position of ulama in the muslim society

CHAPTER II

POSITION OF ULAMA IN THE MUSLIM SOCIETY

The word 'ulama' is the plural form of the Arabic term 'alim', which means a religious scholar. Technically the word 'alim' means, a Muslim scholar who has completed his education in a Madrassa (religious seminary) and has studied subjects such as Tafsir, Hadith, Fiqh and Ilm-ul-Kalam. The ulama as a class devote themselves to the study of the Quran, Tafsir, Hadith, and Fiqh. They are competent to issue fatwas. After acquiring Ilm they would remain in Madrassa as teachers or deliver sermons as Khatibs or enter state service as Qazis or Muftis.

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2 The Sayings of Prophet Muhammad. According to Islam Hadith is second only to the Quran.
3 The laws of Islamic Jurisprudence on the basis of Quran and Hadith prepared by the ulama. It states how to perform the Islamic duties, the requirements to fulfil them and those that nullify them.
4 Ilm-ul-Kalam means scholastic discussion on Islamic philosophy. See Mushir ul Haq, Muslim Politics in Modern India (1857-1947), Meerut, 1970.
5 One may acquire knowledge of these subjects from a university or through some other means, but then he will not necessarily be considered an alim.
6 Verdicts or decisions on the basis of Islamic jurisprudence issued by an alim. It is a document prepared in conventional form and varies little over the centuries. It is headed by a pious invocation in Arabic, often written in a very involved and stylized manner. See Brill Leiden (ed.), Encyclopedia of Islam, Volume IV, 1983, p. 867.
7 Literally it means Knowledge and technically means knowledge about Islamic theology.
8 Literally it means speaker, orator but technically means one who makes the speech before or after special occasions like Friday and I'd congregational prayers.
9 Literally means judges, technically means the leader of Muslims who lead them in congregation, on occasions like marriage and funeral ceremonies. Qazis are also supposed to negotiate in settlements and pass judgments in cases of disputes in the Islamic society.
The implication of the term *ulama*, however, varies considerably from place to place and time to time. In South Asia the term *ulama* becomes *Maulawi* and in West Africa it is *Mallam*. Other terms like *Imam*, *Mufti*, *Qazi*, *Mujtahid*, express specific aspects of the clerical functions of the *ulama*. The word ‘*Imam*’ for example, is the word used for a religious leader of the community. The term ‘*Mufti*’ is applied to a respected member of the *ulama* who may give an opinion (fatwa) on some difficult legal or theological issue and sometimes may overrule the decisions of the *Imam*. The word ‘*Qazi*’ denotes the religious head who gives judgment on the basis of Islamic *Sharia*. In the *Shia* community there is a hierarchy of *ulama* like the *Mujtahid*, *Ayathullah*, *Imam*, *Faqih* and so on. The word ‘*Mujtahid*’ is used to designate a senior scholar who has the grace and authority to interpret the *Quran*. The term ‘*ulama*’ usually includes all religious teachers such as

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11 In Turkey the word *ulama* denotes a political party led by the religious teachers.

12 Literally means one who strives and technically, an authority that makes original decisions of canon law, rather than apply any precedents already established. For Sunnis, door of striving (*Ijtihad*) is closed according to general opinion. For Shiites, *Ijtihad* is possible and also necessary. (Brill Leiden, *op.cit.*, p. 327).

13 The sacred law for the Muslims. In an Islamic state decision would be taken on the basis of *Shariat* since it is framed on the basis of *Quran* and *Hadith*.

14 On the question of Khilafat a split took place in Islam. A group demanded to make Ali the Khalif. This group is known as the *Shias*.

15 *Ayathullah* is an honorific title for high-ranking *shiate* religious authorities in Iran. This grandiose title is an innovation of 20th century Shiaism. See, Brill Leiden, *op.cit.*, p. 71.

16 *Imam* means leader. One who leads the prayer in congregation. Among the Shiites there is a concept of *Imamat*.

17 One who is proficient in Islamic jurisprudence either by his own exegesis or by learning.

Imams, Muftis, Qazis and Maulawis.\(^{19}\) They were usually known as members of the order of the ulama. Their main duty was to teach and guide the people in religious affairs and to give opinion on Sharia about matters relating to their day-to-day life activities.

For the spread of religious education, a large number of Madrassas were established throughout the Muslim world. The highly educated ulama assumed the role of Qazi and Mufti while the less educated got the posts of Imam and Khatib. Though no particular uniform is prescribed, certain prefixes and suffixes with their names helps to recognize their identity. Terms like Maulawi, Maulana, Musaliar, and Mullah are added like wise.

The ulama occupy a very dignified position in Islam. In many traditions of the Prophet, it is stated, “On the day of Resurrection the ink used by a scholar will be weighed with the blood shed by martyrs and the ink of the scholar will outweigh and turn the scales...the world thrives on the piety of the learned... If there had been no Satan,\(^ {20}\) the sons of Adam\(^ {21}\) would not have suffered. If there had been no pious men, certainly the wicked would have been destroyed, if there had been no ulama certainly the people would have wandered about like beasts...” The prophet continues, “the best Kings


\(^{20}\) The Satan is the force to drag humanity towards the evil deeds. It was Satan who instigated Adam and Eve to eat the ‘forbidden fruit’ in the Heaven and they were subsequently caused to the wrath of God and sent out them to the earth.

\(^{21}\) According to the Bible and the *Quran* the first man is Adam.
and the best nobles are those who visit the doors of the ulama and the worst ulama are those who visit the doors of Kings and nobles... The ulama are much superior in dignity and status to others."\textsuperscript{22}

The hallmark of the alim was his knowledge of religious scriptures. Mubarak Shah, a fourteenth century chronicler, at the Delhi court, observed, "All people know that after the apostles and prophets, rank the truthful persons (siddiquin) martyrs (shahidin) and scholars (alimun)."\textsuperscript{23} The scholars are included in the category of siddiquin and the martyrs. The Prophet has said, "The ulama are the heirs of the Prophets."\textsuperscript{24} The world exists on account of the piety of the learned. The laws of Sharia... are enforced by them... and things illegal and not sanctioned by the Sharia are suppressed by them."\textsuperscript{25}

According to Islam, Prophets have been sent to all communities and in all ages. But this practice came to an end with the coming of Prophet Mohammed. The Prophet has clearly declared, "After me there will not be Prophets, ulama are the heirs of the Prophets,"\textsuperscript{26} He also said, "the ulama of my community (Ummah), are like the Prophets of the Bani Israel."\textsuperscript{27} All these

\textsuperscript{22} K. A. Nizami, \textit{Some Aspects of Religion and Politics in India during the Thirteenth Century}, Delhi, 1974, p. 150.

\textsuperscript{23} Quoted in \textit{Ibid}, p. 152.

\textsuperscript{24} Imam Tirmudhi, \textit{Kitab ul Ilm}, Hadith No.2607. See Abu Dawud, \textit{Hadith No. 3157}.

\textsuperscript{25} K. A. Nizami, \textit{op.cit.}, p. 150.

\textsuperscript{26} Imam Bukhari, 'Babu Ma Zukhira Al Bani Israel' in \textit{Kitab Ahadith ul Ambiya}, Hadith no: 4476, Cairo. n.d.

