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CONCLUSION

In the previous Chapters attempt has been made to describe to a reasonable extent the situation prevailing in India in the nineteenth century and later. The conditions as have been discussed were of turmoil for the Muslims. Not only had they lost an Empire but the once rulers had now become the ruled. It was extremely difficult for the Muslims to adjust to the changed situation.

The whole of the nineteenth century, and especially after 1857, became crucial for the Muslim leader and the intellectuals. The pondered over what wrong and what to do now? Every political or religious leader had his own solution and suggestions. Generally the religious minded on surveying the situation concluded that this was due to our religious degradation. People of this thinking began establishing Madrasas. The Dar ul Uloom Deoband and the Nadwatul Ulama, Lucknow were the result of the post 1857 thinking. On the other hand the more liberal like Sir Syed was of the opinion that due to the changed situations, in order to survive, the Muslims must adopt the language of the ruler as well as the new educational system. The religious leaders and thinkers after much deliberation had concluded that the adverse condition of the Muslims was due solely to the fact that they have wavered from the basics of their religion and unless and until they are reformed their fate will not change.

It was in this background that Maulan Ashraf Ali Thanvi was born. After a thorough religious education at Deoband he came into contact with Haji Imdadullah Mahajir Makki (RA) who inspired in him the desire to reform the Muslim Ummah who had fallen back on their religious beliefs. Maulana Ashraf Ali Thanvi had also observed that the Muslims in general had not only went down politically but also they had fallen down in each and every field of life be
it moral, social, economic or religious etc. He had observed very closely the state of fellow Muslims and was deeply concerned about the fact that various innovations and un-Islamic practices had slowly crept into the life of the Muslims. It was either due to the impact of the Indian culture and local customs and traditions or due to certain worldly and so-called saints who used religion to exploit the simple uneducated Muslims to gain their own benefits.

Islam had been introduced into India, especially North India, by the Sufis who accomplished the Muslims conquerors. Almost all these conquerors came from Central Asia and Central Asia had predominantly sufi Islam. The Indian culture of the time was also based on certain customs and traditions therefore Sufism was bound to influence the Indian people in a big way. The local people began to attend the sufi gathering and many of them started to convert to Islam under the influence of the Sufis. Thus we can see that Sufism and its development played a big role in the conversion of the local population. It was also this ground which was largely exploited by the make beliefs sufi who were mainly responsible for the introduction of un-Islamic customs and traditions amongst the Indian Muslims. The false Sufis compromised religion for gaining popularity and achieving their goals little realizing that the true religion had been left far behind.

The Deoband School stood for the spread of pure religion by imparting education of the classical works of Islam. Maulana Ashraf Ali Thanvi was brought up in this training. He too was influenced by the sufis but since he had gained the true knowledge of pure Islam therefore he was conscious enough to distinguish between the true and the false. He was trained in all the four major sufi orders namely Chishtiyya, Qadriyya, Naqshbandiyya and Suharwardiyya. He clearly distinguished between the real Sufism and its misguided version of Sufism. It was with the aim of bringing the real Islamic Sufism to the masses that he had started his mission. He had the multi-purpose of not only sitting right the religious beliefs of the people but also at the same time of purifying
the religion by discarding all the later innovations (bida‘t) and accretions that had crept into it. Also he had resolved to set right the morals of the people. He emphasized that Islam was not only a religion but the whole system of life that encompassed the beliefs (Aqai‘d), Character (akhlaq), social life (ma‘ashrat), and dealings and transactions (mua‘mlat) apart, of course, the declaration of the faith in Tawhid.

For achieving this target he had made every effort to guide the Muslims to the true path through setting practical examples, lectures and discourses, book on a variety of subjects of general interest in the simplest of language. He had a very good understanding of the real cause of the religious degeneration of the Muslims and had the remedy for all the ills. This is the reason why he had earned the title of Hakeem al-Ummat. His mission was not only aimed at the general public but also at the religious scholars so that they may lead the community to the true path in the future too.

He was a prolific writer and contributed about a thousand books and booklets covering all topics from Tafsirs, Hadith, Fiqh, Kalam and the problems of daily life. All of his writings gained popularity and even to this day they continue to be printed and reprinted. Also the numbers of his followers kept on increasing day by day. All his efforts were rewarded but with popularity also came opposition from his adversaries. Many of his opponents were simply those people who were losing their trade as people left them and thronged to him for their guidance. But opposition brings with it four fold success. He was not in the habit of attacking his adversaries but instead kept silent and therefore his adversaries could get no cause to continue the debate further.

When he died in 1943 he had left behind him a large number of his khulafa to continue his good work and they proved to be good followers. Even during his lifetime his followers had spread to every nook and corner of India spreading his message of reform. In the present time too one can find his
followers and *Khulafa* of his *khulafa* not only in India and Pakistan and Bangladesh but also in different parts of Europe and U.K. and also places as far as America and South Africa and of course in the Arab World. Thus we can definitely conclude by saying that Maulana Ashraf Ali Thanvi's was a personality who is born once in many centuries and whenever the religion of Islam is in danger of losing its true values and guidance. Allah gives birth to such personalities to set right the people and guide them to the true path.