Introduction.

The present research work entitled “A study on life and works of Mawlana Karamat Ali Jawnpuri (1800-1873 A.D)” is certainly a lucrative and useful study in humanities. Because, among the preachers of Islam and reformers of Muslim society in India, particularly during the nineteenth century A.D, Mawlana Karamat Ali Jawnpuri has occupied a prominent place and may rightly be called to be the most significant personality of them. He endeavoured, throughout his life, to remove the prejudices, innovations, superstitions and various un-Islamic as well as unethical practices that were in prevalence among the then Muslim society, specially in Bengal and Assam, and played an outstanding role in the process of modernisation of Indian Muslim community. He was also one of the forerunners, who tried uttermost in bringing peace, progress and Hindu-Muslim unity and amity in India. Therefore, the present work though implies the study of life sketch and works of Mawlana Karamat Ali Jawnpuri, definitely requires a scientific investigation as well as elaborate discussion to bring out the essence of his services, rendered for the cause of Islam in particular and for the upliftment of humanity in general.

The main and sole purpose of investigation on the life sketch and works of a great personality is to focus and concentrate the attention of the readers, specially of our young generation on the admirable works and brilliant achievements of that very individual luminary. It has been observed that the works, achievements and services of most of the great personalities of Islam are generally very little known to the world, particularly to the present young Muslim generation. Needless to say that in order to inculcate certain basic ideals of Islam and its fundamental tenets as well as its broad enlightenment
and tolerance and to cultivate a feeling of mutual love and respect, trust and understanding amongst our present generation, this type of studies on the distinguished personalities of Islam, who by their great selfless services to mankind, by their earnest devotion to socio-religious duties and by their exemplary conduct and characters have done unprecedented services to Islam and to the humanity at large, are certainly worthwhile and useful for our present day society. Because, the sincere and genuine studies on great personalities can effectively inspire our young men with new spirits of morality and with new life purposes to serve the nation as well as their fellow men and the humanity, to make the world a heaven of peace and happiness, amity and concord and fellow-feeling of one universal human brotherhood.

Keeping this view in mind, a humble attempt has been made in this work to deal with the typical life and missionary activities of Mawlana Karamat Ali Jawnpuri as well as the contemporary socio-religious changes and problems experienced by the people of Bengal in particular and India in general. These changes were largely induced by a series of socio-religious reform movements emerged during the early and middle part of nineteenth century A.D. The Faraizi movement, Tariqah-i-Muhammadiyah or Wahhabi movement and the Ta‘aiyun movement of Mawlana Karamat Ali were the most prominent among these reform movements which played an important role in respect of these changes. A proper and elaborate scientific study is needed on those movements to understand the actual socio-religious conditions of the time which were extensively responsible for the emergence of those reform movements. Of course, hitherto, many a research scholars have taken great pains to find out the essence as well as the original background of those movements and to illustrate the life stories
of every outstanding leaders who had launched and promulgated these movements by means of life-and-death struggles. However, there is still need of a full scale study to reconstruct the life sketch of Mawlana Karamat Ali Jawnpuri and to re-assess his literary performance as well as the achievements of his life-long struggle for the cause of Islam and regeneration of Muslim society, in addition to the improvement of communal harmony and national integrity.

Mawlana Karamat Ali Jawnpuri was one of the greatest Muslim reformers and 'mujahid' of the early nineteenth century. During this period, the Muslim community of eastern India had plunged into various superstitious beliefs and un-Islamic practices. The Mawlana was very much shocked at the deplorable condition of Islam, specially in Bengal and therefore he took the decision to proceed to this province for preaching pure Islamic doctrines among the Muslims of this region. In 1835 A.D. Karamat Ali arrived in Bengal and began to work relentlessly for the regeneration and reform of the Muslims of entire Bengal and Assam. His reform movement represented a remarkable break with the traditions of other reform movements of the time as he tried to steer a middle course between rigid fundamentalism and liberal practices. He urged upon the Muslims to give up anti British attitude and to learn European learnings for the extension of scientific knowledge among themselves which was utmost need of the hour. His interpretation of Islamic socio-religious thought most effectively influenced the people of eastern India which brought modernist tradition in the society. His comprehensive programme for regeneration and reform of the Muslim society covering its intellectual, religious, moral and social aspects of the people stirred up a hurricane of religious enthusiasm and zeal for moral uprightness and piety, not among the common people alone, but also in the learned and nobility of the country.
During his missionary tours in Bengal and Assam, people of all strata flocked round him in thousands and took oath of allegiance to him. They repented of their past sins and solemnly promised to give up all un-Islamic customs and practices and to betake the path of virtue and goodness. Moreover, it has been assumed that more than 10 million people of eastern India had embraced Islam in his hand and therefore, it has rightly been remarked that no one did so much for the Muslims of Bengal as was done by Mawlana Karamat Ali Jawnpuri. Due to his impartial nature, the Mawlana was uniformly loved by all sections of people irrespective of caste and creed. Besides, he had to his credit a large number of literary works comprising various branches of Islamic learnings which enabled him to occupy a distinguished position amongst the erudites of contemporary Muslim society. In addition to that, he also achieved a significant reputation as a true guide and righteous sufi-saint. His spiritual guidance was so largely accepted by the common people that there was hardly any village in Bengal where his disciples were not found.

