

The Martyrdom of
Sahibzada Abdul Latif
Shaheed

by

Professor Khalil-ur-Rahman

Ahmadiyya Anjuman Isha'at Islam Lahore Inc., U.S.A.

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In the name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful.

Preface

This booklet briefly narrates the biography of the martyr Sahibzada *Hazrat* Abdul Latif, the most eminent of the *Ulama* of Afghanistan, who was stoned to death in July 1903 by order of the Afghanistan authorities for the “crime” of belonging to the Ahmadiyya Movement. The events related here were compiled by Professor Khalil-ur-Rahman in an Urdu booklet from contemporary documents and narrations by our esteemed brother Sahibzada Haroon Ahmad and other members of the family of Sahibzada Abdul Latif.

The status and rank of *Hazrat* Sahibzada *Shaheed* (martyr) and the event of his martyrdom, with its painful but faith enhancing example, do not stand in need of any introduction. This great martyrdom is a glowing example of patience and steadfastness in the path of faith and true belief. Perhaps never before has there been a greater need than now to dispel the darkness surrounding us by the light of this example.

The founder of the Ahmadiyya Movement, *Hazrat* Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, has recorded the details of *Hazrat* Sahibzada’s martyrdom and that of his faithful pupil *Hazrat* Mian Abdur Rahman *Shaheed* in the exquisite book, *Tazkirat-ul Shahadatain* (The Story of Two Martyrs). In his book, the Founder has also counselled his followers and drawn their attention towards an important affair of which they must remain mindful at all times.

It is highly recommended that our dear friends read this book, cover to cover and repeatedly, to strengthen their faith.

Ahmadiyya Anjuman Isha‘at Islam Lahore Inc., U.S.A.
1315 Kingsgate Road
Columbus, Ohio 43221

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1

FAMILY BACKGROUND AND FORMATIVE YEARS

“Those who say, Our Lord is Allah, then continue in the right way, the angels descend upon them, saying: Fear not, nor be grieved, and receive good news of the Garden which you were promised.” (41:30)

Genealogy

No reliable documentary proof exists of the genealogy of *Hazrat Sahibzada Abdul Latif Shaheed* because the documents containing his genealogy were burnt, along with other items, when his house in the village of Syedgah, Province Khost, was set ablaze. According to the tradition preserved in the family, his genealogy is traced back to *Hazrat Ali Hajwari*, better known as *Data Gunj Baksh*. It can be deduced from this that *Hazrat Sahibzada's* ancestors came from Iran to India and settled in the city of Saharanpur. One of his ancestors, *Hazrat Syed Ahmad Saeed*, was resident in Saharanpur during the reign of Emperor Aurangzeb. Because of his great knowledge, virtue, and piety, the Emperor Aurangzeb held him in high esteem. An example in this regard is that the Emperor presented him with books for his personal library valued at approximately Rupees 900,000.

Migration to Afghanistan from Saharanpur

Because of tumultuous conditions in India, *Hazrat Syed Ahmad Saeed* migrated from Saharanpur and came to Afghanistan and

settled in the village of Syedgah in the province of Khost.

The name of *Hazrat* Sahibzada Abdul Latif's father was Muhammad Sharif and he had two other sons, Muhammad Hanif and Abdul Aziz. The progeny of *Hazrat* Sahibzada's two brothers, each had a son and a daughter, did not survive, but Allah blessed *Hazrat* Sahibzada with five sons, whose families grew and prospered. This was solely a blessing of Almighty Allah and the consequence of the association with the virtuous personage of the Promised Messiah. The hometown of the entire family was Syedgah.

Education

Hazrat Sahibzada started his education at a young age, and spent his childhood and youth in the vigorous pursuit of religious education. To quench his thirst for knowledge, he undertook long journeys without paying attention to the difficulties and hardships that were entailed. On one such journey, his ardor took him from Afghanistan to Isa Khel, by way of Miran Shah, Bannu and Sarai Naurang. After crossing the River Indus on boat, he finally reached the rail head at Kundian. He then boarded a train and travelled to any locale that he learnt was the residence of a pious, religious scholar so as to benefit from his knowledge. This fervor took him to Saharanpur, Delhi, Peshawar, Deoband and many other places, where he gained knowledge from the famous scholars residing in those cities. His trips to enhance his knowledge kept him away from home for years at a time. The only possessions he had on these journeys were two dresses of cotton and one of leather, which he probably used during the winters.

Hazrat Sahibzada Abdul Latif remained a student in various religious institutions for a period of thirteen years and achieved complete mastery in the knowledge of Quran, Hadith, Islamic jurisprudence, and logic. He also had complete command over Arabic, Persian, Urdu and Pushto. A measure of his intellect and memory can be gauged from the fact that he could recall with complete precision over three hundred thousand Hadith.

Activities on Return to Syedgah

After the acquisition of this knowledge, *Hazrat Sahibzada* returned to Afghanistan and started imparting religious education. People flocked from great distances to learn and benefit from the great blessing of his knowledge and spirituality. There issued forth from him a spring of knowledge similar to the one that he had sought, and from which he had drunk deeply. Besides providing for the spiritual sustenance of the people who came to learn from him, he also personally supplied them with board and lodging. He owned about 400,000 Kanals (approximately 50,000 acres) of agricultural land in Khost, the income from which was used primarily to help the indigent, and the religious students of the mosque. He detested superficiality and ostentation and preferred to lead a very frugal life, eating a simple diet and wearing plain clothes. His favorite food was a dish made with lentils and rice. His attire consisted of a white turban, plain dress, thin leather sandals and a muslin scarf, slung over the shoulder. He always carried a staff in his hand. He loved all mankind and was very kind and affectionate in his dealings with everyone.

Discipleship of Pir Sahib Manki

He disliked the institutionalized practice wherein a number of disciples would pledge their devotion to a *Pir* (spiritual guide), this being the form that generally prevailed in the area. However, he did become a disciple of *Pir Manki* at one time, but soon discovered that the *Pir* had little regard for the Quran, the *sunmah* (Prophet's practice) and the rules of *shariah* (Islamic Law). On one or two occasions, he remained silent on witnessing actions contrary to the Quran and *sunmah*, but he could not restrain himself for long. He confronted the *Pir* publicly, and accused him of saying and doing things against the Quran, *sunmah*, and the *shariah*. The *Pir* signalled to him to remain silent, but *Sahibzada Sahib* continued with his charge, which upset and enraged the *Pir* greatly. On noticing this condition of the *Pir*, he said, "Here is the rosary you gave me, and here is your staff," and immediately

left the assembly to return to his village, Syedgah in Afghanistan.

The *Pir* and his disciples considered this confrontation a public humiliation, and made plans to assassinate *Hazrat* Sahibzada. However, God kept him safe from their nefarious designs. This incident shows the high regard in which *Hazrat* Sahibzada held the Quran and Hadith and the importance he attached to the fulfillment of the tenets of Islamic Law. It also appears from this incident that, from the beginning, he was in search of a spiritual guide, but was unable to find someone who could fulfill this role. It was this search and striving that finally led him to his ideal.

It was Sahibzada Sahib's practice to go to the mosque in the early hours of the morning and personally call out the *azaan* (call to prayer). His brother would wait outside the door of his house and accompany him to the mosque, to ensure that nobody harmed him in any way.

Sahibzada Sahib's spiritual and temporal status in Afghanistan

Hazrat Sahibzada was a learned, scholarly and pious person who experienced true visions and spiritual signs. He was recognized in Afghanistan as a *Waliullah* (saint) for his learning, scholarship, and piety, and this reputation created a large following and many disciples. Ameer Abdur Rahman, the ruler of Afghanistan, also considered him a scholar-saint, and the greatest doctor of law and religion in his realm. *Hazrat* Sahibzada was the chief judge of Islamic law and all suits based on Islamic law were decided based on his advise. *Hazrat* Sahibzada was held in such high regard by Ameer Abdur Rahman that after his death, it was considered a blessed act to have the new ruler, Ameer Habibullah, crowned by *Hazrat* Sahibzada.

