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# **THE *BANE* OF *MIRZAIYAT***

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## **THE BANE OF MIRZAIYAT**

**By Al-Hafiz Basheer Ahmad Masri**

Many of my friends have requested me repeatedly to express my views about Mirzaees (Qadianees) in the light of my personal experiences, just to bring the matter on record. It is not possible here to go into details. A full account would need a book of great volume. This short article, therefore, contains only a synoptic record of the events which led to my denunciation of this heterodoxical and hypocritical creed.

I was born in Qadian in 1914 - an unfortunate accident of birth which has been hanging round my neck like an albatross throughout the 73 years of my life. As a child I was indoctrinated into believing that the rest of the Muslims were nonbelievers (kaafirs) - so much so that even belief in God and in Islaam was conditional to belief in Mirza Ghulam Ahmad (the founder of this Movement) as a prophet and, after him, belief in his successors as the so-called Khalifahs of Islaam.

However, as I grew up, I found around me a society which was, by and large, insidiously fraudulent. Of course, there were a few elderly people among them who had joined the Movement during the early period of its inception in good faith, under the misconception that it was a genuine 'Reform Movement' within Islaam. Such sincere and faithful few, however, were either too simple-minded to notice what was going on around them or were totally helpless to do anything about it.

As a teenager, I was not capable of grasping mentally the significance of the theological sabotage which this Movement had started committing on Islaam. My initial reaction against these people was on moral and ethical grounds. It was at this stage of mental and spiritual immaturity that fate decided to throw me into the furnace of infernal fire, as if to test my metal.

## The Bane of Mirzaiyat

I was a healthy and athletic young man of about 18 when I received a message from the then Head (Khalifah) that he wanted to see me for some confidential matter. That was the period when I held this man as a demigod and, naturally, felt greatly honoured by the invitation. I just guessed that he wanted to assign to me some religious errand of a confidential nature.

This first meeting remained very formal - the Khalifah asking me various personal questions and I answering them with all the due respect. I was 'commanded' not to tell anyone about our meeting and was given an appointment for the next. The subsequent meetings however became informal, leading up to an Invitation to join an 'Inner Circle'.

This 'demigod' was in reality running a secret circle of fornication, adultery, incest and general debauchery. For this, he had organised a clique of pimps and procuresses. Most of the young men and women who were seduced were selected from such families as were economically dependent or fanatically brain-washed and, for various other reasons, were incapable of putting up any resistance. There were occasional cases of defiance, but they were easily silenced by the weapons of boycott, excommunication, systematic vilification and ostracism.

The Mirza family was not only the spiritual head of the community but was also the owner of most of the land in and around the town of Qadian, as the Feudal Lords. Apart from religious allegiance, there was no security of the tenure of land for those families who had burned their boats to settle in the so-called 'sacred precincts' of Qadian. Under such circumstances it was unthinkable in those days for anyone to fight back. Quite a few of those who did try to revolt met with apparently accidental deaths or simply vanished in thin air without trace. While all this was going on, Muslim theologians, in

their naivety, thought that they could defeat Mirzaiyat on the debating platforms and only by doctrinal arguments.

The first effect on me, after coming in contact with these dregs of vice, was that of stuporous helplessness. I still remember many a wakeful night when I used to wet my pillow with silent tears. I could not tell my parents, not being sure whether they would believe me. Neither could I discuss it with my friends for fear of being betrayed. One easy way out for me could have been to leave Qadian and disappear. This would have, however, meant discontinuation of my studies in the University. Also, there was the sense of responsibility that I should not desert my parents, leaving them in ignorance of this filth.

There were times when the idea of putting an end to all this by murdering the perpetrator of this pious fraud would become very tempting. However, even at that immature age, logic prevailed. Firstly, I reasoned that it would be misunderstood by the society at large as an act of a religious fanatic and this man will go down in history as a martyr. Secondly, I thought, a quick sudden death for a man like him would be a boon instead of a chastisement which he deserved, not only for committing these atrocities but for committing them in the name of God and religion. The subsequent events proved my reasoning right. He was later crippled by paralysis and died a miserably lingering death. The doctor who attended to him during his protracted illness told me that, during the last stages, he had become a mental imbecile, babbling filthy obscenities.

