

## 2. Family history

Now my biography is as follows. My name is Ghulam Ahmad, my father's name was Ghulam Murtaza, my grandfather's name was Ata Muhammad, and my great-grandfather's name was Gul Muhammad. And as has been related, our race is *Mughal Barlās*.<sup>1</sup> It transpires from the old documents of my forefathers, which are still preserved, that they migrated to this country from Samarqand, and with them were approximately two hundred persons comprising their subordinates, servants and family.

### Settlement in Qadian.

They entered this country like a respectable noble and settled at the site of this village, at that time a wilderness, situated at a distance of approximately fifty *kos*<sup>2</sup> north-east of Lahore. They inhabited it and named it *Islāmpur* which later on came

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1. *Author's note:* It was seventeen or eighteen years ago that I came to know from repeated revelations of God the Most High that my forefathers were of Persian origin. I included all those revelations at that very time in the *Barāhīn Aḥmadiyya*, Part II. One of those revelations about me is this: *Khudhu-t-tauḥīd at-tauḥīd yā abnā' al-fāris*, i.e., "O sons of Persia, hold on to Unity [of God], hold on to Unity". A second revelation about me is this: *Lau kāna-l-īmān mu'alaq-an bi-l-thurayya la-nāla-hu rajul-un min fāris*, i.e., "Had faith gone up to the Pleiades, this man of Persian origin would have gone there and got it". Then there is a third revelation about me: *Inna-l-adhīna kafarū radda 'alai-him rajul-un min fāris shakara-llāhu sa'ya-hu*, i.e., "This man of Persian origin has refuted the religions of those who disbelieve; God is thankful for his efforts". All these revelations show that our original ancestors were Persian. *And the truth is what Allah has manifested.*
  2. A *kos* is an old, unstandardized measurement of distance, and is considered to be slightly less than two miles. (*Publisher.*)

to be known as *Islāmpur Qāḍī Mājhi*. Gradually people omitted the word *Islāmpur*, and *Qāḍī Mājhi* became just *Qāḍī*. Then ultimately it became *Qāḍī*, from which it was then distorted into *Qāḍiyān*. The reason why it was called *Qāḍī Mājhi* has been explained to be that this entire area which is about 60 *kos* in length was called *Mājhaḥ* in those days, probably because of the abundance of buffaloes in the land which are called *mājhi* in the Hindi language. Further, since our ancestors, in addition to the estate of the villages, had also been assigned the rulership of this entire territory, they became known as *Qāḍī*.

I have no knowledge why and for what reason our ancestors came to this country from Samarqand, but it is indicated by the documents that in that land too they were respected chiefs and belonged to the house of the rulers and that they had to leave the country because of some strife and dispute in the nation. On arrival in this country they were awarded many villages as estate by the king of the time. Consequently, a permanent state of theirs was established in this vicinity.

### **Great-grandfather's time.**

In the early Sikh period my great-grandfather, Mirza Gul Muhammad, was a renowned and well-known chief of this area, owning at that time 85 villages. Many villages went out of his possession due to repeated attacks of the Sikhs. Yet he was so brave and generous that even out of such a small number he had given several villages, out of benevolence, to some Muslim chiefs who had been victims of discord, which are still in their possession. In short, in that period of anarchy in the land, he was a sovereign chief in that vicinity. Invariably about five hundred men, sometimes more, sometimes less, were fed from his table. Also there lived with him about one hundred learned men, pious persons, and knowers of the Holy Quran by heart, who had been granted sufficient stipends. In his court there was, frequently, much talk of the word of Allah and the Prophet. None among his workers and associates neglected prayer, so much so

that even the women who worked the grindstone said their five daily prayers and the *tahajjud* prayer.

### **High, noble qualities of Mirza Gul Muhammad.**

The respectable Muslims of the vicinity, who were mostly Afghans, had given to Qadian, then known as Islampur, the name Makka because in that time of upheaval this town was a blessed refuge for every Muslim. In most other places there prevailed unbelief, wickedness and injustice, but Qadian radiated the fragrance of Islam, righteousness, moral purity and justice. I have personally seen people who lived close to that period describing Qadian to be in such fine condition as if it was at that time a garden in which were planted hundreds of defenders of the faith, the pious, the learned, and extremely noble and brave men. In this area events are well-known which show that the late Mirza Gul Muhammad was one of the most venerable of the spiritual leaders of the time and worked miracles and extraordinary feats. In order to keep his company, many men of God, righteous ones and scholars had assembled in Qadian. Most curiously, many of his miracles are so well-known that a large number of the opponents of Islam also have been bearing witness to them.