IN SEARCH OF AHMADIYYAT

“That is the grace of Allah; He gives it to whom he pleases. And Allah is the Lord of mighty grace.” (57:21)

The honor of becoming an Ahmadi

When Allah decides to bless and have mercy on someone, He creates unexpected and strange opportunities for that person’s guidance. The opportunity, and great honor of entering into the discipleship of the Promised Messiah, was afforded to *Hazrat Sahibzada* by the demarcation of the Durand Line. The demarcation of the border between Afghanistan and British India took place in 1893 under the supervision of an Englishman, Mortimer Durand, after whom the border came to be called Durand Line. Those accompanying Durand on the British side included Sahibzada Abdul Qayum, the founder of Islamia College, Peshawar, and the Afghan Commission included Sardar Shirin Dil Khan and *Hazrat Sahibzada*.

During the course of the demarcation, *Hazrat Sahibzada* saw Sahibzada Abdul Qayum put two demarcation stones on the side of Afghanistan so that the British territory may get extended. On seeing this, *Hazrat Sahibzada* addressed Sahibzada Abdul Qayum and said:

“Look here Qayum! By putting these two stones on the side of Afghanistan, you are making a place for yourself in hell.”

On the face of it, this incident may appear trivial but it provides visible proof of his perception, sense of justice, courage,

God-fearing nature, and loyalty to his country and government — the same government that dyed its hands with his blood and thereby invoked the displeasure of Allah.

As the work of demarcation progressed, *Hazrat Sahibzada* met an individual who told him that a person in the village of Qadian in Punjab had claimed to be the Promised Messiah and *Mahdi* (rightly guided one). On hearing this, *Hazrat Sahibzada* exclaimed in astonishment, “Has that person come? We have been waiting for him since a long time.” He was also told that the *Ulama* (learned religious scholars) of India were unable to refute the arguments that he presented in support of his claims. The informant then made a request to him, “We have heard that you too are a great intellectual and scholar and a person close to God. I have brought along some books of this claimant. Kindly read them and write a suitable rebuttal.” *Hazrat Sahibzada* took these books with great sincerity and eagerness. The books were given to him with the intention that after reading them, he, too, would issue a verdict declaring, God forbid, *Hazrat Mirza* to be a *kafir* (disbeliever). Little did *Hazrat Sahibzada* know that these books would become the means for him to achieve the elevated status of a martyr.

When the demarcation of Durand Line was completed, he came back straight to his village Syedgah, and immediately started reading these books in the privacy of his study, adjoining his house. After the evening prayer, his wife told him to rest a little as he must be tired from his journey. He replied, “You people go to sleep, I too will retire after a little while.” However, there was such a magnetic attraction and spiritual light in the works of the God-ordained man of the time, that *Hazrat Sahibzada* read through the night, until it was time for morning prayers. He slept only after the morning prayers. *Hazrat Sahibzada* had the following to say about these books:

“I had already been informed in a vision that a grand *mujaddid* (reformer) was about to appear in the present time and, at times, I suspected that I may be that person.

However, when I read the books of *Hazrat Mirza Sahib*, my heart instantly bore testimony that this was the person for whose appearance all the preparations were afoot in the spiritual world. On reading the books with greater attention, the truth manifested itself completely.”¹

After studying these books, his enthusiasm increased further and he proceeded with investigations to verify the truth and reality of *Hazrat Mirza's* claims. For this purpose, he dispatched some of his trusted disciples, which included *Maulvi*² *Abdur Rahman Shaheed*, to Qadian and also sent a letter with them for *Hazrat Mirza*. After staying for a few weeks in Qadian, these people returned back to Khost, and bore testimony to the truth of *Hazrat Mirza's* claim. They brought back with them the response to *Hazrat Sahibzada's* letter by *Hazrat Mirza*, in which he had sent his salutations to him. After reading this letter, *Hazrat Sahibzada* said that further enquiries should be made so that he could make a decision about taking a pledge to join the Ahmadiyya Movement.

Propagation of Ahmadiyyat and the martyrdom of *Maulvi Abdur Rahman*

Accordingly, at his directive, *Maulvi Abdur Rahman* made two or three visits to Qadian, each several months in duration. During his stay, he had the honor to listen to *Hazrat Mirza's* arguments and to benefit from his company. His belief and faith in *Hazrat Mirza* increased to the extent where the desire to propagate Ahmadiyyat became an obsession. On his last visit to Khost, he testified strongly before *Hazrat Sahibzada* to the veracity of *Hazrat Mirza's* claim that he was the Promised Messiah. He then began to vigorously propagate Ahmadiyyat in Kabul. The *Mullahs* (religious priests) of Kabul complained to Ameer Abdur Rahman,

¹ *Mujaddid-e-Azam*, by Dr. Basharat Ahmad, vol. 2, page 939, Footnote 1.

² A learned man of religion.

the ruler, about the propagation of “Qadianiat”,¹ by *Maulvi* Abdur Rahman and said that this would create problems for the Ameer. They further alleged that he was bent upon destroying his kingdom. Accordingly, *Maulvi* Abdur Rahman was proclaimed a *kafir*, arrested and sent to prison. There, on orders of Ameer Abdur Rahman, he was strangled to death and took his place among the ranks of martyrs.

Historical records indicate that the martyrdom of *Maulvi* Abdur Rahman took place in 1901, the same year in which Ameer Abdur Rahman died. No cruel and despotic person who has dyed his hands with the blood of innocent and guiltless men of God has gone unpunished by His wrath and retribution in the past, nor will they ever in the future.

The martyr’s vision about himself

During the rule of Ameer Abdur Rahman, *Hazrat* Sahibzada occupied the high position of chief judge and because of his piety and great knowledge, he was greatly esteemed by the king. Many important affairs of the state were decided only after seeking his advise. For this reason, most of his time was spent in the court at Kabul but sometimes he would return to Khóst. He performed this journey either on foot or horseback and one of his students, *Maulvi* Abdul Jalil, accompanied him as his travelling companion. *Maulvi* Abdul Jalil narrates that once, during the journey, *Hazrat* Sahibzada addressed him and said, “I see these stones reddened with my blood. It appears that this land is asking me for the sacrifice of blood.” At the time of this incident, there was no such sign, as *Hazrat* Sahibzada held a reputation of eminence in Kabul and was a confidante of the King. However, the incident was a

¹ A name by which the Ahmadiyya Movement was frequently referred to because of its origin from Qadian. Later, after the split in the Ahmadiyya Movement in 1914, the part of the Ahmadiyya group that kept its headquarters in Qadian came to be known by this name as distinct from the other group that moved their headquarters to Lahore and came to be known as Lahori Ahmadis.

sign from God of the coming events.

The death of Ameer Abdur Rahman and the coronation of Habibullah

Ameer Abdur Rahman died in 1901. The news of his death was announced before the full court by *Hazrat Sahibzada* as nobody else had the courage to do so, because of their fear of the King. On several previous occasions, the Ameer had himself started rumors of his death in order to identify those who expressed satisfaction at the news. Such people were then ordered by him to be assassinated.

After the death of Ameer Abdur Rahman, a struggle for succession took place between his two sons, Habibullah and Nasrullah. Because Nasrullah was the older, he considered himself to be the legitimate heir to the throne. When the dispute was presented before *Hazrat Sahibzada*, he gave his verdict in favor of Habibullah, and at the coronation, he placed the crown on the King's head with his own blessed hands.

Nasrullah became an arch enemy of *Hazrat Sahibzada* and started to wait for a suitable opportunity to take revenge.

3

JOINING THE AHMADIYYA MOVEMENT

Departure for Haj (pilgrimage) and meeting with *Hazrat Mirza*

After *Hazrat Sahibzada* had studied the books of *Hazrat Mirza*, the desire to meet him intensified to the extent where it became difficult for him to wait any longer. His ardor and affection, and his restlessness to meet him led *Hazrat Sahibzada* to make the decision to go for Haj. Enroute, he hoped an opportunity would present itself for going to Qadian for a meeting with *Hazrat Mirza*. Accordingly, he asked the King in Kabul for permission to go for Haj, and as the King held *Hazrat Sahibzada* in high esteem, he gave him many expensive presents and happily accorded him permission to proceed.

