

## Maulana Muhammad Ali's statement in the Karam Din Court Case of 1904

Compiled by Dr Zahid Aziz

In 1904 Maulvi Karam Din, an opponent of Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, filed a defamation action against him in court, claiming that the latter, in his book *Mawahib-ur-Rahman*, had used defamatory words about him (such as *kazzab*). It has long been put forward by the Qadiani *Jama'at* writers that during this case Maulana Muhammad Ali testified on the witness stand that:

"In regard to a man who claims to be a *Nabi* (Prophet), where a man denies this claim, he becomes thereby a '*Kazzab*'. The Mirza Sahib claims he is a Prophet."

"The Mirza Sahib, in many of his works, puts forth this claim which is to the effect that he is a Prophet from God, though he is not the bearer of a new *shariah*. Where a man denies a claim of this kind, he becomes, thereby, a '*Kazzab*'."<sup>1</sup>

On this basis they allege that at the time Maulana Muhammad Ali believed Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad to be a prophet.

This false impression of his statement was refuted in the Lahore Ahmadiyya Urdu organ *Paigham Suh* by Maulana Muhammad Ali in articles in 1942 and 1944. Before reproducing a translation of those articles, we may make the following three points.

**1.** The book that was the subject of the court case was *Mawahib-ur-Rahman*. So Maulana Muhammad Ali could only be referring to the concept of prophethood and Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad's claim as presented in that book. In that book, he writes in Arabic:

"Allah speaks to, and communicates with, His saints (*auliya*) in this *Ummah*. They are given the colour of prophets, but they are not prophets in reality because the Quran has completed all the requirements of the *Shariah*. They are given nothing but the understanding of the Quran; they do not add to the Quran, nor take anything away from it."<sup>2</sup>

This is what he claimed to be: one of the *auliya* of Allah who arose in the Muslim nation, to whom the Almighty speaks, who has the colour of a prophet, but is not a prophet in reality. The reason why they are not prophets in reality is that a real prophet makes changes in the existing *shariah*. In a published letter in August 1899, this was the definition of 'prophet' in Islam that Hazrat Mirza sahib had given to his followers, warning them not to apply it to him. He wrote:

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1. See, for example, the Qadiani publication *Truth Prevails*, ch. I, p. 4.

2. *Mawahib-ur-Rahman*, p. 66–67; *Ruhani Khaza'in*, v. 19, p. 285.

"However, in the terminology of Islam, *nabi* and *rasul* mean those who bring an entirely new *shariah*, or those who abrogate some aspects of the previous *shariah*, or those who are not called followers of a previous prophet, having a direct connection with God without benefit from a prophet. Therefore, one should be vigilant to see that the same meaning is not taken here [i.e., in my case]."<sup>3</sup>

**2.** At the very time that the process of this entire litigation was taking place, Maulana Muhammad Ali published two articles in the April 1904 issue of *The Review of Religions*, in both its English and Urdu editions, derived from Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad's book *Ainah Kamalat-i Islam*, which had been published in 1893. In the first article, *The Blessings of Islam*, it is written:

"When a person reaches this stage, he is no more a man of this world, and is granted the guidance and high place granted to the holy prophets and messengers of God before him, as if he were their image. Such a man becomes the inheritor of the blessings granted to the prophets and he is their vicegerent upon earth. What is termed *mujiza* in the prophets is termed *karamat* in him, and what is termed *ismat* (sinlessness) in the prophets is called *mahfiziyat* (protection) in him, and what is called *nubuwwat* (prophethood) in the prophets is designated *muhaddasiyyat* in him."<sup>4</sup>

In the Urdu edition in the same article, the following extra passage occurs, which we translate below:

"The sayings of the Holy Prophet Muhammad indicate that a *muhaddas* is potentially a prophet and if the door of prophethood had not been closed, every *muhaddas* possessed in himself the power and capability to become a prophet. It is according to this power and capability that it is allowable to apply the word *nabi* to a *muhaddas*. That is, we can say: the *muhaddas* is a prophet."<sup>5</sup>

In the second article, *Restoring the Dead to Life*, it is written:

"The Muslims are the people who though not called prophets are like prophets spoken to by God, and though not termed apostles, the brilliant signs of God are manifested at their hands like apostles."<sup>6</sup>

In the Urdu edition the wording of the above sentence is:

"This is the *Ummah* which, though not having any prophets (*nabi*) in it, has those who receive the word of God like prophets, and though not having any messengers (*rasul*) in it, has those who show God's clear signs like messengers."<sup>7</sup>

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3. Letter dated 7 August 1899, published in *Al-Hakam*, vol. iii, no. 29, 17 August 1899.

