

## 4. Are all non-Ahmadis unbelievers?

The full force of the new doctrines taught by M. Mahmud would be felt by a Muslim in the strange announcement according to which all Muslims except the Ahmadis are really non-Muslims. So strange and paradoxical does the announcement — the Muslims being non-Muslims — appear that hardly any body would believe that a sane person could make this statement, but this is the actual consequence of the new doctrine taught by M. Mahmud relating to the prophethood of the Promised Messiah. Nor are we left to draw that inference on our own account, for the doctrine that all those who have not entered into the *bai'at* of the Promised Messiah are outside the circle of Islam, i.e., non-Muslims, has been openly and incessantly preached by M. Mahmud for a number of years, and so persistent is he that he openly declared in a meeting of his friends convened in December 1913 that he would rather die than forsake the preaching of the doctrine which taught that all those who were not Ahmadis were *kāfirs* pure and simple, absolute unbelievers outside the circle of Islam, with whom all relations such as saying their funeral prayers, intermarriages, etc., were to be shunned in the same manner as in the case of non-Muslims. In other words, the duties which a Muslim owes to a Muslim according to the plain teachings of the Holy Quran and the reports of the Holy Prophet, an Ahmadi Muslim does not owe to his Muslim brother.

Here then a dissension has been created in Islam, the like of which has not been experienced by this religion of unity — of the unity of God and the unity of humanity — during the thirteen hundred years since its birth. And were it not for this grave

consequence of the doctrine of the prophethood of the Promised Messiah, that doctrine would have passed off as an innocent heresy which might have been left alone to die a natural death. But the serious dissension to which it gives rise requires every true Muslim — and every Ahmadi must be a true Muslim — to raise his voice against this mighty insult to the holy religion of Islam. It not only divides the camp of Islam into two, which in principles has remained completely united for the last thirteen hundred years, but lays the basis of further divisions, which, if they should find their way into Islam, must result in the shattering of its unity to pieces. But Almighty God would never allow Islam to see that disastrous day for which M. Mahmud is so earnestly longing.

It is necessary to explain first, in a few words, what has been said above. M. Mahmud's argument for declaring the Muslims to be infidels is that as a new prophet has appeared in the world, therefore those who do not believe in that prophet are unbelievers, for it is only belief in the latest prophet that can bring a man within the category of Islam. Therefore, while the appearance of the Promised Messiah as a prophet divides the camp of Islam into two parties, each thinking the other to be outside the pale of Islam, the appearance of the thousands of prophets which M. Mahmud believes must yet appear would hopelessly divide Islam into thousands of camps, each thinking the other to be non-Muslim. And just as the millions of Muslims who are even ignorant of the name of Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, the new prophet of the age according to the doctrine of M. Mahmud, have become *kāfirs* simply because a prophet has appeared in India, even the Ahmadi followers of M. Mahmud are not safe from being turned into *kāfirs* because a prophet might appear in Africa of whom they know nothing, just as their African brethren know nothing of the Promised Messiah. Indeed so hideous is this doctrine that it is an insult to the sane reader to offer a rejection of it, but as M. Mahmud tries to attribute it to the Promised Messiah, I deem it my duty to show that that great reformer of the age never thought of preaching this hideous untruth for a moment. He is absolutely clear of the charge.

## Promised Messiah did not call other Muslims as *kāfir*

Because the Promised Messiah is a prophet, we are told, therefore all those who have not entered into his *bai'at* are *kāfirs*. M. Mahmud may be right or wrong, but the question I ask is, did the Promised Messiah even once say or write those words? Do the thousands of the pages of his diaries and writings but once contain the statement that *he being a prophet* those who did not enter into his *bai'at* were *kāfirs*? If he never made that claim even once, is it not a hateful guilt to attribute that doctrine to him? Hundreds of times did he speak and write on questions of *Kufr* and *Islam*, but not once did those words escape his tongue or pen. How cruel, then, to declare to the world that he was responsible for teaching a doctrine which he never dreamt of!

