As desired by Mirzā, *the 25th of August 1900*, i.e., one month after the date of Ḥaḍrat's answering poster, was proposed as the date for the contest, and Mirzā was requested to reach Lāhore on that date. Ḥaḍrat's poster was witnessed by twenty respectable persons, mostly *'ulamā*, as desired by Mirzā.

A reply to the Supplement to Mirzā's poster was written, on Ḥaḍrat's behalf and with his approval, by Mau-lānā Muḥammad Ghāzī, head teacher of the *Madressah* at Golrā Sharīf, and was appended to the main poster.

A poster from other *'Ulamā*

In the wake of Ḥaḍrat's poster, and in reply to the

scope of the contest and to include in it as many 'ulamā as possible. This would help avoid the possibility of some 'ulamā regarding themselves as superior to the Pīr Ṣāhib in the knowledge of Arabic and the Qur'ān, and on that basis refusing to accept the defeat of Pīr Ṣāhib as binding upon them. It would also ensure that the "Sign of God" was manifested with the "maximum strength and glory". Mirzā suggested, therefore, that Ḥaḍrat should furnish a list of at least forty 'ulamā (besides himself) who would also take part in the contest. Furthermore, he asked Ḥaḍrat to suggest a date for the contest not earlier than one month hence, in order to allow enough time for the other participating 'ulamā to make the necessary preparations and arrange to be present in Lāhore on the date of the contest. At the end of the Supplement, Mirzā gave his own list of 86 (eighty-six) eminent 'ulamā and *mashaikh* from all over the country and invited them all to be present at the contest.

Ḥaḍrat's reply accepting the challenge

Mirzā's poster and its supplement were received in Golrā Sharīf on 25 July 1900. Ḥaḍrat immediately prepared a poster in reply and had it printed and published the very next day in all leading newspapers of the country. As desired by Mirza, 5000 copies of this poster were prepared and some copies were sent to Mirzā at Qādiān by registered post. Copies were also mailed or sent by hand to 'ulamā in all parts of India, including the 86 'ulamā listed at the end of the supplement to Mirzā's poster, and also to 'ulamā in adjoining Afghānistān. All this generated widespread interest among the people.

In his reply, Ḥaḍrat wrote that he whole-heartedly accepted the invitation for a public contest extended by Mirzā as well as the conditions listed by him, including the venue proposed for the contest (viz., Lāhore) and the three 'ulamā named by him as prospective judges. He suggested,

contestants, be read out to three learned but impartial persons for adjudication, who would be nominated and arrangements for their presence made by Pīr Meher 'Alī Shāh. Mirzā indicated that the names of Maulvī Muḥammad Ḥusain of Batālā, Maulvī 'Abdul Jabbār Ghaznavī, and Prof. Maulvī 'Abdullāh of Lāhore would, if selected, be acceptable to him for this purpose. After listening to the two commentaries, the judges would pronounce *on oath* as to which of them was considered by them to be superior and written "with the endorsement of the 'Holy Spirit'." In the event of Ḥaḍrat's commentary being adjudged better or even equal to that of Mirzā, Mirzā pledged to admit that the truth was on the side of Pīr Meher 'Alī Shāh. He would then burn all books containing his claims to messiahship and prophethood, and acknowledge himself to be "the damned and the disgraced one." On the other hand, if Mirzā were to be adjudged the winner, or if Pīr Meher 'Alī Shāh were to refuse to enter the contest, he would repent and pledge allegiance to Mirzā and announce this through a published poster.

Ḥaḍrat was asked to convey acceptance of the challenge, along with an assurance that he would pledge allegiance to Mirzā in the event of his defeat, within ten days of its receipt by him, through a printed poster witnessed (like the poster of Mirzā) by twenty respectable persons. Five thousand copies of this poster were to be prepared and distributed by Ḥaḍrat to interested quarters.

Mirzā's poster was accompanied by a Supplement which further spelt out some of the conditions mentioned in the main poster, suggested arrangements for the contest in greater detail, and also made a few additional proposals. One such proposal was that the participation of Ḥaḍrat Pīr Ṣāhib in the contest would be essential in any event, since he had the reputation of being superior to all other *maulvīs* (Muslim clergy) in the knowledge of Arabic and the Qur'ān. At the same time, however, he felt it was necessary to widen the

Ḥaḍrat also posed just one counter-question to Ḥakīm Nūr Dīn, asking him to explain "the reality of miracles". This question was, however, never answered.

The aforesaid correspondence was published in the form of a leaflet by Maulānā Muḥammad Ghāzī, senior teacher in the *madressah* at Golrā Sharīf, and distributed to 'ulamā in various parts of the country. All 'ulamā paid glowing tributes (written as well as oral) to the force of Ḥaḍrat's arguments and the deep learning on which they were based. The publication of the leaflet led to a widespread demand for Mirzā to reply to the questions listed in Ḥaḍrat's *Shams-ul-Hidāyah*.

Mirzā's challenge to Ḥaḍrat for a written contest

Nettled by the aforesaid demand, Mirzā threw a challenge to Ḥaḍrat, in a poster issued on 20 July 1900 and witnessed by twenty persons, to engage in an open debate with him. Curiously, however, the challenge was not for a debate on the disputed issues (viz., the "death" of Christ, or on Mirzā's own claims to be the *mathīl* of Christ, the Promised Messiah and a *zillī nabī*, i.e., shadow prophet), but for a competition in the writing of an Arabic language commentary on selected Qur'ānic verses.

According to the above mentioned poster of Mirzā, the contest was to take place at Lāhore, the capital city of Punjāb Province at a venue to be arranged by Ḥaḍrat. A maximum of 40 Qur'ānic verses were to be selected by ballot, and commentaries thereon were to be completed by the two parties in the space of seven hours at a stretch and in the presence of witnesses, without the help of any book or other *aide*. The commentaries, each of which was to span at least 20 leaves (40 pages) of normal-size writing, would, after their completion and signatures by the respective

Allāh Himself from those sins and errors which are unbecoming of the high station of prophethood, because only thus can their complete abeissance be made binding upon their followers. This is borne out, *inter alia*, by the Qur'ānic *āyāt*

قُلْ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ تُحِبُّونَ اللَّهَ فَاتَّبِعُونِي يُحْبِبْكُمُ اللَّهُ وَيَغْفِرْ لَكُمْ ذُنُوبَكُمْ (آل عمران: ٣١)

(Say: If you love Allāh, follow me and Allāh shall love you (III, 31), and Verily there is for you a perfect model in the Messenger of Allāh (XXXIII, 21). The *auliā* also achieve this protection after they attain complete *fanā* (فناء, identification) with the Supreme Being.

- (ii) *Ihām*, *kashf* and pious dreams are among the manifestations of true faith, and the criterion for judging their goodness or otherwise is the degree to which they conform to the Qur'ān and the *Sunnah*.
- (iii) Reason and the laws of nature, being based on imperfect foundations, have limited reliability. They can be drawn upon only if they are backed up by a categorical pronouncement by the Holy Prophet (ﷺ) on the basis of the Qur'ān.
- (iv) *Aḥādīth* cannot be amended by us today without reference to the analysis and scrutiny carried out by the early scholars, who had greater and closer access to the *original* sources of information by virtue of their proximity to the period of the Holy Prophet (ﷺ).
- (v) Instead of five or six Qur'ānic commentaries like that of Ibn-e-Jarīr, as demanded by Ḥakīm Nūr Dīn, Ḥadrat cited as many as *sixteen* such commentaries.

When Allāh said: "O 'Īsā, verily I shall give thee death and shall raise thee unto Myself", III-55) had clearly spoken of Christ's "death". Refuting this, Ḥaḍrat quoted several Qur'ānic commentaries by the Prophet's *Ṣaḥābah* (Companions) and *Tābi'īn* (تابعين, companions of the *Ṣaḥābah*) to prove that the word (مُتَوَفِّيكَ) had not been used to mean death as Mirzā claimed. He then added that even if Mirzā's meaning were to be accepted as correct, it could refer, according to the correct principles of Arabic grammar, to death *in future* (i.e., after Christ's expected future descent from heaven and completion of his allotted span of earthly life) rather than death at the time of his crucifixion by the Jews.

In short, the book established the case in favour of Jesus Christ's ascent to heaven *alive and in person* in such irrefutable terms as to totally demolish Mirzā's interpretations and claims.

In February 1900, Ḥakīm Nūr Dīn, Mirzā's closest and most trusted associate who had urged him initially to put forward a claim to be a *mathīl* of Jesus Christ, wrote a letter to Ḥaḍrat in which, instead of replying to the questions listed in *Shams-ul-Hidāyah*, he posed a dozen counter-questions on topics which among others included: freedom from sin of prophets and *auliā* (saints); the nature of *ilhām*, *kashf* and pious dreams and the extent to which these could be benefitted from; the place of reason and laws of nature *vis-a-vis* the *sharī'ah*, and so on. He also asked Ḥaḍrat to name five or six commentaries on the Holy Qur'ān comparable to the commentary by Ibn-e-Jarīr, and the sources of some of the *aḥādīth* quoted in Ḥaḍrat's *Shams-ul-Hidāyah*.

Ḥaḍrat sent detailed replies to each of the questions posed by Ḥakīm Nūr Dīn, some of which are reproduced below:

- (i) Prophets and Messengers of Allāh are protected by

Lo! We reveal unto thee the Scripture with the truth, so thou mayst judge between mankind by that which Allāh showeth thee. And be not thou a pleader for the treacherous. (IV, 105).

(ii) وَمَا أَنْزَلْنَا عَلَيْكَ الْكِتَابَ إِلَّا لِتُبَيِّنَ لَهُمُ الَّذِينَ اخْتَلَفُوا فِيهِ وَهُدًى وَرَحْمَةً
لِّلْقَوْمِ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ ○ (النحل: ١٠٥)

And We have revealed the Scripture to thee only so thou mayst explain to them that wherein they differ, and as guidance and a mercy for the people who believe. (XVI, 64).

(iii) وَأَنْزَلْنَا إِلَيْكَ الذِّكْرَ لِتُبَيِّنَ لِلنَّاسِ مَا نُزِّلَ إِلَيْهِمْ وَلَعَلَّهُمْ يَتَفَكَّرُونَ ○ (النحل: ٦٤)

And We revealed the Reminder (i.e., the Qur'ān) unto thee so thou mayst explain to the people that which has been revealed to them and so that they ponder. (XVI, 44).

Ḥaḍrat also quoted a number of *aḥādīth* to prove his point, and thereby not only effectively rebutted the *Qādiānī* arguments but also silenced those others who choose to reject *ḥadīth* as an impeccable source of Islāmic *sharī'ah*. One *ḥadīth* runs thus (Beware! Along with the Qur'ān, I have been given its like, too, i.e., my *Sunnah*).
أَلَا أُوتِيْتُ الْقُرْآنَ وَمِثْلَهُ مَعَهُ (بَيْنَ السَّنَةِ)

Later in the book, Ḥaḍrat also cited nearly *forty aḥādīth* of the Prophet (ﷺ) and sayings of his Companions, all derived from eminently authentic *ḥadīth* compilations, in support of Christ's ascent to heaven and his future descent to earth.

One of the arguments given by Mirzā to back up his view concerning the "death" of Jesus Christ was that the Qur'ānic *āyah*
إِذْ قَالَ اللَّهُ يٰعِيسَى ابْنِ مَرْيَمَ وَرَافِعُكَ إِلَىَّ. (آل عمران: ٥٥)

Mirzā Ghulām Aḥmad had contended that the interpretation about Christ having been bodily raised by Allāh ‘unto Himself’ required Allāh to have a *makān* (residing place), which was factually incorrect. With respect to this, Ḥaḍrat observed that this was not at all necessary since several other Qur’ānic *āyāt* (verses) imply that ‘raising unto God’ denotes raising towards the heaven, rather than literally unto God Himself. The *āyah*

إِلَيْهِ يَصْعَدُ الْكَلِمُ الطَّيِّبُ وَالْعَمَلُ الصَّالِحُ يَرْفَعُهُ (فاطر: ١٠)

(Unto Him (all) good words ascend, and the pious deed doth He exalt) – XXXV, 10 – is one of several examples of such *āyāt*.

Another device used by the *Qādiānīs* to deceive the illiterate masses was to relegate the *ḥadīth* to a secondary place compared to the Qur’ān, ostensibly to place their own interpretations upon the Qur’ānic *āyāt*, regardless of whether these interpretations were in consonance with *ḥadīth* or not. Referring to this, Ḥaḍrat conceded that while the *Qur’ān* (as the direct word of God) was regarded by all as superior to *ḥadīth* in terms of inherent ‘‘dignity’’, no one could deny the importance of *ḥadīth* as the prime source of deriving the true meanings and detailed implications of the Qur’ān. Furthermore, he said, there are many hidden meanings of Qur’ānic *āyāt* the real knowledge of which was granted by Allāh to His chosen Prophet (ﷺ) only and to no one else. It was thus impossible for anyone to fully understand these meanings without guidance from the Prophet’s relevant *ahādīth*.

In support of the foregoing view, Ḥaḍrat cited, *inter alia*, the following Qur’ānic verses which clearly show that God had invested the Holy Prophet (ﷺ) only with the true meanings of the Qur’ān;

(i) إِنَّا أَنْزَلْنَا إِلَيْكَ الْكِتَابَ بِالْحَقِّ لِتَحْكُمَ بَيْنَ النَّاسِ بِمَا أَرَاكَ اللَّهُ وَلَا تَكُنَ لِلْخَائِبِينَ خَصِيمًا ○ (النّور: ١٠٥)

on some authority from the Qur'ān and the *hadīth*?

A. The Qur'ānic *āyah* (وَمَا تَلَّوهُ يُقِينَا أَلَدٌ رَفَعَهُ اللَّهُ إِلَيْهِ (النساء: ١٥٨-١٥٧)) They, i.e., the Jews, certainly did not kill him (i.e., Jesus Christ), but Allāh raised him unto Himself – IV, 157-158) provides irrefutable proof that Christ was not slain but was raised alive to heaven

Q. Is the “raising” mentioned above not “spiritual” rather than “physical”, on the analogy of the *Qur'ānic āyah* (يَا أَيَّتُهَا النَّفْسُ الْمُطْمَئِنَّةُ ارْجِعِي إِلَىٰ رَبِّكِ رَاضِيَةً مَّرْضِيَّةً. (الفجر: ٢٨-٢٧)) (O. Soul at peace! Return to thy Lord, content in His good pleasure. – LXXXIX, 27-28), which would imply that Jesus Christ was “honoured” by God rather than that he “physically” returned to God?

A. In accordance with Qur'ānic idiom (i.e., style), the word “*bal*” (بَلْ) means “but” or “instead” and has been used in the *āyah* IV–158 quoted earlier to disprove the Jewish belief, mentioned in the *āyah* immediately preceding it (IV, 157), viz., that they thought they had “killed” Jesus Christ. This makes it essential for the statement made in the *āyah* following it (i.e., 158) to be directly contrary to that made in the preceding one. This is only possible if the “raising” is interpreted as “physical” rather than “spiritual”, because the souls of even ordinary persons who are either slain or die a natural death are raised to heaven, and this is not therefore a phenomenon deserving a special mention in the Qur'ān in relation to Jesus Christ.

Ḥaḍrat invited him to first explain the real meaning of the *Kalimah* (*Lā Ilāha Illallāh-o-Muḥammad-ur-Rasūlullāh* –

لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ مُحَمَّدٌ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ

There is no god

but Allāh and Muḥammad is His Messenger).

The strength of Ḥaḍrat's arguments in the book, written in scholarly style and language, can be fully appreciated only by the truly learned reader. The book was, therefore, acclaimed by the 'ulamā of all schools of thought. Among others, Maulvī 'Abdul Jabbār Ghaznavī, a leading scholar of the *Ahl-e-Ḥadīth* (اہل حدیث) school, expressed his appreciation in a personal letter addressed to Ḥaḍrat. Rafīq Dilāwarī (*op. cit.*) has also commented that the book explains the question of "aliveness" of Jesus Christ so convincingly as to leave no room for further argument. Understandably, the book caused a stir in Qādiān, where the preparation of replies to the various questions posed in it was taken immediately in hand.

Selected excerpts from *Shams-ul-Hidāyah* are reproduced below:

- Q. What is the agreed belief of the Muslims about the raising alive of Jesus Christ to heaven?
- A. Most of the Muslims believe that Christ was *bodily* raised to heaven by Allāh, although some researchers hold the view that the body was "*barzakhi*" (برزخی, i.e., in a state between death and resurrection). All are unanimous, however, that the same Christ (and not any *mathīl* or other distinct personality) would descend from heaven in future.
- Q. Is this belief without proper foundation and does it represent "blind consensus" as stated by Mirzā Sāhib in his *Izāla-e-Auhām* (*op. cit.*), or is it based

ignorance; (b) for general lack of piety, inner light and scholarly ability, it has become difficult to distinguish between right and wrong and to preserve true belief; (c) simplicity and truth, which are among the basic and important principles of Islām, have given place to greed, mischief and hypocrisy; (d) despite these shortcomings, people now tend to consider themselves to be all-knowing, and to regard the visions of prophets of Allāh to be subject to error and misinterpretation and the *ijtihādāt* (اجتهادات, re-interpretations) of early 'ulamā to be 'obsolete', while they consider their own meanings and interpretations to be immune from these faults; and (e) because of all this, the patently wrong views expressed in *Qādiānī* writings have started gaining more and more credence, making it imperative that something effective be done to stem this tide. Ḥaḍrat added that the views expressed in *Qādiānī* writings had been brought to his notice earlier but he had restrained the 'ulamā from condemning them because he considered this to be against the Islāmic principles of tolerance. However, a situation had now been reached which could not be tolerated any longer. He had, therefore, written the book *Shams-ul-Hidāyah* to inform the people about the true meaning of the Qur'ānic *āyāt* and the Prophet's *aḥādīth*, and thereby ensure that they do not discard the established and unanimously accepted beliefs of Islām due to lack of correct knowledge.

In the book itself, written in the form of questions and answers on the various relevant issues, Ḥaḍrat confirmed as unanimous the Muslim belief concerning the raising alive of Jesus Christ to heaven, *in both body and spirit*, and his expected future descent to earth sometime before the Day of Judgement. He did so with powerful arguments based on the Qur'ān and authentic *aḥādīth*. He showed the *Qādiānī* beliefs regarding the "death" of Jesus Christ and the coming of his *mathīl* as the Promised Messiah (in the person of Mirzā Ghulām Ahmad) to be utterly false. In reply to Mirzā's challenge to the *mashāikh* of the country reproduced above,

openly and without fear: Let all those who lay loud claims to be *muḥaddith* (مُحَدِّثُ masters of ḥadīth) and *mufassir* (مُفَسِّرُ , commentators of the Qur'ān), and call themselves *Chishtī*, *Qādirī*, *Naqshbandī*, *Suhrawārdī** and what not, come before me (if they dare)."

Ayyāmuṣ Ṣulḥ (أَيَّامُ الصَّلْحِ , *Days of Peace*, *op. cit.*)

*Cf. Footnote 29

Ḥaḍrat's book "Shams-ul-Hidāyah"

Initially, Ḥaḍrat not only himself avoided criticizing or denouncing Mirza's sacrilegious ideas, but also dissuaded other 'ulamā from doing so on the ground that this would be against Islāmic tolerance. However, when Mirzā and his new creed gradually started gaining currency and credence among people who took them at their face value, Ḥaḍrat could stand it no longer. Consequently, and in response to a request from some 'ulamā, he took up the task of exposing the fake nature of this creed. Taking some time off from his exceedingly busy schedule already set out earlier, Ḥaḍrat wrote in 1317 A.H. (1899-1900 A.D.) a booklet titled *Shams-ul-Hidāyah Fī Ithbāt-e-Hayāt-ul-Masīḥ* (شمس الهداية في اثبات حياة المسيح , Guidance concerning the "aliveness" of Jesus Christ)" and, besides getting it printed and distributed among the 'ulamā of India, had a copy sent to Mirzā at Qādiān as well. On page 474 of his book *Aimma-e-Talbīs* (*op. cit.*), Rafīq Dilāwarī has observed that *Shamsul Hidāyah* was "perhaps the first among the thousands of books which have been written to-date in refutation of *Qādiānism*."

In the beginning of this book, Ḥaḍrat explained that he had been compelled to write it because: (a) the era of true guidance, firm adherence to the faith, and balanced thought and action is now long past, with the result that human nature is being increasingly influenced by prejudice and

preachers continued to successfully dupe the people for long by quoting Khwājā Ghulām Farīd's earlier letter lauding Mirzā's scholarly ability, and it was only after repeated denials at conferences of 'ulamā held in different parts of the country that the *Qādiānī* deviousness was fully exposed.

Statements favourable to *Qādiānism* were falsely attributed by the *Qādiānīs* to some other eminent *mashāikh* as well, including even Ḥaḍrat Pīr Meher 'Alī Shāh himself.

Qādiānī request for support and Ḥaḍrat's response

Ḥaḍrat's first direct contact with the *Qādiānī* movement occurred when Maulvī 'Abdul Karīm of Siālkot, one of Mirzā's followers, sent to Ḥaḍrat a copy of Mirzā's published letter of invitation in which he had claimed that he was the Promised Messiah and had been assigned by God with the task of reviving the *dīn* and working for the ascendancy of Islām. The letter requested Ḥaḍrat's support in this task. In reply, Ḥaḍrat wrote that he did not accept Mirzā as the "Promised Messiah", and advised him to continue to confine his activities to the holding of debates with non-Muslims and the propagation of Islām as before, instead of making such odd claims.

Recognising the powerful influence which the *mashāikh* (spiritual leaders) wielded on the minds of the Muslims of India in general, Mirzā made every possible effort to enlist the backing of some members of this community for furthering his mission. However, these efforts met with no success whatsoever. In frustration, therefore, he threw out an open challenge to the entire *mashāikh* community in the following words:

"There is no one under the sun at the present moment who could claim to be my equal. I say to the Muslims

published the early volumes of his book *Barāhīn-e-Aḥmadiyah* (op. cit.) during this period. Some eminent orthodox 'ulamā, apparently taken in by the author's professed pious intentions, unwittingly helped build his scholarly image. These included Maulvī Muḥammad Ḥusain of Batālā, a noted *Ahl-e-Hadīth* scholar, who wrote a lengthy review of the *Barāhīn* in his journal *Ishā'at-us-Sunnah* lauding that book as the "masterpiece of the century" and its author (i.e., Mirzā) as a peerless scholar and an eminent spiritual personality. (Maulvī Muḥammad Ḥusain later became one of the severest critics and opponents of Mirzā when the reality of his various writings and pronouncements dawned upon him). Sir Syed Aḥmad Khān, the well-known educationist and founder of the Muslim University at Alīgarh which was to become the Sub-continent's leading Muslim institution of learning in course of time, was also reported to have been deeply impressed by Mirzā's writings in the beginning. Eventually, however, he reached the conclusion that these writings of Mirzā were "no better than his *ilhām* (inspiration) - - of use neither for "*dīn*" (religion) nor for "*duniyā*" (worldly purposes).⁷⁶

Similarly, Ḥaḍrat Khwājā Ghulām Farīd Chishtī (?) of Chāchrān Sharīf, District Bahāwalpūr (1840-1901), an eminent *shaiḥ* and ṣūfī poet, was quite favourably disposed towards Mirzā in the early stages. In response to an appeal which Mirzā had addressed to him (as well as to other 'ulamā) for help in his divinely assigned task of propagating Islām, Khwājā Ṣāhib had not only pledged support to him but had also praised his learning and erudition. In fact when the Muslim 'ulamā started writing persistently against Mirzā, Khwājā Ṣāhib deplored this campaign against "this pious man" who (in his view) had stood up firmly in the cause of Islām and "was on the right path". However, when Mirzā's later writings, containing his claims to be the "Promised Messiah" and *zillī nabī* ("shadow prophet") came to his notice, he also openly denounced him. Even so, the *Qādiānī*

you are destined to play a key role in combating it. Even if you do nothing actively against this movement, your mere presence in the country would help shield the country's 'ulamā against its destructive effects." The truth of these words was proved barely a year later, i.e., in 1891, when Mirzā Ghulām Aḥmad of Qādiān announced his (initial) claim to be the Promised Messiah (Jesus Christ) – an announcement that was to culminate about ten years later in his claim to be a full-fledged prophet of God in his own right.

Two spiritual visions experienced by Ḥaḍrat also deserve a mention in this context. According to one of these, quoted in *Malfūzāt-e-Mihriyah* (cf. Footnote 51), the Holy Prophet (ﷺ) had appeared to Ḥaḍrat in a dream and had commanded him to effectively refute Mirzā of Qādiān, who was "tearing his (i.e., the Prophet's) *aḥādīth* to pieces through distortion and misinterpretation." According to the other vision, which occurred when Mirzā challenged Ḥaḍrat to an open debate in 1900 A.D. (dealt with at length later), Ḥaḍrat had seen himself sitting in a most respectful posture before the Prophet (ﷺ) in his prayer cell, in the manner of a disciple sitting before his *shaikh* (spiritual guide), while Mirzā of Qādiān was sitting a good distance away with his back turned to the Prophet (ﷺ). Ḥaḍrat construed this as a clear indication of Mirzā's open defiance of the Prophet's teachings, and this prompted him to accept Mirzā's challenge for a debate in Lāhore. As described later, this debate did not eventually take place because Mirzā chose not to make his appearance on the appointed date, time and place.

At the time of Ḥaḍrat's return from Ḥaj in 1890, Mirzā's claim had been to be a divinely appointed *mujaddid* (reformer or reviver of religion) only. During the preceding ten years or so, he had made a considerable mark as an Islāmic religious scholar of some standing because of his debates with Christians and *Āryah Samājīs* (a Hindū sect) and of writings based on those debates. He had also written and

inconsistencies in Mirzā's interpretations of his prophethood to suit his own ends. The *Lāhorīs* have not only exposed these inconsistencies but have even mocked at the brain which produced them.

(*Al-Fadl*, official *Qādiānī* newspaper, dated 26 February 1924, and *Paighām-e-Ṣulḥ* official organ of the *Lāhorīs*, dated 27 April 1934 and 3 May 1934).

Summary so far

The foregoing brief introduction to *Qādiānism* would have shown to any discerning and fair-minded reader the flimsy foundations on which the movement was based. It would also have made it clear that the sole objective of the movement was to damage and discredit Islām and to sow dissension in the Muslim *ummah*. What boggles the mind is how this cult, based as it was on innumerable absurdities and profanities, was able to attract even the small following that it did. The next Section describes the main features of the struggle launched against the movement by the Muslim *'ulamā* and *mashāikh* of the Indo-Pākistān Sub-continent, and especially the great role that Ḥaḍrat Pīr Meher 'Alī Shāh played in that struggle.

Ḥaḍrat Pīr Meher 'Alī Shāh's fight against *Qādiānism* (*Aḥmadiyah*)

The background to Ḥaḍrat's entry into the struggle against *Qādiānism* is that during his visit to the Hedjāz for Haj in 1890 A.D. (1307 A.H.), the chaste atmosphere of the Holy Land had touched him so deeply that he had thought of settling permanently there. However, Ḥājī Imdādullāh Mohājir of Makkah (cf. footnote 41) advised him to return home in the following words: "In the near future, a dangerous and evil movement is likely to raise its head in India, and

books and publications based on careful research on *Qādiānism* have also been consulted, and the relevant references given at the respective places in this booklet.

The *Qādiānī* and *Lāhorī* factions

Before long, the *Aḥmadiyah* community was split into two factions: the *Qādiānīs* and the *Lāhorīs*. The former faction believes Mirzā to be a full-fledged prophet with a *sharī'ah* (religious code) of his own, and regards anyone not believing him to be a prophet as a *kāfir* (infidel). The latter, on the other hand, considers Mirzā to be the *Mujaddid-e-A'zam* (مُجَدِّدِ الْعَظِيمِ, The Great Reviver of Religion) only or at best a *zillī nabi* (shadow prophet), and regards anyone rejecting him as a sinner but not a *kāfir*.

