

5. Divine appointment and claims

Appointed as *Mujaddid* of fourteenth century.

Then, when the thirteenth century came to a close and the fourteenth century was about to dawn,¹ God the Most High informed me by revelation:

You are the Mujaddid of this century.

And there came a revelation from God:

“Ar-Raḥmān, ‘allama-l-Qur’ān li-tundhira qaum-an mā undhira ābā’u-hum wa li-tastabayyina sabīla-l-mujrimīn. Qul innī umirtu wa ana awwālu-l-mu’minīn.”

This means:

“God taught you the Quran and made known its true meanings to you, so that you may warn of bad consequences a people who fell in errors because of generations of neglect and lack of admonition, and so that manifest becomes the path of those culprits who do not want to accept the true path even after receiving the guidance. Tell them: I have been commissioned by God and I am the first of those who submit.”

This revelation has been printed in *Barāhīn Aḥmadiyya* which I wrote and published those very days, eighteen years ago. By carefully perusing the revelations of that book, it will become

1. The fourteenth century *Hijra* began in the year 1883 C.E. (*Publisher.*)

clear to everyone why and for what purpose God commissioned me to this service; and whether the state of the present age and the coming of the head of the century did not require that during such a period of the destitution of Islam, prevalence of innovations, and severe onslaught of external attacks, someone should be sent by God the Most High for the help and revival of the faith.

Acclaimed by Ulama.

At this juncture it is also worth mentioning that during the era of *Barāhīn Aḥmadiyya* most of the *Ulama* of this country upheld my claim to be the *Mujaddid*; or at least this much that even the highly prejudiced, taking a very favourable view, did not have any objection to my revelations. Most of them used to say with great joy that God had blessed the fourteenth century for Islam by sending from Himself a *Mujaddid*. Some of them wrote reviews of *Barāhīn Aḥmadiyya*, with complete sincerity, bestowing upon me such high praise as a man can confer on one who is, in the highest degree, righteous, pure-hearted, Godly, and a helper of Islam. This, even though that *Maulavi sahib*² knew that *Barāhīn Aḥmadiyya* contained those revelations in which God had called me by the names ‘Jesus’ and the Promised Messiah.

Reaction to claim of being Promised Messiah.

In short, as long as there was no clear claim on my part to be the Promised Messiah, and only being the *Mujaddid* of the fourteenth century was known among the public, there was no great opposition by the *Ulama*. In fact, most of them confirmed me and followed me. But with this claim to be Messiah a curious sort of uproar spread among the *Ulama*. Most of them deceived the public with various kinds of dishonesty. Some of them prepared a petition to have me branded as *kafir*; and with

2. The reference is to one Maulavi Muhammad Husain Batalvi who wrote a glowing review of *Barāhīn Aḥmadiyya* when it was published, but later became a bitter opponent of Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad after he claimed to be the Promised Messiah. (*Publisher.*)

great efforts obtained on it signatures of hundreds of people of little understanding and blunt intelligence. However, they only fulfilled the prophecy written down in the prophetic traditions of old that the Promised Imam to come would be branded as a *kafir*, as it was necessary that those pure writings come to be fulfilled.

What is surprising is that in the claim to be the Promised Messiah there was nothing new which had not been recorded in *Barāhīn Ahmadiyya* eighteen years before today. Nonetheless the ignorant *Maulavis* raised a great hue and cry on this claim. At last, the result of their mischief was that discord was sewn in every household. A section of Muslims sided with me and another followed the *Maulavis* of perverse understanding. There was another section, neither for nor against.

My followers.

Although my section has not at this time expanded in great number in the world, yet my followers are to be found spread from Peshawar to Bombay, to Calcutta, and to Hyderabad Deccan, and even to some Arab lands. To begin with, this Movement grew and blossomed in the Punjab. Now I see that it is making progress in most parts of India. My followers comprise less of the ordinary masses and more of the eminent people. Among them there are many who hold respectable positions within the British administration, holding the honourable offices of Deputy Collector, Extra Assistant, *Tehsildar* etc. Similarly, in Punjab and in India generally, many aristocrats and landlords, most of the educated people holding the qualifications F.A., B.A. and M.A., and big merchants have joined this Movement.