\textsuperscript{27} Bani Israel conceptually means the earlier communities; literally the term means the Sons of Israel.
are clear indications of the ulama's decorum and responsibility in Islam. In the light of the traditions of the Prophet cited, the ulama are to guide and direct the people in the true path and they should have authority over all the affairs of the masses. In other words, people are bound to obey the directions and commands of the ulama. Whenever the need arises the ulama have to take the lead and shoulder the responsibility of the society and they could never be submissive in times of anarchy and misrule. The Prophet has already stated that the best jihad (struggle) is the expression of protest against a cruel ruler.28

Emphasizing the great role of the ulama, the Prophet reminds, “If two sections of the society played their roles properly, the whole society will be in the right direction, if they are wrong in direction the whole society will suffer. These two sections are the ulama and the umara.”29 The ulama are the custodians of the Sharia and the bulwark of the Muslim community and its uniting force. Consequently they are held in high respect. The Prophet explains whoever does not respect the ulama is not one among us.30 Though, the ulama are the protectors of Sharia and the leaders of the community, Islam never prescribe priesthood.31 It proclaims a strong principle of equality of all believers. The ulama in Islam are not a power head, but a protector and

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28 Nisai, Sunan ul Nisai-Kitab ul Bait, Hadith No. 3138.
guide in all walks of life. They are not middlemen to God as Islam teaches only direct contact with God. The ulama are only to give proper guidance in times of need.

The ulama are not only the religious heirs of the Prophets but also the heir of the Prophets in the political affairs of the Muslim community. In other words there is no separation of politics and religion in Islam. The Prophet was both religious and political head of the Muslim community, and so were all the Khalifs. Thus in the true spirit of Islam the ulama should also be the political leaders of the Muslim community. They have the responsibility of looking after the welfare of the people.

In the early days of Islam there was no class as ulama. The scholars well versed in the respective area of theology gave the needed advice. This explicit class of religious leaders is supposed to have emerged after the decline of the Abbasid Empire in the 10th century AD when power was often wielded by new converts to the faith. There were generally two kinds of religious specialists: the sufis, who engaged themselves in meditative disciplines and sought direct knowledge of religious truth; and the ulama, who knew the scholarly tradition of the faith and above all, the injunctions of the law. Both the ulama and the sufis acted as the foci of revolutionary

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32 Sufis are Muslim mystics. The word Sufi is derived from Suf (wool), a reference to the woolen robe worn by the earliest Sufis. Some link the word Sufi with Sofia (purified), some relate it with their position as saff (first rankers) and so on. See O. P. Mayankutty, Sufism: Some Landmarks in the Stream of Medieval History, South Indian History Congress Proceedings Volume, Tiruchirapally, 2003.
movements, but more often gave their support to any ruler who maintained order and provided a stable framework for the continuation of Muslim social and religious life.\textsuperscript{33}

Among the \textit{ulama} there is a hierarchy with respect to their positions and professions. In the circle of the \textit{ulama} there are students and disciples. There were \textit{ulama} who were known through their writings and publications of religious literature. Some others are reputed for their public preachings and debates. There were \textit{ulama} who had no direct involvement in the propagation of Islam and defence of the faith against cultural and ideological onslaughts.

The day-to-day life of a Muslim is strongly linked with the \textit{ulama}, the custodians of the Sharia. From birth to death a Muslim should live according to the Sharia. As soon as the newborn child is brought out to the relatives the \textit{adhan}\textsuperscript{34} is whispered into the ears of the child.\textsuperscript{35} Circumcision is performed before the age of ten.\textsuperscript{36} The marriage (\textit{nikah}) would be conducted and the contract would be signed before a \textit{Qazi};\textsuperscript{37} who seeks blessings for the couple at the ceremonial function. Friends and relatives offer prayers for the peace and well being of the departed soul in the hereafter. In an Islamic state the


\textsuperscript{34}The call for five times prayers.


\textsuperscript{36}\textit{Ibid}, p. 611.

administration is supervised by the ulama. Thus people turn towards the ulama for all their life activities and they seek their advice in cases of marriage, divorce, inheritance and such minor things as how to take bath, to eat and to drink etc. All rites and rituals are performed and special occasions celebrated in the presence of the ulama.

From childhood onwards a Muslim keeps contact with the ulama. As a young boy, he would be taught to recite the Quran and to read and write by an alim in the Maktab or Madrassa. On Fridays, congregational prayers are led by the ulama. Here the ulama would come into contact with the rich and the poor, the educated and the illiterate, the landlord and the peasant, the town folk and the rural dwellers, the young and the old.

We have illustrious examples in history where the ulama had played a major role in solving serious crises in the course of the history of Islam. It was with the direction of the ulama, that Hazrat Aboobakker; the first Khalif in Islam undertook the task of the compilation of the Quran. The shura, which was part and parcel of the Islamic Khilafat, was mainly constituted by the ulama.

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39 Equivalent to the Othupalli.
40 Though there was no particular ulama class, among the companions of the Prophet there were some more scholarly persons who could be call as ulama.
41 Means consultative body. The body is the supreme council in the Islamic administration as Quran mandates the constitution of such a body in Islamic society.
We also have a number of examples in history for the interference of the ulama in the day-to-day affairs of the administration. Quite often the rulers failed to get the support of the ulama for their vested interests and so used their power against many of them. Imam Hasan al Basari in the court of Yazid Ibn Abdul Malik, the Umayyad Khalif gave a fatwa, which invited the displeasure of the Khalif and got him arrested.\textsuperscript{43} The authority imprisoned Imam Abu Hanifa and Imam Malik\textsuperscript{44} as they pronounced fatwas in favour of Ibrahim's claim to the Khilafat.\textsuperscript{45} Imam Abu Hanifa was also a victim of the displeasure of the Khalif when he refused to take up the office of Qazi ul Quzat (Chief Justice). Subsequently he was arrested and he died in prison on account of the corporal punishment inflicted upon him. Malik bin Anas, another great scholar, was flogged so badly that his shoulder blade was dislocated.\textsuperscript{46} Imam Ahmad Ibn Hanbal\textsuperscript{47} was imprisoned for twenty-eight months as he questioned the Khalif Al Mamun for his misdeeds.\textsuperscript{48} Shah Ismail arrested Sheikh ul Islam, Izzu dhin Ibn Abdul Salam of Damascus for his refusal to issue a fatwa.

Ibn Thaimiya, a great Scholar of the 14\textsuperscript{th} century held that the ulama were responsible for upholding the Law and giving advice to rulers on the

\textsuperscript{44} The two founders of the Islamic schools of Canon (Fiqh).
\textsuperscript{45} Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi, \textit{op.cit.}, p. 51.
\textsuperscript{46} \textit{Ibid}, p. 61.
\textsuperscript{47} The compiler of fourth canon of law.
\textsuperscript{48} Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi, \textit{op.cit.}, p. 84.
basis of Quranic injunctions: commanding the good and forbidding the evils (Quran, 31:17). Quite often he directed the government towards the right path. If the authority did not heed his advice, he personally directed the people towards the path of righteousness. When, for instance, wine became a rampant social evil in the streets of Damascus, he warned the government against its fatal consequences. But finding no satisfactory steps being taken by the government, Ibn Thaimiya with his own companions launched a campaign against it and found success. So also he fought in person against the Mongol menace. Despite these services, the government took him as an enemy and incarcerated him many times and he had his last days in prison.

The ulama, being closer to the people and having known their sufferings due to colonial exploitations provided them effective leadership. The ulama of Algeria, Indonesia, Sumatra, Philippines, Sudan, Somaliland, Libya, Morocco, West Central Africa, Egypt, Palestine, Iraq, Iran, Afghanistan etc. showed their valour against the colonial powers.

