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**“Syed Muhammad Jaunpuri and the Mahdavi Movement:
A Historical, Religious, and Intellectual Analysis”**

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Abstract

Syed Muhammad Jaunpuri (Born 842 AH / 1443 CE – Died 910 AH / 1505 CE) was born in the city of Jaunpur, India. After completing his early education, he excelled in religious sciences and became a disciple of Sheikh Daniyal Chishti. Later, through his claims of spiritual visions and divine inspirations, he came to believe that he was the Promised Mahdi. He declared himself as such in Makkah and began preaching his message across India and Afghanistan.

His followers came to be known as the Mahdaviya. This movement spread its influence in Ahmadnagar, Gujarat, Deccan, and Sindh. Initially, some rulers such as Ahmad Nizam Shah Bahri supported him, but later, due to the protest of scholars and the sermon of Maulana Shah Tahir of Turkistan, Burhan Nizam Shah expelled the Mahdavis from his kingdom.

The paper elaborates on the beliefs of the Mahdaviya sect, according to which: Syed Muhammad Jaunpuri considered himself superior to all prophets (except Prophet Muhammad

His followers regarded all prophets, saints, and even the Companions of the Prophet as inferior to him.

They believed that some commandments of the Shariah of Muhammad had been abrogated by the “Shariah of Jaunpuri.”

Books such as Shawahid alWilayah and Panj Fazail equated his sayings with divine revelation.

In conclusion, the author notes that the Mahdavi movement was strongly opposed by the Islamic rulers of Gujarat, Deccan, and Sindh, and that its founder eventually died in exile in Ferah (Afghanistan).

This paper explores one major aspect of the figure known as the “Indian Mahdi,” while other researchers argue that there exists another perspective on his personality, which is discussed in a separate article.

Keywords: Jaunpuri, Mahdavi, Movement, Claim of Mahdihood, Ahmadnagar,

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Syed Muhammad Jaunpuri The Claimant of Mahdihood

Syed Muhammad Jaunpuri, the claimant of Mahdihood, was born in 847 AH (1443 CE) in Jaunpur, a wellknown city in the province of Awadh (India). His followers are known as Mahdavis.

Muhammad Jaunpuri (born September 9, 1443 – died April 23, 1505) was an Indian ascetic who claimed to be the Promised Mahdi. The Mahdavi and Zikri sects regard him as the Mahdi.

He traveled through Iran (Khorasan) and the Hijaz, and in Mecca he proclaimed himself as the Mahdi. Upon returning to India, he continued to preach his doctrine of Mahdism, traveling as far as Afghanistan. He lived for sixtytwo years. His followers refer to him as Miran Sayyid Muhammad Mahdi Mau‘ood (The Promised Mahdi). His father’s name was Syed Khan, and according to the author of Matla‘ alWilayah, his mother’s name was Bibi Akha Malik.¹

However, in later generations, when no trace of Muhammad Jaunpuri’s family lineage remained, the later Mahdavis began to record his father’s name as Syed Abdullah, so that his claim to Mahdihood might not be invalidated by the wellknown Prophetic tradition that foretells:

“The Mahdi’s name shall correspond to my name, and his father’s name shall correspond to my father’s name.”

Some, like Burhanuddin Mahdi, author of Shawahid alWilayah, went even further he not only named the father as Abdullah, but also assigned Aminah as the mother’s name, thus fitting his spiritual master completely into the prophetic mold of Mahdihood.²

However, Syed Muhammad himself never claimed that his father’s name was Abdullah or his mother’s name was Aminah. On the contrary, when people questioned him, saying:

“The Messenger of Allah has said: ‘The Mahdi’s name will correspond with mine, and his father’s name with my father’s.’”

He replied:

“Is not the Almighty God powerful enough to bestow the rank of Mahdihood upon the son of Syed Khan?”

Similarly, once, when a rival tried to defeat him in argument, Syed Muhammad became angry and exclaimed:

“Why do you not fight with God Himself, who has made Syed Khan’s son the Mahdi?”

Syed Muhammad was graceful in form, tall in stature, and strikingly handsome. From childhood, the brilliance of intelligence and insight was visible upon his face.³

Title: “Asad al‘Ulama” (The Lion of Scholars)

It is said that by the age of seven, Syed had memorized the entire Qur‘an, and by twelve, he had completed all formal studies of Islamic sciences, tying the turban of scholarship. Even in youth, his eloquence and oratory were unmatched. Sheikh Daniyal Chishti and other scholars of the time, admiring his intellect and reasoning, conferred upon him the title “Asad al‘Ulama” (Lion of the Scholars). Sheikh Daniyal Chishti (may Allah sanctify his soul) was a disciple of Syed Raji Hamid Shah, and Syed Muhammad was his spiritual successor. It is said that he was blessed several times with the spiritual presence of Khidr (AS) and also received spiritual grace from Khwaja Muinuddin Chishti of Ajmer. It is established that Khwaja Muinuddin spiritually entrusted him to the care of Khidr (AS).⁴

At that time, India was steeped in Sufi thought and mysticism. The spiritual climate inspired Syed Muhammad to seek the company of mystics. Thus, he took bay‘ah (spiritual allegiance) at the hands of Sheikh Daniyal Chishti of the Chishti order. After enduring long spiritual exercises and austerities, he excelled not only in the sciences of theology (‘ulum alqawl) but also in those of spiritual realization (‘ulum alhal).

