

Majalis-e-Khamsa

*Majalis-e-Khamsa is the account of five debates between scholars of Mughal Emperor Akbar's court and **Hazrat Shaikh Mustafa Gujarati**. These debates took place in the presence of Akbar himself. The debates have been translated into English by Faqir Syed Ziaullah Yedullahi Sahab.*

Given below is an extract from the book which is the introduction of Hazrat Shaikh Mustafa Gujarati.

In the name of Allah, Most Gracious, Most Merciful

HAZRAT SHAIKH MUSTAFA GUJARATI

Mian Shaikh Mustafa Gujarati, the author of this book, was born in Naharwala (now the city of Patan) in Gujarat in 932 AH (1527 AD). He was the scion of a Bohra family and the son of Mian Shaikh Abdur Rashid, an eminent scholar and the author of Naqliat Mian Abdur Rashid, an authentic record on the traditions of Imam Syed Muhammad Mahdi al-Mau'ood of Jaunpur (Uttar Pradesh in India). He received his early education at the feet of his illustrious father. When he reached the age of discretion, he took the vows of discipleship at the hands of Bandagi Mian Pir Muhammad, a murshid (guide) of great spiritual achievements. Then he took the oath of fealty in the service of Hazrat Shihabul Haq and Bandagi Mian Syed Mahmood Syedanji Khatim-ul-Murshideen. Hazrat Syedanji saw signs of great spiritual accomplishments in Shaikh Mustafa and permitted him to set up his own Daira and start preaching. Hazrat Shaikh set up his Dairas at many places. Innumerable people received the blessings of Allah as his disciples.

Hazrat Shaikh was called to the court of Mughal Emperor Akbar and was incarcerated for two years. During this period, a debate on the Mahdavi faith and beliefs went on for eighteen months. He made a record of the debates as the process went on. Due to the passage of time, these records have perished. Of them, the record of only five sittings have been retrieved. The original is in Persian. It had been translated into Urdu by Hazrat Syed Dilawar alias Goray Mian of Begum Bazar, Hyderabad Deccan. This Urdu translation is being repeatedly published for over half a century.

Malik Sulaiman author of Tarikh-e-Sulaimani writes: Pleased by the speeches and arguments of Mian Shaikh Mustafa Gujarati in the court during the debates on Mahdavi beliefs, Emperor Akbar wanted to grant some jagirs to him. But the Shaikh used to reply that the celebrated personalities of the Mahdavi sect refused to accept worldly wealth from kings. He said that they considered such grants, fixed periodical and other sources of income as haram (prohibited). When the Ulema of the court saw that they were unable to defeat the Shaikh in debate, they conspired to find an excuse which would cause his continued imprisonment.

They insisted on the Emperor not releasing him unless he accepted a jagir, which he had termed as haram (prohibited). The Ulema did their worst to torment the Shaikh. Finding no other way, they again conspired to ask the Shaikh what he thought of the Emperor who had

not accepted Syed Muhammad of Jaunpur as Imam Mahdi al-Mau'ood. When they repeatedly insisted on an answer Shaikh Mustafa finally said : "I call a person, who accepts Syed Muhammad as Mahdi al-Mau'ood as a momin (faithful). I call a person, who refutes Mahdi, as a kafir (infidel). I call Akbar akfar (worse infidel), if he refutes Mahdi." On hearing this, the Ulema were angry, but could not say or do anything without the permission of the Emperor.

Continuing the narrative, Tarikh-e-Sulaimani says that the Emperor called the Shaikh for a private audience late one night and asked for an explanation for the disrespect. The Shaikh replied that Prophet Muhammad and Imam Mahdi, standing on his right and left, asked him to reply boldly that one who refuted Mahdi was akfar. "I got the courage to tell the truth after this," he added. The emperor believed him and permitted him to go where he pleased. "But, please, accept the jagir," he pleaded. Finally, the jagir was granted in the name of the Shaikh's son, Shaikh Abdullah.

After his release from captivity, the Shaikh came to Bayana (in Rajasthan) and set up his Daira there. He died the same year, 984 AH (1578 AD) at the age of 52.

A collection of his letters to his contemporaries had been compiled by him and was recently published with its Urdu translation. The letters reveal his profound devotion to Allah and ways and means to do penance to reach spiritual heights and finally realise the Ultimate Truth.

(From Muntakhab-ut-Tawarikh and prefaces to the translation of two books, Majalis-e-Khamsa by Hazrat Syed Dilawar, and, Makateeb by Hazrat Syed Khuda Bakhsh Rushdi, respectively.)

SESSION I

I was taken in shackles to the court where the Mughal Emperor Akbar, Emirs and some Ulema (religious scholars) were already seated.

I said : Assalaam Alaikum

They suitably replied. They sat in a circle and made me sit in the middle.

First, the **Emperor asked my name**.

I said : Mustafa.

The Emir of Surat Fort (in Gujarat), who was present in the court said he had never seen so unclean a Mustafa in the world.

The Emperor was irritated at this and said : Shame on you. He is an elderly person and one should talk to him respectfully.

Turning to me, the Emperor said : We know you are a respected elderly person and a guide. Veiled women, emirs and the king of Gujarat wait at your door-step. Your benediction and paskhurda (what remains after eating and drinking) is respectfully taken to Agra, Gaur (in Bengal) and Surat (in Gujarat). Reference to you is very often made in our court. At the instance of the Ulema and as the need arised, you have been brought here in shackles. What do you think of us?

In reply, **I said** : Somebody asked a murshid (spiritual guide) to define faqiri (the life-style of a faqir). The murshid said it was like sifted and moistened dust; it did neither soil the back of the foot, nor cause pain to the sole. I belong to the religion of ahl-e-batin (saintly heart) and my heart is untainted and pure. I am happy about everyone.

The Emperor then said : The Ulema and mashayakh (religious guides) are very hostile to you. They have petitioned to us many times that great trouble had occurred in Gujarat. The son of a Shaikh had adopted the religion of innovators (bid'atis) and invites all people to his cult. Poladis, Afghans and many others, including some Ulema, had also joined it. Hence, it is the duty of the Emperoro to suppress this trouble. It is because of the efforts of the Ulema that you have fallen into this predicament. How far is your heart afflicted by this?

In reply, I recited a Persian couplet which means that I am not afflicted by what others do, because, whatever is done to me, is done by my Friend (Allah).

After this the discussion veered round to Mahdait. The Emperor asked: What do you say? Mahdi al-Mau'ood is yet to come? Or that he has come and gone?

I said : Mahdi al-Mau'ood has come and gone.

Pandemonium broke out among the courtiers. They started abusing and making acrimonious remarks. Some of them menacingly came towards me.

They said : Killing this man will bring great rewards (from Allah).

Kalan Khan, one of the courtiers, said : I will kill him with my own hands. If the Emperor becomes angry, he will be angry at us. We will respond. We will tell him that this man deserved to be killed, according to Shariat. And, therefore, we killed him.

The Emperor said : Silence. We ask him for his arguments. Let us see what he has to say. We should enquire into his beliefs. After the enquiry, we will take suitable action.

Silence prevailed at this point.

