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Role of Mujahidin Movement in the Freedom Struggle of India – I

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Background:

Sayyid Ahmad Rai Barelavi (C. E. 1786 – 1831), the founder of *Mujahidin Movement* was a freedom fighter and great socio-religious reformer of the 19th century. Sayyid Ahmad's movement stirred Indian Muslim Society to its depths and assumed a significant and historical character with its fighting field in the North-West frontier, its primary head quarters at Patna and its main recruiting ground in Bihar and Bengal.[1]

Sayyid Ahmad was the son of Sayyid Muhammad Irfan. He was born in the month of Safar A.H. 1201/November, 1786 C.E.[2] in the district of Rai-Bareli, Uttar Pradesh, India. Sayyid Ahmad claimed his descent from the Prophet Muhammad صلى الله عليه وسلم[3]. While a boy he showed no inclination to study but rather developed a spirit of social service helping the poor, the needy and the orphans. Sometime after, he went to Delhi and stayed under the care of Shah Abdul Qadir, brother of Shah Abdul Aziz under whom he studied Urdu translation of the *Qur'ân*, detesting the parrot like reading of the text in Arabic. In 1222 A.H., at the age of 22, Sayyid Ahmad became the disciple of Shah Abdul Aziz, son and successor of Shah Waliullah Muhaddith Dehlavi. Sayyid Ahmad stayed with his spiritual guide at Delhi for sometime.[4]

Sayyid Ahmad *Shahîd*, Rai-Beralavi became the founder of '*Mujâhidin Movement*' of India. Shah Abdul Aziz the spiritual guide of Sayyid Ahmad was fully aware of the British doings in Mysore, Bengal, Oudh and the land of the Ruhillas. He fully realized the danger that lay in the new situation and under these

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circumstances Shah Abdul Aziz issued the famous 'fatwa' in C.E. 1803 declaring that India had ceased to be a '*Darul Islam*'. The original '*fatwa*' which is in Persian says:

> ... ..in this city (Delhi) the *Imam al-Muslimîn* wields no authority. The real power rests with Christian officers. There is no check on them; and the promulgation of the commands of '*Kufr*' means that in administration and justice, in matters of law and order, in the domain of trade, finance and collection of revenues everywhere the '*Kuffâr*' (infidels) are in power. Yes, there are certain Islamic rituals, e.g., Friday and '*Îdd* prayers, *adhân* and cow slaughter, with which they brook no interference; but the very root of all these rituals is of no value to them. They demolish *masâjid* without the least hesitation and no Muslim or any *dhimmi* can enter into the city or its suburbs but with their permission. It is in their own interest if they do not object to the travelers and traders to visit the city. On the other hand, distinguished persons like Shuja al-Mulk and Vilâyeti Begum cannot dare to visit the city without their permission. From here Delhi to Kolkata the Christians are in complete control. There is no doubt that in principalities like Hyderabad, Rampur, Lucknow, etc., they have left the administration in the hands of the local authorities; but it is because they have accepted their lordship and have submitted to their authority.[5]

Shah Abdul Aziz gave a lead in organizing the resistance movement. As he was too old to participate in it actively, he instructed his spiritual disciple, Sayyid Ahmad Rai-Barelavi (C.E. 1786-1831), to go to the camp of Amir Ali Khan in Rajputana who, in collaboration with Jaswant Rao Holkar, a Maratha chieftain, was putting up a stubborn opposition to the Britisih. Sayyid Ahmad was a man of strong moral character, a perfect activist, a born leader and paragon of virtues. His spiritual training gave him a unique position among the '*Ulamâ*' trained in Shah Waliullahi traditions. Shah Abdul Aziz was so inspired by his spiritual attainments that he instructed his whole family, relatives and friends to accept Sayyid Ahmad as their spiritual preceptor.[6]

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Sayyid Ahmad Rai-Baralawi was the real founder of the *Mujahidîn Movement* and Shah Ismâ'il was the co-founder of the said movement. Sayyid Ahmad and Shah Ismâ'il both were socio-religious reformers, political thinkers and freedom fighters.[7] Sayyid Ahmad called his movement *Tariqah-i-Muhammadiya* the order of Muhammad صلى الله عليه وسلم, and claimed for himself the right of power of recruiting disciples according to all four principal Sufi orders in India-Chishtiyah, Qadiriyah, Naqshbandiya and Mujaddidiyah as according to him these were only four stages leading to his own. Such wordly actions as marriages, education, commerce, trade and even clothing oneself, was considered by him as being done in pursuit of the ideal of elevating soul. The making of a pilgrimage and fighting a *jihâd* were to the same end.[8]

Sayyid Ahmad's thought had been occupied with the "elevation of the words of Allah" and to do away *Kufr* and *Bida't*, infidelity and innovation; the thought of *jihâd* was always in his mind. 'Infidel' power allowed freedom of worship to Muslims while as the Sikhs did not. The *jihâd* against the second was considered obligatory but since *jihâd* was a long drawn affair, he decided to perform Hajj — pilgrimage first, as a preliminary duty for a Muslim going into the battle field. A large number of followers on his orders sold their belongings and became ready for Hajj.[9]