He renounced worldly ties and devoted himself to the remembrance of God. His simplicity, humility, and detachment from luxury attracted many followers. He lived like the pious elders before him – poor in material means but rich in faith. Despite being invited by kings and nobles to visit their courts, he refused, following the example of the early Chishti saints who avoided the company of rulers.

Historical Context

At that time, the Tughlaq dynasty was in decline in Delhi; in Ahmadabad (Gujarat) ruled the powerful Sultan Mahmud Begarha; in the Deccan, the Bahmani dynasty still held prominence; in Malwa, Sultan Ghiyath alDin reigned; and in Ahmadnagar, Ahmad Nizam alMulk Bahri sat upon the throne.

Jaunpur itself was under the authority of Daniapur, whose Muslim governor, Mir Husain Wali, was a disciple of Syed Muhammad. Mir Husain had once been a feudatory (jagirdar) under a Hindu ruler, Raja Dilip Rai of Gaud. A conflict later arose between them, leading to open battle.

In this war, Syed Muhammad joined Mir Husain’s forces with about 1,500 disciples, known as Fuqarai Piragan. During combat, Syed advanced fearlessly and personally confronted Raja Dilip Rai. The Raja struck at him with his sword, but

his blow missed. Syed responded with a single stroke that killed the Raja instantly. The Hindu army fled in panic, and Mir Husain captured the Raja's territories. Many of Dilip Rai's relatives embraced Islam and became disciples of Syed Muhammad; among them was the Raja's nephew, whom Syed named Miyan Vilawar.

Up to this point, Syed's life resembled that of the righteous saints. However, later, he deviated from the path of guidance. When he set out on migration (hijrah) with his family and a few disciples, Satan appeared to him in a radiant form and said:

“You are the Mahdi of the Last Age foretold in the Prophetic traditions.”

Such inspirations occurred repeatedly, until Syed was convinced of his divine mission. His disciples accepted his claim without question and began to proclaim him as the Promised Mahdi.⁵

The Deviation of Syed Muhammad Jaunpuri and His Claim to Mahdihood

It is unfortunate that none among Syed Muhammad Jaunpuri's companions possessed the insight or discernment to speak truthfully and say to him:

“Your inspirations of Mahdihood are satanic. For the signs of the true Mahdi described by the Truthful Messenger are absent in your person. And the one who has inspired you with this so-called divine rank is none other than the very being whose appointed duty is to lead the children of Adam astray and cast them into the pit of destruction.”

The Mahdavis—that is, the followers of Syed Muhammad Jaunpuri—write that their leader, in a dream or a semiwakeful state, beheld a luminous angel who addressed him saying,

“You are the Promised Mahdi.”

It is true that Syed may have seen some radiant being, but the naïve Mahdavis failed to understand that the one who gave Syed this “glad tiding” of Mahdihood was not a noble angel (malak muqarrab), but rather Iblis the accursed, whose legions often appear in various radiant forms and deceptive lights, displaying miraculous illusions to mislead the pious and the devout from the path of truth.

Only he can escape the snare of Iblis's deception who measures every inspiration and inner suggestion by the scale of the Shariah. One who traverses the path of mysticism (tariqat) without grounding himself in the authentic Shariah and the way of the righteous predecessors (salaf alsalih) can never remain safe from the grasp of Satan's army.

Had Jaunpuri, after seeing that radiant form, turned towards the Prophetic Hadiths, it would have been impossible for the satanic delusion to divert him

from the path of truth. But alas the charm of Iblis is such that even a single glitter of his deceit blinds men's eyes.

Then Syed reached Chandir.⁶

Opposition by Scholars and His Wandering Preachings

When the learned scholars became aware of his claim to Mahdihood, they girded themselves for opposition. Since systems of religious accountability were active in all Islamic territories, Syed was compelled to leave that place. He then went to Mandu, the capital of Malwa. But there too, due to the hostility of the scholars, his stay became difficult. Consequently, he departed from Mandu intending to reach Champaner, the then capital of Gujarat.

Many people in Mandu had already become his devotees and joined his caravan. Upon reaching Champaner, he stayed in the Jami' Mosque. His fame for asceticism and piety spread widely, so much so that Sultan Mahmud Begarha, a ruler of strong faith and great resolve, also intended to enter his discipleship. However, some scholars who had met Syed earlier dissuaded the Sultan, saying that this man claimed to be the Mahdi. The Sultan therefore revoked his intention.

Despite the opposition of the religious scholars, many people continued to become Syed's followers, for those deprived souls who mistake delusion for truth rarely turn back from the path of error.

