

**Prof. Dr. Muin-ud-Din Ahmad Khan**

# **ISLAMIC REVIVALISM**

During 18th, 19th & 20th Centuries (C.E)  
In North Africa, Saudi Arabia, Pakistan  
India and Bangladesh



**Bangladesh Institute of  
Islamic Thought (BIIT)**

# Islamic Revivalism

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In North Africa, Saudi Arabia, Pakistan  
India and Bangladesh

by

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Dedicated to the Memory of My  
Late Teachers and Guides  
*Professor Wilfred Cantwell Smith* of Canada  
*Professor Fazlur Rahman* of Pakistan  
*Professor Ahmad Hasan Dani*  
May Allah rest their souls in peace!

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## PREFACE

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An attempt has been made herein to draw a succinct but comprehensive picture of the rise, progress and ultimate fate of the Islamic Revivalist movements misnamed Wahhabism during the 18<sup>th</sup>, 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries of the Christian Era keeping in view some major works carried on by myself, such as, *History of the Fara'idi Movement, Titu Mir and His Followers, Wahhabi Documents* as well as some other works by my junior colleagues and students namely Dr. Mahmud Ahmad Ghazi's, *Sanusiyah Movement of North Africa*, Dr. Muhammad Athahar Ali's *Shah Wali Allah's Concept of Ijtihad and Taqlid*, Professor Abdul Haq's *The Concept of Tawhid in Islam* and Dr. A.N.M. Wahidur Rahman's *The Muslim Re-Assessment of Orientalism* and numerous other related works published in English, Arabic and Urdu languages.

The present work is a compilation of 16 published articles at different times in international journals, which have now been slightly revised and modified. My grateful thanks are due to the publishers of the *Journals of Asiatic Society of Pakistan/Bangladesh, Pakistan Historical Society, Karachi, Islamic Studies, Islamabad* and the *Asiatic Society of Bengal (Calcutta)* for extending kind permission for reproducing them.

Chittagong  
2009 C.E

Dr. Muin-ud-Din Ahmad Khan

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## FOREWORD

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The Book 'Islamic Revivalism of the 18<sup>th</sup>, 19<sup>th</sup> Centuries C. E.' is a compilation of sixteen published articles in international Journals slightly revised and modified by Professor Muin-u-d-Din Ahmad Khan. The book contains a long introduction reflecting Professor Khan's mastery over the subject matter. Location and collection of articles itself was a painstaking job. Taking permission from different sources made the job further difficult. Few of the articles were rare and he had to discover those with great trouble Professor Khan's life long commitment and dedication to his work made this publication possible and thereby enriched the knowledge in the field of Islamic reforms and revivalism during the 18<sup>th</sup>, 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries in Arabia, Pakistan, Afghanistan, Bangladesh and North Africa. I must congratulate Professor Khan for the stressful job he has undertaken by publishing the valuable book even at this age.

The glorious empire which Islam had achieved with the fall of Constantinople in 1453 witnessed a serious decline from the 18<sup>th</sup> century with the disintegration of military and political powers, loss of commercial and economic powers. Religious stagnation made the situation worse. Although Ottoman Empire was able to retain its political sovereignty, "it was independent without being free". Most of the Muslim countries came under colonial rules, for example, Dutch in Indonesia, the British in Indian subcontinent and Malaya, the British and French in North Africa and the Middle East. Some would argue that Islamic revivalism cropped up in many parts of the

world under the impact of imperialism, such as Ottoman imperialism produced *Muwahhidin* (erroneously called Wahhabism), movements of Shah Waliullah, *Tariqah-i-Muhammadiyah*, *Ahl-i-Hadith* arose under the British imperialism. Similarly *Muhammadiyah* in Indonesia under Dutch, *Fulani* and *Sannusiyah* of North Africa came into surface under French and British imperial rules. However reform movements are innate in Islam as we found some verses of the Qur'an that encourage *islah* (reform) and Prophet Muhammad (PUH) also predicts that a renovator will arrive in each century to reform Muslim community. So the natural outcome of Qur'anic concept of *islah* and Prophet's (PUH) prediction is the appearance of series of reformers through centuries to ensure the pristine purity of Islam as well as to assert Islam's power of adaptability to meet the needs of time and circumstances. Abu Hamid Muhammad al-Ghazali (Iran-Baghadad 1058-1111), Taqui al-Din Ahmad Ibn Tayimyya, (Anatolia-Damascus 1263-1328), Shah Wali Allah al- Dihlawi (India 1703-1762), Muhammad Ibn 'Abd al-Wahhab (Arabia 1703-1792), Uthman dan Fudio (West Africa 1754-1817), Haji Shariat Allah(Bengal 1781-1840), Sayyid Jamal Uddin Afghani (Iran 1838-1897) were among many prominent reformers. Besides there are some renowned renovators such as Muhammad Abduh (Egypt 1849-1905), Muhammad Iqbal (India 1877-1938), Muhammad Rashid Rida (Egypt 1865-1935), and others who can be called modernist Islamic reformers. Some of these reform movements were socio- religious in nature, some included socio-economic and political programs and some even engaged in arms struggle against the colonial rulers and enemies of Islam. Material loss and intellectual stagnation of the Muslim community were the direct result of centuries of colonial rule. Sensing this serious intellectual decadence and massive ignorance and misconception among the Muslims, a group of contemporary Muslim scholars and writers have started what is called intellectual movements to revitalize the Muslims intellectually. However this intellectual movement is not altogether new in the literature of Islamic reform movements. It is



surprising to notice that *Fulani* movement in West Africa had an extensive program to educate ignorant Muslim masses through different stages – lower grade, higher grade, mass and elite education – and thereby built up an enlightened Islamic society (known as *Sokoto Khalifa* ) which was to govern under Islamic *sharia* law. Because of the universal character of the program *Sokoto Khalifat* expanded even in surrounding non Muslim areas and continued its consolidated political authority through the whole 19<sup>th</sup> century until overthrown by the British colonial power in 1903.

The present book is perhaps the only sound work and rare collection in one volume to understand extensive and depth of Islamic revivalism of the 18<sup>th</sup>, 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries in Arabia, Pakistan, India, Pakistan Bangladesh and Afghan Borders. Although the sub title of the book appears as “Significant Phases of *Muwahhdun* (misnamed) Wahhabi Movement in Arabia, Pakistan, India, Bangladesh and Afghan Borders”, the book goes beyond, since it contains the chapters like “Moulana Karamat Ali’s Role at Islamic Reform” (chapter 13), “Research on Islamic Revivalism” (chapter 14), “A Critical Note on Muslim Renaissance in Bangladesh :Renaissance Versus Revivalism” (chapter 16) and two valuable Appendix – 1)Concept of History : Islamic and Western and (2) Persian in Chittagong. However the book discusses extensively and analyses critically the doctrine of *Muwahhidun* (Wahhabism – a derogatory terminology), *Tariqah – i – Muhammadia* movement of Sayyid Ahmad Shahid, *Ahl-e-Hadith* Movement, *Fara’idi* Movement. The volume has made a comparative analysis between, the Sanusiyah movement in North Africa and *Muwahhidun* movement of Arabia. *Sanusiyah* movement was received by the Ottoman with full cordiality and saw its contributions positively to the cause of Islam and even considered the movement as the source of reinvigoration of Ottoman Empire. The Ottoman Empire exempted all *Zawiyahs* taxes and sanctioned special privileges on sanusi trade and cultivation which reached its zenith during the period of Abd al-Hamid II. On the other hand the Ottoman paid

heed to the bad diplomacy of the British and took up the stern policy to quell *Muwahhidun* movement which temporarily became dormant but gained considerable strength during the first quarter of the 20th century by the Saudi rule specially by Abd al-Aziz ibn Saud.

Chapter Three of this volume termed Muhammad Abdul Wahhab of Najad, Arabia and Shah Wali Ullah Muhaddith Dehlavi of India as the main doctrinaire of Islamic revivalist movements of 18<sup>th</sup>, 19<sup>th</sup>, 20<sup>th</sup> centuries as soon after their demise a series of Islamic reform movements cropped up in different parts of the world, for example, “The *Sanusiyah* movement of North Africa, the *Fulani* movement of Nigeria, the *Muhdiyah* movement of Sudan, *Salafiyah* and *Ikhwan al- Muslimeen* movement of Egypt, the *Jihad* movement of the (Indian) subcontinent, the *Fara’idi* movement of Bengal, the *Jamaat-i-Islami* and *Tabligh* movement of Bangladesh, Pakistan and India, the *Paduri* and *Masjumi* movements of Indonesia”....All these revivalist movements had one common feature which aimed at going back to pristine purity of early Islamic doctrines and practices and root out all un-Islamic renovation, accretion and local customs responsible for polluting Islam. These movements flourished during the early 19<sup>th</sup> century had created great enthusiasm and vibration among the decadent Muslim community, but ultimately received death blow by the western colonial powers either through police action or by legal action (trial of Dudu Mia, Wahhabi trial etc.). Ill equipped in every sphere these movements were unable to resist political, economic and military might of western imperial powers. To conclude this note it would be appropriate to quote from Professor Khan’s Introduction - ....” To convert a religious ideology into a social system, purity of faith and sincerity of purpose are though indispensable, yet these are not enough; political astuteness and military prowess are needed too, as necessary ancillaries, which these resurgence movements were lacking with the single exception of the Arabian *Muwahhidun* movement”...

I must thank BIIT authority for taking a judicious decision to publish this valuable book which, I am confident, would be an addition to existing knowledge of Islamic reform movements.

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## INTRODUCTION

Islam is avowedly a peaceful religion. It is divinely revealed by Allah to Prophet Muhammad (sm) as a model way of human life. Through variegated experimentation and devotional efforts, the Prophet himself developed it into a complete world system for the virtuous and moral guidance of the whole mankind.

Prophet Muhammad (peace be on him) was born at Makkah in 571 C.E. He was conferred divine Messengership by Allah in 610 C.E at the age of 40. The divine Message was revealed to him in the form of the holy Quran, transmitting its 6236 ayat, miraculous inimitable verses, bit by bit, through his later life of 23 years till he breathed his last in 632 C.E. at the age of 63.

The Islamic world system gradually developed and was firmly established by Prophet Muhammad (sm) in conformity with the environmental, temporal and earthly circumstantial perspective under divine guidance. These inspirational efforts of the holy Prophet fructified into the *Prophetic Tradition* which along with the Quran, constituted the Islamic way of life. *The Prophetic Tradition* is known as the *Sunnatul-Rasul* and the Quranic principles are known as *Sunnatul-Lah*, which as warp and woof built up the Islamic world system.

In the Islamic world system, the Quranic principles are directly given by Allah and are immutable and permanent whereas the running system of human life related to the *Prophetic Sunnah* admits of further extension, expansion and necessary innovation requisite to the demands of the changing circumstances in consonance with the basic principles of the Quran and the *Sunnah*. Thus, the Islamic way of life is not static but dynamic. Its bases are substantive and its framework and body politic are mutable, ever growing and amenable to change in consonance with the moral and spiritual imperative and the mundane demand of time and clime.

There is a Prophetic tradition saying; Allah will send to this community of Muslims (**Ummah**), at the head of each century those who will renovate (*yujad-di-du*) its system or way of life (*din*) for the sake of it (*Sunan Abi Daud*).

The process of the change is clearly laid down by further prophetic tradition which instructs the men in authority to look for the solution of any new problem arising in the changing social milieu, first in the holy Quran, secondly in the *Prophetic Sunnah* and thirdly by exerting one's intellectual capacity to arrive at an appropriate judgment, which is called *ijtihad* (see for details: Chapter 3, opening sections). The process is illustrated by a four digital working progression: *Quran-Sunnah-Ijtihad-Rayy* (see Chapter 7).

As such, it is recognized at all hands by the Muslims that Islamic history has witnessed the rise of centurion renovators or Reformers of centurion epochs, continuously operating during the last fourteen hundred years, who reasserted the fundamental principles and pristine *rationale* of Islam and reconstructed the Islamic way of life by purging the Muslim society of un-Islamic customs and usages as well as amalgamating to it newer usages, conventions, institutions and technicalities to meet the demand of time and circumstances. The wording '*yujad-di-du*' in the above mentioned *Prophetic Tradition*, means to renew the Islamic way of life by timely reformation.

This point of renewal was emphatically emphasized by Taqi al-Din ibn Taymiyah (661-729H. /1263-1328 C.E.) during the 14<sup>th</sup> century C.E. He vehemently deplored the moral, intellectual, political and religious corruption then prevailing in the Muslim society and called for fortifying the Islamic faith and Muslim conduct by returning to the pristine purity of Islam, that is, to the basic principles of the Quran, the *Sunnah* and *ijtihad*. He called for the renewal of the faith in the pure Unity of Allah, the Unitarianism of the Supreme Creator, and to purge the Muslim society of all sorts of *shirk* and *bid'ah*, that is, to desist from associating any person or thing with the worship of Allah, and to remove all pre-Islamic customs and post-Islamic innovations and accretions in order to purify the Islamic way of life. In the intellectual arena, he abrogated Greek philosophy, Aristotelian logic and speculative thinking (see his *Minhaj al-Sunnah*) and approved of following the principles of the Quran and the *Prophetic Tradition* and imitating the ways and practices of first three generations of the Muslims, that is, the ages of the holy Prophet, the Companions of the Prophet and the Companions of the

Companions (see the collection of his legal opinions: *Fatawa ibn Taymiyah*, 29 Vols. in Arabic). Thus, he advocated for the return to the pristine Islamic doctrines by-passing completely the historical growth of the Muslim community and the continuous contemporary human life process. His mental attitude was doctrinal and theoretical.

Immediately after him, his great disciple and student Ibn Qayyim upheld his renovative doctrines; but it was not until four hundred years after his death that his reformist ideas found a powerful advocate in the person of Muhammad ibn Abd al-Wahhab of Najd in Eastern Arabia. Muhammad ibn Abd al-Wahhab (1115-1201 H. /1703-1789 C.E.) turned Ibn Taymiyah's doctrine of return to the pristine Islam into a forceful religio-political movement of Islamic revivalism (*tajdid al-Islam*).

Again, in the broader Muslim consciousness, the concept of political renovation (*tajdid*) has been practically inter-twined with the Quranic pivotal concept of '*islah*', which means 'to reform', 'to reconstruct' etc. Hence '*tajdid*' and '*islah*', renovation and reform in combination do constitute the most potent continuous process of change and growth in the Islamic social system as the intrinsic capacity of the Muslim society (*Ummah*).

The Indian reformers of Islam, such as, Shaykh Ahmad Sarhindi, known as *Mujaddid-i-Alfi-Thani* (d. 1623 C.E.) and Shah Wali Allah Muhaddith Dehlavi (1703-1762 C.E.) though attached equal importance to both *tajdid and islah* (renovation and reform), yet laid greater emphasis on *islah*. As a matter of fact, Shah Wali Allah, a great contemporary of Muhammad ibn Abd al-Wahhab, developed an all-embracing reform scheme for rejuvenating the Muslim society under the context of *maslahah*, meaning social reformation derived from the basic word of *islah* (see chapter 3).

The inter-twined reform movement of *tajdid and islah* inaugurated by Muhammad ibn Abd al-Wahhab at Najd and Shah Wali Allah at Delhi by the middle of the 18<sup>th</sup> century C.E. took strong root in the popular feeling both in Arabia and India and flared up in the 19<sup>th</sup> century into a *jihad* movement in Arabia against the corrupt local

government and also in India against the oppressive Sikh rule of Ranjit Singh in the Punjab and the government of British India (see Chapters 4 and 5).

Mohammad ibn Abd al-Wahhab wrote his *magnum opus* in a summary doctrinaire form entitled: *Kitab al Tawhid*. We procured two copies of *Kitab al-Tawhid*, one was published in 1344 Hijri from Bombay (Mumbai) by Maktabatul Qayyimah al-Idarah al-Taba'ah al- Muniriyah, which consists of the Arabic text and excellent foot notes annotating the references of the Quran and the *Hadith*, and the other was published from Dhaka in 1980 consisting of Arabic text and Bangla translation. Both have identical text, an excerpt of which has been presented by us in the first part of the second Chapter.

We are publishing herewith two new original documents, one of which is intimately related to the life and works of Muhammad ibn Abd al-Wahhab and the other an authoritative exposition of Muhammad ibn al-Wahhab's reform doctrines by his son Abdullah, which have not so far reached the hands of the general readers of our times (see Chapters 1 and 2). Recently, however, its English translation was published by the Asiatic Society of Bengal from Kolkata at the present writer's suggestion (see Chapter 2).

Our first Chapter contains the unique document, being the Diplomatic Report of the British Ambassador to the (Othmania) Ottoman government, Sir Jones Brydges, who was the British Resident at Baghdad, dwelling on the life and activities of Muhammad ibn Abd al-Wahhab dated 1799 C.E., just ten years after his death. It categorically says that Muhammad ibn Abd al-Wahhab and his followers did not call their movement *Wahhabism*. This may be considered as the earliest authentic document on Wahhabism.

This is a very significant piece of information raising the question as to who concocted this derogatory terminology of *Wahhabism* for the puritan *Muwahhidun* movement.

It may be contemplated that the Arabic speaking people could not fabricate such a gross mistake, since the movement was launched by Muhammad and not by his father Abd al-Wahhab.

There is reason to believe that this mistake was done by the Europeans who thought that the 'last name' Abd al-Wahhab was the real name of 'Muhammad' in the English style, which was actually his father's name super-added for identity. In 1799, Sir Jones writes his Report under the title *The Whabee* (see Chapter 1, text of the Report) and states that, 'they term themselves true Mussulmans' (*ibid.* doctrine No.2). The term *Whabee* is etymologically un-Arabic and the pronunciation is typically English. His term 'true Mussulman' is again a Persian pronunciation and un-Arabic wording to mean 'true Muslim', which may more correctly be compared to D.S. Margoliouth's description that 'the Wahhabis call themselves *Muwahhidun*', that is, Unitarians or *monotheists* (*Ency. Islam*, 1<sup>st</sup> edn. Vol. IV, p. 1086).

On the other hand, the founder of the movement and his followers never called themselves Wahhabi nor did they ever admit the epithet *Wahhabi-sm* for their movement. Indeed, the epithet *Wahhabism* being etymologically wrong and semantically misleading and always used by its opponents as a derogatory abuse, it could not have been coined by the Arabs themselves. Besides, it is popularly known that the founder's father Abd al-Wahhab disapproved of his radical contentions and his brother Sulaiman ibn Abd al-Wahhab was vocal in opposing his extremism.

Available historical data show that the term *Wahhabi* was first of all gathered from somewhere by Carston Niebuhr (see Chapter 1, opening sections) in the 1770's and his works being translated from German into English and published in England in 1792 (*ibid.*), came to the notice of the British government. Sir Jones' Report of 1799 (Chapter 1) must have been in reply to a diplomatic inquiry of the British government. Moreover, the procurement of a copy of Abdullah's book on the doctrines of Muhammad ibn Abd al-Wahhab (written in Arabic in 1803 at Makkah) and procured by the British government of India (Manuscript in Arabic preserved at British Government Archives in Delhi see Chapter 2) shows that the British took persistent interest in watching over the movement.

The development of *Muwahhidun* movement in Arabia during the later half of the 18<sup>th</sup> century C.E. coincided with the formative stage of the British empire in India from the Battle of Plassey in 1757



C.E. to the British occupation of Delhi in 1803 C.E. At this time the British authorities were deeply concerned with preserving the security of so-called 'Imperial life line of communication' through the Middle East to India, for which they had built up cordial relations between the 'Sultan of Turkey and the British Crown' on the one hand, and entered into firm treaty relations with the Sheikhdoms of the Gulf area on the other. The British government felt deep apprehension towards disturbances created by the *Muwahhidun* movement in Arabia and they instigated the *Sublime Porte* (Babe-Ali), the government of the Ottoman Sultan, with the bogey of Wahhabism, as a rebellious movement against the Sultan of Turkey, at that time posed to be the *Khalifah* of the Muslim world and the *Custodian of the Shariah*, the Islamic way of life. This could have been sorted out by the Sultan-Khalifah with administrative action and could be minimized and compromisingly settled through mutual consultation or *Shura*, as they had done with the *Sanusi* movement of North Africa. But the British diplomacy fomented mistrust into the ears of the *Porte*, which eventually compelled the Sultan to request another rebellious force of the Khedive Muhammad Ali of Egypt to quell and subdue the Saudi-Wahhabi rebellious forces of Arabia which though immediately brought destruction upon Saudi regime (1817 C.E.), yet it could not uproot *Muwahhidun* religious movement from the Arabian desert society. On the other hand, it strengthened Muhammad Ali's determination to achieve independence from the Turkish suzerainty.

The British did not stop there, but carried their bogey of Wahhabism to India and applied it on the *Fara'idi* movement, being an extension of Arabian *Muwahhidun* movement in Bangladesh, which assumed the form of a social activist movement from 1818 C.E. (*History of the Fara'idi Movement in Bengal*, of the present writer) and the British administration also applied the same term to another similar reform movement namely *Tariqah-i-Muhammadiyah* that cropped up at Delhi under the leadership of Sayyid Ahmad Shahid of Rai Bareilly in the same year (see Chapters 4,5,6,7), which were blamishly designated by the British administrators as 'Indian Wahhabism' (Dr. Qeyamuddin Ahmad: *The Wahhabi Movement in India*, Calcutta, 1966; *Ency. of Islam* and *Ency. Britannica*). This has been reflected in the introduction to so-called **Wahhabi Doctrines** (see Chapter 2) where the translator J. O'Kinealy says: 'but what is of far greater interest is that it proves beyond all

possibility of doubt, the identity on all important points of Wahhabi doctrines in Arabia with Wahhabi doctrines in India and confirms the prevalent view that one is the offshoot of the other (Chapter 2, commentary of translation).

In India, the British Government kept a close watch over these Islamic religious reform movements through their secret Police network and ultimately suppressed them (see the present writer's *Titu Mir and His Followers in British Indian Records*, Dhaka, and *British Indian Records Relating to the Wahhabi Trial of 1863*, Dhaka, 1961, *History of the Fara'idi Movement in Bengal*, Dhaka, 1981, and Chapters 6, 8 and 11).

On the other hand, the contemporary *Sanusiyah* movement in North Africa received ample sympathy and patronage from the government of the Ottoman Sultan. *Sanusiyah* movement had absorbed considerable impact of the *Muwahhidun* movement of Arabia. In a recent study Dr. Mahmood Ahmad Ghazi says: "by this time the *Muwahhidun* movement (ironically called Wahhabi movement) was rippling out of Najd, its birth place. In spite of vigorous opposition of a strong group of influential Ulama to the movement, the number of its supporters was increasing day by day. Muhammad ibn Ali al-Sanusi seemed to have a soft corner in his heart for the Wahhabis" (see his *The Sanusiyah Movement of North Africa*, Islamabad, 2002, p.115).

Regarding far and wide dissemination of the *Sanusiyah* movement in North Africa, the author observes: "The result of this penetration and influence were tremendous. As pointed out earlier, the Ottoman government recognized the *Sanusi* suzerainty over a vast territory and issued several *firman* (edicts), from time to time to this effect; it exempted all *Zawiyahs* from taxes and imposed no levies on *Sanusi* trade and cultivations" (p.116). He further comments: "Cordial relations between the *Sanusi* and the Ottomans reached the climax during the reign of Sultan Abd al-Hamid II. When he started his movement for Islamic unity, he also tried to strengthen the *Sanusi Emirate* more and more. He believed that it would not only further

the cause of Islam but it would also result in the reinvigoration of the Ottoman empire” (p.117).

“Western powers deemed it a threat to their interests and they conspired to create misunderstanding between Sultan Abd al-Hamid II and Sayyid al-Mahdi Al-Sanusi. Yet, they failed in their nefarious designs” (p.117). “They, however, played another card and spread the rumour that Sayyid Mahdi was posed to proclaim himself the Caliph of Islam” (p.118).

“The *Sanusi* leadership always tried to maintain friendly relations with all Islamic forces. They never took any step, which might sow the seeds of dissension among the Muslims. Towards other contemporary revivalist movements also, their attitude was very friendly and cooperative in many respects” (p.120).

We can define Islamic revivalism as characterized by the endeavours of its protagonists to return to the pristine purity of early Islamic doctrines and practices by combining the Quranic concept of *islah* (reformation) with the Prophetic traditional concept of centurion renovation of the Islamic way of life: *din al-Islam*.

Dr. Ghazi discusses the initiative of Muhammad ibn Abd al-Wahhab and Shah Wali Allah Muhaddith Dehlavi in this respect and regards them as the *doctrinaire* founders of Islamic revivalism of the 18<sup>th</sup>, 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries of the Christian Era in complete agreement with us (see Chapter 3). He says: “These two revivalists [leaders] left far-reaching impact on the Islamic world. Soon after their death a large number of religious reformers appeared on the scene and sought to further [extend] their mission. The *Sanusiyah* movement of North Africa, the *Fulani* movement of Nigeria, the *Mahdiyyah* movement of Sudan, *Salafiyah* movement and *Ikhwan al-Muslimeen* movement of Egypt, the *Jihad* movement of the [Indian] subcontinent, the *Fara’idi* movement of Bengal, the *Jamaat-i-Islami* and *Tabligh* movement of Bangladesh, Pakistan and India, the *Paduri* and *Masjumi* movements of Indonesia, all echoed the same voice” (pp. 17-18).

A categorically different type of Islamic revivalism was the *Fulani* movement of Sheikh Usman ibn Fudi, otherwise known as Osman dan Fudio, in West African region during the 19<sup>th</sup> century C.E. The

area of its origin and expansion comprised central and western Bilad al-Sudan covered by the modern Nigeria, Mali, Senegal, Zambis, and the neighbourhood. The epicentre of this fast developing movement was Hausaland, which eventually grew into a vast Islamic State around the capital city of Sokoto and came to be known as Sokoto Caliphate around 1804 C.E. Its emphasis was on *islah*, social and religious reform, but it strictly adhered to the selfsame doctrine of *tajdid*, Islamic revivalism like the *Sanusiyah* of North Africa, *Muwahhidun* of Arabia, *Tariqah-i-Muhammadiyah* of Indo-Pakistan and the *Fara`idi* movement of Bangladesh. Yet, whereas all other movements sought to revive the pristine ideology of Islam amongst the Muslim individuals and reinvigorate thereby the existing decadent Muslim society, the *Fulani* movement endeavored to educate the ignorant Muslim masses of the area through two separate programmes of lower grade and higher grade, mass and elite education and to organize them into a compact unified and enlightened Islamic society. At the second stage, the education programme was extended to the neighbouring Muslim and non-Muslim population by dint of manifold enthusiastic programmes of *hijrat* and *jihad* over a vast area. At the third stage, the intensive network of local societies and settlements were organized. Shari'ah-based central administration designated as Sokoto *Khilafat* under an *Amirul Muminin* or *Khalifah*. Sheikh Usman ibn Fudi was recognized as the *Mujaddid* or renovator of Islamic way of life of Bilad al-Sudan.

In a brief but a brilliant survey of the *Fulani* movement, Ahmad Mohammad Kani says: "Thus, the Sokoto Caliphate stretched over a geographical area of approximately 250,000 square miles within which numerous linguistic groups in a short while were drawn into its primary fold by the broad universal rather than the limited outlook of the people of the area with active cooperation of the governors of provinces who strived to fortify the strongholds and wage holy war (*jihad*) against the war mongers and oppressors and set up military stations on every frontier and root out all sources of corruption lurking in the country" (*The Intellectual Origin of Islamic Jihad in Nigeria*, al-Hoda, London, 1988, p.13).

The aims and objects of the *Fulani* movement can be roughly delineated from the corpus of his discourses as summed up by Kani. He says that these may be divided into five categories: "First, the fundamentals and derivations of the religion... Second, the refutation of certain misconceptions held by some students. The Shaykh was continuously condemning those students who tried to mislead the common man by labelling those as unbelievers who could not comprehend the debate of the theologians on the Unity of Allah (*Tawhid*). They were strongly denounced by him for the pessimistic approach they were trying to inculcate in people's mind. Third, admonition to follow up the religious injunctions; fourth, the quelling of evil innovations and the refutation of customs foreign to Islam... Fifth, the dissemination of the *Shar'iah*" (p.41).

"In terms of Unitarianism, he complains that there were some people who still venerate trees and stones which were syncretistic, therefore they were obviously unbelievers" (p.63).

"The Sokoto *Caliphate* continued to expand and consolidate its political authority over the non-Muslim areas as well for a whole century before it was finally overthrown by the British imperialist forces in 1903. The greatest part of the Caliphate was conquered by the British colonial administration and was annexed to other non-Muslim areas, the consequence of which was the creation of Nigeria. In 1913, other parts of the Caliphate, to the north-west and north-east, were sliced out by the French colonialists"(p.15).

Thus, in response to the spiritual depravity, moral turpitude, social degradation, economic deterioration, politico-administrative corruption of the world-wide Muslim society during the 18<sup>th</sup> century C.E, there had arisen Islamic revivalist tendencies, re-awakening, and reverberating resurgence from the depth of the deep-laid vital force of the religion of Islam. In the face of the further deteriorating condition of the Muslim world and repeated failures of the existing Muslim political powers, these tendencies bolstered up with sincerity, throbbing energy, enthusiasm and vitality of the primeval Islamic faith. The protagonists of the Islamic revivalism waged a limitless struggle and an unrelented war against all internal and external hostile forces that came in their way. In general, they

developed their reform programs by three stages (a) re-educating the masses and sympathetic elites with the pristine doctrines of Prophetic Islam, (b) re-organizing the people into compact settlements and societies of practising Muslims and (c) waging internal struggle and external *jihad* against all hostile forces and consolidating ideologically converted masses into political States.

In all the three stages of their development strategies, they were generally successful so long as they had to face their own people with conventional tactics and conventional weapons. But since their political advancement coincided almost parallel to the European expansion to Asia and Africa, sooner or latter they came into head on clash with English and French imperialism. Being amateur in international politics, novice in military tactics and their indigenous weaponry being vastly outclassed by the European modern weaponry, they proved no match to the imperial and colonial powers of the West. The English imperialists abused them as madcap, fanatic and *Wahhabi* in Bengal, India, Pakistan, Arabia, North Africa and Nigeria and crushed their political hegemony one by one. Likewise the French colonialists called them the *Red Mullah* and chased them to non-entity.

In the 19<sup>th</sup> Century Bangladesh, *Fara'idi* movement flourished from 1818 C.E. which then languished under the tight control of British imperialism ; they were tactfully surrounded, accused of creating social disturbances, communal riots, terrorism and tumult (*History of the Fara'idi Movement* ; and the *Trial of Dudu Miyan*, and chapter 11 and references therein), and gradually suppressed (see chapter 8). Likewise in the West Bengal of India, the reform movement of Titu Mir, being a branch of *Tariqah-i-Muhammadiyah* was blotted out under similar accusations in 1831 (see chapter 6).

In Indo-Pakistan territories where the hold of the British Government was not tight enough, they closely watched upon the activities of *Tariqah-i-Mummadiyah* movement (misnamed "Indian Wahhabism") and destroyed them through so-called legal action, instituting grand court trials, at Ambala in 1864, at Patna in 1865 (see Qeyamuddin Ahmad: *The Wahhabi Movment in India, Calcutta and Madras* (see our *Selections from Bengal Governments Records on Wahabi Trials, 1863-1870*, Asiatic

Society of Pakistan, Dhaka, 1961, 418 pages, and Lewes A. Mendes: *Report on the Proceedings in the Matters of Ameer Khan and Hashamdad Khan, part I*, Calcutta, 1871, C.E.).

Moreover, besides the diplomatic intrigues of the British against the *Muwahhidun* movement of Arabia and setting them as *Wahhabi* rebels against the Sultan Caliph of Turkey, they suppressed the *Sanusi* and *Fulani* movement of North and West Africa and annexed their territories to their empires about 1903 and 1912 C.E. Thus, the Islamic revivalist movements, which upsurged with tremendous enthusiasm during the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, suffered set back while confronted by the European colonial powers in the later half of the century and gradually fizzled out at the end of the century under the brunt of the violent suppression by the imperial powers of the West.

As a matter of fact, to convert a religious ideology into a social system, purity of faith and sincerity of purpose are though indispensable, yet these are not enough; political astuteness and military prowess are needed too, as necessary ancillaries, which these resurgence movements were lacking with the single exception of the Arabian *Muwahhidun* movement, which had gained the hand of the Saudi Emirate to recuperate it even from the death-bed by the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century C.E. Firm faith in the Unity of Allah, saturated political wisdom and a desert warfare strategy based on settlement brotherhood organization of Abd al-Aziz ibn Saud (see “Abdul Aziz ibn-e-Saud-er Sathe Ikhwaner Samparka”, the Relation of the Brotherhood with Abd al-Aziz ibn Saud by Muhammad Yakub Hussain, Dhaka University, Ph.D. Thesis, in Bengali, 1997), succeeded in reviving and regenerating the *Muwahhidun* movement once again and the Saudi rule in Arabia during the first quarter of the 20<sup>th</sup> century C.E.

We are including herewith our studies, observations and surveys of some related movements such as *Ahl-e-Hadith* of India-Pakistan-Bangladesh subcontinent and Mawlana Karamat Ali Jaunpuri’s mediation between the revivalist movement and the rising wave of Muslim modernism, which are likely to provide the readers with a deeper insight into the realities of time and circumstances.

## CHAPTER-1

## Sir Jones Brydges' Diplomatic Report on Wahhabism of Arabia\*

The document presented below is a Diplomatic Report of Sir Harford Jones Brydges, the British Resident at Baghdad, on the *Wahhabi* movement of Arabia, which was dispatched to the British Foreign Office in C.E. 1799<sup>1</sup>, which was lying amidst the Persian Records at the British Museum, London, in the form of a manuscript. It was first noticed by Dr. Muhammad 'Abdul Bari of Rajshahi University, in 1953 and it came to our hands in 1963 through the good offices of Mr. Mumtaz Hasan, who procured its Photostat copy at our request for preservation at the Library of the National Bank of Pakistan, who was then the Managing Director of the said Bank.

This Report is important for more than one reason. In the first place, it is one of the earliest historical documents on Wahhabism and probably the first comprehensive appraisal of its basic doctrines by a European observer. It is true that Carsten Niebuhr (C.E. 1733-1815) was the first to bring the *Wahhabi* movement of Arabia to the notice of the Europeans. He wrote two books in German language, one being 'Description of Arabia based on the Observations and Researches made within the Country itself', and the other 'Travels in Arabia and other Surrounding Countries', which were published in between C.E. 1772 and 1778. An abridged English translation of these two books was brought out from London by Robert Heron 1792<sup>2</sup>. But Niebuhr's account of Wahhabism does not contain as much accurate and first hand information as provided by the present document. Secondly, the ten *Wahhabi* doctrines listed by Sir Harford faithfully reflect the general structure of the *Wahhabi* system as it was practiced at the time. Thirdly, the European powers having as yet little concern with the rise of the *Wahhabis* in the Arabian desert, the author of our report displays a good deal of neutrality in describing the origin and nature of the movement<sup>3</sup>.



Fourthly, the author has also noticed that the so-called *Wahhabis* actually called themselves not “Wahhabis” but “True Muslims”.

As a matter of fact, the name *Wahhabi* was given to them by their opponents after the name of its founder Muhammad ibn ‘Abd al-Wahhab as a mark of abuse and it was freely used by the European writers, travellers and diplomats. On the other hand, the *Wahhabis* called themselves, as D.S. Margoliouth observes, *Muwahhidun*, Unitarian or monotheists. His further view that they called their system ‘*Tariqah Muhammadi*’<sup>4</sup> is, however misleading and without foundation. At present, they have begun calling themselves ‘*Salafiyah*’ probably for the purpose of identifying themselves with broader like-minded circle. Obviously, they chose the epithet ‘*Muwahhidun*’ in order to lay emphasis on the Unitarianism or pure monotheism of Islam and distinguish themselves from the followers of many superstitious beliefs and un-Islamic customs, which had crept into the contemporary Muslim society.

Last but not least, the present Report was prepared while the *Muwahhidun* or the *Wahhabis* were in the ascendance; nay, while they were nearing the zenith of their power during the first epoch of their history. Besides, the memory of Muhammad ibn ‘Abd al-Wahhab was fresh in the minds of the people at the time of its composition. This enables us to revise and refix the date of his death. Muhammad ibn ‘Abd al-Wahhab, the founder of *Muwahhidun* movement, was born at al-Uyaynah, a small desert settlement of Najd in Arabia in C.E. 1703<sup>5</sup>. He completed his formal education at Madinah in or about C.E. 1724 under Sulyman al-Kurdi and Muhammad Hayat al-Sindi. Then he travelled extensively for about 12 years in Arabia and Persia, in the course of which he prosecuted higher studies at Basra, Baghdad, Hamadan and Damascus. He revisited Hijaz in or about C.E. 1735 and stayed at Makkah for a considerable time before returning to Najd<sup>6</sup>. At first, he settled Huraymilah<sup>7</sup> and then moved to his native village al-Uyaynah where he started his reform movement in C.E. 1744<sup>8</sup>.

He called for a return to pristine Islam as practiced by Prophet Muhammad (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), and urged upon the people to become ‘true Muslims’ by completely and

unreservedly accepting the first principal of Islam: "There is no god but Allah and Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah". Secondly, he emphasized the need for purging the Muslim society of all un-Islamic customs and sinful innovations. In other words, his was a religious revivalist movement, which laid the utmost emphasis on the pure Unitarianism of Islam. Hence he called himself and his followers *Muwahhidun*<sup>9</sup>, meaning Unitarians.

As a result of this point of view, he condemned all deviations from the doctrines of the Qur'an and the Prophet's traditions (*Sunnah*) as polytheism (*shirk*) and sinful innovation (*bid'ah*). His uncompromising attitude even led him to condemn the science of theology (*kalam*) and Greek logic (*mantiq*) as un-Islamic. Besides the Qur'an and Sunnah, he accepted the traditions of the *salf salihin* or the virtuous ancestors, whereby he meant the first three generations of Muslims. Indeed, the adoption of the epithet "Salafiyah" by his present-day followers has been inspired by this concept.

His puritan movement was based on these primary considerations, which were, in fact, in the best tradition of the Hanbali school of law as elaborated by Imam ibn Taymiyah and ibn al-Qayyim, to which Muhammad ibn 'Abd al-Wahhab himself belonged. It is interesting to note that the Muwahhidun have never shown disrespect to any *madhhab* or school of law, though like Shah Wali Allah they condemned blind imitation of the Imams. Rather, they emphatically claim themselves to be Hanbali and follow the Hanbali doctrines in so far as they are found to be in accord with the Qur'an and the Sunnah.<sup>10</sup>

The circumstances under which the movement originated and developed point to a number of factors which played an important role in moulding the reformist ideas of Muhammad ibn 'Abd al-Wahhab. In the first place, he was pained to see his Arab compatriots well high relapsing into the 'Days of Ignorance'. The author of *Rawdat al-Afkar* devotes a long section in which he lists the superstitious beliefs and practices current in Arabia at the time, which savors of paganism. Besides paying excessive veneration to tombs and shrines, reverence was shown to sacred trees and stones

and gifts of food were placed on graves. These superstitious beliefs and practices, which were survivals of pre-Islamic paganism, had gradually led the masses away from the true doctrines and made them Unmindful to the religious duties prescribed by Islam.<sup>11</sup>

Secondly, about the time when Muhammad ibn ‘Abd al-Wahhab was a student at Madinah, a number of influential teachers over there seem to have created a fresh enthusiasm among their disciples for reviving pristine Islam, which turn the gaze of their students to the radical Puritanism of Imam ibn Taymiyah. Shah Wali Allah of Delhi had also visited Hijaz in C.E. 1730 and studied the Prophet’s traditions for fourteen months under Abu Taher Ibrahim al-Kurdi al-Madani, Wafd Allah al-Makki, Taj al-Din Qal’i al-Makki and ‘Umar ibn Ahmad al-Makki. Both Shah Wali Allah and Muhammad ibn ‘Abd al-Wahhab were deeply influenced by the puritanical ideas of Imam ibn Taymiyah as demonstrated by their works after they returned to their respective native lands. Although they never met each other nor exchanged views at any time, they started two separate puritanical movements in seventeen-forties in their respective lands calling the attention of their co-religionists to the doctrine of *tawhid* or pure Unitarianism of Islam urging them to purge their society of un-Islamic customs. In course of time these ideas created the Islamic revivalism of the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries both in Arabia and in Indo-Pak subcontinent.<sup>12</sup>

These factors must have added strength to Muhammad ibn ‘Abd al-Wahhab’s feeling of dissatisfaction. With secularistic administration of the Ottoman Turks as well as with the social, political and economic decadence of the Arabian peninsula that moved him to embark upon a course of radical reform. According to the present report, Muhammad ibn ‘Abd al-Wahhab had propounded his puritan doctrines first at Mosul, which were considered to be so dangerous by the conservative ‘*Ulama* as well as the local administrators that he was compelled to leave that city. Thence he moved to his native place al-Uyaynah where he had the good fortune of finding a convert and protector in the person of Shaykh Abu Muhamar,<sup>13</sup> whose actual name as noted by Palgrave and the author of *Rawdat al-Afkar*, was Uthman ibn Mu’ammam,<sup>14</sup> the Governor of the place. The Report adds further that at first Ibn Mu’ammam showed great

enthusiasm for the new doctrines and gave his sister in marriage to Muhammad. But Muhammad being dissatisfied with the injustice and oppression perpetrated by his brother-in-law over the people and also to prove his unbounded love for justice, murdered him with his own hands while the latter was saying his prayers in the mosque. "The people of al-Uyaynah, however, appear to have had too much good sense", the Report continues, "to esteem as meritorious so horrible a transaction" and they obliged Muhammad ibn 'Abd al-Wahhab to abandon al-Uyaynah, whereupon he fled to Dar'iyah or Dir'iyah.<sup>15</sup>

This allegation calls for a critical examination. Palgrave devotes five pages in his *Travels* to describe Muhammad's relations with ibn Mu'ammār,<sup>16</sup> and states that ibn Mu'ammār was fascinated by Muhammad's personal character, wide experience, solid reputation, learning and gravity "combined with an eloquent yet prudent tongue". But he depicts ibn Mu'ammār as a man of liberal disposition in religious matters, who "took no apparent notice of the religious fermentation" created by Muhammad's preaching of the new doctrines. On the basis of stories current at al-Uyaynah at the time of his visit in 1861-1863, he adds further that, Ibn Mu'ammār was, at the same time, cruel, oppressive and unscrupulous<sup>17</sup>. D.S. Morgoliouth agrees with him in holding that Muhammad's preaching produced a cleavage among the people of al-Uyaynah, which led to his expulsion from the place<sup>18</sup>.

At this point the authorities differ with one another. Palgrave says that Muhammad's opponents, being unable to arouse Ibn Mu'ammār from his inaction, appealed "to the supreme governor at Qatif, Ibn Muflīq", who compelled Ibn Mu'ammār to stop the propagation of the new doctrines and expel Muhammad from his territories.<sup>19</sup> On the basis of *Lam' al-Shihab*, Morgoliouth states that Ibn Mu'ammār was compelled by Sulaymān b. Shamīs al-Anāzī, the prince of Hasa, to expel Muhammad<sup>20</sup>. In substance, this is also corroborated by *Rawdat al-Afkar*, but the latter source gives the name of the chief of Hasa as Sulaymān b. Muhammad al-Humaydi.<sup>21</sup> Moreover, according to the narration of Palgrave, Ibn Mu'ammār met his natural death sometimes later, while Muhammad ibn 'Abd al-Wahhab was busy in propagating his doctrines at Dir'iyah.<sup>22</sup>

These sources, thus, falsify the contention of Sir Harford in the present Report that Muhammad ibn 'Abd al-Wahhab murdered Ibn Mu'ammar with his own hands, and there is strong reason to believe that this was a concocted story circulated by his opponents to malign Muhammad ibn 'Abd al-Wahhab. As, since C.E. 1790, the Sultan of Turkey (*Porte*) took a serious view of the growing political ascendancy of the *Muwahhidun* and as from C.E. 1797 onwards the *Muwahhidun* were at war with the Ottoman Governor of Baghdad and the Sharif of Makkah, it is quite probable that such concocted stories about the founder of the new movement became current and reached the ear of the British Resident at Baghdad, who wrote his Report in C.E. 1799. Palgrave's narration further suggests that, although Ibn Mu'ammar gave protection to Muhammad, he did not become a convert to the new doctrine<sup>23</sup> as stated by Sir Harford.<sup>24</sup>

The latter portion of the story as narrated by Sir Harford is more or less corroborated by other sources. At Dir'iyah, Muhammad ibn Sa'ud, the governor of the place, accepted Muhammad ibn 'Abd al-Wahhab's doctrines and undertook its defence and propagation. Ibn Sa'ud, who was already renowned for his high sense of justice, appointed him the *Qadi* or the Supreme Judge of his domain and as the author of the present Report says, "with this person, Mollah Mohammad (i.e. Muhammad ibn 'Abd al-Wahhab) remained in the capacity of a spiritual and temporal Judge with unbounded authority until he died, which event took place about ten years ago".<sup>25</sup>

Here we come upon another important point as regards the date of the death of Muhammad ibn 'Abd al-Wahhab. If the above statement is correct, he must have died in or about C.E. 1789 since the Report was prepared in C.E. 1799. In the opening paragraph of the article "Wahhabiyah" in the *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, Margoliouth gives the dates of Muhammad's birth and death as H.1115 and H.1201 respectively, and the corresponding Christian dates are C.E. 1703 and 1787. In the latter passage, he, however, asserts that Muhammad died at the age of 89. But if the date of birth H.1115/C.E. 1703, as noted above, is correct, in terms of lunar Hijri era, he gets the life-span of 86 years and computed to the solar Christian era only 84 years. Hence in the latter passage he corrects the circulation and gives date of death as 1792<sup>26</sup>, again committing

an error in calculating the 89 years of Muhammad's life span in terms of solar instead of lunar calendar. Because, although he has not mentioned the source of his statement that Muhammad died "at the age of 89", he obviously has taken it from an Arabic source, and hence it must be calculated in terms of the lunar Hijri calendar and then computed to the solar Christian era.

If he was born in H. 1115, C.E. 1703, he must have died in (1115+89=1204) H. 1204, which corresponds exactly with the year given by Sir Harford, which (1799-10=1789) C.E. 1789. Hence, the date of his death as noted by the author of our report is more reliable than the dates so far calculated by D.S. Morgoliouth and uncritically accepted by the Western as well as Eastern scholars, including the Arabs themselves, as H. 1201/C.E. 1787, which is wrong and needs be corrected.

The subsequent history of the movement may be summed up as follows. Within a year of his arrival at Dir'iyah, Muhammad ibn 'Abd al-Wahhab won over to his side all the inhabitants of the place. The new sect soon became involved in war with Shaykh Dahham ibn Dawwas of Riyadh, which lasted for 28 years from 1160 H./1747 C.E. onwards. During this period, Muhammad ibn Sa'ud and his son 'Abd al-Aziz steadily grew in power and prestige and succeeded in extending their domain far and wide. In H. 1178, C.E. 1765, ibn Sa'ud breathed his last and was succeeded by his son 'Abd al-Aziz, before whose superior military tactics Shaykh of Riyadh proved a poor match. In C.E. 1773, Shaykh Dahham fled from Riyadh leaving 'Abd al-Aziz in full control of the whole Najd.<sup>27</sup> From C.E. 1792 to 1795, 'Abd al-Aziz pushed northwards subduing the Banu Khalid in Hasa and finally in C.E. 1797, he came into direct conflict with Ottoman administration at Baghdad on the one side and with that of Makkah on the other. In C.E. 1801 the *Muwahhidun* invaded and sacked Kerbala in Iraq and in C.E. 1803 they drove out Sharif Ghalib of Makkah and occupied the holy city; they took Madinah in C.E. 1804 a living description of which is epitomized in the *Wahhabi Pamphlet* in Chapter 2. Then in a couple of years they extended their sway up to Jiddah.<sup>28</sup> This brought to an end the first phase of the history of the progress of *Muwahhidun* movement.

The second phase of the movement was marked by a steep political recession of the *Muwahhidun* coupled with a wider diffusion of their doctrines outside of Arabia. Beginning in C.E. 1812, this phase continued down to the end of the nineteenth century. It may be noted that the occupation of the holy cities by the *Muwahhidun* in C.E. 1803-1804, had alarmed the Ottoman Sultan, who ordered Khadive Muhammad 'Ali, the governor of Egypt, to deal with the situation personally and crush the dangerous movement forthwith. Accordingly, Muhammad 'Ali's son, Tusun, marched upon them with a large army and drove them away from Makkah and Madinah in 1812-1813. But when Muhammad 'Ali personally appeared on the scene and attacked them in the interior desert regions, he sustained an ignominious defeat at their hands in C.E. 1813. The death of Amir 'Abd al-Aziz at this critical juncture in 1814, proved a great blow to Saudi power, and thereafter Muhammad 'Ali's son, Ibrahim Pasha, at the end of a series of campaigns, succeeded in entering the Saudi capital Dir'iyah, and taking the next ruling Amir, 'Abd Allah, a prisoner, sent him to Constantinople where he was beheaded by the order of the Sultan.<sup>29</sup>

The Saudi Kingdom was, however, revived soon afterwards. But the growing power of the Rashidi dynasty in Ha'il seriously threatened their position. After a prolonged warfare between the two dynasties, the Sa'udis were defeated by Muhammad ibn Rashid in C.E. 1883. It appeared for a time that this great disaster had destroyed the Sa'udi power forever.

On the other hand, the undisputed control of the holy cities by the *Muwahhidun* from 1806 to 1812 brought the new reform movement to the direct notice of the whole Muslim world. Their puritanism, which resembled the Primitive Church movement of Christian Europe, spurred the zeal and enthusiasm of a great many pilgrims and scholars, that eventually gave birth to the *Fara'izi* (*Fara'idi*) movement in Bangladesh,<sup>30</sup> *Paduri* movement in Indonesia<sup>31</sup> and encouraged, directly or indirectly many religious revivalist movements in different parts of the Muslim world. As a result, religious revivalism in different forms became the most conspicuous phenomenon in the 19<sup>th</sup> century Islam. The political recession of the *Muwahhidun* was thus compensated incognito by their ideological expansion.

The third phase of the *Muwahhidun* movement began with the turn of the twentieth century, when the scion of the Sa'udi family, Abd al-Aziz bin Abd al-Rahman al- Sa'ud succeeded in rekindling the fire of puritanism from the ashes. Following a series of brilliant military expeditions, he captured Riyadh from the Rashidis and re-established the old dynasty there in C.E. 1901. By C.E. 1904, he became the undisputed master of the whole of Najd. In 1912, he captured Ha'il and put an end to the Rashidi dynasty. Finally taking advantage of the dissolution of the Turkish empire after the World War I, and the disturbed situation in the Middle East, on the one hand, and of an Anglo-Sa'udi Non-aggression Pact, on the other, he drove away Sharif Husain from Hijaz and occupied Makkah, Madinah and Jiddah in 1914-1925.<sup>32</sup> Thus, he re-established the hegemony of the Sa'udi dynasty throughout eastern, central and northern Arabia and founded the presently thriving kingdom of Sa'udi Arabia. On the death of King Abd al-Aziz ibn Sa'ud in 1953, his eldest son Sa'ud bin Abd al-Aziz ascended the throne.<sup>33</sup> He was succeeded by his younger brother Faisal bin Abd al-Aziz, to the throne of Sa'udi Arabia, in 1964. Thereafter the Sa'udi Kingdom flourished by leaps and bounds and peaceful regular succession followed one after another and the present incumbent is His Majesty King Abdullah ibn Sa'ud.

The remaining portion of the Report consists of a list of ten *Muwahhidun* doctrines, about which we have already noted our views. Now, therefore, we may turn to the text of report, which is as follows :



## Text of The Report

### THE WHABEE<sup>1</sup>

[1(489)]

It is about seventy years since an Arab from the Nijdy <sup>2</sup> Country whose name was Moollah Mohammed, and who was the son of a person named Abdul Wahhab <sup>3</sup> or the slave of the Giver came from Bussora, <sup>4</sup> and afterwards to Baghdad to study the Law under the most celebrated Mohummedan Doctors then residing at both these places. After finishing his Studies at the latter place he for the further Prosecution of them proceeded to Damascus, where it was first perceived he broached opinions, which were considered as dangerous; and on Account of which he was obliged to fly from Damascus, and retire to Mousul.

During his residence at Mousal, Moollah Mohammed openly announced as otherdox [orthodox] the doctrines, which he held, <sup>5</sup> and these were esteemed so dangerous by the Ecclesiastics, <sup>6</sup> and Men of the Law <sup>7</sup> there, that he was compelled to leave Mousal, and retiring from thence he betook himself to Ayenah, <sup>8</sup> a Town in the Nijdy country where he again publicly made known the Articles of his Faith, and had the good fortune to find a Convert and Protector, in Shaik<sup>9</sup> Ibn Mahamer<sup>10</sup>, the Governor of that place.

Shaik Ibn Mahamer proud of possessing this new Sanctuary, gave Moollah Mohammed his own Sister in Marriage and Moollah Mohammed sometimes after, under pretence, that his Brother in Law, Mahamer perverted Justice, and oppressed the Tribe, murdered him with his own [2(499)] hands in the Mosque as he was at prayers meaning thereby, as he declared, to give to the People of Ayanah a proof that his love of Justice was so great, that neither the obligations which he had to, nor alliance he had with Shaik Mahamer could withhold him from punishing even in him that he conceived to be a deviation from it.

The People of Ayanah however appeared to have had too much good sense, to esteem as meritorious, so horrible a transaction, and they obliged Moollah Mohammed, to abandon Ayanah, and he fled

to Dereah <sup>11</sup> where he found an Asylum and Protector Shaik Ibn Soud, the Governor of that place, who also embraced his Doctrines. With this person Moollah Mohammed remained in the capacity of a spiritual and temporal Judge with unbounded authority until he died, which event took place about ten years ago. These two persons by force and other means made their own Tribe and many persons of the neighbouring Tribes (?) converts to be universally known by the name Whabee. Within these fifteen years it has increased so much as to become an object of great Jealousy and attention to the court of Constantinople. Shaik Abdul Aziz has succeeded his father Ibn Soud, in the Government of the Tribe, and Shaik Hossun has succeeded his father Moollah Mohammed in the Office of Qazi or Judge of it.

The Religion they possess is Mohammedan according to the literal meaning of the Koran, following the Interpretations of Hambelly.

[3(491)] The following are some of the most remarkable of the opinions which the Whabees entertaining contra-distinction to other Mohammedans.

1. That, there is but one God, who has neither Partner nor equal and that Mohammed is his Prophet but to profess that either Mohammed or any of the Imams have now the least Superintendence over or can give the smallest assistance to the affairs of men, is to make tem partners with God; to invoke them therefore is Blasphemy.
2. That, a Mohammadan who deviates in religious duties in the smallest degree from the literal, pure Injunctions, and Precepts of the Koran is as much a Cafer <sup>13</sup> or unbeliever as a Christian or Jew and that therefore to make war against him is the positive duty of every Whabee or as they term themselves true Mussulmans. <sup>14</sup>
3. That, all titles of honour and respect to Men are odious before God, who alone ought to have the Titles of magnificent, might etc.
4. That, according to what is revealed in the Koran all true Mussalmans ought to join waging Continual War against all unbelievers until they oblige them to become either Converts or

Tributaries; that, in the latter instance, the Tributaries should be compelled to wear the coarsest, and most inferior sort of clothes, should not be allowed the use of horses, nor permitted to build splendid houses, but, in short, should be treated with all the severity laid down in the Koran. <sup>15</sup>

[4(492)]

5. That, all Customs, duties, etc. except the Zekat mentioned in the Koran are unlawful to be levied on the Goods of Mussalmans. The principal Impositions for the public service which are lawful are the following:
  - On property in specie an offering of one in forty or 2.5 percent.
  - On property in Land watered naturally, and without Labour one in ten of the produce.
  - On property in Land watered by Wells and Labour one in twenty of the produce.
  - On animals one in forty.
  - The Revenue or produce of all conquered Countries, not embracing the faith, to belong to the public.
  - Of all spoils taken in War, one fifth to be set apart for the public use, and the remaining  $\frac{1}{5}$  (corrected  $\frac{4}{5}$ ) to be equally divided amongst the whole of the Tribe, as well those who were absent as those (?) present at the Capture.
  - The General Revenue of each particular Town or District on being collected, to be divided into 5 parts. One of which 5 parts is to be transmitted to the general Treasury, and the remaining 4 to be retained in the Town or District where it is collected, for the purposes of defraying the different expenses of Government, relieving the poor, and entertaining Travellers.
6. That, to swear by Muhammed, Ally <sup>16</sup> or any particular person or thing ought to be punished, since Oath is properly Calling a Witness to our Secret thoughts or [5(493)] intentions, of which there can not be any other Witness than God.

7. That, it is a species of Idolatry to erect Magnificent Tombs, to the particular persons; but that, to Kiss with religious veneration, and relics or any part of these Tombs is idolatry itself, that therefore it would be in action acceptable in the sight of God to destroy the rich Tombs of the Mohemmedan saints in this country and in Persia, and to appropriate their precious and valuable Ornaments to better and more worldly purposes.
8. That, it is wicked to mourn for the dead, for if they have been good Mussalmans, their souls are in Paradise at which we ought to rejoice.
9. If any convert apostatises and afterwards repents, he may again be admitted to the Number of true Mussulmans; by paying such a fine as may be imposed on him.
10. That, no one is to be paid for his service in War, because properly there can be no other Motive for War than Religion. War then is the service of God. Shall a Man be paid for serving God?

There are many other less consequential opinions held by these puritans but which all revert to someone or other of their foregoing. They consider everyone of their Sect who falls <sup>17</sup> in warring against the Infidels, as being immediately permitted to enjoy the delights of Paradise. The Whabees not only regard a regular War against their brother Mussulmans of a different Sect as incumbent on them but each individual Whabee esteems it a meritorious act to plunder, rob and murder [6(494)] any other Individual Arab, he may meet with <sup>18</sup> and in consequence of this opinion the Whabees have latterly been a terrible annoyance to the Caravans in passing the Desert. <sup>19</sup>

It is said that Shaik Abdul Aziz can bring into the field, a Band of the Enthusiasts amounting to near 50/M <sup>20</sup> mostly mounted on Camels.

(signed) *Harford Jones.*

### References in the commentary

- \* Reprinted by courtesy from: *Islamic Studies*, Journal of the Islamic Research Institute, Islamabad, Pakistan, Vol. VII, No.1, March 1368, pp. 33-46.
1. It is a transcript of the original Report preserved in the file of Factory Records (Persia), Home Misc., Vol. 737(8), dated 1<sup>st</sup> December 1799, pp. 489-494.
  2. See *Islamic Culture*, Hyderabad, 1933, pp. 502-505; review of Carsten Neibuhr's book by V. B. Meta; and for a passing reference see, *Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics*, James Hastings ed., 2<sup>nd</sup> Imp., New York, 1934, Vol. 12, Art "Wahhabiyah," p.661.
  3. Compare with Dr. Muhammad 'Abdul Bari's unpublished doctoral thesis, "A Comparative Study of the Early Wahhabi Doctrines and Contemporary Indian Islam", submitted to Oxford University in 1953.
  4. *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 1<sup>st</sup> ed., Vol. IV, p. 1086.
  5. *Ibid.* Palgrave says that Muhammad ibn 'Abd al-Wahhab's birthplace was Hureymela, cf. W. G. Palgrave: *Narrative of a Journey Through Central and Eastern Arabia*, 1862-63, London, 1866, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed., Vol. 1, p. 374.
  6. *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, Vol. IV, p. 1086.
  7. Palgrave, *op. cit.*, p. 374 ff.
  8. Palgrave holds that he started the reform movement at Hureymela, see *ibid.*, whereas D. S. Margoliouth says that he publicly preached his doctrines at 'Uyaynah; see *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, *op. cit.*, Vol., IV, p. 1086.
  9. See our article, "Shah Wali Allah's Conception of Ijtihad", *Journal of the Pakistan Historical Society*, Karachi, Vol. VII, Part III, July 1859, pp. 168-169, reproduced herein (Chapter 3).
  10. *Ibid.*, pp. 169 and 171; and our book, *History of the Fara'idi Movement in Bengal*, Karachi, 1965, p. XLII. See also "History of the Doctrines of the Wahhabis", translated from Arabic into English by J. O'Kinealy, *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal*, Calcutta, 1874, p. 68 ff., reproduced herein (Chapter 2).
  11. *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, *op. cit.*, vol. iv, p. 1087; cf. *Rawdat al-Afkar wal-Afham-li-Murtad Hal al-Imam wa Ta'dad Ghazwat-Dhawi-I-Islam*, MS. At British Museum. See also Palgrave *op. cit.*, pp. 68, 373 and 375 ff. See also our *History of the Fara' idi Movement*, *op. cit.*, pp. XXXVI ff.
  12. See text of the report below.
  13. Palgrave writes his name as Ebn-Ma'ammer, (cf. Palgrave *op. cit.*, Vol. I), p. 375; and the author of *Rawdat al-Afkar op. cit.*, Vol. II, fol. 3 (quoted by Dr. M. 'Abdul Bari in the thesis referred to above) spells his name as 'Uthman ibn Mu'ammar.

14. See text below, pp. 489-99.
15. Palgrave, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, pp. 373-3.
16. *Ibid.*, pp. 375 and 377 ff.
17. *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, Vol. IV, p. 1086 (cf. *Lam' al-Shihab fī Sirat Muhammad ibn 'Abd al-Wahhab*, British Museum).
18. Palgrave, *op. cit.*, pp. 375-376.
19. *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, Vol. IV, p. 1087.
20. *Rawdat al-Afkar*, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, fol. 3 (quoted by Dr. M. Abdul Bari in his thesis referred to above).
21. Palgrave, *op. cit.*, p. 378.
22. *Ibid.*, p. 373 ff.
23. See text below, p. 489.
24. See text below, p. 499.
25. *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, *op. cit.*, Vol. IV, pp. 1086 and 1087.
26. *Ibid.*, p. 1087 ff.
27. *Ibid.*
28. *Ibid.*
29. *Ibid.*
30. See our *History of Fara'idi Movement*, Karachi, 1965, p. L.
31. *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, *op. cit.*, Vol. III, p. 1317, Art. "Paduri"
32. *Ibid.*, Vol. IV, p. 1087 ff.
33. George Lenczowski: *The Middle East in World Affairs*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., New York, 1965, p. 449.

### ***Reference of the text***

1. *Wahhabi* or *Wahabi*, the name to the *Muwahhidun* movement was given to it by its opponents. The movement, however, became more widely known by this fake name rather than by its real name. It may be noted that in the File of the Persian Records the folios of this document bear the page Nos. 489-494, and we have marked them pp. 1-6.
2. Najd in central Arabia.
3. Muhammad ibn 'Abd al-Wahhab, the founder of the *Wahhabi* or *Muwahhidun* movement.
4. Basra in Iraq.

5. i.e., He held his doctrines which he entertained earlier at Damascus as genuine and orthodox vis-a-vis the other doctrines which were opposed to them.
6. i.e., the *Ulama* or the religious leaders.
7. i.e., the *Fuqaha* or the jurists, such as *Qadi* and *Mufti*.
8. al-Uyaynah, a desert settlement in Hijaz.
9. *Shaykh* is the title of the Arab Chieftain or governor.
10. The correct spelling is Ibn Mu'ammār and his first name was 'Uthman.
11. Dar'iyah or Dir'iyah.
12. *Hanbali madhab* or school of law is named after the Imam Ahmed Ibn Hanbal, which is one of the four recognised orthodox schools of the Sunni sect.
13. *Kafir*, that is, unbeliever.
14. i.e., True Muslims or true believers.
15. This reference to their view regarding the statement regarding treatment to the non-Muslims is unfounded. The followers of his movement, in fact, advocate tolerance of the non-Muslims as prescribed by the Quran and the Prophetic tradition.
16. 'Ali ibn Abi Talib, the fourth Caliph.
17. i.e., killed in war.
18. This reference as regards the attitude of the follower of this movement towards the Muslims of other sects is baseless.
19. The reasons of the raids of the *Wahhabis* on caravans were quite different and politically inspired.
20. i.e., Nearly 50 thousand warriors.

## CHAPTER- 2

### Reading into the Doctrines of the Muwahhidun of Arabia misnamed Wahhabism

In this chapter we shall consider some important aspects of the *Muwahhidun* movement of Saudi Arabia, which was misnamed Wahhabism by the Europeans and, probably in collusion with them also by his Muslim opponents. It is perfectly evident that the movement was launched by Muhammad son of Abdul Wahhab, and not by the father. So, it could have been called 'Muhammadi' movement by the Arabs, which was though suggested by Margoliouth, was found baseless as has been noticed in the preceding chapter. Thinking that the last word of Muhammad ibn Abdul Wahhab's name was the real one in the European style, some German and English scholars concocted the term 'Wahhabism' to designate the movement as we have conclusively shown in the preceding chapter.

With a view to gaining a comprehensive idea of the doctrine of this Islamic revivalist reform movement, we shall draw herein relevant excerpt from two basic documentary writings of its parental sponsors, namely (a) "Kitab al-Tawhid" of Muhammad ibn Abdul Wahhab and (b) a small pamphlet written by his son, Abdullah which was translated into English by British Indian civil servant J. O'Kinealy entitled, "History and Doctrines of the Whabees". Both these works provide us with most authoritative and reliable data about the movement.

#### A.

#### Excerpt from *Kitab al-Tawhid* By Muhammad Ibn Abdul Wahhab

Muhammad ibn Abdul Wahhab was born in 1114 Hijri/ 1703 C.E. at the desert town of Uyaynah in the eastern Arabian region of Najd. His father was a *Qadi* or Judge of the town. The Administrator of the greater area was Abdullah ibn Muammar or Mamar. According to the *Ta'rikh Najd* (history of Najd) of Abdullah Qilaybi, he received his elementary education at the hand of his father, then went to Hijaz and stayed at Madinah for a considerable time where



he pursued higher studies. Returning to Najd, he moved to Basra, where allegedly his radical ideas were detested by the people and he fled to the town of Huraymila where his father was transferred and stayed with him till his father died in 1143 H. According to *Tarikh Alusi*, his father was displeased with his reformist contention and forbade him. After the death of his father, the people of Huraymila threatened to attack him.

According to a more sympathetic source (Introduction to the Bengali translation of *Kitab al-Tawhid* by Muhammad Abdus Samad), first he went to Hijaz for the performance of Hajj at Makkah, then he moved to Madinah to study religious sciences under Shaykh Abdullah ibn Ibrahim ibn Sayf. Thereafter he studied *Tawhid* (Unitarianism) under Shaykh Muhammad Majmuji. At Basra, while he began expressing his radical ideas about *Shirk*, attributing partnership with Allah in violation of the principle of Tawhid or Unitarianism, and also made known his vehement condemnation of *Bid'ah*, that is, introducing innovation in religious affairs, the people traditionally immersed in innovatory customs and usages got agitated and drove him out. This had compelled him to return to his father. Soon after the death of his father, he began his anti-Bid'ah activities with renewed enthusiasm at Duchimla (at Hurymila?) which enraged the people who made a nightly attack to murder him from which he escaped unhurt.

He migrated to Uyaynah where Amir Uthman Ahmad ibn Muammar received him with honour. The Amir also gave his daughter or sister, Jaohara in marriage to him. With the active collaboration of Amir Uthman ibn Muammar his reform activities caught momentum. Many people gathered around him. The movement attracted considerable number of leading persons of the wider area of Najd. Reportedly the innovational sinful usages, showing extreme reverence or allegedly worshipping *pirs* or spiritual guides, blind imitation of pre-Islamic customs and usages, worship of graves and tombs, even adoration of sacred trees were rampant in the town of Najd and other areas. People used to offer *Nazar*, *Niyaz*, *Hadiya* and *Tuhfa*, that is, various kinds of votive offerings to the shrines. They used to offer flowers at the graves and tombs, would put on rose flower, wear blessed clothes consecrated by the guardians of these

holy places. The management of the shrines used to arrange big feasts for the people from time to time. At several shrines enthusiasts would tie ropes at the branch of particular trees for the fulfilment of wishes. Muhammad ibn Abdul Wahhab roused his voice against these superstitious innovations and with the help of increasing number of devoted followers cut down these consecrated trees.

At a place called Jubayla, a Shaheed Minar was erected in the name of Zaid ibn Khattab, the martyred brother of Khalifah Umar Ibn al-Khattab, who died fighting with Musaylama Kadhhab, the impostor prophet, at the time of Khalifah Abu Bakr. In course of time, it acquired the characteristics of a Temple. Some people would make vow, promise money or offering for the fulfilment of wishes or removal of woes and grief; some would make circumbulation around it and even prostrate before it. He was able to convince Uthman of its evilness and made him agree to demolish it. The protectors of Jubayla, on the other hand, stood erect to save it with due preparation for fighting. At the end, however, they gave way and a six-men squad of Muhammad ibn Abdul Wahhab's followers broke it down in which he himself participated with a spade in hand.

The Amir of Ahsa, Sulaiman ibn Muhammad became furious at the demolition of the Jubayla Minar and wrote to Uthman ibn Muammar demanding punishment of Muhammad ibn Abdul Wahhab by killing him. Or else, he threatened to stop paying revenue of his area. Uthman could not avoid it and on his advice Muhammad agreed to go to his birth place Diriyah where he took shelter at the residence of Muhammad ibn Suyailam Urayni. Urayni was, however, afraid of Amir Muhammad ibn Saud's anger. Amidst such tension some people of Diriyah responded to his call and with their help, he contacted Muhammad ibn Saud's wife, who was an astute lady. She became convinced of the rightness of Muhammad ibn Abdul Wahhab's mission. She won over Amir Muhammad ibn Saud to side with the reform. Saud personally went to the house of Sulailam to see the budding Imam, congratulated and welcomed him and extending the hand of cooperation, took *baiyah*, the oath of fealty, putting his hand over the hand of Muhammad ibn Abdul Wahhab.

He settled down at Diriyah and his followers and admitters came flocking to him from Uyainah and else where. He invited them to accept the real Islam from here. He died at Diriyah at the age of 92 (Lunar) years in 1206 Hijri, which if counted in terms of Solar years come to 89 years in 1789 C.E. (see preceding chapter). In our view, this correction in the solar and lunar calendar years of the date of the death of Muhammad ibn Abdul Wahhab is an imperative necessity in the interest of history.

Muhammad ibn Abdul Wahhab wrote many books. But his *summun bonum* was *Kitab al-Tawhid*, which sums up the basic characteristics of his reform movement. We shall consider below relevant extracts from this basic and documentary work illustrating the characteristics and peculiarities of the *Wahhabi* or *Muahhidun* doctrines.

To start with, in the opening section Muhammad ibn Abdul Wahhab emphasized on the religious motive of Allah's creation of human beings instead of the usual view of the more general objective of Allah: to establish vicegerency of Allah on the earth through mankind. He says in the opening sentence:

In the name of Allah, Merciful and the Compassionate. *Kitab al-Tawhid* (Book on the Unitarianism of Allah). And the saying of Allah, the High: "And we have not created the jinn and mankind but for worshipping Me." (Q. 51:56).

And the saying of Allah: "And surely we have raised in every community Messenger that ye (plural of you or thou) worship Allah and refrain from worshipping idols." (Q. 16:36).

And the saying of Allah: "And your Lord hath ordained that ye don't worship except Himself and be decent to the parents." (Q. 17:23).

Secondly, he emphasized on the necessity of abstaining from *Shirk*, setting partner with Allah. He quotes from the Holy Quran:

And the saying of Allah: "And worship (ye) Allah and don't make any partner with Him" (Q. 4:36).

And the saying of Allah: "Say, come along (ye), I shall recite unto ye what your Lord has prohibited upon ye that ye don't keep partner with him anything whatsoever." (Q. 6:151-153).

Turning to the *Sunnah*, the Prophetic Tradition, Muhammad ibn Abdul Wahhab cites the *Hadith* of Muadh ibn Jalal (r.) who said, "I was sitting behind the Messenger (sm) on a donkey; so he said to me, Muadh! Do you know what is the right of Allah on the servants (mankind) and what is the right of the servants on Allah? I replied Allah and His Messenger know best. He said: the right of Allah on the servants is that they should worship Him and should not scribe any partner to Him; and the right of servants on Allah is that he would not punish anybody who have not scribed any partner to Him...."

This proposition of the human obligation of worshipping Allah alone and refraining from attributing any partnership to Him, cast the dye of the whole book and also the whole movement launched by Muhammad ibn Abdul Wahhab.

On the basis of above citations from the Quran and *Hadith*, which constitute the first part of his proposition, the author draws 24 inferences. The second is that "the worship is identical with Unitarianism (*al-ibadah hiya al-tawhid*). The third conclusion is that, whoever does not come up with Unitarianism can never worship Allah. The sixth is that, the worship of Allah cannot be achieved without rejecting the idols (*taghut*). The eighth is that, idol or *taghut* is to be generally understood as everything which is worshipped besides Allah.

The arguments are simple and archaic. This short prolegomena is followed by 66 chapters of the similar pattern dwelling on different things, topics, usages, customs and ceremonies all related to the religious purpose.

First chapter, on the virtues of *tawhid* (faith in the Unity) and whatsoever is forgiven on account of it. And saying of Allah the High: "Those who entertain faith and do not mix up their faith with oppression" (Q. 6:82). Here oppression (*zulm*) is interpreted as *shirk*, attributing partnership with Allah.

In this chapter, 12<sup>th</sup> inference: The author contends that the attributes (*sifat*) of Allah exists as against the theological school of Ash'arites. The 20<sup>th</sup> inference gives vent to affirmative knowledge of the countenance of Allah.

2<sup>nd</sup> chapter: On one who realizes unity (*tawhid*) would enter Paradise without any account. In this chapter a number of sayings of the holy Prophet (sm) have been cited which allows incantation for curing disease of the eye and the bite of snake and scorpion only. Yet these are discouraged by attributing greater virtue of those who never took recourse to it. The 15<sup>th</sup> inference: Shunning incantation and exercise etc. is the demand of *Tawhid*. The 16<sup>th</sup> inference, however, says that for curing ill-eye and poisonous bite of snake and insects incantation is allowed in view of the *Hadith* narrated by Sayeed ibn Jubayr (r.) on condition that there remain no vestiges of *shirk*.

3<sup>rd</sup> chapter on fear of *shirk*, states that it is incumbent to be afraid of committing *shirk* and that, showiness is a part of *shirk*.

The 4<sup>th</sup> chapter: cautions against the cry of oppressed, since according to a *Hadith* there is no barrier between the cry of the oppressed and Allah. It also insists upon the acquisition of insight (*basirah*) as incumbent for religion.

The 23<sup>rd</sup> inference insists upon faith in *taqdir* or fate as essential.

The 7<sup>th</sup> chapter deals with incantation, exorcise, talisman and consecrated paper, beads etc. as strongly prohibited.

The 8<sup>th</sup> chapter deals with seeking after blessing with trees, stones, the pre-Islamic Arabian custom of seeking *barakah* or blessing by hanging clothes and instruments on the branch of a particular tree called *dhatu-n-nuwat* etc. are strongly prohibited as small and big *shirk*. The 20<sup>th</sup> inference says: the consensus is that *ibadat* or worshipping was founded upon the command of Allah."

The 10<sup>th</sup> chapter deals with animal sacrifice and vow. It narrates a *Hadith* from Thabit ibn al-Dhahhaq (r.) who said a man vowed to sacrifice a camel at Bawanah; he asked the holy Prophet (sm); so the Prophet asked: was there any idol of the idols of worship of the time of Ignorance? People replied--no. The Prophet again asked: Had it been the place of any *Eid*, place of religious celebration, which the people of the days of Ignorance celebrated? They said-- no. The holy Prophet (sm) said: "Fulfil your vow; because no vow be fulfilled in disobedience of Allah and wherewithal the progeny of

Adam are unable to do". The *Hadith* is recorded by Abu Dawud. Fifth inference states that there is no harm in making *Nadhar* and *Mannat* (vow to make a sacrifice or pay any money) at any particular place provided it is free from any prohibited objectives (*khala min al-mawani*).

The 11<sup>th</sup> chapter dwells on the shirk in vowing for other than Allah. The first inference holds that fulfilment of the vow is obligatory and the second inference states that since vow (*Mannat/Nadhar*) is admitted to be the worship (*ibadah*) of Allah, then its dispensation towards other than Allah is *shirk*. Third inference says that the sinful vow is not lawful to be fulfilled.

The 12<sup>th</sup> chapter holds that praying for the help of other than Allah is *shirk*; and the 13<sup>th</sup> chapter, to pray for the shelter to other than Allah is *shirk*. The 10<sup>th</sup> inference says that most misguided is one who calls out to other than Allah, since calling out is equivalent to worship.