In Indonesia different factions of the ulama forgot their factional differences in their fight against the Dutch colonialists. Even the members of

a Sufi tariqa\textsuperscript{52} called the Qadiriyyah\textsuperscript{53} provided organizational framework for the revolutionary protest movement that resulted in the Tjilegon risings of 1888.\textsuperscript{54} An anti-colonial literature entitled \textit{Hikayat Parang Sabi} declared that the murder of a Dutch man would enable them to gain admission to paradise.\textsuperscript{55} In 1926 an ulama organization called Nahdat ul Ulama was founded for the liberation of Indonesia. Imam Bunugool, one of the ulama, declared \textit{jihad} against the Dutch colonialism.\textsuperscript{56} The ulama like Dipunigorb and Tiku Umar also led \textit{jihadi} movements against colonialism.\textsuperscript{57}

In the 1930’s, the Algerian ulama took up arms against the French colonization.\textsuperscript{58} Abdul Hamid Ibn Badis led them to wage holy war against the foreign aggressors. In Sudan, Mahdi led an anti-colonial movement against the British colonialists. Mahdi Sudani worked against the foreign intruders. He advised his followers to be ready to sacrifice themselves for the cause of their nation.\textsuperscript{59} When Somaliland was divided between the British and Italian

\textsuperscript{52} Literally means a path. Technically a generic term referring to the doctrines and methods of mystics (Sufi) union and became synonym of the term \textit{tasawwuf} (mysticism). A school of Sufi after the name of a master (sheikh) becomes renowned and known after him as Tariqa. Thus 100’s of such Tariqa grew up. At the same time Islam is partitioned between Sharia (exoteric) and Tariqa (esoteric) paths.

\textsuperscript{53} The first Tariqa emerged was Qadiriyyah by the name of Abdul Qadir Jilani of Baghdad. It has followers through out the world.


\textsuperscript{58} Maxinore Rodinson, \textit{op.cit.}, pp. 24-25.

colonialists, a strong anti-colonial struggle was undertaken there under Mullah Ibn Abdullah Hasan. The British jokingly called him ‘Mad Mullah’ on account of his unrelenting fighting spirits.  

Mufti al-Haj Amin ul Hussain was strong in resisting the British colonialism in Palestine. He founded the Supreme Muslim Council to resist the British domination. Muhammad Abdu, Rashid Ridha and Hasan ul Banna were the ulama of Egypt who offered uncompromising resistance against the colonialists. Hasan ul Bannah also founded ‘Ikhwanul Muslimoon’ with the aim of fighting against the Europeans.

The name of Jamaludhin Afghani was a nightmare to the colonialists. His career was not confined to Afghanistan. He launched many campaigns against the colonial threat in many Muslim countries. With this mission, he travelled widely in countries like Egypt, Iran, Russia, and Turkey, mobilizing people through classes and training sessions. He also wrote a number of articles in periodicals criticizing the colonial enslavement. He aimed at the formation of a pan-Islamic world against the European aggression. For this purpose he brought out a newspaper called ‘Al Urwat ul Wuthqa’, but it was banned after a few issues. The rise of his fame and popularity frightened even the Muslim rulers. He actively participated in the Iranian politics when the

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British monopolized the tobacco. He rose in revolt against it, contacted *Shia alim*, Sheikh Mujtahidin Mirza Hasan Shirazi about the matter and got a *fatwa* issued against the consumption of tobacco. Consequently the monopoly was repealed.63

Eritrea of North West Africa was under Italian colonial exploitation. The Muslims were deprived of their religious freedom. Thus an *alim* named Hamid Idris Awati started a liberation movement. There followed a long drawn out struggle that left him a martyr to the cause.64 In Libya, the Sanusi Movement was founded with the objective of resisting colonialism. Sayyid Muhammad Ibn Ali, Sayyid Muhammad Idris and Sheikh Siddi Umar Mukhtar were the leaders of the movement who stood rock firm against the French.65

The Russian conquest of Merv in 1834, the French occupation of Tunisia in 1871, the British occupation of Egypt in 1882, and the Italian seizure of Tripoli in 1911 and the Balkan war of 1912-13 etc. were all directed and controlled by the *ulama*. The great Ottomans successfully absorbed the *ulama* into the structure of the state administration66 and transformed them into a religious bureaucracy bound inextricably to the interests of the ruling class.67

In recent times the *ulama* are very active in the Islamic world: The Iranian Revolution of 1979 presented to the world a dynamic group of *ulama* who succeeded in throwing out the regime of Shah Pahlavi and establishing a theocratic state.\(^{68}\) The Revolution proved the assertiveness of the *ulama* in the socio-political domain during the past few decades. The doctrinal innovations of Ayathullah Ruhullah Khomeni altered the common opinions about the role of the clergy. Khomeni in his book ‘The Mandate of the Jurists’ argues that the clergy is entitled to rule. This revolutionary statement meant that clergymen (*ulama*) should not rest content with merely giving advice to the rulers, a position with which he had publicly identified himself in his book *Kashf ul Asrar* (Revealing the secrets).\(^{69}\)

The *ulama* of Afghanistan were vigilant against the colonialists. When Russia occupied Afghanistan, the various *ulama* groups like *Jamiat-e Islami, Hisbe-i Islami, Harkath-e Inquilab e Islami*, etc. joined together and worked for the common cause. The conference was attended by 300 *ulama*, which constituted a *shura* of 60 members. But after the withdrawal of the Soviet forces, the unity of the *ulama* vanished and they started internal warfare, which further led to the rise of the *Taliban* (students) under the leadership of Maulana Umar (popularly known as Mullah Umar). They were basically the students of *Sharia* colleges of *Jamiat ul Ulama-i Islami* and *Madrassa-i*


\(^{69}\) Ibid, p. 263.
Hadaniyya. The ulama have also played a very crucial role in the recent US-Afghan war of 2001. Famous alim like Imam Qardavi often reminded America against going anarchic in Iraq.

Thus the ulama of the Muslim society were the fountainhead of the community as ordained by the Islamic law. They were in the forefront of the community in their joys and sorrows, birth and death, peace and violence and so on. So long as the community was in peace and stability, the ulama cared for the cultural and educational growth of the community. As soon as the community entered in any sort of crisis or threat from inside or outside the community, the ulama interfered in it with their capacity of scholarship. The most powerful weapons with them were the fatwas and the jihad. Both these weapons were executed only at the right time and proper place. As a clear testimony to the prowess of ulama, a large number of movements and anti-colonial struggles were recorded from many Muslim countries under the leadership of the ulama who thus acted the role of the Prophets both in temporal and religious spheres.

The ulama in Indian Politics

In medieval India, during the Sultanate period, there were two broad divisions among the officials, Ahl-i Saif (men of the sword) and Ahl-i Qalam

\(^{71}\) Madhyamam Daily, 3rd June 2006.
(men of the pen). The most important section among the Ahl-i Qalam was the ulama. They practically monopolized the judicial, ecclesiastical and educational services of the state.\(^{72}\) They also established matrimonial alliances with the ruling houses, purchased property and emulated the nobles in leading a luxurious life. Traditions have thus classified them as Ulama-i Dunia and Ulama-i Akhira; Ulama-i Dunia lived for worldly gains while the latter devoted themselves to religious services and God’s pleasure.\(^{73}\)

During the medieval times the ulama were indispensable allies of the Sultans of Delhi. Positions and powers were granted to them. Muslim rulers appointed them Qazis, Muftis, and Sadors.\(^{74}\) They were well versed in Arabic language. Thus they became the custodians of religious knowledge. They exercised the right to proclaim fatwa on every issue and interpret Tafsir and Hadith.\(^{75}\) They also held high posts like Sadr-i Jahan or Sadr-us Sudur,\(^{76}\) Qazil Quzat\(^{77}\) etc. They discharge their duties without fear or favour and even dared to question the Sultans in power. When Iltutmish ascended the throne, a group of ulama led by Qazi Wajih ud din Kashani approached him to ascertain whether he had been properly manumitted. Understanding the

