

Maisonneuve & Larose

The Role of Ulema in Indo-Muslim History

Author(s): Aziz Ahmad

Source: *Studia Islamica*, No. 31 (1970), pp. 1-13

Published by: [Maisonneuve & Larose](#)

Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1595059>

Accessed: 30/03/2011 20:04

Your use of the JSTOR archive indicates your acceptance of JSTOR's Terms and Conditions of Use, available at <http://www.jstor.org/page/info/about/policies/terms.jsp>. JSTOR's Terms and Conditions of Use provides, in part, that unless you have obtained prior permission, you may not download an entire issue of a journal or multiple copies of articles, and you may use content in the JSTOR archive only for your personal, non-commercial use.

Please contact the publisher regarding any further use of this work. Publisher contact information may be obtained at <http://www.jstor.org/action/showPublisher?publisherCode=mal>.

Each copy of any part of a JSTOR transmission must contain the same copyright notice that appears on the screen or printed page of such transmission.

JSTOR is a not-for-profit service that helps scholars, researchers, and students discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content in a trusted digital archive. We use information technology and tools to increase productivity and facilitate new forms of scholarship. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.



Maisonneuve & Larose is collaborating with JSTOR to digitize, preserve and extend access to *Studia Islamica*.

<http://www.jstor.org>

THE ROLE OF ULEMA IN INDO-MUSLIM HISTORY

The Ghaznawīd state which laid the foundation of Muslim power in India was, to some extent, a successor of the Sāmānīds; and inherited much of the same pattern of relationship between the rulers and the ulema. It was a close relationship, the purpose of which was to keep the state administration in reasonable conformity with the *sharī'a*, and to keep the Shī'īs, especially the Ismā'īlīs in check. Lahore was the secondary capital, and in the final stage *the* capital of the Ghaznawīd kingdom and it was natural that next to Ghazna there was a concentration of ulema there. Most eminent of them was Shaykh Ismā'īl Bukhārī (d. 1056) who laid the foundation of classical, largely imitative and compilatory study of *ḥadīth* in the Sub-continent. ⁽¹⁾ He was also one of the first missionaries of Islam in India, whose activities were paralleled in the earlier generation by Ṣafī al-dīn Kāzurūnī (d. 1007) who had established his headquarters at Uchch in southern Punjab. ⁽²⁾

The Ghūrīds, who put an end to the Ghaznawīd rule in 1186 and extended the Muslim rule over the greater part of north India, had developed their own pattern of relationship between the ruler and the ulema. The rulers of Ghūr adhered to the Karāmiyya sect, ⁽³⁾ until around 1199 Ghiyāth al-dīn embraced

(1) Raḥmān, 'Alī, *Takdhira-i 'ulamā'-i Hind*, Lucknow 1914, 23.

(2) S. M. Ikrām, *Āb-i Kawthar*, Lahore, 1958, 81-85; for the account of some of the Ghaznawīd ulema see 'Awfī, *Lubāb al-albāb*, ed. Sa'īd Nafīsī, Tehran 1335 shamsī, 168-217.

(3) Al-Shahrastānī, *Kitāb al-mīlāl wa'l niḥāl*, ed. W. Cureton, London 1846, 20; C. E. Bosworth, "The rise of the Karāmiyyah in Khurasan", *Muslim World*, L/1 (1960), 5-14.

Sunnī orthodoxy either in the Shāfi'ite or the Ḥanafite (probably the former) from under an 'ālim Waḥīd al-dīn (or Wajīh al-dīn) Marvārūdhī, and later extended his patronage, much to the annoyance of the Karāmīs to the Shāfi'ite divine and philosopher, Kakhr al-dīn al-Rāzī. (1) Neither the Karāmī nor the Shāfi'ite influence of the Ghurīd court came to be transplanted in India, where Ḥanafism is found as the official religion as well as that of the Muslim majority at the foundation of the 'slave' dynasty by Qutb al-dīn Aybal in 1206; probably because Hanafism was the dominant creed at the Ghūrīd base of power in what is now Afghanistan, and the élite and the soldiery which conquered India adhered to it. Si the history of the ulema in India is predominantly the history of Ḥanafite ulema. (2)