The 17<sup>th</sup> chapter deals with *ghulu* or extremism. It frowns upon transgressing the bounds in praising a virtuous person and all sort of extremism, which may eventually lead to infidelity. It quotes the Quran "O people of the Book, don't go to the extremity of your religion" (4:179). A *Hadith* is narrated by Umar (r.) that the holy Prophet (sm) said: "don't praise me as the Christians praise the son of Mary; surely I am a slave (of Allah), so call me the slave of Allah (*Abd Allah*) and his Messenger (*Rasulahu*)." Another *Hadith* is narrated by Ibn Mas'ud that the holy Prophet (sm) said, "The transgressors of bounds are destroyed, and he said it three times" (*Muslim*). In another *Hadith* narrated by Umar (r): "Be on your guard against extremism (*iyakum wa'l-ghulu*); because verily those who were before you got destroyed on account of extremism". The 3<sup>rd</sup> inference states that the first thing which caused the change in the religions of the earlier Prophets was *shirk* and it is the basic cause of the change in religion. The 5<sup>th</sup> inference holds that the overall cause of *shirk* is the mixture of falsehood with the truth. The 8<sup>th</sup> inference holds *shirk* responsible for infidelity and here the author introduces the discussion of *Bid'ah* or innovation which is identified with *shirk*. The 11<sup>th</sup> inference contends that the meditational stance over the graves is harmful. The 14<sup>th</sup> inference

calls upon the people to hold on the faith that whatever has been forbidden by Allah and His Messenger (sm), to do that is infidelity that renders the life and property of such persons lawful; that is to say, it renders them liable to be killed and their properties be snatched away.

The 19<sup>th</sup> chapter is on what has come down to the effect that the extreme reverence to the graves of the virtuous people turns them into idolatry being worshipped other than Allah. It quotes Imam Malik (r.) narrating a *Hadith* that the holy Prophet prayed to Allah: “O’Allah! Don’t let my grave be turned into such a symbol which is worshipped”. Another *Hadith* has been narrated by Abd Allah ibn Abbas (r.) that the holy Prophet (sm) has cursed upon those women who visit graves and upon those people who build mosque about the graves and kindle lights on them.

The 20<sup>th</sup> chapter is on the strivings of the Prophet (sm) in establishing *tawhid* and closing all the ways of *shirk*. It relates a *Hadith* from Abu Hurayrah (r.) that the holy Prophet said: “Don’t turn your houses into graves and don’t turn my grave into a celebrity (*Eid*) and recite *salat* and *salam* on me, as your *salat* and *salam* are made to reach me from wherever you do it”.

The second inference gives vent to forbiddance of the holy Prophet from oftener visits to graves. The 7<sup>th</sup> inference contends that there is consensus of the learned to the effect that *salat* cannot be performed in the graveyards.

The 8<sup>th</sup> inference contends that since a person’s *salat* and *salam* reach the holy Prophet from whatever distance, it is futile to strive to be nearer his grave.

The 9<sup>th</sup> inference says that the holy Prophet (sm) is staying in such a middle stage (*barzakh*) and here the *salat* and *salam* of his followers are usually placed before him.

It may be noted that the inference of this chapter hardly logically follow from the text of the Quran and the *Hadith* cited therein.

The 21<sup>st</sup> chapter narrates a *Hadith* from Abu Saeed al-Khudri (r.) contending that the holy Prophet said that some of the Muslim *Ummah* would imitate those people who were gone before them,

alluding to the Jews and the Christians, to the extent that if the former had entered the den of reptiles, the latter would also venture into that.

Chapter 22-24 deal with sorcery, enchantment and magic as well as wearing talisman, sting and bead as strictly forbidden being equated to *shirk*. But 25<sup>th</sup> chapter conditionally allows blessing, talisman and resistant sorcery, aimed at repairing; because these bring benefit and which is beneficent is not forbidden. It is called *nushra* by Ibn al-Qayyim.

Chapter 26 denies the existence of infectious disease and the influence of stars on raining as well as the existence of ghost and demon. These are said to be based on a *Hadith* recorded by Bukhari and Muslim; yet the holy Prophet approved of *faal* or divination of a particular sort.

Chapter 27 deals with Astrology. A prominent Companion of the Prophet, Qatada (r.) disapproved of seeking after the knowledge of the orbit of the moon, whereas Imam Ahmad ibn Hanbal allowed it.

Chapter 28 narrates that the holy Prophet (sm) disapproved of four traits of pre-Islamic usages, namely (i) arrogance of aristocracy (ii) slandering or vilifying other tribes or people (iii) seeking rain by the help of the stars and (iv) crying over dead body. In this chapter a *Hadith* is narrated in which holy Prophet (sm) quotes from Allah, Who said that, this morning some one would wake up as faithful and some other as infidel. One who says while waking up in the morning: “by the mercy and grace of Allah it rained over us, he is a faithful servant who denies the grace of stars; on the other hand, one who says that due to the influence of such and such stars it rains, he is disobedient to me and faithful to the stars”.

The 29<sup>th</sup> chapter defined the true faith. It quotes two *ayat* or verses from the holy Quran relating to the theme and then narrates a *Hadith* from Anas (r.) that the Prophet (sm) said: “None of you shall become a *mumin*, truly faithful, until I become to him more beloved than his father, his son and all people together”. (recorded by Bukhari and Muslim); and another *Hadith* from Anas (r.) that the holy Prophet (sm) said, “Three persons who got the real taste of faith, one to whom Allah and his Messenger (sm) are more beloved



then the rest; and one who loves another person only for the sake of Allah and the one who dislikes to return to the denial of Allah after he has been rescued by Him from infidelity as he dislikes to be thrown into the fire” (also recorded by both authorities). It narrates from Abdullah ibn Abbas (r.) who said: “Whoever loves for the sake of Allah and hates for the sake of Allah and befriends for the sake of Allah and entertains enmity for the sake of Allah, he would surely obtain the friendship (*wilayat*) of Allah by that. And a person/servant would never taste the sweetness of the faith even though he performs prayer (*salat*) frequently and fasts frequently till he becomes like that”. In the fourth inference the author holds that the negation of faith (*iman*) does not imply (*yadallu*) the ouster from the bounds of Islam. The 6<sup>th</sup> inference contends that the four (above mentioned) states of heart (*qalb*) are such that the *wilayat* or spiritual friendship of Allah cannot be obtained without them and no one would get taste of faith (*iman*) without them.

The 30<sup>th</sup> chapter narrates a *Hadith* from Ayesha (r.) that the holy Prophet said, “Whoever seeks the pleasure of Allah with the displeasure of people, Allah pleases with him and makes the people pleased with him; and whoever seeks pleasure of the people with the displeasure of Allah, Allah gets displeased with him and makes the people displeased with him too”. (recorded by Ibn Hibban in his *Sahih*).

The thirty-second chapter narrates a *Hadith* from Abdullah ibn Abbas (r.) that the holy Prophet (sm) was asked about the grave sin; He replied: “Ascribing co-sharer (*shirk*) with Allah and despair of the mercy of Allah and feeling secure from the measure of Allah”.

The thirty-third chapter deals with the patience on the predestination measure (*qadar*) of Allah. It quotes a verse from the holy Quran: “And who believes in Allah, He guides his heart (*qalbahu*)” (64:11). Hadrat Alqama (r.) says: “Truly faithful (*mumin*) is one on whom, there comes down any disaster, he realizes that it has come from Allah. So he becomes satisfied with it and bears it with pleasure”. It narrates a *Hadith* recorded by Tirmidhi that the holy Prophet (sm) said: “The largeness of the reward devolves on the largeness of the disaster. When Allah loves any community, He tests it by inflicting

disaster; so whoever gets pleased with it, Allah becomes pleased with him and whoever gets displeased with it, Allah also becomes displeased with him”.

The 37<sup>th</sup> chapter narrates a *Hadith* from Abdullah ibn Amar (r.) that the holy Prophet (sm) said: “None of you would become faithful (*mumin*) until his vain desires become subservient to whatever I have come with”.

The 38<sup>th</sup> chapter dwells in the controversial theological problem of the attributes of Allah and holds that (1<sup>st</sup> reference) the denial of the names and attributes of Allah abnegates faith (*iman*).

Chapter 43 deals with the Time: “Whoever scolds the Time, gives Allah trouble”. It quotes from the holy Quran: “The infidels say, we live only this earthly life, we die and live, nothing destroys us except the Time” (45:24). It narrates a *Hadith* from Abu Hurayrah (r.) that the holy Prophet said: “Allah said: Troubles me the son of Adam by scolding the Time, and I am the Time, I turn over the night and the day”.

Forty-fourth chapter narrates a *Hadith* from Abu Hurayrah (r.) that the holy Prophet (sm) said, “Surely the worst name before Allah of a person who is called ‘king of the kings’ or emperor, there is no proper king except Allah”.

Chapter 54 is on ‘Don’t reject whoever ask by Allah’. It narrates a *Hadith* from Abdullah ibn Umar (r.) that the holy Prophet (sm) said, “Whoever asks by Allah, give him; whoever asks shelter by Allah, give him shelter; whoever calls you, respond to him; whoever does good work for you, satisfy him with adequate remuneration; if you don’t have enough remuneration, pray to Allah for him till you see that he got satisfied”.

Chapter 55 narrates a *Hadith* from Jabir (r.) that the holy Prophet (sm) said, “Nothing is to be asked by the Face of Allah except Paradise”. No. 2 inference from it is that it proves the nature of Allah’s face.

Chapter 59 deals with *al-Qadr* (Fate). It quotes Abdullah ibn Umar (r.) that no amount of good works would be accepted by Allah until one believes in *Qadr* fate. It also quotes Ubada ibn Samit (r.) as

admonishing his son saying: “You would never get the taste of faith till you know that whatever has befallen you was inevitable, and whatever has not befallen on you was not to be so”. Similar opinion of Ubay ibn Ka’ab has also been quoted. All of them inferred from *Hadith* of the holy Prophet demanding belief in the *Qadr* and its good and evil come from Allah, as incumbent for faith (*iman*); and inferring from another *Hadith* that the first thing Allah created was the Pen and the first thing the Pen wrote was the fates or *Maqadir* of all things. No. 1 inference states that belief in *Qadr* or Fate is compulsory for faith.

Chapter 60 deals with painters. It quotes from the Quran and *Hadith* to prove that painting is strictly prohibited. Along with painting it also brings in the condition of graves. It quotes Abul Hayaj that Hadrat Ali (r.) told him, “Shall I not send you on a mission on which the Prophet (sm) send me that ‘do not leave off a picture without destroying it and leave not any grave risen above the ground without levelling it’.”

Chapter 65 deals with the striving of the holy Prophet (sm) in pronouncing *Tawhid* and debarring *shirk*. A *Hadith* is narrated from Anas (r.) that some people called out: “O’ messenger of Allah, O’ best of us and best of our sons and son of our lord (sayyiduna)! Then the holy Prophet said: O’ the people! Say whatever you like but let not the *Shaitan* (Devil) delude you. I am Muhammad, servant of Allah and His Messenger. I do not love that you raise me above my own position that Allah, the High and Majestic! has put me in”

The first inference regards it as a warning against extremism and the fourth inference states that the holy Prophet (sm) did not like to be exalted above his real position.

## **B.**

### ***History and Doctrines of Wahhabis* by Abdullah son of Muhammad ibn Abdul Wahhab.**

This is a pamphlet composed and circulated by Abdullah, son of Muhammad, and grandson of Abdul Wahhab in the month of *Muharram* 1218 *Hijri* as noted at the end of the work. The *Hijri* date corresponds to April 1803 Christian Era. It came to our hand in English translation by a British Indian Civil Servant (C.S.) J.

O’Kinealy who noted that the original Arabic Text was preserved in the archives of the Government of Delhi, Manuscripts Section, Arabic Ms. No. 868. Evidently, the *Tariqah-i-Muhammadiyah* movement of the then Indian subcontinent which was declared hostile to the British government and was being forcibly suppressed attracted his attention to the resemblances between them as is evident in his introductory remarks. J. O’Kinealy says: “but what is of far greater interest is that it proves beyond all possibility of doubt, the identity on all important points of *Wahhabi* doctrines in Arabia with *Wahhabi* doctrines in India, and confirms the prevalent view that one is the offshoot of the other”.

This translation was published in the *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal*, Calcutta, in its first issue in 1874 C.E. (No.1. pp. 68-82). It remained lying there practically unnoticed until recently when I realized its accomplishing significance in relation to *Kitab al-Tawhid* of Muhammad ibn Abdul Wahhab and Sir Jones Brydge’s Report, which also remained hidden until I published it in *Islamic Studies*, Islamabad, in 1968 and which is now being reprinted in chapter 1. As I happen to seek permission of the *Asiatic Society of Bengal*, Calcutta, for its publication as the second chapter of the present work, the authorities of the Asiatic Society of Kolkata realized its importance and published it under the same title “History & Doctrines of the Wahhabis by Abdullah”, in the form of a book in March 2004 C.E. with an introduction by the Society’s President, Prof. Amalendu De. The General Secretary of the Society, Prof. Dilip Coomer Ghose has been very kind to present a copy to me.

This is an English translation of the small Arabic pamphlet composed and distributed by Abdullah son of Muhammad and grandson of Abdul Wahhab amongst the people gathered in a meeting at the holy city of Makkah on Sunday following the *hajj* pilgrimage in the year 1218 *Hijri* / 1803 C.E. It is divided into two parts, the first part is a Report of the take-over of the city of Makkah by the *Muwahhidun* leader Saud on Friday (the 6<sup>th</sup> day of the week) dated 8 *Muharram*, 1218 *Hijri* and about the meeting of the *Ulama* and *Mashaykh* (the learned and the divines) and of general people called by Abdullah as a leader of the *Muwahhidun* movement,

containing his conversation with them, question-answer session and stern warning to them against indulging in *shirk*. And the second part is a smaller pamphlet purported to be an extract of the basic work of Muhammad Ibn Abdul Wahhab, but actually it is an extended comment over it. This second part can, therefore, be meaningful only when read along with *Kitab al-Tawhid*. Hence with grateful thanks and compliment to the Asiatic Society of Kolkata, we are reproducing the article almost in toto herein in its rightful context.

*Translation of an Arabic Pamphlet of the History and Doctrines of the Wahhabis, \* written by 'Abdullah, son of Muhammad, grandson of Abdul Wahhab, the founder of Wahhabism—by J. O'kinealy c.s., Calcutta.*

This pamphlet \*\* contains a complete description of the taking over possession of Makkah, and shows that the *Wahhabis* looked on it in the same light as the Crusaders did while taking over Jerusalem. They entered the holy city not as warriors, but as pilgrims. It is interesting from a historical point of view, as it is a means by which we can test the conflicting statements of Burckhardt and Corancez; but what is of far greater interest is, that it proves, beyond all possibility of doubt, the identity on all important points of *Wahhabi* doctrines in Arabia with *Wahhabi* doctrines in India, and confirms the prevalent view that one is the offshoot of the other. Many parts corroborate the statements of Palgrave as to the intolerance of the sect, and there will be found towards the end a list of mortal sins, which are almost the same as those given in his book.

'Abdullah with several other *Wahhabis* of Najd was put to death in 1818 by Ibrahim Pasha, when the latter took Darayah. His grandson 'Abdur-Rahman, and his great-grandson 'Abdul Latif were both alive when Palgrave visited that city in 1862.

### ***Translation***

*In the Name of God, the Compassionate and Merciful!*

Praise be to God, the Lord of the Universe, and blessing and peace be upon our prophet Muhammad, the faithful, and on his people and his companions, and those who lived after them, and their successors of the next generation! Now I was engaged in the holy

war, carried on by those who truly believe in the Unity of God, when God, praised be He, graciously permitted us to enter Makkah, the holy, the exalted, at midday, on the 6th day of the week on Friday the 8th of the month (*Muharram*), 1218 *Hijri*.

Before this, Saud, our leader in the holy war, whom the Lord protect, had summoned the nobles, the divines, and the common people of Makkah-, for indeed the leaders of the pilgrims and the rulers of Makkah had resolved on battle, and had risen up against us in the holy place (*haram*), to exclude us from the house of God. But when the army of the true believers advanced, the Lord filled their hearts with terror, and they fled hither and thither. Then our Commander gave protection to every one within the holy place, while we, with shaven heads and hair cut short, entered with safety, crying "Labbaika," without fear of any created being, and only of the Lord God. Now, though we were more numerous, better armed and disciplined than the people of Makkah, yet we did not cut down their trees, neither did we hunt, nor shed any blood except the blood of sacrificial animal victims, and of those four-footed beast, which the Lord had made lawful by His commands.

When our pilgrimage was over, we gathered the people together on the forenoon of the first day of the week, and our leader, whom the Lord save, explained to the divines what we required of the people, and for which we would slay them, viz., a pure belief in the Unity of God Almighty. He pointed out to them that there was no dispute between us and them except on two points. And that, one of these was sincere belief in the Unity of God, and knowledge of the different kinds of prayer of which *du'a* was one. He added that to show the significance of 'shirk', the prophet (may he be blessed!) had put people to death on account of it; that he had continued to call upon them to believe in the Unity of God for sometime after he became inspired, and that, he had abandoned *shirk* before the Lord had declared to him the remaining four pillars of Islam. The second point relates to action lawful and unlawful as prohibited. He said that, as regards these they retained but the name, while the use, nay any vestiges of them, had altogether disappeared.

Then they jointly and severally admitted that our belief was best, and promised the Amir to be guided by the Quran and the *Sunnah*. He accepted their promise and pardoned them. Neither did he give any of them the least annoyance, nor cease to treat them with the greatest friendship, especially the divines. And he spoke to them of our faith, publicly and privately giving them proof of what he believed. We, too, asked them to discourse and confer with us and to speak the truth without reservation. Moreover, we explained to them what the Amir had spoken to them publicly, and pointed out the proofs of it in the Quran and the *Sunnat*, and in the conduct of our spotless ancestors, such as the orthodox Caliphs who ruled over their followers. For the prophet had said, "Upon you be my *Sunnat*, and the *Sunnat* of the orthodox Caliphs after me." We also gave them proofs from the four Imams, Doctors Of Divinity, and those who were instructed by them up to the third generation, according to his saying: "Well, for you is my generation, next that which follows, and after it the succeeding generation." Again we pointed out to them that we were searchers after truth wheresoever it might be, and obeyed those proofs which were clear and open without caring whether they were opposed to what our ancestors had or had not done. In fine, they were not able to chide us for a single thing, while we showed them their errors in asking help in their necessities from the dead; and as they had still some a few doubts about it, we removed them by relevant proofs from the Qoran and the *Sunnat*. They then acknowledged our belief, and there was not one amongst them who doubted or hesitated to believe that for which we condemned men to death, was the truth pure and unsullied. And they swore a binding oath, although we had not asked them, that their hearts had been opened and their doubts removed, and that they were convinced whoever said, 'Oh prophet of God!' or 'Oh Ibn 'Abbas' or 'Oh 'Abdul Qadir!' Or called on any other created being, thus entreating him to turn away evil or grant what is good, (where the power belongs to God alone,) such as recovery from sickness, or victory over enemies, or protection from temptation, &c.; he is a '*Mushrik*', guilty of the most heinous form of *shirk*, his blood shall be shed and property confiscated. Nor is it any excuse that he believes the effective first cause in the movements of the universe is God, and only supplicates those mortals, who are between death and

resurrection, to intercede for him or bring him nearer the presence of God, so that, he may obtain what he requires from Him through them or through their intercession. Again, the tombs, which had been erected over the remains of the pious, had become in these times as it were idols whither the people went to pray for what they required, they humbled themselves before them, and called upon those lying in them, in their distress, just as did those who were in darkness before the coming of Muhammad. Among those present were Mufti Shaikh 'Abdulmalik ul-Qala'i; a Hanafite, Husain ul-Maghribi, a Maliki Mufti, and 'Uqail bin Yahya al-Alawi.

When this was over, we razed all the large tombs in the city which the people generally worshipped and believed in, and by which they hoped to obtain benefits or ward off evil, so that, there did not remain an idol to be adored in that pure city, for which God be praised. Then the taxes and customs we abolished, all the different kinds of instruments for using tobacco, we destroyed, and tobacco itself we proclaimed forbidden. Next we banned the selling of those selling *hashish*, and living in open wickedness, and issued a proclamation, directing the people to constantly exercise themselves in prayer. They were not to pray in separate groups according to the different Imams; but all were directed to arrange themselves at each time of prayer behind any Imam who is a (*muqallid*) follower of any of the four Imams (may the Lord be pleased with them!). For in this way the Lord would be worshipped by as it were one voice, the faithful of all sects would become friendly disposed towards each other, and all dissensions would cease.

We appointed a ruler over them, 'Abd ul-Mu'in, the Sharif, and his rule was established without shedding of blood, and without dishonouring or annoying any person. Praised be the Lord of the Universe!

Afterwards, we gave them a pamphlet, composed by Shaikh Muhammad on the Unity of God, (*Kitab al-Tawhid*) which contains all the arguments supported by their sentences bearing on it, in the Qoran and the Hadis, which are *muwali*, so that the souls might be comforted. And we compiled from extracts of it (the present work) a smaller pamphlet fit for the common people



which we commanded be distributed in their places of meeting, read in their assemblies and explained to them by the divines, so that, by learning the doctrine of the Unity of God, and seizing it with a firm grasp, they might awake to the knowledge of *shirk*, and become careful. The pamphlet is as follows:

***In the name of God, the Merciful and Compassionate!***

Know that God has been kind to you, in as much as you are the best of the race of Abraham, and worship God in a pure manner. The Lord commanded all mankind to do so, and it was for this purpose He created them, as He said, "I only created the Jins and mankind to worship." Then know that God created you to worship Him, and know that there cannot be worship without belief in the Unity of God, just as He will not listen to a prayer unless offered up after purification. When *shirk* enters into any form of worship, it vitiates it, as is related in the *Hadis*. Also He has said, "*Mushriks* are not in a position to worship the Lord, since they testify against themselves that they are infidels. Their acts shall not avail them, and they shall burn for all eternity." Therefore, whoever calls upon other than God entreating him to grant something which is only within His power, such as obtaining a benefit or avoiding a misfortune, he, indeed, is guilty of *shirk* in his worship, as the Lord has said, "Those who go astray and call upon others beside the Lord, shall not be answered, even until the Day of Judgment; and those on whom they call, shall not heed them; and when mankind shall rise again from the dead, they will look upon their supplicators as their enemies, and their worship as infidelity." Again, the Lord has said, "Those whom you supplicate other than Me, can avail you nothing. When you supplicate them, they will not hear your supplication, and even should they hear you, they will not answer, and instead of speaking in your favour, they will adjudge you infidels on the Day of Judgment." In short, the Lord exalted and blessed has declared that entreating others than Him is *shirk*; therefore, whoever says, "Oh prophet of God", or "Oh Ibn 'Abbas", or "Oh 'Abdul Qadir", or "Oh beloved, &c.", thinking that the person supplicated is a way unto the Lord or an interceder with Him, or a means to Him, he is a *Mushrik*: his blood shall be shed, and his property confiscated unless he repent. And in the same way,

whoever kills an animal in the name of other than God, or makes a vow to him or puts trust in him, hopes to be benefited, or fears to be injured by him, or asks him for assistance in those things which belong to God alone, he is a *Mushrik*, of whom the Lord has said, those who are guilty of *shirk* towards Him, shall not be pardoned; but except these the Lord will pardon whomsoever He wishes! These also are as it were the *Mushriks* of Arabia, against whom the Prophet (may he, &c.!) stood up in battle and commanded to worship with a pure heart. This is evident for four reasons given by God in the Qoran:

1<sup>st</sup>. It is known that the infidels against whom the prophet (may he &c.!) made war had admitted that the Lord was the Supporter, the Creator, the Giver of life and death, and the Ruler over all things. The proofs of this are the words of the Lord: "Say, who gives you food from the heavens and the earth? Who is the Master of hearing and seeing? Who calls forth life from death, and death from life? Who rules events?" They will quickly say, 'God'. Then, answer, "but you do not fear Him."

And the Lord has said, "Say, if you know, whose is the earth and what is in it?" They will answer, 'it belongs to God'; then say, "is it not that you do not remember Him?" Again, "say, who is the Lord of the seven heavens, and Lord of the great 'Arsh? They will answer, 'God.' Then say, "is it not that you do not fear Him?" Say, "if you know, who is he in whose hands is dominion over everything? Who can compel, yet not be compelled?" They will quickly answer, 'God.' Then answer, "is it not that you do not fear Him?" After you have known this, and found it difficult to understand, how people who accept the scriptures, can supplicate others than God, turn to the second reason, which is as follows:

They say, "we only turn towards and supplicate those departed, that they may intercede with God for us. We ask not from them, but from God, through their intercession. "They worship other than God, that can neither harm nor profit them, and say, "these have interceded for us with the Lord." Answer, "can you inform God of anything either in the heavens or the earth of which He has no knowledge. He is more holy and high than those whom you give Him as companions."

Those who have adopted not God, but others as a patron say, "we only worship them, that they may propitiate us with the Lord: for of a certainty He will decide favourably in matters with which they are concerned." They also hold, as opposed to us that "God will not point out the way of salvation to infidels or liars." Having understood this, turn towards the third reason, viz., that he who calls on an idol to intercede for him, and he who though abandoning idols yet depends on holy persons, such as Christ, or His mother, or the angels, is in the same position. The proof of this is in the words of the Lord, "Those who seek a means to God are they nearer Him? They hope for His mercy and fear His punishment, and certainly the punishment of your Lord is severe." 'And the prophet (may he &c.!) has said, "There is no difference between those who worship idols, and those who worship holy persons. They are both infidels." Moreover, we fought with them, until they all turned towards God.

The fourth reason is: The people the prophet speaks of when in distress, took refuge with God and, forgetting their past conduct, abandoned *shirk*: while the people of our times, when in difficulties, seek refuge in supplicating their *Pirs*. The Lord has said, "when they moꝛt their ships, they supplicate God, taking refuge with Him..... besides God." Now, if you understood this, you will perceive that the *Mushriks* in the time of the prophet (may he &c.!) were not guilty of such heinous *shirk* as the wiser *Mushriks* of our times. The former sought refuge with God in their distress; the latter call upon their *Pirs*. The Lord is omniscient.

And among the persons who presented themselves before us with the people of Makkah and witnessed our victory in discussion, was Husain ul-Airati ul-Hazrami, afterwards al-Hayani. He continued to visit us and sit with Sa'ud and others of the force, who were well learned in the scriptures; and he asked us of those matters other than the intercession of Saints; for which our swords were unsheathed. This he did fearlessly, and without any dread, as he was guiltless of any thing wrong in our eyes. So we informed him of our belief which is as follows: We believe, our sect holds the real true religion, is the sect of the Ahl-us-Sunnat and al-Jama'at, and that our way to salvation is that of the pious ancient departed,

most easy and excellent, and opposed to the doctrines of those who hold that the modern way is the best. We construe the Qoran and Hadises according to the meaning apparent on the face of them, and leave the interpretation of them to God, for He is the Ruler. And for this reason that the divines who have passed away, so ~~ad~~ in answering the question as to whether the highest heaven is level or not, which arose out of the words of the merciful God, the 'Arsh is level"; they held that "level" was well-known, and as was predicated of 'Arsh, it was lawful to believe in it, and retical to question it. We believe that good and evil proceed from God, the exalted; that nothing happens in His kingdom, but that he commands; that created beings do not possess free will, and are not accountable for their own acts; but on the contrary they obtain rank and spiritual reward, merely as an act of grace, and suffer punishment justly, for God is not bound to do anything for His slaves. We believe that the faithful will see Him in the end, but we do not know under what form, as it was beyond our comprehension. And in the same way we follow Imam Ahmad ibn Hanbal in matters of detail; but we do not reject any one who follows any of the four Imams, as we do the Shi'ahs, the Zaidiyyahs, and the Imamiyyahs, &c.; who belong to no regular churches. Nor do we admit them in any way to act openly according to their vicious creeds; on the contrary, we compelled them to follow one of the four Imams. We do not claim to exercise our reason in all matters of religion, and none of our ~~th~~ demand such a position, save that we follow our judgment where a point is clearly demonstrated to us in either the Qoran or the Sunnat still in force, and though there has been no special command in favour of it, yet there is nothing of weight against it. As a rule, we hold the same as the four Imams; but we reject all sects in connection with property inherited by our ancestors, and hold them preferred, although it is opposed to the Hanbali sect. We do not enquire to what sect a person belongs, neither do we abandon the forms prescribed by the four sects, except where we find a clear decision contrary to any of them and the matter is merely an outward observance, such as the action of an Imam at prayers. Hence we direct Malakis and Hanafis equally to collect themselves an instant, when standing or sitting before prostrating

themselves at prayers, for on this point the evidence is clear. On the other hand, we do not prohibit the saying of "Bismillah" in loud voice, as is the custom among Shaffis, neither do we declare it to be said inwardly. Where two contrary practices were a force, and the evidence in connection with each is strong, we declare both allowable, even though this is contrary to any sect. But this occurs only very rarely. The exercise of our reason on some matters of religion is not prohibited, nor can such be deemed contradictory to repudiating the right to exercise our reason in all religious matters; for above all the four Imams followed their own will in some minor religious observances: even so far as to act contrary to the rules of the sect which they founded.

We make use of the usual orthodox commentaries in striving to understand the Qoran, such as, the Tafsir Jarir and its compendium by Ibn Kasir the Shafi'i, and so also the Baghawi, Baizawi, Khazin Haddad, Jalalain, and other commentaries. We also use the commentaries of the well-known Imams to explain the Hadises, viz. Asqalani, Quastulani on Bukhari, the Nabawi on Muslim, Manawi on Jami uccaghir, and Mukhawwac on collections of Hadises, as the *Umahat us-sittah*, or 'the six mothers', their commentaries, the different books of all sects in all sciences, all ordinances, history, grammar, and all sciences, helpmates to other sciences. We do not command the destruction of any writings except such as tend to lead people into infidelity to injure their faith, such as, those on Logic which have been prohibited by all Divines. But we are not very exacting with regard to books or documents of this nature, save in that they appear to assist our opponents, we destroy them. As to the destruction of certain books belonging to the people of Taif by the Badawis, that proceeded from their ignorance, they were punished for it and so were others for the same thing. We do not consider it proper to make Arabs prisoners of war, nor have we done so, neither do we fight with other nations. Finally, we do not consider it lawful to kill women or children. As to those liars and concealers of the truth who say that we explain the Qoran according to our own views and only hold those traditions which agree with our opinions, without having recourse to the well-known commentaries on the one

or taking into consideration the narrators of the other; that we lower the dignity of our prophet Muhammad (may, &c.) and say that he has rotted in his grave, and that any one of us would derive more advantage from his staff than from him; that he cannot intercede for us; that pilgrimage to his tomb is improper; and that he was so ignorant, as not to know positively "There is no God except God" until he became inspired;-we answer, 'only consider that this sentence "There is no God but God" was given forth in Madinah.' Moreover, they say, we do not attend to the sayings of the learned and destroy the writings of those adhering to any one sect, because though partly true, they are also partly false; that being numerous, we proclaim as infidels not only the people of our time, but all since the beginning of the tenth century (Hijrah), except those, who hold as we do; that we do not enrol any person in our sect until he admits that he was a *Mushrik*, and his father died one; that we prohibit the invocation of our prophet (may, &c.) and pilgrimage to his grave even in cases where it is lawful; that whoever joins us, is considered as free of all encumbrances, even his debts; that we do not allow the *Ahl-ul-bait* (may the Lord be pleased with them!) any superior rights; that we compel them to marry inferiors, and that we force those who are old to put away their young wives, in order to marry them to young men among us, although no suit for a divorce has been instituted before us, nor is it desired by the parties. All this is simple nonsense, and when we are asked about them, we only answer in the words of the Qoran, "Praised be you. These are great calumnies." In short, whoever asserts any such thing of us, lies against us. He who has seen how we order our lives, has visited our meetings, or knows what we hold, can affirm that all these have been made up, and that the disseminators of them are enemies of religion, brothers of the devil, who lure men away from offering up their prayers to God, the exalted, in perfect accord with His Unity, and prevent them from abandoning those different kinds of *shirk* of which the Lord has declared that He will never forgive, though He will forgive whatever else He wishes. We believe that whoever commits mortal sin, such as putting a Muslim to death, fornication, taking interest, drinking wines, or whoever repeats such, does not cease to be a Muslim, nor will he suffer eternal punishment, provided he dies entertaining a true belief in the Unity of God.

We believe that our prophet Muhammad (may he &c) is more exalted by God than any other created being, that he is alive, lives in his grave a life quicker than that declared by revelation unto martyrs and that he can hear the salutations of those who salute him. We consider pilgrimage is supported by legal custom, but it should not be undertaken except to a mosque, and for the purpose of praying in it. Therefore, whoever performs pilgrimage for this purpose, is not wrong, and doubtless those who spend the precious moments of their existence in invoking the Prophet, shall, according to the *Hadis*, obtain happiness in this world and the next, and he will dispel their sorrows. We do not deny miraculous powers to the saints, but on the contrary allow them. They are under the guidance of the Lord, so long as they continue to follow the way pointed out in the laws and obey the prescribed rules. But whether alive or dead they must not be made the object of any form of worship. This does not prevent us from asking them or any other Muslim if living to supplicate on our behalf. Thus, it is related in the *Hadis* that, Al Amir-ul-Muminin asked that his brother might be accepted by God and Omar directed Ali to ask Uwais to supplicate that he might be pardoned, and he did so. According to what has descended to us, our prophet Muhammad (may he&c.) is empowered to intercede for us on the day of judgment, and so also, are all prophets, angels, saints and children. And we shall ask it of the Lord God, the Ruler over it, the Granter of it to whomsoever He pleases to those who are amongst the best of men, the believers in the Unity of God. Thus, one of us entreating the Lord God almighty shall say, O Lord, you have empowered our prophet Muhammad (may he, &c.) to intercede for us, &c. (in the form handed down by tradition), or we shall ask it of the Lord God, the Granter of it to us on the Day of Judgment, "O God, you have appointed your pure slave (mortal or angel, as may be) to intercede." Thus we shall ask God for those things which must be demanded from Him and not from them. And as regards the things over which God alone has power, no one will cry out, "O prophet of God", or "O saint of God, I ask intercession," nor will any one say to this "help me," or "intercede for me," or "assist me". Since calling in this manner on those who are dead, but as yet not risen to judgment, is a form of *shirk*. There is nothing in its favour,

either in the *Qoran* or the *Sunnat*. The pious departed have not urged it. On the contrary, they have decided that it is *shirk* of the most aggravated form, on account of which the Prophet worried with the world.

To determine the effect of taking an oath in the name of other than God, it is necessary to look to the intention of the swearer. If he intends by the oath to give that respect which is due to God, or more, as happens as among certain violent *Mushriks* of our time, who swear by their Shaikhs—their gods—on whom they rely, such false oaths will not be accepted like those sworn in His name, and the swearers are, according to the general opinion of Muslims, *Kafirs*, guilty of the most heinous form of *shirk*, ignorant of the most simple elements of their religion. When an oath is lightly taken, it is not an aggravated form of *shirk*; but such a habit must be sternly checked and the swearer directed to beg pardon of God.

As to conjunction with God, we hold that when one says, "O Lord, I shall obtain conjunction with you through the majesty of Muhammad", or "through our prophet", or "through the Majesty of your pure servants", or "through your servant so and so", this is a sort of worship, sinful in its nature, (especially as there has been no decision in favour of it), like the practice of invoking the prophet (may he, &c.) in a loud voice, at Azan time.

Now as regards the *Ahl-ul-Bait*, a similar question, *viz.* the lawfulness of marrying a *Fatimite*, was asked of the people of *Darayah*, and they answered in accordance with former decisions regarding them. It is right to be friendly and on good terms with them, as is stated in the *Qoran* and the *Sunnat*. But we must remember that Islam is the line of separation between us and the rest of mankind; and that there is neither grace nor goodness without piety, which carries with it, honour, respect, and reverence. All learned people are guided by it in the question of precedence, between persons nearly equal in age or knowledge, or in advancing to meet such when escorting them to the place of honour. But the custom which is prevalent in some cities, of honouring those who are young and ignorant, even so far that



they are angry, beat, wound, or at least quarrel with those who do not kiss their hands instead of shaking them, is not based on any decision, nor is there any evidence in its favour. On the contrary, it is forbidden and should be abolished. If one person kisses the hand of another returning from a long journey, or if he does it to honour him for his learning, or after a long absence, it is harmless in itself, but is objectionable, as it becomes known to those who put faith in such things and creates a custom among proud people. Hence we absolutely prohibit it, especially on account of those of whom it is said as a warning: "It is not possible to close all the places where hunters watch." For this very reason we razed the house of the noble Khadijah, the wife of our Prophet, the dwelling in which the prophet was born and other places dedicated to certain Saints in Makkah, so that, the people might be warned and flee from *shirk*, inconsistent with His exaltedness, and which He will never forgive. *Shirk* is worse even than saying God has a son; the latter makes Him superior to all created beings, the former does away with this superiority. For the Lord has said, "A parable I propounded to you about yourselves." "What your right hands have obtained, is it for you or for your companions?"

The marriage of a Fatimite to a person not a Fatimite is not inconsistent with the conduct of Muslims, nor is it wrong. Ali and Omar ibn-ul-Khattab so married. These two examples suffice. Sakinah, daughter of Hussain bin Ali, married four times, and none of her husbands was a Fatimite. Such was the custom of our ancestors, beyond all cavil. We do not compel any person to marry his slave until she demands it, or he is unable to marry his equal. Arabs are all equals for Arabs, and the contrary custom, which prevails in many cities, is simply a proof and a desire to exalt one's self, which, as has been foretold, is a certain cause of great evil.

A marriage with an unequal is lawful. Thus, Zaid who was a slave married Zainab, the mother of the faithful, a daughter of the Qoraish tribe. This is well known to all sects and is conclusive.

Suppose it is objected by a person not desirous of embracing the truth, that according to our argument, *viz.* whoever says. "O

Prophet of God, I ask you to intercede for me", is a *Mushrik*, his blood shall be shed, applies to the mass of Mohammedans of modern times, and above all to the Divines who have believed this, and even despoiled those who opposed it. We answer that, it does not follow. The necessary consequence of a sect is not the sect itself, as is well known. So it is not necessary that we must be *Mujassimah*, though we speak of the "form" of God, but on the contrary we consider whoever dies in that persuasion is lost. We brand as *Kafirs* only those who having heard our call to the true faith are deaf to it. These are the predominant sects, these we war with, so long as they remain in wickedness, prohibit lawful acts, or assist others in committing grievous offences. The non-predominant sects we war with only when they assist the former, are pleased with them, or join them, and thus increase their numbers, becoming as it were predominant with them. Warring with them is commanded. We excuse the past generations. They were not protected from error, and their errors are excusable. And as to those who despoiled of their property such persons as did not agree with them, they were mistaken, and making a mistake is no harm. Indeed, better than they have made mistakes, as we know from the tradition of the woman and the decision about dower. History gives other examples. The companions of the prophet erred, when assembled together, with the prophet in their midst. But his glory penetrated them, and they said to a date tree "give us a sign", and it responded. We say, this is the position of those persons who having fallen away from the right way, subsequently awake to their errors; but not of those who are aware of proofs, know the words and practice of the Imams, and yet remain persistently opposed to them till they die. We say that there is no harm in excusing persons in the first state, nor do we hold them *Kafirs*, simply, because they were in error, or even because they continued so. For none of their time opposed their doctrines either by words, or the sword and spear. They knew of no proofs to the contrary and saw no clearer way. The greater number of the Musalmans referred to by our opponents, neglected the advice of those who followed the *Sunnat*. As a rule they had totally forgotten the *Sunnat*, and even the few who were enlightened turned away from it could make any impression on their heart. The nobles

persistently prohibited the multitude from hearing it, and the monarchs tortured those in whose heart its faintest trace could be found, except the few whom the Lord protected. Thus Mu'awiyah and his friends opposed and fought against the Commander of the Faithful, Ali-ibn-Abi Talib. They were wrong and continued so to their deaths. Yet, though they were in error, as we clearly learn from the Ahl-ul-Bait, that none of our pious ancestors considered them *Kafirs* according to *Ijma'*, or even very wicked; on the contrary they judged them worthy of the reward of warriors in the cause of religion. So when we find a man orthodox in matters of faith, pure, pious, clean of heart, and seeking to benefit his sect by devoting his time to learning the useful sciences, or writing about them, we do not call him a *Kafir*, though he may hold wrong opinions on these or other points. This was the position of Ibn Hajar ul Haisarni, yet we consider his writing as well ordered, do not deny his knowledge for a single instant, but on the contrary take great care of some of his books, such as the *Sharh ul-Arba'in*, *the Alzawajir*, &c. believe what he has copied, and though in error in one point, he is one of the Divines of Islam with whom we hold. Any person of experience and wisdom, who is just and free from any leaning towards hard-heartedness or oppression, looks more to what is said than who says it. Again, the customs and habits of people in authority are obligatory. It matters not whether they are just, or unjust, exact imitations of those of whom God has said, "We found our fathers among them following their religion, and we, coming after them, imitate them in their customs and vices," who form a decision of what is right from the individual and not of the individual from his acts. With these last we seek no conversation; but we use the sword until they are truly and sincerely converted.

And, praised be the Lord, the army of the true believers in the Unity of God was victorious, its standards were unfurled under most auspicious circumstances, and soon shall those in darkness see what turn their affairs shall take. Moreover, we were the more numerous, and God has said, "our armies shall be greater in number", and so were bound to assist the faithful and reward the religious.

As regards *Bid'at* our doctrine is that *Bid'at* is whatever has been introduced after the third generation from Muhammad and is absolutely sinful. This is contradictory to the doctrines of those who divide it into good and bad, and those who divide it into five kinds, unless as appears probable they mean to consider as "good" the acts of the pious departed which were optional, *mandubah*, and obligatory, and call it "bid'at", while "bad" refers to those acts which are unlawful or prohibited. There is no harm in so grouping them.

Among the forms of sinful '*Bid'at*' at which we prohibit, is raising one's voice at Azan time, on Friday night, during the Ramazan, or at either of the '*Ids* (in Makkah we set aside everything connected with *tazkir* and *tarkhim* as sinful according to the Divines of every sect), also reading the Hadises of Abu-Hurairah before the *Khatib* on Fridays, which is denounced as '*Bid'at*' at in the *Jami' Uccaghir*; assembling on certain particular occasions to read the story of the Prophet's birth and believing that it is a special kind of prayer, *milad*, even though the members of the assembly have no knowledge of history. There is no precedent for this. Again, we forbid people taking to themselves *Pirs*, or assembling to invoke their *Pirs*; calling on their *Pirs* with a loud voice, offering *falihahs* to them, or seeking to obtain important advantages through them. For example, we prohibit the *ratib-us-Saman* and the *ratib-ul-haddad* as included in the more heinous form of *shirk*, for which we are ready to battle.

If any person abandons the right way, follows customs, which are not *Sunnat* but *Bid'at*, and subsequently refuses to give them up, he is punished by the Magistrate, such punishments as shall seem fit until he repents.

We do not prohibit people from reading frequently pamphlets composed from extracts of the Quran and the Sunnat; and so to blessing the prophet, repeating his name, &c., begging pardon from God, reading the Qoran, &c., all these are commanded by the Law. Whoever exerts himself in such duties will be rewarded, and his prayers increase, his reward increases in a greater

proportion, - provided he offers them up according to law, without changing the words or the form of them. For God has said, "Call on your Lord secretly as a suppliant". And again, "God has beautiful names, call on Him by them." The *Kitab-ul-Izkar* is full of praises of God, whoever is a seeker of his God can be so with the Book, which is in itself sufficient for religious people.

Among those things, which we prohibit is the custom of reciting verses in praise of the Prophet, and at the same time blessing him, that of repeating his name or reading it after *Tarawih* prayers under the belief that it is a form of prayer. Indeed, multitudes are under the idea that this is a custom undoubtedly handed down from our ancestors, and hence we forbid it. But the *Tarawih* itself is *Sunnat*, and there is nothing wrong in assembling to read it, or even in repeating it very often. Another form of *Bid'at* is the custom of reading the five prayers, which are *farz* after the close of Friday in the Ramazan. This has been prohibited by *Ijma'*, and we punish it most severely. There are other forms of *Bid'at*, such as taking the name of God in aloud voice, when lifting a corpse or when sprinkling the grave with water. No authority for such has descended from the pious departed. In conclusion, it is as well to point out that Shaikh Al-Tartusi al-Maghribi has written a book called '*Al-bais fi-inkar-il-bid' wal-hawadis,*' and that Abu Shamah al-Muqri has compiled from it a shorter pamphlet, which should be in the hands of all who are earnest in their faith.

We prohibit those forms of *Bid'at* that affect religion or pious works. Thus, drinking coffee, reciting poetry, praising kings, do not affect religion or pious works and are not prohibited, so long as they are not mixed up with acts of nature above described, neither do we prohibit *I'tikaf* in a mosque in the belief that it is a pious act. Thus, Hasan told Omar ibnul Khattab, Commander of the Faithful, that he had sung before one who was better than he, and Omar allowed him to sing.

All games are lawful. Our prophet (may, &c.) allowed Al-Habshi to play in his mosque on the *'Id* day. So it is lawful to chide and punish persons in various ways: to train them in the use of

different weapons; or to use anything, which tends to encourage warriors in battle, such as a wardrum. But it must not be accompanied with musical instruments. These are forbidden, and indeed the difference between them and a wardrum was clear. However, the *Daff* is allowed at marriages. The prophet (may, &c.) has said, "Impurity has descended to us with purity". And again, "tell the Jews that our faith is not difficult".

We hold that Imam bin Qayam and his Shaikh Ibn Taimiyah are true Imams, followers of the *Ahl-us-Sunnat*, and we hold their writings in the greatest respect, save that as regards them we are on every point *ghair-muqallid*, and every one of us is allowed to accept or reject their opinions, or the opinions of any person except those of the Prophet. It is well-known that we hold opinions opposed to the Imams on several points. Thus, as regards giving three divorces in one assembly, in one sentence, we hold it obligatory following the four Imams. We hold *waqf* proper, vows allowable, and their proper performance obligatory. Among the many forms of *bid'at* which we forbid, is offering up *Fatihahs* to *Pirs* after the five daily prayers, lauding them immoderately, and seeking conjunction with them after the manner in many cities.

Consolidating prayers, though considered by some as a most pious act, is as a rule a temptation towards *shirk*, though persons do not perceive it. For *shirk* is so imperceptible, that people are often unwittingly guilty of it. If not, why should our prophet (may, &c.) have sought protection from it, viz., "O Lord, you have guarded me against knowingly committing *shirk*. Pardon me, if I have done it unwittingly. To you are known the most secret things." It is absolutely necessary that people should hold to these words, and avoid *shirk* as much as possible. And Omar ibnul Khattab said, "The handle of Islam, that best of handles, will be broken." Then they asked "when", and he answered, when some Moslems know not the state of ignorance before the Prophet, &c. For these will do *shirk* and yet believe that it is a pious act. O God, guard us from backsliding and grant that our faith may not be impaired!

This is a short account of the heads of the conversation, which, as already mentioned, we held with Husain ul-Airat'i. He often asked us to put it in writing, and as he was importunate, I have done so,

but without referring to our religious books, as I have been busily employed in superintending matters connected with the Holy War. But whoever is desirous of knowing our belief, let him come to us at Darayah, and he will see what will gladden his heart, and his eyes will be pleased in reading the compilations on the different kinds of knowledge, especially the *Tafsir* and *Hadises*. He will see God praised in a pleasing manner; the assistance He gives in establishing the true faith; which He exerts among the weak and feeble, between inhabitants and travellers.

We do not deny the doctrines of *Sufis*, or the purification of person's soul from the stains of sin in deed or thought, provided the person who holds them is firm in his religious observances, and treads the straight road as marked out. But we do not undertake to carry it out in all our acts and deeds. Nor do we turn towards, ask assistance, or beg for aid from other than the Lord God, to whom alone we turn in all our acts. He is our Agent, our Master, and our Deliverer. May peace and the blessing of God be upon our prince Muhammad and on his family and his companions!

'Abdullah son of Muhammad, son of Abdul Wahhab, wrote this in Muharram, 1218 [April, 1803 C.E.]

## CHAPTER- 3

# The Birth of Islamic Revivalism or so-called Wahhabism: Shah Wali Allah and Muhammad Ibn Abd al-Wahhab\*

## Introduction

It was an unusual coincidence that Shah Wali-Allah and Muhammad ibn Abd al-Wahhab who, by laying emphasis on the principle of *ijtihad*, brought about a worldwide revolution in subsequent Muslim thinking, were born in the same year, 1114–15 of the *Hijri* Calender/1703 of the Christian era. The need for such an emphasis on *Ijtihad*, pertaining to freedom of thinking was long felt for the revitalization of Muslim thought in the face of the general belief that the gate of *ijtihad* or free thinking in matters of religion, was closed forever by the jurists of earlier generations.

The term *ijtihad* literally means to exert; and in terms of the Islamic social system, it means to exert with a view to formulating an independent opinion and judgement on a legal question.<sup>1</sup> The validity of *Ijtihad*, in the above juridical sense, is clearly based on the following *Hadith*, the Prophetic tradition:

“On being appointed Governor of Yemen, Mu’adh was asked by the Holy Prophet as to the rule by which he would abide. He replied, ‘By the law of the Qur’an’. ‘But if you do not find any direction therein?’ asked the Prophet. ‘Then I will act according to the *Sunnah* of the prophet’, was the reply. ‘But if you do not find any direction in the *Sunnah*?’ he was asked again. ‘Then I will exercise my judgment (*ujahidu*), and act on that’, came the reply. The prophet raised his hands and said, ‘Praise be to Allah Who guides the messenger of his Apostle as He please.’<sup>2</sup>

The utility of *ijtihad* is also seen in the Qur’anic verse: “And those who exert (*jahadu*) in our way, we will certainly guide them to our paths.”

Accordingly, during the earlier generations whenever the Muslims were faced with any problem it was the common practice to look for



a solution first in The Qur'an, then in the Prophetic tradition and lastly to take resort to *ijtihad* in order to find out an appropriate solution. Thus, Iqbal has rightly regarded *ijtihad*, as the principle of movement in the structure of Islam.<sup>3</sup> It was indeed a general rule and not specifically a legal point. Gradually, however, a legal principle was developed by the latter Muslim jurists, namely *ijma'*, the consensus of opinion of the *ulama*, which in course of time acquired the status of infallibility and occupied the place next only to the Qur'an and the Prophetic tradition, *Sunnah*, as a principle of law.

The importance of *ijtihad* was, therefore, relegated to the fourth position. A new type of *ijtihad* through (Aristotelian) analogical method came to be known as *qiyas*. The entire *shari'ah*, the Islamic legal system, including the rules of morality and religion, was then built up on these newly founded four fundamental sources, namely, Quran, *Sunnah*, *ijma'* and *qiyas*.

With the establishment of the principal schools of law (*Madhhab*) about the fourth century of Hijrah, a theory gained ground among the *Sunni* jurists that "The rank of *ijtihad* was progressively narrowed down as successive generations of doctors, supported by consensus (*ijma*) filled up the gaps in the doctrinal and legal systems" and finally, there remained no more gaps to be filled up in the *shari'ah*, or if at all, only insignificant ones, so that, the gate of *ijtihad*, was said to be closed<sup>4</sup>. But, as Iqbal has pointed out, the *Sunni* jurists continued to believe in the theoretical possibility of *ijtihad* though "in practice it has always been denied ever since the establishment of the schools, in as much as the idea of complete *ijtihad* is hedged round by conditions which are well nigh impossible of realization in a single individual"<sup>5</sup>. As a consequence, the principle of *ijtihad* was replaced by *taqlid*, that is, imitation of the opinions of the jurist belonging to their own *madhhab*.

The word *taqlid* means to follow or to imitate. In the juridical sense, it means adoption of the judgment or action of another person believing it to be authoritative and right without investigating into the correctness of his reasons<sup>6</sup>. Thus, in the tenor of above discussion, *taqlid* implies adoption of the opinions and rulings of one of the schools without subjecting them to further examination

and the claim of the finality of the schools was the logical consequence of this position. The tacit idea of the finality also gave vent to the make-belief of the self-sufficiency of each *madhhab* or school of law.

Shah Wali-Allah and Muhammad ibn' Abd al-Wahhab were not the first to revolt against this checkmating on the freedom of opinion. Ibn Taimiyah resented bitterly against it in the eight-century and Jalal al-Din Suyuti and others in the tenth century of the Hijri era.<sup>7</sup> The credit of the Shah and Muhammad, who lived in the Twelfth century of the *hijrah*, lies, therefore, not so much in their emphasis of the principle of *ijtihad*, but in their boldness to rethink the whole Islamic past and to re-interpret the *shari'ah*, in the light of the Qur'an and the *Sunnah* afresh, so as to satisfy the contemporary needs. It is interesting to note that both of them received their training for this onerous task at the religious Seminaries of Makkah and Madinah though they do not appear to have met each other at any time.

Muhammad ibn Abd al-Wahhab (C.E.1703–1789) was born at 'Uyaynah, a desert settlement of Najd.<sup>8</sup> He completed his education at Madinah about C.E. 1724, and then gathered experience in the academic centres of Baghdad, Basrah, Hamadan and Damascus for eleven years.<sup>9</sup> Thereafter, he is said to have revisited Hijaz (*circa* 1735), and stayed at Makkah for a considerable time before he returned to his desert abode of Najd.

At first, he settled at Huraymilah for a short while and then moved to 'Uyaynah,<sup>10</sup> and started his reform movement there about C.E. 1744".<sup>11</sup> The uncompromising puritanism of Ibn Abd al-Wahhab soon aroused suspicion in the minds of the ruling princes, which ultimately resulted in his expulsion from 'Uyaynah. He moved to Diri'ah, about six leagues away, and entered into an alliance of mutual assistance with its ruling prince Sa'ud al-Thani.<sup>12a</sup> With the unflinching support of Sa'ud, he finally succeeded, in the words of Iqbal, "in spreading the fire of his restless soul throughout the whole world of Islam".<sup>12b</sup>

In the eighteenth century, the European travellers described that there were innumerable chiefs in Central Arabia, of whom the most

powerful were Ibn Mu'ammār in Wādī Hanēefah and Da'as at the important locality of Manfoohah in Kharij. But these chiefs and all others were subject in a general way to Ibn Muflīk, the successor of the Carmathian princes of Qatif and Hasa. Almost all over the area the trace of Islam said to have long since vanished around Najd, where the worship of the *Jinn*, under the spreading foliage of large trees, or in the cavernous recesses of Jabal Towayk, along with the invocation of the dead and sacrifices at their tombs, were blended with remnants of old Sabaeen superstitions, not without positive traces of the doctrines of Mosaylemah and Karmoot (*Karamata*). The Quran was unread, the daily prayers forgotten, and no one cared where Mecca was west, north or south; tithes, ablutions and pilgrimages were unheard of. Such was the political and religious condition of the land when the Wahhabee arrived, resolved to restore the days of the Prophet and the Sahabah among his backsliding countrymen, and confident of success. The basic points of the above description, *i.e.* (a) dissatisfaction of Muhammad ibn 'Abd al-Wahhab with local superstitious practices and undue reverence shown to the saints by his countrymen, and (b) his determination to restore Islam in its pristine purity, are confirmed by the doctrinal works composed by the founder of the movement himself and his son, 'Abd-Allah. Muhammad ibn 'Abd al-Wahhab, therefore, emphasized the necessity of accepting completely the first principle of Islam, namely the dogma "there is no lord but Allah;" *i.e.*, the doctrines of the Unity of the Lordship of Allah. He condemned all deviations from the Qur'anic doctrines and branded them as polytheism (*shirk*) or sinful innovation (*bid'ah*). Even Greek logic was condemned and books on logic were banned. He called himself and his followers "Muwahhidun" or Unitarians, though the adversaries, including the Europeans, called the movement "Wahhabiyyah" or Wahhabism, rather by way of reproach.

The reason for his emphasis on the principle of *ijtihad* is not far to seek. Like his predecessor, Ibn Taimiyah, he was brought up in the tradition of the Hanbali school of law (*madhhab*), which recognized *ijma'* (in the sense of being an infallible source of law) only of the first three generations after the Prophet, or which were strictly based

on the tradition of the Prophet and of his companions. The very spirit, therefore, which impelled Ibn Taimiyah four centuries before him to rise in revolt against the finality of the schools and to advance the claim of *ijtihad* for himself, also inspired Muhammad ibn 'Abd al-Wahhab to rise against the un-Islamic innovations of his time and to re-assert the right of *ijtihad*.

Shah Wali-Allah (C.E. 1703-1762) was born at Delhi, the capital of the great Mughal Empire and completed his early education in C.E. 1718 at Madrasah Rahimiyah, the religious Seminary founded by his father, Shah Abd al-Rahim. Thereafter, he taught *Hadith* at the same Madrasah for twelve years. In C.E. 1730, he made a pilgrimage to Makkah and Madinah, where he stayed for 14 months and studied *Hadith* <sup>19</sup> under Abu Fahir Ibrahim al-Kurdi al-Shafi'i al-Madani, Wafid-Allah al-Makki, Taj al-Din Qa'li al-Makki and 'Umar ibn Ahmad al-Makki. He acquired great proficiency in *Hadith* studies and on his return to India in C.E. 1733, started his reform movement at his native city, Delhi. He was regarded as the highest authority on religion and theology by the Muslims of the Indo-Pakistan subcontinent. <sup>20</sup>

While he was residing at Makkah, he had conceived the plan of writing a book on the secrets of religion (*asrar al-din*); <sup>21</sup> so as to explain the operative moral principles of the universe. This he worked out after his return to Delhi in two volumes and named it *Hujjat Allah al-Balighah*. In this study Shah Wali Allah has developed a comprehensive philosophy about the nature of the universe with special reference to the place of human being in it on the basis of the universal moral principle of *maslahah* or salutary purposiveness, which he conceived as the basis of all creation that resides in every act of Allah and is, consequently, the 'operative principle' of the system of the universe (*nizam al-alam*), and which ought to be the motive of all conscious activities of man.

A close examination of his philosophical works, such as, *Hujjat Allah al-Balighah*, *Budur al-Bazighah*, *Tafhimat al-Ilahiya* and *al-Fawz al-Kabir Usual al-Tafsir* reveal that after a long search for the truth, he found the *raison d'etre* of the universe and the moral basis of all existence in it, in this teleological principle of *maslahah*.<sup>22</sup> Naturally, therefore, he made the principle of *maslahah* the foundation of his reform movement.

In this sense, all the ordinances and the rules of morality and religion promulgated in the Quran are the embodiment of *maslahah* in consonance with the purpose of the creation of the universe. The *Sunnah* also comes under the same category, because it is, in fact, an explanation or elaboration of the Quranic principles.

In this context, the need of *ijtihad* arises out of the necessity of discerning the salutary purpose in a given situation, so as to be able to formulate a general rule in the light of the Quran and the *Sunnah* (prophetic tradition) in order to direct its course accordingly.

The initial agreement of these two religious reformers of the eighteenth century on the necessity of reviving the principle of *ijtihad*, therefore, need not lead us to identify the character of the two reform movements. Because, in the first place, although in their zeal for reviving the principle of *ijtihad* they realized the necessity of re-interpreting the *shari'ah* and went back to the Quran and *Sunnah*, yet Shah Wali Allah, unlike his Najdian compeer, did not reject the *ijma'* of the later generations. Also, he accepted the *qiyas* for the method of *ijtihad*<sup>23</sup>, which must have appeared as wrong to Muhammad ibn 'Abd al-Wahhab.<sup>24</sup> Probably the fact that Shah Wali Allah was brought up in the *Hanafi* tradition, which is well known for its inclination towards *rayy*, 'personal opinion' and his Najdian compeer grew up in the puritan *Hambali* tradition, was responsible for this difference of outlook.<sup>25</sup> Secondly, in their intellectual orientation the two movements stood farther apart. The reform movement of Shah Wali Allah aimed at integration or *tatbiq* of the whole structure of Islam including its past tradition; and that of Ibn 'Abd al-Wahhab aimed at a return to the golden past of Islam, *i.e.* of the time of the Prophet and the three succeeding generations. In order to realise the significance of the principle of *tatbiq* or integration, as enunciated by Shah Wali Allah, it is necessary to examine the contemporary events, which moulded his ideas of reform.

### **Shah Wali Allah's Principle of Tatbiq**

We have noticed earlier that Shah Wali Allah was born at Delhi, the capital of the great Mughal Empire of India, which at the time of his birth in C.E. 1703, was at the zenith of its power. His life however

coincided with the most critical period of the Mughal Power in India and with the process of its gradual decline from C.E. 1707, the date of the death of Emperor Aurangzeb Alamgir, down to the passing of Bengal, Bihar and Orissa into the hands of the British East India Company following the Battle of Plassey in C.E. 1757. This era of the Mughal history of India is marked by the lack of cohesion among the rulers, provincial governors and the imperial feudatories, and by the consequent political instability and administrative corruption, which slowly but steadily sapped the central authority and eventually brought about disintegration of the Empire. This long process of decline and decay of the Muslim power in India deeply affected all phases of Muslim life and created various social, political, moral and spiritual crises and instability in the Muslim society. "This instability" Dr. Fazlur Rahman observes, "partly threatening but partly also operative (it came to a head once with the eclectic Akbar, it nearly came to a head again with Dara Shikuh), in the Islamic value structure, demanded some such thinker as Shah Waliyullah, a thinker who should attempt an over-all re-integration of the value structure of Islam". "Before him", he adds further, "Islam had produced great masters of individual disciplines, who in one or even in more than one discipline taken separately, perhaps even excelled Shah Waliyullah, but no one before him attempted an integration (*tatbiq*) of the total Islamic structure" This is what, according to Dr. Rahman, makes Shah Wali-Allah a thinker *sui generis* in the entire history of the tradition of Islam<sup>26</sup>.

### **Irtifaq and Iqtirab**

Shah Wali Allah's principle of *tatbiq* is a product of his sociological outlook. This point has been examined by Dr. Fazlur Rahman with great assiduity. He says, "the strikingly new feature in Shah Waliyullah's application of the principle of *tatbiq* is his concern with the socio-economic basis of the human society within the context of religion."

Before him, Ibn Khaldun had pioneered the discussion of the organization and development of the human society, but that was done from a historic-civilizational view-point. In Waliyullah, the soundness and welfare of a socio-economic structure is deduced

theologically. For the first time, we see an orthodox theologian developing a concept of natural law--not merely of physical nature, but of sociologic-moral nature in order to find a secure basis for the spiritual development of man. Indeed, for these two aspects of human life, he uses two distinct terms: *irtifaq* (socio-economic security) and *iqtirab* (spiritual evolution).

So closely are these two spheres related to each other in his mind that he finds one main justification for the appearance of Islam in the moral necessity of destroying the corrupt socio-economic structure of Byzantine and Persian empires<sup>27</sup>. In the like manner, the indispensable need of religion for human beings, is not deduced from any self-evident assumption but is inductively discovered from a penetrating analysis of the social and psychological requirements of human personality, on the basis of the principle of *maslalah*. i.e. the salutary purpose of the over-all welfare of the human species<sup>28</sup>.

### **Ijtihad and Maslalah**

The basic function of Shah Wali Allah's principle of *tatbiq* as analysed by Dr. Fazlur Rahman is to supply "sufficient inner elasticity" in the structure of Islam. "Obviously", Dr. Rahman points out, "the principle can have a narrow meaning or a wide meaning depending upon the terms within which it operates: it can be made to operate strictly within the traditional elements or established schools, so as to make the structure more cohesive; or it can be made to operate so as to give a creative adaptability to the traditional structure *vis-a-vis* newer elements and even newer values. It is also obvious that the first meaning will, given necessary conditions including minds of insight, by its logic tends towards the second meaning"<sup>29</sup>. This is why, according to Dr. Rahman, Shah Wali Ullah can be regarded in a basic sense, "as the founder of Muslim modernism though living in a pre-modernist age".

A close examination of Shah Wali Allah's writings in the light of the principle of *tatbiq* reveals that he utilized the concept of *ijtihad* as an operative principle within the frame-work of the first meaning, i.e. for the purpose of creating elasticity and cohesiveness (he calls it "roominess")<sup>30</sup> among the established schools of law (*madhahib*), and he applied the concept of *maslalah* to operate in the wider

frame-work of the second meaning, as explained above. Not only that, in the operation of the principle of *maslahah* in a teleological sense, as has been explained earlier, Shah Wali Allah finds the unity of all creation and its proper relations with the Creator of the universe.

The concept of *maslahah*, therefore, provides the central and the unifying principle of thought, which was not realized by Dr. Fajlur Rahman in his pioneering study when he says, "The chief failing of his (Shah Wali Allah's) integrative effort is the lack of the formulation of some central principle which should render his total thought a cohesive system"<sup>31</sup>.

A striking example of the application of the principle of *ijtihad*, in the above sense is Shah Wali Allah's advocacy to allow the adherent of one school, *Hanafi* for instance, to consult a jurist of a different school, *Shafi'i* for example, for seeking legal opinion (*fatwa*) and to practise accordingly<sup>32</sup>. An example of the application of the principle of *maslahah*, in the above sense, can be seen in his speculation regarding the growth of different grades of human society, viz., for the lowest grade of (a) the rural and tribal society, (b) to be the urban society and the city state, (c) country state with a capital city or a kingdom, and lastly to (d) the universal or international state, i.e. *Khilafat*, the lowest naturally tending to the highest by internal social necessity, which contains in itself all the potentialities for yielding greatest good and overall welfare of man, if its course is guided in accordance with the principle of *maslahah*<sup>33</sup>.

The integrative character of Shah Wali Allah's thought has been reflected even more clearly in his conception of religions, which according to him is a set of spiritual principles formulated on a definite pattern for the welfare of man. He viewed Islam as a universal religion in this immaterial sense, which consequently requires a vehicle of flesh and blood, that is, customs and traditions for its manifestation in time and space or in local societies. It is, therefore, liable to be coloured by the vehicle it takes for the purpose. As the Prophet was born in Arabia, he naturally interpreted the universal principles of Islam in terms of Arabian tradition and incorporate in its various Arabian customs, which were salutary for humanity.



Thus, Islam has acquired an Arabian colouring. But while moulding the early Islamic social system, the Prophet had to keep in mind the fact that there existed and would exist other societies whose customs would differ from that of Arabia of his time. As such, he incorporated into it only that much of the existing customs as was essential to rendering it concrete and workable as a sample to humanity, and let a great scope and flexibility remain dormant in it for further development and application<sup>34</sup>.

Thus, Shah Wali Allah's thought is highly integrative and his reform movement takes cognisance of the past tradition and future possibilities; and it endeavours to mould the existing way of life into an Islamic pattern after the sample set forth by the Prophet. It is therefore basically receptive of the existing tradition in so far as it is conformable to the principles of *maslahah*, and rejective of only that portion thereof, which is contradictory or opposed to it.

The reform movement of Muhammad ibn Abd al-Wahhab is, on the other hand, an attempt to return to the pristine purity of early social system of Islam, and signalises a "go back " to the days of the Prophet and his companions<sup>35</sup>.

Basically, therefore, it is rejective to the existing tradition and the local and foreign influences, which somehow or other found their way into the body-politic of Islam.

Thus, in its basic orientation the reform movement of Ibn Abd al-Wahhab tends towards past time and its method is purgatory as against the movement of Shah Wali Allah, which is cumulative in its method and futurist in its orientation<sup>36</sup>.

The two reform movements were, therefore, oriented towards strikingly opposite directions though their founders derived their inspiration from the same ideal sources, that is, the Quran and the Prophetic tradition. This unity in ideals and difference in orientation are by no means symptomatic of discordance; rather it is a pointer to the basically Arabist *Hambalian* texture of Muhammad ibn Abd al-Wahhab's thinking process and the basically Indian widely speculative *Hanafi* texture of Shah Wali Allah's thought and even more strongly indicative of the infinite virility of the *elan vital* of

the religious doctrines of Islam as well as the deeper vitality in its materializational process in actual human life, whether puritanical or synthetic .

### **The Evolution of the Idea of Ijtihad in Shah Wali Allah's Thought**

A broad review of Shah Wali Allah's writings suggests that his visit to Makkah had exerted decisive influence in moulding his idea of *ijtihad*. For, it was not until his return from Arabia that, he took a determined stand in favour of reviving it, though even before his visit to Makkah, he appears to have been disgusted with the imitative habits of the *Ulama* of India, and with their unproportionate reliance on the book of *fiqh*, the Islamic jurisprudence. In one of his earlier works, he complains that the religious scholars of his time, to whom was entrusted the task of enforcing the *Shari'ah*, neglected the study of the Qur'an and the Prophetic tradition and cared only for *fiqh* and other theoretical sciences, the former for securing government posts and the latter for holding verbal duels and hair-splitting controversies among themselves<sup>37</sup>. This, according to him, produced disastrous results. In another work, he exhorts, "You should know for certain that the door of *ijtihad* is closed today, except that you should keep *Mu'atta'* (a collection of Prophetic tradition by Imam Malik which also contains his interpretations), before you."<sup>38</sup> This undoubtedly points of Shah Wali Allah's earlier indecision about the subject.

As a matter of fact, if the scope of *ijtihad* (i.e. freedom of investigation and forming fresh opinion about the rule of law *vis a vis* what has already been elicited by the scholars of the past and compiled in the books of *fiqh* and *fatawa*), is denied and the study of the Quran and the Prophetic tradition is encouraged only for legal purposes, then it would logically relegate the Quran and *Sunnah* to secondary importance. Because, it can serve no other purpose than the confirmation of an existing theory or the rejection of one such theory in favour of another. The emphasis laid by Shah Wali Allah on the study of the liberal interpretation of Imam Malik, as quoted above, implies that he had already realized this difficulty.

After his return from Makkah, this hesitation in his mind was changed into a striking boldness. In fact, he came back to his native

country with a revolutionary turn of mind and not only re-asserted the validity of *ijtihad* but declared himself to be a *Mujtahid* or reformer of religion, i.e. an absolute *Mujtahid (mujtahid al-mutlaq)*<sup>39</sup>. In his monumental work, *Hujjat Allah al-Balighah* he says:

“At times, Allah creates in my mind a balance, by dint of which, I know the causes of the differences of opinion that occurred amongst the Muslim community, and by means of which I can discern as to which opinion is right in the sight of Allah and the Prophet. Also, Allah has enabled me to establish this truth by both rational and traditional evidences”<sup>40</sup>.

Thus, his visit to Makkah definitely influenced his ideas in favour of re-opening the gate of *Ijtihad*.<sup>41a</sup>

### **Historical Background of Taqlid as Analysed by Shah Wali Allah**

In *Hujjat Allah al-Balighah*, Shah Wali Allah considers the problems of *ijtihad* and *taqlid* from a historical point of view. According to him, the need of religion for man arises out of the necessity of developing the potentialities of his personality that have been originally planted by Allah in his nature, and also bestowed on him by Allah from time to time as required for his inner development from one stage of progress to another. The personality of man is an indivisible combination of twofold forces, one set being oriented to the highest level of existence, i.e. towards *Mala' al-A'la* or supernal plenum and the other, to the lowest level of existence or *Mala' al-Safil*, i.e., the realm of gross animality.

Man has, therefore, only two alternatives before him: he can either channelise the forces of his personality towards a progressive role by following the principle of *maslahah* or he is being drawn to the lowest degradation by his animal desires. In this dynamic concept of human personality, there is, thus, no scope for remaining standstill. It is, therefore, the duty of man to strive constantly to become what he ideally is (a philosophy, later on further developed by Iqbal), which is possible only through following religion. Because, religion, in his view, is a compendium of all salutary principles designed especially for the progress of man.<sup>41b</sup>

Furthermore, the primary sources of religion are the revelation of Allah (i.e. the Qur'an) and its interpretation by the Prophet (i.e. the tradition of the Prophet or *Sunnah*), which contain directions in the form of commandment or prohibition and encouragement or discouragement in accordance with the salutary purpose (*maslahah*) of the system of the universe (*Nizam al-Aalam*). The welfare of man, therefore, lies in following the biddings of the Qur'an and the *Sunnah*, and for that reason, *taqlid* (or imitation without questioning), of the Prophet, is not only permitted but what ought to be the aim of every men. <sup>42</sup> Accordingly, Muslims of the first three generations clung to the express meaning of the Qur'an and the *Sunnah* of the Prophet. <sup>43</sup>

Since the third generation after the Prophet, however, there arose a group of learned men who mastered the science of religion and jurisprudence, and resorted to the principle of *ijtihad* for forming rules of *Shari'ah*, i.e. of law, religion and morality. But whenever they found a *Hadith* (i.e., Prophetic tradition) containing direction on a specific case, they set aside their *ijtihad* and accepted the *Hadith*. Because, the real intention of *ijtihad* was to find out the path shown by the Prophet <sup>44</sup>. In this new trend, Shah Wali Allah discerns two distinct tendencies: one oriented to the following of the express meaning of the *Hadith*, and the other inclining to finding out the underlying causes ('*illat*) of a given injunction and deducing general rules of law from them (these two tendencies have been contrasted by Iqbal as Semitism vs. Aryanism). <sup>45</sup> He called those who showed the former tendency, *Ahl al-Hadith* i.e. the partisan of the Prophetic tradition, and those who followed the latter course, *Ahl al-Takhrij*, i.e. the elicitor of laws, generally known as the *Faqhi* or jurist <sup>46</sup>.

Shah Wali Allah says, "Before the fourth century of the Hijri era, the people (i.e. the Muslims) were not agreed upon pure imitation (*taqlid al-khalis*) of a particular school (*madhhab*) exclusively." <sup>47</sup> (Iqbal has pointed out that, in this period there had arisen not less than nineteen schools among the Muslims <sup>48</sup>). They used to learn the Islamic rites and ceremonies from their parents and teachers and whenever any difficult problem arose, their custom was to turn to a jurist whomsoever they found, no matter to which school or schools they themselves and the jurist in person belonged. The more

enlightened section of the Muslims used to follow the *Hadith* and the interpretations of the *Muhaddithun* (i.e. those who specialised in different branches of *Hadith* studies). But if they did not find the required rule of law in the above sources they used to consult the opinion of the jurists (*faqhi*). The *ahl al-takhrij*, i.e. the learned group who engaged themselves in fresher inquiry about the rules of *shari'ah*, used to belong to one or the other school, some of the *ahl-al-Hadith* or the *Muhaddithun* also used to be related to some of the schools according to their inclination. In those days, the *Mujtahid* (i.e. one who by dint of his extraordinary knowledge acquired the right of *ijtihad*) alone were competent to pronounce legal opinion (*fatwa*), and they alone were called jurist (*faqhi*)<sup>49</sup>. But from the fourth century of *Hijri* on, a change set in the way of life of the Muslims owing to the moral weakness of the administrators and general incompetence of the Judges and the jurists, which ultimately led the people more and more to adopt and follow *taqlid*, the opinions of one of the various schools of law, *madhhab*. This new trend encouraged pure imitation (*khalis taqlid*). "They gratified themselves with *taqlid*, Shah Wali Allah observes, "and the practice of *taqlid* set firmly in their hearts like the habit of the ants, while they were unmindful".<sup>50</sup>

Accordingly, to Shah Wali Allah, in this later period, those who learnt the opinions of the earlier jurists by heart even without understanding the real import, and could satisfy others by dint of endless debates and controversies, came to be known as jurists (*faqhi*); and in this manner those who could repeat Prophetic tradition from rote memory like story-tellers, even without having the least idea of the principles of its criticism, became known as *Muhaddith*". "Thus, as the time passed on", he says, "the moral corruption (*fitna*) and the imitative habit (*taqlid*) went on the increase and the spirit of religion and trust (*amanah*) proportionately decreased in the hearts of the people till they gratified themselves by giving up research in matters of religion altogether."<sup>51</sup>

### **The Principle of Taqlid in the Context of Maslahah**

In *Hujjat Allah al-Balighah*, Shah Wali Allah considered the principle of *Taqlid* within the frame-work of *maslahah*. In this context, he found no justification for *khalis Taqlid* or pure imitation,

which implies absolute reliance on other than Allah and the Prophet. Not only because such reliance is forbidden in Islam, but also it is derogatory and harmful to the purpose of the creation of man.

He quotes several verses from the Qur'an and shows that Allah has given clear and unambiguous direction on this point. For instance, the Qur'an says: "Follow what has been sent down to you by your Lord and do not follow other guardian friends beside Him."<sup>52</sup>

"If you dispute among yourselves about anything, refer it to Allah and the Prophet, if you really believe in Allah and in the Day of Judgment."<sup>53</sup> In order to break the hard nut of the blind imitateness (*taqlid jamid*) of the Muslims of his own time, he goes to the length of well-nigh *Khariji* doctrine of "*in-il hukmu illa lillah*", "there is no arbitration but that of Allah", which was though judged to be wrong at the time of the Companions of the holy Prophet, who were experts of the knowledge of the Qur'an and Sunnah, must be deemed right at our times when the arbitrators are, in reality, ignoramus of the Prophetic knowledge.

