

The Lahore Ahmadiyya Anjuman — A Summary

- **Name:** The Ahmadiyya Anjuman Isha‘at Islam, meaning Ahmadiyya Association for the propagation of Islam.
- **Founded** in Lahore in 1914 for the purpose of *the propagation of Islam to the world generally, especially to Western countries.*
- **Basis of its interpretation of Islam:** The Quran is the supreme authority. *Sunna* and Hadith accepted as secondary to the Quran. All other sources (books of law, theology, mysticism) only accepted if not in conflict with the Quran.
- **Our view of Islam:**
 - Islam seeks to *convince* and *persuade* people of its truth by reason and evidence. Grants *freedom* to all to embrace any religion.
 - It urges people to use their *thinking* in religious matters and disallows blind acceptance or obedience.
 - It teaches *tolerance* of differences, whether with other religions or among Muslims. Anti-Islam criticism to be answered *only* by word, not violence. No fellow-Muslim can be declared ‘heretic’.
 - It requires acts of worship to be performed with the *heart, soul and mind*, and not as mere mechanical rituals. Our worship must improve our behaviour in life.
 - Muslims must live in *peace* with other communities, show *compassion* towards all, regardless of their religion, and *reject the use of violence* on the basis of difference of religion.

History

- Ahmadiyya Movement founded around 1890 in Punjab, India, by Mirza Ghulam Ahmad (d. 1908).
- It was a time when Muslims all over the world had suffered their most complete downfall in every field of life: political, intellectual, moral, and religious.

- The religion of Islam was under ferocious attack by Western critics. They condemned it as a religion of violence, brutality, sensuality, mere ritual, lacking high values, and devoid of any notion of love of God or forgiveness. The Prophet Muhammad's character was misrepresented in the worst possible terms.
- Muslim religious leaders were generally uninterested in and ill-equipped to respond. Many Muslims were losing faith in Islam.
- Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad arose claiming to be a *mujaddid* with the God-given mission of defending Islam and reviving faith in the hearts by means of guidance from the Quran and the Holy Prophet.
- He taught that Islam possesses a great spiritual power to attract the human mind and heart. It spreads without any worldly force, power, army or state behind it. From a state of destitution, Islam will capture human hearts, even among the nations who are its worst critics.
- He rebutted all kinds of criticism and objections against Islam.
- He sought to present Islam to the Western nations and the modern world. Some points he stressed in his presentation are:
 - The Quran describes God as Lord of all the nations (not as God of Muslims only), Who is concerned for all of them. He sent prophets before Prophet Muhammad in all nations and Muslims are required to believe in all of them. A belief in the prophets of all nations creates harmony between nations in place of antagonism.
 - The Quran presents God as treating all human beings justly without prejudice for or against anyone. It says you don't get acceptance from God by calling yourself by a label such as Muslim, Jew or Christian, but only by surrendering your base desires, being dutiful and doing good to all others. Islam rejects the concept of exclusivity of any nation.
 - The Quran tells Muslims to side with truth and goodness wherever these may be found among any people. It teaches Muslims to follow *principles* such as justice rather than show blind favouritism for one's own people and prejudice against others.

Work of Lahore Ahmadiyya

- Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad inspired deep faith and enthusiasm among his followers for the propagation of Islam to the modern world. Six years after his death some of them created our present body in Lahore devoted to this work, led by Maulana Muhammad Ali.
- It published an English translation of the Quran with full commentary by Muhammad Ali in England in 1917, the first such work by a Muslim to reach a Western audience. For many years it was the only Muslim English translation available.
- Later translators (Pickthall, Yusuf Ali and others) greatly benefitted from this pioneer work.
- Muhammad Ali produced a huge number of books in English covering all aspects of Islam. Pickthall, a Sunni Muslim, wrote of him in 1936:
 - “Probably no man living has done longer or more valuable service for the cause of Islamic revival than Maulana Muhammad Ali of Lahore.”
- His writings have been published in several European languages.
- A Lahore Ahmadiyya pioneer, Khwaja Kamal-ud-Din, founded the Woking Muslim Mission at the Mosque in Woking in England in 1913:
 - A monthly magazine *The Islamic Review* was published from there for over 55 years. He and the later Imams gave lectures on Islam all over this country.
 - Many people accepted Islam at this Mission. The stories of those converts, published by the Woking Mission in a book *Islam Our Choice*, have been republished all over the world by other Muslims and are on numerous Muslim websites.
 - It was Britain’s main centre of Islam, supported by Muslims of all persuasions, for over 55 years. Prominent Muslim leaders visiting the U.K. from all over the world, as well as Muslim students, diplomats, scholars, businessmen, professionals living here, joined the meetings and gatherings organised by the Mission.

- Plans to build a mosque in London were made at the Woking Mission, under the direction of Khwaja Kamal-ud-Din, which later led to the present-day Central London Mosque in Regents Park.
- The Lahore Ahmadiyya Movement built a Mosque in Berlin in 1925 and established a Mission, from where Islam was propagated in Central Europe. Other Muslims made use of and supported this Mosque and Mission.
- The Movement provided religious assistance to Muslim communities all over the world, east and west, especially where Christian missions were attacking Islam in order to convert Muslims.

Some other aspects of the Lahore Ahmadiyya

- It believes that an Islamic society is *not* created by imposing laws and regulations on people. It is only created by reforming the character of individuals through moral training and example, and this was what the Holy Prophet Muhammad did.
 - It emphasises that Muslim women should be given the full rights conferred on them by Islam and they should participate fully in all aspects of community life, including religious activities.
 - The Movement deplors sectarianism in Islam. It regards all those as Muslims who declare their profession of Islam. No Muslim should be branded an ‘unbeliever’ or expelled from the community.
 - It has always worked for Muslim unity and co-operation. Leading Lahore Ahmadiyya figures were greatly respected by Muslim national leaders (such as Iqbal and Jinnah).
 - The focal point of the unity of Muslims is belief in the Holy Prophet Muhammad. He is thus their last, final and supreme human guide. No prophet can come after him, but only *auliya* (saints) and *mujaddids* (revivers of Islam). Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad did **not** claim to be a prophet but a *mujaddid* in Islamic tradition.
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Find out more about the Lahore Ahmadiyya by visiting the websites:

www.aaiil.org

www.ahmadiyya.org

www.wokingmuslim.org