Role of Sayyid Ahmad in the War of Independence

In July C. E. 1821, he set out for Hajjj, from Bareli with 400 men and women including his close associates Shah Ismâ'il and 'Abdul Hai. He chose a circuitous route for the purpose; for he is said to have gone with a sufficiently intelligible move, first north to Saharanpur and then west to Rampur.[10] He then made his way towards Kolkata by boat and passing through Ramcharghat, Allahabad, Mirzapur, Benaras, Gazipur and Dharampur, reached

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Patna, halting these places, gaining converts and receiving *nazars* of money and provisions.[11]

Sayyid Ahmad halted at Patna for two weeks and enrolled thousands as his disciples including some of those leading men of the place-Wilayat 'Ali, 'Inayat 'Ali, Farhat Hussain, Ilahi Bakhsh Ahmadullah - who afterwards were to figure prominently in the history of the second phase of the '*Mujahidin Movement*'.[12] Before leaving Patna, Sayyid Ahmad appointed Shah Muhammad Husain, Wilayat 'Ali and 'Inayat 'Ali as his Khalifahs and lieutenants to enroll disciples in his name and collect supplies for the proposed jihad.[13]

After leaving Patna Sayyid Ahmad visited Munghyr, Bhagalpur, Murshidabad, Hooghly and other places on the bank of the river, gaining converts and appointing local representatives, he arrived at Kolkata towards the end of C. E. 1821, and was given a princely reception by the prominent Muslims of the city.[14] While in Kolkata, the people flocked to him in so large a number everyday, that he was unable to go through the process of enrolling them by separate laying on of hands. Seven or eight turbans were spread out to them with instruction to hold any part of their length and thus became legally his disciples.[15] Besides enrolling disciples[16] a large number of Non- Muslims, is said to have converted to Islam.[17] The success of the preaching conducted by Shah Isma'il and 'Abdul Hai was so great in Kolkata, that people gave up drinking, performed obligatory prayers regularly and gave their widows in re-marriage.[18]

It is said that Sayyid Ahmad left Kolkata for Hajjj on boats hired for the purpose with the whole body of his followers and after a journey of eleven months reached destination on 28 Shaban, 1237 A. H June C. E. 1822. At Makkah, he is reported to have exercised great influence over reputed teachers on law including Shaykh 'Umar, the Mufti of the place and enlisted among others a learned Bulgarian as his disciple and appointed

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him his Khalifah.[19] There after, he went to Madinah, where, too he imparted. He returned to Makkah and before leaving for India enrolled enormous influence on many on account of his scholarship[20] from Turkey, Egypt, Syria and Bulgaria as his disciples and presented some of them with Arabic versions of *Sirat ul-Mustaqîm*.[21]

In October C.E. 1823 Sayyid Ahmad returned to India and halted at Bombay for a few days, where his success in gaining followers was remarkable as it had been at Kolkata.[22] He then made a second tour to Upper India as far as Kolkata, organized his followers under a sort of government and returned to Bareli, via Patna and Gwalior.[23]

Besides the preaching work undertaken by Sayyid Ahmad and his lieutenants in all important cities of India, emissaries were sent to the interior to incite the Muslims to a *Jihâd* (Holy war). The influence which Shah Ismâ'il as a preacher exercised over the minds of his audiences is said to have been tremendous, so that public meetings were for a time prohibited by the British Government.[24] It appears that the Movement was anti-British from the very beginning.

In spite of that, preparations were made with remarkable rapidity; such weapons as swords, guns and spears took the place of paraphernalia of religious rites; riding and drilling of the recruits was regularly practised; military uniforms were submitted for the loose dress of the converts and *nazars* to the Sayyid consisted now of either horses or weapons of war. Some 2,000 armed and trained, were divided into three companies and were led towards Tonk.[25] Initiation of any convert was made conditional on his joining the *jihad* or making *hijrat* — migration. The declared object of all these preparations was the launching of a holy war against the Sikh government of North-West Frontier, the then an ally of the British Government.

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It is true to say that Ranjit Singh was undoubtedly very oppressive to the Muslims. A contemporary Journal giving the causes of Ranjit Singh's popularity among the Non-Muslims speaks of the reverence which he showed for cows, the slaughter of which was punishable with death and also "his dreadful ill-treatment of the Musalmans in his territories", who besides suffering from various other disabilities, were not allowed to cry their Adhan-call to prayer-or publicly offer their prayers. "This exclusion of the Musalmans from their religious ceremonies," continues the journal, "is considered by every Non-Muslim as an act of great piety".[26] The cases of the forcible conversion of Muslim women and their marriage with Sikhs were not uncommon.[27] As a result, the pilgrims from India to Makkah could not take a route through a Sikh territory.[28] The call for a religious war against such an 'infidel' and oppressive government, therefore, received the enthusiastic support of those Muslims who saw in it the prospect for earning for themselves religious merit and also of securing for their brothers in foreign land religious and political independence.

Sayyid Ahmad and his disciples received support from the ruler of Tonk and his son Wazir al-Dawlah accompanied the party to Ajmer. 'From Ajmer, passing through the desert, Sayyid Ahmad entered the territory of Mir Rustam Khan of Khairpur, where he was well received and joined by many followers from all over India.[29] Sayyid Ahmad then entered the hills of the North-West and began to establish his position among the Afghans of Qandahâr and Kâbul at the same time educating them about the significance of fight against oppression.