4. *The Review of Religions*, April 1904, p. 120–121.

5. Urdu edition of *The Review of Religions*, April 1904, p. 117.

6. *The Review of Religions*, April 1904, p. 137.

7. Urdu edition of *The Review of Religions*, April 1904, p. 131, translated by us into English.

It is impossible that Maulana Muhammad Ali was testifying in court that Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad claims to be a prophet, when he was at the same time declaring to the readership of *The Review of Religions* in both English and Urdu that there cannot be any *nabi* or *rasul* arising among Muslims because the door of prophethood is closed, and a person such as Mirza Ghulam Ahmad is, in fact, a *muhaddas*.

**3.** What is of the highest importance is what Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad himself told the court from the witness-box as to his status. Here it is, related by himself a couple of years later, in his book *Haqiqat-ul-Wahy*:

**“Sign no. 118.** Once when I was in Gurdaspur due to a court case which Karam Din of Jhelum had instituted against me, I received the revelation ... meaning, ‘they will ask you about your rank, as to what is your rank and status; tell them: It is God Who has bestowed this status upon me; then leave them sporting in their idle talk’. So I related this revelation to the members of my *Jama‘at* who were accompanying me in Gurdaspur, who were not less than forty men, including Maulvi Muhammad Ali, M.A., and Khwaja Kamal-ud-Din, B.A., Pleader. Then after this, when we went into the courtroom, the lawyer for the opposite party asked me this same question: ‘Is your rank and status as stated in the book *Tiryaq-ul-Qulub*?’ I replied: ‘Yes, by the grace of God this is my status, and He has bestowed it upon me.’ Then this revelation which had come from God in the morning was fulfilled at nearly the time of *Asr* prayers, and strengthened the faith of all our *Jama‘at*.<sup>8</sup>

His “rank and status as stated in the book *Tiryaq-ul-Qulub*” is that he is a *mulham*, *muhaddas* and *wali*, i.e., recipient of revelation who is a saint without being a prophet, so that no Muslim becomes a *kafir* by denying his claim,<sup>9</sup> and that he is a non-prophet (*ghair nabi*).<sup>10</sup> Given that the defendant in this court case, i.e., Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, affirmed that this is his rank and status, it is therefore simply impossible that Maulana Muhammad Ali, giving evidence in the same case, is testifying that he holds the higher rank of prophet!

A few years later in 1914, when the Qadiani leadership developed the baseless theory that sometime after writing the book *Tiryaq-ul-Qulub* Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad had changed his claim from that of being a *muhaddas* to that of a real prophet in 1901, they were faced with the great difficulty that his statement, as above, was relating an event of 1904 and was published in 1907, confirming *Tiryaq-ul-Qulub*. This was in plain contradiction to their theory of change of claim in 1901. So they came up with the explanation that his mention of the book *Tiryaq-ul-Qulub* in the above statement is an error of memory by

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8. *Haqiqat-ul-Wahy*, pages 265–266. *Ruhani Khaza'in*, v. 22, pages 277–278.

9. *Tiryaq-ul-Qulub*, p. 130–131, footnote. *Ruhani Khaza'in*, v. 15, pages 432–433.

10. *Tiryaq-ul-Qulub*, p. 157. *Ruhani Khaza'in*, v. 15, page 481.

him and that he was actually asked in court about the book *Tuhfa Golarwiyya*, published in September 1902. In the editions of *Haqiqat-ul-Wahy* published by them they have added a publisher's footnote at this point with their explanation that the book he meant was not *Tiryaq-ul-Qulub* but *Tuhfa Golarwiyya*.

However, while inserting this explanation, they forgot that elsewhere they had themselves classified *Tuhfa Golarwiyya* as being a book written in the same time period as *Tiryaq-ul-Qulub*. Just read this from page 24 of their compiler's introduction to volume 17 of *Ruhani Khaza'in*, which contains the book *Tuhfa Golarwiyya*:

“Therefore it has to be accepted with certainty that the time of writing of *Tuhfa Golarwiyya* was the year 1900, though its printing and publication were delayed. Just as *Tiryaq-ul-Qulub* remained printed and was later published in 1902 after the addition of one or two pages, the same took place with *Tuhfa Golarwiyya*. After adding the title page and the announcement on page 2 about a reward of 50 Rupees in 1902, it was published in 1902.”

