
About Maulana Muhammad Ali webpage: www.ahmadiyya.org/m-ali/

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The Perfect Leader

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The late Maulana Muhammad Ali was the first President and Ameer of the Ahmadiyya Anjuman Ishaat-i-Islam, Lahore. As President, he managed the affairs of the Anjuman; as Ameer, he was the spiritual guide and mentor of his followers. He founded the Anjuman nearly 37 years ago, after he had left Qadian because of the heretic ideas which sprang up there some time after the death of Mirza Ghulam Ahmad — the Founder of the Ahmadiyya Movement. History will give a prominent place to Muhammad Ali for this fact alone that he refused to recognise or yield to the pernicious move, initiated by the Founder's own son, to lead astray the Ahmadiyya Movement by introducing heretical concepts such as the prophethood of the Founder and the exclusion from Islam of those who did not believe in him. By his courageous and inspired action, Muhammad Ali saved the true teachings and mission of the late Mirza Ghulam Ahmad.

Muhammad Ali founded another Anjuman in Lahore to carry on the work entrusted to his followers by the late Mirza Sahib. Beginning from almost nothing, Muhammad Ali developed an institution which today runs several expensive Islamic missions in Europe, America and other countries, publishes and propagates Islamic literature — the like of which cannot be had elsewhere, and is the only institution which has, as its sole object, the preservation and propagation of Islam. Mosques, mission buildings, schools, valuable lands, invaluable books on Islam and selfless missionaries, are some of the assets which the Anjuman possesses today — thanks to the untiring and prodigious efforts of its founder.

The Anjuman is a charitable body. And those who have some experience of the working of charitable institutions alone know how difficult and heart-breaking it is to run it. Add to it the opposition of some of the sister bodies like the Ahrar and the Qadiani movement, and you will have some idea of the difficulties which Muhammad Ali had to face. There was opposition even inside his fold. There was a move to join the Khilafat movement when it was at its height in 1921. There were other distractions. But Muhammad Ali stuck to the path laid down by Mirza Ghulam Ahmad and refused again and again to yield to influences which might lead the Ahmadiyya movement astray.

Muhammad Ali's excellent management of the affairs of the Anjuman would alone make him its greatest benefactor. But he served it in another and a much better way. Along with the heavy duty of running the difficult affairs of the Anjuman almost single-handed, he found time to write books which not only made him internationally famous but also brought fame and profits to the Anjuman. To mention only some of his books, the English translation and commentary of the Holy Quran, the Prophet's biography, the Manual of Hadith, the Religion of Islam, the Early Caliphate, the New World Order, and the Living Thoughts of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, constitute almost a complete picture of Islam in the English language. Towards the end of his life Muhammad Ali initiated a move to place 5000 copies of this set of books in the libraries of foreign countries to send the message of Islam to the four corners of the world. More than half the necessary funds have already been collected. With postage and packing charges, each set costs Rs. 70 and the donor's name is inscribed on each book sent out. I propose, with God's help, to complete the work more than half-done in Muhammad Ali's own lifetime in connection with this scheme.

Muhammad Ali's Urdu works are more numerous and equally valuable. I was fortunate enough to observe him from very close quarters for nearly four decades. He did the unparalleled work of his lifetime without any fuss, and with such ease and grace that it was amazing to see the marvellous results which he thus achieved. He found time, with all this, to visit the sick and bereaved persons, attend to his family, his household affairs and even his garden. He would write with his own hand to most people. He would spend hours in prayer—including about 3 or 4 hours of 'Tahajjud' prayers. If a friend or relation came to see him, Muhammad Ali would not be the first to terminate the meeting. He greeted every caller with a smile. He would listen attentively and sympathetically to him. He had unfeigned affection and sympathy with all human beings and particularly with Muslims. The Ahmadis were dearer to him than his own children. He never said one evil word, during my forty years' experience, against any friend or foe. He did not like it even if somebody else said a bad word about his opponents. He never spoke a lie. Everybody trusted him. It is impossible to record all the beauties of his character and the achievements of his career. His sublime and most successful leadership of the Ahmadiyya (Lahore) movement, and his sublime and beautiful character, are to my mind the surest indications of the Divine purpose behind the Ahmadiyya Movement, for Allah alone could have provided the movement with such a perfect leader.