These two factions have engaged in hot debate on their respective points of view from time to time. While the *Qādiānī* faction, for example, has invoked a number of Qur'ānic verses in support of the prophethood of Mirzā, the *Lāhorīs* have condemned such interpretations as far-fetched, perverted and in bad faith. Here are two salient examples of this argument.

- (i) Verse 81 of *Sūrah 3 (Āl-e-'Imrān)*⁷⁵ of the Qur'ān speaks of a covenant made by Allāh with the earlier prophets to believe in and extend their support to a prophet who was to come at a later date and was to re-affirm what they themselves had brought to mankind. The *Qādiānīs* interpret this verse as referring, not to Prophet Muḥammad (ﷺ) as unanimously believed by the Muslim *ummah* but to Mirzā Ghulām Aḥmad. The *Lāhorīs*, however, totally reject this distorted interpretation.
- (ii) The *Qādiānīs* have tended to gloss over the many

of Islām, and the manner in which these had influenced the course of Islāmic history. He particularly highlighted the essentially tolerant nature of Islām and rightly argued that by violating the concept of *khatm-e-nubuwwat*, Qādiānism had proved itself unworthy even of Islām's wide-ranging tolerance.⁷⁴

Besides the sustained onslaught of the Muslim 'ulamā, the inconsistencies and contradictions in Mirzā's own various writings and pronouncements contributed in no small measure to the failure of his unholy mission. These not only helped expose the hollowness and falsity of his claim to prophethood; they even cast doubts in the minds of those reading or listening to them about his mental soundness. There are numerous instances on record in which he first condemned the impostors of the past in his early writings, but when he chose to make similar claims himself at a later stage, he put forward all sorts of flimsy and directly contrary arguments in favour of his own claims. Besides making him a laughing stock in the eyes of his critics, this deeply embarrassed his own followers and admirers as well. As a result, grave differences arose within his lifetime among his followers. Some of them not only withdrew their recognition of Mirzā's prophethood, but also exposed many unfavourable aspects of his character which were enough to falsify his claim in this behalf. A detailed account of these aspects would require a separate volume. Extensive excerpts from such writings of Mirzā himself and his followers were collected by Prof. Muḥammad Ilyās Burney of Hyderabad (Deccan, India) and published in the form of a book titled *Qādiānī Creed: A Scientific Appraisal* (*تاریخی مذہب کا علمی تجزیہ*). The book, which has recently been re-published in Pākistān also, makes the various aspects of Mirzā's life and character abundantly clear. Most of the references and excerpts from *Qādiānī* writings reproduced in the present booklet have been derived from the 5th edition of this book published in 1935 by the 'Umdat-ul-Maṭābi' (*عمدة المطابع*) Press, Lucknow. A number of other

undue leniency of the British Indian Government towards this movement, Mirzā would have met the same fate as the impostors preceding him in the various periods of history had met. Hadrat Pīr Meher 'Alī Shāh (ؑ) was in the vanguard of this combined struggle of the 'ulamā of India against *Qādiānism*. He was indeed among the first to grasp its real evil motives, publicly denounce these motives, and warn other Muslims against them. Other prominent participants in the struggle included Syed 'Atāullāh Shāh Bukhārī and his *Majlis-e-Ahrār* party, Maulvī Thanāullāh of Amritsar, Maulvī Muḥammad Husain of Batālā, Maulānā Zafar 'Alī Khān (editor of the Daily *Zamīndār*, Lāhore), poet-philosopher of the East 'Allāmah Muḥammad Iqbāl, Maulvī Muḥarrām 'Alī Chishtī (editor of the newspaper *Rafīq-e-Hind*, Lahore), and Maulvī Sirājuddīn (editor of the newspaper *Chaudhvīn Sadī*, Rāwalpīndī).

'Allāmah Muḥammad Iqbāl made an in-depth study of the *Qādiānī* movement and its disruptive implications for the Muslim *ummah* in general and for the Muslims of India in particular. On the basis of this study, he concluded that since *Qādiānism* violated the concept of *khatm-e-nubuwwat* (ختم نبوت), finality of the prophethood of Muḥammad (ﷺ) which was basic to the Muslim *ummah's* unity and solidarity, the Muslims of India were fully justified in regarding it as a grave threat to their very existence as a united community. In a public statement issued in June 1935, therefore, he advised the then British Government of India to declare the *Qādiānīs* as a separate community, distinct from the Muslims, which in his opinion would be quite in line with that Government's policy of "religious non-interference". This was followed by the 'Allāmah by a much more detailed analysis in a letter which he wrote in June 1936 to Pandit Jawāharlāl Nehrū, the well-known Hindū leader mentioned above, in response to three articles written by him in defence of *Qādiānism* in the *Modern Review*, Calcutta. In this letter, the 'Allāmah spelt out the religious, social and political basics

study, that while the earlier impostors who appeared in different periods and lands after the passing away of the Holy Prophet Muḥammad (ﷺ) had in general confined themselves to making one or at best two or three claims including that to prophethood, the claims of Mirzā are too numerous and varied to be accurately counted. Nevertheless, on the basis of Mirzā's various books and other writings, Diḥwārī has identified as many as 86 (eighty-six) such claims including those mentioned at the beginning of this paragraph. These, among others, include claims to be: *muḥaddith* (master of *ḥadīth*); *mujaddid* (reformer or reviver of religion); Mariam (Mary); a manifestation of God; God Himself; God's son; God's father, God's mistress; Prophets Nūh, Ibrāhīm, Is'ḥāq, Ismā'īl, Ya'qūb and Yūsuf; Lord Krishnā; superior to all Prophets of God; the Black Stone of the Holy *Ka'bah* (i.e., the Grand Mosque at Makkah); the Holy *Ka'bah* itself; King of the Aryans; the sun and the moon; the Light of God; and one to whom God Himself pledged allegiance!

Impact of Mirzā's claims on the Muslim *Ummah*

The claims and assertions of Mirzā Ghulām Aḥmad listed in the preceding sections struck at the very roots of the Muslim belief structure in many vital spheres; interpretations of the Qur'ān and the *Ḥadīth*; *waḥī* (divine revelation); *jehād* (holy war); raising alive of Jesus Christ to heaven and his future descent to earth; and above all Mirzā's blatant violation of the concept of the finality of prophethood of Muḥammad (ﷺ). As noted, these claims started in a low key but became more and more daring with the passage of time. Inevitably, therefore, a time came when the Muslim '*ulamā*' and intellectuals were constrained to take serious notice of the activities of this 14th Hijra Century impostor, and to launch a unanimous crusade against his heretical creed. Through sustained writings and speeches, they exposed the sinister designs underlying the *Qādtānī* movement with such force as to render it largely ineffective. Indeed, but for the

Prophet (ﷺ) should continue to emphasise a lowly physical relationship (and that too) based on the offspring of his daughter (Fātimah).
(*Tiryāq-ul-Qulūb, ibid.*)

However, the foregoing principle does not apply to Mirzā's own offspring. In one of his "inspirations", for example, he claims that verse 33 of Sūrah XXXIII of the Qur'an⁷³ which refers to the purification by Allāh of members of the Holy Prophet's household from uncleanness and sin, is applicable to his own family members.

In his poetic collection *Durr-e-Thamīn* (درّ ثمنی, The Valuable Pearl, *op. cit.*), Mirzā also asserted that he was superior to Ḥaḍrat Imām Ḥusain (رضی اللہ عنہ), and that he had "one hundred Husains under his collar". In several verses included in an Arabic language *Qasīdah* (قصیدہ, Eulogy) titled *I'jāz-e-Aḥmadi* (اعجاز احمدی, The Aḥmadiyah Miracle), he speaks about Imām Ḥusain (رضی اللہ عنہ) in highly derogatory terms not even worthy of reproduction here. What is more, he claims in the Urdū introduction to the *Qasīdah* that the words were not his own but had been put in his mouth by God Almighty Himself!!

Bewildering variety of Mirzā's claims

The preceding sections have highlighted only the principal claims put forward by Mirzā Ghulām Aḥmad, viz., those to be the *mathīl* of the Messiah (Jesus Christ), the Promised Messiah himself, the promised *Mahdī*, a *zillī nabī* ("shadow" prophet), and finally a full prophet in his own right. In actual fact, however, Mirzā has made many, many more claims (large or small) in his various writings and pronouncements. In a book titled *A'imma-e-Talbīs* (انتماء تبیس, *Leaders of Masquerade or Leading Impostors*) (Maktabah Ta'mir-e-Insāniyat, Lahore, 3rd Edition, 1974), Abul Qāsim Dilāwarī has observed, on the basis of a detailed and in-depth

such a happening, and to cool down tempers and thereby prevent a possible law and order situation, would be to reply somewhat firmly to the Christian missionaries' writings”

(Appendix to *Tiryāq-ul-Qulūb*,
ترياق القلوب , Panacea for the Hearts)

Mirzā also wrote two books titled *Toḥfa-e-Qaiṣariyah* (تحفة قيصريه) Present to the Empress (of India) and *Sitāra-e-Qaiṣariyah* (ساره قيصريه , The Star of the Empire), specifically to underscore his own loyalty and the loyalty of his followers to the British Crown. The former book praised the “benign reign” of Her Majesty Queen Victoria of Britain and Empress of India, while the latter purported to be a biography of Mirzā himself as a loyal subject of Her Majesty.

(v) *Attitude towards descendents
of the Holy Prophet (ﷺ)*

In his various writings and posters etc., Mirzā has tried to prove himself to be a descendent of the Holy Prophet (ﷺ), his successor, and his “spiritual son”. In particular, he has sought to downgrade the importance of blood relationship with the Prophet (ﷺ). Some examples:

“The “*āl*” (آل, offspring) of Muḥammad (ﷺ) does not denote any worldly relationship, but refers to those who inherit the spiritual legacy of the Prophet (ﷺ). This is what the Prophet (ﷺ) really meant by the word *āl*, and not the transitory worldly relationship which ceases to exist after death. How is it possible that while Allāh indicates that worldly relationships would be limited to the present world only and would not remain valid on the Day of Judgement, his

(یحییٰ، John the Baptist) was superior to him since unlike him (i.e., Jesus) Yaḥyā did not drink wine, and there had been no instance of any immoral woman having touched him with her hand or hair or “any un-related young woman” having served him at any time (as had been the case with Jesus Christ). That is why the Qur’ān has referred to Yaḥyā as “ḥaṣūr” (حَصُورٌ , chaste)⁷² but not so Jesus Christ, since incidents like the above did not permit this.”

In the Appendix to his *Nuzūl-ul-Masiḥ* (نزول مسیح , The Descent of the Messiah), he wrote thus:

“ And the Jews have raised such strong objections concerning Jesus Christ and his prophecies that even we (Muslims) are unable to answer them. One is thus left with no argument in Christ’s favour beyond the fact that the Qur’ān calls him a prophet of Allāh”

To pre-empt a possible adverse reaction, amounting even to punishment, from the ruling British (Christian) Government of India to his foregoing disrespectful references to their sacred religious personalities, and especially to Jesus Christ whom the mass of Christians believe to be the Son of God, Mirzā submitted an apologia in the form of “A humble petition to the Exalted (British) Government” (حضور گورنمنٹ عالیہ کی خدمت میں ایک عاجزانہ درخواست) as follows:

“ I also confess that when the writings of some Christian priests and missionaries became increasingly harsh and disrespectful about the Holy Prophet (ﷺ) of Islām, I became apprehensive lest these might cause a violent reaction from the highly sensitive Muslim community I therefore concluded, in good faith and with clean intentions, that the best strategy to avoid

(g)

إِنَّمَا يَسْتَأْذِنُكَ الَّذِينَ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ وَانْتَابَتْ
قُلُوبُهُمْ فَأَصْحَابُ قُلُوبِهِمْ يُرَدُّونَ ۝ (التوبة: ٢٥)

Those alone ask leave of thee (from *jehād*) who believe not in Allāh and the Last Day, and their hearts feel doubt, so in their doubt they waver. (Ibid., 45).

Aḥādīth

(a) لا هجرة بعد الفتح ولكن جهاد ونية فاذا تمتمتم ثم فانفروا

There shall be no migration from Makkah after the conquest (of Makkah). However, *jehād* shall remain. So whenever you are ordered to come out for *jehād*, come out for it.

(b) الجهاد ماض إلى يوم القيامة

Jehād shall continue (to remain incumbent in times of need) until the Day of Judgement.

(iv) *Opinion about Allāh's various prophets*

As shown later in this booklet, Mirzā claimed in his various writings to be equal to such great and eminent prophets of Allāh as Nūḥ, Ibrāhīm, Is'ḥāq, Ismā'il, Ya'qūb and Yūsuf (peace be upon them all). In one such writing, he claimed even to be superior to all prophets. This provides an indication of his irreverent attitude towards the prophets of Allāh in general. In particular, he referred slightly to Jesus Christ on many occasions. In his book *Dāfi'-ul-Balā* (op. cit.), for example, he wrote:

“The truthfulness of Jesus was no greater than that of other truthful persons of his time. In fact Yaḥyā

of conduct) a duty that has been enjoined upon the Muslim *ummah* as absolutely essential for its continued survival against forces threatening its existence. The following Qur'ānic verses and two well-known *ahādīth* of the Prophet (ﷺ) underscore the importance of *Jehād* in unmistakable terms:

- (a) يَا أَيُّهَا النَّبِيُّ حَرِّضِ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ عَلَى الْقِتَالِ ۗ (الأنفال: ٦٥)
- O Prophet! Exhort the believers to fight. (VIII, 65).
- (b) يَا أَيُّهَا النَّبِيُّ جَاهِدِ الْكُفَّارَ وَالْمُنَافِقِينَ وَاغْلُظْ عَلَيْهِمْ ۗ (التوبة: ٢٣)
- O Prophet: Strike against the disbelievers and the hypocrites. Be harsh with them. (IX, 73).
- (c) يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا قَاتِلُوا الَّذِينَ يَلُونَكُمْ مِنَ الْكُفَّارِ وَلْيَجِدُوا فِيكُمْ غِلْظَةً ۗ (التوبة: ١٢٣)
- O ye who believe! Fight those of the disbelievers who are near to you, and let them find harshness in you. (IX, 123).
- (d) فَلَا تَطِعِ الْكُفْرَيْنِ وَجَاهِدْهُمْ بِهِ جِهَادًا كَبِيرًا ۗ (الفرقان: ٥٢)
- So (O Prophet!) obey not the disbelievers, but fight against them herewith with a great endeavour. (XXV, 52).
- (e) وَقَاتِلُوهُمْ حَتَّى لَا تَكُونَ فِتْنَةً وَيَكُونَ الدِّينُ لِلَّهِ ۗ (البقرة: ١٩٣)
- And fight them until prosecution is no more, and religion becomes for Allāh (only). (II, 193).
- (f) لَا يَسْتَأْذِنُكَ الَّذِينَ يُؤْمِنُونَ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ أَن يُجَاهِدُوا بِأَمْوَالِهِمْ وَأَنْفُسِهِمْ وَاللَّهُ عَلِيمٌ بِالْمُتَّقِينَ ۗ (التوبة: ٢٤)
- Those who believe in Allāh and the Last Day ask not leave of thee from striving with their wealth and their lives. Allāh is aware of those who keep their duty (unto Him). (IX, 44).

religion and kills infidels, is guilty of disobedience of God and His Prophet (ﷺ) . . . Now that I have come as the Promised Messiah, there is to be no armed *jehād* in future. We have raised the white flag of peace.

Appendix to Khutba-e-Ilhāmiyah
(خطبة الهامية, the Inspired Discourse),
published in Dīaul Islām Press, Qādiān, 1913.

- Ghulām Aḥmad (i.e., Mirzā himself) enjoins upon his party, which regards him as the Promised Messiah, that it should always desist from such unholy practices. Since God has sent me as the Promised Messiah and invested me with the garb of Jesus son of Mary, I admonish my people to avoid making mischief.

The British Government and Jehād,
by Mirzā Ghulām Aḥmad, published by
Dīaul Islām Press, Qādiān, 22 May 1900.

- Look! I have come to you with the message that from now on all armed *jehād* has come to an end, and only the *jehād* to purify your souls remains. (Ibid.)

- *Jehād* is now totally forbidden. It was valid only when the use of the sword had to be made in the cause of Islām. Now an environment has been created when everyone views the shedding of blood for the sake of religion with contempt.

Toḥfa-e-Golraviyah (op. cit.)

Mirzā thus made a persistent attempt, by either disregarding or distorting the relevant Qur'ānic verses and the Prophet's *aḥādīth*, to strike out of the Islāmic *sharī'ah* (code

that is beyond human comprehension. A *ḥadīth* of the Holy Prophet (ﷺ) described the spirits to be “the armies of God”, and added that the spirits which loved each other in the erstwhile world (of spirits), and those that opposed each other there, do the same in the present material world also.⁷¹ On the other hand, Mirzā declared thus in a speech made in a religious public meeting on 27 December 1896: “We witness daily that thousands of germs infect the sores in the human body. The fact, therefore, is that the spirit is a fine light, which is born right in the sperm that breeds in the female womb, and the essence of which is present in the sperm from the very beginning.”

(iii) *Jehād* (جهاد, Holy War)

In a period when Christian nations, especially Britain, France and the Czarist Russia, were wrecking Muslim territories everywhere, Mirzā declared armed *Jehād* (جهاد, holy war) as forbidden by God for all Muslims, and termed the Promised *Mahdī* and Messiah, who according to *ḥadīth* were to come and fight the forces inimical to Islām, as “the blood-thirsty *Mahdī*” and the “blood-thirsty Messiah”. Some of Mirzā’s writings and pronouncements on this point are reproduced below:

- From now on, all holy wars on earth have been stopped for ever, and have come to an end. According to the Prophet’s *ḥadīth* which indicates that fighting in the path of religion would be banned after the reappearance of Jesus Christ on earth, such fighting has been forbidden from today. Anyone who now wields the sword in the cause of

Mirzā of Qādiān from the rest of the Muslim community of India was emphasized in a notice which was printed and published by Mirzā in October-November 1900. A copy of this notice was sent by him to the Government of India with the request that in the population census planned to be carried out in 1901, his followers should be grouped separately under the religion "Aḥmadiyah".

The detailed reproduction of all those issues on which Mirzā expressed dissent with the Muslim *ummah* would require several volumes. Consequently, only a few of the salient issues are listed below:

(i) *Descent of angels*

Mirzā described angels to be the "souls of the stars", and on that basis argued in his *Ayyāmuṣ-Ṣulḥ* (أيام الفتح, Days of Peace) that if the angels were to descend to earth as most Muslims believed, the stars would disintegrate and fall from the skies. In support of this, he quoted (or rather misquoted) portions of a couple of Qur'ānic verses (VI, 8 and XVII, 95)⁶⁸ which had no relevance to this point but had in fact been revealed to answer the objection of disbelievers as to why a human being and not an angel had been sent by God as a prophet. Yet, in another of his writings containing a commentary on *Āyah* 4 of *Sūrah* (Chapter) *Al-Qadr* of the Qur'an (XCVII),⁶⁹ Mirzā conceded that angels did in fact descend to earth.

(ii) *The human spirit (رُوح, Rūḥ)*

The Qur'an declares the human spirit (رُوح, Rūḥ) to be "by the command of the Lord" (XVII, 85).⁷⁰ It thus belongs to a category of creation

detailed list of his various claims is given in a later section of this booklet.

Distortions of the Qur'ān and the Ḥadīth

Having put forward a categorical claim to prophethood and to *wahī* and *ilhām*, Mirzā turned his attention to the manipulation of the Qur'ān and the ḥadīth for his ends. He started by claiming in his *Arba'in No. 4 (op. cit.)* that God Himself had informed him about the real meanings of the Qur'ān and also about which of the Prophet's *aḥādīth* were correct and which of them had been falsely attributed to him. Similarly, in his *Toḥfa-e-Golraviyah (op. cit.)*, he said he had been authorized to accept or reject whatever he desired from the compilations of *aḥādīth* "on the basis of knowledge received by him directly from God."

Disagreement with Muslim Ummah on every principle of Islām

Mirzā exploited the aforesaid self-conferred divine authority, to tamper with the Qur'ān and the ḥadīth, for the purpose of expressing disagreement with the mass of Muslims in every sphere, be it religious, social or national. His son Maḥmūd Aḥmad said thus in one of his *khuṭbās* (sermons):

"These words of the Promised Messiah are still ringing in my ears: 'It is wrong to think that we differ from other people only with respect to the death of Christ or a few other matters. The fact is that we differ from them concerning God Himself, the Holy Prophet (ﷺ), the Qur'ān, the daily prayers, fasting, Ḥaj, Zakāt (regular almsgiving or 'poor due' enjoined upon all well-to-do Muslims) – in short in each and every thing.'" (*Al Fadl*, official *Qādiānī* newspaper, 3 July 1931).

The separate and distinct identity of the followers of

op. cit. (1897) that he had made this prediction only after God Himself had informed him about it, and that he therefore regarded it as a test of his truthfulness or falsity. However, while the girl's father did die within the predicted period of three years, the girl herself and her husband, Sultān Muḥammad, lived long after Mirzā's own death.

- The gist of Mirzā's inspirations, quoted in his books *Mavāhib-ur-Raḥmān* (مواهب الرحمن), The Bounties of Raḥmān, i.e., of Allāh), *Araba'in No. 3* (*op. cit.*) and *Toḥfa-e-Golraviyah* (*op. cit.*), was that he would live up to an age of 80 years. In fact, his age at the time of his death on 26 May 1908 was 68 or 69.
- Concerning Maulvī Thanāullāh of Amritsar, who had denounced Mirzā as an impostor, Mirzā published in April 1907 a poster containing a fervent prayer to God (which he claimed to have made not on his own initiative but on God's bidding) that if Thanāullāh was right in his accusations against him, he (i.e., Mirzā) should die within Thanāullāh's lifetime, otherwise the latter should meet his end within the lifetime of Mirzā. In fact, Mirzā died in 1908 while Thanāullāh lived for as long as 40 years thereafter upto March 1948.

The foregoing short list of Mirzā's *waḥī*, *ilhām*, and predictions, which have been derived mostly from his own authenticated writings and pronouncements, should enable the reader to form a reasonably good idea about the reality of his various claims. The list would, *inter alia*, indicate that Mirzā not only claimed to be the Promised Messiah and a full prophet; from time to time, he did not even hesitate in claiming to be the son of God, God Himself, Muḥammad (ﷺ) and Aḥmad (ﷺ), and many many other things. A more

wrong. Some of these predictions, and the fate they met in each case, are reproduced below :

- Simultaneously with the death of one of Mirzā's sons, named Mubārak Aḥmad, he claimed that God had given him tidings of a 'mild-mannered' son who would have qualities similar to those of Mubārak Aḥmad. (Mirzā's poster dated 5 November 1907 included in the book *Tabligh-e-Risālat (op. cit.)*, Vol. X. However, Mirza did not have any issue, male or female, after this prediction..
- In June 1893, Mirzā published an inspired prediction that 'Abdullāh Ātham, a Christian priest with whom he had engaged in a religious debate, would die and go to hell "within the next 15 months." He said he was ready for any penalty including showering of disgraces upon him, blackening his face, and putting a rope around his neck and hanging him, if the prophecy was proved wrong, unless 'Abdullāh Ātham embraced Islām in the meantime. In fact, Ātham, despite his old age, lived for many years after the predicted date, i.e., September 1894, without embracing Islām.
- In 1886, at the age of 46 years, Mirzā had requested his cousin Mirzā Aḥmad Beg for the hand of his daughter Muḥammadi Bēgum (then hardly 12-13 years of age) in marriage. In 1888, he announced his *ilhām* that God Himself had given Muḥammadi Bēgum in his wedlock, and that this was bound to happen sooner or later whether she remained a virgin or became a widow. The inspiration also indicated that if the girl were married to someone other than Mirzā himself, her husband would die within 2½ years and her father within 3 years. Mirzā claimed in his book *Anjām-e-Ātham*,

who will be such a manifestation of truth and loftiness as if God Himself had descended from heaven.” (*Istaftā*, استفتاء, The Verdict).

- “God praiseth thee from His Throne and cometh to thee.” (*Anjām-e-Ātham*, op. cit.)
- “Like Mary, the spirit of Jesus was breathed unto me, and I was allegorically made pregnant! After no more than 10 months, I was transformed from Mary to Jesus. In this way, I am the son of Mary.” (*Kashtī-e-Nūh*, op. cit.).
- In yet another *ilhām* quoted in his *Āina-e-Kamāl-āt-e-Islām* (آئینه کمالات اسلام), Mirror of the Accomplishments of Islām), he said he dreamt that he was Allāh Himself and had created the sky and the earth!
- According to his *Ḥamāmatul Bushrā* (حائنه البشرى), The ‘Carrier Pigeon’ of Good Tidings), “God will descend in Qādiān”

Mirzā’s inspirations included a number of other dreams, most of which were meaningless and are unworthy of reproduction here. Far from vindicating his claim to prophethood, these dreams and inspirations cast serious doubts even on the state of his mental balance.

c. Predictions

Many of Mirzā’s inspirations are in the form of predictions. However, unlike the predictions of Allāh’s true prophets of the past which invariably proved to be correct, a large majority of Mirzā’s predictions turned out to be

Izālatul Auhām (op. cit.), he divided *ilhām* into two classes, viz., *Rahmānī* (رہمانی , divine) and *Shaitānī* (شیطان , satanic). The former *ilhām*, according to him, was accompanied by divine light and blessings, while the latter was influenced by the inspired person's own hopes and wishes. In his book *Haqīqatul Waḥī* (op. cit.), he classified the receivers of *ilhām* into three categories, viz.: (i) those who possess no skills and have no relationship with God, but who sometimes see true dreams and experience *kashf* (کشف , clairvoyance) by virtue of their mental attributes; (ii) those who have some but not a perfect relationship with God; and (iii) those who burn their carnal desires in the fire of God's love and choose a life of bitterness solely for His sake. He claimed to have been placed by God in the third category, "not because of any effort on my part but even while I was in my mother's womb."

Some specimens of Mirzā's *ilhāmāt* (inspirations):

- My, God pledged allegiance unto me! (*Dāfe-ul-Balā* (دافع ابلا , The Repeller of Calamity).
- God said to me: "O Sun, O Moon, thou art from Me and I am from thee."

Haqīqat-ul-Waḥī

"Thou art like a son to Me".
(How brazenly this negates the Qur'ānic assertion that 'God begetteth not nor is He begotten.' CXII, 3). (Ibid.)

"Thou art of such eminence that whenever thou decidest to do something and orderest it to be, it shall be." (Ibid.)

"We give thee tidings of a son,

hood of Muḥammad (ﷺ) has passed on symbolically to Muḥammad himself (i.e., Mirzā) and to none else.”
Ēk Ghalatī kā Izālah (Op. cit.)

“ The shadow (i.e., the reflected image) never gets detached from the original self, and since I am Muḥammad in a reflected sense, the seal of prophethood has not been broken by my arrival No one but Muḥammad (ﷺ) himself has now claimed to be prophet.”
Ibid.