In addition to all these considerations, there was another reason why I thought any direct action would be futile. I had come to realize that this corruption would not end by this man's death. It was not only this one man who had turned into a sex maniac. His brothers

and most of the other members of the Mirza family were no better. Even the elite order in this community's religious hierarchy, holding responsible positions under the camouflage of flowing beards, had their own 'enclaves of depravity', with the tacit understanding among them: "you don't ruffle my beard, and I won't yours". As a matter of fact, in the Establishment of this organisation, only those were promoted to high positions who had fallen in line with this family's lifestyle - the family who they have the audacity of calling 'the prophet's family'. It was not surprising that the news of such amorous licentiousness spread around from mouth to mouth and play-boys from rich families started joining this 'Reform Movement' to seek freedom from the strictures of the then sexual discipline of the Asian culture, and so on. . . .

Since my alienation from the Khalifah's 'inner circle', my life had been constantly in danger. His mafia-like thugs started shadowing me. In desperation, I decided to take the bull by the horns, went to the Khalifah and showed him a long letter in which I had recorded all the details of his private life with names, dates, facts and figures. I told him that sealed copies of that letter had been deposited with some persons in authority, instructing them to open the letters only in case of my death or disappearance. From then on, I felt safe and walked about freely in the streets of Qadian. The more I saw of this corruption the more I became sick of religion, one and all, till ultimately I ended up as an atheist. This morbid phase of my life, however, left a spiritual vacuum with which I could not cope on my own, and I had to tell my father. It came to him as a great shock. Naturally, he could not accept the word of a young boy without corroboration and started making discreet inquiries. It did not take him long to be convinced that I was telling the truth.

My father wrote a very long letter to this so-called Khalifah, asking him for an explanation of his conduct and demanding his abdication. There was no reply, but two reminders afterwards, the Khalifah declared that Sheikh Abdul-Rahman Misri (my father) and all members of his family had been expelled and excommunicated. These three letters were later published in India.

This excommunication in practice meant complete boycott and social dissociation. Our lives were so much in danger that the Government had to detail twenty four hours guard of military police around our house. No member of our family could go out without a police escort. In spite of all such precautions, I and two of my companions were attacked in broad daylight in the main bazaar. One elderly companion was stabbed in the chest and died. The other was stabbed in the neck and shoulder and had to remain in hospital for quite a long period. I managed to fight back and succeeded in giving such a blow on the skull of my assailant with a cudgel which I was carrying that he started bleeding. The wounded assailant was whisked away to a hiding place by his accomplices, but the police caught up with him by following the blood drops from his skull. He was later found guilty of murder and hanged. Such was the flagrant disdain of law and order in Qadian that the murderer's funeral service was held with great pomp and show, the Khalifah himself leading the prayer.

After this incident a Muslim organisation, known as 'Majlis-e-Ahrar-ul-Islam', started sending squads of volunteers to guard our house, in addition to the military police. They pitched their tents in the open fields around our bungalow, which started looking like a besieged fortress.

The Mirzai Administration started involving my father in trumped-up court cases to discredit his high reputation for uprightness, as well as to drain his meagre savings. In short, all sorts of dirty tricks were played to make life impossible for him. To support his family with eleven children, he had to sell the family jewelry and cattle. The most unfortunate of these disasters which befell our family during this period was the setback to the education of children. All the details of these attacks and persecution used to be published in the Indian Press.

There was a great pressure on our family, both from the Government and others to leave Qadian and we ultimately migrated to Lahore. My father joined the Lahori Party. Although there is not much difference between their beliefs and those of the Qadianees, at least their society was not riddled with moral corruption. I, however, kept myself unattached. As I have said earlier, I had lost faith in the very institution of religion. However, during this period I started coming in close contact with the leaders of Ahrar, who had a profound effect on me. Among them were: Sayed Ataa-ullaah Shaah Bukhaari, Maulana Habeeb-ur-Rahmaan Ludhianavi, Chaudhri Afzal Haque, Maulana Mazhar Ali Azhar - I found these people devout Muslims and very sincere friends.

