



The Light — U.K. edition

April 2008

The Lahore Ahmadiyya monthly magazine from U.K.

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Darus Salaam, 15 Stanley Avenue, Wembley, HA0 4JQ (U.K.)

Centre: 020 8903 2689. President: 020 8524 8212. Secretary: 01753 692654.

E-mail: aaail.uk@gmail.com ♦ websites: www.aaail.org/uk • www.virtualmosque.co.uk

Assalamu alaikum: Our next meeting —

Date: **Sunday 6th April 2008**

Time: **3.00 p.m.**

Speaker: **Miss Saadia Abdullah**

Topic: **Traditional Islamic Art**

Regular activities:

Darus-i Quran and Hadith:

Every Friday at 2.30 p.m.

Meetings of the Executive:

First Sunday of every month at 2.00 p.m.

Meeting of the Jama'at:

First Sunday of every month at 3.00 p.m.

The Legal Position of Women in Islam

by the late Rt. Hon. Syed Ameer Ali

[*Editor's Note:* This is a booklet by the distinguished Indian Muslim judge, Islamic law expert, reformist and author, Syed Ameer Ali (d. 1928). In 1904 he moved from India to England. In 1908 he was made a member of the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council, the final court of appeal for cases from the British colonies; hence his title *Right Honourable*. Apparently, up to the present day he is the only Muslim member of the Privy Council. Among his writings are two famous books *The Spirit of Islam* and *A Short History of the Saracens*, in which he has refuted allegations against Islam of

religious intolerance, barbarity and backwardness. Incidentally, in 1913 Syed Ameer Ali helped Khwaja Kamal-ud-Din to take legal possession of the Mosque at Woking.

This booklet was published in 1912 by the University of London Faculty of Laws. Below we quote approximately the first half, with our comments. The author, one hundred years ago, seems to have been ahead of most present-day U.K. Muslim religious leaders.]

IN ENGLAND, one might say almost in every European country, there is a great misapprehension regarding the legal position of women in Islam. It is supposed that in Christendom alone woman occupies an equal place with man. I do not wish to examine the correctness of this proposition. My

suffragist friends, for whom personally I have great sympathy, a sympathy which has lasted nearly forty years, will probably be the first to dispute its accuracy. My own view is that in the Islamic System she occupies a far higher legal position than was accorded to her, even in England, until recent years, and a decidedly higher position than in many Continental countries. And this view is founded, not on a knowledge of any one system, but based on some acquaintance with others besides the Islamic rules.

There is some excuse for the misapprehension to which I have referred on the part of Continental nations who have little or no direct concern with Islamic peoples; and even when they do come in contact their relations in the majority of cases are characterized by a total lack of sympathy.

To England the subject is of more than academic interest. A hundred millions of Muslims¹ directly or indirectly own allegiance to our Sovereign. They practically form one-fourth of the vast and conglomerate population of the British Empire. A thorough and sympathetic understanding of their laws and institutions, a due consideration of their feelings and sentiments, must unquestionably be of the greatest importance in the administration of this world-wide Empire.

Policies may vary with changing circumstances or particular idiosyncrasies, but one fact, I say without fear of challenge, must remain unchanged — the Throne of England must rest on the attachment of the millions who acknowledge its sway, which again depends on due regard and consideration for all their cherished traditions.

The misapprehension regarding the position of Muslim women is a part of the general and unsympathetic attitude, not confined to the ignorant multitude, towards Muslim nations. I say again, whatever excuse there may be for other European communities, there is none for the English people to misunderstand the Muslims or to underrate their feelings and sentiments, their laws and institutions, for misunderstandings like these affect not merely social relations but the very foundations of the attachment on which the Empire is based.

For example, the statement that Muslim women are mere slaves and that countries where women are kept in a state of abasement deserve to be wiped out — perhaps this idea is at the root of much that is going on under our eyes — that

statement is not only offensive to His Majesty's Muslim subjects, but a falsehood.

To remove the impression which must naturally be created by such statements, spread broadcast over the land, it is necessary to discuss the legal position of a Muslim woman from four points of view —

- (1) As a daughter.
- (2) As a wife.
- (3) As a mother.
- (4) As a member of the society to which she belongs.

