

It was this kind of *jihād* about which Ḥazrat Mirza Ghulām Aḥmad had written:

“There is no doubt in this that the conditions of *jihād* are not to be found in this age and in this country.”³⁷

This is true because there is no party at war with Muslims at this time in India. When a Hindu leader, *i.e.* Gandhi showed the path of non-violence to Indians even some of the ‘*ulamā*’ followed him but when the Founder said that conditions for *jihād* with sword did not exist, these ‘*ulamā*’ raised a great hue and cry against him. And today all Muslims believe that conditions of *jihād* with sword in fact do not exist at the time in this country. *Jihād* by virtue of its being a Qur’ānic command is never abrogated in the sight of an Aḥmadī, neither *jihād* in the general sense, nor in the particular sense which is carried on in the form of *qitāl* (fighting).

The third distinction: The Qur’ān must be given precedence over everything else

All Muslims agree that the Qur’ān is the real source of guidance for Muslims. All the Islamic principles are mentioned in it, and this pure book is in our hands in exactly the same form in which it was revealed to the Prophet Muḥammad. The status of Ḥadīth, though a collection of reports of the Holy Prophet, is not in any way equal to that of the Qur’ān, and that it has not been so carefully preserved as the Qur’ān. Firstly, because the ḥadīth gives only the sense of what the Prophet said and his actual words have not been preserved entirely and, secondly, the fabricated reports have also found place in the works of Ḥadīth.

Islamic *Fiqh* (jurisprudence), which although the result of the exercise of judgement (*ijtihād*) by the great *Imāms*, cannot be held above the Qur’ān or Ḥadīth. A jurist does err, sometimes in spite of his profound knowledge and good intentions. Moreover, *Fiqh* is concerned only with those matters which have not been expressly mentioned in the Qur’ān or Ḥadīth because it is

37. *Tuhfah Golarwiah* (1st September 1902 C.E.), p. 30.

only then that the need of *ijtihād* arises. As a matter of belief, though Muslims consider the Qur'ān above everything else, practically they attach more importance to *Fiqh* over the Qur'ān and the Ḥadīth. The general attitude of the *Ahl Sunnah wal Jamā'ah* relating to all matters of principles of religion or a portion thereof is that they should refer to one of the four *Imāms*, and according to the *Ahl Ḥadīth* (Wahābīs) reference should be made to the Ḥadīth of the Prophet. The argument brought forward in the first case is that *Imāms* had a better understanding of the Qur'ān than common Muslims and if perchance there seems to be a difference between the Qur'ān and the *ijtihād* of an *imām*, they should better follow the *Imām*, as his knowledge and understanding of the Qur'ān was much superior to their own knowledge. And according to the *Ahl Ḥadīth*, if any difference exists between a ḥadīth and a verse of the Qur'ān it should be solved in the light of the ḥadīth, the latter being the saying of the Holy Prophet who had again the better understanding of the Qur'ān.

Doubtless we should all bow our heads in complete submission to the sayings of the Holy Prophet but the difficulty is that all the words of a ḥadīth are not the actual words uttered by the Holy Prophet. Only the sense of his utterances has been conveyed to us and the words of the reports which are at present before us, are in most cases the words of the reporters. As compared to this the words of the Qur'ān are definitely the same which were revealed to the Prophet; therefore, if we place the Ḥadīth over the Qur'ān it would mean that we are giving a higher status to words, which are not certain, over the Divine communication which is absolute and certain in every respect. Besides this, the compilers of Ḥadīth have very often differed themselves about the authenticity of a ḥadīth. One ḥadīth may be accepted by *Tirmidhī* or *Abū Dāwūd* but not by *Bukhārī* and *Muslim*. Again, a ḥadīth accepted by *Muslim* may be rejected by *Bukhārī*. Even the reports collected in *Bukhārī* have been criticized although the book has been regarded as the most correct book after the Book of God. It has been, however,

declared the most correct book as compared only to the Qur'ān because the authenticity of the Qur'ān, unlike Ḥadīth, cannot be doubted. Thus if we observe any contradiction between the Qur'ān and a ḥadīth, in all cases the Qur'ān should be given preference over the ḥadīth. If a contradiction is found, the ḥadīth should be interpreted to make it fall in conformity with the Qur'ān or else it should be rejected.