In short, besides rulership and leadership of the state, he was highly renowned for his honesty, righteousness, manly bravery, lofty ideals, defence of the faith and concern for the welfare of the Muslims. The participants of his assembly, one and all, were righteous, of good character, had a sense of honour for Islam, avoided transgression and wickedness, and were brave and dignified. So much so that I have heard many a time from my late father that once a minister of the Mughal government, known by the name of Ghias al-Daula, came to Qadian and witnessed Mirza Gul Muhammad's way of statesmanship, sharpness of mind, resolve, enterprising spirit, firmness, intellect, understanding, defence of Islam, passion for support of the faith, piety, purity and dignity of court, and found his small court consisting entirely of very sober, wise, virtuous and brave

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men. Then, with tearful eyes, he said: “Had I known earlier that in this wilderness there is a man of the Mughal house possessing the necessary qualities of statecraft, I would have tried to save the Islamic kingdom by placing him on the throne of Delhi during the period of inaction, incompetence and impropriety of the Chughtai kings.”

### **Teaches noble lesson on death-bed.**

At this point, it would not be without benefit to record that my great-grandfather, Mirza Gul Muhammad, died of hiccough along with other ailments. At the height of the disease, the physicians all agreed that if alcohol was used for a few days for this disease it would probably help. But they did not have the courage to say it to him. At last some of them mentioned it to him gently. He said: “If God the Most High intends to heal there are many other medicines created by Him; I do not want to use this filth, I am content with the decree and fate ordained by God.” At last he died of the same illness a few days later. Death was destined but his way of righteousness became a permanent memorial, that he had preferred death to taking alcohol.

What does man not do to escape death? But he preferred death to committing a sin. Pity be on those lords, aristocrats and rulers who, in this short life here, neglecting entirely their God and His commands, and cutting off all connections with Him, indulge in sin to their heart’s content by drinking alcohol like water. Thus making their life filthy and unclean, they lose even the natural span of life and die sooner by falling victim to some dreadful ailments, leaving behind a most sordid example for posterity.

### **Time of grandfather.**

Now the gist of it is that when my great-grandfather died, my grandfather, i.e. his noble son Mirza Ata Muhammad, succeeded

him.<sup>3</sup> During his time, the wisdom and purpose of God so ordained that the Sikhs were victorious in battle. My late grandfather made elaborate arrangements for the security of his state but as destiny and fate did not favour his aims he failed and none of his plans succeeded. By and by, the Sikhs kept taking control of the villages of our estate till the late grandfather was left with only one, Qadian. At that time Qadian was a small fortress town, with four towers in which the fighting men were stationed. There were a few guns, and the rampart was about twenty-two feet high and so wide that three carts could easily move abreast on it.

### **Qadian captured by Sikhs.**

It so happened that a group of Sikhs called Ram Garhia first entered Qadian by getting permission through deception and then took possession of it. At that time our elders suffered great destruction and like the Israelites they were made captives, all their property and possessions being looted. Several mosques and fine houses were razed to the ground. Gardens were destroyed out of ignorance and bigotry. Some mosques, one of which is still occupied by the Sikhs, were converted into Sikh temples. That day a library of our elders was also burnt. It contained five hundred manuscript copies of the Holy Quran which were burnt utterly disrespectfully. At last, after some thought, the Sikhs ordered our elders to leave. Consequently, all men and women were boarded in carts and turned out. They took refuge in a state of the Punjab. Shortly afterwards, according to the plan of the same enemies, my grandfather was poisoned.

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3. *Author's note:* My family tree is as follows: My name Ghulam Ahmad, son of Mirza Ghulam Murtaza, son of Mirza 'Ata Muhammad, son of Mirza Gul Muhammad, son of Mirza Faiz Muhammad, son of Mirza Muhammad Qa'im, son of Mirza Muhammad Aslam, son of Mirza Muhammad Dilawar, son of Mirza Allah Din, son of Mirza Ja'far Baig, son of Mirza Muhammad Baig, son of Mirza Abdul Baqi, son of Mirza Muhammad Sultan, son of Mirza Hadi Baig, the progenitor of the family.

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**Return to Qadian in father's time.**

Then, during the last days of the rule of Ranjit Singh, my late father, Mirza Ghulam Murtaza, returned to Qadian. The said Mirza *sahib* received back five villages out of the villages of his father. For, during this period, Ranjit Singh had, by subjugating most of the other smaller states, established a big state of his own. Thus all our villages had also come under the control of Ranjit Singh. His rule had spread from Lahore to Peshawar, and on the other side up to Ludhiana. In short, our old state having been eradicated, we were in the end left with only five villages. Still, in view of being an old established family, my father Mirza Ghulam Murtaza was a well-known chief in this vicinity. He was always invited to the court of the Governor General, as belonging to the rank of chiefs who were entitled to a seat in court. In 1857 C.E.<sup>4</sup> he served the British government by providing fifty horses, purchased out of his personal funds, along with fifty riders, and promised to give similar help to the government in future too whenever needed. He received letters of commendation from British government officials of the time, wishing him well, in view of services rendered. Sir Lepel Griffin too has mentioned him in his book *History of the Punjab Chiefs*. In short, the authorities were well-disposed towards him. Many a time the officials of the day, such as deputy commissioner or commissioner, would call at his house to meet him for his consolation.

This, briefly, is an account of my family. I do not consider it necessary to prolong it much.

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4. References to the year 1857 indicate the famous uprising in India against British rule which took place in that year. (Publisher.)