As a class the majority of ulema of the Delhi Sultanate were associated with the court, the ruling élite and the administration. Head of the Department of religious affairs was the *ṣadr al-ṣudūr* who enjoyed great prestige and power. Often he combined that position with that of the chief qāḍī of the state, the *qāḍī-yi-mamālik*, head of the department of justice; and made appointments of *qāḍīs* in the provincial towns as well as of *imāms* to lead prayers in the mosques everywhere. The department of *ḥisba* was also controlled by the ulema, and was especially effective in certain reigns as that of 'Alā al-dīn Khaljī (1296-1316). Usually the ulema were also appointed to the position of *shaykh al-Islām* or *shaykh al-shuyūkh*, a position which had a very different connotation from that of the *ṣyhūl-Islām* in the Ottoman empire. The *shaykh al-Islām* in the Delhi Sultanate looked after the *Ṣūfīs*, *faqīrs* and other men of God. His office was subordinate to that of the *ṣadr al-ṣudūr*. (3)

In the office of the *shaykh al-Islām* in particular and as a class in general the ulema were sometimes at loggerheads with

(1) Minhāj al-Sirāj al-Jūzjānī, *Ṭabaqāt-i Nāṣirī*, ed. A. H. Habibi, Kabul 1964, i, 361-62; C. M. Kieffer, *Les Ghorides, une grande dynastie nationale*, Kabul 1962; C. E. Bosworth, "Early Islamic History of Ghūr", *Central Asiatic Journal*, VI/2 (1961), 116-133; idem, "Ghūrīds", *EI*³, ii, 1099-1104.

(2) Aziz Ahmad, *An Intellectual History of Islam in India*, Edinburg 1969, 1-3.

(3) Amir Ḥasan Sijzī, *Fawā'id al-Fu'ād*, Lucknow 1885, 24; I. H. Qureshi, *The Administration of the Delhi Sultanate*, Lahore 1958, 175-76, 190-91.

the Şūfis whom they accused from time to time of *bid'a* (innovation), of such unorthodox practices as listening to music (*samā'*), and often brought grave charges against individual Şūfis. Iletmish's *shaykh al-Islām*, Najm al-dīn Şuġhrā ⁽¹⁾ was jealous of the eminent mystic Qutb al-dīn Bakhtiyār Kākī (d. 1236); ⁽²⁾ and according to Sūfī hagiographies, cooked up a charge of adultery against another mystic Jalāl al-dīn Tabrizī. To judge this last case a *maḥḍar* (or jury-like assembly) of ulema and Şūfis was convened by Iletmish; the charge could not be proved; Tabrizī was exonerated and Şuġhrā, either because of his failure in this case or his antagonism to Kākī who had much influence over Iletmish, lost his job and was replaced by a mystic Jamāl al-dīn Biṣṭāmī. Another 'ālim, Qutb al-dīn who was *shaykh al-Islām* under Bahram Shah (1240-1242) had as notorious a reputation as Şuġhrā, and was even accused of treason. ⁽³⁾

An even more remarkable instance of rivalry between the ulema and the Şūfis, illustrating a degree (though on the whole minimal in India) of the tension between *sharī'a* and *ṭarīqa*, was the famous *maḥḍar* of 253 ulema convened by Ghiyāth al-dīn Tughluq (1320-1325) on the question of the permissibility of *samā'*, at the instigation of Qaḍī Jalāl al-dīn and the Shaykhzāda of Jām and other ulema, in which the great Chishtī mystic Nizām al-dīn Awliyā had to appear as a defendant. The interesting point in the proceedings of this *maḥḍar* was the ulema's assertion of the greater validity of the Ḥanafite juristic ruling against listening to music, compared to the *ḥadīth* quoted on the permissibility of *samā'* in his defence by Nizām al-dīn, the authenticity of which the ulema questioned.