The question of *ijtihād* of Muslim Imāms is more clear than this. No doubt their knowledge of the Qur'ān and Ḥadīth was greater than ours but they were after all not infallible. Was it not possible for them to commit an error at some place while interpreting the Qur'ān? Was their knowledge of the Qur'ān equal to God's knowledge and free from the possibility of all errors? Again many times it happens that an Imām gives a judgement on the basis of a Qur'ānic verse but fails to notice another verse which is more explicit on the subject. The instance of 'Umar is well known who exhorted Muslims not to exceed a certain limit in fixing up nuptial gifts (*mahr*), otherwise the excess amount would be deposited to the *Bait al-Māl* (Public Treasury). An old lady stood up and argued with him by quoting the verse:

*“And (if) you have given one of them a heap of gold, take nothing out of it.”*³⁸

This proves that even a heap of gold could be offered to a woman in marriage. 'Umar immediately apologized for his mistake as he had not thought of this particular verse at that time. This does not mean that the woman's knowledge of the Qur'ān was greater than that of 'Umar. Similarly, if a particular verse escapes any Imām's notice, this does not go to slight his knowledge of the Qur'ān. Again in matters of Ḥadīth also he may err in his judgement, either being unaware of a particular report or forgetting it while contemplating over a subject.

38. The Qur'ān, 4:20.

The Qur'an and Ḥadīth, therefore, should always be given preference over *Fiqh* or the *ijtihād* of the Imāms. This mistake which has been referred to above is found among all the Muslim sects. Practically, all of them give preference to the sayings of their respective Imāms over the Qur'an, with the result that this Divine Book has been relegated to the background. It is recited in prayers or for further reward of course but *Fiqh* is considered to be the real Sharī'ah of Islam. The natural beauty and simplicity of Islam has been lost in the labyrinth of arduous and nerve-racking questions which have ultimately sapped the energy of Muslim nation. The principles of Islam which had arrested the hearts of other people have become like riddles by the inclusion of such intricacies, which in the end blocked the progress of Islam. Books depicting the teachings of Islam written by European Christians were chiefly based on the works of *Fiqh* and they tried to excite hatred against Islam among the Europeans by presenting before them a confused and complicated picture of the simple doctrines and beliefs of Islam.

To remove all these misunderstandings and revive the movement for the preaching of Islam it was, however, essential that the original simplicity of Islam be restored. This was the work that Aḥmadiyya Movement accomplished by laying due emphasis on the importance of the Qur'an in a Muslims's life. The Founder explained not only the right place of the Holy Qur'an as compared to Ḥadīth and *Fiqh* but also directed his whole attention to the study and teachings of the Qur'an. For the reformation of Muslims and for the propagation of Islam among non-Muslims he used the Qur'an as his chief instrument. In his poems along with his expression of love for the Prophet Muḥammad, his love for and devotion to the Qur'an has also been fully manifested. The object of all this was that Muslims should develop a real thirst for the Qur'an and consider it a panacea for all their ills and the basis of all their progress. They should go ahead with it to conquer the world as they did before in the early days of Islam.

Whatever success the Aḥmadiyya Movement has achieved in its missionary activities is due to the fact that it has placed the Qur'ān above everything else. Although the Aḥmadīs fully respect the Ḥadīth and thereafter the *ijtihād* of the Imāms and after the Qur'ān they refer to and accept these two as sources of information on religious matters, yet their main energy is spent in disseminating the knowledge of the Qur'ān which was the real source of the life of Muslims before, and it is the Qur'ān which is still capable of giving them life. The *Fiqh* throws light on certain details of our religion and the Ḥadīth, apart from this, contains valuable teachings for high morals but the Qur'ān is far superior to both of them. It not only lays down the principles of religion, or sheds light on certain fundamental problems or teaches the highest morals to men but also generates faith in God and creates in man the will for action. And this faith is the real source of all religious life. In short, by giving preference to the Qur'ān the Aḥmadiyya Movement has set up the right basis of reformation among Muslims and preaching of Islam among non-Muslims.

Glory of the Qur'ān manifested

Aḥmadiyyat not only gave preference to the Qur'ān, not only expressed its love for it and not only popularized its teachings but also, above all, proved that it was a book of great knowledge and learning. Ḥazrat Mirza Ghulām Aḥmad in his earlier writings based all his arguments on this Divine Book whether these were in support of Islam or for repudiation of some other false doctrines. In important discussions and controversies his usual practice was to go through the whole of the Qur'ān from beginning to end and derive all his conclusions from it. While debating with a Christian Missionary 'Abd Allāh Ātham, in 1893 C.E., he laid before him the principle that whatever claims or arguments were advanced from either party, should be based on their respective religious scriptures. He followed this principle throughout his written controversy and deduced all his claims and arguments in favour of Islam or against Christianity

from the Qur'ān.³⁹ But the Christian Missionary could not fulfil this condition. Similarly in his lecture delivered at the Religious Conference held at Lahore in 1896 C.E. in reply to the five fundamental religious questions put forward by the organizers of the meeting, the Founder kept in view the same principle.⁴⁰ This distinctive feature of the Qur'ān not only gives it preference over other sacred Books but also is a strong argument for its being revealed from God. For it is impossible for a man to comprehend all the claims and furnish all the arguments necessary thereof in establishing the truth and refuting falsehood in every form for all times to come. Thus in this way he firmly established the glory and grandeur of the Qur'ān which cannot be denied by any wise person. The literature published today by the Ahmadiyya Movement reflects this main characteristic of the Qur'ān that its greatness can be manifested on rational grounds.

