

HAZRAT MIRZA BASHIR-UD-DIN MAHMUD AHMAD

The Beliefs of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community

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By Hazrat Mirza Bashir-ud-Din Mahmud Ahmad
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The Beliefs of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community is a short essay which was first published in two parts on 12 and 14 May 1924 in the Daily Alfazl. The essay sets forth the true teachings and beliefs of the community as well as clarifying many of the misconceptions and false ideas, which have through the efforts of the opponents of the community, become prevalent over the years.

The Beliefs of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community

[Written May 1925]

Those beliefs by which the basic principles of our faith can be determined are as follows:

We believe in the existence of Allah the Exalted. He is one and possesses all the attributes mentioned in the Holy Qur'an.

We believe that the angels are the creation of Allah the Exalted and are distinct from human beings. They are neither imagined nor do they emerge from superstition, but are instead the last designated link in the chain of Allah's material provisions. In accordance with the commandments of God, the angels

¹ In the name of Allah, the Gracious, the Merciful. We praise Allah, the Exalted, the Greatest, and we invoke His blessings on His Holy Messenger^{sa}. [Publishers]

initiate cause in His creation, and after it has passed through various stages, we are able to observe its effects with our own eyes.

We believe that God Almighty reveals His word for the guidance of His people. And ever since the world was created (for which there is no need to impose a limit on the span of its existence, whether it be as long as hundreds of thousands or millions or even billions of years) God has spoken to His chosen ones to steer humankind in the right direction. God speaks now and will continue to do so in the future.

We also believe that divine revelation takes many forms. One form of revelation is that which reveals the law. Another, such as has been revealed to the recipient of the age and previous prophets, interprets the sharia, elucidates its actual meaning and guides people to the true path. A further kind of revelation is that which inspires certainty and confidence

in the recipient. Another kind of revelation comes as an expression of love and yet another kind warns and reprimands and can also be revealed to non-believers and idolaters. It is our belief that law-bearing revelation has found its culmination in the revelation of the Holy Qur'an.

We believe that the Messenger of Allah, Muhammad^{sa}, is the last of the law-bearers, and no law-bearing book will be sent after the Holy Qur'an. No prophet who brings a new law or restores an abrogated commandment can come after the Holy Prophet^{sa}. That is, no new decree can be added to the sharia, nor can an abrogated decree from a previous law be revived by a new prophet.

We also believe that, from time to time, Allah the Exalted selects such people who are capable of receiving His revelation and serving as an example for others; He blesses them with His discourse and raises them for

the guidance of the world. Some bring a new law, while others bring only guidance and no fresh commandments are disclosed to them.

We believe that those prophets who do not bring a new law, but only interpret and elucidate on the previous one, come when dissension, an absence of spirituality, estrangement with God and a lack of righteousness and goodness of heart impairs the ability of people to properly understand the law. Even if the people are able to uncover the true meaning in certain matters, they are faced with such a multiplicity of interpretations that it hinders them from having any confidence in it. When the power and might of God is hidden from the sight of people, and His being is reduced to myth and legend and fresh manifestations of divine signs no longer appear in the world, Allah the Exalted sends a prophet, who through the correct interpretation of the divine word vouchsafed to him by the Almighty, delivers it

to humankind. He demonstrates the majesty of God through fresh signs and imparts certitude and confidence and supplants those hereditary beliefs that have no value of their own.

We believe that Allah the Exalted will continue to send prophets, whenever the need arises, for the reformation and transformation of the umma. We also believe that according to the prophecy of the Holy Qur'an and the hadith which relates to our current time, the teachings of the Holy Prophet^{sa} would disappear from the hearts of people despite the presence of the scripture, and faith and certitude would rise to the Pleiades. At this time, a person from the umma of the Holy Prophet^{sa} would appear and rejuvenate their beliefs and reveal the true teachings of the Holy Qur'an.