(1) The adjective *Şuġhrā* in his name is meant, at least in hagiographical literature, to distinguish him from the renowned and much respected founder of the Kubrāwiyya order, Najm al-dīn al-Kubrā, for a study of whose work and influence see Fritz Meier (ed.), *Die Fawā'ih al-ġamāl wa fawā'ih al-ġalāl des Naġm ad-dīn Kubrā*, Wiesbaden 1957; M. Molé, "Les Kubrawiya entre sunnisme et shiisme aux huitième et neuvième siècles de l'Hégire", *Revue des Études islamiques*, xxix-xxxii (1961), 16-142.

(2) Amir Khurd (Sayyid Muḥammad b. Mubārak Kirmānī), *Siyar al-awliyā'*, Delhi 1885, 54-55.

(3) Jūzjānī (Kabul), i, 468.

The question was decided in a compromise by the Sultan on the evidence of a mystic of Suhrawardiyya order, 'Alam al-dīn, who probably was sympathetic to rationalist trends in theology, that the practice of the Muslims generally outside India was to tolerate music. The Sultan permitted *samā'* for the orthodox Ṣūfis; but banned it for the heterodox mystics such as the *qalandars* and the Ḥaydarīs. ⁽¹⁾

On the whole the ulema occupied a position of great prestige throughout the period of the Delhi Sultanate, and even when they could not influence a sultan, they could not easily be influenced by him. They had a place close to the sultan even in the battle array. ⁽²⁾ Iltutmish, though he sided with the Ṣūfis whenever there was a clash between them and the ulema, ⁽³⁾ nevertheless honoured the ulema as much because of his own piety as for *raison d'état*; as their influence, presumably with the Muslim élite and soldiery, helped the consolidation of his power. From the reign of Bahrām Shāh (1240-1242) onwards their influence increased even more and occasionally they entered into matrimonial relations with the ruling house. ⁽⁴⁾ They held similar prestigious position under the pious Nāṣir al-dīn Maḥmūd (1246-1266).

But, on occasions they were disloyal to the interests not only of the ruling sultan, but even of the Muslim state in India. As early as 1257 some ulema had conspired with the protégés of Hülegü against their own Sultan. ⁽⁵⁾ The episode of their intrigue against Bahrām Shāh has already been mentioned. These instances as well as the overall political considerations led to Balban's (1266-1287) policy of evolving a pattern of power in which the ruler was supreme, his right to rule derived

(1) Sijzī, 125-26; Amīr Khurd, 128; Ḥāmid b. Faḍl-Allāh Jamālī, *Siyar al-ʿarīfīn*, Delhi 1893, 89; Ikrām, *op. cit.*, 270-73; Aziz Ahmad, "Muslim contribution and attitude to music in India", *Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft*, 119/1 (1969), 87.

(2) Qureshi, 149.

(3) K. A. Nizami, "Iltutmish the Mystic", *Islamic Culture*, XX (1946), 165-80.

(4) K. A. Nizami, *Some Aspects of Religion and Politics in Indian during the 13 th Century*, Aligarh 1961, 172.

(5) 'Abd-Allāh b. Faḍl-Allāh Shirāzī, *Tajziyat al-amṣār wa tazjiyat al-a'sār (Ta'rīkh-i Waṣṣāf)*, Bombay 1877, 310-11.

form Divine favour, his administration pragmatic, relegating the influence of the umela to the background. But, at the same time, to keep the ulema quiet, he cultivated good, even flattering, personal relations with them. (1) 'Alā al-dīn Khaljī, though he imposed pietistic conformity on his Muslim subjects, was himself illiterate and no patron of ulema who do not seem to have thrived very much under the Khaljī dynasty (1290-1320), at least not as much as in the periods before and after it.