The fourth distinction: Islam is an intellectual and scientific religion

From among the sacred scriptures, the Qur'ān is perhaps the only Book that has laid emphasis on the application of reason and intellect. The principles of religion have been undoubtedly taught by Divine revelation. Human intellect does not discover them as their discovery is beyond its reach; these principles are according to the nature of man and are also in conformity with man's intellect. That is why the Qur'ān has enjoined the use of intellect in understanding whatever has been revealed therein. To discover God and His attributes is above the human faculties; because whatever is discovered by intellect is also subjected to it. If man was capable of discovering God and also His attributes, he was also capable of overpowering Him which is, however, not possible. Man can discover the laws of nature and the properties of matter and can overpower and utilize them for his own benefit but God is far above from him. It is God Who is his Lord and Master and it is He Who manifests Himself to

39. This controversy was published under the title *Jang-i Muqaddas* — Ed.

40. The *Teachings of Islam* is an English translation of this lecture — Ed.

man. This manifestation is done in the form of revelation, which is one of the sources of man's knowledge and is superior to his intellect. Nevertheless it is true also that matters which are revealed to man by God are not, and naturally should not be, against human intellect, because intellect after all is also a God-given power in man. Therefore, whatever is unacceptable to man's intellect and his nature cannot be meant for him. Now if we think over it a little carefully we find that the existence of God, His unity, His attributes of *Rabūbiyyat* (Lordship), His Benevolence and Mercifulness, His promise of reward and threat of punishment for man's actions etc. all these are understandable. But belief in the Trinity, *i.e.* Three in One and One in Three, or in the Atonement, *i.e.* the taking of all the sins of humanity by one person on his shoulders, or transmigration of souls cannot be accepted when judged on rational grounds.

As the principles of Islam are in harmony with man's intellect, therefore it has been enjoined on its followers that they should also apply their intellect for understanding the details of these principles. This is indeed what is called the exercise of judgement (*ijtihād*). Islam is thus a rational religion in respect to its principles and its details. For this reason there was no priestcraft, monkhood or papacy in Islam, but unfortunately in imitation of other religions a privileged class of the *Mullas* also came into existence among Muslims. If the use of intellect was encouraged, the authority of such people could not be maintained, therefore they prohibited the use of intellect in religious matters. Anybody who raised an intellectual question was dubbed as *kāfir* and atheist. In the progress of Islam this again was a great obstacle which was removed by Ahmadiyyat. Thus it was shown to the world that Islam was, in fact, the rational religion and its teachings and beliefs were open to intellectual criticism.

Intellect and knowledge go side by side. When man applies his intellect to a matter he advances in his knowledge too. Thus, when Islam enjoined its followers to make use of their reasoning faculties and even in matters religious its use, unlike other

religions, was not forbidden, the result was that the Arabs who were an illiterate people became the torch-bearers of scientific knowledge to mankind and the light that was shown in Arabia illuminated the whole world. The Holy Qur'ān itself is a source of great knowledge and wisdom, that is why it has been named *al-Qur'ān al-Hakīm* i.e., the Qur'ān full of wisdom, for it has set up the very foundation of religion on science and has given a rational basis to the principles of religion. All the baffling problems of religion such as existence of God, His Unity, Divine revelation, reward and punishment of actions, conception of hell and heaven etc., have been explained in a philosophical way. It is not only the religious truths that have been explained rationally but also attention has been drawn to material sciences. By the use of this knowledge man can overpower the forces of nature and utilize them for his own benefit. Whatever is between heaven and earth is subservient to him. It has been repeatedly mentioned in the Qur'ān that man can control the seas, mountains, winds and other forces of nature.⁴¹ At one place such persons have been called “men of understanding”⁴² in the Qur'ān, that is the possessors of wisdom who both remember Allāh and also reflect on the creation of heaven and earth. It is evident that the starting-point of all the material sciences is the reflection on God's creation.

