



AHMADIYA CONTRIBUTION TO ISLAMIC THOUGHT AND LIFE

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**Self-Sovereignty—Solidarity—Purge of Priest-craft—Morale—Islam Put
on World Stage—Clue to Living God—Second Phase of Glory of Islam**

The annual Conference of the Lahore Ahmadiyya Movement opens tomorrow, December 25. The role which this Movement has played in the drama of Islamic revival in these times has not received the recognition that is its due. Nor is the world of Islam at all alive to the big possibilities that are wrapped up with the forces released by this Movement. It is the purpose of these lines to assess at its true worth the contribution which this Movement has made towards the onward march of Islam.

Self-Sovereignty

First and foremost, the Ahmadiya Movement gave the Musalmans self-respect and self-sovereignty by smashing the age-long impotent illusion fostered by the Mullas that for their national deliverance they must look forward to the descent of a Messiah from the heavens. The Ahmadiya Movement pricked this bubble which acted like an opiate on the Musalman's will-to-power. The Musalman must be his own Messiah, proclaimed this Movement. That exactly and nothing else was the correct interpretation, it expounded, quoting chapter and verse, of what had been said in the scriptures as to the second advent of Jesus. To import an Israelite prophet to set the House of Islam in order, it protested, was no compliment to the great Founder of Islam. His humble followers, it claimed, were capable of rising to Messianic heights.

The Mullas found this free cry of a free unfettered soul too much for their cramped bookish outlook. They launched a crusade against the Founder and thereby slackened the pace of the onward march of Islam. Events however put a seal of approval

on the correctness of this attitude. No sensible Musalman now takes the come-back to be staged by Jesus in these times as anything sober or serious. This is a homage that the sub-conscious mind of the Muslim nation has paid to this very healthy contribution of the Ahmadiya Movement.

Solidarity

The other great contribution which this Movement has made towards the resuscitation of Islam as a force to be counted with is that it has given the Musalmans the only principle on which it is possible to build a united house. The House of Islam was a house divided against itself. Islam was sect-ridden. Every sect took delight in tearing another to pieces. The Ahmadiya Movement cried a halt to this madness. There are no sects in Islam, it declared. The so called sects were minomers, it pointed out, inasmuch as they all agreed on the fundamentals, on what constituted the essentials of Islam. They were mere different schools of thought. Differences in non-essentials did not matter. In fact, they were conducive to healthy thought and life. So the very first slogan with which the Ahmadiya Movement arose was that the *Kalima* was the magna carta of Islam. Anyone who proclaimed the *kalima*, accepting the unity of God and the prophetic mission of the Holy Prophet Muhammad became a member of the universal brotherhood of Islam, no matter what other denominational label he might bear.

Now this was a very great contribution. It gave the Musalmans for the first time after centuries of sectarian feuds, a sense of oneness, of universality, of broad-minded

toleration of differences. In one word this Movement was the first to give the Musalmans a sense of national solidarity. Here again, the idea has sunk into the sub-conscious mind of the Musalmans. No decent Musalman would now listen to any talk in a sectarian strain. The Pakistan struggle has driven this truth home to the Musalmans with full force. Sectarianism must go, it has taught the Musalmans, if Islam is to live. The Ahmadiya position stands vindicated once again by the hard facts of life.

Purge of Priesthood

While dealing with the evil of sectarianism, we might as well mention as the third very important contribution of this movement, the evil of priesthood which had found its way into Islam and which this movement eradicated root and branch. Sectarianism was in fact the offspring of this evil. The priestly class lived on these differences. It paid them to fan the flames of sectarian passions. The Ahmadiya Movement gave this class a short shrift. If Islam was to live, the Mullas and the Pirs must go. The Quran had no room for these parasites. They were two cankers eating into the vitals of Islam. Every Musalman, declared the Ahmadiya movement, is his own priest. He is free to study the Quran for himself and chalk out his life in that light. Here again, events confirmed the Ahmadiya contribution. The Mullas as a class have ranged themselves, barring noble exceptions, against the best interests of Islam on the Pakistan issue. The Muslim body-politic has thrown them overboard unceremoniously. Like the fungii, it is now openly said about these theological luminaries, the Mullas are an extraneous matter and must be scrapped

off, if the tree of Islam is to thrive and flourish.