Hazrat Sahibzada, along with some companions, left for Haj by way of Punjab, but on reaching Amritsar, they were informed that there were restrictions on going for Haj. The days of Haj were still distant and some of his companions advised that they should go to Qadian to see *Hazrat Mirza*. So from Amritsar, they caught the train to Batala. From Batala to Qadian, a distance of about eleven or twelve miles, had to be travelled on a horse drawn carriage. *Hazrat Sahibzada*, along with his companions, hired one and set out for Qadian. When they approached the environs of Qadian, his eyes alighted on the Messiah minaret, and involuntarily the words, "Glory be to Allah! Glory be to Allah!" escaped his lips. Soon they were in Qadian. *Hazrat Mirza* invited them to stay in his house but *Hazrat Sahibzada* answered with great respect, "We are the guests of the Messiah and so we will stay in

the guest house of the Messiah.” According to his wishes, he was put up in a room of the guest house and his food too came from its kitchen, but sometimes he had the honor of eating with the Promised Messiah.

Hazrat Mirza was always very concerned about the welfare of his guests. He asked Mir Nasir Nawab Sahib (his father-in-law), who was in charge of the guest house, to enquire from *Hazrat Sahibzada* what he would like to eat. When Mir Sahib delivered this message, *Hazrat Sahibzada* replied, “I am a man of God, not of the stomach. I will eat whatever is cooked in the guest kitchen.”

Visit to *Hazrat Mirza* and stay in Qadian

As soon as he saw the spiritual light on the face of *Hazrat Mirza*, the *Imam*¹ of the time, *Hazrat Sahibzada* was in a world of ecstasy, quite oblivious to this world and what is in it. The emotion of love and affection gripped him with such intensity that nothing else mattered except the reality of life in Qadian. Even the time for Haj came and passed. *Hazrat Mirza*, in his book, *Tazkirat-ul Shahadatain*², has the following to say about this meeting:

“I swear by God in whose hands is my life that when I met him, I found him so completely convinced of my claim and devout in my following that it is not possible for a man to be more so. Like a glass vial that is filled with perfume, so too did I find him filled with my love, and just like his face had a spiritual light, so too his heart, it appeared to me, had a spiritual light. A quality worthy of emulation in this pious person was that he, in reality, gave precedence to religion over things of this world. He, in truth, was from among the righteous who, from fear of God, take their duty and obedience to Allah to the highest pinnacles. They, in order to please Allah and obtain his pleasure, are willing

¹ Spiritual leader of Muslims.

² See pp. 7–8. The title means ‘The Story of Two Martyrs.’

to let go their life, reputation, and wealth from their hands as if these were useless sticks and straws. His faith was so strong that if, by analogy, I refer to it as a mountain, I am afraid that my analogy may not do justice to him...And when he came to me, I enquired from him, what arguments had identified me to him. He said:

“Foremost, it is the Quran that guided me to you. I am the kind of person who had already concluded that the era in which we are living is such that the majority of Muslims have strayed far from Islamic spirituality. They say with their lips that they believe, but in their hearts they do not. Their words and actions are filled with heretical innovations, infidelity, and all kinds of sins. Similarly, external attacks (on Islam) have reached their maximum intensity, but most hearts remain motionless and insensitive, underneath veils of darkness, as if they are dead. The religion and observance of duty that the Prophet (on him be peace and blessings) had brought and whose knowledge was imparted to his Companions (may Allah be pleased with them) and the truth, conviction and faith that were given to this pure party, most certainly, by virtue of the neglect of the majority, are extinct and only in rare cases has it not been annihilated. I was seeing Islam turning into a dead body. The time had come that out of the unknown a reformer from Allah should appear. In fact, my restlessness was increasing because the time (for this event) was getting late. In those same days, I heard that a person in Qadian, Punjab, had claimed to be the Promised Messiah. With great difficulty, I was able to procure some of the books written by you and read them without prejudice. I then examined the statements in them in the light of the Quran and found the Quran corroborating each and every one of them.”

Hazrat Sahibzada stayed in Qadian for about three months, and during this time he undertook a journey to Jehlum in the company of *Hazrat Mirza*.

A close friend of *Hazrat Sahibzada*, Rafiq Ahmad Noor, has given the following testimony:

“In Qadian, he repeatedly received the following revelation: ‘Sacrifice your life in this path, and do not withhold from it because this is what God has desired for the land of Kabul.’ Once he said that it had been revealed to him: ‘The sky is in agitation and the earth is trembling like a person who has ague. The world does not know, but this event is about to happen.’ He understood from these divine signs that martyrdom had been ordained for him in heaven, and he decided to return to Afghanistan.

RETURN TO AFGHANISTAN

The painful scene of departure from Qadian

When *Hazrat* Sahibzada departed Qadian, the Promised Messiah accompanied him for quite some distance outside the town. Finally, it was time to say farewell, but *Hazrat* Sahibzada broke down and involuntarily fell at the feet of *Hazrat* Mirza. The Promised Messiah had never permitted anyone to touch his feet or knees to show their respect. Once, when a youth from the Frontier started to bow down towards his feet, *Hazrat* Mirza stopped him immediately and said, "God ordained persons are sent into this world to erase infidelity, and not for being prostrated to." *Subhanallah* (Glory be to Allah). However, when Sahibzada Abdul Latif broke down and fell at his feet, even *Hazrat* Mirza was upset momentarily, but he regained his composure with great effort, and asked him to get up. *Hazrat* Sahibzada, however, continued to lie there, and *Hazrat* Mirza said, "The command takes precedence over respect". At this, he got up and said, "The reason for my restlessness is that I am sure, in my heart, that I will not see you again in this life. I am now seeing you for the last time."¹

On directions of *Hazrat* Mirza, some food had been prepared for the departing party for consumption on the way. When the food was brought, it was wrapped in paper. *Hazrat* Mirza remarked that the food should have been put in some clean cloth. He then tore a piece of his turban and gave it for the food to be properly packaged. Those ordained by God have an abundance of love for their true followers. They are not like ordinary *Pirs*

¹ *Mujaddid-e-Azam*, vol. 2, page 941.

(spiritual leaders) who try to cover the aggrandizement of their desires by hiding from their followers behind curtains. It is this glory of the genuinely ordained persons that completely fascinates those having true heart and sight. The disciples then become totally devoted to these men of God and are willing to sacrifice everything they have.

Stop over in Lahore and a vision

On his way back to Afghanistan, *Hazrat Sahibzada* stopped in Lahore with Shaikh Rahmat-ullah. A prominent citizen of Lahore invited Sahibzada Sahib and his companions for food. In a big room, the table cloth was decked with food. The guests came into the room and sat down to eat, but Sahibzada Sahib at once got up and started to leave. As he was leaving, he repeatedly kept saying, "Filth! filth! filth!" When he was asked, what was wrong? He replied that every plate had excrement in it instead of food and he was unable to eat it. It transpired that the host had the food prepared by using money earned from usury. On learning this, the guests were greatly impressed by the spiritual sight of Sahibzada Sahib.¹

Departure from Lahore for Afghanistan

The following revelation of *Hazrat Mirza* is given in *Barahin-e-Ahmadiyya*:²

"Two goats will be slaughtered, and there is nobody on this earth who can escape death."

In other words, everyone has to face the inevitable reality of death. A little further on, *Hazrat Mirza* has written this verse, originally in Persian:

¹ *Mujaddid-e-Azam*, vol. 2, page 942.

² *Barahin-e-Ahmadiyya*, vol. 4, page 511.

*It is death that veils, with memories, the faces of friends,
And turns the season of spring into the season of autumn.*

God grants to His ordained ones a telescopic sight with which they witness coming events that cannot be seen by those who worship earthly things. This revelation was meant to inform *Hazrat Mirza* that two of his innocent followers would be slaughtered. The word 'slaughter' was used to indicate the coercive, cruel, brutish, and beastly nature of the action to be taken against them by tyrants, who sought to safeguard their power by stifling forever the voices of the innocent persons upholding the cause of truth. Intoxicated by their temporary power, these tyrants do not realize that men of God are willing to sacrifice for the truth their life, their wealth, their relationships, and the love of their relatives and dear ones. They are willing to be stoned to death, or hung upside down, but, at no cost, are they willing to give up that which is right. They consider death to be the gateway to life eternal. *Hazrat Mirza* says:

*Concealed behind this death are hundreds of lives
If you desire life, then put this cup of death to your lips.*

These men of God are restless to meet with their Lord. From the drops of their blood emanates the fragrance of the flowers of Paradise so that the entire atmosphere reeks with its fragrance. But after them, the tyrants become an admonitory sign for the world. Because they laid their hands on these brave men of God, they are destroyed, and it is considered an insult even to mention their names. Not only this, but their progeny is annihilated, and they become proof of what is stated in the Holy Quran, "Surely thy enemy is cut off (has no progeny)" (108:3).