From there, Syed moved on to Ahmadnagar, the capital of the Nizam Shahi kingdom one of the five powerful Muslim states rivaling Delhi. This region had already been influenced by Mahdavi ideas even before his arrival. Hence, Syed was received with great enthusiasm. His spiritual prestige so dominated people's hearts that Sultan Ahmad Nizam alMulk Bahri himself became his disciple. Syed's hospice thus became the center of devotion for nobles and commoners alike, and the Mahdavi doctrine took firm root in the Deccan.

After Sultan Ahmad Bahri's death, his son Burhan Nizam alMulk ascended the throne. He too was deeply devoted to the Mahdavi sect. It is even said that after the death of Syed Muhammad Jaunpuri, Burhan Nizam Shah summoned Syed's special disciples from Gujarat to Ahmadnagar and, in extreme reverence, married his beautiful daughter to the grandson of Syed Jaunpuri thus granting him royal kinship.

This imprudent act raised the status of the Mahdavi sect to great prominence, and Jaunpuri's Mahdism began to flourish under royal patronage. Seeing this

moral decline, the righteous scholars of the realm could do nothing but silently grieve.

Expulsion from Gulbarga and Ahmadabad

It appears that Syed was not inclined to remain in one place for long. Sometimes he was expelled, and at other times he left voluntarily for his mission was to wander across different regions, proclaiming his selfmade Mahdihood. Thus, he departed Ahmadnagar and went to Ahmadabad and then to Bidar, the Bahmani capital. At that time Malik Qasim Baryid sat upon its throne. There, Mulla Ziya and Qadi Ala alDin joined his discipleship.

From there, Syed proceeded to Gulbarga, the ancient Bahmani capital, where he visited the shrine of Syed Muhammad Gisu Daraz Chishti, the disciple of Sheikh Nasir alDin ChiraghiDehlavi.

After a brief stay, the scholars complained to the Sultan that this man's false claims were shaking the foundations of religion. Consequently, an order for his expulsion was issued.

Syed then reached Bander Dabhol, and in 890 AH, driven by his longing to perform pilgrimage, he embarked on a ship bound for Mecca.

Upon reaching the holy city, he remembered the wellknown Prophetic prophecy that people would pledge allegiance to the Mahdi between the Rukn and Maqam. Therefore, standing at that sacred spot, Syed Jaunpuri invited his followers to take the pledge of allegiance at his hand, thus declaring himself to be the fulfillment of that Prophetic prediction.⁷

Return to India and Further Expulsions

On his return, Syed came again to Ahmadabad and took residence in the mosque of Taj Khan Salar. When his claims of Mahdihood and spiritual deception became the talk of the town, the scholars of Gujarat complained to Sultan Mahmud Begarha, saying:

“A man is plundering the faith of the people, and countless souls are being misled by his presence.”

He was expelled once more. He moved from city to city through the region of Gujarat, staying briefly by a pond, where students of Arabic schools from all sides gathered to debate with him. In these theological debates, Syed was overwhelmed and silenced, and again, through the efforts of scholars, expelled from there.

Leaving that region, he arrived at the town of Badli, where in an assembly he dramatically raised his arm, pointed to his body and fingers, and declared:

“Whoever denies me is a disbeliever without faith. I receive commands directly from Almighty God. He has said to me: ‘I have granted you the knowledge of the first and the last, the understanding of the meanings of the Qur’an, and the key to the treasury of faith. Whoever believes in you is a true believer and monotheist; whoever denies you is an infidel destined for Hell.’”
Even there he was expelled.

Final Days and Death

Syed then went to Jalor, from there to Nagaur, and then entered Nasarpur in the province of Sindh. By this time, many of his followers, weary of constant expulsions and endless wandering, abandoned him and returned to Gujarat. He threatened them with divine wrath, but none listened even his wife Shukar Khatun was among those who left him.

From Nasarpur he went to Thatta, the capital of Sindh. The scholars of Sindh, aware of his arrival, warned the public against his heretical movement. The people resolved to boycott him completely, sending him a message:

“Desist from corrupting the faith of Sindh’s Muslims, or not a grain of food shall reach your throat.”

He ignored the warning. The people implemented a policy of total noncooperation, cutting off all his provisions. As a result, eightyfour of his companions died in agony from starvation. Jaunpuri then proclaimed that these starving followers had attained the ranks of great Prophets!

When the orthodox scholars saw that Jaunpuri still persisted in his deceitful efforts, they complained to the ruler of Sindh, a devout and lawabiding Muslim. Enraged upon hearing of Jaunpuri’s blasphemies, the ruler ordered his execution along with all his followers. However, through the intercession of the royal courtier Darya Khan, the death sentence was commuted to exile.

At last, when Syed saw that life had become unbearable, Muslims everywhere treated him with hostility, and no Muslim ruler was willing to shelter him, he resolved to spread his poisonous creed in another land. Leaving Sindh, he turned toward Khorasan the eastern region encompassing parts of Persia and Iraq. After much hardship and wandering, he reached Qandahar, where the scholars engaged him in heated debates, leaving him humiliated. Escaping from there, he went to Farah, burdened by sorrow and exhaustion.