Religious narrow-mindedness has often stood in the way of scientific progress, several examples of which can be met with in Christian history. When Western scholars opened new avenues for scientific discoveries, after getting light from the Islamic sources, the priestly class declared them the worst kind of infidels, followers of Satan and heretics, and tortured them in every possible way. Contrary to this, in Islam, with the progress of spiritual and religious teachings, Muslims did not lag behind in scientific and philosophical knowledge. We find historians, philosophers and scientists working along with religious teachers, Imāms and jurists. It is a curious fact of

41. The Qur'ān, 14:32–33; 45:13; 31:20.

42. *Ibid.*, 3:190.

history that when Muslims gave up Islam for worldly gains their material progress also came to a halt. Disgrace, illiteracy and ignorance followed in its wake and their condition became like those Christians who once declared scientific progress to be a great heresy. This brought on their heads all sorts of miseries and misfortunes, and ignorance prevailed on a large scale among them. Ahmadiyyat once more established a healthy relation between intellectual and spiritual truths to combat the false conception that knowledge and human intellect were incompatible with religion and spirituality.

New light about interpreting the Qur'ān

The most beneficial work in this respect done by Ahmadiyyat was to interpret the Qur'ān in a scientific and literary manner. There was a time when ordinary matters mentioned in the Qur'ān were interpreted by fanciful and imaginary stories with the result that the new generation of Muslims having modern outlook on life thought such fantastic stories to be part of the Qur'ān and expressed their disgust at them and at the book which incorporated them. The '*ulamā*', instead of removing such doubts, started issuing *fatwās* of *kufr* (verdicts of heresy) against everybody who differed with them even in minor details of religion or who did not accept the stories of the Qur'ānic commentators as next to the word of God or who gave vent to any objection against religion. At this crucial moment Ahmadiyyat without caring for the *fatwās* of *kufr* fought against the ignorance and the narrow-mindedness of the '*ulamā*'. It showed to the world that the Qur'ān is clear of all such spurious matter and that scientific research in different spheres of knowledge, in fact, does not go against the spirit of religion. Religion was not subjugated by science, as was thought by the educated Muslims of the age, rather science was to follow the higher values of spiritual life to ensure real peace in the world.

While interpreting the Qur'ān, the Qur'ān itself should have the priority over everything else and then should come the Hadīth, but the Hadīth dealing with stories must be accepted

after great caution and scrutiny. While consulting Arabic lexicons care should also be taken in selecting meanings of words. If a verse can be interpreted two ways, according to the literal meaning of the words, preference should be given to that interpretation which does not go against history, human intellect or experience. Thus the Qur'ān at present is deemed as a book of great learning and science and has proved to be a guide and source of healing to ailing humanity. The whole Islamic literature, appearing today, seems to be saturated with this new spirit. As the *Moslem World*, a Christian quarterly, stated in its July 1931 C.E. issue, the English translations of the Holy Qur'ān done by other Muslims later on resemble very closely the version of Aḥmadiyyat.⁴³

The fifth distinction: Revival of Islamic Brotherhood

From the beginning the message of Islam was meant for the whole of mankind. Arabs or non-Arabs, Iranians or Abyssinians, were addressed by Islam. All these nations and religions, Christians or Jews, in short, all nations and religions who had deep-rooted enmity for one another were given a message of peace, brotherhood and tolerance. No religion can be universal in its teachings unless it is based on broad principles. In this respect no other religion can stand in comparison with Islam. Muslims were required not only to believe that truth was found in the other religions of the world, that the religious savants and the sacred scriptures of other nations were to be respected, that prophets and messengers were sent to every nation and country with Divine directions and revelations, and that there was light and guidance in the previous scriptures but also faith in the prophets and the sacred scriptures was made obligatory on every Muslim like faith in the Prophet Muḥammad and the Qur'ān. This liberal attitude attracted men's hearts towards Islam. It was not only a theory but Islam in fact wanted to develop amongst its followers an outlook that all humanity should be considered

43. For elaborate quotation see Maulānā Muḥammad 'Alī's Preface in his English Translation of the Qur'ān. — Ed.

one family, all mankind as one nation. The Qur'ān thus laid the foundation-stone of the unity of mankind when it declared:

*“All people are a single nation.”*⁴⁴

They are, however, not a nation in name only but their Lord is also one:

*“All praise is due to Allāh, the Lord (Rabb) of the worlds or nations.”*⁴⁵

And *Rabb* is He Who fosters, brings up and nourishes things gradually to make them attain perfection. Thus to make different nations to attain perfection He sent His messengers in every age for their spiritual and moral upliftment. Every community had a Messenger, every nation had a guide and a prophet,⁴⁶ there is not a single nation where a warner has not appeared,⁴⁷ such are the teachings of the Qur'ān not met with in any other scripture. Then amongst its followers Islam created such a spirit of brotherhood that after accepting Islam a monarch and a slave were treated alike in their capacity as Muslims. It was the result of this spirit of equality and fraternity that wherever Islam went, it attracted millions of people under its fold, because after accepting Islam nobody was asked to renounce the prophet or the sacred scripture in which he formerly believed. Thus every Muslim was enjoined to respect the spiritual leaders of every nation and country.