He argues that, obviously Allah has not permitted the Muslims to turn to the arbitration of any but of the Qur'an and the Prophetic tradition for the settlement of a dispute. "Therefore, it is forbidden (*haram*) to turn to anybody's opinion for the settlement of a dispute; because it is other than the Qur'an and the Sunnah". "This, he points out, has been agreed upon by the consensus (*ijma'*) of the first three generations of the Muslims". Hence "it ought to be known that whosoever accepts all the opinions of Abu Hanifah, or all the opinions of one of these Imams or any other Imam whom he follows in preference to any other's opinion, and relies not on what has come down in the Qur'an and the Sunnah, verily, he has gone against the consensus of the community of all ages, from the first to the last, most certainly without any whit of doubt; and verily, he will not find any one of the ancestors or of the first three praiseworthy generations, to support him. He has, therefore, followed the path of other than the Muslim's."<sup>54</sup> In the opening section, this is what he felt necessary to be told to the followers of the four orthodox schools (*madhhab*).<sup>55</sup>

He concludes the section by saying, "May Allah protect us from falling into such a station."<sup>56</sup>

### Taqlid of the Learned by the Ignoramus

Shah Wali Allah is not, however, so uncompromising to the practice of *taqlid* in a more general sense, i.e. *taqlid* of the learned by the ignorant person. For he clearly says, "He who has no knowledge of what the Prophet said, and of the method of reconciling between different Prophetic traditions and drawing conclusion from them—can follow a rightly guided learned man." But, if any of his opinion goes against a Prophetic tradition, it must be parted with without hesitation or insistence.<sup>57</sup> This kind of *taqlid*, in his opinion, is comparable to the practice of seeking legal opinion from the jurist and following it. He sees no harm even if such a person seeks *fatwa* from a particular jurist all the time. But it must be remembered "we neither believe in the jurist nor did Allah reveal the *fiqh* to him, and make it obligatory on us to obey him." The opinion of the jurist can be followed only on account of his knowledge of the Book of Allah and the Sunnah of the Prophet. "If this were not the case, no Muslim would have ever followed (*qallada*) any *Mujtahid*."<sup>58</sup> Thus, the object of Shah Wali Allah's criticism is directed against pure imitation or *khalis taqlid*.

Shah Wali Allah further analyses the opinions of such eminent authorities as Hasan al-Basri, Imam Abu Shamah, Ibn Hajr Asqalani, Shaykh Izz al-Din and others, bearing on this subject, and shows that the four recognised Imams, namely Abu Hanifah, Malik, Shafi'i and Ahmad, disapproved of *taqlid* and warned their friends and followers not to imitate them blindly.<sup>59</sup> He quotes from them exhorting their followers to accept any other's opinion as against theirs, if such an opinion appeared sounder and more accurate.<sup>60</sup> He quotes Imam Shafi'i saying, "If a sound Prophetic tradition is found, that is my school (*madhhab*)."<sup>61</sup> Shah Wali Allah, therefore, deplores the claim of finality of the schools, in a later work, and takes those '*ulama*' to task, who do not permit a *Hanafi*, to seek *fatwa* from a jurist and *vice versa*.

Obviously the above arguments of Shah Wali Allah logically tend to what came to be known at a later date as *ghayr muqallideen*, i.e. the school which does not follow any particular Imam or any particular group of Imams. It is, therefore, interesting to notice that one of the direct effect of the above philosophy, was at the root of the rise of

the school of *Ahli-Hadith* in India in the nineteenth century C.E. in which all the logical consequences of the above arguments became crystallised and the followers of which unhesitatingly declared themselves as *ghayr muqallid*.

### **Ijtihad and Taqlid: Varieties and Conditions**

Apparently Shah Wali Allah was not entirely satisfied with the brief discussion of the problems of *ijtihad* and *taqlid* in *Hujjat Allah al-Balighah*; for, he wrote a monograph later on elaborating his views on these subjects in great details. He named this monograph *Iqd al-Jid fi Ahkam al-Ijtihad wa'l-Taqlid* (i.e. the genuine necklace of the jewels of *ijtihad* and *taqlid*). "What urged me to write this epistle", he says, "was the inquiries on the important issues pertaining to this subject put to me by some friends".<sup>62</sup> In this study, he discussed the real nature of *ijtihad* and *taqlid*, their varieties, rules and conditions attached to them and differences of opinion amongst the authorities about them.<sup>63</sup>

### **Definition of Ijtihad**

"The true nature of *ijtihad*" he says, "as understood from the discourses of scholars, is exhaustive endeavour in understanding the derivative principles of *Shari'ah* by means of detailed arguments", the *genera* (i.e., of the syllogism) of which must be based on one of the four fundamentals, vis., (a) the Book of Allah (b) the example and precept of the Prophet (c) the consensus of opinion of the community (*ijma'*) or (d) *qiyas*, (i.e., analogy) on the above three sources. The scope of *ijtihad* is wider than merely comprehending the rules of law worked out by the earlier scholars. Its scope is neither limited to arriving at agreement with the earlier scholars nor subject to taking notice of only those issues which were not considered by them. It is not, therefore, objectionable either to disagree with the earlier scholars or to take resort to their aid in considering an issue. Even to arrive at agreement with the earlier scholars with proper understanding of their arguments and the principles and sources utilised by them, must be regarded as *ijtihad*. "Thus, if a person", he says, "who is in agreement with his teacher (*shaykh*) in most matters, knows the arguments supporting every decision (of his teacher), and is satisfied with those arguments", he



is *mujtahid* (i.e. one who exercises *ijtihad*). Therefore, “the belief that a *mujtahid* is not found in our times is a corrupt belief based on corrupt foundation .”<sup>64</sup>

How close Iqbal stands to Shah Wali Allah, not only in his conception of the dynamic personality of man<sup>65</sup>, but also in his speculation on the problem of *ijtihad*, can be seen from his analysis of this problem in the *Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*. He says, the closing of the door of *ijtihad* is a pure fiction, suggested partly by the crystallization of legal thought in Islam, and partly by that intellectual laziness which, especially in the period of spiritual decay, turns great thinkers into idols. If some of the later doctors have upheld this fiction, modern Islam is not bound by this voluntary surrender of intellectual independence .<sup>66</sup>

### **The Competence of a Mujtahid and the Condition Attached to Ijtihad**

Shah Wali Allah says, “the competence of a (i.e., one who exercises *ijtihad*), is that he must know that portion of (a) the Quran and (b) the Prophetic Tradition, which is relevant to the principles of legislation; and must know (c) the consensus of the opinion of the community (*ijma'*) formed in the past, and (d) the method of analogy (*qiyas*), i.e., the method of arranging the premises properly (e.g. syllogism) in a case of *qiyas*, (e) the Arabic language, (f) those ordinances of the Qur'an which are abrogated and others which are abrogating i.e., about the occurrence of abrogation in the Qur'an<sup>67</sup>, and finally (g) the biographical criticism of the narrators of Prophetic tradition .”<sup>68</sup>

Shah Wali Allah rejects the view of the earlier scholars that, proficiency in scholastic theology (*Kalam*) and jurisprudence (*usul al-fiqh*) as necessary for a<sup>69</sup>. He points out that, Imam Gazzali said, “*ijtihad* is not accomplished without proficiency in jurisprudence.” But this view has no solid foundation. Because, it was laid down, as a condition for *ijtihad*, but was not practised.

As a matter of fact, this concession of Shah Wali Allah can be traced to the central point of his thinking, e.g. the principle of *maslahah*. We have pointed out earlier that he regarded religion as a compendium of salutary principles. In *Fawz al-Kabir*, he further

says, “The purpose of revelation of the Qur’an is to civilise all human beings, Arabs and the non-Arabs, the city dwellers as well as the inhabitants of the villages .”<sup>71</sup> It is, therefore, addressed to all shades of people in accordance with their innate capacity of understanding (a theory later on further developed by Sayyid Ameer Ali). “Every individual human being has been created”, he says in the same work, “in the state of (original, i.e., ideal) nature, without being endowed with a grasp on scholastic theology.”<sup>72</sup> Also, we have seen above that, Shah Wali Allah felt the need of religion for the purpose of developing the potentialities that are planted in the nature of man by following the salutary principles provided to him in the Qur’an and the *Sunnah*. Since *ijtihad* is an endeavour to discover such salutary rules of law as may be helpful to the development of his inner potentialities, on the analogy of the rules already provided in the Qur’an and the *Sunnah*, the knowledge of the complicated sciences of jurisprudence and scholastic theology is not necessary for its exercise, however, covetable its acquisition may be.

On the authority of al-Baghawi, al-Rafi’i and al-Nawawi, he further shows that, exhaustive knowledge in all the branches of learning, mentioned above, is not necessary for *ijtihad*.<sup>73</sup> A considerable knowledge in each of the above branches (he says, “a major portion of each”), is sufficient for the purpose, so as to enable the *mujtahid* to guard himself from falling into error.

### Different Grades of Mujtahids

Shah Wali Allah classifies the *mujtahid* into three grades; the first grade being subdivided into two, thus giving in all four grades of *mujtahids*, viz., (i) *mujtahid al-mutlaq al-mustaqil*, (ii) *mujtahid al-mutlaq al-muntasib*, (iii) *mujtahid fi’l-madhhab*, and (iv) *mujtahid fi’l-futya*.<sup>74</sup>

- (i) *Mujtahid al-mutlaq al-mustaqil*, i.e., an absolute independent *mujtahid*, is one who is able to base his *ijtihad* on a fresh interpretation of the principles of *Shari’ah*, is capable of examining the decisions, which are already formed by the earlier authorities, in the light of his knowledge of the Qur’an and the Prophetic tradition, and can resolve satisfactorily

between conflicting arguments by means of his knowledge of the above sources, and by his proficiency in the 'principles of religion' (*usul al-din*) and the method of argumentation. Finally, he must be able to discern different sides of an issue by means of sound discourse, so as to provide with a clear ground for decision .<sup>75</sup>

- (ii) *Mujtahid al-mutlaq al-muntasib*, i.e., an absolute mujtahid, who is affiliated to an independent mujtahid of the first grade, is one who adopts the principles of his teacher (*Shaykh*) and seeks assistance abundantly from the latter's argumentative discourse, and resorts to his method of eliciting rules from the fundamental sources, but who essentially bases his judgment on clear understanding either of the arguments of his teacher or of his own, as the case may be, and is capable of drawing independent judgment from those arguments.<sup>76</sup>
- (iii) *Mujtahid fi'l-madhab*, i.e., mujtahid within the school, is one who follows the unequivocal decisions of an Imam (i.e., founder of a school) and exercises his own *ijtihad* in accordance with the opinion of the latter, and elicits judgment in conformity with the views of his Imam.

### **Different Types of Ijtihad and Their Scope**

Shah Wali Allah approaches this subject rather in a cryptic way. He devotes a long chapter to its consideration and calls it "Explanation of the differences among the Mujtahids." The chapter is opened with a question:

"Scholars have differed in the matter of ratification of the opinion of *mujtahids* pronouncing differently on such issues in which no conclusive judgment can be formed as to whether each of the *mujtahids* or only one of them is correct in such a case?"<sup>78</sup>

He then examines the opinion of the authorities of this subject and analyses various aspects of the question, grammatical, logical, epistemological and circumstantial, - which generally lead to the differences of opinion. For instance, according to Imam Shafi'i: in every matter there is a fixed verdict and a corresponding indication that hits the target .<sup>79</sup> But, this primary assumption may not be acceptable to other *mujtahids*, and differences are likely to accrue on

account of that. Such differences may also occur in the manner of generalisation and interpretation of terms, as well as on account of differing frames of reference. It may also happen that, one *mujtahid* finds a sound Prophetic tradition and bases his verdict on the evidence of that tradition, whereas (let us assume) two other draw two different conclusions independent of this tradition. In such a case, if the two independent verdicts contradict the Prophetic tradition, they automatically stand refuted and cannot be ratified. But, if all of them base their judgments on the same or different Prophetic traditions (or in the same manner on Qur'anic evidences), and still they differ among themselves, - in such a case, the differences may be due to differences in the interpretations of terms or due to the consideration of other circumstantial evidence or indications ('*illat*). In such a case, Shah Wali Allah regards all the three verdicts as acceptable; because, in this case one may be more meritorious than the others, and all may be correct either "in all strict sense" ('*azimat*) or "in the broad sense" (*rukhsat*). Shah Wali Allah, however, admits that, in the legal courts the scope of such ratification is very narrow. For, the *Qadi* has to judge only with external evidences, and is required to choose the most convincing one of the different alternatives and give verdict accordingly. In the courts, therefore, there can be only one verdict, which is right.<sup>80</sup> Yet, that does not mean that others are necessarily wrong.

In order to get over the confusion, Shah Wali Allah points out that, there can be four different types of circumstances on which *ijtihad* is called for. They are as follows<sup>81</sup>:

- (a) "That, in which the truth is decisively determined, and it is necessary in such a case that, its opposite be contradicted, for it is false."
- (b) "That, in which the truth is determined by the dominating opinion. The opposite of it is false by (dominant) opinion."
- (c) "That, in which definite choice has been given to adopt any of the two (or more) alternative sides of the difference."
- (d) "That, in which the above choice (i.e., between alternatives) is given by the dominating opinion."

Shah Wali Allah further points out that, Allah called upon us to obey Him by acting upon that, to which our *ijtihad* may guide us.<sup>82</sup>

Therefore, *ijtihad* in itself is an act of pious obedience and is meritorious, irrespective of whether it hits the target or unwittingly fails to do so.

Answering to a question of those who believe in the possibility of only one right verdict in each given case, he says, "It is said that if the verdict is fixed, then he whose position is contrary to it, does not judge according to what Allah has revealed, and therefore, he is a transgressor; for, Allah, the Exalted says, 'Who judges not in accordance with what Allah has revealed, they are the transgressors'." We say that, he (who erred) pronounced judgments in accordance with what he thought (was right) even though his judgment missed (the intention of) what Allah has revealed<sup>83</sup>. Thus, he partially agrees with al-Baydawi and holds that basically *ijtihad* is the sum-total of search for arguments, which precedes the verdict. Therefore, the merit of the search cannot be nullified by the merit of the verdict though his verdict cannot be ratified; because of the defect which became evident later on.<sup>83</sup>

An examination of the above four-fold classification reveals that there can be two categories of judgment through *ijtihad*, e.g. (i) the truth of which is decisively determined by the express evidence of the Qur'an or else by the evidence of valid *ijma'* and (ii) the truth of which is determined by the dominating opinion (*zann al-ghalib*). The first case has been partially considered above, (type a). The perspective of the type "c" is clear in so far as it lies within the given frame of reference, such as, the seven variant reading of the Qur'an which are equally permitted. With regard to the second category of judgment, our author thinks that, the choice ought to rest ultimately on the good sense (*taharra*) and satisfaction of heart (*sakun al-qalb*) of the person who is to practise it (*al-mamur*).<sup>84</sup>

In this respect, he detests the tendency of sweeping generalisation of the jurists and their habit of overlooking the common sense. He says, "Supposing you see a stone and are sure of that it is a stone, and then a contentious man comes and announces the general principle that, a thing is recognised by its colour and its shape and appearance, etc. and so (tries to) pull down your conviction by means of this general principle."

The poor man (i.e., the contender) does not know that (your) conviction attained in this particular case, is greater (in value) than the pursuit of (his) generalities! Beware! Do not let such people beguile you by their argument; for, the difference in such matters is to be resolved by taking recourse to the merit of the thing itself and the satisfaction of heart (*sakun al-qalb*) by looking into contexts (of the matters). And the Prophet has pointed out on different occasion that, religious impositions (laws) are determined by the choice of good sense (*taharra*). On one occasion he said, "The 'Id al-Fitr' (i.e., the day of celebration at the completion of the fasting month) is on the day when you cease to fast and the 'Id of Sacrifice' is on the day when you perform sacrifice. <sup>85</sup>"

"In short", he concludes, "whomsoever looks carefully into different aspects of the Prophetic tradition, will recognise that, in the matter of detailing, the Prophet has referred men to their own good sense whereby they bring congruity among things. <sup>86</sup>"

As in Shah Wali Allah's view *ijtihad* in itself is a meritorious act <sup>87</sup>, the *mujtahid* can be excused for his error, if the intention of his *ijtihad* was good though his judgment cannot be accepted. For, by falling into error, he becomes *mukhti* (i.e. one who blunders), and not a *mubtil* (i.e., falsifier of the truth). His case, therefore, is not opposed to the truth (*haqq*), and for the same reason, he cannot be regarded as "transgressor". <sup>87</sup> For instance, if a Prophetic tradition is found which contradicts his judgment, his judgment is certainly wrong. But, "the in such a matter," he says, "will sometimes be excused on grounds of his ignorance of this sound tradition of the Prophet, until that tradition reaches him...". "And if the *ijtihad* is exercised for the ascertainment of an event, which happened, but the state of which became dubious, - like in the question whether Mr. A is dead or alive? Unquestionably, the truth in such a case will be one of the two alternatives. But the *mujtahid* (making a mistake in such a case) will sometimes be excused (for the error) in his *ijtihad*. <sup>88</sup>"

Shah Wali Allah then sums up his conclusions as follows:

- (a) "In the majority of cases of the truth lies somewhere between the two extremities of views."
- (b) "In matters of religion there is roominess (and not narrowness)."

- (c) “Being unreasonably stubborn and determined to reject the opponent’s point of view is ridiculous.”
- (d) “Such construction of definition which aims at bringing concept closer to understanding of every knower of language, is helpful to the causes of knowledge. But, if it is complicated and attempts to discriminate between involved matters by means of innovated premises, it will soon lead to an unworthy and innovated system of *shari’ah*.”
- (e) “The right opinion is that which is pronounced by ‘Iss al-Din ‘Abd al-Salam, who says, ‘He attains the goal who stands firm on what is agreed upon by scholars and abstains from what they held unanimously to be wrong and keeps away from what they unanimously ruled as incorrect.’”

Thus, Shah Wali Allah has attempted to create newer scope for *ijtihad* by revising and redefining the rules and conditions that were attached to its exercise by the earlier scholars, and by relaxing the stiffness of the rules in the light of the Qur’an and the *Sunnah* wherever he thought it is necessary in order to make them attainable to the Muslims of our times.

### The Scope of Taqlid

In the tenor of the above discussion, one may naturally ask as to where the ignorant masses, who form the bulk of the people, stand in Shah Wali Allah’s scheme, who apparently do not come under the classification of *mujtahids*?

Shah Wali Allah gets over this problem by classifying the people in general into four grades in respect of their intellectual attainment; and the fourth grade, according to him, consists of “the blind imitators (*muqallid al-sarf*) who ask for legal opinion (*fatwa*) from the scholars ...and act accordingly”.<sup>89</sup> The problem of *taqlid* arises from the inability of those people to form their own opinion in religious matters by means of intellectual exertion or *ijtihad*, as detailed in the previous sections. For this reason Shah Wali Allah recognises in *Iqd al-Jid* the necessity, on the part of these people, to adhere to the opinions of *mujtahids*, which he was almost unwilling to do in *Hujjat Allah-al-Balighah*.

Shah Wali Allah, however, distinguishes between two categories of *taqlid*, and maintains that, one category is obligatory on this fourth grade of people, and the other is prohibited (*haram*). A relevant passage from *'Iqd al-Jid* is translated below, in which he sets his point of view in a clear perspective. He says:

“Adherence (*taqlid*) to the *mujtahid* may be of two categories, one is obligatory and the other is prohibited. (a) The former is to follow (his opinion) on account of its being evidenced by the Prophetic tradition, that is to say, a person who is ignorant of the Qur’an and the Sunnah and incapable of investigating and eliciting judgment, ought to consult a jurist about the rule of law laid down by the Prophet regarding such and such a case (which he actually faces), and must follow his legal opinion (*fatwa*); all the same whether the *fatwa* was directly deduced from an unequivocal rule of law elicited indirectly from such a rule or else based on an analogy to a similar precedent, because, all these are directly or indirectly referred to the tradition of the Prophet.”<sup>90</sup>

Shah Wali Allah, however, refers, at once, to the definition of *taqlid* as stated above, and points out that the most important point in the permissibility of *taqlid* is the assumption that, the opinion of the *mujtahid* (which the *muqallid* is going to follow) must necessarily be in accordance with the Prophetic tradition .<sup>91</sup> Here the problem comes to a head, for who is to check as to whether or not his opinion is in conformity with the tradition of the Prophet?

Shah Wali Allah unhesitatingly says, “the *muqallid* should always look for the (relevant) Prophetic tradition in so far as it lies within his power, and if any tradition of the Prophet becomes manifest (to him) contradicting the opinion (of the *mujtahid*), he must throw away the opinion and take to the following of the Prophetic tradition.”<sup>92</sup> “The permissibility of this (category of *taqlid*)” he says, “has been agreed upon by the (*Muslim*) community, generation after generation.”

(b) The latter category of *taqlid*, which is prohibited, is described by him as follows:

“It is to fancy about a jurist whose opinion the *muqallid* follows that, he has reached the highest peak of learning; so that, it is



impossible for him to make a mistake. So much so that, even if an unequivocal and sound tradition of the Prophet reaches the *muqallid* which contradicts the opinion of the jurist, he does not leave aside the opinion (in favour of the Hadith)".<sup>94</sup>

According to Shah Wali Allah, such fanatic attachment to a *mujtahid* or to a school of law is forbidden in Islam. He says, "this is a corrupt belief and a useless opinion, and there is no support for it, rational or traditional."<sup>95</sup>

Thus, it is clear that Shah Wali Allah is thinking of those *muqallids* who either have some proficiency in religious sciences or at least some understanding about religious matters, though he has described them as "blind imitators" (*muqallid al-sarf*), in the definition. In so far as, the *muqallid* of the above description goes, he is apparently unwilling to allow such a person to resign totally to *taqlid*, and has not, therefore, departed from his earlier stand point in *Hajjat Allah-al-Balighah*, where he ascribed a progressive and dynamic role to human personality. Going ahead in his discussion, he hits upon the multitude of blind imitators, whom he invariably refers to as '*ami* (unlettered); but, even so, he advocates that, they should be permitted to seek *fatwa* from different *muftis* on the same issue and be allowed to choose the one which satisfies their hearts' content.

Shah Wali Allah proceeds next to examine different views advanced by earlier scholars on the permissibility of *taqlid*. He points out that according to Ibn Hazm *taqlid* of anybody except that of the Prophet, is forbidden (*haram*). Imam Abu Yusuf, on the other hand, maintains that *taqlid* is obligatory (*wajib*) on the ignorant ('*ami*). There is, however, a third group of scholars who follow the golden mean, and who, in Shah Wali Allah's view, hold fast to the practice of the Companions of the Prophet. In their opinion, the '*ami* (ignorant) belongs to no particular school. His duty is to follow the *fatwa* of the *mufti*, whose opinion he seeks. His school is, therefore, that to which his *mufti* belongs"<sup>96</sup>. After a long discussion, Shah Wali Allah accepts this last view and pleads that the '*ami* should be permitted to seek legal opinion (*fatwa*) from any *mufti* he finds or likes, and follow it accordingly without prejudice as to which school

the *mufti* or the '*ami* belongs. This, he thinks, is the most appropriate, in view of the instruction of the Qur'an: "So ask the people of learning if you do not know"<sup>97</sup>.

But, does the '*ami* have to follow the *fatwa* of any *mufti*, blindly? Shah Wali Allah's answer is definitely in the negative. He points out that, we have been invited to accept the mission of the Prophet through investigation and understanding, and not through imitation<sup>98</sup>. This principle equally applies to the learned and the ignorant, in accordance with their respective capacity and intellectual attainment. He, therefore, refers the matter again to the principle of good sense (*taharra*) and the satisfaction of heart (*sakun al-qalb*) of the person who is to practise a *fatwa*. Shah Wali Allah goes even to the extent of permitting an '*ami* to go on consulting different *muftis* on one particular issue until his heart is fully satisfied with the opinion. Replying to the objection of Ibn Salah and others, who held that, it is not permissible for an '*ami* to follow anybody's opinion except that of any one of the four recognised Imams, i.e., Abu Hanifah, Malik, Shafi'i or Ahmad Ibn Hanbal, and that, a layman must follow the *muftis* of only one school, for if he is allowed to follow different *muftis* belonging to different schools, he is likely to take much liberty and follow the lightest prescriptions of different jurists. Shah Wali Allah says, "I do not know what rational or traditional argument can there be to prevent a person from following the lightest prescriptions of the mujtahids as the Prophet himself liked to prescribe light rules to his followers."<sup>99</sup> Not only that, while defining the relation between the *mujtahid* and *muqallid*, he says, "nor should they follow (*yuqallidu*) a single scholar ('*alim*) in all that he says whether or not their minds are satisfied (*sakun al-qalb*) by his argument"<sup>100</sup>. Thus, the trend of Shah Wali Allah's thought towards *ghayr muqallideen*, which we have seen earlier in *Hujjat Allah al-Balighah*, became more and more crystallised as the time proceeded.

We have pointed out in the opening section that the first step of the principle of *tadbiq* (integration) as enunciated by our thinker, was purported to creating elasticity and cohesiveness among the established schools, working on the basis of, or in conformity to, the universal moral principle of *maslahah* (salutary purposiveness).

Shah Wali Allah's principle of *ijtihad* as a method as well as the freedom of choice allowed the ignorant masses ('*ami*) considerable discretion even in the field of *taqlid*, cannot be fully understood in this context, i.e., as a means to achieve that end. The relaxation of the stiffness in the rules of *ijtihad* and *taqlid* was, therefore, a logical consequence of the first principle of his thought, i.e., *tadbiq* within the framework of *maslahah*.

The real significance of Shah Wali Allah's philosophy of human life and society, which consists of the final step of *tadbiq* (i.e. total integration of the values of Islam and its materialisation in the society), has not yet been fully appreciated by the posterity. Although the integrative spirit of his thought, which not only leaves ample scope for, but also naturally tends to, accommodating newer values, foreign or indigenous, into the structure of Islam on the basis of *maslahah*, - appears to have reflected in Iqbal's philosophy of amelioration, yet his philosophy of *maslahah* as such, remains fully to be analysed.

In the context of the Islamic revivalism of the eighteenth century, it is interesting to notice that, in spite of the difference of Shah Wali Allah with Muhammad ibn al-Wahhab in the basic spirit and intellectual orientation (as we have seen above), the former comes to almost identical conclusion with the latter on the point of *taqlid*. For instance, in a pamphlet on the principle of Wahhabism, 'Abd Allah, son of Muhammad ibn 'Abd al-Wahhab says, "We follow Imam Ahmad ibn Hanbal in matters of details, but we do not claim to exercise our reason in all matters of religion, and none of our faith demands such a position save that we follow our judgment where a point is clearly demonstrated to us in either the Qur'an or the *Sunnah*, still in force" <sup>102</sup> (i.e. not abrogated).

### Conclusion

Thus, these two Muslim reformers of the eighteenth century, having replenished their spirit from the holy cities of Makkah and Madinah, inaugurated an era of religion revivalism and reformation in the world of Islam, which prepared the ground for the trend of rethinking of the Islamic past that became the dominant feature of Muslim thought in the nineteenth and the twentieth centuries. One

great defect from which both these early reform movements suffers, however, lies in the reluctance of their enunciators to define the boundaries of *ijma'*. We have seen above that, the development of the principles of *ijma'* in the early period of Islam had drastically limited the scope of *ijtihad*. Consequently, any step to revitalise the principle of *ijtihad* and to broaden its scope, strikes heavily against the solid rock of *ijma'*, formed by countless generation of Muslims in the past, and which has virtually assumed the position of its overpowering counterpart.

In spite of his almost uncompromising insistence on reviving the principle of *ijtihad*, Shah Wali Allah has accepted the validity of *ijma'* in the totality. Thus, although by rescuing the principle of *ijtihad* from its scholastic fetters, he has effected a good deal of elasticity and roominess in the traditional structure of Islam, as he himself claimed; yet, he left the definition of its relation to *ijma'* untouched. Muhammad ibn Abd al-Wahhab, on the other hand, tried to resolve the conflict between *ijtihad* and *ijma'* by avoiding to face the problem as far as practicable. Thus, he and his followers accept the *ijma'* of the later generations though not unequivocally. For instance, as we have just quoted above, they recognised the *taqlid* of the four Imams (without defining any limit whatsoever), the validity of which is based on the *ijma'* of the community formed at a much latter date than the era of the first three generations. Probably, the hesitation or unawareness of these two early reformers of the pre-modern times in determining the exact relations between *ijtihad* and *ijma'* and in defining the two terms clearly for the posterity was mainly responsible for the partial failures of their movements to attain the ultimate object set forth by them, namely the total regeneration of Islam.

So that, their present day followers are caught halfway between pastism and futurism and in spite of all the enthusiasms, they stand much short of synthesizing the older values with newer ones. In order to broaden the scope of *ijtihad*, the first and the foremost requirement, therefore, appears to be definition of relation between *ijtihad* and *ijma'*, i.e., as to what extent *ijtihad*, (or at least an *ijma'* of our times, formed through a definite method of *ijtihad*), can replace or modify the *ijma'* of the past generations.

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26. Fazlur Rahman, "The Thinker of Crisis- Shah Wali Allah." in *Pakistan Quarterly*, Karachi, Summer 1956, p. 44.
27. *Ibid.*, pp. 44-45.
28. *Hujjat* pp. 66 ff (*irtifaqat*), and 187 ff. (*masalih*), for social analysis; and Vol. II, p. 212 ff (*muqaddamah*) and Shah Wali Allah, *Hamm'at* (in Persian), translated into Urdu by Mohammad Sarwar, *Tasawwuf ki Haqiqat ovr us Ka falsafah-i-tarikh*, Lahore. 1946. pp. 162-229, for psychological analysis.
29. *Pakistan Quarterly. op. cit.*, p. 44.
30. Shah Wali Allah, *Iqd al-Jid*, translated partially by Dr. M. Da'ud Rahbar in *The Muslim World*, Hartford Seminary, Connection, U.S.A. Vol. XIV, No. 4, pp. 346-58.
31. *Pakistan Quarterly*, p. 46.
32. *Vib infra*.
33. *Hujjat*, p. 66 ff. (*irtifaqat*).
34. See, *Pakistan Quarterly*, p. 45 ff.
35. *Vide supra*.
36. See *Hujjat*. Vol. I, p. 24 ff, (*mala'al-a'la*).
37. Shah Wali Allah, *Insaf fi Bayan-i-Sabab al-'Ikhtlaf*, p. 86, quoted by Dr. Hasan al-Ma'sumi: "Shah Waliyullah...." in *Islamic Culture*, Hyderabad, Oct. 1947, pp. 341-43.
38. Shah Wali Allah, *Musaffa* (Commentary on Mu'atta'), p. 12, quoted by M.S. Hasan al-Ma'sumi: "Shah Waliyullah....." in *Islamic Culture. op. cit.*, p. 350
39. *Vide infra*.
40. *Hujjat*, Vol. I, p. 321.
41. See *Hujjat* (the whole work is devoted to this subject), especially Vol. I, pp. 19-28 (Bab al-Ibda al-Khalq); and *Pakistan Quarterly*, p. 45 ff.
42. See *Hujjat*, Vol. I, p. 157 ff. (Haqiqat al-Nabuwat), and p. 305.
43. *Ibid.*, p. 276 ff. (Tatimmak).
44. See *Hujjat*, p. 284 ff. (Asbab al-Ikhtilaf madhahib-al-Fuqaha).
45. See *Iqbal, op. cit.*, p. 177.
46. See *Hujjat*, pp. 289-291.
47. *Hujjat*, p. 301.
48. *Iqbal, op. cit.*, p. 164.
49. *Hujjat*, pp. 301-302 (Bab Hikayat al-Hal al-Nas).
50. *Ibid.*, p. 303.

51. *Ibid.*, p. 304.
52. Qur'an 7:3.
53. Qur'an 4:59.
54. *Hujjat*, p. 305.
55. *Ibid.*, p. 304.
56. *Ibid.*, p. 105.
57. *Ibid.*, p. 308.
58. *Ibid.*
59. *Ibid.*, p. 306 ff.
60. *Ibid.*, p. 312.
61. *Ibid.*
62. *Vide Infra.*
63. Shah Wali Allah, '*Iqd al-Jid*', Mujtaba'i Press A.H. 1344 (hereafter referred to as '*Iqd al-Jid*'), see Preface. In recent times a Ph. D. thesis was developed on the theme of *Iqd al-Jid* by Dr. Muhammad Atahar Ali, presently Associate Professor of Islamic History and Culture, Chittagong University under our guidance, which is published by BIIT (Bangladesh Institute of Islamic Thought) Dhaka, Bangladesh, 2001 C.E.
64. '*Iqd al-Jid*', pp. 6-7. See also a partial translation of the work by M. Da'ud Rahbar in *Muslim World*, Connection, Hartford Seminary, Vol. XIV, No.-4, Oct. 1955, pp. 346-58 and another complete English translation in Prof. Dr. Atahar Ali's Thesis referred to above.
65. *Vide supra.* See also *Pakistan Quarterly*, p. 46 ff for Shah Wali Allah's conception of man and life. For Iqbal's see Iqbal, *op. cit.*, p. 95 ff.
66. Iqbal, *op. cit.*, p. 178.
67. It is interesting to note that according to Shah Wali Allah, there are not more than five verses in the Qur'an, which is abrogated (c.f. *Fawz al-Kabir fi Usul al-Tafsir*, Lahore, Chap. II conclusion).
68. '*Iqd al-Jid*', pp. 7-9.
69. '*Iqd al-Jid*', pp. 7-9.
70. *Ibid.*
71. Shah Wali Allah, *Fawz al-Kabir fi Usul al-Tafsir*, p. 15.
72. *Ibid.*
73. '*Iqd al-Jid*', pp. 7-9.
74. '*Iqd al-Jid*', pp. 7-9.
75. '*Iqd al-Jid*', p. 10 ff.
76. *Ibid.* p. 11.

77. *Ibid.*, p. 11.
78. *'Iqd al-Jid*, p. 15 ff.
79. *Ibid.*
80. *Ibid.*
81. *'Iqd al-Jid*, the translation is Dr. Rahbar's (see *Muslim World*, *op. cit.*)
82. *Ibid.*
83. *Ibid.*
84. *Hujjat*, Vol. I, p. 166.
85. See *'Iqd al-Jid*, Chap. II.
86. *Ibid.* (the translation is Dr. Rahbar's, see *Muslim World*, *op. cit.*)
87. Vide *Hujjat*, Vol. I, p. 166.
88. *'Iqd al-Jid*, p. 69 ff.
89. Vide *Hujjat*, Vol. I, p. 166.
90. *'Iqd al-Jid*, p. 69 ff.
91. *'Iqd al-Jid*, p. 69 ff.
92. *Ibid.*
93. *Ibid.*
94. *Ibid.*
95. *Ibid.*
96. *'Iqd al-Jid*, pp. 54, 55-56 and 76.
97. *Ibid.*, pp. 32 and 76.
98. Shah Wali Allah, *Maqalat al-Wadiyah fi'l-Wasiyat wa'l-Nasihah*, p. 264.
99. *'Iqd al-Jid*, p. 93 (the closing sentence).
100. *Ibid.*, p. 44.
101. Shah Wali Allah, *Maqalat al-Wadiyah fi'l-Wasiyat wa'l-Nasihah*, p. 257.
102. *History and Doctrines of the Wahhabis*, *op. cit.*, p. 68 ff.



## CHAPTER- 4

## Tariqah-i-Muhammadiyah Movement: An Analytical Study

*Tariqah-i-Muhammadiyah* movement was launched by Sayyid Ahmad Shahid Brelavi in C.E. 1818 from Delhi with the blessings of Shah 'Abd al-'Aziz Muhaddith Dehlavi. Taking its start as a campaign for religious reform, it quickly assumed the form of a socio-political movement and after a short while, flared up into a *jihad* movement against the anti-Muslim aggressive Sikh regime of the Panjab. Indeed it became most popular in this militant phase and was popularly called *jihad* movement or *Tahrik-i-Mujahidin*. The Indo-British administrators and European writers designated it Indian Wahhabism or Wahabi fanaticism, most probably, owing to their suspicion of its political aspirations on the one hand and due to its resemblance with the so-called Wahhabism<sup>1</sup> of Arabia on the other. Many conservative '*Ulama*' and *Pirs* who detested its uncompromising puritanism and radical reform ideas also termed it *Wahhabiyat* or *Wahhabiyah* by way of reproach. Sayyid Ahmad Shahid himself however called his movement *Tariqah-i-Muhammadiyah*. But the propriety of this term was questioned as early as C.E. 1829 by an opponent, Mir Muhammad 'Ali of Madras, who asserted that Sayyid Ahmad had no right to designate his own *Tariqah* as "the *Tariqah* of Muhammad".<sup>2</sup> This controversy makes it clear that originally the movement was indeed known as *Tariqah-i-Muhammadiyah*.

A close examination reveals at least four historical strands, which made up this movement. In the first place, Sayyid Ahmad Shahid was a disciple of Shah Abd al-Aziz who initiated him into the popular mystic orders of *Qadiriyyah*, *Chishtiyah*, *Suhrawardiyah* and *Nakshbandiyah* as well as into the *Mujaddidiyyah Tariqah* or reformed branch of the last one founded by the great *Sufi* reformer Shaykh Ahmad Sarhindi<sup>3</sup>. In addition, Sayyid Ahmad himself had introduced a further reformed mystic order which he called *Tariqah-i-Muhammadiyah*.<sup>4</sup> This *Tariqah*, in fact, was the logical

culmination of the spirit of reform introduced into Indo-Muslim mysticism two centuries earlier by Shaykh Ahmad Sarhindi. Shaykh Ahmad's *Tariqah-i-Mujaddidiyah* aimed at guiding the steps of mysticism back to *Shari'ah* and Sayyid Ahmad's *Tariqah-i-Muhammadiyah* stood for nothing less than taming the *leviathan* of Sufism with the loop of *Shariah*".<sup>5</sup>

Shah Ismail Shahid who became a co-sponsor of *Tariqah-i-Muhammadiyah* movement, wrote in his *'Abaqat*: "those people [who have over-stepped the limits of *Shari'ah* in their mystic path] have themselves untied the loop of *Shari'ah* from their necks, so they cannot be regarded as *Ahl al-Sunnah* by any means though some of them claim to be so. Rather, the *Ahl al-Sunnah*, in reality are the Companions [of the Prophet] and those who followed them".<sup>6</sup> Moreover, while Sayyid Ahmad was undergoing training in mysticism under the guidance of Shah Abd al-Aziz and had reached the stage of *Tasawwur-i-Shaykh* or *Shughl-i-Barzakh* which is the highest object of love, he entreated Shah Abd al-Aziz to absolve him of this idolatrous performance and got exemption from it<sup>7</sup>. It can thus be called, in the terminology of Dr. Fazlur Rahman, a type of neo-Sufism *par excellence*<sup>8</sup> which was indeed, a concomitant of the Islamic revivalism of the 18th and 19th centuries A.C. and on account of its uncompromising stance, it also became suspect with many conservative *Ulama* and *Pirs* who regarded it as a veiled attempt to sabotage Sufism altogether.

In fact, *Tariqah-i-Muhammadiyah* was not merely a mystic order but a complete way of life, Sayyid Ahmad was often heard to say that *Tariqah-i-Muhammadiyah* was "the path of Muhammad which required its votaries to do every thing they could for the sake of the pleasure of Allah alone, whether staying at home or travelling on the road, sitting or walking, sleeping or keeping awake, eating or drinking, one ought to aim at obeying the command of Allah and winning His pleasure, one ought to maintain himself and his family with lawful earning, perform his prayers, keep the fasting, go for the pilgrimage to Makkah and so on and so forth."<sup>9</sup>

Secondly and thirdly, *Tariqah-i-Muhammadiyah* proved a concourse of two somewhat analogous religious revivalist trends, both arising

from the reformist tradition of Shah Wali Allah Muhaddith Dehlavi and his son and successor Shah 'Abd al-'Aziz. One of the two trends was carried on by Shah Wali Allah's grandson Shah Ismail,<sup>10</sup> in collaboration with Mawlana 'Abd al-Hayy Phulti,<sup>11</sup> which emphasized the uncompromising monotheism of Islam, revival of the *Sunnah* or pristine Prophetic tradition, and the principle of preferring *Hadith* or Prophetic tradition to the prescriptions of *Fiqh* or schools of Law. It further advocated the revival of *Ijtihad* or fresh systematic thinking for deciding all problems facing the Muslim community, opposed *Taqlid* or blind imitation of Imams, and called for purging Muslim society of *Shirk* or polytheistic accretions and *Bid'at* or sinful innovation<sup>12</sup>. There is reason to believe that Shah Isma'il had begun preaching these reformist ideals at the Jami Masjid of Delhi as early as C.E. 1810.<sup>13</sup> These ideals later crystallized in his *Taqwiyat-ul-Iman*<sup>14</sup> whose close resemblance to Shah Wali Allah's *Tuhfat al-Muwahhidin*, coupled with its radicalism and vehemence in denouncing *Shirk* and *Bid'at* and, at the same time, the absence of warlike ideas of Sayyid Ahmad in it,<sup>15</sup> make it evident that the ideas expressed in it were Isma'il's own. According to one report, on the completion of this work, Isma'il submitted it to a gathering of 'Ulama' including Sayyid Ahmad and 'Abd al-Hayy for approval<sup>16</sup> which lends support to our contention.

The above standpoint was fully shared by Mawlana 'Abd al-Hayy Phulti with Shah Isma'il and both of them conscientiously maintained it to the end of their lives. Interrogated by a group of 'Ulama' in C.E. 1824, as to whether they were followers of *Hanafi* school or not, 'Abd al-Hayy replied on behalf of both: "I am in the fold of *Hanafi* school like Tahawi and Karkhi in point of fact which is proved by a reliable Prophetic tradition (*Hadith*) and do not act blindly like the nightly wood-gatherers (who cannot distinguish the dry from the raw).<sup>17</sup>

It is interesting to note further that the above reformist ideas of Shah Ismail corresponded in toto to the classical creed of *Ahl-i-Hadith*, which were in fact resuscitated from the Quran and by Shah Wali Allah in his *Hujjat Allah al-Balighat*.<sup>18</sup> This trend was, thus, a theoretical elaboration or further development of the puritanical aspects of Shah Wali Allah's reformist tradition, which was

separated by Shah Ismail from the concourse in order to make it emerge independently as the *Ahl-i-Hadith* movement in Indo-Pak Bangladesh subcontinent.<sup>19</sup>

The other trend of the concourse was developed by Sayyid Ahmad Shahid<sup>20</sup> himself, partly by taking advantage of his close association with Shah 'Abd al-Aziz son of Shah Wali Allah, and partly by exercising his own inborn genius for mystic perception. By exerting his *intuitive* faculty to the fullest extent under the guidance of Shah Abd al-Aziz and through hard striving and good faith, he also arrived at a position similar to that of Ismail and Abd al Hayy as expressed in a brief epistle, which was widely circulated among his disciples. Sayyid Ahmad says: "The main purpose of becoming a disciple of a mystic guide is to win the pleasure of God and the pleasure of God cannot be had but by following the *Shari'ah* of Prophet Muhammad (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). And the *Shariah* of Prophet Muhammad (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) is based on two things: first - abstention from polytheism (*shirk*) and second - abstention from sinful innovations (*bid'at*)".

The explanation of the 'abstention from polytheism' is that, any one whether he be angel, a jinnee, mystic guide, disciple, teacher, student, prophet or saint, must not be looked upon as having the power to remove your difficulties and woes or as able to bestow benefit (upon you). Rather, all of them must be considered weak and impotent like yourself before the power and knowledge of Allah. And one should never seek to satisfy one's wants by votive offerings to the prophets, saints, and men of piety or angels. Of course, one may believe in their acceptability [or nearness] to Almighty Allah. But the advantage that accrues therefrom in the path of winning the pleasure of Allah, they [or their example] might be humbly followed. They must be regarded as guides in the path of faith, but not as able to control the calamities of the time and the forces of nature, known and unknown. To do this is sheer infidelity and polytheism.

"As regards 'abstention from sinful innovations', it means that in all types of worship and in all dealings pertaining to the worldly affairs as well as that of the Hereafter, one ought to hold on to the path of

Muhammad, the seal of all prophets (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) with all the power and courage one has in one's command. And the (bad and superstitious) customs and usages invented by the people after the Prophetic age, such as those of merry-making, wailing, decorating graves and erecting tombs over them, extravagant spending on 'Urs (or death anniversaries of Pirs), or preparing

*Ta ziyah* (or the effigy of Husayn's tomb at the time of *Muharram*) and the like, must not be practised. One ought to strive to the utmost to abolish them ; first, one ought to keep oneself away from them and then one should try to persuade one's fellow Muslims to do the same. Because, it is obligatory to obey the *Shari'ah*, as such to command the good and to resist the evil is also obligatory.

While around C.E. 1810, Shah Ismail waged a relentless war against superstitious beliefs and idolatrous practices of his co-religionists, Sayyid Ahmad tuned his gaze inwards to the depth of his own mind in mystic contemplation; then from 1810 C.E. onwards he laboured hard in the army of Amir Khan, and finally in 1818 C.E. they crossed each other's road at Delhi. But Ismail and Abd al-Hayy, though much more learned than Sayyid Ahmad in the theoretical sciences of religion, yet soon both became his disciples, which brought the two trends , one theoretical or academic (*ilmi*) and the other practical (*amali*) flow into a concourse that gave birth to the *Tariqah-i-Muhammadiyah* movement.

It may also be noted that Shah Ismail and Mawlana Abd al-Hayy were by all standards top ranking *Ulama* of the time and their conversion to Sayyid Ahmad 's discipleship captivated the popular imagination and was largely responsible for the meteoric popularity of the movement . *Al-Sirat-ul-Multaqin* is regarded as the most authentic exposition of *Tariqah-i-Muhammadiyah* , which was composed jointly by Ismail and Abd al-Hayy by way of elaborating the reformist ideas of Sayyid Ahmad Shahid as dictated to them. As such, it is an eloquent testimony to the high degree of integration between the two trends. In this work, Sayyid Ahmad explains the process of initiation or *bay' ati-i-tawbah* thus: "First of all, the seeker of this path (*rah-i-nabuwwat*) ought to attend to the prohibitions of the *Shari ah* relating to faith, action, morality,

instinct, desire and prayer. He must seek and find out (the rules) from the Qur'an and Prophetic tradition (*Hadith*). If he possesses knowledge of the Quran and *Hadith*, he must find them out himself; or else, he must enlighten himself by the opinions of the learned scholars of *Hadith*."

The forth strand, which soon became the dominant passion of Sayyid Ahmad Shahid and his followers, was religio-political in nature. The process of the growth and development of this trait is quite instructive. *Tariqah-i-Muhammadiyah* movement had taken its birth as a form of neo-Sufism aimed at bringing the Muslims back to the true path of Islam and purging Muslim society of un-Islamic customs and usages. In the beginning, Sayyid Ahmad and his followers remained absorbed in preaching, prayers and meditation in pursuance of the above goals. But during the second and third phases when Sayyid Ahmad was staying at Rai Bareilly, it underwent a series of developments. At first, Sayyid Ahmad embarked upon a programme of *Ihya-i-Sunnat* or revivification of prophetic tradition. Addressing a gathering on one occasion, he said: "It is not Islam to profess by word that I am a Muslim or to eat beef, practise circumcision or (even) to participate in the customs and ceremonies of the Muslims; but Islam is to carry out the commands of Allah with a sincere heart".

In this context he launched a mass campaign for the remarriage of widows which was regarded as sacrilegious by the Muslims of the subcontinent (with the exception of Bengal) due to the influence of Hinduism. Then he drew the attention of his followers to the Islamic injunctions for waging *jihad* and ordered them to pass the greater portion of their time in learning the tactics of war. Asked about the relevance of militant exercises to his avowedly *Sufi Tariqah* or mystic path, he explained: "the time for that task comes after this task has been accomplished".

Thus, the initial religio-moral action had attained the momentum of a political activism, which lies inherent in the pristine doctrine of Islam. An eminent Muslim scholar has recently pointed out that the revival of interest in *Hadith* and orthodox teachings of Islam is bound to accentuate the spirit of *jihad* and Islamic activism, not only because of the fact that, the doctrine of *jihad* lies permanently enshrined in both, but also on account of the fact that, the actual

example of the Prophet and the early community teaches a positive participation in the affairs of life as well as effecting changes in the existing state of affairs.

Under almost suffocating despondent social, political and religious circumstances of the Muslims obtaining at the time, the *elan* of this Islamic activism got directed into political channels and sought to create an ideal political state as a paradigm of the classical Islamic state of Madinah. Stray materials at our disposal also suggest that the growth of this political aspect of *Tariqah-i-Muhammadiyah* was partly encouraged by the general economic depression, which enveloped the Muslims of the subcontinent during the 18th and 19th centuries C.E.

The intents and purposes of *Tariqah-i-Muhammadiyah* movement being rooted in the reformist tradition of Shah Wali Allah and Shah Abd al Aziz, we may look further into that tradition to ascertain the precise relationship between the two. It may be recalled that as early as C.E. 1732 Shah Wali Allah dreamt a sombre dream at Makkah wherein he found himself as Director of the Epoch (Qaim-uz-Zaman) who reflected the mood of the Creator and through whom Allah's guidance descended on the destiny of the universe. The decadence of the Mughal empire in the Indo-Pak-Bangladesh subcontinent and the consequent threat of depredation of the centres of Muslim power by the Jat and Maratha hordes, had so much overwhelmed his mind that in that vision he saw many Muslim towns and cities, including Ajmer, fall into the hands of the marauding infidels and their acts of sacrilege incurred the wrath of Allah, which flashed into the countenance of Shah Wali Allah and through him it flashed into the faces of the mammoth gathering in the midst of which he was standing:

‘What is the command of Allah at this moment?’

They inquired of him.

"Destroy all order", <sup>32</sup> he replied.

"Till when?" They cried.

Until no wrath is visible in my face," he cried back.

They rushed at one another's throat and there ensued a mutual fight. Shah Wali Allah then, followed by the mob, which included Turks,

Uzbeks and Arabs, sallied forth in a holy war<sup>33</sup> against the infidels, overtook and vanquished them and liberated the country up to Ajmer.<sup>34</sup>

Although this was a fantasy, the spirit of revolution and *jihad* (the former directed towards the rank and file of the Muslims themselves and the latter against the enemies of the Muslim community), that is discernible therein, continued to be a strong undercurrent in his thought for the three more decades that he lived under extremely agonising circumstances which then obtained in Delhi. The misfortunes and calamities that overwhelmed the Mughal capital during this period (C.E. 1732-1762) had made life unbearable,<sup>35</sup> which according to Khaliq Ahmad Nizami, lacerated Shah Wali Allah's heart and seared his soul.<sup>36</sup> "The stars, twinkling in the darkness," he wrote in a couplet, "appear to me (like) the eyes of serpents and stings of scorpions."<sup>37</sup>

But in actuality, Shah Wali Allah found the Muslim society of this subcontinent incapable of waging *jihad*. Because, on the one hand, the seed of degeneration, decay and disintegration had gone so deep into the Mughal society that he suspected it to have been suffering from *Akilat*,<sup>38</sup> a disease that corrodes the bones; and on the other, the Delhi Badshahi, and for that reason, the powerful Nawabdoms and Ministerships which were the repository of actual power, were a far-cry from the "just and balanced society" based on *'adl* and *tawazun*, which, in his opinion, was demanded by Islam and which alone could provide a strong political structure capable of waging *jihad*.<sup>39</sup> He, therefore, endeavoured without rest to awaken the slumbering Muslims and to enthuse them to build up a "healthy society free from all moral abuses and economic distemper" in order to overcome the Jat and Maratha perils, which he not only dreamt of but was also able to sensibly visualize.<sup>40</sup>

In this context, being disgusted with the imitative habits (*taqlid*) of the *Ulama*, he asked them not to get lost in Greek sciences, and grammar and rhetoric; but to pay due attention to the Qur'an and *Sunnah*, which were the real base of religion.<sup>41</sup> Addressing the kings, he advised them to unsheathe their swords and not to put them back into the scabbard until Allah decided the affairs between the believers and the polytheists and until they had implemented the



laws of Islam.<sup>42</sup> He urged upon the Ministers to introduce economic reform and to check chaos and confusion with a view to ensuring peace and prosperity of the people.<sup>43</sup> Turning to the administrators (*Umara*), he reminded them that the power wielded by them "is meant for reforming the conditions of the territories put under their charge and not meant for gaining selfish ends or for rebelling against the Sultan."<sup>44</sup> He then goes on to say: "O, the administrators! Don't you fear Allah? You remain busy in fleeting objects of enjoyment and leave the people to devour one another! Drinking of wine goes on openly and you don't stop it! Dens and quarters are being set up for prostitution, drinking and gambling, and you feel no qualms of conscience! How is it that the criminal laws (*hudud*) were never implemented in the big cities (of this country) for the last six hundred years or more; whomsoever you found weak you exploited him and whomsoever you found strong you left him and his arrogance alone! Your minds remain engrossed in the thought of delicious food, delicate women, luxurious dress and palatial buildings! You never raise your hands towards Allah nor mention His name except in tell-tales as a mere word of your mouth, as if you intend to bring a great revolution (simply) by invoking His name!"<sup>45</sup>

Addressing the soldiers, he declared that Allah has brought them forth for *jihad* ; so that, they might raise the truth aloft and put polytheism and the polytheists down . "But you put aside the cause for which you were brought forth" and take to soldiery as a profession and as a means of amassing wealth. He advised them to immerse themselves in the spirit of *jihad*, to acquire Islamic values and Islamic habits and to become dedicated soldiers of Allah<sup>46</sup>. He asked the artisans to shun corruption, to be honest in their dealings with their fellow beings and to be dutiful towards Allah. Likewise, he advised the Muslims in general to reform their character, to keep up sexual morality, to cultivate fear of Allah and to follow the commands of Islam.<sup>47</sup>

But failing to rouse them sufficiently enough to the gravity of the situation even when the Marathas struck in full force and overran Delhi in August -September 1757,<sup>48</sup> Shah Wali Allah invited the Afghan king Ahmad Shah Abdali to come to the help of Indo-Pak

Muslims .<sup>49</sup> The Panjab was wrested earlier by the Sikh chief Jassa Singh from the hands of Ahmad Shah's son Taimur Shah in C.E. 1756-57.<sup>50</sup> But now having brought Najib-ud-Dawlah to his knees and placing Delhi in the friendly hands of Imad ud-Dawlah, the Maratha chiefs, Raghunath Rao and Malhar Rao marched to the Panjab and conquered it from the Sikhs up to Attack in April 1758; and thereafter expelling the Sikhs also from Lahore they made the wily chief Adina Beg Khan its governor by whose treacherous activities first the Sikhs and then the Marathas had greatly benefited. But on Adina Beg's sudden death a few months later in October 1758, a Maratha, Sabaji Sindhia, was appointed in his place<sup>51</sup> and the Panjab became a part of the Hindu *pad-padshahi* of the Marathas. It gave added reason to Ahmad Shah Abdali to march on India for the fifth time and to crush the Marathas in the third Battle of Panipat in 1761.

Some scholars view the Battle of Panipat as the fulfilment of Shah Wali Allah's dream at Makkah. But the victory won by Abdali at this battle, though crucial and historic, proved a shallow one in the long run. It resulted neither in the consolidation of his own power over India nor in the recuperation of the strength of the Mughals. Rather the long presence of his troops on the side of the rickety throne of Delhi caused serious disruption in the rank of the dissident and intriguing Mughal nobility at the semi-independent provinces, which precipitated the fall of Bengal into the hands of the East India Company<sup>52</sup> and helped the rise of British and Sikh powers in this subcontinent.<sup>53</sup>

The above trend of Shah Wali Allah's thought, which revolved round the idea of *jihad* conceived narrowly as a war against the infidels, represented only a speculative undercurrent in his mind, which was caused more by the instinct of survival than by ratiocination. In his reasoned and systematic thinking, he viewed *jihad* in the pristine Qur'anic sense as "exertion in the way of Allah" which according to him takes "divers forms" depending on changing circumstances. "The major and most significant part of it," he says, "is right guidance of the people (*hidayat al-nas*) in their inner and outer life," for the accomplishment of which Prophets had been sent. "And every *jihad* involves utmost endurance and fortitude

before Allah's help is expected."<sup>54</sup> Moreover, he believed in a theory of the "spirit of the age" which changes from era (*dawrah*) to era in accordance with the universal moral principle of "salutary purposiveness" (*maslahah*) and the demand of the age.<sup>55</sup> In this perspective, he further believed that the spirit of the era in which he was living did basically demand neither fighting (*harb*) nor cultivation of physical sciences, such as astrology, astronomy (*al-najum wa'l-hai'ah*) etc, nor even researches in the technology or engineering and architecture (*al muhindisah wal-mi- mariyah*) but a moral regeneration on the bedrock of the knowledge of realities (*asrar*) underlying the creation and development of the universe and mankind .<sup>56</sup> He therefore laid the utmost emphasis on the acquisition of true knowledge and revival of the spirit of inquiry or *ijtihad*<sup>57</sup> and he saw the right guidance which constitutes the means to the attainment of the *summum bonum* of human life poised in a healthy balance between the two poles of *jihād* and *ijtihad*, that is to say, between physical and intellectual exertion. In *Tafhimat-i-Ilahiyah*, he says that if he were to live at a time when circumstances demanded warfare for the reformation of the humanity, he would have done it with utmost care .<sup>58</sup>

This poise or equilibrium was scrupulously maintained by Shah Wali Allah and his son and successor Shah Abd al-Aziz even to the point of rupture. Under what precarious circumstances and mental agony Shah Abd al Aziz passed his latter life is depicted in his Arabic poetry:

"But I see the infidels masters of affluence  
 (Who) disrupted (the country) from Delhi to Kabul.  
 They have raised the evil- doers over the good soul among us;  
 And every evil person got the gut of a challenger."  
 ' May Allah turn upon the Sikhs and Marathas  
 With quick requital for their evil deeds.  
 In our behalf."

This country has become desolate and devoid of justice.  
 After this, is there any giver of refuge to the seekers?  
 And is there any just and Allah-fearing person  
 To come to their rescue?"<sup>59</sup>

The position of the Muslims east of Delhi had become equally precarious. Replying to a question as to whether a *Dar-ul-Islam* (abode of Islam) can change into *Dar-ul Harb* (abode of war) Shah Abd al-Aziz deemed it fit to make the following supplementary remarks: "And the ordinance and laws of *shari'ah* are not in force in this country (Hindustan); rather the Law of the English Government is in force; that, the running of the administration, settlement of the peasantry, collection of land revenues, imposition of custom duties, punishment of robbers and thieves, settlement of disputes etc. are carried on by the ruler of the infidels in accordance with their own laws. It matters little if they make no objection to holding (congregational) prayers of *Jum'ah* and *Ids* and to the prayer call and slaughtering of cows etc; because the government administration (deliberately) overlook things. But under the protection of their laws they also demolish mosques as they please. No traveller can enter this country without obtaining Passport and permission from these present rulers of this country. And for their own interest they do not object to the entry of travellers and merchants, but such important personages like Shuja-ul-Mulk and Velayeti Begum cannot enter this country without the permission of the English Government. Rather the control of the English Government extends from here (Delhi) to Calcutta."<sup>60</sup>

Thus, by the early decades of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the rotten fabric of the Mughal Empire had crumbled down throughout the Indo-Pak subcontinent under the weight of its own vices.<sup>61</sup> The course of events had made it impossible for the Muslims to recover their power by means of the usual internal revolution. The movement of *ijtihad* and moral regeneration launched by Shah Wali Allah fell on the deaf ears of a blind folded conservative society. No alternative was, therefore, left before the tiny groups of enthusiasts for reform that gathered around Sayyid Ahmad Shahid except to carry on war, if they wanted to rehabilitate the Muslim society on its original footing. Little wonder, therefore, that the final appearance of Sayyid Ahmad before Shah 'Abd al-Aziz in C.E. 1818 as a "soldier of Islam," was considered Providential. In a letter, Shah 'Abd al-Aziz (d. 1823 C.E.) commended Sayyid Ahmad to Munshi Na'im Khan as Godsend and as one of the blessed and chosen mediums through

whom the regeneration of mankind is to be effected by the Providence. ‘May Allah shower benefits on the Muslims through him!’ he prayed.<sup>62</sup>

The *Tariqah-i-Muhammadiyah*, which shaped itself into an Islamic revivalist movement emphasizing the need of (i) reviving the Prophetic tradition, (ii) socio-religious reform, (iii) *jihad* and (iv) *ijtihād*, was, therefore, a revolutionary outcome of the reformist tradition of Shah Wali Allah.

### References

1. In fact, the followers of Muhammad ibn ‘Abd al-Wahhab disliked the epithet ‘Wahhabi’ and called themselves ‘Muwahhidun’ or Unitarians and nowadays they call themselves ‘Salafi’.
2. See *History of the Fara’idi Movement in Bengal* by the present writer, Karachi, 1963 pp. XXXI-XLI, for a detailed discussion.
3. He lived from C.E. 1564 to 1624 and was popularly known a *Imam Rabbani Mujaddid-i-Alf-Thani*, i.e., the great reformer of the second millennium of Islam.
4. For a detailed discussion, see our *History of the Fara’idi Movement*, *op. cit.*, p. XXXVII.
5. See below.
6. Abu Yahya Imam Khan Nawshahrawi: *Tarajim-i-‘Ulama’-i-Hadith-i-Hind*, vol. I, p.105
7. Ghulam Rasul Mehr: *Sayyid Ahmad Shahid*, Lahore, 1652, part I, pp. 76-77.
8. Dr. Fazlur Rahman: *Islam*, Weedenfeld and Nicolson, 1966 , p.206.
9. Ghulam Rasul Mehr: *Sayyid Ahmad Shahid*, *op. cit*, part I , p. 130.
10. Shah Muhammad Isma‘il, son of Shah ‘Abd al-Ghani, son of Shah Wali Allah. He was born in C.E. 1718 and fell as a martyr at Balakot, in the modern district of Hazara in C.E. 1831 along with Sayyid Ahmad Shahid. See a *Bibliographical Introduction to Modern Islamic Development in India and Pakistan*, by the present writer, Asiatic society of Pakistan, Dacca, 1955, and p.50ff.
11. Mawlana ‘Abd al-Hayy Phulti was a student, disciple and son-in law of Shah ‘Abd al-Aziz, son of Shah Wali Allah. See Ghulam Rasul Mehr: *Jama‘at-i-Mujahiddin*, Lahore, 1955 , pp. 111-118.

12. The distinction made by some scholars between Shah Isma'il and Mawlana 'Abd al-Hayy claiming that the former maintained a negative attitude towards the idea of following any particular school or *madhhab* and the latter clung to the *Hanafi* school would prove untenable in view of the evidences produced below.
13. Mirza Hayrat Dehlawi: *Hayat-i-Tayyiba*, Lahore, 1940, p. 61 ff. Mirza Hayrat has greatly romanticised the achievements of Shah Isma'il. But we have other evidence to support the point as would be seen below.
14. For particulars about this work, see *A Bibliographical Introduction to Modern Islamic Development in India and Pakistan, op. cit.*, pp. 54-55.
15. *Ibid.*
16. Hafiz Aziz al-Din Muradabadi, *Akmal-ul-Bayan fi'Ta'id-i-Iman*, Lahore, 1965, p.10.
17. *Ibid.*, p. 13.
18. See also article of the present writer "Shah Wali Allah's Concept of Ijtihad," *Journal of the Pakistan Historical Society*, Karachi, vol. VII. part III. 1959, pp.165-94 reprinted in Chapter 3 above.
19. For an analysis of this process see our *History of the Fara'idi Movement, op. cit.*, pp. LII ff.
20. Sayyid Ahmad Shahid was born at Rai Bareilly in C.E. 1786 and fell a martyr at Balakot in C.E. 1831. See *A Bibliographical Introduction to Modern Islamic Development in India and Pakistan, op. cit.*, pp. LII. ff.
21. Hafiz 'Aziz al-Din Muradabadi: *Akmal-ul-Bayan, op. cit.*, pp. 842-45.
22. Ghulam Rasul Mehr: *Sayyid Ahmad Shahid, op. cit.*, Part I, pp. 82-113.
23. *Ibid.*, pp. 116-118.
24. *Ibid.*, p. 142.
25. *History of the Fara'idi Movement, op. cit.*, p. XLI.
26. From June 1819 to August 1821. See Ghulam Rasul Mehr: *Sayyid Ahmad Shahid, op. cit.*, Part I, pp. 127-32.
27. *Ibid.*, p. 143.
28. *Ibid.*, p. 146.
29. Widow remarriage never posed a problem among the Muslims of Bengal.
30. Ghulam Rasul Mehr: *Sayyid Ahmad Shahid, op. cit.*, Part I, p. 140.

31. Dr. Fazlur Rahman: *Islam*, op. cit., p. 211.
34. Shah Wali Allah: *Fuyuz al-Haramayn*, '44th *Mushahida*': see Urdu edition by Prof. Muhammad Sarwar, Lahore, 1947, pp. 297-99; and Arabic edition, p.89 quoted by Ghulam Husayn Jalbani: *Shah Wali Allah ki Ta'lim*, Hyderabad-Sind, 1963, p.110.
35. *Tarikh-i-Mashaykh-i-Chishti*, p.331, quoted by Khaliq Ahmad Nizami in *History of Freedom Movement*, Pakistan Historical Society, Karachi, 1957, Vol. I, p. 515.
36. *History of the Freedom Movement*, op. cit., p. 515.
37. *Ibid.*, ft. n. 4 for Arabic text.
38. *Ibid.*, pp. 526-27; see also p.520.
39. *Ibid.*, pp. 519-21.
40. *Ibid.*
41. Shah Wali Allah: *Tafhimat-i-Ilahiyah*, Vol. I, pp. 214-15.
42. *Ibid.*, pp. 215-16.
43. See Khaliq Ahmad Nizami in *History of the Freedom Movement*, op. cit., Vol. I, pp. 527-28. See also, *Shah Wali Allah Dihlvi ke Siyasi Maktubat*, ed. Khaliq Ahmad Nizami, Aligarh, 1950, pp. 58-89.
44. Shah Wali Allah: *Tafhimat-i-Ilahiyah*, Vol. I, p. 216.
45. *Ibid.*
46. *Ibid.*, pp. 216-17.
47. *Ibid.*, pp. 217-18.
48. Dr. R.C. Majumdar et al: *Advanced History of India*, p. 548.
49. Khaliq Ahmad Nizami ed.: *Shah Wali Allah Dihlvi ke Siyasi Maktubat*, Aligarh, 1950, pp. 45-58, Persian text, 97-114 Urdu translation.
50. Syed Muhammad Latif: *Lahore*, published in 1892, p. 78.
51. *Ibid.*, and Majumdar: *Advanced History of India*, op. cit., p. 548.
52. Dr. M. Mohar 'Ali, "The Background of the Battle of Plassey", *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Pakistan*, Vol. XI, No. 3, Dec. 1966, pp. 37-70. (Dhaka)
53. Majumdar: *Advanced History of India*, op. cit., p. 542.
54. Shah Wali Allah: *Tafhimat-i-Ilahiyah*, Vol. II, p. 103.
55. *Ibid.*, Vol. I, p. 101: see also the article of the present writer: "Shah Wali Allah's Concept of Ijtihad," *Journal of the Pakistan Historical Society*, Vol. VII, Part III, 1959, p. 165 ff. reprinted in Chapter III above.

56. See our article "Shah Wali Allah's Concept of Ijtihad," *op. cit.*, p. 165 ff.
57. See Shah Wali Allah's *Tafhimat-i-Ilahiyah*, Vol. I, p. 152; *Hujjat Allah al-Balighah*: the Muqaddamahs; and *'Iqd al-Jid* (the whole treatise is on this subject). For a detailed discussion, see our article: "Shah Wali Allah's Concept of Ijtihad," *op. cit.*, p. 165 ff. (Reproduced above)
58. *Tafhimat Ilahiyah*, Vol. I, p. 101.
59. Abu Yahya Imam Khan Nawshahrawi: *Tarajim-i-'Ulama'-i-Hadith-i-Hind*, p. 58.
60. *Fatawa-al-'Aziziyah* (Urdu translation), Hyderabad-Deccan, 1313 Hijri., pp. 51-55.
61. See *History of the Freedom Movement*, *op. cit.*, p. 575.
62. *Risalah-i-Jihad* (MS. Persian), collected by Islamic Research Institute, Islamabad, Pakistan, pp. 16-17.



## CHAPTER- 5

## Sayyid Ahmad Shahid's Campaign Against the Sikhs

Sayyid Ahmad Shahid, the founder of the *Tariqah-i-Muhammadiyah* movement, was born at Rai Bareilly in U.P. in India, in H.1201, C.E. 1785.<sup>1</sup> In his early boyhood he showed little attachment to the rigors of academic discipline; rather, he found more interest in games, sports and physical exertion.<sup>2</sup> Nevertheless, through conscious and repeated efforts in his youth, he succeeded in acquiring some amount of proficiency in Persian as well as Arabic languages under the guidance of Shah 'Abd al-Qadir, son of Shah Wali Allah Muhaddith Dehlavi.<sup>3</sup> "This was followed by training in mysticism which he received at the hands of Shah 'Abd al-Aziz Muhaddith Dehlavi, the eldest son of Shah Wali Allah, who initiated him into the mysteries of all the fourth popular *Sufi Tariqahs* of the time, namely, *Qadiriyyah*, *Chishtiyah*, *Suhrawardiyah*, and *Nakshbandiyah*. He later founded a new mystic order, which he called *Tariqah-i-Muhammadiyah* or the path of Muhammad in which he attempted to effect a combination of *Shari'at* and *Tariqat*.

After his education and training at Delhi, he returned to his native town, Rai Bareilly, about C.E. 1809 (H. 1222 -1223)<sup>5</sup> where he remained three and a half years. Then he joined the army of Amir Khan<sup>6</sup> and passed about six years in military service as the Imam, but parted company with him on the latter's acceptance of the Nawabship of Tonk under British suzerainty in December 1817.<sup>7</sup> From Tonk he proceeded to Delhi and arriving there in the middle of 1818, presented himself before Shah 'Abd al-Aziz, with whose blessings he soon started his *Tariqah-i-Muhammadiyah* movement.<sup>8</sup>

To begin with, it was a campaign for introducing religious reform in the Muslim society. Soon, however, it assumed a socio-political character and after a short while flared up into *Jihad* movement for liberating the Muslims from the tyranny of the Sikh ruler, Ranjit Singh of the Punjab.<sup>9</sup>

From November 1818 to May 1819, he toured different parts of U.P. and Delhi and people came out in surging waves to welcome him

and hundreds of thousands became his disciples.<sup>10</sup> Then returning to Delhi, he took leave of Shah 'Abd al-'Aziz and proceeded to his native town Rai Bareilly. He arrived there in June 1819 C.E. and made it the headquarters of his reform movements.<sup>11</sup> In August 1821, he went on a pilgrimage to Makkah accompanied by about 400 followers *via* Calcutta, visiting different places of Bihar and Bengal on the way."<sup>12</sup> Indeed, at Patna and Calcutta people flocked round him in such a vast number that the religious aspect of his reform movement may be said to have reached its zenith there.<sup>13</sup>

<sup>11v</sup>, in February 1822 C.E., the pilgrim party set out from *via* Bombay to Jiddah and having spent about one year in back through the same route and arrived at Calcutta in reached Rai Bareilly in April 1824 C.E. <sup>14</sup>

from *hajj*, he remained at Rai Bareilly for one year months before setting out once again on a *hijrat* or in January 1826 C.E.<sup>15</sup> It is said that even before going pilgrimage to Makkah, Sayyid Ahmad decided to migrate Hindustan, which was then under the occupation of the British, the independent Muslim land as a first step towards waging a holy war against the usurpers of Muslim territories.<sup>16</sup>

famous letter to the ruler of Bukhara, despatched in the of 1827 from the North-West Frontier, he says that he was so to see "the evil-natured Christians and bad-intentioned ts" usurping this subcontinent from end to end and to the humiliation of the Muslims, destruction of their political , suppression of the rules of the *Shari'ah* etc., that his heart filled with a longing for migration (*hijrat*) from Hindustan. int, however, he says that his attention was diverted and he a pilgrimage to Makkah; and he would not have returned tranquillity of mind and the blessedness of the holy places th and Madinah to this country but for the divine beckoning aim to wage *jihad* in order to eliminate infidelity and anarchy. "I have been commanded", he further asserts, "to raise aloft the Word of Allah, to revive the *Sunnah* (or tradition of the holy Prophet), and to eliminate the (power of) rebellious infidels". He then claims that with these objects in view, he bade farewell to his native land and took to the path of *hijrat*; and travelling through

Hind, Sind and Khurasan, preaching the true doctrines of religion and spreading the good tidings of *jihad* and also followed by a large number of sincere believers, he finally arrived at the lands of Yusufzai in the North-West Frontier of India and planted the flag of *jihad* therein.<sup>17</sup>

As noted above, his journey of *hijrat* began in January 1826 C.E. Leaving his family behind<sup>18</sup> and accompanied by about 500 or 600 patriots,<sup>19</sup> Sayyid Ahmad first proceeded to Gwalior and thence to Tonk where the party stayed for one month.<sup>20</sup> From there he moved through Ajmer, Pali, Suraha, Jodhpur and Khathiawar to independent Muslim principalities of Sind.<sup>21</sup> Most uneasy, Sayyid's party came under the suspicion of the Mirs of Mirpur, but was well received at Hyderabad, Shikarpur, the party again faced hostilities of Princes but later reconciliation was effected.<sup>22</sup> In the terrible heat of the summer, the party marched through Khangarth, Bhag, Dhadar and Bulan Pass to Quetta. From there the party entered into Qandahar and, passing through Ghazni and Kabul, arrived at Peshawar about the 10<sup>th</sup> November 1826. In going to the Frontier from Rai Bareilly, Sayyid Ahmad had to take this round-about way and cover a distance of about 2,500 to 3,000 miles,<sup>23</sup> because his intention to wage a holy war against the Sikhs of the Panjab, which was also the motive behind his *hijrat*, had been already known, it was not possible for him to pass through the shorter route *via* Lahore and Rawalpindi, through which the distance between Rai Bareilly and Peshawar would have been reduced to about 800 miles only.

Still denying to himself and his followers the comforts of a city, he moved out of Peshawar after four days' stay in order to take up a more strategic point at Charsadda.<sup>24</sup>

Within a few days of his arrival at Charsadda, it however became known that Budh Singh, a Sikh General, sent by Maharaja Ranjit Singh for intercepting Sayyid's party, was marching with a large army towards the place. Moreover, Amir Khan Khan of the Khan Chieftain of Akora Khattak, came to Sayyid Ahmad with the intriguing news that his nephew (brother's son) had already gone over to the Sikhs. He counselled Sayyid to retreat.

action in order to restrain the local people from joining hands with the enemy, and on his advice, Sayyid Ahmad decided to proceed at once to Nowshera with the object of blocking Budh Singh's way across the Kabul river. On his arrival there, on the 19th December 1826, he found that the Sikhs had already entered through Khairabad into Akora and pitched their camp on the western bank of Kabul river (where the river is locally called Londe), at a distance of about 8 miles from Nowshera. Thus was set, most abruptly, the stage for the first encounter between the two parties.<sup>25</sup>

The above evidence leaves us in little doubt as to the targets of Sayyid Ahmad's *jihad*. The excerpts from his letter quoted above take away all the force from the controversy created by Sir Syed Ahmad Khan and Mawlana Ja'far Thanisari that Sayyid Ahmad's sole aim was to fight the Sikhs and not the British Government or the East India Company.<sup>26</sup> Rather, it clearly points out that he had decided seriously to wage a holy war against "Christian" as well as the Sikh usurpers of Hindustan at the time of his pilgrimage, and on his return from Makkah, he made the Sikhs of the Panjab his first target. This is not to deny that he had entertained the idea of *jihad* somewhat vaguely since long before. During his stay at Rai Bareilly from June 1819, he laid considerable emphasis on the necessity of acquiring the art of warfare, and towards the close of this period, he declared that the waging of *jihad* against the enemies of Islam was a supreme duty of every Muslim, so much so that, the accomplishment of the aims of *jihad* was the prerequisite of the peaceful spiritual meditation of the mystic.<sup>27</sup>

### Forms of War

We have seen in the preceding section that Sayyid Ahmad Shahid not only decided to wage a *jihad* against the enemies of Islam in the Indo-Pak sub-continent but had also traversed thousands of miles to reach the North-West Frontier for the purpose of fighting the Sikhs, who had usurped the Muslim power in the Panjab under the leadership of Maharaja Ranjit Singh. One may, however, be reminded that *jihad* or war is not a child's play. Beside willingness of the warriors to fight, it requires expensive equipments, proper organisation, a constant source of supply of food, men and material, a thorough preparation, sustained practice, acquisition of tactical

know-how and, above all, a careful planning and a well-formulated war-strategy. Again, war is a means and not an end in itself. Of all the means generally resorted to for the achievement of an object or resolving strife, war is an extreme measure, which by its very nature transforms a social, religious m into a political one. In the last analysis, war thus turns out, to be a political act; hence it is also legitimately guided by political principles. Moreover, the accumulated experience of war-lords and generals in the history of mankind shows that to wage a war is very easy, but to win a victory is most difficult.