One part of this revelation of *Hazrat Mirza* was fulfilled by the martyrdom of *Maulvi Abdur Rahman*, and now *Hazrat Sahibzada*, with the desire for martyrdom in his heart, was drawing closer to his place of slaughter in Afghanistan, to fulfill the second part. Allah had ordained for him to renew the example

of the martyrdom of *Imam Hussain*. *Hazrat Sahibzada* realized that:

*In reality, the murder of Hussain is the death of Yazid,
Islam gets a new life after each Karbala.*

Perhaps, *Hazrat Mirza* also foresaw the coming events, and for this reason expressed himself in a verse as follows:

*None can conceive of my pain and sorrow,
Every moment, I see a Hussain, upholding the truth of
Islam, martyred by some Yazid.*

It is a fact, that in every period, conflict by the likes of Abu Lahab has sought to extinguish the lamp of Mustafa¹, and in every period, the incident of Karbala is repeated. This period, too, could not have gone without it. Abu Lahab was the personification of disbelief, waywardness, and enmity to truth. In every era, these evils are manifested, in some form or other, and attempt, unsuccessfully, to blow out the torch lighted by the Prophet. However, the lovers of this light sacrifice themselves to keep it alive and these Abu Lahab type of manifestations remain unsuccessful and are destroyed.

Hazrat Mirza's comprehensive vision had created a certainty in *Hazrat Sahibzada's* heart that Ahmadiyyat is the real Islam which can imbue the spiritually dead hearts with a new life, and restore Islam to its former position of glory. To resuscitate Islam, he was convinced, he had to re-enact the incident of Karbala by offering his life, and thereby rejuvenating the tradition of *Hazrat Imam Hussain*. For this reason, he repeatedly told his disciples, "The land of Kabul is in need of my blood for its reformation."

¹ A title of the Holy Prophet Muhammad.

ARREST

Arrest, as narrated by close sources

Sources close to Sahibzada Sahib narrate that when he reached his village Syedgah, the people enquired with great eagerness about the Promised Messiah. He replied:

“The Promised Messiah is a great spiritual personality of the highest order. Previously, I had this notion about myself that I had received some part from the knowledge of God, but when I saw the Promised Messiah, I realized that the knowledge he had received was boundless. I am even unable to fathom his nearness to God and what his spiritual status is.”

Just two or three days after reaching Syedgah, *Hazrat Sahibzada* started propagating Ahmadiyyat vigorously. Night and day, sitting and standing, he was engaged in this task. The result of this vigorous propagation was that the people became receptive to the idea of accepting Ahmadiyyat. They started coming to Syedgah in large numbers to listen to his sermons. After hearing his arguments, based on the truth, they became Ahmadis without any reservation. The province of Khost and its surrounding areas in Afghanistan are inhabited by four large tribes which are Mengal, Judran, Ghiljai and Tani. Of these, the Tani were living in the area around Syedgah, and a majority of them accepted Ahmadiyyat.

As the news spread about the propagation of Ahmadiyyat and its acceptance by the masses, the *mullahs* of Afghanistan felt unnecessarily anxious. They began to poison the ears of the Ameer

against *Hazrat Sahibzada*, and told him that a man, Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, from Punjab had claimed to be the Promised Messiah and *Hazrat Sahibzada* was propagating his beliefs. Influenced by the incorrect reporting of the *mullahs*, Ameer Habibullah summoned *Hazrat Sahibzada* to his court. He said that he had no objection to his Ahmadi faith and anything he did in the privacy of his home, but admonished him to stop preaching to the masses publicly in mosques. *Hazrat Sahibzada* replied, "I cannot stop preaching the truth, even if I have to make the supreme sacrifice for it." Accordingly, *Hazrat Sahibzada* kept up his propagation activity in the usual manner.

Soon after, one day, as he sat with his companions in his guest house, *Hazrat Sahibzada* remarked to them, "I am a guest for a few days only. I am seeing myself wrapped in a shroud and my bier going forever from this house. Look upon me keenly." His family was greatly upset by such talk. He also added, "Martyrdom can be had at any time, but I want to achieve it while eating *pillao*."¹

By these words, he probably meant that he wanted to present his life to the Lord, not in a state of destitution, but while in ease and luxury, the kind of state in which the materialistic persons of this world cling desperately to life.

Under the pressure and insistence of the *mullahs*, Ameer Habibullah felt that his power was threatened and so, one day, he issued orders for *Hazrat Sahibzada*'s arrest and sent a detachment of sixty horsemen to Syedgah, under a Shia commander to execute the order. The Commander presented the Ameer's order of arrest to *Hazrat Sahibzada*. *Hazrat Sahibzada* asked for permission to go inside his house to meet his family before departing, but permission was denied. *Hazrat Sahibzada* asked his oldest son to fetch his Quran and staff from the house. He then accompanied the detachment towards his destiny. Nobody from his family knew at the time that he was departing from them forever to go to the

¹ A dish of rice and meat traditionally served at feasts.

court of his real Master.

The Ameer had given orders to the Commander of the detachment to bring back Hazrat Sahibzada under close scrutiny and not to offer him any privileges. Accordingly, Hazrat Sahibzada was taken away on foot from his village. However, when the Shia Commander learnt that Hazrat Sahibzada was a Syed¹, a very learned and pious person, he was greatly impressed and treated him with great respect and reverence. Wherever they camped for the night, the Commander was solicitous about the comforts of Hazrat Sahibzada.

Several times the Commander tried to convince him to flee to British India and said that he was willing to accept the harshest punishment to save the life of Hazrat Sahibzada. He pleaded with Hazrat Sahibzada and said, "I do not care for myself if I can save your life," but he always received the same answer. "I am willing to sacrifice my life for the truth and cannot even conceive of fleeing to save my life. I am accompanying you out of my own volition and desire. Otherwise, you would be unable to take me forcefully. You can test this if you don't believe me."

The Commander narrated that:

"Once, Hazrat Sahibzada asked us to encircle him tightly in a ring of soldiers. We continued on our journey, with Hazrat Sahibzada walking in the middle of this ring. To our great astonishment, we found that he had managed to get out of the ring of soldiers and disappeared. We were greatly perturbed, but after a little while we heard a faint voice from a great distance, and were reassured. We apologized profusely to him and again requested him to cross the border because we were convinced of his great spiritual status and did not want anybody to hurt him in any way. His reply was the same: turning your back on the path of truth is an act of cowardice."

¹ Syeds trace their genealogy to the family of the Holy Prophet.

Finally, the journey of 250 miles from Syedgah was over and *Hazrat Sahibzada*, in protective custody, reached Kabul to keep his date with destiny.

6

IN KABUL

What happened to him in Kabul?

On arrival in Kabul, he was lodged in the Royal Guest House. On orders from the Ameer, *Hazrat* Sahibzada was presented before him. The Ameer tried to convince him to refrain from propagating Ahmadiyyat, but he was met with the same reply:

“I am commanded by the Promised Messiah, the *Imam* of this era, to take the message of truth which I have found to other people.”

The Ameer insisted, over and over again, for him to desist, but *Hazrat* Sahibzada remained adamant. “How can I refrain from spreading the message of truth?” he replied.

