

*“Call to the path of thy Lord with wisdom and goodly exhortation,
and argue with people in the best manner.” (The Holy Quran 16:125)*

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*Exponent
of Islam
and the
Lahore
Ahmadiyya
Movement
for over
seventy-
five years*
•

The Light

& Islamic Review

September – October 2001

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*Presents
Islam as:*
*PEACEFUL
TOLERANT
RATIONAL
INSPIRING*
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***50th anniversary of the death
of Maulana Muhammad Ali***

*Space left for photo of
Maulana Muhammad Ali*

◆ *Ahmadiyya Anjuman Isha'at Islam Lahore Inc., U.S.A.* ◆
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The Light was founded in 1921 as the organ of the AHMADIYYA ANJUMAN ISHA'AT ISLAM (Ahmadiyya Association for the propagation of Islam) of Lahore, Pakistan. *The Islamic Review* was published in England from 1913 for over 50 years, and in the U.S.A. from 1980 to 1991. The present periodical represents the beliefs of the worldwide branches of the Ahmadiyya Anjuman Isha'at Islam, Lahore.

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Articles, letters and all enquiries should be sent to:

'The Light', 1315 Kingsgate Road, Columbus, Ohio 43221-1504
U.S.A.

Phone: 614-457 8504 Fax: 614-457 4455

E-mail: light@muslim.org or aaiil@aol.com

WWW: <http://www.muslim.org>

The main object of the A.A.I.L.L. is to present the true, original message of Islam to the whole world — Islam as it is found in the Holy Quran and the life of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, obscured today by grave misconceptions and wrong popular notions.

About ourselves

Ahmadiyya Anjuman Isha'at Islam Lahore has branches in the following countries:

U.S.A.	Australia
U.K.	Canada
Holland	Fiji
Indonesia	Germany
Suriname	India
Trinidad	South Africa
Guyana	

The Movement has members and supporters in many other countries as well.

Achievements:

The Anjuman has produced extensive literature on Islam, originally in English and Urdu, including translations of the Holy Quran with commentaries. These books are being translated into other languages, such as French, German, Spanish, Russian, Chinese, Dutch and Polish.

The Anjuman has run several Muslim missions around the world, including the first ever in Western Europe.

The Movement's contribution to Islamic thought is summed up on the left.

History:

1889: Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad founded the Ahmadiyya Movement.

1901: Movement given name *Ahmadiyya* after Holy Prophet Muhammad's other famous name *Ahmad*.

1905: Hazrat Mirza appoints central body (Anjuman) to manage the Movement.

1908: Death of Hazrat Mirza. Succeeded by Maulana Nur-ud-Din as Head.

1914: Death of Maulana Nur-ud-Din. Ahmadiyya Anjuman Isha'at Islam founded at Lahore as continuation of the original Anjuman. Maulana Muhammad Ali elected as Head.

1951: Death of Maulana Muhammad Ali after fifty years of glorious service to the cause of Islam. Maulana Sadr-ud-Din (d. 1981) becomes Head.

1981-1996: Dr. Saeed Ahmad Khan, an eminent medical doctor and religious scholar, led the Movement, at a time of intense persecution.

1996: Prof. Dr. Asghar Hameed, a distinguished retired University Professor of Mathematics, and learned Islamic scholar, elected Head.

Maulana Muhammad Ali passes away

From *The Light*, Lahore
October 24, 1951

[We reproduce below the notice of the death of Maulana Muhammad Ali which appeared in 'The Light' upon his death in October 1951, on the front page of its issue of the above date.]

We deeply regret to have to announce the death, by heart failure, at Karachi at 11.30 a.m., on Saturday the 10th of *Muharram* [13 October 1951], of Maulana Muhammad Ali, the world famous divine and scholar of Islam and President of the Ahmadiyya Anjuman Ishaat-i-Islam, Lahore, ever since its inception in 1914. He dies at the age of 76. His body was brought by train to Lahore and buried after a solemn *Janaza* prayer at the Ahmadiyya Cemetery on Sunday night.

Born in a village in the state of Kapurthala in East Punjab about the year 1874 and passing through a brilliant academic career Maulana Muhammad Ali, then an ordinary English educated youth, saw a new light of Islam rising from the village of Qadian in the Gurdaspur district of East Punjab in the year 1897. Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, the Saint and Messiah of Islam, had proclaimed his claims for world reform some time before this time. Accompanied by his life-long friend and comrade-in-arms Khwaja Kamal-ud-Din he visited Qadian in that year. And reading the signs of the times, took his pledge at the hands of this Messiah. From that time onward the one thought that engrossed the attention of Muhammad Ali was the dissemination of the ideas of this Messiah in the English language because that was the passionate desire of the Messiah himself.

We need not tell the world what this devoted disciple had been doing all these years in the promotion of the cause that he had in heart. The enlightened Muslim world knows it but too well that but for the efforts of Maulana Muhammad Ali and Khwaja Kamal-ud-Din (may their memories be blessed) the position of Islam in relation to Christianity would not have been what it is today. Their names alone are a terror to Christian missionary efforts in the world.

It is indeed very rarely that a man can devote himself so thoroughly and for so long to the service of religion as has fallen to the lot of Maulana Muhammad Ali. Since the first beginning of the present century till the moment of his death the pen of Maulana Muhammad Ali wielded in defence and exposition of Islam never knew any rest. The scholarly pages he has thus written will surpass in volume and magnificence any other work on these lines by any contemporary writer. If the late Khwaja Kamal-ud-Din could be called the organ voice of Islam for the west and the westernised sections of the Muslim world, Maulana Muhammad Ali can certainly be called with equal fitness the mighty pen of Islam for the same world.