Wahī (revelation), **Ilhām** (inspiration), and **predictions**
of Mirzā Ghulām Ahmad

a. **Wahī** (وحى)

Having made a claim to full prophethood, Mirzā proceeded to take all those steps which he considered necessary to substantiate that claim. These included assertions that he was receiving *wahī* (i.e., divine revelation), *ilhām* (إلهام , inspiration), and *kashf* (vision) in the manner of other prophets. He also made a number of predictions about different matters. In a poem included on page 287 of his poetic collection titled *Durr-e-Thamīn* (درّ ثمن , The Precious Pearl), he said on oath that whatever he heard was based on divine revelation, free of all error, and God’s own sacred word like the Holy Qur’ān. In another book, *Arba’in No. 4* (الأربعين جزء 4), he said he had as full a belief in the divine revelations to himself as he had in the Torah, the Bible and the Qur’ān. In *Ḥaqīqat-ul-Wahī* (op. cit.) he wrote: “. God’s revelations to me are so numerous that they would cover 20 chapters if compiled.”

b. **Ilhām** (إلهام)

In addition to *wahī*, Mirzā also claimed to receive *ilhām* (إلهام , i.e., inspiration) from time to time. In his book

of the prophets). In his book titled “*Ēk Ghalatī kā Izālah*” (*op. cit.*), he wrote:

“Many a time have I told the people that in accord with the Qur’ānic *āyah* *وَٱلْآخِرِينَ نَسَأَ يَلْحَقُوا بِهِمْ* (Along with others of them who have not yet joined them . . . LXII, 3), I am the last of the prophets in a spiritual sense, that God named me Muḥammad and Aḥmad twenty years ago, and also that He pronounced me to be Prophet Muḥammad himself So when the Promised Messiah and Muḥammad are one and the same and there is no duality or difference between them, how unfair it would be for people to deny that the Promised Messiah is none but Muḥammad himself.”

He also interpreted a number of Qur’ānic verses glorifying Holy Prophet Muḥammad (ﷺ) as having in fact been revealed concerning himself. These included: III, 31; VI, 164; VIII, 17; XVII, 1; XXI, 107; XLVIII, 1-2, and a number of others.⁶⁷ (cf. *Haqīqatul Wahī* حقیقت الوحی , *op. cit.*).

To soften the repugnance of these blasphemous claims, the argument was given that Mirzā was Muḥammad (ﷺ) and Aḥmad (ﷺ) himself and no separate personality. Some examples of this:

“He who differentiates between me and Muḥammad (ﷺ), and considers the two to be separate, has neither seen nor recognised nor understood me.”

Khuṭba-e-Ilhāmīyah
(خطبة الإلهامية , An inspired Discourse)

“ He (i.e., Mirzā) derives his inspiration, not from himself but from the fountainhead of the Prophet (ﷺ), and not for his own but for the Prophet’s glory. For this reason, his name is Muḥammad and Aḥmad in the heavens, which means that the prophet-

projected himself as a *zillī nabī* (ظلي نبي i.e., a 'shadow prophet'), implying that even though the door to prophethood was still open, no one could be invested with it directly as in the past but only through endorsement by Prophet Muḥammad (ﷺ), whom God had called "*Khātim-un-Nabiyyīn*" (خاتم النبيين) in the Qur'an (XXXIII, 40). He interpreted this title to mean, not "the last of all prophets" as universally believed by the Muslims on the basis of authentic evidence from the Qur'an itself as well as numerous *aḥādīth*, but "the seal of prophets" which was intended to endorse or certify the prophethood of others. This, in turn, also implied that persons could and would in fact appear after Muḥammad (ﷺ) whom the latter would certify as prophets with his "seal". According to Mirzā, the criterion for such certification was to be the concerned person's strict and consistent adherence to the Prophet's *sharī'ah*, as he claimed to have done himself. The claim has been confirmed by Mirzā's son Bashīr Aḥmad in his book *Kalimat-ul-Faṣl* (كلمة الفصل, The Decisive Word) in the following words:

"Those who consider "shadow prophethood" to be an inferior type of prophethood suffer from a delusion . . . I fail to understand why they hold this view about the prophethood of Mirzā Ṣāḥib. . . In my opinion, Mirzā Ṣāḥib was a shadow prophet by virtue of his being a 'reflection' of the Holy Prophet (ﷺ), and such shadow prophethood is of a very high order."

b. Full prophet with a *sharī'ah*

After remaining a shadow prophet for some time, Mirzā finally proceeded to take a step about which even the most accomplished *'ulamā* and *auliā* (saints) of the *ummah* shuddered to think. He put forward a claim to be a full-fledged prophet of Allāh with his own *sharī'ah* (religious code), and also *Khātim-un-Nabiyyīn* (خاتم النبيين, i.e., the last

why should I reject them or fear anyone besides Him?

Ēk Ghalatī kā Izālah (ایک غلطی کا ازالہ)

Removal of an Error),

November 1901.

“God has endorsed my prophethood through thousands of ‘signs’ in a manner no other prophethood was endorsed in the past I swear by God (Who holds my life in His Hands) that He alone has sent me and named me a prophet as well as the Promised Messiah, and He has manifested as many as three hundred thousand ‘signs’ in my favour.”

Epilogue to *Ḥaqīqat-ul-Wahī* (حقیقت الہامی)

The Reality of Revelation), 1907.

In his earlier books (e.g., *Barāhīn-e-Aḥmadiyah*, Vol. IV, and *Izālatul Auhām*, *op. cit.*), Mirzā had stated categorically that the coming of any prophet after Muḥammad (ﷺ) was “impossible and contrary to the will of God.” However, when he decided to become a prophet himself, he put forward all kinds of arguments contrary to authentic Muslim beliefs in this behalf. In Vol. V of *Barāhīn-e-Aḥmadiyah*, for example, he wrote thus: “How wrong and absurd it is to believe that the door to Divine revelation has been closed for all time to come after Prophet Muḥammad (ﷺ), and that there is no hope of its resumption until the Day of Judgment. This means that future generations of humanity have been left to worship and believe in ancient tales only, and will have no direct opportunity to learn about God. What is the value of a religion that does not provide any direct knowledge about God but relies instead on stories and legends only? I swear by Allāh that I regard such a religion as the religion of Satan, and one which leads its followers straight to hell.”

a. “Shadow prophet”

For sometime after making his prophetic claim, Mirzā

time to come, to which he had himself categorically subscribed as shown earlier, put forward an unequivocal claim to be a full-fledged prophet of Allāh. The occasion for this arose when in August 1901, the *khatīb* (خطيب, leader of congregational prayers) of Mirzā's mosque in Qādiān, one Maulvī 'Abdul Karīm, referred to Mirzā in his Friday *khutbah* (خطبة, sermon) as a prophet of God. Despite a strong objection raised to this by one of the persons present in the prayer congregation (Sayyid Muḥammad Aḥsan Amrohī Qādiānī), the *khatīb* repeated the statement in the following Friday's *khutbah* and the objector raised his objection once again. On being requested by the *khatīb* to adjudicate, Mirzā Ghulām Aḥmad, who had hitherto been reluctant to stake a direct claim to prophethood, and had confined himself to claiming to be "God's deputed one", "the appointed one", "the trusted one" and the *mathil* of the Messiah etc., decided to take the final plunge and confirmed the statement made concerning him by the *khatīb*. This greatly infuriated Sayyid Muḥammad Aḥsan, who started arguing loudly with the *khatīb*. Thereupon, Mirzā himself appeared on the scene and chided both of them by reciting the Qur'ānic *āyah* (verse)

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَا تَرْفَعُوا أَصْوَاتَكُمْ فَوْقَ صَوْتِ النَّبِيِّ (المجادل: ٢)

(O believers, raise not your voices above the voice of the Prophet XLIX, 2), which had in fact been revealed in relation to Prophet Muḥammad (ﷺ). (cf. *Al Fadl*, official Qādiānī newspaper, Qādiān, 4 January 1923).

His former hesitancy in the matter having thus been removed, Mirzā followed the aforesaid incident by making clear and written assertions to the same effect. A couple of examples are reproduced below:

"How can I deny being a Prophet or a Messenger? When God Himself has conferred these titles upon me,

which was similar to the "eastern minaret" of Damascus mentioned in the Prophet's *ḥadīth*. (*Izālatul Auhām, op. cit*). (Mirzā also started building a minaret in Qādiān but died before its completion. Furthermore, there was in fact no similarity about "killing of pious people" between the inhabitants of Damascus and Qādiān, because there are no instances of any Qādiānī having murdered any sacred personality like Imām Ḥusain (ؑ) or even of making an attempt on Mirzā's own life.)

Mirzā also asserted that the Al-Aqsā Mosque, which is situated in Jerusalem, in fact meant the mosque of the Promised Messiah that was situated in Qādiān. (*Tadhkirah Majmū'a-e-Wahy-e-Muqaddas*, تذکرہ مجموعہ وحی مقدس). An Account of the Collection of Sacred Revelations). As regards the "yellow sheets" in which, according to Prophet's *ḥadīth*, Christ would be draped at the time of his descent to earth, Mirzā likened these allegorically to the two types of physical ailments from which he suffered, viz., headache, vertigo, insomnia, and heart spasm in the upper part of his body, and diabetes in the lower part (cf. Appendix to *Arba'in* Nos. 3 and 4). Concerning that part of the same *ḥadīth* in which it was predicted that Jesus Christ would kill the *Dajjāl* (Antichrist) in armed combat, Mirzā claimed that *Dajjāl* represented that group of Christian priests whom he (i.e., Mirzā) had already "killed" through arguments given in his various books. And in placing this interpretation on the *ḥadīth*, Mirzā in fact implied that the Prophet (ﷺ) could have erred in interpreting the message revealed to him by God on this point!

Claim to prophethood

Mirzā's claim to be the Promised Messiah lasted for about 10 years. Thereafter, in November 1901, he went a step further and, repudiating the unanimous Muslim belief in the finality of the prophethood of Muḥammad (ﷺ) for all

To support his claimed resemblance to Jesus Christ, Mirzā put forward some quaint arguments. Here are some examples:

“My birth had a novelty about it similar to the birth of Christ, in that a girl had been born as my twin. This is an uncommon happening, since a single child is born in most cases.” *Tohfa-e-Golraviyah*

“Another point of resemblance between Jesus Christ and the promised Messiah of this *ummah* is that Christ was not a full-fledged Israelite but was considered so only because of his mother. Similarly some of my paternal grandmothers were descendents of the Prophet (ﷺ) of Islām. *A lecture given at Siālkot*

(Quoted on p. 225 of *Qādiānī Creed*, cf. p. 113 *infra*)

“Be sure that the person who has now descended (i.e., Mirzā) is in fact (Jesus) son of Mary, who, like the original Jesus Christ, had also no human as his “spiritual father”. God himself, therefore, became his Custodian, took him under His protection, and named him Son of Mary. He is thus symbolically Jesus son of Mary, who was born without a father. *Izālatul Auhām*

Mirzā also placed distorted interpretations on some of the Holy Prophet’s *ahādīth* concerning the future descent of Jesus Christ. For example, he likened Qādiān, his birthplace, to Damascus (Syria), on the “eastern minaret” of which the Prophet (ﷺ) had predicted Jesus to descend. He did this on the queer grounds that: (a) Just as Damascus (Syria) had been inhabited by wicked people who had martyred Imām Husain (ع) ⁶⁶, Qādiān (Punjāb) was also inhabited by people of similar qualities who did not hesitate to kill pious and pure people; it was therefore necessary that Jesus Christ should descend among such wicked people; and (b) Damascus and Qādiān were geographically “situated on the same latitude”, and there was a “minaret of Messiah” in Qādiān

“If you are true believers, you should be thankful to God that the moment for which your ancestors waited expectantly for long, and countless souls passed away without witnessing it, has finally arrived I cannot help saying repeatedly that I have been sent in good time to reform mankind and to re-instill the *dīn* (دين, religion) in people’s hearts, in the same manner as he (i.e., Jesus Christ) who was sent after Moses and whose soul was raised to heaven after great agony in the reign of Herod. The *mathīl* of Jesus Christ promised (by God) to Prophet Muḥammad (ﷺ) (i.e., Mirzā himself) has now descended from heaven in the fourteenth Hijrah century, i.e., approximately the same length of time after Muḥammad (ﷺ) as that between Moses and Jesus Christ. This is a spiritual descent It has taken place during a period very similar to the one in which the original Christ had come, and is meant to provide a sign for those who understand.”

Fateḥul Islām

“And this is the (long) awaited Christ, and it is I who am referred to in revealed texts as Mary *and* Jesus, and about whom it was said that he would be made a “sign”, and it was also said that he would be the Jesus son of Mary that was due to come. Those who doubt this are in manifest error.”

Kashṭī-e-Nūḥ

“I swear by God Who has sent me, and to Whom only the accursed ones attribute anything but the truth, that He has sent me as the promised Messiah.”

Tabligh-e-Risālat, Vol. II

“I hereby claim to be that promised Messiah, about whom there are prophecies in all the sacred books of Allāh that he would appear (again) in the last period of history.”

Toḥfa-e-Golraviyah

Messiah himself I have made no such claim
 I am his *mathil* (only), which means that God has
 endowed me with some of the spiritual attributes, habits
 and traits of character of Jesus Christ (ﷺ).”

One of the arguments given by Mirzā in support of his
 aforesaid claim was that the construction put by the Muslims
 upon the *ahādīth* of the Holy Prophet (ﷺ) about the future
 descent of Jesus Christ was incorrect. What these *ahādīth*
 really meant was, not that Christ would descend bodily and
 alive from heaven, but that the spirit of Christ would enter
 some virtuous person in this world. He then added that he
 himself was the very person in whom that spirit had entered.

From Messiah's *mathil* to Messiah in person

Mirzā did not stick to his claim to be a *mathil* of Jesus
 Christ for long. His next step was to refute the belief con-
 cerning the “aliveness” of Christ and to assert that Christ had
 in fact “died” on the Cross. He then proceeded to declare
 himself to be the promised Messiah and the promised *Mahdī*
 (who, according to orthodox Muslim belief, is predicted to
 precede the Messiah, prepare the ground for the latter's des-
 cent from heaven, and greet and join forces with him on his
 arrival). This he did in the following statements excerpted
 from his books titled *Tauḍīḥ-e-Marām* (توضیح مرآه , *op. cit.*),
Fateḥ-ul-Islām (فتح اسلام , *op. cit.*), *Kashtī-e-Nūḥ* (کشتی نوح , *op.*
cit.), *Tablīgh-e-Risālat* (تبلیغ رسالت , *op. cit.*), and *Toḥfa-e-*
Golraviyah (شجره گولرادیه , *op. cit.*):

“Both the Muslims and the Christians believe (with a
 slight difference of detail) that Jesus son of Mary was
 lifted bodily and alive to heaven, and that he would
 descend to earth at some future date. I have denied the
 validity of this belief earlier in this journal.”

Tauḍīḥ-e-Marām

Indian Muslims to his advantage. Nūr Dīn felt that if Mirzā were to present himself to the nation as a *mathīl* of Jesus Christ, he was sure to be greeted as a saviour and would thus be able to play an invaluable role in the Muslim nation's revival. Initially, Mirzā did not view this suggestion with favour and wrote back to Nūr Dīn as follows in his letter dated 24 January 1891, which is included in *Maktūbāt-e-Aḥmadiyah* (مکتوبات احمدیہ, *The Letters of (Ghulām) Aḥmad*) edited by Shaikh Ya'qūb 'Alī 'Irfānī:

“..... With reference to your suggestion that I might put forward a claim to be the *mathīl* of Jesus Christ, I wish to say that I have no need to do so. My sole desire is that Allāh should include me in His humble and obedient bondsmen. For us there is no running away from trial and tribulation, which are in fact the only means of (temporal and spiritual) progress”

Not long after writing the above, however, Mirzā did put forward a claim to be the *mathīl* of Jesus Christ in the following words reproduced from a poster included in the book *Tablīgh-e-Risālat* (*op. cit.*), Vol. II, which was edited by one Mīr Qāsim 'Alī Qādīānī:

“..... I do not claim to be the Messiah Jesus son of Mary (in person), nor do I believe in *tanāsukh* (تَنَاسُخُ , i.e., transmigration of the soul). My only claim is to be the *mathīl* of Jesus. This is because my spiritual state resembles the spiritual state of Jesus Christ as closely as does *muḥaddithiyat* (مُحَدِّثِيَّت , i.e., mastery of the Prophet's *ḥadīth*) resemble prophethood.”

Similarly, he wrote as follows in his *Izālat-ul-Auhām* (إزالة الأوهام, *Dispelling of Superstitions*):

“Some ignorant people have chosen to view my claim to be a *mathīl* of Jesus Christ as a claim to be the Promised

In those days Mirzā also believed in Jesus Christ having been raised alive to heaven, and his expected descent to earth in future, as borne out by the following words in his *Barāhīn-e-Aḥmadiyah* (op. cit., Vol. IV):

“The Qur’ānic verse—“Allāh is He Who sent His Messenger Muḥammad (ﷺ) with right guidance and the true *dīn* (Islām), so that He should exalt this *dīn* over all other religions.” (XLVIII, 28)—is in the nature of a prophecy concerning Jesus Christ. The complete dominance of Islām that has been promised in this verse will come about through the victory of Christ. It would be through the efforts of Jesus Christ, after his expected reappearance on earth, that Islām would spread throughout the length and breadth of the world.”

The mental state of contemporary Indian Muslims

The Muslim community of India was passing through a grave mental and emotional crisis around this time. On the one hand, it had lost its former political supremacy, especially after the failure of the 1857 War of Independence against the British (which the latter preferred to call “The Mutiny”). On the other, its religious values were being seriously threatened by the materialistic ideas of Europe which had invaded the Sub-continent *via* the British rule. This dual challenge had left the community (commoners and intellectuals alike) in a dazed and demoralized state, leading them unconsciously to cherish the hope that some man of God would one day come and deliver them from this agony.

Mirzā’s claim to be a *mathīl* (مَثِيل) of Jesus Christ, the Messiah

It was around this time that Ḥakīm Nūr Dīn, the disciple, relative and close associate of Mirzā mentioned earlier, advised him to exploit the prevailing demoralized state of the

fully orthodox like any other true *Sunnī* Muslim. In a public notice dated 2 October 1891, which is included in the second volume of his book *Tablīgh-e-Risālat* (تبلیغ رسالت, Propagation of Prophethood), he wrote:

“I subscribe to all Islāmic beliefs, and accept all those things which are borne out by the Qur’ān and the *Hadīth* and are accepted as true by all *Sunnī* Muslims. I regard anyone claiming prophethood after Muḥammad (ﷺ), the last of all Allāh’s prophets, to be an impostor and a *kāfir* (کافر, infidel). I firmly believe that divine prophetic revelation had started with Ādam (ﷺ)⁶⁴ and had ended finally and for ever with Prophet Muḥammad (ﷺ) Let everyone be a witness to this.”

Similarly, in an open letter in Arabic language addressed to the *mashāikh* (شيوخ, Muslim spiritual leaders) of India, which was incorporated in his booklet titled *Anjām-e-Ātham* (انجام آثم, The End of Ātham)⁶⁵, he wrote thus:

“I do not subscribe to any religion except Islām, believe in no divine book except the Qur’ān and in no prophet except Muḥammad (ﷺ), who is the last of Allāh’s prophets. Allāh has showered his innumerable blessings upon Muḥammad (ﷺ) and has strongly condemned his enemies. Note everyone that I invoke the Qur’ān in all matters, and follow the Prophet’s *ḥadīth* as the fountainhead of all truth and knowledge, and accept without any addition or diminution all those things concerning which there is consensus among the Prophet’s *Aṣ’ḥāb* (اصحاب, Companions). I shall live on this belief until the end of my life, and invoke the condemnation of God, men and the Angels on anyone who seeks either to depart from any agreed Islāmic tenet or to alter the Islamic *Shariāh* in the slightest degree.”

(Translation from the Urdū original)

multi-volume book titled *Barāhīn-e-Aḥmadiyah* (براین احمديه , *The Aḥmādi Arguments*), seeking to expound in strong and irrefutable terms the truth of Islām *vis-a-vis* other religions, and sought the material help of the Sub-continent's Muslim community in this task. In response to this call, the Muslims in general extended generous financial support to him in what they viewed as a laudable venture. After publishing only 4 volumes in about four years between 1880 and 1884, however, Mirzā abandoned the project and stopped the publication of subsequent volumes of the book on the plea that he was the *mujaddid* (مُجَدِّد)⁶³ of the century, and had therefore been commanded by God to propagate Islām henceforth through divine inspiration rather than through intellectual effort and the written word. (More than 23 years later, Mirzā wrote and published the fifth and last volume of the *Barāhīn* in 1908, the year of his death).

In 1886, Mirzā wrote his second book, titled *Āryah Dharam* (آریہ دھرم , *The Āryah Creed*), and also held a debate in Hoshiārpūr (Punjab) with the Hindū Āryah Samājī sect. This enabled him to make some name for himself as an Islāmic debater, and also helped him build up a group of disciples around him. Ḥakīm Nūr Dīn, personal physician to the Mahārājah of the Jammū and Kashmīr princely State and reportedly a relation of Mirzā through his wife, was a prominent member of this influential band of advisers and helpers. He was to play an important role in Mirzā's future career as an impostor prophet. Although Ḥakīm Nūr Dīn was reportedly dismissed by the Mahārājah some years later when he predicted the Mahārājah's early death and the accession to the throne of another prince of his dynasty, he remained a staunch supporter of Mirzā throughout his life.

Early beliefs entirely orthodox

Until this stage, Mirzā's religious beliefs, including that in the finality of the prophethood of Muḥammad (ﷺ), were

Kashtī-e-Nūh (کشتی نوح , Noah's Ark), and *Toḥfa-e-Golrāviyah* (تحفہ گولڑویہ , The Golrāvi Present), which are mentioned at some length later in this Section. From there he proceeded to refute the firmly established concept of the absolute finality of the prophethood of Muḥammad (ﷺ), first calling himself a *zillī nabī* (ظلّ نبی) or a "shadow prophet", and then announcing his elevation to full prophethood. He thus sought to demolish a fundamental Muslim belief that is rooted in the Qur'ānic verse quoted earlier (XXXIII, 40), is re-affirmed in a number of the Prophet's authentic *aḥādīth* (احادیث , traditions), and has been unanimously accepted by the Muslim *ummah* for the past 14 centuries. The subsequent pages describe and analyze in some detail the stages through which the founder of *Qādiānism* carried forward the campaign which resulted in his elevating himself to the full status of an impostor prophet.

Early life of Mirzā Ghulām Aḥmad, founder of Qādiānī movement

Mirzā Ghulām Aḥmad was born in Qādiān in Gurdāspūr District (Punjab, India) in 1839 or 1840 A.D. His father, Ghulām Murtaḍā, was a physician-cum-landowner of Moghul descent. After completing his education in the Arabic and Persian languages (as was customary in the orthodox Muslims families of the day) and in *Ṭibb* (طب , Eastern medicine), Ghulām Aḥmad served for about four years beginning 1864 as a clerk in the office of the Deputy Commissioner (District Officer) of Siālkot District. He then gave up this job to join his father's practice of medicine. Simultaneously, he continued his somewhat irregular study of religious literature and also participated in religious debates. As far as is known, his ancestors had been orthodox *Sunnī (Ḥanafī)*⁶² Muslims, and Mirzā Ghulām Aḥmad (to be briefly referred to hereinafter as "Mirzā" only) also subscribed to the same school of thought in his early years. In fact in 1879, at the age of about 40, he publicly announced his intention to write a

nouncement to the effect that Jesus Christ had been raised alive to heaven and not killed on the Cross as generally believed (*italics provided*):

“And they (i.e., the Jews) said (in boast): We killed the Messiah son of Mary, Allāh’s messenger; and they killed him not, nor did they crucify him, but it was made to appear so unto them, and those who disagree concerning it are in doubt thereof; they have no knowledge thereof save the pursuit of a conjecture; for certainly they killed him not; *but Allāh raised him up unto Himself*; and Allāh was ever Mighty, Wise;”
(IV, 157-158)

Mirzā Ghulām Aḥmad also repudiated the unanimous Muslim belief, based on authentic *aḥādīth* of the Holy Prophet (ﷺ), that Christ would descend alive from heaven sometime before the Judgement Day, to complete his interrupted life span and mission on earth, and that he would do so in the cause of Islām. Mirzā contended instead that although Christ had been nailed to the Cross by those who had accused and convicted him, he had in fact been removed secretly from there before his death and concealed by his disciples. These disciples had later taken him to Srinagar (Kashmīr State, India), where he had died a natural death at a ripe old age. There was thus, according to him, no question of Christ himself descending from heaven at any time in future. Instead, a *mathīl* (مثیل, replica, likeness or prototype) of Christ would appear in future, and he himself claimed to be that *mathīl*.

Mirzā’s next step was to claim to be the promised *Messiah* (or Christ) *in his person*, thus contradicting his own earlier stand that only a *mathīl* of Christ and not Christ himself was to appear in future. This he did in stages in his books titled *Tauḍīḥ-e-Marām* (توضیح مرآم, The Elucidation of Objectives), *Fateḥul Islām* (فتح الإسلام, The Victory of Islām),

which they could muster their forces once again, and deal a decisive and crushing blow to the principles and beliefs of the Islāmic faith and to the Muslim community in general.

The *Qādiānī* movement that raised its head in the undivided British-ruled India around this time under one Mirzā Ghulām Aḥmad of Qādiān, a town in Gurdāspūr district of the Punjāb Province of India, was a part of the aforesaid wider and revived anti-Islām campaign. Its prime aim was to attack and demolish the concept of finality of the prophethood of Muḥammad (ﷺ), which has been unequivocally announced in the Holy Qur‘ān (XXXIII, 40)⁶¹, with a view to shaking the unflinching adoration and reverence of the Muslims for their beloved Prophet (ﷺ). A secondary objective was to distort and mis-interpret some of the fundamental and hitherto fully agreed pronouncements of the Qur‘ān and the Holy Prophet (ﷺ), especially those emphasizing the waging of *jehād* (جهاد, cf. footnote 44) as one of the essentials of the Islāmic faith. Mirzā Ghulām Aḥmad argued that in the changed conditions of the world, and especially when he himself had been sent by God as a prophet to defend Islām, the previous divine injunction for armed *jehād* had become “redundant and meaningless”. His basic objective was to leave India’s already defeated and despairing Muslim community ever more confused and demoralized, and thereby pave the way for their steady destruction and extinction. Persuasive indications exist to show that the *Qādiānī* movement was inwardly welcomed by the then British rulers of India, possibly in the hope that it would weaken the Indian Muslim community whom they had succeeded as India’s rulers and would thus prevent it from posing any serious threat to their supremacy in the Sub-continent ever again.

The *Qādiānī* movement (or the “*Aḥmadiyah*” as the members of the creed themselves prefer to be called), which was to culminate in its founder’s claim to full prophethood, started with a challenge to the following clear Qur‘ānic pro-

the prophethood of Muḥammad (ﷺ). The opponents of Islām had, on the basis of deep study, come to fully understand this fact. Most of their anti-Islām designs were, therefore, focussed primarily on weakening and undermining these beliefs. They were unable to make much headway against the first-named one, i.e. *towḥīd*, primarily because through sustained missionary endeavours this concept had become too deeply ingrained in the minds of its believers for them to be easily weaned away from it. They concentrated their attention, therefore, on eroding the second belief, viz., the truth and especially the finality of the prophethood of Muḥammad (ﷺ), and on diminishing the unbounded love and respect in which every Muslim without exception held and still holds his great Prophet (ﷺ). They hoped that success in doing so would help them attain the first-named objective as well, since it was the Prophet (ﷺ) who had introduced the world to the concept of *absolute towḥīd* and any erosion in the belief in his true prophethood would correspondingly weaken the hold of *towḥīd*, too.

The aforesaid disruptive efforts had started right after the passing away of the Holy Prophet (ﷺ) of Islām, and had found expression, *inter alia*, in the appearance of a number of impostor prophets (e.g., Musailamah, Aswad ‘Anasī, Abū ‘Ubaidah Thaqafī) in the Arabian peninsula. All these were, however, summarily crushed through strict and timely deterrent action by the first Righteous Caliph Abūbakr (رضى الله عنه). Similar false prophets continued to raise their heads occasionally in later periods also, but failed to make much impact so long as Muslim power and influence (both material and spiritual) were at their pinnacle. The position changed dramatically, however, beginning the 13th Hijrah century (19th Century A.D.) when the rapid all-round decline of the once powerful world Muslim community coincided with the rise to political, intellectual and economic pre-eminence of the non-Muslim nations of the West. This provided to the hitherto low-lying anti-Islām elements an environment in

ence of *waḥdat-ul-wujūd*, is totally false and misguided. Strict adherence to the *sharī'ah* is the be-all and end-all of true Islām and *īmān*, and there is no escape from it at any stage of a Muslim's life. Indeed, the higher one goes on the spiritual scale, the greater and more meticulous should be his observance of the *sharī'ah*.