My father had accepted my atheism only with ostensible resignation, while at heart he was very unhappy about it. He told me that he prayed for me regularly and used to ask me to seek God's guidance through prayer. My answer to that used to be that he was asking me to pray to a Being who did not exist. Finally, after lengthy discussions, he started advising me to make my prayers conditional and I started to pray in words such as, "God! if You exist, give me

some indication of it; otherwise, if per chance You do exist, don't blame me for not believing in You.....”

Although this kind of prayer might sound blasphemous to the real believers, it produced esoteric results for me within about a year of praying. I saw two dreams in quick succession. Since they are very much of a personal and subjective nature, I dare not relate them here. Suffice it to say that they, especially the second dream, were of long duration, very explicit and coherent. Even for a sinful man like me, there remained no room for doubt that there did exist a Supreme Being whom we call God or Allah. I may mention, though, that in the concluding part of the dream I was shown the Mirzai Khalifah as a depraved miscreant with a heinously tarred face. After these dreams I felt much relieved. It seemed as if my spiritual crisis was over. I decided to turn a new leaf and become a Muslim formally. The late Sayyed Ataa-ullaah Shaah Bukhaari took me along to Maulana Muhammad Ilyas (the founder of the Tablighi Jama'at) in a village called Mehroli, a few miles from Delhi. There, in 1940, I took my oath of fealty to Islaam (Bai'at) at his hand. It was a blissful coincidence that the Shaykh al-Hadeeth of India, Maulana Muhammad Zakariyya, also happened to be present. After the sunset (Maghrib) prayer, led by Maulana Ilyas, all the congregation of about 40 worshippers said a special prayer for me. In 1941 I migrated to East Africa with the mixed feelings of relief and guilt. Standing on the deck of the steamer in the Bombay harbour, I started reciting under my breath the following Qur'aanic verse,

**“And what reason have you not to fight for the cause of ALLAAH to help those weak men and women who are crying out, ‘Our Lord ! take us out of this town whose people are oppressors’.”**  
**(Al-Nisaa – 4:75)**

After 20 years' stay in Africa, I migrated to England in 1961.



## THE IMAMATE IN WOKING

In 1964 I was appointed as the Imaam of the Shah Jehan Mosque in Woking, England. This appointment calls for some explanation for record. This Mosque was built by an orientalist, Dr. Leitner, in 1889 with funds from Muslims in India and, later, a Trust was formed to run it. That was the period when Mirzaiyat had not shown itself fully in its true colours and the Trust readily agreed to hand over the management of the Mosque to the Lahori section of this Movement.

By the nineteen sixties quite a few Muslim Organisations had established themselves in the United Kingdom and the pressure started increasing for this Mosque to be reverted to its originally intended position of an Islamic Centre. I was approached by the Secretary and the Treasurer of the Trust to accept the Imamate. I made it clear to them that I was a Sunni Muslim and showed them copies of some published articles which I had written against Mirzaiyat. They told me that they were aware of my views and that they considered it as an asset. They also assured me that the High Commissioner of Pakistan, who was the ex-officio Chairman of the Trust and who would sign the letter of my appointment, had given his blessings.

After taking charge of the Mosque, it soon became obvious to me that I was being branded by the general Muslims as a Mirzai. For the last about three quarters of a century there had been a successive line of Mirzai imams. Muslims could not believe that all of a sudden, a Sunni Imaam would appear out of the blue. I found myself falling between two stools. My theological differences with both the Lahori and the Qadiani sections were irreconcilable; while the Muslims took it for granted that I must be a mirzai, otherwise I would not have been appointed. It took me long to win over the trust of some Muslim religious leaders in the U.K.

It had been my life-long ambition to tour the Islamic countries by car, so that I could travel even into the rural areas and study at first-hand how they were transacting their religious affairs in practice. (This tour took me about three years, covering 45,000 miles in more than 40 countries). Before leaving the Mosque, however, I wanted to make sure that this far-famed Mosque and the Islamic Centre remained in the Muslim hands permanently. There were only two or three Mirzai members on the Board of Trustees, but they were very active and wielded a great influence. They were leaving no stone unturned to bring back a Mirzai Imaam, after I had left.

