CHAPTER VII
VARIOUS MOVEMENTS AND LEADING REFORMERS

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I. INTRODUCTION

As power was gradually being transferred into non-Muslim hands during the eighteenth and the early nineteenth centuries, the Muslim nobility were threatened with this grave crisis. They were particularly concerned of their own privileged status linked with the former Muslim ruling establishment. It was at this time of despair that several charismatic figures emerged from among the ulama.¹

Thus there developed a trend towards shunning local religious accretions and return to the pristine and simple form of Islam, which consisted mainly of obeying the Word of God as embodied in the Quran and of following the Sunnah of Prophet Mohammad.² Back to the period of the Prophet’ ‘Back to the early Khilafat’ was the call of revivalism which summarized the reformist trends.

Early in the nineteenth century Haji Shariatullah preached a return to the pristine purity of Islam and discouraged contrary etiquette and customs. He felt that India under the British rule had ceased to be dar-ul Islam or the land of Islam and had become dar-ul-harb. His son Dudhu Miyan proclaimed the equality of man, energetically espoused the cause of the poor and the distressed, upheld puritanism and forbade un-Islamic practices.

Sayyid Ahmad of Rae Bareli founded the Tariqa-i Muhammadiyah or the return to the ways of the Prophet and to achieve this he emphasized on holy war.

The Ahl-i-Hadith movement founded at about the same time, proclaimed afresh the Unity of God, the exclusive supremacy of the Holy Quran and Hadith, denounced polytheism the worship of the saints and all those customs, which prevailed among the Muslims in contradiction to the true Islam.³

The Dar ul-Ulum Deoband was founded in 1866 to generate a new Indian body of ulama. In 1875 Sir Sayyid Ahmad Khan established the Mohammadan Anglo Oriental College with a westernized secular curriculum to educate Muslims capable of reviving Islam and addressing the exigencies of modernity.⁴

The Jama'at-i-Islami founded by Abul Ala Maududi in 1941 advocated religious renewal and political independence. Grass roots movements like the Tablighi Jama'at, founded in 1926, arose to teach Islamic principles and practices and to eradicate local accretions such as pilgrimage to saints, tombs, musical elaborate weddings and mourning and death rites.⁵

The second half of the 19th century was the most critical period in the history of Indian Muslims. Steeped in ignorance,

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³ Beni Prasad, *The Hindu Muslim Question*, (Allahabad, 1941), p. 22
⁴ Aziz Ahmad, *op. cit.*, p. 367
conservatism, traditionalism and superstitions, the Muslim community presented the sad spectacle of inertia and degeneration. It had lost all the vitality, vigour and the creative force of a living nation.

The debacle of the first struggle for India's freedom turned out to be a total catastrophe for the community. The Indian Muslims were now at a very delicate turn of their history, a turn at which even a single flattering step could consign a nation to the pages of history as one of the numerous tales of extinct nations. The whole community was in the state of severe trauma and was unable to find a solution.⁶

The Deoband seminary came into existence after the failure of the War of Independence of 1857, the ulama decided to transfer their mission from the battlefield to the school.⁷ The founder of the Deoband seminary, Maulana Muhammad Qasim Nanautvi and Sir Sayyid Ahmad Khan the founder of Aligarh College, were pupils of the same master.⁸

Sir Sayyid and Maulana Mohammad Qasim Nanautvi both tried to revive the Muslim community through education both were equally concerned with the fate of Muslims in the new changed situation. Their aim was one, upliftment of

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⁸ Ishrat Ali Qureshi, *op. cit.*, p. 35
Muslims, but there was a world of difference between their approaches.\(^9\)

While Deoband tried to achieve this objective through pure religious instructions and a continued policy of non-cooperation with the government, Aligarh endeavoured to proceed towards the same goal through a symbiosis of western education and religious teaching and a policy of cooperation with the government.

Deoband was primarily a centre of religious puritanism with no concern for worldly affairs, but Aligarh was saddled with all the responsibilities and duties, which any modern educational institution owes to the society.\(^10\)

(ii) Deoband Movement

The Madrasa Arabiyyah was established at Deoband barely a decade after the uprising of 1857. Those who founded it had played an active role in the uprising. They were trained in the Waliullahi school of thought.\(^11\)

The Madrasa, later known as Dar ul-Ulum, was yet another means to secure political independence and freedom for religion and culture.\(^12\) The Dar ul-Ulum was therefore not only a response to the challenges of western education alone but a response to a whole gamut of challenges that were

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\(^10\) Ishrat Ali Qureshi, *op. cit.*, p. 35.


\(^12\) Syed Masroor Ali Akhtar Hashmi, *Muslim Response to Western Education*, p. 35.
posed before the Muslims in the nineteenth century as a result of their exposure to western culture.\textsuperscript{13}

After the defeat of Shamli\textsuperscript{14}, Delhi and in various other battlefields during and after 1857 the prominent leaders of the freedom movement found it very hard to save India from the cultural onslaught of the West. To counter the nefarious British plan to enslave India culturally they planned to establish a revolutionary institution that would impart religious knowledge as well as enthuse fervour among students to resist the westernization process.

Maulana Muhammad Qasim Nanautvi (1832-1880) the founder of Dar ul-Ulum at Deoband later on outlined the purpose of establishing the institution in the following words.

"The English have perpetrated boundless acts of tyranny against the Muslims for their faults, if at all it was a fault of the uprising in 1857 and their relentless endeavour for the independence of this country thereafter, they have left no stone unturned to plunder and obliterate the Islamic arts and science, Muslim culture and civilization. Endowments of Muslim educational institutions have been confiscated and as a result state funded schools have been virtually closed. It is therefore

\textsuperscript{13} Ibid., p. 38.
\textsuperscript{14} Shamli is a small town in the district of Muzaffarnagar (U.P.)
necessary to adopt other methods instead of relying upon the old system of endowments.¹⁵

Maulana Mohammad Qasim Nanautvi was a prominent Islamic scholar belonging to the Waliullahi School. After the British had successfully overcome the uprising of 1857, Nanautvi led the establishment of the theological school at Deoband in 1866 to keep alive the true Islamic learning and then he devoted the rest of his life to building it up.¹⁶ Maulana Mohammad Qasim Nanautvi was born in Shaban or Ramadan 1248 A.H. (1832 A.D.) at Nanauta a small town sixteen miles West of Deoband and about eighty miles north of Delhi and was the founder of Dar ul-Ulum Deoband. He died at an early age of 49 in 1880 A.D.

He received his early education at Nanauta and Deoband. He studied almost all the books from Maulana Mamluk Ali Nanautvi (d.1851)¹⁷ who was a solid teacher and an alim of vast knowledge and experience. When he completed his basic Islamic education he along side. Maulana Rashid Ahmad Gangohi studied his Daura-i-Hadith from Hazrat Maulana Shah Abul Ghani Mujaddidi and at that time they both became murid of Haji Imdadullah Muhajir Makki. His genius began to show up at this stage. The difficult books like

Sadra, Shams Bazigha etc were recited by him just like a memorizer (Hafiz) of Quran recited the Holy Book.\textsuperscript{18}

Reason and rationalism in the Western world has been the inner spirit of all-progressive thoughts termed as 'Modernism which is often confused with westernism. It refers to the scientific outlook and rational approach rather than the traditional or convention based views. This approach is mainly based on rational perception and critical analysis of an issue.

It was destined for Maulana Qasim Nanautvi to come up with this need of reassessing and re-interpreting the concepts of Islamic faith in a rational framework capable of being appreciated even by the unbelievers.\textsuperscript{19}

His rational expositions can be divided mainly into three categories

1. Question of Shariah: Many hundreds of pages written by him generally deal with his answers to questions of Shariah or highly rational statement of issues of Islamic faith it may be pointed out that his remarkable distinction lies in his highly subtle and logical discourse of Islamic faith system which he treats in his writings as under:

\textsuperscript{19} Mohammad Azam Qasmi, ‘Maulana Mohammad Qasim Nanautvi’s Contribution to Islamic Thought with Special Reference to Al-Kalam’ (Unpublished Thesis), (Arligarh Muslim University, 1988), p.106.
(a) Single issues of faith, where the rational bases of a particular issue in question or objection is brought out and explained.

(b) Theorization of Islamic faith as a whole. This is where the ultimate genius of Maulana Muhammad Qasim comes into full light and Islam as a reasoned faith is profoundly explained.

Most of these discussions, which come under the last, mentioned two categories are generally scattered in various books and Rasail.\(^{20}\)

The writings of Maulana Qasim are usually based on rational arguments rather than Riwayat (traditions). He had realized that the traditional paradigm of Islamic thought ought to change in the wake of the rationalist revolution already knocking at the door. The rational trend seeks to know the inner wisdom and the rational basis of everything including faith and belief.\(^{21}\)

Deoband is a small town in the district of Saharanpur (U.P.) at a distance of about ninety miles from Delhi. The guiding spirit of this venture was Maulana Mohammad Qasim Nanautvi.\(^{22}\)

The approach of Dar ul-Ulum towards religion and its understanding was in essence Waliullahi. It sought all

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\(^{20}\) Ibid., p. 107.

\(^{21}\) Ibid., p. 115.

religious interpretations in the light of the Quran and the Sunnah. The central religious approach of the school of Deoband is relatively a comprehensive, moderate and versatile approach among other reformist groups.\(^{23}\)

The part played by Dar ul-Ulum in religious, social and political life of the Indian Muslims can be legitimately interpreted in terms of aims and objectives that lay behind the actions of its founder during the days of the rebellion. The difference lies only in weapons. Now the sword and spear was replaced by the pen and the tongue. The basic idea of this educational movement was born out of the fact that the doors of all worldly progress were closed on Muslim community under a repressive hostile and alien rule. Now the only thing left for the Muslim's was the preservation of their faith, learning and culture.\(^{24}\)

Maulana Mohammad Qasim Nanautvi was the guiding force behind this educational movement. He rendered glorious and invaluable services to the people of the Subcontinent in academic, dawah, political and social fields.

In his eight point resolution which he proposed for the newly founded Dar ul-Ulum, he emphasized on the need of public contribution and donation as against the system of endowments or government aid that was prevalent ever since


\(^{24}\) Zia ul-Hasan Faruqi, *op. cit.*, p. 23
the Muslim rule. This new system was adopted basically to keep the institution free from the government influences.25

Most of the income was derived from popular contributions pledged annually by their many supporters. The Deobandis also solicited single gifts in both cash and kind especially in the early days of the school. People donated books and food for the students apart from household items to furnish the school.

Five of Mohammad Qasim's eight principles dealt with this new financial arrangement. They stressed the obligation of all associated with the school to encourage donations of cash and food.26

The founder knowing princely patronage and Waqf no longer to be dependable sources of funding created a system of popular contributions.27 He postulated therefore dependence on uncertain means (public donations) rather than on definite sources:

"As long as the Madrasas have no fixed sources of income, they will, God willing, be operated as desired. And if they gain fixed incomes like Jagir holdings, factories, trading interests or pledge from nobles then the Madarsas will lose

26 Barbara Daly Metcalf, op cit., p. 97.
27 Ibid, p. 98.
the fear and hope that inspires submission to God and will lose its hidden help”.  

The Madrasa was to be based on public cooperation it had to be run by the method of 'Shura' (Consultation) and not by arbitrary decisions of a person or a group of persons. It rejected all possibilities of government interference. This independence attitude together with more and more emphasis on mass contact has been throughout its existence a chief characteristic and main reason of Deoband's increasing influence.  

The majority of students were drawn from the respectable poor of Muslim society, petty landholders sons, small shopkeepers' sons, not only from the upper provinces but also from the southern regions and even from countries like Afghanistan, China etc.

The course of study was strictly traditional, Arabic rhetoric, logic, Kalam, Fiqh, Tafsir and a little philosophy. The medium of instruction was Urdu; no English was taught and no modern science.  