There he was treated harshly; the authorities confiscated his weapons, counted his companions, and threatened imprisonment. In that state of destitution and exile, after years of wandering, he finally breathed his last in 910 AH (1505 CE).⁸

At that moment, death was for him a message of relief, for ever since his claim to Mahdihood, both body and soul had been tormented. After his death, Miyan Allahdad Mahdavi recited a sorrowful elegy at his grave, one verse of which said: “May he who rose above all Prophets by God’s decree,

Be on the Day of Resurrection our intercessor by God’s mercy.”

The Aftermath: His Son and the Collapse of the Movement

Syed’s eldest son, Syed Mahmud, after a year of hiding, left Khorasan and settled in Bhalot, in Gujarat. The remaining Mahdavis turned to him as their new leader. Hearing of his activities, Sultan Mahmud of Gujarat imprisoned him in Ahmadabad, shackled with heavy chains. After fortyone days, through the intercession of the Sultan’s sisters Raji Soon and Raji Muradi, both believers in Syed Jaunpuri he was released. But due to the wounds from the chains, his leg became gangrenous, and he died two and a half months later.

After his death, Khund Mir became the new Mahdavi leader (Khalifa Thani). Expelled from Patan, he took refuge in the village of Khanbeel, on an estate owned by a Mahdavi named Malik Pyare. Later, upon hearing that a Mahdavi preacher had been executed in Ahmadabad, Khund Mir, in fury, sent four armed Mahdavis to assassinate the scholars responsible for issuing the death fatwa. They carried out the murders and returned to Bholarah.

When Sultan Mahmud learned of this, he dispatched a military force under Mu‘in alMulk to crush the Mahdavis. In the ensuing battle, fortyone Mahdavis were killed; Khund Mir was struck in the eye with an arrow that destroyed both eyes, rendering him blind. Reinforcements under Sharaf alDin Mahdavi arrived, but they too were defeated; fiftyfour Mahdavis, including Khund Mir, his son Jalal alDin, and his soninlaw, were slain.

Shah Tahir and the Refutation of Mahdism in Ahmadnagar

At that time, while Gujarat’s government was suppressing the Mahdavis, the sect flourished in Ahmadnagar. Such was the devotion of the Nizam Shahi rulers that Burhan Nizam Shah Bahri had even married his daughter to Jaunpuri’s grandson. By divine coincidence, in 928 AH (1521 CE), a distinguished scholar from Turkistan, Mawlana Shah Tahir, arrived in Ahmadnagar and was appointed vizier to Sultan Burhan Nizam Shah. Observing the people’s misguided devotion to a false Mahdi, he resolved to expose the delusion.

In due course, he presented before the Sultan the Prophetic traditions that foretell the coming of the true Mahdi of the Last Age, including the following:

Narrated by Abdullah ibn Mas‘ud (RA):

The Messenger of Allah said:

"The world will not come to an end until a man from my household rules the Arabs, whose name will correspond with mine."

In another narration:

"He will fill the earth with justice and equity as it had been filled with oppression and tyranny."⁹

Prophetic Traditions Regarding Imam alMahdi (Peace Be Upon Him)

Narrated by 'Abdullah ibn Mas'ud (RA):

The Holy Prophet said:

"Even if only one day were left for the end of the world, Allah would prolong that day until He raises a man from among my AhleBayt (household), whose name will correspond with my name (Muhammad), and whose father's name will correspond with my father's name ('Abdullah). He will fill the earth with justice and equity as it had been filled with oppression and tyranny."

This tradition was narrated by Abu Dawud, who remained silent regarding it. He himself wrote in his treatise that any hadith on which he remains silent is authentic (sahih). Ibn Majah also narrated it from Abu Hurayrah (RA).¹⁰

Another narration from 'Abdullah ibn Mas'ud (RA):

The Messenger of Allah said:

"The world will not come to an end until a man from among my household rules over the Arabs. His name will be the same as mine."

This hadith was narrated by Abu Dawud and alTirmidhi, who said:

"This is a sound and good (hasan sahih) hadith."

AlHakim also narrated it through several chains, all of which he declared authentic.

In another version narrated by Tirmidhi, instead of "he will rule (yamlik)", the word "he will govern (yali)" occurs, and that narration too is hasan sahih.¹¹

Narrated by Abu Sa'id alKhudri (RA):

The Messenger of Allah said:

"The Mahdi will be from my household. His face will be radiant and luminous, and his nose will be high and prominent. He will fill the earth with justice and equity as it had been filled with oppression and tyranny. He will rule for seven years."

This hadith was narrated by Abu Dawud and alHakim, who said:

“It is a good and authentic hadith.”

It was also transmitted by alTirmidhi and ‘Abd alRazzaq with a sound chain, and by Ibn Majah from Abu Hurayrah (RA) with a sound chain.

Narrated by Jabir alAnsari (RA):

The Prophet said:

“In the latter days, there will be a caliph (that is, the Mahdi, peace be upon him) who will distribute wealth abundantly, without counting it.”¹²

In another narration of Sahih Muslim, the Prophet said:

“At the end of my Ummah, there will be a caliph who will distribute wealth with both hands and will not count it.”