\(^{72}\) D. N. Jha, Aristocracy in Medieval India, Delhi, 1993, p. 42.
\(^{73}\) K. A. Nizami, op. cit., p. 152.
\(^{74}\) Head of the department of theology.
\(^{76}\) Chief officer in charge of religious endowments and charities.
\(^{77}\) The post of chief justice in Islam.
purpose of their visit Iltutmish placed the letter of manumission before
them.\footnote{\textit{Ajaibul Afsar} Volume II, p. 52, quoted in K. A. Nizami \textit{op.cit.}, p. 152.}

There were instances of independent \textit{ulama} and sufis criticizing the
rulers for their excesses or actions contrary to the \textit{Sharia}. There were also
\textit{ulama} who issued \textit{fatwa} in favour of Sultans for fear of loss of position in the
government. The \textit{ulama} also enjoyed high positions during the Mughals as
under the Sultans of Delhi. They constituted a powerful segment of the
bureaucracy.\footnote{B. D. Metcalfe, \textit{op.cit.}, p. 18} In the Mughal period the \textit{ulama were} more dominant than the
Sufis. Both Akbar and Aurenghezeb tried to win their support to raise their
royal status.\footnote{\textit{Ibid}, p. 22.}

After the establishment of the British rule in India the \textit{ulama} did not feel
the changes for long and made no protest. They were in fact friendly to the
British and to the changes that they had brought about. They encouraged the
Muslims, to learn English language, to have social intercourse with the
Christians and even to wear western dress.

This moderate stand of the \textit{ulama} might have been due to the non-
interference policy followed by the British. An analytical study of the stand of
the \textit{ulama} would bring out the fact that the \textit{ulama} had been slow to react to
the British rule. It was, perhaps, because the East India Company had only
very gradually departed from the medieval *modus vivendi* between the religious and political establishment. Regulation II of 1772 provided that in all suits regarding inheritance, succession, marriage, caste and other customs and institutions of Muslims, the law of the *Quran* would be invariably adhered to. Until 1790 penal justice in Bengal continued to be dispensed according to the revised *Sharia* norms of Aurengzeb’s time. But in the last decade of the 18th century and in the first decade of the 19th century, the East India Company began legislation to substitute its own rules of evidence, definitions of offences and penalties for those of the *Sharia*. The leading Delhi scholar Shah Abdul Aziz (1746-1824), son of Shah Waliyullah, protested against this interference with the substantive content of the Islamic Holy Law. He issued a *fatwa* declaring those areas of Northern India under British supremacy, to be *Dar ul Harb*81 (the abode of war).82 In the *fatwa* he stated, “In this city (Delhi), the Imam ul Muslimin wields no authority. The real power rests with Christian officers.”83

The British educational reforms, reorganizations of the law courts, growth of local governments, the spread of secular ideas and above all the separation of religion from government weakened the power of the *ulama* and

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81 Abode of war.
83 Ibid.
steadily reduced their influence on the Muslim society. In his address to the first congress of Nadwat ul Ulama in April 1895 Maulana Shibli lamented, “Gentlemen, in the days of the Muslim rule the worldly as well as the religious affairs of the Muslims were in the hands of the ulama. The reins of the affairs of the community relating to both this and the next world were in the hands of the ulama. Now those things have changed and worldly affairs have come under the authority of the (British) government.”

The ulama were of the opinion that the Christian missionaries with the help of the British Government were bent upon destroying Islam. There were none but ulama to defend Islam at this juncture. But, they too were weak. They were not well organized. So they had to put up religious seminaries and Madrassa as bastions of defence. Thus was started the Madrassa Movement, which also helped in the intellectual awakening of the Muslim community.

Another important reason for the ulama’s wrath against the British was sociological. During the Muslim regime they enjoyed high status and privileges. They also controlled the judiciary. With the British occupation, they lost both the social and political status and suffered a great economic setback. The centres of trade and crafts were ruined. They became ardent enemies of the British enbloc and came to the forefront of the freedom

struggle. In the struggle for independence no other group could rival the
proud role played by the ulama. A number of ulama groups like Faraizis,
Taaiyunis, Ahl-I Hadith and Tariqa-i Mohammadiyyah took the lead in the
eyear phase of the struggle.

Maulawi Pir Shariatullah of Faridpur and his son Muhammad Muhsin
alias Dadu Mian led the Faraizi Movement in Eastern Bengal while Nasir Ali
alias Titu Mir put up fight in the Western part of Bengal. Pir Shariatullah
who stayed in Makkah for 20 years preached revolutionary doctrines against
the British. On his arrival he found that India had become Dar ul Harb (a land
of war) where a Muslim could not live. He declared, “As long as his country
was under non-Muslim rule, it was to be considered a Dar ul Harb and that
the congregational prayers such as those offered on occasions like Jumu’ath
and Id remaining prohibited there.” Thus he implicitly called upon the
Muslims to participate in jihad and said that congregational prayers could be
held only after India had been converted to Dar ul Islam. Hence it was a farz

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90 P. Hardy, op.cit., p. 56.
91 Pakistan Historical Conference Proceedings, Lahore, 1955, pp. 175-77 [AMU Collections].
(obligatory duty) upon the Muslims to oust the British. The movement was as much directed against exploitation by landlords as against impure encumbrances. Its leader Dadu Mian came into conflict with both Hindu and Muslim landlords. With the object of fighting the British, he led many peasant uprisings in 1833, 1841, 1844 and 1846.

The Delhi ulama being followers of Shah Waliyullah, played a militant anti-colonial role and thus it is important to note that despite fierce opposition from separatist elements from amongst their co-religionists, they continued to support the nationalist movement led by the Indian National Congress.

There were strong methods to popularize the Wahabi movement. Sayyid Ahmed of Bareily formed a central body consisting of Maulana Rafiudhin, Maulana Abdul Qadir, Maulana Abdul Ghani, Maulana Ismail Shahid, Maulana Mohammed Ishaq and Maulana Abdul Hai of Delhi. The liberation of India from British control and converting it into Dar ul Islam from Dar ul Harb had become their immediate goal.

Maulawi Ahmedullah Shah of Faizabad, popularly known as Dunka Shah, was an uncompromising patriot who mobilized the people against the British in his own way. For this purpose he toured widely through Patna, Calcutta, Delhi, Meerut, Lucknow, Kalpi, Banda, and Bareily. He gathered

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92 Thus it assumed the name Faraizi Movement. Shan Muhammad, Muslims and India's Freedom Movement, New Delhi, 2003, pp. 5-6.
the people by distributing *chapattis* and preached the need of waging war against the British.\textsuperscript{94}

On 16\textsuperscript{th} April 1816, Mufti Muhammed Iwaz led a movement against the heavy taxes imposed by the British on the peasants. When the authorities came to his house for collecting tax, a large number of his followers gathered near his house and intercepted the tax collectors. To overcome this hurdle, the Magistrate Dumpleton ordered to fire at the crowd, which resulted in the killing of several people. Thereafter, the Mufti led the people to a garden, Hussainy Bagh and declared *jihad*.

