CHAPTER – II

MAULĀNA MOHD QĀSIM NĀNAUTVI

1) Biographical Sketch  
2) Deoband Movement  
3) Missionary Challenge Rebutted
MAULĀNA MUHAMMAD QĀSIM NĀNAUTVĪ

1. BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH:

Maulāna Muhammad Qāsim Nānautvī was born in Sha'ban or Ramadan 1248 AH (1832 AD) at Nānauta - a small town 16 miles west of Deoband and about 80 miles north of Delhi. Eight generations earlier, his fore-father Maulāna Muhammad Hashim who had close contact with Emperor Shāhjahan, was granted a Jagîr at Nānauta. By descent, the family line is traced to Ḥadrat Abu Bakr al-Siddiq, the 2nd Caliph (632-634 AD). The town in district Sahāranpūr) is still known for its Siddīqi families.¹

He received his early education at Nānauta and Deoband. Afterwards he was called at Sahāranpūr by his maternal grand-father. He studies there Arabic language and grammar.²

In 1843 Maulāna Mumlûk 'Ali (d. 1851) the renowned "teacher of the teachers"³ of Delhi College and father of

2. Ibid, p. 2
3. Among his students were such luminaries as Sir Sayyid, Maulana Mohd.Qasim, Maulana Rashid Ahmad Gangohi etc. About his erudition, Sir Sayyid Says: "He had such a perfect capacity and ready recall of rational and traditional sciences and their texts that if by some stroke of misfortune, suppose, the treasury of the world were to be emptied of these books, it would have been possible to reproduce them from his memory." - Athar al-Sanadid, p. 70.
Maulāna Muhammad Yāqūb Nānautvi, took him along with his son to Delhi.

For some years he studied along with Maulāna Yāqūb and Maulāna Rashīd Ahmad Gangōhi, who had joined them two years later. Maulāna Mumlūk'Ali taught them privately at his residence where they stayed. His genius began to show up at this stage. The difficult books like Sadra, Shams, Bāzigha etc were recited by him just like a Hāfiz (Memorizer) of Qur'ān recited the Holy Book. All this was not without understanding the subject. But since certain students doubted if at all he understood the Arabic texts which he so fluently recited, the learned teacher said, "No students can continue before me without understanding." The same applied to Maulāna Rashīd Ahmad Gangōhi. Both became friends since those days and remained so to the last. They studied Hadīth together from Shah Abd al-Ghani (1819–1878), a disciple of Shāh Moḥi. Ishāq and a central figure in the field of Hadīth after the migration from Delhi of Shāh Moḥi. Ishāq. About the same time both of them together made Bai‘ah (Spiritual descipleship) to Hāji Imādullah and covered different stages of it under him.²

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1. Maulāna Yaqūb, pp. 6-7
2. Ibid.
Afterwards Maulāna Mamlūk 'Ali admitted Maulāna Qāsim, in the Delhi College where he was a teacher of oriental learning. He asked the teacher of mathematics not to object his conditions and instructed Maulāna Qāsim to study geometry by himself. Shortly afterwards his exceptional capacity in this began to be discussed within the campus. On solving certain difficult geometrical problems, presented as test to him by one of the teachers, he became all the more known. At the stage of final examinations, however, in spite of all persuasions, he left the college without appearing at the examination. The English Principal of the college and others felt very sorry for this. Sir Sayyid writes about him,

"There are many people still alive who have seen Maulvi Mohd. Qāsim receiving his education in Delhi at a very early age. He studied all the books from Maulāna Mamlūk 'Ali. His manners and general disposition were all too symbolic of God-fearingness, piety and good-naturedinness. From his student days, he was known for his exceptional intelligence, broad-views and a very piercing power of reasoning. In the same way he was also known for his pious-

1. The then Principal of Delhi College was Mr. Tailor who was killed in 1857. See Tarikh-e-Darul Uloom, V.1, p.103.
ness and deep religiousness in the learning circle of
the College."