The Tughluq revolution (1320), which overthrew the apostate usurper Khusraw Khān, was to some extent basically pietistic. This pietistic element was strengthened during the reigns of Ghiyāth al-dīn Tughluq I (1320-1325) and Firūz Tughluq (1351-1388). In between during the reign of the enigmatic and scholarly Muhammad ibn Tughluq, at least for a time scholastic rationalism seems to have thrived at the expense of orthodoxy. (2) Firūz Tughluq's theocracy could not have existed in theory or in practice without the assistance of the ulema. The very theocratic nature of his regime presupposes their preponderant influence on the state administration under him. After a period of the decline of the Delhi Sultanate during its resurgence under Sikandar Lodī (1489-1517) we find again an upsurge of the prestige of the ulema, though counterpointed by that Sultan's proclivity towards scholastic rationalism.

The creative contribution of the ulema of the Delhi Sultanate to theological literature was not very considerable. Among early author-theologians was Raḍī al-dīn Ḥasan al-Saghānī, who acted on one occasion as the envoy of 'Abbāsīd al-Nāṣir to Iletmish. He was a *ḥadīth* scholar in the traditional sense without much originality of treatment or analysis. Two important juristic manuals were prepared in the reign of Firūz Tughluq; *Fiqh-i Firūzshāhī* and *Fatāwī Tātārkhānī*. Though they are landmarks in the history of juristic compilation in India; they have no great significance in the total intellectual history of Islam. The first Persian commentary on the Qur'ān

(1) Ḍiyā al-dīn Baranī, *Ta'riḳh-i Firūzshāhī*, Calcutta 1862, 46-47.

(2) Muhammad b. Tughluq (attributed to), Autobiographical Fragment at the end of Jūzjānī, *Ṭabaqāt-i Nāṣirī*, B. M. Add. Mss. 25, 785, fos 316-317b.

was written in India by Shihāb al-dīn Dawlatābādī; again its significance is largely historical.

Most of the ulema were content with official careers in state departments of justice, ecclesiastical affairs, and the *hisba*. Professionalisation of by far the great majority of ulema became a set pattern in India and led to an ideal distinction between the other-worldly divines ('*ulamā'-i ākhirat*) and the theologians who preferred a worldly career ('*ulamā'-duniya*). (1)

The Mughal Empire inherited from the Delhi Sultanate this pattern of the position and role of the ulema in relation to the court, the administration and the Muslim society. In fact, some of the Lodī ulema continued to hold influential offices under the early Mughal rule, such as 'Abd-Allāh Tulanbī (Makhdūm al-Mulk) who began his religious career probably as a rationalist Whose lectures Sikandar Lodī attended from time to time, but who became later an arch-conservative, a persecutor of all heresy and heterodoxy, and of a character which as revealed in his *fatāwī* moves from one *hīla* (legal evasion) to other. (2)

Akbar who started as an orthodox Muslim was, in the course of time, disillusioned by the arrogance, petty-mindedness, intolerance and mutual rivalries of the ulema of his court. Makhdūm al-Mulk, the *shaykh al-Islām* and Shaykh 'Abd al-Nabī, the *ṣadr al-ṣudūr* who had for a time enjoyed power and great prestige were disgraced and sent to the Hijaz in exile. (3) In his disillusionment Akbar turned to the teachings of other sects in Islam, to the heresies, to other religions; and finally evolved a heretical cult of his own, the *Dīn-i Ilāhī*. (4)

(1) Baranī, 154-55.

(2) 'Abd al-Qādir Badā'ūnī, *Muntaḥhab al-tawārikh*, Calcutta 1868-69, *passim*.

(3) Badā'ūnī, ii, 202; Raḥmān 'Alī, *op. cit.*, 103.