Take her first as a daughter, and ask yourself initially what was the legal position of a maiden in the Hebrew or Roman System. I may even ask you to consider her position in the English System. Do not be afraid, I am not going to inflict on you a discourse on the Hebrew, Roman or English Law. I have discussed that at some length in my *Spirit of Islam*, which perhaps you may have an opportunity of studying some day if your interest can carry you so far. But I know you have come to hear me talk about Muslim women, and I trust you will not find what I have to say too tiring or too much for your endurance. As I am only at the beginning of my address I must beg you to possess your souls in patience.

A Muslim daughter does not depend on the foresight of her parents or the affection of her brothers or other relatives for a future provision. The law throws over her its special protection. It declares in express terms her title to a share in her parents' patrimony, which she takes in her own absolute right. The share may vary according to the number and title of the other heirs left by the deceased parent, but under no circumstance can she be deprived of some portion of the inheritance. For example, when a person dies leaving only a daughter and a son, the daughter's share is one-third and the son's two-thirds.

(The female under the Muslim law always takes half the share of a male.) If there is one daughter and two sons, she takes one-fifth and the sons two-fifths each; if there are two daughters and one son, he takes a moiety, and the sisters one-fourth each. All this is a matter of arithmetical calculation and does not require the intervention of the family lawyer to swell expenses and diminish the distributable assets.

Whilst she is under age and unmarried she lives with her mother, who is her guardian.

During minority guardians have a qualified power of contracting her in marriage. But even a

1. Syed Ameer Ali has used the Indian term *Mussulman* for 'Muslim' in this treatise, which is here replaced by *Muslim*.

father cannot enter into a contract of marriage for his minor daughter which is detrimental to her interests, or with a person who does not belong to the same status in life or who is suffering from some disease. In case of any such attempt the Judge, on the motion of any other guardian, has the power of prohibiting its completion; whilst in the case of a contract entered into by any person other than the father, according to one school it is subject to her option on attaining majority, according to the other school it is ineffective until ratified by her.²

But once she attains majority, which, according to most of the schools, is on the completion of the fifteenth year, the marriage can be contracted only with her express consent, and no person, “not even the King,” can compel her marriage. Remember this rule was enacted in the seventh century of the Christian Era, and may be used to illustrate the precepts and practice of Europe up to the sixteenth century, even later.

The Muslim law attaches great importance to what it calls “equality in marriage”. Muslim jurists believed that ill-assorted unions do not conduce to family happiness, and therefore viewed with disfavour the alliance of a high-born maiden to a person of inferior station in life.³

Among the Arabs the rules of equality were very minute, and those rules are preserved with great fidelity in the Hanafi school. Thus, although a *sui juris* young lady has an absolute right to marry any one she likes, if she takes it into her head to contract a *mésalliance*⁴ with her groom, the law gives the power to her relations to apply to the Court to get it cancelled. But that right “drops” on the birth of a child to the defaulting couple.

This naturally brings us to her position as a wife. A Muslim wife does not lose her individuality upon marriage. She retains after marriage all the rights which the law vests in her from the moment she comes into the world. Her property

belongs to her in her own right to deal with it as she likes; if she is a wage-earner her earnings belong to her absolutely without the smallest right on the part of the husband to intermeddle or appropriate them. On the death of the husband she is entitled to a share in his inheritance. When there are children she is entitled to an eighth; but when there are no children she inherits a fourth. Her right to the custody of her children does not depend on the idiosyncrasies of individual judges, but is laid down in express terms by the law. The custody of a male child appertains to her exclusively until he attains the age when he must be placed under a tutor for schooling and training. This age varies from seven to nine, whilst the custody of a female child belongs to her until the daughter attains majority or is married. On marriage she is entitled to a settlement technically called “dower” in accordance with the station in life of her husband, which is absolutely hers to dispose of or leave to her heirs, among whom the husband is one. If no settlement is made at the time of the contract, the law presumes the amount to be in accordance with the usual settlements in favour of women of her father’s family, as they are considered to furnish the standard for fixing the dower she ought to receive.

During *couverture*⁵ she is entitled to maintenance suitable to her position and the means of the husband. In case of desertion or habitual ill-treatment she can seek a dissolution of the marriage in the Court of Justice. Nor does the law contemplate a woman remaining permanently tied to a lunatic, or to a husband afflicted with an incurable and pernicious malady. In all these cases she is entitled to relief.