B. Fight against *Qādiānism* (or *Aḥmadiyah*)

The second outstanding distinction of Hadrat Pīr Meher 'Alī Shāh concerns the epic and pioneering struggle that he waged against the blatantly anti-Islāmic *Qādiāni* creed that was founded in India in the closing years of the 19th Century A.D. by one Mirzā Ghulām Aḥmad of Qādiān (cf. the Preface and footnote 49). Indeed, from the standpoint of effective deterrence of anti-Islāmic forces from time to time in order to safeguard the purity of Islām's basic essentials, which was mentioned in Section I above as the prime missionary obligation of the Muslim *ummah* as a whole, this can justly be regarded as the crowning achievement of Hadrat's life. It also helps reaffirm the view expressed on page 27 above that historically the *ṣūfīs* have made important contributions not only in the spiritual sphere but also in actively fighting the forces of tyranny, oppression and heresy. The present sub-section discusses this subject in some depth and detail.

i. *Qādiānism* – Historical background, genesis and growth

The history of the past 14 centuries since the advent of Islām proves beyond doubt that the secret of the material and spiritual greatness attained by the Muslim *ummah* at its zenith lay in its strict observance, in word as well as deed, of the two basic tenets of its faith, namely, *towḥīd* (توحيد), Absolute Unity of Allāh) and finality for all time to come of

from Shaikh *Ibn-ul-'Arabī's Futūhāt* and *Fuṣūṣ*, Ḥaḍrat frequently dealt at length with the various aspects of *waḥdat-ul-wujūd* for the benefit of the students as well as the 'ulamā attending these sittings. The *Malfūzāt-e-Mihriyah* (*op. cit.*) is a veritable storehouse of knowledge on this subject.

Ḥaḍrat's balanced interpretation of the concept of *waḥdat-ul-wujūd*, as contained in his various sayings and writings, may be summed up as follows:

- a. The concept is based essentially on the *kashf* (کشف or clairvoyance) of Shaikh Moḥyuddīn Ibn-ul-'Arabī and the *ṣūfī* masters who came after him.
- b. Neither the Qur'ān nor the *ḥadīth/sunnah* openly negates the concept. On the other hand, both contain several implied references to it, as already shown above.
- c. Nevertheless, belief in the concept is by no means essential to basic Islāmic faith (ایمان), nor is non-belief in it in any way repugnant to the latter. It is not part of the belief structure that has been prescribed for the Muslim community in general. In fact, the concept is a matter that concerns the very select even among the *ṣūfī* masters and not one to be dabbled into by every common believer. It should not, therefore, be made the object of public debate or discussion as is being done to day by some people. Recognizing this, the old *ṣūfī* masters used to explain the various aspects of this concept only to the chosen one among their disciples and that too behind closed doors in the utmost secrecy.
- d. The view held by some latter-day fake *ṣūfīs*, that observance of the *sharī'ah* does not remain binding on a person as he advances in the spiritual experi-

divine revelation (وحي) which is reserved for God's prophets only.

As already stated, Ḥaḍrat Meher 'Alī Shāh was one of the leading authorities on *waḥdat-ul-wujūd* and on Ibn-ul-'Arabī's works in general, not only in the Indo-Pākistān sub-continent but also in the contemporary Islāmic world. In the Sub-continent, he was without doubt the most eminent one, as evidenced by a letter addressed to him by 'Allāmah Dr. Muḥammad Iqbāl, the great and world-renowned poet-philosopher of the East. In this letter, Iqbāl sought clarification of some of Ibn-ul-'Arabī's concepts from Ḥaḍrat "as the only door that could be knocked for this purpose throughout India."⁶⁰ Ḥaḍrat's various written works, as well as his sayings, letters and the few mystical poems that he composed dealt with this concept at considerable length. Yet he devoted one of his major books *Taḥqīq-ul-Ḥaq Fī Kalimatil Ḥaq* (تحقیق الحق فی کلمة الحق , The Truth about Kalimatul Ḥaq) to the rebuttal of an incorrect interpretation of the concept by one of the 'ulamā, Maulānā 'Abdul Raḥmān of Lucknow. The latter had held in a pamphlet entitled *کلمة الحق* (*Kalimatul Ḥaq*, The Word of Truth) that the *kalimah* – There is no god but Allāh and Muḥammad (ﷺ) is His Messenger – which forms the fundamental basis of Islām, in fact denotes *waḥdat-ul-wujūd* and that therefore non-belief in the latter constitutes heresy. Ḥaḍrat proved conclusively that this was not so. He argued that while *waḥdat-ul-wujūd* could be deemed to represent the inner meaning of the *kalimah*, it certainly was not intended to constitute the basis for the belief structure of the Muslim community in general. At the same time, in keeping with his uniquely balanced and moderate outlook, and unlike some of the other contemporary 'ulamā, he refused to pronounce the Maulānā a heretic, but attributed his view to "overpowering spiritual experience" and therefore to be due to a state beyond his control.

In his daily sittings also, especially when giving lessons

between the Creator and His creation, and advocating *ḥulūl* (*حلول*) or incarnation, both radically antithetical to Islām. These were, of course, farthest from the Shaikh's own mind, as evidenced by his oft-quoted saying reproduced below and his firm rejection of these heretical concepts in his other writings:

الرَّبُّ رَبٌّ وَإِنْ سَقَطَ وَالْعَبْدُ عَبْدٌ وَإِنْ تَرَفَّعَ

(God is God however much He may descend from His Lofty Pedestal; and man is man, however high he may rise from his lowly station.).

Ḥadrat Shahābuddīn 'Umar Suhrawardī (539–632 A.H.) regarded Shaikh Ibn-ul-'Arabī as an "ocean of realities" (*baḥr-e-ḥaqāiq*, بحر حقایق), and a "treasurehouse of divine wisdom and secrets," yet he used to forbid his followers from the latter's company, and especially from studying his writings, lest they might be misled because of their own lack of understanding. Furthermore, the concept has a profound metaphysical content which calls for spiritual experience of a high order to be properly understood. No wonder, therefore, that it was not made part of the *sharī'ah* of Islām meant to be followed by the common believer. The Shaikh himself never meant it to be so, which may be one of the reasons why he analysed the concept in terms that even among the scholars only the most richly gifted could understand.

It seems necessary to point out here that all those eminent *ṣūfīs* who subscribe to the concept of *waḥdat-ul-wujūd*, including Shaikh Ibn-ul-'Arabī himself, regard it as based on clairvoyance (*كشف*) or non-prophetic spiritual inspiration (*إلهام*). They accept the concept because they do not find anything in the Qur'ān or the *ḥadīth* to repudiate it; on the other hand, as noted earlier, there are clear hints in both that point to the plausibility of the concept. Yet no one of the concept's proponents claim for it the force of that

that the human mind can conceive. Allāh is the *Colourless Reality* (*حقیقت بی رنگ*) whence millions and billions of “colours” have emerged; the boundless and the fathomless Ocean from which innumerable waves and bubbles keep emanating every moment; the One Face which is reflected in innumerable mirrors; the One Shapeless and Formless Whole from which shapes and forms without number emerge, and after remaining on view on the stage of life for predetermined periods revert to their Source. Every item of creation is a manifestation of one of Allāh’s numerous Attributes (*صفات*) and Names (*اسماء*), and Man is the most comprehensive and perfect one of those manifestations.

It must be clearly understood, however, that all the examples given above are illustrative and elucidatory only. The real and indisputable truth, in the words of the Qur’ān, is that “There is nothing whatever like unto Him (i.e., Allāh)”. (XLII-11).⁵⁹ As the great Maulānā Rūmī says:

اے بڑوں از دہم وقال قبیل من خاک بر فرق من و تمثیل من

(O Thou Who art beyond my conception and words, dust be on my head and my similes and metaphors).

As shown above, the concept of *waḥdat-ul-wujūd* appears in essence to be perceptibly convincing. Furthermore, Shaikh Ibn-ul-‘Arabī, whose truthfulness and integrity are widely acknowledged, claims that it is based upon inspiration (*وہام*) and has the spiritual approval of the Prophet (*ﷺ*) himself, and also that the arguments advanced by him in support of the concept are mostly derived from the Qur’ān and the *sunnah*. The utmost care must, therefore, be exercised in rejecting the concept.

Yet the concept admittedly seems to contain elements which make it liable to misconstruction, except by the highly erudite and discriminating. For example, it has been interpreted by some of its critics as removing the distinction

Labid, the famous Arab poet of the Holy Prophet's time, which was pronounced by the Prophet (ﷺ) as the truest of all that Arab poets had said or written :

أَلَا كَلُّ شَيْءٍ مَّا خَلَقَ اللَّهُ بَاطِلٌ

‘Behold, verily nothing except Allāh has any existence (in the real sense)’.

The concept has been elaborated by Shaikh Ibn-ul-‘Arabi at considerable length, but in exceedingly abstruse terms, in his *Futūhāt* and *Fuṣūs*. And it is apparently this abstruseness of his analysis, which is beyond the grasp of the common run of scholars and *ṣūfīs*, that has led to much of the controversy surrounding the concept. Interpreted in simple terms, the concept appears eminently plausible: He Who, according to the above quotation from the Holy Qur’ān, is the First and the Last, the Apparent and the Hidden, and except Whom none else possesses these attributes, can alone be *the Ultimate Reality*, the Only One that can be said to exist in real terms, by and of Himself. Who or what else can share this absolute unity with Him? Indeed, everything else owes its existence (which in any event is temporary and transitory) to Him and His Command (أَمْرٌ), not only in a metaphysical sense but in physical terms also. For there *was nothing* except Him at one time in the past and there *will no nothing* except Him at a point of time in future. He is the *Original Creator* of the Heavens and the Earth (يَخْلُقُ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ)⁵⁷, Who does everything, including the act of creation, by just saying ‘Be’ and it ‘Becomes’ (وَإِذَا قَضَىٰ أَمْرًا فَإِنَّمَا يَقُولُ لَهُ كُنْ فَيَكُونُ)⁵⁸. All except Him thus exist in name only, through His Bounty rather than in any real terms. His is the only real Being; the Universe is like a mirror that reflects His Being. All creation stemmed from His Being, without taking anything away from the Latter, just as innumerable small candles can be lit from a large one without diminishing the volume of the latter’s light or its capacity to illuminate; only His Light is without limit and transcends anything

Outward and the Inward (or the Apparent and the Hidden); and He is Knower of all things” (LVII-3)

- (ii) “And whithersoever you turn, there is Allāh’s Countenance” (II-115)
- (iii) “Allāh is the Light of the Heavens and the Earth” (XXIV-35)
- (iv) “Everything shall perish save His Countenance. His is the Command and unto Him you shall return” (XXVIII-88)
- (v) “And We are nearer to man than his jugular vein”. (L-16)
- (vi) “Everything that is there (on the Earth) will pass away; only the Countenance of Thy Lord of Might and Glory shall remain for ever” ... (LV-26, 27)
- (vii) “And He (i.e., Allāh) is with you wherever you may be” (LVII-4)

b. From the **Hadīth**

- (i) “I (i.e., Allāh) was a Hidden Treasure; then I desired that I should be known and recognised, so I created the Creation” (as a manifestation of My various Attributes)⁵⁵, (*Ḥadīth-e-Qudsi*, i.e., divinely inspired *ḥadīth*).
- (ii) “Do not talk ill of Time, for God Himself is Time”.⁵⁶ (That is, since everything happens in this world with the command of Allāh, it is useless to blame Time for it.)

And finally, the following excerpt from the poetry of

and the long line of his spiritual successors in the Indo-Pākistān sub-continent; Maulānā Jalāluddīn Rūmī; Ṣadrūddīn of Qauniah (Turkey); ‘Abdul Raḥmān Jāmī, and a host of others have accepted and elaborated upon the concept. The *Naqshbandiyah* ṣūfī school still subscribes instead to the concept of *waḥdat-ul-shuhūd* (وحدت الشهود, Oneness of Perception) already mentioned above, although some of its adherents (including ‘Abdul Raḥmān Jāmī just mentioned) also subscribe to *waḥdat-ul-wujūd*. The disagreement, however, is largely apparent rather than real, a matter of degree rather than of any basic difference. For both schools agree that existence in the real and ultimate sense belongs to Allāh alone and that all else owes its existence to His Bounty and Grace. Ḥaḍrat Meher ‘Alī Shāh reconciled the two views by stating that while *waḥdat-ul-shuhūd* is the beginning of *sulūk* (سُلوک i.e., spiritual journey) and the basic essence of faith (نفس ایمان *nafs-e-īmān*), *waḥdat-ul-wujūd* is the acme of *sulūk* and the perfected state of faith (i.e., کمال ایمان, *kamāl-e-īmān*). Put in another way, *waḥdat-ul-shuhūd* could be equated with ‘*ain-ul-yaqīn*’ (عین الیقین, i.e., visual certainty) and *waḥdat-ul-wujūd* with the superior and loftier state of *ḥaqq-ul-yaqīn* (حقیق الیقین or absolute certainty). On this premise, Ḥaḍrat considered both schools to be right in their respective spheres – a reflection of his meticulously moderate approach mentioned earlier.

The ṣūfī masters subscribing to Shaikh Ibn-ul-‘Arabī’s concept of *waḥdat-ul-wujūd* claim with full conviction that the concept contains nothing repugnant to either the Qur’ān or the *sunnah*. They assert, indeed, that several Qur’ānic verses and some of the Prophet’s authentic *aḥadīth* contain clearly implied references to the concept. Among the examples quoted are:

a. From the Qur’ān

- (i) ‘He (i.e., Allāh) is the First and the Last, and the

According to this concept, the universe has no more than an apparent, visual, or illusory existence, and was created by Allāh through His Creative Power. However, Allāh exists as the Ultimate and the Supreme Entity separate from and infinitely beyond His creation.

Despite differences in their respective points of view, the aforesaid two schools are in complete agreement on one fundamental point, viz., that both *waḥdat-ul-wujūd* and *waḥdat-ul-shuhūd* belong to the "inner" world of the mind, and that therefore belief in them is not binding upon the Muslim *ummah*. For the latter, it is sufficient to believe only in the concept of Divine Unity embodied in plain and simple terms in the *Kalimah* – There is no god but Allāh and Muḥammad (ﷺ) is His Messenger. (لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ مُحَمَّدٌ رَّسُولُ اللَّهِ)

Indirect references to the concept of *waḥdat-ul-wujūd* appear even in the writings of Islām's earliest scholars. In concrete and elaborate terms, however, the concept was first propounded by Shaikh Moḥyuddīn Ibn-ul-'Arabī in his now famous works mentioned above, namely, *Futūḥāt-ul-Makkiyah* and *Fuṣūṣ-ul-Hikam*. Thus elaborated, the concept generated bitter controversy and sharply opposed responses during the Shaikh's own lifetime. Some orthodox '*ulamā* denounced the concept as heretical and its proponent as a heretic (زنديق , *zindīq*) and a monist. On the other hand, an equally potent section of them held that the concept was in no way contrary to Islām's basic doctrine of *tawḥīd* (or absolute Unity of God), but was in fact its truest and most perfect interpretation. They therefore hailed the Shaikh as the truthful (صدیق , *ṣiddīq*), and also gave him the title of *Shaikh-e-Akbar* (شيخ اكبر The Great Shaikh). Over the past 8 centuries, as the concept has been subjected to sober study and analysis, the initial violence of the controversy surrounding it has tended to subside, and the concept has become the cornerstone of an overwhelming section of *ṣūfī* thought. Such highly eminent *ṣūfīs* as Ḥadrat Mōinuddīn Chishtī of Ajmēr

III. TWO SPECIAL DISTINCTIONS OF ḤADRAT PĪR MEHER 'ALĪ SHĀH

This section discusses at some length two of the leading achievements that distinguish Ḥadrat Pīr Meher 'Alī Shāh (ؒ) from other contemporary 'ulamā and ṣūfīs of the Indo-Pakistān sub continent. Although these two achievements have been briefly touched upon in the earlier sections, they are of such over-riding importance as to merit separate detailed treatment. The present section seeks to fulfill this need.

A. Mastery of the Concept of *Waḥdat-ul-wujūd* (وحدت الوجود) Ultimate Oneness of Being)

The first of Ḥadrat's two prime distinctions concerns his mastery of Shaikh Ibn-ul-'Arābī's concept of *waḥdat-ul-wujūd*. As mentioned earlier, Ḥadrat was acknowledged as one of the leading authorities of his time on this concept, and it figured prominently in both his teachings as well as writings. Here an attempt is made to briefly examine the genesis and content of the concept, and to present the essence of Ḥadrat's point of view concerning it.

The essence of the concept of *waḥdat-ul-wujūd* is that "existence" in real terms belongs to Allāh and Allāh only. The creation, comprising the universe which we see all around us, does not have any discrete existence of its own but is a mere reflection and manifestation of the "Names" (*Asmā*, أسماء) or "attributes" (*Ṣifāt*, صفات) of Allāh. In other words, the entire universe has a "reflective" rather than any "real" existence of its own, and for this it is beholden to the "Bounty of Allāh".

Another school of thought subscribes to the concept of *Waḥdat-ul-Shuhūd* (وحدت الشهود), Unity of Perception or Vision).

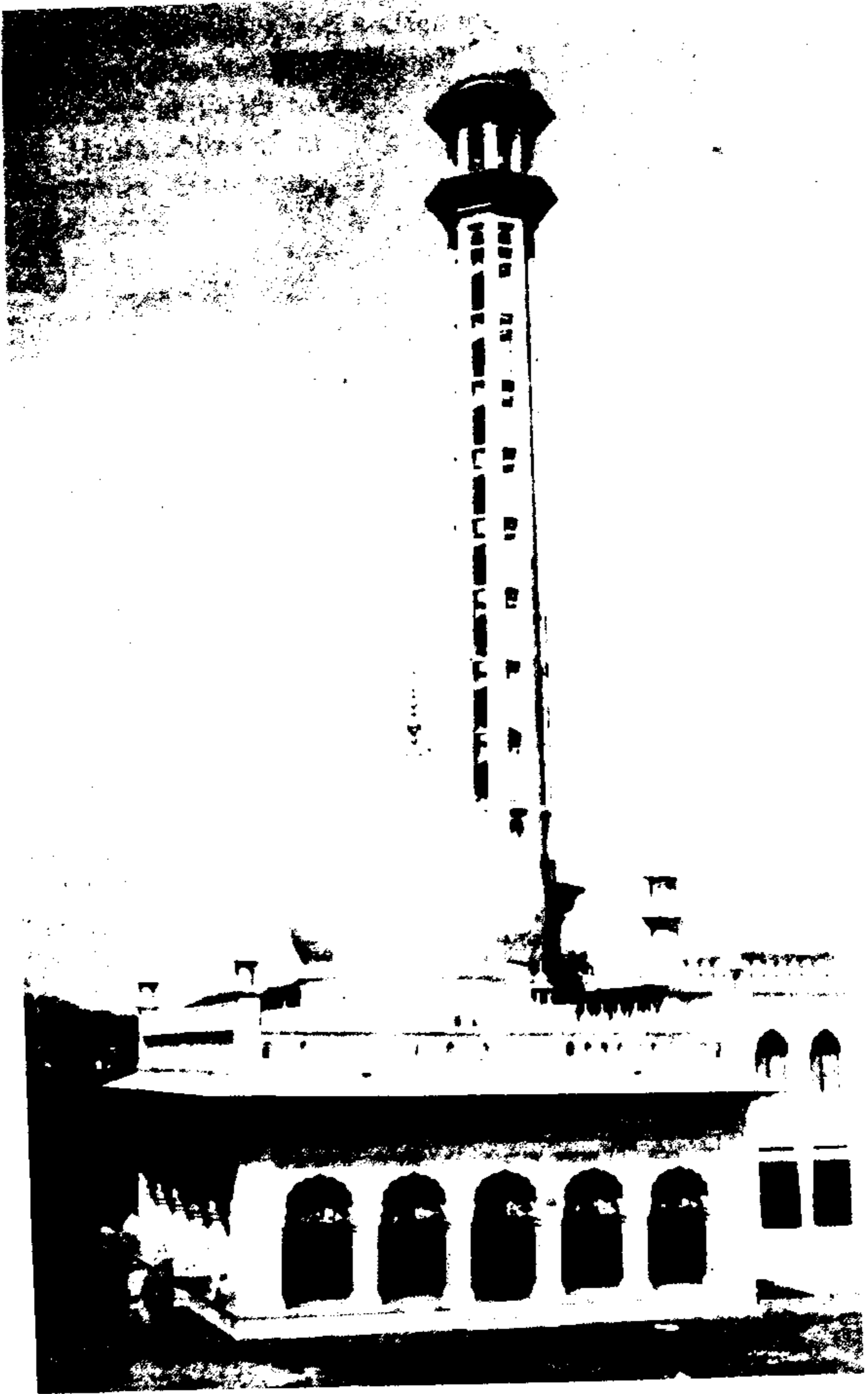
Fiqh-e-Hanafī (فقہ حنفی , or the jurisprudence school of Imām Abū Hanīfah) and in Ḥadrat Meher 'Alī Shāh's various writings. These pronouncements receive a great deal of attention in the country's scholarly circles.

lover of learning, and in line with the time-honoured tradition of *ṣūfī* shrines, a well-staffed *madressah* (school) imparting free religious education upto an advanced stage has been functioning at Golṛā for a long time. The *madressah* started with Ḥaḍrat himself as its principal teacher. Before long, many other distinguished scholars and teachers arrived from various places, not only to share the teaching work with Ḥaḍrat, but also to themselves benefit from a scholar and spiritual luminary of Ḥaḍrat's eminence. Some of them later settled down permanently and spent the rest of their lives in Golṛā. The outstanding examples of this were Maulānā Muḥammad Ghāzī (cf. p. 29 above) and Maulānā Maḥbūb Ālam. Under the personal supervision of Ḥaḍrat's son and successor, Ḥaḍrat Bābūjī, the *madressah* developed into a regular educational institution whose graduates started teaching at other places and schools. The *madressah* specializes in *Dars-e-Nizāmī*, i.e., the Nizāmī curriculum, which was pioneered in the Sub-continent by Maulānā Nizāmuddīn Sihālvi over two centuries ago and which now ranks among the Sub-continent's premier Islāmic theological curricula. Lately, general subjects such as history, geography, mathematics etc. have also been added to the curriculum so as to produce well-rounded alumni. Average enrolment in the *madressah* totals about 40 students at a time.

The present head of the *madressah* at Golṛā is Maulānā Faiḍ Aḥmad, a scholar of considerable contemporary eminence, who has already been mentioned on page 1 above as compiler of Ḥaḍrat's authentic Urdū-language biography, *Mihr-e-Munīr*. Maulānā Faiḍ Aḥmad has also rendered valuable service in reviewing Ḥaḍrat's own various writings and getting them re-published in the past few years. Furthermore, in his sermons during Friday prayers, in his *fatāwā* (فتاویٰ or rulings) on various religious issues, and on other appropriate occasions, the Maulānā takes every opportunity to project as clearly as possible the viewpoint of the Golṛā shrine in the light of the Qur'ān and the *sunnah*, and as embodied in the



Tomb of Hadhrat Meher Ali Shah (2) (An interior view)



*Tomb of Hadhrat Meher Ali Shah (۲)
(with mosque in the background)*

The shrines and ceremonies at Golrā Sharīf

The main holy places at Golrā comprise the tombs of Ḥaḍrat's ancestors, of Ḥaḍrat himself, and of Ḥaḍrat Bābūjī. For the daily and Friday congregational prayers, a large mosque exists which was originally built in 1896-97 and has recently been renovated and expanded, and a lofty *minār* (مِنَار , tower) constructed in its south-western corner. To cater to the needs of thousands who visit these shrines during the year, a *langar* (free kitchen), three spacious guest houses, and one guest *annexe* have been provided. In addition, many residents of Golrā town voluntarily vacate parts of their houses to accommodate the numerous visiting devotees who attend the special ceremonial functions. These now consist of three annual 'Urs (عُرس or death anniversary commemorations), namely, those of Ḥaḍrat Ghauth-ul-A'zam (غوث الاعظم) on 9--11 Rabi'-ul-thānī, of Ḥaḍrat himself on 29 Ṣafar—1 Rabi'-ul-awwal, and of Ḥaḍrat Bābūjī on 1—3 Jamādi-ul-thānī. The birthday of the Holy Prophet (ﷺ) — *Milād-un-Nabī* (میلاد النبی) — on the 12th of Rabi'-ul-awwal every year is celebrated with special veneration and fervour and attracts a very large gathering. In addition, special commemorative functions are organized on the death anniversaries of Ḥaḍrat Mo'inud-dīn Chishtī of Ajmēr (cf. p. 20 and footnote 32), and Maulānā Jalāluddīn Rūmī, both of whom were held in particularly high esteem by Ḥaḍrat. Sittings of *samā'* (devotional music) are also held daily, and are presided over by the current spiritual head of Golrā. Service in the *langar* and at the periodic functions is partly voluntary and partly on a compensation basis. All institutions are well maintained and exceptionally well-run, and atmosphere at the ceremonial functions is in strict keeping with their spiritual dignity and the sanctity of the shrine itself.

The Madressah

In keeping with Ḥaḍrat's standing as a great scholar and

ous rituals and the *wazāif* (*وظائف* , recitations) enjoined by the *shaikh*, in order to derive maximum spiritual benefit. Those who are not content with the guidance provided by their own *shaikh*, and keep seeking it from others, ultimately waste their efforts (just as a rolling stone gathers no moss). (*Malfūzāt*, pp. 23 and 138 and *Maktūbāt*, p. 78).

43. To derive maximum spiritual as well as worldly benefit, the *murīd* should steadfastly sustain and nourish his relationship with his *shaikh* under all circumstances, adverse or favourable. (*Ibid*).
44. *Samā'* (devotional music) is not an end in itself for men of God. At the same time, its importance should not be denied, since many eminent religious and spiritual personalities are known to have listened to *samā'* as a spiritual vehicle. (*Malfūzāt*, p. 78).
45. Power and authority are sure touchstones of a person's real character and nature. The mean person in power indulges in cruelty, oppression and injustice, while the noble one in a similar position exercises kindness, generosity and justice. (*Malfūzāt*, p. 90).
46. While reason and intellect do facilitate the formal study of religious and spiritual sciences, access to the deeper meanings of these sciences is possible only through the Grace of Allāh and with the help of an accomplished guide and teacher. (*Malfūzāt*, p. 98).