(4) Badā'ūnī, ii, *passim*; Abu'l Faḍl 'Allāmi, *Akbar Nāma*, ed. M. Ṣādiq 'Alī Kanpur/Lucknow 1881-1883; Eng. tr. H. Beveridge, Calcutta 1948, *passim*; idem, *Ā'in-i Akbarī*, Eng. tr. i (H. Blochmann), introduction, 175 ff., iii (Jarrett), 424 ff.; Muḥsin Fānī (attributed to), *Dabistān-i madhāhib*, Eng. tr. by D. Shea and A. Troyer (*The Dabistān or School of Manners*), Paris 1843, iii, 49-138; Makhanlal Roychoudhury, *The Dīn-i Ilāhī*, Calcutta 1941; Vincent E. Smith, *Akbar, the Great Mogul*, Oxford 1927, 209-22, 237; Wolsey Haig in *The Cambridge History of India*, iv, 378 ff.; Aziz Ahmad, *Studies in Islamic Culture in the Indian Environment*, Oxford 1964, 167-181; Y. Hikmet Bayur, "L'Essai de réforme religieuse d'Ekbar Gürkanlı", *Belleten*, ii (1938), 127-85.

The power of the ulema which Akbar curtailed was never again restored to the same degree as earlier under the Delhi Sultanate, not even under pious and theocratic Awrangzīb. The person most responsible for the overthrow of the ulema under Akbar was an eclectic, Shaykh Mubārak and his two sons, the intellectual Abu'l Faḍl 'Allāmī and the poet Fayḍī. Shaykh Mubarak engineered the drafting and willy-nilly signing by the ulema of a *maḥḍar* (in the sense of a juristic decree) ⁽¹⁾ erroneously referred to by some English historians as the 'infallibility decree', by which the ulema were forced to recognise the right of the *ijtihād* of the Emperor when on a legal point there was a difference of opinion among themselves. In practice Akbar went far beyond the provisions of the *maḥḍar* and introduced legislation in his empire by which it ceased to have the complexion of a Muslim state during his reign. The point to remember is that this whole development was occasioned because of the shortcomings of the ulema of his reign and time. In his letter to 'Abd-Allāh Khān Özbek in 1586 Akbar accuses the ulema of having twisted and misrepresented the *sharī'a* and of having corrupted it to assume a role of partnership in the government of the state ⁽²⁾. The fanatically orthodox historian Badā'ūnī, as well as the Naqshbandī mystic Shaykh Aḥmad Sarhindī who was to set in motion a chain reaction against Akbar's heterodoxy, condemn these worldly-wise ulema in similar unambiguous terms. ⁽³⁾ As under the Delhi Sultanate, actually even more forcefully, a distinction was made by the pietistic or orthodox writers between the 'evil' ulema (*'ulamā'-i sū'*) and the God-seeking divines (*'ulamā'-i Ḥaqq*).

Restoration of the Sunnī orthodoxy was partly a work of the ulema of the latter category in several generations. Immediately after the reign of Akbar the two persons most active in the revival of orthodoxy were Shaykh Aḥmad Sarhindī and 'Abd al-Ḥaqq Dihlawī. Of these two, the former was

(1) Text in Badā'ūnī, ii, 272.

(2) Akbar to 'Abd-Allāh Khān Özbek, in 'Allāmī, *Maktūbāt*, Lucknow 1863, 21.

(3) Badā'ūnī, ii, 255; Shaykh Aḥmad Sarhindī, *Maktūbāt*, Lucknow 1877, i, 47. The best study of his life, times and work is, K. A. Nizami, *Ḥayāt-i Shaykh 'Abd al-Ḥaqq Muḥaddith Dihlawī*, Delhi 1953.

essentially a mystic and cannot be defined as an *'ālim*. But 'Abd al-Ḥaqq, though he too had joined more than one Ṣūfī orders, was first and foremost an *'ālim*.⁽¹⁾ At Akbar's capital Fathpur Sikri he had been in contact with the intellectual élite among Akbar's courtiers, though not perhaps with Akbar himself. But his visit to the Hijaz in quest of theological scholarship and his subsequent career as a theologian was not merely a reaction against the heterodoxy of Akbar as suggested by Nizami and others; it also had a positive side in the tradition of 'Alī Muttaqī and 'Abd al-Wahhāb Muttaqī, ulema of Central India unconnected with the movements in the Mughal court, who had immigrated to the Hijaz earlier solely in quest of knowledge and piety, and of whom the latter was 'Abd al-Ḥaqq's teacher and mentor.⁽²⁾ The study of ḥadīth which had been neglected for several centuries in India received a new impetus with the work of 'Abd al-Ḥaqq⁽³⁾ and has, since then, enjoyed a tradition of continuity to the present time. He wrote on several other theological subjects; and his personality and his writings had some effect on restoring and rehabilitating the image of ulema as deserving veneration. He was first of a long series of ulema, not directly connected with the Mughal court, but radiating some indirect influence on receptive Mughal nobles in favourable periods.