To sum up: men of intellect, knowledge, honour and renown; and holders of high posts in the British administration; and aristocrats, landlords, owners of estates and descendants of *nawabs* (rulers); and those belonging to the lineage of the saints of India of various orders, whose forefathers were believed by hundreds of thousands of people to be saints of the ages having

the highest rank; such are the people who joined this community and are continuing to do so. In short, the grace and power of God the Most High, by frustrating the designs of the *Maulavis*, granted and is continuing to grant our Movement extraordinary progress. In this Movement will be found in abundance people who are truly good-natured and God-fearing, who serve humanity, strive heart and soul for the progress of the faith, honour God the Most High in their hearts, who are wise, intelligent, and resolute, and who entertain true love of God and the Messenger. I see that it is the will of the Beneficent God to multiply this community and bless it, and to draw virtuous people from as far as the furthest corners of the earth and make them enter its fold.

Expectation of Promised Messiah by Muslims.

It would not be without advantage to write here that my claim of being the Promised Messiah is a claim whose fulfilment was being looked forward to by all the sects of the Muslims. Having studied the repeated prophecies in Hadith reports of the Holy Prophet, everyone was waiting as to when those glad tidings would be fulfilled. Many recipients of Divine inspiration had given the news, after receiving revelation from God the Most High, that the Promised Messiah would appear at the head of the fourteenth century.

Although this prophecy is to be found only in an abbreviated form in the Holy Quran, yet according to Hadith reports it occurs so repeatedly that, judged rationally, it cannot possibly be false. If repetition has any value, then we can say that among all the Islamic prophecies made by the Holy Prophet, may peace and the blessings of Allah be on him, there is none that enjoys the same degree of repeated occurrence as this prophecy. Anyone acquainted with Islamic history knows well that among the Islamic prophecies there is none that excels this prophecy as regards frequency. So much so that the *Ulama* have written that whoever refuses to accept this prophecy, is in danger of falling victim to heresy. For, to deny the repeatedly-occurring reports (*mutawātir*) amounts almost to denial of Islam.

Contradictions introduced into beliefs.

It is, however, a pity that in spite of this widespread occurrence, the *Ulama* of this age of corruption suffer from severe misconceptions in comprehending the real and true meaning of this prophecy, and because of gross misunderstanding, they have gathered embarrassing contradictions in their beliefs. That is to say, on the one hand by believing in the Holy Quran and accepting the sound Hadith reports they had to admit that Jesus had, in fact, died, while on the other hand they also held the belief that at sometime Jesus, on whom be peace, will himself descend in the latter days, and that he is alive in heaven, not having died. Again, on the one hand they declared the Holy Prophet Muhammad as the Last of the Prophets (*Khātām al-anbiyā'*),³ while on the other they also maintained the belief that after the Holy Prophet a prophet is yet to come, i.e. Jesus, who is a prophet. Yet again, on the one hand they believed that the Promised Messiah would appear during the days of the *Dajjāl* (Anti-Christ), who will have gained dominance over the entire world except the two Holy Places (Makka and Madina). On the other hand, they had also to admit, in accordance with the sound and highly-reliable Hadith reports in the *Sahih Bukhari*, which have continuous chains of reporters, that the Promised Messiah would appear at the time of the domination of the Cross, i.e. at that time when the Christian religion would have spread in the world with great vigour, and the power and wealth of the Christians would be unsurpassed by anyone else. Further, on the one hand they had to adopt the belief that the Messiah would be the ruler, the imam and the Mahdi of his time, while on the other they believed that the Messiah would not be the Mahdi and imam, but that the Mahdi would be someone else, who would be from the Bani Fatima.