We believe that the promised person has appeared and his name is Mirza Ghulam Ahmad^{as} of Qadian. We believe that he is the

Promised Messiah who, through the guidance of the Holy Prophet^{sa} and in accordance with the prophecies of the past prophets, will eradicate Christian heresies. He is also the awaited Mahdi through whom Allah the Exalted will bring about a reformation among the Muslims. He is also the semblance of Krishna^{as} and other holy personages who appeared among different nations; he will bring these various peoples into the fold of Islam in the name of their respective prophets. It is through him that Allah the Exalted will spread the message of Islam.

We believe that it is incumbent on us to accept, aid and join the community of the appointed one of God Almighty; otherwise the purpose for which God Almighty sends his appointed ones is unfulfilled. According to the Holy Qur'an, the established order always opposes the prophets, therefore, there would be no reason for a person to invite the

opposition of the world upon themselves if it was not essential to join the community established by the chosen one of God. Such a community can only be established for this purpose if people support the prophets and propagate their mission and realise that without this they cannot earn the pleasure of God Almighty. Then it is readied and prepared to endure an unsurpassable level of hostility from the world.

We believe that God Almighty accepts our prayers.

We believe that when a person dies they are dealt with according to their actions. This is known as the period of the grave—but the grave in question is not one of soil and dust. Rather it is a distinct place where the souls of the deceased are kept. After this period they will receive their punishment and reward at the final gathering.

It is our belief that the mercy of Allah

the Exalted is ever present with His other attributes. A day will come when all people will be enveloped by His mercy, regardless of how far they are sunk in sin, infidelity, transgression and disbelief. The following words of God Almighty which were said upon the birth of humankind will then be fulfilled:

وَمَا خَلَقْتُ الْجِنَّ وَالْإِنْسَ إِلَّا لِيَعْبُدُونِ²

That is, all His servants will worship Him. Everyone will be rewarded according to their [spiritual] status and neither their good deeds nor their sins will be wasted. Ignorant are those who think that hell is not a just and fair chastisement given its impermanence. Even in this world, people are punished everyday before eventually being pardoned, and yet the action taken against them is still seen as a

² And I have not created the Jinn and the men but that they may worship Me. *Surah Adh-Dhariyat* 51:57 [Publishers]

reprimand. Just to contemplate the torment of hell makes the heart tremble with fear due to the immensity of its length. [Indeed, it is so long,] that in the Holy Qur'an Allah the Exalted describes hell as '*abd*', that is, never-ending. Who can endure such a sustained punishment? And what could be more painful than the fact that while one, who is disobedient to God, is wasting in hell and cauterising their unholy soul in its fire, their kin will be vying for God's nearness and rapidly progressing in spirituality. Ask any jockey about the despair they would feel if they were stopped for a time during a race, and then made to return to the contest [once the other competitors have surpassed them].

We believe with complete certainty that the human soul will continue to progress to a higher level and reach a stage where on account of its enhanced capabilities it will become like a new being, while retaining

its original earthly name, for it would have emerged from this previous existence. The soul will then be capable of witnessing Allah the Exalted. In truth it will not be a real beholding, but it will be better than before and the world will appear to recede behind a barrier.

We disagree with the common assertion that Allah the Exalted has restricted successional prophethood to the Jews alone. Despite many Qur'anic references [to the contrary, those who affirm this also aver that God] denied other nations His prophets and knowledge of Himself. Another disagreement we have is that such people believe that all forms of revelation have ended with the Holy Prophet^{sa}—yet there was no reason for revelation to cease except in the case of that revelation which brought a new law. The perfection of the sharia does not nullify the need for a revelation that brings guidance and true interpretation; in fact

it becomes more necessary. A previous law can be forgotten if there is the possibility of a new law, but if there is to be no new law, then interpretive revelation becomes all the more important for without it there can be no guidance. If it is said that people are able to interpret the law, then there are so many differences amongst them that each interpretation gives birth to numerous other meanings. Only divine revelation can impart full certainty and authentication. How can one achieve salvation if there is doubt and ambiguity in matters of religion?