Among the advanced Muslim communities a bride is a person of great consequence. The extraordinary consideration that was paid to brides in the royal families of Delhi and Oude furnishes some indication of the position women occupy in the Islamic System. To English historians and lawyers, I say lawyers, because the reports of Indian cases are replete with illustrations of my statement — the deference paid in great families to brides, the titles they receive, the ceremony and consideration with which they are surrounded, convey no meaning. To the student who dives below the surface they are full of significance. I should be sorry if all that old Oriental chivalry were to disappear under the thoroughly prosaic influences of what passes by the name of Western Civilization.

2. Maulana Muhammad Ali writes in *The Religion of Islam*: “...there is no case on record showing that the marriage of a minor through his or her guardian was allowed by the Holy Prophet after details of the law were revealed to him at Madina.” (Ch. *Marriage*, under *Age of Marriage*.)

3. Maulana Muhammad Ali has shown in *The Religion of Islam* that the Quran and Hadith are quite opposed to this ruling of the later Muslim law that the two people marrying must be of “equal” social status and wealth or from a similar family or ethnic background. He adds that it is quite a different thing that this is generally preferred. (Ch. *Marriage*, under *Marriage in Akfā*’).

4. *Mésalliance*, literally “bad alliance”, means marriage with a person of inferior social position.

5. Meaning dependence on the husband.

As a mother, a Muslim woman's position in the family is of unique interest.

The Founder of Islam declared, "Paradise is at the feet of the mother," and the reverence that is paid to the mother in Muslim domestic circles is the direct outcome of the great Prophet's teachings.

In the Western Systems, so far as I am aware, a mother has no claim — no legal claim, I mean — on her son. He may be a millionaire, in the habit of helping her in his lifetime. If he were to die she cannot claim or receive the smallest fraction of his wealth.

Under the Muslim law the mother is entitled to a specific share in the inheritance of the deceased son. She is thus assured against want in her old age, if circumstances had made her dependent on her deceased children's bounty in their lifetime.

Although the law does not give her all the powers possessed by the father over the immovable property of her minor children, it must be remembered he himself cannot deal with what belongs to them except for their necessity or benefit.

As a member of society, a woman has the same rights and the same responsibilities as a man. She is a perfectly free agent, as competent to deal with her property as her brother, husband or father. She can enter into a contract and make binding engagements with anybody without the intervention or association of husband or father.⁶ If she is not a minor her contractual powers are identical with those of her male relatives. She is not precluded (by reason of her sex) from holding any office or discharging any function which may be held or discharged by a member of the opposite sex and which does not involve any exceptional or special duties. For example, a woman can equally with a man hold the office of a Rector of a University or Governor of an endowment; but where a particular office carries with it special duties which can be discharged only by men, a woman is debarred by her sex from holding it. One example will illustrate my meaning. You know probably that in Muslim countries there are bodies of mystics, each of whom has its own special esoteric doctrines. These brotherhoods form so many congregations under their own spiritual leaders, who have to initiate their disciples into the mysteries of their respective cults. Women are

usually precluded from holding these positions, though there are cases on record where holy women, who by their learning and saintliness had attained a high rank, were recognized even among the sects of mystics as spiritual chiefs.

But even where duties are attached to an office which cannot, in ordinary circumstances, be discharged personally by a woman, but which can be carried out under her directions by a delegate or proxy, there is nothing in law or usage to prevent her from holding it.

And Abu Hanifa, the founder of the great Hanifa School of Muslim Law to which the bulk of the Sunni world belong, has declared that a woman is entitled to hold the office of Judge or Kazi equally with a man. This was enunciated in the eighth century of the Christian Era. The question may well be asked if Europe has risen to the same conception of woman's rights and privileges in the twentieth century?■

Rumi's moral tale and modern suicide bombings

Comments on article in Daily Jang

An article in the Urdu *Daily Jang*, London edition, 28 February, by its columnist Dr Safdar Mehmood, was of interest to us in more ways than one. It relates one of the moral tales from Rumi's *Masnavi* and draws a parallel between the villain of the story and the present-day Muslim fanatics. Our first interest in it stems from a debate on our blog (www.ahmadiyya.org/WordPress/), in which a virulent opponent of the Ahmadiyya Movement alleged that Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad had described a scene of illicit sexual relations in graphic terms. We replied that he had used no such terms but quite harmless language, and that in fact he was simply condemning the immoral behaviour of some members of a certain Hindu religious movement. This particular extreme movement on the one hand levelled all kinds of vile allegations relating to the marriages of the Holy Prophet Muhammad and the teachings of Islam on sexual relations, and on the other hand the same movement considered it allowable under its religion that its followers could resort to extra-marital sexual relations in order to conceive male children.