Turning to me, the Emperor said : Describe in detail how you accepted and reposed faith (iman) in Imam Mahdi and how did you know that Syed Muhammed, who migrated from Jaunpur, claimed to be Mahdi al-Mau'ood in Gujarat and was laid to rest in Farah (in Afghanistan) was in fact Mahdi al-Mau'ood? How did you find out that the place of birth of Mahdi al-Mau'ood was Jaunpur, the place of the announcement of his claim to be Mahdi al-Mau'ood was in Gujarat and his place of burial was Farah? There is a Hadith (Prophet Muhammad's tradition) about the places of birth, claim and death of Mahdi. Ulema from Arab and Ajam (non-Arab lands) and the imams of Makkah and Madina are all convinced of the mischief and falsehood of the claim. You are learned, wise, and a spiritual guide. In spite of all this, how did you accept the claim and now invite the people of these beliefs. You should tell us all about your acceptance, the whole of your story.

I said : My ancestors belonged to the Sufi order and were mashayakheen (religious patriarchs) of tariqat (religious observances). It is generally accepted that in the religion of mystics, the refusal to accept the word of a vali (saint) is prohibited; it is worse than a killer poison. Many from among the *ahl-e-zahir* (worldly people) did not accept the word of the saints and lost their iman (faith) and divine knowledge. They went astray in the wilderness of spiritual destructions. All this is clearly written in the books of Khwaja Junaid Baghdadi, Imam Muhammad al-Ghazali and Shaikh Shihabuddin Suhrawardi. Be that as it may, we knew for sure by tawatur (continuity of the narrations) that Hazrat Syed Muhammad had claimed in congregations of Ulema and mashayakheen that he was Mahdi, he stood by his claim to his last breath and the signs of his sainthood (vilayat) manifested themselves all

over the world. The manifestations of his grace became well known every where. So much so, that illiterates became fully acquainted with the nuances of Shariat (Islamic Code of Law) and recognition of Allah through his (Imam Mahdi's) companionship to a degree that their knowledge and competence are beyond description. Their commendable attributes and illustrious actions. Like tawakkul (trust in Allah), truth, obeisance, gentleness, politeness and other virtues reached excellence. This again is beyond description. Each one among his followers became a spiritual guide in his own right. Thousands of followers flocked around such spiritual guides. They renounced worldliness and became the seekers of Allah within the limits of tariqat and Shariat and realised the Ultimate Reality. On the basis of the religion of Sufis, we accepted the Imam as Mahdi al-Mau'ood and knelt at his door-step. We abstained from wordy duels and discussions which is the usual practice among the Ulema-e-zahir (experts in worldly knowledge). Mashyakheen of tariqat have written in their books : "O the traveler of the path of the (Ultimate) Truth : Be careful ; keep yourself away from rejecting the aulia Allah (saints) so that you do not destroy the fruit of your Faith (Iman). And, look at the word of Allah that Prophet Moses who was endowed with the glory of Prophethood told Prophet Khizr, in view of the compulsions of the Laws of Torah, that 'Truly, a strange thing hast thou done' (XVIII : 71), and then how in utter humility and modesty Prophet Moses said : 'Rebuke me not for forgetting, nor grieve me by raising difficulties in my case.' (XVIII : 73). But the light of the Prophethood of Moses is required so that we could identify the nur (light) of the sainthood, that is Imam Mahdi al-Mau'ood. What do the ignorant and worldly pirs know? In short, the beliefs of Mashayakheen of Tariqat are manifest. But let not the Ulema of your court think that the proof of the Mahdiat of Syed Muhammad of Jaunpur is confirmed to what I have just said. No. We know that what we have just said is not the final argument for the Ulema of Shariat. But, since you had asked me to describe from the beginning to the end, my story in detail, I said all that I have just said. We now come to the scientific argument that when Imam Mahdi al-Mau'ood was accepted on the basis of what has been described above, that is, the beliefs of the Mashaykheen of Tarqat, the Ulema-e-zahir disputed our acceptance of the Imam and started a debate on the subject. They asserted that our beliefs were wrong and that we were faithless. They went to the extent of issuing fatwas (religious edicts) ordering us to be exterminated or killed. They got some Mahadavis killed just for saying that Mahdi had come and gone. We were astonished. We were intrigued whether our beliefs were wrong under the Quran and Hadith-e-mutawatir (continuity in narration of Hadiths) and the consensus of the Ummah (followers of Islam), and if so, it was our duty to repent and return to the truth. But if our beliefs are correct according to the Quran, the Hadith and consensus of the Ummah, we need not bother about the opposition, reproach and torture by the opponents of Imam Mahdi. For Allah says : "Whoso works righteousness benefits his own soul; whoever works evil, it is against his own soul:" (XLI : 46). Hence, it is not necessary for us to repudiate Hazrat Syed Muhammad Mahdi al-Mau'ood on the basis of what the *Ulema-e-Zahir* say. (To take two instances :) The sayings of the *Jamaat Asaba* (the group of paternal relations) about their younger brother (Joseph) : "They said : 'Truly Joseph and his brother are loved more by our father than we; but we are a goodly body! Really our father is obviously wandering (in his mind)! Slay ye Joseph.....'" (XII : 8). And the sayings of the group of angels about Adam: "... They said : 'Wilt thou place therein one who will make mischief therein and shed blood....'" (II : 30). We do not give credence to the words of the brothers of Joseph and the group of angels. The Ulema-e-zahir of our times do not command more dignity or excellence than them. How can we reject the claim of Imam Mahdi on the basis of the blind following of these Ulema? To find out the truth we studied the books of our predecessors. We found references to Imam Mahdi in the books of Hadith (traditions of Prophet Muhammad). We found that no Hadith-e-mutawatir (a number of traditions giving continuity to prove an event) had been reported in respect of Imam Mahdi as Mutawatir-ul-ma'ani (continuity in meaning). However, no mujtahid (religious director) or mufassir (commentator of Quran) has said anything definite about the signs of Imam Mahdi, because

the ahadith (traditions) are obviously ahaad (single traditions without corroboration); such traditions give only the benefit of assumption and assumptions cannot be relied upon in matters of beliefs. Besides, there are obvious contradictions. Some traditions say that Mahdi and Jesus will come at the same time, while others say that they will come at different times. Similarly, some traditions say that Dajjal (Anti-Christ) will come during the time of Imam Mahdi while others say that he would come after the appearance of the Imam. Again, there is contradiction in various traditions about the places of birth, claim and death, and dates of appearance of Imam Mahdi. Hence, the Ulema of the past hesitated and deliberated about the matter because of their immense intellectual honesty. They finally left it to Allah. They agreed on the point that Imam Mahdi was Aadil (just and righteous). He will be among the descendants of Fatima, daughter of Prophet Muhammad. He will appear when Allah wished to help His religion. In short, contradictory statements in the traditions give rise to doubts. Ulema in the Emperors court and of Naharwala town tried their best to disprove the possibility and create doubts about Imam Mahdi but they failed. They came to the conclusion that the appearance of Syed Muhammad as Imam Mahdi was possible and that those who reposed trust in him were not liable to be derided. They said that the Mahdavis should not invite others to their religion and beliefs on the basis of the possibility because the possibility alone was not a final argument. In short, a study of the books of traditions showed that it did not become necessary to find fault with and deride a follower of Imam Mahdi. It was not just, they said, to attribute kufr (infidelity), zalalat (deviation from the right path) and bid'at (innovation) to the followers of Imam Mahdi. To issue a fatwa (religious edict) to behead them was unjust tyranny. May Allah bless him who does justice. The Court Ulema argued that it appeared from the speech of Shaikh Mustafa that, according to the Ulema of the past, it was proved that Mahdi called Mahdi al-Mau'ood was not proved to be Imam Mahdi. Hence, the Shaikh deserved to be blamed (as wrong) by his own confession.