We also disagree with the assertion that a prophet of the Mosaic dispensation will descend from heaven to revive the umma. It would be an affront to the Holy Prophet^{sa} for someone from outside of Islam to be summoned [for this purpose], when his servants and those inspired by him can fulfil the task of reforming the umma. Now that religion and faith have been

perfected no pre-Islamic messenger is required to aid Islam.

Another disagreement we hold is that we believe that the initiation of a new sharia is not an exclusive condition for the advent of a prophet of God. As has been mentioned, prophets are sent to impart a true and authentic interpretation of the divine message and guide by their example. This necessity is not fulfilled by merely receiving a sharia. The need for any such appointee of God after the Holy Prophet^{sa} would have been irrelevant if there had been no schism or discord in the umma of Muhammad^{sa}. However, if one looks at the situation [current in the Muslim world] with a degree of clarity they will see only dissension and disorder spread rife in every direction. How astonishing and foolish is the belief that after the Holy Prophet^{sa}, a disease will afflict the umma, but no physician will come to cure it. If there is disease, there must also

be a physician—or else there is no disease to begin with. Even the blind are witness to the religious, moral and spiritual decline of the Muslims.

Another difference we have with these people is that we believe the Holy Qur'an continues to reveal new verities and truths, whereas our opponents believe that they have ceased with the people of the past and this book is like a bone from which all meat has been picked, *God forbid*. It is extraordinary to think that people accept that the physical world reveals new truths, but deny this when it comes to the word of God.

We firmly believe that Allah the Exalted listens to the supplications of believers, but this assertion is often met with ridicule.

Again, we believe that God Almighty continues to manifest signs of His power as mentioned in the Holy Qur'an, but our opponents are divided on this matter. One

group says that, in these enlightened times, such beliefs are implausible. Others say that God Almighty can manifest His power only if He breaks His own laws and practices. Hence, they want to witness such signs which God Himself says He will not manifest. These people call themselves scholars and yet make such claims as God can speak a lie for He possesses the power to do so, *God forbid*. They do not realise that telling a lie is a sign of weakness. According to this peculiar form of logic, God is shown to be weak and as a consequence cannot be considered all-powerful.

Another matter of contention between us is that in their ignorance these people believe that Allah has abandoned the Muslims and forsaken Islam, therefore, in order to make progress, they need to forego the sharia and its guidance. We believe that Allah the Exalted has established Islam and will continue to nurture

it. We do not despair over His promises.

A further disagreement between us and them is that we believe humans will be raised with new powers in the hereafter. Their ethereal body will be created from the soul and particles of their earthly frame. The present corporeal body is not resurrected. Our detractors allege that because of these views we do not believe in resurrection.

We believe that the blessings of paradise will be manifested just as has been described in the Holy Qur'an. But we also believe that heaven is an altogether different realm. This is why we say that physical matter will not exist there as it does here. As a result, our opponents say that we deny the existence of heaven.

We believe that hell is a fire, which, unlike earthly fire, is exceptional in many ways. It is of greater ferocity and can cleanse the heart, unlike the fire of this world. Our opponents

accuse us of not believing in hell because of this.

We believe that after enduring a prescribed punishment in hell and after becoming capable of acquiring God Almighty's blessings, all sinners will be taken out of hell and entered into heaven and be blessed. Our opponents consider this a rejection of the doctrine of eternal punishment. We cannot understand why they hold such a belief in the presence of God's eternal mercy.

These are the principles on which we differ from others. There is also a significant point of departure between us in how we interpret the verses of the Holy Qur'an. The interpretations of others are constrained by their lack of spirit and zeal, whereas we interpret the Holy Qur'an in light of revelation.

(Alfazl, 14 May 1925)

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