When our opponent persisted with his accusation against that writing of Hazrat Mirza sahib, I pointed out to him that the internationally

6. Unfortunately the law in Saudi Arabia does not recognise this right of women, and requires them to have permission of a male relation such as father, brother or husband.

renowned Muslim spiritual leader Maulana Jalal-ud-Din Rumi had written parables using far more sexually explicit terms to condemn hypocrisy and evil of all kinds. Even a British oriental scholar at the beginning of the 20th century, and translator of Rumi's book *Masnavi* into English, namely, Prof. R. Nicholson, was shocked by Rumi's language. However, in the 1960s, a Pakistani historian and academic, Dr Afzal Iqbal, had exonerated Rumi by arguing that this usage was not "pornographic" but necessary to convey the depth of evil that Rumi was exposing.⁷

Anyhow, the response given by our adversary to my argument that Rumi had portrayed such depictions was that he was prepared to reject the writings of Rumi, and Rumi was no authority that he was bound by. I pointed out that it was all too easy for him, posting to our forum under a pseudonym, to make this declaration but he would be unlikely to take this stand openly in front of Muslims as a known person. He would not risk their ire and wrath because an anti-Ahmadiyya activist, like him, seeks popularity among the general Muslim public. That is the name of the anti-Ahmadiyya game. Rumi is too highly renowned and revered among Muslims, as I showed by some quotes, for our opponent to denounce him so casually.

It was some weeks after our debate that I came across the article in *Jang* mentioned above. The columnist briefly introduces Rumi as follows:

"You are aware that Maulana Jalal-ud-Din Rumi (1207–1273) was a great spiritual figure, religious scholar, philosopher and poet. Allama Iqbal considers him as his mentor. The *Masnavi* of Maulana Rumi is a living book which will remain till the Day of Judgment. This is the reason why some scholars refer to his *Masnavi* as 'the Quran in the Iranian language'."

This, then, shows the high repute of Rumi. Even supposing our anonymous debater is prepared to disown him, Rumi is certainly an authority for Muslims generally.

Now to the moral tale from *Masnavi* quoted in this *Jang* column, and what it illustrates according to the columnist. This instructive story relates that there was a *mu'azzin* (one who calls out the Azan) of a mosque whose voice was very coarse and jarring to the ears, and people disliked his manner of giving the Azan. Out of respect, however, they

did not want to mention it to him. They then came up with the plan of collecting money to send him for Hajj, as they would then have relief from him for several months (as in those days this was the length of time that journeys to and from the Hajj took). Naturally he was most thrilled, as very few could go for Hajj in those days, and rushed to leave. On his long travel to the Hajj, he once broke his journey in a mosque, and when the prayer time came, he out of habit went up the minaret and sounded the Azan. After the prayers, a local wealthy man entered the mosque. People in the mosque were surprised to see him because he was a Zoroastrian, not a Muslim. He came forward, looked for the *mu'azzin*, and started lavishing great gifts and money on him! Everyone was even more startled now, and asked him why he, a non-Muslim, was being so generous to a *mu'azzin* in a mosque. He replied: "My daughter wanted to leave her religion and become a Muslim. All of the family were trying to convince her not to embrace Islam but she was determined. Today she heard his Azan which repelled her so much that she has changed her mind, so I am grateful to the *mu'azzin* for this and want to reward him."

Dr Safdar Mehmood then explains that this story comes to his mind by the suicide attacks, upon Muslims by Muslims, in Pakistan. Do the perpetrators not know, he asks, that by their actions they are repelling non-Muslims further from Islam and alienating the people of the world from the religion of God?