Among the numerous books written by him both English and Urdu his translation and commentary of the Holy Quran in both these languages and 'The Religion of Islam', an encyclopaedic work on Islamic jurisprudence, will stand out for many centuries as a beacon light for the new age of Islam.

Of no less importance but very much less known is his translation and commentary in Urdu of Al-Bukhari, 'the most correct of books of Islam after the Book of God', as it has been rightly called. This storehouse of knowledge, so laboriously collected for and bequeathed to the new world of Islam, is a precious heritage, of which any family and any community can be rightly proud.

The difficulties of the field in which he chose to work are known only to those who have any actual experience of them. Born in a community that had fallen to the lowest depths of national decay, but which yet contained potentialities of forming a nucleus for a new order for the world, his work was as arduous as it can ever be. He cherished a hope for the regeneration of the Muslim community but their present condition kept him, as was but natural, always depressed and sad. Rejected by the main body of the Ahmadiyya community, it was his faith in the mission of this movement and in the destiny of Islam in the world that alone sustained him in his lonely efforts in the cause of reviving Islam.

We mourn his loss today, because he was a lover of Islam, not the superficial type of lover whose love ends in mere talk, but a lover whose love consumes his whole being, even his very soul, and such lovers of Islam alas are very rare in these days. We mourn his death because he wielded the pen of Islam with a mighty hand, and we who presume to succeed him

in office, so sadly lack in that vigour and strength in our shaky hands. We mourn his loss because his faith in the destiny of Islam was unshakable, a faith alas very much wanting in the present generation of Muslims, theologians or laymen. We mourn his loss because he was a man of profound scholarship, one that can be regarded as an asset of contemporary humanity and was a sign of the intellectual potentialities of Islam and we shall search in vain to find anyone who can fill his position in this regard. We mourn his loss because side by side with his high intellectual powers he had cultivated his spiritual parts which made him exceptionally meek and humble, a quality of mind which is the best gift of religion to human culture, and we have yet to find a Muslim who can present this rare combination.

But although we are overwhelmed with grief at the moment of writing, our one great consolation is that the God of Islam is a Living God, as testified by one at whose hands Maulana Muhammad Ali had sold his career. And it has been announced by this God, through this chosen servant of His, that Islam is sure to shine once more in the world as it did at its first appearance in the world. ■

Obituaries in Pakistani English language press

[We quote below from what English newspapers in Pakistan wrote about Maulana Muhammad Ali when he died.]

The Dawn, Karachi, 16 October 1951:

“Maulvi Muhammad Ali, whose death occurred in Karachi, probably did more writing on Islamic subjects for almost half a century than any contemporary individual. Immersed in scholarly pursuits and gifted with a researcher’s frame of mind, his aims were not academic. He was a missionary who awoke to his calling in life in the environment of the last century when Islam in this sub-continent was a target of concentrated scurrilous attacks from Western missionaries and votaries of a venomous revivalist Hinduism.

A man of his academic distinction, in the late nineties, must have overcome a strong temptation in declining to enter Government service — the

inevitable goal of education in those days — and choosing a missionary career. The object to which he dedicated his life was the translation of the Holy Quran into English; and he lived long enough after the first edition of his translation and commentary appeared in 1917, to follow it up with many other works. The best among these subsequent works are believed to be his *Muhammad, The Prophet* and *The Religion of Islam*. The former is a biography which pre-eminently serves its purpose; and the latter is almost cyclopaedic in its range of information.

As a missionary Maulvi Muhammad Ali had profitably studied the publicity techniques of European missionaries and his prolific writings reflect his ability to devise a suitable approach to almost every individual section of his readers. Stupendous was the energy that he could put into this task; and as the years grew on him the will-power made up for what was lacking in physical strength. He died working almost till the last. Silent and unassuming as he was, both the man and his works were appropriately reflected in the fact — paradoxical as it might seem — that his writings were better known than the man himself.

His death is a real loss. He will be mourned by a wide circle of friends and admirers. We extend our heartfelt sympathy to the bereaved family.”

The Star, Lahore, 20 October 1951:

“On October 13, at 11.30 a.m. in Karachi, there passed away from this world a well-known scholar and religious leader — Maulana Muhammad Ali, head of the Ahmadiyya Anjuman Ishaat Islam, Lahore. Soon after finishing his education, and while still very young, Maulana Muhammad Ali joined the followers of Mirza Ghulam Ahmad of Qadian, and came to the fore as a writer in English on Islam while he edited the *Review of Religions*, a monthly organ of the Ahmadiyya Movement of which the first issue came out in January 1902. The monthly journal, devoted to the comparative study of Religion, did yeoman’s service under Maulana Muhammad Ali’s editorship by defending Islam against the onslaught of Christian Missionaries and European Orientalists of the old school whose writings were more marked by a virulent prejudice against Islam than by a spirit of honest enquiry and scholarly research.

After the death of the founder of the Ahmadiyya Movement, Mr. Muhammad Ali was assigned the

task of preparing a translation in English of the Holy Quran; but the work could not be finished in the lifetime of Maulvi Noor-ud-Din. Moreover, after the death of Maulvi Noor-ud-Din, a split occurred in the Ahmadiyya Movement over some points of belief and doctrine, as well as general policy to be followed in carrying on the mission of the Movement. Maulana Muhammad Ali was the Head of the section that broke away from Qadian and established itself in Lahore, finally coming to be known as Ahmadiyya Anjuman Ishaat Islam, Lahore.

The translation of the Holy Quran into English, prepared by Maulana Muhammad Ali, was published in 1917, and was at once accepted as a most valuable addition to Islamic literature in English prepared by Muslim scholars and divines themselves, as distinct from what European and American scholars write on the subject, practically always under a deep anti-Islamic bias characteristic of Christian missionaries.

