



## The Formation Process of Ahmadiyya Movement

Zaman, Şenol. Kadiyaniliğin Teşekkül Süreci. Ankara: Ankara Üniversitesi, Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü, Doktora Tezi, 2023.

**Şenol ZAMAN**

Ph.D., Ankara/Türkiye

[senolzamansz85@gmail.com](mailto:senolzamansz85@gmail.com) | [orcid.org/0000-0002-9396-1497](https://orcid.org/0000-0002-9396-1497)

### Article Information

#### Article Type

Doctoral Dissertation Summary

#### Date Recieved

28 October 2023

#### Date Accepted

19 December 2023

#### Date Published

31 December 2023

#### Plagiarism

This article has been scanned with iThenticate software. No plagiarism detected.

#### Ethical Statement

It is declared that scientific and ethical principles have been followed while carrying out and writing this study and that all the sources used have been properly cited (Şenol Zaman).

**Licensed under CC BY-NC-ND 4.0 license.**

## Abstract

The Ahmadiyya movement is known as such due to its origin in the town of Qadian, which is why it is often referred to as Qadianism. Originally recorded as the Qadiani (Ahmadi) sect in the population census of Pakistan by Mirza Ghulam Ahmad himself, the community has continued its activities under the name of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community, as later named by Mirza Bashir-ud-Din Mahmood Ahmad. The term Qadianism is used in the literature to describe this community as a sect, movement, or religion.

The late 18th century witnessed the emergence of the concept of modernity, which left its mark on social life, cultural perspectives, and art. During this time, it is possible to observe that Muslims were not keeping pace with these developments and were turning towards a more mystical worldview in the conservative movements led by Ghulam. The 19th century stands out as a pivotal period in terms of intellectual restlessness and tensions in the Muslim world. It was a century marked by invitation wars between Islam, Hinduism, and Christianity, leading to increasing tensions in society. In 1857, the Sepoy Mutiny resulted in adverse consequences for Muslims, further exacerbating these tensions.

Mirza Ghulam Ahmad emerged as a savior figure among Muslims and developed his ideas in this context. He faced serious criticism from Islamic scholars of his time, and there were written exchanges of refutations. Not only did he receive criticism from Muslims, but also Arya Samajis criticized him by asserting that the Vedic texts were the last divine scriptures. He engaged in heated debates with Dayananda Saraswati, a prominent Arya Samaji leader. Additionally, he had debates with Christian priests and missionaries.

Mirza Ghulam Ahmad's bi-weekly columns in local newspapers won the hearts of the Muslim community and sparked interest. His courage was admired during a time when everyone else was being suppressed and silenced. Instead of confronting difficulties, humanity often chooses the easier path of seeking a savior. Mirza Ghulam Ahmad's views developed and spread in the multicultural context of the Indian subcontinent, where different cultures interacted. Therefore, the impact of this context on his ideas is evident. He initially presented his claims as the Mujaddid (reformer) and later introduced claims of being the Messiah, Mahdi, Muhaddis (renewer), Krishna-avatar, and the concept of subordinate prophethood (Cüz-i Nübüvvet). His activities revolved around these claims, and it is possible to see clear influences from Christianity, Hinduism, and Sikhism in these claims.

Starting with his claim to Mujaddidship and elevating it to a shadowy prophethood dimension, he emphasized that he was chosen by Allah and that he was the second coming of Prophet Muhammad. All religions have the concept of a savior: Islam has the Mahdi, Judaism and Christianity have the Messiah, Hinduism has the Krishna-avatar, Buddhism has Maitreya, and Zoroastrianism has Saošyant. This fact paved the way for Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, who could skillfully interpret the concept of revelation. He initially claimed to be the Mujaddid of the 14th Islamic century, then successively proclaimed himself as the Mahdi, Messiah, and believed that there would be no new prophet after him, asserting the title of Krishna-avatar.