Dr Mehmood refers to surveys and studies showing that after the September 11, 2001 attacks, one side effect was that interest in Islam by the general public in the West *increased* and the circulation of the Quran went up as people wanted to find out more about Islam. However, since suicide attacks spread in the Muslim world itself, and lately in particular in Pakistan, Islam is being confirmed in their minds as a religion of violence and, he writes, they are being alienated from Islam just as the Zoroastrian girl in Rumi's story became disenchanted with Islam because of the ugly sound of the Azan of that *mu'azzin*.

He further writes that a Muslim intellectual living in the West has advised him in God's name "to make those carrying out suicide attacks understand that by their actions they are misleading the people of the world about the peace-loving religion of God and that their final abode is not the garden of paradise but hell". He ends his article by saying in despair: "I am wondering how can I make them understand this?"

7. See Afzal Iqbal, *The Life and Work of Jalal-ud-Din Rumi*, London, 1983, chapter 7.

We may offer him the following analysis, written by Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad in 1899:

“A Jain or a Buddhist is afraid of and avoids killing even a mosquito or a flea, but, alas! there are many among us Muslims who, while they kill an innocent man or commit wanton murder, are not afraid of the powerful God, Who rates human life higher than that of all the animals. What is this callousness and cruelty and want of sympathy due to? It is due to this — that **from their very childhood, stories and anecdotes and wrong views of the doctrine of Jihad are dinned into their ears and inculcated into their hearts**, the result being that gradually they become morally dead and cease to feel the heinousness of their hateful actions; nay, rather, the man who murders another man unawares and thus brings ruin to the murdered man’s family thinks that he has done a meritorious deed; or rather, that he has made the most of an opportunity to win favour with his community. As no lectures or sermons are delivered in our country to stop such evils — and if there are any such lectures they have an element of hypocrisy in them — the common people think approvingly of such misdeeds.” (*Jesus in India*, p. 1)

The answer to the question which puzzles Dr Mehmood, “how can I make them understand this?”, is to refute the commonly-prevailing, false concept of jihad and show that the Quran, the teachings of Islam and the life of the Holy Prophet Muhammad have no part in such intolerance and wanton violence.

Muslim “raids” on Quraish caravans after emigration

A friend has sent us, for comment, an extract from the book *The Messenger: The Meanings of the Life of Muhammad* by the well-known Muslim writer Tariq Ramadan, in which it is stated that as the Muslims migrated from Makka to Madina the Quraish in Makka started seizing their property they left behind, and thereupon the Holy Prophet Muhammad and the Muslims decided “six months after their exile, that they would attack the Meccan Caravans passing near Medina in order to take back the equivalent of their belongings expropriated in Mecca.” And the result of this was that:

“In the expeditions, no fighting or killing occurred: the merchants gave up their goods, then were free to move on. The *Muhajirun* [Muslims who had left Makka for Madina] occasionally arrived too late at the spot where the Meccans were supposed to have stopped; the Caravans had already left, and the operation failed. Generally however, they were successful, and the exiles managed to obtain significant compensation in the form of booty.”

It is disappointing that a man of Tariq Ramadan’s calibre and reputation, who is trying hard to correct the misunderstood image of Islam, should have fallen prey to this misconception. On the basis of such readings of early Islamic history the critics of Islam condemn these actions as robbery and looting. It is true that those Muslims who penned the history of this period, about 200 years after those events, have mentioned such expeditions but their interpretations have been analysed and challenged in biographies such as *Sirat-un-Nabi* by Maulana Shibli, *The Life of Muhammad* by M.H. Haykal, and *Muhammad The Prophet* by Maulana Muhammad Ali.

Even those writers who consider that Muslims were trying to waylay and seize Quraish caravans contradict one another. So while Tariq Ramadan says that the raids were generally successful, Martin Lings, the famous Muslim convert and Sufi, in his book *Muhammad*, admits that these raids failed to intercept any caravan, which he ascribes to the inaccuracy of the Muslims’ information about the caravan movements.

