
Relationship with Maulana Muhammad Ali

There was a warm relationship of respect and affection between Maulana Muhammad Ali, the Head of the Lahore Ahmadiyya *Jama'at*, and Maulana Abdul Haq Vidyarthi, a writer and missionary of this *Jama'at*.

1. In the biography of Maulana Muhammad Ali, entitled *Mujahid-i Kabir* and translated into English as *A Mighty Striving*, Maulana Abdul Haq Vidyarthi contributed the following impressions:

“It was from the late Hazrat Maulana that I acquired my interest in the propagation of Islam and the Holy Quran. Although I had very little opportunity to study from him directly, but mere encouragement from a teacher suffices for life. And he was a teacher who had inherited in full measure from the Promised Messiah the qualities of humility, and respect and appreciation of friends, as well as the passion to serve Islam. Twice I had occasion to spend summer with him at a hill resort: once in Simla and once in Dalhousie. People go to hill resorts to enjoy life but what made the deepest impression upon me was his zeal to serve Islam and the sound of his fast moving pen with the ticking of the clock. He would start work punctually and carry on writing and writing. In those days in Simla he wrote *Sirat Khair-ul-Bashar* and had it calligraphed for printing. My duty, in addition to other tasks, was proof-reading with the Maulana. It usually happened that, when after working all day long we young ones were tired and felt like going for a pleasant walk in the mountains, we would hear him call out: Come and let us read the proofs. So untiring was he that, while we young people would give up, he knew not the meaning of fatigue.

The other thing which made an impression on me was that at that time, while I myself was learning, I also used to teach the Quran to someone. Hazrat Amir [Maulana Muhammad Ali] must have been able to hear me in his room. One day he said to me: ‘Your explanation of the Quran is very good and reasonable’. His comments were, I believe, meant to encourage me. A person who is an expert in some field tries to create the same talent in others. On a later occasion too in Muslim Town, he said to me most insistently that I should write my explanations of the Holy Quran, and he further commented that they would be more popu-

lar than my book *Muhammad in World Scriptures*. He also offered to get them published.

The second time I went to the hills with him was when I was not in good health. He took me with him to Dalhousie and there he gave me special instructions about my diet. On many occasions he would bring foodstuff to my room and stress that I eat it as it was good for health. My mail came via his address, but never did he call me to come and collect it. He would bring it to me downstairs to my room, saying 'this letter is for you'. This is how he treated his assistants. Even now recalling those days brings tears to my eyes.

Let me also mention something else. In the meetings of the Anjuman, of which I too was a member, every member had freedom of speech. It was not like the subservient court of the *Khalifa* of Qadian. Objections used to be raised and some members would argue with Hazrat Amir and occasionally say something inappropriate. After the meetings, he used to return home to Muslim Town, where I and some other friends met him for prayers in the Muslim Town mosque. He would never mention what happened in the meeting, while it is quite natural for a person who is hurt to talk to others about it. If we ever broached the subject, saying that so and so had acted badly, he would only smile and evade the subject, putting an end to the matter.

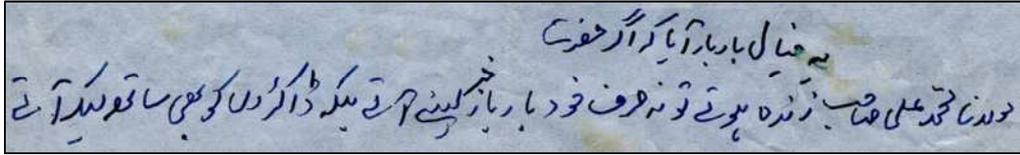
I remember there was a time when, in reply to the late Maulana Shibli, a magazine entitled *Al-Nazir* used to be published from Lucknow containing articles against religion and in support of agnosticism. Its objections against the existence of God appeared to be very strong. I presented them to many great *Ulama* but none could give satisfactory replies. There must have been many people who were misguided by those articles. If memory serves me right, they were written by Maulana Abdul Majid Daryabadi who, in those days, used to mock and ridicule God and religion. As he admits, he was agnostic. I would say that he was made agnostic by the translations and commentaries of the Quran which were then commonly studied, and he in turn made other people agnostic. Now the same Maulana Abdul Majid Daryabadi is a translator and preacher of the Quran and lover of Islam. What was this due to? He has himself testified that this change in him was due to the English translation of the Quran by Maulana Muhammad Ali.