Morale

This is but a bird's-eye-view of the most salient contributions which this movement has made towards infusing new life into the dead bones of Indian Islam. In a newspaper article we have perforce to confine ourselves to the main points which stand out as so many distinct landmarks in the onward move of the life and thought of contemporary Islam in this country. And under this category must come what we should call the Morale which this movement has given to the Musalmans. The very idea of revival and restoration of the lost glory of Islam, it can be said without fear of contradiction, took birth with the birth of the Ahmadiya movement. It is an open secret that before this movement saw the light of the day, Indian Islam was in the paralytic grip of inferiority complex and had virtually accepted its defeat as a force in present-day life. What appeared in defence of Islam was at best an apologia for Islam. With the rise of the Founder of this movement, we find the first note struck that was discordant with this prevailing background—a note of the triumph of Islam. *Fath-i-Islam* was the very first book he published when he received the call from God as the duly-commissioned Mujaddid for this age. To say nothing of the opponents of Islam, even the Ulema of Islam, were startled at this strange out-cry. They could not possibly reconcile the dead Islam in their hands to the live Islam of the Founder which looked the world in the face and was already making a bid for world supremacy.

This by itself is a contribution of this movement towards the onward march of Islam which should win it a place in the heart of every fair-minded Musalman. Morale, as we have come to know during the war that is just over, counts for more than the armed forces. It was the Ahmadiya Movement first of all that kindled the spark of this Morale—the Triumph of Islam—and kept that flame burning. Pakistan, we would venture to submit, is but the political manifestation of that very spark. High morale is half the battle won. It was this contribution of the Ahmadiya Movement to the sum-total of Islamic thought in this country, which, sinking into the subconscious mind of Islam, even of those avowedly hostile to this movement, transformed a defeatist Islam into a triumphant Islam, out to have a say of its own in the reshaping of India, not going to be content with anything short of a full independent sovereign status of its own in this sub-continent. Pakistan is, in fact, the

political edition of the Founder's *Fath-i-Islam*.

Leaven of Life

These are no fairy tales. These are hard facts of contemporary history of Islam in this country as it has been shaping itself. The Ahmadiya Movement marks a definite landmark. Before its rise, it is all dark, all lifeless—a veritable autumn blighting the garden of Islam. It is no poetic imagery to say that this movement came with the breath of spring, as it were; for we see a stirring to new life on all sides in the House of Islam and in all aspects of life. The impact of the Ahmadiya Movement quickened the dormant soul of Islam, and if we see the various limbs of the body-politic of Islam, so far mere dead bones, galvanized to a new life, it was due to that subtle stirring from within. The leaven may have been invisible but it had worked.

Self-confidence instead of intellectual inertia and impotence, national solidarity instead of a Babel of confusion that the House of Islam was and above all a heroic triumphant outlook on life instead of the chronic gloomy defeatism that had been weighing on Islam—these are by no means any mean contributions which the Ahmadiya Movement has made to the current of Islamic thought and life in this country. If there is such a thing as psycho-analysis of mass mind, such an analysis would reveal that the present stirrings to life among the Musalmans in the various fields are the fructification of the seeds sown for half a century past by this movement. But for the touch of the heroic imparted to it by the Ahmadiya leaven, Muslim mind, used to servile dependence on others, would have been incapable of even conceiving the idea of Pakistan. But for the unity of Islam which forms the main plank, the keel of the Ahmadiya Movement, Pakistan would have remained an empty pious dream. And we make bold to say that when Pakistan actually comes, the Musalmans will not be able to retain it for long unless they keep a firm hold on this central plank—the one-ness and indivisibility of Islam.

During the half a century or so of its life, the Ahmadiya movement, it will be seen, has changed the whole complexion of Muslim thought and life in this country. Allama Iqbal's poetry which breathed similar message, very few people seem to realize, was itself the outcome of the poet's very early impact with the Founder of this movement whom he, while yet a college student, described as a burning candle of Islam and his comrades as devoted moths swarming around him.

These contributions of the

Ahmadiya movement, though not openly acknowledged, have won tacit recognition from the hearts of all sensible Musalman. There are two other main tendencies of this movement, however, which even this vanguard of Muslim thought and life find it hard to keep pace with. It is on these that we would like to focuss attention when we claim that very big possibilities yet lie in the womb of this movement so far as the future of Islam on world stage is concerned.