It may also be noted that initially Sayyid Ahmad was neither a military leader nor a general. He came out of the army of Amir all alone and as more or less unimportant military person reason to believe that while serving Amir Khan, he passed his time more in religious meditation than in mastering political manoeuvres and military strategy.<sup>28</sup> Moreover, materials at our disposal do not entitle us to make absolutely sure as to whether he was determined to fight the Sikhs of the Panjab before he left the army of Amir Khan or decided upon such a course slightly later on.<sup>29</sup>

While Sayyid Ahmad Shahid was staying at Rai Bareilly before going on the pilgrimage, he had introduced some war-like exercises among his disciples, which received more emphasis until he left for Makkah in 1821.<sup>30</sup> After returning from the *hajj*, he passed a period of one year and nine months again at Rai Bareilly before he left for the *hijrat* in 1826.<sup>31</sup> Unfortunately, the paucity of data relating to this period leaves us almost completely in the dark regarding any military developments which might have taken place there at that time. In so far as Ghulam Rasul Mehr's meticulous efforts to collect data could uncover, we come across the first regularly organized military set-up of his followers at Gwalior where Sayyid Ahmad and his party stayed for about 10 days on the first leg of *hijrat* in C.E. 1826. Here the party of the *Mujahidin* were divided into companies and were put under the command of different leaders.<sup>32</sup>

But during his long stay at Hindustan following the *hajj*, the idea of *jihad* was widely propagated; so that the Sayyid's decision for *hijrat* was correctly understood by all as heralding a *jihad* against the Sikhs of entire Panjab. As a result, only such people came forward

to accompany him as were both willing and able to fight. They numbered about 500 or 600 persons belonging to Hindustan, Bihar and Bengal, many of whom really were *Moulavis* or theologians. This whole lot of *Mujahidin*, however, came to be known as Hindustanis or *Hindustani* followers of Sayyid Ahmad, especially during their sojourn in the North-West Frontier. Beside the 500 or 600 Hindustanis, Biharis and Bengalis, Sayyid Ahmad also recruited about 270 Pathan patriots from Qandahar. These combined forces numbering about 800 or 900 men proved again and again the sole strength of Sayyid's party in times of field operations. Fortunately for Sayyid Ahmad, fresh arrivals from Bengal, Bihar and Hindustan continued to replace the martyrs and the disabled and kept the above size of the inner circle of the *Mujahidin* more or less constant with an occasional tendency towards slight increase.<sup>33</sup>

Ghulam Rasul Mehr has drawn up an interesting account of Sayyid's experience at Qandahar. At his approach to the outskirts of the town on 1st December 1826, Sayyid Ahmad and his party were greeted by a small group of mounted guards headed by a representative of its ruler, who escorted them to a garden lying at a distance of about a mile from the town of Qandahar. As Sayyid Ahmad was already in correspondence with the rulers of Afghanistan, arrangement for his encampment there seems to have been made beforehand, and prominent citizens, renowned theologians as well as a large number of common men came out several miles from the town to greet the *Mujahidin*. Purdil Khan, the ruler of Qandahar, was not in a position to receive Sayyid Ahmad personally as his brother Sherdil Khan had died three days before. Hence, on the next day, Sayyid Ahmad paid a visit to Purdil Khan with a view to offering his condolences. Purdil Khan met him "with great love and expressed much surprise at his firm resolve for  *Jihad*  in spite of the lack of men and material at his disposal".

Nevertheless, the masses began to flock around him in such numbers that Purdil Khan was taken aback. At first, he tried to restrain the people at the gates of the town; but this having proved ineffective, he sent an urgent message to his honorable guest requesting him to hurry away at the earliest opportunity. He informed Sayyid Ahmad that his people were preparing for  *Jihad*

with so great an enthusiasm as to throw the peace and order of the realm into jeopardy. "You had better leave for Kabul without losing any time", he then entreated; "lest disaffection should grow between you and me". For this reason, the Sayyid had to leave Qandahar on the sixth day. Ghulam Rasul Mehr regretfully comments, "had Purdil Khan created no obstacles, a great army could have been raised by Sayyid Ahmad Shahid from among the Qandaharis". Yet a good many Qandaharis followed him to the next station entreating him to admit them into his party and they ultimately compelled him to recruit a few hundreds of them, as we have noted above, with the special leave of Purdil Khan.<sup>34</sup>

The contrast between the rousing enthusiasm with which Sayyid Ahmad was greeted by the masses everywhere in Bengal, Bihar and Hindustan on the one hand, and the cautious diplomatic welcome accorded to him by the independent Muslim rulers of Sind and Afghanistan on the other, was too conspicuous to scape his notice. Even regarding the native Princes of India, Dr. Mahmud Husain observes, "with the exception of Tonk no one of the Muslim principalities came forward to help him to any appreciable degree" in spite of the fact that these Princes did not hesitate in expressing their admiration for the sincerity and enthusiasm of Sayyid Ahmad and his followers."<sup>35</sup>

An explanation for the poor response of the Princes, Mirs and Khans, sought to be gathered by different scholars in the inadequacy of their equipment for such an ambitious war, <sup>36</sup> seems rather unconvincing. A close examination of available materials, on the other hand, points to the natural fear of the potentates towards the rise of a 'popular voice' as a more basic reason for their 'cautious indifference'. Taking a lesson from his experience at Qandahar, Sayyid Ahmad thought it prudent not to accept the invitation of the chieftains of Ghilzai clan, which had earlier extended its sway over the whole of Afghanistan and Iran, but was later vanquished by Nadir Shah, and had, at that time, fallen into disfavour with the ruling Barekzai clan of the Durrani tribe, <sup>37</sup> which was not otherwise normally expected of him.

At Kabul, Sayyid Ahmad also got acquainted with the intricacies of power-politics and is reported to have said:

“This humble person stayed for about 45 days in that city with the hope that my endeavours might succeed in removing dissension and effecting agreement (among the ruling Barezai brothers of Afghanistan); but at the end, I gave up this pursuit and left the city.”  
38

At the end of his long journey, no sooner did he set his foot on Charsadda than he stepped upon deception. Ghulam Rasul Mehr holds that, but for the co-operation of Khwas Khan, Budh Singh could not have advanced so easily to Akora Khattak, and that Amir Khan joined hands with Sayyid Ahmad not so much for his love of *jihad* as on account of his enmity towards his nephew, Khwas Khan.  
39 Moreover, Yar Muhammad Khan, the Barezai ruler of Peshawar, is said to have clandestinely sent intelligence to the commander of Sikh garrison of Attock about the movement of Sayyid Ahmad. So did also the Muslim Thanadar or Police in charge of Khairabad.  
40

As a matter of fact, the Bengali, Bihari and Hindustani followers of Sayyid Ahmad, who had left everything behind for the sake of spiritual happiness, were in complete accord with him and were sincerely eager to sacrifice their lives in the path of Allah and taste the felicity of martyrdom. The concept of *jihad* not only as a religious duty but also as a means for achieving solely a religious end, had been a common theme of Sayyid's numerous letters despatched to various Muslim Kings, Princes and leaders belonging to Central Asia and the Indo-Pak subcontinent. In one of them, he writes:

"The real position of this servant of Almighty Allah is that I am neither a king (*Shah*) nor son of a king; nor am I a Prince (*Amir*) or son of a prince. Neither do I seek a kingdom nor do I want a government. I am a recluse (*Faqir*) son of a recluse. I regard simple living (in poverty and hardship) as a good fortune. I have only repulsion for the laws of the kings. Neither do I aspire to possess political power nor shall I ever endeavor to acquire it. I have tightened my belt only (i) for the performance of (my) religious duties (*fara'id*), and (ii) (in quest of) goodwill for all mankind, as well as (iii) for the sake of keeping the word (*kalima*) of Allah aloft, and (iv) for serving the laws (set forth) by Prophet Muhammad



(sm). Anyone who joins hands with me only for the sake of his faith would be happy; and one who parts company with me, woe may overtake him!"<sup>41</sup>

There is a strong indication that Sayyid Ahmad had developed non-political concept of *jihad* at the time of his pilgrimage to Makkah. He possessed a heart, throbbing with sincerity and goodwill, which was thoroughly roused by his spectacular success in taking hundreds of people to the *hajj* whom he invited in the name of Allah; and thus assured of divine help, he viewed *jihad* like the *hajj*-- from a purely religious angle. Hence in the selfsame manner, he sought to prosecute his *jihad* campaign by means of "a prayerful dependence on the help of Allah."<sup>42</sup>

This religious dialogue for buttressing the campaign for *jihad* was well appreciated by the Muslims of Bengal, Bihar and Hindustan. Sayyid Ahmad Shahid seems to have been aware of the fact that the Princes of Afghanistan and North-West Frontier viewed it in a different light. In his letter to Faqir Muhammad Khan of Lucknow (C.E. 1827),<sup>43</sup> which was meant for circulation, Sayyid Ahmad felt no need of holding out any assurance that he had no political ends in view, whereas in his letters to Sultan Muhammad Khan, ruler of Kohat,<sup>44</sup> Dost Muhammad Khan,<sup>45</sup> ruler of Kabul, and to numerous tribal chieftains,<sup>46</sup> the denial of any political intentions, as quoted above, was prominently displayed.

One can also argue from another angle that Sayyid Ahmad Shahid sought to win the support of the people for his reform movement as well as for the *jihad* campaign by means of *bay'at*, which means 'swearing allegiance'. To begin with, the *bay'at* offered to him was purely religious and was generally described as *bay'at-i-tawbah* or a pledge of penitence. But it gradually developed a militant aspect and acquired a semi-political character. Hence during this middle period it was often capitalized as *bay'at-i-jihad* or 'pledge for a holy war'. Finally, soon after his migration to the North-West Frontier, it developed into *bay'at-i-imatat*<sup>47</sup> or 'allegiance to leadership' which indeed meant 'political allegiance' par excellence.

This created no problem for his Bengali, Bihari and Hindustani followers, who had neither any political axe to grind in the

prospective war against the Sikhs in the North-Western India nor did they belong to any tribal structure carrying with it an immediate political stake. Different was, however, the case with the tribal people of North-West Frontier, where people belonged to compact tribes and clans, and where seeking 'individual allegiance' of the people over the head of their rulers and chieftains, was impolite and the mass popularity of any revolutionary movement, whether Islamic or otherwise, would cause deep apprehensions in the minds of the tribal leaders, whose authority it would jeopardize.

It was this implication of the *bay'at* which made the ruler; and chieftains of Afghanistan and North-West Frontier suspicious of the ultimate aim of Sayyid Ahmad or, at least, of the ultimate consequence of his aim. It made them deeply apprehensive of their own future.

Moreover, although the masses of the North-West Frontier were exceedingly vocal in professing their faith in and allegiance to Islam, they belonged to innumerable tribes and clans, which were, more often than not, mutually hostile to one another; and their lives from the cradle to the grave were governed primarily by tribal customs and usages.

No doubt, they were mostly ignorant and superstitious and could hardly have grasped the full significance either of *jihad* or Sayyid Ahmad's struggle. Yet in their allegiance to him, they showed great enthusiasm and they may have been quite sincere. They could not, however, throw away their tribal structure and were bound by the rules of their tribes. Consequently, they had to place their tribal interest above all other interests. These were indeed facts of life which neither Sayyid Ahmad himself nor his chief lieutenants ever tried to understand. Even when critical circumstances compelled them time and again to turn attention to these traits of tribal life, they frowned at them, saw only deception and infidelity in the hearts of the tribesmen and dismissed the whole affair as downright treachery. Strategy in the North-West Frontier had frequently alienated the tribesmen from his party; and the more he tried to strengthen his hold over tribesmen by imposing on them the authority of the *Shari'ah*, enforcing widow remarriage, or levying

*zakat* and *'ushr*, the more he roused the suspicions of the tribal leaders. It ultimately proved fatal to the *jihad* movement in that region.

### Strategy Pursued at the Frontier

To appreciate the strategy of war pursued by Sayyid Ahmad Shahid a reference to the existing circumstances, which conditioned his war efforts, appears to be necessary. One may surmise, that Sayyid's intention to wage a *jihad* against the Sikhs of the Panjab, having been known since long, the Sikh ruler Maharaja Ranjit Singh and his agents kept the track of his movements and, as we have noticed above, they received timely intelligence of his arrival at Peshawar. They, therefore, allowed him no time to study the local situation and to devise a suitable plan of war. He had selected the strategic place of Charsadda before hand for his headquarters, and no sooner did he arrive there than he was drawn into a snare of tribal intrigue, on the one hand, and was confronted by a large Sikh army, on the other, for none of which he was fully prepared.

He had under his command approximately a good number of patriots who were joined by about 600 or 700 local Pathans, being supporters of Amir Khan Khattak. Thus, marching at the head of about 1600 men, when he entered Nowshera from Charsadda on the 19th December 1826 C.E., he found himself face to face with a well trained Sikh army under the command of Budh Singh numbering about 7,000 strong and lying in wait for him at Akora Khattak. The first serious problem was thus posed before him arose out of the gross disparity between his men and those of Budh Singh.

Ghulam Rasul Mehr maintains that the selection of North-West Frontier for the operation of *jihad* was decided upon by Sayyid Ahmad Shahid in accordance with a larger plan for occupying the Panjab first and then for dealing with the British power in India using the Panjab as the base of operation.<sup>48</sup> In the first place, the North-West Frontier was inhabited by warlike Muslim tribesmen. They were especially well known for their love of freedom, which was, at the moment, seriously threatened by the aggressive policy of Maharaja Ranjit Singh. In fact, the whole tribal belt comprising the modern districts of Peshawar, Mardan, Hazara, Muzaffarabad,

Jammu and Kashmir was tightly drawn by the Sikhs into the front-line of their expansive occupation policy. They had already gone through these areas with sword and fire and had set up many fortresses and out-posts at different strategic points. 49 Whether the Sayyid was aware of this whole situation before or not, or whether he had a preconceived plan to take the Panjab for the purpose stated above, or not, on his arrival on the spot he certainly set his mind upon bolstering the fighting spirit of the tribal people and using it as fully as possible for the cause of Islam. In one of his lectures delivered just a few months before his martyrdom in C.E. 1831, he said:

“Brothers! I have come to this mountainous region of yours, taking so many servants of Allah with me and braving so much suffering and hardship on the way with the sole intention of vanquishing through Allah's help those infidels who have subjugated your country and are subjecting you to trouble and dishonor; so that, the political power of your States remain in your hands and the religion of Islam is thereby strengthened.”

Had I sought comfort and luxury, I could have plenty of it in Hindustan and would never have intended to come to this mountainous region (of wilderness). So, all I want to say to you brothers! Stand apart from the government of the infidels and join me with your life and wealth!”<sup>50</sup>

While planning for the migration, he had probably thought that once he arrived at the Frontier and preached the doctrine of *jihad* to the tribesmen with open heart, they would cluster around him. In the army of Amir Khan he must have observed the religious susceptibilities of the Pathan and their uncommon courage and fidelity in warfare. Indeed, the Pathan has the capacity to become one of the finest soldiers in the world, provided they received appropriate training in military discipline outside of their tribal environment, but not probably within the free atmosphere of his tribe. Sayyid Ahmad blundered in equating the Pathan alike under both the situations. He began to be disillusioned in the first place, of the falsity of his notion about Muslims living still in freedom from the time he entered into the Muslim principalities of Sind; secondly,

he felt utterly disappointed at the treatment meted out to him by the Muslim rulers of Qandahar and Kabul; and finally, left alone with about 1,600 volunteers to fight against the Sikh army of 7,000 strong at Nowshera, he could do no better than take recourse to guerilla tactics.

A close examination of the meticulous details about the war efforts of Sayyid Ahmad, patched together by Ghulam Rasul Mehr,<sup>51</sup> makes it evident that, unable to give a frontal battle to the Sikhs at Akora Khattak with a handful of men, he adopted the policy of 'developing a holy war' against the Sikhs under his leadership. He sought to accomplish this objective on the one hand by keeping the Sikhs at an arm's length through *shabkhun* or daring night attacks on their camp, and on the other, by thoroughly rousing the warlike spirit of the tribesmen in the name of Islam and freedom and gaining their active co-operation in the *jihad* movement through preaching and persuasion from the pulpit and platform as well as by means of staging frantic display of bravery and heroism in the battle-field. As a matter of fact, since the Sayyid's arrival at Nowshera on the 19th December 1826 C.E., until his martyrdom at Balakot on the 6th May 1831 C.E., his thoughts and activities were actuated by this single motive more than anything else. Indeed, the courage of conviction in their ideals, dedicated devotion to the cause of *jihad*, contempt of death and a deep sense of prayerful dependence on the will of Allah had combined together in Sayyid Ahmad and his followers, to make each of them extraordinarily bold and heroic. In their night attacks on enemy camps they brought to bear these qualities so vigorously that the very thought of Sayyid's *shabkhun* began to throw the Sikhs into terror. No wonder, therefore, that the intrepidity of Sayyid's followers was often judged by the hostile European writers as 'fanaticism'.

Sayyid Ahmad's endeavour to 'develop a holy war' began right from Nowshera. Being confronted by a large Sikh army which outnumbered his men by nearly five times, as we have noted above, he decided to resort to guerilla tactics, and without waiting further to be harassed by the enemy, sent a party of about 900 men (consisting of approximately 136 Hindustani, 80 Qandaharis and nearly 700 local Pathans) to make a night attack or *shabkhun* on the enemy

camp at Akora on the 20th December 1826. <sup>52</sup> The party did its work so well that on the next morning, instead of preparing for a frontal attack, the Sikh Commander, Budh Singh, thought of retreat as the better part of valor and fell back to Shaidu, about 6 or 7 miles in the direction of Attock, with his whole army. It is said that he might have even retreated to the Fort of Attock had he not been warned by the Commander of the garrison that such a course would expose the Fort to the attack of the enemy. <sup>53</sup> In a letter written soon afterwards, Sayyid Ahmad claimed that this initial success at Akora opened up one door of victory for the *Mujahidin*. <sup>54</sup> It opened up, at any rate, a flood-gate of enthusiasm among the local Pathans for *jihad* and people came in surging waves to pay their allegiance to Sayyid Ahmad and become his disciples. Influential chieftains, who were so long sitting on the fence, also came forward and swore allegiance to Sayyid Ahmad. Finally, on the insistence of the powerful chieftain, Khade Khan of Hund, he moved thither and set up his headquarters at the Bazur area situated on the outskirts of the old fortress of Hund. <sup>55</sup> It was a landmark in the history of the movement as by this act the *jihad* movement became, so to say, a part and parcel of the life of Frontier tribesmen and here in the second week following the night of Akora, two brief skirmishes took place between the two parties.

The first was occasioned by a raiding expedition undertaken by the Pathans and the Qandaharis to Hazru, a rich centre of tobacco business in Campbellpur, and the second was caused by a retaliatory action of the Sikhs, who appeared in a considerable number on the other side of the Indus river near Hund, two or three days after the above incident. <sup>56</sup>

Sayyid Ahmad, having an entirely different aim in view, did not approve of the raid and kept aloof from it. The tribesmen still proceeded with the project and "organised a typical tribal raid". <sup>57</sup> But when they were chased out by the Sikhs, the local Pathans ran pell-mell towards the river leaving the Qandaharis behind to fight it out alone. <sup>58</sup>

In this encounter as well as in the following counter-attack, the Bengalis, according to Ghulam Rasul Mehr, showed great valor <sup>59</sup> and the followers of Sayyid Ahmad were able to maintain their

superiority both over the Sikhs and local tribesmen. The heroic way in which a handful of Sayyid's followers fought and drove away the Sikhs made a deep impression on the tribesmen and bolstered up their morale so much so that in the third week following the night attack of Akora, that is, on the 11th January 1827, the chieftains and religious leaders of the area decided to acclaim Sayyid Ahmad as the *Imam* for *jihad* and swore allegiance to his leadership in the war (*bay'at-i-imamat-i-jihad*).<sup>60</sup>

Next day, his *Imamat* was proclaimed in the Friday Sermon from the pulpit and he came to be addressed by the inner circle of his followers as *Amir-ul-Mu'minin*, and by the Pathans as "Sayyid Badshah", and by the Sikhs as "Khalifah Sahib".<sup>61</sup> Within two months from the date of *bay'at-i-imamat-i-jihad*, 80,000 warriors rallied round him ; and towards the close of the first week of March 1827 C.E., he proceeded in full force, from Hund to Akora Khattak, for giving battle to Budh Singh who still remained in waiting at Shaidu. At Akora, he was also joined by the Barezai brothers, Yar Muhammad Khan, the ruler of Peshawar and Sultan Muhammad Khan, the ruler of Kohat as well as by their third brother, Pir Muhammad Khan with 20,000 Peshawari followers, thus enhancing the number of the *Mujahidin* to 1,00,000.<sup>62</sup>

As against this huge concourse of volunteers and commandos, there were 33,000 Sikhs under Budh Singh in the village of Shaidu and 20,000 reserves under Hari Singh lying in wait on the bank of Attock River.<sup>63</sup> In fact, the Sikhs had advanced against Sayyid Ahmad from the Fort of Attock, which was strongly fortified by Maharaja Ranjit Singh and which constituted a most important rampart in the defensive system of his gradually expanding Panjab kingdom. Nay, as a fort, it was large and impregnable. In its mountainous awesome environment it also symbolised strength and stood as a sentinel over the North-West Frontier. Sayyid Ahmad had fully realised the strategic importance of the Attock Fort and the impossibility of advancing towards Lahore from the NorthWest Frontier without capturing it. Hence, all his attempts to strike a contact with the Sikhs from Peshawar and Hoti Mardan were directed primarily to Attock in order to clear the way, as it were, to the Muslim reconquest of the Panjab.

This most fantastic growth of *jihad* movement in the Frontier, which rallied hundreds and thousands of people under its banner in the short span of two or three months' time, had also another side of the medal. We have already noticed that the first move, which Sayyid Ahmad took in that region, met with deception. In the night attack of Akora, Amir Khan Khattak's followers formed the bulk of the party and when in the midst of the operation (around 4 a.m.) they saw the Sikhs running pell-mell in all directions they at once took to gathering spoils leaving the burden of fighting to the handful of Hindustanis and Qandaliaris, and anyone who could lay his hand on some thing, silently slipped out of the field and went straight to his home; so that, in about an hour very few of them were left in the field. When the Sikhs lighted flares they found only a handful of enemies engaged in the operation. This helped them in rallying themselves and mounting a fierce attack on the intruders. As a result 36 Hindustanis, 46 Qandaharis and no Pathan were killed.

Secondly, the grand success at Akora, while it bolstered up the morale of the Bengali, Bihari and Hindustani *Mujahidin*, it fomented the raiding spirit of the tribesmen including the Qandaharis resulting in the raid of Hazru. Even so, when chased by the Sikhs the local Pathans ran with their spoils and jumped into the river leaving the 40 Qandaharis, , in the lurch, who had accompanied them.

Thirdly, following this incident when Khade Khan ordered for gathering all the spoils at one place for equitable distribution, they defied his command and created almost a riotous situation, compelling Sayyid Ahmad to instruct for leaving off the spoils in the hands of the captors.<sup>64</sup> Subsequent events extending to the day of Balakot, proved that the local people, who joined hands with Sayyid Ahmad, with few respectable exceptions, primarily aimed at making hay while the sun shone.<sup>65</sup>

On the day of Shaidu, which fell in the second week of March 1827,<sup>66</sup> the battle array of Sayyid's party was formed, according to Ghulam Rasul Mehr, in the shape of a 'crescent' extending from the foot of Khattak Hills right up to the Kabul river. At the extreme right stood Yar Muhammad Khan, at a little distance to his left was Sultan Muhammad Khan and on further left, Pir Muhammad Khan. The rest of the line extending up to the riverbank was occupied by



the tribesmen commanded by Fath Khan Panjtari, Khade Khan of Hund, Ashraf Khan of Zaida, Amir Ahmad Khan Bajori and others. The followers of Sayyid Ahmad stood somewhere in this area. Gudri Shahzada, who came from Sind, took his place on the other extreme inside the village of Shaidu.<sup>67</sup>

The whole party appears to be facing to the east. In the front of them there lay a dry canal bed and across it was the Sikh encampment. The enemy had mounted a number of guns at different points and set up a few advance posts in the canal area.<sup>68</sup>

As the fighting began, the Sikhs started raining ball and fire on the *Mujahidin*. But defying the barrage of bullets, Sultan Muhammad Khan, Pir Muhammad Khan and Fath Khan Panjtari made a swift and fierce cavalry charge which broke through the front line of the Sikh army. The valiant Gudri Shahzada even spearheaded his way into the main body of the enemy. By and by as the whole party of the *Mujahidin* came into action, the Sikhs began to be pushed back.<sup>69</sup> The leader of the Barekzai, Yar Muhammad Khan, however, chose this opportune moment to strike his nefarious blow to the *jihad* movement. All of a sudden, he raised a hue and cry and ran with all his men out of the field.<sup>70</sup> Seeing him go, his younger brothers Sultan Muhammad Khan and Pir Muhammad Khan followed suit and in the midst of the confounding fright created by the anomalous running to and fro of their 20,000 followers, the great crowd of the tribesmen also chose the flight as the better part of valor and hurriedly ran out of the field. Only Gudri Shahzada and his Sindhi followers stood the ground and, true to their salt, fought to the last till the battlefield became strewn with their dead bodies.<sup>71</sup>

The greatest misfortune, however, had fallen on Sayyid Ahmad himself. In the previous night Yar Muhammad Khan supplied sumptuous but poisoned food to him which he took in good faith and fell seriously ill. Since then, he remained most of the time unconscious and was not fully cured until about a month or two had passed. Yet probably to ensure the presence of Sayyid Ahmad in the battlefield and to make easy his capture by the Sikhs, Yar Muhammad had despatched an elephant to him in the morning. Seeing disaster, Shah Ismai'll personally took charge of the Sayyid and mounting him on the elephant howdah, he prudently kept the animal at a safe distance

from the centre of operation. At the critical moment, seeing a party of the Sikhs coming in pursuit of the elephant, he hurriedly transferred the ailing leader to horseback and sent him to a different direction. With great difficulty he was carried by Ashraf Khan of Zaida and some others to Chinglai in the modern district of Mardan.

<sup>72</sup> The life of the leader was saved though the *jihad* movement suffered a crushing defeat.<sup>73</sup> The Barezai family, which had recently succeeded in establishing its rule over Kohat, Qandahar, Ghazni, Kabul and Peshawar under most intriguing political circumstances,<sup>74</sup> had little or no reason to curry favour with the *jihad* movement of Sayyid Ahmad. The latter, of course, had tried to win over the Barezai brothers to his side since long: first through correspondence from Hindustan and latterly through direct negotiation. It appears from a number of letters written to them that he continued to cherish high hopes of receiving their active co-operation in conducting the *jihad* until his actual meeting with them.

However, evidence is not lacking to show that among them, at least, Sultan Muhammad Khan had taken considerable interest in the *jihad* movement in the beginning; he, however, remained carefully cautious and at the end turned hostile. In fact, they appear to have viewed Sayyid's activities in their realm as a disturbing element. But, it may be that if they did not like to associate themselves with his movement, they could neither keep aloof from it in view of the growing mass popularity of his *jihad* campaign.<sup>75</sup> Moreover, Yar Muhammad had accepted the overlordship of Maharaja Ranjit Singh since long and was carrying in confidence of him.<sup>76</sup> These facts may explain partly, if not wholly, the conduct of Yar Muhammad Khan in sabotaging the position of the *Mujahidin* at the battle of Shaidu.

The defeat at Shaidu brought to an end the first and meteoric phase of the *jihad* movement in the Frontier. The shock of defeat and dependency begotten of the fatal illness of Sayyid Ahmad might have crushed the movement altogether; but boundless energy, courage of conviction and dedicated attachment of his Bengali, Bihari, Hindustani and Qandahari followers towards him, turned this mortal occasion into the birth-pang of a more humble and sober phase of the *jihad* movement in the Frontier which, however, can be dealt with only cursorily in the short space of the present study.

## Second Phase of the Jihad

This second phase of the *jihad* campaign consisted of exploratory mass-contact tours in the fashion of those undertaken earlier in Hindustan. This phase lasted for about ten months from April to December 1827, in the course of which Sayyid Ahmad himself toured Bonir, Swat, Ismailia, Lundkhor, Malakand, Khar and other places,<sup>77</sup> and sent Shah Ismail to Pakhli and Hazara. It is evident from the materials at our disposal<sup>78</sup> that the main objective of Shah Ismail's mission was to explore the prospect of striking a contact with the Sikhs from that side of the Province with a view to avoiding conflict with the Barekzais of Peshawar,<sup>79</sup> who had come out with open hostilities against the *Mujahidin* after the battle of Shaidu and had blocked the way to Attock, on the one hand, and cut off the Sayyid's retreat to Hindustan, on the other. As a matter of fact, during the whole period of his campaign in the Frontier, owing to his weak and infirm position, the Sayyid's interest remained oscillating between Attock and Hazara with the rise and fall of the prospect of developing a holy war on one side or the other.

Of course, he aimed primarily at taking the Fort of Attock, from where he wanted to advance towards Lahore; and Hazara, which formed his second best objective, through which he wanted to pass on to Jammu and Kashmir for the purpose of establishing a secure foothold in the area. The above-mentioned phase was, thus, prompted by the Sayyid's anxiety to avoid the shedding of Muslim blood and by his quest for a policy of non-belligerency towards the Barekzai rulers of Peshawar.

This phase was brought to an end especially by the failure of Shah Isma'il either to forge unity among the quarrelling Sardars of Pakhli and open a second front against the Sikhs with their help at Hazara or to open the way to Jammu and Kashmir. Consequently, he returned in disgust in October 1827 C.E.<sup>80</sup> Because of the failure of Isma'il's mission to Hazara, Sayyid Ahmad was left with no other alternative except to make a renewed attempt to contact the Sikhs once again from the side of Attock. This was not, however, possible without an armed conflict with the Barekzais first. As a result, the third phase of the *jihad* movement, which began with the arrival of

Sayyid Ahmad at Khar in December 1827 C.E., centered round the policy of 'containment of the Barekzais', to which Sayyid Ahmad was driven out of desperation.

### Third Phase of the Jihad

The third phase lasted for about three years from the time of his arrival at Khar in December 1827 C.E. to his second *hijrat* from Peshawar and Hoti Mardan to Pakhli and Hazara in December 1830.<sup>81</sup> The policy of 'containment', however, took different shapes at different times with the change of attending circumstances. In the beginning, specially during the Sayyid's stay at Khar, it took the form of a 'diplomatic offensive' against the Barekzais which occasionally tended to break into an undeclared war as it happened at Utmanzai about May 1828 C.E.<sup>82</sup> From February 1829 C.E., i.e., during the second year, it became galvanized with its natal energy for socio-religious reform.

To start with, it assumed an evangelical and persuasive character, but the campaign for introducing reform in the local society gradually became more and more militant especially under the leadership of Qazi Habban.<sup>83</sup> Finally, the policy of 'containment' resulted in the conquest of Peshawar in the middle of C.E. 1830.<sup>84</sup>

The campaign for introducing socio-economic reform was launched on the 6th February 1829 C.E. following a huge conference at Panjtar, at the end of which thousands of tribal chiefs and '*Ulama*' pledged on the hand of Sayyid Ahmad to enforce *Shari'ah* in the society<sup>85</sup> and this *bay'at-i-iqamati-shari'at*, in course of time, developed into the 'ideology' of the *jihad* movement which Shah Isma'il sought to elaborate in his *Mansab-i-Imamat*.<sup>86</sup> The main aims of this campaign were (1) dispensation of Islamic justice, (ii) collection of *zakat* and '*Ushr*', (iii) implementation of the rules of *Shari'ah* and (iv) abolition of un-Islamic local customs which were imprudently dubbed as *Afghaniyat*.<sup>87</sup>

As we have quoted above from a letter of Sayyid Ahmad, he expressly denied to have any personal political motive behind his *jihad* movement; rather, he intended that "the political power of your States remain in your own hands and the religion of Islam is thereby strengthened."<sup>88</sup> But the manner in which these measures

were implemented looked apparently coercive: the imposition of a superstructure of Islamic administration on the tribesmen, as it were, over the heads of their chieftains and rulers in the fashion of a contemporary 'suzerain'. This naturally provoked grave apprehension in the minds of the ruling class and eventually turned three most powerful rulers of the Frontier, namely Sultan Muhammad Khan of Kohat and Peshawar, Khade Khan of Hoti Mardan and Painsa Khan of Amb in Hazara, into desperate enemies who were formerly, at least nominally, his allies. The policy of 'containment', in fact, got him entangled into an intriguing game of tribal politics, the complexity of which became accentuated with the conquest of Peshawar; yet he tried, all in good faith, to play on and win it by means of the simplicity of a religious divine." 89

It is, indeed, this naivety in politics that first led to the massacre of *Mujahidin* at Peshawar 90 in November 1830 and ultimately led to the disaster of Balakot in May 1831.<sup>91</sup>

With what amount of disgust and disillusionment he was heading towards his martyrdom at Balakot is amply reflected in the following observation, which he is reported to have made in the previous night (the 5th May 1831 C.E.):

"For so many years have I endeavored in very many ways to promote this goodly task (i.e., *jihad*), and no stones have I left unturned. I sent my deputies to Hindustan, Khurasan and Turkistan, who did all in their power to attract people towards the path of Allah; and I myself made ceaseless efforts through preaching and admonition to make the people conscious about its significance wherever I went. Yet, none but some strangers joined hands with me; and the bulk of them invented calumnies against me. Such was perhaps the will of Allah. Our scribe has now got tired of writing letters and we have got fed up with despatching them. Nothing positive developed out of it."<sup>92</sup>

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4. See article of the present writer, "Tariqah-i-Muhammadiyah Movement: An Analytical Study", *Islamic Studies*, Islamic Research Institute, Islamabad, Vol. VI, No. 4 , Dec. 1967, pp.375-88 reproduced herein in Chapter 4,
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15. *Ibid.*, pp. 282-86. Mehr calculated 1 year 10 months in terms of lunar calendar.
16. *Ibid.*, p. 178.
17. Risalah-i-Jihad (MS. Persian) recently collected by Islamic Research Institute, Islamabad, Pakistan pp. 27-29. Also compare with Mehr. *op. cit.*, Vol. I, pp. 432-35.
18. Mehr: *Sayyid Ahmad*, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 284. Sayyid's family was later on taken to Tonk at the request of Nawab Amir Khan (*Ibid.*, p. 290) and thence to Pirkot in Sind, to be under the care of Sibghatullah Shah in H.1242 / C.E.1827 (*Ibid.*, p. 394).

19. *Ibid.*, 412; see also Mehr: *Jama'at-i-Mujahidin*, p. 23.
20. Mehr; *Sayyid Ahmad, op. cit.*, Vol. I, pp. 287-90.
21. *Ibid.*, pp. 293-95 .
22. *Ibid.*, pp. 299-312 .
23. *Ibid.*, pp. 282-329.
24. *Ibid.*, pp. 339-43.
25. *Ibid.*, pp. 345-48.
26. Dr. Mahmud Husain in *History of the Freedom Movement*, for the description of the controversy.
27. Mehr: *Sayyid Ahmad, op. cit.*, Vol. I, pp. 40-41.
28. Mehr: *Sayyid Ahmad, op. cit.*, Vol I, pp. 92-112.
29. See our discussion above and excerpts from his letter to the ruler of Bukhara.
30. Mehr: *Sayyid Ahmad, op. cit.*, Vol. I, pp. 132-178.
31. *Ibid.*
32. Mehr: *Jama'at-i-Mujahidin*, p. 23.
33. *Ibid.*, pp. 24-25 and Mehr: *Sayyid Ahmad, op. cit.*, Vol. I, pp. 282 ff. 358 ff., 412 ff., Vol. II, pp. 22 ff.
34. Mehr: *Sayyid Ahmad, op. cit.*, Vol. I, pp. 324-25 and Dr. Mahmud Husain : *History of the Freedom of Movement, op. cit.*, Vol. 1, p. 534,
35. Dr. Mahmud Husain, *op. cit.*, p. 584.
36. *Ibid.*
37. Mehr: *Sayyid Ahmad, op. cit.*, Vol. 1, p. 325.
38. *Ibid.*, p. 328, referred to *Manzura*, p. 310, see ft. n. 1 therein .
39. *Ibid.*, p. 347.
40. *Ibid.*
41. Hafiz `Aziz al-Din Muradabadi: *Akmal al-Bayan fi Ta'id-i-Taqwiyat al-Iman*, Lahore, 1965, p. 833, referred to *Tawarikh-i-Ajib*, p. 16.
42. *Risalah-i Jihad* (MS. Persian) Islamic Research Institute, p. 28.
43. *Ibid.*, pp. 19-20; see also Mehr: *Sayyid Ahniad, op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 374 for the date.
44. *Risalah -MS., op. cit.*, pp. 20-23
45. *Ibid.*, pp. 23-25.
46. See the addressees in Mehr: *Sayyid Ahmad, op. cit.*, Vol. I, pp. 433-35

47. See description of different types of *bay'at* in Ghulam Rasul Mehr: *Sayyid Ahmad Shahid*.
48. Mehr: *Sayyid Ahmad Shahid, op. cit.*, Vol. 1, pp. 276-81.
49. *Ibid.*, pp. 250-81, especially pp. 276-79.
50. *Ibid.*, Vol. II, p. 358. The lecture was delivered at Sachchun in March 1831.
51. It may be noted that the meticulous details mustered by Ghulam Rasul Mehr about the battles of Sayyid Ahmad Shahid in his different works still remain the main source of information in this field, on which all the subsequent writers on this subject have largely depended for their data with or without acknowledgement. Recently Dr. Qiyam-ud-Din Ahmad of Patna University has added a few important points and modified and corrected a number of earlier notions on the basis of more reliable evidence.
52. Mehr: *Sayyid Ahmad, op. cit.*, Vol. I, pp. 352 and 358; and Dr. Qiyam-ud-Din Ahmad: *Wahhabi Movement*, Calcutta, 1966, p. 47.
53. Mehr: *Sayyid Ahmad, op. cit.*, Vol. 1, p. 363.
54. *Ibid.*, p. 362.
55. *Ibid.*, pp. 364-65. Hund was a place of considerable antiquity situated about 17 miles east of Attock on the right bank of river Indus. It was a ferry ghat for crossing the river (see Qiyam-ud-Din, *op. cit.*, p. 61, ft. n. 79).
56. Mehr: *Sayyid Ahmad, op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 366 ff.
57. Qiyam-ud-Din, *op. cit.*, p. 47.
58. Mehr: *Sayyid Ahmad, op. cit.*, Vol. I, pp. 356-58.
59. *Ibid.*, p. 362.
60. *Ibid.*, p. 372-74. Ghulam Rasul Mehr and Qiyam-ud-Din Ahmad have suggested that the formal adoption of the *Imamat* of Sayyid Alimad Shahid at Hund was due to the realisation that the tribesmen were not really steadfast in their resolve to participate in the *jihād* and that, they were actually motivated by their lust for plunder; so they were called upon to give their express allegiance to the leader. Judging from a purely historical perspective, his *Imamat*, however, appears to us as a natural and logical growth, to which the above realisation may have been a concomitant fact rather than an efficient cause.
61. Mehr: *Sayyid Ahmad, op. cit.*, Vol. I, pp. 372-75.
62. *Ibid.*, pp. 357-89.
63. *Ibid.*, pp. 388-98.
64. *Ibid.*, pp. 368-70.
65. Compare Sayyid Akbar Shah's counsel to Shah Isma'il Shahid in Mehr's *Sayyid Ahmad Shahid, op. cit.*, Vol. II, p. 7.
66. According to a Sikh source, the date was 14th Phagun, see *ibid.* Vol. I, p. 395 referred to *Umdat al-Tawarikh*.
67. *Ibid.*, p. 392 ff.



68. *Ibid.*, p. 393.
  69. *Ibid.*, pp. 393-94 .
  70. *Ibid.*, pp. 394-97. Reasons put forward for this strange conduct are mere surmises of different writers.
  71. *Ibid.*, pp. 394-96.
  72. *Ibid.*, pp. 392, 402 and 407.
  73. *Ibid.*, p. 401. According to Sikh sources 6,000 followers of Sayyid Ahmad Shahid were killed in this battle.
  74. *Ibid.*, p. 323 ff. This family consisted of Sherdil Khan, Kohandil Khan, Rahamdil Khan and Mohardil Khan ruling over Qandahar, and Mir Muhammad Khan, Pir Muhammad Khan, Sultan Muhammad Khan and Sayyid Muhammad Khan ruling over Ghazni, Kabul, Kohat, Peshawar and Hasht Nagar. They were progeny of one father and two mothers.
  75. See also *Ibid.*, p. 382-83; and ft. note, on p.383 in which Munshi Amar Nath's *J'afar Nama*, p.175 has been cited.
  76. *Ibid.*, p.335, referred to *Umdat al-Tawarikh*, Vol. II, p.35.
  77. *Ibid.*, Vol. I, pp. 418-31, Vol. II, pp. 32-34.
  78. *Ibid.*, Vol. II, pp. 1-20.
  79. This anxiety of Sayyid Ahmad affected Mawlawi Mahbub Ali, see *Ibid.*, Vol. II, p. 23 ff.
  80. Mehr: *Sayyid Ahmad, op. cit.*, Vol. II, pp.19-20.
  81. *Ibid.*, Vol. II, pp. 34-323.
  82. *Ibid.*, Vol. II, pp. 34-54.
  83. *Ibid.*, Vol. II, p. 55-65, 78 ff. and 211 ff.
  84. *Ibid.*, p. 261 ff.
  85. *Ibid.*, p. 55 ff.
  86. Shah Muhammad Isma'il: *Mansab-i-Imamat* has been published in original Persian and recently also in Urdu translation from Lahore.
  87. Mehr: *Sayyid Ahmad, op. cit.*, Vol. II, p. 57 ff. 88. See above.
  89. Mehr: *Sayyid Ahmad, op. cit.*, Vol. II, pp. 267-73.
  90. *Ibid.* pp. 290-322.
  91. *Ibid.*, pp. 368-434 .
  92. *Ibid.*, pp. 383
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## CHAPTER: 6

## The Struggle of Titu Mir: a Re-examination<sup>1</sup>

An examination of the nineteenth century Muslim society in Bengal reveals three concurrent forces which deeply affected the life and thought of the Muslim community. In the first place, a religious revivalism, introduced and carried forward by different religious leaders from C.E. 1818, swept over the country and created a good deal of commotion in the Muslim society down to C.E. 1870<sup>2</sup>. Secondly, a socio-political wave bent on waging holy war or *Jihad* against the infidels with a view to regaining the lost glory of the Muslims, constantly hovered over the horizon of Muslim thought. Thirdly, an economic struggle of the peasantry against the oppressions and extortions of the new class of Hindu *zamindars* (landlords), who had risen to that position by virtue of the lease-farming policy of British Governor-General Hastings (from C.E. 1772 to 1793); and a similar struggle of the peasantry against the oppressions of the European indigo planters, who made enormous capital investment in the indigo industry of Rural Bengal (from C.E. 1795). This economic wave often broke into mass agitation, especially from C.E. 1830 to 1860<sup>3</sup>. All these forces are to be seen struggling together in greater or lesser degree in the movement of Titu Mir.

A closer look into the life and career of Titu Mir further shows that the dominating feature of his movement lay in his concern to safeguard the rights of the Muslim peasantry against the oppressive and extortionate measures of the Hindu Zamindars, which he sought to accomplish by introducing socio-religious reforms into the Muslim society and by uniting the Muslim peasantry on this religious platform. Although the inspiration for this socio-religious reform was derived by him from *Tariqah-i-Muhammadiyah* movement led by Sayyid Ahmad Shahid, the doctrine of *jihad* preached by the Sayyid appears to have played, if at all, an insignificant role in his struggle. The views of the European writers, who often characterise Titu Mir's movement as a political rebellion

against the established government, therefore, deserve a careful reappraisal, which is attempted below.

### **Life and Career of Mir Nithar Ali *alias* Titu Mir**

Mir Nithar 'Ali *alias* Titu Mir was born in C.E. 1782<sup>4</sup> at Chandpur, a village in the district of 24 Parganahs. Very little is known about his early life. Our knowledge of his later life is almost entirely derived from British government sources, which depict him as an "arch rebel" and a downright villain. The Bengali biography of Titu Mir by Biharilal Sarkar furnishes us with a good deal of valuable information. But his account is very sketchy consisting of only 38 pages, and was published as late as B.S.1304. Moreover, the author's love of the Hindu zamindars, against whom Titu Mir fought to the last, and his frequent attempt to justify the cause of the zamindars, rendered the work highly prejudicial against its hero.

Another Bengali work by a Muslim author entitled *Narkel Beder Janga*, which also consisted of 38 pages, was published as early as C.E. 1853-54 from Calcutta<sup>5</sup>. This last work, which might have counter-balanced the opinions of Biharilal Sarkar, is unfortunately not available to us. The article of 'Abd al-Ghafur Siddiqi contributed to the *Masik Muhammadi* (Dhaka) in B.S.1360, does not stand historical criticism. Some reliance can, thus, be put only on the first two sources mentioned above.

According to the British government sources, Titu Mir was known to be a "bad and desperate character" around C.E. 1815. At that time he lived a life of professional wrestler in Calcutta. Subsequently, he took service under the Hindu zamindars of Nadia, where he got implicated in an affray fighting and was imprisoned".<sup>6</sup>

After his release, an accident brought him to the notice of a member of the Delhi Royal Family whom he attended on a pilgrimage to Makkah. There he met the pilgrim party of Sayyid Ahmad Shahid. Thereupon, Titu Mir became the disciple of the Sayyid in C.E. 1822<sup>7</sup>. About C.E. 1827, he returned to his native district 24 Parganahs, and settled down at Haydarpur, a village near Narkelbaria<sup>8</sup>. During his absence from C.E. 1822 to 1827, he lived with his royal master in close proximity to the *Tariqh-i-Muhammadiyah* movement and must have received necessary training for leadership and religious propaganda of this period.

It may be recalled that during this period the Muslim society of Northern India, being excited to the climax by the puritanical preaching of Sayyid Ahmad Shahid and his followers, — was in a religious turmoil. In C.E. 1824, the Sayyid had declared *jihad* or holy war against the Sikh ruler of the Punjab, and the first battles with the Sikhs were already fought before C.E. 1827, when Titu Mir returned to Bengal. Living in Delhi or elsewhere in North India for over 5 years as a disciple of the Sayyid, Titu Mir could not but be deeply influenced by this new movement. Small wonder, therefore, that he came back to his native district, not as a hungry wrestler looking for a job, but as a devout preacher of the puritanic doctrines of the Sayyid. For this commendable work, he also received a stipend from his royal patron<sup>9</sup>.

We, however, do not know for certain, whether the Sayyid had invested Titu Mir with *Khalifat* or commissioned him to preach pure doctrines of Islam to the Muslims of Bengal, though the local traditions as recorded by 'Abd al-Ghafur Siddiqi, would have us believe to that effect<sup>10</sup>. Biharilal Sarkar says that one Mawlawi Muhammad Husain of Pabna (a district in North Bengal) was appointed *Khalifah* by Sayyid Ahmad Shahid, to whom the Sayyid had granted a *sanad*. In this *sanad* (which was deciphered by Biharilal Sarkar), the Sayyid impressed upon the *Khalifah* that (i) the attributes of Allah must not be applied to human beings, and (ii) no rite or ceremony — excepting those prescribed by the Qur'an and the Prophetic tradition — be observed<sup>11</sup>.

According to Biharilal, the explanation of the former is that, none of the angel, spirit, demon, Pir, disciple, teacher, student, saint or prophet has the power to bestow good or inflict injury to anybody. Therefore, none of them be worshipped or propitiated. The explanation of the latter is that, no (un-Islamic) rite or ceremony be observed on the occasions of marriage or death. It is prohibited to decorate tomb, to raise mosque on the grave, to prepare *ta'ziyah* or to observe various *fatihas* for the dead<sup>12</sup>. Biharilal adds further that it was also written in the *sanad*: "If you cannot change the opinion of the people by words, it must be done by sword<sup>13</sup>."

The reforms or changes advocated above have also been noted by W.W. Hunter, almost in identical terms<sup>14</sup>. As a matter of fact, the

first principle noted above by Biharilal Sarkar, relates to the doctrine of Unitarianism (monotheism), and forms the subject-matter of *Taqwiyat al-Iman*;<sup>15</sup> and the second principle relates to the purging of the Muslim society of un-Islamic customs and ceremonies, dealt elaborately in *Sirat al-Mustaqim*<sup>16</sup>.

Whatever else we know about the life and activities of Titu Mir is derived from local traditions, collected by ‘Abd al-Ghafur Siddiqui,<sup>17</sup> which cannot be entirely relied upon. Biharilal Sarkar, however, observes that Titu Mir returned home with similar ideas<sup>18</sup>. We have seen earlier that Titu Mir became a disciple of the Sayyid at Makkah. According to the current tradition, his meeting with the Sayyid was arranged by Mawlavi Muhammad Husain himself, who was at that time accompanying the Sayyid as a leading disciple of Bengal<sup>19</sup>. At any rate, a comparison of Titu Mir’s teachings<sup>20</sup> with those of the *sanad* of Muhammad Husain shows that they were substantially the same.

Besides the reform of religious institutions, Titu Mir directed his followers to grow beards and to wear *dhuti* (the national dress of the Hindus, the use of which was also common until recently among the Muslims), without passing one end of it between the legs<sup>21</sup>. This practice was also the characteristics of the *Fara’idis*. Furthermore, Titu Mir is said to have asked his followers to keep away from the unreformed Muslims, and permitted inter-dining only among the reformed Muslims.<sup>22</sup>

If this last characteristic of Titu Mir’s reform, namely “imposition of restriction on inter-dining”, as reported by Colvin, is true, it must have led his followers to form into a distinct and exclusive social group resembling the Hindu caste; and consequently, restricted the number of his followers. Being the promoter of an Islamic revivalism, Titu Mir is not, however, expected to follow such a course. There have been many *Sufis* and puritan *‘ulama* who would not accept food or presents offered by a person who earned his livelihood by foul means, or offered by one who indulged in un-Islamic practices. But such people are not restrained from dining with them or even from becoming their guests.

Even now-a-days such instances are not absent in the Muslim society of Bengal. This practice is also found among the *Fara’idis*.











It may be recalled that Krishna Dev Ray, the arch enemy of Titu Mir, was not present in the Lawghata engagement. Even it is not known whether he was present at Purwa on the 6<sup>th</sup> November, when Titu Mir's followers attacked that village. But since long he was sending "intelligence report" to the Police of Barasat regarding the activities of Titu Mir,<sup>47</sup> presumably describing him as a rebellious character. On the incidents of Purwa and Lawghata, such intelligence reports must have been sent to the Police by the *zamindars* who, unlike Titu Mir's faction, were in contact with the British government officials. The intervention and defeat of Mr. Davis at Lawhata and the risings excitement in the neighbourhood alarmed the European indigo planters, and Mr. Piron of Baruguri factory and Mr. Storm of another factory, appealed to the government headquarters at Calcutta to take necessary steps against Titu Mir.<sup>48</sup>

On 14 November, 1831, Mr. Alexander, the Joint Magistrate of Barasat moved out to Narkelbaria to apprehend Titu Mir and his followers. The expedition was unsuccessful: rather in a short engagement with Titu Mir's followers, the Police party was beaten back. Alexander fled leaving behind one Jamadar, one Havildar, ten Sepoys and three Barkandazes killed and many including the Darogah of Barasat wounded.<sup>49</sup>

It is said that when the Police force came within the sight of Titu Mir's party, the officer ordered for blank fire, probably to frighten the latter. Thereupon Titu Mir's party fell upon them so quickly that the Police had no time to refill the match-locks. Thus, whatever may have been the intention of the Police officer, the party of Titu Mir felt themselves being under attack without warning or negotiation. It, therefore, appeared to them that the Police force had come to destroy them by the instigation of the *zamindars*; rather than to investigate into their grievances.

In the wake of their victory, they widely publicised that the Miskin Faqir, believed to be a miraculous person who joined Titu Mir some-times earlier, had eaten up the bullets fired by the Police. This propaganda produced the desired effect. The sprit of the party was elated and many out-siders joined the faction.<sup>50</sup> On the other hand,

the fact that the Police party was resisted, attacked and beaten back by Titu Mir's followers, removed all doubts from the mind of Alexander regarding the rebellious character of Titu Mir and the propaganda of the Hindu *zamindars*, so long passed lightly off as rumours, got confirmed. Mr. Alexander hurried to Calcutta to enlighten the supreme government of the gravity of the situation and to impress upon them the necessity of firm and immediate action. As a result, a Regiment of Native Infantry was ordered to proceed to the troubled spot at once.<sup>51</sup>

In the meantime, the Magistrate of Krishnagar got together a good number of men and proceeded to Narkelbaria on 17 November 1831.<sup>52</sup> The European members of the party were mounted on elephants. In this second Police expedition Krishna Dev Ray was seen accompanying the Magistrate as one of the guides.<sup>53</sup> Thus, it appears that in this final bid to crush Titu Mir, Krishna Dev left home a few days earlier and had gone to Krishnagar or elsewhere in order to induce the European officers for an urgent government expedition against Titu Mir.

Receiving intelligence of this second Police expedition, Titu Mir came out with his followers and decided to harass the party on the way. According to Biharilal Sarkar, at one place while the Police party was embarking on a country boat to cross a river, Titu Mir's party suddenly fell upon them and so quickly drag the boat ashore that the expedition party became terror-stricken and ran pell-mell to all directions.<sup>54</sup> W.W. Hunter says that on this occasion Titu Mir's party cut down those "who were slowest in retreat".<sup>55</sup> But Biharilal's description, which is in greater details, does not indicate any thing of the kind. A close examination of the source suggests that besides the "dragging of the boat" no engagement took place on this occasion. No casualty on either side has been reported with regard to this incident.

The European officers fled back and Krishna Dev Ray was saved by an old Muslim servant, namely Muti Allah, who was at that time in Titu Mir's service.<sup>56</sup> On this occasion one leading Hindu, Manohar Ray, joined hands with Titu Mir against the *zamindars*.<sup>57</sup> The incident undoubtedly heightened the morale of Titu Mir's follower and convinced them of Divine help as claimed by Miskin Faqir.

On 19 November 1831, the final military expedition, which was ordered from Calcutta on 16 November, arrived at Narkelbaria under Mr. Alexander and Major Scott Harding. It included two guns and some Horse-Artillery.<sup>58</sup>

The party encamped within a short distance of Titu Mir's bamboo stockade (*Bansher Killa*), and fired a few blank shots from the guns. It was at once rumoured in the camp of Titu Mir that Miskin Faqir has eaten up the cannon balls.<sup>59</sup>

Conflicting accounts of the struggle that followed have come down to us. According to the Government Report, Titu Mir's followers came out of the bamboo stockade and met the enemy in the open plain.<sup>60</sup> But, according to Biharilal Sarkar, they gave no resistance to the expedition party but waited anxiously for Miskin Faqir to eat up the fireballs of the enemy. Unfortunately, however, the Faqir left them in the lurch, rather miraculously slipped away leaving his votaries to be eaten up by the fireballs of the troopers.

The action began with heavy cannonade and merciless shooting. After the first round of firing a small party came out of the stockade, probably to surrender. In fact, the party of Titu Mir could do little against such on-rush of the enemy, with their swords and spears. The party, which came out of the stockade, were shot down one by one at first sight. The rest stood where they were and waited in stunned amazement for the mercy of Allah to come and the miracle of the Faqir to work. At last, the troopers entered the stockade and put an end to their lives. In the meantime, some of them managed to climb on trees but only to be brought down by shooting.<sup>61</sup>

According to the Government Report, Titu Mir with some fifty followers were killed in the action. Their dead bodies were collected in a heap and burnt. The houses around were also looted by the expedition party.<sup>62</sup> Hunter says that 350 persons were arrested,<sup>63</sup> but according to another Government Report the number of arrest was 179, who were tried before the Nizammat 'Adalat. Ghulam Ma'sum, the deputy of Titu Mir, was sentenced to death, 11 were transported for life and 128 were sentenced to various terms of imprisonment. Of the rest, 4 died while on trial and 53 were either acquitted or released.<sup>64</sup>

### **The Nature of Titu Mir's Struggle**

In the Government Report as well as in the Bengali biography (by Biharilal Sarkar), Titu Mir has been accused of fanaticism, carrying out outrages against the Hindu community and against a section of the Muslims, and of rebellion against the British government, which would be evident from the following quotation from Hunter. He says:<sup>65</sup>

“On the 6<sup>th</sup> November, they [the followers of Titu Mir] marched out to the number of 500 fighting men, attacked a small town [i.e., the village of Purwa], and after murdering the priest, slaughtered two cows, the sacred animal of the Hindus, with whose blood they defiled a Hindu temple, and whose carcasses they scoffingly hung up before the idol. They then proclaimed the extinction of the English rule and the re-establishment of the Muhammadan Powers. Incessant outrages followed, the general proceedings being to kill a cow in a Hindu village, and if the people resisted, to murder or expel the inhabitants, plunder their houses, and burn them down.”

Hunter adds further that Titu Mir and his followers were “equally bitter” against any Muslim who would not join their sect and that, on one occasion in sacking the house of a “wealthy and obdurate Musalman,” they “varied the proceedings,” described above, by forcibly marrying his daughter to the head of their band.<sup>66</sup>

The outrage on a Muslim who was hostile to their puritanism and who may have tried to check the spread of the reform movement like those who went to the Hindu *zamindars* with their complaints against Titu Mir, is understandable. For, the reformists were convinced that the doctrines, which they were advocating, were strictly in accordance with orthodox Islam. Hence, it was the duty of every Muslim to accept them and to reform their practice accordingly. In the history of religious movements, such enforcement or imposition is not a rare phenomenon. But the sacking of the houses and forcibly marrying the daughter, cannot be attributed to sane religious zeal or justified on Islamic principles. If the allegation is true, Titu Mir and his followers must be judged guilty of fanaticism or of violation of an Islamic principle. What is, however, important to notice here is that the description of Hunter

itself suggests that this sacking of the Muslim family took place sometimes after the reformists set up a definite pattern of outrage or “proceedings” in the Hindu villages.

We have seen earlier that all sources, governmental and indigenous, are in complete agreement to the fact that the first incident of Titu Mir’s outrage on the Hindu villages took place on the 6<sup>th</sup> November, 1831, i.e., his attack of Krishna Dev Ray’s village, Purwa or Punrah, in retaliation of the latter’s earlier attack on the Muslim village of Safdarpur. All sources further agree that the next venue of Titu Mir’s attack was Lawghata or Lawghati, the village of Krishna Dev’s brother Devanath Ray. The details of this latter incident has not been recorded by government sources; but, luckily, it is furnished by Biharilal Sarkar, who collected it from indigenous sources. The circumstantial evidence of the Lawghata incident, which as we have seen, involved a combination of the votaries of *zamindars*, Kaliprasanna Ray and Devanath Ray, and the clubmen of Mr. Devis on the one side and Titu Mir’s followers on the other. This entailed elaborate preparation on both sides. It was a tough fight and absorbed almost the whole day; hence, it is doubtful whether after the hard-earned victory, Titu Mir’s party had the time and energy to celebrate it on the land of the enemy in the same manner as they did a few days earlier at Purwa. As a matter of fact, Biharilal Sarkar, who gives us a detailed account of the incident, does not mention any such outrage.

Furthermore, it has been noticed earlier that the Joint Magistrate of Baraset acted promptly in despatching a police force against Titu Mir, especially on the request of Messrs. Piron and Storm<sup>67</sup> after the Lawghata incident. This expedition reached Narkelbaria on the 14<sup>th</sup> November, 1831. The Lawghata incident, therefore, took place in between the 6<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> November, and at the latest on the 12 or 13<sup>th</sup>. Since, from the 14<sup>th</sup> November on, Titu Mir’s men were constantly engaged with the government forces (as the second expedition arrived at the spot on the 17<sup>th</sup> and the final expedition on the 19<sup>th</sup>), all these outrages described by Hunter must have been committed, and a definite pattern or “proceedings” set up, during the interval of about 5 or 6 days, in between the 6<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> or 13<sup>th</sup> November.

The time, therefore, at the disposal of Titu Mir, was too short to permit him to carry on “incessant outrages” after the pattern of the incident, which took place on the 6<sup>th</sup> November, besides the preparation for the attack on the enemies at Lawghata. The fact that no specific data of these later “incessant outrages” have been supplied by the sources and no vanue of Titu Mir’s attack besides Purwa and Lawghata, has been named, suggest that these broad observations of the English writer had probably no surer basis than the regular “intelligence reports” sent to the Police by Krishna Dev Ray regarding the activities of Titu Mir. The content of these “intelligence reports” is not known to us; but coming from the arch enemy of Titu Mir and a person who induced the Darogah earlier to give a false report on the Safdarpur incident,<sup>68</sup> the nature of these reports can be well imagined.

The earliest English sources about Titu Mir are the two reports, one prepared by Colvin and the other by Alexander,<sup>69</sup> on which all subsequent English writers have based their contention. According to the assertion of Colvin and Alexander, these reports were “based on local information”.<sup>70</sup> We have seen earlier that Alexander himself headed a Police expedition against Titu Mir, secondly, as the Joint Magistrate of Baraset, he was also the head of the Police of that sub-division, hence the “intelligence reports” of Krishna Dev Ray, which were sent to the Police of Baraset, must have reached him; and thirdly, there was no possibility of contact between Titu Mir’s party and the Englishmen, whereas a close contact was maintained between the Hindu *zamindars* and English planters and officers. The possibility of eliciting information from Muslim sources by these two Englishmen was, therefore, remote, and the influence of the so-called intelligence reports on them must have been considerable.

Likewise, Hunter’s contention that Titu Mir proclaimed the end of English rule and re-establishment of Muslim power, is not free from doubt. Admittedly, he was a bold and courageous person, and had unflinching support of his followers. Probably, he was also frustrated when justice was systematically denied to his followers. But as a well-travelled person, who had covered from Bengal to Makkah and lived at Calcutta, Delhi and elsewhere in North India for a considerable time, must have observed the military power of

the British government. It is, therefore, not conceivable that he would attempt to overthrow the British government from Bengal with only "4000 to 5000" villagers at his beck and call.

Moreover, the so-called Wahhabis of India, with whom Titu Mir was related through his Pir, Sayyid Ahmad Shahid, were at that time engaged with the Sikhs of the Punjab. They were neither in direct conflict with the British nor any *Fatwa* was given by the religious authorities calling upon the Muslims to rebel against the British rule, - which might have fired the religious zeal of Titu Mir. Probably, Titu Mir, was painted as a rebel against the government by those *zamindars* who eagerly wanted to eliminate him for the security of their vested interest. The fact that the *zamindars* and indigo planters of Faridpur painted the *Fara'idi* leader Dudu Miyan a few years later, as a rebel and as a source of danger to the security of the State under similar circumstances,<sup>71</sup> lend support to our contention.

At any rate, after Titu Mir had resisted the Police forces, he became technically a rebel and probably was declared so by the government. On the other hand, when he saw the European planters and the government officials taking side with the *zamindars*, he must have become desperate. Moreover, when Krishna Dev Ray was seen accompanying the government officers in the second Police expedition, Titu Mir's suspicion that the government was actually against him was confirmed. As a respectable Muslim, he may have, therefore, decided to die fighting rather than be caught and humiliated.

Still a distinction must be made between "rebellion to overthrow the government" and "to be treated or declared a rebel". H Beveridge, an English officer and an Orientalist, appears to have discovered the actual nature of such disturbances in rural Bengal about half-a-century later in connection with the *Fara'idi* movement. He observed that the revolutionary views of the *Fara'idis* did not appear to "extend beyond disputing their landlords' claim for rent". "Hindu *zamindars* and alarmists generally are fond of representing *Fara'idis* as politically dangerous," he says, "but, I think, without sufficient reason."<sup>72</sup>



We have seen earlier that the main cause of Titu Mir's conflict with the Hindu *zamindars* was his revolt against the humiliating "beards-tax" imposed by the latter on his followers. Apparently, the struggle which ensued between the *zamindars* and his followers had a deeper root in the economic field, especially in the landlord-tenant relationship. But as Titu Mir's movement originated in the field of religious reform and as the beards tax went incidentally against the teachings of Islam, his struggle against the *zamindars* also received a dominant religious tinge. Nevertheless, throughout his struggle against the *zamindars* from the time of his revolt against the beards-tax down to the shedding of his last drop of blood, a thread of continuity is clearly discernible in which the smaller events were constantly absorbed by greater ones till his life itself was absorbed in the process. Once involved in such a dangerous course, it was hardly possible for him to withdraw from it without risking his honour and ideals. He, therefore, died as a sacrifice of inevitable circumstances, but not without a worthy and rightful cause.

#### **Titu Mir's Reform Movement versus Fara'idi Movement**

We have seen earlier that Titu Mir was a disciple of Sayyid Ahmad Shahid, and that the reform movement started by him represented, in all its characteristics, an extension of the *Tariqah-i-Muhammadiyah* movement in the rural society of West Bengal. Revenshaw, one of the *Wahhabi* prosecutors (circa. C.E. 1864 – 1870), makes a distinction between the so-called *Wahhabis* (i.e., the followers of Sayyid Ahmad Shahid or *Tariqah-i-Muhammadiyah*) and the followers of Titu Mir. According to him, the *Wahhabis* looked upon the Sayyid as an *Imam* and the ignorant among them even believed him to be *Imam Mahdi*. But the latter were orthodox *Hanafis*, who looked upon him as a good and pious person but refused to give him the status of an *Imam* or Prophet. Furthermore, Revenshaw identified the reform movements of Titu Mir and Haji Shariat Allah and called both of them "*Fara'idi*".<sup>73</sup>

It is clear from our earlier analysis that the loyalties of Titu Mir had lain with the Sayyid. The inspiration of Haji Shari'at Allah for the *Fara'idi* movement was drawn, on the other hand, from Arabia and had no connection with the trend of reformation started by Shah Wali Allah, to which this Sayyid belonged.

Moreover, identification of the two movements from doctrinal point of view appears to be wrong. One of the basic traits of the *Fara'idi* movement, for instance, was the suspension of the congregational prayers of *Jum'ah* and *Id* in Bengal under the British rule. This point was so important in the *Fara'idi* scheme of reform that the *Fara'idis* generally came to be known as *Be-Jum'ah Walas* (i.e., those who did not say *Jum'ah* prayers) and their opponents as *Jum'ah Walas* (i.e. those who say the prayer of *Jum'ah*). Titu Mir on the other hand, held fast to these congregational prayers and never thought of giving them up. This fact alone is sufficient to prove their difference conclusively.

Nevertheless, there are certain amount of similarity between the life and career of Titu Mir and that of Haji Shariat Allah as well as in the nature of their respective movements, which must not be overlooked. In the first place, Titu Mir was born of an obscure family though he got married in a landlord family.<sup>74</sup> Hence, like Haji Shariat Allah, he was more akin to the lower order of the Muslim society of Bengal and both of them drew almost all their supporters from the general mass of the people. Secondly, Titu Mir's movement came in conflict with the traditional society and through it with the Hindu zamindars from about C.E. 1830 and the *Fara'idis* faced exactly similar circumstances from C.E. 1831 on. Hence both the movements took a socio-economic turn, the former in the hand of Titu Mir himself and the latter in the hand of Dudu Miyan.<sup>75</sup> But, far from proving the identity of the two movements, the above evidence indicates the reason why the two religious reform movements, originating in Bengal, took a socio-economic turn (i.e. because of the rise of a new class of Hindu *zamindars* under Permanent Settlement), unlike their North Indian counter-part, *Tariqahi-i-Muhammadiyah* and latter Patna school, which developed rather a socio-political aspect.

### **The Successors of Titu Mir**

It is not known with certainty whether any of the close associates of Titu Mir escaped death or imprisonment after the Narkelbaria incident, to carry on the religious reforms advocated by him. In an enlightened family of Jessore district, however, we find a tradition, which connects Titu Mir with their religious aspirations. In this

family, we know of two brothers, namely Munshi Muhammad Yasin and Munshi Faïd al-Din Mukhtar,<sup>76</sup> who were contemporary of Titu Mir. The former was a scribe<sup>77</sup> and the latter a licentiate pleader<sup>78</sup> (*Mukhtiar*) at the Court of Faridpur.

According to the tradition current in the families of the two brothers (at Jesore and Faridpur respectively), Faïd al-Din was sent to Calcutta for higher education in Arabic and Persian at an early age. He was strong and stout, and soon developed a taste for wrestling. At that time Titu Mir was a professional wrestler at Calcutta, and young Faïd al-Din joined his party. Later on when Titu Mir (after being a disciple of Sayyid Ahmad Shahid), returned to Calcutta (*circa*. C.E. 1827), Faïd al-Din had the opportunity of meeting him there. Thereafter Faïd al-Din became a staunch supporter of Titu Mir, and on his return to Jessore, his native district, he began to preach the puritan doctrines advocated by Titu Mir.

Not far from his native village Panipara, there was an indigo factory at Mirganj, on the bank of Barasia river. The oppression of the indigo planters on the Muslim cultivators soon attracted his attention. He preached the new reform doctrines to the peasantry and organized them into a solid party. About C.E. 1840, the conflict between the cultivators and the European planters had come to grips, and in one of the skirmishes Faïd al-Din was wounded. Thereafter, he did not feel secure to live within the reach of the Mirganj indigo planter, and emigrated to Faridpur. There he married the daughter of Jalal al-Din Mullah, an eminent *Fara'idi* leader, and settled there permanently. He, however, did not become a *Fara'idi* himself but remained a follower of Titu Mir though he co-operated with the *Fara'idis*<sup>79</sup> and acted as Dudu Miyan's legal attorney.

The available material is too scanty to afford us to draw a decisive conclusion with regard to the influence of Titu Mir's struggle after his death. Titu Mir himself was not an original contributor in the field of religious reform. He propagated the doctrines advocated by Sayyid Ahmad Shahid. But the spirit of reform survived his death. In violent death he became even more widely known than in his lifetime. His martyrdom became symbolic of his ideals and as a lasting source of inspiration to the peasantry of Bengal in their subsequent struggle against the oppression of the *zamindar* and indigo planters.

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4. e.g., Peasant agitation led by Titu Mir (C.E. 1830-1831), by the *Fara'idi* leader, Dudu Miyan (C.E. 1838-1856) and the mass agitation against the indigo planters (C.E 1854-1860). Biharilal Sarkar: *Titu Mir*, Calcutta, B.S. 1304, p. 8
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7. W.W. Hunter: *Our Indian Musalmans*, London, 1871 p. 45  
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9. *Ibid.*
10. See, *Masik Muhammadi* (Bengali monthly). Dacca, Magh, B.S. 1360, p. 260
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19. See *Masik Mukamnadi, op.cit.*, p.259
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28. cf. Biharilal Sarkar; *Titu Mir, op.cit.*, pp. 14 – 16.
29. Dr. Abdul Bari, "The Reform Movement in Bengal", *History of Freedom Movement*, Karachi, 1957, p. 551 quoted from Bengal Judicial Consultation, April 15, 1832 (India Office Library, London).
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31. It may be recalled that Titu Mir served the Hindu *zamindars* earlier as the head of such a party.
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57. *Ibid.*, p. 32
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66. *Ibid.*
67. cf. *History of the Freedom Movement, op.cit.*, p. 553
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## CHAPTER-7

# Ahl-e-Hadith Movement

**Ahl-e-Hadith** means the partisan of *hadith* the tradition of the holy Prophet of Islam, Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). It comprises not only the traditional practices of the holy Prophet (sm), but also his sayings, doings and his tacit approval of other's acts performed before him which he did not prohibit. The literal meaning of *hadith* is conversation, news, message. Yet the *Ahl-e-Hadith* take for themselves the broader meaning with its wide implications, sincerely to adhere in theory and in practice to the wider meaning and as the strict adherents to *hadith*, they call themselves by the title of *Ahl-e-Hadith*, as such, meaning true Muslims and strict adherents of the Prophetic Islam.

The above explanation generally given by the group of *Ahl-e-Hadith*, however, practically identify them as the followers of the *Sunnah* or Tradition of the holy Prophet (sm). Because *hadith* means news, which may be true or false, which needs be strictly examined before being accepted as correct. In order to get over this lag behind it, the group of *Ahl-e-Hadith* amend their statement by saying that, they are the followers of *Sahih Hadith*, that is, reliable *hadith*. They are puritan, Islamic revivalist and live mainly in India, Pakistan and Bangladesh and also sparsely in Nepal and Srilanka.

As a reform movement, it emanated from the *Tariqah-e-Muhammadiyah* movement of Sayyid Ahmad Shahid of Ray Bareilly through the inspiration of his chief disciple Shah Ismail Shahid. It was, however, latterly shaped by the Sayyid's chief Kalifah, Mawlana Wilayat Ali Sadiqpuri of Patna, Mawlana Sayyid Miyan Nadhir Husain Dehlavi and Nawab Siddiq Hasan Khan of Bhopal .

The movement spread extensively throughout British India during the second half of the nineteenth century C.E. and by precept and example its followers inaugurated a 'fundamental-principles-oriented' revivalism of the golden past of the Islamic life pattern of the first three-generation of good pious Muslims. Thereafter, it spread widely throughout the South Asian regions mentioned above



separating itself from other branches of *Tariqah-e-Muhammadiyah*, and in course of time attained self-sufficiency as a wholesome religious reform movement.

In comparison with other Islamic movements and *mazhabs* (schools of law), *Ahl-e-Hadith* resembles more closely to the *Hanbali mazhab* of the *Sunni* faction though its adherents are not willing to identify themselves with any of the *mazhabs*. Rather they express strong conviction and desire to follow, in their practical life, the pure Islamic path of the Messenger of Allah, Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) with cautious and active disposition.

As a matter of fact, *Ahl-e-Hadith* is such a religious revivalist movement, which is dedicated to the practice of the *Sunnah* of the holy Prophet. Yet, in their devoted stance in focussing their gaze on the practice of the first three pious generations of the early Muslims (a) the generation of the Companions of the holy Prophet (b) their Companions and (c) their Companions, which are regarded to constitute the Prophetic golden age of Islam and in their enthusiasm in identifying themselves overtly and covertly with the three golden generations, both in pursuing their precepts and imitating their behavior, they tend to overlook the realities of the flow of time and the material socio-political change of history and hardly realize the impending necessity of rectification, reformation, remodeling and re-structuring of the social, political, economic, religious and cultural behavior of ever changing human life; in a word, over and against the over-attachement of the followers of the *mazhabs* or schools of law, towards the historicity of life and nature, the *Ahl-e-Hadith* lean strongly towards strict and immutable principles formulated by their leading proponents. Historically, therefore, they divide the life-pattern of the Muslims into two main streams: the *Ahl-e-Hadith vis-a-vis* the *Ahl-ar-Rayy*; that is, the followers of the Prophetic tradition *vis-a-vis* the followers of rational opinions. Besides, in their commendation and condemnation of one stream or the other, they express their feelings with vehemence as a mark of their strictness in upholding the pristine principles of Islam.

Moreover, the phrase '*ahl-e-hadith*' is akin to Urdu language. The *Islami Bisyakosh* (Islamic Encyclopedia in Bengali) refers this

technical term to the earlier uses of it in Arabic studies as '*ashabul hadith*', '*ashab al-athar*', or as *salafi* or '*athari*', which are arabicized in structure and which refer to certain stream of thought or school of opinion or even some groups of people adhering to certain socio-religious practice, rather than particular movements of the people. The above Encyclopedia further states that the *Ahl-e-Hadith* movement in question took its start about two hundred years ago (vol. 3). Besides, the movement is generally seen thriving within the South Asian or Indian subcontinent. These facts and data suggest that the origin of the movement was affected within the regions of South Asia.

But the exponents of *Ahl-e-Hadith* contend that the movement is as old as Islam itself; and that, the *Ahl-e-Hadith*, lock, stock and barrel, is an extension of the *Ahl al-Hadith* of Islamic history as demonstrated by Shah Wali Allah Muhaddith Dehlavi in his monomental work *Hujjatullahi'l-Balighah*. In this connection, however, one has to remember that the Shah delineated *Ahl al-Hadith vis-a-vis Ahl-ar-Ray* as two confronting schools of opinions (and not of schools of law) in the earlier history of Islam.

In his time, the *Ahl-e-Hadith* movement was not launched. We find its natal conception with his grandson Shah Ismail Shahid as pointed out in the two preceding chapters. Hence, the problem of identity or difference between the *Ahl al-Hadith* as a school of opinion of a section of learned Ulama and *Ahl-e-Hadith* as a practical socio-religious movement, resembling a *madhab*, still remains to be closely investigated and proved.

Nevertheless, the contemporary exponents of *Ahl-e-Hadith* of Indo-Pak-Bangladesh sub-continent convincingly identify one with the other (Ibrahim Mir Sialkoti: *Tarikh-e-Ahl-e-Hadith*) and depict it as a continuous religious puritanic movement actively carried on by its exponents since the demise of the holy Prophet (sm), which is still being carried on with enthusiasm by the *Ahl-e-Hadith* movement in this subcontinent (Dr. Mohammad Asadullah al-Ghalib: *Ahl-e-Hadith Andol'an*, Rajshahi, 1996) .