In short, they gathered together many contradictions of this kind, thus putting the people in hesitation and doubt about the

3. It is clear from the context here that the term *Khātām al-anbiyā'* is being used by the author in its usual meaning of *the Last of the Prophets*; hence our translation. (Publisher.)

reliability of this prophecy. For, a matter which comprises many contradictions cannot possibly be true. Then how can intelligent people accept it, and how can they trample under foot their faculty of reason and follow this illogical path? That is why the modernly-educated people of the present age, who regard nature, laws of nature and the intellectual process as the criteria for determining the truth, had to reject this prophecy, in spite of the highest degree of repetition with which it occurs. And indeed, if this prophecy were to be interpreted in this very manner which embodies so many contradictions, then human reason, after being unable to reconcile these contradictions, concludes in the end that the only way out of this confusion is to deny the truth of the prophecy. Hence this was why the devotees of the laws of nature and reason disowned this magnificent prophecy in spite of its often-repeated occurrence.

Alas, however, that even these people were very hasty in their denial, for no man of reason can deny continually repeated news. It is not possible for there to be a suspicion of falsehood regarding a report which reaches the degree of continuous repetition. So the path of justice and truth was that they should not have discarded the news of repeated continuity. Rather, they should have rejected those meanings which the foolish *Maulavis* had given, which led to many kinds of inconsistencies, and to which they had also added many other contradictions. In fact, it is the fault of the *Maulavis*, whose understanding is defective, that by interpreting a plain and simple prophecy in such a way as to make it a bundle of contradictions, they put the truth-seeking people to great confusion and puzzlement.

True interpretation of prophecy.

Now God the Most High, having disclosed its true and correct meanings, which are quite free from contradictions and absurdities, has provided an opportunity to every just-minded seeker-after-truth to accept this continuously repeated tradition and look for the one in whom it is fulfilled, and not join the rejectors by denying a clear prophecy of God.

The detail of this explanation is as follows. In this age, by appointing me at the head of the fourteenth century [*Hijra*], God the Most High manifested the logic of this prophecy, and made it clear that the second coming of the Messiah in this world was destined to be in the same sense and manner as the second coming in the world of the prophet Elijah recorded in the book of the prophet Malachi [in the Bible]. For, it was pointedly mentioned in the book of Malachi that the Promised Messiah awaited by the Jews would not appear in the world until the prophet Elijah came into the world again. Had our opponents possessed spiritual good fortune and the quality of truth-seeking, they would have reaped much benefit from this prophecy of the prophet Malachi, on which the Jews and Christians both concur. For, according to the apparent meaning of Malachi's book, it has to be admitted that Elijah has not yet returned to the world, even though about nineteen hundred years have elapsed since the Messiah appeared in the world. Therefore if, as is the literal meaning of the words of Malachi which the Jewish divines strongly adhere to till this day, it is true that the personal return of Elijah to the world is necessary before the Messiah, in that case Jesus cannot be a true prophet. He can be taken to be true only if the return of the prophet Elijah is given a different interpretation. That is to say, by the return of Elijah should be meant the coming of one in his likeness, and that like was John, i.e. Yahya, the son of Zacharias, as was the interpretation given by Jesus upon the demand of the Jews.

From this interpretation, given by a prophet himself, it becomes plainly clear that the second coming of the Messiah in the world is also akin to the return of Elijah. To turn away from a precedent that has been set, and to add contradictions in one's belief by taking the literal meanings, is the work of those people who have been endowed with very little sense and understanding. Prophecies are generally dominated by allegories and metaphors, and nothing would be more foolish than to take some word of a prophecy literally, when by so doing many

contradictions are gathered together. It was exactly this practice which destroyed the Jews.

Messiah, not king in literal sense.

There was another similar prophecy about the Messiah, that he would be a king and would fight the unbelievers. The Jews stumbled over this also, because Jesus did not receive worldly kingship. That is why the Jews have been saying till the present time that not even one letter has been fulfilled up to now out of the prophecies relating to the Messiah. The Jews had put forward this very argument before Jesus, and had repeatedly pointed out that the return of Elijah to the world was necessary before the true Messiah, not that someone resembling him should come. For, in the book of the prophet Malachi the return of Elijah in person is mentioned. It is not written that "someone resembling him shall come". However, Jesus gave them the reply that by the return of the prophet Elijah was meant the coming of one like him, having his nature and qualities, and he explained that that man was John, the son of Zacharias, i.e. Yahya. And as for the kingdom, he interpreted it by saying that "my kingdom is that of heaven and not of the world". The Jews had considered these interpretations to be highly far-fetched and to be feeble devices, and they believe so till today, because they laid stress on the literal words of their books. On the face of it, the Jews appeared to be right, for they put forth clear decisions of the holy books, while Jesus resorted to interpretations which appeared to be shallow and weak.