In C.E. 1826, Sayyid Ahmad was in the Yusufzai territory and his success as the leader of a noble cause here was all the more remarkable.[30] But the ambitious design of Ranjit Singh threatened the independence of his neighbours. The rulers of Sind and the chiefs of frontier were already making frantic appeals for

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help to the British Government against the encroachment of the Sikhs on their territories.[31] The British Government had informed them that the amicable and pacific relations subsisting between British and the Sikh Government under the treaty of C.E. 1809," rendered it impossible for them "even if so inclined" to take cognizance of their grievances, or to "hold out to them the smallest hope of assistance and support" and the British representative at Delhi was warned against accepting any such overtures from affected parties.[32] The political stage was thus suited for any determined person to take up, as it were, the cudgels of those helpless chiefs against a common foe.

According to certain accounts Sayyid Ahmad patched up an alliance with Sardar Sayyid Khan, brother of Dost Muhammad Khan and Amir Khan, Chief of Khatak and with several minor chiefs of Panjtar. The disquieting news from the frontier having reached Lahore, Budh Singh, with 10,000 troops, was sent by the Darbar against the Sayyid. The Sikh army, by rapid march entered Akura and took up an entrenched position. An attack led by the advanced guards of Sayyid Ahmad was repulsed by the Sikhs but the loss was so heavy that Budh Singh was forced to withdraw a few miles.[33] This was followed by another indecisive action at Hadrow, forced on Sayyid Ahmad by the plundering habits of his restless Pathan followers.

The said two engagements encouraged Sayyid Ahmad to form a sort of government in the frontier. The *'Ulamâ'* from Hindustan in conjunction with some leading Pathan Chiefs decided to establish a *Khilafat* and *Imamat* and in Jumada II, 1242 A.H. (February C.E. 1827) all took allegiance to the Sayyid as their *Khalifah*. Obedience to the Sayyid was declared obligatory on the part of all Muslims and people opposed to him were branded as rebels. The *Khutbah*,[34] Friday sermon, too, was read in the name of Sayyid Ahmad.

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Sardar Yar Muhammad Khan, the ruler of Peshawar, who hitherto had been notorious for his aggression on the territories of the Yusufzais (now Sayyid Ahmad's allies), promised to respect the independence of his neighbours.[35] A letter from Sayyid Ahmad, intimating his assumption of the title of *Imâm*, was despatched to India almost at the same time.[36]

British Political Assistant, Wade was informed by many that Sayyid's armed followers at the time numbered about a lac (1,00000).[37] Sayyid's position, quite naturally, soon aroused the jealous of Yar Muhammad Khan, the ruler of Peshawar. When a major battle with the Sikhs was imminent, he attempted to poison the Sayyid and in the actual clash with the Sikhs the next day, he played a treacherous game, his army using blank cartridges and making only a show of fight. This resulted in Sayyid Ahmad's defeat and loss of many of his trusted followers.[38]

Sayyid Ahmad again consolidated his position and in alliance with the chiefs of Summa and Swat attacked and defeated "Alam Khan, the Atmanzai Chief, who had recently joined with the enemy. The combined army of the Sikhs and Khadai Khan under Rajit Singh's French General, Ventura, approached Panjtar, burning *masâjid* and villages and causing destruction all along the route. But the fortified position which the Sayyid established by building a wall at the entrance of the pass leading to Panjtar compelled Ventura to withdraw to Lahore. A night attack was then made by Shah Isma'il upon Khadai Khan's against the occupation of the port. Leaving the fort under Mazhar 'Ali of Patna, Shah Isma'il and the Sayyid moved out to meet the two enemies of Zaida. Zaida turned now the head quarter of the *Mujâhidin*.[39]

Yar Muhammad suffered defeat at the battle of Zaida and died in action. The combat of Zaida was also followed by small engagements with the Sikhs under Hari Singh; the Sayyid captured and then immediately lost, the fortress of Tarbella and

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the Sikhs also snatched from him the fort of Hund. The Sayyid was perturbed and thought of sending Shah Isma'il to Kashmir to his headquarters there, but the antagonism of the chief of Amb necessitated first an expedition against him before executing his plan. Shah Isma'il attacked and captured Amb where he was met by the friendly chiefs of Kagân in Kashmir. However, Sayyid Ahmad now succeeded in reoccupying the fortress of Hund and depriving the Sikhs of their possession of Garhi Singhli. He organized also some sort of Government within the territories that directly or indirectly acknowledged his sovereignty. Shah Isma'il and Hasan were made ministers; the secretariat was transferred to Amb and seal bearing the inscription, "Ismahu Ahmad," was made for Sayyid Ahmad. Attempts were made to do away with the corruption and abuses among the Pathans. The practice of demanding large sums from the bridegroom by the parents of the girls and the taking of baths naked were prohibited according to the strict rules of Islam. The power of the Sayyid was now at its zenith. His elation kept pace with his success and he formally assumed, now, the title of *Khalifah* and struck coins in his name bearing the inscription 'Ahmad the just, Defender of the Faith.[40]

The Muslims of Summa were disgusted with the strict rules of Islam. Sultan Muhammad who became a traitor incited to rebellion the Muslims of Summah. Mazhar 'Ali, Sayyid Ahmad's representative at Peshawar, was assassinated along with the whole body of Hindustani tax collectors and all *Ghazis*, at the time of Maghrib Salâh.[41]