Although his name is not mentioned in these versions, the next hadith (number 6 in this collection) explicitly identifies him as alMahdi.

Narrated by Abu Sa‘id alKhudri (RA):

The Messenger of Allah said:

“A man will come to alMahdi and say, ‘Please give me something.’ AlMahdi will fill his cloak with as much gold and silver as he can carry.”

(Narrated by alTirmidhi, who said it is a good hadith, and by Ahmad with a sound chain.)

Narrated by Jabir alAnsari (RA):

The Messenger of Allah said:

“A group from my Ummah will continue to fight for the truth and will remain dominant until the Day of Resurrection. Then Jesus, the son of Mary (peace be upon him), will descend. Their leader will invite him to lead the prayer, but Jesus will decline, saying, ‘No, you lead it, for Allah has honored this Ummah of Muhammad () above all others.’”¹³

In some narrations it is stated that the Muslims will have arranged themselves for prayer behind their Imam, alMahdi, when ‘Isa ibn Maryam (AS) will descend from heaven. AlMahdi will step back, requesting ‘Isa (AS) to lead, but he will refuse and instead pray behind alMahdi. Thereafter, during their companionship, ‘Isa (AS), being higher in rank, will lead the prayers.

Narrated by Abu Hurayrah (RA):

The Prophet said:

“How blessed will you be when the son of Mary (‘Isa, peace be upon him) descends among you, and your Imam will be from among you.”¹⁴

Here, “your Imam” refers to alMahdi (AS), behind whom ‘Isa ibn Maryam (AS) will perform prayer.

Narrated by Imam Ja‘far alSadiq, from his father Imam Muhammad alBaqir, who narrated from his father ‘Ali ibn alHusayn Zayn al‘Abidin (RA), that the Messenger of Allah said:

“The life span of this world will not end until the one whose beginning is with me, whose middle is with the Mahdi, and whose end is with Jesus, the son of Mary.”

(Narrated by Razin in Mishkat alMasabih, and by alHakim in his Tarikh.)¹⁵

The Expulsion of the Mahdavis from the Ahmadnagar Sultanate

After Mawlana Shah Tahir presented before Sultan Burhan Nizam Shah the authentic Prophetic traditions concerning the true Mahdi of the Last Age, he shattered the false spell of Jaunpuri’s Mahdism. His clear and reasoned exposition so convincingly demonstrated the falsity of that doctrine that the Sultan became enraged against the sect. Realizing that he had previously married his daughter to a Mahdavi, he was deeply remorseful.

He withdrew his favor from the Mahdavis entirely and reproached the royal scholars, saying:

“Why did you not explain this matter to me with the same clarity that Shah Tahir has done?”

He then annulled his daughter’s marriage with Jaunpuri’s grandson and ordered that all Mahdavis be expelled from his dominions. Thus, after a long period, the Ahmadnagar Sultanate was finally delivered from the snare of the Mahdavi heresy.¹⁶

The Four Fatwas from Mecca

At this time, the Mahdavi movement was in a pitiable and broken state. Muslim rulers across India took strict action against them. Particularly in Gujarat, from the year 952 AH, when the great scholar Shaykh ‘Ali Muttaqi alGujarati (RA) the teacher of Shaykh ‘Abd alHaqq alMuhaddith alDehlawi and compiler of Kanz al‘Ummal sent to the Sultan of Gujarat four fatwas issued by the chief Muftis of the Four Schools (madhahib arba‘ah) from Makkah alMukarramah, one of which was authored by Shaykh Ibn Hajar alMakki, the author of alSawā‘iq alMuḥriqah. These fatwas declared:

“If the Mahdavis do not repent from their false beliefs, then the ruler of Islam is obliged to execute them for apostasy.”

Accordingly, the Sultan of Gujarat ordered the arrest of Shah Ni‘mat, a prominent Mahdavi leader and successor of Jaunpuri.

The Death of Jaunpuri’s Son and Successor

When government soldiers arrested Shah Ni‘mat, a man named Syed ‘Ali ibn Syed Muhammad Jaunpuri asked them on the way:

“If instead of this elder, you were to capture the son of Imam Mahdi himself, would you release this man?”

They replied, “Yes, certainly.”

Syed ‘Ali then said, “I am the son of the Mahdi.” So they released Shah Ni‘mat and arrested Syed ‘Ali, bringing him to the royal court. The Sultan ordered that he be imprisoned in the dungeon, where he remained for a long time.

Later, when Sultan Muzaffar of Gujarat died and Sultan Bahadur Shah ascended the throne, Malik Pir Muhammad Mahdavi, who had distinguished himself in war, requested the Sultan to release their “pīrzāda” (spiritual leader) as a reward for his service. The Sultan instructed the vizier Sadr Khan to release him.

Sadr Khan replied:

“He has long since met the fate of death,”

and secretly sent word to his deputy to execute the prisoner immediately. Thus, he was put to death in the dungeon, along with sixteen other Mahdavis, whose bodies were then burned.

Witnessing this, Malik Allahdad, one of Jaunpuri’s devoted disciples, fled from Gujarat to Marwar, settling in the village of Parker. The Mahdavis there endured great hardship, famine, and persecution.