This basic aspect of the Islamic teachings was unfortunately lost sight of by the Muslim '*ulamā'*' who started declaring their own brethren-in-faith infidels on minor differences. When narrow-mindedness takes such a strong hold on a nation, that its members fail to tolerate difference of opinion among themselves, how can they be tolerant towards other nations? In short, this mutual *takfīr* (denouncing one another as heretics)

44. The Qur'ān, 2:213.

45. *Ibid.*, 1:1.

46. *Ibid.*, 10:47.

47. *Ibid.*, 35:24; 16:63.

destroyed the spirit of Islamic tolerance and liberty which was a source of bringing other people under its fold. Aḥmadiyyat, however, revived once again this lost speciality of Islam. As far as other nations were concerned, the Founder of the Aḥmadiyya Movement took another bold step and declared that Rama-chandra and Krishna were also prophets of God raised in India according to the Qur'ānic verse:

“And (We sent) messengers We have mentioned to thee before and messengers We have not mentioned to thee”,⁴⁸

and the Vedas were also the revealed books of India.

Obviously, when the Qur'ān has declared it as a matter of principle that prophets have been raised in every nation and country, how is it possible that the Hindu nation which had a great civilization of its own should have also lately remained neglected by God, and no prophet should have been raised in that nation? At the time of the conquest of Iran, the companions of the Holy Prophet, under the same principle, treated the Fire-worshippers (Zoroastrians) as the People of the Book. The extension of this Islamic principle harbours the secret of the success of Islam.

The sixth distinction: The door of *ijtihād* is open

However good and perfect principles may be given to a nation, unless that nation has an opportunity for progress, such principles cannot be of much use. Principles are like the roots of a tree and the other details like its branches. If there is enough space for the tree to spread its branches far and wide, its strong roots indeed become a help for its proper growth. If there is no scope for its branches to spread, its roots shall also soon shrivel and cramp and cause an early death to the whole plant. The tree of Islam had strong roots in the form of sound principles and its branches had a great scope to spread because of the opening of the door of *ijtihād* (exercise of judgment). *Ijtiḥād* means to exert oneself and make use of one's intelligence for some cause.

48. The Qur'ān, 4:164.

This door was kept open in Islam in respect of details of *sharī'ah*. In matters of Law where no details were found in the Qur'ān and the Ḥadīth, Muslims could make use of their intellectual faculties for understanding and solving the new problems with which they might be faced from time to time. Islam is a universal religion in its scope and teachings, free from and above all limitations of race, colour and nationality. Although there was no religion to emerge after it, but human needs are limitless and every age, nation and country is faced with new problems for the solution and fulfillment of which human faculties must be utilized. In other words, after the Divine revelation existing in the Qur'ān in the form of *wahy jalī* or *wahy matluww* (revelation which is recited) and in the Ḥadīth in the form of *wahy khafī* (inner revelation), man's intellect has been given the status for the working out of laws for human needs.

It is also evident that if no use is made of human faculties, they become obsolete. Thus if Muslims were not guided to make use of their mental powers they would have suffered the same fate. Accordingly as long as they considered the door of *ijtihād* open and made use of their faculties of judgment they made progress in all walks of life. But after the death of some great Imāms when the door of *ijtihād* was considered to have been closed, their intellectual powers were also paralysed and their spiritual and material progress quickly came to cease. The Founder of the Aḥmadiyya Movement removed this fatal misunderstanding from the minds of Muslims and showed them that the door of *ijtihād* was opened by the Prophet Muḥammad himself, and no one else has any right to close it. And none of the four Imāms had said anything contrary to it. The world of today has given rise to so many new problems that there is a growing need of rejudication and *ijtihād* in details of Law. By opening the door of *ijtihād* all over again, Aḥmadiyyat has in fact opened new vistas for the progress of Islam and the Muslims.

The seventh distinction: Unity among Muslims

Islam which taught forbearance and tolerance to the extent that in spite of many vital differences it accepted the Divine origin of other religions, could not foster the feeling of intolerance and narrow-mindedness among its own followers towards one another. It could not teach them that for minor differences they should declare one another *kāfir*. The Qur'ān has, however, given a clear indication that anybody who accosts another brother Muslim with *assalāmu 'alaikum* (peace be with you) should not be declared an unbeliever:

*“Say not to one who offers you (Islamic) salutation, Thou art not a believer.”*⁴⁹

This means that we have no right to suspect or investigate his behaviour or go into the details of his beliefs for the sake of laying a charge of heresy against him. A person who accosts us with *assalāmu 'alaikum*, in fact, considers himself to be a member of the Islamic brotherhood, and he who includes himself in this brotherhood cannot be turned out of it by anybody else. This is what has been the practice of the Holy Prophet. 'Abd Allāh ibn Ubayy, a great hypocrite and a bitter opponent of Islam who never helped Muslims in their campaigns against the unbelievers and always instigated the enemy against Islam, was accepted as a Muslim by the Holy Prophet for the simple reason that 'Abd Allāh outwardly declared himself to be a member of the Islamic brotherhood. The Holy Prophet said the funeral service for him after his death and prayed for him. In one of the reports, the Holy Prophet has said:

*“Do not declare the people of your Qiblah as kāfirs.”*⁵⁰

This means that as long as a person includes himself among the Ahl Qiblah (People of the Qiblah) nobody has any right to denounce him as a heretic. The object of this teaching and the repeated emphasis on this point was to maintain unity among

49. The Qur'ān, 4:94.

50. *Al-Nihāya* of Ibn Aṭhīr, vol. iv, p. 187.

Muslims, for unity is the basis of a nation's strength. The nation which is torn within itself can neither make any progress nor face its opponents. The first condition of unity in Islam, therefore, is that its followers should consider one another as brethren. The Holy Prophet also gave various illustrations to make Muslims understand this point. Once he said that Muslims were like one organism; if any part of this organism was injured the whole system was affected.⁵¹ Thus if a group or sect of Muslims was suffering it would affect the whole nation. At another occasion he said that a Muslim should refrain from attacking the life, property or honour of his brother Muslim.⁵² Again, once he compared Muslims to a strong wall every part of which contributed to its strength, and if a part was weakened it would bring the other parts to the ground.⁵³

The object of all this advice was to keep the unity among Muslims intact. The only result of *takfīr* (denouncing one another heretics) is destruction. By saying that *difference among my followers is a blessing*, Muslims were actually taught to tolerate differences among themselves; but they made every difference an excuse for *takfīr* and thus struck at the very root of their unity and strength. It was truly said by the Holy Prophet that their enemies would not be able to destroy them unless they destroyed themselves. And that is what Muslims have done to themselves. For minor differences they have declared one another *kāfir* and thus shattered to pieces the unity of Islam. It was in 1891 C.E. that the Founder of the Ahmadiyya Movement raised his voice against this habit of *takfīr*:

“Let this be evident that Jesus Christ came for this work and at such a time when Jews were divided into many sects like Muslims ... So the Holy Prophet has informed this nation that in the latter ages the same would be their condition and many sects would spring up among them

51. Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim, *Kitāb al-Birr*, H. No. 66,67.

52. Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī, *Kitāb al-Harām*.

53. Tirmidhī, *Kitāb Shafqat 'ala-l-Muslim*, p. 351.

... And like Jews one group would consider the other one as *kāfir*. And if there were ninety-nine reasons for Islam, just one reason for *kufr* would be considered sufficient to declare others *kāfir*. So due to mutual *takfīr*, deep hatred, jealousy and enmity would come into play and due to difference of opinion, vindictiveness, rancor and beastly tendencies will prevail among Muslims. And Islamic character which requires a perfect unity as in a single body and is full of mutual love and sympathy would be completely taken away from them. The one would consider the other so strange as not to hesitate to declare the other as *kāfir*.”⁵⁴

The Lahore Aḥmadiyya Movement by following such exhortations of the Founder for unity lay particular emphasis on the point that all the followers of the *Kalimah* are Muslims and anybody who declares his faith in the unity of God and prophethood of Muḥammad cannot be turned outside the pale of Islam. Such a doctrine is now having a wider influence among Muslims. But as opposed to this, unfortunately, the Qādiānis have made the declaring of all the Muslims of the world *kāfirs* a basis of their belief.⁵⁵

The eighth distinction: The significance of paradise and hell properly explained

Belief in the punishment or reward for one's actions in another life is common to all religions. But Islam has explained this phenomenon in a scientific manner. For instance, paradise and hell are not only meant for the life hereafter but also they have their beginning in this life:

*“And for him who fears to stand before his Lord there are two Gardens.”*⁵⁶

54. *Izālah Auhām* (3rd September 1891 C.E.), pp. 589, 590.

55. *The Truth about the Split*, pp. 55-56, 140 etc. The detailed references have been given earlier. — Ed.

56. The Qur'ān, 55:46.

The one garden (*jannat*, paradise) is of this life and the other of the life to come. The soul that attains perfection also sees its own paradise in this life. To the contented soul the Qur'ān says:

*“So enter among My servants and enter My garden.”*⁵⁷

Similarly, the fire of hell is described as rising above the hearts of men:

*“It is the fire kindled by Allāh, which rises over the hearts.”*⁵⁸

And the hell in the hereafter is just another form of blindness in this life:

*“And whoever is blind in this world, he will be blind in the Hereafter.”*⁵⁹

But these matters remain hidden from the eyes of the common people and only come to light on the day of Resurrection, therefore on that day hell and heaven would become manifest.