Apart from his translation of the Holy Quran, Maulana Muhammad Ali brought out a translation of Sahih Bukhari, and many other books on subjects connected with the superiority of Islam as a religious and social system. By removing him from our midst, death has thus created a vacuum that will long be felt by all interested in the revival of Islam as the most dominant spiritual force in the lives of the Muslim peoples.”

Public figures in Pakistan condole Maulana's death

Feroz Khan Noon

He was a Pakistani statesman who was governor of the Pakistani province of East Bengal at the time when Maulana Muhammad Ali died. Later he was Prime Minister of Pakistan. On the Maulana's death he sent the following letter to Mr. N.A. Faruqi:

“Dacca
16th October 1951.

I was very sorry to read in the papers of the demise of Maulana Muhammad Ali. Please accept my deepest sympathy. It is a loss which not only I but the whole Muslim

world will share with you fully. His works will remain forever and I do not know of any man who has done so much for the revival of Islam as your brother-in-law, not even during the last 500 years.”

(Published in *The Light*, 8 November 1951)

Khwaja Hasan Nizami

He was a spiritual leader and successor of a saint of Dehli, India. (His son, Dr. F. Nizami, became in 1985 the founding Director of the Oxford Centre for Islamic Studies, an associated institution of the University of Oxford, England.) His tribute, taken from his own journal *Munadi* of September-October 1951, was reproduced in the Lahore Ahmadiyya paper *Paigham Sulh*, of 26 December 1951. It is translated from Urdu below:

“Maulana Muhammad Ali was the head of the Lahore Jama'at of the Ahmadis. His death was recently reported by Lahore radio. He did not agree with the *khilafat* of Qadian, and so he had formed a separate Jama'at. Khwaja Kamal-ud-Din belonged to his group. Maulana Muhammad Ali also translated the Holy Quran into English. In connection with the work of the propagation of Islam, I had cause to meet the Maulana from the very beginning of my life till today. I consider him to be a very great and very successful worker. May Allah grant him protection, and patience to the bereaved.

I inform my disciples and their leaders in India and Pakistan to hold meetings of reading the *Fatiha* for him. He has rendered so much service to the Quran and Islam that I believe it essential to hold the reading of the *Fatiha* for him.”

Abdul Majeed Salik

He was a journalist and writer, being editor of a Muslim daily, the *Inqilab*, and author of the book *Zikr-i Iqbal* about the life of Dr. Sir Muhammad Iqbal. He lived close to Maulana Muhammad Ali's house in Lahore in the Muslim Town suburb. The street in which he lived is now known as *Salik Street* in his honour. His tribute to the Maulana was published in the Lahore Ahmadiyya paper *Paigham Sulh* of 26 December 1951, which is translated below from Urdu:

“It was 1912. I had gone from Batala to Qadian to meet some friends. I went to see Maulana Hakim Nur-ud-Din, *marhum* and *maghfur*, in connection with the illness of a relation. It was the morning time, and the Hakim sahib was sitting in the front yard of his house attending to the needs of a crowd of people, consisting of both his followers and other needy persons. If one was having his pulse taken, another had come to seek medical knowledge, and yet another was waiting his turn to ask a question about religion. I too went and sat among the waiting people.

When my turn came I showed him the document detailing my relation’s illness, which the Hakim sahib read very carefully. While doing so, he asked me where I had come from ...

[Mr. Salik narrates here his conversation with Maulana Nur-ud-Din, which we omit, and then he continues] ...

My talk with him was going on when a man came to see him. The Hakim sahib left all his work and turned his attention to him. After saying one or two things to him, he introduced me to him, saying: This young man is Abdul Majeed Salik, grandson of Maulvi Mir Muhammad of Batala. Then he said to me: *Meet Maulvi Muhammad Ali sahib*. I met the Maulvi sahib with much admiration. I had been hearing for long that Maulvi Muhammad Ali, M.A., LL.B., was a very skilled writer of the English language and was translating the Holy Quran into English, but it was only today that I met him. Then the Maulvi sahib asked the Hakim sahib the meanings of some places in the Holy Quran and discussed with him the meanings of certain words. Having finished, he bade me farewell with great affection and left.

After this, I next met Maulvi Muhammad Ali sahib when I was appointed editor of *Zamindar* in Lahore. At that time Maulvi Zafar Ali Khan and Dr. Iqbal had friendly relations with Maulvi Muhammad Ali, Khwaja Kamal-ud-Din, Dr. Yaqub Baig, Dr. Syed Muhammad Husain Shah and Shaikh Rahmatullah,¹ but I met these revered elders only infrequently. After the publication of the *Inqilab* started, I met Maulana Muhammad Ali quite often. The Maulana used to live in a house adjacent to the mosque in Ahmadiyya Buildings and I used to go to

meet him sometimes. He was very kind to me and highly praised the religious and political services of *Inqilab*.

Maulana Muhammad Ali became a true and staunch Muslim by living in the company of Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad. Not only that, the greatness of the religion of Islam was so impressed upon his mind and heart that he devoted the whole of his life for its propagation. Every moment in his life was spent in the service of the faith. Besides the English translation of the Holy Quran, he wrote countless books on religious subjects. In my opinion, the best of these is the book *The Religion of Islam*, by studying which an English-knowing person can acquire such detailed knowledge about the religion which even the fully-qualified *maulvis* do not possess.