Thus, prior to the revolt of 1857 a line of *ulama* realized the ulterior aims of the British and prepared the people against their rule. Most of them asserted the need of *jihad* against the British, since the British posed a threat to the existence of their religion. Sayyid Ahmad Bareily and Shah Ismail even compared Muslim position in British India to that of Jews under the Pharaohs of Egypt.\textsuperscript{95}

**Revolt of 1857**

By the mid of the 19\textsuperscript{th} century *jihad* became synonymous with national war against alien rule. The call for *jihad* issued by the *ulama* thus overcame all religious barriers during 1857. From religious point of view it was not

\textsuperscript{94} Maulawi Ahmedullah Shah of Faizabad, *Indian History Congress 64\textsuperscript{th} session Bareily, Souvenir*, p. 38.
binding upon the Hindus or the Shi`as to join the jihad proclaimed by the Sunni ulama, but their cultural and national affiliation was so strong that they responded to the call whole heartedly.96

During the revolt of 1857, the ulama took an active role in mobilizing the people against the British authorities. Maulana Fasl-`e Haq Khairabadi addressed a congregation of Mussalman in Jama Masjid, Delhi and called upon them to fight against the British. He, along with Maulawi Abdul Qadir, Qazi Fayiz Ahmed Badayuni, Dr.Wazir Akbarabadi, Maulawi Mubarak Ali Ranpuri and Mufti Sadruddin issued a fatwa. It inspired the people to join the movement in large numbers and consequently Delhi became mutinous. Ninety thousand people assembled in Delhi to fight against the British. In the fight, that ensued, Sayyid Nabi Baksh Saharenpuri, Qazi Wazir Ali, Sayyid Karam Ali Akbarabadi, Maulawi Faiz Ahmed Usmani Badayuni, Sayyid Mubarak Ali Ranpuri, Sayyid Gulam Ali Amrohi and others97 who led the revolt were done to death.98 According to Kamaludhin Hyder about 27,000 Muslims were sentenced to death.99 The sufferings that followed were indescribable. Lord Elphinston wrote to Sir John Lawrence that, after the siege was over, the outrages committed by our army are simply disheartening. A wholesale

96 Mujeeb Ashraf, Muslim Attitude Towards British Rule and Western Culture in India, Delhi, 1982, p. 176.
97 Shan Mohammed, op.cit., p. 22.
98 Ibid, pp. 22-23.
vengeance is being taken without distinction of friend or foe.\textsuperscript{100} During this time, the \textit{ulama} issued another proclamation that friendship with the Christians is heresy. It states, \textquote{He who has friendship with a Christian is by no means a Mussalman. Hence it is the duty of all Mussalmans to make themselves inveterate foes of these Christians.}\textsuperscript{101} The Proclamation was translated into Hindi and Urdu and was pasted on all the principal walls of the city inviting the citizens to unite and exterminate all Europeans. Consequently the Muslim population assembled in large numbers at all the mosques and afterwards staged an anti-British demonstration in the city, calling upon all good Mussalmans and Hindus to rise in revolt against the British.\textsuperscript{102}

Maulawi Ahmedullah and Begum Hazrat Mahal of Awadh were staunch supporters of the national cause. Maulawi Ahmedullah appeared in Lucknow and openly declared a holy war against the English. He had resolved to fight the English who were uprooting the very foundation of Islam in India. In association with Mufti Inamullah he constituted a body of \textit{ulama}, consisting of Maulana Gulam Imam Shahid, Maulawi Sheikh Aeytiqad Ali Beg, Maulawi Imam Buksh Sahbai, Maulawi Kwaja Turab Ali, Maulawi Noorul Hasan, Sayyid Masatib Ali, Maulana Gulam Gilani, Maulawi Tufail Ahmed Khairabadi, Maulana Mohamed Qasim Danapuri, Maulawi Fazl

\textsuperscript{100} \textit{Ibid}, p. 23.
\textsuperscript{101} Kamta Choubey, \textit{Muslims and Freedom Movement in India}, Allahabad, 1960, p. 2.
Ahmed Badayuni, Dr. Wazir Khan and Maulawi Karimullah Shah for the purpose. Under Ahmedullah's inspiring personality, thousands of Hindus and Muslims vowed to sacrifice their lives to emancipate the country from the British. He left for Faizabad with an army of Mujahids but was incidentally caught by the British. The revolt of 1857 being suppressed, the other leaders like Qazi Sarfaraz Ali Jaunpuri, Maulana Fazl-e-Haq Khairabadi, Maulawi Inayat Ali Kakori, Maulawi Karimullah, Sayyid Akbar Zaman Akbarabadi, Munshi Ismail Hasan, Muneer Shikohabadi and Mirza Wilayet Hussain of Banda and others were arrested and either hanged or exiled to Andaman. In the post revolt period several prominent ulama and hundreds of their supporters were blown to pieces by cannon, while others were deported to the penal settlement at the Andamans. Among the first batch of prisoners to arrive at Andaman include such well-known ulama leaders of the revolt like Mufti Mazhar Karim of Delhi and Munshi Inayat Ahmed of Lucknow. Later hundreds of Maulawis followed them. Maulawi Fazal-e Haq Khairabadi wrote Risala-e Ghaddariyyah during his imprisonment in Andaman. The work discloses the cruelties suffered by the ulama during the revolt.

In spite of all these suppressions, the ulama made isolated protests against the British. Several conspiracies were hatched up against the British. Despite being kept in top secrecy, the British intelligence unearthed their

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105 Ibid, p. 23.
conspiracy. Many of them were arrested and tried at Ambala (1864) and Patna (1865) and they were punished under section 121 of the Penal Code. In these trials more than a dozen ulama, prominent being Maulawi Yahya Ali, Maulawi Muhammad Jafer, Maulawi Abdul Rahim, Maulawi Muhammad Shafi, Maulawi Abdul Karim, Maulawi Amirudhin, Maulawi Abdul Gaffar, Qazi Mian Jan, Maulawi Ahmedullah and Elahi Bux were either sentenced to death or transported for life to the Andaman.106

After the revolt of 1857, Muslims were largely alienated from the government. Moreover, some acts of the Hindu leaders strengthened Muslim hatred towards the British. Though both Muslims and Hindus participated in the revolt jointly and sincerely, its effects were bitterer to the Muslims than to the Hindus. It was because of the fact that the British generally held the Muslims responsible for instigating the anti-British movement and made them special targets of their vengeance.107

Dayananda Saraswathy, the founder of Arya Samaj in his work ‘Satyarth Prakash’ condemned and attacked Islam.108 Editions after editions of the work were sold out in the country. It increased bitterness among different religious groups, particularly between Hindus and Muslims.109

107 P. Hardy, op.cit., p. 70.
Besides, he published *Gokarunanidhi* on the theme of cow protection Association. These works of Dayananda Saraswathy instilled a strong sense of hatred in the Muslim minds. The Muslims sensed the British instigation behind such works and became suspicious of both the Hindus and the British.

**Dar ul Uloom Deoband**

The *ulama* by and large were silent for a short while due to the inhuman atrocities they faced after the revolt. Meanwhile realizing their strength and silence the British officials made attempts to appease them by appointing some *ulama* in high posts. Despite the British attempt to woo the *ulama*, they remained irreconcilable to imperialism. They were quite cognizant of the harm the British caused to the Muslims. They considered it their duty to protect them and the country from imminent danger.

Moreover, modern education and the modern educated reduced the chances of the traditionally educated *ulama* to government posts. During the early British period, both religious and secular educations were provided under the same roof. With the starting of non-Madrassa type of schools by the government, the graduates of the Madrassa found it difficult to get any important position in the government. Moreover, the British government

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111 *Ibid*, p. 79.
showed no interest in supporting the old Muslim educational system. All these led to the establishment of Dar ul Uloom in Deoband in 1865.112

Besides, Dar ul Uloom had a strong political background. Following the 1857 debacle, Maulana Imdadullah at Shamili113 of Muzaffer Nagar, started a jihadi movement against the British. He was the Imam or the Amin of the movement. Maulana Muhammad Qasim Nanutavi and Maulana Rashid Ahmed Gangohi acted as the commander and the Qazi of the movement respectively.114 The authorities hunted them down. Imdadullah fled to Makkah and led the movement there.