The departments of religious accountability under the Muslim kings never allowed them to settle or spread their heresy. Indeed, how could righteous Muslim rulers tolerate a movement that threatened the very integrity of faith?

Though the sparks of the Mahdavi fire spread from Gujarat and the Deccan toward Agra and Bengal, timely government intervention prevented the flames from spreading further.

The Apostasy and Blasphemous Beliefs of the Mahdavis

The Mahdavis believe:

That affirming Syed Muhammad Jaunpuri’s Mahdiship is obligatory, and denying it is disbelief (kufr).

That since 905 AH, when Jaunpuri claimed Mahdihood, every Muslim who lived thereafter or will live until the Day of Resurrection is a disbeliever for rejecting him.

That Syed Jaunpuri, though a member of the Ummah of Muhammad , is superior to the Rightly Guided Caliphs and all other Companions.

That Syed Jaunpuri, apart from the Prophet Muhammad , is superior to all Prophets and Messengers, especially the Ulul‘Azm.

That Syed Jaunpuri, although nominally a follower of Muhammad , is equal to him in rank, with no distinction whatsoever.

That no Hadith even if transmitted with authentic chains is reliable unless it agrees with the sayings, states, and inspirations of Syed Jaunpuri.

That Syed Jaunpuri and Muhammad alone were perfect Muslims; all others even Adam, Noah, Abraham, Moses, and Jesus (peace be upon them) were imperfect in faith: some half-Muslim, some a third, some a quarter. Only when Jesus (AS) descends from heaven again will he become a perfect Muslim.

In the Mahdavi book Insaaf Nama (also known as MatneSharif, by Miyan Khund Mir and compiled by Miyan Syed Yusuf), it is written:

“Khund Mir said to Syed Jaunpuri: ‘In all humanity, there seem to be only two Muslims you and Muhammad the Messenger of Allah ().’

Syed Jaunpuri replied: ‘Yes, indeed it is so. Some Prophets were Muslim only in part some by the head, some by the right side but we two are Muslims in our entirety.’”¹⁷

Doctrinal Beliefs and Blasphemous Claims of the Mahdavis

The Mahdavis believe that it is obligatory to affirm the truth of the “Real Mahdi (peace be upon him).”

According to their interpretation, all the souls of prophets, saints, and other believing men and women from Adam (AS) until the Day of Resurrection are presented before Syed Muhammad Jaunpuri, who examines their deeds and determines their acceptance or rejection. They assert that God Almighty commands these souls:

“Make correct what you have done by comparing your deeds with the treasure from which you were granted them.”

In the Mahdavi book Panj Fazā’il (The Five Virtues) it is written that Syed Muhammad Jaunpuri said to his soninlaw, Khund Mir:

“Just as the verification of souls (taṣḥīḥ-e-rwāḥ) takes place through me, so it shall take place through you as well.”

The Mahdavis further claim that Syed Jaunpuri is the Lawgiver of a new Shari‘ah, and that his Shari‘ah abrogates certain commandments of the Muhammadan Law.

According to Mahdavi belief, some of the divine attributes are shared by Syed Jaunpuri himself. In the thirtyfirst chapter of their book *Shawāhid alWilāyah* it is written that the Mahdi (Syed Jaunpuri) said:

“I am aware of all created beings and their conditions, just as a goldsmith examines gold and silver by turning them in his hand and discerning their purity.”¹⁸

In *Panj Fazā'il*, it is stated that Syed Jaunpuri said concerning his disciple *Miyān Dilāwar*:

“For *Miyān Dilāwar*, everything from the Throne (‘Arsh) down to the lowest earth is as clear as a mustard seed held in the palm of one’s hand.”¹⁹

In *Shawāhid alWilāyah*, it is also written that Syed Jaunpuri declared:

“I am the possessor of complete awareness of all existences.”²⁰

According to the absurd notions of the Mahdavis, the companions of Syed Jaunpuri are equal in rank to the Companions of the Holy Prophet . In the thirtyfirst chapter of *Shawāhid alWilāyah*, under the thirtyseventh section of “special virtues,” it is written:

“The Messenger of God declared that the companions of the Mahdi are equal in rank to his own companions.”

In *Panj Fazā'il* it is written that one day *Miyān ‘Abd alRaḥmān* recited a ḥadīth that the Messenger of God said:

“The companions of the Mahdi are my brothers and equal to me in rank.”

Upon hearing this, *Shāh Nizām Mahdavi* remarked: “This description applies to the ordinary companions of the Mahdi; the foremost ones are even higher in station.”²¹

In *Panj Fazā'il*, it is narrated that one day all the Mahdavis were seated in ranks. *Dilāwar*, a disciple of Jaunpuri, said to his wife *Khund Khwund*,

“Look! These are the people who hold the rank of Messengers; a Messenger is one to whom the Archangel *Jibrīl* brings revelation. Yet there are twelve men even superior to these.”