Therefore, in this work an effort of scientific investigation has been made to find out the momentous events, career and achievements of Mawlana Karamat Ali Jawnpuri and to analyse the remarkable changes that occurred in the socio-religious thoughts and practices as well as political attitudes of the Indian Muslims, in particular and other communities, in general due to his writings, constant struggle and historic ‘fatwa’ issued under the patronage of Muhammadan Literary Society of Calcutta. Moreover, a comprehensive study has also been made in it on his catholic thoughts, impartial outlook, educational endeavours and sufiistic principles as well as the emergent links which eventually bound together the different sections of the Muslim
community, specially in Bengal and various parts of Assam. In doing so, we have tried to be just and impartial to him. We have neither attempted to laud him to the sky, nor dragged him to the dust. We have only thrown a light on his strong points and also brought out his weakness, thus presenting a just and balanced picture of the Mawlana which will introduce him to the readers and common people as a whole.

For the conveniences of going through the present work, it has been divided into six main chapters, few of which contain some sub-chapters thereof.

The first chapter under the heading “A brief discussion on the history of early Muslim settlers in India”, deals with the background of appearance of Muslim people in India. The early history of Muslim settlers in India comprises the Muslim merchants, missionaries, invaders, soldiers, noblemen and commoners, who came to India since the advent of Islam in Arabia in the early 7th century to the end of the 13th century A.D. If once they came to India in a small groups, in other time they arrived in droves and sometimes in abundant like ants and locusts. Here in this chapter the coming of the primitive Muslims to India from Arabia, Persia, Tarkistan etc, and their settlement in this land, has been discussed in a very concise way as the relevant link to the genealogical history of Mawlana Karamat Ali Jawnpuri.

In the second chapter which is under the title -- “Genealogy and Early life of Mawlana Karamat Ali Jawnpuri”, an attempt has been made to discuss the genealogy and ancestors of Mawlana Karamat Ali Jawnpuri and then an account of his birth, early life and education has been taken down in a considerable expatiation. Moreover, his nuptial life and his offsprings
are also mentioned in it. Thereafter, his initiation (Bay'at) and acquisition of spiritual knowledge has been discussed in this chapter.

The third chapter under the caption “Contemporary socio-religious movements of India and their influence on Karamat Ali’s reformatory movement and missionary works till his last days”, which is one of the principal chapters of the present research work, deals with the reform movements of India in the nineteenth century, notably the Tariqah-i-Muhammadiyah of Sayyid Ahmad Shahid and the Faraizi movement of Haji Shariatullah which had emerged to rectify the Muslim society of various un-Islamic practices and to counter the challenges brought by the British colonial administration. It also deals with the positive as well as negative impacts of these movements on Mawlana Karamat Ali’s thought and works and with his reform campaign known as Ta’aiyuni movement. Moreover, the propaganda of Darul-Harb, its reaction among the Muslims and the Mawlana’s historic ‘fatwa’ against it, are also expounded in this chapter. Furthermore, his missionary and reform works at Jawnpur, in different districts of Bengal and Assam are comprehensively discussed therein.

The fourth as well as another leading chapter of the thesis under the inscription- “Literary works of Mawlana Karamat Ali Jawnpuri and his contribution to Arabic language and literature”, deals with the Mawlana’s literary works on Arabic, Urdu and Persian languages. In this chapter a list of his literary works has been prepared and an attempt has been made to give a compendious estimation of some of his books in brief and some others in a considerable length as per importance of the works. Herein, we have also tried to classify his works in accordance with the subject matters and themes. Further, a few specimen passages of his Arabic writings from different books
have also been quoted in this chapter as a paradigm of his language and diction. Lastly, this chapter has come to an end with a commentative as well as compact observation on his contribution to Arabic language and literature.

The fifth chapter under the heading - "A compendious appraisal of Karamat Ali's personality, habits, character and career," deals with the colourful achievements and alluring personality of the Mawlana Jawnpuri. As a righteous man, as a courageous Muslim, as a socio-religious reformer, as a sufi-saint and as a patron of learning, the Mawlana occupied a distinguished position in the society and obtained great reputation in every sphere of his career. He devoted his whole life and energy in transforming Islamic teachings into practical applications and relentlessly fought for the cause of Islamic propagation and human services. He also tried to bridge the gulf of aversion, antagonism and animosity that had been existed between the two principal religious communities of Bengal in particular and India in general by focussing their attention on the liberal and sympathetic principles of Islam for the establishment of cordial relation between the two communities i.e; Hindu and Muslim. On account of his liberal attitude and enchanting character, thousands of non-Muslim masses embraced Islam in his hand and a compact as well as explicit discussion of all these facts have been furnished in this chapter with a view to make a mutual understanding and co-operation among diversified population of India.

The sixth i.e.; the last chapter is narrated to have delt with the conclusion which acts as the sum and substance of the total work of this thesis. It has also included the bibliography comprising all the books, journals, encyclopaedias, dictionaries and other pamphlets whose references have been used in this work. Finally, the index of some selected proper names have also
been embodied in this sixth chapter. But some other proper names like-
Bengal, Assam, India, Darul-harb, Darul-Islam, Mawlana Karamat Ali
Jawnpuri etc. which are very frequently used in this thesis have not been
included in index.