The *Masnawi* of Rumi is known as ‘the Quran in the Pahlavi language’. Maulana Abdul Majid Salik, former editor of *Inqilab*, himself relates that once Maulana Muhammad Ali asked him for a review of his English translation of the Quran and he replied: If the Holy Quran had been revealed in English, it would have been the translation of Muhammad Ali.”¹

2. In October 1966 Maulana Abdul Haq Vidyarthi had a road accident in the inner city area of Lahore, in which he was knocked unconscious and taken to hospital. He wrote a letter about it, in which he said at the end:

“The thought came to my mind again and again that if Hazrat Maulana Muhammad Ali were alive, he would not only have come to ask after me many times but would have brought doctors with him.”

Below is an image of the lines of the letter where he wrote this:



The image of the entire letter can be seen at this link:

www.abdulhaq.info/life/accident.htm

3. Once, during a meeting of the Trustees of the Lahore Ahmadiyya Anjuman, a member objected that the Anjuman had in the past wasted a huge amount of money on running the Isha‘at Islam College, and its only achievement was to produce Maulana Abdul Haq Vidyarthi. On this, Maulana Muhammad Ali replied: **Then it was a great bargain!**

4. Around 1929, the *Jami‘at-ul-‘Ulama Hind* (the main association of the *Ulama* of the Indian subcontinent) wrote officially to the Ahmadiyya Anjuman Isha‘at Islam Lahore asking for the services of Maulana Abdul Haq Vidyarthi to be lent to them for two years to train their *Ulama* in debating. They offered to pay him two and a half times the salary he was receiving from the Anjuman, and allow him still to do any necessary work for the Anjuman in this period. Maulana Muhammad Ali replied to their request by stating:

¹ The last two paragraphs were added to *A Mighty Striving* from Maulana Abdul Haq Vidyarthi’s tribute in the special issue of *Paigham Sulh* issued on the death of Maulana Muhammad Ali, dated 26 December 1951.

“As we have only one Abdul Haq we cannot spare him, but if you send your students to us here we will train them in the propagation of Islam.

5. I may also add here the following incident which was told to me (Zahid Aziz) by Maulana Muhammad Ali’s younger son, Hamid Farooq. He was a young boy staying with his family in Dalhousie for the summer. Maulana Abdul Haq Vidyarthi was also there, and the Maulana would often take him for a walk in the mountains. One day, when he and the Maulana were on a walk, from the other side was coming Mirza Mahmud Ahmad, the *khalifa* of the Qadiani *Jama‘at*, along with his entourage. After Mirza Mahmud Ahmad had passed them, he stopped and addressed his company loudly, recounting to them the services of Maulana Abdul Haq Vidyarthi and eulogising his work. When they went on their way, the Maulana said to Hamid Farooq: “He was trying to impress me by lavishing praises on me!”

6. Mr Naseer Ahmad Faruqi writes that when he visited Maulana Haq Vidyarthi a few days before his death, the Maulana smiled and said:

“During the night Hazrat Amir *marhoom* [Maulana Muhammad Ali] came and said to me: Pack up your things and come with me.”

Relating this dream, the Maulana laughed out loud, rather than being gloomy at the prospect of his impending death. This dream conveyed the glad tidings referred to in the Quran as follows: “And whoever obeys Allah and the Messenger, they are with those upon whom Allah has bestowed favours from among the prophets and the truthful and the faithful and the righteous, and a goodly company are they!” (4:69) As Maulana Muhammad Ali had already joined this company of “the prophets and the truthful and the faithful and the righteous”, Maulana Abdul Haq Vidyarthi was given the news that he too would be soon joining this goodly company.