When no other way could be found, on the advice of mullahs the Ameer ordered a debate. *Hazrat* Sahibzada imposed the condition that the debate would be verbal and before the public, but the mullahs were afraid that such an arrangement would reveal the truth to the public. They, therefore, insisted on a written debate so that the public may remain uninformed of the questions and answers of the opposing sides and of the arguments advanced. Because the Ameer was afraid of the influence that the *mullahs* had on the populace of Kabul, he ordered a written contest. The written arguments took place, but when the *mullahs* saw the truth triumphing over falsehood, they took out the last arrow from their quiver and declared *Hazrat* Sahibzada to be a *kafir* (disbeliever) and an apostate. Just as it has always happened, and continues to happen today, the Ameer felt constrained by the verdict of the *mullahs*. He broached *Hazrat* Sahibzada again and said: “I am

proud of the pious, learned, spiritually elevated people like you in my kingdom. You are a priceless pearl of my court. Just reject Mirza Qadiani and stop propagating his message.” Once again, the reply he received was: “I cannot deny the truth that I have found. At any cost and to the last breath in my body, I will continue to propagate (Ahmadiyyat).”

The Ameer was enraged at this reply, and ordered *Hazrat Sahibzada* removed from his presence. He was put in a cell of the prison with no natural light and tortured in many ways. He was handcuffed, fettered, and yoked around his neck with a heavy chain. His guards reported that the light in his cell remained lit all the time and *Hazrat Sahibzada* kept busy in Divine worship, with the chains hanging down at his side. Allah alone knows how greatly He would reward this act of Divine devotion. Allah causes the angels to remove the load of those who wear collars and chains for His sake, and says: “We....made for him a light by which he walks among the people” (6:122). Those who stumble along in the darkness, cannot know this secret.

VERDICT

Events from arrest to verdict — extracts from *Tazkirat-ul Shahadatain*.

Hazrat Mirza writes:

“When Sahibzada Abdul Latif was presented before the Ameer, the opposition had already put the Ameer in an angry mood. For this reason, his behavior was very tyrannical. The Ameer commanded that Akhunzada¹ be made to stand at a distance from him because he reeked. After a little while, he ordered that *Hazrat Sahibzada* be imprisoned in the fort where the Ameer also lived, and be restrained by the chains known as *ghara-ghraab*. These chains weigh one *maund* and 24 *seers* English (approximately 130 pounds), cover a person from the neck to the waist, and include handcuffs. In addition, he ordered that his feet be fettered with chains, which weigh 8 *seers* English (approximately 16 pounds). The *Maulvi* Sahib remained imprisoned for four months. During this time, he was broached several times on behalf of the Ameer, and given to understand that if he repented from the belief that the Qadiani (a reference to *Hazrat Mirza*) is, in fact, the Promised Messiah, he would be allowed to go free. Every time, he gave the same reply:

‘God has given me knowledge and the ability to distinguish between truth and falsehood. After a

¹ Another respectful way of calling *Hazrat Sahibzada*.

complete investigation, I have found that this person is, in reality, the Promised Messiah. Although I know that by adopting this position, my life is not safe and my family will be ruined, but, at this time, I consider my faith to be more valuable than my life and all worldly satisfactions.’

“*Hazrat Sahibzada* gave this reply, not once, but over and over again during the course of his imprisonment. This imprisonment was not like that in British prisons, where some consideration is given to human rights, but it was a harsh confinement of the sort to which one would prefer death. For this reason, the people were amazed at this show of firmness and steadfastness, and an amazement indeed it was. *Hazrat Sahibzada* was an illustrious person, owner of an estate in excess of a hundred thousand rupees in the Kingdom of Kabul, a leader in the Kingdom on account of his excellence of learning and piety, who had spent about fifty years of his life in ease, had a big family, many friends and sons. He had been cast into a grievous imprisonment, the mere mention of which sends shivers through a person’s body and was worse than death. It was incredible that this person of delicate form, raised on the lap of luxury, could show such extraordinary patience in the face of this spirit-breaking imprisonment; this especially so in light of the repeated messages he received that if he retracted from attesting to the truthfulness of the claim of the Qadiani person, he would be released honorably. But this pious man, with a mighty faith, did not care one bit for these repeated offers. Again and again, he gave the same reply:

‘Do not expect me to prefer this world over my belief. How can it be that I deny, for fear of my death, a person whom I have identified well and investigated carefully. I cannot deny him. I see that I have found the truth, and I cannot commit the deceit of abandoning the proven truth for the sake of this life of a few days. I have decided that I am willing to give up my life, but

the truth shall go with me.’

“The Kingdom of Kabul will never forget this reply, given over and over again, nor would the people of Kabul have ever seen in their lives an example of such steadfastness to truth. It is worth mentioning here that it is not the normal practice for the nobles of Kabul to repeatedly persuade a person to change his faith with offers of clemency. This was a special concession extended to *Maulvi* Abdul Latif because he was an important person of the Kingdom and had thousands of disciples. As already stated above, he was held in high esteem by the Ameer on account of his knowledge and scholarship and was considered to be a star among the *Ulama*. It is possible that the Ameer may have had some regrets that such a pious person would, of certainty, be killed by the unanimous verdict of the *Ulama*. It is well known that, in one way, the reins of government in Kabul are in the hands of the *maulvis*, for it is not possible for the Ameer to do anything against the unanimous agreement of the *maulvis* on an issue. It is within the realm of possibility that, on the one hand, the Ameer was in fear of the *maulvis*, and, on the other, he saw *Hazrat* Sahibzada to be innocent. This was the reason why, throughout the period of imprisonment, he kept instructing that if *Hazrat* Sahibzada denied that the man of Qadian was the Promised Messiah and repented from this belief, then an honorable release would follow. The motivation for imprisoning him in the same fort, where he lived, was also to create the opportunity for repeatedly giving him these instructions.

“After four months of imprisonment had passed, the Ameer summoned *Hazrat* Sahibzada to his presence in the open court and, once again, instructed him that if, even then, he denies, in his presence, Mirza Qadiani and his principles, then he would be forgiven and honorably released. The Ameer expressed his strong desire that he would accept this offer. *Hazrat* Sahibzada replied:

‘It is impossible that I will relent from the truth. The

punishment of the rulers of this world ends with death, but I am afraid of Him whose punishment will never end. However, since I am on the side of the truth, I desire that I should be given the opportunity to debate the *maulvis*, who are against my beliefs. If the arguments prove me to be false, I should be punished...'

"The Ameer liked this suggestion, and Khan Mulla Khan and eight other Muslim jurists were selected for a debate in the Royal Mosque. A doctor from Lahore (Abdul Ghani), who by virtue of being a Punjabi was a bitter opponent, was appointed and sent as an arbitrator. A large crowd was present at the time of the debate, and the eye witnesses say that they were present. The debate was conducted by written statements, and those who had gathered were not informed of the written proceedings that were taking place before them. For this reason, the details of the debate remain unknown. The debate continued from seven in the morning to three in the afternoon. At the time for the late afternoon prayer (*asr*), *Hazrat Sahibzada* was decreed a *kafir* (disbeliever). In the final argument, he was asked that, if the Promised Messiah is this man of Qadian, then what was his opinion about Jesus (peace be upon him), as to whether he will come back to this world or not? With great steadfastness, he replied: 'Jesus (peace be upon him) has died and he will never come back. The Quran is a witness to his death, and the fact that he will never return.' On hearing this, the crowd, like the *maulvis* who had torn their clothes on hearing the Quranic verses regarding Jesus, became abusive and stated that there was now no doubt about the disbelief of this man. The verdict of *kufr* (disbelief) was drafted in a state of great anger, and after that, *Hazrat Sahibzada* was sent back to the prison in the same fettered state. I forgot to mention earlier that eight men with drawn swords stood confronting *Hazrat Sahibzada* throughout the debate with the *maulvis*.

"The verdict of *kufr* was sent to the Ameer at night, but in a

clever strategy, the record of the debate was intentionally withheld, and nor was it divulged to the public. This was a clear proof that the opposing *maulvis* had no rebuttal to the arguments presented by *Hazrat Sahibzada*.¹ Woe on the Ameer who passed his judgment on the verdict of *kufir* and did not even ask to see the record of the debate. In actual fact, he should have been present at the debate, out of fear of the Real Judge to whom he would soon return, leaving behind all his wealth and rulership. The dictates of compassion required him to be present, regardless of what it took, since he knew that the life of an innocent person hinged on the outcome of the debate. In addition, jailing him without proof, restraining him with chains and handcuffs, and attempting to intimidate him with the drawn swords of eight soldiers were clearly attempts to prevent him, through torture and fear, from producing evidence in his support, and such duress should never have been permitted. If the Ameer did not do this, at the very least it was his duty to request for the record of the debate in order to give a just judgment. In fact, he should have issued instructions prior to the debate that all the papers should be sent to him...