Allama Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi says that the *Ahl-e-Hadith* movement in India has been founded on four pillars, viz. (a) belief in

pure Unitarianism, (b) following the *Sunnah* of the holy Prophet, (c) enthusiasm for *jihad* or holy war and (d) submission to Allah (cf. Ghalib, *op. cit.* p. 58). He is of the opinion that these four characteristics of the movements came out of the joint endeavour of Sayyid Ahmad Brelavi and Shah Ismail Shahid (the martyrs of Balakot, 1831 C.E.). Besides, Al-Ghalib places a 5-point ideals or primary principles of *Ahl-e-Hadith* movement, which are (a) supremacy of the Quran and *Sunnah* (b) rejection of imitation of any person (*taqlid-e-shakhsi*) (c) opening the door of *ijtihad*, (d) solution of all problems in the light of Islam alone and (e) strengthening the unity and integrity of the Muslims. He, however, holds that in reality the first principle is the central one and the remaining four are explanatory interpretation of the same (p.133).

The points of view of the contemporary exponents of *Ahl-e-Hadith* may be summed up as follows: (1) that the followers of the movement accept the Quran and *Sahih Hadith* as the guiding principles under all circumstances. (2) In Quest of the solution of any problem they do not accept the principles devised by any given *Mujtahid* whatsoever, rather in all matters they turn first to the holy Quran, then to the *Hadith*, thereafter to the tradition of the Companions of the Prophet, after that they turn to the acceptable opinion of the *Mujtahids* of *Ahl-e-Sunnat wa'l-Jama'at* and judge them with neutrality and at the end they solve their problems in the light of all these demonstrative tests and verifications; (3) they give preference to *Sahih Khabar Wahid*, that is, correct solitary narration of a *hadith* over the *Qiyas*; (4) they respect all the learned persons belonging to the school of *Ahl-e-Sunnat Wa'l-Jama'at* though they would not follow any one *Majtahid* or school, that gives vent to *taqlid* or imitation and (5) they hold that the door of *ijtihad* or research remains always open before the capable and learned *Ulama* for finding the solution of problems arising before the Muslims from time to time.

In view of the above, the exponents of *Ahl-e-Hadith* try to define *Ahl-e-Hadith* as those who endeavor to receive direction directly from the Quran and *Sahih Hadith* and /or factual and intellectual sources and neutrally apply it in their lives (*ibid.* p. 65).

On the basis of such a strong belief and faith in the direct guidance of the Quran and *Hadith*, they sometimes style themselves as *ghayr muqallid*, that is non-partisan or opposed to *taqlid* or imitation of all kinds. Their opponents, however, contemptuously call them *Lamadhabi*, that is, non-adherents to *madhhab* or 'madhhab-less, since they do not attach themselves to any school or *madhhab*.

It may be recalled that the central cause of difference between the *Ahl-e-Hadith* and the rest of the Muslims in the religious sphere, lies in matters of *ijtihad* and *taqlid*, and in all other spheres of life, the difference is due to their uncompromising insistence on taking all decisions on the basis of the holy Quran and Hadith *vis-à-vis* taking decision freely by applying the methodology of the *Qiyas* or analogical deduction. This attitude indeed long preceded the sub-continental *Ahl-e-Hadith* movement and was a historical issue.

As regards *Ahl al-Hadith* of the classical times, Allama Ibn Qutayba (213-276 H) contends that by importing Greek philosophy into the Muslim society, the learned Muslims began to get somewhat intellectually tilted towards rationalism (*Ta'bil Mukhtalafil Hadith*, 1326 H./ 1908 C.E., p. 103). Latterly Ibn Khaldun (732-802 H.) says that the Muslim learned section have got divided into two factions in their consideration of the science of *fiqh*. One faction is called *Ahl al-Rayy* and *Qiyas*, who belong to Iraq and the other faction is called *Ahl al-Hadith* who reside in Hijaz (*Tarikh Ibn Khaldun*. Vol. I, Muq. p. 446). He related Imam Abu Hanifa (ra.) as the chief of the first group and Imam Malik and Imam Shafi'i as amongst the chiefs of the second group.

Shahraṣṭani (479-548 H.) says that the leaders of the Muslim *Ummah* are divided into two groups, *viz. Ashab-ul-Hadith* and *Ashab-ur-Rayy* and further says that, there exists no third group amongst them (*Kitab al-Milal wa'l Nihal*, vol. 1, pp. 206-07).

Shahraṣṭani further explains that the *Ashab al-Hadith* reside in Hajaz. They are called *Ahl al-Hadith*, because they apply all their energy in collecting *Hadith* and in eliciting rules of conduct and they base all commands and prohibitions thereupon. Whenever they get any *Hadith* or *Athar* (tradition), they act upon it and do not care for any rational deduction and *Qiyas* at all. On the other hand, *Ahl-*

*ar-Rayy* are those residents of Iraq, who are the followers of Imam Abu Hanifa Nu'man ibn Thabit (80-150 H.) who fix their gaze towards searching after the bases of *Qiyas*, analogical deduction, and towards the rules and principles deducible from the Quran and *Hadith*, on which they lay the bases of their arguments and judgments. Sometimes they give preference to *Qiyas* or analogical deduction over the *Hadith al-Wahid* (cf. Al-Ghalib, *op.cit.*, pp. 54-55). As a matter of fact, it is the view directly opposed to that of *Ahl-al-Hadith*, who always give preference to *Hadith al-Wahid* over the *Qiyas*.

It is interesting to note that the *Ahl-e-Hadith*, the topic of our present consideration, is an Urdu word and it points specifically to a group of people comprising both learned and commonality, who subscribe to the principles cited and explained at the opening section of our discussion. In comparison, the Arabic terminology 'Ahl al-Hadith' points to the learned section of the Muslims who used to hold views elicited directly from the Quran and *Hadith vis-a-vis* the analogical deduction elicited through logical speculation and rational arguments, which later on blossomed into the legal tradition of *Fiqh*.

For that reason, in order to distinguish the experts of one group from the other, the learned experts of the *Ahl al-Hadith* group are called *Faqih-ul-Hadith* whereas the learned experts of the *Ahl-ur-Rayy* are called *Faqih-ul-Fitya*. The former give expert opinion on any subject that is, *fatawa*, on the basis of Quran and *Hadith*, and deprecate those legalistic experts (*Muftis*) who give *fatawa* on the basis of *Qiyas*.

Shah Wali Allah Muhaddith Dehlavi brought out this problem prominently in his famous work *Hujjat tu-llahil Balighah* and he confronted therein the attitude of *Ahl al-Hadith* with that of *Ahl ar-Rayy* and discussed their merits and demerits thread-bare and, at the end, he demonstrated the sincerity and rightness of the *Ahl al-Hadith* in matters of correctly following the religious doctrines of the holy Prophet. In course of his discussion, he brought out the confrontation of the two factions conspicuously, as in reality, being a case of *ijtihad* versus *taqlid* (Dr. Muhammad Athar Ali: *Shah Wali Allah's Concept of Ijtihad and Taqlid*, Ph.D. Thesis, Chittagong University, published by B.I.I.T. Dhaka).

Moreover, Shah Wali Allah wrote a documentary book on the vices of shirk and *bida'ah* and also strongly advocated the abolition of various overt and covert types of anti-Islamic innovations from the Muslim society. During his life time, in the 18<sup>th</sup> century C.E., he found three sources of unwanted and undesirable innovations which bedeviled and disrupted Muslim society throughout the world, viz (a) introduction of local customs, usage and superstition (b) introduction of foreign influence antagonistic to the values of Islam and (c) anti-Islamic innovations invented by the Muslims themselves for unwholesome worldly gains.

He wrote about two hundred books propounding the Islamic doctrines in their pristine purity, analyzing side by side the local, foreign and invented customs and usage that ringed around Islamic tenets and encrusted the purity of Islam, almost throttling it into suffocation. He vehemently condemned these innovations and called for eliminating them from the Muslim society (c.f. Muin-ud-Din Ahmad Khan: *A Bibliographical Introduction*, Chapter I; and "Shah Wali Allah's Conception of Ijtihad and Taqlid", J.P.H.S. Vol. vii, pt. iii 1959). To perform this arduous job, he advocated the revival of fresh research, *ijtihad*, in all sectors of life. He endeavoured to prove that ever-fresher research or *ijtihad* is a bounden duty, an inalienable right and an indispensable obligation in the make-up of the Islamic attitude of life. This drastic reformative thought of Shah Wali Allah was forcefully championed by his grandson Shah Ismail Shahid who wrote a pamphlet entitled: *Taqwiyatul Iman*, rejecting in relentless terms *shirk*, *bida'at* and *taqlid*, that is, holding co-sharer with Allah in reverence and worship, superstitious innovation in religious performance, and imitation of any person other than the holy Prophet and his Companions. In this treatise, Shah Ismail took light directly from the holy Quran and the Sunnah of the holy Prophet and enthused the Muslims to re-build their life style on the pure values of Islam. In his advocacy of radical reform in religion, society and politics, he went to a rigid extreme which produced counter-blast from the traditional conservative social milieu (Muhammad Ali's 18 Questions against *Taqwiyatul Iman*: J.A.S.B. Vol. 1, 1832, pp. 479-99 (cf. *History of the Fara'idi Movement*, of the present writer, p. 101 and Moulana Mukhlesur Rahman: *Sharh*

*al-Sudur fi Daf' al-Shurur az Radd-i-Taqwiyal al-Iman*, cf. *History of the Fara'idi Movement*, p.102).

Shah Ismail, however, became a disciple of Sayyid Ahmad Brelavi soon afterwards and produced another work depicting the combined views of the Sayyid and Mawlana Abdul Hayy Fulti, which was generally accepted as representative of reformative views of Sayyid Ahmad Shahid, though the impact of Ismail's radicalism is clearly recognisable in it. It was entitled: *Siratul Mustaqim* and Shah Ismail says therein that, although the general usage of following and imitating (*taqlid*) any of the four *Madhhabs* is correct, yet any limitation of the knowledge (*ilm*) of the holy Prophet (sm) within the boundaries of the opinions of any one Imam or *Mujtahid* is not befitting enough. Rather, if any *Sahih Hadith* comes to the hands, then following the *Hadith* is necessary in that case, it would not be lawful to set aside the *Hadith* in order to follow the opinion of any Imam or *Mujtahid* (cf. Abdur Rahim Zaberi: *Tadkirah –e- Sadiqah*, p. 94, Quoted by Ghalib, *op. cit.*, p. 265). As a matter of fact, Shah Wali Allah had contended that *Sahih Hadith* deserves preference over *Qiyas* or analogy. He quoted Imam Abu Hanifa as saying: "if you get a *Sahih Hadith* which contradicts my opinion, then you must leave aside my opinion and follow the *Hadith* (Dr. Md. Athahar Ali: "Shah Wali Allah's Concept of Ijtihad and Taqlid," Ph. D. Thesis, Chittagong University 1993, p. 143, since published by B.I.I.T. from Dhaka).

Considering the matter from the historical perspective, it is obvious that the Islamic four step methodology of taking decision, viz. in the light of (a) the Quranic direction, (b) Prophetic Sunnah and (c) the rational matter-of-fact consideration of *Ijtihad* and (d) justified decision) in a word, on the basis of Quran-Sunnah-Ijtihad-Rayy, as evident from the holy Prophet's interlocution with Mu'adh ibn Jabal while sending him as the Amir or governor to Yamen (Iqbal: *Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*), had remain current till the early generation of the Companions of the Prophet, the age of the *Taba'ye*, such as, we find in the cases of seven *Fuqaha* of Madinah amongst who Imam Qasim bin Muhammad bin Abu Bakr (r.) and Salem bin Abdullah ibn Umar (r.)

were prominent. They were called *Faqih al-Hadith*, that is, legal experts of the Prophetic Tradition. The age of legalism, in fact, began thereafter wherein Imam Abu Hanifa, Imam Shafi'i, Imam Malik, Imam Abu Yusuf, Imam Muhammad Shaybani and others adopted the analogy or *Qiyas* of the *Mantiq*, the Greek logical deduction from the argumentative method of Aristotelian *sylogism* and began to give their considered decision or *fatawa* on various subjects on the basis of it. For that reason, they came to be known as *Ahl ur-Rayy*, that is, rational thinkers. The *Ahl ur-Rayy* elicited their decisions by means of a four-step argumentation namely Quran-Sunnah-Ijma-Qiyas instead of the earlier four step methodology of Quran-Sunnah-Ijtihad-Rayy. Since then the researchers of the Islamic Shariah got divided into two types of legal experts, confronting one with the other as *Ahl al-Hadith* versus *Ahl ur-Rayy*.

Since then *Ahl al-Hadith* was, however, a group of learned people, which Shah Wali Allah cited as such. Probably it was Shah Ismail, who for the first time endeavoured to introduce their ideology amongst the commonality of the Muslims. Shah Wali Allah's family belonged to the *Hanafi Madhhab*. Even though he had somewhat strong leanings to the intellectual contemplation of Imam Shafi'i, yet, in practice he remained stuck to the *Hanafi* usage in religious performance. Shah Ismail, however, seems to get so much enamoured with the idea of practising *Hadith* that, he introduced the Shafi'i and Hambali practice of raising hands in the takbir of salat and pronouncing amin loudly at the end of reciting *Sura Fatihah*, which practices are said to be upheld by a great number of *Hadith*. Consequently those who followed him in these practices came to be known as *Rafi Yadayn*, that is, raisers of hands. *Ahl-e-Hadith* movement in this subcontinent was obviously born out of this embryonic stage.

Following the martyrdom of the Sayyid and Shah Ismail (ra.) at Balakot in 1831 C.E. Mawlana Balayet Ali (1790-1852 C.E.) was elected as the Chief Khalifah of Sayyid Ahmad Shahid at Patna. He wrote a booklet in Persian language entitled "Amal bi'l-Hadith" (Practising Hadith) which was published in 1837 C.E. in which he confronted the following Hadith with the usage of following of *Fiqh* (jurisprudence). He contended that, the primal objective of Islam is



to make human beings the followers of the Quran and the *Hadith*; so that, if any matter or judgment is found in the *Fiqh* which stands opposed to these source springs, then one must leave it off and follow the biddings of the Quran and the Hadith. Because, the motive behind following the *Fiqh* is to follow the Quran and the Hadith, therefore, in matters of such confrontation there is no way out besides following the Quran and the Hadith. Rather, it can be reasonably said that under such circumstances if a *Hanafi* Muslim gives up the following of the judgment of the *Fiqh* and follows the *Hadith*, he would be a better *Hanafi* (cf. Muin-ud-Din Ahmed Khan: *History of the Fadra'idi Movement*, 1948, p. 60)

Maulana Belayat Ali of Patna was a descendant of the renowned Sadiqpuri family. As the Chief Khalifah of Sayyid Ahmad Shahid, he worked in Bihar and U.P. (Uttar Pradesh) to popularize the concept of following *Hadith*. In this regard, he wrote the booklet: *Amal bi'l-Hadith*, which stands as the most important exposition of the *Ahl-e-Hadith* movement in the Indian subcontinent. At the same time, his younger brother Maulana Inayat Ali worked in Northern Bengal, who was placed in leadership of the movement in Bengal to succeed Shahid Titu Mir. He did the yeoman's job in popularizing *Hadith* in the eastern zone of British India (*ibid.* pp. 78-80; and Ghalib, *op.cit.*, p. 271).

As a matter of fact, it was Sayyid Miyan Nadhir Husain Dehlavi, who succeeded in popularizing extensively the concept of following the *Hadith* in preference to any *Madhhab* (school of law) and the *Jihadi* spirit of Sayyid Ahmad Shahid and Shah Ismail Shahid in 1850's onwards and also succeeded in establishing *Ahl-e-Hadith* as an erstwhile Islamic revivalist movement through the dedicated efforts of his students of *Hadith* who were innumerable and wide-spread activist throughout British India (Dr. Muhammad Ishaq: *Ilm-e-Hadithe Bharatiya Upamahadesher Abadan [in Bengali language]*. I.F. Dhaka, 1993 pp. 176-77; Ghalib, *op. cit.*, p. 320).

Latterly Nawab Siddiq Hasan Khan Bhopali (1832-1890 C.E.) and Maulana Abdul Wahhab Dehlavi (1866 – 1933 C.E.) became prominent amongst those who made the *Ahl-e-Hadith* movement a self-sufficient expanding organization. Moulana Bhopali founded in

1895 C.E., 'Jamaat-e-Guraba-e- Ahl-e-Hadith' as a branch of the movement and published a monthly journal therefrom entitled "Sahifa-e-Ahl-e-Hadith" in 1920 C.E.

Following the independence of India and Pakistan, the Ahl-e-Hadith movement turned its gaze towards Karachi, the capital city of Pakistan and organized a movement centering round it in 1963 C.E. In India, the prominent students of Sayyid Miyan Nidhir Husain, such as, Hafez Abdullah Ghazipuri, Hafez Abdul Aziz Rahimabadi, Shamsul Haq Azimabadi etc. set up an all-India Hadith Conference at Arah of Bihar in 1970, the name of the Conference was changed into "Markazi Jamiat-i-Ahl-e-Hadith Hind", which now subsists at the Urdu Bagar of Delhi. Besides, at the Indian state of Kerala, there is a strong movement of *Ahl-e-Hadith*.

Following the emergence of Pakistan, a wide range *Pakistan Markazi Jami'at-e-Hadith* was organised centering round Lahore. Maulana Muhammad Daud Ghaznavi (1895 – 1963 C.E.) Maulana Muhammad Gundalavi (d. 1984 C.E) succeeded each other to the Supreme leadership of the organization. In addition, there are numerous smaller organizations of *Ahl-e-Hadith* thriving here and there in different parts of India and Pakistan.

In 1914 the Anjuman-e-Hadith Bangla and Assam, was organised by the Bangali and Assamese students of Maulana Sayyid Miyan Nadhir Husain. Since 1916, it came to be regarded as a branch of All India Ah-e-Hadith Conference.

Latterly, in 1946 C.E. 'Nikhil Bonga O Assam Jami'at-e-Hadith' was formed under the leadership of Maulana Abdullahil Kafi (1900 – 1960 C.E) at Calcutta. On partition of Bengal in 1948, the centre of the above organization was transferred from Calcutta to Pabna, whereupon there emerged in West Bengal "Anjuman-e-Ahl-e-Hadith" Pashchim Bongo in 1951 C.E. On the other hand, the "Nikhil Bonga O Assam Jamat-e-Ahl-e-Hadith" which was plying at Pabna was changed to "Purba Pakistan Jami'at-e-Ahl-e-Hadith" in 1953 and in 1956 its central office was shifted to Dhaka. In 1960 C.E., on the death of Moulana Abdullahil Kafi, his nephew Dr. Muhammad Abdul Bari succeeded him as President. Presently its name has been further changed to "Bangaldesh Jami'at-e-Ahl-e-Hadith (*ibid.* pp. 385-402).

Recently in 1990's, at the initiative of a young teacher of the Rajshahi University Dr. Muhammad Asadullah Al-Ghalib, a young men's Ahl-e-Hadith Association: *Ahl-e-Hadith Juba Sangstha* emerged at Rajshahi with the central aim of effecting world-wide unification of the Muslim Ummah. Under the dynamic leadership of Al-Ghalib, it has quickly developed into a widely popular organization of the *Ahl-e-Hadith* in the northern region of Bangladesh. It has established a thriving Hadith Foundation at the city of Rajshahi and a large educational Institution in the vicinity of the city where in course of a single decade, a full-fledged Primary, Secondary and College level education has already emerged and steps are on the way to elevate it into a Modern University.

Thus, to sum up, in the Arabic usage "Ahl al-Hadith" denotes the group of learned *ulama* who adhered to the genuine *Hadith* or narrated tradition of the holy Prophet (sm.) *vis-a-vis* the adherents of various level of opinions of the *Fuqahah*, popularly known as "Ahl al-Rayy." Whereas the Urdu usage of *Ahl-e-Hadith* denotes a wide range of people, learned as well as common folk who adhere to the ideology of practising *Hadith* directly *vis-a-vis* the adherents of different *Madhhabs* or schools of law, such as *Hanafi*, *Shafi'i* etc. This *Ahl-e-Hadith* are a group of Muslims who profess to follow the principle of *Ijtihad* as against the principle of *Taqlid*. They abound in the South Asian Subcontinent.

Secondly, as a growing Islamic revivalist movement, the *Ahl-e-Hadith* consider Shah Wali Allah Muhaddith Dehlavi's *Hujjatullahi'l-Balighah*, Shah Ismail's *Taqwiyatul Iman*, the joint work of Shah Ismail and Sayyid Ahmad Shahid's *Sirat al-Mustaqim*, Maulavi Belayat Ali's *Amal bi'l-Hadith* and *Miyar-e-Haqq* as the basic documentaries of their ideology.

Thirdly, there is no doubt that the *Ahl-e-Hadith* movement has basically emerged from the fold of *Tariqah-i-Muhammadiyah* movement. Because, *Ahl-e-Hadith* movement cannot be conceived without Shah Ismail Shahid and there is no evidence indicating his motivation to launch any reform movement whatsoever before his joining hands with Sayyid Ahmad Shahid. He wrote *Taqwiyatul Iman* after joining it. A comparative study of the two works shows

that his uncompromising extremism in the former got minimised and relaxed in many cases in the latter under the spiritual influence of the Sayyid. The reason behind it was his initiation into the Sufi Order of Sayyid Ahmad Shahid through *bay'ah* and gaining of *qalbi dhikir* that brings *itminan-e-qalb*, which was highly rated by Shah Wali Allah in his *Hujjat, Tafhimat-i-Ilahiyah* and *Qawl-al-Jamil*.

It is narrated that one day Shah Ismail went to see the Sayyid in the company of his brother-in-law Maulana Abdul Hayy Fulti. They arrived at his camp at the time of *Fajr* prayer. The prayer had started led by the Sayyid. Shah Ismail joined the prayes and he got so much *itminan-i-qalb*, peace of mind in it, that he at once decided to become a disciple of the Sayyid. Since then the Shah never left the company of the Sayyid till both of them were martyred at Balakot in 1831 C.E. All through Shah Ismail was a disciple, a close friend and the chief Lieutenant of the Sayyid. His gaining of spiritual blessings, *faiz*, from the *Naqshbandiyah-Mujaddidiyah Tariqah* of Sayyid Ahmad Shahid, with which he synthesized the *Qadiriyyah* and *Chishtiyah Tariqah* also, and called it *Tariqah-i-Muhammadiyah*, is evident. Therefore, the complete separation of *Ahl-e-Hadith* movement from the spiritual Sufi Orders, particularly its cut-off relations with the spiritual moorings of *Tariqah-i-Muhammadiyah* movement, calls for a close re-investigation.

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## CHAPTER-8

## Fara'idi Movement: A Historical Interpretation\*

*Fara'idi*, which is spelt in Bengali as 'Faraizi', was a religious revivalist movement, launched by Haji Shariat Allah in Bengal in C.E. 1818.<sup>1</sup> It is a significant historical coincidence that *Tariqah-i-Muhammadiyah* movement, which had similar aims and objectives in view, was started by Sayyid Ahmad Shahid at Delhi during the same year.<sup>2</sup> The question posed by some scholars as to which of them was older than the other, therefore, does not arise at all.<sup>3</sup>

Broadly speaking, the *Fara'idi* movement was a manifestation of the Islamic revivalist tendency which had become a conspicuous phenomena in the Muslim world during the nineteenth century C.E. In this global perspective it is to be classified with such other revivalist movements such as the *Muwahhidun* (so-called Wahhabism) of Arabia, *Salafiyah* movement of Egypt, *Sanunsiyah* movement of Libya, *Fulani* movement of Nigeria, *Paduri* movement of Indonesia and *Tariqah-i-Muhammadiyah* and *Ahl-e-Hadith* movements of Indo-Pak-Bangladesh subcontinent, which strove in common (i) to revive the simple and uncompromising Unitarianism (*Tawhid*) of the Quran and (ii) the normative practice or *Sunnah* of the Holy Prophet as transmitted and demonstrated by the first three generations of Muslims, collectively called *Salf-i-Salihin*, to purge the Muslim society of polytheistic accretions (*shirk*) and sinful innovation (*bid'at*) which crept into it in course of time through foreign influence in the form of survival of un-Islamic local customs; (iv) to resuscitate the Muslim *Ummah* by rehabilitating the fundamental Islamic values of equality and brotherhood of the Muslims, unity and integrity of the Muslim world and (v) lastly, to arouse the Muslims to the supreme need of waging a holy war or *jihad* for the liberation of the Muslim lands (*Dar-ul-Islam*) from the hands of infidels. The last impulse also led the proponents of these movements to strive overtly or covertly for the establishment of an Islamic order and a political State.

Moreover, as a matter of policy, all the protagonists of the movements imbued themselves with the Islamic spirit of egalitarianism and they turned directly to the Muslim masses for support and cooperation. In their appeal to the masses, they unreservedly condemned all types of oppression (*zulm*) and exploitation of man by man, and put their weight heavily on the side of the struggling masses against the indigenous as well as foreign exploiters. Their caseless effort and vigorous propaganda stirred the Muslim masses to a considerable extent and energized them to undertake the *jihad* or liberation movements in different parts of the Muslim world during the 19th Century C.E. The spirit of struggle bequeathed by these *Jihad* movements in Indonesia, Indo-Pakistan-Bangladesh, Arabia, Egypt and North Africa played an important role in popularising Muslim freedom movements during the first half of the 20th century C.E.

It is not, enough, however, to understand the *Fara'idi* movement merely from the global perspective of Islamic revivalism whose characteristics we have roughly enumerated above. For grasping its real significance it must also be judged in its local historical perspective, which alone will help determine the measurement of its practicability and the extent of its success and failure. On this latter plane, it must stand a comparison, too, with other Islamic revivalist movements, which crossed its path or interacted with it, such as, *Tariqah-i-Muhammadiyah*, *Ta'aiyuni* and *Ahl-i-Hadith*. This is attempted below.

Being a manifestation of Islamic revivalism, the *Fara'idi* movement naturally had a good deal in common with the *Tariqah-i-Muhammadiyah*. The former, however, remained confined to, and spread intensively in Eastern Bengal and parts of Assam which have now been incorporated into Bangladesh and it carried with it the vigour and personality of primordial exuberance of East Bengali masses. *Tariqah-i-Muhammadiyah*, on the other hand, arose out of the politically decaying Muslim society of Hindustan. i.e. U.P. and Delhi, and then it extended its influence to Bihar, Bengal, Deccan and North-West Frontier. Moreover although, to begin with, both had chalked out a purely religious program, the divergent social, political and economic forces prevalent in their places of origin,

soon gave to each a somewhat different type of orientation. Whereas the *Fara'idi* movement soon developed a strong socio-economic bias, *Tariqah-i-Muhammadiyah*, assumed a socio-political character. Indeed within a decade or so the *Fara'idi* movement got entangled into a fierce economic struggle for safeguarding the rights of the Muslim peasantry *vis-a-vis* the oppressive and extortionate policy of European indigo painters and *bania* farm-lords of the Permanent Settlement, while *Tariqah-i-Muhammadiyah* flared up into a *jihad* campaign against Māharaja Ranjit Singh's Sikh rule of the Punjab.<sup>5</sup>

It may, however, be noted that popularity of *Tariqah-i-Muhammadiyah* had grown in Bengal, in the first phase, under the direct contact of Sayyid Ahmad Shahid from 1821 to 1823 C.E., and in a second phase, it developed into a mass movement in 24 Parganahs and Nadiya under the leadership of Bengali disciple of Sayyid Ahmad, Mir Nithar 'Ali<sup>6</sup> *alias* Titu Mir from 1827 to 1831 C.E. In this second phase, it also stuck up amidst Bengali Permanent Settlement Zamindari atmosphere, like the *Fara'idi* movement, in an economic struggle against the *bania* farm-lords and European planters.<sup>7</sup> Although, this phase was short-lived, it proved to be a counterpart of the *Fara'idi* movement in West Bengal. But the economic bias of Haji Shari'at Allah and Titu Mir's movements *vis-a-vis* the political bias of other phases of *Tariqah-i-Muhammadiyah* misled many scholars to judge both as *Fara'idi*.<sup>8</sup> In fact, Shari'at Allah and Titu Mir's recognition of economic realities was no proof of their alleged 'Ferazism', but reflected the mood and the crisis of the rural society of Bengal during the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. As such, it rather underlines, as we have already emphasised, the importance of studying these religious reform movements not only from the angle of their universal archetype but also in their local historical setting.

It is neither possible nor desirable to go into the details of the history of Bengal here. Suffice it to mention that Bengal came under Muslim rule in the beginning of the 13<sup>th</sup> century C.E. and continued to be a bastion of Muslim power in Indo-Pak subcontinent down to the time of the Battle of Plassey in C.E. 1757. This last incident brought the Englishmen to the political saddle of Bengal, Bihar and

Orissa and sealed the political fate of the Bengali Muslims for 190 years till the emergence of Pakistan in C.E. 1947. This long era of subjugation can be subdivided into two periods, namely the rule of the East India Company from 1757 to 1858 and the rule of the British crown from 1858 to 1947.

In the long and otherwise glorious history of the Muslim community of Bengal, which forms, after Java the second largest concentration of Muslim population in the present day world, a hundred years of the Company rule stands out as the darkest period, in the course of which the Muslims sank into the lowest abyss of their mundane existence. Indeed, during this period, the Muslims were systematically sacked from the military organisation and civil services. The old landed gentry who provided leadership and patronage to the masses were dispossessed by means of lease-farming *zamindaris* to the highest bidders and eventually a new class of *bania zamindars* or commercial landlords was raised through Permanent Settlement of *zamindaris* from C.E. 1793 onwards, whose greed for wealth coincided with the aggrandising policy of the Company's servants to fleece the down-trodden peasantry.<sup>9</sup> On the top of it, hundreds and thousands of well-to-do Muslim families were ruined by the so-called Resumption Proceedings of the rent-free or *Lakhiraj* lands.<sup>10</sup> These changes impoverished all classes of Muslims beyond-imagination and cut off the Muslim upper class politically and economically from the masses of the people.<sup>11</sup>

On the other hand, the Plassey debacle was affected by a conspiracy of the servants of the East India Company against the rebellious Muslim Nawabdom of Bengal; the plot was actually hatched in collusion with some influential Hindu nobles of Bengal and Bihar and its success was brought about especially by active co-operation of the Hindu *banias* of Calcutta,<sup>12</sup> who later on popularly came to be known as *gomashdahs* or black agents of the Englishmen. Naturally, under the regime of the 'Company Bahadur' this class of *banias* rose to pre-eminence and under the protection and callous patronage of their white masters, they lorded over the people.<sup>13</sup> Their unabridged atrocities ruined within a few decades the prosperous and internationally flourishing textile, silk, sugar and salt



industries of Bengal<sup>14</sup> and the worst sufferers, especially in the province of Bengal, were those Muslim “artisans whose hands wielded plough in one season and spindle in another.”

To add to the miseries of the people, this was followed by the scourging of the new class of *bania* landlords, on the one hand and the heartless European indigo planters on the other, which reduced the helpless peasantry to sub-humans level of subsistence.<sup>15</sup> Thus, the loss of the political power of the Muslims soon produced dire economic consequence, which has been likened by an English officer in Calcutta Review of 1844, as a “loathsome revolution which turned Bengal into a regime comparable to the Robespierian era of the Revolutionary France.”<sup>16</sup>

A very unfortunate trend in the life of the Muslims of Bengal had been the ceaseless effort of their upper class to adapt themselves to a foreign-based Persian culture, which affected a cleavage between them and the commonality of Muslims who nourished themselves with local culture and cultivated the Bengali language and literature. Nevertheless, from the beginning of the Muslim rule, writers and poets of Bengali literature used to receive generous patronage from their Turkish and Pathan rulers which was narrowed down under the Mughal governors owing to their extraordinary love for the outlandish Persian literature.

The historical reason for this predicament is not far to seek. The Mughal conquest of Bengal and the establishment of Mughal administration in Bengal under Emperor Akbar and Emperor Jahangir took a considerably long time on account of the vehement opposition of the Pathan element with whom the local Muslim aristocracy had also joined hands. In such a struggling process of the establishment of the Mughal rule in Bengal, the local Muslim aristocracy had, therefore, to be eliminated from power along with the Pathan rulers. The new Muslim aristocracy built up by the Mughals in Bengal mainly comprised of officialdom who had accompanied the Mughal conquerors from U.P., Delhi and elsewhere. Consequently, the new class had no attachment to Bengali language and literature, which they regarded, rather repulsively as a part and parcel of Hindu culture. This attitude not only polarized the two strata of the society and widened the

cleavage between them but also psychologically antagonized one from the other. As a result, the new upper class was unable to fill up the gap, which was probably one of the main reasons why there was no popular uprising either at the time of Plassey or in the process of the elimination of the Muslim upper class by the English rulers.

The consequences of this had been far-reaching especially under the foreign rulers. Dr. R.C. Majumdar observes that all over India the Muslim culture and civilization had become a spent force at the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century C.E. Originally Mawlana Karamat 'Ali claimed himself to be a disciple of Sayyid Ahmad Shahid and also his movement to be a branch of *Tariqah-i-Muhammadiyah*. He even went to the extent of claiming his movement to be the truly inspired one by the reform ideas of Sayid Ahmad and condemned the other branches, such as, the Patna school and *Ahl-e-Hadith* as disruptionist Wahhabism. He also condemned *Fara'idi* movement as the dissensionist Kharijism of Bengal. As against these reform movements, he championed the conservative standpoint of *taqlid* or imitation of the *mazhab*.<sup>22</sup> Might not one, therefore, say that in course of time he reverted to old conservative standpoint of *taqlid* or imitation of the *mazhab*.<sup>22</sup> Might not one, therefore, say that in course of time he reverted to old conservatism; and consequently his reform movement turned into a revisionism not only of *Tariqah-i-Muhammadiyah* but also of Islamic revivalist trend as a whole?

In this mood, Mawalana Karamat 'Ali aimed at finding a *modus vivendi* or developing a compromise system, between Muslim conservatism and Islamic revivalistic trends; and since after the holocaust of 1857 C.E., he sought a further compromise also between Islam and modernism and joined hands with Nawab Abdul Latif, the leader of Muslim modernism and unleashed a most un-Bengali-like intolerant religious propaganda which soon degenerated into a fanatic type of religious disputation called *bahas* or *mubahisa*, and sometimes also branded as *munakasha* or altercation. As a religious preacher he, nevertheless, played an important role in spreading the knowledge of religious rites and rituals in the old conservative fashion moving through the length and breadth of Bengal. Moreover, his support to Nawab Abdul Latif's policy of loyalism and modernism gave fillip to the growth

of Muslim modernism in Bengal as well as in 'Aligarh.<sup>23</sup> As such the *Ta'aisyuni* movement proved beneficial, though indirectly, as an auxiliary to liberal modernism.

As we have indicated above, the *Fara'idi* and *Tariqah-i-Muhammadiyah* gained considerable popularity in Bengal from C.E. 1818 to 1970 and both promoted occasional mass risings at different places. The third Islamic revivalist movement, namely *Ahl-e-Hadith*, however, won little support in Bengal; because, on account of its avowed radicalism and uncompromising intellectualism, it proved least viable in the religiously ingorant<sup>26</sup> and tenaciously conservative *Hanafī* society there.

The reasons for the popularity of *Fara'idi* and *Tariqa-i-Muhammadiyah* during the 19<sup>th</sup> century may be sought in the history of the progress of Islam in Bengal. Islam was brought to Bengal by a handful of Muslim traders, *Sufi* missionaries and Turkish conquerors, who came from outside, and the rank and file of the ever-growing Muslim community was swelled by local converts from Buddhism and Hinduism. In fact, Islam was propagated there not so much as a court religion or as the creed of the ruling class, but as a religion of humanity, which upheld all that was valuable in man. Islam in Bengal has rightly been described as a gift of the *sufis*, who were humanist par excellence and who placed before them the ideal of *khidmat-i-khalq*, service to the creation as the coveted worship to the Creator Allah.

At any rate, in the gigantic socio-religious expansion of Islam in Bengal from the 13<sup>th</sup> to the 19<sup>th</sup> centuries C.E. many local beliefs and superstitious customs and ceremonies crept imperceptibly into the body politic of local Muslim society, which hedged round the fundamental teachings and institutions of Islam. But, as long as the Muslims held political supremacy over the country, they were economically well off or remained satisfied with their lot. Economic affluence, specially of the upper class Muslims, also enabled them to maintain a good measure of cultural and intellectual superiority over their non-Muslim neighbours.

Moreover, although the Muslims of Bengal had acquired an attitude of fatalism under the overbearing influence of indigenous as well as

pre-Islamic Iranian mysticism, they had also grown a strong sense of religious tolerance under the impact of the self-same Islamic mysticism. Naturally, they remained oblivious to the un-Islamic accretions in their society until they were beaten low by their English conquerors and their lackeys during the latter half of the 18<sup>th</sup> century and the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century C.E. A feeling then gradually gained ground among them that their political decadence – the root cause of their untold sufferings may have been due to their deviation from the original teachings of Islam. The remedy consequently lay in penitence to Allah and return to the original doctrines of Islam. This provided a fertile ground for Islamic revivalism, which was taken full advantage of by the revivalist leaders of the time. In this context, the *Fara'idi* and *Tariqah-i-Muhammadiyah* movements were especially favoured by the Bengali Muslims, because they maintained their link with both *Hanafi* school of law and as well as *Sufi* mysticism while demanding penitence sought to lead the way to return to the fundamental doctrines of Islam.

The elimination of the Muslim upper class from public life during the latter half of the 18<sup>th</sup> century C.E. and thereafter, as we have briefly noticed above, they were politically and economically cut off its perennial source of leadership at a time when effective leadership was demanded in the rural society for defending the rights of the peasantry from the oppressive hands of the *gomashtahs*, *zamindars* and indigo planters, most of whom came from outside and were motivated by the desire for making quick money. As the requisite leadership was not forthcoming from impoverished and uprooted Muslim upper class, the masses sought to create it from within their own rank and file. The emergence of the *Fara'idi* leader, Haji Shari'at Allah, in 1818 C.E. and the extension of *Tariqah-i-Muhammadiyah* to Bengal from 1820 and especially by dint of the emergence of Shahid Titu Mir about 1827 C.E., therefore, coincided well with this new mass aspiration.

Both these leaders rose from the mass society and called upon their co-religionists to turn to Allah in penitence, to purify their character and mend their ways in order to alleviate their woes. At the same time, they gave a clarion call asking the people to throw away

lethargy and to unite as brothers-in-faith in defence of their natural rights through mutual help and combined action. Thus these reform movements held out the promise of fulfilling two burning demands of the time, *viz.* guiding the people back to the true principles of Islam and protecting the masses from the oppressions of the farm-lords and planters.

In the last analysis, it was this dual reason coupled with systematic preachings and propaganda that gave mass popularity to these reform movements in rural Bengal; and so long as they continued to provide effective leadership to the down-trodden masses, and so long as there remained the slightest hope of the success of these movements in regaining the lost prosperity, their popularity persisted. Their popularity fell on the wane, only after the ruthless suppression of the *jihad* movement by the British Government from C.E. 1863 to 1870, which also coincided with the rising tide of Muslim modernism in Bengal. Muslim modernism indeed stole a march over Islamic revivalism everywhere in the Muslim world at the turn of the twentieth century and gradually moved towards replacing the revivalist trends by rational and scientific attitude and middle class leadership, which process is still continuing. Thus, apart from introducing religious reform, these movements also represented an attempt of the masses to fill the vacuum in leadership created by the elimination of the Muslim upper class during the latter half of the 18<sup>th</sup> century C.E. and the need of whose presence was acutely felt until the emergence of a strong Muslim middle class in Bengal at the beginning of the twentieth century C.E.

### **Growth and Development**

The term *Fara'idi* or *Fara'izi* (فرائضى) is derived from '*fara'id*' or '*fara'iz*' plural of '*faridah*' (فريضة). It means 'obligatory duties enjoined by Allah'. The *Fara'idis* are, therefore, those who aim at enforcing the obligatory religious duties. The exponent of the movement, Haji Shari'at Allah, however, interpreted the term in a broad sense to include all religious duties whether obligatory or supererogatory as enjoined by Allah as well as by the holy Prophet. The utmost emphasis was laid by him on the five fundamentals of Islam *viz.*, (i) profession of the *Kalimah* or Faith, (ii) performing five times daily prayers, (iii) fasting during the month of *Ramadan*

(iv) payment of *zakat* and (v) Hajj, pilgrimage to Makkah. The object of this emphasis was to focus the attention of the Muslims to these primary duties, as in their enthusiasm to celebrate various local customs and ceremonies, the Muslims of Bengal had become utterly negligent to the fundamental teachings of Islam.<sup>25</sup>

Haji Shari'at Allah was born in C.E. 1781, at Shamail, a village in the Madaripur district, which was at that time a part of Bakarganj district but was transferred in C.E. 1873 to the then existing district of Faridpur. In C.E. 1799, he made a pilgrimage to Makkah and returned to Bengal after an absence of 20 years. He studied religious sciences at Makkah under Shaikh Tahir Sombal, a doctor of *Hanafi* school, and soon after his return started the *Fara'idi* movement in C.E. 1818. After a short while, he went on a second pilgrimage to Makkah with the special object of consulting his teacher in matters of his reforms. On his return in 1820 C.E., he added *Sufi* mysticism to his religious reform scheme and the movement gathered momentum. In course of time it gained popularity throughout Eastern Bengal. Haji Shari'at Allah died in C.E. 1840, leaving the leadership of the movement to his son and successor, Muhsin al-Din Ahmad *alias* Dudu Miyan."<sup>26</sup>

Haji Shari'at Allah claimed himself to be a follower of the *Hanafi* school of law; but like other Islamic revivalists of the time, such as the *Muwahhidun* or *Wahhabis* of Arabia, he insisted on the complete acceptance and strict observation of the pure Unitarianism of Islam and condemned all deviations from the original doctrines as *shirk* (polytheism) and *bid'ah* (sinful innovation). Hence he prohibited numerous rites and ceremonies connected with birth, marriage, death, such as *Chuttee*, *Puttee*, *Chilla*, *Shabgasht* procession, *Fatihah* and *Urs*. Besides, he condemned Saint-worship, showing undue reverence to the *Pir*, rising of *Ta'ziah* during the Muharram as *shirk* or polytheism. He emphasised the brotherhood of the Muslims, universal justice and social equality and abolished all kinds of social discrimination and caste prejudices from the society.<sup>27</sup>

Haji Shari'at Allah also regarded British rule in Bengal as injurious to the spiritual life of the Muslims. In pursuance of the old school of *Hanafi* law as enunciated in such standard law books as *Hadayah*,

he ruled that the absence of a lawfully appointed Muslim administrator in Bengal deprived the Muslims in this country of the privilege of holding congregational prayers of *Jum'ah* and *'Id*. Although he did not feel himself strong enough to declare *jihād* against the British, he suspended those congregational prayers for until such times, as the-Muslim administration could be re-established. The suspension of the congregational prayers became a peculiarity of the *Fara'idi* movement, which distinguished it from other revivalist movements of the time. These prayers were resumed by the *Fara'idis* only after gaining independence from the British rule in 1947.<sup>28</sup>

A contemporary British medical officer of Indian empire, James Wise considered Haji Shari'at Allah as the first preacher in the swamps of Eastern Bengal to denounce the superstition and corruption, which the Muslims had developed through long contact with Hindu polytheism. "It required a sincere and sympathetic preacher to rouse the apathetic and careless Bengali peasant to enthusiasm", says he, "and no one ever appealed more strongly to the sympathies of the people than Haji Shari'at Allah". He was convinced that the people admired Haji Shari'at Allah's "blameless and exemplary life" and venerated him as a father "able to advise them in seasons of adversity and give consolation in times of affliction".<sup>29</sup> No wonder, therefore, that the *Fara'idi* movement gained wide popularity during the life time of its founder.

The Haji's another contemporary British Indian Civil servant, James Taylor observes that the *Fara'idi* movement spread with "extraordinary rapidity" and soon the Haji succeeded in converting about one-sixth of the population of the districts of Dacca, Faridpur, Bakergonj and Mymensing.<sup>30</sup> The movement gained large following in the district of Tippera (Comilla) at an early stage and during the latter half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century C.E. it extended itself to the districts of Chittagong and Noakhali as well as to the province of Assam.<sup>31</sup> Evidently, Haji Shari'at Allah's clarion call for strengthening the bond of Islam, for purification of life and society and his repeated emphasis on unity, brotherhood and equality of the Muslims evoked spontaneous response from his co-religionists; and the leaderless, impoverished and inflammable Bengali peasant recognised in him a

'Godsend deliverer'. The movement, however, gained the greatest popularity in those places where the new class of Hindu landlords and European indigo planters were powerful and oppressive and where their Muslim tenants outnumbered the Hindu peasantry.

But under the conservative atmosphere of the Bengali society and disruptive socio-economic circumstances, the *Fara'idi* movement did not go unhampered. From the initial stage a section of conservative Muslims had opposed the radicalism of the Haji, and the growing unity of the Muslim peasantry under his leadership soon alarmed the Hindu landlords. As in the case of Titu Mir,<sup>32</sup> so in the case of Haji Shari'at Allah, the Hindu landlords found a suitable occasion to intervene. Taking the advantage of a dispute between the *Fara'idis* and the conservative Muslims on some religious issues, the landlords of Dacca secured his expulsion by the police in C.E. 1831, from Ramnagar or Nayabari where he had set up his propaganda centre.<sup>33</sup> The conservative tendencies of the Bengali Muslims were later on favourably exploited by Mawlana Karamat 'Ali of Jawnpur against the religious radicalism of the Haji,<sup>34</sup> and through continuous involvement with the Hindu landlords and European indigo planters, the movement gradually developed a socio-economic bias. This socio-economic aspect became a dominant feature of the *Fara'idi* movement under Haji Shariat Allah's son, Du'du Miyan and his successors.

The contemporary European writers generally agree that after the Nayabari incident, the Haji acted with great prudence and rarely assumed any other character than that of a religious reformer."<sup>35</sup> They, however, tendentiously charged him with instigating his followers to withhold payment of land revenues to the Hindu landlords. As a matter of fact, he never objected to the payment of lawful land revenues fixed by the government in the usual Rent Roll. But taking advantage of the weakness of the Muslims in the nineteenth century, the new class of Hindu landlords imposed many additional *abwabs* or illegal cess on the peasantry not approved by the government.

An inquiry made by the Magistrate of Faridpur in 1872 C.E. revealed that the landlords levied not less than 23 kinds of illegal cesses on the peasantry. They even realised taxes from the Muslim



tenants for the celebration of the Hindu festivals, such as, *Kali Puja*, *Durga Puja* etc. Haji Shari'at Allah objected to this practice. He particularly opposed laying idolatrous cess on his followers. He, therefore, directed his disciples not to pay these illegal cesses to the landlords. Moreover, he saw no valid reason behind the ban imposed by the Hindu landlords on the slaughter of cow, especially on the occasion of '*Id al-Azha* (the festival of animal sacrifice), as sacrificing of cow was traditional and most convenient in Bengal and as beef provided the Muslims with the cheapest and most delicious meat.<sup>36</sup>

The landlords reacted sharply against this policy of the Haji and did everything in their power to malign him and his followers. Eventually they launched a propaganda campaign in Calcutta Press as well as in their private conversation with the British officials, implicating the *Fara'idis* with rebellious character. In C.E. 1837, they accused Haji Shari'at Allah of attempting to set up a kingdom of his own like that of Titu Mir. They also brought numerous law-suits against the *Fara'idis* in which they gained active co-operation of the European indigo planters. But as their allegations were utterly devoid of truth, they could prove none before the law courts. James Taylor, however, informs us that in 1839 C.E. the Haji was ore than once in the custody of the police for allegedly occasioning affrays and disturbances in Faridpur.<sup>37</sup>

He died in his native village of Shmail in C.E. 1840, at the age of 59 and was buried at the backyard of his residence.<sup>38</sup> He is described as a man of middle height, fair complexion and robust health and he wore a voluminous turban, which matched well with his long and flowing beard. He possessed a strong but amiable personality and according to the popular view, his appearance was beautiful and awe-striking at the same time, which reflected the firmness of his conviction and softness of his heart. Above all, he was a man of wide experience and keen foresight and knew well how to steer his movement clear through rampant political intrigues of his adversary. This is one of the principal reasons why the *Fara'idi* movement could continue and flourish eve though in attenuated form, down to the present day.

On the death of Haji Shari'at Allah, his only son Muhsin al-Din Ahmad *alias* Dudu Miyan was acclaimed the head of the *Fara'idi* movement. Even at an early age he began to play an important role in the *Fara'idi* society, Born in C.E. 1819, he was sent to Makkah about 1831 for schooling. But his father recalled him after a period of 5 years due to his feeling of the infirmity of old age.<sup>39</sup>

At this time, the oppression of the Hindu landlords on the peasantry had exceeded all limits. In C.E. 1842, an English civil servant characterised the Britisher's replacement of the old Mughal landed gentry by the new class of zamindars of Permanent Settlement, as ushering a "loathsome revolution", which subtracted the paternal role of the old nobility towards peasantry with downright commercial interests of the adventurers and speculators.<sup>40</sup> And the head of the Bengal police reported in the same year that these landlords of Faridpur did not care for anything beyond extorting all they could from their tenants by any means.<sup>41</sup> Three decades later, an indigenous civil officer, Magistrate and Poet, Navin Chandra Sen's observations about the Hindu landlords of Madaripur testify that in extorting money they made no discrimination between their Hindu and Muslim tenants.<sup>42</sup> Naturally, being unable to control their tenants peaceably, they maintained a large number of hirelings and clubmen (*latiyals*) in their employ, with whose assistance they hounded the peasantry. Increasing conflict between the Hindu landlords and the *Fara'idi* peasantry towards the end of Haji Shari'at Allah's life necessitated the raising of a volunteer corps of clubmen among the *Fara'idis*. On his return from Makkah, Dudu Miyan was charged with this task. No wonder that the police accused him in C.E. 1838, of abetting the plunder of several houses, but failed to prove their charge before the law courts.<sup>43</sup>

His election to the headship proved a turning point to the *Fara'idi* movement. His youthful exuberance and indomitable spirit, which was held in check so far by the prudent restraint of his father, now sought an outlet for expression. He bethought of the miserable plight of the *Fara'idi* peasantry who were reduced to extremities by the high-handedness of the landlords and felt convinced that his father's policy of passive resistance had made the landlords even more arrogant. Free to choose, he decided to take quick and firm action against them.

The Permanent Settlement had virtually invested the landlords with English type of feudatory rights and reduced the peasantry to near serfdom. Besides, the new class of zamindars being a creation of the British, the greed of the one was marvellously wedded to the interests of the other. This new experiment in land reforms naturally produced semi-anarchic conditions in rural Bengal where the government administration was not only less effective than the authority of the landlord but the government officials could also be manipulated to take sides with the latter. The only check to this vicious circle was the Court of Nizamat Adalat (the then Mughal provincial Supreme Court) at Calcutta, which was, however, beyond the reach of the poor peasantry.<sup>44</sup> Dudu Miyan had before him no other course to make the landlords see reason than the application of force.

At the outset, Dudu Miyan chose to deal with two zamindars, Sikdar of Kanaipur and Ghosh of Faridpur, who had made a league against the *Fara'idi* movement and exceeded all bounds in torturing his followers. In C.E. 1841, he proceeded to Kanaipur at the head of a few hundred clubmen and threatened to take off every brick of the landlord's palace. Thoroughly frightened, the Sikdar bound him down in a solemn promise to treat the *Fara'idi* peasantry with fairness.<sup>45</sup> Next year he proceeded against Ghosh of Faridpur at the head of about 800 men, plundered the residence of Joynarayan Ghosh and carried away his brother Madan Narayan Ghosh who was killed and buried under the river Padma. On this last occasion, 117 *Fara'idis* were arrested, of whom 106 were tried before the Sessions Judge and 22 of them were awarded 7 years of rigorous imprisonment each. Dudu Miyan is also said to have been one of the accused, but was released by the Sessions Judge for the lack of evidence against him.<sup>46</sup>

On account of complicity with the murder of Madan Ghosh, a renowned British Civil Servant, H. Beveridge has regarded Dudu Miyan as devoid of morality. But Mr. Dampier, the head of the Bengal Police, who investigated the case personally, accused the zamindars of having "done everything which could degrade these men (*Fara'idis*), their religion and their females". He rather expressed surprise that "a much more serious and general

disturbance did not occur” and cautioned the Magistrate to keep a strict watch not only over the *Fara'idi* peasantry but also over the Hindu *zamindars*.<sup>47</sup> James Wise testifies that the Hindu zamindars tried to prevent the peasantry from joining the *Fara'idi* movement and punished and tortured the disobedient, whose beards were tied together and red chilli powder was given as snuff.<sup>48</sup> The *Fara'idi* view is that, Madan Ghosh was murdered with a view to giving a lesson to the zamindars and in order to convince them that they could not escape retaliation. At any rate, these adventurously exploits of Dudu Miyan produced the desired results. The landlords were stricken with terror and dared not disturb the peace of the *Fara'idis* by any direct violent means.

These initial victories of Dudu Miyan captured the imagination of the masses and his prestige rose high in the esteem of the downtrodden peasantry who looked upon him as their saviour. Soon his fame spread far and wide, and James Wise says that his name became a household word in the district of Faridpur, Pabna, Bakarganj, Dacca and Noakhali.<sup>49</sup> These incidents also gave added impetus to the spread of the *Fara'idi* movement and drew to its fold not only numerous Muslims who so far stood aloof but also attracted many supporters from among the Hindus and native Christians who sought Dudu Miyan's protection against the landlords. In C.E. 1843, the Bengal police estimated the followers of Dudu Miyan as not less than 80,000.<sup>50</sup>

Unable to check the spread of the *Fara'idi* movement by direct intervention, the *zamindars* began to foment suspicion of the English officials and indigo planters against Dudu Miyan. By their instigation a big English indigo planter, Andrew Dunlop, became a sworn enemy of Dudu Miyan and several times caused him to be arrested and tried for illegal actions.<sup>51</sup> These advances of the English masters led his *gomashtah* Kali Prasad Kanjhi Lal, a Marwari Brahmin, who was the manager of Dunlop's indigo factory at Panch Char, on the war path. Under the protection of his English master, he not only committed high-handedness against the *Fara'idi* peasantry but also endeavoured to champion the cause of the Hindu zamindars against Dudu Miyan. In October, 1846 taking 700 or 800 men including the Hindu Baboos of Panch Char, he made an attack

on Dudu Miyan's residence at Bahadurpur, and according to Dudu Miyan's statement, "they broke the front door and murdered four watchmen and severely wounded others and plundered about one and a half lakh rupees in cash and property."

When Dudu Miyan reported the case to the police, the Hindu police officer, Mrityunjy Ghose sent up the wounded victims to the Magistrate for trial allegedly for holding illegal assembly and for rioting, who advised Dudu Miyan to agree to a compromise. But on further insistence for investigation, the English magistrate proceeded personally towards the spot after about two and half months had elapsed; but instead of going direct from Dacca to Bahadurpur, he first went to Paragram with his retinue and engaged himself in hunting wild buffaloes and kept Dudu Miyan in attendance before him.<sup>52</sup>

Unable to secure justice through legal means, Dudu Miyan finally decided to pay Mr. Dunlop's *gomashtah* with his own coins. While he hunted with the Magistrate at paragram, a party of the *Fara'idis* quietly proceeded in small groups from Narayanganj to Panch Char and reaching there before daybreak on the 5<sup>th</sup> of December 1846, burned down Mr. Dunlop's factory to the ground, and taking Kali Prasad Kanjhi Lal with them as well as pillaging the residences of the Hindu Baboos in the adjoining village, departed as suddenly as they appeared.<sup>53</sup>

As the news reached the Magistrate at Paragram, according to Edward de Latour, the Magistrate dined with Mr. Dunlop in the tent, and after taking deposition of some of their own creatures, committed Dudu Miyan to the sessions. The Session Court convicted Dudu Miyan and 40 of his followers and sentenced them to different terms of imprisonment. But as the power of this court did not cover the heavy sentences pronounced, the whole case was sent up for confirmation to the *Sudder Nizamat Adalat* of Calcutta, which however, found the prosecution story "in part utterly incredible and in part far from trust-worthy and conclusive." All of them were, therefore acquitted.<sup>54</sup>

The defeat of the prosecution proved a crushing blow to Mr. Dunlop and Hindu Baboos. Dudu Miyan's followers hailed it as a grand

victory for the oppressed peasantry. The elimination of Kanjhi Lal removed the last straw from the path of the *Fara'idis* and henceforth they could walk with their heads high without fear of being molested by the landlords and indigo-planters. As a result, Dudu Miyan appears to have enjoyed the peace of the land from C.E. 1847 to 1857.

At the outbreak of the Great Rebellion of C.E. 1857, the so-called Sepoy Mutiny, Dudu Miyan was arrested, removed to Calcutta and thrown into Alipur Jail. As soon as the danger had passed off in C.E. 1859 he was released from Calcutta but only to be re-arrested by the local police of Faridpur on his arrival at home. He was finally released in the summer of 1860 C.E. He then went to Dhaka and lived there until his death on 24<sup>th</sup> September, 1862. He lies buried at the backyard of his Dhaka residence at Bansal Road of old Dhaka.<sup>55</sup>

Thus, like his West Bengali predecessor, Titu Mir, Dudu Miyan was pitted against the vested interests of the landlords and planters, and as a consequence was involved into a dangerous situation, which threatened not only his life and property but also the very existence of the reform movement led by him. It was his uncommon acumen and tactful manipulation of affairs that enabled him to escape the sorrowful plight in which Titu Mir had got stuck.

Dudu Miyan's eldest but minor son Ghiyath Al-Din Haydar had succeeded him after his death. But he died soon after and was succeeded by Dudu Miyan's second son Abd al-Ghafur-aliar Naya Miyan in C.E. 1864, when he was a mere boy of 12 years. The board of guardians which was appointed by Dudu Miyan to look after his minor sons, succeeded with great difficulty in keeping the dwindling movement from falling to pieces. It was not until Naya Miyan attained maturity that the movement regained some of its lost strength.

Unfortunately, we know very little about this remarkable man. His contemporary Civil Servant, Poet Navin Chandra Sen records two notable incidents during his sojourn as Sub-divisional Officer at Madaripur, viz (i) a series of conflicts between the Hindu *zamindars* and the *Fara'idi* peasantry and (ii) a religious debate or *bahath* between the *Fara'idis* and the *Ta'aisyunis*. These took place in C.E.

1879 and on both occasions, Naya Miyan was seen moving enthusiastically at the head of the *Fara'idis*. Navin Sen testifies that, at this time, his leadership was well established among the peasantry, most of whom were *Fara'idi*. He even goes to the extent of saying that, they accepted Naya Miyan's words as divine revelation and that, Naya Miyan had succeeded in establishing 'a state of his own within the British regime'. His power was so great that Navin Sen thought it prudent to enter into an alliance of mutual help with him, which he latterly regarded as the secret of his successful administration. On the other hand, this good gesture of Navin Sen generated cooperative spirit among the *Fara'idi* leaders towards the government, which was scrupulously maintained by both sides for a long time.

On the death of Naya Miyan in C.E. 1884, the third and the youngest son of Dudu Miyan, Sa'id al-Din Ahmad was acclaimed leader by the *Fara'idis*. Sa'id al-Din was deeply read in Islamic sciences and loved to keep him surrounded by learned theologians. During his time, the conflict of the *Fara'idis* with the *Ta'aiyunis* reached the climax and religious debate between them had become a common-place occurrence in Eastern Bengal. Brought up under the peaceful atmosphere of Dhaka city where he devoted his time and energy to the pursuit of learning until the death of his elder brother, he lacked much in the sagacity and shrewdness of his predecessor, which was nevertheless amply compensated by his love, affection and generosity towards the common man, qualities that endeared him to all and sundry. In appreciation of his high learning and peaceful cooperation with the government administration, he was conferred the title of Khan Bahadur by the British government. In 1905, on the question of the partition of Bengal, he lent strong support to Nawab Salimullah Bahadur in favour of partition, but he died soon after in C.E. 1906.<sup>57</sup>

Khan Bahadur Sa'id al-Din was succeeded by his eldest son Aba Khalid Rashid al-Din Ahmad *alias* Badshah Miyan whom the *Fara'idis* elected their head in C.E. 1906. During the early years of his leadership, Badshah Miyan maintained the policy of cooperation towards the British government, which he had inherited from his predecessors. But his father, Khan Bahadur Sa'id al-Din, had also

initiated a policy of collaboration with the Muslim modernists a little before his death by extending his support to the demand for the partition of Bengal. This latter policy brought the *Fara'idi* leaders in direct contact with the Muslim political trend of the time. The annulment of the partition of Bengal in C.E. 1911, disheartened Badshah Miyan and the declaration of war by the British against the Sultan-Caliph of Turkey in C.E. 1914, turned him hostile against the British government. In 1922, Badshah Miyan joined the *Khilafat* and non-cooperation movement for which he was arrested by the government and imprisoned.<sup>58</sup>

A person of peaceful disposition and intensely Allah-fearing, politics was not the normal avocation of Badshah Miyan. But once involved in a patriotic adventure, he continued to take considerable interest in the subsequent political struggle of the Muslims and lent whole hearted support to the Pakistan movement. In 1947, soon after independence, he called a Conference of the *Fara'idis* at Narayanganj and declaring Pakistan as *Dar al-Islam* and gave permission to his followers to hold the congregational prayers of *Jum'ah* and '*Id*,<sup>59</sup> which were suspended by Haji-Shari'at Allah under the British regime. He also permitted his son Dudu Miyan Junior to participate in the political life of the country.

Having led the *Fara'idi* movement through thick and thin for about 54 years, he died on the 13<sup>th</sup> December 1959 and was succeeded by his eldest son Muhsin al-Din Ahmad alias Dudu Miyan Junior. Dudu Miyan II was born in 1917 and played an active role in the politics of Pakistan. He died in 6<sup>th</sup> August, 1997 and was succeeded as the head of the family by his son, Pir Muhiuddin Ahmed alias Dadan Miyan.

### **Fara'idi Doctrines**

Since its inception down to the present day, the *Fara'idi* movement pursued a predominantly religious program. The socio-economic program of Dudu Miyan had, of course given added impetus to it and gained for it the support of the masses of Eastern Bengal and parts of Assam. But, if its socio-economic aspect proved more attractive to the masses, its religious aspect was never under-rated by the real core of its adherents.



It is well-known that the *Fara'idis* adhered to the *Hanafi* school, to which almost all the Muslims of Eastern Bengal and Assam also belong. Yet, on account of their revivalistic orientation, they had adopted certain peculiarities in their religious beliefs as well as in practice, which distinguished them from the rest of their co-religionists. These peculiarities can be loosely grouped together into five *Fara'idi* doctrines. It may be recalled that in launching the *Fara'idi* movement, Haji Shari'at Allah aimed at enforcing the original teachings of Islam and purging the Muslim society of superstitious rites and ceremonies. His first policy was, therefore, to call upon the Muslims to be penitent for their past sins as a measure for the purification of their soul. This principle is known as the doctrine of *tawbah* or penitence. After this purification he called upon them to observe strictly the obligatory duties or *fara'id* and it is on account of great emphasis laid upon this doctrine that the movement itself came to be known as *Fara'idi* or *Fara'izi*. Thirdly, the doctrine of *tawhid* or Unitarianism as enunciated by the Qur'an was strictly enforced and whatever beliefs or customs were found repugnant to it were to be given up. Fourthly, the *Fara'idis* differed from other Muslims of Bengal on the question of holding the congregational prayers of *Jum'ah* and '*Id*'; and fifthly, they denounced all popular rites and ceremonies, which had no basis in the Qur'an and Prophetic tradition, as sinful innovations (*bid'ah*) and abolished them unsparingly. These are briefly discussed below:

i) *Tawbah* — According to Haji Shari'at Allah, *tawbah* means penitence for past sins and a resolve to abstain from sinful acts in future. For this purpose, he devised a simple formula in the spoken Muslim dialect of Bengali language, which he administered to a desirous person while sitting face to face. This process of penitence or *istighfar* was called

*Ustad* or teacher and his disciple *Shagird* or student, instead of using the terminologies of *Pir* and *Murid*.<sup>60</sup>

A person so initiated into the *Fara'idi* fold was called *twabar* Muslim or *Mu'min*, and enjoyed equal rights in all respects with the rest of the *Fara'idis*. The doctrine of *tawbah* was, thus, the gateway to his reforms.

ii) *Fara'id* or *fara'iz*. — The doctrine of *Fara'id*, or observance of obligatory duties, was a central principle of the *Fara'idi* reform program, from which the movement derived its name itself. By the term *fara'id*, Haji Shari'at Allah meant all the duties enjoined by Allah and the holy Prophet though he laid special emphasis on the observance of the five fundamentals, namely (i) profession of the faith, (ii) daily prayers, (iii) fasting in Ramadan (iv) payment of *zakat* and (v) pilgrimage to Makkah. In a *Fara'idi puthi*, Durr-i-Muhammad compares these fundamentals, with the root, branch and flower of a tree in the garden of Islam, with bumble-bee sucking the honey and nightingale singing sweet melody. The rest of the duties or *fara'id* are, according to him, like innumerable smaller branches and leaves of the tree, which not only embellish the garden but accomplish its beauty as well as vitality. In conformity with the Islamic injunctions, the first three fundamentals were enforced on the rich and poor alike while the last two were meant for rich alone who could afford to perform them.<sup>61</sup>

(iii) *Tawhid*. — Haji Shari'at Allah, being the protagonist of an Islamic revivalism, laid utmost emphasis on the necessity of going back to the simple Qur'anic concept of the Unity of the Lord or *Tawhid*. Unable to satisfy himself with the conventional interpretation of *Tawhid* which stressed the belief in the Unity alone, Shari'at Allah interpreted faith or *Iman* as founded on two pillars, viz., (a) to believe in the Unity of Allah and to stick to it firmly in practice, and (b) to refrain from ascribing Allah's partnership to any other. He, therefore, emphasised that the doctrine of *tawhid* was not merely a theory but also a principle to be practised in day-to-day life. Any belief or action which had the remotest resemblance to infidelity (*kuf'r*), polytheism (*shirk*) or sinful innovation (*bid'at*) was declared repugnant to the doctrine of *Tawhid* and therefore un-Islamic.<sup>62</sup>

The *Fara'idi* doctrine of *tawhid* can thus be characterised as a doctrine of *puritanism*, which aimed at purging the Muslim society of all un-Islamic accretions. According to James Taylos, a contemporary of Haji Shari'at Allah, the *Fara'idis* "profess to adhere to the strict letters of the Koran and reject all ceremonies that are not sanctioned by it."<sup>63</sup>

H. Beveridge described it as a sort of "primitive church" movement which aimed at a return to the doctrine of the Prophet of Islam.<sup>64</sup> In this doctrine, therefore, we find the closest resemblance between the *Fara'idi* movement of Bengal and the *Muwahhidum* or the so-called Wahhabi movement of Arabia.

(iv) *Jum'ah* and *'Id*.— The most conspicuous distinction between the *Fara'idis* and other Muslims was to be found in the former's suspension of the congregational prayers of *Jum'ah* and *'Id* under the British regime of Bengal. This was certainly a political move. But as Haji Shari'at Allah could not afford to stage a confrontation against the mighty British power, he adduced a purely religious argument to prove its necessity. He argued that according to the *Hanafi* law, these congregational prayers cannot be held except in *misr al-jam'i* or constituted township; where the *Amir* (Administrator) and *Qadi* (Judge), appointed by a Muslim ruler, reside, and such constituted townships obviously did not exist in Bengal under the British regime. The prayers of *Jum'ah* and *'Id*, therefore, were not permissible in Bengal.<sup>65</sup> These prayers were resumed by the *Fara'idis*, as we have noticed elsewhere, after the independence in 1947.<sup>66</sup>

(v) Denunciation of popular rites and ceremonies — The doctrines of *tawbah* and *tawhid* as enunciated by Haji Shari'at Allah demanded abstention from any practices or beliefs which clashed with the doctrine of the Unity of Allah. Naturally, he abolished numerous rites, ceremonies, customs and usages including social discrimination and caste prejudices. Indeed, Haji Shari'at Allah viewed the existence of social discrimination among the Muslims with grave concern and denounced it as a deadly sin, as such these practices were contradictory to the spirit of the Holy Qur'an. He emphasised on the equality and brotherhood of all Muslims again and again which provided a strong incentive to the teeming millions

for lending their support to his movement; <sup>67</sup> and this was probably one of the most potent factors that eventually led to the elimination of caste prejudices in the Muslim society of Bangladesh.

**Social organisation** — The above peculiarities tended to give the *Fara'idis* a distinctive mark from the very beginning and in course of time, these doctrines fostered a community of interests among them and unified them into a brotherhood, especially under the challenging circumstances eked out by the oppression of the Hindu zamindars upon the *Fara'idi* peasantry. In the process of effecting this unification, Dudu Miyan played a pivotal role.

In organising the *Fara'idi* society Dudu Miyan had two objectives in view, viz. (i) protecting the *Fara'idi* peasantry from the oppression of the Hindu zamindars and European indigo planters, and (ii) securing social justice for the masses. In order to secure the first objective, he raised a volunteer corps of clubmen and arranged for their regular training in the art of affray fighting. For securing the second objective, he revived the traditional system of local government (*Panchayat*) under *Fara'idi* leadership. The former came to be known as the *Siyasi* or political branch and the latter *Dini* or religious branch, which were amalgamated later on into a hierarchical *Khilafat* system.

The *Fara'idi Khilafat* system was designed to bring all the *Fara'idis* under the direct control of the authorised representatives of Dudu Miyan who stood at the top of the hierarchy of *Khalifahs*. He styled himself as the *Ustad (Ustadh)*. He appointed three grades of *Khalifahs*, namely (i) the Superior or *Uparastha Khalifah*, (ii) the Superintendent *Khalifah* and (iii) *Ward* or *Gaon Khalifah* over a village or a ward of town.

As a matter of fact, for this purpose Dudu Miyan divided the *Fara'idi* settlements into small units of 300 to 500 families and appointed a *Gaon* or *Ward Khalifah* over each unit. Ten or more such units were grouped together into a circle or *Gird*, which was put under a Superintendent *Khalifah*. The Superintendent *Khalifah* was provided with a peon and a *Piyadah* or guard, who were sent to and fro for maintaining contact between the Superintendent *Khalifah* and the unit *Khalifahs* on the one hand, and between them

and the *Ustad* on the other. The *Uparastha Khalifahs* were advisers to the *Ustad* who stayed at his company at Bahadurpur, the place of Dudu Miyan's residence and headquarters of the *Fara'idi* movement.<sup>68</sup>

The unit *Khalifah* acted as a community leader whose duty it was to spread religious education, enforce religious duties, maintain a prayer-hall, look after the morals and administer justice in consultation with the elders. He was also required to maintain a *Maktab* for teaching the Qur'an and elementary lessons to the children. The Superintendent *Khalifah's* main functions were to supervise the activities of the *Unit Khalifahs*, look after the welfare of the *Fara'idis* of his *Gird*, preach the fundamentals of religion and above all, to sit as a Court of Appeal against the decisions of the *Unit Khalifah* if any. In such cases, he heard the appeal sitting in a Council of the *Unit Khalifahs* of his *Gird*. In all matters of religious as well as political affairs, the decision of Dudu Miyan was final and as the *Ustad*, he also acted as the final Court of Appeal.<sup>69</sup>

James Wise testifies that the *Panchayats* of Eastern Bengal possessed great influence among the people and in *Fara'idi* villages "as they take cognizance of all offences, it is exceedingly rare that any case of violence or assault committed within their jurisdiction finds its way to the regular legal courts." According to him, Dudu Miyan settled disputes, administered summary justice and punished any Hindu, Muslim or Christian who dared to bring a suit for recovery of debt in the adjoining Munsif's court instead of referring the case to his decision.<sup>70</sup>

Regarding the career of Dudu Miyan's son Naya Miyan, Sub-Divisional Administrator, Poet Navin Chandra Sen says that the majority of the cultivators of land in Eastern Bengal, especially those of the district of Faridpur are *Fara'idi* Muslims. "They accept Naya Miyan's words as divine revelation, and such slavish submission to the priest is not seen in any other human race". He further adds that in Madaripur subdivision, Naya Miyan had established a State of his own within the British regime. "In every village he appointed a Superintendent and a Piyadah through whom he kept the *Fara'idis* in control. No dispute of the village could be submitted to the civil or criminal Court of law without the

permission of the Superintendent".<sup>71</sup> The *Fara'idi Khilafat* system was thus a compact organisation and it worked marvellously well in defeating the nefarious designs of the *bania zamindars* of the Permanent Settlement.

*Equality and brotherhood*—Dudu Miyan laid the foundation of the *Fara'idi* society on equality and brotherhood. James Wise states that he even asserted the "equality of mankind" and "taught that the welfare of the lowest and poorest was as much an object of interest as that of the highest and the richest." He declared all men as brothers and pleaded that when a brother fell into distress it was the "duty of his neighbours to assist him".<sup>72</sup> According to government reports, the equality of the *Fara'idis* was "again and again emphasised"<sup>73</sup> and James Wise further testifies that Dudu Miyan created a common fund for the welfare of the brotherhood.<sup>74</sup>

In fact, Dudu Miyan even went a step further and following the Qur'anic verse: 'Whatever is in the heaven and in the earth belongs to Allah', he declared that land is a bounty of Allah and man has equal right to exploit the divine gifts. Land, therefore, belonged to the tiller; and the *zamindars* had no right to levy tax on him in excess to the lawful land revenue fixed by the Government.<sup>75</sup> But as the *zamindars* did not desist from oppressing the peasantry, they were persuaded to settle on *Khas* land managed directly by the Government.<sup>76</sup>

The socio-economic aspect of the *Fara'idi* movement which was thus an outgrowth of its religious reforms, represented an organised attempt of the masses to resist the oppression of the newly created landed gentry. Hence, it reflected, on the one hand, the intensity of the resentment of the peasantry towards the oppressions of the farm-lords and indigo-planters which was later on enshrined in the peasant agitation of Bengal, and it indicated, on the other hand, the growth of some kind of an effective leadership from within the rank and file of the masses.

In conclusion, it may, therefore, be said that as the *Fara'idi* religious program grew out of the necessity of self-correction, so also its socio-economic program developed out of the socio-economic need for leadership in the lower strata of the Muslim society of Bengal.

## References

1. See *History of the Fara'idi Movement in Bengal* by the present writer, Pakistan Historical Society, Karachi, 1965, Part II, p. 11.
2. See *ibid.*, p. XXXVI, also Ghulam Rasul Mehr: *Sayyid Ahmad Shahid*, part I, p. 111, Mehr's calculation of the date is more accurate than Dr. Mahmud Husain's (in the *History of the Freedom Movement*, Pakistan Historical Society, Karachi, Vol. I, p. 562) who puts it in C.E. 1817 as against Mehr's C.E. 1818.
3. For the question elaborated by Dr. Muhammad Abdul Bari, see *History of the Freedom Movement*, *op. cit.*, p. 545, ft. 3.
4. See *History of the Freedom Movement*, *op. cit.*, Part II, Chapter IV, p. 23 ff.
5. See article of the present writer: "Tariqah-i-Muhammadiyah Movement, an analytical definition," *Islamic Studies*, Islamic Research Institute, Islamabad, Vol. IV, No. 4—Dec. 1967, pp. 375-88.
6. Spelt in Bengali as 'Nisar Ali'.
7. See article of the present writer: "The Struggle of Titu Mir, a Re-examination," *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Pakistan*, Dacca, Vol. IV, 1959, p. 113 ff and the present writer's *History of the Fara'idi Movement*, *op. cit.*, pp. LXI-LXVIII.
8. See our *History of the Fara'idi Movement*, pp. XLVII-LI and LXIII-LXVII.
9. See *ibid.*, pp. XCII-CXVII.
10. See relevant chapters of Dr. Azizur Rahman Mallick's *British Policy and the Muslims of Bengal 1757-1856*, Dacca, 1961.
11. See article of the present writer: "Economic Conditions of the Muslims of Bengal under the East India Company," *Islamic Studies*, Islamic Research Institute, Islamabad, Vol. VI, No. 3, Sept. 1967, pp. 277-88.
12. See Dr. M. Mohar Ali's article on the "Background of the Battle of Plassey" in *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Pakistan*, Dacca, Vol. II, No. 3, Dec. 1966, pp. 37-70.
13. See our article: "Economic Conditions of the Muslims of Bengal," *op. cit.*, pp. 277-78.
14. See Dr. Mazharul Haq: *The East India Company's Land Policy and Commerce in Bengal, 1692-1784*, Dacca, 1962, p. 293 and Dr. Azizur Rahman Mallick, *op. cit.*, pp. 56-57.
15. See our *History of the Fara'idi Movement op. cit.*, Part I, Chapter II, Section C, pp. XCII-CXVII.