36. As far as possible, one should endure the unkindness of others with patience, and leave revenge and retribution to Allāh. (*Malfūzāt*, p. 74).
37. 'Ibādat (عبادت or devotion) consists of submission without argument, acceptance without dissent, patience without complaint, faith without uncertainty, perception without concealment, and attention without diversion. (*Malfūzāt*, p. 59).
38. All *sūfi* schools have the same ultimate objective, namely, the attainment of spiritual elevation and union with Allāh; no school should, therefore, claim superiority over the others. (*Malfūzāt*, p. 101).
39. The 'ulamā and preachers should observe tolerance and avoid hostile criticism of each other. They should try to promote unity rather than fan hatred and discord among various sections of the *ummah*. (*Malfūzāt*, p. 97).
40. Denunciation of Muslims as *kāfir* (infidel) on pretty sectarian grounds, or on the basis of doubt or supposition only, is highly loathsome, and must be avoided at all costs. This alone can ensure the unity of the *ummah* and thereby help it regain its lost glory. (*Malfūzāt*, p. 72 and *I'lāu Kalimatillāh*, p. 30).
41. *Waḥdat-ul-shuhūd* is the beginning of *sulūk* (i.e., spiritual journey) and *waḥdat-ul-wujūd* its ultimate and perfected state. (*Mihr-e-Munīr*, p. 143).
42. The *murīd* (disciple) should obey the commands of his *shaikh* (spiritual guide) in everything and particularly in the regular performance of religi-

- lead to error and are liable to incur the wrath of Allāh. (*Tasfiah Mābain Sunnī wa Shi'ah*, p. 91)
30. Avoid extremes in religious as well as worldly matters, for peace and salvation lie only in following the middle path. (*Malfūzāt*, p. 95 and *Maktūbāt*, p. 205).
31. One should observe strict moderation in everything. While endeavour in worldly matters is essential, concern for them should not be so deep as to make one oblivious to religious and spiritual obligations. Both this world and the Hereafter should be kept in view. (*Ibid.*)
32. Trust in God does not consist in discarding human endeavour altogether. The best course is to put in one's best effort and leave the results to God. (*Malfūzāt*, pp. 85 and 95).
33. Man should put in his best endeavour to achieve his objectives; he should, however, never be impatient for results, since these are controlled by Allāh and come only at the divinely destined time. (*Malfūzāt*, pp. 95 and 104).
34. Faith in God's mercy, benevolence and omnipotence in the fulfilment of human objectives must be backed up by the utmost human endeavour. (*Ibid.*)
35. As indicated in the Qur'ān (XCIV, 5–6), "hardship goes side by side with ease" (in this worldly life). One should, therefore, not lose heart in times of adversity, but should instead have full faith in the Mercy of Allāh and be thankful to Him in all circumstances. (*Maktūbāt*, p. 101).

23. It is a great pity that people today hanker after verbal recitations and charms and incantations, instead of trying to improve their character and deeds which constitute the real things, and remembering Allāh Who is the Fountainhead of all that is good and noble in this life. (*Malfūzāt*, p. 47).
24. No good deed yields any lasting benefit unless performed with complete sincerity of purpose, without regard to personal gain, and without a vestige of hypocrisy. (*Malfūzāt*, pp. 68, 107 and 137).
25. One should always endeavour to do good deeds; Allāh's forgiveness, however, depends on His Mercy and Grace and not necessarily on one's good deeds. (*Malfūzāt*, p. 126).
26. Man's greatness and nobility lie in his character, and especially in practising humility and self-effacement, and not only in his lineage. (*Malfūzāt*, p. 93).
27. Pride and conceit destroy all good deeds. (*Ibid.*)
28. Mutual love and sincerity are among the finest qualities of the Islāmic *ummah*. In fact it was Islām which first stressed these qualities for observance by its followers. Unfortunately, however, these are largely missing from today's Muslim world due to its indifference to Islāmic teachings and values. (*Malfūzāt*, p. 70).
29. Allāh likes moderation and temperance in everything, and this constitutes the Straight Path (*سِرَاطِ الْمُسْتَقِيمِ* , *Ṣirāṭ-e-Mustaḳīm*) that He has ordered us to follow. Exaggeration and excess, even in religious matters,

prided in simplicity and frugality. (*Malfūzāt*, p. 69).

17. A *sālik* (traverser of the Path) should have nothing to do with the good or bad of the world; he should devote his entire attention to his Lord at all times. (*Malfūzāt*, p. 49).
18. One should answer humility with humility, but need not be humble before the proud and the conceited. (*Maktūbāt*, p. 99).
19. Seeking the favour or pleasure of persons in high office may be alright for the common man; it is undesirable for those who aspire to be *darvīsh* or *sūfī*. (*Malfūzāt*, p. 22; *Mihr-e-Munīr*, p. 283).
20. The men of God have outshone others because of the precedence that they gave to the rights of others over their own personal good. (*Malfūzāt*, p. 75).
21. The life and death of *Auliā-Allāh* (*أولياء الله* friends of Allāh or Saints) are devoted solely to seeking the Lord's pleasure, and must not be compared to or equated with the life and death of the common people. (*Malfūzāt*, p. 65).
22. Prayers and recitations should be performed primarily with the object of earning the Lord's pleasure; this can lead, as a by-product, to worldly gain also which lies in the hands of the Lord. It is inconceivable that man should devote himself wholly to the remembrance of his Creator but the Latter should not fulfill his ambitions and needs. (*Malfūzāt*, pp. 69, 87, and 124).

10. Single-minded remembrance of Allāh is the supreme source of felicity and happiness. (*Malfūzāt*, p. 81).
11. The *darvīsh* should devote himself solely to the remembrance of Allāh, rather than hanker after money or other worldly gain. (*Malfūzāt*, pp. 75 and 133).
12. The true 'abd (عبد , i.e., slave) of Allāh derives infinitely more happiness and satisfaction from spreading his hands before Him in prayer than from achieving his own worldly objectives. (*Maktūbāt*, p. 17).
13. One should carry on one's legitimate business in life, and should at the same time consider God to be Omnipresent and All-Seeing. (*Maktūbāt*, p. 67).
14. A *darvīsh* is one who opposes whatever his baser self (نفس اماره) impels him to do. (*Malfūzāt*, p. 80).
15. The (true) *darvīsh* considers everyone else better than himself; he tries to rectify his own faults instead of finding fault with others. (*Mihr-e-Munīr*, p. 482 and *Malfūzāt*, p. 23).
16. Being a *darvīsh* is a state of mind, and does not necessarily depend on the type of dress that one wears, or the food that one eats, so long as these are acquired through lawful means and do not otherwise violate the dictates of the *sharī'ah*. Daūd, Sulaimān, and Yūsuf were kings and apostles of God at the same time, while many eminent *ṣūfīs* are known to have dressed richly and lived comfortably. Ideally, of course, it is preferable to follow the example of the Holy Prophet (ﷺ) who

3. No one can become a true and accomplished *ṣūfī* without first gaining mastery of the *sharī'ah* sciences; indeed venturing on the *ṣūfī* path without *sharī'ah* knowledge involves many pitfalls. (*Malfūzāt*, p. 101).
4. The view held by some people that the *ṣūfīs* do not observe the *sharī'ah* is totally false and misleading. The fact is that no group of Muslims equals the true *ṣūfīs* in their love for the Prophet (ﷺ) and their adherence to his *sharī'ah*. (*Malfūzāt*, p. 68).
5. There is no conflict whatsoever between the *sharī'ah* and the *ṭarīqah*. While the former constitutes the injunctions of Allāh and His Prophet (ﷺ), the latter consists in acting meticulously upon those injunctions. (*Maktūbāt*, p. 182).
6. Spiritual elevation does not give anyone a licence to ignore the *sharī'ah*. Indeed, the higher a person goes on the spiritual scale, the greater should be his observance of the Prophet's *sharī'ah*. (*Malfūzāt*, p. 16).
7. True faith can only be sustained through the love of Allāh. (*Ibid*).
8. The love of Allāh and His Prophet (ﷺ) is infinitely superior to the love of mortal human beings and of other worldly things. (*Malfūzāt*, p. 52).
9. Every breath of life is a priceless treasure; it should be devoted to the remembrance of the Lord, and to the seeking of His pleasure. (*Malfūzāt*, p. 64 and *I'lāu Kalimatillāh*, p. 143).

in the Hereafter (cf. XLI-30 and XLVI-13), was also demonstrated in everything that he did in public or private. All the other attributes listed above, which he commended to his disciples, visitors or correspondents, were exemplified in optimum degree in his own person. He was kind to everyone regardless of his colour, creed or station in life; listened with care and sympathy to all those who related their problems to him and sought his prayers; grieved sincerely for those who suffered; enquired about the sick and the needy; condoled with the bereaved, and forgave those who caused hurt in any form. He rarely (if ever) lost temper despite the gravest provocation.

In short, the life and conduct of Ḥaḍrat were a model and an inspiration for all those who cared to follow his example.

Excerpts from Ḥaḍrat's writings and sayings

A bulk of Ḥaḍrat's writings in prose pertains to complex religious issues, and can be properly understood only by scholars or people otherwise well-versed in religion, theology, or mysticism. Indeed some of his writings, particularly those concerned with the concept of *waḥdat-ul-wujūd*, are even beyond the grasp of ordinary *'ulamā*. For the benefit of the general reader, therefore, selected excerpts from his writings and pronouncements of general interest only are presented below:

1. Observance of the Holy Prophet's *sharī'ah* and of his personal example (*sunnah*) has precedence over everything else. (*Malfūzāt*, p. 101).
2. There is no honour in doing things and performing rites and ceremonies (e.g., extravagance on occasions of marriage etc.) which are not permitted by the *sharī'ah*. (*Malfūzāt*, p. 107).

Ḥaḍrat back from Makkah Mukarramah on Ḥaḍrat's return to Golrā from Haj, and whom Ḥaḍrat held in high esteem as a scholar and teacher. The art of *tajwīd* (تجويد), reciting the Qur'ān in accordance with established rules of pronunciation and intonation) was learnt by Ḥaḍrat Babūjī from Qārī Abdul Raḥmān of Jaunpūr, an illustrious contemporary name in that field. In addition, Ḥaḍrat kept a constant eye on his distinguished son, and missed no opportunity to instill into him (either orally or or through correspondence as the occasion demanded) all the principles of virtuous conduct, service to others, strict observance of the *sharī'ah* in everything, and other noble traits of character becoming of the scion of such an honoured family. No wonder, therefore, that in course of time Ḥaḍrat Bābūjī showed himself to be a truly worthy successor to Ḥaḍrat Pīr Meher 'Alī Shāh (؎).

Finally, Ḥaḍrat found time from his heavy daily schedule to do a considerable amount of writing in the Persian, Arabic, and Punjābī languages, both in prose and verse. His writings in verse consist mostly of *na't* (نعت), i.e., poems glorifying the Holy Prophet (ﷺ); mystic *ghazals* (lyrics); an elegy in memory of Ḥaḍrat Imām Ḥusain (ؑ), the Prophet's grandson martyred at Kербala in Iraq in 61 A.H.; a *mathnawī* (مثنوی), and some other miscellaneous verse. The prose comprises letters, pronouncements, and books and pamphlets on current issues, the most significant of which were the books on the *Qādiānī* movement (cf. page 33 above), the naturist creed, the concept of *waḥdat-ul-wujūd*, and Sunnī-Shī'ah Reconciliation mentioned on 34 above. A complete annotated list of his writings is given in Appendix I to this booklet.

On the *practical* side, Ḥaḍrat's meticulous observance of the *sharī'ah* in every sphere, which is the cornerstone of true Islāmic character, has been highlighted earlier. His staunch and steadfast faith in Allāh, which has been extolled in the Qur'ān as the prime means for felicity in this world as well as

(*ṣalāt* صلاة) regularly, preferably in congregation in mosque, and to add a couple of short recitations after each prayer. This signifies (a) Ḥaḍrat's recognition of the key importance of *ṣalāt* in an Islāmic system, and its instrumentality in restraining a person from "wickedness and sin" as stressed in both the Qur'ān (XXIX-45) and the Prophet's *ḥadīth* and *sunnah* (e.g., the *ḥadīth* defining *iḥsān* cited on page 12 above); and (b) his anxiety not to burden the common run of his disciples with too exacting a regimen, but to stress only those matters which could open the way to piety and virtue in a person's entire life. The regimen was suitably enhanced for those seeking spiritual advancement or themselves requesting extra recitations. In addition, Ḥaḍrat took every opportunity, in his daily general sittings, in meetings and conversations with individual visitors, as well as in his letters, to emphasize other requisites for developing a true Muslim character. These included: strict adherence to the *sharī'ah*; avoidance of superstition; unshakeable faith in God and constant remembrance of Him; sincerity of intent and abhorrence of hypocrisy and pretence; cultivation of humility, compassion, civility and faithfulness, and eschewal of conceit, callousness, discourtesy, and infidelity; avoidance of extremes and observance of moderation and balance in all matters; ceaseless endeavour in accordance with one's God-given faculties and attributes; seeking of unity and shunning of discord, and so on. He also stressed the need for modelling one's practical conduct on the pattern of the illustrious early masters (*salaf-e-ṣāliḥīn*, سلف صالحين) instead of paying mere lip service to their greatness and glory.

Ḥaḍrat devoted special attention to the education and upbringing of his only son, Ḥaḍrat Ghulām Moḥyuddīn whom he often affectionately called *Bābūjī* (بابو), and did everything possible to ensure that he was provided with the best on both these counts. For formal religious education, he was assigned to the care of Maulānā Muḥammad Ghāzī who has been mentioned earlier as having accompanied

title *Malfūzāt-e-Mihriyah* (*مفوضات مہریہ* i.e., Sayings of Ḥaḍrat Meher 'Alī Shāh).⁵² The fact is that in the case of several eminent *ṣūfī* masters, such *malfūzāt* constitute the sole authentic source of information concerning their views on scholarly and spiritual matters. Also, as observed by *The New Encyclopaedia Britannica* (*op. cit.*, Vol. 22, p. 20), the *malfūzāt* "are psychologically interesting and allow glimpses into the political and social situation of the Muslim community. Collections of letters of the *Shaikhs* are similarly revealing". Three outstanding examples of this are: the *malfūzāt* of Ḥaḍrat Nizāmuddīn Auliā (cf. footnote 39) entitled *Fawā'id-ul-Fawād* (*فوائد الفوائد*) compiled by one of his leading disciples, Amir Ḥasan 'Alā Sajazī (cf. footnote 51); (b) the *malfūzāt* of Ḥaḍrat Bābā Farīduddīn Ganjshakar (footnote 40), entitled *Bazm-e-Farīd* (*بزم فرید* or the Assembly of Farīd), compiled by Ḥaḍrat Nizāmuddīn Auliā; and the second collection of Ḥaḍrat Baba Farīduddīn Ganjshakar's *malfūzāt* compiled by Khwājā Badruddīn Is'hāq.

Many of Ḥaḍrat's disciples, and some others formally unconnected with him, sought his prayers or his views on religious questions through correspondence. Ḥaḍrat usually responded to such letters personally. Where, however, the issue raised was not important, or the letter requested prayers only, the reply was written on Ḥaḍrat's behalf by the person incharge of Ḥaḍrat's routine correspondence. A selection of Ḥaḍrat's letters has been published under the title *Maktūbat-i-Tayyibāt* (*مکتوبات طیبات*, the sacred letters).⁵³ Similarly, Ḥaḍrat issued authoritative rulings (*فتاویٰ fatāwā*) on important religious questions referred to him by various people, including some 'ulamā. These have also been published under the title *Fatāwā-e-Mihriyah* (*فتاویٰ مہریہ* or Rulings of Ḥaḍrat Meher 'Alī Shāh).⁵⁴

To those who took the pledge (*bai'at*, *بیعت*) at his hands to become his formal disciples (or *murīd* *مُرید*), Ḥaḍrat generally enjoined two things: to say the five daily prayers

widely acknowledged as the leading contemporary authority in the Sub-continent. Ḥaḍrat was one of the very few religious scholars in his day who clearly understood and made others understand Shaikh Ibn-ūl-‘Arabī’s abstruse and controversial concept of *waḥdat-ul-wujūd* at the intellectual as well as the spiritual planes. Besides formally enrolled students, Ḥaḍrat’s teaching sessions and general daily sittings were often attended by other scholars of standing, who flocked to them to listen to a master of exposition that combined rare intellectual and scholarly brilliance with a very high spiritual station. These included persons from all schools of religious thought – a tribute to Ḥaḍrat’s balanced and moderate approach to all issues.

Shunning unnecessary controversy, Ḥaḍrat usually stayed away from debates among ‘*ulamā*’ on parochial issues. Such debates have been quite common in all periods. However, according to Ḥaḍrat’s way of thinking they serve no useful purpose but in fact create avoidable schisms and discords in the Muslim *ummah* and thus grievously hurt its unity. All the same, where issues of real and fundamental importance were involved, Ḥaḍrat did participate in debates and most often succeeded in achieving consensus and removing scholarly dissension injurious to the unity of the *ummah*. His method on such occasions was marked by conciseness of expression, strength of argument, and a patient persuasiveness that carried conviction both with the audience and the parties to the debate.

Ḥaḍrat’s general daily sittings were devoted not only to meeting the usual requests for prayers from persons facing various problems, difficulties, and afflictions; many religious questions of day-to-day relevance were also raised at these sittings and answered by Ḥaḍrat. The wide ground covered in these sittings can be gauged from the selective collection of Ḥaḍrat’s sayings compiled by two of his disciples (themseves learned people) and published under the

can, therefore, be obtained only by looking at his theoretical teachings as well as his practical conduct in life.

Some of the salient aspects of Ḥaḍrat Meher 'Alī Shāh's teachings, as just defined, have been touched upon in varying detail in the preceding pages. Here an effort is made to sum them up in one place in order to give a composite total picture.

On the *theoretical* side, Ḥaḍrat's prime contribution was in the spheres of academic teaching, participation in scholarly debates and discussions, dispensation of theological knowledge through pronouncements in general and special sittings, views expressed in letters to seekers of truth and knowledge, provision of spiritual guidance, and authorship of books and treatises on issues of current religious interest and importance.

Starting at the early age of 20 years, Ḥaḍrat continued his academic teaching activities until late in life. During this period, he imparted religious education to innumerable seekers of learning, many of whom later became teachers of note themselves. Endowed with all the qualities of an excellent and a highly effective teacher, Ḥaḍrat was able to make even his mentally weak students thoroughly understand the most complex and difficult issues without much difficulty. To everyone he spoke in a soft and measured tone, enabling him to understand and remember every word.

Besides taking regular classes in classical religious sciences at the *madressah* of Golrā, he gave special lessons to selected students in the *Mathnawī* of Maulānā Jalāluddīn Rūmī; the writings of Shaikh Moḥyuddīn Ibn-ul-'Arābī; *Ṣaḥīḥ-ul-Bukhārī* (the most authentic and comprehensive of all *ḥadīth* compilations); the *Qasīdāh* (Eulogy) of Ibn-e-Fāred Makkī; and the *Diwān* (poetic collection) of Hāfīz of Shīrāz. On all these, and especially on the first two, he was

the path laid down for it by its Great Creator. The heart of their missions, therefore, lies in their teachings – all else is secondary and incidental. The measure of their greatness is the impact that they exercise and the imprint that they leave upon the hearts and souls of their contemporaries as well as on posterity.

Teaching encompasses both precept and example, theory and practice, outer form as well as inner essence. In fact, it can produce little impact upon others unless the teacher exemplifies it in his own character and conduct. The lives and missions of all prophets of God demonstrate this basic truth – they enjoined upon their audiences only that which they themselves acted upon. The peak in this respect was reached in the person of the great Prophet of Islām (ﷺ). The Prophet (ﷺ) not only conveyed to mankind the words of God's final and everlasting message as enshrined in the Holy Qur'ān; he lived his own entire life in such perfect accord with that message that his wife of revered memory *Sayyedinā 'Āyeshah Ṣiddiqāh* (رضي الله عنها) called him the "Qur'ān in person." As a consequence, the Prophet's *aḥādīth* (sayings and traditions) and his *sunnah* (actions) have come to form an integral part of the conduct code of Islām, complementing and next in importance only to the Qur'ān itself. The numerous references in the Qur'ān about the importance of following and obeying both Allāh *and* His Prophet – e.g., III–132; IV–59, 64, and 80; V–92 and many others – coupled with the pronouncement that the Prophet's character constitutes the "best pattern of conduct" (*uswa-e-ḥasanah*, *أُسْوَةٌ حَسَنَةٌ*) for the Muslim *ummah* (XXXIII–21), underscore the importance of *ḥadīth* and *sunnah* in the Islāmic framework.

As seen before (p. 9), the *ṣūfīs*, themselves basically scholars of religion, went a step ahead of the pure *'ulamā* (scholars) by propagating Islām through practical example rather than through oral teaching or theoretical written exposition alone. A true idea of any *ṣūfī* master's greatness

As was to be expected, Ḥaḍrat's passing away was widely mourned within and outside the country. Newspapers carried the news in banner headlines, and magazines and periodicals featured articles setting out the life and work of a great Muslim divine whose personality constituted a beacon of light for contemporary as well as future generations of Muslims. The obituary notes and articles particularly highlighted Ḥaḍrat's complete mastery of *shari'ah* sciences coupled with an exceedingly high spiritual station, his constant devotion to the remembrance of Allāh, the strict moderation of his approach in all matters, and the historic and pioneering role that he had played in stemming the heretical *Qādiānī* (*Aḥmadiyah*) movement. On these premises, his passing away was regarded as an irreparable loss to the entire Muslim *ummah*, creating a vacuum that would be most difficult to fill.

Ḥaḍrat was succeeded by his only son, Ḥaḍrat Ghulām Moḥyuddīn (؎), who inherited many attributes of his illustrious father and carried on his great mission with singular distinction. In fact the name of Bābūjī, as Ḥaḍrat Ghulām Moḥyuddīn had been affectionately nicknamed by his august father and was later called by his own followers and admirers as well, became in course of time and in its own right almost as much of a household word as that of Ḥaḍrat himself. Ḥaḍrat Bābūjī also passed away in June 1974 at the age of 83 after having graced the spiritual throne of Golra for over 37 years. His eldest son, Sayyid Ghulām Mo'īnuddīn, along with his younger brother Shāh 'Abdul Haq, is now keeping alight that spiritual torch which Ḥaḍrat had lighted with such distinction and brilliance almost a century ago.

Teachings of Ḥaḍrat Meher 'Alī Shāh

Like the prophets of God, with whom they have so much in common as noted earlier, the great *ṣūfī* masters are essentially teachers and guides. Their assigned task is to bring an errant and wayward humanity back to the right path —



Hadhrat Bābūji (r)

schedule, Ḥaḍrat's health remained noticeably good until the age of 71–72 years. However, continued lack of rest and adequate food was bound to take its toll sooner or later, and signs of decline started appearing around 1928–29 A.D. Besides general weakness, Ḥaḍrat developed persistent and prolonged spells of hiccough, a sign of a weakening digestive system. The illness was aggravated by the depth of feeling generated by tales of distress brought to him by the visitors or narrated by many in their letters. Medical treatment was arranged but did not produce any tangible or lasting improvement, and the gradual decline in health continued for the next 5–6 years.

vii. Passing away of Ḥaḍrat

For over 48 years, Ḥaḍrat Meher 'Alī Shāh (؎) carried on his sacred mission on earth. During this period, hundreds of thousands of people from all parts of the Sub-continent and from other countries of the Islāmic world visited Golrā to seek his blessings. Most of them formally became his disciples. Others just came, sought his prayers, and left. These included many non-Muslims who were as courteously received and attended to as the Muslims, and some of whom voluntarily embraced Islām. From a small, relatively little known village, Golrā became a household word in the Sub-continent, and its fame as the abode of a scholar and spiritual celebrity of rare brilliance spread far and wide in the Muslim world. Eventually, at the age of 78 years and while still in the state of *istighrāq* mentioned above, Ḥaḍrat's great spirit left his earthly frame and travelled heaven-ward to join the Supreme, Exalted Companion (رفیق الاعلیٰ Rafīqul A'lā) on 29 Safar, 1356 A.H. (11 May, 1937 A.D.). According to eye-witnesses, Ḥaḍrat pronounced the word "Allāh" from the deepest recesses of his heart before the arrival of the final irrevocable moment. One of Islām's brightest lights was extinguished. A great scholar and a great *sūfī* had left the scene that he had adorned and graced for nearly half a century.

in consequence. Medical attention was promptly arranged but did not help much, probably because the real malady lay elsewhere than in his outward physical condition. This state, which began more than 10 years before Ḥaḍrat's passing away in 1937 A.D., gradually developed into what in the language of Islāmic *ṣūfism* is termed *istighrāq* (استغراق), i.e., total spiritual absorption. This constitutes the loftiest spiritual station that a person could attain to. It denotes the state of *fanā fillāh baqā billāh* (كُنَّا فِي اللَّهِ بِقَاءًا بِاللَّهِ), perishing or annihilation *in* God and enduring for ever *with* Him), during which the *sālik* is so completely lost in the spectacle of Divine Beauty as to become wholly oblivious of all else around him. It may also be likened to the stage of *nafs-i-muṭmainnah* (نَفْسٌ مُّطْمَئِنِّتٌ) mentioned on page 9 above. To start with, Ḥaḍrat had to discontinue congregational prayers in mosque, which he had strictly observed himself and stressed upon others all his life. Next, he was constrained to offer his prayers on his bed and later by gestures only. In course of time, even this gave place to prolonged spells of lack of consciousness, with the result that Ḥaḍrat had to seek the advice of the 'ulamā at Golrā as to what he should do concerning the irregularity that had crept into his prayer schedule. They unanimously ruled that such a situation was condonable under the circumstances, thus allaying Ḥaḍrat's anxiety not to violate any dictate of the *sharī'ah* as long as he could help it. This apical condition continued during the last 2–3 years of Ḥaḍrat's life.

vi. Decline in health

As mentioned earlier, Ḥaḍrat's daily time-table was such as to permit very limited time for rest or repose. He followed a rigorous schedule of prayer, *dhikr*, contemplation and study. Whatever time was left over from these was devoted to seeing visitors and attending to their needs and problems. He also ate sparingly and frequently fasted or otherwise went without food. Despite this highly exacting



*Hadhrat Pīr Meher Ali Shah (ؒ)
(The last days)
(Istaghraq - Spiritual absorption)*

Belonging primarily to the *Chishtiyah* school, Ḥaḍrat regarded instrumental *samā'* as permissible, although not indispensable for the *ṣūfī*. He listened to it only very occasionally even during the early period of his life. As he advanced in age and in spiritual experience, the frequency declined still further and the musical instruments tended to be dispensed with. This is understandable, since artificial "aids" such as *samā'* are apt to become redundant as spiritual elevation matures and stabilizes. Normally, Ḥaḍrat showed no visible sign of the spiritual impact of *samā'*, but very occasionally he used to experience *wajd* (*وَجْد* or ecstasy), and when this happened the entire audience felt the impact and shared the rare and memorable experience. Instances are on record of some non-Muslims embracing Islām during Ḥaḍrat's *samā'* sessions. In the *samā'* sittings of Ḥaḍrat, recitals were derived usually from the *Mathnawī* of Maulānā Jalāluddīn Rūmī, and the poetic writings of other eminent Persian, Urdū, and Punjābī poet-*ṣūfīs*. The topics covered included the love of Allāh, *na't* in adoration of the Prophet (ﷺ), *waḥdat-ul-wujūd*, and similar other topics which produced an electrifying spiritual impact upon the audience. During the period of Bābūjī, Ḥaḍrat's only son and successor, *samā'* became a regular daily phenomenon and remains so until today.

v. Spiritual absorption (*استغراق* – *Istighrāq*)

As Ḥaḍrat advanced in age, and scaled ever greater spiritual heights, his outward condition as well as the state of his mind underwent gradual change. He still meticulously observed all dictates of the *sharī'ah*, and also tried to keep his erstwhile daily routine of prayer and meditation. Nevertheless, he spoke less and less even when in company, and remained mostly occupied in silent contemplation. His complexion kept changing hues, reflecting the constant inner spiritual activity. His physical health, which despite his austere living had throughout remained enviably good, suffered

tual development has been a controversial issue among the 'ulamā and the *sūfī* schools of Islām. One school of thought regards instrumental *samā'* as totally forbidden under Islāmic *sharī'ah* because of its potential for purposeless luxury and its traditional association with profligacy. Another school legitimizes *samā'* without musical instruments, provided the recitations are religious or mystical. The *Chishtiyah* school considers *samā'* with musical instruments permissible, possibly because of its potential as an aid to the propagation of Islām among Indians who were culturally accustomed to instrumental music. It does so, however, on the condition that the subject of the recital is strictly religious or mystical and the listener has the ability to benefit spiritually from it. The *Chishtiyah* school also bases its acceptance of instrumental *samā'* on the premise that the Prophet's *sharī'ah* does not explicitly prohibit it.