*Maulana Muhammad Ali
became a true and staunch
Muslim by living in the
company of
Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad*

For the last fifteen years, Maulana Muhammad Ali had been living in Muslim Town [a suburb of Lahore], where I also have my residence. So we used to meet often in various gatherings and functions. Despite his religious and pious nature, he was quite informal. He was, no doubt, an Ahmadi, but his relations with other Muslims were extremely sincere and fraternal. One reason was that he was the head of that group of Ahmadis whose beliefs are not intolerant. Secondly, he was by nature peace-loving. He used to give sympathetic support to the campaigns and movements of the Muslims, and did not tolerate *takfir* of them, because he believed that calling Muslims as *kafir* was inconsistent with the work of propagation. He presented the message of Islam not only to India but to the Western world as well. And it is a fact that he possessed the capability of doing so in every way. He was not only a learned man of the religion, but also a high-ranking commentator of the Quran and *mujtahid*. He was an English writer of the highest standard, who well understood the Western mind. He presented Islam to Western-educated people as well as to Westerners themselves in such a style that they could not help

¹ These were the leaders of the Lahore Ahmadiyya Movement.

becoming convinced of the greatness of this faith. I believe that hundreds of seekers-after-truth in the Western countries became Muslims by reading the writings and books of Maulana Muhammad Ali, and it is as a result of his efforts that today the name of Islam is mentioned with respect in the West, hostility towards Islam having become infrequent. The selfless service of Islam, over a long period, will surely be a source of Allah's mercy for Maulana Muhammad Ali, because Allah never wastes the efforts and exertions of the true servants of his faith.

...it is as a result of his efforts that today the name of Islam is mentioned with respect in the West...

There is no doubt that there was a little difference of belief between him and the general Muslims, but that difference was by no means so serious that the Muslims should ignore his services and fail to appreciate him. I am extremely dismayed to see that, when quite ordinary poets and writers die, the press and the radio devote hundreds of pages in their honour and relay endless speeches boring the listeners, but at the death of Maulana Muhammad Ali they did nothing. Muslim newspapers and magazines should have published detailed articles about his life and his work of the propagation of Islam, and talks should have been broadcast on the radio about his work. However, most newspapers did no more than publish just the news of his death. Two or three newspapers wrote notes which were about twenty lines in length. This is a reflection of the ingratitude and lack of appreciation of these times. However, in the religious circles in Western countries, regret was expressed at the death of the Maulana, and articles were written about his services. But the most important thing is that the Maulana will find his reward with Almighty Allah. The man whose work is accepted by Allah cannot have any concern about its acceptance by the world.

May Allah grant the Maulana shelter under the shadow of His mercy, make his services to the religion a cause for his forgiveness and for his elevation in rank, and grant that educated Muslims follow his example, *Amin.*" ■

A heavy loss for the Muslim world:

Muhammad Ali and his work

by Omer Riza Dogrul

[Omer Riza Dogrul (died March 1952) was a Turkish Islamic scholar, writer and a deputy to the Grand National Assembly of Turkey. He wrote the following article about Maulana Muhammad Ali after the Maulana's death in 1951, in which he pays tribute to his services to Islam and also gives an account of meeting him in Lahore in February 1951. The article originally appeared in The Islamic Review, published in England by the Working Muslim Mission, May 1952 (pages 17-18) and is reproduced here with its heading and subheadings.]

The debt I owe to Muhammad Ali

With the death of Muhammad Ali we have lost a man who devoted his whole life to the service of Islam; a savant and a thinker, he was a hard worker and a prolific writer. I was profoundly moved on learning this sad news through reading *The Islamic Review* for November, 1951. He was certainly the greatest Muslim thinker and writer of our time, and was possessed of a sound and fertile brain, a pure heart full of enthusiasm, a faith which was profound and unshakable and a knowledge that was limitless. During his lifetime he devoted all his capabilities and talents to one object, the revival of Islam, the brushing aside of useless superstition among Muslims, and re-establishing the original doctrine of Islam in its pristine beauty. And he rejuvenated its lost force. This good worker in a saintly cause, whose days of work are over, was called Muhammad Ali of Lahore, famous translator and commentator of the Quran into English. He was an eminent personality who left his mark on the world by this supreme work and a host of other books on Islam.

It so happened that after taking part in the World Muslim Conference at Karachi in February, 1951, we spent several days in Lahore. Here our first duty was to pay a visit to Maulana Muhammad Ali. We had read his writings in Turkey for 30 years with great benefit to ourselves. He enlightened us on many matters, for he had penetrated deeply into the spirit of Islam and understood its aims and objectives, and had set out to explain them to others. He wrote with equal facility in English and his

native tongue. Through his writings in English we were able to understand what he had to say. It has been calculated that he wrote altogether 7,000 pages in English and 10,000 in Urdu. I can truthfully say that I have read in full the 7,000 pages written in English. These are quite sufficient for me to judge the full extent of my great debt of knowledge to him.

On our arrival at Lahore we were confronted with a very full programme of activities, but when I was told that he wished to see me, I solved my difficulty by scrapping the official scheduled arrangements, and taking his emissary by the arm, said to him, "Let's go to see Maulana".

On the way I asked him, "How is he getting on and what is he working on?" He replied:

"At one time all hope of saving his life was given up, as he was greatly incapacitated by severe heart attacks. But thanks to the care of his entourage he has pulled through. He ought not to work, but none the less he does. Whenever we request him to rest he replies:

'Let me work; rest is death, it is only by working that I feel that I am alive'.

He is at present revising the new edition of his translation of the Holy Quran into English, and will not rest until he has checked all the proofs himself. His only wish is that he will live long enough to complete this work. *Insha Allah* he will live long enough."