I replied : It is necessary that Mahdi's imamat (leadership) was bound to be similar to the imamat of the Prophets and not that of the worldly kings because all Prophets were imams and their leadership was not dependent and contingent upon their having possessions of kingdoms and wealth. In respect of Prophets, Allah says : "And We appointed, from among them, leaders, giving guidance under Our command, so long as they persevered with patience...." (XXXII : 24). A few hundred prophets suffered certain poverty and were martyred by their detractors. Where did they have a country in possession, a large army and immense riches? On the basis of this meaning, it is proved that Syed Muhammad was Mahdi and under the Quranic injunction, "giving guidance under Our command," invited the people to Allah. In short, it is proved from a study of the books of Hadith that Syed Muhammad was an imam (leader).

The Ulema quoted the Hadith in which Prophet Muhammad had said that Mahdi would fill the earth (al-arz) with justice and fair-play, as it was filled with oppression and tyranny. They asked me whether I considered it to be correct or contrived (mauzu).

I said : We consider it to be correct.

The Emperor asked : How does it reconcile with your stand?

I replied : Allah had said in respect of Shu'aib (identified with Juthro, According to Pickthal) : "Do no mischief on the earth, after it had been set in order...." (VII : 56). In this Verse, the word al-arz (the earth) means the land of Madyan because Shu'aib appeared on the land of Madyan as Allah says : "To the Madyan people we sent Shu'aib, one of their own brethren : " (VII : 85). The consensus of the commentators of Quran is that there were in all 400,000 mounted soldiers in Madyan but none other than the two daughters of Shu'aib accepted him as Prophet and obeyed him. In spite of this, Allah says "Do no mischief on the earth of Madyan, O followers of Shu'aib after it had been set in order." The point to be considered here, is that nobody in Madyan had reposed faith in Shu'aib and abstained from

mischief : yet, Allah says : "After it had been set right" What does it mean? Hence, it is obvious that here "setting right" means Shu'aib's call to the people to set right or invitation towards good. Whether somebody obeys him or not is immaterial. In accordance with the commandment of Allah. it can be said that Shu'aib invited the people of the land of Madyan to set it in order. Some of the commentators have said that Shu'aib did good deeds and invited others to do good deeds. In this sense of Shu'aib inviting the people of the earth (al-arz) to set it in order, Imam Mahdi also invited the people of the earth (al-arz) to justice. Many people reposed faith in Imam Mahdi, obeyed him and sacrificed their life and property for him and made themselves the target of reproach.

At this point, the Ulema said : Your argument on this count is not correct because all your trouble is confined to the town of Patan (in Gujarat). It is not known in any other town or country. Hence, your argument that Mahdi had filled the whole world with justice as had been done by Shu'aib in the town of Madyan is wrong. By your own admission, you have made yourself blameworthy.

I replied : There is contradiction in your contentious. Just now you were saying that during the reign of Salim Shah, when Shaikh Ala'i was produced for beheading, he refused to retract from his faith in Imam Mahdi, while some of his followers had reneged, that somebody asked why he did not renege while his followers did, he had said that as the leader, he had to act according to the highest principles while the followers could adopt easygoing ways. In short, you know that nobody was known to be as strict in piety, discipline and devotion as Shaikh Ala'i. He had made the doorstep of Imam Mahdi his object of veneration and sacrificed his life at that doorstep. This news spread all over the world that a devout aalim (scholar), strict follower of the Shariat and a leader of tariqat had given the information that Imam Mahdi had come and gone, and that he had fought kings, emirs, Ulema and mashayakhs with convincing arguments. There is hardly a person in Arabia or elsewhere who can say that he had not heard of this news. Besides, you were just now saying that the Ulema of this city had sent their complaints to the Ulema of Makkah and that they (the Ulema of Makkah) had issued a fatwa to kill the group of Mahdavis. It is thirty years since this fatwa reached Gujarat. The Ulema of Arabia know that a large group of Mahdavis exists on this earth and this had astounded the Ulema of the non-Arab lands (Ajm). A large number of people follow the group of Mahdavis, that is, it believes that Imam Mahdi has come and gone. The news had spread both to Makkah and Madina; may Allah protect these cities. But then again you say you had heard that somebody had claimed to be Mahdi in Patan town and that you had not heard anything more than that. In another breath, you say that the misfortune of your waywardness had reached Gaur (in Bengal) and East, where there are thousand of people who follow our claim that Imam Mahdi had come and gone and fallen into this waywardness (gumrahi). You also say that our waywardness had reached Badakhshan where our friends killed a Badakhshani. People of Shiraz had fallen into perversity in following our ways. Mullah Alauddin has come from Shiraz and joined our company. There is a group of Mahdavis in Hirat, Farah and Qandhar. Furthermore, Shaikh Abdunnabi, who is the president of (the Ulema of) the Emperor's court, and Qazi Yaqub, who is the Malik-ul-Quzat (chief justice), have both said in this very court before the Ulema that Emperor Akbar had come all the way to Gujarat to put down the Mahdavi menace; otherwise, an ordinary servant of his was enough to conquer Gujarat because the Gujarat army was not strong enough to warrant the invasion by the Emperor, while I am as insignificant as a straw among the group of Mahdavis. But to put me down, the mighty Emperor Akbar had to come himself to Gujarat. In spite of all this evidence how can you in fairness say that the news of Imam Mahdi's claim was confined to a town like Patan and that you had not heard about it from anywhere else. In fact, the whole world is agog with the news that a big group of Mahdavis had spread and invites the people to give up innovations, strictly follow Prophet Muhammad and Quran, observe the commands of

Shariat and abstain from what had been prohibited therein; that in prayers and supplications, it adopts the highest standards. Piety, truth, renunciation, honesty, secludedness, acceptance of the life of poverty with resignation and philanthropy are the cornerstones of the Mahdavi faith and practice. Day and night the group sings the paeans that Imam Mahdi had come and gone. Therefore, the Ulema should not falsely say that the news of Imam Mahdi was confined to the town of Patan only.

At this stage, the Emperor said : There is no way other than to say : 'Unto you your religion, and unto me my religion.' (CIX :6). Because, it is impossible to defeat you in argument. But why is it that the commentators of Quran have decreed this Verse as repealed?

I said : Some of the commentators have treated the Verse as not repealed.

The Emperor asked : Which of the Commentators?

I replied : Qazi Baizavi, for instance.

The Ulema of the court told the Emperor : There is no need to discuss this matter. Shaikh Mahdavi's word does not deserve to be taken into consideration. He is the mischief-monger of our era. We are the people of learning who sit with the king. When we listen to the Shaikh with attention, we sometimes feel that the Shaikh is probably right. His word casts influence on our minds. Such a mischief-monger should not be allowed to go free. The fatwa of the Ulema of Makkah is enough as the final argument for us, because they are the best in the world and their fatwa would not be wrong. Under their fatwa, the Shaikh should be beheaded.

The Emperor asked me : Had you been to Makkah?

I said : No.

The Emperor asked : Had the Ulema of Makkah come to Gujarat?

Again **I said** : No.

The Emperor said : What kind of a people are they! Without coming to Gujarat and without enquiring or issuing a warning, they have issued a fatwa to behead the Mahdavis on the issue of Imam Mahdi's appearance and death, on the basis of what their (the Mahdavis') enemies had to say. This is not the work of Allah-fearing Ulema.