In Delhi after completing his education, he joined
the famous publishing house, Matba' Ahmadi of Maulana Ahmad
'Ali Muhaddith Saharanpuri as a proof-reader. It was about
this time that Maulana Ahmad 'Ali who was then writing the
commentary of Sahih al-Bukhari and only 5 or 6 last sections
were remaining, entrusted the work to Maulana Mohd.
Qasim. Maulana Muhammad Yaqub writes:

"At that time some people who were not aware of the
genius of Maulana Qasim objected that the commentary-writing
of such an important book has been entrusted to such a young
man. Maulana Ahmad 'Ali replied, 'I am not so silly as to
do this without having realised everything.' Then he showed
the commentary to them. The people then realised. These
sections in Bukhari are specially difficult, particularly
due to having regular regard towards supporting the Hanafite
school of Fiqh disproving the objections put by Imam Bukhari
himself against the Hanafite view. Now anyone can see for
himself how wonderful a commentary he has written."
He was married in 1853. In those days the war of Crema between Turkey and Russia was going on and the Indian Muslims prayed every day for the victory of the Turks. Maulāna Mohd. Qāsim gave away all the jewellery of his wife in Sultani donation.¹

In May 1857, the Meerut regiments raised the banner of freedom and shortly afterwards the whole Northern India rose in revolt against the British rulers. All law and order almost suddenly disappeared. On the arrival of general Bakht Khan in Delhi (2 July 1857) the Ulama assembled in Jami' Masjid of Delhi and declared Jihad. The Fatwā (religious decree) of Jihad issued by the Ulama had signatures of Mufti Sadruddin Āzurda, Maulāna Mohd Nadhir Husain and Maulāna Rahmatullah of Kerāna, the last being the famous polemic who had come here as a representative of Ḥāji Imdādullah, the celebrated divine of Thāna Bhawan with wide-ranging following among Muslims and Ulama both including the king and the royal family.

Maulāna Mohd Qāsim played an important role in mobilising popular as well as royal support to the cause of Jihad. Through Nawab Sher 'Ali Khān of Muradabad, he made an effort

to persuade Bahadur Shah Zafar that: "The king should try to purify Delhi from the Britishers by utilizing his force, whereas we shall proceed towards Delhi by fighting the British power from Thana-Bhawan and Shamlī. This would make possible that Delhi was freed finally."¹

After having Thana Bhawan evacuated from the British force, Hāji Imādudullah was selected as the Imam (ruler of the Muslims) and Maulāna Qāsim and Maulāna Rashīd Gangōhi were appointed his chief advisers. Hāji Imādudullah for a few days sat down to decide civil and criminal cases according to Islamic law.² Volunteers for Jihad were recruited and the Tahsīl of Shamlī, which was fortified like a fort was then invaded by them and finally occupied. This raid was led by Maulāna Mohd. Qāsim and Maulāna Rashīd Ahmad Gangōhi. Among the besieged, 113 people were killed.

In the mean-time the British forces re-occupied Delhi (14 September 1857). The occupation of Shamlī had enraged the English men greatly. The Collector of Muzaffar Nagar, Mr. Edwards was ordered to attack Thana Bhawan in order to crush the Jihādi stronghold. The Mujāhidin reversed the first three attacks. They could not however withstand the

¹ Munāzir Ahsan Qāsim, V.2, pp.136-36.
fourth one and had to vacate the field. Hāfiz Mohd. Dāmin, a close friend of the leaders, was also martyred. After their re-occupation the British badly destroyed the town and raged many stately residences in order to avenge their defeat. Maulāna Mohd. Qāsim was also wounded in this fight by a bullet in the leg. The British government initiated a reign of terror and a campaign of prosecution and arrest. Hāji Imdādullāh kept shifting his hide-outs before he secretly migrated to Mecca. Maulāna Gangōhi was arrested and jailed, but was released after six months. Maulāna Mohd. Qāsim however, could not be arrested in spite of many attempts, though he refused to remain hidden within four walls saying that the Prophet, while migrating to Madīnah did not hide himself beyond three days. In the following year the Government declared general pardon but Maulāna Mohd. Qāsim remained throughout his life a suspect in the eyes of the Government.

He visited three times al-Ḥiṣā for Ḥaǧj purpose. He performed his first pilgrimage in 1860. It was on board the ship that he memorized the Qur'ān. Whatever of the Holy

1. Abdur Rashīd Arshād, Bis Bade Musalman, p.119
Book, he memorized each day, he recited it in the Tarāvīh prayers at night. In the following year again in Ramādān he completed the memorization of the rest of the Holy Qur'ān.