The massacre of his Indian followers by the treacherous mountaineers disappointed Sayyid Ahmad so much that he decided to leave the place and emigrate to Arabia. At this critical movement, he was again invited by some chiefs of Pakhli, Kagan and Kashmir to join them in their fight against the Sikhs. Sayyid Ahmad and Shah Isma'il with 400 trusted followers reached Kagan, and there joined the refractory chiefs of Muzaffarabad.[42]

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The combined army harassed the Sikhs under Kharg Singh, plundered the countryside and surrounded the fort of Muzaffarabad. Ranjit Singh was sent with a large army to Muzaffarabad.[43]

Sayyid Ahmad suffered a defeat at Muzaffarabad[44] but soon after seized Balakot and made it his headquarters. The main approaches to Balakot - a pass and a bridge were guarded against the Sikhs and contact seemed very difficult. The money power of the Sikhs and treachery on the part of some Pathan guards led, however, to the capture of the bridge by Sher Singh and a surprise attack on Sayyid Ahmad and his followers. The battle of Balakot took place in May C. E. 1831, Sayyid Ahmad, Shah Ismâ'il and the leading members of the *'Mujahidîn'* fell in action.[45] Contradictory reports about the final disposal of the Sayyid's dead body raise a controversy. According to Indian Gazette of 24 June C.E. 1831, Sayyid Ahmad's body was identified before Sher Singh and "the enemy forces wanted to cut off the head and hands and burn the mutilated remains; but the prince restrained them from the act of violation and directing the corpse to be decently wrapped up in a shawl, caused it to be buried with due honours.[46] S.M. Latif (writing about sixty years after) holds that the heads of Sayyid Ahmad and Shah Isma'il were cut and sent to Ranjit Singh.[47] But Captain Wade, in his report to Secretary to the Governor General, states about a week after the battle, that the Sayyid's body "was identified and burnt by the Sikhs".[48] Having regard to the antagonism of the Sikhs towards the *Mujahidîn* and the feeling of irritation and the spirit of vengeance which Sayyid Ahmad's activities during the past few years, had given rise to, in the minds of the Sikhs, Captain Wade's version of the incident appears acceptable[49].

It is true to say that the battle of Balakot left the *'Mujahidîn'* leaderless and threw the entire organisation out of gear. Shaikh Wali Muhammad, the only man of importance who survived the

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disaster,left with the Sayyid's family for Tonk via Sind. Nawab Wazir al-Dawlah of Tonk received the bereaved family with great reverence and granted them jagirs.

We may now conclude that the political aim of the '*Mujahidîn*' was the establishment of an Islamic State in India. The Kingdom of Allah on Earth. *Jihâd* was supposed to be a means to that end. Even since the ' *Mujahidîn*' Trials of C.E. 1864 and C.E.1865, most Anglo-Indian writers have held the view that the *Mujahidîn Movement* in India was from the very beginning directed against the British power, a fact to which the English rulers were, however, blind, for some time, till they were roused to their senses forty years after.[50]

Now, it is a controversial point that when the ultimate target of '*jihâd*' was the British power why Sayyid Ahmad collided with the Sikhs. Recently an effort has been made to resolve the controversy, by the researches made by Ghulam Rasul Mehr, author of *'Sayyid Ahmad Shahid'*, Muhammad Miyan, author of *'Ulama-i-Hind Ka Shandâr Mâdi'*, vol. 11, 1957, and Mawlana Husain Ahmad Madani, author of *'Naqsh-i-Hayât'*, Vol. II, Deobānd, 1954.

Mawlana Husain Ahmad Madani (1879-1957), a religio-political leader and a long time principal of Darul 'Ulûm Deoband, rightly observes, 'Sayyid Ahmad's main objective was to drive the British out of India". Mawlana Husain Ahmad Madani based his claim mainly on the letters of Sayyid Ahmad which he addressed to Raja Hindu Rao, at that time minister and brother in-law of Dawlat Rai Sindhia of Gwalior, and Ghulam Haider Khan, then an officer in Sindhia's administration. In his letters he says that his primary motive was to force the British to quit India. He was fighting only for the cause' of *'Dîn'* and the liberation of the country, not for the attainment of worldly riches and power. Hence, the cause was noble and the Hindus and Muslims alike should support it.

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It is correct to state that the first war of independence in C.E. 1831 was led by Sayyid Ahmad *Shahîd* Rai Barelavi (C.E. 1786-1831). His chief lieutenant was Shah Ismâ'il Shahid. They aimed at the renaissance of Islam in undivided India in the religious as well as political spheres. According to European historians, the political part of the Movement was directed against the British. This statement is true. But some other scholars are of the opinion that the Movement was led against the Sikhs who had forbidden the call of *adhân* and who used to interfere with the Muslim religious practices in the Punjab and the North West Frontier province. When Sayyid Ahmad *Shahîd* heard of the ill treatment of the Muslims at the hands of the Sikhs, he at the instance of Shah Abdul Aziz decided to wage a holy war (*Jihâd*) against the Sikhs. He made necessary preparations for *Jihâd*. In order to popularize the movement he with his associates visited Gwalior, Tonk, Ajmer, Patna, Kolkata and other important cities of India. He proceeded to the scene of action via Panipat, Karnal, Thaneswar, Sind, Baluchistan and Afghanistan. Maulana Wilayat Ali, 'Inayat Ali and Karâmat Ali were deputed in the central province and Shah Ismâ'il and Abdul Hai in the North West Frontier Province.