Shāh Jahān (1628-1658) was more religious than his father Jahāngīr; but the ulema did not have any say in his policies of administration. His relationship with the most eminent and the most learned *'ālim* of the period, 'Abd al-Ḥakīm Siyālkotī was one of distant patronage. In 1642 Shāh Jahān had him weighed in gold. But, Shāh Jahān and his wazīr Sa'd-Allāh Khān also made use of him. To answer some of the scholastic questions raised by the Ṣafawīd 'Abbās II's wazīr Khalīfa Sultān in his discussions with the Mughal ambassador Jān Nithār Khān, by the imperial order Sa'd-Allāh Khān asked

(2) 'Abd al-Ḥaqq Dihlawī, *Zād al-Muttaqīn*, B.M. Or. Mss. 217, fos. 10^b-41^a, 48^a-134^b.

(3) Raḥmān 'Alī, 109.

Siyālkotī to write what is now regarded as one of his most outstanding works, the *Durrat al-thamīna*. (1)

Awrangzīb (1658-1707) ruled the state as a theocracy, but not through the ulema, but through the *manṣabdārs* (fiefholders) and the administrative structure he had inherited from his predecessors. No doubt he made use of the ulema; but there is no evidence that he ever allowed them to make use of him even in the slightest degree. Through the juristic opinions (*fatāwī*) of the courtier-ulema, ever ready to oblige, he was helped in bringing about the executions of his brothers Dārā Shukoh and Murād Bakḥsh. Ironically similar courtier-ulema attached to the entourage of his son Akbar supplied that prince with juristic rulings to rebel against his pious father, accusing him of irreligion. (2) The most positive use of ulema made by Awrangzīb was to set them at work on the monumental *Fatāwā-i 'Ālamgīrī (Fatāwī Hindīyya)* which is the most comprehensive juristic work compiled in India; and is also, incidentally, the theoretic chrysalization of Awrangzīb's theocratic policies.

It was not until after the death of Awrangzīb in 1707, which marked the collapse of Muslim political power in India, that the ulema, or rather one of them, Shāh Walī-Allāh, assumed not merely the religious, but also to some limited extent social and political lead, at least in the history of ideas, in Indian Islam, opening new vistas of speculation which inspired as divergent religio-political thinking as that of the fundamentalists and the modernists in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. In modern Indo-Pakistani historiography Walī-Allāh's political influence over the Muslim potentates of the period has been exaggerated. (3) On the contrary, there is reason to believe that his intellectual approach and his fundamentalism were both repugnant to the more traditionally orthodox among his contemporaries. (4)

(1) Sa'd-Allāh Khān, *Maktūbāt*, ed. N. H. Zaydi, Lahore 1968, 14-16.

(2) Jadu Nath Sarkar in *The Cambridge History of India*, iv, 227-228, 250, 252.

(3) Cf. K. A. Nizami, *Shāh Walī-Allāh ke siyāsī maktūbāt*, Aligarh 1950; S. M. Ikram, *Rūd-i Kawīhar*, Lahore 1958, 509-514.

(4) Mirzā Hayrat Dihlawī, *Hayāt-i Ṭayyiba*, Lahore 1958, 26-27; also Mirzā Rafī' Sawdā, "Dar hajw-i shakhḥī ki muta'aeib būdsh, in *Kulliyāt*, Lucknow n.d.