According to Ubaidullah Sindhi, Imdadullah at Makkah was guiding the Indian branch of Waliyullah- i Movement, the goal of which was to establish an adil (just) government in India.115 Though Maulana Muhammad Qasim Nanutavi managed to escape from arrest, Rashid Ahmad Gangohi was arrested and jailed. He was released after six months since the government failed to prove the charges levelled against him. After release Rashid Ahmad and others out of the rising nationalist fervour decided to found a religious seminary, which became Dar ul Uloom of Deoband in 1865. Later it

113 A place in U P with its large number of ulama and religious institutions, as Ponnani in Malabar.
115 Mushirul Haq, op. cit., p. 15.
developed into a movement, which had direct contact with the pan-Islamic view of Jamaludhin Afghani. Rashid Ahmed Ganghohi's *fatwa* entitled *Nusrat-ul Ahrar* called upon the Muslims to support the Congress and to declare *jihad* against the illegitimate rule of the Britishers.\(^\text{116}\)

*Dar ul Uloom* had a great role in moulding the Muslim politics of India. Its objectives were the following:

- Exalt the words of God.
- Extend contact with the Muslims in order to organize them for leading their life according to the original Islamic principles.
- Non-co-operation with the government.
- Strictly follow the teachings of Shah Waliyullah.
- Avoid aristocratic and despotic ways and to work through co-operation and mutual consultation.\(^\text{117}\)

Deoband *ulama* were vehemently against English education, Western culture and their domination over Eastern land. They longed to liberate the Asian countries in order to bring about the moral and religious regeneration of the Muslim community. The *Deobandis*\(^\text{118}\) even in times of great communal


\(^\text{117}\) Mushirul Haq, *op.cit.*, p.15.

\(^\text{118}\) Deoband *ulama* hereafter called as Deobandis.
dissentions upheld the cause of National Solidarity and Independence.\(^{119}\) Soon Deoband developed as a channeling centre of Indian ulama against the British domination. The leading Deobandi, Maulana Mahmud ul Hasan, established close contact with the ulama of the North West Frontier. His plan was to spread a network of campaign against the English from Afghanistan to India.\(^{120}\) Ubaidullah Sindhi, a nationalist alim started a universal Islamic movement against the British in India among the graduates of Deoband. Thus the Deobandis had always been not only in the forefront of the freedom struggle but also as Qari Muhammad Tayyib put it, were the pioneers, who initiated this very idea of Indian Independence.\(^{121}\)

Though the ulama were in the forefront of the movement, their aim was never an Islamic government but an adil government. Discussing the nature of such a government, Maulana Hussain Ahmed Madani said, “The ulama of India, after the disintegration of the Mughal power, were only interested in a just (adil) ruler, whether he was a Muslim or a non-Muslim. They only wanted to liberate their country (watan) from the British---. We are the inhabitants of India; so far as we are Indians, we have one thing in


\(^{121}\) *Ibid*, Vol. I, p. 390. Khan Abdul Gaffar Khan, during his visit to India in 1969, addressing the students of Dar ul Uloom said, “Sitting here with Sheikh ul Hind Maulana Mahmud ul Hasan, we used to make plans for the independence movement as to how we might drive away the English from this country and how we could make India free from the yoke of slavery of the English.
common i.e. our Indianness." The ulama wished to see India independent from the British rule and were of the opinion that it could be possible only if the Hindus and the Muslims were united. Ubaidullah and his companions had even chalked out a plan for a provisional government at the dissolution of the British government. According to this plan Mahendra Pratap was to be the President and Barkathullah to be the Prime minister.

The Khilafat Movement

In 1913, Maulana Muhammad Ali organized a movement called Anjuman Khuddam-i ka’aba for the safety of Khilafat. The objectives of the organization were to defend the holy places from non-Muslim aggression, to prepare its members ready to sacrifice their lives and property for this objective. The ulama used the Khilafat issue to turn the whole society against the British authorities. Sayyid Sulaiman Nadwi wrote to Abdul Bari that if Muslims wanted to liberate Ka’aba they would have to liberate India first. The political emancipation of India was a religious duty.

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123 Raja Mahendra Pratap was the local Chieftain of Muthra District and in 1914 he went to Europe and made moves with the enemies of Britain. When the ulama went ahead with the plan of a provisional government, Mahendra Pratap was projected as its president, which also shows the secular fabric of the ulama in the Indian politics.
125 Mushirul Hasan (ed.), op.cit., p. 133. See also P.C. Bamford, Historians of Khilafat and Non-Co-Operation Movements, Delhi, 1985, p. 113.
126 P.C. Bamford, op.cit., p. 113.
In 1913, Maulana Shibli Numani started a new movement known as Dar-ul Musannifin. Its objective was the propagation of Khilafat ideas through the publication and translation of historical, religious and scientific works. But like many other Muslim institutions, it also used to foster Pan-Islamism thanks to the influence of Sayyid Sulaiman Nadwi. A large number of works were published, translated and made available to the masses through which it imparted the spirit of Islam and the need for fighting against the British.

When the Ottoman Khilafat was shaken during the First World War, Muslim community rose up and started large-scale mass movements the world over. The ulama convinced the people that the Khalif was the viceroy of the Prophet of Islam and he was both the spiritual and the temporal head. The shock of the dissolution of Khilafat even tempted the leaders like Maulana Muhammad Ali to think of committing suicide. To fight for the Khilafat an All India Khilafat Committee was formed in November 1919. Maulana Abdul Bari, Maulana Muhammad Ali, Maulana Shoukat Ali, Maulana Hazrat Mohani, Maulana Tanaullah Amritsari, Maulana Abul Kalam

128 Ibid.
129 Ibid, p. 3.
Azad, Maulana Kifayatullah, Sayyid Hasan, Maulana Fakhir Ilahabadi and Maulana Sayyid Sulaiman Nadwi were the leaders of the committee.\textsuperscript{132}

Maulawi Kifayatullah, one of the Central Khilafat Committee members declared that in Islam, religion and politics are not two separate entities. The ulama should take up the reins of politics also.\textsuperscript{133} Thus with the inspiration of the ulama, Muslims throughout India observed 17\textsuperscript{th} October 1919 as the Khilafat day. In February 1920, Central Khilafat Committee at Bombay called upon the Muslims to observe fasting on 19\textsuperscript{th} March 1920.\textsuperscript{134}

During this time Gandhiji was attracted towards Khilafat movement, which got integrated into the Non-co-operation movement. Accepting Gandhiji’s leadership, Maulana Shoukat Ali declared, “I tell you that to kill and be killed in the way of God are both Satyagraha.”\textsuperscript{135} It shows his loyalty towards and acceptability of Gandhiji’s teachings on the one hand and the spirit for Islamic armed jihad on the other. This was a high mark of Hindu-Muslim co-operation in the Indian National Movement.

The call for jihad sounded the death knell of British rule in India. The Governor of Bengal nervously reported to the Governor General of India that

\textsuperscript{132} P. Hardy, \textit{op.cit.}, p. 193.

\textsuperscript{133} Qazi Abdul Ghaffar, ‘Hayat-i Ajmal’, Aligarh, 1950, p. 91, quoted in Mushirul Hasan (ed.), \textit{op.cit.}, p. 28.

\textsuperscript{134} Notice is appended in the last. No: II.

the Muslim divines (*ulama*) were busy traveling all over Eastern Bengal enjoining the faithful to perform *jihad*. The leaders of the *Majlis-ul Ulama* of Madras toured the entire presidency to ignite Muslim emotions on the Khilafat issue. In May 1920, the *ulama* Association of United Provinces sent students to preach *jihad* in the mofussils. The Khilafatist *ulama* urged the believers to wage *jihad* against the government and to boycott foreign goods. Supporting the call for *jihad* they issued *fatwa* freely quoting form the *Quran* and *Hadith*. Maulana Abdul Bari issued a *fatwa* on Non co-operation and declared that to support the British government was *haram* (forbidden) to a Muslim. Responding to the call a large number of Muslim lawyers gave up their legal practice and boycotted foreign goods because the theory of Non co-operation was presented before them as a religious dictum.