Face to face with Muhammad Ali

On our arrival at the Maulana's house I asked that we should cause him no inconvenience. "I will go to his room and kiss his hand," I said. I was promised that my wishes would be fulfilled, and so I waited in the drawing room. After one or two minutes I saw a light shining through the open door; I was irresistibly drawn towards it, and a moment later was embracing Muhammad Ali. His form had really acquired a sort of transparency and translucidity which were not of this world. His hair and beard, which were exceptionally white, surrounded his face like a halo. He was of striking stature. His eyes were pale and dim, and gave the impression that his thoughts were already not of this world. I spoke in order not to tire him; I treated subjects which I knew would interest him, and as I was very well informed

about these ideas, he received my remarks with a sympathetic smile.

Somebody brought him some sheets of paper on a roller. "These must be your proofs," I said. "Please let me look them over with you." He appeared to appreciate my efforts not to tire him. I was able to observe that his work was well on the way to its final completion. As far as I can remember, 20 parts of the Quran had already been corrected and only ten remained to be completed. As the proofs had been prepared with the greatest of care, and the text and corrections had been treated with equal attention, the checking was quickly carried out. I asked him: "What are your other occupations?" He replied slowly in a deep voice:

"I have sworn an oath to send a complete set of my works to all the libraries of the world. I have 5,000 complete sets of my works, for which my friends have collected money in order to send them to all the important libraries of the world. Would you kindly give me a few addresses of libraries that would be interested in receiving them?"

I immediately wrote down several addresses, and he gave them to his secretary. I made as though to retire, but he stopped me. He said:

"I have read your translation of the Holy Quran entitled *Tanri Buyrugu* (The Order of God). I have the first and second editions in my library, and I hope that you will publish a third. I beseech you to do all that lies in your power to express the enlightenment of Islam. I am sure that you will never in any way give satisfaction to the fanaticism of the narrow-minded people or even consider supporting the views of the intolerant."

I kissed his hand and asked permission to leave.

This was my first and, alas, my last, interview with him.

His life and work

Muhammad Ali was born about 1874, in the village of Murar, in the province of Kapurthula. His education was a success; he was an excellent mathematician as well as a man of letters. He studied law at the University of the Punjab and started to embark on a legal career, but destiny had ordained that he should contribute to the revival of Islam. He met Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, the founder of the Ahmadiyya

Movement. He joined forces with him at the same time as Khwaja Kamaluddin, and for many years they were engrossed in profound religious studies. He was editor of *The Review of Religions*, and was asked by the Ahmadiyya Anjuman in 1909 to translate the Holy Quran into English. It took him eight years working twelve hours a day to complete the translation and the Commentary.

Meanwhile, there had been a split in the Ahmadiyya Movement. On the death of Mirza Ghulam Ahmad in 1908 some of his supporters who wrongfully interpreted his intentions attributed to him the claim of a prophet, and treated those who would not accept this view as unfaithful. Muhammad Ali broke with them, and in 1914 set up, with the help of his associates, *Ahmadiyya Anjuman Isha'at Islam*, at Lahore. He was elected president of the organization. Muhammad Ali believed that the Prophet Muhammad was the Last of the Prophets, and there were none to come after him. Furthermore, nobody has the right to dub another an unbeliever (*kafir*) once he has recited the *Kalima*, which says: "there is but one God, and that Muhammad is His Messenger".

Later, Muhammad Ali published a translation and Commentary on the Holy Quran in the Urdu language, and this was followed by other works. As most of these works were written in English, they helped to spread the light of Islam across the whole world.

Until he breathed his last, Muhammad Ali gave his life to the spreading of the publications of Islamic literature, and published without interruption many new works; this activity went on without hardly a break.

His chief objective was to reveal the true meanings of Islam, to show it in its full glory so that it would give satisfaction to human beings brought up under modern education. For this purpose his first field of activity was to combat all false legends and superstitions prevalent among Muslims which were in contradiction with common sense. He wished to restore the simplicity of Islam, and reject all that was opposed to this. But his chief objective was not that of pleasing this generation, but the search for historical truth. His work was essentially of historic value which will live for ages to come. ■

Passing away of Maulvi Muhammad Ali

"Speak well of your dead"

by Shaikh Yaqub Ali,
former editor *Al-Hakam*

[Shaikh Yaqub Ali was a leading Qadiani writer and journalist, who started the journal Al-Hakam in 1897 which chronicled the activities, conversations and talks of the Founder of the Ahmadiyya Movement. His tribute to Maulana Muhammad Ali was reproduced in the Lahore Ahmadiyya paper Paigham Sulh, of 26 December 1951, taken from his own journal.]

Respected Maulvi Muhammad Ali, President of the Ahmadiyya Anjuman Ishaat Islam Lahore, died in Karachi on 13 October 1951. *Inna li-llahi wa inna ilai-hi raji'un*. I personally felt such a shock at the news of the death of the Maulana as if a dear brother of mine had died. This feeling is not something imaginary, but a real fact. For years we grew up under the care of one spiritual father, and reached adulthood. After the death of the Promised Messiah, we stayed united around one hand during the first *khilafat*. At the beginning of the second *khilafat*, the respected Maulvi sahib separated from us on the grounds of some differences. This is not the time to discuss the nature of those differences. He has now passed away, and we too are travelling on the same road which leads to death. His affair is now with Allah. Bearing in mind the command of the Holy Prophet quoted above, I will mention his good qualities.