The school taught basically the Dars-i-Nizami after the name of Mullah Nizamuddin Sahalvi. The curriculum was evolved at Farangi Mahal in the eighteenth century. The Deobandi's however reversed the emphasis on

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29 Zia-ul Hasan Faruqi, op. cit., p. 26
30 P. Hardy, op. cit., p. 170
rational studies in favour of an emphasis on Hadith, which was to be the basis of their final study and teaching.\textsuperscript{31}

Maulana Mohammad Qasim Nanautvi was not against the acquisition of western language and literature. He pointed out that the Madrasa was not apposed to the study of such education, but simply wanted to avoid duplication of government efforts.\textsuperscript{32}

Maulana Mohammad Qasim was of the opinion that after the completion of traditional Islamic learning students might acquire modern education. His ideas for the acquisition of modern sciences were being recognized and in 1903 in the meeting of Majlis-e-Shura it was approved that scholarship would be given to those students who wanted to join government schools after completing their education from the Dar ul-Ulum. With this view a proposal was made to reduce the period of course of studies from ten years to six years.\textsuperscript{33}

Deoband was thoroughly dissatisfied with the affairs as they were. There was vigorous determination to improve them. The aim was to resuscitate classical Islam to rid the Muslims of their theological corruptions, ritual degradation and the material exploitation to which they had fallen prey since the British occupation.\textsuperscript{34}

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\item[\textsuperscript{31}] Barbara Daly Metcalf, \textit{op. cit.}, pp. 100-101
\item[\textsuperscript{32}] Dar ul-Ulum Deoband, \textit{Rudad-e-Salanah}, 1290 A.H. (Deoband 1873), p.16, Also quoted in \textit{Islamic Revival in British India} by Barbara Daly Metcalf, p. 102.
\item[\textsuperscript{33}] Mehboob Rizvi, \textit{op. cit.}
\item[\textsuperscript{34}] W.C. Smith, \textit{Modern Islam in India – A Social Analysis}, (New Delhi, 1979), p. 363.
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The Deobandis opposed folk Islam in which intercession by saints occupied a major place and similarly. Seeking initiation in a mystic order was considered the path to salvation and miracles and other such phenomenon were seen as crucial and defining attributes of popular faith. They did not oppose mysticism altogether but did argue that the adherence to the Islamic law was the path of mystical exaltation. They also opposed folk practices such as fixing days for distribution of food to gain spiritual merit and celebrating the days in the scriptures. Hallmark of Deobandis practices included passive opposition to Urs at the graves of saints, to the so-called Fatiha - food offerings for the dead and to the elaborate ceremonies associated with birth and death they tended to oppose the celebration of the Prophet's birthday Meeladun nabi on the grounds that it encouraged the belief that it elevated the importance of a fixed day and that it had no basis and sanction. For Deoband sufism is a means to an end and as such it is subservient to scriptures whereas it's tomb based cult is an end in itself and as such it predominates scriptures.

There is no denying of the fact that popular sufism i.e. the guardianship of the tombs of medieval Muslim saints was the characteristic and dominant feature of popular Islam in India.

Deoband on the other hand practiced a purer sufism devoid of customs and rituals surrounding the tombs of the saints in the form of urs, sama, ritual fatiha, calling others than God, Giarwahin Sharif of Shaykh Abdul Qadir Gilani and ceremonial Milad of the Prophet etc. However, the very fact of Deoband’s professing and recognizing of all the major sufi orders and its reformist approach being mild and passive towards popular custom had left not much room for contention and conflict.\(^{36}\)

In Tasawwuf all the founders of Deoband and more specially Maulana Muhammad Qasim and Maulana Rashid Ahmad Gangohi received this broad sufistic vision from their sufi mentor Haji Imdadullah. Haji Imdadullah frequently used to say that just as Jalauddin Rumi was the tongue of Shams Tabriz in the same way Maulvi Qasim and Maulvi Rashid were his tongue for all which he felt but could not express. At the Deoband seminary there has been a spiritual succession alongwith the Shariat and sufistic devotion side by side with academic excellence.\(^{37}\)

A deliberate system of discourse was added in the teachings of Hadith to prove that the Hanafi principles of Fiqh are closely based on Hadith and so are the judicial particulars. This method of proving Hanafism on the grounds of Hadith was adopted for rebutting the increasing claims and


\(^{37}\) Ibid., p. 344.
objections made by the Ahl-i-Hadith that Hanafi Fiqh is based more on "personal opinion" than on the Hadith of the Prophet.\textsuperscript{38}

One of the objectives before the founders of Dar ul-Ulum of Deoband was the countenance of the propaganda of the Christian missionaries. After 1857 the missionaries became bolder and began to raise objections against Islam and its Prophet in public meetings. Arya Samaj a Hindu revivalist organization also joined them in this campaign. Maulana Qasim and several other Muslim scholars took up the challenge to combat them.\textsuperscript{39}

Muslim scholars produced considerable literature to nullify the Christian missionary efforts and developed the institutions of Munazara or polemical debates. The most outstanding name in this connection is that of Maulvi Rahmat Ali of Kayrana (1891) whose work Izharul Haqq contains effective biblical criticism and refutation of the missionary propaganda.

Maulana Qasim's speeches delivered to explain the Islamic faith and to counter the objections raised by the opponents, were powerful dialectical discourses. He addressed public gatherings in Delhi, Roorki, Meerut, Shahjahanpur etc, during 1875-77 several of these polemical

\textsuperscript{38} Ibid., p. 346; See Maulana Qazi Mohammad Tayyab, op. cit., p. 45.
\textsuperscript{39} Mohammad Azam Qasmi, op. cit., p. 349.
speeches with their highly intellectual contents have been published intermittently from several places.  

Deoband strictly adhered to the principle and practice of keeping aloof from all politics. The love of independence and freedom from the foreign domination was inherent in the concept of Deoband itself. Obviously Deoband and its educational movement was an outcome of the failure of 1857. The institution of Deoband therefore right from its inception maintained its independence of teaching and administration as a matter of principle.

During World War I (1914-18) the issue of Khilafat heated up which was more spiritual for the Indian Muslims than political. The ulama of Deoband zealously supported the cause of Khilafat in order to exert pressure on the British Government to help maintain and safeguard the institution of Khilafat as a legacy of Islamic history.

During the same period Maulana Mahmud al-Hasan better known as Shaykh al-Hind and his followers saw a rare opportunity to unburden the country from the yoke of British slavery. For this purpose the Silken Kerchief conspiracy was hatched up which sought to derail the British rule in India by maneuvering the combined political and military pressures of Germany, Russia, Turkey and Afghanistan against the British. But the Silken Kerchief writings were caught and decoded prematurely and the leaders were jailed and exiled.

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More than 300 ulama issued a Fatwa, which was repeatedly published in the newspaper called *Al-Nusrat-al Abrar* and Maulana Abul Kalam Azad launched the weekly 'Al-Hilal' a heraldry of the freedom struggle.\(^1\)

In March 1919 an organization called Jamiyat ul-ulama was set up in view of Deoband's wider role and vision of national struggle and independence. As the concept of partition of the country crystallized and the political controversy and debate intensified, so was the polarization of Muslim community around the Indian National Congress\(^*\) (formed in 1885) and the Muslim League\(^**\). The majority of the ulama of Deoband continued to support the ideology of undivided India.

A splinter group however disagreed with the majority view and the traditional broader vision of Deoband and allied itself with the Muslim League and the demand for partition. This section of the ulama was led by Maulana Shabbir Ahmad

\(^1\) S. Abid Husain, *op. cit.*, p. 77


\(^**\) Muslim League: Original names All India Muslim League, political group that led the movement calling for a separate Muslim nation to be created out of the partition of British India (1947). The Muslim League was founded in 1906 to safeguard the rights of Indian Muslims. At first the league was encouraged by the British and was generally favourable to their rule, but the organization adopted self-government for India as its goal in 1913. For several decades the league and its leader, notably Mohammad Ali Jinnah called for Hind Muslim unity in the unito and separate nation for India's Muslims because it feared that an independent India would be dominated by Hindus. After the formation of Pakistan in 1947 the league became Pakistan's dominant political party. See: *The New Encyclopaedia Britannica*, vol.8, p. 450.
Usmani and those who opposed the idea of partition was chiefly led by Maulana Husain Ahmad Madani.

The activist stance of Deoband emanated mainly from two sources.

i) The freedom from foreign rule-in which Deoband has played a leading role from 1857 down to 1947.

ii) The second represents Deoband's participation in the Khilafat movement and its campaigns against Qadianism, antagonistic missionaries, Shuddhi, Sangathan etc.^^

Theologically the school stood for a rigid orthodoxy. The doors of Ijtihad is closed tight which Deoband maintained rigorously within the *premises of Islam. However within the limits of those premises it remained highly rationalist. It attempted to do away with aberrations, compromises and intellectual laziness. Their ideal is traditional Islam at its purest with a strict enforcement of the canon law.^^

The Dar ul-Ulum achieved this aim to a great extent having been undoubtedly the greatest source of orthodox Islam in India fighting on the one hand, religious innovations (*bidat* ) and on the other the cultural and religious apostasy under western or local influences. As a matter of fact Deoband has established itself as a school of religious thought, a large number of religious Madarsas were founded

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on its lines throughout the country by those who graduated from it. Dar ul-Uloom Deoband not only played a very important role in saving Muslims from educational, spiritual and political abyss and discomfiture but also produced tens of thousands of educated and well-trained freedom fighters who struggled and laid down their lives for the sake of the liberation of this great nation.

Dar ul-Ulum Deoband besides being an old type of religious institution of Islam at the same time it is rather the name of a glorious movement for the revival of Islam and the stability of the community, Dar ul-Ulum Deoband was a centre of revolution and political training.\[^{44}\]

(iii) Aligarh Movement

Almost all the socio-religious movements of the 19\(^{th}\) century, the Mujahidin movement of Sayyid Ahmad Shahid Barelvi, the Faraidi movement and the Barelvi School etc drew their inspiration from Shah Abdul Aziz. These movements within their traditional framework did some useful work to improve the moral tone of the Muslim society and instilled confidence at a time when frustration and pessimism had brought it to the verge of collapse.

However none of them could exert such a profound influence as to bring about any significant change in the socio-religious thinking of Muslims. It was left to Sir Sayyid to implement the mission of Shah Waliullah and Shah Abdul Aziz

\[^{44}\] Manazir Ahsan Gilani, *op. cit.*
in such a way and on such a scale as to take the Muslim society out of the morass of medieval orthodoxy, conservatism and traditionalism, and bring about a change in its socio-religious thinking consistent with the tenets of Islam on the one hand and responsive to the demands of the modern age on the other.45

The movement that he started is commonly known as the Aligarh Movement, marked the beginning of a new era, the era of intellectual renaissance, which brought about a profound change in the thinking of Indian Muslims.46

Sayyid Ahmad Khan (1817-1898) was an Islamic modernist, writer and political activist. The family of Sir Sayyid Ahmad Khan claimed lineal descent from the Prophet Mohammad. His ancestors had settled in Herat in Afghanistan and had migrated to India during the Mughal period in the seventeenth century.47

Sir Sayyid’s formal education was strictly traditional. In his childhood he had the chance of visiting the royal palace, played with the princes and princesses attended durbars and realized the weaknesses of the Mughals.48

The death of Sir Sayyid’s father in 1838 left the family in financial difficulties. The maintenance allowance given by the

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46 Ibid., p. 41.
Mughal King was too meagre to meet the family's expenses.\(^{49}\) This made him pensive and much against the wishes of his family he joined the services of the East India Company in 1839 and was appointed Sarishtadar in the office of Sadr Amir in Delhi. A year after, he was transferred to Agra as Naib Munshi or deputy reader in the office of the Commissioner.

Along with government service he continued his literary pursuits. He wrote a booklet *Jam-i-Jam* in 1840 containing the history of the Mughal Emperors.