The Mahdavi books further state that in childhood Syed Jaunpuri’s son, Syed *Maḥmūd ibn Khund Mir*, (God forbid) “used to play with God Himself.”²²

In the eighth chapter of *Shawāhid alWilāyah*, it is recorded that Shaykh *Muhājir Mahdi* raised a dead man to life, and Syed Jaunpuri (whom they call “Mahdi Ma ‘ūd”) declared him the deputy of Prophet ‘*Īsā* (Jesus, peace be upon him).

The author further instructs that:

“Anyone who partakes of the spiritual grace of the Mahdi should refrain from uttering the phrase ‘by Allah’s permission’ (biidhni Allāh) even when performing miracles such as Jesus did.”²³

The materials in this chapter are derived from *Tabaqāte Akbarī*, *Muntakhab alTawārīkh* by Badā’ūnī, and *Hadiyahe Mahdawiyyah*. The detailed account of the battle with Raja Dilip Rai was published long ago in a newspaper from Amritsar; the writer must have taken it from a Mahdavi source.

Maulana Muhammad Zaman Shah Jahanpuri Shaheed, in his book *Hadiyahe Mahdawiyyah*, has collected many more blasphemous statements of the Mahdavis. Those who wish to study their refutation may refer ²⁴

Ḥājī Muḥammad Khurāsānī

Ḥājī Muḥammad was born and raised in Farrāh, in Khurasan. He was a disciple of Syed Jaunpuri and later claimed to be the Messiah (‘Īsā ibn Maryam).

In *Shawāhid alWilāyah* it is written that Syed Jaunpuri (the so-called Mahdi) said: “Most of the Prophets and Messengers of firm resolve (Ulū l’Azm) used to pray, ‘O Lord! Make us among the community of Muhammad and include us among the followers of the Mahdi (Jaunpuri).”

In the Mahdavi poetic composition *Dīwāne Mahdi*, attributed to Jaunpuri, the following verse occurs:

“All the Prophets, from Adam to Moses, longed for companionship with him;
Each sought from God the honor of joining the circle of the chosen ones.

From Yahyā to Khaleel (Abraham), all manifestations of sainthood appeared through this wish;

Every Messenger supplicated: ‘O Lord! Make me among the later ones.”

Syed Jaunpuri told his disciples that none of these prayers was accepted except that of ‘Īsā ibn Maryam (Jesus, peace be upon him). Since Jesus belongs to the community of Muhammad and to Jaunpuri’s own circle, he would soon descend to meet him in person.

Whether this supposed meeting between Jesus (AS) and Syed Jaunpuri ever took place is unknown; however, one Mahdavi narration asserts that Jesus did appear to Khund Mir, Jaunpuri’s son-in-law and successor.

In the eighteenth chapter of *Insaaf Nama* (also known as *Matne Sharif*), it is written:

“One night I (Khund Mir) was sitting with full concentration and saw my master Syed Jaunpuri before me. I asked, ‘Master, when will the exalted Jesus come?’ He replied, ‘Soon.’ I asked, ‘Will he come after a hundred years?’ He said, ‘Soon.’ I asked, ‘After forty years?’ He said, ‘Soon.’ I asked, ‘After ten years?’ He said, ‘Soon.’ Then he pointed to one side and said, ‘Behold! Jesus is present ask him yourself.’ Khund Mir says: ‘I then met Jesus (peace be upon him) and conversed with him about many matters though I forgot to ask when exactly he would return.’”²⁵

It is obvious, however, that the being whom Khund Mir claimed to meet could only have been a demon in disguise, for the noble Prophet Jesus (peace be upon him) is far above descending to converse with the followers of a false claimant. Such deceptive encounters are merely the tricks of devils who assume radiant forms to mislead pretentious ascetics. Whoever once glimpses such satanic apparitions remains trapped forever in their delusion. Thus, just as the so-called Mahdi was the fabrication of Satan, so too was this “Jesus” a devilish phantom associated with him.

Another Mahdavi account narrates that their Mahdi said:

“Jesus, son of Mary, will appear after me.”

According to Bahīj alFadā’il, it is reported that one day while Syed Jaunpuri was going to relieve himself, his disciple Ḥāḥī Muḥammad Khurāsānī asked him: “Master, you have already come when will Jesus arrive?”

The question was based on the wellknown Prophetic traditions that mention Jesus’ descent during the lifetime of the Mahdi. Syed Jaunpuri turned and replied:

“He will appear after me, in Damascus.”

If Jesus were to appear only after the death of the Mahdi, as Jaunpuri claimed, that would contradict the Prophetic hadiths in which Jesus descends during the Mahdi’s era.

Panj Fazā’il records that as soon as Jaunpuri said, “Jesus will appear after me,” Ḥāḥī Muḥammad

Khurāsānī was instantly elevated to the rank of Jesus (‘Īsā Rūḥ Allāh). Yet, according to the authentic Prophetic narrations, it is Jesus himself, not another person, who will descend bodily upon the eastern minaret of Damascus not someone who merely attains his “spiritual station.”