“After the verdict of *kufir* had been given, *Hazrat Sahibzada* was sent back to prison. On Saturday morning, he was summoned to the special court of the Ameer, where a large audience was present. When the Ameer came out of the fort, *Hazrat Sahibzada* was sitting at a place on the way. He passed by him and enquired, ‘Akhundzada Sahib, what was the verdict?’ *Hazrat Sahibzada* did not reply because he knew that these people were bent upon being tyrannical, but one of the guards with him said, ‘He was reproached,’ i.e. verdict of *kufir* was given. The Ameer then went to his assembled court, and

¹ Did not history repeat itself in September 1974? The National Assembly of Pakistan, after hearing arguments about their beliefs by the Lahore and the Rabwah groups of the Ahmadiyya Movement, declared both to be non-Muslims. But the records of the proceedings were sealed and not disclosed to the public.

as soon as he sat down, he asked for Akhundzada Sahib to be called, and told him:

‘The verdict of *kufr* has been given. Now say, what will it be? Will you repent or accept punishment?’

“In no uncertain way, he told him:

‘I cannot repent from the truth. Should I accept falsehood for fear of my life? I am unable to do this.’

“The Ameer again asked him to repent, and assured him of an honorable acquittal. But *Hazrat Sahibzada* forcefully rejected the suggestion, and said, ‘Do not expect from me that I will desist from the truth.’ ...He firmly kept on rejecting all suggestions (of clemency based on repentance), for he had decided that it was necessary for him to give his life in this cause. He also said that, ‘After my killing, I will come alive after six days.’ The meaning of this statement is that the life that is granted to saints and religious persons would be given to him by the sixth day, and before the Lord’s day arrives, i.e. the seventh day, he would be alive. It must be remembered that saints and those special people who are slain in the way of Allah are given life after a few days. As Allah says:

‘And speak not of those who are slain in Allah’s way as dead. Nay, (they are) alive, but you perceive not.’
(2:154)

“The remarks of the deceased martyr pointed to this status... By his martyrdom, the deceased has given my followers an example, and indeed my followers were in need of such a grand example.”¹

¹ *Tazkirat-ul Shahadatin*, pp. 49–56.

MARTYRDOM

Departure for the place of martyrdom

*What is the clamor in your street, enquire about it quickly,
Lest a mad lover's blood be spilt.*

Hazrat Mirza writes:

“When *Hazrat Sahibzada* rejected repeated suggestions to repent, the Ameer despaired, and wrote with his own hands a long judgment in which he included the verdict of the *maulvis* and stated in it that the punishment for such a *kafir* is death by stoning. The judgment was hung from *Akhundzada's* neck, and the Ameer ordered that a hole be made in his nose, a string put through it, and he be pulled by that string and led to the place of execution. Accordingly, by order of this cruel Ameer, a hole was bored in his nose, a string passed through it with great pain, and he was led by the string to the place of execution amongst a tumult of abuses, jeers, and jokes. The Ameer, along with all his courtiers, judges, Islamic jurists, and other officers, witnessed this painful scene as they proceeded to the site of execution. Thousands of people from the city, whose exact number is difficult to gauge, turned up to witness this show.”

Exactly the same treatment was meted out by the Jews to Jesus (on whom be peace). They had spat on his face, slapped and boxed him, placed a crown of thorns on his head, and taken him to the cross, hitting him with a cane, joking, and laughing.

“When they reached the place of execution, *Hazrat Sahibzada* was interred in the ground up to the waist. In this condition, when he was buried up to the waist, the Ameer went to him and said: ‘If you denounce the Qadiani, who has claimed to be the Promised Messiah, I will save you even now. Time has run out on you, and this is the last chance that is being given to you. Have mercy on yourself and your family.’ *Hazrat Sahibzada* replied: ‘May Allah protect me. How can truth be denied? What is the reality of life and what is the importance of family and children, for which I should leave my belief? I can never do it. I will die for the truth.’ The judges and Islamic jurists raised a cry: ‘He is a *kafir*; he is a *kafir*. Stone him immediately.’ At that time, the Ameer, his brother, Nasrullah, the Qazi (judge), and the Commander, Abdul Ahad were mounted on horses, while everybody else was on foot. When, even in this critical situation, *Hazrat Sahibzada* persisted repeatedly with his reply, ‘I value my belief more than my life,’ the Ameer told the Qazi to cast the first stone because he had given the verdict of *kufir*. The Qazi said: ‘You are the ruler; you throw the (first) stone.’ The Ameer replied: ‘You are the king of Islamic law, and it is your verdict; I have nothing to do with it.’ The Qazi then got down from his horse, and threw a stone, which injured *Hazrat Sahibzada* grievously, and his head bent forward. After that, the unfortunate Ameer threw a stone, and this was a signal to the public to follow the example of their ruler. Thousands of stones started to rain on him, and there was none in that crowd that did not throw a stone in his direction. The abundance of stones created a pile over the martyr’s head. At the time of his departure from the site, the Ameer said: ‘This person had remarked that he would come alive on the sixth day; so keep a guard on him for six days.’ What cruelty! The stoning took place on July 14, 1903. The martyrdom which was ordained for *Sahibzada Abdul Latif* has occurred, but the recompense of the tyrant

remains... O Abdul Latif, thousands of blessings be upon you that you showed an example of your truthfulness in my life, and about those who will stay in my party after my death, I know not what they will do.”¹

These words of *Hazrat* Mirza should be a source of reflection for us.

¹ *Tazkirat-ul Shahadatain*, pp. 56–58.

SOME INCIDENTS BEFORE MARTYRDOM

A recollection of some incidents prior to martyrdom

Once in his own house, long before his arrest or even any suspicion of the forthcoming events, *Hazrat* Sahibzada addressed his hands as follows:

“O my hands, would you be able to bear the handcuffs.”

He advised his household:

“I am going, but let it not be that you take some other path. The faith and belief which I profess should be your faith and belief as well.”

While being taken to Kabul after his arrest, he said:

“I am the bridegroom of this gathering.”

During the debate with the Islamic jurists, who had gathered under the orders of the Ameer for this purpose, he said:

“You have two gods because you are afraid of the Ameer like you should be afraid only of God. I have only one God, so I am not afraid of the Ameer.”

In another incident from the debate, he was asked by the *mullahs* about his opinion of the man from Qadian who claimed to be the Promised Messiah. He replied:

“I have seen him and given his actions close attention. There is none like him on this earth, and certainly and without a doubt, he is the Promised Messiah. He is bringing

the dead back to life.”

The *mullahs* raised a clamor and said, “He is a *kafir* and so are you.” They threatened him on behalf of the Ameer and said that he would be stoned to death in the event he did not repent. *Hazrat* Sahibzada understood that he would die and he recited the following verse:

“Our Lord, make not our hearts to deviate after Thou hast guided us and grant us mercy from Thee; surely Thou art the most liberal Giver.” (3:8)

When he was about to be stoned, he recited the following verse:

“Thou art my Friend in this world and the Hereafter. Make me die in submission and join me with the righteous.” (12:101)

After this the stoning started and he was martyred. “Surely we are Allah’s and to Him we shall return” (2:156).

10

BURIAL

Burial of *Hazrat* Sahibzada as narrated by close family members

Hazrat Sahibzada's body remained in a mound of stones for some days. When the situation calmed down, a Shia, non-commissioned officer, Badshah Khan Mangal, and a disciple, Mian Ahmad Nur, extricated his blessed body with the help of the guards and took it to a suburban area. They put the body in a coffin and tried to bring it to Syedgah. When they were near Syedgah, a disciple of *Hazrat* Sahibzada lifted the coffin on his back and brought it to the village. After two days, he was buried in the family cemetery in Ghundai. Numerous people visited the family daily for condolence, and offered prayers for the deceased. The number of visitors was so large that it became difficult for the family to arrange for their stay and food.