Our *Ulama* would have been very fortunate if they had recalled the story of the return of Elijah and taken a lesson from it, thus attaching the same meaning to the return and descent of Jesus from heaven as Jesus himself attached to the return and descent of the prophet Elijah. Would that they had pondered over the point that the interpretation of the descent of Jesus given by the writer of these lines is not new but is exactly the same as the one already given by the tongue of Jesus, for the case of the descent of the Messiah, son of Mary, is entirely

analogous to the case of the prophet Elijah. Hence, in view of the fact that the wish of the Jews has not been realized till today that the prophet Elijah should descend from heaven, and this is the reason why they have been disbelievers in Jesus, how can the wish of the *Maulavis* be fulfilled that at some time Jesus should himself descend from the heavens? Wise is the one who takes a lesson from the stumbling of another. The Jews, who remained deprived of confessing faith in Jesus, give this very reason for it till today, that the same prophecy of the prophet Malachi was emphatically conveyed to them that, until the prophet Elijah returns to the world, the Messiah who had been promised to them would not come. It was also written that that Messiah would appear as a king. But neither of these prophecies was fulfilled in Jesus. That is why the Jews have been complaining till today as to how they could accept Jesus, son of Mary, when neither did the prophet Elijah re-appear before him nor did he appear as a king. On the face of it, the Jews appear to be in the right because the implication of the clear texts of their books is that, in fact, the prophet Elijah will re-appear before the Messiah, and at last the Messiah will come as a king.

In short, this was a case that had clarified the meaning of the descent of the Promised Messiah and of other signs; and for the fair-minded there was a satisfactory precedent for the descent of the Messiah in the manner of the descent of the prophet Elijah, but prejudice makes a man blind. It is still more surprising that the *Sahih Bukhari* clearly contained the words: “*imāmu-kum min-kum*”, i.e. that Promised Messiah would be from this very *Umma*, and similarly it was written in *Sahih Muslim*: “*fa-amma-kum min-kum*”, i.e. the Messiah would be one of you, from your *Umma*, and would be your Imam. Were these facts not enough to give satisfaction? Did the fact not give satisfaction that the Quran spoke of the death of Jesus? The mention of his age in Hadith reports as one hundred and twenty years indicated that he must have died in 120 C.E. The meaning of *tawaffā* was explained as ‘causing to die’ and the verse

containing the words *fa-lammā tawaffaita-nī*⁴ clearly gave the information that Jesus had died. And as for the earlier disagreement between the Jews and Jesus regarding the manner of the descent of the prophet Elijah, there is no Muslim who would consider the Jews to be in the right on that question. So the meaning of ‘returning to the world’ as explained by a prophet, is exactly the meaning which I give to the descent of Jesus. But as for the interpretation given by the *Maulavis* who oppose me, they do not possess any authority for those meanings.

Opponents resort to false accusations.

Now one should ponder over this, that I put forward the belief which has a precedent in the earlier scriptures and which is confirmed by the Quran, while our opponents set forth a view regarding the descent of Jesus which has no precedent anywhere in the entire institution of prophets and which is belied by the Quran. Then when our opponents meet with failure in this debate, they slander me by way of fabrication to allege that I have laid claim to prophethood and that I deny miracles and angels. But it must be remembered that all this is a fabrication. My belief is that our leader and master, *Hazrat Muhammad Mustafa*, on whom be peace and the blessings of Allah, is the Last of the Prophets (*Khātam al-anbiyā*), and I believe in the angels, miracles and all the doctrines of the *Ahl as-Sunna* (Sunni Muslims). The only difference is that our opponents, because of their ignorance, are awaiting the descent of Jesus in the real sense, while we accept it in the sense of spiritual manifestation, as is the view of all the Sufi saints, and we believe that the prophecy of the descent of the Messiah has been fulfilled.

Messiah to come at time of havoc caused by Christians.