A group of *ulama* under Hazrat Mohani took a more militant view. They declared that if martial law was imposed, Muslims would have to abandon Non co-operation and to face bullets and bayonets. On the failure of Muhammed Ali’s delegations to Britain, the *ulama* took stronger steps against the British. Muslims were asked by the nationalist *ulama* to sacrifice themselves for the cause of religion. It is noteworthy that *ulama* took the

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140 *Ibid.*, p. 32
initiative for communal amity. When a group of the ulama objected to Gandhi's leadership, Abdul Bari strongly argued for a multi-religious movement with Gandhi as its leader. He even went to the extent of supporting the move against cow slaughter.\(^\text{141}\)

Some Deobandis thought to seek support from their counterparts in Turkey. Maulana Mahmud ul Hasan of Deoband went to Hijaz and met Ghalib Pasha, the Turkish Governor and Anwar Pasha, Turkey's Minister of war and prepared a plan of action for the liberation India. Sherif Hussain, the ruler of Makkah who had been watching them keenly, at the instance of the British officials caught Mahmud ul Hasan and handed him over to the British. The British interned him at Malta\(^\text{142}\) for over four years from 1917-1920.\(^\text{143}\) As soon as he returned to India, he joined the Khilafat movement and issued a fatwa-supporting Non co-operation against the British government, which engendered great agitation in the country.\(^\text{144}\)

**Hijrat Movement**

The Allahabad session of Khilafat-Ulama Conference (June 1920) declared British India a Dar ul Harb and proposed hijrat (migration) to Afghanistan. Maulana Abdul Bari gave a ruling that if anyone felt that he

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\(^{142}\) During his internment he wrote *Asir-i Malta* describing the hardships he suffered in the jail.


could not discharge his religious duties freely under a non-Muslim
government, he should migrate to a Muslim country. He also stated that in
certain cases migration was even *wajib* (incumbent) on Muslims. Maulana
Azad also issued a *fatwa* to the same effect. Thus the *Hijrat*
movement started. Maulana Ubaidullah Sindhi went to Afghanistan and worked with
German and Turkish agents to stir up tribesmen against the British in the
North West Frontier Province. It was estimated that about 20,000 persons
sold their lands and properties at throw away prices and migrated to
Afghanistan. Having neither property nor employment, their rehabilitation
was difficult. Among the early emigrants only a few persons with special
skills were absorbed. Meanwhile the *Amir* of Afghanistan, at the instigation of
the British, turned against the emigrants and ordered them to retreat. When
they reached their native places they found themselves totally ruined. But
they bore all sufferings in the cause of their faith.

*Jam‘iyyat ul Ulama-i Hind*

In November 1919, ulama from *Deoband* and *Frangi Mahal* founded the *Jam‘iyyat-ul Ulama-i Hind* (society of ulama in India). Mufti

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146 Gail Minault, *op.cit.*, p. 106.
147 Ibid. p. 107.
149 Ibid.
Kifayatullah and Maulana Ahmad Said were elected the President and the Secretary of the Jam‘iyyat respectively.\textsuperscript{151} The Jam‘iyyat was to act as a link between the Khilafat Committee and the ulama.\textsuperscript{152} It was the time when Gandhiji was elevated to the leadership of the Indian National Congress. The advent of Gandhiji to the leadership held out hopes to the ulama.\textsuperscript{153} The aims of the Jam‘iyyat were the following

- Religiously train the Muslims both in politics and non-political affairs.
- Protect Islam, its centres, rituals and Islamic identity according to Sharia.
- Obtain and protect political and religious rights of Muslims.
- Bring the ulama to the public life.
- Organize the Muslims on moral basis.
- Establish harmony with the non-Muslims.
- Fight for the liberation of faith and nation on religious line.
- Solve the problems of the community by establishing Sharia courts etc.\textsuperscript{154}

They also had a leading role in the Khilafat issue. Under the auspices of Jam‘iyyat, Maulana Abdul Bari managed to secure a unanimous fatwa on

\textsuperscript{151} Sayyid Muhammad Miyan, Jam‘iyyat ul Ulama Kya Hai, (Urdu), U P Public Division, n.d. pp. 9-10. See also, Minault Gail, \textit{op.cit.}, p. 80.

\textsuperscript{152} Minault Gail, \textit{op.cit.}, p. 73.


\textsuperscript{154} Sayyid Muhammad Miyan, \textit{op.cit.}, p. 37, quoted in K. Hussain, \textit{op.cit.}, p. 211-12.
the Khilafat question. The Khilafat fatwa stated that the Khalif need not be a Qurayshī and that if anyone, Quraysh or not (such as Sherif Hussain) revolts against the recognized Khalif or tries to replace him, it is the duty of all Muslims to put down that rebel.¹⁵⁶

The Jam‘iyyat-ul Ulama became a guiding force both to the common mass and to the political leaders. On 24th June 1920 in its meeting of 500 ulama at Allahabad, the Jam‘iyyat took strong steps to which even Gandhiji objected owing to its extreme nature. The fatwa proposed four stages for Non-co operation.

1. Resignation of titles and honorary posts,
2. Resignation from civil services,
3. Resignation from police and army and
4. Refusal to pay taxes.¹⁵⁷

Responding to the fatwa of the Jam‘iyyat a large number of Muslims gave up their government posts and lawyers stopped their legal practices.¹⁵⁸

The Jam‘iyyat held that it was because of their supremacy over Muslim countries in the Middle East that the imperial England was keeping its hold

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¹⁵⁵ A member from the family of the Prophet and the custodian of Holy Ka‘aba at Makkah.
¹⁵⁷ P.C. Bamford, op.cit., p. 158.
over India. Thus Jam'iyat thought it to be its religious as well as national duty to fight against the British Imperialism.

In November 1920, a meeting of the Jam'iyat-ul Ulama at Delhi issued a Muttafiqa fatwa,¹⁵⁹ signed by 900 prominent ulama,¹⁶⁰ which took the following historic decisions:

➤ It is unlawful to be member of the government council.

➤ It is unlawful to occupy judicial posts in government courts.

➤ It is unlawful to get education from the government schools or colleges aided by the government.

➤ It is unlawful to remain in honorary magistracy and to accept honorary ranks and titles conferred by the government.

➤ All government services and services with government help are haram (forbidden).

➤ Serving in the army and the police is a serious sin as they may be duty-bound to shoot their brothers about which God says in Holy Quran Surah Nisa',¹⁶¹ “Whoever will intentionally kill a fellow Muslim will

¹⁵⁹ Means unanimous verdict.
¹⁶¹ Quran, 4: 93.
be punished in hell for ever.” The Prophet has said, “Whoever raises weapon against a Muslim will cease to be a Muslim.”

