PREFACE

A vast literature exists concerning the rise and fall of Muslim rule in India culminating in a situation that became increasingly chaotic for the Indian Muslims especially around and after the downfall of the Mughal Empire. There was a pronounced change in the attitude of ulama during the reign of Mughal Emperor Akbar who introduced ideas repugnant to Islam. The sufi thought which had dominated the intellectual life under the principle of wahdat-al-wujud was nearly shaken up by Shaykh Ahmad Sirhindi (1564-1624). He certainly can be said to have initiated the process of a reform movement in India by introducing the rival notion of wahdat-al-shuhud because wahdat-al-wujud was supposed to have opened up doors for the entry of vedantic ideas.

The rapid deterioration of the socio-political and economic conditions of the Muslim society and the incremental lack of education during the 19th century led to an awakening for reforms, which found its greatest intellectual leader and thinker in Shah Waliullah (1703-1761).

A number of reformist trends appeared in this period, which was also a period of multiple conflicts. The Mujahidin movement became the initiator of the conflicts, and later the Barelwis, Tablighi Jama’at and the Jama’at-i-Islami took up the challenge. The liberal Aligarh movement of Sir Sayyid was opposed because conservatism with all its shortcomings could not foresee to allow any such change.

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*Burhan Ahmad Faruqi, The Mujaddid’s Conception of Tawhid, Lahore, 1943.
However the conditions of life as they went on changing under the British rule were a grim reality that had to be faced because all efforts had failed with the successive military defeat of Indians by the British. English education was inevitable and a compromise was made by Sir Sayyid not only in the field of education but also with the English culture.

The state of affairs of the Muslim society in India during the 18th and 19th centuries is quite confusing for a student and hence requires a chronologically systematic and critically logical writing to project a clear picture by taking the scattered material from authentic sources. It is therefore intended to present a clear and critical study of the conditions surrounding the decadent Muslim society of that period, enabling a student to understand and find out the undercurrents of the social and religious tensions that arrested its progress into the 20th century.

Attempt has been made to provide a deeper understanding of the conservative and liberal Muslim psyche of today so as to serve as an updated and compact study resting upon authentic sources and upon the views of the eminent and competent scholars of our time.