### Opponents declared Promised Messiah as *kāfir*.

How did then the question of *kufr* arise in connection with the Promised Messiah at all? When he first claimed to be the Promised Messiah, the Maulvis exerted themselves to their utmost in pronouncing him a *kāfir* because his claim clashed with their cherished doctrines which were really opposed to the Holy Quran and the sayings of the Holy Prophet. In their *fatwas*, however, they were not content with declaring him a *kāfir* but advised the Muslims to cut off all their connections with him, just as M. Mahmud is doing today with respect to those who do not follow the Promised Messiah. The Promised Messiah gave no answer to these *fatwas* except that he went on assuring the public that the charges on which he was declared a *kāfir* were absolutely false, that he did not claim to be a prophet, nor did he deny the existence of angels or miracles and so on. But these assurances had no effect, and it became clear that the Maulvis intentionally persisted in declaring a Muslim to be *kāfir*, notwithstanding that he repeatedly explained that he did not swerve a hair's breadth from the principles of Islam. Now there is a saying of the Holy Prophet according to which if anyone calls his Muslim brother a *kāfir*, the *kufr* reverts to himself.<sup>29</sup> It was about four years after

his claim to Promised Messiahship that an opponent asked him to have a *mubāhila* with him (i.e., praying for the destruction of the party in error). The Promised Messiah's reply was that though his opponent might call him a *kāfir*, yet as he looked upon his opponent as a Muslim, he could not pray for his destruction.<sup>30</sup> But when at last it became manifest that the opponents quite unjustly persisted in calling him a *kāfir*, the Promised Messiah wrote that after that he was entitled to treat those opponents as *kāfir* who declared him to be a *kāfir* or imposter, in accordance with the saying of the Holy Prophet. This is all that the Promised Messiah has ever said, viz., that *kufir* reverted to those who declared him to be a *kāfir* or imposter and to this he stuck to the last, never going against this principle.

It is not necessary for me to explain why the saying of the Holy Prophet makes *kufir* revert to him who declares a Muslim to be a *kāfir*. The Holy Prophet had laid the basis of a great brotherhood and he did not like that such dissensions should exist in this brotherhood as should destroy the unity of Islam. Hence it was necessary to have a safeguard against the creation of such dissensions. But the only safeguard could be the infliction of some punishment on the person who should dare to violate the unity of the Muslim brotherhood. Thus a person who called a Muslim brother a *kāfir* did not deserve to be called a member of the brotherhood and hence the words of the Holy Prophet that *kufir* reverted to him who called his brother Muslim a *kāfir*.

That the Promised Messiah went no further than this is evident from his latest pronouncement. He was at Lahore in May 1908 when about two weeks before his death Mian Fazl-i-Husain, Bar-at-Law, put to him the question whether he called the Muslims *kāfir*. The conversation is thus recorded in the *Badr* newspaper dated 24th May 1908:

“Mr. Fazl-i-Husain said that if all non-Ahmadis were called *kāfir*, there remained nothing in Islam.

“(The Promised Messiah) said: ‘We do not declare anyone, who accepts the *Kalimah*, to be outside Islam unless he himself becomes a *kāfir* by calling us *kāfirs*. It is not

perhaps known to you that when I first claimed to have been appointed by God, Maulvi Abu Said Muhammad Husain of Batala prepared a *fatwa* with great effort in which it was written that I was a *kāfir*, *dajjāl* and misguided, that my funeral prayers should not be said, and that anyone who said *assalāmu alaikum* to me or called me a Muslim was also a *kāfir*. Now it is accepted on all hands that anyone who calls a believer a *kāfir* himself becomes a *kāfir*.”<sup>31</sup>

Further on, it is again affirmed in clear words:

“He who does not call us a *kāfir*, we do not call him a *kāfir* at all.”

### **Belief expressed in *Haqīqat-ul-Wahy*.**

It would be seen from this that the Promised Messiah never declared a single Muslim to be a *kāfir*. As against this, certain words in *Haqīqat-ul-Wahy* are produced where it is written:

“It is strange that you consider him who calls me a *kāfir* and him who denies me as of two different kinds, but in the sight of God they are one kind; for he who denies me does so because he holds me to be an imposter, but God says that a fabricator against God is the greatest of all *kāfirs*.... therefore when in the sight of one who calls me an imposter I have fabricated against God, in this case I am not only a *kāfir* but the greatest of *kāfirs*, and if I am not an imposter, then undoubtedly the *kufir* reverts to him.”  
(p. 163)