In 1846 he was transferred to Delhi. This was his native town and apart from his service he spent most of his time in studying traditional subjects from the leading scholars of the time like Maulvi Nawazish Ali, Maulvi Faizul Hasan and Maulana Makhhsusullah. From them Sayyid Ahmad studied Fiqh, Usul-i-Fiqh, Hadith and the Holy Quran.\(^{50}\)

Sir Sayyid Ahmad was a multitalented man, and his position in the judicial department gave him enough time to be active in many other fields. His career as an author started at the age of 23 with the writing of some religious tracts. In 1847 he brought out a noteworthy book, ‘Asar-us-Sanadeed’ (‘Monuments of the Great’—an archaeological history of the ruins of Delhi).\(^{51}\) His three works on the uprising *History of the Mutiny in Bijnore 1858, Asbab-i-Baghawat-i Hind* (Causes

\(^{49}\) Shan Mohammad, *op. cit.*, p. 28.

\(^{50}\) *Ibid.*, pp. 29-31

of Indian revolt, 1857) and the *Loyal Mohammadans of India 1860*) are indispensable source materials for any study of that period.

When the Mutiny broke out in 1857 he was at Bijnor. He remained loyal to the English officers in those stormy days. Neither the threats nor the promises of the mutineers could shake him from the position he had taken. He saved the lives of Mr. Shakespeare, Collector Bijnor, his wife and few other Englishmen.\(^{52}\)

Like turning a knife in one's wound, the Muslims were held responsible for the revolt of 1857 although it was a joint endeavour of the Hindus and Muslims.\(^{53}\) The government merely relied on the false rumours and exaggerated stories of their informers. They did not care to verify the truth and were bent on crushing the Muslims.\(^{54}\)

Sir Sayyid, through the hard way, had experienced the horrors of the hectic days of 1857. In saving English lives he had discharged what he felt to be his moral duty, but the inhuman treatment meted out to Muslims and the miserable plight in which he found them stirred his soul to its depth. He saw palatial houses of Muslims in Delhi ruined and deserted and wells and tanks gutted with their dead bodies.\(^{55}\)

\(^{54}\) Shan Mohammad, *op. cit.*, p.36.
The traumatic experience of 1857 induced him to leave India. But on contemplation “he realized that it would be cowardly of him and inhuman to run away to safety while his community was being laid in ruins”.\(^{56}\) He managed to pass safely through this great crisis in his life and made up his mind that he would remain in India and guide and help his people (Qaum) out of this terrible crisis.

Sir Sayyid loved the Muslim community as he loved the Indian nation and wanted to serve both. He drew up a comprehensive plan to save the Muslims from material and spiritual ruins and devoted the remaining forty years of his life to implement that plan. The main objectives of his plan, as Syed Abid Husain has summed up, were as follows.

1. To protect the Islamic religion from the onslaught of Christian missionaries, and to prove that, it was the one true religion.

2. To remove the bitter enmity which had arisen between the Muslims and the British for religious and political reasons and to establish friendly relations between them.

3. To re-interpret the teachings of Islam and bring them in harmony with modern science and philosophy.

4. To persuade the Muslims to learn the English language and the Western Sciences so that they

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\(^{56}\) Altaf Husain Hali, *op. cit.*, also quoted in Syed Masroor Ali Akhtar Hashmi, *op. cit.*, p. 75
could contribute substantially to the administration of the country.

(5) To try to maintain Urdu along with English as an associate official language and to develop it through translations and original writings.\(^57\)

Sir Sayyid realized that for the survival and progress of his co-religionists it was absolutely necessary that they eschewed rebellious thoughts, made friends with Englishmen and devoted themselves to the study of modern sciences and literature. He took upon himself the dual task of convincing the Muslims that their future laid in their close association with the British besides assuring the government that the Muslims could be depended upon for their loyalty and faithfulness.

His two documents "An Apology from Sayyid Ahmad, the Sinner (Uzr Az Taraf Gunahgar Sayyid Ahmad) and An appeal to his countrymen (Arzdasht ba Khidmat-i-Arbab-i-Watan) which he wrote for his countrymen from England to show how deeply impressed he was by the Western culture and learning and how sincerely he believed that the salvation of his country lay in their acceptance.\(^58\)

He was convinced that the Indian Muslims were suffering because of their conservatism, which had made them a prisoner of out-moded ideas. He was anxious to make them accept the English system of education and thus to

\(^{57}\) S. Abid Husain, *op. cit.*, pp. 24-25.
\(^{58}\) S.K. Bhatnagar, *op. cit.*, p. 3.
draw them out of their conservative thoughts. He argued that since all the leading works had been translated into English they should devote their attention to the study of this language.

Thus he insisted upon the study of English and planned to get the leading English works translated into Urdu in order to introduce them to the Muslims. To attain this objective he founded the Scientific Society in 1864 at Ghazipur for the translation of English books pertaining to history, natural Philosophy and political economy. Two years later in 1866, the society started a weekly paper *The Aligarh Institute Gazette* aiming to put the views of Indians before the government and to introduce them to the English system of administration.59

Sir Sayyid visited England in 1869 and studied the British system of education and administration with the sole ambition to transform the Muslim society by harmonizing Islam with western scientific spirit and improving the material prosperity of his community. His visit to England proved very fruitful in convincing him that the only way to rehabilitate the Muslims was to provide them with the modern weapons, that of western learning through modern education.60 While in London he replied to Sir William Muir's unsound and unfounded treatise *Life of Mohammad*, in a series of pamphlets published in English. This reply proved so effective

that William Muir remarked 'I do not object to the Islam of Sayyid Ahmad but to the Islam of the common people."61

After seventeen months of sojourn in London he returned to India with a number of educational schemes and started his educational movement more enthusiastically than ever.62

Sir Sayyid's activities in London ran parallel to the abiding aims of bringing Muslims closer to Christians and to open up before the Muslims the civilized world that could only be accessed through the western education. His major occupation was the writing of *Khutbat-i-Ahmadiyah* — a collection of Essays written for the purpose of removing misunderstanding about Islam and its Prophet.63

Another danger, which Sayyid Ahmad observed, was the work of Christian missionaries among the Muslims. He was fully aware of the means and tactics adopted by the missionaries. His approach was more scientific and objective. His purpose was to attack the Christian missionaries and not Christianity. To achieve this he wrote a commentary on the Bible.64

The *Tabyin Al Kalam* (Commetary on the Bible), which should be considered against the background of his endeavours to bring rulers and the ruled together, is a

61 B.A. Dar, *op. cit.*, p. 11
64 Bashir Ahmad Dar, *op. cit.*, p. 8.
scientific work by Sayyid Ahmad Khan. It is written in a very mild tone. He wanted to emphasize that there are numerous similarities between Islam and Christianity.

A prejudice of Indian Muslims, which was largely due to the influence of Hindu customs, was the opinion that it was unlawful to eat with Christians. And as a matter of fact this turned up to be a great obstacle to any social intercourse between Muslims and Christians. In 1868 a theological treatise called *Ahkam-i-Taam-i-Ahl-i-Kitab* (Rules for eating with the people of scriptures) appeared from his hand. His pleadings found the strongest support in the Quranic verse, which indicates that those who have been given the scriptures are lawful for you and your food is lawful for them.65

Two serious obstacles lay in the way of the plans he had made for Muslim education long before his journey to Britain. The first of these were the religious prejudices of the Muslims, their loathing of the very name of English education, and their total disregard of the meaning of the ‘word’ education. By writing an account of his journey and sending numerous articles from London to be published in the society’s newspaper, he tried to make the Muslims feel ashamed of the state in which they were living. He deplored their downfall stressing the importance of western education.66

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66 Altaf Husain Hali, *op. cit.*, pp. 122-123
According to Sir Sayyid the new age was the age of reason and science in which only those people could get on whose religious beliefs and cultural and social life were in keeping with a rational and scientific outlook. According to him Muslims had in the course of centuries deviated from true Islam and their faith and practice had become encumbered with a number of accretions, which had nothing to do with the Islamic teachings. It was necessary to get rid of these accretions and to go back to the essence of the religion, which could be found in its authentic form only in the Quran.

He believed in the genuine traditions of the Prophet (Hadith) as classification of the Quranic injunctions but did not accept the opinion of any single Jurist (Faqih) or the consensus of juristic opinion (Ijma) as binding. In questions that have not been specifically dealt with by the Quran and Hadith, he was of the opinion that every Muslim has the right of personal interpretation in the light of the Quran.

Based on these principles he wrote articles in his journal Tahzib-ul-Akhlaq discussing a number of religious matters.67

While he was still busy with the Tahzib-ul Akhlaq Sir Sayyid formed a committee in Benares to consider the question of the progress of Muslim education. A committee known by the Arabic name Khazinat-ul Bizaat li Tasisi Madrasat ul Muslimin (contributory fund for the foundation of

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67 S. Abid Husain, op. cit., p. 27.
Muslim College) was also set up. Its function was to collect donations for the proposed college.\textsuperscript{68}

The foundation of the Aligarh College in 1875 was a turning point in Sir Sayyid’s life. So far he had been a liberal thinker and reformer who was leading the Indian Muslims towards an adjustment with the modern age through a comprehensive plan of religious, intellectual, cultural and educational reforms. The ulama, the muslim masses and many narrow minded Englishmen were opposed to him and his plan.

The M.A.O. College, which developed to become the Muslim University three decades after Sayyid Ahmad Khan’s death and became the most significant educational institution of Muslims in India. It aimed at a liberalization of outlook, a broad humanism and a scientific worldview. In religious ideas its curriculum covered a wide spectrum ranging from enlightened orthodoxy to agnosticism. In politics it trained its students to adjust to the British ruling power and to be wary of the Hindu political stance. Most of the intellectuals and political leaders of Muslim India in the last decades of the nineteenth and first half of the twentieth century were educated at Aligarh.\textsuperscript{69} Sir Sayyid had accepted Shah Waliullah and Sayyid Ahmad Shahid and his associates’ framework for Muslim social reform. However he added a new dimension to the concept of \textit{Bidah} in urging the Muslims that

\textsuperscript{68} Altaf Husain Hali, op. cit., p.31.
\textsuperscript{69} S. Abid Husain, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 30.
in secular matters where Islam was indifferent the modern, western options could be legitimately adopted.

Sir Sayyid de-emphasized Shia-Sunni differences and appealed to both sects to reform their cultural pattern. His liberal approach forged cohesiveness among the Shias and the Sunnis making them effective partners in the cultural and political struggles.

In a nutshell Sir Sayyid’s paradigm of the Muslim social reforms included Islamization plus modernization. According to Barbara Daly Metcalf Sayyid Ahmad was not a worldly man who tried to exploit religion. He was rather, a deeply religious man who like other reformers felt that Muslims being the recipients of the final revelation would prosper in this world as well as the next if they were faithful to the Revelation. His religious perspective was largely in the Waliullahi tradition and was in particular close to that articulated by the Ahl-i-Hadith, when he rejected the law schools, denied the abrogation of verses of the Quran, and insisted on the literal meaning of the text.  

Like Ahl-i-Quran he denied the validity of the Hadith collections deeming many to be fabrications. He never wavered in his absolute belief in God, the authority of the Quran, the mission of the Prophet and the obligatory nature of Muslim religious duties. To Sayyid Ahmad modernism was

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70 Hafiz Malik, *Sir Syed Ahmad Khan and Muslim Modernization in India and Pakistan*, p. 261
not a simple imitation of western ideas but had its root in indigenous movements of reform.\(^71\)

In his re-interpretation of Islam Sir Sayyid drew inspiration from the ardent reformer Shah Waliullah who is considered to be the founder of the new Ilm al-Kalam in India.\(^72\)

Sir Sayyid was deeply influenced by Shah Waliullah about the need of *Ijtihad*. Muslims had generally accepted the concepts of the four schools of *Fiqh* as final. The circumstances under which these schools were founded had changed but the law remained the same. Shah Waliullah went back to the original sources of Islam the *Quran* and *Hadith*.\(^73\) He stressed the rational interpretation of Islamic thought to make it adaptable to the new age. This rational approach to religion, which was so ardently advocated by Shah Waliullah, had won over Sir Sayyid.