When Ameer Habibullah learnt that the body of *Hazrat* Sahibzada had been buried in Syedgah after removal from the site of martyrdom, and that people thronged there in large numbers for condolence, he became unnecessarily alarmed. He worried that if the disciples and followers of *Hazrat* Sahibzada were given the signal, they would revolt against his government and overthrow him. Because of the fear that the Ameer may take some further action, it is said that the coffin was secretly removed from the grave and buried in an undisclosed location in the hills of Matun, to the south of Syedgah. It was well known among the locals of the area that lights could be seen descending from the sky towards the earth in the mountains of Matun. The site of the grave in

Syedgah was marked by a big stone, which was still in place sixteen years after *Hazrat* Sahibzada's family was exiled.

It is said that when Badshah Khan Mangal took out the body of the deceased martyr from the mound of stones, the place exuded a fragrant aroma that filled the whole area, much to the astonishment of those present. Badshah Khan's wrist got stained by a red, oval shaped mark, which too exuded a fragrant smell. He kept the mark covered under his long sleeves, but once, when he came to Syedgah, he showed the mark to Sahibzada Muhammad Saeed, a son of *Hazrat* Sahibzada, after which the mark disappeared. Before that, he had tried on numerous occasions to remove the mark by washing, but without success. However, when the mark disappeared, he felt very sorry and sad because he considered it to be a miracle for him and others, and wished then that he had not shown it to Sahibzada Muhammad Saeed.

THE AFTERMATH

The heartfelt feelings of the Promised Messiah on the martyrdom of *Hazrat Sahibzada*

The Promised Messiah expressed himself poignantly at the painful events of the martyrdom as follows:

“The land of Kabul shall witness the bitter fruits that this murder shall bear. This slaughter shall not go unavenged. Prior to this, poor Abdul Rahman of my party was cruelly killed, and God remained silent. But He will not remain silent on this murder and the consequences that will accrue will be enormous. Accordingly, it has been reported that in the days when the deceased martyr was killed by stoning, a virulent epidemic of plague broke out in Kabul and many important persons of the kingdom fell prey to it. The plague hit the house of Nasrullah Khan, the real brother of Ameer Habibullah Khan, and the actual culprit responsible for this bloodshed, and he lost his wife and son. About four hundred persons died daily, victims to the plague, and on the night of martyrdom, the sky turned red. This is only the beginning, because this murder has been committed most mercilessly, the like of which cannot be found in these times. Alas! This foolish Ameer has destroyed himself by murdering such an innocent person with such unusual cruelty. O land of Kabul, remain a witness that on you this heinous crime was committed. O unlucky land, you have fallen in the eyes of God because

you are the venue of this extreme cruelty.”¹

The Promised Messiah’s predictions about Kabul and the historical facts about the tyrant’s retribution

*Be afraid of the sigh of those in the class of saints,
Especially when it comes from the sorrowing heart of
Mirza.*

This is so because there is no barrier between such a sigh and God. One prophecy of *Hazrat Mirza* was, “About fifty thousand people will be killed in the kingdom of Kabul.” The loss of life that was occasioned by plague has been mentioned above. In 1919, Ameer Habibullah Khan was murdered as the result of a plot by his brother Nasrullah Khan. After this, Nasrullah Khan was put in prison and, subsequently, murdered there. Those judges, Islamic jurists, and *mullahs*, who gave the verdict of *kufir* and had *Hazrat Sahibzada* stoned to death, were disgraced, humiliated, ruined and destroyed. There was no trace left of them and none remained to mourn them.

After Habibullah Khan, his son Amanullah Khan ascended the throne. He tried to pursue a policy designed to rid Afghanistan of British influence. The British did not like this, and so they instigated Baccha Sakka to revolt against Amanullah Khan. In the ensuing fighting, thousands of people were killed and Amanullah Khan had to flee and take refuge in Italy. The government passed from his family to that of General Nadir Khan, who later ruled in Kabul under the name Nadir Shah. There was a prophecy of *Hazrat Mirza* about him, as well. The prophecy was, “Alas! Where has Nadir Shah gone?” He was assassinated at a function by a student. After him, his son, Zahir Shah ascended the throne, but he too was forced into exile.

¹ *Tazkirat-ul Shahadatain*, p. 72.

Dr. Abdul Ghani, the arbitrator of the debate, was imprisoned by the Afghan government for conspiracy and spying for the British Government. He had to suffer the torment of imprisonment for a long time.

After intervention by the Russian forces at the end of the 1970s, a civil war started in Afghanistan. The human toll of this war was colossal: several hundred thousand were killed and over four million refugees had to seek shelter in Iran and Pakistan. Afghans killed Afghans. After about a decade and half of fighting, a tenuous peace prevails, which erupts sporadically into more bloodshed. It is not known for how long the unfortunate land of Kabul, which fell in the eyes of God after the murder of the innocent person, will continue to pay for the crime that was committed on it. The anger of the "Mighty in retribution" is still visiting it. The fallout of the events in Afghanistan is directly or indirectly affecting the neighboring countries. Is there not a sign in this for those who observe? But:

"Or thinkest thou that most of them hear or understand?
They are but as the cattle; nay, they are farther astray from
the path." (25:44)

Only those with intelligence can learn a lesson from this. And in the heaven and the earth are many signs that appeal to their intellect and thought, but they pass by them with their faces turned and forgetful of their end. Then why feel sorry for a people who will not accept.

FAMILY HISTORY AFTER MARTYRDOM

How the family fared after martyrdom

The family of *Hazrat* Sahibzada was not spared after his martyrdom. Habibullah Khan feared a revolt because the deceased martyr, on account of his piety, purity, knowledge, generosity, and care of the masses, was an influential and popular personality of the kingdom. His disciples, followers, and admirers were spread throughout Afghanistan. At the slightest signal from the family, tremendous bloodshed would have ensued. Out of this fear, the Ameer gave orders to exile the four largest Sahibzada households, including *Hazrat* Sahibzada's, to Turkistan. This happened during the months of October and November, when heavy snowfalls close the tortuous, mountain roads in Afghanistan. All four heads of the households, therefore, petitioned that the orders be kept in abeyance till the spring, when they would leave for exile in Turkistan. The governor of Khost conveyed this request to Habibullah Khan, who consented to the postponement.

When spring arrived, in accordance with their pledged word, the four families left on foot, on horses, and on camels for exile. When this caravan of innocent and guiltless people, with the few possessions they could carry with them, left Syedgah for Turkistan, hundreds of Afghans accompanied them to Ghalai to bid them farewell. In Ghalai, Sahibzada Muhammad Saeed and Sahibzada Muhammad Muzzammal requested them to go back. A barber read some verses in Pushto, which expressed the following sentiment: The time to depart from you has arrived. We would more readily accept death than separation from you. We

bid you farewell with greatly sorrowing hearts.

This scene of affection was worth witnessing. Many people fainted. Sahibzada Muhammad Saeed and Sahibzada Muhammad Muzzammal comforted them by saying, "This separation is only temporary. God willing, we will return back to you very soon." With tears in their eyes, the people went home.

The journey from Afghanistan to Turkistan takes about a month and a half, and covers a route over very difficult terrain and poor roads. As a result, many children in the party fell sick. On arrival in Turkistan, they had to face many difficulties and problems. Once, there was a time when they spent their life in ease and luxury. They slept in bedding of silk and hundreds of people ate with them at their meals, but now their situation was so straitened that they longed even for barley bread. The government gave them some land for their subsistence, but they had no money to develop and cultivate it. The first year or two were spent in extreme distress and poverty, but after that their financial situation began to improve gradually.

Because of poverty and poor medical facilities, tuberculosis was common in Turkistan, and many people died from it. It is a miracle of God, that the children of the deceased martyr remained free from all serious diseases. A very pious and sincere sister of *Hazrat Sahibzada* used to say: "God protected us and our honor in such a way that nobody even saw the end of my head covering."¹ This was a special blessing of the prayers of the Founder of the Ahmadiyya Movement and of the deceased martyr that his family escaped every unbearable hardship. The other three families exiled with them had to face considerably greater difficulties.

