CHAPTER VIII

CONCLUSION
We have seen in the earlier chapters how the traditional education system which was once the chief source of producing both the civil servants and the academicians and scholars has gradually been losing its significance and relevance to changed politico-social set up of the contemporary world. The first major development in the system was Al-Ghazali's attempt at purifying it from the Greek influence. Al-Ghazali's criticism of Greek thoughts was based on the ethical and moral approach to education. As a matter of fact he was not opposed to teaching of science in schools. His main objection to the Greek learning was that it laid too much emphasis on reason and relegated the faith to the secondary position. Al-Ghazali realized that if the tendency of his contemporaries eulogizing the Greek knowledge was not checked in his time, it would, later on, lead to the undermining of Islamic faith. But unfortunately his criticism was mistakenly taken to mean that anything connected with reason was bad for Islam. This was the reason that in the post-Ghazali period, traditionalism and orthodoxy became a permanent feature of the Islamic society. Thus this hostile attitude towards Greek knowledge with its accent upon 'reason' became instrumental in suppressing the inquisitive nature of the Islamic society. However, like all historical forces its repercussions became visible only after they had rendered the body politic absolutely impotent to withstand the intellectual onslaught of the West.

1. Maqbul Ahmad, Some Aspects of Traditionalism in the Muslim Society of India today with special reference to the Madrasa System of education, p. 3.
At this stage, somewhere in the middle of the nineteenth century the traditional system, which still was the only source of providing bureaucrats for the state, was deprived of even this privilege. Macaulay's report was the last nail in the coffin of this system. Sir Sayyid, though himself a product of the traditional system soon realised its futility in the changed circumstances. However, the crusading spirit of Mawlawi Qasim Nanutawi and his group combined with subsequent political struggle of the Indian National Congress and Ulama's close association with it gave it a further lease of life. The Maktabs and Madrasahs which mostly avoided governmental interference by not accepting financial aid from the Government were symbolic of the rebellious attitude then prevailing and provided satisfaction to the ego of the Ulama who were in revolt against the British regime.

However, the incongruous nature of these institutions has once again come to the fore. They have been rightly criticized that they are producing men who have no place in the modern society. Economically they are liability on the Muslim society in India. Intellectually they stand nowhere. But despite these weaknesses the significance of these institutions in the contemporary India can hardly be overemphasized. "... the Madarsa system as it exists in India today has deeper implications than mere religious education". The fact that these institutions still attract a large number of students who not only become burden on the society but also become "the main source of spreading and emphasizing religious dogmatism in the society", calls for

2. Ibid., p. 7.
an urgent look at these institutions and the content of education that they are imparting.

While discussing the curriculum we have seen how much it is out of date and needs drastic changes. Writing about the prevailing curriculum Mawla Abdul Haq remarks that "the prevalent curriculum in the present age is a distorted version of Darsei-Nizamia. He has also recounted the accidental manner in which this curriculum has emerged.

The first thing, before we take up the issue of revising or remodelling the curriculum, is to determine the place of the traditional educational system in our own time in the context of socio-economic environment. In this regard there are three alternatives open before us. Firstly, these Madarasa may be relegated to a position where they assume the role of tributaries to the general educational system of the country. In other words, their aim would be to impart elementary education in such a way that once the students have completed their formative period of education and have imbibed the essentials of their faith they move on to schools and colleges to pursue the higher education for the vocation of their choice. It was a similar concern for the relevance to the then contemporary socio-economic set up as also the need to protect one's faith that was instrumental in the foundation of the A.M.O. College.

Alternatively, the traditional educational system might be accorded the status of a system parallel to prevailing secular
educational system, just as Unani or Ayurvedic system of medicine is to the Allopathic. The underlying assumption of this alternative is the acceptance of separation as also of conflict between the aims of the temporal and spiritual worlds. The measuring rod for the relevance and usefulness of the traditional educational system is not the success in this world but in the world hereafter.

Yet another alternative would be to upgrade the Madarasahs into institutes of advanced studies. Like other centres of advanced studies they would confine their activities to research and would prepare and produce scholars who would, like the orientalists of the West, devote their lives in the study and understanding of Qur'an, Hadith, Fiqh etc.