He returned via Bombay in December 1861 and joined the publishing house, Maṭba' Mujtabāī of Munshi Imtiāz 'Ali in Meerut, for the same job which he had selected for himself. He remained there for more than a year. During his leisure time he used to teach Sahīh Muslim and the Mathnawi of Māulānā Rūmī. A notable work during his stay in Meerut was the proof reading of the Himāel Shārīf (al-Qur'ān in more portable size), which was printed in 1286 A.H. by Maṭba' Mujtabāī, Delhi. It is still counted as a good model for clarity and precision.

In addition to his other academic and educational pre-occupations, Māulānā Mohd Qāsim was an active reformer and preacher of the re-marriage of widows. He presented a practical example of this by arranging re-marriage of his own widow sister. In the same way he actively preached for giving out the legal share of daughters in inheritance. Moreover he stressed in his writings and speeches and carried zealously the reform of futile customs and ceremonies.

It was about this time that he corresponded with Sir Sayyid. He wrote more than one letter in response to

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1. Munshi Imtiāz Ali was a perfectionist calligrapher of his day. He had received instruction in Naskh & Nasta'liq style from Bahadur Shah Zafar. See Encyclopaedia of Islam(Urdu) Lahore, 1986, V.19, p.507, Art. Māulānā Mohd. Qāsim.

Sir Sayyid's queries who wanted to know if at all there was any fault in the principles on which were based almost all of his writings.\textsuperscript{1} Maulānā Mohd. Qāsim pointed out academically in reply the faulty aspects of Sir Sayyid's principles (15 in all) one by one. He replied Sir Sayyid's doubts and objections politely, expressing nevertheless his unhappiness over the latter's liberalism in matters of Hadīth and Faith. This correspondence was later published under the name Tasfiyah al-'Aqāid. Notwithstanding this, their relations throughout remained pleasant and sincere and both admired each other.\textsuperscript{2}

A general misconception however seems to prevail that their relations and efforts were antagonistic to each other. In reality the gap separating them was not that of narrow-mindedness and liberalism as is often superficially regarded. It was in fact that of reformist choice and emphasis. In the words of Professor Ziaul Hasan Faruqi, "Maulānā Nānawtvi was an enlightened 'ālim and in no way opposed to the acquisition of modern sciences by the Ulamā. What he stood for was the preservation and propagation of Uloom-e-Nagliyyah" (transmitted Islamic sciences). Nor equally Sir Sayyid was opposed to the acquisition of Islamic learning.

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{1} Tasfiyah al-'Aqāid, p.5, Karachi, 1976.
\item \textsuperscript{2} When Sir Sayyid established Aligarh School, the names of Maulānā Mohd. Qāsim and his colleague Maulānā Yāqūb were included in the school's advisory board. The Maulānā however expressed his inability with apologies. See Bis Bade Musalman, pp.127-28.
\end{itemize}
Commenting on the conditions of Deoband's Madrasa in the year 1289, Sir Sayyid writes in Tahdhib al-Akhlaq (dated 1 Jamad al-Thani, 1290).

"It appears that the Madrasa is not functioning on its own or the sympathy of the Muslims. It is rather dependent on the person of one man. Moulavi Mohd. Qāsim is indeed a very great man and a born saint in fact. The whole district Sahāranpūr and Meerut hold him in reverence."¹

In 1880 Sir Sayyid wrote on Maulāna Qāsim's passing away an elaborate condolatory note expressing his deep affection and shock,

"Maulāna Qāsim was peerless in this world. He might have been inasmuch as academic knowledge is concerned slightly less than that of Shāh Abd al-'Azīz, but in all other things he outstone him. In his simplicity, piety and loveability he was no less than Shāh Mohd. Ishāq if not more than him. Indeed he had angelic character and qualities."²

¹. Bis Bade Musalman, pp.125-26
The Maulāna performed his 2nd hajj in 1870 and the third in 1877, in which a number of his disciples, colleagues and those who loved him, accompanied him. During his all the three pilgrimages, he had also the satisfaction of seeing and staying with his spiritual mentor Ḥāji Imdādullāh who had migrated to Mecca (hence his epitet Muhājir Makkī) in 1860.

It was during the return journey from his last Hajj that he was taken ill in Jeddah. He suffered with fever, cough and respiratory trouble which turned into a chronic disease. His efforts however for the progress of Dārul 'Uloom and against the Christian and Ārya Samājī challenges continued even in the wake of his debilitating sickness. In spite of all Ünāni and allopathic treatment, his condition continued to deteriorate. Finally, on 4 Jamād al-Ūla 1297/15 April, 1880 he breathed his last. He was buried in a piece of land made available for this purpose at the spot as a trust. It is not far from the main buildings of the Madrasa and the town of Deoband.