After spending eight years of exile in Turkistan with varying fortunes, Ameer Habibullah gave orders for the deceased martyr's family to come to Kabul, and the other three families to return to Khost. In Kabul, the family was lodged in a house on Qazi street,

¹ An expression meant to denote that they always had the means to subsist.

and a stipend was approved by the government for subsistence. They also started to receive income from their lands in Khost. Two traders, Khan Ameer and Khaista Meer, who traded between Kabul and Peshawar, collected the ownership share of *Hazrat Sahibzada's* family from the tenants and brought it to them, along with other necessities. The financial condition of the family thus improved. In Kabul there were several Ahmadi families, as well. However, some restrictions were placed on *Hazrat Sahibzada's* family by the government. No member of the family could travel outside a five mile radius, and one person had to report to the Police Station every day that the entire family was present.

In those days, an unfortunate person came to Kabul from Punjab. He was arrested on the suspicion of being a spy for the British. During investigation, he claimed acquaintance with a member of *Hazrat Sahibzada's* family, and as a result, the Police arrested four sons of the deceased martyr and took them away. The oldest son had gone out to the bazaar at the time. When he learnt of the arrest of his brothers, he set out in their search. On the way, somebody informed him, in confidence, that his brothers had been taken to the Ann-ud-Daula guest house. When he reached there, he too was placed under arrest. After two months, they were transferred from Ann-ud-Daula to Sherpur Jail, which was extremely filthy. They were put in fetters, and kept there for nine months. The oldest two sons of *Hazrat Sahibzada*, *Sahibzada Muhammad Saeed* and *Sahibzada Muhammad Umar* died of typhus. *"Surely we are Allah's, and to Him we shall return."*

During that time, *Habibullah Khan* was murdered and celebrations started for the coronation of his son, *Amanullah Khan*. All the leading nobles of Afghanistan gathered for the coronation, including *Babrak Khan*, the older brother of *Syed Akbar Khan*. On this occasion, the nobles told *Amanullah Khan*: "The family of *Sahibzada Abdul Latif*, who are confined to Kabul for the last eight years, are innocent citizens and very straightforward Muslims. What is their crime that they are kept in this condition? Unless you free them, we will not participate in your celebrations." *Amanullah* assured them that he would review their case.

After the festivities, true to his promise, Amanullah announced that the family could go back to Syedgah. After sixteen years of exile, the family returned to their former glory in Syedgah. On seeing this, the opponents of this family became extremely jealous, and started secretly to conspire against it. Whenever there were disturbances or problems anywhere in Afghanistan, these people claimed that it was because of the family of Sahibzada Abdul Latif. Thereby, they tried to create hatred against this family.

After the return of the family to Syedgah, the first Governor appointed to the post in Khost ordered the sons of *Hazrat Sahibzada* to appear before him. Probably, he was influenced by the opponents of the family or was acting on direction of the government in Kabul. It so happened that both the sons of *Hazrat Sahibzada* had gone to Bannu a few days beforehand. A message was sent to them that very night about the Governor's order. They returned to present themselves before the Governor. After meeting and conversing with them, the Governor was so impressed that he stated under oath that if there was a family to be respected in Khost, it was their family.

However, the opponents did not desist from their mischief. They incited the Judge of the area, who was known as the Mad Judge, to pass orders that all "Qadianis" should be jailed. In accordance with these orders, the father of Sahibzada Abdul Qudus, Sahibzada Meer Akbar, and Sahibzada Abu-al-Hassan were arrested and imprisoned in Darband Jail. They were beaten and tormented during their imprisonment, which was to last for eighteen months. In this way, it was made impossible for them to stay in Khost and the family decided to migrate from Afghanistan.

Some male members of the family went to visit the two imprisoned Sahibzadas in Darband Jail and broached the idea of emigrating from Afghanistan. With great courage and steadfastness, both gave the advise to proceed with the plan and not to worry about them. They would face whatever came their way.

In 1924, a revolt started against Ameer Amanullah Khan, and amongst the numerous charges brought against him, one of the charge was that he was a Qadiani. The most effective way of inciting the masses against anybody was and still is to allege that the person is a Qadiani. This method has been used from the beginning of the Movement, and is still being used. The reason for calling Amanullah Khan a Qadiani may be that he freed the Sahibzada family from captivity, and restored their privileges. This was not acceptable to the opponents of the family, who were benefitting from their absence. Amanullah crushed this revolt. However, this gave rise to the fear that the persecution of Ahmadis may intensify and the opponents may create greater mischief. In view of this, the family, along with a few tenants, left Syedgah stealthily at night and went to Dargai, where they lived for about a year and a half. The people of Dargai had pledged to the government that the family would stay there and would not be allowed to leave Dargai. Once, they tried to leave but the government functionaries learnt about it, and they were stopped. After waiting for two or three months, a second attempt succeeded miraculously. This is how it happened. After the family had left, a woman came to the house, and on finding it empty, she told a person named Abdul Baqi to inform the local administrator. He went to the Administrator's orderly to give him the message. It was night time and the orderly was sleeping. He woke up the orderly and gave him the message, but instead of taking the message to the Administrator, he went back to sleep. When he got up, the day had dawned. He ran to the Administrator with the message, but it was too late. The family had already crossed the border into British India. On January 1, 1926, the family reached Miran Shah from Afghanistan. From there they went to Bannu and then on to Sarai Naurang, where they have lived ever since.

Conclusion

Hazrat Sahibzada Abdul Latif walked steadfastly and sincerely on the path that lead to the status of martyrdom. According to his advise, his sons and other members of the family, despite severe trials, held on dearly to the code of conduct he had prescribed for them. The tyrants received exemplary punishment for their deed. However the words of *Hazrat* Mirza, "Those who will stay in my Movement after my death, I do not know what kind of service they will perform," give an invitation to the present members of the Lahore Ahmadiyya Jamaat to stop and reflect. After *Hazrat* Mirza, the great achievements of his companions, who were our forefathers, will forever remain an illuminating chapter of the Movement's history. The torches lighted by them are today illuminating the dark valleys of Europe, and, God willing, will continue to do so.

Our excessively stubborn opponents are also benefitting from the scholarly works produced by the Movement, though they may not admit it. Because of the untiring efforts of our forefathers, the world is continuing to accept the views of *Hazrat* Mirza. Articles in the national press, and speeches on other information media, reflect this change in thinking.

Their hearts are with us, though their mouths may babble incessantly.

Every cloud has a silver lining, which gives hope in despair. It is our duty that we do not wound, or give cause to despair, to the holy spirit of the Founder of the Movement. We know that we are weak and that none of us can become the like of Abdul Latif; nor can we make the same claim of giving precedence to religion over worldly affairs. However, in these times of turbulence, we can at least strive to preserve and pass on to the coming generations the priceless inheritance of *Hazrat* Mirza and our forefathers. May Allah grant us this power. Amen.

13

AN ODE TO SAHIBZADA ABDUL LATIF

Some verses of the Promised Messiah in respect of Hazrat Sahibzada

These verses are taken from Hazrat Mirza's book *Tazkirat-ul Shahadatain*. The original poem is in Persian.

*This courageous, beloved of Allah
At last showed his mettle*

*He gave his life for his love
And elevated his heart over the worldly desires*

*The jungle of this life is full of dangers
Serpents everywhere are lurking with open mouths*

*Thousands of flames reaching from the earth to sky
Thousands of floods of blood must be traversed*

*Thousands of miles must be crossed to reach the Beloved
Over thorns and thousands of difficulties*

*See the courage and bravery of this foreigner Shaikh
He spanned this dangerous jungle in one stride*

*Imbued with the love of God so much
Happily he gave his head for the Beloved*

*Willingly he embraced death for his Beloved
And as an antidote drank the cup of poison*

*Unless one drinks the cup of poison
How can salvation be received from this life.*

*Concealed behind such death are hundreds of lives
If you want life, put the bowl of death to your lips*

*Keep the example before you of this pure person, Abdul Latif
How did he destroy himself for truth*

*Its the way and manner of fidelity and faithfulness to God
Its the customary pinnacle of sincerity*

*To keep truth alive, they kill themselves
In the path of Allah, they sacrifice themselves*

*Religion is sowing the seed of annihilation and stepping out
of this world
Dying for religion is the name of life.*