So their “correction” of the name of the book makes no difference. Whether he was asked about *Tuhfa Golarwiyya* or about *Tiryaq-ul-Qulub*, in either event, he affirmed in court in 1904 in the Karam Din case that his rank and status was as he had described it in a book written when, as the Qadiani leadership itself admits, he was not claiming to be a prophet.

After the three points above, we now proceed to give in English translation two articles on this topic written by Maulana Muhammad Ali and published in *Paigham Sulh*.

From *Paigham Sulh*, 3 June 1942, p. 4

### **My Court Statement and an appeal to the *Jama'at* of Qadian**

Since a long time Qadiani newspapers have been publishing an extract from the statement I gave as a witness in the court case of Maulvi Karam Din of Jhelum. I have explained more than once, regarding the word *nubuwwat* (prophethood) which I have used about the Promised Messiah in this statement, that by describing his denier as a *kazzab* or one who utters falsehood I made it clear that this word *nubuwwat* is being used in its literal sense, that is, being spoken to by Allah, or receiving news of the unseen from God, or making prophecies. If I had been using this word according to Islamic religious terminology I would have described his denier as being *kafir* also, not only one who speaks falsely.

Nonetheless I wrote to the editor of *Al-Fazl* [the Qadiani community's newspaper] asking him to publish my court statement in full because I believed

that there must be some other words of explanation in it which are not published by the Qadiani missionaries. The editor sent me this reply:

“As this statement is spread over 17 pages of foolscap size, and consists of legal submissions relating to various matters, the words in it about the prophethood of the Promised Messiah are those which have been published again and again in this newspaper etc.”

I then obtained a verified copy of it, and my astonishment knew no bounds when I realized what great dishonesty the missionaries and the newspapers of the Qadiani *Jama'at* have been practising by publishing one part of my statement. At the end of this statement, my words are as follows:

“Mirza sahib claims to be a *nabi*, a saint, that is, a *wali*.”

All this time Qadiani missionaries have been concealing this part of my statement from the public and from their own *Jama'at*, so much so that when I asked them to publish the statement in full they replied that it contained nothing about the prophethood of the Promised Messiah beyond what they had already published.

It can be seen that just as at the beginning of my statement, by saying that the word *kazzab* or speaker of falsehood applies to the person who denies his prophethood, I had made clear that prophet here means merely one who makes prophecies, at the end of my statement I had made it further clear by saying that his claim of being prophet was in the sense of being a *muhaddas* or a *wali*, not in the sense of a real prophet. How could I describe him as a real prophet when, in the very book *Mawahib-ur-Rahman* — which was under discussion in this court case, and about which I was asked many questions because that was where the words *kazzab* etc. had been used — Hazrat Mirza sahib has written under the heading of ‘My Beliefs’ that Allah speaks to his *auliya* in this *Ummah* and they are given the colour of prophets: “but they are not prophets in reality because the Quran has completed all the requirements of the *Shariah*.” The meaning is that, in view of the Quran having been revealed, no person in this *Ummah* can be a real prophet, although someone may be given the colouring of a prophet. This is a writing of 1903, from which missionaries of the Qadiani *Jama'at* run as if they are running from a lion.

What should have been done was that if there was some flaw or defect in my statement, my words should have been explained in the light of what the Promised Messiah explained in his book *Mawahib-ur-Rahman*, that it is possible in this *Ummah* to attain the colour of prophets, as [according to Hadith] “The *Ulama* of my *Ummah* are like the prophets of the Israelites”, but in reality no one becomes a prophet because “the Quran has completed all the requirements of the *Shariah*”. Instead of this, the Qadiani religious scholars kept concealed from people the part of my statement in which I had clarified that he

was a prophet in the sense of being a *muhaddas* or a *wali*, and even upon my asking they maintained that it contained nothing further about prophethood.

Leaving aside the *Ulama* and the missionaries of the Qadiani *Jama'at*, about whom their own Khalifa has expressed doubts, I ask the ordinary members of the Qadiani *Jama'at*, and I ask Mirza Mahmud Ahmad himself: Have not these *Ulama* committed dishonesty by concealing this part of my statement, and by claiming that it contained nothing about prophethood beyond what they had published, have they not compounded their crime?

In reply to this, it may perhaps be argued that before my words there is mention of the newspaper the *Truth Seeker* and it is possible that my words are based on what that paper said. Firstly, my statement does not say that this is taken from the *Truth Seeker*, but it is separate. Secondly, whether or not my words are based on the *Truth Seeker*, they are my words. My statement contains many references from dictionaries and commentaries of the Quran, and from books of Hazrat Mirza sahib. This does not affect its position as my statement. As one part of my statement about prophethood was published, why was another part kept concealed? It was only because it explicitly mentioned sainthood and *muhaddasiyyat*, and the Qadiani *Ulama* did not want to bring it before the public.