This fatwa carries the insignia of Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, Mufti Muhammed Kifayatullah of Delhi, Maulawi Azad Subhani of Kanpur, Maulawi Muhammed Dawud of Ghazni, Maulawi Abdul Bari of Lucknow, Maulawi Sanaulla of Amritsari, Maulawi Aziz-ul Rahiman Mufti of Deoband School and Shah Sulaiman Phulvari, a leading Sufi of Bihar and all the followers of Abdul Bari of Frangi Mahal School and many other great learned men of India.163 The response of those concerned towards the fatwa was quick and phenomenal. Thirty-one policemen from Uttar Pradesh, forty from Bengal and seventeen from Bombay resigned from service and joined the Khilafat Movement.164

The rising power and influence of the Jam’iyyat-ul Ulama, made the government take harsh measures. Many of its leaders were arrested and executed. The fatwa was confiscated and its sources were checked. Jam’iyyat could not even meet for many years after its Karachi session of 1931.165 Even after five years the British authorities were not ready to let off the Jam’iyyat

163 CID list of names of Maulawis signed the Fatwa, March 15, 1919 Home (pol.), A 415-26 August 1919. Qazi Muhammad Jamshed, op.cit., p. 36.
164 Qazi Muhammad Jamshed, op.cit., p. 36.
165 E. Moidu Maulawi, Charitra... op.cit., p. 18.
leaders. On 25th December 1936 Maulawi Samiulla, an active worker of Jam’iyyat ul Ulama was ordered by the authorities to vacate Delhi within 24 hours under the Punjab Criminal Act.\(^{166}\)

The Jam’iyyat always supported the Congress. Many of its annual conferences declared its unconditional support to the Congress.\(^{167}\) In many respects it served as the beacon light to the Congress and the national leaders. Years before the Congress adopted the resolution of total independence, the Jam’iyyat under the Presidentship of Maulana Sulaiman Nadwi (in 1920) had passed ‘Azad i Hind’ (India Independence Resolution). The Congress took the step of Purna Swaraj only in the Lahore session of 1929.\(^{168}\)

The Jam’iyyat and Pakistan

It would be interesting to note that the Jam’iyyat ul Ulama could not be won over by the Indian Muslim League for supporting its demand for partition.\(^{169}\) The Jam’iyyat leaders devoted their indefatigable energy to oppose the partition. They dreamt of a United India, which could have best solved the Hindu Muslim problems.\(^{170}\) Thus the Muslim League treated Jam’iyyat as a rival group, both for its anti-partition attitude and pro-Congress approach. To the Muslim League, the members of the Jam’iyyat ul

\(^{166}\) Al-Ameen (News paper), Book 2, Vol. 130, Calicut, 7th May 1936.
\(^{167}\) E. Moidu Maulawi, Charitra... *op. cit.*, p. 13.
\(^{168}\) Ibid, p. 23.
\(^{169}\) Asghar Ali Engineer (ed.), *op. cit.*, p. 2.
Ulama were traitors to Islam and the mercenary agents of the Hindus.\textsuperscript{171} The Al Ahrar (literally free people) led by Maulana Ataullah Shah Bukhari of the Punjab actively opposed the Muslim League and condemned it as the party of capitalists.\textsuperscript{172}

Maulana Hussain Ahmad Madani, the leading ulama of the Jam’iyyat, criticized the Pakistan demand of the Muslim League.\textsuperscript{173} He said, “This is a time when the movement for Pakistan is gathering strength and the very basis of the movement is religious nationalism.”\textsuperscript{174} Because of his stand against Pakistan demand, the League vehemently attacked Maulana who paid for it in the same coin.\textsuperscript{175} About Pakistan he said, “These days the Pakistan movement is in everyone’s lips. If it means Islamic government, the one established by the Prophet to be formed in the Muslim majority provinces, then it is a very appreciable scheme. No Muslim would oppose it. And if its purpose is to establish some government under the British control which may be called Islamic government, then this scheme is mean and cowardly which provides the British an opportunity to divide and rule. Turkey was divided in this manner. Arabia was broken into pieces like this and the same process is manifesting itself in India too…. It is a poisonous powder for communal war

\textsuperscript{171} Muhammad Numan, Muslim India Rise and Growth of All India Muslim League, Allahabad, 1942, pp.213-214.

\textsuperscript{172} Ibid, p. 7.

\textsuperscript{173} In one of his speeches at Delhi in December 1937.

\textsuperscript{174} Maulana Sayyid Muhammad Miyan Sahib, Asir- e Malta (Urdu), Delhi, 1976, p. 7.

\textsuperscript{175} Presidential address of Jam’iyyat-ul Ulama Session of 1940 in Jaunpur.
and it is deadly poison for peace and prosperity in India and it is a death warrant for the Muslim minority provinces."^{176}

The ulama considered the opposition of and fight against the British as their religious obligation for which the co-operation of the Hindus was essential. Addressing the last session of the Jam‘iyyat- ul Ulama conference in 1920 Maulana Mahmud Hasan said, "there is no doubt that Allah (Haq Ta’ala) has made your fellow country men, the Hindu people who are greater in number in some way or the other (your) supporters in achieving such pious objective (freedom) and I consider unity and solidarity between these two communities are very beneficial and fruitful and considering the delicacy of the situation I have high regards for the leaders of the two communities (i.e. unity). Because I know that if conditions are contrary to this it would make achievement of freedom for India impossible."^{177}

The alim like Maulana Abdul Bari of Frangi Mahal School supported Gandhiji in the Rowlat Satyagraha and submitted to his leadership. In 1919, during the Khilafat agitation, he wrote to Gandhiji, “Thanks are due to your kind special attention for the success of Hindu Muslim unity. Your personality and behaviour are deeply affecting the Muslims in general and religious sections in particular. A group of ulama have written to me specially

^{176} Maulana Sayyid Muhammad Miyan Sahib, Ulama-e Haq, Vol. II, Delhi, 1948, p. 113-14, quoted in Asghar Ali Engineer, Role of Minorities op.cit., p. 12.

^{177} Maulana Sayyid Muhammad Miyan Saheb, Asir-e Malta, Delhi, 1976, p. 59, quoted in Asghar Ali Engineer, Role of Minorities op.cit., pp. 4-5.
to pay their homage to you." Maulana also declared in November 1920, “I have accepted his (Gandhiji’s) support in getting our aims fulfilled for that purpose. I think it is necessary to follow his advice.... I know that the strength of Islam lies in association with him.”

The cordial relation with Gandhiji did not last long. When Gandhiji suspended the Civil Disobedience Movement following the incident of Chauri Chaura, the Jam‘iyyat leaders became disappointed and criticized him bitterly. The immediate result of this was the disappearance of the ulama from the national scene.

On the eve of independence, some leading ulama founded the Jam‘iyyat-ul Ulama i Islam in collaboration with the Muslim League. Maulana Shabbier Ahmad Usmani of Deoband was its president. Thus both the Congress and the League had their own separate Jam‘iyyat groups in India. Both of them justified their cause on the basis of Sharia. Maulana Hussain Ahmad Madani tried to prove the theory of one nation with the help of Quran and Hadith. He wrote in his work, ‘Hamara Hindusthan our uske fazail’ (Our India and her greatness) that it was in India that Adam had

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179 Ibid, p. 33.
180 Jam‘iyyat was divided with its headquarters one at Bedaun and another at Kanpur. Tabligh and Tansim movements were also started. For details see, Maulana Hussain Ahmed Madani, Hamara Hindusthan our Uske Fazail, Delhi, 1941.
descended from the heaven. During the general election of 1945, the nationalist ulama made a frantic appeal to the other group of Muslim voters not to cast their vote in favour of Pakistan. At the same time the pro-partition group tried to canvass among the Muslims, in favour of Pakistan.

In short the ulama of India in general were par excellence with their counterpart in the world. As they enjoyed high posts and powers during the Muslim rule, they concerned the welfare of the community their prime duty. At the rise of British rule, they took vigilant steps and organized many movements and outbreaks at different places. The revolt of 1857, thus, was marked with the presence of a large number of ulama in the warfront. Thus the ulama were the group that suffered most in the post revolt period. Despite all the persecutions, they continued their campaign with different institutions such as the Deoband and the Frangi Mahal schools of learning. It was the ulama of India who stood in the forefront of the Khilafat movement and worked hard to make it an international issue. They ardently declared the ahimsa, Non co-operation and boycott preached by Gandhiji as the only means to achieve success. Besides, an organization was founded to boost the activities of the Indian National Congress. It also emphatically declared its stand of a unified and united independent India.

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182 To the spirit of the ulama paid to the freedom of the country. See Speech of the Vice Chancellor of Deoband. Appendix, No: I.