16. See *Calcutta Review*, Vol. I, 1844, p. 196.
17. Dr. R.C. Majumdar: *History of the Freedom Movement in India*, Calcutta, 1963, Vol. I, p. 42.
18. James Wise: *Notes on the Races, Castes, and Trades of Eastern Bengal*, London, 1884, p. 21.
19. W.W. Hunter: *England's Work in India*, Madras, 1888, p. 47.
20. See *History of the Fara'idi Movement*, Part II, Chapter VI, p. 64.
21. *Ibid.*, pp. 62-63.
22. See present writer's article: "Some Reflections on Mawlana Karamat Ali's Role as a Reformer," *Islamic Studies*, Vol. IV, No. 1, March, 1965, pp. 103-10.
23. See *Ibid.*
24. Religious ignorance among the Muslims of Bengal is mainly due to the practice of cultivating religious knowledge by the Muslim *Maulvis* in Urdu rather than in Bengali, which makes it inaccessible to the masses.
25. See *History of the Fara'idi Movement* by the present writer, Karachi, 1965, Part II, Chapter VI, p. 60 ff.
26. See *Ibid.*, Part II, Chapter I, p. 1 ff.
27. See *Ibid.*, Part I, Chapter II, pp. XLVII-LI and Part II, Chapter VI, pp. 65-8.
28. See *Ibid.*, Part II, Chapter VI, p. 67 ff. and Appendix I, pp. 147-48.
29. James Wise: *Notes on the Races, Castes, and Trades of Eastern Bengal*, London, 1884, p. 248.
30. James Taylor: *A Sketch of the Topography and Statistics of Dacca*, Calcutta, 1940, p. 23.
31. See our *History of the Fara'idi Movement, op. cit.*, Part II, Chapter IX, p. 216 ff.
32. See "The Struggle of Titu Mir: A Re-examination," *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Pakistan*, Dacca, Vol. IV, 1959, pp. 113-33.
33. See our *History of the Fara'idi Movement*, Part II, Chapter I, p. 13 ff.
34. See *Ibid.*, Part II, Chapter VII, p. 89 ff.
35. See *Ibid.*, p. 20 and James Wise: *Notes on Races, Castes and Trades of Eastern Bengal*, London, 1884, p. 22.
36. See our *History of the Fara'idi Movement*, Part II, Chapter III, pp. 16-19 and Appendix C, pp. 127-29.
37. See *Ibid.*, pp. 17-20.



38. *Ibid.*, p. 22, and the present writer's article: "Tomb Inscription of Haji Shariat Allah," *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Pakistan*, Vol. III, 1958, pp. 187-98.
39. See our *History of the Fara'idi Movement*, Part II, Chapter IV, p. 24 ff.
40. See *Calcutta Review*, Vol. I, 1944, p. 106.
41. *Ibid.*, pp. 215-16.
42. Navin Chandra Sen: *Amar Jivan*, Calcutta, B.S. 1317, Vol. III, p. 154.
43. See our *History of the Fara'idi Movement*, Part II, Chapter VIII, pp. 105-6.
44. A most conspicuous example is the case of Titu Mir who tried his level best to secure justice from the higher court of Calcutta but all went in vain. See our article: "The Struggle of Titu Mir, a Re-examination," *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Pakistan*, Dacca, Vol. IV, 1959, pp. 113-33.
45. See our *History of the Fara'idi Movement*, Part II, Chapter IV, p. 27 ff.
46. *Ibid.*
47. *Ibid.*, pp. 28-29 and 43.
48. James Wise: *Notes on Races, Castes and Trades of Eastern Bengal*, London, 1884, p. 24.
49. *Ibid.*, p. 23.
50. W.W. Hunter: *Our Indian Musalmans*, p. 100.
51. See our *History of the Fara'idi Movement*, Part II, Chapter IV, p. 34 ff.
52. *Ibid.*
53. *Ibid.*, p. 36 ff.
54. *Ibid.*, p. 38 ff.
55. *Ibid.*, p. 42 ff.
56. *Ibid.*, pp. 50-56, and Navin Chandra Sen: *Amar Jivan*, Calcutta, B.S. 1317, Vol. III, p. 154.
57. See our *History of the Fara'idi Movement*, pp 56-59.
58. *Ibid.*, p. 57.
59. *Ibid.*, Appendix I, pp. 61-63.
60. See present writer's *History of the Fara'idi Movement in Bengal*, Karachi, 1965, Part II, Chapter VI, pp. 61-63.
61. *Ibid.*, pp. 63-65.
62. *Ibid.*, pp. 65-67.
63. James Taylor: *A Sketch of the Topography and Statistics of Dacca*, Calcutta, 1840, p. 249.

64. H. Beveridge: *The District of Bakarganj, its History and Statistics*, London, 1876, p. 254.
65. For details our *History of the Fara'idi Movement*, Part II, Chapter VI, pp. 67-80.
66. See *Ibid.*, Appendix I, pp. 147-48.
67. See *Ibid.*, Chapter VI, pp. 80-83.
68. See *Ibid.*, Part II, Chapter VIII, p. 104 ff.
69. See *Ibid.*, p. 106 ff.
70. James Wise: *Notes on Races, Castes and Trades of Eastern Bengal*, London, 1884, pp. 34-35.
71. Navin Chandra Sen: *Amar Jivan*, Calcutta, B.S. 1317, Vol. III, pp. 149.
72. James Wise, *op. cit.*, p. 24.
73. *Selections from the Records of the Bengal Government*, Vol. XIII, *Trial of Ahmedullah*, p. 141.
74. James Wise, *op. cit.*, p. 23.
75. *Ibid.*
76. *Ibid.*

## CHAPTER- 9

## A Note on the Chronology of the Fara'idi Movement

The earliest writer, who took notice of the *Fara'idi* movement, was an English Civil Servant, James Taylor. He wrote in March 1839, about the founder of the *Fara'idi* movement, Haji Shari'at Allah, as follows: "This person at the early age of 18, made a pilgrimage to Mecca; he visited it a second time, and took his abode among the Wahabees and after an absence of twenty years returned to his country about the year 1828."<sup>1</sup> He further mentions that while he was writing this (C.E. 1839), Haji Shari'at Allah was under the ban of the Police.<sup>2</sup>

The next important writer on the subject was another English officer, James Wise, who repeated the same statement, but dropped the mention of the second pilgrimage and corrected the date of the Haji's return to Bengal. He says: "When eighteen years of age, he made the pilgrimage to Mecca, but instead of returning as was usual, he remained a disciple of the Wahabi leaders then ruling the sacred city. About 1820, after an absence of twenty years, he came back to India, a skilful disputer and a good Arabic scholar."<sup>3</sup>

Following him, M. Hidayet Husain, a prominent teacher of Calcutta Aliyah Madrasah, wrote in the first edition of the *Encyclopaedia of Islam*: "When eighteen years of age, (he) went on a pilgrimage to Mecca, but instead of returning as usual, he remained a disciple of Shaikh Tahir al-Sombal al-Makki, the head of the *Shafi'i* sect there in those days. About 1802, after an absence of twenty years, he came back to India, a skilful disputer and a good Arabic scholar".<sup>4</sup>

A close look into the above passages shows that, M. Hidayet Husain's statement is a verbatim reproduction of James Wise's version, except that James Wise subscribed to the Taylor's view that, the Haji lived among the *Wahhabis*, whereas Hidayet Husain makes him a disciple of a *Shafi'i* leader Shaikh Tahir al-Sombal al-Makki; and secondly, the date of the Haji's return, which was given by James wise as "about 1820", is changed by Hidayet Husain to

"about 1802", which was obviously a printing error (Read in All-Pakistan History Conference held in Karachi from the 7th to 10th May, 1965).

Commenting on the above chronological accounts in 1957, Dr. M. Abdul Bari says: "The authorities put the date of his return variously in 1802, 1822 and 1828; some suggest that he visited (Makkah) twice and finally returned to Bengal (1828)."

Here we may note that the date 1802 is offered by Hidayet Hussain and 1828 is given by James Taylor. But the date 1822 mentioned by Dr. Bari in the above passage, is either a slip of pen or a printing mistake for James Wise's date of 1820. It is further evidenced by the fact that in the next paragraph Dr. Abdul Bari puts the same date as 1802, in which he says:

"If the first date, 1802 is correct, any possibility of Shari'atullah's coming into contact with the *Wahhabis*, who entered Mecca for the first time in 1803, is to be precluded, the *Fara'izi* movement becomes junior to the reform movement led by Sayyid Ahmad Shahid Bareilvi, an opinion Dr. Wise himself does not hold, Taylor's theory of two visits, too, in the absence of satisfactory evidence, remains doubtful."<sup>5</sup>

When the present writer started his doctoral research on the *Fara'idi* movement in 1957, in the face of such a baffling controversy, my first task was to work out a reliable chronology of Haji Shari'at Allah's life. Fortunately at this juncture, we were able to recover a good deal of indigenous sources including three biographies of the Haji written by his followers, and his tomb inscription, on the basis of which we were able to resolve the above controversy and fix the correct chronology of Haji Shari'at Allah's life. Our findings were published in the *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Pakistan*, Dhaka in 1958, under the title, "Tomb Inscription of Haji Shari'at Allah,"<sup>6</sup> reproduced in the next chapter.

The Tomb Inscription, which gives a gist of Haji Shari'at Allah's missionary activities in Arabic language, inscribed on a piece of black basalt, clearly states that the Haji died at the age of 59, on the 10th *Dhi'l-Qa'dah*, H.1255. This date corresponds to the 16th January, C.E. 1840. This is also corroborated by James Taylor's

remark that the Haji was living in 1839. Calculated from this date in accordance with the Hijri calendar, the date of his birth falls in H. 1196 / C.E. 1781.

In view of this, if James Taylor's date of the Haji's return to Bengal is accepted, the date of his birth would fall in C.E. 1790, which would allow him only 50 years instead of 59. Calculated on the basis of Hidayet Husain's date of 1802, he must have been born in C.E. 1764 and died in C.E. 1823 and could not live under the ban of the police in 1839 as reported by Taylor. The date of his birth as implied by James Wise's version, being C.E. 1782 comes nearer to the date of the Inscription, which is C.E. 1781. It may, however, be remembered that James Wise does not give a precise date, but says that he returned "about 1820". In another place, a few pages below, he further states that the Haji's son and successor, Dudu Miyan was born at Mulfatganj in 1817. Now, how is it that, the Haji returned to Bengal in 1820, one year after the birth of his first child. Plainly, he must have returned, at least, one year before 1819, and calculated on the basis of the Inscription, the date of his return falls in 1818, which is thus, both plausible and corroborated by circumstantial evidence.

James Wise's confusion must have arisen out of overlooking the fact of Haji Shari'at Allah's second visit to Makkah which was categorically stated by James Taylor and which has been confirmed by the indigenous biographies of the Haji recently recovered by us.<sup>8</sup>

These biographies also give some details about the second journey of the Haji and state that after his first return at the age of 38, he began preaching puritan Islam; but as at this initial stage his mission did not prove a success, he bethought of going to Makkah once again, for securing advice and blessings of his teacher Tahir Sombal,<sup>9</sup> who was not however, a *Shafi'i* leader as stated by Hidayet Husain, but as we have decidedly proved, he was a *Hanafi*, and has been referred to by the *Fara'idis* as "Chhota Abu Hanifa" or Abu Hanifa the Junior.<sup>10</sup>

With this aim in view, Haji Shari'at Allah soon left for Makkah; and returning for the second times in B.S. 1227 (corresponding to James Wise's data of C.E. 1820), he launched a vigorous movement

adding to his preaching of puritan Islam initiation into *Qadiriyyah Tariqah* of Islamic Sufism, which thereupon became popular among the masses. For this reason the earliest *Fara'idis* are known down to the present day as the *Sataish sani Fara'idis* or the *Fara'idis* of the 27th B.S. year.

Moreover, as we have noted above, Hidayet Husain's passage, in which he gives the date of the Haji's return as 1802, is almost a verbatim reproduction of James Wise's passage giving the date as 1820. It is, therefore, most probable that Hidayet Husain's date of '1802' is a printing mistake for James Wise's date of '1820', especially because he produced no documentary evidence for this improbable date.

There remains, therefore, not a whit of doubt in the veracity of the chronology of Haji Shari'at Allah's life as derived from the Inscription, which stands as follows:

Birth .....	1781 C.E.
First pilgrimage .....	1798 or 1799 C.E.
First return .....	1818 C.E.
Second return .....	1820 C.E.
Death .....	1840 C.E.

Our basic article on the chronology of Haji Shari'at Allah's life, including the full text of the Inscription with English translation, was published in the *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Pakistan*, Dhaka in 1958. In between 1959 and 1964, we contributed eight articles on different aspects of the *Fara'idi* movement to the above *Journal* and to the *Journal of the Pakistan Historical Society*, and three chapters on the *Fara'idi* movement were included in three books published in between 1960 to 1963 C.E., one of them being *East Pakistan: a Profile*, published by the Longmans.

Yet, the renowned Italian Professor, A. Bausani, the contributor to the second edition of the *Encyclopedia of Islam* on the *Fara'idi* movement (published in 1964) confined his reference to the *History of Freedom Movement*, Vol. I. published by the *Pakistan Historical Society* in 1957 C.E. including into his article all the mistakes

corrected by us as mentioned above, which was therefore downright outdated. Secondly Prof, Bausani being unaware of any additional source, did his level best to adapt the above chapter to his own view-point and as a matter of fact, he merely paraphrased the above chapter of the Pakistan Historical Society Journal to suit his own purpose making a little change here and there. For instance, as regards the Haji's return to Bengal, he says:

“The date of his return to Bengal varies in different sources which give it as 1807, 1822 or 1828 while certain writers affirm that he made two journeys to Mecca returning home to his country in the interval. If we accept the latest date (i.e. 1828), it is unquestionable that Shari'at Allah was in touch with the *Wahhabi* reformers in Mecca.”<sup>11</sup>

Here he plainly paraphrased Dr. Abdul Bari's passage (p.545 ft .n. 3), which we have already quoted above and corrected. We have, however, noticed that Dr Abdul Bari's above foot note consists of two paragraphs and that, in the first paragraph by a printing mistake or slip of pen, James Wise's date of 1820 is erroneously given as 1822 which is corrected by him in the second paragraph. Unfortunately Prof Bausani, overlooking the second paragraph of Dr. Bari's footnote and being unaquainted with James Wise's original work, repeated the mistake of the first paragraph and gave the date as '1822'. What is even more deplorable is that, instead of reproducing Hidayet Hussain's date of '1802', as given by Dr. Bari, Prof. Bausani changed it without rhyme and reason to '1807'. Thus instead of resolving the issues raised by Dr. Abdul Bari he has thrown more confusion into the matter.

Thirdly as regard the date of the death of Haji Shari'at Allah's son and successor Dudu Miyan, James Wise had made an unfortunate mistake by putting it at 1860. Wise says: “He died at Bahadurpur on 24 September 1860, and was buried there but the Arial Khan river has after few years washed away every trace of his house and tomb.”<sup>12</sup>

Although an earlier writer J.E. Gastrell, the Surveror-General of Bangal, reported that in the year 1861, Dudu Miyan was very ill and was living at Dacca<sup>13</sup> and one year after the publication of James

Wise's book, W.W. Hunter had correctly put the date of the death of Dudu Miyan at 1862 in the *Imperial Gazetteer of India*.<sup>14</sup> All subsequent writers including Hidayet Hussain and Dr. Abdul Bari repeated the erroneous views of James Wise on this point.

In course of our investigation, we found, to our surprise the tomb of Dudu Miyan in the city of Dhaka instead of at Bahadurpur which is in the Faridpur district and a number of new sources and documents recovered by us, confirmed the date given by Hunter that is, 1862 C.E. Our findings were published in the *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Pakistan*, Dhaka in December 1962 under the caption Mazar of Dudu Miyan in which two pictures of the grave of Dudu Miyan were also included.

Prof. Bausani, however, relying on his single source paraphrased the above passage of James Wise from Dr. Abdul Bari's chapter and repeated the same old mistakes in respect of both dates and place of Dudu Miyan's death. Moreover, taking no cognisance of the accepted view that, Dudu Miyan was imprisoned at the Alipore Jail by the British government in 1857 at the outbreak of the War of Independence or the so called Sepoy Mutiny (which has been recorded by all writers including W.W. Hunter in his *Our Indian Musalmans*), Prof Bausani says "in 1836 the enemies of the *Fara'idiyya* succeeded in having Dudu Miyan sent to the prison in Alipur," which is absurd thus not only repeated the old mistakes in the chronology of the *Fara'idi* movement but also created fresh errors.

Fourthly the title of his article "*Fara'idiyya*" though may be deemed correct in accordance with the usage of the Arabic language, his contention that locally the movement was known as such, and was pronounced as "Faraziyya" is not a fact, locally the movement has always been and still is known as the *Fara'idi* movement, pronounced in Bengali as "Farazi" and not "Fara'iziyya". Even in the first edition of the *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, the article was titled "*Fara'idi*". He unnecessarily tried to Arabicise it.

Fifthly his spelling of *Haji* as *Hadjji* is wrong. In Arabic one who performs *Hajj* is called *Haji* or *al-Haji* and in the Persian usage it is *Haji*, which became popular in Indo-Pak-Bangladesh subcontinent.



Sixthly, his spelling of Dudu Miyan's name as "Muhammad Muhsin" known as Dudhu Miyan is another repetition of James Wise's mistake. In our article, "Two Fara'idi documents" (published in the *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Pakistan*, Dhaka in 1961 we have shown that his name was "Muhsin al-din Ahmad *alias* (urf) Dudu Miyan on the basis of a Court document in which he signed in Arabic as "دودو میان" Dudu Miyan.<sup>15</sup>

As the present note deals with the chronology of the *Fara'idi* only, we need not go through other errors which abound in Dr. Bausani's article. Suffice it to say that this article in the *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, was not only out-dated by about six years at the time of its publication in 1964, but also suffers from inaccuracy, and wanton mistakes in the chronology of the *Fara'idi* movement.

### References

1. James Taylor: *A Sketch of the Topography and Statistics of Dacca* (Calcutta, 1840), p.248.
2. *Ibid.*, p. 248 ff.
3. James Wise: *Notes on the Races, Castes and Trades of Eastern Bengal* (London, 1884), p. 22.
4. M. Hidayet Hussain: "Fara'idi", *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, Vol. II, p. 57.
5. See *A History of Freedom Movement 1707-1831*, (Karachi, Pakistan Historical Society, 1957), Vol. I, p.545, ft. n. 3.
6. See Chapter 6 above.
7. James Wise, *op. cit.* p.23.
8. Wazir Ali: Muslim Ratnahar MS; Munshi Abdul Halim : Haji Shariat Allah MS; Mawlawi Adil al Din : Halat i kar Guzari MS
9. See our *History of the Fara'idi Movement*, *op. cit.*, p. 5 ff.
10. *Ibid.*
11. See art. "Fara'idiyya" in the 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. of the *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, under Fasciculus "F".
12. James Wise, *op. cit.*, p. 25.
13. J.E.Gastrell: *Geographical and Staistical Report of the Districts of Jessore, Fureedpore and Backergunge*, (Calcutta, 1868), p. 36.
14. W.W. Hunter ed.: *Imperial Gazetteer of India* (London, 1885), Vol. IV, p. 399.
15. See Chapter 11 below.

## CHAPTER-10

## Tomb Inscription of Haji Shari'at Allah An Important *Fara'idi* Relic\*

A stone inscription on black basalt, originally fixed into the tomb of Haji Shari'at Allah, the founder of the *Fara'idi* movement,<sup>1</sup> has been presented to the Asiatic Society of Pakistan Dhaka, by Aba Khalid Rashid al-Din Ahmad *alias* Badshah Miyan,<sup>2</sup> the then head of the *Fara'idis* and his eldest son Muhsin al-Din Ahmad *alias* Dudu Miyan. Previous to its presentation to the Asiatic Society, it was preserved by the descendants of Haji Shari'at Allah at the village Bahadurpur<sup>3</sup> in Faridpur district.

The Haji's grave was situated in the backyard of his residence at Shamail,<sup>4</sup> a village about one mile and a half south-west of Bahadurpur. Not long after his death the site of his residence was engulfed by the flood water of river Arial Khan and all traces of his house and tomb were washed away. His son Dudu Miyan shifted his residence from Shamail to Bahadurpur, recovered the stone inscription and preserved it with his family.

The stone-slab is rectangular in shape being 21.8 inches in length 13.5 inches in breadth, and 1.8 inches in thickness. It contains ten lines of Arabic inscription in Naskh character. The letters are written freely without any complication.

The inscription is fairly legible. The Arabic language is not, however, free from grammatical errors. Many of these linguistic mistakes are to be attributed to the indiscriminate use of the long *ta* (تاء الجمع) for the sake of rhyme; such as *البلاغات، الفصاحات، العلامات* and *البتكالات*. Also, the text bears influence of the Persian style of expression; for instance *وفات*, for Arabic *مطابق، وفاة*, *الموافق*. For a grammatical error we may cite the use of *اربع عشر* for *اربعة عشر*. Nevertheless, the inscription conveys its meaning clearly without any ambiguity whatsoever.

The inscription eulogises the Haji as a person who went on pilgrimage to Makkah and Madinah; an able exponent of the Divine Law (*Shar'*); a source of guidance in Hind and Bengal; a defender

of religion from the menaces of the disbelievers and the Shi'ites, as well as from all misguidance (*dalalat*); and as a valiant fighter for righteousness against all falsehood and vanity. It says that the Haji was a *Hanafi* and a follower of the *Ahl al-Sunnat wa'l-Jama'at*. Finally, it gives the date of his death both in Bengali and Hijri era, and states that he died at the age of 59

From historical point of view, the latter part of the inscription, which deals with the *madhhab* of the Haji and the date of his death, is of special interest to us for the following reasons:

- (1) It enables us for the first time to ascertain the dates of Haji's birth and death which have not been fixed before.
- (2) On the basis of these dates we are able to calculate the chronology of the Haji's life.
- (3) Finally, the categorical assertion (in the inscription) that the Haji was a *Hanafi* and followed the path of *Ahl-al-Sunnat wa'l-Jama'at*, provides us with a basis to judge more carefully than before Mawlawi Karamat Ali's allegation that the Haji was a *Khariji*.

### Chronology of the Haji's life

1. The inscription gives the B.S. date of the Haji's death as "in the late afternoon of Saturday, the 14<sup>th</sup> Magh, 1245" اربع عشر شهر ماكه يوم السبت وقت العصر سنة ١٢٤٥ بنگله. The corresponding *Hijri* date is given as "the 10<sup>th</sup> Dhi'l-Qa'dah, 1255" (عشر شهر ذى القعد سنة ١٢٥٥ هجرى). According to the table of dates prepared by Amulya Chandra Banerjee,<sup>5</sup> the above B.S. date corresponds to the 5<sup>th</sup> Dhi'l-Qa'dah, H. 1254 (22<sup>nd</sup> January, C.E. 1839); whereas the above *Hijri* date corresponds to the 4<sup>th</sup> Magh, B.S. 1246 (16<sup>th</sup> January, 1840). Thus, surprisingly there is a difference of 359 days in between the two dates (supplied by the inscription), which were to synchronise with each other. This discrepancy renders the problem of resolving the exact date of the Haji's death somewhat difficult.

The inscription, however, categorically states that the Haji died on Saturday, and specifies the exact time to be "late afternoon" وقت العصر. According to the Tables of Banerjee the 10<sup>th</sup> Dhi'l-Qa'dah, H. 1255,<sup>6</sup> falls on Saturday; whereas the 14<sup>th</sup> Magh, B.S. 1245,<sup>7</sup> falls on Tuesday. Thus, from the specification of the

inscription, the stress laid on the weekday, *i.e.*, Saturday, and the time, *i.e.*, late afternoon, it appears that the *Hijri* date (provided by the inscription), is the correct date of the Haji's death.

If the above suggestion is accepted, the difference in the Bengali date can be explained on the assumption that the inscription was prepared long after the death of the Haji, so that, the exact date of the Bengali era was forgotten. The discrepancy may have thus crept in the process of recapitulation.

The question may be considered from another angle of vision *viz.*, in the light of other sources, which are discussed below:

i. James Taylor, a contemporary of the Haji, says, "This person [Shurkitullah, *sic.*] at the early age of 18, made a pilgrimage to Mecca; he visited it a second time, and took up his abode among the *Wahabees*, and after an absence of twenty years returned to his native country about the year 1828."<sup>8</sup>

ii. James Wise says, "When eighteen years of age he made the pilgrimage to Mecca, but instead of returning, as was usual, he remained a disciple of the Wahabi leaders then ruling the sacred city. About 1820, after an absence of twenty years, he came back to India a skilful disputer and a good Arabic scholar."<sup>9</sup>

iii. M. Hidayet Husain says "When eighteen years of age [Haji Shari'at Allah] went on a pilgrimage to Mecca, but instead of returning as usual he remained a disciple of al-Shaikh Tahir al-Sunbal al-Makki, the head of the *Shafi'i* sect there in those days. About 1802, after an absence of twenty years, he came back to India, a skillful disputer, and a good Arabic scholar."<sup>10</sup>

iv. According to the tradition current in the family of Haji-Shari'at Allah, he went to Calcutta and thence to Makkah when he was 18 years old, and returned home in 1818, after passing twenty years there.<sup>11</sup>

v. James Wise further says, "Dudhu Miyan [son of Haji Shari'at Allah], was born in 1819".<sup>12</sup>

vi. H. Beveridge says, "Dudha Mia was born in Thana Mulfatgonj (now transferred to Faridpur), and his sect is particularly strong in that neighbourhood."<sup>13</sup>

On a close examination of above evidences, we find that all of them agree in the chronology of Haji Shari'at Allah's life, i.e. he went on a pilgrimage to Makkah at the age of 18, and returned home after 20 years of absence. The inscription categorically says that the Haji lived for 59 years, thus suggesting that he was born in H. 1169/C.E. 1781. According to Taylor, Wise, and Hidayet Husain, he went to Makkah at the age of 18, which falls in H. 1214/C.E. 1799, and returned home after an absence of 20 years, that is, in H. 1234/C.E. 1818. This date exactly corresponds with the tradition current in the family of the Haji. Also, it is not opposed to the other statement of Wise that the Haji's son Dudu Miyan was born in C.E. 1819. Judging from this standpoint the dates of return of the Haji to Bengal as suggested by Taylor, Wise, and M. Hidayet Husain prove incorrect.

In the first place, if the date of Taylor, i.e. C.E. 1828, is accepted, the date of the Haji's birth falls in 1790; because Taylor, Wise, and Hidayet Hussain assign (18+20) 38 years from the Haji's birth to return from Makkah. But this goes against the evidence of the inscription. Moreover, both the dates i.e. 1828 of Taylor, and 1820 of Wise, are opposed to the remark of Wise himself that Dudu Miyan was born in C.E. 1819. Now if Dudu Miyan was born in 1819, at Mulfatgonj (in the district of Faridpur) as said by Beveridge, the Haji must have returned to Bengal at least one year before that date.

Secondly, as the statements of Taylor, Wise, and Hidayet Husain go, all of them appear to have been in confusion about the exact date of the Haji's return, as the word "about" indicates.

As for the unusually early date of Hidayet Husain, and late date of Taylor, (i.e., 1802 and 1828 respectively), we have special reason to express doubt on their authenticity. The inscription categorically states that, the Haji lived for 59 years. If the date of Hidayet Husain, i.e. C.E. 1802, is accepted, the Haji must have been born in C.E. 1764, as Hidayet Hosain himself ascribes (18+20) 38 years to the Haji from his birth till his return from Makkah. On this hypothesis he must have died in 1823. But Mawlawi Karamat 'Ali informs us that he met the Haji at Calcutta in H. 1252 (C.E. 1836-1837).<sup>14</sup> Besides, it is contradictory to the evidence of the inscriptoin:

On the other hand, the whole tenor of the discussion of Taylor suggests that he was mainly concerned with the last ten years of the *Fara'idi* movement when he wrote the *Topography* about C.E. 1838-1839,<sup>15</sup> which the following quotation will amply illustrate.

Taylor says:<sup>16</sup>

“Within the last ten years a Mahommedan sect has sprung up, in this part of the country and has spread with extraordinary rapidity in this district (Dacca), Fureedpore, Backergunge, and Mymensing. The founder of it is a man of the name of Shurkitullah (*sic.*), a native of Fareedopore”.

Thus, it is clear that the date of the Haji's birth as evidenced by the Hijri calendar of the inscription (i.e. H. 1196/C.E. 1781) is correct. There is, therefore, no reason to question the validity of the same Hijri era (i.e. H. 1255), in regard to the date of his death. Moreover, the fact that the 10<sup>th</sup> Dhi'l-Qa'dah, A.H. 1255, falls on Saturday, further strengthens this view.

Even if we consider the date of the Haji's death as supplied by the Bengali era of the inscription (i.e., B.S. 1245), it does not fundamentally alter the chronology of the Haji's life, as specific dates cannot be established in this regard, with the only exception of the date of his death. As a result, our calculation about it must remain approximate. If, therefore, he died in B.S. 1245 (H. 1245/C.E. 1839), he must have been born in B.S. 1186 (H. 1195/C.E. 1780); he went on pilgrimage to Makkah in B.S. 1204 (H.1213/C.E. 1798); and returned home in B.S. 1224 (H. 1234/C.E. 1818). Thus, on the above calculation the two chronological tables of the Bengali and Hjri era approximately synchronise in C.E. 1818, the date of the Haji's return from Makkah,<sup>17</sup> even though the difference remains in the dates of his birth and death.

1. On the basis of above discussion, we may fix the dates of the Haji's birth in C.E. 1781 or 1780, and death in C.E. 1840 or 1839.

2. The above calculations further enable us to fix the dates of the Haji's visit to Makkah in C.E. 1799 or 1798, and return to Bengal in C.E. 1818, and, thus, resolve the interesting controversy put forward by Dr. Abdul Bari, which is reproduced below:

“The authorities put the date of his (Haji Shari’at Allah’s) return (i.e from Makkah) variously in 1802, 1822 and 1828—some suggest that he visited (i.e., Makkah) twice and finally returned to Bengal (1828).”

“If the first date, 1802, is correct, any possibility of Shari’at Allah’s coming into contact with the *Wahhabis*, who entered Macca for the first time in 1803, is to be precluded. If on the other hand, the second date, 1820, is accepted, the *Faraizi* (*Fara’idi*) movement become[s] junior to the reform movement led by Sayyid Ahmad Shahid Barelvi, an opinion Dr. J. Wise, himself does not hold, Taylor’s theory of two visits, too, in the absence of satisfactory evidence, remains doubtful.”<sup>18</sup>

We have already discussed the chronology of Haji Shariat Allah’s life and have come to the conclusion that the Haji returned from Makkah in C.E. 1818.<sup>19</sup>

To conclude, therefore, the chronology of Haji Shari’at Allah’s life stands as follows:

- (i) Birth—C.E. 1781 or 1780.
- (ii) Pilgrimage to Makkah—C.E. 1799 or 1798.
- (iii) Return from Makkah—C.E. 1818.
- (iv) Death—C.E. 1840 or 1839.

### **The *Madhhab* of the Haji**

The next important point in the inscription is the statement that the Haji “belonged to the *Hanafi* School of Law<sup>20</sup> (*Madhhab*) on the path of *Ahl al-Sunnat wa’l-Jama’at*”.<sup>21</sup> This categorical assertion in the tomb-inscription is instructive pertaining to Bengal where the Muslims generally belong to the *Hanafi* School of Law. This evidence negates the allegation of Mawlawi Karamat ‘Ali that Haji Shari’at Allah was a *Khariji*.<sup>22</sup> Two quotations are put below to illustrate Karamat ‘Ali’s point of view. He says:

1. “I beg to submit that in the land of Bengal, adjacent to the country of Hindustan, two [religious] sects (i) one, the *La Madhhab*,<sup>23</sup> and (ii) the other, the *Kharijis* of Bengal,<sup>24</sup> have led the masses astray by raising doubts [in their mind] about their religion (*Din*) and School

of Law (*Madhhab*), by means of inciting evil thoughts, putting fictitious interpretation, and telling lies.”<sup>25</sup>

2. “In H. 1252 (C.E. 1836-1837) there was a meeting between me and the leader of the *Kharijis* of Bengal, Haji Shari’at Allah, in the city of Calcutta.”<sup>26</sup>

Beside the writings of Mawlawi Karamat ‘Ali, there is no other contemporary evidence to determine the *Madhhab* of Haji Shari’at Allah except the inscription under discussion. But the inscription far from supporting the view of Karamat Ali, emphatically asserts that Haji Shari’at Allah was a *Hanafi*, and followed the *Ahl al-Sunnat wa’l-Jama’at*. There is, therefore, good reason to express doubt on the veracity of Mawlawi Karamat Ali’s view.

### The Text of the Inscription :

- (1) بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم
- (2) ربنا اغفر لنا ذنوبنا وأسرافنا في أسرنا وثبت أقدامنا وانصرنا على القوم الكافرين.
- (3) تاريخ وفات<sup>27</sup> مولانا حاجي الحرمين الشريفين عالم العلامات<sup>28</sup> وناطق الشرع بلسان النصاحات
- (4) والبلاغات ومنبع الهدى ببلاد الهند والبنكالات<sup>29</sup> ومجاهد الدين بالرافض<sup>30</sup> والكوافر.
- (5) والضلالات وغازي الشجاع بالحق على الزور والبطالات وشرح الاسلام من الظلمات
- (6) كالشمس في الغمامات وكان<sup>31</sup> كلامه في الحق كالجبال على العراصات<sup>32</sup> ومذهب الحنفى على
- (7) طريق<sup>33</sup> السنه والجماعات يعنى مولوى شريعت الله سيد المسلمين والمسلمات
- (8) اربع<sup>34</sup> عشر شهر ماكه يوم السبت<sup>35</sup> وقت العصر سنة ١٢٣٥
- (9) بنگله مطابق عشر شهر ذى القعدة<sup>36</sup> سنة ١٢٥٥ هجرى وكان عمره
- (10) من يوم مولده<sup>37</sup> الى يوم وفاته تسع وخمسون سنة.

### Translation

1. In the name of Allah, the most Compassionate, the Merciful.
2. Our Lord! Forgive us [of] our sins and extravagance of our actions, make our feet firm, and assist us against the disbelieving people!
3. The date of the death of Mawlana Haji al-Haramayn [i.e., one who made pilgrimage to Makkah and Madinah]; the learned of all learned; the exponent of the Divine Law (*shar'*) in eloquent
4. and elegant tongue; the source of guidance in the lands of Hind and Bengal; defender of religion against the *Shi'ites* and the disbelievers,



5. and against all misguidance; valiant fighter for righteousness against all falsehood and vanity; deliverer of Islam [which was] covered by darkness.

6. Like the sun enveloped in clouds, whose words in truthfulness were like mountains in the open field; and who followed the *Hanafi* School of Law (*Madhhab*)

7. on the path of *Ahl al-Sunnat wa'l-Jama'at*; that is, Mawlawi Haji Shari'at Allah,, the leader of all Muslims, men and women,

8. is [i.e. the date of his death is] the fourteenth of Magh, Saturday, at the time of late afternoon ('*Asr*), in the year 1245

9. of the Bengali era; corresponding to the tenth of Dhi'l Qa'dah, of the year 1255 of the *Hijri* era; his age having been from the day of his birth till the day of his death, fifty-nine years.

## References

- \* Reprinted with thanks from the *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Paksitan*, Dhaka, 1953.
- 1. The *Fara'idi* movement was started by Haji Shari'at Allah in Eastern Bengal in C.E. 1818, which aimed at religious reform of the existing Muslim society. It flourished in greater Faridpur and its neighbouring districts during the nineteenth century, and it thrives to a limited extent in the interior of the districts of Faridpur, Bakarganj, Dacca and Tipperah down to the present day.
- 2. Badshah Miyan is the great grand son of Haji Shari'at Allah.
- 3. Bahadurpur is the site of the permanent residence of Dudu Miyan, son and successor of Haji Shari'at Allah.
- 4. The villages of Shamail and Bahadurpur fall in the sub-division of Madaripur, which was transferred from the district of Bakarganj to the district of Faridpur in C.E. 1873 (*cf.* H. Beveridge, *District of Bakarganj: Its History and Statistics*; London, 1876, p. 249). Badshah Miyan claims that Haji Shari'at Allah was born at Shamail; and that his father 'Abd al-Jalil Talukdar had landed property at Shamail and Hajipur. 'Abd al-Jalil died when the Haji was only 8 years old. The Haji's mother being dead since long at that time, he resided with his paternal uncle 'Azim al-Din. Thereafter, he had gone to Makkah and returned to Bengal after an absence of 20 years. After his return,

he settled at his native village, Shamail, and resided there till his death. Some government Reports, however, state that the Haji was born in the neighbouring village, "Dawlutpore, in the Thannah Circle of Seeb-Chur, District Fareedpore" (cf. J.E. Gastrell: *Geographical and Statistical Report of the Districts of Jessore, Fureedpore and Backergunge*; Calcutta, 1868, p. 36, no. 151; and W. W. Hunter, ed., *Imperial Gazetteer of India*; London 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., 1885; Vol. IV, p. 398, "Faridpur"). It may be noted that Col. Gastrell's authority in this case, appears to be a disaffected *Fara'idi* and an anonymous person, is weak, and Hunter appears to have followed him. On the other hand, the claim of Badshah Miyan, which represents the family tradition of Haji Shari'at Allah, is further supported by Munshi 'Abd al-Halim in his biography of the Haji (*MS.* "Haji Shari'at Allah", p. 1.), which is said to have been written on the basis of diaries and notes of his ancestors who were traditionally *Fara'idi Khalifahs*, his grandfather, Mawlawi Ahsan Allah being the *Khalifah* of Haji Shari'at Allah himself and also colleague at Makkah during their student life (the *MS.* which is now in the possession of the Asiatic Society of Bangladesh, Dhaka). But the contention of M. Hidayet Hossain that the Haji resided in the village, Bahadurpur (cf. *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, Vol. II, p. 67) does not tally with the above evidence.

5. Amulya Chandra Banerjee, *Chronological Tables*, Calcutta, 1914; pp. 96 and 98. It may be mentioned that there occurs a difference of one day in the *Hijri* dates from H. 1253 to H. 1259, in between the calculations of Banerjee and Sir Wolseley Haig. According to the former the 1<sup>st</sup> day of H. 1256, falls on the 6<sup>th</sup> March, 1840; whereas the latter fixes it on the 5<sup>th</sup> March 1840. But Sir Wolseley calculates only the 1<sup>st</sup> day of each *Hijri* year in terms of the Christian calendar; whereas Banerjee calculates the Bengali, Hijri, Christian and other eras in details indicating also the weekdays corresponding to different dates. In preparing his tables of *Hijri* and Christian dates, W.H. Hagar followed closely the tables of Sir Wolseley and both are identical. At any rate, the difference of one day in the calculation of Hijri lunar era (in which the month frequently vary from 29 to 30 days), does not pose any difficult problem; especially when we have got the weekday citation (i.e., Saturday), both from the inscription and the Tables of Banerjee,— the difference of one day can be easily adjusted—(cf. Sir Wolseley Haig, *Comparative Tables of Muhammadan and Christian Dates*, London, 1932, p. 25; Harry W. Hazard, *Atlas of Islamic History*, Princeton, 1952, p.45).
6. Corresponding to the 4<sup>th</sup> Magh, B.S. 1246; 16<sup>th</sup> January, C.E. 1840

7. Corresponding to the 5<sup>th</sup> Dhi'l-Qa'dah, H. 1254; 22<sup>nd</sup> January, C.E. 1839.
8. James Taylor, *A Sketch of the Topography and Statistics of Dacca*, Calcutta. 1840, p. 248
9. James Wise: *Notes on the Races, Castes and Trades of Eastern Bengal*, London, 1884, p. 22.
10. M. Hidayet Husain: "Fara'idi", *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, Vol. II. p. 57
11. The above information was obtained from Badshah Miyan, and his son Abu Hamid Muhsin Al-Din Ahmad *alias* Dudu Miyan.
12. James Wise, *op.cit.*, p. 23.
13. H. Beveridge: *The District of Bakargonj: Its History and Statistics*, London, 1876, p. 254. It may be noted that the name of Dudu Miyan has been variously spelt by different writers, as "Dudhu Miyan," Dudha Mia and Dudu Miyan. The last form e.g., Dudu Miyan (دودو میان) has been adopted in this paper on the basis of his own signature in a document, which has come down to us (now preserved in the Asiatic Society of Bangladesh, Dhaka).
17. The synchronisation of the Bengali and Hijri tables in C.E. 1818 is by no means exact, since the Bengali era, i.e., B.S. 1224, falls in the earlier part of C.E. 1818, and the Hijri era, i.e. H. 1234, falls in the later part of C.E. 1818.
18. *History of Freedom Movement 1707-1831*. Karachi 1957, Vol. I, p. 545, foot note 3.
19. See above. It may, therefore, be reasonably assumed that Haji Shariat Allah had started the *Fara'idi* movement in C.E. 1818, on his return from Makkah, which is also corroborated by James Wise's anecdote that the Haji made disciples of the "Dakaitis" in whose hands he fell on his way from Makkah to Bengal (cf. *Eastern Bengal, op. cit.* p. 22)
- 20-21. The *Hanafi* School of Law (*Hanafi Madhhab*) is the school of Imam Abu Hanifah (see, *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, Vol. I, pp. 90-91: "Abu Hanifa"), one of the four traditionally recognised schools of law (*Madhhab*), belonging to the *Ahl al-Sunnat wa'l-Jama'at*, popularly known as *Sunni* (see, *Ibid.*, Vol. IV, p. 555-57: "Sunnah").
22. The *Khariji* School (*Khariji Madhhab*) is a principal contending party against the *Ahl al-Sunnat wa'l Jama'at* on various doctrinal problems (see, *Ibid.* Vol. II, pp. 904-908: Kharidjites".) and is outside the pale of *Ahl al-Sunnat wa'l-Jama'at* (see *ibid.* vol. iv, pp. 555-57: Sunnah).

23. The term *La Madhhab* (meaning La Madhhabi), literally means non-sectarian. Mawlawi Karamat 'Ali's allusion is to the *Ahl al Hadith* or the so-called Indian Wahhabis who follow no particular school of law.
24. By the term "Kharijis of Bengal", Mawlawi Karamat 'Ali alluded to the *Fara'idis*, i.e., Haji Shari'at Allah and his followers, as is clear in the next passage.
25. "عرض ہے کہ اس ملک ہندوستان کے متعلق بنگالے کے ملک میں دو فرقوں نے ایک نوا مذہب لوگوں نے اور دوسرے بنگالے کے خارجی لوگوں نے طرح طرح کے وسواس دلا کے اور افترا کر کے اور جھوٹ کہہ کے لوگوں کو دین اور مذہب میں شک دلا کے گمراہ کر دیے۔"
25. cf. Karamat 'Ali Jawnpuri, *Tazkiyat al-'Aqaid* (Published in *Dhakhirah-i-Karamat*. Calcutta, 1344A.H. Part i, No.3), p.63.
26. "شہر کلکتہ میں س ۱۲۵۲ھ کے ہم سے اور بنگالے کے خارجیوں کے استاد حاجی شریعت اللہ سے ملاقات ہوئی تھی۔"
26. cf. Karamat 'Ali Jawnpuri, *Hujjat-i-Qati* (in *Dhakhirah-i-Karamat, op. cit.*), p. 85.
27. The correct Arabic form is "وفاة"
28. In Arabic the term "عالم العلامات" is not used; simply "العلامة" would have sufficed to convey the intended meaning.
29. The term "البنگالات" is used here as the plural of "البنگالہ" which is technically wrong.
30. Here preposition "الباء" is used to give the meaning of "against" which is, how ever, out of place. The reading; "الروافضی والکوافر" by dropping the preposition "الباء" altogether gives more accurate meaning than the present form.
31. It must be read "العصرات" correct, "تشدید" with "کان"
32. "ظریف" in the inscription; apparently due to the mistake of the workman of the inscription.
33. It must be read "فی اربعۃ عشر من شہر"
34. "یوم السبت" in the inscription.
35. "ذی القعد" in the inscription.
36. "مولودہ" in the inscription.

## CHAPTER- 11

**Two *Fara'idi* Documents\***

The two *Fara'idi* documents reproduced below, were recovered by the present writer in 1958 and 1959 in course of an intensive investigation into the growth and development of the *Fara'idi* movement in Bengal. The first was recovered from the India Office Library (London),<sup>1</sup> the existence of which was known to some scholars but which was never critically examined or published and the second was recovered from the then head of the *Fara'idis*.<sup>2</sup> The former is a *Ro-bakari* or a brief official report, submitted by the Magistrate of Dacca-Jalalpur<sup>3</sup> to the East India Company in C.E. 1831, with regard to a criminal suit in which Haji Shari'at Allah, the founder of the *Fara'idi* movement, was implicated. The latter is a *Mukhtar namah*, Power of Attorney, delegated by Muhsin al Din Ahmad alias Dudu Miyan<sup>4</sup> to Munshi Faid al-Din, a practising lawyer of Faridpur, which was duely registered in C.E. 1849. The *Ro-bakari* is written in English and the *Mukhtarnamah* in Bengali characters and both are preserved in handwritten manuscripts.

**(I) *Ro-bakari* of the Magistrate of Dacca-Jalalpur**

The *Ro-bakari* consists of a brief report on the criminal proceedings against two Muslim groups of Dacca district, who were charged by the government with disturbing the peace of the land by fighting an affray involving plunder and looting. The affray was fought in April, 1831, between the followers of Haji Shari'at Allah and the followers of traditional local customs, and was provoked by religious differences.

Describing the ground of the affray, the *Ro-bakari* states that one of the *Fara'idis* "wished to bring his brother over to that sect, and on his not consenting, a large body of persons (i.e. *Fara'idis*) attacked and plundered the village in which he lived with the view of bringing about conversion by force. They repeated the attack after the next day."

The same ground was also repeated by Biharilal Sarkar in his biography of Titu Mir,<sup>5</sup> published in B.S.1304 (i.e. around

C.E.1914). He says:<sup>6</sup> “In C.E. 1831, the Eastern Bengal had become excited, and in the month of April of the same year, Shari’at Allah of Faridpur had attacked and looted a village. The entire village was looted because one person of that village did not accept his creed”.

On the other hand, James Wise, in his *Notes on Eastern Bengal* observes that the Hindu Zamindars were “alarmed at the spread of the new creed” of Haji Shari’at Allah, “which bound the Muhammedan peasantry together as one men. Disputes and quarrels soon arose, and Haji Shari’at Allah was deported from Nayabari, in the Dacca District, where he had settled.”

In the face of these conflicting views, it appears that although the basic reason for the collision between the *Fara’idis* and the followers of traditional customs had lain in religious differences, yet the Hindu *zamindars* had a hand in making it flare up into an affray.<sup>7</sup> On the whole, this incident of Nayabari in C.E. 1831, points to the fact that, the *Fara’idi* movement came into conflict by that time with the traditional Muslim society on the one hand, and with the Hindu landlords on the other, in a similar manner as it happened with Titu Mir and his followers about the same time in the district of 24 Parganahs.<sup>8</sup>

The *Ro-bakari* describes the followers of Haji Shari’at Allah as “Tueeyyooni Hal”, and the followers of the traditional customs as “Tueeyyooni Sabik”. It adds further that the latter, like other Muslims of the country, generally worshipped the Prophet and different *Pirs* or Spiritual Guides, whereas the former revered neither and disregarded established traditional customs.

Barring the exaggeration contained in the above statement, it points to the fact that the *Fara’idis* were puritan and revivalist of the type of those who became widely known as *Wahhabis*, whereas the rest of the local Muslims were steeped in superstitious beliefs and practices and unlike the former, paid unusual reverence to the *Pirs*.<sup>9</sup>

The terminology offered in the above statement gives another interesting point. The term “Tueeyyooni” more correctly “Ta’aiyuni”, is derived from the Arabic word “ta’aiyun”, which means “to identify”. Hence the term “Ta’aiyuni” implies a person who identifies himself with a particular trend or school of law

(*Madhhab*). It is well known that the Muslims of Bengal, especially in rural areas, have always been almost to a man *Sunni*, belonging to the *Hanafi* school of law or *Madhab*. The term “Ta’ayuuni” applied to both the parties, indicates that both belonged to the *Hanafi* school of law, which is also corroborated by the findings of our recent investigation.<sup>10</sup> Probably, the term was applied for distinguishing them from such radical revivalists who repudiated the need of any school of law and declared themselves as the followers of the Qur’an and the tradition of the Prophet on their own interpretation, and who gradually came to be called as *La Madhhabi* (i.e. those who belonged to no recognized school) by their opponents. The distinction “Ta’aiyuni Hal,” applied on the *Fara’idis*, obviously means “identifiers of the recent interpretation”, i.e., followers of the *Hanafi* school of law in accordance with the revivalist interpretation; and the other term “Ta’aiyuni Sabik” (more correctly *Sabiq*), applied to the rest of the local Muslims, indicates, ‘identifiers to the *Hanafi* school on the traditional interpretation’; in other words, followers of the *Hanafi* school of law in accordance with the previous traditional customs. This latter group or the followers of traditional local customs came to be generally known later on as *Sabiqi*.<sup>11</sup>

We have, however, no other evidence beside this in support of the contention that the *Fara’idis* were known as “Ta’aiyuni Hal”. But we know, on the other hand, that the followers of Mawlana Karamat ‘Ali were definitely and specifically known as *Ta’aiyuni*,<sup>12</sup> especially during the later half of the nineteenth century, who were deadly against the *Fara’idis*. Moreover, in the *Fara’idi* annals, there is no reference or hint of their ever having called themselves *Ta’aiyuni* though the connotation of the term “Ta’aiyuni Hal” vaguely corresponds to their views.

The only probable conclusion, therefore, which we can draw is that the *Fara’idis* may have also called themselves as “Ta’aiyuni Hal” in the formative stage of their movement (in order to express their allegiance to the *Hanafi* school of law and to distinguish themselves from the so-called *La Maddhhabis*), which may have been discarded soon afterwards, especially when their arch opponent Mawlana Karamat ‘Ali came to the fore with his *Ta’aiyuni* movement about C.E. 1839.

Regarding the judgment, the *Ro-bakari* states that two *Fara'idi* leaders were sentenced to one year's rigorous imprisonment with a fine of Rs.200 each, and some others were sentenced to similar terms with a smaller fine. It adds further that the Haji was subsequently apprehended and was compelled to sign a bond with a security deposit of Rs.200, to keep the peace for one year.

The importance of the present document would be evident by the fact that chronologically this is the first source of our information about the formative stage of the *Fara'idi* movement, and that, besides this, we have one letter contributed by a Hindu gentlemen to the Bengali Newspaper *Darpan*<sup>13</sup> of Calcutta in C.E. 1837 and a few brisk observations of James Taylor<sup>14</sup> (written in C.E. 1839), which are the only sources written during the life time of Haji Shari'at Allah.<sup>15</sup>

### **Text of the *Ro-bakari***

Bengal Criminal Judicial Consultations (Lower Provinces) No. 6

Fort William, the 3rd April 1832.

*Ro-bakari* of the Magistrate of Dacca-Jelalpoore,

29th April 1831.

The Government Prosecutor against two parties of Mohamedans on charge of affray with plunder and looting:

The quarrel between the parties is this, that the one, the disciple(s) of a person named Hazee Shureeut Oollah and the other, the inhabitants of the village of Ramnagar<sup>16</sup> had had for some time a difference in matters of religion. The former sects are known by the name of "Tueeyyooni Hal," the latter by that of "Tueeyyooni Sabik". The latter like the inhabitants of the country generally worship Mahomed and the different Peers. The former reverences neither. In other matters also they disregard established rules. As for instance, in this case, one of the followers of Hajee wished to bring his brother over to that sect and on his not consenting, a large body of persons attacked and plundered the village in which he lived with the view of bringing about conversion by force. They repeated the attack after the next day.



Two leaders on the part of the followers of the Hagee, who were actively engaged in the affray, were sentenced to one year's imprisonment with labor and a fine of 200 Rupees and in default of payment of the fine, to imprisonment for a further period of one year. The others, to similar punishment except that the fine imposed on them were only 100 Rupees.

Hajee Shureeut Oollah, the leader of the party was subsequently apprehended; but no proof existing against him, he was released on a *Mochulka*<sup>17</sup> and giving security to the amount of 200 Rs. to keep the peace for one year.

### **A Document Giving Power of Attorney by Dudu Miyan to Munshi Faïd al-Din Mukhtar**

This power of attorney delegated by the *Fara'idi* leader, Muhsin al-Din Ahmad *alias* Dudu Miyan relates entirely to his personal properties. Although it throws no direct light on the growth and development of the *Fara'idi* movement, yet it illuminates a few dark corners of our knowledge, which have relevance to the study of its history.

In the first place, it shows that Dudu Miyan had acquired extensive landed property in Faridpur, Dacca and Bakagranj, even though it does not specify the extent of his properties or the amount of his income. Secondly, it proves a close attachment of Munshi Faïd al-Din Mukhtar to Dudu Miyan and *vice versa*. It may be noted that the Munshi was originally an inhabitant of Jessore, who immigrated to Faridpur about C.E. 1840 and enrolled himself, as a practising lawyer or *Mukhtar* in the Faridpur Court. Though he was not a *Fara'idi* himself, he played an important role as an appointed guardian and protector of the sons and successors of Dudu Miyan.<sup>18</sup> Thirdly, it bears a signature of Dudu Miyan in his own hand. Moreover, it being the only relic of Dudu Miyan coming down to us, its importance should not be underestimated.

The document is written in Bengali character and in the typical language known as "Court Bengali". It was composed on the 22<sup>nd</sup> Paus, B.S. 1255 and registered in the Court of Faridpur on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Magh B.S. 1255 / 2<sup>nd</sup> January, 1849. Dudu Miyan, the giver of Power of Attorney, signed his name in Arabic character, while

Munshi Faïd al-Din Mukhtar and the witnesses signed in Bengali character. The signatures of the court officials and stamp-vender are in Persian and illegible. The document is presented below in original Bengali, followed by English translation.

### Text of the Power of Attorney <sup>19</sup>

Obverse:

Stamp Office <sup>20</sup>

Four Rupees

চারি টাকা

Line

১. লিখিতং শ্রী মহাশয়নদিন আহামদ ওরফে দুদু মিঞা
২. সাকিন বাহাদুরপুর থানে সিবচর মহকামে ফরিদপুর
৩. কস্য আম মোক্তার নামা পত্রামিদং কার্যধরণে আমার
৪. জমিদারি ও তালুকাত ও হাওলা, ও নিম হাওলা, ওসত হাওলা
৫. ও জোত জমা ও স্বনামি ও বিনামী এলাকাহায়ের মহকুমা
৬. ফরিদপুর ও জিলে ঢাকা ও জিলে বাখরগঞ্জ শাখিন <sup>২২</sup> (?) নিম্নুক্ত
৭. আয়ে তাহাতে উপর উক্ত এলাকাহায়ের শংক্রান্ত জে <sup>২৩</sup> সকল
৮. মকদমা জজ <sup>২৪</sup> সাহেব আদালত ও প্রধান সদর আমিন
৯. আদালত ও মনছফহারে ও আদালতের মোকারিরার আমিন মোস্তালীক
১০. ও মাজেস্টরি ও জানটু <sup>২৫</sup> মাজেস্টরি ও ডেপুটী মাজেস্টরি ও এসিসটেন্ট <sup>২৬</sup>
১১. মাজেস্টরি ও থানাহায়ের ও কালেক্টরি ও ডেপুটি কালেক্টরি
১২. ও বিসপীসীওস <sup>২৭</sup> কালেক্টরি ও কালেক্টরি আফিস, কমিসনারি ও ফোজ-
১৩. দারি আফিস সিসিওন জর্জ <sup>২৮</sup> আদালত ও আবগারি সাপ্রেটেন্ট <sup>২৯</sup> ও
১৪. কমিসনর ও নিটির কমিসন (?) ও মোং <sup>৩০</sup> কলিকাতার সদর দেওয়ানি আদালত
১৫. ও নেজামত ও গবরেনমেন্ট ও বিলাত আফিস ও খাস কমিসন ও সুপ্রা-
১৬. টেট পুলিশ মোহকামাহায়ের মৈধ্যে জে জে মহকামার হাকিম
১৭. সমিপে আমার মকদমা উপস্থিত আছে এবং হালে জাহা উপস্থিত
১৮. হইবেক ও আমার নামে কেহ নালীষ করে কীস্তা আমি কোন লোকের
১৯. নামে নালীষ করি তাহার তালাফি তদবির করেন পক্ষে
২০. জিলা জএসরের শাখিন <sup>৩১</sup> পানিপাড়া নিবাসী সেক আগর মোহাম্মদ
২১. সতকার <sup>৩২</sup> পুত্র শ্রী মুনসী ফৈজদ্দিনকে মোক্তার নির্দষ্ট করিয়া লিখিয়া
২২. দিতেছি উপর উক্ত জখন জে <sup>৩৩</sup> জিলা এ হাকিমআনের সমীপে
২৩. এবং রেজেষ্টর সাহেবের মহকামা এ হাজির হইয়া সহাল জওআব
২৪. তদবির তালাফি ও দরখাস্ত দাখিল করা ও দস্তাবেজাত দাখিল
২৫. করা ও আদালত হইতে টাকা ওয়াপোচ লওয়ার রসীদ ও দস্তাবেজাত

২৬. ওয়াপোচ লওয়ার রসীদ ও আদালতের ফএছলা লওয়ার রসীদ ও  
 ২৭. আদালতে মোকররির উকিলের নামে ওকালনামা ও উকালতর  
 ২৮. দিনে দোসরা উকালতনামা ও মোচনীয়া <sup>৩৪</sup> ও কালেক্টরি খাজাঞ্চিখানা  
 ২৯. তোহবিলে খাজানা দাখিল করার চালান ইত্যাদিতে আমার নাম  
 ৩০. দস্তখতে আপন নাম বকলম দস্তখত করিয়া দাখিল করা ইত্যাদি  
 ৩১. আমার নিজ ক্রেত লেখা ও কোবুল সেনেক্তর এতদার্থে আম  
 ৩২. মোক্তারনামা লিখিয়া দিলাম ইতি সন ১২৫৫ বিস্তারিত  
 ৩৩. ২২ পৌষ।

ইসাদি লিখিতং	আমি এই মোক্তারনামা
শ্রী ফৈজউদ্দিন	দেহেন্দাকে ও সাক্ষীগণকে
তালেবেলম	চিনি
গাং গণ	ফৈজদ্দিন মোক্তার।
শ্রী সেখ এয়াকুব লিখিতং	
গাং গণ গোপাল পাড়া।	

Reverse:

bs-28

(sd.) illegible

Line

১. অত্র মুনসী ফৈজদ্দিন মোক্তার এই মোক্তারনামা
২. হজুরে উপস্থিত করিয়া মোক্তার নামায় লিখিত ফৈজদ্দিন <sup>৪০</sup>
৩. ও সেফ এয়াকুব সাক্ষীগণকে সনাক্ত করিয়া
৪. যায় সাক্ষীগণ প্রতিজ্ঞাপূর্বক মোক্তারনামা
৫. দায়ক উহার দ্বারায় মোকাবেলা আপন নাম দস্তখত
৬. করিয়া মোক্তার মকদ্দের নামে এই মোক্তারনামা দেওয়ার
৭. কথা প্রকাশিতমতে তছদোক করা গেল ইং তাং <sup>৪১</sup>
৮. ১৫ জানুয়ারী সন ১৮৪৯ মোং ৪২ ৩ মাঘ সন ১২৫৫

(sd.) illegible

92

১৮৪৯ সন-২ জানুয়ারী

১২৫৫ সন ২ পৌষ

(sd.) illegible

illegible

illegible

**Translation****Obverse**

1. Know all men, by this, present, I, Shri Muhsin al-Din Ahmad *alias* Dudu Miyan,
2. of village Bahadurpur, Thana Sibchar, Sub-division Faridpur,
3. hereby delegate constituted Power of Attorney to take such actions which may be required with regard to my
4. Zamindari, taluks, hawlah, nim-hawlah, oşat hawlah
5. and jot jama, svanami and benami rights in the sub-division of
6. Faridpur and in the districts of Dacca and Bakarganj,
7. (and in respect of) law-suits relating to the above-mentioned rights.
8. In the courts of judge and the Chief Sadar Amin,
9. and in respect of (such other law-suits or anything connected therewith) in Courts of Munsifs and the Amin of the Adalat Muqarrirah,
10. and (in the Courts of) the Magistrate, Joint Magistrate Deputy Magistrate and Assistant
11. Magistrate, and in the Thanahs, and in the offices of the Collector, Deputy Collector
12. and special Collector, and (in respect of appeal suits in the Courts of the Collector and the Commissioner, and (in respect of) criminal
13. appeal (suits) and (in respect of whatever suits my lie) in the Courts of the Session Judge and in the Superintendent of Customs and
14. the Commissioner, and (in respect of any thing which may lie before) the Nitir(?) Commissioner, Sadar Diwani Adalat of Calcutta.
15. and Nizamat (Adalat), the Government of India, appeal suits to London, Khas Commission and the Superintendent of
- 16-17. Police, and in those sub-divisions where any of my suits may lie pending before the Sub-Divisional officers or may be brought (before them) in future,

- 18-19. or if anybody files a suit against me or I file any suit against anybody (before them) to appear and argue for me and on my behalf,
- 20-21. I (hereby) appoint Shri Munshi Faid-al-Din, son of Shaykh Agar Muhammad Sutkar of village Panipara, district Jessore, to be my true and lawful attorney to do (for me and in my name) the following (functions):-
- 22-24. to appear, argue and defend, to file and to sign (for me and on my behalf) in the Courts of the aforesaid districts and before the Registrars of the sub-divisions therein,
25. and to appoint Mukhtar (for me and on any behalf), to deposit money to the Courts, to file document,
- 26-31. and to sign his own name, for me and on my behalf, in the acknowledgement receipt (while) receiving back the money and the documents from the Court, (and while) receiving the judgment of the Court, (and) to sign the Wikalatnamah at the time of appointing Wakil at the Court for me and on my behalf, (and) to sign second Wikalatnamah on the day of hearing, for me and on my behalf, and to submit the chalans of rent to the Treasury of the Collectorate and of the Muhsiniyah (Trust); for me and on my behalf, by signing his own name for me and on my behalf which will be deemed to have been done and signed by me,
- 32-34. in witness whereof, I (the said Muhsin al-Din Ahmad) hereunto set and subscribe my hand and seal, this the 22<sup>nd</sup> day of Paus, B.S. 1255.

Signed in the presence of:

Shri Faid-al-Din (a student). I personally know the institutor of  
 Shri Shaykh Ya'qub (of) this Power of Attorney  
 Gopalgonj. (Sd.) Faid al-Din Mukhtar

## Reverse

### *Registration of the Mukhtarnamah*

1-3. On presenting this Power of Attorney to the honorable Court by the aforesaid Faid al-Din Mukhtar, and on identification of the aforesaid witnesses, Faid al-Din and Shaykh Ya'qub,

4-7. and on their giving witness on oath to the effect that the executor of this Power of Attorney signed his name in this document before them, this Power of Attorney, in the name of the Appointee, is hereby publicly recognised and registered on

8. the 15th January, 1849, corresponding to the 3<sup>rd</sup> Magh, B.S. 1255.

(Sd.) illegible

Signature of clerk.

(Sd.) illegible.

Registrar.

### References

- \* Reprinted with thanks from the Journal of the Asiatic Society of Pakistan/Bangladesh, Dacca, Vol. VI, 1961.
1. The photostat has been preserved by the Asiatic Society of Pakistan/Bangladesh, Dacca.
  2. Namely, Muhsin al-Din Ahmad *alias* Dudu Miyan, son of the late Badshah Miyan and the great grandson of the first Dudu Miyan.
  3. The old district of Dacca-Jalalpur consisted of the present districts of greater Dacca and greater Faridpur. For details, see *Journal of the Pakistan Historical Society*, Vol. VII, Part I, p. 24.
  4. Dudu Mian was born in C.E. 1819 and died in 1861. He played such an important role in the development of the *Fara'idi* movement, especially by defending the *Fara'idi* peasantry against the oppressive Hindu *zamindars* and European indigo planters, that he has been regarded by some scholars as the co-founder of the *Fara'idi* movement (*cf.* H. Beveridge: *District of Bakarganj*, pp. 254 and 381). In fact, the *Fara'idi* movement reached to the zenith during his time (*cf.* James Wise: *Notes on Races, Castes and Trades of Eastern Bengal*, 1884 p. 24 f).
  5. Entitled *Titu Mir* in Bengali
  6. *ibid.*, p. 13.
  7. James Wise: *Notes on Races, Castes and Trades of Eastern Bengal*, 1884 p. 22.
  8. See article of the present writer, "The Struggle of Titu Mir: a Re-examination," in J. A. S. P., Vol. IV, 1959, p. 113 f.
  9. See our article in *Social Researches in East Pakistan*, Asiatic Society of Pakistan, Publication No. 5, Dacca, 1960, p. 33.
  10. *Ibid.*, p. 36.
  11. James Wise, *op. cit.*, p. 7.
  12. *Ibid.*
  13. See, Brajendranath Bandopadhyay, ed., *Sambad Patre Sekaler Katha*, Calcutta, B.S. 1342, Vol. III, pp. 311-12.

14. James Taylor: *A Sketch of the Topography and Statistics of Dhaka* (completed in March, 1839), Calcutta, 1840, pp. 248-50.
15. Haji Shar'iat Allah died in C.E. 1840.
16. Ramnagar maust have been a small village in Nayabari in the Dacca district. We have got further details of the incident from James Wise who describes it as the incident of Nayabari (See, James Wise, *ibid.*).
17. Mochulka, correctly "Muslihah", an Arabic word which means covement or bond.
18. See, J. A. S. P. Vol. IV, p. 132.
19. See infra, photograph.
20. Seal of the stamp paper.
21. Signature of the institutor, Dudu Miyan.
22. Probably, the actual word was "অধিন", which was carelessly written by the scribe. At any rate, the meaning must be read as "অধিন"
23. Obviously it is "বে".
24. i.e., "জজ".
25. i.e., "জয়েন্ট" or joint.
26. i.e., Assistant.
27. i.e., Special.
28. i.e., Session Judge.
29. Superintendent.
30. stands for "Muta'allak" meaning "relating to".
31. It stands for অধিন.
32. It must be read as "Sutkar".
33. Here number "২" stands for doubling, i.e., জে জে, meaning "দে বে".
34. Obviously Muhsiniyah Endowment Estate.
35. Signature of the witnesses.
36. stands for "gairahagan".
37. Signature of the receiver of the power of Attorney, Munshi Faid al-Din Mukhtar.
38. Serial number of the registration.
39. Signature of the dealing clerk in Persian.
40. i.e., Faid al-Din (student), the witness.
41. stands for English date.
42. stands for "corresponding to".
43. Signature of the clerk in Persian.
44. Signature of the Registrar in English.
45. This bottom right corner contains the serial number of the stamp paper, date of purchase, name of purchaser (and probably his signature too) and the signature of the Vendor.
46. Although owing to some difficulties a literal ranslation is attempted here, no pain was spared to confirm to the requisite form generally practised in the courts of Bengal.

## CHAPTER-12

**Mazar of Dudu Miyan**

Muhsin al-Din Ahmad *alias* Dudu Miyan was the son and successor of Haji Shari'at Allah, the founder of the *Fara'idi* movement in Bengal. He proved to be a worthy son of a worthy father and combining the erstwhile religious reforms with the welfare of the down trodden peasantry, he gave a socio-economic bias to the *Fara'idi* movement. In this latter form the movement reached the zenith of its popularity.

By championing the cause of the helpless peasantry, he also stimulated the peasant agitation which dominated the rural society of Bengal during the later half of the nineteenth century. On the other hand, by so doing he antagonised the Hindu landlords and European indigo planters whose downright enmity proved a thorn by his side so long as he lived. Their resourcefulness, collusion with the Police and British officers, large scale physical assault, oppression and torture of his followers and a series of criminal cases instituted against him ultimately failed to overcome his indomitable spirit.

Declaring the equality and brotherhood of mankind and holding that land is a gift of Allah, the possession of which is an inalienable right of its tiller, he denounced the oppression of the landlords and planters and with overwhelming popular support, he met them with equal measures. No wonder therefore, as a leader of the down-trodden peasantry, he attracted even many Hindus and native Christians to his side and during the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, as James Wise testifies, his name became a household word throughout Eastern Bengal or the modern East Pakistan and latterly Bangladesh.<sup>1</sup>

The *mazar* of Dudu Miyan, two pictures of which are presented here, stands in a narrow lane at the backyard of 137 Bangsal Road, about fifty yards from the Mahaottoli crossing, in the old city of Dhaka. The *mazar* or grave of Dudu Miyan itself is flat with the ground, surrounded on three sides by a double-grave size rectangular structure made of brick and plaster, fixed at the nether



end on the fourth side with the boundary wall nearby a residence. The grave complex at present is encumbered by high buildings on all four sides.

The three walls of the structure are cut into a leafy design chosen at random for the purpose. No doctrinal or architectural implication need, therefore, be gleaned in it. So are the doorways as Dr. Ahmad Hasan Dani says, "poor imitation of rectangular door-frames with some off-set added for variety."<sup>2</sup> On the above, the structure is open and whitewash is occasionally applied over it for keeping it fresh looking.

The name "mazar" by which it is locally known, need not lead us to equate it with popular shrines. Because the *Fara'idis*, who stand for the abolition of local superstitions and un-Islamic customs, have little enthusiasm for sanctifying the grave of their dead leader. Whenever they pass by it, no doubt, they offer *Ziyarat*, i.e., pray to Allah for blessing the soul of their leader; but compared to other shrines, this *mazar* is left completely unattended and forlorn. Recently, the descendants of Dudu Miyan have built up their residence on the northern side of the Mazar and have set up a prayer place adjacent to its eastern side.

There is no writing or inscription either engraved on or fixed to the structure. It has an appearance of gravity and solemnity but is far from being artistically attractive. By all measure, the structure is to be considered simple and austere.

The fixation of the floral walls on the fourth side with the boundary wall of a Residence, suggests that the structure was not raised immediately after his burial. But if we are to count on the memory of the local people, it must have witnessed the passing of three or four generation. Because, even the oldest of the people of the locality (*basti*) could not say when it was built, but testify to have seen it since their childhood.

The flatness of the grave conforms to the general practice of the *Fara'idis* who strictly following a prophetic tradition prefer to leave it as such. But the open and austere structure around it testifies to the fact that they did not object to raising a boundary wall in so far as it did not give the impression of a shrine.

The double-sized grave goes to some extent to confirm the claim of his descendants that his last wife, a Brahmin girl converted to Islam,<sup>3</sup> also lay buried beside him. The situation of the *mazar* behind the residence No. 137 Bangsal Road, also lends support to the claim of his descendants that he passed his last days in that very house which he had acquired by purchase for the purpose.

What is, however, of greater interest to the students of history is that the evidence supplied by the very existence of this *mazar*, confirms that Dudu Miyan passed his last days at Dhaka till his death and was buried there, which helps us making important correction in the chronology of his life.

It may be noted that the chronology of the life of Haji Shari'at Allah and that of Dudu Miyan had long been a subject of great controversy.<sup>4</sup> But fortunately, in contrast to great difference of opinions that exist among scholars in respect of Haji Shari'at Allah, the controversy regarding the chronology of Dudu Miyan's life is comparatively narrow. As regards the date of his birth, James Wise says that it was in C.E. 1819. The only other source which we were able to lay our hands on and which gives us a hint in this matter, is a contemporary document recorded before the Sessions Court of Faridpur on 30 July 1847. It reads:<sup>5</sup>

“The prisoner Mohsinuddeen Ahmad *alias* Doodoo Meea, the son of Moulvee Shureeatoollah Hadgee deceased, inhabitant of Bahadurpore, pergunnah Jelalpore, Thannah Sheeb Chur in Furreedpore, a Talukdar, by caste Mussulman, aged about 28 years, but in appearance about 32 years old, appeared in Court.”

As Hidayet Husain followed closely the account of James Wise to the extent of reproducing a few paragraphs almost word by word (compare Wise's account in his book on *Eastern Bengal* cited above, p. 22 and M. Hidayet Husain, “Faraidi” in *Encyclopaedia of Islam* vol. ii, p. 57), and since he does not cite any other authority while giving such a culpably different date, it is possible that year 1802 was a printing mistake for 1820. At any rate, these irreconcilably different date led Dr. Abdul Bari and some other present day scholars, probably helplessly, to the surmise that (i) if the date 1802 is correct Haji Shari'at Allah's contact with the

*Wahhabis* of Arabia is to be precluded, but (ii) if the other date, i.e., 1820, is correct, the *Faraidi* movement is to be considered junior to the other reform movement in this sub-continent led by Sayyid Ahmad Shahid (cf. *A History of Freedom Movement*. Karachi, Pakistan Historical Society, 1957, Vol. I, p.545, foot note 3). When we were able to lay our hands on the tomb inscription of Haji Shari'at Allah, it came out that he was born in A.D. 1780, went to Makkah in 1799, returned to Bengal in 1818 and died in 1840 (see our article "Stone Inscription from the Tomb of Haji Sharia't Allah", *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Pakistan*, Dacca, Vol. iii, 1985, pp. 187-98, reproduced herein at chapter 10.

If he was 28 years in the middle of C.E. 1847, the date of his birth is plainly 1819. Thus, this documentary evidence virtually confirms the date offered by James Wise.

But in respect of his death, curiously enough James Wise and (probably following him) M. Hidayet Husain states that Dudu Miyan "died at Bahadurpur", his native village in the district of Faridpur, "on the 24<sup>th</sup> September, 1860", and that he was buried there but the Arial Khan river had within the last few years washed away every trace of his house and tomb.<sup>6</sup>

On the other hand, J. E. Gastrell, who as the Surveyor-General carried out an extensive survey of the district of Jessore, Faridpur and Bakarganj from C.E. 1857 to 1861 says that getting release from police custody in the summer of 1860 (?), Dudu Miyan "left the district (Faridpour) then too hot to hold him, and it is believed, sought refuge in Dacca, where in 1861 he was said to be very ill."<sup>7</sup>

Thirdly, in the *Imperial Gazetteer of India*, edited by W.W. Hunter, it is stated that Dudu Miyan died at Dhaka in C.E.1862.<sup>8</sup>

Fourthly, Wazir 'Ali, who recorded the local tradition of the *Fara'idis* in his Bengali work, "Muslim Ratnahar" gives the date of Dudu Miyan's death as B.S. 1268,<sup>9</sup> which corresponds with C.E. 1862, virtually corroborating and confirming the date offered in the *Imperial Gazetteer*.

In order to bring out the importance of our present findings, it may be pointed out that although the *Imperial Gazetteer* and Gastrell's

survey report were not inaccessible to the scholars, all modern writers who dealt with the life of Dudu Miyan, have invariably followed the chronology presented by James Wise and Hidayet Husain and without a single exception have given the date of Dudu Miyan's death as C.E. 1860.

In conclusion, we may sum up the findings of the above discussion which are as follows: —

(i) Dudu Miyan died in C.E. 1862 at the age of 43 years and not in C.E. 1860 as it is generally believed.

(ii) From C.E. 1860 to 1862, he lived at Dhaka, evidently for medical treatment as he was reported to have been "very ill" during this period. Probably, his long detention in the Alipore Jail near Calcutta during the time of the Great War of Freedom/Sepoy Rebellion (C.E. 1857-1859) and thereafter at the Faridpur Jail till the summer of 1860, may have considerably damaged his otherwise good health and stout physique, which eventually caused his premature death.

(iii) He was buried at Dhaka and not at Faridpur as stated by James Wise and Hidayet Husain.

(iv) Although the *Fara'idis* detested raising the ground on the grave or building a tomb thereon, they permitted raising modest boundary walls around it for its preservation, as it was also the case with the grave of Haji Shari'at Allah, whose tomb inscription was preserved by his descendants after the grave itself was washed away by the river Arial Khan and which was published by us in an earlier issue of this Journal as referred to above (see Chapter 10).