It must also be remembered that this part of my statement is in reply to a question by the lawyer for the defendant. In other words, the questions in answer to which I said these words or presented the *Truth Seeker* were being asked of me on behalf of the Promised Messiah. If the newspaper *Truth Seeker* was presented, it was done by the Promised Messiah himself. Everyone who was present during those hearings at Gurdaspur knows that the session began every-day at about 3 o'clock in the afternoon. All of us, along with the Promised Messiah himself, would sit within the grounds of the court building under the shade of the trees and search through books and references. Every reference was presented before the Promised Messiah, and whichever ones he approved, those were the ones presented in court. As a general rule the attorney follows the instructions of his client, and the attorney's questions are taken as being asked on behalf of the client. This is all the more so when the attorney is a spiritual disciple of the client, that he merely follows his instructions. Hence even if my words are based on the *Truth Seeker*, Hazrat Mirza sahib himself had this newspaper presented to explain that the prophethood mentioned at the beginning of my statement means only *muhaddasiyyat* and sainthood, and not anything else.

*End of article.*

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From *Paigham Sulh*, 19 July 1944, p. 4

**A letter to the Khalifa Mirza Mahmud Ahmad at Qadian**  
**by Maulana Muhammad Ali**

Dalhousie, 3 July 1944

Respected and honourable Mian sahib

*Assalamu alaikum wa rahmatullahi wa barakatuhu*

In your speech published in *Al-Fazl*, 28 June, you have made the accusation against me that, as regards the witness statement I made in the Maulvi Karam Din case, I have not acted honestly about the matter. My statement in that court case, which you have also quoted, was as follows:

“The Mirza sahib claims prophethood in his writings. This claim to prophethood is of this kind, that he is a prophet but has not brought a new *shariah*. A person who belies one who makes such a claim is a ‘*Kazzab*’ according to the Quran.”

You hold the opinion that I have changed my belief in this respect and that, having done so, I do not admit that I have changed my belief. This you regard as not being honest.

I have replied to this previously and the reply was published in *Paigham Sulh*, but you have not even hinted at my reply. I am, therefore, sending this reply to you directly, so that just as you have made an accusation against me in your newspaper, you will also publish the reply to it in the same newspaper. Although you consider me as your enemy, but if a person makes an accusation against his enemy, he should also take the enemy’s response. “And do not let hatred of a people incite you not to act equitably” [the Quran, 5:8]. I give below my reply in brief.

**1.** My opening words are: “The Mirza sahib claims prophethood in his writings.” This means that whatever claim of Hazrat Mirza sahib is found in his writings, I accept it. I accepted it at the time of making this court statement, and I accept it now. It is a fact that I have made no change. The only question is: What is that claim which he made in his writings? As examples, I present three writings of three periods.

(a) Right at the beginning in 1892 he wrote and gave a decisive writing while holding a debate with an opponent:

“...my intention has never been that this word *nabi* means real prophethood (*nubuwwat*), but that it only means *muhaddas*, which the Holy Prophet has explained as meaning one who is spoken to by Allah.”<sup>11</sup>

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11. *Translator's Note:* See *Majmu'a Ishtiharat*, 1986 edition, v. 1, pages 312 to 314.

(b) During the middle period, he wrote in *Anjam Atham* in 1897:

"I have never, at any time, made a claim of prophethood (*nubuwwat*) or *risalat* (messengership) in the real sense. To use a word in a non-real sense, and to employ it in speech according to its broad, root meaning, does not imply heresy (*kufr*)."<sup>12</sup>

(c) In the last period, that is, after 1901, he wrote in *Mawahib-ur-Rahman* in 1903, the translation of which [from Arabic] is as below:

"Allah speaks to, and communicates with, His saints (*auliya*) in this *Ummah*. They are given the colour of prophets, but they are not prophets in reality because the Quran has completed all the requirements of the *Shariah*."<sup>13</sup>

It is clear from these three writings that the word *nabi* which the Promised Messiah has used about himself in his writings, or which has occurred for him in Hadith, was not considered by him as meaning prophethood in Islamic religious terminology but as being meant in the literal sense, which is called in other words as *muhaddas*. This was a non-real use of this word, which elsewhere he has called as metaphorical and figurative. He believed till the end of his life that no prophet can come after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, but that the experience of Divine communication in this *Ummah* continues and those persons with whom Allah communicates in this *Ummah* are given the colouring of prophets, but they are not prophets in reality.