The first phase of the Mujahidin movement in C.E. 1831 failed to the absence of co-operation between the Hindustani followers of the Sayyid and the local populace, lack of proper funds, poor war equipment and want of proper military training, the sectarian propaganda against the reforms introduced by the followers of Sayyid Ahmad *Shahîd* and the dissension created by Ranjit Singh among the Pathans of North West Frontier Province.

After the assassination of Sayyid Ahmad *Shahîd*, Shah Ismâ'il *Shahîd* and other important *'Ulamâ'* in C.E. 1831 at the battle of Balakot, the political work of the Sayyid carried on by Maulana Wilayat Ali and 'Inayat Ali of Patna. They continued their mission in Northern India and East Bengal. The movement

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came to an end when the subsequent extension of the British power over the Punjab brought the *Mujahidîn* into direct conflict with the British who fought against the Muslims many a battle and brought the Movement to an end.

History of the *Mujahidîn Movement* for the independence of Un-Divided-India from 1831 to 1858, is to a great extent the history of the activities of Maulana Wilayat Ali[51] (A.H.1203/1790-91-1852) and Maulana 'Inayat Ali[52] (A.H.1208/C.E.1794-1858C.E.) of the Sadiqpur family of Patna, Bihar. Their selfless zeal for the promotion of the Mission and their various sacrifices in the service of the Movement have earned the ungrudging praise of even William Hunter. He observes:

> Indefatigable as missionaries, careless of themselves, blameless in their lives, supremely devoted to the overthrow of the English Infidels, admirably skilful in organizing a permanent system for supplying money and recruits, the Patna Khalifahs stand forth as the types and exemplars of the Sect. Much of their teaching was faultless and it had been given to them to stir up thousands of their countrymen to a purer life and truer conception of the Almighty.[53]

Maulana 'Inayat Ali kept on working, alternatively, in two such far-flung places as the North-West Frontier and Eastern Bengal, waging and supervising an active war in the former, and preaching and enrolling new members in the latter.

It is said that after short stay on the frontier both the brothers were deputed by Sayyid Ahmad to do missionary and organizational work in India. From that time till the departure of 'Inayat Ali to the frontier in C.E. 1839 both of them were engaged in organizational and constructive work in the greater part of eastern and southern India.[54]

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Maulana Wilayat Ali's Visit to Bombay, Hyderabad, Madhya Pradesh and Madras

Maulana Wilayat Ali along with Sayyid Karamatullah and Abdul Qadir of Bihar was deputed by Sayyid Ahmad to work in Bombay and Deccan (Hyderabad). At the former place he replaced Muhammad Ali Rampuri who went to Madras. He was still in the South when the sad tidings of the disaster at Balakot reached him. At about the same time his father, Fateh Ali, also died at Patna. He therefore, returned to Patna travelling via Madhya Pradesh. 'Inayat Ali had returned earlier on hearing the news of the illness of his father.

Patna became the head-quarter of the *Mujahidîn Movement*. Maulana Wilayat Ali took charge of the reorganization of the Movement. A large number of Muslims renewed their *Bai'at* on Wilayat Ali's hands. He appointed Muhammad Hussain in charge of the local Nanmohia *masjid*, one of the earliest and important centers of *Mujahidîn* in Patna. He also placed him in charge of the Movement in Muzaffarpur, Darbhanga and Chapra districts.[55] He re-established the weekly congregational prayer in another *masjid* in the city, known as Fakhruddaulah's *masjid*.[56] Meetings were also held at his house in which the *Qur'ân* and *Hadith* were taught in plain and simple language and lectures delivered on theological and political matters. The gatherings included men, women and children. The translation of the *Qur'ân* by Abdul Qadir and of the *Mishkat* by Qutubuddin of Delhi was requisitioned from Delhi and its copies distributed in large numbers among the followers of the *Mujahidîn* who were present there.

Maulana 'Inayat Ali's visit to Bengal

After his return from the North-West Frontier he did extensive missionary work in the countless villages of the eastern districts of Bengal. Detailed and authentic information about his work is available to us in the contemporary police records.[57] As

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early as March, 1843, the Superintendent of Police, Lower Provinces, reported to the government about the existence of a band of 'Muslim *'Ulamâ'*, moving around the districts of Baraset, Jessore, Pubna and Rajshahi, preaching a religious war against the Sikhs, "the allies of government" and endeavouring to procure recruits and money for that purpose. "The leading man of the party was a "native of Patna, called 'Inayat Ali".

Another report from the superintendent of police gave additional information about the other leaders among the *'Ulamâ'*, the aims and objects of their preachings, as well as his own efforts to counter the effects of their preachings among the masses. It was reported[58] that besides 'Inayat Ali, Karâmat Ali[59] and Zynoodeen (Zainul 'Abidîn) of Hyderabad were also working in the above mentioned districts. Their appeal for recruits was getting encouraging response and they had fixed upon the village Narayanpore, near Jungypur in Murshidabad district as the place where the followers were to collect before proceeding to the North West.