Among his pupils, whose number runs into hundreds, the most distinguished were Maulāna Mahmūd al-Ḥasan of

1. Tarīkh Dārul 'Uloom, V.I, p.119
2. In the wake of his arrest orders, Ḥāji Imdādullāh, remained underground at various places for two and half years after 1857's calamity. Finally in January 1860 he migrated to Hijāz. See 'Ulama-e-Hind ka Shandār Mādi, V.4, p.333.
Deoband, better known as Shaikh al-Hind, Maulana Fakhr al-Hasan of Gangoh and Maulana Ahmad Hasan of Amroha. These brilliant academicians and other lesser-lights with their own disciples rendered valuable services to the cause of Islamic sciences. 1

2. DEOBAND MOVEMENT:

The Muslims were at the cross-road in their dilemma between what is urgent for them and what is important: Economic and political betterment or moral and religious upliftment. Both of these aspects required immediate attention and total devotion.

The first response to this dilemma came from Deoband, where a group of 'Ulama decided to establish the institution which came to be known as Darul-'Uloom of Deoband. The Muslim defeat at the political front coupled with the anti-Muslim policy of the British Government and the open challenge to Islam by the missionaries had forced these 'Ulama to think and take care in the first place of preserving Islamic Character and culture through dissemination of Islamic learning.

2. The second response was the emergence of Aligarh Movement initiated by Sir Sayyid, a few years later. It took care of the desperate conditions of Muslim community and devoted itself to providing social and economic confidence through modern education.
"The sword and spear were replaced now by the pen and the tongue."¹

Thus, Deoband did not only become a renowned seat of Islamic education but in fact it was the centre of a strong education and political movement also. Among the founding fathers of Deoband Seminary were Maulana Zulfiqar Ali of Deoband, Maulana Qasim of Nanautah, Haji Abid Hussain of Deoband, Maulana Fazlur Rahman of Deoband and Maulana Rashid Ahmad of Gangoh. At that time these divines decided that in order to keep the religious awareness of the Muslims alive it is inevitable to establish an academic centre of religious education. In the light of this Maulana Mohammad Qasim and his chief colleagues as named above decided that this institution ought to be established at Deoband rather than at Delhi. Thus, the Masjid Chhatta, the meeting Centre of these 'Ulama and divines in Deoband, became also the starting point of Deoband institution.²

Initially it was no more than a primary school or Maktab. One of the founders, namely, Haji Abid Hussain was rather insistent on keeping it confined to that level only. It was however, Maulana Mohammad Qasim who patronised

it from the beginning and conceived of it on a much larger scale and made it within a short time the centre of a great educational movement.¹

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Deoband school was established in 1283/1867. Maulāna Qasim did not live long to see this institution turning into the largest University of theological studies in the sub-continent. He died at the age of forty-eight in 1880. Nevertheless during that brief period as a result of his ambitions, devotion, he saw the rapid progress and popularity of this institution.²

The objectives of the institution as elaborated in the old constitution are as follows:

"(1) Education of Qur'ān, Hadīth, Tafsīr, beliefs, Kālām and instruction of other useful related sciences and arts to provide the Muslims with complete religious information and to serve Islam through preaching and spiritual guidance.

(2) To train the students in Islamic morals and actions and to create Islamic spirit among students.

(3) To propagate Islam and to preserve and defend it through speech and writing both. To awaken such morals and deeds among Muslims as were the distinction of the Salaf (companions of the Prophet of Islam).

(4) To avoid the influence of Government and to retain the independence of knowledge and thought.

(5) To establish Arabic Madrasas in order to disseminate religious sciences and affiliate them with Darul Uloom."

Maulana Qari Mohd. Tayyeb, former Muhtamim of Darul 'Uloom explained the main ingredients of Deoband's outlook as follows:

"First Religiousness: as Darul 'Uloom is the source of religious dynamism and it is wholly bound to Islamic constitution and laws.

Second, Independence: from all internal servitude in its administration of education and training, and in its

1. Tarikh Darul-'Uloom, V.I, p.142.
financial matters. It is the first institution to which more than once the Government made offers of financial aid of lakhs of rupees but it refused to accept.