Utilizing Shah Waliullah’s approach to the *Quran* Sir Sayyid adopted a rational approach for the study of *Quran* and then concluded that:

"I found that if the principles yielded by the *Quran* were adopted there remained no opposition between the modern sciences and Islam".\(^74\)

Fifteen principles of *Quranic* exegesis established by him thus stood as a landmark, dividing the traditional from

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\(^71\) Barbara Daly Metcalf, *op. cit.*, pp. 322-323; See also Shan Mohammad, *op. cit.*, p. 191.

\(^72\) Ishrat Ali Qureshi, *op. cit.*, p. 25

\(^73\) Hafiz Mailk, *op. cit.*, p. 266.

modern and rational Islam. Like Shah Waliullah Sir Sayyid believed the Quran was revealed to the Prophet Mohammad piecemeal, according to the requirements of situation.\textsuperscript{75}

Sir Sayyid applied Shah Waliullah’s rational approach to highlight the relative importance of Hadith for the modernization of Islam. His grievance against the Ahl-i-hadith was that they too have been blinded by Taqlid. Following precedents he reasoned that the time has come when the traditions should be tested on the touchstone of rationality.\textsuperscript{76}

He argued that science was not inimical to Islam but actually intrinsic to it; to study it was to study Islam itself. His slogan was that the word of God and the work of God were identical. It was this characteristically 19\textsuperscript{th} century preeminence he gave to the laws of nature that won him and his followers the derogatory name of Nechari (Naturist).\textsuperscript{77}

Sir Sayyid’s contribution in shaping the destiny of the Muslims in India have won accolades from the scholars of not only India and Pakistan but also from the world over. He is the doyen of Muslim Nationalism and the father of renaissance and reformation of Islam in India.\textsuperscript{78}

Sir Sayyid was hard on his co-religionists, which he considered to be essential for the uplift of Muslims in India and for the promotion of social reforms. Sir Sayyid not only held liberal views on religious and social subjects but he was

\textsuperscript{75} Ibid., pp. 266, 268.
\textsuperscript{76} Ibid., p. 269.
\textsuperscript{77} Barbara Daly Metcalf, op. cit., p. 323.
\textsuperscript{78} Madhvi Yasin, op. cit., p. 47.
opposed to violent changes for which, he believed, the public mind was unprepared. He held that Islam, if properly understood, was essentially a rationalistic religion. The Quran, he declared, was not to be verbally understood but must be interpreted in the light of reason and individual conscience.\textsuperscript{79}

The movement, which Sayyid Ahmad launched, was destined to be opposed. His ideas were assailed from various quarters but the most formidable opposition came from the orthodox section of his own community. Not only were his educational reforms attacked severely but his social religious and political ideas also came under fire.\textsuperscript{80}

(iv) Nadwat ul-Ulama

The advent of modern education in India brought about almost two opposite perceptions and reactions against Muslim intellectual elite. One section advocated for the restoration and preservation of Islamic values and rejection of western cultural elements. Their response to modern education was retrogressive and they considered it an instrument of cultural and ideological indoctrination by the Christian missionaries.

The other section advocated for the adoption of a modernist approach to contemporary issues and challenges. They looked at modern education as a vehicle of


enlightenment, social transformation, and modernization of the Muslim community. Such a divergent response to the same phenomenon was not conducive to the advancement of the Muslim community.

In this background a third section of Muslim intellectuals emerged with a view to forge a link between the two streams of thought. They attempted a rapprochement between Islam and modernity. They clamoured for the incorporation of those trends in western scholarship that were not contrary to the commandments of Islam but, otherwise, were indispensable for credible scholarly pursuits.\(^{81}\)

In these circumstances a group of ulama realized that modern education and traditional education had to be studied side by side. Among them Maulana Mohammad Ali Mongeri, Maulana Shibli Nomani, Mahmud al-Hasan, Maulana Ashraf Ali Thanawi, Maulana Lutfullah of Aligarh etc were in agreement that the curriculum of the Madrasa needed reform and effort should be made to evolve an up to date curriculum.\(^{82}\)

The Nadwat ul-Ulama movement launched towards the end of the nineteenth century to bring Muslim religious scholars of various persuasions together, concerned itself from the outset, self consciously and even ostentatiously with the reform of the Madrasa – education.


\(^{82}\) Iqtidar Muhammad Khan, *1947 Kai Bad Hindustan Mein Islami Tahriken*, p. 51.
To achieve these goals it was deemed imperative to reform the prevalent styles of learning. The existing Madrasas were seen as lacking in intellectual creativity as equally indifferent to changes in Muslim societies and to the challenges facing them.  

The school was founded by a group of religious leaders, government officials, and local notables who planned to establish Nadwa as a university that would affiliate all Muslim schools. Eschewing all divisive issues, they proposed no new formulation of religions beliefs and practices but rather summoned the ulama to forget their differences and simply emphasize their shared goal of spreading Islamic teachings and defending Islam.

The Nadwat ul-Ulama was first conceived in 1892 by a group of ulama who had assembled at Kanpur’s Madrasa Faiz-e-Aam to attend the school’s annual convocation. Its prime mover was Abdul-Ghafur a deputy collector in British government service; other founders included the exegete Abd-al Haqq Haqqani and the historian Shibli Numani who remained actively associated with it.

The first organizer (Nazim) was Maulana Mohammad Ali Mongeri (1846-1927) who may rightly be called the real founder of the movement.

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84 Barbara Daly Metcalf, *op. cit.*, p. 336.
85 Ibid., p. 335.
87 Syed Masroor Ali Akhtar Hashmi, *op. cit.*, p. 120.
More importantly the early leaders of the Nadwa were united by the fact that several of them had either studied under or were disciples of Shah Fazl-e-Rahman Ganj Muradabadi (1797-1895), who had taught Maulana Mohammad Ali Mongeri, Ashraf Ali Thanwi, Ahmad Hasan Kanpuri and Sayyid Zuhurul Islam Fatehpuri among others, all of whom were leaders of the Nadwa in the early years.

Their chief aim were two-fold, to improve the system of Madrasa education by establishing one of their own, based on a new curriculum, and to promote unity among the ulama by settling disputes between them internally. By improving on the existing Madrasa system, of which the founders were highly critical, they hoped to train a new generation of religious leaders who would be respected both within the Muslim community and by the British Indian government.

The Nadwat ul-Ulama had four main objectives

1. To introduce suitable changes in the syllabi of Islamic theological institution with a view to bring it in line with the changed conditions of the modern age and enabling it to integrate religious education as far as possible with the cultural progress of the community.

2. To examine the principles and injunctions of the Shariat with a view to keep it in conformity with the fundamental guidance of the Quran and the Sunnah so as to address the ever increasing modern questions and problems.

3. To establish a central library in northern India which could serve as a useful centre of study and research in Islamics.

4. To propagate Islamic faith and ideals by suitable literature, and making arrangements for its publications.\(^{89}\)

They contemplated independent financial resources for the ulama by reclaiming all Auqaf lands taken by the government, and soliciting both governmental and princely patronage and ordinary contributions. They aimed to act as spokesman for Muslims to the government.\(^{90}\)

Dar ul-Ulum Nadwat ul-Ulama was established on the principles of balanced synthesis. Nadwat ul-Ulama also brought about certain far-reaching changes in the traditional curriculum of the Arabic Madrasas of India in the context of the changed circumstances and need of the age. Some of the medieval sciences, which had lost their utility in the present time, were excluded from the curriculum.

A large part of the scholastical sciences that had grown out of date and had ceased to have any value owing to the disappearance of those sects, and philosophical disputes which had sprung up in the earlier days, were discarded and in their place certain modern sciences and languages were introduced. These alterations were deemed necessary with a view to ensuring that they should not be lagging behind.

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\(^{90}\) Barbara Daly Metcalf, *op. cit.*, p. 336.
anyone in the race for knowledge and learning that the students passing out of the portals of Nadwat ul-Ulama should be fully alive to the spirit of the age and properly equipped with the latest intellectual weapons for the defense of the faith.

The scholars of Nadwat ul-Ulama made their mark by creating a new mould of educational system consistent with the spirit of Islamic teachings as well as the demands of the changing times. The Nadwat ul-Ulama has succeeded in bringing forth a body of ulama who could feel the pulse of time and adequately carry out the functions of Islamic preaching and propagation in the context of the demands made by the modern age. This has also gone a long way in bridging the gulf between the modern educated classes and those who had received theological education.

During the period Nadwat ul-Ulama functioned more as a movement than merely as an educational institution. It succeeded in providing a common platform to the religious scholars of the old school of thought and the modern educated Muslim intelligentsia. The revolutionary call of reform and renovation was given by it at a time when it was most needed. It produced a number of highly distinguished theologians and doctors of religion who made an impression on the educational and cultural life of the Indian Muslims.91

(v) Barelwis

Apart from Deoband and Nadwat ul-Ulama the other Sunni rival ideologies are Barelwis and the ‘Ahl-i-Hadith’. Both of them also emerged in the second half of the nineteenth century. Though all these movements are united in their reverence for the teachings of the Prophet but their interpretation of the sources of religious authority differs markedly.

The Barelwis affirm the authority not just of the Prophet but also of the saint’s alongwith the Holy Prophet, whom they revere as sources of religious guidance and vehicles of mediation between God and human beings. It is against such a vision of shrine and cult – based Islam that the Deobandis preached.

The Ahl-i-Hadith for their part deny the legitimacy not just of all practices lacking a basis in scriptural text but even of the classical schools of law, stringently insisting on the Quran and Hadith as the exclusive and directly accessible sources of guidance.92

Each fostered devotion to the Prophet Mohammad as well as fidelity to his practice, each thought itself the correct interpreter of Hadith, the guides to that practice.93

Besides differentiating themselves from each other, the Deobandis, the Barelwis, the Ahl-i-Hadith and the Shia are all

92 Qasim Zaman, op. cit.
opposed to Ahmadis who profess their belief in Mirza Ghulam Ahmed (d. 1908) as a Prophet after the Prophet Mohammad.

This Ahmadi belief contravenes the doctrine that Mohammad was the last of God's Prophet. They are, therefore, regarded as heretical by almost all other Muslims. The late nineteenth century Muslim renewal movements of North India of which the sect of Ahl-e-Sunnat which emerged under Ahmad Raza's leadership is always described by supporters and opponents as a reaction to the other two.

Like the others the followers of Maulana Ahmad Raza or the Barelwis, too centred their vision of Islam on the Prophet. They saw themselves as reformists and traced their intellectual heritage to the Shah Waliullah tradition.

They believed in reciting the Fatihah, in holding observances on the fortieth day after a death and on its anniversary; in celebrating the 'giyarhwin' of Shaykh Abdul Qadir and the urs of other saints; in meditation on the image of the Shaykh; in standing during the celebration of the Prophet's birthday and in calling on saints for help.

Conflict with the Deobandis revolved around issues relating to the Prophet's attributes, his ability to see into the future, to have knowledge of the unseen, and to be present in

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94 Qasim Zaman, op. cit., p.11.
95 Usha Sanyal, op. cit., p. 34.
96 Barbara Daly Metcalf, p. 296.
97 Usha Sanyal, op. cit., p.40.
98 Barbara Daly Metcalf, op. cit., p. 296.
multiple places, all of which they accepted. Ahmad Raza charged all those who differed with him as being "Wahhabi" a politically charged label on the colonial context.99

The Bareiwi movement was inspired by Ahmad Raza Khan of Bareilly (1856 – 1921) who is highly revered by his followers.100 The Bareiwi movement emerged during the 1880's in the North Indian town of Bareilly in the Rohilkhand region. The movement is so called because of his close association with Maulana Ahmad Raza Khan who was a resident of Bareilly.101

Maulana Ahmad Raza Khan was born into a well to do family of Pathan origin. His ancestors had been associated with the Mughal rulers and had become local notables with landholding and trading interests in and around Bareilly.