It would be seen that this statement in no way applies to all those who do not accept the Promised Messiah, but only to the rejectors who denounce him as an imposter. For instance, it does not apply at all to those non-acceptors of the Promised Messiah who have not heard of him at all, nor to those who regard him as a good Muslim; in fact, it does not apply to anyone who does not consider him an imposter, i.e., one fabricating revelations to deceive people. It would be seen that the only reason which he

has again and again given for calling anyone a *kāfir* is either that such a person calls him a *kāfir* or that he calls him an imposter. Nowhere has he once said what M. Mahmud attributes to him, that those who did not accept him were *kāfirs because he was a prophet*.

Further proof of what has been said here is met with in *Haqīqat-ul-Wahy* itself where we find him thus accusing his opponents for bringing false charges against him, one of which is that they charged him with declaring the Muslims *kāfirs*:

“Again consider this falsehood that they bring this charge against us that we have declared two hundred million Muslims to be *kāfirs*.... Can any Maulvi or any opponent or any *sajjāda nashīn* give proof that we first declared these people to be *kāfirs*? If any leaflet or manifesto or pamphlet was published by us before their *fatwa* of *kufr* in which we declared our Muslim opponents to be *kāfir*, they should bring it forward; otherwise they should think how dishonest it is that they themselves call us *kāfir* and then charge us with having declared all the Muslims to be *kāfirs*. How hurtful is this great dishonesty and lie and false charge!” (p. 120)

Again, relating to those who have not heard even the name of the Promised Messiah whom M. Mahmud considers to be *kāfirs* along with the bitterest abusers, he writes in *Haqīqat-ul-Wahy*:

“Dr. Abdul Hakim Khan in his pamphlet *Al-Masīh-ud-dajjāl* lays this charge against me that I have written in my book that anyone who does not accept me, even if he does not know my name and even if he is in a country where my invitation has not reached, even then he shall be a *kāfir* and go to hell. It is entirely a fabrication of the said doctor; I have not written so in any book or announcement of mine. It is his duty to bring forward any such book of mine in which this is written.” (p. 178)

### Promised Messiah signs declaration in court.

The plainest statement regarding this is, however, contained in *Tiryāq-ul-Qulūb* which was published in 1902. The incident arose out of a case in which both Maulvi Muhammad Husain of Batala and the Promised Messiah signed an agreement, the former undertaking not to call the Promised Messiah a *kāfir* or liar in future, and the latter giving the same undertaking with regard to Maulvi Muhammad Husain. Reference to this is contained in *Tiryāq-ul-Qulūb* on p. 130 in the following words:

“The third aspect of the fulfilment of the prophecy of 21st November 1898 is this that Mr. J. M. Douie, late Deputy Commissioner and District Magistrate, Gurdaspur district, in his order dated 24th February 1899 made Maulvi Muhammad Husain sign the agreement that he would not call me anti-Christ and *kāfir* and liar in future.... And he promised standing in the court that he would not call me a *kāfir* in any assembly, nor give me the name of anti-Christ, nor would he proclaim me a liar among the people. Now consider after this agreement the fate of his *fatwa* (of *kufr*) which he had prepared by (travelling all over the country) going so far as Benares. If he had been in the right in giving that *fatwa*, he ought to have given this answer before the Magistrate that as he (the Mirza Sahib) was a *kāfir* in his opinion, therefore he called him a *kāfir*, and as he was a *dajjāl* (anti-Christ), therefore he called him a *dajjāl*, and as he was certainly a liar, therefore he called him a liar, particularly when I, by the grace of God, still adhere to those very beliefs, and shall do so to the end of my days, which Muhammad Husain gave out to be words of *kufr*. What honesty is this, then, that from fear of the Magistrate he destroyed his own *fatwas*.... It is true that I have also signed that notice, but by signing it I am under no blame in the sight of God and the just, nor is this signature a cause of my disgrace, for it is my belief from the beginning that no one can become a *kāfir* or *dajjāl* on account of denying my claims; though certainly,

he would be going astray and erring from the right path.”