## References

- \* Reprinted with thanks from J.A.S.P. (Dhaka), Vol. VII, No-2
1. James Wise: *Notes on the Races, Castes and Trades of Eastern Bengal*, London, 1884, p. 23. For life and character of Dudu Miyan reference may be made of our study *History of the Fara'idi Movement*.
  2. See Dr. Ahmad Hasan Dani: *Dacca, A Record of Its Changing Fortunes*, Dacca, 1962, pp. 192-93.
  3. James Wise, *Ibid.*, p. 25.
  4. It may be noted that the paucity of source materials combined with fragmentary and sometimes inaccurate data supplied by earlier writers, especially in respect of Haji Shari'at Allah's life led some of the scholars of our time even to wild speculations. For instance, in the *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, M. Hidayat Husain maintains that he returned from Makkah about C.E. 1802 at the age of 38 years, whereas James Wise held that the year was 1820.
  5. *Translation of the Proceedings held in Two Cases tried in 1847 before the Session Judge of Dacca in which Doodoo Meea, and his Followers belonging to the Sect of Hadjees or Ferazeed were charged with unlawful Assemblage, etc.*, Calcutta, 1848, p. 4.
  6. James Wise, *Ibid.*, p. 26; and M. Hidayat Husain: "Fara'idi", *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, Vol. II, p. 58.
  7. J.E. Gastrell: *Geographical and Statistical Report of the Districts of Jessore, Fareedpore and Backergunge*, Calcutta, 1868, p. 36.
  8. W.W. Hunter Ed.: *Imperial Gazetteer of India*, London, 1885, Vol. IV, p. 399.
  9. Wazir Ali: *Muslim Ratnahar*, B.S. 1334, p. 9.

## CHAPTER- 13

## Some Reflections on Mawlana Karamat 'Ali's Role as a Reformer

### Early Education and Training

Mawlana Karamat 'Ali was born in Mullaatola Mohalla <sup>1</sup> of Jawnpur town in U.P. (India) on the 18th Muharram, 1215 Hijri (corresponding to C.E. 1800). His father, Abu Ibrahim Shaykh Bakhsh was a man of considerable learning and appears to have taken every care to give his son a good education in Arabic and Persian.<sup>2</sup> From Mawlana Karamat 'Ali's biographical data, we know of several teachers under whom he studied Arabic grammar, rhetoric and prosody and *tafsir*, *hadith*, *fiqh*, *kalam* and *tasawwuf*. Jawnpur being an ancient seat of Islamic learning, facilities for such higher education were within his easy reach and Mawlana Karamat 'Ali's later career as a preacher and his prolific writings on the above subjects show that he availed himself of these facilities to the fullest extent.<sup>3</sup>

James Wise says: when "sixteen years of age", he went to Delhi and studied religious sciences under Shah 'Abd al-'Aziz.<sup>4</sup> This view is not, however, corroborated by other sources. The Bengali genealogy of Mawlana Karamat 'Ali, namely *Banga Hadi ba Nasab-Nama-i-Karamatiya*, gives the impression that he studied *fiqh* and *hadith* under Sayyid Ahmad Shahid<sup>5</sup> and the Mawlana himself claims to have completed his training under the Sayyid in a period of only 18 days during his visit to Bareli,<sup>6</sup> i.e. about 1820 C.E. But, as the Sayyid was not an 'alim in the strict sense of the term, we may assume that the Mawlana studied these subjects under the learned *khalifahs* of the Sayyid, Shah Isma'il Shahid and Mawlana 'Abd al-Hayy Fulti. This surmise appears to be supported by the fact that, Mawlana Karamat 'Ali is known to have received a *sanad* of *khilafat* from Sayyid Ahmad Shahid through Shah Isma'il Shahid.<sup>7</sup>

In his *Quwwat al-Iman* (published in C.E. 1837), Mawlana Karamat 'Ali pays highest tribute to Mawlana Ahmad Annami under whom he claims to have studied *hadith* and *fiqh*.<sup>8</sup> In his *Mukashifat-i-Rahmat*, Mawlana Karamat 'Ali describes his *sanad* of *hadith* as follows:<sup>9</sup>

"From Mawlana Ahmad Allah ibn Dalil Allah Siddiqi Annami, from Mawlana Muhammad Ishaq, from Shaykh Abd al Aziz, from Shaykh Wali Allah."

In *Quwwat al-Iman*, he introduces Mawlana Annami to the readers as the compiler of a treatise entitled *Miaat Masail fi Tahsil al-Fadail* in support of *taqlid*.<sup>10</sup> In Mawlana Karamat 'Ali's defence of *taqlid*, *madhhab* and *fiqh* we find not only an echo of Mawlana Annami's opinion on these subjects as described by him but also a further stressing of the same logic, on the basis of which he condemned the *Tariqah-i-Muhammadiyah* i.e. the school of Sayyid Ahmad Shahid's followers led by Mawlana Wilayat Ali of Sadiqpur, Patna.<sup>11</sup> Mawlana Karamat 'Ali calls this group and the later *Ahl-i-Hadith* as *la madhhabi* and *Wahhabi*.<sup>12</sup> He asks: if a prescription of the School of Law is found to contradict a sound Prophetic tradition what should one do?

According to this group, one should give up *Taqlid* in such a case. But Mawlana Karamat 'Ali cautions the people not to be misled by them. For, according to him, to give up the *Taqlid* of the *Imam* was tantamount to deserting the 'mass of the community' the *sawad-i-a'zam*. Hence, in the above case one has no alternative but to have good faith in the *Imam* and to follow the prescription of his School.<sup>13</sup>

On the other hand, we know very well that, Shah Wali Allah, Shah 'Abd al-Aziz and Sayyid Ahmad Shahid held a different view on the above point. For the revival of interest in *Hadith* and its emulation formed the very basis of their reform movement.<sup>14</sup>

Thus, it is clear that Mawlana Annami's influence was a determining factor in moulding Mawlana Karamat Ali's ideas about Islamic law and religious principles. Probably, this was the reason which largely contributed to his differences with Mawlana Wilayat 'Ali of Sadiqpur, Patna, the chief Khalifah and spiritual successor of the Sayyid.

In the field of Sufism, Mawlana Karamat 'Ali, however, paid unlimited allegiance to Sayyid Ahmad Shahid. In the work above quoted i.e. *Quwwat al-Iman*, he hailed the Sayyid as a *Mujaddid* and called upon the people to enter the Sayyid's *Tariqah*, not only for

the salvation of their individual souls but also for saving the community at large from divine retribution which, he apprehended, might befall on the Muslims on account of their gross negligence of religious duties.<sup>15</sup>

Thus, in spite of his condemnation of the *Tariqah-i-Muhammadiyah*, founded by the Sayyid, he still claimed to belong to his *Muhammadi Sufi Tariqah*. He, however, tries to explain this apparent contradiction by asserting that, the *Muhammadi Tariqah*, which was enunciated by the Sayyid, did not represent a new Order but was only a higher stage of spiritual attainment in the four *Sufi Orders*, which are popular in the sub-continent, namely, *Chishtiyah*, *Qadiriyah*, *Naqshbandiyah* and *Mujaddidiyah*.<sup>16</sup> Mawlana Karamat 'Ali, thus, claimed to be a follower of these four mystic Orders as reformed by the Sayyid, which he, however, occasionally called the *Muhammadi Tariqah*.

In short, the influence of Mawlana Annami on Mawlana Karamat 'Ali's ideas about *Shariah* and Sayyid Ahmad Shahid's influence on him in *Sufism* or the mystic knowledge, must be kept in view in order to understand his role as a religious reformer.

### **Mawlana Karamat 'Ali in Bengal**

Mawlana Karamat 'Ali came to Bengal for the first time about 1820. James Wise says, "excited by the preachings of Sayyid Ahmad, he followed that remarkable man to Calcutta, became his disciple and accompanied him to Mecca. On return he proved one of the most valuable deputies of Sayyid Ahmad."<sup>17</sup> In his recent Urdu biography, it is claimed that Mawlana Karamat 'Ali was sent to Bengal and Assam by Sayyid Ahmad Shahid for preaching on the eve of the Balakot disaster, which took place in 1831. We, however, find him at Calcutta in 1835. This time he came accompanied by his family with the intention of devoting the rest of his life to preaching of Islam to the people of Bengal.<sup>18</sup>

In *Mukashifat-i-Rahmat*, Mawlana Karamat 'Ali says that he toured different parts of Hindustan and found the Muslims so much negligent of their religious duties that he became apprehensive of divine retribution descending on them. He further says that the Muslims of Bengal were more steeped in superstitious beliefs and



practices than those of the other parts of this sub-continent. He complains that due to the ignorance of the Muslim masses of Bengal with regard to their *madhhab* and *'aqa'id* that they were led astray by the *Fara'idis* and by the *Muhammadis* i.e., the *Sadiqपुरi* followers of Sayyid Ahmad Shahid, whom he identified with the *Wahhabis* of Arabia.<sup>19</sup> Probably, his decision to dedicate his life to the preaching of Islam in Bengal and Assam was influenced by all these factors. As a matter of fact, from 1835 till his death in 1873 C.E., he fought simultaneously on three fronts: firstly, against the *Fara'idis*, secondly, against the *Sadiqपुरi* followers of Sayyid Ahmad Shahid; and thirdly, against the superstitious beliefs and practices of the Muslim masses.

Before Mawlana Karamat 'Ali's arrival in Bengal, the *Fara'idi* and the *Sadiqपुरi* followers of Sayyid Ahmad Shahid had developed mutual friendly relations, which were probably cemented by their common disapproval of the British occupation of Muslim dominions. Mawlana Karamat 'Ali met Haji Shari'at Allah, the founder of the *Fara'idi* movement in 1836-37, and denounced him especially for his suspension of the congregational prayers of *Jum'ah* and *'Id*.<sup>20</sup> On the other hand, he condemned the *Muhammadis*, i.e. the *Sadiqपुर* group, for their campaign to revive *ijtihad* or fresh inquiry into the rules of Islamic law. In his writings, he often refers to the former as the *Kharijis* of Bengal and the latter as the *la-madhhabis*.

Mawlana Karamat 'Ali's vehement attack on the *Fara'idis* and the *Muhammadis*, however, far from unifying them into a common front against him, set them further apart. For the *Fara'idis* were *Hanafis* and clung to the *taqlid* of the *Hanafi* school of law. Mawlana Karamat 'Alis defence of *taqlid* and his condemnation of the *Muhammadis* for their campaign for *ijtihad* were, therefore, approved by the *Fara'idis*. The *Muhammadis*, on the other hand, believed in the validity of the prayers of *Jum'ah* and *'Id* in India<sup>21</sup> though they maintained that the country under the British rule was a *Dar al-harb*. Mawlana Karamat Ali's criticism of the *Fara'idis* on their suspension of *Jum'ah* and *'Id* prayers was, therefore, approved by the *Muhammadis*. Moreover, Mawlana Karamat 'Ali succeeded in introducing an intense type of religious polemics which laid more

emphasis on the religious differences of the different groups. The natural result was an increase of religious tension, which, as Dr. Muhammad Abdul Bari says, did not remain confined to few controversialists but often led to altercation throughout the country.<sup>22</sup>

### **The Ta'ayyuni Movement of Mawlana Karamat 'Ali**

Like other reformists, Mawlana Karamat 'Ali opposed superstitious beliefs and practices, and in his *Mukashifat-i-Rahmat*, he lists a great number of idolatrous rites and ceremonies which were practiced by the Muslims of Bengal.<sup>23</sup> He especially condemned music, dance, the *ta'ziyah* (i.e. carrying the effigy of Imam Husayn's tomb to commemorate the tragedy of Karbala) the rite of *Urs* and the offering of *fatihahs* in remembrance of the dead relatives. According to James Wise, his reform movement came to be known in Bengal as the *Ta'ayyuni* movement.<sup>24</sup>

The term "ta'ayyuni" is derived from the Arabic word "ta'yyun", which means "to identify". Hence, the term "ta'yyuni" implies a person who identifies himself with a particular trend. In the context of Mawlana Karamat 'Ali's views, it, therefore, implied a person who identified himself with a particular school or *madhhab*. This interpretation is supported by the fact that Mawlana Karamat 'Ali rebuked the *Muhammadis* as *la madhhabi*, i.e., those who do not belong to any established school of law. Hence, James Wise's contention that the "ta'ayyuni" means "establishing or manifesting"<sup>25</sup> does not fit in well with the context.

The *Ta'ayyuni* movement was also known as the 'Rahi movement',<sup>26</sup> a term derived from Persian word '*rah*' which means 'a path'. This term was used by Sayyid Ahmad Shahid to mean *Tariqah* in his *Sirat al-Mustaqim*, in which the practices and institutions of Islam are divided into *rah-i-nabuwwat* (the path of prophecy) and *rah-i-wilayat* (the path of mysticism). Probably, Mawlana Karamat 'Ali meant these two paths by the term 'Rahi'. Thus, although Mawlana Karamat 'Ali professed to be a follower of Sayyid Ahmad Shahid and kept a semblance of terms used by him, he stood aloof from the Sadiqpur (Patna) disciples of the Sayyid and founded a new trend of religious reform, i.e. the *Ta'ayyuni* movement, which was

substantially different from the *Tariqah-i-Muhammadiyah*, enunciated by the Sayyid himself and kept up by his Sadiquri *khalifahs* against heavy odds.<sup>27</sup>

### **Mawlana Karamat 'Ali and Muslim Modernism:**

Among the Muslim theologians, Mawlana Karamat 'Ali was the first to realize the futility of militant opposition to the British rule in this sub-continent. This realization dawned upon him especially after the failure of the Revolt of 1857-58. In course of time, he became a close associate of Nawab 'Abd al-Latif, the leader of the Muslim modernists in Bengal. In 1890, when the modernist movement of Sir Sayyid Ahmad Khan and Nawab 'Abd al-Latif faced a critical situation on account of the pronouncement of a *fatwa* by some prominent '*Ulama*' at Lucknow assailing the "loyalism" of the modernists and declaring Indo-Pak-Bangladesh sub-continent a *Dar al-harb*, implying thereby the duty of the Muslims to wage war against the British, Mawlana Karamat 'Ali lent his strong support to the side of the modernists.

In a lecture, delivered at the Mohamedan Literary Society of Calcutta on "a question of Islamic law involving the duty of the Muslims in British India towards the ruling power", he pleaded that since the Christian rulers did not obstruct the religious function of the Muslims, this sub-continent continued to be a *Dar al-Islam* as it was before the coming of the British. Consequently, it was not lawful for the Muslims to declare *jihad* against the rulers of the land. He also tried to impress upon his audience that the British nation was an ally of the Sultan, the Khalifah of Turkey, and cordial relations which existed between the two powers made it the religious duty of the Muslim subjects of British India to be loyal to the British Crown. He further argued that under the British rule in India, religious freedom was fully guaranteed which made it an "abode of security" or *Dar al-Aman*. This fact also dispelled the need of waging *jihad* against the ruling power.<sup>28</sup>

To discuss the validity of these arguments is beyond the scope of this short paper, but it must be emphasized that they served the purpose of a "legal fiction". In fact, what Nawab 'Abd al-Latif advocated only as an indispensable expedient, the Mawlana justified

as a religious duty. Naturally this discourse of the Mawlana in support of "loyalism" became a powerful weapon in the hands of the modernists. Sir Sayyid Ahmad Khan quoted it in support of his own contentions in his letter to the Pioneer, Allahabad, dated April 4, 1871, on the question of *jihad*.

In view of the above analysis, one is led to the conclusion that being apprehensive of disruption in the existing Muslim society by what appeared to him the iconoclastic radicalism of the *Fara'idis* and the *Tariqah-i-Muhammadiyah* but at the same time deeply conscious of the evil consequences of superstitious customs and usages in which the Muslim masses were steeped, Mawlana Karamat 'Ali strived to find a *modus vivendi* in a milder type of reform. Thus, while he defended the conservative stand point of *taqlid* as against the more radical reformers of Sadiqpur, he, nevertheless, strongly condemned the superstitious customs and usages, such as *'urs* and *ta'ziyah* procession on the occasion of Muharram, which were practised by the conservative masses and were denounced by the *Fara'idis* and the *Tariqah-i-Muhammadiyah*. It appears that his ideas underwent considerable changes under the impact of the establishment of British rule in this sub-continent. Probably, for this reason his views on different aspects of life propounded at different times do not appear to conform to a monolithic pattern, especially his avowed attachment to Sayyid Ahmad Shahid and at the same time his obvious deviation from the *jihad* movement enunciated by the Sayyid. Perhaps, his greater anxiety to save the Muslim community of India from total collapse and to ensure their survival after the failure of the War of Independence (1857-58), forced him to make compromises and eventually led him to declare that India under the British rule was a *Dar al-Islam* or a *Dar al-Aman*, and to advocate Muslim loyalty to the British. Nevertheless, through his strong personality, milder reform ideas and great power of persuasion he exerted tremendous influence on the Muslim society of Bengal where he dedicated his whole life for the propagation of Islamic values and ideals.

## References

- \* Reprinted with thanks from the Journal of the Islamic Research Institute, Karachi, Vol. IV, No 1, 1965, No. 103-110.
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  2. *Ibid.*
  3. *Ibid.* It may be noted that he wrote about fifty books and treatises. For the list of his writings see A. Yusuf Ali's article, "Karamat 'Ali", *Encyclopaedia of Islam*. 1st Edition, and 'Abd al-Hayy Lakhnawi, *Nuzhat al-Khawdtir wa Bahjat al-Masami' wa 'l-Nawazir*, Hyderabad-Deccan, 1366 A.H., VII: pp. 394-95.
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  6. Mawlana 'Abd al-Batin, *Sirat, op. cit.*, 23.
  7. *Ibid.*, p. 22.
  8. Mawlana Karamat 'Ali, *Quwwat al-Iman*, Calcutta, 1253 H., p. 95 ff. For a brief biographical notice of Mawlana Annami see *Nuzhat al-Khawdtir, op. cit.*, VII; pp. 47-8.
  9. Mawlana Karamat 'Ali, *Mukashifat-i-Rahmat*, in the collected works entitled *Dhakhirah-i-Karamat*, Calcutta, 1344 H. 131.
  10. Mawlana Karamat 'Ali, *Quwwat, op. cit.*, 95 ff. The full title of the treatise is *Mi'at Masa'il fi Tahsil al-Fada'il bi'l-Adillat al-Shar'iyah wa Tark al-Umur al-Manhiyah*. It consists of extracts from the writings of his teacher, Shah Muhammad Ishaq, who was the brother of Shah Isma'il Shahid and belonged to the "rightist" group of the illustrious descendants of Shah Wali Allah of Delhi. However, Shah Ishaq with all his "rightist" tendencies cannot be called an upholder of *taqlid* in the sense Mawlana Karamat 'Ali would like us to believe.
  11. *Ibid.* pp. 135-200.
  12. Mawlana Karamat 'Ali, *Hujjat-i-Qati'*, in *Dhakhirah-i-Karamat, op. cit.*, I, p. 94ff.

13. Mawlana Karamat 'Ali: *Quwwat al-Iman*, *op. cit.*, p. 72 ff.
14. See the present wrtter's article, "Shah Wali Allah's Conception of Ijtihad" in the *Journal of the Pakistan Historical Society*, vol. VII. part III, p. 165 ff. reproduced herein in Chapter III; Shah Isma'il Shahid, *Sirat al-Mustaqim*. p. 144.
15. Mawlana Karamat 'Ali, *Quwwat al-Iman*, *op. cit.*, pp. 197, 203 and 208.
16. *Ibid.* p. 200.
17. James Wise, *Notes, op. cit.*, p. 27.
18. Mawlana Karamat Ali, *Mukashifat op cit.*, p. 3 ff.
19. For, according to the *Fara'idis*, after the fall of the Muslim power in India there was no longer an *Amir* or *Imam* of the Muslims whose prerogative it is to lead either himself or through his deputies, the cngregationl prayers of *jum'ah* and the two '*Id* festivals.
20. For according to their belief Sayyid Ahmad Shahid was *imam* and *amir*, to whom they owed not only religious but also political allegiance. After his death at the battle field of Blakot in 1831, the continuity of the office of the *imam* was maintained through the fiction of his being still alive. This fiction served its purpose of keeping the *jihad* movement alive, but was subsequently given up when it soon degenerated into the superstitious belief of *ghaybubiah*.
21. Abdul Bari, 'A Comparative Study of the Early Wahhabi Doctrines and Contemporary Reform Movements in Indian Islam' an unpublished Ph. D. thesis, Oxford, 1953, p . 158: *cf.* Fadl Husayn, *al- Hayat ba'd al- Mamat*, p. 308,
22. Mawlana Karamat Ali, *Mukashifat,op cit.*, p. 3 ff.
24. James Wise, *Notes op.cit.*, 6 ff.
25. *Ibid.*
26. *Ibid.*
27. The present writer has elaborated this theme in Chapter II, "Relations between the *Fara'idi* and the *Ta aiyuni* of his doctoral thesis *History of the Fara'idi Movement in Bengal*, published by the pakistan Historical Society, Karachi, 2<sup>nd</sup> edn. Islamic Foundation Bangladesh, Dhaka.
28. See *Proceedings of the Mohamedan Literary Society*, Calcutta, 1870.

## CHAPTER-14

## Researches in the Islamic Revivalism of the Nineteenth Century and its Effect on the Muslim Society of Bengal.

The Islamic revivalism of the nineteenth century has been regarded by the English writers as the most momentous event in the modern history of Bengal. In earlier times, W.W. Hunter and James Wise made some attempt to assess the importance of this revivalism and its effect on the Muslim society. A systematic inquiry into the nature and progress of different religious reform movements, namely the *Fara'idi*, and *Tariqah-i- Muhammadiyah* and its successor movements, in which this revivalism expressed itself, and the manner in which the traditional society responded to its call or reacted against it, will form a subject of profound interest to the students of social history and sociology.

An inquiry of this nature will, in the first place, call for an examination of beliefs and practices of the Muslims of Bengal, especially relating to the mystic cults, rites, ceremonies and various socio-religious values, which played an important role in their day-to-day life during the period under review. Hence it will lead to an analysis of the social structure of the Muslims of Bangladesh. Secondly, the Muslim religious movements of the nineteenth century show certain characteristic features in respect of their appeal to different classes of people. It will be seen in the following pages that these movements can be classified under two heads, viz., (1) the *Fara'idi* movements and (2) *Tariqah-i-Muhammadiyah* and its successor movements. The former was influenced by the Wahhabi movement of Arabia and the latter reached Bengal from Delhi. It is a curious fact that the former found supporters mostly from the lower classes of the Muslims of rural Bengal, such as cultivators, weavers and oil-grinders; *Tariqah-i-Muhammadiyah* and its successor movements, on the other hand, spread equally in towns and villages and among the high and low without distinction. Another characteristic feature that is observed of these movements

is that in the phase of their "mass movement" the *Fara' idi* tended to assume the form of a socio-economic program; whereas *Tariqah-i-Muhammdiyah* tended to assume the form of a religio-political revolution. A close examination of these movements in relation to the attitude of the masses of the people, may eventually lead to a comprehensive study of "Sociology of Religion" of Bangladesh .

Materials at our disposal are in great abundance. In the first place, there are Imperial and District Gazetteers, Government Reports, Published and unpublished documents, and district histories, such as (1) James Taylor-*A Sketch of the Topography and Statistics of Dacca*, Calcutta, 1840, (2) J. E. Gastrell-*Geographical and Statistical Report of the Districts of Jessore, Furredpore and Backergunge*, Calcutta, 1868, (3) H. Beveridge- *District of Bakarganj, its History and Statistics*. London, 1876. Secondly, there are innumerable books and pamphlets in Urdu and Persian languages published by the promoters of the revivalism, which are preserved in various private and public collections, especially in the libraries attaches to the universities, collages and Madrasahs. These sources can be utilised with great advantage. Thirdly, the promoters of revivalism have also published a considerable number of *Puthis*, i.e. Bengali folk literature in which descriptions of various local customs and ceremonies are found. These sources, however, still remains to be collected. Fourthly, family records and genealogies will also yield valuable data.

It may be mentioned that I have been carrying on historical research on the *Fara' idi* movement for the last two years (C.E. 1958-1959), and my work is expected to be completed in near future. It is not proposed in the following pages to present a comprehensive study of the Muslim society of Bengal, but an illustration of the vast scope of study in this field.

### **Islamic Revivalism**

The loss of political power by the Muslims in Bengal during the later half of the eighteenth century put them to a number of crises in the social, economic and religious fields and the Islamic revivalism that arose in the next century (19<sup>th</sup> century), represented an attempt of the Muslim society to resolve these crises. In order to achieve this



end, the protagonists of revivalism deemed it necessary to reinvigorate the spirit of the Muslims by returning to the original teachings of Islam.

The political power of the Muslim of Bengal, has always been a source of honour, prestige and social upliftment, and it is with the direct or indirect help of this power that a handful of Muslim, who came to Bengal during the early centuries of their conquest, forged a society and culture of their own. The new culture, which they brought with them, succeeded in exerting great influence on the life and thought of the non-Muslim population.

It cannot be claimed, on the other hand, that the new culture which the Muslim brought with them, remained purely Islamic in its new geographical set-up. Through centuries of intermixing with the local populace various cults, customs and ceremonies crept into the Muslim way of life. The local influences, ranging from idolatrous propitiation of the goddess of smallpox and saint worship down to some amount of caste prejudices, which thus infiltrated into the Muslim society, hedged round the pure doctrines and institution of Islam. The original form of Islam survived only in the fundamentals of their beliefs and practices.

So long as the Muslims held the political supremacy, they were also able to hold cultural and intellectual superiority over their non-Muslim neighbours. AS a result, they were economically well off or at least satisfied with their pecuniary condition. Under such circumstances, things went on as usual, and they hardly left the necessity of purging their society of un-Islamic elements, But once the political power was lost, their economy suffered, and the loss of economic prosperity was bound to cast baneful effect on their social and religious life. Naturally, therefore, there has been a general feeling among the Muslims that their political decadence in the eighteenth and the nineteenth centuries was mainly due to their deviation from the original doctrines of Islam.

Hence, the religious leaders thought it their sacred duty to revive religious tradition (*Sunnah*). The rise of several religious reform movements amongst the Muslim of Bengal during the nineteenth century signified the local manifestation of this revivalist tendency

that was generally felt throughout this sub-continent. As a matter of fact, for some reason or other, a feeling of revivalism swept over the Muslim world during the period under review.

Thus it is interesting to notice that first Islamic revivalist movement that arose in Bengal, name by the *Fara'idi* movement, drew its inspiration from Makkah and was directly or indirectly influenced by the *Wahhabi* movement of Arabia. The other reform movement, which reached Bengal subsequently, stemmed from the influences of Shah Wali Allah of Delhi and his immediate successors.

James Wise credited the *Fara'idi* movement with stirring successfully "the docile and apathetic" Bengali Muslims to enthusiasm by resuscitating the dormant spirit of their faith. The other major Islamic revivalist movement, which in course of time split into Patna school, *Ta'ayuni* and *Ahl-i Hadith* movement. All these movements aimed at purging the Muslim society of un-Islimic elements and endeavoured to remodel it in accordance with the original teachings of Islam. But in their scheme of reformation they had differences, which often resulted in natural friction and rivalry. The scope of the present paper being limited to sociologico-historical interest, we would not go into the details of their origin and development, but confine our discussion to their distinctive features, so as to be able to examine their influences on the traditional Muslim society of Bengal.

The *Fara'idi* movement was started by Haji Shari'at Allah (C.E.1781-1840), in Eastern Bengal in C.E. 1818. It aimed at remodeling the Muslim way of life in accordance with the original doctrines of Islam. Its founder claimed himseif to be a *Hanafi* and followed the prescriptions of *Hanafi* school of law (*Madhhab*) in principles as well as in details. Like other Islamic revivalist movements of the time including the Wahhabism of Arabia, it insisted on the strict observance of Unitarianism of Islam and condemned all deviations from the original doctrines and institutions as polytheism (*Shirk*) or sinful innovation (*Bid'ah*), Hence, it prohibited numerous rites and ceremonies connected with birth, such as *Chuttee*, *Puttee*, *Chilla*, with marriage, such as, *Shabgasht* procession, and with death, such as various *Fatihahs*. Besides, it condemned saint-worship, undue reverence to the Pirs,

propitiation of the goddess of small-pox, raising of *Ta'ziah* (i. e. effigy of the Prophet's grandson Husayn's tomb), as downright polytheism (*Shirk*). The social equality of the Muslims was again and again emphasised by the enunciators of the *Fara'idi* movement, and all kinds of social discrimination and caste prejudices were abolished from the *Fara'idi* society.

What especially distinguished the *Fara'idi* movement from other revivalist movements of the time was, however, its suspension of the congregational prayers of Friday and *Id* under the British regime of Bengal. The *Fara'idis* held that according to *Hanafi* school of law (*Madhhab*) the congregational prayers were lawfully permitted only in the presence of the Muslim ruler or his agents. These prayers have been revived in East Pakistan, Bangladesh only after the achievement of Pakistan in C.E. 1947.

Haji Shari'at Allh was born in C.E. 1781, at Shamail, a village in the Madaripur sub-division, which at the time formed a part of the Bakarganj district but transferred to Faridpur district in C.E. 1873. In C.E. 1799, he made a pilgrimage to Makkah <sup>21</sup>, and instead of returning home, he stayed in Arabia for about 20 years. He studied religious sciences there under one Tahir Sombal, a doctor of the *Hanafi* school of law, and started the *Fara'idi* movement on his return from Makkah in C.E. 1818. Thus, it may be noted that he had the unique opportunity to watch the progress of the *Wahhabi* movement of Arabia from close quarters, especially from C.E. 1803 when Makkah was occupied by the *Wahhabis*.

*Tariqat-i-Muhammadiyah* movement was started by Sayyid Ahmed Shahid (C.E. 1786-1831) and Shah Ismail Shahid at Delhi in C.E. 1818, i.e. in the same year when Haji Shari'at Allah started the *Fara'idi* movement in Eastern Bengal. The term "*Tariqat-i-Muhammadiyah*" means "the path of Muhammad". It belonged to the reformist tradition of Shah Wali Allah of Delhi (C.E. 1703-1763), and was, in fact, a revolutionary outcome of the spirit of reformation started earlier by him. It has been erroneously regarded as the Indian *Wahhabism*, especially by the English writers, because of the involvement of its later major phase, the Patna school, in a series of State Trials, officially called *Wahhabi Trials*, from C.E. 1864 to 1870.

The central point of the *Tariqat-i-Muhammadiyah* movement was its encouragement for the following of Prophetic tradition (*ittiba-i-Sunnat* or *amal bil-Hadith*) in preference to the prescriptions of the schools of law (i.e. *Fiqh*). It endeavoured to accomplish this object through revivification of the principle of *Ijtihad*, i.e. fresh inquiry into the Quran and the Prophetic tradition (*Sunnah*). This being also the central points of Shah Wali Allah's scheme of reformation, the doctrinal connection between the two movements is well grounded. Moreover, the fact that Sayyid Ahmad Shahid was a disciple of Shah Abdul Aziz, son of Shah Wali Allah, and that Ismail Shahid was a grandson of Shah Wali Allah, both of whom received their education and training in the religious seminary of Shah Wali Allah and Shah Abdul Aziz also shows unmistakable historical connection between the two reform movements.

The Wahhabi movement of Arabia, on the other hand, laid utmost emphasis on the observance of the Unitarianism of Islam, so much so that Muhammad Ibn Abdul Wahhab (C.E. 1703- 1792 ) called himself and his followers "Muwahhidun " or unitarians, though the adversaries, including the Europeans, designated the movement as *Wahhadiyah* or Wahhabism, rather by way of reproach. Thus, the observance of Unitarianism formed the central point of the *Wahhabi* movement of Arabia though it also laid equal emphasis on the "following of the Prophetic tradition", as the *Tariqat-i-Muhammadiyah* on its part laid emphasis on the strict observance of Unitarian doctrines beside the revivification of *Ijtihad* and the following of the Prophetic tradition. But the primary emphasis laid by the former on the doctrine of Unitarianism and the latter on the following of the tradition, clearly shows the allegiance of *Tariqat-i-Muhammadiyah* to Shah Wali Allah rather than to Muhammad Ibn Abd al-Wahhab. Moreover, there is no historical evidence to link the *Tariqat-i-Muhammadiyah* movement of Delhi with the *Wahhabi* movement of Arabia. The similarity of their doctrines must, therefore be referred to the original source of the religious seminaries of Makkah and Madina of the eighteenth century from where both Shah Wali Allah and Muhammad Ibn Abdul Wahhab derived their inspiration for reform during their student life.

*Tariqah-i-Muhammadiyah* movement aimed at reforming the Muslim society, like the *Fara'idi* movement, in accordance with the original teaching of Islam. But as we have just mentioned, it laid utmost emphasis on the revivification of *Ijtihad* or fresh inquiry into the Quran and the Prophetic tradition and *Ittiba'-i-sunnah*, i. e. following Prophetic tradition in preference to the prescriptions of the school of law. The *Fara'idi* movement, on the other hand, accepted *Taqlid* (i. e. adherence to the prescriptions of the schools of law without subjecting them to fresh inquiry, which is opposed to, *Ijtihad* of the Hanafi school of law. In spite of the similarity in their condemnation of polytheistic accretion (*Shirk*) and sinful innovation (*bid'ah*), *Tariqah-i-Muhammadiyah*, therefore, had fundamental doctrinal differences with the *Fara'idi* movement. Moreover, the *Fara'idis* held that the congregational prayers were not lawful under the British regime, whereas the followers of *Tariqah-i-Muhammadiyah* continued to hold the congregational prayers of Friday and *Id* in the Indo-Pakistan sub-continent.

It may be noted that Shah Ismail Shahid, one of the enunciators of the *Tariqah-i-Muhammadiyah* movement enumerated almost all the superstitious beliefs and practices that were in vogue in the Muslim society of the Indo-Pakistan sub-continent in his pamphlet *Taqwiyatal-Imam*. In a later work, which was dictated by Syed Ahmed Shahid entitled *Siratal-Mustaqim*, the condemnation of all un-Islamic practices enumerated in *Taqwiyatul Iman*, was renewed. In a *Sanad* granted by Sayyid Ahmad Shahid to a Bengali khalifa (i.e. spiritual agent ), he advocated two sets of reform to be introduced into the Muslim society. In the first place the attributes of Allah must not be applied to human beings. That is to say, none of the angel, spirit, demon, *Pir* (i.e. mystic guide ), teacher, saint or Prophet be deemed to have the power of doing good or harm to anybody. Hence, none of them be worshipped or propitiated. Secondly no rite or ceremony, excepting those prescribed by the Quran and the Prophetic tradition, be observed. That is to say, the local rites and ceremony, such as raising mosque, decoration of tomb, preparation of *Taz'iah* (i.e. effigy of Husaan's tomb ) and various *Fatihahs* for the dead, be abandoned.

In C.E. 1820, Sayyid Ahmad Shahid paid a visit to Calcutta and made numerous disciples, and from that date the influence of *Tariqah-i-Muhammadiyah* movement said to have reached Bengal. From C.E. 1827, it assumed the form of a movement in the hands of Mir Nisar Ali *alias* Titu Mir. In C.E. 1831, Titu Mir, however came in conflict with Hindu Zamindars and through it also with the British government. Consequently he was crushed in that year.

On his way to Calcutta, Sayyid Ahmad Shahid had stopped at Patna, where the number of his disciples rose so high that an organisation of regular government was required. He appointed Mawlawi Wilayat 'Ali of Patna as Khalifah (or Deputy) and left the charge of his disciples in his hands. When Sayyid Ahmad and Shah Ismail were killed at Balakot in C.E. 1831, Mawlawi Wilayat 'Ali hurried from Southern India to Patna where he was elected the chief leader of the *Tariqah-i-Muhammadiyah* movement. In his turn, he appointed several Khalifahs and sent them to different directions, and in this process his younger brother Mawlawi Inayat Ali was sent to Bengal, who took up the thread which was cut off by Titu Mir's death.

### **The Split of *Tariqah-i-Muhammadiyah* into Patna School, *Ta'aiyuh* and *Ahl-i-Hadith***

In C.E.1837, Mawlawi Karamat Ali (C.E. 1800-1873), an eminent disciple of Sayyid Ahmad Shahid, published a book entitled *Quwwatul Iman*, in which he claimed that Sayyid Ahmad was a follower of *Hanafi* school of law, and maintained that it was necessary on every Muslim of "our age" to adhere to the prescriptions of one of the four *Sunni* schools of law, *viz.*, *Hanafi*, *Shafii*, *Maliki* and *Hanbali*. This went against the policy of the *Tariqah-i-Muhammadiyah* movement led by the Patna *Khalifah*, Mawlawi Wilayat 'Ali, who had advocated the principle of following Prophetic tradition in preference to the prescription of the schools in a pamphlet published sometimes earlier, entitled '*Amal bi'l-Hadith*'. Moreover, Mawlawi Karamat 'Ali emphasised on the necessity of *Taqlid* as against the policy of encouraging *Ijtihad* maintained by the Patna *Khalifah*. The inevitable result was a split between the two leaders.

Henceforth the group of Mawlawi Karamat 'Ali came to be known, specially in Bengal, as *Ta'aisyuni* or *Rahi* and the group of the Patna *Khalifah* as *Wahhabi*, specially in the government circle, due to their involvement in a series of *Wahhabi Trials*, as mentioned above. Nevertheless, the Patna group remained in the tradition of the *Tariqah-i-Muhammadiyah* and were popularly known as *Muhammadi*, an abbreviation of the term *Tariqat-i-Muhammadiyah*.

After the death of Mawlawi Wilayat 'Ali, there occurred another split within the Patna group (circa. C.E. 1864), between the extremists who repudiated the propriety of following any particular school of law in theory as well as in practice and others who in spite of their adherence to the policy of giving preference to the Prophetic tradition over the prescriptions of the school, inclined more or less to the *Hanafi* school of law. The former group called themselves *Ahl-i-Hadith* (i.e. the partisans of the Prophetic tradition), but also continued to be called *Muhammadi*. In order to avoid confusion, we will identify them as *Ahl-i-Hadith* and call the other group as the Patna school.

The foregoing discussion shows that from the doctrinal point of view the Patna school and the *Ahl-i-Hadith* had very little differences, while the difference between them and the *Ta'aisyuni* was considerably wide. The term "*Ta'aisyuni*" is derived from the Arabic word "*Ta'aisyun*", which means, "to identify with definiteness." *Ta'aisyuni* is, therefore, a person who has identified himself with one of the schools of law. The term "*Rahi*" is derived from the Persian word "*Rah*", which means "path". In this case, it meant a path or *Tariqah*. Thus, the *Ta'aisyuni*, definitely stood at the opposite pole of *Ahl-i-Hadith* who repudiated the propriety of following any particular school of law. Hence, Mawlawi Karamat Ali frequently scolded the latter as "*La Madhhabi*", i.e. one who belonged to no school. The Patna school stood somewhere in between them, but still in greater agreement with the *Ahl-i-Hadith*. For, in spite of its inclination to the *Hanafi* school of law in most practical matters, it continued to encourage the principle of *Ijthad* and that of preferring Prophetic tradition to the prescriptions of the schools. But their differences grew wider on a different plane.

From the middle of the nineteenth century, the Patna school took ever-increasing part in practical politics, and got involved into anti-government activities. The *Ahl-i-Hadith*, on the other hand, detested politics and concentrated wholly in the field of religious reform. In course of time, this created a wide chasm between them. The *Ta'aisyuni*, by its acceptance of *Taqlid* of the *Hanafi* school of law, though apparently came nearer to the *Fara'idi* movement from the doctrinal point of view, yet in practice proved to be the arch enemy of the latter. For, Mawlawi Karamat Ali stongly objected to the *Fara'idi* practice of suspending the congregational prayers of Friday and *Id*, and made scathing criticism of many other *Fara'idi* practices. He even called them "*Kharijis*" of Bengal.

Moreover, Mawlawi Karamat Ali stood for moderation and detested the radical approaches of the Patna school, *Ahl-i-Hadith* and the *Fara'idis* on the one hand, and denounced the superstitious practices of the traditional society on the other. Nevertheless, he accepted the propriety of the tradition *Fatihah* and some other customs in a modified form.

In his later lif he also collaborated with Nawab 'Abd al-Latif, the leader of Muslim modernism in Bengal. Amongst the Muslim theologians, he appears to be the first to realise the futility of militant antagonism against the British rule. He, therefore, pleaded for the loyalty to the established government and for reconciliation between the rulers and the ruled.

James Wise divides the Muslims of Bengal in the nineteenth century into four religious groups, viz. *Sabiqi*, *Ta'aisyuni*, *Fara'idi* and *Ahl-i-Hadith*. In his opinion, the traits of the traditional Muslim society had survived in the practice of the *Sabiqi* alone. The Arabic term "*Sabiqi*" means 'the followers of the ancestral customs'. According to Wise the *Sabiqis* consisted of the majority of the landed gentry and "with few exceptions" the descendants of the old families, who may be called the conserving "the debased Hinduised religion, peculiar to Muhammadan India". He further describes the *Sabiqi* group as "the oldest, the most corrupt", who, until recently, represented "the dominant State religion". Haji Shari'at Allah considered the traditional Muslim society of Bengal as corrupt and



un-Islamic. In H. 1289 / C.E. 1872, Mawlawi Karamat Ali says that he witnessed “much pauperism, lethargy and negligence in matters of religion” among the Muslims of Bengal in comparison to other Muslim lands.

As the *Fara'idis*, the followers of the Patna school, the *Ta'aiyuni* and the *Ahl-i-Hadith*, who represented the Islamic revivalism of the nineteenth century, campaigned for remodelling the Muslim society, they competed with one another to win the *Sabiqis* over to their respective sides. It is, therefore, a matter of great interest to examine the structure of the traditional Muslim society of Bengal and to assess the reaction of the *Sabiqis* to the impact of revivalism.

### **The Structure of the Traditional Muslim Society of Bengal**

The traditional Muslim society of Bengal represented a composite culture in which various foreign Muslim traditions and local influences were fused. In a recent study, Dr. Abdul Karim has shown that during the Sultanate period (i.e. from the thirteenth to the sixteenth century C.E.), the Muslim society of Bengal was “divided into two broad classes- the higher class and the lower class.”<sup>50</sup> The higher or upper class was mostly composed of foreign immigrants, *Khaljis*, *Ilbari Turks*, *Tughlaqs*, *Afgans* and *Sayyids*, who came to Bengal as conquerors.<sup>51</sup> In the wake of their conquest many Arabs, Persians, Africans and North Indian Muslims joined them as peaceful settlers, traders and missionaries.<sup>52</sup> Besides, many Central Asian families up-rooted by the Mongol eruption “moved out of their homeland and settled in Bengal”.<sup>53</sup> Although these different groups of Muslims came to Bengal under the “banner of Islam,” they brought with them their several particular way of life which they continued to practice.

The assumption of the political leadership of Bengal by the Mughals in the middle of the sixteenth century, did not change the earlier social setup, but introduced still newer elements, specially the *Shi'ite* influence imported by them from Persia. The extent of the *Shi'ite* influence in Bengal under the Mughals can be gauged from the fact that though the Muslim population of Bengal were almost all *Sunnis*, the *Shi'ites* are reported to have held supremacy over Bengal down to the eighteenth century, as the Nawabs and top ranking officials were drawn mostly from the *Shi'ite* sect.<sup>54</sup>

The upper strata of the Muslim society of Bengal did not form an isolated group, but an extension of the North Indian Muslim society. Even the *Sufis* who were responsible for the mass proselytisation of the local people, came to Bengal from Central Asia or elsewhere through North India.

The lower strata of the Muslim society of Bengal, on the other hand, consisted mostly of local converts. In their conversion, the *Sufis* (i.e., Muslim mystics) played such an important role that Islam in Indo-Pak-Bangladesh sub-continent has come to be regarded as “largely the gift of the *Sufis*”.<sup>55</sup> The *Sufis*, who emphasised more on the love of Allah than on the observance of the Law (*Shari'ah*), were naturally more tolerant than the orthodox '*Ulama*' or the theologians, and were ready to compromise to some extent with local customs. Archaeological evidence shows that the tomb of some of the earliest *Sufis* were erected on older mounds, which were apparently older local shrines or places of pilgrimage. For instance, the shrine (*Dargah*) of Shah Sultan Mahisawar at Mahasthan in the district of Bogra stands on the top of a *Shaiva* temple.<sup>56</sup> The *Dargah* of Bayazid Bistami, near Chittagong town, stand on the top of an older mound,<sup>57</sup> and the *Khanqah* (i.e., monastery) of Shah Jalal of Sylhet is likewise placed on an ancient mound.<sup>58</sup> The fact that these older shrines were let to continue or revived under a new garb, is a proof, not only of the accomodative attitude of the *Sufis* and their followers, but also, of their manipulation of the local sentiment in favour of Islam.

Another conspicuous instance of the survival of pre-Islamic custom is found in the utmost veneration shown to the stone-representation of the footprint of the Prophet (i.e., *Qadam Rasul*), especially in Eastern India. The earliest example of *Qadam Rasul* is found in the *Qadam Rusul* Building, erected by Sultan Nasir al-Din Nusrat Shah at Gaur to preserve the stone-representation of the foot-print of the Prophet, said to have been brought by Makhdum Jahaniyah Jahangasht from Arabia.<sup>59</sup> In Chittagong, there is a *Qadam Rasul* mosque, where such a foot print is preserved and another building is found at Habiganj (near Narayanganj) , which preserved a similar foot print.<sup>60</sup>

Nevertheless, the early *Sufis* appears to have been orthodox Muslims, and in spite of their greater attention to mysticism or *Tasawwuf*, they managed to observe the religious duties prescribed by the *Shari'ah* (i.e. Islamic Law). But in course of time, there grew up a heterodox type of mysticism and distinction began to be made between two types of mystics, one *Ba shar'a* (i.e. those whose practice conformed with *Shari'ah*, that is to say, "orthoprax") and the other *Be shar'a* (i.e., those whose practice did not conform with *Shari'ah* or "heteroprax"). The former type of mystic were also called *Salik* and the latter *Majzub*.<sup>61</sup>

The term *Salik* literally means a traveller, and in the mystic terminology, a traveller in the pathway of mysticism who conscientiously observes the religious duties prescribed by Islamic law (*Shari'ah*) as well. The *Majzub*, on the other hand, is one who being overcome by his passion of love for Allah, has become unmindful to the worldly etiquette.<sup>62</sup> It is generally believed that the desires of *Majzub* are in reality the desires of Allah expressed through him. In this sense, he is compared with a corpse resigned completely to the will of Allah. About the *Majzub* or *Be shar'a* mystics as they were regarded in the nineteenth century, James Wise says that they followed their own appetites and passions eating and drinking whatever they fancy and leading disreputable and scandalous lives. They wander about naked or nearly naked and live on begging or charity and are universally credited with supernatural powers.<sup>63</sup> He describes the *Salik* or *Ba shar'a* mystics as "usually married men of settled habit", who initiate disciples into their Orders. Consequently the *Salik* was by far the most respected in Bengal.<sup>64</sup>

From the earliest time, the prominent *Sufis* who initiated disciples into their Orders were known as *Pirs* or guides. In mystic practices where a *Pir* has to guide his disciple at every step, the "person" of the *Pir* was naturally regarded as more important than the "science of mysticism" (*ilm-i-tasawwuf*) and "super-human powers were ascribed to the *Sufis*, such as, giving relief to the poor, destitutes and the patients, being present at several places at a time, giving life to the dead, killing anybody at their wish and foretelling the future."<sup>65</sup> In his analysis of *Pirism*, Dr. Karim observes that "reverence to the

*Pir*” or the “concept of super-human power of the *Pir*” is not of Bengali origin. It was imported from Central Asia “through Northern India” by the Muslim immigrants. But in Bengal, it found a fertile soil and was established on a solid foundation.<sup>66</sup> Thus, *Pirism* in Bengal was, in its early stages, was an extension of the North Indian development.

The Buddhist populations of Bengal practised worshipping *Chaityas* or the *Stupas* and adore them with flowers and burning incense. The Hindus believed in *Avatarism* or incarnation of the Deity in human body. The local converts found a suitable parallel in the *Pirs* and even inclined to *accept* them as such.<sup>67</sup> The result was the rise of various local cults around *Pir*, such as, *Kumbhira Pir* and *Madari Pir*.<sup>68</sup> Besides, in the cult of *Satya Pir* of the Muslims and *Satya Narayan* of the Hindus,<sup>69</sup> the Muslims and the Hindus even stood shoulder to shoulder. As a matter of fact, Muslim relics have been found on excavation of *Satya Bhita*, which stands on the famous Buddhist monastery at Paharpur in the district of Rajshahi.<sup>70</sup> It is interesting to note that these local cults were propagated exclusively through Bengali literature, pointing unmistakably to their local origin.

The *Shi'ite* influence is found in its most prominent form in the Karbala legends, which has deeply affected the Muslim Bengali literature; and it is found in its corrupt form in the worship of *Bibi Fatimah*, the daughter of the Prophet. “One *Nil Bahr* built on a Cenotaph in honour of *Bibi Fatimah*, and for many generations a paper *Tazia* called *Turbat Haidari*, had been deposited in it during the Muharram”.<sup>71</sup> Mir Hashmat Ali, the English translator of *Taqwiyat al-Iman*, says, “the commonalty of the Muslims, especially the women, have more regard for the memory of *Imams*,”(i.e. Hasan and Husayn and their successors), than for that of Muhammad and his *Khalifahs*. The making of the *Taziyas* on the anniversary of the *Imams*, is most common throughout India, so much so that, “the opposition to it is ascribed by the ignorant Muslims to blasphemy”.<sup>72</sup>

The immigrant Muslims had introduced a type of birthday celebration of the Prophet called *Milad Sharif* or *Milad al-Nabi*, and

*Fatihah* or the rite connected with the remembrance of the dead relatives, usually followed by a feast, and 'Urs', i.e. *Fatihah* of the deceased *Pirs*, annually held at the shrines or *Khanqahs* of the *Pirs* and their descendants. The non-Bengali origin of these rites, is evident from the fact that even down to the present day, their services are conducted in Arabic, Persian and Urdu languages. Nevertheless, these rites were given a distinct Islamic orientation by their enunciators, and had become universally popular throughout the Muslim world during the medieval times.

Likewise the cults of *Khawaj Khizr*, *Zindah Ghazi*, *Pir Badar*, *Shaykh Sady*, were either introduced or developed, in Bengal by the immigrants, which became very popular among the lower strata of the Muslim society of Bengal. The festival of *Bhera*, dedicated to *Khawaj Khizr*, was widely observed by high and low "on the Thursday of the Bengali month *Bhadra*". The festival, according to James Wise, coincided "with the breaking of the rains" and was celebrated by Hindu boatmen and fishermen as well as by the Muslims. The *Bhera* was "made of paper and ornamented with tinsel," had a prow "resembling a female face with the crest and breast of a peacock, in imitation of the figure-head on the bow of the pleasure boat." "The effigy," Wise further says, "placed on a *Mor Pankhi* (i.e. *Mayur-Pankhi*) raft of plantain stem is set afloat at sunset, and with its flickering light gives a picturesque aspect to the dart and flooded stream."<sup>73</sup> Nawab Siraj al-Dawlah is reported to have celebrated it at Murshidabad.<sup>74</sup>

We have noted earlier that the upper strata of the Muslim society of Bengal were an extension of the Muslim society of Northern India. They generally followed the pattern of culture prevalent in Delhi and Lucknow. From the time of Bakhtiyar's conquest of Bengal in the thirteenth century C.E. down to the nineteenth century, the Persian language and the Turko-Mughal court etiquette were the dominant factors in their way of life. Describing the educated class to the Muslims in the nineteenth century, James Wise says that they were of "liberal ideas" and "Sympathised with the sincere worshippers of God" in whatever form it might be found. According to him, the educated Muslims were well-read in Persian and Arabic literature, and were convinced that they were the heir of "latest and

best” Religion.<sup>75</sup> He ascribes the main reason of the unsympathetic attitude of the Muslims towards English education to their consideration that, it favoured infidelity and atheism.<sup>76</sup> They absorbed themselves so much in Arabic, Persian and Urdu literature that Bengali literature was considered foreign to them.<sup>77</sup> In their day-to-day activities they were, magnanimous to the poor and needy, tolerant to the followers of other religions and sects, and pious in the practice of their own faith. They attended regularly to the daily prayers, observed the fast of Ramadan, and dispensed charity “freely and unostentatiously”.<sup>78</sup> Thus, the upper class, which consisted of princes, high officials and *Zaminders*, although may not have believed in the local cults and innovations, mentioned above, they tolerated them.

It may be well imagined that the Muslim theologians (*‘Ulama*) must have kept themselves aloof from such un-Islamic innovations as worship of *Satya Pir*, *Manik Pir*, *Kumbhira Pir* etc. but they generally adhered to one or another of the great mystic Orders, viz. *Qadiriyyah*, *Chistiyah*, *Naqshbandiyah* and *Suhrawardiyah*. As a matter of fact, these mystic Orders, specially as reformed in the seventeenth century by Shaykh Ahmad Sarhindi, who was reputed to be the Renovator of faith in the second millenium of Islam (*Mujaddid-i-Alf-i-Thani*), came to be recognised by the Muslims of the Indo-Pakistan sub-continent as orthodox, and were placed on almost an equal footing with the four recognised schools of law.

In the actual practice of mysticism, especially on the popular level, there were hundred and one deviations from the true path. But, in a society where the high and the low, *‘Ulema* as well as the layman belonged to one or another form of mysticism, the deviations could be justified or at least defended by referring them to *Ba shar’a* or *Be shar’a* mystic Orders. Thus, the indiscriminate practice of mysticism by the masses or laymen came under sharp criticism of Haji Shari’at Allah; Mawlana Karamat Ali made scathing criticism of many corrupt practices that had grown round the real teaching of the *Sufis*.

The Muslim society of Bengal was, thus, a melting-pot for centuries in which various foreign traditions imported by the immigrants as

well as local influences were fused. The foreign elements, such as *Fatihah*, *Urs* and *Milad*, were same as the North Indian pattern. But the local influence which consisted of customs, ceremonies and cults were somewhat peculiar to Bengal or Eastern India and with the blending of these various elements a complete socio-religious system had grown up in Bengal in which every custom, usage or ceremony acquired a definite value through long practice. Although many of the customs and ceremonies were from doctrinal point of view deviations from the original teachings of Islam, yet by long association with the original doctrines they came to occupy definite places of their own in the structure of socio-religious values and gradually acquired an Islamic orientation. Various customs and ceremonies connected with wedding, for instance, offered the masses the facilities of recreation and merrymaking. The wedding feast, *Fatihah* and *Urs* provided them with a square meal. The celebration of *Muharram* provided them the occasion for psychological distraction from the common humdrum of life, mixing in the crowd and for intense feeling. Every society is, in its own way, dynamic, and is prone to change. It cannot stand still for ages or centuries on the same grounds. The Muslim society of Bengal had, therefore, naturally changed, adapted itself to the vicissitude of time and had grown in size as well as in depth.

### **Reaction of the Traditional Society of Bengal to Islamic Revivalism**

We have mentioned earlier that Shah Isma'il Shahid enumerated almost all superstitious beliefs and practices of the Muslims of Indo-Pakistan sub-continent in his *Taqwiyat al-Iman* and denounced them as polytheism (*Shirk*) or sinful innovation (*Bid'ah*). It is interesting to note that Mawlawi Mukhlis al-Rahman of Chittagong published a refutation of this work in Persian language, which he called *Sharh al-Sudur fi Dafi al-Shurur az Radd-i-Taqwiyat al-Iman*, which means "a clearance of doubts from the hearts (of men), in self-defence against evils and in refutation of *Taqwiyat al-Iman*".

*Taqwiyat al-Iman* was published, probably in C.E. 1820s. In C.E. 1829, one Mawlawi Muhammad 'Ali of Madras had seriously questioned the propriety of the reforms advocated by its author Shah Isma'il Shahid and his co-adjutor Sayyid Ahmad Shahid. He

advanced eighteen points against Shah Isma'il's reform movement. A lengthy reply to these questions was published by Mawlawi Irtada 'Ali Khan (which consists of 124 pages in Persian) about the end of the same year (i.e. H. 1245/C.E. 1829).<sup>79</sup> Garcin de Tassy mentions another refutation of *Taqwiyat al-Iman*, namely *Ibtal-i-Taqwiyat al-Iman* written by an anonymous author.<sup>80</sup> Thus, the traditional Muslim society of Indo-Pakistan sub-continent reacted sharply against the puritan revivalism of the nineteenth century, and in this respect, Bengal was not lagging behind.

The theologians, who supported the customs of the traditional society, especially those who were deeply read in the sciences of the Qur'an and the Prophetic tradition, were, however, in a dilemma. For, it was not possible to vindicate the propriety of the rites and ceremonies, which were in vogue among the Muslims on the basis of strict Unitarianism of Islam. In an *istifta* (a formal way of seeking legal opinion from the jurists), addressed to the traditional theologians, it was asked, whether or not the *Fatihah* as practised by the Muslims in general, was to be regarded as unlawful on account of its certain resemblances with the *Prasad* of the Hindu deities?<sup>81</sup> The theologians in question wrote a *Fatwa* (legal opinion) allaying the fears.<sup>82</sup> Gradually, however, the traditional theologians took their stand on three points, viz., the justification of (i) *Fatihah*, (ii) 'Urs and (iii) *Milad*, which occupied most important places in the structure of their socio-religious system, and numerous pamphlets, *Fatwa* and many books were published by the traditional theologians of Bengal on these subjects.

The rites of *Fatihah* and 'Urs, as practised in the Indo-Pakistan sub-continent down to the present day, and the procedure observed therein, has no basis in the tradition of the Prophet or of the first three generations of the Muslims (i.e. the good ancestors or *Salf-i-Salihin*). Consequently, the promoters of the revivalism, i.e. the followers of Muhammad Ibn 'Abd al-Wahhab of Arabia as well as the *Fara'idi*, the partisans of the Patna School and *Ahl-i-Hadith*, regard these rites as sinful innovations, (*Bid'ah*). In the opinion of the traditional theologians, on the other hand, all innovations are not necessarily evil. They make a distinction between two types of



innovations, one being “good innovatoin” (*Bid'at-i-Hasnah*) and the other “sinful innovation” (*Bid'at-i-Saiyiah*). *Fatihah* and *'Urs*, in their opinion, are good innovations.

The traditional theologians explain that the term *Fatihah* is derived from the title of the first chapter of the Qur'an (i.e., *Sura Fatihah*). This is because the recitation or repetition of the *Sura Fatihah* forms the most prominent part in the procedure of the *Fatihah*.<sup>83</sup> It may be noted that the rite of *Fatihah* were observed (which has now become rare) on the third, fourth, tenth, twentieth, and fortieth days after the death of a person and thereafter observed annually. Mawlawi Karamat Ali describes six types of *Fatihah* including the one just mentioned,<sup>84</sup> which are not, however, important for our purpose. The procedure of its observance has three parts, viz., (i) recitation of the first chapter of the Qur'an, and its repetition for several times, which is generally followed by recitation or repetition of some other portion of the Qur'an. This part is known as (i) *Suwar*, (ii) entertainment of the guests generally by a square meal, for which one or more fowl or even a goat is slaughtered. (iii) Lastly, prayer to Allah for bestowing the reward of the recitation and of the feast to the departed soul of the person or persons in whose remembrance the *Fatihah* is held. This last part is called “bestowing of the reward” (*Isal-i-Thawab*).<sup>85</sup>

In the *fatwa* of Mawlawi Faid Ahmad, the author states that although *Fatihah* in the composite form, as detailed above, has not been found in the tradition of the Prophet and of his companions, yet the practice of the parts thereof separately is found, directly or indirectly, in their tradition. He, therefore, justifies the propriety of the rite of *Fatihah* on this latter basis.<sup>86</sup> In *Haqq al-Yaqin*, Mawlawi Karamat Ali also maintains that *Fatihah* is lawful if it conforms strictly to the above description though it is unlawful to observe on fixed days, such as the third, fourth or tenth day, and so on and so forth.<sup>87</sup>

*'Urs* is the death anniversary of the *Pir* or guide in the path of mysticism. In every detail, it is a *Fatihah*; but it generally attracts a large gathering. On the occasion of *'Urs*, the disciples of a deceased *Pir* congregate preferably at the residence of his successor and pass

a few days in mystic exercise and pious contemplation. They bring with them their provision, including animals for sacrifice, and present of *Nazranah* in cash to be offered to the successors of the *Pir*.

The rite of '*Urs* is justified by the traditional theologians on the same grounds as *Fatihah*. The *Fara'idis* and the followers of Patna school and *Ahl-i-Hadith*, however, regard *Fatihah* and '*Urs* as sinful innovations. But curiously enough, Mawlawi Karamat 'Ali strongly detested '*Urs* in spite of his approval of the *Fatihah*. He says, "the rite of '*Urs* has neither been found in the tradition of the Prophet or in the tradition of the two generations of the Muslims that followed him nor is there any basis for it in the writing of the four Imams." It is, therefore, decidedly a sinful innovation.<sup>88</sup> It is true that some of the ancestors practised it "by way of error or negligence." But that should not be a reason for the continuation of this rite, for, according to Mawlawi Karamat 'Ali, they admitted their fault whenever questioned on this point.<sup>89</sup>

*Milad-al-Nabi* means "birth anniversary of the Prophet". It is also known as *Milad Sharif* or *Mawlud Sharif*. On principle, it is regarded by all section of Muslims as a commendable ceremony. But the revivalists differ with the followers of the traditional customs regarding certain aspects of the procedure observed by the latter.

The traditional form of its observation consists of three parts, viz. (j) the narration of events immediately preceding the birth of the Prophet. (ii) the description of the occasion of birth, which is known as *Tawwallud Sharif*, and (iii) the exposition of his teachings. The second part or the *Tawwallud Sharif* is accompanied by a chorus in Arabic, Persian and Urdu. Recently Bengali chorus has also been introduced. According to the traditional theologians, it is desirable to stand up when the occasion of the Prophet's birth is described, and to sing the chorus loudly together while standing. For, it is believed that the soul of the Prphet visits the function at this stage. This act of standing up is called *Qiyam*.<sup>90</sup> The *Fara'idis*, the followers of Patna school and *Ahl-i-Hadith* regard such *Qiyam* as not only superstitious but as resembling to polytheism (*Shirk*). For,

they believe that such *Qiyam* involves “extreme form of reverence,” which is not permissible unto unseen beside Allah.<sup>91</sup>

The institutions of *Fatihah*, *'Urs* and *Milad*, as pointed out above, occupied very important place in the socio-religious system of the Muslims of this sub-continent and also elsewhere in the Muslim world. Although the history of their origin is obscure and their procedure is not found in the tradition of the early Muslims, yet their celebration was permitted by pious motive and through long practice they came to be regarded as the prototype of Islamic festivity. Moreover, the Islamic orientation that they had received in course of time, made it possible to justify their propriety on the basis of Prophetic tradition at least in piece-meal. The case of *Muharram*, *Bhera* and such other local customs were, on the other hand, of a different nature. Their proximity and resemblance to local Hindu *Pujas* (i.e. worship of gods and goddesses), had rendered their defence on Islamic grounds almost impossible. Besides, there were many details in the local customs which unmistakably pointed to the survival of pre-Islamic local custom. *Fatihah*, *'Urs* and *Milad* were imported by the Muslim immigrants of Central and Western Asia, and their obscure origin provided with a greater opportunity for their defence.

### Conclusion

Thus, the Islamic revivalism of the nineteenth century represented a supreme attempt on the part of the Muslim society to rehabilitate its lost glory; and this was sought through remodelling the Muslim ways and thoughts in accordance with the original teachings of Islam. In this endeavor, although the reformed schools succeeded considerably in reawakening the political as well as spiritual consciousness of the masses of the people, yet they were far from realising the real significance of the impact of Western science and rationalism which the European nations brought to bear upon the East. In spite of the tangle fight between the revivalists and the traditional society, as well as amongst the re-formed schools themselves, which followed the preachings of the new doctrines, the reformists were able to rouse great enthusiasm among the masses, who pinned their hopes for the recovery of their past glory with the success of the revivalism. Thus, it is significant to note that until the

failure of the Muslim arms and strategy in the great Rebellion of 1857-58, which falsified the hope of success on the old footing, Muslim modernist movement, led by Nawwab Abd al-Latif, could not take firm root in the Muslim society of Bengal.

It may, therefore, be suggested that the social awakening effected by this revivalism amongst the Muslims of Bengal, directly or indirectly paved the way for the tradition of the Muslim society from the old system to the new social order after the Western model, which is observed to gain predominance during the later half of the nineteenth century. Hence, the need of making a systematic study of the revivalism in relation to the Muslim society of Bengal, as suggested above, is important, not only for the understanding of the social history of Bengal but also for a proper estimate of the background of the contemporary society. The importance of such a study, therefore, needs no emphasis.

With regard to the methodology, one important point remains to be mentioned. In view of the characteristic diversity of the Bengali society, a student should always try to avoid over-generalisation, in his estimation of local customs, rites, ceremonies, usages and socio-religious values. The different strata of the society and the size of the geographical unit, often play a significant role in the ways and thoughts of the people, especially in the rural areas of Bengal which needs to be taken into account. Hence, any judgment of a general nature must be based on concrete data. In this respect, greater attention may be paid to the religious literature found in abundance in Urdu and Persian languages.

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1. cf. James Wise: *Notes on the Races, Castes and Trades of Eastern Bengal*. London, C.E. 1883, p. 20; and L.S.S.O' Malley: *History of Bengal Bihar and Orissa under British Rule*, Calcutta, 1925, p. 209.
2. See W.W. Hunter: *Our Indian Musalmans*. London, C.E. 1878; and James Wise: *Notes on the Races, Castes and Trades of Eastern Bengal*, *op. cit.*, pp. 1-116.
3. See Dr. Enamul Haq: *Bange Sufi Prabhav* (Bengali). Calcutta, 1935.
4. See Muhammad Ismail Shahid: *Taqwiyat al-Iman* (Urdu). Bangalore, India, H. 1371 (first published in Circa C.E. 1823). Translated into English by Mir Hashmat Ali: *Support of the Faith*. Lahore, Orientalia, not dated (first published Circa., C.E. 1850). This work consists of an enumeration of all un-Islamic influences found generally in the Muslim Society of India-Pakistan subcontinent.
5. For elaborate discussion, see *Ibid*.
6. cf. L.S.S. O'Malley: *Bengal District Gazetteers, Jessore*, p. 48 ff.
7. See "Shah Wali Allah's Conception of Ijtihad," *Journal of the Pakistan Historical Society*, Vol. VII, Part III, Karachi, July 1959, pp. 165-94.
8. See James Wise: *Notes on the Races, Castes and Trades of Eastern Bengal*, *op. cit.*  
p. 21 ff.
9. See *History of the Freedom Movement*, Karachi, 1957, p. 558 ff. (It may be noted that *Tariqah-i-Muhammadiyah* movement was started by Sayyid Ahmad Shahid, has been widely known as Indian Wahhabism).
10. cf. James Wise: *Notes on the Races, Castes and Trades of Eastern Bengal*, *op. cit.*,  
p. 21 ff.
11. See *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Pakistan*, Vol. III, Dacca, 1958, p. 187, ft note 1.
12. cf. H. Beveridge: *The District of Bakerganj*, London, 1876, p. 382.
13. *Hanafi Madhab* is one of the four Sunni Schools of Law, See *Encyclopedia of Islam*, Vol. I, pp. 90-91. "Abu Hanifa".
14. cf. W.W. Hunter, ed.: *The Imperial Gazetteer of India*, London, 1885, Vol. IV, p. 399.
15. cf. James Taylor: *A Sketch of the Topography and Statistics of Dacca*, Calcutta, 1840, pp. 248-50.
16. *Ibid*.
17. cf. *Selections from the Records of the Bengal Government*, Vol. XLII, *Trial of Ahmadullah*, p. 145; quoted by Dr. A.R. Mallick in his unpublished Ph. D. Thesis: *The Development of the Muslims of Bengal and Bihar, 1813-1856*,

- University of London, 1953, p. 80. See also James Wise: *Notes on Races, Castes and Trades of Eastern Bengal*, *op. cit.*, p. 22 ff.
18. *cf.* *Fara'idi Fatwa*, recovered by the present writer and preserved in the Asiatic Society of Pakistan/Dacca.
  - 19-22. See "Tomb Inscription of Haji Shari' at Allah," *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Pakistan*, Dacca, Vol. III, 1958, p. 187 ff. reproduced above.
  23. *cf.* J. O'Kinealy, "History of the Doctrines of the Wahhabis," *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Pakistan*, Dacca, Vol. XIII, Calcutta, 1847, p. 68 ff. reproduced above.
  24. *cf.* Ghulam Rasul Mehr: Sayyid Ahmad Shahid (in Urdu). Lahore, 1954, Vol. I, p. 111.
  25. See *History of the Freedom Movement*, Karachi, 1957, p. 550.
  26. For Patna School, see *infra*.
  27. See W.W. Hunter: *Our Indian Muslims*, London, 1871, p. 105.
  28. See *Journal of the Pakistan Historical Society*, Vol. VII, part III, Karachi, 1959, p. 165 ff.
  29. See Mir Hasmat Ali: *Support of the Faith*. Lahore, not dated, pp. iii-v: for Isma'il Shahid; and *History of the Freedom Movement*, *op. cit.*, p. 556 ff.: for Sayyid Ahmad Shahid.
  30. See *Encyclopedia of Islam*, Vol. IV, Art. "Wahhabyah".
  31. See *Journal of the Pakistan Historical Society*, Vol. VII, part III, Karachi, 1959, p. 167 ff., p. 169 ff., and p. 193 ff.
  32. See *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Pakistan*, Dacca, Vol. III, 1958, p. 198.
  33. See its trans. into English: Mir Hasmat Ali, *Support of the Faith*, *op. cit.*
  34. See Biharilal Sarkar: *Titu Mir* (in Bengali). Calcutta B.S. 1304, p. 11.
  35. *cf.* W.W. Hunter: *Our Indian Muslims*, *op. cit.*, p. 13.
  36. See *History of the Freedom Movement*, Karachi, 1957, p. 549 ff.
  37. *cf.* W. W. Hunter: *Our Indian Muslims*, *op. cit.*, p. 13.
  38. *Ibid.*
  39. See Munshi Hamid Husayn: *Al-Durar al-Manthur fi Tarajim-i-Ahl-i-Sadiqpur*, Allahabad, H. 1345, pp. 114-16.
  40. Mawlana Karamat Ali: *Hujjat al-Qati*, Calcutta, H. 1253, pp. 38 ff., 82 ff. and 208.
  41. *al-Durar al-Manthur*, *op. cit.*, p. 133.
  42. *cf.* Mawlana Karamat Ali: *Hujjat al-Qati*, Calcutta, not dated, pp. 94-97.
  43. *cf.* Mawlana Karamat Ali: *Tazkiyat al-Aqaid*. Calcutta, H. 1344, p. 64. Note: The term *Khariji* means "an ousted sect". It was a group opposed to the Sunni school during the early centuries of Islam (See, *Encyclopedia of Islam*, Vol. II, pp. 904-908).

44. For explanation of *Fatihah*, see *infra*.
45. Mawlana Karamat Ali: *Haqq al-Yaqin*, Calcutta, not dated, p. 39.
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47. *Ibid.*
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49. Mawlana Karamat Ali: *Qawl al-Thabit*, Calcutta circa H. 1344, p. 3.
50. Dr. Abdul Karim: *Social History of the Muslims in Bengal, down to A.D. 1538* (unpublished Ph. D. Thesis, Dacca University, 1958), p. 202.
51. *Ibid.*, pp. 180-81, and 190 ff.
52. *Ibid.*, pp. 179 and 188, also James Wise: *Notes on Races, Castes and Trades of Eastern Bengal*, *op. cit.*, p. 2.
53. Dr. Abdul Karim: *Social History of the Muslims in Bengal*, *op. cit.*, pp. 179-80.
54. James Wise: *Notes on Races, Castes and Trades of Eastern Bengal*, pp. 6, 21 and 107 ff.
55. Shaykh Muhammad Ikram: "Shah Wali Allah I," *History of the Freedom Movement*, Karachi, 1957, p. 491.
56. Prabhas Chandra Sen: *Varendra Research Society's Monograph No. 2* (Mahasthan and its Environs), Rajshahi, Bangladesh, August 1929, p. 4., See, also Dr. Abdul Karim: *Social History of the Muslims in Bengal*, *op. cit.*, p. 176.
57. *cf.* Dr. Abdul Karim: *Social History of the Muslims in Bengal*, *op. cit.*, p. 176 ff.
58. *Ibid.*
59. *Ibid.*, pp. 223-25.
60. *Ibid.*, p. 224, ft. note 1.
61. James Wise: *Notes on Races, Castes and Trades of Eastern Bengal*, *op. cit.*
62. *Ibid.*
63. *Ibid.*
64. *Ibid.* p. 53.
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67. *Ibid.*
68. *Ibid.*, pp. 215-18.
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70. K.N. Dikshit: *Memoirs of the Archaeological Survey of India*, No. 55 Delhi, 1938,  
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71. James Wise: *Notes on the Races, Castes and Trades of Eastern Bengal*, p. 9.

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74. *Siyar al-Muta'akhhivin* (English Translation by M. Raymond, Calcutta, 1902),  
Vol. II, p. 533.
75. James Wise: *Notes on the Races, Castes and Trades of Eastern Bengal op. cit.*, p. 55.
76. *Ibid.*
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78. *Ibid.*, p. 36.
79. Copy in the *Asiatic Society of Bangladesh*, Dacca.
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81. MS. in the possession of the present writer, recovered from village Chunati, district Chittagong.
82. *Ibid.*
83. MS. *Fatwa* of Mawlawi Faid Ahmad of Chittagong (in the possession of the present writer).
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## CHAPTER-15

## Socio-economic and Political Implications of the Islamic Reform Movements of the Nineteenth Century Bengal

The Western Orientalists recognize two types of Islamic reform movements taking place in recent centuries coinciding with the modern period of the West. One, they call Islamic religious reforms which was akin to Islamic fundamentalism and which dominated the Arabian society in the latter half of the 18th century Christian Era (C.E.) and made a popular thrust on the Indian subcontinent in the first half of the 19th century C.E. They called the Arabian movement “Wahabism” and the Indian reform movements “Indian Wahabism”.<sup>1</sup>

On close examination of contemporary documents we found these epithets inappropriate and misleading as the Arabian movement was launched by Muhammad, son of Adb al-Wahhab, while Abd al-Wahhab himself seems to have been conservative and is known to have opposed its radicalism. Muhammad Ibn Abd al-Wahhab called himself and his followers “Muwahhidun”, which means adherents to Unitarianism and translated by a contemporary Englishman in 1799 C.E. as “true Muslims”.<sup>2</sup> The upholders of the Indian movements called themselves severally *Fara'izi (Fara'idi)*, *Tariqah-i-Muhammadiyah*, *Ta'aiyuni* and *Ahl-i-Hadith*. None of them called itself *Wahhabi*.<sup>3</sup>

They called the other reform movements as Islamic or Muslim modernism, which raised its head in the Muslim society during the latter half of the 19th century and became widespread throughout the Muslim world in the 20th century C.E. This included the Aligarh movement of the Indian subcontinent and the Westernizing tendencies of Bengal, Turkey, Egypt, Syria, Lebanon, Indonesia etc., which aimed at reforming the political, military, educational, legal, economic and technological institutions of the Muslim countries on modern Western lines; so as to make the Islamic social system up-to-date.<sup>4</sup>

This was inspired by the spirit of “moving with the time” as Nawab Abdul Latif called it<sup>5</sup>. Sir Syed Ahmad Khan's inspiration was wedded to the Islamic ideal and removing educational backwardness of the Muslims and to guide them to the modern path of scientific and technological progress. The young Turks had also the ideal of “unity and progress” and the Indonesians sought “*budi utomo*” – meaning ‘modern enlightenment’.<sup>6</sup>

Some renowned scholars classified these two types of reforms as pre-modernists and modernist Muslim reform movements, apparently delineating them in the time scale of Western history.<sup>7</sup> The anti-Islamic forces in the outside world, reared into it the drastic need for reforming the social system of Islam as an evidence of defect in the religion of Islam itself; whereas the deeper critics from within the Muslim society<sup>8</sup> itself as well as the rebellious elements of the Muslim elite, blamed the *mullahs* and the conservative masses for dragging Islam backwards.<sup>9</sup>

These were indeed speculative contemplations and subjective judgments centering round the idea that, either as a religion or as a social system, Islam is not as wholesome, complete, perfect or faultless as it is generally claimed to be.

Thus, the modernist interpretation of Islam by the Orientalists as well as by the Muslims themselves, this or that way, tells upon the divine sources and disparages the revelational basis of Islam.

Such a predicament led some even to the counter-productive assertion that, Islam is not a religion but a complete code of life, without realising that, apart from the defective current Latin phraseology and modern Western linguistic usages of the word ‘religion’<sup>10a</sup> in its basic semantic sense; it means almost the same thing as Arabic ‘Din’ and Sanskrit ‘Dharma’, and that, there is a gulf of difference between “code” and “religion”. Because “religion” has a reference to the ethical responsibility and the next world, whereas “code” refers to this world alone and to the legal frame of a political State.

For this reason, the term “modernism” in all the languages of the world has remained almost an anathema to the pious Muslims; not because, they have no enthusiasm to become up-to-date; but because, they feel apprehensive of its repairing and reconstructural savour.