Islam on World Stage

One of these is that the Ahmadiya movement has taken Islam out of all territorial and racial bound and placed it on the world-stage as a whole, a message and a destiny for humanity as a whole as it was designed by God to be—for the people of the West as much as for those of the East, for the white races as much as for the so-called "coloured" races. Fifty years ago when the white man strutted on earth as a demigod, such a thing would have sounded fantastic. Today, leaders of thought in the West themselves talk of turning to Islam for deliverance from the demon of their own materialistic civilization as practical politics. This transformation of Western outlook on Islam which may be a prelude to the mightiest revolution known to history—the wholesale Islamization of the white races—is an achievement of the Ahmadiya movement which a man who runs may see. Musalmans however are yet slow to realize the wide vistas of possibilities that Providence is opening up in this direction. With the Ahmadiya movement it is a matter of faith that history is destined to see this miracle actually happen. The general body of Musalmans is yet lagging behind, although the need of foreign missions is forcing itself on their attention by the exigencies of political developments. Politics at the present day has entered upon a higher phase. Instead of a struggle for survival on the part of territorial units of humanity it has become a struggle for cultural survival. Fascism, Nazism were two such cultural bids for world supremacy. Against these the combined forces of two other cults, democracy and communism, have for the time being prevailed. The next war, it seems, would seal the doom of one of these two and leave only one as the only cultural force in the field. And Islam as a complete code contrived by the Hand of God for the highest weal of mankind shall have to cross swords with that surviving cult, whichever it may be—anti-God communism or practically God-bereft democracy. It is here that the

Ahmadiya movement shall be called upon to take up arms on behalf of Islam. That is the great role that this movement has yet to play. It will be well both for the general body of Musalmans and the members of this movement to take note of this. Muslim brethren must open their eyes to the big writing on the world wall. They must not forget that we are passing through the atomic age when things impossible are becoming possible overnight. And those who have responded to the call of this movement must grasp and concentrate on this world-role which this movement is to play instead of frittering away their energies over trifling peurilities.

Second Reel of Islamic Film

Viewed through the glasses of the Quran and the Hadith, the Islamic film to be released in history seems to consist in two distinct reels. The first one has already seen the light of the day and history is still rubbing eyes at its colourful beauty and glamour. But both these inspired sources point definitely to a second reel—the second phase of the world domination of the faith and culture of Islam. And this is as it should be. If Islam is really the all-humanity message that the Quran repeatedly declares it to be with all the force possible, there is no reason why it should be the monopoly of the East alone. There are teeming masses of humanity in Europe, in America, in Africa, in Australia. Why should the Musalman pooh pooh the suggestion that one day the light of Islam shall illumine these continents as well? To think so is to belie one of the very fundamentals of Islam—viz., that Islam is a world message, a world healing. In its first effulgence the light of Islam enveloped the Eastern hemisphere because this part of the globe was then the nerve-centre of life-currents. To-day the scales have turned. The East has become the back-water, the main ocean of life being the West. It stands to reason that Islam should capture those high currents of life.

Voice of God

This is the outlook and the faith which inspires the Ahmadiya Movement and in regard to which there is yet a big gap between this movement and the general body of Islam. Will Muslim brethren some day catch up with this movement in this respect as well yet lies in the womb of future. World events however are forcing the hands of time in that direction. The age of matter is in its last gasps. It has been found wanting. It has brought man nothing but misery. The soul of humanity is crying for the life-water of faith.

The age of religion is on the threshold of dawn—religion not in the sense of books and scriptures and priests with upturned collars but religion in the sense of a living God with whom man can actually aspire to a personal contact. And this is a contribution to the march of human civilization for which the Ahmadiya Movement stands all by itself, Mahatma Gandhi's problematic semi-political inner voice notwithstanding. The Founder of this Movement offered himself as a living testimony to the fact that the Quranic way of life can even in this 20th century lead man to spiritual heights where he has the fullest realization of God. In order to provide a conclusive evidence as to this efficacy of the Quranic mode of life, the Founder claimed that God actually spoke to him and gave a demonstration of this fact by making apparently impossible prophecies which no scientific scrutiny can lightly dismiss. Why this should be a red rag to the Muslim brethren we really fail to see. If by following in the footsteps of the Prophet a man can attain to such spiritual heights as to be the recipient of Divine inspiration, it should be a matter of which they should feel proud. If Mahatma Gandhi says that God has ordered him to undertake a fast or launch a civil disobedience movement, Maulana Husain Ahmad Madani and the whole of his breed say hallelujah to it. Why should they put on airs of wounded piety if the Founder of this movement should proclaim that God has, in accordance with the writs in the Quran and Hadith, blessed him with the gift of inspiration from Himself and commissioned him to revive Islam and make it triumph over all the "isms" and cults of the world.