Third, Simplicity and Industry

Fourth, Moral Character: which is the spiritual legacy of its founders and elders.

Fifth, Academic and Educational Devotion: This is a characteristic which can be felt in the first instance by anyone who visits here.¹

The history of Darul 'Uloom during more than hundred years since its inception, indeed seems to verify this stand or outlook of Deoband school.

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The basic idea of this educational movement was born of the fact that the doors of all worldly progress were closed on Muslim community under a repressive, hostile and alien rule. Now the only thing left at the Muslim's choice was the preservation of their faith, learning and culture.² The

¹ Ibid, p.144.
² Ulama-e-Haq, V.I, pp.37-41
question of Islamic identity through preservation of its faith and culture required immediate attention. The 'Ulama were of the view that unless positive attention was not paid to this grave question, the Indian Muslims in their ignorance and poverty would be gradually deprived of their religious character and Islamic identity. The ultimate dissolution of the community then seemed imminent to the 'Ulamā of Deoband. The most urgent to them was to initiate a programme of Muslim education in religious learning and carry it out independently without government aid and interference.  

With this idea Deoband institution was founded. Under the conditions the 'Ulamā did not accept any financial grant or aid from the British Government. Nor they liked the idea of receiving any aid from the government, because it would entail government supervision that would mar the very idea of their independent struggle. They disliked government intervention not only because they wanted to pursue their own course of education, but, also because they had not still forgotten the wounds inflicted in 1857.

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1. Ibid, pp.49-53.
This fact is important in so far as the Deoband school of thought never severed its relation with the political struggle. This sentiment found expression time and again in various efforts aiming at ultimate freedom of the country. In the beginning the goal was pursued in full secrecy, as would be seen in the Silken Kerchief Movement of Shaikh al-Hind during the second decade of this century. But finally, the Deoband Movement aligned itself openly with the emerging freedom struggle in the country.

In 1913, Maulana Mahmud Hasan (Shaikh al-Hind) one of the chief disciples of Maulana Mohd. Qasim, initiated a secret movement which aimed at gaining the freedom of the country through certain revolutionary means. This secret scheme has been named in Rolt Commission Report as "Silken Kerchief Letters" which were being used to exchange secret information and messages. Incidentally, however, the scheme came to light and Shaikh al-Hind with some of his disciples was arrested and exiled to the island of Malta where he remained confined for several years. His couriers, Maulana

Mohd. Mansoor Ansari and Maulana Ubaidullah Sindhi working for a long time had to live in exilement. 1

After his release from Malta, Shaikh al-Hind became a member of Jam'iyat al-'Ulama which was established a year before - in 1919 mainly by his own disciples to promote the struggle for independence. It worked side by side with Indian National Congress. Muslim luminaries in Jam'iyat al-'Ulama-e-Hind, almost all of them being old boys of Deoband, enthusiastically participated in the freedom struggle just as they had taken active part in the Khilafat Movement. In 1926, the Calcutta session of Jam'iyat passed the resolution of complete Independence - 3 years prior to the same resolution of the Indian National Congress. All the participant members were graduates of Deoband. 2

During his visit to Darul Uloom of Deoband in 1969, Khan Abd al-Ghaffar Khan while addressing the students said, "My relation to Deoband dates back to the days when Shaikh al-Hind was still alive. Sitting here at Deoband, we envisaged plans as how to expel the British from the country and how to free India from British subordination. In fact, this institution has rendered great services towards the freedom of the country."

1. Ibid.
It is surprising to note that in spite of this political sentiment ingrained in Deoband Movement from the beginning, the educational and academic devotion and the reformist purpose were never compromised. The main founder of the institution Maulana Mohd. Qasim himself had levelled the ground for this sincere and silent effort. This he did also in the form of certain directive principles which he formulated as the basis of functioning of the Madrasa. These principles provide an insight into the fact that how a single institution, totally unaided by the Government, without any regular financial means and in an antagonised and tense environment, brought about a pleasant change and restored the lost confidence to an otherwise totally depressed community. Some of the more important of these principles are as follows:

1) "So long as there is no regular or definite financial source, this Madrasa will function successfully. But in case a definite source of income or any other regular financial means like a manufacturing house or a jagir is made available for this madrasa, it appears then that this God-fearingness and hopefulness will slip out of the hands and the divine help will cease to come about, and conflicts will develop among those working here. It is therefore advisable that regarding income and construction, a sort of meanslessness should be kept up in view throughout."
2) Participation of the Government or that of the nobility-class in the affairs of this Madrasa also appears harmful for it.