The moderate view about *samā'* is summed up in the following verses of Shaikh Sa'dī of Shirāz (mentioned earlier on page 14 above):

سماح اسے برادر بگویم کہ چیت اگر شتبع را بدانم کہ کیت

(I will tell you what *samā'* is, O brother, provided I know the person who listens to it.)

گر از برج معنی بود طیر آو فرشته فرماند از سیر آو

(If he, i.e., the listener, is one who takes off from the tower of Truth, then his flight will surpass even the angels (through *sama'*)).

وگر مرد نخواست و بازی دلاغ قوی تر شود لهوش اندر دماغ

(If, on the other hand, he is one that loves fun, sport, and licentiousness, these attributes will become even stronger through *samā'*)).

کرامت (i.e., 'grace' or the mini-miracle). Indeed, whereas the prophets had been divinely enjoined to manifest their miracles whenever the occasion demanded in order to establish their prophetic identity, the 'ulamā-cum-ṣūfīs were required to conceal them as much as possible, since these could become a dangerous trap that might deflect the ṣūfī from his real goal. A saying of a famous ṣūfī master of the Sub-continent (Ḥaḍrat Nizāmuddīn Auliā of Delhi) places *karāmāt* at only the 17th stage of *sulūk* (سُلُوك , i.e., "the path") out of a hierarchy of 100 stages.⁵¹ Nevertheless, most of the great ṣūfīs and spiritual 'ulamā of Islām, popularly known as *Auliā-Allāh*, have been credited with *karāmāt* even though their manifestation was not consciously sought by them. Ḥaḍrat was no exception to this general rule. His foremost *karāmāt* were, of course, his profound learning, his lofty character, his uncompromising observance of the Prophet's *shāri'ah*, the rare moderation of his religious approach, his constant engagement in providing religious and spiritual guidance to others, and the effective battle he waged against *Qādiānism* (dealt with in detail in a later separate section of this booklet). These constitute what are termed *ma'navī karāmāt* (معنوی کرامات , i.e., "significant" graces). In addition, however, many manifest and "perceptible" *karāmāt* are also attributed to him. These include the curing of blindness, paralysis, dumbness and other ailments through prayer; saving some of his followers from fatal accidents through prior warning on the basis of prescience; predicting the emergence of Pākistān long in advance, and many others. Indeed, towards the closing stages of his earthly life, when Ḥaḍrat's spiritual greatness reached its zenith, he is known to have cured ailing people requesting him for prayer by simply repeating their words of request or plaint.

iv. *Samā'* (سَمَاء , Devotional music)

Samā' (سَمَاء), or listening to devotional music especially that accompanied by musical instruments, as an aid to spiri-



*Hadhrat Pīr Meher Ali Shah (r)
(At middle age)*

fairly late into the night before retiring to bed. Ḥaḍrat thus kept awake for about 18 out of the 24 hours of the day. The daily timetable was suitably adjusted during the fasting month of *Ramaḍān*.

ii. Travels

True to the classical tradition, Ḥaḍrat travelled outside Golrā largely for the sake of advancing his spiritual 'experience', for preaching the faith, or for visiting holy places. He rarely did so for worldly purposes. Two journeys he undertook regularly every year, namely, to Pākpatan to attend the annual 'urs of Ḥaḍrat Bābā Farīd-ud-dīn Ganjshakar, and to Siāl Sharīf to attend the 'urs of his own immediate spiritual guide, Ḥaḍrat Khwājā Shamsuddīn, who had passed away in 1300 A.H. (1881-82 A.D.). The occasional journeys included those to the shrine of Ḥaḍrat Moīn-ud-dīn Chishtī at Ajmer in 1305 A.H. (1887 A.D.) to pay homage; to the shrine of Ḥaḍrat 'Alauddīn 'Alī Aḥmad Ṣābir at Kaliar Sharīf (District Sahāranpūr) for the same purpose; to the Hedjaz for Ḥaj and for visit to the tomb of the Holy Prophet (ﷺ) at Madīnah in 1307 A.H. (1889 A.D.); to Bhopāl State in 1332 A.H. (1914 A.D.); to Alīgarh around 1917-18 to pay his respects to his former teacher Maulānā Luṭfullāh; and to other places in connection with his wanderings in search of the truth mentioned on page 25 above.

iii. *Karāmāt* (کرامات , Graces or mini-miracles)

Miracles have figured prominently in all prophetic missions down the ages. With the termination of prophethood after Muḥammad (ﷺ), the era of prophetic miracles also came to an end. Among the 'ulamā-cum-ṣūfīs of Islām, on whom the missionary mantle once worn by the prophets of God had fallen, emphasis was to be placed on *istiqāmat* (استقامت) i.e., steadfast adherence to the true principles of the faith as embodied in the *sharī'ah*) rather than on *karāmāt*

and remembrance of Allāh. At the same time, he managed to see those seeking guidance, and to listen to the requests and problems of visitors and pray for them which he regarded as a duty to his fellow-beings. Recitations continued during these meetings as well. Ḥaḍrat also managed to do a considerable amount of teaching, and to attend to his personal and family affairs, although these latter received minimal attention only.

Ḥaḍrat woke long before dawn, offered his *tahajjud* (*تَهَجُّد* , pre-dawn) prayers alone in his room, joined the regular congregational morning prayers in the mosque, and thereafter remained engaged in recitations until about 11—A.M. He then came out in the sitting room to see visitors. Sometimes he gave lessons from the *Mathnavī* of Maulānā Rūmī; *The Futūḥāt-ul-Makkiyah* (*فتوحات المكيه* — The Meccan Revelations) and *Fuṣūṣ-ul-Hikam* (*فصوص الحکم* — Bezels or Cutting Edges of Wisdom) of Shaikh Moḥyuddīn Ibn-ul-‘Arabī, on whose profound but controversial concept of *waḥdat-ul-wujūd* (*وحدت الوجود* — The Ultimate Oneness of Being) he was widely regarded as a distinguished authority not only in the Sub-continent but throughout the Muslim world; the *Ṣaḥīḥ-ul-Bukhārī* (*صحيح البخاري*), the most authentic and renowned of all *ḥadīth* compilations; *Qaṣīdah* (*قصيده* , Eulogy) of Ibn-e-Fāreḍ Makki; and the *Dīwān* (poetic collection) of the great mystic Persian poet Ḥāfiẓ of Shīrāz. Immediately after noon, he would leave for lunch, take a short nap, and thereafter return to the mosque for the *zuhr* (*ظهر* , early afternoon) prayers. This was followed by further recitations in his room until the ‘*Aṣr* (*عصر* late afternoon) prayers. After ‘*Aṣr*, he usually left on horseback for the village Mairā Bādiyah, a couple of miles away, where he offered his evening (*maghreb*) and late evening (*عشاء* , ‘*Ishā*) prayers in a mosque before returning to Golrā. A daily spell of horse-riding had been medically prescribed for Ḥaḍrat as a fitness device in an otherwise sedentary schedule. On return to Golrā, the recitations and meditations were resumed and continued

True to the traditions of the great early Muslim *'ulamā* and *ṣūfīs*, Ḥaḍrat never sought to woo or please the highly-placed and the ruling elite of his day. An outstanding example of this was his refusal to attend the coronation ceremony of George V, King of Britain and Emperor of India, held at Delhi in 1911 A.D., to which he was officially invited. The same was true of his attitude towards officialdom in general. Indeed, far from Ḥaḍrat hankering after official or princely favour, several highly-placed personalities of the day sought to become his spiritual beneficiaries. These included: The Kābul ruler Amīr Ḥabībullāh Khān, who paid a secret visit to Ḥaḍrat in Golrā to seek his prayers for the vindication of his rightful claim of succession to the throne of Afghānistān against the machinations and intrigues of some hostile members of his family and their co-conspirators, and was rewarded with success; the Nawāb of the then Bahāwalpūr State; Nawāb Waliuddaulah of Hyderabad (Deccan); the Nawāb of Amb Darband State in the north of India; Nawāb Sir 'Umar Ḥayāt Tiwānā and his son Sir Khizar Ḥayāt; Nawāb Miān Muḥammad Ḥayāt Qureshī; Sir Sikandar Ḥayāt Khān, who served as Governor as well as Chief Minister of the Punjāb during the British rule of the Sub-continent; and Nawāb Miān Mushtāq Aḥmad Gurmānī. In addition, several contemporary *'ulamā* and *mashāikh* (spiritual leaders) also figure in the circle of Ḥaḍrat's beneficiaries, prominent among them being the Diwān Ṣāhib of the holy shrine at Ajmēr, the Diwān Ṣāhib of the shrine at Pākpatan, and Khwāja Ḥasan Nizāmī who was connected with the shrine of Ḥaḍrat Nizāmuddīn Auliā at Delhi. Several British officials, too, after some initial misunderstandings, developed high esteem for him as they became convinced of his piety and spiritual standing.

Other aspects of life

i. Daily schedule

Ḥaḍrat spent most of his time in prayer, meditation,

persons daily, and their number swelled to thousands during the two annual 'urs (*عُرس*, i.e., death anniversary commemorations) of Ḥaḍrat Ghauthul A'zam (ؒ) and Ḥaḍrat Khwājā Moinuddīn Chishtī (ؒ) (mentioned on pp.20-22) which were held every year. In addition, many widows and orphans, and some poor but otherwise respectable families were regularly extended financial help. These included some of Ḥaḍrat's disciples from Peshāwar, who had once been very rich merchants but had turned penniless overnight following the Bolshevik Revolution of 1917 in Russia where most of their trading operations had been located. As far as possible, charity to individuals was kept secret so as not to embarrass them or to injure their self-respect.

h. Aversion to cultivate the elite

Because of their abstinence from and indifference to worldly riches, desires, or influences, the *ṣūfī* masters not only kept a respectable distance from kings, rulers, and other official functionaries of their time; they never hesitated to fearlessly proclaim the truth in all matters in the latter's presence whenever the occasion demanded. They thus presented practical instances of acting according to those sayings of the Prophet (ﷺ) in which the "world-loving worshipper" (*زاهد گویا دار*) has been strongly decried, and wherein the utterance of truth in the presence of a tyrant has been extolled as even superior to *jehād*. History abounds in examples of *'ulamā* and *ṣūfīs* who stood firm in the face of despotic tyranny as well as various forms of enticement, and flatly refused to mis-interpret religious issues and injunctions to oblige rulers having ulterior motives. In doing so, they suffered untold privations, and some even lost their lives in this noble cause. At the same time, there are also illustrious examples of truth-loving rulers and monarchs who appreciated the lofty principles of the *ṣūfī* masters, and preferred the path of deference and veneration to them to that of confrontation, thereby achieving both worldly felicity and salvation for the Hereafter.

popularly referred to as *darvīsh* (درویش) or *faqīr* (فقیر), which literally means 'the poor ones' but in reality denotes those who do not care for worldly riches, material possessions, or physical desires.

Once a *ṣūfī* master's fame spread, and the circle of his disciples and admirers grew, money and goods started flowing to him in the form of voluntary offerings. Yet many of the *ṣūfī* masters are known to have given away all of it in charity, keeping nothing for themselves or their families. This was reminiscent of the occasion when the Prophet's closest Companion and first Righteous Caliph Abūbakr (ؓ) donated everything that he had for *jehād* (armed holy combat), and upon the Prophet's query as to what he had kept back for himself and his family replied that Allāh and His Prophet (ﷺ) were enough for them.

Free kitchens (called *langar*, کھانا) were run by all eminent *ṣūfī* masters for the benefit of those who visited them and wished to stay for a while. Their domestic life remained simple and austere, free from wasteful indulgence and luxury, and having only one over-riding objective, namely, doing everything according to God's command and to earn His pleasure.

Generosity and munificence were ingrained in Ḥaḍrat from the beginning. During his school days, he used to distribute almost all the expense money that he received from home among his poorer class-mates, and often starved or fasted himself, thus fulfilling the dictates of charity and self-abnegation at the same time. Later, when people started flocking to him in large numbers and at all times of the day for prayers or guidance, a *langar* was set up to meet their food and lodging needs and the offerings made to Ḥaḍrat by his visitors were spent wholly on meeting the *langar* expenses. Nothing was kept by Ḥaḍrat for his personal use. The visitors to the *langar* averaged a minimum of 250–300

f. Mercy, compassion and constancy

Ḥaḍrat had a heart full of kindness and grace for everyone. He felt deeply for all those who came to him with their tales of affliction or wrote to him about them, seeking his prayers for relief. He listened to everyone with concern and sympathy, and consoled and prayed for them. He cultivated enduring relationship with everyone that came into contact with him, and this relationship was sustained and nurtured even if the other party for some reason became lukewarm or even indifferent. This was because the objective was not worldly gain or loss but love for the sake of Allāh. Critics and detractors were thus treated with even greater grace than the admirers. All this reflected the universality of love that had been preached and practised by the Prophet of Islām (ﷺ), whom the Qur'ān terms *Raḥmat-ul-lil-'ālamīn* (*رَحْمَةُ الْقَائِمِينَ*), i.e., mercy for all the worlds (XXI-107). It also exemplified Allāh's own attributes of Mercifulness and Compassion which, as they appear in the Qur'ān, far outnumber and outweigh His authoritarian attributes. Indeed according to the Qur'ān, Allāh has made Mercy obligatory upon Himself (cf. VI-12 and 54), His Mercy extends over everything (VII-156), He forgives all sins (XXXIX-53), and only the non-believers and those who go astray despair of His Mercy (XII-87 and XV-56).

g. Charity and munificence

Consistent with their calculated abstention from worldly involvements that might divert them from their foremost duty of remembrance of God, the great *ṣūfī* masters never sought to amass wealth or other worldly goods beyond their legitimate needs. Following the illustrious example of the Prophet (ﷺ), his Companions, and members of his household, they preferred the needs of others to their own, helped the needy and the indigent, and fed the poor and the hungry even while starving themselves. For this reason, they were

of his non-Muslim admirers in India endured undiminished, and many of them were in regular correspondence with him until his passing away in 1974 A.D.

e. Humility

Like all truly great men, Ḥaḍrat was modest and humble in spirit as well as in bearing, and deeply disliked pride and conceit of any kind. This was in line with the Qur'ānic denunciation of these things at several places (e.g., XVII-37, 38; XXXI-18; and XL-35), and with the Prophet's saying that no person with even an iota of pride and conceit shall enter paradise. A profound and brilliant scholar, he always called himself a mere "student" of religion and "dust of the feet" of the great early masters. He called his disciples "friends" and "associates" and never sought distinguished posture in their company. He lived frugally and ate very sparingly. His dress was also simple and usually white, but always spotlessly clean as enjoined by Islām. He often indulged in pleasantries with the poor and the lowly, making everyone of his myriad followers feel he was kinder to him than to everyone else. His reverence of the Holy Prophet (ﷺ), of the *Ahl-e-Baet* (*اہل بیت* , i.e., members of the Prophet's household), of the Prophet's Companions, and of the great old spiritual masters, was profound and complete. He also treated with great respect his teachers as well as their family members, and even those others who were in any way associated with them. He was thus a true exemplar of the following verses of the great Rūmī:

از خدا خواهیم تو بینت ادب! بے ادب محروم ماند از لطف رب

(We seek of God the capacity for "respect", because the disrespectful never receive God's grace).

بے ادب تہمانہ خود را داشت بد بلکہ آتش در ہمسہ آفاق زد

(The disrespectful is not only bad himself; he also kindles fire, i.e., spreads evil, in the entire universe).

and a total lack of malice. In times of need, they extended succour to all, irrespective of caste, colour or creed. As a result, even those who did not embrace Islām came to have feelings of deep respect for them as human beings. This respect endured even beyond their earthly lives. As briefly noted earlier (page 20), the shrines of eminent *ṣūfīs* are held in reverence and visited by many non-Muslims—a remarkable phenomenon considering that these same *ṣūfīs* had been responsible for drawing thousands of their co-religionists away from their ancestral faith.

After encountering initial hostility from the non-Muslim ruler and residents of Golrā, mentioned on page 23 above, the family of Ḥaḍrat Pīr Meher 'Alī Shāh came to command their respect and thereby live in peace in their newly-chosen abode. This respect grew with time and attained its peak during the period of Ḥaḍrat and his successor, Ḥaḍrat Bābūjī (r). The harmony and goodwill thus developed was demonstrated in full measure during the country-wide communal discord that erupted at the time of the Sub-continent's partition and Independence in 1947, resulting in large-scale exchange of population between the emerging states of India and Pākistān, accompanied by massive loss of life and property on both sides. During this crisis, Ḥaḍrat Bābūjī first gave protection of life and property to the local non-Muslim residents, and later escorted them personally to the Indo-Pākistān border and saw them cross safely over to India. The feelings of gratitude and obligation thus generated found moving expression during the first few visits that Ḥaḍrat Bābūjī made to India after Independence, when hundreds of Hindūs and Sikhs received him with deep affection and played host to him during his stay in that country.

For political reasons, the conditions for travel between the two countries worsened with the passage of time. As a result, Ḥaḍrat Bābūjī visited India very infrequently during the later years. Nevertheless, the feelings of affection for him

parochial Muslim sects as *kāfir* (کافر, infidel). Instead, he tried, most often successfully, to bring them round to the correct point of view through persuasion and patient argument. In brief, he sought to resolve rather than aggravate parochial differences, to promote love and understanding rather than fan hatred and acrimony, and to forge unity rather than foster schism.

In this context, one of Ḥaḍrat's major contributions was the compilation of a book entitled *Taṣfiah Mābain Sunnī wa Shī'ah* (تصفیه مابین سنی و شیعه Sunni-Shiah Reconciliation), which was intended to decisively resolve the long-standing differences between Islām's two leading sects (the *Sunnī* and the *Shī'ah*) that have caused incalculable damage to the world Muslim community over the past 12 centuries. Unfortunately, Ḥaḍrat passed away before the final completion and publication of this book. After a careful review, the book has been recently published with suitable explanatory notes alongwith Ḥaḍrat's other writings.⁵⁰ A gist of the contents of this book appears under item 7 of Appendix I to this booklet, which gives an annotated list of the published writings of Ḥaḍrat Meher 'Alī Shāh (ؒ).

d. Religious tolerance

As noted earlier, the spread of Islām in various parts of the world, especially in the Indo-Pāk sub-continent, owes a great deal to the missionary work of the *ṣūfīs*. Yet the *ṣūfīs* set unrivalled examples of religious tolerance as well. Their missionary method consisted essentially of modelling their own lives on the loftiest principles of Islām; those around them were led to embrace this model because they found it irresistibly enchanting and better than anything they had seen or experienced before. Not the slightest coercion was used for this purpose. The *ṣūfīs* captured the hearts of people with sheer beauty of character and nobility of conduct. They answered hostility and bigotry with compassion, forgiveness,

On religious issues, Ḥaḍrat's approach, unlike that of some of his contemporaries, was based on absolute moderation and tolerance for points of view different from his own. On those rare occasions when it became absolutely necessary to express his disagreement with others, he would do so very mildly and in the most refined manner so as not to give the slightest offence. For example, in relation to a religious scholar who was and is held in high esteem by a particular sect of Muslims, he once observed: "His scholarly greatness and his services to Islām are beyond dispute. However, on certain issues on which there is consensus among the Muslim *ummah*, he has chosen to adopt an extreme and a rigid stance. (cf. *Mihr-i-Munīr*, *op. cit.*, p. 142.)" This attribute of Ḥaḍrat helps prove the truth of the view expressed by a present-day scholar that "there is a linear relationship between the depth of knowledge and the degree of tolerance."

Carefully avoiding the extremes of the various sects that have created everlasting schisms in the Muslim *ummah* over the centuries, Ḥaḍrat exhorted his followers and others to always emphasise the points of union rather than those of disunity. Averse to petty sectarian controversies, he nevertheless did participate at times in debates involving fundamental religious questions concerned with the preservation of the pristine purity of Islām. For example, he stood up firmly against those new sects which tended to reject the Prophet's *ḥadīth* as an authentic source of the Islāmic *sharīāh* and to rely on the Qur'ān as the sole such source. He also strongly repudiated views involving the slightest disrespect to the august personality of the Prophet (ﷺ) of Islām. Even in these matters, however, while he invariably clinched the issue with brilliant decisive points, he never indulged in the acrimony usually associated with such occasions. His *fatāwā* (rulings) on religious issues were marked by the same moderation. Except for the *Qādiānīs*⁴⁹ who blatantly infringed the fundamental Islāmic doctrine of the finality of Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ), he never denounced any other of the

dictates of the *shariāh* in all that he said, did or preached. He strongly discouraged deviation from the path of the Qur'ān and the *sunnah*, not only in matters of religious ritual (e.g., the daily prayers) but also in day-to-day social affairs, such as those pertaining to mutual dealings, religious tolerance, marriage and divorce, treatment of dependents or neighbours, and so on. This accounts for the universal esteem in which he was held by all schools of religious and secular thought.

c. Balance and moderation

Both as a scholar, a *ṣūfī*, and a human being, Ḥaḍrat's method was marked by that balance and moderation which is the essence of Islām, which distinguishes it from other great faiths known to man, and of which the Holy Prophet (ﷺ) himself was the epitome and the perfect exemplar.

In a long life fully and cleanly lived, Ḥaḍrat maintained an exquisite balance between his religious and secular obligations. In the former sphere, he imparted religious and spiritual light to hundreds of thousands; taught the famous *Mathnavī* of Maulānā Jalāluddīn Rūmī, and the writings of Shaikh Moḥyuddīn Ibn-ul-'Arabī; issued *fatāwā* (فتاویٰ, authoritative rulings) on important religious issues referred to him; participated in scholarly religious debates whenever this became absolutely necessary; campaigned untiringly and effectively against movements seeking to disrupt the Muslim community; and indulged ceaselessly in meditation, prayer, and remembrance of the Supreme Being which is the essence of Islām. In the secular sphere, he maintained all family and other worldly relationships and did so in strict accord with the Islāmic *shariāh*. In short, his life exemplifies what a poet has summed up in a beautiful Persian verse:

نی گویم کہ از عالم جدا باش ہر جا سیکہ باشی با خدا باش

(I do not ask thee to forsake the world; only be with God, i.e., remember Him, wherever thou mayst be.)

A substantial part of Ḥadrat's writings is in these languages. Those who had the privilege and good fortune of listening to him on religious and spiritual matters were spell-bound by his mastery of exposition, strength of argument, depth and breadth of knowledge, sharpness of intellect, and above all his ability to explain the most complex issues in simple and concise but convincing terms for the benefit of persons with average intelligence. His sittings were always attended by a sprinkling of scholars, seeking to advance and sharpen their knowledge of various religious issues, yet he spoke to everyone at his respective level of understanding. In short, Ḥadrat had been blessed with that rare capacity to imbibe and impart knowledge which is given only to the very select few.

b. Strict observance of the *Shariāh*

As noted in earlier sections of this booklet, all eminent *ṣūfīs* of Islām based their spiritual development on a thorough knowledge and a strict observance of the Islāmic *shariāh*, and regarded even slight deviation from the dictates of the *shariāh* as antithetical to true *ṣūfism* and tantamount to sin. Indeed, classical *ṣūfism* was inconceivable without this combination of temporal and spiritual rectitude. In course of time, however, as happens with all human institutions, the combination tended to develop kinks and many latter-day *ṣūfīs* started seeking or claiming spiritual elevation without due knowledge or observance of the *shariāh*. Inevitably this caused the gradual decline of *ṣūfism* from its pristine glory; it even brought some discredit to this one-time illustrious institution. The critics who chose to judge *ṣūfism*, not by the lofty standards set by its classical masters but by the diluted ones of the latter-day pseudo-*ṣūfīs*, quickly multiplied and are found in large numbers today. Nevertheless, the truly eminent *ṣūfīs* have never wavered from the classical path, and *shariāh* observance has remained their hall-mark. Being in the line of the truly great, Ḥadrat strictly followed the

Faiḍ Aḥmad, titled *Mihr-e-Munīr* (*مہر منیر*), which has already been mentioned in the Preface to the booklet.

The attributes of Ḥaḍrat set out in the succeeding paragraphs add up to a combination that is rarely found in religious personalities, and that earned Ḥaḍrat the esteem of all schools of religious thought and practice – an uncommon phenomenon in this part of the world.

a. Edudition and learning

The solid scholarly base of classical *ṣūfism* was noted earlier (pp. 8-9). In line with this tradition, Ḥaḍrat devoted his early years to the learning and mastering of all basic religious sciences of Islām and the rest of his life to furthering that knowledge and imparting it to others. To his store of *shariāh* knowledge, he added a deep study of all important *ṣūfī* literature. In some of this literature, e.g., the *Mathnavī* of Maulānā Jalāluddīn Rūmī and the writings of Shaikh Moḥyuddīn Ibn-ul-‘Arabī (ؒ)⁴⁷, he was acknowledged as a leading authority in the Sub-continent. In the understanding, exposition, and balanced interpretation of the latter’s concept of *wahdat-ul-wujūd* (*وحدت الوجود*, Ultimate Oneness of Being) in particular, with its myriad fine and subtle nuances, Ḥaḍrat stands very high among the ‘ulamā and *ṣūfīs* of the Sub-continent. He also had mastery in the ‘science of numbers’ (*‘ilm-ul-a‘dād*, *علم الأعداد*) or *‘ilm-ul-ḥurūf* (*علم الحروف*, science of letters), which is regarded in *ṣūfism* as the root of sciences⁴⁸ and is said to have been pioneered by Imām Ja‘far Ṣādiq (ؒ), a great grandson of Fourth Caliph ‘Alī (ؓ).

As a result of all this, Ḥaḍrat developed in course of time into one of the most eminent religious-cum-mystic scholars this Sub-continent has produced. His ability to write and speak masterfully in Arabic and Persian, which have been the two principal languages of Islām throughout its history, brought him recognition in the entire Muslim world.

the Holy Prophet (ﷺ) at Madinah is an integral and essential part of the Haj programme. Besides operating as a means of consolidating the unity of the world Muslim community, *Haj* and *ziārah* confer untold religious and spiritual benefits upon individual pilgrims, especially those who are mystically inclined. Ḥaḍrat undertook this sacred journey in 1307 A.H. at the age of 31, accompanied by one of his disciples. During his stay in the Hedjāz, he met several well-known religious personalities, including Ḥājī Imdādullāh Mohājir of Makkah (cf. footnote 41) and Ḥājī Raḥmatullāh Mohājir of Makkah. Maulānā Muḥammad Ghāzī, who was then teaching at Madressah Şaulatiyah (مدرسه صولتیه), the leading religious school at Makkah, was so deeply impressed by Ḥaḍrat's erudition and overpowered by his magnetic personality that he left his job at Makkah and accompanied Ḥaḍrat on his return journey to Golrā. He spent the rest of his life teaching and benefiting from Ḥaḍrat's company at Golrā, where he also served as the principal tutor of Ḥaḍrat's only son and successor, Ḥaḍrat Sayyid Ghulām Moḥyuddīn, affectionately nicknamed by Ḥaḍrat as Bābūjī (ب).

The journey to Madīnah, a little over 400 kilometers from Makkah, used to be performed on camelback in those days of slow and primitive transport, and took several weeks. It was during this journey that Ḥaḍrat was honoured with a vision of the Holy Prophet (ﷺ) in dream, which, besides other spiritual benefits, inspired him to compose a *na t* (نعت), i.e., poem in the Prophet's adoration, in the Punjābī language that has attained wide popularity in *şūfī* circles.