The same officer further observes:

> Muslim population in the Eastern districts was largely composed of *Faraizis*, strongly united together, very fanatic, under control of particular leaders, inimical to our government, and they required to be most carefully watched for if there is any danger of an outbreak in these provinces it is from the excited religious fanaticism of this sect.[60]

According to the Police Officer:

> Actions were being taken, by the Magistrates of the districts concerned, particularly in Murshidabad, West Bengal, to keep an eye on the assemblage of these men and to propagate among the people the 'folly' of such preachings. If any coercion was needed such force would be taken out as at once to overawe the people.

Again the Superintendent of Police in his another letter[61] reported that 'Inayat Ali had for sometime been visiting different parts of Bengal. Collecting money from his followers, "making

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use, I understand, of the topic of a religious war and the resurrection of Sayyid Ahmad as a pretext for calling for aid....He has however left this part of the country to go to Patna." In yet another letter[62] it was reported to the government that he had written to the Magistrate of Bhagalpur requesting to report whether any groups of men were passing through his district to the North-West, and that from the reply of the Magistrate it appeared that men from the districts of Baraset, Jessore, Mymansingh and Rajshahi had passed in different bodies to the number of 800 or 900 stating that they were proceeding to Makkah.

The British government, in a consolidated reply[63] to all these reports of the S.P., while expressing their disinclination to attend much importance of the preaching, directed him to use a guarded mixture of advice and admonition in conveying to the leaders in particular and the people in general that they would be held responsible for any "outrage" or "breach of peace" into which they or their followers might be involved.

The chief contribution of 'Inayat Ali's work in Bengal, during this period was the inculcation and development of a civic and corporate spirit among the villagers, the adoption of a policy of civil disobedience to the government, and the boycott of some of its administrative organs.

O'Kinealy emphasizes an important aspect of the teachings of the *Mujahidîn* missionaries sent to the villages of Bengal by 'Inayat Ali. It was proclaimed, he observes:

> Those who were not in a position to abandon this country and join in *jihâd* were recommended to resist passively and refrain from all intercourse with their Kafir rulers, to form as it were, a power within the government and totally opposed to it. Assistance should not be demanded from the infidels, their courts, which decreed interest, should be avoided and all complaints between

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brother and brother should be decided by the local *Mujahidîn* chiefs.[64]

It is also evident the government records relating to five state trials, viz (a) Ambala Trail of 1864 (b) Patna Trial of 1865 (c) Malda Trial of 1870 (d) Rajmah Trial of 1870 and (e) The great Wahabi (*Mujahidîn*) Trials of 1870-1871, that the endeavours of 'Inayat Ali and his followers from C. E. 1830 to 1870 had far reaching effects on the Muslims of Bengal.

Village *masjid* became the centre of newly formed corporate life. The *Imâm* of the *masjid* was entrusted with the judicial work of deciding disputes among the followers. A well-educated man was appointed as an *Imâm*. People were forbidden to take their cases to the government courts and persuaded to get them settled by their own corporate bodies. Some important locality with a bigger *masjid* was selected as a higher unit covering an area of over 10 miles. The *masâjid* also served as the collecting centers of local contributions. It will be seen that this was a system which drew heavily upon the earlier *Faraizi* organization.

It is asserted that during this period Wilayat Ali himself proceeded on an inspecting tour to Bengal. Earlier, Zainul 'Abidîn and Abbas had arrived Patna from Hyderabad and had been deputed by Wilayat Ali to Orissa and Allahabad as '*Khalifah*' to organize the Movement there.[65] He appointed Badiuzza-man as the local '*Khalifah*' at Kolkata and gave him the charge of Misrigunj mosque there. Afterwards he left for Bombay on way to Hijâz for the performance of Hajjj. At the former place he stayed for two months and appointed 'Inayatullah as his *Khalifah*. After performing the Hajjj, he traveled to Yemen, Najd, Yasir and Muscut. During that tour he met the famous *Qadi* Shaukani[66] from whom he took a certificate of proficiency in exegesis and also brought several of his works to India. He returned to India after

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two years and having once again traveled to some of the districts of Bengal, came back to Patna. During this period they established their internal organization on more solid foundation of this article. Thus ended the first phase of their work.

(**Note:** *The part second is likely to be published in the next issue of the journal*)