Sometimes people use a difference of opinion as the basis for hostility and animosity. This is not worthy of a true believer. A true believer never deviates from doing justice even to one with whom there is animosity, because departure from justice is a sin. I have observed and studied the Maulvi sahib very closely since the year 1897. We worked together. He entered the Ahmadiyya Movement with sincerity and true belief. He devoted his life to the service of the Movement, and earned the approval and praise of the Promised Messiah. No one can deny what the Promised Messiah said and wrote about the Maulvi sahib, and it is because of these sacred words that I have always held feelings of respect for the deceased. Although I frequently

wrote in refutation of some of his views, and wrote much, Allah knows that there was no spite or malice, and I never forgot his services. Even though we were, so to speak, at war with him, nonetheless whenever I went to Lahore I would meet all the honoured brethren. We would meet like brothers. Certainly we would debate the differences, but when we would take leave, feelings of love and fraternity would rise up in our hearts, and we could detect the effects of our old connections.

Due to his academic excellence, respected Maulvi Muhammad Ali held a position of distinction throughout his years of study, always attaining the highest marks. And it is also a fact that, even while a student, he was virtuous and righteous. For this reason, he was held in high regard by his teachers and fellow-students. I made his acquaintance when he was appointed to the Islamia College, Lahore, but the real connection began when he joined this Movement. Maulvi Muhammad Ali was born in a village called Murar, in the state of Kapurthala, in an honourable and righteous family of land-owners. His father, Hafiz Fateh Din, was a *hafiz* of the Holy Quran. Another man belonging to this family, Maulvi Muhammad sahib, was a fellow-student of mine in Ludhiana in the school of Maulvi Muhammad Farooq. Eventually, he joined Maulana Nur-ud-Din in Jammu, and once visited Qadian.

So the Maulvi sahib was born in a noble family, and after having attained the highest accomplishment in his education, when he stepped into a worldly career, and looked at the hopes and the promise based on his period of education, he would have risen high in the world had he continued along this path, and reached a distinguished official position. But Allah had willed otherwise for him. He entered the Movement, and the Promised Messiah wished him to serve it. This young man agreed, and he agreed with a truthful heart. Discarding all the hopes and aspirations, for the service of the Movement in obedience to his master he vowed to serve Islam with the pen. And he performed this service till the day of his death. His services, by means of scholarship and by means of the pen, are vast. If Allah please, I shall write in detail about his work.

To have differences with him is a separate matter. It does not mean that I or anyone else should find fault with his work, now that he is no longer in the world. The service he rendered to the Movement

in Qadian till 1914 is magnificent, and it is an example to young men to employ their talents with such determination, zeal and sincerity.

*We too shall pass away, and
other generations will come
and pass away. And in the
history of the Movement, there
shall remain the mention of
the achievements of the
respected
Maulvi Muhammad Ali sahib.*

At the beginning of the second *khilafat*, he had differences, and went to Lahore, taking a group with him, and started work. Till the end, he remained active in the work, and continued the writing of books which he had earlier begun.

There is no doubt that his writings acquired fame in different countries of the world and in different languages. He gained all this from the Promised Messiah. Our differences with him are at an end. In the Promised Messiah, we were sons of the same father, and now at his death we grieve as we do at the death of a relation.

There were differences among the Companions of the Holy Prophet as well, even leading to war. But the Quran says: "We shall remove whatever of rancour is in their breasts" (15:47). At the end they had clean hearts. May Allah produce the same cleanliness and purity in our hearts. The Maulvi sahib completed the natural span of his life and died. It would have been better if he had lived a while longer, but this was the time of death in the knowledge of Allah. We too shall pass away, and other generations will come and pass away. And in the history of the Movement, there shall remain the mention of the achievements of the respected Maulvi Muhammad Ali sahib.

I express my sympathies to his family with sincerity. I share in their grief. Although I had differences with him, there was love for him in my heart.

(Taken from *Al-Hakam*, Karachi, 14 November 1951.) ■

Maulana Muhammad Ali in the view of Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad

In 1899, shortly after the young Muhammad Ali had joined the Ahmadiyya Movement, Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad wrote and published the following opinion about him in an announcement:

“Among the most sincere friends in our community is Maulvi Muhammad Ali, M.A., who, besides his other qualifications, has also just now passed his law examination. For the past few months, at much loss to his own work, he has been staying with me in Qadian to perform a service to religion by translating some of my writings into English. ...

“During this period in which he has been with me, I have been observing him, both openly and discreetly, to assess his moral character, observance of religion and goodness of behaviour. So, thanks be to God, that I have found him to be a most excellent man as regards religion and good behaviour in all ways. He is unassuming, modest, of a righteous nature, and pious. He is to be envied for many of his qualities. ... It is obvious that such promising young men possessing these qualities, who are able and honourable, cannot be found by searching.”

(Announcement dated 9 August 1899, *Majmu‘a Ishtiharat*, vol. 3, p. 137, number 206)

Two months later, in another announcement in which Hazrat Mirza mentioned several of the prominent men who had joined the Movement, he writes:

“I am very happy that another good young man, having found the grace of God, has joined our community, that is Maulvi Muhammad Ali, M.A., Pleader. I have very good expectations of him. For a long time he has borne a worldly loss in order to stay in Qadian to serve the religion, and is learning the deep knowledge of the Holy Quran from Hazrat Maulvi Nur-ud-Din.

“I am sure that my foresight will not go wrong in this, that this young man will make progress in the path of God, and I am sure that by the grace of God he will prove to be so firm in righteousness and love of religion that he will set an example worthy to be followed by his peers. O God, let it be so! *Amen*, again *Amen*.”

(Announcement dated 4 October 1899, *Majmu‘a Ishtiharat*, vol. 3, p. 157–158, number 208)

In a letter to the Maulana in this early period, Hazrat Mirza wrote:

“I hold an extremely favourable opinion about you. This is why I have a special love for you. If your nature had not been pure in the sight of God, I could not possibly have thought so well of you, never. I love you fervently from the bottom of my heart, and often pray for you in the five daily prayers. I hope that at some future time these prayers will show their effect. ... I am busy praying, with heart-felt passion, for your welfare in this world and the hereafter, and your body and soul, and I am awaiting the effects and results of the prayer.”