But there is no doubt that, at least to some extent Wali-Allāh saw himself in the role of a champion of political Islam. (1) Much more important is the fact that he was the first divine in India to see the problems of Muslims in a social and economic context, and in a historical perspective. (2) He faced the question of the purification of religious belief and practice from what he considered to be the contamination of an overwhelmingly Hindu environment; (3) an orientation which reached its culmination in the work of his grandson Shāh Ismā'il. (4) Even more significant was his impact on all future religious thinking in India due to his re-evaluation and reopening of the question of *ijtihād* (use of individual reasoning) (5) which opened in various subsequent schools of religious thought new vistas of neo-scholasticism and speculation.

The tradition and the impact of his thought was continuous through the school he founded; though the political rôle of that school has often been misrepresented in recent historical writing. Thus, the oft-quoted *fatwā* of his son Shāh 'Abd al-'Azīz declaring India *dār al-ḥarb* (enemy territory) under the British (6) should not be taken in isolation; actually the position of 'Abd al-'Azīz vis-à-vis the British was quite ambivalent. (7) It has to be remembered that the *fatwā* in question, like most of the political statements of the ulema during the nineteenth century, were not positive statements or stands, but answers to queries put to them, in dealing with which their rôle was not dissimilar to that of the medieval *mufliṣ*.

The movement of the *Mujāhidīn*, begun and led by Sayyid Aḥmad Barelwī in the early decades of the nineteenth century, had for its brain trust two ulema who were members not only

(1) Wali-Allāh, *Fuyūḍ al-Ḥarmayn*, Urdu Tr., Lahore 1947, 55, 117, 127.

(2) Specially in *Hujjat-Allāh al-bāliḡha*, Karachi 1953 and *Izālat al-khafā'*, Karachi n.d.

(3) In *Tuḥfat al-Muwahhidīn*, Delhi 1894 and *al-Balāḡh al-mubīn*, Lahore 1890.

(4) Shāh Ismā'il, *Taqwiyyat al-imān*, Lahore 1956.

(5) Wali-Allāh, *'Iqd al-jīd*, Delhi 1926.

(6) Shāh 'Abd al-'Azīz, *Fatāwā-i 'Azīziyya*, Delhi 1904, 16-17; Urdu tr. Kanpur n.d., i, 35-37; cf. Mushiru-l-Haqq, *Indian Muslim Attitude to the British in the Early Nineteenth Century: A Case Study of Shāh 'Abdul 'Azz*, unpublished thesis submitted for the degree of M. A. at the McGill University, 1964.

(7) *Ibid.*

of the Walī-Allāhī school, but also of the family of that divine. The activism of these two ulema, Shāh Ismā‘īl and ‘Abd al-Ḥayy, is really the first instance of the participation of ulema in a popular movement which was as much political as it was religious and social, and which culminated in a *jihād* against the Sikhs on the north-western frontier of India. It is debatable whether it envisaged in its earlier stages a *jihād* against the British as well. In subsequent generations the ulema associated with this movement were actively, though not very effectively, hostile to the British. ⁽¹⁾

The participation of some of the ulema, especially those of the small town of Thanā Bhawan and Delhi in the anti-British Uprising of 1857-1858 (the Indian Sepoy Mutiny), again, needs examination. In the case of Thanā Bhawan the hagiological historiography ⁽²⁾ can be trusted more than in the case of Delhi. But Thanā Bhawan was an insignificant town which made no impact on the course of the Mutiny or its sequel; and it was for this reason that of the Thanā Bhawan participants in Mutiny the leader Hājī Imdād-Allāh was allowed to proceed to the Hijaz unmolested by the British authorities, Rashīd Aḥmad Gangohī was temporarily arrested but due to insufficient evidence soon set free, and Muḥammad Qāsīm Nānotawī, who later founded the theological seminary of Deoband, escaped imprisonment or trial at the hands of the British altogether. That these ulema became respected divines later as founders of Deoband is relevant to the fact that they posited a distrust of the British which gathered a political momentum in the subsequent generations under Maḥmūd al-Ḥasan and Ḥusayn Aḥmad Madanī. In the case of the *fatwā* of the ulema at Delhi justifying the *jihād* against the British during the Mutiny,