Two Sides of the Picture

This in brief outline is the role which the Ahmadiya Movement, as it strikes us, has played in the onward march of Islam or is yet to play on a much bigger scale and a much bigger stage. Muslim masses have assimilated much of its contribution to their distinct benefit which has made them a force to be counted with. They have much lee-way to make up to catch up with the fullest significance of this movement with which in fact is bound up the whole future of Islam as big history on the Western stage. There was a time when opposition to this movement was perhaps excusable. The tree had not yet borne any fruit and it was naturally difficult to judge it. Much water however has since flowed under the bridge of this movement. Both sides of the picture now stand in clear-cut contrast before the Muslim world to judge

—the sound, solid and steady contribution which this movement has been making at every step towards the advancement of the cause of Islam as well as the worth of the forces that pitched themselves in opposition to this reformist and revivalist movement. It is now plain enough for anybody to see that opposition to the Ahmadiya Movement has been a paying proposition with certain people. Bogus leaders and bogus organizations with whom it is a sheer profession to pander to the baser passions of their fellowmen, have found in this an ever-handly job. The recent Pakistan struggle has torn the mask off their faces and revealed the whole breed of them in their true colour. Posing as champions of Islam and being most vociferous in their solicitude for the purity and preservation of Islam, these worthy individuals and the organizations they have woven around themselves have not hesitated, when it came to touch their own pocket, to let Islam down at one of the most critical junctures of its history. This has already opened the eyes of the average Musalman to the fraud that this sort of leadership has been playing upon their credulity in the holy name of Islam. It has proved to the hilt that to them Islam was just a slogan to make capital of and when it clashed with their personal interests, they threw it over-board with a light heartedness as if, instead of the Destiny which God has meant it to be, Islam were no more than a worn-out glove. Their opposition to the Ahmadiya Movement should also be read in this new light which facts of life have thrown on their real character. This movement came a challenge to their authority and like all vested interests they were startled at the flag of revolt which the Ahmadiya Movement raised against that authority.

It is time for decision. Humanity is passing through momentous times. Big issues are being hammered and shaped on Providential anvil. And this Movement definitely claims on the authority of the Quran and the Hadith to be a movement initiated by God's own Hand to uphold Islam as pan-human Destiny. Will Musalmans stand aloof and sit on the boundary line while history is being forged, simply because a section of self-seekers have sensed in it the death-knell of their own power and prestige and clouded its true import behind a smoke screen of distortions, misrepresentations and calumny? They may take it from us that the Ahmadiya Movement is nothing more nor less than a Movement within Islam, for Islam and by Islam.

The Ahmadiya Movement through Western Eyes

AHMADIYA BELIEFS

A FORCE BIG WITH REVOLUTIONARY POSSIBILITIES

"Thence, perhaps, new powers might be born amongst Oriental peoples, which would check the present decay of Islam or even turn it into new growth, if Europe were to continue along the line which it is following just now. Who would deny the possibility at least of such a new development, after seeing, for instance, how movements like the Ahmadiyya, with its strong ethical powers and its no doubt deep religious feelings are able to exercise certain influence far beyond what has so far been considered to be the frontier of Muslim territory.

— *Whither Islam* by Prof. Gibb of London University.

"Taken out of this environment the Movement resolves itself mainly into liberal Islam with the peculiarity that it has a definitely propagandist spirit and feels confident that it can make an appeal to western nations, an appeal which has already been made with some measure of success. If it be thought that this success be insignificant, it must be remembered that missionary progress in India where the Muslim community is now the largest in the world was slow."

"But the Ahmadiyya movement in England does not only aim at making converts though it invites them: It is making a very definite effort to improve the attitude of the English people towards Islam and to secure for it a fair and just hearing."

— *Islam at the Cross-roads*

"The Ahmadiyya are an interesting exception to the generally prevailing communal spirit of Islam. They concentrate on religious propaganda and abstain from all politics..... In this respect they are a very remarkable group in modern Islam, the only group that has purely missionary aims. They are marked by a devotion, zeal and self-sacrifice that call for genuine admiration, notwithstanding their harassing and bitterly aggressive tactics."