The fact is that these were reconnaissance missions whose purpose was to detect any armed move by the Quraish and also to approach tribes living in the vicinity of Madina to secure pacts of neutrality or friendship with them. M.H. Haykal writes in *The Life of Muhammad*:

“That by means of these raids, begun six months after their settlement in Madina and undertaken by the *Muhajirun* alone, the Muslims sought to wage war against Quraish and to attack its caravans is an opinion which cannot be accepted without hesitation and scrutiny.” (p. 202)

He shows that “the number of fighters assigned by the Quraish to the protection of their caravan was in each case many times the number of riders the Muslims had sent out” (p. 203). We quote below from his comments and explanations:

“Rather than to bring war and hostility, these expeditions were intended to put an

end to the old hostility, to guarantee to the Muslims the freedom they sought for calling men to their religion, and to ensure for Makka the security it needed for its caravans ... If the Quraish could be made to realize that this precious trade and wealth were exposed to danger by their own sons who had migrated to Madina, perhaps they might be inclined to reach an understanding with the Muslims in order to grant them the freedom to preach their faith, visit Makka, and perform the pilgrimage, which was all they really sought.” (p. 204)

According to Maulana Shibli’s *Sirat-un-Nabi*, the Muslims in Madina right from the beginning were deeply anxious about defending the city against the aggressive plans of the Quraish. Shibli quotes two hadith reports in this connection:

“When the Messenger of Allah first came to Madina, he used to stay awake at night.” (p. 308; report from *Nasā’i*)

This was because he was apprehensive of an attack by the Quraish. The other report is:

“When the Messenger of Allah and his Companions came to Madina, and the *Ansar* gave them shelter, all the Arabs combined to fight them. The Companions had to sleep by their weapons, till the morning.” (ibid., report from *Hakim* and *Darimi*)

With such great anxiety about their own security in Madina, Muslims were not in a position deliberately to court war with the Quraish.

Centenary Convention in Lahore, May 2008

To mark the 100th anniversary of the death of the Founder of the Ahmadiyya Movement, Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, the Ahmadiyya Anjuman Lahore is holding an International Ahmadiyya Convention from Friday 23rd May to Monday 26th May at its Centre at Darus Salaam, Lahore. The Founder passed away on 26th May 1908 in Lahore at the house of Dr Syed Muhammad Husain Shah in the locality known as Ahmadiyya Buildings. Later, from 1914 to the mid-1970s, the centre of the Ahmadiyya Anjuman Isha‘at Islam Lahore was located at Ahmadiyya Buildings.

Below we reproduce some edited extracts from the booklet *An Account of the Last Days and Death of Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad*, recently compiled by Mr Nasir Ahmad.

AT THAT TIME in 1908 the wife of Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad was not keeping good health, so she expressed her wish to go to Lahore for a change of climate. When the holy Imam sought Allah’s guidance in this regard through *istikhara* prayer, the following Persian couplet was revealed to him on 26th April 1908:

“Do not feel secure against the vagaries of fortune.”

He became very worried on receiving this Divine warning. But since there was no specific interdiction but only a warning about some future danger, and his wife was insisting on visiting Lahore, so he left Qadian for Lahore on 27th April 1908. After arrival in Lahore on the 29th, he received still another revelation in Persian:

“Do not count on this transitory life.”

In Lahore he stayed first at the house of Khwaja Kamal-ud-Din. After some days he decided to stay for a longer period. Therefore Hazrat Maulana Nur-ud-Din, Maulana Muhammad Ahsan Amrohi and some other friends also came to Lahore from Qadian. The staff and office of the newspaper *Badr* was also shifted to Lahore temporarily so that latest news about the Jama‘at and reports about the activities of the holy Founder could be published. After some days, the holy Founder’s wife visited the house of Dr. Syed Muhammad Husain Shah and she liked it very much. Due partly to her preference and partly to the insistence of Dr. Syed Muhammad Husain Shah that they stay at his house, the holy Founder along with his family shifted to this house.

For holding congregational prayers, the arrangement at that time was that these were held at the open space on which the present Ahmadiyya Mosque is now situated. A marquee was installed there and thick cotton carpets with white sheets over them were spread on the ground. No one could have known at that time that the place where the Promised Messiah and Mahdi of Allah was offering his Friday prayers would one day be the Central Mosque of the Lahore Ahmadiyya Movement which would be a centre for the propagation and dissemination of the teachings of Islam in the world. At the same open ground, Hazrat Maulana Nur-ud-Din used to deliver *Dars-i Quran* every evening.