This is plain enough. Not only he never said that as he was a prophet therefore those who denied him were *kāfirs*, but he held *from the beginning* that no one could be a *kāfir* on account of denying his claims. A footnote is added which lays further stress upon this point:

“It is a point worth remembering that to call a denier of one’s claims a *kāfir* is the right of those prophets who bring a law and new commandments from God, but aside from the givers of law, any inspired ones (*mulham*) and *muhaddasin*, however great their dignity in the sight of God, and however much they may have been honoured by being spoken to by God, no one becomes a *kāfir* by their denial.” (*Tiryāq-ul-Qulūb*, p. 130, footnote)

Such a clear statement from the pen of the Promised Messiah should have set all doubts at rest; for to hold that the Promised Messiah, when he published these views, did not really entertain them is to hold him in meaner estimation than even Maulvi Muhammad Husain. If it was disgraceful on the part of the latter to sign an agreement contrary to his belief for fear of punishment, it was much more disgraceful on the part of the Promised Messiah to assure people that he did not look upon his deniers as *kāfirs* while he actually did so. Would this not be declared as the meanest attempt to deceive the public? I do not think anyone who calls himself an Ahmadi would take that view of the character of the Promised Messiah.

Even if the Promised Messiah had not left these plain statements in his writings, his practical life was a sufficient guarantee that he did not look upon a mere denial of his claims as *kufr*, nor did he regard those who had not entered into his *bai‘at* as *kāfirs*. Khwaja Ghulam Farid of Chachran, the spiritual leader of the Nawab of Bahawalpur, held the Promised Messiah in great honour, though he never entered into his *bai‘at*. Now according to the verdict of M. Mahmud, published in his monthly *Tashhīz-ul-Azhān* for April 1911:



“...even he who from his heart believes him (i.e., the Promised Messiah) to be true, and does not deny him even with the tongue, but he postpones *bai‘at*, is looked upon as a *kāfir*” (p. 141),

Khawaja Ghulam Farid should be ranked as a *kāfir*, but the Promised Messiah speaks of him in terms of great respect in his book *Sirāj Munīr*, as “a man of truth”, as “one who receives light from God”, as “one helped by the Holy Spirit” (page *e*, supplement) and he addresses him as “one matchless in truth and purity” (page *g*).<sup>32</sup>

## Practical relations with other Muslims

### Funeral prayers for other deceased Muslims.

M. Mahmud lays down some rules for the guidance of his community which are entirely opposed to the writings of the Promised Messiah, and this is due to his calling the Muslims *kāfirs*. For instance, one of the rules laid down is that in no case shall an Ahmadi say the funeral prayers of another Muslim,<sup>33</sup> however nearly he may be related to the dead person. But when the Promised Messiah was questioned about it, he gave his judgment in the following words:

“Being asked whether it was lawful to offer prayers for the dead persons who had not joined this movement, the Promised Messiah replied: If he was an opponent of this movement and abused us and thought of us in an evil manner, do not offer prayers for him, and if he was silent and was in a middle position, it is lawful to offer up prayers for him but the *imam* should be from among you.”<sup>34</sup>

Later still, when questions were put to him on this point, he directed the writing of replies in almost identical terms, the words of one letter being:

“Funeral prayers may be offered for an opponent who did not resort to abusing.”<sup>35</sup>

He also wrote letters to that effect with his own hand, and all this is admitted by M. Mahmud in his *Anwār-i-Khilāfat*:

“Again, there is a question as to the funeral prayers of a non-Ahmadi. Here we are confronted with the difficulty that the Promised Messiah gave permission in certain cases to offer prayers. There is no doubt that there are some references which lead to this conclusion and there is also a letter to this effect on which I shall ponder, but the practice of the Promised Messiah is against this.” (p. 91)

M. Mahmud says that the practice of the Promised Messiah was opposed to his *fatwas* and his letters. There is not the least truth in this statement. Evidence has been produced on oath of some of the most pious members of the community that the Promised Messiah himself offered up funeral prayers for others than his disciples. But the question is, did M. Mahmud ever ponder on these *fatwas* and on that letter and did he announce the result to which deep thought on that point had led? Nearly two years have passed away since he uttered these words and he has been repeatedly asked to declare the result of his pondering but there is no reply.<sup>36</sup>

He has given a *fatwa* against the *fatwa* of the Promised Messiah and now he is silent, though he had promised to speak on that point. But what can he say? He knows well that he has given a judgment contradicting the judgment of the Promised Messiah because he believes the Muslims to be *kāfirs* while the Promised Messiah never entertained that belief. He, therefore, now desires to keep his followers in the bliss of ignorance.