"The Lahore group, who have seceded from the original community on the ground that they venerate the founder as a *Mujaddid* (Renewer) of religion and not as a *Nabi*, are therefore more acceptable to public opinion in Islam..... Their influence is far wider than the number of their adherents would suggest. Their vindication and defence of Islam is accepted by many educated Moslems as the form in which they can remain intellectually loyal to Islam."

—Rev. H. Kraemer in *The Moslem World* Vol. XXI

"Their missionaries have devoted special efforts to winning European converts and have achieved a considerable measure of success. In their literature they give such a presentation of Islam as they consider calculated to attract persons who have received an education on modern lines, and thus not only attract non-Muslims, and rebut the attacks made on Islam by Christian controversialists but win back to the faith Muslims who have come under agnostic or rationalist influences."

— *Encyclopedia Britannica*.

"Lahore branch, being the more active, resolved to see what might be achieved in the direction of commending Islam to the western world."

"The Ahmadiyya is determined at all costs to clear the character of the Holy Prophet....."

"Throughout the comments may be seen the conviction that in the end Islam must inevitably triumph over every other religion. Whatever is good among Christian nations to-day is set down to their unconscious acceptance of Muhammadan principles."

— *The Influence of Islam*.

"The Lahore organisation is known as the Ahmadiyya Anjuman-i-Ishaat-i-Islam, or "Society for the diffusion of Islam", and has its head Maulana Muhammad Ali, M.A., LL.B. It, likewise, carries on an extensive missionary propaganda throughout India and in foreign countries. Khawaja Kamal-ud-Din has for years been at the head of their mission to England with its headquarters at Woking, Surrey, where there is a small mosque. Both of these leaders have published works intended to commend Islam to Western readers, and also some polemical writing against Christianity. Of these Maulana Muhammad Ali's English translation of the Quran with commentary, now in its second edition, deserves special mention."

— *The People of the Mosque*.

"The Lahore party has organized itself under the title of the Ahmadiyya Anjuman-i-Ishaat-i-Islam, with Maulvi Muhammad Ali as its head. This section of the Muslim community likewise has an extensive missionary propaganda throughout India and in foreign countries. Khwaja Kamal-ud-Din is Imam of the Mosque at Woking and head of the mission to England; Maulvi Sadr-ud-Din is head of the mission to Germany; and Maulvi Muhammad Ali has distinguished himself not only by the publication of numerous apologetic works, but especially by a complete translation of the Qur'an into English, with a critical commentary which purports to present the results of the most modern Muslim scholarship."

— *Indian Islam*.

"The propaganda of the Ahmadiyya in Germany deserves our special attention. The magnificent mosque in Berlin-Wilmetsdorf serves this purpose. Imam Abdullah and his converts to Islam hold services and festivals and deliver lectures on Muhammad's personality, the morals of Islam, the position of women in Islam, the democracy of Islam, etc. etc, quarterly journal "Moslemisch Revue" is published from the Mosque....."

— *Dar Orient*.

A ORTHODOX PICTURE OF ISLAM

1. We believe in the Unity of God and the prophethood of Muhammad

2. We believe in the finality of prophethood in Muhammad. In the words of the Founder of the Ahmadiyya Movement "no prophet, old or new, will come after our Holy Prophet;" "the man who denies the finality of prophethood must be considered as having no faith in, and outside the pale of Islam."

3. We believe the Holy Qur'an to be the final and perfect Book of God, no portion of which has ever been or shall ever be abrogated.

4. We believe that *Mujaddids* (reformers) are raised after the Holy Prophet and that God speaks to His chosen ones (*Auliya Allah*), as the Holy Prophet said that there shall be among his followers "those to whom God shall speak, though they shall not be prophets."

5. We revere all the Companions of the Prophet and all the great Imams, whether they are accepted by the Sunnis or Shias.

6. We look upon every one who professes faith in the *Kalima, La ilaha illallah Muhammad ur Rasul Ullah*, as a Muslim to whatever sect or school of thought in Islam he may belong.

7. We accept the founder of the Ahmadiyya Movement, as the *mujaddid* of the 14th century of Hijra, not as a prophet.

8. We do not regard the Ahmadiyya Movement to be anything like a new sect in Islam but as a society for the defence, propagation, and glory of Islam.

9. We believe that the Qur'an is as much of a force to-day as it was 1365 years ago and capable of quickening the dead world of Islam to life once more.

10. We believe that Islam, being the only religion in keeping with the head and heart of man as well as with the scientific spirit of the age, is bound to be the religion of the enlightened man all over the world.