3) Donations from those seem more beneficial who do not desire renown. This should be kept in mind while receiving donation, as this would provide for the Madrasa a stronger foundation to perpetuate.

4) The members of the consultative body of the Madrasa should always keep in mind the betterment and good prestige of the Madrasa and must not show adamance in their contention. If such a situation arises, it appears then that the very foundation of the institution will be shaken. 1

These principles are a vivid example of the Ulama's main concern for the Muslim masses. They had not only total indifference towards the government but even towards the Muslim nobility. But to call it separatism as is in vogue or regard it as introversion will be no more than an argument without evidence. For these 'Ulama chose for themselves on the one hand the harder path of simplicity and dedication. On the other hand they adopted a course of action which

brought for them independence of activity, while it helped restore confidence and optimism among the Muslim masses.
The 'Ulama kept away from the Government and the so-called elite class. But their close and continued contact with the Muslim public was refreshing and rejuvenating.

The seat of learning at Deoband as mentioned above was in fact the center of an educational movement meant for the whole sub-continent. The founder himself took steps to promote Islamic learning at many other places also. ¹ The Madrasa Shāhi of Murādabād, Manba‘ al-Uloom of Gulavadhi in district Meerut, Madrasa Murādiya of Muzaffar Nagar, Madrasa Jāmī' Masjid of Amroha are some of the examples of such theological centres as were founded by Maulāna Muhammad Qāsim himself. ²

"All these Madrasas are still rendering valuable religious services. The graduates of these Madrasas, spread over from China to Africa Coasts, and from Tarkestan to Sri Lanka, have done unforgettable service to preserve Muslim identity and Islamic learning. It also deserves mention here that the 'Ulamā and graduates of Deoband never bowed down before the British might or magnificence

¹ Encyclopaedia of Islam, vol.19(Urdu), Article Maulāna Mohi. Qāsim, p.509. See Also Tarikh-e-Darul Uloom, pp.464-76.
² Palanpuri, p.17.
and never compromised with it. Rather the Dārul Uloom Movement actively worked against British rule. They devoted themselves to their work silently. The bright examples of truthfulness and honesty, religiousness and fear of God, sympathy and common weal for the Muslim community, Martyrdom and self-less struggle, which they have come out with, are enviable for the 'Ulamā and graduates of all Muslim countries. Many 'Arab lands even cannot present such precedents as have been presented within last hundred years or so by them in the form of active struggle for preserving the prophetic learning, teaching, dissemination and propagation."¹

³. MISSIONARY CHALLENGE TO ISLĀM AND MAULĀNA MOHD. QĀSIM:

We have noted above that India was raided even before 1857 by Christian missionary zealots from various parts of Europe and America belonging to different Christian orders.² These missionaries, with open support of the Government, did not prefer to work silently or anonymously. On the contrary


they began to fling objections and caste aspersions on Islam and preached Christianity through harassment and temptation. Muslims being the greatest political victims, also became the target of their attacks on Islamic Faith, and unfounded objections to the life of the Prophet of Islam. It was an unfortunate development as it led to create an atmosphere of discontent and tension among the Muslims. It was realised even by the more equitable English men themselves. Another unfortunate development for Muslims which took place as a corollary of missionary activity was the aggressive challenge of Hindu revivalist movement of Arya Samajis. Encouraged and supported by Christian Missionaries, the Arya Samajis also began to challenge Muslims in terms of public objections and attacks on Islamic Faith.

As a result, more than one from amongst the Muslim Ulama came out in order to debate with the Christian ecclesiastics and the Arya Samajis. Among the more renowned in this group were Maulana Rahmatullah Kerana, Maulana Sayyid Abu al-Mansoor of Delhi and Maulana Muhammad Qasim of Nanautah. The first two in this field specialised in

2. Ibid, p.479.
3. Intisar ul Islam, ed. by Mohd. Miyan, Deoband (1930), pp.3-10
Biblical Studies and as such debated successfully with missionaries and pointed out the historical inconsistencies of the existing versions of New Testament etc.¹

Maulāna Muhammad Qāsim in addition to such debates chiefly distinguished himself in bring to the fore the inner and inherent rationalism of Islamic faith system.