Ahmad Raza's grandfather Maulana Raza Ali Khan (1809-1865) breaking with family tradition devoted his life to jurisprudential scholarship and the sufí way of life. There is no evidence to show that he was involved in the 1857 uprising revolt. Ahmad Raza and his followers were also sufí Shaykhs or pirs owing particular, though not exclusive, allegiance to the Qadiri order. In this capacity Ahmad Raza enjoyed closer relations with a number of prominent Qadiri sufí families.102

100 Sheikh Mohammad Ikram, Mauj-e-Kauser, p.69; http://www.sunnirazvi.org/topics/reformist.htm#reformist currents in sufism.
102 Ibid., p. 201.
He was a theologian, poet, and prolific writer over a hundred books are ascribed to him. Most of his books were on Fiqh, usul and poetry in praise of the Prophet Mohammad. Ahmad Raza also wrote diwan of Nat (collection of eulogies in praise and love of the Prophet). The Barelwis present a mixture of sufi ideas and practices on the one hand and Hanafi Fiqh and Kalam on the other hand.

He particularly emphasized the preeminent position of the Prophet, writing some sixteen books on his life. In his writings and sermons he often focused on the sufi doctrine of 'nur-i-muhammad' which he claimed was denied by his opponents. The doctrine was that there existed a "light of Mohammad" that is derived from God's own light and had existed like the word in Christian theology from the beginning of creation enlightening the world just as the full moon reflecting the sun, lights the world.

He insisted that one must recognize the place of the Prophet for whose glory the world had been created and designed. The Prophet was himself light present and observant (hazir o nazir).

The Prophet is Hazir and Nazir and alive everywhere and in all times. He is not dead. He is in this world. He can move everywhere. He can listen to our cause and he can help the Muslims whenever and wherever he wants.

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103 Sheikh Muhammad Ikram, op. cit., p. 70.
105 Barbara Daly Metcalf, op. cit., p. 300-301.
Ahmad Raza argued that every one needed a pir for a different and more fundamental reason and that without a pir one could not reach Allah.

The Quran commands one to seek a means (Wasila) to reach him. This means is the Prophet and the means to reach the Prophet are the mashai kh (pirs). It is absurd to imagine that one could have access to Allah without an intermediary and for the Prophet; access to him was difficult without a pir.106

Ahmad Raza also believed that the Prophet had unique knowledge of the unknown or ‘ilmul ghaib' which means he knew everything in advance. The reformers stressing God’s uniqueness denied that the Prophet had this knowledge except in special instances when it was granted by God.

The Barelwis by contrast felt that he had full knowledge of spiritual matters (Haqiqat i ruh) of the meaning of all metaphorical passages in the Quran and of the part and future.107

Ahmad Raza himself showed his personal piety and devotion to the Prophet in many ways. He gave importance to the celebration of 12 Rabi ul Awwal i.e. the milad-un-nabi or the Prophet's birth anniversary. It was a time of rejoicing eagerly anticipated by Ahmad Raza and his followers.

The Dabdaba-e-Sikandari reported in January 1916 that on the Prophet's birthday the Muslims of Bareilly, Rampur,

107 Barbara Daly Metacliff, op. cit., p. 301.
Pilibhit, Shahjahanpur and other towns performed the pilgrimage to Ahmad Raza for this was one of the three annual occasions on which he consented to give a sermon.\textsuperscript{108}

As Ahmad Raza’s attention to birth and death anniversaries such as ‘\textit{urs}', \textit{giyarhwin} and \textit{milad} indicates that he believed strongly that the dead continued ‘to live' spiritually and they retained a especially close relationship with places that they had been associated with during their lifetime. Moreover their spirits were especially alert and their grace heightened on certain days.\textsuperscript{109}

On the issue of ‘Sama’ i.e., whether the saints after death could hear the believers’ prayers. He held that they could not only hear but that their power of \textit{tasarruf} and \textit{Karamat} continued even after death as they had in life, and that the saints maintained not only a spiritual but a bodily life after death.

In his book \textit{Hayat-i-Maut} he explained that the saints could see with the light of God (\textit{nur-i-Khuda}). They could be solicited for their help not only at their graves but everywhere. Their powers of communication were especially strong on Friday nights.\textsuperscript{110}

The Barelwis came into conflict with other Sunni Muslim reform movements of the late 19\textsuperscript{th} century, particularly with the ulama associated with the Dar al-Ulum at Deoband,

\textsuperscript{108} \textit{Ibid.}, p. 301
\textsuperscript{109} Usha Sanyal, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 164; Mauj-e-Kauser, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 70.
\textsuperscript{110} Barbara Daly Metcalf, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 302.
primarily on their "Hazir-o-Nazir" vision of Prophet Mohammad's attributes.\textsuperscript{111}

The Barelwis justified the mediational custom - laden Islam closely tied to the intercession of the pirs of the shrines as also their belief that Prophet Mohammad was made of Divine radiance and had knowledge of \textit{ilm-ul Ghaib}.\textsuperscript{112}

Both these beliefs were challenged by the Deobandi and the Ahl-i-Hadith ulama. Related to this was the debate on the issue of the \textit{imkan-i-nazir}, the question whether God could make another person equal to Prophet Mohammad. The Barelwis denied the possibility while the others did not.

The debates were no less better as the Deobandi-Barelwi Munazras of 1928 collected in \textit{Futuhat-e-Nomania} illustrate. The pioneers of the sects and subsectarian schools often indulged in refuting each other's beliefs. For instance Ahmad Raza Khan the pioneer of Barelwi school wrote a series of Fatwa against Sir Sayyid of Aligarh, the Shias, the Ahl-i-Hadith, Deoband and the Nadwat ul-Ulama in 1896 these were published in \textit{Fatawa al-Haramain bi-Rajf Nadwat al-Main}.\textsuperscript{113}

In 1906 Ahmad Raza Khan published in the name of some Meccan ulama, a \textit{fatwa} against ulama of Deoband entitled: \textit{Husan al-Haramain ala Manhar al-Kufr wa,t Main}. (The Sword of the Harmain at the throat of Kufr and

\textsuperscript{111} Usha Sanyal, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 201
\textsuperscript{112} Barbara Daly Metcalf, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 296
\textsuperscript{113} Usha Sanyal, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 203
falsehood). The Deobandis claimed that those Meccans and Medinans who affixed their signature were misled by this campaign and were wholly uninformed about the nature of Deobandi’s beliefs.

The Barelwis have produced only one book ‘Rashidiya’ dealing with the ‘preparation for debates on controversial issues’. They prescribe no specific books but only the Fatwas of Ahmad Raza Khan are referred to in order to refute the ideas of the other sects and subsects.

(vi) Ahl-i-Hadith

The people of the Prophetic tradition (Ahl-i-Hadith) is a title mostly in use in India and Pakistan exclusively for the members of a Sunni Muslim sect. They do not bind themselves by Taqlid or obedience to anyone of the four recognized Imams of the Fiqh schools but consider themselves free to seek guidance in matters of religious faith and practices from the authentic traditions which, together with the Quran, are in their view the only worthy guides for Muslims.

They disregard the opinions of the founders of the four schools when they find them unsupported by or at variance with authentic traditions transmitted on the authority of the companions of the Prophet. They have thus earned the name ghayr Muqallid’. They reject also the common notion that

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114 Ibid., p. 231.
115 Barbara Daly Metcalf, op. cit., p. 310.

ghayr Muqallid: one who does not follow the historic law schools but consults the Quran and Hadith. They reject the common notion the Ijtihad or legal conclusions of the founder of these schools are of
Ijtihad or legal conclusions of the founders of these schools are of final authority and rather contend that every believer is free to follow his own interpretation of the Quran and Traditions.\textsuperscript{116}

The Ahl-i-Hadith movement was inspired by the school of thought of Shah Waliullah of Delhi who in the 18\textsuperscript{th} century not merely laid a renewed emphasis on the conservative study of Hadith but the principle of its right of primacy over the rulings of Juristic schools.

This particular trend in Shah Waliullah's fundamentalism, though rigidly balanced in his own writings and qualified by his emphasis on analysis and Ijtihad, formed the starting point of the Ahl-i-Hadith movement.\textsuperscript{117}

The pioneers of the movement found themselves struggling to promote what they believed to be the true Islam of the Prophet and his companions.

In addition they believed that the Sunni groups too had strayed from the path of the pious ancestors. They argued through their writings and Fatawa—that the Hanafis, the dominant section among the Indian Sunnis, erred in blind conformity (Taqlid) of the ulama of ‘Hanafi’ school even when their prescriptions went against the express commandments of the Quran and the Hadith.

\textsuperscript{116} S.H. Inayatullah, ‘Ahl-i-Hadith’ in \textit{EI}, vol. I, p. 259

They bitterly castigated this as akin to shirk or sin. They insisted that they alone represented Islam of the Prophet, and that far from settling up a new sect, they were simply reviving what they believed to be 'true' Islam. Hence they claimed to be "Muwahhids" or 'true monotheists' or Ahl-i-Hadith or 'people of the tradition of the Prophet'.

As a result of their characteristic attitude they found themselves in conflict chiefly with the Hanafis or followers (Muqallid) of Abu Hanifa in India and Pakistan. Their controversy has however been largely confined in actual practice.

The Ahl-i-Hadith tries to go back to first principles and to restore the original simplicity and purity of faith and practice. Emphasis is accordingly laid in particular on the reassertion of Tawhid or the Unity of Allah and the denial of occult powers and knowledge of the hidden things to any of his creatures. This involves a rejection of the miraculous powers of saints and of the exaggerated veneration paid to them. They also made every effort to eradicate customs that may be traced either to innovations or to other non-Islamic system.

The Ahl-i-Hadith made their first appearance as a distinct sect in the 19th century. Its chief representatives were Siddiq Hasan Khan (d. 1890) and Nazir Husayn (d. 1902) an eminent theologian who specialized in the science of

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Hadith and lectured on them for more than a half century at Delhi.

The crystallization of the Ahl-i-Hadith in India as a separate school of thought was a gradual process, given fillip by the setting up of separate Mosques and Madrasas from late 19th century onwards, which gave the movement the shape of a community separate from the Hanafi majority.

This owed in part to the fierce opposition that the Ahl-i-Hadith encountered from the Hanafi ulama of popular Islam. Many Hanafi ulama saw the Ahl-i-Hadith as a hidden front of the 'Wahhabis' whom they regarded as enemies of Islam for their fierce opposition to the adoration of the Prophet and the saints, their opposition to popular customs and to Taqlid, and rigid conformity to one or the other of the four generally accepted schools of jurisprudence.

Further they also saw the Ahl-i-Hadith as directly challenging their own claims of representing normative Islam. Numerous Hanafi 'ulama' issued fatwas branding the Ahl-i-Hadith as virtual heretics, contemptuously referring to them as 'Ghair Muqallid' for their opposition to Taqlid, which they believed to be integral to, established Sunni traditions. Popular Hanafi and Barelvi opposition to Ahl-i-Hadith was fierce. In many places Hanafis refused them admittance to the Mosques, schools and graveyards. Martial ties with them...
were forbidden and in some places followers of the Ahl-i-Hadith even faced physical assault.\(^{121}\)

The Ahl-i-Hadith explicated texts to yield only single meanings and in their case particularly shunned the esoteric and symbolic meanings offered by mystics. They denied that any verse of Quran had been abrogated. Their opponents called them worshippers of the external or *Zahirparast*. But they argued in return that this brought an end to uncertainty and ambiguity.

The Ahl-i-Hadith maintained that like the Imams of the law schools they based their legal thought on the four sources of law sanctioned in Hadith i.e. Quran, Hadith, Qiyas and Ijma.\(^{122}\)

The Ahl-i-Hadith are strictly opposed to *Bid’ā* classical or modern as the antithesis of Sunnah and held that it must be rejected under all circumstances. The Ahl-i-Hadith regards the classically condoned commendable innovation (*bida-hasana*) as equally repugnant as it has no precedent in the life and thought of the Prophet.

The credo of the Ahl-i-Hadith was belief in God, His books, His Prophets and His angels as enjoined in the Quran and all His attributes mentioned in the Quran and the Hadith without modification, selection, suspension, symbolization or intellectualization.\(^{123}\)


\(^{122}\) Barbara Daly Metcalf, *op. cit.*, pp. 270-271

\(^{123}\) Aziz Ahmad, *op. cit.*, p. 115.
They strongly opposed the position of Taqlid-i-Shakshi fostered by the Deobandis that insisted that people adhere not only to the rulings of single school of law but to the interpretations of those rulings by a single ‘alim’. Ahl-i-Hadith are against Taqlid. They say that the opinion of ulama can be useful but the blind following of a human being is not proper and permissible.