Character and attributes

Ḥaḍrat's attributes and achievements are too numerous and wide-ranging to admit of elaboration in this booklet. They will therefore be touched upon here only briefly and selectively. A full account of Ḥaḍrat's life and work is contained in his detailed Urdū-language biography by Maulānā

quote *The New Encyclopaedia Britannica* once again, *ṣūfī* masters “have raised their voices against social inequality and have tried, even at the cost of their lives, to change social and political conditions for the better and to spiritually revive the masses.” (cf. Vol. 22, 1985, p. 24).

In line with the foregoing quotations from the Qur’ān and the *ḥadīth*, the great *ṣūfī* poet Maulānā Jalāluddīn Rūmī (ؒ),⁴⁵ whose celebrated *Mathnavī* (*مثنوی*) ranks among the loftiest *ṣūfī* works and was termed by ‘Abdul Raḥmān Jāmī as “the Qur’ān in Persian language,” sums up the *ṣūfī* view of “the world” in the following verse:

چیت دُنیا؟ از خدا غافل بُن
نہ تماش و نقرہ و فرزندوزن

(What is the world? It is not vocation, riches, sons or wives, but forgetfulness of God.)

In Islāmic *ṣūfism*, therefore, the seclusion, contemplation and prayer are meant to enable the *ṣūfī* to single-mindedly traverse the various stages of spiritual growth, and thereby prepare himself for an eventual role of mentorship which he must perform in the full blaze of the public eye.⁴⁶ And this is precisely what happened in Ḥaḍrat’s case. The period between his spiritual “graduation” in 1889 A.D. (1307 A.H.), and his passing away 48 years later, was wholly devoted by Ḥaḍrat to the dispensation of knowledge and spiritual guidance to the hundreds of thousands who sought them at his hands.

Visit to the Hedjāz (Sāūdī Arabia) for Ḥaj

Ḥaj, i.e., the pilgrimage to Holy *Ka’bah* at Makkah, is prescribed as an obligatory religious duty, to be performed at least once in his or her lifetime, for every adult Muslim man and woman who can afford the journey financially and physically. Visit to pay homage (*ziārah*, *زیارة*) at the tomb of

approach is supported by several verses of the Qur'ān, of which two may be cited here: (i) "O ye believers, when the call to prayer is proclaimed on Friday (the day of Assembly), hasten earnestly to the remembrance of Allāh, and leave off business; that is best for you if ye but knew. And when the prayer is finished, then ye disperse through the land, and seek of the Bounty of God (i.e., resume your usual activities of life) and celebrate the praises of Allāh often that ye may benefit." (LXII, 9–10); and (ii) "O ye believers, let not your riches or your children divert you from the remembrance of Allāh; if anyone acts thus, they are the losers." (LXIII–9). In accord with the spirit of these Qur'ānic admonitions, many of the renowned *ṣūfī* masters pursued different vocations and trades to earn honest living, simultaneously with their pursuit of the spiritual path. This is also in complete accord with the Prophet's saying which forms the basis of the adage: "*Al-kāsibo ḥabībullāh* الكَاسِبُ حَبِيبُ اللَّهِ i.e., Allāh loves him who earns his living by working."

Furthermore, history records numerous instances in which the *ṣūfīs* waged valiant struggles, both with the spoken and the written word as well as with the sword when this became unavoidable, against forces of tyranny and oppression. The participation of *ṣūfī darvīshes* in the Muslim military campaigns in different countries has already been mentioned on page 18 above. The *ṣūfīs* also played a prominent role in reviving the spirits of the Muslim *ummah* after the greatest calamity that had befallen the Islāmic world in the shape of the Mongol invasion of the mid-seventh century A.H., which destroyed everything that came in its way. They were even instrumental in the large-scale conversions to Islām of the self-same Mongols not very long after they had overrun and conquered Islāmic lands.⁴³ In addition, the *ṣūfīs* of the *Qādiriyyah* and *Naqshbandiyyah* schools are known to have waged armed *jehād* (جِهَاد)⁴⁴ against the Russians in the Central Turkestān both during Czarist rule and during the period since the Bolshevik Revolution of 1917. Finally, to

in the Holy Prophet (ﷺ)'s own periods of retirement into the cave of *Hirā* outside Makkah for contemplation and prayer, which preceded his formal elevation to prophethood. They tend sometimes to be compared to Christian monasticism (i.e., monkhood). The comparison is, however, totally invalid and misleading. *First*, how could the *ṣūfī* adopt monasticism or anything patterned on it when, according to the Qur'ān, monasticism was not enjoined by God even upon the Christians but they imposed it upon themselves? (cf. LVII-27).⁴² *Second*, seclusion under Christian monasticism is intended generally to be life-long, whereas in *ṣūfism* it is a temporary and passing phase among a succession of consciously planned phases. And *third*, Christian monasticism seems to stem from the concept that wordly life is essentially sinful and must be abjured completely if salvation is to be attained. Islām categorically rejects this concept, and maintains that all human actions are virtuous or otherwise depending upon whether or not they are performed according to Divine Will or Injunction.

The foregoing argument is endorsed by the *New Encyclopaedia Britannica* (*op. cit.*, Vol. 8, p. 245), which traces the origins of monasticism to Christianity, and compares the Christian monastic practices to those in Buddhism, Hinduism, Jainism and Taoism, but makes no mention of Islām in this context.

It also seems necessary here to correct a mistaken conclusion drawn by those critics of *ṣūfism* who have interpreted the call made by many *ṣūfī* masters for the "abjuration of the world" in its purely literal sense and equated it with a plea for hermitism. What the *ṣūfī* masters have in fact meant is not the renunciation of worldly life and its pursuits as such, which would be palpably un-Islāmic, but abstention from the *love* of and too much pre-occupation with worldly goods, luxury, and comforts to such an extent as to become forgetful of God and of one's duty to Him. This *ṣūfī*

aspects of the Islāmic *sharīah* (temporal code), Ḥaḍrat diverted his attention, in line with the family tradition, to the spiritual field. He was first initiated into his ancestral *Qādiri-yah*³⁸ *ṣūfī* school by his father's maternal uncle, Pīr Faḍal-uddīn. Later, for further spiritual elevation, he sought induction into the *Chishtiyah Nizāmiyah*³⁹ order at the hands of its leading contemporary light, Ḥaḍrat Khwājā Shamsuddīn of Siyāl Sharīf (Distt. Sargodhā, the Punjāb). His formal links remained throughout with these two schools, to which he initiated seekers of spiritual guidance at his hands. Some years later, during his visit to the Ḥedjāz for Ḥaj, he was admitted to, and permitted to initiate people into, the *Chishtiyah Ṣābiriyah*⁴⁰ order by Hājī Imdādullāh Mohājir of Makkah⁴¹, who had been greatly impressed by Ḥaḍrat's erudition and scholarly prowess during discussion on an important but complex religious issue.

The period of Ḥaḍrat's spiritual growth was marked by wide travels, extended spells of self-imposed seclusion for purposes of contemplation, prayer and meditation, fasting, and diverse spiritual exercises. These, *inter alia*, included *murāqabah* (*مراقبه*, contemplation) on a stone slab of the size of a prayer mat, which was placed outside his *hujrah* (*حجره*, prayer cell). On this slab, Ḥaḍrat often spent whole nights (including the long and exceedingly cold winter ones) sitting motionless in single-minded contemplation until the break of dawn, when he rose to prepare for his morning prayers. During daytime, the same slab used to serve as a seat for his teaching and related activities. There are also numerous spots in the districts of Lāhore, Multān, Muẓaffargarh, Derā Ghāzī Khān, and Rāwalpindī, and in the hills around Golrā, where Ḥaḍrat spent long periods in prayer, *dhikr* (*ذکر*, remembrance), and reflection. These spells constitute recognised essential elements in classical Islāmic *ṣūfism* as aids to soul-purification, and are meant to enable the *sālik* (*سالك*, i.e., wayfarer or traverser of the 'Path') to "graduate" and become a mentor for others. They are rooted

mainly as ‘Ḥaḍrat’, was a uniquely endowed child, possessing extraordinary intelligence, memory, physique, and other qualities of head and heart. His birth had been spiritually foretold much in advance, and many portents testified to his being a born *walī* (ولي, saint). His early religious education was arranged by his parents and elders under carefully selected and eminent local teachers. Later, he himself sought out the best available teachers in remote parts of the Sub-continent, and travelled to their schools to complete his education. Ḥaḍrat’s rare intellect, his thirst for learning, and his single-minded devotion to studies enabled him to cover all known fields of Islāmic religious education, and to start teaching himself at Golrā, by the relatively early age of 20 years. His phenomenal memory enabled him to memorize the entire Qur’ān just by reading it several times, and without any conscious or systematic effort towards that end. His teachers included, among others, Maulānā Luṭfullāh of ‘Alīgarh and Maulānā Aḥmad ‘Alī of Sahāranpūr, both of country-wide contemporary fame. He also tried to join the school of another famous scholar and teacher, Maulānā Aḥmad Ḥasan *Muḥaddith* of Kānpūr, but the latter could not admit him because of his impending journey to the Hedjāz for Ḥaj (the annual Muslim pilgrimage to Holy *Ka’bah*, the House of God, at Makkah) — a journey that used to take months in those days of relatively slow transport. Many years later, when Ḥaḍrat’s own fame spread far and wide, Maulānā Aḥmad Ḥasan used to regret his having turned away a pupil of such outstanding calibre and potential. He in fact once travelled to Pākpatan, the resting place of Ḥaḍrat Bābā Farīduddīn Ganjshakar (ؒ), another very great name among the Muslim *ṣūfīs* of the Sub-continent, on the occasion of the latter’s annual ‘*Urs*’³⁷ which Ḥaḍrat used to attend regularly, solely to earn the privilege of meeting him.

The spiritual journey

Having equipped himself with the knowledge of all

time, Shaikh 'Abdul Qādir (ؒ) was born in Gīlān (Irān), but received his religious and spiritual education at Baghdād, which was then the foremost Islāmic centre of learning, and spent the rest of his life teaching and dispensing spiritual guidance there. The Shaikh is popularly known as the *Ghauthul A'zam* (نوّث الاعظم The Great Helper), *Mohyuddīn* (مُحْيِي الدِّين The Reviver of Religion), and *Pīrān-e-Pīr* (پیران پیر The Pir of Pīrs). These titles signify, respectively, the Shaikh's outstanding spiritual capacity to give succour to those in distress, his great services in revitalizing Islām and its hold on the minds and actions of his contemporaries, and his ascendancy over other *ṣūfī* masters of his own and other generations. The Shaikh's shrine in Baghdād is a place of pilgrimage for *ṣūfīs* and non-*ṣūfīs* alike from all parts of the Muslim world.

The ancestors of Ḥaḍrat Meher 'Alī Shāh had migrated in the mid-fifteenth century A.D. from Baghdād to the Province of Bengāl in India, whence their offspring later moved to other parts of the Subcontinent and finally settled down at Golrā in the province of Punjāb towards the end of the 18th century. Here it was that Ḥaḍrat Meher 'Alī Shāh was born on the first day of Ramaḍān (the Muslim fasting month) in 1275 A.H. (1859 A.D.). His family had been known for piety and saintliness even before him. His father, Sayyid Nadhar Dīn Shāh, during his youth, had been condemned to be publicly burnt alive by the local Sikh³⁶ ruler on a false charge of immorality, but had had his innocence providentially vindicated when the fire blazing all around him failed to touch his person — a miraculous incident that had added greatly to the family's prestige and veneration. Nevertheless, it was only with the advent and rise to eminence of Ḥaḍrat Meher 'Alī Shāh that the family as well as its abode, Golrā, acquired wide and enduring fame.

The early years and education

Ḥaḍrat Meher 'Alī Shāh, to be referred to henceforth

II. ḤADRAT PĪR MEHER 'ALĪ SHĀH (ؒ) OF GOLRĀ SHARĪF

One of the most illustrious of such Islāmic scholars and *ṣūfīs* in the Indo-Pākistān sub-continent was Ḥadrat Sayyid³³ Pīr³⁴ Meher 'Ali Shāh (ؒ) of Golrā, District Rāwalpindī (now Islāmabād, Pākistān). Born in 1859, the period of Ḥadrat Meher 'Ali Shāh's mission spanned nearly half a century until his passing away in 1937. During this period, he attained rare scholarly and spiritual heights, imparted religious knowledge and guidance to thousands of their seekers, and provided solace and prayers to the myriad others that thronged to him for this purpose. The remainder of this booklet describes the salient attributes and achievements of this great man and his mission.

Ancestry and birth

Ḥadrat Meher 'Alī Shāh was a direct descendent, from the side of both of his parents, of the Holy Prophet (ﷺ) of Islām, and of his son-in-law and principal spiritual successor, fourth Righteous Caliph 'Alī (ؓ). The fact that all the illustrious prophets of God during the past three thousand years or so, including Holy Prophet Muḥammad (ﷺ), were descendents of Prophet Abraham (Ibrāhīm), underscores the importance of lineage in matters religious and spiritual. While personal qualities and effort are as essential in these fields as in any other, chaste lineage and family environment undoubtedly provide the backdrop in which piety and virtue can germinate and thrive. This in no way contravenes the principle of equality at the general human level which Islām so strongly stresses.

In the 25th generation, Ḥadrat Meher 'Alī Shāh descended from a scholar and sage of unequalled renown in the Muslim world, namely, Ḥadrat Shaikh 'Abdul Qādir Gīlānī (ؒ)³⁵. Widely acknowledged as the greatest *ṣūfī* divine of all

endeavour in this part of the world continues to the present day. Students and scholars of Islāmic history are unanimous in the view that the great *ṣūfīs* contributed signally, not only to the spread of Islām among India's non-Muslims but also to the revival and sustenance of true religious and moral values among the contemporary Muslims themselves, the rulers and the ruled alike.

to carry the torch of Islām to remote, alien, inhospitable, and in many cases downright hostile lands. They encountered serious obstacles and hazards from the non-Muslim local communities and their leaders or rulers during their missions, including sometimes threats to their lives. They faced all this, however, with patience, faith and fortitude, and with God's help and grace ultimately overcame them. They answered hostility with love, bigotry with tolerance, tyranny with forgiveness, and abuse with prayers for the well-being of their detractors or tormentors. In short, they captured the hearts of people with the sheer beauty of their character and dealings. One of the results of this has been that their shrines are today held in equal esteem by the Muslims as well as non-Muslims, particularly in the Indo-Pākistān sub-continent.

Unlike the military conquerors, who often kept their capitals in their homelands and visited the conquered lands only periodically either for on-the-spot inspections or for quelling revolts by their appointed governors or army commanders, the *ṣūfī* luminaries usually settled down permanently in the places they chose as centres of their missions. In most cases, their descendents and successors carried on their noble work after them. In addition, their own spiritual influence tended to abide, and even to increase over time – a phenomenon that can be explained and understood on a spiritual and metaphysical plane only.

The above is especially true of the Indo-Pākistān sub-continent, where the *ṣūfī* sages, particularly those belonging to the *Chishtiyah* (*چشتیہ*) school²⁹ introduced here by the great Khwājā Moīnuddin Chishtī (*ؒ*) of Ajmēr, played a dominant missionary role. Starting as early as the 11th century A.D. (5th century A.H.)³⁰ with the arrival from Ghaznī (Afghānistān) in Lāhore (India) of Makhdūm 'Alī of Hajvēr³¹ (popularly known as Dātā Ganj Bakhsh)³², and perhaps even sometime earlier, the *ṣūfī* missionary

that the Far East and South East Asia were first introduced to Islām by Arab traders.²⁷ These traders had been trading in these regions long before the advent of Islām, and upon embracing Islām themselves they undertook to carry its light to these far-flung areas. Later, some of the great *ṣūfī* masters or their disciples carried on the missionary work, and it was through them that Islām spread on a mass scale in these distant lands.

Furthermore, only a miniscule minority among the converts to Islām is known to have permanently renounced it after once embracing it, suggesting voluntary and willing conversion and discounting the use of force or duress. The Qur'ān itself categorically rejects any form of compulsion in religion²⁸, and it is inconceivable that its custodians, who regard it as God's Final Word in all matters, would have so openly flouted one of its most important and explicit injunctions.

The conclusion is thus inescapable that the spread of Islām as a religion is, to a very significant extent, the achievement primarily of its *'ulamā* and *ṣūfīs*. The *New Encyclopaedia Britannica* (1985, Vol. 22, *Islām*, p. 24) acknowledges the fact in the following words:

“The main contribution of the *ṣūfī* orders. . . . is their missionary activity. . . . *Ṣūfism* has helped to shape large parts of Muslim society. . . . The missionary activities of the *ṣūfīs* have enlarged the fold of the faithful. The importance of *ṣūfism* for spiritual education, and inculcation in the faithful of the virtues of trust in God, piety, faith in God's love, and veneration of the Prophet, cannot be over-rated.”

Unsupported by organized or well-financed missionary enterprise, these self-less men of God often travelled hundreds and even thousands of miles, on foot or by primitive transport,

the superiority of the heart over the head, of knowledge over vision, and of *'irfān* (real knowledge) over philosophy.

William Stoddart testifies to the Islāmic genesis of *ṣūfism* in these words: "One cannot be a Benedictine without being a Christian, or a *ṣūfī* without being a Muslim. There is no *ṣūfism* without Islām."²⁶

In a wider context, the charge of borrowing from Greek and other old traditions is also sometimes brought against Islām itself. However, the resemblances (if any) between Islām and other systems are largely superficial or incidental. Human history, temporal as well as religious and spiritual, being one continuously evolving whole, similarities on certain points are bound to exist between systems of belief and action prevalent in each succeeding age. They exist even among contemporary systems. However, they need not and must not be interpreted so as to damage the distinct identity of the various systems and codes *as a whole and in their basic essentials*.

Ṣūfīs' role in the spread of Islām

Contrary to what is often alleged by Western and other non-Muslim scholars, Islām spread over the globe primarily through its *'ulamā* and *ṣūfīs* rather than through military conquest. The latter, by bringing new lands under Muslim sway, admittedly created a climate somewhat favourable to the spread of Islām in certain cases. However, the actual task of bringing it to the hearts and souls of the new millions was performed by the *'ulamā* and the *ṣūfīs*, many of whom served in and accompanied the Muslim armies in their campaigns and many also came as traders and craftsmen. To illustrate, Islām travelled to some countries of South East Asia (e.g., Malaysia, Indonesia, even some parts of China) long before they were militarily "conquered" by the Muslims. The fact seems to have been fairly well-documented

In this process, they did identify and may have absorbed some of the ideas of those systems. The touchstone for doing so, however, would be whether or not those ideas conformed to the Islāmic *sharīah*. Anything in the slightest degree at variance with the latter would be summarily rejected, for no such thing does in fact figure in the available authentic *ṣūfī* writings and pronouncements.

The following excerpt from *The New Encyclopaedia Britannica* (Vol. 22, 15th Edition, 1985, p. 19) bears out the foregoing observations (italics provided):

“Though the roots of Islāmic mysticism formerly were supposed to have stemmed from various non-Islāmic sources in ancient Europe and even India, *it now seems established that the movement grew out of early Islāmic asceticism that developed as a counterweight to the increasing worldliness of the expanding Muslim community; only later were foreign elements that were compatible with mystical theology adopted and made to conform to Islām.*”

The fact established through objective and unbiased research is that, what to speak of borrowing from or being influenced by Greek or any other brand of philosophy, it was the *ṣūfīs* who waged a heroic and successful struggle from the 5th Hijrah century onwards to save the Islāmic intellectual world from the ravages of Greek philosophy that had ruthlessly descended upon it. Al-Ghazālī, whose views about *ṣūfīs* and *ṣūfism* were reproduced above, heads the list of the Muslim scholars who launched this epic struggle. His books titled *Maqāsid-ul-Falāsifah* (مقاصد الفلاسفة) The Objectives of the Philosophers) and *Tahāfat-ul-Falāsifah* (تہافت الفلاسفة) The Misconceptions of the Philosophers) deal with this subject convincingly and in detail. More recently, ‘Allāmā Muḥammad Iqbāl, the world-famous poet-philosopher of the East (1876–1938), in his later works, has established

likening the scholars of his *ummah* to the prophets of old (footnote 3) could be aptly applied. They could be said to be the true beneficiaries of the prophetic heritage. This is especially true of those *ṣūfīs* who, to quote Maulānā ‘Abdur Raḥmān Jāmī, “return from their mystical experience in a higher, sanctified state of mind and are able to lead other people on the right path.”²⁴

The great Muslim scholar and divine, Imām Abū Ḥāmid al Ghazālī, whom even the Western scholars regard as one of the most outstanding intellectual personalities of his own or of any other era, has this to say with respect to the *ṣūfīs* of Islām (italics provided):

“I have discovered with absolute certainty that the *ṣūfīs* alone are the great traversers of the path of God. Their character is the best character, their path the straightest path, and their moral attributes the most correct and refined. The wisdom of the wise, the sagacity of the sages, and the knowledge of scholars of *shariāh*, all combined, could not present anything nobler than their character and morals. *All their overt and inner actions are derived from prophethood*, and there is no light or source of light on the earth’s surface greater than the light of prophethood”.²⁵

The foregoing also disproves the conclusion reached by a class of scholars and researchers (most of them Western, some also Eastern) that some of the *ṣūfī* ideas and practices were derived from Greek and Neoplatonic philosophic traditions. This conclusion seems to be based on a misreading of *ṣūfī* literature and ideas. As noted earlier, *ṣūfī* thought and practice are rooted entirely in the Islāmic *shariāh*. At the same time, in consonance with the emphatic injunction to imbibe knowledge (religious or secular) from every possible source (cf. footnote 6), the *ṣūfīs* studied earlier and contemporary non-Islāmic systems for educational purposes.

latter constitute only a very small part of the activity of life, and are in fact meant to ingrain the concept of God's omnipresence and omniscience in the human mind, so as to enable man to steadfastly do good and shun evil to earn Divine pleasure. Indeed, Islām regards the fulfilment of one's obligations to one's fellow-beings (*ḥuqūq-ul-'ibād*, حَقُوقُ الْعِبَاد) as equal in importance to his obligations to Allāh (*ḥuqūq-ullāh*, حَقُوقُ اللَّهِ), and regards the simultaneous fulfilment of both as indispensable for building a truly Islāmic character. On this premise, Islām defines every worldly action as *'ibādat* provided it conforms to God's will and injunction and is carried out with the intention of earning His pleasure. This view is supported by the Holy Prophet (ﷺ)'s famous saying: "Deeds are as the intentions underlying them are,"²³ which implies that every human deed done to earn the Creator's pleasure will be duly rewarded by Him and that the reverse will also be true. Consequently, injunctions have been laid down and principles established in the Qur'ān as well as in the Prophet's *sunnah* (practice) by adhering to which a Muslim can bring every action of his or hers in the purview of *'ibādat* as defined in Islām. In such a pervasive concept of *'ibādat*, every secular action has a spiritual dimension, and only by combining the two can a person claim to be a true Muslim.

It is for the aforesaid reason that all the great Prophets of God enjoined good and forbade evil *in the total daily life* as part of their missions, although, as mentioned earlier, some of them did highlight those aspects in which particularly serious social maladies prevailed in their communities. This attribute is especially conspicuous in the mission of the Prophet (ﷺ) of Islām. In fact, as stated on page 7, the Qur'ān terms the Prophet's *ummah* as "the best ever brought forth from mankind" primarily because of its fulfilment of its sacred twin obligation of enjoining good and forbidding evil. The *ṣūfīs*, who seek to combine the aforesaid attributes in optimum degree, can therefore perhaps justly be regarded as the only class of people to whom the Prophet's saying

ṣūfī loves or dislikes others only for the sake of Allāh and not for any selfish reasons or motives. Above all, the *ṣūfī* loves Allāh because such love alone can effectively veer him from the love of the world and its myriad temptations.

F.A.D. Tholuck, a German professor of divinity, declared that “the *ṣūfī* doctrine was both generated and must be illustrated by Muḥammad (ﷺ)’s own mysticism”.²⁰

The great Persian poet and *ṣūfī*, Shaikh Muṣleḥuddīn Sādī of Shīrāz, underscored the *ṣūfī*’s strict adherence to the *sharīah* when he wrote:

خلافِ پیغمبر کے راہ گزیدہ کہ ہرگز بمنزلِ نخواہد رسید

(He who chose a path other than that of the Prophet (ﷺ) will never reach the ultimate destination (of perfect communion with God).

پہنڈارِ سعدی کہ راہِ صفیٰ تو اس رفتِ جز درپے مصطفیٰ

(O Sa’dī, do not think that the path of purity (or *ṣūfism*) can be traversed except by following *Muṣṭafā*, i.e., the Holy Prophet (ﷺ).

It becomes clear from these few examples that *ṣūfism* is firmly rooted in the Islāmic *sharīah*.

What lends force and credence to the preceding observations of Shaikh Sarrāj, Ibn Khaldūn, Shāh Waliullāh, Tholuck and Sādī and those of many others not reproduced here, is the comprehensive sense in which Islām conceives *ibādat* (عبادت or worship), namely, as the sole purpose of the creation of the *jinn*²¹ and the human beings²². That being so, *ibādat* must necessarily cover everything that man does during his earthly life, and not be limited to formal prayers and other religious rituals (e.g., fasting and *Haj*) alone. The

Consistent with the foregoing view about the genesis of *ṣūfism*, the *ṣūfī* approach to *'ibādat* (عِبَادَةٌ, worship) is based fundamentally on the love of Allāh and His Prophet (ﷺ), since true love alone compels total submission and obedience. This approach reflects the *ṣūfī*'s anxiety to do nothing even remotely contrary to the will or command of Allāh and His Prophet (ﷺ), and thereby adhere to the Qur'ānic injunction to follow Allāh and the Prophet (ﷺ) contained at many places in the Book (e.g., III-32; IV-59, 64, 69 and 80; V-92; VIII-20 and 46; XXIV-54; XLVII-33; and LXIV-12). It particularly denotes the *ṣūfī*'s practical recognition of the Qur'ānic pronouncements that (a) "Say (O Muḥammad to mankind): If you love Allāh, follow me; Allāh will (then also) love you and forgive your sins"; (III, 31), and (b) "Whoever obeys the Messenger (in fact) obeys Allāh" (IV-80)¹⁷. The *ṣūfī*'s love for Allāh thus conforms to the Qur'ānic verse which describes the "passionate love of Allāh" as the prime attribute of the true believers (II-165)¹⁸. His love for the Prophet (ﷺ) is rooted in the Prophet's own saying that a Muslim's *īmān* (faith) is not complete unless he or she loves him (i.e., the Prophet) more than his parents, children, or anything else in the world. The Prophet (ﷺ) once said that Allāh loves His human creation inconceivably more than the most loving mother would love her child. Bearing this in mind, and also the Prophet's injunction to his followers to adopt the attributes of Allāh,¹⁹ the *ṣūfī* loves all his fellow-beings regardless of caste, colour, or creed. Following the Prophet's example, he preaches and guides, not out of any self-interest or a desire for publicity and renown, but to save people from the wrath of Allāh.

Ḥadrat 'Alī (رضي الله عنه), the fourth Righteous Caliph and the fountainhead of most of the *ṣūfī* schools, once spared the life of an enemy overpowered by him on battlefield when the latter spat on his face, for the reason that killing him now would amount to avenging a personal insult rather than earning the pleasure of Allāh. True to this example, the

or first Caliph Abūbakr (ؓ)¹⁵, both among the Prophet's most eminent Companions and spiritual legatees, and through them to the Prophet (ﷺ) himself. This also further endorses the statement made earlier that the *ṣūfīs* were basically religious scholars (*'ulamā*), since the Prophet (ﷺ) once described himself as "the city of knowledge" (*Madīnatul 'Ilm*, مدينة العلم) and 'Alī as "its gate" (*Bābuhā*, بابها).