The Ulema of the court said : O Emperor, compared to the Ulema of Makkah, we are illiterate. It does not lie in our mouth to criticise or contradict their word. We have to follow their word and act accordingly.

Addressing one of the Ulema, the son of a mullah, the Emperor said : Tell us about the story of your father who had lived in Makkah for a long time and was famous as a teacher and a leader. But then the Ulema of Makkah issued a fatwa charging your father of being a rafzi (heretic), an enemy of religion and, therefore, liable to be beheaded. What do you say now? Was the fatwa of the Ulema of Makkah correct and was your father liable to be beheaded? Or, was it that the Ulema of Makkah were jealous of the good name of your father and falsely issued the fatwa against you father?

The son of the mullah said : If the Emperor himself shames the Ulema in front of the Mahdavi innovators, who will come to the help of the Ulema of the religion?

The Emperor said : Yours in an unreasonable argument in a learned discussion. Your reply should be based on scientific argument and knowledge of religion. Now, you follow your father and believe that your father was among the Ahl-e-Sunnat-o-Jamaat. You do not consider your father to be a rafzi (heretic). In this sense, the Ulema of Makkah could be

jealous of your father. When the Ulema of Makkah could be jealous of your father, what argument do you have to believe that they are not jealous of the group of Mahdavis. You answer my question.

The son of the mullah kept quiet.

Feeling defeated, the **Ulema** changed their tactics. They quoted Prophet Muhammad as saying that Truth (Haq) always surmounted falsehood (batil), and **argued** : The group of Mahdavis, wherever it was, lived in poverty and disgrace. We always dominate them. Had they been on the right path, why should their condition be so bad? Please ask this question of the Shaikh.

The Emperor said : It is not necessary to ask this question of the Shaikh. I can tell you the answer that is in the Shaikh's mind.

The Ulema asked : What is it?

The Emperor said : The truth triumphs over falsehood as the Shaikh triumphs over us. See, We are fifty or sixty people here trying to corner the Shaikh by our questions. The Shaikh, despite his poverty, shackles, being away from his father or brother and relatives and friends, sits in our court as if he is our master. He is answering each and every one of our questions with dignity, aplomb and steadfastness. This is the triumph of the Truth over falsehood.

The Ulema said : This argument is beside the point. Triumph, as it manifests itself from outside, is needed.

The Emperor said : Your argument is unreasonable because when two hundred mounted Mughal soldiers seen ten Firangi (European) soldiers, they run like sheep which see a wolf. According to your arguments, the Firangis were on the right path. You should not indulge in unreasonable arguments.

Then turning to me the Emperor said : From the contents of Hadith, you have proved the possibility and probability. In other words, it is possible and probable that your claim of Imam Mahdi having come and gone may be correct. This shows that because of this belief, you are not liable to be beheaded or externed. Had you been steadfast in this belief and not invited other people to accept you belief, it would not have landed you in trouble. The arguments of possibility and probability should not have been used to raise a hue and cry and deceive people that Imam Mahdi would no more come, that all the Ulema were misled. All this is sheer waywardness. You have fallen into this predicament by your pride and ignorance. You should now repent and say that your pir (spiritual guide) was a perfect saint of the highest order (vali-e-kamil). He had claimed on his own to be Mahdi. According to Hadith, it is possible and probable that his claim could be true and you are in his (spiritual) order. It is not justifiable for you to reject the word of your pir, which is possible and probable in Shariat. If, by chance, a Mahdi were to come as is being claimed by experts in Hadith, you will accept him and you will think that you pir had erred in interpreting the revelation or intuition. If, on the contrary, no Mahdi were to come in future, it will be obvious that the real Mahdi al-Mau'ood is the person, who has come and gone. Either you say this, or you give a final argument (to prove that Syed Muhammad of Jaunpur is the real Mahdi).

I replied : Since you had asked me to relate the whole story of my acceptance of Syed Muhammad as the Mahdi al-Mau'ood from the beginning to the end, I presented the arguments of the Sufi saints and experts in Hadith. Otherwise, I know that the Ahadith-e-Ahad (Solitary uncorroborated traditions of Prophet Muhammad) cancel each other under the principle that when two ahadith contradict each other, they cannot be relied upon in arguments. But these arguments in this sitting have proved that even if we (the Mahdavis) have intentionally committed a mistake, we are not liable to be beheaded or externed. How

can we be considered liable to be beheaded and externed when it is obvious that we are on the right path.

Therefore, whoever says that Mahdavis are liable to be beheaded and externed and considers that this order is correct and permitted (jayaz), is himself liable to be inflicted with the same punishment. Now, I present the final argument, by the grace of Allah, the one.

The emperor said : Go ahead.

I said : Ulema of the past have laid down in the books of beliefs some conditions of character and conduct to prove the prophethood of a human being. These conditions have been described in detail. They have arrived at a conclusion by consensus that a person who possess certain qualities, attributes and character, will never be a false pretender. All these qualities can be seen in Sharah-e-Aqaid, Tawale', Sharah-e-Muaqif, Tafseer-e-Madarik, Ahya-ul-Uloom and other books of beliefs. The characteristics and attributes, which have been laid down as a condition for a prophet, we found in Syed Mohammed of Jaunpur who claimed to be Mahdi. Hence, according to the standards, laid down by the Ulema of the past and jurists of the subsequent era, we came to know that truly and certainly Syed Muhammad was the Mahdi al-Mau'ood and there as no doubt about it. Prophet Muhammad has said with reference to Mahdi that he would follow in my footsteps and would not err. This saying of the Prophet has come true in respect of Syed Muhammad of Jaunpur. In other words, the character, conduct and behaviour of Prophet Muhammad was flawlessly followed by Syed Muhammad of Jaunpur. Hence it was realistically known that he alone, and none else, was Mahdi al-Mau'ood. And the probability shown by Hadith finally became a certainty. For, all that was laid down by the Ulema of the past was in conformity with the character and conduct of Imam Mahdi.

The emperor said : You have not seen Syed Muhammad : how did you come to know that the character, conduct and behaviour, laid down by the Ulema of the past, were present in him ?

I Said : We investigated the character of Imam Syed Muhammad as the Ulema of the past had investigated through their research in the books of beliefs the character of Prophet Muhammad and came to the conclusion that this person alone was Mahdi al-Mou'ood.

The Emperor said : From your arguments it appears that the person who bears this character is to be accepted. Suppose in future, some person is born, has all the qualities in him and claims to be Imam Mahdi, what will you say about him?

I Said : No such person will be born and will never claim to be Mahdi al-Mou'ood.

The emperor said : To suppose that the impossible will occur is not impossible. Hence, suppose that somebody is born and makes the claim, what will you say about him?

I replied : Suppose somebody with the character of prophet Muhammad is born and claims that he is the Prophet, what will be your and our reaction? Whatever can be said in that event, will also be said in respect of Imam Mahdi. But such an event will never come to happen. The seal of the Prophets has come and gone and the Seal of the Sainthood (vilayat) too has come and gone.

At this point, the trend of the discussion changed and questions not related to the discussion of Mahdavi beliefs began to be asked. Some of them were : Can an underage (unadult) person be called a companion of the Prophet? What is your opinion about a person who says Hazrat Ali (the fourth Caliph of Islam) was superior (afzal) and more respected than Hazrat Au Bakr (the first Caliph of Islam)? What is your belief in respect of the quarrel

between Hazrat Ali ad Hazrat Mua'wiah? What do you say about cursing Yazid? What are the conditions for a Mujtahid (religious director), according to you? These and similar other questions were asked and replied according to my light. The emperor and the Ulema did not controvert my replies. They appeared to be happy about them.