(Facsimile of letter published in *Mujahid-i Kabir*, page 50)

The Review of Religions

When the Maulana decided to devote his life to the cause of Islam and the Ahmadiyya Movement, and for that purpose came to settle in Qadian in 1899, Hazrat Mirza announced his proposal to start a magazine in English. He wrote:

“It was always a matter of sadness and anxiety for me that all those truths, the spiritual knowledge, the sound arguments in support of the religion of Islam, and the teachings giving satisfaction to the human soul, which have been disclosed to me and are still being made known to me, have not yet benefited the English-educated people of this country or the seekers-after-truth of Europe. This pain was so intense that it was no longer bearable. But God Almighty intends that, before I pass away from this temporary abode, all my aims should be

fulfilled so that my last journey is not one of disappointment.

“So to fulfil this object, which is the real purpose of my life, there is a suggestion that ... a magazine in English be published for the fulfillment of the objectives mentioned above.”

(15 January 1901, *Majmu‘a Ishtiharat*, vol. 3, pages 393–394, number 234)

This magazine was started under the title *The Review of Religions* and Hazrat Mirza appointed Maulana Muhammad Ali as its editor. Most of the articles in the magazine were from the pen of the Maulana, many of them being translations of writings of the Promised Messiah. In a very short time this magazine acquired renown, not only in India but abroad as well.

It should be noted that what Hazrat Mirza has called above as “*the real purpose of my life*”, he appointed the Maulana for its fulfillment.

The following incident was also recorded and published in Hazrat Mirza’s lifetime:

“*The Review of Religions* was being mentioned. A man praised it and said that its articles were of high quality. Hazrat Mirza said:

Its editor Maulvi Muhammad Ali is an able and learned man. He has the M.A. degree, and along with it a religious bent of mind. He always passed with top marks and his name had gone forward for E.A.C. But leaving all this he has settled here. This is why God Almighty has blessed his writing.”
(7 November 1906, *Ruhani Khaza’in No. 2*, vol. 9, page 90)

Another interesting incident is recorded as follows:

“Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad called in the editors of *Al-Hakam* and *Al-Badr* and emphasized to them that they must be very careful in writing down his speeches, in case something got misreported by mistake, which would then be used by the critics in their support. ... So (added Hazrat Mirza) ‘it is proper that before publishing such articles in your newspapers you should show them to Maulvi Muhammad Ali. You will benefit

by this, and also people will be saved from error.’ ”

(2 November 1902, *Ruhani Khaza’in No. 2*, vol. 4, page 159)

The Promised Messiah highly valued the services of Maulana Muhammad Ali and regarded them as unique, so much so that once he said:

“I wish that such people could be produced who would do the kind of work that Maulvi Muhammad Ali is doing. There is no certainty of life, and he is all alone. One cannot see anyone who can assist him or take his place.”

(*Ruhani Khaza’in No. 2*, vol. 8, page 270)

Gives pen to the Maulana

The Promised Messiah also regarded the Maulana as the inheritor of his knowledge, who would spread in the world the spiritual truths taught by Hazrat Mirza. A dream was related by Hazrat Mirza in which Maulvi Abdul Karim, one of his top-most followers who had died sometime earlier, gave him a pen which had a modern device attached to it that was shaped like a tube, making the pen work very easily without effort. Hazrat Mirza then relates that the following took place in the dream:

“I said: ‘I did not send for this pen’. Maulvi [Abdul Karim] *sahib* replied: ‘Maulvi Muhammad Ali must have sent for it’. I said I would give it to him.”

This pen came from heaven, as it was brought by a great disciple of Hazrat Mirza who had died, and Hazrat Mirza passed it on to Maulana Muhammad Ali. This signifies that Hazrat Mirza passed on to the Maulana the religious knowledge that he received from God and handed to him the task of broadcasting it to the world. Hazrat Mirza’s saying “I did not send for this pen” signifies that he himself would not be wielding this pen personally in his lifetime. And so it was that Maulana Muhammad Ali wielded this pen to produce legendary writings such as his English and Urdu commentaries of the Holy Quran. The feature of the pen mentioned in the dream, that it could write very easily without effort, was also clearly fulfilled in the prolific nature of the writings authored by the Maulana.

English translation of the Holy Quran

In 1891, some five or six years before Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad and Maulana Muhammad Ali had first met, Hazrat Mirza had published his book *Izala Auham*, in which he had expressed his heart-felt desire to prepare and send an English translation of the Quran to Western countries. He wrote:

“I want to prepare a *tafsir* [commentary of the Holy Quran], have it translated into English, and sent to these people. I cannot refrain from saying plainly and categorically that this is my work; it is entirely impossible that anyone else could do it as I would or as he would who is my branch and is a part of me.”

(*Izala Auham*, page 773)

Here he declares that the person who does this work would be “my branch and a part of me”. It was Maulana Muhammad Ali who did this work, starting it in 1909, one year after the death of Hazrat Mirza, and publishing it eight years later. Not only was it hailed by many independent reviewers at that time as a marvellous, unequalled work, but even up to today, after the appearance of other translations by Muslims, this translation and commentary is still considered as surpassing all others in scholarship and quality.

The Maulana’s translation and commentary has quite clearly fulfilled Hazrat Mirza’s bold prediction in the above quotation that it would be entirely impossible for anyone else to do this work as he could or one who was his branch. It follows that Maulana Muhammad Ali clearly fulfils the description “my branch and a part of me”. The Maulana’s life and work was thus a continuation of the life and work of Hazrat Mirza, and this is what constitutes true successorship.