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References and End Notes

[1] G.M. Sufi, *Al-Minhâj*, p. 68.
[2] Jafar Thaneswari, *Sawanih Ahmad*; (SA), Lahore, n.d. p. 4.
See also *Journal of the Bombay Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society* (JBRAS), p. 382, Calcutta Review, No. 9, p. 80.
[3] *Ibid.*
[4] Sawani Ahmad, *op. cit.* p. 8.
[5] Shah 'Abdul' Aziz, *'Fatawa 'Azizi'*, Maktaba 'Mujtaba'i, Delhi, 1311 A.H., p. 17. cf. Prof. Ziaya-ul-Hasan Faruqi, *Deoband School and the Demand for Pakistan*, pp. 2-3).
[6] Farûqî, *op. cit.*, pp. 5-6.
[7] The initiation of Maulana Shah Isma'il and Maulana Muhammad 'Abdul Hai, two 'Alim Benazir'- learned men without a parallel at the hands of Sayyid Ahmad a 'ummi-illiterate-aroused great excitement in the city and resulted in his gaining numerous proselytes. (Ja'far Thaneswari, *Sawanih Ahmadi*, p. 19; *J.R.A.S.*, Vol. XIII, 1852, pp. 311-12.
[8] Gulam Rasul Mehr, *Sayyid Ahmad Shahid*, Kitab Manzil, Lahore, 1954, pp. 112-13.
[9] Jafar Thaneswari, *Sawanih Ahmadi* (SA), Lahore, n.d. p. 19.
[10] *Ibid.* pp. 44-45.
[11] S.A. (*Sawanih Ahmadi*), p. 47.
Journal of Asiatic Society of Bengal (J.A.S.B.), Vol. 1, 1832, p. 481; *Calcutta Review* No. CP. 82; See further selections from the *Records of the Bengal Government. S.R.B.G.)*, "Trial of Ahmedoolah", p. 128.
[12] S.A., pp. 48-51.
[13] *Ibid.*, p. 51, *Calcutta Review*, No. C.P. 82; *S.R.B.G.*, XLII "Trial of Ahmedoolah", p. 129.
[14] The Chief *Khalifah* was Muhammad Husain who was authorized to appoint representatives. For *Sanad* appointing him see S.R.B.G., XLII- "Trial of Ahmedoolah" - Exhibit No. 49C, pp. 32-34.
[15] S.A., p. 51.
[16] S.R.B.G. XL11 – "Trail of Ahmedoolah", p. 129; S.A., 55.
[17] S.A., p. 56; A.S. Tritton speaks of "forced conversion" of Hindus, See Tritton, *Islam*, p. 160. There is however, nothing in contemporary accounts to support his views.

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[18] S.A., pp. 55-6.
The wine dealers of Kolkata, according to some accounts, became worried about their future and made a representation to the Magistrate.
[19] *Ibid.*, p. 60.
[20] *Ibid.*, pp. 63-4. The writer of the *Kolkata Review* holds that some of the Sayyid's followers were arrested for preaching his doctrines at Makkah, see *Calcutta Review*, No. C.P. 82.
Hunter goes to the extent of stating that Sayyid Ahmad was turned out of the city and publicly degraded.
See, W.W. Hunter. '*Our Indian Musalmans*,' p. 60.
Their views appear to be untenable particularly because no authority is cited by either. It is very likely that the Sayyid scrupulously avoided offending the authorities at Makkah. Thaneswari tells us that he was well received there, and what is more, was helped by the governor in procuring 120 camels for conveyance to Madinah.
[21] S .A., p. 65.
The party is reported to have been to Constantinople (Istanbul) too and well received there, the Sayyid having received a *nazar* of 9 lacs of rupees.
See, *J.R.A.S.*, Vol. XIII, 1852, p. 312. But this appears improbable since Thaneswari, a '*Mujahidîn*' makes no reference to that.
[22] *S.R.B.G.*, XL11 –"Trial of Ahmedoolah" p. 129.
[23] *Calcutta Review* No. C.P. 82; S.A., p. 66.
[24] *J.R.A.S.*, Vol. XIII, 1852, pp. 313-4.
[25] *Sawani Ahmadi*, pp. 69-70.
[26] *Asiatic Journal*, Vol. III, p. 389.
R.N. Martin, *Anglo Eastern Empire*, p. 371, foot note.
See also *Calcutta Review*, No. C. pp. 81-2.
[27] S.A., pp. 24, 71.
[28] Mrs. H. Ali, *Observations on the Musalmans of India* (2 Vols.), London, 1832.
[29] J.D. Cunningham, *History of the Sikhs*, p. 191.
[30] *Calcutta Review*, No. C.P. 83.
For details of the route taken by Sayyid Ahmad,
See S.A., pp. 73, 96.
[31] *Bengal Secret Consultations*, 31 Oct., 1823, Nos., 5-8;

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Bengal Political Consultations, 9 April, 824, No. 55.

[32] Bengal Sec. Letters, Vol. 20. Letter No. 18098/1 of 1 Nov.1824, Para 12..

[33] *Bengal Political Consultations*. 30 March '1827, No. 27, Agent, Delhi to Secy., Govt. Pol. Dept. 8 March 1827, with enclosures.
S.A., pp. 97-100.

[34] *Sawani Ahmadi, op. cit.* p. 101. The reading of *Khutba* in the name of a person has great political significance.

[35] Cunningham, J.D., *A History of the Sikhs*, London, 1853, p. 192.

[36] *Sawani Ahmadi, op. cit.*, pp. 101-2.

[37] *Bengal Political Consultations*. 30 March 1827, No. 32, Ranjit Singh estimated the number at 40,000.
See *Ibid.* No. 34, Wade to Metcalfe, 5 March 1827.

[38] S.A., pp. 102-4.

[39] S.A., pp. 110-113.

[40] Cunningham, *op., cit.*, p. 193.
Latif, *op. cit.*, p. 442.

[41] S.A., p. 131.

[42] *Ibid.*, pp. 131-3; *Bengal Political Consultations*, 15 April 1831.

[43] *Jan Jahan Namah* of May 1831 quoted in A.J., Vol. VI, 1831, p. 116.

[44] *Bengal Political Consultations*, 6 May 1831, No. 42, Wade to resident at Delhi, 31 March.