Since these questions and their replies were not related to the subject under discussion and to be brief, they have been omitted. This sitting had started at dusk and went on till midnight. When the sitting was over, I was handed over to the jailor in-charge.

SESSION II

I was again taken in shackles to the Emperor's court where, besides the Emperor and Ulema, some emirs, who were not present in the earlier sitting, were already occupying their seats. I was made to sit in the centre and all others sat around me in a circle.

To the Ulema, the Emperor said : This is Shaikh Mustafa Mahdavi. You may ask him whatever you want.

The Ulema told me : You are an elderly person and a leader. You possess abilities that people like us can benefit from. On the basis of which argument, do you call Syed Muhammad of Jaunpur as Mahdi al-Mau'ood? Why do you subscribe to beliefs which are against the ahadith (traditions of Prophet Muhammad)? There are signs for Mahdi in the ahadith.

I Replied : There is great contradiction in ahadith describing the signs of Imam Mahdi. It is impossible to identify him on the basis of ahadith. All that can be said on the basis of the ahadith is that Imam Mahdi has come and gone or will come.

The Ulema said : Alas ! It does not lie in your mouth to say such unreasonable things because there cannot be any contradiction among the ahadith of Prophet Muhammad.

To the Emperor, I said : Please listen to me attentively. We say that contradiction does occur among the ahadith, while these Ulema say that there is no contradiction among them. We will concede that we are wrong in our claim about Mahdi, if these Ulema prove, according to the rules of the science of ahadith, that there can be no contradiction among them.

The Emperor told the Ulema : At the beginning of the discussion itself, you are saying a very unreasonable thing. I would be a rafzi (heretic) if there is no contradiction among the ahadith. Today itself, I was reading a book of ahadith. I came across two ahadith about the appearance of Dajjal (Anti-Christ). They contradicted each other. It is obvious that the ahadith about Imam Mahdi too would not be without contradiction.

The Ulema did not reply. Instead, they asked me another question.

The Ulema said : According to a tradition, Prophet Muhammad said in respect of Mahdi that those living on earth and in heavens, would be friendly to Mahdi. In another tradition, it is said that those living on earth and in heavens will be contented, satisfied and happy with Imam Mahdi. How is it that the people of the city are hostile to your Imam and his followers, and keep them at a distance ?

I replied : Look at what Allah has to say. Allah had commanded that people should be benevolent to those who troubled and tormented Prophet Muhammad. Allah says "Nor can

Goodness and Evil be equal. Repel (Evil) with what is better : then will he between whom and thee was hatred becomes as it were thy friend and intimate". (XLI : 34). In other words O Muhammad Mustafa, have a good word to those who are hostile to you, treat them with a better morality and remove their evil with your good; for instance, be patient against their anger, be forbearing against their ignorance. Pardon their evils, be benevolent against their miserliness and so on. In consequence, your enemy will become your friend as if he is your close relative. If you follow this regime, your difficulties will come to an end. Now, think it over. Prophet Muhammad followed the commandment with utmost devotion. But did all those, who were hostile to him, become his friends? Did they eschew their hostility? It is obvious that the hostility of the opponents had reached its zenith. Hence, the Verse should be understood to mean the negligence, ignorance, hostility, malice and belligerence of the kafirs (infidels), so that the meaning of the Verse reflects the situation in favour of Prophet Muhammad because the malicious people are prominent here. With respect to these hostile elements, Allah says : "Even if they see all the signs, they will not believe in them". (VII : 146). Similarly, except the *Ulema-e-Zahir* (worldly Ulema) and their followers, ask anybody. They will all say that they had not seen anybody except the group of Mahdavis who had pleasantness, elegance, courage, uprightness, affection, honesty, brotherhood, bravery, generosity, trust in Allah, surrender to the will of Allah and such good character and conduct. As the Quranic Verse came true in case of Prophet Muhammad, the Hadith has come true in respect of Imam Mahdi and his followers. Further, Prophet Muhammad has said : Verily, when Allah makes one of His servants His friend, He calls Gabriel and tells him that He makes so and so His friend. He asks Gabriel to be friendly to him. Gabriel becomes friendly to him and then announces in Heavens that Allah has made so and so His friend and all others should make him their friend. Hence, all in Heavens make him their friend. He also becomes popular among the people on earth. From this, Hadith, it becomes obvious that all prophets and saints, whether they are from the *sabiqoon* (eminent virtuous people of the past) or *as-hab al-yameen* (people of paradise), are popular among the inhabitants of the earth and the Heavens. All this inspite of Allah's saying. "...And, in defiance of right, slay the Prophets, and slay those who teach just dealing with mankind, ...?" (III : 21), and the Hadith, "Verily the prophets and saints were subjected to most difficult trials and tribulations. " Both the Quranic Verse and the Hadith manifest that trials and tribulations were inflicted on Prophets and saints. It should, therefore, be noted how the saints were subjected to difficulties and how people slandered them. And then Allah tells Prophet Muhammad : "Patiently persevere, as did all apostles of inflexible purpose; ..." (XLVI: 35). Besides, Prophet Muhammad is quoted as saying that his (grandsons) Imam Hasan and Imam Hussain are the leaders of the young men of paradise. But they were subjected to trials and tribulations at Karbala (now in Iraq), so soon after the demise of Prophet Muhammad, by the descendants of his companions. Now you should know that the Hadith, "he becomes popular among the inhabitants of the earth", applies to all prophets and saints. Similarly, the Hadith, "all the inhabitants of the earth and the Heavens make him their friend", applies to Imam Mahadi and his followers.

The Ulema then said : The Hadith should not be interpreted (taveel). The world of Hadith should be believed as it was. One should abstain from violating this rule.

I replied : The religion of Imam Abu Hanifa is based on taveel (interpretation), so much so, that the Ulema of Shafei school of Fiqh call them *as-hab-ur-rai* (opinionated Ulema) and their own Ulema as the *as-hab-al-hadith* (Ulema of Hadith). Prophet Muhammad has said that the actions are related to the intentions. Besides, Prophet Muhammad has also said everyone gets what he intends to achieve. Further, he said wazu (ablution) will not be valid unless there is nee'at (intention) for it. Imam Shafei bases his beliefs on the word of the Hadith, while Imam Abu Hanifa on taveel (interpretation). This is no secret to those who know the differences of opinion among the *mujtahids* (religious directors).

The Ulema said : We accept all that you have said. But if you go in for taveel, the taveel should satisfy us.