Discussions on the genesis of *ṣūfism* also refer to a well-known *ḥadīth* (حديث, saying or tradition) of the Holy Prophet (ﷺ). According to this *ḥadīth*, Archangel Gabriel (جبرائيل, *Jibrāil*) once appeared in human form to the Prophet (ﷺ) in the presence of some of his Companions, and questioned him about the true meanings of *Islām* (إسلام, submission), *Īmān* (إيمان, faith) and *Iḥsān* (إحسان, excellence). In reply to these questions, which were in fact meant to educate the Companions about these basic concepts, the Prophet (ﷺ) is said to have defined *Iḥsān* (excellence) in these words: "Iḥsān is that when you worship God, you should think as if you are actually seeing Him; if that be not possible, you should at least think as if He is seeing you." This shows that *Iḥsān* is the real essence of *Islām* and it is meant to help see and understand God as *the* Ultimate Reality, as well as to ingrain the idea of His omnipresence and omniscience in the human mind. The well-known Muslim scholar, historian and thinker of the Indo-Pākistān sub-continent, Shāh Walīullāh *Muḥaddith*¹⁶ of Delhī, has declared the above *ḥadīth* as the basis of *taṣawwuf* (Islāmic *ṣūfism*), and has discussed the issue at length in his renowned work, *Hujjatullāh-ul-Bālighah* (حجة الله البالغة Allāh's Final Argument). Inspired by this *ḥadīth*, all truly great and eminent *ṣūfīs* have emphasized and practised the constant "inner" remembrance of Allāh, even when outwardly engaged in their day-to-day worldly activities, as a means of attaining ultimate communion with the Supreme Being, and have termed it as *Ṣalāt-e-dāemī* (صلوة دائمی perpetual worship).

Although, according to the foregoing quotation from Shaikh Sarrāj, the words *taṣawwuf* or *ṣūfī* were not extant or in use in the Prophet's time, they are nevertheless not wholly unrelated to that august period either. As mentioned in footnote 5, one of the views about the origins of these words holds that they were inspired by the example of that group of the Prophet's Companions who were called *Aṣ'ḥāb-i-ṣuffah* (اصحاب صفوة or people of the dais), who had devoted themselves wholly to the study of the Qur'ān and Islām, and who were engaged in it day and night on a raised platform in the Prophet's mosque in Madīnah.

The above-quoted view of Shaikh Sarrāj is echoed by the great Muslim historian, jurist and scholar, Abdul Raḥmān Ibn Khaldūn, in the following excerpt from his *Muqaddimat-ut-Tārikh* (مقدمة التاريخ or An Introduction to History), which has been described by Arnold Toynbee¹² as "undoubtedly the greatest work of its kind that has ever been created by any mind in any time or place" (italics provided):

"*Sūfism* belongs to the sciences of the religious law that originated in Islām. It is based on the assumption that the practices of its adherents had always been considered by the important early Muslims, *the men around Muḥammad (ﷺ) and the men of the second generation*, as the path of truth and right guidance. The *ṣūfī* approach is based upon constant application to divine worship, abstinence from the pleasure, prosperity and position to which the great mass aspire, and retirement from the world into solitude for divine worship. *These things were general in the men around Muḥammad (ﷺ) and the early Muslims.*"¹³

The views of Shaikh Sarrāj and Ibn Khaldūn are also supported by the fact that most of the recognised *ṣūfī* schools, formally called *silsilah* (سلسلة or the "chain"), trace their origins to the fourth Righteous Caliph 'Alī (عليه السلام)¹⁴

actions. The present sharp differentiations between the two seem to have arisen primarily from the progressive formalization of the *ṣūfī* orders as part of the inevitable institutionalization process, and the introduction of special terms to describe the *ṣūfī*'s spiritual exercises, "states" (*أحوال* , *aḥwāl*) and "stations" (*مقامات* , *maqāmāt*), over the centuries. These, however, parallel similar formalisation of terms etc. in the sphere of the *sharī'ah* as well. Western "Orientalists" and some Muslim scholars and intellectuals have also perhaps aided the stratification process by subjecting *ṣūfism* to study and analysis as a separate branch of Islām.

Shaikh Abū Naṣr Sarrāj, in his well-known treatise on *ṣūfism* entitled *Kitābul-Lama'* (*كتاب النور* , The Book of Light), considers that all categories of religious scholars (e.g., those specializing in the *ḥadīth* *حدیث* , or the Prophet's sayings and traditions, in *fiqh* *فقه* or jurisprudence, and in *taṣawwuf* *تصوّف* , or *ṣūfism*) merit to be termed as successors to the Prophetic heritage. However, he ascribes certain distinctive attributes to the *ṣūfīs*, namely, that "their *tawḥīd* (*توحيد* , or concept of Divine Unity) is absolutely pure, they do not care for anything or anyone except Allāh under any circumstances, and the centre of their love is Allāh and Allāh alone."⁹ As for the oft-raised objection that no one was called a *ṣūfī* in the time of the Prophet (ﷺ) and that this term originated a long time later, Shaikh Sarrāj observes that the essence of *ṣūfism* did in fact exist even in the Prophet's time, and that in a very real sense the Prophet's Companions (*اصحاب* , *Aṣ'ḥāb*) were *ṣūfīs*, since they combined in themselves a theoretical knowledge of all essentials of Islām with spiritual piety and temporal rectitude of a very high order, deriving both from their supreme fountain-head, i.e., the Prophet (ﷺ) himself¹⁰. However, since their companionship of the Prophet (ﷺ) was an honour of such high order that it surpassed and encompassed every other attribute and virtue possessed by them, it precluded their being called by any epithet other than that of the Prophet's "Companions" (*اصحاب*)¹¹.

kiah) of the “self” (or *nafs*, نفس), the seat of all carnal desire, and thereby equip themselves for the performance of righteous deeds which the Qur’ān regards as the foremost quality of the believers’. To use Qur’ānic terminology, they sought to travel from the *nafs-i-ammārah* (نفس اماره evil-inciting or the animal self), through the *nafs-i-lawwāmah* (نفس لوامة, the reproachful self), to the *nafs-i-muṭmainnah* (نفس مطمئنة, the soul at peace), which represents the highest stage of spiritual development (cf. XII–53, LXXX–2, and LXXXIX–27 respectively). This they sought to achieve through prayer, meditation, and “remembrance” (or *dhikr*, ذكر) of Allāh⁸, while strictly observing the *sharī’ah* in day-to-day worldly affairs. In course of time, their spiritual method came to be known technically as *ṭarīqah* (طريقة or “the Path”). This was nothing separate or different from the *sharī’ah* but only reflected the latter’s inner essence and spirit as distinct from its outer form. The *ṣūfīs* could thus be said to have in a sense outshone the pure ‘ulamā by more consciously combining temporal rectitude and beauty of character with spiritual purification of self as well as others, which the Qur’ān describes as two of the prime attributes of the Prophet (ﷺ) of Islām (cf. III–164; LXII–2; and LXVIII–4). In other words, they captured and demonstrated the true pervasive spirit of Islām as exemplified in the trail-blazing lives of the Prophet (ﷺ) and his Companions. It was indeed this attribute that earned the *ṣūfī* masters the esteem of all schools of Islāmic religious thought, as well as of the common mass of people, in all periods of Muslim history.

The distinctions commonly made between the ‘ulamā and the *ṣūfīs*, and between the *sharī’ah* and the *ṭarīqah*, are thus largely apparent rather than real. In reality, the *sharī’ah* and the *ṭarīqah* are two sides of the same coin, and the difference between the ‘ulamā and the *ṣūfīs* consists in the fact that while the former emphasize formal observance of the outer form of the *sharī’ah*, the latter seek to capture its inner spirit and weave it into their day-to-day life and

of brotherhood among them regardless of geography, colour or race, is due in no small measure to this continuing missionary obligation placed on the Muslim *ummah*, besides of course Islām's own resilience and lasting relevance. Thanks to this, as observed by Maulānā Abul Ḥasan 'Alī Nadavī, "there is not a single period in the long and stormy history of Islām when the preaching of its true message may have ceased completely, its reality totally concealed, the conscience of the Islāmic *ummah* become wholly dormant, or the Islāmic world plunged in total darkness. It is a historical fact that whenever Islām's teachings and message were subjected to wilful and ill-intentioned distortion or to a materialistic onslaught, some strong Muslim personality inevitably came on the scene to fight such movement with all his might and to overcome it."⁴

Birth and rise of *Taṣawwuf* or *Ṣūfism* (Islāmic mysticism)

In course of time, Islām's scholars and doctors of religion came to comprise two main categories. One of these continued to be called the '*ulamā*' (scholars), and their primary task remained religious study, teaching, research and writing. The other category came to be known varyingly as *ṣūfiā* (صوفیاء mystics), *ṣālihīn* (صالحین the pious ones), or *auliyā Allāh* (أولیاء اللہ friends of Allāh or saints). These latter were also basically religious scholars; indeed in classical *ṣūfism*⁵, no one who did not possess thorough knowledge of the Islāmic *sharī'ah* (شریعة, canonical law) could aspire or claim to be a *ṣūfī*. With the great stress that Islām places on the acquisition of knowledge, religious as well as secular,⁶ *ṣūfism* could never hope either to inspire confidence or achieve its lofty ideals without a solid scholarly base. However, the *ṣūfīs* projected and propagated Islām, to a larger extent perhaps than the pure '*ulamā*', primarily by practical example rather than by teaching or theoretical exposition alone. Also, in their lives and teachings they particularly emphasised the spiritual aspects, so as to attain or promote the purification (تطہر *taz-*

since its revelation, the text of the Qur'ān as well as the fundamental teachings enshrined in it have remained fully intact, unaltered and inviolate.

Missionary obligations of the Muslim *Ummah*

God's chosen faith (Islām) having been perfected on earth through Muḥammad (ﷺ), whom the Qur'ān calls the "Seal, i.e., the last, of Prophets" (خاتم النبيين) *Khātam-an-nabiyyīn* — cf. XXXIII, 40 — the door to formal prophethood was closed for ever. At the same time, to ensure fulfilment of the above-mentioned divine intent to permanently preserve the pristine theoretical purity of Islām, the entire Muslim *ummah* (community or people) on earth was charged to "enjoin good and forbid evil", that is, to always keep conveying the message of Islām to its fellow-beings (III-110). On this basis, the Qur'ān describes the Muslim *ummah* as "the best ever brought forth from mankind" (*ibid*). To help the *ummah* discharge this collective responsibility in practice, there were to be, not more prophets in future but people whose duty it would be to specialize in the study of Islām, to preserve and safeguard the basic purity of its essentials, to interpret and re-interpret its injunctions in the light of changing conditions but without in any way violating their fundamental content or intent, and to demonstrate its truth and continuing practicality through precept and example (III-104). This class of people was to be known as '*ulamā*' (علماء scholars or doctors of religion), whom the Prophet (ﷺ) likened to the apostles of old because of the close similarity of their respective missions³. They were to preach and propagate the faith without consciously seeking material reward or establishing formal priesthood as in some other religions.

That Islām has been able, over the centuries, to retain its basic purity and vitality, to effectively control the belief structure and conduct of its adherents, and to infuse a spirit

Hūd and Šāleḥ the wasteful construction of luxurious mansions and monuments, and indulgence in extravagant and cruel practices by their people, and so on (cf. XXVI, 128–30 and 149). The Holy Qur'ān refers frequently to Abraham (Ibrāhīm), who came well over 2½ thousand years before the Prophet of Islām (ﷺ), as a “Muslim” (one who submits, i.e., practices Islām) (cf. III, 67). It tells the Prophet (ﷺ) and his followers that they have to adhere to the religion of Ibrāhīm (III–95; VI–162; XVI–123; and XXII–78), and observes that only the foolish and the misguided ones forsake the religion of Ibrāhīm (II–130). The Prophet (ﷺ) himself used often to tell his Companions that his message was essentially that of their “ancestor Ibrāhīm”. Even the disciples of Jesus Christ, termed in the Qur'ān as *ḥawāriyyūn* (حَوَارِيُّونَ), which literally means “washermen” but metaphorically denotes “sincere helpers”, are mentioned in it as having called themselves “Muslims” (III–52 and V–111).

According to the Qur'ān, the differences that we perceive today between some of the basic beliefs of Islām and those of certain other religions of divine origin (e.g., the current Christian belief in Trinity, i.e., the three-dimensional concept of one Godhead comprising Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, as opposed to Islām's uncompromising emphasis on the absolute unity of God), were created by the later generations of followers of the earlier prophets. These followers, for reasons and motives of their own, so altered the original teachings of their prophets, or concealed some portions of the messages as originally revealed, as to completely distort their real character and intent (II–213; III–187; V–13, 15 and 44). To guard the final and perfected version of His chosen faith, as revealed to Prophet Muḥammad (ﷺ), against such human distortion or concealment, God therefore Himself guaranteed the inviolacy of the Qur'ān for all time to come (XV–9), and laid down requisites and injunctions towards that end. The truth of these Qur'ānic assertions is borne out by the fact that during the fourteen centuries

Consistent with its enduring character, Islām is intended to be much more than a 'religion' in the conventionally accepted sense. The Qur'ān calls it *dīn* (دين), cf. III-19), which literally means recompense or reward and therefore signifies a code of *accountable* conduct encompassing every single aspect of human life, be it religious, secular, spiritual, material, political, social, economic or any other.

Possibly to underscore the finality of Muḥammad (ﷺ)'s prophethood, and the perfected, comprehensive, universal and lasting nature of his mission, it is only his message which is called 'Islām' in common idiom. The messages of his fore-runners, even though they incorporated most of the basic ingredients of Islām, are nevertheless known by different other names, derived either from the names of the respective prophets or other sources (e.g., Christianity and Judaism), thus signifying the limited nature and audience of their missions. The essential core of all these messages, however, conforms to the definition of Islām, which literally means "submission" or "surrender" (to the Divine Will and Guidance) and also "peace". This is borne out by the fact that the fundamentals of all divinely revealed religions are the same: namely, belief in the absolute Unity, Transcendence, Omnipotence and Omnipresence of God; and belief in all God's true prophets, in the books or messages revealed to them, in the Angels, in the Day of Judgment, and in life in the Hereafter. All true prophets were assigned by God to preach these self-same basic principles. Only the detailed injunctions were modified from time to time to suit the particular social and other conditions prevailing during the period of each prophet's mission, the stage of growth attained by humanity until then, and the principal social evils and maladies prevalent at the time. To illustrate, the main targets of Prophet Shu'aib's mission were his people's indulgence in dishonest use of weights and measures and in highway robberies (VII, 85-86), of that of Lūt (Lot) his people's addiction to sodomy (e.g., VII, 80-81), of those of

I. INTRODUCTION

Islām – The universal, complete and eternal religion

The two fundamental beliefs of Islām are the absolute Unity of Allāh, the One and Only Supreme God (*Tawhīd*, توحيد), and the continuity of all divinely-revealed religion culminating finally and for all time to come in the apostolic mission of the Holy Prophet Muḥammad (ﷺ)¹. According to the *Qur'ān*², Islām is *the* religion chosen by the Supreme Creator for the guidance of humanity from its beginning until the Final Day (Chapt. III, Verse 19). All the true prophets of God — from Adam (Ādam) and Noah (Nūḥ), through Abraham (Ibrāhīm), Isaac (Iṣḥāq), Ishmael (Ismāīl), Jacob (Ya'qūb), David (Daūd), Solomon (Sulaimān), Moses (Mūsā), Aaron (Harūn), John (Yaḥyā), and Jesus Christ (Īsā), to Muḥammad (ﷺ), the last and the greatest of them all — preached nothing but Islām to their respective audiences. The only difference is that the missions of the prophets before Muḥammad (ﷺ) were addressed to selected communities, tribes or groups of people. Their scope and applicability were therefore necessarily restricted in terms of time, locale and social environment. Prophet Muḥammad (ﷺ), on the other hand, was deputed by God to the entire contemporary as well as future mankind, and was therefore entrusted with a perfected version of Islām that was capable of remaining fully valid and applicable, in its basic essentials, for the rest of man's destined tenure on earth (cf. II-136; IV-79, 163, 170, and 175; V-3; VII-158; X-19; XXXIV-28; and XLVIII, 8-9). In some of the references just quoted (e.g., IV-170 and 175; VII-158; and XXXIV-28) and at several other places, the *Qur'ān* addresses its message to the entire mankind and not to "the believers" (i.e., the followers of Prophet Muḥammad) only, thus underscoring the universality of that message.

booklet much more useful and informative for the interested readers.

I am deeply grateful to Ḥaḍrat Sayyid Ghulām Moīnuddīn and Ḥaḍrat Shāh ‘Abdul Ḥaḳ, the present spiritual heads of the holy shrine at Golrā, for their blessings and guidance without which this treatise could not have been written.

I am also indebted to Maulānā Faiḍ Aḥmad, head of the *Madressah* at the Golrā shrine and compiler of the Urdū-language biography of Ḥaḍrat Meher ‘Alī Shāh mentioned above, who was kind enough to review an Urdū translation of the booklet and provided many useful comments and suggestions for its improvement.

My thanks are due also to my brother, Mr. Muḥammad Ḥayāt Khān, who gave valuable advice and suggestions concerning the text and arranged publication of the booklet in a presentable form.

Finally, I pray in all humility to Allāh that He bless this humble effort with His gracious acceptance.

Muḥammad Fāḍil Khān

Golrā Sharīf, June 1989
(*Dhīqa‘dah*, 1409 A.H.)

fifth edition (1987) is now obtainable from the shrine at Golrā Sharīf as well as from some bookstalls in major cities of Pākistān. The remainder of the booklet is the result of the present writer's own research and study.

The first edition of this booklet was published in July, 1980 and the second in November, 1983. This third edition incorporates considerable additional material, meant to make the account more exhaustive and cover certain aspects which were either left out or insufficiently dealt with in the first two editions. A special feature of this edition is that separate detailed sections have been included in it on two of Ḥadrat Meher 'Alī Shāh's prime distinctions: (a) His incomparable mastery of Shaikh Moḥiuddīn Ibn-ul-'Arabī's world-renowned but controversial concept of *Waḥdat-ul-Wujūd* (وَحْدَةُ الْوُجُودِ , Ultimate Oneness of Being); and (b) his epic and pioneering struggle against the heretical *Qādiānī* (or *Aḥmadiyah*) movement, which was founded in pre-Independence British India by one Mirzā Ghulām Aḥmad of Qādiān, a small town in the Gurdāspur District of the Punjāb Province. In fact, as far as missionary endeavour is concerned, the latter can justly be regarded as the crowning achievement of Ḥadrat Meher 'Alī Shāh's life, since it was this struggle which not only helped stem the progress of *Qādiānism* at its very outset by showing its true face to everyone concerned, but also paved the way for the eventual pronouncement of its members as outside the pale of Islām by the elected legislature of the Islāmic Republic of Pākistān in September 1974. The inclusion of a separate section in this booklet about Ḥadrat's fight against *Qādiānism* has become particularly necessary at the present juncture, in view of a reported increase in the sustained campaign launched by contemporary *Aḥmadiyah* leaders to present a distorted and misleading picture about their movement to their foreign audiences.

It is hoped that the aforesaid additions would make the

PREFACE TO THE THIRD EDITION

Shrines of 'ulamā (علماء scholars or doctors of religion) and ṣūfiā (صوفیاء mystics) form an important part of the Islāmic religious heritage of the Indo-Pākistān sub-continent. Their importance stems primarily from the great missionary services performed by persons in these two categories particularly in this part of the world. They are also believed to be, and in fact are, repositories of spiritual inspiration and sources of secular solace for the millions who visit them to pay their homage.

This booklet, written especially for the benefit of the foreign reader, is concerned with one of Pākistān's leading shrines, namely, that at Golrā in Islāmabād District of the Federal Territory. Situated at the foot of hills in an environment eminently conducive to spiritual contemplation, Golrā owes its widespread renown almost wholly to the personality of Ḥaḍrat Pīr Meher 'Alī Shāh (رحمۃ اللہ علیہ)*. It is to the life and work of that great scholar and mystic that this booklet is primarily devoted.

The portion of this booklet relating to the life, work, and teachings of Ḥaḍrat Meher 'Alī Shāh (page 22 onwards) is based largely on his detailed and authentic biography in Urdū language by Maulānā Faiḍ Aḥmad, present principal teacher of the Madressah at the Golrā shrine, titled *Mihr-e-Munīr* (مہرِ منیر), meaning literally "The Resplendent Sun", and also some of Ḥaḍrat's own writings and pronouncements. The biography was first printed by the Pākistān International Printers, Lāhore, and published from Golrā Sharīf in 1973. It has since been reprinted several times, and its

* رحمة اللہ علیہ is the abbreviation of *Rehmatullāh-e-'alaih*, i.e., Allāh's mercy be on him, which is frequently suffixed to the names of the eminent 'ulamā or ṣūfīs as a mark of respect and veneration.

(iv) Opinion about Allāh's various prophets	107
(v) Attitude towards descendents of the Holy Prophet (ﷺ)	109
Bewildering variety of Mirzā's claims	110
Impact of Mirzā's claims on the Muslim Ummah	111
The <i>Qādiānī</i> and <i>Lāhorī</i> factions	114
Summary so far	115
Ḥaḍrat Pīr Meher 'Alī Shāh's fight against <i>Qādiānism</i>	115
<i>Qādiānī</i> request for support and Ḥaḍrat's response	118
Ḥaḍrat's book <i>Shams-ul-Hidāyah</i>	119
Mirzā's challenge to Ḥaḍrat for a written contest	127
Ḥaḍrat's reply accepting the challenge	129
A poster from other <i>Ulamā</i>	130
<i>Qādiānī</i> objection to Ḥaḍrat's proposal for oral debate before a written contest, and its consequent withdrawal	131
Huge Muslim assemblage at Lāhore, venue of the contest	132
Ḥaḍrat's arrival in Lāhore	133
Mirzā's failure to reach Lāhore	134
Reaction among Mirzā's followers	135
Muslim public meeting in <i>Bādshāhī</i> mosque, Lāhore	136
A new challenge of Mirzā Ṣāhib	138
<i>Saif-e-Chishtiyāī</i> (سيفِ چشتیائی) The Chishtiyah Sword), Ḥaḍrat's second book on <i>Qādiānism</i>	139
Some salient excerpts from <i>Saif-e-Chishtiyāī</i>	141
A Summing Up	144
APPENDIX I. Published Writings of Ḥaḍrat Pīr Meher 'Alī Shāh (ؒ) – An Annotated List	146
APPENDIX II. English translation of poster dated 21 August 1900 issued on behalf of Ḥaḍrat Pīr Meher 'Alī Shāh by Ḥakīm Sulṭān Maḥmūd of Rāwalpindī	156
NOTES	161

(vi) Decline in health	48
(vii) Passing away of Ḥaḍrat	49
Teachings of Ḥaḍrat Meher 'Alī Shāh	51
Excerpts from Ḥaḍrat's writings and sayings	58
The shrines and ceremonies at Golrā Sharīf	66
The <i>madressah</i>	66
III. TWO SPECIAL DISTINCTIONS OF ḤAḌRAT PĪR MEHER 'ALĪ SHĀH	71
A. Mastery of the Concept of <i>Waḥdat-ul-Wujūd</i> (Ultimate Oneness of Being)	71
B. Fight against <i>Qādiānism</i> (or <i>Aḥmadiyah</i>)	80
<i>Qādiānism</i> – Historical background, genesis and growth	80
Early life of Mirzā Ghulām Aḥmad, founder of <i>Qādiānī</i> movement	84
Early beliefs entirely orthodox	85
The mental state of contemporary Indian Muslims	87
Mirzā's claim to be a <i>mathīl</i> (مسیح) of Jesus Christ, the Messiah	87
From Messiah's <i>mathīl</i> to Messiah in person	89
Claim to prophethood	92
a. "Shadow prophet"	94
b. Full prophet with a <i>shariāh</i>	95
<i>Wahī</i> (revelation), <i>ilhām</i> (inspiration), and predictions of Mirzā Ghulām Aḥmad	97
a. <i>Wahī</i>	97
b. <i>Ilhām</i>	97
c. Predictions	99
Distortions of the Qur'ān and the <i>Ḥadīth</i>	102
Disagreement with Muslim <i>Ummah</i> on every principle of Islām	102
(i) Descent of angels	103
(ii) The human spirit (روح <i>Rūh</i>)	103
(iii) <i>Jehād</i> (جهاد, Holy War)	104

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	<i>Page</i>
PREFACE TO THE THIRD EDITION	1
I. INTRODUCTION	4
Islām – The universal, complete and eternal religion	4
Missionary obligations of the Muslim <i>Ummah</i>	7
Birth and rise of <i>Taşawwuf</i> or <i>Şūfism</i> (Islāmīc mysticism)	8
<i>Şūfīs'</i> role in the spread of Islām	18
II. ḤADRAT PĪR MEHER ALĪ SHĀH (ؑ)	
OF GOLRĀ SHARĪF	
Ancestry and birth	22
The early years and education	27
The spiritual journey	24
Visit to the Ḥedjāz (Sāūdī Arabia) for Ḥaj	28
Character and attributes	29
a. Erudition and learning	30
b. Strict observance of the <i>Shariāh</i>	31
c. Balance and moderation	32
d. Religious tolerance	34
e. Humility	36
f. Mercy, compassion and constancy	37
g. Charity and munificence	37
h. Aversion to cultivate the <i>ēlite</i>	39
Other aspects of life	40
(i) Daily schedule	40
(ii) Travels	42
(iii) <i>Karāmāt</i> (كرامات, Graces or mini-miracles)	42
(iv) <i>Samā'</i> (سماع, Devotional music)	44
(v) Spiritual absorption (استغراق – <i>Istighrāq</i>)	46

TRANSLITERATION TABLE

ء medial :	ف :	ب :
ء final :	ق :	پ :
ء initial :	ک :	ت :
	گ :	ث :
ا :	ل :	ج :
ب :	م :	د :
پ :	ن :	ذ :
ت :	و :	ح :
ث :	ه :	خ :
ج :	ة :	د :
چ :	ا :	ذ :
ح :	ء :	ر :
خ :	ا :	ز :
د :	ا :	ز :
ذ :	ا :	س :
ر :	ا :	ش :
ز :	ا :	س :
ز :	ا :	د :
س :	ا :	ت :
ش :	ا :	ز :
س :	ا :	ء :
د :	ا :	غ :
ذ :	ا :	
ر :	ا :	
ز :	ا :	
ز :	ا :	
س :	ا :	
ش :	ا :	
س :	ا :	
د :	ا :	
ت :	ا :	
ز :	ا :	
ء :	ا :	
غ :	ا :	

VOWELS	DIPHTHONGS
Short ا : a	او : aw
آ : i	ای : ay
اُ : u	اے : ae
Long آ : ā	Double
آ : ī	اوآ : urwa
اُ : ū	ایآ : iyya
او : ō	انآ : anna
اے : ē	
اے : -o- (اردو / فارسی)	
افانٹ : -i- (اردو / فارسی)	

53589

- First Edition July, 1980 A.D.
Ramaḍān-ul-Mubārik, 1400 A.H.
(500 Copies)
- Second Edition November, 1983 A.D.
Ṣafar-ul-Muḏaffar, 1404 A.H.
(1000 Copies)
- Third Edition June, 1989 A.D.
Dhīqa'dah, 1409 A.H.)
(2000 Copies)

Printed at
Pakistan International Printers (Pvt.) Ltd.
118, G.T. Road, Lāhore – Pākistān
Phones: 330561, 334658

843

**HADRAT PĪR MEHER 'ALĪ SHĀH
OF
GOLRĀ SHARĪF**

(حضرت پیر مہر علی شاہ گولڑوی رحمۃ اللہ علیہ)

A Brief Sketch of his Life, Work, Achievements
and Spiritual Greatness

by

Dr. Muhammad Fātib Khān

THIRD EDITION

Under the Guidance
of
HADRAT SAYYID GHULĀM MOĪNUDDĪN
and
HADRAT SAYYID SHĀH 'ABDUL HAQ
Sajjādāh Nashīnān of Golrā Sharīf
1989

843

843