After long discussions and consultations with my Muslim friends, I called a meeting of all the Muslim Organisations in the U.K. and Eire, on the 20th July 1968, at the East London Mosque. It was attended by more than a hundred delegates. I explained the situation to them that I was due to start on my tour by the end of the year and that the Mirzaees were trying their best to have their own Imaam installed.

There was one very important legal point which was to prove helpful to us in the tug-of-war which ensued. According to a clause of the Trust Deed, the legal status of the Mirzaees, from the very beginning, had been that of Tenants of the Trust which could be terminated. This clause had remained unnoticed by the Muslims until I pointed it out to them.

At this meeting it was decided unanimously to form a “Woking Mosque-Regeneration Committee” which should take over the Physical possession of the Mosque under protest, and appoint an ad hoc Muslim Imaam after my departure. It was further resolved that the Mosque Trust should be asked to expel all its Mirzai members on the Board and never to appoint a Mirzai Imaam again. It was in these circumstances that, in November 1968, I handed over the Mosque to Muslims and left England on my tour.

It must be acknowledged here that I could not have been able to perform this almost impossible task without the help of my Muslim

friends. Naming all of them would make a long list. However, three of them deserve a special mention: The late Maulana Lal Husain Akhtar who was the President of an international Organisation to uphold the concept of the 'Finality of Prophethood' - a belief which has served as the fulcrum of Islamic homogeneity and brotherhood for the last more than fourteen centuries. Maulana Akhtar, like me in his early life, had personal experiences of Mirzaiyat. The second name I would like to mention is that of Haji Muhammad Ashraf Gondal, President of International Tableeghi Mission. The third was Mr. N.M Lodhi who worked very hard on the Mosque Regeneration Committee.

Lastly, a few words of advice - if I may - to my Muslim brethren, in the light of my life-long conflict with the Qadiani cult, and in the hope that Muslim leaders and governments will take it seriously. The Mirzai religionism and schism is, no longer a threat to Islaam. The ugly face of this pious fraud has long been exposed. Islaam as a religion is quite capable of defending itself against such heterodoxies. The new danger, however, lies in the role which the Qadiani leaders have started playing in the sphere of international politics by offering their clandestine services to anti-Muslim countries and cabals. Espionage is a very lucrative business and becomes much easier and safer when secret agencies are opened up in foreign countries with the facade of 'Missionary Posts'.

The general impression among the non-Muslims is that our opposition to Mirzaiyat stems from religious intolerance. They fail to appreciate the fact that apart from doctrinal differences, this clique is being used by the anti-Islamic powers as collaborators in the promotion of their political and economic interests throughout the Muslim world. On top of all this, there is a growing apprehension among the Muslims that the pattern of Qadiani libertinism is liable to corrode the moral fabric of Muslim youth.

“Russia offered tolerance to Babism and allowed the Babis to open their first missionary centre in Ishqabad. England showed Ahmadis the same tolerance in allowing them to open their first missionary centre in Woking. Whether Russia and England showed this tolerance on the ground of imperial expediency or pure broadmindedness is difficult for us to decide. This much is absolutely clear that this tolerance has created difficult problems for Islaam in Asia. In view of the structure of Islaam, as I understand it, I have not the least doubt in my mind that Islaam will emerge purer out of the difficulties thus created for her. Times are changing. Things in India have already taken a new turn. The new spirit of democracy which is coming to India is sure to disillusion the Ahmadis and to convince them of the absolute futility of their theological inventions!”

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“The solidarity of Islaam, as I have explained before, consists in a uniform belief in the two structural principles of Islaam supplemented by the five well-known "practices of the Faith." These are the first essentials of Islamic solidarity which has, in this sense, existed ever since the days of the Holy Prophet until it was recently disturbed by the Bahais in Persia and the Qadianees in India.”

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From - “ISLAM AND AHMADISM” by Dr. Sir Muhammad Iqbal (1934)