It is according to these explanations of the Promised Messiah, given in the first period, the middle period, and the last period, that I also used the word *nabi* for him. I took his prophethood only in the literal sense of sainthood (*muhaddasiyyat*) and in a non-real sense. I took it in this sense at the time of the court case and I take it in the same sense today. Consequently, at the end of my court statement there are words saying that the claim of Mirza sahib is that of *nabi* in the sense of saint or *wali*. During his life all Ahmadis took this word in the same sense. Mufti Muhammad Sadiq published in his newspaper *Badr* his own statement which he made before the late Maulana Shibli as follows:

"Shibli asked if we believe the late Mirza sahib to be a prophet. I replied that our belief in this respect was the same as that of other Muslims, namely, that the Holy Prophet Muhammad is the *Khatam-un-nabiyyin*. After him, no other prophet can come, neither new nor old. However, the phenomenon of Divine revelation still continues ... As Hazrat Mirza sahib was also privileged with Divine revelation, and in his revelations God gave him many news of the future as prophecies, which were fulfilled, for this reason Mirza sahib was one who made prophecies. Such a one is called *nabi* in Arabic lexicology."<sup>14</sup>

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12. *Translator's Note*: See *Anjam Atham*, footnote, pages 27–28, in *Ruhani Khaza'in*, v. 11.

13. *Translator's Note*: See *Mawahib-ur-Rahman*, p. 66–67; *Ruhani Khaza'in*, v. 19, p. 285.

14. *Translator's Note*: See *Badr*, 27 October 1910, page 9.

**2. The second part of my statement was:**

“This claim to prophethood is of this kind, that he is a prophet but has not brought a new *shariah*.”

It is a plain fact that prophethood without a *shariah* is not prophethood in reality. The word *nabi* can only be used for it in a metaphorical and figurative sense. The Promised Messiah himself wrote in his book *Tiryaq-ul-Qulub* on page 130:

“To call the denier of one’s claim as *kafir* is only the privilege of those prophets who bring a *shariah* and new commandments from God the Most High. But apart from possessors of *shariah* (*sahib-i shariah*), all the others who are inspired (*mulham*) or *muhaddas*...”

This clearly shows that, apart from the bearers of *shariah*, anyone else who receives revelation from God is a *mulham* or *muhaddas*. The word *nabi* in its real sense can only be applied to the man who brings a *shariah* or new commandments. One not bringing a *shariah* is not a prophet, according to Hazrat Mirza sahib. Similarly, the extract from *Mawahib-ur-Rahman* quoted above proves the same point. He writes that those persons of this *Ummah* who receive revelation are given the colouring of prophets, but the reason why they are not prophets in reality is that “the Quran has completed all the requirements of the *Shariah*”. As no one can now arise bringing a new *shariah*, no one can arise as a prophet in reality.

When prophethood is mentioned which is said to be without a *shariah*, it only means that it is not prophethood in reality. What is meant is only someone who gives out prophecies. This word is being used in its literal sense, and not according to Islamic religious terminology. This is also the belief of the great saints of this *Ummah*. Accordingly, the Shaikh Akbar, Muhyay-ud-Din Ibn Arabi, has written that only prophethood with a *shariah* has ended and added: “The terms prophethood (*nubuwwat*) and prophet (*nabi*) apply to none except those who bring a *shariah*.” Thus, in the terminology used by Hazrat Mirza sahib, as well as the terminology used by the saints of this *Ummah*, prophethood without a *shariah* is only another name for sainthood (*wilayat*) or being a *muhaddas*.

**3. The third part of my statement is:**

“A person who belies one who makes such a claim is a ‘*Kazzab*’ according to the Quran.”

Now if a man claims prophethood in the real sense, the person who belies him is certainly a *kafir*, as the Quran clearly says that those who deny a prophet are “truly disbelievers” (4:151). But in my statement I do not call as *kafir* a person who belies Hazrat Mirza sahib. I called him *kazzab* which does not mean *kafir*. You can have all my writings searched again, and set your experts to dig

out references, but nowhere will you find that I have called the deniers of Hazrat Mirza sahib as *kafir*. As the quotation from *Tiryaq-ul-Qulub* given above shows, the one whose denier is not a *kafir* cannot be a prophet. He is, in the real sense, a *mulham* and a *muhaddas*.

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*From:* [www.ahmadiyya.org](http://www.ahmadiyya.org)