The content of practice and belief defined by the focus on Hadith clearly distinguished the Ahl-i-Hadith from those who followed customary forms of the religion as well as from other reformers. Nevertheless on many other counts they were no different from the Deobandis. Like the Deobandis the Ahl-i-Hadith opposed the cult-based sufism of shrines and the customs of the shia’s.

The Ahl-i-Hadith like the Deobandis opposed the ceremonies that were the foundation of the communities that surrounded the shrines. They prohibited ‘urs’ and qawwali particularly opposing the giyarhwin of Shaykh Abdul Qadir Gilani. They prohibited all pilgrimage even that to the grave of the Prophet of Madina. They insisted nonetheless that they respected the great saints but deplored the tomb-based practices of the followers of the saints.

Ahl-i-Hadith also discouraged the institutional forms of sufism. They believed sufism itself to be a danger to true religion. Siddiq Hasan Khan said he was a Naqshbandi but insisted that sufism be wholly private and that there be no
speculation about God's existence and the practice of *rabitah*, the special relation with the Shaykh be eliminated.

Like the Deobandis, the Ahl-i-Hadith encouraged certain kinds of family reforms – they too opposed elaborate ceremonies and took the simple marriage and modest dowry of the Prophet’s daughter Fatima as their model. They encouraged widow remarriage.

But the reform that significantly distinguished them and even exposed them to several conflicts was their style of performing the compulsory prayers i.e. their method of performance that was singled out as the dividing feature between them and all others. The Ahl-i-Hadith said ‘amen’ aloud (*aminbi’l-Jahr*) lifted their hands at the times of bowing (*rafai-yadain*), folded the hands above the navel and repeated Fatihah silently along with the Imam (*Fatihah Khalif i imam*). The Hanafis claimed that the Ahl-i-Hadith in so doing followed abrogated Hadith but Ahl-i-Hadith denied that charge and claimed that many great and learned Muslims of the past including Shah Waliullah had prayed in exactly the same manner. Ahl-i-Hadith feared harm, and so did many others, to their own prayer from praying behind someone whose practices were defective. Gradually those who emphasized one element or another in Shah Waliullah’s thoughts crystallized as separate groups. As the orientation of those who rejected the law schools became more defined in the later nineteenth century they took the name of Ahl-i-Hadith,
(the people of Hadith) to identify themselves with the Ahlu’l Hadith of classical Islamic times.\footnote{Barbara Daly Metcalf, \textit{Islamic Revival in British India Deoband}, pp. 274-275.}

The main polemical attack on the Ahl-i-Hadith was launched by a fundamentalist splinter group, which called itself Ahl-i-Quran who goes even further in demanding absolute reliance only on the Quran, casting some doubt on the reliability of the Hadith, which was transmitted through fallible human channels therefore precarious.

The founder of this sect was Maulvi Abdullah Chakralawi who had his headquarters in Lahore; its influence was mostly limited to the Punjab. The position taken by Abdullah Chakralawi was that the Quran itself was the most perfect source of tradition \textit{(ahsan hadis)} and could be exclusively followed. The Prophet received only one form of \textit{wahy} and that was the Quran.

His followers considered the call to prayer \textit{(adhan)} unnecessary repeating the phrase "God is great" silently including only the required portions of the prayer. They prayed only in their own Mosques. They eliminated funeral and ‘Id prayers and denied the utility of prayers and alms offered for the sake of the dead. They knelt on only one knee for prayer.\footnote{Aziz Ahmad, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 120; See, Titus T. Murray, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 190; See Metcalf, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 289}
The debate on these subjects between Muhammad Husain Batalawi* and Chakralawi was so intense that the government had to intervene to protect the latter's life.\(^{126}\)

(vii) **Tablighi Jama'at**

Tabligh means 'to convey' or 'to communicate' a message. The word Jama'at is best translated as 'party' or 'organized' group. The term 'Tablighi Jama'at' then simply means preaching party.

Maulana Muhammad Ilyas (1885-1944) the founder of the movement, does not appear to have himself referred to it by that name, however the reason for this seems to be that the term Jama'at can be understood in a very different sense from 'party'.\(^{127}\)

Maulana Ilyas stressed that the one true Jama'at the Jama'at of Prophet Mohammad had already been founded by the Prophet and no one after the seal of the Prophets could lay claim to establishing a new Jama'at.

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\(^*\) Muhammad Husain Batalawi was the leader of Ahl-i Hadith sect and editor of a journal Ishaat as Sunna who from 1891 onwards became a leader of opponent of Hazrat Mirza Gulam Ahmad after Hazrat Mirza claimed to be the promised Messiah. However earlier in 1884 when Hazrat book Blarain Ahmadiyya was published Muhammad Husain wrote a very lengthy review to this book and highly praised the work. His mission was to opposed Mirza. Maulana Mohammed Husain Batalawi along with Nazir Husain of Delhi was called Devil, atheist, senseless, faithless etc this Fatwa bears the seal of 82 ulama of Arabia and elsewhere.


\(^{127}\) Yoginder Sikand, *The Origin and Development of the Tablighi Jama'at, 1920-2000*, p. 65
However despite Maulana Ilyas's insistence that he was not forming a Jama'at of his own the label 'Tablighi Jama'at' has got closely associated with this movement.\textsuperscript{128}

The Tablighi Jama'at of the Indo-Pakistan Subcontinent, also variously called the Jama'at (party) Tahrik (movement), Nizam (system), Tanzim (organization) and Tahrik-i-Iman (Faith movement) is one of the most important grassroots Islamic movements in the contemporary Muslim world.

From a modest beginning with dawah (missionary) work in Mewat near Delhi under the leadership of the sufi scholar Maulana Mohammad Ilyas, the Jama'at today has followers all over the Muslim world and the west.

The emergence of the Tablighi Jama'at as a movement for the reawakening of faith and reaffirmation of Muslim religio-cultural identity can be seen as a continuation of a broader trend of Islamic revival in North India in the wake of the collapse of Muslim political power and consolidation of British rule in India in the mid nineteenth century.

The piestic and devotional aspects of the Tablighi Jama'at owe their origins to the sufi teachings and practices of Shaykh Ahmad Sirhindi, Shah Waliullah and the founder of his Mujahidin movement Sayyid Ahmad Shahid.

\textsuperscript{128} Christian W. Troll, 'Five letters of Maulana, Ilyas (1885-1944), The founder of Tablighi Jama'at, Translated Annotated and Introduced in Islam in India Studies and Commentaries, Religion and Religious Education, (Delhi, 1985), vol. II, p. 139.
The emergence of the Tablighi Jama'at was also a direct response to the rise of such aggressive Hindu proselytizing movements as the Shuddhi (purification), and Sangathan (consolidation), which launched massive efforts in the early twentieth century to "reclaim" those 'fallen away' Hindus who had converted to Islam in the past. The special target of these revivalist movements were the so called "border line" Muslims who had retained most of the religious practices and social customs of their Hindu ancestors.

Maulana Ilyas the founder of Tablighi Jama'at believed that only a grassroots Islamic religious movement could counter the efforts of the Shuddhi and Sangathan, purify the borderline Muslims from their Hindu accretions and educate them about their beliefs and rituals in order to save them from becoming easy prey to Hindu proselytizers.  

Maulana Muhammad Ilyas (1885-1994), originally Akhtar Ilyas, was born at his maternal grandfather's home at Kandhela. He came from a family widely known for its scholarly pursuits in the field of Islamic learning, religious piety and devotion to Shah Waliullah's tradition.

Ilyas memorized the Quran at an early age. He received his primary education from his father Maulana Mohammad Ismail and at the age of 11 or 12 went to Gangoh, then an
important centre of Deoband influence. There he stayed for nine long years studying various Islamic disciplines from Rashid Ahmad Gangohi (1829-1905) a leading Deobandi alim. Thereafter in 1908 he proceeded to Deoband itself to study the traditions of the Prophet under the renowned scholar Sheikh-ul-Hind Maulana Mahmud al Hasan (1851-1920). While at Deoband he also came into contact with such other renowned Deobandi ulama as Ashraf Ali Thanawi and Shah Abdul Rahim Raipuri. From Deoband Maulana Ilyas proceeded to Saharanpur to study under Maulana Khalil Ahmad at the Mazahir ul-ulum.\(^{132}\)

Maulana Mohammed Ismail who lived in Hazrat Nizamuddin in Delhi. He founded the Madrasa in the Bangle-wali-Masjid by inviting on a certain day a few Meos who were out in search of some casual labour. He told them that they would be paid daily the same amount, which they expected to earn if they sat with him and learnt the Quran.

This was the first contact with the Meos. Maulana Mohammad Ismail was a sufi who lived a very simple life and possessed a spiritual status recognized by all of his contemporaries particularly by Maulana Rashid Ahmad Gangohi, disciple of Haji Imdadullah Muhajir Makki (1817-99) Maulana Muhammad Yahya succeeded Maulana Mohammad Ismail both in matters of Madrasa as well as Bangle Wali Masjid.

\(^{132}\) Yogindar Sikand, *op. cit.*, pp.126-127.
Maulana Mohammad Yahya had studied Hadith from Maulana Gangohi and was one of the distinguished spiritual disciples. When he died in 1915 his younger brother Maulana Muhammad Ilyas started teaching in the Madrasa.\textsuperscript{133}

The Maulana had realized that the Muslims were drifting away from elementary teachings of the faith. The Maulana also felt that theological sciences were becoming unproductive and in fact a burden on the pupil, owing to the predominance of worldly interests. He said these sciences were becoming valueless because the aims and objectives for which one acquired them have gone out of them and the ends and advantages for which these were studied are gained no longer.\textsuperscript{134}

The primary need therefore was to revive the ardour and enthusiasm among the Muslims. It should be brought home to them that there was not other way to acquire the faith than to learn it, and the learning of faith was more important than learning of material arts and sciences. Once this realization was produced, the rest would be easy; the general ailment of the Muslims was lethargy and listlessness.\textsuperscript{135}

Like Shah Waliullah (1703-61) Ilyas came to the conclusion that the Muslims of his time were ignorant of their

\textsuperscript{135} Ibid. p. 133
faith.\textsuperscript{136} After making a careful study of the moral degeneration of the Indian Muslims, Maulana Mohammad Ilyas came to believe strongly that Muslim society needs a new type of reform movement and it should be organized on the same pattern as, in his opinion, the Prophet and his companions adopted in the early days of Islam.\textsuperscript{137}

Besides the Sunnah, there were several verses in the Quran, which made it binding upon the Muslims to engage themselves in the \textit{tabligh} work. He said:

"I do not say that all Muslim institutions should suspend their activities in their own field. But I do believe that this work (tabligh) alone will put real life into those activities. It is therefore essential that all the groups working for Islam should consider this work indispensable for their mission".\textsuperscript{138}

To teach them true Islam, to revive the Islamic way of life prescribed by God and practiced by the Prophet and his companions was his simple goal.\textsuperscript{139}

The 'Faith movement' was based on two verses of the Quran.

\begin{footnotesize}
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\item[\textsuperscript{136}] Anwar-ul Haq, \textit{The Faith Movement of Maulana Mohammad Ilyas}, (Britain, 1972), p.72
\item[\textsuperscript{137}] Ziaul Hasan Faruqi, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 63.
\item[\textsuperscript{138}] Ibid., p. 63; quoted from Maulana Muhammad Ilyas, \textit{A Call to Muslims}, p. 24.
\item[\textsuperscript{139}] Anwar-ul-Haq, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 72.
\end{itemize}
\end{footnotesize}
"You are the best community sent forth into mankind you command that what is reputable and you prevent that which is disreputable and you believe in Allah and let there be of you a community calling others to do good and commanding that which is reputable and prohibiting that which is disreputable".\textsuperscript{140}

Maulana Ilyas realized that among his fellow Muslims faith is fundamental, as the belief in the Unity of God and the Prophet-hood of Muhammad was weakening. The dignity of the word of the Prophet and respect for religion and Shariah were becoming less important and the desire for divine reward and salvation was decreasing in their hearts.