The second alternative is based on the assumption of the difference between the real and the spiritual world. However, Islam does not recognize this difference. According to Islamic teachings the main purpose of religion is to awaken in man a higher consciousness of his manifold relations with God and the Universe. The Universe is an extension of God as it were designed to serve as the theatre of man's growing and manifold activity. To quote Iqbal "with Islam the ideal and the real are not two opposing forces which cannot be reconciled". In fact historians and analysts of the industrial revolution in the West such as Max Weber, R.H. Tawney etc. have tried to establish a close link between the realisation of the identity of the interest

5. Ibid., p. 9.
between the temporal and the spiritual worlds. For this is what they mean when they try to establish relationship between the phenomenon of industrial revolution and the simultaneous emergence of Protestantism.

If the history of the Western countries is any lesson to us, it is time we realised that success in this world is not at variance with the success in the other world.

As regards the other two alternatives, it would appear that a combination of the two would be much nearer the realistic situation. In other words, the demands of the present age would be met much better if the traditional schools divided themselves into two categories namely, the Maktabs and the Dar-ul-Ulums.

The Maktabs would perform the twin function of serving as tributaries to the secular educational system as well as providing students to the Dar-ul-Ulums.

The changed role of these Maktabs would necessitate an altogether new curriculum. Some earlier efforts in this direction are the curricula drawn out by the Deeni-Talimi Council (U.P.), Jamaat Islami (Hind) and the one drawn out by the Committee constituted by the Central Waqf Council. One common defect of these curricula is their assumption of Urdu as the medium of instruction of the Muslims all over India. In fact the presentation of North India point of view as all India point of view has become such a common practice among the Muslims that

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the sooner it is challenged, the better. In fact it is surprising that the Central Waqf Council and the Jamaat-e-Islami who have professed to produce a curriculum for its adoption all over India have been completely oblivious of the fact that the best elementary education is the one that is given through one's mother tongue. Another striking feature is complete absence of any provision for teaching of the regional languages. One major factor that would come in the way of adoption of either of these curricula is their voluntary nature. These recommendations are mere suggestions without carrying any compulsion with regard to their adoption. In essence, they are only an intellectual exercise which might become essential study to a research scholar but would remain a scrap of paper for others. This situation takes away whatever little usefulness they might carry.

These Maktabs scattered all over the country, who, by not accepting Government aid, have secured their freedom from Government interference, have not always done so in the interest of promoting scholarship. Freedom without sense of direction and sound vigilance has only resulted in their wandering in the wilderness and producing a kind of person who, when he comes out of this sanctuary, finds himself an alien in his own land.

In view of these drawbacks there is a need for constitution of a committee consisting of eminent Muslims who are not only eminent in scholarship but have some practical experience of the various sectors of the society. Needless to say that this committee, since it is going to draw up a curriculum which would produce students who, while they have a solid and secured
understanding of Islam, are also likely to join the stream of higher education of a secular nature, should give proper place to the teaching of science as well as subjects that are essential for an understanding of the contemporary social structure.

A much more urgent and serious problem is to find out some way of making the recommendations of this committee as an obligatory curriculum on the part of each and every Maktab. Muslims, who at the theoretical level claim to be the practitioners of a religion that enjoins an organised way of life, have in their practical life proved a *milat* that is the most ill-organised. While it may be argued against the acceptance of Government interference, it is time some way is found out whereby Maktabs that do not adopt the prescribed course, are disqualified from accepting donations, contributions and similar financial benefits. Perhaps the Central Waqf Board might be called upon to play a more active role in the coming years.

We shall now take up the Dar-ul-Ulums or institutes of higher learning. The first thing that should be taken up with regard to these institutions is their linking up into one unified structure. In fact the first effort in this direction was made as early as 1892 when the idea of Nadwatul Ulemā was mooted at the convocation of Faiz-e-Ām College at Kanpur. It was for the first time in the Indian history that Ulema belonging to various sects had gathered on one platform. It is unfortunate that the Dar-ul-Ulum Nadwatul Ulemā itself became representative of one group in subsequent years.