Nevertheless, if we look at the matter impartially, one might say that Ḥāḥī Khurāsānī was at least more consistent than the Qadiani Messiah, Mirza Ghulam Ahmad. He claimed the rank of Jesus effortlessly, whereas Ghulam Ahmad had

to pass through long and painful stages before proclaiming himself “Jesus son of Mary.”

According to his own writings, Ahmad first became a symbolic “Mary,” then conceived, became pregnant, and after ten months gave birth to a “boy” and that boy, he claimed, was Jesus son of Mary thus making himself “‘Īsā ibn Maryam.” In contrast, Ḥājī Khurāsānī attained the rank of “Messiah” in a single leap!

Panj Fazā’il further records that although Khurāsānī attained this “station of Jesus,” he dared not declare his Messiahship during his master’s lifetime. After Jaunpuri’s death, however, he went to Thatta in Sindh and openly proclaimed himself the Present Messiah.

In reality, the true Jesus, son of Mary (peace be upon him), will descend personally, in bodily form, upon the eastern minaret of Damascus during the time of the real Mahdi. Nevertheless, when Khurāsānī made his claim, it caused great distress to Syed Jaunpuri’s son and successor, Syed Maḥmūd.

References

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² *Shawahid al-Wilayah, by Burhanuddin Mahdi, “Chapter 29: On the Blessed Names of the Caliph of the Merciful, the Heir of the Sons of the Sublime,” p. 333, Dār al-Ishā‘at Kutub Salaf al-Sālihīn, Mahdavi Daira, Mushirabad, Hyderabad Deccan, 1179 AH.*

³ *Insafnama (Matn Sharif), Bandagi Miyan Syed Yusuf, Dār al-Ishā‘at Kutub Salaf al-Sālihīn (Mahdavi Daira, Mushirabad, Hyderabad Deccan, 1374 AH), p. 23.*

⁴ *Khazinat al-Asfiya, by Mufti Ghulam Sarwar, Maktaba Nabawiyyah, Lahore, 1873.*

⁵ *Hamare Mahdi, Hazrat Muhammad Nur al-Din al-‘Arabi, p. 6, Maktaba Miran, Nishat, Chhachhal Gaud, Hyderabad, 1393 AH.*

⁶ *(Hamare Mahdi, Hazrat Muhammad Nur al-Din al-Arabi, p. 14, Maktaba Miran, Nishat, Chhachhal Gaud, Hyderabad, 1393 AH)*

⁷ *(Hamare Mahdi, Hazrat Muhammad Nur al-Din al-Arabi, p. 20)*

⁸ *(Hamare Mahdi, Hazrat Muhammad Nur al-Din al-Arabi, p. 39)*

⁹ *(Sunan Abu Dawud, Kitab al-Mahdi, Hadith no. 4282)*

¹⁰ *Sunan Ibn Majah, Kitab al-Fitan, Bab Khuruj al-Mahdi, Hadith no. 4085.*

¹¹ *Musnad Ahmad ibn Hanbal, Hadith ‘Abdullah ibn Mas‘ud, Vol. 1, p. 376.*

¹² *(Narrated by Muslim and by Ahmad from Abu Sa‘id al-Khudri.)*

¹³ *(Narrated by Muslim and Ahmad.)*

¹⁴ *(Narrated by Muslim and by Abu Nu‘aym in his book on al-Mahdi.)*

¹⁵ (Note: These hadiths are taken from *Mishkat al-Masabih*, *Kanz al-‘Ummal*, and *Bij al-Karamah*.)

¹⁶ (S. A. A. Rizvi, *A History of Sufism in India*, Vol. II, Delhi, 1983)

¹⁷ (*Insaaf Nama*, *Dār al-Ishā‘at* at *Kutub-e-Salaf al-Şāliḥīn*, known as the Mahdavi Circle, *Mushirabad*, Hyderabad Deccan, 1374 AH, p. 174, Statement 36.)

¹⁸ (*Shawāhid al-Wilāyah* by *Burhān-ud-Dīn Mahdi*, 26th Section, p. 388, *Dār al-Ishā‘at* at *Kutub-e-Salaf al-Şāliḥīn*, Mahdavi Dār’irah, *Mushirabad*, Hyderabad Deccan, 1779 AH.)

¹⁹ (*Panj Fazā’il*, *Ḥaḍrat Miyān Rūḥullāh*, *Faḍā’il-e-Miyān Dilāwar*, p. 71, *ibid.*)

²⁰ (*ibid.*, ch. 8, p. 56.)

²¹ (*Shawāhid al-Wilāyah*, 26th Section, p. 398.)

²² (*Panj Fazā’il*, *Faḍā’il-e-Miyān Dilāwar*, p. 83.)

²³ (*Shawāhid al-Wilāyah*, ch. 8, p. 57.)

²⁴ to *Hadiyah-e-Mahdawiyyah*, printed in Kanpur (pp. 21–33).

²⁵ (*Insaaf Nama*, by *Bandagi Miyān Syed Yusuf*, *Dār al-Ishā‘at* at *Kutub-e-Salaf al-Şāliḥīn*, Mahdavi Dār’irah, *Mushirabad*, Hyderabad Deccan, 1374 AH, p. 174, Statement 18.)