(1) Apart from the familiar printed sources, as Hafeez Malik has points out in his review (*Journal of Asian Studies*, forthcoming) of Qeyam-ud-din Ahmad's *The Wahabi Movement in India* (Calcutta 1966) there is still a great deal of untapped material on the movement of the Mujāhidin in the archives of Calcutta, Patna and Bombay, in the archives of the Government of West Pakistan, in the Sayyidiya Library at Tonk and in the India Office Library, London (specially VIII Duke of Argyll pp. L95/54 and Legal Adviser's Papers, Box 94788).

(2) Muḥammad Miḡān, *‘Ulamā’-i Hind kā shāndār maḡi-yi jadīd*, Delhi 1957-60, iv, 275-307; Ḥusayn Aḥmad Madanī, *Naqsh-i Ḥayāt*, Delhi 1953, ii, 42-43.

it was not an initiative, but a formal response to query, and was probably issued under the pressure of mutineers and Bahkt Khān, their leader in Delhi. On the other hand Sayyid Aḥmad Khān's assertion that the *fatwā* in question was a forgery has to be treated as motivated by loyalist apologestic. (1)

Rashīd Aḥmad Gangohī was opposed to the modernist theology of Sayyid Aḥmad Khān to such an extent that he extended his dislike to his politics, and in answer to a query gave the ruling that a Muslim may join the Hindu-dominated Indian National Congress provided his doing so did not lead to any infringement of the *sharī'a* or the humiliation of the Muslim community, rather than respond to Sayyid Aḥmad Khān's political call of Muslim separatism from Hindu-oriented politics and of loyalism to the British rule. (2)

In the succeeding generation at Deoband, Maḥmūd al-Ḥasan's political activism against the British rule, his contacts during the First World War with Turkish leaders Enver Pāsha and Ghalib Pāsha in the Hijaz leading to his imprisonment by Sharīf Ḥusayn of Mecca and his internment by the British were primarily motivated by pan-Islamism. In 1920 with the rise of the Indian Khilāfat movement in alliance with the Indian National Congress Maḥmūd al-Ḥasan's pan-Islamism came to be telescoped with Indian nationalism, though its rudiments are traceable in some of his earlier activities especially those organised in the north-western frontier area and in Afghanistan. Later, a theological philosophy for Indian nationalism was worked out by the nationalist leader Abu'l Kalām Āzād and by Maḥmūd al-Ḥasan's disciple and successor Ḥusayn Aḥmad Madanī. It was based on Muḥammad's 'Covenant' with the Medinians, cited by Ibn Ishāq and other early Muslim chroniclers, which defined all Medinians, whether Muslim or non-Muslim as belonging to a similar community. Though this 'covenant' was soon superseded by very different action by the Prophet, it was argued by the nationalist Indian ulema

(1) Text in *Ṣādiq al-akhbār*, Delhi, 26 July 1857; cf. Sayyid Aḥmad Khān, *Asbāb-i baḡhāwat-i Hind* (1858), Agra 1903, 8-9.

(2) Rashīd Aḥmad Gangohī in *Nuṣrat al-akhbār*, Lahore 1886, 19.

that it was a valid precedent for the justification of the forging of a composite Hindu-Muslim nationalism in India to face the British. (1) These ulema as well as their principal organisation, the Jam'īyyat al-'ulamā'-i Hind were opposed to the Pakistan movement which was supported by very few ulema, the most eminent of them being Shabbīr Aḥmad 'Uḥtmānī, the political anti-thesis of Madanī. With the foundation of Pakistan in 1947 the drama of the political activism of the ulema shifted to Pakistan and deserves a separate study.

Aziz AHMAD
(Toronto)

(1) Āzād, *Khuṭbāt*, Lahore 1944, 42-44; Madanī, *Muttahida qawmiyyat awr Islām*, Delhi n.d., 44-51.