Mirza Ghulam Ahmad's messianic claims, later harmonized with his messianic and prophetic claims, are seen to be influenced by the cultural heritage and religious structure of the Indian subcontinent. The messianic ideas found in many cultures and religious traditions in this region have led to mutual influences among these cultures. Mirza Ghulam Ahmad's ideas seem to be a product of this process. He used the story of Jesus traveling to India as a basis for his claims, insisting that Jesus did not ascend to the heavens but died in India, and that he was the true Messiah. During this process, this understanding was turned into a discourse aimed at the Muslims in the region. Mirza Ghulam Ahmad compiled evidence from the divine scriptures, including the Quran and ancient religious texts, to argue that Jesus did not ascend to the heavens and that he died in India. He declared himself as the Messiah and Mahdi sent by Allah in 1890-1891.

Mirza Ghulam Ahmad's continuous prophethood concept is one of the fundamental beliefs of the Ahmadiyya community, which emerged with the aim of continuing the tradition of prophethood. The Ahmadiyya community considers Ghulam Ahmad to be the inheritor of the final prophet, Muhammad, and a subordinate prophet.

In summary, this thesis examines the life and ideas of Mirza Ghulam Ahmad and the formation process of Ahmadiyya. The thesis consists of an introduction and three chapters. In the introduction, information is provided about the political, social, religious, and cultural structure of the Indian subcontinent, where Mirza Ghulam Ahmad was born, lived, and died. The religions, Islamic sects, and movements in the Indian subcontinent, as well as the political and social situation, are examined. In the first chapter, information is provided about Mirza Ghulam Ahmad's birth, childhood, upbringing, marriages, education, and the content of his works. His charismatic leadership and the formation of the fundamental doctrines of the Ahmadiyya community, including his claims of being a Muhaddith, Mujaddid, Mahdi, Messiah, and the Seal of Prophethood, as well as the concept of Krishna-avtar, are studied. In the second chapter, it is explained that after the death of Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, Hakeem Noor-ud-Din assumed the leadership of the community in 1914. After his death, the Ahmadiyya community split into two factions, Qadiani and Lahori, and the reasons behind this division are elucidated. The third chapter focuses on Mirza Ghulam Ahmad's debates with Islamic scholars, Arya Samaj groups, and Christian missionaries and priests, as well as the reactions of these groups to Ahmadiyya. Ghulam Ahmad claimed that the Jihad should be conducted with the pen and knowledge, not the sword, and he asserted that the door of revelation had not been closed. His debates were marked by a language and style similar to those employed by Christian missionaries. In this context, his idea that Jihad should be conducted with words and knowledge rather than weapons and his calls for the abolition of slavery can be highlighted.

The Ahmadiyya community has been very active in publishing and disseminating its messages. The community prioritizes introducing itself in the content of these publications. They meticulously explain their views, always providing supporting evidence. Another means of communication for the Ahmadiyya community is magazines. They have a magazine called *Maneviyat*. Additionally, the magazine *The Review of Religions* has been published in English since 1900. This magazine is sent to libraries and relevant institutions, including faculties that offer

Islamic studies in many countries. Furthermore, *The Muslim Herald*, *The Muslim Sunrise* and *el-Fazl*, published in Urdu, are available. The Arabic magazine *el-Buṣra* is sent to 30 countries. In general, each magazine includes a section with a Quranic verse and Hadith (sayings and actions of the Prophet), followed by content related to Islamic topics. The Ahmadiyya community has three television channels: MTA1, MTA2, and MTA3 (Muslim Television Ahmadiyya). These channels broadcast 24-hour religious and cultural programs. To list their services, after being declared illegal by the Pakistan government in 1974, they established their presence in around 100 countries. They have 1869 centers, 69 translations of the Quran, 36 hospitals, 650 dispensaries, and have established schools (primary, middle, and high schools) in 11 countries. The number of schools and educational institutions founded by the community is 505. Today, it is estimated that there are around 15 million members of the Ahmadiyya community living in India, Pakistan, Europe, Africa, and the United States.

**Keywords:** Kalām, Ahmadiyya, Reform, Messiah, Mahdi, Prophethood, Krishna-avtar, Jihad, Revelation.