I replied : It is not necessary for me to satisfy you. We have satisfied ourselves and our followers by the rules of the religious commandments and Islamic theology. For, a perfect man like Imam Abu Hanifa, despite his immense capabilities and the goodness and superiority in faith, could not satisfy Imam Shafei and the differences between the two imams persisted. I am not superior to Imam Abu Hanifa and you are not superior to Imam Shafei in comprehension and justice. How can the difference of opinion between us be removed? Allah says : "Already has our word been passed before (this to Our servants sent (by us). That they would certainly be assisted, and that our forces, they surely must conquer. (XXXVII : 171, 172, 713). Allah further says : "Allah has decreed; it is I and my apostles who must prevail": for Allah is one, full of strength, able to enforce his will". (LVIII : 21). Allah further says "Ye Must gain mastery if ye are true in Faith". (III : 139). Allah says : "... and it was due from us to aid those who believed" (XXX:47). There are many other similar verses in Quran. Now will you argue on the basis of the manifest wording of the verses or would you explain them in a manner applicable to the condition of the prophets and the faithful? The prophets did not attain outward or manifest dominance over the people hostile to them. They were actually beheaded by their opponents. What do you say about the sorcerers of Fir'aun (Pharaoh) and *As-hab-e-akhood* and such others; whether they were dominant or not? If you rely on the outward meaning of the words, you are bound to come to the conclusion that they were not dominant. To infer this meaning is tantamount to blaming the momineen (believers). But the reality of these momins is proved by convincing arguments. Therefore, we are bound to interpret the Quranic Verses and hadith in a way conducive to the realities of the prophets and their followers so that we are not thrown out of our religion. Allah knows better.

SESSION III

I was brought to the Emperor's court in shackles. **Abdunnabi Danishmand** who was the head of the Ulema of the durbar **told the Emperor :** O Emperor, please do justice. These Mahdavis are few. How can one accept their argument? The majority of the people say that Mahdi al-Mau'ood will come while these few Mahdavis say that Mahdi al-Mau'ood has come and gone. Then, O Emperor, please ask what Shaikh Mustafa has to say.

I asked : Has the Emperor heard the conversion of Prophet Joseph and his brothers or not?

Abdunnabi said : I have heard it many times

The emperor said : Please say. I have not heard it from you.

I said : O Emperor, Ten brothers were the children of one mother. Joseph and Bin yamin were from the other mother. Joseph's brothers, out of jealousy, said that Joseph should be killed, thrown at a place where there was no human being or thrown into a dry well. However, they told their father they would take Joseph out to play with. They took him and threw him into the well of Kin'an. They came a second time and sold him to a trader. Joseph's brothers were many but Joseph was alone. But who was a liar among them?

The Emperor said : All brothers of Joseph were sinners and Liars.

I said : Joseph's brothers were many. How could they be sinners and liars?

The Emperor said : You are turning it on us.

I said : I related the story of Joseph to you because number of mullahs and shaikhs is great and they say that Imam Mahdi will come. I am alone and my brothers are few and we say that Imam Mahdi has come and gone. Who are the liars? O Emperor, please do justice. Again the Emperor conceded that Joseph was right.

I said : If that is so, we Mahdavis, who say that Imam Mahdi has come and gone, are on the right path, because we are few. Allah says : "...Among them are some who have faith and most of them are perverted transgressors". (III : 110). At every point of time, every prophet has been opposed by a majority and only a few people reposed faith in them. Similarly, at the time of Imam Mahdi also, many people opposed and refused to accept him and only a few people accepted him. Hence, it is proved by convincing argument that Imam Mahdi had come and gone. Besides, O Emperor, before creating Adam, Allah told all the angels, 'Behold, thy Lord said to the angels: I will create a vicegerent on earth.' They said: 'Wilt Thou place therein one who will make mischief therein and shed blood?' --- whilst we do celebrate Thy praises and glorify Thy Holy (name)?' He said: I know what ye know not.' And he taught Adam the nature of all things; then placed them before the Angels and said : "Tell me the nature of these if ye are right". They said : 'Glory to Thee : of Knowledge we have none, save what Thou has taught us : In truth it is Thou who are perfect in knowledge and wisdom". (II : 30-32). Two thousand years before the birth of Adam, Allah had told the angels that he intended to create Adam, who would be his vice regent on earth. The angels said O Allah, will you create a person on earth who will shed blood and cause destruction while we sing praises of your purity? Allah said : What We know, you do not know. And when Adam was created, He was instructed in the nature of all things. He informed him of their names and explained all creation. Then, all the things were set before the angels. He asked them to tell the names of all things that were created, if they (the angels) were truthful. The angels were momins (faithful). They repented and said they knew what He had taught them. They said : Verily, He knew everything and He alone issued commandments to the Creation. The point to be noted here is that the angels were all in the Heavens, they had been created out of light (noor). In spite of this, they were jealous of Adam. Why should not the people who are sinful and are madly wedded to worldly desires, not be jealous of Imam Mahdi, his followers and the seekers of Allah? When the angels repented and reposed Faith in the commandments of Allah, in humility, they were accepted by Allah. Similarly, those people, who refute Imam Mahdi, listen to the arguments in proof of Imam Mahdi. Those who are blessed with iman (Faith), repent with modesty and humility and accept Imam Mahdi. They thus become the loved of Allah. Satan has sinned. He refused to prostrate before Adam and said : 'I am better than Adam'. He does not repent now. Similarly, the person, who is not blessed with iman (Faith), does not repent. He too is proud. He does not accept Imam Mahdi. He is therefore, kafir (infidel). Allah said : "If they do fail to judge by (the light of) what Allah hath revealed, they are (no better than) Unbelievers". (V:47). Prophet Muhammad has said "Whoever disbelieved Mahdi, verily, he is Kafir (infidel)". This Hadith has been reported in *Tabaqat Al-Fuqaha*. O Emperor, please do justice. Allah Says : "O David ; we did indeed make thee a vice regent on earth ; so judge thou between men in truth (and justice) ..." (XXXVIII : 26). And Prophet Muhammad said : May Allah bless him who does justice and curse of Allah be on him who does not do justice".

After listening to this, **the Emperor said** : O Shaikh Mustafa, May Allah bless you and may He shower his bounties on you.

Turning to the Ulema, the Emperor said : You also present some arguments in reply to the Shaikh's arguments.

However, none said anything

(Shaikh Mustafa writes) : Allah says : 'Truth has (now) arrived, and Falsehood perished ; for Falsehood is (by its nature) bound to perish. (XVII : 81). Prophet Muhammad has said ; Truth will dominate; it will never be dominated. Hence, it is proved that Imam Mahdi has come and gone.

A few hundred Ulema and Shaikhs had gathered in the Emperor's court for the debate in which by the grace of Allah they were defeated.

The Ulema asked : How many years have passed since Imam Mahdi came and went away?

I replied : Imam Mahdi came in 905 AH after the migration of Prophet Muhammad from Makkah to Madina and claimed to be Mahdi al-Mau'ood in the tenth century AH. Thus he supported the religion of Prophet Muhammad. We (Mahdavis) followed him. Historians have by consensus quoted the Hadith that, according to Abu Huraira, Prophet Muhammad had said that Allah would send at the head of every century a person who will revive the religion for this ummah. Historians have also arrived at the consensus that at the head of the tenth century AH, none other than Imam Mahdi will appear. After this, I recited a Persian couplet, which means : Sun has arisen in the skies, what is the use if a blind eye does not see it? The sun is on the head and my shield is in my hand. If the ant does not pick up the grains of sugar, tell it not to pick; and if a blind person does not see, tell him not to see.