### **Marriage relations.**

Another point relating to practical life is the question of having marriage relations with other Muslims. M. Mahmud gives them the same position as the law of Islam gives to non-Muslim possessors of scriptures, but he cannot produce a single word from the Promised Messiah in support of this *new* law. It is true that the Promised Messiah enjoined his followers so far as possible to have marriage relations among themselves, the object

being the strengthening of the ties which united the community. But he never thought of altering the Islamic law, nor did he ever declare that the giving of an Ahmadi girl in marriage to other than an Ahmadi Muslim was illegal. On the other hand, he sanctioned the marriage of an Ahmadi girl, the daughter of one of his trusted and intimate friends, Dr. Khalifa Rashid-ud-Din, and the sister-in-law of M. Mahmud himself, with a non-Ahmadi boy, a relative of the mother of the girl, towards the end of his life, and the marriage sermon was given by the late Maulvi Nur-ud-Din, M. Mahmud himself taking part in all the principal functions. If the marriage was illegal, why did the Promised Messiah allow it? And if M. Mahmud held the same belief then as he holds now, why did he take part in the marriage ceremony? This shows clearly that all the novel doctrines which M. Mahmud is now introducing into the Ahmadiyya movement were formed after the death of the Promised Messiah.

### **Prayer after non-Ahmadi imams.**

The third point in practical relations with other Muslims is the question of saying prayers after an *imam* of another denomination. Here, too, as M. Mahmud looks upon the Muslims as *kāfirs*, it is illegal according to him to say prayers after other than an Ahmadi *imam*. It is true that the Promised Messiah was compelled to prohibit his followers from saying prayers after other *imams* when opposition to the Ahmadiyya movement grew very severe, and *fatwas* had been issued by the Maulvis stating that the Ahmadis should not be allowed to enter the mosques and their corpses should not be buried in Muslim grave-yards. Had the Promised Messiah prohibited Ahmadis from saying their prayers after other than Ahmadi *imams* at the time when he laid claim to Promised Messiahship, we would have been entitled to draw the conclusion that he thought it illegal for his followers to say prayers after the others, considering the latter to be *kāfir*. But it is a fact that long after his claim, he himself used to say his prayers after other *imams*, and it was not until about ten years after the claim to Promised Messiahship that he prohibited his followers from following other *imams*. In fact, it was not a

matter of choice, but a step of the utmost urgency for the welfare of a small community that, suffering persecution of every kind, had assembled around him. It was a sort of a defensive measure for the Ahmadiyya community which could not have prospered until it was separated from its persecuting co-religionists.

The measure regarding the prohibition of saying prayers after other than Ahmadi *imams* was, as I have said, introduced when the Maulvis, persisting in their *fatwas* of *kufir* against the Promised Messiah, instilled the poison of malice into the public mind against the Ahmadiyya movement. The masses, accustomed to follow their Maulvis and their *pirs*, did not care to distinguish the truth from the falsehood for themselves and implicitly believed in the truth of what their religious and spiritual leaders said. Hence, though he treated them as Muslims, allowing even the funeral prayers to be said for them, he did not think it proper for his followers to say their prayers after their *imams*, making an exception in favour of men who separated themselves from those Maulvis and *pirs* who declared the Promised Messiah to be a *kāfir*. The conversation which he had with Mr. Fazl-i-Husain at Lahore, from which I have already quoted, throws light on this point as well. When the Promised Messiah declared emphatically that he did not at all call those *kāfir* who did not call him a *kāfir*, Mr. Fazl-i-Husain asked him what was the harm in saying prayers with such Muslims who did not call him a *kāfir*. The answer to this question was as follows:

“A believer is not bit from the same hole twice! We have experienced well that such people are in fact hypocrites. Their condition is this that in (our) presence they say ‘We bear no opposition to you,’ but when they are alone with their leaders they say, ‘We were mocking with them.’ So until those people make a public announcement that they look upon the members of the Ahmadiyya community as believers, nay, that they consider those persons *kāfir* who call them (i.e., the Ahmadis) *kāfir* — in that case I will today order my followers that they say their prayers along

with them. We are the followers of truth; you cannot compel us outside the law of Islam.”<sup>37</sup>