Once these institutions are threaded together the next stage would be to settle the area of their respective
specialization. In fact some sort of specialization has been practised by these institutions for a long time, albeit it has functioned in an uncoordinated manner. This view is strengthened by a perusal of bio-data of renowned scholars who have been products of these Madarasahs. We often come across such statements that they learned Hadith under one teacher, Fiqh under another teacher and interpretation of quʾan under yet another teacher. What is needed is a well-planned allocation of various sub-areas of Islamic studies among these institutions. In this regard the various fields of specialization as set out in the report of the Central Waqf Council may serve as guidelines. The Council has provided specialization in five subjects, namely, History, Arabic, Literature, Fiqh, Hadith and Tafsīr. To this may be added a few more subjects that have emerged as full subjects only in recent years. One most important field is study of comparative religions. Due to recent researches of the Western Orientalists we have now a vast literature on the period immediately preceding Islam as also of the advent of Christianity. In order to do full justice to the study of comparative religions, provision will have to be made not only for the teaching of modern European languages but also for some ancient languages such as Ibrani, Suryani and Hebrew.

Another subject that needs our attention is the study of the history of science and technology. Till recently it was a commonly held notion that Muslims' contribution in this field was only that of a messenger transmitting to the world whatever had been received from the Greeks. The recent researches have revealed facts that do not warrant to hold such views. Evidences
have come to light where some scholars in the West have simply translated a whole manuscript from Arabic into German or some other European languages and claimed it as their own creation.

Geography, a subject that has been neglected even in our universities was once a favourite of Muslim scholars. It is really surprising that such an important field has been totally neglected in the traditional educational system.

The teaching of history in these institutions leaves much to be desired. Apart from other defects which have been discussed elsewhere, one glaring defect is the omission of the history of the Muslims in South East Asia. Even the Central Waqf Council which has included in its curriculum the teaching of history of Spain, has not thought fit to include the history of Indonesia and Malaysia etc. Perhaps it is yet another reflection of the defeatist attitude of the contemporary Muslim intellectuals that while they consider the history of a defeated mission fit for inclusion in their curriculum, they would not include those areas where Islam has not only survived but flourished to this day. History of African region excluding the Maghreb also merits our attention.

Next to the place of the traditional educational system and the content of the education that they would provide, is the problem of finance. There are two aspects of finance that would need our attention. Firstly, there is the problem of sound management and proper maintenance of the accounts. Most

7. For instance teaching of the history of Spain.
of these institutions suffer from financial instability due to poor accounting procedure. Relatively scant attention is paid to the budgetary planning. Again, no efforts are made to categorise the assets into less remunerative and more remunerative. For instance, income accruing to the institutions by way of rent from houses donated is often found stationary and in some cases even declining. This seems to be paradoxical in view of the fact that the rents have a tendency to rise over a period. Quite often this situation is the result of poor drafting of deed letters and of poor maintenance. Little care is taken in planning the tour for the collection of donations. Detailed listing of income and expenditure together with reasonable justification for expenditure would inspire confidence and dispel any impression of misappropriation of funds from the minds of donors.

Some of the bigger institutions, such as Dar-ul-Ulum, Deoband, might do well to appoint estate officers to manage the properties that various benefactors have endowed/them. In fact poor accounting coupled with uncertainty in sources of finance has created almost a vicious circle for these institutions.

In this regard there are two things that need proper examination. In the first instance, some such arrangement should be made that all the endowed properties are brought under the purview of the Central Waqf Board. The Board might, in its turn, create a body on the pattern of the University Grants Commission for the purpose of distribution of finance. Of course, there might be many complications in such a scheme. However, in view of its obvious advantages it seems worthwhile for someone to examine its implications.
Another point that should be reviewed afresh is the question of accepting Government aid. As a matter of fact the widely held view that the traditional educational institutions do not accept any Government aid is erroneous and the sooner it is dispelled, the better it would be for us. About 40% to 50% of the existing institutions are accepting either regular or ad hoc aid. Again the decision of non-acceptance of Government aid was taken at a time when the country was under an alien power. It is time such policy decisions should be reviewed in the context of the changed circumstances.

If these institutions are not going to be stratified into a parallel educational system, it is essential that they should establish some sort of relationship with institutes of advanced studies in various universities in their respective fields of specialization. The pioneers of the traditional educational system in the late nineteenth century such as Mawlanā Qasīm Nanutawi, etc., were conscious of this fact and did make attempts to develop some sort of relationship with the M.A.O. College. It is unfortunate that this contact could not be put on a regular basis and ceased in subsequent years.

Another aspect that seems to have been neglected in these institutions is the maintenance of libraries. Some of the libraries attached to these institutions have priceless collections of manuscripts and rare books. It is unfortunate that most of these have remained non-existent to the outside world. Similarly,

little if any, provision is made to acquire recent publications. As a matter of fact almost the entire collection in these institutions built up during the recent years is based on gifts.