After this I told the Emperor : Allah says in Quran : And get two witnesses, out of your own men" (II : 282). In other words, Allah has asked to call two men from among our men as witnesses. Allah has not asked for the evidence of eunuchs. Prophet Muhammad has said that the seeker of worldliness is a eunuch, the seeker of life in the hereafter is a woman and the seeker of Allah is the man. Further, Prophet Muhammad has also said : Fasting is obligatory for the person who has seen the crescent moon (of Ramzan) and if others accept his evidence, fasting is obligatory on them also. Similarly, we have seen the arguments of Quran and Hadith and listened to the evidence of Allah and his prophet, and therefore, it is obligatory on us to accept Imam Mahdi. It is for this reason that we have accepted and say that Imam Mahdi has come and gone. And on my saying so, many people have accepted the Imam. And if somebody does not accept, divine vengeance for refusal falls on his head. In other words, his abode will be in Hell. O Emperor, I have presented evidence from Quran, Prophet Muhammad and reliable books. Please now ask your Ulema also to present evidence from Quran, Hadith and reliable books and put forth their arguments to show, when Imam Mahdi, according to them, has to come.

The Emperor told the Ulema : Shaikh Mustafa has argued his case and you have listened to him. Now, you can go ahead with your arguments.

Nobody said anything.

I told the Emperor : You may listen to one more argument. In Quran, Allah says about people who read Quran but do not act according to it : "The similitude of those who were charged with the (obligation of the) Mosaic Law (Torah), but who subsequently failed in those (obligations) is that of a donkey which carries huge tomes (but understand them not). (LXII : 5). In other words, people, who read Quran but do not act according to it, are like the donkey which is loaded with stones or wood on its back. Prophet Muhammad has said : The scholar, who does not act according to his knowledge, is like a donkey".

(Here Shaikh Mustafa quotes a Hindi doha, which, in translation, reads)

O half wit, you are loaded with the burden of a donkey.

You are led by your ear and you are asked to walk silently.

(Again, he quotes a Persian couplet, which in translation, reads)
That you see around and (believe that) they are men.
They, in fact, are donkeys and bullocks without tails.
(Shaikh Mustafa quotes Shaikh Mohiuddin ibn Arabi as saying)
All praise be to Allah who had created donkeys in the shape of men.
(Then Shaikh Mustafa quotes a stanza of Persian Poetry which, in translation, reads)
O ignorant scholar, how much would you learn,
I know the knowledge of inner (Truth) and you do not,
The hair of your head have greyed in learning the grammar and syntax.
But you have not acquired a single letter of the divine knowledge.
(Another couplet, he quoted, reads in translation)
you have put a number of books on the back of a donkey.
But you cannot say that it is the scholar of the inner divine knowledge.
(After quoting these lines of poetry, Shaikh Mustafa continues his address and says)
Allah says: "They are like cattle- nay more misguided; ..." (VII: 179). So they do what Allah has created them for. They praise Allah. But some people do not remember Allah and worship Him. They would, therefore, always burn in Hell. Dogs, pigs, donkeys and other quadrupeds will not be tormented in Hell. But people, who oppose Allah and his Prophet and die in a state of opposition will always burn in Hell. Therefore they are worse than the animals. Allah says: "Ye people of the book! Why do ye cloth truth with falsehood, and conceal the Truth, while ye have knowledge?" (III: 71). That is, the knowledge of Prophet Muhammad being the true apostle of Allah. Similarly, Imam Mahdi's attributes are obvious. Why do they conceal it?. But what can one, who is blind, see?

Prophet Muhammad has said that the fly which sits on filth is better than the Ulema and fuqaha (Islamic jurists) who go to the doorsteps of kings , or in other words, who go to kings seeking (pleasures of) worldliness. Hence, how can the people, who possess such attributes, accept Imam Mahdi? But people, who seek the Truth and who are just and who have forsaken the profane world, will surely accept Imam Mahdi and have actually accepted him. Allah says: "Those who reject (Truth), among the people of the Book and among the polytheists, were not going to depart (from their ways) until there should come to them Clear Evidence. (XCVIII: 1) In other words, they believed that Prophet Muhammad would come but when he actually came with Clear Evidence, (they refuted him). Allah says: "Nor did the people of the book make schisms, until after there came to them clear evidence. (XCVIII: 4) Similarly, the Ulema and shaikhs have arrived at a consensus that Imam Mahdi will come in 905 AH. When Imam Mahdi Actually came, the Ulema and shaikhs made schisms except for a few who were just and seekers of Allah. They accepted Imam Mahdi and the rest refuted him. They said : This is not the Mahdi that was promised (Mau'ood). This extract is from the book, Tafseer-e-Taveel by Abdur Razaq Kashi.

Finally I said : O Emperor, I say that I will write a letter to you, and please ask your Ulema and shaikhs to write a similar letter that the person or persons, who argue without the support of Quran and Hadith, should be made to blacken their faces, ride a donkey and go round the bazaars of the town , while people should be allowed to stone them.

I wrote the letter and handed it over, to the Emperor, while he Ulema and shaikhs did not. The Emperor asked the Ulema and shaikhs to explain their reluctance to write the letter. One of the Ulema, who was an elderly person, said: We are not as well versed in Quran and Hadith as Shaikh Mustafa is. He studies the Quran and Hadith day in and day out.

The Emperor said : You have studied so much but you cannot argue on the basis of Quran and Hadith. Quran and Hadith are the basic things. Why did you not become well versed in Quran and Hadith?

The Emperor was angry with Abdunnabi Danishmand and said: Bring donkeys. Blacken the faces of these Ulema and shaikhs, make them ride the donkeys. Then take them round the town.

All the courtiers rose and started begging off the emperor to forgive them. When the emperor ordered blackening of their faces and making them ride the donkeys, it was as good as their being disgraced. At this point the scholar who was arguing was expelled from the court. The meeting ended thus.

SESSION IV

The Ulema asked the Emperor to tell Shaikh Mustafa that Prophet Muhammad had **said:** "The world is like a stinking and decaying cadaver and its seekers are curs. Stinking cadavers have a smell. Then worldliness too must have a smell. How does it smell?"

The Emperor told me :What is this? What is your answer?

I said: People who could smell the stink of worldliness and the seekers of Allah have renounced the world because to them the smell of the world is dirtier than that of a stinking cadaver. Insensate people do not understand because when dogs go to eat stinking cadavers, their sense of smell becomes blunted, and therefore, they relish eating decaying cadavers. Similar is the case of the seekers of worldliness. They do not smell the stink of worldliness; they seek the world and they enjoy eating with an open heart and are happy. It is narrated that Prophet Muhammad was going with his companions and saw the decaying and stinking parts of the body of a rat. The stink was strong enough to make all of them cover their noses with cloth. To his companions, Prophet Muhammad said: Friends, Is there anybody among you who could buy this? The companions said: Nobody will accept it. The Prophet asked: Will anybody take it free of cost? The companions said: It is of no use. What can we do with it? The Prophet then said: There are worms in this decaying body of the rat. They eat rot and become fat. He dies when he is taken out of this worldliness. He is like the worm which is accustomed to the stink of the cadaver. Similarly, the person who lives and loves the worldliness, does not feel the smell of the rot, because his mind is accustomed to that smell and has become fat. When he is retrieved from worldliness, he dies. In other words, such people relish and enjoy the wealth and love of worldliness. And what wealth (*mata*)? It is worse than used sanitary towels. The world is worse than them but it appears to be good to its seekers. So saying one's prayers daily, listening to the explanations of Quran and acting according to the Holy book *tark-e-dunya* (renunciation), piety, trust in Allah and to accept Syed Muhammad, who is the seal of the Muhammadan Sainthood (*Vilayat-e-Muhammad*), as Mahdi al-Mau'ood do not appeal them till their last breath. Another incident is narrated that a scavenger chanced to come into the locality of perfumers. The smell of the perfumes went to his head. It appeared to him as intolerably bad. He lost consciousness and fell to the ground. The people of the locality wondered what had happened to him. Incidentally, Shaikh Fariduddin Attar happened to pass that way. He asked what kind of a person was he. They said he was a scavenger. Shaikh Attar asked somebody to bring some fresh excrement. It was brought, The Shaikh asked him to place some of it near the nose of the scavenger. An hour later, the scavenger regained consciousness. He rose and cleaned his face and nose with a cloth. He was happy. Reaching home, he related the incident to his wife and other members of his family. He promised that he would never again go to the locality of the perfumers. Similar is the case of the person who seeks the world. The seeker of the world does not like saying his daily prayers, listening to the commentary of Quran, piety, trust in Allah, renunciation, love for Allah, spending his wealth and sacrificing his life for Allah do not appeal to him because all these