This answer shows clearly that the Promised Messiah prohibited prayers after only such *imams* as either openly declared him a *kāfir* or mixed themselves up with such persons. But if a person, who was already mixed up with the Maulvis who declared the Promised Messiah to be a *kāfir*, openly separated himself from them and treated the *fatwa* of *kufr* against a Muslim in the manner in which the Holy Prophet’s injunction required it to be treated, then the Ahmadis could say their prayers after him. Similar words are contained in a letter, dated 17th March 1908, written in reply to a representation by some Muslims as to one of his followers not saying his prayers with them:

“As generally the *Mullas* of this country, on account of prejudice, have declared us *kāfirs* and have written *fatwas*, and the other people are their followers, therefore if there are such people that they make a public announcement for the sake of clearance that they are not followers of the Maulvis who have given *fatwas* of *kufr*, then it is allowed to say prayers with them.”<sup>38</sup>

Other quotations to the same effect may be multiplied to any extent, but the two given above are sufficient for our purpose. The reason of not saying prayers with others is the *fatwa* of *kufr* against the Promised Messiah; if he had not been declared a *kāfir*, or the *fatwa* had been taken back when he had given public assurance that he was a true believer in the Muslim articles of faith, the question of not saying prayers after other *imams* would never have arisen. And even now prayers may be said by an Ahmadi after a Muslim who practically separates himself from the givers of the *fatwa*. It can be easily concluded from this that prayers may be said by Ahmadis after other than Ahmadi *imams*, when necessary, in countries where the *Ulama* have not declared the Promised Messiah to be a *kāfir*. Such was, in fact, the judgment given by the late Maulvi Hakim Nur-ud-Din who succeeded the Promised Messiah in the leadership of the community. He allowed the saying of prayers after other than

Ahmadi *imams* in Arabia, Africa and England, and the Ahmadis who have performed the pilgrimage did say their prayers after such *imams* there, M. Mahmud himself being one of them.

The present position of the Ahmadiyya community in the matter of saying prayers after other *imams*, in accordance with the orders of the Promised Messiah, which however do not form any amendment of the Islamic Law, is this, that where there is a sufficient number of Ahmadis, generally it is in the interests of the community to have their own *imam* to lead prayers, but prayers might be said when necessary after other *imams* in countries whose *Ulama* generally have not given or do not recognise the *fatwa* of *kufir*, or in a country like India where generally the *Ulama* have declared the Promised Messiah to be *kāfir* after such men as make a public announcement to the effect that they consider him to be a Muslim, and in accordance with the saying of the Holy Prophet consider such persons to be in error as have issued *fatwas* to that effect. This latter condition was put in a simpler form by the late Maulvi Nur-ud-Din who, on being questioned by Maulvi Fazal-ud-Din of Kharian (Punjab) regarding the saying of prayers after other than Ahmadi *imams*, gave the following reply:

“Those who are not hypocritical, and who really entertain a good opinion, are excusable to a certain extent. You may say prayers after them, having first made an *istikhārah*.”<sup>39</sup>

This letter was written on the 25th of February 1910, and the writer of it adheres to the spirit of the orders of the Promised Messiah, though a different method has been suggested to arrive at the conclusion whether a certain person actually entertains a good opinion about the Promised Messiah or only makes a show of it hypocritically. If we refer to the reply given to Mr. Fazl-i-Husain by the Promised Messiah in May 1908, we will find that even the Promised Messiah required an announcement simply as a safeguard against hypocritical assurances. Maulvi Nur-ud-Din suggested the adoption of a different method to arrive at the same conclusion which is no doubt simpler than the first. It is a fact that the attitude of the Muslim public in general towards the

Ahmadiyya movement has greatly changed since the assurances given by the Promised Messiah immediately before his death in May 1908 in respectable gatherings at Lahore, and were it not for the novel doctrines of M. Mahmud which are again widening the gulf, the Ahmadiyya movement today would have cleared off most of the prejudice which prevails against it.