In 1876 a Kabīr Panthi landed aristocrat, Munshi Piyārelāl and father Nōlls arranged a public forum in Chandāpūr (district Shāhjahanpūr U.P.) in order to evaluate the truth of Islām, Christianity and Hinduism. In this he invited Christian bishops, Hindu Pandits and Muslim scholars. He named this Assembly as Mela-e-Khudā-Shanāsi (Fare of Divine Cognition).²

Among the main participants of this assembly were Pandit Dayānand Sarasvati (d. 1882), Maulāna Mōhd. Qāsim and the British Bishop of Shahjahanpur father Nōlls.³ "Although there were three parties, Hindus, Muslims and Christians to participate in this. In reality, however, the debate was between Muslims and Christians."⁴ The Maulana here delivered

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1. Maulana Rahmatullah defeated father Funder in open public debate, who never afterwards dared to face him. The Maulāna wrote also on this subject his famous book,"Izhār al-Haq", which has been translated in various languages including English.
3. Spelling not certain: Nōlls - is made out from Urdu.
4. Ibid, p.5.
such a well-argued speech in refutation of Trinitarianism
and in affirmation of unity of God that everyone — friends
and foes — had to acknowledge it.\(^1\) After the dispersal of
the assembly, one of the Christian priests who wanted to see
the Maulāna is reported to have said: "I have participated
in many such meetings and talked to many Muslim 'Ulamā, but
neither have I heard such speeches nor seen such a scholar ---
If we were to accept a Faith, on the basis of a speech, then
we would have accepted Islām for the speech of this man."\(^2\)

This "Mela" was held once again in the following year,
i.e. March 1877. It was attended in addition to the former
participants, by Munshi Indarman of Muradabad and Christian
father Scott, Pandit Dayanand, founder of Ārya Samaj, who raised
objections on Islām. Maulāna Qāsim delivered his speech in

2. Guftugu-e-Madhhabi, Op.cit, p.40. A reportage of this "Mela" containing the speeches of Maulāna Nānautvi, was
published shortly afterwards by Mohd. Hāshim 'Ali, Manager,
of Matba' Hāshmi, Meerut, and Mohd. Hayāt, manager of
Matba' Diyāī, under the title Guftugu-e-Madhhabi (theological exchange) or Wāqi'ā Mela-e-Khudā Shanāsī 1293/1876.
reply on existence, Unity of God, pre-destination and
free-will, and distortions in Biblical script. As before
his lectures turned out the hall-mark of the session.¹

Afterwards, Pandit Dayanand started a campaign of
hostile remarks against Islam. Consequently, the Muslims
invited Maulana Qasim to Roorkee where the founder of Arya-
Samaj was carrying his anti-Islamic campaign. He did not
come out however to face the Maulana whom he had known well,
and who had come to Roorkee against all expectations and
medical advice, as he was seriously ill those days. Pandit
Dayanand left Roorkee and shortly afterwards reached Meerut
to carry the same anti-Islamic propaganda there. But the
Maulana followed him there too and forced him again to take
to flight.²

At both places he tried his best to talk to Pandit
Dayanand publicly or privately but the latter preferred

¹. History of Darul Uloom Deoband, V.I, pp.118-19. The
minutes of this second session of religious debate in
Shahjahanpur were compiled by Maulana Fakhr al-Hasan
of Gangoh and published under the name "Mubahitha-e-
Shahjahanpur" of 1877. See pp. 2-9, Matba' Qasmi, 1915,
Deoband.

². Intisar-al-Islam (Deoband, 1930), pp.1-9; P. Hardy,
Ulama in Politics : The Muslims of British India, p.171.
avoidance and flight. Finally, the Maulāna asked his disciples Maulāna Fakhr al-Hasan, Maulāna Mahmūd Hasan (Shaikh al-Hind) etc. to reply in public speeches the hostile objections and remarks made by Pandit Dayānand.¹

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¹. Intisar al-Islam, pp. 1–9. Maulāna Nānautvi himself wrote answers to the objections on Islamic Faith made by Dayānand. Intisar al-Islam contains 10 of these objections and their two-tier answers. The 11th objection has been discussed separately at length in Qibla Numā. The book is highly subtle in its discussions.