The question remains as to what is the evidence in support of this claim of mine to be the Messiah? Let it be clear that it is

4. These are words of Jesus addressed to God on the Day of Judgment, as given in the Holy Quran 5:117, and mean: “when Thou didst cause me to die”. (*Publisher.*)

confirmed by the authentic reports that, at the time of the mischief spread by Christianity, the man who would appear as the *Mujaddid* at the head of the century, in order to uproot the evil of the worship of Jesus, he is the *Mujaddid* who has been called 'Messiah'. Afterwards, by misunderstanding the Hadith reports, people came to believe that Jesus himself would descend from heaven to become the *Mujaddid* of the century, and would come at the head of the century, the majority of the *Ulama* holding that it would be the fourteenth century [*Hijra*]. But the error of this view is that the real intent of the Holy Prophet Muhammad was that the *Mujaddid*, from among the *mujaddids* of this *Umma*, who would have to come to the aid of Islam to defend it against the Christian onslaughts, shall have the name 'Messiah' because of his work of the reformation of the Christian religion. But these people thought that the Messiah himself would in some age descend from heaven, which is a clear error.

The eloquent and profound statement of the Holy Prophet Muhammad did not contain this inappropriate, irrelevant and unreasonable suggestion that a prophet who, having completed the span of his life, had been recalled to God and to the blessings of the Hereafter, in accordance with the Law of Allah, shall be sent again into this world of affliction and trials; and prophethood which has been closed, and the Book which is the last of the scriptures (*khātam al-kutub*), shall be deprived of the excellence of being the last. Rather, it was prophesied as a very subtle metaphor that a time would come when the Christian nations would reach the height of stubbornness in their man-worship and their false beliefs about the crucifixion, and would become the *Dajjāl*-Messiah (Anti-Christ) by excelling in their distortions and deceit. Then shall God the Most High, out of His mercy, send a heavenly Messiah for their reform, who would break their cross with clear arguments.

No prophet after Holy Prophet Muhammad.

For those who use their reason and ponder, there was no difficulty at all in understanding this prophecy. For, the sacred

words of the Holy Prophet Muhammad were so clear that they themselves pointed towards this interpretation: that this prophecy cannot possibly mean the return of the Israelite prophet to the world. The Holy Prophet had said repeatedly that no prophet would come after him, and the Hadith report “There is no prophet after me” (*lā nabiyya ba’dī*) was so well-known that no one had any doubt regarding its authenticity. And the Holy Quran, every single word of which is absolute, in its noble verse “*he is the Messenger of Allah and the Khātam an-nabiyyīn*”,⁵ had also confirmed that prophethood has, in fact, ended with our Holy Prophet. Then how could it be possible that any prophet should come after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, according to the real meaning of prophethood?⁶ This would have destroyed the entire fabric of Islam. To say that Jesus will come having been suspended from prophethood is a highly shameful and disrespectful statement. Can a prophet of God like Jesus, His chosen one and one possessing nearness to Him, be suspended from his prophethood? Then what way and manner was there by which Jesus could return to the world in person?

In brief, God by naming the Holy Prophet Muhammad as *Khātam an-nabiyyīn* in the Holy Quran, and the Holy Prophet himself by saying “There is no prophet after me” (*lā nabiyya ba’dī*) in Hadith, had settled the matter that no prophet can come after the Holy Prophet, in terms of the real meaning of prophethood. To make the matter clearer still, the Holy Prophet had also said that the Promised Messiah to come would be from this *Umma*. Accordingly, the Hadith report in *Sahih Bukhari*, “*imāmu-kum min-kum*”, and the report in *Sahih Muslim*, “*fa-amma-kum min-kum*”, occurring at the exact place where the Promised Messiah is mentioned, clearly show that that Promised Messiah will belong to this very *Umma*!

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5. The Holy Quran 33:40. It is perfectly obvious from what Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad has written on this page that he considers the term *Khātam an-nabiyyīn* to mean the *Last of the Prophets*. (*Publisher.*)
 6. Here and in the next paragraph Hazrat Mirza has declared most forcefully that *no* prophet can come after Holy Prophet Muhammad. (*Publisher.*)