*“Thou wast indeed heedless of this, but now We have removed from thee thy veil, so thy sight is sharp this day.”*⁶⁰

Commencement of paradise and hell in this life shows that the reward or punishment in fact (whether we are conscious of it or not) takes place simultaneously with our deeds. Then another point is emphasized: that every action begets results according to whether the doer is a believer or non-believer. If a non-Muslim does a good work the result will naturally be good and if a Muslim does something bad it will have a bad consequence:

*“So he who does an atom’s weight of good will see it and he who does an atom’s weight of evil will see it.”*⁶¹

57. The Qur'ān, 89:29,30.

58. *Ibid.*, 104:6–7.

59. *Ibid.*, 17:72.

60. *Ibid.*, 50:22.

61. *Ibid.*, 99:7–8.

Again it has been explained that hell is a place for the purge and betterment of human ills and shortcomings. This is a means of purification of man so that for this progress, he may get another opportunity in the life to come which he has wasted in this life. And because this is only by way of remedy, therefore, sooner or later all the inmates of hell will come out of it. According to a saying of the Holy Prophet a time will come when the morning breeze will be striking against the doors of hell;⁶² and it will become a devastated place. Similarly about paradise it should be remembered that man is capable of making unlimited progress therein. Those who have once entered into it will never be taken out of it again. This makes it abundantly clear that future reward in Islam means various aspects of man's progress, and punishment (*'adhāb*) the stages of his decline and decadence. But Muslims lost sight of these matters of deep wisdom and thought the *'adhāb* and *thawāb* only meant for future life of the world. They also thought that non-Muslims did not receive any reward for their good actions, and that Muslims will all go to paradise and the *kāfirs* will burn in the fire of hell forever. Aḥmadiyyat, however, brought the original teachings of Islam to light and removed all such errors. It also explained that even the worship of God was also meant for man's own advancement, for by worshipping God man in fact tries to come into real contact with God for the purpose of imbuing himself with Divine attributes.

The ninth distinction: Theory of abrogation rejected

There were several other things which Muslims had accepted by mistake although there was no ground for their acceptance. For instance, Muslims had generally come to believe that there were verses in the Qur'ān which were abrogated by other Qur'ānic verses. And on this point they insisted so much that anybody who did not agree with them was not considered to be a Muslim. A verse can abrogate another verse only when it stands

62. For detailed references please consult Maulānā Muḥammad Alī's *The Religion of Islam*, Part II, Ch. 6.

in opposition to the other. By accepting such a view it has to be admitted that discrepancy was found in the Qur'ān whereas the Qur'ān clearly indicates:

*“And if it were from any other than Allāh they would have found in it many a discrepancy.”*⁶³

Thus to accept discrepancy in the Qur'ān is to accept it from any other source than Allāh. This is where this wrong belief had led the Muslims. But they kept on adhering to such an erroneous doctrine till it was removed by the Founder of the Aḥmadiyya Movement, who made it clear that there was no verse in the Qur'ān which has been abrogated by another verse, nor does the Qur'ān mention anything like that. Verses⁶⁴ from which such a conclusion was drawn only refer to the abrogation of some of the commandments, *i.e.* previous *sharī'ahs*. It was in this way that the dignity of the Qur'ān was manifested and established.

The tenth distinction: Faith in the dominance of Islam

Besides what has been mentioned above there are also other matters in which Aḥmadiyyat has differed from other Muslims but none of these differences is related to problems of jurisprudence (*Fiqh*). It is evident from the foregoing remarks that wheresoever Aḥmadiyyat has differed from other Muslims it is only in its efforts to restore the original beauty and simplicity of Islam, to make Islam a rational, scientific and progressive religion once again so that its influence may penetrate deep into the hearts of men and so that Islam may rise once more in the world. The Christian scholars have laboured to show that the Aḥmadiyya Movement is the result of the contact of European civilization with Islam. But in the history of modern India we find two separate movements among Muslims. The one started by Sir Sayyid Aḥmad Khān of Aligarh and the other by Mirza Ghulām Aḥmad of Qādiān. The work done by Sir Sayyid

63. The Qur'ān, 4:82.

64. *Ibid.*, 2:106; 16:101.

towards educating Muslims is unique in its own way and nobody should deny its manifold advantages to Muslims. But as far as his religious views are concerned, which are sometimes stigmatized as *naturiyyat*, they mark a clear distinction between the two movements. Sir Sayyid and Ḥazrat Mirza Ghulām Aḥmad both tried to solve problems facing Islam today in a rational way. But the religious movement of Sir Sayyid very often took the turn of slavish imitation of the European thought while the movement initiated by Hazrat Mirza had in view the conquest of Europe for Islam. The object of the former movement was also to save Islam from the onslaughts of the West but in this effort Islam was subjected to modern trends. But the latter Movement not only wanted to save Islam but also wanted to see it a triumphant religion of the world. This is not a mere presumption. The late ‘Allāmah Shīblī Nu‘mānī, who was one of the great admirers of Sir Sayyid, writes about him:

“This new thought is of two kinds. Either we find the same rotten stuff or far-fetched problems and arguments originated by the later Ash‘arites, or every European belief or thought is regarded to be the only right standard of judgment. The Holy Qur’ān and the Ḥadīth is later on dragged in to harmonize with these ideas.”⁶⁵

In the writings of Sir Sayyid the Qur’ān is *ipso facto* subjected to the European ideology but Ḥazrat Mirza wants Europe to kneel down before the Qur’ān. Sir Sayyid’s movement may be regarded a result of the impact of European thought on Islam in India but this is not true about the Aḥmadiyya Movement. It has, on the contrary, helped to remove the effects of European thought on Muslims’ minds. It is in fact a panacea for the poison which the materialistic civilization has brought to the world of Islam. The Founder had a great passion for seeing the cause of Islam dominant in the world. Before his advent Islam in Indian Sub-continent was attacked from three sides. The attack of atheism and materialism in the form of European

65. *‘Ilm al-Kalām*, p. 8.

thought, the attack of Christian missionaries and the attack of the new Hindu sect Ārya Samāj. Whatever Muslims were doing in their defence was quite ineffective. Sir Sayyid came forward to save Muslims from the influence of modern education but he was himself swayed by it and thus he wanted to make an apologetic compromise with it. One or two other persons also stood against the onslaught of Christian missionary activities, but on the whole Muslims remained passive and the Christian missionaries became more severe and menacing in their attacks against Islam. And as to the attack of the Ārya Samāj nobody seemed to care for the defence of Islam.

It was at this time that Hazrat Mirza Ghulām Aḥmad came to the forefront to uphold the cause of Islam. He not only defended Islam but also took an offensive against all these hostile forces within a short time. This made a great change in the circumstances and the invaders themselves were put to their defence. In short, every Aḥmadī harbours a feeling in his heart to see Islam a dominant religion in the world. He is fully convinced that, however slender the outward chance may be, Islam will flourish and dominate the world. It is because of this faith and enthusiasm that he is ready to sacrifice his all for this object. There lies the secret of the success of Aḥmadiyya Movement in its preaching of Islam.

In brief, Aḥmadiyyat is not a sect distinguished on minor differences of *Sharī'ah* from other Muslim sects. It is rather above all these petty differences. It is a movement for the spread of Islam and towards this its whole efforts are directed. It has done its best to remove all misconceptions about Islam which were a hindrance in the way of its propagation and progress. For this the Aḥmadiyya Movement has sometimes differed from the current thought of Muslims and only this makes it differ from other Muslim sects. Such differences are not in fact internal but they only relate to those matters which are connected with the propagation and progress of Islam in the world. The Holy Prophet has himself described this age as the "age of corruption" when Islam will be set on a wrong track by

its followers and its advancement will come to a standstill, and people will begin to despise this polluted form of Islam. By removing misunderstandings of this age of corruption the Aḥmadiyya Movement has opened new vistas for the success and glory of Islam. Islam is, thus, once again on the march and is arresting the attention of the entire world. ■

Translator's note 4 on page 2.

These words of Maulana Muhammad Ali are rather prophetic in their nature which found partial fulfillment in 1954 C.E. when a written statement by the delegate of the Qādiānis was submitted to the Munir Court of Inquiry in Pakistan that: "A Muslim is a person who belongs to the *ummat* of the Holy Prophet and professes belief in *kalimah tayyibah*" (*Report of the Court of Inquiry into the Punjab Disturbances of 1953*, p. 218). At another place in this report it has been mentioned that:

"On the question whether the Aḥmadīs [Qādiānis are meant – Ed.] consider the other Musalmāns to be *kāfirs* in the sense of their being outside the pale of Islam, the position taken before us is that such persons are not *kāfirs* and that the word *kufr*, when used in the literature of the Aḥmadīs in respect of such persons, is used in the sense of a minor heresy and that it was never intended to convey that such persons were outside the pale of Islam." (p. 199)

The above are the remarks by the judges. The actual answers given at the Court were as follows:

"Q. Do you include Mirza Ghulām Aḥmad *Ṣāhib* among the *māmūrs* [appointed ones of God – Ed.] whose acknowledgement is necessary to be called a Muslim?"

"A. I have already answered this question. No one who does not believe in Mirza Ghulām Aḥmad *Ṣāhib* can be taken as out of the pale of Islam." (Proceedings of the Court of Inquiry, 84th sitting, dated 14th January 1954 C.E.)