There was no depth in their religious observances. It became essential to strengthen the foundation. In a letter to\textsuperscript{141} the Dean of Deoband institution, Maulana Husayn Ahmad Madani, Ilyas describe the aims of his movement as follows.

"To take the name of namaz (prayer) fast and the Quran and to mention obedience to religion and submission to Sunnah in the Islamic world nothing short of making these a laughing stock, object of ridicule and disdain. This (preaching) movement rests upon inviting (people) towards the (realization

\textsuperscript{140} Ibid., p. 73
\textsuperscript{141} Ibid., p. 73
of the) sacredness and greatness of the above-mentioned matters and the very foundation of movement is to endeavour to revolutionize the environment from scorn to exhaltation.\textsuperscript{142}

Deploring the state of religion among Muslims, Ilyas listed in detail the aims and objectives of his movement as follows.

(i) Muslims are ignorant of even the basic articles of faith so the first preaching should be of that article which asserts the divinity of God, after correcting the words of the article of faith, one must turn to correcting matters, which concern prayer.\textsuperscript{143}

(ii) Namaz (prayer) what has been professed in the Kalimah (of faith) is to be proved by employment of one's self and 'resources' in the service of Allah, by offering prayer at the appointed hours of the day and night as an obligatory duty.

(iii) One should engage in remembrance of God (Dhikr) and acquiring knowledge of religion three times morning, evening, and a part of the night, according to one's ability.

(iv) Ikram-i-Muslim (kindness and respect for the Muslims) In the beginning it was Ikramun – Nas

\textsuperscript{142} Ibid. p. 73; Quoted from S.A.A. Nadwi, \textit{Ilyas Awr Unki Dini Da’wat}, p. 244.

\textsuperscript{143} Ibid, p. 75.
(kindness and respect for all humanity). But as the movement was launched to reform the Muslim society, it was emphasized that special kindness was to be shown to the Muslims and deep respect was to be accorded to those who were nearer to Allah. The idea was to bring back the various factions and different classes in the Muslim society to the fold of the real Islamic brotherhood.

(v) Ikhlas-i-Niyat (Sincerity of intention). It aims at beautifying one's action by performing them in accordance with the commands of Allah and with the sincere intention that his efforts would be rewarded here or in the world hereafter.

(vi) Tafrigh-i-waqt (sparing the time): holding the above as the basic duty of a Muslim, one should set out to spread the same everywhere, the Muslims are required to spare their time for traveling in groups from house to house, street to street, village to village and town to town, exhorting the people to lead their life according to the principles mentioned above.

In these tours everyone should resolve to practice politeness, courtesy and earnestness in fulfilling one's duties because every person will be questioned about his own acts.\textsuperscript{144}

Maulana Muhammad Ilyas believed that Muslims had strayed far from the teachings of Islam. Hence he felt the urgent need for Muslims to go back to the basic principles of their faith, and to strictly observe the commandments of Islam in their own personal lives and in their dealings with others. Ilyas himself wrote nothing about his own project of reformed Shariah centered Sufism stressing that practical work amalikam for the sake of Islam was more important than merely writing about it. Maulana Ilyas's malfuzat and maktubat are concerned with the fate of the Muslim community in both its worldly conditions as well as its digression from the Prophetic model. Ilyas was convinced that community fortunes depended on strict observance of Shariah. As he believed that the plight of the Muslims was due to their straying from the path of God and adopting the ways of the disbelievers. Equally distressing to Ilyas was the widespread practice among many Muslims of the, Hinduistic and polytheistic customs. He regarded the need for the reform of popular traditions.\footnote{Yogindar Sikand, 'The Reformist Sufism of the Tablighi Jama'at, The Case of the Meos of Mewat' in Living with Secularism The Destiny of Indian Muslims, ed. Mushirul Hasan, (New Delhi, 2007), pp. 37-41.}

Equally condemnable were a range of beliefs and associated practices relating to the authority of the Sufis, whether living or dead. The belief that a buried sufi was still alive and could intercede with God to grant one request was fiercely condemned as un-Islamic. Likewise the idea that one could attain Unity with God was branded as heresy.
Ilyas reformed Sufism by attacking popular custom and challenged the authority of the custodians of the sufi shrines who were seen as having a vested interest in preserving popular custom for their own claims to authority rested on these.

Ilyas insisted on the gradual process of Islamization and in this he only followed the footsteps of his sufi forebears.\(^\text{146}\)

Maulana Muhammad Ilyas began his work among the Mewatis. (The territory South of Delhi inhabited by the Meos is known as Mewat).

The origin of the world 'Meo' is not very clear, some say that it just means 'hillmen' and that the tribe consist of four Rajput stocks, Tunwars from Delhi, Jaduns from Mathura, Kachwahas from Jaipur and Chauhans from Ajmer.\(^\text{147}\)

Very little is known about the early history of the Mewatis especially their conversion to Islam. There are no historical accounts except conflicting reports.\(^\text{148}\)

The various references to the conversion of the Meos to Islam, the presence of Amina Meos, the prevalence of Hindu manners, customs and traditions among them and the worship of Hindu Gods and Goldlings in their homes even up to the time of Ilyas suggests that there must have been a series of conversions to Islam and reconversion to Hinduism whenever

\(^\text{146}\) Ibid., pp. 42-48.
\(^\text{147}\) Anwar-ul Haq, op cit., p. 100.
\(^\text{148}\) Ibid., p. 103.
Muslim influence declined or weakened. The converts were Muslims in name only.\(^{149}\)

Major Powlett, the settlement officer of Alwar state, writes in the Alwar Gazetteer published in 1878:

The Meos are now all Musalmans in name but their village duties are the same as those of the Hindus, they keep several Hindu festivals. Holi is the occasion of special rejoicing among the Mewatis and they consider it as important as Muharram, Id and Shab-i-barat. The same is the case with Janam Ashtami, Dussehra, and Diwali. The Meos engages the services of the Brahmans to fix the dates of marriages. They call themselves by Hindu names with the exception of Ram and their last name is often 'Singh', though not so common as Khan. As regards their own religion, the Meos are very ignorant. Few know the Kalima and offer up Namaz and an attachment for the Madrasas also is found among them. At another place, major Powlett writes.\(^{150}\)

"The Meos are half Hindu by their habits. Mosques are rarely to be seen in their villages. There are only eight Mosques in the fifty villages of the Tahsil of Tajarah leaving aside the Temples, the

\(^{149}\) *Ibid* p 104

\(^{150}\) *Ibid* p 105, Major Powlett quoted in William Crooke, *The Caves and Tribes of the North-Western Provinces and Oudh* (Calcutta 1906) pp 489–90
places of worship of the Meos are very much similar to those of Hindu neighbours".\textsuperscript{151}

Maulana Mohammad Ilyas felt that the only way to the religious reform and correction of the Mewatis was promotion of religious knowledge and familiarization with the rules and principles of the Shariat.

Maulana Mohammad Ismail and after him Maulana Mohammad Ilyas had adopted the same method. They used to keep the Mewati children with them and educate them in their Madrasa and then send them back to Mewat to carry on the work of reform and guidance. Maulana Ilyas went a step ahead and decided to establish Maktabs and Madrasas in Mewat so that the influence of faith could spread to wider areas and the pace of change was accelerated.\textsuperscript{152} At Hazrat Nizamuddin he worked hard and soon started attracting a considerable number of students to the Madrasa. Though financially in a strained position the Madrasa flourished and the seekers of knowledge gathered around him. His reputation as a teacher and a Sheikh spread far and wide particularly in Mewat. Where there were a good number of people who had known his father and brothers as their benefactors. They once again started visiting Nizamuddin and requested him to turn his attention towards Mewat. He then visited Mewat and exhorted the people to start Maktabs and

\textsuperscript{152} S. Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi, \textit{op. cit.}, pp. 28-29.
Madrasahs. In the beginning there was some resistance as the Meos who were generally peasants were not prepared to spare their sons from day to day agricultural work and engage them in studying religion.\textsuperscript{153}

With the passage of time Maulana Mohammad Ilyas became dissatisfied with the progress that was being made through the Maktabs. He found that the Madrasah too were not free from the effects of the general environment of ignorance and irreligiousness. There was no genuine attachment to faith nor did they know the worth and value of religious knowledge. Moreover, necessary religious instructions could not in any case be imparted to the whole of the community in the Maktabs.\textsuperscript{154}

Maulana Muhammad Ilyas left for the second Haj in 1925. On coming back from the Haj Maulana Ilyas began the Tabligh tours and called upon others also to come forward and propagate the fundamental tenets of Islam like Kalima, and Namaz directly among the masses. People on the whole were unfamiliar with such a thing. They had never heard of it before and were reluctant to respond to the call. With great difficulty a few persons were persuaded to join the movement.

At a public meeting in Nooh a Meo village the Maulana explained his call and urged the people to organize

\textsuperscript{153} \textit{Ibid.}, p. 62

\textsuperscript{154} \textit{Ibid.}, p. 31
themselves in Jama’ats and go out in the countryside to spread the teaching of Islam.¹⁵⁵

For few years the work continued in this manner in Mewat but after performing his third Haj in 1933. Maulana Ilyas not only increased the tempo of work but also began sending groups of the Mewatis for short period of time to various centres of religious learning in the United Provinces.

Ultimately a Jama’at of ten persons were sent to Kandhla, his hometown, and another to Raipur. Thereafter, Maulana Ilyas laid out various routes for the Jama’at. To travel all over the district of Gurgaon and the work began to spread in an organized manner all over Mewat.¹⁵⁶

After the death of Ilyas in 1944, his son Muhammad Yusuf 1917-65 took over the commands of the movement. He refused to transfer the central head quarter the organization from Nizamuddin, New Delhi to Pakistan after partition.

He transformed the activities of Tablighi Jama’at into a worldwide movement.¹⁵⁷ Under the amirship of Yusuf the movement expanded to all parts of India and Pakistan and beyond to countries like Saudi Arabia, Iraq, Syria, Jordan, Turkey, England, Japan and the USA. It was during Maulana Yusuf time that large conventions began to be held regularly.

¹⁵⁵ Ibid., pp. 32-34; See Mumtaz Ahmad, ‘Tabligh Jama’at of the Indo-Pakistan Subcontinent an Interpretation’ in Islam in South Asia Proceeding of International Seminar Art and Culture in South Asia Islamabad, Pakistan 1986, eds. by Rashid Ahmad, and Muhammad Afzal Qureshi, (Islamabad, 1995).
¹⁵⁶ M.M. Qureshi, op. cit., p. 242.
in various parts of the Subcontinent. Maulana Yusuf also made it a point to address non-Muslims and from his times onwards Jama'at began moving out over the whole world.\textsuperscript{158} After the death of Muhammad Yusuf his cousin Inam al-Hasan succeeded him as chief of Tablighi Jama'at. He started regular annual *Iztema* meetings in India, Pakistan, and Bangladesh. It is said that the three day annual *Iztema* in Pakistan had drawn one of the largest assemblies of Muslims after hajj in Mecca. After the death of Inam ul-Hasan, his two sons Izhar al-Hasan and Zubayr al-Hasan along with one of the grand sons of Yusuf collectively led the movement. Tablighi Jama'at ideology does not have any explicit and elaborate social and economic agenda and had so far remained confined to the six-point programme discussed above.\textsuperscript{159}

The rapid expansions of Tablighi Jama'at needs to be understood with reference to its organizational structure that is inextricably tied with the ideology of the movement. The Jama'at is popular in South Asia and has many adherents internationally —Nizamuddin New Delhi, Europe main Markas is in Dewsbury, England East Asian main markas is in Jakarta, Indonesia main African markas is in Durban South Africa.\textsuperscript{160}

\textsuperscript{159} http://www.saag.org//paper20/paper1943.html#top.
Some groups within Islam like Salafis and the Jama'at i-Islami accuses Tablighi Jama'at for its policy of refraining from warning its followers of activities that could be labeled as forms of Shirk Polytheism in Islam. On the other hand the Barelwis accuse the Jama'at of propagating the Wahhabis beliefs and associating with them. Numerous tracts have been written by Barelwis ulama vehemently denouncing the Tablighi Jama'at. Arshad ul-Qadri well-known Indian Barewi had quoted in his text that Tablighi leaders paid glowing tributes to certain Wahhabi teachings. He argues that Tablighi Jama'at is actually a movement of anti-Islamic conspirators.  