Ever since the holy Founder came to Lahore, the opponent mullahs had set up their camp in the lawns of Islamia College, which was opposite to Ahmadiyya Buildings, across Brandreth Road. Every evening they would gather there to voice their opposition and make foul-mouthed speeches against the holy Founder. Among the uproar of shouting and hooliganism by the mullahs and their crowd, Hazrat Maulana Nur-ud-Din would continue his evening exposition of the Holy Quran solemnly and seriously, full of jewels of knowledge and wisdom. He would not even hint at the misbehaviour of the opponents.

It was the desire of the holy Imam that the message of the Ahmadiyya Movement be conveyed to the leaders of the Muslim community of Lahore. So Khwaja Kamal-ud-Din sent out invitations to all prominent Muslim citizens of Lahore to lunch on 17th May 1908. A big marquee was installed in the courtyard of the house of Dr. Syed Muhammad Husain Shah, where all the guests gathered. Khwaja Kamal-ud-Din briefly introduced them to the Founder. Hazrat Mirza sahib started his speech at about 11 o'clock. This was his last message, and was delivered at Ahmadiyya Buildings to the citizens of Lahore.

Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad intended to deliver a public speech on 31st May, in the open ground at Ahmadiyya Buildings, in which he wished to convey to the Hindu community a message of peace and reconciliation, explaining how the two major communities of the Indian subcontinent could live together in peace and harmony. So he started writing a lecture that was later published as a booklet entitled *Paigham-i Sulh* or *Message of Peace*.

The holy Imam was busy day and night exerting himself in hard intellectual work. Before coming to Lahore, he had written a voluminous book, entitled *Chashma-i Ma'rifat*, which was published on 15th May 1908. This effort affected his health greatly. In Lahore his engagements became more strenuous. From morning till evening there was a constant stream of visitors asking all kinds of questions, to which he replied with amazing patience and kindness.

On 25th May, after spending the whole day writing *Paigham-i Sulh*, he went out for a walk as usual in the evening. When he returned he fell ill and his digestive system was affected. He had attacks of diarrhoea but treatment administered by Dr. Syed Muhammad Husain Shah and Hazrat Maulana Nur-ud-Din, and later during the night by Dr. Mirza Yaqub Beg, had no effect. Towards the end, Dr. Sutherland, a well-known physician who

was also Principal of the Medical College, Lahore, was called. At last, at about 10.15 a.m. on Tuesday 26th May 1908, corresponding to 24th *Rabi'-uth-Thani* 1326 A.H., Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad of Qadian left this temporary world and went to his Beloved Creator — *Inna lillahi wa inna ilai-hi raji'un*. His last words were: "O my Beloved Allah, O my Beloved, O my Beloved, O my Beloved Allah."

The rites of bathing the body and wrapping it in the funeral cloth were complete by 2.30 p.m. At about 3.00 p.m. a large gathering joined his *Janaza* prayer. Afterwards, groups of both his followers and non-members of the Movement came and paid their last respects to him. His face was radiating spiritual lustre as it did when he was alive.

On hearing the news of his death, his inveterate opponents went wild with jubilation and marched in procession on the house of Dr. Husain Shah while shouting abusive and obscene slogans. The police had to be called to disperse the mob.

At about 4.00 p.m. his body was carried on shoulders by a large number of Ahmadis from Ahmadiyya Buildings to Lahore Railway Station where a train compartment had been reserved. The opponents followed behind, staging a mock funeral procession, with one of them being carried like a dead body. They maliciously reported to the railway authorities that Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad had died of cholera, a contagious disease, so that the body would not be allowed to be carried by train. When Ahmadis heard of this, Shaikh Rahmatullah, a leading businessman of Lahore and devoted follower of the Promised Messiah, obtained from Dr. Sutherland, who had attended the Founder close to the end, a medical certificate to the effect that the death was due to diarrhoea.

It being summer time, the body was kept in a box with heavy blocks of ice around it. The train left Lahore at 5.45 p.m. and reached Batala at 10 p.m. The compartment carrying his body was detached from the train and the coffin remained within it. At 2.00 a.m. the body was taken out of the coffin and placed on a bier, which was then carried on the shoulders of his devotees to Qadian.

After the *Janaza* prayer on 27th May led by Hazrat Maulana Nur-ud-Din, and the *Asr* prayers, the body was placed in the middle of the garden so that all the people could see the face of their departed Imam and pay their last respects. Approximately 1200 men and women had gathered on that occasion.

At last the body was taken to the *Bahishti* graveyard and laid to rest in the ground. ■