For a case study in Bengal, let us take up Syed Ameer Ali's endeavors. He was a devout Muslim and a first grade modernist. While founding National Muhammadan Association at Calcutta in 1877 C.E. he defined its aims and objects as, "Deriving its inspiration for the noble traditions of the past, it proposes to work in harmony with Western culture and progressive tendencies of the age. It aims at the political regeneration of the Indian Muhammadans by moral revival".<sup>10b</sup>

Again at the end of his life in 1927 C.E., Syed Ameer Ali wrote an article on "the Modernity of Islam" in which he recounted the teachings of the holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), as who "proclaimed that constant striving (*jihad*) was a necessary condition of man's existenc; and that, unless human being strove for progress, humanity would soon come to an end"; and as one who did not preach Islam for the Muslims alone, but "invoked blessings on all humanity"; who strove "not in supersession of what Jesus (peace be on him) taught but as a continuation of his efforts to revive spiritual life in the world, which leads to the observance of the rule that, the service of man is the most acceptable worship to the Almighty".

"The present stagnation of the Muslim world" says he "is due to the misreading of the Master's teachings. The followers of Islam have substituted the letter for the spirit, and are disputing among themselves about nonessential and neglecting the essential". In the Prophet's system the dignity of labour was extolled, they chose now to regard labour as an unworthy occupation. He preached thrift and practice of charity, the relief of suffering and distress; they practise instead extravagance, shutting their ears to the cry of distress. He preached the seeking of knowledge even unto China; they refuse to receive it even when brought to their doors".

"The faith" he asserts, "is alive but its followers are unable to understand its meaning". Islam needs no reform in the literal sense. "Islam needs only revival of the spirit which inspired the Prophet".<sup>11</sup>

Even before the Marxian socialism got set, Syed Ameer Ali wrote in his famous *Spirit of Islam* that, Islam is closer to socialism. Yet, he

wrote in an age when capitalism *laissez faire* and individual freedom were widely popular. Hence, detecting the *malaise* in the body-politic of Islam, he tended to detect it in the individual Muslims or in their personal life and personal attitudes towards the world; whereas in the precapitalist Mughal India, the famous Islamic reformer, Shah Wali Allah Muhaddith Dihlavi detected the *malaise* of the Muslims in the social milieu. He observed that the Muslim *Ummah* was attacked by the bone-corroding *Aqilat* (tuberculosis), and he tried to remedy it by economic, social and religious reforms.  
12

Shah Wali Allah 's reformist trend was brought to Bengal in one form by Sayyid Ahmad Shahid and Titu Mir under *Tariqah-i-Muhammadiyah* movement; <sup>13</sup> in another form by Moulana Karamat Ali under the *Ta'aisyuni* movement <sup>14</sup>; and still in another form by Moulana Wilayat Ali and Moulana Inayat Ali under the *Ahl-i-Hadith* movement.<sup>15</sup>

Again Syed Ameer Ali's category of "spirit" by which he tried to revive Islam, proved verbose in the Muslim social arena. Because, although it is an inspiring and galvanizing word for the *elite* of the modern West and the Westernized modern Muslims, in its substantive quality, it directly means a ghost, a demon, a fiend, a jinni and a devil, and scarcely good angelic being. Moreover, it has a superstitious and idolatrous implication, as believing that there is a "*genii*" in a man, which makes him spirited. Such an idea does not naturally go well with the rational and iconoclastic orientation of the Muslim society.

So Syed Ameer Ali's *Spirit of Islam* though deeply enlightened the Muslim *elite*, it did little in changing the Muslim society.<sup>16</sup>

### **Tracing the Sources of Inspiration**

Compared to the uneven, skin-deep, hesitant and sometimes rickety and sometimes jittery impact of modernism on the Muslim society of Bengal, Shah Wali Allah's influence made a wide sweep on the body-politic of Islam; and in less than one century, following his death (1863C. E.), his doctrines of reform pervaded the length and breadth of Indo-Pak-Bangladesh subcontinent.<sup>17</sup> In Bengal, it made a three-pronged projection in the form of *Tariqah-i-Muhammadiyah*, *Ta'aisyuni* and *Ahl-i-Hadith* as we have recounted above.

Shah Wali Allah's Arabian contemporary Muhammad Ibn Abd al-Wahhab had started a similar reform movement in Arabia aimed at political, economic, social and religious reform for the rejuvenation of Islamic ideology and revivification of the Prophetic tradition.<sup>18a</sup>

Like Shah Wali Allah, he also studied at Makkah for a considerable time and both came under the influence of Ibn Taimiyah's 18b writings, who had given a clarion call to the Muslim community to go back to the holy Quran and the Prophetic tradition for the revitalization of the muslim ummah in the 13th century C.E.<sup>19</sup> In the last analysis, it was Ibn Taimiyah's reform scheme for going back to the pristine Islam that fired the imagination of Shah Wali Allah 20a and Muhammad Ibn Abd al-Wahhab, which generated in its turn the Islamic revivalist movements of the 18th and 19th centuries C.E. These included also the Sannusi and Fulani movements of North Africa, Salafi movement of Egypt and Syria and Paduri movement of Indonesia.<sup>20b</sup>

The above comparison between the modernist and revivalist stand-points has been drawn for inviting the attention of the learned readers to a number of significant points, that is to say that, both themselves the groups shared among themselves a somewhat progressive element of uncompromising revolt against the cras conservatism of the traditional Muslim society--- modernists against the cras-conservatism of the Muslim masses and the revivalists against the blind imitation (*taqlid jamid*) of the conservative Ulama; and that, in their reformist attitudes, in the last analysis, the revivalists as a whole and the stalwarts of the modernists, pleaded not for repairing Islam or replacing any parts of its theoretical and social framework by the modern tit-bits, but endeavoured to inspire the present-day Muslims with the Prophetic inspiration and to revive the doctrines and traditions of Islam in their pristine purity.

### **Moulding the Process of Thought**

However, the modernist were so stupefied by the meteoric rise of mercantile capitalism and so enamoured of skyscraping capital accumulation and unprecedented industrial development of the modern west that, they thought of adjustment towards it and adaptation of its modes of life and thought as indispensable requirements for the survival of the Muslim Ummah. In their

marathon run and breath-taking haste for getting at modernity, they even connived at the interest-based banking system' that held the position of central importance in the society of the modern West; and they scarcely perceived the poisoning effects of the interest, a modified form of *riba/usury*, on the body-politic of Islam. They opted for modernity along with interest-based banking system, to be sure, with a view to achieving the general weal; and perforce, their reform scheme became more or less capitalist-oriented whereas Islam frowned at the accumulation of wealth in few hands and warned against any measures that might keep the money cycling in the coffers of the rich.<sup>21</sup>

In Bangladesh, besides the influence of Aligarh, the endeavors of Nawab Abdul Latif, Syed Ameer Ali and A.K. Fazlul Haq may be cited for the illustration of this trend.

On the other hand, the revivalists being equally concerned with the people's welfare, but purists in their attitude, stood for the re-establishment of the Muslim society on the pristine rules of Islam and were dead-set against inserting anything in their modes of life that might smell usurious or interest-like. Hence, they felt basically unaccommodative, inimical and even hostile towards capitalism. Some of the members of their peripheral relay, even felt like making a common cause with the socialist system of modernism. Mawlana Ubaydullah Sindhi and Moulana Abdul Hamid Khan Bhashani may be cited as illustration of this latter trend.

Nevertheless, in spite of their leanings, this or that way, both the modernists and the revivalists aimed at returning to the basic traits of Islam with the immediate object of revitalizing the foundation of the Muslim society and then intended to build up a viable, competitive and progressive social set-up thereupon. Only at the developmental level they differed: the revivalists clinging fast to the eternal principles of Islam and intending to build up the coveted new society only by means of extending those principles to the social milieu and refusing to step outside of them by any means; whereas the modernists felt amenable to adjusting Islamic usages and institutions to the current needs of the modern life and even felt the necessity of adapting in their own modes of life the good principles and progressive usages of other cultures and civilizations. In this

sense, the modernists have been classified by some as conservative and liberal reformists respectively. In short, both revivalists and modernists were up and doing primarily to carry the world to the Islamic pivot and not to carry Islam to the pivot of the outer world and only at the secondary level, some were ready to relax, to some extent, and others were not.

### **Islamic Social Framework**

The above discussion brings us to the question as to what constitutes pristine Islam? We may begin answering this question, first by pointing out that the holy Quran defines Islam in the substantive sense as a “*din al-haqq*”, “*huda*” and “*furqan*” which mean the true and righteous religion, a guiding light and a differentiator between right and wrong, and so on and so forth. These indicate a direction of thought and action rather than a code or a system. In fact, Islam consists more of principles and broad framework of action with the potential of world-wide development, and which can be grown into so many codes or systems of life as there are conscientious or desiring human beings. Had Islam been a code or system of life, it would have encroached upon the freedom of choice of human beings and would have stultified the human freedom of choice between various alternative courses of action (*ikhtiyar*). Moreover, code is a safeguard against violation of a rule; but Allah created mankind not for doing evil at all or to judge between his bad and good action simply; but in the Quranic perspective man has been created to see whoever of them does, how best of works.<sup>22</sup> On the other hand, as against the completeness of the system or perfectness of the code, in Islam the right guidance (*huda*) is most comprehensive that covers everything in the universe. We may call Islam a system of guidance in the strict sense and a code or system only in a loose sense of the term .

In other words, Islam gives human beings enlightenment and guidance and directives and it expects them to choose freely not only between the alternatives of good and evil; but also, between better and best courses of action. For that purpose, man has been endowed with an animal mind entertaining vain desires on the one hand, and with an angelic soul judging with conscience on the other; so that, he can take his own decision freely and act as he

pleases whether to satisfy his vain desires or to comply with the biddings of conscience and earn the pleasure of the Creator, Allah. Therefore, human beings, acting individually or in family circles or even in the social, political, economic, moral and religious arena, in accordance with the needs of the time and clime, are likely to develop diverse ways of life, structures of society, codes of inhibitions and systems of life. In a word, Islam does not offer a system or code, but a comprehensive guidance to human beings for the free exercise of their action, which is the subject of the judgment of Allah. On this earth, human being is on trial and his is an examinational life, leading him towards the enjoyment of endless rewards or sufferance of painful punishment in the life hereafter, in accordance with his own freely performed actions.

Now, the total basis of Islamic guidance has been laid down in a precise, brief, short, pointed and simple formula, namely; "La ilaha illa-Allah", meaning "there is no lord/god but Allah". This is the Islamic ideology of Unitarianism, (rather Unitarian doctrine) since Islam is a divinely inspired religion and is inimical to any sorts of 'isms' whatsoever. This comprises the sum-total of Islam; the holy Quran is but elaboration of this formula and the Prophetic *Sunnah* is an objective application of this formula in the arena of human life. In the current terminology, we had better call it the theoretical framework of Islam; nay the holy Quran claims that this constitutes in reality the essence of all true religions of the world. But the true religion must come from Allah and Allah being one and the same, religion cannot be but essentially one and the same. Hence, in the usage of the holy Quran and the Prophetic tradition, *din* (religion) is always used in singular number and never in plural as because, the true religion must also be eternally one and the same. Hence the above formula is also the essence of eternal religion. In a word, "there is no lord but Allah" constitutes also the eternal principle of religion.

What, however, distinguishes one religion from another is the recognition and faith in the particular prophets who brought the message to their particular peoples in particular times and climes. So, the complete Islamic formula of faith or the ideology *per excellence* is 'there is no lord but Allah and Muhammad is his servant and messenger'. Beside the above ideological formula of



eternal religion, the holy Quran also gives a model framework of human action characteristic of the eternal religion, which has been summed up in a five-point formula the Qur'an says:

**Might be they the Jews and Christians have not been informed about what is laid down in the sacred Book of Musa (peace be on him) and in that of truthful Ibrahim (peace be on him) that :**

- (a) "No bearer of burden shall bear the burden of another ,"
- (b) "And that, nothing is due to man except what he has strove for;"
- (c) "And that, the fruit of his strivings shall be bestowed soon on him;"
- (d) "And that, the consequent reward or punishment shall be awarded to him in full in the Hereafter."
- (e) "And that, the end lies with the Lord." <sup>23</sup>

The above framework of the model human goal and action has been summed up and restated in the holy Quran for the purpose of emphasizing the eternity of the principles of Allah and to draw the attention of the Jews, Christians and Muslims to the common identity of their religions emanating from the ideology of Prophet Ibrahim (peace be on him), the common ancestor of all their prophets and to focus their attention as on the unity of their faith in the Unitarian entity of the Creator Lord, Allah-Yehweh-God; as also to focus on the identity of their basic scheme of life. It ascribes (a) individual responsibility for all human action; (b) it judges emanation of all human rights from human strivings (striving = motive + labour); (c) it awards that, the fruit of one's labour is due to him alone; (d) it states that, the consequent reward or punishment of one's motive plus labour shall be awarded to him in full in the Hereafter: and that, (e) the ultimate return is towards the Lord-Povidence, Allah.

No wonder that Karl Marx, <sup>24</sup> son of a Jewish priestly family *i.e.* the Rabbanical Jew, the follower of Musa/Moses (peace be on him) built up a just path of *mundane salvation* for the non-Jewish secularist people of the world, in the form of socialism basing on the first three points noted above, substructing therefrom, however, the "ethical" motive from the labour, and replacing it by "economic"

motive; so that, when the ethical motive is minused from the processes of action, the fourth and the fifth points, namely reward and punishment in the Hereafter and the ultimate return to Allah, become redundant. In effect, therefore, Marxism stood for two and half mundane points, out of the five eternal mundane plus hereafterly points of religion.

It may be noted that ,for the affirmation of Islamic faith, abnegation of all shorts of gods and goddesses becomes necessary,that amounts to atheism ,no-godism,but faith in Allah alone. It being derived from Abrahamic ideology ,it also devolved on Jewish faith, which may look strange to a Christian who adopted the terminology of theistic “god” with capital “G” to imply the Supreme Lord of the universe.Hence,a Muslim as well as a Jew can be literally an atheist in order to be faithful to Allah and Jehovah.

Thus, the Marxian socialism proved a halfway house to the Judaic and Islamic ideal framework of human action. That is the reason why, in the arena of justness, the Muslims are likely to feel attracted towards the outer appearance of Marxian socialism. But get repulsed by its inner mechanism and the overall philosophy of materialism *cum* pure atheism, which are the replacement of the last two points of their prophetic tradition.

The central theme of the above fremework is that, the human action has two-fold results: one is mundane and immediate, which one reaps from the field; and the other is ultimate, other- worldly and eternal, which one would receive on the Last Day of Judgment in the life Hereafter; and that, there is nothing due to a man except these two-fold fruits of his own action in his life here and Hereafter. Human rights in the mundane life emanates from human labour and human fate in the Hereafter accrues from human motive for one's own action.

The mundane result is the direct fruit of his labour, which is bestowed upon him by the Providence without let or hindrance, even without judging its goodness or badness. The fruits of his labour belongs to him and to no others, to no one else. Nor can he claim the fruit of another's labour. In justness, therefore, the fruits of his labour should be given to him. It is the duty of the society and the

State to see that he gets his *due*. This is in contrast to the Western concept of legal human *rights*.

In the perspective of Plato's dialogue in *The Republic*, therefore, Islam advocates 'to give every human being his due *vis-a-vis* the Graeco-Roman principle of giving everybody his right.'

This economic theme of the Prophetic tradition was developed by Karl Marx into his theory of socialism on the one hand; and on the basis of this very tradition, Titu Mir and Haji Shariat Allah claimed that, the product of the land is due to the cultivator, and nothing of it is due to the feudal landlords appointed by the East India Company's government.<sup>25</sup> Indeed, Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said, "the land belonged to one who reclaimed<sup>26</sup> it." He further said: "Pay the wage of a labourer before drying of his sweat."<sup>27</sup>

With his mundane perspective, Karl Marx, however, judged 'human labour' as the basis of human life and human rights, whereas in the eternal perspective of religion the prophets judged human strivings (motive- plus- labour) as the basis of human life and human due.

### **The Role of the Islamic Revivalist Movements**

Nevertheless, it may be remembered that Islamic revivalist movements of the 19th century Bengal not only derived inspiration from the revivalist stance of Shah Wali Allah and Muhammad Ibn Abd al-Wahhab (both lived and flourished in the 18th century C.E.); but in their concrete historical context, they also preceded the birth of Marxism and other socialist endeavors of the West. Amongst the four Islamic revivalist movements that thrived in Bengal during the 19th century, the *Ta'aisyuni* movement of Maulana Karamat Ali Jawnpuri peacefully adjusted itself with the then existing English rule and concentrated all its energies to the field of religious reforms and the propagation of the religious doctrines of Islam amongst Muslim masses, who had become politically down-trodden, dislodged from normal economic and social life and turned ignoramus. The role of *Ahi-i-Hadith* was also similar in Bengal. Although it was like *jihadi* in the Punjab and Peshawar, thrived peaceably in Bengal focussing its attention on propagating the pure doctrines of Islam amongst the Muslim masses. They endeavored to

disentangle the masses from the superstitious beliefs and practices in which they had got steeped owing to the ignorance about the real teachings of the Quran and *Sunnah*.<sup>28</sup>

The remaining two trends led by Titu Mir and Haji Shariat Allah, known as *Tariqah-i-Muhammadiyah* and *Fara'izi* respectively, thrived in Bengal during 1820's, 1830's and 1840's. Both were forcefully suppressed by the English government in 1850's and 1860's. Besides holding fast to the basic doctrines of Islamic faith and campaigning for uprooting *shirk* (partnership with Allah) and *bid'ah* (religious innovation), both of them developed also certain well calculated social and economic doctrines.

Both Titu Mir and Haji Shari'at Allah declared the equality of mankind and the brotherhood of the faithful. They ruled inequality in social treatment and caste discrimination as repugnant to Islam. Both tried to build up an egalitarian society on the basis of the Islamic principle of *Shura*, mutual consultation, for deciding all public affairs and declared mutual cooperation and mutual help for promoting good and resisting evil amongst brothers as a bounden duty of every Muslim.<sup>29</sup>

It may not be out of place to note here that, Islam does not recognize any caste or class, which is ultimately a survival of the superstitious belief in the transmigration of soul. In Bengal, however, some sort of a professional caste differentiation is said to have grown up amongst the Muslims, such as *Sutar* (carpenter) *Rangrez* (textile color printer) *Julaha* (weaver) *Kulu* (oil-grinder) and so on. In course of time, by contagion of Hindu caste practices, these professional castes of the Muslim society came to be regarded as high and low in the social scale.<sup>30</sup>

Titu Mir and Haji Shariat Allah preached against such un-Islamic caste practices. The former, however, did not get enough time to purge it. The latter took concrete steps to remove caste discrimination and encouraged his followers to change the caste titles into *karigar* (technician).

In the economic field, Haji Shari'at Allah extolled labour in the spirit of the holy Quran, that human being has no claim over anything in this world or in the life Hereafter except on the fruits of

his own labour. He declared the earning of one's bread by means of his own labour as of highest merit. He declared such earning as *Halal rozi*, i.e. lawful provision, which lays the firmest footing for the acceptance of one's *ibadat* (worship).

Again, according to the holy Quran, Allah is the owner of the heavens and the earth. He is the real owner of all lands. He has bestowed only utilitarian ownership of land to mankind. So, the holy Prophet ruled that the land belonged to one who makes it arable. For this reason, no Islamic State can give ownership of land to any individual. As the manager and guardian of the community, it can give the land to a person only on lease. That is why unlike in the West, there is no "real estate" in the Muslim countries. In Bengal under Muslim rule, lands were settled with the individuals as *bandbasti*, which means just a lease and not ownership. *Bandbasti* was granted on condition that he would cultivate it himself and would not lease it further to any other person. On this basis, Haji Shari'at Allah ruled that, land belongs to Allah and its product belongs to one who cultivates it.

Titu Mir and Haji Shariat Allah declared that, the land belonged to the holder of the plough: *langal jar jami tar*,<sup>31</sup> as the Prophetic tradition awards the product of the land to the cultivator; and he ruled that, one can retain only that much of land which one can cultivate and the excess land must be given to his fellow brethren.<sup>32</sup> Hence, the claim of the *zamindars* on the product of the land was declared illegitimate.

Moverover, as mutual cooperation in goodness and non-cooperation in badness have been ordained by the holy Quran, Titu Mir as well as Haji Shari'at Allah and his son Dudu Miyan organized volunteer corps of clubmen to confront the hired clubmen of the *Marwari zamindars* and European *nilkar*, indigo planters and for resisting them from oppressing the peasantry.<sup>33</sup>

They expected in good faith, as they would naturally do under the Muslim rule, that their complaints against the newly set up Baron-type of *Marwari zamindars* and indigo planters, will be heard by courts of law and they may get access to the *Qazi-ul-Quzat* or to the *Nizamat Adalat*. And if they obtained hearing therein, their cases

were likely to be upheld on grounds of the rule of the *Shari'ah*. In between 1827 and 1830 C.E. Titu Mir sent his agents to Calcutta to file a suit against the European indigo planters. But they got puzzled by learning that the Europeans can only be tried by the Supreme Court, and that, the Court had closed down for a long vacation. They, therefore, returned home frustrated.<sup>34</sup> Because, in the law of the *Shari'ah* no one of human beings had any superiority over others and justice delayed is justice denied.

In 1831 C.E. two violent cases occurred, one involving Haji Shariat Allah and the new *zaminders* and the other involving Titu Mir and the new *zaminders* and the European indigo planters. These cases were taken cognisance of by the European magistrates who sided with their *zamindars* and planters. Following these occurrences smelling rat in the British law, Haji Shari'at Allah revised his steps and withdrawing from foul politics, concentrated all his efforts in the fields of socio-religious reforms.<sup>35</sup> Titu Mir's frustrated but bold policy however brought him increasingly into clash with the new *zamindars* and through their cunning machinations he soon fell in to trap which forced him to fight with the armed forces of the Company government.

Then a few Battalions of army and cavalry were sent from Calcutta with field guns (cannons) to kill those rebellious flies. They staged a grand show of field fighting befitting a great imperial and colonial power and mercilessly butchered about 50 clubmen who collected themselves around Titu Mir to defend him or to die for him. So cruel was the demonstration to the brute power that some of the simple folk who climbed upon trees to save themselves from cannon shorts, were brought down by the bullets of shot guns. After the cruel operation was over, they arrested another 250 men from the surrounding areas and sent them up to the Alipore jail.<sup>36</sup> Nevertheless the more was the vehemence of cruelty the deeper struck the urge for freedom in the minds of the hapless and helpless peasantry of Bengal.

Politics is the birth right of every man and woman. The more civilized a people become, the more enlightened becomes their politics. Politics thus becomes the measure of civilization for which

every man or woman has a natural urge; but the measure of its exercise gets conditioned by the degree of enlightenment and progress achieved by the society wherein he or she lives.

On the political plane, Sayyid Ahmad, the spiritual guide of Titu Mir, had declared Indian subcontinent under the British rule as *Darul Harb* i.e. an abode of war. When a country running under Muslim administration is occupied by a non-Muslim power, in the eye of the *Shari'ah* (the Islamic law) it turns from *Darul Islam* (abode of Islam) to *Darul Harb* (abode of war) which imposes upon all Muslims men, women and children, the incumbent duty of fighting with the occupation power until the country is freed.<sup>37</sup> Alternatively the Muslims are advised to migrate to any Muslim country for the maintenance of freedom. Being a follower of Sayyid Ahmad Shahid, Titu Mir was technically at war with the foreign rulers of Bengal though he did not declare it openly. But at the end, being surrounded by the Company government, he seems to have declared *jihad* (holy war) against the occupations forces<sup>38</sup> and died a martyr's death.

Titu Mir, whose real name was Mir Nithar Ali, was a well-travelled man. He went to the holy city of Makkah for *hajj* pilgrimage. He remained there for several years before he returned to Bengal about C.E. 1827 as a disciple recruit of Sayyid Ahmad Shahid. He was a stalwart wrestler, he possessed a strong and stout physic, he was well-educated in the available norm of Muslim education of the time and he inherited a good and pious cultural tradition.

Back to his homeland from revolutionary Wahhabi turmoil of Arabia (C.E. 1827), true to his metal, he devoutly engaged himself in preaching the Sayyid's puritan-cum-devotional teachings of Islam. He advanced the universal equality of mankind and egalitarian brotherhood of Islam. And on the top of it, he championed the sole right of the peasantry on the crops produced by them from their cultivated lands. Hence, his martyrdom was prompted by threefold objectives, namely (a) fulfilling a religio-spiritual duty (b) accomplishing freedom struggle and (c) protecting the peasantry from undue oppression.

The tragic death of Shahid Titu Mir made Haji Shari'at Allah more cautious. In a way he had made to appear Bengal under the foreign rulers as a *Dar-ul-Harb*, without announcing it in so many words.

He declared the prayer of *Juma'* on Friday and those of two *Eids* as unlawful and not permissible in Bengal since there was no lawful Muslim administration working in the country.<sup>39</sup> Because, the sermon of the *Juma'* and *Eid* being semipolitical in nature, these prayers could not be held unless certain conditions are fulfilled. One of those conditions was the presence of the Muslim ruler or his representative on the spot, which was absent in Bengal. So he indirectly called upon the Muslims to make struggle for the re-establishment of the Muslim rule by driving away the foreign rulers; but taking lessons from Titu Mir's debacle and his own set-back in 1931, he paid increasing attention to build up the social infrastructure for such a struggle instead of coming into a direct clash with the ruling power.

He began to re-organise the village communities into small *Fara'izi* brotherhood, on the one hand, and sent his son Dudu Miyan to the holy city of Makkah for schooling and political training on the other. On return from Makkah about C.E. 1838, Dudu Miyan organised the *Fara'izi* communities into such a compact organisation that a latterly administrator of the area namely Navin Chandra Sen exclaimed that the *Fara'izis* had organised a 'state of their own' within the British regime, a state within the State.<sup>40</sup>

The *khilafat* organization of Dudu Miyan had become so effective that, seated at his residence in Bahadurpur in the then Faridpur district, he was able to settle through the network of his *khalifahs* (representatives) all cases of disputes and quarrels in far off areas by means of arbitration, so much so that, people were not allowed to file law suits in the English courts without obtaining permission of the *khalifah* of the area concerned, in violation of which the complainant could not produce witnesses resulting in the dismissal of the case.<sup>41</sup> Such a position of the *Fara'idi* communities continued in Faridpur, Barisal, parts of Comilla and Dacca from about 1840 to 1857, until the arrest and imprisonment of Dudu Miyan in connection with the Great War of Independence or so-called Sepoy Mutiny in 1857.<sup>42</sup>

### Summary

Before concluding let us recapitulate the main points put forward in the foregoing pages and reformulate them into a minimum number of postulates.



In the first place, we have contended that the intellectual orientation of the oriental and occidental peoples, not being the same, Western words and terminologies do not always fit in well with the Eastern thinking and often fail to give a clear understanding of the circumstances of life in the orient.

Secondly, we have hinted to the fact that certain Western make-beliefs, such as, spirit, genius, ghost and such idelatrous terminologies as god, God-head, divine etc. do not precisely reflect the meaning and significance of the corresponding Semitic ideas. For instance, if "theo" stands for god, then its obnegation, that is to say "atheism" may be construed to be a prerequisite of Semitic faith as in Islam the negative formula "la ilaha" (there is no god) precedes the positive assertion "illa Allah" (but Allah).

Thirdly, we have shown that Titu Mir's and Haji Shari'at Allah's dictum, "Land belongs to the tiller" ----- had emanated from the Quranic doctrine of "human strivings as the fountain head of all human rights". We have further shown that, striving (Bengali "prachesta", Arabic "sa'i") comprises "motive *plus* labour". We have also shown that in the Quranic perspective every human being carries (a) individual responsibility for all his actions, (b) he has no claim on another's striving nor the others have any claim on his strivings, and that (c) he gets the rewards or punishment of his motive in full, in the life Hereafter and that (e) he shall have to return to his Lord-Providence at the end. We have contended that five postulates of the "doctrine of strivings", provide a common basis to the Jewish, Christian and Islamic religious traditions. In this context, we have surmised that Karl Marx had *minussed* the ethical motive from the doctrine of striving and postulated that "labour is the spring-head of all human rights" and that, none has any claim over the fruits of another's labour nor has any other the claim on the fruits of his labour.

Thus, we have shown that the Marxist "doctrine of labour" is a progeny of the bifurcated "labour" postulate of the Semitic religious "doctrine of striving". Hence, Titu Mir's and Haji Shariat Allah's "doctrine of striving" need not be classed with the premordial socialist endeavours of the Western nations, that preceded Marxist Communism; rather the Marxist Communism may be more

plausibly regarded as a systematic manifestation of the mundane portion of the premordial religious doctrine of strivings as given in the Semitic Scriptures that reflects in a depleted form the Semitic mundane ideal of human life leaving aside the inter-related ideal of the next life in the Hereafter.

### **Conclusion**

In conclusion, it may be stated that the Islamic reform movements of the nineteenth century Bengal were 'Islamic revivalist' in nature and aimed at rejuvenating and revitalising the Islamic social life by returning to the fundamental principles of Islam. Their objective was not that of going back in the scale of history; but one of retracing their steps to the point of departure of their gait from the original pattern of Islamic way of life and then firstly rejoining their life stream with the main stream of the Prophetic tradition and proceeding therefrom to the world stream of human life.

Now, going back to the pristine or original Islam also implied going back to the eternal Prophetic tradition of faith and action, which run on a comprehensive ideal of justice, which looked upon, from the side of the Creator, makes for the faith in Unitarianism; and looked at the side of the creature, falls upon the right of every human being on the fruits of his own strivings (*jihad*), such as, Syed Ameer Ali marks out "constant striving" as the sole principle of human progress.

The Islamic revivalist movements, therefore, were not blindfolded, but were dedicated to a rational ideal of fundamental justice and general weal, that was the reason why all denominations of oppressed humanity felt persuaded to join their rank and file even at the risk of their life.

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30. See James Wise: *Notes on Races* etc. *op. cit.* p. 22.
31. See *Titu Mir and his Followers in British Indian Records op.cit.* pp. 70-71 and *History of the Fara'idi Movement in Bengal, op.cit.* chapter VI: Fara'idi Doctrines.
32. see Dr. Ziaul Heque: *Landlord and Peasant in Early Islam*. Islamabad, Pakistan, 1977,pp.28-29; see also *Sahih al-Bukhari*, "Kitabul-Muzra' a" and *Sunan Abu Daud*, part III, "Kitab al-Muzra'a".
33. *History of the Fara'idi Movement in Bengal. op.cit.* Chapter IV.
34. See *Titu Mir and his Followers in British Indian Records*, pp. 73 and 142.
35. See *History of the Fara'idi Movement in Bengal. op.cit.* Chapter III. And the present writer's article: "Two Fara'idi Documents" *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Pakistan*, Dacca, vol. VI 1961, pp.119-24.
36. See *Titu Mir and His Followers in British Indian Records, op.cit.* p. 37.
37. See present writers article: "Sayyid Ahmad Shahid's Campaign 'Aganist the Sikhs" *Islamic Studies*, Journal of the Islamic Research Institute, Islamabad, Pakistan, Vol. VII, No. 4. Dec. 1968, p.318, reproduced above.
38. See *Titu Mir and His Followers in British Indian Records, op.cit.* p. 38
39. See *History of the Fara'idi Movement in Bengal. op.cit.* Chapter VI: "Fara'idi Doctrines".
40. See Navin Chandra Sen : *Amar Jivan* Vol.III, comments on Naya Miyan: see also *History of the Fara'idi Movement op.cit.* Chapter V.
41. See *History of the Fara'idi Movement, op.cit.* Chapter VIII "Khilafat Organisation".
42. *Ibid.* Chapter IV: "Dudu Miyan".

## CHAPTER-16

## A Critical Note on Muslim Renaissance in Bangladesh: Renaissance *versus* Revivilism

Renaissance is an historical terminology that was especially coined to illustrate a phase of the Western civilization, in the process of its transition from the classical Graeco-Roman-Hellenic 'spirit of rationalism' to its fall into a state of near coma or death, under the pressure of the medieval 'scholasticism' of the Christian fathers and its renewed birth-pang or a sort of 'pre-naissance' in the ethico-religious Christian 'Reformation' movement passing into 'Renaissance'; that is, the rebirth of the classical 'rational spirit' in combination with 'the Christian morality' taking the shape of 'humanism'. Eventually, the 'Renaissance' assumed the form of 'experimental science' and technology oriented 'modernism' in the West.

Thus, as a terminology 'Renaissance' is intimately related to the Western culture and as a phase of the West European historical process, it is to be dated from about the middle of the 15<sup>th</sup> to the 18<sup>th</sup> century C. E.

The birth of Western Renaissance is of often co-related with the Muslim conquest of Constantinople, the Eastern Roman Capital, and the consequent dispersal of the numerous Graeco-Latin scholars to different parts of Western Europe, who had till then remained concentrated there under the protection of the Byzantium. It is equally logical to assume that, the joining of hands with them by the Jewish and Muslim scholars of Spain after the fall of the Muslims, who were forcibly converted to Christianity and deported to various parts of Europe since Reconquista in 1498, gave birth to the scientific modernism.

The meaning of the word also carries a peculiar significance. Pre-naissance, naissance and renaissance mean pre-birth, birth and rebirth; and the process of birth and rebirth naturally presume a 'state of death' in between them. Renaissance, therefore, implies the rebirth of the classical 'spirit of Rationalism'. But its relatedness to the humanism gives it the requisite complexity to become the 'seed'

of a cultural evolution. To explain the matter, a Western story-teller like Christean Hans Anderson, could have told us: As Jesus Christ was born 2000 years ago with 'love-and-morality', that is, 'loving morality', so also humanism was born about four to six hundred years ago with 'loving morality-cum- rational spirit'; that is, the enlightenment, which came to be known as 'Renaissance'.

With all these meanings, implications and significance, the term 'Renaissance' can only be very ineptly applied to the 'Islamic situation' since Islam never died following its birth about 15 centuries ago. Therefore, even if applied, it can mean only 're-awakening' of the Muslims, rather than rebirth.

However, taking 'Renaissance' analytically as a 'synthesis' of the spirit of 'rationalism', 'morality' and 'humanism', some modern historians sought to 're-read a phase of 'Renaissance', by means of an analogy, in the middle part of the Islamic history, especially under the reign of Harun al-Rashid and Mamun al-Rashid, which they tried to reinterpret as an attempt at 'synthesis' of the 'Islamic spirit' with 'Greek rationalism'. By analogy, they also regarded Syed Ameer Ali's call to the Muslims, in the late 19th century C. E., to turn to the 'spirit of Islam' and his entreaties to them to disentangle themselves from the vainglorious and useless encrustation of formalism and traditionalism, as a call for 'Renaissance'.

Following up such a 'synthetic and analogical trend of thinking', some young people had set up a 'Muslim Renaissance Society' around 1940 at Calcutta and it was moved to Dhaka following independence in 1947 and they are said to have met several times at Dhaka in 1950's.

Yet, the term 'Renaissance' often proved captivating to the imagination of many Islamically oriented Bengali Muslim literateurs, probably more owing to the contagion than by any intellectual apprehension; as in the one-sided Anglo-Bengali education system, hatched by the servants of the East India Company and their Hindu *Gomashtahs* of Calcutta, 'Renaissance' was extolled as the 'seed or modernism' *par excellence*, and which was lauded equally by the English writers, poets, novelists and

dramatists on the one hand, and the Bengali Hindu writers and teachers of the *Inga-Banga Samaj* orientation, on the other. In this respect, the renowned Bengali Muslim literateur, Ismail Husain Shiraji and others of the like, were regarded the leading figures of Muslim Renaissance in Bengal.

The above analysis of ‘Renaissance’, on the top of our discussion, was deemed necessary for clearing the background of the equivalent Islamic situation, which we have to consider presently, for the special reason that, the newer researches of the Muslim scholars in 1970’s have rendered out-of-date many a concepts and judgments of the Western Orientalists which were accepted as in good order in 1960’s. Keeping these precautions and forewards, therefore, in view, we may, proceed to analyse the equivalent Muslim situation in Bengal during the modern times.

### **Role of Syed Ameer Ali**

As a starting point, let us consider the statement of a very renowned Orientalist, G. E. von Grunebaum, in a chapter entitled “attempt at self-interpretation” in his *Islam : Essays in the Nature and Growth of a Cultural Tradition* (Oxford, 1969, pp.185-236), where he says, “For almost a century, the Islamic East has been astir. The example of the West, the pressures of defeat and foreign control, of social and economic unrest, of ambition and pride, have led the peoples of the East to rediscover the ‘will to grow’ and to assert themselves” (p.231).

Then keeping Ibn Khaldun (d. 1406 C.E.) in the background as the prime source of inspiration, he considers nine great Muslim writers as the most leading thinkers of contemporary Islam. Amongst them, Syed Jamal al-Din al-Afghani (1839-97 C.E.) comes first, followed by Mufti Muhammad Abduh (1849-1905 C.E.) in Egypt on the one hand, and Syed Ameer Ali (1819-1928 C. E.) in Bengal and India, on the other. He observes: “On the whole Ameer Ali’s insight into rationale and ideals of Islam is remarkable, and his contagious idealism, if it does sometimes confuse hopes and facts, always compels sympathy for the author as well as for his subject” (p. 191).

“The Sayyid”, says he, “criticizes intolerance and reaction wherever they are met. He clearly implies that these evil forces, at least, were



more powerful in Christianity than in Islam, but his mind is not set on disputatious victories: he yearns for a renaissance of his faith along its original lines. Many dregs have accumulated in the course of the ages: despotism has hamstrung the intellectual elasticity of the believers. But there is no doubt in Ameer Ali's heart that restoration of the Prophet's undiluted word will bring about the restoration of Islam to its rightful place in this world" (p.193).

Indeed, we may further note that writing in *Islamic Culture of Hyderabad, Deccan*, one year before his death; in January 1927, under the caption "Modernity in Islam", Syed Ammer Ali says, "The present stagnation of the Muslim world is due to the misreading of the Master's teachings. The followers of Islam have substituted the letter for the spirit, and are disputing among themselves about non-essential and neglecting the essential."

"In the Prophet's system, the dignity or labour was extolled: they choose now to regard labour as an unworthy occupation. He preached thrift and the practice of charity, the relief of suffering and the distressed: they practice instead extravagance, shutting their ears to the cry of distress. He preached the seeking of knowledge even into China. They refuse to receive it even when brought to their door. The Faith is alive, but its followers are unable to understand its meaning".

"Islam needs only a revival of the spirit, which inspired the Prophet" (K. K. Aziz: *Syed Ameer Ali, His life and Work*, pp. 455-56).

Thus, in the great centurian astir, Syed Ameer Ali of Bengal played a leading role in re-awakening the Muslims from a deep slumber. His clarion call to the spirit and to the salvation, his bidding to the Muslims to take back the light of learning and scientific knowledge from the West, and his advice to go for the revival of the pure breed of Islam, made him the most quoted scholar of the century on Islamics. Indeed, he was the conscience keeper of the Muslims of Bengal and India as a whole as may be gleaned through his letters and articles written in between 1882 to 1928 (Vide K.K. Aziz: *Syed Ameer Ali, His life and works*, Lahore, 1965).

At the same time, it needs be clearly grasped from the above quotations that, Islam being a revealed religion, a pure creed and a

prophetically patterned well demarcated way of life, it admits of no grafting or synthesis. Therefore, in the Islamic arena, 'Renaissance' is a more or less irrelevant terminology and if applied at all, it can only mean re-awakening, revival and regeneration in the broadest sense of the term.

In fact, on account of well demarcated historical reasons, which seemed obscure to the Western scholars but have now been made crystal clear by the newer researches of the Muslim scholars, Muslim social organisations all over the world had fallen into a process of continuous decay and degeneration under the frequent disruptive pressures of political disasters and economic break-downs in the 17th and 18th centuries C.E. It drastically affected the Muslim social, educational and cultural institutions everywhere in Central Asia, North Africa, Arabian Peninsula, Ottoman, Safavid and Mughal empires and, as a reaction, a strong Islamic revivalist spirit (*tajdid al-din wa yahya al-sunnah*) had gripped the thoughts of the Muslim intellectuals all over the world from the middle of the 18<sup>th</sup> to the middle of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, C.E. which, at different times and places took different local shapes, and flowed, at least, at three almost equally popular channels, namely (a) Islamic revivalism (*tajdid al-din wa yahya al-sunnah*), (b) Pan-Islamism (*ittihad ve taraqqi, jamiyat al-Muslimin, tahrir-i-Khilafat, Ikhwan al-Muslimin*), and (c) Muslim modernism (*Hadarah al-Muslimins*).

Besides, there have arisen in recent times, beginning with the end of the First World War in Turkey, and in the second half of the twentieth century elsewhere, Muslim national socialism, *Awami* and populist democratic socialism, Ba'ath socialism etc. which have no internal moorings with Islam. Though 'ba'ath' means rebirth and renaissance, it really does not aim at a rebirth of Islamic value system or Islamic power; rather like other movements of its class, it aims at going beyond and besides Islam, for the sake of attaining progress (*pragati, tatawwur*) of the down-trodden Muslim population in conjunction with the efforts of the other down-trodden peoples of the world.

Therefore, the above three trends of Islamic revivalism, Pan-Islamism and Muslim modernism may be considered as the equivalent Muslim movements comparable to the Reformation and

Renaissance of the Western history. However, with the fundamental difference that, while the Islamic trends were avowedly 'non-synthetic' and 'puritan in spirit' and hence, in all its aims and objectives, morally oriented, the latter were 'synthetic', as we have seen above, and hence were morally compromising and secularist, positive law and legal justice oriented in spirit, which were camouflaged by their protagonists as 'scientific and objective' in order to make it inoffensive to the other-worldly religious minded Christians.

Nevertheless, we come upon many criss-cross influences, borrowed at times sparingly and at other times at random, by the protagonists of Pan-Islamism and Muslim modernism from the stacks and stocks of Western Renaissance for boosting up Muslim enthusiasm or even for burning a new candle of progress before them.

In fact, cultural borrowing has never been abnormal in the length and breadth of human history. In the twentieth century Iqbal claimed that the Muslims were taking back from the West only the legacy of their fore-father's which was transmitted to the West in the Middle Ages through Spain, Sicily and Syria. From the twelfth to the seventeenth century C.E. the Western scholars claimed that they were taking back from the Arabs, the legacies of the Greek philosophy, which the Muslims borrowed in the 8th, 9th and 10th centuries. Ibn Khaldun had traced the channels through which the ancient Greeks had borrowed learning and wisdom from Egypt and Mesopotamis. Such borrowings were normal and often proved good which need not, however, be confused with synthetic hybrids, that, in the first instance, at least among selected varieties, show up a prolific growth but then quickly degenerates unless the process of hybridization and selection are made continuous.

Turning to Islamic revivalism (*tajdid al-din wa yahya al-sunnah*) in Bengal, we find that it had taken so much hold of the Bengali Muslims in the 19th century C.E. in the shape of the *Fara'idi*, *Tariqah-i-Muhammadiyah*, *Ta'aisyuni* and *Ahl-i-Hadith* movements that, the historians, travellers and on-lookers alike rated it as the persistent sign of life of a subjugated and decadent Muslim community. We have hinted above that Islamic revivalism was not a peculiar symptom of the Muslim community of Bengal, but

contemporaneously it had become widespread throughout the Muslim world affecting the world Muslim community, the Muslim Ummah as a whole.

There is one suggestion that, it had cropped up in different parts of the Muslim world under the impact of imperialism. Thus considered over and against time, space and circumstances, the *Muwahhidun* movement of Arabia or the so-called Wahhabism appears to have arisen under the impact of Ottoman imperialism, *Shah Wali-Allahi* and *Tariqah-i-Muhammadiyah* of Delhi under the impact of Mughal and British imperialism, *Fara'idi*, *Ta'aiyuni* (in Bengal) and *Ahl-i-Hadith* (in the Indian Sub-continent) under the British imperialism, *Fulani* and *Sannusiyah* of North Africa under the French and British imperialism and *Paduri* and *Muhammadiyah* movements of Indonesia under the impact of Dutch imperialism.

A further suggestion is that, in popular parlance these religious reform movements came to be properly or associatedly known as Wahhabism and Islamic revivalism (*tajdid al-din*) as against somewhat Westernist Renaissance oriented Pan-Islamism (*ittihad al-Muslimin*). Both the types of movements, in generality, were universal: both aimed at re-awakening the Muslims all over the world; and both carried the slogan: 'Islam in danger'. Therefore, there existed considerable mutual sympathy and a good deal of unity of purpose and identity of sentiments between them. Yet, they pursued different goals and occasionally expressed disapproval of each other's programs and scrupulously maintained organic exclusiveness and independence of each other's stance.

The reasons for their remaining mutually somewhat aloof, may be sought, in the first instance, in the objectives of the Islamic revivalists to resuscitate the pristine norms of Islam in its original purity as practised by the early good generations of Muslims for its own sake *vis-a-vis* the objectives before the Pan-Islamists, to resuscitate the golden past or the glorious tradition of Islam with a view to regaining the lost power and prosperity of the Muslims. Obviously the Islamic revivalists were aiming at reviving the local Muslim communities as parts of a universal community, the *Ummat al-Islam*, with its characteristics social egalitarianism, oriented

towards human conscience, as a special gift of Allah to Adam and his progeny, universal justice, and equality and brotherhood of mankind.

Therefore, they were placing greater emphasis on conscience and norms than on formalities, tradition and *madhhab*. On the other hand, the Pan-Islamists were aiming at the principles and practices of the golden age of the great Muslim States which flourished in the bygone times in different parts of the world.

Secondly, the historical reason for this partial aloofness may also be sought in the Islamic theory of society and State, and the conflict arising between them in the arena of power-politics.

Let us recall that, in the Islamic arena, the 'community' (*Ummah*) is universal and the 'nation' or state (*Dawlah*) is geographical and local; whereas in the case of all other non-egalitarian societies the 'nation' or State is universal while the 'community' is local. Therefore, the community affairs in Islam are universal and humanistic, which for other people is communal and parochial.

In point of fact, Islamic community is multi-communal and multi-national and hence Muslim *Ummah* should properly be designated as the 'Muslim Society', which is universal. As such, in the Islamic Medieval times, when the Muslim Society/*Ummah* was confronted by the '*Dawlah/State*', the *Khalifah* in his capacity as the Head of the universal *Ummah* bestowed authority to the *Sultans/Kings*, the head of the State; but later on, as the *Sultans* became the protectors of the *Khalifah*, and even independent of the authority of the *Khalifah*, the powers of the *Sultans* and Emperors over-shadowed the fundamental Islamic values of the *Ummah*.

The *Firmans* of the ruler of the State, the *Sultans* became supreme, giving rise to the make-shift concept of '*al-sultanu zhillu-l-Lah*', the Sultan is the shadow of Allah, by shifting the meaning of *sultan* from its original Arabic meaning of authority, implying authority is the shadow of Allah, i.e. protector, to the Turkish usage of 'the holder of authority', that is, the *Sultan*, implying that the man in authority is the shadow of Allah.

Such a concept laid down the seed of a new type of autocracy and a secular type of imperialism that crystallized with the later Ottoman and the Safavids of Iran and the Great Mughals of India. It

overlooked and suppressed the institution of *Khilafah* and put forward the Majestic Kingship as the glorious Islamic heritage. In reality, the Pan-Islamists appear to aim at buttressing the institution of the golden age of the *Sultans*, *Badshahs* and *Shahinshahs* whereas the Islamic revivalists appear to long for resuscitating the institution of *Khilafah* as an elected constitutional office, holding legitimate authority of the Muslim community, to rule over both the *Ummah* and State, in accordance with the classical value system of Islam. The mutual suspicion and distrust between them were, therefore, mainly in the sphere of formulation, analysis and diagnosis of the problem. But, at the same time, their affinity was also very great in sensing the apprehensions and giving vent to the call of Islam in danger. This may have been a basic reason why we find both the parties often working together though standing mutually apart, one party looking for the revival of Islamic classical institutions and the other for the resuscitation of the Islamic power and glory of the immediate past which outwardly very much resembled the Renaissance movement of the West.

### **Islamic Revivalist Movements in Bengal**

The Islamic Revealist movements of Bengal, namely the *Fara'idi*, *Tariqah-i-Muhammadiyah*, *Ta'aisyuni* and *Ahl-i-Hadith* movements, sought to revivify the pristine classical tradition of Islam consisting of :

- (i) the simple and uncompromising doctrine of the Oneness or Unity of the Lordship of Allah. That is to say, the assertion that there is no lord or god in the Universe except Allah. In other words, the simple Islamic formula of : *La ilaha illa Allah*, there is no lord but Allah;
- (ii) the normative tradition of the holy Prophet as transmitted through, and demonstrated by the practices of the first three good generations of Muslims; that is, the living Prophetic *Sunnah* as practised by the *salf-i-salihin*;
- (iii) purging the Muslim society of *shirk*, that is, associating others with the lordship of Allah and *bid'at* or sinful innovations, which crept into the Muslim society in course of time through survival of local practices or by contamination of the customs and usages of the non-Muslim neighbours;
- (iv) resuscitating the pure Islamic faith by rehabilitating the fundamental Islamic values of equality and brotherhood of the Muslim individuals, and the unity and integrity of the Muslim community; and lastly,

- (v) waking up the Muslims to the urgent need of waging a relentless *jihad*, overtly or covertly as the situation might permit, for the liberation of the Muslim lands forcibly occupied by the non-Muslim rulers.

The last impulse also led them to aspire for the establishment of an Islamic order and multiple political States. Moreover, as a matter of policy, they shunned the earlier type of leadership-oriented tactics; imbued themselves with the Islamic spirit of egalitarianism and turned directly to the masses for support and cooperation. In their appeal to the masses, they unreservedly condemned all types of oppression (*zulm*) and exploitation (*taghallub*) of man by man and put the weight heavily on the side of the struggling masses against indigenous as well as foreign exploiters. Their ceaseless efforts and vigorous propaganda stirred the Muslim masses to a considerable extent and re-invigorated their energies, which gave vent to the *jihad* movements in the 19th century and the liberation and freedom movements in the twentieth century C.E.

### Conclusion

Thus, we may conclude by advancing our proposition that the term "Renaissance" so popularly associated with modernism and progress in the West is not appropriately applicable to the Islamic situation, because in the first place, Islam represents a living religion and a thriving society and culture as well as a ceaselessly continuous historical civilization wherein so far no discontinuity, coma, gap or death has arisen to call for rebirth; and secondly because, if we are permitted to point out at this point of our argument, in comparison to other religions which justify believing and subscribing to a faith prior to studying and reasoning, Islam calls for reading, studying, observing and reasoning prior to believing, leading a human being to a rational conviction that properly constitutes faith in Islam or *Iman*. Therefore, re-awakening or revivalism in Islam offers the selfsame potentials, which are eked out by the renaissance of the rational spirit in the West, that leads to modernism and progress. Islamic revivalist movements in Bangladesh namely *Fara'idi*, *Tariqah-i-Muhammadiyah*, *Ta'ayuni* and *Ahl-i-Hadith* movements were based on this revivalist tendencies.

## ***Appendix- I***

### **The Concept of History: Islamic and Western**

A.

While linking the concept of history with Islam, I recall one of the greatest events in human history and the most significant fact in the religion of Islam, namely the sending down by the Almighty Allah, the latest and the most complete guidance for humanity in the form of the miraculous Quran on Muhammad, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, about 1443 years ago. Then I recall with deepest respect the sacred memory of the holy Prophet (s.m.), who initiated the grand social revolution of Islam on the basis of active and dynamic principles of holding firmly to good faith, good thinking and good work in the concrete and complex human situation of Makkah and Madinah and thereby inaugurated the historical process of Islam, wherein we still find the beaming light of hope and good guidance amidst today's frightfully confusing, dreadfully conflicting and hopelessly confounding situation of human life and in the midst of darkest and bleakest prospect of the future of mankind on our planet.

Turning to the wider world when we look at the shrinking universe in the face of the unprecedented advancement of human knowledge moving ahead with breath-taking speed along with ever-newer scientific inventions and discoveries and novel technological devices, we seem to find, near at hand, an unlimited prospect of comfort and happiness for mankind. Yet, no sooner we stretch our hands towards it, than we realise through hard experience that presently high-running population explosion, widespread clashes of human interests, conflicts of power, aggrandizement of economic resources by the few at the expense of the teeming millions, naked exploitation of man by man, and the resulting rampant fighting, killing, rape, murder, hi-jacking, robbery and theft prevailing everywhere in the world and, above all, the materialistic ideological clashes placing one group of men against another, people against people and nation against nation that throw us head-long into a most revolting circumstances and most insecure and calamitous situation around us.

Under such a highly prospective, yet so deeply apprehensive situation, it behoves us to ponder and contemplate as to what role Islamic history might play to elevate the morale of mankind and to rescue them from the down-right dispendency.



## B.

We generally entertain many a misgiving about the nature and scope of Islamic history. Specially, in this Indo-Pak-Bangladesh subcontinent, we are prone to think of Islamic history as a branch of general history. Such a trend of thinking hardly does justice to Islamic history. In order to bring this home to the people at large of this subcontinent the epithet “culture” was added to the caption of “Islamic History” and this discipline was named “Islamic History & Culture”.

In the first place, Islamic history points to the socio-politico-religious trends of the Muslims all over the world for the last 1443 years or so; and in the wider perspective, it comprises the progress of the human society from the time of Father Adam, peace be on him, down to the advent of the Prophet of Islam, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him; life and works of innumerable Messengers of Allah that intervened in between them; the nature and contents of their missions, and the type of guidance they imparted to the humanity; the *Khilafah* and the *Sultanat* and their administrations that thrived; the analysis of the culture and civilization from the earliest known period down to the present day—as providing the background and concrete perspective of Islamic History & Culture.

## C.

Judging from such a standpoint, the subject-matter of Islamic history stands in the same stead with what we call “*Itihas*” in Bengali and “history” in English. Yet, the terminology of “*tarikh*” which is the proper designation of Islamic history, does not correspond exactly with the other two.

Philologically, the Bengali word “*Itihas*” when technically used for history is not applied in the literal sense of the meaning. Morphologically, it seems to stand for “*iti+has*”, which gives somewhat the meaning of “humour” and the term “*pari+has*” gives the meaning of “irony”.

But if it is derived from Sanskrit “*iti+ha+isa*”, as some *Pundits* would have us believe, it takes us on the threshold of two serious difficulties. Firstly, it was never used in Sanskrit for the meaning of history or anything akin to it; and secondly, if we accept it as a Bengali word, derived from the above Sanskritic roots, then its literal meaning “as it happened” give the flavour of story-telling.

Hence the safest course is to assume that it was a novel word discovered by the *Pundits* of Calcutta by the middle of the 19th century C.E. for the translation of the English word history; so that "*Itihas*" has no other meaning than history, not the literal, but in the technical sense.

Nevertheless, the culture of history was not quite unknown to the people of Bangladesh before the advent of the English in this country. Rather the culture of history seems to pre-date herein far beyond the use of the word history by the Englishman in their own country. The word used for the culture of history herein from the beginning was "*tarikh*" with a Perso-Arabic orientation.

It may be recalled that culture of "*tarikh*" has been an integral part of Islamic civilization and , as an echo of this, we use the term "*tarikh*" (তারিখ) in Bengali as well as in all other regional languages of this subcontinent to mean the date. This practice must have come into vogue through the influence of long-standing Muslim rule, in so far as the word "*tarikh*" originally stood in Arabic, and still stands, for "the date of an event".

In comparison with this Perso-Arabic terminology of "*tarikh*", the Graeco-Latin-English terminology of "history" stands for tales and stories, and also in their technical sense they yield a subtle and significant difference. As for "*tarikh*", there are, as we know, a few significant dates in the life of every human being, such as those of birth, marriage, death etc. with chronological and systematic arrangement of such dates one's life story is built up. Similarly by arranging the description of the advent, advancement or retrogression, childhood, youth, maturity, old age and death of a person, family, tribe, society, culture and civilization in a systematic and chronological order and examining the veracity of the events, their orientation, the idea or intention, one can write the life story of all, collectively or individually. Such a chronological and systematic account of a family, nation or civilization is known as "*tarikh*".

As a matter of fact, since "*tarikh*" literally means a "date", a systematic account of anything involves more than one date. Hence such an account used to be called "*tawarikh*" in plural. But on account of the difficulty in pronunciation, the singular "*tarikh*" came to be popularly used to mean it in the plural sense.

Therefore, in its last analysis, Perso-Arabic "*tarikh*" means a chronological and systematic description of events, and in this very literal sense, it is

history. To the Muslim scholars "*Tarikh*" is not an Art, but a Science, an *ilm*; because it is based on a systematic methodology, critically checked and re-checked at every step.

In devising this science, the Muslims were inspired by their zeal for working out a truthful and factual description of the life and activities of Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, and to collect all his utterances, commands, directives, advices, messages, his practices at war and peace. The Muslim scholars left no stone unturned for accomplishing those tasks as exactly and truly as possible. Because to them, the life of the holy Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, was a practical exemplification of the best and nicest ideal of a good human life—*uswatun hjasanatur*, which if any one can actualise, to any extent, in one's own life, that much of his life would also become ideal and virtuous.

Moreover, the behaviour of the holy Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, was invariably bound up with actual living situation of human life and provided practical solution of all problems arising from the complexity of family, social and national life. Such practicability of the ideal form of life and the behavioural pattern of the Prophet's life as the warp and woof of good living on this earth, as also providing the best prospect for the future life in the next world is covetable.

As such, the birth of the "*tarikh*" out of the researching endeavour of the Muslims to gather, collect and compile the living, factual and true description of the sayings, doings and approvals of the holy Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, was commensurate primarily with the compilation of the *Sunnah*, which was called *Ilm al- Hadith*, the Science of *Hadith* and besides, it also comprised the wider and more liberal endeavours of the Muslim scholars to gather, collect and compile all the information available about the wars and pacts of the holy Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, which were fought and enacted for the implementation of the ideals of Islam; in addition, the theoretical purpose of ascertaining the truth about the events that took place in this connection and also political and economic necessity of fixing up the status of those who participated in these events as well as the need of assessing the roles of different persons taking part therein, eventually led to the birth of the Science of *Tarikh*, firstly in the form of description of the holy Prophet's wars and expeditions called *Sirah* and *Maghazi*.

These researches were carried on in the best tradition of human knowledge, combining the critical methodology and technique of sifting Prophetic Tradition or *Hadith* with the lore and learning of the conquered peoples of the East and West. This newly devised critical methodology was called *Jarah* and *Ta'dil*, i.e., critically sifting reliable information, which was applied to ascertain the accuracy and the rational analysis of the factual narration of *Hadith* called *Riwayat* and the rational analysis of the points and facts called *Dirayat*. Later on these *Riwayat* and *Dirayat* were adopted by the modern Western scholars as the warp and woof of historical methodology under the caption of Internal Criticism and External Criticism of history. This historical methodology gave the West the first scientific basis for the learning of humanities.

D.

The critical pursuit of compiling *Sirah* and *Maghazi*, the biographical narration and the accounts of wars and expeditions of the Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, necessitated for sifting *Hadith*, which gave birth to another auxiliary science of "biodata" of the narrators of the above accounts called *Asma ur-Rijal*, which prepared the ground for the birth of the science of Islamic History *par excellence*. In fact, *Tarikh* was gradually developed by the Muslim scholars by broadening the scope and range of the subject-matter of the biography of the holy Prophet in its accomplished form called *Sirat Rasul Allah* or *Siratu-Nabi* comprising progress and development of the Muslim community, the Ummah as a whole and then extending it from the Islamic history proper, and to the history of the entire human race as well as the universal history composed by the classical Muslim scholars like Tabari.

Such an Islamic history and the universal history found well-formulated, abiding and durable pattern in the hands of al-Tabari during the 4th century Hijri/10th century C.E. which is well known as *Tarikh al-Tabari*. Latterly the pursuit of historical research reached its zenith amongst the Muslim scholars in the hand of Ibn Khaldun during the 14th century C.E. who gave it a peculiar combination of a scientific methodological dynamism and an empirical-cum-rationalistic philosophical orientation, who named his work, *Kitab al-Ibar* or the Book of Lessons, instead of calling it *Tarikh*, which has remained still unsurpassed in the field of history and in the intellectual arena of the medieval and modern civilization.

Considering from this wider perspective of the inner development of Tarikh, keeping pace with material progress and the intellectual needs of the ever-expanding Muslim community life throughout the world, Islamic history may be classified into two inter-related and inter-dependent yet self-sustaining parts; that is to say, (a) the inner history of Islam comprising the birth, growth and development of the Muslim Ummah beginning with the Hijrah of the holy prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, along with the background of the social situation in which he was born and brought up, received the revelation of the holy Quran and struggled to propagate the truth of Islam till the time of Hijrah; then it proceeds through the Hijrah, which gave birth to the community life of the Muslims, organized by the holy prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, into a Constitutional Society and State, which marked a turning point in the progress of Islam by putting into operation the inner and outer dynamics of a concrete historical process that kept on moulding through centuries of active and continuous struggle to establish and spread the truth and which kept on moulding and remoulding the ideal pattern of the Muslim community life on the one hand, and never ceased to influence and spin around its own orbit the broader historical process of the outer world that has been commemorated in the body of the Hijri Calendar, the backbone of Islamic history par excellence.

(b) Besides this inner part of Islamic history, the Muslim scholars also meticulously worked out an outer part of history, which comprised the history of mankind from Father Adam down to the present day, which provided the background and human perspective to the inner history of Islam.

Thus Islamic history deals with two continuous parallel current of history. The first part of it comprises the background and the perspective beginning with Father Adam down to the present day and the second part deals with the birth of the Muslim Ummah and comes down to the present day. In one words, Islamic history falls into two parts, one part dealing with the human civilization in general and the other part dealing with the Islamic civilization in particular.

In the above perspective, the subject-matter of Islamic history presents itself as "a search after the wonderful technique of the creation of the great Creator, Allah the Most High, and an understanding of the freedom-loving nature of man by means of observing the endless variety of creatures on the

one hand, and the peculiar ways of human life, his socio-economic revolutions, his ethical and religious ideals, his creative arts and crafts, gradual evolution of his culture and civilization on the other."

The fullness of the scope of Islamic History and Culture lies with the study and research under the context of such a broad and wider field of the history of mankind. We may briefly illustrate the point by recalling the observations of a 15th Christian/9th Hijri century Muslim scholar, namely al-Sakhabi, who classified the works of the Muslim historians into 40 groups or divisions and observed that any one historian cannot master more than two or three divisions out of them (cf. Rosenthal: Muslim Historiography, pp. 388-91). He held that the number of history books is uncountable and referring to a learned person of his time he further observed that any one histoecian cannot master more than two or therr divisions out of them (cf. Rosenthal : Muslim Histoerography, pp. 388-91). He held that the number of history books is uncountable and refering t o a learned person of his 1,000 volumes of history in his collection (p.388) and that, if all the histories are compiled together, it cannot be accomplished with less than 600 volumes (p.391). This clearly shows the wider nature of Islamic History and culture and the vastness of the actual historical researches of the Muslim scholars.

Indeed, if you compare the historical researches of the Muslims with those of the western historians of the time of al-sakabi (15th AC.<sup>9</sup> Hijri century), it gives out a startling contrast .The large oxford Dictionary (Vol .V) states that in the year 1485 caxton wrote the history of the brave deeds of ancestors of the western people for the first tine (p.305) .The term history ' ; was not in use in the English language before that.

Even to the present day scholars are not decided as to the derivative root of the currently popular English term History it is said that it may have been derived from the French root of "histoire", which stands for a tale narrative story etc. A remote possibility is, however, that it was derived from the Greek root of "histoire (icropia) which means learning or knowing by inquiry, an account of one's inquiries, narrative etc.

From which ever roots it may have been derived in its actual use it is said to imply either "a relation of incidents 9in early use, either true or imaginary; later only of those professedly true Or " a written narrative constituting a continues methodical record, in order of time, of important public events, especially those connected with a particular country, people, individual etc," (p.305)

In order to get to the heart of the Western concept of history, let us turn to the Greek tradition set by Herodotus and Thucydides of the 5th century B.C. They are credited with devising a new discipline of history basing on their own observation or on information received from others which they called "istoria". In Greek language "istoria" means "to learn through inquiry or investigation" in course of time. This discipline came to be defined as "the written methodological, systematic and chronological accounts of important and significant events in the life of a person, country or nation."

First it was Herodotus who endeavored to write the history of the Greeks and the neighbouring peoples. But his contemporary Thucydides limited his subject-matter within the range of the Greeks alone, the former aimed at entertaining the readers and hence took little care to verify the truth of the information he gathered from various sources and presented to others in attractive language. The latter, on the other hand aimed at deducing objective lessons from past events by which the future statesmen may be benefited.

Long afterwards, Polybius drew up a plan, in the 2nd century B.C. to write a world history, he combined the Herodotian ideal of popular entertainment with Thucydides' pragmatism and put forward a cyclical theory of history and propounded that the same laws of growth and decay were obeyed by the States and Empires like as the natural organism followed and the organismic stages of youth, maturity, senility and death are also obtained in the form of spring, summer, fall and winter in nature that constitute the inescapable rhythm of life. In his view, every stage grew and perished in accordance with this rule from which only the gods were exempted (Grier: Encyclopaedia, P. 242).

Thereafter, the historical learning in the West fell into decay till it was revived by the modern scholars following the example of the Muslim historians. One indubitable evidence of the Islamic influence on modern Western historical research is the famous "historical methodology," which comprises internal and external criticism as the warp and woof. A close examination of the meaning, scope and principles of internal and external criticism makes it evident that these two component parts of history are nothing other than the principles of Riwayat and Dirayat of the science of Hadith criticism that together constitute the methodology of Islamic history or tarikh.

The principle of Riwayat id applied to examine the internal genuineness of the text of information and the principle of Dirayat is applied to examine the external genuineness of information, that is, trustworthiness, on the basis of external circumstances. In other words, the principle of Riwayat is applied to test the inner text of a document, and the principle of Dirayat is applied to test the external evidences for the confirmation of the same document as genuine, reasonable and true. The former establishes the truth of a document and the latter confirms the reasonableness of its content.

In fact, the modern methodology of history is an adoption in toto of these principles Islamic history, which originated in the field of Hadith criticism.

However, compared to the methodology of Islamic history, the modern historical methodology exhibits a significant lag. For, in the arena of Hadith criticism, so also in the Tarikh or Islamic history, the principles of Riwayat and Dirayat prepare the ground for the higher critical assessment by means of the further principles of jarah and Ta'dil, which together means critically judging, first by assailing the result of Riwayat and Dirayat, then by synthesizing the analysed facts into datum or data. Then the data are used like the burnt bricks to build up the edifice of tarikh

Hence the Islamic history is made of the data and by mere information or facts as such and for the reason why it is more objective as well as uniform than the western concept to history which being moulded by information or facts, however examined through the internal and external criticism, remains in a large measure like unburnt or sun-dried bricks, fluid and interpretative.

It goes, therefore, without saying that since the Western concept of historical methodology is made of the warp and woof of internal and external criticism and since any information processed through this methodology gets recognized, at best, as a genuine or factual information, much less than verified data remains still as information qua information, comparatively fluid, interpretative and hence inevitably subjective in nature.

Thus, compared to the science of Islamic history: Ilm al-Tarikh, the Western history remains a half-way house; and hence is regarded as an Art and not a Science. The wide gap in between the Art of Western History and the Science of Islamic History needs, therefore, be recognized both in respect of selecting the raw material as well as in articulating the concepts, ideas and information derived therefrom.



Moreover, as the classical Western history was a compendium of the braveries of the ancestors and narration of events and transmission of stories and information, so also, the modern Western history comprises narration of and /or information about the past events. It is informative and on account of the fluid nature of its informativeness, more often than not, reflects the personal inclinations or biasness of its writer in a large measure. As such it falls far short of the ideal of Tarikh, which aspires at an high objectivity based on verified data; so that, in the body of Tarikh we often come across layers of generally accepted course of history and flow of events, which non-Muslim scholars tend to mistake for repetition. This difference in between the history and Tarikh needs be properly grasped by the teachers of Islamic history and the students before they would be able to derive adequate benefit out of it.

Secondly, the Greeks used to think of human being as a rational animal. They had no notion of the type of morality, that is, the judgment of good and evil, related to the concept of the Day of judgement in the life hereafter. This was the characteristic of revealed religions and they have had no share in it. They contemplated a philosophical type Ethics emanating from ethos, which have had little relevance with the religious people of the East.

The Greeks, however, realised the significance of human mind, which was bound up with their concept of anima whose characteristic was thinking, reasoning, reflection, apprehension etc, and they took full advantage of it in promoting their advancement of learning and developing their culture and civilization. Yet they fell short of grasping the significance of humanity which lay in Soul, Ruh or Atma ; and hence they were not fully aware of the function of Bibek, Zamir or conscience in that special sense. They did not have a genuinely spelled word for it. Even the Latin word conscience is too weak to give it requisite vividness and force it deserves. Even so, the conscience was related to the mind that arose from the anima or animality in sharp contrast to the Bibek or Zamir, which arose, directly from the Atma, Ruh or Soul.

Although it appears that in the 4th century B. C. the wise Socrates and his worthy successor Plato realised the relations of the truth and justice with inner voice or inner light and the Nous , yet this spiritual wisdom was lost in the medley of superstitious polytheism and paganism of the Greek people. In the 2nd century B.C. the great Greek sage Polybius thought that the gods were exempted from the rule of nature as we have quoted above.

Such a superstitious naturalistic philosophy lands man in the same kind of determinism and passive role as the natural objects are made subjected to and it turns man into a mere puppet and plaything of nature. For the misfortune of philosophy, the modern Western philosophers, groaning under the suppressive and repressive Christian dogmatism of the medieval times, revived with throbbing enthusiasm this classical Greek naturalism in the name of Renaissance disentangling it from the Greek pantheon and then it up as modernism in the name of objectivity and realism.

On the other hand, the Muslims firmly believe that Allah alone is the Creator of the universe as well as its Sustainer, Preserver, Destroyer. He is the only Lord of the universe, is alone the object of worship and the sole judge of the good and evil, who will judge human actions on the Last Day of judgment and reward the doers of good and punish the doers of evil. The universe moves and has its being at His behest in perfect conformity with the order set up by Him. It is the order and discipline set up by Him that we call Nature. Nature is not a reality in itself nor is it

a fact or thing by its own right; but it is just the name of the order of Creator Allah.

The Muslims also believe firmly that, as the plants and vegetables are not mere inanimate objects, so also human being is not mere animal. As to the plants and vegetables, Allah has given life to them in addition to their objectness or materiality; so also, to man He has bestowed a soul, Atma or Ruh in addition to his animality or animae, mind or Pran. Man's animae emerges from the chromosomes of male sperm and female egg just as the animae of all other animals do emerge; but human soul comes from the breath of the Creator as He has breathed it from His own Soul into the primeval man, Father Adam (peace be on him) so also, as from the animae emanate desires, wishes and intentions, so also there emanated from the human soul, Bidek or conscience, by dint of which human beings carry with them reason, freedom of will and responsibility for his action. Owing to man's freedom and responsibility in this sense of distinction, between good and evil, arising from his soul and conscience, Allah will judge his actions on the Day of judgment and reward or punish him with permanent abode in the heaven or in Hell Fire. Therefore, it is the moral duty of man to think of right and to do what is right and good. The Muslims equate this morality with his humaneness and believe that it is this morality which bestows on him the status of humanity.

Thus, the Muslims do not believe man to be merely an animal or a rational animal; rather they regard man as an *Insan*, *Satwa*, being a conscientious entity, a *Bibekban Satwa*. They believe that the soul and conscience are the differentia of man that distinguish him from lower animals. Hence not mere intelligence or rationality as it is generally understood, but morality is the basis of human life.

In addition, the Muslims believe that (a) man's judgment of good and evil is the criterion of conscience or *Bibek*, *Kamir*; (b) his freedom of will and (c) his potency or power to utilize all things in the universe by of knowledge and wisdom bestowed on him by Allah, enable him to change the course of events on earth. The Muslims call this potency, the freedom or choice "Ikhtiyar" and believe that, it carries with it not only rights but also responsibility: Muslims believe that this potency and its concomitant rights and responsibility make man *Khalifah*, representative of Allah on earth.

By dint of this freedom man stands head and shoulder above all other creatures of the universe and him best of all creation. Thus, mere Naturism or Mechanism does not point to the speciality of humanity. *Ikhtiyarism* is the key to human philosophy.

The Muslim point of view of history may be gleaned through the comments of a fifteenth century (Christian Era) Muslim scholar *Muhi al-Din Muhammad ibn Sulayman al-Kafiyaji* (1383-1474 C. E.). The topics of discussion of history, according to him, are such important events which are beneficial to humanity, attracts people towards good word and creates repulsion towards doing evil, becomes the source of entertainment, enthusiasm, advice, education and various other actions and reactions and which is noted down in precise, articulated and balanced writing in accordance with the chronology of time or in the form of good speech, and above all, which is composed with good intention, and so on.

Thus, in the eye of the Muslims, history an account of events, a story, a tale or an entertainment; rather it is the description of such chain of events, which emits lessons for a good life. Its Quranic ideal is *i'tibari*, that is lessonableness. But, far from the Greek ideal, it is not lessonable to the future statesmen alone, as Polybius would have us believe; rather it is a comprehensive science, that is lessonable for all men of conscience and such as becomes helpful in building up humane character.

Over and above, it may also be noted that in the perspective of the holy Quran, history is meant to be more than a mere description of the tradition of the ancients *asatir al-awwalin*, a true narration of events *qasas*

al-haqq, It has been stated in the surah al-An'am (6:57)\_"Allah narrates the true events yaqssu' l-haqq in Surah al Yusuf (12:3) it is stated that Allah narrates the best of events, that is, true stories.

Enthused by these Quranic examples, the Muslim schosars took to th epath of historical research and devoted their life in this field, so much so much so that, they uncoverd all types cf topics and fields of study which they could have imagined. Hunderds and thousands of volumes of historical works collected and preserved in the lidraries at every nook and corner of the world give witness to their boundless endeavours in this field.

The above discussion must have made it clear that the aims and objects of the Islamec history and Western history are not quite the same. They widely differ in their intints, ideals, objectives and methodology even though we call both histories. Thedifference between themis, howe ver, so subtle that it hardly comes to view to other than the xperts in the subject. For this reason. even the Western Orientalists do feel that in order to enable one to understand Islamic history properly, at least one major Muslim language, such as, Arabic, Persian, Turkish or Malay has to be learnt by the ineumbent so as to acquaint oneself with some original sources and to derive lessons therefrom joining our own voice to such a mode of thinking, we may draw a number of conclusions.

Firstly, the study of Islamic History and Culture originated and developed through constant research in respect of the continuous forward movement of the Muslim community life throughout the world. Islamic History and Culture is thus a living history in the midst of an ever-changing environment and cannot be separated from constant study and research.

Secondly, since the end of the Second World War, about Muslim countries have emerged as independent political States, which had been previously subjugated by the Western imperialist and colonial powers. Even though these Muslim States may be weak for the time being, their combined imbinde impact has not biin negligidle.

Thirdly, as the Muslims beling to a unversal community of Ummah, they are comparatively free from communal psychology, which has a big role to play in establishing kworld peace in the present day strife torn social milieu of the world.

Fourthly, Islamic history as it has been moulded by the Muslim scholars, comes nearer to sociology rather than what presently goes by the name of history . This needs be realised both by the academicians and public leadersbefore they would be able to move the Muslim society and States to the road of progress.

Fifthly, the emergence of numerous Muslim States in the present-day world has created a new field of study in the arena of world politics, the history of which cannot be properly calculated and written down without continuous research, collection of data and news. This calls for mutual cooperation of Muslim States and Muslim scholars in exchanging ideas and materials, which can be done only through well-established Islamic Research Institutes.

Taking all these in view the history of Islam needs to be re-written and the courses of studies be remolded so as to cope with the present requirements of the Muslim community all over the world.

## About the Book

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**Islamic Revivalism** during 18th, 19th & 20th Centuries (C.E) : Significant Phases of Muwahhidun (miscalled) Wahhabi Movement in Arabia, Pakistan, India, Bangladesh and Afghan Borders.

An attempt has been made herein to draw a succinct but comprehensive picture of the rise, progress and ultimate fate of the Islamic Revivalist movements miscalled Wahhabism during the 18th, 19th and 20th centuries of the Christian Era keeping in view some major works carried on by myself, such as, History of the Fara'idi Movement, Titu Mir and His Followers, Wahhabi Documents as well as some other works by my junior colleagues and students namely Dr. Mahmud Ahmad Ghazi's, Sanusiyah Movement of North Africa, Dr. Muhammad Athahar Ali's Shah Wali Allah's Concept of Ijtihad and Taqlid, Professor Abdul Haq's The Concept of Tawhid in Islam of Dr. A.N.M. Wahidur Rahman's "The Muslim Re-Assessment of Orientalism" and numerous other related works published in English, Arabic and Urdu languages.

The present work is a compilation of 16 published articles at different times in international journals, which have now been slightly revised and modified. My grateful thanks are due to the publishers of the Journals of Asiatic Society of Pakistan/Bangladesh, Pakistan Historical Society, Karachi, Islamic Studies, Islamabad and the Asiatic Society of Bengal (Calcutta) for extending kind permission for reproducing them.

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