Book *The Religion of Islam*

It was reported in the Ahmadiyya newspaper *Badr* during the life of Hazrat Mirza that on 13 February 1907 Hazrat Mirza called in Maulvi Muhammad Ali and said to him:

“I want to fulfil the duty of the propagation of Islam to the Western people by having an English book written, and this is your work. The reason why Islam today is not spreading in those countries, and if someone does become a Muslim he is very weak, is that

those people do not know the truth about Islam, nor has it been presented to them. It is their right that they should be shown the true Islam which God has made manifest to me. ... All those arguments that God has taught me to prove Islam to be true should be collected together in one place. If a comprehensive book along these lines is compiled it is hoped that people would benefit from it greatly.”

(*Ruhani Khaza'in* No. 2, vol. 9, p. 191–192)

The Maulana eventually performed the great service of writing such a book in the form of *The Religion of Islam*, first published in 1936. In the preface of this book he mentions that Hazrat Mirza had asked him to write such a book:

“... the Founder of the Ahmadiyya Movement, Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad of Qadian, had charged me with the writing of an English book which should contain all that was necessary for a Muslim, or a non-Muslim, to know about the religion of Islam, and to give a true picture of the religion which was largely misrepresented.”

This book was received with acclaim by many famous Islamic writers and reviewers; it prompted the following opening words in his review by Marmaduke Pickthall:

“Probably no man living has done longer or more valuable service for the cause of Islamic revival than Maulana Muhammad Ali of Lahore.”

(*Islamic Culture*, Hyderabad, India, October 1936, page 659)

Further on in this review, Pickthall wrote:

“Such a book is greatly needed at the present day when in many Muslim countries we see persons eager for the reformation and revival of Islam, making mistakes through lack of just this knowledge.”

This is independent confirmation that the Maulana’s book corrected the generally prevailing misconceptions about Islam, which was a chief objective laid down by Hazrat Mirza when he directed the Maulana to write such a book.

Thus Hazrat Mirza handed to the Maulana a most important duty of his own mission — the

presentation of Islam to the West in English in one comprehensive book — telling him “*this is your work*”, and the Maulana was able to fulfil this duty to the highest standard.

In the life to come, also, the position of Maulana Muhammad Ali is alongside Hazrat Mirza, as he has described in a vision related by him as follows:

“Saw Maulvi Muhammad Ali in a dream. You also were righteous and sincere. Come and sit by me.” (*Tazkira*, page 518; June 1904)

This vision refers to the promise in verse 4:69 of the Holy Quran to those who obey Allah and the Messenger: that they shall be in the company of the righteous of the highest grade in the next life. ■

The Maulana’s last word

In an Urdu booklet whose title means *A Moment’s Reflection for every Muslim and every Qadiani*, published in 1949, close to the end of his life, the Maulana traces the factors and events which led him to devote his life for the service of Islam. And he asks the question about Hazrat Mirza: *Can an imposter produce such men?* He writes:

“ALL I can say about myself is that if Almighty God had not guided me towards this work, I would, like my fellow-students, have become at best a successful lawyer or judge. But the man who directed me to this work, then set me on this path, and guided me correctly is the Founder of the Ahmadiyya Movement, Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad of Qadian. At a time when I had gone into a worldly path, he not only pulled me out of the mire of this world but also created within me a light of faith that has stayed with me throughout this struggle. I declare it openly that if the Imam and *Mujaddid* of this age had not guided me, I was not capable of doing this work. I received a spark of the light which filled his breast.

The nineteenth century of the Christian era had drawn to a close. In exactly the year 1900, when I was on my way to Gurdaspur to start my law practice, with all arrangements completed, the premises rented, and my belongings and books

moved there, my Guide took me by the hand and said: You have other work to do, I want to start an English periodical for the propagation of Islam to the West, you will edit it. What great fortune that, on hearing this voice, I did not hesitate for a moment as to whether I should start this work or the work for which I had prepared myself.

This periodical was issued on 1 January 1902 under the title *The Review of Religions*. In 1909 I began the English translation of the Holy Quran. When I look back today, after half a century, I fall before God in gratitude that He gave me such long respite and enabled me to do so much work.

In reality, this is not my work. It is the work of the one who took my hand and set me on this road. And not only myself, but whoever went to him he put a spark of the fire of the love of God in the heart of that disciple. Just like me, the late Khwaja Kamalud-Din too, by sitting at the feet of the Imam of the age, was blessed with opening the first Islamic mission to Europe at Woking, shedding such light on the teachings of Islam and the life of the Holy Prophet Muhammad that the entire attitude of Europeans towards Islam changed. Not only this, that *Mujaddid* produced thousands of people whose hearts ached with the urge to spread Islam, and who gave their lives and wealth to spread the Divine faith in the world.

To those people who harbour ill-feeling against the honoured *Mujaddid*, or who fail to give him the respect and love due to such a servant of the faith, I say: Has there ever been in the world a liar and imposter who filled the hearts of his followers with such an urge for the propagation of Islam, and to whom Almighty Allah gave so much help as to continue fulfilling his dreams and aspirations long after his death? In the beginning we did not have the longing that Islam should spread in the world. It was the yearning of the Imam of the age who set us on this work, and set us on it so firmly that the longing which was in his heart was disseminated to thousands of other hearts. ...

Whatever work of the propagation of Islam we have done up to today, whether it is little or much, it is all the outcome of his inner urge which Allah had strengthened with the power of His own Will. And Allah caused the foundations of the propagation of Islam in English-speaking countries to be laid by the hands of a man who himself was a complete stranger to the English language.” ■

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