The Indian Ahl-i-Hadith scholar Habib ur-Rahman Salafi vehemently denies the claim of Tablighi leaders as inheritors of the legacy of Shah Waliullah. He alleges that Tablighi Jama'at actually promoting the very same degenerate Sufism consisting of renunciation of this world, personality worship, false miracles and customary un-Islamic practices that Shah-Waliullah had devoted his life to fighting. Abdur Rahman Umri another noted Ahl-i-Hadith scholar claims that in Tabligh gatherings only the Fazail-i-Amal is allowed to be read out. According to Tablighi elders the Quran is meant for the understanding of only the ulama. Ordinary Muslims who do not possess the necessary skills in the Arabic language must rest content with just the Fazail-i-Amal. All this proves writes

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Umri that Tablighi Jama'at is by no means the true Islamic movement that it claims to be.  

It appears from the above facts that institutions of Tabligh had begun to blow a wind of change in the hitherto tranquil and uniquely synthetic culture of the Meos. Its effects were to be felt not only in the religious aspect but social, cultural, economic and political aspect of their life also.

The Tabligh Jama'at is said to be the largest Islamic movement in the world today, in terms both of number of activist as well as geographic spread. The movement is active in also every country where significant number of Muslims lives. The bedrock of the effort is based purely on the participant utilizing their own health, wealth, and time in the pursuit of moral and spiritual developments. The Tablighi Jama'at neither has formal organizational structure nor does it publish any details about the scope of its activities, its membership, or its finances. The Jama'at is like an itinerant bond of disciples or followers of a great man in which there may be at different times some rich and some poor, some educated and others illiterate but all having a feeling that they share something.

(viii) Jama'at-i-Islami

Jama'at-i-Islami has been influential in the development of Islamic revivalism across the Muslim world in general and South Asia in particular. It was founded in Lahore in 1941.

\[162 \text{Ibid., pp. 95-96.}\]

Abul Ala Maududi was born on September 25, 1903 in Aurangabad a well known town in the former princely state of Hyderabad (Deccan) and presently part of Maharashtra state. Born in a respectable family, his ancestry on the paternal side is traced back to Prophet Mohammad. The family had a long-standing tradition of spiritual leadership. A number of Maududi’s ancestors were outstanding leaders of sufi orders. One of the luminaries among them being the one from whom he derived his family name i.e. Khwaja Qutb al -din Maudud a renowned leader of the Chishti order.\footnote{KalimBahadur, The Jama'at Islamic of Pakistan, Political Thought and Political Action, New Delhi, 1997. p.9}

Maulana Maududi was educated at home before attending the Madrasah Fawqaniyah. He wanted to complete his graduation from Dar ul Ulum, Hyderabad, but withdrew when his father became terminally ill. He knew enough Arabic, Persian, English and his native tongue Urdu to continue his studies independently.

In 1918, at the age of 15, he began working as a Journalist for a leading Urdu newspaper. In 1920 he was appointed editor of Taj published from Jabalpore Madhya Pradesh. By 1921, Maulana Maududi moved to Delhi to work as editor for a Muslim newspaper (1921-1923) and later for
al-Jamiyat (1925-1928) published by the Jamiat-ul-ulum Hind, a political organization of Muslim scholars mainly associated with Deoband. Under Maulana Maududi's editorial leadership, al-Jamiyat became the leading newspaper of the Indian Muslims.

Maulana Maududi participated in the Khilafat Movement and Tahrik-e-Hijrat supported by Indian Muslim organizations opposed to the British colonial occupation. He urged India's Muslims to migrate to Afghanistan to escape the British rule. During this period Maulana Maududi began translating books from Arabic and English to Urdu. He also authored his first major book al-Jihad fi al-Islam which won him acclaims from his contemporaries. His magnum opus however was the 'Tafhim al-Quran' a Tafsir or exegesis of the Quran which took 30 years to complete. He also worked on compiling a four-volume biography of Prophet Mohammad.  

The most dynamic and well-organized challenge that traditional and modernist Islam has been facing in India and Pakistan is that of the writings and preaching's of Abul Ala Maududi and his well-knit religio-political organization the Jama'at-i-Islami.

The Jama'at-i-Islami was founded in 1941. Maulana Maududi being its founder strongly opposed the idea of creating Pakistan, a separate Muslim country, by dividing India, but surprisingly after the creation of Pakistan he

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migrated to Lahore. Again in the beginning he was opposed to and denounced the struggle for Kashmir as un-Islamic, for which he was imprisoned in 1950, but later on in 1965, he changed his views and endorsed the Kashmir war as Jihad.\(^{166}\)

Maulana Maududi took an active part in demanding discriminative legislation and executive action against the Ahmadi sect leading to widespread rioting and violence in Pakistan. He was persecuted, arrested, and imprisoned for advocating his political ideas through his writings and speeches.

During the military regime from 1958 the Jama'at-i-Islami was banned and was revived only in 1962, Maududi was briefly imprisoned. He refused to apologize for his actions or to request clemency from the government. He demanded his freedom to speak and accepted the punishment of death as the will of God. His fierce commitment to his ideals caused his supporters worldwide to rally for his release and the government acceded commuting his death sentence to a term of life imprisonment. Eventually the military government pardoned Maulana Maududi completely.

In 1964 he supported the candidacy of Fatima Jinnah for election to the office of president of Pakistan against Mohammad Ayub Khan, although in his writings he asserted

Maulana Maududi's goal was to make Islam the supreme organizing principle for the social and political life of the Muslim Ummah. So, the objective of his Jama'at-i-Islami was to establish *Hukumat-e-Ilahiyya* or the rule of Allah. The declared object of the Jama'at-i-Islami is to conduct human life in all its varied aspects faith, ideology, religion ethics, morality, conduct, education, training, social order, culture, economic system, political structure, law and war and peace etc on the principle of submission and obedience to the law of God as revealed to the Holy Prophet Mohammad in the Quran and the Sunnah. The word Muslim had no communal connotation to him. By the word 'Muslim' was meant to him not a Muslim by birth but a person who sincerely abides by the commandments of Allah. The very objective was later on called as *Iqamat-e-Deen* meaning literally the establishment of religion or establishment of the order of Allah.¹⁶⁸

Maududi's beliefs and teachings form the basis of the Jama'at-i-Islami. The entire organization according to him is concentrated in the person of God. Religion is identical with obedience and Islam with submission to God's will. It is for a man to adjust himself to these laws and in this way harmony of thought and action can be achieved by the individual and the society both.

¹⁶⁷ *Ibid.,* p. 370
Another basic feature of the Islamic state consist in its being an ideological state. "All those persons who surrender themselves to the will of God are welded into a community and that is how the Muslim society comes into being." Thus, this is an ideological society radically different from those, which spring from accidents of races, colour or country the cementing factor among the citizens of the Islamic state therefore is the ideology that they all hold in common.

Two important consequences follow from the Islamic state being an ideological state. The first is that the state must be controlled and run exclusively by Muslims. Kufr is opposite of Islam and is termed as tyranny, rebellion and infidelity. The result of Kufr is a failure to realize the ultimate ideals of life. The ideal society is the Islamic state, which is based on strict segregation of sexes.

In the beginning all the preachings of Maulana Maududi were directed against the Nationalist ulama of Deoband and the Jamiat-i-Ulama-i-Hind. There were counter attacks on both sides. He believed that their theories exposed Muslim India to dangers of religio-cultural absorption into Hinduism. Till 1947 he continued to attack and argue against the Pakistan movement because be believed that a homeland for Muslims was different from Dar-ul-Islam.

He was not for political freedom or self-determination of Muslims but for the rule of Islam for a purely Islamic

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170 John L. Esposito, *op. cit.*, pp. 120-121.
171 Aziz Ahmad, *op. cit.*, p. 373.
traditionist fundamentalist theocracy. According to Maududi Muslims do not make up a national entity but a Jama'at. Islam is not just a political party, it has no rivals, nor can it compromise with anyone, its objectives are permanent, it cannot confine itself to any given cultural or traditional system of a particular people. Islam draws upon all human individual and mobilize them into a movement of Jihad for an Islamic revolution it will also be a duty of the people to work out a theory of Islamic law and constitution in an Islamic theocracy achieved and organized in this manner this became a proclaimed stand of Jama'at-i-Islami.

Its objectives were to invite all mankind generally and Muslims especially to submit to God and become sincere Muslims so that the entire Muslim society is an Islamic state. He believed that all, including the Muslim states, in the modern world were being run by evil, wicked and sinful leaders. The Jama'at-i-Islami stood for a revolution to overthrow them and to transfer theoretical and practical leadership into the hands of the pious and the faithful.\(^\text{172}\)

The structure of the Jama'at-i-Islami was built in such a manner that its organization was highly centralized culminating to a single Amir, obedience to whom was binding upon its members. The political thought of Jama'at-i-Islami as expounded by Maulana Maududi was in principal based on the Quran as the source of constitution and law. The Shariah is the legal codification of this contract, the Shariah as a

source of law is unalterable and partly flexible; the Quran and Hadith are unalterable sources, the flexible elements are Tawil of the Quran and Hadith and such traditionally accepted sources of interpretation as Qiyas, Ijtihad or Istihsan.

Maududi believes in the early institution of 'Shura' (consultation) as an ideal parliamentary system. In 1948 the Jama'at-i-Islami in Pakistan decided to support the principle of gradually islamising the law and constitution in Pakistan.\(^{173}\)

Maududi believed that the political philosophy of Islam is eternally perfect and therefore requires no change; he equates his concept of Islamic polity with a theocracy: Theocracy run by man as the representative of God. This concept he termed as theo-democracy in which the leaders must accept the clear-cut injunctions of Shariah and thus abolish interest – based banking and insurance.

The Islamic state thus would be a national state and since it is an ideological state therefore the citizens will be of the two categories, Muslims and non-Muslims, there would be equality between Muslims and non-Muslims in civil and criminal law but in personal law the non-Muslims would have their own system. Non-Muslims would be allowed to worship freely but will not be permitted to organize public processions in purely Muslim cities. They would be allowed to repair but not construct temples and churches they would pay jazia and would be exempted from military service. No non-Muslims would be the head of the state or a member of the Shura.

\(^{173}\) Ibid., p. 375-376.
they would have to accept the system of the country but would have the right to make arrangements for imparting knowledge of their religion to their children in their own schools and colleges. They would not be compelled to study Islam.  

The purpose of an Islamic state are positive as well as negative, Maududi says the object of the Islamic state is not merely to prevent tyranny, to put a stop to the evils of various sorts, and to protect its territory but more basically to foster a balanced system of social justice and to encourage every kind of virtue. To accomplish these ends requires political power and justifies the state in using all of the means at its command like propaganda public education etc for the task.

Maududi has been an intensely controversial figure. Criticism has come in both from the secularists and from within the Islamic religious establishments. Many of the ulama who were involved in the founding of the Jama'at-i-Islami left shortly afterwards in protest against Maududi's policies and leadership style. Both Barelwi and Deobandi ulama have accused Maududi of having turned Islam into a political instrument and power-cult and overturned its ethical foundations from the Barelwi side, a representative critique is that offered by Shaykh al Islam Saiyyad Muhammad Madani Ashrafi who authored a series of books on Maududi's

175 John L. Esposito, op. cit., p. 119.
misunderstanding and abuse of traditional Islamic terminology. Foremost amongst the Deobandi scholars, who have written formal refutations of Maududi, is Shaykh Muhammad Zakariyya Kandhalvi, the late hadith scholar and an influential figure in the Tablighi Jama'at.176