[45] *Bengal Political Consultations*, 17 June 1831, Nos. 39 x 41;

[46] S.A. pp. 134-6.
Journal of the Bombay Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society, Vol. XIV, 1878-80, p. 355.
India Gazette, 24 June 1831, vide *Asiatic Journal*, Vol. VIII,1832; p. 09.
See also S.A. p. 137.

[47] S.M. Latif, *History of the Punjab*, p. 442.

[48] *Bengal Political Consultations*, 17 June 1831, No. 39, Wade to Prinsep, 17 May 1831.

[49] W.W. Hunter holds this view.

[50] Maulana Husain Ahmad Madani, *Naqsh-i-Hayât*, Vol. 11, Deoband, C.E. 1954, pp. 12-16.

[51] Maulana Wilâyat Ali was the son of Fatah Ali of Sadiqpur, Patna City , Bihar, India.

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See for details, A. Rahim, *Tazkirah-i-Sadaqa*, 2nd edition, Allahabad, pp. 110-140.

Wilayat Ali, was born in A.H. 1205 (1790-91). He received his early education from his father. Later, he was sent to Lucknow where he took training under Ashraf Ali of the Farangi Mahal. It was there that he met Sayyid Ahmad and took *Bai'at*. Subsequently he persuaded his family members to take *Bai'at* on Sayyid Ahmad's hands. He accompanied him when he left Patna.

Wilayat Ali was first married at the age of fifteen to Bibi Amiran, the daughter of Maqsud Ali of Village Labna Pakhtoli in the district of Arrah, Bihar. She died of illness. He married again, during the course of his stay in Hyderabad (Deccan), the daughter of a local nobleman, Mirza Wahid Beg. He had several issues from this marriage, including Abdullah the leader of the *Mujahidîn* during the well-known Ambala campaign. Again, in order to propagate the principle of widow-remarriage, he married the widowed daughter of Ilahi Bukhsh. The first case of widowed among the local Muslims of high family and social status.

[52] Maulana 'Inayat Ali, the younger brother of Maulana Wilayat Ali, and son of Fatah Ali was born in A.H. 1208, C.E. 1794. He,too, had his early education from his father. ,Later he became the student of Sayyid Muhammad Musafir of Patna. He first married Muhammad Musafir's daughter, Amna. After her death he did not marry again for fifteen years, when he was mostly touring Bihar and Bengal for missionary work. After the death of Akbar Ali, son of 'Ilahi Bukhsh, Wilayat Ali got 'Inayat Ali married to Bibi Sharifan, the widow of Akbar Ali and daughter of Muhammad Husain, who lived with her husband at Jessore in the house of Mufiduddin and always accompanied him on his missionary tours. He, too, took *Bai'at* along with other members of his family and joined Sayyid Ahmad, later on the Frontier.

[53] W. W. Hunter, *Our Indian Musalmans*, London, 1871, p. 68.

[54] A. Rahim, *Tazkira-i-Sadaqa* (T.S.) (2nd edition) Allahabad, 1924.

[55] Fakhruddaula *masjid* is situated at a short distance east of Khwaja Kalan Police Station, Patna City.

[56] a) A. A. Rahim, *Durrar al Manahur fi tarajin-i-Sadiqpur*, Allahabad, C.E. 1845, pp 133-34.

b) Govt. of Bengal, Judi. Dept. Cons. Nos 21-24 of 1 9th May, 1843.

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[57] Letter from W. Dampier, S.P. L.P., to F.J. Halliday, Secretary, Govt. of Bengal, Judi. Dept., No. 581, dated 29 th March 1843.

[58] *Ibid.*, Letter No. 680, dated 5th April, 1843.

[59] Maulana Karamat Ali was a native of Jaunpur. He had taken *bai't* on the hands of Sayyid Ahmad at the early age of 18. On being deputed to Bengal he did extensive missionary work there.

[60] The Superintendent of Police showed a deep insight in the characteristic features of the *Wahabi* (*Mujahidîn*) and *Faraizi* Movements by underlying the similarity of ideas between the two. It was, in fact, the ground work done by the *Faraizis* which facilitated the subsequent work of the *Mujahidîn* in Bengal. In a subsequent letter dated 13th April, 1843, the S.P. also noticed the distinction between the followers of Karamat Ali and 'Inayat Ali "owing to difference in formula in prayers" added that the foliowers of the former were not interested in the movement of Enayat Ali which was more powerful in the districts visited by him.

[61] Letter from W. Dampier, S.P.L.P. , to the Secretary Govt of Bengal, Judi. Dept., No. th 714, dated 10th April, 1843.

[62] *Ibid.*, No. 736, dated 13 April, 1843.

[63] Letter from Secretary Govt of Bengal to W. Dampier, S.P.P., No 348, dated Fort William, 24th April, 1843.

[64] a) Calcutta Review, Vol. 51 (1870), p. 393.

b) W.W. Hunter, *Our Indian Musalmans, op. cit.* p. 84 f.

A. Lewis Mendes, Report of the proceedings in the matters of Ameer Khan and Hashamadad khan, Calcutta 1871, Muniudud Ahmad Khan, Selection from Bengal Govt. records on Wahabi Trials 1863-1870, Dhaka, 1961, p.lff.

[65] T. S., *op. cit.*, p. 115.

[66] Imam Qazi Shukani was a reputed *'Âlim* and a celebrated authority on exegesis.