things are like perfume. Allah says : "And whose word can be truer than Allah's ? (IV : 87) To the others (seekers of worldliness) this word will not appeal. In fact, this makes them lose consciousness and, like the scavenger, they regain their consciousness when they smell the stink of worldliness. Prophet Muhammad has said that the world was the place for the descendants of Adam to defecate. The smell of the worldliness was worse than the stink of the decaying cadaver. To the seekers of the (Ultimate) Truth, the smell of worldliness is a stink. Therefore, they renounced it. They sought Allah. They won the divine robe of honour as Men. Allah says : "By men whom neither traffic nor merchandise can divert from the remembrance of Allah..." (XXIV : 37). In other words, they are men or the seekers of Allah and trade does not make them neglect the remembrance of Allah. The minds of the seekers of worldliness are accustomed to the stink. If one of them goes to his house and tells his family members about renunciation or explanation of Quran, the members of the house become angry and scold him like the members of the scavenger's family on his going to the locality of the perfumers. They say they earn worldly wealth. All this talk of renunciation and other things does not please them.

SESSION V

One day, I was brought to the court of Emperor Akbar and the Ulema started the debate on Mahdism. All the Ulema said their zuhr (afternoon) prayers in congregation but I said my prayers separately and did not join their assembly. The prayers over, all came to the court. **Abdunnabi told the Emperor:** please ask Shaikh Mustafa why he calls Muslims as kafirs (infidels).

I said: O Emperor, please ask Abdunnabi whom have I called kafir, or am calling kafir. Also, please ask Abdunnabi to produce some evidence to prove his allegations.

The Mullah Said: If you do not call us kafirs, why did you not say your prayers in our leadership (imamat).

I asked the Emperor: Which religious order do you belong to and who is your murshid (spiritual guide)?

With great respect, both his hands touching his ear lobes and a bowed head, the Emperor said: I am the disciple of Hazrat Khwaja Moinuddin Chishti (of Ajmer).

I said: Suppose somebody were to say that Hazrat Khwaja Moinuddin Chishti had deviated from the religion or that he had gone astray and had misled other people, what would be your reaction? What would you say?

The Emperor said : I would call such a person a kafir and will kill him with my own hands.

I said : My murshid is Imam Syed Muhammad Mahdi al-Mau'ood. When somebody were to say that Imam Mahdi and his followers are apostates and are misleading the people, how can I say my prayers under the leadership of such a person? Besides, I do not call anybody kafir. But I recite the Hadith, in which Prophet Muhammad has said : "Whoever refused to accept Imam Mahdi, verily he is a kafir." This Hadith is reported in the book, *Tabqat al-Fuqaha*. I only recite this hadith. I do not call anybody kafir on my own.

Then I told the Emperor : Please ask the mullahs : What is the punishment under the Shariat for falsely slandering anybody?
The mullahs did not reply.

I said : Allah says in Quran that people who falsely slander, should be punished with eighty stripes. The Mullahs have become liable to this punishment. Allah says : "And those who launch a charge against chaste women, and produce not four witnesses (to support their allegations), flog them with eighty stripes; and reject their evidence ever after : For such men are wicked transgressors..... (XXIV : 4).

The Emperor said : O mullahs and shaikhs, you have falsely slandered Shaikh Mustafa and, therefore, you are liable to Quranic hadd (punishment).

I said : O Emperor, prophet Muhammad has said : May Allah bless him who has done justice and curse him who does injustice.

The Emperor then asked me : O Shaikh Mustafa, these mullahs and shaikhs are devout persons and guide the people in religious affairs. But you did not say your prayers under their leadership. Why?

I said : Prophet Muhammad has said that the seeker of the world is impotent, the seeker of the Hereafter is a woman and the seeker of Allah alone is a man. Allah says : "By men whom neither traffic nor merchandise can divert from the Remembrance of Allah, nor from regular Prayers...." (XXIV : 37). In other words, these people had renounced the world and kept themselves busy in nothing other than regular prayers and remembrance of Allah. They listen to the explanation of Quran and they act according to it. These are the men. All others are impotent. O Emperor, please do justice. Ask Abdunnabi and all other Ulema to produce one commandment from the books of Hadith and Fiqh asking a man to say his prayers under the leadership of impotents. Many books are eloquent about the prohibition of an impotent person from leading a group of men in prayers. Therefore, I did not say my prayers in the congregation led by an impotent.

The Emperor laughed and said : O Shaikh Mustafa, you have spoken the truth.

To the Ulema, he said : Shaikh Mustafa did not say his prayers under your leadership because you are impotents and to say one's prayers under the leadership of a eunuch is not allowed. Now, come, answer him. And produce an argument based on Quran and Hadith and reliable books to prove that saying one's prayers under the leadership of eunuchs is permissible.

Nobody gave a reply and appeared to be defeated.

The Emperor Said : O Shaikh Mustafa, you have given a fitting reply. May Allah bless you.

Then, I told the Emperor : I have recalled another narration. I will tell you if you feel like listening. There was a eunuch sitting among a group of God-fearing devout men. These men of God were talking about Allah, Prophet Muhammad and Makkah. One of them said he had been to Makkah. Great rewards from Allah await those who go to Makkah. He had been the wonders of the oceans and forests. This created a desire in the mind of the eunuch to go to Makkah. He went to his house, took some food for the journey and started his sojourn to Makkah. He had hardly gone a couple of leagues when his legs and loins began to ache. He saw a tree on the way and tried to reach it. He found reaching it very difficulty. With a great effort, he somehow reached the tree and started lamenting like a woman and fell down. He saw an approaching man at a distance. When he came near, the eunuch asked him how far Makkah was. The newcomer asked how long he had been travelling. The eunuch said he had started from his house the same day and intended to go to Makkah. His house was about a couple of leagues from the place. The traveller said : O Eunuch, return home because when you see the ocean you would die of fear." The traveller went away. The eunuch felt scared of what the traveller had said. He returned home. His relatives scolded him for undertaking the journey. They said going to Makkah was the task for men.

After narrating the story, I told the Emperor : As Prophet Muhammad has said the seekers of Allah alone were men and the seekers of the world were eunuchs. Hence, they do not follow the Prophet, they do not renounce the world. They go to the kings and emirs and seek pensions and other worldly possessions. For this they indulge in flattery and sycophancy. They cannot repose trust in Allah and they cannot become pious. The seekers of the world were like the eunuch who returned from his intended journey to Makkah.

The Emperor was happy to listen to the narration and the arguments. He said : May Allah bless you and may He Shower his bounties on you, O Shaikh Mustafa. Then, he ordered the Ulema to put forth their arguments in reply to me. They did not reply. They did not have the strength to reply.